

Award Convocation Criteria (2016)

10th Edition of the IOPD Award for “Best Practice in Citizen Participation”. An Award Promoted By Local Governments

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:

Eligibility for applying for the award is based on the following criteria:

a) **Initiatives whose main objective is one of the following:**

- Achieving greater levels of equality by including all of the parties involved and, thereby, strengthening their capacities and creating a more just society.
- Engendering citizenship, extending citizens’ rights, granting new freedoms and responsibilities for democratic activity.
- Instilling a sense of legitimacy and confidence in public powers: fomenting actions that increase transparent decision-making and, thereby, bring about improvements in governance.
- Creating more effectiveness in public management, and improving the results of public policies.

b) **Innovation.** An “innovative” experience is understood as one that introduces an improvement through non-habitual mechanisms or processes. Examples of this might include the involvement of population sectors that are traditionally non-participatory or at risk of social exclusion, the creation of participative culture within a given city, the promotion of transversal actions, or new uses of ITCs, etc.

c) **Transferability:** This is the capacity for the essential elements of an experience or idea to be replicated in a different context with a high probability for success.

d) **Feasibility:** An experience or idea is considered feasible if its design takes into consideration economic, technical, organizational and socio-political contexts that are essential for its successful execution.

e) **Planning and articulation of participative practices in the local government:** This means the planned establishment of a series of rationally ordered and interrelated steps to obtain certain desired results within the intervention limits of a local government.

Participation is not improvised. It is planned. Different social agents (administrative, associated network, private sector, unions, etc.) should be involved in all of the phases of a participative process, i.e. diagnostic, planning, implementation and evaluation.

At the outset of a participative effort, other existing processes in the municipality must be taken into account, articulated and coordinated in order to produce a coherent intervention and make maximum use of the time and resources of the various participants in the process.

f) **Shared responsibility of the various participants:** Any best practice should include political figures, technical persons and normal citizens (organized and not organized).

g) **Political leadership of the government team:** This is understood as the capacity to promote an initiative through fomenting the participation, cohesion and motivation of all the involved parties. In this sense, any participative process should be based on solid political leadership.

h) **Defined responsibilities:** This means transparently and intelligibly establishing who is responsible for each of the competencies and functions within the organization and the process in order to guarantee accountability and the effective execution of the initiative.

i) **Educational process:** A best practice in citizen participation cannot be limited to a single participative moment. Instead, it requires a process that must be educational. It must improve and deepen the democratic and participative culture of all the actors involved. This, in turn, leads to a change of roles among these actors based on respect, flexibility, listening, transparency, dialogue, self-criticism, constructive criticism, etc.

j) **Impact and transformation of the surroundings:** A best practice should, by definition, lead to the successful fulfillment of the established objectives. This implies the existence of an impact, an observable and positively evaluated change in the surroundings that is directly attributable to the initiative.

k) **Evaluation:** A best practice should involve the establishment of a fiscal system to account for the measures taken and to control the effects produced by those measures in relation to the declared objectives. The goal of this evaluation is to observe any deviations and, if necessary, redefine future objectives and measures.

l) **Return of information:** Local governments should report on the various phases of the participative process and inform the involved citizenry regularly about any decisions made during the course of the process.