

COUNTRY Bulgaria
CASE STUDY CODE Bulgaria_Good Practice_O.09_05

MAIN INFORMATION

Title Civic Participation Forum

Location Sofia, Bulgaria

Responsible Authority Civic Participation Forum Association

Link <https://www.fgu.bg>

Keywords Civic participation, citizen engagement, public and media relations



IDENTIFICATION

| | | | | | |
|----------------------|---|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| Type | Case (plan, program, project etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Stakeholders involved | Public institutions | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Method / Tool | <input type="checkbox"/> | | Private sector | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Organisation | <input type="checkbox"/> | | Civil society organisations | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| | Legal framework | <input type="checkbox"/> | | Knowledge institutions | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Other <input type="text" value="on-line platform"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | Public or grassroots movements | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Policy field | Urban planning | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Timeline | Other <input type="text" value="citizens"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| | Mobility | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | Start date <input type="text" value="2014"/> | |
| | Tourism | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | End date <input type="text"/> | |
| | Other <input type="text"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | On going | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| | | | | Completed | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Spatial level | National | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Limited | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| | Regional | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Repeated overtime | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| | Local | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | | |

CONTENT AND RESULTS





Purpose and context

The Civic Participation Forum aims to improve the interaction between citizens and NGOs with state institutions. The focus is on strengthening civil society by promoting active participation and influence on policies at all levels. The main aspects of the activities include promoting dialogue, sustainable development of NGOs and improving public understanding of the role of CSOs.

Problems and challenges

The Civic Participation Forum confronts the problems of insufficient citizen engagement and the limitations of the interaction between NGOs and institutions. Overcoming barriers to effective civic participation and fostering broader dialogue and collaboration is a major challenge. The Civic Participation Forum focused on addressing several key issues: the low level of civic engagement, limited communication and cooperation between NGOs and government bodies, and the lack of understanding and support for the importance of civic initiatives. The Platform seeks to create a sustainable environment that encourages active citizen participation in public life and facilitates interaction between different stakeholders. This includes overcoming barriers to effective dialogue, promoting transparency and accountability, and developing policies that support civil society.

The problems refer to participatory planning only in particular stemming from the general issue about civic participation in decision-making processes.

Organizing, Supporting and Funding Entities

The Civic Participation Forum is a network of 120 Bulgarian civil society organizations united by the idea to activate civic participation in policy formulation and in the decision-making at different governmental levels.

The founding members of the Civic Participation Forum include active civil society organizations dedicated to change and improvement of society. These organizations gather information, organize events, conduct training and engage in public consultations.

The supporting structures include institutions, foundations and other organizations that support the activities of the Civic Participation Forum. They can provide financial assistance, expert support, training and other resources.

Funders are the organizations or programs that provide financial resources for the implementation of projects and initiatives related to civic participation. This can include national and international donors, European funds as well as other sources. The forum relies on membership fees and project-based funding

Process (including participant recruitment & selection) and Interaction/Participation (including methods/tools) used

Civic Participation Forum is a network of Bulgarian civil society organizations. It works in different spheres of public life, actively recruits participants and uses methods and tools for civic participation.

The participatory processes are organized via:

- Recruitment: The Forum actively seeks and attracts citizens who are willing to engage in public discussions and processes. This is done through information campaigns, events, social media, the Forum's web-site and other channels.
- Participant selection: The Forum selects participants who represent different societal groups, interests and opinions. This includes citizens, activists, experts, business representatives and others.



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- Methods and tools for citizen participation:
 - o Public consultations: The Forum organizes public consultations where citizens can express their views and suggestions on specific issues.
 - o Round tables and discussions: The Forum brings together participants to discuss topical issues and problems.
 - o Polls and surveys: Used to collect data and opinions from citizens.
 - o Partnerships with institutions and bodies: The Forum engages in dialogue with government institutions, local authorities and others together with citizens.

Outcomes, Effects and Lessons Learned

The Civic Participation Forum (CPF) has sustained an online platform created in 2014 to promote active citizen participation in public life and the efficiency of this platform has been very high as it is promoted and sustained by all network members.

As a result, the Forum has:

- reached over 100,000 people through its publications, events and trainings.
- generated over 10 000 comments and suggestions on important public issues.
- supported the implementation of over 50 civic initiatives.

Result implications:

- A more active civil society: the CSF has contributed to strengthening civic activism in Bulgaria.
- More transparent and accountable governance: the CSF has contributed to increasing the transparency and accountability of public institutions.
- Stronger civil-state partnership: the CSF has contributed to building a stronger partnership between citizens and state institutions.

Lessons learned:

- Citizens are willing to actively engage in public life if given the opportunity.
- It is important to use digital tools to stimulate citizen participation.
- Citizen participation is a key factor for the democratic development of society.
- The CSF is an example of a successful platform for civic participation. It has proven that it is possible to stimulate active citizen participation in public life by using digital tools.

Bibliography

Official web-site - <https://www.fgu.bg>

Facebook Profile - <https://www.facebook.com/FGUBG>



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Activity Report of the Civic Participation Forum for 2021 - <https://www.fgu.bg/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/ReportFGU2021.pdf>

Civic Participation Forum adopted its new strategy for the period 2024-2027 - <https://www.fgu.bg/blog/forum-grazhdansko-uchastie-prie-novata-si-strategiya-za-perioda-2024-2027/>

Handbook for organising and conducting public consultations - <https://www.fgu.bg/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/NarachnikPosledenZaKachvane.pdf>



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