



COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, 4 December 2019

CDDG(2019)11 ADDENDUM  
Item 8.2 of the agenda

## **EUROPEAN COMMITTEE ON DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE (CDDG)**

### **DRAFT GUIDELINES ON E-DEMOCRACY IN THE FORM OF A TOOLKIT**

**For approval in substance and decision**

Secretariat Memorandum  
prepared by the  
Directorate General of Democracy  
Democratic Governance Department

---

*This document is public. It will not be distributed at the meeting. Please bring this copy.  
Ce document est public. Il ne sera pas distribué en réunion. Prière de vous munir de cet exemplaire.*

**Introduction**

The present addendum includes proposed additions (A), drafting amendments (B) and comments (C) which have been received by the Secretariat after the meeting of the CCDG Bureau on 15 November 2019.

**Action required**

The CDDG is invited to consider whether to include the proposed additions and accept/take into account the proposed drafting amendments and comments.

## **A) Additions**

### **Proposed by Finland**

#### ***Cooperative development of E-participation Platform Decidim in City of Helsinki***

(to be added under B.1.3)

The City of Helsinki is aiming to utilize the most modern approaches of co-design participatory collaboration. European co-creation has played a significant role for participation platforms. At the moment, Helsinki is utilizing and developing Decidim, which is an e-participation platform first kick-started by the City of Barcelona. The city of Helsinki is an active member of the international Decidim community, which develops the platform together and makes use of crowd-based software development methods. Decidim has been used to run several e-participation services, e.g. participatory budgeting ([omastadi.hel.fi](https://omastadi.hel.fi)) and Mayor's idea competition ([www.maimlantoinmivinkaupunki.fi](http://www.maimlantoinmivinkaupunki.fi)). The aim is to find concrete ideas on how Helsinki could become an increasingly service-minded, sustainable and creative city.

Every year, Helsinki opens up 4.4 million euros of its budget for ideas to be created and decided on by the residents. All residents of Helsinki who have turned into age of 12 years old or will turn 12 this year may vote on residents' plans. The process was launched for the first time in 2018. During the idea phase, the city received nearly 1,300 proposals, and 839 of them was found complied with the limiting factors for participatory budgeting. Out of these proposals, residents worked together with City experts to formulate nearly 300 more detailed plans to put to the vote in October 2019. See: <https://omastadi.hel.fi>

In this kind of software development process, the city benefits from international collaboration, and provides better user experience to all its inhabitants who want to contribute and take part to local development. City of Helsinki also brings its own innovations concerning participative budgeting platform into use of the whole international network of cities and developers. In this kind of software development process the city benefits from international collaboration and provides better user experience to all its inhabitants who want to contribute and take part to local development. Helsinki also brings its own innovations concerning participative budgeting platform into use of the whole international network of cities and developers. From private sector the city can acquire for example technical know-how on Decidim and certain programming skills, while avoiding the risk of being dependent on a single IT-product and company.

### **Proposed by Iceland**

#### ***Better Districts: Citizens Prioritizing Projects (Reykjavík city)***

Better Districts is a collaborative project between citizens and administrative authorities for prioritizing and distributing funds for new projects on a smaller scale and projects of maintenance in the districts of Reykjavík. The project is intended to enhance public participation in deliberative democracy and democratic decision making and is based on experience from previous years.

Better Districts has been running since 2012, resulting in hundreds of minor projects that have been executed by the municipality. These projects have started as ideas which individual citizens or groups have submitted online and then voted on in online public elections.

### What kind of ideology is Better Districts based on?

The project is based on ideas on deliberative democracy, participatory democracy, participatory budgeting – promoting public participation in democratic discussions and decision making beyond what is normally seen in a representative democracy. The project is a further developed edition of Better Districts 2012. Previous years' experience is used as a foundation as well as expert services and information from other cities all over the world that have experience with participatory budgeting.

### The budget and district distribution

The budget assumes a total of x million ISK, which is divided between districts in accordance with a fixed sum on one hand and the number of residents on the other.

### What kind of ideas?

The projects in question are projects to enhance the quality of the residents' surroundings and increase possibilities for recreation and social gatherings, to improve equipment or opportunities for games and leisure, to encourage cycling or improve conditions for pedestrians and public transportation users.

### How much can a project cost?

The projects can be small or large but the cost cannot exceed the amount each district has been assigned. A team of experts from the City of Reykjavík's Environment and Planning Division estimates if projects are practicable and prepares and informs of a cost estimate.

### When can ideas be submitted?

Ideas collection in each cycle ends in April each year. The voting takes place in October-November same year and the projects are executed the following year. Citizens can participate in and follow the project on the consultation forum [www.betriereykjavik.is](http://www.betriereykjavik.is), on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/Betri.Reykjavik> or through their district service centres or district committees.

### How does the consultation forum work?

Those who want to post ideas on the website must first register as users of citizens portal Better Reykjavík – [www.betriereykjavik.is](http://www.betriereykjavik.is) Ideas are posted on the website under the district chosen. The collaboration includes viewing other users' ideas, adding comments/arguments and rating ideas. After ideas are posted they can be argued, discussed and rated.

### District committees organize ideas

After the Environment and Planning Division's team of experts has finished assessing and discussing ideas, the district committees organize the ideas so that residents can vote on them.

### District voting

Voting will be done electronically on a special website where the Reykjavík's residents can choose between the projects. All citizens in Reykjavík 16 years of age and older can vote.

## Executing Projects

When the results of voting are in, the projects chosen will be designed, tenders called for and the projects executed the next year (2020). An effort will be made to maintain good collaboration with original posters of the ideas and the district committees regarding the execution process.

## The year 2019

This year's Idea collection ended April 9, 2019. In total, 1,053 ideas were received! It is a new record in several ideas, and never have so many people visited the site during the conception of ideas. Election took place from October 31 to November 14.

## Proposed by Serbia

### *Single Electoral Roll, Serbia*

The Single Electoral Roll is a public document where single records are kept of nationals of the Republic of Serbia eligible to vote. *The Single Electoral Roll is kept as an electronic database* and is updated on a regular basis by municipal and city administrations as a delegated duty under the Law on the Single Electoral Roll. Updating of the Electoral Roll includes changes made ex officio or on request from citizens. Any change in the Electoral Roll is based on a relevant decision, namely a decision on registration, deletion or change, supplementation or correction of a fact relating to a voter on the Electoral Roll. Registration with the Electoral Roll is prerequisite for the exercise of the right to vote and each voter can be registered with the Electoral Roll only once.

The following persons are registered with the Electoral Roll:

- Nationals of the Republic of Serbia of legal age with the capacity to contract, i.e. persons with the right to vote – according to their place of residence; at voter's request, his/her temporary residence address in the country may also be recorded;
- Voters who reside abroad – according to their most recent place of residence before moving abroad or according to the most recent place of residence of one of their parents; in this case, the voter's temporary residence address abroad must also be recorded;
- Internally displaced persons – according to the place where they are registered as internally displaced persons.

The Electoral Roll contains the following details of voters: name and surname of the voter, name of one of voter's parents, voter's unique personal identification number, date and place of voter's birth, voter's sex, place and address of voter's residence, local self-government unit in which the voter resides, foreign country where the voter temporarily resides, place and address of voter's temporary residence abroad and place of voter's residence in case of internally displaced persons.

The name and surname of a voter who is a member of a national minority is written first in Cyrillic letters based on the Serbian spelling and then in the script and spelling of the language of the relevant national minority.

Every citizen has the right to consult the Electoral Roll in order to verify their personal information. The Electoral Roll may be consulted in person at the municipal or city administration of the voter's residence or electronically at <https://birackispisak.mduls.gov.rs/javniportal>.

Citizens apply for changes to the Electoral Roll to the municipal or city administration of their residence. Any change in the Electoral Roll must be based on data contained in civil records, other official records and public documents (e.g. excerpts from registries of births, marriages and deaths, identity card, proof of residence, certificate of citizenship, valid and enforceable decision restoring the capacity to contract), on which the relevant decision is passed by the municipal or city administration concerned if the application is made before the closing of the Electoral Roll (15 days before the election day) or by the Ministry if the application is made from the date of closing of the Electoral Roll until 72 hours before the election day.

Instruction on Amendments to Implementation of the Law on the Unified Electoral Roll's Instruction were passed to ensure necessary conditions for the realization of citizens rights for voting abroad. Also, the law provisions have been improved in terms of connectivity civil registry books with Unified Electoral Roll, in order to ensure the accuracy, compliance and correctness of the Unified Electoral Roll.

### ***Open Government Partnership, Serbia***

Since 2012, the Republic of Serbia has been a member of the Open Government Partnership (OGP), an international multilateral initiative with the aim of providing support to member countries in building an open, transparent, efficient, accountable, citizen-oriented administration, by building the trust of the public, through cooperation with civil society organizations (hereinafter: the CSOs), empowering citizens' engagement in administration, combating corruption, providing access to information, use of new technologies, all with the purpose of achieving a more efficient and accountable work of public authorities.

The Republic of Serbia sees the membership in the OGP as the right road towards the implementation of the overall goal of the public administration reform in the Republic of Serbia which include providing high-quality services to citizens and corporate entities and creating a public administration that would foster economic stability and increase the standard of living. The principles behind this initiative are completely aligned with the intention of the Government to build an administration on the grounds of "good governance" and "open administration" principles, i.e. to enable full implementation of the generally accepted principles of the rule of law and legal safety, publicity, accountability, economic efficiency and efficiency.

Since becoming a member, Republic of Serbia developed and adopted 3 action plans. The consultative process during developing, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of APs has been significantly improved, and Serbia adopted, implemented and planned to implement various commitments that will contribute to improvement of all OGP values (transparency, public accountability, public participation, as well as using new technologies and innovation in order to exchange information, improve public services and involve citizens in decision-making processes.

Example: one commitment that has been developed upon the initiative of civil society and in full cooperation with civil society. The commitment started in the previous AP and transferred to the present one (AP 2018-2020), when its implementation should be completed.

**Improving proactive transparency – Information Booklet - in progress**

imple  
mentin  
g  
agenci  
es

MPALSG, Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection

**Description**

The Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance, which came into force in 2004, provides that transparency in the work of public administration authorities can be achieved in two ways: proactively and reactively. Proactive transparency implies timely publishing of documents and availability of understandable information for citizens. Information booklets and their content are defined by the by the Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance and they include information used or generated by public administration authorities in their work. The currently applicable arrangement for publishing the Information Booklets (in *Word/PDF* formats) and the updating system lead to insufficient data, make any attempt at oversight an arduous task and provide limited possibilities for comparison of information, which reduces citizens' overall awareness of the issues.

The results of a survey carried out by the Belgrade Open School at the local self-government unit level showed that information booklets generally tend to lack the most sensitive information, especially information about the budget, which was observed in 69% of all cases. Only 16% of all municipalities published information about public procurement, while 11% published information about awarded state aid and various forms of financial support to public and other enterprises. About a half of all information booklets of LSGUs in Serbia (47%) do not contain information about e.g. documents and requirements necessary to exercise a social security entitlement or about the issuance of a certificate of registration with the register of births.

The planned amendments to the Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance, will see the information contained in those Information Booklets reformatted with the aim of opening the data contained therein, improving proactive transparency and expanding the circle of administration authorities subject to the legal requirement of publishing Information Booklets.

This will entail:

- 1) Development of a single IT system to access, process and present the Information Booklet
- 2) Designing a segment of an online platform that would serve as an Information Booklet, coupled with an obligation for public administration authorities to publish information booklets in *PDF* format.
- 3) Training of employees in state authorities for the use of a single IT system
- 4) Piloting the use of the application
- 5) Promotion of the application (single IT system) for the public, civil sector, business sector and the media.

Effectiveness of the amendments to the Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance would be delayed until the online platform is designed.

