



Australia South Africa Local Governance Partnership
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**A 'tool kit' to Support Public Participation
in Local Governance**

Introduction

About the 'tool kit'

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa emphasizes the importance of involving people in programmes aimed at improving their lives. The Municipal Systems Act 2000 states that municipalities are required to establish mechanisms, processes and procedures to enable local communities to participate in local governance affairs.

This kit can be seen as a tool box containing the tools municipal staff and elected officials can use to include the community in their decisions. The toolkit can be built on according to local needs and conditions.

The tools in this kit were designed during an activity conducted by the Australia South African Local Governance Partnership (ASALGP) with Maluti a Phofung Local Municipality and Thabo Mofutsanyane District Municipality in Free State. All the ideas and suggested ways of communicating and working with the public were tested out in the region. So the approach has come from a very practical road test. The team of advisors included staff of the two municipalities and the Provincial Department of Local Government and Housing and two local community workers.

The team was led by an experienced community development worker who provided on the job training for this team to raise their ability to work together on joint problems in the region.

There are many different ways to encourage public participation eg written surveys, online feedback or calling for public submissions, but this toolkit mainly covers personal contact either through community meetings, or one to one, as these were the most suitable ways the team used in Maluti a Phofung.

ASALGP is funded by the Australian Government through their aid agency, AusAID. The aim of ASALGP is to support the development of local government in South Africa.

ASALGP would like to thank all those who were involved in putting this document together. We hope it will be of use to many people in South Africa.

What is Public Participation?

Public or community participation refers to:

‘an open, accountable process through which individuals and groups within selected communities can exchange views and influence decision making’.

Throughout the tool kit, the terms ‘public’ and ‘community’ are used interchangeably as they mean the same thing.

An Overview of the 'tool kit'

The document is divided into six sections:

Section One: Background to community participation in local governance:

This section provides a background to public participation in local governance. It looks at the policy framework for public participation in South Africa. It shows the concept and principles of public participation, as well as outlining various forms. It highlights the advantages and challenges to community participation.

Section Two: Strategies for community participation:

This section is an overview of strategies you can use in public participation. It shows how important good planning is for effective public participation. It further emphasizes the importance of establishing ways to include the community in municipal decision making. It shows the need for all people involved in decision making to reach a common understanding of the concept of public participation. Lastly, it provides guidelines for preparing for participatory events.

Section Three: Identifying community stakeholders to participate in municipal decision making:

'Stakeholders' are people or groups who have an interest in the decisions being made. The section shows you how to identify community stakeholders that can work with municipalities on decisions affecting service delivery.

Section Four: Conducting preparatory workshops for coordination committees and ward councillors:

This section tells you why it is important to set up coordinating arrangements to take charge of a community participation strategy. It then provides guidelines for how to prepare your coordination committee and ward councillors, for the actual strategy. There is particular focus on the training steps needed for effective engagement with communities.

Section Five: Running public meetings or events

This section identifies the roles of key officials, i.e. councillors and appointed officials in community participation. It also identifies the role of community stakeholders.

Section 6: Review and evaluation

This section suggests how to measure whether the participation process you used worked for the people involved. It shows you how to ask participants what they thought and how to follow on from what they suggest.

Section One

Background to Community Participation in Local Governance

1.1 Policy Framework for Community Participation in Local Governance

South Africa has laws that require community input as part of the decision making processes of local government. The Constitution says that one of the objects of local government is to encourage the involvement of local communities and community organizations in local government affairs. It goes even further to say that the public must be encouraged to participate in policy-making processes. This puts the responsibility on to local government to actively work out ways to include the community in decision making.

These basic constitutional requirements are made even clearer in the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 2000 that contains a chapter on public participation. The Systems Act states in Section 4(2) that “a municipal council, within the municipality’s financial and administrative capacity and having regard to practical considerations, has the duty to, amongst other things, encourage the involvement of the local community and to consult the local community about:

- The level, quality, range and impact of municipal services provided by the municipality, either directly or through another service provider; and
- The available options for service delivery.

