

Application Form

**PART 1: BASIC DATA**

**Experience data** (complete the information below in a clear and concise manner)

|  |                                      |   |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Title of the experience:</b> Katılım Kafe (Participation Cafe)  |                                      |   |
| <b>Name of the city or region:</b> İstanbul  |                                      |   |
| <b>Inhabitants of the city or territory :</b> 15 840 900 inhabitants (According to 2021 Data)  |                                      |   |
| <b>Country:</b> Turkey   |                                      |   |
| <b>Institution presenting the candidacy</b> (name of the municipality, department, government, institution leading the candidate experience): İstanbul Citizens Assembly   |                                      |   |
| <b>Website of the experience or institution:</b> <a href="https://istanbulkentkonseyi.org.tr/">https://istanbulkentkonseyi.org.tr/</a>   |                                      |   |
| <b>Profiles in social networks of the experience or the institution:</b> Non- governmental organizations, district (municipal) city councils, unions, professional chambers, universities, local authorities, individual participants, trade associations etc. |                                      |   |
| <b>Start date of the experience:</b> December 2021   |                                      |   |
| <b>End date of the experience</b> (if operational, indicate "ongoing"): ongoing  |                                      |   |
| <b>Budget of the experience</b> (indicate the budget of the experience or the resources mobilized for its development and implementation): <b>There is no specific budget defined or allocated for the application.</b>  |                                      |   |
| <b>Type of candidacy</b><br>(Mark with an X in the right column)   | New experience                       | x |
|  | Innovation on an existing experience | x |
|  | Continuity of an experience          |   |

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| <p><b>Type of experience</b></p> <p>(Mark with an X in the right column)<br/>(you may choose more than one)</p>          | Participatory budgeting  |   |
|  | Participatory planning   |   |
|  | Standing council   |   |
|  | Workshop/meeting for diagnosis, monitoring, etc.   | x |
|  | Public Hearing/Forum   | x |
|  | Poll/referendum  |   |
|  | Assemblies / Citizen juries / Deliberation spaces  | x |
|  | E-government/Open government/Digital platforms   |   |
|  | Citizen initiative   |   |
| Other (specify):   |  |   |
| <p><b>Objective of the experience</b></p> <p>(Mark with an X in the right column)<br/>(you may choose more than one)</p> | To achieve higher levels of equality in terms of participation                           | x |
|  | Including diversity as a criterion for inclusion   | x |
|  | Community empowerment  | x |
|  | To empower non-organized citizens  | x |
|  | To increase citizen's rights in terms of political participation                         | x |
|  | To connect different tools of participation within a participatory democracy "ecosystem" | x |
|  | To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the mechanisms of participatory democracy | X |
| To improve the quality of public decision-making through the mechanisms of participatory democracy                       | x  |   |

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|---|---|----------|---|
|   | To improve the evaluation and accountability of the mechanisms of participatory democracy |          |   |
|   | To improve any public policy through the active participation of the public               |          | x |
| <b>Territorial area</b><br>(Mark with an X in the right column)<br>(you may choose more than one) | All the territory   | Local    | x |
|   |   | Regional |   |
|   | District  |          | x |
|   | Neighborhood  |          |   |
| <b>Thematic area</b><br>(Mark with an X in the right column)<br>(you may choose more than one)    | Governance  |          | x |
|   | Education   |          | x |
|   | Transport   |          | x |
|   | Urban management  |          | x |
|   | Health  |          | x |
|   | Security  |          | x |
|   | Environment/Climate change and/or urban agriculture                                       |          | x |
|   | Civic associations, grassroots and new social movements.                                  |          | x |
|   | Culture   |          | x |
|   | Housing   |          | x |
|   | Job creation  |          | x |
|   | Decentralization  |          |   |
| Local development   |   | X        |   |

