



A digital platform for participatory citizen science

Tutorial



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Introduction

Decidim4CS is a free digital platform for participatory citizen science (CS) built by the Artificial Intelligence Institute (IIIA-CSIC) with contributions from the University of Barcelona. Decidim4CS constitutes the deliberation technology used in the Crowd4SDG European project. This tutorial gives the information to sign-up in Decidim4CS and contribute to the projects on the platform. It also presents basic configuration options for project administrators.

Decidim4CS is based on *decidim* which is a free open-source software created by the Barcelona City Hall as a participatory democracy platform for cities and organizations. *decidim* has rich documentation (see [Official Decidim Documentation](#) section below). However, due to the high customization flexibility of the platform, it may be tedious to find information for basic configuration. Therefore, we felt the need to prepare this tutorial, hoping it can help a quick start for your citizen science projects on Decidim4CS.

Decidim4CS: <https://decidim4cs.ml>

Decidim4CS admin mail: decidim@iiia.csic.es

Crowd4SDG project: <https://crowd4sdg.eu>

What can I do in a Decidim4CS project?

Co-creation of a citizen science (CS) project requires citizens and scientists to self-organize, propose and discuss ideas, schedule meetings, conduct surveys, and much more. Decidim4CS allows citizen scientists to take an active role in project design and execution by making proposals for CS projects, participating in ongoing debates or starting new ones, attending online meetings, making collective and democratic decisions through voting, and monitoring the implementations of these decisions.

Concepts and components

- **Participant:** A user registered in Decidim4CS.
- **Project:** A CS project where participants can contribute with their proposals, comments and votes.
- **Components:** These are the building blocks of your CS project page. A project can have the following components shown on the project page. Project admins choose and configure the components on the [Admin Dashboard](#) as detailed in the section with the same name:

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- **Proposals:** The Proposals is Decidim4CS's pivotal component. A proposal is an idea suggested to solve the problem that a CS project tackles. Participants can endorse and comment on a proposal and vote existing comments. They can also follow a proposal to get notified of new developments.
- **Debates:** A debate is a separate discourse beside proposals. They are not necessarily about a suggested solution, rather general discussions regarding the project. A debate may lead to a proposal in the end.
- **Page:** This component is used to provide more information than the one given in the project description setting.
- **Survey:** Decidim4CS allows users to configure and publish surveys to be answered by the users.
- **Meetings:** You can schedule meetings and notify your community of the event. You give the address of the meet which can be an online platform or a physical place.
- **Blog:** Project owners can maintain a blog for a CS project to keep track of key events and achievements.
- **Accountability:** The accountability component works like a project management system built into the platform. It offers the possibility of defining and applying progress in implementation statuses (0% to 100% implemented).
- **Vote:** Participants can vote in favor of (Up) or against (Down) a comment. The total up and down votes for a comment are visible to everyone.
- **Endorse:** Through endorsements, participants can publicly show that they want to support a particular content, for instance, a proposal. Followers of the endorsers will be notified of the endorsement.
- **Share:** The *Share* links on proposals and debates allow disseminating the direct link to the content on a set of major social media platforms.

Note

To prevent spam users and incompliant content, **sign-up** and **project creation** are evaluated and performed by the site admins on demand.

Sign-up

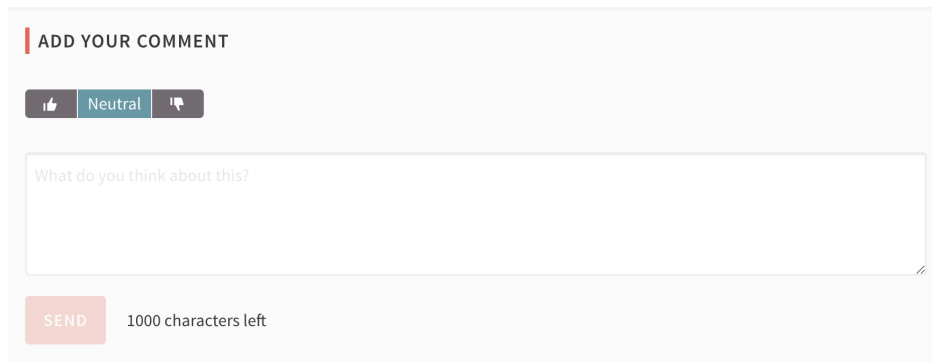
1. Send an email to the site [admins](#), writing your **name** and preferred **username** in Decidim4CS, and briefly describing **your interest** in the platform.
2. Site admins will send an invitation to you. After accepting the invitation and the **Terms**, you can sign-in to the platform.

