



USAID | **SOUTH AFRICA**
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Local Governance Support Program (LGSP)

**Communication in a Municipal Environment
Public Participation
Cluster Technical Working Session**

DISCLAIMER

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

Local Governance Support Program (LGSP)

**Communication in a Municipal Environment
Public Participation – Technical Working Session**
USAID Contract Number 674-C-00-05-00001-00
RTI Contract Number 0209357
February 2006

Prepared for
Office of
United States Agency for International Development
101 Totius Street
Groenkloof 0181
South Africa

Prepared by
RTI International¹
3040 Cornwallis Road
Post Office Box 12194
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709-2194

¹ RTI International is a trade name of Research Triangle Institute.

DISCLAIMER

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
TABLE OF CONTENTS**

SUBJECT	PAGE
PART ONE: COMMUNICATION IN A MUNICIPAL ENVIRONMENT.....	4
1. INTRODUCTION	4
2. THE MUNICIPALITY'S COMMUNICATION RESPONSIBILITY.....	5
3. EXTERNAL/INTERNAL COMMUNICATION.....	5
4. FACTORS IMPACTING ON COMMUNICATION	7
5. CONCLUSION	10
 PART TWO: COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION	 11
1. INTRODUCTION	11
2. OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION	11
3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK.....	12
4. MUNICIPAL ROLE-PLAYERS IN COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION	17
5. DEVELOPING A YEAR PLANNER FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.....	17
6. PREPARING A BUDGET FOR COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION	18
7. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION / CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION.	19
8. IDENTIFYING THE STAKEHOLDERS	20
9. PREPARING A PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN	21
10. CONFLICT AMONGST STAKEHOLDERS.....	22
11. HOW TO INVOLVE THE PUBLIC	23
12. PREPARING FOR PUBLIC MEETINGS.....	25
13. HOW TO CONDUCT A PUBLIC MEETING.....	26
14. CONCLUSION	27

DISCLAIMER

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

PART ONE: COMMUNICATION IN A MUNICIPAL ENVIRONMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

Communication is now recognized as a key element in the management of any institution, whether it is a multi-national corporation, a small non-governmental organization, a religious organisation or a municipality.

Efficient communication is more than a simple transfer of information; it must be bi-directional, open to exchanges and feedback. In order to *survive*, the organization must *inform* everyone it is in contact with. But if it wants to *grow* and in the case of a municipality, promote a culture of community participation as it is legally required to do, it must also *listen* to the community and act upon what it hears.

Just like any other managerial function, a communication programme must be driven in a strategic way. Four factors are essential to the success of any municipal communication programme:

- i) Firstly, both the political and administrative leadership must be convinced of the importance of communication. The mayor, speaker, councillors but especially ward councillors, the municipal manager and heads of departments must play a critical role in this process.
- ii) Secondly, the leadership must agree that communication must be planned in a strategic way, just like any other managerial function.
- iii) Thirdly, the leadership must budget for and provide resources for the communication and public participation function. This should preferably include a full-time dedicated communicator for the communication actions of the Municipality. In this respect Municipalities are reminded that in terms of section 16 (c) of the Municipal Systems Act, No. 32 of 2000, they are legally required to budget for the communication and community participation process.
- iv) Finally, the leadership must insist on the development and regular update of a **communication strategy**.

DISCLAIMER

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

In this module it is not intended to provide an illustrative communication strategy document; as such strategy would vary considerably between the different municipalities. Some of the issues addressed in the following paragraphs should, however, be considered when developing the municipality's communication strategy.

2. THE MUNICIPALITY'S COMMUNICATION RESPONSIBILITY

The municipality must ensure that:

- i) Clear communication plans are in place for everything it does in order to maximize public information and minimize confusion.
- ii) It communicates clearly, openly, accurately and regularly with the public and with its professional partners in order to promote mutual understanding, and give a better service to the people of the municipality.
- iii) Its communication is produced in the language of the local population, written for its intended audience and be unambiguous, timely and of an appropriate quality.
- iv) All communication and promotional material issued by the municipality is branded and therefore clearly identifiable as having come from the municipal council, and include key contact details.
- v) All communication, both internal and external, shows respect for those to whom it is addressed.
- vi) All communication is prepared in line with other appropriate council policies concerning freedom of information, data protection, fairness and equality, customer care and environmental sustainability.

3. EXTERNAL/INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Communication policies and communication strategies often spell out how the internal and external communication process is to be approached. If extensive use is to be made of e-communication as it should be, guidelines should also be developed in regard to such communication. Corporate branding as part of the communication strategy has also become extremely important.

