PILOT ACTION FOR AUTHORITIES
MANAGING COHESION FUNDS
TO **INVOLVE CITIZENS** AND
PROMOTE TRANSPARENCY

Citizen Participation Playbook
for Emilia-Romagna Region

with the support of

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAYBOOK

For Emilia-Romagna Region

Following a High-Level Conference on the issue of Engaging Citizens for Good Governance in Cohesion Policy on 6 February 2020, the European Commission decided to provide "grassroots" financing to support innovative ideas and initiatives for promoting citizen engagement coming from smaller and local civil society organisations. The goal was to test new approaches and stimulate, promote and support citizen engagement in Cohesion Policy, for a better implementation of the projects and a stronger sense of ownership of their results among citizens.

Participating to an open call of EC's Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO) for authorities managing cohesion funds, Emilia-Romagna Region was selected together with four other national and regional authorities among 18 candidates. The main idea of the Pilot action was to involve citizens and promote transparency with tailored assistance and OECD top class expertise in setting up new initiatives. Having in consideration that the Cohesion Policy is the EU's main investment policy and one of its most concrete expressions of solidarity, DG Regio focus was on the important role citizens have in making public authorities more transparent and more accountable.

Despite having setbacks due to the pandemic and delays in designing the final 2021-2027 programming documents at a European level, the project of Emilia-Romagna Region started by doing an overview of possible applications of citizen participation to the new regional programmes, by designing a Roadmap for an accountability strategy connected to SDGs. In January 2021, during an online workshop, innovative ways of involving citizens and civil society in the implementation of cohesion policy were explored, with focus on local territorial development strategies - a process that can be applied both on urban cities and internal areas. One of the final goals of the Emilia-Romagna Region was to engage all the networks, stakeholders, and partners but also subjects that were excluded so far - people who do not belong to structured organisations, socially isolated persons or people with financial, social and/or employment difficulties. Moreover, dealing mostly with small-scale projects, the impact on the society is less evident hence communication and engaging become particularly demanding.

As a result of the co-design process, with OECD support this Citizen Participation Playbook was created. It represents a tool for the Emilia Romagna Region to help identify opportunities and plan for citizen participation in designing, implementing, and evaluating their Territorial Development Strategies under Cohesion Policy. It helps public authorities identify whether and when citizen participation is useful, the order in which a participation process should be designed, considerations to ensure quality and follow-up, and a variety of different methods and tools that can be used depending on the purpose and context.

Table of Contents

PART 1 | CITIZEN PARTICIPATION: WHAT DOES IT MEAN? WHY AND WHEN TO DO IT?

Part 1 aims to help the reader understand what citizen participation is and what its key benefits are. It then guides the reader through questions that help them to identify potential opportunities for citizen participation in their project and decide whether to pursue them. Participatory processes have been implemented in Emilia-Romagna, at the regional as well as municipal level, some examples are included in this section.

Introduction

Citizens today are more informed than ever and are demanding a say in shaping the policies and services that affect their lives. In response, public institutions at all levels of government are increasingly creating opportunities for citizen participation to harness citizens' experiences and knowledge to make better public decisions. The global landscape for citizen and stakeholder participation is evolving constantly, becoming richer with new and innovative ways to involve citizens in projects and policy.

In the context of the Emilia-Romagna Region, citizens are also of key importance. They are the ones who ultimately benefit from the projects implemented through the Operational Programme and the Territorial Development Strategies, hence they have a role to play in the process of development and implementation. The public is an invaluable resource to be tapped. If good conditions for citizens to meaningfully and constructively get involved are created, citizens can help improve the results of the programme projects.

The Emilia-Romagna Region has experience in implementing participatory processes, both at the regional and municipal level. Regional Law (L.R 15/2018) strengthens the sense of an active citizenship and gives citizens a role in public decision making in all stages of the process from the design and implementation to evaluation.

The following cases are some examples of the use of public consultations in policy making in the Emilia Romagna-Region. More examples are listed in the Annex of this Playbook.

Process	Date	Organiser	Description	Level of participation	Methodology
New Urban Plan (PUG - Piano Urbanistico Generale)	2020 - 2021	Municipality of Cesena	A four-step process including public meetings, workshops, and interactive events to integrate citizens' inputs throughout the design and evaluation of Cesena's Urban Plan (PUG - Piano Urbanistico Generale).	Consultation	Public consultation; open meetings
Climate Assemblies	2021 - ongoing	Municipality of Bologna	The Bologna climate assemblies are representative deliberative processes with a pre-	Engagement	Deliberative processes

			determined duration and tasks, in which randomly selected citizens, representative of the different components of society, discuss and define shared proposals to fight climate change. The Assembly alternates moments of training and moments of deliberation to formulate and vote on proposals.		
Parma's Participatory Budget	2019	Municipality of Parma	More than 6000 citizens participated in the allocation of public funding through projects across the municipality with in-person and online mechanisms.	Engagement	Participatory Budget
Laboratori aperti - Open Labs	2014 – 2020	Region of Emilia Romagna	Collaborative spaces to co-create solutions to public problems for smart and inclusive cities, in order to implement the European Urban Agenda and strengthen digital skills of citizens and stakeholders in ten cities of the Emilia-Romagna Region.	Engagement	Open innovation

What is citizen participation? Key terms

Participation includes "all the ways in which stakeholders can be involved in the policy cycle and in service design and delivery". It refers to the efforts by public institutions to hear the views, perspectives, and inputs from citizens and stakeholders. Participation allows citizens and stakeholders to influence activities and decisions of the public authorities at different stages of the policy cycle and through different mechanisms.

The OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government (2017) distinguishes between three levels of citizen and stakeholder participation, which differ according to the level of involvement:

- **Information:** an initial level of participation characterised by a one-way relationship in which the government produces and delivers information to citizens and stakeholders. It covers both on-demand provision of information and "proactive" measures by the government to disseminate information.

> Such as the open data platform of the Emilia-Romagna Region

- **Consultation:** a more advanced level of participation that entails a two-way relationship in which citizens and stakeholders provide feedback to the government and vice-versa. It is based on the prior definition of the issue for which views are being sought and requires the provision of relevant information, in addition to feedback on the outcomes of the process.
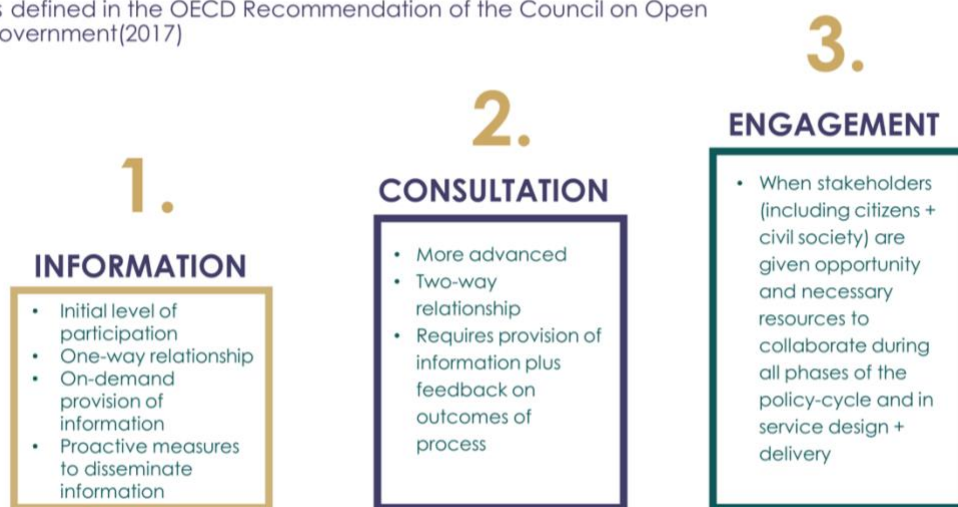
> Such as the public consultations at the national level in the ParteciPA digital platform or the regional platform

- **Engagement:** when citizens and stakeholders are given the opportunity and the necessary resources (e.g. information, data and digital tools) to collaborate during all phases of the policy-cycle and in the service design and delivery. It acknowledges equal standing for citizens in setting the agenda, proposing policy options and shaping the policy dialogue – although the responsibility for the final decision or policy formulation in many case rests with the government.

> Such as the Climate Assemblies in Bologna

Three pillars of stakeholder participation

As defined in the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government(2017)

1. INFORMATION
- Initial level of participation
- One-way relationship
- On-demand provision of information
- Proactive measures to disseminate information

2. CONSULTATION
- More advanced
- Two-way relationship
- Requires provision of information plus feedback on outcomes of process

3. ENGAGEMENT
- When stakeholders (including citizens + civil society) are given opportunity and necessary resources to collaborate during all phases of the policy-cycle and in service design + delivery

This playbook covers all three levels of participation, however it puts an emphasis on the third – citizen **engagement**.

What are the differences between involving stakeholders and citizens?

Another element to keep in mind is the difference among the types of participants that public authorities can involve. The participation of citizens and/or stakeholders are both equally important, however they should not be treated equally. The OECD (2017) defines the actors that public authorities can involve in their participatory mechanisms:

- **Stakeholders**: any interested and/or affected party, including institutions and organisations, whether governmental or non-governmental, from civil society, academia, the media or the private sector.
- **Citizens**: individuals, regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, religious and political affiliations in the larger sense 'an inhabitant of a particular place', which can be in reference to a village, town, city, region, state, or country depending on the context.

No value or preference is given to citizens or stakeholders in particular, as both publics can enrich the decisions, policies and services. However, public authorities should first decide on who to engage, then adapt the design and the expectations of the participatory process in accordance to the category of participants. Individuals and stakeholders will not require the same conditions to participate and will not produce the same type of inputs. Stakeholders can provide expertise and more specific input than citizens through mechanisms such as advisory bodies or experts' panels, whereas citizen participation requires methods that provide the public with the time, information, and resources to produce quality inputs and develop recommendations.

	Stakeholders	Citizens
Definition	Stakeholders - any interested and/or affected party, including institutions and organisations, whether governmental or non-governmental, from civil society, academia, the media or the private sector.	Citizens - individuals, regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, religious and political affiliations in the larger sense 'an inhabitant of a particular place', which can be in reference to a village, town, city, region, state, or country depending on the context.
Benefits of involving	Brings in official stakeholder perspectives Yields expert opinion and knowledge, can point to relevant evidence and studies Ensures representation of key players	Brings in public opinion/ public judgement Can bring a diversity of views and include rarely heard voices Can be representative of the broader public (if a representative group is engaged) Helps raise awareness and facilitates public learning about an issue
Considerations when preparing to involve	Have dedicated time and resources for getting informed about the issue and participate – threshold to participate is low Often have clear interest and incentives to participate Often have experience interacting with public authorities and having a role in a decision-making process	Do not have dedicated time and resources for getting informed about the issue and participate – these conditions should be built in the participation process Often do not have personal interest or incentives to participate – these should be ignited Often do not have a strong sense of efficacy - it should be nurtured via clear links to decision making, invitations from high-level figures

Designing participation processes that take into account these considerations will help "level the playing field" for citizen and stakeholder participation. This playbook focuses on **citizen participation**.

Why involve citizens?

1. **It is good for democracy**

Citizen participation has **intrinsic benefits.** It leads to a better and more democratic policy-making process, which becomes more transparent, inclusive, legitimate, and accountable. Citizen participation enhances public trust in government and democratic institutions by giving citizens a role in public decision making.

2. **It is good for policies, services, and projects**

Citizen participation also has **instrumental benefits.** It leads to better policy results that take into account and use citizens' experience and knowledge to address citizens' most pressing needs. The quality of policies, laws, and services is improved, as they were elaborated, implemented and evaluated based on better evidence and on a more informed choice. They also benefit from the innovative ideas of citizens and can be more cost-effective as a result (OECD, 2016).

3. **It is good for inclusion and diversity**

Citizen participation can make governance and decision making more inclusive by opening the door to more representative groups of people. Through participatory processes, public authorities can include the voice of the "silent majority" and strengthen the representation of often excluded groups like informal workers, migrants, women, indigenous populations, LGBTQ+ communities, etc. Citizen participation in public decision making can answer the concerns of unrepresented groups by addressing inequalities of voice and access, and thus fight exclusion and marginalisation. This in turn can create better policies and services, build a sense of belonging, and foster social cohesion (OECD, 2020).

4. **It is good for legitimacy and facilitates implementation**

Involving citizens in the decision-making process supports the public understanding of the outcome and enhances its uptake. Citizen participation can allow the public to follow, influence, and understand the process leading to a decision, which in turn enhances the legitimacy of hard choices. Empowering citizens through participatory processes is also good for the overall legitimacy of the democratic process as it signals civic respect and builds a relationship based on mutual trust.

How can citizen participation support public authorities and institutions?

Citizen participation can support the daily activities of public servants as well as public institutions' decision-making process.

- **Citizen participation can help public authorities solve problems or address specific situations, such as:**
    - public problems that require careful consideration from a diversity of perspectives;
    - when there is a vacuum of ideas and solutions;
    - addressing complex issues that require informed public judgment;
    - preparing long-term plans.
- **Citizen participation can help public authorities in their daily activities to take better decisions and provide services and policies that respond to citizens' needs, especially:**
    - As a way **to gather information, data and public opinion**.
    - As an opportunity **to tap into the collective intelligence** to co-create solutions, services or projects.
    - As a mechanism **to collect public feedback** on proposed solutions such as draft legislations or plans.

