

# PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING AS CIVIC ENGAGEMENT TOOL

## Participatory budgeting (PB):

- PB is a democratic process in which community members decide how to spend part of a public budget.
- PB directly involves local people in making decisions on the priorities and spending for a defined public budget. This means engaging residents and community groups representatives of all parts of the community to discuss and vote on them, as well as giving local people a role in the examination and monitoring of the process.

## Participatory budgeting (PB):

- Civic engagement is a wide range of activities aimed at purposeful and meaningful interaction between the municipality and the citizens to make the municipal decision-making process and its results better.

# Main aims and objectives of a PB:

- Gaining **insight** into what the population prioritises, and how different preferences are weighed against each other.
- **Distributing city budget** according to what citizens have decided (especially for decisive types of PB).
- Giving citizens **the opportunity to interact** with each other. Creating debate between people from different backgrounds and with different preferences or needs can promote empathy for 'the other' within the same community.
- Building **awareness and support**. When the voice of citizens is taken into account, they will find more legitimacy in the chosen policies.
- **Giving citizens more insight** in how budgeting decisions are taken. Through a PB, citizens learn how to make choices with finite city budgets.

# Benefits for citizens:

- **Dialogue** between citizens and authorities makes both sides more democracy-minded.
- Involving the public in planning the budget **enhances their role** as active, critical, demanding and responsible members of society.
- Citizens **monitor** how the decisions taken jointly are implemented. Making the administration accountable can contribute to modernizing it.
- Public participation leads to budget priorities being revised – which can result in an **improved quality of life** in a relatively short time.
- Participatory budgeting can contribute to **social restructuring** and to gains in **social justice**.

# Benefits for the local administration:

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- With a more transparent budget, money is employed more efficiently, and administrators reap more **public recognition** for their work
- **Citizens support the budget decisions** that they have been involved in taking.
- **Democratic culture** and social cohesion are both enhanced.
- When public funds are in short supply, public participation can lead to more **general acceptance of the need for austerity measures**.
- **Cooperation** between citizens, politicians and administrators can help to create an atmosphere of trust.

# Types of Participatory budgeting (PB) I:

Various types of PB slightly differ from each other

## Decisive or Advisory

If the outcome of the PB is fixed and the city commits to acting accordingly, the PB has a decisive character. If results are merely taken into account and viewed as suggestions in the allocation or draft of a budget, the PB has an advisory character.

## Themes or Ideas

In some cases, a PB is held at the level of themes or policy domains. In other cases, the focus lies on concrete ideas or projects. And in other cases there's a hybrid process.

(2018-2019) CitizenLab: [The Beginner's Guide to Participatory Budgeting](#)



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# Types of participatory budgeting (PB) II:

## In group or individually

Ideas or themes can be discussed in small groups before a vote takes place. Online trajectories are more suitable for individual participation, where citizens express their personal preferences.

## Ideation or fixed framework

In many cases, you'll already have a set of ideas or themes that your citizens can vote or comment on. In some cases, however, cities allow their citizens to submit their own ideas.

## Local or regional

What's the designated area for the participatory budget?

