

Terms of the 21st OIDP Award 2027 “Best Practice in Citizen Participation”

1. PRESENTATION

The **OIDP Award for “Best Practice in Citizen Participation”** is an initiative of the International Observatory on Participatory Democracy (OIDP) in collaboration with United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG). The OIDP is a global network open to cities, organizations, and research centers dedicated to learning, exchanging, and applying participatory democracy practices at the local level. It operates as part of UCLG, a worldwide organization representing cities, local and regional governments, and municipal associations, advocating for their interests within the multilateral system.

This Award **aims to recognize practices of participatory and deliberative democracy implemented by local and regional governments**. The Award is also an opportunity to showcase these practices, bringing them to the attention of other local governments so they can be transferred, and also promotes networking.

The Award also aims to encourage and value the implementation of successful practices at the local and regional levels, highlighting initiatives that foster public participation and engagement in the development and implementation of public policies.

2. APPLICATIONS

- Applications may be submitted by **local, supralocal, and regional governments that are members of the OIDP** and have promoted a democratic practice on a local or regional scale.
- Cities and governments that are not yet members of the OIDP and wish to apply must fill out the membership form **by 5 January 2027**, before submitting their Award application.
- Nonprofit organizations may also submit an application based on a practice **promoted and implemented in collaboration with local and regional governments**, exclusively with their authorisation and a letter of endorsement for the corresponding government.
- **All practices must have been active and impactful during 2026**. Practices may have started before 2026, but they must have remained in effect throughout that year.

- Practices submitted in previous editions of the Award may be resubmitted if they have been updated with innovations.
- **A Special Mention for Sustainability may be awarded. This Special Mention is intended for practices that were implemented for more than five years and maintained their name and core characteristics without significant changes.**
- Applications should pertain to any public policy, strategic plan, assembly, council, or practice—whether temporary or permanent—that involves citizen participation or supports local democracy.
- Each government is encouraged to submit **up to three applications**, provided that they address different topics and are submitted in **different categories** of the Award.
- **In case we receive more than 3 practices by the same local or regional government, the Secretariat will get in touch with applicants to agree on which 3 practices will be considered.** In case no decision is made, the Secretariat will consider the first 3 practices submitted. We therefore encourage you to liaise with colleagues from your government to align on which practices will be submitted.

3. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applications may only be submitted if their main goal is one of the following:

- To achieve higher levels of equality in terms of participation and to incorporate diversity as criteria for inclusion.
- To empower the community and non-organised citizens.
- To increase civic rights in terms of political participation.
- To connect different tools of participation within a participatory democracy “ecosystem.”
- To improve the quality of public decision-making through the mechanisms of participatory democracy.
- To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the mechanisms of participatory democracy.
- To improve the evaluation and tracking of the mechanisms of participatory democracy.
- To improve any public policy through the active participation of the public.

The jury will assess the practice according to the following criteria:

- **Coherence of objectives, design, and scope:** the clarity and relevance of the main and specific objectives, their alignment with the selected category and thematic area, and the adequacy of the defined target groups and participation scope.
- **Methodological soundness:** the quality and clarity of the methodology, including chronological phases, territorial organisation, and the roles of stakeholders involved throughout the process.
- **Communication and outreach effectiveness:** the adequacy and diversity of communication strategies and channels used to inform, engage, and mobilise the population, raise awareness, and encourage participation.
- **Innovation:** the degree to which the practice introduces innovative methodologies, participatory formats, or governance arrangements within the territorial context.
- **Inclusion and equity:** the effectiveness of strategies to include specific or underrepresented groups, addressing barriers to participation.
- **Evaluation, accountability, and transparency:** the existence and quality of evaluation mechanisms, citizen involvement in assessment processes, use of results for improvement, and transparency regarding funding and decision-making.
- **Follow-up, sustainability, and accountability:** the capacity of the practice to ensure continuity over time through monitoring, feedback integration, adaptability to changing circumstances, and long-term alignment with its objectives.
- **Impacts and results:** the clarity, precision, and relevance of the reported outcomes, including benefits for communities, effects on public policies, administrative functioning, and contributions to the institutionalisation of participatory democracy.
- **Collaboration and articulation:** the level of coordination with other participatory mechanisms, institutions, and stakeholders, and the coherence of the practice within the broader participatory ecosystem.

