



INNOVATION PROJECT 5: E-PARTICIPATION AND POLICY MODELLING PLATFORM FOR MUNICIPALITIES

Viability and Validation of Innovation for Service Delivery Programme

1. Introduction

South Africa faces significant socio-economic challenges. It needs equitable access to basic services; equitable participation in the economy and equitable access to appropriate infrastructure to support economic activities. The 2019 White Paper on Science, Technology and Innovation sets the long-term policy direction for the South African government to ensure a growing role for science, technology and innovation (STI) in a more prosperous and inclusive society. It focuses on using STI to accelerate inclusive economic growth, make the economy more competitive, and improve people's daily lives. In order to achieve this, the national system of innovation needs to be more inclusive and focus on more active participation and collaboration with a wider set of actors, including municipalities.

The endemic nature of poverty and inequality in South Africa demands that government constantly seek innovative approaches to respond to service delivery challenges and do things differently. There is a prominent role for science, technology and innovation to generate novel solutions; whether they involve technologies that can directly and significantly improve the quality of people's lives, or new innovative methodologies for examining and planning policies and delivery of basic services. Most significantly, STI-based value-adding interventions can open new economic opportunities, create jobs, develop skills, improve local government capacity and decision-making, and help realise the vision of a capable state and local governments through innovation.

2. Context and background

E-participation is about fostering civic engagement and open, participatory governance through information and communication technologies. Growing evidence points to the rapid expansion of e-participation as a tool for engagement and strengthened collaboration between governments and citizens. E-participation should improve access to information and public services, and promote participation in policy making, for the empowerment of individual citizens and the benefit of society.

3. Project objective

The objective of Project 5 is the development, testing and piloting of an e-participation and public policy modelling platform for local government to enable open collaboration in modelling public policies.

4. Typical project activities related to Project 5

The municipalities selected to participate in Project 5 will be required to work on the project with an implementing agency. The municipality will need to have well established public participation policies, programmes and initiatives. This project will explore the use of ICT tools to modernise and digitise existing municipal public participation programmes. The municipality's response to the call for expressions of interest should outline public participation challenges, existing policy formulation processes and existing public participation programmes that could benefit from e-participation and policy modelling ICT tools. Municipalities selected for this project will be expected to present these challenges and municipal public participation processes at a workshop with implementing entities for Project 5.

The typical project activities to be undertaken by the municipalities and implementing agencies for Project 5 are the following:

- Identifying and analysing existing international case studies and similar flagship projects around the world.
- Conducting literature studies on a number of well-known books, scientific journals and publications on the topic of e-participation and policy modelling.
- Researching and analysing existing local government and country-specific e-participation niches, and producing a report on their application and capability.
- Identifying international lighthouse projects in the EU Framework programme that could serve as a lighthouse project and conclude collaboration agreement.
- Selecting appropriate public participation structures for piloting.
- Conceptualising an e-participation and policy modelling platform, analysing user requirements, developing specifications, and designing and developing the platform.
- Establishing an e-participation community of practice under the relevant national forum for e-participation and policy modelling, and undertake scientific exchange and study visits.
- Piloting the e-participation platform in the municipal environment and making conference presentations, publishing scientific papers and participating in policy dialogues.

5. Expected project outputs

- International case study report.
- Literature review report.
- Country e-participation niches report.
- Collaboration agreement with e-participation and policy modelling lighthouse project.
- Piloting agreement with beneficiary municipalities.
- Concept design and system requirements for the e-participation and policy modelling platform.

- E-participation and policy modelling community of practice.
- E-participation and policy modelling exchange visits report and research papers and policy briefs.
- Municipal e-participation and policy modelling pilot report.

6. Output indicators

- E-participation platform researched.
- E-participation and policy modelling platform lighthouse project followed and memorandum of understanding on collaboration concluded.
- E-participation and policy modelling community of researchers and stakeholders established.
- Scientific research papers and policy briefs, and reports on exchange visits.

7. Expected project outcome

Improved policy-making processes using scientific evidence-based solutions to influence policy design, development and decision-making through e-participation and a crowd intelligence-based policy modelling platform. A typical indicator would be capability for e-participation and policy modelling developed with one pilot municipality and a development of a research/community of practice in this area.

8. Key result areas

The DSI will be working with the selected municipalities, technology developers and the implementing agency to track and report on the following programme key result areas:

- Number of additions to the DSI portfolio of STI-based methodologies, models or tools available for use by municipal governments for planning and/or service delivery.
- Number of use cases by municipalities of STI-based methodologies, models or tools developed to support planning and/or service delivery.