



# Tool #3: Public Participation

## Introduction

**A public participation tool will** assist MPs to facilitate the participation of citizens to make claims upon government services that are in accordance with the mandates contained in national legislation on CDFs. It includes mechanisms for participation and cooperation with local, regional and national agencies, and for conducting community-based needs assessments and public awareness campaigns, establishing CDF offices, holding community meetings, and initiating community-based budget proposals. This tool may emerge from a strategic plan for the development of the constituency.

This tool serves as a guide for MPs to a range of participatory practices for CDFs: from those addressing problems of inter-governmental coordination to those including constituents in the selection of priorities and projects to be developed with CDF funds. By facilitating inter-governmental coordination, CDFs can help to enhance service delivery through the achievement of positive synergies in development administration. By connecting constituents to MPs and CDF decision-makers, participatory mechanisms can increase the likelihood that that CDFs will be responsive to local needs and those of constituents. This tool provides a menu of options for including individuals and organizational actors in identifying development priorities and selecting CDF projects.

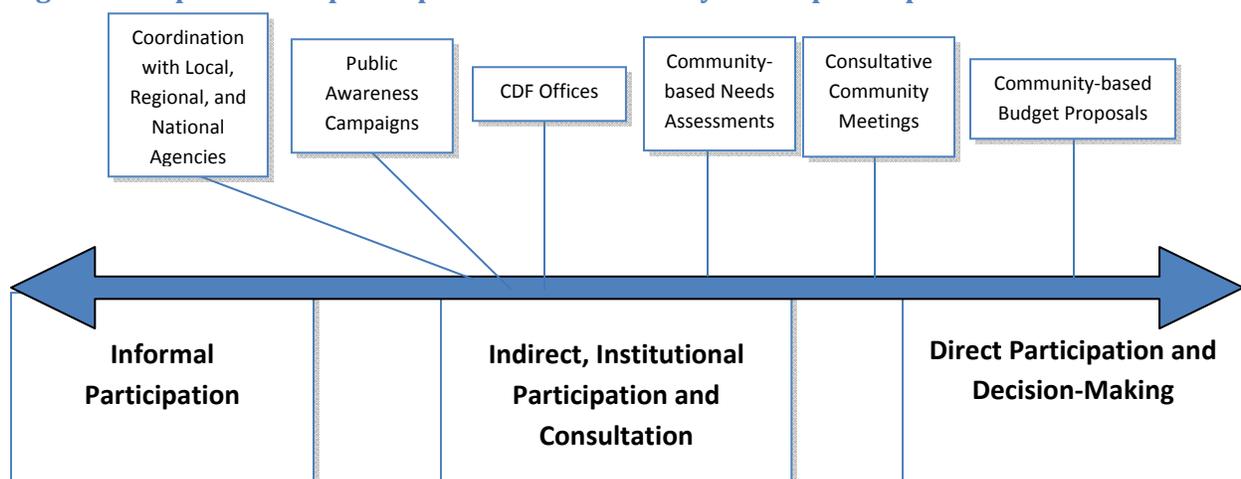
In the following section, we propose participatory practices that emerge from the Principles and Guidelines for Constituency Development Funds that the CPA developed and adopted in 2011.

### A Spectrum of Participation

We now turn to the spectrum of different types of participation that can increase the responsiveness, transparency, and accountability of CDFs to the public.

Figure 1 illustrates how CDFs permit a broad range of participation. On one side of the spectrum, participation in CDFs lack clearly defined institutional rules or procedures for participation and place decision-making at the discretion of individuals. In the middle of the spectrum, participation in CDFs is governed by clear rules and procedures, which include local committees of constituent representatives,

**Figure 1: A spectrum of participation in constituency development practices**



parastatal committees and other government agencies. At the other end, CDFs can encourage much broader participation by constituents, including in mechanisms that resemble participatory budgeting.

## Informal participation

At the left side of the spectrum, there is very narrow participation in decisions about the use of CDFs. Elected officials have great discretion to make decisions over the employment of funds on the basis of personal links with particular constituents' perception of local development needs.

