FORUM
PROCESS
MODERATOR'S GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION

The **FORUM** is a broad participatory process on common problems and joint solutions, discussed and worked on over a prolonged period. Discussion is between interest groups relevant in the particular setting, it is public and all actions derived from it are reported on explicitly. The session cycle results in recommendations, or in coherent plans, or – with a fund – in tangible projects implemented by groups of participants.

A Forum at community level may include up to ten interest groups of several persons each. With guests, media and experts attending this is a large audience.

Deliberations during sessions and in-between session activities are facilitated by an outside Forum **moderator**. The moderator is instrumental in maintaining a fair, objective and transparent Forum activity, from selection of participants to the handling of discussions, to intensive between-session work, to project prioritization and follow-up sessions on project results.

Responsibility for Forum process management as an organizational framework lies with a Forum **coordinator**. The coordinator is answerable for the timely handling of logistics, infrastructure, communication flows, securing of expertise and training, process and project monitoring and controlling.
Yet the first idea to have a Forum, the "vision" so to say comes from a person closely engaged in societal matters. This is the **initiator**, as a person or an institution, who submits the overall concept of a Forum in terms of location, theme and participants.

The Forum initiator as a rule will need the support of coordinator and moderator, as the process is substantial and prolonged. The arrangement of such support and the opening of sources for support and (partial) project funding are the central tasks of the Forum initiator who – having provided for the realization of the vision – retreats to the position of an interested observer.

The Forum process is designed to complement existing political structures, enriching them with bottom-up contributions and broad involvement of citizens and civil organizations. If the immediate outcome of a Forum process is tangible projects and targeted recommendations, the overall impact is a changed attitude and heightened interest of participants in public affairs. Improved governance quality may be the overall outcome of a Forum.

The standard form of a community Forum aiming at tangible projects has become decidedly popular (in a Swiss program in Bulgaria 2000–2007). The Forum as an instrument can be adapted to regional and even national settings. Institutionalized forms of Forums e.g. in annual municipal budget discussions, or the sustained handling of a community fund, would be instrumental in decentralization policies. There is no end to the way the Forum format can be varied. As long as its results are of active concern to the participants, the Forum remains an instrument to generate creative consensus.

Table 1 below shows the distribution of roles and responsibilities of the main protagonists within a Forum.

The Forum Process Moderators' Guide focuses on the specific requirements of *Forum process moderation*, which has all the characteristics of a large group process. As such it is closely linked and complementary to the manual developed by Ernst Bolliger and Tonino Zellweger of AGRIDEA Switzerland – *The art of making your meetings and workshops purposeful and time-efficient* (ISBN 978-3-906776-12-5), where the dos and don'ts in facilitation techniques are explained in a general, comprehensive and systematic way.

It is advisable for a potential moderator of a Forum to carefully read the companion publications of this manual, the Initiator's Guide and the Coordinator's Guide in order to be well acquainted with the process of Forum design and Forum management.

Acronyms & Abbreviations:

FP	Forum participants
OG	Operative group
OHP	Overhead projector
PC	Project committee
PR	Public relations
Q&A	Questions and answers
SO	Forum outline
ToR	Terms of reference
WG	Working group

Table 1 Forum process implementation sequence: roles and responsibilities

ACTIVITIES	INITIATOR	COORDINATOR	MODERATOR
Forum process preparation			
Forum outline (FO) & draft budget			
Securing sources of financing			
Identification & appointment of coordinator			
Review & finalization of FO + Budget (including project funds, if needed)			
Appointment of moderator		(contract)	
Define/ derive stakeholder groups			
Public outreach/ Media			
Survey on public/community needs (if required)			
Public information meeting			
Appointment of Co-moderator		(contract)	
Identification of members of OG			
Meetings with stakeholder groups to finalize selection of Forum participants			
Selection of Forum venue			
Official invitation sent to Forum participants		(sending)	

color key	assistance/advice	executive responsibility

Table 1 Forum process implementation sequence: roles and responsibilities (contd.)

ACTIVITIES	INITIATOR	COORDINATOR	MODERATOR
Managing Forum sessions and in-between activities			
Preparation of the Forum session		technical	
Running the Forum session			
In-between session operations & support			(+ OG)
Forum newsletter & media			(member of the OG)
Minutes & reporting materials			(member of the OG)
Capacity building & training			
Expert support		search&contract	(content)

ACTIVITIES	INITIATOR	COORDINATOR	MODERATOR
Managing Forum results			
Implementation monitoring (recommendations, projects, policies)			
Preparation for feedback session			
Final report			
Final assessment			

color key	assistance/advice	executive responsibility

A Forum brings together sixty to one hundred people, representing different stakeholder groups, for a limited although sometimes prolonged period. Participants debate an issue of interest to all; but contrary to other participatory processes they discuss not as individuals, but as members of their group. They meet in public sessions facilitated by a moderator, each voice has the same weight, procedures are transparent, decisions democratic and results are accounted for (Guide for Initiators).

Even the most general description of a Forum as a sizeable process makes it obvious that the moderator must play an essential role – structuring the debate, facilitating discussions so that each voice is heard, consolidating different views and ideas and reaching a consensus for measurable results. The moderator is the person responsible for the quality of the Forum process. Once appointed, he or she takes the lead in choosing the appropriate participants, in making sure that disadvantaged and ethnic groups are not left out, in preparing each Forum session and planning and managing the work between the sessions. He/she has to rely on different sources of information to become acquainted with the characteristics of the place in which the Forum is held and the background of the Forum topic and to be clear about the expected Forum results, agreed with the initiator and the coordinator. The moderator is "the master" of the Forum sessions and he/she designs the session scenarios according to the participants, expected results and the timeframe of the Forum process.

The moderator is the most public figure in the process, always "in the spotlight", armed with different facilitation techniques to be used accordingly. He/she should therefore be an outsider as far as the place where the Forum is to be held is concerned or at least have enough distance to treat participants equally and in a neutral way. It is advisable for the moderator to have some training in

advance to acquire adequate knowledge, skills and behaviour for neutral facilitation. It would be an advantage for the moderator to make the effort to get acquainted with and have a broader understanding of the Forum topic and to get used to the specific terminology. This will enable him/her to better paraphrase, ask questions, formulate theses and lead the discussions.

The moderator must have excellent communication skills and organizational capacity, an audible voice and clear articulation, be able to listen, and have self-confidence and professional commitment to the process so as to be respected by the initiator, coordinator, local authorities and Forum participants.

Personal characteristics of a Moderator:

- self-control/calmness
- self-confidence
- analytical capacity
- neutral
- open-minded
- polite
- neat appearance
- controlled body language
- moderate
- operational
- smiling

Once the Forum outline has been written, the budget has been elaborated and the funding sources are clear, the Forum initiator and the coordinator choose a moderator. His/her direct involvement in the Forum process can be divided into four phases: Forum inception, Forum session preparation, Forum moderation and Forum follow-up.

1 FORUM INCEPTION

The activities to be conducted before the start of the sessions are: (1) first meetings with the initiator, coordinator and representatives of basic stakeholder groups, (2) public information meeting, (3) selection of co-moderator, (4) selection of operative group, (5) meetings with stakeholder groups to identify their representatives, (6) selection of Forum venue and (7) official invitation to Forum participants.

1.1 First meetings with the initiator, coordinator and representatives of basic stakeholder groups

Once the moderator is selected and invited to moderate the Forum, he/she signs a contract with the coordinator with detailed ToR and time allocation. Usually the moderator needs two to three visits to the place where the Forum is to be held to conduct preparatory meetings before the start of the process. The most important one is with the initiator and local authorities, if the initiator is not the local authority. Mutual agreement needs to be reached on the main goal, the type of results, the process, the coverage, the timeframe and the participants of the Forum.

The local authority should agree that they will respect and take into consideration the results and outcomes of the Forum process and assist the Forum with information and expertise when needed. The local authority should agree in advance how they will treat the Forum recommendations and what financial procedures will be used for the municipal financial contribution.

The Moderator:

- Supported by the coordinator, meets representatives of the main stakeholder groups to get acquainted with the Forum topic, public expectations, the potential for local expertise and possible additional stakeholder groups not identified in the Forum outline by the Initiator;
- Is aware that these initial steps are very important and if neglected can put the whole process at risk;
- Contributes to raising awareness of the media to the Forum process and the expected results.

1.2 Public Information Meeting (Information Session)

The first event to be organized and facilitated by the moderator before the Forum takes place is the so-called Public Information meeting. The goal of this meeting is to inform all citizens about the forthcoming Forum and to motivate them to participate in the Forum process. The key message of the meeting should be *"the citizens have the say when solving common problems or planning community future, and their opinion counts"*. The local authorities are ready to listen and support citizens' initiatives. They rely on the experience, commitment and creativity of all stakeholders. All participants will be equal in the process, no matter what their ethnic, professional or political background is.

A public campaign involving the media needs to be organized before and after the Information meeting, so that all interested groups or individuals are apprised

of the opportunity to participate in the Forum process.