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Contributing to existing projects

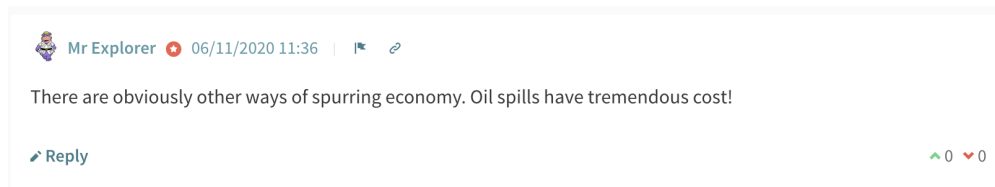
Commenting

Many components (e.g., Proposals, Blog) allow commenting. The comments can be *In favor*, *Neutral*, or *Against*.



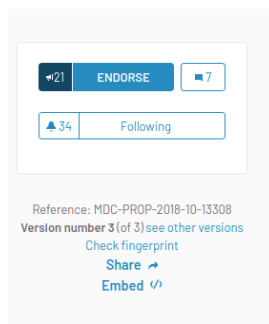
Voting

You can Up or Down vote a shared opinion by clicking the corresponding arrow.



Endorsement

Proposals and debates allow endorsements through a button.





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Creating Proposal and Debates

If allowed by the project admins, participants can create their own proposal and debate topics in a CS project.

[THE PROJECT](#) [DESCRIPTION](#) [MEETINGS](#) [PROPOSALS](#) [DEBATES](#) [BLOG](#)

3 PROPOSALS

New proposal +

Access collaborative drafts

[THE PROJECT](#) [DESCRIPTION](#) [MEETINGS](#) [PROPOSALS](#) [DEBATES](#) [BLOG](#)

2 DEBATES

New debate +

Admin Dashboard

If you are assigned as an administrator of a project, you can access the Admin Dashboard via the arrow next to your name or the [Edit](#) link on the top-right.

Your name ▾ Edit

[My account](#)

[My public profile](#)

[Notifications](#)

[Conversations](#)

[Admin dashboard](#)

[Sign out](#)

This dashboard allows you to configure your project. Basic configurations are given below.

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Creating a new project

Send an email to the site [admins](#), writing your **name** and **username** in Decidim4CS, **project's title**, and briefly **describing** the area and scope. Your project will be created for you.

Configuring a project

General Information

Follow the links below to set the project's general information:

Admin Dashboard > Projects > [Your project] > Info

DrinkClear [Demo]

View public page

Info

Basic information you would like to configure is the following:

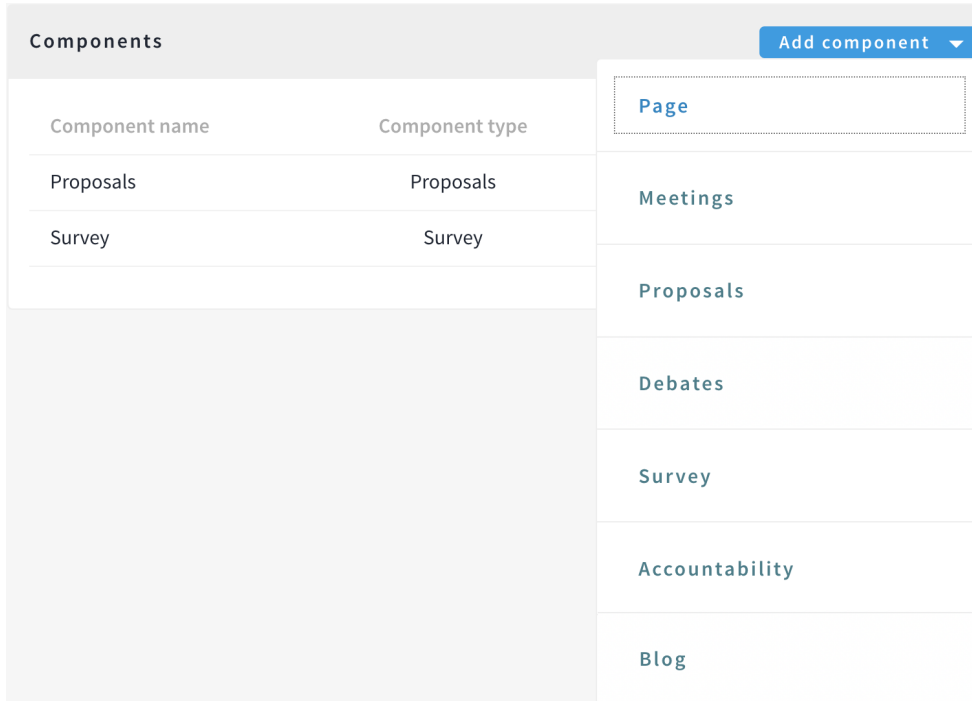
- *Hashtag*: The hashtag you use for your project on social media.
- *Short description* and (long) *Description* of the project, possibly inserting links to other sources.
- *Home image*: This image would appear on the Projects page of Decidim4CS.
- *Show statistics*: Selecting this option gives the statistics of the following project components on the homepage of your project:

Proposals, Endorsements, Results (of Accountability), Debates, Meetings, Answers, Posts (in Blog)

Selecting components

After the general description, the first thing to do is to select which components you would like to have in your project. For example, the Proposals component is necessary if you want to suggest several options as solutions to the problems you are addressing and you wish the community to comment on these. To add a component, click the Components link on the Admin Dashboard and choose the components you want to add to your project.

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Later, you can configure each component by clicking its gear icon. For example:



You can also rename all components in a way that suits you better. For a component to be visible on the project page, click the ✓ icon on the left of the ⚙️. If you need to make a component invisible, click the ✖ icon that appears at the same place.

Basic configuration options for each component will be covered in the [Content management](#) section.

Choosing project admins

Follow the links below and choose the administrators for your project.

Admin Dashboard > Projects > [Your project] > Project admins


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[Un]Publishing projects

After finishing the configuration, you would like to preview the project on Decidim4CS. To do that, follow the links below

Admin Dashboard > Projects > [Your project]

Then, click on the  button.


If all seems correct, click the  button at the right bottom of the Admin Dashboard > Projects > [Your project] page.

If you want to unpublish your project after some time, press the  button that would appear at the same link path above for the published projects.

Content management

Proposals

Configuring proposals


Follow the links below and click on the gear icon  of the Proposals component.

Admin Dashboard > Projects > [Your project] > Components

Among many configurations, the basic configurations of interest would be:

- The order of the proposals component in relation with the other components. This is adjusted by the *Weight* setting: the smaller the value, the higher the priority;
- How many proposals a participant can create;
- Whether you want to enable participants comment on proposals;
- Whether you want proposals have images, attachments, WYSIWYG editor, etc.

Creating a proposal

Beside the front-end option given [above](#), project admins can create proposals from the Admin Dashboard as well. Go to Admin Dashboard > Projects > [Your project] and click Proposals link under Components on the left hand side. Then, click the  button on the right and fill in the necessary fields.

