



CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN MUNICIPAL DECISION-MAKING

“Municipal Forums” in Kosovo – Manual and guidelines for improving public meetings and active citizens’ participation

Swiss-Kosovo Local Governance and Decentralisation Support Programme (LOGOS)

Financed by the Swiss Cooperation Office in Kosovo the Swiss – Kosovan Local Governance and Decentralisation Support Programme (LOGOS) operates in 9 municipalities in the southeastern part of Kosovo. The programme promotes the development of local governance and decentralization reforms in municipalities of Kosovo, thus contributing to the overall stabilization of rule of law and democratization of a multiethnic Kosovo state and society. In the first phase, LOGOS included a strong village level component, which consisted of activities with village councils and the civil society. These activities – together with the municipalities – contributed to the development of management and governance capacity at the sub-municipal level and, as a side impact, to improving local infrastructure. In the ongoing second phase, LOGOS focuses on capacity development of municipalities on:

1. Planning and Resources Management,
2. Administration and Public Services, and
3. Capitalization and Dissemination of Experiences.

Gender, good governance and the inclusion of the sub-municipal level are transversal themes of the project. Through all its activities, LOGOS Phase II actively supported the improvement of citizens' participation at the local level. An important part of this support translated into supporting the municipalities organize public consultations through the techniques and modalities that are presented in this manual.

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It aims at providing practical guidelines for increasing citizen participation.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This handbook presents the mechanisms applied by LOGOS Phase II and its partner municipalities in order to organize public meetings and improve the quality of these consultations as well as increase the number of participants. It is intended to help municipalities easily replicate the methodology and key mechanisms applied through the Phase II and thereby support the organization of successful public meetings/consultations and promote active citizens' participation.

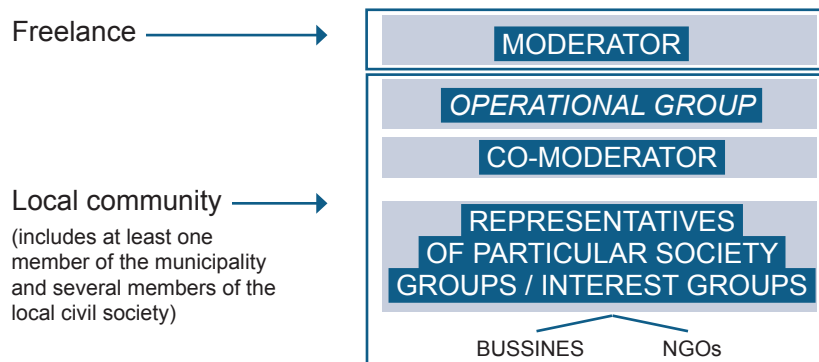
The key mechanisms presented in this manual are based on the "the municipal forum" technique. This is a method originating from Switzerland and which was previously promoted by SDC and applied in its programmes in Bulgaria and Macedonia¹. This methodology proposes a very structured way to organize/prepare public meetings, mobilize citizens, ensure that discussions are structured, active and inclusive and finally that a proper follow-up of the discussions takes place.

Based on the successful application of the "Community Forums" in Macedonia, LOGOS decided to borrow key elements of this methodology in order to improve the quality of the public meetings organized in its partner municipalities. LOGOS opted for a "simplified version" of the "Forums" as compared to the ones previously conducted in other countries. In this respect, it reproduced the key mechanisms and implementing structures developed to improve participation a way to support the organization of public meeting required by Kosovo legislation. In the case of LOGOS Phase II, the "Forums" took place in the fields of budget planning and execution, strategic planning and for the development of waste management plans. This has allowed to further test, develop and adapt the methodology to the specificities of Kosovo. The "municipal forums" as applied in Kosovo municipalities implied the following supporting structures:

An operational group (OG) comprising members of the local civil society and representatives of the municipalities was constituted per partner municipality. The central objective of the OG is to "mobilize" the local population. Its primary role is to support partner municipalities in preparing the public meetings and in inviting citizens. It ensures that all communities and categories of the population are informed about and included in the meeting.

In order to support the "moderation" of discussions, LOGOS also relied on an external moderator in order to structure and moderate the debates. The key role of the moderator is first to provide support to municipalities in preparing the agenda and their inputs. He/she then plays a central role in facilitating the discussions during the meeting and in ensuring that citizens can voice their questions and concerns. The neutrality of the moderator is key for constructive, transparent and inclusive discussions to take place.

MUNICIPAL FORMAT – IMPLEMENTING STRUCTURE



¹ For an extensive presentation of the Forum methodology please see: Forum Process: A Coordinator's Guide, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, 2007, Bern, available at: http://www.deza.admin.ch/ressources/resource_en_168425.pdf

INTRODUCTION

The set-up used by LOGOS also implied a co-moderator. Included in the work of the operational group, the co-moderator is a representative of the local civil society and is expected to be trained to moderation techniques to gradually take responsibilities in moderating the debates.

Finally, the operational group ensures that the meeting processes smoothly. It is furthermore responsible for the minutes and in ensuring that the conclusions reached are recorded and will be followed-up on the occasion of the next meeting.



Coordination of operational group

The application of these simple mechanisms has shown very positive results. It has first led to a significant increase in participation. In the case of LOGOS, meetings supported through this methodology allowed gathering three to four times more citizens than in previous meetings. Meetings are furthermore better structured and lead to very active discussions. This has in parallel contributed to changing perceptions of both citizens and municipal officials on the usefulness of public meetings. Citizens' feedbacks translate increased interest for public consultations as they are increasingly perceived as a credible opportunity to voice concerns and influence municipal policy. In the same vein, the opinion of municipal officials has also changed as they increasingly consider these public consultations as a useful way to test their plans and decide on municipal priorities. In the overall, the introduction of the "Forum methodology" has revealed very useful for improving participation in policy-making and supporting transparency and accountability mechanisms. It works "on system" by supporting procedures which are required by applicable legislation. Through simple mechanisms, the application of the "Forum" methodology has allowed to give greater substance to public meetings and create proper opportunities for exchanges and debates. An additional strength of the methodology is that it can easily be replicated and adapted to other contexts.

