



THE PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE INDEX IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY OF RA STATE ADMINISTRATION BODIES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The main purpose of the study “Participatory Governance Index in The Development and Implementation of the Policy of RA State Administration Bodies” is to assess the degree of transparency and accountability of public policy in the areas assigned to ministries by the RA legislation, as well as present practically applicable recommendations for their improvement.

The task of the participatory governance index is to measure the degree of transparency and accountability of public policy in the areas assigned to the ministries by the RA legislation, based on the public participation levels defined by the CE guidelines, i.e. provision of information, consultation, cooperation and active involvement.

The public policy framework includes: setting policy priorities, policy formulation and decision-making, policy implementation, and policy impact evaluation.

The indicators defined for each level of participation in the stages of the policy development process, each of which characterizes the level of participation at a specific stage of the policy process, lie at the basis of calculation of the participatory process index. For the collection of participation index data, in order to evaluate the indicators, a baseline data questionnaire was developed (Annex 1). For the expert evaluation of the standardized answers to the questionnaire received from the ministries, in order to calculate the participation index, the calculation of the index of the participatory process, a questionnaire for the evaluation of the coefficient of participation characterizing the indicators of individual stages of the participatory process was developed (Annex 2). As a result, for all modes of the participatory process (provision of information, consultation, cooperation, active involvement) the scores of the subindices at the stages of policy priorities, policy formulation and decision-making, policy implementation and impact assessment were calculated. In particular, for the participatory process of information provision, the sum total of the scores of the provision of information subindex was calculated by the formula $\sum_{\text{provision of information}} = \sum 1 + \sum 2 + \sum 3 + \sum 4$, where

$\sum 1$ = the level of provision of information at the stage of setting policy priorities (a maximum of 8 scores)

$\sum 2$ = the level of provision of information at the policy formulation stage (a maximum 28 scores)

$\sum 3$ = level of provision of information at the policy implementation stage (a maximum of 40 points)

$\sum 4$ = the level of provision of information at the policy impact assessment stage (a maximum of 24 scores).

The summary index of the participatory process, $\sum_{\text{participation index}} = \text{max. } 228 = 1$ or 100 percent, was calculated as the sum total of the magnitudes set by the theoretically maximum scores of the

answers to the questionnaire for the subindices of each mode (stage) of the participatory process. This sum total (max. 228=1 or 100 percent) was accepted as the maximum value of the index of the participatory process.

The summary index of the participatory process: $\sum \text{participation index} = \sum \text{provision of information} + \sum \text{consultation} + \sum \text{cooperation} + \sum \text{active involvement}$.

In the participatory process, the magnitude of the **inclusiveness index** was also calculated as the sum total of indicators for the evaluation of sign language translations or subtitles, audio accompaniment tools, involvement of persons with disabilities and national minorities in working groups and groups of other formats and in public councils under the minister.

The inclusiveness index of the participatory process: $\sum \text{inclusiveness} = \sum \text{sign language translations or subtitles or subtitles (a maximum of 4 scores)} + \sum \text{audio accompaniment tools (a maximum of 4 scores)} + \sum \text{inclusion of disability and national minority (a maximum of 20 scores)}$.

By comparing the evaluations of the scores of the participatory process index in the given agency calculated by the above method for each ministry with the theoretically defined maximum magnitude in scores, the magnitude of the participatory process index of the specific ministry and its place among the other ministries studied or evaluated were obtained.

The data of the rankings table of the participatory process index (Table 3) show that, in general, the magnitude of the index is very low in the ministries of the Republic of Armenia, ranging from the maximum level of 0-46 percent. The highest level of participation was provided by the RA Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, with 46 percentage points.

The analysis of the evaluations of the answers to the questionnaire received from the RA ministries (Figure 11) indicates that none of the 12 ministries ensured the maximum evaluation degree of the participatory process index, which implies that the processes planned for the 4 stages of participation are not fully implemented, and the tools supporting the participatory process are not used.

The 2020 evaluations of the participatory process index at the individual stages of the participatory process (Figure 12) show that the ministries have mostly met the requirements for the stage of **provision of information**. **Cooperation** is among the most established stages of participation in ministries, due to meeting the legally defined requirement for the use of the tool for ensuring public participation through the e-draft.am platform of draft legal acts.

At the policy development and implementation cycles, the information and recommendations received through the tools ensuing the participatory process, i.e. public opinion polls, “Hotline”, “E-request”, “Contact us”, individual and collective petition systems and other channels, public discussion formats (public hearings, round table, focus group discussions, etc., the e-draft excepted), the public councils under the minister and the Public Council, are not a basis for identifying the problems in the ministry’s sectoral policies, for policy formulation and decision-making.

In the ministries the participatory **processes are mostly not inclusive**. The presence of sign language translations, subtitles or audio accompaniments in the materials published on the official website and social media, the level of involvement of people with disabilities and national minorities in the public councils under the minister, working groups and groups of other formats formed by the ministry is episodic in nature.

Despite the first attempt to study the development of a participatory process index, the results are evaluated in the conditions of presence of the collected baseline data and their credibility risks.

Nevertheless, the participatory governance index tool enabled to highlight the systemic problems and gaps in the use of participatory methods in the policy development and implementation processes by the ministries, which deserve to be discussed and solved within the framework of the RA public administration reform strategy and its implementation roadmap for 2022-2024.