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|   | Training/learning                               |   |
|   | Economy and/or finances                         | x |
|   | Legal regulations                               |   |
|   | Social inclusion                                | X |
|   | All   |   |
|   | Other (write the topic)                         |   |
| <p><b>Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) associated with the practice</b><br/> <i>Mark with an X in the right column (more than one option can be chosen)</i><br/> <i>You can also add the specific target</i></p> | SDG 1 - No poverty                              | X |
|   | SDG 2 - Zero hunger                             | X |
|   | SDG 3 - Good health and well- being             | X |
|   | SDG 4 - Quality education                       | X |
|   | SDG 5 - Gender equality                         | X |
|   | SDG 6 - Clean water and sanitation              | x |
|   | SDG 7 - Affordable and clean energy             |   |
|   | SDG 8 - Decent work and economic growth         | x |
|   | SDG 9 - Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure | x |
|   | SDG 10 - Reduced inequality                     | x |
|   | SDG 11 - Sustainable cities and communities     | x |
|   | SDG 12 - Responsible consumption and production | x |
|   | SDG 13 - Climate action                         |   |
|   | SDG 14 - Life below water                       |   |

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|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
|  | SDG 15 - Life on land                           |   |
|  | SDG 16 - Peace, justice and strong institutions |   |
|  | SDG 17 - Partnership for the goals              | x |

## PART 2: DESCRIPTION OF THE EXPERIENCE

Fill in the following fields clearly and concisely. You can add links if you consider it appropriate.

### **Context**

*In a **maximum of 300 words**, it presents the cultural, geographical, historical, institutional and socioeconomic context of the city, the territory in which the experience takes place.*

*Istanbul is a city that lies on two continents, Europe and Asia. It is also a cradle of civilizations that has hosted Prehistory, Byzantine and Ottoman Empires, Republican Period etc. Today, Istanbul is home to 39 districts, 964 neighborhoods and approximately 15 million residents from various socio-economic, cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Since its geographical importance, Istanbul has been subject to large waves of immigration from abroad and inland, and a population explosion has occurred correspondingly. As a rapidly expanding and poly-centric metropolis, Istanbul has faced numerous challenges. Various problems such as irregular migration, economic crisis, unmanaged urban development, climate disasters etc. Those are all on the current agenda of Istanbul.*

*Each district in Istanbul has a unique urban pattern, demographic structure and various needs as well. Since each local government's agenda is diverse and unique, efforts carried out at the province-scale or top-down policies usually ignore local agendas, needs of local residents or above-mentioned unique structures. Once the obstacles before effective urban policy-making recognized, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality chose to utilize participatory policy-making methods and tools with collaboration of civil society, local people etc. Istanbul Citizens' Assembly (ICA), which aims at realizing the above-mentioned 'civil participation efforts', was established after local elections in 2019. The main objective of ICA is to find needs-satisfying solutions to leading problems of city dwellers, by means of bringing together various civil society actors; building participatory environments for local people; activating several participation tools and projects; finding solutions to leading problems with the attendance of various shareholders, in a participatory and deliberative manner. As a result, a variety of efforts, such as the Participatory Budget Model in Istanbul; Participation Cafe; Istanbul asks Children; Participation School Project; Youth, Women's Council, and Children's Councils etc. are materialized immediately in a short term.*

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### Precedents

*Explain the precedents and origins of the experience: if it is the innovation of an existing experience, what are its origins, if it is a new experience, what are the antecedents in participation in your city/municipality/region. You can also indicate if you have been inspired by experiences in other cities/countries. (maximum 300 words)*