DISCLAIMER

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

Should the municipality wish to address any of these issues in its communication strategy it should indicate how :

- i) Through **external communication**, it would seek continued improvement in public perception and understanding of the council and its services. This could be by:
 - a. Protecting and enhancing the reputation of municipality.
 - b. Seeking understanding and support for the municipality while at the same time influencing opinion and behaviour.
 - c. Actively educating and informing the public about the municipality, its practices and its services.
 - d. Taking a targeted, high profile approach to major local issues.
 - e. Giving equal support and attention to all geographical areas covered by municipality.

- ii) Through **internal communication**, it would increase staff understanding of the aims and objectives of the council and promote ways of improving communication between service units. This could be through:
 - a. Maintaining a strong two-way flow of information within the municipality that supports and encourages teamwork, trust and loyalty.
 - b. Informing all staff and councillors of issues and events that affect the municipality and the impact it will have upon them.
 - c. Consulting the staff through formal and informal channels about the development of policies, practices and procedures.

- iii) Through **e-communication**, it would maximize the opportunities to communicate creatively and effectively through the use of new technology. This could be through:
 - a. Continually seeking out and exploiting the opportunities presented by electronic communication, internally and externally, to benefit the municipality and the communities it serves.
 - b. Supporting the use of e-communication by training the staff and councillors in its use.

DISCLAIMER

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

- c. Using the municipality's website to promote the council and its services and to facilitate channels of communication so that the public can communicate with the municipality electronically.
 - d. Using the intranet site (if established) to communicate fully with staff and councillors, and actively encouraging its use.
- iv) Through the consistent use of a strong **corporate identity it could** strengthen the municipality's visual profile locally, regionally and nationally. This could be through:
- a. Providing information in a clearly branded, concise fashion to both internal and external audiences.
 - b. Promoting the individual services provided by the municipality but always being mindful of their contribution to the corporate body as a whole.
 - c. Always adhering to the guidelines laid out in the publications and printed material protocol and any corporate identity protocol and style guide that may have been developed for the municipality.

4. FACTORS IMPACTING ON COMMUNICATION

In developing their communication strategies municipalities should bear the following issues in mind.

4.1 *Spokespersons*

To ensure that the integrity of the municipality is not compromised it is considered important that only designated persons within the municipality be appointed as official spokespersons.

However, the communication function of the municipality extends to every employee and councillor within the municipality, especially if the letter and the spirit of the legislation in regard to community participation are to be complied with. It may therefore become necessary to sensitize both councillors and the municipal officials to the need to be honest with their responses to enquiries on municipal services etc but not too place the municipality in an unnecessarily poor light.

DISCLAIMER

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

4.2 Messages

Clearly every municipal council would wish to portray its municipality as a haven for investment etc to encourage entrepreneurs to develop in their areas and so promote local economic development etc.

However, in addition to the promotional and marketing aspect, municipalities are also compelled to engage and consult with the communities on a range of issues including, the integrated development plans, the budget, tariffs, bylaws and a host of other issues.

The municipality will therefore have to compile a schedule preferably linked to a year planner in regard to information etc which it must convey to the community during the course of any financial year. The strategy should therefore indicate clearly who is responsible for what.

4.3 Audiences

These can broadly be divided into two categories viz. internal and external with the internal audience consisting of the municipal councillors and the municipality's employees.

The external audience would include other municipalities, provincial and national government departments, the community, chambers of commerce and industry, parastatals etc.

The important aspect is, however, that all the different audiences must be identified so that the municipality can convey and obtain feedback on all municipal functions from its varied audiences.

The table hereunder could prove useful in identifying:

- i) the audiences,
- ii) what they need to be informed/ consulted on: and
- iii) the time frames within which they must be engaged.

Target Audience	Issues which they require to be informed/consulted on	Month /Timeframe within which they require to be informed /consulted

DISCLAIMER

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

4.4 Tools

Before spending time and a large amount of money on developing various communication tools, the municipality must ensure that the communication tools to be used are appropriate and that they will reach the targeted audience. If the audience has low levels of literacy, it would for instance be pointless to generate long written messages.

Here are some tools that could be used by the municipality. The communication strategy should also give direction in regard to the occasions when the different tools should be used and who the responsible persons are.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billboards • Banners • Meetings • Seminars • Circulars • Telephone calls • Conversations in person • Letters • Business cards • Emails 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public hearings • Brochures • Posters • Magazines or bulletins • News releases • Paid advertisements • Interviews • Sponsored television or radio shows • Conferences • Others
---	---

4.5 Feedback

Good communication goes both ways, the municipality must *inform* and *listen* to the community and take appropriate action

The only way the municipality can provide appropriate services is by listening to its community. Its communication strategy and plans must therefore make ample provision for feedback at meetings, through letters, e-mail telephonic communication etc. and identify the persons or structures that must follow up on the feedback received.

