

“Local non-governmental institutions taking part in setting up the strategic planning process for local authorities”

For the EU funded project

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Civil Society for Dignity**

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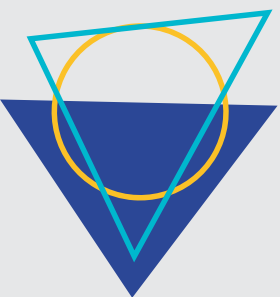
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Acronyms

APLA	Association of Palestinian Local Authorities
CSO	Civil Society Organization
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
LGUs	Local Government Units
MDLF	Municipal Development and Lending Fund
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MoLG	Ministry of Local Government
MoM	Minutes of Meeting
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NWSDIP	National Working Group SDIP
PNA	Palestinian National Authority
SDIP	Strategic Development and Investment Plan

Section One: Context and Introduction

| Context

This action puts CSOs at the center and emphasizes their role in policy development and in monitoring the implementation of laws and policies in close contact with local authorities and citizens. Therefore, creating an environment where Civil Society Organizations are able to fully play their legitimate role in Palestinian society not only as service providers, but also as advocates and watchdogs.

An important focus point of the action is addressing the particular needs and constraints of the target groups and Palestine as a whole. The ongoing occupation of the Palestinian Territories does not only cause enormous problems in light of the absence of human security, and of any community-based security, accessibility and possibilities for economic prosperity for the Palestinians, it also leads to societal fragmentation, pressure on Palestinian unity and undermines the possibilities for a sustainable solution for the conflict. The different struggles geographically separated Palestinians are facing and the overall restrictions on mobility lead to an increased inward looking way of life with less connections between the different Palestinian localities, not only within the various parts of the West Bank, but also between Palestinians living in the West Bank and Palestinians living in East Jerusalem. In addition to this, internal political struggles and lack of effective governance, as a result of which large parts of the population do not feel represented anymore by their political leaders, put even more pressure on the situation. While there are many youth and community leaders that are very much aware of the needs of their communities, they are often excluded from access to the political sphere and decision making powers. This is especially the case for youth and women given the patriarchal system including strong elements of (toxic) masculinities, leading to a lack of services and pressure on community-based security issues. Furthermore, even though there are many CSOs active in Palestine, they often don't optimally act as representatives of citizens and as a result of a lack of space and enabling environment (repression and shrinking space) they are unable to successfully play their role in effective governance and enforcing accountability through working together and with (local) authorities. All specific needs and constraints this action aims to address, build on the notion that a strong civil society is essential to bridge the gap between citizens and local authorities and that CSOs are of utmost importance in light of accountability and good governance, including in terms of contributing to increased gender equality.

| Introduction

The Project

The Civil Society for Dignity is a project implemented by a consortium of four NGOs: The Palestinian Centre for Rapprochement (PCR); The Palestinian Centre for Peace and Democracy (PCPD), PAX and Middle East Nonviolence and Democracy (MEND)The project is funded

by The European Union and will extend for three years, from January 2021 until December 2023.

This proposed action is a joint intervention by the applying organizations (PCR, PCPD, MEND and PAX) in close cooperation with other relevant CSOs and grassroots movements from all over the West Bank and East Jerusalem (Jerusalem districts, not including villages inside the colonial wall) with a specific focus on women and youth. The action will contribute to the overall objective to "enable Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to play their legitimate role as advocates and watchdogs in Palestine".

Civil Society Organizations in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza

Palestinian civil society in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and Gaza has a robust and complex history, and it evolved dramatically over the past half century. In 1967, there were dozens of Palestinian civil society actors – primarily unions and humanitarian organizations¹.

²It is hard to pinpoint a special period when civil society organizations emerged in the Palestinian case, but it could be argued that the foundation for an active and influential civil society role started in 1920s. New organizations were founded with the aim of reaching out to marginalized groups such as youth and women. These institutions continued to take an active role in Palestinian society until 1948. However, after the Israeli Occupation in 1948, the working environment for these organizations changed dramatically. Some organizations remained working in the occupied territories, striving to work on the maintenance of the Palestinian identity. Others established themselves outside occupied territories, and they focused their efforts on the liberation of Palestine and the Arab national identity (Costantini, Gianfrancesco, Atamneh, Jamal, Ayesh, Khaled & Feda Al Hussein 2011).

In the period between 1948 till 1967, the West Bank was temporarily annexed by Jordan while the Gaza Strip was placed under Egyptian administration, though without being annexed to Egypt. In Gaza, CSOs set out to work openly, and formed relationships with political parties, such as the Palestinian Communist Party of Gaza and the Muslim Brotherhoods' Gaza Branch. This led to the development of political institutions in Gaza such as the Palestinian National Council in 1948 and the Palestinian Legislative Council in 1963. In the West Bank, CSO faced many difficulties, and they concentrated their activities toward providing basic services due to the heavy restriction imposed on them that limited their movements and activities. (Giacaman, George 2000)

After the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967, the development of Palestinian CSOs was linked to that of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and its various political parties. The PLO enhanced the institution of CSOs, and with the absence of public sector or a state, these organizations concentrated their efforts in health and education and in service provision. The main activities performed by civil society organizations during this period can be summarized in service provision and relief work. (Adawi, Naser 2008)

After the beginning of the First Intifada in 1987, a new stage emerged for CSOs. They have become more concentrated on the Palestinian political agenda, and formulating a developmental vision within the framework of protracted conflict and the long, continuing occu-

pation. Accordingly, many CSOs were active in protecting human rights against the Israeli violations in occupied territories. In this period, a new type of CSOs developed that is so-called popular committees that constituted the main participants in the Intifada. (Giacaman, George 2000)

The 1990s shaped another stage for Palestinian CSOs. They expanded and began to adopt an agenda concentrating on the internal social environment in the oPt, and after the signing of the Oslo agreement, the Palestinian territories have entered into a more stable environment. Since then, many CSO concerted their efforts in exploring their role in the process of building the Palestinian public entity, and promoting the process of democratization in Palestinian society; and in the Palestinian case the political movements and parties are considered the oldest and the most dominant in the Palestinian political process. (Adawi, Naser 2008)

However, the Second Intifada in 2000 with its return to a stage of armed conflict, these organizations became under greater pressure to change their efforts and resources and orientations. Political parties returned to armed struggle and CSOs in their turn, returned to concentrate on relief work. In 2004 and 2005, international funds for Palestinian NGOs and the PA increased again and became dependent on their activities. According to a study carried out in 2009, external aid funds to Palestinian NGOs reached less than 50% of their total funding in 1999 to close to 80% in 2008. (Costantini, Gianfrancesco, Atamneh, Jamal, Ayesh, Khaled & Feda Al Hussein 2011).

" The relationship between LGUs and social movements emerged in the mid-seventies, especially during the period of holding LGUs elections. LGUs also worked later to build relationships with the mass and voluntary movements, especially since they do not have the financial resources to implement projects and programs in the community, and they resorted to voluntary work committees to implement service projects such as roads, streets, sanitation and others." Moharam Barghouthi.

Over the following two decades, Palestinian civil society would continue to blossom, with an estimated 1,400 Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) by 1994³. These CSOs typically operated at a grassroots level, providing critical services to communities in the absence of a government⁴ and were especially prominent leaders in human rights advocacy initiatives. The Oslo Accords and advent of the Palestinian Authority (PA) marked an important shift in this landscape. An estimated 800 CSOs dissolved, as the PA sought to subsume many of the services CSOs traditionally provided. Despite this, civil society continued to fill critical service gaps—for example, CSOs were providing over half of the healthcare services and nearly all the pre-school services into the early 2000s. This period was also marked by an increase in funding from abroad. As a result, local communities became increasingly critical of CSOs for catering to international donors, rather than local communities' priorities, i.e., the "NGO-ization" of civil society. Today, Palestinian CSOs continue to occupy an important space, with continued leadership on human rights, health, education, gender equality, and agricultural and rural development initiatives. The number of CSOs operating in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and Gaza has far surpassed the 1994 figures above: as of June 2021, 3,223 Palestinian CSOs are officially registered with the Ministry of the Interior

³ Zamlah, October 2021. Investigative Study: The Palestinian Public's Perception of Palestinian CSOs. Accessed 2 December 2021. Hard copy. Page 9.

