

Community Forums – tool for participatory budgeting



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Citizen Participation

- Citizen participation represents the inclusion of citizens, residents of a community, in the process of making decisions that directly or indirectly affect their life in the community.



What is a Community Forum?

- tool for the successful inclusion of citizens in the decision-making process at the municipal level.
- platform for structured discussions about community problems and how to solve them.

Why Forum?



- Enables more comprehensive citizen participation
- develops participative and accountable governance of local self-government

Preconditions

Both parties to be active stakeholders:

- local government that is open to this type of local governance and has available mechanisms to do so
- active citizens who are ready to devote time and energy to cooperate with the municipality



Project Forum

organized to define priorities between several topics and projects that are necessary to be solved in the community

results of the project forum are a certain number of projects and recommendations that contribute to the development of the community as a whole

Regional forum

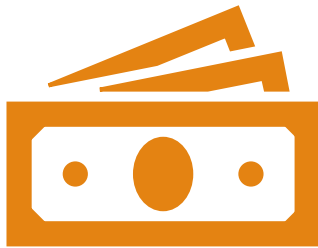


organized at the level of the statistical region on a common topic of discussion, that allows solving common problems faster, more economically and more efficiently.

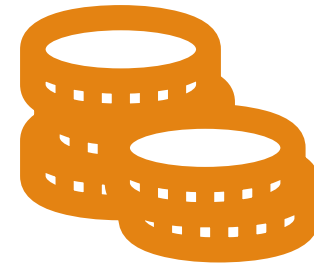
result of regional forum is a certain number of projects and recommendations that contribute to the development of communities in all municipalities.

Apart from a common topic for discussion, it is necessary that the solutions that are offered be common to municipalities included in the forum, and not to offer the same parallel solutions.

Budget forum



topic of discussion in the Budget Forum is the budget of the LGU for the next year



result of the budget forum is adopted municipal budget in consultation with the citizens

Forum process - 18 months

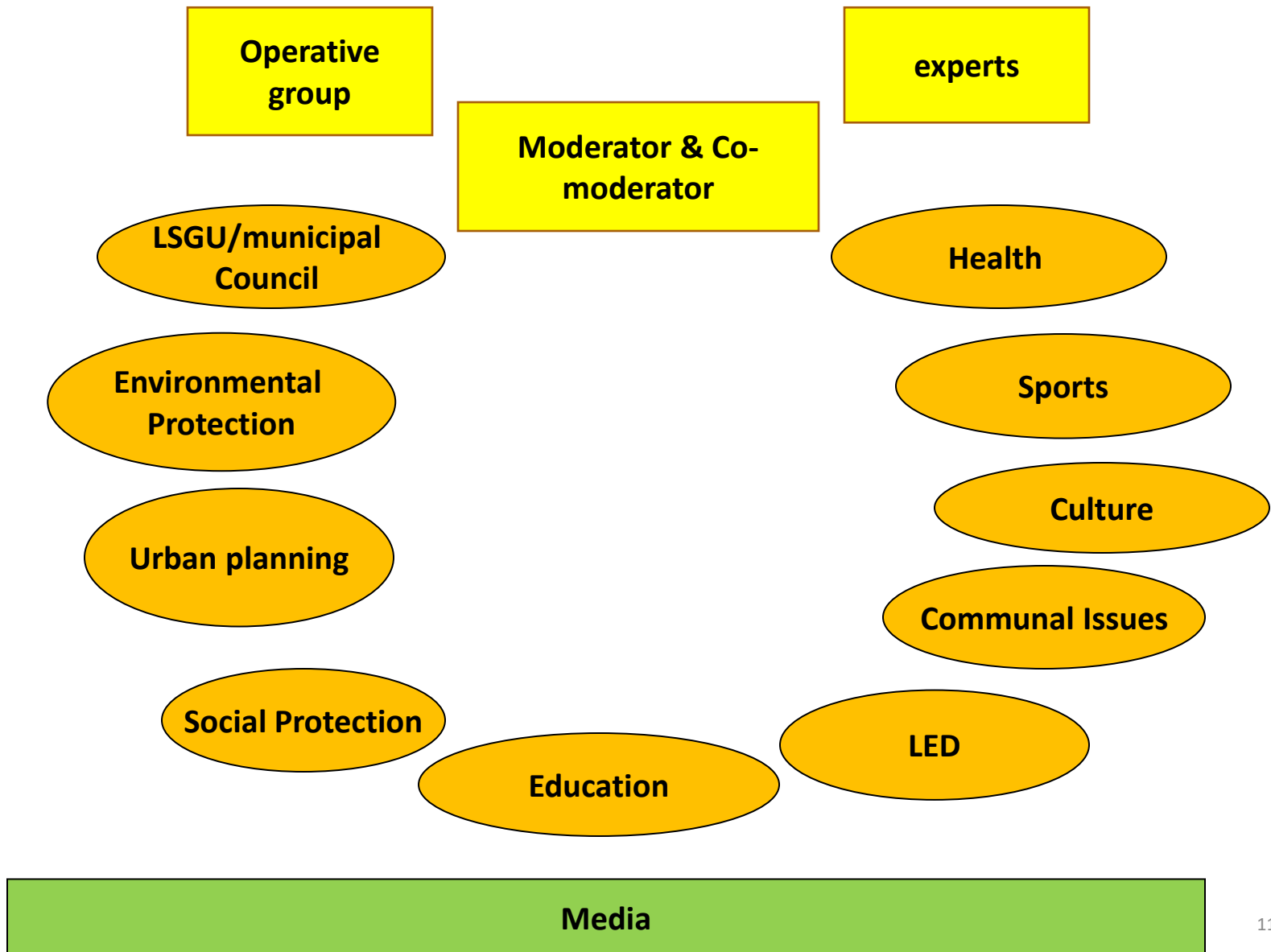
- Sessions 1 – 5 – Participants discussions
- Topic and structure – Problems/Solutions – Concepts – Project proposals – Selection of forum projects