DISCLAIMER

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

4.6 Obstacles

Even the best-planned communication can face obstacles. These can be 'physical' obstacles - a bad telephone line, a letter lost in the mail, background noises during a conversation or a range of other issues including:

- Cultural or linguistic differences within the country.
- Political tensions within the municipality and between the local, district and provincial governments.
- Poor literacy levels of the population.
- Population scattered over a large territory.
- Lack of interest from journalists on local government topics.

In countries with more than one official language as in South Africa, the municipality must translate the information material into the languages of the local population.

In municipalities with a low level of literacy, the printed material should rely on illustrations, such as posters, photos, caricatures, etc.

If there is a great difference between the local governments in urban settings and those in rural areas, the municipality should ensure that both sectors are well represented in the information material.

'Knowledge is power'. The municipal leadership must understand that by informing and getting feedback from the community it is empowering the community and itself, which is essential for a stable democracy.

Ultimately, however, what is important is that the municipality identifies all the obstacles in relation to its communication strategy and develops clear action plans as to how to overcome these.

5. CONCLUSION

Part Two of this module is devoted to community participation which cannot take place without proper two way communication. The communication issues directly related to the community participation process have therefore been set out in Part Two of this module and will give greater insight into developing a year planner for public communication and participation, municipal role-players in community communication and participation, preparing a budget for community communication and participation, channels of communication etc.

DISCLAIMER

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

PART TWO: COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

1. INTRODUCTION

Whilst there is a statutory obligation on municipalities to encourage community participation in the affairs of the municipality, this is often done in a haphazard manner. Very few municipalities have prepared participation strategies or put plans in place to formalise such participation. This module is intended to familiarise municipal councillors and officials with the legislative prescripts relating to community participation and to give some insight into how best to prepare for and consult with their communities.

2. OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

What Is Community Participation: Community participation refers to a range of activities that members of a community can do to assist in planning and/or implementing projects. Furthermore it refers to the extent to which stakeholders can influence development by contributing to the project design, influencing public choices, and holding public institutions accountable for the goods and services they are bound to provide. It is a process that involves participation of communities in project design and implementation as well as participation in the opportunities created by the project.

Participation also includes analysis of strategies for involving stakeholders, designing a plan to meet the costs of stakeholder participation, as well as managing the expectations and providing timely feedback and follow-up of decisions taken.

Why Community Participation: Quite simply, people want to know what is happening in their community and participate in its future.

Consulting with the public is about involving the community. When the public is involved in decision-making processes, people feel that they have contributed to the community. Municipal projects generally affect everyone in the municipality and public consultation will allow everyone that is interested to have a voice in the process.

DISCLAIMER

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

Looking at municipalities that have fully committed themselves to public participation you will find that there is a direct correlation between community satisfaction with the outcome of the municipal project or service and a high level of public consultation in regard to the municipal project. Clearly, if people are included, they are more likely to understand the process and benefits of a municipal project and more likely to support the council's initiatives.

Public involvement will also keep everyone informed of council's progress with the design and implementation of a municipal project or with the running of the affairs of the municipality especially in respect of the four distinct areas on which they must consult with the community, viz.

- (a) The municipality's IDP.
- (b) The municipality's performance management system
- (c) The municipality's budget.
- (d) Strategic decisions relating to the provision of services.

If the community knows what is happening, they will feel that the process is transparent and that there are no hidden motives.

Public consultation is a key strategy for council to communicate its ideas to the community and to get their full support for the council's initiatives. In addition municipalities are legally obliged to involve the community in affairs of the municipality as we will note from the provisions of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000, the Municipal Planning and Performance Management Regulations, 2002 and the Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003, as well as other statutory enactments relating to e.g. bylaws, rezoning of properties, road closures, expropriation etc

3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

It is considered extremely important that municipal councillors and officials are left in no doubt in regard to the statutory obligation placed on the council to create opportunities for the community to participate in the affairs of the municipality. It is for this reason that detailed information is provided on the various sections of the legislation relating to community participation.

3.1 The Local Government Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000

3.1.1 Section 16 of the Municipal Systems Act

ii) Development of a culture of community participation

DISCLAIMER

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

Section 16 of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 provides that a municipality must develop a culture of municipal governance that complements formal representative government with a system of participatory government and must for this purpose encourage and create conditions for the local community to participate in the affairs of the municipality.

iii) Affairs of the municipality in which the community should participate

In terms of section 16 (a) the municipality must encourage communities to participate in:

- (a) Preparation, implementation and review of the municipality's IDP.
- (b) Establishment, implementation and review of its performance management system.
- (c) The monitoring and review of its performance, including the outcomes and impact of such performance.
- (d) Preparation of the municipality's budget.
- (e) Strategic decisions relating to the provision of services.

iv) The municipality's capacity building obligation for community participation

In terms of section 16 (b) municipalities must contribute to building the capacity of—

- i) the local community to enable it to participate in the affairs of the municipality; and
- ii) councillors and staff to foster community participation.

iv) The municipality's responsibility for funding of community participation exercises

Section 16 (c) provides that a municipality must use its resources, and annually allocate funds in its budget, as may be appropriate for the purpose of implementing the above provisions of section 16.

