



Strasbourg, 10 November 2009

SIGG(2009)3

The European Label of Innovation and Good Governance

Benchmark on the Label of Innovation and Good Governance

Explanation of how to use this benchmark

For each of the 12 Principles of good democratic governance detailed in the Strategy for Innovation and Good Governance at Local Level, the following information is provided in this benchmark:

- a. a description of the good governance Principle and a list of the activities by that would typically help a municipality to deliver that Principle;
- b. a self assessment section where municipalities are asked to identify their level of maturity for that Principle. The levels of maturity are the following: aware, developing, practising and excelling.

Aware	Developing	Practising	Excelling
We are aware of the key issues to be addressed but currently have no, or very few approaches developed to address them.	We recognise key issues and are developing approaches to address them, although there has been limited practical implementation so far.	We have well developed plans to address key issues, with significant examples of implementation.	We can show clear evidence of good practice which can be shared and are further developing our approach to ensure long term and sustainable improvement.

- c. evidence to support the self assessment provided by the municipality.

2. A municipality would be expected to:

- a. read the information provided for each Principle;
 - b. consider the evidence they have available which would support the delivery of the Principle;
 - c. make a self assessment of their maturity for that Principle; and
 - d. record the evidence they would wish to offer in support of their self assessment.
3. The description of the ‘*indicators*’ reflects a level of governance arrangements that would be consistent with a standard that would be appropriate for the European Label of Innovation and Good Governance. A municipality which is ‘*practicing*’ for a Principle of good governance is likely to be at the level required for the European Label of Innovation and Good Governance.
4. Information used as evidence to complete the self assessment should be easily available to municipalities from a variety of sources for example: existing policies, procedure documents, operating rules and guidance, internal audit and review reports and external audit, inspection and review

documents. It is expected that the citizen survey required as part of the European Label of Innovation and Good Governance assessment will provide a useful source of evidence to support the self assessment.

5. At the bottom of each Principle, you will find one question or statement which is taken from the citizen's questionnaire. The way these statements apply is measured as follows:

Applies very well (4)	Applies quite well (3)	Applies quite poorly (2)	Applies very poorly (1)	Don't know, no opinion (0)
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6. The Summary Maturity Matrix is used to determine if a municipality meets the criteria for the label by totalling the individual scores for each Principle. The total score is determined by adding the points scored for each of the indicators of each of the 12 Principles using the following system: Aware = 1 point; Developing = 2 points; Practising = 3 points and Excelling = 4 points. This allows for a municipality to achieve maximum score of 400 points and a minimum score of 100 points. Typically a total score in excess of 300 points (equal to 75%) would be required to obtain the European Label of Innovation and Good Governance.
7. Implementation of the benchmark can be country or region wide. Some questions in this benchmark may not be applicable for every region/country. Of course efforts have been made in order to prevent this. Sometimes this could unfortunately not be overcome. It is therefore up to the National Stakeholders Platform¹ to decide if a question needs to be removed from this benchmark.

¹ For the role and responsibilities of the National Stakeholders Platform please see document 'Structures and procedures of attributing the label of innovation and good governance'.

			EVALUATION				YOUR COMMENTS
PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY	INDICATORS	A	D	P	E	
1. Fair Conduct of Elections, Representation and Participation	1. Local elections are conducted freely and fairly, according to international standards and national legislation, and without any fraud.	1. The municipality conducts elections according to laws which match international standards of best practice.					
	2. Citizens are at the centre of public activity and they are involved in clearly defined ways in public life at local level.	2. As part of a defined consultation process, the municipality actively publicises its plans and invites individual citizens, NGOs, businesses, local media and other groups to comment on these plans.					
		3. Municipalities strive to improve local regulations and practical arrangements concerning citizens' participation in local public life.					
		4. The public is consulted right at the beginning of the decision making process.					
	3. All men and women can have a voice in decision-making, either directly or through legitimate intermediate bodies that represent their interests. Such broad participation is built on the freedoms of expression, assembly and association.	5. There is an active programme of elected representatives engaging with citizens in decision making					
		6. There is an active program for encouraging individuals to take on elected representational roles.					
	4. All voices, including those of the less privileged and most vulnerable, are heard and taken into account in decision-making, including over the allocation of resources.	7. Access to vote has been considered and actions taken to ensure no groups are excluded or disadvantaged.					
		8. There is an active program to include the less privileged into decision-making.					
	5. There is always an honest attempt to mediate between various legitimate interests and to reach a broad consensus on what is in the best interest of the whole community and on how this can be achieved.	9. The municipality has identified key stakeholder groups (that includes NGOs, businesses, local media and other interest groups). This list is subject to review and updating.					
		10. The municipality cooperates/have a dialogue with a number of stakeholders and involves those groups and individuals in policy development, planning and decision making.					