Implementation of forum projects/budget

Follow-up forum session – presenting implemented forum projects and recommendations

Forum structure - working tables



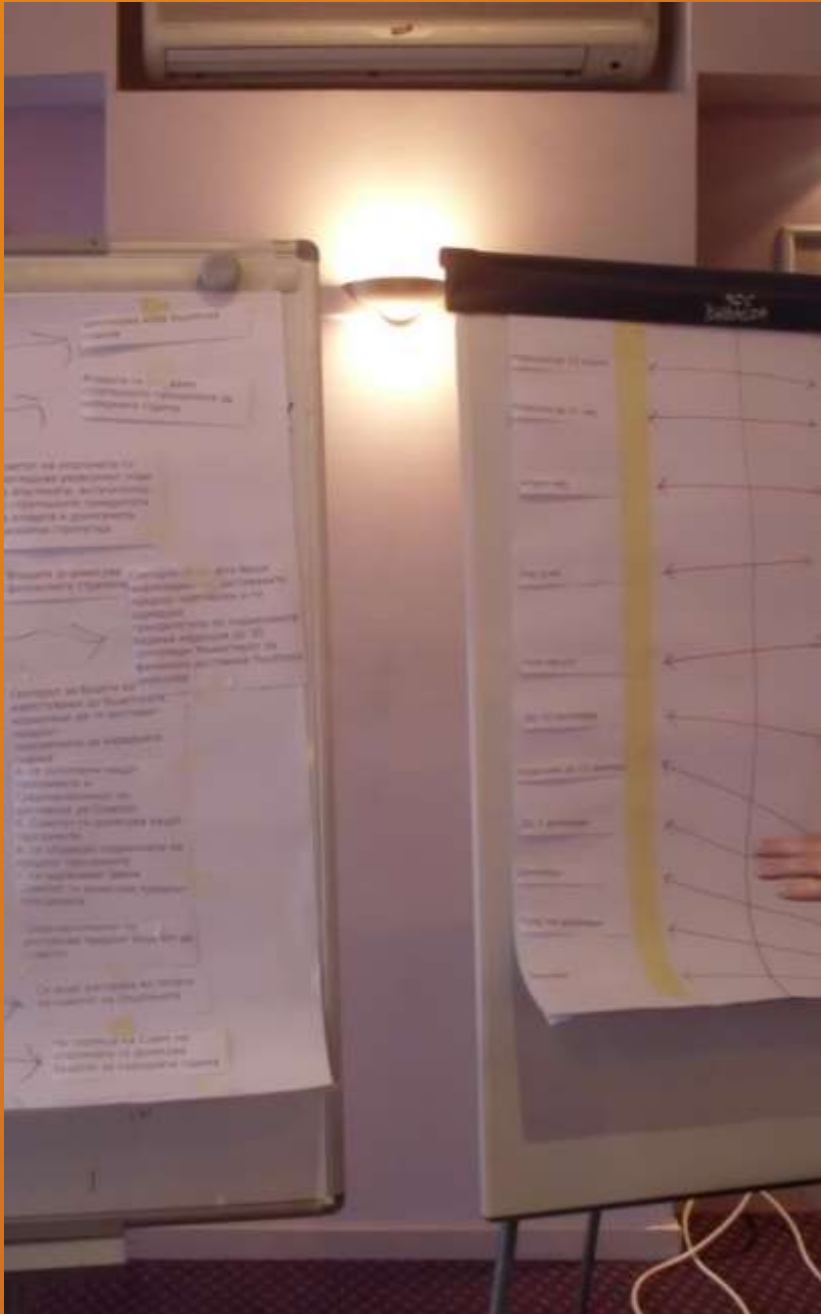
1st Forum Session



- Presentation of the forum process
- Formation of the structure of the forum (working tables)
- Determining the Rules for the work of the forum
- Presentation of the budget (revenues and expenditures), budget utilization in the past three years
- Presentation of strategic priorities of the municipality

2nd Forum Session

- Presentation of the discussion on the strategic priorities of the municipality from the previous session
- Overview of the planned against realized revenues of the municipality for the current year and discussion
- Representatives of the municipality present the projection, i.e. the revenue plan for the following year,
- Discussion on citizens proposals for increasing municipality's revenue, improving their collection or restructuring
- Deciding on budget programs to be discussed



3rd & 4th Forum Session



Presentation of citizens proposal for revenue increase from the previous session



Presentation of municipal expenditures from the current and previous three years



Presentation of budget programs