In order to increase civic participation, it will first be necessary to raise the citizens' awareness, both in quantitative and in qualitative terms. In this context, the level of comprehensibility of information made available to citizens by the public administration should also be taken into account. Only if citizens fully comprehend information that is provided to them proactively can it be considered that citizens have been properly informed. Reformatting of the information booklets would entail changes in the data entry and updating arrangements, which in turn would have direct effects on citizens' awareness and facilitate the work of civil servants and oversight of compliance with the Law.

This measure would ensure the following:

Public administration authorities would be able to enter data in their Information Booklets in a more efficient and faster manner

The number of freedom of information requests would be reduced

Public administration would be significantly improved because all pieces of information would be available in a single central database, both for other authorities and for citizens

The system used for overseeing compliance with the Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance would be more efficient if the oversight procedures were more expedient and if the oversight activities were conducted to a higher standard of quality.

Interested parties would have easier and faster access to the required information, which they would be able to download in an open format, compare, cross-check and use for further analysis, research and development of various applications.

Civic participation would improve significantly, as would the *watchdog* role of the media and citizens' oversight of the work of public administration authorities.

The proactive transparency principle is fully compliant with the open government principles, which are also stipulated by the OGP initiative. Timely provision of information in an open format would directly improve data accessibility, which will ensure transparency and accountability in the work of public administration and foster civic participation and influence on the work of public administration.

Provision of information in an *open data* format would enable subsequent processing of information and easier development of services and digital solutions for certain social services or social changes (e.g. development of a web or mobile application which would provide necessary information on required documentation to citizens).

<https://ogp.rs/> web site, in Serbian language only, for any additional information you can contact Ministry of Public administration and Local self-government <http://mduls.gov.rs/en>



## B) Amendments

### Proposed by Finland

- Replace the case study concerning Finland at A.3.1 with the following:

*Finland:* Citizens are able to consult institutions through specific dedicated platforms to facilitate communication and make it attractive and to some extent standardised (<https://kerrokantasi.hel.fi>)

- In the part on *Inclusiveness* under A.3.1., include a reference to the EU Accessibility Directive <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/web-accessibility>
- In the part on *Strategies*, under B.2., reword the second bullet point as follows: *'specific considerations should analyse the democratic and participative processes and identify which of these should, or are suitable to, be planned and realised as electronic processes or processes aided by electronic processes based on standardised methodology and added value compared to off-line processes'*;
- In the part on *Strategies*, under B.2., reword the seventh bullet point as follows: *'the objectives and nature (top-down or bottom-up) of the participatory process and methods, to guarantee key timing points for effective participation'*;
- In the part on *Action plans*, under B.2.2., in the section on *sourcing of technical solutions and upgrading previous software*, add a bullet point worded as follows: *'Recognise the need for good co-operation between ICT experts and persons with knowledge of participatory processes – in procurement both expertise is needed'*
- In the part on *Awareness and acceptance* and under B.2.3. rephrase the beginning of the last section as follows: *'User experience and satisfaction is also an element to be taken into account in development of services.'*

### Proposed by the INGO Conference

In the part on *Responsiveness*, under A.3.2., at the second bullet point, adding at the end of the sentence *'while ensuring that the last decision is always made by people, not machines'*.

In the part on *Civil society*, under A5, rephrase the last two bullet points as follows:

- contribute to the development and testing of e-democracy initiatives and tools, in cooperation with authorities at local, regional or national level as well as develop on its own account;
- Contribute to awareness and acceptance of and training in e-democracy tools and associated technologies as well as provide training.

In the part on *Digital literacy*, under B.1.4., in the last bullet point, replace 'short term' with 'medium term'.

## C) Comments by the INGO Conference

Under A.2. *What is democracy today?* economic benefits and cost-savings are mentioned. The INGO Conference proposes mitigating this reference pointing out that groups who are not proficient with digital tools may be excluded if e-democracy becomes prevalent, to the exclusion of other channels

Along the same line, in the part on *Inclusiveness*, a sentence saying that *traditional channels of communication should be kept open, at least for some time* should be added.