

# **6** Reimagining democratic institutions: Why and how to embed public deliberation

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The evidence suggests that the majority of representative deliberative processes that have taken place have been one-off initiatives, dependent on political will. Their topics have been decided top-down by public decision makers. However, there has been a move towards experimenting with the design of new democratic institutions, which embed deliberative processes in such a way as to make them a permanent part of the policy cycle, or a requirement under certain circumstances. Some of these new institutions also give citizens an agenda-setting role, allowing them to decide which issues should be up for public deliberation and how the remit should be framed. This chapter explores the reasons for and routes to institutionalising public deliberation, as well as its limits.

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## Introduction

Representative deliberative processes for public decision making (referred to interchangeably as deliberative processes for shorthand) have proliferated in many countries over the past four decades. This report includes a database of 289 examples (282 from OECD Member countries), and there are many others underway. There has been a great deal of experimentation with different models (Chapter 2) and design choices (Chapter 4), as well as with various connections to representative and direct democracy. However, two notable commonalities between most examples to date are their one-off nature and that their topics have been decided and defined top-down by public decision makers. Only 14 examples in this OECD report relate to cases of institutionalised practices.

These are some of the reasons why this report explores the future developments of representative deliberative processes, both in terms of how they can become a more permanent feature of democratic systems, and how agendas can be set by citizens rather than just top-down. In some ways, this discussion is nothing new. The academic debate about moving beyond ad hoc practices towards new deliberative institutions has been ongoing for about two decades (Smith, 2001 and 2018; Warren, 2007; Hartz-Karp and Briand, 2009; Elstub, 2010; Setälä, 2017; Gastil and Wright, 2019). However, in the past few years, the theoretical debates have taken place alongside experimentations with different approaches to institutionalisation in practice.

This chapter discusses the reasons for a move towards institutionalising<sup>1</sup> representative deliberative processes. It provides an overview of the different routes attempted so far, briefly discusses the legal, institutional, and budgetary requirements to make institutionalisation possible, and acknowledges the limitations. This is therefore only a preliminary discussion of a much larger and richer set of questions about the topic, which will be explored further in future OECD working and policy papers.

This chapter benefitted from a collaborative approach with a group of leading international practitioners in government, civil society, and academics who provided a substantial contribution with their ideas and comments at the outset<sup>2</sup>.

### ***Defining institutionalisation***

There are two aspects to the meaning of institutionalisation: legal and cultural. Together, they touch on the requirements for sustained change.

Institutionalising deliberation in democratic politics and policy making means incorporating deliberative activities into the rules of public decision making structures and governance arrangements in a way that is legally-constituted so as to establish a basic legal or regulatory framework to ensure continuity regardless of political change.

Institutionalisation also has a cultural dimension. It can refer to regular and repeated processes that are maintained and sanctioned by social norms (Abercrombie, Hill & Turner, 1988), which are important for ensuring that new institutions are aligned with societal values.

## Overview of key findings

The main findings in this chapter are as follows:

- Institutionalising deliberative processes into policy-making cycles and public decision-making procedures can make it possible to: take more hard decisions; conduct better deliberative processes more easily and less expensively; enhance public trust; enrich democracy by expanding meaningful citizen participation; and strengthen the civic capacity of citizens.

- There is no ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach, nor a single ‘best’ design to institutionalise. There is thus a need to consider diverse roadmaps to embedding public deliberation, with various aims.
- Three existing routes to institutionalisation are examined: the establishment of a permanent or ongoing structure for representative citizen deliberation; the establishment of requirements for public authorities to organise representative deliberative processes under certain conditions, and the establishment of rules allowing citizens to demand a representative deliberative process on a specific issue.
- One route to institutionalisation is to create a permanent or ongoing deliberative structure that complements the existing institutions of representative decision making. As of early 2020, permanent or ongoing deliberative bodies have roles that include agenda-setting, oversight, providing ongoing informed input about a particular public policy issue, and similar responsibilities to those of parliamentary select committees. These include:
  - The Ostbelgien Model
  - The Toronto Planning Review Panel
  - The Mextrolinx Regional Reference Panel on Transport in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA)
  - The City Observatory of Madrid
  - The mixed deliberative committees in the parliament of the region of Brussels and the French-speaking parliament in Brussels
  - Goulburn Valley Water Annual Performance Forums
  - City of Kingston Ward Committees.
- Another route to institutionalisation has been to establish requirements for a public authority to organise a representative deliberative process under certain conditions. Examples include:
  - The Citizens’ Initiative Review, where a randomly selected group of citizens prepares a collective statement about significant information they believe voters should know about the pros and cons of a proposed ballot measure. This statement is circulated to all households in their voters’ pamphlet.
  - The 2017 Mongolian Deliberative Polling Law, which sets out that Deliberative Polls have to be organised for any constitutional amendments, projects to be funded by local development funds, or urban planning projects.
  - The Danish Board of Technology and Sciencewise in the UK. They are variations of programmes to involve citizens in policy discussions about complex science and technology issues.
  - The 2011 French law on bioethics, which institutionalises the obligation of the National Consultative Ethics Committee (CCNE) and the parliament to organise public debates and representative citizen deliberations for any changes of the laws relating to bioethics.
  - Municipal laws in two Japanese cities – Yoshikawa and Iwakura – that institutionalise Citizen Deliberation Meetings as a formal method of citizen deliberation to inform public decision making.
- The third route to institutionalising public deliberation involves legislation or regulation that stipulates that citizens are able to demand a public body to organise a representative deliberative process on a specific issue if the number of signatures in support of the demand meets a specified threshold. Examples include:
  - Municipal regulations in the Polish cities of Gdańsk, Kraków, Lublin, and Poznań allow citizens to initiate participation processes, including deliberative processes, by collecting signatures supporting their initiative. The threshold varies from 350 in Lublin to 1,000 in Gdańsk. A

separate threshold exists in some of cities for when enough signatures means that the request cannot be denied: 2,000 in Poznań and 5,000 in Gdańsk.

- The 2013 amendments to the Land constitution of the Austrian state of Vorarlberg to allow citizens to initiate a Citizens' Council with 1,000 signatures.
- Successful institutionalisation requires the right design for the context. This will vary depending on the level of government and other institutional factors.
- Institutionalisation requires support from politicians – not only the ones needed to enact a law or a regulation, but enough of a cross-party consensus to maintain it when governments change.
- Institutionalisation also needs backing by civil servants – not only those at the top of public authorities, but also the “hands on” officials at lower levels who have to incorporate these new practices into their work programmes.
- Achieving greater public backing requires a supportive media environment where outlets and journalists are willing and encouraged to give coverage to deliberative processes.
- Governments should consider drafting pieces of legislation or regulations that introduce a requirement for a deliberative process under certain conditions and to allow citizens to initiate a deliberative process if they gather enough signatures.
- Additional legal support issues (such as access to databases to carry out a random selection process well) need to be addressed to make organising deliberative processes easier, less costly, and to result in better outcomes.
- A next step would be to introduce requirements for employers to provide paid leave to participate in a deliberative process, as is the case with criminal juries, or for public authorities to compensate employers.
- Institutionalisation requires sufficient capacity, both within and outside of government. There need to be enough civil servants who understand the benefits, know how to commission a deliberative process and understand their role as neutral hosts. Equally, there need to be enough highly skilled practitioners who know how to design, organise, run, and facilitate deliberative processes.
- One strategy to address the capacity challenges could be for governments to establish an office permanently in charge of deliberative processes or an office with a broader remit that could also have responsibilities for deliberative processes. This could include an academy of participation to support standards of training, research, and evaluation.
- For institutionalisation to take place, it requires some initial financial investments in establishing sustainable infrastructure. While this requires a budgetary commitment, when deliberative processes are institutionalised they can be less costly than one-off experiences.
- It is important to leave enough room for experimentation and to make changes to institutional design based on evaluation and learning. If it is too highly regulated with too many constraints, institutionalisation could thwart innovation and participation.
- Introducing permanent or ongoing deliberative processes as complementary institutions to representative institutions requires a consideration of how such initiatives enhance existing accountability mechanisms and how participants can be accountable to one another and to members of the public.