The Moderator:

- Discusses together with the coordinator and the initiator the most appropriate time for the public information meeting (usually the meeting takes no more than two hours). A sample agenda for the meeting is in Attachment 1. The date, venue, and the time of the meeting are coordinated with the initiator and the local authority (mayor and city council chair) since their presence at the meeting is crucial;
- Helps with the preparation of the inputs needed – a general presentation focused on the Forum outline (topic, goals, objectives, expected results, timeframe, budget, etc.) and a presentation of the Forum process (specifics, individual involvement as Forum participant, public outreach). If a survey on community needs has been made, this could be presented to make the presentation more convincing;
- Facilitates the information meeting and respects the time schedule of the meeting and demonstrates facilitation capacity - "There is no second chance for a first impression" (The information meeting sets the standard of behaviour of the moderator and of the participants);
- Provides information for the media, if needed;
- Makes sure that all the equipment needed is available (a beamer, a flipchart, an overhead projector, a laptop, etc.);
- Makes sure that the selected hall is arranged so that it can accommodate more people than expected (usually there is a great interest in this information meeting).

1.3 Appointment of a co-moderator

To be effective in the preparation and moderation of the sessions and in-between activities, the moderator needs to be supported by a co-moderator. The co-moderator is a local person familiar with the specific problems in the municipality / community where the Forum is held as well as with the main social and professional groups and their interrelations. Together with the Operative Group, he/she is the person who is mainly in charge of the detailed preparation of the sessions and the organization of the work between the sessions under the advice and guidance of the moderator.

The co-moderator must have excellent communication skills and organizational capacity, be able to listen, and be respected by both the local authorities and the public. The moderator should select the co-moderator very carefully and establish very good working relations, exchange of information and coordination with him/her.

After selecting the co-moderator, the *Moderator* takes the following steps:

- Together with the coordinator prepares Terms of Reference for the co-moderator;
- Decides on the channels and frequency of communication with the co-moderator and the format of the information to be stored or exchanged;
- Discusses with the co-moderator the mutual expectations in working as a team;
- Agrees with the co-moderator on the division of tasks for the preparation of a session and delegation of responsibilities during the absence of the moderator.

1.4 Selection of members of the Operative Group (OG)

The function of the Operative Group is to support the moderator and the co-moderator in the organization of the Forum session, during the session and activities between the sessions. This is the "support team" of the moderator. Usually it has five to seven members, depending on the size of the Forum coverage and the number of stakeholders involved. It includes the Co-moderator, a representative of the municipal administration (high enough in the hierarchy to manage the contacts with local authorities), a minute-keeper, the Forum PR and one to three other representatives of the basic stakeholders' groups. A bigger OG is difficult to manage, but allows broader participation and better coordination with the respective stakeholder tables. The Forum participants approve the OG at the first Forum session.

The Moderator:

- Makes sure that there is a common understanding within the OG on what should be prepared for each session;
- Based on the individual strengths of the OG members, distributes the tasks and responsibilities for the preparation of each session;
- Based on the results of the session and assigned working groups, distributes the tasks and responsibilities for the activities between the sessions;
- Delegates the coordination of the OG to the co-moderator when absent;
- Before each session presents to the OG the detailed scenario of the session and assigns individual tasks during the session;
- After each session facilitates a feedback meeting with the OG to analyze the process and results and to plan improvements for the next session if needed;
- Recognizes the contribution of individual members and tables;
- Together with the OG, decides how to approach the addressees of the recommendations and arrange personal meetings if needed;
- Makes sure that the minutes and all reporting forms are prepared on time.

Possible structure of OG (Forum Teteven)

Co-moderator	Lyuba Dotcheva, Center for Sustainable Development of the Municipality of Teteven
Representative of Municipal Administration	Tihomir Lazarov, Deputy Mayor
Representative of Business	Marin Kraev, Private business owner and Chairman of Craftsmen Association
Representative of Tourism sector (in accordance with Forum theme)	Milkana Ivanova, Chief of Municipal Tourist Office
PR	Hristo Hristov, Journalist
Protocolist	Denitsa Ivanova
Technical Assistant	Boris Dotchev, Center for Sustainable Development of the Municipality of Teteven

1.5 Meeting with stakeholder groups to finalize the selection of Forum participants

As the key person of the Forum process, assuring the equal representation and participation of all interested stakeholder groups within the community, the moderator, together with the coordinator, should participate in the preparatory stakeholder meetings. The coordinator organizes the meetings. As mentioned earlier, Forum participants do not participate as individuals but as representatives of social or professional groups. So it is very important who represents the respective groups and if the groups trust and delegate the representative functions.

It is very helpful at this meeting to discuss the internal communication within the group, so that they are informed about the Forum discussions and their interest is properly represented at each session. Often focus groups with representatives of a given stakeholder group are organized to provide feedback and ideas for change to be reported to the Forum session, or, alternatively, a mini session (small scale session between the Forum sessions) is facilitated by the moderator for the representatives of only one or several groups. The importance of different stakeholders groups in the Forum process is described in detail in the Initiators' Guide.

The Moderator:

- Facilitates the meeting and encourages each group to identify the most appropriate representatives who can participate in the Forum on behalf of the whole group;
- Reaches an agreement on how the group will be informed by their representatives about the Forum process status;
- Reaches an agreement with each stakeholder group if they want to be involved as a group in the Forum process (via focus group, survey, mini session, statements, etc.);
- Facilitates a short discussion about the Forum topic, objectives and expected results from the respective stakeholder group point of view.

Experience shows that the most difficult group to be mobilized are the representatives of the business sector, unless the theme is of vital concern to business persons. Two options could be tried to make up for their difficulty in attending a sequence of sessions:

- Different representatives on a rotation principle for each session instead of having permanent representatives attending the entire cycle of Forum sessions. Business representatives for each session could be decided on by a business organization or at a business meeting between the sessions;
- Meeting with business people between the sessions, when the moderator facilitates a discussion to receive feedback, comments and ideas from business people on concrete issues, projects or initiatives.

There are cases (especially for inter-municipal Forums) when different Forum sessions take place at different locations with different options for an appropriate Forum venue. Sometimes a compromise regarding the Forum venue is needed, to assure that Forum sessions take place in all participating municipalities on a rotation principle. Two examples:

Intermunicipal Forum Teteven/Yablanica	Intermunicipal Forum Silistra/Tutrakan/Alfatar
Session 1 – Teteven	Session 1 – Silistra
Session 2 – Yablanica	Session 2 – Silistra
Session 3 – Teteven	Session 3 – Tutrakan
Session 4 – Yablanica	Session 4 – Alfatar
Session 5 – Lesidren (neutral venue)	Session 5 – Silistra

1.6 Selection of Forum venue

The place in which people meet for a Forum is of particular significance. Every location (a building, a hall) is full of symbolism and inevitably speaks of its owner or builder. The symbolism of a venue may therefore reinforce the status of some of the participating groups or reduce the status of others – which should be avoided. (More details in the *Initiator's Guide* Chapter 2, p.10)

The main responsibility for finding possible Forum venues is with the initiator and the coordinator.

The participation of the moderator in the final selection is to make sure that the place:

- is big enough so that the tables can be arranged in a circle and the participants are able to see each other and the moderator;
- is accessible for the public (for disabled people as well) and have a room large enough to seat not only the participants, but also other citizens as guests or observers;
- is well illuminated and allows the use of the technical equipment required (sound system, multimedia, a screen, flipchart, etc.);
- provides enough place (walls) for displaying the sheets of paper already written on;
- is heated or cooled when necessary.

1.7 Official invitation to the Forum participants

For the first Forum session, an official invitation is signed by the initiator and sent to each Forum participant. This underlines the public nature of the Forum and demonstrates the initiator's readiness to respect and to take into consideration the results of the Forum process. Although the dispatch of the invitations is a matter for the coordinator, the moderator makes sure that all participants chosen at the stakeholders' meetings are invited, as well as representatives of state agencies which are interested in the issue to be discussed.

2   FORUM SESSION PREPARATION

The preparation of a Forum session starts with the end of the previous one. Usually at the end of each session participants agree on:

• the concrete topic / subtopic to be discussed at the next session;
• the working group for preparation of basic information or overview of the situation in the municipality;
• working groups for further elaboration of project ideas;
• the need for additional meetings (focus groups, mini sessions) between the sessions;
• the need for expert support or input;
• the need for capacity development activities.

These very typical outcomes of a Forum session require special interventions by the moderator to ensure continuity and the quality of the process and to prepare for the next session.

Although the approach is similar, each session is different and needs special preparation, facilitation techniques and scenario.

Based on the outcomes of the previous session, the objectives and expected results of the Forum process, the moderator, supported by the OG, prepares the Forum session agenda. In addition the moderator prepares a detailed scenario, also for the OG, to ensure that the discussion proceeds logically. The detailed scenario describes the time allocation of each step in the Forum session, the envisaged input, the process/the facilitation methods and the expected results. (A sample of a Forum session scenario can be found in Attachment 2).

It is very important that the moderator allocates sufficient time for his / her own preparation – materials to be presented, legal regulations to be respected, possible reactions of different stakeholder groups, need for some meetings in advance, appropriate guests to be invited.

According to this detailed scenario, all preliminary work between the sessions should be planned with, and responsibilities shared between, the moderator, co-moderator and the OG members. The moderator is responsible for the selection of the most appropriate moderation techniques for each sequence within the scenario, depending on the expected results, participatory culture and experience of the participants and availability of space, equipment and materials.

Time management is very important and is often a challenging job. Task assignments for group work (by tables) should be formulated in advance in terms of time frame and how the results will be presented and used.

