

Digital Participation

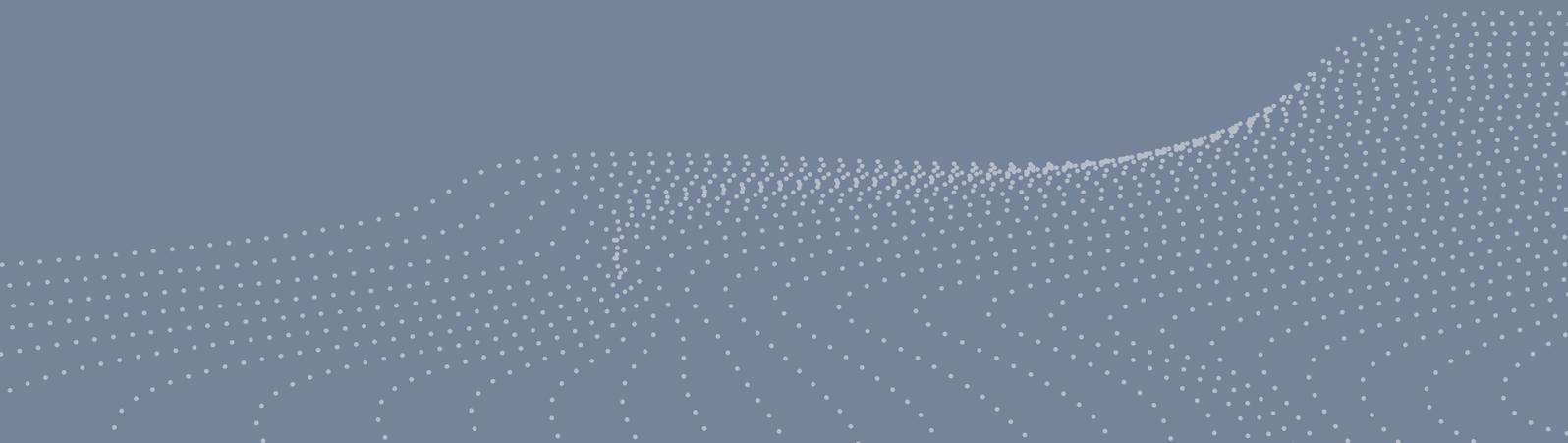
Specialist Booklet

2022-2023

Contents



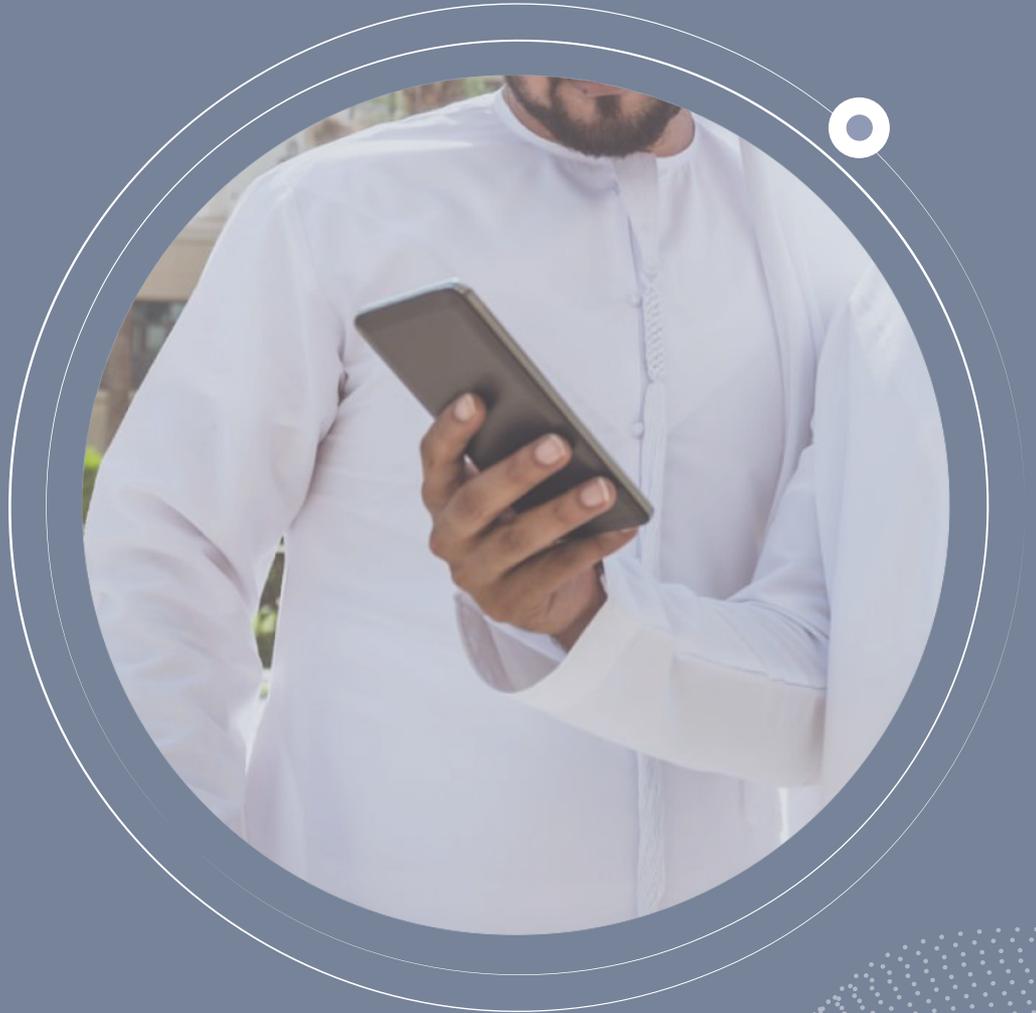
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Introduction

As a part of its commitment to lead the UAE Government's digital presence, the Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority (TDRA) released this booklet as a reference on digital participation for digital participation coordinators in the UAE federal and local government entities.

The booklet aims to inspire and enable UAE government entities to innovate and enhance the digital participation practices.



Terms and concepts



Term	Definition
The national participation platform – Sharik.a	A central platform for digital participation through which government entities engage their customers to discuss topics of interest and make decisions for the benefit of all.
Crowdsourcing	Crowdsourcing means involvement of a group of people to achieve common goals usually related to innovation, problem-solving and efficiency. Crowdsourcing technique employs modern technologies, social media channels and the web to achieve its goals.
International standards or requirements	Requirements launched by the United Nations to annually assess countries at the global level in the field of digital participation.
Digital blog	One of the digital participation channels, through which a government official presents a summary of a new and useful idea or a set of ideas through an article summarizing his/her experiences or knowledge on a particular topic.
Publisher	The writer of an article or a blog.
Digital consultation	Government entities raise a topic to collect as many opinions as possible, and then analyze those opinions and use them as data to make decisions of interest to customers, thus contributing to enhancement of their satisfaction and happiness.
Brainstorming	A group creativity technique by which a group of people tries to find a solution for a problem by gathering a list of ideas spontaneously generated by its members.
Consultation topic	A topic raised by the entity as consultation to gather opinions of the public and take a decision on it.
Consultation objective	The entity's objective in raising the consultation.
Decision-making	After studying the public's opinion, the entity makes the decision for the benefit of all.
Current consultation	Digital consultation on Sharik platform that is still open for receiving public opinion through a survey link.

Terms and concepts



Term	Definition
Future consultation	Digital consultation on Sharik platform that only provides information to the public and still not open for receiving the public opinion.
Past consultation	Digital consultation on Sharik platform that shows the results of the consultation but is closed for public participation.
Storytelling	A literary art that has evolved with time and appears in a variety of forms: illustrative, oral, and written.
mSurvey	A digital participation channel provided by the UAE Digital Government to government entities to facilitate consultations.
Polls	A digital participation channel that facilitates posting multiple-choice questions to the public on certain topics.
Social media channels	Platforms through which individuals and entities engage and interact. They include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.
Digital interaction	Expressing opinion on a specific topic via a digital channel or platform. It includes likes, retweeting, and comments.
Digital content	Visual or written materials posted on a website or a mobile application.
Public engagement	Raising a specific topic and opening the door for the public to give their opinion about it.
Digital participation channels	Multiple channels to raise different topics and receive the public opinion on them.
Discussion forum	A digital participation channel to raise various topics in various fields and engage all public segments.
Digital participation guidelines	A reference approved by an official entity to identify terms and standards that must be followed in digital participation.
Digital participation policy	The entity's approach in applying digital participation.
Digital participation team	A group of members nominated by government entities to implement the digital participation standard.

