Institutionalising public deliberation
Step 1 DISCOVER
Step 2 IMPLEMENT
Step 3 EVALUATE
Step 4 EMBED
First empirical, comparative study of representative deliberative processes for public decision making

- 289 examples from 1986 – Oct 2019
- 18 OECD countries + international level
- All levels of government
- 12 models of deliberative processes
- 11 principles of good practice
The “deliberative wave” has been building since 1979, gaining momentum since 2010.

Note: n=566; Data for OECD countries is based on 24 OECD countries that were members in 2021 plus the European Union. Processes that spanned over multiple years are noted by the year of their completion (except for permanent ongoing processes).

Source: OECD Database of Representative Deliberative Processes and Institutions (2021).
Good Practice Principles for Deliberative Processes for Public Decision Making

1. Purpose
2. Accountability
3. Transparency
4. Representativeness
5. Inclusiveness
6. Information
7. Group deliberation
8. Time
9. Integrity
10. Privacy
11. Evaluation
### Why is deliberation different?

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<th>Better policy outcomes because deliberation results in considered public judgements rather than public opinions.</th>
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<td>Most public participation processes are not designed to be representative or collaborative. Deliberative processes, on the other hand, create the space for learning, deliberation, and the development of informed recommendations, which are of greater use to policy and decision makers.</td>
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<th>It gives public officials and policy makers greater legitimacy to make hard choices.</th>
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<td>These processes help policy makers better understand public priorities, and the values and reasons behind them, and identify where consensus is and is not feasible. Evidence suggests that they are particularly useful in situations where there is a need to overcome political deadlock and weigh trade-offs.</td>
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<th>Enhance public trust in government and democratic institutions by giving citizens a significant role in public decision making.</th>
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<td>People are more likely to trust a decision that has been influenced by ordinary people than one made solely by government.</td>
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Why do representative deliberative processes work?

1. Independence: Thanks to civic lotteries, the members of a deliberative body can avoid being ‘captured’ by interest groups or influenced by powerful or wealthy people and organisations.

2. Cognitive diversity: Research has shown that, for developing successful ideas, diversity is more important than the average ability of a group.

3. Favourable conditions for quality deliberation: Information, time, and skilled facilitation lead to informed, detailed, and rigorous recommendations, which consider trade-offs.

4. A focus on the common good: The members are not there to represent any particular interest group, company, political party, etc. They are there to collectively develop recommendations for the common good.

5. High levels of trust: People have lost trust in politicians and experts, but they do trust everyday ‘people like them’. At the end of a deliberative process, it is its members - a microcosm of the population - who explain their recommendations to the public.
Why institutionalise?

1. To allow public decision makers to take more hard decisions better, as well as more decisions with long-term impacts (such as on climate change, biodiversity, emerging technology, urban planning, infrastructure investment, and other issues of this nature).

2. To enhance public trust. Public trust has been declining for decades. A one-off deliberative process can make a difference, but it is the regular practice of public deliberation that gives people and decision makers the opportunity to build mutual trust.

3. To make representative deliberative processes easier and less expensive. Costs and resources are saved by not starting from scratch every time.
Institutionalisation also reinforces democracy.

Adding public deliberation and civic lotteries to democracy extends the privilege of representation to a much larger group of people.

These processes strengthen people’s agency, harness collective capacity, and awaken a collective consciousness that connects people to one another and to something bigger than themselves.

It often leads to increased levels of political efficacy amongst members of deliberative bodies as well as the broader public.

Seeing ‘people like me’ participating in complex public decision making can have a similar effect on those not directly involved but aware of the process.

Institutionalisation scales the positive impact that participation has on people’s perception of themselves and others, strengthening societal trust and cohesion.
Combining deliberative and direct democracy

Connecting deliberation to parliamentary committees

Standing citizens’ advisory panels

Giving people the right to demand a deliberative process

Embedding deliberative processes in local strategic planning

Requiring public deliberation before certain types of public decisions

Sequenced deliberative processes throughout the policy cycle

Combining a permanent citizens’ assembly with one-off citizens’ panels

8 ways to institutionalise deliberative democracy
1a. Ostbelgien Model

**Citizens' Council**
- 24 Members
- One third of Members rotate every six months
- 25-50 people chosen by civic lottery
- Min. 3 meetings over 3 months

**Citizens' Panel**
- Face-to-face meetings over 1.5 year period
- Collectives recommendations

**Regional Parliament**
- 25 MPs
- Minimum 2 parliamentary debates about recommendations

**Response**
- Citizens' Council monitors response to and implementation of Citizens' Panels recommendations

**Secretariat**
- Full-time parliamentary staff devoted to organisation of CC and CPs

**Civic lottery**
- Chooses issues
1b. Paris Citizens’ Assembly

Citizens’ Assembly
- 100 Members
- 16 years +
- Residents of Paris
- 1 year mandate

Current Affairs Questions + Vœux Evaluation Mission Local Bill of Citizens’ Jury

Chooses issue

Citizens’ Jury
17 Members

Local Bill Proposal

Chooses theme of Paris Participatory Budgeting

Min. 2 meetings/year in plenary Working group meetings regularly, at interval determined by members

Paris Council
163 Councilors

Required to provide written response at time of submission and one year later

Secretariat
Full-time council staff devoted to organisation of CA and CJs

Oversight committee
- Representatives of CA
- Representative from each political party
- 4 deliberation experts
2a. Deliberative Committees