⁴ NGO Development Center, March 2014. Improving the Internal Governance of the CSO sector: The Case of Palestine. Accessed 2 December 2021.

¹ Ibid. Arab Center Washington DC, December 2020.

² Helen Khoury Paper on " Civil Society Organizations in Palestine and its relationship with their public"



(MoI) NGO Department (under the PA) in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and Gaza. When counting unregistered organizations, those operating in Israel, and organizations

abroad, this figure may exceed 4,000⁵. CSOs face a complex operating environment which has become increasingly difficult to navigate. Summarized here are some of the most salient themes about factors impacting the civil society landscape, with particular attention to developments in this landscape over the past five years. Additionally, the novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) crisis is exacerbating pre-existing social, political, and economic challenges in the sector. Some of the current challenges are the increased number of gender-based violence (GBV) cases, the high rates of unemployment, and the lack of adequate information reaching citizens. In addition to an increased need, the pandemic impacted the day-to-day functions of CSOs and their ability to carry out activities, as well as their donor-funded resources.

The Public Participation Policy Paper

In July 2010, the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG) initiated a dialogue process on public participation in Local Government Units' (LGUs) affairs. The MoLG held a series of workshops that brought together representatives of LGUs and MoLG, civil society organizations, and community leaders to discuss and establish a common framework on the concept, roles of stakeholders, tools, and mechanisms to enhance public participation in local government. The initiative was implemented in accordance with the MoLG's strategy for 2010–2014, and its vision "good local governance able to achieve sustainable development with effective community participation". Citizen participation implies participation of individuals, as well as stakeholder groups and civil society organizations in municipal decision-making process.

According to the Public Participation Policy Paper, **the level of public's involvement fluctuates based on the understanding of citizens and institutions of their role in promoting democracy and good governance concepts and supporting local development. In many cases, public participation is superficial, ineffective and is not representative of the local community. There are challenges in communication between citizens and public institutions from one hand, and citizens and the LGUs on the other, for one or more of the following reasons:**

- Lack of appropriate communication tools and mechanisms.
- Public's lack of knowledge in LGUs' work and its participatory role in supporting local development.
- Lack of LGUs' awareness of the value of public participation in planning and decision-making at the local level.
- Lack of public's interest and belief in the value of participation and as a result of previous failures in this area.
- Therefore, the most important challenges to promoting and institutionalizing public participation in LGU affairs are:
- Lack of clarity on the concept, levels, tools and importance of public participation and its role in promoting the principles of good governance.
- Weak public awareness of and belief in the importance of public participation in supporting local development.
- The absence of regulations necessary to promote and institutionalize effective public par-

ticipation in LGU affairs.

- To tackle the above-mentioned challenges, there is a need to:
- Enhance and institutionalize public participation in LGUs' affairs.
- Promote good governance practices in LGUs' affairs.
- Strengthen levels of trust between citizens and public institutions, and citizens and LGUs.
- Develop means of communication that provide an opportunity for citizens to access information and provide feedback on LGUs' affairs, and participate in the LGU planning and decision-making processes.

The Benefits and opportunities of Citizens and CSOs Participation to the LGU:

When it comes to navigating citizens and CSOs engagement, there are a lot of choices to be made. In the end, the most effective engagement will depend greatly on the issue or decision at hand and the potential impact on citizens. However, even before this, it is important to understand the benefits that citizen engagement can provide.

Information, Perspective and Ideas all aspects of citizens and CSOs engagement, regardless of where it sits along the Spectrum of Public Participation can contribute to communication that shares information, perspective and ideas. **Public communication** allows a LGU to share accurate and timely knowledge and insight on conditions (i.e. road closures, changes to recreation schedules, changes in personnel, updates to bylaws), concerns and priorities. **Public consultation** allows citizens to contribute their feelings, experience and evidence based information back to LGUs in advance of a decision being made. Citizens and LGUs work more closely together to not only share information, perspectives and ideas but deliberate their merits for the most desirable solution.

Working Relationships Effective citizens and CSOs engagement is, regardless of the nature of the activity, if done right, citizen engagement can build knowledge bases, trust and, ultimately, a commitment to support current and future decisions.

Balanced and Legitimate Decisions by engaging citizens and CSOs LGUs are able to generate a diverse cross-section of views and options for addressing issues or capitalizing on opportunities. They can get insight into points of contention as well as those that generate hope and excitement. They identify potential risks and barriers to success before they have invested in an initiative. They can achieve results that respect the values, experiences, rights and needs of the citizens they serve.

Well-supported Decisions Citizens and CSOs engagement can also contribute to broad support for and stake in decisions made and work undertaken by LGUs. It can identify and confirm community priorities. It can ensure that work is undertaken in a way that addresses citizen concerns, meets expectations and delivers on priorities. It can encourage citizens to stand with their LGUs on difficult decisions and back community investments.

The Core Values of Citizens Participation, as detailed in the public participation policy paper, are:

1. Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
2. Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
3. Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interest of all participants, including decision-makers.

⁵ Ibid. 7amleh, October 2021. Page 10.

4. Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
5. Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
6. Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
7. Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

Executive Summary

This report is based on a review and analysis of the FGDs and Individual Interviews conducted during the course of the research to answer four main questions regarding CSOs and citizens involvement in the process of the development of the SDIPs for LGUs in accordance with the SDIP manual and toolkit developed by the Palestinian MoLG and adopted by the MDLF for the purpose of measuring CSOs' satisfaction, and recommendations for future focus. The four questions are:

1. How does the strategic planning process look like?
2. What are possible ways for (local) non-governmental institutions to be involved in these processes?
3. What are best practices established and lessons learned?
4. What are specific recommendations for relevant stakeholders?
5. Many Palestinian LGUs exercise one or more forms of public participation in varying degrees using different tools through LGU-initiated activities or donor-funded programs. In addition, there are other forms of public participation in terms of citizens and institutions through providing in-kind and financial contributions to the LGUs and to initiatives that serve the public interest. There are four levels of public participation in LGU affairs in Palestine, according to the Public Participation Manual. The SDIP process falls under the third level "**Participation in Planning and Decision-making**".

This report coincides with the launching of the fourth generation of SDIPs by the end of this year

For more than 150 LGUs⁶. Among what will be focused on, the awareness campaign and capacity building of CSOs to be able to have key role in the development of the SDIPs.

This report, based on the analysis of the results of the FGDs and Individual Interviews with relevant stakeholders generated a number of findings that can be summarized as follows:

1. The research shows that community participation including CSOs is an essential component of good governance and local sustainable development. Effective participation promotes mutual trust between LGUs and CSOs, ensuring that LGU services and community initiatives are effective and responsive to citizens' needs. The research analysis shows that

the various participants have different views of the participatory planning approach. CSOs can play a key role in mobilization of local communities since they have close ties with the local communities and aware of their priorities and needs and can identify communities' representatives can contribute to enriching the output of the SDIP process.

2. The strength of CSOs varies from one city or town to another. Where CSOs are strong and effective, they have a vital, tangible and influential role on the SDIP process, while the weakness of CSOs leads to weakness in the outcomes of the SDIP process. This requires that work should be done to strengthen CSOs in local government issues, to be effective partners in the development of cities and towns' SDIPs.
3. The research analysis shows that the SDIP manual assumes that LGUs have the control, resources and ability to lead the local community and work in the four Developmental Sectors (infrastructure, social development, local economic development, administration and good governance), and this unfortunately does not exist in the Palestinian LGUs. Whereas experience in development planning indicates that LGUs, or most of them, are still focusing on the infrastructure sector, as it is a collective priority, and despite this, they are still unable to respond to the needs and priorities of their citizens in this vital area, due to lack of financial resources.
4. To institutionalize the SDIP process and enhance CSOs' participation, relevant parties should find justifications and a legal-legislative document for the SDIP process as well as urban planning to be a requirement by law- and to review and update the SDIP policy paper to reflect the legal requirement on LGUs to develop SDIPs. The LGU, in close coordination with the community and CSOs should prepare and develop key indicators to include the applied tools, results of the participation, citizens' influence on the LGUs' decisions and plans, etc.

