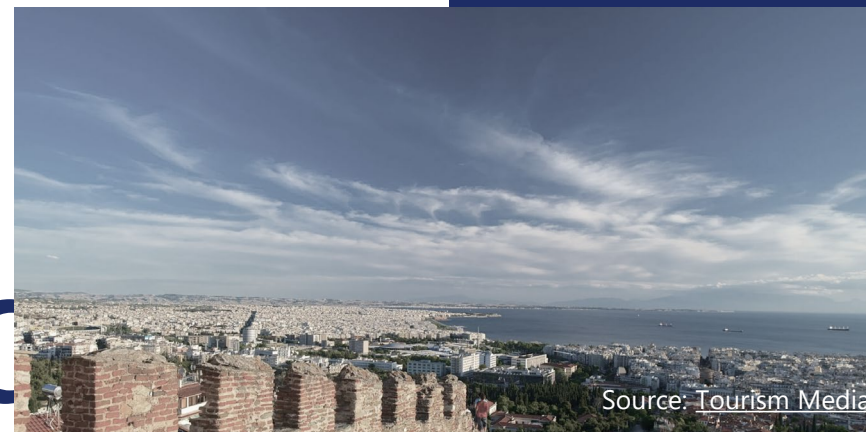




Engaging citizens in decision-making

Participatory Budgeting Needs assessment

European Week of Regions
and Cities 2022



Experiences and priorities

Different stages of participatory democracy – PB development and institutionalisation

| MILESTONES | PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT | | | PB IMPLEMENTATION | | |
|----------------|------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|------------|
| | practice and education | enhancement | co-creation | pilot | customising and experimenting | mainstream |
| Cyprus | ■ | | | ■ | | |
| Greece | ■ | ■ | | ■ | ■ | |
| Ireland | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | |
| Netherlands | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | |
| Poland | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | |
| Romania | ■ | ■ | | ■ | ■ | |
| United Kingdom | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |



Experiences and priorities



Engagement and commitment to PB shaped by institutional framework, political interest and resources

- **Legal framework (sometimes mandatory)**
- **Funding** (national or subnational levels)
- **Infrastructure** (digitalisation, developed and active communities)
- **Capacity** (qualified staff, vision and strategy)
- **Know-how** (procedures, communication channels, experience, external support)

Challenges

- How to ensure accountability?
- How to involve different stakeholders and guarantee representativeness?
- How to get public authorities at different levels more interested and involved?

Main features



PB Geographical scale is typically at city or neighbourhood level

Other PB features vary widely



Funds

Small grants

< EUR 5k
(Cork, Fife)

Medium scale projects

< EUR 150k
(Dublin, Paphos, Cluj-Napoca)

Big scale projects

> EUR 150k
(Wałbrzych, Rotterdam)



Policy Areas

Infrastructure

– Cluj-Napoca, Dublin, Rotterdam, Neapoli-Sykies, Chalandri, Kifissia, Fife

Green/climate/environment

– Kifissia, Ioannina, Rotterdam, Fife

Social justice/inclusion

– Cork, Rotterdam, Fife.



Process of ideation

Open

– individuals submit projects independently
(e.g., Paphos, Fife)

Facilitated

– individuals or groups are assisted by professionals
(e.g., Dublin, Wałbrzych, Fife)

Delegated

– citizens are selected to take part in deliberation
(e.g., Rotterdam - Middelland)



Communication

Media (radio, TV, newspapers)

– Dublin, Wałbrzych

Analogue (flyers, letters, posters)

– Neapoli-Sykies, Chalandri, Wałbrzych

Physical meetings (workshops, picnics, gatherings, district assemblies, through local leaders)

– Kifissia, Dublin, Rotterdam, Wałbrzych, Fife.

Level of citizen participation



Different traditions, audiences and tools

Participants

- **citizens** – specific groups (educated, youth, elderly)
- **network participants** – mixed stakeholders (local authorities, ngos, education institutions, informal citizens' groups)
- **professional participants** – well-organised, high level of citizen involvement

Actions to broaden the pool

- engagement education for different groups (youth, elderly, immigrants)
- programmed involvement of NGOs, volunteers, social groups
- engagement design strategies

Challenges

- **improving the reliability and validity of PB process**
- **understanding of PB process / stages**
- **limited participant data and evaluation of PB and engagement**
- **multichannel and transparent communication**
- **building relationships within/across communities and with local authorities**
- **new/relevant policies** e.g. social justice / inclusion policies

Implementation

**Generally positive experiences,
notably learning and democratic value**

Various challenges

- **Administrative and legal**
- **Staff shortages**
- **Technical and technological**
- **New policies/instruments**

Solutions

- **Designing a clear framework** with simplified procedures
- **Developing competences** of all actors through participation in PB and/or dedicated trainings and professional support
- **Securing resources** in advance e.g. funding and institutional capacity
- **Learning from good practices** e.g. in planning and evaluation
- **Ensuring accessibility and inclusiveness**
- **Building trust** and positive experiences among participants

Effectiveness

Absence of strong evaluation mechanisms / systems for evaluating PB impact, but recognition of public value

- democratic accountability, legitimacy and trust
- citizen engagement and influence on policy
- more informed citizens
- better policy outcomes
- increased community building, cohesion and identity
- spillovers to other policies and geographical areas
- learning about best practices on transparency, participation and co-production
- online /digital PB can support reach and effectiveness



Lessons

- **Better communication for inclusive engagement**
- **Digital engagement to maximise reach**
- **Transparent decision-making to foster understanding and trust**
- **Leverage EU funding to promote Participatory Budgeting**
- **Develop a learning and evaluation culture**
- **Build institutional capacity**
- **Seek political support**