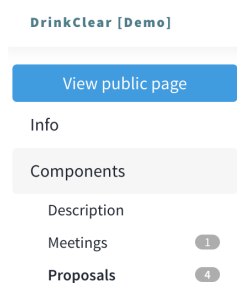
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Updating proposal status

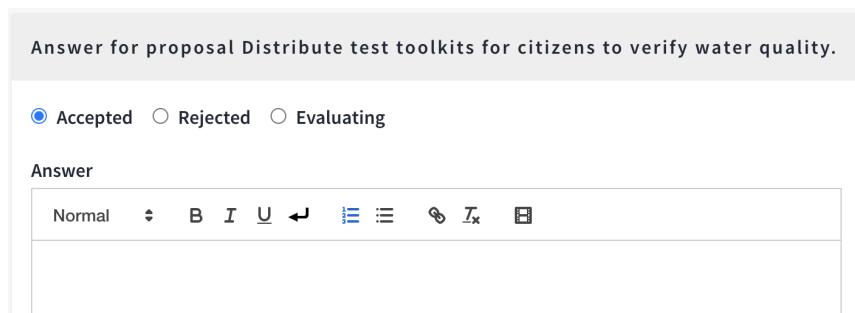
Projects can be in one of these statuses:

- *Open*: Community contribution is expected.
- *Evaluating*: Citizen contributions are evaluated for a final decision.
- *Accepted*: The proposal is accepted.
- *Rejected*: The proposal is rejected.

To change the status, go to the project page in the Admin Dashboard > Projects > [Your project] and click Proposals link under Components on the left hand side:



Then, click the [Proposal title] in the list of current proposals on the right. Choose one of the three available statuses (Since Open is the first default option, it is not listed) and optionally give a description on the change:



Debates


Beside the front end option given [above](#), project admins can create debates from the Admin Dashboard as well. Go to Admin Dashboard > Projects > [Your project] and click Debates link under Components on the left hand side. Then, click the [New Debate](#) button on the right.

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Page

To create a new static information Page in your project, follow the links below:

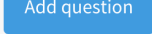
Admin Dashboard > Projects > [Your project] > Components

Then, add a Page component from by clicking the  button on the right. then edit the *Title* and the *Body* of the page.

Survey

To create a survey, go to Admin Dashboard > Projects > [Your project], and click the Survey link under Components on the left hand side. Set the following information first:

- *Title* of the survey
- *Description* of the aim of the survey. This is also a good place to give general instructions on how to fill in the survey.
- *Terms of Service* to be shown to the participants. e.g., That you will keep the data anonymous.

Then, you can add questions by clicking the  button. Questions can be either of the following types:

- *Short Answer* (one line text)
- *Long Answer* (multiple lines text)
- *Single Option* (radio button)
- *Multiple Option* (check box).

For each question, enter the *Title* and select the *Type* and, optionally, *Description* (or specific instruction) of the question. Also, click the *Mandatory* option if you need a question answered by all participants. You can add multiple questions per survey, and reorder or delete them. It's also possible to add separators between questions.

Once a survey is answered by a user, it's not possible to modify its questions, as that would affect the integrity of the answers. If it's needed to modify the questions, then you'll have to create a new survey and unpublish the original one.

Meetings

To schedule a new meeting with the community, follow the links below:

Admin Dashboard > Projects > [Your project] > Components > Meetings

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Then, click the **New meeting** button on the right and set the following:

- *Title*
- *Description*
- *Type: In person, Online or Both*
- *Start-End Times*
- *Registration type: Select “On this platform”*
- *Transparent: If the meeting is publicly visible on the project page.*

The followers of your project will be notified of the event. Other participants can also see the meeting if it is chosen as *Transparent*.

Blog

To create a new Post on your blog, follow the links below:

Admin Dashboard > Projects > [Your project] > Components > Blog

Then, click the **New post** button on the right and type in your post.

Accountability

This component allows participants to monitor the progress in proposal results. To add a *Result* entry for a proposal follow the links below:

Admin Dashboard > Projects > [Your project] > Components > Accountability

Then, click the **New Result** button on the right and give a *Title* for the result, and set the *Progress* value (0-100%). Click the *Included proposals* link to associate the result with related proposals.

Official Decidim Documentation

For more configuration options you can refer to the official Decidim documentation at <https://docs.decidim.org/en>.

Most of the component names in Decidim4CS are shared with decidim. However, please note that in Decidim4CS, the Assemblies component is renamed as Projects. Also, the Budgets, Elections, Processes and Sortitions components are not used.