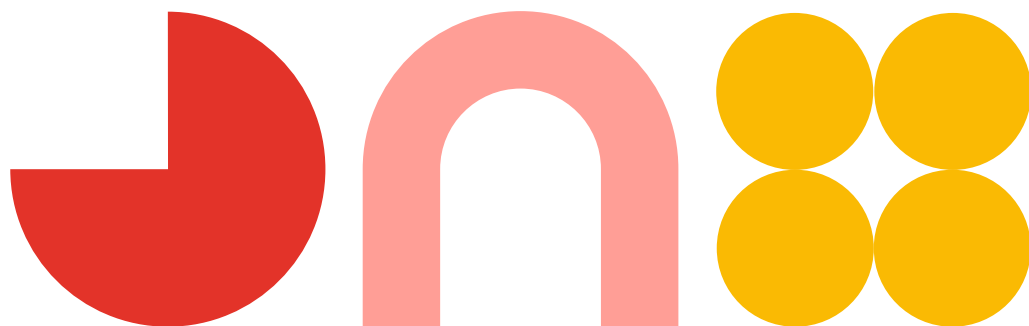


Local democracy & collective intelligence

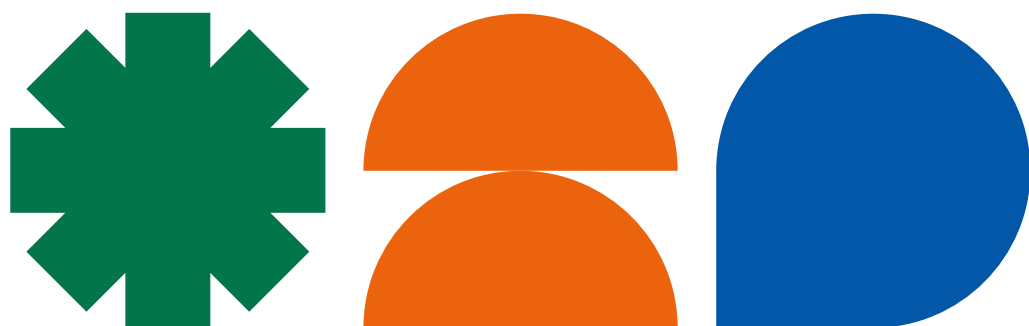
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experiment
evaluate
transform

9:00–18:00

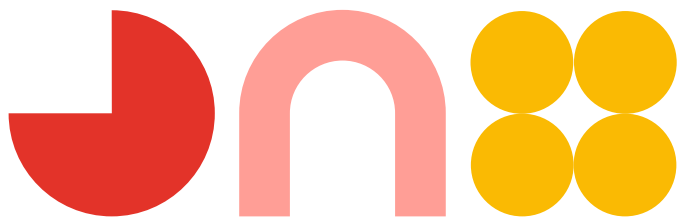
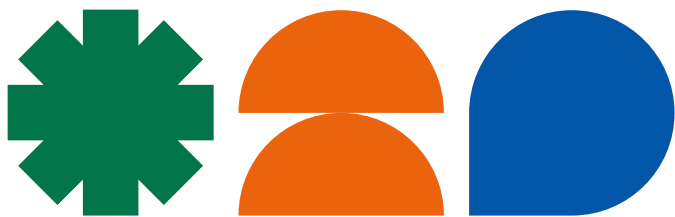


CCRD opderschmelz



City of Dudelange





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Programme

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Concept note

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Panelists &
keynote speaker

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Handbook

Welcoming
participants

9:00

10:00

Opening Session

Dan Biancalana • Mayor, City of Dudelange
Dr. Raphaël Kies • University of Luxembourg
Loris Spina • 1st Alderman, City of Dudelange

Coffee
Break

10:30

11:00

Round Table I & Exchange with audience

“Luxembourgish Municipalities and the Challenges
of Participatory Experimentation”

Bruno Cavaleiro • Alderman, City of Esch-sur-Alzette
Jeff Gangler • Mayor, Municipality of Boulaide
Tom Jungen • Mayor, Municipality of Roeser
Lou Linster • Mayor, Municipality of Leudelange
Bob Steichen • Mayor, City of Ettelbrück

Lunch
Break

12:30



Keynote speech & Exchange with audience

Camille Dobler • Missions Publiques (France)



Round Table II & Exchange with audience



**“Collective Intelligence at the Crossroads:
Comparative Views from Luxembourg, France,
Belgium and Germany”**

Caroline De Vos • Coordinator for Citizen Participation City of Mons

Sophie De Vos • Mayor, Municipality of Auderghem

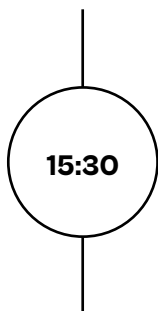
Pierrick Grall • Chief of Staff to the Mayor, City of Thionville

Michael Sohn • Adviser for the Environment, Mobility and European Cooperation,
City of Trier

Laurent Watrin • Deputy Delegate for Cooperative Democracy, City of Nancy

Loris Spina • 1st Alderman, City of Dudelange

5



**Coffee
Break**



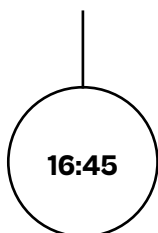
Closing Session

Dr. Jens Kiesel • Rector, University of Luxembourg

Max Hahn • Minister for Family, Solidarity, Living Together and
Reception of Refugees

Léon Gloden • Minister for Home Affairs

Dan Biancalana • Mayor, City of Dudelange



Reception

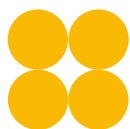
Local democracy & collective intelligence: experiment, evaluate transform

Context



At a time when representative democracies are undergoing a diffuse yet profound legitimacy crisis, municipalities appear as bastions of proximity politics still capable of generating meaning for citizens. More than mere service counters, they are vibrant spaces of mediation between institutions and everyday lives. It is on this terrain—of the everyday, of the commons, of social bonds—that the foundations of a new social contract can be rebuilt.

It is in this spirit that the City of Dudelange committed, as early as 2004, with the adoption of a **Local Participation Charter**, to a democratic transformation process. In 2020, this dynamic was structurally extended through the **signing of an action-research agreement with the University of Luxembourg**. This innovative partnership enabled the anchoring of institutional experimentation in academic reflexivity, turning the municipality into a real laboratory for local democracy and democratic innovation.



The conference on 14 November 2025 marks the conclusion of this action-research cycle. It aims to highlight and debate the learnings from these five years, to **share their key insights**, and above all, to sketch out possible futures for a local democracy grounded in **collective intelligence**.

Guiding question

How can municipalities become the locus of a renewed democracy built on co-construction, deliberation, and the collective capacity to shape society?



This central question runs throughout the entire day and structures the debates around several key issues:

What are the actual contributions of participatory tools in shaping local public policy?

7



What are the necessary conditions for a sustainable institutionalization of participation within municipal governance?

How can we navigate the tensions between administrative efficiency, democratic legitimacy, and social inclusion?



How far can local administrations go in becoming learning, reflexive, and transformative institutions?

Dudelange as a testing case in Luxembourg

Three major participatory mechanisms were implemented under the action-research agreement:

The Citizens' Council

The Citizens' Council, a small body of **randomly selected citizens** tasked with providing informed opinions on specific issues, in a setting of co-presence with elected officials and municipal staff;



The Citizens' Panel

The Citizens' Panel, a flexible digital **consultation tool**, quickly deployable via online surveys to gather broad and regular insights from residents;



8

The Participatory Budget

The Participatory Budget, a democratic mechanism for the partial allocation of the investment budget, driven by citizens' direct expression of needs.



Kannergemengerot & Jugendgemengerot

In addition, two educational participatory bodies – the children's council and the youth council – were established to cultivate deliberative and engagement skills from a young age.



Theoretical and practical challenges

The conference also aims to be a moment of fruitful tension, where contradictions are explored rather than smoothed over:

Between **political time**,
driven by urgency, and
administrative time,
driven by procedure;

Between **institutional
expertise** and
situated, **legitimate
lay knowledge**;

Between **electoral
legitimacy** (from
the ballot box) and
deliberative legitimacy
(from argumentation);

Between the desire for
democratic inclusion
and the need for
operational efficiency.

**The future of local democracy
lies at the intersection of these
tensions — not as a model to
replicate, but as a praxis
to be redefined.**



Objectives

This closing event pursues four main goals:

1.

To highlight the methodological and political insights from the action-research initiative;

2.

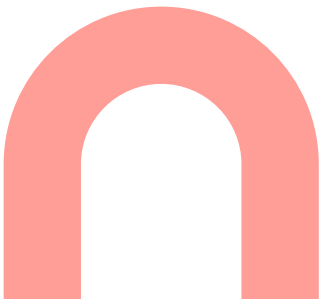
To foster dialogue between administrations, academia, civil society, and residents;

3.

