CSOs and Citizens´ Participation

Acknowledgments

We are deeply grateful to all Civil Society Organisations from the Western Balkans and Turkey which have contributed to the enrichment of this Manual by sharing their knowledge and experience with us.

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CONTENTS

Foreword

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With activities in eight countries of the Western Balkans and Turkey *Technical Assistance for Civil Society Organisations* – TACSO – is providing support and opportunities for the development of a strong and influential Civil Society sector. This investment in Civil Society is based on our conviction that in the context of EU affiliation ongoing political, economic and social processes require an engaged and well-functioning Civil Society as an important precondition for democratic developments.

An important project component of TACSO is Capacity Development of CSOs with the main objective being to increase the capacity of CSO representatives in a number of key areas by offering them new knowledge on contemporary methodologies and techniques as well as the opportunity for exchange and practical knowledge.

During the spring of 2010 TACSO implemented five Regional Training Programs targeting experienced and well-established CSOs and their representatives. Following the successful completion of these Training Programs and in order to further strengthen the capacities of CSOs, TACSO has decided to develop five manuals as follows:

- Fundraising and Accessing EU Funds;
- Civil Society Organisation Management - Practical Tools for Organisational Development Analysis;
- Developing and Managing EU Funded Projects;
- Advocacy and Policy Influencing for Social Change;
- *Citizens' Participation in the Decision-Making Processes.*

The present Manual *CSOs and Citizens' Participation* is aimed to increase the CSOs capacities in the area of citizens´ participation in the decision-making processes.

We sincerely hope that you will find the Manual useful for your work.

Palle Westergaard

Team Leader

Introduction

Introduction

The European Union is founded on the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law. Among these fundamental freedoms is the right of citizens to form associations to pursue a common purpose which respects the above-mentioned principles and to participate actively in society. One of the important roles for Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) both within the EU and globally is indeed the facilitation of citizens' participation in decision-making processes, whether they be at the local, provincial, national or even international level. However, this is a role that CSOs often struggle to fulfil effectively and it is a particular capacity challenge for CSOs in countries in transition.

To assist CSOs in the Western Balkans and Turkey to address this capacity challenge, the TACSO programme has produced this Manual. It should be noted that although the primary target is CSOs, it is expected that a range of partners of the CSOs - local government bodies, central government departments, and other public institutions - as well as individual citizens, will all find the Manual instructive and enlightening. The range of information, methodologies and experiences shared in the Manual is also deliberately broad, so that both novices to citizens' participation and more experienced practitioners will find useful advice.
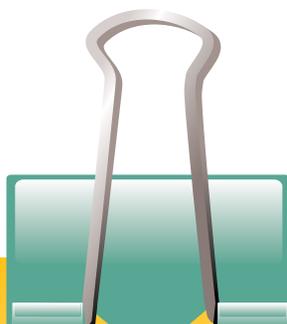
The Manual is made up of three main parts:

Part 1 deals with the concepts and general approaches, mechanisms and methodologies for effective citizens' participation;

Part 2 looks at citizens' participation in action, at both the local and national level;

Part 3 is a 'Toolbox' which contains checklists and examples of templates and methodologies to be used in support of citizens participation.

Throughout the Manual there are plenty of case studies and presentations of good practices and lessons learnt from the region and beyond, and at the end of each Chapter there are 'moot points'* designed to stimulate discussions and reflection on the issues addressed Finally, at the end you'll find a glossary of key terms and an extended section with references and useful sources for further reading and practice.

The old English verb 'to moot' means 'to bring up for debate or discussion', and as such in Anglo-Saxon Britain there were places or buildings designated specially for discussing 'moot points'. These places were referred to as Moot Hills or Moot Halls and became community focal points for where decisions would be made about public issues, such as land use and the settlement of commercial disputes.

Both the Manual and contents of the Toolbox have been designed to be used as either self-directed learning guides or can be used in the context of workshops, roundtable events, or even more formal training. Thus, anyone working or volunteering with a CSO should feel comfortable using the publication. There are also plenty of references and examples of real experiences of CSOs in the region, and details of where to find more information, so it is hoped that any reader will feel inspired and confident to take appropriate actions.

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PART I

What is Citizens Participation, why is it important, and how does it work?

Citizens Participation and Solidarity, or what can happen if we don't participate in the decision-making process!

Timur brings an elephant to Aksehir, a small town in Anatolia. The monumental animal is left alone to roam around wherever he wants. And so all the fields, vineyards, and vegetable gardens get ruined. On top of that, the poor people of Aksehir were left in charge of feeding the animal. In short, Timur's elephant became the first and foremost problem of Aksehir.

`Dear Hodja,' the people of Aksehir entreated Nasreddin Hodja\*, `you are the only person who is not afraid of talking to Timur. Only you can convince him. Go tell him that we don't want this elephant here. Explain to him that we've had enough.'

`You are right,' Hodja agreed, `we need to do something about this. But I am also scared of talking to Timur. How about tomorrow morning if ten or fifteen of us all together go to Timur and plead our case as a group. We'll be stronger that way.' Everyone agreed.

Illustration by Alperen KOSEOGLU

The next morning a large group of men and women gathered in front of Hodja's house. They then began their procession up towards Timur's tent, with Hodja in the lead and the crowd following behind. As they approached the despot's temporary residence, people behind Hodja, overcome by fear of Timur's fury, disappeared one by one. When Hodja was about to enter the grand tent, he noticed that he was all alone. `Ahh you cowards!' he said to himself.

`Hodja,' thundered Timur, `What brings you to my presence today?'

`Great Timur,' Nasreddin Hodja, gathered up his courage, `we love the elephant you brought to Aksehir. We are grateful to you for your benefaction. He is our pride and joy. But we are concerned, Great Timur. The poor animal is a little lonely. Maybe you can bring a friend to him, perhaps a female elephant to keep him company. They can stroll around in the fields and gardens together and, God willing, they might even have a family. That can only increase our appreciation of your very generous gift to us".

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* Nasreddin Hodja is a fabled humourist and storyteller from the Anatolia of the past.

Democracy and Citizens Participation

Defining Citizens' Participation and How It Relates To Governance

Before looking at the 'nuts and bolts' of citizens participation and learning how CSOs might strengthen their contribution towards participatory decision-making, it is useful to explore the concepts behind this much-used word of 'participation'. We need to have a common understanding of what these concepts mean and why they are important to the work of organised civil society. Thus, the following paragraphs serve as an introduction to the theme and are designed to act as talking points for CSO members, staff and volunteers. We begin by exploring the link between 'participation' and 'democracy', and how the two combine to make people's lives better.

Representative democracy, as seen in the EU and the region of the Western Balkans and Turkey, is a form of government founded on the principle of elected individuals representing the people. The representatives form an independent ruling body (for an election period) charged with the responsibility of acting in the people's interest, but not as their proxy representatives (and not necessarily always according to their wishes), but with enough authority to exercise swift and resolute action in the face of changing circumstances.

Today, in liberal representative democracies, representatives are usually elected in multi-party elections that attempt to be 'free and fair'. The power of representatives in a liberal democracy is usually curtailed by a constitution (as in a constitutional democracy or a constitutional monarchy) or other measures to balance representative power.

The capacity of the citizens to elect public officials and to mandate them the right to represent their views goes hand in hand with other basic democratic principles, to safeguard sound and effective government, such as accountability and transparency. Nonetheless, voting is not the only form of citizen participation: public debates, public meetings, campaigns, citizens' polls, citizens' advisory committees, petitions, written notices, hotlines and 'video boxes', mailings, online forums, and score cards, are just a few examples of possible instruments either citizens or officials can use in order to enhance the public participation dimension of policy making and its related processes. Citizens' participation brings the government closer to the people. It enables citizens to set policy goals and priorities, oversee the actions of the politicians and administrators and hold them accountable for their actions, express points of view, share information and point to their needs and problems, get involved in the decision-making processes, identify additional resources, monitor and evaluate the outcomes of implementing policy, and many other actions.

So we can see that a participatory approach towards public policy can indeed foster a shift from 'government' to 'governance', whereby 'governance' implies a whole array of actors that are involved in the making and implementation of the public policy. It is therefore understood that governance refers to new emerging institutional entities that have been transformed from established forms of government, or that have evolved independently of the state, including different models of governing and coordination where public and private institutions and actors are involved. Multi-actor decision-making helps to embrace the cornerstone characteristics of governance. These are characteristics which are best summed up by a capacity for articulating a common set of priorities for society, maintaining coherence, offering 'steerage', and accountability.

Another important dimension to citizens' participation is that of how the relationships between the different institutions and actors are shaped through the distribution of authority. This dimension was a particular focus of Sherry Arnstein, the American sociologist, who, in 1969, published landmark research on the role of citizens' participation in decision making processes. Arnstein argued that citizens' participation is a "categorical term for citizens' power", as it has to go beyond mere citizen observation and inactive participation, because the Public is not a passive actor, but an agent who has the power to change and influence how public affairs are managed. Thus, it becomes clear that citizens' participation is not just part of a description of particular institutional arrangements for decision making, but an aspect of the authority that actually makes the decisions. Citizen participation is, therefore, increasingly seen in the EU Member States and would-be Members as a fundamental element of good governance.

> Obrad Ivanovic of the Serbian Democratic Forum comments that "citizens' participation means crossing the residents of local communities from 'passive political' observers into active participants in community development. Furthermore, the participation of citizens in the decision-making process means that citizens in an organised way recognize problems of local communities and have the ability to propose solutions".

According to political scientists such as Robert Dahl, democracies must provide equal and adequate opportunities for citizens to participate. These opportunities should see citizens: a) putting issues on the agenda; b) expressing their views on those issues, and c) exercising some form of authority (through voting or otherwise). All three of these rights are enshrined in the European Union's Lisbon Treaty and, for both the EU as a whole and its individual Member States, present significant challenges to be upheld and stand as useful benchmarks for those seeking EU membership. The Treaty sets out to support a more democratic and transparent Europe, with a strengthened role for the European Parliament and national parliaments, a clearer sense of who does what at European and national level, and more opportunities for citizens to have their voices heard. One of the new key instruments to promote citizens' participation in the EU decision-making processes is the 'Citizens' Initiative'. You can find out how to learn more about this Initiative in the 'box' below:

The European Citizens Initiative

The ECI is the first transnational instrument of participatory democracy in world history. It is considered to be one of the major innovations of the Treaty of Lisbon and enables one million EU citizens to call directly on the European Commission to propose legislation of interest to them in an area of EU competence.

More information on ECI can be found through the web pages of the EC (http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/secretariat_general/citizens_initiative) and through a portal created by a coalition of CSOs, called 'The ECI Campaign' (http://www.citizens-initiative.eu)

Of course, it is not only the EU which looks to support and promote citizens' participation as a crucial aspect of good governance. The UN Report *People Matter: Civic Engagement in Public Governance* argues that 'engagement is regarded as an important governance norm that can strengthen the decision-making arrangements of the state and produce outcomes that favour the poor and the disadvantaged'. The report goes on to outline over a dozen areas in which UN resolutions and declarations have promoted the importance of civic engagement and participatory processes for achieving both 'rights' and 'development management'. For instance, the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2006/99, articulated the importance of civic participation when it encouraged 'Member States to strengthen citizen

trust in government by fostering public citizen participation in key processes of public policy development, public service delivery and public accountability.'

It is thus clear from the debates and adopted international resolutions of the last twenty years or so that there is a need to promote and strengthen citizens' participation in the decision making processes. The need is recognised by the majority of stakeholders in the countries of the Western Balkans and Turkey and therefore, in the context of those countries, this Manual sets out to demonstrate how CSOs can play a role in meeting that need. However, before moving on to explore some of the concrete opportunities for strengthening participation and identifying possible methodologies, it is important to acknowledge that citizens' participation may have disadvantages for policy making and the public good, as well as advantages. Thus, in the paragraphs below we look briefly at these advantages and disadvantages, at how the impact of participation might be measured, and review the different types of participation which practitioners and observers have come to recognize. We will also look further at some of the concepts and terminologies used to describe aspects of citizens' participation, particularly those that help to explain how Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) provide a link between individual citizens and organised participation.
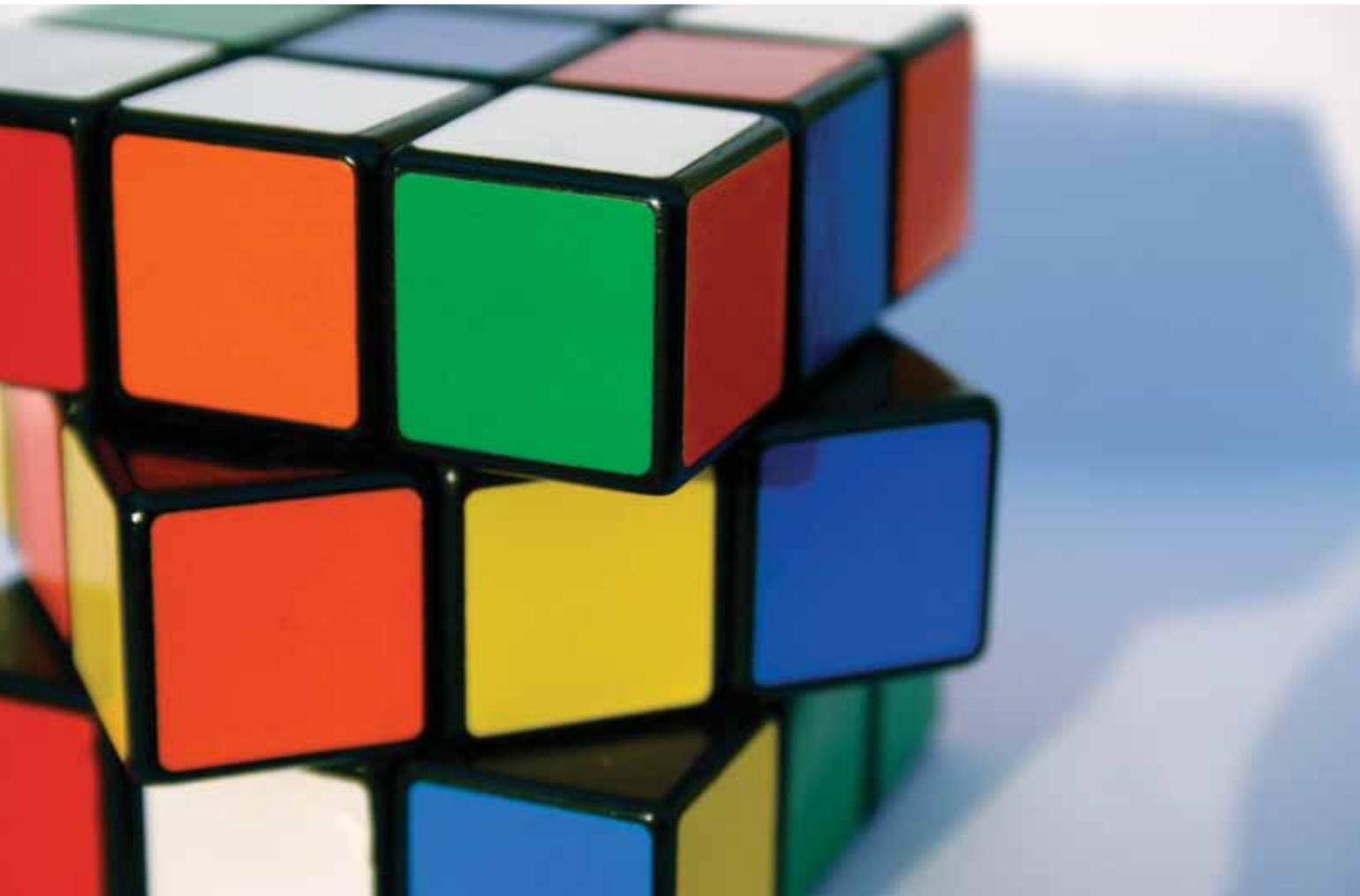
Understanding the Concepts and Terms

This Manual is not the place to debate in full the meanings of some of the fundamental concepts that underpin citizens' participation. However, the introductory paragraphs above do serve as a good starting point for CSO staff and members to discuss and identify common understandings for the concepts of 'governance', 'representative democracy', 'participatory democracy', and 'participation'. And in the References & Further Reading section of this Manual there are recommendations for sources of information to support further such debates. It is important for any CSO mandated and interested to promote citizens' participation that the members, staff, and partners all have a shared understanding of what the concepts mean. Without a common foundation it is difficult for CSOs to make a sustainable contribution to the promotion of citizens' participation.

There is also a need for a common understanding amongst the stakeholders - individual citizens, public and private institutions - of what a 'civil society organisation' is and what role it might play in the strengthening of citizens' participation. There are, of course, different views as to what 'civil society' is and made up of, but popular definitions of CSOs tend to refer to organisations which work in the arena between the household, the private sector, and the state, to negotiate matters of public concern. CSOs include a very wide range of institutions and operate at many different levels, including the global, regional, national and local. The various types of CSO that are commonly referred to include NGOs (non-governmental organisations), community groups, research institutes, think tanks, advocacy groups, trade unions, academic institutions, parts of the media, professional associations, and faith-based institutions.

To begin to understand the role that CSOs might play in the strengthening of citizens' participation, it is useful to look at some categories of functions of CSOs and the way in which the terminology for these functions helps to explain the CSOs' contribution to participation.

The UK's ODI (Overseas Development Institute) provides a useful list of categories of CSOs, describing them in relation to the function that they perform in a development context:

- representation (organisations that aggregate citizen voice)
- advocacy (organisations that lobby on particular issues)
- technical inputs (organisations that provide information and advice)
- capacity building (organisations that provide support to other CSOs, including funding)
- service delivery (organisations that implement development projects or provide services)
- social functions (organisations that foster collective recreational activities)

The ODI also provides a good starting point for understanding the terms 'policy' and 'policy processes', as these are fundamental to explaining the context in which citizens can participate in 'decision making'. The term 'policy' is used to denote 'a purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors'. This goes beyond documents or legislation, as, perhaps most pertinently for many CSOs, it includes activities on the ground and it can also include changes in the behaviour of the key policy actors, and can be on a local, national, or international basis.

The 'policy process' is usually considered to include the following main components: agenda setting, policy formulation, decision-making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. These processes are explored in some detail in Chapter 3. 'Policy influence' refers to how external actors are able to interact with the policy process and affect the policy positions, approaches and behaviours in each of these areas. In reality, policymaking does not often work through these components in a linear manner, and in fact in many countries, including those of the Western Balkans and Turkey, the processes can be particularly informal. Nevertheless, the depiction is useful since it identifies the different components that are critical to policy processes.

Another important concept for understanding the policy processes and the role therein of CSOs is that of 'evidence'. Evidence, as defined in dictionary terms, refers to an indication of the basis for knowledge or belief. But this is unhelpful for our purposes as we focus on evidence that informs policy and practice in development. Many institutions devoted to promoting good governance would suggest that policy and practice should be informed by research-based evidence. But the definition of research can be accepted as a very general one, encompassing 'any systematic effort to increase the stock of knowledge'. This may include any systematic process of critical investigation and evaluation, theory building, data collection, analysis and codification related to development policy and practice. It also includes 'action research', i.e. self-reflection by practitioners oriented towards the enhancement of direct practice and 'voice and consultations'. The key is that evidence is collected in a rigorous and systematic way, and this is something which CSOs have often been criticised for not doing. Thus, the topic of 'evidence' will be explored further in Chapter 4.

Finally, the term 'transparency' is widely used in discussions around good governance and particularly in relation to policy processes involving CSOs. Thus, we should be clear what is meant by the concept. A contributor to the online open-source 'Wikipedia' describes transparency as a general quality, and goes on to define the term in relation to many other qualities: 'It is implemented by a set of policies, practices and procedures that allow citizens to have accessibility, usability, informativeness, understandability and auditability of information and process held by centres of authority (society or organisations). Feedback mechanisms are necessary to fulfil the goal of transparency.' This last comment offers a clear entry point for CSOs in promoting citizens' participation.

Within this introductory section it is also useful to note that cooperation between CSOs and Government is of course not restricted to the policy processes, but rather is often dominated by cooperation in the delivery of services and other mechanisms for channelling public funds. 'Social' contracting, whereby public institutions outsource aspects of their service delivery to non-governmental bodies, is an important part of the relationship between CSOs and governments and has strong links to the policy cycle. However, the focus of this Manual remains with those processes related to policy decision making.

Different Levels or Types of Participation

During the last 30-40 years social scientists have written large amounts on the concept of 'participation' and have tried to explain why practitioners have been mistaken in thinking that participation comes in one simple form. The findings from their research and the conclusions that they offer can greatly contribute to the debates that CSOs may have in determining how they as organisations should approach participation.

As early as 1969, Arnstein introduced a number of important issues to the conceptual debate. In an effort to describe the way communities interacted with government in development projects, she established the idea of a Ladder of Participation which functioned as a continuum ranging from the most exploitive and disempowered to the most controlling and empowered. These ideas enabled analysts to describe various types of participation in terms of increasing degrees of decision making. Arnstein's ladder proposed eight 'levels' of participation, starting at the bottom with levels which she described as being 'non-participatory':

degrees of citizen power

- 8 citizen control
- 7 delegated power
- 6 partnership

degrees of tokenism

- 5 placation
- 4 consultation
- 3 informing

non-participation

- 2 therapy
- 1 manipulation
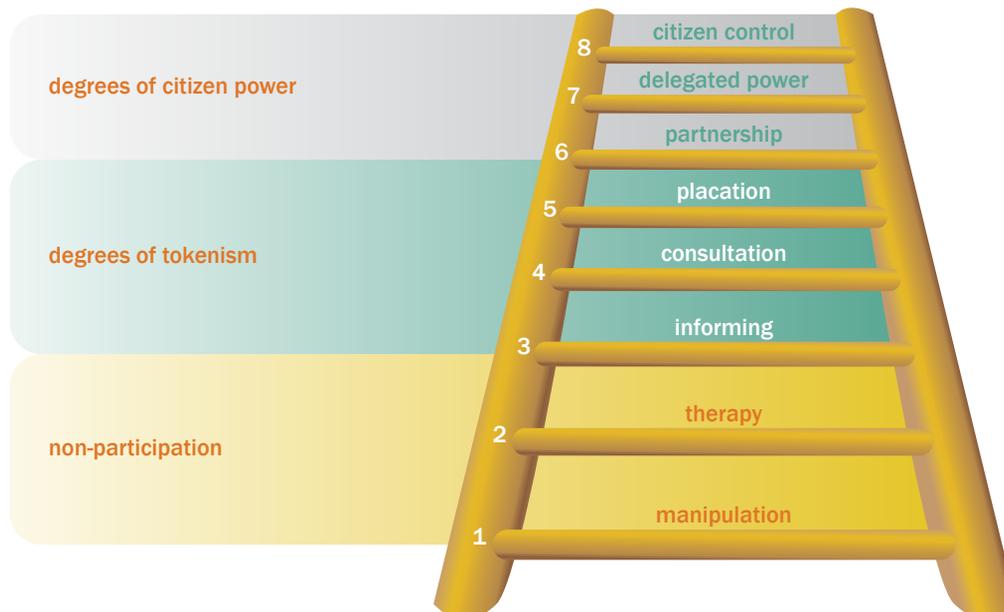
Since Arnstein, others have presented more simplistic interpretations of the various types of citizens' participation, many from a functional or institutional viewpoint. For example, according to the OECD (2001), government-citizen relations cover an array of interactions at each stage of the policy cycle, from policy design, to implementation and evaluation. For the OECD, public participation is composed of:

- information or a one-way relation in which the governmental officials produce and only deliver information for use by citizens; this type of interaction provides passive access to information upon demand by citizens and active measures by government to disseminate information to citizens;

- consultation or a two-way relation in which citizens' role consists of providing feedback to government;

- active participation or the relation based on partnership with government, in which citizens play an active role and engage in the policy-making process. This last tier admits the important role of the citizens in proposing policy alternatives and in shaping the policy dialogue. Nonetheless the responsibility for the final decision or policy formulation rests with the public administration entity.

For CSOs, the Council of Europe, through its 2008 conference for INGOs, describes the ladder of participation in a more pragmatic way, demonstrating that the involvement of CSOs in the different steps of the political decision making process varies based on four gradual levels, where the first offers the least participation of CSOs and the last offers the most:

- Information
- Consultation
- Dialogue
- Partnership

These different perspectives on how citizen participation (or non-participation) can manifest itself are important for CSOs in terms of setting short and long term objectives and the corresponding types of activities that they intend to implement in support of citizens.

Another important consideration is for CSOs to understand what might be the costs and benefits of their actions in support of citizens' participation, and this cost-benefit analysis can be undertaken within the framework below of how the impact of citizens' participation might be measured.

Measuring the Impact of Citizens' Participation

Over the last three decades, the idea that citizen engagement and participation can contribute to improved governance and development outcomes has been mainstreamed in development policy and discourse. Initially, most of the arguments in favour of citizens' participation pointed to the benefits of the outcomes of that participation, for example, better tailored and more economically efficient service delivery. But increasingly, proponents of citizens' participation emphasise that a key benefit is actually the process of participation itself, which is argued as a transformative tool for social change.

CSOs need to be aware that Citizens Participation can be seen to have two tiers of benefits - process and outcomes - and two different types of beneficiaries: the citizens themselves and the decision-makers (those appointed or elected to public office).