- o As a tool **to adapt and design public services** that respond the real needs of citizens.
- o As a way to **involve citizens and stakeholders in the implementation** of policies, projects, and research.

Why it is important to engage citizens in cohesion policy?

Around one third of the European Union's budget (around 352 billion euros over seven years) is dedicated to cohesion policy, which promotes and supports the overall harmonious development of its Member States and regions.

For the 2021-2027 European Budget, the European Commission proposed five objectives to guide Cohesion Policy: A Smarter, Greener, Connected, Social and Democratic Europe. In this context, citizen participation in cohesion policy can also directly and indirectly support the European Commission's policy objectives:

- **Smarter Europe**: through innovation, digitisation, economic transformation and support to small and medium-sized businesses.
- **Greener Europe:** implementing the Paris Agreement and investing in energy transition, renewables and the fight against climate change.
- **Connected Europe:** with strategic transport and digital networks.
- **Social Europe:** delivering on the European Pillar of Social Rights and supporting quality employment, education, skills, social inclusion and equal access to healthcare.
- **Europe closer to citizens:** by supporting locally led development strategies and sustainable urban development across the EU.

The funds dedicated for cohesion policy are managed and delivered in partnership between the European Commission, Member states, and stakeholders at the local and regional levels. Success of these investments relies on robust and capable institutions, as well as effective partnerships between governments, stakeholders, and citizens. Citizens have a key role to play in shaping decisions of public investment, as well as making public authorities more transparent and accountable.

1. Citizen participation can increase public awareness and understanding about cohesion policies and the allocation of European funds in their country, region, and community.

2. Citizen participation can improve the quality of cohesion policy outcomes by supporting the inclusion of citizens' experience and knowledge to address citizens' most pressing needs.

3. Citizen participation can increase diversity and inclusion in cohesion policy by broadening the stakeholders involved in the planning and implementation of programmes linked to EU cohesion policy funds.

4. Citizen participation can support transparency and accountability in cohesion policy by creating opportunities for the public to monitor and evaluate the use of resources and the outcome of projects

Myths about citizen participation

There are several myths and misconceptions those considering involving citizens might have:

1. *Citizens are not capable of understanding the complexity of an issue or project.*

Often people who are experts in a specific field have spent many years gaining experience and knowledge to understand a complex issue. While citizens cannot be as knowledgeable about a subject as experts, there is a large amount of evidence which shows that citizens are able to grapple with complexity if the process has been designed to give them time and resources for learning. Experts should be involved in helping select, prepare, and present a broad and diverse information for citizens to be able to develop *informed* recommendations.

Decision makers, whether elected representatives or appointed officials, are not experts on all topics on which they are required to take decisions either. A member of parliament cannot be a specialist on

every single policy issue covered by legislation. They have access to technical experts that guide them in understanding complex problems. This can, and should, also be the case for citizens.

2. *Citizens are unreliable and will not commit fully to the participation process.*

Another common misconception is that citizens will either not participate, or will drop out partway through a process. Sometimes there is a sense that we ask too much of people, however, more often than not we ask *too little*. Evidence shows that people are more than willing to participate *if they see that the process is worth their time and effort, with a clear link to impact*.

To make it worthwhile, there has to be a clear link to the decision-making process, meaning that citizens' recommendations, ideas, and proposals will be considered by a public authority or another actor in charge of making decisions within a project. It will be clear how and when the public authority will use those inputs and will provide a direct response to citizens.

Citizen participation levels are also affected by the design of a participation exercise. A good design will help overcome barrier to participation by:

- giving citizens a clear task;
- being transparent about the process and its intended impact;
- providing opportunity for learning; giving enough information for people to come to an informed point of view;
- being well-moderated dialogue and deliberation;
- and providing compensation for time/travel/other costs.

It is helpful to ask yourself: *"Would I be motivated to take part in my participatory process? Is it clear what is asked of me and that my time is worth the effort?"* If your process is well designed, the answer to both questions should be *yes*.

3. *Citizens will develop either a wish list or a list of grievances*.

This myth is based on the negative past experiences of interacting with citizens in participatory processes. Often public servants face citizens in situations such as town hall meeting or a public consultation about a specific decision that was already taken. In such circumstances usually citizens with something negative to say show up, to express a complaint or disagree with a public decision, because the process is designed this way.

Whereas participation can be designed to elicit constructive contributions towards finding solutions. If a citizen participation process is designed to gather ideas, co-develop solutions or co-implement activities or policies, citizens will do just that – they will work in a constructive, substantial way.

Should I engage citizens in my project?

You should engage citizens in your project, if:

- There is a problem that citizens can help solve.
- There is room in your project's scope for citizens to have influence over certain decisions. You can act on the advice you receive from them.
- There is a genuine commitment by senior leadership to take into account citizens' inputs.
- There are financial, time, and staff resources dedicated for meaningful citizen participation.

PART 2 | PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN THE SCOPE OF YOUR PROJECT

Part 2 aims to help the reader identify where in the scope of their projects citizens can be involved, identify the problems that citizens could help them to solve, presents various methods that can be used to involve citizens, and offers guidance on how to choose the right one.

This section outlines eight steps of planning and implementing a citizen participation process.

Steps of planning and implementing a citizen participation process

1. Identifying the moment of participation and the problem to solve
2. Defining the expected outcome
3. Identifying available resources
4. Identifying the relevant public to be involved and the recruitment process
5. Choosing the participatory method
6. Tips for implementation
7. Keeping your promise
8. Evaluating the participatory process

Developed in reference to Faulkner, W. & Bynner, C. (2020) How to Design and Plan Public Engagement Processes: A Handbook, Glasgow: What Works Scotland and Involve (2005) People & Participation: How to put citizens at the heart of decision-making, London: Beacon Press.

Step 1: Identifying the problem to solve

The first step when deciding if citizen participation is necessary is to identify if there is a genuine problem that the public can help solve. If there is, then the problem needs to be defined and framed as a question. It is also important to be clear about the stage of the decision-making process in which citizens' inputs are most valuable and can have influence. Clarity about the problem and the timing will then help define the type of input that it is needed, the type of participant that should be involved, and the most appropriate method to engage them.

In what stages of my project can citizens be involved?

The policy or project cycle is usually composed of five stages: issue identification; policy or project formulation; decision making; implementation; and evaluation.

1. ISSUE IDENTIFICATION
2. POLICY FORMULATION
3. DECISION MAKING
4. IMPLEMENTATION
5. EVALUATION

Source: OECD (2016), Open Government: The Global Context and the Way Forward, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264268104-en.

1. In the **issue identification stage**, citizens can be involved to help identify the most pressing problems to solve, map the real needs of the public, or gather inputs or ideas to tackle the problem.

2. During the **policy or project formulation stage**, citizens can be involved to enrich a proposed solution, prototype or test solutions, or collaboratively draft a policy, a project plan or legislation.

3. In the **decision-making stage**, citizens can be involved to collectively decide on the solution to be implemented, the budget to be allocated, or the projects that will be selected.

4. During the **implementation stage**, citizens can provide help in deploying the solutions or projects decided in the previous stage.

- Citizen participation in the implementation stage refers to opportunities for citizens and stakeholders to be involved in the delivery of projects or services.
- Co-production is an overarching term to describe how public authorities can harness the skills, capabilities and energy of citizens and stakeholders to deliver services that best meet the needs of future users.
- In the context of cohesion policy, public authorities can include citizens in the implementation phase by:
    - Engaging citizens and stakeholders in the creation of solutions or prototypes for services or projects, through hackathons, collaborative workshops, or maker spaces.
    - Creating spaces for co-creation between public authorities and citizens and stakeholders as a way to continuously involve them in the implementation of projects or services. For example, open innovation labs, open spaces, recurrent public meetings, etc.
    - Allowing citizens and stakeholders to be involved throughout the implementation phase, by publishing information and data about the progress of implementation and by providing opportunities to provide feedback on the implementation through digital platforms or in-person mechanisms.

5. In the **evaluation stage**, citizens can be engaged to evaluate or monitor the implementation of the solution and to measure its outcomes and results.

- Citizen participation in the evaluation stage refers to opportunities for citizens and stakeholders to see, monitor and reward or sanction public authorities in the delivery of projects or services.
- Participation in the monitoring and evaluation of a policy's outcomes can provide valuable information for governments to adjust policies and make sure they correspond to citizens' needs.
- In the context of cohesion policy, public authorities can include citizens in the evaluation phase by:
    - Providing information and data on the selected projects, the expected outcomes, the implementation progress, and the results. For example, through open data platform, communication campaigns, open meetings, websites, etc.
    - Soliciting citizen feedback on services or projects implemented as part of the cohesion policy program to support efficiency and improve results. Various methodologies can gather citizens' opinions and perceptions, such as polls, surveys or Community Scores Cards.
    - Involving citizens in the continuous monitoring of projects or programs funded as part of the cohesion policy, through public hearings, citizens' advisory groups, or digital tools.

- o Empower citizens to monitor and evaluate the allocation of public funds as part of the cohesion policy program through release of information and data or community led audits.
- o Refer to the CIVIC MONITORING section of this Playbook for more information and examples.

How to identify the problem the public can help solve?

Keeping in mind the five project stages, answering the following questions can help identify the precise problem citizens can help solve.

- What problem do you want to solve throughout your project in general?
- What are some of the smaller problems you have to address to implement your project?
- What do you want to learn from participants that you don't already know?
- What benefits would you expect from involving citizens in your project?

Defining a precise problem is one of the most important elements of successfully engaging citizens, as it gives them a clear ask with a clear task.

Questions to answer during this step:

- Where in the project or policy cycle are you?
- What problem do you need to solve?
- How can citizens and/or stakeholders help you solve this problem?

Step 2: Defining the expected outcome

Before involving citizens, it is essential to have a clear understanding of the expected outcomes of the process. This means the desired type of inputs and the impact they will have in the scope of your project.

Desired type of inputs

Having clarity about the desired type of inputs is imperative before designing a process. Inputs can vary from broad ideas to improve a neighbourhood, experts' opinion on a project, feedback on an existing proposal, or developing concrete solutions and recommendations to solve a problem.

Expected impact

The public needs to understand the impact their contribution will have. This manages the public's expectations and enhances their trust in the process and its result. Public authorities should decide and communicate in advance how they plan to use inputs received from the public during a participation process and the level of impact they will have on the final decision. The expected impact of the inputs gathered though a participatory process can vary from informative purposes (information) or a consultative exercise (consultation), to more impactful outcomes with binding results (engagement).

The table below provides examples of inputs and their expected impact.

Examples of inputs gathered through a participatory process	Their expected impact
Ideas and proposals to improve the cycling infrastructure in a metropolitan area	Tap into the collective intelligence of the public to get ideas and inspiration that will help public authorities develop a plan for improving cycling infrastructure (Consultation)
Feedback and broad opinion on a draft roadmap or project proposal	Test the proposal and gather insights from the public to adapt or enrich the proposal accordingly (Consultation)

Expert or technical advice on the use of European funds to support SMEs	Inform decision makers and adapt the original idea or solution based on the advice received (Consultation)
Informed recommendations on legislative changes needed to ensure gender equality in the workplace	Integrate the recommendations as part of the solution and final decision (Engagement)
Prototypes of digital apps to measure the quality of air in a former industrial area	Partner with participants to co-create solutions (Engagement)
Direct distribution of public resources	Give citizens and stakeholders the possibility to decide on the use of public resources through a participatory budget (Engagement).

> **Questions to answer during this step:**
> - What type(s) of inputs would you like to receive from participants?
> - How will you use these inputs to solve your problem?

Step 3: Identifying available resources

Every participatory process requires dedicated resources to be successfully implemented and result in useful outputs for decision makers. The necessary resources vary depending on the design and implementation of the process. Some elements that will impact the amount and type of resources needed can include: the scope of the process (timeframe, quantity of participants), the method used, the type of recruitment, the tools and some logistical considerations such as venues and facilitation. The resources can be human, financial, and/or technical.

- **Human resources:** Participatory processes (even when completely virtual), require sufficient staff to organise the process, recruit participants, develop information resources, facilitate interactions, answer requests, communicate, analyse and synthesise the inputs, etc. These human resources can be available within your project, such as partners and colleagues, or through external contractors. The quantity and profiles of staff required will depend on the method used, the scope of the process, and the desired input from citizens.
- **Financial resources:** As with every democratic process, participatory processes need dedicated financial resources to cover the cost of human resources, meeting venues and catering, digital platform licenses, public communication, honorarium payments to participants, costs of participants' childcare/transport, etc. The costs will depend on internal resources available, the scope of the process, the method, etc. A process that is truly inclusive and breaks down the common barriers to participation will require a larger investment.
- **Technical resources:** More and more processes are using digital tools for communication, receiving participants' inputs, and/or processing/analysing the inputs received. Technical resources can encompass staff with digital skills, software licenses, computers, tablets, cloud services, etc.

> **Questions to answer during this step:**
> - How many staff (internal/external) is available to support the design and implementation of the process?
> - What is you estimated budget?
> - Do you have additional resources available for this process (platforms, contractors, etc.)?

Step 4: Identifying the relevant public to be involved and recruitment

The next step is identifying the public to be involved in the process, depending on the purpose. This decision will affect how the public will be selected or recruited.