This analytical report came out with a number of recommendations, the most important of which are:

1. LGUs should identify participants ensuring inclusion of women and other marginalized groups by conducting a detailed mapping of all existing local CSOs in each LGU through developing a database with names of influential citizens and local CSOs who are experienced in various sectors and ensuring inclusion of women and other marginalized group to be represented in any participatory events.
2. There is a need to allocate budgets by the central government/ MoF to the LGUs for the implementation of the SDIP as well as financial resources to implement the work plan and the proposed interventions in an appropriate time frame. One of the most important interventions is to provide the necessary awareness and training for CSOs to ensure their effective participation in the SDIP process with focus on the fourth and fifth phased of the planning process to play a key role in monitoring the implementation of the plan. It is also important that the relevant parties should find justifications and legal-legislations for the SDIP process as well as urban planning to be a requirement by law- and to review and update the SDIP policy paper to reflect the legal requirement on LGUs to develop SDIPs. LGUs, in close coordination with the community and CSOs should prepare and develop key indicators to include the applied tools, results of the participation, citizens' influence on the LGUs' decisions and plans, etc.
3. LGUs should prepare and share reports including key indicators about the implementation

⁶ Source of information is the MDLF.

of the communication plan with all its activities. The reports should clarify the applied tools, a summary of the most important results of the participation, citizens' influence on the LGUs' decisions and plans, etc.

- 4.
- 5.
6. Local community and CSOs should be given the opportunity to identify consultation topics that it deems necessary and based on communities' priorities and needs. The LGU should provide platforms to allow citizens and CSOs to suggest topics of consultations. Such tools can include, LGUs' Facebook page, official LGUs' Websites, mobile apps.
7. LGUs should be committed to the results of planning and decision-making activities and citizens' contributions to decision-making in order to gain credibility, and in the event of any change, the issue must be re-discussed with the participants. For this, LGUs should prepare reports of all participation activities detailing results and how citizens' contributions have been considered. LGUs should use a variety of planning and decision-making tools, so that traditional tools and electronic tools are used according to the subject and target groups, focusing on private meetings, public meetings, as well as sectoral meetings. More emphasis should be given to using digital tools, in addition to the traditional tools, to obtain citizens' and CSOs' opinions and suggestions through electronic opinion polls, or consulting citizens on one issue through questionnaires. Using these tools will encourage wider range of community's representation and are more feasible and build more trust between LGUs and community.

Structure of This Report

Section 1: Context and Introduction, describes the context of local CSOs in LGUs and an introduction to the SDIP policy note and the public participation policy paper. Section 2: Research Methodology and Approach, describes how the research was implemented. Section 3: Specific recommendations for relevant stakeholders. Section 4: Road Map of Improving CSOs' Involvement in All Phases of the SDIPs. Section 5: "Annexes" presents Annexes related to the research.



Section Two: Research Methodology and Approach

I Objective of the Research

In light of good governance and accountability it's important to have (local) non-governmental institutions taking part in setting up the strategic planning process for local authorities. The research answers the following questions regarding CSOs and citizens involvement in the process to measure their satisfaction, and recommendations for future focus

1. How does the strategic planning process look like?
2. What are possible ways for (local) non-governmental institutions to be involved in these processes?
3. What are best practices established and lessons learned?
4. What are specific recommendations for relevant stakeholders?

I Methodological Approach

The proposed approach as detailed in the application is summarized as following:

- **Desk review** of relevant documents and reports.
- **Designing the individual interviews' questions, the FGDs' structured questions:** The team will design of the individual interviews' questions, the FGDs' structured questions with the SDIP committees and teams and the FGDs with involved Citizens and CSOs with emphasis of inclusion of Women, Youth and PWDs, and share with the project's team for comments and feedback then modify accordingly.
- **Data Collection:** The team collected all needed data through:
 - Conducting 12 Individual Interviews with (MoLG, MDLF, LGUs and Donors involved in the SDIP Process and relevant CSOs involved in the SDIP process).
 - The team conducted six structured FGDs to assess the current status of the SDIP committees, teams and CSOs and citizens involvement in the process to measure their satisfaction, and recommendations for future focus.
- **Completed research in English:** The team prepared a complete research report and shared with the project's team for comments and feedback then modify accordingly.

I Implementation of the Research

Desk Review

The team reviewed literature and data on current participation processes at the selected LGUs including but not limited to:

- a. Relevant policies and regulations.

- b. Previous studies.
- c. Implemented participation opportunities and measures, areas, purposes, and objectives
- d. Review of the participation opportunities' documentations
- e. The Public Participation Manual.
- f. MoLG Strategic Directions.
- g. The target LGUs' SDIPs
- h. The Public Participation Policy Paper.
- i. SDIP Policy Note.
- j. Frequency of participation opportunities for citizens and CSOs.
- k. Profile and number of participants from the SDIPs with focus on CSOs.
- l. Participation outcomes and whether they were reflected on the ground.
- m. Assessment of the effectiveness of the participation opportunities.
- n. And many other relevant documents and reports.
- o. The PCPD paper that was presented during MoLG, GIZ conference of 2014 (attachment no.1, annex no. 5)

Desk Review Summary

The desk review was done for the purpose of informing the formulation of hypotheses to be tested during the research. The summary of the literature review can be summarized, based on review and findings:

In a recent survey⁷ conducted by the World Bank in 2017, The Performance of Palestinian Local Governments, concluded that the existing municipal data is very limited in its scope and only covers minimal inputs into service delivery, a household survey covering more than 380 Palestinian LGUs was conducted. The household survey data focuses on access to public services, quality and reliability of service delivery, and citizens' participation and willingness to pay, which allows for an in-depth analysis of the drivers of LGU performance in service delivery. Given that LGUs responsiveness and citizen participation indicators are strongly associated with better LGUs' performance, addressing the disinterest of major shares of the Palestinian population in participating in their local political system is a key factor for improving service delivery. Assessing the drivers of citizens' participatory patterns and enhancing local government responsiveness is

crucial to increase accountability and improve service delivery outcomes. Growing empirical evidence suggests that citizen interactions with local governments spur their efforts in achieving improved development results, such as sustainable public financial management, social inclusion and empowerment, and effective public service delivery.

CSOs' and citizens' involvement can come in the forms of participation in local governance and involvement in decision-making, information-exchange regarding service provision, or through grievance redresses.

Many Palestinian LGUs exercise one or more forms of public participation in varying degrees using different tools through LGU-initiated activities or donor-funded programs. In

⁷ The Performance of Palestinian Local Governments, World Bank Study Survey



addition, there are other forms of public participation in terms of citizens and institutions through providing in-kind and financial contributions to the LGUs and to initiatives that serve the public interest. There are four levels of public participation in LGU affairs in Palestine, according to the Public Participation Manual:

1. **Information Disclosure:** such as publishing LGUs' newsletters and bulletins, providing the public with access to physical plans, publishing municipal service procedures and some financial statements.
2. **Consultation:** such as forming LGU sectoral committees, consultative meetings, town hall meetings, citizen complaint box, neighborhood committees, and implementing the "Open Door" policy.
3. **Participation in Planning and Decision-making:** Such as the public participation in developing strategic development plans and identifying the community's needs, and the participation of specific groups (such as youth) in the designing of a community project.
4. **In-kind and financial contributions:** such as implementing voluntary work or providing in-kind and financial donations.

The preliminary hypotheses that was verified during the research can be summarized as below:

1. Public participation enhances trust between CSOs and decision makers.
2. Increasing the effectiveness of the services provided by LGUs in terms of meeting the needs and priorities citizens.
3. Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
4. Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
5. Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interest of all participants, including decision-makers.
6. Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
7. Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
8. Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
9. Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

Designing the individual interviews' questions and the FGDs' structured questions⁸

The team of consultants designed the individual interviews' questions and the FGDs' structured questions and shared with the project.

⁸ FGDs and Interviews Questions Attached in annex 1

Focus group and interview guidelines for the research, which are detailed in the Arabic version of the questions are:

- a. How does the strategic planning process look like?
 - What is overall SDIP processes that take into consideration the inclusion of citizens and local CSOs? What are major gaps in the SDIP manual and the implementation process?
 - Are the processes reasonable/achievable in the context of developing the SDIPs in LGUs?
 - To what extent are monitoring tools of CSOs participation and engagement adequate to meet the CSOs' needs?
 - What is the progress towards achieving better CSOs' engagement?
 - Are monitoring measures adequately linked to achieve better CSOs' engagement?
 - Do LGUs and other relevant stakeholders use monitoring data and analytical reports of CSOs engagement in SDIP process? Are current performance monitoring tools and process responsive to CSOs' needs?
 - How are the CSOs functioning in developing SDIPs?
- b. What are possible ways for (local) non-governmental institutions to be involved in these processes?
 - Are the involved CSOs satisfied with the level of engagement in the SDIP processes?
 - What are the best evidence/proof that SDIP manual is ensuring CSOs' engagement?
 - Are these engagement tools in line with the national priorities?
- c. What are best practices established and lessons learned?
 - How efficient and effective are the SDIP processes in ensuring engagement of local CSOs?
 - How adequately do processes ensure engaging CSOs? What are the gaps? What is working well and what could be improved?
 - How adequately do the SDIP processes respond to adequate engagement of CSOs?
 - How are the checks and balances adequately integrated CSOs into the SDIP processes?
 - What mechanisms and process exits for lessons learned/best practices (value-added innovations) as a result of engaging CSOs, documented, shared and incorporated into the SDIP manual?
- d. What are specific recommendations for relevant stakeholders?
 - What are the most significant successes so far in engaging CSOs in the SDIP processes? What factors contributed to these successes?
 - How can these successes be built into current programming strategies and techniques?
 - What have been the major challenges of engaging CSOs in the SDIP processes?
 - What are the key lessons learned from previous SDIP processes in terms of CSOs' engagement?
 - What adjustments are needed to enable an enhancement of CSOs' engagement in the SDIP processes?

Implementation of the FGDs and Individual Interviews

The team utilized a participatory approach in all research steps beginning with the focus group discussions to identify the constraints and challenges facing the relationship between the CSOs' and the LGUs in involving CSOs in the development of the cities and towns SDIPs in all five stages. Six focus group discussions were held for this purpose as follows:

1. One FGD was held with representatives and SDIP relevant Beit Enan LGU staff on May 26th 2022, with the participation of 6 (Annex 3 – List of Participants).
2. One FGD was held with representatives and SDIP relevant Beit Sahour LGU staff on May 31 2022, with 8 participants (Annex 3 – List of Participants).
3. One FGD was held with representatives and SDIP relevant Al Zababedah LGU staff on June 4th 2022, with 12 participants (Annex 3 – List of Participants).
4. One FGD was held with representatives and SDIP relevant Tubas LGU staff on June 4th 2022, with 10 participants (Annex 3 – List of Participants).
5. One FGD was held with representatives and SDIP relevant Jericho , Al Ojahand Fasayil LGUs staff on June 16th 2022, with 7 participants (Annex 3 – List of Participants).

The team has already scheduled all the FGDs; meeting with the target LGUs and CSOs as detailed in the table below:

No.	Governorate	LGU	Date	Focal Person
1	Bethlehem	Beit Sahour	May 31 2022	Maha Al atrash
2	Jerusalem	Beit Inan	May 26 2022	JadRabie
3	Jericho	Jericho Al Ojeh&Fasayil	June 16 2022	ImanGhroof and Moham- mad Dwuik
4	Tubas	Tubas City	June 4 2022	HusamSawaftah
5	Jenin	Al Zababidah	June 4 2022	RashaAwawdah and Abu Hanna

The team conducted the research with relevant stakeholders in the selected LGUs, applying individual interviews/focus group discussions with participating CSOs' representatives and other relevant stakeholders. The team started the FGDs and the interviews by introducing the Civil Society for Dignity project, the SDIP process and the purpose of the research. For that purpose the team developed a presentation, which is attached in Annex 2.

I Analysis of the FGDs and Individual Interviews

The analysis is based on the results of the FGDs, Individual Interviews⁹, review of the target LGUs' SDIPs, review of the SDIP manual, Review of the Public Participation Policy Paper and other relevant document.

The following steps were followed for the purpose of data analysis:

- Qualitative Analysis: summarizing and development of focus group discussion results and interviews into a recommendations list.
- Quantitative Analysis: Review of the quantitative parts of the questionnaires and the review of the target LGUs' SDIPs using charts and tables for better representations.

The four main questions of the research were analyzed as detailed below:

4.1 The strategic planning process

The ministry of Local government (MoLG) in cooperation with various developmental partners and the Municipal Development and Lending Fund (MDLF) has introduced a policy note for strategic development and investment planning (SDIP) for Palestinian Cities and Towns (2009). This was followed by a guiding manual in 2009, later modified in 2018. This manual was as well accompanied by tools and examples booklet, the guidelines for awareness raising for the SDIP, and the terms of reference for contracting consultancy companies.

A national working group for SDIP (NWSDIP) in Palestinian cities and towns was formed by a ministerial decree on March 2008 with the mandate to develop a unified Strategic Development Planning Concept and Approach for Palestinian Cities and Towns referred to as Strategic Development and Investment Planning (SDIP). The national working group is chaired by MoLG, includes members of relevant ministries, donors and experts in planning.

SDIP is a process that is aiming at addressing various aspects of institutional, economic, social, environmental, infrastructural and spatial aspects in a way that boosts local development. Further, SDIP process is seen as a mean to bringing local government closer to citizens and civil society.

The SDIP consists of a five-phase process¹⁰:

The intended impact of the SDIP is to make Palestinian towns and cities better places to live, to strengthen participatory democracy, to enhance youth and women participation in decision making and to strengthen the steadfastness of Palestinians in their localities. The SDIP is highly significant since it is intended to be used as a Framework for balancing LGUs' capacities and objectives through priority setting; Reference to prepare, monitor, and supervise LGUs' budgets; Mechanism for integrated management of local government services and decision-making; Frame of reference for community and business participation; Tool for inter-governmental co-ordination; and Tool for promoting rational development and improving LGU capacity.

The SDIP Approach and Process comprises of a five-phase process¹¹:

- Phase One: Where are we now? Preparation and Analysis.
- Phase Two: Where do we want to go? Strategic Development Framework.
- Phase Three: How do we reach there? Implementation and Monitoring Plans.
- Phase Four: What will make us reach our destination? Implementation.
- Phase Five: Did we reach? Evaluation and Update

According to the Policy Note and SDIP Procedure Manual the participation of the local community and CSOs' representatives in the planning process, monitoring and evaluation is essential as it constitutes a crucial part of planning methodology. Participation is also important to give the SDIP plan legitimacy as being agreed upon by the LGU and the various local community sector representatives. The MoLG role in the strategic development planning process at the local level and the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of its plans, its main role is represented in supervising and directing the planning processes, providing technical support and coordinating with the concerned ministries in that regard.

The listed key objectives of introducing SDIP process at the local level are (MoLG, 2009a, p.4):

- Promote a decentralization process.
- Improve governance and decision-making process at the local level.
- Improve responsiveness to emerging community needs.
- Enhance services delivery at the local level.
- Promote rational local economic and social development.
- Set the basis of an integrated development approach that ensures integrated development among different governing levels

The SDIP is a four-year plan that would steer the work of the local government unit and would comprise the following:

1. Community Diagnosis of the following thematic areas (i.e. sectors planning and Zoning, Social Services, Local Economy, Public Health and Environment, Utility and Infrastructure Services, Security and Disaster Management, and Culture and Sports.
2. Priority and strategic development issues (Thrusts).
3. Community development vision (8 – 12 years).
4. Development objectives in line with the priority strategic issues (3–4 years).
5. Performance indicators at the level of the development objectives (3–4 years)

From the Perspective of the CSOs and Interviewees

The SDIP manual, in the opinion of the participants, includes procedures and tools that de-

⁹ See list of persons interviewed in Annex 4

¹⁰ Policy Note Strategic Development and Investment Planning (SDIP) for Palestinian Cities and Towns, 2009

¹¹ SDIP Manual and Toolkit

tails the inclusion of citizens and CSOs representatives, but at the same time they stressed the need to organize awareness workshops for the CSOs to better understand the planning process and to have the chance to discuss what concerns CSOs. The participants in the FGDs confirmed that the LGUs usually send official invitation to CSOs to involve them in the strategic planning process, through official written invitations, phone calls and e-mail messages. Most of the LGUs held the first public meeting by publicly announcing the start of the planning process inviting citizens and CSOs to participate through various means including, social media channels, official LGUs' websites and Facebook pages and posting invitations in public places such as churches, mosques, LGUs' buildings and others.

In the meeting, the LGUs' SDIP coordinators started with a brief presentation about the SDIP manual and tools, explaining the concept of the planning, planning objectives, phases of the planning process, and development sectors. During the meetings, participants were asked to nominate representatives in the development committees (the Infrastructure Committee, the Social Development Committee, the Local Economic Development Committee, and the Management and Good Governance Committee) in addition to the subcommittees, especially those related to the social development committees.

In general, the FGDs' participants, CSOs and LGUs, unanimously agreed on the need to institutionalize the relationship of the LGU with CSOs, in order for participation to be effective and sustainable and not limited to the development of the SDIP. They also agreed that there is a need to expand the involvement of the CSOs beyond the planning proceeds to include, the establishment of a specialized committees giving CSOs an effective role in addressing their needs and citizens in the outputs of the SDIPs.

According to the MoLG and MDLF relevant staff members who were interviewed:

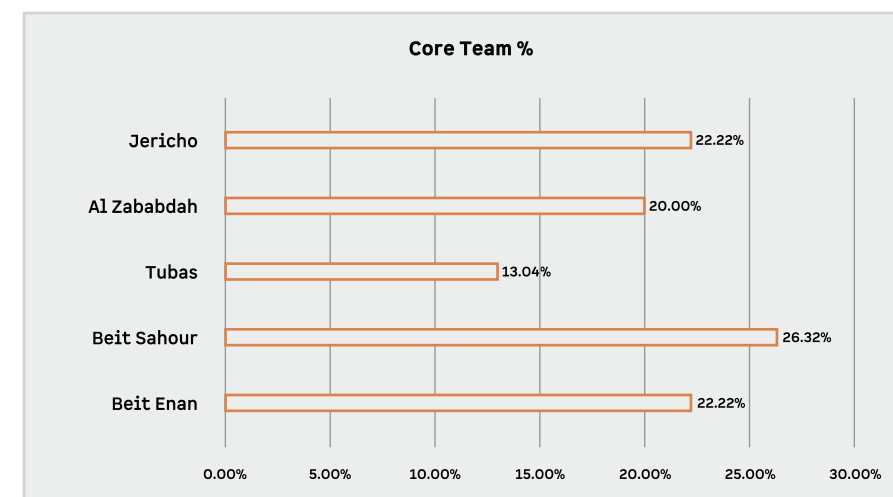
- The SDIP manual is designed primarily in accordance with the public community participation methodology by including specific procedures and steps that are keen to involve citizens, CSOs and relevant stakeholders in the five different stages in developing the SDIP. The CSOs are considered a main component of the local community, which although the SDIP does not provide clear approach to ensure effective participation. The SDIP manual also provides clear recommendation to ensure at least 30% representation in all planning committees and the core planning team of youth, women and persons with disabilities, in addition to a requirement in the SDIP manual for the need of representation of the CSOs. The manual includes the requirement of signing the community contract by all stakeholders including CSOs and the preparation a disclosure and communication plan.
- MoLG and MDLF relevant staff members who were interviewed, stated that "from our experience in supervising the planning processes we noticed that some LGUs rely on a list of citizens having already identified in directing invitations, including CSOs that are close to them politically, socially or personally."

Analysis of CSOs' Participation at the SDIPs of the Targeted LGUs

The team collected all SDIPs for the targeted LGUs and analyzed the participation of CSOs in all phases of the SDIP process. From the table and the chart below, we notice some variation on the percentage of representation at the core planning teams and thematic committees. The variation is clearly noticed in the percentage of representations of CSOs in the Thematic Committees. It was observed that there is variation from one LGU to another in terms of their relation with the CSOs; which was highly related to the LGUs councils perception towards the role of CSOs and the number of existing CSOs in each LGU .

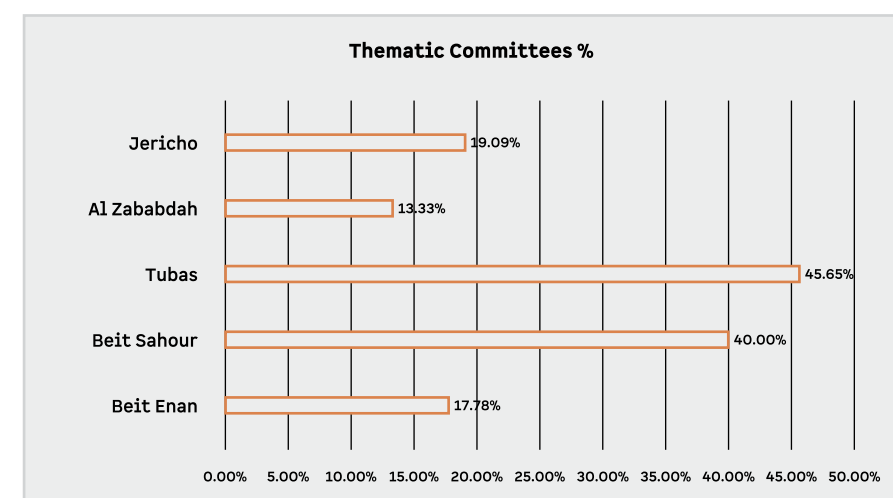
Percentage of CSOs represented in the Core Planning Team.

# of CSOs' Representatives			
LGU	Core Planning Team	Total Number Core Team	Core Team %
Beit Enan	2	9	22.22%
Beit Sahour	5	19	26.32%
Tubas	6	46	13.04%
Al Zababedah	3	15	20.00%
Jericho& Al auja	4	18	22.22%



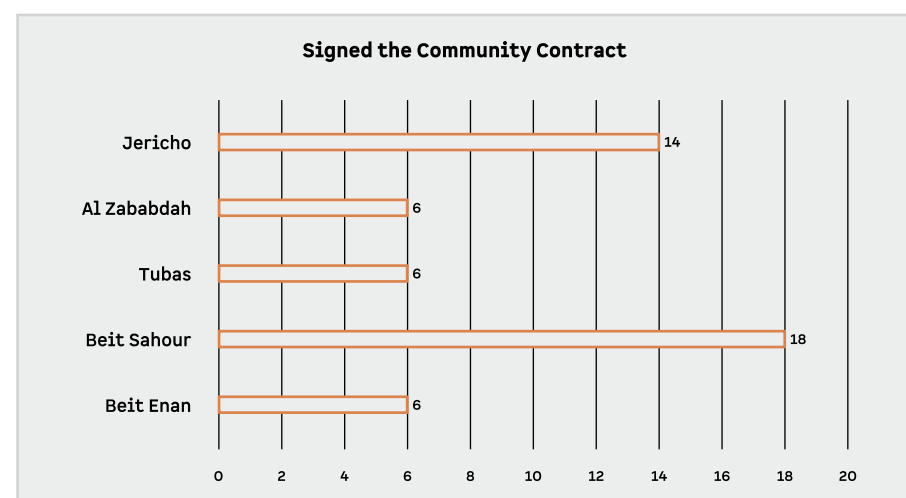
Percentage of CSOs represented in the Thematic Committees (Four Committees).