To encourage the transfer of experiences and competencies between local authorities;

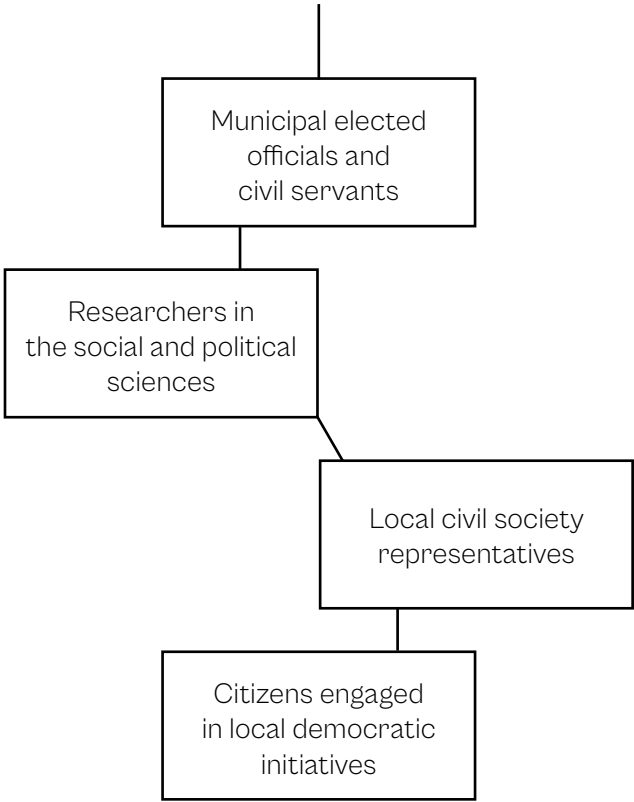
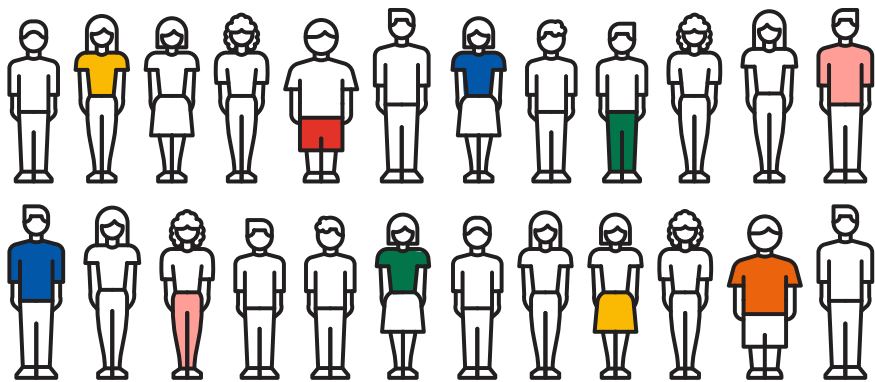
4.

To spark democratic imagination through concrete examples, open dialogue, and shared stories of experimentation.



Target audience

The conference is intended for:



A democratic culture to reinvent

Dudelage does neither offer a model, nor a doctrine. It opens a path: a vision of democracy as a living culture in motion, where institutions expose themselves, listen, and transform. This demanding path—marked by trial and error, mediation, and mutual learning—calls for the renewal of both attitudes and procedures.

The 14 November 2025 conference is thus an invitation to think differently. Not to conclude, but to open; not to standardize, but to inspire.



**In a world
where
democratic
certainties are
faltering, there
is an urgent
need to breathe
life, shape, and
meaning back
into the act of
participation.**

Biographies**BRUNO CAVALEIRO**

Alderman,
City of Esch-sur-Alzette (L)

Bruno Cavaleiro is responsible for social affairs, youth, civil registry, international relations, religious affairs, and citizen participation. Deeply engaged in local development, he promotes inclusive social policies, intergenerational cohesion, and the involvement of young people in democratic life. Convinced of the importance of international openness, he actively develops Esch-sur-Alzette's twinnings and participates in various European networks, particularly those focused on cross-border cooperation and intercultural exchanges.

11:00

Panel I

13

JEFF GANGLER

Mayor,
Municipality of Boulaide (L)

Mayor since 2021, re-elected in 2023, Jeff Gangler also chairs the Haute-Sûre Nature Park. He places sustainable development and citizen participation at the heart of his action, notably through the "Gedankekescht – Iddienatelier Bauschelt" workshop, aimed at rethinking the village centre together with its residents.

TOM JUNGEN

Mayor,
Municipality of Roeser (L)

Mayor since 2008, after serving as alderman from 2001 to 2007, Tom Jungen has sat on the Committee of the Regions of the European Union and currently holds the vice-presidency of the European network PES Local. Holding a degree in electromechanics, he has also pursued a parallel career as a trade unionist, serving as Central Secretary of the OGBL. Within the LSAP, he was Secretary General from 2019 to 2024.

LOU LINSTER

Mayor,
Municipality of Leudelange (L)

Mayor since July 2023, Lou Linster also sits on the European Committee of the Regions. A mechanical engineer, he graduated from TU Munich and the University of Sussex and has worked for an engineering firm specialising in building technologies. Active in local politics since 2017, he led the "Zesumme fir Leideleng" list during the 2023 municipal elections.

BOB STEICHEN

Bourgmestre,
Mayor, City of Ettelbrück (L)

Mayor of the City of Ettelbruck since 2023, Bob Steichen holds a master's degree in geography from the University of Nancy. From 2010 to 2021, he coordinated the European LEADER Éislek programmes for rural development and territorial innovation in northern Luxembourg. In 2021, he joined the Ministry of Agriculture, where he contributes to the formulation of public policies on sustainable planning and rural revitalisation. His mandate focuses on housing, education, citizen participation, regional cooperation, and public safety.

CAMILLE DOBLER

Director of Research
at Missions Publiques (F)

Missions Publiques, a purpose-driven company based in Paris, Brussels and Bonn, Camille Dobler specialises in the design and implementation of deliberative processes and citizen participation.

She coordinates the Horizon Europe project Scale-Dem, which aims to develop a theory and tools for scaling up democratic innovations. This comprehensive process unfolds across four complementary dimensions: acculturation (changing practices and narratives), institutionalisation (integration into public structures), multiplication (diffusion and adaptation of models) and "empowerment" (strengthening actors' skills and capacities for action). This guiding thread shapes both her scientific coordination and her methodological developments.

As a practitioner, she has designed and facilitated the European Citizens' Panels of the Conference on the Future of Europe as well as their "new generation" versions for the European Commission. Since 2021, she has worked closely with EU institutions towards the institutionalisation of deliberative mini-publics at continental level.

As a researcher – formerly a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow – she devoted her academic work to the study of political identity reconfigurations in cross-border regions and the role of citizen participation in these dynamics.

She is also a member of the Knowledge Network on Climate Assemblies (KNOCA), the Ashoka Europe Changemaker programme, and the Democracy R&D network.



Keynote speech

In addition, she works as a trainer for the Council of Europe and the Joint Research Centre's Competence Centre on Participatory and Deliberative Democracy, training national, regional, and local officials in the design, facilitation and evaluation of participatory approaches.

CAROLINE DE VOS

Coordinator for Citizen Participation,
City of Mons (B)

Coordinator of the Citizen Participation Unit of the City of Mons since 2022, Caroline De Vos previously worked for nearly twenty years as an interior architect. Holding an inter-university certificate in citizen participation, she leads cross-sectoral projects involving residents and municipal services to integrate the citizen voice into urban, cultural and social initiatives.

SOPHIE DE VOS

Mayor,
Municipality of Auderghem (B)

Mayor of Auderghem since 2022, Sophie De Vos is a business engineer by training, specialising in economics, finance and management. She is particularly committed to citizen participation as well as the promotion of local culture and heritage.

MICHAEL SOHN

Adviser for the Environment, Mobility
and European Cooperation,
City of Trier (D)

Adviser for environment and mobility at the City of Trier, Michael Sohn coordinates strategic projects to strengthen urban sustainability and the energy transition. He recently led the development of the city's heating plan – the first of its kind in Germany's oldest city – based on extensive information and participation of citizens.