In the absence of broader participation of constituents, CDF projects may neglect important issues in constituencies and, more generally, have difficulty in establishing development priorities that reflect broader needs in constituencies. Overall, this type of CDF relies on the capacity of the MP, alone, to aggregate constituent interests, and provides limited opportunities for other government agencies or constituents to participate in project selection.

## Indirect, Institutional Participation and Consultation

In the middle of the spectrum, CDFs can feature indirect popular participation and participation of cooperating agencies though clearly defined rules and regulations governing the methods of project selection, implementation, and oversight.

Constituent participation in project selection takes place in community needs assessments, such as focus groups, surveys of constituents, and contact with individual participants. Constituents can also participate in **consultative local decision-making bodies**, such as 'CDF Boards', which can be chaired by MPs and staffed by representatives of constituents, CSOs, and local elected officials. These **consultative bodies** can hold **community meetings** where citizens can express views on needs of the constituency. CDF programs can also open **Constituency/CDF Offices** in constituencies to receive constituent input and disseminate relevant information about the CDF activity in that constituency. Project implementation and oversight is often performed by national-level agencies in either the executive or legislative branches. These administrative bodies promote formal compliance with existing rules and provide expectations for appropriate contracting and tendering procedures. In addition, CSOs and parastatal agencies can perform their own oversight activities to inform the public about the progress of project completion and hold project implementers accountable.

### CDF Participation Tools

- **Constituency Needs Assessments:** methods in which constituents can express their preferences in focus groups, surveys, individual meetings and interviews.
- **Public Awareness Campaigns:** increasing awareness among CDF stakeholders about CDF purposes and procedures
- **CDF Offices:** providing constituents with a one-stop clearinghouse for all CDF information relevant to their constituency
- **Consultative Community Meetings:** enabling constituents to pose questions to a panel of CDF decision-makers and CSO representatives about local development
- **Constituency-based Budget Proposals:** empowering constituents to define their own development agenda, make project proposals, and select projects
- **Coordination with Local, Regional, and National Agencies:** forging relationships with government agencies across communities of practice

Indirect participation provides constituents with channels to communicate their priorities and preferences about which projects deserve support. MPs may supervise these consultative bodies, play a central leadership role in them, or select the personnel for the local CDF board. **Consultative community meetings** with constituents can strengthen **responsiveness** and **accountability** of a CDF board.

Establishing **local Constituency/CDF offices** in each constituency can strengthen **transparency** and **oversight** of CDF operations by public information campaigns. Clearly defined rules and procedures allow constituents and CSOs to perform oversight and improve the efficiency of **administration and management**.

**Table 1. Types of CDF participation**

Type of Participation \ CDF Operations	Informal Participation	Indirect Participation and Consultation	Direct Participation
<b>Who is Mobilized</b>	MP supporters, friends, clients	CSOs, constituencies, ordinary citizens	Ordinary constituents
<b>Method of Project Selection</b>	MP discretion	Local CDF boards including MPs, constituents, CSO representatives	Direct selection by constituents
<b>Method of Information Sharing</b>	Informal communication among MP's network of constituents	Town hall meetings with constituents and CDF offices	Deliberative discussion within community assemblies
<b>Amount of Participation</b>	Limited: dependent on outreach activities of individual MPs	Representative: constituent input via representatives on CDF boards	Direct: constituents specify development priorities in assemblies, community meetings
<b>Role of CSOs</b>	Oppositional: perform oversight independent of MPs	Supportive: CSOs sit on local CDF boards, but conduct independent oversight	Facilitative-supportive: CSOs promote and organize community assemblies
<b>Role of Central Gov't</b>	Agencies audit or implement projects	Agencies approve project selections, disburse funding, and perform oversight	Informative: agencies provide budget information to citizen assemblies and work with constituents, CSO on oversight

### Participatory budgeting mechanisms

On the right side of the spectrum are participatory mechanisms that enable direct constituent participation in selecting projects for CDFs. Among these mechanisms are: **community assemblies** to enable constituents to identify local development priorities and articulate individual project proposals. **Deliberative forums** led by **facilitators** who provide information to constituents on the legal and actual possibilities for funds. Constituents participating in deliberative assemblies may also elect **constituent delegates** who become experts in local and national budgeting. Constituent delegates then work with MP staff and facilitators to refine project proposals and present them at community assemblies where participants select projects for funding.

