

# HOW TO ENGAGE CITIZENS IN URBAN REGENERATION PROCESS?



## Background

Public participation is aimed at recognising people’s voices in addressing urban challenges and city-making, which are viewed as a crucial element to accomplish urban development in a more effective, sustainable, and inclusive way. Participatory budgeting (PB) is one of tools, that empowers people to collectively decide on how to spend part of public budget and allows to engage citizens in sharing ideas and voting on city development proposals.

While in some cities of Europe PB was introduced in 2000s in others such programs appeared only in 2010s. Thus, in some cities the process of applying different models and bringing together different parties is new to all engaged actors: local authorities, citizens, stakeholders, researchers, and others.

Typically, PB is an annual process, that is integrated into a regular budgeting process. Usually PB process follows five steps, still the tools used for communication and voting, type of actors involved, number of face-to-face meetings, etc. depend on a chosen PB model.

Involvement of local inhabitants in co-planning and co-design of a neighbourhood is of special importance, as it strengthens the sense of belonging to a place and sense of community. The PB allows direct citizen engagement in decision-making related to regeneration of the urban environment.

The stages of the participatory budgeting program are formed by the public participation (PP) approach that includes several stages of development: information, consultation, involvement, collaboration, and empowerment. Similarly, participatory budgeting includes stages of organising/designing the process, brainstorming, developing and submitting proposals, voting, and funding.



Image 1. PB traditional process [by authors].



Image 2. Proposals for “Riga City Participatory Budgeting Project Ideas Competition 2022” in Āgenskalns neighbourhood [using visualisations of student proposals].



Image 3. Workshop during the design phase in program “Riga City Participatory Budgeting Project Ideas Competition” [by authors].

## Advice

### For municipalities:

- Consider budget and project number limits and allocation in relation to geographical and administrative borders (in some cases neighbourhoods can not compete due to inequality in residents number);
- Identify actors (some municipalities are organising workshops to allow advisory support of experts in the phase of project idea proposal development);
- Understand tools for engagement (eg. Decidim platform allows any organisation to create mass processes for strategic planning, participatory budgeting, public consultation, collaborative design for regulations, urban spaces and election processes, etc.)
- Learn from good practise examples (see the links);
- Check the requirements and ability of community to fulfill the tasks;
- Cooperate with academia;
- Learn how to make the process transparent.

### For local inhabitants and NGOs:

- When thinking of a new proposal consider whether your project idea serves a wider community?
- Check accessibility of the chosen area;
- Ask municipality if surroundings are going to be developed;
- Learn how to reach various community groups (eg. when the project is submitted and active participation of local people is required).



Image 4. Proposals for “Riga City Participatory Budgeting Project Ideas Competition 2022” in Brasa neighbourhood [using visualisations of student proposals].

## Learn more

### Useful links:

<https://uisur.ktu.edu/#workshop>

[http://www.participatorybudgetingworks.org/uploads/files/lists/youthpb\\_toolkit\\_en\\_compressed-20220324160040.pdf](http://www.participatorybudgetingworks.org/uploads/files/lists/youthpb_toolkit_en_compressed-20220324160040.pdf)

<http://empaci.eu/>

### References:

**Treija, S., Bratuškis, U., Koroļova, A.** University-Community engagement: formation of new collaboration patterns in participatory budgeting process. *Architecture and urban planning*, 2022.

<https://sciendo.com/article/10.2478/aup-2022-0016>

**Cabannes, Y.** Participatory budgeting: a significant contribution to participatory democracy. *Environment and Urbanization*, 2004.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/095624780401600104>

**Lehtonen, P.** Policy on the move: the enabling settings of participation in participatory budgeting. *Policy Studies*, vol. 43, no. 5, 2021, pp. 1036–1054.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/01442872.2021.1895981>

Developed by:

S.Treija, Riga Technical University, Faculty of Architecture  
A.Koroļova, Riga Technical University, Faculty of Architecture  
U.Bratuškins, Riga Technical University, Faculty of Architecture  
A.Lektauers, Riga Technical University,  
Faculty of Computer Science and Information Technology

Joint Research Project between Lithuania, Latvia and Taiwan

## **Up-to-date Information Systems in Urban Regeneration**

2020/01/01–2022/12/31

### Acknowledgment

This factsheet is based upon work from Joint Research Project between Lithuania, Latvia and Taiwan “**Up-to-date Information Systems in Urban Regeneration**”

<https://uisur.ktu.edu/>

Joint Research Project between Lithuania, Latvia and Taiwan “**Up-to-date Information Systems in Urban Regeneration**” is supported by The National Science and Technology Council (Taiwan), the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia.