



Open Budgets
Fighting Corruption with Fiscal Transparency

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Abstract: The WP7 Test Beds and Evaluation - Participatory Budgets has been designed to assess the specific needs of the stakeholders regarding the implementation of digital participatory processes in their jurisdictions. Two different points in time have been considered: before a budget is formally approved, when allocations are still under discussion; and afterwards, where actual spending needs to be monitored to ensure the budget execution follows the initial plan.

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Executive Summary

Deliverable D7.1.1 is the result of an intense series of face to face interviews to current and future stakeholders combined with papers addressing the issue and questionnaires worldwide. We have gathered cities that are already using the participatory budgeting (Mexico D.F., Chicago, Paris, Madrid or Torrelodones, among others), we have also met with experts (Ms. Hollie Russon Gilman, Mr. Alan Hudson, Mr. Matt Haikin, Mr. Tiago Peixoto, Mr. Pedro Pietro-Marín, Mr. Nathaniel Heller, Mr. David Sasaki among others) that have collaborated with their expertise in the field of participatory budgeting. In the final phase we have designed a multilingual poll for end users, in order to get a broad perspective of what kind of platforms users are waiting to interact with.

The surveys conducted are listed in this report. We have identified, analysed, described and compared 5 already running platforms and more than 10 to be developed participatory budgeting platforms. We have identified several improvements such as PB platform visualisations, easiness of use, clear educative materials added to each PB platform and an increase on filtering capacity.

The D7.1 deliverable will serve us to better design, program and implement a participatory budgeting platform with the characteristics needed by most of the current and future users and administrators of these platforms. The assessment has taken into consideration analogue and digital platforms from different locations and hence we will develop the best possible approach for both solutions, since we see the separation of off-line and the on-line system very improbable.

With this report we attempt to address the challenges posed by administrations interviewed, experts consulted and users surveyed (education on participation, impact assessment of the PB platform and transparency in decision making), while reducing the administrative burden and increasing efficiency of public services. Our aim is to create a tool that will increase the transparency of existing on-line and off-line public sector resources, as well as enhance participation culture among jurisdictions and encouraging collaboration among stakeholders within an open government setting.

Focused also in the educational scope, the project will be designed to improve the level of awareness about the Open Budget and Participatory Budgeting (PB) ideas in our society, according to the gaps and needs identified in this assessment.

To conclude, according to the testimonies and experiences gathered in this report, we can state that the implementation of PB processes and platforms in different jurisdictions:

- Broadens citizens' trust in public governments and public administrations.
- Increases tax revenue - since citizens are really aware of how their money is spent -
- Fosters information, sharing meetings and spaces, contributing to a stronger engagement of civil society to current and future local development plans and challenges.

Having said all of that, although improvements resulting from the PB processes implementation are praiseworthy, it is true that most of them are dependent on government willingness to comply with decisions taken by local citizens inside PB processes. Only, if local governments commit to implement what has been decided by their citizenship, a step forward in transparency, accountability and citizens' engagement can be taken.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

LOD	Linked Open Data
PB	Participatory Budgeting
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
PPAA	Public Administrations
DF	District Federal
IEDF	Instituto Electoral del Distrito Federal (District Federal Electoral Institute)
IT	Information Technologies
USA	United States of America

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	4
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS.....	5
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	6
1. INTRODUCTION.....	7
2. PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION SURVEY AND INTERVIEWS – NEEDS ASSESSMENT.....	12
SCOPE AND GOALS.....	15
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES AND TRAINING	17
BECOMING A PARTICIPANT	18
DISSEMINATION AND ENGAGEMENT	20
ONLINE VS. OFFLINE PROCESSES.....	20
OPENBUDGETS.EU IMPROVEMENTS/REQUIREMENTS	21
MOVING FORWARD.....	21
3. EXPERTS AND CSOS SURVEYS AND INTERVIEWS – NEEDS ASSESSMENT.....	23
FINDINGS	24
4. FINAL USERS – POLLS – NEEDS ASSESSMENT.....	28
5. CIVIO'S APPROACH TO THE PLATFORM SOLUTION	32
SOLUTION APPROACH – WHAT DO YOU INTEND TO ACHIEVE AND WHERE DO YOU START?.....	32
TARGET GROUPS	33
6. CONCLUSION.....	34
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIONS	34
EXPERTS AND CSO'S.....	34
END USERS	35
MOVING FORWARD.....	36
7. REFERENCES.....	38

1. Introduction

Over two decades ago the “Prefeitura de Porto Alegre” in Brazil began to implement the participatory budgeting system on their municipal budget. The participatory budgeting system decided 20% of the total municipal budget. It was 1989.

Former Mayor of the city during the implementation of this approach, Olívio de Oliveira Dutra said “*The Participatory Budget started in Porto Alegre, in the 80s, originating in social and community movements. It was born as a counter-action to the hegemonic current that then pushed for the State's privatisation and the reduction of its core functions. It became consolidated under the Popular Front government in 1989 as a tool for ensuring citizen participation in the construction of that year's proposed public budget, setting priorities for government action and, after approval by lawmakers, monitoring its execution. It became a valuable tool in the fight for public control over the State (at a local scale), the government and its members*”¹

The essence of the implementation of a participatory budgeting process is to democratise governmental actions at local level. It improves the interaction between the citizenry and their local elected representatives. However, as Yves Sintomer writes: “*it is also remarkable that participatory budgets are found in a wide range of societies, cultures and political systems – and that not all countries where participatory budgeting is found are democracies. Whereas in some cases participatory budgeting is used to democratise society, to strengthen civil society or to deepen democracy, in others it is employed to fight corruption or to create a first opening in closed structures. Given the diversity of their contexts and forms, participatory budgets would appear to be an appropriate subject for a global dialogue. By finding out more about the various procedures and their origins, we will also discover more about the society of the country, region or city in question.*”² A PB process is a double layer of legitimacy for governments and projects planned to be developed in a municipality.

Most of the PB processes do not have an executive mandate. They can be explained in two ways. First, as top-down initiatives from representatives that wants to improve the level of local participation on budgetary decisions. Second, as bottom-up initiative, in which a participative society (aware of participatory mechanisms and practices and used to them), demands a more relevant role in the decision-making process and activities developed in their municipality.

To start and finish a PB process will normally take more than 12 months. Submitting of proposals, discussions and votes are mainly distributed during the first half of the year. Advisable actions along this first half are also informing and educating people about their rights, participation possibilities and competences at stake in the PB process. Provisions for next year's local budget are generally made in September, including the most voted project

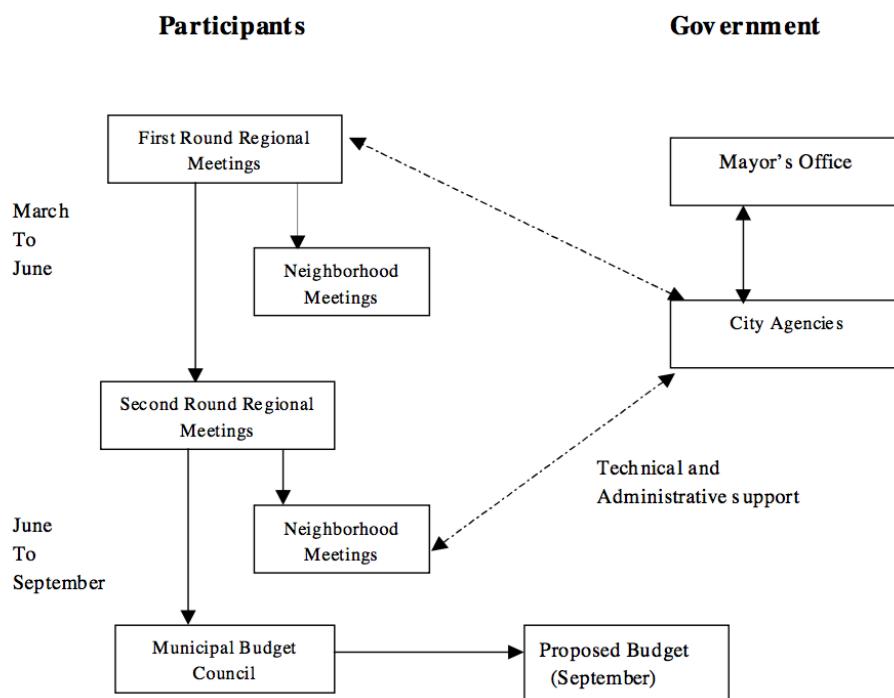
¹ Taken from Dias, Nelson et al., (2014) “Hope for Democracy – 25 Years of Participatory Budgeting worldwide”, page 9. http://www.portugalparticipa.pt/upload_folder/table_data/4502b693-3a6c-46b6-95d8-a8705d6dde17/files/OP25Anos-EN-20maio2014.pdf

² Taken from Sintomer, Yves et al. – with the collaboration of Anja Röcke, (2013) “Learning from the South: Participatory Budgeting Worldwide – an Invitation to Global Cooperation Study, InWEnt gGmbH – Capacity Building International, Germany/ Service Agency Communities in One World”, page 7. http://www.buergerhaushalt.org/sites/default/files/downloads/LearningfromtheSouth-ParticipatoryBudgetingWorldwide-Study_0.pdf

inside the PB process. When next years' budget come into force, implementation of the selected projects will begin and will need a monitoring from a citizens' perspective.