2.1 Preparation of the first Forum Session

The first session is probably the most important, as it sets the standard and the values of the process, receives the formal agreement of the Forum participants on the goal, objectives, timeframe and expected results of the Forum, the topic of the discussions, the stakeholder groups involved and the code of conduct. The first session also sets the official structure of the Forum – number and titles of tables, members of the operative group, co-moderator.

The Forum structure – number and titles of the tables - needs to be discussed in advance with the initiator and the coordinator and later approved at the stakeholder meetings. Usually a Forum has no more than ten tables (six to eight participants each), which reflect the participation of different social and professional groups. Representatives of ethnic or vulnerable groups are better seated according to their professional background than at a separate table unless the theme turns them into a specific stakeholder group. Similar considerations can be made with respect to members of a municipality council.

At the first session, usually the Forum structure by tables is officially adopted by the participants before the coffee break. After the coffee break, participants take their seats according to the interest group they are representing. If there are tables with more participants than needed the moderator facilitates the discussion to direct some participants to other tables, according to their second choice. If this is impossible then two tables with the same title are arranged to accommodate these participants. Once all participants are seated at the respective tables the moderator determines whether any of the possibly interested groups are missing, and if this is the case, the Forum should decide to invite their representatives to the next session in order to become regular Forum participants.

These basic issues take half of the time. The second half is devoted to starting up the discussion of the Forum topic and reaching an agreement about its dimensions from different stakeholders' perspectives.
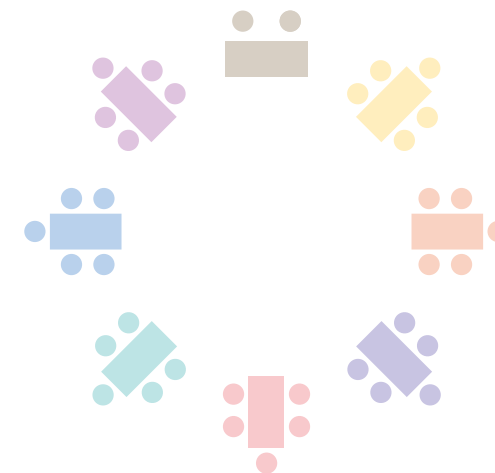
It is worth reflecting carefully in which way a topic should be approached in a sequence of sessions – as this may greatly influence the spirit and orientation of later Forum interaction. When in Zurich the revitalization of a particular district of the town was selected as a theme for a local Forum, the participants at the first session decided to always discuss "leisure" and "habitat" jointly. Because interests in occasional leisure and permanent residence are often diametrically opposed, only solutions accommodating both realms of interest would do. With separate sessions for each of these issues, ideas proposed would not have been filtered by the concern of the other.

The Zurich example is remarkable in another way for its creative approach to the structuring of sessions. Before entering into discussion, the participants devoted one afternoon to fact-finding "in the field": they went for a guided tour to acquaint themselves with the problems of the district with their own eyes rather than sitting through an avalanche of statistical and abstract information.

True enough, one should always make a point of how best to transmit information to the participants. But the moment of programming the sequence of sessions is one of particular relevance because once the pace is set inertia starts and it is difficult to change. Reflect to be creative, and then get going.

The Moderator:

- Prepares the schedule for the first Forum session to be sent with the Forum invitation;
- Prepares a detailed session scenario for himself/herself and the OG with details of inputs, moderation techniques, etc. (see example in Attachment 2);
- Reviews the schedule and the detailed session scenario with the OG and assigns individual tasks to the OG members (see example in Attachment 3);
- Based on the experience from the information meeting, makes sure that the presentation of the Forum outline and of the Forum process is clear and informative;
- More details could be included if needed. It would be appropriate for the Forum outline to be presented by the initiator representative and Forum process by the Co-moderator;
- Supported by the OG, identifies in advance a person or group to prepare a brief background information about the Forum topic to be sent with the Forum invitation;
- Supported by the OG and the coordinator, prepares in advance the code of conduct and working rules. The text is sent to the participants with the Forum invitation;
- Makes sure that the hall is arranged to have enough tables for all stakeholder groups plus one or two more, in case additional participants show up, and that all equipment and materials needed are available.

2.2 Preparation of a regular Forum session

As has been said before, the preparation of a session depends on the results of the previous one, the Forum outline and schedule, and the scenario for the session.

Let us start with possible results of the previous session and the preparation needed:

a) Concrete topic to be discussed at the next session

The quality of the discussion on a topic or subtopic depends a lot on the basic information, which will be prepared in advance. Because of that, it is very important who prepares the information and what sources of information are used.

Usually the basic information is prepared by the local administration, especially when the topic discussed is their responsibility. On the one hand this is appropriate, because the municipality has the information, but on the other hand the information is usually very formal, full of figures and sounding like a report. Often there are no analyses and trends of development. Very rarely is the experience of another municipality included.

If a citizen prepares the information, then it will more likely reflect public opinion, but not so much the real status of the issue. If the information is prepared by an outside expert then it might provide excellent expertise, but be too complicated, theoretical and unrealistic for the municipality concerned.

As one can see, there is always a challenge and a risk. The role of the moderator and the OG is to arrange for the most appropriate information depending on the topic, situation, human resources available and the purpose of the information. Very often a combination of more than one presentation is the best solution.

No matter who is preparing the information it should be:

- clear and focused; short input of fixed presentation time e.g. max. 5 minutes;
- understandable for the audience;
- a balanced combination of data, analysis and trends;
- providing options for solution or applicable experience;
- stimulating to the discussion.

The information has to be sent with the Forum invitation so that the participants have the chance of acquainting themselves with it. At the session, the information should be presented in a visual format and in an attractive way (Power point, flipchart, etc.).

The Moderator:

- Discusses with the OG the scope and the specifics of the information needed. It is advisable to prepare it in a written form so to be clear to everyone what is needed and in what format it should be delivered;
- Delegates to one of the members of the OG the responsibility to monitor the preparation and make sure that it is delivered on time;
- Gets acquainted with the information in advance and decides in advance how it will be used for the discussion;
- Makes sure that the presenter of the information is strict with the time allocated;
- Prepares questions related to the topic in order to be prepared to stimulate the discussion.

b) Working group for preparation of basic information or overview of the situation in the municipality/territory covered by the Forum

Very often, at the end of the previous session, the Moderator encourages the selection of a working group to prepare the basic information or overview of the situation in the municipality / territory covered by the Forum. Three different approaches could be used to select members of the working groups from the plenum of participants:

- on voluntary basis – calling for individual participants who think they have knowledge, experience and professional interest to contribute;
- on a selective basis – discussing which stakeholder groups should be interested or able to contribute; each interested table nominating a representative;
- on a comprehensive basis – having all stakeholder groups (tables) name one representative each for the working group.

There is no recipe – all approaches might work perfectly.

The Moderator:

- According to the situation, decides which approach to use for working group formation;
- During the session, should reach an agreement about time and place for the first meeting of the working group;
- Discusses with the OG the scope of WG activity and the kind of information needed. It is advisable to prepare the task in a written form to make clear to everyone what is needed;
- To achieve productive performance in groups, assign roles of group members and group facilitator;
- Delegates to one of the members of the OG the responsibility to follow the meetings of the working group and to make sure that the information is delivered on time;
- Gets acquainted with the information in advance and decides how it will be used for the discussion;
- Makes sure that the presenter of the information is strict with the time allocated.

c) Working group for further elaboration of project ideas

In many cases, one of the outcomes of a Forum session is project ideas. In order to be funded and implemented, these project ideas need to be developed into fully-fledged project proposals. Usually the project ideas are generated as a result of a discussion during the Forum session. The moderator could choose one of the three methods for formation of a group already described in 2.2.b, making sure that in any case the originator of the idea is part of the group.

Sometimes a given organization or stakeholder group (table) promotes a readymade project idea to the Forum. Then an appropriate way to form a group is the last two described in 2.2.b. In this way the project idea could be enriched with the contribution of other stakeholders and upgraded to meet public demand. Make sure that the focus of the project idea is not lost.

The Moderator:

- According to the situation, decides which approach to use for group formation;
- During the session, reaches an agreement about time and place for the first meeting of the working group;
- Delegates to one of the members of the OG the responsibility to follow the activities of the working group and to make sure that the project preparation is on time. If expert help is needed, then the coordinator is requested to take action;
- Gets acquainted with the elaborated project idea in advance in order to be prepared to lead the discussion within the session;
- Makes sure that the presenter of the project idea presents it in visualized form and is strict about the time allocated.

d) Need for additional meetings (focus groups, mini sessions) between the sessions

In some cases it is very beneficial to expand the discussion (beyond the Forum session) and to involve additional expert groups, social or professional groups, potential beneficiaries, public institutions or media separately. Such additional meetings between the sessions should maintain the basic principle of the Forum process that it is open to all interested parties and individuals. They give groups which cannot devote the time needed to participate in each Forum session the opportunity to make their contributions to the discussion (often enough the business sector). These meetings help the Forum not to encapsulate itself within its participants, but to welcome all appropriate contributions and comments. Such meetings could provoke a professional debate within a professional group and help it to come up with a shared view, idea or statement to the Forum session.

Practice shows that the meetings between the sessions strongly support the effectiveness of the Forum discussions, save time during the sessions and convey the message that the opinion of everyone really counts. However, clear and pertinent feedback information from the extra-session groups to the next plenum is indispensable to secure transparency and coherence.

