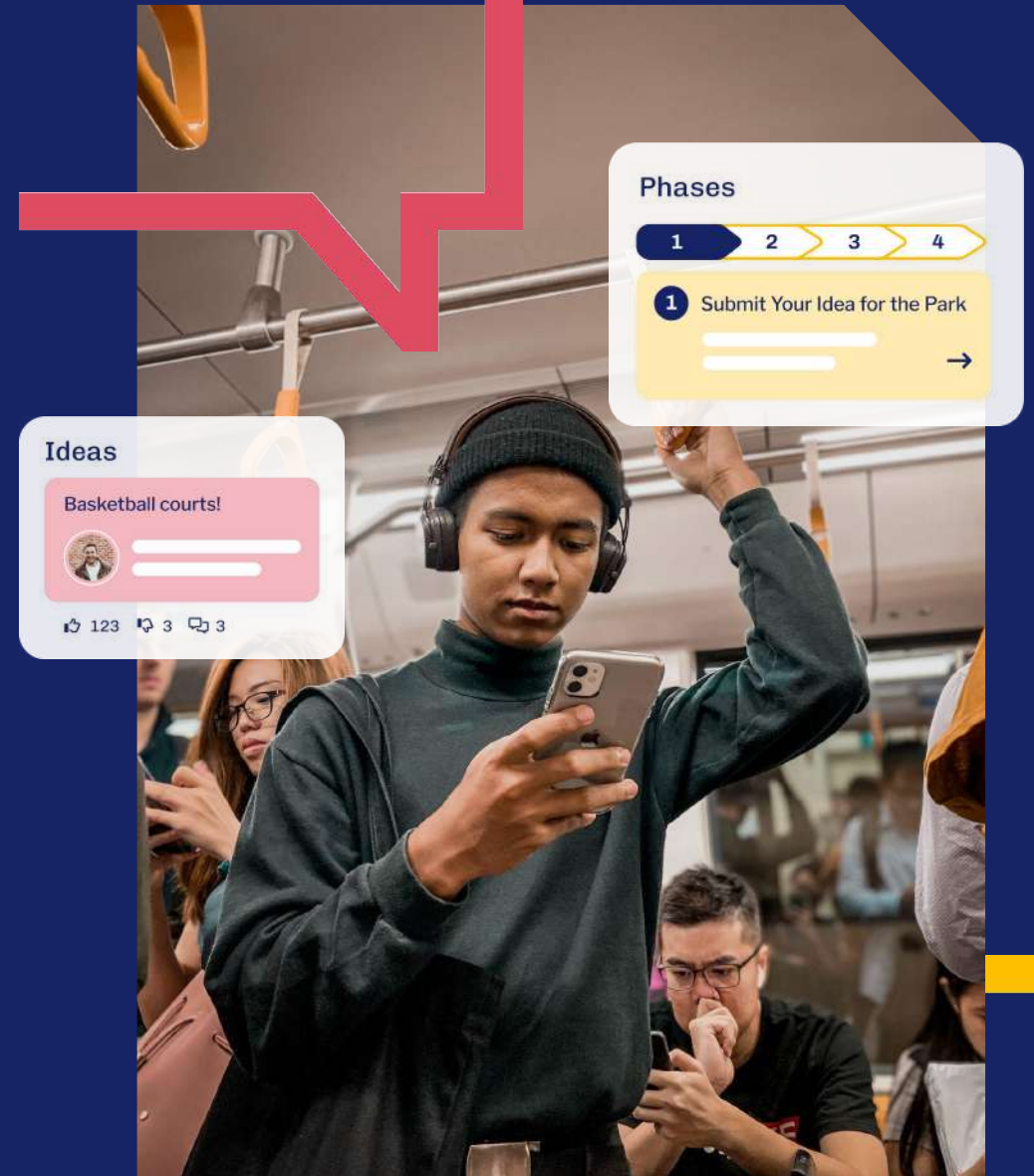


# How to get started with citizen engagement

An introduction to Go Vocal

NIDO Inspiration session  
June 20, 2024



# Agenda

**01**

**Introduction:  
Re-imagining Participation**

**02**

**How To Get Started &  
Implement**

**03**

**How To Manage Different  
Levels of Ambitions**

**04**

**3 Case Studies from  
Belgium, Luxembourg & Chile**



# 01

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## Introduction: Re-imagining Participation

# Quick Facts | Introducing Go Vocal



Last year...

**3,000**

projects were  
launched across  
Go Vocal -powered  
platforms

**2,000**

projects were  
completed across all  
global platforms

**1,000**

public servants use  
our platform  
monthly on  
average

**3,000**

community members  
participated in projects  
on Go Vocal platforms  
monthly (on average)

**500+**

Governments

**15.000+**

Projects

**1.000.000+**

Engaged citizens

## Success and recognition

- Ranked #2 platform (Globally) on the People Powered list for community engagement platforms.
- Founders recognized by Forbes 30 under 30
- Best Social Impact From TechCrunch
- World Summit Award in Government and Participation
- Active in more than 18 countries

