

# The New Frontiers of Citizen Participation

Government-wide digital platforms and Representative  
Deliberative Processes

DECEMBER 13, 2023 | PRAGUE

**Giulia Cibrario**

OECD Consultant – Citizen and Stakeholder Participation

OECD Public Governance Directorate

[giulia.cibrario@oecd.org](mailto:giulia.cibrario@oecd.org)

# Key Recommendations from the Public Governance Review of Czechia

## Chapter 1: Fostering citizen and stakeholder participation in Czechia

### Definition

- Consider adopting a single definition of citizen and stakeholder participation.

### Enabling Environment

- Consider reviewing the legal and regulatory framework for citizen and stakeholder participation to establish a mandatory “participation check”.
- Consider designing an integrated open government strategy that includes a strong participation component.
- Consider creating a centre of expertise on citizen and stakeholder participation to coordinate and harmonise practices across public institutions.
- Consider extending the mandate and composition of the existing Council for Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organisations and transform it into the Government Council for Citizen and Stakeholder Participation.

### Literacy

- Consider updating the existing Methodology and Manual for Public Involvement in the Preparation of Government Documents to include more recent trends and practices
- Consider including a dedicated course on participation in mandatory training requirements
- Consider setting up a community of practice dedicated to citizen and stakeholder participation including both public officials and non-public stakeholders.

### Transparency and Information

- Proactively disclose all relevant information regarding participatory processes
- **Consider creating an integrated government-wide participation portal.**

### Experimenting with emerging tools and practices

- **Pilot representative deliberative processes at the local level**

# Government-wide Digital Portals for Citizen Participation

## Digital portals

### Why digital portals for citizen participation?

- Digital portals for participation, such as websites where public institutions publish consultation and engagement opportunities, can help to facilitate collaboration with citizens and stakeholders.
- A digital portal for citizen participation can list all participation opportunities across the central/federal government or only those offered by a specific institution.
- Digital portals for citizen participation leverage the capabilities of digital technologies to extend participation processes and initiatives on a large scale.



## Provision n. 9

*Promote innovative ways to effectively engage with stakeholders to source ideas and co-create solutions and seize the opportunities provided by digital government tools, including through the use of open government data, to support the achievement of the objectives of open government strategies and initiatives.;*

*9.2 Leverage digital government tools to support open government objectives.*

## Recommendation of the Council on Open Government (2017)



BETTER POLICIES FOR BETTER LIVES

### The OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government

**The pathway for the first international legal instrument on Open Government**

Open government strategies and initiatives are needed more than ever to regain citizens' trust in governments. Countries are increasingly acknowledging the role of Open Government as a catalyst for good governance, democracy and inclusive growth. Open government principles – i.e. transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholders' participation – are progressively changing the relationship between public officials and citizens in many countries. A scan of existing initiatives, however, reveals that there is a diversity of definitions, objectives, and implementation methodologies that characterize open government strategies. The OECD has therefore developed a **Recommendation of the Council on Open Government** that defines a set of criteria that will help adhering countries to design and implement successful open government agendas.

**First international legal instrument on Open Government**

- Informal Experts Group on Open Government
- 2016 Global Forum on Open Government – attended by 30 Ministers and 50 HoD
- Regional Networks on Open and Innovative Government in LAC, MENA, SEA

**Online Public Consultation on the Draft Recommendation**

- > 100 participants from 44 different countries
- Input received from NGOs, citizens, government officials, private sector, academia, media
- Remarkable outreach on social media



**A firm evidence base for the Recommendation**

- 2015 Survey on Open Government – 54 countries (all OECD members)
- 2016 OECD Global Report on Open Government
- 2017 Survey on Ombudsman Institutions

**OECD at the forefront of Open Government for 15 years**

- Open Government Reviews
- Capacity building seminars
- Open State
- Public Governance Reviews
- 2001 Citizens as Partners

**Rationale for developing the Recommendation and its scope**

- Ensure that open government principles are rooted in the public management culture;
- Identify an enabling environment that is conducive to an efficient, effective and integrated governance of open government;
- Promote the alignment of open government strategies and initiatives with, and their contribution to, all relevant national and sectoral socio-economic policy objectives, at all levels of the administration;
- Foster monitoring and evaluation practices and data collection.

