# Toolkit for Urban Inclusion in Arab Cities

Cities promoting inclusion through public participation, access to information, sport, and citizenship and human rights education

# Public Participation

# The relevance of Public participation

- Enables local authorities to make rational decisions concerning their cities
- Allows them to closely identify the priorities and needs of different groups of inhabitants.
- Respond through adequate measures, programs and projects.
- Allows different opinions to be expressed and heard.
- Allows information, data and options to be identified in a scientific way
- Helps in securing the support of concerned parties, whether moral or material.

# Principles of Public Participation

**1** Commit to involving city inhabitants and enhancing the contributions of as many of them as possible throughout the policy-making cycle.

**2** Ensure equal and fair representation of all groups of inhabitants as well as non-governmental actors.

**3** Respond efficiently to the demands and needs raised by the city inhabitants.

**4** Educate the public about their rights and responsibilities to ensure that their participation is effective, not nominal.

# Benefits of public participation

- **Build public trust in the local governments** and strengthen societal support for local policies and plans.
- **Build a sense of belonging and promote citizenship** as a result of the participation, thus **developing a sense of responsibility** which would **lead to higher productivity and improvement of the local economy.**
- **Promote decentralization** by enabling local institutions to implement effective public participation.
- **Improve the quality of the provided services and programs**, and their relevance to the needs of the population, and enable city inhabitants to access these services.
- **Raise public understanding about the functions of local institutions**, their operating procedures, and the restrictions governing the work of different local bodies.
- **Improve understanding among city inhabitants of the pursued policies**, leading to greater support for their implementation.

# Benefits of public participation

- **Develop new and innovative solutions** that draw on the specialized technical expertise of the inhabitants, the private sector and civil society.
- **Establish continuous communication with community members**, monitor trends in public opinion, and test the extent of societal satisfaction with the city plans and programs.
- **Enable inhabitants to act as observers**, monitor the implementation of local policies and plans, hold local authorities accountable, and report shortcomings to them through better access to information and continuous dialogue.
- **Achieve greater social cohesion**, by enabling the participation of marginalized groups in discussions and building relationships within and between different communities and social groups (social capital).
- **Establish new networks that enable different stakeholders to work together.**

# Public participation and the commitments of cities

## Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Public participation in local administration and political life is one of the most important principles supporting a human-rights-based development approach.

**Article 21:** "Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives."

Participation is closely associated with the right to freedom of expression (article 19), the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association (article 20) and the right to form syndicates (article 23(4)).

## New Urban Agenda

The New Urban Agenda 2016 addresses public participation in different paragraphs. For example:

**Paragraph 41:** "We commit ourselves to promoting institutional, political, legal and financial mechanisms in cities and human settlements to broaden inclusive platforms, in line with national policies, that allow meaningful participation in decision-making, planning and follow-up [...]".

# Public participation and the commitments of cities

## 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Public participation is one of the most important foundations for social inclusion tackled under SDG 10 which seeks to "Reduce inequality within and among countries", specifically target 10.2:

**Target 10.2:** By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.

This is in addition to SDG 11, which seeks to "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable", specifically target 11.3:

**Target 11.3:** By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacities for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries.