# Go Vocal makes community engagement and public decision-making more:



## Inclusive

Reach more people using email, text, and in-person messaging



## Continuous

Build local trust by engaging citizens early and often



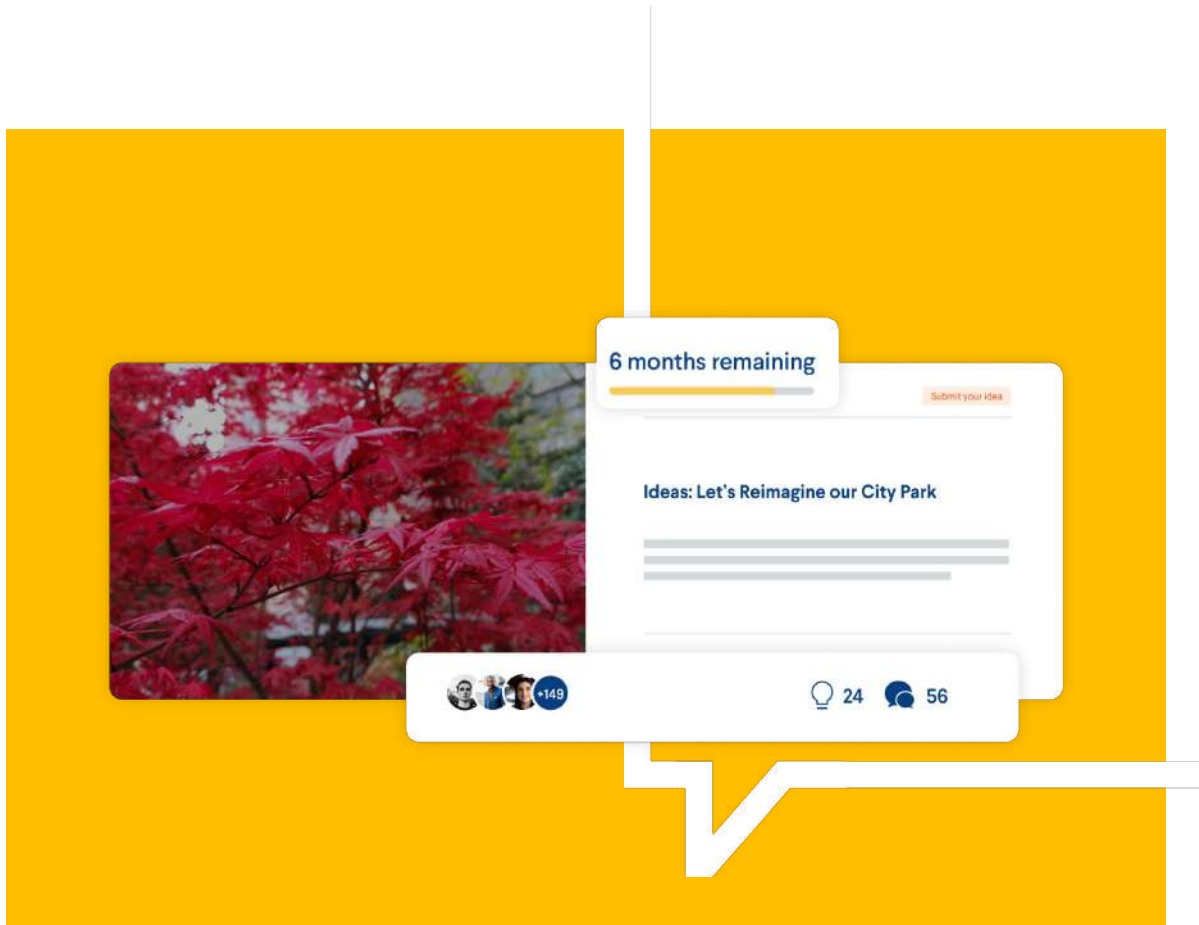
## Strategic

Validate decisions and show progress on strategic goals





# Go Vocal is a central hub for all participation projects



## Engage

A complete participation toolbox to engage your community



## Manage

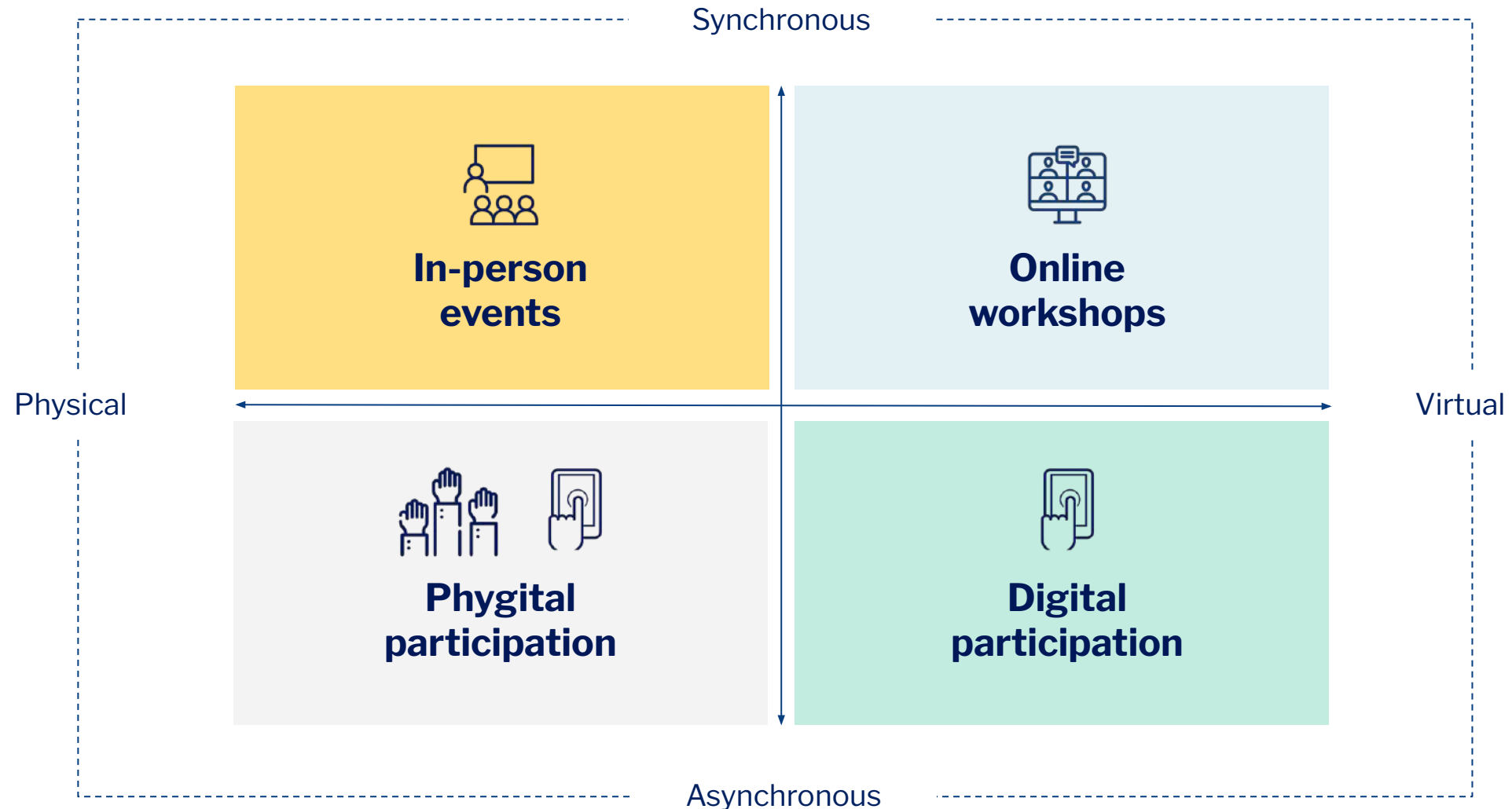
Easily manage projects and community input in one central hub