Table 1-1 lists the principal roles of the government and the responsibilities of participants during the first round of PB. The first round, which typically runs from March to June, involves the distribution of information, the initial discussions on policies, and the establishment of the number of elected representatives. Mobilization in neighbourhood meetings is high because turnout determines the number of elected representatives from each neighbourhood to the regional meetings. Since final votes are held at the regional level, a greater number of elected representatives (citizen-delegates) from a particular neighbourhood increase the likelihood of having a project selected.³

Figure 1-1
Yearly Participatory Budgeting Cycle



There is no standard way of implementing a PB process, but cities, experts and CSO's consulted agree on that the adoption of several PB processes in different cities aims to replicate examples of legitimacy, participation and a clear break with "*old-school*" former local governments based on democracy but with a very poor interaction and collaboration with civil society and their citizens, in other cities. This will create a virtuous implementation circle, exporting best-practices from one jurisdiction to another.

Initiatives such as Participatory Budgeting Project⁴, which tries to gather people in USA working around PB projects, can give us a clue of the importance of these kind of

³ Text and diagram's photo taken from Wrampler, Brian (October, 2000) "A Guide to Participatory Budgeting".

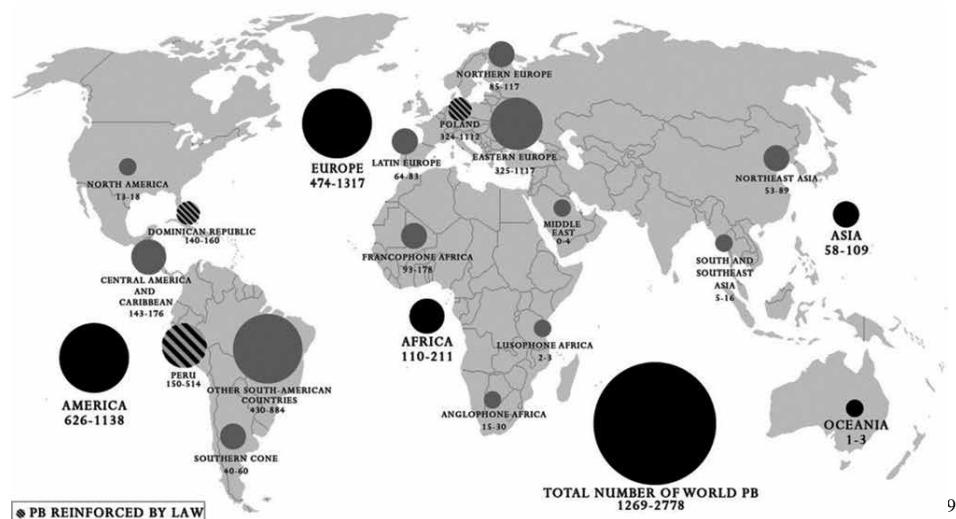
⁴ <http://www.participatorybudgeting.org/>

initiatives just in only one country. Our attempt is to foster PB processes not only in countries used to participation but also in those not used to it, not educated to participate in decision-making processes but every 4 years in a row. This is the reason why we have consulted a great number of administrations and citizens to elaborate the assessment; we want to get to know their needs better when implementing or taking part in PB processes. We aim to facilitate and improve their PB processes through the development of the accurate and appropriate on-line tools and educational materials they will need.

During the elaboration of this report, our team has had the great opportunity to interview partners that might be later identified as competitors in the coming years. This is a reflection we want to point out; due to the specific environment we are working in, Open data and Creative Commons scene, we have been able to contact PB platforms pioneers such as Open North⁵ or Matt Haikin (Aptivate)⁶, Alan Hudson (Global Integrity)⁷ or Pedro Prieto-Marín from Kyopol⁸, key players in the open and participative environment.

All people interviewed, papers consulted and interactions with platforms, have provided us with a broad vision of the tools used in the implementation of PB processes. Nevertheless, it is quite common to run a platform from scratch in many municipalities, since there is not a specific service to provide jurisdictions with a standard model designed to work in modules or with adaptable patterns for different municipalities.

Our experience adapting the visualization platform *¿Dónde van mis impuestos?* (Where do my taxes go?) to Spain's national and regional budgets, but also to handpicked pilot projects in municipalities, is an added value to develop an adaptive tool to improve Europe's PB processes environment, leveraging from multiple platform testing (Data from 2012):



⁵ <http://www.opennorth.ca/>

⁶ <http://www.aptivate.org/>

⁷ <https://www.globalintegrity.org/>

⁸ <http://www.kyopol.net/>

⁹ Taken from Sintomer, Yves et al. – with the collaboration of Anja Röcke, (2013) “Learning from the South: Participatory Budgeting Worldwide – an Invitation to Global Cooperation Study, InWEnt gGmbH – Capacity Building International, Germany/ Service Agency Communities in One World”, figure 2 page 10. http://www.buergerhaushalt.org/sites/default/files/downloads/LearningfromtheSouth-ParticipatoryBudgetingWorldwide-Study_0.pdf

A participatory budgeting platform is needed as a first step for a) local politicians and civil servants to be more accountable and b) for citizens to have their say in this new democratic wave based on IT, where everyone should have the chance to be heard and should have also the right to participate.

We have set, throughout this assessment report, the pivotal points to be followed for developing a PB platform, suitable for the greatest number of people possible, including governments' administrations and their ad-hoc users. This report and the platform will be of interest to public officials, practitioners, students, journalists, and those interested in public and participative governance worldwide.

According to the conclusions taken out from this report, our approach will harness the useful recommendations given by our interviewees to conceptualise and design an educative, easy of use and broadly replicable PB platform. Our project is based on our technological expertise and on our unwavering belief in the ability to unite people around a politics of purpose, of which participatory budgeting is a great example.

2. Methodology

We have used a combined methodology to harness previous findings already reported on papers, previous approaches, experts and all stakeholders involved in the process:

1. We have identified the main important and influential experts in terms of participatory platforms, Tiago Peixoto and Brian Wampler, who have taken us to Nelson Días, Diether Beuermann, Alta Fölscher or Benjamin Goldfrank among other listed in the bibliography. We have read their papers and the references used for their reports to understand the environment of the participatory processes.
2. On the other hand, we have begun to explore and interact with the PB platforms listed by these experts mentioned above in their papers or reports. The experiences gathered have been diverse and hence also our approach to the problem. We have created a list of stakeholders and target groups that should be include in our surveys, since the PB field has a broad scope.
3. Following the problems we have identified in the papers and when interacting with the different platforms we have created a series of questions associated to:
 - Scope and goals of the platform
 - Becoming a participant of the platform
 - Dissemination and engagement for the platform
 - Online vs. offline platforms
 - OpenBudgets.eu, the new platform
 - Moving forward
4. We have gathered all these questions and adapted in three different surveys, one for the PPAA, other one for CSO's and Experts and one more for final users. Designed and developed to assess the needs that the creation of a participative solution suitable for multiple stakeholders would pose.
5. After analysing reports and papers listed under references, and the results of the surveys, we have written this assessment report trying to show which features are needed for each stakeholder group (PPAA, CSO's and Experts and final Users) and also which are the main challenges we aim to address in the development of the platform.

Limits of the methodology:

- Inputs are not limited to these gathered in January and February, we will continue gathering inputs from different actors that have not yet replayed.
- Solutions and conclusions on the report will iterate since more interviews and one-to-one meetings with public administrations are going to take place.
- Culture of participation associated to these platforms is still growing, so needs and gaps will also vary.
- Our expertise needs to improve in terms of PB environment, this gap might be solved in two months more of research.