The key elements, supporting actors and techniques used through the organization of the "municipal forums" in Kosovo are described in this handbook. The detailed descriptions proposed below should allow the reader to see how the different structures and processes articulate with one another and thereby provide useful indications in order to replicate the entire method or some of its mechanisms only.

The manual is structured in several parts. The first part contains a detailed description of roles and functions of the supporting structures and key stakeholders that take part in the preparation, organization and moderation of the meetings.

A second part of this handbook focuses on citizens' information and "mobilization" and presents some of the channels and instruments available to motivate and mobilize citizens to participate in the meetings.

The third part gives useful information and practical reminders on the things to consider when preparing the meeting and the logistics.

Finally, a fourth section presents useful techniques and information to be kept in mind for moderating the meetings in a way that promotes active participation of the citizens present.

2. IMPLEMENTING STRUCTURE AND KEY ACTORS IN THE ORGANIZATION

2.1. The role and responsibilities of the moderator

The moderator and the co-moderator are central players for ensuring a successful mobilization and participation of citizens in the meeting first and for ensuring that active discussions and actual participation in local decision-making process take place during the meeting. They are directly responsible for leading the meetings, and respectively for their adequate moderation, for promoting an active participation and ensuring the quality of discussions.

The moderator must have the following profile:

- Neutral, balanced, knows how to steer discussions and keep them lively and constructive;
- Possesses listening and understanding skills, does not speak much during the meeting;
- Pragmatic personality, result oriented;
- Possesses excellent communication skills;
- Awareness and sensitiveness to local issues and problems, including gender and ethnicity.



The moderator - a central mechanism to ensure inclusion of all participants



Preparing a simple agenda helps structure the session

The moderator has a double-role. On the first hand, he/she plays a key role in the preparation of the meeting, in coordinating the activities of the operational group and supporting the forum organizers (i.e. generally the municipality) preparing for the meeting. In this sense and for a successful preparation and implementation of the meetings, the moderator must cooperate directly with the forum organizer(s) (generally the municipality) and the co-moderator. His/her main role is to lead the organization/implementation process of the meetings in all selected municipalities. Reciprocally, he/she must be informed by the organizer on the topic of the debates and on its key implications.

Second, he/she plays a central role during the meeting in facilitating the discussions. The moderator is in fact the “conductor” of the meetings and the “enabler” of active discussions of participants. He/she is responsible for facilitating discussions and directly interacting with the participants of the meeting.

To sum up, the key functions of the moderator are:

- To lead the organization, preparation and implementation process of the meetings;
- To coordinate the work of the co-moderator and of the operational group;
- To moderate and support active discussions during the meeting

Annex 1 provides a description of the competences expected from a moderator

2.2. The role and responsibilities of the co-moderator

As mentioned above, the co-moderator has an equally important role as the moderator with regard to motivation, mobilization and active participation of citizens in the meetings. As for the moderator, the co-moderator originates from the civil society. But unlike the moderator, the co-moderator must be a resident of the municipality where the thematic meeting is implemented. This person must possess the same characteristics and profile as the moderator. In addition it is expected from him/her to have experience in cooperating with the municipality and other relevant local organizations as well as experience in facilitation, coordination and reporting.

The co-moderator represents “the right arm of the moderator”. His in-depth knowledge of the local situation and actors should allow him/her to be the “local leader” of the organization and implementation of the planned meetings. In the longer run, it is expected that this local co-moderator becomes confident enough to facilitate the meetings discussions along and to replace the moderator.

In addition, the co-moderator also directly cooperates with the forum organizer(s), the moderator and the members of the operational group. He/she is formally the coordinator/team leader of the operational group. He acts as the contact person of the operational group and is in this sense in close contact with the organizers of the forum/the municipality. This implies constant communication with relevant municipal representatives and ensuring that proper support is provided.

To sum up, his/her main responsibilities are to support the moderator in his/her work, lead the operational group and contribute to the moderation of the meetings. In addition the co-moderator is in close interaction with the municipal representative appointed to the operational group and with the mayor and/or official(s) from the municipal administration involved in the thematic field(s) that is (are) of relevance for the planned meeting. He/she ensures the coordination of the support provided to the partner/municipality.

To sum-up, the main functions of the co-moderator are:

- To support the moderator
- To co-moderate the meetings
- To lead and coordinate the work of the operational group and the overall preparation of the meetings.
- In the longer run, the co-moderator should gradually take on the responsibilities of the (professional) moderator and replace him/her.

Annex 2 provides with a description of the competences expected from a co-moderator.

2.3. Role and responsibilities of the operational group (OG)

The operational group (OG) is the structure set in place to prepare and directly support the meetings. In this sense its main responsibilities include disseminating information on the meetings and inviting participants in parallel to supporting the municipality preparing the meeting. The OG is also available for support during the meeting (preparation of the room, of the necessary material, etc.). It is finally responsible for taking the minutes of the meeting and preparing compiling the information that could be disseminated. In order to avoid conflicts of interest, OG members usually do not participate in the debates and personally do not initiate any discussion.



Work of the operational group - Preparation of material for a municipal forum



Arrival of participants - Registration and distribution of material

The operational group gathers residents of the municipality in which the meetings are organized. It often consists of 3-5 persons who represent different target groups/interest groups (public, business and civil sector). In this respect, it is recommended that the operational group consists of: the co-moderator (originating from the local civil society), one representative from the municipality (municipal administration), one representative of the media and one representative of every main affected party (NGO and/or business sector).