Local authorities, of course, have been democratically elected to represent their voters so they have the ultimate responsibility for making and implementing decisions. The community votes for the people they like based on the policies the party told the electorate about before the election. The majority of the community has given them the right to make a number of decisions based on these policies. However, not all policies are totally comprehensive, nor are they always completely thought through. Some policies will be found not to work as they begin to be implemented. Therefore, there is always room for community input, and indeed, research has shown that involving the community can ensure greater success of various policies.

Local authorities are expected to encourage maximum participation of citizens in decision-making process so people can take part in the life of the country, and to help build the nation. At the heart of developmental local government is the principle of working with citizens and groups in the community to find sustainable ways to meet social, economic and material needs and improve the quality of life. This local democracy at work demonstrates government’s commitment to democracy in a very real way.

1.2 The Concept and Principles of Community Participation

Definition

The following material was found in a scan of literature about public participation in South Africa and around the world.

The term public participation, or community participation, broadly refers to the process of involving the public in decision making, implementation and evaluation of programmes affecting their lives (Healthy Cities Australia: Starting Out, 1992).

Public participation is a democratic process of engaging people in thinking, deciding, planning, and playing an active part in the development and operation of services that affect their lives (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1973).

In South Africa, the term community participation tends to be used interchangeably with public participation. An example is the South African Constitution which identifies one of the objects of local government as being “to encourage the involvement of communities and community organizations in matters of local government” (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996)

The participation of communities in matters affecting their lives is a way of ensuring a sense of dignity and self respect for those involved; local people’s knowledge about their lives is respected and taken into account when governments make decisions. Democracy is about communities saying what they need and how to meet that need. Constructive change will be more possible when people tell governments what they need. Government programs and actions can then be based more clearly on the reality of people’s lives.

Basic assumptions underlying participation can include the following:

- Participation is a fundamental right of all people.
- Decisions made by people on their own behalf will often be better than those made for them by other people because people know what they need in their own lives.
- Skills learned through participation can be extended to other aspects of participant’s lives. For example, the experience of participation often leads to a general increase in personal confidence and development and this flows over into other aspects of people’s lives (Liffman, M as quoted in Healthy Cities Australia: Starting Out, 1992).

Principles of Public Participation

As we have seen, at the heart of developmental local government in South Africa is the principle of working with citizens and groups in the community to find long term ways to meet social, economic and material needs and improve the quality of life. Arnstein S.R,

(1969) developed a 'ladder' of levels of possible approaches to public participation. Figure 1 below demonstrates eight different approaches to community participation.

Figure 1: Arnstein's Ladder of citizen participation

Participation	Example	Cluster
<u>Citizen control</u>	Self government – the community makes the decision	<i>Degrees of citizen power</i>
<u>Delegated power</u>	Government ultimately runs the decision making process and funds it	
<u>Partnership</u>	Joint projects – community has considerable influence on the decision making process but the government still takes responsibility for the decision	
<u>Placation</u>	Community is asked for advice and token changes are made	<i>Degrees of tokenism</i>
<u>Consultation</u>	Community is given information about the project or issues and asked to comment; their advice may be sought either through meetings or brochures but may not be reflected in the final decision, nor feedback given as to why not	
<u>Informing</u>	Community is told about the project either through meetings or leaflets, community may be asked how to use the project site or adjacent areas but their opinion may not be taken into account	
<u>Therapy</u>	Community is informed about the project and its benefits; there is no opportunity for stakeholders to express their concerns	<i>Non-participation</i>
<u>Manipulation</u>	Community is selectively told about the project according to an existing agenda. Communities' input is only used to further this existing agenda	

Extracted from ASALGP Terms of Reference: Project for Building Capacity for Public Participation, 2003

The least advanced forms of participation are at the lower end of the ladder. These include "manipulation" and "therapy" where the community is merely informed about a subject (sometimes in a selectively disclosed manner, e.g. pointing out the benefits and hiding the disadvantages). The community has no opportunity to express an opinion.

