

**deliver democratic
innovations
barrier cards**

If this is your first time using this deck, please follow the instructions on the toolkit page:

nesta.org.uk/toolkit/advancing-democratic-innovations-toolkit/

Use the deliver barrier cards if you want to explore challenges around:

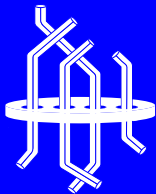
- Starting a process.**
- Getting funding and resources.**
- Finding the right skills.**
- Delivering on the outcomes of the process.**
- Setting up a digital participation tool.**

Traditional culture and risk aversion

PEOPLE

01

BARRIER



deliver

Common features experienced

- Top-down cultures, which are less likely to pursue bottom-up methods
- Political parties with weak majorities, who are less likely to pursue participation
- Institutional belief that citizens will not make the right decision or do not want to participate



institutions



citizens

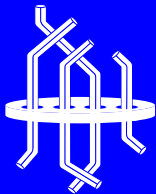
Traditional culture and risk aversion

DESIGN CHALLENGES

- How might we create an environment of experimentation that encourages public managers to pursue participation?*
- How might we build institutional trust in participation processes?*
- How might we encourage institutions to embrace bottom-up innovation?*
- How might we design participation to appeal to traditional institutional cultures?*

Shortage of institutional skills

PEOPLE
02
BARRIER



deliver

Common features experienced

- Low digital and participatory skills
- Low resourcing of specialist participatory skills, such as outreach and community-building
- Limited analytical skills to review and act on outputs of participation
- Under-resourced specialist skills with unrealistic expectations
- _____



institutions



citizens

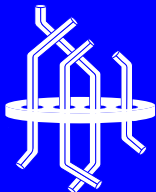
Shortage of institutional skills

DESIGN CHALLENGES

- How might we ensure an institution has the right skills to deliver a project to best practice?*
- How might we grow institutional digital and participatory skills through a digital democracy project?*
- How might institutions plan and resource participation projects to ensure their success?*
- How might we support specialists to deliver on their expertise?*

Rigid regulation and processes

PROCESS
01
BARRIER



deliver

Common features experienced

- Regulations and bureaucracy that limit uptake of participation and adoption of results
- Institutional view of participation as an add-on to existing processes
- Failure by institutions to budget adequately for participation



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citizens

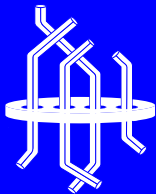
Rigid regulation and processes

DESIGN CHALLENGES

- How might we deliver participation despite regulatory constraints?*
- How might we reframe participation as a 'core cost'?*
- How might we demonstrate the cost of not pursuing participation?*
- How might we support institutions to sustainably budget for participation processes?*

No impact and poor communication

PROCESS
02
BARRIER



deliver

Common features experienced

- Participation with no clear impact or action
- Mismatch between the influence promised to participants and the reality
- Lack of communication or transparency at any stage in participation
- _____



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citizens

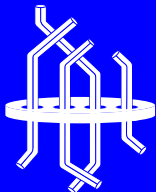
No impact and poor communication

DESIGN CHALLENGES

- How might we communicate the scope and impact of a participatory process to citizens?*
- How might we ensure transparent communication throughout the process?*
- How might we build public trust in participatory processes and its outcomes?*
- How might we drive meaningful action from a participatory process?*

Difficulty commissioning and integrating digital tools

TECH
01
BARRIER



deliver

Common features experienced

- Exclusion of early-stage civic tech companies from public procurement
- Rigid government workflows that are difficult to integrate with digital democracy platforms
- Inflexible institutional contracts with IT providers that hamper the integration of new tools
- Regulatory constraints that limit the integration of digital tools
- _____



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citizens

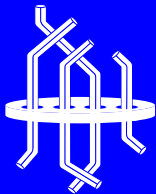
Difficulty commissioning and integrating digital tools