# 1st Phase: Planning

# Steps of the planning phase

Identifying stakeholders

Identifying the form of public participation and its objectives

Ensuring continuity

# Identifying stakeholders

**Direct Beneficiaries**

Those who will be directly affected by the policy or the program, such as residents of a certain district or shop owners.
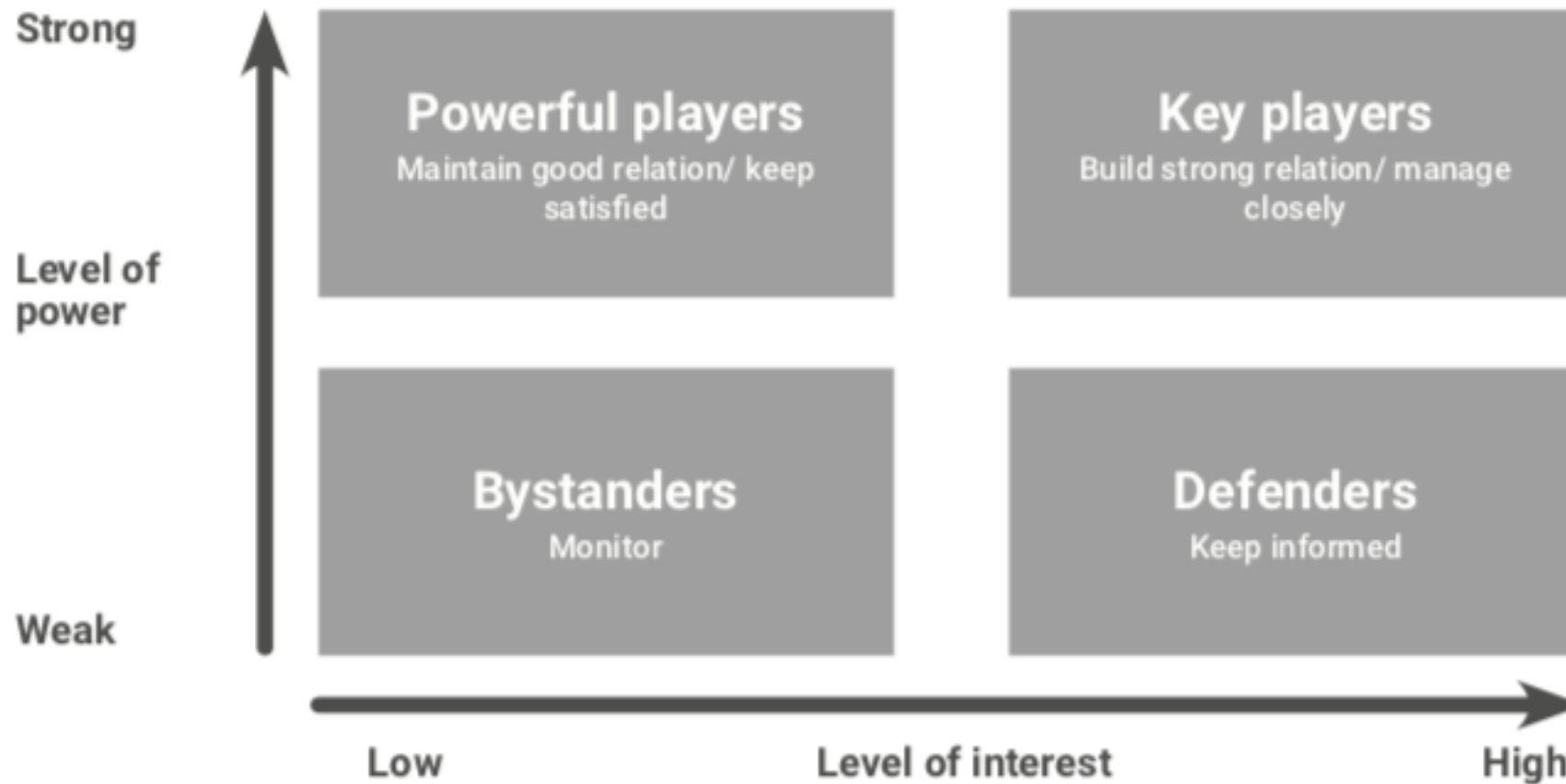
**Implementing partners**

Those who will play a direct role in the implementation of the policy or program, such as local governments, and water and electricity companies.