The OG should appoint an information officer (IO) that will be the person responsible for the public relations/external communication of the operational group. In case the operational group counts a representative of the media among its members, he/she should be appointed as IO. In other cases, the choice needs to be made based on the competences available in the operational group.

The operational group should also appoint somebody responsible for maintaining records/minutes of the meeting. This responsibility is in general given to the person appointed as information officer.

The operational group has to contribute to the preparation and organization of the meeting and to support the moderator and co-moderator in the accomplishment of their duties and obligations.

The main functions of the operational group are:

- To support the co-moderator
- To work in close cooperation with the co-moderator on the preparation and organization of the meetings, this includes:
 - mobilizing participants to the meetings;
 - identifying/gathering information on key potential participants;
 - disseminating invitations and information on the meeting;
 - linking with the media (written press, TV + Radio) and preparing press releases;
 - preparing the list of participants and ensuring it is signed during the meeting;
 - overall preparation of the room of the meeting (booking the place, logistics, ensuring that the necessary technical equipment is available, etc.);
 - taking the minutes during the meeting;
 - ensuring public information on the conclusions of the meeting.

The activities of the OG should respect and be guided by the following basic principles and criteria:

- Transparency
- Ethnic and gender balance
- Invitation of key actors who would be interested and affected by the topic of the meeting.

Annex 3 provides with a description of the competences expected from the members of the operational group.

Annex 4 gives a description of the competences expected from the person(s) responsible for public information/relations (IO).



Mobilization - Posters are being placed on municipal public boards and in most frequented places of the municipality

3. METHODS FOR MOBILISATION AND MOTIVATION

This second part introduces the different methods and channels available for informing and inviting citizens and local organizations to participate in the meeting. Public information and “mobilization” constitute the main responsibilities of the operational group.

The approach to be followed by the OG members can be separated in three consecutive steps. Attention should first be given to identifying key participants/groups to be invited. In a second stage, disseminating information and inviting participants constitute the core activities of the members of the OG. For this purpose, it is recommended to use methods that favour direct contacts with possible participants and techniques that will allow for snowball effects. Third, it is worth noting that public information should also be ensured after the meeting, in order to ensure that the population is informed about the points raised and the conclusions reached during the meeting and in order to ensure proper follow-up. Taking minutes, compiling the conclusions of the meetings and preparing press releases also fall within the responsibility of the operational group.

3.1. Identification of potential participants

First, the co-moderator in close cooperation with the operational group (OG) prepares a list of key participants from each municipal settlement/village. Usually around 100 key participants for municipalities with up to 10,000 residents and 150 for municipalities with more than 15,000 residents are to be identified and to be contacted individually to participate in the meeting. The participants' list should contain basic data: first and last name, settlement/village, telephone (to be complemented with address and email if is possible).

The list of proposed (key) participants should include:

- Chairman and members of the local communities / villages
- Activists from civil society organisations
- Employees of the municipality and other public institutions
- Teachers/professors from education institutions (elementary and secondary schools, etc.)
- Influential and respected residents (doctors, health workers, representatives of the religious communities)
- Youth (focus on young intellectuals)
- Women (active, with interest and influence among local women groups)
- Active retirees
- Successful farmers
- Owners/managers of private companies

This list can be extended to include other relevant participants depending on the local conditions, opportunities, needs and the topic of the meeting.

It is recommended that this list be prepared two weeks before the first meeting. The same list can then be used for inviting/informing the potential participants of following meetings. Even if a participant did not attend the first meeting, he can be invited again to upcoming meetings. In addition, the operational group members, in direct cooperation with the co-moderator, should continue identifying additional

persons that should be invited in order to replace invited people that did not show up on the occasion of the first meeting and thus ensure that a sufficient number of participants are gathered.

3.2. Inviting and Informing

Direct invitations/announcements to specific groups

Telephone calls

The most basic and fastest way for the direct invitation of participants is to make telephone calls (cell or home). It is the duty of the operational group members to call and inform participants. It is important to transmit a positive and motivating message with the aim of encouraging participation. At the same time, it is important to encourage the contacted persons to spread the information and to invite other persons from their place of residence to participate in the meetings. It is recommended to use municipal infrastructure/phones for conducting this activity or to ensure that a small additional financial compensation is given to the members of the operational group in order to cover the communication expenses.

A follow-up of whom was contacted (possibly including a feedback: positive reply vs. negative reply, will attend vs. will not attend) must be ensured. Members of the operational group must include this information on the list of identified participants. In case no contact could be established on the occasion of the first call, that person should be called again.

Written invitations

Written invitations can be sent through mail, fax, electronically (e-mail) or through direct delivery. This method is used in rare cases, primarily due to constraining factors such as longer time of delivery of the invitation by mail and lack of technical conditions for sending invitation via fax or e-mail (smaller and rural areas that are isolated have in general no infrastructure for this kind of communication). However in larger (and better equipped) settlements written invitations have a great potential. Receiving a formal personal invitation is positive and gives importance to the event. This encourages potential participants to come to the meeting.

Preparatory visits/meetings with local communities

Individual meetings

In larger neighbourhoods/settlements, the local community representatives and the village representatives should be used as key contact points to disseminate information and invitations. They can then directly inform their community and the residents about the meeting and its purpose. They can further hold preparatory meetings in their neighbourhood. For this purpose, the co-moderator together with OG group members should prepare an overview of all village councils and representatives that are active on the territory of the municipality. They should contact them directly (through an official letter) in order to inform them on the meeting and its objectives and also in order to make them aware of the importance and usefulness of organizing preparatory meetings at the local community/village level. These activities are to be organized at least two weeks before the meeting.