		11. The municipality has introduced techniques for deliberative process in the municipality (deliberative hearing, citizen's jury, participation budgeting etc).					
	6. Decisions are taken according to the will of the many, while the rights and legitimate interests of the few are respected.	12. The demographic composition of the body of elected officials represents the demographic composition of the municipality.					
Citizens' questionnaire			4	3	2	1	0
	In this municipality people are satisfied with the opportunities they have to influence municipal decisions which are of interest to them.						
YOUR QUESTIONS/ PROPOSALS							

			EVALUATION				YOUR COMMENTS
PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY	INDICATORS	A	D	P	E	
2. Responsiveness	1. Objectives, rules, structures, and procedures are adapted to the legitimate expectations and needs of citizens	1. Clear guidelines and procedures exist in all areas where officials and elected representatives have to make decisions.					
		2. Municipalities ensure that all elected representatives have the interests of local people at heart.					
	2. Public services are delivered, and requests and complaints are responded to within a reasonable timeframe.	3. An individual complaints procedure regarding the functioning of local public services and authorities, with response time targets has been developed and implemented and there is evidence that it is being used.					
		4. Information relating to consultation made about the municipality, and responses to the consultation including any resulting change is made available to employees, elected representatives and citizens.					
		5. Information relating to complaints made about the municipality, and responses to the complaints including any resulting change is made available to employees, elected representatives and citizens					
		6. If changes in policy and service delivery are required, they are made in response to consultations, complaints and other methods of communication. The changes made are publicized.					
		7. The municipality provides good 'customer' care by ensuring that services are provided by knowledgeable and well-trained staff who understand the needs of their population.					
Citizens' questionnaire		4	3	2	1	0	
	• In this municipality complaints over service provision are handled in a professional manner.						
Your questions/proposals							

			EVALUATION				YOUR COMMENTS
PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY	INDICATORS	A	D	P	E	
3. Efficiency and Effectiveness	1. Results meet the agreed objectives	1. The municipality plans its activities and budget according to its strategic guidance plans at a strategic and an operational level to achieve objectives and make best use of the human resources available through a good organisation of services.					
	2. Best possible use is made of the resources available	2. Performance information is regularly collected and reviewed. The municipality acts to deal with gaps between expected and actual performance.					
	3. Performance management systems make it possible to evaluate and enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of services	3. The municipality develops a performance management framework that covers all of its objectives, services and functions including appropriate indicators and reports regularly on its performance and its progress.					
		4. The municipality compares its performance with other municipalities and uses this information to improve its own efficiency and effectiveness.					
		5. The municipality develops a strategic and operational evaluation document for the evaluation of public policies.					
		6. The municipality takes into account the results of its evaluations on order to implement its future public policies.					
	4. Audits are carried out at regular intervals to assess and improve performance ² .	7. Procedures, performance reports and information systems are independently audited and the results reported to the councillors.					
		8. All major services and functions are regularly reviewed at appropriate intervals, to evaluate their performance and impact.					

² Audit refers to audits to improve the working of municipality.

		9. Municipalities keep appropriate records to ensure patterns can be identified and efficiency and effectiveness increased.						
Citizens' questionnaire			4	3	2	1	0	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On the whole, people in this municipality are quite satisfied with the services offered by the municipality. 							
YOUR QUESTIONS/ PROPOSALS								

			EVALUATION				YOUR COMMENTS
PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY	INDICATORS	A	D	P	E	
4. Openness and Transparency	1. Decisions are taken and enforced in accordance with rules and regulations.	1. The municipality has a clear and well understood legal framework which is widely publicised.					
		2. The municipality's legal framework includes a clear decision making scheme of delegation, setting out who has the responsibility for taking each decision, and how decisions will be taken, enforced and publicised.					
		3. The municipality takes and enforces decisions in a manner which is open, transparent, accountable and timely, and in accordance with rules and regulations and which matches international standards of best practice.					
		4. There is a process for appealing against decisions which is widely available and understood.					
		5. The opposition has the right to formulate proposals, amendments, put questions to councillors, conduct research on certain themes, being able to take part in certain bodies of local government.					
	2. There is public access to all information which is not classified for well-specified reasons as provided for by law (such as the protection of privacy or ensuring the fairness of procurement procedures).	6. Municipalities ensure regular and easy contact between citizens with elected representatives.					
		7. Municipalities actively informs the population.					
		8. Municipality meetings are open to the public and media and agendas and documents are publically available.					
	3. Information on decisions, implementation of policies and results is made available to the public in such a way as to enable it to effectively follow and contribute to the work of the local authority.	9. The municipality has a 12 month rolling forward work programme that has received input from citizens, and is publicised widely.					
		10. The elected representatives show an openness towards the media, and a willingness to provide the media with information.					

