

PART 1: BASIC DATA

Title of the experience: Notifying citizens about the latest zoning plan and plan changes via SMS “ASKIDA PLAN SMS’LE”		
Name of the city/region: Istanbul		
Country: Turkey		
Institution presenting the candidacy: Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality		
Start date of the experience: 01/01/2020		
End date of the experience: 01/03/2021		
Type of candidacy	New experience	X
	Innovation on an existing experience	
Type of experience (you may choose more than one)	Participatory budgeting	
	Urban planning	X
	Council	
	Workshop/meeting for diagnosis, monitoring, etc.	
	Audience/forum	
	Poll/referendum	
	Citizen jury	
	E-government/open government	X
	Citizen initiative	
	Other (specify):	
Objective of the experience (you may choose more than one)	To achieve higher levels of equality in terms of participation and to incorporate diversity as a criterion for inclusion	X
	Community empowerment	
	To empower non-organised citizens	
	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
	To improve the evaluation and accountability of the mechanisms of participatory democracy	X
Territorial area	All the territory	X

	District	
	Neighbourhood	
Thematic area	Governance	
	Education	
	Transport	
	Urban management	
	Health	
	Security	
	Environment and/or urban agriculture	
	New social movements and associationism	
	Culture	
	Housing	
	Job creation	
	Decentralization	
	Local development	
	Training/learning	
	Economy and/or finances	
	Legal regulations	
	Social inclusion	
	All	
Other: PARTICIPATORY PLANNING	X	

PART 2: DESCRIPTION OF THE EXPERIENCE

Objectives

Main objective of the innovative experience:

For equality and rise of citizen’s rights in terms of political participation, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality uses the basic mechanisms of participatory democracy such as to build new connections via residents’ simple devices.

For the transparent and participatory planning approach, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality aims to share and reform all planning decisions with the community.

“The right to object” to the planning decisions is a requirement of the participatory planning approach.

It is the main mechanism for citizens to express their review to the new zoning plan decisions, if any.

Main objective of this experience is to remind the participation chance to the citizens by informing about the new plan decisions in time.

How have you achieved this objective?

Zoning decisions approved by the Istanbul Municipal Council and the Mayor are promulgated for 30 days as required by law.

The promulgated plans and plan changes are exhibited in the City Hall for 30 days.

During the promulgating period, the plan and plan change decisions can examine by citizens and an objection can be made to the presented plan or plan changes if necessary.

Each objection is evaluated by Istanbul Municipal Council for a decision.

In the past, spreading the new plan decisions to masses was the main problem of the procedure. Due to disinformation, citizens were complaining about to be too late to object and intervene.

By notifying of the last zoning plan decisions via SMS, makes possible to inform the community fast and feasible.

Thus, it enables the city dwellers to intervene in the decisions of the plan with the objections accepted by the Council.

To what extent has this objective been achieved?

Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality has the contact details of most of the Istanbulites on its technical infrastructure of services. This rich and approximately 10 million dataset of fellow citizens makes possible to inform the community on related notices. By the end of April, this unique method achieved the following:

- the service informative SMS sent to 10,5 million+ Istanbulites,
- 200.000 SMS notice on Suspended sent just in the first 2 months,
- 500.000 user and 1,500.000 transaction on the website just in the first 2 months,

The increase on the level of participation and aptitude of Istanbul citizens going up day by day or plan by plan. It is obvious that the project makes a difference because the amount of letters of application of objection increases dramatically.

Dimensions of the experience

Which is the most innovative aspect of the experience?

Today, almost every adult citizen lives in Istanbul has a mobile phone. It is so efficient to inform citizens using public notification via SMS. Central and local authority prefer to use SMS as a manner to inform citizens about anything but the zoning plans.

Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality has almost every citizens’ communication information via the technical infrastructure services. This rich and approximately 10 million amount of dataset makes possible to inform the community the related notices.

Plan and plan changes approved by the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality are promulgated for 30 days as required by law in the City Hall.

During the promulgating period, the plan and plan change decisions can examined by citizens and an objection can be made to the presented plan or plan changes if necessary.

Each objection is evaluated by Istanbul Municipal Council for a decision.

In the past, spreading the new plan decisions to masses was the main problem of the procedure. Due to disinformation, locals were complaining about to be too late to object and intervene.

By noticing of the last plan decisions via SMS, makes possible to inform the community fast and feasible.

Thus, it enables the city dwellers to intervene in the decisions of the plan with the objections accepted by the Council.

To what extent is the procedure transferable?

