

Public Consultation Guidelines

Through consultations, JPAC creates a bridge of communication between the public and the Council, which improves the efficiency and transparency in large-scale processes such as projects, laws, and policies.

1. Purpose of Consultation

JPAC may seek information or the participation of experts, specific groups and individuals on any relevant issues or projects, and may provide the Secretariat with relevant technical, scientific or other information.

Public may participate in a consultation to contribute in:

- Establishing policies or directives
- The preparation of the program of the CEC
- Obtaining views in the context of a specific project
- Addressing a specific issue or set of issues

2. Goals

The goals of the public consultations are to provide the CEC with:

- A sense of the concerns, priorities and aspirations of the participants
- Information to shape the policies and programs of the CEC
- Whenever possible, specific recommendations and proposals

And provide the participants with:

- A forum to interact constructively and make progress towards solutions and actions
- Feedback from JPAC on information received and steps to follow

3. Principles

Any consultation should advance the purpose for which it has been convened and should be organized to provide the most effective use of the time and the resources dedicated to it.

To achieve this goal, consultations should provide participants with:

- Information on the purpose and objectives of the meeting
- Opportunity to express individual views without interruption or contradiction
- Opportunity to build on views expressed and, whenever possible, to discuss and reach conclusions, consensus or recommendations
- Opportunity to engage in open-ended discussion (generally at the conclusion of the meeting)

4. Structure

Consultation meetings will generally be structured along the following lines:

- Advance notification
- Introduction and information
- Early break-up into work groups or roundtables
- Opportunity for each participant to make a presentation
- A closing session to allow open discussion between participants and JPAC members

JPAC members normally act as facilitators, although professional facilitators will be employed when it is appropriate.

Members of the general public may state their views:

- In a brief presented at the meeting or submitted to JPAC before the established deadline
- Speaking at the public meeting, using whatever form of presentation they consider appropriate

Following the public consultation, all comments and briefs will be analyzed by JPAC, which shall prepare a report for Council. The report will be published and made available to anyone upon request.

5. Financial Considerations

There is an unavoidable cost to maintain an effective dialogue with public and this cost must be seen in light of the budget allocation of the CEC.

- NGOs participation is assisted according to the following criteria:
 - Funds from the budget of the CEC will be made available to each Party in the proportion agreed to by the Parties
 - Distribution of the assistance to individual participants is the responsibility of the Parties
 - An impartial means of allocating funds on the basis of need will be developed by the each Party for distribution to those NGOs who have applied within the determined deadlines for participation in a meeting
- Workshops require additional meeting rooms and additional translation units, which add to the expense of the event. Therefore, they must be budgeted and planned for.