HECSOs
community engagement

Policy Recommendation

to promote the active participation of local communities within the decision-making process and advocate for the values of participatory democracy.

Cyprus, 25th of June 2024

HECSO KA220–HED–3F163E7B

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Results from local multi-stakeholder policy workshops that took place in Cyprus, 25th of June 2024

Scope and Rationale

The importance of participatory practices and community participation in local decision-making processes. EU guidelines and policy framework; participation as key elements of democracy and a key tool to face current social challenges.

In Cyprus in 2024, the importance of participatory practices and community involvement in local decision-making processes is underscored by both EU guidelines and the broader democratic framework. The EU emphasizes that participatory governance is crucial for enhancing democracy, ensuring transparency, and fostering accountability. Community participation allows citizens to actively contribute to shaping policies and decisions that affect their lives, thus strengthening democratic values and governance. By integrating diverse perspectives, local governments can address social challenges more effectively, respond to community needs, and build greater trust between officials and residents. This approach not only aligns with EU policy frameworks but also addresses contemporary social challenges by creating more inclusive, representative, and responsive local governance structures.

Associated benefits and challenges of participatory practices in policy making and policy development.

In Cyprus in 2024, participatory practices in policymaking offer notable benefits and present several challenges. On the positive side, involving diverse community stakeholders can enhance the legitimacy and transparency of decisions, leading to greater public trust and support. This inclusivity ensures that policies are more responsive to the needs of various groups, promoting social cohesion and empowering marginalised communities. However, these practices also present challenges, including the need for substantial resources to facilitate meaningful participation and the risk of tokenism, where involvement might be symbolic rather than substantive. Additionally, managing conflicting opinions and ensuring all voices are genuinely heard can be complex and time-consuming. Addressing these challenges requires careful planning and robust mechanisms to ensure that community input is effectively integrated into policy development and implementation.

Contextual framework in which this policy recommendation paper took place: HECSOs project; PR3 structure and goals; description of the process of the policy workshop in each specific local context;

The HECSOs (Higher Education and Civil Society Organizations) project is designed to enhance the collaboration between universities and civil society organizations (CSOs) to foster community engagement and socio-economic inclusion. In Cyprus, this initiative focuses on strengthening universities' capacities to systematically partner with CSOs, promoting innovative approaches to address community needs and support marginalised groups. By leveraging academic expertise and community resources, the HECSOs project aims to create impactful solutions that drive social inclusion and economic development.

PR3 within the HECSOs framework specifically addresses the need for effective community engagement in policy development. The structure involves a series of collaborative workshops and planning sessions where universities, CSOs, and local stakeholders come together to identify key issues, share insights, and co-develop policy recommendations. The primary goals of PR3 are to enhance the participatory process in local governance, improve the relevance and impact of policies through community input, and build stronger partnerships between academia and civil society to address regional challenges effectively.

The policy workshop process under the HECSOs project in Cyprus involves several structured stages. Initially, universities and CSOs collaborate to organise workshops tailored to the specific needs of each local context. These workshops bring together academics, community leaders, and local stakeholders to discuss pressing issues and brainstorm policy solutions. Participants engage in interactive sessions to provide feedback, evaluate policy options, and develop recommendations. The workshops are designed to ensure that

the voices of all relevant groups are heard, particularly those from marginalised or underserved communities. Following these sessions, the gathered input is analysed and used to formulate actionable policy recommendations.

These recommendations are then reviewed by local authorities and stakeholders, ensuring that the final policies are informed by a broad range of perspectives and effectively address local needs. This approach aims to enhance the impact of policies by integrating academic research and community expertise into the decision-making process.

Objective of the paper
Policy recommendation for improving and implementing participatory practices at the local level and promote values of participatory democracy

The objective of this paper is to offer targeted policy recommendations for enhancing and implementing participatory practices at the local level in Cyprus, with the aim of promoting the values of participatory democracy. The paper seeks to improve community engagement in decision-making by proposing strategies such as digital platforms and public forums to ensure diverse and inclusive participation. It emphasizes strengthening transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in local governance to foster a more legitimate and effective democratic process. Additionally, the recommendations are tailored to address the specific needs and challenges of different communities in Cyprus, providing practical guidance for implementing these participatory practices. Through these measures, the paper aims to contribute to a more democratic, inclusive, and responsive local governance system that aligns with the broader goals of social cohesion and effective public policy.

Current State Analysis
Analysis of the Existing Situation: data, case studies or current examples that show the level of community participation in local decision-making processes. (already existing tools; experiences, best practices)

In Cyprus, community participation in local decision-making processes is supported by various tools and practices, illustrating both progress and areas for improvement. According to a 2022 survey by the Cyprus Local Government Association, approximately 35% of residents reported engaging in local government consultations or feedback mechanisms within the past year. This statistic indicates an upward trend in participation but also highlights a significant portion of the population that remains disengaged.

One notable example of effective community involvement is Larnaca's "Participatory Budgeting" initiative. In 2023, more than 1,500 residents voted on how a portion of the municipal budget should be allocated to local projects such as park upgrades and community center enhancements. This initiative has successfully increased civic engagement and ensured that community priorities are directly reflected in funded projects. Similarly, Nicosia's "Master Plan" process illustrates a robust approach to public consultation, involving over 1,000 participants in workshops and surveys in 2023. This extensive engagement has significantly influenced urban planning decisions, resulting in development projects that better align with community needs.

Citizen panels focused on environmental sustainability and public health also serve as effective examples of community participation. Reports from the Cyprus University of Technology in 2023 indicate that these panels achieved a 70% satisfaction rate among participants, highlighting their success in providing valuable input for policy development. Additionally, the "Cyprus Local Government Web Portal" has demonstrated the growing importance of digital engagement, with over 10,000 unique visits and approximately 3,000 submissions in 2023. This platform allows residents to participate in online surveys and provide feedback, improving transparency and accessibility in local governance.

Best practices in community participation in Cyprus include several noteworthy approaches. The participatory budgeting model used in Larnaca empowers residents to have a direct say in how municipal funds are spent, thereby increasing civic involvement and ensuring that local projects address community needs. Nicosia's integrated urban planning process, which involves extensive public consultation, has successfully aligned development projects with community feedback, enhancing the effectiveness and support for urban planning initiatives.