Caroline Moser suggested a simple distinction could be made, irrespective of context, between those development efforts which envisaged community participation as a means, and those which saw participation as an end in itself. Thus, when considering the benefits of citizens' participation we should be aware that there are two different tiers of benefits: process and outcomes.

There are also, crudely speaking, two types of beneficiaries of citizens' participation. On the one hand there are the Administrators, those who are either elected or appointed to public office, who benefit from more public-preference in decision making, and on the other, the citizens themselves, who benefit from better policy making and implementation and an appreciation of the wider community. As with the different levels of participation, there is, of course, a broader spectrum of beneficiaries than just 'citizens' and 'government', with CSOs being a clear example of beneficiaries of the capacity building that goes on within the 'process' benefits of citizens' participation, amongst other things.

By making the basic distinction between two types of benefits and two types of beneficiaries, we can use a simple matrix to help understand the overall impact of citizens' participation on decision making processes, which in turn enables analysts to make distinctions between what might be considered positive impact and that which is negative. CSOs need to be able to assess what impact they intend to have in their work to assist citizens' participation and be aware of the probable and possible costs. Such analysis can be seen applied to examples of participation at both the local and national level as described in Chapters 5 and 6 of this Manual.

This simple matrix looking at the two different types of benefit and beneficiaries is also a useful way of analysing the general advantages and disadvantages of citizens participation, as it allows for a kind of cost-benefit analysis from the two perspectives of the beneficiaries. Indeed, by looking at an example of citizens' participation in a local environmental project in the USA, Irvin and Stansbury (2004) used such a matrix to summarise their general conclusions on the advantages and disadvantages of participation in the decision-making process. The table below illustrates the summary:

Advantages of Citizens' Participation in Decision Making Processes		
	Advantages to Citizen Participants	*Advantages to Government*
Decision Process	Education (learn from and inform government representatives) Persuade and enlighten government Gain skills in active citizenship	Education (learn from and inform citizens) Persuade citizens; Build trust and allay any fears or anxieties in the community Build strategic alliances Gain legitimacy of decisions
Participation Outcomes	Break possible gridlocks - achieve outcomes Gain some control over policy process Better policy and implementation decisions	Break possible gridlocks - achieve outcomes Avoid possible litigation costs Better policy and implementation decisions
Disadvantages of Citizens Participation in Decision Making Processes		
	Disadvantages to Citizen Participants	*Disadvantages to Government*
Decision Process	Time consuming (and even de-motivational) Waste of effort if input ignored	Time consuming Costly May backfire, creating more hostility to government
Participation Outcomes	Worse policy decision is heavily influenced by opposing interest groups	Loss of decision-making control Possibility of bad decision which is politically impossible to ignore Less resources available for the actual implementation of policy

From this analysis of the advantages and disadvantages, Irvin and Stansbury proposed that it is possible to set out indicators that show whether or not the 'right' conditions exist for advantageous citizens' participation. They suggested a list of indicators for high and low cost participation, and for high and low benefit participation. Lists of such indicators can be seen in the Toolbox at the end of this Manual and can be modified to help CSOs in the region assess conditions for citizens' participation in their policy areas.

CSOs in the region may also want to construct frameworks for measuring the long term impact of any citizens' participation that they may support. Such long term impact assessment in this field is actually something of a rarity. Indeed, as John Gaventa points out: "…despite the normative beliefs that underpin this approach, the impact of participation on improved democratic and developmental outcomes have proved difficult to assess … as they tend to be limited to the study of single interventions." However, Gaventa and his colleagues have undertaken a 'meta-case study' analysis over a 10-year period with 100 research studies of four types of citizen engagement in 20 different countries. By mapping the observable effects of citizen participation through a close reading of these studies, he created a typology of four democratic and developmental outcomes, including (a) the construction of citizenship, (b) the strengthening of practices of participation, (c) the strengthening of responsive and accountable states, and (d) the development of inclusive and cohesive societies. This large scale study did then find evidence to support the conclusion that citizen participation does produce positive effects across all these outcome types, though in each category there are also examples of negative outcomes. These findings have important implications for the design of and support for participatory programmes meant to improve decision making, and CSOs' staff, members, and their partners are encouraged to learn more about such experience and apply the learning to their actions (see the section on 'References and Further Reading).

■ *What do the staff and members of your CSO identify as the common understanding of the concepts of 'governance', 'representative democracy', 'participatory democracy', and 'participation'?*

■ *Does your CSO have a mandate to engage in public policy debates and support citizens' participation? And if 'yes', what are the expected, or desired results, from engaging in the policy making processes?*

■ *What added value will your organisation bring to the decision making process?*

Understanding Decision Making Processes

What is the Decision Making Process?

The 'decision making process' basically refers to the mechanisms and the specific stakeholders within public authorities, be they at national or local level, that determine the public policies that are to be enacted and the means for doing so. These mostly involve formal and explicit procedures, carried out at specific times. However, there are also many informal processes that can influence decision making and the process itself, although it may seem in theory to be a linear one, can in practice be quite fluid and often incremental. Thus, whether working at either national or local level, CSOs need to undertake **mapping exercises** in order to have some understanding of the various steps in the decision making process of the public authority and of the actors involved. They also need to be clear about at which point or points in the process they wish to engage, and to realise that there is not necessarily a 'one choice' only option for citizens' participation. Indeed, there are often many options and opportunities.

As part of the mapping, it is useful for CSOs to differentiate between pre- and post-decision-making processes. According to some classifications, agenda setting, policy problem structuring and forecasting expected policy outcomes are the main components of the pre-decision making stage. Meanwhile, implementation, policy evaluation, learning and policy dynamics are parts of the policy cycle which develop in the post-decision making stage. The reason for making such a differentiation is that there are often different sets of actors and different types of procedures involved at these different stages. Thus, analysis of the appropriate 'stage' can be crucial in planning methodologies for citizens' participation. To assist CSOs to make this analysis it is useful to explore the cyclical nature of traditional public policy making, the timeframes in which the processes take place, and the different forms of decisions. All three are examined in brief on the next pages.

For any CSO or individual interested to explore in more detail the dynamics of influencing policy, you are recommended to have a look at an accompanying TACSO Manual 'Advocacy and Policy Influencing for Social Change'. This is available to download at www.tacso.org

The Public Policy Cycle

Regardless of whether a piece of policy is being considered at national or local level, the various processes related to the making of that policy are often categorised as being within a 'cycle': agenda setting, drafting, decision taking, implementation, monitoring, evaluating and re-formulating. We can look at each part of this cycle and how CSOs can engage with it. The Council of Europe's Conference of INGOs produced a useful summary to aid such exploration:
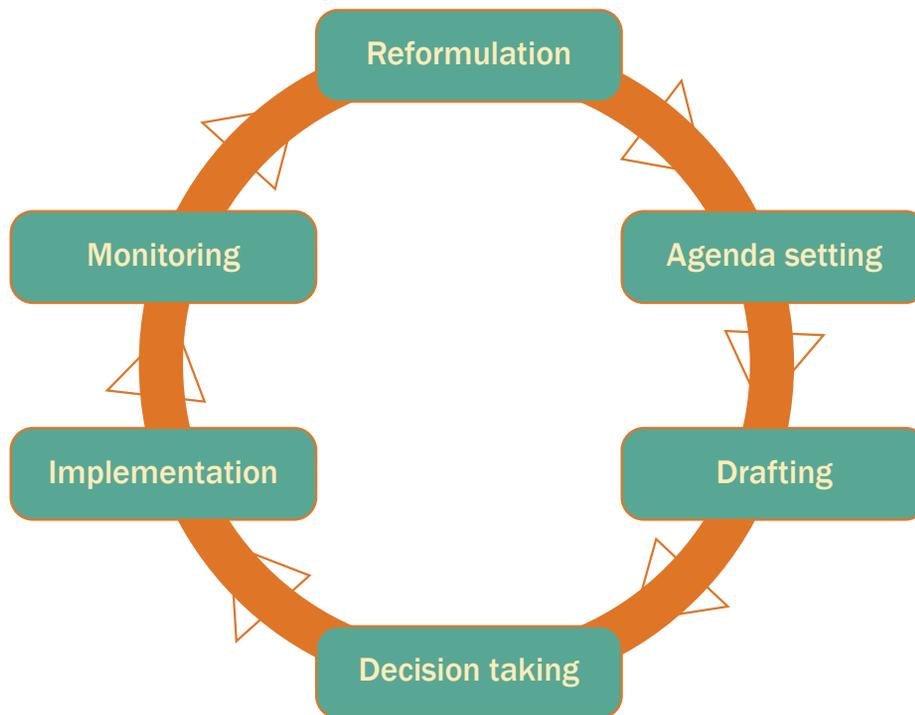
Agenda setting: The political agenda is generally agreed by parliament at the national level or by councils or local governments at the local level, but it can be shaped by CSOs through campaigns and lobbying for specific issues and concerns. CSOs aim to influence decision makers on behalf of a collective interest and act in a way that is complementary to public debate. In Chapter 6 we will explore some local examples of this, including the Serbian Democratic Forum's initiative to support informal 'Local Councils for Community Development', which are platforms whereby citizens can promote what they consider to be their priority needs to be addressed by the municipalities. And in Chapter 7 there is case study looking at how citizens' participation in Macedonia has been the catalyst for prioritizing new legislation on Free Access to Information.

Drafting: Public authorities have well-established processes for policy drafting. Here CSOs can be involved in areas such as identifying problems, proposing solutions and supporting their preferred proposal with, for example, research. This is one of the most challenging parts of the policy cycle for CSOs to engage with, however, within the region there are plenty of examples of such practices, even if many of them actually illustrate the challenges involved. In Chapter 6 we include the 'story' to date of the contribution of CSOs in Istanbul in the development of the city's Environmental Plan, which has not been an altogether happy experience, but which demonstrates the importance for participation in every aspect of the cycle from the very beginning.

Decision Taking: Models for political decision taking vary based on national context and legislation. Common characteristics are the establishment of a government policy directive by a Ministry, and legislation, such as passing a bill by parliamentary vote or public referendum. On a smaller scale, similar processes take place within the institutions of local governments. Government bills and motions, whether at national or local level, should be open to influence and participation of CSOs. The government, or local authority, should evaluate and find a balance between different views and opinions before the decision is taken. In recent months in Croatia, the Government has been drafting and passing new legislation to help meet requirements related to 'justice' and 'human security' in the EU's acquis communautaire. Such new pieces of legislation are vital for Croatia's accession to the EU, however a coalition of prominent CSOs has reviewed some of these new and draft laws and concluded that they do not adequately meet EU standards and will not adequately secure the rights of Croatian citizens. Thus, this civil society coalition is lobbying hard to ensure that both existing laws are amended and draft bills improved before Croatian and EU decision makers close this particular 'chapter' of the acquis. The experience of the activities of this coalition is covered in some detail in Chapter 7.

Implementation: This is the stage at which many CSOs are most active, e.g. in service delivery and project execution. Much of the work done by CSOs in the previous steps includes attempts to influence the implementation of policy. This phase is especially important since there are no guarantees that the intended outcome will be realised. Increasingly in the region there are opportunities for CSOs to be engaged in the implementation of policy directly through social contracts. This is a common occurrence in Member States, where, for example in the UK, according to the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), in the financial year 2004-2005, 38.5 per cent, or £10.7 billion, of all CSOs' income came from the public sector. These figures represent spending on a wide range of public services, such as care and support for disabled people, children and elderly people, employment training, and health services such as nursing care for terminally-ill people. But there are also examples in the region where CSOs secure external funding to assist in policy implementation, such as Transparency International Serbia, which assisted several municipal authorities to implement new policies on budgeting and public procurement through the provision of

training and expertise to those local officials responsible for the public expenditure. This input from the Serbian civil society is covered in more detail in Chapter 4.

Monitoring: At this point the role of CSOs is to monitor and assess the effects of the implemented policy. It is important to have in place an effective and transparent monitoring system that promotes adherence to the policy objectives and intended purpose. In Macedonia the NGO 'Pro Media' has been undertaking comprehensive monitoring of the country's recent legislation on the Freedom of Access to Information. This law was introduced in 2006, with its original drafting being urged by a coalition of CSOs, however Macedonian civil society has the opinion that not only is the law itself inadequate, but that its implementation is extremely weak and the expected outcome of meeting EU standards in free access to information is far from being achieved. The details of how NGO 'Pro Media' have approached this monitoring exercise and what they are doing with the findings is covered in Chapter 7, with more examples of local level monitoring to be found in Chapter 6.

Evaluation and Re-Formulation: At this stage the knowledge gained from assessing the policy implementation, coupled with evolving needs in society, require a reformulation of policy. The process of integration with the EU is offering many opportunities for increased citizens' participation in the Western Balkans and Turkey, as these candidate and potential candidate countries undertake a comprehensive review of their legislation and regulatory frameworks in order to establish EU standards. Above we have already seen one example of this in Croatia, whereby CSOs issued a 'Joint Opinion on the readiness of Croatia for the closing of negotiations on Chapter 23 (Judiciary and Fundamental Rights)'. But there are also examples at the local level where citizens' participation has been instrumental in reformulating how decisions are made on the delivery and management of local services. In Albania, for example, with the support of Dorcas Aid International, there are a number of municipalities which are in the process of establishing Community Water & Sanitation Committees as an alternative to the previous inefficient policy of managing these services on a centralised basis.

Another similar way of looking at how public policy is made and implemented, particularly at the local level, is provided by an American CSO called 'Minnesota Waters'. Their model is explained in the text box below.

Public Policy Decision-Making Process - A Local Level Model

'Minnesota Waters' is an environmental NGO which has a mission "to promote responsible stewardship of our water resources by engaging citizens, local and state policymakers, and other partners in the protection and restoration of Minnesota's lakes and rivers". The organisation has developed its own model for understanding the decision making process and how citizen engagement relates to it:

Stage 1 ⇨ Awareness

Citizens with an interest or stake in an issue (stakeholders) increase their awareness of the issue. Awareness emerges through informal discussions, sporadic complaints, or in extreme circumstances, litigation forcing action on an issue. In the awareness stage, the process offers the public an initial opportunity to exchange viewpoints about a concern(s). This exchange helps citizens clarify concerns by legitimizing their complaints, hearing about how others are affected by the same issue, and separating rumour from fact.

Stage 2 ⇨ Involvement

Other stakeholders are identified who are affected by the issue but are not yet involved in discussions. Citizens may also identify information specialists to provide facts about the issue and who might help identify other stakeholders.

Stage 3 ⇨ Issue Clarification

Clarifying the concern and framing it formally as a public issue is the goal in the third stage of the issue evolution cycle. Stakeholders may exchange individual perceptions of the problem through focus group interviews, panel discussions, public forums (whole group input), and/or study groups. Knowledge-based experts on the issue may be invited to conduct or coordinate scientific research and share research results with the public.

Stage 4 ⇨ Alternative Identification:

As the issue is clarified through the educational process, stakeholders identify and/or create alternatives to resolve the issue. In addition to scientific or technical information provided by subject matter specialists, stakeholders may conduct their own research to identify alternatives. Citizen research may include: reviews of journal articles, books, videos; citizen surveys, and case studies of areas with similar issues. Ideally, the alternatives generated are based on factual, objective information combined with an effective exchange of individual views, ideas, and values.

Stage 5 ⇨ Consequence Analysis

Citizens examine carefully the consequences of the alternatives created in stage 4. This involves looking at the measurable costs and benefits of alternatives in terms of, for example, time, cost, technical feasibility, and human and physical resources required. In addition to economic consequences, social consequences must be considered as well. Potential losses to public welfare are difficult to measure, but provide important information to consider when weighing consequences of public action.

Stage 6 ⇨ Choice

After careful consideration of alternatives and consequences of a particular action, stakeholders can provide informed input as how to address the issue. In making a choice, stakeholders learn or improve their understanding of how public choice is shaped into public policy. This may involve learning how to influence elected officials as well as individuals who influence decisions behind the scenes.

Ideally, stakeholders are in agreement that the choice represents the best possible way of addressing the issue. They must be open, however, to working through conflicts that might arise among disagreeing interests. Hard-line advocates of a particular choice must learn that there are advantages in negotiating and collaborating with their opponents. If they refuse to negotiate, the issue may end up unresolved. Therefore, striving for a solution that satisfies all interests is of interest to all stakeholders.

Stage 7 ⇨ Implementation

In this stage, the choice is implemented in the form of a policy or formal agreement of understanding. Stakeholders need to understand how the agreement or new policy will be implemented. They need to look for changes in public opinion that might occur during its implementation. Individual concerns may arise during implementation that includes, for example, possible third party injuries. This possibility emphasizes the importance of including a broad and diverse array of stakeholders in the awareness and involvement stages of the issue evolution cycle. It also underlines the importance of examining carefully the consequences of given alternatives.

Stage 8 ⇨ Evaluation:

This final stage of the cycle evaluates the effectiveness of the choice or implemented policy. At this stage stakeholders may ask:

- Is the policy or action taking care of the problem?
- Does the public agree that the policy is effective? Why?
- Is it perceived generally as ineffective? Why?
- What can be done to improve it?

The final stage offers an additional opportunity to evaluate the entire issue education process. Stakeholders may ask:

- What happened at each stage?
- Why did this happen?
- What else might have happened?
- Has the situation improved?
- What can we do to improve the situation?

In a sense, stage 8 offers a chance to begin the cycle anew--with more information and experience begin clarifying concerns.

Timeframes Related to Decision Making

In addition to understanding the cyclical nature of policy making, it is useful to find out the timetable of the actions and events which influence policy development and the timing of decision making, and to factor in significant dates or periods to any policy influencing plan.

For example:

It is of paramount importance to know when public budgets are being set. This will vary from country to country and from local government to local government. But CSOs can easily find out through public sources of information (government web sites) or asking public officials.

Typically, policy proposals are developed six to nine months before the budget. Advocacy in this early period should target ministers and departmental officials, if at the national level, and councillors, mayors, and Heads of Municipal departments if you're engaged at the local level.

Three to six months before the budget, the proposals are with senior members of government (Cabinet or a Cabinet sub-committee at national level, or Committees and Boards within local government). They will be considering the possible trade-offs between different sectors and within sectors. This is an important consideration in sectors such as health, education, environment, culture and the arts, where funds may be withdrawn from one area to support another.

Advocacy during this budget period should target Finance and Treasury-type personnel, as well as key members of the Cabinet or Council. Policy ideas that are not expensive (or that generate revenue) are popular, whereas for costly policies and programmes, potential budget savings will have to be determined.

In budget submissions it is important to have a proposal which has been convincingly subjected to cost analysis.

Levels of Decision Making

Decision levels can also be seen as existing on a spectrum from strategic to operational. Strategic decisions can be defined as those concerned with deciding the objectives of an organisation or the policy priorities of a government or public institution, the resources used to attain the objectives and policies, and use and disposition of those resources. Operational decisions, on the other hand, are concerned with ensuring that resources are used efficiently in the accomplishment of the organisational or policy objective. CSOs are in a position to support citizens' participation with both types of decisions.

For example, in health services, strategic decisions may include: allocating funds among programme areas, assessing programme performance with respect to strategic objectives (evaluation), and setting standards for operations. Operational control decisions ensure that specific tasks are performed in an effective and efficient manner: monitoring daily operations and activities with respect to standards, corrective actions, and scheduling.

Thus, we can see that within the 'policy cycle' the example above illustrates that at the point of 'agenda setting' and 'drafting' we are concerned with strategic decisions being made by a Health Ministry or some kind of public institution providing health services. Whereas, during the phases of 'implementation' and 'monitoring', the same Ministry or public institution may be more concerned with operational decisions.

In Serbia, CSO 'Philanthropy' is working with an informal network of like-minded CSOs to ensure that a systematic set of palliative care standards are developed and implemented at the primary healthcare level. Such an intervention is seen as an urgent and necessary measure by 'Philanthropy' given that the Government has already drafted (in consultation with CSOs) and approved a National Strategy on Palliative Care, but the public health institutions have not yet established a satisfactory operational plan for achieving the strategic goals.

CSOs supporting citizens participation need to be clear what issue is their main concern, at what point it is occurring in the policy cycle, and what level of decision it is. Thinking through these questions will assist in determining what kind of evidence needs to be collected, analysed and presented, and discussed with whom and at what time.

As has been noted elsewhere, CSOs should also bear in mind that the decision-making processes described in the 'policy cycle' often do not follow a linear pattern and can often be subject to a process of incremental decision making. This acknowledges the fact that most policy areas are interrelated with each other and therefore susceptible.

moot
points

■ *Policy analysis is "determining which of various alternative policies will most achieve a given set of goals in light of the relations between the policies and the goals". However, policy analysis can be divided into two major fields. Analysis of policy is analytical and descriptive—i.e., it attempts to explain policies and their development. Analysis for policy is prescriptive—i.e., it is involved with formulating policies and proposals (e.g., to improve social welfare). The area of interest and the purpose of analysis determine what type of analysis is conducted.*

■ *In terms of the policy issue which concerns you, do you have the relevant information at hand in order to undertake your policy analysis?*

■ *What might be missing from your policy analysis (according to Dunn's framework below) and in which areas do you have capacity weaknesses?*
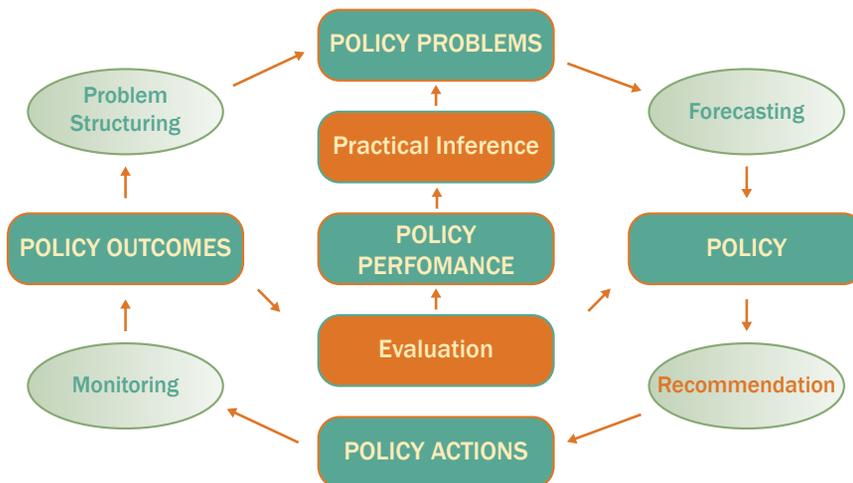
DUNN'S INTEGRATED FRAMEWORK: PROCESS OF POLICY ANALYSIS

Challenges and Opportunities for CSOs in Support of Participation

Role of CSOs in Citizens' Participation

"Citizens often care passionately about local issues, but struggle to actually get involved. Sometimes this is because they lack the support they need, sometimes because the support they receive is wrong for them or in some cases because government action actually prevents citizens from taking action. We need to explore what it is that citizens need if they are to actively participate in building their own communities. The answers to these questions are crucial if we are to make full use of the energy and enthusiasms of citizens."

'Unleashing Citizens Participation' - UK-based NGO 'Involve', www.involve.org.uk

In the previous two chapters we have been exploring the concepts related to citizens' participation and the various elements to the decision making processes. It is essential that CSOs have a firm understanding of these and where their organisation stands in relation to them, before embarking on any action. But once their position is clear, CSOs may consider: firstly, what is their role in support of citizens' participation; secondly, what opportunities exist for exercising that role; and thirdly, what challenges do they face in fulfilling that role and how to address those challenges. Thus, this chapter looks at some of the practical steps that CSOs can take in terms of promoting citizens' participation.

Firstly, given that this Manual is primarily concerned with assisting organised groups from civil society rather than individual activists, it is useful to remind ourselves that in serving communities CSOs are responding collectively to the individual responsibilities that citizens have. These responsibilities are summarised in the 'box' on the next page:

Excerpt from the Manual 'Citizen Participation in Decision Making' Romania 2002

Citizens' responsibilities are:

- *To understand what (central and local) government does, and to what purpose.*

- *To be ready to bring their contribution, when the government plans to do something that can affect their interests.*

- *To approach government representatives with a positive attitude.*

- *To show interests in understanding the issues, including constraints regarding what the government can do.*

- *To express their ideas and opinions in a clear and complete manner.*

- *Under appropriate circumstances, to cooperate constructively with government officials, to find and implement mutually satisfactory solutions.*

Strengths of CSOs in support of citizens' participation:

- A solid track record of activities and community engagement enables CSOs to be trusted by a wide range of stakeholders, including government, and therefore offer opportunities to bridge gaps between opposing groups, and

- CSOs frequently have specific expertise in facilitation and mediation, and thus offer an effective forum for dialogue and debate

- For government entities that are committed to transparency and democratic processes, close cooperation with CSOs offers great mechanisms for demonstrating this commitment

- CSOs also offer governments a mechanism for tapping into additional resources, particularly in terms of expertise and local 'know-how'

- Enhance communication between the legislative and executive branches of government, between government and the community, and between branches of local government

- Public institutions often are looking for new insights and creativity in policy analysis, which their bureaucratic environment can otherwise stifle

- CSOs can assist in reaching out to the more remote stakeholders and,

- In communities that have deep political, social or ethnic divisions, CSOs that are broadly representative of the make-up of the whole community can help to defuse tensions and de-politicise the process of governing

Common weaknesses of CSOs in support of citizens' participation:

- Not seen as having legitimacy within the community and constituency they claim to represent
- Perceived or actual hostility towards government entities which makes them seem as unlikely partners in governance
- Lack of both human and financial capacity for consistent cooperation
- Poor capacity for communication with stakeholders and a lack of organisational transparency
- Research and analysis of evidence for policy debates is often compromised or incomplete, and its presentation ineffective
- Strong motivation, but often unrealistic objectives. This is well summed up by a comment from Nihat Yildirim of the Turkish TEGV Foundation:

"One of the common weakness is what we may call a "as if we're going to save the world" approach, which causes an "inconsistency" of participation to NGO activities even for the people who do not have prejudices or doubts. Such activists have high hopes for the power of NGO work, but their unrealistic approach often leads to a loss of motivation and the NGO loses its volunteers."