**Influencers**

Those influencing the outcome of the policy or program, like the supervising ministries, media, and civil society.
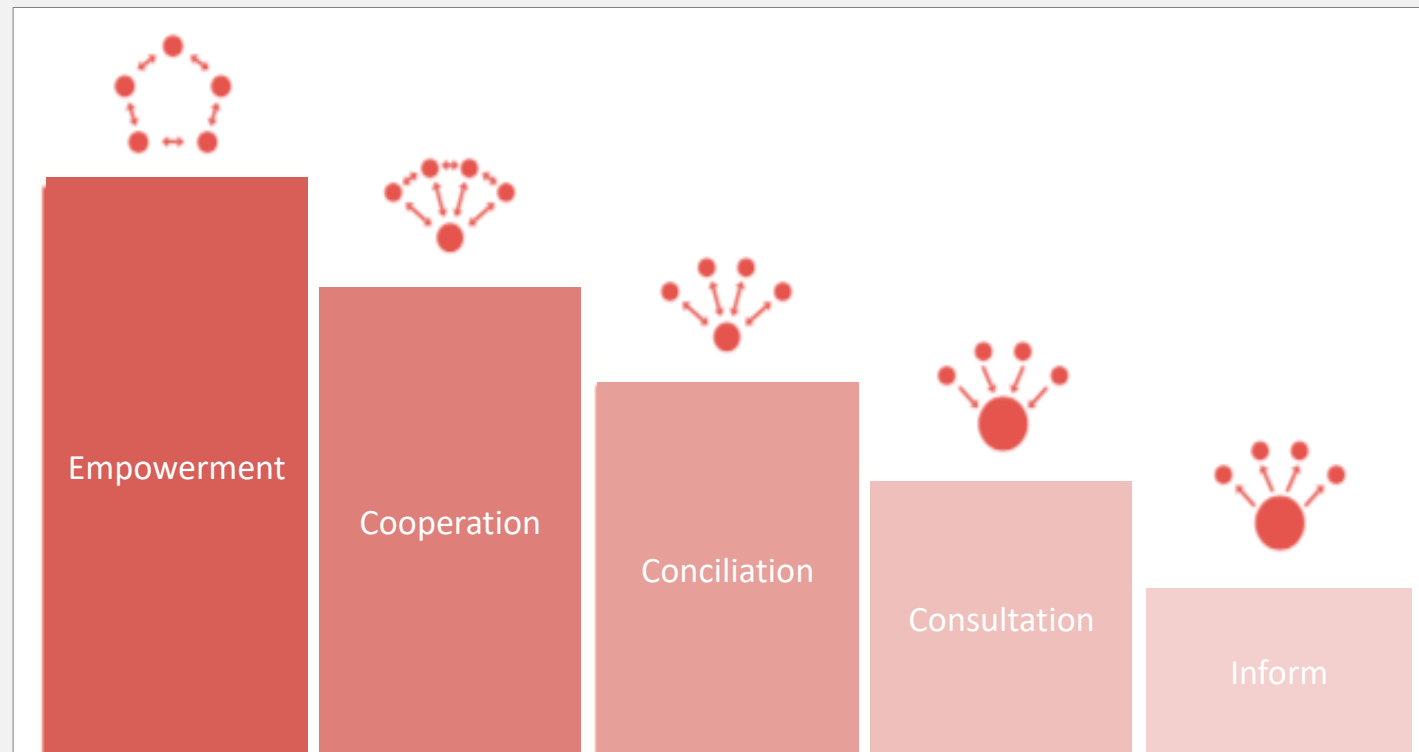
# Stakeholder power analysis matrix

# Identifying the form of public participation and its objectives

- What degree of participation is required?
- What is the purpose (or the expected outcome) of implementing public participation?
- Who are the direct stakeholders? What are their roles?
- What information can be shared with the public (e.g. the budget of the project)?
- How will the results of the public participation process be dealt with, especially in case of conflicting views?

# Identifying the form of public participation and its objectives

# Ensuring continuity

| Legislative/ regulatory factors | Political/ technical factors | Social/ economic factors |
| --- | --- | --- |
| • Having a clear definition of participation in the law to avoid contradictory interpretations.<br><br>• Adopting local policies that describe, in details, the nature and mechanism of participation and the contributors to such mechanism.<br><br>• Existence of articles in the law protecting local administration and municipality staff from accountability if they have engaged inhabitants, changed programs according to their suggestions or shared information.<br><br>• Institutionalizing participation within the regulatory frameworks of local administration institutions. | • Enabling individuals and institutions to obtain the necessary information.<br><br>• Empowering city inhabitants and considering them not only as service recipients but also as having the right to make informed decisions.<br><br>• Effectiveness of administrative decentralization.<br><br>• Availability of supporting national programs / funding. | • Providing the necessary infrastructure and resources to implement public participation mechanisms.<br><br>• Existence of active civil society and community groups.<br><br>• Willingness of the society and local leaders to participate.<br><br>• Benefiting from the existing traditional leadership structures in many Arab cities.<br><br>• Acknowledging the existence of marginalized groups and seeking their fair participation.<br><br>• Addressing cultural barriers that may prevent certain groups from participation (women for example). |

# Checklist

## ☑ Checklist - Planning phase

- ☑ Identify human rights and development aspects in support of public participation.
- ☑ Identify the type and level of public participation that is desired and appropriate to the objectives.
- ☑ Identify marginalized groups.
- ☑ Plan and implement methods for the participation of marginalized groups.
- ☑ Identify stakeholders.
- ☑ Plan and implement methods for the participation of stakeholders.
- ☑ Study the means of ensuring sustainability and identify steps to reduce the risks of discontinuity.

