



Corporate Guidance on **CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT**

A NEW PHASE OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Building on the Conference on the Future of Europe and its follow-up Communication, the Commission has worked on further developing **“ways to ensure citizens are given a closer role in EU policymaking”**.

More regular Citizen participation is important **to build a democracy fit for the future**. But it is also about the **quality of EU policymaking**: citizens are experts of their own lives and bringing in their perspectives can add value to EU policymaking.

Two key purposes



→ Building up democratic resilience and innovation



→ Enhancing the quality of public policies.

This new phase aims at **bringing more consistency** in the Commission's citizen engagement practices, making them **more relevant to the Union's policymaking and ensuring their visibility and effective communication**, showing their results to the wider public and encouraging citizens from all walks of life to engage with the EU.

A NEW ECOSYSTEM FOR CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT



Support and Guidance

- Guidebook
- Procurement (DPS)
- COMM domain leadership
- JRC Competence Centre



Participatory Events

- Deliberative: the Citizens' Panels
- Focus groups and co-creation formats



Have Your Say Portal

- One-stop-shop online for citizen engagement
- New Citizen engagement Platform
- Online processes accompanying the participatory formats

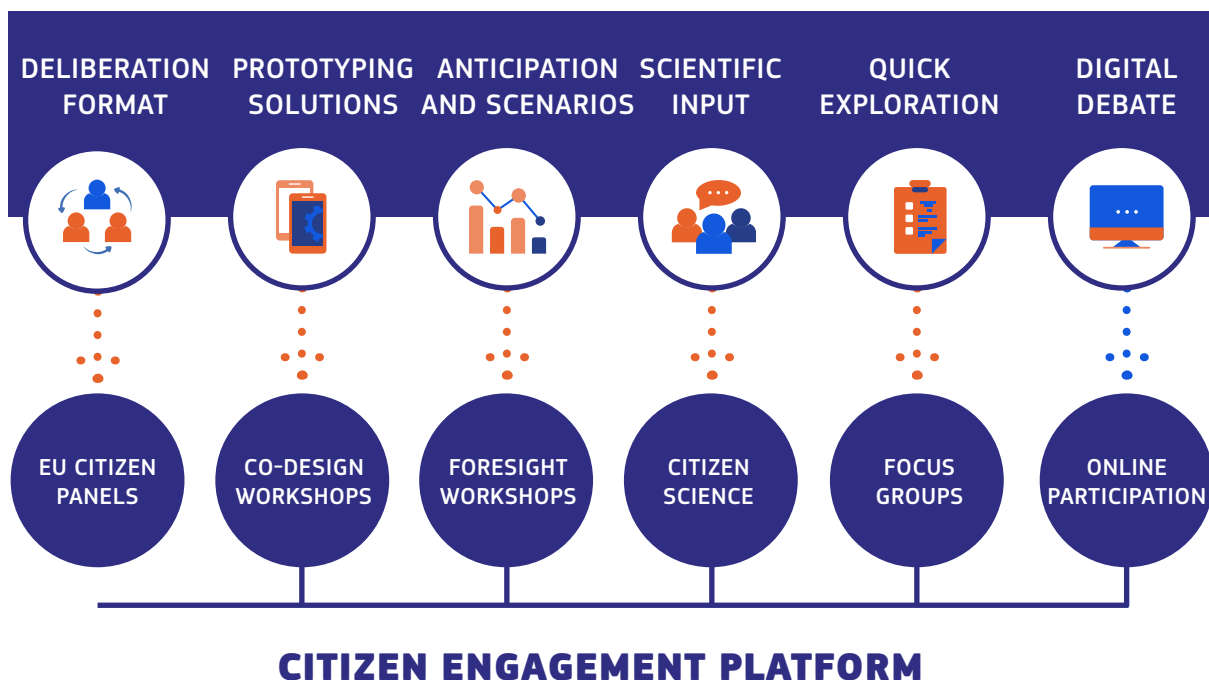


Communication Strategies

- Democratic innovation
- Spotlight on policy initiatives
- Truly inclusive

GUIDANCE ON CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

The Corporate Guidance on Citizen engagement proposes two types of participatory formats: one based on **deliberation** between the citizens, in the form of the European Citizen Panels, and four others, such as focus groups or **co-creation** workshops, which are less resource-intensive and can add value to the policymaking process. The Citizen Engagement Platform also offers the possibility to run **online** participatory processes. Citizen participation can take place at **pan-European level and/or** have a **decentralised dimension**, possibly mobilising key partners in the Member States.