In the next more advanced rungs of the ladder, the public is informed and consulted. In these cases the community is fully informed and has the opportunity to express an opinion. However, even though the comments have to be considered, there is no guarantee that the decision making body will reflect the community's view in their final decision.

Finally, the most advanced rungs reflect varying degrees of citizen power where the community view influences the final outcome in the decision making process. Citizen control occurs when the community is given the power to make the final decision.

Local authorities, of course, have been democratically elected to represent their voters so they have the ultimate responsibility for making and implementing decisions. The community votes for the people they like based on the policies the party told the electorate about before the election. The majority of the community has given them the right to make a number of decisions based on these policies. However, not all policies are totally comprehensive, nor are they always completely thought through. Some policies will be found not to work as they begin to be implemented, therefore, there is always room for community input. Involving the community can ensure greater success of various policies.

Benefits of Public Participation

Benefits of public participation include the following:

- Improves the quality of relations between the council and its communities as the council is seen to listen to the community and act on the public's views.
- Helps to address the concerns of all interested and affected parties as the council has **consulted** a range of different people .
- Encourages citizen-focused service delivery because the council has asked what the community needs and responded to that.
- Develops a clear sense of direction for communities as the process of community consultation can help clarify and focus the community's issues.
- Makes the most of a whole range of resources in the community; a council will be unaware of the skills hidden in the community (such as local expertise and knowledge) if they never talk to community members.
- Adds value to council's decisions-making by drawing on these skills and the wisdom of community members.
- Identifies alternatives to be considered when addressing issues.
- Improves municipal credibility with the public if the municipality takes the community's opinions into account in their work.
- Reduces levels of misconception/misinformation about a project as the community has been fully informed.
- Creates a better understanding of a project and its objectives as the municipality has told the community and invited them to be involved.

- Enhances community ownership of decisions and resultant outcomes if the community has been part of the decision-making process.

Challenges to Public Participation

While there are advantages of public participation, there are limits to such participation. For example, a public participation programme cannot always:

- Overcome all opposition as the municipality may, in the end, make a decision which they think is the best for the majority of the community, but not everyone will always agree.
- Resolve differences in opinion because community opinions may vary widely about one particular issue; you cannot always please all the people all the time.
- Replace planning or regulatory processes that examine the technical aspects of projects. There are some decisions the municipality must make which are purely technical, for example planning regulations must be followed whether or not some people in the community agree with them.

Section Two

Strategies for Community Participation

2.1 Planning for Community Participation

The success of community participation processes in municipal activities will often depend on how well prepared and adequately resourced they are. Community participation processes can be quite complex and need to be thought through well to ensure that you get the best results. For this, the municipality needs to develop participation plans for all major activities otherwise it's possible to get lost in the process, or not achieve what you need to.

Municipalities could consider the following when they are planning activities:

- Detailing which planned activities will require the involvement of the community: e.g. water meter installations, rate increases, information on indigent policy of the municipalities, development of integrated development plans (IDP), etc.
- Defining the objectives of the proposed community participation events.

Some of the questions that must be answered include the following:

- What does council want to achieve from the event?
- Why should the community be involved?
- How is the community likely to benefit from the event?
- How is the municipality likely to benefit from the event?
- Outlining key stakeholders to be involved. 'Stakeholders' simply means those people who have an interest, or a 'stake' in what you are trying to do. Therefore, stakeholders will vary according to the topic you are consulting about.

Stakeholders could include the following:

- Councillors;
- Ward councillors;
- Ward committee members;
- Municipal officials;
- Community groups including youth and women;
- Other government officials;
- Business people, to name just a few;
- Describing the broad methodologies to be used for community participation.

- Giving information to communities about the project. The way you give information to communities will vary depending on the people you are trying to talk with. For instance, if you are trying to talk with older people, you may need to go to where they meet rather than expecting them to come to a venue. Or, if you are trying to talk to young people it may be best to think of some fun way to get the information across eg holding a dance and talking with young people as they arrive. Or, try not to just give written information; some people can't read. And if you are giving written information, you need to make sure it's available in people's first language, not just English for example. Some ways of giving information are:
 - Distributing pamphlets.
 - Going on road shows and talking to people personally.
 - Meetings with communities where they are most comfortable e.g. after church, in their houses, at schools.