**Process for developing the Draft Recommendation**

**November 2016 (54th PGC):**

- Establishment of the Informal experts group on Open Government comprising 16 OECD Members and Partners

**December 2016:**

- Launch of the OECD Report on Open Government: the Global Context and the Way Forward

**July – September 2017:**

- Online public consultation

**December 2017:**

- Council adoption



# Government-wide Participation Portals

The creation of centralised participation portals, where public institutions publish consultations and engagement opportunities have the advantage of providing a “one-stop-shop” portal for citizens and stakeholders to learn about past, current and future opportunities for participation



89%

Of Adherents to the Recommendation of the Council on Open Government have deployed a government-wide participatory portal (38 countries out of 43)\*

\*Source: Open Government for Stronger Democracy: A Global Assessment (2023), OECD

# Government-wide Participation Portals

## What for?

Information about participation opportunities

Online Consultations and engagement

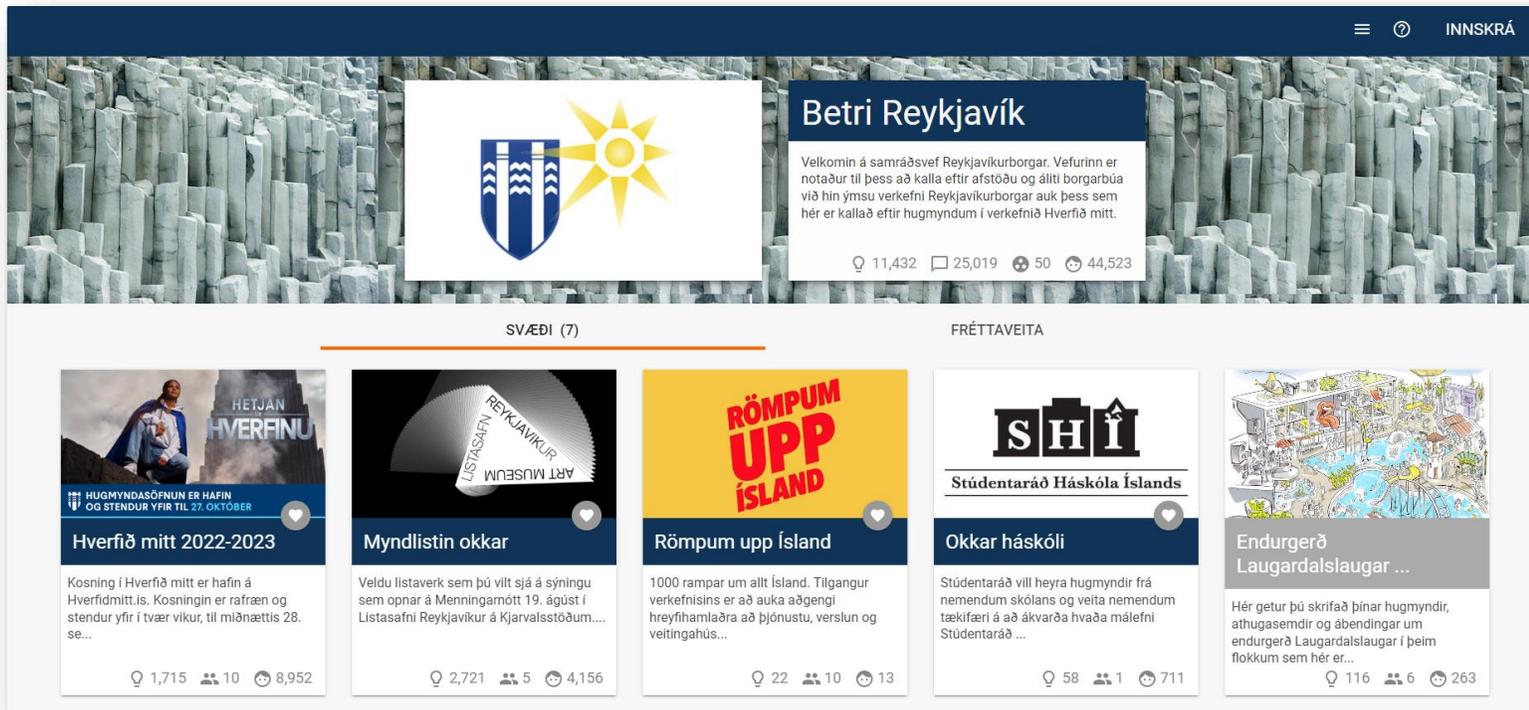
Feedback on the implementation of the outcomes of participatory processes

Archive of information and documents on past participation opportunity





# Iceland's Better Reykjavík



- Since 2010, citizens of Iceland are **regularly consulted** on the participation portal [Better Reykjavík](#).
- **Citizens can submit, comment, and vote for proposals** on various political issues at the national and local level.
- The portal is built on the **open-source\*** software for online participation **Your Priorities**.