3.1.2 Section 17 of the Municipal Systems Act

i) Manner of community participation

DISCLAIMER

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

Section 17 (1) provides that participation by the local community in the affairs of the municipality must take place through—

- (a) political structures for participation in terms of the Municipal Structures Act;
- (b) the mechanisms, processes and procedures for participation in municipal governance established in terms of this Act;
- (c) other appropriate mechanisms, processes and procedures established by the municipality;
- (d) councillors.

ii) Procedures to be followed during participation

Section 17 (2) provides that a municipality must establish appropriate mechanisms, processes and procedures to enable the local community to participate in the affairs of the municipality, and must for this purpose provide for—

- (a) the receipt, processing and consideration of petitions and complaints lodged by members of the local community;
- (b) notification and public comment procedures, when appropriate;
- (c) public meetings and hearings by the municipal council and other political structures and political office bearers of the municipality, when appropriate;
- (d) consultative sessions with locally recognised community organisations and, where appropriate, traditional authorities; and
- (e) report-back to the local community.

iii) Making provision for participation by the illiterate and people with disabilities

When establishing mechanisms, processes and procedures in terms of subsection 17 (2) the municipality must take into account the special needs of—

DISCLAIMER

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

- (a) people who cannot read or write;
- (b) people with disabilities;
- (c) women; and
- (d) other disadvantaged groups.

iv) Communication of information concerning community participation

In terms of section 18(1) a municipality must communicate to its community information concerning—

- (a) the available mechanisms, processes and procedures to encourage and facilitate community participation;
- (b) the matters with regard to which community participation is encouraged;
- (c) the rights and duties of members of the local community; and
- (d) municipal governance, management and development.

v) Considering language and illiterate persons

When communicating the information mentioned in subsection 18 (1), a municipality must take into account:

- (a) language preferences and usage in the municipality; and
- (b) the special needs of people who cannot read or write.

vi) Public notice of meetings of municipal councils.

In terms of section 19 of the Municipal Systems Act the municipal manager of a municipality must give notice to the public, in a manner determined by the municipal council, of the time, date and venue of every—

- (a) ordinary meeting of the council; and
- (b) special or urgent meeting of the council, except when time constraints make this impossible.

DISCLAIMER

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

3.1.3 Section 42 of the Municipal Systems Act

Section 42 of the Municipal Systems Act provides as follows: “A municipality, through appropriate mechanisms, processes and procedures established in terms of Chapter 4, must involve the local community in the development, implementation and review of the municipality’s performance management system, and in particular, allow the community to participate in the setting of appropriate key performance indicators and performance targets for the municipality.”

3.2 The Municipal Planning and Performance Management Regulations, 2001 (MPPM Regulations)

The Municipal Planning and Performance Management Regulations also deal extensively with the issue of community participation and in summary requires that a Municipality:

- Clarifies the roles and responsibilities of each role-player, including the local community, in the functioning of a PMS.
- Involves communities specifically in the setting of key performance indicators (KPIs).
- Develops and implements mechanisms, systems and processes for the monitoring, measurement and review of municipal performance after consultation with the local community.
- Makes provision through the said mechanisms for the local community to participate in the process.
- Establishes an appropriate forum that will enhance community participation in the IDP process and the monitoring, measurement and review of municipal performance.
- Convenes regular meetings of the forum to, inter alia, discuss the development, implementation and review of the PMS and to monitor municipal performance in relation to KPIs and targets.

3.3 Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003

In terms of section 22 of the Municipal Finance Management Act, the accounting officer must immediately after the budget has been

DISCLAIMER

The author’s views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

tabled in the municipal council make public the annual budget and invite the local community to submit representations in connection with the budget.

3.4 Other Statutory Enactments

Numerous other enactments require that the municipality seek the comments of the community/ inform the community on issues such as bylaws, rezoning of property, expropriation of property, provision of services through service delivery agreements with external mechanisms, levies to recover fees, charges and tariffs etc.

4. MUNICIPAL ROLE-PLAYERS IN COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The following institutions/ councillors and officials have distinctive roles to play in ensuring that every opportunity is provided for the community to become involved in the affairs of the municipality. The allocation of roles and responsibilities will differ from municipality to municipality but it is important that the responsibilities to be carried out in terms of a community participation plan are clearly spelt out.