# of CSOs' Representatives			
LGU	Members of the Thematic Committees	Total Number Thematic Committees	Thematic Committees %
Beit Enan	8	45	17.78%
Beit Sahour	14	35	40.00%
Tubas	21	46	45.65%
Al Zababedah	6	45	13.33%
Jericho& Al auja	21	110	19.09%



Number of CSOs signed the Community Contract.

LGU	# of CSOs' Representatives
Beit Enan	6
Beit Sahour	18
Tubas	6
Al Zababedah	6
Jericho& Al auja	14



Gender Participation in the SDIP Process

Targeting of certain social groups such as youth, women, the poor, PWDs is clearly addressed in the SDIP manual as part of the social services thematic committees with a minimum of 30%. Furthermore, the manual recommends the inclusion of women and youth in the various committees, not only in the social committee as practiced by most LGUs. The SDIP manual is also indicating that gender participation is intended for the objective of empowerment not only for the purpose of meeting the target of 30% representation. It is crucial that mainstreaming of the gender takes place from the preparation phase to the final phase of the SDIP process.

"The LGUs' law is a patriarchal law in language and in essence. For example, in the event that a municipal or village council is appointed, there are no clear texts that guarantee the necessity of female representation. The law also lacks articles that allow or create equal opportunities for women to compete for leadership positions in the LGU's council and its basic committees. The electoral law is still based on proportional representation, which sets the quota for women at only 20%." Aref Jaffal

The number of women participating in the various committees, workshops and meetings were counted manually based on the name from the participant list. In Arabic, some names might be used for both males and females. It is recommended that LGUs should use attendance sheets for all committees with requirements indicating age and sex.

The few youth who participated in the FGDs indicated that they are interested in participating in the SDIP process to reflect their needs and priorities. It was observed that despite the participation of youth in the SDIP process as individuals they still need a body to represent them, such as the Youth Councils. Youth indicated that one important aspect that has impacted the participation of youth is the limited knowledge and information about the strategic planning process. They also indicated that community participation in general was

not only limiting youth participation but also limiting active people and volunteers from participating in the planning process. Youth indicated that it is important to hold community meetings to inform citizens about the launching the SDIP process.

Possible ways for (local) CSOs to be involved in these processes

As the SDIP manual and the SDIP policy paper emphasize, there is an important necessity to involve CSOs in the planning process since the CSOs do not only represent themselves but rather they represent social groups that the LGUs work with, and they want to communicate their needs and priorities to the decision makers and planners. There are 23 references to CSOs in the SDIP manual stressing the importance of their role in the planning process in all its five phases. The manual emphasizes the need to have CSOs' representatives in the Core Planning Team and all four thematic Committees. A key CSOs' role is recommended in the SDIP manual in the fourth and fifth phases, the implementation and monitoring and evaluation phases. Granting CSOs or providing them a conducive environment to oversight and accountability is weak. As community institutions CSOs do not play this role stemming from their wills and programs, as much as playing this role dependent on the existence of funded projects. Although it does not need much resources and large programs to implement its oversight role on development plans, CSOs must not only implement their own projects, but also exercise their function in monitoring policies, planning, decisions, budgets, and mobilizing and empowering citizens in participating at the LGUs' work.

From the FGDs and the Interviews that were conducted in the process of the research, the following are the most important observations and findings:

- There is variation from one LGU to another in terms of their relation with the CSOs; which was highly related to the mayor and the council members' perception towards the role of CSOs.
- CSOs readiness to start the SDIP process is still weak and not as it should be.
- The startup phase (Where are we now? Preparation and Analysis), in which the orientation session takes place, does not include CSOs resulting in inappropriate representation of CSOs and weak mobilization of CSOs and citizens to enhance participation in the process.
- The CSOs' representatives stressed the importance of the LGUs' appreciation of their expertise and their role in the planning process, the experience CSOs enjoy in working with different social groups, CSOs' role in various fields, as well as the inclusion and expansion of the representation of CSOs in the SDIP core planning team, and not only in the main committees.
- It was indicated by few of the representatives of CSOs, that in some LGUs' there was an intentional exclusion of the role of CSOs.
- The need to provide proper training for CSOs' representatives in using the SDIP manual and Toolkit to foster and enhance their participation prior to the start of the SDIP or parallel to the preparedness of the LGUs.
- The need for clear distribution of roles and responsibilities in implementing the plan, including the role of oversight institutions and accountability over the development plan.
- Among the most important challenges facing some of the CSOs is the lack knowledge about the SDIP process and their limited capacity-building in the field of SDIP process in general, and the local government sector in particular.
- Unclear role distribution between CSOs and LGUs in all phases of the SDIP.

Best practices established and lessons learned

One of the main roles of the NWSDIP, as part of its mandate, is to coordinate and supervise the SDIP roll-out process; assess and disseminate lessons learned; lead and supervise the institutionalization of the SDIP within MOLG and LGUs. The SDIP manual has been reviewed and evaluated more than once in a participatory manner by the various relevant parties. The methodology of the SDIP process is based on the idea of community participation in preparing and developing the plan. Participation, to some extent, has become a culture at the LGUs especially in relation to the development of the SDIP. The issue here is not in the participatory planning, but in the confidence in the results of the plan itself, as there is a general feeling and dissatisfaction with the extent of progress achieved in the implementation of the SDIPs due to lack of financial resource at most of the LGUs. Therefore, the availability of sufficient resources to implement the planning outputs enhances confidence in the developmental and participatory process, and vice versa.

I Conclusions and Findings

The SDIP manual is designed primarily in accordance with the Public Participation Policy Paper and Policy Note Strategic Development and Investment Planning (SDIP) for Palestinian Cities and Towns by including specific procedures and steps that are keen to involve citizens, CSOs and relevant stakeholders in the five different phases in developing the SDIP. Although the SDIP manual does not provide clear approach to ensure effective participation, CSOs are considered a main component of the local community.

1. There is a in the role of CSOs in monitoring the performance of the LGUs especially in implementing SDIPs. Among the reasons for this are:
 - The extent of openness of LGUs to involve local CSOs in municipal work and the extent to which the CSOs are willing to work with LGUs.
 - There is a weakness in the resources and capabilities of the CSOs to play the role of oversight and accountability over LGUs.
 - Weak partnership environment between LGUs and CSOs.
2. The strength of CSOs lies in their joint efforts and in a unified voice with the LGUs. In fact, there is a weakness in the CSOs collective effort in local affairs, which weakens their influence and capacity in the various phases of SDIP process.
3. Enabling citizens and CSOs to participate in LGUs and in the SDIP and decision-making process to contribute towards the development of the local communities needs to align local CSOs' priorities with the LGUs' relevant priorities in the process of developing the SDIP. In addition to including the needs of CSOs in the SDIP itself and finding common priorities in the SDIP and the strategic plans of the CSOs. The relationship between CSOs and LGUs should not be limited to their involvement in planning, but rather involving them in municipal work especially in relevant sectors under the mandate of the CSOs, such as agriculture in some LGUs, gender mainstreaming, human rights, youth and people with disabilities.
4. The CSOs participation in LGUs work should be systematic or institutionalized in planning processes to enhances the concept of citizenship and ownership among citizens and CSOs to contribute to and sustain community projects. This is already exhibited by the MOLG's Policy Paper "Promoting and Institutionalizing Public Participation in Local Government Units' Affairs".