\*A software is open-source if its source code is available for study, re-use, change, and distribution. Its openness allows for the collaborative development of the software.



## Brazil Participativo

- In 2023, Brazil has launched a government-wide participation portal, [Brazil Participativo](#).
- Initially intended to **collect citizen inputs for the Multiannual Plan**, the portal is becoming the **one-stop-shop for online participation at the Federal level**.
- Brazil Participativo is built on the **open-source software for online participation Decidim**, developed in 2016 in Barcelona.



## Deploying a Government-wide Participation Portal

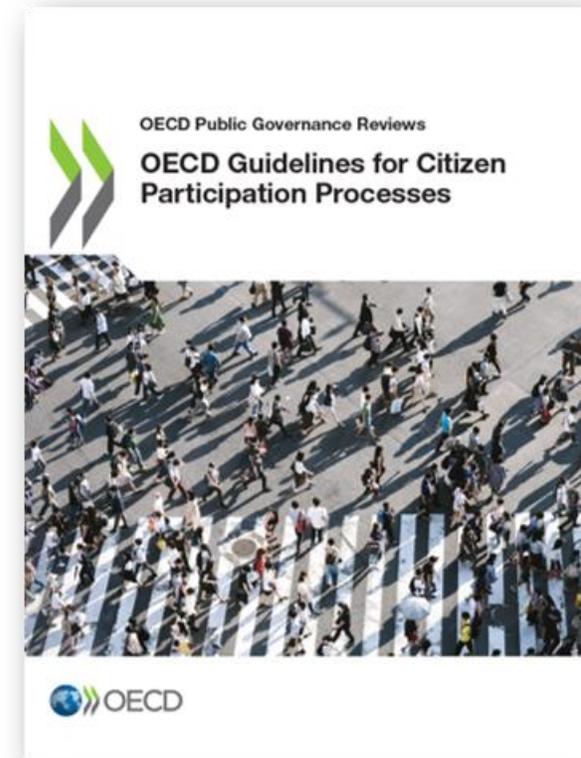
### 1. Technology

- As the demand for online participation is growing, **so are the digital solutions available.**
- **High-quality open-source software** for citizen participation can be deployed internally by the IT department of Public Administration.
- The **market of Civic Technologies** (CivicTech) for online participation is flourishing across Europe, offering GDPR compliant digital products.

## Deploying a Government-wide Participation Portal

### 2. Culture of (Online) Participation

- Digital platforms are a powerful tool to **expand the scope and the scale** of citizen participation.
- **Tools alone are not sufficient:** a change of culture within the administration is needed to design, effectively communicate, and implement meaningful online participation processes and initiatives.
- Government-wide participation portals require **strong coordination across administrations** to effectively collect and display information on participation opportunities on policy issues coming from different Ministries/institutions.
- The aim of online participation is to include more people: beware of the persistence of **digital divide** in the population and **complement online participation with offline participatory formats**.



# Representative Deliberative Processes

## representative

- Random selection of participants ("civic lottery")

- Stratification

- Relatively small groups

## deliberative

- Informed

- Weighing options and evidence

- Common ground

## processes

- Sufficient time

- Key steps:

1. Learning
2. Deliberation
3. Collective decision making

## Key differences between deliberative and participatory democracy

	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	TYPE OF PARTICIPATION	PARTICIPANT SELECTION METHOD
DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY	<b>Small, but representative</b> groups of people, aiming for <b>deep deliberation</b>	<b>Deliberation</b> , which requires that participants are well-informed and consider different perspectives to arrive at a public judgement	<b>Civic lottery</b> , which combines random selection with stratification
PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY	<b>Large numbers</b> of people, ideally everyone affected by a particular decision - the aim is to achieve <b>breadth</b>	<b>More participation</b> from all citizens who choose to be involved	<b>Self-selected participation</b> in order to engage as many people as possible

Source: Table is author's own creation, based on descriptions in Carson and Elstub (2019).

