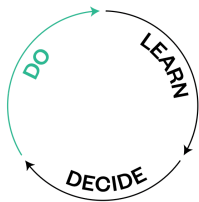


Building Composable Governance Software

This orientation was written by Liz Barry to assist the members of the first cohort of Interoperable Deliberative Tools see relationships among the functions their tools provide.

The Do-Learn-Decide Loop

Loops are well-described in cybernetics and inform [organizational development](#). Metagov Research Director Michael Zargham highlights the importance of a recursive loop in this framework for [computer-aided governance](#). For our purposes, we simplify governance into a loop of **doing**, **learning** individually and collectively from what we did, **deciding** to change, and returning action under a new plan. **Do** → **Learn** → **Decide** → **(repeat)**:



Loops reconceptualize governance from an inert to a living state.

Deliberative Arcs

The *Learn* and *Decide* portions of the loop can be referred to as a “deliberative arc.” An arc can be triggered with something as simple as a timer, more complex such as a quorum-based agenda-setting process, or in response to emerging events such as conflict online or protests in the streets. If a group is non-self-governing, additional work will be required to bind powerholders to the decision. We used a bottom-up approach to define a set of stages based on the functions provided by the tools participating in the Interop1 cohort:

- **Agenda setting** - prioritizing, framing, identifying dimensions and stakeholders
- **Eliciting** - self-reflecting on values, lived experience, and acquired knowledge
- **Learning** - welcoming evidence, others’ lived experience, maps of arguments, graphs of debates, steel manning, fact-checking
- **Deliberating** - explaining yourself to others, being paraphrased to others, articulating values, arguing positions
- **Proposing** - ideating solutions, forming proposals, modeling scenarios
- **Deciding** - ranking, voting, integrating objections, consenting
- **Actuating** - taking a decision and making it happen, tracking status
- **Evaluating / Reflecting** - evaluating results, assessing how to do it better next time

In practice, deliberative processes start at different stages and jump around before concluding.

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