It also proposes **key principles** that should be considered when planning engagement activities.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Anticipation ● Clear expectations ● Clear mandate and scope | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Multilingualism ● Inclusiveness ● Representation of Diversity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Transparency ● Integrity ● Facilitation for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - respectful dialogue - knowledge management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Accountability ● Follow-up, feedback and evaluation |
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Ideal timeline for Citizen engagement in the preparation phase



..... **Policymaking**

..... **Decision-making**

***KEY MOMENTS FOR COMMUNICATION ACTIONS**

EUROPEAN CITIZEN PANELS

A Citizen Panel is a **deliberative format** enabling a sample of randomly selected citizens, representative of diversity, to work on collective recommendations contributing to early phases of the policymaking process.

The European Citizen Panels are now embedded in the Commission's policy-making process, and **lead to the adoption of a Citizen Report annexed to the proposal or the initiative**, explaining how the Panels' recommendations are taken into account in this process.

Since 2022, five Panels have already taken place successfully:



Energy Efficiency



Tackling Hatred in Society



Learning Mobility



Food Waste



Virtual Worlds

→ **PARTICIPANTS:**

Around 150 randomly selected citizens, representative of EU diversity.

→ **TIME FRAME:**

Three weekends of deliberations (e.g., 2 in Brussels, one fully online).

→ **METHODOLOGY:**

Methodology co-designed by professional hosts, DG COMM and the operational DGs to appropriately address the policy topic and the framing question. Professional facilitators and moderators to manage plenary and working groups' meetings.

→ **MULTILINGUALISM:**

Possibility for participants to speak and work in their language (24 in plenaries/5-6 in working groups).

→ **KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT:**

help of a Knowledge Committee and inputs from experts from academia, professional and civil society organisations and the Commission services.

→ **OUTCOMES:**

Recommendations used in the drafting of the Commission's initiatives; Citizen Reports annexed to the initiative; feedback to the participants.



OTHER FORMS OF CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

Depending on their needs and resources available, the Commission services can also choose other less resource intensive forms of Citizen engagement. Below are participatory exercises where people are brought together to work on something as a group, the object of co-creation being material or immaterial. Participants are viewed as experts of their experience with the matters of concern and treated on an equal foot.

FOCUS GROUPS & IN-DEPTH GROUPS

- Enable moderated interaction among a small group (6-10) of pre-selected participants representative of diversity in a given population/community.
- Aims at exploring collective experiences over a topic and observing the interactions among the participants, which together, can improve understanding of a problem and its underlying issues.
- Focus groups meet once during 3-4 hours; in-depth groups can meet more times (typically up to 4 times for 3-4 hours or for an entire day). Professional facilitators. The facilitation team can include experts in the topic being discussed.
- Method best used when the aim is to explore a predefined perspective into an issue, or as an early exploration of possible framings of an issue. Best for national or local levels.

EXAMPLE: *Focus Groups on Food Contact Material* -

In 2022-23, 10 focus groups were organised for the citizen engagement exercise on food contact materials, each one in a separate EU Member State representing geographical diversity.

CO-DESIGN WORKSHOPS

- Actively engage ordinary citizens (groups of 4-6 to 30 participants depending on the format - diversity is key) in the collaborative production of solutions in the form of objects, projects, programs and other policy-related outputs.
- Design practitioners employ fast-paced activities (around 3 hours) to generate ideas and construct rough concepts through the creation of prototypes or scenarios. Professional facilitation is needed and is key.
- Co-design workshops are mostly used for discovery and problem solving, best suited for early phases of the policy process.

EXAMPLE: *The Social & Ethical Issues of Connected and Automated Vehicles* -

A series of co-creation workshops were conducted by the JRC from May to October 2019 in 3 different Member States, concerning the future of mobility and in particular the issue of connected and self-driving vehicles. The participants of the workshops explored various mobility narratives, ethical considerations, expectations and matters of concern toward this new type of mobility.

FORESIGHT WORKSHOPS

- Foresight workshops allow to explore potential futures and corresponding pathways, often in relation to a specific policy topic, a technology or other particular action.
- It generates reflections on drivers of change, the creation or exploration of scenarios or the development of visions of desirable futures.
- The emphasis is on involving diverse groups of citizens from the start to be able to build a solid collective intelligence. Quality interaction requires at least 10 participants. The maximum size of the group depends on the number of moderators but is rarely above 100.
- It often requires from days to months, but short formats are available ad hoc (e.g., serious games).
- Method is best suited to inform foresight or anticipatory studies, as it typically delivers drivers, scenarios and visions, reflections on key uncertainties.

EXAMPLE: *The Future of Government 2030+* -

A citizen centric perspective on new governance models ran from October 2017 until November 2019, at request of DG CNECT to the EU Policy Lab at the JRC. The overall aim of the project was to better understand changing relations in society, with the growing role and pervasiveness of digital technologies in our lives and to stimulate discussion about them.

CITIZEN SCIENCE

- Approaches focused on the involvement of citizens in science, as contributors. Contribution may mean different commitments to the scientific process and advance of scientific research.
- It involves non-expert volunteers in the scientific process – commonly in data collection, but also in other phases, such as quality assurance, data analysis and interpretation, scientific problem definition and the dissemination of results.
- A variable number of citizens meet the number of times necessary to accomplish a task proposed by the organisers.
- If not online, it is usually a rather localised approach.
- Professional facilitators as well as experts on the scientific topic need to be present.
- Best used where data needs to be widely collected by citizens to inform policymaking at all stages, but especially on the monitoring stage of the policymaking cycle.

EXAMPLE: *Invasive Alien Species and Environmental Monitoring* -

The JRC together with policy DGs of the Commission (incl. DG Environment and DG Research and Innovation) developed Best Practices in Citizen Science for Environmental Monitoring. This Staff Working Document also comes with recommendations on how to integrate high quality citizen science contribution in a systemic and sustainable approach.

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND TOOLS

MULTILINGUALISM

A citizen participation process cannot claim to be truly inclusive if citizens do not have the possibility to express themselves in their native language. This refers to the **systematic use of translation and interpretation with the support of SCIC and DGT**, but also using plain language and specific techniques to communicate and deliberate in a multilingual setting. This also means setting up, possibly with the help of the logistics service providers, a multilingual secretariat to communicate with citizens during the whole process.

DIGITAL PLATFORM

- The European Commission's [Have Your Say](#) portal becomes a **one-stop-shop for online Citizen engagement**, bringing together the public consultations, the European Citizen Initiative and a new interactive space, as well as all information on Citizen engagement (e.g. reports, photos/videos).
- This new space, the [Citizen Engagement Platform](#), is designed to support Citizen participation and deliberation, either through exclusively online processes or as a support to participatory events.
- It relies mainly on the possibility for citizens to **share their ideas**, as well as **comment and exchange on these ideas**, in all languages via automatic translation.

COMMUNICATION

Any Citizen engagement initiative **needs to be flanked by a communication strategy** in order to ensure transparency and call for action, where appropriate, the largest possible audience, with the aim for the process to be as inclusive as possible and to underline the growing role of Citizen involvement in the preparation of European public policies.

• Possible tools:

- **Creative content** on social media.
- **Paid promotion.**
- **Inviting journalists and influencers** from all over across the EU to ensure media coverage.
- Build up on **specific networks of stakeholders** at pan-European or national and local levels.
- Involving **citizens as “ambassadors”**.

• Actors:

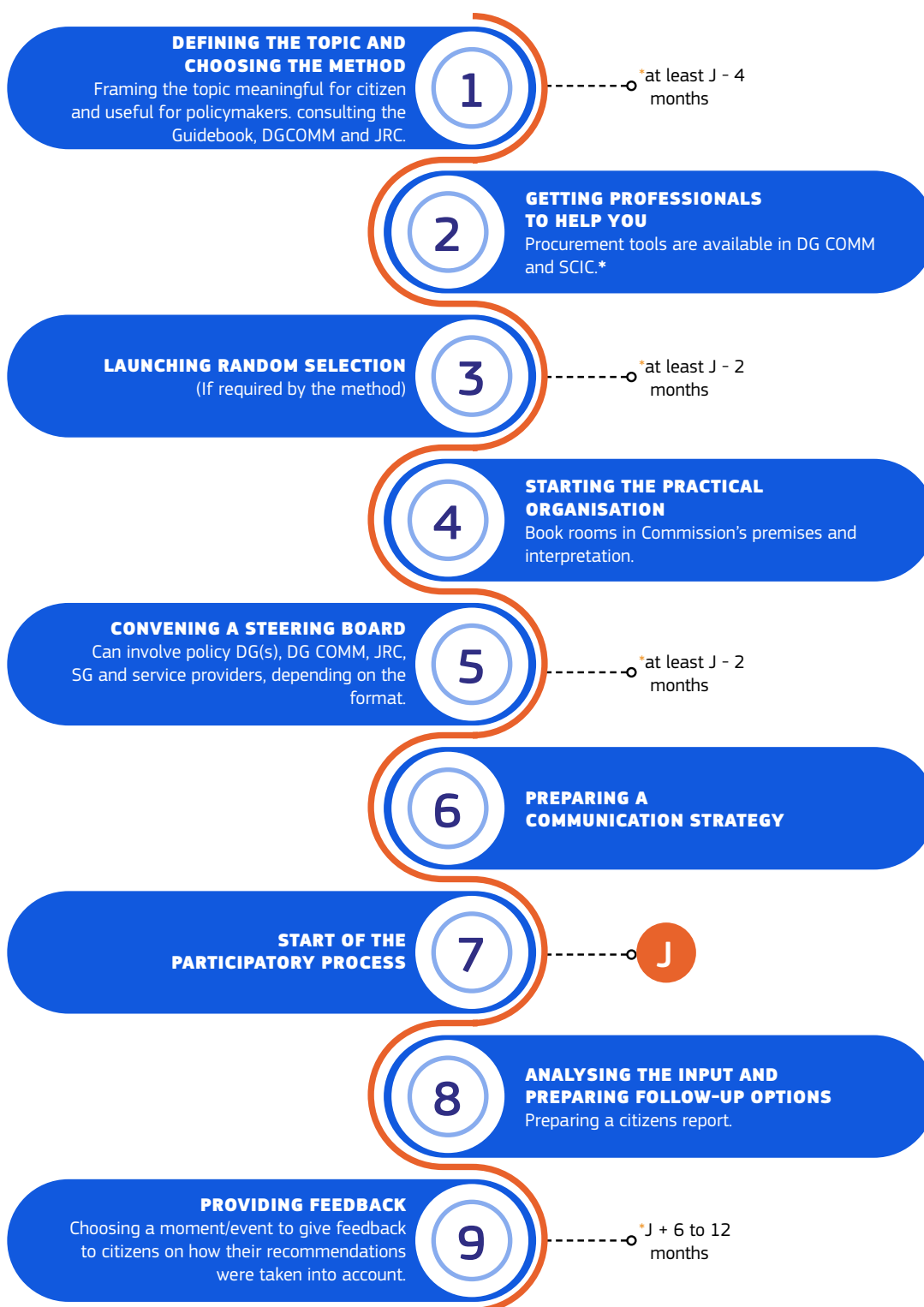
- DG COMM headquarters, corporate accounts, Policy DGs.
- Representations in Member States, Europe Direct Centres and other networks.
- Organised civil society and stakeholders.
- Citizens themselves.

ORGANISED CIVIL SOCIETY

Citizen engagement, civil dialogue and consultation with stakeholders are complementary. It is important to create the conditions for the **best synergies possible between CSOs and the group of citizens involved**. This could mean associating CSOs at different degrees, such as:

- Informing network of stakeholders and relying on them to support the communication around the participatory formats.
- Inviting some CSOs to contribute as experts/resource persons in the Citizen Panels or other formats of participation.
- Accompanying the whole participatory format with an online consultation on the platform.

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT STEP BY STEP



*Timeline for Citizen panels (for other formats, timeline might be shorter)

*** SERVICES AVAILABLE:**

- Random selection
- Methodology and facilitation
- Logistics
- Online support
- Communication support

This guidance does not come alone. Both at DG COMM and DG JRC, there are **services that can advise on implementing citizen engagement exercises.**

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DG JRC Competence Centre on Participatory and Deliberative Democracy:

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