14:30

Panel II

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PIERRICK GRALL

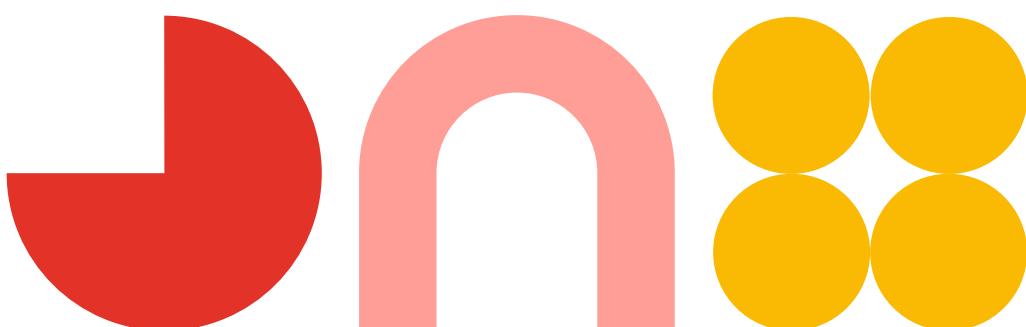
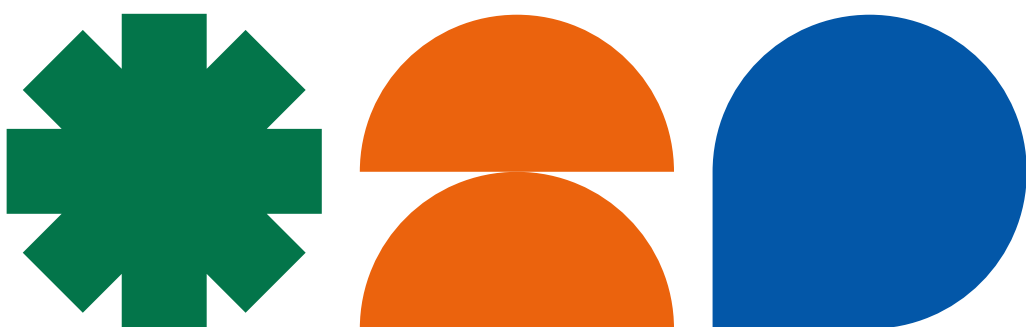
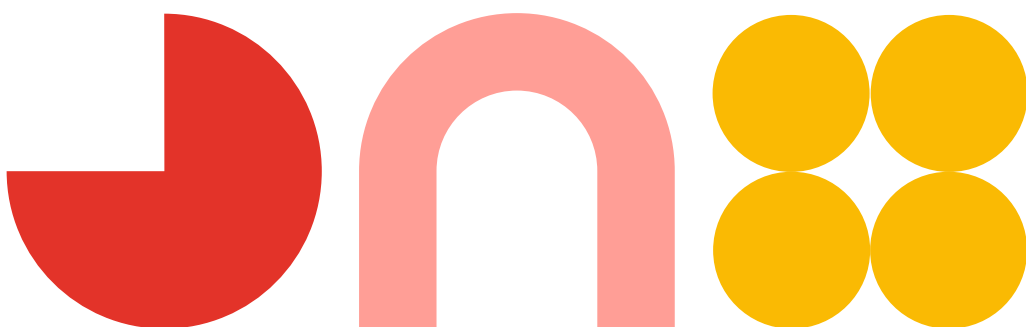
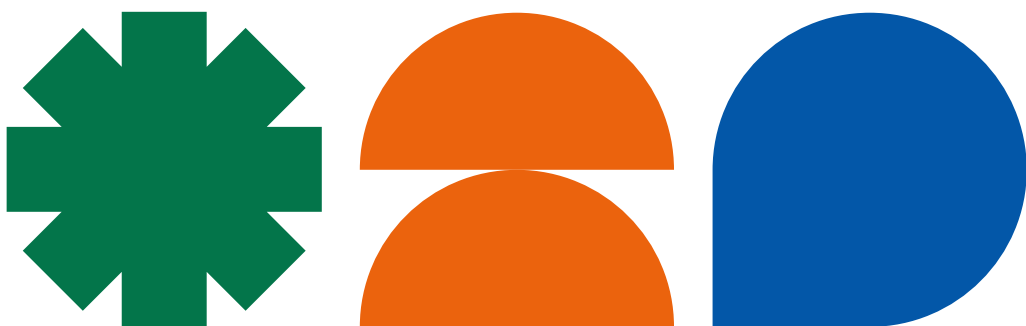
Chief of Staff to the Mayor,
City of Thionville (F)

Chief of Staff to the Mayor of Thionville since 2014, Pierrick Grall assists the Mayor and elected officials in defining, implementing and communicating the municipal project. He ensures the link between the city, administrative authorities, socio-economic actors and residents, contributing to the strategic coherence of local government action.

LAURENT WATRIN

Deputy Delegate for Cooperative
Democracy, City of Nancy (F)

A lawyer and honorary journalist of the French public audiovisual service, Laurent Watrin is a consultant and sophrologist. Founder of the Citizens' Cafés in Lorraine (2007-2018), he currently chairs the "Europe and Citizen Participation" commission of the AFCCRE and is a member of the association "Les Interconnectés", dedicated to digital transformation issues.

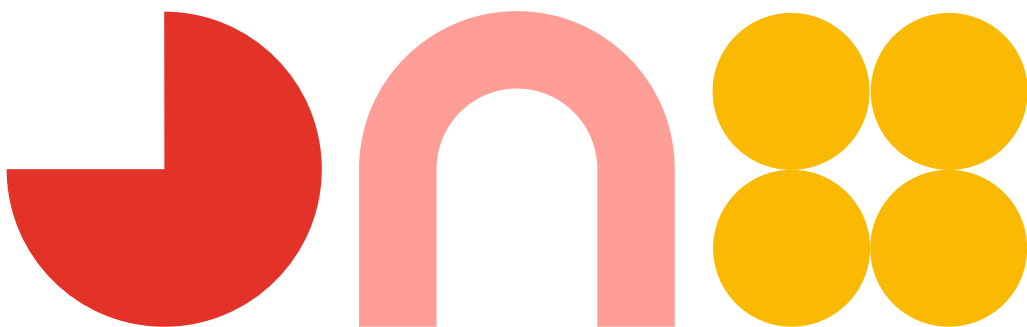
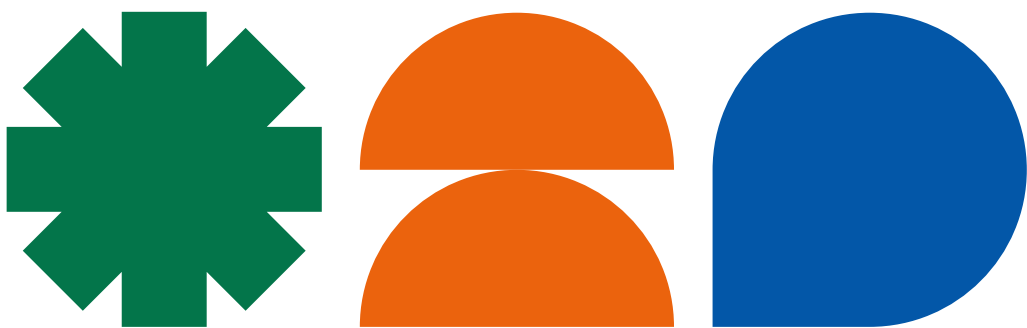


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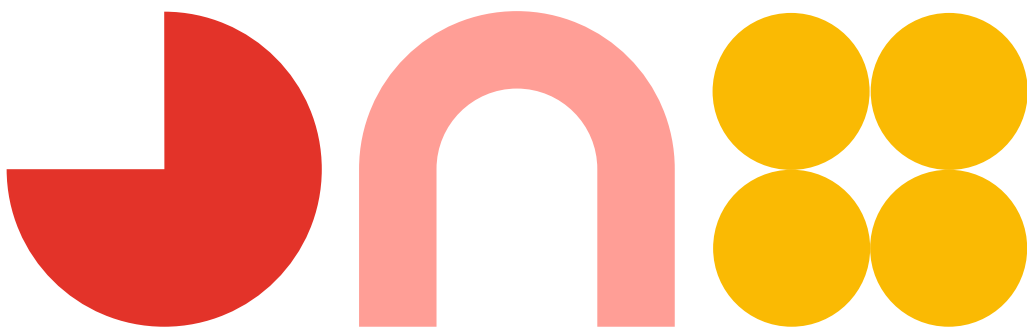
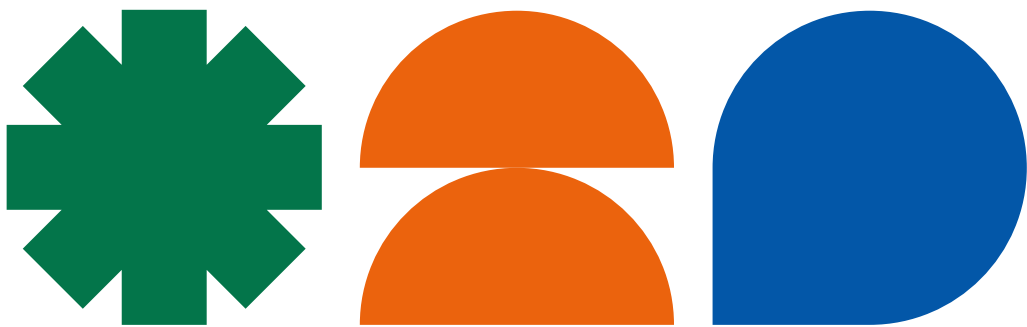
A Handbook for the Implementation of Participatory Democracy at the Local Level

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A practical handbook: why and how to set up citizen participation?

The proliferation of participatory initiatives is today one of the most significant developments in public governance (OECD 2020; Paulis et al. 2021). The local level plays a central role: it is often regarded as both an incubator and a laboratory for democratic experimentation (Falanga 2024), particularly through the implementation of what are sometimes rightly – or wrongly – described as democratic innovations (Elstub & Escobar 2019).

This term encompasses a variety of arrangements designed to redefine the role of citizens in governance by multiplying opportunities for participation, deliberation, and influence. The aim is to deepen democracy beyond its traditional representative structures by involving citizens more directly and substantively in public decision-making. Among the most common forms are citizens' assemblies, citizens' workshops, and participatory budgets.

However, the relevance of these approaches cannot be assessed solely on the basis of their design quality or the sincerity of the intentions behind them. Their value also depends on their ability to produce tangible outcomes and to integrate coherently within existing institutional frameworks.