3. Public Administration Survey and Interviews – Needs Assessment

We conducted a survey to multiple municipalities worldwide to understand the needs they have and the gaps they are facing while implementing analogue and digital platforms for participatory budgeting.

Administrations invited to take the interview were, city of Torrelodones (Spain), city of Madrid (Spain) including districts of Arganzuela, Canillejas-San Blás and Tetuán, city of Guimaraes and city of Ovar (Portugal), city of Paris (France), city of Chicago (United States of America) and city of Mexico D.F. (Mexico). We have requested personal interviews with the person in charge of the project on each city (one-to-one, Skype, telephone, mail). Four of them have already answered, helping us to develop a more accurate analysis of the platforms already in place in the respective cities.

Here is the questionnaire we have used for all interviews:

Objective:

The objective of this task is to assess the specific needs of the stakeholders regarding the implementation of digital participatory process platforms in their jurisdictions. To do so, this test bed will integrate different tools into the OpenBudgets.eu platform to enable and promote citizens' participation:

- A tool where citizens can express their budget allocation priorities during the budget approval process, along the lines and within the process defined by each administration concerned. This tool will fundamentally target municipalities;
- A tool where citizens can monitor budget transactions, auditing budget compromised vs. actual spending and giving feedback to the administrations;
- Educational resources for citizens, providing online materials to understand i.e. the budget cycle, terms used or how to influence and monitor the budget.

Executive resume:

The WP7 Test Beds and Evaluation - Participatory Budgets is designed to assess the specific needs of the stakeholders regarding the implementation of digital participatory processes in their jurisdictions. Two different points in time must be considered: before a budget is formally approved, when allocations are still under discussion; and afterwards, where actual spending needs to be monitored to ensure the budget execution follows the initial plan. Different levels of administration are being targeted with the aim of understanding their needs and previous participatory experiences, gathering recommendations and use cases, which will lead the development and implementation of the tools in the next phase.

This process will result in a collection of user, developer and actor stories, an assessment of the existing knowledge gap, and a list of required educational resources and crucial needs that should be targeted.

OpenBudgets.eu will be used as a best practice and awareness raising initiative for municipalities, councils and regions willing to increase their level of budget transparency. It will be promoted as part of Civio's project portfolio and, as a result, more administrations are expected to join the project. Civio will also use the portal as an information source for the data journalism content of our projects and will promote its use among media partners. Finally, we will promote the use and development of the portal and tools, especially the ones related to citizens' participation and feedback, among project's community and our community of users and developers.

Please read all questions before answering.

You have the opportunity to improve the development, effectiveness and user experience of a participatory budgeting platform that could end up being used by more than 500 millions of people.

Scope and goals PPA

A1.- How did you become aware of the need to implement a participatory budgeting process in your city or neighbour? Was this a bottom-up decision or a top-down one? Were you inspired by experiences in other municipalities? If so, which ones?

A2.- Which percentage of the city's total annual budget are you placing at the disposal of the participatory budgeting process? Has there been any change in the percentage since the beginning/first draft of the project? Are you seeking to enlarge it in the future? If so, why?

A3.- How have you defined the competences of the city council that are suitable to be included into the participatory budgeting process? How have you explained this to citizens?

A4.- Are you asking for projects at the city or neighbourhood levels? Or both?

A5.- Are you considering/accepting non-spending proposals, i.e. avoid light pollution, avoid overwhelming public advertising, avoid spending in public privileges (official cars, official advisors, etc.)?

A6.- Taking a look at the whole process, how many people are involved in the back-office of the project? Which areas do they belong to? How much time and expenses are allocated to the process? How have you engaged them?

A7.- Which departments are involved in the study of the feasibility of the projects? Can you estimate the number of people involved in this task?

Becoming a participant

B1.- Which conditions do you apply/require for voters/participants in your participatory budgeting process?

B2.- Is your council/region enforcing an age limitation to vote? Why?

B3.- Is the process open to everybody, or only people living in the city? If restricted, how do you monitor and verify it?

B4.- Do you ask for IDs when participating offline? Which IDs do you accept? (e.g. proof of address, ID card...)

B5.- Which IDs or validations do you ask for when participating online? Which other mechanisms do you use to avoid manipulation (i.e. tracking the user IP, captchas to avoid robots...)?

B6.- Is the council able to submit PB proposals to be voted in the same conditions as citizen's ones? Can organizations submit proposals?

B7.- How many steps has your participatory budgeting process? Can you give us an approximate timeline of the complete process, i.e. 1 month to gather ideas, two months to elaborate the proposal, 15 days to vote, etc.?

B8.- How long do you keep the vote process open? How does the voting process work? I.e. do citizens have to vote for a fixed number of projects, are they free to vote for all of them... How did you decide on this?

Dissemination and engagement

C1.- Which dissemination actions have you implemented to encourage citizens to participate? Have you targeted any group in particular to try to increase their engagement and reduce participation biases (e.g. low-income neighbourhoods, elders...)? If so, were these actions effective?

C2.- Have you used the help of civil servants as ambassadors of the process?

C3.- Can users campaign for certain proposals? Is it limited to the platform itself or do you allow/support users to campaign offline for a period of time?

Online vs. offline

D1.- Do you offer both offline (i.e. ballot boxes) and online (web site) participation channels? If so, how do you combine them? Do they offer the same possibilities? Which benefits do they each offer?

D2.- How have you implemented the analogical part of the process? i.e. Information spots, ballot boxes, mobile ballot boxes, voting results publication, people deployed to attend these spots, opening-closing times...

D3.- Which model have you used as a basis to create your online participatory budgeting platform? Did you create it from scratch? Which programming language you have used to create the platform? Is it open-source?

D4.- Which common/current errors have you identified while creating the digital platform? Which errors/mistakes are most reported by users?

D5.- Can you share your user's feedback with us? (No individual name will be published, e.g. Voter from Madrid, Voter from Paris, Mexico, etc.)

OpenBudgets.eu

E1.- Which features do you want to see implemented in the participatory budgeting platform from Openbudgets.eu?

E2.- How could this platform enhance your user experience compared to other platforms you have used? Could it fix some of the issues you've detected on your current platform?

Moving forward

F1.- Which is the most widespread collateral benefit since the implementation in your city/district of your participatory budgeting platform?

F2.- What are your plans for the next iterations of the participatory budgeting process?

Some municipalities are more agile than others in terms of timing and response. We have contacted all the above stated but only some have replied on time. Responses coming into our inboxes after the deadline of the deliverable, will be included in the report afterwards.

We have analysed the feedback sent by the cities below:

City of Torrelodones, which has not yet started the platform, we have met with Ángel Guirao (Communications and citizen support) and Luís Ángel Collado Cueto (Participation and finance).

City of Madrid, which just released the platform on the February 22nd, we have met with Miguel Arana Catania, Participation Project Director. Citizen participation, Transparency and Open Government Department

City of Paris, which is on their second round of PB, we have met with Julien Antelin (Chef of Cabinet of Pauline Véron, Chargée d’Affaires Local Democracy and Participation)

City of Mexico D.F. implementing PB processes since 2010, we have contacted per mail with Oscar Mauricio Valadez Martín (Advisor at the Executive direction of Citizen Participation at the IEDF)

Scope and Goals

Torrelodones

City of **Torrelodones** (Madrid) has been very active and helpful for this report. They have done already a lot of work for implementing a PB platform, which is not ready yet, and have also shared some technical contacts to be in touch while implementing the platform.

“Participation does not come easy, participation should be taught, structured and organized... people need to be somehow “pushed” to participate, since in Spain we do not have such a participation culture”¹⁰.

Their experience is a **top-down** one. Citizens did not ask for a PB platform, but Torrelodones' City Hall will implement it in their jurisdiction. Torrelodones has been working on this for the last three months but they have still many questions to answer. Nonetheless Torrelodones has one of the best experiences in communication in terms of PB processes that we have seen in our country, they have surveyed the population of the city to build a PB platform according to the needs of their citizens.

With a **total budget of €25/26M**, they will submit a 10% of the investment budget (≈€1,5M) to the PB process. For the first round, they will submit around €100.000.

¹⁰ Ángel Guirao, Communication and Citizen support, City Councillor, Torrelodones City Hall. Personal Interview, 20160215, Madrid.

Madrid

The city of **Madrid**, has just announced their PB process (Monday, February 22nd).¹¹ The Madrid city council team had in mind opening the city hall to the citizens. Their project is based in a participative platform that includes the first round of a PB Process. This platform has been developed from scratch inspired by other PB processes such as those in Iceland, Paris or Brazil.