DESIGN CHALLENGES

- How might we adapt procurement to enable more organisations to bid for digital participation projects?*
- How might we design digital democracy tools to easily integrate with existing workflows?*
- How might we enable experimentation with digital tools outside of regulatory constraints?*

Low trust in and poor usability of tech

TECH
02
BARRIER



deliver

Common features experienced

- Lack of in-person events resulting in falling participation on digital platforms
- Lack of trust in the privacy and security of technology, particularly private platforms
- Poor usability of technology
- _____



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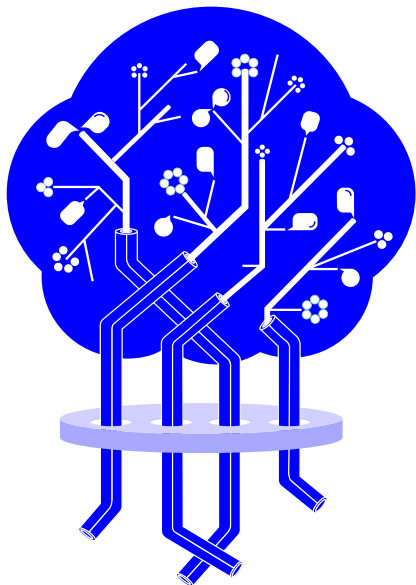


citizens

Low trust in and poor usability of tech

DESIGN CHALLENGES

- How might we create experiences on digital that offer something different to offline engagement?*
- How might we increase public trust in tools for participation?*
- How might we enable seamless and integrated online and offline participation?*
- How might we ensure the tool fits the needs of the user?*
- How might technology enable people to contribute?*



**expand democratic
innovations
barrier cards**

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Use the expand barrier cards if you want to explore challenges around:

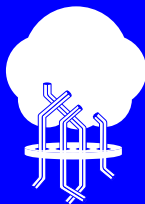
- Measuring and monitoring the diversity of participants.**
- Forming an inclusive and equitable environment for participation.**
- Reaching marginalised communities.**
- Reaching communities that do not traditionally participate.**
- Creating inclusive and accessible digital environments.**

A lack of diversity in participants and institutions

PEOPLE

03

BARRIER



expand

Common features experienced

- Participants who are not representative of the population
- Inconsistency in how diversity is described or measured
- Municipality staff and facilitators who are not representative of the wider population
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institutions



citizens

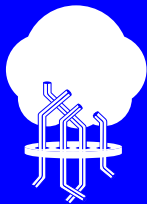
A lack of diversity in participants and institutions

DESIGN CHALLENGES

- How might we monitor the diversity of citizens while protecting privacy?*
- How might we ensure people who are typically underrepresented participate?*
- How might we design participation to be welcoming for all?*
- How might we ensure people see themselves in the institutions they are engaging with?*

People lack the incentive or motivation to engage

PEOPLE
04
BARRIER



expand

Common features experienced

- Belief by citizens that institutions will not listen to them
- Participation fatigue suffered by marginalised groups
- Failure to compensate or reward participants adequately for their time
- Topics of debate that do not motivate people
- _____



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citizens

People lack the incentive or motivation to engage

DESIGN CHALLENGES

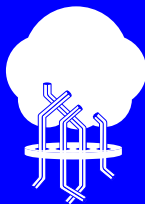
- How might we build citizens' trust in institutions through the participation process?*
- How might we build confidence from marginalised groups that institutions will act on their input?*
- How might we ensure that everyone impacted by can participate?*
- How might we demonstrate the impact of participation to citizens?*
- How might we design a process around community priorities?*
- How might we understand the diversity of reasons for participating to motivate a representative group of participants?*

Processes that some citizens cannot access

PROCESS

03

BARRIER



expand

Common features experienced

- Written and verbal communication that does not represent the diversity of languages spoken within a city
- Activities that are inaccessible due to time or place
- Poor information and communication design
- _____



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citizens

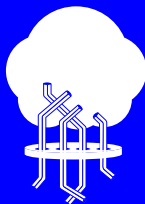
Processes that some citizens cannot access

