Application Form

CATEGORIES IN WHICH YOU WANT TO APPLY THE EXPERIENCE

1: TYPE OF EXPERIENCE: *choose the most important element* ***(choose only one element*** *which you consider the most outstanding of your practice).*

A) Deliberation Citizen assembly / deliberation workshop / lottery / legislative theater / participatory planning	
B) Decision Participatory budget / referendum / consultation / participatory process with vote	
C) Citizenship Citizenship / community action / permanent council / civic education / associationism / other initiatives to reinforce local democracy	X

2: TYPE OF GOVERNMENT: *choose one only.*

A) Up to 50,000 inhabitants (towns, small cities, rural areas).	
B) Cities between 50,000 and 250,000 inhabitants.	X
C) Cities between 250,000 and 1,000,000 inhabitants.	
D) Large cities or urban areas of more than 1,500,000 inhabitants.	
E) Supralocal, regional, provincial governments	

Experience data: *complete the information below in a clear and concise manner.*

Title of the experience: Using digital tools to enhance service delivery
Name of the city or region: Pemba
Inhabitants of the city or territory: 80 000
Country: Zambia

Institution presenting the candidacy: (name of the municipality, department, government, institution leading the candidate experience) Pemba Town Council together with Swedish International Centre for Local Democracy		

Website of the experience or institution: n/a

Profiles in social networks of the experience or the institution:

ICLD Blog post:

https://www.mynewsdesk.com/se/icld/blog_posts/using-digital-tools-to-improve-service-delivery-pemba-town-council-zambia-114107

ICLD Project Summary:

https://icld.se/en/researchproject/using-digital-tools-to-improve-service-delivery-in-pemba-district-zambia/

Start date of the experience: November, 2022

End date of the experience: (if operational, indicate "ongoing") Ongoing

Budget of the experience: (indicate the budget of the experience or the resources mobilized for its development and implementation)

70,000 SEK for impact proposal and research on using digital tools to improve service delivery

Type of candidacy *(mark with an X in the right column)*	New experience	X
	Innovation on an existing experience	
	Continuity of an experience	
Type of experience *(mark with an X in the right column, you may choose more than one)*	Participatory budgeting	
	Participatory planning	
	Standing council	
	Workshop / meeting for diagnosis, monitoring, etc.	
	Public hearing / forum	

	Poll / referendum		
	Assemblies / Citizen juries / Deliberation spaces		
	E-government / Open government / Digital platforms		X
	Citizen initiative		
	Other (specify):		
Objective of the experience *(mark with an X in the right column, you may choose more than one)*	To achieve higher levels of equality in terms of participation		
	Including diversity as a criterion for inclusion		
	Community empowerment		
	To empower non-organised citizens		
	To increase citizen's rights in terms of political participation		
	To connect different tools of participation within a participatory democracy "ecosystem"		
	To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the mechanisms of participatory democracy		
	To improve the quality of public decision-making through the mechanisms of participatory democracy		
	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
Territorial area *(mark with an X in the right column, you may choose more than one)*	All the territory	Local	X
		Regional	
	District		

Application Form

	Neighbourhood	
Thematic area *(mark with an X in the right column, you may choose more than one)*	Governance	
	Education	
	Transport	
	Urban management	
	Health	
	Security	
	Environment / Climate change and/or urban agriculture	
	Civic associations, grassroots and new social movements	
	Culture	
	Housing	
	Job creation	
	Decentralization	
	Local development	X
	Training / learning	
	Economy and/or finances	
	Legal regulations	
	Social inclusion	
	All	
	Other (write the topic): E-government / Digital services	X

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) associated with the practice	SDG 1 - No poverty	
(mark with an X in the right column, more than one option can be chosen, you can also add the specific target)	SDG 2 - Zero hunger	
	SDG 3 - Good health and well-being	
	SDG 4 - Quality education	
	SDG 5 - Gender equality	
	SDG 6 - Clean water and sanitation	
	SDG 7 - Affordable and clean energy	
	SDG 8 - Decent work and economic growth	
	SDG 9 - Industry, innovation and infrastructure	
	SDG 10 - Reduced inequality	
	SDG 11 - Sustainable cities and communities	X
	SDG 12 - Responsible consumption and production	
	SDG 13 - Climate action	
	SDG 14 - Life below water	
	SDG 15 - Life on land	
	SDG 16 - Peace, justice and strong institutions	X
	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, images or graphics if you consider it appropriate.