## Decide

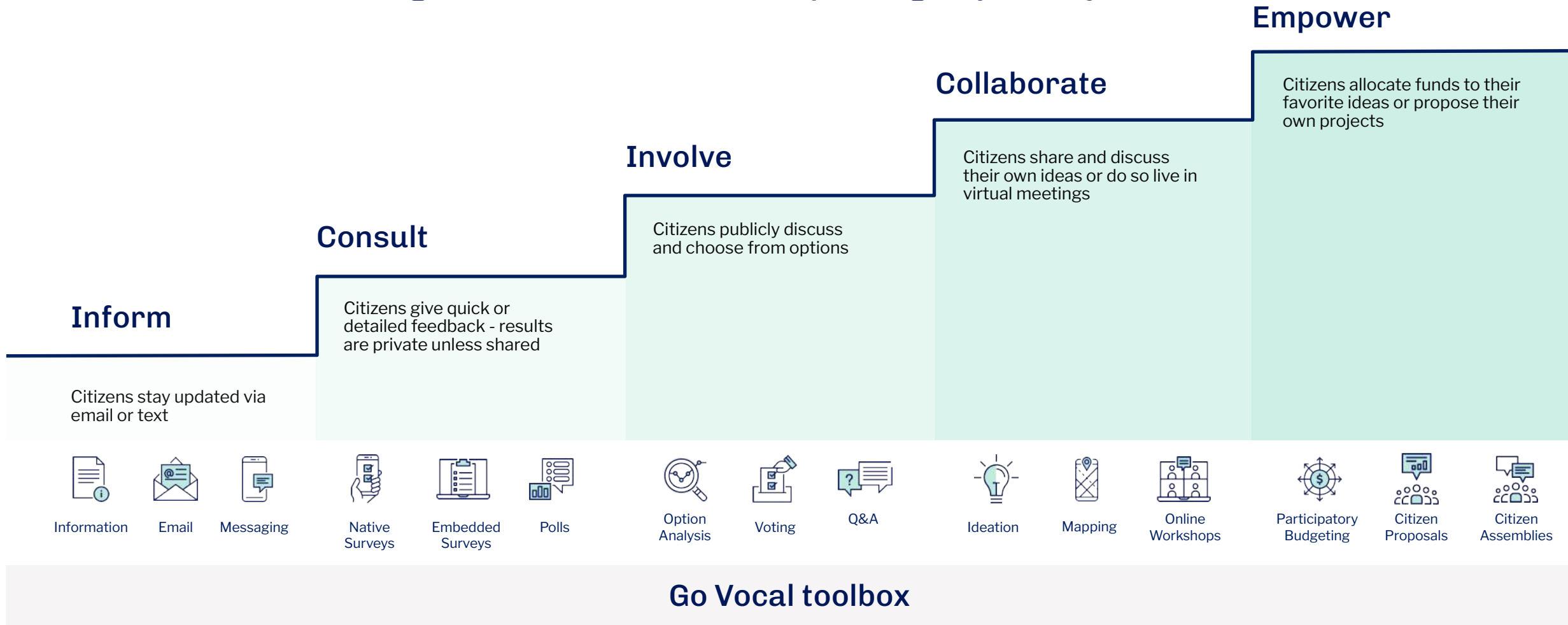
Our Insights & AI tools turns community input into data-driven reports to support decisions

# The future is blended 360° participation



# The participation ladder

Combine and interchange the different methods depending on your objectives





# Trusted by some of the most forward-thinking governments

**500+**

Governments

**15,000+**

Projects

**1,000,000+**

Community members

**SPORT.**  
VLAANDEREN



SECRETARIA  
**gob digital**

**gent:**

be  
be.brussels



**City of  
Vienna**

  
CITY OF  
LANCASTER



  
**City of Seattle**



# How governments across the world are using Go Vocal



## Strategy & Budgeting

### Strategic Plan

City of Leuven collected 2,500+ ideas for their multi-annual plan to enrich their strategic objectives.



## Mobility & Infrastructure

### Mobility Plan

Newham Borough in London has made all its urban planning projects open via their CL platform.



## Environment & Sustainability

### Climate Action

City of Vienna is implementing measures against climate change in co-creation with its citizens via their Mein Wien platform.



## Neighborhoods & Community Development

### Participatory Budgeting

The City of Ghent organized a €6M participatory budget for citizen initiatives in their neighbourhoods.