DESIGN CHALLENGES

- How might we ensure people can access information and contribute in their strongest language?*
- How might we ensure that complex topics are easy to understand?*
- How might we ensure that no one is left behind as the process progresses?*
- How might we ensure that all the needs of participants are considered in the design of the process?*
- How might we expand the reach of a deliberative activity beyond those that take part?*

Processes that exclude some citizens

PROCESS 04 BARRIER



expand

Common features experienced

- Identity verification that prevents participation
- Digital and physical institutional environments that intimidate and exclude some people
- Factors such as group dynamics and dominant participants that can favour overrepresented voices



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citizens

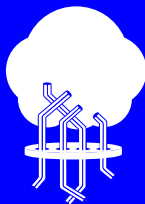
Processes that exclude some citizens

DESIGN CHALLENGES

- How might we design to elevate the value of lived experience?*
- How might we design for an equitable process, where social or financial capital does not influence the results?*
- How might we design participation that taps into existing community organising?*
- How might we create an equitable environment for debate and discussion?*
- How might we create a neutral environment that is welcoming?*
- How might we create an inclusive identification process?*

Digital exclusion

TECH
03
BARRIER



expand

Common features experienced

- People affected by digital poverty or who lack digital skills
- People with diverse needs
- Lack of funding for inclusive technology design

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citizens

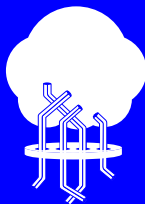
Digital exclusion

DESIGN CHALLENGES

- How might we design for diverse needs in civic tech?*
- How might institutions ensure that technology meets inclusion and accessibility standards?*
- How might we prioritise inclusive and accessible technology design?*
- How might we ensure people without access to technology or data can still participate in the process?*

Technology amplifying negative interactions

TECH
04
BARRIER



expand

Common features experienced

- Echo chambers and digital trolls
- Unstructured or unmoderated participation that reduces the quality of debate and increases the risk of abuse
- Technology amplifying competition
- _____



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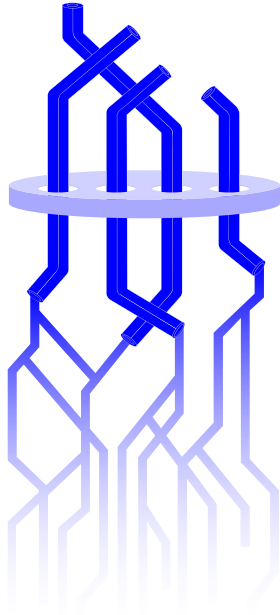


citizens

Technology amplifying negative interactions

DESIGN CHALLENGES

- How might we use technology to bring people together?*
- How might we reduce polarising opinions and form consensus through technology?*
- How might we structure digital engagement to increase meaningful and inclusive discussion?*
- How might we moderate digital engagement to increase meaningful and inclusive discussion?*
- How might we encourage community building rather than competition?*



**embed democratic
innovations
barrier cards**

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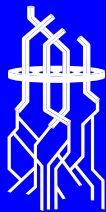
nesta.org.uk/toolkit/advancing-democratic-innovations-toolkit/

Use the embed barrier cards if you want to explore challenges around:

- Sustaining a project beyond pilot stage.**
- Developing wider institutional and non-partisan belief in participation.**
- Giving citizens power over high-stakes and long-term issues.**
- Creating the procedural and regulatory environment for participation.**
- Adopting open government principles such as transparency and open data.**

Reluctance of institutions to share real power

PEOPLE
05
BARRIER



embed

Common features experienced

- Processes focused on low-stakes issues
- Institutional fears of losing control and the belief that experts know better
- Participation as a tool to quell citizen-organising
- _____



institutions



citizens

Reluctance of institutions to share real power

DESIGN CHALLENGES

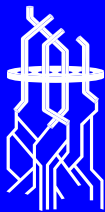
- How might we extend the power citizens have through each participation exercise?*
- How might we emphasise the value of citizens' lived experience expertise?*
- How might we grow institutional trust in people through participation?*
- How might institutions grow a connection with the communities they serve?*

Partisanship and outsourcing

PEOPLE

06

BARRIER



embed

Common features experienced

- Partisanship limiting the adoption of participatory practices across institutions
- Outsourcing limiting the embedding of results
- Outsourcing limiting the development of skills and competencies
- _____



institutions



citizens

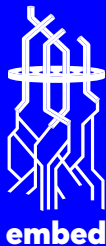
Partisanship and outsourcing

DESIGN CHALLENGES

- How might we grow institutional skills through a participatory process?*
- How might we design a participatory process that lives beyond one term?*
- How might we create a long-term plan for cultural transformation across parties?*
- How might we build ownership of participation across party lines?*
- How might we build citizen demand for participation across political divides?*

Short-term and siloed processes

PROCESS
05
BARRIER



Common features experienced

- Processes that focus on short-term outcomes
- Processes that are siloed within departments
- Institutional processes and constraints that are not clear to citizens
- _____



institutions



citizens

Short-term and siloed processes

DESIGN CHALLENGES

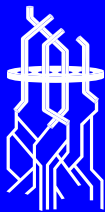
- How might we extend participation beyond the department it starts in?*
- How might we design participation for the long-term?*
- How might outputs from participation processes feed into other institutional departments?*
- How might we embed participation into existing policy processes?*
- How might we plan ahead to ensure institutional constraints do not limit the output or design of participation?*

Compliance without conviction

PROCESS

06

BARRIER



embed

Common features experienced

- Institutions mandating participation without sufficient support and driving a 'box ticking' culture
- Participation officer 'burnout' from working against the grain of the institution
- _____



institutions



citizens

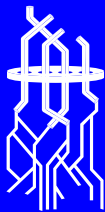
Compliance without conviction

DESIGN CHALLENGES

- How might we ensure processes are designed to have a meaningful impact on policy?*
- How might we secure investment in processes to ensure quality?*
- How might we create the regulatory environment and culture to support participation and those delivering it?*
- How might we ensure that the responsibility for participation is experienced across the institution?*

Poor development and maintenance of digital tools

TECH
05
BARRIER



embed

Common features experienced

- Funding focused on individual projects
- Investment in proprietary software that becomes obsolete
- Failure to keep tools relevant and active
- _____



institutions



citizens

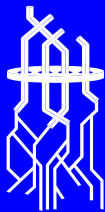
Poor development and maintenance of digital tools

DESIGN CHALLENGES

- How might we build long-term funding for digital tools?*
- How might we improve digital tools iteratively alongside participation processes?*
- How might we develop new business models for funding and investment in open source tools?*
- How might we facilitate a strong civic hacker community?*

Transparency and security risks

TECH
06
BARRIER



embed

Common features experienced

- Selective transparency and digital vulnerability
- Fear of security risks



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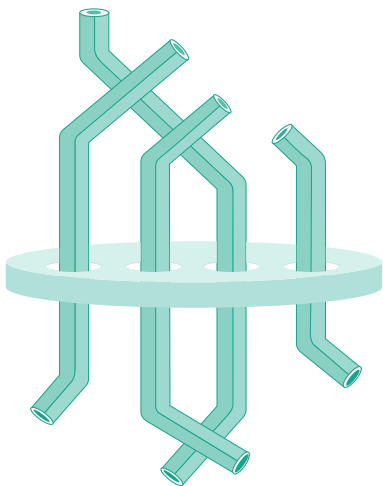


citizens

Poor development and maintenance of digital tools

DESIGN CHALLENGES

- How can digital participation tools drive a more open government?*
- How might institutions embed transparency throughout their participation platform?*
- How might citizens demand greater transparency from institutions?*
- How might we build radically transparent institutions that gain trust from citizens?*
- How might we design for security?*
- How might we design for privacy?*



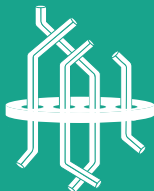
**deliver democratic
innovations
enabler cards**

Gain senior and multi-departmental buy-in

PEOPLE

01

ENABLER



deliver

Find senior political and institutional champions and build cross-departmental support to drive participation and ensure outcomes are realised.



