



Participatory Budgeting in Regione Lazio



Participation

The Government of Regione Lazio believes that the Participatory Budgeting it is not just an exercise to share information with local communities and citizens, but a key tool to improve direct and deliberative democracy.

The ultimate goal of the Participatory Budgeting is to fill the gap between governments and citizens in order to strengthen representative democracy, which is currently undergoing a deep crisis in the Western world due to the progressive decline of “mass” political parties.

Thus, since 2006 Regione Lazio has adopted the idea of Participatory Budgeting by Regional Accounting Law.



Testing phase

In 2007, Lazio Region has had its first concrete experience of Participatory Budgeting.

Thousands of citizens have expressed their priorities on the following issues:

- **Environment**
- **Labour**
- **Transportation**
- **Welfare**

Based on citizens' feedback, Lazio Region has increased the financial resources of its 2008 budget for recycling waste and renewable energy development programs.



Testing phase

- Nel 2007 è stato effettuato un interessante esperimento di bilancio deliberativo
 - Ad un campione statistico rappresentativo sono stati posti dei quesiti attraverso un questionario su rilevanti decisioni di spesa e di entrata
 - se era giusto ridurre i posti letto di ricovero acuto in cambio di una riorganizzazione dei presidi ospedalieri,
 - se era opportuno dare vita a forme di finanza etica

Testing phase

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 - se era opportuno dare vita a forme di finanza etica
 - Se era opportuno migliorare il sistema dei trasporti o ridurre la pressione fiscale
- Dal campione è stato estratto un sottoinsieme di 300 persone che è stato invitato una domenica a partecipare in Regione ad una discussione (facilitata da un opuscolo e da una persona specializzata) sugli stessi temi

Testing phase

- Alla fine della discussione, svoltasi sia in sede plenaria sia in gruppi ristretti il sottocampione è stato interrogato di nuovo ed il risultato è stato confrontato con il precedente.
- E' stata una esperienza molto interessante: girare per i gruppi ha consentito di vedere direttamente i cittadini che discutevano delle politiche regionali

Testing phase

In a two year period (2006-2007) Lazio Region has spent over €1.4 million to help 130 municipalities involving city residents in the budgeting decision-making process.

This initiative has involved one municipality out of 4, in Lazio, with the participation of over 1 million people. After this experience, Lazio comes out as the European Region with the highest number of municipalities that adopted Participatory Budgeting.

The results of this first experience are available at www.economiapartecipata.it



Implementation phase

The 2008 Regional budget includes the allocation of €30 millions which will be given to those local authorities that have designed their infrastructure and social development projects through Participatory Budgeting.

In addition, in May 2008 Lazio Region has published a call for tender of €700.000 reserved to those public authorities that want to adopt Participatory Budgeting practices.



Participation tools

Participation requires the preliminary reorganization of budgeting tools. To make participation real, budgeting practices must be fully understandable, so that anyone can actually express their opinion on the budget provisions.

Accordingly, Regione Lazio has carried out several improvements on:

DPFER (Regional Financial and Economic Forecast Document) in order to make clear distinction between the macroeconomic forecast scenario and the specific yearly measures

Budget of each Regional Department (Assessorato)

On time approval of the Regional Budget

Clear separation between the role of Regional Government (Giunta) and the Regional Council (Consiglio) on the budgeting decision-making process



Participation tools

Regione Lazio believes that Social and Participatory Budgeting is the right approach for building accountability based on social commitment. That is that citizens can participate directly or indirectly and ask for their government and PA to be accountable.

Therefore, in 2007, Regione Lazio has decided to implement a Social Budget Report in order to convey its belief for a more accountable policy making.

While this Report satisfies the demand of measuring the Regional Budget impact, it also allows citizens, local communities and NGOs to use it as a tool to verify the accountability of the Regional offices.



Budget decision-making

- ❑ **Balancing the various and sometimes conflicting interests**
- ❑ **Policy-making process rather than merely technical**
- ❑ **Procedures can help the various actors to reach the aimed goals**
- ❑ **Main actors include:**
 - **directly: National Government and Parliament (direct)**
 - **indirectly: Corte dei Conti (Control and Audit)**

The inherent characteristics of the decision-making process facilitate the implementation of standard procedures and rules (being a circular process that repeats every year)