## Provision n. 9

*Promote innovative ways to effectively engage with stakeholders to source ideas and co-create solutions and seize the opportunities provided by digital government tools, including through the use of open government data, to support the achievement of the objectives of open government strategies and initiatives.;*

*9.1: Promote innovative ways to effectively engage with stakeholders in their open government agendas.*

## Recommendation of the Council on Open Government (2017)

**The OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government**

**The pathway for the first international legal instrument on Open Government**

Open government strategies and initiatives are needed more than ever to regain citizens' trust in governments. Countries are increasingly acknowledging the role of Open Government as a catalyst for good governance, democracy and inclusive growth. Open government principles – i.e. transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholders' participation – are progressively changing the relationship between public officials and citizens in many countries. A scan of existing initiatives, however, reveals that there is a diversity of definitions, objectives, and implementation methodologies that characterize open government strategies. The OECD has therefore developed a **Recommendation of the Council on Open Government** that defines a set of criteria that will help adhering countries to design and implement successful open government agendas.

**First international legal instrument on Open Government**

- Informal Experts Group on Open Government
- 2016 Global Forum on Open Government – attended by 30 Ministers and 50 HoD
- Regional Networks on Open and Innovative Government in LAC, MENA, SEA

**Online Public Consultation on the Draft Recommendation**

- > 100 participants from 44 different countries
- Input received from NGOs, citizens, government officials, private sector, academia, media
- Remarkable outreach on social media

**A firm evidence base for the Recommendation**

- 2015 Survey on Open Government – 54 countries (all OECD members)
- 2016 OECD Global Report on Open Government
- 2017 Survey on Ombudsman Institutions

**OECD at the forefront of Open Government for 15 years**

- Open Government Reviews
- Capacity building seminars
- Open State
- Public Governance Reviews
- 2007 Citizens as Partners

**Rationale for developing the Recommendation and its scope**

- Ensure that open government principles are rooted in the public management culture;
- Identify an enabling environment that is conducive to an efficient, effective and integrated governance of open government;
- Promote the alignment of open government strategies and initiatives with, and their contribution to, all relevant national and sectoral socio-economic policy objectives, at all levels of the administration;
- Foster monitoring and evaluation practices and data collection.

**Process for developing the Draft Recommendation**

**November 2016 (54th PGC):**

- Establishment of the Informal experts group on Open Government comprising 16 OECD Members and Partners

**December 2016:**

- Launch of the OECD Report on Open Government: the Global Context and the Way Forward

**March 2017:**

- First meeting of the Informal Experts Group to inform the development of the Recommendation

