

# TARTU

## Building digital governance

Tartu is the second largest city in Estonia, with a population of 91,407. In Estonia, it has always been known as a smart city, where academia closely cooperates with the city government, as well as with other international governments, and where progress is based on the openness and readiness for change. Tartu city government has been paperless for more than 10 years, and continues to strengthen the city's eGovernance system.

Tartu has invested strongly in improving citizen participation, especially in the area of urban planning and participatory budgeting.

Starting in 2017, Tartu improved public engagement in relation to the **City's masterplan** by moving away from complicated text and maps towards something that people can understand and feel they have something to say about it.

### The following steps were implemented:

- official invitations to the public and announcements of the plan were launched, as well as an effective marketing campaign
- A special subpage for the whole process was created within the city's website
- A digital map containing all relevant information was developed, allowing different information layers to be switched on or off and enabling citizens to compose the map of what they are personally interested in, such as main roads, bicycle roads, schools, social infrastructure etc.
- all data connected to the localities are based on the same platform and constitute layers on the city map
- city staff have the capacity and knowledge required to manage and use the digital data citizens' suggestions and ideas are collected through a map of the city; citizens simply choose location on the map and pin their idea in a couple of words (each proposal receives feedback from the local administration)
- when necessary, subsequent communication with citizens and neighbourhood organisations were organised, as well as the final public debate.

Furthermore, the City of Tartu introduced its co-creation environment called **geoHUB** - an open digital space for open data, spatial data, mobility data and data from different registers. Anyone can be a co-creator in geoHUB by adding new data, creating their own digital map with different data layers, etc. The geoHUB also enables creation of surveys for citizens and distribution of information.

Tartu also encourages citizens engagement through **participatory budgeting** process which is managed through the information system Volis. Citizens propose investment ideas related to public space and vote for their preferred proposals.

### Advice and tips for cities starting their digital transition within city governance (by Raimond Tamm, Deputy Mayor of Tartu):

- Digital solutions can have a positive impact, both on internal efficiency and higher quality of public services
- Solutions should be easy to use - people need simple solutions and support, via helplines or training
- It is best not to use too many different platforms, environments and applications
- Information systems should be connected to each other to ensure smooth data exchange
- Time is needed for testing and citizens should be involved as test users
- New solutions normally bring early stage resistance - don't be afraid of it
- It is good to use / adapt existing solutions - any custom-made solution will be more expensive

## Contact

Raimond Tamm, Deputy Mayor, [evo@tartu.ee](mailto:evo@tartu.ee), [lmo@tartu.ee](mailto:lmo@tartu.ee)

## Weblinks for further information:

City of Tartu: <https://tartu.ee/en>

News related to Tartu's new comprehensive plan:  
<https://www.tartu.ee/en/uudised/tartus-new-comprehensive-plan-public-display>

City of Tartu geoHUB: <https://geohub.tartu.ee/>

News related to PB process: <https://tartu.ee/en/participative-budgeting>