Meeting with focus groups/specific sectors

In certain municipalities, where there are clearly defined target groups (groups with common interest) and depending on the nature/complexity of the topic, it is recommended to hold preparatory meetings with them before the main meeting. Here, the procedure to organize these types of meetings can be exactly the same as for the organization of the main meeting. Only representatives of the target groups (interest groups) that are relevant for the topic of the main meeting are invited to these preparatory meetings. If necessary several preparatory meetings can be held with the same interest groups.

For instance, it is often the case that these focus group meetings gather certain civil society organizations or other interest groups (e.g. farmers associations, retirees associations, youth and sports groups, ecological groups, women's associations, touristic workers, etc.).

Using available media channels

It is also important to make use of available media channels to disseminate information both before and after the meeting. In this respect, the OG member that is responsible for public relations (IO) is also responsible to prepare a list of the media (printed, audio and electronic) which operate within the territory of the municipality or are relevant for its population. According to the possibilities and the local context, journalists should be contacted either per e-mail or per phone calls. All local media should be invited to the meetings.

Press releases

The IO is responsible to inform and report on the meeting. He/she prepares the text/press releases (journalistic, short and interesting) which are going to be distributed to the media/journalists in order to inform the general public about the meeting and its results.

In this respect, press releases have to be prepared at least twice. Once before the meeting (often two days earlier) in order to announce it and a second time immediately after the meeting took place in order to disseminate the conclusions and recommendations reached during the meeting.

TV/Audio Advertisements

The OG member that has been appointed Information Officer (IO) is responsible to prepare the text for the audio/radio announcements of the meeting. Radio announcements should be used to inform the general public on the topic and objectives of the meeting as well as on its date, time and location. The message should be short, interesting and encouraging (positive). The slogan of the message should be prepared in the spirit with the local context and traditions. It is recommended that this notice should be emitted 5 days before the meeting. Local radio stations are often key channels to successfully inform citizens.

Disseminating information in public places

Information through billboards/posters

It is recommended to work on the preparation of billboards/posters, with which will inform the municipal residents on the meeting/session (topic + date, time, location). Information should be displayed in a clear, simple and interesting manner in order to easily attract the attention of every citizen.



Mobilization - Posters are being placed on municipal public boards and in most frequented places of the municipality

In order to minimize costs, the model of the poster has to be unified for all meetings. In such a template poster, certain areas are to be left blank (smaller fields, rectangles). Information relating to a specific meeting can then be added manually with a marker: the topic of the meeting, location and date and time of meeting. It is not expected to have luxurious and quality posters. What matters is to have a quality good enough to disseminate the information and to ensure that posters do not deteriorate too rapidly due to transport and/or weather conditions. If the project covers several municipalities and/or if there are several meetings to be organized, printing a large number of template posters for all municipalities at the very start will allow obtaining better prices and for the municipalities to have sufficient stock to organize several meetings.

Annex 5 provides examples of posters of the municipal forum organized in the LOGOS project in Kosovo.

The posters are to be distributed to every co-moderator (an average of 50 for each meeting) who, with the rest of the OG, is responsible to place them in visible places which are easily accessible and widely visited. For instance, these posters can be placed in entrances of shops, schools, in the locations where posters and other announcements are usually placed, close to religious buildings, bus stations, sport buildings, municipal buildings, local community/village buildings, in front of markets, health centers, small post offices and other public buildings.

3.3. Reporting on the results of the meeting

As implied in the above, the OG member in charge of public information is also responsible to produce the material that will inform citizens on the results / conclusions of the meeting.

The IO should take statements, make interviews of the participants and prepare a short text summarizing/compiling the statements. This text should then be transmitted to the co-moderator and to the project leader (if relevant). This text should also be used to inform participants and the general public and thus to encourage participation in the future.

At the end of the event, the IO must also prepare a report on the event (in coordination with the rest of the OG and in particular the person responsible for taking minutes if he/she is a different one). The report needs to be short, simple and interesting for the public. The report should be sent to the local media and published on the project/municipal webpage.

If relevant, the IO must also gather all the articles covering the meeting that were published in the media (they are usually published immediately after the meeting).

It is very important that the IO works on promoting at the local level the results of the meeting directly after it (in order to also promote participation in future meetings).

Where possible, and as implied in the above, it is recommended to also contact local TV and radio stations to attend the meeting. The IO is responsible to ensure these contacts, to invite local TV and radios to the meeting and to ensure contact between them and the project leader, moderator and co-moderator.

4. PREPARING THE MEETING

4.1. Selection of the proper location and time for the meeting

Finding a proper location for the meeting and making the necessary booking and arrangements is to be done by the operational group in close coordination with the organizer(s) of the forum/the municipality and the moderator. In particular, the organizer/municipality needs to approve the location chosen for the meeting.

The venue in which the meeting will be held is to be located on the territory of the municipality. It furthermore needs to be large enough and easily accessible. It is also advised to choose the place with the highest concentration of inhabitants in order to easily motivate an important part of the population to join the meeting. The location should be a well-known place and should offer easy access, especially in winter conditions.

The size of the room has to be at least big enough for up to 100-150 persons and should offer a minimum of comfort to host such a large number of participants. Premises of the municipality, school buildings, cultural houses, local community houses or large conference rooms are often used for organizing these types of meetings. If possible, it is recommended to avoid rooms with pillars or other obstacles that could prevent visibility during the meeting.



Importance of finding a suitable place for the meeting to take place - this is a school on Saturday



During the forum – Plenary



The room should be equipped with adequate light and a proper heating system. If the room is not well heated, this can significantly affect participation during the winter period. This can also give a negative impression to participants and reduce participation in the next meeting.

If there are several meetings in one municipality, it is recommended to organize all meetings in the same venue and at the same time.