Type of public	Expected input	Example of participation process	Type of recruitment
Representative sample of citizens	Informed recommendations on legislative changes needed to ensure gender equality in the workplace	Citizens' Assembly on Gender Equality	Civic lottery
A group of citizens with specific skills	Prototypes of digital apps to measure the air quality in a former industrial area	Citizen science project and hackathon on air quality	Closed call
Experts and technical profiles	Expertise and technical advice on the use of European funds to support SMEs	Advisory group on European funds	Closed call
Residents of a specific area	Ideas and proposals to improve the cycling infrastructure in a metropolitan area	Participatory budget	Open call
Broader public	Feedback and broad opinion on a draft roadmap or project proposal	Consultation on an infrastructure project	Open call

How to recruit participants?

There are different possible strategies for recruiting citizens depending on the targeted public and the participation method.

1) Open call

In many traditional participation processes, such as public consultations, there is often an "open call" to recruit participants, either to an in-person meeting or to participate in an online consultation or forum. Participation is usually encouraged through advertising the opportunity via a variety of channels (online, social media, post, posters). Participation is open, so anyone who wants to is able to come in person or contribute online. In other instances, participants may be chosen by an institution through an application or selection process, such as before a committee hearing. However, there is a wealth of research that demonstrates that certain demographics tend to disproportionately participate, notably those who are older, male, well-educated, affluent, white, and urban (Dalton, 2008; Olsen, Ruth and Galloway, 2018; Smith, Schlozman, Verbe and Brady, 2009).

> The public consultations available in the Emilia Romagna's IoPartecipo+ digital platform recruit citizen via open calls, meaning that anyone who wants is able to participate and no specific group or stakeholder is targeted. Some participation processes could be addressed to particular categories of citizens or specific territorial areas.

2) Closed call

Public authorities may also conduct consultations through a "closed call" for participants, meaning that politicians and/or civil servants might choose specific members of a community who have a particular expertise or experience needed to address a policy issue. In these instances, participation

could be based on merit, experience, affiliation with an interest group, or because of their role in the community (see MASS LBP, 2017).

For example, a citizen science project aiming to improve air quality in classrooms might be interested in involving schools and will require a closed call and targeted recruitment of schools to take part in the project. Based on the target group, recruitment of participants can take place via organisations that represent these groups, going to places where members of the target group might be present or via tailored online communication campaigns that catch the attention of a desired audience.

> The Laboratori Aperti - Open Labs in Emilia Romagna, spaces equipped with advances ICT solutions as places for collaboration and debate between enterprises, citizens and PA, selected to gather specific stakeholders (with a certain expertise) to discuss on specific issues or projects.
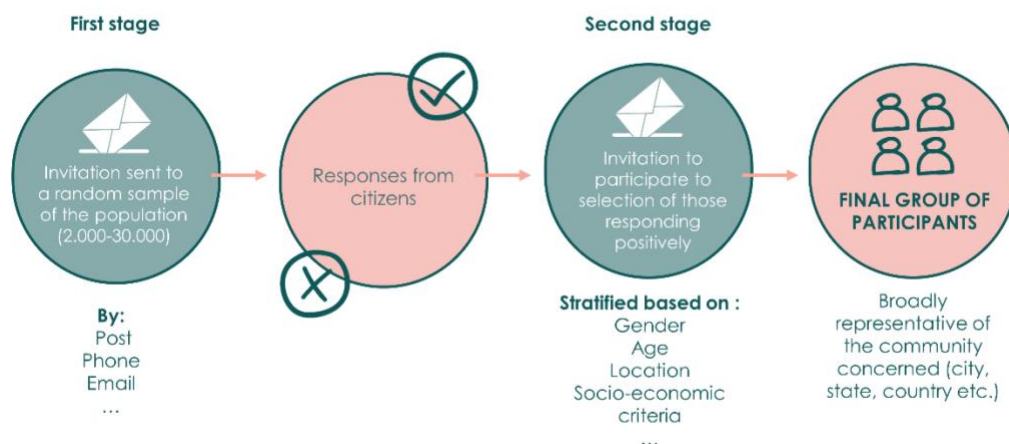
3) Civic lottery

Civic lottery, or sortition, is used as a shorthand to refer to recruitment processes that involve random sampling from which a representative selection is made to ensure that the group broadly matches the demographic profile of the community (based on census or other similar data) (2020 OECD).

Civic lottery attempts to overcome the shortcomings and distortions of "open" and "closed" calls for participation described earlier. It ensures that nearly every person has an equal chance of being invited to participate in a participation process and that the final group is a microcosm of society. The golden standard is the two-stage random selection. During the first stage, 2.000-30.000 invitations are sent out to a random sample of the population. From those who respond positively, a second invitation to participate is sent out, stratified based on criteria such as age, gender, location, and socio-economic criteria. Invitations are usually signed by a figure of authority – for example, the Mayor.

Civic lottery
(Two-stage random selection)

Civic lottery is most often used when conducting a representative deliberative process. Although it is not its exclusive use. A randomly selected group of citizens can also be formed for a participatory budget or a public consultation – in any circumstance, when a participatory process requires maximum representativeness.

Recruiting participants via civic lotteries offers a range of benefits to the participation process. Most importantly, the final group of participants is representative of the broader public, which creates an opportunity to hear from a very broad range of people with different life experiences and opinions. Some limitations of the civic lottery to keep in mind are its rather lengthy and expensive process, and limited breadth of participation.

More information on random selection: How to run a civic lottery, MASS LBP

For the [Climate Assemblies in Bologna](#) the number of participants could be from 50 to 100 citizens selected through the methodology of civic lottery.

Questions to answer during this step:

- Given the policy issue(s) at stake, what groups should be reflected among the participants?
- How many people should be involved?
- How will participants be selected?
- How to ensure transparency in the process?

Step 5: Choosing a participatory method

Once the problem to solve, the expected inputs, and the public you are working with have been identified, it is time to choose the method of participation. There are many different methods that can be used to engage citizens in any given context. The summary of methods detailed below compares their key characteristics.

Participation method	Definition	To use when you are looking for…	Considerations	Type of input it yields	Stage of decision	Costs
Information and communication	Publishing of information both in a proactive and reactive manner.	• Ways to raise awareness about an issue or a public decision • Ways to keep the public informed about public decisions	• It is the very minimum that can be done • Should be used in situations where there is no room for citizens to have a say	Creates awareness about public issues, provides necessary information and creates conditions for more advanced methods of participation	• Identification • Formulation • Decision making • Implementation • Evaluation	Most often can be done using existing resources, but will require more extensive investment to be effective at reaching wider audiences
Open meetings/ town hall meetings	Gathering the public in face-to-face meetings with public authorities, in order to provide information and openly discuss topics of interest chosen beforehand.	• Ways to inform the public about public issues and decisions • Space to have a loosely structured exchange and receive broad initial feedback • ''Test the water'' for initial reception of ideas and policies by the public	• Allows for an exchange between public authorities and the public • Does not yield representative judgement or well-informed solutions	Information sharing and broad feedback from citizens	• Identification • Formulation • Decision making • Implementation • Evaluation	Often done using existing resources. Approx. 1.000-5.000 €
Civic monitoring	Involving the public in the evaluation and monitoring of public decisions, policies, and services.	• Create an oversight and evaluation mechanism for public decisions and actions • Benefit from an ongoing monitoring of and feedback on a policy or a project	• It is an ongoing process which requires sustained participation • It is geared towards receiving feedback from individuals on implementation, rather than working with them to improve services or policies	Citizen feedback, opinions, suggestions	• Implementation • Evaluation	Depending on the method chosen. Approx. 15.000-50.000 €

Public consultation	A two-way relationship in which citizens provide feedback to a public institution (such as comments, perceptions, information, advice, experiences, and ideas)	• Gather aggregated individual opinions and feedback from the public • Discuss policies and solutions with the public	• Adaptable to the needs - can be done in a range of different methods, ranging from surveys to in-person discussions • Not statistically representative of the population	Aggregation of individual citizens preferences	• Identification • Formulation • Decision making	Depending on the method chosen. Online submissions usually done with existing resources, whereas focus groups or roundtable discussions up to 30.000 €
Open Innovation	Tapping into the collective intelligence of the public to co-create solutions to specific public challenges via crowdsourcing or hackathons.	• Ideate and co-create collectively • Involve the public in developing solutions or prototypes	• Allows to create the conditions and provide necessary resources for citizens and stakeholders to work on and develop solutions to public problems	Collective ideation, co-creation of solutions, prototypes	• Identification • Formulation • Decision making	Depending on the method chosen. Online crowdfunding efforts often done with existing resources, hackathons cost approx. 100.000 €
Citizen Science	Involving citizens in one or many stages of a scientific investigation, including the identification of research questions, conducting observations, analysing data, and using the resulting knowledge	• Help collecting or analysing scientific data • Feedback or guidance on research questions and research design • Collaboration to implement science-related projects	• Is suited for scientific endeavours rather than policy questions and dilemmas • Adaptable to the needs – covers a range of participation opportunities in science	Varies from data collected to guidance on research questions and decisions to implemented citizen projects	• Implementation • Evaluation	Depending on the method chosen. Approx. 5.000-50.000 €

Participatory budgeting	Mechanisms that allow citizens and stakeholders to influence public decisions through the direct allocation of public resources to priorities or projects.	•Help from the public to identify budget or resource allocation preferences •Ideas and projects from the public to be funded •Increased awareness and understanding by the public-on-public spending	•Creates conditions for the public to participate in decisions linked to public spending •Can yield either an aggregation of participants individual preferences (if takes the form of a voting), or their collective judgements (if it has a deliberative element)	Varies from ideas, projects, to binding allocation of public resources through vote	•Identification •Formulation •Decision making •Implementation	Depending on the scale and level of government, approx. 50.000 - 1.000.000 €
Representative deliberative process	A randomly selected group of people who are broadly representative of a community spending significant time learning and collaborating through facilitated deliberation to form collective recommendations for policy makers	•Informed, collective public judgements about a complex policy issue •Recommendations that consider a broad diversity of views •Legitimacy to take tough decisions	•Helpful when tackling complex, long-term policy issues •Can take place in 12 different models – ranging from shorter and smaller, to larger scale, longer, or even permanent	Collective citizen recommendations/position/judgement	•Identification •Formulation •Decision making •Evaluation	Depending on the scale of the process from 13.000 € to 5.400. 000 €

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

As explained in the introduction, the first level of participation is information. Public authorities are usually obliged by legislation to publish information both in a proactive and reactive manner (i.e. access to information or open data legislation). However, in this playbook information is seen both as an enabler for more impactful levels of participation and as a prerequisite for an informed participation.

- **Information as a prerequisite for informed participation:** public information and data (in an open format) can promote informed public debate and increase the quality of participatory processes. In this regard, public authorities can publish different types information and data:
  - o **Legal framework and official information:** constitution, laws, regulations, decrees in different formats (text as well as machine readable) for all levels of government.
  - o **Policy-making information:** all the information needed to formulate policies like policy proposals, draft legislation as well as speeches, press releases, benchmarks, external advice, impact assessments, audits, and policy reports.
  - o **Decision-making procedure**, including: agendas, actors involved, timeframe of debates and expected milestones to reach a decision, moments where the public can interact and influence the process, legal framework, stakeholders involved (especially interest groups), etc.
- **Information as an enabler for more impactful participation:** public information and data (in an open format) can empower citizens to understand and act upon the decisions that affect their lives, enable citizens to co-create solutions and support an effective monitoring of government's actions.
  - o **Public services information:** Descriptions of services offered to the public, information on the recipients, guidance, booklets and leaflets, copies of forms, information on fees and deadlines. Governments should also publish the algorithms used for public service delivery when appropriate.
  - o **Budget information:** all budget related documents and data, projected budget, actual income and expenditure and other financial information and audit reports. Governments should also publish the relevant formulas and algorithms when using projections and machine-based calculations. This also applies to the use of European funds.
  - o **Implementation and evaluation,** including: information about the results of policies, annual reports, audits and all necessary data and information to allow for public monitoring and evaluation.

> **Examples**
> - The Emilia-Romagna Region has a [dedicated digital platform](#) to provide citizens and stakeholder access to public information, including information about public authorities (responsibilities, agendas, etc.), policy documents (territorial development plans) or fiscal information (budget, expenditures, etc.). In addition, the ioPartecipo+ platform, provides useful information for each participatory process, including the normative framework, documentation and a glossary of terms.
> - The Municipality of Bologna has an [open data platform](#) with public datasets covering a wide range of topics including mobility, infrastructure, health, and budget. Besides publishing public data, the platform provides contextual information and support to better understand and reuse the data available. For a continuous improvement of the platform, citizens can propose categories of data to be included.
> - Many European cities have an open data platform including [Munich](#), [Lyon](#), [Manchester](#), [Florence](#) and [Thessaloniki](#).

Resources and tools

- *[Proactive Transparency: The future of the right to information?](#)* (Helen Darbishire; 2010):This paper provides an extensive overview of the benefis of the proactive disclosure of information, based on best practices from around the world.
- [The International Open Data Charter](#) (ODC; 2015): Provides guidelines and definitions on the release of data by public authorities. Governments can adopt the Open Data Charter to commit to deliver open data policies that make data accessible and freely available while protecting the rights of people and communities.
- [The Open Contracting Partnership's Guide on Open Contracting](#) (OPG; 2016): provides useful practical information on the use of open government data for open contracting.
- [The Open Data Handbook](#) (Open Knowledge Foundation; ongoing): A collaborative resource by the Open Knowledge Foundation with guides, case studies and resources for government & civil society on the "what, why & how" of open data.