- Outlining proposed timing of activities. Relevant information must be provided well in advance of the event to be held. The following must be outlined:
 - Date and time of the event
 - Venue for the event
 - Duration of the event
 - Number of events to be held
 - Purpose of the event
 - Speakers lined up
 - Who to contact for further information
 - Whether refreshments are included.

- Indicating resources that will be required to support the community engagement processes

'Resources' may include:

 - Transportation of communities members to the venue of the event.
 - Refreshments.
 - Relevant publications to be given to community members.
 - Information packs, etc.

2.2 Establishing Structures within Municipalities to Drive Community Participation Events

2.2.1 Coordination Committees for Specific Topics

For successful implementation of community participation events, it is critical that a core team i.e. a coordination committee is established to drive the process. The composition of this team should include the following key people:

- **The Speaker of the municipality:** Speakers of municipalities play leading roles in public participation programs. They are regarded as leaders who can represent council at public meetings. For their effective involvement in public participation, they require support from their host municipalities as well as officials involved in public participation programs.
- **A dedicated official** who is ideally appointed on a full-time basis for community participation programmes. This is critical for the coordination of all municipal public participation programmes. This official can share lessons learned from other public participation programmes of the municipality, which can result in ‘state of the art’ public participation programmes. Further, sustainability of public participation can be enhanced by the involvement of a dedicated official as officials may keep the community’s views alive within the municipality.
- **Local community advisors:** The advantage of involving local community advisors is that they are a good link between ward committees, councils, community members and other stakeholders. They are able to contact community members directly through their local networks and because people already trust them. They can keep this communication channel open between the community and the municipality and provide both with information on a continuous basis. They play a key role in ensuring the sustainability of community participation as they have a specific role to do so.
- **Ward Councillors:** As chairpersons of ward committees, Ward councillors are a direct link between communities and council. They bring important experiences of working with communities and can ensure the involvement of ward committees throughout the process.
- **The Municipal Manager or his/her assignee:** The role of the Municipal Manager or assignee will be to provide the core team with technical information on subjects discussed, as well as high-level, decision making input into the process. It is crucial that the assigned official attends all core team meetings as well as meetings with communities.

- **Key technical experts** of the municipality: These may include service providers for specific programmes. For instance, if the municipality wants involvement of the community in making decisions about the installation of water meters, the people installing the water meters need to be present as they'll have particular pieces of information about the installation, or the actual meters, which may impact on any decision being made.

2.2.2 Ward Committees

Ward committee members play an important role in encouraging community participation in local governance. They are representative of local wards and are a direct link with the municipality. They can be involved in matters such as:

- IDP development, implementation, and monitoring.
- Annual budgets and how these should be spent.
- Identification and running of projects to improve the lives of community members.
- Providing information on municipal programmes and operations to the community and vice versa.
- Help in awareness campaigns across communities.

See the ASALGP *Having Your Say* Handbook for ward committees for more information about working with ward committees.

Section Three

Identifying Community Stakeholders to Participate in Municipal Decision Making

3.1 Processes Involved in Identifying Community Stakeholders

The word ‘stakeholder’ simply means an informal group, individual or formal organization that has an interest, or ‘stake’ in what the municipality is trying to do in the community.

The identification of community stakeholders to participate at council meetings, or in the community participation process, should be a collective effort by members of a coordination team or committee. Councillors who are not members of the coordination committee must also be given the opportunity to identify community stakeholders in their wards to be involved in discussions with the municipality. This will help to ensure that a wide spectrum of the community is represented. It is imperative that the identification of community stakeholders is gender sensitive to ensure women’s ideas and needs are taken into consideration. If you don’t pay special attention to this, chances are that the solution the community comes up with, may only suit men. (This is explained further in section 3.3.)