**July – September 2017:**

- Online public consultation

**December 2017:**

- Council adoption

---

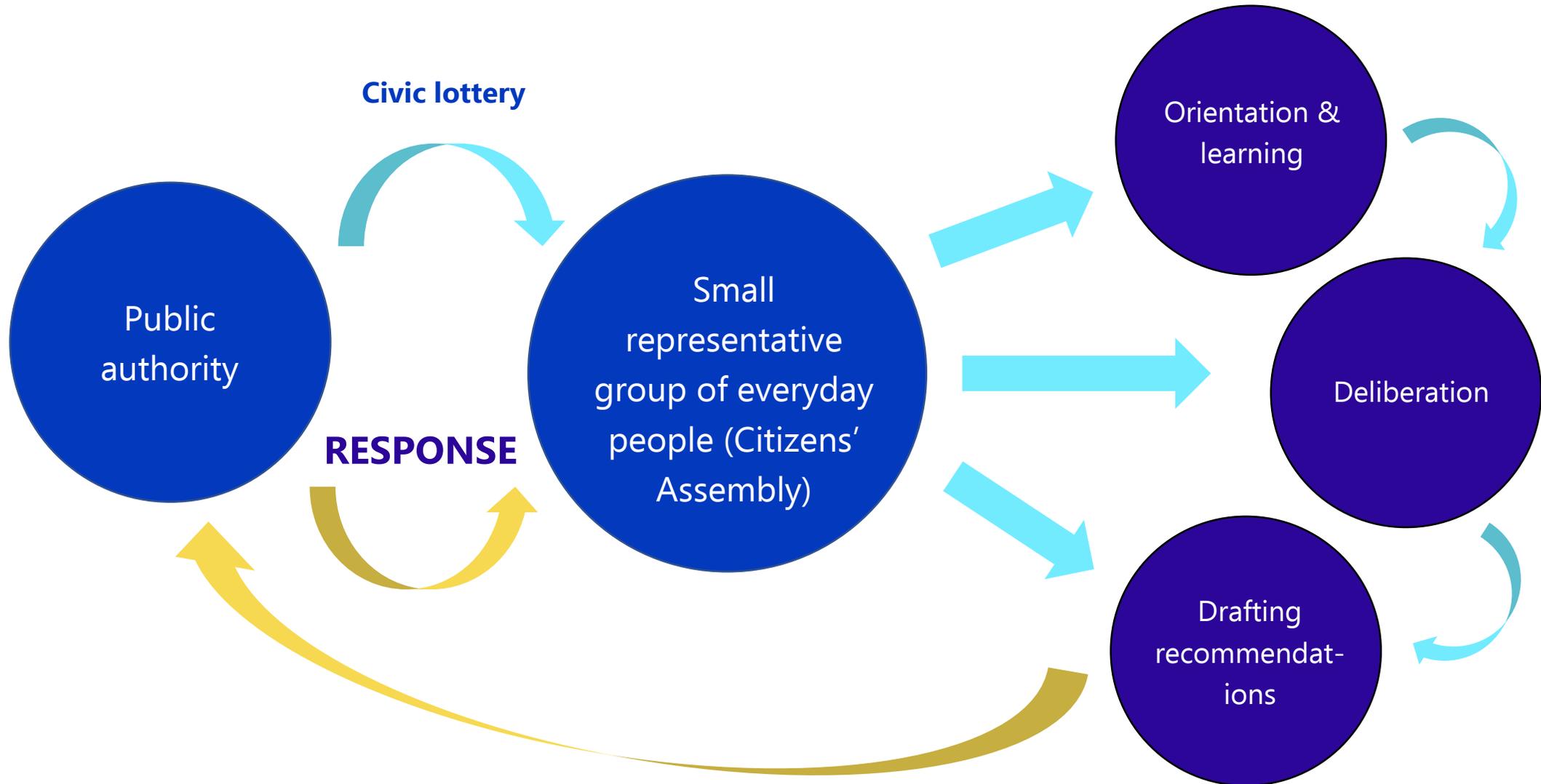
## Deliberative processes

Types of problems that deliberative processes are well-suited to address:

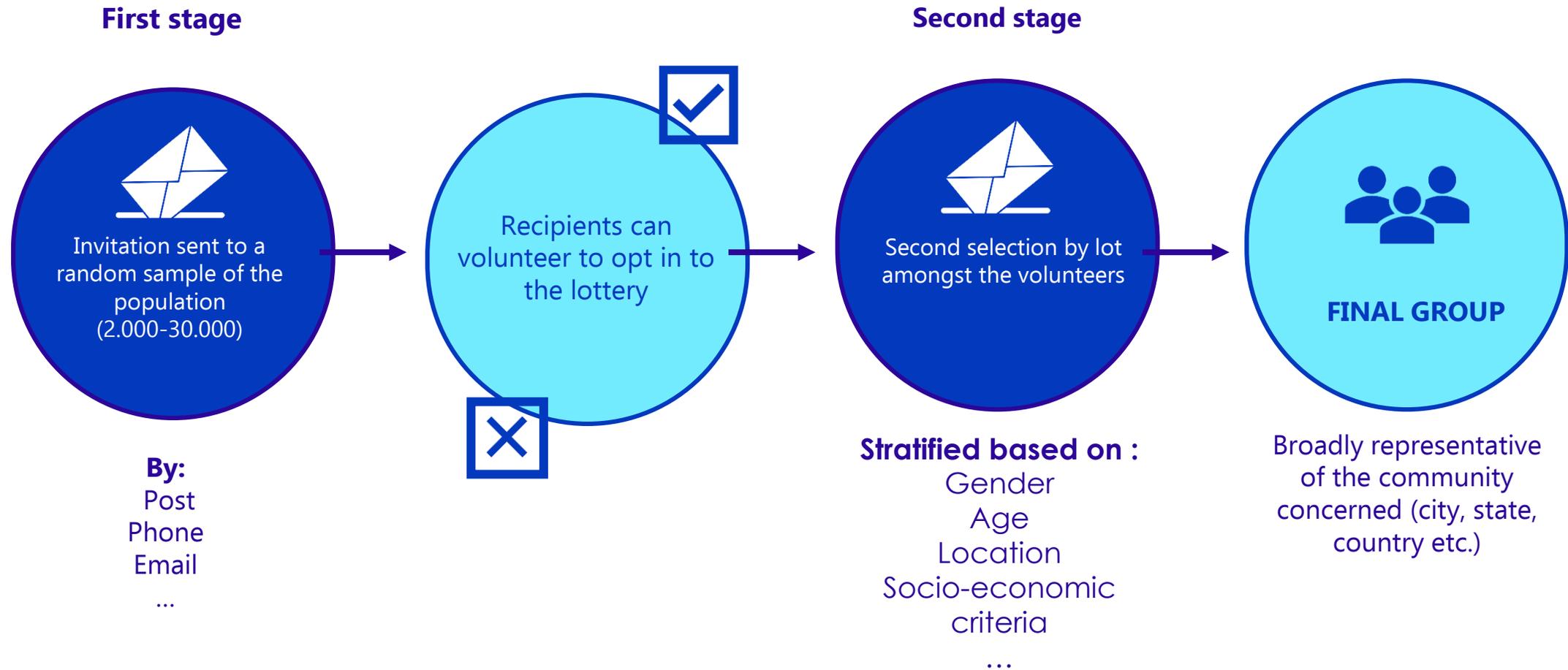
- Values-based dilemmas
- Complex problems that require trade-offs
- Long-term questions