*Katılm Kafe (Participation Cafe) is a tool to facilitate district-based participation of city dwellers by means of a series of meetings. Experiences and methods from other European countries and World Bank were researched and analyzed in order to inspire this unique project. However, socio-economic status and political and cultural peculiarities of local actors, the surface area of Istanbul and its polycentric- structure were considered before taking any action. Besides, the usage of video conferencing platforms is very low in Turkey. That's why; the meetings were planned to be held in a physical environment that would increase the participation of vulnerable groups and the interaction between various local residents. The role of civil society organizations and mukhtars (elected local governors) are very determinant over the attendance of local residents to civil meetings and participatory processes in Turkey. Thus, a social network, which would be utilized while informing people about the process and attracting their attention, was established. As a result, a new technique, which oversees and gives weight to the local needs and potentials of Istanbul, was preferred so as to utilize during the participatory decision-making process and practices.*

### Objectives of the experience

*What is the objective listed in Part 1 that you think is the most important, and indicate other outstanding objectives of the experience (maximum 100 words)*

*Participation Cafe is so flexible that it gives room to residents to speak up their voices and share their opinions. It prioritizes:*

- *Sharing the outcomes of meetings to the relevant authorities,*
- *Brainstorming on local problems and solutions,*
- *Becoming an example of good practice for Turkish local democracy and other regions,*
- *Contributing to orientation in local participation; capacity- building efforts of all shareholders in the district; and local democracy,*
- *Building a trust relationship between public institutions and residents,*
- *Bringing residents from all segments of society together to establish common values and common sense among citizens.*

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### Methodology

Describe the methodology of the experience: phases of the process, participation channels (**maximum 300 words**)

*Each meeting of Participation Café lasts between **1.30 and 2 hours** on average depending on the overall number of attendees (which is usually 40) and there are 5 rounds of 20-30 minutes for the discussions, during which 10 participants at each table discuss pre-defined topics. Common method in selecting participants is 'purposive sampling' since socio- economic, demographic and cultural diversity and social inclusion as well are preferable for contributing to the interaction between different segments of same residence and diversity in inputs.*

*A research, which includes district's historical, spatial, socio-economic, and cultural information is carried out before each meeting in order moderators- the personals of ICA- to guide the discussions, and to find out the relevant and current local agenda. As the consent of participants is taken, a voice recorder is used and the meeting report is made according to the inputs or notes taken by moderators.*

*There are mainly two sections/themes that moderators promote discussions around. The first one is based upon subjects such as spatial change and transformation, urban development, access to urban services, urban disasters, cultural heritage etc. Besides, population growth, migration, economic organization and livelihood, local democracy, solidarity and social inclusion etc. are discussed in the second section respectively. District's maps are used for participants to point out the problematic areas and maps are collected by the moderation team to make analysis and reporting.*

*The desk moderators include discussed problems and suggestions within reports in detail. These reports are formed as both soft and hard copy and are provided to city dwellers, participants, municipalities, citizens' assemblies etc.*

*It is planned to display soon the inputs of all meetings, on a digital map of Istanbul, in order for all residents to be informed about other districts and compare their locality with others.*

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**Innovation**

Explain what you consider most innovative in the practice. (In a **maximum of 150 words**)

*Participation Cafe meetings are organized by civil urban actors such as citizens' assemblies. These meetings are open to all residents, NGOs and representatives of local governments as well. There are no criteria for attending the meetings, with the exception of being the local resident and in between the appropriate age range. In other words, Café aims at including residents, which are different from each other, into this deliberative and participatory environment as much as possible.*

*Participation Cafe, being a local participation tool, provides opportunity for residents to speak up their aspirations, problems, needs and suggestions and convey them to relevant authorities. Further, it contributes to the capacity building process of local shareholders such as municipalities, citizens' assemblies, NGOs etc. As well, it serves as a model of a platform for negotiation and local democracy, where all participants are supposed to be equal around the same table.*

**Inclusion**

Point out the importance of including as many groups and diverse populations as possible and how you have achieved it. (In a **maximum of 150 words**)