In some countries, adverse political contexts continue to be the main barrier to informed policy engagement, but often, the extent of CSOs' influence on policy is in their own hands. By getting the fundamentals right – assessing context, engaging policymakers, getting rigorous evidence, working with partners, communicating well – CSOs can overcome key internal obstacles. Thus, in the following sections we look at how CSOs can indeed get these fundamentals 'right', before exploring the 'external environment', and later the opportunities presenting themselves to CSOs in the Western Balkans and Turkey.

This approach is within the framework of a traditional SWOT analysis, wherein CSOs identify their Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats in relation to citizens participation in the decision making process. Such analysis enables CSOs to be clear about the challenges which are internal to their organisation (and therefore within their direct sphere of influence) and those which are external (and therefore much less easy or even impossible to control). For more on how to undertake a SWOT analysis see the Toolbox at the end of the Manual.

Addressing 'Internal' Challenges

Stakeholder Analysis and Engagement

The legitimacy of CSOs in the eyes of the community is often strengthened through the CSOs' efforts in communicating with the community and its activities undertaken to enhance its understanding of the community - both of these present an important starting point for CSOs intending to influence policy, as researching and reaching out to all stakeholders is a crucial first step.

A stakeholder can be a person (a citizen), an institution (including various government compartments), a business or an association representing business interests, a specific group or category of individuals (eg. young people, elderly, men, women etc.), a neighbourhood or even the whole community. Stakeholders are those individuals and/or groups who will be in some way, either positively or negatively, affected by the policy.

CSOs should ask the following questions, in order to identify stakeholders:

⇨ *Who do you think will benefit from this particular piece of policy or project?*

⇨ *Who can be negatively affected?*

⇨ *Who can delay or hinder the implementation of activities?*

⇨ *Who can have qualities, money or other resources to support the policy?*

⇨ *Who is in charge of making decisions on this policy or project?*

⇨ *Who is missing from our list of stakeholders?!*

People are interested in different policy areas and proposed projects for various reasons and have different influence levels. For example, with a project to build a natural gas pipeline, one stakeholder may be an ecologist with great motivation to support the project because of its positive impact on the environment. Another stakeholder may be an individual who lives in the area and opposes the construction because it can ruin his business in selling coal and firewood.

CSOs should know who the stakeholders in any piece of policy are and what activities they are interested in, as well as their private interests. Stakeholders may oppose the policy. In such cases, CSOs might be in a good position to initiate trade-offs with stakeholders, if they want to gain their support and allow for the policy to be approved and implemented.

CSOs need to understand the causes and size of the "opposition", as well as the reasons for it. Sometimes, stakeholders are negative because they don't have enough information. They can become supporters of the project if they are integrated in the process and they are shown respect for their point of views and if they are informed and involved in solving the problem.

In a town in Western Ukraine, close to the Romanian border, a bank planned to renovate its old building in the historical downtown area. The planned reconstruction could stop public access to the old town walls.

An informal group called "Our Town" had an interest in maintaining the historical aspect of the downtown area. "Our Town" was able to mobilize a strong opposition against the banks' plans. The bank had to make a trade-off and change its plans. Finally, all parts were happy. The access to the historical area was not limited and the bank renovated the building with the support of a large part of the community regarding its design.

Thus, the bank assumed some additional costs that could have been avoided if the interests of the stakeholders had been taken into account in guarding the historical aspect of the downtown area.

Once all stakeholders have been identified, a useful exercise in analyzing the various interests and positions of the stakeholders is to complete a Stakeholder Analysis matrix as illustrated in the Toolbox below. CSOs that undertake such analysis should validate their findings and assumptions by discussing them with the concerned stakeholders. Indeed, stakeholder analysis can itself be an effective participatory process (for more on 'participatory tools' please see Chapters 4 and 5).

A few words of warning for less experienced CSOs might be necessary at this stage. When planning any kind of intervention into policy making practices, remember that you are highly likely to begin dialoguing with all kinds of stakeholders that you may not have dealt with in the past. Thus, it is a good idea to follow the advice of the Citizens Network in Slovakia. Writing in 2001, the Network advised 'it is important to consider these four rules:

> ↳ *Get comfortable with such words as conflict and agitation. There is no change without conflict. As citizens, we do not create conflict; we merely expose the conflict that already exists.*
>
> ↳ *The tool we use to expose conflict is agitation. To agitate means to move to action, or change from the resting position.*
>
> ↳ *When we look to develop effective organising strategies, we want to choose the strategy that will expose the conflict as openly, quickly and deeply as possible.*
>
> ↳ *The organising group is in control of the pressure. The organisation should release the pressure as soon as the opposing group or institution agrees to negotiate in good faith.*

Build Capacity for Research, Analysis and Presentation

It is a universal phenomenon that some CSOs are not taken seriously by public institutions and businesses, (nor in fact by other CSOs), as they are unable to support their proposals regarding public policy with credible and robust evidence. Or perhaps they have the evidence, but present it in unconvincing or unfocussed way. CSOs need to address this capacity weakness as a matter of priority and accordingly, in this manual, Chapter 4 is devoted entirely to the issue.

In addition to the skills and methodologies that can be developed by CSOs in order to strengthen their capacity for research and analysis, which will be covered in the following chapter, there are also systematic considerations which effect CSOs' capacities in this domain. Thus, it is worthwhile for CSOs to address the following points:

- Do you have a strategy for how to develop your organisations' analytical skills and to ensure that you have access to the necessary research resources, including external experts?

- What potential partnerships or alliances can you develop in order to access and benefit from the research undertaken by others, such as Universities, think tanks, multi-lateral agencies?

- In addition to operating feedback mechanisms with your organisation's target groups and members, do you have any quality control systems (such as peer reviews) in operation which will assess your research findings and conclusions?

- Do you need to differentiate between the presentation of research findings with the presentation of your organisation's viewpoint?

- What opportunities are available to you (such as seminars and conferences) to nurture long term relationships with key stakeholders in the decision making processes, so that your organisation can enhance its reputation for sound analysis?

The practice of influencing policy makers with credible and robust evidence is largely supported through three different types of activity: advocacy, which mostly involves the formal presentation and debate of a particular viewpoint; lobbying, which tends to refer to the more informal activities of influencing decision-makers; and mobilizing popular support and pressure for your proposal through campaigning. These important aspects of citizens' participation are covered in detail in TACSO's *Advocacy and Policy Influencing for Social Change*.

Developing Partnerships, Networking, & Building Coalitions

Development transformations tend to occur, as the ODI's briefing paper on Policy Engagement suggests, when four factors come together: political leadership, public engagement, effective practice and good ideas. There is a wide body of literature and wealth of practical experience that highlights the importance of networks and links across groups of actors. From the G8 to anti-globalisation protests to, more controversially, criminal gangs, networks are an exceptionally effective organisational model.

The same is true in international development. A good example is the Huairou Commission.[1] Until the mid-1990s grassroots women's groups were kept out of discussions at the global level. In less than 10 years, the Huairou Commission has gone from an informal, loose coalition into a global network of more than 11,000 grassroots women's groups. In doing so it has deepened collaboration and provided women's groups with their own platform for net-working.

Many CSOs see networking as impor-tant for their policy engagement, espe-cially with similar actors with whom 'bonding' networks have proven useful for information sharing and learning. But they work together all too rarely – caused in part by a perception of compe-tition for funding and influence.

The main problem, however, is that civil society practitioners, policymak-ers and researchers all too often appear to live in parallel universes and do not engage across boundaries. This is partly caused by the different incentives and approaches that characterise the differ-ent communities. This limited 'bridging' by CSOs to researchers and policymak-ers results in reduced effectiveness of

'Boomerang Strategies'

A growing number of CSOs are linked into national and 'transnational' advocacy networks as a means to build new links among actors in civil societies, states and international organisations. These broaden the options CSOs have to engage with partners in the national and international systems. Using their links within advocacy networks can provide CSOs with the opportunity for sophisticated policy-influencing campaigns, otherwise known as 'boomerang strategies'. A boomerang strategy should be tried where CSOs work to influence their own government (State or Local Government 'A'), but are blocked. According to the boomerang strategy, CSOs in location 'A' would then work with CSOs in location 'B'. These CSOs then try to influence the authorities in B in order that it influences those in A. They may also enlist an intergovernmental organisation to help influence State A. By engaging with external partners CSOs try to have greater influence on policy issues in their own country.

[1] *The Huairou Commission is a global membership and partnership coalition that empowers grassroots women's organisations to enhance their community development practice and to exercise collective political power at the global level. The network was established from partners dialoguing at the 1995 Beijing World Conference on Women.*

their policy engagement strategies. It also results in CSOs failing to enjoy the possible benefits that can accrue from effective networks. Networks, coalitions and partnerships often enjoy greater political weight and success than a single organisation or individual.

CSOs can develop specific partnerships in their policy work according to the specific needs. We have already noted that CSOs can greatly benefit from collaborating with research-oriented institutions, such as universities and think tanks, and with media owners, such as newspapers and web portals, to assist in the presentation of evidence, but there are of course many other areas where partnership can strengthen the citizens' voice. For example, as described in the box below, NGOs can effectively partner with other community-based institutions, such as local schools, in order to maximise their outreach and bolster their credibility.

The 'Say&Play' format simply involves combining a community fun day with appropriate consultation methods. It is designed to attract busy parents and carers who might not normally have the time to come to a more formal consultation event. 'Say&Play' is also a format suitable for consulting with children and young people.

The 'Say&Play@Schools' project ran from September 2007 – September 2008 and was a partnership between NGO Involve, the London Borough of Lambeth (a local government), and five primary schools in the area. Each school took part in the trials by running their own event. A report is available with the details of the findings of the trials and provides a toolbox for local authorities to replicate the approach themselves at

www.involve.org
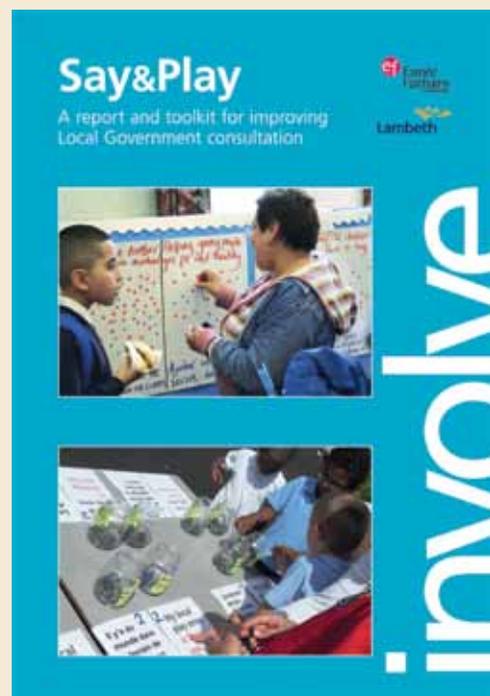
Building partnerships is about relationships that are in-depth, involve a few carefully selected targets, and have specific, practical goals. It is different from "public relations" or networking, where activities are likely to be less in-depth, involve many more targets, and be for the general purposes of information-sharing and solidarity.

The capacity to develop effective and sustainable partnerships is of course important to many areas of CSOs' work and advice on the subject is widely available. A particularly good source of information and tools for partnership development can be found at the Partnering Initiative (details in the Further Reading section of this Manual.) Some of the fundamentals to fostering partnership and developing collaborations with organisations from across the stakeholder groups (whether they are other CSOs, businesses, or public institutions) include:

■ Adhering to the key partnering principles of 'equity', 'transparency', and 'mutual benefit', as illustrated by the Partnering Initiative below:
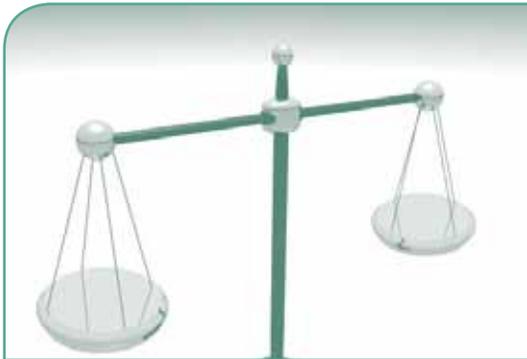
EQUITY?

What does 'equity' mean in a relationship where there are wide divergences in power, resources and influence? Equity is not the same as 'equality'. Equity implies an equal right to be at the table and a validation of those contributions that are not measurable simply in terms of cash value or public profile.

TRANSPARENCY?

Opennes and honesty in working relationships are pre-conditions of trust – seen by many as an important ingredient of sucessfull partnership. Only with transparent working will a partnership be truly accountable to its partner donors and other stakeholders.

MUTUAL BENEFIT?

If all partners are expected to contribute to the partnership they should also be entitled to benefit from the partnership. A healthy partnership will work towards achieving specific benefits for each partner over and above the common benefits to all partners. Only in this way will the partnership ensue the continuing commitment of partners and therefore be sustainable.

MUTUAL BENEFIT

If all partners are expected to contribute to the partnership they should also be entitled to benefit from the partnership. A healthy partnership will work towards achieving specific benefits for each partner over and above the common benefits to all partners. Only in this way will the partnership ensue the continuing commitment of partners and therefore be sustainable.

- Being clear about what kind of partner(s) you're looking for and by what criteria you judge whether an organisation is an appropriate partner for your particular policy initiative;

- Assessing the potential risks and rewards for any partnerships, both from the side of your CSO and from the side of the potential partners;

- Ensuring that partners make some kind of formal or informal commitment to the partnership. A formal approach would be some sort of legally-binding document, whereas an informal commitment might be recorded through a Memorandum of Understanding or Partnership Statement;

- Having a clear agreement and systems for governing the partnership and for reporting both within the partnership (i.e. between partners) and externally (for example between partner CSOs and a shared donor);

- Agreeing and regularly updating management plans, so that partners are clear in their roles and actions, and activities are adequately resourced;

- Monitoring and evaluating partnerships, so that lessons are learnt and good practice supported.

In addition to networking and the establishment of specific partnerships, coalition-building is another means by which CSOs can address their individual organisational shortcomings. It is a common occurrence that in order to accomplish a goal, resources must be extended to include all interested groups, who have larger roles and experiences in local and/or national policy-making. Thus, CSO coalitions enable better cooperation and coordination of non-governmental activities, and the sharing of resources (e.g. experts, contacts, equipment, facilities, etc). They can also provide a stronger negotiating position when solving conflicts with the local government, or the business sector. Moreover, it is easier for local authorities and/or central government to communicate with the coalition instead of trying to reach each CSO one by one.

In Chapter 7 we will review a case study of a national coalition of CSOs in Croatia to see how the members of the group have been working together, and below there is a case study from Macedonia, prepared by Marija Risteska and Kushtrim Ismali, which illustrates how coalitions of CSOs can successfully coordinate participatory actions in various locations in order to achieve a nationwide objective. There are also lots of good practices in the region

where CSOs in local communities are cooperating to address issues of common concern. One such local coalition supporting citizens participation is that of the group of animal welfare associations operating in Belgrade. Their story is also told below.

Macedonian Green Centre Coalition

Upon Macedonian independence in 1991, it was evident that none of the political parties had any real green agenda in their electoral campaigns. In 2004, the country hosted local elections, the first in a decentralized environment in which the municipal and town mayors took on greater responsibility, resources and rights in managing local affairs. The competing political parties' mandates focused on urbanism, transport, taxes and education, rather than waste management, water supply, and air pollution, all pressing urban environmental concerns.

Observing this deficit, environmental civil society organisations from across the country established the Macedonian Green Centre Coalition. Member organisations included Ekosvest, Proaktiva, Ekonet (all Skopje-based), Green centre Struga, Biosfera Bitola, Green power Veles, Planetum Strumica and Zletovica from Probishtip. Prior to the local elections they began their "Vote for the Environment" campaign. Activities were implemented in a coordinated fashion by the Coalition's members within their respective cities. Among these were:

- Manufacture and distribution of promotional material for the public (postcards with key environmental concerns, posters, stickers, banners);
- Several press conferences;
- Multiple appearances at political party gatherings and rallies with banners sending a clear message for the inclusion of the green agenda in political party programs;
- Dialogue with mayoral candidates in Skopje, Veles and Strumica on key environmental concerns.

The Campaign was successful because through these activities the political parties – mayors especially – have began to debate environmental issues and even some have begun to implement environmental projects. Meanwhile, during the 2006 Parliamentary elections the coalition repeated the same tactic, focusing on the protection of Lake Ohrid; energy; waste management; and the approximation of Macedonian legislation with EU environmental standards. During their campaign, participating organisations met with representatives of all political parties in Macedonia and advocated for public participation in environmental policy-making.

Marija Risteska, CRPM, Macedonia, with Kushtrim Islami

The 'People's Voice Project' in Ukraine in 2002 produced a handbook which described the process for building a CSO coalition as typically including seven stages. These useful steps are summarised below:

STEP 1 — Creation of the Initiative Committee

It is important to carefully select those people who will be invited to launch a coalition. Usually the group consists of about seven to nine individuals who are representatives of the community. These initial group members often then go on to become the formal 'Coalition Team'. Such a team ensures good coordination with members composed of:

Head — conducts the meeting, defines the agenda, proposes the methods of work, coordinates the work and supports the group activity. Usually the head is the main contact person in a coalition.

Coordinator — makes the connections within the coalition, between its members and organisations through telephone conversations, meetings and mailing of written materials.

Observer — pays attention to the emotional climate, participants' equal rights and makes propositions that further group development and functions.

Organiser (i.e. Secretary) — helps in the minute keeping of different meetings and negotiations.

Committees' Representatives — are the members of the steering committee and/or secretariat.

Representative of the Coalition (i.e. Speaker) — is responsible for public relations.

Strategist — has experience in defining goals, objectives and tactics, and has both good policy and negotiation skills.

STEP 2 — Defining the Goals and Aims of the Coalition

The coalition's aims may differ from case to case, depending on the type of social issue. For instance, a coalition can be created to share information, knowledge and new ideas, to work together for the community development, to locally promote the NGO sector and/or to lobby civil society interests.

STEP 3 ## Selection of Partners

The main task of this stage is to choose appropriate partners through a transparent and democratic selection process. It is important to evaluate other organisations that would or would not support the chosen issue. Knowing supporters and potential non-supporters will help the coalition develop a better strategy. The selection of partners requires answering such questions as: Who else should be asked to join? Who has the capacity to affect the issue? Who has the resources that could help resolve the problem? Whose experience can help?

STEP 4 ## The Constituent Assembly

At this meeting, coalition members vote on the name of the coalition, discuss and vote on its constitution, and elect the coalition steering committee and secretariat. Discussions concerning the activity area, coalition structure and financial support are important during this stage.

STEP 5 ## Development of an Action Plan

An action plan is often composed of a series of small steps that build the relationships and make larger steps possible, involving all coalition participants in the process. This helps to keep the coalition functioning properly.

STEP 6 ## Implementation Stage

In order to achieve success in solving the issue at hand, other citizen participation methodologies can be used throughout this phase. For instance, it can be useful to launch

public information and education campaigns, conduct public hearings and focus groups, and establish advisory committees and citizen information centres to include all stakeholders in the participation process.

STEP 7 Assessment of Results

There are many evaluation tools that can be used to conduct an assessment of the coalition's results. It can be done through surveys, focus groups or interviews with all stakeholders, including coalition members, community leaders, business and mass media. Evaluation results should be shared with citizens in order to inform them about the coalition's success and failure. Public opinion is an important instrument to change the action plan if needed.

Communication Strategies

Having the capacity to develop, manage and implement a communication strategy is an important part of organisational development for CSOs and plays a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of a CSOs contribution to supporting citizens' participation. Primarily, in respect of influencing public policy decision making, it is important for a CSO to have a communication strategy that assists in defining the 'message', 'target' and 'communication tools' to be used in any specific advocacy or lobbying campaign.

There are many handbooks and guides for CSOs on the subject of 'Communication' and readers are strongly advised to refer to these in order to build-up a comprehensive approach to communication. A good starting point are the guides produced by REC (The Regional Environment Centre in Budapest), which although primarily designed for environmental campaigning have lots of excellent generic tips and tools. Particularly recommended is Tonc, A., 2002, 'Developing Skills for NGOs: Presentation and Communication' (www.rec.org).

Also see the relevant parts of the TACSO manual on *Advocacy and Policy Influencing for Social Change*.

A communication strategy is a well-planned series of actions aimed at achieving certain objectives through the use of communication methods, techniques and approaches. The first step of designing a communication strategy is to identify the right communication objectives. A good start might be writing down an overarching one-sentence communication objective. This might apply to the organisation as a whole or to a single project, or both. After setting this general objective, you should formulate your communication objective just like you would do for a project. You need to make it SMARTer (Specific-Measurable-Attainable-Result oriented-Time limited). For example, in 2005 a Turkish CSO, "Supporting Modern Life Association" (CYDD) has initiated a programme for increasing the enrolment rate of young girls to school, with a campaign called "Daddy, send me to school". Identifying the main reasons for this problem as economic insufficiencies, cultural values and not having schools in close distances, CYDD designed various projects and sub-campaigns over the years, targeting each reason. While the overall communication objective remains as general as "to increase enrolment rates of girls to school and to improve educational level of women in Turkey", every year the CSO identifies different sub-campaigns and smaller yet SMARTer communication objectives, while keeping the overall communication objective visible to all of its target audiences.

> **The message you give with your communication strategy should include:**
>
> - Your analysis of the problem
> - The problem's cause
> - Who could or should solve it
> - Why change is important
> - Your proposed solution
> - Actions we ask others (message recipients) to take to bring this change about.

> Communication can be expensive in resources and time, so the more precisely you state your reasons for communicating, the better you'll be able to spend those precious resources.

After the communication objectives (the "messages") are identified, understanding the target group very clearly becomes essential. After all, the "message" is only valid when it reaches the right address. In order to achieve this, one should acknowledge that a communication strategy doesn't work as glue between different communication products: it is a means of elaborating how we interact with the world. Good communication reflects a two-way dialogue, where we listen (what does our audience want?) and then give our messages (what is the best way of presentation?).

Listening is the key element of effective communication. The goal of real listening is to understand what the speaker is trying to express. A good listener sends verbal and non-verbal messages to the speaker that facilitates communication. This is called active listening.

Active listening refers to a listener's active efforts to improve communication. Sometimes the messages that speakers give can be imprecise and abstract, and even speakers themselves can be unclear about their thoughts but not realise it when expressing them. When it is not clear what a certain person wants or feels, it is a good idea to use indirect questions, in other words paraphrasing or summarising. Because direct questions about sensitive and personal topics can provoke discomfort, lead to negative or defensive reactions, distrust, and even to total withdrawal of the co-speaker, and to a complete breakdown of communication.

> Communication is a two-way process. The better we listen to our audience, the better we'll be able to answer their needs.

> Effective communicators know what an audience needs to know, what "language" they understand, and what they look at and listen to.

Types of Non-Listening:

- False listening: pretending to concentrate, but in reality the message is not getting through;

- Listening on one level: receiving one part of the message (verbal) while neglecting others;

- Selective listening: filtering a message to hear only what is of particular interest or confirms what is already believed;

- Selective refusal: concentrating only on topics one does not want to hear. When this topic arises in conversation, the listener simply represses and rejects it;

- "Stealing" words: listening only to find an opportunity to start speaking

- Defensive listening: treating a message like a personal attack against the listener's behaviour or beliefs;

- Ambush" listening: listening for an opportunity to attack the speaker

Remember, every organisation requires a dynamic communication strategy. While the world of private sector almost revolves around marketing and communication, non-profit sectors tend to perceive communications as a onetime issue or as being of necessity for a campaign or project. Although communication can be time consuming and skill-intensive work, it should be seen as an indispensable aspect of CSO activities. As a CSO, your target audience is not only limited with your target beneficiaries but also your potential partners, donors etc. Consequently your communication strategy should be able to cover such different actors.

> The more your audience hears and believes your messages, the stronger they act upon it.

CSOs as 'Policy Entrepreneurs'

Given all the internal organisational issues that CSOs need to address if they are to become effective actors in support of citizens' participation in decision making processes, it is clear that CSOs will benefit from having a comprehensive framework for developing their capacities. In much the same way that CSOs have learnt from the private sector on how to develop as 'social entrepreneurs' in order to more effectively deliver services and promote social equity, many CSOs in the EU are now becoming what the ODI has termed 'policy entrepreneurs'. This means that, in addition to their capacity to collect evidence and undertake analysis, they are developing a package of capacities to ensure that they can be powerful communicators, well-networked, practical and innovative, and be known as 'fixers - able to make things happen. Such a package of policy entrepreneurship stands as a neat way to summarise the attributes that CSOs may want to aspire to have. These attributes are described by the ODI as below:

Storytellers

Successful policy entrepreneurs need to be good storytellers. This is because narratives inform policy. Narratives are simple, powerful stories that help policymakers understand a complex reality. Scheherazade was a consummate storyteller. She managed to survive the daily threat of beheading by telling the Sultan the most wonderful stories.