- The Mayor and his/her support staff
- The Speaker and his/her support staff
- The Municipal Manager and support staff
- The IDP Manager
- The PMS Manager
- The Chief Financial Officer
- Communications Officer
- PR and Ward Councillors

While the main focus would be on the councillors, the various municipal managers and senior officials have a distinct role to play as they should be accessible to the community to answer questions on for example the integrated development plans of the municipality, on the municipality's performance management system and budget, the services to be provided by the municipality and any bylaws that are to be introduced or revoked.

Ward councillors are, through the ward committee system, closest to the community and should spearhead the municipality's community participation drive.

5. DEVELOPING A YEAR PLANNER FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

DISCLAIMER

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

Once the municipal council has decided on the distinct roles and responsibilities to be assigned to the various councillors and officials in regard to community participation clearly reflecting what needs to be done by whom and by when, a year planner can be developed for each role player. Care must be taken that the roles and functions to be carried out by the different role players are properly integrated and coordinated.

The consultation and communication process must be aligned with the respective cut off dates specified in legislation relating to for instance the preparation of the municipality's budget, the development and or review of the municipality's IDP and the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the municipality's performance management system.

Timing of the participation of the community in regard to strategic decisions relating to the provision of services could be more flexible. The Council must weigh the timing of collecting and analyzing data for the proposed project against the need to share its intention with the public. If too little work has been done, council may not be able to fully understand and rationalize its choices or expectations and be in a position to answer questions on the project from the community. If council has progressed too far without public consultation, the public may view the proposed project negatively and oppose the process.

Legislation does not address when councils must undertake public consultation in regard to municipal projects. It is left up to the municipal leaders who best know their community, to determine the appropriate timing of public consultation.

It is nevertheless recommended that council go to the public earlier rather than later and be cautious about making commitments or raising expectations which they may not be able to fulfill. By going to the community early, the council may be able to solicit assistance from the community and form advisory committees to take on specific tasks.

Additionally, early consultation will endorse the idea that council is working in the best interests of the community. This may help promote community support for its proposals.

6. PREPARING A BUDGET FOR COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

As already indicated municipalities are in terms of section 16 of the Municipal Systems Act legally required to budget for community consultation and for capacitating the local community to enable it to participate in the affairs of the municipality; and to capacitate councillors and staff to foster community participation.

DISCLAIMER

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

Planning and budgeting for consultation in respect of the municipality's integrated development plans, performance management system and budget should be a relatively easy exercise since a history of expenses incurred during previous such consultation processes would have been documented. Should the council, however, wish to intensify and expand its consultation process to include most of the consultation processes set out in paragraph 11 or commission surveys, then a relatively big upward adjustment may have to be made.

Calculation of consultation expenses in respect of the various municipal service projects the Council may wish to embark upon may be somewhat more difficult as this would depend on the number of projects to be implemented, the enormity of the projects, the public interest generated in respect of the projects, the number of objections received in respect of the projects and the additional consultation exercises that would have to be undertaken to gain support for the council's projects.

The budget for the consultation process should take the following into account.

- i) Media expenses- public notices in the press, radio etc
- ii) Design and printing of pamphlets, brochures etc
- iii) Transport expenses
- iv) Hiring of halls for public meetings or workshops
- v) Public address systems
- vi) Targeted interviews
- vii) Conducting and analyzing the survey results surveys (Consultant fees)

If workshops are to be conducted by consultants to capacitate councillors and officials to promote community participation, the municipality would also have to budget for these costs which would include the professional fees of the consultants and any accommodation and subsistence and transport expenses of the participants.

Capacitating the local community to participate in the affairs of the municipality could be done through the ward committee system. Nevertheless this would also have a budget implication and the necessary funds for this exercise would also have to be budgeted for.

7. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION / CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

Clear guidelines in regard to the channels of communication to be followed by the community in respect of complaints or enquiries must be determined by the municipality and made known to the councillors, the officials and the community so that all affected parties are clear on their roles and responsibilities.

DISCLAIMER

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

In deciding on the lines of communication the municipality must ensure that all sectors of the society i.e. the affluent, the marginalized and poor, the illiterate and the disabled can give input into the decision making process.

Where structures have been established for purposes of consultation e.g. the IDP representative form, the ward committees etc. the municipality must ensure that these are effectively utilised and that they give feedback to the community whenever necessary. Councillors, but in particular the ward councillors should be accessible to the community and respond objectively to their complaints or enquiries in regard to municipal matters.

Community participation contact points viz. such as telephone, fax numbers and email addresses must be published for general information and the municipality must ensure that all enquiries/complaints are timeously responded to.

The wide spread protests against poor service delivery that swept the country during 2005 could have been avoided had proper communication channels been established between the communities, the councillors and officials and had the municipalities responded early to the complaints lodged and enquiries received from the affected communities.