At the local level, this challenge is particularly pronounced. The direct link with residents highlights both the potential of these instruments and the difficulties they entail. For elected officials and municipal staff, engaging in such initiatives raises numerous questions:

- **Which approach should be adopted?**
- **How can inclusiveness and transparency be ensured?**
- **How can frustration among participants be avoided?**

This handbook seeks to provide practical answers to these questions. It offers clear, cross-cutting guidelines and concrete tools to support municipalities in the design, facilitation, and evaluation of participatory processes.

It is structured in three parts:

1. Strategy

Determining why and when to involve citizens in local decision-making;

2. Method

selecting appropriate methods or instruments, defining recruitment procedures, and establishing mandates and governance structures;

3. Follow-up

Reporting results, providing feedback to citizens, and ensuring the valorization and evaluation of the process.

This handbook is the result of a collaboration between the University of Luxembourg and the City of Dudelange. It combines two ambitions: on the one hand, to draw on insights from academic research to inform participatory practice; and on the other, to ground these practices in the concrete realities of a Luxembourgish municipal administration.

Although inspired by the experience of the City of Dudelange, its content is designed to be widely transferable. The principles, methods, and tools presented here may be useful to any municipality, city, or community—regardless of size or institutional context—in Luxembourg and beyond. Rather than reinventing the wheel, this handbook builds upon and synthesizes a range of excellent existing resources produced by various institutions (see bibliography).



**What is meant by
citizen participation
in this handbook?**

In this handbook, citizen participation refers to the opportunities offered to citizens to contribute to collective decision-making beyond the electoral framework. Various participatory instruments enable ordinary citizens to engage in shaping public decisions outside of elections, allowing them to express their views, propose actions, or weigh in on societal choices.

Implementing one or more participatory instruments cannot be left to improvisation. Organizing spaces for dialogue in

which citizens collectively define priorities requires careful preparation and a rigorous methodology. The more structured and transparent the process, the greater the likelihood that its outcomes will inform public action and strengthen the legitimacy of decisions.

Researchers generally distinguish four broad categories of participatory instruments (Elstub & Escobar 2019):

1. Deliberative instruments

(e.g., citizens' assemblies, citizens' workshops, panels, or deliberative forums) bring together a small group of citizens selected by sortition to reflect the diversity of the population. Participants deliberate in an informed manner on a specific public policy issue and formulate recommendations for decision-makers.

2. Participatory instruments

(e.g., participatory budgets, participatory planning, co-creation processes) offer citizens direct and ongoing involvement in policy development or resource management.

3. Direct democracy instruments

(e.g., referendums, citizens' initiatives) grant citizens the power to decide directly on specific issues.

4. Digital instruments

(e.g., e-consultations, online participation platforms) facilitate engagement through digital means, helping to broaden and simplify participation.



Why must citizens be involved?

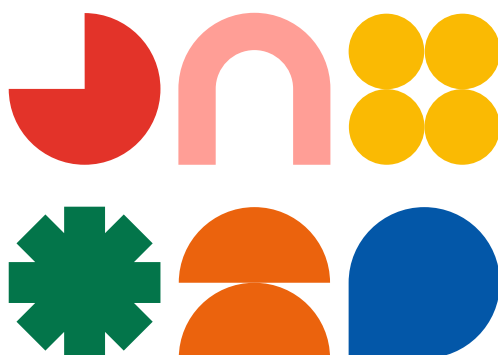
For citizens, participation entails making their experiences known, sharing concerns, engaging in dialogue, and ultimately contributing to a collective understanding of local priorities. All residents are affected by local policies – whether related to education, mobility, housing, culture, the environment, or health. Even without technical expertise, citizens can express what they consider to be fair, desirable, or necessary.

To support meaningful dialogue, it is essential to provide participants with information that is accessible, balanced, and, whenever possible, presents diverse and even contrasting perspectives. On this basis, citizens are better equipped to propose innovative ideas and recommend concrete improvements.

For decision-makers, involving citizens enhances the relevance, effectiveness, and legitimacy of public policies.

It contributes to:

- collectively debating the objectives and rationale of a public policy;
- identifying and addressing dysfunctions perceived by the population;
- illustrating the complexity of collective choices and fostering a shared approach to governance.



The legitimacy of participatory approaches at the local level in Luxembourg





Preamble

Local citizen participation has gradually established itself as an essential component of contemporary public governance. It strengthens proximity between institutions and residents, enriches decisions through user expertise, and enhances democratic trust. However, the legitimacy of these approaches cannot be taken for granted: it must be understood in all its complexity, at the intersection of political, social, and legal dimensions.

The City of Dudelange considers it necessary to clarify the contours of this legitimacy to prevent misunderstandings and to avoid participatory mechanisms being perceived as mere window dressing or as practices incompatible with the constitutional framework.



The Luxembourg constitutional framework

The Luxembourg Constitution precisely defines the organization and powers of municipalities:

- It recognizes municipalities' local autonomy based on legal personality and the management of their interests through their own governing bodies (Art. 121).

- It entrusts **decision-making power** to the municipal council, elected by direct universal suffrage, and daily administration to the college of mayor and aldermen, composed of members of the council (Art. 122).
- It grants the municipal council **regulatory authority** regarding the adoption of municipal regulations, except in emergencies (Art. 124).

In its opinion of 1 July 2025 regarding Bill No. 8218, the Council of State strongly reaffirmed that transferring binding decision-making power to a municipal referendum would upset this balance.

Such a mechanism would indeed substitute citizens directly for the municipal council, which is not compatible with the current Constitution. The Council of State concluded that this change could only be considered through a constitutional revision.

Thus, under the current legal framework, municipal citizen participation retains a consultative value. It can illuminate, enrich, and influence decisions, but it cannot replace elected bodies in exercising their authority.



Three dimensions of legitimacy

Political Dimension

Municipal councils and the college of aldermen derive their legitimacy from direct universal suffrage. Citizen participation must be understood as a complement to this legitimacy, not as a competitor. It enriches the electoral mandate by introducing new perspectives, while ultimate responsibility remains with the elected bodies.

Social Dimension

The social legitimacy of a participatory process lies in residents' perception of its usefulness, inclusiveness, and transparency. The more diverse, consequential, and well-communicated a process is, the more it strengthens trust in local institutions. Conversely, purely symbolic exercises or processes lacking follow-up undermine legitimacy and risk reinforcing distrust.

Legal Dimension

Luxembourg law clearly delineates the powers of municipalities. Any participatory process must therefore remain within the legal perimeter: consultation, co-construction, panels, participatory budgets, advisory councils, and similar mechanisms. These instruments cannot create a legal obligation compelling the municipal council to adopt a particular decision. Their legitimacy is political and social, rather than normative.



The scope of action for local authorities

Within these boundaries, municipalities retain a broad and dynamic space for action. They can, for instance:

- organize **participatory budgets** enabling residents to propose and vote on projects consistent with municipal competences and financial capacities;
- establish **advisory councils** (on youth, integration, community life, culture, etc.) that contribute to local debate;
- convene **workshops, panels, or citizens' assemblies** to explore collective solutions to specific issues;
- conduct **public consultations**, both online and in person;
- systematically publish **reports and evaluations** detailing how citizens' contributions have been taken into account.

These mechanisms create dynamics of co-responsibility and improve the quality of decisions, while remaining fully compatible with the existing legal framework.

The City of Dudelange emphasizes that it is precisely within this space—where political enrichment, social recognition, and legal framing intersect—that citizen participation finds its full meaning. Far from undermining institutions, it can serve as a lever for enhancing the legitimacy of municipal decision-making.

**Part 1: Strategic orientation
of citizen participation**

**1. Ensuring
the relevance
of citizen
involvement**



Before getting started: two essential steps.

1.1. Specify the objectives

Before opening the door to citizen participation, it is essential to clearly define why participation is being sought and how the results will be used.

Key questions include:

- What is the primary objective?
To collect ideas, test a project, or find a compromise?
- How will citizens' contributions be used? In what form will they influence decisions or policies?
- Can the organizer clearly and transparently explain to residents why they are being consulted and how their input will matter?
- Is there genuine room for maneuver to integrate citizens' proposals?

Without clear answers to these questions, participation risks generating frustration rather than trust.

Application to Participatory Budgeting

In the case of a participatory budget, it is crucial to define objectives from the outset. Do we aim to stimulate citizens' creativity, fund local projects, strengthen transparency in municipal action, or foster a culture of shared responsibility? Citizens should also know what will happen to their proposals: eligibility review, feasibility assessment, public voting, and – where applicable – implementation by the municipality.

1.2. Verify the Relevance of Citizen Involvement

Once objectives are clarified, it is equally important to assess whether the topic genuinely warrants citizen participation. Not every issue lends itself to such an approach: some matters are too technical or operational to sustain interest or allow meaningful participation.

However, citizens are generally willing to participate when:

- the topic is new to local politics and involves forward-looking choices;
- the subject is contentious and sparks debate among residents or experts;
- the decision has a direct and visible impact on daily life.