5. The research shows that community participation including CSOs is an essential component of good governance and local sustainable development. Effective participation promotes mutual trust between LGUs and CSOs, ensuring that LGU services and community initiatives are effective and responsive to citizens' needs. The research analysis shows that the various participants have different views of the participatory planning approach. CSOs an play a key role in mobilization of local communities since they have close ties with the local communities and aware of their priorities and needs and can identify communities' representatives can contribute to enriching the output of the SDIP process.
6. The strength of CSOs varies from one city or town to another. Where CSOs are strong and effective, they have a vital, tangible and influential role on the SDIP process, while the weakness of CSOs participation leads to weakness in the outcomes of the SDIP process. This requires that work be done to strengthen CSOs in local government issues, to be effective partners in the development of cities and towns SDIPs. CSOs can play a key role in monitoring the implementation of the SDIP's implementation plan, which is difficult to follow up to ensure the achievement of its declared objectives and proposed interventions due to the absence of adequate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.
7. The research analysis shows that the SDIP manual assumes that LGUs have the control, resources and ability to lead the local community and work in the four Developmental Sectors (infrastructure, social development, local economic development, administration and good governance), and this unfortunately does not exist in the Palestinian LGUs. Whereas experience in development planning indicates that LGUs, or most of them, are still focusing on the infrastructure theme, as it is a collective priority, and despite this, they are still unable to respond to the needs and priorities of their citizens in this vital area, due to lack of financial resources.
8. This is also reflected in improving the trust of citizens and CSOs in the outputs of planning process, as the percentage of achieving what is planned is low leading to a loss of trust in the planning process. The research shows that the development of the SDIP is a flexible participatory methodology that allows LGUs to work creatively and appropriately to their specificity in involving citizens and CSOs in planning, in addition to the presence of participatory tools included in the toolkit where there is an appendix on participation and accountability tools.
9. To enhance the SDIP process, it must be preceded by a community awareness campaign aimed at enhancing the understanding and awareness of CSOs and citizens in participating in planning process and understanding how to use the SDIP Manual and Toolkit.
10. There is also a need to focus on including community initiatives in the SDIP implementation plan, which CSOs can be real partners in implementing the SDIP.
11. To institutionalize the SDIP process and enhance CSOs' participation, relevant parties should find justifications and a legal-legislative document for the SDIP process as well as urban planning to be a requirement by law- and to review and update the SDIP policy paper to reflect the legal requirement on LGUs to develop SDIPs. The LGU, in close coordination with the community and CSOs should prepare and develop key indicators to include the applied tools, results of the participation, citizens' influence on the LGUs' decisions and plans, etc.

Section Three: Specific recommendations for relevant stakeholders

According to the results of the research on CSOs' participation in the SDIP process from the perspective of the LGUs and the perspective of the citizen and CSOs, focusing on the four levels of community participation (dissemination of information, consultation, participation in planning and decision-making, volunteering) and what is included in each level of tools aimed at engaging citizens and CSOs in municipal work, in different ways, including the use of digital tools available at the LGU. The following recommendations will serve as a roadmap for what needs improvement and change to facilitate effective CSOs' involvement in the SDIP process in a creative manner to improve the quality of life of citizens and CSOs within their communities beyond the scope and concept of social accountability so that these recommendations are to be the cornerstone for developing a vision and prototypes for solutions that lead to enhancing effective community participation.

It should be noted that the team adopted a "bottom-up" approach that allows decision makers to better understand CSOs' and citizens' decisions and behaviors, which leads to the design of more effective interventions with minimal effort by adapting existing solutions to participatory mechanisms that suits the needs and aspirations of citizens and CSOs.

First: At the LGU's level

Preparatory and SDIP Development

1. MoLG should revise and develop the LGUs Law no.(1) of the year 1997 to give more space for LGUs to plan to work freely and institutionalize social accountability and CSOs participation.
2. The municipal council should endorse a public disclosure policy and abide to it. The public disclosure policy should be operationalized through a detailed public disclosure and communication plan.
3. LGUs should allocate the required budget for implementing the public disclosure and communication plan.
4. LGUs should ensure the availability of qualified staff and other resources (equipment, logistics ...) necessary for implementing the public disclosure and communication plan.
5. Diversifying the means of dissemination and disclosure of information.
6. Publish and circulate budgets related to participation activities and events.
7. Identify participatory topics that are necessary based on communities' priorities and needs.
8. Identify participants ensuring inclusion of women and other marginalized groups (Mapping of all existing CSOs in each LGU)
9. Detailed invitation letter and agenda and information for the participation activities.

Implementation and Monitoring

1. Effective facilitation of the participatory events and activities.
2. Implementation of variety of planning and decision-making tools.
3. Document and share the results of any participatory activities with Citizens and CSOs.
4. Commitment to the results of planning and decision-making activities and citizens' contributions to decision-making.

Second: At the CSOs' and citizens' level

1. CSOs and Citizens should be prepared to participate and be committed to community participation activities in municipal work, and to be part of the voluntary committees that the LGU forms, such as advisory committees, planning committees, neighborhood committees, and social accountability and community participation committees.
2. CSOs and Citizens should contribute to providing feedback and objective criticism on social media and other ICT channels regarding the activities and decisions of the LGU, its services and performance.
3. The relationship between CSOs and LGUs should not be limited to their involvement in planning, but rather being involved in municipal work especially in relevant sectors under the CSOs' mandates, such as agriculture in some LGUs, gender mainstreaming, human rights, youth and people with disabilities.
4. Citizens and CSOs should be involved in defining the topic of participation according to their priorities. Citizens should take the initiative, with other groups, to bring up consultative issues to LGUs.
5. CSOs and Citizens should play an active role in monitoring the work, decisions and services of the LGU, especially by submitting complaints and proposals, and requesting attendance at council sessions, or holding consultative meetings.
6. CSOs and Citizens should be aware of the LGUs' plans and decisions, so that the process of participation and evaluation of participation activities can be objective and done in structural and orderly manner.
7. CSOs should include in their strategic institutional plans the implementation of community participation tools in municipal work.
8. CSOs can, by virtue of their experience and their relationship with the local community, assist the LGU and provide technical expertise in the field of enhancing participation.
9. CSOs should be keen to design and implement public awareness campaigns about the concept and mechanisms of public participation, especially in participation in decision-making.

Third: Best Practices

1. Conduct a review and evaluation of the implementation of the participation plan
2. Develop and prepare key indicators about the implementation of the public disclosure and communication plan and participatory activities.
3. Open the door for volunteerism of specialized persons and CSOs in the field of participation.
4. Central Government to allocate Budget for LGUs to implement the SDIP.
5. Local government to promote participatory democracy at the local level.