8. IDENTIFYING THE STAKEHOLDERS

The stakeholders who would have to be involved in any projects initiated by the municipal or provincial /national government on behalf of municipalities would differ from project to project. It is extremely important that every effort be made to identify all stakeholders in the project i.e. those that are aligned and in favour of the proposed project as well as those who may be vehemently opposed to the project E.g. the siting of a waste disposal site may be suitable to some but because of health risks and odours just not acceptable to others.

The following is a broad range of stakeholders that may be affected by proposed municipal projects or that would like to give input on the municipality's integrated development plan, the performance management system and the budget.

- Most importantly the community that is directly or indirectly affected by the proposal
- User Groups
- Various National Government Departments
- Various Provincial Government Departments
- Municipalities (Metro, district and local)
- Tribal Authorities

DISCLAIMER

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

- Ratepayer Associations and other civic groupings
- Chambers of Commerce and Industry
- Parastatals
- The Poor and Vulnerable Groups:
- Non-Governmental Organizations: local environmental organizations, church groups, youth groups
- Community-Based Organizations
- Private Sector
- Organised Labour and Trade Associations
- Donor Organisations
- Other Stakeholders: media, educational institutions

9. PREPARING A PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

In developing the community participation plan it would be advisable to cater for two distinct groupings but nevertheless to integrate the participation process to include both groups.

The first group would be constituted of the poor and vulnerable groups and special care will have to be taken to ensure that they fully understand the process to be followed, their contribution to the ultimate decision and the consequences of them not participating in the process. It is these vulnerable groups who may also not be able to read and write and as specified by legislation, the municipality will have to ensure that it engages with them in a meaningful manner.

The second group would be constituted of the broader group of stakeholders set out in paragraph 8 above, and other parties involved in designing the new or improved municipal service, particularly with regard to planning service levels; siting facilities; and/or introducing new technical, financial, or institutional aspects.

Broad stakeholder participation is critical for building ownership among all users of the proposed municipal service as well as for ensuring that the poor and/or other vulnerable groups participate in the system.

Preparing a public participation involves the following steps:

- a) Step1: Identify the most important stakeholders, their roles, interests, conflicts between stakeholder groups, and the level of participation required by each stakeholder group in the project- for example, information dissemination, consultation, collaboration.

DISCLAIMER

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

- b) Step 2: Identify the important project and social issues for which participation will be needed (for example, size and location of large refuse containers, siting of solid waste facilities, willingness and ability to pay for improved services). Describe how public participation activities will be used to influence project implementation.
- c) Step 3: Identify key points for public involvement in the implementation of each project component, where applicable. For each component, the plan should identify key actors, the level of participation required for each actor (that is, one-way exchange, two-way exchanges, shared decision making, and project ownership), and the methods through which these actors will participate (for example, information dissemination, including methodologies such as media communication, brochures; public meetings and workshops, in-depth interviews), as well as processes and appropriate mechanisms for resolving disputes.
- d) Step 4: Determine the types of information that will be disseminated at each stage for the important stakeholder groups as well as awareness raising and training that would be needed for relevant stakeholder groups (Keep in view that the municipality is in terms of section 16 (b) of the Municipal Systems Act required to build capacity in communities to enable them to participate in the affairs of the municipality).
- e) Step 5: Apart from the ward committees and other formalized consultative structures the municipality must try and identify NGOs or other institutions that can contribute to the participation process through the design and management of public education and outreach activities. This will require an assessment of the abilities of these institutions to develop public outreach strategies, organize public information campaigns; and write, design, and disseminate both project and general information.
- f) Step 6: Describe how public involvement and participation activities will be monitored and evaluated (the plan should include a list of criteria and indicators for monitoring and evaluating changes in socioeconomic factors and community participation that are relevant to project success and sustainability).
- g) Step 7: Estimate the costs that would be required to initiate and sustain these activities and develop a budget.

10. CONFLICT AMONGST STAKEHOLDERS

DISCLAIMER

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

When participatory processes bring stakeholders of different power and interests together around development work, both apparent and latent conflicts are often at issue.

Conflict resolution techniques may therefore have to be utilised by the Municipality to involve the stakeholders in a process, based on improved communication, to address differences in a constructive way.

Conflict resolution specialists focus on helping stakeholders: describe their key concerns and identify common interests that will motivate them to work together; undertake joint problem-solving and suggest specific steps for organizing meaningful decision making processes; and work together to design creative solutions and make commitments to agreements reached. .

11. HOW TO INVOLVE THE PUBLIC

Municipal councils are encouraged to undertake more in-depth consultation with their community and not merely pay lip service to the provisions of the legislation outlined in paragraph 2. However, while it is expected that the community will be interested in municipal matters and wish to take part in the process, council must remember that public participation is voluntary. People cannot be forced to show up and participate.