Context:

In a maximum of 300 words, present the cultural, geographical, historical, institutional and socioeconomic context of the city, region or territory in which the experience takes place.

Pemba Town Council, situated in Zambia's Southern Province, caters to approximately 80,000 residents (CSO, 2019). As the population grows, the council has had to expand its range of services, necessitating better coordination among its departments. Unfortunately, the absence of adequate information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure, as well as ICT-enabled systems, leads to a lack of integration between departments and inconsistencies in data across the council. Each department maintains its own physical database, impeding efficient audits and hindering data sharing and access to personal information. Consequently, trust issues arise among citizens, impeding effective engagement between the council and the community. To address this, the council requires an internal data strengthening system and a digital platform for improved storage and information exchange among departments, which would ultimately benefit the community.

Moreover, citizen engagement with the local authority is limited, primarily relying on physical gatherings like community meetings. This approach proves less effective, costly, and excludes many citizens from important decision-making processes. Some individuals are compelled to undertake long journeys to access services, further hampering engagement with the local government. Currently, information dissemination relies heavily on physical platforms, requiring citizens and council representatives to be physically present. Given the population size and travel distances involved, the effectiveness of such information-sharing methods is questionable.

In summary, the Pemba Town Council faces challenges related to departmental integration, data inconsistencies, limited citizen engagement, and inefficient information-sharing practices. Overcoming these obstacles would involve implementing an integrated digital system, enhancing access to information, and exploring alternative engagement channels to foster a more inclusive and effective relationship between the council and its citizens.

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, region or territory. You can also indicate if you have been inspired by experiences in other cities/countries. (In a maximum of 300 words).

The use of digital tools to improve service delivery was brought up for discussion by representatives from Pemba Town Council within the thematic session of Digital Services and Innovation in the Local Democracy Labs held on June 8th, 2022 in Visby, Sweden. Swedish International Centre for Local Democracy (ICLD) Democracy Labs is a space for

local government officers and politicians to meet researchers and have a dialogue that contributes to a more informed understanding of local issues at hand.

For Pemba Town Council, despite being in existence as a local authority since 2013, it still lags behind in terms of basic information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure and ICT-enabled systems as it relies largely on a manual based system. Because of this, the council lacks an internal integrated system to handle data, and facilitate data and information sharing between the various council departments. In addition, it lacks an internal-to-external system that can facilitate engagement between the council's internal systems and the citizens, as such citizen engagement on various issues is low and ineffective.

This situation is however not unique to Pemba, as most local authorities in Zambia face similar circumstances. While the use of ICT-enabled systems to streamline services has largely been adopted by the national government in its various departments, many local authorities, especially those in rural towns such as Pemba Town Council have not yet taken advantage of the benefits of digitalisation. Conducting this research is thus, not only important, but also necessary in order to discover new ways for local governments operating in similar contexts as Pemba Town Council on how they can possibly approach digital transformation to improve service delivery. It is also a novel initiative in the context of Zambian local authorities.

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. (In a **maximum of 100 words**).*

The research's main objective was to establish how digital tools can be used to improve service delivery for Pemba Town Council, improving the existing public services through the active participation of the public. Within this, the specific objectives were to then develop a digital strategy for the Council that corresponds to the actual needs and practices of the Pemba District community and to create an impact by sharing the experience and knowledge gained in digital transformation. The Pemba Town Council case can thus help to provide a detailed plan for addressing the key elements of digital transformation.