Networkers

We know that networks matter. Good networkers are likely to have more policy influence that those who are not. One ultimate networker was Paul Revere. The night that Revere rode out in 1775 to raise the militia against the British in America, another rider also set out: William Dawes. In all the villages that Revere went to, the militia turned out and defeated the British. In the villages that Dawes went to, no one turned out to fight. Why? The answer is that Revere was networked. He was well known, well connected and trusted.

Engineers

To be convinced policymakers need to see things working in practice. So policy entrepreneurs need to practically test their ideas if they expect policymakers to heed their recommendations. Who better to represent this way of working than Isambard Kingdom Brunel. The best story about him is apocryphal. Brunel was very much engaged in the debate about whether paddle wheels or screw propellers were more efficient and powerful for moving boats. In order to test that theory, he is supposed to have built one of each, tied them together and put them in the Bristol Channel to see which would tug the hardest.
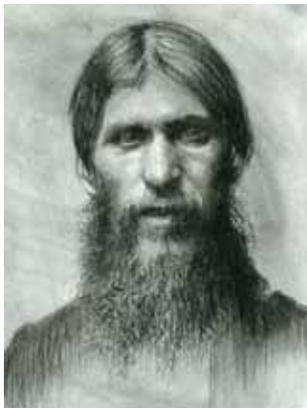
Fixers

The fourth and final model of the policy entrepreneur is the "fixer". Examples could include Rasputin and Machiavelli. This model is about understanding the policy and political process, knowing when to make your pitch and to whom. Rasputin famously became indispensable to the Russian Tsarina. He presented himself as the only one with a solution. CSOs need to understand and respond to contexts to be effective in policy engagement.

CSOs need to use all these policy entrepreneurship styles at different times. It helps to be adept at all styles. Training can help here. But it is not necessary. The key is to find partners within your team or network who can complement your skills.

Source: Maxwell (2005)

The 'External' Conditions

As we have seen in Chapter 1, it is suggested there are various necessary conditions for citizens' participation to be effective. These conditions are analysed by Irvin & Stansbury in terms of the likely benefits of the participation and the likely costs. However, such a cost-benefit analysis does not cater for the dimension of what is within the control of a CSO and what is not. Thus, as has also been noted above, the role of CSOs in the process of promoting citizens' participation can be scrutinised through a traditional SWOT-type analysis and this helps to identify issues that are 'internal' to CSOs (namely, within their power to change) and ones that are 'external' (and therefore not within the direct control of CSOs.) Undertaking this kind of analysis is important for CSOs, as they need to be aware of the potential barriers to citizens' participation and to develop strategies to mitigate those barriers.

As a starting point, we can reflect upon some of the common barriers experienced worldwide and think about how these may or may not be relevant in any particular location. The list below is made up of barriers as noted in a variety of research (some of which is highlighted in the 'References & Further Reading' part of this manual):

- Excessive bureaucracy and a clash of working cultures between government and CSOs can alienate and frustrate many citizens and CSOs wishing to participate in the decision making processes;
- A lack of community confidence tends to obstruct the mobilisation of support for the participatory process and can starve CSOs of resources;
- Weak capacity of communities to be technically competent to participate is often part of the reason for a lack of confidence, and therefore it is clear that poor civic education is often a big barrier to citizens participation;
- Ideological conflicts (eg. between faith-based groups and local governments) tend to obscure any common understandings and prevent dialogue from even beginning;
- Legal frameworks may, in the worse scenario, prevent citizens' participation or fundamentally restrict its effectiveness;
- A lack of regulatory frameworks to promote participation means that public officials tend to do the minimum rather than the maximum in terms of facilitating participation;
- Poor and untimely information flows from government and the inaccessibility of information - for example, official documents being too 'technical', or too full of jargon, or simply in the 'wrong' language - obstructs citizens' participation;
- Infrastructural and systematic weaknesses of public institutions can restrict a range of participation opportunities - for example, e-governance requires that citizens have access to the internet; parents may require that meeting venues have child care facilities in order for them to attend consultative events;

> *"In our local area, citizens participation does not attempt to address major community problems, but rather the community members prefer to engage with simple and clear issues, which limits the benefits of their participation."*
>
> *Sanja Stanic, NGO 'Viktorija' in BiH. Also see the relevant parts of the TACSO Manual on 'CSO Advocacy and Policy Influencing for Social Change'.*

■ Institutional timeframes are often too short and inconvenient for meaningful citizens' participation, as parliaments and local councils often have full and tight agendas.

"Citizens were afraid of the consequences of struggling against the local centre of power".

As cited by the NGO 'Avalon' (Serbia) as one of the main reasons why their local community failed to engage with the NGO's initiative to protect a local park.

Of course, this is not an exhaustive list of barriers to citizens' participation and so CSOs are encouraged to use the Toolbox section to undertake their own analysis of real or potential barriers to citizens' participation in their location or field of work, and to identify strategies to mitigate the obstacles.

Strategies for helping to address some of the barriers to participation or at least to mitigate the impact of the barriers can be developed by CSOs specific to their local or national conditions. Indeed, it is essential to understand the contextual nature of the barriers in order to be able to come up with feasible, practical solutions or strategies for mitigation. Thus, in the table below we offer some general guidance on dealing with these external conditions and include, where relevant, specific references where readers can follow-up with issues particular to their location in the Western Balkans and Turkey.

Approaches and Strategies for Mitigating or Minimising the Barriers

Barriers to Participation	CSOs Response	Further Information
Low Community capacity and confidence for participation	Civic education activities – providing formal training programmes; running awareness-raising events and activities; produce and distribute non-technical/jargon-free materials Support to overcome economic constraints – for example taking 'participation' to the workplace or 'door to door' campaigns; providing 'honariums'; Inclusive practices - ensure the principle of equity is applied so that no group feels marginalised; or perhaps use of 'positive discrimination' approach to assist most disadvantaged to participate; ensure moderators of meetings limit 'dominators' and encourage others to speak; provide necessary interpretation or multi-lingual materials; promote 'community champions' Small pilot/demonstration projects and sharing experiences with other communities - CSOs are well placed to address reluctance within their communities, by either demonstrating on a small scale what is possible through participation or by showing examples of success in other communities	The Civic Education Resources Inventory is an online database of materials for all levels and various situations. It has dedicated pages for CE in Europe: www.ceri.civnet.org Civicus manages an excellent web platform on Participatory Governance called PG Exchange. This site provides information on a wide range of participatory governance practices and tools – all aimed at achieving more transparent, responsive, accountable and effective governance, at both the local and national level, through active citizen participation. http://www.pgexchange.org UK-based NGO 'Involve' offers lots of insights into how to bring more people into the participation process www.involve.org
Ideological conflicts	Mitigation activities - use dialoguing techniques to bring stakeholders together	A good source of ideas for actions and tools can be found through the EU-funded SALTO network: www.salto-youth.net/find-a-tool www.salto-youth.net/diversity Learn about David Bohm and his approaches to dialogue by reading the articles and training resources available from the Dialogue Group at: www.thedialoguegrouponline.com Innovative support to dialoguing at the Corrymeela Centre (N Ireland) www.corrymeela.org

Inadequate or obstructive legal/ regulatory frameworks	Advocacy/Lobbying - Development and implementation of a Code of Practice – CSOs and Government need to work together on a long term strategy to promote citizens participation	The European branch of the International Centre for Non-Profit Law (ICNL) has a range of papers, case studies, and advice to give in terms of reviewing and advocating for changes in regulatory frameworks for civil society: www.ecnl.org The Council of Europe's Conference of INGOs has produced a guideline for Codes of Practice http://www.coe.int/T/NGO
Restricted access to information	Campaigns – see the case study in Chapter 6 on NGO 'Pro Media's work in Montenegro Facilitation – for example by establishing 'open access' information centres within the CSO or partner's office Development of a Code of Practice	The European Digital Rights platform has a membership of privacy and civil rights CSOs across Europe and has news and reports on campaigns across the region: www.edri.org The Open Society Foundations offer plenty of reading and funding opportunities: www.soros.org
Infrastructural weaknesses	Fund-raising to support infrastructure that will give more equal access for all citizens to participate Service provision – for example, projects to pilot innovative ways for citizens to participate, or providing transport for elderly to attend meetings, childcare provision so that parents can take part in public hearings; survey community members to find out where and when they prefer to have meetings	See TACSO's manual on 'Fund Raising & Accessing EU Funds' UK-based NGO 'Involve' offers lots of insights into how to bring more people into the participation process www.involve.org

Regulatory and Legal Issues Affecting Citizens Participation

The conditions for favouring or restricting citizens' participation do, of course, vary from context to context. In the paragraphs above we have explored the internal context of organised civil society and looked at the external context in terms of the social, economic, and cultural characteristics of the communities, but we have not yet considered the implications of the political context. This political context is largely determined by the regulatory and legislative environment prevailing in any one country and its local administrations, and thus it is important for CSOs to have a grasp of what, legally-speaking, is possible and permissible, and what actions might be restricted and therefore what legislative changes might be desired. In other words, we need to explore the policies that affect the way policy-making itself is done.

Within the region of the Western Balkans and Turkey there are some contrasts in the various national policies guiding cooperation between the State and Civil Society, but in general the motivation of EU integration is tending to polarise these policy areas. Within this manual it is not suitable nor practical to consider the legal and regulatory conditions current in all the countries in the region however, we can outline some general issues and highlight emerging good practices. It is also helpful to mention the main frameworks for cooperation and key approaches that dominate in the EU. For readers looking for more detailed analysis of this kind of legislation it is advised that they contact the European Centre for Non-Profit Law (www.ecnl.org), which has up-to-date information and commentary on the situation on most of the countries in the region.

From a legal point of view, there are 4 key areas which impact upon a CSO's ability to support citizens' participation:

- The legal framework pertaining to Civil Society Organisations;

- The legal framework pertaining to potential Governmental partners;

- General principles on CSO-State cooperation as expressed in policy documents and legislation;

- Specific legal frameworks for cooperation: for example, regulating consultative processes and other policy-making activities, service delivery, funding mechanisms.

In recent years the legislative environment for CSOs across the region has been greatly improved through the reform processes and the details governing the status, operations, rights for free association and assembly, and are generally well known to the CSOs themselves. However, the legal issues relating to potential partners amongst public institutions are often least known and understood. Here CSOs need to consider the regulations which govern central and local government bodies; the various regulations which relate to the public institutions either in their supervisory or contracting roles; and any special provisions which may allow, for example, for the establishment of dedicated units dealing with CSOs. In many of the older EU member States the basic laws affecting governmental partners (such as laws on State finance or on municipalities) are often silent on the issue of non-governmental partners being permitted to engage in governmental duties. However, many of these countries, like the UK, for example, follow the general principle of 'what is not prohibited, is allowed'. On the other hand, in the newer Member States, because of their recent transition from a tradition of strong State control, there tends to be more explicit legislation.

The European Centre for Non-Profit Law has made some useful comparative research which helps CSOs map out the various approaches expressed in the policy documents of different countries in the region and neighbourhood on citizens' participation. It notes that in the recent Member States there have been some good initiatives and there is much to learn from their experiences (go to www.ecnl.org to read more about these).

The issue of citizen participation has somewhat different connotations at the European Union level, given the unique nature of the EU structure. Nevertheless, citizen participation

is gaining in prominence with major EU political and legislative institutions, as part of comprehensive efforts to bring them closer to citizens. In 2003 the General Principles and Minimum Standards for Consultations of Interested Parties with the European Commission came into force. This is a comprehensive document that guides the Commission when consulting on major policy initiatives, without prejudice to more advanced practices developed by the Commission's departments – or, for that matter, any specific rules that are to be developed for certain policy areas.

As a first step, the Commission is focused on applying the Principles to those initiatives that are subject to an extensive impact assessment. However, it does encourage Directorates-General to apply it to any other consultations they seek to engage in. The major objection raised against the Principles is that it is a political rather than a legally binding document (it was adopted in the form of the Commission's communication). The Commission was determined to avoid a legally binding instrument for two reasons: (1) the need to draw a clear-cut line between consultations launched by the Commission's own initiative prior to the adoption of a proposal by the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament, as part of the compulsory decision-making legislative process which is governed by the founding treaties; and (2) the risks associated with a possibility of the Principles being challenged by the European Court, which could significantly increase transactional costs of the enactment and implementation of the EU law. In addition, the Commission noted that it does have administrative and other means to ensure that all its departments duly apply the Principles. Since 2003 the most interesting development within the EU has been the establishment of the European Citizens Initiative (as described in the opening Chapter of this Manual).

Within the Toolbox in this Manual there is a checklist of general issues that need particular consideration with regard to understanding the specific regulations that may affect citizens' participation in your country. If your CSO has not already considered these issues, please take time to discuss them and reflect upon what strategy or action, if any, should your organisation adopt for each issue.
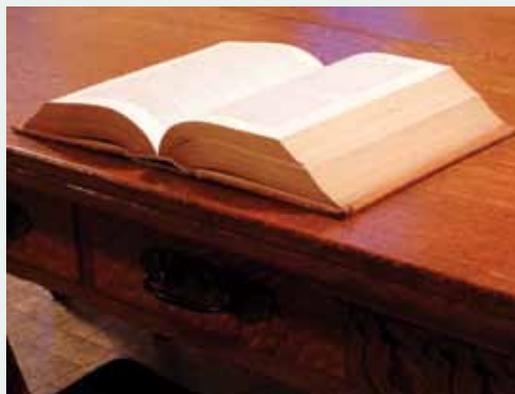
- *What added value does your organisation give to efforts related to strengthening citizens' participation? Can you articulate them concisely? Do you have a strategy for promoting these strengths?*

- *What are the 'real' barriers to improving participation in the decision-making processes for the community or communities that you serve? How can these constraints be overcome or mitigated?*

- *Do you have what it takes to be a 'policy entrepreneur'?*

Entry Points and Tools for Engagement

In the previous chapter we have seen that CSOs have both strengths and weaknesses in promoting participation in decision making processes and thus obviously many of the opportunities for engagement circle around either building on these strengths or addressing the weaknesses. However, in conjunction with the SWOT analysis framework, CSOs can further identify opportunities for citizens' participation by revisiting the different stages in the Public Policy Cycle and considering how to address the major cross-cutting barriers to participation. Thus, this chapter is organised by presenting tools under seven sub-headings relating to either 'cross-cutting opportunities' or 'entry points around the policy cycle'.

For many of the tools there are brief examples and a summary description of the tools that can be used. In the Toolbox at the end of the Manual there are more detailed descriptions of how to use the tools and a number of checklists to guide practitioners. However, within the scope of this Manual it is not possible to give detailed methodologies for every possible tool. Thus, readers are encouraged to follow-up on the methodologies discussed by referring to the highlighted 'Further Reading' section and particularly the featured web sites that have 'downloadable' resources. It should also be noted that there is more guidance on specific tools for collecting information from citizens in Chapter 5.

CROSS-CUTTING OPPORTUNITIES

Contributing to Civic Education

Before citizens can actively engage in the decision making processes they need to be informed about the issues and have both the capacity and willingness to use that information. In support of this CSOs can undertake three basic kinds of activity:

- determine citizens' awareness about specific issues;

- inform citizens about specific problems in which they can make a difference;

- persuade them to change their behaviour and actively participate in the life of their community.

Such activities will not only strengthen the capacity of the communities which the CSOs serve, but will also contribute to building up the CSOs' own credibility, both in the eyes of their constituents and of the Government.

Education is a priority for an environmental NGO in Croatia, 'Blue World Institute of Marine Research & Conservation'

"...we are constantly in communication with the public. Citizens are the users of our education programmes, but also through their participation in our activities we get ideas, inspiration and motivation for our work. We organise various forms of education from brochures and web pages to public debates and lectures on environment issues. We encourage people to get involved in decision-making processes at all levels, from local to national.

We opened an 'education centre' for schools, students and general visitors. This provided us with an opportunity to send our message to a wider public through exhibitions, lectures etc, but also to attract press, sponsors and donors to insure finances for our projects."

The first step in delivering effective civic or public education programmes is to be sure of the objective of the education, clearly identify the target group, and be sure that the objective fits with the needs of the target groups. The tools required to do this are related to the collection of evidence or information and are covered in Chapter 5.

For smaller target groups, or in order to create a pool of 'multipliers' in the community, CSOs may often be involved in the design and delivery of formal training activities. Indeed it is recommended to establish a group of citizens (who may be members of the CSO, volunteers, the staff of partner organisations, or other interested individuals) who can act as agents for the education process. Such people need to be trained not only in the topic of concern, but also in the basic technical areas relating to participatory research, developing and implementing communication strategies, and in presentation and facilitation skills.

The large part of civic education is about implementing communication strategies and these often involve various kinds of awareness-raising campaigns: leaflets, posters, radio broadcasts, online forums, electronic flyers, public lectures, social events, door-to-door campaigns, competitions, public appearances of 'champions' and 'role models' and many others.

Door-to-Door Awareness-Raising in Kosovo

Kosovo's second parliamentary election since the 1999 conflict ended was expected to have a depressed voter turnout. Slow economic development, high unemployment, lack of government accountability, limited public participation in decision-making, and disappointment with the closed-ballot election system were all cited as reasons the voters might stay home on election day.

A coalition of 74 local organisations throughout Kosovo worked together on a 'get-out-the-vote' campaign. Albanian and Serbian Kosovar organisations worked in their localities, motivating voters to use their right to vote and distributing materials printed in Serbian and Albanian. Using the slogan, "Don't Complain, Vote!" volunteers went door to door, canvassing potential voters — an approach never before used in Kosovo.

In addition, municipal media outlets, print media organisations and two broadcast TV stations broadcast throughout Kosovo gave crucial support to the volunteers' grassroots efforts, airing get-out-the-vote announcements, hosting debates and presenting in-depth coverage of activities.

Lessons Learnt

The most significant factor in the election's success was the get-out-the-vote campaign, which mobilized 2,153 volunteers and demonstrated that large-scale volunteer campaigns can be effective in Kosovo. The door-to-door contact with voters also provided local organisations with a better understanding of the electorate, more solid alliances with other organisations and a greater ability to successfully run major campaigns in the future.
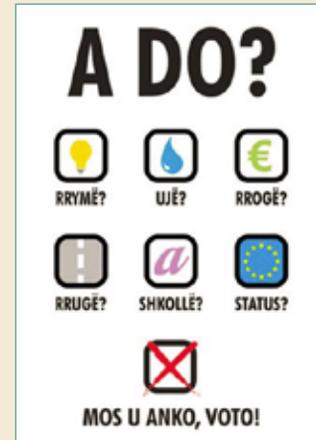
CSOs need to build up partnerships and collaborative arrangements with a range of other institutions in order to maximise the impact of civic education initiatives. A key ally in the process should be the media, as they can assist in establishing regular newspaper columns on local policy issues, slots on radio and TV, as well as news coverage of particular events, such as exhibitions. Another important ally at the local level is the municipal authorities. Local governments often have Citizens Information Centres or similar which can be mobilised to contribute to civic education activities. And if the district doesn't have such a Centre CSOs should lobby the local authorities to establish one. Finally, as seen earlier in the 'Say&Play' case study from the UK, formal education institutions such as schools and colleges, and public libraries, and other community centres are useful partners for CSOs' civic education activities.

Improving Access to Public Information

As we have seen above, a key role for CSOs is in assisting in the provision of information to citizens and helping to build a capacity to use that information. However, neither CSOs or individual citizens can benefit from 'public information' if the relevant public institutions responsible for the supply of that information do not make it accessible. Thus, CSOs must play a continuous role of 'oversight' and advocacy to ensure that access to official information is open and inclusive, and that the content of the information is at a sufficient or acceptable level to meet regulatory requirements and the needs of citizens' participation. The flows of public information should be consistent with the policy cycle, so that at every stage citizens are well informed in a timely fashion.

In Chapter 7 there is a full case study of how CSOs in Macedonia are monitoring the implementation of the free access to information laws and the progress being made in meeting international standards on the access to public information.

At the local level, as mentioned in the Civic Education section above, one of the key allies for CSOs in promoting citizens' participation is the local government itself, and measures can be taken to ensure that municipal authorities not only provide information, but also facilitate the understanding and application of that information. Citizen Information Centres are key tools in doing this, as are the local government web portals. As a minimum, CSOs should ensure that both they and the local government publish and update data as follows:

- a description of the organisation and its mission;
- the strategic plan, including long term objectives and annual goal;
- organisational chart;
- contact information for all offices: name of the contact person, e-mail, phone/fax, voicemail;
- a phone guide with the names, locations and phone numbers of the employees;
- information about the budget including budget process and opportunities for the citizens to become involved;
- procurement and contracting of information (for the companies and CSOs that want to work with the authorities);
- current job opportunities.
- current volunteer work opportunities, including any citizens' advisory groups or similar;
- recent publications;
- "FAQ" (Frequently asked questions).

CSOs should also be aware that in order to be as inclusive as possible the access to public information should consider issues such as local language requirements and being as 'jargon' free as possible. The mode of delivery of the information is also important as reliance on just one media can exclude many citizens (for example, those that do not have easy access to the internet) and the venue for events needs to be thought about carefully, as this story from London indicates:

> *The Healthcare for London (HCFL) Community Group in Camden wanted to provide an opportunity for Camden residents to learn more about local health plans. The informal engagement event was focused on the promotion of polyclinics, and stroke and trauma centres. However, unfortunately the event did not attract many citizens. The HCFL group evaluated that this was probably due to 3 simple reasons*
>
> - *inadequate publicity;*
> - *the venue was quite hidden and there were few passers-by;*
> - *it was held in a church hall, and this might have put off some people, or it could have been wrongly perceived as a religious event. A more central venue would have been more appropriate.*

ENTRY POINTS AROUND THE POLICY CYCLE

Agenda-Setting and Facilitating Deliberations

Whether at a local or national level, the process of developing or reformulating policy begins with a review of the existing situation, including evaluation of current policy, and the issues which are considered the most valid and urgent for the community. Naturally, at this stage, there will be a wide range of opinion as to what these issues are and a need to provide information and analysis about the issues. Thereafter, those closest to the policy-making process may begin to devise strategies and programmes for addressing the issues and should then be able to offer stakeholders a proposed option for dealing with the issue along with some possible alternatives.

"Where traditional tools, such as opinion polls, measure 'top of the head' public views, deliberative public engagement provides policy and decision-makers with much richer data on public attitudes and values, offers opportunities to more fully explore why people feel the way they do, and allows the time to develop ideas, options, and priorities with the public. For the public participants, the experience provides opportunities to share and develop their views with each other and directly with experts and decision-makers."

Deliberative Public Engagement: Nine Principles (www.involve.org.uk)

This process of setting the agenda may involve some simple tools for facilitating citizens' participation such as opinion polls and surveys, online forums, 'open house' meetings, roadshows, video 'soapboxes', or formal public meetings. These tools allow for what 'Involve' refer to as 'top of the head' opinions of citizens and can be very useful as a first step (but not necessarily very satisfactory if they are not complemented with tools which allow for a more considered or deliberated opinion from citizens.)

Open house events allow those promoting development initiatives or responsible for establishing policy agendas to present them to a wider public and secure reactions in an informal manner. They are less structured than a workshop and more informal than a traditional exhibition.

Open house events can be organised at any of the early stages of the design and development process by any of the parties. They can last from a few hours to several weeks.

The venue will be arranged with a number of displays on the proposals and options using a variety of interactive display techniques.

Organisers should be present to deal with queries and engage in informal debate.

Material collected will be analysed afterwards and used to further develop the initiative.

People move freely from display to display and hold discussions with the organisers.

Tools which provide for a more in-depth and considered participation include:

- *public hearings;*
- *citizens cdvisory groups, citizens panels, and other similar mechanisms;*
- *consultative meetings with specific interest groups.*

How to collect information, opinions and other data from communities is covered in more detail in Chapter 5, and in the Toolbox there are checklists and other advice on how to apply these methodologies.

The Programme for Assistance to Local Public Administrations in Romania (2002) documented the process of a Public Hearing organised by Braşov Municipality. Below is a summary of the significant aspects to that process:

- the preparation and organisation of the Public Hearing was to debate the 2001 budget;

- a coordination team was set up, to draft the budget and organise the Hearing. The team was made up of staff from the Municipality Budget Unit and the Citizens Information Centre;

- all Municipality services drafted budgets based on specific programs;

- the program budget drafts were centralized in a single document, which also included the financial policy statement for Braşov;

- with the support of the Municipality IT Center, a computer assisted presentation was created, using a projector and a big screen, and showed all the programs in the Municipality divisions;

- once the Municipality draft budget was built, the public hearing organisation started: posters for the hearing were developed, multiplied and distributed, more than 1000 phone calls were made to various organisations and individuals to take part in the hearing, and 1200 invitations were sent by mail. Questionnaires were designed to poll the hearing participants, and the Braşov Municipality newspaper was published, which included the financial policy statement and essential elements of the new draft, to be distributed to participants. The form for hearings minutes was also drafted, and a large Theatre Hall was rented for this occasion, with the sound system and video projection equipment;

- the hearing went according to plans. In front of the more than 600 participants, the Mayor made a short presentation of the financial policy statement for the current year and immediate future perspectives. Short and concise presentations of the programs designed by the 8 Municipality divisions were then made, with a focus on services to the population and their costs. Local budget revenue sources were detailed by the Local Taxes and Fees Division;

- a session of questions and answers, proposals and suggestions followed;

- at the end of the public hearing, participants were asked to fill and hand in to the organisers a questionnaire regarding the categories of expenditures supported from the local budget that need to be cut down. Participants were asked to choose 3 of the 10 budget chapters for these cuts. 267 individuals answered the questionnaire. Results show that expenditures should be cut down for: Municipality operational expenditures (508 points), district heating subsidies (456 points), public transportation subsidies (420 points), investment (350 points), culture (285 points), public lighting (262 points), city sanitation (258 points), social welfare (252 points), street maintenance and repairs (251 points), education (202 points).