They will work with **€60M out of the investment fund for the whole city**, 40% for projects that will have a whole city scope and 60% for projects planned for the 21 city-districts. Less-income per person districts will enjoy a greater investment than those districts with higher income per person. This will be around the 1% of the whole total budget of Madrid for 2016. But they are working to improve the amount dedicated to future processes.

Paris

The city of **Paris** has started to do an amazing job in the past few years, given the size of the city and the volume of funds now made available to Parisians to make decisions. They want to set an example, trying to use the data to persuade “your neighbour” to do the same as you are doing. In order to have a clear picture of what their citizens want, they have worked alongside major actors such as: city neighbourhoods, youth councils, local councils of non-EU citizens, Paris’ Students council and the Municipal council of children (9-10 years).

They have set aside 5% of the total city-budget for the PB process, around **€100M** every year for the 2014-2020 period. Paris has created one PB process for the whole city and 20 more PB processes for each district of Paris. For each €1 the district invests on the PB Process, city of Paris will equal, double or triple the amount. Pre-requisites for the projects are:

- that capital money is invested in public areas or municipal facilities
- within the cities’ competencies
- for the general interest.

Mexico DF

Mexico DF. Citizens’ participation law came into force in the DF region. During 2011 civil servants have consulted citizens and citizens’ association to define the scope of the PB process on each delegation(administrative units) of DF . Mexico DF is a top-down example, and according to IEDF many people are not participating because they see as a governmental imposition. Some more Mexican municipalities are willing to replicate the DF model.

DF has submitted the 3% of the budget from every village to the PB process. But the first version of the Law included a variation between the 1% and the 3%. Some municipalities rose until 5%. All projects implemented in the 1793 DF villages are local projects, with a total cost of around \$50M. The management of the PB process is made by the IEDF (40 different offices around DF), and the implementation is carried out by the municipalities (16 offices in DF).

¹¹ https://decide.madrid.es/participatory_budget

Educational Resources and Training

Torrelobones

Torrelobones pushes for participatory budgeting in many ways. First, Torrelobones engaged civil servants by publicly saying that since these job-positions will be a new experience, which sometimes will be developed outside normal working hours, they will be paid better than the average. Second, the participation is structured on-line and off-line, they have clearly bet on this. To assess their educational needs, they will analyse how their citizens consume information. They will adapt their educational materials to video pills, twitter, to the city's monthly magazine. In addition, they will improve the way this topic is tackled in the city council. Finally, they have dedicated one person per department of the city council to the implementation of the project.

Madrid

City of **Madrid** is working on **pedagogic examples** to educate on participation and to clearly explain city hall's competences to avoid disaffection, if citizens propose projects under regional or state competences.

The PB Process from **Madrid** seem to be of standard length, beginning on 22nd of February, proposals will be accepted until the April 1st. The pre-selection by citizens takes until the 14th of April. The next full month – until May 15th – the feasibility of the proposals is evaluated. From 15th of May until 30th of June, the final proposals are in voting process. Proposals will be discussed in the 2017 budget debates and are to be implemented in 2017. For proposals to be successfully taken forward, economic and participatory council and the involvement of one person per department is needed.

Paris

The **Parisian** PB process, being a year long, has already been tested twice. It follows a quite simple schema:

- Generating and collecting projects.
- Feasibility studies and cost evaluation by municipal engineers.
- Vote by Parisian citizens.
- Implementation of the laureate projects.

More than 300 civil servants are supporting this project in Paris. On educational resources the city is mainly informing and creating a culture of participation as this slide show illustrates:

Generating and Collecting Projects

It is very important to provide information and explain how the Parisian administration works :

- Online information available
- University of education of active citizenship
 - Open to everyone
 - Free sessions about PB, budget, associations



12

Mexico DF

Mexico D.F. insists on a the “learning-by-doing” experience. The PB process in DF is running for the last 5 years and now citizens seem more permeable to ideas or proposals and are better prepared to identify projects that do comply with local, federal or national law.

Non-spending proposals, as happened with the other three cities above, are not considered inside the PB processes. They have not a clear position against this, but they would prefer to include them as citizens’ initiative.

Becoming a Participant

In **Torrelodones**, **participation policies** with regards to age limits are standard, going from 16 years. ID policies are yet to be defined, but possibilities are among city census, digital signature, pin24h (mobile secured) and mobile geo-localization, and they may add IP address to the list.

In **Madrid**, voters should be registered in the city census and being older than 16 years old. Analogue submission of proposals, registration and voting can be done in 010 Offices (26 in Madrid). 010 offices are in charge of local paperwork and local taxes, and they will be also used as PB information offices. Online submission, registration and voting has three different levels of entrance, which makes tasks more difficult. The first level allows the citizen to debate on proposals, but not to submit any. The second level needs an SMS code to support proposals. However, voting is still reserved for the third level. The difficulty with these three layers is one of the problems they are still trying to solve.

Paris has some particular views on participation policies. First, people do not need to be registered in the census to vote. Second, there is no age limitation as long as they can read and understand the proposals, either nationality or census limitation. This is one of the best examples of trust we have gathered in this report. There is true faith and confidence on

¹² Taken from Julien Antelin presentation of the Budget participative project (2015)
<https://budgetparticipatif.paris.fr/bp/le-budget-participatif-.html>

what people will do, as said by Julien Antelin “*It is civic education*”¹³. If we talk about online platform voting, Paris has implemented an IP policy check; if you are inside the Paris IP directory, you will be able to vote, if you are not in the city or on Holidays you can not vote. Citizens only have one vote. They can vote in the neighbourhoods where they live or where they work, home/work adjacent neighbourhoods are also accepted, but they can only vote once.

Although **Chicago** has not completed the survey yet, city’s view on participation policies are also quite ample, and merits a fast review to be taken into account for the conclusions of this report:

ACCEPTABLE VOTER IDS

Voters must prove that they live in the ward and are of age to vote (depends on ward). In order to facilitate broad participation, voters may present a wide array of proofs of ID, including but not limited to one or more of those below,

- A document with name and current address from a local, state, or US government agency such as a state driver's license or non-driver ID, consular ID, passport, EBT card, military ID card;
 - Voter registration card;
 - Utility, medical, credit card bill with name and current address;
 - Current lease;
 - Paycheck or paycheck stub from an employer or a W-2 statement;
 - Bank statement or bank-issued credit card statement;
 - Student ID;
 - Employee ID;
 - Permanent Resident Card (Green Card) or other Immigration Documentation;
 - Tax forms;
- www.pbchicago.org
- Residency Letter or Identification issued by a homeless shelter, halfway house, etc;
 - Passport or other ID issued by a foreign government;
 - Social Security benefit statements or check;
 - Employment Authorization Document;
 - Medicare or other insurance document with address;
 - School records (or naming the parents of children attending school and the parents' address);
 - Title to any property (automobiles, house, etc.) with address;



14

¹³ Julien Antelin, Directeur de Cabinet de Pauline Véron, Adjointe à la Maire de Paris chargée de la démocratie locale, de la participation citoyenne, de la vie associative, de la jeunesse et de l'emploi.

¹⁴ Taken from, http://www.pbchicago.org/uploads/1/3/5/3/13535542/final_pbchicago_2015-16_rulebook.pdf, page 14.

Dissemination and Engagement

City of **Torrelodones**, has designed a **communication protocol** that has to be followed to communicate every action they are developing:

1. First, they have asked their citizens if council communication is working.
2. Second, which media channels are most used by them.
3. Third, strong commitment to inform day after day.

Through this protocol, they have engaged people to participate in assemblies, communal meetings, city hall meetings, etc. They have taken the time to inform them about a future PB platform and its implementation. People are aware that the surveys taken by them have been used to implement new actions inside the municipality. Surveys work and therefore people are really eager to participate, for their own sake.

Regarding dissemination and engagement, **Madrid**'s city hall has essayed traditional advertisement (bus-stop banners, streetlights' flags, leaflets) but this has not worked at all. They have focused on twitter and Facebook, because they are more effective. Dissemination has also profitted from different awareness actions in the 21 city districts, such as interventions in city districts meetings, political meetings and other collective meetings in which the city hall wanted to influence. Campaigns by people who have submitted proposals will not be supported by the city hall this year, but they are aware that they need to improve this aspect.

Paris has implemented several ways to communicate and engage with people. City hall is creating a strong network of PB Ambassadors and 'citizen kiosques'. Kiosques are designed for citizens and managed by them. Citizens can organize events to explain neighbourhoods' needs, explain proposal PB projects and campaign for them (Citizens' project campaign are supported by Paris city Hall). These actions have been combined with programs such as "*Je m'engage*"¹⁵, to boost the not-for-profit organization in need for volunteers and citizens who want to commit to and take part in the life of their city and neighbourhood.