Methodology:

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

The research was qualitative in nature and was both exploratory (aimed at exploring ways to improve service delivery through digital tools) and descriptive (aimed at describing the digital challenges facing Pemba Town Council in delivering services to the community). The research used an action research design as it was deemed the most appropriate to answer the research question "How can digital tools be used to improve service delivery for Pemba Town Council?". Action research is ideal and suggested for local governments wishing to make a meaningful impact within their communities (Aimers, 1999). Furthermore, the

research was guided by insights from Gooch et al. (2015) regarding a practical model for getting citizens involved in projects, particularly in digital transformation projects.

The research followed the practical action research approach, and researchers worked with representatives from Pemba Town Council to understand and define the problem, before developing a plan of action. The research project started with a comprehensive literature review on digital services and e-government and then engaged the Pemba Town Council and via virtual meetings for planning the research and the community via focus groups and interviews.

During the first two months of the project, virtual meetings with the Pemba Town Council team were held in order to further understand their needs, their current ICT infrastructure, and the political issues that could affect the implementation of the project. Following these engagements, researchers went on a field trip with the goal of connecting with different stakeholders, understanding their local context, and to collaboratively designing solutions. The researchers engaged almost 200 people, with the largest group consisting of students. For the meetings with the community and civil society representatives, researchers used focus groups, whereas, for meetings with public servants, individual key informant interviews were conducted.

Innovation:

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

The most innovative aspect of the practice is to involve researchers from different backgrounds to work on a digital strategy. Digital transformation of local governments can be a complicated process, especially in the initial phase. For the Pemba Town Council, the process of digital transformation started less than a year ago, when the representatives of Pemba Town Council initiated the process within the thematic session of Digital Services and Innovation in the Local Democracy Labs held on June 8th, 2022 when researchers met local government officials that are part of ICLD programmes to discuss pressing issues faced by the municipalities. With an Impact Research Grant, researchers aimed to help Pemba Town Council solve operational dilemmas and improve service delivery by providing a roadmap for implementing digital tools in the form of a digital strategy.

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**).*

In order to ensure inclusivity and address the digital divide, the project focused on developing a digital strategy for the local authority to facilitate better public service accessibility for citizens. Understanding the diverse needs of stakeholders was crucial, as it allowed for the development of inclusive strategies. To achieve this, consultations were held with various representatives, including citizens, local authority officials, community members, stakeholder representatives, civic leaders, and students, who all require access

to public services. Some of the inclusive strategies suggested include rolling out the digital services in phases while still keeping the traditional way of accessing the services until most people were familiar with the new methods; and having the council website in both English and the native local language of the locals so that it would be easier to navigate.

Communication:

What has been the strategy and communication channels of the experience for engaging the population. (In a maximum of 150 words)

The selection of participants for the interviews and for the focus group discussions was purposive. Due to the objectives of the research and also to time and space constraints, interactions were held exclusively with deliberately selected members of the Pemba community. The criteria for selecting participants was developed by the researchers and the council authorities based on the literature review and the objectives of the project. Inclusion and representativity were key values when selecting the participants. The council authorities invited community leaders and citizen representatives of different interest groups to represent their constituencies in the digitalisation discussions. In that sense, the communication efforts to engage the population were made by the council authorities.

Articulation with other actors:

Explain 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 articulation. (In a maximum of 150 words)

The key actors that were engaged in this process, besides the researchers team, were the Pemba Town Council authorities, the citizens of Pembaand staff members of ICLD, that is the funding organisation and the proposer of the research project. The first group of stakeholders was involved since the beginning of the research, as we adopted a practical action research methodology, and the citizens were engaged during the field trip, as participants in the focus groups and interviews. Details on this are available at other sessions of this application, but their engagement was considered successful as the research did not have any limitations regarding the absence of participants or access challenges. As the research was part of a project proposed by ICLD, they assumed the role of presenting the challenge, evaluating the project's proposal, and coordinating the timeline and resources for the implementation of the project, which succeeded as the goals were reached.

Evaluation:

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

As implementation and roll out of digital services only started this year, a proper and systematic evaluation is yet to be conducted. However, if the comments received from users and citizens so far on some services is anything to go by, qualitative evaluation metrics such as satisfaction, convenience, awareness, and mindset shift among others can be considered positive.