# 02

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## How To Get Started & Implement

# Participation throughout the policy cycle

## Agenda-setting

Enable your audience to help determine what will be on the decision agenda. Guide the input by providing a clear structure, either per

- Decision-level: municipal council, advisory council, ...
- Topic: culture, mobility, spatial, ...
- Geographical area: neighborhood, district, region, ...



## Policy formulation

Involve your audience in the development of your strategy, from analysis through policy making to action plans. The multi-annual strategic plan is a prime example.

## Policy implementation

Even when decision is already made, there is room for participation. The emphasis lies on creating a dialogue and involve your audience where still possible.

# e-Participation Canvas

Define the building blocks of your engagement platform and strategy

## 1. Goals

Did you agree on shared objectives?  
What are the short and long term goals of your platform?  
What projects will be put on the platform?  
What projects will be open for input continuously?



## 2. Organisation

Who will lead the core team?  
Who are the operational and strategic stakeholders?  
Does every project manager know how to set-up and follow-up on projects?



## 4. Communication

How will the platform fit in the overall communication strategy?  
What channels will be used to communicate launches?  
How will feedback or follow-up be organized?



## 3. Audience

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



## 5. Key Dates

Are there key dates to work towards?  
What activities or events are opportunities for engagement?



## 6. Metrics

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



## 7. Risks

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





# 1. What are the goals of your participation projects?

1

## Identify the Problem

You want to identify and understand a **problem**

2

## Generate Solutions

You want to generate **solutions** for a certain problem.

3

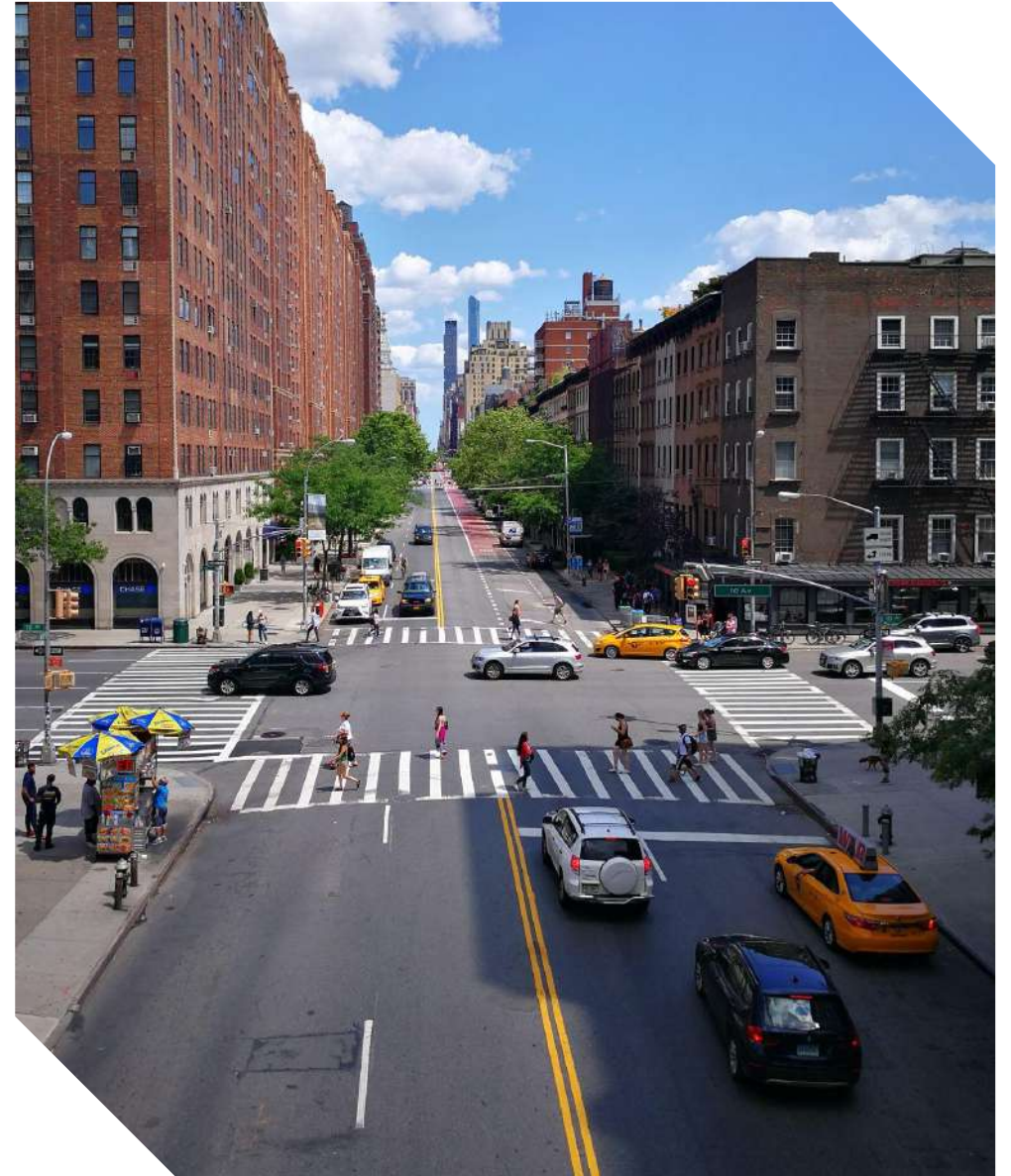
## Make a Decision

You want to build consensus, get buy in, and come to a **decision**.