Participation

means customers participation in topics raised by the government to develop and improve the policies and services it provides. Through participation, members of the community can express their opinions on a specific topic, and the government ultimately takes the decisions for the benefit of all.



Electronic/digital participation

Promoting civic participation through ICTs to enhance cooperation between governments and citizens aimed at accessing public information and services, as well as promoting participation in making policies related to services, utilities and projects to maximize the benefits of citizens and society as a whole.

Participation



Public participation

Refers to the engagement of the public, via digital and non-digital channels, in various levels of the government decision-making process, policy development, and public services design and delivery.

Public participation in the UAE

The UAE ensures participatory, inclusive, and deliberative decision-making at all levels.

[Read more](#)



Classification of digital participation

According to the stages of the UN Model

E-Information

E-Consultation

E-Decision
-making



Practices and tools for the Provision of Information



E-information:

It enables the citizen to know all available information about a particular subject by making all the required information available.

Practices and tools	Description	Offline	Online
Public meetings	Public meetings are a way to bring diverse stakeholders together for a specific purpose. They can also be a way to increase awareness about an issue or proposal, and can further encourage public participation.		
Open data	It is data that anyone can access, use, and share by attributing to the source. It is also made available in a common machine-readable format.		
Press and media	All major media sources, from which people get news. It includes magazines, newspapers, social media, TV, and radio,.		
Website	It is a collection of publicly accessible web pages under a single domain name. It contains information under a specific theme.		
Newsletters	A newsletter is a tool to directly communicate with subscribers usually through email. It is composed of texts, pictures and video files. It generally covers one main topic of interest for the subscribers.		
Social Media	Social media, such as Twitter, WhatsApp, and Facebook, allows for the use of a wide variety of media formats, including video and voice recordings, to reach more people. They also allow participants to share and obtain information in a low-cost and quick manner.		
Information Kiosks	Kiosks offer menus for interaction between a user and a computer. They provide information through a presentation that invites users to ask questions or direct the flow of information.		

Practices and tools for Consultation



E- Consultation:

Allowing citizens to participate in consultations on decisions related to public policies and services.

Practices and tools	Description	Offline	Online
Ideation tools	Brainstorming is the process of engaging the right people to generate ideas and solutions. Some of the useful tools for this collaborative process include brainstorming cards, post-its, sketching cards, etc.		
Consultation on draft policies	A draft policy document is made available for public comments, feedback, and assessment before it is finalized. This is a way to engage stakeholders in the policy formulation process.		
Participatory planning	Participatory planning is a process by which a community diagnoses the problems it faces and maps out a course of action to work on them. It is a way to achieve specific socio-economic goals through community involvement.		

Practices and tools for Collaboration and Empowerment



E-Decision-making:

Involving citizens in developing public policies and services.

Practices and tools	Description	Offline	Online
e-Voting & m-Voting	Electronic voting refers to voting that uses electronic means for casting and counting votes. Mobile voting refers to the usage of mobile devices by voters to easily and conveniently cast their votes.		
Participatory budgeting	Participatory budgeting is a process of deliberation and decision-making, in which the public decides how to allocate the budget.		
Citizens' initiatives	Citizen initiatives are a mechanism by which citizens can propose legal measures to be adopted if enough people pledge support for the proposal. The proposed measure is then approved by another vote.		
Hackathon	A hackathon is any event of any duration where people come together to solve problems. It is usually structured in a design sprint-like event, in which computer programmers, graphic designers, interface designers, project managers, domain experts, and others collaborate intensively to work on certain projects.		
Innovation competitions	An innovation competition is a form of social engineering, which focuses on the creation and elaboration of the best sustainable ideas that come from some of the top innovators in the community.		
Crowdsourcing	Crowdsourcing refers to the practice of engaging a group of people to achieve a common goal, which is often related to innovation, problem-solving, or efficiency. It is powered by new technologies, social media and web 2.0.		