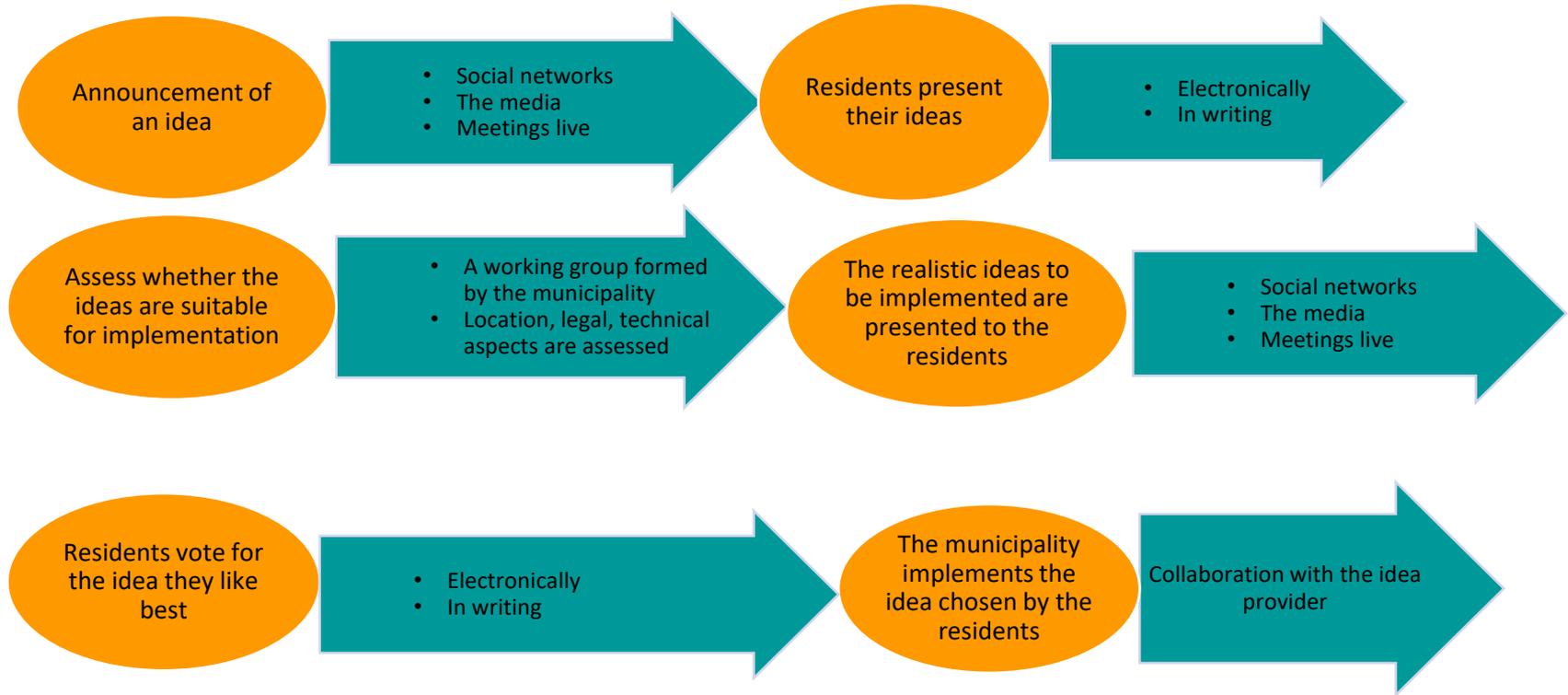
Does the project have an impact on the entire territory of the city or municipality, or does it focus on a particular neighbourhood? This also impacts who's invited to participate in the PB.

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# What needs to be in place for PB to work?

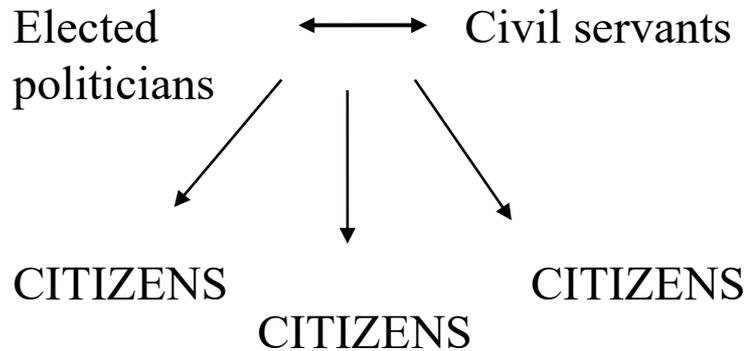
- A dedicated source of public funding.
- An agreed upon process and schedule.
- A staff to mediate the process.
- Community volunteers to facilitate the process.
- Outreach to the neighborhood to get people to attend.