A meeting between the sessions could also be organized for conflict resolution purposes. In this case it is advisable always to have a three faction meeting – the two contending parties with a third one, either neutral or expert, so as to stimulate professional arguments, to defend different interests and to avoid a stalemate.

The Moderator:

- Facilitates the focus groups or mini sessions;
- If unable to facilitate personally, delegates the co-moderator to do so. In this case he/she must study the results of the additional meetings as soon as possible, so as to decide how to use them appropriately, preparing the scenario for the next session;
- Makes sure feedback by the extra-session groups to the plenum is complete and pertinent.

e) Need for expert support or input

In the course of the Forum activities – during or between the sessions - expert support is often needed. This might be to clarify or stimulate the discussion, to provide expertise or best practices or to comment on the relevance of the solutions discussed. In addition, expert support in most cases is needed for the methodological and technical aspects of project development. It might be an expertise related to the content of the project or related to specific aspects of the project application and budget.

The moderator, in cooperation of the OG, having specified the need for some outside expertise, it is then the responsibility of the coordinator to find the most appropriate expert. Once the expert is named, he/she must be well introduced to the discussion or to the project idea and to the local context by the OG. It is even better, in collaboration with the coordinator, to establish written terms of reference (ToR) with a clear description of the background, the topic of the session, the main stakeholder groups participating, the objective of the input, the format and the duration of the presentation. It is advisable to indicate the role of the expert input in the course of the discussion since it should be focused on analyses of the issue, on possible solutions, on technical advice, or on a comparison of best practices, etc.

The selection of the expert is a very sensitive issue. There is a tendency to invite outstanding experts from the capital as consultants to the Forum or individual working groups. They might be very knowledgeable, but if unacquainted with the particular context of the community or the specific problem to be resolved, they may be very theoretical and helpless. Usually local or regional experts are not sufficiently trusted even though they might be much more appropriate.

When the expert input is used during the session, the role of the moderator is to make sure that the quality of the material is satisfactory, is presented in an appropriate format and does not disrupt the logical evolvement of the discussion.

The Moderator:

- Discusses with the OG the scope and type of expert input needed. It is advisable in collaboration with the coordinator to prepare written ToR for the expert, so to be clear to everyone what is needed;
- Delegates to one of the members of the OG the responsibility of contacting the coordinator and following up the delivery of the expertise;
- Gets acquainted with the expert input in advance, makes sure that the quality of the material is satisfactory and decides in advance how it will be used in discussion;
- Makes sure that the time allocated for presentation of the information is strictly respected.

f) Need for capacity development

Often enough Forums take place in a context where participants could not be expected to be acquainted with specific cooperation skills and practices needed in the course of Forum activities. Some guidance may be needed to develop e.g. the "art of handling public relations", and even formal training for members of working groups that engage in the formulation of a business plan and project proposals. In fact, improved skills in individuals and cooperation capacity within institutions are a most welcome side effect resulting from the Forum process.

It is therefore appropriate if not indispensable if the Forum outline and the budget allows for capacity development initiatives. Usually a limited number of training courses (delivered in workshop style or evening sessions) are decided in advance. Based on the Forum experience the topics most often requested are:

- Team work and organizational skills (for OG members);
- Project writing and project management (for all interested Forum participants);
- Fund raising (for OG and interested participants);
- PR and media relations (for OG members).

The coordinator organizes these training sessions. The role of the moderator is to promote them and to make sure it is announced during the session that they will take place, so that all those interested have the chance of participating.

Possible agenda for a regular Forum session is found in Attachment 4.

3 FORUM SESSION MODERATION

Forum moderation is a special form of moderating big groups' meetings. The facilitation techniques used should allow equal participation of all participants, relatively quick ways to consolidate different opinions, and approaches to prioritize and reach consensus.

Leading a Forum process needs the usual and regular facilitation techniques used in participatory processes, such as making clear agreements, reading the body language of participants, secretary and co-moderator, paraphrasing participants' contributions. Yet some special methods are needed to handle a large and structured audience of up to 100 Forum participants. In this case, a moderator should be versed in assigning discussion tasks to tables, using appropriate visualization formats, leading plenary discussions and consolidating divergent opinions to an agreed common view or decision.

It is a must for Forum moderators to have adequate knowledge and skills as a result of training and some experience as an observer of the Forum process, before themselves acting as a moderator of a Forum. The best way is to observe some experienced colleague moderators in action and to participate in the feedback meetings after the sessions, or to participate in a Forum as a member of the operative group or co-moderator. When a moderator starts his/her own Forum, it is advisable to provide a supporting advisor/coach (experienced moderator) for the first two to three sessions.

A thorough preparation of each session is the best guarantee for success. Based on the detailed scenario, the moderator selects the most appropriate facilitation techniques. It is sound practice if the moderator is always well prepared and

can act in a flexible way. It is advisable for the moderator to use only techniques he/she knows well and feels familiar with. Improvising during a session with so many participants is quite risky.

The purpose of a Forum is to develop step by step an abstract topic into a project – or at least into some recommendations or a plan that can be implemented in reality. In the course of the session cycle, the discussion moves from diverse individual opinions to a deepened interpretation of the theme and finally to a consolidated opinion, first by the tables and later by all. The Forum is designed to achieve a consolidation of opinions. This is indeed its central function.

3.1 Agreement on Forum objectives and Code of Conduct

Starting a Forum is like starting a long common journey. Participants need to know where the journey will go, how long it will last, how they will be travelling, who will be the guide, and what they might expect as an outcome. Accordingly, a moderator has to make clear the objectives and the program of the Forum; he/she has to introduce him/herself and all persons with a special role (co-moderator, operative group, secretary, etc.). For the smooth functioning of the proceedings it is helpful to establish a code of conduct with the participants. The first session is the most appropriate moment to do so. A code of conduct can be prepared in advance by the OG and the participants should formally adopt it.

Participants may be better motivated if rules are formulated positively, as given in this example:
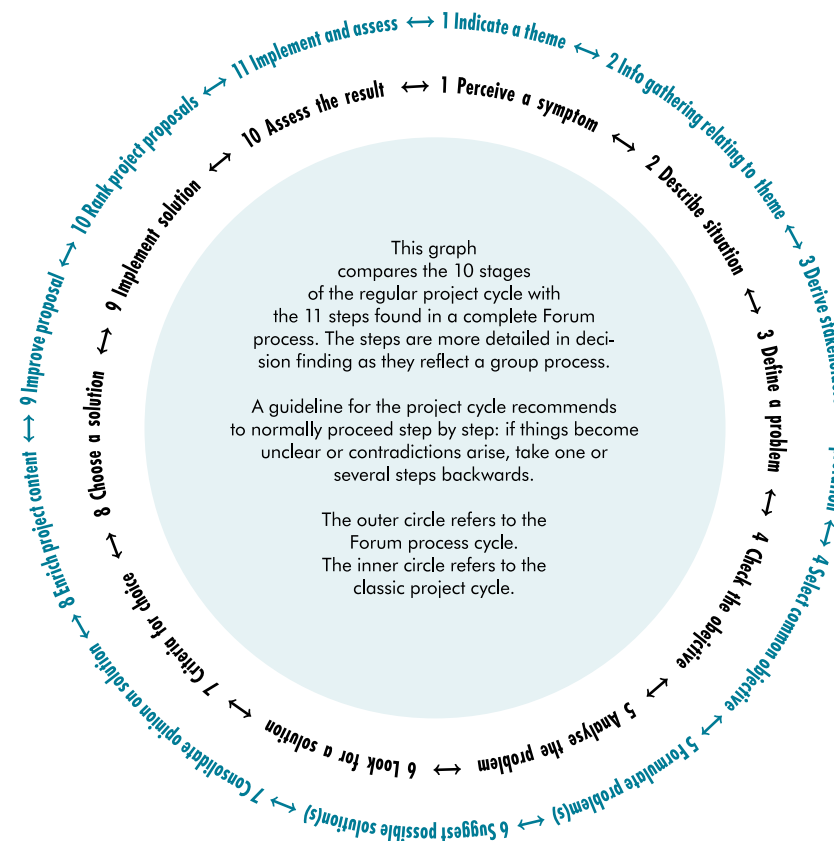
What I do ...	What I am going to avoid ...
I listen carefully	I am not going to judge or value
I observe attentively	I don't interrupt others
My contributions fit with the theme	I avoid formalities
My contributions are short and concise	I avoid unnecessary side-talks
I participate actively (table, plenary, groups)	
I express my feelings	I don't give reign to my emotions
I am positive and constructive	
I empower everybody in this Forum to remind me to respect this code of conduct.	

As a moderator you might distribute yellow cards to the participants; if someone does not observe the code of conduct, any participant may show the yellow card to remind the others of the code, as the referee does in a football game.

An actual code of conduct used in a particular Forum is given in Attachment 5.

The Moderator:

- Prepares charts (or other visualizations) with key information regarding objectives, program, working procedures, persons with special roles in the Forum, time frame, code of conduct;
- Presents all key information to the participants and clarifies questions;
- Presents the code of conduct and leads a discussion with the participants;
- Makes a formal agreement with all participants (e.g. every table names a speaker who - in the name of the table - formally agrees with objectives, program, code of conduct, etc.).

This graph compares the 10 stages of the regular project cycle with the 11 steps found in a complete Forum process. The steps are more detailed in decision finding as they reflect a group process.