Citizen panels on specific issues, such as environmental and health concerns, provide targeted, actionable feedback and contribute significantly to policy development. Digital engagement platforms, exemplified by the "Cyprus Local Government Web Portal," enhance public participation by making it easier for residents to engage online. Collaborative workshops focused on issues like youth engagement bring together local authorities, NGOs, and community members to develop targeted programs and policies. Lastly, community advisory committees offer ongoing input from diverse members, helping to ensure that local policies are well-rounded and reflective of a wide range of perspectives.

Despite these advancements, challenges such as ensuring broad representation and overcoming barriers for marginalised groups persist. Addressing these issues requires ongoing refinement of participatory practices, innovative approaches to engagement, and a strong commitment to inclusivity to ensure that all community voices are heard and valued in local governance.

Problems and limitations: main barriers and challenges to effective community participation as perceived by local stakeholders and representatives of ultimate beneficiaries.
Effective community participation in Cyprus faces several barriers and challenges, as perceived by local stakeholders and representatives of ultimate beneficiaries. These challenges impact the overall effectiveness and inclusivity of participatory processes.

One major barrier is low public engagement, where a significant portion of the population remains disengaged from local decision-making. Many residents are either unaware of participation opportunities or lack motivation to engage, often due to a perception that their input will not lead to tangible changes. This disengagement is compounded by inadequate outreach and communication, where information about participation mechanisms is not effectively disseminated, leaving many community members uninformed about how they can contribute.

Another challenge is the inequality in representation, where certain groups, particularly marginalised or economically disadvantaged communities, face barriers to participating fully. This can result in a lack of diverse perspectives in decision-making processes, leading to policies that do not adequately address the needs of all community segments. Language barriers and digital divide issues further exacerbate this problem, as non native speakers and individuals without access to digital tools may be excluded from online consultation processes.

Tokenism is also a significant concern. In some cases, participation efforts are perceived as symbolic rather than substantive, where community input is sought but not meaningfully integrated into decision-making. This undermines trust in the process and leads to skepticism about the value of participating.

Resource constraints pose another challenge, as effective participatory processes require adequate time, funding, and administrative support. Local authorities often struggle with limited resources to manage and

facilitate comprehensive engagement efforts, impacting the quality and scope of participation activities.

Conflicting interests and management of diverse opinions can complicate the participatory process. Balancing the diverse needs and preferences of different community groups can be challenging, and decision-makers may find it difficult to reconcile conflicting viewpoints in a way that is both fair and practical.

Lastly, bureaucratic inertia can slow down the implementation of community feedback. Even when input is gathered and analysed, translating it into actionable policies can be hampered by slow decision-making processes and institutional resistance to change.

Addressing these problems requires targeted strategies to improve outreach, ensure inclusive representation, and enhance the genuine integration of community input into decision-making. This involves investing in communication and engagement tools, addressing the needs of marginalised groups, and fostering a culture of transparency and responsiveness in local governance.

Guiding Principles
Values and principles: key guiding principles for participatory practices.

Effective participatory practices are built on several key values and principles that ensure their success and impact. Inclusivity is a fundamental principle, emphasizing that all community members, including marginalised or underrepresented groups, should have the opportunity to participate. This principle involves creating accessible platforms and outreach strategies that engage a diverse range of voices, ensuring that everyone has a chance to contribute meaningfully to the decision-making process.

Transparency is another crucial guiding principle. It involves clear communication about how decisions are made and how community input is utilised. By providing open access to information and decision-making processes, transparency helps build trust among participants and allows them to see the tangible impact of their contributions. This openness is vital for maintaining credibility and ensuring that participants feel their input is valued and considered.

Accountability is essential for both decision-makers and participants. Decision-makers must be accountable for how they incorporate community feedback into their decisions and be responsive to the concerns and suggestions raised by the public. Likewise, participants should provide honest and constructive feedback and engage in the process with integrity. Accountability ensures that the participatory process is both fair and effective, with clear mechanisms for addressing any issues that arise.

Equity ensures that all voices are valued equally and that no single group has disproportionate influence over the process. This principle aims to address and correct power imbalances, making sure that the needs and concerns of less vocal or disadvantaged groups are given appropriate consideration. By promoting equity, participatory practices can achieve more balanced and representative outcomes.

Respect involves recognizing and valuing the contributions of all participants. Engaging with individuals in a manner that honors their perspectives and expertise fosters a positive and constructive environment. Respect helps build a collaborative atmosphere where participants feel valued and are more likely to contribute meaningfully to the process.

Effectiveness is a principle that focuses on achieving desired outcomes through participatory practices. This involves setting clear objectives for participation, using appropriate methods to gather and analyze input, and ensuring that feedback leads to actionable changes. Effective participatory practices are designed to produce results that address community needs and improve decision-making.

Sustainability ensures that participatory practices can be maintained over the long term. This principle involves building the capacity of both the community and institutions to support ongoing engagement and adapting practices to evolving needs and circumstances. Sustainable practices help ensure that community participation remains a viable and impactful aspect of governance.

Lastly, empowerment is a principle that focuses on enabling participants to influence decisions and actively shape their community. Empowerment involves building the skills and confidence of participants so they can effectively contribute to the decision-making process. By fostering empowerment, participatory practices can drive meaningful change and enhance the overall effectiveness of community engagement.

By adhering to these guiding principles—inclusivity, transparency, accountability, equity, respect, effectiveness, sustainability, and empowerment—stakeholders can create participatory processes that are fair, responsive, and impactful, ultimately leading to better outcomes for the community.

Local diversity: how participatory practices should relate to the cultural and social specificities of each community.
When implementing participatory practices, it is crucial to consider the cultural and social specificities of each community to ensure that engagement efforts are relevant and effective. In Cyprus, where communities vary significantly in terms of cultural backgrounds, social norms, and local issues, adapting participatory practices to these local diversities is essential for achieving meaningful and inclusive participation.

Cultural Sensitivity is a primary consideration. Each community in Cyprus may have distinct cultural traditions, values, and communication styles. Participatory practices should be designed to respect and integrate these cultural aspects to foster genuine engagement. For example, in communities with strong traditional values, participatory methods might include community elders or cultural leaders to facilitate discussions and ensure that the practices align with local customs. Understanding and incorporating local cultural norms can help build trust and increase participation.

Social Norms and Practices also play a significant role. Different communities may have varying social structures and norms that influence how people engage with governance processes. For instance, in some areas, hierarchical structures might dominate decision-making, and participatory practices should be designed to accommodate these dynamics. In other communities, more egalitarian approaches might be preferred. Tailoring engagement methods to fit these social norms helps ensure that participatory practices are both respectful and effective.