In terms of time and date, it is recommended to carefully evaluate what could be optimal for the local communities, with the objective of gathering as many participants as possible. The co-moderator together with the members of the OG has to make an assessment of what could be the most appropriate and convenient time for the inhabitants to join the meeting. In this context, experiences show that residents are not really willing to devote leisure time (weekends and late evenings) to municipal meetings. Schedule and timing can be different from one municipality to another depending on various factors, such as work obligations of the population, farming season, traditional celebrations, sports events, atmospheric conditions, traditional habits of the population, etc. Again, it is recommended to avoid weekends.

4.2. Preparation of the agenda and structure of the meetings

An agenda of one page only has to be prepared for every meeting. It needs to include a general overview of the topic of the meeting, of the points to be discussed and if possible indicate the results (outputs) to be achieved during the meeting. The agenda should be prepared by the moderator in consultation with the forum organizer/the municipality. The format of the agenda has to be standardised. The agenda should be finalised for every meeting at least three days prior to the meeting day.

Every agenda has to contain:

- The topic of the meeting;
- The list of the points to be discussed during the meeting (first, second, third, etc.);
- The place, location and time of the meeting;

The optimal length for the meeting is 3 hours, with a break of 15 to 30 minutes for refreshments. If a lunch is served it is preferable to have it at the end of the meeting. By serving the lunch at the end of the meeting, the public will be more inclined to stay till the end of the meeting.

It is recommended to place logos of the project/municipality on the agenda.

4.3. Provision of additional material

Based on the equipment already available at the location of the meeting and on the structure of the meeting (types of presentations to be provided, work plenary session vs. separate working groups, etc.), the operational group needs to prepare a list of the material/equipment that will be necessary to conduct the meetings (microphones, speakers, computers, screens, etc.).



During the session - importance taking the necessary material - projector and screen



During the session - importance taking the necessary material – translation



Annex 6 provides with a review of activities for mobilisation and motivation

Annex 7 provides with a checklist of the equipment that is generally useful for holding public meetings.

5. FACILITATION AND MODERATION OF THE MEETING

As expressed in the above, the moderator and co-moderator play a critical role during the meeting. With the help of the co-moderator, the moderator steers and facilitates discussions. He/she ensures that discussions proceed in a fluent, constructive and respectful manner. As implied in the above, he/she does not need to be an expert on the topic under discussion but should nevertheless be well-aware of the topic and objective(s) of the meeting and have informed himself/herself on its implications for the locality/municipality. This knowledge will help him/her steer the discussions and have it focused on the points that are to be discussed. The moderator furthermore plays a crucial role in ensuring that everybody can actively participate in discussions and has his/her opinion heard. This also needs to be taken into account when defining the structure of the meeting and time devoted to each topic. The moderator needs to define appropriate mechanisms and discussions structures for this purpose.

5.1. Basic recommendations on facilitation

The moderator and co-moderator are key players for conducting the meeting and moderating it. They have to steer the discussions whilst avoiding offending the local population. A successful moderator looks the participants in the eyes. He/she has to show neutrality and should not favour some participants over others. The moderator and co-moderator have to react to what the participants say with moderation, with a smile, movement of the head or with a gesture that shows that they are listening to them carefully. It is important not to make unexpected moves and not to point peoples with the finger or a pen/paper sheet. It is better to give the floor using full names or making a wave with the whole hand.

In addition, it is strongly recommended not to use the words or expressions such as “NO” or “WRONG”. If the statement or intervention of a participant is not clear or out of the topic, the moderator/co-moderator has to react with a positive approach and to ask for explanation/elaboration, without taking a defensive stance. He/she shall in no way attack a participant in order to defend himself/herself. The terms “I THINK DIFFERENTLY” or “YOU ARE NOT RIGHT/ YOU ARE WRONG” should not be used. It is better to replace these expressions by: “I agree with almost everything you say, but” or “have you thought about”.

A good moderator first expresses some praises and thanks the participant for his/her intervention. He/she comments afterwards if it is needed.

Another advice is to avoid closed questions (yes/no answers), which do not promote discussions. Above all, the moderator and co-moderator should not give answers or enter into the content of the debate (i.e. become part of the debate). They should facilitate the process and not present themselves as experts on the topic under discussion. It is furthermore useful to use paraphrases in order to repeat some information and control whether he/she understood well what the participants have expressed and in order to emphasize/repeat what has been said before. In this respect, it is important to repeat and summarize discussions in order for everyone to understand it. This furthermore helps steer the discussions.

If is often important/necessary to remind the participants of the agenda and of the time allocated for discussions. Sometimes processes are however more important than time. When discussions go well and require more time, it is better to show flexibility with the agenda and allow the discussion process to continue.

The instructions that the moderator and co-moderator give during the meeting have to be clear, well articulated and audible. It is useful to check and ask whether they have been understood by the participants.

If there is material that should be distributed to the participants, this should not be distributed during activities or in the middle of session/discussion. It should be avoided that participants are distracted in the middle of activities or the meeting and start reading a document.

The most important fact remains that the moderator and co-moderator do not hold a lecture or training but they lead/facilitate a public debate.

5.2. Techniques for encouraging and facilitating the discussion

The moderator and co-moderator should have good interpersonal/communication skills. Nonverbal communication is as important as verbal/oral. Gesture, the positions of hands, body, looking in the eyes (nonverbal communication) ensure feedback effect for active participation of participants. Of course, verbal communication is also of key importance. In concrete terms, this refers to the intonation, the level of voice, the choice of vocabulary, the way of asking questions and giving feedback. Particular attention should be paid to all these dimensions for a successful moderation of the meeting.