*One of the leading principles of ICA is the 'justice in representation' which is supposed to mean that needs, views, demands, problems of people from different segments of society would be issued and brought to the current agenda of the Participation Cafe during the discussions. Depending on this target, different social groups are invited to the meetings and citizens' assemblies as well as NGOs adopting rights-based approaches are informed about this highly stressed principle in order for them to sustain the attendance of those social groups. Vulnerable groups or individuals that are somehow subject to discrimination and social exclusion are prioritized while ICA team evaluates the applications. Thus, social groups including refugees and immigrants, LGBTi+s, minority groups, women, disabled people, the elderly, students etc. have attended the meeting on a regular basis since now. Moreover, their views are transparently reflected in the meeting report in the end.*

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**Communication**

What has been the strategy and communication channels of the experience so that the population knows about it and gets involved. (In a **maximum of 150 words**)

*Information about location, time and date of each meeting is announced on social media accounts of ICA and on local news media two weeks before the events. ICA also informs via e-mail all of its stakeholders such as councils, working groups, local governments etc. As local citizens' assemblies are notified, the invitation of local stakeholders and residents is ensured. Further, posters are prepared and hung on the official buildings of mukhtars and on the walls of centers in which meetings will be held.*

**Articulation with other actors**

It explains how the experience was articulated with different actors and simultaneous or pre-existing processes. What roles did these participants assume? Explain the degree of success of this joint. (In a **maximum of 150 words**)

*ICA attaches importance to integrating its stakeholders into the participation process and to delegate the duties among them in order for a 'multiplier effect' in terms of positive outcomes to arise.*

*A natural stakeholder is local citizens' assemblies that contribute to organization and announcement of the meetings and reach out to local focus groups and other residents getting involved. It is ICA's success that these stakeholders have adopted Participation Cafe and participatory goals, hosted it and aimed at being productive during the meeting as much as possible. Local citizens' assembly functions as being a bridge between local people, local governments and ICA. Also, NGOs are eager to disseminate information about the outcomes. ICA collaborates with universities, too, for them to deliver this participatory tool to a broader scale. Students from Istanbul Kadir Has University have so far practiced two Participation Cafe meetings themselves, within their context of Social Responsibility Courses.*

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**Evaluation:**

What evaluation mechanisms have been implemented? Develop whether citizenship has participated in the evaluation of the practice (In a **maximum of 300 words**)

*Once the meeting ends, the opinions of participants and other stakeholders are noted down. The evaluation is based on the following criteria:*

- *To what extent they were able to share their opinions,*
- *For them, which groups were over or under represented,*
- *Which other groups they would suggest the ICA team for them to incorporate in other districts,*
- *To what extent current local agenda was discussed,*
- *Whether the uniqueness of the locality was stressed,*
- *Whether the meeting strengthened the interaction between local social actors,*
- *Whether this practice paved the way for other participatory mechanisms that would be carried out by local social actors.*

*The ICA team assesses the practice and compares it with other ones before the report is generated. The assessment and the comparison is based upon the criteria such as number, profile and diversity of participants; the diversity in subjects assessed and solutions proposed; the equilibrium between themes; the frequency of map usage at each table; the rate of making connections between local agenda and current issues etc. A concrete SWOT analysis is recorded for improving Cafe.*

*As the last step of evaluation, the experiences from the practices and also the report are shared with the Executive Committee and broached to them. The Committee's feedback supports the improvements in efficiency and inclusiveness of the participation tool.*

**Impacts and results**

Describe the impacts and results of the process. How many people have participated, and which are their profiles. What have been the impacts on public policies, on the functioning of the administration and on citizens. (In a **maximum of 300 words**)

*Approximately 243 district residents have attended 5 Participation Cafe meetings since now. Most of them were the representatives of professional chambers, rights- based and environmental rights oriented NGOs, universities, Women Councils and Councils on Disability; mukhtars; members of*

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*local citizens' assemblies etc. 42% of the total participants were female while %58 were male. Most of them had graduated from High School. There were refugees and migrants among participants as well. Further, the majority had immigrated from other provinces while %30 were born in Istanbul. The average age of 5 meetings was 45.*