The list of community stakeholders identified must be presented to council for ratification. This will ensure that the council as a whole is aware of the intended event as well as the people who will be represented. This will also help in identifying gaps in any list provided.

Once a decision has been taken about the people to be involved, invitations should be sent about the intended meetings. This could be in writing or in person. Remember, not everyone can read so **they** should be taken into consideration when you’re inviting people. Again your local community adviser can advise you about this.

A clear description of the purpose of the public participation event and issues to be discussed must be included in the invitation. You could consider also attaching a copy of the stakeholders identified as this will help in identifying possible gaps in the list.

3.2 Determining Numbers of Representatives

In determining the number of community members to attend the event (e.g. public meeting, small representative or specialist group; sometimes called a focus group), the following should be considered:

- Size of the venue for the meeting or event. If you have only invited five people and the event will be in a large hall, people can feel overwhelmed and not comfortable in participating. It's important to try and find the right venue so people feel comfortable to come along and work with you.
- The number of meetings to be held. It may be necessary to hold more than one meeting to ensure that all people can participate in the discussion of key items. For instance, if you notice that no women have come to your meeting and you are only getting the advice of men, it may be necessary to hold a specific meeting just for women to ensure they have a voice in the process. (You can plan for this when you are doing your planning process with your coordinating team or committee.) It is important that all groups or stakeholders are represented fairly at all meetings.
- The size of the group should allow for community members who attend to have the opportunity to give their views. If you're working with a number of people who have a health issue e.g. HIV/AIDS, they may not feel comfortable participating in a large group. They may feel ashamed to identify as having the disease, so going along to a large meeting won't work for them. In this case it may be better to consult and involve some individually. Once again, your local community advisor may be able to help you work this out so that you can plan this into the design of your participation process.
- Key issues to be discussed will also guide the numbers to be involved at a single meeting or event. The important issues such as an increase in tariffs may require long explanations by municipal officials. Issues raised may lead to protracted discussions. Many people may get a bit lost in long explanations are. So it may be better to run smaller meetings to explain such complicated matters.

3.3 Making sure your Community Participation Process includes all the Community

In determining stakeholders to attend a community meeting or public event, it is important to make sure you include people from all sections of the community. This will help your municipal decisions to represent a wide range of people, not just the same ones. If you don't think of ways to encourage less vocal members of the community, your municipality will miss out on lots of good ideas about how to respond to community issues, especially if some of those issues particularly affect a specific group.

For instance, if you ask older people what they need to help them pay rates and tariffs, you may find they are very happy to pay but they can't walk up the hill to the municipality to pay over the counter as they are too frail. They may suggest that the municipality run a mobile rates collection van that can come to them. If you take this on and begin to do this, you may find that your rates and tariffs collection increases significantly.

Or, if you only hold public meetings at night, you may find that women can't attend as they are cooking dinner or looking after their children; even though the topic may be something like community safety, or how to support careers in the community more. Both topics are particularly relevant for women as they are often victims of crime, or the primary carers in a household. If no women come to the meeting, you will miss out on hearing some of their good ideas about how to resolve these matters.

Some ideas to include a variety of people are:

- When you send out invitations or invite people to the event, make sure you specifically say 'women' or 'young people' or 'older people' are especially invited to attend. As well, invite the community groups that represent these special groups. Ask these people the best way of including these there people in your consultation process.
- Invitations should be sent to old age homes, special homes for people with disabilities as well as special associations for the aged and the disabled. It may be important that special events or community meetings be held at special places so old people, or people with a disability can come, e.g. during pension pay outs to ensure that they do not have to travel long distances to the venue of the community meetings. You may need to provide transport to ensure they can come, or you may need to go to them, rather than expecting them to travel to you.
- Traditional leaders should be sent special invitations to the community event. This may be done through the associations of traditional leaders or through the ward councillors. Make sure you find out what protocols you should observe and follow these throughout your community participation process.
- Consider holding a separate event like a youth gathering or something through the schools.