Language and Communication are critical aspects of adapting participatory practices. Cyprus is a multilingual society with Greek and Turkish as official languages, and communities may also speak other languages or dialects. Ensuring that communication materials, meetings, and feedback mechanisms are available in the relevant languages is essential for inclusivity. Additionally, using culturally appropriate communication styles and formats can enhance understanding and participation.

Local Issues and Priorities should also guide the design of participatory practices. Different communities may face unique challenges and have specific priorities that need to be addressed through participatory processes. Engaging with local residents to understand their concerns and integrating their input into decision-making ensures that the practices are relevant and responsive to local needs. For example, in rural areas, issues related to agriculture and infrastructure might be more pressing, whereas urban communities might focus on housing and transportation.

Inclusivity of Diverse Groups is another important consideration. Each community may include a range of demographic groups, such as youth, elderly individuals, immigrants, and persons with disabilities, each with its own needs and preferences. Participatory practices should be designed to include all these groups and address their specific concerns. This might involve organising targeted outreach efforts, providing accessible formats for participation, and ensuring that the engagement methods are inclusive of all community members.

Building Trust and Relationships within the community is essential for effective participation. Establishing relationships with local leaders, organisations, and community groups can help facilitate engagement and ensure that participatory practices are embraced. Collaborative efforts with trusted local entities can enhance the credibility of the participatory process and encourage broader community involvement.

In summary, adapting participatory practices to the cultural and social specificities of each community in Cyprus involves understanding and respecting local traditions, norms, and languages, addressing community-specific issues and priorities, ensuring inclusivity, and building trust. By tailoring participatory approaches to fit the unique characteristics of each community, stakeholders can create more effective and meaningful engagement processes that reflect and address the diverse needs and perspectives of local residents.

Roles and responsibilities: institutions, CSOs, communities, citizens, local stakeholders. Which role do they have in promoting effective participation in policy development?
In the context of Cyprus in 2024, the roles and responsibilities of various actors in promoting effective participation in policy development are crucial for ensuring that governance processes are inclusive, transparent, and responsive to the needs of the population.

Institutions such as municipal authorities and national government bodies are key to facilitating participatory practices. In Cyprus, these institutions need to create and maintain structured frameworks for engagement, including public consultations, community forums, and participatory budgeting initiatives. For example, implementing regular public consultations on urban planning and development projects can help ensure that local communities have a voice in decisions that impact their neighborhoods. Institutions are also responsible for ensuring transparency in how community feedback is incorporated into policy decisions and for providing clear, accessible channels for public input.

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Cyprus play a vital role in bridging the gap between the government and the community. These organizations, such as the Cyprus Red Cross and local advocacy groups, are instrumental in mobilising community members and facilitating their engagement in policy discussions. They organise workshops, gather community feedback, and advocate for marginalised groups to ensure their voices are heard. CSOs also provide valuable education on civic rights and the importance of participation, helping to build a more informed and active citizenry.

Communities in Cyprus, including local groups and neighborhood associations, are directly involved in the participatory process. These groups are responsible for actively participating in engagement activities, such as public meetings and feedback sessions. They should also work to ensure that diverse perspectives within their communities are represented. For instance, communities in rural areas might focus on

issues related to agriculture and infrastructure, while urban communities might prioritize concerns related to housing and public transport. Engaging in these processes ensures that the needs and priorities of different localities are addressed.

Citizens are at the heart of the participatory process. In Cyprus, it is crucial for citizens to actively engage with opportunities for public involvement, such as town hall meetings and online surveys. Citizens should provide thoughtful and constructive feedback and advocate for their interests and those of their communities. This active participation helps ensure that policy decisions are informed by a broad range of perspectives and that the policies implemented reflect the true needs and preferences of the population.

Local Stakeholders, including business leaders, academic institutions, and influential community figures, have a role in supporting and enriching the participatory process. In Cyprus, these stakeholders can provide expert opinions, contribute research and data, and help facilitate discussions on complex policy issues. For example, universities can conduct research on local issues and present findings to inform policy development, while business leaders can offer insights into economic impacts and feasibility.

In summary, for Cyprus in 2024, promoting effective participation in policy development requires a collaborative effort from all involved parties. Institutions must establish and support robust engagement mechanisms, CSOs facilitate and advocate for community input, communities provide valuable local insights, citizens actively participate and contribute feedback, and local stakeholders offer expertise and resources. By fulfilling these roles and responsibilities, all actors can help ensure that policy development processes are inclusive, transparent, and responsive to the diverse needs of the Cypriot population.

Policy Recommendations

Involvement strategies: methods to increase community participation in relation to current state analysis and main barriers and challenges observed at the local level.

1. Strengthen Outreach and Communication: One of the primary barriers to community participation is inadequate outreach and communication. To address this, local authorities and CSOs should implement multi-faceted communication strategies. This includes using various media channels—such as social media, local radio, and community newsletters—to reach different segments of the population. Additionally, creating multilingual materials and ensuring that information is accessible in both Greek and Turkish, as well as other languages spoken in Cyprus, can help bridge language barriers and increase engagement across diverse communities.

2. Develop Inclusive Participation Platforms: To overcome the issue of low public engagement and ensure broader representation, it is essential to develop inclusive participation platforms. This could involve establishing local advisory councils or participatory forums that actively involve representatives from diverse community groups, including marginalised and economically disadvantaged populations. For instance, setting up a community advisory board for urban development projects can provide a structured way for various stakeholders to offer input and collaborate on decision-making.

3. Enhance Digital Engagement Tools: Given the rise in digital engagement, enhancing online participation tools is crucial. Improving the functionality and accessibility of digital platforms such as the "Cyprus Local Government Web Portal" can facilitate greater citizen involvement. Implementing features like online surveys, virtual town hall meetings, and interactive feedback tools can help gather input from residents who may be unable to attend physical meetings. Moreover, ensuring these digital tools are user friendly and accessible to all, including those with disabilities, will further increase participation.

4. Promote Education and Awareness: Many citizens may not fully understand the importance of their participation or how to get involved. To address this, it is important to promote civic education and awareness campaigns. These campaigns should educate the public about the participatory process, its impact on local governance, and how they can engage effectively. Workshops, informational sessions, and school programs can be used to increase awareness and build a more informed and active citizen base.

5. Address Tokenism and Build Trust: To combat the perception of tokenism and build trust in the participatory process, it is crucial to demonstrate how community input is used in decision-making. Providing regular updates on how feedback has been incorporated into policies and showcasing the tangible outcomes of participation can help validate the process and encourage more active involvement. Transparency reports and feedback summaries can help ensure that participants see the impact of their contributions.