Since constituents are empowered to identify priorities and select projects, these CDF programs guarantee a high degree of **responsiveness** and ensure that project selection is **accountable** and **transparent**. Further, greater participation by constituents in selection of projects for CDFs can lead to increased constituent participation in the implementation and oversight of CDF projects.

# CDF Public Participation Tools

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Below are six tools designed to ensure broad participation in the implementation of CDFs together with MPs. Each section defines the purpose of the tool and makes suggestions for employment of the tool. Appendix A includes templates for using the tools.

## 1. Constituency Needs Assessment

A Constituency Needs Assessment (CNA) can be part of a constituency strategic plan. It gathers information from constituencies to identify needs for local development and service delivery, and to assist in developing projects that address those concerns. A CNA can be performed using multiple methods of assessment, including:

- **Surveys:** posing specific questions to a large number of constituents about local development
- **Focus groups:** meetings with groups of selected constituents about local development
- **Constituent interviews:** enabling constituents to directly inform MP or CDF staff about local development
- **Informal constituent contacts:** reaching out to constituents active in local communities for information about local development

*Suggested Components of a Community Needs Assessment Survey:*

- **Constituent Contacts:** An effective way of learning about development in a constituency is from informal contact with constituents, who express their preferences and priorities for local development. These contacts can also be used to build a list of respondents who may be interested in participating in surveys, focus groups, or interviews.
- **Preliminary Consultation with Local Stakeholders:** Local stakeholders such as CSOs, local elected officials, and community leaders, can provide input into the development of CDF proposals and enhance the legitimacy of the assessment as a basis for decision-making on CDFs.
- **User Friendly Assessment Questions:** Needs assessment questions should be written in simple, easy to understand language. Questions asked in either a survey or a focus group should be composed in the primary language spoken by constituents.
- **Selection of Assessment Methodology:** CDF decision-makers should choose an assessment methodology tailored to the type of constituent information they wish to collect. Surveys

provide decision-makers with a large number of constituent responses and can provide a more comprehensive description of constituents' priorities. On the other hand, focus groups provide more in-depth understanding of how local constituents perceive their community's development needs.

- **Designated Staff to Perform Needs Assessment:** A small number of CDF staff (2-3 persons) should be designated to develop procedures for executing the needs assessment. Staff members with experience in constituency relations and who are familiar with the demographic composition of the constituency can identify a sample of respondents that is representative of the entire population within the constituency. The size of the sample should reflect good practice in statistical sampling. Staff should also possess a basic understanding of quantitative or qualitative research methods in order to analyze survey, focus group, or interview data.

## 2. Public Awareness Campaigns

Public Awareness Campaigns, which are under the overall direction of the MP and/or a parliamentary committee, disseminate knowledge about CDFs in trainings, workshops, and produce outreach materials that build stakeholder understanding of a country's CDF program. Such campaigns inform constituents and stakeholders about the rules and procedures governing CDF operations including project selection, approval, and implementation. Public awareness campaigns can strengthen relationships among stakeholders and increase cooperation between CDF officials and other stakeholders, and give to constituents a greater sense of ownership of CDFs.

*Suggested Components of a Public Awareness Campaign:*

- **Informational Literature and Public Service Announcements:** CDF Campaign organizers should distribute information on the rules and procedures of the country's CDF to the general public. These pamphlets or brochures should describe CDF rules to ensure comprehension by all sectors of the public. It should also include contact information for meetings of local CDF boards or committees to facilitate public participation. CSOs and other officials can also distribute these pamphlets and brochures on CDFs.

Public service announcements can inform the public about CDFs. These are short commercials or advertisements produced and purchased for broadcast in local media and uploaded to institutional web sites to inform the general public about the purpose of a CDF program.