A guideline for the project cycle recommends to normally proceed step by step: if things become unclear or contradictions arise, take one or several steps backwards.

The outer circle refers to the Forum process cycle. The inner circle refers to the classic project cycle.

Outer circle (Forum process): 1 Indicate a theme ↔ 2 Info gathering relating to theme ↔ 3 Derive stakeholders' interpretation ↔ 4 Select common objective ↔ 5 Formulate problem(s) ↔ 6 Suggest possible solution(s) ↔ 7 Consolidate opinion on solution ↔ 8 Enrich project content ↔ 9 Improve proposal ↔ 10 Rank project proposals ↔ 11 Implement and assess

Inner circle (classic project cycle): 1 Perceive a symptom ↔ 2 Describe situation ↔ 3 Define a problem ↔ 4 Check the objective ↔ 5 Analyse the problem ↔ 6 Look for a solution ↔ 7 Criteria for choice ↔ 8 Choose a solution ↔ 9 Implement solution ↔ 10 Assess the result

3.2 Consolidation process in Forum discussions

The Forum discussion evolves from one session to the other and can be characterized by a sequence of stages, as the diagram above shows. In fact the consolidation occurs several times during the whole Forum process: first in relation to the interpretation or viewpoint regarding a theme (step 4); then regarding possible solutions (step 7); and again in the final phase when proposals are to be ranked by priority (step 10).

The consolidation process is certainly one of the key features of the Forum. It is the tool to deepen the knowledge of a topic, to share insights, to reach a better understanding. One of the biggest dangers in the Forum is to keep the consolidation processes too short, too formal and to go on too fast with the next step or with another topic.

Consolidation means sharing knowledge, insights, ideas and opinions. Consolidation usually starts with trying to convince others, arguing, getting support, and developing new ideas. In the consolidation process, there will be moments when participants develop rather strong feelings. They might fear losing something, or they might be over-enthusiastic about getting support from other stakeholder groups.

The art of moderating a consolidation process lies in guiding the discussion along a win-win strategy. In a win-win situation neither party is losing, both or all parties win something, maybe not the full prize, but they get some benefit. As long as the stakeholder groups in the Forum see their benefit, they will participate in the discussion. Asking for advantages, strengths, benefits, and opportunities helps to discover an interest.

Sometimes the theme has to be adapted to accommodate diverging interests. The moderator could enlarge a project idea: e.g. a sports facility propagated by an NGO could be made accessible for schools or seniors or the general public and thus become much more attractive to all. Sometimes the opposite has to be done with an idea, when the removal of some of its elements makes it more manageable or eliminates the basis of some opposition. The difficult side is that both methods, an enlargement on the one side, and a focusing on the other, have to be managed during a discussion process, without planning and on the spur of the moment, demanding a lot of diligence from the moderator. It is the skill of the moderator to perceive the potential for adaptation in the course of a discussion. And it is a fact that discussions always contain redundant elements that can offer a solution to an issue – one simply has to be sensible enough to perceive them and to pick them up.

One specific feature of the Forum is the structured discussion involving different stakeholders. Working with different tables is an essential element in the discussion and the consolidation process. The different stakeholder groups express their common interest and opinion and they need some time to reach a consensus and formulate their common interest. Assigning the task of a group discussion (at each table) during the Forum session is a commendable technique for the moderator. The consolidated opinion within each stakeholder group is the basis for later reaching a consolidation of opinions in the Forum as a whole.

There is one aspect that really can obstruct a consolidation process. As soon as stakeholder groups start to define their positions and to defend them, the task of the moderator becomes much more difficult. The moderator, therefore, should not allow groups to declare their positions with firmly made opinions which tolerate no further discussion, but should stimulate them to express their interests.

For keeping the discussion away from a fight for position, there are some helpful tools, which can be found in Attachment 6.

Very often some prioritization is needed to consolidate the discussion. There are different techniques for prioritization, some focused on individual preferences (putting dots or stickers on the preferred items) or focused on group (table) preferences. For the group approach some time should be allocated for a group discussion for reaching consensus.

The most difficult decision at the last Forum session is which projects defined by the Forum participants should be funded (if there is a Project fund allocated to the Forum). It is very important to have an agreed transparent procedure, giving equal opportunities for each group to express their preferences. A sample for voting procedure for prioritization of the projects is to be found in Attachment 7.

The Moderator:

- Has sufficient background information about the topic in discussion;
- Has discussed the topic with the operative group in order to understand the importance of the topic in the local context;
- Is aware of the need to discuss a topic in-depth or not;
- Has developed a selection of useful questions regarding the topic to be able to animate the discussion;
- Has a strategy to guide the discussion around the pitfall of position fights among stakeholder groups (and to get out of it if this happens);
- Masters different methods of decision taking.

3.3 Visualization in a forum

In a Forum, visualization is a special challenge because the assembly of people is of considerable size. Most appropriate visualization instruments in a Forum are flipcharts, overhead projector (OHP), laptop with beamer, and pin boards. While OHP and beamer work well for presentations, flipcharts and pin boards are good for visualizing discussions. They have the advantage of being fully functional with daylight in the room. A laptop with a powerful beamer works well for the same purpose.

Visualization rules that are valid in a small or medium-sized room with ten to twenty participants will no longer work in a Forum hall. Writing on charts and cards must be adjusted; a much bigger font is needed. This needs some practice to get used to. An OHP need to be of special power, transparencies need to have bigger fonts (and as a consequence less content).

In order to keep track of a discussion on flipcharts or pin boards (a procedure sometimes called: "running protocol" as it evolves under the eyes of the participants), ask one member of the OG to act as secretary (usually this person is the co-moderator); two others ensure that the written charts are placed in the prepared spots – most often along the side walls of the hall – to keep them visible throughout the meeting.

A laptop with a powerful beamer is very useful to visualize key messages of inputs. This equipment can also be used to keep notes of key contributions during the discussion. Make sure the screen does not become the centre of attention of the participants. Above all avoid "cinema seating"; the basic arrangement of the tables should still be a circle, despite the screen. If no single member of the operative group has decent handwriting, visualization with the beamer might be better. The inconvenience is the limited screen: once the screen is scrolled, the information is no longer visible for the

participants, and scrolling up and down is often very confusing for the participants. In that sense this method might lower the potential for discussion involving all participants.

Key words of discussions can also be written on an OHP. The main disadvantage is that this technique only works in a relatively dark room and this hampers interaction between moderator and participants. During the discussions we need to see, not only to hear, each other. It is therefore advisable for the secretary to keep a running protocol of decisions taken during the sessions on a separate flipchart.

Group work can also be visualized on cloth (banners) for a kind of visualized demonstration. Pin board charts (size 1.2 x 1.2 meters) can be used for the presentation of project ideas during an exhibition in the end phase of the forum.

A special aspect of "visualization" is the use of space in the assembly hall in the course of the proceedings. For large assemblies it may be a good rule if the speakers at the table rise when speaking. Similarly, information gathered from the participants (in writing e.g. on charts) can be arranged and grouped on the floor in the free centre of the hall, or against opposing walls – where it can be studied by everybody during a break – the distance thus underlining some possible difference in content or valuation.

The Moderator:

- Prepares charts with key information of relevant inputs for every session;
- Requests resource persons to visualize key information of their input and verifies the visualization in time (if possible some time before the Forum session);
- Appoints one or two member(s) of the operative group as secretary; the main selection criteria is legible handwriting on charts;
- Briefs two other members of the operative group where to place the written charts;
- Checks the legibility of sample charts in the Forum hall (letter size, colour brightness, etc.);
- Prepares space to put written charts produced during the Forum session;
- Checks the technical installation and functionality of all visualization materials (OHP, PC, beamer, flipchart stands, pin boards, spare charts, felt pens, etc.);
- Delegates all possible activities regarding visualization to the members of the operative group so that the moderator's attention keeps to the facilitating of the discussion.

3.4 Working with tables (different stakeholder groups)

Assigning group work tasks to the groups by tables rather than to individual participants gives the moderator the opportunity to receive the consolidated reaction of different stakeholder groups. Working via tables allows participants to reach consensus step by step – first at table level and then at Forum level. Also it gives them the opportunity to discover each group's position during the discussion.

Discussion within a group offers the opportunity to all participants to speak. For 70 to 100 people in a Forum it is not possible to contribute individually; for six to eight persons around a table it is possible. Be aware that group discussions around a table need at least 20 minutes unless the question is a really simple one.

The assigned task should be clearly defined, preferably written on a flipchart for the plenum or on sheets of paper for each table. The assignment should state what has to be done, the time available, the expected results and their format, the way they will be presented in plenary or used later in the Forum process. The information about how the results will be used is essential and motivates participants to take the task seriously and to do their best. Working via tables creates positive competition between different stakeholder groups and increases the responsibility of the participants, the efficiency of the discussion and the consolidation of the process.

Example

Discuss at the table for 15 min.: what are the reasons for using the cultural heritage of your municipality as a factor for development? Write the three main reasons on cards with markers (each reason on one card) and be ready to present them in plenary and post them on the pin board. The moderator will cluster the reasons coming from different tables to come up with a consolidated list to be used later in the discussion.

During the assignment, the members of the OG are available to support "their" tables, to give additional information or clarification and to make sure that all tables have properly understood the assignment and the format of the results. However, the members of the OG are not allowed to interfere in the table discussion.