Quantitative evaluation mechanisms include such metrics as digital transformation return on investment, that is, data on financial management to indicate the increase or loss in revenue since introduction of digital systems. This would be obtained from financial reports.

Impacts and results

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

To describe a clear picture of how many people have participated in the process it is worth mentioning that the first two months of the project started with virtual meetings with the Pemba Town Council team in order to further understand their needs.

Following these engagements, researchers prepared for a field trip. Two of the researchers went on a three-day working trip to Pemba from 9-11 November 2022 to connect with different stakeholders, understand their local context, and collaboratively design solutions. For this purpose, it was relevant to meet with stakeholders who represented different actors in the scenario - so both citizens and local authority representatives - and also with people from different backgrounds and access to public services, such as community members and stakeholder representatives, civic leaders, and youth (students). The researchers engaged almost 200 people, with the largest group consisting of students.

As has already been described above more than 200 people have participated in the process with different profiles from the representatives of local government to civic leaders and youth (students).

Moreover, to discuss the impacts and results of the process, first of all, the research helped to inform the development of a digital strategy that helps the Council to contextualise the actual problem and plan on how to go about it. Secondly, the research contributed to creating awareness and changing perceptions around digital tools in general. Thirdly, as a result of the research, the council has decided to make use of social media as a platform to share useful information fourthly, as a recommendation from the engagements, the Council has committed to the construction of 6 centres in the community which will double as e-centers and community hubs.

PART 3: EXPERIENCE SUMMARY

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

The origins of the experience started within the thematic session of Digital Services and Innovation in the Local Democracy Labs held on June 8th, 2022 when researchers met local government officials that are part of ICLD programmes to discuss pressing issues faced by the municipalities, where the use of digital tools was brought up for discussion by representatives from Pemba Town Council. With an Impact Research Grant, researchers aimed to help Pemba Town Council to solve operational dilemmas and improve service delivery by providing a roadmap for the implementation of digital tools in the form of a digital strategy which was the main objective of the research. The research was qualitative in nature and was both exploratory (aimed at exploring ways to improve service delivery through digital tools) and descriptive (aimed at describing the digital challenges facing Pemba Town Council in delivering services to the community). The research used an action research design as it was deemed the most appropriate to answer the research question "How can digital tools be used to improve service delivery for Pemba Town Council?". During the first two months of the project, virtual meetings with the Pemba Town Council team were held in order to further understand their needs, following these engagements, two of the researchers went on a three-day working trip to Pemba from 9-11 November 2022 to connect with different stakeholders, understand their local context, and collaboratively design solutions. For this purpose, it was relevant to meet with stakeholders who represented different actors in the scenario - so both citizens and local authority representatives - and also with people from different backgrounds and access to public services.

To present the results of the process, some very interesting points can be presented, first of all, the research helped to inform the development of a digital strategy that helps the Council to contextualise the actual problem and plan on how to go about it. Secondly, the research contributed to creating awareness and changing perceptions around digital tools in general. Thirdly, as a result of the research, the council has decided to make use of social media as a platform to share useful information. Fourthly, as a recommendation from the engagements, the Council has committed to the construction of 6 centres in the community which will double as e-centers and community hubs.

One of the most interesting parts of this research is that depending on the nature of the action research project, there may never be a clear end to the study. There may be a need to continue going through subsequent cycles of planning, acting, observing, and developing a new course of action that can go into the following year. Moreover, while this project has been completed for now, the planning, acting, reflecting, etc will continue throughout the digital transformation process and Pemba Town Council will continue to pick lessons in each action or implementation phase, to be applied in the next.

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We invite you to share annexes that allow you to better illustrate your experience: videos, photographs, documents... These can be sent through a file transfer service, such as WeTransfer, Dropbox or Google Drive.

Google Drive:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1_qMrHzkUc9qTAh-88uU6IoMYrR8Pzw7j?usp=sharing

Thank you for participating!