- **Workshop Planning and Agenda:** Workshops can build relationships between MPs, CSO leaders and other elected officials with information to participants on project selection, approval, and implementation to facilitate broadly legitimate participation in CDF programs. Workshop facilitators should also pose questions to participants that enable them to deliberate on their communities' development needs and priorities.
- **Media Contacts:** Public awareness campaigns are strengthened by publicity from local, regional and national media, and web sites that provides constituents with information about CDF programs. MPs and CDF staff should actively reach out to reporters and journalists to keep them informed about the venue and dates of awareness campaign events. Media advisories and

press releases should be regularly provided to reporters and journalists at least one week prior to campaign events.

- **Outreach to CSOs and Local Elected Leaders:** Public awareness campaigns can strengthen relationships among stakeholders, CSO leaders and local government officials. Campaign organizers should invite the relevant local CSO and government officials to campaign events, and publicize this cooperation to demonstrate broad approval of the CDF program.

### 3. Constituency/CDF Offices

A Constituency/CDF Office provides a one-stop clearinghouse for all CDF-related activities and information in a single constituency. It may be necessary to set aside funding for these offices that provide citizens with a space to review potential CDF projects and submit feedback regarding their priorities and preferences.

*Suggested Components of a Constituency/CDF Office:*

- **Constituent Contacts:** Constituency/CDF Offices permit regular contact with constituents that provide MP's with information on the preferences and priorities for development of constituents. Office staff should maintain a database of all constituent requests to the CDF Office, which can serve as a quick and reliable information resource for CDF decision-makers.
- **Office Staff Trained in Constituency Relations:** CDF office staff should have experience in constituency relations, be familiar with the constituency's communities, and understand CDF operations. They should also be trained to develop and maintain a database of constituent preferences and to communicate this information to the MP and CDF board.
- **Official Records of CDF Operations:** CDF offices should maintain multiple copies of official records of CDF operations, which include a list of all selected projects, their locations and implementers, tendering and contracting documents, and comments of constituents on the project or its implementers. Such offices will provide minutes of meetings of local CDF boards or other bodies about decisions concerning CDFs to constituents.
- **Easily Accessible Location and Hours:** CDF offices should be accessible to all constituents and office hours should be scheduled to maintain accessibility during normal business hours.

### 4. Consultative Community Meetings

Community meetings are gatherings that enable MPs, constituents and government officials to identify community needs and develop priorities for local development. They provide opportunities for constituents to consult with MPs and other officials on the use of CDF funds. These meetings also allow MPs to demonstrate their responsiveness to constituents by publicizing recent activities.

### *Suggested Components of a Community Meeting:*

- **Meeting Planning:** the location and format of the community meeting should be publicized well in advance, and invitations containing the agenda should be sent out. Members of a CDF board and other stakeholders should participate in the community meeting. Planners should publicize the meeting in local media and post notices of the meeting throughout the constituency.
- **Outreach to CSOs, local elected leaders, CDF decision-makers:** Meeting planners should reach out to CSOs and government officials to encourage their participation. Advanced coordination will improve prospects for a successful public, community meeting.
- **Agenda and Format:** The meeting agenda should be publicized in advance and distributed at the meeting. The MP or her/his representative can make a brief opening statement about recent development initiatives in the constituency. Constituents may then address comments and/or questions to the panel for brief responses. At the end of this dialogue, the MP and panelists can conclude by summarizing what was discussed at the meeting.
- **Meeting Organization and Follow-up:** The meeting should take place in an orderly fashion: *moderators* from local CSOs or interested constituents can help to manage the meeting to ensure that it maintains a tone of civil dialogue. Organizers can reach out to local police for security. Other *staffers* should maintain a record of the community meeting (either audio, video, or a written record) for the MP, the CDF local board and that is publically available.

## 5. Constituency-based Budget Proposals

Participatory budgeting mechanisms confer some direct decision-making authority to constituents in the use of CDFs. They are based around citizen assemblies that enable constituents to identify development priorities and select projects to be funded by a CDF. MPs, CDF Board staffers and CSOs can facilitate participation and assist constituents to make decisions that address needs in constituencies. These constituency based budget proposals can demonstrate the manner in which CDFs can contribute to developmental synergies between local and national initiatives in service delivery in constituencies.