In conclusion, according to the citizens' opinions, the highest cuts should take place in Municipality operational expenditures, and the lowest in education.

Participatory Planning

Encourage, facilitate and actively engage in participatory planning. This is one of the most powerful means by which CSOs can support citizen engagement as it fits in well with many of the CSOs strengths and is similarly a technical area where government is often least competent. This is all about the collection of data beyond 'official statistics' and trying to find ways in which informal data can be as influential as traditional formal data.

Participatory planning is most commonly found at the local level, but increasingly there are policy areas at the national level where the planning process is undertaken in a participatory manner. The challenge for CSOs is to find more methodologies to facilitate participatory planning.

Planning can be defined as: 'A process referring to the conscientious assessment of policies and decisions before implementing them'. It is therefore more than just 'agenda-setting', which tends to be just a list of issues, as it attempts to set priorities and clear objectives, the modes for achieving those objectives (including the allocation of resources), a timeframe, and a set of indicators by which the plan can be monitored and its outcomes evaluated. Traditionally in public administration the process has been the realm of opaque planning departments, but new tools are now being used to benefit from citizens' participation:

- citizens advisory groups and panels - a group of 10-20 members of the community which can be a representative sample of the local population, representatives of particular groups (for example older people) or specific individuals, such as community leaders;
- expert groups – individuals drawn from CSOs, universities and other organisations in the community to advise on particular technical aspects of the planning;
- visioning workshops - used at the beginning of the planning process to establish a common vision amongst the stakeholders for what kind of community they want in 5 years time (or longer);
- focus groups – a participatory research tool (see Chapter 5);
- public hearings.

'Planning Cells'

The Planning Cell method engages approximately twenty-five randomly selected people, who work as public consultants for a limited period of time (e.g. one week), in order to present solutions for a given planning or policy problem. The cell is accompanied by two moderators, who are responsible for the information schedule and the moderation of the plenary sessions. Experts, stakeholders and interest groups have the opportunity to present their positions to members. The final results of the cells work are summarised as a citizen report, which is delivered to the authorities as well as to the participants themselves.

But, beware, the method has some weaknesses:

- Since citizens are not responsible for implementing the final decision, they may make choices that are not financially or physically feasible in the long run.

- Decisions involving only a yes-no alternative are inappropriate for Planning Cells because participants tend to select the easier solution of objecting to any new development, especially if the affected community does not equally share the benefits.

There is guidance on the above methodologies in the Toolbox at the end of the Manual.

Co-Drafting and Responding to Drafts

Drafting pieces of policy or making inputs to the drafting process generally requires a lot of expertise, and is usually the least participatory part of the cycle. However, increasingly, CSOs are able to provide meaningful inputs to 'white papers' and other draft policy documents at a national level, and are certainly making significant contributions to local level policy document drafts.

The drafting process usually has two distinct phases. Firstly, the drafting of an 'options' paper (or 'green' paper as it might be called for national policy making), which will be discussed and further researched, resulting in the drafting of a final decision paper (or 'white' paper), which is the intended piece of policy. Depending on the circumstances this may or may not be subject to further discussion and revision.

From a CSO's perspective, contributions might be made to the actual drafting of either paper, but most commonly involves giving comment to the drafts at the consultative stage and, where necessary, proposing amendments. These contributions can be made through:

- expert groups or individual consultancies;
- citizens panels or advisory groups;
- online consultative mechanisms;
- written communications, such as 'shadow reports' and opinion papers.

In Chapter 7 there is a case study illustrating, amongst other things, how a coalition of CSOs can contribute to a complex drafting process.

Supporting Participatory Budgeting and Better Public Procurement

CSOs can contribute both to the drafting stage of the budgeting for public expenditure (particularly at the local level) and during implementation by ensuring appropriate public procurement procedures are being used. The tools which CSOs and government bodies might use to support these processes are likely to include:

- public hearings;
- expert groups;
- training workshops - for many members of the public there is a desire to be involved in how public funds are allocated, but they often struggle with the technical aspects, and so some basic civic education on this topic can be very effective. Likewise, finance officers in public administrations often lack experience and expertise in working in a participatory manner, so CSOs can offer them training;
- investment planning - a form of participatory planning that facilitates citizens engagement with the lengthy process of identifying and prioritising infrastructural needs of a local authority district and can also be applied to Local Economic Development. (In Chapter 6 there is a case study from Poland which illustrates a methodology for such processes);
- workshops - invariably members of CAGs or other types of working groups which have multi-stakeholder compositions will be able to contribute most effectively when given facilitation and other resources to 'workshop' budget issues.

Information Seminar Responsibilities of CSOs from the Anti Money Laundering and Financing Terrorism, March 2011, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

In 2000 the Serbian branch of Transparency International began implementation of the programme 'Building Transparency in Budgeting & Public Procurement at the Local Level'. The programme initially worked with three municipalities, but expanded to others as it proved successful, and was designed to assist reforms aimed at more transparent and accountable budgeting and procurement practices in Serbian municipalities, based on EU standards.

The programme had a number of components, including the provision of training to local public administrators on EU-recognised procedures for budgeting and procurement, the introduction of specific software to facilitate more transparent procurement procedures, conducting an opinion poll to monitor the quality of service provision, and perhaps most innovatively, the programme ran a campaign entitled 'Citizens Select the Best Municipal Civil Servant'.

Bestowing an award on the best civil servant

The campaign 'Citizens Select the Best Municipal Civil Servant' had the objectives of to:

- initiate the competition among public servants;
- improve the relationship between citizens and their municipalities;
- help transform the local governments into genuine service providers for their citizens;
- initiate improvements in municipal management; and
- promote new standards in municipal functioning.

The campaign included the hanging of posters and the setting up of information tables (with accompanying information) in municipal buildings.

Over a period of one month, citizens had a chance to evaluate the work of their local civil servants after visiting a municipal office. Questionnaires were placed next to each counter. The questions focused on their willingness, the efficiency and success of the services provided, whether the clerk served anybody out of turn, as well as a space on the questionnaire for additional remarks. Respondents were asked to grade the civil servants on a scale from one to five before depositing the questionnaire in a box on their way out of the municipal building. In this manner, the best civil servant was selected and awarded a diploma. A picture of this civil servant was framed and hung in the city hall.

Since a lack of good information and communication between civil servants and citizens was perceived as a signficant problem for municipal services, charts were placed at the entrances of the three municipal buildings in order to provide citizens with basic information. Each chart contained basic information on the services provided: name, floor, areas of responsibility and working hours. In this way, it was possible to find the appropriate counter of the office at a glance.

From Transparency International's 'Corruption Fighters Toolkit' (2002)

Monitoring and Oversight

Monitoring the implementation of policy and the delivery of services is another entry point which strongly matches CSOs strengths and technical capacities. These can be both at the national and at the community level. There are a whole range of tools and approaches to engaging in monitoring, most of which relate to the collection and analysis of data (which is covered further in Chapter 6). Many of the tools are readily available to CSOs and can be used most effectively at the local level to capture a snapshot of policy success or failure (such as 'score cards', 'citizens reports', 'opinion polls', 'public barometers'. Whereas others require considerable resources and expertise to run, and need to be linked to other initiatives to monitor policies at the national level. However, as the Macedonia case study in Chapter 7 illustrates, CSOs can often monitor the implementation of policy simply through the review of public information.

CSOs are encouraged to check out the various tools for monitoring listed below:

- public barometers;
- score cards;
- focus groups;
- interviews – these can be semi-structured interviews with individuals, or informal 'community interviews';
- direct observation - which can be recorded in short reports or captured in photographs or on film (see example on the next page from Akyaka in Turkey);
- empirical research;
- literature review and screening public information (in Chapter 7 there is a full case study from Macedonia on an effective process for the screening of public information.)
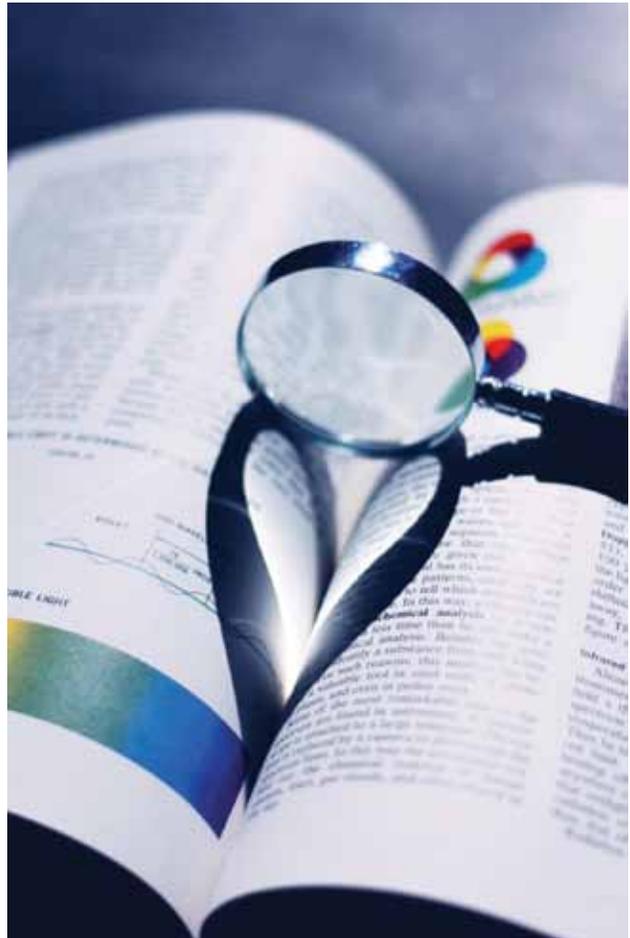
Akyaka's citizens use photography to monitor their local authority

Akyaka is a small town on the Turkish Aegean coast. In addition to its elected municipal council it has, like many other municipalities in Turkey, a citizens' body referred to as the 'city council'. This citizens' body draws membership from the CSOs active in Akyaka and works closely with the elected officials and local administrators. One of its recent innovations has been the launching of a photo campaign to encourage local residents to publish images of aspects of their municipality that they are unhappy about. The text below is an extract from the Akyaka city council's web site (http://www.akyakakentkonseyi.org.tr/index-eng)

"Let's See Our Problems"- Photograph Campaign

Yes, we took a lot of lovely pictures of Azmak Rivers, birds, gooses, forest, sea, plains and sunset. We carved them into our memories. This time we would like to direct our cameras to the problems of Akyaka and make them more 'visible'. Our aim is to remember them as nice pictures after solving the problems related to them; developing the awareness and establishing the management plans in order they do not happen again. Our consciousness about the environment and urban culture arises as our awareness of the problems increases.

Did you happen to face an unwanted situation as you are walking with your camera in Akyaka? Please do not hesitate to take a photo of it and then send it to bilgi@akyakakentkonseyi.org.tr This way you will contribute to the understanding of governance in Akyaka. We will publish the photos we receive on our web site, keeping the name of the sender secret. We will discuss these problems together with the municipality administration and develop action plans to resolve them. As the problems get resolved, we will take new pictures of the related problems and publish them as well along with the description of the actions taken. Thus, resolutions will unfold effectively.

- *What are the most pressing 'education' needs for your members and the communities you serve in terms of capacities for civic participation? What contribution can your organisation make to address those needs?*

- *What type of decisions does your organisation want to influence? Where do you see the opportunities for influencing those decision-making processes, and what tools and collaborators might you need?*

Collecting and Presenting Evidence

Evidence-Based Policy Making

"If you want to influence anything, you must win the intellectual debate. To do that you have to have bullet-proof research." -- Céline Chervariat, Oxfam International

There is nothing new about collecting evidence to inform on policy decisions. However, in many of the EU Member States in recent years there has been a trend for governments to place more emphasis on 'evidence-based' policies rather than ideological ones. This is based on the premise that policy based on systematic evidence is seen to produce better outcomes and therefore a more content electorate.

Such a trend offers CSOs both more opportunities and more challenges. The opportunities increase as governments, both at central and local level, widen their search for the 'supply' of evidence and increasingly actively seek out CSOs' support. The challenges increase as CSOs, if they want to take these opportunities, must strengthen their capacities for collecting and presenting such evidence. Of course, these capacities are also important for CSOs to better design and deliver their own services.

In short, for CSOs the better use of evidence can: (i) improve the impact of CSOs' service delivery work; (ii) increase the legitimacy and effectiveness of their policy engagement efforts, helping CSOs to gain a place and have influence at the policy table; and (iii) ensure that policy recommendations are genuinely supportive of those most disadvantaged and marginalised in society. Thus, the importance of building capacity for the collection and presentation of data and analysis related to policy issues should never be under-estimated. Hence there is a dedicated chapter in this manual to complement the participatory process discussed in the other chapters.

At the Overseas Development Institute there is a Research & Development Programme (RAPID) which over the last few years has documented critical lessons learnt for CSOs wishing to strengthen citizens' participation. In the RAPID framework, understanding of the wide range of inter-related factors that determine whether research-based evidence is taken up by policymakers is facilitated by organising them under three headings and giving them a graphic representation. This framework helps CSOs to visualise the task before them:
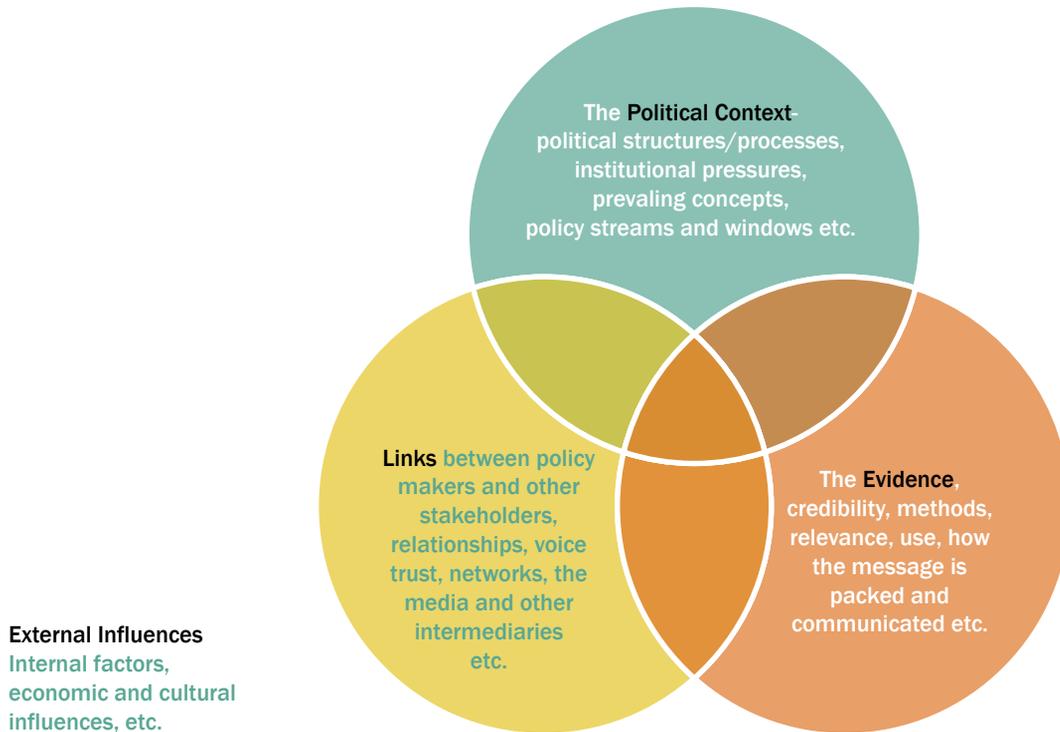
The three headings are: the political context, the evidence, and the links between policy and research communities, all of which are conditioned by a fourth dimension, external influences, such as the socio-economic context:

- **Political context**: includes the degree of political freedom in a country, levels of contestation, strength of vested interests, institutional pressures, attitudes and incentives among officials, their room to move and be innovative, power relations.

- **Evidence**: must be topically relevant and credible. Research and analysis presents viable solutions to problems, which are even more persuasive if 'pilot-tested' to prove their usefulness. Communication with policy-makers must be interactive, and the results of research should be presented in such a way that they are in appealing and easily understood.

- **Links**: Involvement of researcher/influencers in networks with policymakers such as policy communities or advocacy coalitions creates trust, legitimacy and openness. Those playing a role in aiding communication between the researchers and policy people, such as the media, are also important for building links.
- **External influences**: these range from the impact of international policies and processes such as liberalization or democratization, to donor attitudes and priorities that may influence the usefulness of research projects to beneficiaries.

From a very practical point of view, ODI has tested the framework through case studies and workshops and confirms that research 'is more likely to contribute to policy if':

- It fits within the political and institutional limits and pressures acting on policymakers, and that it resonates with their assumptions, (or at least sufficient pressure is exerted to challenge them);
- The evidence is credible and convincing, providing practical solutions to pressing policy problems, and is packaged to attract policymakers' interest;
- Researchers and policymakers share common networks, trust each other and communicate effectively.

We have seen in previous chapters that CSOs can achieve much of these conditions through their own organisational development and building stronger and broader relationships within the various stakeholder groups. One aspect of this organisational capacity is the competence to conduct research, undertake the analysis, and present the evidence and recommendations in an 'appealing' and convincing fashion. The first step in this process is being able to ask the right questions.

Asking The Right Questions

Once the policy area of interest and stakeholders have been identified, any CSO engaging in a research process to a) understand the issues better, and b) find solutions to recognised problems, must decide on their approach. From what perspective will the policy area be researched? To answer this the CSO must be clear on what the objectives are for their research and then stick to a rigorous methodology to investigate those objectives. Practitioners must be very wary of 'interest groups' wishing to have pre-set policy positions endorsed by bias research.

One of the most effective approaches to asking the right questions is to focus on opportunities within the policy area for transformations. This means exploring the dynamics for change in any policy area and identifying what feasible changes will improve the lives of those stakeholders targeted by the policy. For example, the international Collaborative Research Group on Gender and Energy (CRGGE) have been involved in a range of research to understand better how 'gender sensitive' energy policies might be made. In an introduction to one of their discussion papers the CRGGE noted: ' Our research started by asking whether

gender relations were a key variable in determining the impact of energy policies, projects and programmes; and then, inversely, how could energy interventions most effectively contribute to the process of empowering women?'

Another important consideration at the design phase of research is to understand that citizen engagement on a range of issues is often limited purely because the issues are presented in a way that have little meaning or are just downright dull! It is therefore essential that CSOs take approaches to collecting and presenting information within their communities that avoid the use of 'jargon' and too many technical terms. Thus, aim to ensure that your community and the targets of any research can themselves relate directly to the main research questions. All the stakeholders may agree that the selected policy area is indeed one which is most urgent and valid, but if research into the topic is dressed up in impenetrable language most people will be put off and shy away from engaging in the analysis. So make the very design of the research attractive and its application explicitly linked to potential benefits for the community.

Engaging with a range of informants ensures that CSOs can assist stakeholders to look at the issue from different perspectives

TUKAL is a womens' NGO based in Ankara, supporting the needs of women who are most marginalised in Turkey. The organisation attempts to not only collect information from all of its stakeholders, but also to facilitate the various stakeholders to meet to discuss the issues and thereby generate a common language on the topic.

'Our organisation specialises on issues that are very sensitive to public conscience, such as domestic violence and substance abuse, and has a main target of women and young people. However, when hosting discussion forums we invite people from every level of society, including parliamentarians, medical professionals, and academics.'

Methodologies for Collecting Information from Citizens

As with any job, there are different tools for achieving different research tasks. Crudely-speaking these can be divided into non-participatory and participatory methodologies. Some are more suited than others to data collection at different stages in the policy cycle, and predominately, the participatory tools are best suited to local government policy issues. There is plenty of literature available looking at the 'pros' and 'cons' of different data collection tools, so here we will not be going into detail, however, CSOs are strongly advised to review such literature and discuss relevant methodologies within their organisation and with external experts. For example, if you're going to engage in a piece of research on social

policy, go to your local university and make contact with researchers there to learn from their experience of conducting fieldwork. They can easily advice on the challenges of using different methodologies.

The design of the research framework will help to determine what tools are best used for the data collection. Such a framework should contain the answers to these basic questions:

- What are the Key Questions of the research - namely, what are the information objectives of the research?

- What kind of information do we want to collect, and how much - are the information needs of a quantitative nature, or qualitative, or both? How big is the target group? Will research focus on representative samples, or the whole group?

- What resources are available for collecting the data and how will the data be recorded and stored?

- What are you going to do with all the data once you've collected it? How are you going to retrieve and analyse your data? (Here the expression 'optimal ignorance' is good way to guide your planning. Only collect as much data as you actually need to satisfy your research objectives and to be credible)

- How will you verify your data? - if you only use one data collection tool and rely on a small sample of informants and only collect data at one fixed time, the chances are that your data will not be very reliable. To avoid this, ensure that you 'triangulate', which means using a variety of tools, various sample groups, various data collection times, and involve a number of different researchers.

- What resources are available for doing the analysis?

- What is the timeframe for the research - are there important deadlines or milestones that are guiding the research process?
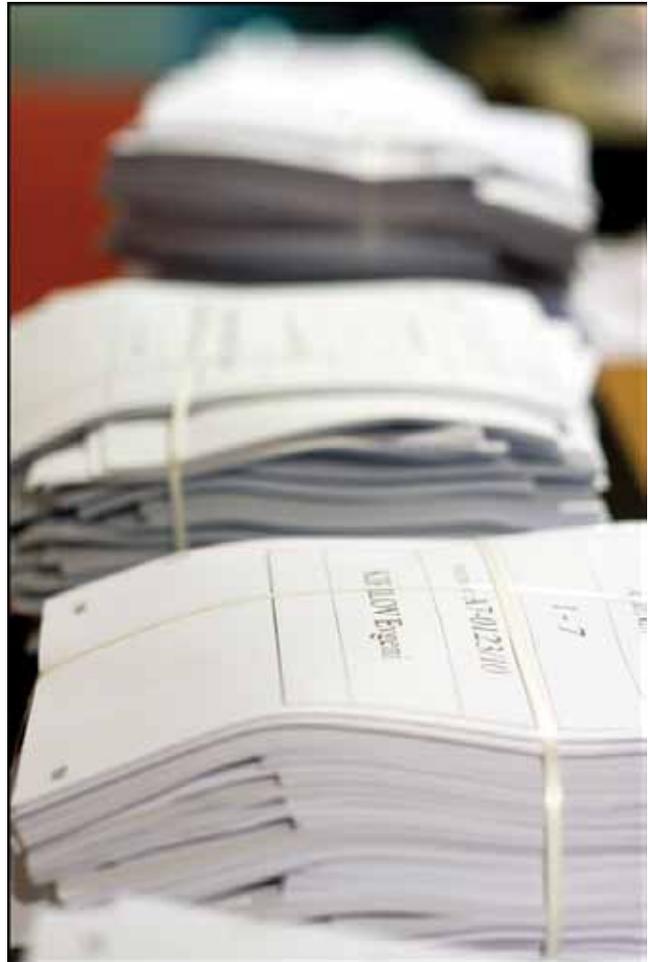
Once there is a clear picture for the framework for the research, it is possible to start selecting tools. Some examples are listed below and a few illustrated in the 'toolbox' section.

Non-Participatory

- Use of **existing or 'secondary' data** - undertake a literature review of your policy area and look for all published and, if possible, unpublished reports and articles on the topic. The internet makes this quite an easy task, but for the unpublished material you'll need to consult with partners and potential collaborators such as universities and international organisations;

- **Empirical research** tools such as laboratory experiments.

Participatory

- **Interview** sare a quick and simple way of learning the opinions of stakeholder groups, regarding a program or policy;

- **Brainstorming** is a relatively easy to implement technique, with low costs and no need for specialized skills. The essence of a brainstorming session is focusing on a certain issue and stimulating groups to generate ideas and solve that particular issue;

- **Nominal Group Technique** requires participants to generate ideas individually, at first, rather than in an interactive group process, therefore the term nominal (see more on this in the Toolbox section);

- **Focus-groups** (group interviews) are interactive meetings facilitated by small groups of citizens. Their moderator leads the group to discussions by a set of questions about a certain topic (a guide to managing Focus Group Discussions is in the Toolbox);

- **Opinion polls** (surveys) are used to discover realities (including attitudes and opinions) within various categories of population. There are three types of polls:

  a) whole group polls;

  b) random sample polls;

  c) straw polls.

Arber Gorani of the Kosovar Stability Initiative (IKS) notes that not only is sound evidence important, but that the collection of it should also be participatory:

"IKS strives to include a diversity of citizens, particularly vulnerable and marginalised groups, as active participants in the monitoring of the implementation of existing policies and identifying new public policy needs. Through in-depth empirical research, by involving all relevant citizens in all stages of the research, IKS seeks to identify issues with existing public policies and their implementation in order to propose viable changes with the aim of furthering citizens' well-being."