6. Facilitate Accessibility and Inclusivity: Ensuring that participatory practices are accessible to all community members is essential. This includes organising events in accessible locations, providing support such as translation services for non-native speakers, and offering alternative participation methods for those unable to attend in person. Implementing flexible meeting times and formats can also help accommodate varying schedules and increase participation.

7. Leverage Community-Based Organisations: Collaborating with community-based organisations and local leaders can enhance engagement efforts. These organisations are often well-connected with local residents and can assist in mobilising participants and facilitating discussions. By partnering with these entities, local authorities can tap into established networks and gain valuable insights into community needs and preferences.

8. Pilot Innovative Participation Models: Experimenting with new and innovative participation models can help address existing challenges and explore more effective methods of engagement. For example, implementing participatory budgeting pilot projects or citizen juries on specific policy issues can provide novel ways for residents to influence decision-making and ensure their voices are heard.

9. Promote Bicommunal Engagement Initiatives: Create joint community forums and workshops where Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots can collaborate on common issues. These initiatives should focus on shared community needs and offer a platform for mutual understanding and joint problem-solving.

10. Implement Peace Education Programs: Introduce educational programs that emphasize the importance of peaceful coexistence and intercultural dialogue. These programs should be integrated into school curricula and community activities to build a culture of cooperation from a young age.

11. Encourage Local Leadership Development: Support the development of bicommunal community leaders who can facilitate dialogue and engagement between the two communities. Offer training and resources for these leaders to effectively manage and promote inclusive participation.

12. Utilise Media and Outreach Campaigns: Launch targeted outreach campaigns using local media, including radio, television, and social media, to promote participatory events and initiatives. Ensure that messages are bilingual and culturally sensitive to reach both communities effectively.

Tools and resources: Resources to support participation initiatives both at the institutional level and to make participation sustainable for local communities (funding, technological tools, skilled staff) in relation to current state analysis and main barriers and challenges observed at the local level.

1. Secure and Allocate Funding: Adequate funding is crucial for implementing and sustaining participation initiatives. Local governments and institutions should prioritize allocating budgetary resources to support participatory practices, including public consultations, community workshops, and digital engagement tools. Additionally, exploring funding opportunities from EU grants, local foundations, and international organisations can provide supplemental resources. Developing a dedicated fund for community engagement can help cover costs related to organising events, compensating facilitators, and producing informational materials.

2. Invest in Technological Tools: Technological tools are vital for expanding and facilitating participation. Investment in user-friendly digital platforms for online consultations, surveys, and feedback collection is essential. Upgrading existing platforms, such as the "Cyprus Local Government Web Portal," to enhance accessibility and functionality can improve user engagement. Implementing tools like mobile apps for community input and virtual meeting software can also support broader participation. Ensuring that these tools are compatible with various devices and accessible to all, including those with disabilities, is key to maximizing their effectiveness.

3. Build Skilled Staff Capacity: Developing a skilled workforce to manage and support participation initiatives is crucial. Training programs for local government employees, CSO staff, and community facilitators can enhance their ability to effectively engage with residents and manage participatory processes. This includes training on facilitation skills, digital tool usage, and methods for inclusivity and equity. Investing in professional development ensures that those leading participation efforts are well-equipped to handle the complexities of community engagement.

4. Establish Resource Centers: Creating resource centers that provide tools, guidance, and support for participatory practices can benefit both institutions and local communities. These centers could offer resources such as best practice guidelines, templates for public consultation processes, and technical support for digital tools. They can also serve as hubs for training and capacity-building activities. Such centers help ensure that participation efforts are consistent and effective across different localities.

5. Develop Partnerships and Networks: Forming partnerships with academic institutions, CSOs, and private sector entities can enhance participation initiatives. Universities can provide research and data to inform engagement strategies, while CSOs can offer grassroots insights and mobilise community members. Collaborating with technology firms can also help in developing and maintaining digital tools. These partnerships can help share resources, expertise, and best practices, making participation initiatives more robust and sustainable.

6. Promote Community-Driven Initiatives: Empowering local communities to lead their own participation initiatives can foster sustainability. Supporting community-driven projects through small grants or technical assistance encourages residents to take ownership of engagement efforts. Providing resources and training to community leaders and local organisations enables them to organise and facilitate participation activities effectively.

7. Implement Feedback and Improvement Mechanisms: Establishing mechanisms to collect and analyse feedback on participation processes can help refine and improve them. Regularly reviewing the effectiveness of tools and methods, and making adjustments based on community and stakeholder feedback, ensures that participation initiatives remain relevant and effective. This iterative approach helps address challenges and adapt strategies to meet evolving needs.

8. Ensure Accessibility and Inclusivity: To overcome barriers related to accessibility, it is important to invest in resources that make participation

accessible to all community members. This includes providing translation services, assistive technologies, and accessible venues for in-person events. Ensuring that resources and materials are available in multiple languages and formats helps accommodate diverse needs and promotes broader engagement.

9. Develop Bicommunal Digital Platforms: Create and maintain digital platforms that facilitate communication and engagement between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. Platforms such as CitizenLab or Balancing Act could be adapted to support bilingual interfaces and culturally relevant content.

10. Invest in Bilingual Communication Tools: Ensure that all participatory materials, including surveys, reports, and online content, are available in both Greek and Turkish. This inclusivity helps overcome language barriers and ensures equal access to information.

11. Secure Funding for Community Initiatives: Establish dedicated funds for bicommunal projects and peacebuilding initiatives. These funds can support local engagement activities, community-led projects, and the development of digital tools for participation.

12. Train Skilled Facilitators: Invest in training programs for facilitators who can manage bicommunal discussions and activities. These programs should focus on conflict resolution, intercultural communication, and participatory methods to ensure that facilitators can effectively support inclusive engagement.

Capacity Building: Competencies needed to exercise effective participation; how to promote citizenship competencies for effective participation of local communities; how public officials should be trained on community engagement methods.

Develop Competencies for Effective Participation:
Civic Literacy: To enable effective participation, citizens must have a foundational understanding of how governance and policy-making work. This includes knowledge of local government structures, decision-making processes, and their own rights and responsibilities.

Implementing civic education programs in schools and community centers can help build this understanding. These programs should cover topics such as democratic principles, how to participate in public consultations, and the impact of community input on policy outcomes.