# Participatory budget implementation process

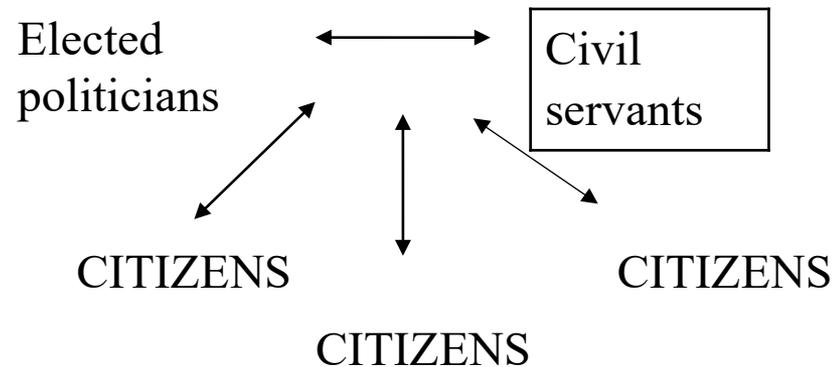


# Traditional budget and participatory budget models

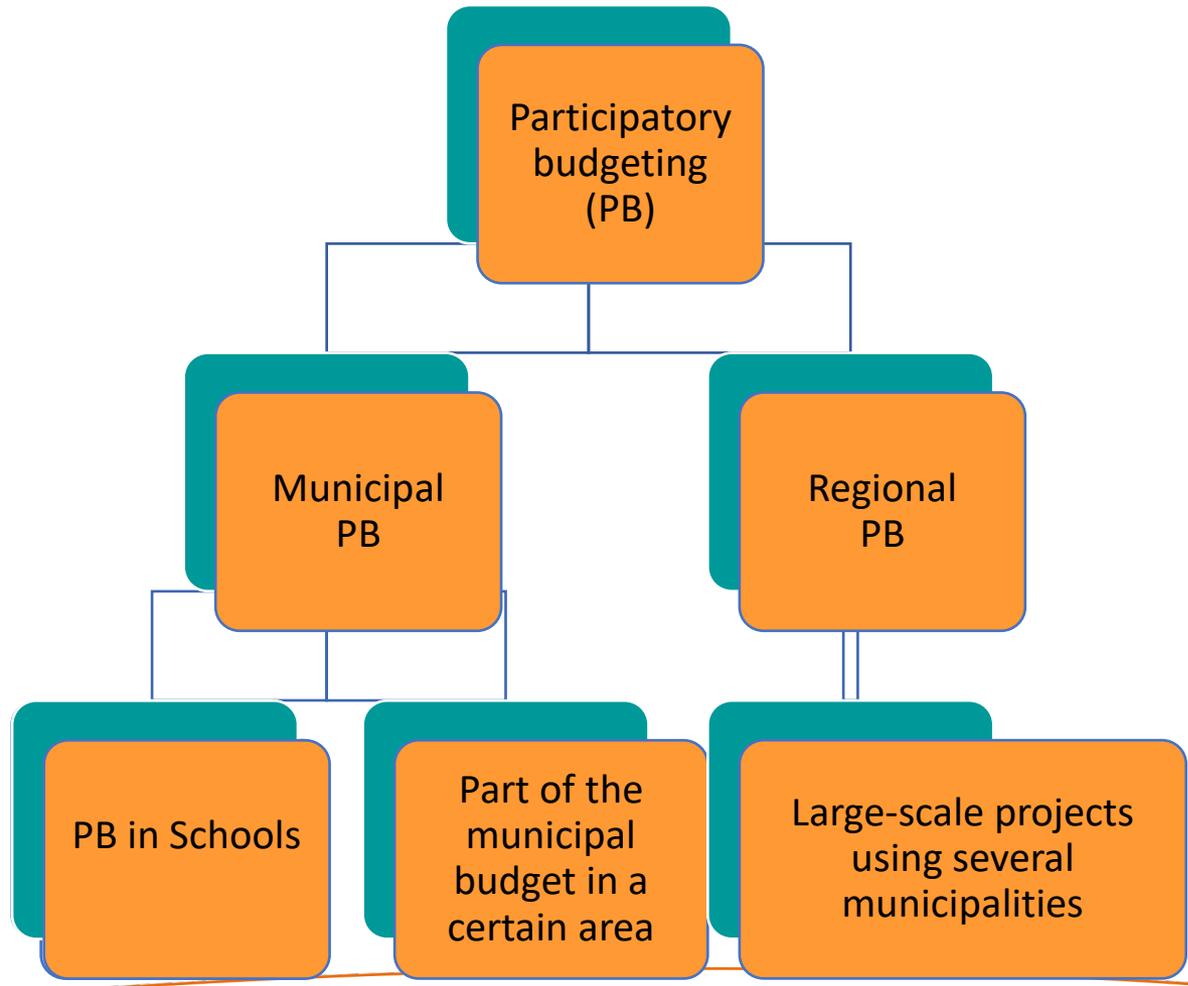
## TRADITIONAL BUDGET



## PARTICIPATORY BUDGET



# PB MODELS



# PB allows to participate in the allocation of public finances for citizens, but **five basic criteria must be complied with:**