Citizens' questionnaire		4	3	2	1	0	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This municipality does a good job in informing citizens about issues on the local political agenda. 						
YOUR QUESTIONS/ PROPOSALS							

				EVALUATION				YOUR COMMENTS	
PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY	INDICATORS		A	D	P	E		
5. Rule of Law	1. The local authorities abide by the law and judicial decisions	1. The municipality complies with all applicable laws and regulations.							
		2. The municipality publicly reports any judicial decisions or sanctions taken under alw of all offenses it has committed.							
	2. Rules and regulations are adopted in accordance with procedures provided for by law and are enforced impartially.	3. Rules and regulations are adopted in accordance with procedures provided for by law.							
		4. Rules and regualtions are enfoced impartially.							
Citizens' questionnaire				4	3	2	1	0	
	● In this municipality, special interests prevail, not the common interests of all residents.								
YOUR QUESTIONS/ PROPOSALS									

			EVALUATION				YOUR COMMENTS	
PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY	INDICATORS	A	D	P	E		
6. Ethical Conduct	1. The public good is placed before individual interests.	1. An independent panel or committee is appointed with responsibility for reviewing remuneration of elected representatives.						
		2. Public policies are decided taking in account the social welfare role of the municipality						
		3. The local public interest guides the allocation of budgetary resources of the municipality						
	2. There are effective measures to prevent and combat all forms of corruption.	4. Codes of conduct specify the ethical standards expected of elected representatives and officials. These include a requirement for interests, gifts and hospitality to be recorded in publicly available registers.						
		5. Specific procedures have been adopted for decisions in areas that are vulnerable to corruption including procurement, selling municipal assets and awarding permits and licences.						
		6. An annual review of anti corruption arrangements is undertaken, for example by internal or external audit.						
		7. Personnel policies require staff to be appointed, promoted and rewarded on merit, and/or disciplined only in accordance with approved procedures.						
	3. Conflicts of interest are declared in a timely manner and persons involved must abstain from taking part in relevant decisions	8. Elected representatives and staff are required to declare any potential conflict of interest that could impact on decision taking and to abstain from taking part in relevant decisions making.						
		9. Municipalities ensure an effective and efficient procurement and it uses pre-set selection criteria.						
		10. Municipalities ensure free access to public procurement documents and decisions with regard to the awarding of the contract.						
Citizens' questionnaire			4	3	2	1	0	
	● In this municipality, people with good personal connections are given preferential treatment							
YOUR QUESTIONS/ PROPOSALS								

				EVALUATION				YOUR COMMENTS	
PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY	INDICATORS		A	D	P	E		
7. Competence and Capacity	1. The professional skills of those who deliver governance are continuously maintained and strengthened in order to improve their output and impact.	1. The municipality identifies the skills needed to deliver its services effectively and undertakes a skills audit to identify any gaps as part of a strategic workforce plan							
		2. The municipality operates a system to implement personal development plans for its staff.							
	2. Public officials are motivated to continuously improve their performance	3. Arrangements are in place to reward good performance and improve poor performance							
		4. The municipality has a recruitment and selection policy and procedures that are made public and implemented consistently							
		5. A training plan is developed, implemented and monitored to ensure that training needs are fully met, and professional skills continually developed.							
		6. Municipalities review the implementation and outcomes of recruitment, training and promotion procedures and makes improvements based on that.							
	3. Practical methods and procedures are created and used in order to transform skills into capacity and to produce better results.	7. Selection criteria are defined for each post and communicated to all applicants. The criteria reflect the essential requirements of the job and do not exclude any social groups.							
		8. Staff receives regular appraisals of their performance and development as part of a systematic approach to performance appraisal and career development.							
Citizens’ questionnaire				4	3	2	1	0	
	● Most elected officials in this municipality are competent people who (usually) know what they are doing.								
YOUR QUESTIONS/ PROPOSALS									