Online vs. Offline processes

In **Torrelodones**, traditional ballot boxes will be available for voting in the afternoon, and the on-line platform will be active around the clock. Voting processes will run 7 to 14 days. Citizens that have submitted proposals will be supported by the city council, but how they will be supported is not yet defined.

Madrid, as a relatively young PB team, is more focused on an on-line platform for casting votes, based in their self-made CONSUL App.¹⁶. In addition, they are also designing and implementing a ballot for mobile ballot boxes. At the on-line platform, the team is running software for creating more powerful filters, faster web-load, RSS features and feedback receiver options for proposals submitters.

¹⁵ <https://jemengage.paris.fr/> Paris citizens' Volunteer service.

¹⁶ <https://github.com/AyuntamientoMadrid/consul>

Paris has maintained a combination of offline and online processes. The city uses an online platform, traditional ballot boxes and, as also implemented in Chicago and Madrid, mobile ballot-boxes. Mobile ballot boxes run with brief explanations of the selected proposals, to attract less motivated collectives, mainly in areas where more low income individuals and immigrants are particularly located.

Openbudgets.eu improvements/requirements

According to city of **Torrelodones**' point of view, **Openbudgets.eu** platform needs to be one unique platform for all paperwork (proposals, excels, voting, videos, etc.). It has to focus on transparency in the decision making, ease of use and educational materials in order to engage more and more people, independently of their views or thoughts. They opted for having a strong visual interface, a timeline and a tour around platform's functionalities and a simple explanation of what a PB process is about. They mention for example that: "*PB processes are based on citizens' contributions (project, ideas, etc.) not in rebellion or complaint against the city council*"¹⁷.

Openbudgets.eu platform could improve their experience in terms of filters, platform information and data visualization. "*We see no improvements regarding budget administration but in citizens' awareness of the need to participate in the decision making process and consciousness of the importance of their decisions*"¹⁸. Voters will have to choose informed of the costs of each project. They will not be able to vote for proposals which exceed cities' budget designated for the entire city or a city-district. Most voted projects will need to comply with financial requirements to be implemented.

The process in **Paris** is transparent and fully accessible, just as in Madrid. Next month we have organized a meeting to share our experiences and see how the development of the Openbugets.eu PB platform could contribute to improve the already at disposal city platform and off-line/back-end practices.

Moving forward

In Torrelodones, city expects following best practices will emerge out of the PB Platform implementation. First, a collective image of a collaborative environment is created. Second citizens' confidence in politics improves. Third, the city council gets closer. Fourth, the development of proactive transparency on expenses and increased citizens trust in **Torrelodones**.

Paris assumed that city hall is responsible for the civic education of their citizens. PB processes are part of a broader plan for citizen education and communication that is being deployed. *Le Mairie de Paris* hopes that their example could be imitated/mirrored in more municipalities nation- and worldwide. Paris is committed to work for continuous ongoing learning.

Independently of the cities analysed, some papers state that, the existing PB processes are helping governments to increase their tax income and revenue, because citizens knowing

¹⁷ Ángel Guirao, Communication and Citizen support, City Councillor, Torrelodones City Hall. Personal Interview, 20160215, Madrid.

¹⁸ Miguel Arana Catania, Participation Project Director. Citizen participation, Transparency and Open Government Department. Madrid City Hall, personal interview 20160218, Madrid (Spain)

the final destination of their taxes will show greater willingness to collaborate with local, regional and national governments, as stated in the paper¹⁹ published by Diether W. Beuermann and María Amelina at the IDB:

*"This paper provides the first experimental evaluation of the participatory budgeting model showing that it increased public participation in the process of public decision making, increased local tax revenues collection, channelled larger fractions of public budgets to services stated as top priorities by citizens, and increased satisfaction levels with public services. These effects, however, were found only when the model was implemented in already-mature administratively and politically decentralized local governments. The findings highlight the importance of initial conditions with respect to the decentralization context for the success of participatory governance."*²⁰

Suming up, although some cities are still in the first steps of the implementation of the platform, their aim is to continue improving their platform and the way they interact with citizens with improvements such as:

- A stronger visual component in the platform.
- Better filtering capacity to address user demands.
- Improving communication with citizens and also more specific educational and learning materials.

¹⁹ <https://publications.iadb.org/bitstream/handle/11319/6699/Does-Participatory-Budgeting-Improve-Decentralized-Public-Service-Delivery.pdf?sequence=1>

²⁰ Abstract, Beuermann, Diether Does participatory budgeting improve decentralized public service delivery? / Diether Beuermann, María Amelina. p. cm. — (IDB Working Paper Series; 547) Includes bibliographic references. 1. Local budgets—Citizen participation. 2. Public administration—Decision making. 3. Decentralization in government. I. Amelina, María. II. Inter-American Development Bank. Country Department Caribbean Group. III. Title. IV. Series. IDB-WP-547

4. Experts and CSOs Surveys and Interviews – Needs Assessment

Experts and CSO's can also add here their valuable input. We have identified the key players acting in the field of the PB processes. Their input has helped us a lot to develop the concept for the design of a new PB platform.

On the experts and Civil Society Organizations level we have requested the inputs from Matt Haikin, Tiago Peixoto, Alan Hudson, Pedro Prieto-Marín, Stefaan Verhulst, Nathaniel Heller, David Sasaki, Hollie Russon Gilman, the International Budget Partnership, Bürgerhaushalt, The PB Network, Plataforma de Auditoría de la Deuda and Open North.

We did not have the opportunity to conduct one-to-one interviews, but they have been very helpful by sending us their inputs for the questionnaire per mail. Here you can find the questionnaire, shorter than PPAA one, that we have used to interview experts and CSO's.

Objective

The objective of this task is to assess the specific needs of the stakeholders regarding the implementation of digital participatory process platforms in their jurisdictions.

To do so, this test bed will integrate different tools into the OpenBudgets.eu platform to enable and promote citizens' participation:

A tool where citizens can express their budget allocation priorities during the budget approval process, along the lines and within the process defined by each administration concerned. This tool will fundamentally target municipalities;

A tool where citizens can monitor budget transactions, auditing budget compromised vs. actual spending and giving feedback to the administrations;

Educational resources for citizens, providing online materials to understand i.e. the budget cycle, terms used or how to influence and monitor the budget.

Executive resume:

The WP7 Test Beds and Evaluation – Participatory Budgets is designed to assess the specific needs of the stakeholders regarding the implementation of digital participatory processes in their jurisdictions. Two different points in time must be considered: before a budget is formally approved, when allocations are still under discussion; and afterwards, where actual spending needs to be monitored to ensure the budget execution follows the initial plan. Different levels of administration are being targeted with the aim of understanding their needs and previous participatory experiences, gathering recommendations and use cases, which will lead the development and implementation of the tools in the next phase.

This process will result in a collection of user, developer and actor stories, an assessment of the existing knowledge gap, and a list of required educational resources and crucial needs that should be targeted.

OpenBudgets.eu will be used as a best practice and awareness raising initiative for municipalities, councils and regions willing to increase their level of budget

transparency. It will be promoted as part of Civio's project portfolio and, as a result, more administrations are expected to join the project. Civio will also use the portal as an information source for the data journalism content of our projects and will promote its use among media partners. Finally, we will promote the use and development of the portal and tools, especially the ones related to citizens' participation and feedback, among project's community and our community of users and developers.

Please read all questions before answering.

- 1.- Which towns/cities would you list as examples of outstanding participatory budgeting processes in the last two years?
- 2.- What is the most widespread benefit (*local and global*) since the first implementations of participatory budgeting processes in 1989? Are these benefits the ones expected by early practitioners?
- 3.- Which criteria would you use to define a PB process as “successful”? What would be a good predictor of “success”?
- 4.- Which are the most common excuses for a city council/region to refuse a participatory budgeting process?
- 5.- Taking into account your experience in participatory budgeting, which social groups are more prone to take part in the PB? And to avoid participating on it? In general, do citizen proposals provide a fair overview of the population needs, or are some collectives over-represented?
- 6.- Which citizens' proposals are present in almost all cities around the world? Which areas are the ones gathering most of the proposals?
- 7.- What about non-spending proposals: are they normally accepted as part of a PB process?
- 8.- Which educational and communication resources would you recommend to motivate citizens to take part in a PB? Is there a particular PB process you'd highlight?
- 9.- How would you bring on board volunteers (of all ages) to act as “PB Ambassadors”, close to citizens?
- 10.- In your opinion, how important is an online platform in a PB process? When would you deploy, and for which purposes (i.e. information, voting, discussion...)?