# 2nd Phase: Implementation

# Steps of the implementation phase

Assigning the roles of stakeholders

Selecting the method of public participation

# Assigning the roles of stakeholders

| Stakeholder | Expected role during the implementation phase |
|---|---|
| **Governmental bodies** | • Announce local projects and policies.<br>• Coordinate and cooperate in providing necessary material and financial resources. |
| **Community leaders** | • Participate in the meetings of local city councils, committees, hearings and discussions.<br>• Contribute to the organization of discussion sessions.<br>• Attract relevant stakeholders and seek to converge the views of local authorities and inhabitants. |
| **Civil society** | • Communicate local inhabitants' needs and opinions to the local authority.<br>• Provide technical expertise (e.g. deliver training programs, simplify content, prepare studies to inform the development of local policies, propose legal amendments, etc.)<br>• Support the inclusion of inhabitants by encouraging their participation, and act as mediator between city inhabitants and local authorities. |
| **Private sector** | • Evaluate the needs of city inhabitants, and study their reactions and feedback on provided services.<br>• Establish and manage electronic government portals and other technological platforms that facilitate inhabitants' participation and enable access to information. |

# Selecting the method of public participation

**Community consultation sessions**

**Surveys and questionnaires**

**Focus group discussions**

**Participatory design**

# Checklist

☑ **Checklist - Implementation phase**

☑ Ensure balanced representation of all social groups and engagement of concerned parties.

☑ Engage civil society and private sector organizations.

☑ Identify means to convince the opposition.

☑ Select method of participation most appropriate to the nature of the policy or program.

☑ Consider power relations when inviting different parties to discussion sessions to avoid situations where one party dominates the other.

☑ Ensure that all meetings and discussion sessions take place in suitable places for vulnerable people like women, youth, persons with disabilities, etc.

☑ Ensure that sufficient financial resources are available by diversifying partnerships.

# 3rd Phase: Evaluation

# Evaluating public participation

| Indicator | Key Questions |
|---|---|
| **Diversity of opinions and commitment to public participation in the planning, implementation and evaluation of different city projects, without exclusion of any group** | • Has a comprehensive consultation process been completed prior to the implementation of plans? Have all segments of the population participated equally?<br><br>• Is there a strategy ensuring the representation of all social groups in the consultation process?<br><br>• Are there legal tools confirming inclusion of all groups?<br><br>• Have marginalized groups been informed, and has their awareness about their right to participate been developed?<br><br>• Have the inhabitants' views and suggestions been included in the final proposal? |
| **Participation mechanism and its effect on implementation** | • Have timeframes been set for amending projects based on consultations outcomes?<br><br>• What is the mechanism of participation? Are there clear and appropriate tools for participation and for influencing the project? |
| **Provision of necessary information** | • Was information about the project clearly available to all?<br><br>• How was the project announced?<br><br>• Did the implementing entity provide and disseminate information on the project and its action plan in due time?<br><br>• What technological tools have been used to communicate information? Are these tools appropriate for all groups?<br><br>• Were inhabitants informed about which of their views and suggestions have effectively been adopted? |

Access to information

# The relevance of access to information

Access to information is an essential enabler of urban inclusion and a pre-requisite for effective public participation and citizenship.

It also contributes to the achievement of good governance principles, notably transparency and accountability.