## Why institutionalise?

Chapter 1 focused on the question: ‘why deliberation?’, a complementary consideration to the question of institutionalisation. In short, there are seven key reasons why representative deliberative processes can help lead to better public decisions and enhance trust. They can:

1. **Lead to better policy outcomes** because deliberation results in considered public judgements rather than public opinions. Decision making within deliberative processes is informed by expert knowledge; people's own experience and values; and input from the broader community, resulting in informed citizen recommendations to policy makers.
2. **Give decision makers greater legitimacy** to make hard choices.
3. **Enhance public trust** in government and democratic institutions by giving citizens an effective role in public decision making.
4. **Signal civic respect and empower citizens.**
5. **Make governance more inclusive** by opening the door to a more diverse group of people.
6. **Strengthen integrity and prevent corruption** by ensuring that groups and individuals with money and power cannot have undue influence on a public decision.
7. **Help counteract polarisation and disinformation.**

The first chapter also gave an overview of the types of problems that representative deliberative processes are well-suited to address, namely 1) **values-driven dilemmas**, 2) **complex problems** that require trade-offs, and 3) **long-term issues** that go beyond the short term incentives of electoral cycles. Generally, they have also been used to address issues around which there is political deadlock.

With this in mind, institutionalising representative deliberative processes into policy-making cycles and public decision-making procedures can bring the same benefits as described above, and additionally makes it possible to:

1. **Take more hard decisions:** Institutionalising representative deliberative processes can help communities address challenging problems that the government is not able to solve on its own. Involving citizens makes it easier to identify community priorities and overcome resistance of interest groups and intra- and inter-party divisions, enabling action on difficult but necessary policy decisions. Institutionalisation in different ways and at different levels of government thus enables governments to take more hard decisions.
2. **Conduct better deliberative processes more easily and less expensively:** Institutionalisation can make it easier to develop re-usable processes, documents, practitioner capability, etc. This in turn can help to make high quality deliberative processes easier to conduct, less expensive, more effective, and less vulnerable to loss of support as new governments take power. It also makes them quicker to organise as issues emerge, as start-up time can be reduced. Institutionalisation can also improve practice by ensuring collective learning and making it easier to experiment, evaluate, and improve practice over time.
3. **Enhance public trust:** Public participation opportunities, including deliberative processes, have proliferated over the past few decades, but it is difficult to say that they have had a positive impact on overall levels of trust in government, politicians, and policy makers. This is likely partly linked to the one-off, ad hoc nature of most participation exercises, and their limitation to specific and project-related issues. Arguably, institutionalising deliberation (and conducting many more citizen deliberations) can help to increase public trust in government. It opens more opportunities for more people to get closer to the heart of governance and to garner greater empathy for the complexity of public decision making. Institutionalisation can also begin to fundamentally change the relationship between public authorities and citizens.
4. **Enrich democracy by expanding meaningful citizen participation:** Democracy is being governed, but also governing. Through institutionalisation, more people can get closer to being part of the governing process. In doing so, they bring a wider diversity of perspectives into democratic decision making. Governments go to great lengths to ensure political equality when it comes to voting in elections. Extending the same logic to the period in between elections could

mean, for example, having a goal for everyone to receive an invitation to participate in a deliberative process at some point in their lives.

5. **Strengthen the civic capacity of citizens:** Institutionalisation extends and embeds the privilege of representation amongst a wider range of people. The act of representing others is itself a skill and form of democratic fitness that deserves to be extended and cultivated by more people. It means that a larger proportion of society has the opportunity to serve their communities, to experience the complexity of public decision making, and to strengthen their sense of agency and efficacy.

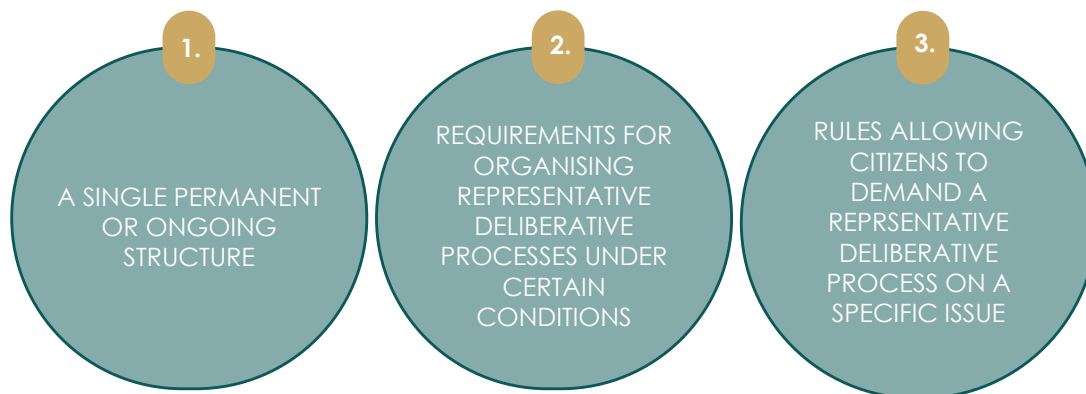
## Different approaches to institutionalising representative citizen deliberation

There is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach, nor a single 'best' design to institutionalise. There is thus a need to consider diverse roadmaps to embedding public deliberation, with various aims. Different models of deliberative processes (see 2) will be useful in different circumstances, for different purposes, at different levels and on different issues. As this is only the starting point for future reflections, the routes that have been tried are considered (Figure 6.1), recognising that other options could be envisaged.

Three existing routes to institutionalisation are examined in this chapter:

1. The establishment of a permanent or ongoing structure for representative citizen deliberation;
2. The establishment of requirements for public authorities to organise representative deliberative processes under certain conditions; and
3. The establishment of rules allowing citizens to demand a representative deliberative process on a specific issue.

**Figure 6.1. Three existing approaches to institutionalising representative citizen deliberation as of 2019**



Source: OECD Database of Representative Deliberative Processes and Institutions (2020)

For each possibility, this chapter describes what it entails, where it is taking place already, and examples of institutionalising other forms of deliberative or participatory practice from which we might learn. There is also potential for these options to be combined in various ways. They could be feasible at all levels of government and, in line with the idea of an open state, in the public sector more broadly (i.e. ministries, departments, agencies, boards, commissions, hospitals, schools, etc.). All of these options are based on the view that elected legislatures and professional civil servants have – and should have – a key role in representative democracies. These measures are designed as institutional arrangements that interact with representative institutions with the aim of strengthening them.

## 1. A permanent or ongoing structure

One route to institutionalisation is to establish a permanent or ongoing deliberative structure that complements the existing institutions of representative decision making. This has various relative advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, certain functions of government require attention on an ongoing basis (such as monitoring implementation and executive branch oversight). Permanent institutions are also harder to dismantle than one-off bodies. On the other hand, there is a greater possibility for ongoing citizens' bodies to be politicised if the individual members have long terms of office. However, this can be –and in the examples thus far, is being – mitigated by regular rotation of members with limited mandates. This means that new members are randomly selected after a certain period of time, ensuring that members are defended “against asymmetries in social and economic power to the extent necessary for [a permanent or ongoing deliberative body] to be democratically effective and realise the goods of political equality and deliberative reasoning” (Owen and Smith, 2019: 280).

Turning to some examples, a permanent deliberative body could be an agenda-setting and oversight council, which could decide on the issues that should be addressed by ad hoc representative deliberative processes like Citizens' Assemblies, Juries, or Panels, as in Ostbelgien (Box 6.1). The Ostbelgien Model refers to three new institutions that have been established through legislation to complement the regional parliament in the German-Speaking Community of Belgium (Ostbelgien). Randomly selected citizens are given new roles of agenda-setting, monitoring implementation, and developing recommendations for parliament.

### Box 6.1. The Ostbelgien Model

On February 25<sup>th</sup> 2019, in Ostbelgien, the German-Speaking Community of Belgium, the parliament unanimously voted in favour of a piece of legislation that establishes three new democratic institutions:

1. A permanent Citizens' Council: it is comprised of 24 randomly selected citizens, who have a mandate to represent fellow citizens for one and a half years. One third of the members rotate every six months. Its mandate is twofold. First, it has an agenda-setting role. It initiates up to three ad hoc Citizens' Panels during its term and decides the issues the Panels should address. Second, the Council has an oversight role, ensuring that the recommendations from the Citizens' Panels are presented and debated in the parliament and receive a response from the relevant parliamentary committee and minister. The Citizens' Council met for the first time on 16 September 2019.
5. Citizens' Panels: There will be between one to three panels per year. Each Citizens' Panel will be comprised of 25 to 50 randomly selected citizens, who will meet for a minimum of three times over three months. The Citizens' Council decides the number of participants and the length of the Citizens' Panel. Citizen proposals that have the support of at least 100 citizens, as well as proposals of parliamentary groups or the government, can also be submitted for the consideration by the Citizens' Council (Parliament of the German-speaking Community of Belgium, 2019).
6. A Secretariat: this consists of full-time officials who are responsible for carrying out the random selection for the Citizens' Council and Citizens' Panels, servicing the Citizens' Council, and organising the Citizens' Panels.