There are a number of ways for council to inform the public of its initiatives and projects and the progress being made with these projects. Some of these methods are identified below. This list is not exhaustive and each council may develop and use other different strategies for public consultation.

General Public Meetings: Public meetings are an effective way for council to inform a large number of people of its intentions and to enable them to give input on the IDP, the budget and the performance management system and to test their sentiments in respect of proposed municipal projects. Community report back meetings, consultative meetings and ward committee meetings also form part of the general classification of public meetings but are more specific in nature in regard to the target audience or their geographic demarcation.

All public meetings should be adequately advertised so that they reach all sectors of the population and be attended by councillors as well as officials directly involved in the issues to be addressed at such meetings.

Community consultation and community report-back meetings are conducted so that ward councillors can get input on various municipal issues outline the key council plans and programmes for the area and give feedback on

DISCLAIMER

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

issues raised during ward committee meetings or other forums. The community should also be afforded ample opportunity to raise their concerns and give input on problems they are experiencing and how these can be addressed and resolved.

Ward Committee meetings: As specified in section 74 (3) of the Municipal Structures Act the object of a ward committee is to enhance participatory democracy in local government. It is therefore the responsibility of the chairperson of the ward committee, who in terms of the Municipal Structures Act must be the ward committee councillor, and the members serving on the committee to ensure that proper consultation takes place with all communities within the relevant ward.

Open “House”: Much like a public meeting, an open house is a way to present information. Councils embarking on say the development of public amenities such as swimming pools, taxi ranks etc may wish to hold an open “house” to allow people to review displayed models, or architectural drawings of the proposed amenities.

Media releases and advertisements are further methods of informing the public about municipal initiatives and inviting input either through the post, by email or at public meetings to be held for this purpose. Advertisements may also be used to display important information or to present major announcements to the public of the accomplishment of certain objectives or steps.

Mail-Outs: A mail-out may be used to share detailed information with the community. Mail-outs are effective in presenting data and detailed information. For example, council could share its findings after it has collected and analyzed data and the expected costs of service provision. Another idea is to use mail-outs to collect comments and questions from the public. For instance, council may wish to distribute mail-outs with a detachable portion that has a place for people to add their questions or comments and which could be mailed to the municipal office.

In remote areas or informal settlements where the mail-out would not be an option, the municipality could utilise the drop and collect method of mail-out where fieldworkers would drop the questionnaires/information pamphlets with each household and collect them in instances where the council wishes to elicit responses from the householders.

Establishment of Advisory Committees: In terms of section 17 (4) Of the Municipal Systems Act, a municipal council may establish one or more advisory committees consisting of persons who are not councillors to advise the council on any matter within the council’s competence. When appointing the members of such a committee, gender representivity must be taken into account.

DISCLAIMER

The author’s views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

Each committee could have a specific task, like the collection and analysis of data on an aspect of the municipality or to look at service provision models. Each committee could be made up of a council member and a small number of residents. The council members of each committee could then report to a portfolio committee of the council or to the council itself.

Forums: The municipality will in most instances have established IDP Forums as prescribed by the Municipal Planning and Performance Management Regulations, which could also be used for consultation in regard to the municipality's performance management system as well as its budget, since these aspects are so interrelated.

In loco inspections: Inviting the community to in loco site inspections to test their sentiments regarding for instance the development of sports amenities/taxi ranks etc on the site, also ensures that the community can contribute to the decision making process in regard to the issue under discussion.

Socio economic or service level surveys: A more formalised way of testing the feeling of the community or getting responses and comments on pressing issues is through socio economic or service level surveys. The municipality, must however, ensure that it gives proper feedback to the community once it has analysed the responses.

Conducting socio economic or service level surveys can be an expensive exercise and the municipality must ensure that the survey questionnaires are not ambiguous and that the manner of conducting the survey guarantees sufficient responses

Door-to-door work visits by ward councillors to obtain input or comments on municipal affairs is a further method of involving the community in the affairs of the municipality. Unfortunately it seems that the only time this method of consultation is resorted to is during political election campaigns.

Publicity tables could be set up at places like shopping centres, hospitals or taxi ranks so that ward councillors and committee members can relay important information to the people and answer any questions they may have regarding the municipality or any of its projects or projects it intends embarking upon.

All the above consultation processes would in all probability be initiated by the Municipality. At times, the public may however wish to collectively take its opinion to council in the form of a **petition** or embark upon **protest action**.

12. PREPARING FOR PUBLIC MEETINGS

Prior to calling a public meeting councillors and officials must ensure that they are fully prepared. They must satisfy themselves that the data and whatever else needs to be presented in regard to the IDP, the PMS the budget or municipal

DISCLAIMER

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

service project is accurate. They must anticipate questions and prepare responses.