    …

OPEN MEETINGS / TOWN HALL MEETINGS

What are open meetings and town hall meetings?

Open meetings and town hall meetings are participatory tools that can be traced all the way back to 17th-century New England meetings or colonial traditions in Latin America (cabildos). Nowadays, these processes are used worldwide, most often at local or legislative level, to foster information about public action, encourage citizen participation and to build a relationship based on accountability and trust.

What is it used for? Who takes part?

Open meetings and town hall meetings aim to gather the public in face-to-face meetings with public authorities, to provide information and openly discuss topics of interest chosen beforehand, contrary to public consultation, which aim specifically to gather citizens' inputs on a particular topic. These processes are based on dialogue and debate rather than deliberation (OECD, 2020), and are more often used for information or consultation without a specific impact in the final decision.

Its main objectives are to inform about public authorities' decisions and discuss them, to get citizens closer to public decision making and to increase public transparency. Open meetings and town hall meetings can be complemented with other participatory methodologies. For example, a participatory budget can be supported by open meetings to present the methodology, enhance participation and share the results.

Usually, these meetings are open to any resident in a designated area to participate or to the broad public without a geographical condition. However, they are usually not designed to be specifically inclusive: traditional means of communications are used (street posters for instance), therefore engaging already-interested citizens rather than pursuing a representative or inclusive participation.

Who organises?

Town hall or open meetings are usually organized by public authorities at the local level, to support information sharing and discussions about day-to-day topics. However, these meetings can be organized by other levels of government, including the national level or the legislative.

How does it work?

Contrary to a public consultation, an open meeting or town hall meeting does not seek to gather inputs on a particular issue. These processes are rather a mean for public authorities to start a discussion with the public, whether to understand their needs, present upcoming decisions or share advances of

implemented actions. They also help maintain a direct channel for communication and be accountable to the public on certain actions or mandates. As open meetings and town hall meetings are not designed to be representative, they can be organized fairly easily in three steps:

1) Define the topic: Because public authorities are not in principle bound by any of what may come out of those discussions, the topic and framing of the meeting can be rather loose. The objective is to find a purpose precise enough to enable discussion, present evidence and provide information, in order for the public to be able to participate in the debate. Sometimes, public authorities allow the public to propose topics to the agenda or present initiatives and projects.

2) Communicate: Public authorities should announce the date, time, and location of the meeting with sufficient time to allow citizens and stakeholders to participate. The publicity for these meetings is generally done both in-person and digital means, in order to reach a broader audience. As mentioned above, it is to be noted that although the very nature of open meetings and town hall meetings involve non-representative attendants, efforts should be made to make them the most inclusive as possible.

3) Hold the meeting: These meetings can be any physical space available, often in places linked to public authorities (town halls, public amphitheaters, schools, libraries, squares, etc.). More recently, and especially during the COVID19 pandemic, these meetings have been also organized in virtual spaces, a trend that may continue after the end of the in-person restrictions. Regarding the agenda of the meeting, usually public authorities start with and opening remark presenting the agenda and topics to be discussed, followed by a discussion with participants.

4) Keep records:

A written record should be published to allow for more transparency, accountability and to engage with a broader public.

> **Examples**
> - As part of the Stai COMPOSTo! Project, the Municipalities of Terre di Castelli Union (Castelnuovo Rangone, Castelvetro, Guiglia, Marano, Savignano, Spilamberto, Vignola and Zocca) have organized open meetings on community composting practices. These open meetings aim at providing information on the valorisation of biodegradable waste and ensuring citizens the possibility to take an active role in the circular recycling process.
> - From January to April 2020, as part of a national wide participatory process (Grand Débat), French public authorities organized more than 10 000 open meetings to collect complaints as well as ideas from citizens and stakeholders in four topics: Ecological transition, Fiscal policies, public administration and services, and democratic institutions.

Resources and tools
- Guide to 21st Century Town Meeting (Involve; 2019): This resource provides practical information to support public authorities in organizing public meetings using digital and in-person mechanisms.
- Guide to Public Participation (United States Environmental Protection Agency; 2019): This resource provides guidance to organise successful public participation, with specific elements on open meetings.
- Civicus published a fact-sheet on Public Forums and on Town Hall Meetings providing guidance and important information for public authorities interested in organizing public and open meetings.

What is civic monitoring?

In the context of this playbook, civic monitoring refers to the idea of involving the public in the evaluation and monitoring of public decisions, policies and services. This participatory method can also be considered as vertical or social accountability tool, as it allows citizens and stakeholders to directly participate in making public authorities accountable for their decisions or actions.

Characteristics: what is it used for? Who takes part?

Public institutions can largely benefit from creating feedback channels for the public to provide inputs, comments and complaints to improve the decisions, actions and services provided. When involving citizens and stakeholders in the oversight and evaluation of its decisions and actions, public authorities can create virtuous circles and healthier relationships that can contribute to the overall trust in government. Civic monitoring can allow the public to monitor key areas of government action, such as:

- **Budget:** Opening up budgets and public financial management, and providing spaces for direct citizen participation and collaboration, can reduce corruption and waste, and increase the odds of taxes being used to deliver quality public services and to achieve real improvements in living standards and in social, economic, and environmental outcomes (OECD, 2017). In addition to being accountable in the collection of revenues, governments should also be accountable for the management and execution of the budget. Concretely, citizens and stakeholders can monitor and evaluate the budget by reviewing the information and data published by public institutions or ensuring that the money was indeed spent in the way it was intended.

- **Policies**: Civic monitoring in policymaking is focused on the implementation and evaluation stages of the policy process. Concretely, it is about ensuring that policies achieve their expected outcome, benefit the desired publics and are efficient vis a vis the public resources involved (GovLab, 2019). The public can gather evidence and inform about the real outcomes of policies to be able to assess the policy impact in comparison to the expected results.

- **Public services**: Involving citizens and stakeholders in monitoring and evaluation can promote efficiency and improve access as well as quality of public services. Mechanisms to hold public services to account, can focus on different aspects and at different stages of the service design and delivery process such as:
  - **Spending**: how much is the government spending on which activities? Is the allocated budget in line with the public preferences?
  - **Performance**: is the public service achieving its planned results? How are public authorities delivering public services? How are users perceiving and evaluating the performance of the public service?
  - **Access**: is the target public being correctly given access to these services? If the public service is intended to be universal, do all groups have equal access?

Who can participate?

There are different approaches regarding who can participate in civic monitoring mechanisms.

- **Universal access:** the process is open to all interested citizens and stakeholders without requiring a specific skill, expertise or profile.

- **Specific audiences:** some mechanisms can be aimed at more targeted audiences or public with specific skills or expertise such as technical communities, scientists, designers, etc. It can also target users of specific public services, or residents of limited geographical areas, etc.

How does it work?

Civic monitoring can be implemented using a diverse set of tools such as:

- **Citizen Report Cards (CRC)** can be used to solicit user feedback on service provider performance and should be openly available and user-friendly so citizens can understand to what extent public service delivery meets users' needs and satisfy their expectations and priorities (OECD, 2020). During a CRC process, quantitative and perception-based information

from statistically representative surveys is gathered, which means that the findings reflect the opinions and perceptions of the citizen group from which input and information is being sought. As such, it is a useful tool for establishing sound baseline information and benchmarking service coverage and performance, as well as identifying inequities in service delivery.

- **Social audits** can also play a critical role in keeping the community informed about government services and allow citizens to hold them to account. These audits are formal reviews of the objectives, decision making processes, and codes of conduct in public institutions. Social audit processes can help focus on bad government performance and/or behaviour and also by denouncing corrupt public officials or disseminating information about a public officials' asset declaration before an election. Social audit activities can take place at any stage of the policy-making cycle and can help measure public policy consistency between expected and actual outcomes.

- **Citizen complaints mechanisms**: can often be lodged on-site or in public hearings, although most institutions also offer various channels, such as hotlines, mailboxes, and online submission forms to enable diversity and accessibility. Registering complaints is the most common way through which any citizen can alert about possible fraud, corruption or mismanagement of public funds, or alleged irregularities within state agencies or government programs.

- **Public opinion surveys and citizen report cards:** Participatory surveys are powerful tools that seek citizen feedback on the quality and performance of public services such as primary and secondary education, healthcare, public transportation, and the water supply network. A citizen report card on public services is not just one more opinion poll. Report cards reflect the actual experience of people with a wide range of public services. Surveys and report cards directly engage citizens in assessing the quality of public services in terms of quality, access, and availability. Governments can systematically gather this feedback, periodically publish the responses on their website, and then use this information to benchmark citizen satisfaction with public services over time.

- **Public Expenditure Tracking:** Public expenditure tracking involves tracing the flow of public resources for the provision of public goods or services from origin to destination (CIVICUS, 2014). It is a mechanism for citizens and civil society to be involved in monitoring the use of public resources and for public authorities to increase efficiency and decrease corruption or misuse.

- **Online tools:** Citizens can also monitor public action and report to a wider community through the use of apps, virtual forums, social media or dedicated websites. It is more and more common that citizens take on social media to complain about the degradation of a public space, or to evaluate publicly their experience when using a public service (in a positive or negative way). More and more local governments are also putting in place dedicated mobile applications or digital solutions to allow the public to alert when a public service is malfunctioning (such as the public transport system) or when the streets are not clean, the public lighting is not working, etc.

- The State Audit Office of Georgia created the Budget Monitor, a digital platform that enables citizens to oversee and monitor the use of public resources.
- Citizens can monitor and track the activity and decisions of the United States Congress through a digital tool which includes information on the proposed bills, record of votes and activity of legislators. Similar portals are available in countries like France, Greece.
- Civic monitoring can allow citizens and stakeholders to monitor the implementation of strategies of action plans published by public authorities. This can be done through public meetings, or with digital platforms such as the Dashboard of Open Government in Mexico or the Government Results Platform in France.
- "CityScore" is an indicator co-created with by citizens to measure the quality and the delivery of public services in Boston (Unites States). It combines 24 different metrics, from 311 reports and resident satisfaction surveys to Wi-Fi availability, energy consumption, and grants for the arts. The Score is used by the local government to identify policy and implementation issues.
- La Buona Scuola Digitale was implemented in 2015 as a citizen led evaluation of the education reform "La Buona Scuola," introduced by Law 107/2015 across Italy. A mobile application allowed students and families to monitor the implementation of projects and measure the impact of funds and reforms at the school level. The application is no longer available.

Resources and tools
- Crowd Law Guide (New York University; 2019): This resource includes a section on how to include citizens and stakeholders in the evaluation of policies and legislations, including through social auditing and online tools.
- Civicus published a series of factsheets providing guidance and important information for public authorities interested in implementing participatory processes in the evaluation of policies and services:
  - Factsheet on Social Audits
  - Factsheet on Community Based Monitoring System
  - Factsheet on Public Expenditure Tracking
  - Factsheet on Community Monitoring and Evaluation
  - Factsheet on Citizen Report Cards
- Citizen's Guide to Monitoring Government Expenditures (International Budget Project): a useful resource to support civic monitoring of the budget cycle.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

What is a public consultation?

A consultation is a two-way relationship in which citizens provide feedback to a public institution (such as comments, perceptions, information, advice, experiences, and ideas) (OECD, 2016).

Usually, governments define the issues for consultation, set the questions, and manage the process, while citizens are invited to contribute their views and opinions (OECD, 2003).

What is it used for? Who takes part?

Public consultations are used to either gather ideas/feedback/input/opinions to help design and shape projects or policies, or to identify ways that an already defined project or policy can be implemented. Public consultations can be used to involve the broader public as well as stakeholders. Most of the time they are open to all to participate. The organisers need to prepare a robust communication strategy to ensure high levels of participation and reach a range of different groups.

Public consultations can be done in many different ways, either in-person or online. Most common types are listed below, Adapted from OECD (2001), *Citizens as Partners: OECD Handbook on Information, Consultation and Public Participation in Policy-Making* and *Action Catalogue*.

Comment periods are a type of public consultation where citizens and stakeholders are invited to submit their ideas to help solve a public problem, or their feedback to a proposed policy. These are open to all and simple to set up online, however they work better if there are roundtable discussions or other types of consultations set up in addition to it, where ideas can be developed and discussed. Calls for proposals favour participation of established stakeholders and actors over citizens, as they require time and resources to prepare ideas and suggestions to be submitted, which everyday citizens do not necessarily have.

Focus groups are a consultation tool used to determine peoples' preferences or to evaluate proposals and ideas. Usually, they involve a group of citizens who are testing or experiencing services, products or solutions and provide their in-depth feedback. They are usually comprised of around 8-10 people, gathered for a day or less.

Surveys are used to identify individual citizens' opinions and preferences based on a series of questions posed to citizens by governments. They can take place online or in person (i.e., to reach groups that do not have easy access to internet). Surveys are often open to any respondent and hence are not representative.

Public Opinion Polls are established instruments for portraying opinions held by a population on a given issue at a certain moment in time**.** They are a useful tool to gather the opinions of a random sample of the public, which ensures statistical representativeness of their responses.

Workshops/seminars/conferences/round-table discussions can be used to gather more detailed stakeholder or expert opinions and create opportunities for exchange of ideas. They happen online or in person and involve around 20 to 150 participants. It is important to keep in mind that smaller group discussions are better suited for developing ideas and exchanging opinions, whereas bigger events can help frame the debate and raise awareness about the policy issue.