A decree establishing the permanent participatory process can be found here (in English): <https://www.governanceinstitute.edu.au/centres/deliberative-democracy-and-global-governance/working-paper-series> and here (in French): [https://www.pdg.be/PortalData/34/Resources/dokumente/diverses/2019.02.25\\_Dekret-Buergerdialog-FR.pdf](https://www.pdg.be/PortalData/34/Resources/dokumente/diverses/2019.02.25_Dekret-Buergerdialog-FR.pdf)

Another form of permanent deliberative institution could be a standing panel with a longer-term mandate to provide ongoing informed input about a particular public policy issue to public authorities and decision makers. Examples include the Toronto Planning Review Panel and Metrolinx Regional Reference Panel on Transport in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) (Box 6.2). In both cases, a broadly representative group of around 30 residents has been given a two-year mandate to advise the relevant public authority on a variety of questions related to the overarching policy issue on a continual basis. At the end of the two years, a new group is randomly selected to replace the members.

Planning issues seem to be excellent candidates for an ongoing deliberative structure, as these decisions are often controversial and involve difficult trade-offs. There are often legal requirements for public participation, which are not always pleasant for the civil servants who need to conduct them. Representative deliberative processes are designed in a way that helps to overcome political deadlock and tensions, as citizens need to consider the complexity of decisions and find common ground.

### **Box 6.2. Planning and Transportation Standing Panels in Toronto**

#### **Toronto Planning Review Panel, 2015-2017 and 2017-2019**

The Toronto Planning Review Panel was an ongoing deliberative body, embedded into the city's planning division, which enabled ongoing citizen input on the issues of planning and transportation. Its members served two-year terms, after which time a new cohort was randomly selected to be representative of the Greater Toronto Area.

A group of 28 randomly selected residents from all parts of the greater Toronto area met for 11 full-day meetings from 2015-2017. Prior to deliberation, participants met for four days of learning and training.

A similar panel was appointed for the period of 2017-2019, this time consisting of 32 randomly selected citizens.

At the time of writing, there was a pause following the conclusion of the second cohort pending a review of the planning department's engagement strategy.

More information is available at: <http://bit.ly/3brvnxy>.

#### **Metrolinx Standing Panel on Transportation, 2018-2020**

Similarly, the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) transport authority, Metrolinx, has established a Regional Reference Panel to give 32 randomly selected residents the mandate to provide informed advice on managing the growing transport demand over the next 25 years and achieving Metrolinx's goals in a manner that reflects the values and priorities of all residents. The Regional Reference Panel met for 11 full-day meetings between October 2018 and May 2020.

Metrolinx's Planning and Development Department is seeking the Panel's recommendations on issues such as:

- improving seamless connections between regional transportation services;
- setting high standards for traveller experience and design excellence;
- managing congestion and demand during peak hours;
- expanding access to cycling infrastructure;
- and preparing for new transportation modes and shared mobility services.

More information is available at: <http://www.metrolinx.com/en/aboutus/inthecommunity/mrrp/default.aspx>.

It is also possible to combine digital, deliberative, and direct democracy, as demonstrated by the City Observatory in Madrid (Box 6.3). A new institution established through a regulation passed in January



2019 gave a representative group of 49 citizens agenda-setting power to decide the issues that should go to a local referendum. Those issues could either come from the online platform *decide.madrid*, or could be elaborated by the Observatory members on any topic related to municipal policy. This decision has the potential to solve a big challenge with direct democracy more generally – the highly undemocratic practice of setting the agenda based on gathering large numbers of signatures.

### Box 6.3. Madrid City Observatory

#### Proposal review and agenda-setting

The City Observatory is a model of a permanent deliberative body that has been developed and implemented in Madrid city council in Spain. It was established through a regulation passed on 29 January 2019 that transformed the existing City Observatory into a deliberative body comprised of randomly selected citizens with new competencies. The initial Observatory was limited to a regular meeting between governing politicians and civil servants to analyse data about citizens' opinions (collected through traditional means like opinion polls, focus groups, etc.). Until this regulatory change, the City Observatory had not held any meetings for several years.

In the first week of February 2019, the Council sent out 30,000 letters to households inviting them to be selected for the Observatory. On 12th March 2019, the 49 inaugural members were randomly selected among the 1,135 people who put themselves forward. The group of 49 was chosen stratifying for gender, age, and geographical location (which is strongly correlated to income distribution) to ensure representativeness. Mandated to address and propose solutions to key issues for the well-being of citizens in Madrid, the design of the City Observatory was for members to meet and deliberate over citizen proposals a minimum of eight times per year (Madrid City Council, 2019).

The agenda of the meetings was informed by the proposals submitted to the *decide.madrid* online platform. At each meeting, (at least) the most popular proposal on the platform was discussed. Observatory members analysed the proposals and could suggest improvements if the author of the proposal agreed. They were also free to define their own agenda and focus on any issues within the municipality's competencies. The members then had the power to send the citizen proposals, as well as their own proposals, to a local referendum, in this way opening up meaningful opportunities for participation in both setting the agenda and having a say in decision making.

It is an example of digital democracy, deliberative democracy, and direct democracy combined in an innovative way. However, after a change in government in May 2019, the future of the City Observatory was brought into question. After a period of many months that involved announcements to abolish the City Observatory and a public consultation on the matter, in February 2020, the composition and function of the Observatory reverted back to a body comprised of governing politicians and civil servants.

This example highlights the necessity of institutionalising such initiatives into policy and legislation, so that they become less dependent on political shifts and become an integral part of the democratic architecture (Chwalisz, 2019). It also demonstrates the importance of the two aspects of institutionalisation: legal and cultural. While the legal aspect is necessary and important, without a shift in social norms to sustain and sanction continuity, the legal rules are subject to change. It also highlights the need to gather buy-in from all stakeholders across the political spectrum so that it does not become wedded to one political grouping.

The operating rules of the Observatory can be found here (in Spanish): [http://www.bocm.es/boletin/CM\\_Orden\\_BOCM/2019/02/01/BOCM-20190201-42.PDF](http://www.bocm.es/boletin/CM_Orden_BOCM/2019/02/01/BOCM-20190201-42.PDF)

More information about the original design of the City Observatory are here: <https://www.newdemocracy.com.au/2018/11/15/the-city-of-madrid-citizens-council/>

Finally, representative deliberative processes could also be established as permanent institutions with similar responsibilities to those of parliamentary select committees. A first example of how this could work is being piloted by the parliament of the region of Brussels and the French-speaking parliament in Brussels in the form of “mixed deliberative committees”. These ad hoc committees are defined in internal regulations. Fifteen parliamentarians sit alongside 45 randomly selected citizens to develop recommendations for the permanent parliamentary committee on a specific issue (Box 6.4). The question is how to decide on and define the issue that should be put to this mixed deliberative committee. In Brussels, either parliamentarians or a citizen petition with enough signatures can bring forth a topic for consideration.

The use of mixing elected representatives with ordinary citizens will be an interesting experiment. One of the problems with deliberative processes, sometimes, is that they do not necessarily encourage deliberation among decision makers (Parkinson 2004; Stetälä, 2017). Including representatives can help to strengthen their sense of ownership of the process, potentially strengthening the impact. An instance when politicians and randomly selected citizens were mixed in a deliberative process was during the Irish Constitutional Convention in 2013. It was comprised of 66 citizens and 33 elected representatives from the Oireachtas and Northern Ireland Assembly (Farrell, 2014). While there is a risk that politicians could dominate discussions and intimidate citizens (Mansbridge *et al.*, 2012), this did not seem to materialise in Ireland according to observers (Suiter *et al.*, 2016). That may be due to the design of the process, which included skilled facilitation, private individual voting on proposals, and keeping small-group conversations confidential (with only the full-group plenary sessions being shared with the public).