				EVALUATION				YOUR COMMENTS
PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY	INDICATORS		A	D	P	E	
8. Innovation and Openness to Change	1. New and efficient solutions to problems are sought and advantage is taken of modern methods of service provision.	1. The municipality has a structured approach to innovation, research and development.						
		2. Municipalities take action to identify and implement examples of good practice and new solutions.						
	2. There is readiness to pilot and experiment new programmes and to learn from the experience of others.	3. Established processes are routinely evaluated and challenged to determine if there is a more effective method of delivery						
		4. The municipality has in the last three years participated in at least one state-/regional or own initiated development program.						
	a. A climate favourable to change is created in the interest of achieving better results.	5. Elected representatives and staff are clearly committed to taking action to ensure that benefit is derived from new solutions and good practices.						
		6. There is a regular process of review of municipal operations and plans in light of changing practices and solutions.						
			4	3	2	1	0	
Citizens' questionnaire	● In this municipality there are good procedures for handling citizen suggestions to improve public service delivery.							
YOUR QUESTIONS/ PROPOSALS								

			EVALUATION				YOUR COMMENTS
PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY	INDICATORS	A	D	P	E	
9. Sustainability and Long Term Orientation	1. The needs of future generations are taken into account in current policies.	1. The municipality has a structured approach to long term development.					
		2. The needs of the future generation is taken into account routinely in the planning process.					
	2. The sustainability of the community is constantly taken into account. Decisions strive to internalise all costs and not to transfer problems and tensions, be they environmental, structural, financial, economic or social, to future generations.	3. There is a clearly demonstrated high level commitment from politicians and senior management to achieving corporate sustainability.					
		4. Ensuring sustainability is an integral part of policy and strategy development, action planning and target setting within all departments, functions and service areas.					
		5. Allocation of specific resources and responsibility to mainstream sustainability (for example, a multi-functional working group).					
		6. Undertake an integrated examination ³ of the municipalities' impact and influence on the municipality performance.					
		7. Ensuring routinely that the municipality's processes such as performance management, audit and scrutiny provide mechanisms for feedback and challenge on sustainability in practice and performance.					
	3. There is a broad and long-term perspective on the future of the local community along with a sense of what is needed for such development.	8. There is a participatory approach to decision making for a sustainable development.					
		9. A capital financing plan that ensures the long term viability of the infrastructure and assets of the municipality.					
	4. There is an understanding of the historical, cultural and social complexities in which this perspective is grounded.	10. There is a structured approach on how to preserve historical, cultural and social aspect of the municipality.					

³ An integrated examination refers to a detailed analysis of the municipalities performance in which all parts in relation to environmental, social and economic issues resource consumption, environmental degradation, social cohesion, health inequalities, economic development etc are covered.

Citizens' questionnaire		4	3	2	1	0	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In this municipality decision-makers involve citizens in attempts to find solutions to local problems and sustainability. 						
YOUR QUESTIONS/ PROPOSALS							

			EVALUATION				YOUR COMMENTS
PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY	INDICATORS	A	D	P	E	
10. Sound Financial Management	1. Charges do not exceed the cost of services provided and do not reduce demand excessively, particularly in the case of important public services.	1. Elected officials are clear about the rationale and the basis for charges for services.					
	2. Prudence is observed in financial management, including in the contracting and use of loans, in the estimation of resources, revenues and reserves, and in the use of exceptional revenue.	2. Standing financial instructions identify the financial responsibilities that apply to everyone working for the municipality.					
		3. An internal audit function reviews financial transactions to ensure compliance with approved internal procedures.					
		4. Regular reports are presented to officials and elected representatives comparing actual income and expenditure with budget.					
		5. The accounts are audited by persons independent of the municipality, and the conclusions of the audit made public.					
		6. The annual audit includes a review of value money in the provision of services by the municipality.					
	3. Multi-annual budget plans are prepared, with consultation of the public.	7. Annual and multiyear budgets are adopted before the start of the relevant period. The budgets should outline key assumptions and risks.					
		8. The budget preparation process should include extensive consultation with external stakeholders.					
		9. Approved budgets, tax rates and an annual report including information on service outputs and outcomes, are made publically available and a summary of the budget and taxes is made available to all citizens.					