Participation tools

There are several examples of participation tools:

- ▶ Hackathon
- ▶ Social media
- ▶ Government blog
- ▶ Interactive lab
- ▶ Live chat channels
- ▶ Suggestions and complaints channels
- ▶ Applications
- ▶ Live labs
- ▶ Crowdsourcing

Participation tools in the UAE

- ▶ [UAE Hackathon](#)
- ▶ [The Community Design platform for Wellbeing](#)
- ▶ [2017 Moonshot Apprenticeship Program](#)
- ▶ [Emirati Children's Parliament](#)
- ▶ [Training courses on digital participation](#)

Principles of public participation

1 Demonstrate the characteristics of the Emirati personality

2 Promote innovation and creativity
Innovation is a part of the UAE's National Agenda, and you should design your public participation plans to contribute to this agenda. Please see innovation international practices in public participation.

3 Embrace and encourage collaboration
Collaborating with government entities and stakeholders can lead to more public participation initiatives.

4 Be People-centric
Public participation, ultimately, boils down to the people in the country and their involvement in the way the entity decides on the various aspects of their lives.

5 Be inclusive and reflect the diversity
Since the UAE is a highly diverse country, it is pertinent to embrace this diversity in public participation activities.

6 Promote openness and transparency
A commitment to openness and transparency is essential to further boost the public trust in the public participation activities run by government entities and to encourage more active and genuine engagement.

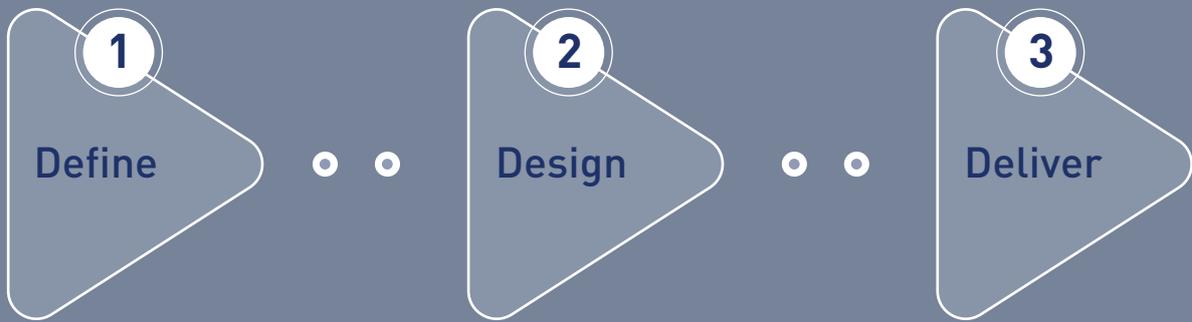
7 Be intentional and plan well
The planning stage of any public participation practice should be through well in advance to prepare ahead for any circumstances that may arise



Public participation campaigns framework

The Six-Steps Framework for public Participation Campaigne

Monitoring and Assessment



Monitoring and Assessment

In parallel with the progress in carrying out the six stages of the framework, the public participation team should always monitor and assess the level of success in carrying out each stage. In the need for intervention to change the direction of the campaign or introduce a change, the team should act quickly and leverage the agile design of the campaign referred to above.

Public participation campaigns framework



Step 1: Define

In this step, your aim is to define the Campaign Brief document which covers the campaign's goals, target audience, budget among other elements.

- Define smart objectives for this public participation campaign, and make sure these objectives are aligned with the public participation strategy.
- Identify which segment(s) of the public you will target to engage in this campaign, and invest in thoroughly analyzing and understanding their motivations and incentives to engage with your entity in this campaign.
- Identify potential partners and stakeholders from inside and outside the public sector and define their roles and possible contribution in this campaign.
- Identify accurately the campaign scope, timeline and budget.

Step 2: Design

In this step, you use the Campaign Brief document from the previous step to design the most innovative and appropriate process for delivering the campaign.

- Identify the appropriate set of public participation practices and methods that can be effective in achieving the goals of the campaign.
- Identify the appropriate mix of digital tools to help you deliver the digital part of your campaign to enable and complement the defined practices and methods.
- Decide on the best mechanisms to identify and invite participants from within the target audience you have identified in the first step. See the following table for more guidance on this point.