#### **Box 6.4. Mixed deliberative committees in the parliament of the region of Brussels and the French-speaking parliament in Brussels**

##### **Agenda-setting and legislative and policy recommendations**

In December 2019, the parliament of the region of Brussels in Belgium adopted a set of internal regulatory reforms aimed at strengthening citizen participation in their legislative work. One of the enacted measures is the possibility to create “mixed deliberative committees”. The same regulatory change was approved by the French-speaking parliament in Brussels (officially called the French-speaking Community Commission – Cocof), the body responsible for regulating the French-speaking Community in the Brussels-Capital Region (Reuchamps, 2020). It is considered to be the first institutionalised mechanism of its type.

The mixed committees will be comprised of 15 parliamentarians (members of the corresponding thematic permanent committee) and 45 randomly selected citizens (Brussels’ residents who are over 16 years’ old). The exact selection mechanism and rules were yet to be published at the time of publication. These deliberative committees can be initiated in one of two ways: either by parliamentarians or at the request of at least 1,000 Brussels residents (1,200,000 inhabitants), although the final decision lies with the Parliament. The topics to be discussed must be of a regional scope within the competencies of the Parliament.

The mandate of the mixed committee is to meet several times, with the possibility of requesting the presence of experts, and to publish a report with recommendations for the Parliament on a specific issue. This report will have to be studied and discussed by the corresponding permanent parliamentary committee and other committees if needed. No more than six months later, the parliament must publish a report to explain the decisions and its follow-up to the recommendations.

The enacted modification to the internal rules of the regional parliament can be found here (In French and Dutch): <http://weblex.brussels/data/arccc/doc/2019-20/106936/images.pdf>

Further examples of permanent deliberative processes used for monitoring the implementation of recommendations are outlined in Box 6.5. All of these possibilities demonstrate that a permanent institution would not mean that its members would be in place for a long period. Like ad hoc processes, its members would be chosen by lottery, and would be replaced (or rotated) after a certain amount of time and/or on an issue-by-issue basis. The permanence of the institution, however, would help the public to recognise the body as playing a specific role in public decision making processes. They could provide citizens with the opportunity to play different roles in addition to those of developing and proposing recommendations on specific policy issues, notably agenda-setting and oversight.

It will take time to know how these various examples of institutionalised permanent and ongoing deliberative processes work in practice, as most were established only recently and as such there is little evidence of the impact at the time of writing. Their various designs and different approaches to integration into existing representative democratic systems will provide an interesting point of comparison.

### **Box 6.5. Annual Performance Forums and Ward Committees in Australia**

#### **Permanent deliberative processes for monitoring the implementation of recommendations**

##### **Goulburn Valley Water Annual Performance Forums**

Goulburn Valley Water, a water provider in Victoria's Hume Region, set up a deliberative process for 2018-2023 to involve citizens in setting the price for water, which touched on all aspects of how the water authority operates. Annual Performance Forums were established to review the implementation of the pricing plan throughout its duration. The 40 citizens who were selected included randomly selected people from the original pricing forum and a new group of randomly selected participants. Meetings are held annually and participants are compensated for their time.

More information: <https://www.gvwater.vic.gov.au/community/community-engagement/annual-performance-forum>

##### **City of Kingston Ward Committees**

The local council in Victoria, City of Kingston, appoints three ward committees composed of randomly selected and demographically stratified citizens for two years. Ward committees provide strategic advice on a range of key issues. Launched in 2019, ward committees have a mandate to provide input to councillors on key initiatives. Their recommendations are presented during councillor information sessions.

More information is available at: <https://www.kingston.vic.gov.au/Community/Community-Groups-and-Networks/Committees-and-Networks/Ward-Committees>

## **2. Requirements for organising representative deliberative processes under certain conditions**

The second route to institutionalisation that has been explored has been to establish requirements for a public authority to organise a deliberative process under certain conditions. Following the example of the Citizens' Initiative Review (CIR), ballot or referendum initiatives could be reviewed by a Citizens' Assembly, Jury, or Panel before the public debate and vote (Box 6.6).

In Oregon, where the CIR was initiated and institutionalised, a randomly selected group of citizens prepares a collective statement about significant information they believe voters should know about the pros and cons of the proposed ballot measure. This statement is circulated to all households in their voters' pamphlet. While there is legislation regarding the CIR in the state of Oregon, it has also been piloted by public authorities in Arizona, California, Colorado, and Massachusetts (Healthy Democracy, 2019), as well

as by academics in Finland (Academy of Finland, 2019) and Switzerland (Fenazzi, 2019). More details about the CIR are in Chapter 2.

### Box 6.6. Citizens' Initiative Review

The Citizens' Initiative Review (CIR) is a deliberative process that provides a platform for citizens to evaluate proposed ballot measures and provide informed arguments for both sides of the issue to go out to all voters alongside their ballot papers. To date, the Citizens' Initiative Review has been implemented and institutionalised in the United States in the state of Oregon, where the model was developed by Healthy Democracy.

The CIR is officially authorised by state law. Many elements of the CIR's process are written into the state statute. The law outlines aspects of the panel selection, the process, and the composition and duties of the state Citizens' Initiative Review Commission. When a state-wide CIR takes place in Oregon, the Citizens' Statement that is produced during the process has a place in the official state voters' pamphlet.

On average, Oregon's Citizens' Initiative Reviews have gathered 22 randomly selected citizens for 4.4 consecutive days. Prior to the first meeting, citizens have no information about the policy question they will be addressing. Due to the political pressures of these review, organisers do not prepare briefing documents in advance. Rather, citizens receive all testimony directly from campaigns and experts during the review.

The process begins with a training programme for participants, providing them with the fundamentals of deliberating and evaluating information.

The following stage is learning and evaluation. Participants assess written evidence submitted by opponents and proponents of the ballot measure, and question both campaigners and independent experts. They then add to, edit, deliberate on, and prioritise all the evidence collected.

The editing and refining information phase is carried out in smaller groups where participants are invited to discuss and draft evidence statements, examine costs, benefits, and trade-offs of the proposed ballot measure (Healthy Democracy, 2019).

Finally, they draft a collective statement that includes the most important information for all voters to know. In addition to general information relevant to all voters, participants also select certain evidence that is strongest in favour of and against the measure, and then explain why each piece of evidence is important to one side or the other.

Their final statement is presented publicly in the press conference to the wider public and is included in the voters' pamphlet, which reaches every voter across the state. Compared to the other deliberative engagement models, CIR is less visible publicly until it has finished its work. The final result of the CIR is not addressed to the government, but rather to fellow citizens, helping them make better informed voting choices on ballot measures. The method can be a powerful tool to help counteract the spread of misinformation and disinformation ahead of a vote.

The House Bill establishing the details of the CIR can be found here (in English): <https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2011R1/Downloads/MeasureDocument/HB2634/Enrolled>.

There is more information about the CIR in Chapter 2 about deliberative models.

Another way that this route to institutionalising public deliberation can be achieved is through legislation or regulations that require a deliberative process to take place under certain circumstances or in relation to a

specific policy issue. For instance, a representative deliberative process is required in France for as part of a broader citizen participation exercise for any changes to laws regarding bioethics (Box 6.7).

### Box 6.7. Institutionalised deliberation in France

#### Citizen participation and deliberation in shaping bioethics policy (États généraux de la bioéthique)

Article 46 of the French 7th July 2011 law on bioethics institutionalises the obligation to organise public debates and deliberations for any changes of the laws relating to bioethics. The National Consultative Ethics Committee (CCNE), together with the parliament, is assigned responsibility to organise these public debates, that take the form of États Généraux.

The law defines États Généraux as various forms of citizen consultations and citizen conferences comprised of citizens selected to represent the diversity of the public. Citizens participate via both traditional consultation methods such as online submissions and online surveys, as well as representative deliberative processes where they learn, deliberate and produce recommendations on policy questions.

The 7th July 2011 law is available in French at:

<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000024323102&categorieLien=id>.

A similar piece of legislation is in place in Mongolia since 2017 (Box 6.8). It outlines that a Deliberative Poll (see Chapter 2 for more details about this model) is required to be organised for any constitutional amendments, projects to be funded by local development funds, or urban planning projects. Additionally, in overlap with the third route to institutionalisation described in the following section, the law also gives citizens the right to initiate a Deliberative Poll, if enough signatures are gathered, at the capital city and district levels.