	4. Risks are properly estimated and managed, including by the publication of consolidated accounts and, in the case of public-private partnerships, by sharing the risks realistically.	10. The municipality identifies and manages its financial and service delivery risks by either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accepting and recognising the risks; • avoiding the risks (e.g. by transferring an activity to another entity); • transferring the risks (e.g. by means of a public-private partnerships or obtaining commercial insurance); or • sharing the risks (e.g. working collaboratively with another municipality). 					
	5. The local authority takes part in arrangements for inter-municipal solidarity, fair sharing of burdens and benefits and reduction of risks (equalisation systems, inter-municipal co-operation, and mutualisation of risks).	11. The municipality is, together with other municipalities, actively involved in activities relating to the prevention of sound financial management, financial mismanagement and risk management.					
Citizens' questionnaire			4	3	2	1	0
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This municipality does a good job in informing citizens about what taxpayers get for their money. 						
YOUR QUESTIONS/ PROPOSALS							

				EVALUATION				YOUR COMMENTS	
PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY	INDICATORS		A	D	P	E		
11. Human Rights, Cultural Diversity and Social Cohesion	1. Within the local authority’s sphere of influence, human rights are respected, protected and implemented, and discrimination on any grounds is combated.	1. The municipality ensure that all different groups are involved and has implemented anti-discrimination measures and has defined targets which are put in the place in all policy area’s.							
		2. Municipalities take action to protect all citizens from discrimination and exclusion.							
	2. Cultural diversity is treated as an asset, and continuous efforts are made to ensure that all have a stake in the local community, identify with it and do not feel excluded.	3. The municipality actively promotes diversity and cohesion as being in the best interests of all citizens by making resources available, supporting and subsidising the activities of non-governmental actors, promoting dialogue and encouraging partnerships between various key social actors.							
	3. Social cohesion and the integration of disadvantaged areas are promoted.	4. The municipality has set clear objectives to improve social cohesion and maximise the potential of cultural diversity by encouraging greater inter-cultural mixing and interaction.							
		5. The municipality has taken action in all relevant policy areas to meet those objectives.							
	4. Access to essential services is preserved, in particular for the most disadvantaged sections of the population.	6. Politicians and staff ensure, together with all strategic partners, that the equality targets are embedded in and translated into strategies, spatial plans, and public service delivery.							
Citizens’ questionnaire				4	3	2	1	0	
	● In this municipality most people are considerate of others and are helpful.								
YOUR QUESTIONS/ PROPOSALS									

			EVALUATION				YOUR COMMENTS
PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY	INDICATORS	A	D	P	E	
12. Accountability	1. All decision-makers, collective and individual, take responsibility for their decisions.	1. All decision makers are clear about their collective and individual responsibilities for the decisions they take and these are clearly set out in a legal framework and in their job descriptions.					
	2. Decisions are reported on, explained and can be sanctioned.	2. The council prepare regular public reports (at least annually) to account for the decisions they have taken.					
		3. The municipality’s legal framework includes details of reporting, explaining and sanctioning decisions which is well understood by elected representatives, officials and citizens.					
		4. Reports and other documents will be accessible and made available free of charge					
	3. There are effective remedies against maladministration and against actions of local authorities which infringe civil rights.	5. The municipality has a transparent and independent audit arrangement, as set out in the legal framework. The scrutiny arrangements are respected and considered as independent and are undertaken without fear or favour.					
		6. Auditors are clear who to hold to account for each decision and the relevant decision takers willingly present themselves for public scrutiny.					
		7. The municipality has a robust process as set out in its legal framework, to remedy against maladministration and against actions of local authorities which infringe civil rights, in accordance with rules, regulations and best practice.					
Citizens’ questionnaire		4	3	2	1	0	
	• In this municipality elected officials are good at explaining their decisions to residents.						
YOUR QUESTIONS/ PROPOSALS							

Summary Maturity Matrix

Principle	Headline Definition	Maturity Level				
		Aware	Developing	Practicing	Excelling	Citizens questionnaire
Principle 1	Fair Conduct of Elections, Representation and Participation					
Principle 2	Responsiveness					
Principle 3	Efficiency and Effectiveness					
Principle 4	Openness and Transparency					
Principle 5	Rule of Law					
Principle 6	Ethical Conduct					
Principle 7	Competency and Capacity					
Principle 8	Innovation and Openness to Change					
Principle 9	Sustainability and Long term Orientation					
Principle 10	Sound Financial Management					
Principle 11	Human Rights, Cultural Diversity and Social Cohesion					
Principle 12	Accountability					
	Total Score					