4. 2027 CATEGORIES

Applications will be organized and assessed across five categories:

- a) **Democratic and Peaceful Communities**

Any action, public policy, or practice that seeks to improve democracy, guarantee human rights, generate trust among citizens, and build peace through civic education, open government, transparency, and renewal of institutions.

b) Urban Management and Public Space

Any participatory, deliberative, and co-creative action on public space and urban or territorial development.

c) Social Inclusion and Care

Any policy to promote social inclusion, the inclusion of specific groups commonly neglected (women, children, young people, older adults, people with disabilities, diverse gender identities...), or ensuring public service provision to all.

d) Ecological Transition and Environment

Any participatory, deliberative, or co-creative action to protect the environment or face the climate emergency, guaranteeing social justice.

e) Civic Tech

Participation, deliberation, or co-creation through digital platforms, virtual processes, or Artificial Intelligence.

5. PROCESS STAGES

1. First Stage: Application submission.

Applications must be submitted by filling out the [Online Application Form](#) on the OIDP website by **12 January 2027**. The form may be completed in English, French, Spanish, or Portuguese. Please refer to the [OIDP Award Application Guidelines](#) when completing your application; following these instructions will help ensure that your application is clearly presented and can be fairly assessed by the jury.

Please attach at least two images (maximum 1400 x 600 pixels, in JPG or PNG, ideally under 1 MB each) to illustrate your practice. You may also attach supporting documents (maximum 5 files, PDF format only, up to 10 MB each), such as publications, presentations, or press releases. If you wish to share a video of 3-5 minutes (maximum one), please send it via [WeTransfer](#) to oidp@uclg.org.

Please name all files using the name of your territory and a short practice title: e.g., "Territory_PracticeTitle_1.jpg", "Territory_PracticeTitle.pdf", "Territory_PracticeTitle.mp4".

The OIDP Technical Secretariat may request any additional information deemed necessary in relation to the applications submitted. The deadline for submission of applications is **12 January 2027**.

The summary of your practice, along with some images and links to information on all the applications, will be posted on the [ParticipateOIDP](#) platform. Please ensure that the materials you submit are copyright-free or that you hold the necessary rights; by submitting them, you grant OIDP/UCLG permission to use them for communication and learning materials.

2. Second Stage: First jury assessment.

A jury of experts organised and divided according to their expertise on thematic categories will assess the applications and select up to 40 finalists for the Award. Grades between 1 and 5 will be given for each application.

3. Third Stage: Assessment of finalists: open voting on ParticipateOIDP and jury assessment.

All finalist applications will be submitted to open voting on the [ParticipateOIDP](#) platform for one month. To participate, each person must register on the platform and select five applications for their vote to be valid. Specific instructions will be shared through OIDP social media.

In parallel, a jury of experts will assess in detail the finalist practices, using a specific set of criteria. Finally, once the open voting period ends, the jury will meet online to deliberate on the winner and special mentions, taking into account the results of the open voting results.

4. Awarding.

The jury will select the winning practice, taking into account the results of the open vote. If the top-voted practice is not chosen as the winner by the jury, it will receive a special mention as *"The Practice Most Supported by the OIDP Community."*

Additionally, in this 21st Award, a special mention may be given to a practice for its sustainability over time. The jury will also award three to four special mentions in different categories, ensuring geographic representation across continents.

The winner of the OIDP Award will receive a trophy, a diploma, and enhanced dissemination of the practice through OIDP communication channels. Travel and accommodation will be

covered for one representative of the winning government to attend the 26th Conference in the city of Niterói (Brazil), from 11 to 14 May 2027, where the Award ceremony will take place. The winner and the special mentions will be notified privately to ensure their presence at the Award Ceremony, but the announcement will not be made public until the ceremony.

5. Final Stage: Publication of results.

The OIDP Technical Secretariat will publish an Award compilation including summaries of the winning practice and the special mentions, as well as a full list of all the submitted applications. The Secretariat will also disseminate the applications widely through the OIDP website, the ParticipateOIDP platform, and social media.

6. JURY

Two juries will be convened: one for Phase 2 (assessment of all applications) and another for Phase 3 (assessment of finalists). A public call will be launched to form juries from among professionals, experts, and practitioners with experience in democracy, citizen participation, and the Award categories. The OIDP Technical Secretariat will appoint jurors based on their qualifications, expertise, and relevance to the field, while ensuring a balanced representation in terms of gender and geographic origin.

The Phase 2 Jury will include a minimum number of jurors to ensure that all practices are evaluated by 3 or 4 jurors, depending on the number of practices received.

The Phase 3 Jury will include 10 members. Each finalist practice will be assessed by at least three jurors. The Phase 3 Jury will meet online before the assessment begins to align expectations and clarify requirements, and again for deliberation.

Exceptionally, some individuals may serve on both juries.

Jurors will be required to declare any conflicts of interest and comply with confidentiality requirements.