Citizen initiated (1,000 signatures)

Deliberative Committee
- 45 residents of Brussels + 15 MPs
- 16 years+

Citizens – secret vote

Collective recommendations

MPs – public vote

Brussels Parliaments
- 89 MPs

Information evening + minimum 4 days of face-to-face meetings

MPs involved in the committee follow up on recommendations within 6 months

Response
Deliberative Committee reconvened for one day. Government and parliament are obliged to respond to all recommendations

Secretariat
Full-time parliamentary staff devoted to organisation of committees

Oversight committee
- 2 parliamentary staff
- 4 experts on topic of deliberation
- 4 deliberation experts
2b. Options for adding public deliberation to NSW Committees

**OPTION A:**
Considered input from citizens

- Civic lottery
  - Citizens’ Jury + 8 MPs who are Members of the Committee
  - 90 minutes working together
  - 2 meetings over 2 weekends
  - Citizens’ Jury report that outlines experts, information & questions citizens would like committee to consider

**OPTION B:**
Balance of submissions

- Civic lottery
  - Citizens’ Jury + 8 MPs
  - 4 meetings over 4 weekends
  - Citizens’ Jury and MPs co-author report about where they find a balance among competing submissions

**OPTION C:**
Citizens’ Jury in partnership with Committee

- Civic lottery
  - Citizens’ Jury + 8 MPs
  - 6 meetings over several weekends
  - Citizens’ Jury and MPs co-author report after finding common ground on recommendations that answer remit put to them by committee chair
3. Citizens’ Initiative Review

Face-to-face meetings for 4.4 consecutive days on average

Civic lottery to select 24 people

Training programme
- Fundamentals of deliberation and evaluating information

Learning and evaluation
- Q&A with pro/con campaigns, and with independent experts
- Assessing information for costs and benefits

Editing and Refining Information
- Discussing and drafting evidence statements

Drafting Pro/Con Statements
- Prioritising and explaining evidence
- Drafting rationales for voting for/against the initiative

Collective statement of key facts

Voters’ Pamphlet
4. Toronto Planning Review Panel

Panel
- 28-32 Members
- Residents of Greater Toronto Area
- 2 year mandate

Ongoing citizen input on issues of planning and transportation

Civic lottery

4 days of learning + training
11 full-day meetings (one every two months)

Toronto City Planning Division
5. Bogotá Itinerant Citizens’ Assembly

- Civic lottery

Citizens’ Assembly
- 110 Members
- Mandate to propose objectives for addressing urban planning challenges
- Divided into 6 commissions

2 weeks of learning (mix of synchronous + asynchronous activities)
2 days of deliberation
Collective proposals delivered to next Citizens’ Assembly

Citizens’ Assembly
- 60 Members (18 of which were also in first assembly)
- Mandate to develop policy recommendations linked to the objectives

2 weeks of learning (mix of synchronous + asynchronous activities)
2 days of deliberation
Collective recommendations

Bogotá City Council
- 45 Councillors
6. Vorarlberg Citizens’ Councils

- **Citizen initiated (1,000 signatures)**
- **Government initiated**
- **Parliament initiated**

Civic lottery

Citizens’ Council
- 15 Members
- Dynamic facilitation

Collective recommendations

Face-to-face meetings for 2 days on average

Citizens’ Café
Recommendations presented to and discussed with broader public

Regional government
7. French law on bioethics 2011

Obligation to organise public debates and deliberations (états généraux) for any change in the laws relating to bioethics

États généraux:
- Consultations and conferences comprised of citizens selected to represent diversity of the public
- Online submissions and surveys
- Representative deliberative processes
All local councils must engage the community through deliberative practices on four strategic documents:

1. Planning and financial management plan
2. Community vision
3. Council plan
4. Financial plan

Deliberative engagement practices must follow characteristics of good design:
- Clear scope and objective
- Access to information
- Representativeness
- Impact
- Transparency throughout the process
Considerations for implementation:

Just as there are numerous considerations for the successful running of parliaments and other democratic institutions, adding public deliberation and civic lotteries to democracy requires certain commitments and infrastructure to be effective:

1. Sustainable political commitment.

2. A self-governing and systemic approach that depoliticises as many aspects as possible.

3. Measures to enable sustainable involvement of the public: Elements that can support this include – but are not limited to – a special position for alumni of deliberative processes, maximum visibility through public communication, and paid leave from work to participate in these processes (such as is the case with jury duty in many countries).
Support from and capacity of public servants is imperative to deliver ongoing, quality public deliberation and follow-up.

Public authorities should establish an office permanently in charge of deliberative processes.

Such an office could be funded by the public authority, but at arm’s length to stay unbiased and trustworthy.

Professional staffing of such an arm’s length body might be by civil service employees or universally respected and impartial civil society organisations or universities under contract.
References:

• Innovative Citizen Participation and New Democratic Institutions: Catching the Deliberative Wave; OECD, 2020
• Good Practice Principles for Deliberative Processes for Public Decision Making; OECD, 2020
• Evaluation Guidelines for Representative Deliberative Processes; OECD, 2021
• Eight Ways to Institutionalise Deliberative Democracy; OECD, 2021
• Database of Representative Deliberative Processes and Institutions; OECD, 2021