Monologues/very long interventions should be avoided in these meetings. The purpose is really to allow for a dialogue to take place and to support active participation of most participants of the meeting. In this respect, the most useful techniques that should be used to promote and encourage participation are the following: asking questions to the audience; encouraging answers from the speakers; listening carefully; welcoming/praising; using paraphrasing; repeating certain statements and positions; and requesting the consent/approval of the audience for adopting decisions.

Questions have to be clear, simple and short in order for all participants to understand them.

In order to promote answers the moderator and co-moderator have to show attention to public. The moderator and the co-moderator should listen carefully when participants discuss and express themselves. They should further encourage the audience to listen carefully.



During the session - participants should be allowed to take the floor - ask questions and react to the presentations



Participants are split into topical working groups

Every statement should be welcomed with expressions such as “good”, “excellent”, “it is an interesting idea”, “interesting comment” etc. Submitting the comment of a participant to the rest of the assembly is also welcomed in order to prolong the discussion on a specific point and to get additional opinions: “this is a great idea, what do you think? etc.”, “does anyone wish to add something? This is used to steer the discussions in one direction or another.

At the end of each discussion, the debates should be summed up. The moderator and/or co-moderator should then control/ask whether there is a consensus to adopt a common conclusion/recommendation (for instance by asking: “do you agree with what has been said?”).



Participants are split into topical working groups

Invite experts on the issue(s) under discussion

For every meeting it is helpful to invite experts on the topic that is under discussion. It is the duty of the co-moderator in agreement with the organizer of the forum / the municipality. They most often are representatives of the municipality but if necessary they can also be external experts from specific fields. Their presence is also necessary in order to clarify certain issues, especially on specific topics where representatives of the municipality and the project team do not have sufficient knowledge and expertise. Municipal officials and/or local experts will usually play an important role at the start of the meeting in order to introduce the topic and make introductory presentations.

Use of working groups/roundtables discussions based on topic/interests

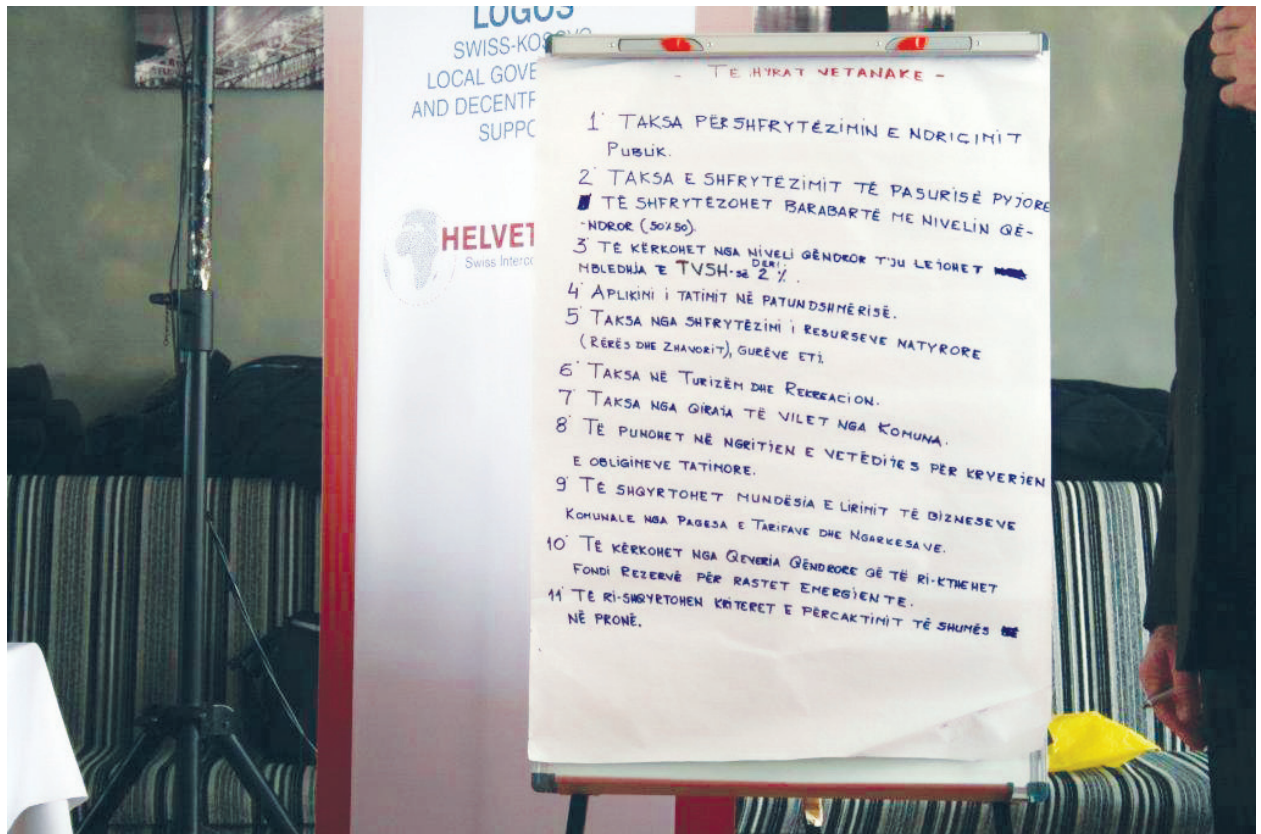
In order to ease discussions on specific issues, it is useful to conduct part of the meeting in smaller working groups. Working groups are often divided by interest or field of action (eg. working groups – farmers, business sector, culture, education workers, sport and recreation etc.). The purpose of working groups is to better introduce and deal with the issues concerning their community or to deal with specific issues. Division in working groups is often done in the second half of the meeting. This means that the table arrangement and chairs will need to be adjusted for allowing the gathering of working groups (this re-arrangement of the room can for instance easily be done during a coffee break).