# How does a representative deliberative process work?



# Civic Lottery – Two-stages sortition process





## Benefits of representativeness and deliberation

1. **Better policy outcomes** because deliberation results in public judgements rather than public opinions.
2. **Greater legitimacy** to make hard choices.
3. **Enhance public trust** in government and democratic institutions by giving citizens an effective role in public decision making.
4. **Signal civic respect** and empower citizens.
5. **Make governance more inclusive** by opening the door to more representative groups of people.
6. **Strengthen integrity and prevent corruption** by ensuring that groups and individuals with money and power cannot have undue influence on a public decision.
7. **Help counteract polarisation and disinformation.**

## Deliberative processes

# The OECD work on Deliberative Democracy

- **289 examples** from 1986 – Oct 2019
- **18 OECD countries** + international level
- **All levels of government**
- **12 models** of deliberative processes
- **11 principles** of good practice
- **3 routes** to institutionalisation



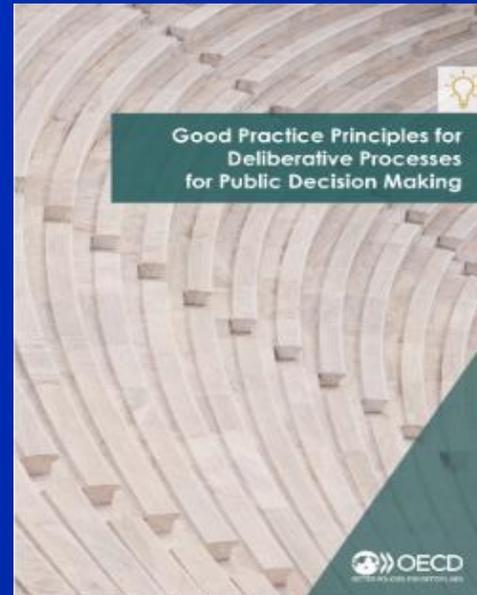


# The OECD Deliberative Democracy Toolbox



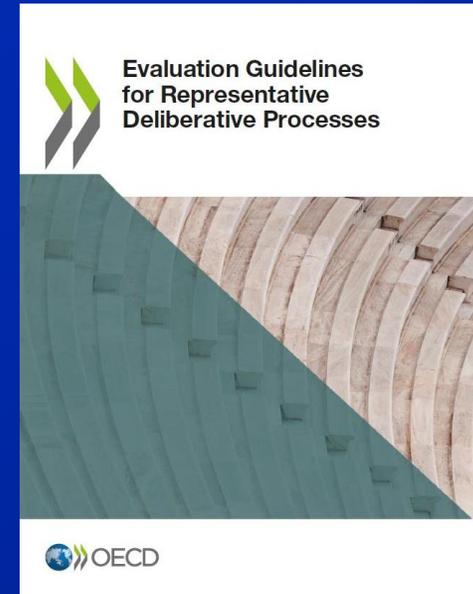
**Step 1**

**DISCOVER**



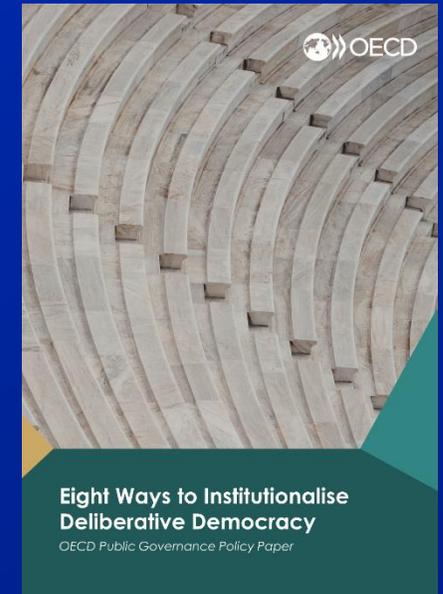
**Step 2**

**IMPLEMENT**



**Step 3**

**EVALUATE**



**Step 4**

**EMBED**



# The OECD Database of Representative Deliberative Processes

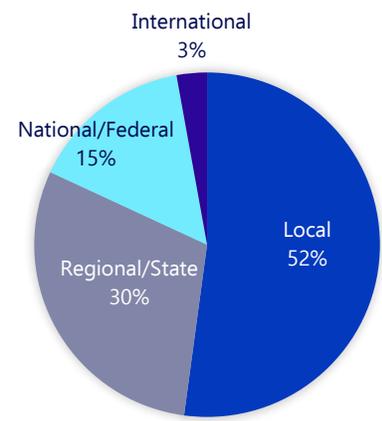