Laws and policies to regulate information-related issues include: access to information, privacy, protection of confidential and security information, dealing with governmental documents, national information infrastructure, information flows at the local level, and the promotion of information use.
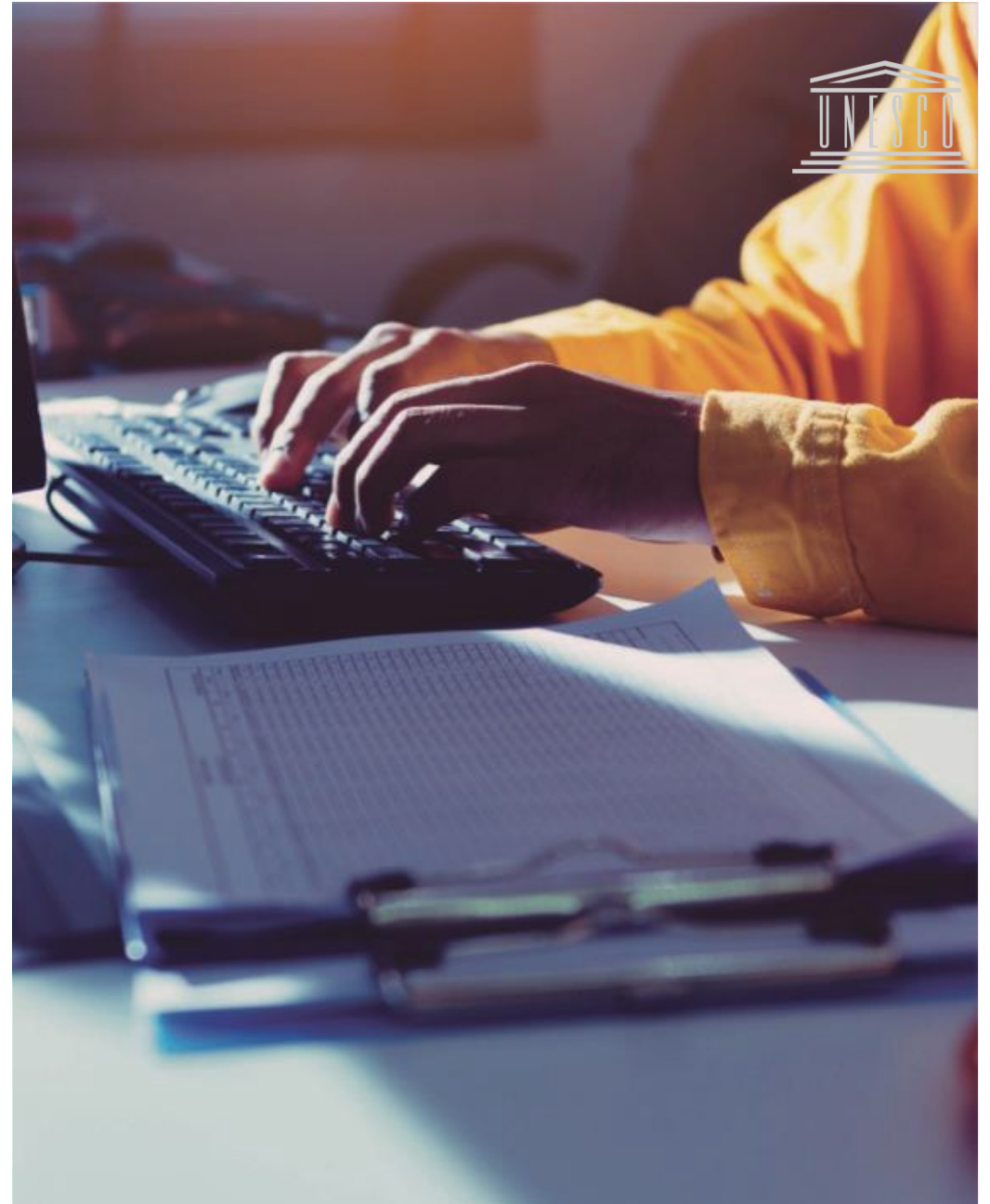
# Benefits of access to information

UNESCO

- Strengthen participation and the democratic process.
- Enable inhabitants to know their rights and duties and create communication channels with city officials
- Ensure continuous oversight and accountability
- Facilitate access to local services and participation in local decisions
- Promote private sector engagement
- Limit rumors and avoid resentment that may disrupt the process of decision- making and the implementation of development projects
- Promote transparency and fight corruption
- Enable sound decision-making, facilitate access to more resources, and raise the efficiency of local administration
- Encourage researchers to produce quality research and studies

# Access to information and the commitments of cities

## Universal Declaration of Human Rights

**Article 19:** "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers".

## 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Access to information is a cross-cutting theme for the achievement of all sustainable development goals. Goal 16 in particular is concerned with peace, justice and accountable institutions, and refers to:

**Target 16.10:** Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements.

# Access to information and the commitments of cities

## New Urban Agenda

Access to information is a cross-cutting theme that supports the different commitments in the New Urban Agenda, for example:

**Paragraph 92:** "We will promote participatory age- and gender-responsive approaches at all stages of the urban and territorial policy and planning processes, [...] including through broad-based and well-resourced permanent mechanisms and platforms for cooperation and consultation open to all, using information and communications technologies and accessible data solutions".

**Paragraph 160:** "We will foster the creation, promotion and enhancement of open, user-friendly and participatory data platforms [...] to enhance effective urban planning and management, efficiency and transparency [...]".