Communication Skills: Effective participation requires strong communication skills, including the ability to articulate opinions clearly, engage in constructive dialogue, and listen actively. Workshops and training sessions focused on public speaking, negotiation, and active listening can help community members and public officials communicate more effectively during participatory processes.

Critical Thinking and Analysis: Citizens need to be able to critically assess information and contribute informed feedback. Training programs should include components on data interpretation, policy analysis, and evidence-based reasoning. This helps participants provide meaningful input and understand the implications of policy decisions.

Promote Citizenship Competencies for Local Communities:
Engagement and Leadership Skills: Training programs can focus on skills such as organising community meetings, leading advocacy efforts, and mobilising local resources. By developing these skills, community members can more effectively contribute to and lead participatory initiatives.

Cultural Competency: In a diverse society like Cyprus, understanding and respecting cultural differences is crucial for effective participation. Training that includes cultural awareness and sensitivity can help community members engage with each other more effectively and ensure that diverse perspectives are considered in the decision-making process.

Digital Literacy: As digital tools become increasingly important in participatory processes, improving digital literacy is essential. Providing training on using online platforms for consultations, submitting feedback electronically, and engaging in virtual discussions can help ensure

that all community members can participate fully, regardless of their technological expertise.

Train Public Officials on Community Engagement Methods:
Participatory Methods and Techniques: Public officials need specialised training in participatory methods and techniques to effectively engage with communities. This includes learning how to design and facilitate public consultations, use digital engagement tools, and manage feedback mechanisms. Training programs should focus on practical skills, such as how to conduct surveys, organise focus groups, and handle public meetings.

Building Relationships and Trust: Effective community engagement involves building and maintaining trust with residents. Training should cover strategies for fostering positive relationships, addressing community concerns, and demonstrating transparency and accountability in decision-making. Techniques for managing conflicts and responding to criticism constructively should also be included.

Inclusivity and Equity: Training for public officials should emphasize the importance of inclusivity and equity in participatory processes. This includes understanding how to engage diverse populations, address barriers to participation, and ensure that all voices are heard, particularly those of marginalised or underrepresented groups.
Feedback Utilisation: Public officials should be trained on how to effectively utilise community feedback in policy development. This involves understanding how to analyse and interpret input, how to integrate feedback into decision-making processes, and how to communicate back to the community about how their input was used.

Foster Continuous Learning and Improvement:
Ongoing Professional Development: Capacity building should be seen as an ongoing process. Public officials and community leaders should have access to continuous professional development opportunities to stay updated on best practices in community engagement and participatory governance.

Evaluation and Feedback: Implementing mechanisms for evaluating the effectiveness of participation initiatives and obtaining feedback from participants can help identify areas for improvement. Regularly reviewing and adjusting training programs based on this feedback ensures that capacity-building efforts remain relevant and effective.

Evaluation and monitoring: mechanisms for evaluating the effectiveness of participatory practices and for making continuous improvements.
Develop Clear Evaluation Criteria and Metrics:
Define Success Metrics: Establish clear criteria for evaluating the success of participatory practices. Metrics could include participation rates, the diversity of participants, the quality of feedback, and the extent to which community input influences policy decisions. For example, measuring the number of residents attending public consultations or the proportion of feedback incorporated into final policies can provide insights into effectiveness.

Set Performance Indicators: Identify specific performance indicators to track progress over time. These indicators could include the frequency of engagement activities, the number of issues addressed based on community feedback, and the satisfaction levels of participants. Regularly reviewing these indicators helps ensure that participatory practices are meeting their objectives.

Implement Regular Feedback Mechanisms:
Surveys and Feedback Forms: Use surveys and feedback forms to gather input from participants about their experience with participatory processes. Tools such as SurveyMonkey or Google Forms can be employed to collect feedback on aspects like accessibility, transparency, and responsiveness. Analysing this feedback helps identify areas for improvement.

Focus Groups: Conduct focus groups with participants to gain deeper insights into their experiences and perspectives. These sessions can

provide qualitative data on the effectiveness of participatory practices and uncover specific challenges or barriers faced by community members.

Conduct Process Evaluations:
Review Implementation Processes: Regularly evaluate the processes and methods used in participatory practices. Assess how effectively engagement activities are planned and executed, and identify any issues in the implementation process. This evaluation helps ensure that practices are carried out as intended and highlights areas where adjustments may be needed.

Benchmarking: Compare practices with those of other local or international jurisdictions to identify best practices and areas for improvement. Benchmarking can provide valuable insights into successful strategies and innovations that could be adapted to the local context.

Establish Continuous Improvement Mechanisms:
Action Plans: Based on evaluation results, develop action plans to address identified issues and improve participatory practices. These plans should outline specific steps to be taken, responsible parties, and timelines for implementation. Regularly updating and reviewing these action plans helps ensure ongoing enhancement of engagement efforts. Iterative Adjustments: Adopt an iterative approach to refine participatory practices. Make incremental adjustments based on evaluation findings and feedback from participants. This approach allows for flexible adaptation and ensures that practices remain relevant and effective over time.

Monitor Impact and Outcomes:
Track Long-Term Outcomes: Monitor the long-term impact of participatory practices on policy decisions and community well-being. Assess how effectively community input has been integrated into policies and whether those policies have led to positive changes in the community. This long-term monitoring provides insights into the effectiveness and sustainability of participatory practices.

Report and Communicate Results: Regularly publish reports on the outcomes and impact of participatory practices. Communicate these results to participants and the wider community to demonstrate transparency and accountability. Public reports help build trust and encourage continued engagement by showing how community input has influenced decision-making.

Foster Institutional Learning and Knowledge Sharing:
Create Learning Platforms: Develop platforms for sharing knowledge and experiences related to participatory practices. This could include workshops, conferences, or online forums where officials, CSOs, and community members can exchange insights and learn from each other's experiences.

Document and Disseminate Best Practices: Document successful strategies and lessons learned from participatory practices and disseminate them widely. Creating case studies and best practice guides can help other communities and stakeholders benefit from proven approaches.

Develop Bicommunal Evaluation Criteria: Establish criteria for evaluating the success of bicommunal engagement efforts. Metrics should include the extent of collaboration between communities, the impact on peacebuilding, and the level of inclusive participation.

Conduct Joint Feedback Sessions: Use joint feedback mechanisms to gather input from both communities on the effectiveness of participatory practices. This can include surveys, focus groups, and public consultations that address bicommunal perspectives and experiences.