It analyzes how a limited budget needs to be targeted



Residents of the entire city or district are included



There must be a constantly repetitive process



Meetings / forums should be held with residents



Accountability for performance

# Rules are important and necessary for PB:

The definite political decision-makers of the mayor and heads of administration

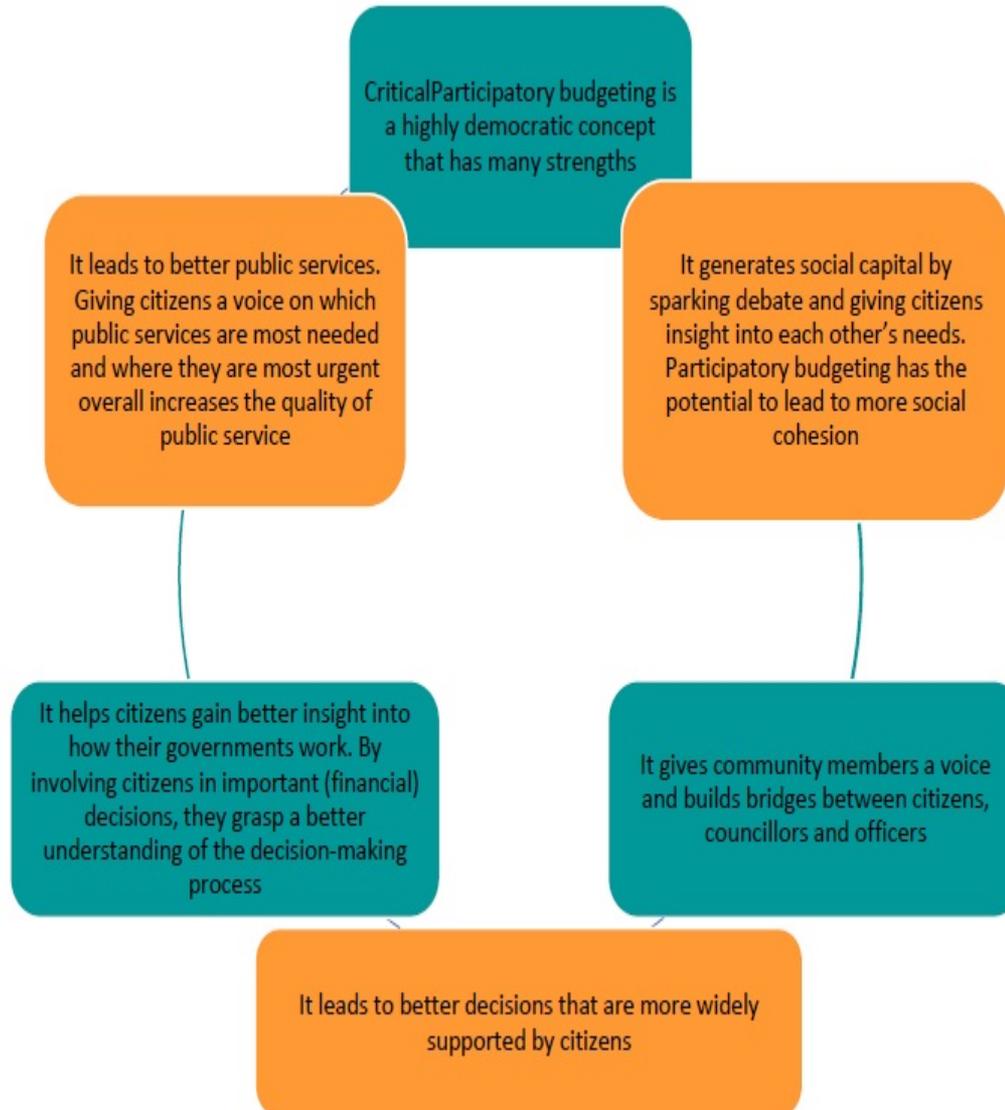
The interest for civil society organizations and citizens in general

The rules of the "game" are clearly and generally defined

The competence of residents and municipal officials is expanded in order to acquaint them with the problems of society

Wide dissemination of information by all possible means of communication

# PB is a highly democratic concept that has many strengths



# WEAKNESSES OF PB:

Interaction with the government increases the risk of community movement

Financial constraints and resources are limited, so the application of a participatory budget is limited

Communities stop participating when their needs will be fulfilled

Very poor young people and people from lower social backgrounds are under-represented

Participants are disappointed of the slow pace of public works

Fragmented decisions and short-term needs can do damage for urban planning and long-term projects

Manipulation of budget resources