Launch Successful
Online Participation Platforms

with the
E-Participation Canvas

Launching a successful participation project online is not something that you should leave up to chance. It is essential that, even before the start of the citizen consultation, all the stakeholders sit around the table to clearly state what their expectations are, as well as which levers are going to be used to reach these goals. Even if it sounds obvious, it is not always easy to find a common space and format to jot down all of this information.

At CitizenLab, we stand by your side each step of the way when you decide to launch an online citizen participation platform. And the most important step of all is undoubtedly the first one. This framework has been designed by our engagement specialists to help local governments and platform administrators.

The three goals of a participation canvas

A participation canvas will help do 3 things:

Brainstorm together: filling the canvas is a good moment for the stakeholders – i.e. you! – to define the end goal of the project and how that goal is going to be achieved.

Get an overview: in the long run, and even weeks after the launch, it is always useful to be reminded at a glance of all the aspects of the process, such as your engagement levers or planned risks and barriers. This framework is also used by our participation specialists who are working with administrations to help them reach their goals.

Give transparency and accountability: the canvas helps make the purpose of the consultation clear, as well as who is involved, and which goals you commit to.

Steps

The canvas covers the different steps of the citizen participation project, from the launch to the assessment.

1) Defining objectives: The first step is to set your goals and choose the relevant metrics that will be used measure success. Is the project aiming to reach a number of votes? To engage a certain age group? How will this be measured?

2) Engaging stakeholders: Attributing clear roles within the administration helps gather support for the project and improves efficient collaboration. It's also key to define who your project is talking to, and how you're going to reach this audience.

3) Planning communications: Having a clear idea of how the input is managed internally, how the feedback is shared with citizens, and what channels are used to promote the platform will help make the project a success.

4) **Agreeing on key dates for the project:** This will keep things ticking along. We also recommend sharing some of these deadlines on the platform.

eParticipation Canvas

Define the different building blocks of your participation platform

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Objectives

Goals

What are the short and long term goals?
What are the processes that will be open continuously?
What processes will be put on the platform?
Did the framework agreement get approved?

Metrics

What is going to be measured and when?
When is the platform going to be a success?

Stakeholders

Organisation

Who are the operational and strategic stakeholders?
Who are the members of the steering committee?
When are the committee meetings planned?

Audience

Who is the targeted audience?
Any particular groups or organisations to focus on?

Communication

Channels and follow-up

What will be the identity of the platform?
How will be the platform fit in the overall communication strategy?
What channels will be used to communicate the launch?

Feedback

Who will process the input?
Does every project have a dedicated moderator?

Risks

What is possible blocking inside the organisation?
What are the external factors to take into account?

Key dates

Any key dates to work towards?
Any upcoming activities or events that create opportunities?