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Gain senior and multi-departmental buy-in

ACTIONS

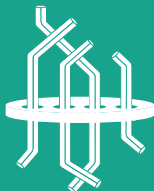
1. **Find participation champions** by identifying topics of political deadlock, that are unpopular or political parties are yet to develop a strong stance.
2. **Build awareness and ownership across departments** through process co-design and senior sponsorship and advisory panels.

Build skills and capabilities

PEOPLE

02

ENABLER



deliver

Build participatory, digital and analytical skills to gain support for and interest in participatory processes and deliver these to best practice.



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citizens

Build skills and capabilities

ACTIONS

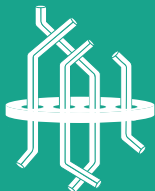
1. **Choose the right team structure and resource for success:** *generally, if staff resources are low, use outsourced staff and easy-to-operate platforms; if the team is bigger and better-resourced, building from open-source tools will be a worthwhile long-term investment.*
2. **Hire in-house community engagement specialists.**
3. **Train for outreach and facilitation skills.**

Start small and focused, then scale

PROCESS

01

ENABLER



deliver

Start participation processes small and focus them on clearly bounded issues with predefined outputs and responsibilities.



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citizens

Start small and focused, then scale

ACTIONS

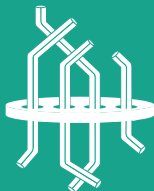
- 1. Set clear and tangible objectives that align with wider strategic goals for the municipality.**
- 2. Start by starting:** create a 'learn by doing' culture.
- 3. Plan for and protect time for institutions and teams to deliver processes.**
- 4. Evaluate and redesign throughout.**

Transparent processes and communication

PROCESS

02

ENABLER



deliver

Ensure processes follow best practice, are accessible to people affected by the issue, are transparent throughout and translate citizen input into clear outputs.



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citizens

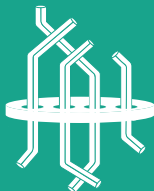
Transparent processes and communication

ACTIONS

1. **Follow best practice:** review case studies and best practice guides to learn from successes and failures in getting the basics right.
2. **Communicate the process and impact** through clear messaging on what will be done and agreeing the tangible impact ahead of the process.
3. **Maintain active and meaningful communication throughout** guided by a strong and adaptive communication strategy.

Shape new business and operating models

TECH
01
ENABLER



deliver

Use creative financial and operational models to deliver innovative forms of participation.



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citizens

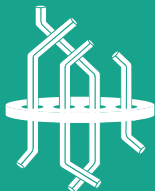
Shape new business and operating models

ACTIONS

- 1. Use existing infrastructure and tools** including social media and corporate licensed software. Existing participation platforms include: off-the-shelf platforms (such as CitizenLab and Delib) and open-source platforms (such as Decidim and Polis).
- 2. Find partners and collaborate,** either from within your organisation or through a network of other institutions seeking digital participation tools.
- 3. Iterate technical development.**

Design for digital

TECH
02
ENABLER



deliver

Do not simply digitise physical processes; use digital to make participation simple, accessible and exciting.