4

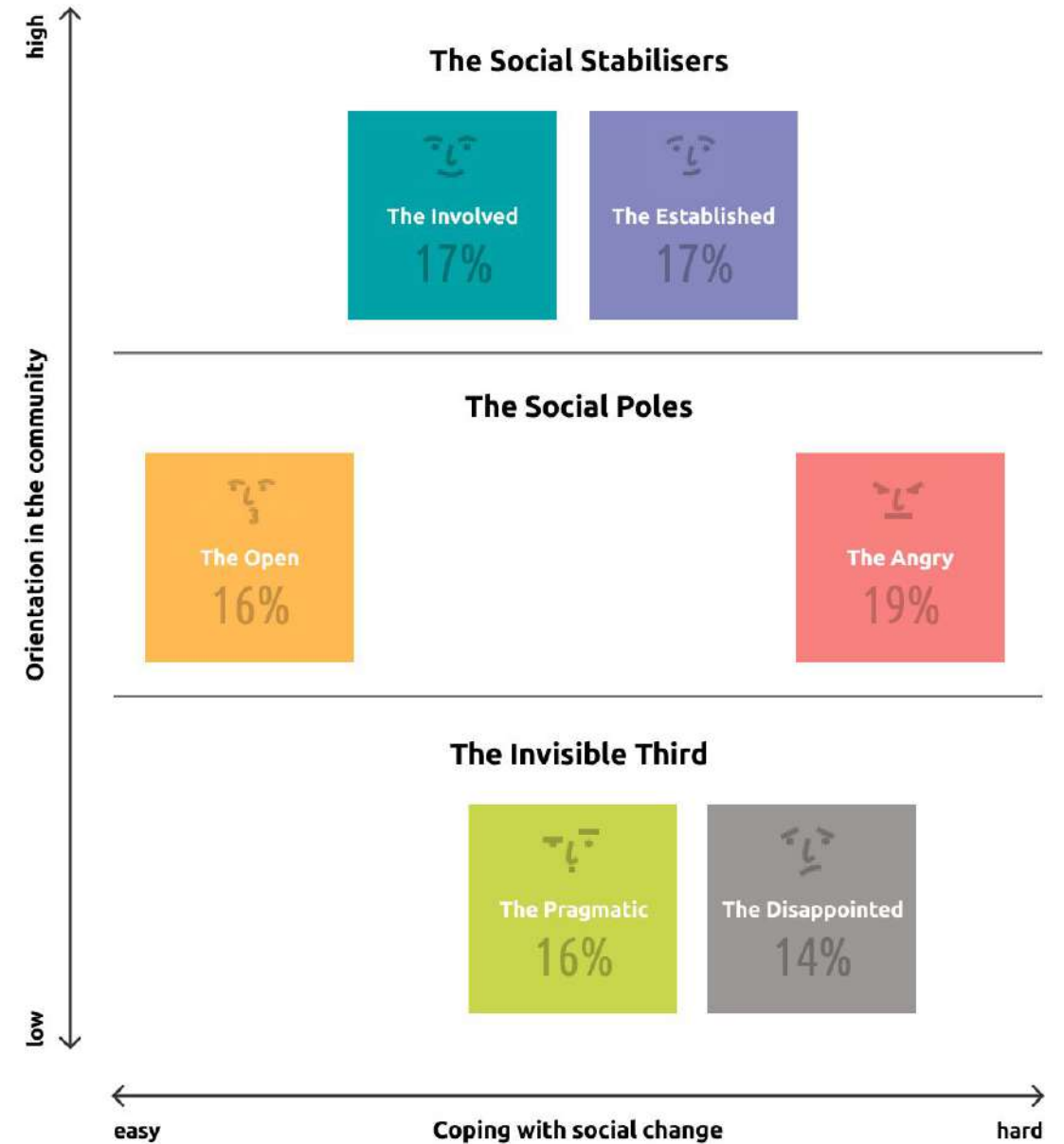
## Implement

You want to implement a decision





## 2. Audience: Reaching out to 'the invisible third'

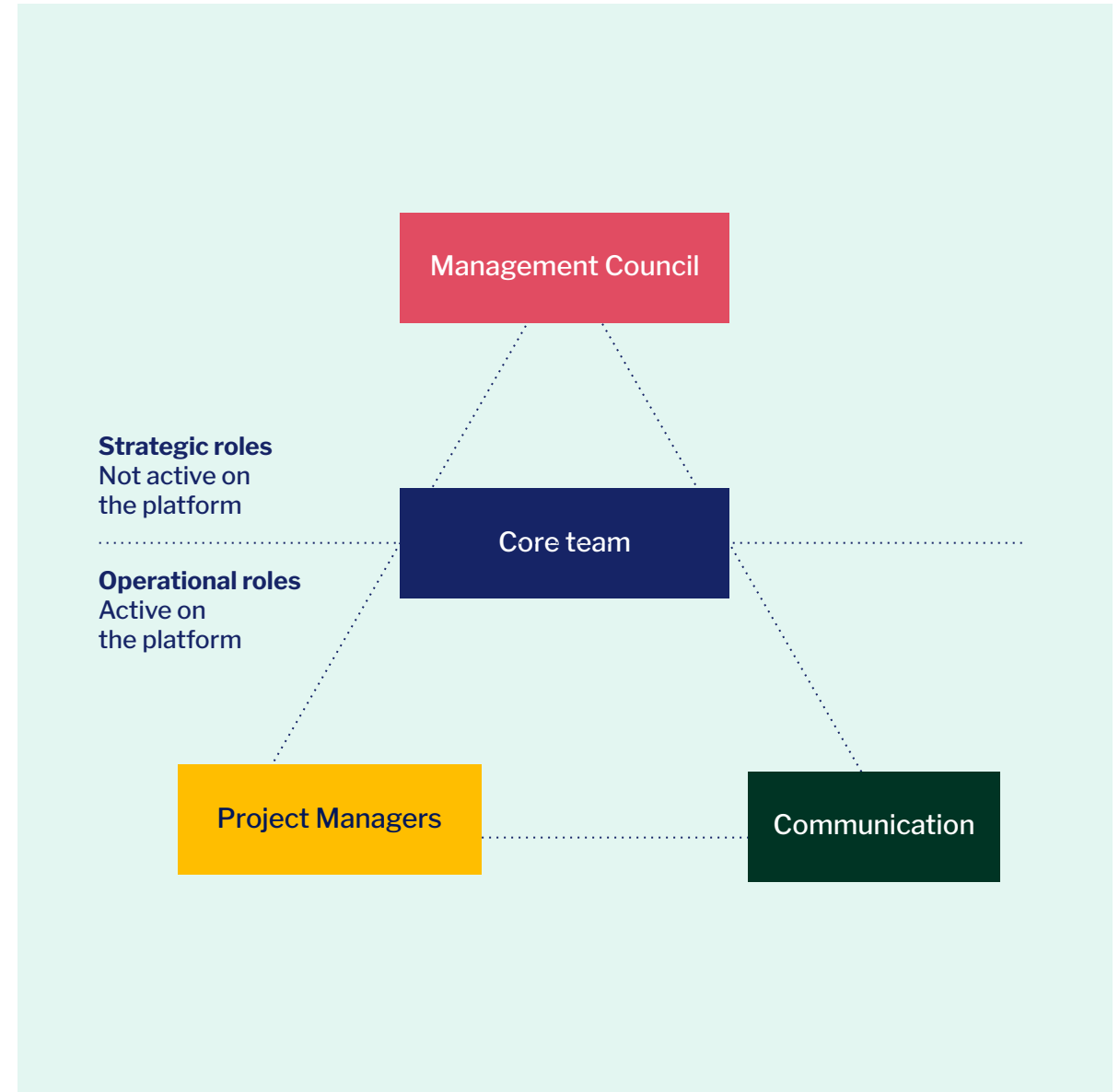


### 3. Organisation: Set up a core team

The core team is your **executive team** and the pivot of the platform. This **dynamic** group preferably has one key contact who is the **main contact person to be in touch with Go Vocal**. That person can involve project managers, depending on the active processes on the platform.

Preferably in the core team:

- At least the **head of (online) engagement or communication**