In such cases, citizen participation can provide real added value by:

- capturing residents' aspirations and needs to inform policy design;
- identifying perceived problems and suggesting practical improvements;
- testing hypotheses, confronting scenarios, or exploring alternatives;
- assessing with citizens the tangible effects of public action and reflecting collectively on possible adjustments.

Defining the right questions

The quality of citizen participation depends largely on the questions asked. Poorly formulated questions can misdirect the discussion and steer citizens in the wrong direction.

Pay attention to the wording

A question that is too vague leads to superficial answers, while one that is too narrow stifles debate and limits creativity. Every participant should be able to understand clearly what is being asked and why. A good question is comprehensible, precise, and directly linked to a concrete municipal concern.

Structure the question(s)

It is often advisable to begin with a broad, neutral umbrella question and then break it down into more specific and operational sub-questions. The object of consultation should reflect the context and the existing knowledge on the issue.

Useful checks include:

- Has the topic already been addressed through previous participatory initiatives?
- Are there strong disagreements (technical, scientific, or political) surrounding the issue?
- Are there studies or expert reports that should be shared with participants?
- Does the topic cover multiple issues? If so, which are most relevant?

Fictional example

Umbrella question:

- How can we improve mobility in our municipality?

Sub-questions:

- How can peak-hour congestion be reduced?
- Which alternative modes of transport should be prioritized?
- How can peripheral neighborhoods be better connected to the city center?

**Application to
Participatory Budgeting**

It is important to clarify whether citizens are expected to submit general ideas—to be later translated by the municipality into concrete projects—or detailed proposals including a description, location, cost estimate, and target audience.

Finding the right balance is essential: too many constraints discourage participation, while too little guidance results in proposals that are difficult to assess. A clear and well-communicated framework at the launch of the process helps generate ideas that are both accessible to citizens and specific enough for realistic evaluation.

**Part 1: Strategic orientation
of citizen participation**

**2. Ensuring
the quality
of citizen
participation**



Setting up a citizen participation process represents a clear commitment to residents. It must therefore comply with strict principles of transparency and ethical and methodological integrity. Without these guarantees, trust can erode rapidly, and citizens may disengage.

To ensure quality and credibility, it is essential to:

- **Ensure participant diversity:** include citizens of different opinions, social backgrounds, generations, and sensitivities, regardless of the participation method used.
- **Make information and communication accessible:** favor clear and varied formats—infographics, summary sheets, short videos—rather than lengthy technical documents.
- **Guarantee neutrality and objectivity:** participation and its results must never serve particular interests or be influenced by organizers or political decision-makers.

2.1. The role of an independent oversight committee

To reinforce credibility, many municipalities rely on an independent oversight committee that supervises the process from beginning to end. This committee may include representatives from the administration, elected officials from across the political spectrum, local actors from associative, cultural or economic sectors, citizen guarantors, and scientific experts.

Its main missions

- Ensure that the process remains inclusive, transparent, and in line with the announced rules;
- ensure the plurality of expertise and viewpoints mobilized;
- check that the results are faithfully reported and that follow-up commitments are effectively implemented.

Example: Dudelange

In Dudelange, this approach is embodied in a dual complementary structure:

A. **Le comité de suivi**, composé du / de la membre du collège échevinal en charge du dossier et de représentant-es de l'administration communale, assure le pilotage opérationnel. Il veille au respect du calendrier, des critères de recevabilité et de la cohérence budgétaire. Il joue ainsi un rôle de garant interne, garantissant que la démarche s'inscrit dans les capacités réelles de l'administration.

B. **The Monitoring Committee**, composed of the alderman in charge of the initiative and representatives of the municipal administration, ensures operational steering. It oversees the schedule, eligibility criteria, and budget coherence, acting as an internal guarantor of the process.

Citizen participation only makes sense if participants know what will happen to their contributions. Participation must therefore be conceived beyond the moment of exchange: transparency about follow-up is as important as the quality of the debate itself.

COMMENT FROM THE CITY OF DUDELANGE



Whether it is a citizens' council, a workshop, or a participatory budget, the monitoring committee is an ideal instrument for bringing together all relevant administrative and technical actors around the same table. This shared resource pool ensures coherent communication and consistent follow-up, regardless of the administration's size. Such coordination not only strengthens awareness of participatory processes within municipal departments but also enhances transparency for citizens, who can directly perceive its benefits in terms of clarity and reliability.

3. Clarifying the commitments asso- ciated with citizen participation



3.1. Anticipation

From the outset, it is essential to anticipate and define:

- the scope of the debate and the limits of what can be discussed (or not)
- the feedback process to participants how, when, and in what form citizens will be informed of the outcomes;

The mechanisms for accountability, ensuring that organizers publicly respond to the ideas expressed, whether they are adopted or not, and explain their choices transparently.

3.2. Best practices



- Involve citizens early in the process, so that their proposals can genuinely influence decisions and actions.
- Share results from parallel consultations or expert analyses, and show how these have been taken into account.
- Publish key information throughout the process: recruitment and working methods, participant profiles, invited speakers, and the results produced.
- Provide regular follow-up after the process, informing both participants and the broader public about progress made and the concrete impacts of the participation.

In short, the value of participation lies as much in the after as in the during. Clarity and transparency regarding follow-up transform citizen dialogue into a genuine lever of trust and democratic legitimacy.

Plan the follow-up from the onset

The credibility of a participatory process depends on the visibility and clarity of commitments. From the very beginning, citizens must understand what their involvement will lead to: Will it feed into an action plan? Help to set priorities? Contribute to a public report or synthesis for decision-makers?

Publishing these commitments in advance—on the municipality's website, a dedicated platform, or at the launch meeting—strengthens participant trust and creates a secure and constructive working environment, by clearly defining the objectives and expected follow-up.

The credibility and effectiveness of citizen participation depend largely on clear governance: defining who is responsible at each stage and ensuring that commitments are respected.

4. Structuring the governance of citizen participation



4.1. Role of the sponsor

The sponsor remains the keystone of the process, with multiple responsibilities:

- **Establish strategy:** clarify the purpose, objectives, commitments, and anticipated follow-up.
- **Set methodological choices:** select appropriate methods, identify participants and experts, and define the schedule.
- **Operational steering:** manage logistics, coordinate recruitment, and oversee the implementation of the process.

Administrative reality and culture

When designing governance, it is essential to consider administrative realities and culture:

- Does the administration already use participatory instruments and integrate results into decision-making?
- Does it have sufficient time and resources to embed participation into existing practices?

Inviting citizens to participate requires opening dialogue spaces between political, administrative, and citizen spheres, which may necessitate adapting usual workflows.

4.2. External providers vs. internal capacity

Organising citizen participation requires time, tools and sometimes specialised skills: facilitation, moderation, facilitation, communication, translation, recruitment, digital platform management, etc.

Depending on the resources available, a municipality may choose to use an external service provider. In this case, it is essential to select trusted partners who are capable of building a lasting relationship.

Outsourcing certain tasks does not mean delegating governance. The organiser must retain control of the project, its scope and the use of the results.

Another strategy is to develop dedicated skills or functions internally, strengthening the municipality's capacity to conduct its own initiatives independently.

This approach promotes consistency and continuity in citizen participation over time.

COMMENT FROM THE
CITY OF DUDELANGE



Developing internal capacity is a promising avenue for municipalities and has been particularly effective in Dudelange. Municipal employees, with appropriate training, can carry out facilitation or moderation tasks. Certain professionals, such as educators, often already have solid experience in group management and participatory dynamics. To maintain neutrality, the person overseeing the process should not be the same as those moderating the debate. This clear distinction reinforces the neutrality of the moderator and allows the organizer to focus mainly on framing and managing the process.

The essential role of the sponsor

Even when external providers are involved, the sponsor/commissioner retains ultimate responsibility:

- guiding collaboration with the provider;
- ensuring methods align with the project's objectives and spirit;
- allocating time for follow-up and feedback.

The legitimacy and final impact of the process depend on the active engagement of the sponsor.

The success of citizens' participation rests much on the clarity of the roles and responsibilities as on the quality of the debate. A well-structured steering committee, a committed organizer, and transparent processes ensure that citizen participation remains credible, inclusive, and useful.

Even when external providers are used, the organizer retains project control and responsibility. Robust governance structures transform citizen participation into a genuine democratic process, in which citizens' voices are heard, valued, and integrated into collective decisions.

**5. Choosing
the method:
select one or more
participatory
instruments**



A wide variety of methods exist to involve citizens. The choice of instrument depends primarily on the objectives and the type of decision or public policy concerned.

When a topic requires in-depth deliberation—for example, defining new orientations, reforming, improving, or evaluating public policy—deliberative instruments are particularly appropriate. They allow citizens to collectively produce reasoned proposals and can be used either prospectively or to inform public decisions.

When the goal is to co-construct decisions directly with citizens—such as decisions regarding public space or local infrastructure—participatory budgets may be more suitable.

If the aim is to gauge public opinion or to address a divisive political issue, online consultations or referendums may be relevant.

In some cases, combining instruments can leverage complementary participatory logics and maximize both depth and reach.

5.1. Deliberative Instruments: Citizen Assemblies

Citizen assemblies bring together a diverse group of participants, usually selected by sortition from the population register, to produce collective advice.

