

# Civic participation in the digital age

## Austrian example

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## Agenda

- Participation: concept and key components
- The policy cycle as a structuring element
- Civic Participation: the Austrian approach
- Opportunities and challenges of citizen participation in the digital age
- Next activities in Austria and outlook on future participation

## Participation: concept and key components

- Participation = social, communicative and political process.
- The central components for the successful integration of participation processes into political-administrative processes are...
  - a clear objective and a structured format for participation
  - a sound understanding of the target group(s) and the selective choice of citizens in the participation process (“sampling”)
  - a predefined procedure for further processing the results
  - a clearly defined approach to formats, functions and work steps (“process design”)
  - continuous reflection on one's own approach (“learning loop”)

## The policy cycle as a structuring element

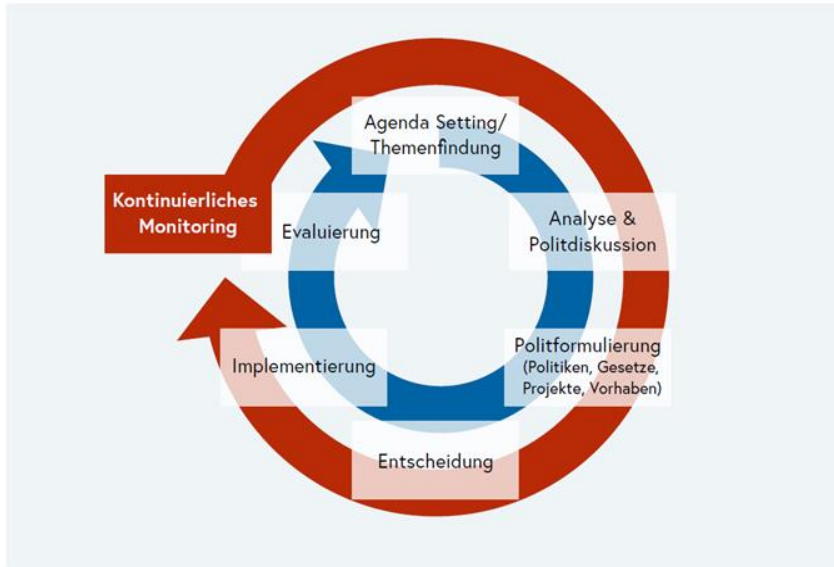


Abbildung 4: Partizipation im Policy Cycle, BMKÖS 2019

- **Agenda setting/topic identification:** Identification of politically & socially relevant topics
- **Analysis & policy discussion:** Collection & discourse of specific topics
- **Policy formulation:** Formulation of solutions & measures
- **Decision:** Selection of solutions & measures
- **Implementation:** Implementation of the decision & testing in practice
- **Evaluation:** Continuous monitoring of the success and impact of the implemented decisions

→ Participation processes can improve all elements of the policy cycle, however, they also require differentiated procedures.

## Civic Participation: the Austrian approach

- **Goal:** Create a framework for standardized, goal-oriented participation processes with a practical guide
- **Framework:** Provide methods, tools and quality criteria for the different phases of the policy cycle
- **Implementation:** Scientific support and exchange, multidisciplinary workshops and conferences, ...



## Civic Participation - The Austrian approach

- **Provided contents for the public sector:**
  - General quality criteria
  - Standardized terminology
  - Caution points and stumbling blocks
  - Decision trees
  - Toolboxes
  - Checklists and questionnaires
  - Instruments for stakeholder, target group and risk analysis
  - Selected participation methods (...)

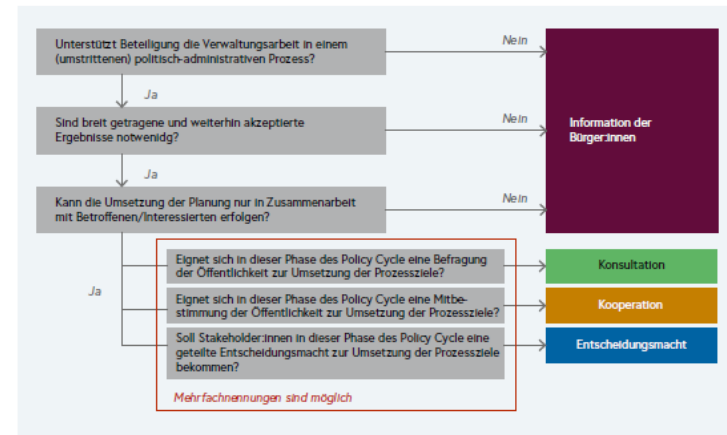


Abbildung 9: Entscheidungsbaum zur Wahl der passenden Beteiligungsintensität

## 5 central challenges & opportunities in the digital age

<u>Challenges</u>	<u>Opportunities</u>
Inclusion of groups without affinity for participatory processes & data protection	Automated evaluation and analysis
Changing results through digital processes, the digital process itself creates patterns of participation	Paradigm shift for the areas of inclusion and mobility
Social-communicative framework of respectful interaction	Reduced costs of participation
Difficulty understanding interactions and reactions - relevance of contextual factors	Broad scope of participants and the knowledge gained
<b>Quality vs Quantity of the supplied information</b>	<b>Opportunities for extensive, systematic involvement of citizens in the political-administrative system</b>

## Next activities in Austria and outlook on future participation

- Increased cooperation between different federal and regional authorities (f.e. parliament, regional governments and communities) and coherent knowledge transfer
- Building a “culture of participation” through intensified training courses for civil servants and communities of practices including all state levels
- Working towards a system-integrated online-participation-tool in order to reduce costs for civil servants to conduct participation processes, pending political decisions



# Thank you for your attention!

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