- Members of the administration in charge of citizen participation or, if not possible, members of the **communication** team
- **Project managers of different thematic departments** who currently have active projects on the platform or plan to have projects on the platform soon



# Who is in your core team?

## Core team (admins)

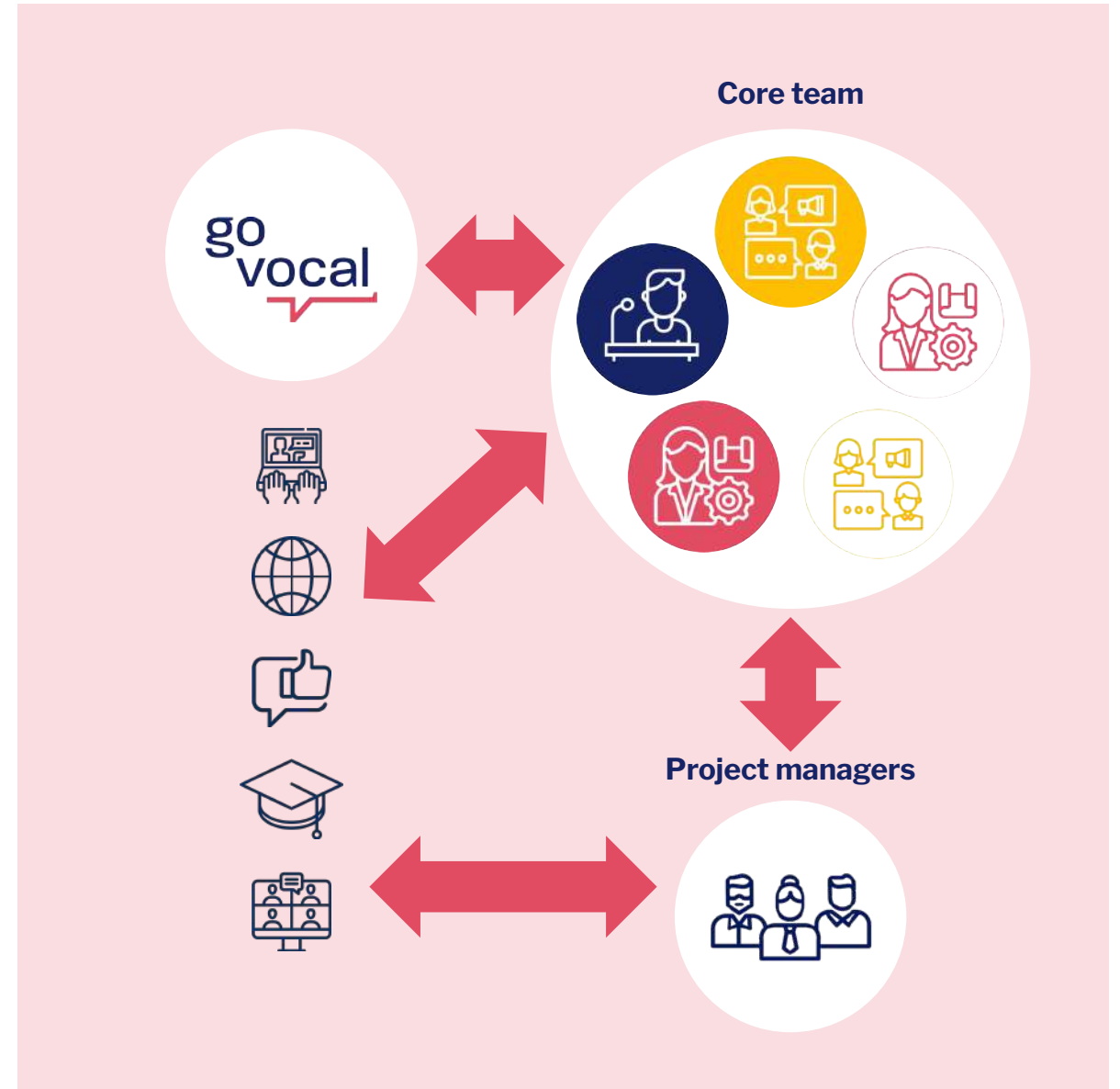
- Sets up platform
- Manages overall communication strategy
- Oversees overall Participation Strategy
- Assesses the project ideas
- Determines internal decision structure
- Assesses when projects should be archived
- Trains & supports project managers
- Ensures platform goals are met