Public participation campaigns framework



Methods for reaching out to potential participants

Method	Description
Broadcast	Promoting your campaign to your target audience through online and offline communication and marketing channels.
Social Networks	Using stakeholder analysis and network analysis to identify stakeholders and attract participants through physical and online social networks. This is also useful for enhancing representation or targeting of specific stakeholder groups as they are more likely to be affected by the proposed changes.
Random selection	Identifying the demographics of your target audience, and inviting a demographically representative sample to participate.

- ▶ ● Decide on how the input of the campaign will be reviewed and analyzed.
- ▶ ● Decide on how the final decision concerning the subject of the campaign will be taken.
- ▶ ● Decide on how the result of the campaign will be implemented and communicated back to the participants and other stakeholders.
- ▶ ● Brainstorming sessions with a variety of stakeholders from inside and outside the government entity help in developing a more creative campaign design.
- ▶ ● Use an agile approach while designing the campaign; this will subsequently help in the successful implementation of the campaign.

Public participation campaigns framework

Step 3: Deliver



Launching and delivering the public participation campaign through the designated methods, tools and channels.



The result of the campaign (e.g. public feedback on the consultation) is captured and documented in the Campaign Report document.



Public participation campaigns framework



Accessibility challenges and other factors to consider when running participation events.

Factor	Online Events	Offline Events
The venue is accessible for people using wheelchairs	N/A	Yes
Other accessibility needs are arranged for people of determination	Yes	Yes
Live interpretation	If members of the audience don't speak the language of all or part of the event	
Sign language	Yes	Yes
Dietary requirements for participants	No	Yes



Public participation campaigns framework

Step 4: Analyze

In this step, the entity should review the Campaign Report to analyze the input collected from participants in the campaign and also assess the campaign performance.



Collect all the data and information provided by the public and other stakeholders throughout the campaign in one central place.



Thoroughly analyze this data and information and generate insights and recommendations that can contribute to the goal of the campaign.



Run an internal assessment for the campaign and capture the key lessons learned and how future campaigns can be improved.



The public should have the opportunity to provide feedback on the campaign management itself.



Apply the results generated from the previous step in your decision making process and fulfill the goal of the campaign.



It's essential for the campaign output to be fed back into the entity's decision making process and contribute in one way or another to the announced goal of the campaign. Otherwise, the campaign loses its value.



Communicate the outcome of the public participation campaign to participants and contributors.



Ensure that the entire campaign experience is documented using suitable media and shared with the public through the entity's public participation platform.

Public participation campaigns framework

Step 5: Apply



Apply the results generated from the previous step in your decision making process and fulfill the goal of the campaign.

It's essential for the campaign output to be fed back into the entity's decision-making process and contribute in one way or another to the announced goal of the campaign. Otherwise, the campaign loses its value.



Public participation campaigns framework

Step 6: Announce



Communicate back the result of the public participation campaign to those who participated in it and contributed to it.



Your communication should explain how the output of the campaign was reached.



Your communication should also include all partners and other stakeholders of the campaign.



Consider using the same online and offline channels which were used for the phase of participation to collect the opinions of the public.



It's a good practice to express your gratitude to the public and all parties involved in the campaign.



Ensure you document the entire campaign experience in suitable media formats, and share it with the public on the entity's public participation platform.

Public participation campaigns framework

Step 7: Publicize

The publicity process aims to enhance of the digital participation culture and awareness of the government in this concern. It highlights digital participation activities to enhance the UAE's ranking in related indices. This step involves the following points:

- 1**
Press release
Publish a press release if the consultation topic is of significant importance to the public.
- 2**
Social media
Publish on social media using images, graphics, and videos as per the case.
- 3**
Document
Document the whole participation process on the website and sharing its link on social media channels.
- 4**
Events & explain
Hold events and explain actions taken regarding digital participation to encourage other parties to apply digital participation.
- 5**
Publish reports
Publish reports and press kits related to digital participation in global languages.