- **Public hearings** are characterized by attentive listening by public officials. A public hearing is usually held when the city has made a plan, has carried out a public information campaign, and is about to make a commitment. (See Chapter 4 and the Toolbox);

- **Public debate** is a public meeting that provides a formal opportunity for information exchange. As opposed to a Public Hearing, which is more a mechanism for 'listening' to citizens.

Analysis and Presentation

No matter at what point in the 'policy cycle' you might be collecting evidence for, once you have data it is important to undertake a thorough process of analysis. Generally speaking this will involve a) organising the findings in a coordinated and logical manner, and checking that there is consistency across the data collected by different means; b) making conclusions from the findings (whether they are positive or negative); c) testing the conclusions within your organisation and with close stakeholders to ensure that your analysis is robust - the conclusions may be altered after such initial and informal testing; d) formulate recommendations based on your conclusions. Thereafter it will be necessary to publish and present your analysis in one form or another. In most situations this will mean making a presentation to your key stakeholders and probably to your target groups (in order to provide feedback and validity). The use of analysis in policy influencing is another large skill area and is well covered in the TACSO manual on 'Advocacy & Policy Influencing'. Within this Manual we will focus on the generic matter of making convincing presentations.

Presentation skills are as important as the messages you deliver. Clearly, almost anyone can give a presentation. It is simply getting in front of an audience and presenting some information. However, a poorly made presentation can tarnish your organisation's image, whereas an effective presentation can increase the interest and support from your target population. If, for instance, you are at the beginning of a fund-raising campaign, a bad presentation can cause loss of credibility and may result in losing your potential donors. Thus, sharpening your skills is very important before you go on making a presentation.

First, as discussed earlier, the most important aspect of a presentation is the subject. What are the key conclusions from your analysis? What do you want to deliver as a message to your audience? The format of your message will depend on the nature of your presentation – i.e. oral presentation, press releases, posters, videos etc. No matter what presentation type you use, you should make sure that you deliver your messages in an innovative way while keeping them short and interesting. Remember, the average attention span of adults is about 20 minutes!

Before moving onto tips about making a successful presentation, it is important to talk about the preparation stages of a presentation. Your presentation skills are greatly influenced by your preparation efforts. Thus, below are some useful preparation tips:

- **Know your strengths:** You should analyse yourself and identify your strengths before you take a stand in front of an audience. Some people are able to attract their listeners with a touch of humor in their presentation. You have to evolve your own style of presentation that will let you display all your presentation skills. Being unique and informative is always applauded by the audience, as your listeners also want you to succeed.

- **Know your audience:** The audience is the key element of a successful presentation. Knowing who they are, what they would like to get out of the presentation, what their interests are, how familiar they are with the subject, and what their stated and hidden purposes are, are the essential questions to answer before a presentation is prepared. Use appropriate channels and media depending on the size of the particular audience. The presentation should appeal to the audience's interests. The knowledge of the topic and learning potential of the audience should be anticipated. The vocabulary should be adjusted to the audience so there are no unfamiliar terms or unexplained acronyms.

- **Practice makes perfect:** Practice, practice, practice! When you're practicing, pay attention to your toning; be precise in timing, catch problems about your visuals, IT equipments etc. But remember, over-preparation will have adverse effects on your presentation skills. Concerning yourself too much with preparation will create stress, which will eventually affect your presenting ability. Also, keep in mind that rehearsing doesn't mean memorizing. Memorizing your speech can make you sound mechanical and over-prepared. Look diligent, but relaxed.

Once you feel comfortable that you know what you want to present and to whom, and have understood what your strengths are as a presenter, you will need to work on the details of your presentation. In the Toolbox there is a full checklist to guide you in this process, but here are more short advisories from the IRDC's Resource for Researchers:


TACSO Regional Conference on Quality Assurance Systems for Civil Society Organisations, October 2010, Croatia

- **Know more, say less:** When you're giving an oral presentation, make sure that you have thorough information about your presentation subject. Your comfort level with presenting will be high if you know everything about your topic. After all, the audience sees you as an expert. However, don't overload the audience with your complete knowledge about the topic. Three key points is just about right to keep them interested, allowing them to ask questions if they want more.

- **Tell them what you are going to tell them:** At the beginning of your presentation, outline briefly the key points of your presentation. This will help your audience to follow you easily and help them shape their questions and comments throughout the presentation and thus make them more attentive.

- **A picture is worth a thousand words:** Try finding interesting pictures that would complement your speech. It would be a nice break in the flow and increase your audience's attention.

- **Tell them what you have told them:** Before you finalize your presentation, make a brief summary of your messages, return to the beginning of the presentation or statement, finish with a vivid, positive "picture" and/or explain to the listeners what your expectations are.

- **Encourage them for asking questions:** Remember the butterflies in your stomach before you've taken on the stage? Well, your listeners might have a similar uneasiness about asking you questions in front of a crowd. So, encourage them for asking questions and "win them over" for discussion.

In the "The RM Knowledge Translation Toolkit: A Resource for Researchers" (IDRC, 2008), Sandy Campbell summarizes the process of successful presentation with a neat formula:

Tell them; Show them; Remind them; Ask them!

- tell them what the the messages are;
- show them those messages in action and with detail;
- remind them what the the messages were;
- ask them for their questions or concerns.

- *What is the connection between 'citizens' participation' and the research activities of CSOs?*

- *Think about any recent research that your organisation has been involved in - were the findings credible, robust, and pertinent to the priorities of the community you serve? If not, what were the weaknesses and how can you address them?*

- *Common weaknesses in research conducted by CSOs are that it either involves the collection of too much data or the collection of too little. What does the phrase 'optimal ignorance' mean to your organisation and the judgements it makes about the collection of information from citizens?*

- *What strategies does your organisation have for strengthening its capacity to collect, analyse, and present evidence related to decision making processes?*

PART II

Citizens Participation in Action

Citizens, Local Governance and Participatory Development

Think Globally!

Most CSOs are working with and supporting specific communities, either defined by geography, sector, or specific interests. Thus, their capacity and eligibility for supporting citizens' participation can be best enhanced through looking at good practice and lessons learnt from local contexts or from the experience of other CSOs working in their specific area of interest. Likewise, the most opportunities for CSOs to actively support citizen engagement and participation is at the community level, as opposed to a regional, national or even international one. Therefore, within this Chapter we will look at particular contributions that CSOs can make at the local level for citizens' participation, and in Chapter 7 we will focus on examples of citizens' participation in some particular sectors. And in Chapter 6, there is a review of opportunities and examples for supporting citizens' participation at the national level.

As it has been noted in earlier Chapters, there is a need for the 'right' conditions for citizens' participation to be meaningful and effective. At the local level, CSOs are well placed to both evaluate these conditions and to influence them. In this respect CSOs play a vital role in enhancing representative democracy and complementing it with the application of tools for participatory democracy. They are, in effect, a means for ensuring global principles are followed at the local level. To do this more effectively in the Western Balkans and Turkey, there are plenty of good practices and experience from both within and outside the EU that CSOs can learn from.

Experience shows that some of the key steps for CSOs to make a more effective contribution to citizens' participation at the local level include:

- build stronger partnership with local government;
- establish alliances across sectors and between CSOs;
- strengthen the legitimacy of CSOs within the community;
- use innovative techniques for participation.

In this chapter will explore some of these 'steps' through case studies from around the region and from the EU. In each brief study we will also highlight specific good practices and relate them to how citizens' participation is manifested at the different stages of the local policy cycle.

CASE STUDY 1

Coalitions of community groups for more participatory local development

Entry Point & Context	All aspects of the local policy cycle in small municipalities in Croatia
Good Practice	Formation of informal coalitions of local community organisations under the banner of 'Local Council for Community Development' NGO providing technical support to the community coalition throughout the policy cycle Use of Operational Programmes to assist in building local capacity for strategic planning, data collection and analysis, advocacy, and monitoring
Tools Used	Community coalition
Source of Information	Obrad Ivanovic, Project Manager at the Serbian Democratic Forum

The Serbian Democratic Forum has been working formally in Croatia since 1998. In some of its earliest activities in the small municipality of Pakrac the Forum identified that there were three key obstacles to citizens' participation:

- local authorities exercised power strictly along ideological grounds, with almost no intention for engagement with citizens in the community on local decision-making;

- the poor relationship between local CSOs and the local authorities was maintained through a sense of mistrust from the side of the local authorities and a sense of 'reluctance' from the side of the CSOs 'to express opinions contrary to the opinions of the local authorities';

- a lack of coordination and cooperation amongst the local CSOs, and the low levels of their capacity for engaging seriously in local development issues.

In response to this situation, the SDF initiated the building of a coalition of community-based organisations in Pakrac, along with partners from the Council of National Minorities and the local authorities. This arrangement became known as the Local Council for Community Development (LCCD). The LCCD set out to achieve objectives related to improving inter-sectoral cooperation, strengthening local decision-making practices, and to improve the coordination and use of limited local resources. To do this, representative groups within the LCCD were supported by SDF through mentoring and training, and through their facilitation of meetings and planning workshops.

One of the keys to the success of the LCCD, which have since been established in other municipalities, has been the development and implementation of well-formulated Operational Programmes. The impact of these OPs is described by Obrad Ivanovic, Project Manager at the Serbian Democratic Forum:

'Operational Programmes have proved to be successful because they lay the foundation for the sustainability of CSOs and minority organisations at the local level. The OPs assist the CSOs to:

- identify clear 'vision' and 'mission' statements and to confirm common values;
- strengthen their management capabilities through the building of skills for strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation;
- improve their analytical and strategic thinking skills;
- build coalitions and partnerships, with skills that enable cooperation at the horizontal level;
- be more effective in how they present their analysis and proposals and so be able to more effectively influence the local decision-making processes;
- become 'learning organisations' by promoting a culture of continuous learning and renewal;
- be resourceful through more innovation, creativity, and risk-taking.

CASE STUDY 2

Capital investment planning in Zwolen, Poland

Entry Point & Context	Agenda-Setting & Planning Small municipality in eastern Poland
Good Practice	Mechanisms created for all citizens in the municipality to easily participate in a complex process of determining investment priorities - 'citizens investment cards' combined with public meetings An 'implementation committee' was established with a multi-stakeholder composition to oversee the whole process of developing the plan with citizens participation
Tools Used	Citizens Report Cards (here adapted as 'Capital Investment Cards'
Source of Information	International Centre for Policy Studies handbook on Citizens Participation for the Citizens Voice Project in Ukraine, 2002

Zwolen is one of many typical small municipalities in the so-called "Eastern Wall" of Poland. Seventeen thousand inhabitants are represented in the city council by 22 councillors. Both the local authorities and citizens are open to new ideas and new management tools. In 1998, Zwolen was sponsored by USAID to implement a multi-year capital investment plan.

Operational revenues as well as operational expenditures were predicted, the city budget was analyzed and a five year financial vision of how to cover the city's development costs was developed, with the help of Polish financial consultants.

Initially, local government officials debated if they should involve citizens in the decision making process. It was the mayor who finally decided that citizen participation should be unlimited and citizens should be actively involved in all stages of the process. In order to involve citizens in this process, Capital Investment Cards were printed, through which each citizen was able to express his/her development project priorities. Capital Investment Cards were distributed to all possible public places such as schools, shops, businesses, post offices, etc. At city hall, citizens could both pick up Capital Investment Cards and seek related CIC information from the Investment Service Department officials who have been instructed in advance on how to deal with the public in the matter.

Through the use of Capital Investment Cards, local government officials were able to see what citizens' priorities were in terms of city development. Citizens were able to express their opinions and, thus help to set development goals for the future.

Important steps in preparation of the Capital Investment Plan are outlined below:

1. the city council passed a new resolution regarding the CIP and undertook its promotion in the community. The city council resolution consisted of:
   - a detailed schedule for implementation;
   - capital Card Investment forms with instructions;
   - an outline on how to prioritize and rank projects based on the Town Development Strategy;
   - appointment of an implementation committee (including names of individuals, their
   - responsibilities, work regulations and the working agenda). The committee's responsibility is to ensure that the CIP process is being exercised according to schedule, and acts as an intermediary between government officials, experts and the public;

2. capital Investment Cards were distributed to citizens, local businesses, schools, community organisations and NGOs;

3. the implementation committee informed the public about the CIP process though the media, public meetings, brochures and articles, as well as worked with various departments to prioritize projects;

4. capital Investment Cards were collected from the public and city departments;

5. the city council and the implementation committee prioritized projects based on information from Capital Investment Cards and public meetings. This process took over one month. The committee focused on projects, which would enhance the city's economy, create workplaces and bring new revenue to the city. Projects that were already under construction or had a chance for outside investments were also prioritized;

6. the implementing committee carried out the first recommendation of the requested projects and created the first version of the CIP;

7. the first version was discussed with the city council Implementation Committee and the city board, where investment budget and city budget drafts were taken into account;

8. the city treasurer presented analysis of the city's financial potential and several proposals for increasing resources through loans;

9. tased on consultations, changes were made in the first draft of the CIP — first by the committee and then by the board. Then the second version was presented to the city board and the city council;

10. finally, the city board, the city council and the implementation committee approved the final CIP draft.
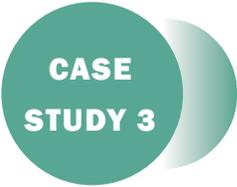
CASE STUDY 3

Re-formulating local environmental policy – a success!

Entry Point & Context	Monitoring Re-formulation
Good Practice	A consensus-seeking approach which aimed to ensure that local by-laws directly meet the expectations and needs of a majority of citizens. The process was allocated enough time and a range of tools used to maximise participation of all interested parties.
Tools Used	Working Group; awareness-raising campaign; petition; consultative meetings; public debates
Source of Information	Goran Djurovic of CRNVO (Montenegro) with Kushtrim Islami

Danilovgrad is a municipality of central Montenegro with approximately 16,500 inhabitants, located in the fertile valley of the Zeta river. Despite a 2005 Municipal Decision which inter alia recognised its "green" areas, a local CSO, "Green Home", felt these were not adequately protected (particularly in light of specific concerns over construction). For this reason, the CSO launched a civil initiative proposing changes and amendments to the decision to enhance the protection of the city's green areas. (Under Montenegrin law there is provision for the adoption or amendment of acts within the competence of local self-government, such as taxes, spatial planning and development, public transportation, social and child protection, construction of temporary objects etc. The local elected government body is obliged to react by decision within 60 days. The number of signatures required to start a civil initiative varies from municipality to municipality, but is within the range of 1-3% of voters.)

Dubbed "Participate! Decide! Win!" their campaign started with forming a working group to draft changes and amendments. Meetings were organised with various institutions having an interest in the issue, with the result being that members included the public communal services, local self-government, local high school and CSOs. A balance within the group was maintained so as to assure that no one had a majority and the final proposal was consensus-based.

Following preparation of the first draft, a series of three public debates was hosted with citizens. These sought to inform, listen and garner support (besides alert decision-makers

to the groundswell in favour of the amendments). Suggestions and comments were taken on-board by the working group and inserted into the proposal, which was undersigned by the meeting participants (Green Home deliberately opted for a more collaborative/less combative approach than a full petition campaign). Separate meetings were also held with representatives of the political parties from the municipal parliament, in order to gain their support for the subsequent adoption of the document.

It is important to note that during this campaign, the support of both local and national media was pursued. After each and every working group meeting, the media received a press release or a media appearance was set-up. Furthermore, after the meetings with political party representatives, public announcements were also published. In this manner, the lobbying process was made very public. This helped contribute to a positive result. Upon the consensus of all political parties, the requested changes and amendments to the municipal decision were subsequently brought forward by the coalition and adopted by the local Parliament. This was no small achievement considering that the practice of lobbying is still under-practiced in Montenegro.

Learning lessons from the drafting process

Entry Point & Context	Drafting of Istanbul's Environmental Plan
Good Practice	Facilitating citizens' participation may be well served by using an intermediary organisation, but, without an informal effective mechanism for mitigating and resolving conflicts, the intermediary can fail to maximise participation
Tools Used	Consultative meetings Web site
Source of Information	An 'opinion piece' written by a Turkish citizen

Istanbul has long been one of the world's most famous cities, and in recent years that fame has grown at a pace similar to that of its population and economy. Consequently the strategic planning for the city has become not only a vital process, but one which is extremely challenging and comprehensive. Currently, with its population over 13 million people, which is already larger than 100 countries in the world, Istanbul is in danger of facing a decline in its economic sustainability. In order to establish a controlled growth for this huge city, in 2005 the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipal authorities embarked on the process of elaborating a comprehensive environmental plan for the city, covering all important aspects including the traffic flow, preservation of cultural heritage, internal immigration, and industrialization.

The authorities established the Istanbul Metropolitan Planning and Cultural Design Centre (IMP) in order to prepare a "1/100.000 scaled Istanbul Environmental Plan". The IMP comprised of several academicians and experts, as well as the regular city planning staff, but did not consult formally with civil society until a draft plan had been produced. Thus, once the draft was complete, the IMP published the Plan on the Metropolitan Municipality's website and the Municipality established a temporary partnership with an NGO- called "Arkitera" in order to organise a series of consultation meetings. These consultation meetings were designed so that each part of the massive plan could be considered one by one. Through the website and other awareness-raising actions, Arkitera announced the consultative process and called for all interested parties to attend the meetings in order to shape the future of their city.

Although so far the process and intentions of the municipal authorities seemed quite participatory, some of the major actors in Istanbul civil society did not agree that the participation had been inclusive enough and did not respond well to the intermediary process. Indeed, the major NGOs in this field – namely the Professional Chambers under the Union of Turkish Engineers and Architects (TMMOB), including the Chamber of Environmental Engineers, Chamber of Architects, Chamber of Civil Engineers, Chamber of City Planners and four other organisations of professionals – were left out of the discussions. The reaction was unsurprisingly huge. TMMOB and its affiliates strongly opposed the draft Plan and undermined the efforts of the intermediary by which time the Chambers under TMMOB took the process to court. The key argument of TMMOB was that the main objective of the Plan was to "assure that Istanbul becomes more competitive in the international market" and argued that this puts investors as the main target group for the plan, and not the local citizens.

While the judicial process was underway, the heated discussions took another turn and questioned the legitimacy of the CSOs. Some remained supporting TMMOB and complained that the Plan did not resolve the most urgent problems of the City, others argued that having a bad plan is much better than having no plan at all and criticised TMMOB's approach in not taking part for improving the plan during the consultation process. However, finally TMMOB won the legal case and the Plan was cancelled.

After this initial disastrous start and with the lapse of 4 years, the second phase of Istanbul Environmental Planning started in 2009. Although the Metropolitan Municipality has followed a more cautious approach and has been more attentive in the procedures of preparing the plan, many of the opposing CSOs remain suspicious as they believe that the driving force behind the Plan is still one of commercial interests before those of the citizens. Having won the legal arguments the first time around, TMMOB has again filed a lawsuit for the stay of execution of the Environmental Plan, with the outcome still pending.

While this rapidly expanding city is still without an agreed environmental plan, all the stakeholders have some important lessons to learn:

- citizens' participation makes the most effective contribution to local development planning when engaged throughout all the stages of the policy cycle, and not only when the decision-makers deem it important;

- tensions always arise during the participatory processes of complex and 'high stakes' planning, so those managing the process and facilitating the dialogue must identify strategies for resolving conflicts without derailing the policy development;

- setting mutually agreed minimum standards, for a framework for cooperation between CSOs and government (local or central), before embarking on policy development will help support the maintenance of the principles of equity and transparency.

Citizens' Participation in the National-Level Decision Making Processes

Act Locally!

Following the examples in the previous chapter which highlight how local-level participation can be supported through the actions of CSOs, this chapter explores the experiences of CSOs engaging with national-level decision making processes. The four case studies on the next pages particularly highlight a number of important features:

- the role of robust and credible mechanisms to guide CSO-State dialogue and therein the need for CSOs to address the issue of 'representation';

- the need for appropriate resources (including 'time') to be available to support and nurture participation;

- the extensive opportunities for citizens' participation offered through the drive towards EU integration;

- how initiatives for improved citizens participation at the national level can lead the way for more opportunities and mechanisms for participation at the local level;

- the credibility of CSOs in supporting citizens' participation is greatly strengthened by rigorous research and clear presentation of evidence and recommendations.

CASE STUDY 1

Frameworks for enhancing civil society-Government dialogue and cooperation

Entry Point & Context	Participation at all points in the policy cycle, and in cooperation on service delivery, within the UK
Good Practice	A non-binding protocol allows for flexibility over time and from sector to sector. Within the UK this has proved to be a very effective means for setting minimum standards for cooperation and is widely used by CSOs and public bodies of all kinds.
Tools Used	Compact (A kind of 'Memorandum of Understanding' or 'Code of Practice')
Source of Information	ECNL

In the United Kingdom citizen participation is governed by the Code on Practice on Consultation (2004). The Code is a further elaboration of one of the five compacts, the Compact Code of Good Practice on Consultation and Policy Appraisal, that were signed following the adoption of the Compact on Government's Relations with the Voluntary and Community Sector. It proclaims six principles that the state administration bodies must observe in the process of public policy consultations. These principles apply accordingly with regard to consultations that take place before the government takes its position on the EU draft directives. As stated in the introduction of the Code, it is a document that is not legally binding and therefore may not derogate domestic laws and other binding legal instruments, as well as the EU acquis communautaire. As a result, citizens may not enforce their right to consultation. However, similarly to Hungary, the right to consultation may nevertheless be enforced if the court in particular instances finds violation of some other rights that enjoy direct legal protection, such as freedom of expression, the right to free access to information, or the prohibition of discrimination. On the other hand, the Code is considered generally binding for state administration bodies. This means that the violation of the Code may result in political or disciplinary liability of the heads and employees of the state administration bodies.

Since the first national 'compacts' were agreed between the Government and Civil Society in the UK in 2004, a series of local compacts and sector-specific compacts have been elaborated following the same principles and format. (Although some, for example the compact for Wales, have built-in some legally-binding elements.)

Good practices in citizens participation in the development of national strategies

Entry Point & Context	Agenda-setting, planning and drafting of national strategies in Serbia Policy implementation and monitoring
Good Practice	Time and resources made available at an early stage to ensure appropriate mechanisms were in place to support wide-spread, national level CSO participation. Lessons learnt from the challenge of Civil Society representation used to guide stronger methodologies and mechanisms for sustained CSO-State consultations.
Tools Used	National Advisory Committees; NGO Focal Points, Parliamentary Forums
Source of Information	Dragan Golubović and Branka Anđelković for the PRSP Implementation Focal Point, Serbia, 2008 'Partnerships in Action', 2008, UNDP (CSO Division) Zorica Raskovic, TACSO Belgrade Office, 2011

The experience of Serbia has shown that the Government most often seeks partners among the CSOs in the phase of development of national and local strategies it is responsible for. There are currently over 40 national strategies in the formulation of which CSOs took part. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) adopted in 2003 paved the way for CSOs participation in strategic processes and since then documents such as The Sustainable Development Strategy, National Action Plan for Children, Strategy on Ageing, national plans and actions for persons with disabilities and gender equality are but a few of the examples of CSOs participation.

The participatory processes related to the PRSP in Serbia provide a range of insights and lessons learnt for such national level consultations. In this brief case study we will look at a few of these, including the mechanisms used to facilitate the initial consultations, the ways in which citizens' participation developed from the planning stages to implementation, the experience of addressing the issue of 'representation', and the sustained impact the process has had in establishing a track record and institutional arrangements for cooperation between the State and CSOs.

The Government of Serbia recognized the PRSP as an opportunity to create a participatory pro-poor development strategy, making it transparent by consulting advisory committees. Despite a history of tense relations between the public and non-governmental sectors, civil society welcomed the PRSP as an opportunity to engage the Government in policy dialogue. At the same time, the significance of the PRSP for national development was a cohesive factor for civil society policy action. As such, the Government of Serbia sought and achieved technical assistance in facilitating the participatory process from UNDP, demonstrating that in such initial processes it can be useful to have an external facilitator to guide the dialogue.

The principal way in which civil society participation in the PRSP consultation process was supported was through a Civil Society Advisory Committee (CSAC), comprised of civil society organisations from all regions of Serbia. The committee provided comments on the two PRSP drafts, and served as an awareness-rising channel, sharing the information on PRSP, bringing in grass-roots organisations and excluded groups. This process was particularly successful in relation to refugees and internally displaced persons (IDP) as representatives of refugee/IDP groups had the opportunity to actively contribute to PRSP content during a series of round-tables. In two rounds, the CSAC gathered comments from approximately 250 CSOs, including NGOs, CBOs, and associations of people with disabilities, professionals, farmers, and trade unions.

There were a number of obstacles to the PRSP consultation process, including tight deadlines, the complexity of issues, and inexperience in policy dialogue of both the Government and CSOs. More specifically, Government experts often used exclusionary jargon, and had difficulties incorporating civil society contributions. In turn, civil society had difficulty articulating field experience into policy recommendations, or overcoming its mistrust of Government and its fears of merely legitimising the process.

While an institutional framework for the consultation process is key for the inclusion of civil society, a consultative committee may not readily recognize its role as interlocutor and representative. To ensure a broad representation of civil society, and the poor themselves in the PRSP consultation, institutionalized structures should be clear on the role of civil society committees as voices of civil society and the poor.