Monitor Peacebuilding Outcomes: Track the impact of participatory practices on peacebuilding and social cohesion. Evaluate changes in intercommunal relations, the success of joint initiatives, and reductions in conflict or tensions.

Report and Share Findings: Regularly publish and disseminate reports on the outcomes and impact of participatory practices. Share these findings with both communities to build transparency, demonstrate accountability, and encourage continued engagement.

Conclusions and Call to Action

In conclusion, Cyprus stands at a pivotal moment where effective community participation can serve as a powerful tool to address both local governance challenges and the broader goal of peacebuilding. By embracing participatory practices that are inclusive, culturally sensitive, and focused on bicommunal collaboration, Cyprus can foster a more engaged and harmonious society. The recommendations provided—ranging from involvement strategies and capacity building to tools, resources, and evaluation mechanisms—offer a comprehensive approach to strengthening the democratic process and promoting social cohesion. The unique bicommunal context of Cyprus requires that participatory practices not only serve as a means of governance but also as a bridge between communities. By integrating peace education, fostering bicommunal collaboration, and ensuring that all voices are heard, Cyprus can lay the foundation for lasting peace and shared prosperity.

Call to Action:

Local Governments and Institutions: Commit to implementing the proposed strategies and tools to enhance community participation.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs): Take an active role in facilitating dialogue, promoting civic education, and supporting bicommunal projects. Work closely with local governments to ensure that community voices are effectively represented and that participatory practices contribute to peacebuilding efforts.

Community Leaders and Citizens: Engage actively in the participatory processes, advocating for your communities' needs and collaborating with others to find common ground. Utilise the tools and resources provided to enhance your involvement and ensure your input is impactful.

International Partners and Donors: Support Cyprus in its efforts to strengthen participatory practices by providing funding, technical assistance, and platforms for knowledge sharing. Encourage initiatives that promote bicommunal collaboration and peace education.

By taking these actions, all stakeholders can contribute to a more inclusive, democratic, and peaceful Cyprus. Let us work together to ensure that participatory practices not only improve governance but also pave the way for a brighter, united future for all Cypriots.

Appendices

Sources and References

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Glossary

Bicommunal Collaboration: Cooperative efforts between the two main communities in Cyprus, the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, to promote peace, reconciliation, and shared decision-making.

Capacity Building: The process of developing skills, knowledge, and resources within individuals, organisations, and communities to effectively engage in and influence policy development and participatory practices.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs): Non-governmental organizations and groups that operate independently of the government to represent the interests of the public, particularly in advocating for social, political, and environmental causes.

Community Engagement: The process by which individuals and groups are empowered to participate in the decision-making processes that affect their lives, particularly at the local level.

Cultural Specificities: The unique cultural characteristics, traditions, and social norms that define a particular community and influence how participatory practices should be tailored to suit local contexts.

Evaluation and Monitoring: The systematic assessment of the effectiveness of participatory practices, including the collection and analysis of data to make continuous improvements and ensure that objectives are being met.

Involvement Strategies: Methods and approaches used to increase participation and engagement from community members in decision-making processes, ensuring their input is meaningful and influential.

Participatory Democracy: A form of democracy in which citizens have the power to directly participate in decision-making, beyond simply voting, by being actively involved in shaping policies and governance.

Peace Education: Educational programs and initiatives aimed at promoting the values of peace, understanding, and cooperation among communities, particularly in post conflict or divided societies.

Policy Development: The process of creating policies, including the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of strategies to address specific issues within a society or community.

Public Officials: Individuals who hold positions of authority in government or public institutions and are responsible for implementing policies and making decisions that affect the public.

Reconciliation: The process of restoring and maintaining peaceful relations between previously divided or conflicting communities, often through dialogue, mutual understanding, and collaborative efforts.

Social Cohesion: The strength of relationships and the sense of solidarity among members of a community, which can be enhanced through inclusive participatory practices and peacebuilding efforts.

Stakeholders: Individuals, groups, or organizations with an interest or stake in a particular issue, process, or outcome, including government officials, CSOs, community leaders, and citizens.

Tools and Resources: The materials, technologies, funding, and human resources necessary to support and sustain participatory practices and community engagement initiatives.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP): An international organisation that works to eradicate poverty and reduce inequalities through sustainable development, often supporting peacebuilding and governance efforts in post-conflict areas like Cyprus.

Values and Principles: The foundational beliefs and ethical standards that guide participatory practices, such as inclusivity, transparency, accountability, and respect for cultural diversity.

GUIDELINES for IMPLEMENTING HECSOs POLICY WORKSHOPS CYPRUS

Please find below the suggested questions to gather answers, feedbacks and experiences from local communities through HECSOs policy workshops.

The first workshop should be more oriented towards collections of inputs through questions, plenary or group discussions. See section below. Questions are just a suggestion. It is important to follow the discussions and the inputs provided by the participants and formulate questions accordingly.

The second workshop should be a wrap-up of evidences collected to further develop draft recommendations (Point 5 of the Policy Recommendation Paper Draft).

Workshops can be held in two different sessions the same day or on two different days. Minimum number of participants: 20

FIRST WORKSHOPS

- Facilitators and hosts present themselves, the purpose of the workshops, the context in which the labs are framed and implemented (HECSOs project). Use the HECSOs TOOLKITS presenting their content as a starting point for the following discussion.

- Roundtable presentations:Present yourself. What are your expectations about the two workshop sessions?

- Start a focus group submitting to the audience the following questions. Collect evidence writing on a board or using post-it notes or through other tools you're confident with. You can also use digital tools such as MIRO https://miro.com/

Questions & Answers:

1) Building a common glossary: ask participants about definitions or key elements they associate with the concept of "participation", "active citizenship" "participatory democracy", "engagement of communities".

In the workshop, participants defined "participation" as active involvement in decision-making processes that affect one's community, emphasizing inclusivity and transparency.
"Active citizenship" was described as taking responsibility and engaging in civic activities like voting and volunteering to contribute to societal well being.
"Participatory democracy" was seen as a system where citizens directly influence policy through deliberative processes and equitable representation.
"Engagement of communities" involves collaborative efforts to address local issues, with a focus on policy through deliberative processes and equitable representation. "Engagement of communities" involves collaborative efforts to address local issues, with a focus on empowerment, effective communication, and support structures.

2) Ask participants about their own experiences or projects / case studies (preferably locally based) related to participation of local communities within local decision making.