Section Four: Road Map of Improving CSOs' Involvement in All Phases of the SDIPs

No.	Phase	Recommendation	Action	Responsibilities			Timeframe
				LGU	CSOs	MDLF, MoLG, APLA and Relevant Donors	
1		The municipal council should endorse a public disclosure policy and abide to it. The public disclosure policy should be operationalized through a detailed public disclosure and communication plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a Public Disclosure Policy and Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LGUs to lead the process to update/develop and endorse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively participate in developing the policy and the communication and reflect their needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide template (MDLF) and facilitate the process 	<p>In the first quarter</p> <p>At least two months before launching of the next SDIPs' development.</p>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a public disclosure and communication plan. Identify the nature of the information that must be published and circulated, defining responsibilities and roles among the LGUs' departments in preparing the required information to be published to citizens and CSOs, and put the plan into action with the supervision of the head of the municipal council in close coordination with the Media and public relations departments, or the staff members assigned to follow up the function of public relation, especially in smaller LGUs. Develop an information system to feed in and facilitate the implementation of the public disclosure and communication plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LGUs to lead the development of the with public disclosure and communication plan with close cooperation with Citizens and CSOs, participation and social accountability committees. LGUs to provide all needed information to encourage participation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide needs of community to be reflected in the plans. Monitor the implementation of the plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MDLF and MoLG provide Technical support to LGUs. Monitor the implementation of the plan. 	<p>In the first quarter and update regularly</p>
2		LGUs should allocate the required budget for implementing the public disclosure and communication plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare a budget that includes, coverage of community participation activities so that community participation is integrated in the work of the LGUs' departments. Identify the needs, requirements and costs of the participation and disclosure plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial department, the participation committee and public relation unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide needs in community participation to be included in the budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor the implementation of the budget. 	<p>Annually</p>
3		LGUs should ensure the availability of qualified staff and other resources (equipment, logistics ...) necessary for implementing the public disclosure and communication plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LGUs to update the organizational structure to include qualified staff to implement the public disclosure and communication plan. Implement internal awareness and capacity building plan targeting staff involved in implementing the public disclosure and communication plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LGUs' HR departments prepare assessment of needed staff. LGUs' PR departments internal awareness and capacity building workshops. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide technical assistance and expertise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide technical assistance and expertise 	<p>Annually</p>
4		Diversifying the means of dissemination and disclosure of information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LGUs should work on diversifying the means of dissemination and disclosure of information, with emphasis on utilizing digital tools, such as: Platforms, Official Facebook Pages, Official Websites, SMS and WhatsApp, Mobile applications, phone call, e-mail, display screens in different major locations of the city and others, to be done on regular basis ensuring easy access by citizens and CSOs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The PR at LGUs with close cooperation with the participation committee working on diversifying participation tools. Consult with citizens and CSOs about the suitable tools. LGUs exchange experience in the using different participatory tools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide expertise to support LGUs Provide feedback on the most suitable tools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide advice and required technology. Provide financial support to LGUs. 	<p>During the year with regular updates</p>
5		Publish and circulate budgets related to participation activities and events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LGUs publish and circulate budgets, projects and services of the LGUs in an accurate and timely manner, so that citizens and CSOs are able to understand the resources and limitations that inform the decisions process in the LGU. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance Department at LGUs in coordination with the participation committee and the PR department. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review budget and provide feedback Monitor expenditure of the budget, through the participation and social accountability committees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoLG to monitor the expenditure. 	<p>Annually</p>
6		Identify participatory topics that are necessary based on communities' priorities and needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LGUs give the local communities the opportunity to identify participatory topics that it deems necessary and based on their priorities and needs. The LGU to provide platforms to allow citizens and CSOs to suggest topics of participation. Such tools can include, LGU' Facebook page, official LGU's Websites, mobile apps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PR Department. Participation Committee headed by a members of the Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify their priorities and need in participation. Provide expertise in ICT. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MDLF, APLA and MoLG advice in best practices and available resources. 	<p>Periodically</p>
7		Identify participants ensuring inclusion of women and other marginalized groups (Mapping of all existing CSOs in each LGU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a database with names of influential citizens and local CSOs who are experienced in certain sectors. Ensure inclusion of women and other marginalized group to be represented in any participatory even. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The LGUs' PR department in coordination with the participation committee to lead the develop of the database 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support LGUs in identifying citizens and CSOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide technical support 	<p>Periodically</p>

8		Detailed invitation letter and agenda and information for the participation activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation of detailed invitation letter and agenda for any participatory activity. Providing all related information regarding the participatory activity prior to the event so citizens and CSOs can prepare and effectively participate. Send invitation letter and agenda at least three days in advance. Diversifying participants and ensuring inclusion of marginalized groups with focus on youth and women. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The LGUs' PR and the Participation Committee to lead the preparation of the invitation, agenda and related information in close coordination with Citizens and CSOs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to the preparation of the agenda through the participation committee. Commit to participate in LGU's activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MDLF, APLA and MoLG monitor the process and support in providing templates. Send representatives to participate. 	Prior to conducting participatory activity
9		Effective facilitation of the participatory events and activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide effective facilitation of all participatory activities in close cooperation with citizens and CSOs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The LGUs' PR and the Participation Committee to lead the preparation provide experienced workshops' facilitators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide technical support and expertise. Commit to participate in municipal activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide technical support and expertise. Provide financial support. 	During the participatory activities
10		Implementation of variety of planning and decision-making tools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement variety of planning and decision-making tools, so that traditional tools and electronic tools are used according to the subject and target groups, focusing on private meetings, public meetings, as well as sectoral meetings. Using digital tools to obtain citizens' and CSOs' opinions and suggestions through electronic opinion polls. Consulting citizens on one issue through questionnaires to encourage wider range of community's representation and are more feasible and build more trust between LGUs and community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead the design and implementation of various tools. Ensure effective consultation with citizens and CSOs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide technical support and expertise. Commit to participate in municipal activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide technical support and expertise. Provide financial support. 	During the participatory activities
11		Document and share the results of any participatory activities with Citizens and CSOs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare a record/ MoMs of the results of the participatory events with an explanation of what will be implemented from the consultations and decisions agreed upon by the participants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share MoMs and- and results with CSOs and Citizens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide feedback and comments. Monitor related actions by the LGU through the participation and social accountability committees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoLG to monitor the process of decision making. 	After each participatory activity
12		Commitment to the results of planning and decision-making activities and citizens' contributions to decision-making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LGUs committed to the results of planning and decision-making activities and citizens' contributions to decision-making. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow citizens to monitor decisions taken by the LGUs regarding any participatory events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play monitoring role of the commitment of the LGUs through the participation and social accountability committees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoLG to monitor the process of decision making. 	Continuously
13		Conduct a review and evaluation of the implementation of the participation plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Municipal council hold a periodic evaluation meeting with the departments and with representative of community and CBOs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PR lead the evaluation meeting PR and the LGU develop and update the plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute from Community and CBOs in the evaluation process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical support 	Quarterly
14		Revise and develop the LGUs Law no.(1) of the year 1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoLG should revise and develop the LGUs Law no.(1) of the year 1997 to give more space for LGUs to plan to work freely and institutionalize social accountability and CSOs participation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LGUs to collaborate through APLA to Revise and Develop LGUs Law no.(1) of the year 1997 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSOs to advocate and lobby for revising and developing LGUs Law no.(1) of the year 1997. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the PNA to Revise and Develop LGUs Law no.(1) of the year 1997 	Continuously
15		Develop and prepare key indicators about the implementation of the public disclosure and communication plan and participatory activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The LGU, in close coordination with the community and CSOs should prepare and develop key indicators to include the applied tools, results of the participation, citizens' influence on the LGUs' decisions and plans, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead the development of key indicators (PR and Council, participation committee and social accountability committee) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to the development of the key indicators. Provide technical expertise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to the development of the key indicators. Provide technical expertise and best practice standards 	Annually
16		Open the door for volunteerism of specialized persons in the field of participation and ICT.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LGUs recruit a pool of volunteers experienced in participation and Information Technology, especially for specialists in the field of media and social communication to benefit from their experience in supporting the LGU in developing and implementing tools for dissemination of information and participation in planning and decision-making. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify needed support that is not available at the LGUs. The LGUs' HR and PR departments to lead the recruitment in coordination with the participation committee and council members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the LGUs in identifying needed support. Volunteer to support LGUs in participation activities and other related support (ICT, Media, ...) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide technical and financial support. 	Quarterly
17		Central Government to allocate Budget for LGUs to implement the SDIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation of realistic SDIP with clear implementation plan and proposed budget. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LGUs to develop a realistic and achievable SDIP with reasonable estimated budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSOs to support LGUs in developing a realistic SDIP and support in preparing a detailed budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoLG to communicate with the MoF to allocate budgets for implementing the LGUs' SDIPs 	Annually
18		Democratization And participation : All actors should be working for enhancing democracy in general and participatory democracy in particular. (attachment no. 2 annex no. 6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhancing participatory democracy at the local level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider using technology offered by the Internet to enhance local democracy to: develop community dialogue, conduct online surveys and preference polls, provide feedback and citizen input, promote the LGUs' image, ... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSOs to advocate for participatory democracy. Support LGUs in developing their capacity in participatory democracy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt and promote participatory democracy. Provide fund for CSOs to play a key role in developing the LGUs' capacity in participatory democracy. 	Continuously

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