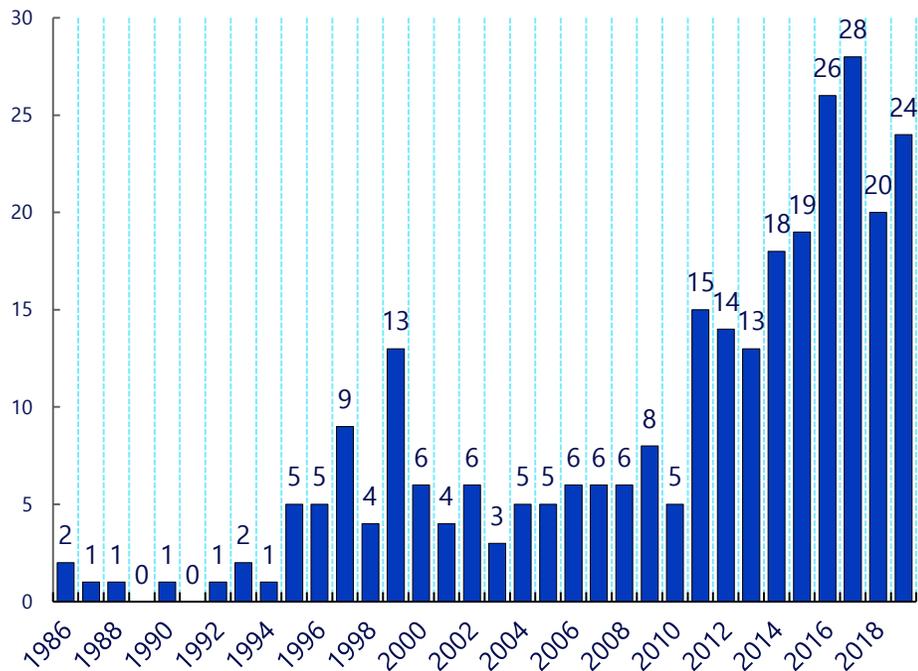
- Since 2019, the OECD keeps and regularly updates a global **Database of Representative Deliberative** processes which can be used for research and as a source of inspiration.
- The **2023 update** was released on December 7.

	Name	Deliberative model (cate...)	Deliberative model (na...)
1	Planning cells on Solingen's leisure facility Baerenloch	Planning Cell	Planning cell
2	Citizens' Panel on Organ Transplants in Minnesota	Citizens' Jury	Citizens' Panel
3	We Want More	Planning Cell	Planning Cell
4	Solingen 2010	Planning Cell	Planning Cell
5	Policy Jury on School-based clinics	Citizens' Jury	Citizens' Jury
6	Technical possibilities of ISDN	Planning Cell	Planning Cell
7	Consensus conference on technological animals	Consensus Conference	Consensus Conference
8	Guipúzcoa citizens' jury	Citizens' Jury	Citizens' Jury
9	Consensus Conference on Infertility	Consensus Conference	Consensus Conference
10	Consensus conference: A Light-green Agricultural Sector	Consensus Conference	Consensus Conference
11	ÜSTRA	Planning Cell	Planning Cell
12	Consensus conference on chemical substances in food and the environment	Consensus Conference	Consensus Conference
13	Consensus Conference on Gene Therapy	Consensus Conference	Consensus Conference
14	Planning Cells on biotechnology and genetic engineering	Planning Cell	Planning Cell