Steps in a Forum appropriate for extended group discussions are: identification and prioritization of problems, possible solutions, project ideas, prioritization of projects, etc. Inputs of resource persons can first be discussed at each table (points to clarify, points the table agrees / disagrees with). After a period of group discussion follows a period of sharing / discussing within the Forum.

The Moderator:

- Sets periods for group (or table-centred) discussions while he/she prepares the program and the scenario for the Forum session;
- Defines the purpose and the expected outcome of a group discussion;
- Prepares in writing an assignment (a chart, or a sheet of paper for each table);
- Is attentive to the guidance one or another group might need;
- Steers the process to consolidate the tables' contributions in the overall Forum process;
- Recognizes the groups' contributions.

3.5 Cooperation between the moderator and the co-moderator in the Forum session

While preparing the Forum session, think about the role-sharing between the moderator and the co-moderator. If the co-moderator is not going to write notes on the flipchart (because of illegible handwriting) select a secretary from other members of the OG. Before the start of the Forum session, make the sharing of roles and tasks clear to the persons concerned. There might be other roles needed and given to other members of the OG.

During Forum discussion the moderator paraphrases and summarizes the participants' contributions. It is advisable for the essence of each contribution to be articulated clearly by the moderator and to be written on a flip chart by the co-moderator or other member of the OG. This is a "running protocol" to visualise the discussion and should not be confused with the session minutes, maintained by the Protocolist. In that way the participants can follow easily the progress of the discussion and later these contributions can be used for further elaboration or Forum decisions. This procedure is even more important with regard to the decisions of the Forum. The co-moderator should have readable handwriting and should follow the main rules for writing on flipchart.

Only excellent coordination and eye contact between the moderator and the co-moderator assures the quality of the notes and fluent flow of the discussion.

The Moderator:

- Has worked out the division of labour within his/her team;
- Delegates supplementary tasks to the co-moderator or other members of the OG;
- Agrees with the co-moderator upon (body) signs to make the facilitation process as smooth as possible.

3.6 Keeping the dynamics between the sessions

As has been mentioned several times, the Forum process does not only consist of Forum sessions. A lot of serious work and preparation is done between the sessions:

- working group meetings to fulfil tasks given by the Forum;
- focus groups to deepen the discussion of a topic and to involve additional people in the discussion process;
- mini sessions to get the opinions of additional people;
- surveys to gather information regarding a Forum topic;
- Forum newsletter and media coverage;
- meetings with institutions addressed by a Forum recommendation;
- consultations with experts;
- viewing of facilities, places and institutions of Forum participants' concern to be discussed next session.

The moderator is involved in most of these activities personally. If unable to attend all of them, his/her facilitation role is delegated to the co-moderator or to an OG member. The dynamics between the sessions contributes to a better understanding of the problems discussed, allows participation of additional professional or social groups, encourages a culture of dialogue, openness and continuity and creates opportunities for informal interaction and generation of solutions and project ideas.

The Moderator:

- Defines with all persons concerned the tasks to be done;
- Participates in the preparation and execution of the different tasks according to the needs;
- Keeps contact with all active groups in order to be informed for the next Forum session;
- Includes reports of the activities done between two Forum sessions into the program of the upcoming Forum session.
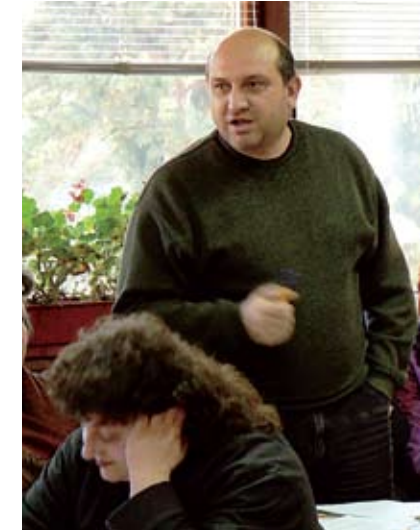
3.7 Non-verbal communication (body language and intonation)

Body language is less encoded than spoken words. We have to interpret and verify body language. It can often be an indicator for certain messages: interest in a topic, saturation during a long-lasting discussion, eagerness to contribute something, need to clear confusion, all this and much more participants communicate permanently with their body language. Whenever as a moderator we receive a message via body language, we have to interpret and verify it.

Being attentive to the body language of participants in a Forum helps a lot in steering the process and making everyone feel at ease. A participant facing the moderator and making even small signs with the hands is likely to want to contribute something. The secretary staring at the moderator needs a repetition of the message to be written on the chart. An agreed sign of the moderator reminds the input person to keep it short – or to stop at the latest after two minutes (provided this is previously agreed upon).

The Moderator:

- Is aware of and attentive to body language;
- Interprets body language signals carefully and verifies them (by asking the sender).

4 FORUM FOLLOW-UP

It is a characteristic and a central virtue of the entire Forum process to establish from the very beginning internal monitoring mechanisms to keep track of the quality of the process and the achieved results. As a tool for Forum session monitoring (mainly for the OG and the moderator) a feedback meeting of the OG after each session could be used. As a monitoring tool for the results of the Forum process "Follow-up Forum sessions" are very appropriate. They must be planned in advance, and form the logical conclusion of the Forum process, handing back information on the outcome of a Forum to the participants as the originators.

4.1 Feedback meeting of the OG after each session

After each session, the moderator holds a discussion with all members of the OG to evaluate the session and to decide on what could be improved next time, to plan the work between the sessions and divide responsibilities. The discussion is focused on the quality of: logistics, materials for participants, presentations, expert input, working with tables, Forum discussions, flipchart notes, coordination between the moderator and the OG, moderation and other specific aspects.

The coordinator also attends these meetings and participates in the planning. He/she needs information and feedback for contracting experts and making arrangement of the capacity building activities.

If the moderator has a mentor (less experienced moderators might have an adviser in facilitation techniques for the first 1-3 sessions), he/she also attends the meeting and shares its observations regarding the above aspects. Later he/she gives detailed feedback to the moderator personally about his/her performance during the session and makes recommendations.

Some of the sessions are visited by a representative of a coaching group or of a research, development and control group (group appointed by a donor organization, which observes the quality of the Forum sessions mainly from the program point of view). Such a group – if there is one – gives appropriate recommendations and shares experience from other forums.

The Moderator:

- Schedules and holds the feedback meeting;
- Makes sure all the persons concerned take notes of the feedback imparted to them (including himself/herself);
- Hands over the facilitation of the meeting to the co-moderator or coordinator when the discussion is about his/her own performance;
- Refers to the feedback when planning the coming Forum session.

4.2 Preparation of a Follow-up session

Usually the Forum process outline envisages two follow-up sessions (6 months and one year after the last forum session). The purpose of these follow-up sessions is to review the implementation of projects and the status of the recommendations. The follow-up sessions guarantee the transparency of the activities taking place after the regular forum sessions. The project implementing organizations report on the status of the project activities and project budget. The contribution of different partners is recognized. Often new ideas are discussed as a consolidation of the implementation of a given project. The OG reports on the implementation of the Forum recommendations and the changes that have taken place as a result.

Note: Do not confound the follow-up session described here with the feedback meeting of the OG taking place after each regular Forum session.

Sample agenda for a follow-up session is found in Attachment 8.

The Moderator:

- Refers to the coordinator to make sure that all project implementers are ready to report on the status of the projects and their budgets;
- Makes sure that the co-moderator is ready to report on the status of the recommendations;
- Makes sure that all forum participants and local and regional media are invited to the feedback session.

Basic insights for Forum moderators

- Moderation starts with preparation;
- Each event, sequence, step needs an agreement between moderator and participants;
- Allow equal participation and be neutral;
- The expected results, participants and the framework conditions define the methods;
- Apply only methods you are familiar with and you are personally convinced of;
- Paraphrasing is the most efficient tool to make people feel at ease and to turn individual contributions into a part of the whole of the common discussion;
- Limit your objectives to what is feasible.

Dear reader,

You have come to the end of the Guide for Forum moderators. Now you are equipped with information and techniques for Forum moderation, based mainly on the practice of community Forums. Your own experience in Forum moderation will come with practice. Each Forum is different; even each session within one Forum is different. There is no strict recipe for success, but if you follow the basic hints for a Forum moderator, we are sure that you will soon join the family of successful ones. Good luck!