List of features of the public participation platform or section

#	Feature	Description
1	Open ideas and proposals	A space for the public to submit proposals to improve the services or policies provided by the entity. The proposals should be open for the public to discuss and vote on them.
2	Official blog	A space for officially communicating information, articles and other updates by a government official.
3	Digital Public consultation	Consultation on the entity's policies as per the official criteria issued by TDRA.
4	e-Decision Making	Engaging the public in the decision making process as per the official criteria issued by TDRA.
5	Voting	The public can vote on the ideas and proposals on the portal, whether initiated by the public or the entity.
6	Polls	A multiple choice question to gauge the public preference on certain issues related to the entity's services and policies.
7	Collaborative legislation	Where possible and applicable, the entity can engage the public in the process of preparing new legislations or updating current ones.
8	Participatory budgeting	Where possible and applicable, the public can participate in deciding how part of the entity's budget should be spent.
9	Archive	The public can access the entire history of all participation campaigns and activities.
10	Success stories	Select campaigns should be featured as success stories to demonstrate the value of public participation and further encourage the public to stay engaged.
11	Public participation policy/charter and moderation policy	As per the official criteria issued by TDRA.
12	Moderation Options	The platform should offer the entity options to moderate the contributions of the public.

List of features of the public participation platform or section

The public participation platform should be used and maintained as the central hub for launching all public participation campaigns and activities. This includes e-Participation campaigns and other campaigns that don't solely rely on digital channels or tools.

- ▶ The platform and its content should be bilingual (Arabic and English) unless the target audience has different preferences.
- ▶ The visitors of the public participation platform should easily access key resources such as the public participation strategy, and the contact details of key people in charge of it.
- ▶ The public participation platform should provide online information on policies and budgets in the core business domain of the government entity such as education, health and environment.
- ▶ The public participation platform should be linked to the open data page or platform where visitors can have access to open data about the entity's core business and the topics of its public participation campaigns and activities. This should help the audience participation be better informed and more evidence-based.
- ▶ The public participation section or platform should offer its visitors a calendar of all previous and upcoming public participation activities.
- ▶ The public participation section or platform should be connected to the entity's social media channels to reach wider audiences and offer them timely updates.
- ▶ The public participation section or platform should highlight how the federal government entities can benefit from the national platform Sharik and its tools in their practices.

List of features of the public participation platform or section

- ▶ Using digital solutions that are specialized in enabling e-Participation platforms, this should make it easier for the team to manage it, increase the return on investment and enable adoption of trendy practices.
- ▶ It should offer the visitors the option to provide feedback about the platform itself and all other digital and non-digital channels of communications related to public participation activities.
- ▶ It should have a dedicated section to enable visitors to file complaints about the entity's services.
- ▶ The public participation section or platform should offer the audience the option to report corruption by the entity or its employees.
- ▶ It should provide the results and notifications of public tenders and procurements run by the entity.

Competencies of the digital interaction specialist

Knowledge

- He/she must have sufficient knowledge of the importance of digital interaction and how to encourage the public to participate in surveys and polls.

Ability

- He/she must have the ability to identify and propose new topics of interest to members of the community and discuss them with the internal departments in the entity.

Experience

- He/she must have the ability and experience to draft and review digital content in Arabic and English, including storytelling.

Present

- He/she must have sufficient knowledge of how to present the topic of consultations in an innovative way (photos, videos, infographics, etc.) and promote it on social media platforms in a way that attracts the audience to the topics and encourages them to interact.

Analyzing

- He/she must have sufficient experience in analyzing audience opinions and publishing the results on participation platforms (e.g. the National Digital Participation Platform).

Competencies of the digital interaction specialist

Following up

- Following up on the public's comments on the published posts and following up with the entity's officials in this regards.

Practices

- He/she must have knowledge of international practices and requirements in the field of digital participation.

Communication

- He/she must maintain constructive communication with the enabling entity in the field of digital participation through the available communication channels (e-mail, call, WhatsApp group, meetings, training workshops, etc.)

Useful links

- [Crowdsourcing](#)
- [UAE Hackathon](#)
- [Digital Participation Criteria](#)
- [The UAE's rank in the e-Participation Index \(EPI\) according to the UN E-Government Survey 2020](#)
- [Digital Participation Policy](#)
- [The characteristics of the Emirati personality on Social Media](#)
- [The UN E-Government Survey](#)

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