# 1st Phase: Planning

# Steps of the planning phase

Understanding the legislative framework governing access to information

Identifying objectives and beneficiary groups

Identifying information to be made available and the level of accessibility

Identifying stakeholders

Institutionalization and continuity

# Understanding the legislative framework

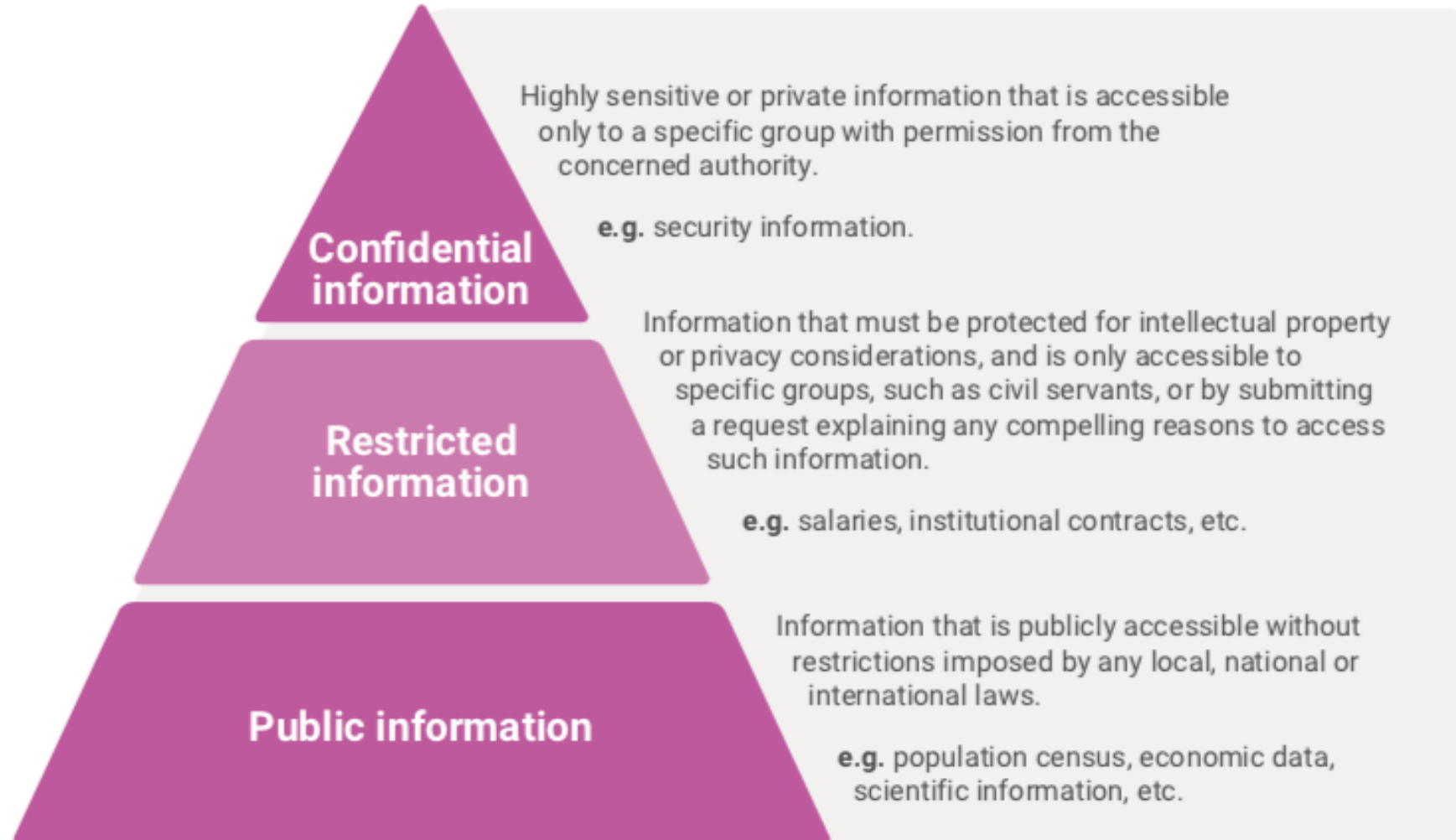Good practices in regulatory and legislative frameworks governing access to information:

- A clear and inclusive regulatory framework identifying different types of data and levels of access (e.g. public, classified, available upon request, available to specific groups like journalists and researchers, and available for purchase).
- Include access to information as a prerequisite throughout the phases of the public policy cycle: planning, implementation, follow-up and evaluation.
- Incorporate access to information in national legislations and identify conditions and type of information to be disclosed clearly and explicitly to prevent multiple interpretations.
- Develop a clear and written protocol for requesting and disseminating data, including an explanatory note of the process; to avoid individual interpretations by civil servants, thus facilitating the accountability process.
- Increase the types of information classified as public information that can be accessed free of charge.
- Ensure the protection of municipal employees who disclose permissible information in accordance with the law against accountability and unfair retribution.