### *Suggested Components of Participatory Community Assemblies:*

- **Formation of Steering Board:** A steering board helps to establish and organize community assemblies. They are composed of the MP, CSO representatives, and other constituency stakeholders. The steering board determines when and where to hold citizen assemblies to guarantee to all constituents the opportunity to participate in assemblies. The board typically addresses questions or comments about community assemblies and informs the public about the purpose, time, and place of the assemblies.
- **Trained Assembly Facilitators:** Trained facilitators enhance prospects for successful participatory assemblies. Facilitators guide discussion among constituents to identify problems and propose practical solutions. Facilitators must also ensure that all participants have an opportunity to speak during the assembly, especially those participants from marginalized and

dispossessed groups, and members of the opposition who may otherwise lack opportunities for participation.

- **Trained Budget Delegates:** Budget delegates are constituents who volunteer at the initial community assembly to develop expertise on a development sector that identified as a priority, refine initial project proposals to ensure compatibility with existing capacities and budgetary rules, and inform other constituents about existing CDF proposals.
- **Publicly Accessible Information:** The Steering Board will provide constituents with up-to-date data about local economic growth, poverty, health, and education, as well as on service delivery in these areas. This information should be made available by facilitators and CDF staff in formats that are accessible to all citizens, regardless of language, and in both hard and soft copies.

### *Proposed Timeline for Community-based Budgeting Proposal Process*

Community-based Budget Proposals are developed in a series of events and meetings. It begins with initial deliberative community assemblies and results in project proposals selected by direct constituency voting. The community-based budgeting timeline should provide sufficient time to develop alternative proposals: below is a five-month process of decision making on project selection. This time line can vary according to national legislation and in a manner that is in harmony with national budget cycles.

#### Month 1: Steering Board Formation

Local stakeholders (MPs, CSOs, government officials) meet and plan the logistics of the community-based budget process. The Steering Board should select accessible locations for community assemblies, designate facilitators and budget delegate trainers among CDF staff, and determine what technical information will enable constituents to develop initial project proposals.

#### Month 2: Community Assemblies

Constituents meet to discuss development priorities in their constituencies. These discussions specify current shortcomings in service delivery and development, and identify potential project proposals.

#### Month 3: Delegate Meetings

Individuals who have been selected as delegates at community assemblies will meet with facilitators and CDF staff to refine proposals according to pending legal regulations and existing infrastructure capacity.

#### Month 4: 2<sup>nd</sup> Community Assemblies

Budget delegates present refined project proposals to community assemblies to solicit feedback. Constituents deliberate about which proposals are most needed.

#### Month 5: Project Selection and Voting

Constituents vote on projects to receive funding, which will then be implemented through the CDF.

## 6. Coordination with Local, Regional, and National Agencies

Communication across government agencies is an important guarantee that CDF projects improve local development and service delivery, and that CDF projects are coordinated with parallel development initiatives of other government agencies. Officials from other agencies can provide technical expertise on development issues, and assist CDF decision-makers to anticipate likely costs and implementation problems of potential CDF projects.

- **Identifying Policy Communities:** A Policy Community is a network of officials involved in a specific area of service delivery or governmental operations who share a common definition of the issues at hand. CDF decision-makers should consult with officials across the policy community to ensure that the selection and implementation of projects are consistent with existing regulations and operational standards. Coordination with local and national ministerial officials throughout project selection and implementation will increase the likelihood of smooth CDF operations.
- **Coordination Mechanisms:** communication across the diverse policy community of government, parastatal agencies and CSOs will enhance prospects for effective decisions on CDFs that are consistent with national and local development priorities. These individuals should also participate in community meetings, public awareness campaigns, and other activities.
- **Periodic Meetings:** MPs, CDF staff, local government staff and agency staff should meet regularly to coordinate CDF operations with those of line ministries. Meetings should have an agreed-upon agenda that evaluates past developments and upcoming planning associated with CDFs. A record of the meetings should be maintained and distributed among the participants in the meetings.
- **Opportunities for Learning, Innovation, and Adaptation:** Coordination within policy communities on specific issues addressed by CDFs will enable MPs, local officials and ministerial officials to develop new and more effective approaches to development challenges in constituencies. Routine coordination with other agencies thereby enables CDF decision-makers to transform country-wide development practices and accelerate the development of each individual constituency.