Participants are split into topical working groups

An easy way to arrange the room for the working groups is to allocate one table for each working group and to clearly indicate which working group is where. The work in smaller working groups should allow for active discussions.

The content of the discussions of every working group, the proposals and recommendations expressed should be written on cards or directly on the paper of flip charts in order to be presented to the plenary later.



Vote - the forums usually end up with the audience taking decision or approving conclusions

Definition of individual/group tasks

The moderator and the members of the operative group already have clearly defined responsibilities for the preparation of the meeting and for its implementation. In particular, during the meeting the moderator is in charge of the overall progress of the debates and act as the time keeper. He decides if more time should be devoted and when it is time to move to the next point of the agenda. The moderator is also responsible for distributing individual and group tasks that will need to be fulfilled during the meeting and that will ensure its fluency. For instance, one needs to identify before the meeting the members of the OG that will be responsible for registering participants, taking minutes, handling of the microphones and taking pictures.

The distribution of responsibilities is also especially important when people who are not part of the operational group will be necessary. This especially applies in cases where participants are divided into working groups. Their work needs to be organized. In this respect, one needs to appoint a moderator for each working group, a minute taker and a person that will present the results to the plenary. They should be clearly identified before the discussions start in the working groups.



Vote - the forums usually end up with the audience taking decision or approving conclusions

Summarizing the discussions & voting on priorities/conclusions

As mentioned above, it is very important to take time to summarize the discussions and ask the audience whether it has questions and agrees with what has been discussed. The moderator and co-moderator should take the lead in repeating the main points of the discussions and (if necessary) checking the consensus.

This summary of the main points discussed should happen at the end of each topic under discussion and is especially important at the time of closing the meeting. The main conclusions of the meeting should be summed and repeated. This will on the one hand help ensuring reporting on and a follow-up of the meeting but above all ensure that people feel involved with what has been discussed and decided.

An additional option for the population to feel involved and committed to what has been discussed/decided is to make people vote at the end of the meeting. Depending on the topic of the forum, people can either vote on the conclusions of the meeting or on different options/possible priorities identified through the meeting. For instance, and once they even be presented to the plenary, the conclusions of the working groups should be approved or selected through a vote of all participants.



Vote - the forums usually end up with the audience taking decision or approving conclusions

Visualisation techniques

The use of technical tools for qualitative visual presentations and for steering the meeting is necessary.

In general, it is useful to provide visual presentations (often using a projector), especially at the start of the meeting and the time of the introduction in order to present the agenda, topics or clarify the topic and structure of the meeting.

In order to keep track of the discussion and for participants to visualise progress, it is also generally useful to write key observations raised by participants and display them visually (through a flipchart or the projector for instance).



Vote - the forums usually end up with the audience taking decision or approving conclusions

The OG in cooperation with the co-moderator is responsible for providing and preparing all the necessary technical tools: a computer, a projector, a screen for the projector, table for flip chart and paper, a box with the necessary markers, cards, pins and glue, are part of the necessary equipment for the successful implementation of a meeting (please refer to the checklist provided in Annex 7). If necessary, it is also recommended to bring proper sound equipment.

Translation material may also be necessary. This includes providing the following material: cabins, headphones and microphones (one of which must be mobile). This also requires hiring professional translators.

ANNEXES

Annex 1 – Terms of reference for the moderator

Annex 2 – Terms of reference for the co-moderator

Annex 3 – Terms of reference for the operational group (OG)

Annex 4 – Terms of reference for the information officer (IO)

Annex 5 – Posters used in community forums in LOGOS partner municipalities in Kosovo

Annex 6 – Review of activities for mobilisation and motivation

Annex 7 – Checklist for the material necessary to conduct the meeting

Terms of reference for moderator

Position	Moderator
Purpose of work	Managing the overall process of preparing and implementing the meetings in all selected municipalities
Responds to	Project manager
Responsible for	Co-moderator (indirectly for the operational group)
Specific responsibilities	■ Lead the preparation of the meeting (in cooperation with the co-moderator and the operative group); ■ Lead the process of the meetings and facilitate discussions (in cooperation with the co-moderator); Coordinate the work of the co-moderator and of the operational group; ■ Prepare the agenda (in cooperation with the project manager) for each meeting; ■ Support the forum organizer with the presentations to be done during the meeting (format, adapt substance to target group, etc.) (if necessary); ■ Moderate and support active discussions during the meeting; ■ Participate in trainings and meetings organized by the project team/donor; ■ Implement other activities upon request of project manager or donor .
Key relations (internal/external)	Project manager; co-moderator; operational group; members of the working groups; representatives of the municipal administration.

Terms of reference for co-moderator

Position	Co-moderator
Team	Support the work of the moderator, lead the operational group and co-moderate the meetings
Purpose of work	Moderator and project manager
Responds to	Operational group (OG)
Responsible for	Operational group (OG)
Specific responsibilities	■ Coordinate the work of the members of the operational group to collect the necessary information and identify the possible key participants in the meetings; ■ Coordinate and communicate with mayor and municipal administration; ■ Invite and mobilize the participants to the meetings. The co-moderator in close cooperation with the members of the operational group prepares the lists of all potential participants. He/she together with members of the operational group contacts directly and informs possible participants on the topic, objective and date of the meeting. This also implies preparing the invitations that are sent to the participants; ■ Support the OG in placing posters in public buildings and places that are most frequented by the population; ■ Organize and manage the preparatory meetings organized with the population of the villages/settlements before the meetings; ■ Arrange other meetings on request of the moderator or project manager; ■ (if relevant) Organize meetings with other identified key participants for “motivation” – explanation of the objectives of the meeting (with the support of the operational group); ■ Provide support to the Operational Group for contacts with the media and the press; ■ (in coordination with the operation group) Prepare the meetings (help chose the location, ensure adequate meeting space, audio equipment with sound system, refreshments and other logistical assistance (flip chart table, projector, etc); ■ Support the OG in preparing the meeting room (placement of chairs and tables provision of technical equipments, etc); ■ Co-moderate the meetings and support facilitation. He/she supports the moderation during the meeting and should gradually take increasing responsibilities in moderation; ■ (with the operational group) Support participants during the meetings and working groups formed by participants (if there are working groups); ■ Prepare the documentation for the meeting (list of participants, presentations, etc) and invit experts from the municipal administration or relevant project team for the topic of the meeting; ■ Take care of the timely preparation of the minutes of the meetings, including the necessary final list of participants, summaries and other documents; ■ Participate in the trainings and meetings organized by the project team/donor; ■ Perform other activities as requested by the moderator or project manager;
Key relations (internal/external)	Moderator; project manager; operational group; members of the working groups and participants; representatives of the municipal administration.