# Identifying objectives and beneficiary groups

| Objectives | Beneficiary groups | Practical aspects to be considered |
|---|---|---|
| **Inform and facilitate access to available local services.** | All inhabitants | Use multimedia to ensure provision of information to all population groups (for example persons with disabilities, illiterate persons, older persons, etc.). |
| **Improve outsourcing of public services.** | Private sector | Transparency, equal opportunities and adherence to rules. |
| **Integrate refugees in society.** | Refugees | Language, location, cultural differences, financial costs, etc. |
| **Raise awareness about rights and duties and promote active participation.** | All inhabitants | Clarity and acceptance of messages by all population groups. |
| **Empower women and enhance their participation in public life.** | Women | Address differences between women and men (e.g. differences in information needs, type of information and access channels). |
| **Empower youth and enhance their participation in society.** | Youth | Adopt communication methods that are attractive to youth, use appropriate language. |

# Identifying information to be made available

## Confidential information

Highly sensitive or private information that is accessible only to a specific group with permission from the concerned authority.

**e.g.** security information.

## Restricted information

Information that must be protected for intellectual property or privacy considerations, and is only accessible to specific groups, such as civil servants, or by submitting a request explaining any compelling reasons to access such information.

**e.g.** salaries, institutional contracts, etc.

## Public information

Information that is publicly accessible without restrictions imposed by any local, national or international laws.

**e.g.** population census, economic data, scientific information, etc.

# Identifying stakeholders

There are many entities and stakeholders concerned with access to information, such as:

- National institutions and local administrations responsible for the production and management of information;
- Consulting firms in charge of data collection and studies;
- International organizations and donors supporting the right of access to information; and
- Civil society organizations of all kinds, especially those supporting access to information.

It is advisable to engage civil society organizations and the private sector in facilitating access to information for persons with disabilities and non-Arabic speakers. This can be achieved by developing advanced technological tools such as e-readers for blind persons and e-translators for foreigners.

# Checklist

## ☑ Checklist - Planning Phase

☑ Identify the human rights and development aspects that access to information programs are expected to serve, and use this link to advocate for the program and gain political support.

☑ Identify the legislative local framework governing access to information and ensure that there are no obstacles to the implementation of the program.

☑ Define clear and measurable objectives for access to information and identify the beneficiary population groups.

☑ Classify information and specify level of accessibility.

☑ Identify and engage stakeholders.

☑ Analyze the challenges that may hinder access to information and identify means of mitigation.

# 2nd Phase: Implementation

# Steps of the implimentation phase

Information gathering

Information processing and dissemination

# Information gathering

| Parties responsible to information gathering | Parties contributing for information gathering |
|---|---|
| • Information centers<br>• Local government institutions<br>• Statistical bodies<br>• Research centers | • Non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations<br>• Donors, who are usually committed to report on their activities and who also collect field data in coordination with the concerned governmental bodies<br>• Private sector institutions, who are committed to submit reports or information on their activities to governmental bodies<br>• Researchers |

# Information processing and dissemination

**Provision of information upon request**

**Proactive dissemination**

# Information processing and dissemination

| Means of dissemination | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|---|---|---|
| **News bulletins in the media** | Reach a large number of inhabitants, especially if diverse media are used (e.g. radio and television). | • High cost of television advertisements.<br>• Non-interactive method that does not allow for asking questions or requesting clarifications. |
| **Street billboards** | Reach a large number of inhabitants, especially if placed around main roads and busy areas. | • Expensive.<br>• Accommodate only brief messages and information.<br>• Not useful for illiterate persons.<br>• Non-interactive method that does not allow for asking questions or requesting clarifications.<br>• Contribute to visual pollution. |

# Information processing and dissemination

| Means of dissemination | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|---|---|---|
| **Local information meetings** | Possibility for inhabitants to interact directly with officials and ask questions. Inhabitants feel that officials are giving special attention to their concerns. | • Difficulty to reach all people in all locations.<br>• Logistical obstacles, such as finding a spacious venue, availability of microphones and sound systems, etc. |
| **Websites** | Provide easy access to basic information and required official forms without the need to commute. | • Not useful for illiterate persons or for people who do not have electronic communication devices.<br>• Limited opportunity of interaction and asking questions, unless "live chat" features are used. |