Stakeholder interviews: stakeholder interviews are individual conversations with experts and stakeholders to gather their feedback and opinion regarding a project element, policy solution or a service. They can be structured (a list of predetermined questions are asked), semi-structured (a few prepared questions and a further natural development of the conversation), or unstructured (starts with the open question and develops further based on the answer).

How does it work?

The process starts by determining the purpose of involving citizens in your project and the target audience. Is it to gather ideas and help shape your project or a part of it? Or is the project already set, and help is needed to find ways to best implement it? Is there a clear target audience you would like to involve and hear from? Based on the answers to these questions, a method of a public consultation is chosen. Small group face-to-face methods, such as roundtable discussions, can be useful for brainstorming and generating ideas, whereas a call for proposals or a survey can be useful to gather detailed feedback on a concrete idea or document from a large amount of people. The method chosen should also be adapted to the group you would like to reach – for example, involving elderly people would be more efficient via interviews or in person surveys and discussions, whereas policy makers might prefer high level forums and comment periods.

The next step is setting up a clear plan how citizens will be consulted. Steps include recruiting participants, conducting the consultation method chosen, taking into account and communicating the results.

Providing clear and accessible information about the process and the question of the public consultation is essential to recruitment, meaningful participation, as well as growth and learning of the participants.

- In 2016, a series of public consultations were held in Bologna as part of the process "Passante di Bologna". Consultations allowed citizens to better understand the project and to influence the decisions by proposing improvements to the original plan. In parallel to the citizen consultation, a stakeholder advisory group formed by experts (the Scientific Council) provided technical advice to the Municipality.
- In 2017, the Metropolitan City of Genoa organised seven public meetings to inform and collect ideas from stakeholders and citizens for the Metropolitan Strategic Plan. The meetings were divided in two segments: a first part in plenary with the presentations of the authorities and experts, followed by a participatory moment where citizens were divided in focus groups and led by a facilitator. The suggestions and proposals were gathered in an online questionnaire as well as written forms.
- In January 2016, the Metropolitan City of Bologna started a consultation process with the Unions of Municipalities that make up the metropolitan area to gather ideas, projects and proposals for the Bologna Metropolitan Strategic Plan 2.0. Six meetings took place with the seven Unions of Municipalities between 13 January and 17 February, which produced a guidelines document for the strategic plan.

Resources and tools
- Guidelines on Stakeholder Consultation (European Commission; 2015): Chapter VII on their series on regulation guidelines; provides definitions of key terms, motivations for consultation and a method for doing so.
- Background Document on Public Consultation (OECD): provides definitions, methods and examples from OECD countries, along with good practices.
- Citizenlab published two short e-books on public consultations, with special emphasis on digital engagement: The FAQs of Digital Consulting and 6 Methods for Online Consultation.
- Consultation Principles utilized by the UK Government (2013).
- Code of Practice on Consultation (BRE UK, 2008): Includes seven criteria to guide policy makers on when and how to conduct stakeholder consultation.
- Consultation Principles & Guidance (Irish Government, 2016): Provides principles and also advice on practical issues that may arise throughout a consultation procedure.

OPEN INNOVATION: CROWDSOURCING AND HACKATHONS

What are open innovation practices?

Open innovation practices, such as crowdsourcing, hackathons or public challenges, are a way for public authorities to tap into the collective intelligence to co-create solutions to specific public challenges. Open innovation is regularly inspired from business development strategies or technological development, and it can be defined as "the cooperative creation of ideas and applications outside of the boundaries of any single organisation" (Seltzer and Mahmoudi, 2012).

What is it used for? Who takes part?

Open innovation methods are usually used to convene expertise from citizens and stakeholders to find ideas or inspiration, prototype and test solutions or to improve services or methods (GovLab, 2019).

Crowdsourcing refers to the idea of using the expertise and ideas coming from the crowd (in this case broader citizens and stakeholders), can be used to gather inputs throughout the policy-cycle of any public decision. Through digital platforms or in-person activities, public authorities can gather inputs from expert groups, targeted stakeholders (such as scientists or developers) or the wider public to answer specific public problems.

Hackathons (from hack and marathons) are in-person or virtual events bringing together public authorities and stakeholders to collaboratively work on ideas, prototype solutions and services to

solve public problems. The idea is to take advantage of the diversity of skills, expertise and profiles to find new approaches or innovative solutions. Usually, hackathons involve technical communities (developers, coders, designers, data scientists, etc.) to make use of data priory published (in an open data format) by the public authority convening the event. Hackathons are organized during a short period time (24 to 72 hours), where participants can work in sprint to solve a policy problem, design or code digital solutions such as dashboards, applications, websites, etc.

Public challenges are co-creation mechanisms where citizens and stakeholders propose solutions to concrete public problems. The public authority publishes a specific problem or challenge, and then selects the best proposals coming from the public to solve the problem in question. Solutions can be policy proposals, prototypes of mobile applications, or projects proposals, etc. Citizens and stakeholders submit their proposals and based on prior published criteria, the public authority selects the best ranked solutions. In some cases, the public authority provides a reward to the selected solutions (as financial compensation, public recognition or other awards). The public authority can then implement those solutions (as new public services, or as part of a wider policy program) or provide support for the participants to submit their project (as coach sessions, financial resources, etc.).

Who can participate?

There are different approaches regarding who can participate in open innovation methodologies such as crowdsourcing, hackathons or public challenges.

- **Universal access:** the process is open to all interested citizens and stakeholders without requiring a specific skill, expertise or profile.
- **Specific audiences:** some processes can be aimed at more targeted audiences or public with specific skills or expertise such as technical communities, scientists, designers, etc.

How does it work?

Crowdsourcing usually involves a digital platform where participants can publish ideas or contributions to answer the organizing authority's request or question. In-person alternatives can be put in place, such as workshops or ideas boxes.

Key steps:

1. Decide and set the problem to solve by participants;

2. Decide on the conditions to participate and the expected outcome of the inputs;

3. Communicate clearly on the problem, the conditions to participate and the expected goal of the process;

4. The process can be temporary to solve a specific problem (decide on the length of the process) or permanent as a continuous brainstorm tool;

5. Set up the digital or in-person mechanisms and communicate regularly to ensure your target audiences are aware of the process;

6. Once the process is finalized, communicate about the results.

Hackathons are usually in-person events organized during a weekend, in one common space where all participants can work and share ideas. Hackathons are sprint-oriented events, so the goal is to allow for a collaborative work environment with technical facilities and usually involve a setting the scene moment and a pitch session where participants present their ideas and solutions. Participants work in teams to solve one or several problems and mentors with strong expertise on the policy problem or the type of solution expected can be assign to each team. In some occasions, public authorities might consider rewarding the winner(s) with a prize or the recognition that comes with the implementation of their idea as a policy solution. For a hackathon to be productive, public authorities should put at disposal of participants data and information regarding the problem to solve.

Key steps:

1. Decide and set the problem(s) to solve by participants;

2. Decide on the conditions to participate and the profiles of stakeholders you will require;

3. Communicate clearly on the problem, the conditions to participate and the expected goal of the process;

4. Ensure you have a space set up with tables, co-working stations, stable internet and pitch corner;

5. Gather (and share with participants) as much data and information as possible regarding the problem you are aiming to solve;

6. Allow for sufficient time (assign teams, present the problem, allow for breaks, work on the solution and pitch ideas or prototypes);

7. Once the process is finalized, communicate about the results.

Public challenges are usually based on a digital platform where public authorities publish the public problem to solve, with information and data to support an informed participation. In some cases, public authorities can organize in-person sessions to answer questions or provide coaching and support to improve the participants solutions.

Key steps:

1. Decide and set the problem(s) to solve by participants;

2. Decide on the conditions to participate and the profiles of stakeholders you will require;

3. Communicate clearly on the problem, the conditions to participate and the expected goal of the process;

4. Decide on criteria to select the winners of the public challenge, and communicate about the criteria widely before the selection process starts.

5. Gather (and share with participants) as much data and information as possible regarding the problem you are aiming to solve;

6. Allow for sufficient time for participants to work on a qualitative proposal;

7. Nominate a jury (which can be formed with public authorities as well as independent juries from civil society or academia);

8. Once the solutions are selected, communicate about the results.

9. Communicate about the implementation status of the solutions.

> **Examples**
> - [Desafios (Challenges)](#) is an open innovation initiative in San Pedro Garza (Mexico) launched in 2016 to invite the public to collaborate in the creation of better policies and services with the municipality. Participants were invited to propose solutions on several public challenges including the mobility crisis, pollution, government inefficiency, and enhanced public spaces. The Municipality committed to select 10 proposals and support their implementation. The success of the pilot led San Pedro Garza to legislate this initiative into a new Citizen Participation Law (GovLab; 2019). [The United States](#) has a similar portal to co-create solutions to solve public challenges.
> - The "[Laboratori di Quartiere](#)" (Neighbourhood labs) organised by the Municipality of Bologna are open spaces for citizens and stakeholders to listen their needs and proposals, collaborate, debate and support innovative projects and solutions. The 6 laboratories organised in the 6 city districts serve as hubs of collaboration and innovation, where public authorities and citizens co-design initiatives to find agreed solutions to public challenges in those areas. Hackathons are widely used to solve public problems or to support public authorities in finding solutions to improve public services or policies. For example, during the COVID19 pandemic, [Estonia](#) and [France](#) organised virtual hackathons to co-create solutions that help the government better monitor the spread of the virus, improve the publication of data and information and support citizens and businesses throughout the crisis.

Resources and tools

- [A Framework of Open Practices](#) (Mozilla Foundation, 2017): This blog article describes and provides guidance on how to use open and collaborative innovation methods based on the experience of Mozilla and other innovative organisations.
- [Open Policy Making Toolkit](#) (UK Government; 2016): This manual includes information about Open Policy Making as well as the tools and techniques policy makers can use to create more open and user led policy.
- [The Power of Hackathons: a roadmap for sustainable open innovation](#) (Bastian, Zachary; 2013): This brief provides an overview of hackathons and offers practical guidance as well as good practices from successful experiences.
- [21st-Century Public Servants: Using Prizes and Challenges to Spur Innovation](#) **(**White House; 2015): This blog article presents results and experiences from the Obama Administration approach of using public challenges to solve complex public problems and other innovative methodologies. Better
- [The Open Policy Making Playbook](#) (GovLab, 2019): This playbook offers case studies and guidance for policymakers to include collaborative and innovative approaches to policymaking.

CITIZEN SCIENCE

What is citizen science?

Citizen science has a long history, as amateur enthusiasts of science, astronomy, biology, and other sciences have been exploring and observing the world around them for thousands of years. With the advance of online technologies, it has become much more prominent and efficient, and is now employed by researchers, advocates, and communities all over the world.

The essence of citizen science is that citizens are involved in one or many stages of a scientific investigation, including the identification of research questions, conducting observations, analysing data, and using the resulting knowledge (Craglia and Granell, 2014). It is a way to democratise a scientific process, opening it up to everyday people, and tapping into their motivation and curiosity to co-create and further research goals.

What is it used for? Who takes part?

Citizen science methods can be used for several different purposes (Veeckman et al., 2019):

- **An opportunity for citizens to learn more about a specific field or issue.** Such objectives can be achieved by citizen science projects that open access to the results of scientific research to citizens for free (such as open access journals) or organising informal learning workshops. Such efforts would be considered as an initial step of citizen participation: information.
- **As a research approach, where citizens contribute by gathering or analysing data.** The key strength of recruiting citizen scientists to contribute to research by collecting and analysing data is the large amount of data citizens are able to collect, the diversity of data when citizens are dispersed across different geographical locations which would not be possible to gather otherwise, and the opportunity to process and analyse data on a larger scale. The data collection can be done via observation, such as counting a specific kind of birds in one's neighbourhood, or using technical devices, such as air quality meters. Such efforts would be considered as citizen consultation or engagement, depending on the mandate given to citizens.
- **As a method to give citizens a voice in shaping research questions, designing a project, determining a focus of a study.** Citizens can be valuable and active agents in shaping the research process for some research projects. Their personal experience of living in a specific location, interacting with a specific environment, and being part of a particular community can yield important insights and helpful suggestions when identifying research questions or

determining a focus of the study. In addition, involving citizens in the co-design of the research project contributes to raising awareness around the issue the study aims to analyse, and can further help influence policy decisions and demonstrate the importance of the issue. Such efforts would be considered as citizen consultation or engagement, depending on the mandate given to citizens.

Both everyday people and stakeholders can be involved in citizen science projects, depending on the purpose of the project and technical requirements. They usually play different roles: while citizens are at the heart of the process, stakeholders provide support, inputs, access to data or tools.

How does it work?

The process starts by determining the purpose of involving citizens in your research or a scientific project. Based on the answer, it is then important to define the role citizens will have. The next step is to establish a clear plan, which outlines the steps and how citizens will be engaged. A good practice is to keep the citizens' participation journey in mind. For example, if citizens are collecting and analysing data, they should be kept informed how the data is used, and the final research results. If citizens have a more active role of determining the research questions or co-creating the research design, they should be kept up to date about the following steps that the project takes.

Providing clear and accessible information about the process and the research is ensures citizens' engagement and learning.

Participants in citizen science are usually volunteers recruited via an open call. Depending on the type of projects, a recruitment strategy might target specific groups, such as schools or students, people with particular interests or living in specific locations, or the general public at large. To recruit a sufficient number of motivated participants, a communication plan is essential.

