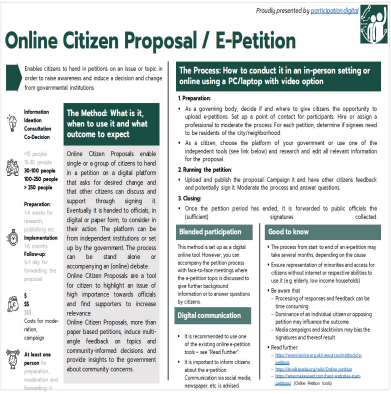

Online Citizen Proposal / E-Petition

Description

Online Citizen Proposal / E-Petition ?

Online Citizen Proposal / E-Petition ?enables citizens to hand in petitions on an issue or topic in order to raise awareness and induce a decision and change from governmental institutions.

Level of participation

Information
Ideation
Consultation
Co-Decision

Duration of participation process

Preparation: Several weeks for planning,
Implementation: 1-2 days
Follow-up: Internal to the group who need to implement and monitor

Target group size

30-100 people
100-250 people
> 250 people

Costs

$
$$

Cost for moderation, campaign

Human resources needed

At least one person for preparation, moderation and forwarding it

The method: what is it, when to use it and what outcome to expect

Online Citizen Proposals enable single or a group of citizens to hand in a petition on a digital platform that asks for desired change and that other citizens can discuss and support through signing it. Eventually it is handed to officials, in digital or paper form, to consider in their action. The platform can be from independent institutions or set up by the government. The process can be stand alone or accompanying an (online) debate.?

Online Citizen Proposals are a tool for citizen to highlight an issue of high importance towards officials and find supporters to increase relevance.?

Online Citizen Proposals, more than paper based petitions, induce multi-angle feedback on topics and community-informed decisions and provide insights to the government about community concerns.?

It is particularly suitable for projects with a community-building objective, such as sustainability or urban development projects. NGOs or decision makers obtain an action plan with concrete ideas and Citizens or community members can meet new people who support implementation of change..

The process: how to conduct it in an in-person setting or online using a PC/laptop with video option

1. **Preparation:** ?

- As a governing body, decide if and where to give citizens the opportunity to upload e-petitions. Set up a point of contact for participants. Hire or assign a professional to moderate the process. For each petition, determine if signees need to be residents of the city/neighborhood.?
- As a citizen, choose the platform of your government or use one of the independent tools (see link below) and research and edit all relevant information for the proposal.?

2. **Running the petition**: ?

- Upload and publish the proposal. Campaign it and have other citizens feedback and potentially sign it. Moderate the process and answer questions. ?

3. **Closing:** ?

- Once the petition period has ended, it is forwarded to public officials the (sufficient) signatures

collected.?
?

?

Blended participation

This method is set up as a digital online tool. However, you can accompany the petition process with face-to-face meetings where the e-petition topic is discussed to give further background information or to answer questions by citizens. ?

Digital communication

- It is recommended to use one of the existing online e-petition tools – see “Read Further”. ?
- It is important to inform citizens about the e-petition. Communication via social media, newspaper, etc. is advised.?

Good to know

- The process from start to end of an e-petition may take several months, depending on the cause?
- Ensure representation of minorities and access for citizens without internet or respective abilities to use it (e.g. elderly, low income households)?
- Be aware that:

  – Processing of responses and feedback can be time consuming?

  – Dominance of an individual citizen or opposing petition may influence the outcome?

  – Media campaigns and slacktivism may bias the signatures and thereof result

- Read further:

  ?

  https://www.involve.org.uk/resources/methods/e-petitions?

  https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Online_petition?

  https://www.makeuseof.com/best-websites-start-petitions/ (Online Petition tools)?

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