Effective assemblies rely on:

- plural and contradictory information;
- sufficient time for deliberation;
- skilled facilitation ensuring that all viewpoints are expressed.

Assemblies can be used to:

- evaluate existing policies,
- define new orientations,
- formulate recommendations to decision-makers.

They are powerful tools to deepen democratic debate and foster collective understanding of complex issues.

Example: Esch-sur-Alzette

Esch-sur-Alzette plans in spring 2026 to launch its Citizen Assembly, aimed at collectively envisioning the city's future in light of climate and environmental challenges.

The assembly is intended to become a permanent institutional structure for ongoing citizen engagement on major issues such as energy transition, sustainable urban planning, mobility, and biodiversity preservation.

**COMMENT FROM THE
CITY OF DUDELANGE**



The choice of terms used to describe a participatory approach strongly influences how it is perceived by citizens. In Dudelange, the experience of the 'Citizens' Council' has sometimes led to confusion. Although the mandate clearly stated that this was a group formed by random selection to work on a specific topic on an ad hoc basis, some participants believed that it was a longer-term commitment, comparable to a permanent consultative body. This experience serves as a reminder that it is essential to pay close attention to terminology in order to avoid unrealistic expectations and to clarify, from the outset, the exact nature of the commitment required.

5.2. Digital Instruments:

Online Consultations

Organizing online consultations via participatory digital tools is an excellent strategy to broaden participation and reach a larger number of citizens. They make it possible to :

- involve a wider audience beyond those who participate in person ;
- collect and structure contributions on a large scale ;
- make participation accessible remotely and continuously, according to citizens' availability

Some Considerations on Online Consultations

For an online consultation to genuinely contribute to the development, implementation, or evaluation of public policy, it is recommended to combine closed-ended and open-ended questions.

A. **Closed-ended questions** allow for a clear presentation of the possible choices as well as the associated issues and dilemmas. They facilitate the collection and quantitative analysis of responses.

B. **Open-ended questions** give participants the opportunity to make proposals, nuance their answers, and express original ideas, thereby enriching the debate.

Unless an internal digital tool is available, it is often necessary to work with a specialized provider to launch a consultation. When designing the content, several aspects require particular attention:

- **Accessibility and clarity of questions:** formulations should remain understandable, avoid technical jargon, and allow participants from diverse backgrounds to express themselves.
- **Quality of the information provided:** provide reliable, concise, and structured data, including key figures, context, and main issues.
- **Diversity of participants:** implement targeted communication to reach a representative audience and ensure a plurality of profiles and opinions.
- **Technical accessibility:** the platform should be easy to use, compatible with different devices, and comply with accessibility standards for people with disabilities.

Ultimately, an online consultation is not just about publishing a questionnaire. It should be conceived as a full participatory process designed to generate high-quality, actionable contributions to public decision-making.

In this sense, it differs from an opinion survey, which aims to measure public opinion on a representative sample but does not seek co-construction.

Designing a questionnaire useful for public decision-making

An online questionnaire should allow citizens to contribute constructively to policy-making and inform decisions.

Several objectives can be pursued:

1. Diagnose a public policy (e.g., "In your opinion, what is the main problem to solve?").
2. Test implementation conditions (e.g., "Would you be willing to...?").
3. Position participants on political dilemmas (e.g., "Should we... or...?").
4. Propose new ideas to improve public policy (e.g., "What would you suggest for...?").

It is recommended to combine closed-ended and open-ended questions:

- **Closed-ended questions** structure responses and facilitate quantitative analysis.
- **Open-ended questions** allow participants to express original ideas, but they require more extensive analysis.

Best practices

- **Limit response time** to approximately 10 minutes.
- Use **clear, simple, and accessible** language.
- **Test the questionnaire** with a small panel of users before publication.

CHECKLIST – Designing an Effective Online Consultation

1. Define the objectives

- ☐ Identify the role of the consultation: diagnose, test, clarify dilemmas, and propose ideas.
- ☐ Make sure that the consultation can genuinely influence public decision-making.

2. Design the questionnaire

- ☐ Combine closed-ended and open-ended questions.
- ☐ Limit response time to around 10 minutes.
- ☐ Use clear and accessible language.
- ☐ Test the questionnaire with a panel of citizens before dissemination.

3. Structure information and content

- ☐ Provide reliable and clear resources: key figures, context, issues.
- ☐ Publish videos, infographics, and testimonials to make content accessible.
- ☐ Organize, if possible, live Q&A sessions.

4. Ensure communication and engagement

- ☐ Develop a multi-channel strategy (institutional channels, associations, local media).
- ☐ Map out relays to reach diverse audiences.
- ☐ Communicate before, during, and after the consultation to maintain interest.

5. Monitoring and analysis

- ☐ Track participation statistics and geographic distribution.
- ☐ Prepare interim summaries to observe trends.
- ☐ Collect, if possible, data on participant profiles (age, location, interests).

6. User experience

- ☐ Verify the technical accessibility of the platform.
- ☐ Minimize the number of clicks required to participate.
- ☐ Test content comprehension with a sample of users.
- ☐ Ensure simple and intuitive navigation.

Example : Dudelange

As part of the development of its cultural development plan, the City of Dudelange involved both a randomly selected Citizens' Council and a larger Citizens' Panel through the platform jeparticipe.dudelange.lu.

The Council, composed of a small group of people representative of the population, worked deliberatively to identify their cultural priorities and formulate detailed recommendations. These recommendations then served as the basis for the Panel. The online consultation, entitled "Your Voice for Culture", presented the Council's proposals in the form of closed-ended questions to measure the level of support, while also including open-ended response fields so that participants could nuance their opinions and suggest additional ideas.

This approach made it possible to combine two scales: the depth of analysis produced by a small group and the enhanced social legitimacy provided by a large-scale consultation. It also highlighted challenges specific to digital initiatives in Dudelange, particularly the difficulty of engaging certain audiences (especially 16–25-year-olds) and the need for targeted communication efforts to ensure sufficient diversity in responses.

5.3. Direct Democracy Instruments: Referendums

Referendums allow citizens to decide directly on political issues by vote. Unlike deliberative instruments, which focus on discussion and consensus-building, referendums follow a binary voting logic (yes/no).

Advantages

- high perceived democratic legitimacy,
- strong authority of results (even if non-binding),
- ability to close political debate.

Limitations

- oversimplification of complex issues,
- risk of polarization,
- uncertainty about the quality of information voters receive.

Luxembourgish Framework

In Luxembourg, decision-making authority is reserved for elected bodies. Article 35 of the Municipal Law explicitly regulates local referendums: it allows the municipal council to hold a referendum on matters of communal interest and requires its organization when a specified fraction of the electorate requests it. In all cases, however, the referendum is purely consultative.

The Council of State, in its 2025 opinion, reaffirmed this rule, emphasizing that popular consultation can inform political decisions but cannot replace the deliberative competence of elected officials. Municipal referendums, therefore, function as instruments for guidance and legitimacy, without a legally binding effect.

Example : Leudelange

On 12 October 2025, the municipality of Leudelange held a consultative referendum on local mobility. Voters were asked: "Do you approve reducing the speed limit from 50 km/h to 30 km/h on all main streets in the Leudelange municipality in the coming years?" This experience highlighted two key points.

First, it confirmed the consultative nature of municipal referendums in Luxembourg: they inform political decisions but do not legally compel elected bodies.

Second, it demonstrated the practical value of the instrument: although not legally binding, the Leudelange municipal council was politically committed to respecting the vote outcome, thereby enhancing both the social legitimacy and credibility of the decision.

5.4. Participatory Instruments: Participatory Budgeting

Participatory budgeting is one of the most widely used instruments for directly involving citizens in a municipality's budgetary decisions. It consists of allocating a portion of the municipal budget to projects proposed and chosen by the population.

This process relies on several essential steps:

- **Call for projects:** Residents are invited to submit ideas or proposals according to a framework defined by the municipality (themes, eligibility criteria, budget limits).
- **Eligibility review:** Municipal services examine the proposals in terms of municipal competencies, technical feasibility, and financial resources.
- **Citizen vote:** Approved projects are submitted to a vote by all residents, usually electronically or during public events.
- **Implementation:** Winning projects are carried out by the municipality, with regular monitoring and feedback provided to citizens.

Strengths of the Instrument

- It makes participation tangible by involving citizens in concrete budgetary decisions.
- It encourages creativity and social innovation.
- It strengthens trust, as the chosen projects are visible in public spaces.

Possible Limitations

- Selected projects often focus on local improvements and do not always address structural policies.
- Poor communication or insufficient follow-up can undermine trust.

Example

While the City of Dudelange was a pioneer in launching the first participatory budget in Luxembourg, this practice has spread widely in recent years. Municipalities such as Bertrange, Mamer, Differdange, Roeser, Strassen, and Erpeldange have since implemented this participatory instrument, allocating budget envelopes to realize the projects most favored by citizens, whether in urban development, the environment, or cultural initiatives.

COMMENTARY FROM CITY OF DUDELANGE



Participatory budgeting has established itself as one of the most visible citizen participation instruments in Luxembourg. However, the experience of the City of Dudelange shows that it cannot be regarded as a mere "add-on" to democracy: it represents a genuine collective commitment for the administration. Each approved project entails substantial additional work, whether technical studies, financial monitoring, or on-the-ground implementation.