### Box 6.8. 2017 Mongolian Deliberative Polling Law

In 2017, the national parliament of Mongolia passed a “Law on Deliberative Polling”. The law defines the model of Deliberative Polling, sets its principles, defines circumstances under which deliberative polling is to take place, sets the composition and the role of an advisory committee, defines the process of organising a deliberative poll and taking into account its recommendations, as well as ensures funding to carry out such deliberative processes.

According to the law, Deliberative Polls have to be organised for any constitutional amendments, projects to be funded by local development funds, or urban planning projects (Fishkin, 2018:244). It suggests public authorities consider organising a deliberative poll after a request by residents. To initiate a Deliberative Poll in the capital city, 500 resident signatures are required, and to initiate one on district level, 300 signatures are needed (Fishkin, 2018: 245).

The law is available here: <https://www.legalinfo.mn/law/details/12492?lawid=12492>.

Bioethics decisions and constitutional amendments are not the only types of public decisions that can benefit from having requirements for public deliberation in place. In Denmark and the UK, there have been different variations of programmes to involve citizens in policy discussions about complex science and technology issues (Box 6.9).

These are not institutionalised in the sense discussed here – there is no law or regulation requiring deliberative processes to take place on these issues in specific circumstances, so they are not discussed in detail. However, considering them together with the French example (Box 6.7) highlights how the same

principles of having public deliberation requirements on bioethics policy could be applied to broader science and technology issues.

For instance, it could be envisaged that legislation could be passed to ensure that before new legislation or regulation is approved regarding an emerging technology, there is a deliberative process that results in informed citizen recommendations to parliament and/or government on the issue.

### Box 6.9. Deliberative processes for assessing science and technology: Denmark and the UK

#### Danish Board of Technology

The Danish parliament established the Danish Board of Technology (DBT) in 1985 with an aim to institutionalise the assessment of technology in a participatory manner (Joss, 1998). The board was free to choose which technological projects to assess and what methods to use. It was funded by the government. The main criteria for choosing the questions for stakeholder and citizen deliberation were:

- a technological aspect;
- relevance to a large part of society;
- potentially controversial; and
- potential to benefit from discussing cultural and social aspects.

One of the main models of deliberative processes, the Consensus Conference (detailed in Chapter 2), was developed by the Danish Board of Technology for the purpose of stakeholder and citizen deliberation on technology-related policy issues. It was used widely to involve citizens and gather their opinions and recommendations regarding various new technologies.

In 2011, the Danish Board of Technology was abolished by law as a publicly funded institution. Since 2012, it continues its work as a non-profit foundation.

More information is available at: <http://tekno.dk/?lang=en>.

#### UK Sciencewise Programme

Sciencewise is a programme led by UK Research and Innovation, an independent organisation principally funded through the Science Budget by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). It is an initiative of the government to develop policy in the areas of technology and science that is informed by citizen and stakeholder participation.

The Sciencewise programme supports government organisations and bodies in commissioning deliberative processes by providing advice, expertise, and up to 50% of funding. The priority themes include artificial intelligence and data, future of mobility, ageing society, clean growth, genomics, and gene editing. Sciencewise accompanies government organisations during each stage of the dialogue process: from scoping to forming an oversight group, and assessing the impact.

More information is available at: <http://sciencewise.org.uk/>.

In Japan, two cities, Yoshikawa and Iwakura, have institutionalised a specific form of representative deliberative process that translates as Citizen Deliberation Meeting (similar to Planning Cells, see Chapter 2) as a formal method of citizen participation to inform public decision making. The municipal laws in both of these places recommend the use of these Citizen Deliberation Meetings to policy makers, who are able to initiate them for any policy issue. There are no specific conditions specified under which it is obligatory for public authorities to use a representative deliberative process. Rather, it is an example of how the

details of a deliberative model can be put into law to ensure the quality of the process for when it is employed, as well as to encourage its use (Box 6.10).

### Box 6.10. Citizen Deliberation Meetings in cities of Yoshikawa and Iwakura, Japan

Yoshikawa and Iwakura city legislation institutionalises a non-mandatory option for the municipalities to organise Citizen Deliberation Meetings (i.e. a type of a Planning Cell, see Chapter 2) as a formal method of citizen participation to inform their decision making.

The law details various elements that city governments must achieve regarding how these processes should be organised, such as random selection of participants, remuneration, and transparency of information about the meetings.

The existence of these laws has not necessarily led to more Citizen Deliberation Meetings being organised in these two cities than in other Japanese localities. A lesson can be drawn that institutionalising deliberative processes in a way that does not make them mandatory, but only includes them as an option, does not necessarily increase their use. Such a law can, however, be helpful in ensuring minimal standards of representative deliberative processes when they do take place.

The law detailing citizen participation in Yoshikawa via Citizen Deliberation Meetings (in Japanese):

[http://www.city.yoshikawa.saitama.jp/reiki/H416901010015/H416901010015\\_j.html](http://www.city.yoshikawa.saitama.jp/reiki/H416901010015/H416901010015_j.html).

The law detailing citizen participation in Iwakura via Citizen Deliberation Meetings (in Japanese):

<https://www.city.iwakura.aichi.jp/cmsfiles/contents/0000000/385/cllm40000003uje.pdf>.

In the same category of institutionalising processes that have been successful on a one-off basis, public deliberation could also become a regular part of public budgeting. Typically, participatory budgeting entails setting aside a limited proportion of an overall budget and inviting the public to express their preferences about the best use of resources (OECD, 2019). However, there are numerous examples from Australia – Canada Bay (2012), Greater Geraldton (2013), Darebin (2014), and Melbourne (2014) – where citizens were involved in deliberating on and developing proposals for the entirety of a budget (Box 6.11). Arguably, involving citizens to weigh the trade-offs and consider the complexity of an entire budget results in recommendations that consider the bigger picture and the longer-term view than participatory budgeting initiatives limited to one portion of a public budget.

Beyond provisions 8 and 9 of the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government (2017), institutionalising public deliberation on budgeting would also help to strengthen implementation of provision 5.b. of the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Budgetary Governance (2015), which suggests that adherents:

“Provide for an inclusive, participative, and realistic debate on budgetary choices by facilitating the engagement of parliaments, citizens, and civil society organisations in a realistic debate about key priorities, trade-offs, opportunity costs, and value for money”.

### Box 6.11. Institutionalising public deliberation as part of public budgeting

#### Canada Bay, Australia (2012)

In 2012, for the first time in Australia, a local council used a deliberative process to garner informed citizen advice on a full set of decisions regarding services and funding. The council in Canada Bay, in metropolitan Sydney, commissioned a Citizens' Panel that was asked the question: "What services should we deliver in the City of Canada Bay, and how should we pay for them?"

Thirty-six randomly selected and demographically stratified citizens were asked to consider the trade-offs involved in ensuring the delivery of hundreds of services within a constrained revenue environment, and asked them to explore their preferred balance of services and funding changes.

This Citizens' Panel met five times over 2.5 months and had access to detailed information and technical expertise to enquire in detail. The council agreed that the Panel would set the level of service to be provided for in the 2014-18 Delivery Plan, subject to the final approval of council. This example goes beyond consultation and beyond traditional participatory budgeting, allowing the citizens a far greater say in the operations of their local government.

More information is available at: <https://www.newdemocracy.com.au/2013/03/30/city-of-canada-bay/> and in Thompson, Nivek (2012), "Participatory Budgeting – the Australian Way", *Journal of Public Deliberation* 8(2): Article 5.

#### Greater Geraldton, Australia (2013)

In September 2013, the Greater Geraldton council formally approved the implementation of two stratified, random sample Participatory Budgeting (PB) Community Panels. One was a 10 Year Capital Works Participatory Budgeting Panel, tasked with deliberating and recommending a priority list of capital works projects to be funded (around \$70 million AUD over 10 years). This needed to include a set of criteria to determine that ranking that could be used by the city for deciding future priorities.

The second one was the Range and Level of Services Community Panel, tasked with recommending the allocation of 100% of the City Region's operational budget of around \$70 million AUD annually. It had the remit of recommending to the council the community desired range, level, and priority of services to achieve minimal rate increases, or reductions, within the budget limitations set by the council's adopted Long Term Financial Plan.