*ICA aims at strengthening residents' sense of belonging to their district and city, providing a working environment for them to internalize this participatory approach, and contributing to the capacity building processes within the scope of local participation. Feedbacks from residents reveal that they respond positively to the dissemination of such tools that enable people to express their ideas freely. Moreover, it is supported that Cafe illuminates residents about how and through what processes they can participate in the administration process of their localities.*

*Participation Cafe also mediates between local governments, NGOs and individual participants, on the purpose of increasing the communication between them. As well, Cafe enables policy makers and residents to gather round the same table and exchange their ideas and views. As the final reports are posted on the website of ICA, local governments, policy makers, citizens' assemblies etc. are able to follow the local agenda by analyzing and considering the reports.*

## PART 3: EXPERIENCE SUMMARY

*A summary of the experience: origin, objectives, operation, results, monitoring and evaluation (Do not hesitate to repeat aspects that have already been written before, this summary is the one that will be shared on the digital platform for open evaluation and in the publication of the award). (In a **maximum of 500 words**)*

*Istanbul is a global metropolis with a population of 15 million people, millions of immigrants, and a cosmopolitan socio- cultural structure. Istanbul Citizens' Assembly, which was established by Ekrem İmamoğlu – the Mayor of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality since 2019, aims at enhancing participation in local policy making process by implementing various and current participation tools. However, since Istanbul's daily increasing population and polycentric structure make the management difficult, slow down the service delivery to peripherals, and hinder the participation in policy making processes.*

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*“Participation Cafe” model, which was designed according to ICA’s goal, vision and mission, aims at developing solutions to the problems at the local level, by means of discussing and negotiating with governors, civil society and residents. In other words, the goal of ICA in implementing Cafe is to strengthen the capacity of local democracy by supporting interaction between social actors.*

*ICA holds meetings every month in pre- determined districts by means of getting contact with district assemblies as indispensable stakeholders. All residents, who live in the pre- determined districts, are invited to the meetings by public announcements. Individuals from various vulnerable groups such as LGBTI+, women, elderly, persons with disabilities, and immigrants are given priority on participation.*

*Each meeting is held by participation of approximately 50 people and lasts **2 hours** on average depending on the overall number of attendees. In addition, World Cafe technique is utilized during the meetings in order for the ICA team to gather information about residents’ problems and suggestions. 10 participants come together around each of 5 tables. Participants are assigned to tables based upon their ages, genders, and occupations etc. in order to guarantee diversity during the discussions. Besides, each table is moderated by a personal from ICA. Participants are also given an information note, which is about the historical, social-economic and cultural transformation of the district the meeting will be held in.*

*As the meeting finishes and the team evaluates the workshop, desk moderators report the outcomes including residents’ issues, needs and suggestions. Both the soft and hard copies of reports are reached the public, meeting participants, local governments and district assemblies. It is planned to display soon the inputs of all meetings, on a digital map of Istanbul, in order for all residents to be informed about other districts and compare their locality with others.*

*ICA aims at strengthening residents’ sense of belonging to their district and city, providing a working environment for them to internalize this participatory approach and contributing to their capacity building process. Moreover, it is supported that Cafe illuminates residents about how and through what processes they can participate in governance process of their localities. Also, Cafe also mediates between local governments, NGOs and participants, on the purpose of increasing the communication between them.*

*Participation Cafe, which is influenced by European antecedents and has the features of being peculiar to its socio- political and cultural context, aspires to setting an example as an inclusive, professional, and innovative participation tool for other provinces around the world.*

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Please check the link below for additional documents (photos, reports, videos etc.):

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1rEvT8DZJAhouhTuMw32hTIPI5GDc3NOo?usp=sharing>

***We invite you to share annexes that allow you to better illustrate your experience: videos, photographs, documents... They can be sent through a heavy document delivery system such as WeTransfer, Dropbox or Google Drive***