Presentation and discussion of citizens' budget proposals

5th Forum Session

- Presentation of final budget programs and citizens' projects
- Voting and selection of projects
- Submission of a list of recommendations from the Forum to Mayor
- Creating working group for monitoring the implementation of forum projects and recommendations



Forum sessions

- **Follow up session (budget forum)**

- announcing the budget process for the next financial year.
- mayor and the municipal administration provide feedback regarding the municipal budget utilisation and the implementation of priority forum projects and recommendations.
- Presentation by the working group that follows the process of budget adoption and its implementation.

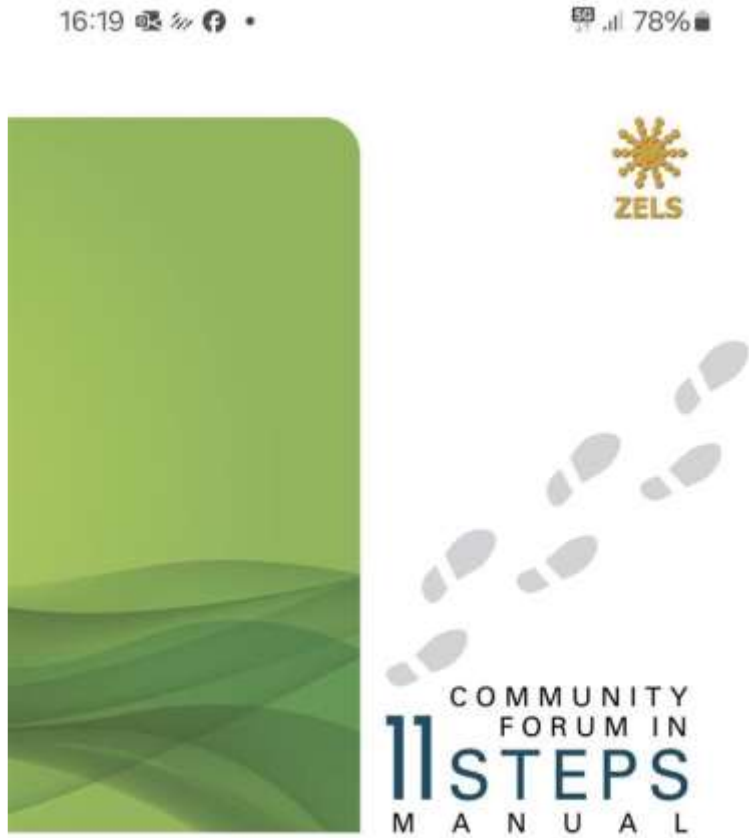


Forum results

- Identified priorities and needs of citizens
- Developed budget proposals/ projects for citizens' priorities
- Implemented budget programs/projects and realized citizens' priorities
- Recommendations given to the municipality







SUSTAINABILITY

- Incorporating the forum in the Statutes of the municipalities
- Significant number of municipalities and administration experienced the forum first hand
- Manual for conducting forums in 11 steps