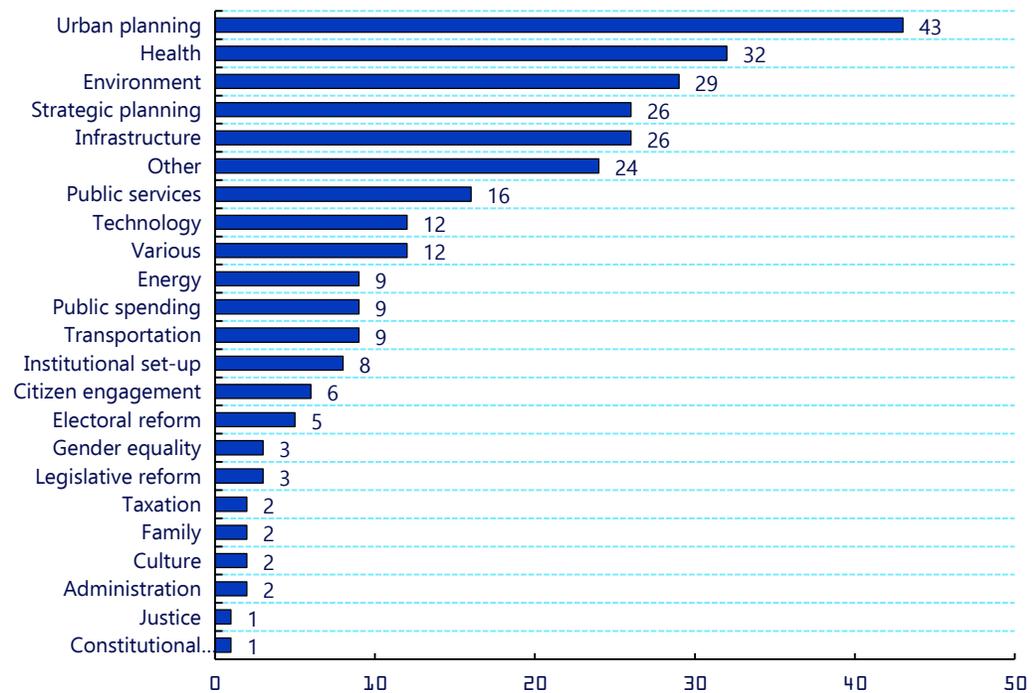
- [Link to the Database](#)

The “deliberative wave” has been building since the 1980s, gaining momentum since 2010, at all levels of government , and on a wide range of policy issues

Number of representative deliberative processes per year, 1986 – October 2019



Number of times a policy issue has been addressed through a representative deliberative process



Notes: n=282; Data for OECD countries is based on 18 OECD countries that were members in 2019 plus the European Union. Processes that spanned over multiple years are noted by the year of their completion (except for permanent ongoing processes).

Source: OECD Database of Representative Deliberative Processes and Institutions (2020).



## Citizens' Reference Panel on Pharmacare in Canada



- In 2016, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research convened a Citizens' Reference Panel to review provincial and federal policies on drug coverage and to consider alternative funding models to improve access to pharmaceuticals.
- **The 35 randomly selected participants issued a public report with recommendations addressed to the Federal Health Minister.**



- In 2016, Ireland established a Citizens' Assembly to consider specific political questions.
- The first Report of the Assembly paved the way for an Amendment of the Irish Constitution, allowing the Parliament to rule the Termination of Pregnancy and ultimately to **legalise abortion in the country in 2018.**



Dr Noelle Higgins from Maynooth University - International Human Rights Law and Fatal Foetal Abnormalities speaking at the second meeting of the Citizens' Assembly in January 2017. Photo: Dara Mac Dónaill / The Irish Times



- In September 2019, 150 randomly selected citizens from all regions in Germany took part in a conversation about the **future of democracy** in the country.
- **22 recommendations handed over on 15 Nov 2019 to president of Bundestag Wolfgang Schauble.**



The 150 members Bürgerrat Demokratie Citizens Council



## Citizens' Convention on Climate in France



The 150 members of the Citizens' Convention. Photo: La Convention Citoyenne pour le climat

- In 2020, the 150 members of the French Citizens' Convention of Climate submitted 149 proposals to reduce greenhouse gases emissions by at least 40% within 2030 to the Parliament.
- **The proposals fed the parliamentary works on the Climate Bill, passed in 2021.**



Děkuji!

## Get in touch

Giulia Cibrario  
OECD Consultant – Citizen and Stakeholder Participation  
OECD Public Governance Directorate  
[giulia.cibrario@oecd.org](mailto:giulia.cibrario@oecd.org)