

GOOD GLOBAL LOCAL GOVERNANCE & ICMA

ICMA Mission Statement: To create excellence in local governance by developing and fostering professional local government management worldwide.

ICMA, the International City/County Management Association, embodies the principles and practices of good local governance. The values of professional management that have been advocated by ICMA since 1914 coupled with the organization's 84-year-old Code of Ethics serve as a reference point for the reform of local governments so they can be more responsive, efficient, equitable and professional in the delivery of local services.

In its international outreach, ICMA's advocacy for the direction of a local government's day-to-day operations by an independent, nonpartisan, highly trained and experienced professional manager may be a concept or role not readily transferred or understood in countries outside the United States. In such environments, it may be more appropriate initially to advocate the advancement of practices that are commonly and internationally held as standards for good local governance and widely adopted as "preferred" ways to manage local government. By electing, in some situations, to focus first on good governance principles and best practices, ICMA follows in the tradition of international governmental accounting practices, and establishes a common ground for efficient, transparent, responsive and effective local government internationally.

The following statement of principles articulates those local governance practices that should be a model for the administration and management of any local government and are intended to guide local government management professionals.

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GOOD GLOBAL LOCAL GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES OVERVIEW

- 1) Legitimacy of voice is assured regardless of the structure of government or the manner in which policy decisions are made. Practices include:
 - a) Participation in local choice of leaders is ensured for all citizens through a relevant and defined process. Participation in the processes is orderly and honored by local government authorities
 - b) Individuals are reasonably free to share information and comment on the activities of their government without fear of reprisal or punishment
 - c) Citizens are free to interact and participate openly in the decision-making processes of the local government
- 2) Vision and direction reflects a public service ethic
 - a) The local government has the capacity to effectively formulate and implement sound policies and plan strategically for the future
 - b) There are adopted statements of professional ethics and conduct which encourage honesty, integrity, minimization of conflicts of interest, and adherence to procurement practices that discourage corruption and provide for outside oversight, audit, and review of service delivery processes and practices
 - c) There are clear definitions of what constitutes success so that the government's responsiveness, productivity, and performance can be measured and subsequently communicated to the public; it can then serve as a tool for holding local officials accountable
- 3) Accountability and transparency in service delivery
 - a) Professional training and compensation for local employees and officials is sufficient to serve as a deterrent to corrupt practices, with decisions about recruitment and retention of staff based on merit
 - b) The government has the financial and decision-making capacity and authority to respond to local needs in a timely manner
 - c) Services are provided reliably and predictably, fairly and equitably, without the necessity of expending public funds out of view of the public for personal access, individual consideration, or private purposes not directly advancing the goals of public service delivery
 - d) Services are provided with attention to long-term sustainability
 - e) Staff of the local government is accountable to locally elected officials through a defined chain of command
- 4) Accountability and transparency in governmental processes
 - a) Service delivery is based upon sound financial and budget practices that are clearly understood and communicated internally and externally to the organization
 - b) There are mechanisms in place for finding out what citizens want
 - c) Reasonable access to government and its decision-making processes is allowed freely; information is disseminated broadly to citizens & media
 - d) There are mechanisms in place for preventing and punishing corruption and other forms of unethical behavior capable of damaging public confidence and undermining accountability and transparency that are both meaningful and effective
 - e) The government observes the supremacy of the "Rule of Law" in a manner resulting in political stability and the absence of violence
 - f) There is protection from seizure of persons and property without due process
 - g) There is a mechanism for periodic and open review of the decisions of the government by others to verify that they enjoy the support of citizens
- 5) Form, function and continuity of local government
 - a) Actions are taken to strengthen the local government's internal organization; e.g., systems and processes are in place to provide a mechanism for the replacement of local officials, including processes for the recruitment and retention of professional local government managers and administrators committed to the implementation of principles and practices of good local governance
 - b) Professional local government managers are able to freely interact with and advise the entire local legislative governing body, not just the head of government, along with all members of the staff and all bureaus of the organization.