The procedure for the model is easy to replicate by using mobile data which are highly-preferred by local authorities and creates unique opportunity for active participation.

Each SMS includes the definition of promulgating period of the plan and the link of the internet address where plan can be examined will be announced and the right to object. Every plan decision is set on a spatial query to related to neighbours and establish new index of mobile phone number. It is possible to set any citizen who wants to be informed about a different/extra/all districts of the city via customizing mechanisms on website.

Why do you consider that the experience is feasible?

Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Planning Department uses a customized spatial data based application to manage the standard procedures of planning. All information that is spatial or not is open to query of need.

Every plan or plan change approved by the Istanbul Municipal Council and the Mayor, is serviced to public on the web site. <https://planaski.ibb.gov.tr/>

Informing the citizens the notifications of the plans via SMS, is the most feasible way to reach the mass and related.

Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality has the technical infrastructure and budget to manage the mass SMS spread.

The model can easily be integrated with standard or GIS based spatial digital databases as IMM tested the model in both platforms. IMM is highly motivated to share the know-how on its software and experience for transferring the model.

How has the experience been coordinated with other actors and processes?

The model of information service on zoning plans via SMS is considered as a strong tool of local participation and the partnership with the Istanbul City Council (civil participation body) is strongly considered in various steps including monitoring the effect and results.

What has been the level of co-responsibility?

In the first phase of the project, Planning Department developed the infrastructure of the databases. Geographical Information Systems Department and Electronic Systems Department were the cooperative units. During 2020, the preparatory and experimental steps have been developed.

Once the preparation works completed, the main actor is introduced: the publicity message of the project is sent to 10,5 million citizens of Istanbul.

Nowadays, it is clearly seen that the participation aptitude of Istanbul citizens are going up day by day or plan by plan.

Which evaluation and accountability mechanisms were used?

The feedbacks of the project are consistently (daily) pursued by Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality.

Due to the using rates of the web site, the reaction of the public can be understand. It is also followed daily.

After the publicity message of the project, there are been lots of social media and other media updates.

And finally, the amount of the plans are noticed and the reaction of the realm to these plans are reported monthly. It is obvious that the project makes a difference because the amount of letters of application of objection increases dramatically.

Summary of the experience

For the transparent and participatory planning approach, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality aims to share and reform all planning decisions with the community.

“The right to object” to the planning decisions is a requirement of the participatory planning approach.

It is the main mechanism for citizens to express their review to the new zoning plan decisions, if any.

Main objective of this experience is to remind the participation chance to the citizens by informing about the new plan decisions in time.

Zoning decisions approved by the Istanbul Municipal Council and the Mayor are promulgated for 30 days as required by law.

The promulgated plans and plan changes are exhibited in the City Hall for 30 days.

During the promulgating period, the plan and plan change decisions can examined by citizens and an objection can be made to the presented plan or plan changes if necessary.

Each objection is evaluated by Istanbul Municipal Council for a decision.

In the past, spreading the new plan decisions to masses was the main problem of the procedure. Due to disinformation, citizens were complaining about to be too late to object and intervene.

By notifying of the last zoning plan decisions via SMS, makes possible to inform the community fast and feasible.

Thus, it enables the city dwellers to intervene in the decisions of the plan with the objections accepted by the Council.

Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality has almost every citizens’ communication information via the technical infrastructure services. This rich and approximately 10 million amount of dataset makes possible to inform the community the related notices.

Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Planning Department reminds every citizen with a mobile phone has the right to follow the planning procedure and to be a part of planning management easily.

Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Planning Department, notices about 30 zoning plans or plan change decisions every month.



These decisions’ notifications should be reach to the related citizens of about different 800 neighbourhoods.

In each SMS contents the definition of the plan, promulgating period of the plan and the link of the internet address where the plan can be examined will be announced; and the right to object will be reminded.

Every plan decision is set on a spatial query to relate the present neighbours of it and establish a new index of mobile phone number.

It is possible to set any citizen who wants to be informed about a different/extra/all districts of the city via the customizing mechanisms on the related web site.

Every plan or plan change approved by the Istanbul Municipal Council and the Mayor, is serviced to public on the web site. <https://planaski.ibb.gov.tr/>

The publicity message of the project is sent to 10,5 million citizens of Istanbul.

During the approximate 2 months of practice, about 200.000 SMS are sent.

The 2 months of practice also executes of 500.000 user and 1,500.000 uses on the website.

Nowadays, it is clearly seen that the participation aptitude of Istanbul citizens are going up day by day or plan by plan. It is obvious that the project makes a difference because the amount of letters of application of objection increases dramatically.