Number of available seats in your license:

## Project managers

- Launch and maintain their own projects
- Engage with users (answer questions, respond to comments, etc)
- Follow-up on reporting in the project
- Assess when a project is finished

Number of available seats in your license:



# Why set-up an adequate organisation?

To allow an approach in terms of citizen participation that is :



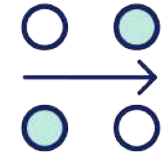
## Centralized

a core team to coordinate the projects put on the platform and align with the different stakeholders



## Continuous

repeated participation over time for an ongoing dialogue with citizens



## Transversal

citizen participation involving all departments of the administration but also other stakeholders

Ensure that the objectives and responsibilities in terms of participation are shared and clear to everyone

## 4. Communication is key

### **Make sure you consider the 3 main phases of communication:**

1. Communication at the beginning of your project
2. Communication during the implementation of your project
3. Communication of the results of your project

For all 3 phases, the communication guide provides practical tips and checklists, as well as templates that you can use directly on your channels.

[Download on the Community Platform](#)





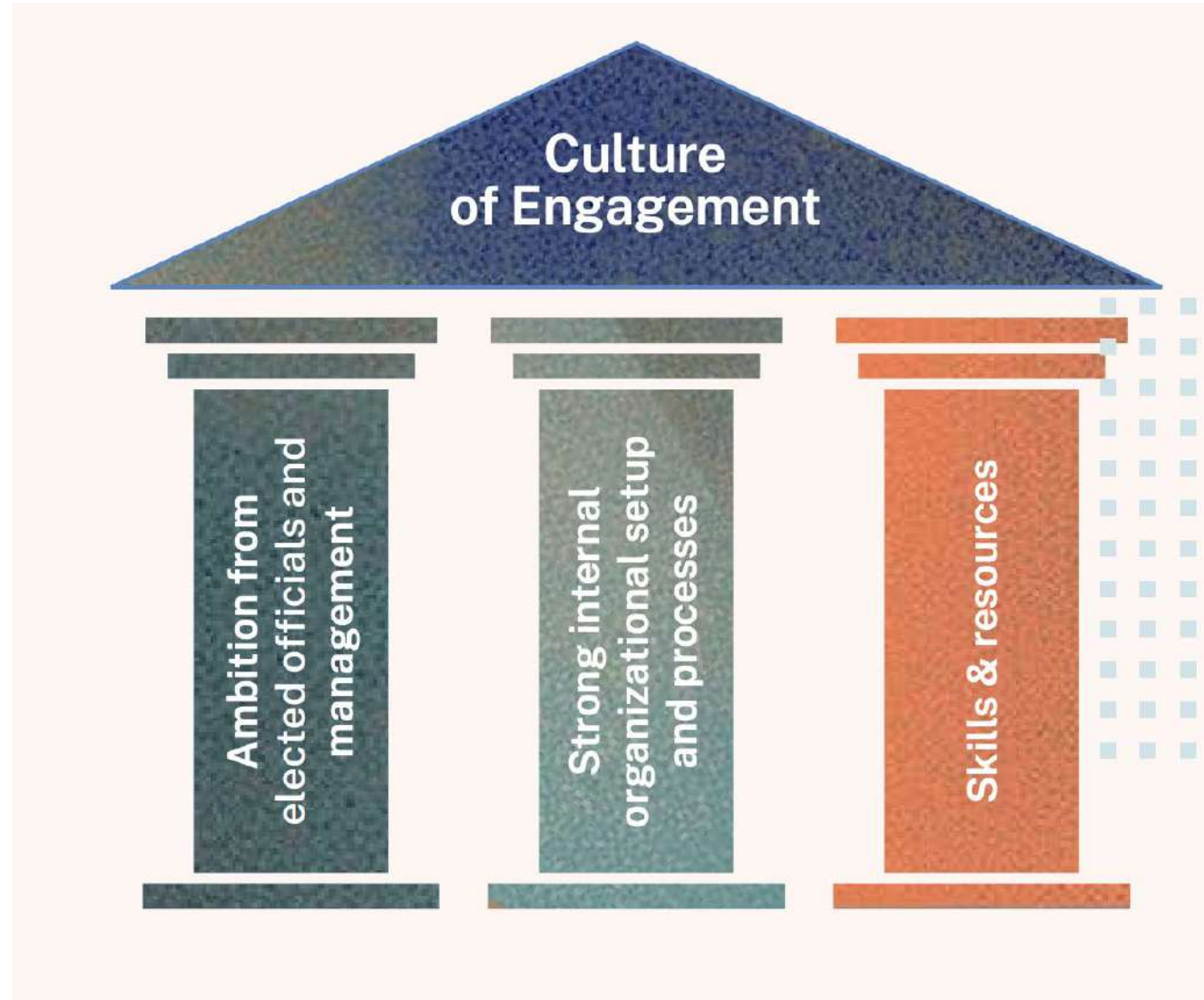
03

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## How To Manage Different Levels of Ambitions