The success of the instrument therefore requires a clear framework from the outset, with upfront communication that specifies the rules, budget limits, and the role of municipal services. It also requires attentive internal support so that teams have the time and resources to manage this workload, as well as continuous follow-up until the projects are fully implemented. The credibility of the process relies on its ability to turn citizens' ideas into tangible results.

Beyond these practical aspects, participatory budgeting also reflects the administrative culture itself. Its value is measured not only by the decisions taken but also by the patient, often discreet work of municipal services: from planning to the concrete interventions of staff, down to the municipal worker installing a bench in a public space. By recognizing and valuing this chain of expertise, the instrument can become deeply embedded in civic culture and strengthen trust between the population, elected officials, and the administration.

**Part 2 : Methodological approach
to citizen participation**

**Summary
table of main
participatory
instruments**



PARTICIPATORY TOOL	Objectives / Uses
Citizens' Assembly	Produce a reasoned collective opinion on a policy or decision; evaluate or reform public policy
Participatory Workshop	Consult citizens upstream, explore prospective scenarios, identify consensus and disagreements
Online Consultation	Broaden participation and collect contributions at large scale
Consultative Referendum	Decide a political question through a direct vote
Participatory Budgeting	Involve residents in concrete budgetary decisions
Combination of Tools	Reach a diverse audience and maximize relevance of contributions

Advantages	Limitations / Points to Consider
In-depth deliberation, plurality of viewpoints, solid recommendations, high legitimacy	Requires significant time investment (several weekends), complex organization, need for pluralistic information
Flexible and quick format, fosters exchanges among diverse profiles, allows cross-cutting synthesis	Limited scope (small number of participants), requires external synthesis to integrate results
Wide accessibility, expanded participation, structured data collection	Less in-depth deliberation, requires moderation and structuring of inputs
Perceived as highly legitimate, clear result, ability to close a debate	Simplification of issues, risk of polarization, no legally binding value in Luxembourg
Participation tangible, projets visibles, créativité citoyenne, innovation locale	Significant administrative workload, expectations can be difficult to manage
Allows articulation of deliberation and broad participation, integration of content, coherent process	Complex coordination, need for circulation and synthesis of results, vigilance on continuity

Practical Advice

- Choose the participatory instrument based on the objectives pursued, the desired level of depth, and the number of citizens to involve.
- Ensure pluralistic, understandable, and accessible information for all participants.
- Guarantee continuity and circulation of content when combining multiple instruments.
- Assess the opportunity to institutionalize the participatory instrument in order to give participation a lasting place in the functioning of the community.

**6. Using an online
participatory
platform:
communication,
consultation,
proposal, and
centralization**



Beyond a simple one-off consultation, the use of an online participatory platform allows for the scaling up of participation and communication, while also centralizing information related to other participatory instruments. For example, it can enable a large number of citizens to contribute directly to a consultation, submit proposals as part of a participatory budget, or simply stay informed about the progress or follow-up of a citizens' assembly. It thus inevitably becomes the digital showcase of a municipality's participatory strategy.

COMMENTARY FROM
CITY OF DUDELANGE



Although new media and digital platforms play an increasing role in citizen participation, the experience of the City of Dudelange shows that paper remains an essential channel. During the Citizens' Panel organized around the cultural development plan, more than 70% of participants chose to respond via paper using the prepaid mail option, even though an online version was available and easily accessible.

6.1. Main functions of a participatory platform

An online platform generally brings together several functionalities:

- Conduct questionnaires and collect preferences (online consultation);
- Collect free and spontaneous contributions;
- Supplement physical participatory instruments organized locally (citizens' assemblies, participatory budgets, referendums, etc.);
- Communicate about the organization, results, and progress of various participatory instruments;
- Potentially create an active community of citizens.

Offering the possibility to participate online can, in theory, reduce certain barriers related to travel and mitigate some accessibility biases. However, it is advisable to integrate digital presence thoughtfully with on-the-ground work as part of the participatory strategy. Rather than opposing them, these approaches should be designed as complementary.

6.2. Communicate at all stages

Communication strategy is a decisive factor for the success of a consultation, as it largely determines the profile and diversity of participants.

Before using a participatory instrument:

- Mobilize institutional channels (website, newsletters, social media)
- Collaborate with associations, local media, and community relays to reach a diverse audience;
- Map stakeholders to identify relevant relays.

During the use of a participatory instrument:

- Regularly monitor connection statistics and the distribution of participants (by age, neighborhood, socio-demographic profile);
- Publish interim summaries to highlight emerging trends;
- Feed the platform with regular updates to maintain interest and stimulate engagement.

6.3. Enrich the platform with information

To facilitate participation, enhance understanding of the issues, and potentially create synergies between different participatory instruments, it is recommended to provide the platform with diverse content:

- Create a “resources” tab accessible to all;
- Publish explanatory videos, for example from the project initiator, experts, or witnesses involved in the participatory process;
- Offer infographics or visual summaries to highlight key points;
- Organize live Q&A sessions with the project initiator.

6.4. Optimize the user experience

When using a digital participatory platform, several elements should be monitored to maximize participation:

- **Test the platform** with a small group of citizens to check understanding and identify improvements;
- Ensure site **accessibility** and compatibility with different devices;
- Provide a **short, easy-to-remember web address**;
- **Limit the number of clicks** required to access information on the participatory instruments used;
- Use **clear, simple, and inclusive language** throughout the content.

7. Defining the recruitment strategy



Citizen participation can be open to all citizens, allowing anyone to get involved freely, or it can be organized around a specifically constituted group designed to reflect the diversity of the population.

7.1. Main recruitment methods

A. Self-selection: Call for Volunteers

A call for participation can be widely disseminated through local media, social networks, or associations. Interested individuals are invited to participate directly. This approach applies to instruments such as referendums, participatory budgets, or online consultations.

It can also extend to more deliberative participatory formats. A pool of volunteers can be created, and then a balanced sample of participants selected to ensure diversity in age, gender, socio-professional categories, and place of residence. In this case, it is also desirable to account for the diversity of opinions on the issue at hand, so that the group reflects the plurality of viewpoints present in society.

More generally, regardless of the participatory instrument used, it is always relevant to assess the representativeness of participants. This requires collecting information to better understand their socio-demographic profiles and the diversity of opinions expressed.

This process not only enhances the legitimacy of the procedure but also helps identify potential participation biases and adapt recruitment or facilitation methods if needed.

B. Random Selection: Lottery

Random selection is the principle governing recruitment for most citizens' assemblies. To avoid biases linked to self-selection and overrepresentation of socio-economically advantaged profiles, citizens are chosen randomly, for example using public registries or automatically generated phone numbers. This procedure places each individual on an equal footing.

Among those contacted and agreeing to participate, a complementary selection is made to form a panel representative of the reference population (municipality, region, or country).

This process can be conducted directly by the organizer or entrusted to a specialized provider.

Working with associations or local institutions can also help reach audiences that would otherwise be difficult to engage.

Note

A call for volunteers is a simple and inclusive method, but it introduces self-selection bias. Results from such a group cannot, therefore, be considered statistically representative.

In contrast, when random selection is properly conducted and complemented by diversity criteria, it allows for the formation of a panel representative of the reference population and the analysis of results with statistical validity.

7.2. Constituting a diverse citizens' assembly

Two main dimensions guide selection:

A. Socio-demographic criteria:

Age, gender, education level, profession, place of residence, etc. Classifications used in opinion surveys generally serve as a reference.

B. Attitudinal criteria: Ensure that different opinions and sensitivities present in society are represented. This can be done through a few targeted questions on the topic under discussion (closed-ended responses to facilitate processing) or by identifying participants' direct or specific interest in the subject.

Example : Esch-sur-Alzette

For its Citizens' Assembly on climate, the City of Esch-sur-Alzette sent 10,000 invitations to residents aged 16 or older. Based on responses received, the city will form a representative group of 40 people, taking into account several criteria: gender, age, education level, geographic distribution across the ten districts, years of residence in Esch, and nationality.

In addition, since volunteers must complete a short questionnaire providing this information, their attitudes and behaviors regarding climate issues will also be considered.

The goal is to ensure the assembly reflects a plurality of viewpoints, including not only those already engaged or aware of climate issues but also more skeptical or less involved profiles.

**7.3 Encouraging participation:
reducing barriers**

Participation in a citizen initiative, especially one that is deliberative, can require time and may incur costs. Therefore, compensation is essential.

To avoid excluding certain groups, it is recommended to provide a participation allowance, which is not a salary but a form of reimbursement.

This allowance can cover:

- Loss of income related to professional activity (e.g., for freelancers, shopkeepers, or artisans);
- Specific expenses, such as childcare or transportation.

In practice, this allowance often ranges from 50 to 80 euros per day of participation.

Example: Esch-sur-Alzette

In Esch-sur-Alzette, participants in the Citizens' Assembly on climate will receive a daily allowance of 125 euros per day of deliberation, paid directly to their personal bank account. This compensation recognizes the time invested and reduces material barriers to participation, enabling a wider range of citizens to engage in the process.