> **Example**
> - [CurieuzeNeuzen Vlaanderen](#) is a collaborative scientific study in which the population helps and participates by collecting data about air quality. The aim is to map air quality throughout Flanders, both in the city and in the countryside. Around 20,000 families, associations, companies and schools will be involved in these processes and will collect data by using simple measuring set-up on a window of their home, apartment or building. This is an example of how to involve citizens in data collection for scientific purposes.

Resources and tools
- [Guides and manuals](#) (SCivil, 2020): This includes a guide to getting started with citizen science, explaining all the most basic details and also a manual on communication around a citizen science project.
- [Citizen science for all](#) (GEWISS Programme, 2016): This short book presents a guide for citizen science, both its practical and theoretical aspects in fields ranging from education to arts and humanities.
- [Digital Tools](#) (Rees, Dylan, 2021): A compilation of useful resources, including software, academic literature, links to conferences, among many other practical tools.

PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

What is participatory budgeting?

Participatory budgeting is a democratic way for people to have a direct say on how public money is spent. It began in 1989 in Porto Alegre in southern Brazil. In Brazil alone, this participatory mechanism spread to more than 436 municipalities, and today we can count more than 11,000 participatory budgeting experiences around the world.

What is it used for? Who takes part?

A participatory budget refers to mechanisms that allow citizens and stakeholders to influence public decisions through the direct allocation of public resources to priorities or projects. Those resources

are usually pre-defined by the public authorities, meaning that a dedicated budget is decided prior to the process. The amount depends on each authority, and it can go up to 100 million euros per year as in Paris (France), where the biggest amount of budget is put up to citizen vote (Véron, 2016[1]).

The Participatory Budgeting World Atlas defines a participatory budget as a "process that involves a specific portion or the entire amount of an institution's budget, so that can be freely and independent decided by all the citizens participating in the initiative."

Who organises?

The majority of processes are organized by local governments, however it's important to take into consideration those experiences organized by other levels of government such as regional, state and national. For example, in Portugal, where a national participatory budget is in place as of April 2021.

Who can participate?

There are different approaches regarding who can participate in a participatory budget:

- **Universal access:** the process is open to individuals of a certain territory or institution.
- **Targeted audiences:** some processes can be aimed at more targeted audiences or specific social sectors such as young people, residents of a specific area, elderly, immigrants, women, LGBTQ+ communities, etc.

The goal of a participatory budget should be to make fiscal public decisions more open, meaning more transparent, accountable and participatory. It also helps citizens better understand the functioning of public budgeting. Some processes can have targeted policy objectives through the allocation of resources, such as including citizens in urban planning, education priorities or the 2030 Agenda.

How does it work?

There is not a one-fits-all solution for participatory budgets, as each public institution can accommodate the process to fit its desired purpose, timeline or legal requirements. However, there are certain stages that all participatory budgets should include:

0) Communication: Before the process is open for participation, public authorities should communicate about the opportunity to participate, the expected outcomes of the participatory process, the stages of the process as well as the conditions for the projects to be eligible.

To be able to communicate about the process, public authorities should have decided the following elements:

- ✓ Budget allocated for the process
- ✓ Public that will be able to participate
- ✓ Criteria for eligibility of proposals
- ✓ Stages of the process
- ✓ Timings for the different stages

1) First stage of decision making: proposals

In this initial stage, the public authorities should make the rules of the game clear:

- **Who can present proposals?** It can be open to all citizens and stakeholders, to only a certain category of citizens (target groups) or stakeholders (NGOs, associations, etc.), or it can be the government that makes the proposals.
- **Which proposals are accepted?** This is important for participants to know in advance the specificities to take into account when submitting a proposal. Public authorities can define prior to the process certain conditions such as budget constraints, feasibility, locality of proposal, duration of implementation, etc.

It is also important to decide on the **methodology and format to submit the proposals**:

- **In-person:** Some processes require citizens and stakeholders to co-create the proposals through in-person mechanisms such as workshops, hackathons, town hall meetings, makerspaces, etc.

- **Online:** The vast majority of participatory budgets put in place a digital platform where the public can submit their proposals.
- **Hybrid:** To maximise inclusion and fairness, some processes put in place a hybrid system where citizens and stakeholders can submit their proposals both though a digital platform or an in-person mechanism.

2) Intermediate stage: evaluation of proposals and feasibility

In some participatory budgets, public authorities decide to include an intermediate stage between the submission and the vote, to review the proposals and decide on their feasibility. This analysis has to be transparent, meaning that the public authority should communicate about the conditions for proposals to be accepted. Once the submissions are reviewed, the authority can publish the proposals that are accepted and put to vote.

3) Second stage of decision making: vote

In this stage, the proposals that have been accepted by the public authorities are submitted to a vote in order to select the ones that will be implemented. Once again, the rules of who can participate should be clear as well as the mechanisms available for the public to vote.

- **Who can vote?** Public authorities should decide and communicate the individuals that are eligible to participate in the vote. It can go from all residents of a geographical area, to targeted groups.
- **How can the public vote?** Public authorities can implement different methodologies: digital platforms, physical booths, SMS voting, mail ballots, or hybrid systems. The ultimate goal should be to ensure that all the eligible participants have the capacity to vote.

Once the vote stage is finalized, public authorities should communicate widely about the results.

4) Implementation and evaluation: In some cases, citizens and stakeholders are also involved in the execution of the selected projects or proposals, and in the monitoring and evaluation phases.

It is highly recommended that participatory budgets become a continuous practice, meaning a process that repeats itself in a continuous basis (yearly, bi-annually, etc.) for citizens to be able to follow up the implementation of the projects and create a culture of participation.

> **Examples**
> Many Municipalities in Italy have implemented participatory budgets, some examples are:
> - In 2018, the Community of Desio open a process for citizens to allocate 100 000€ to projects proposed by other citizens. The participatory budget included several stages including an initial phase with open meetings to allow for discussion and a final vote through digital platforms.
> - In 2018, the Community of Milan gave citizens the opportunity to allocate 4.5 million euros to projects submitted by other citizens. The process includes four stages: proposals, evaluation of feasibility by public authorities, vote and monitoring of implementation.
> - From 2015 to 2021, the city of Paris allocated 25% of the city's investment budget to a participatory exercise. Using a mix of online and virtual tools, citizens can propose, co-create and vote for the projects to be financed. To increase diversity and inclusion, a specific part of the budget is dedicated to projects in the peripheries of the city.
> - In 2017, the city of Bologna implemented this practice. Proposals were examined by a group of city experts, and those qualifying would move on to online voting. Inclusiveness was a priority and as such, anyone over 16 years of age working, living, or studying in the city was allowed to participate. The allocated 1 million euros were shared by the six winning proposals for their implementation. The practice continues to this day, with an increased budget.

Resources and tools

- [72 Frequently Asked Questions about Participatory Budgeting](#) (UN HABITAT; 2014): This resource provides guidance on how to define a participatory budget, how to implement it, how to decide on the allocation of budget and the participatory aspects.
- [Participatory Budgeting Toolkit](#) (East, North and South Ayrshire Councils; 2020): A toolkit developed in Scotland for community groups and organizations who are planning to organise a participatory budget.
- [Another city is possible with participatory budgeting](#) (Cabannes, Yves; 2017): This book discusses the background and challenges of PB processes. It highlights 13 cases of PB around the world, in various contexts and institutions. It also includes recommendations to address challenges with participation.
- [Participatory Budgeting in Schools: A Toolkit for Youth Democratic Action](#) (Great Cities Institute; 2020): This toolkit, developed based on participatory budgeting experiences in Chicago schools, aims to make PB easier to implement with teachers and youth in schools across a wide variety of models and contexts.
- [Participatory Budgeting (PB) Blueprint Guidebook](#) (Empaci; 2021): This e-book presents best practices based on case studies.
- [How Cities can use Participatory Budgeting to address Climate Change](#) (People Powered): A short information sheet giving useful recommendations.

REPRESENTATIVE DELIBERATIVE PROCESSES

What is a representative deliberative process?

A representative deliberative process refers to a randomly selected group of people who are broadly representative of a community spending significant time learning and collaborating through facilitated deliberation to form collective recommendations for policy makers (OECD, 2020). There are twelve models of deliberative processes, but the most well-known are Citizens' Assemblies and Citizens' Juries.

What is a representative deliberative process?
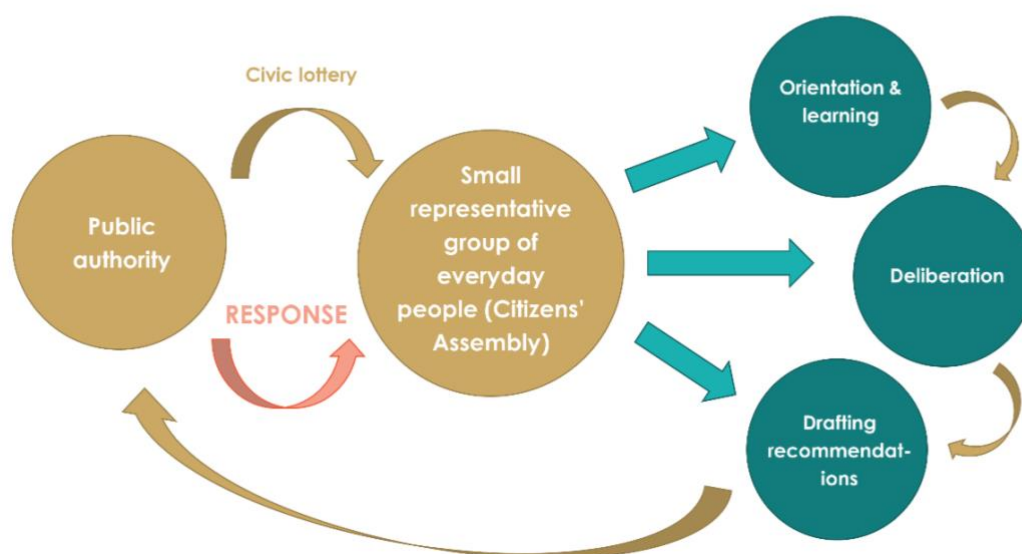
What is it used for? Who takes part?

A representative deliberative process is most suited to address the following types of problems:

- values-based dilemmas;
- complex problems that require trade-offs and affect a range of groups in different ways;
- long-term questions that go beyond electoral cycles.

How does it work?

There are two elements that make representative deliberative processes quite different from other methods of citizen participation.

The first element is the **random selection of participants through a civic lottery**. To be able to organise deep and substantial deliberation, the group of citizens participating in it has to be relatively small, usually ranging from 15 to 100 participants. See more details about the civic lottery in the participant recruitment section of the playbook. Randomly selecting citizens, stratified based on the criteria such as age, gender, location, and socio-economic background, has the benefit of capturing the diversity of society. Even though it is a smaller group of participants than some other processes, it is designed to ensure inclusiveness and capture the views of those harder to reach communities and voices.

The second element is **deliberation**. Deliberation involves dialogue, debate, but also implies a careful consideration of a range of different arguments and opinions in a respectful way. It requires accurate and relevant information and adequate time, so that those deliberating can go into the core of the issue and find common ground.

Overall, because of these properties, representative deliberative processes focus on the depth of deliberation and all parts of society being represented within a smaller group of participants, whereas the majority of other methods of citizen participation place the focus on the breadth of participation – aiming to ideally involve everyone affected by a specific issue (Carson and Elstub, 2019) (OECD 2020).

Steps of a representative deliberative process

1) Preparing for a representative deliberative process

- **Securing buy-in** from politicians/policy makers/decision makers. This is a crucial step of the process, which helps to ensure that a citizens' jury or panel is meaningful and will have impact on decision making. It is important to factor in enough time to establish this.
- **Designing the process.** The complexity of the question citizens will be asked to address will affect how many participants will be required, how much time they will need, which experts and stakeholders should provide information, and what online tools could be helpful.
- **Civic lottery to select participants.** More details about it can be found in a dedicated section above.
- **Preparing information, the stakeholder line-up, briefing facilitators.** Identifying broad and diverse information from experts and stakeholders is needed for citizens' to be able to deliberate and reach public judgement. Successful deliberation requires skilled facilitation.

2) Five phases of a representative deliberative process

1. **A team/community building phase**, when the members of the process meet one another and establish the values that will guide their deliberation. In some cases, they also receive training on understanding biases and critical thinking. This phase creates the conditions for their deliberation to be possible in the latter stages.
2. **A learning phase**, where citizens become familiar with the policy question and consider a range of perspectives presented by experts, stakeholders, and affected groups, a diverse mix of whom present to the participants in person or in writing and answer their questions. It is also common for citizens to be able to request additional information, experts, or stakeholders if they feel they are missing information or need additional clarifications. For bigger processes, it is common to conduct other participation methods, such as public

consultations or crowdsourcing ideas, before a representative deliberative process starts, to gather inputs from the broader public.

3. Learning and consultation is followed by **citizen deliberation**, when evidence is discussed, options and trade-offs are assessed, and recommendations are collectively developed. The process is carefully designed to maximise opportunities for every participant to exercise public judgement and requires impartial trained facilitators.

4. The final step is **reaching a "rough consensus"** – finding (as much as possible) a proposal or range of options that a large proportion of participants can strongly agree on. When voting is used, it is either an intermediate step on the way to rough consensus, or a "fall back" mechanism when consensus cannot be reached. Final recommendations are made publicly available and receive a response from the public authorities.

