



## **PARIS PARTICIPATORY BUDGET: Good Practice Summary**

In late 2014, just a few months after her election, Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo set out to deliver on her ambition to turn the city into a more collaborative one, where residents play an active role in the ideas and decisions which shape its future. This has since been summarised by Pauline Véron, Deputy Mayor of Paris, in charge of local democracy, citizen participation, civil society, youth and employment who said “We know that it was no longer enough for us to merely inform or provide information. Parisians want to actually help projects evolve... We want to construct a stronger relationship with citizens”. The first major step was to introduce a participatory budgeting programme.

In 2014, over 40,000 people voted on 15 proposals put forward by the City Council. Nine projects were selected, ranging from vertical gardens to urban sports facilities to the renovation of outdoor ‘kiosks’ for music and arts in public spaces. In the second year, a new dedicated website was launched, the residents of Paris suggested over 5,000 ideas, of which 3,000 passed the initial basic criteria and more than 67,000 people voted. 188 projects were chosen.

In 2016 the City has improved its process and decided to reserve 30 Million Euros exclusively for the most deprived areas of the city. Another proportion (10 million Euros) was reserved for spending on youth and education projects, with schools being encouraged to participate and children's votes determining how that money is spent. Those children in turn may have educated and encouraged their families to take part.

All of which makes the results of the 2016 round of participatory budgeting in Paris a significant achievement. In October 2016, over 158,000 people voted in the latest round, a 39% increase on 2015, deciding how to spend 100 million Euros. This represents 219 projects, from an initial 3,158 proposals, 1,800 of them being feasible and whittled down to 624 which were then put forward for a public vote. Even after excluding the school votes in a special ballot to allocate €10 million reserved for projects in schools and colleges, almost 93,000 adults participated.

The process has four phases: during January and February project proposals can be made online, which are in turn supported by many neighbourhood workshops. Anyone can comment online on the proposals. From March to May there is a co-creation process to bring together, online and in person,

representatives of similar proposals to develop and refine proposals. Over the summer selected projects are then shared online for public review. These meet minimum criteria such as being for wide public benefit, technically feasible, and within budgetary scope. They are selected by an elected Committee, based in the relevant arrondissement or Paris-wide, depending on the project's geographic scope, made up of representatives of political parties, the City Administration, civil society, and citizens. Support is provided for projects to assist people in promoting and campaigning for their idea. In September citizens are then able to vote, either online or in person at designated locations with people trained to provide support. Successful proposals are included in the December budget and work begins the following year.

Once projects have been approved, there are multiple ways for people to follow their progress - from updates on the online platform, to infographics created by the team, to online maps showing how particular areas will be changed by the choices made. Paris Participatory Budgeting process is also delivering tangible outcomes: more than a quarter of 416 winning projects have been delivered such as new public gardens, coworking spaces, renovated schools, pedestrian areas, sport facilities, etc... Yet, Participatory budget is also a support for public innovation: the project named "shelters for homeless" has received 21,000 votes in 2016, which is the highest number of votes among projects. It is a call for the City to find innovative ways to fight poverty and welcome migrants.

This practice has brought new ways of working inside the city's offices. These are based on more cooperation and new kind of relationship between civil servants and citizens. These first three attempts taught the team behind the process some important lessons. And over the last year the Paris team has responded to all of these issues - increasing the size of the team working on citizen engagement, strengthening relations with civil society and continuing to invest in offline and online promotion of the programme.

Many priorities are defined for the coming years and the City is developing a long term strategy to meet them: main objectives are deprived communities' empowerment, ideas generation processes which would allow citizens to submit more and more innovative proposals, public involvement into winning projects' implementation. The commitment to continuing growing the programme through to 2020 also reinforces the importance which the City places on it.

It appears many European cities are aiming at implementing a Participatory Budgeting process. We understand that sharing our good practice and learnings should inspire and help amend our Participatory Budget to suit other cities context, according to their size, their existing public participation policies, and their ability to embrace digital tools or their human, technical and financial means. It seems we can identify different topics such as those mentioned above and reflect on them to define different options than can be implemented according to the urban context in order to contribute to sustainable urban living through and highly an integrated and participative approach.