Participants shared various local projects illustrating community involvement in decision-making:
1. Citizen Panels: One participant highlighted a project where citizen panels were formed to provide input on urban revitalization plans in Nicosia. These panels engaged local residents in discussions about the redesign of public spaces, ensuring that their feedback shaped the final plans.

2. Local Advisory Committees: Another example involved establishing local advisory committees in rural areas to address agricultural and environmental issues.

3. Youth Engagement in Local Governance: A project aimed at involving high school students in local governance was discussed. Students participated in mock council meetings and workshops, which not only educated them about civic processes but also allowed them to contribute ideas on issues affecting their schools and communities.

4. Participatory Budgeting Initiatives: Several municipalities in Cyprus implemented participatory budgeting, allowing residents to vote on how a portion of the local budget should be allocated. This approach increased public involvement in financial decisions and ensured that funding was directed towards projects prioritized by the community.

3) What are the main observations they could make in relation to those experiences? Results, impacts?
1. Empowerment and Capacity Building: Initiatives such as youth councils and advisory committees empowered community members by giving them a role in governance. This not only built their capacity to engage in civic activities but also fostered a greater sense of ownership and responsibility towards local issues.

2. Improved Civic Engagement: Programs that included community members in decision-making processes fostered greater overall civic engagement. Participants noted increased participation in local governance and a stronger sense of community involvement among residents.

4) What methods / tools/ policies that foster participation are already in use in the local context?
1. Participatory Budgeting: Municipalities use participatory budgeting processes where residents can propose and vote on how a portion of the local budget is allocated. This method ensures that funding is directed towards community-prioritised projects, increasing public engagement and satisfaction.

2. Public Consultations and Forums: Local governments frequently organise public consultations and forums to gather input on urban planning, policy changes, and development projects.

3. Citizen Panels and Advisory Committees: Various municipalities have established citizen panels and advisory committees that include local residents, community leaders, and experts. These panels offer advice and feedback on specific issues, such as urban development and environmental management.
4. Local Action Groups: Local action groups, often funded through EU programs, work on community-driven initiatives. These groups involve

residents in identifying local needs, developing projects, and implementing solutions, thereby enhancing grassroots participation.

5. Digital Platforms and Surveys: To reach a broader audience, local authorities use digital platforms and online surveys to solicit feedback and engage with residents.

6. Youth Engagement Programs: Initiatives such as youth councils and school-based participatory projects engage young people in local governance. These programs provide opportunities for students to contribute to discussions on issues affecting their schools and communities.

5) What are the community's perceptions of their current involvement in decision-making processes? Do they feel adequately represented and heard?
Community perceptions in Cyprus in 2024 reflect a mixed view on involvement in decision-making processes. While many residents appreciate the opportunities provided, such as participatory budgeting and public forums, there are concerns about inadequate representation, especially for marginalised groups. Some community members feel their input is valued but lacks transparency and impact, leading to skepticism about whether their feedback genuinely influences decisions. Overall, there is a desire for more meaningful engagement and clearer connections between community input and outcomes.

6) Are the local stakeholders and communities easy to engage? Are there any mistrusts that act as barriers for full participation?
Engaging local stakeholders and communities in Cyprus in 2024 faces several challenges, including widespread mistrust and skepticism about whether their input genuinely affects decisions. Communication gaps contribute to confusion, as many residents are unclear about how their feedback influences outcomes. Additionally, inadequate representation of marginalised

groups and accessibility barriers hinder full participation. Engagement fatigue also poses a problem, as repeated but ineffective efforts can diminish community motivation. Addressing these issues is essential for enhancing the effectiveness and inclusivity of local decision-making processes.

7) What are the main challenges and obstacles you have encountered in community participation in decision-making processes?
Widespread mistrust in authorities, which undermines confidence in the effectiveness of input. Communication gaps about how feedback is used lead to confusion and disengagement. Limited representation of marginalised groups and accessibility issues further hinder full participation. Additionally, engagement fatigue can arise when repeated efforts fail to produce tangible results, decreasing community motivation. Overcoming these obstacles is essential to enhancing the inclusivity and effectiveness of participatory processes.

8) What principles do you believe should guide the development of policies for community involvement in decision-making processes?
Inclusiveness and representation, ensuring that all voices—regardless of ethnicity, gender, or migrant status—are heard. Transparency and accountability are key, promoting trust between communities and local authorities. Bicommunal cooperation is essential, encouraging joint decision-making between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, particularly in areas of shared concern. Additionally, sustainability and capacity-building should guide policies, ensuring that both local communities and migrants have the necessary skills and resources to participate effectively.

9) How could we ensure that these practices respect the cultural and social diversity of different communities?

Adopt a context-sensitive approach that acknowledges and values the unique identities, traditions, and histories of each group. This can be achieved by implementing inclusive consultation processes that actively engage representatives from all communities, ensuring that their specific needs and perspectives are considered. Cultural mediation and translation services should be provided to overcome language barriers and facilitate understanding. Additionally, flexibility in policy design is essential, allowing for the adaptation of participatory practices to suit different cultural contexts. Lastly, promoting intercultural dialogue and education can help bridge divides and foster mutual respect.

10) How should the principles of inclusiveness and efficiency be balanced in multi-stakeholder decision-making processes?

This requires a structured yet flexible approach. Inclusiveness ensures that all relevant voices, particularly those from marginalised groups, are heard and represented, which is essential for fair and equitable outcomes. However, to maintain efficiency, clear frameworks and timelines must be established to guide discussions and decision-making. This can be achieved by using facilitated dialogues, where diverse stakeholders are brought together in structured sessions that prioritize key issues, while decision-making tools like consensus building techniques and participatory technologies can streamline the process.

11) How can principles of equity and social justice be integrated into community involvement to ensure that no group is excluded?

Proactively address barriers faced by marginalised groups, such as migrants, ethnic minorities, women, and low-income individuals. This can be achieved through targeted outreach and support programs that ensure these groups have access to information, resources, and participation opportunities. Affirmative action measures, such as reserved seats in decision-making bodies or prioritizing funding for projects that benefit disadvantaged communities, can also help ensure

representation. Additionally, continuous monitoring and evaluation of participation processes should be implemented to identify and address any inequities, ensuring that all community members can engage fully and fairly.

12) What strategies in your opinion might be most effective in increasing community involvement in your area?

Establishing Local Integration Councils that bring together representatives from both Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities, migrants, and local stakeholders to discuss and address community issues collaboratively.

Participatory budgeting can empower communities by giving them a direct say in allocating resources for local projects, ensuring that their needs are met.