Other Non-Financial Incentives:

- Offer flexible arrangements (adapted schedules, possibility to attend some sessions online).
- Provide meals, transportation, or accommodation if needed.
- Recognize participation through public acknowledgment or dissemination of contributions.

A thoughtful and inclusive recruitment process is key to the success of a deliberative participatory instrument. By combining appropriate methods, socio-demographic and opinion diversity criteria, and relevant incentives, it is possible to form a credible and motivated panel.

This diversity allows for rich and representative proposals, strengthens the legitimacy of the results, and increases the real impact on public decisions.

8. Establishing a citizen participation mandate



The participation mandate is a document addressed to citizens. Its purpose is to explain the general context, objectives, modalities, and goals of the participatory process undertaken, as well as the impact of citizens' contributions on the decision-making process and the timeline of decisions.

The mandate is neither simply a communication tool nor a technical text intended for experts. The key challenge is to strike a balance between:

- Presenting the issues and context;
- Providing clear and accessible information necessary to motivate and guide citizen engagement.

8.1. Content of a participation mandate

A complete participation mandate generally includes:

- **Context:** Description of the context in which one or more participatory instruments are being used.
- **Objective and Purpose:** What the participation concerns and the goal sought.
- **Commitments of the Organizer:** Details on how contributions will be taken into account and used.

- **Participation Modalities:** Location, dates, duration, registration procedures, tools used (assemblies, online consultations, public meetings, etc.).
- **Timeline:** Stages of the consultation, as well as information on follow-up and upcoming decisions.

8.2. Best practices



- Write the mandate in clear, simple, and understandable language, avoiding technical jargon.
- Illustrate the document with diagrams, tables, or timelines to make the process easy to follow.
- Highlight the value of citizen contributions and guarantees of listening, transparency, and feedback.

**Fictional Example: Downtown
Park Redevelopment**

Context

The municipality wishes to redevelop the park in the city center to better meet residents' needs and reinforce its role as an intergenerational meeting place.

Objective and purpose

The participatory process aims to collect concrete proposals for the use of the future park: playgrounds, relaxation areas, light sports activities, landscaping.

Organizer commitments

Citizens' contributions will be analyzed by the municipality's technical services. A public summary will present the proposals retained, those not retained, and the corresponding reasons.

Participation modalities

- Citizens' assembly organized in the municipal hall (2 evenings, 6 p.m. – 9 p.m.).
- Prior to the assembly, residents can submit proposals via the online platform or on paper at the citizen service desk, which will be considered by the assembly.
- Online consultation via the municipal platform (jeparticipe.ville.lu).

Timeline

- Launch of the process and submission of feedback: March–April
- Citizens' assembly: April
- Online consultation: May
- Results feedback and final development plan: end of June
- Redevelopment work: September–April

9. Reporting the results of citizen participation: valuing and following up



Reporting is an essential stage of any participatory process. It highlights the work done by citizens, shows that their contributions have been considered, and clarifies how their proposals will be used.

Informer sur les conséquences : le devoir de suite

Any participatory process implies a genuine duty to follow up, meaning a clear commitment from the organizing authority to report on how citizens' contributions will be used and to ensure their follow-through.

9.1. Founding Principles of follow-up

1. **Responsibility:** Account for how the results generated through the participatory instrument are used and explain the choices made.
2. **Transparency:** Provide a document specifying concretely how and why decisions were made to follow up – or not – on the results.
3. **Evaluation:** Analyze the instrument and its results to draw lessons, identify transferable good practices, and assess the concrete impact on public action.

9.2. Importance of feedback to citizens

Even if citizen participation is well-received during the process, it often raises questions or skepticism regarding outcomes and the actual use of contributions. To strengthen credibility and trust, clarity and visibility on follow-up actions are essential.

This involves:

- **Valuing** the work and proposals submitted by citizens and recognizing citizen participation as a whole;
- Conducting internal **analysis** to assess whether the consultation changed stakeholders' perspectives, revealed blind spots, or promoted cross-department collaboration.

9.3. Possible forms of follow-up

- A public and formal presentation of conclusions, potentially delivered by the participants themselves;
- A motivated and accessible response specifying which proposals were adopted, adapted, or rejected by the organizer;
- Establishing a citizen follow-up committee to oversee the period between the end of the consultation and the final decision.

9.4. Best practices



- Communicate regularly about follow-up actions to reinforce trust;
- Document and share the concrete impacts of participation on public policies;
- Ensure follow-up goes beyond simple feedback, contributing to organizational learning and reinforcing the legitimacy of the process.

Reporting and the duty to follow up are inseparable. Reporting publicly acknowledges the work completed, while following up demonstrates that participation is not symbolic but genuinely influences public action. Together, they transform consultation into a learning, legitimate, and trust-building process.

Digital platforms can centralize information and enhance public monitoring of the various participatory instruments implemented.

10. Evaluating citizen participation



Monitoring a participatory process naturally concludes with an evaluation. This stage is essential for drawing lessons, reinforcing good practices, and improving future initiatives. Evaluation allows for the measurement of several dimensions:

- **Relevance and added value of the instrument:** Did citizen participation provide new and useful insights on the topic? Did citizens' proposals enrich public decision-making?
- **Quality of organization:** Was the process clear, transparent, and inclusive? Were participants able to express themselves under good conditions? Were the methods and tools appropriate?
- **Impact on administration and internal practices:** Did citizen participation foster collaboration between departments? Did staff and decision-makers integrate the lessons learned into their practices?
- **Impact on citizens' perceptions:** Did participation help residents better understand the issues of public action? Has their perception of decisions and institutions evolved?

10.1. Anticipating Evaluation

Evaluation should not be improvised after the fact but anticipated from the design phase.

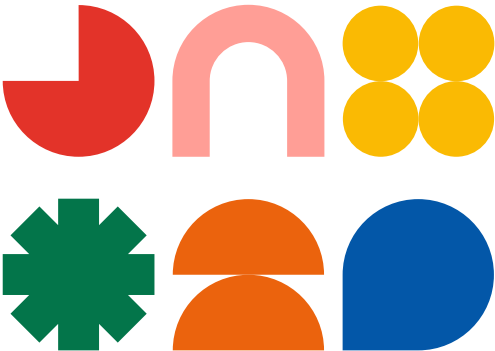
This implies:

- Defining objectives and indicators from the outset to measure the success of the process;
- Planning the resources and skills necessary to analyze results rigorously;
- Documenting each step to compare initial objectives with actual results;
- Combining quantitative tools (questionnaires, participation statistics) and qualitative tools (interviews, focus groups, participant feedback) to gain a comprehensive view of the instrument's effectiveness.

A well-crafted evaluation transforms the participatory process into a genuine shared learning experience. It allows both the administration and citizens to improve practices, strengthen legitimacy, and increase the impact of participation on public decisions.

Example : Esch-sur-Alzette

For its Citizens' Assembly on Climate, the City of Esch-sur-Alzette partnered with researchers from the University of Luxembourg to monitor the entire process, from participant recruitment, assembly design, and ensuring quality deliberation conditions, to evaluating the follow-up.



Conclusion



Citizen participation is not merely a consultation tool. It is a powerful lever to strengthen local democracy, improve the relevance and effectiveness of public policies, and consolidate citizens' trust in their institutions. As this guide has shown, the success of a participatory process relies on a series of inseparable principles.

Everything begins with clear objectives and purpose: knowing why and for what residents are involved is the first condition for sincere and constructive engagement. The relevance of the topic and the chosen method then determine the form of the instrument: some themes require broad consultation, while others call for in-depth deliberation in citizens' assemblies or participatory workshops.

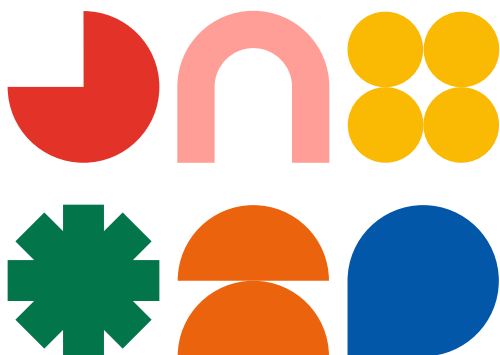
Governance is another fundamental pillar: defining roles, establishing a steering committee, and keeping the organizer central ensures coherence and reliability. Recruitment and participant diversity guarantee the legitimacy of results: whether through volunteer calls or random selection, the process must combine socio-demographic criteria and diversity of viewpoints to form an inclusive and representative group.

A credible participatory process also relies on clear, accessible, and pluralistic communication at all stages to mobilize and sustain engagement. It requires a methodical process, with appropriate tools—online consultations, workshops, panels, or consultative referendums—and activities designed to foster expression and deliberation.

Reporting and follow-up are decisive steps: they value the work accomplished, make conclusions public, and provide clear feedback on the use of contributions. Finally, monitoring and evaluation transform each initiative into a collective learning process, measuring its impact on decisions, administrative practices, and citizens' perceptions.

By combining methodological rigor, transparency, and openness to diversity, citizen participation turns residents' voices into a true force for public action, while reinforcing democratic legitimacy and trust in public governance. •

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