Facts, figures, information and findings must be presented clearly through the use of suitable presentation aids, such as charts, graphs, models and maps, to clearly convey the information and illustrate the points they wish to make. Additionally, council should be honest with the public. The future is always uncertain. Be clear that there will be unexpected hurdles. Change may not come about smoothly and easily, but a strong, united community will be able to persevere and remain cohesive.

13. HOW TO CONDUCT A PUBLIC MEETING

If council decides to hold a public meeting, or is required to as a result of public objections, it is important to find a time that council thinks the most people could be able to attend. This is most likely to be over weekends or in the early evening.

The meeting should be held in a venue that is accessible and central and that accommodates the expected number of people. A community hall or sports stadium may be appropriate.

The meeting should start on time and be conducted in a professional manner. Planning to have the doors open and seating arranged prior to the start time will allow people to arrive, get comfortable and focus on the topics of the meeting before the meeting begins.

Council should have an agenda for the meeting. An agenda will provide structure to the meeting and help keep everyone focused on the topic. Council could ask a respected and objective member of the community to act as chairperson. The role of the chairperson will depend on the type of meeting being held. If council is presenting the budget, performance management system or any other proposed project to the community, the chairperson will ensure timeframes are followed and disruptions are kept to a minimum. If the purpose of the meeting is to debate an issue, the chairperson will have to be an impartial individual who will keep order and who is versed in rules of conduct.

Rules of conduct should be established early and clearly communicated to those in attendance. Normally the chairperson will outline these rules once the meeting has been called to order. Common considerations for rules of conduct are:

- People wishing to speak should first identify themselves.
- Questions may be directed to the panel as a whole or to a specific person.

DISCLAIMER

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

- Once the question is asked, the chairperson may restate the question and call for a response.
- There may be an opportunity for rebuttal if the question is not fully answered.
- Comments and questions should be restricted to the subject of the meeting.
- Personal attacks and obscenities will not be tolerated and may result in the offender being asked to leave the meeting.
- Interruptions will not be tolerated.
- Questions and answers may be limited to a set time (for example, three minutes).

14 CONCLUSION

Whilst the above information may have provided insight into the requirements of legislation into various aspects of community participation this will only really come to fruition if the municipality prepares and implements:

- i) An action plan that clearly sets out the roles and responsibilities the various role-players are required to play in respect of community participation.
- ii) An internal and external communication plan and communicates this to the relevant role-players clearly showing lines of communication and communication contact points.
- iii) A year planner for all persons who have a specific role to play in the community participation process.
- iv) A budget for community participation and for capacitating councillors, officials and the community.

In planning the communication and participation plan it would be useful to refer to the nine basic steps of environmental communication planning (Kudat 1994). Cernea, Micheal and Ayse Kudat. 1977. Social Assessment for Better Projects. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.

These consist of

- a) Gathering the facts concerning the solid waste (or any other identified) issue to be dealt with.

DISCLAIMER

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

- b) Identifying the goals and the objectives of the campaign (*What do you wish to achieve in engaging with the community*)
- c) Identifying target audience (*Check against the stakeholders we have identified in paragraph 6 above and any others you may have identified*)
- d) Determining the main message (*What do you want to inform them about and what response are you looking for*)
- e) Identifying the channel and format (e.g., distributing brochures to high income neighborhoods);
- f) Pre-testing the message (*Make use of pilot studies*)
- g) Developing strategy for message transmission and reception (e.g., frequency, length, impact, etc.);
- h) Transmitting the message; and
- i) Evaluating results (It is pointless evaluating the results and not acting on the outcome. Once the results have been analysed it is extremely important to give feedback to the community and other stakeholders that were involved in the process of consultation and participation)

Although these are relatively simple steps to follow, many campaigns are designed without adequate fact finding, strategy development, pre-testing, and results evaluation.

The participation process should also involve the design of an information and communication strategy to ensure stakeholder ownership of the development proposals. This strategy usually has three main elements:

- i) Mechanisms to share the information from the social surveys and institutional analyses with the broader group of stakeholders and partners. (Are you for instance going to:
 - a) Use the media for this purpose
 - b) Arrange public meetings
 - c) Use formal structures like the IDP forums
 - d) Use Ward committee meetings

DISCLAIMER

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

- ii) . Mechanisms to ensure the participation of key stakeholders to obtain feedback on responses to the initial community participation
- iii) Procedures to involve stakeholders in monitoring and evaluation of the projects to be initiated after the consultation process.

A public participation plan or strategy should outline a general framework for encouraging participation during the planning and implementation of the project decided upon and should be continually updated throughout project implementation.

References

**TOOLKIT
SOCIAL ASSESSMENT AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
IN MUNICIPAL SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT
Janis Bernstein
ECSSD
Urban Environment Thematic Group
August 2004**

DISCLAIMER

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.