3.4 Ensuring Mandated Representatives

All stakeholders identified must be given the opportunity to select members who will represent them at meetings. This is especially important if you're inviting groups and organizations. They may very well have their own democratic process where a member represents the views and reports back to their organization. Therefore, it is important to give them enough time to sort this out when you invite people. Minutes of the meetings where the selection occurred should be kept and copies submitted to the Office of the Speaker. In addition, copies of letters giving representatives the mandate to participate as actively as possible must be submitted to the Office of the Speaker. This will assist in preventing queries about some organisations not having been mandated to attend public meetings.

Section Four

Conducting Preparatory Workshops for Coordinating Committees and Ward Councillors

4.1 Training

The municipality has to ensure that coordinating teams or committees and ward councillors have the required skills to facilitate community participation events. Training should focus on:

Understanding the Concept and Principles of Community Participation

It is better to ask an experienced trainer to guide the process of training. You're trying to encourage people to participate in your decisions; therefore, an experienced trainer can often use a participatory process to 'model' participation processors throughout the training. This will help you to get a good idea of how to run a meeting, how to deal with difficult questions, and how to include everyone throughout the event. In a sense, the process the trainer uses with you, will give you a lot of good ideas about how to include the community when you begin to work with them.

Understanding the Advantages of Community Participation in Local Governance

Coordination committee or team members should explore the advantages and disadvantages of community participation. This will help all present to begin to work out the shared understanding of community participation which they feel comfortable with and can put into practice.

Understanding Policies in South African that relate to Community Participation in Local Governance

Members need to have some basic understanding of key policies relating to community participation in South Africa. This will enable them to demonstrate that they are functioning within approved policies of the country. For example, take into account what the Constitution says about local government and community participation, what the Municipal Systems Act 2000 says about community participation in the development and implementation of IDPs, etc.

Understanding the Purpose of Community Participation

It is imperative for the coordination committee or team members to understand the purpose of community participation in local governance. Community participation aims to:

- Ensure that community needs and priorities are represented and identified in plans and policies of the municipality
- Ensure that significant policies and programmes of the municipality reflect inputs from the communities
- Ensure that a range of options are considered in developmental programmes of the municipality
- Ensure that the community is adequately informed of the plans of the municipality, their implementation strategies and how implementation will be monitored
- Encourage the collaboration and cooperation between the municipality and the community
- Engage the community appropriately in information campaigns.

Understanding Techniques that can be used to Encourage Community Participation

There are many different ways to encourage people to participate. The main thing is to work out who your target audience is, i.e. those you are trying to reach, and to use processes that are familiar to them. This will help people to feel comfortable to talk. For instance, you could:

- Write about your project in a community newsletter; this will automatically go to sections of the community that consistently read that newsletter
- Setup up public displays or exhibitions at the local shopping mall, or taxi rank; somewhere that many people congregate
- Write a specific media release for the local newspaper
- Use the municipality's web page and ask people to give you feed back online
- Go to neighborhood meetings, or other existing meetings to talk to people personally about your project or issue
- Run specific workshop (or focus group) to gather people's ideas
- Hold a public meeting.

4.2 Preparing for Possible Questions from the Public

It is important for the coordination committee or the ward committees to prepare for possible questions that may be asked by community members attending a public meeting. This helps avoid the embarrassment of not being able to provide answers to simple questions. Senior officials should prepare for issues that may be raised by community members and should brief councillors so that **they too** are prepared.

Section Five

Running Public Meetings or Events

5.1 The Role of the Speaker

The Speaker is an elected official responsible for relationships between the municipality and its public. She/he is responsible for monitoring the activities of ward councillors. She/he also presides at council meetings. The Speaker's direct involvement at public meetings confirms the political commitment to community participation in governance matters.

The Speaker's basic responsibility at a public meeting includes:

- Clarifying the objectives of the meeting.
- Ensuring full participation by community members and avoiding one lobby group 'hijacking' the meeting.
- Ensuring discussions stay on track.
- Ensuring that the meeting stays on time.
- Clarifying understanding.
- Ensuring commitment to action.
- Recapping.
- Summarising.
- Ensuring commitments by the municipality, elected and appointed, to follow up on agreed actions.