# Structural impact through **Cultures of Engagement**



# Top-down and bottom-up participation

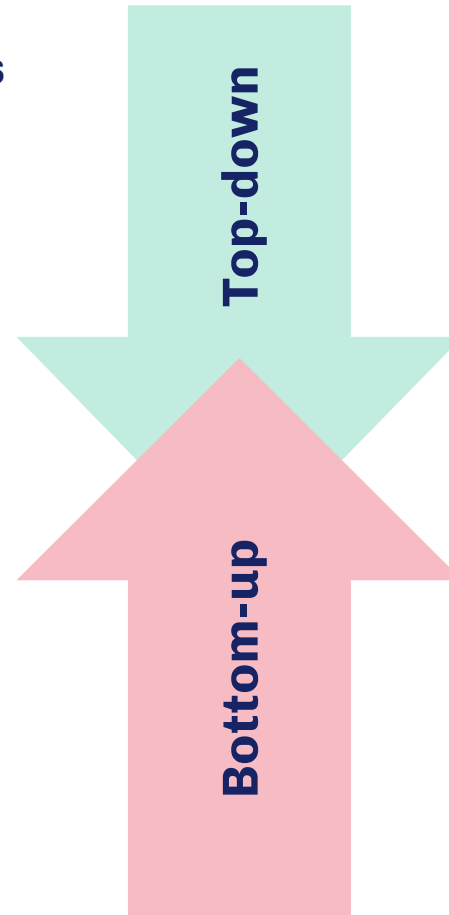


## Top-down organisation-led projects

- Consult your audience
- On a pre-defined topic
- To complete a set outcome
- Through a clear process

### In order to

- Improve quality of decision-making
- Increase support for decisions
- Tap into collective intelligence



## Bottom-up audience-led proposals

- Open a continuous dialogue with your audience
- Through an advanced “idea box” called proposals
- With clear participation conditions and thresholds for eligibility

### In order to

- Increase engagement and address concerns of partial participation
- Learn about your audience’s priorities

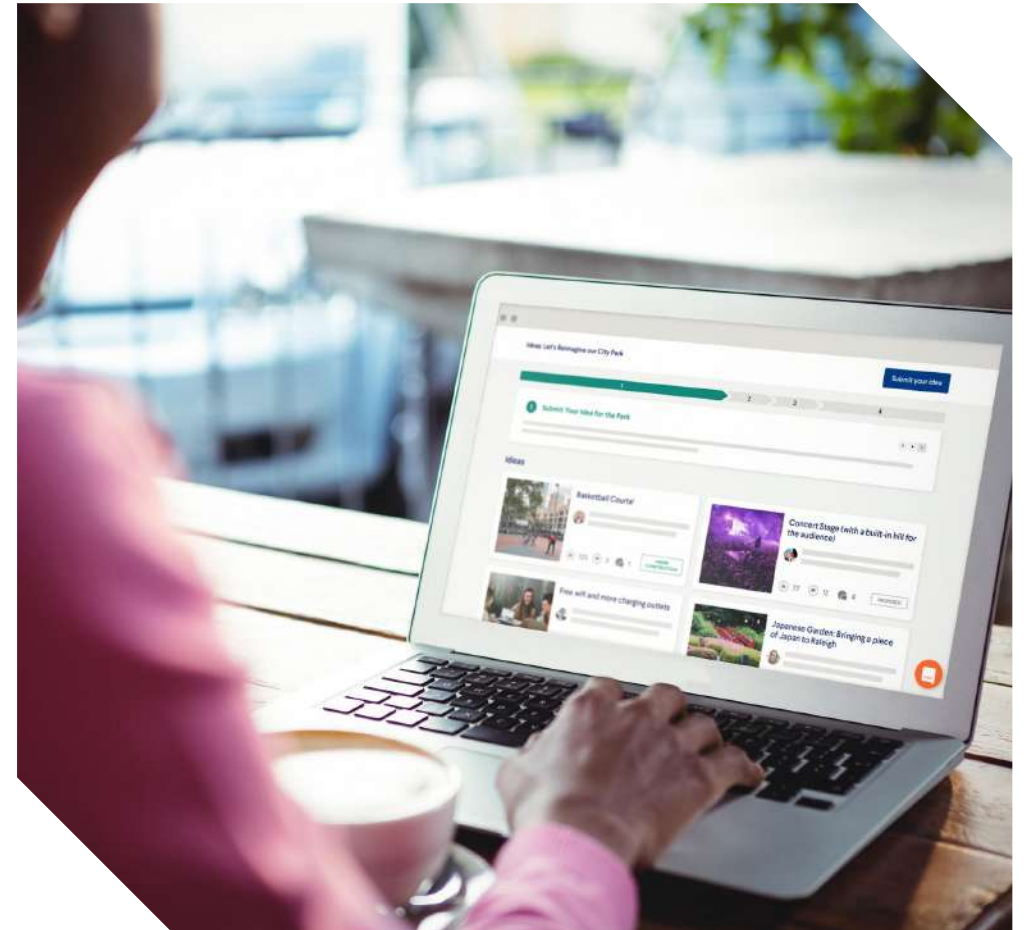
# Choose an ideal pilot engagement project

Choose topics that:

- appeal to many
- are tangible: relevant and concrete
- are meaningful: participation leads to change

## An ideal project: conditions for success

- Has a clear **timeline** and sets the right expectations from the start
- Has enough **time** and **resources** devoted to it
- Has something at **stake** for participants
- Is **responsive** and feedback is provided
- Is **transparent** and participants are well-informed
- Has a communication strategy - **outreach**
- Has **commitment** from public officials
- Is conducted both **online and offline**



# Online Participation in 500 Communities: Key Learnings

1

The great leap forward:  
**from “why” to “how”**

The real question is now: how do we institutionalize participation?

2

We’re still **climbing up the ladder**

The pioneers are doing participatory budgeting and ideation, but the majority of use cases are still with surveys.

3

**Representation matters**

From mass engagement to equitable participation. We managed to hear many more voices, yet many voices still go unheard.

4

**“Show me my impact”**

The key to online participation increasing levels of trust are process transparency and short feedback loops.

5

Easy **reporting** and process **scalability**

The unfulfilled AI promise. We expected magic and got some of it, but the human-computer interface matters most.



# Thank you!

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