Negotiations within the CSAC were at times difficult and time-consuming, due to the uneven capacity of civil society partners to engage in policy dialogue. From the experience it is clear that selecting committee members should therefore be based on precise criteria:

- the type and function of their efforts (services and lobbing/advocacy) in one of the following sectors: education, health, social protection, environment, urban planning, farming, etc.;

- coverage of vulnerable groups including the elderly, young people, the disabled, refugees, IDPs, Roma, women, etc.;

- comprehensive regional distribution;
- referenced by NGO associations.

Subsequent to the work of the CSAC, and in no small measure as a result of the successful contributions of the CSAC, for the implementation and monitoring of the PRSP in Serbia comprehensive institutional arrangements were put into place to facilitate citizens participation. 'NGO Focal Points' for the PRS Implementation (KOCD) were established to enable participation of CSOs in shaping, implementation and monitoring the policies and measures created by the Government and other relevant actors in the process of PRS and other reforms implementation. The KOCDs consisted of 7 organisations selected through a public call for proposals, each representing one marginalized group: Roma, persons with disabilities, women, elderly, refugees and IDPs, children and young people. The KOCD programmes enabled 545 CSOs to be involved in the implementation of different activities related to poverty reduction both on national and local level. Most significantly, after the end of the PRSP strategic term, the seven KOCD contact organisations continued to function successfully as a coalition and together developed a Civil Society for Government Accountability programme.

Since the initial process of cooperation between CSOs and the State on the PRSP back in 2002/3, and the subsequent arrangements for the implementation and monitoring of the Strategy, mechanisms and methodologies for consultation have become widespread in Serbia at both the national and local level.

Thanks to their thorough insight into the situation at the local level and the problems of specific social categories, the CSOs are often involved in strategic planning and implementation of various local programmes. They are often partners in development of local sustainable development strategies and strategies of socio-economic development in cities and municipalities of Serbia, in drafting strategies for participation of citizens at the local level as well as local action plans for children and social policy. (This is further explored in a local case study in Chapter 6 of this Manual.)

At the national level the 'Forum of the Parliament' was initiated by the Poverty Reduction Committee of the Parliament of Serbia. The objective of the Forum is to enhance information dissipation to the members of Parliament about best practices and initiatives for resolution of problems identified during implementation. Thanks to the work of the initial PRSP CS Advisory Committee, CSOs are permanent participants of this Forum. Similarly, given a strong policy commitment from the Government of Serbia for EU integration, the Government and CSOs are now establishing 'KOCD-type' mechanisms to facilitate citizens' participation in the potential EU accession process, including the programming of pre-accession funds from the EU.

CASE STUDY 3

Monitoring policy implementation

Entry Point & Context	Monitoring national policy in Macedonia
Good Practice	Strong, but simple research methodology used to undertake a comprehensive monitoring exercise, with clear conclusions and recommendations. Simple and powerful.
Tools Used	Screening of web sites and literature review
Source of Information	Klime Babunski & Vesna Gogova, NGO 'Pro Media' in Skopje, Macedonia, 2007 and 2009

Issues concerning 'freedom of information' have been a focal point for coalitions of Macedonian NGOs since the early 2000s. Indeed, the initial drafting of the law on Free Access to Information was undertaken by a group of NGOs in 2003, with a further impetus given by a letter signed by 126 NGOs in 2006 urging the Government to immediately to adopt the law. The draft proposal of the Law suffered dramatic changes during this period and the adoption of the Law was postponed several times. Unfortunately the concerns of the civil society, articulated in front of the Parliamentary Commission, were not fully taken into account when drafting the final version of the Law that went into parliamentary procedure. Since, NGOs have pushed hard for amendments and meanwhile have expressed concerns that even the existing law is so poorly implemented that Macedonia is severely lagging behind EU standards.

In order to verify the poor implementation and to present robust evidence of a lack of consistent standards in free access to information, the NGO 'Pro Media' undertook a major monitoring exercise, carrying out research conducted in both 2007 and 2009. The research mostly involved a comprehensive survey of the web sites of 66 public institutions (Central Government institutions, local authorities, the judiciary, public enterprises, and political parties).

The monitoring focused on five topics which were instrumental in determining the implementation of the laws:

- information that would facilitate a request for access to information (FAI) or application;

- the annual FAI report and its content, in accordance with requirements defined in LFAPI;

- a description of the organisation, i.e., the public information holder;

- access to documents;

- spending public money.

The first part of the research on implementation of the Law related to several obligations stipulated in Articles 8, 9, and 10; this in turn was made concrete by means of the following items in the monitoring:

- does the homepage of a web site have a link directing towards another page, or a FAI section?

- is there any information on the officer in charge of offering access to public information? Where such information is placed on the web site?

- does the web site have an application form for filing FAI requests? Is it possible to submit such request electronically?

- does the web site have any instructions or a guide relating to the entire FAI procedure?

- does the web site have any instruction or explanation on how to send a FAI request?

- does the web site say that such request can be also sent electronically?

- does the web site have a list of public documents? Is there any access to the documents from the list?

Other aspects of the research involved reviewing each public institution in respect of:

- access to documentation – 'adopted' documents and draft documents;

- reporting – information about completed work (eg. Minutes of meetings) and about current or planned work (eg. Info on events, meetings etc);

- public funds – budgeting and expenditure information; info on procurement procedures.

The conclusions and recommendations of 'Pro Media' during the 2 years of the monitoring, were that there has been, overall, an improvement in public institutions' 'openness' and readiness to provide information. However, the improvements are small and show a slow pace in development. Thus, the researchers concluded that there is poor implementation of the relevant FAI law. They recommend the following:

- the Commission for free access to public information, whose members presently enjoy second half of their mandate, must change its own inactivity and must impose

itself as authority and real example for all other institutions in every aspect of the implementation the Law on free access to public information, and, generally in the promotion of the FAI principle;

- the public information holders should place on their official web sites a sign or link that shall lead to a new page where it shall be clearly stated that this is a free access to public information in accordance with the Law on free access to public information. Furthermore, it would be wise to further support such initial information with explanations and instructions on the manner how information seekers can realize their rights;

- the public information holders should enable filing FAI requests electronically as well; such possibility should be clearly underlined and supported by corresponding instructions;

- on their part, the public information holders should publish on their official web sites not only their obligatory annual FAI reports, but also received FAI requests, as well as documents the access to which was requested and granted; information holders should also there publish requests denied;

- the public information holders should regularly publish, on their official web sites, draft laws and draft bylaws, all program and plan documents, as well as all reporting documents, thus enabling participation and influence of all stakeholders. Together with this, regular publication should be made of agendas of management bodies, including also the corresponding documents of different agenda items;

- furthermore, the public information holders should also publish on regular basis their financial plans and financial annual statements, in order to be also accountable for current spending of public money;

- it is necessary to provide complete openness of public procurement tenders. Publications of such documents on the official web sites should include documents of the entire tender procedure: public calls or notices; minutes and records; final ranking lists; selection decisions; and awarded and concluded contracts.

The 'Pro Media' approach demonstrates that fairly simple 'desk-based' research, using existing literature and public web sites, can be a very effective tool for monitoring, and with good analysis allows for clear conclusions and recommendations. At the time of drafting this manual it was unclear of the impact of Pro Media's lobbying.

CASE STUDY 4

Opportunities of the EU accession process

Entry Point & Context	Re-Formulation and Drafting of policy in line with reforms for Croatia to meet EU criteria.
Good Practice	Coalition established on an informal basis, to allow it to function speedily and with minimal administration, but a clear division of roles and tasks agreed amongst the members
	Robust research informing on a comprehensive 'shadow report'
	Separation of research findings and published 'opinion' document
Tools Used	Literature review
	Interviews
Source of Information	Joint Opinion of the Croatian civil society organisations on the readiness of the Republic of Croatia
	for the closing of negotiations in Chapter 23 - Judiciary and Fundamental Rights
	Zagreb, February 16, 2011
	Telephone interview with Gordan Bosanac, Centre for Peace Studies, Zagreb, Croatia
	www.cms.hr

The process of EU integration for the countries in the Western Balkans and Turkey offers great entry points for CSOs to play a more effective role in support of citizens' participation. This is due to a number of reasons:

■ to accede to the EU potential Member States need to align their laws and regulations to those of the EU, and thus there are clear policy areas that are open to debate and reformulation. These areas are collected under the 'chapters' of the EU's acquis commun32taire and the process of harmonizing with the contents of each chapter is regularly monitored. The results of such monitoring is summarised in EU documents, like the annual Progress Reports, and available for CSOs to identify where they can most effectively contribute;

■ the EU encourages consultation with CSOs both on its own policies and on the alignment process being carried out by Candidate and potential Candidate

countries, and in many cases provides support for the consultation. Furthermore, the EU also offers various models and experiences on citizens' participation which can be applied in the Western Balkans;

■ following the above, it can also be noted that for many countries in the region, the strong political commitment to integrate with the EU means that Governments are more likely to welcome participation in the decision-making processes if the EU explicitly encourages it;

■ governments recognize that in many areas related to EU Accession CSOs can bring much added value to the policy reformulation process. For example, they acknowledge that many CSOs, particularly those working at the national level, are well networked within Europe and often have very significant EU experience.

During 2010/11, a group of prominent Croatian NGOs with an interest in Human Security and Rights demonstrated the great value that citizens participation can offer to a country's reformulation of policies. On 16 February 2011 these 15 NGOs issued a Joint Opinion on the readiness of the Republic of Croatia for the closing of negotiations in Chapter 23 of the Acquis - Judiciary and Fundamental Rights. This 'opinion' report was carefully researched, drafted, and publicly presented in a collaborative manner by the CSOs, and offers much to learn from both in terms of the content of the policy contribution and in terms of how the contribution was made. Thus, the bullet points below attempt to highlight these key lessons.

In terms of the substance of the CSOs' contribution there are some excellent learning points:

■ the framework for the CSO Coalition's advocacy follows the screening process of Croatian legislation for alignment to EU norms (in this case the issues covered by Chapter 23 of the acquis), as well as the issues highlighted in the EU's progress reports on the Croatian accession process. This means that stakeholders are using common frameworks and it allows the CSOs to place their 'agenda items' alongside those of the Government, rather than proposing competing items;

■ the CSOs have conducted a robust review of the draft/new legislation and undertaken parallel research, and plan to publish their findings as an objective 'shadow report' to that of the Government's formal reporting. In this way they are separating the publication of their research from the advocacy of their opinions and recommendations;

■ the recommendations of the CSOs are clear and simple to follow, and limited to 10 argued priorities, which ensures that the message from the CSOs is focused and the recommendations feasible;

- given that this process relates to EU accession, the CSOs have produced their reports both in Croatian and English, and thereby making them accessible to all the stakeholders.

With regard to the process of this particular exercise in participation, the CSOs have demonstrated some useful practices:

- the 15 CSOs at the heart of the policy-influencing have deliberately organised themselves in an informal way. That is to say that the 'coalition' is an informal one and one which has been put together for a 'one-off purpose'. In this way the CSOs are saving time and resources which might otherwise be used to 'formalise' the process. As one of the members remarked, "NGOs in Croatia suffer from the fatigue of formal networks and too much other work to waste resources on building new mechanisms";

- the 15 CSOs have a strong, public track record in pursuing their individual missions and most have recognised memberships, which means that collectively they have credibility and a legitimacy amongst the stakeholders;

- the coalition members undertook a quick mapping of the stakeholders and developed a list of specific targets for their advocacy on these issues;

- a clear division of tasks and appropriate use of relevant specializations amongst the group (eg. In terms of legal analysis, public relations etc) have been prioritized;

- similar to the 'boomerang strategies' mentioned in Chapter 3 of this Manual, the CSOs have particularly targeted stakeholders related to the EU (the EU delegation, Embassies of the EU Member States, and the EC itself) in order to promote their message to the Government through these channels.

At the time of compiling this Manual, the outcomes of this participation are not yet clear, but readers are encouraged to visit the web sites of the NGOs in Croatia in order to learn more and download the relevant documents (available in both English and Croatian): Centre for Peace Studies - www.cms.hr

The Toolbox

How to use the Toolbox

It should be noted that this is not a comprehensive collection of tools required to assist citizens participation, but rather complimentary and additional tools to those that are already freely available to CSOs. In other words, this Toolbox does not repeat all the tools that are published elsewhere and therefore, in order to maximise the benefits of the Manual, readers are strongly advised to ensure that they have access to the documents published elsewhere, particularly those available from the web portals listed at the end of this Manual and those captured in the other TACSO Manuals:

'Advocacy and Policy Influencing for Social Change'

'CSO Management – Practical Tools for Organisationl Development Analysis'

The tools listed on the next pages are divided into two types. Firstly, a range of checklists and methodologies to assist in the preparation of activities to support citizens participation, and secondly, a few templates and exercises with explanatory notes.
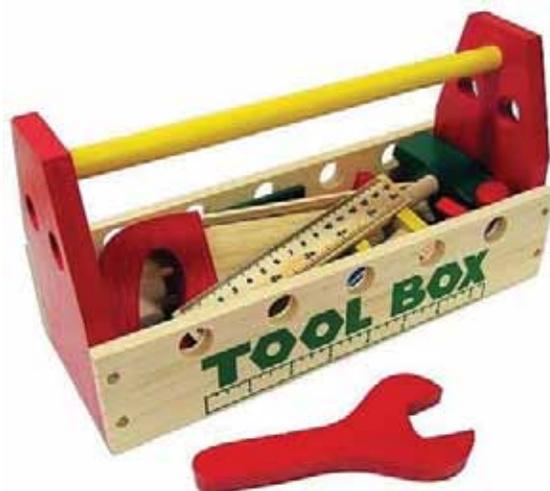
Checklists and Methodologies

1. Cost-Benefit Indicators for Citizens' Participation

Irvin and Stansbury suggest that conditions that may facilitate or obstruct citizens' participation can be analysed using indicators that help to measure the potential costs and benefits of participation. For CSOs planning to support participation and interventions in any policy area it may be useful to check the conditions for participation against the indicators in the matrix below:

Conditions Likely to Favour Participation	Conditions Likely to Obstruct Participation
Low Cost Indicators • Community has a history of providing willing volunteers for projects • Key stakeholders not geographically too dispersed and therefore can meet easily • Community has levels of income that can support the donation of time to attend meetings etc • Community is homogenous and therefore likely to come to an agreed decision quickly • Issue does not involve too many technicalities and is easily understood and researched	**High Cost Indicators** • Acquiescent community reluctant to get involved in what they see as a Government job • Large region with dispersed population • Many competing interest groups • Low income community which has other economic priorities • Topic is very complex and requires considerable technical expertise • Issue not considered problematic by the community
High Benefit Indicators • Issue is gridlocked and progress cannot be made without a mandate from citizens • Hostility to Government entities is high and therefore public institutions need validation from community in order for policy to be implemented • Community members willing and competent to serve formally as representatives • Group facilitators with credible positions	**Low Benefit Indicators** • Community not hostile to Government entities • Previous policy implemented successfully and credibly • Population very large and difficult to influence • Community representatives not seen as competent • Citizens decisions likely to be the same as Government

2. Criteria for Identifying Issues for Local Level Participation Support

(Example from Slovakia – Chuck Hirt, Citizens Network, 2001)

A variety of criteria should be considered when choosing an issue for an intervention supporting citizens' participation at the local level. Not all of these criteria will apply in every situation, but the ability to maximize the largest number of them is optimal. Consider following this checklist of possibilities before choosing an issue. The issue should:

- result in real improvements in people's lives;
- give people a sense of power and therefore alter the relations of power;
- be worthwhile and winnable;
- be widely and deeply felt;
- be easy to understand;
- have a clear target;
- have a clear time frame that works;
- be non-divisive and build leadership;
- set the organisation up for the next campaign;
- be consistent with the organisation's values and vision;
- develop a strategic plan;
- include tactics and action.

3. Policy Process Assessment Checklist

What is it?

Policy Process Assessment is a technique where a policy is in the policy development process.

Who uses it?

An individual or group.

Why use it?

To plan your course of action for advocating change based on where the policy is in the development process.

How to use it?

- if working with a group, explain to them the objective of the exercise;

- describe in one sentence the policy you will be assessing. Policy description:

  _____

- then agree on where in the process of policy development the policy is by placing *A* in the appropriate box.

Stage of development	
Problem identification and agenda setting: In which policy problems are defined and the policy agenda set.	
Policy formation: Is the stage in which policies are created or changed.	
Adoption: Is the stage when the policy is enacted, or brought into force.	
Policy Implementation: Includes the actions and mechanisms whereby policies are brought into practice.	
Policy evaluation: The final stage in the health-policy-making process, includes monitoring, analysis, criticism and assessment of exiting or proposed policies.	

4. Issues to Consider in Formulating a Regulatory Framework for Citizens' Participation

Checklist of general issues that need to be considered with regard to regulatory frameworks for citizens' participation:

- what kinds of consultations are feasible, given the circumstances (information, consultation, active participation)?

- should an instrument governing public consultations be legally binding (law or other general regulation), or would a "softer" instrument, such as a code, better serve the purpose?

- should an obligation for public consultations entail only laws, or also other general acts, or any public policy document?

- should an obligation for public consultations pertain to executive bodies (consultations during the drafting process — ex ante consultations), or to legislative bodies(consultations after a draft is submitted to Parliament — ex post consultations), or both?

- should an obligation for consultations pertain to the state bodies only, or should it also include local governments?

- who is the other party in consultations: citizens, various forms of CSOs, and corporations? Or citizens and CSOs only, including associations of employers?

- is it necessary and justified to introduce minimum and broader scope of consultations (as Bosnia and Herzegovina did) with different deadlines?

- is it necessary and justified to stipulate exemptions to the public consultation obligations?

- what sanctions for the breach of consultation obligations will appropriately reflect the legal nature of an instrument chosen to govern public participation?

5. Checklist for Essential Elements of Effective Communication

Essential Elements* are a series of ten steps every organisation should consider as it develops a communications strategy. Addressing these gives us a precise snapshot of who we are, what we have to say to the world, who we want to influence, and how we'll do that – now, and in the months and years to come.

Review: How have we been communicating in the past? How effective has that been? How do our audiences perceive us?

Objective: What do we want our communications to achieve? Are our objectives SMART?

Audience: Who is our audience? Do we have a primary and a secondary audience? What information do they need to act upon our message?

Message: What is our message? Do we have one message for multiple audiences or multiple messages for multiple audiences?

Basket: What kinds of communications "products" best capture and deliver our messages?

Channels: What channels will we use to promote and disseminate our products?

Resources: What kind of budget do we have for this? Will this change in the future? What communications skills and hardware do we have?

Timing: What is our timeline? Would a staged strategy be the most appropriate? What special events or opportunities might arise? Does the work (or future work) of like-minded organisations or ministries, etc., present opportunities?

Brand: Are all of our communications products "on brand"? How can we ensure that we are broadcasting the right message?

Feedback: How will we know when our communications strategy is 100% successful? What will have changed? How can we assess whether we used the right tools, were on budget and on time, and had any influence?

6. Tips for Holding a Public Hearing:

- A public hearing should be open to all interested citizens;

- A public hearing should be widely publicized beforehand;

- Publicity also educates the public about the subject of the hearing;

- The hearing is held at a time and place that is convenient for citizens wishing to attend it;

- Local government decision-makers are present and are prepared to listen;

- The hearing usually begins with a brief presentation by a senior city official of the issue or proposed action under review. The hearing then is opened for citizen comments. Remember, the 'hearing' is organised in order to listen to citizens' views, not for citizens to listen to public officials, thus, initial presentations must be kept short;

- It is helpful to have a professional facilitator to keep the hearing on course, enforce time limits, and remind participants of the ground rules;

- Everyone who registers to speak gets a chance to do so, but speakers are limited to a defined time period (often 3 minutes);

- Public officials listen attentively, but do not respond to individual speakers;

- At the end of the hearing, the leader thanks the citizens for their comments. The hearing may end at that point, or a responsible official may briefly summarize what follow-up will take place;

- A report on the hearing is made available to the public and released to the news media. The report writers should be careful to answer the questions raised in the public hearing.

7. Checklists for Establishing and Running Citizens Advisory Groups

Normally a 'CAG' or similar mechanism would be established by a local government, however it is common for local authorities to seek advice and support from CSOs during this process and certainly members of a CAG need to be aware of what needs to be done to make the group effective. Thus, this checklist is divided into two parts: actions for the local authority; and actions for the CAG members.

From the side of the local authority, a written mandate should include:

- Name and purpose of the advisory body;
- Membership and how it is selected or appointed and term of service;
- The product or outputs that the body is expected to produce (e.g., periodic progress reports, final reports, etc.);
- The authority of the group – letting the group know about the impact or influence the group can expect to have in the areas of its responsibility;
- Timeframe – whether permanent or temporary and if temporary, period of operation, and how frequently the body is expected to meet;
- Resources – e.g., support from administration agency or agencies, documents to which it will have access, expenses (if they are to be provided), meeting place, etc;
- Relationship with the news media and issues of confidentiality and conflict of interest.

Members of a CAG need to ensure that they:

- Concur and adopt any relevant by-laws and procedures proposed by the local authority;
- Prepare a work plan and have it approved by the local authority;
- Regularly evaluate the CAG's work;
- Ask to participate in the budget process if relevant to the work of the CAG;
- Meet and exchange ideas regularly with the local elected officials and administrators;
- When appropriate, invite elected officials and administrators to the CAG meetings;
- Appoint a 'Chair' or representative who can speak on behalf of the CAG and make presentations;
- Work in an open and transparent way - make meeting minutes available;
- Ask the local authorities for documents and other materials that you may need;
- Educate yourself on the relevant issues;
- Get inputs from the public and make your work publically known.

8. Café Consultations

Using the café consultation method is a way of enabling a large group of people to discuss questions in an informal creative way. It does this by offering people a relaxed café-type environment in which they can talk to others in small groups, and move between groups to meet new people and get a fresh perspective.

When to use this method:

- When you want to generate ideas and share knowledge;
- When you want to engage people in lively discussion;
- When you want to explore different possible strategies;
- When you want to deepen relationships and shared ownership of the piece of work by an existing group;
- When you want to engage groups of more than 12 people.

When not to use this method:

- When you are driving toward an already determined solution or answer;
- When you want to convey information to people and not hear information from them;
- When you want to make detailed implementation or action plans;
- When you have fewer than 12 people.

Planning the Cafe:

- Clarify the reason you want to bring people together. Ideally, involve some participants in planning the event and deciding the questions to be discussed;
- Check that your venue is wheelchair accessible, and if you'll need any interpretation;
- Consider naming your café event — for example the "Carers' Café" or the "Connecting Café";
- Cend out invitations to your café event, asking people to identify any special requirements;
- Plan how you are going to create a hospitable space: Consider playing soft music while people arrive; Consider creating a banner showing the name of the café; Set out small tables with chairs for up to six people at each; Consider covering the tables with colourful tablecloths, overlaid with sheets of flip-chart paper, and vases of flowers; Give each table a 'menu' listing the questions you want the groups to discuss;
- Identify and structure the powerful questions that matter to participants.

Questions need to be:

- Simple and clear;
- Thought provoking;
- Energising;
- Open to new possibilities.

Wrapping up

When all the 'hosts' have spoken, you can ask the whole group questions such as:

- What is emerging here?
- If there was a single voice in the room, what would it be saying?
- What deeper questions are emerging as a result of these conversations?
- Do we notice any patterns and what do those patterns point to, or how do they inform us?
- What do we now see and know as a result of these conversations?

You can record these more general thoughts on a flip chart.

After

It is vital that you write up the comments on the 'tablecloths' and send them out to all participants as a record of the event, highlighting the main points that were circled. You can transcribe the doodles, notes and thoughts on the 'tablecloths', or photograph them in all their messy glory, scan them onto a document and send them to people for further comments.

More information available at **www.theworldcafe.com**

9. Example Agenda for a Community 'Visioning' Workshop

Village of Campbellsport Visioning Workshop

Village of Campbellsport Library

Monday, October 25, 2004

Agenda:

6:00 – 7:00 P.M	**Introduction**
	Overview
	Ground Rules
	Welcoming Exercise - Pair up people at the tables. If with your spouse, find someone else. Each pair interviews each other asking questions provided to you. Each person has one minute to then introduce the person he or she is paired with to the rest of the group.
	Review of the Agenda and the Nine Elements of the Comprehensive Plan
7:00 – 8:00 P.M	**What Do People Want To Preserve In The Community?**
	Work in groups
	Group A
	Describe why the Village of Campbellsport was formed
	Describe how it has changed since then.
	Identify the significant events and trends that have taken place in the community.
	Group B
	What do you want the Village of Campbellsport to look like in the future?
	What areas should be developed?
	What areas should be protected?
	List three places you like to take out-of-town visitors.
	List three places you avoid taking out-of-town visitors.

Name three sites that you consider to be "public places"; that is, places where people can meet freely to discuss community issues.

Name three features, natural or man-made, that make the Village of Campbellsport special and unique.

Both Groups

Discuss the answers to the questions and statements. During the discussion, answer the following:

What do you want to preserve in the Village of Campbellsport?

What are the basic values of the community?

What would be worth committing to in the next ten to twenty years?

What words do you want your grandchildren to use to describe the community?

What is unique to our community that is not found anywhere else?

8:00 – 9:00 P.M	**What Do People Want To Change or Create In The Community?**

We will have a brainstorming session to come up with ideas for what we want to change or create in the Village of Campbellsport in the next five, ten, or twenty years.