5.2 Role of Councillors

Councillors attend public meetings to support the speaker and to bring a local view to the topic. They assist in clarifying matters, especially when questions relate to their wards. They also commit themselves to action plans identified for their wards and can communicate back to their ward committees about any relevant outcomes.

5.3 Role of Officials and Technical Teams

Appointed officials may be called upon to clarify technical and implementation issues. Appointed officials can also clarify any policy matters e.g. how the indigent policy affects the payment of rates and tariffs. They may also be requested to follow up on issues raised at meetings and communicate back to the community about something the municipality has been doing. Appointed officials may often be the ones actually implementing the decisions made at the meeting and providing feedback to community about progress on these actions.

Section Six

Review and Evaluation

6.1 Evaluating the Results of your Participatory Event

Evaluation is an on-going tool used to assess and improve on community participation strategies. It should be designed as part of the public participation programme. The coordination committee should be responsible for checking to see whether people are finding the kind of community participation events you are running useful.

It is important to get informal feedback immediately following each event from both municipal and community stakeholders. The coordination committee can then look at the results of this feedback and take it into account when organising the next stage of community input.

The kind of information you can ask people to give you is:

- Has the input from the community been useful for the municipality in making a particular decision?
- Did the community get enough information to provide meaningful input?
- Were the community expectations met e.g. did they feel the municipality listened to them?
- Did the coordinating committee believe their aim in holding the event had been met?
- Did anything occur that showed there should be changes to the community participation plan?

The Speaker can ask these kinds of questions publicly at the end of the event.

Use of Questionnaires

Questionnaires can be used to get the broad-based input of how the community participation process achieved its objectives. Questionnaires must be short, to-the-point and can be used periodically or at the end of an event. Remember, as not everyone can read, you need to make a decision about whether one of the coordinating committee members or municipal officials should use the questionnaire in a verbal interview rather than expecting everyone to write down their feedback.

You can ask the following in a questionnaire:

- Did the community members feel that the process took notice of their opinions?
- Did participants understand the objectives of the community participation event?
- Were the issues raised by community members adequately listened to and answered?
- Were communities given adequate opportunity to give input during the event?
- Are there other issues to be discussed or taken into consideration by the municipality?

Please see the attached questionnaire as an example that you could use if you decide to get this kind of feedback.



Australia South Africa Local Governance Partnership
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Participants Evaluation Form

The purpose of this evaluation exercise is to get feedback on how community members experienced the public participation meeting that was held on 18 February 2004. Your views and responses will help in improving similar public participation programmes in the future. Kindly answer the questions as truthfully and objectively as possible.

Effectiveness of Community Participation Meeting

Below are scores to rate the discussions and the process of the public participation meeting. We would also like you to rate your understanding about service matters in your area since the meeting and the degree to which the public meeting helped you to understand the meter installation programme in your area. Circle the most appropriate response.

Note the following ratings:

- 1 = Poor
- 2 = Fair
- 3 = Good
- 4 = Very good
- 5 = Excellent

A. Subject:	Rating
1. Introduction of participants	1 2 3 4 5
2. Explanations of the meter installation programme by consultants	1 2 3 4 5
3. Discussion of key issues raised by community members	1 2 3 4 5
4. Answers to questions raised	1 2 3 4 5
5. Participation by councillors at the meeting	1 2 3 4 5

- | | | | | | | |
|----|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6. | Participation by community members at the meeting | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. | Participation by women at the meeting | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. | Participation by the youth at the meeting | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. | Relevance of meeting to understanding the meter installation programme | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

B. Additional Information

- | | | | | | | |
|----|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | How the meeting was run | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. | Participants involvement | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. | Time allocation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. | Composition of participants | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. | Length/duration of the meeting | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. | Meals and refreshments | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. | What topics should be discussed in future? | | | | | |

8. How often should meetings with community members be held to encourage participation in municipal decisions?

What changes would you recommend for future participation in Council matters?

General comments. Is there anything else you would like to add?