Most of the answers have been identified as future steps for the Openbudgets.eu platform to be developed since experts and CSO's already have a long experience in the field of PB.

Findings

In the survey, we asked CSOs to name the outstanding PB processes. We take the examples to design our own platform. The most cited **examples** are Porto Alegre²¹(Brazil), or what the national budget ministry has done in the Philippines through their bottom-up

²¹ <http://www2.portoalegre.rs.gov.br/op/default.php>

budgeting²². A very sophisticated attempt to implement local-level PB at the Local Government Unit level²³, which is roughly equivalent to a municipal unit in most countries. Or what Paris²⁴ (France) has started to do in the past few years.

New York City²⁵ (USA) (for its wide expansion to over half the New York city council and its institutionalization) and Boston MA²⁶ (USA) (*for a youth driven process for people 12-25 years old and pioneering SMS and civic crowd funding*)²⁷ were also cited as pioneers.

Potential Benefits of implementing a PB platform are listed below:

- It is a turning point for government priorities; from the implementation of PB, priorities in policies will be more aligned to those of the wider public.
- Citizen awareness of public spending and the inherent allocation decisions taking place when budgeting (e.g. funding a project implies most of times restrictions to fund others) increases.
- Co-creation of public policies between government and civil society results in a greater legitimacy for those policies.
- The Redistribution of funds has the potential to fight inequality by redirecting resources to the poor and marginalised.
- Government tax revenue slightly increases
- PB promotes pro-poor spending with programs such as infant mortality reduction.

Most of our CSO's and Experts, identify a PB process as **successful** when it becomes a tool of redistribution of investment. However, they also considered a PB process a success when it results in an increase in the confidence between administration and population. Other characteristics to highlight are:

- Granting of decision-making to citizens.
- Citizens feeling like their voice and input were heard in the PB process
- The process is replicable to become embedded into other decision-making processes.

The amount at stake in the PB process in relation with the total budget amount is also a key indicator of the success of PB, as a government's confidence in the citizens.

Citizens' tools for monitoring the implementation of the PB process, since there are no such a tools in most of the PB processes already implemented. Tools also focused on make implementation more accountable, has been also regarded as truly efficient indicators of the success of a PB process for the interviewed CSO's and experts.

With regards to **excuses to refuse** a PB process in their jurisdictions, all our interviewees have outlined the possibility of losing control of the decision-making processes by some councillors and politicians, but also lack of resources, lack of citizens' interest, motivation

²² <http://openpub.gov.ph>.

²³ <http://citizenaction.net/index.php>

²⁴ <https://budgetparticipatif.paris.fr/bp/>

²⁵ <http://council.nyc.gov/html/pb/home.shtml>

²⁶ <http://youth.boston.gov/youth-lead-the-change/>

²⁷ Taken from Hollie Russon Gilman (Fellow Harvard Kennedy School's Ash Center, post Doctoral Scholar in Technology and public Policy, Columbia University) Author of the book "Democracy Reinvented: Participatory budgeting and civic innovation in America". Mailed interview 20160218.

or capacity. This shows us the stagnation of some administrations and institutions, but also the dread of some inside the institutions of new work-patterns and of the political costs of the (good/bad) implementation of a PB process.

All stakeholders inside a municipality should be involved into the decision-making process of a PB, but most of the times all factors involved in the process are not measurable or even noticeable, since there are also a strong irrational component (i.e. family ties, political will in the municipality, citizen's view of the municipal management, etc). Experts remark that less represented **interest groups** before the PB process implementation tend to capture the process, since they feel their interests will be better represented. They have very little to lose and a lot to win²⁸. Citizens' proposals offer a biased perception of the society and because of this some social collectives are overrepresented. Not everybody is familiar with participation so, those already involved in social movements will have a clear advantage, because they have shown a more prone attitude towards civic engagement previously. "*However, PB process can take intentional steps to engage traditionally marginalized people including people who have never participated before.*"²⁹

Most of the experts are not sure about what are the "most popular demands inside a PB process", since there is no specific current to work on. Therefore we can not talk about a list of "world demands", but specific needs from every municipality. Citizens regard these demands as unsolved, unattended or **unsatisfied demands** and hence, decision-making process should pay attention to these demands.

Interviewed experts have not tackled non-spending proposals, as most of them have no experience in this area. We need further research on this topic to evaluate whether **non-spending proposals** belong into a PB process.

On educational resources, our collaborators (Experts and CSO's) have expressed the need of clear information policies and the call for new **educational policies on participation** at a local, regional and national level. They have suggested some already successful approaches. First, a multi-channel approach: local media (press, radio, TV), administrative channels, information events, off-line workshops, social-network tools. Second, H.R. Gilman says: "*Like all things "open," the more we relate these exercises to things that people care about – their kids' schools, access to healthcare, jobs, and public safety – the more appeal they will have. Let's stop branding these exercises as "PB" and instead frame them as, "Come help make decisions around whether your local school is going to expand free after-school care for young children." Approaches like that will draw a crowd*"³⁰

All inputs insisted that the best education strategy is "*letting residents know that a process was happening at all*"³¹, to attract their attention and learn while participating.

Gathering a group of "**Ambassadors of the PB process**" has been seen as a meaningful and relevant action by our collaborators. In relation with the topic of educational materials

²⁸ See more about this topic: <https://www.mysociety.org/files/2015/10/demographics-report.pdf>

²⁹ Hollie Russon Gilman (Fellow Hardvard Kennedy School's Ash Center, post Doctoral Scholar in Tecnology and public Policy, Columbia University) Author of the book "Democracy Reinvented: Participatory budgeting and civic innovation in America". Mailed interview 20160218.

³⁰ Nathaniel Heller, Managing Director at the Results for Development Institute (R4D), Civil society representative at the OGP steering committee, Global Integrity co-founder, advisory board member of Civio and on the board of the Engine Room. Mailed interview, 20160222.

³¹ James McKinney, Popoloproject, Open Corporates, Influencemapping, Open North founder. Mailed interview 20160222.

some stated that we should “*take a sector and service delivery approach rather than expert people to be budget wizards who can easily weigh the trade-offs across domains they have little to no familiarity with.*”³²

The **online platform** is seen as an intersection point to connect offline and online processes, gathering proposal submissions, voting and virtual discussion forums. However, the online platform is not a crucial point for the informative process. It can be “*used to amplify and supplement in person opportunities. Online should not replace in person engagement, but can potentially engage new types of people. Questions of digital literacy and access are of course important to address*”³³. Some experts have also expressed their desire of seeing a monitoring for the PB implementation on the platform, but as this paper³⁴ from Jonathan Fox and Tiago Peixoto suggests, “*cases suggest that while ICT platforms have been relevant in increasing policymakers' and senior managers' capacity to respond, most of them have yet to influence their willingness to do so*”³⁵.

Expert and CSO's impressions and experiences gathered are shaping our approach to the design and implementation of Openbudgets.eu platform that we will begin to commence its development by the beginning of March.

³² Nathaniel Heller, Managing Director at the Results for Development Institute (R4D), Civil society representative at the OGP steering committee, Global Integrity co-founder, advisory board member of Civio and on the board of the Engine Room. Mailed interview, 20160222.

³³ Hollie Russon Gilman (Fellow Hardvard Kennedy School's Ash Center, post Doctoral Scholar in Tecnology and public Policy, Columbia University) Author of the book “Democracy Reinvented: Participatory budgeting and civic innovation in America”. Mailed interview 20160218.

³⁴ http://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/123456789/7687/IDS-B_47_1_10.190881968-2016.104.pdf?sequence=1

³⁵ ibidem, page 23.

5. Final Users – Polls – Needs Assessment

No assessment could be ready without taking into account the opinions, experiences and desires of the final users, administrations on the one hand and associations and citizens on the other hand.

For this section, we have used a Google doc in English and another one in Spanish, with 6 questions related to the implementation of a PB process. We have send it to our followers in social networks and also shared with all members of the Consortium Open Budgets.

Our goal is to understand the needs of final users when participating in a PB process, but also their experiences when taking part in such a process, to help us the design of a participatory platform.

Below, you will find the answers that we have collected in users' surveys in Spanish and English, where people from 9 different nationalities have contributed to the task.