# Information processing and dissemination

| Means of dissemination | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|---|---|---|
| **Social media**<br><br>**(e.g. Facebook and WhatsApp)** | Reach large number of inhabitants, especially youth. Facilitate access to basic information and download official forms without the need to commute, and provide instant e-communication and e-interaction. | • Not convenient for illiterate persons or those who do not have electronic communication devices or social media accounts. |
| **One-stop shops** | Easy access to all information and official forms in one place. It is useful for illiterate persons and those without access to electronic communication devices. | • Require the person to go physically to the center. |
| **Information kiosks** | Easy access to information, including by illiterate persons and people without access to electronic communication devices. | • Require the person to go physically to the information kiosk; sometimes the person may have to travel between different offices to get the required forms. |

# Information processing and dissemination

**Quality criteria for information request processes**

- **The application form is simple and clear for anyone to complete.**
- **Procedures for requesting information are clear and easy for persons to follow.**
- **The cost of application is affordable, thus ensuring equal access to information.**
- **The response time to the application is short.**
- **Rejected applications are accompanied by a justification, while allowing the applicant to appeal.**
- **Rejection criteria are clear and detailed to avoid personal interpretations by the responsible officer.**
- **Decisions to approve or reject applications are taken by a Committee and are not restricted to one decision-maker.**

# Checklist

☑ **Checklist - Implementation Phase**

☑ Information has been collected and verified with the support of different entities as needed.

☑ Information has been processed and simplified.

☑ The most adequate dissemination method has been identified (based on the type of information, objective of its provision, and the target population).

☑ Expand the network of partners to help address implementation gaps.

☑ Availability of financial, technological and human resources that are needed for good and sustainable access to information.

☑ Avoid potential misuse of information before proceeding to its dissemination.

# 3rd Phase: Evaluation

# Evaluating access to information programs

| Information quality standards | |
|---|---|
| **Comprehensive** | Information is published in full, rather than partially or selectively (for example, avoid publishing information on the activities of a local development project without mentioning the results of these activities). |
| **Easy to use** | Information is available in an easy-to-use format (for example, statistical data tables are published in "Excel" rather than in "pdf" format, similar to what international organizations and statistical entities do on their data portals). Terminology is simplified to be understood by most people. |
| **Coherent** | Information is provided in the same template and format every time, to enable and ease comparison over time. |
| **Accurate** | Information provided is correct, and is based on good research methodology. |
| **Updated** | Information is updated regularly and is instantly disseminated before it becomes outdated. Date when data was collected is specified. |

# Evaluating access to information programs

| Indicator | Main questions |
|---|---|
| **Indicator 1:** Municipality employees enjoy the freedom and ability to provide access to information and data. | • Are municipal employees authorized to share information and data?<br><br>• Is the employee's right to make information available exercised according to a national or international law?<br><br>• Did any of the employees withhold information based on an individual decision? |
| **Indicator 2:** Availability of laws that allow local authorities to disseminate information in alignment with the needs of inhabitants. | • Can inhabitants request information freely (except for confidential information)?<br><br>• Is there a definition that is not subject to conflicting interpretations of what constitutes confidential information with restricted access for security reasons?<br><br>• Does the law require local authorities to provide information / data within a specific period of time? |

# Evaluating access to information programs

| Indicator | Main questions |
|---|---|
| **Indicator 3:** Equal access to information among inhabitants. | • Is information provided to all citizens regardless of their social status, gender, race or religion?<br><br>• Was there diversification in the adopted dissemination methods to ensure information reaches all inhabitants?<br><br>• Is there any social group that could not access information or faced challenges while requesting it? |
| **Indicator 4:** Information is disseminated ahead of the start of the implementation of developmental projects. | • Was information dissemination ahead of the start of the project considered as a pre-requisite for the engagement of implementing parties?<br><br>• Was a timeline for information dissemination identified and communicated to the implementing parties?<br><br>• Have the methods of information dissemination been identified? Have the permits and approvals for that been granted? |

# Evaluating access to information programs

| Indicator | Main questions |
|---|---|
| **Indicator 5:** Use of technological tools to process and disseminate information. | • Do local authorities have the required human and technical resources to manage the electronic tools used to disseminate information? <br><br> • Have local authorities considered human resources needs for the effective use of different technological tools? |
| **Indicator 6:** Outreach to poor and marginalized communities. | • How much will inhabitants pay to access information? <br><br> • Are poor people unable to access information due to high cost? <br><br> • Are there alternatives to electronic means, as such means may not necessarily be accessible to all? |

# Thank you .,

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