Participatory Budgeting Protocol

Overview

This protocol provides a structured approach for implementing participatory budgeting within the Nested Sovereignty Framework, enabling communities to democratically allocate resources while upholding sovereignty, interoperability, justice, and adaptability. Designed for use by municipalities, indigenous councils, cooperatives, and community organizations, it ensures inclusive decision-making and equitable resource distribution.

Core Principles

1. **Inclusive Participation**: Ensure 80% community engagement with specific provisions for marginalized groups.

2. **Transparent Process**: Maintain open access to budget information, proposals, and voting results.

3. **Equitable Resource Allocation**: Prioritize projects addressing needs of underserved populations.

4. **Sovereignty-Aligned**: Respect local decision-making while maintaining interoperability with regional systems.

5. **Adaptive Implementation**: Incorporate feedback to refine processes and outcomes over time.

Implementation Phases

Phase 1: Preparation (2-3 months)

1. **Budget Committee Formation**:

- Establish a diverse committee with 50% representation from women, non-binary, indigenous, and marginalized groups.

- Include 3-5 youth representatives (ages 15-30) to ensure intergenerational equity.

- Train committee using the Workshop Guide from the Economic Integration Seed Kit.

2. **Resource Assessment**:

- Determine available resources (e.g., community currency revenue, cooperative profits, municipal allocations).

- Document resources using the Resource Mapping Tool, with offline exports for low-connectivity areas.

- Set allocation parameters (e.g., 70% for infrastructure, 30% for social programs).

3. **Protocol Customization**:

- Adapt timelines and formats to local cultural contexts, incorporating indigenous decision-making protocols.

- Establish voting thresholds (recommended: 60% approval for standard projects, 75% for major initiatives).

- Create accessibility plans for diverse participation (multilingual materials, disability accommodations).

Phase 2: Proposal Solicitation (1-2 months)

1. **Community Education**:

- Conduct workshops explaining available resources, process, and criteria.

- Distribute multilingual guides using radio, community boards, and social media.

- Train facilitators to assist low-literacy and disabled community members.

2. **Proposal Development Support**:

- Provide standardized proposal templates (digital and paper formats).

- Host proposal development workshops, particularly in underserved areas.

- Offer technical assistance through trained volunteers.

3. **Proposal Collection**:

- Accept submissions via multiple channels (online platform, SMS, paper forms).

- Document proposals using DecideTogether Platform or paper records.

- Verify proposal eligibility against established criteria.

Phase 3: Deliberation and Refinement (1 month)

1. **Proposal Review**:

   - Publish all eligible proposals through multiple channels.

   - Conduct community forums to discuss and refine proposals.

   - Enable proposal amendments based on community input.

2. **Feasibility Assessment**:

   - Evaluate technical and financial viability of proposals.

   - Provide feedback to proposers for necessary adjustments.

   - Merge complementary proposals with proposers' consent.

3. **Final Proposal Preparation**:

   - Format proposals for voting with clear descriptions, budgets, and impacts.

   - Translate all materials into local languages with visual representations.

   - Publish final proposal list with implementation timelines.

Phase 4: Decision-Making (2-3 weeks)

1. **Voting Process**:

   - Implement voting through multiple channels:
     - Digital: DecideTogether Platform with screen reader compatibility
     - Mobile: SMS voting for low-connectivity areas
     - Physical: Paper ballots at community centers with Braille options
   - Ensure minimum 14-day voting period with extended hours.

   - Provide transportation assistance to voting locations.

2. **Voting Methods**:

   - For simple budgets: Direct project selection with ranked-choice voting

   - For complex budgets: Participatory allocation using points or percentage systems

- Allow collective voting options for indigenous communities following traditional protocols

3. **Vote Verification**:

   - Employ transparent counting methods with community observers.

   - Use blockchain verification for digital votes, with paper backup.

   - Publish results within 48 hours of voting conclusion.

Phase 5: Implementation and Monitoring (Ongoing)

1. **Resource Allocation**:

   - Transfer approved resources to selected projects within 30 days.

   - Document allocations on the Nested Economic Health Index Dashboard.

   - Ensure allocation compliance with the Decision Rights Matrix.

2. **Implementation Oversight**:

   - Establish community monitoring teams with diverse representation.

   - Conduct quarterly progress assessments against project plans.

   - Publish updates via community channels (online, radio, boards).

3. **Feedback and Adaptation**:

   - Collect implementation feedback via the Community Survey Toolkit.

   - Hold biannual evaluation sessions to identify improvements.

   - Document lessons learned to refine future budget cycles.

Accessibility Requirements

- **Language**: Materials in minimum 3 local languages plus indigenous languages

- **Literacy Accommodation**: Visual guides, oral presentations, audio recordings

- **Digital Divide**: Offline alternatives for each digital component

- **Disability Inclusion**: Screen readers, sign language, tactile materials

- **Geographic Access**: Mobile voting stations for remote communities

Technical Integration

- **Blockchain Verification**: Optional SHA-256 hashing of voting results for transparency
- **API Compatibility**: Standard data formats for integration with regional systems
- **Offline Synchronization**: Weekly data uploads from paper records to digital systems
- **Dashboard Integration**: Automatic updates to Nested Economic Health Index

Risk Management

Risk	Likelihood	Mitigation
Low Participation	Medium	Targeted outreach, incentives, multiple engagement channels
Elite Capture	Medium	Representation quotas, facilitated proposal development in marginalized areas
Implementation Delays	High	Clear timelines, accountability measures, progress tracking
Resource Shortfalls	Medium	Conservative budgeting, contingency funds, phased implementation

Evaluation Metrics

- **Participation Rate**: Target 80% of eligible community members
- **Inclusion Index**: 50% participation from marginalized groups
- **Implementation Success**: 90% of approved projects completed within timeframe
- **Community Satisfaction**: 70% approval rating via post-implementation surveys
- **Resource Efficiency**: Maximum 10% administrative overhead

Scaling Pathway

1. **Neighborhood Level**: Initial implementation in small geographic areas

2. **Municipal Level**: Expansion to city-wide budgeting after successful pilots

3. **Regional Level**: Integration with regional redistribution mechanisms

4. **Global Connection**: Linkage with AUBI and commons governance systems

Sample Timeline

- Months 1-2: Committee formation and resource assessment

- Month 3: Community education and proposal solicitation

- Month 4: Deliberation and refinement

- Month 5: Voting and decision-making

- Months 6-18: Implementation and monitoring

- Annual cycle thereafter

This protocol is a living document, designed to be adapted to local contexts while maintaining core principles. It is part of the Economic Integration Seed Kit and complements other framework components like community currencies and cooperative governance.