More information is available in: Hartz-Karp, Janette (2012), "Laying the Groundwork for Participatory Budgeting – Developing a Deliberative Community and Collaborative Governance: Greater Geraldton, Western Australia", *Journal of Public Deliberation* 8(2): Article 6; and in Weymouth, Robert and Janette Hartz-Karp (2015), "Deliberative Collaborative Governance as a Democratic Reform to Resolve Wicked Problems and Improve Trust", *Journal of Economic and Social Policy* 17(1): Article 4.

#### Darebin, Australia (2014)

In 2014, the Darebin city council established an infrastructure fund (\$2 million AUD in 2014-2016) and used a Citizens' Jury process to get advice on how this money should be spent. At the outset, council committed to accepting the Jury's recommendations on an "all or nothing" basis.

The Darebin Participatory Budgeting Citizens' Jury meet for four full days over the course of four months. They reviewed submissions from the Darebin community as well as ideas from the jurors. They presented their recommendations to the mayor and councillors, recommending eight specific infrastructure developments. The council unanimously approved the Jury's recommendations.

More information is available at: <https://www.newdemocracy.com.au/2014/02/20/darebin-participatory-budgeting-citizens-jury/>.



### Melbourne, Australia (2014)

In 2014, the City of Melbourne produced a \$5 billion AUD 10 Year Financial Plan, which was informed by the Melbourne People's Panel, a descriptively representative random sample of 43 citizens who provided a considered set of recommendations to inform the lord mayor and councillors. The City's scope of operations is in the region of \$400m annually. This was the largest city with the largest budget being opened up to citizens through a deliberative process.

More information is available at: <https://participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/10yearplan>.

### 3. Rules allowing citizens to demand a representative deliberative process on a specific issue

Finally, the third route to institutionalising public deliberation is to give citizens the right to initiate a representative deliberative process on a specific issue if they gather enough signatures. This often takes the form of legislation or regulation that stipulates that citizens are able to demand a public body to organise a deliberative process on a specific issue if the number of signatures in support of the demand meets a specified threshold.

As mentioned in the introduction, there are ways to combine the different institutionalisation methods. Some of the previously mentioned examples therefore include the element of citizen initiative, notably the Mixed Deliberative Committees initiated by the parliament of the region of Brussels (Box 6.4) and the Mongolian Deliberative Polling Law (Box 6.9).

Beyond these cases, however, there are additional examples from Poland and Austria where rules have been introduced to allow citizens to demand a deliberative process. Five of the biggest Polish cities have passed local regulations that give citizens the right to demand that a deliberative process is organised if enough signatures are gathered (Box 6.12). This right has not yet been used by citizens.

#### Box 6.12. Local legislation that allows citizens to initiate representative deliberative processes on the local level in Poland

In Poland, the national law allows cities to create local rules on citizen participation (Law 16/95/1990, Article 5). Several cities have used this opportunity to specify the types of methods of citizen participation that can be used. Making use of this national law, the cities of Gdańsk (Law XVI/494/15), Kraków (Law CXI/2904/18), Lublin (Law 722/XXVIII/2017), and Poznań (Law VIII/844/VII/2017) have all institutionalised models of deliberative participation. In Gdańsk, Kraków, Lublin, and Poznań, the law makes an explicit reference to Citizens' Panels ("Panel Obywatelski" in Polish).

In all of these cities, citizens can initiate participation processes, including deliberative processes, by collecting signatures supporting their initiative. The threshold varies from city to city. For instance, 1,000 signatures are required to propose such a process in Gdańsk, and with 5,000 signatures, the request cannot be refused by the mayor. In Lublin, only 350 signatures are required to request a participatory process. In Poznań, a request with 2,000 signatures cannot be denied.

The rules establishing citizen participation in Lublin can be found here (in Polish): <http://bit.ly/2SfOuTA>.

Similarly, in the Austrian state of Vorarlberg, 1,000 citizen signatures can prompt the state government to organise a Citizens' Council (Box 6.13). This right was used for the first time in 2017, when a petition with 1,400 signatures led to a Citizens' Council about the future use of land in the state (Vorarlberg.at, 2017).

### Box 6.13. Citizens' Councils in Vorarlberg, Austria

The Austrian state of Vorarlberg has a long history of constitutional reforms that favour direct and participatory democracy (Palermo and Alber, 2015: 225-28). Article 1, paragraph 4 of the Land constitution of Vorarlberg was amended in 2013 to include a reference to direct democracy initiatives, referendums, public consultations, and supporting other forms of democracy, notably Bürgerräte, which literally translates to Citizens' Council.

Citizens' Councils can be initiated in three ways: if 1,000 or more citizens sign a petition asking for one, by a decision of state government, or by the state parliament. Citizens used this right of initiative for the first time in 2017 to deliberate on the handling of land.

Citizens' Councils are typically composed of around 15 randomly selected citizens and last two consecutive days. The first part of the process allows participants to identify issues of public interest to be discussed by the Citizens' Council within the proposed subject, and there is no strictly predetermined remit.

During the next step, citizens engage in facilitated deliberation, develop solutions to the problems identified, and produce collective recommendations (Partizipation.at, 2019). The process relies on the method of dynamic facilitation, where the facilitator encourages participants to speak their minds without having to follow a strict agenda or process; it is a safe place for everyone to express themselves is created, leading to openness, inclusion, and creative solutions (Center For Wise Democracy, 2019).

Recommendations are then presented and discussed with the broader public in a Citizens' Café, which is open for anyone to attend. Finally, the recommendations are presented to the local government and a small group of participants are assigned to follow up with the government on how the recommendations have been implemented (Partizipation.at, 2019).

The regional government guidelines for convening and implementing Citizens' Councils define a range of important elements, including for what purpose Citizens' Councils should be used, what are their main elements, what is their role in relation to the institutions of representative democracy, who can initiate these processes of deliberative engagement and other details.

According to the guidelines, the Citizens' Council process has to be followed by an event where citizens' recommendations are presented publicly (a Citizens' Café), as well as by delivering recommendations to decision makers. It recommends the use of Citizens Councils when dealing with complex issues that affect the broader society, common good and requires a broad social consensus. Practices of deliberative democracy are seen as a complement to institutions of representative democracy, and the role of Citizens' Councils is to recommend and consult.

The regional government guidelines for convening and implementing Citizens' Councils can be found here (in German): [https://www.partizipation.at/fileadmin/media\\_data/Downloads/methoden/Buergerrat\\_Richtlinie.pdf](https://www.partizipation.at/fileadmin/media_data/Downloads/methoden/Buergerrat_Richtlinie.pdf).

In an adjacent way, the rules of the French Economic, Social, and Environmental Council (Conseil économique, social et environnemental, CESE) also allow for a certain threshold of citizen signatures to trigger a debate (Box 6.14). At the moment, this debate takes place amongst members of the CESE, who are representatives of civil society organisations. One possible reform could be to allow a certain number of citizen signatures to trigger the organisation of a deliberative process, like the French Citizens' Convention on Climate. During this Convention, 150 randomly selected citizens had a mandate to meet for seven long weekends from October 2019 until April 2020 to develop detailed recommendations that would either go directly to a parliamentary debate or to a national referendum.

### Box 6.14. French Economic, Social, and Environmental Council (Conseil économique, social, et environnemental, CESE)

The Economic, Social, and Environmental Council is a consultative assembly that facilitates the debate of civil society organisations, associations, and other stakeholders. The Council can be called to debate over a certain public policy by either a petition signed by 500,000 citizens, the government, or the parliament.

As one of the outcomes of the “Great Debate” in early 2019, French President Emmanuel Macron pledged to transform the CESE into a Citizen Participation Council – a deliberative body consisting of randomly selected citizens. At the time of writing, no reforms have been implemented.

More information is available at: <https://www.lecese.fr/en>.

## Moving from *ad hoc* initiatives to institutionalised practices: Requirements, obstacles, and strategies

Three existing routes to institutionalising public deliberation have been discussed: establishing a permanent or ongoing deliberative body; creating legal or regulatory requirements to organise a deliberative process under certain conditions, and creating legal or regulatory rules that give citizens the right to initiate a deliberative process. Other possibilities could also be envisaged, and will be the focus of future OECD research on how to implement the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government (2017).

While numerous examples of where each of these three routes have been implemented have been discussed, this section considers what is needed and what are the obstacles to achieving any or all of these institutionalisation options. It thus explores the requirements of moving from an idea to implementation, the potential difficulties that could be encountered, and strategies to meet the requirements and overcome the obstacles.