ATTACHMENT 1
Agenda for the information meeting

Draft agenda for the information meeting
(preferably facilitated by the moderator appointed for the Forum)

10.00 – 10.10	Opening on behalf of the initiator of the Forum process
10.10 – 10.45	Presentation on the Forum approach • goals and objectives • participants • process (sequence of sessions) • results • information flows • management (introducing support services, coordinator and moderator)
10.45 – 11.10	Discussion and sharing of previous community experience on participatory processes
11.10 – 11.30	Presentation of the process as a result of which the Forum topic has been defined – initiator, method, participants, and survey results (if any)
11.30 – 11.45	Discussion and feedback from the participants about their readiness to participate in the process. Identification of additional stakeholders to be invited
11.45 – 12.00	Decision on the date of the First Forum session
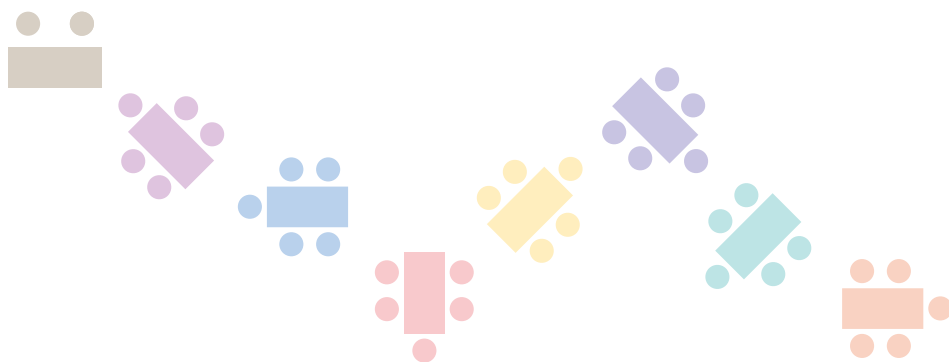
ATTACHMENT 2

Forum session scenario
(detailed version for internal use by moderator and OG)

Time	Sequence	Input	Process / Methods	Output (expected result)
Σ 10 min	**Opening**	Welcome words by moderator	Presentation in plenary	Forum participants (FP) are informed
	Review of the activities between the sessions	Report of OG (written material if needed)	Presentation in plenary	Forum participants (FP) are informed
	Review of the status of the recommendations	Report of OG (written material if needed)	Presentation in plenary Q&A session if needed	
Σ 140 min	**Discussion of a new topic**			
10 min	Presentation of background information about the topic	Written material of a WG, assigned at the previous session	Presentation in plenary Q&A session	FP are informed about basic issues
30 min	Define the problems: Stakeholders groups' view/interpretation	The background information	Structured brainstorming	List with problems
15 min	Select the relevant problems to be treated by the Forum	Problems identified by tables	Plenary discussion with secretary	List with 3-4 priority problems
30 min	Analyze the problems one by one	List with 3-4 priority problems	Working by tables, followed by plenary discussion	List with causes for each problem
15 min	Expert input (if needed)	Experience, best practices	Group formation	Awareness about solutions
30 min	Look for solutions	Solutions identified by tables		List with options
10 min	Establish WG Assign a task to WG	List with options		WG members Concrete assignment
	Break			

Time	Sequence	Input	Process / Methods	Output (expected result)
Σ 60 min	**Discussion of project ideas from previous session**			
20 min	Presentation of WG	Written outlines of project ideas (reports by WG) List with criteria	Presentation in plenary Q&A session Plenary discussion	FP are informed about the draft project ideas
15 min	Check the relevance with the criteria for eligible Forum project	Projects brief outline	Discussion by tables Plenary discussion	Agreement about the project ideas relevance
15 min	Enriching the project ideas		Plenary discussion	Suggestions to enrich project idea
10 min	Short presentation and approval of projects ready to be submitted to PC		Presentation in plenary Q&A session Agreement	FP agree on the projects to be submitted to PC
Σ 15 min	**Preparation of the next session:** • agenda; • basic information needed (WG assignment); • outside expertise needed; • capacity development needed; • date for next session.		Plenary discussion	FP are clear about the preparatory work for the next session
	End of the session			

ATTACHMENT 2 (contd.)

Concrete example for a Forum session scenario

TOPIC: "ADEQUATE USE OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S FREE TIME"

Time	Sequence	Input	Process / Methods	Output (expected result)
13.00 – 13.15	Opening Welcome words by the moderator; Presentation of guests and officials			
	Review of the activities between the sessions Review of status of recommendation concerning establishment of professional education at the local high school	Report of the OG (written material if needed) Report of the school headmaster (written material for all participants)	Presentation in plenary Presentation in plenary Q&A session if needed	Forum participants (FP) are informed Forum participants (FP) are informed
13.15 – 14.00	Discussion of project ideas from previous sessions			
15 min.	"Children's playgrounds in Bolyarovo municipality" project Check the relevance with the criteria for eligible Forum project	Report of the WG / multimedia presentation and/or written material/ List with criteria	Presentation in plenary Q&A session WG reports on the necessity of expert contribution. Plenary discussion.	FP are informed about the project idea draft Agreement about the project idea relevance
15 min	"Equal start for every student – buying books for the needy ones" project Check the relevance with the criteria for eligible Forum project	Report of the WG / multimedia presentation and/or written material/ List with criteria	Presentation in plenary Q&A session WG reports on the necessity of expert contribution. Plenary discussion	FP are informed about the project idea draft Agreement about the project idea relevance
10 min	Enriching the project ideas	Projects' brief outline	Discussion by tables Plenary discussion	Suggestions to enrich project ideas
5 min	Approval of projects ready to be submitted to PC		Agreement	FP agree on the projects to be submitted to PC
14.00 – 14.35	Discussion of new topic: basic information, problems – defined and prioritized			
10 min.	Basic information – a survey with young people	Presentation of the WG – written material, basic issues visualized on a flipchart	Presentation in plenary	FP are informed about basic problems and ideas
15 min.	Define the problems	Results of the survey	Open brainstorming – FP add their remarks to list of problems defined by the survey. Discussion with a secretary.	List with problems, based on survey results and filled out by the participants
10 min.	Select the relevant problems to be treated by the Forum	List with problems	Discussion by tables. Each table prioritizes 3 major problems and a representative puts stickers on the flipchart.	3 major problems are prioritized.
14.35– 14.55	Coffee break			
14.55 – 16.15	Discussion of the new topic: analyze problems, look for solutions			
25-30 min.	Analysis of problems	List with prioritized problems	Plenary discussion with a secretary. Questions to responsible institutions, immediate answers (if possible).	List with causes for each problem
10 min.	Sharing good experience	Multimedia presentation and/or written material	Successful youth initiatives – presentation of youth leaders from another municipality.	FP are aware of possible solutions.
30 min.	Looking for solutions	List with problems, lists with causes, shared good experience	Discussion by tables. Each table makes a list with solutions (recommendations, project ideas). Plenary discussion of the solutions. Agreement.	FP agree on recommendations to be followed up or projects to be developed.
10 min.	Forming WG		On voluntary basis or one representative per table	WG are formed with assignments and deadlines.
16.15 – 16.30	Preparation of the next session: Basic information needed (WG assignment); Date, time and place for next session.		Plenary discussion	FP are clear about the preparatory work for the next session
16.30	End of the session			

ATTACHMENT 3

Example of first Forum session agenda

AGENDA

13:30 – 13:40   **OPENING OF THE SESSION**
Representative of the Municipality of Tryavna
Representatives of Partner organizations of the Forum Programme- Balkan Assist Association and Foundation for Local Government Reform

13:40 – 15:00   **INTRODUCTION TO THE WORK OF FORUM TRYAVNA**
Presentation of the moderator and the operative group
Presentation of Community Forum Tryavna
 • Objectives and Tasks
 • Possible results
 • Methodology of work
 • Structure
Presentation of participants
Adoption of the Forum structure (Working Tables)
Adoption of Code of Conduct
Adoption of operative rules of discussions
Adoption of Session Schedule

15:00 – 15:30   **COFFEE BREAK**

15:30 – 16:20   **DEFINE GENERAL THEME OF DISCUSSION WITHIN FORUM TRYAVNA**
Presentation of results of a public survey
Presentation of preliminary formulated themes
Discussion of themes by the working tables
Presentation of opinions by the working tables
Discussion of themes within Forum Tryavna

16:20 – 16:30   **DEFINE TASKS FOR SESSION # 2**

ATTACHMENT 4

Example of a regular session agenda

AGENDA

TRYAVNA – AN ATTRACTIVE PLACE FOR LIVING, WORKING AND TOURISM

MAIN TASKS:
• Discussion of sub-theme Linking people of arts and crafts and tourist business
• Discussion of sub-theme Relationship between environment and culture
• Discussion of project proposal within sub-theme Opportunities for entertainment and outdoor activities
• Selection of idea/s for demonstration project/s of the Forum
• Define themes and tasks for Session 4 (20 March)

14:00 – 14:10   **OPENING**
Present Session programme– Methody Methodiev- moderator
Present activities between Forum Sessions 2 and 3 – Georgi Kolarov, Co-moderator

14:10 – 15:00   **DISCUSSION OF SUB-THEME: LINKING PEOPLE OF ARTS AND CRAFTS AND TOURIST BUSINESS**
Sub-theme: Development of tourist product promotion in the sphere of cultural tourism
Presentation of working group
Discussion within working tables and in the Forum

15:30 – 16:00   **COFFEE BREAK**

16:00 – 16:45   **DISCUSSION OF SUB-THEME: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURE**
Presentation of resources and opportunities of Natural Park "Bulgarka" Discussion within working tables and in the Forum

16:45 – 17:00   **DISCUSSION OF SUB-THEME: OPPORTUNITIES OF ENTERTAINMENT AND OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES**
Project proposal: Building of sports facilities for outdoor activities
Presentation of working group
Discussion in the Forum

17:00 – 17:15   **COFFEE BREAK**

17:15 – 18:20   Presentation of idea/s for demonstration project/s of the Forum
Presentation of working groups
Discussion and selection

18:20 – 18:30   **DEFINE THEMES AND TASKS FOR SESSION 4 (20 MARCH)**

ATTACHMENT 5
Sample of Code of Conduct

CODE OF CONDUCT
COMMUNITY FORUM TETEVEN

1 The main objective of COMMUNITY FORUM TETEVEN is to unite the broad public, the NGOs and local Administration through a quality "public discourse" in the name of building and development of the civil society.