English Poll

Help us design an open participatory budgeting platform

Fundación Civio is developing a participatory budgeting platform as part of the H2020 European project OpenBudgets.eu. The goal of this questionnaire is to learn from your experience and assess your experience, needs and preferences for an open-source participatory budgeting platform, to guide its design and development.

Thanks for taking six minutes to answer this form.

More info: <http://openbudgets.eu/>

Name:

Nationality:

Email:

1.- Do you know any participatory budgeting (PB) process? Which ones?

2.- Have you ever taken part in a participatory budgeting process, in your country or abroad? If so, how was your experience?

3.- Would you prefer both offline (i.e. ballot boxes) and online (web site) participation channels? Or only one of them? Why?

4.- What type of proposals would you submit?

5.- What about non-spending proposals (i.e. avoid light pollution, avoid overwhelming public advertising, avoid spending in public privileges): do you think they belong in a PB process?

6.- Which features would you like to see implemented in an online participatory budgeting platform?

According to our **English survey** all users (10 in total) are eager to learn more about PB processes, although 6 of them have not really taken part in such a process. Users are aware of other international initiatives such as Porto Alegre (Brazil), most cited, but also Mexico D.F and Paris, Praha, Cascais, Lisbon, Paris, Grenoble, Rennes, Montreuil, Edinburgh, Tunis, Turin or Milano. The 4 people who have experienced participating throughout a PB process, highlighted their experiences as remarkable and useful.

In terms of preferences between online and offline processes, users agree on the need of having both for having a stronger legitimization and a better approach to all ages.

Regarding proposals they would likely submit, users participating in the survey stated the need of a previous campaign of education on participation and competences related to their local governments. Most users are not aware of what to propose, and how can the proposal be linked to the local public spending. The development of education materials should help for participation in the PB processes.

When tackling the topic of “non-spending proposals” users are divided. On the one hand 5 people would like to include them as a sign of transparency and accountability. On the other hand, other 5 people said that this is not a question for PB process but for normal accountability process inside local administrations that should be initiated and managed by citizens in their jurisdictions.

Features requested by citizens are focused on the transparency solutions in decision-making processes inside PB platforms:

- Percentages of money spent in each area, with clear information about companies contracted.
- Deliberative tools
- Budget games
- Keeping track and advertising the offline process.
- Sufficient level of participation

Among other collected in the survey.

Spanish Poll

Ayúdanos a diseñar una herramienta abierta de presupuestos participativos

En Civio estamos desarrollando una plataforma de presupuestos participativos en el marco del proyecto H2020 Openbudgets.eu. Tu experiencia y tus opiniones nos ayudarán a definirlo y a crear una plataforma abierta que se adapte a tus necesidades y sea útil para todos.

Muchas gracias por tomarte 6 minutos para contestar a nuestro cuestionario.

Más información sobre el proyecto: <http://bit.ly/1SgJipi>

Nombre:

Nacionalidad:

E-mail:

- 1.- ¿Conoces algún ejemplo de presupuestos participativos? ¿Cuál o cuáles?
- 2.- ¿Alguna vez has participado en unos presupuestos participativos? Si es así, ¿en cuál/cuáles?, ¿cuál ha sido tu experiencia?
- 3.- ¿Preferirías un proceso offline –por ejemplo, con urnas de votación-, online –desde una página web- o una combinación de ambos? ¿Por qué?
- 4.- ¿Qué tipo de propuestas presentarías?
- 5.- ¿Crees que sería interesante y encajaría presentar propuestas que no impliquen gasto (por ejemplo: evitar determinados gastos públicos)?
- 6.- ¿Qué componentes y funcionalidades te gustaría ver implementados en una plataforma online de presupuestos participativos?

Spanish and Latin-American users, with 35 different inputs, have been the most active using our online survey.

22 respondents (63%) claimed to know **examples of participatory budgets**, compared with 13 (37%) who reported not being aware of any. As above, most cited example was Porto Alegre (Brazil), other examples mentioned were Cordoba (Spain), Molina de Segura, (Spain) and other local Spanish experiences.

Only seven respondents had affirmatively **taken part in a PB process**, the vast majority (28 = 80%) has never participated in a PB experience. Among those who took part in a PB process, 3 considered it a positive or a very positive experience, and the other 3 as a negative experience. Negative aspects mentioned to be avoided were: final breach of the approved proposals (which were never executed), low participation and the special role of family and friends to get the approval of submitted proposals in low turnout scenarios.

In the **analogue-digital dichotomy**, half of respondents preferred a mixed process that combines both. Mentioned reasons to do so had to do with ease of accessibility, social inclusion and increased participation.

The answers to the third question – what kind of proposals would you submit – can be classified in three fields:

- Eleven of the proposals are related to investment / expenses (education, research, mobility, green spaces, urban infrastructure or nurseries).
- Another 10 are focused on more abstract proposals (promotion of transparency, creation of new mechanisms of participation, improvement of social tissue or study and research on participatory democracy).
- Fourteen people suggested improvements on the future platform (easy to use, interactivity with proposed projects, feedback-receptive platform).

For the question on **non-spending proposals**, 30 respondents considered those interesting, and even essential, to have in a PB process. Based on a previous PB experience, one respondent said that non-spending proposals were channelled through a different route, and ignored afterwards.

Requested features for the platform can be also divided in three categories, depending on the stage of the process: information requests, deliberation and implementation.

-
- Most are related to information requests [previous years' budget information available to compare with current; information about authorities, departments and areas involved in each proposal and their responsibilities; more context information, budget visualisations; information on variables involved in each proposal (population, environmental impact, use of resources, etc.); a stronger search engine and a filter of proposals by themes; etc.].
 - Deliberation phase: publicly meet-up off-line mechanisms to discuss proposals; online forums; proposals catalogue and top rated inputs.
 - In the implementation phase: clear information of the timeline and method used to implement proposals; the possibility of being informed of the vote of public representatives in decision-making; structured follow-up and proposal monitoring and compliance audit; the possibility to ask the person in charge of carrying out a specific approved proposal.

All users request will be also taken into account to design and implement a platform that will enhance and harness participation practices in their jurisdictions. All the requests and improvements gathered will be discussed inside our team during coming months, aiming to cover the greater scope of people possible when interacting with a PB platform.

6. Civio's Approach to the Platform Solution

After having studied all the inputs gathered by our interviews and surveys we are steadily working in the conceptualisation of a PB platform. Some of the features are listed below but these are expect to pivot several times to adapt to the changing environment of the Online participative platforms worldwide.

OpenBudgets PB tool/platform will be conceived to tackle the problem of a replicable and multifunctional PB platform.

This problem is faced by a variety of actors that work with complex digital and analogue participatory processes worldwide, such as administrations, citizens, social activists and civil servants. The current situation prevents these groups from carrying out complete processes in just one platform, due to the increasing complexity of information and the need of programming skills to visualize and communicate effectively participatory and budgetary information.

This was also the case for us at Fundación Civio, when we started to investigate (2014) the PB processes in Spain and Europe: despite the relevance of the demand of such a processes we intended to address, we were not able to find any replicable tool in the market. We aim to solve the problem through the development of a customisable tool, specifically designed for all stakeholders involved in a PB process, which will allow to submit, analyse, discuss, filter, visualize, campaign, communicate and receive feedback in a PB process.

Solution approach – what do you intend to achieve and where do you start?

One of the most important lessons learned during our interview work with stakeholders, and through the research of existing tools, is that our Openbudgets.eu tool/platform needs to be powerful, but easy to use, avoiding the development of a tool that only technical people would use.

We believe a more visual approach will clearly differentiate our solution from existing solutions and gives further value to the platform, as it combines the benefits and addresses the limitations from other tested platforms.

Functionally, we will define a Minimum Viable Product (MVP) based on the administrators' and users' input gathered in interviews and workshops. This MVP which will be tested for market and audience fit and will evolve from that point iteratively.

Openbudgets.eu PB solution will be a tool targeted at administrators and users without advanced technical skills and will be made available online (Software as a Service, SaaS). Hence avoiding the need for users to download or install any special software. Users will be able to upload their own data (submitting or voting proposals, comments, feedback, etc.) in order to generate discussions, voting processes, announcements, visualizations, etc) and will be able to interact with data in a more visual and simple way . All in all, the application must be intuitive and user cases should require as few steps as possible.

Target groups

Our identified targets can be divided in the following categories:

Two direct primary target groups:

- The primary targets are local, regional and national administrations: early-adopters (top-down or bottom-up) of new interactive tools that make the PB processes. This target is formed by regular users of a variety of open-source and interactive tools for the different stages of participation and administration processes.
- Civic organizations, activists and social movements conform a target group that increasingly employs on-line participatory tools to engage their communities and communicate with their audiences more efficiently. Along with traditional NGOs, activists and experts in different fields of social change would be part of this landscape.