Examples
- Bologna is the first city in Italy to implement deliberative representative processes. The Bologna climate assemblies are representative deliberative processes with a pre-determined duration and tasks, in which randomly selected citizens, representative of the different components of society, discuss and define shared proposals to fight climate change. The Assembly alternates moments of training and moments of deliberation to formulate and vote on proposals.
- The Regional Ministry of Economy in Cantabria (Spain) organised a representative deliberative process to involve citizens in the allocation of European Cohesion Policy funds and support the Region's transition to a greener economy. The Besaya Citizens' Jury took place between May and July 2021 and was comprised of a broadly representative group of 35 everyday citizens selected by civic lottery from ten municipalities in the Besaya region. They were asked to develop recommendations for the Ministry to answer the following question: "*How to make the most of European Green Funds in the Besaya basin to create and / or maintain jobs that respect the criteria of a fair and inclusive ecological transition?*"

Resources and tools
- The OECD Trello board with a range of further resources for representative deliberative processes.
- The OECD Report *Innovative Citizen Participation and New Democratic Institutions: Catching the Deliberative Wave* (2020).
- Handbook on Democracy beyond Elections by UN Democracy Fund & newDemocracy Foundation (2019).
- MASS LBP's Guide on How to run a civic lottery
- Citizens' Assemblies: Guide to Democracy That Works by Marcin Gerwin.
- OECD has two forthcoming publications on the matter: *Bringing public judgement to democracy: Eight models of representative public deliberation implemented across OECD Member countries* and *Evaluation Guidelines for representative deliberative processes*.
- How to Start a Climate Assembly (People Powered): a short information sheet with key facts.
- How to run a Citizen's Assembly (RSA et al; 2020): a handbook covering the planning, organizing and delivery stages of a CA.

Questions to answer during this step:
- Which participation method will you use?
- What are the steps you will need to take to plan and implement it?

Step 6: Tips for implementation

The implementation of a participation process largely depends on the method chosen. Key elements of each model are outlined in the previous section. However, there are some general considerations that concern any participatory process – such as preparing an adequate timeline, communication strategy and selecting appropriate digital tools.

Timeline

- **Plan sufficient time to implement the participation process.** Simpler processes such as public consultations might take a couple of months to implement – from preparing necessary materials, to communicating and inviting citizens to participate and giving them enough time to provide their contributions. More complex processes, such as participatory budgets, citizen science projects or deliberative processes can take much longer, depending on their scale. For example, for a deliberative process several months are required to get stakeholders and decision makers on board, around two months to conduct a process of random selection of participants, and several months of learning and deliberation of participants (as they meet every or every other weekend).
- **Make sure that participation process is aligned with the decision-making process.** Participation should be timely in order to inform decision making.
- **Prepare a detailed timeline.** It should include preparatory steps, such as booking the venue and preparing information material, as well as steps to implement the process (how long in-person sessions will be, how much time in between etc).

Questions to answer during this step:
- How much time is needed to implement your participation process properly?
- What are the main steps, and how much time they take?
- Does the timing of the participation process align with any relevant decision-making processes?

Communication

- **Prepare a communications strategy** and plan which follows every step of the process.
- **Distinguish between communication with the participants of the process and communication with the broader public about the participation process.**
- Ensure constant and clear communication.

Questions to answer during this step:
- What will be the communication strategy for before, during, and after the process?
- Which channels will you use to inform the public?
- How will you ensure that citizens who are not directly involved in the process are informed about what happens?

Communication with participants	Communication with the broader public
Purpose: helpful at recruiting participants, keeping them engaged, and ensuring a smooth experience. **Channels:** can be done using communication channels such as email, a dedicated Facebook or WhatsApp group or a dedicated online platform.	**Purpose:** raising interest, understanding, and awareness about the participatory process and the issue it tackles, ensure transparency and gain trust in the decisions made by the participants. **Channels:** ongoing communication on a dedicated website, making relevant information public, social media posts, videos, press releases or press conferences.

Digital tools

The use digital tools for citizen and stakeholder participation is a widespread practice at all levels of government around the world. It is normal for public authorities to be prone to reach out to the public using digital tools, as it might seem more accessible, easy to put in place, allowing for an instantaneous and massive participation etc. However, **before using digital tools for participatory processes, public authorities have to take into account some considerations:**

- **Keep in mind the existing "digital divides"** (i.e. the fact that societies can be divided into people who do and people who do not have access to - and the capability to use - digital technologies) and avoid the emergence of new forms of "digital exclusion" (i.e. not being able to take advantage of digital services and opportunities). For example, men, urban residents and young people are more likely to be online than women, rural populations and older persons (International Telecommunication Union, 2021). It is important to always propose a non-digital alternative to ensure the inclusion of digitally excluded populations. Participatory processes, as well as public services, should aim at equality of access and participation. Non-digital alternatives can be for example: physical vote, consultations via phone or any other in-person mechanisms (workshops, kiosks, paper mail, etc.).

- **Using digital tools requires resources:** using digital tools does not imply that the costs or the needed resources will be reduced, so public authorities should not think about digital as a saving option. On the contrary, a qualitative use of digital tools, one that ensures inclusion and impactful participation requires technical, human and financial resources. In some cases, public authorities might want to outsource (meaning contract external resources for a limited period of time) to set up and manage the digital tools and in other cases, they can use internal resources. It is important to avoid overlaps, so it is recommended that public authorities reach out to colleagues or dedicated offices in their institutions to ensure that a digital platform is not already in place or if a digital tool has been pre-selected by the institution for these types of uses.

- **The technological choice**: As it has become evident in the latest electoral campaigns, technology such as algorithms and social media, can have a direct impact on the democratic process and the outcomes of a citizen participation process. Public authorities should think twice before selecting a digital tool, this means ensuring that the technology selected is transparent and accountable. This Playbook does not support any digital tool, but evidence shows that open-source software is best suited for democratic processes because it allows for scrutiny and accountability. In Part 4, we provide concrete examples of digital tools that public authorities can use in their participatory process.

Step 7: Keeping your promise

Closing the feedback loop
- After the participation process, get back to participants as well as the broader public with the acknowledgement of their inputs, recommendations, or help implementing your project.
- Explain, how exactly their contributions will feed into the bigger picture of your project, and when can they expect any concrete results.
- Thank participants for their time and effort and keep them updated on the progress of the project to ensure they feel valued and appreciated.

By not properly closing the feedback loop organisers risk discouraging people from participating another time and potentially diminishing the benefits of participation, such as the increased sense of trust, efficacy, and agency.

Taking into account the results of the participation process
- Results should be taken into account based on the remit and the task that was initially set for the participants of a participatory process.
- Results should be given careful and respectful consideration, and used as set out in the beginning – with clear justifications and arguments if certain results are not used or implemented.
- There is no obligation to implement all of the recommendations, ideas, or proposals that came out of the participatory process, nor an obligation to use all of the data gathered – as long as such choice is justified.
- It might not possible to communicate to participants right away how their input or recommendations were taken into account. Instead, let them know the potential timeframe and provide regular updates on the status of the outputs of their efforts.

Step 8: Evaluating the participatory process

Why evaluate?
- Evaluation allows to measure and demonstrate the quality and neutrality of a participation process to the broader public. This can increase trust and legitimacy in the use of participation processes for public decision making and implementing projects.
- Evaluation creates an opportunity for learning by providing evidence and lessons for public authorities and practitioners about what went well, and what did not. It gives a basis for the iteration and improvement of the design and implementation of a participation process (OECD Evaluation Guidelines for Representative Deliberative Processes, forthcoming in 2021).

How to evaluate?

Evaluation should be planned for from the very start of designing a participation process. Depending on the method of participation and scale of the participation process, different types of evaluation can be chosen. For a short, small-scale process, such as a public consultation, a participant questionnaire administered by the organisers would be an appropriate evaluation. Whereas for participatory budgeting or representative deliberative processes it is recommended to commission independent evaluation.

To design a participant questionnaire, guide self-reflections of the organisers or commission an independent evaluation, it is central to keep in mind the principles for quality participation, which can serve as a benchmark. Part 3 of this document outlines these principles. Further resources on evaluation can be found in part 4 of the guidelines.

Questions to answer during this step:
- How are you going to evaluate the participation process?
- What methods will be used?
- When will it happen?
- What criteria will you be using for evaluation?

PART 3 | ENSURING QUALITY OF PARTICIPATION

Part 3 aims to introduce principles that help ensure the quality of citizen participation. The reader should use these principles to help shape their citizen participation activities and that Joint Secretariat can use to ensure that participation activities beneficiaries are planning are inclusive, transparent, meaningful etc.

Various methods of citizen participation outlined in these guidelines rely on different principles of good practice to ensure their quality. Even though methods have their own specificities, there are general principles to keep in mind when implementing citizen participation activities.

1) Purpose

The objective of a citizen participation process should be outlined as a clear task and is linked to a defined public problem. Relevant stakeholders are involved in setting the objective. It is phrased neutrally as a question in plain language. It aims for a genuine outcome – answering a policy or research question.

2) Accountability

There should be influence on public or research decisions. There should be public commitment to responding to or acting on participants' recommendations, following up on the use of their inputs (such as data) in a timely manner.

3) Transparency

The participation process should be announced publicly before it begins. There should be full transparency on any applicable decision-making process which will follow the participation process. The process design and all materials, as well as relevant data collected, should be available to the public in a timely manner. The funding source should be disclosed. The response to the recommendations or other outputs of the participation process and the evaluation after the process should be publicised and have a public communication strategy.

4) Inclusiveness and accessibility

The public must have good access to participatory processes. This means that the methods chosen must be appropriate for the intended audience, efforts are made to reduce barriers to participation and to consider how to involve underrepresented groups. Participation can also be encouraged and supported through remuneration, expenses, and/or providing or paying for childcare and eldercare.

5) Integrity

The process must have an honest intention. Depending on the scale of the process, there can be oversight by an advisory or monitoring board, and the participation process can be run by an arms' length co-ordinating team different from the commissioning authority.

6) Privacy

There should be respect for participants' privacy. Data published should have consent of participants. All personal data of participants should be treated in compliance with international good practices, such as the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and taking into account legal and ethical issues surrounding data sharing, copyright, intellectual property.

7) Information

Participants should have access to a wide range of accurate, relevant, and accessible evidence and expertise. Participation processes are designed to give citizens full and clear knowledge a specific issue.

These principles have been developed based on the analysis of good practice principles for each method (for which such principles were available), linked below.

- [Good practice principles for representative deliberative processes](#)
- [Good practice principles for citizen science projects](#)
- [Good practice principles for public consultations](#)
- [Good practice principles for participatory budgeting](#)

PART 4 | USEFUL RESOURCES AND LINKS

Online tools useful for citizen participation

As explained in Part 2, the use of digital tools for participatory processes is becoming the new normal for many public authorities. The list of existing digital solutions is very extensive and would be impossible to map all the possibilities in this playbook. Public authorities can also decide to develop and design their own platform to be adapted to their specific needs.

The table below presents a list of digital tools that can be used in the context of the methodologies presented in this playbook. All the tools listed are open source, which means that you can see, replicate and collaborate to the code.

Tool	Representative deliberative process	Public consultation	Participatory budget	Open meeting	Crowdsourcing	Civic monitoring
Your Priorities		X	X		X	X
All Our Ideas		X			X	
Pol.Is		X			X	
Decidim	X	X	X	X	X	
DemocracyOS		X	X			
Jit.si	X			X		
Consul		X	X		X	
HackMD / FramaPad				X		
CitizenLab		X	X			

Resources on using digital tools for participation:

- The e-Participation canvas (Citizenlab): A short e-book providing a framework for internal use for the development of a digital citizens' participation platform.
- Digital Democracy: The Tools Transforming Political Engagement (NESTA; 2017): Published for Nesta research, this paper shares lessons from different experiences of digital democracy put forth by different European governments.
- Digital Democracy: A Guide on Local Practices of Digital Deliberation (ERDF; 2020): Gives advice for implementation of digital tools for governance, specifically at the local and regional level.
- Designing Online Public Deliberation (newDemocracy & Democratic Society; 2020): This paper explains how to build tools for online deliberation that do not simply mirror offline deliberation, but that are better adapted for the digital space.
- Digital Tools for Citizens' Assemblies (mySociety; 2019): This paper explores how digital tools can be used to enhance in-person CAs.

