



O I D P

**INTERNATIONAL OBSERVATORY ON PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY**

**INTERNAL REGULATIONS**



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## Preamble

The International Observatory on Participatory Democracy (henceforth referred to here as IOPD) was founded in 2001 under the auspices of the European Commission's URB-AL Programme for Decentralised Cooperation. The IOPD has been collaborating with United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) since 2006 and is currently contributing towards the production of innovative knowledge at the service of local governments in the field of participatory democracy.

In November 2011 it revived and highlighted the network's original aim of becoming a useful knowledge-production and experience-exchange space for its city members (R&D). In that way it accepted the challenge of reflecting on participatory democracy on a global level, setting itself the goal of innovating and recommending specific policies for the world's public authorities, preferably local ones, and by making experience exchange its main working basis.

The issue at hand here is participatory democracy, especially on a local level. We understand participatory democracy to mean public involvement in the governance of public affairs, going beyond merely electing government representatives. Issues tackled by the IOPD include public participation, the concept of open government, political transparency and open data, the role of organisations in civil society and any other related subject matter.

## I AIMS

The Observatory's aims are to:

1. Act as **the world's main network of cities and institutions** in public participation.
2. Foster the **spread of participatory democracy**, understood as public involvement in governance, by restoring the public's confidence in democratic institutions and its political representatives.
3. Promote **cooperation between local governments**, based on **exchanging experiences** in participatory democracy on a municipal level. An experience bank will be managed for that purpose, as well as any other mechanism that may help in achieving these aims.
4. **Cooperate with local governments in looking for resources** to apply and develop experiences that form the subject matter of this Observatory.



5. Manage an **activities calendar** for promoting all the events or programmes of interest to IOPD members (local governments, civil society organisations and research centres).
6. Manage a **news programme** sharing new developments of interest in our area.
7. Make progress in **studies, political reflection and application of participatory democracy's concepts and practices, democratic regeneration and new governance models**. Civic education, support for local players and the promotion of participatory budgeting will be encouraged in this area.
8. **Extend the Observatory** to all local governments, research centres and civil society organisations from any area in the world that share our aims.
9. **Build up strategic alliances and agreements** with other key players such as research centres and civil society organisations.
10. Establish a **mechanism for monitoring the state of participatory democracy** in the world and publishing an annual report on it.

## II Composition

The Observatory will be made up of members and collaborators.

### MEMBERS:

Any local government or local body or agency may become a member so long as it voluntarily commits itself to promoting participatory democracy in its own area and collaborating in the achievement of the Observatory's aims.

### COLLABORATORS:

Any association, organisation or institution may become a collaborator so long as it voluntarily commits itself to promoting participatory democracy and wishes to collaborate in the implementation of the Observatory's aims. We distinguish between two categories of collaborating members: research centres and civil society organisations.



### III ORGANISATION

- **Presidency:** Annual term of office.

This will fall to a local government. Its main duty will be to organise the Annual Conference.

- **Secretary General:** A three-year term of office

This will fall to a member local government, for a renewable period of 3 years and its duties will include:

- Managing the Observatory's webpage.
- Managing the experiences bank,
- Managing the resources bank,
- Managing the activities calendar and the news
- Coordinating the IOPD Awards
- Coordinating the Observatory's various activities.
- Coordinating the various Regional Offices
- Representing the Observatory before the various authorities it has links with.

- **Coordinating Committee:** Made up of the Annual Presidency, the Secretary General and the Regional Offices. Its task is to run the IOPD during the period between General Assemblies.

- **Regional Offices:** these are offices responsible for IOPD in a specific geographical area. Their duty is to represent the IOPD in this specific area, look for new members and build up alliances with regional organisations.

- **General Assembly of Members:** this is the IOPD members' meeting.



Duties: Electing the governing bodies (Presidency, Secretary General, Steering Committee etc.), presenting reports and approving working plans.

#### **IV OPERATIONS**

1. *Virtual work*: being an organisation with worldwide coverage means that virtual workspaces are key to the IOPD's operations. The Observatory will use available mechanisms through webpages, social media networks and other digital platforms for communication and discussion between its members.
2. An *annual meeting* will be held for members, in one of the member municipalities, to prepare and approve annual goals.
3. *Specific working groups* may be established that meeting physically or virtually to develop specific aspects of the Observatory's work.