### ***The right institutional design***

First and foremost, successful institutionalisation requires the right design for the context. This will vary depending on the level of government (i.e. national/federal, regional/state, or local) and other institutional factors (i.e. in what branch of power the deliberative practise will be institutionalised and phase of the policy cycle). There is no “one size fits all” approach. The challenge is that there are currently limited examples of institutionalisation, and only a few (mostly academic) papers proposing viable designs that are yet to be tested. An institutionalisation design guide does not yet exist, though this could be an area of future OECD work to build further on the initial explorations in this report.

### ***Political support***

Institutionalisation requires support from politicians – not only the ones needed to enact a law or a regulation, but enough of a cross-party consensus to maintain it when governments change. It is difficult to achieve such agreement across political divides, and even more so sustainably. There is a risk when an initiative is perceived to be associated with the agenda of one political party, as the example of the Madrid City Observatory demonstrates (see Box 6.3). A potential strategy could be to identify situations where institutionalising citizen deliberation can help to solve a recurring vexing problem that affects all parties, and that is not being solved with the usual methods.

Elected representatives, as well as key senior civil servants, also tend to see decision making as their role, and this relates to both making policy decisions, but also making decisions about when and if citizens get a say on any particular topic. Few politicians have witnessed or experienced one-off deliberative processes – let alone institutionalised examples – so it is not necessarily familiar or easy to understand, with unclear benefits and large potential risks. Increasing opportunities for politicians and civil servants to witness citizen deliberations and to speak with counterparts in other places who have had these experiences could be a promising starting point.

Elected representatives and officials must overcome scepticism about the competency of ordinary people to address complex problems. This is an understandable reaction given that citizen engagement is often designed in such a way to garner people's top-of-the-head opinions about an issue. Many times, even when there is recognition that citizen involvement is necessary and helpful, the argument that an issue is too complex for ordinary citizens arises. Without providing citizens with the necessary time and information to understand an issue, this is certainly true. However, deliberative processes are designed in such a way to overcome these typical shortcomings of public consultation, allowing citizens to become informed about the multifaceted aspects of a policy issue.

### ***Support from civil servants***

Institutionalisation also needs backing by civil servants – not only those at the top of public authorities, but also the “hands on” officials at lower levels who have to incorporate these new practices into their work programmes. Civil servants charged with decision making and public engagement on complex policy issues have challenging jobs already, without adding new requirements. However, as with elected representatives, one potential solution could be to search for situations in which institutionalising deliberation could help solve pressing challenges for civil servants.

Many have also had bad experiences with traditional forms of consultation, where “open” meetings or forums (offline and online) tend to be dominated by the noisiest voices and those with the most to lose. Outputs in such processes tend often take the form of wish lists that do not consider the constraints and trade-offs. A degree of understanding about how deliberative processes differ, and also how they can be combined with other forms of stakeholder participation effectively, is needed. Achieving this might require dissemination events, specific training, and career or salary incentives. Promising opportunities for institutionalisation are presented in situations where public participation is mandated, and where the usual processes are not helping civil servants to deliver more effective and legitimate solutions.

Moreover, there is a need for cultural change within the public service – it is not enough to have a few committed individuals – and within society more broadly to recognise the importance and capability of citizens playing a role in public decision making. Too often citizen participation is viewed as a threat, or an expensive additional step, rather than as a way to complement the existing institutions of representative democracy and to strengthen policies by early involvement of the public. Institutionalisation requires a commitment from all stakeholders to sustained change.

### ***Support from the public and the media***

Achieving greater public backing requires a supportive media environment where outlets and journalists are willing and encouraged to give coverage to deliberative processes. In most OECD countries, neither the media nor the public are well-informed about deliberative processes. This is starting to change, notably in countries where high-profile national initiatives have taken or are taking place, but is not yet on a scale needed for cultural change.

Public communication can be used as a strategic tool not only to facilitate deliberative processes, but also to increase public support for them. Involving the person responsible for communicating deliberative processes (such as a press officer, media advisor, or director of communications) from the very beginning

could be beneficial. They can help develop a communications strategy, organise press conferences, and handle media requests, maximising the opportunities for quality media coverage as a result.

### ***A supportive legal and regulatory framework***

Once the political and public will is in place, there are considerations of whether new legislation or regulation is needed, or whether existing legislation, regulation or governance arrangements need to be amended or revised. For example, governments should consider drafting pieces of legislation or regulations that introduce a requirement for a deliberative process under certain conditions (such as before a public decision is taken regarding long-term projects that cost a certain amount) and to allow citizens to initiate a deliberative process if they gather enough signatures. For accountability, there should be a provision that states that above a certain threshold, public decision makers are not able to ignore the petition, as is the case in certain Polish cities (see Box 6.12). The level(s) of government at which the legislative and/or regulatory changes are required is an aspect to consider. Once again, as the Polish example highlights, often changes are required at multiple levels.

Beyond legal changes to establish rules or requirements for public deliberation, additional legal support issues need to be addressed to make organising deliberative processes easier, less costly, and to result in better outcomes. For example, the rules in OECD countries, and within countries at different levels of government, differ in regards to access to databases to carry out a random selection process, like a civic lottery, well. Legislation and regulation should be adapted so that the most complete databases that exist can be used for the random selection procedure, to ensure that the largest number of people possible have a fair chance of being selected to participate at the outset. Consideration in doing this should always be given to inclusivity. In particular, many of the most vulnerable people are not citizens, so they will not necessarily appear on electoral registers or other databases. All of these considerations should be in light of overarching personal data protection rules, such as the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

A next step would be to introduce requirements for employers to provide paid leave to participate in a deliberative process, as is the case with criminal juries, or for public authorities to compensate employers. If citizens' time and inputs into policy making are valued, then it is important to compensate their time and ensure inclusivity. Providing paid leave and reimbursement of costs to participate in a deliberative process would help ensure the implementation of the good practice principle of inclusiveness (see Chapter 5)<sup>3</sup>. It would also demonstrate the seriousness and importance of citizen involvement in policy making, and would encourage citizens to participate as a way of fulfilling their civic responsibility as citizens of a democratic community.

### ***Sufficient capacity within and outside government***

Institutionalisation also requires sufficient capacity, both within and outside of government. There need to be enough civil servants who know how to commission a deliberative process and understand their role as neutral hosts. Equally, there need to be enough highly skilled practitioners who know how to design, organise, run, and facilitate deliberative processes. Practitioners can be within government if they are established in independent, arm's length institutions from commissioning authorities. They can also be external providers, such as the many organisations that have delivered the projects analysed in this report. Civil servants need to understand the benefits and know how to tender, commission, and work with practitioners for a deliberative process.

One strategy to address these challenges could be for governments to either establish an office permanently in charge of deliberative processes (such as a "Centre of Excellence on Deliberative Democracy") or an office with a broader remit that could also focus on deliberative processes. For instance,

this could be the Open Government office or a “Centre of Excellence on Deliberative and Participatory Democracy”.

Such a centre could be funded by government, but at arm’s length in order to stay unbiased and trustworthy. Examples of similar institutions that exist include the French Centre for Citizen Participation (Box 6.15) or the UK What Works Centres (Box 6.16). Professional staffing might be by civil service employees or universally respected and impartial civil society organisations (CSOs) or universities under government contract. In addition to running deliberative programmes, the remits of such an office could be:

- **Setting standards** of good practice for deliberative processes for public decision making that are in line with the OECD Good Practice Principles and are adapted to the context. This is important to avoid corruption or manipulation of the procedures. Having an office or agency with the priority of maintaining the integrity of the process can enhance its legitimacy and trustworthiness. Documented good practices and professional staff allow the process to remain impartial and independent of partisan politics;
- **Advising decision makers** who are considering the uses of citizen deliberation in their work;
- **Building knowledge** in the government and public institutions more broadly by **training civil servants** to be smart commissioners and neutral hosts. There needs to be a clear delineation of functions: those who initiate the process; those who organise and run it; and those who supervise it;
- **Monitoring and evaluation of ongoing deliberative processes and their impact** to ensure that collective learning ensues (for example, about which processes do and do not work well in particular contexts) and that the outputs have influence on public decision making;
- **Managing a budget** dedicated to funding deliberative processes;
- **Investing in the skills and capabilities of civil society organisations** that could be capable of organising, running, and facilitating a deliberative process, since institutionalisation implies a greater need for more operators, and
- **Regularly reporting findings from representative deliberative processes to government and parliaments** to ensure the cumulative benefit of deliberative processes are related to the parliamentary and government cycles.