9:00 – 10:00 P.M	**Develop a Vision for the Village of Campbellsport**

Using the responses from both of the previous sessions, the people at each table will write a short, two to three sentence paragraph about the community and its future. After fifteen minutes the people will share their sentences with each other.

We'll divide the room into two groups. Each group will take the work of the large group and develop another vision statement on a flip chart. The two groups will then come back together and develop the final vision statement.

10. Managing Focus Group Discussions

Preparing for a Focus Group Discussion:

- identify the major objective of the meeting;
- carefully develop five to six questions (see below);
- plan your session (see below):
- call potential members to invite them to the meeting. Send them a follow-up invitation with a proposed agenda, session time and list of questions the group will discuss. Plan to provide a copy of the report from the session to each member and let them know you will do this;
- about three days before the session, call each member to remind them to attend.

Developing Questions

- develop five to six questions - Session should last one to 1.5 hours -- in this time, one can ask at most five or six questions;
- always first ask yourself what problem or need will be addressed by the information gathered during the session, e.g., examine if a new service or idea will work, further understand how and why a piece of policy is failing etc;
- in addition to your main questions, draft a few supplementary questions to help guide the responses if the group 'gets stuck' on one of the questions. However, be careful not to ask 'leading' questions.

Planning the Session

- scheduling - Plan meetings to be one to 1.5 hours long. Make sure that they are at a time convenient for the participants - perhaps during lunch time or at the end of the working day might be good;
- setting and Refreshments - Hold sessions in a conference room, or other setting with adequate air flow and lighting. Configure chairs so that all members can see each other. Provide name tags for members if they do not already know each other. Provide refreshments, especially box lunches if the session is held over lunch;
- ground Rules - It's critical that all members participate as much as possible, yet the session move along while generating useful information. Because the session is often a one-time occurrence, it's useful to have a few, short ground rules that sustain participation, yet do so with focus. Consider the following three ground rules: a) keep focused, so any 'rambling' responses will be cut short; b) maintain momentum; d) ensure every participant has an equal opportunity to speak; and c) get closure on questions;
- agenda - Consider the following agenda: welcome, review of agenda, review of goal of the meeting, review of ground rules, introductions, questions and answers, wrap up;

- membership - Focus groups are usually conducted with 6-10 members who have some similar nature, e.g., similar age group, status in a program, etc. Select members who are likely to be participative and reflective. Attempt to select members who don't know each other;

- plan to record the session with either an audio or audio-video recorder. Don't count on your memory. If this isn't practical, involve a co-facilitator who is there to take notes. Remember to always get the permission of participants before starting the recording.

Facilitating the Session

- the major goal of facilitation is collecting useful information to meet the objective of the session;

- introduce yourself and the co-facilitator, if used;

- explain the means to record the session;

- carry out the agenda - (See "agenda" above);

- carefully word each question before that question is addressed by the group. Allow the group a few minutes for each member to carefully record their answers. Then, facilitate discussion around the answers to each question, one at a time;

- after each question is answered, carefully reflect back a summary of what you heard (the note taker may do this);

- ensure even participation. If one or two people are dominating the meeting, then call on others. Consider using a round- table approach, including going in one direction around the table, giving each person a minute to answer the question. If the domination persists, note it to the group and ask for ideas about how the participation can be increased;

- closing the session - Tell members that they will receive a copy of the report generated from their answers, thank them for coming, and adjourn the meeting.

Immediately After Session

- verify if the tape recorder, if used, worked throughout the session;

- make any notes on your written notes, e.g., to clarify any scratching, ensure pages are numbered, fill out any notes that don't make sense!

- write down any observations made during the session. For example, where did the session occur and when, what was the nature of participation in the group? Were there any surprises during the session? Did the tape recorder break?

11. Using the Nominal Group Technique

To use this methodology for collecting information and opinions you will need to be prepared for:

- **Organisation and introductions:** The plenary group is divided into small groups of five to nine persons and seated at tables. At each table there is a staff member or two, a flip chart or newsprint sheets, and some index cards or pieces of paper and felt-tip pens. Introductions take place;

- **The questions:** One or two questions (designed very carefully beforehand) are presented to the plenary group and posted at each table. The question(s) should be more specific than general and designed to elicit concrete ideas. Examples are: (a) what specific measures can we take to make our neighbourhoods more pleasant places in which to live? (b) What resources can be used to accomplish this end?

- **The ideas:** Participants (individually or in pairs) are given 10 to 15 minutes to come up with answers to the questions and write them down on sheets of paper. The small group leader then goes around the group asking for the ideas, one at a time per participant, and writes them on a flipchart or newsprint (an assistant could handle the writing task) until there are no more ideas. Participants needn't be limited to the ideas they initially wrote down if further thoughts are stimulated by the discussion;

- **The discourse and comprehension:** The group discusses each item to achieve full understanding of the idea and to make sure that it is written in its clearest formulation. Anyone can take part in this process, though the leader should speed it along;

- **Selecting and ranking ideas:** Each participant in the small group is asked to select and rank some specified number of ideas, say five, that they prefer, and to write these down on a card, one idea per card. Then rank the ideas, writing on the cards a five for the highest ranking through one for the lowest rank. Each card should have one idea and one number;

- **Scoring:** Cards are collected and shuffled and the scores are tallied to determine the scores for the various ideas. Any member of the group can monitor the tallying process. The highest five or so ideas (leaders should look for a natural break in the scoring) for each question are clearly identified so that the group can then discuss their relative merits;

- **Consensus building:** The group then discusses the chosen ideas. This may lead to a revised ranking if the group is uncomfortable with the initial ranking because of the new information and insights flowing from the discussion. This is the final product that is reported out to the plenary session.

▪ **Consensus in the larger group:** Time permitting a discussion can take place in plenary with a new round of selections and ranking based on the top ideas of the whole group. If this is done, some synthesis of the top ranked ideas that are similar will be necessary to reduce their numbers and avoid overlaps. Step 8 could also be put off to a further session at another meeting of the group if time is short. Alternatively, this task could be left to a smaller group, such as a task force or committee assigned to this particular problem.

12. The Community Score Card (CSC)

The 'Score Card' is a participatory, community based monitoring and evaluation tool that enables citizens to assess the quality of public services such as a health centre, school, public transport, water, waste disposal systems and so on. It is used to inform community members about available services and their entitlements and to solicit their opinions about the accessibility and quality of these services. By providing an opportunity for direct dialogue between service providers and the community, the CSC process empowers the public to voice their opinion and demand improved service delivery.

Score Cards are often used by local authorities, often in collaboration with CSOs, and are also used independently by CSOs for data collection.

Key steps in implementing a CSC are:

STEP 1 — Preparatory groundwork and research

- identify the subject and scope of the assessment (e.g. health provision for pregnant women in a specific district);
- carry out preliminary research regarding current inputs, entitlements, degree of usage etc;
- identify people or groups within the sample area who can help to facilitate the implementation of the CSC process, such as traditional leaders, NGO staff, and officials of local governments;
- conduct an awareness campaign to inform people about the purpose and benefits of the CSC;
- train facilitators.

STEP 2 — Help community members generate a scorecard

- convene community members into one or more focus groups.

Ask each group to identify performance/quality indicators for the public service in question.

- ask the group to score each indicator and give reasons for the scores;
- ask the group to develop their own suggestions on how to improve the service, based on the performance criteria they have identified.

A Sample Community Score Card for a Health Centre

SI No.	Indicators (in order of importance)	Score out of 100	Scores after 12 months
1	Attitude of staff	20	
2	Affordability of services	50	
3	Availability of medicine	40	
4	Distance to health centre	35	
5	Equal access to the health services for all community members	25	

3. Help service providers to generate a self-evaluation score card:

- hold a brainstorming session with service providers including the management and the staff to develop self-evaluation indicators.;

- ask the service providers to score each indicator and give reasons for the scores;

- invite service providers to discuss and propose possible solutions.

4. Convene an interface meeting between community and service provider:

- aided by the facilitators, each focus group presents its scores;

- reasons for scores are discussed;

- service providers react and give feedback;

- all participants discuss and potentially agree possible solutions.

5. Advocacy and follow-up:

- document the process and record score card results in a brief, clear and easily understandable format;

- disseminate results through the media and communities;

- feed score card results into other policy and advocacy processes;

- ensure the implementation and follow-up of the solutions;

- take steps to institutionalise the process like for example by supporting community-based organisations and/or service providers to repeat the exercise on an annual or half yearly basis.

13. Emerging techniques to support citizens' participation

The methodologies summarised below are increasingly proven to be extremely effective for supporting citizens' participation, however all require a substantial degree of technical expertise and experience to make them work effectively. Thus, CSOs are encouraged to learn more about these techniques and to either build their own capacity for applying the tools (by participating in formal training or through mentoring) or identify experts who can assist them in using the tools. Each tool would require an individual manual to explain fully the processes, appropriate conditions, and strengths and weakness of each technique, so here there is a brief summary and references for further learning.

Open space technology uses plenary circles and has a few, simple rules. Breakout sessions are organised, led and reported on by self-selected participants. This technique can maximize the creativity, energy, vision and leadership of all participants, and is egalitarian and inclusive. It can be used to set strategic direction, plan or initiate a project, and develop standards, criteria or regulations. It has the ability to maximize teamwork. **www.openspaceworld.org** has lots of practical advice and experiences from practitioners, published in a range of languages.

Future search conferences are workshop conferences at which 40-80 people join forces to visualize a desired future and then design the steps needed to get the organisation there. This technique uses a 'whole system' approach and places emphasis on self-managed, small-group discussions. It can be used when the solution to an issue or problem resolution may require a change in organisational mission, functions or structure. **www.futuresearch.net** provides an overview and examples of this planning technique, and information about how to learn the process. (Books and videos can be purchased on line)

E-participation includes a wide range of specific individual techniques, including e-mail, provision of Web site information, bulletin boards, chat and news groups, dialogue groups and virtual communities. These low-cost approaches are only available to those who have access to a computer and are useful when the policy community is spread over a broad geographic area, or where open information-sharing is important.

Appreciative inquiry focuses on the positive aspects of a situation, opportunities, strengths, proven capacities and skills, resources, and affirms, appreciates and builds on existing strengths. Appreciate inquiry is a very effective way to get people to think about their demonstrated abilities instead of listing and dwelling on problems or challenges. **http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu** is a web portal that provides a platform for practitioners of Appreciative Inquiry to share their knowledge and skills. Here there are lots of tools, resources and case studies to assist anyone in applying the approach.

Study circles explore a critical public issue in a democratic way; analyze a problem, develop strategies and actions; and look at issues from multiple viewpoints. Small-group discussion among peers is often facilitated. Study circles have eight to 12 members and meet regularly over a period of weeks or months. This technique is especially useful at the problem definition, values and goal clarification, option generation, and selection stages of policy development.

14. Checklist for Preparing and Giving a Presentation

CHOOSING A COMMUNICATION CHANNEL

In written form it is easier to:

- present complicated facts (regulations, legal acts, reports); and
- decrease the possibility of expressing negative emotions.

Communicating orally it is easier to:

- use emotions convincingly;
- direct the listener's attention;
- answer direct questions, solve conflicts and build agreement;
- adjust ideas according to the listener's reactions; and
- receive instant feedback.

Combining the two channels allows the speaker to take advantage of the benefits of both forms, but the speaker must insure that they are complementing each other and not introducing contradictions or distractions.

WORKING OUT A PRESENTATION STRUCTURE

Tailoring the topic to the listeners:

- how many listeners are already familiar with the presentation topic?
- how important is this to them?
- what are their opinions and attitudes towards the topic?
- what is the general state of mind of the listeners?

Opening: Tell them what you are going to tell them.

- greeting, introduction (begin with a surprising or humorous statement, a story or joke related to the topic a provocative question or an opposite quotation);
- subject (title/subject of your presentation);
- objective (the purpose of your presentation);
- outline (the main points you will cover);
- timing (length of presentation);
- questions (when audience can ask).

Delivery: Tell them what you promised.

- give the title, key message and request for feedback at the end of each part;
- select information (simple, concrete, vivid);
- organise the information;
- emphasise the goal of the presentation;
- present positive arguments;
- summarise occasionally;
- analyse possible objections.

Closing: Tell them what you have told them.

- signal to end;
- summary;
- conclusion;
- closing (return to the beginning of the presentation/statement, finish with a vivid, positive "picture" or explain to the listeners what your expectations are);
- invitation for questions.

Answering questions:

- explain that you will answer questions at the end of the presentation;
- stop periodically during the presentation to pose questions that the audience may have;
- while questions are being asked, look the person in the eye and avoid the temptation to nod and look away;
- if you need to think about a question, repeat or paraphrase it;
- answers should be connected to what has been said in the presentation. Answers should be addressed to all listeners;
- if the question is hostile and aggressive, rephrase it into a neutral or positive form;
- if you do not know the answer, admit it and make a promise that you will look for an answer;
- after you finish with questions close your presentation with a short summary.

Source: Andreja Tonc, "Developing Skills of NGOs: Presentation and Communication Manual", REC, 2005.

Templates and Exercises

SWOT analysis matrix and explanation

An evaluation of the internal and external environment is an important part of the strategic planning process. Internal environmental factors usually can be classified as strengths (S) or weaknesses (W), and those external to the organisation can be classified as opportunities (O) or threats (T). Such an analysis of the strategic environment is referred to as a SWOT analysis.

Subject of SWOT Analysis: (define the subject of analysis here):

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats

Internal Factors

External Factors

Positive

Negative
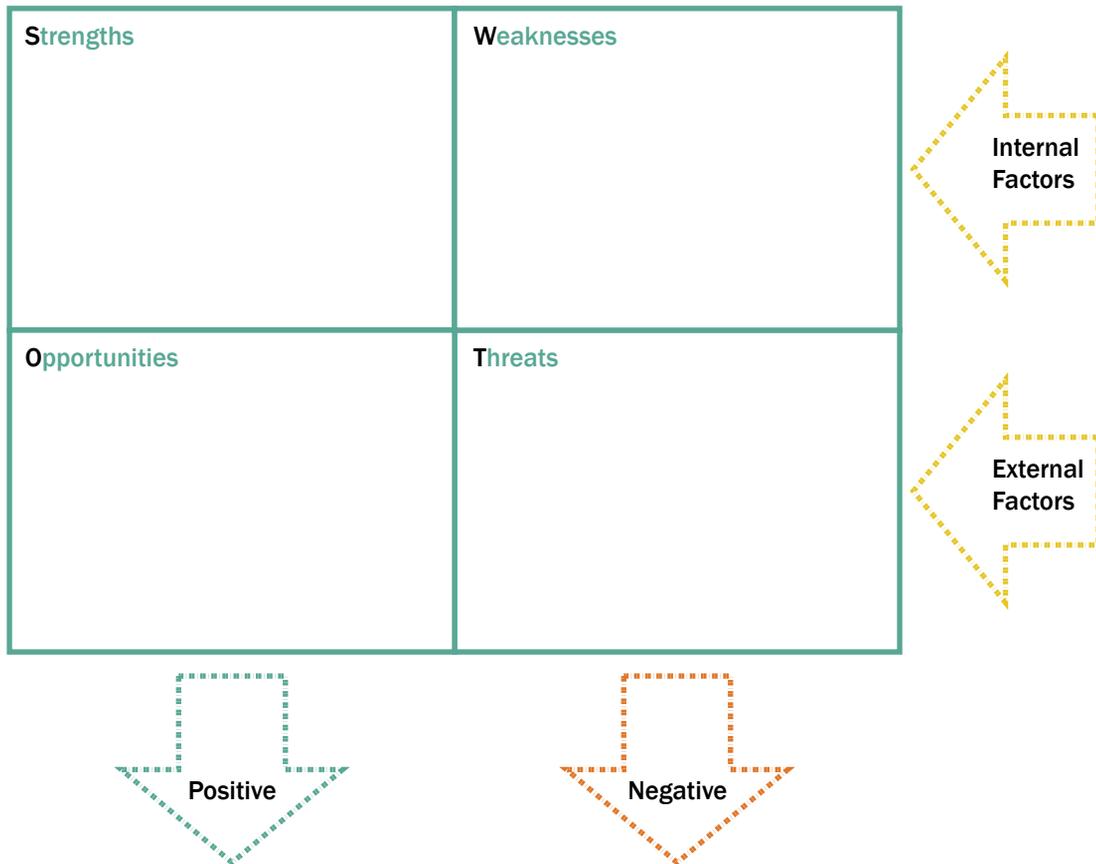
Stakeholder Analysis Matrix

Stakeholder groups	Role in the policy issue	Policy impact on stakeholder groups	Stakeholder group influence over the policy		
			Stage preparation	*Stage decision*	*Stage implementation*
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					

Legend:
U = unknown   3 = relative importance
1 = no importance   4 = high importance
2 = low importance   5 = critical

Stakeholder Case Study Exercise

Piteşti municipality pursued, all throughout 2001, the rehabilitation of a large area in the main park – Strand Park. In a first attempt to stimulate citizen participation, the Municipality identified those stakeholders who will be the main beneficiaries of the facilities provided by the park:

- athletes' association;
- students from a university adjacent to the park;
- tenant associations in the neighbourhood;
- parents of the children who use the playfield in the area;
- students of nearby schools;
- the elderly, especially those in the Citizens' Advisory Group;
- Roma communities adjacent to the park;
- NGOs.

The stakeholder representatives were interviewed and invited to take part in focus groups, in order to provide information to the project team.
(Piteşti Municipality, 24 Victoriei street, 0300 Piteşti, county Argeş; tel: 048-626287; contact person: Dan Teodorescu, Division for Heritage and Social Activities)

1. Do you think there are other stakeholders in the rehabilitation of the Strand Park in Piteşti?
2. Assuming that you represent the interests of (a) Roma community / (b) tenant association / (c) athletes' association / (d) ecologist NGO – what questions would you ask the project manager?

Strategies for Mitigating Constraints to Participation - Matrix

Barriers to Citizens Participation	Root Cause of the Constraint	Mitigation Strategy
List the barriers to citizens participation within the community/communities that your CSO serves	*Undertake a simple problem analysis to identify the root cause(s) for each of the 'barriers'*	*Discuss and identify possible strategies to mitigate or minimise the impact of these 'barriers'*
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

Glossary of Key Terms

Glossary of Key Terms

ACCOUNTABILITY is a concept in ethics and governance with several meanings. It is often used synonymously with such concepts as responsibility, transparency, answerability, blameworthiness, liability, and other terms associated with the expectation of account-giving.

ADVOCACY refers to non-violent activities to influence policies, practices and behaviour.

It includes lobbying and other activities that are considered non-violent and legal.

AGENDA is a set of issues and policies laid out by an executive, cabinet, or council in government that tries to influence current and near-future political news and debate.

BENEFICIARIES are those stakeholders that directly benefit from the implementation of a piece of policy, either approved at national or local level.

CIVIC EDUCATION is the discipline of governance theory as it applies to government bodies. It is partly based on the study of democracy and on an exploration of national identity, including issues related to social cohesion and social diversity.

COMPACT refers to a 'protocol' or Memorandum of Understanding guiding the objectives and means for cooperation and dialogue between CSOs and Government, usually used in the UK.

DRAFTING refers to the process of setting out the context, objective and scope of a piece of policy.

GOVERNANCE is the act of governing. It relates to decisions that define expectations, grant power, or verify performance. It consists of either a separate process or part of management or leadership processes. These processes and systems are typically administered by a government, which might be mandated at national, provincial or local level.

INDICATOR is a quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, to reflect changes connected to an intervention, or to help assess the performance of a development actor.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION is the processes of measuring progress towards or actual achievement of objectives of any given intervention or piece of policy.

PARTICIPATION refers to the degree to which a citizen or group of citizens are engaged in the process of making decisions and sharing responsibilities for the policies that effect their livess.

POLICY is a set of factors directed or guided by law or accepted practices, often represented by the government, dominant power brokers or stakeholders. Such factors are not easy to

change or influence. However, most policy influencing processes target such factors and actors.

POLICY PROCESS   refers to the series of steps taken to develop, approve, implement, and monitor and evaluate a piece of policy. Often referred to as the 'public policy cycle'.

REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY   a is a form of government founded on the principle of elected individuals representing the people. The representatives form an independent ruling body (for an election period) charged with the responsibility of acting in the people's interest, but not as their proxy representatives (and not necessarily always according to their wishes), but with enough authority to exercise swift and resolute action in the face of changing circumstances.

STAKEHOLDER   is all actors in society from government, civil society or private sector who have an interest at stake either in favour or against or neutral to your own position or opinion.

TOKENISM is the practice of doing something in order to make people believe that you are being fair and including all types of people and issues when this is not really true.

TRANSPARENCY   is implemented by a set of policies, practices and procedures that allow citizens to have accessibility, usability, informativeness, understandability, and auditability of information and process held by centres of authority (society or organisations).

References and Further Reading

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UN Report People Matter: Civic Engagement in Public Governance

UNDP Local Agenda 21

Web Sites with Resources On Citizens Participation

American Civil Liberties Union (Student Organising Manual)
www.aclu.org/students/organizingmanual.html
This is the ultimate A_Z of how to organise a group to create change. The ACLU has decades of experience in civic activism in the US, and a page dedicated to this topic on their larger site shows this.

Centre for Community Change
www.communitychange.org/media.html
This is a good source of information about community organising, coalition building, advocacy groups, housing, community development and lobbying. The CCC believes that a strong media strategy is essential to NGOs or community organisations that are working toward change. It includes links to related sites.

Civic Practices Network
http://www.cpn.org/
This site features several essays on community organising, social capital, and urban democracy, providing a broad range of approaches. It also lists different links to models, techniques, manuals, syllabi, and training centres. CPN is designed to bring schooling for active citizenship, which has always been at the heart of democratic and associational life, into the information age.

Civicus
www.civicus.org
This is a useful site that promotes the active involvement of local citizens in their communities, wherever they live. Of special interest is a new dedicated portal on 'participatory governance', which acts as a facilitator for sharing knowledge and experiences of participation throughout the world. This is a highly recommended community of practice site: www.pgexchange.org

Civitas International
www.civnet.org
This organisation believes that citizens must learn about government and how it works so that they can then make use of government to make democracy more effective, make elected officials more accountable and raise the standards of living for all. The site has resources for all those involved in learning about government, including students, teachers, parents and advocates.

CommunityPlanning.net
http://www.communityplanning.net
This is a privately run web portal, supported by a range of public funders and private sponsors, providing an online collection of tools, methodologies, and case studies of community planning in action. The portal has an excellent A-Z Methods section with easy to read and illustrated text.

Communities Online
http://www.communities.org.uk/ukco/
Community networks provide public space in cyberspace. The site provides links to various articles, community websites, both in the UK and throughout the world.

Community Toolbox

http://ctb.lsi.ukans.edu/

This websites provides information about community building tools. Its mission is to promote community health and development by connecting people, ideas and resources.

Institute for Development Studies

http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/particip/

Through the work of the Participation Group, the Institute of Development Studies serves as a global center for research, innovation and learning on citizen participation and participatory approaches to development. The website is frequently updated with research papers and articles on various topics. It also provides links to other citizen participation websites.

International Association for Public Participation

http://www.iap2.com/

This is a website of the International Association for Public Participation. It is an association of members who seek to promote and improve the practice of public participation in relation to individuals, governments, institutions, and other entities that effect the public interest in nations throughout the world.

Internet Democracy Project

http://www.internetdemocracyproject.org/

The Internet Democracy Project seeks to enhance the participation of Internet users worldwide in Non-governmental bodies that are setting up Internet policy. It seeks to advocate that these bodies adhere to principles of open participation, public accountability and human rights.

Involve (UK)

http://www.involve.org

Involve are experts in public engagement, participation and dialogue. They carry out research and deliver training to inspire citizens, communities and institutions to run and take part in high-quality public participation processes, consultations and community engagement.

Open Society Institute/Soros Foundation

www.soros.org/osi.html

The Open Society Institute works in areas of education, social and legal reform, providing resources and networking capabilities to people in the formerly communist countries of Eastern and Central Europe. Their office is in Budapest, Hungary. Look for the Budapest link for programs relevant to Eastern Europe.

Organisation for Economic Co_operation and Development

www.oecd.org/puma

As a separate link through the OECD, The Public Management Program (PUMA) offers a range of themes relating to its public management services. Special attention should be paid to the section on government-citizen relations, with online articles, an excellent documentation section (with questionnaires) and general information on engaging citizens in policy-making and providing services to citizens.

Participatory Budgeting Unit (UK)
http://www.participatorybudgeting.org.uk
This is a web-based resource run by an NGO in Manchester (UK) to support public sector and community groups in developing participatory budgeting processes in their local areas.

Participation Toolkit
http://www.toolkitparticipation.com/
The toolkit offers information on tools which promote citizen participation in local governance. Hundreds of cases are described and analyzed. The site also presents articles and links for further reference.

Pew Centre for Civic Journalism
www.pewcenter.org
"The Pew Centre is an incubator for civic journalism experiments that enable news organisations to create and refine better ways of reporting the news to re-engage people in public life." Generally, an advocacy site for civic-minded journalism and media that support local, grassroots initiatives.

World Bank Institute Website
www.worldbank.org/wbi/home.html,
www.worldbank.org/wbi/sourcebook/sbhome.htm
The home site for the WBI contains various information and resources relating to World Bank projects, research and publications, including the "public participation sourcebook." This link on public participation, in particular, summarizes the knowledge and expertise that the World Bank has gained in providing technical assistance to developing nations and regions of the world.

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