One direct secondary target groups:

- Education communities, schools, universities. Our PB solution big goal is to make explaining PB processes realities in a much simpler way. This will be helpful to educators.

7. Conclusion

This report reviewed cases of PPAA platforms and management, experts, CSO's and users' platforms where response was available. As suggested in our introduction, this review of different platforms and opinions finds that there is not a single way to implement a PB process or a PB tool/platform among the stakeholders.

We have identified several different currents in various countries that we aim to sum up here:

Public Administrations

According to our interviews, **Openbudgets.eu** platform needs to be one unique platform for all paperwork (proposals, excels, voting, videos, etc.). It has to focus on transparency in the decision making, easiness of use and on educational materials to engage people independently of their views or thoughts. They insisted on having a visual interface, a timeline and a tour around platform's functionalities and a simple explanation of what a PB process is about. PB process "*are based on citizens' contributions (project, ideas, etc.) not in rebellion or complaint against the city council*"³⁶.

Openbudgets.eu platform could improve their experience in terms of filters, platform information and data visualization. "*We see no improvements regarding budget administration but in citizens' awareness of the need to participate in the decision making process and consciousness of the importance of their decisions*"³⁷. Voters will have to choose informed of the costs of each project. They will not be able to vote for proposals which exceed cities' budget designated for the entire city or a city-district. Most voted projects will need to comply with financial requirements to be implemented.

Specific requests have been:

- A strong emphasis on visualisations options
- The platform should give a push to participation
- Simple but effective verification and identification mechanisms
- Proposal campaign support features (video player, feedback receiver options for proposal submitters, etc.)

All these improvements will enhance the collective participative environment, citizens' confidence in politics, city council closeness, proactive transparency on expenses and citizens trust.

Experts and CSO's

On educational resources, our collaborators have expressed the need of clear information policies and the call for new **educational policies on participation** at a local, regional and national level. They have suggested some already successful approaches:

³⁶ Ángel Guirao, Communication and Citizen support, City Councillor, Torrelodones City Hall. Personal Interview, 20160215, Madrid.

³⁷ Miguel Arana Catania, Participation Project Director. Citizen participation, Transparency and Open Government Department. Madrid City Hall, personal interview 20160218, Madrid (Spain)

- Multi-channel proposals; local media (press, radio, TV), administrative channels, information events, off-line workshops, social-network tools
- Identification of the projects with the current problems of people living in the municipality.

All inputs insisted that the best education strategy is “*letting residents know that a process was happening at all*”³⁸, to attract their attention and learn while participating.

Specific approaches suggested were:

- The inclusion of an effective monitoring tool
- Fostering of a network of PB Ambassadors
- Tools to avoid overrepresentation of particular collectives, from an educational point of view, rising awareness about the importance of the participation inside a PB process. But, as one of our interviewees said, this is a very difficult issue. He *“explored this in depth in Rio Grande. The online platform reaches a different demographic, that’s good on the one hand as it broadens reach, bad on the other as online users are generally richer, more male etc. BUT intriguingly the voting-results were unexpected – the ‘richer, whiter, more male’ online voters voted similarly to the offline voters, and could even be argued to vote more progressively. I suspect this is because they are all politically-interested whereas the “turn up and vote” model of PB in Rio Grande means a lot of the offline voters actually weren’t very engaged. However this wouldn’t apply to a more traditional model where voting takes place during deliberative meetings – in general everyone at these meetings is highly engaged, but the numbers are small... Tricky!”*³⁹

End users

Just some of the improvements mentioned by **End Users** in our survey are listed below:

- A transparency tool for monitoring decision-making processes inside PB platforms.
- Previous years’ budget information available to compare with current budget.
- Information about authorities, departments and areas involved in each proposal and their responsibilities.
- More contextual information to budget visualisations.
- Information on variables involved in each proposal (population, environmental impact, use of resources, etc.)
- A stronger search engine and a filter of proposals by themes and top rated inputs (as stated by PPAA).
- Clear information of the timeline and method used to implement proposals.
- Structured follow-up and proposal monitoring and compliance audit.
- The possibility to ask the person in charge of carrying out a specific approved proposal.

³⁸ James McKinney, Popolo project, Open Corporates, Influence Mapping, Open North founder. Mailed interview 20160222.

³⁹ Taken from Matt Haikin (Expert, Freelance, World Bank, Aptivate). Mailed interview 20160217.

Moving forward

We need to evaluate every proposal and interview conducted to begin with the design of the platform, but it will be useful to read one more extract from one of our experts to be aware of the difficulty of this essential task:

"Personally I think the key benefit of PB is redistribution – i.e. it combats inequality by redirecting resources to be spent on things which benefit the poor and marginalised. However a lot of PB programs don't do this, and a lot of newer PB implementations don't even see this as a goal, they see PB purely as a citizen-interaction tool not a social justice/redistributive tool. Wampler's (2012 I think) 4 elements (Voice, Vote etc.) are good on this, and helpful for investigating whether a particular implementation of PB is actually seeking to improve outcomes or simply seeking to be a citizen communication channel ... I think the biggest challenge though is (a) ensuring all (analogue and digital) channels remain open – adding online is fine, replacing offline with online is dangerous, and (b) enabling informed deliberation online – the equivalent of a face to face meeting – is incredibly hard. Interesting challenge though!"⁴⁰

We also want to remark again, as stated above, that the existing PB processes are helping governments to increase their tax income and revenue, because citizens knowing the final destination of their taxes will show greater willingness to collaborate with local, regional and national governments, as stated in the paper⁴¹ published by Diether W. Beuermann and Maria Amelina at the IDB:

"This paper provides the first experimental evaluation of the participatory budgeting model showing that it increased public participation in the process of public decision making, increased local tax revenues collection, channelled larger fractions of public budgets to services stated as top priorities by citizens, and increased satisfaction levels with public services. These effects, however, were found only when the model was implemented in already-mature administratively and politically decentralized local governments. The findings highlight the importance of initial conditions with respect to the decentralization context for the success of participatory governance."⁴²

Depending on the input gathered after the launch and the implementation of the platform we will explore also the potential of our PB solution for other target users. For example, Private enterprises willing to make participatory processes as part of the transparency and accountability policies.

We will leverage from existing PB processes, platforms and experiences and continuously ask for feedback, as we did in this assessment. In the next few months we plan to continue

⁴⁰ Ibidem

⁴¹ <https://publications.iadb.org/bitstream/handle/11319/6699/Does-Participatory-Budgeting-Improve-Decentralized-Public-Service-Delivery.pdf?sequence=1>

⁴² Abstract, Beuermann, Diether Does participatory budgeting improve decentralized public service delivery? / Diether Beuermann, María Amelina. p. cm. — (IDB Working Paper Series; 547) Includes bibliographic references. 1. Local budgets—Citizen participation. 2. Public administration—Decision making. 3. Decentralization in government. I. Amelina, María. II. Inter-American Development Bank. Country Department Caribbean Group. III. Title. IV. Series. IDB-WP-547

working with the community of interviewees to evaluate the first MVP, beta test it and kick-start the launching of the Openbudgets.eu solution as a publicly available tool.

OpenBudgets PB tool/platform's model will be as a freemium Software as a Service (SaaS) application. Initial administrator, expert and user feedback suggest that we should probably include visualization capabilities, a strong filter capacity and most useful requests gathered in our feedback.

Despite being a SaaS application, Openbudgets.eu tool/platform will be open-source software, released under a free license (GNU Affero). This is in order to encourage reuse of either the whole platform or some of its components and to allow third-party developers and organisations to extend and improve the application. It has been proved in the past that open sourcing software doesn't have to damage the business model around it.

To conclude, according to the testimonies and experiences gathered in this report, we can state that the implementation of PB processes and platforms in different jurisdictions:

- Broadens citizens' trust in public governments and public administrations.
- Increases tax revenue - since citizens are really aware of how their money is spent -
- Fosters information, sharing meetings and spaces, contributing to a stronger engagement of civil society to current and future local development plans and challenges.

Having said all of that, although improvements resulting from the PB processes implementations are praiseworthy, it is true that most of them are dependent on government willingness to comply with decisions taken by local citizens inside PB processes. Only, if local governments commit to implement what has been decided by their citizenship, a step forward in transparency, accountability and citizens' engagement can be taken.

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