Terms of reference for the members of operational group (OG)

Position	Member of the operational group (OG) / 3-5 persons
Purpose of work	Prepare and organize meetings; Support the moderator and the co-moderator; Provide background documents for follow-up (minutes, list of participants, etc.)
Responds to	Co-moderator
Responsibilities	■ Coordinate with the co-moderator for the identification of key participants in the meetings; ■ Organize preparatory meetings for informing/inviting the participants to the meeting; ■ “Mobilization”: Inform citizens on the meetings. The members of OG in close co-operation with the co-moderator prepare the list of all potential participants. The members of OG together with the co-moderator contact directly and inform possible participants on the topic, objectives and date of the meeting. In addition, and if necessary, the OG sends invitations that have been previously prepared by the co-moderator; ■ Place posters in public buildings and other places that are most frequented by the population; ■ Support the organization of preparatory meetings with the inhabitants of various villages/settlements before the main meeting. The OG members identify and inform the participants of these preparatory meetings; ■ Inform and invite the media (in particular the local ones); ■ Prepare the hall/room of the meetings (support on installing the voice equipment, refreshments, chairs and tables and any other logistic support on request of the facilitator (flip chart table, projector, etc); ■ Provide technical support for organizing the meeting: make the necessary arrangements in the meeting room, monitor the registration of participants (most often through presence at the entrance of the hall making the participants sign the list and making available to them all the material that is relevant for the meeting) , prepare and distribute the cards and material necessary for the working groups, flip chart cards, distribute the evaluation sheets, etc.; ■ Organize/prepare public information: organize press conferences, interviews, public statements (this mainly refers to the member of the operational group that is responsible for public relation/information); ■ Prepare the participants list and ensure it is signed by participants; ; ■ Take minutes during the meeting; ■ Distribute relevant documents; ■ Participate in the trainings (meetings or events) organized by the team of the project/donor; ■ Perform other duties as requested by the co-moderator.
Key internal/external relations	With his/her colleagues of the OG, the moderator; co-moderator and representatives of the municipal administration.

Terms of reference for public information officer

Position	Information officer (IO) (as part of the operational group)
Team	Operational group
Purpose of work	Ensure public information on the meeting and contacts with the media
Responds to	Moderator and co-moderator
Specific responsibilities	1. Preparatory activities ■ Prepare a list of the media: printed, audio and electronic which are present/operating within the municipality (if possible with journalists' contacts, e-mail addresses and telephone numbers). They will be asked to report on the meetings. ■ Prepare text/press releases (journalistic, short and interesting) which are going to be distributed to the media/journalists in order to inform the citizens about the meeting and its results. ■ Invite all local media to the meetings. 2. Promotion ■ Prepare short jingles – audio ads which will be distributed to all local/ national radio which are being listened to on the territory of the municipality. This is intended to stimulate and encourage citizens to participate in the meeting. The jingle should be short, interesting and easily understandable for the citizens. The jingle should contain positive, interesting and encouraging messages. ■ The jingle should be submitted to the media and should be emitted five days before the meeting. 3. Activities during the meeting ■ Take minutes (in agreement with the division of responsibilities in the OG) ■ Take statements/ make interviews of the participants (2-3). ■ Prepare short text summarizing/compiling the statements and publish them. This text should be used to inform on the results of the meeting and thus encourage participation in future ones. 4. Reporting after the meeting ■ Prepare a report on the event (short and simple). ■ Send the report to the local media and publish it on the project/municipal webpage. ■ (if relevant) Gather the articles covering the meeting in the media (they are usually published immediately after the meeting). ■ Promote the results to the local level immediately after the first meeting.



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Tema: _____

Data: _____

Ora: _____

Në: _____

Ju mirepresim.

Financuar nga:



LOGOS

Review of activities for motivation and mobilization

MUNICIPALITY: _____

TOPIC OF THE _____

MEETING: _____

DATE OF THE _____

MEETING: _____

ACTIVITY		WHEN?	HOW?	WHO?	REMARKS
Identification of participants					
Direct invitations	Telephone calls				
	Written invitations				
Individual meetings	Direct meetings with local communities				
	Meetings with focus groups				
Information and press releases	Processing of the jingles (slogan)				
	Press release				
	Reporting the results				
Information through billboards and posters					

Checklist for the material necessary to conduct the meeting

MUNICIPALITY: _____

TOPIC OF THE

MEETING: _____

DATE OF THE

MEETING: _____

	WHO?	WHEN?	REMARKS
Place (name and capacity)			
Flip chart paper (how much?)			
Table			
Projector			
Laptop or computer			
Extension cable			
Bag with additional elements			
Amplifiers			
Translation equipment			
Professional translators			
Refreshments (drinks)			
Power Point presentation			
Hard copy material			
Photographing			
Banner			



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