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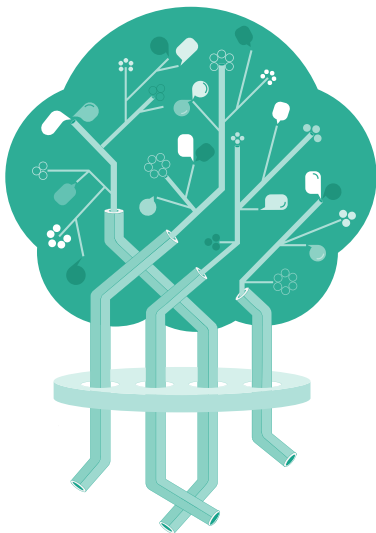


citizens

Design for digital

ACTIONS

- 1. *Keep interactions simple by removing barriers for citizens.***
- 2. *Meet people where they are (digitally) by using digital tools and platforms with an established user base.***
- 3. *Design to enhance rather than replicate in-person processes and interactions.***



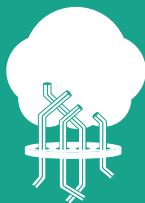
**expand democratic
innovations
enabler cards**

Use independent and diverse facilitators

PEOPLE

03

ENABLER



expand

To build trust and deliver an inclusive process, ensure participants can see themselves in their institutions and in those facilitating the process.



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citizens

Use independent and diverse facilitators

ACTIONS

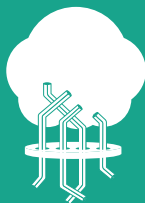
- 1. Set diversity standards** for your organisation, the facilitators and the participants.
- 2. Recruit independent, diverse and local champions** to establish long-term support for a process.
- 3. Train for inclusive moderation** such as facilitation techniques that focus on the safety and equity of participation.

Develop inclusive incentives

PEOPLE

04

ENABLER



expand

Understand people's diverse motivations for taking part, monitor who is participating and adapt outreach and incentives accordingly.



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Develop inclusive incentives

ACTIONS

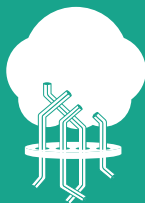
1. **Compensate people fairly for their time** through monetary and non-monetary means such as childcare, transportation and food.
2. **Expand who can participate** by including people that are affected by the topic of participation rather than their citizenship status.
3. **Experiment with and adapt incentives** as motivations vary.

Design for and with the community

PROCESS

03

ENABLER



expand

Design participation through participatory methods so that the community is empowered to set the agenda, shape the process and define the outcome.



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Design for and with the community

ACTIONS

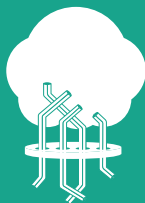
1. **Citizen-led agenda setting and process design** empowers citizens to participate on what is important to them and how they would like to participate.
2. **Use existing community infrastructure** such as existing forums, faith based spaces, schools, private spaces trusted by the community, etc.
3. **Design for community-building** by combining participatory and deliberative practices.

Design for increased access

PROCESS

04

ENABLER



expand

Design processes in a way that enables all community members to participate and reaches the widest range of people affected by the issue.



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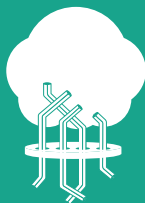
Design for increased access

ACTIONS

1. **Use accessible language for all:**
available in all the languages spoken in the city and in jargon-free, easy to understand framing and format.
2. **Use design methods to increase understanding** of the needs of community, how people behave and their motivations.
3. **Legislate to increase access,**
from accessible website design to protecting employment rights for participating in a citizens' assembly.
4. **Invest in multichannel outreach and access** including social media and in-person activities and marketing.

Treat inclusivity as standard

TECH
03
ENABLER



expand

Design digital tools for and with people that represent citizens' diverse needs.