Furthermore, a Citizens’ Advisory Council could support the work of a Centre of Excellence, comprised of randomly selected citizens who rotate serving a one- or two-year mandate. The remits of such a council could be twofold. One being the monitoring and evaluation of ongoing deliberative processes alongside the Centre for Excellence. The second being to monitor implementation of accepted recommendations made by one-off deliberative processes. In an institutionalised context, there will be more representative deliberative processes taking place. While sometimes the process is evaluated (32% of the time amongst the 282 cases in OECD Member countries; see Chapter 3), the impact is harder to measure and is rarely evaluated. A Citizens’ Advisory Council could have an oversight function to follow-up on the implementation of accepted recommendations by public authorities at all levels of governance.

### Box 6.15. French Centre for Citizen Participation (Le centre de la participation citoyenne, CPC)

Launched on 25 November 2019, the Centre for Citizen Participation was set up by the Inter-ministerial Directorate for the Support of Public Sector Transformation (DITP) and relates to the executive branch of government.

The Centre offers ministries advice and expertise on citizen participation and engagement in policy making. As a resource and skills centre, it provides strategic advice for decision makers and methodological advice for the steering committees of deliberative processes. It also helps policy makers to implement recommendations produced by citizens.

More information is available at: <https://participation-citoyenne.gouv.fr/>

### Box 6.16. UK What Works Centres

The What Works Network is an initiative to use evidence to improve the design and delivery of public services. It aims to improve the way that government and other public sector organisations “create, share and use (or ‘generate, translate and adopt’) high quality evidence in decision making. It supports more effective and efficient services across the public sector at national and local levels” (GOV.UK, 2019).

The What Works Network consists of nine independent What Works Centres, three affiliate members, and one associate member. The bodies of interest in relation to establishing a Centre of Excellence as suggested in this report are the What Works Centres.

The centres help to ensure that evidence shapes decision making by:

- “Collating existing evidence on the effectiveness of programmes and practices;
- Producing high quality synthesis reports and systematic reviews in areas where they do not currently exist;
- Assessing the effectiveness of policies and practices against an agreed set of outcomes;
- Filling gaps in the evidence base by commissioning new trials and evaluations;
- Sharing findings in an accessible way;
- Supporting practitioners, commissioners and policymakers to use these findings to inform their decisions” (GOV.UK, 2019)

The centres are funded through a combination of government and non-government sources, which include the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Big Lottery Fund. They are supported by the What Works National Advisor and his team in the Cabinet Office.

More information is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-works-network>

## **Sufficient funding**

Some budgetary obligations are required to make institutionalisation a feasible endeavour. It requires some initial investments in establishing sustainable infrastructure (either through legal or regulatory rules, or new institutions that play the role of a secretariat or similar). While this requires a budgetary commitment, a public sector cost-benefit analysis of citizen participation and deliberation could identify that when deliberative processes are institutionalised, it is less costly than one-off experiences.

## Limits to institutionalisation

This chapter has largely explored the potential of institutionalisation and the experiments taking place thus far. However, institutionalisation may not always be beneficial. It is important to consider the potential limitations and how they might be mitigated.

The same as with one-off deliberative processes, an important consideration when designing institutionalised citizen deliberation is to take into account that deliberative processes are not well-suited for every type of policy issue. They are best used for addressing values-driven policy dilemmas, complex problems that require trade-offs, and long-term issues that go beyond the short-term incentives of electoral cycles (see Chapter 1).

It is important to avoid a “one size fits all” model of institutionalisation. This chapter has already laid out three different routes – which could be combined in various ways – and many other possibilities could exist. The political, legal, and institutional contexts all matter when deciding if and how to institutionalise public deliberation. Moreover, it is equally imperative to leave enough room for experimentation and to make changes to institutional design based on evaluation and learning. If it is too highly regulated with too many constraints, institutionalisation could thwart innovation and participation. For example, participatory budgeting (PB) activists in Porto Alegre did not necessarily want the PB process to be codified because they believed that it would remove the potential for experimentation, creativity, and innovation (Baiocchi, 2005, as cited in Smith, 2009: 50). The downside of not codifying, however, meant that the PB process was vulnerable with a change of government.

The more that deliberative processes are used, and the more that they are involved in shaping important public decisions, the more likely they are to come under attack. They will thus need to garner greater legitimacy. As Mansbridge (2018) argues, “robust legitimacy derives not only from appropriate delegation but from the design and the public presentation of the mini-publics themselves”. Effective public communication is a critical component of success to ensure that the representativeness of the participants in the deliberative process, the balanced and extensive nature of the evidence and expertise presented to participants, and the quality of deliberation and results are well-publicised. These points are reflected in the OECD Good Practice Principles for Deliberative Processes for Public Decision Making (see Chapter 5).

The introduction of institutionalised deliberative processes also raises new questions about the meaning of accountability, which today primarily denotes the capacity to sanction through elections. However, accountability did not always have this restrictive definition. When the word first came into use in the 1960s, it meant literally to give an account – “having to describe, explain, and justify one’s actions to those to whom one is responsible” (Mansbridge, 2019: 193-4). Introducing permanent or ongoing deliberative processes as complementary institutions to representative institutions thus requires a consideration of how such initiatives enhance existing accountability mechanisms and how participants can be accountable to one another and to members of the public. Table 6.1 offers an overview of this more deliberative view of accountability:



**Table 6.1. Types of accountability in deliberative processes with participants chosen by lot**

Accountability type	Level of formality	
	Formal	Informal
Sanction-based	Laws against bribery and other forms of wrongdoing.	Representatives monitoring and sanctioning the norms of discourse within their own deliberations. Members of the public exerting informal pressures on the representatives.
Deliberative	Collective written accounts to fellow representatives or the public.	Representatives mutually listening, explaining, and justifying perspectives, opinions, and interests to one another. Representatives doing the same with the larger public or specific constituents, face-to-face, or through media.

Source: Mansbridge (2019).

Finally, as stressed throughout the chapter, institutionalisation is in the experimental stage. Any institutionalisation efforts should therefore be monitored and evaluated. It is a collective learning process.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Institutionalise and embed are used interchangeably throughout this chapter and report to mean the same thing.

<sup>2</sup> This group included: Bjørn Bedsted (Danish Board of Technology, Denmark) Yago Bermejo Abati (Deliberativa, Spain); Terrill Bouricius (Former elected official and unaffiliated political scientist, United States); Lyn Carson (newDemocracy Foundation, Australia); Nicole Curato (Centre for Deliberative Democracy and Global Governance, Australia); Yves Dejaeghere (G1000 Organisation, Belgium); Mahmud Farooque (Arizona State University Consortium for Science, Policy, and Outcomes, United States); Doreen Grove (Scottish Government, United Kingdom); Brett Hennig (Sortition Foundation, United Kingdom); Dominik Hierlemann (Bertelsmann Stiftung, Germany); Angela Jain (Nexus Institute, Germany); Dimitri Lemaire (Particitz, Belgium); Miriam Levin (UK Government, United Kingdom); Peter MacLeod (MASS LBP, Canada); Arantxa Mendiharat (Deliberativa, Spain); Min Reuchamps (UC Louvain, Belgium); David Schecter (Democracy R&D, International Network); Graham Smith (Centre for the Study of Democracy, University of Westminster, United Kingdom); Jane Suiter (Institute for Future Media and Journalism, Dublin City University, Ireland); Nivek Thompson (Deliberatively Engaging, Australia), Niamh Webster (Scottish Government, United Kingdom), and Antoine Vergne (Missions Publiques, France).

<sup>3</sup> Principle 5 on inclusiveness states: “Inclusion should be achieved by considering how to involve under-represented groups. Participation should also be encouraged and supported through remuneration, expenses, and/or providing or paying for childcare and eldercare.”

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**From:**  
**Innovative Citizen Participation and New  
Democratic Institutions**  
Catching the Deliberative Wave

**Access the complete publication at:**  
<https://doi.org/10.1787/339306da-en>

**Please cite this chapter as:**

Chwalisz, Claudia (2020), "Reimagining democratic institutions: Why and how to embed public deliberation", in OECD, *Innovative Citizen Participation and New Democratic Institutions: Catching the Deliberative Wave*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/056573fa-en>

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