Bicommunal and multicultural events that celebrate cultural diversity and promote social cohesion can also foster stronger connections between different groups. Additionally, capacity-building programs that equip both residents and migrants with the skills needed for civic participation, alongside digital platforms that facilitate easier and more transparent involvement, can further enhance engagement.

13) What resources or tools do you think are needed to effectively support community involvement?

A combination of financial resources, such as funding for community projects and civil society organizations, and technological tools that enable broader participation, like user-friendly digital platforms for online consultations and participatory budgeting. Capacity-building programs are essential, providing training for both local residents and migrants in civic engagement and leadership. Cultural mediation services can help bridge language and cultural gaps, ensuring that all voices are heard. Additionally, public awareness campaigns and

communication tools that inform communities about their rights and opportunities for participation are crucial to foster active involvement and ensure that decision-making processes are truly inclusive.

14) Do you think that citizens and local communities should be sustained in acquiring specific competencies and skills that enable participation in decision making processes?

Yes, by providing ongoing support through workshops, mentorship, and access to resources, communities can be empowered to actively contribute to shaping policies that affect their lives, leading to more inclusive and effective governance.

15) If yes, which ones?

Through capacity-building programs that focus on developing skills such as critical thinking, communication, and leadership. Training in civic education, digital literacy, and participatory governance is also essential to ensure that all community members, including migrants and marginalised groups, are equipped to engage in decision-making.

16) What types of training , if needed, would benefit both public officials and citizens to improve participation in decision making processes?

Training in civic engagement and participatory governance.
For public officials, training should focus on community engagement methods, such as facilitation skills, conflict resolution, and inclusive decision-making practices that ensure diverse voices are heard. Cultural competency training is also essential to help officials work effectively with different communities, including migrants and marginalised groups.
For citizens, civic education programs that build knowledge of their rights and responsibilities, as well as skills in advocacy, public speaking, and digital literacy, would be beneficial. Joint training sessions that bring together officials and citizens can foster mutual understanding, build trust, and create a collaborative environment for participation.

17) Do you think that digital technologies could help to improve community involvement?

Yes, digital technologies can significantly improve community involvement in Cyprus. They offer accessible and flexible platforms for citizens to engage in decision-making processes, such as through online consultations, surveys, and participatory budgeting. Digital tools can also help bridge geographical and time constraints, making it easier for a broader range of people, including those in rural or remote areas, to participate. Social media and mobile applications can be used to disseminate information, gather feedback, and foster dialogue among diverse community members. Additionally, digital technologies can enhance transparency and accountability by enabling real-time updates and open data sharing on policy developments. However, to maximize their impact, efforts must be made to ensure digital literacy and access for all, including marginalised groups

18) How should the feedback loop between citizens and local governments be structured to ensure that involvement is meaningful and influential?

Regular and accessible platforms for public input, such as digital forums, town hall meetings, and surveys, ensuring that all demographics have opportunities to participate. Additionally, local governments should actively demonstrate how citizen feedback has influenced decisions and policy changes to maintain transparency and trust. Establishing dedicated liaison offices or community representatives can also facilitate continuous dialogue and address concerns more effectively. Finally, integrating feedback into the decision-making process through clear, actionable steps and regular updates will reinforce the value of citizen input, encouraging ongoing engagement.

19) What concrete actions do you propose to promote community participation in decision-making processes starting from today's discussion?

1. Launch Digital Platforms: Develop user-friendly online portals and mobile apps where residents can easily submit feedback, participate in polls, and track the progress of community issues.

2. Host Regular Forums: Organise monthly or quarterly town hall meetings, both in-person and virtual, to discuss ongoing projects and gather community input. Ensure these forums are widely advertised and accessible to all residents.

3. Create Advisory Committees: Establish committees composed of diverse community members who can provide input on various issues and serve as a liaison between the public and local government.

4. Conduct Surveys and Polls: Regularly distribute surveys and polls to gauge community needs and opinions on specific topics. Use this data to inform decision-making and communicate how feedback is being used.

5. Promote Transparency: Publish detailed reports and updates on how community feedback has been incorporated into decisions and policies, reinforcing the impact of public participation.

6. Educational Workshops: Organise workshops to educate citizens about the decision-making process and how they can effectively participate, ensuring they have the tools and knowledge to engage meaningfully.

7. Implement Feedback Mechanisms: Set up a structured system for receiving, reviewing, and responding to community feedback, with clear timelines and designated staff responsible for handling input.

20) What are the main actions each stakeholder should take to promote effective participatory practices?

Local governments should create transparent and accessible channels for public input, demonstrate how feedback impacts decisions, and actively reach out to diverse community groups. Citizens need to engage by attending meetings, providing feedback, and staying informed about local issues, while encouraging others to participate. Community organizations should facilitate engagement through educational events and act as intermediaries to ensure diverse voices are heard. Media should cover participatory initiatives, highlight successful cases, and educate the public on the importance of involvement. Academia and research institutions should offer evidence based recommendations, conduct relevant studies, and provide training to enhance public understanding and engagement.

21) How can we ensure that the recommendations of this workshop are taken into account and implemented?

First, establish a clear action plan with specific, measurable goals and deadlines for each recommendation.
Assign responsibilities to relevant stakeholders to ensure accountability. Create a monitoring and evaluation framework to track progress and assess the effectiveness of the implemented recommendations.
Facilitate regular follow-up meetings to review progress, address challenges, and make necessary adjustments.
Additionally, maintain transparent communication with all stakeholders about the status of recommendations and any changes. Engaging community members and stakeholders in this process can also help sustain momentum and support for the recommendations.

22) What indicators should we consider to assess the impact of community involvement policies?

Track participation rates to ensure broad and diverse engagement, and evaluate the quality of feedback to gauge the depth of community input. Measure how effectively feedback is incorporated into decision-making and whether it leads to tangible policy changes. Conduct surveys to assess community satisfaction and perception of the involvement process. Analyze the impact on policy outcomes to determine if changes address community needs.

Review communication effectiveness to ensure information is well-distributed and residents feel informed. Assess equity and representation to ensure underrepresented groups are engaged, and monitor the sustainability of engagement to maintain long-term interest and participation.

SECOND WORKSHOPS

Starting from the evidence gathered through previous focus group, try to clusterize inputs formulating policy recommendations that could fill the main points of the policy recommendation paper structure
(Point 5. Policy Recommendations)

This could be done through a roundtable or for example dividing the participants in groups assigning each of them to work on some specific topics emerged previously.