Databases of various examples of citizen participation

- OECD database of representative deliberative processes
- Participedia
- LATINNO database
- People Powered Hub
- Gov Lab CrowdLaw Catalog

Handbooks & further readings on citizen and stakeholder participation

1) **Practical resources in Italian:**
- Linee guida sulla valutazione partecipativa di cittadini e utenti
- Linee guida sulla consultazione
- Linee guida per promuovere la partecipazione dei cittadini alle decisioni pubbliche
- La partecipazione dei cittadini: un manuale

2) Handbooks and practical resources

- How To Design And Plan Public Engagement Processes: A Handbook
- How to run a civic lottery
- The International Open Data Charter
- The Open Contracting Partnership's Guide on Open Contracting
- The Open Data Handbook
- 21st Century Town Meeting
- Guide to Public Participation
- Citizen's Guide to Monitoring Government Expenditures
- Open Policy Making Toolkit
- The Open Policy Making Playbook
- Action Catalogue
- SCivil Guides and manuals
- EU-Citizen.Science
- Citizen science for all
- Digital Tools for Citizen Science
- 72 Frequently Asked Questions about Participatory Budgeting
- Participatory Budgeting Toolkit
- Participatory Budgeting in Schools: A Toolkit for Youth Democratic Action
- OECD Trello board
- Handbook on Democracy Beyond Elections
- Digital Democracy: The Tools Transforming Political Engagement
- Guidelines on Stakeholder Consultation
- Background Document on Public Consultation
- The FAQs of Digital Consulting
- 6 Methods for Online Consultation
- Consultation Principles
- Participatory Budgeting (PB) Blueprint Guidebook
- How Cities can use Participatory Budgeting to address Climate Change
- How to Start a Climate Assembly
- How to run a Citizen's Assembly

Civicus factsheets

- Factsheet on Public Forums
- Factsheet on Town Hall Meetings
- Factsheet on Social Audits
- Factsheet on Community Based Monitoring System
- Factsheet on Public Expenditure Tracking
- Factsheet on Community Monitoring and Evaluation
- Factsheet on Citizen Report Cards

Briefs

- Crowd Law Guide
- The Power of Hackathons: a roadmap for sustainable open innovation

Good practice principles

- Good practice principles for representative deliberative processes
- Good practice principles for citizen science projects

- Good practice principles for public consultations
- Good practice principles for participatory budgeting

3) Academic materials

- Journal of Deliberative Democracy
- *Proactive Transparency: The future of the right to information?*
- The Participatory Budgeting World Atlas
- Another city is possible with participatory budgeting
- *Innovative Citizen Participation and New Democratic Institutions: Catching the Deliberative Wave* (2020).
- *Citizens as Partners: OECD Handbook on Information, Consultation and Public Participation in Policy-Making*
- *Bringing public judgement to democracy: Eight models of representative public deliberation implemented across OECD Member countries (forthcoming)*
- *Evaluation Guidelines for representative deliberative processes (forthcoming)*

4) Blogs and podcasts

- Participo
- A Framework of Open Practices
- The Living Library – Gov Lab
- 21st-Century Public Servants: Using Prizes and Challenges to Spur Innovation

References

Abellán López, María Ángeles & Pineda Nebot, Carmen & Flack, Andres & Barros, Marta & Enríquez, Sahsil. (2019). Participatory Budgeting Worldwide Atlas.

Carson, Lyn and Stephen Elstub (2019), "Comparing participatory and deliberative democracy", newDemocracy Research and Development Note, newDemocracy Foundation, https://www.newdemocracy.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/RD-Note-Comparing-Participatory-and-Deliberative-Democracy.pdf

Craglia, Max and Carlos Granell. (2014), "Citizen Science and Smart Cities." Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/38628014.pdf.

Faulkner, W. & Bynner, C. (2020) How to Design and Plan Public Engagement Processes: A Handbook, Glasgow: What Works Scotland

Involve (2005) People & Participation: How to put citizens at the heart of decision-making, London: Beacon Press.

OECD (2016), Open Government: The Global Context and the Way Forward, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264268104-en.

OECD (2017), *Recommendation of the Council on Open Government*, https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-0438.

OECD (2020), *Innovative Citizen Participation and New Democratic Institutions: Catching the Deliberative Wave*, OECD Publishing, Paris, *https://doi.org/10.1787/339306da-en*.

Regione Emilia-Romagna (3 August 2021) Legge sulla Partecipazione, https://partecipazione.regione.emilia-romagna.it/news/normali/news-2021/legge-sulla-partecipazione-5 (14 October 2021).

Veeckman, C., Talboom, S., Gijsel, L., Devoghel, H., & Duerinckx, A. (2019) Communication in citizen science. A practical guide to communication and engagement in citizen science. Leuven: SCIVIL.

Ville de Paris (n.d.), "La Charte du #Budgetparticipatif", https://budgetparticipatif.paris.fr/bp/jsp/site/Portal.jsp?page_id=16 (accessed 14 October 2021).

ANNEX – Checklist for designing or commissioning a citizen participation process

Guidance on each checklist item is provided in corresponding sections of this document.

I. Choosing to involve citizens	*Should I involve citizens in the design, implementation or evaluation of the territorial development strategy?*	
• Is there a problem that citizens can help solve?		☐
• Is there room in your project's scope for citizens to have influence over certain decisions? Can you act on the advice you receive from them?		☐
• Is there a genuine commitment by senior leadership to take into account citizens' inputs?		☐
• Are there are financial, time, and staff resources dedicated for meaningful citizen participation?		☐
II. Planning and implementing/commissioning citizen participation	*Steps to follow*	
Step 1: Identifying the problem to solve		
• Determining where in the project or policy cycle you are.		☐
• Identifying the problem you need to solve.		☐
• Determining how citizens and/or stakeholders can help you solve this problem.		☐
Step 2: Defining the expected outcome		
• Identifying type(s) of inputs you would like to receive from participants.		☐
• Developing a clear understanding how you will use inputs from citizens to solve your problem.		☐
Step 3: Identifying available resources		
• Determining how many staff (internal/external) you have available to support the design and implementation of the process.		☐
• Determining budget available for citizen participation.		☐
• Identifying any additional resources available for this process (platforms, contractors, etc.).		☐
Step 4: Identifying the relevant public to be involved and recruiting it		
• Given the policy issue(s) at stake, determining what groups should be reflected among the participants.		☐
• Deciding approximate number of people you aim to reach/involve.		☐

- Choosing the recruitment method. ☐
- Taking steps to ensure transparency of the recruitment process. ☐

Step 5: Choosing a participatory method

- Determining which method most closely matches your needs: yields your desired type of inputs, is feasible given your timeline and resources. ☐
- Identifying the steps you need to take to plan and implement your chosen method. ☐

Step 6: Tips for implementation

Timeline

- Determining how much time is needed to implement your participation process properly. ☐
- Identifying the main steps of setting up your participation process and time needed for each step. ☐
- Making sure the timing of the participation process aligns with any relevant decision-making processes. ☐

Communication

- Preparing the communication strategy for before, during, and after the process. ☐
- Considering how you will ensure that citizens who are not directly involved in the process are informed about it. ☐
- Choosing communication channels you will use to inform participants and the public. ☐

Digital tools

- Determining whether online platforms and digital tools will be used. ☐
- Choosing what digital tools you will use. ☐
- Considering how to ensure that everyone has access to those tools and planning for any technical support needed. ☐

Step 7: Keeping your promise

- Deciding who will respond to the participants' inputs and recommendations and in what form. ☐
- Planning how and when you will communicate the response. ☐
- Determining how the hard work of the participants will be recognised and celebrated. ☐

Step 8: Evaluating the participatory process

- Determining how you will evaluate the participation process. ☐

• Deciding what methods will be used for evaluation and when they will be deployed.	☐
• Setting criteria of success that will be used for evaluation.	☐

III. Ensuring quality participation	*Does the participation process meet good practice principles?*

1) Purpose
The objective of a citizen participation process should be outlined as a clear task and is linked to a defined public problem. Relevant stakeholders are involved in setting the objective. It is phrased neutrally as a question in plain language. It aims for a genuine outcome – answering a policy or research question.   ☐

2) Accountability
There should be influence on public or research decisions. There should be public commitment to responding to or acting on participants' recommendations, following up on the use of their inputs (such as data) in a timely manner.   ☐

3) Transparency
The participation process should be announced publicly before it begins. There should be full transparency on any applicable decision-making process which will follow the participation process. The process design and all materials, as well as relevant data collected, should be available to the public in a timely manner. The funding source should be disclosed. The response to the recommendations or other outputs of the participation process and the evaluation after the process should be publicised and have a public communication strategy.   ☐

4) Inclusiveness and accessibility
The public must have good access to participatory processes. This means that the methods chosen must be appropriate for the intended audience, efforts are made to reduce barriers to participation and to consider how to involve underrepresented groups. Participation can also be encouraged and supported through remuneration, expenses, and/or providing or paying for childcare and eldercare.   ☐

5) Integrity
The process must have an honest intention. Depending on the scale of the process, there can be oversight by an advisory or monitoring board, and the participation process can be run by an arms' length co-ordinating team different from the commissioning authority.   ☐

6) Privacy
There should be respect for participants' privacy. Data published should have consent of participants. All personal data of participants should be treated in compliance with international good practices, such as the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and taking into account legal and ethical issues surrounding data sharing, copyright, intellectual property.   ☐

7) Information
Participants should have access to a wide range of accurate, relevant, and accessible evidence and expertise. Participation processes are designed to give citizens full and clear knowledge a specific issue.

ANNEX – Examples of citizen participation in Emilia Romagna

Process	Date	Organiser	Description	Level of participation	Methodology
New Urban Plan (PUG - Piano Urbanistico Generale)	2020 - 2021	Municipality of Cesena	A four-step process including public meetings, workshops, and interactive events to integrate citizens' inputs throughout the design and evaluation of Cesena's Urban Plan (PUG - Piano Urbanistico Generale).	Consultation	Public consultation; open meetings
Ravenna Partecipa	2019	Muncipality of Ravenna	A multi-step process to consult citizens from Ravenna in the elaboration of the guidelines for participation in Ravenna. This process included online surveys, public meetings, world cafés, and open meetings.	Consultation	Public consultation, open meetings, open innovation
Il quartiere bene comune	2015 - ongoing	Municipality of Reggio Emilia	An initiative including participatory mechanisms in several neighbourhoods of the city, with both online and in-person activities to provide citizens with information (open local meetings), include them in local decisions (co-planning workshops) and in the evaluation of certain projects.	Information Consultation Engagement	Open meetings, public consultations, open innovation
Climate Assemblies	2021 - ongoing	Municipality of Bologna	The Bologna climate assemblies are representative deliberative processes with a pre-determined duration and tasks, in which	Engagement	Deliberative processes

			randomly selected citizens, representative of the different components of society, discuss and define shared proposals to fight climate change. The Assembly alternates moments of training and moments of deliberation to formulate and vote on proposals.		
Urban Innovative Actions	2020 - ongoing	Municipalities of Bologna, Ravenna and Ferrara (with the support of the Urban Innovative Actions EU fund (ERDF).	The three projects aim at involving citizens and stakeholders in urban design in support of the sustainable development goals. Through a co-design and co-creation process, the project aims at including citizens/stakeholders in local decisions, to raise awareness and increase their active participation. In Bologna, citizens are given an active role in supporting the reception and integration of refugees. In Ravenna, a collaborative digital platform supports the implementation of a participatory culture. In Ferrara, by gamification, rewarding mechanisms and round tables/webinars, the project aims at increasing the participation of citizens in Living labs, and other communal associations.	Engagement	Public consultation, open innovation

Parma's Participatory Budget	2019	Municipality of Parma	More than 6000 citizens participated in the allocation of public funding through projects across the municipality with in-person and online mechanisms.	Engagement	Participatory Budget
Laboratori aperti - Open Labs	2014 – 2020	Region of Emilia-Romagna	Collaborative spaces to co-create solutions to public problems for smart and inclusive cities, in order to implement the European Urban Agenda and strengthen digital skills of citizens and stakeholders in ten cities of the Emilia-Romagna Region.	Engagement	Open innovation
Consultation for the Bologna Metropolitan Strategic Plan 2.0	2016	Metropolitan City of Bologna	Consultation process with the Municipality Unions comprising the metropolitan area to gather ideas, projects and proposals for the strategic plan. Six meetings took place with the seven groups between 13 January and 17 February, producing a guidelines document.	Information Consultation	Public Consultation
Bologna Participatory Budgeting	2017-ongoing	Municipality of Bologna	Online voting. Was available to anyone over 16 years of age working, living, or studying in the city. 1 million euros were shared by the six winning proposals for their implementation. Today, the budget has increased.	Engagement	Participatory Budgeting
Emilia-Romagna Dedicated	Ongoing	Region of Emilia-Romagna	This platform provides citizens and stakeholders with access to public information, including	Consultation	Public consultation

			information about public authorities (responsibilities, agendas, etc.), policy documents (territorial development plans) or fiscal data (budget, expenditures, etc.).		
Digital Platform					
Stai COMPOSTo! Project		Municipalities of Terre di Castelli Union (Castelnuovo Rangone, Castelvetro, Guiglia, Marano, Savignano, Spilamberto, Vignola and Zocca)	As part of this project, the cities involved organize open meetings on community composting practices. These open meetings aim at providing information on the valorisation of biodegradable waste and ensuring citizens the possibility to take an active role in the circular recycling process.	Consultation	Open meetings
"Laboratori di Quartiere"	Ongoing	Municipality of Bologna	These are open spaces for citizens and stakeholders to collaborate, debate and support innovative projects and solutions. Six laboratories (one per district) serve as hubs of collaboration and innovation, where public authorities and citizens co-design solutions to public challenges. Hackathons are widely used to solve public problems or to support public authorities in finding solutions to improve public services or policies.	Engagement	Open innovation

Bologna Open Data Platform	Ongoing	Municipality of Bologna	Includes public datasets covering a wide range of topics including mobility, infrastructure, health, and budget. Platform provides contextual information and support to better understand and reuse the data available. Citizens can also propose categories of data to be included.	Information	Information and communication
IoPartecipo+	Ongoing	Region of Emilia-Romagna	The public consultations available on this digital platform recruit citizen via open calls, meaning that anyone who wants is able to participate and no specific group or stakeholder is targeted. Some participation processes could be addressed to particular categories of citizens or specific territorial areas. It also provides useful information for each participatory process, including the normative framework, documentation and a glossary of terms.	Information Consultation	Information and communication open calls

with the support of