2 Members of the Forum represent the public and private sectors and each of them is equal in rights to the other.

3 Members of the Forum are selected as individuals.

4 Membership in the Forum includes agreement for personal participation in all Forum sessions. Replacement and representation is allowed in specific cases.

5 Members of the Forum formulate their opinion and share experience openly.

6 Discussions in the Forum are conducted honestly and in mutual respect. Recriminations and accusations are not allowed. Statements are short, clear, up to the point and in accordance with the rules accepted.

7 Members of the Forum are obliged to bring forward the information they have at disposal – in full and at the appropriate time.

8 Members of the Forum will be always ready to listen to others' opinion, to motivate and argue their opinion, to be flexible in questioning it and in reorientation in case of acquiring new information.

9 Members of the Forum exert efforts to reach consensus on all issues and try to find solutions for the problems in cooperation and in a spirit of mutual benefit. The objective is not only to share opinions but also to formulate concepts for Community development through elaboration of projects, proposals and models, in the light of sustainability and long term perspectives.

10 In case of a conflict, Forum members are obliged to contribute to its beneficial solution.

11 The Forum formulates recommendations to the Local Authorities and other respective institutions and organizations. Participants in the Forum are obliged to answer the recommendations which are a matter of common knowledge.

12 Recommendations are not legally compulsory solutions, they do not infringe upon participants' sphere of competence.

13 Participants are obliged to check on implementation of Forum recommendations, to assess and analyse them. This applies also to the period after Forum completion. In case of a refusal to implement a recommendation, it shall be explained to the Forum.

14 Members of the Forum shall not undertake actions against formulated recommendations which might harm their result. If such solutions are a subject to supreme considerations, they shall be reported to the Forum.

15 Sessions of the Forum are public. Their protocols are at the disposal of anyone interested.

16 The main discussion circle is formed by the working tables; the public (i.e. guests to the Forum) can be invited to participate in particular phases of the discussion.

ATTACHMENT 6
Helpful tools for keeping the discussion away from a fight for position

ENLARGING THE SCOPE OF THE TOPIC
• Who is especially concerned about this problem? Who suffers? Who benefits?
• How did it happen that this problem still exists?
• What solutions have other municipalities found?
• What other (side-) effects does this solution have?

NARROWING THE SCOPE OF THE TOPIC
• What exactly is the stumbling block?
• Can it be by-passed?
• Can it be eliminated without destroying the idea?

ASKING ABOUT ADVANTAGES FOR OTHERS
• Participants list benefits they see for other stakeholder groups.
• Other stakeholder groups confirm whether or not they share this view.

ASKING FOR FUTURE EFFECTS
• What is the durability, the economic sustainability?
• What will our children think about this idea?

ASKING FOR OWNERSHIP
• Who takes action now?
• Who will feel responsible for this in two years time?

> Let the smoke go out of the stack. Don't confront troublemakers; make them play by the rules; design new rules, if necessary, to fit their character. Avoid individualization of criticism; always let the audience decide.

Possible procedures for selection of ideas or proposals in the course of discussion:

• Develop selection criteria based on reasons stated during the discussion: make visible all reasons given, and condense the reasons to selection criteria.
• Introduce the method of pair-wise ranking: out of all options available, select two options and ask: Which option of the two do you prefer? And then go on by asking: Why? What speaks for this choice? Go on with another couple of options.
• Use the Hyde Park Corner approach: The stakeholder groups prepare a three minute speech to bring forward their views regarding a problem, their reasons for a solution or their criteria and arguments for a project. Each group designates a speaker who comes forward to the "Hyde Park Corner" to deliver his/her speech in public. After the speeches, the forum collects the most convincing arguments and thus consolidates the discussion or takes a decision by voting.

ATTACHMENT 7

Procedure for prioritization of the projects within the last Forum session

ATTACHMENT 7 (contd.)

Part of the session protocol

1. Each project which has been approved by the Project Committee* should be presented shortly as a summary, with a common structure for all proposed projects, and sent in advance to all Forum participants.

2. At the Forum Session each applicant organization (i.e. the working group mandated by the Forum with project development) demonstrates to what extent their project meets the criteria of a Forum project. The organizations each have the same structure and time for their presentations, set in advance. The Forum project criteria should be sent to all Forum participants together with the project proposal summaries.

3. Following each project presentation the floor is open for questions and discussion.

4. After hearing all project presentations, on the basis of a consensus, the tables prioritize the proposed projects. The first ranked project they rate at the highest degree equal to the total number of projects, and each project is rated a degree lower. (For example we have 10 projects – the first ranked of them will receive 10 points, the second – 9, the third one – 8, and the last project – 1 point). Each table will be given a prepared form which is to be filled in with the results.

5. During a coffee break the Operative Group inserts the results in a common table and summarizes the results of the prioritization.

6. Forum participants are introduced to the results of the prioritized projects in a descending order together with information about the requested funds by the Project Fund and by the Partners' Contributions. This table clearly shows the number of concrete projects to be funded by the Project Fund. (The funding amount for projects, determined by the donor agency, is a final one. The municipality can increase its contribution if it is willing to finance a follow-up project.)

7. The project arrangement, based on the results of a consensus reached at different tables regarding project prioritization, should be the final one.

* In many Forum programs, an advisory committee of outside experts is introduced to check on the quality of the proposals, the sustainability of the projects and if necessary to recommend changes for project improvements and financing. Projects that are formally approved (or rather termed eligible) by such a Project Committee (PC) are later involved in the prioritization process during the last Forum session. The ultimate decision to actually select and implement a project remains with the Forum.

PROJECT PRIORITIZATION TABLE

FORUM YABLANITZA   **WORKING TABLE NO. ...3....**

Project code	Name of the project	Ranking result Table No. 8	Total project cost $	Contribution from project fund $
F1	Renovation of town square "Освобождение"	8	8'230	19'123
F2	Youth club	2	xxxx	yyyy
F3	Tourist paths Dragoitza	7	1'311	2'626
F4	xxxxxxxxxxx	5		
F5	xxxxx	1		
F6	xx	10		
F7		12		
F8		6		
F9		3		
F10		9		
F11		11		
F12	xxxxxxxxxxx	4	xxxxxx	xxxxxx
Total all projects		78	yyyyyyy	yyyyyyyyy

All projects have to be ranked by priority
Highest priority ranking: 12 points
Lowest priority ranking: 1 point

Signed: …………………….....................

ATTACHMENT 7 (contd.)
Part of the session protocol

RANKING OF PROJECTS BY WORKING TABLES

FORUM YABLANITZA

Project Code	Table 1	Table 2	Table 3	Table 4	Table 5	Table 6	Table 7	Table 8	Table 9	Total
F1			8							85
F2			2							37
F3			7							96
F4			5							104
F5			1							18
F6			10							etc.
F7			12							
F8			6							
F9			3							
F10			9							
F11			11							
F12			4							

ATTACHMENT 7 (contd.)
Part of the session protocol

OVERALL RESULTS OF PROJECT RANKING

FORUM YABLANITZA   **ALL WORKING TABLES**

Project code	Name of the project	Total ranking result of all working tables	Total project cost $	Contribution from project fund $
F4	xxxxxxxxxxx	104	xxxxxx	xxxxxx
F3	Tourist paths Dragoitza	96	1'311	2'626
F1	Renovation of town square "Освобождение"	85	8'230	19'123
F9				
F8				
F6	xx			
F11				
F7				
F2	Youth club	37	xxxx	yyyy
F12	xxxxxxxxxx		xxxxx	xxxx
F10				
F5		18		
All tables		702		

tables: 9   Initial Project fund amount $........
projects: 12   Cost demonstration project $ …………..
Lowest possible result: 12   Available project fund amount $ …………..
Highest possible result: 108

ATTACHMENT 8
Example of follow-up session agenda

FOLLOW-UP SESSION 2
COMMUNITY FORUM TETEVEN

AGENDA

3 OCTOBER 2006 / TUESDAY, MUNICIPALITY OF TETEVEN

13.30 – 13.40 **OPENING OF THE SESSION**
Agreement on the Agenda
Maya Krusteva – Forum moderator

13.40 – 13.50 **GENERALIZATION OF THE FORUM RESULTS**
General review of the results
Maya Krusteva – Forum moderator
Luba Docheva – co-moderator

13.50 – 14.00 **REVIEW THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS**
Presentation
Luba Docheva – co-moderator
Discussion, comments, questions

14.00 – 15.00 **PRESENTATION OF THE PROJECTS STATUS –**
DISCUSSION, COMMENTS, AND QUESTIONS
Short presentation of each of the projects following a preliminary
set-up structure; time for reporting – up to 10 minutes per project
Discussion – up to 10 minutes per project

15.00 – 15.20 **COFFEE BREAK**

15.20 – 16.10 **PRESENTATION OF THE PROJECTS STATUS –**
DISCUSSION, COMMENTS, AND QUESTIONS
Continuation

16.10 – 16.20 **DISCUSSION, COMMENTS, AND QUESTIONS ON THE**
OVERALL WORK OF THE OF THE FORUM

16.20 – 16.30 **SUMMARIZE THE DISCUSSION AND CLOSURE OF THE**
SESSION