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citizens

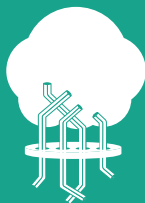
Treat inclusivity as standard

ACTIONS

1. *Design digitally inclusive environments by following inclusive design guides.*
2. *Build a diverse community of contributors through the recruitment of development teams and test users, or through open-source tool development.*
3. *Use tools to increase understanding and level the playing field between participants.*

Design tech for community- building

TECH
04
ENABLER



expand

Thoughtful technology design can drive community-building and collaboration beyond the participatory process.



institutions

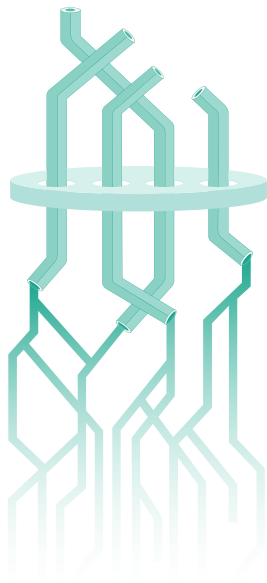


citizens

Design tech for community-building

ACTIONS

1. **Build features for connecting communities** such as a chat function, group forming around interest areas or proposals and providing time for building social relationships.
2. **Design for consensus-forming** to bring people together around shared values.
3. **Build features that encourage inclusive behaviour and language.**



**embed democratic
innovations
enabler cards**

Grow citizen-centred cultures

PEOPLE
05
ENABLER



embed

Work towards the cultural transformation of institutions and political parties so that these centre on citizens and a participatory approach to decision-making.



institutions



citizens

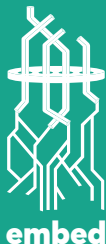
Grow citizen-centred cultures

ACTIONS

1. **Move from outsourced to in-house capacity** through tailored capacity building and the incremental transfer of skills and responsibilities through the contracting of specialist skills.
2. **Build cross-party support and participatory culture** by planning adequate time for relationship building and non-partisan design and custodianship of the process.
3. **Build cross-departmental participatory culture** by bringing together advocates.
4. **Deliver participation internally to build advocates.**

Strengthen community- organising

PEOPLE
06
ENABLER



Build a citizen base empowered with organising, political and subject expertise to drive change beyond participatory processes.



institutions



citizens

Strengthen community-organising

ACTIONS

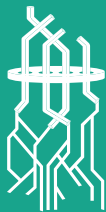
1. ***Set community capacity-building as an objective to support public service delivery and collective action.***
2. ***Build empowered citizen networks by supporting strong 'horizontal' or citizen-to-citizen relationships.***

Embed participation into existing policy processes

PROCESS

05

ENABLER



embed

Design with existing and future policy processes in mind to embed participatory practice and outcomes into policy.



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citizens

Embed participation into existing policy processes

ACTIONS

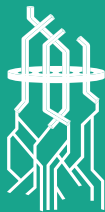
1. *Align participation with existing policy cycles.*
2. *Create accountable teams with a mandate to deliver.*

Design new citizen-led institutions

PROCESS

06

ENABLER



embed

Reimagine institutional processes, regulation and guidelines to realise the full potential of participatory governance.



institutions



citizens

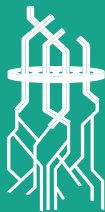
Design new citizen-led institutions

ACTIONS

1. *Design participatory participation by designing your process with communities.*
2. *Establish a new regulatory environment that can provide the framework for delivering and auditing participatory processes.*
3. *Establish new standards of practice that are aligned with strategic and long-term planning.*

Use technology as a tool for transformation

TECH
05
ENABLER



embed

Use digital democracy tools to drive institutions to become more transparent and scale participatory practice.



institutions



citizens

Use technology as a tool for transformation

ACTIONS

1. *Use digital transformation to drive institutional transformation.*
2. *Grow open and interconnected government through citizen-to-institution, institution-to-citizen and interdepartmental communication, as well as distributed responsibility for transparency.*

Build open-source tools and a civic tech community

TECH
06
ENABLER



embed

Facilitate the growth of a strong hacker and civic tech community to drive the development of digital democracy tools and grassroots networks.



institutions



citizens

Build open-source tools and a civic tech community

ACTIONS

1. **Consolidate and refine tools** to ensure they reach the standards expected in public service delivery.
2. **Form a strong civic hacker community** by investment in open-source tools, physical spaces for communities to organise, providing access to data and creating an open relationship between communities and institutions.