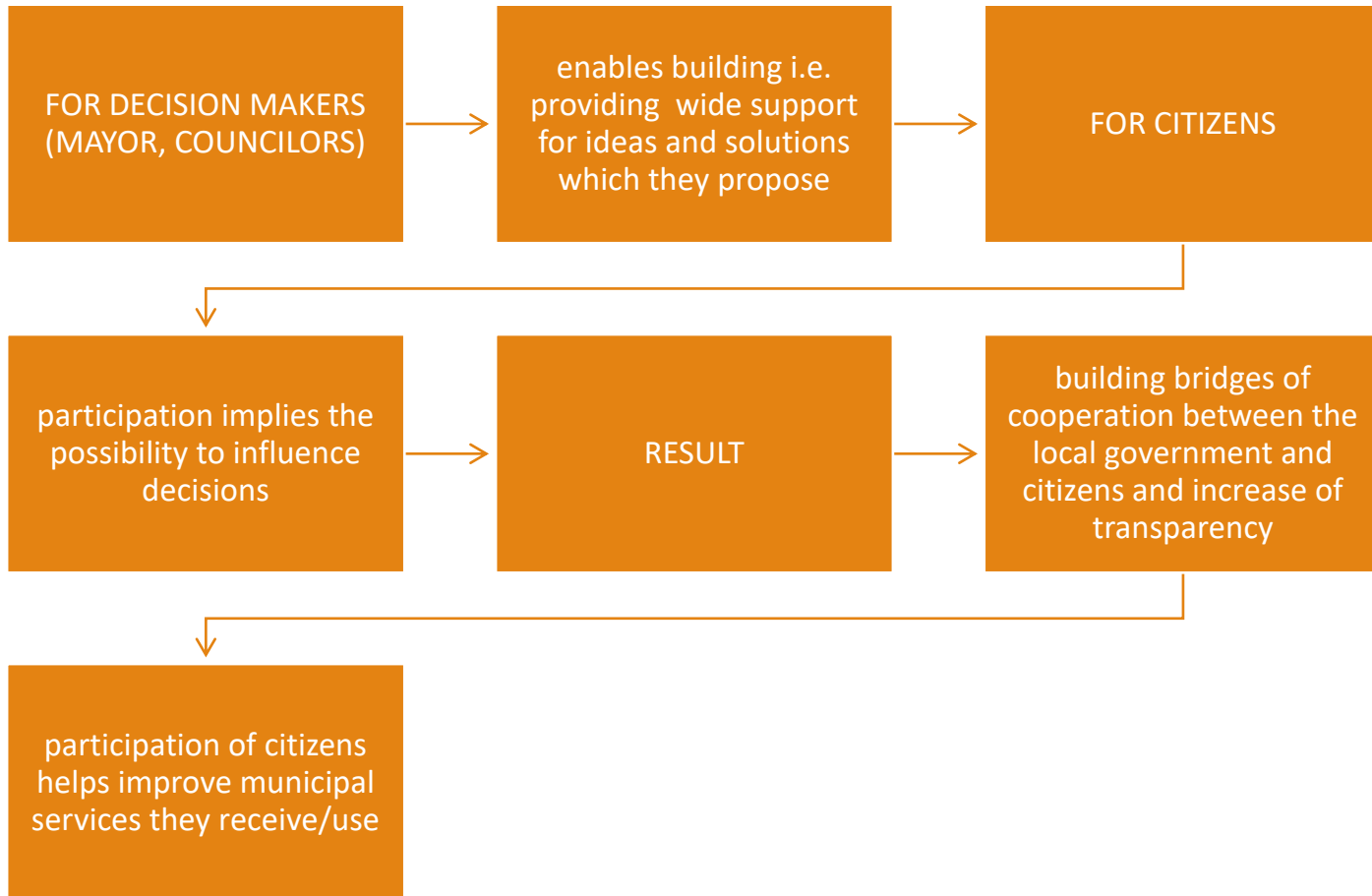
Challenges

- **Time**
- **Funding**
- **Strategic approach to budgeting**
- **Trust**

- **Mobilization of citizens**
- **Presenting municipal budget**
- **Structuring forum discussions**
- **Continuous presence**
- **Cooperation**
- **Working tables**
- **Time and location**



Why Forums?



Forum benefits



Increase of capacities



Improving the lives of people in the community



Building a wide support for ideas and solutions from citizens



For citizens, participation implies the possibility to influence decisions.



Building bridges of cooperation between the local government and citizens



Increase of transparency



improving the municipal services for citizens



Improves trust between local governments and citizens



Improves quality of life



Allows different voices to be heard



Wins elections

Thank you!

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