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Portugal Participatory Budget

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Brief Overview

The Portugal Participatory Budget (PPB) is a democratic, direct and universal process that allows civil society to decide on public investments in different governmental areas.

Through the PPB, the Portuguese population is having a voice to decide where to invest part of the National State Budget: in 2017, 3 million euros in the areas of education and adult training, culture, science, agriculture and justice. In 2018, the PPB budget will consider 5 million euros and citizens will be able to propose ideas in all areas of government.

The Participatory Budget is deliberative. This means that the Portuguese people are presenting investment proposals and they will be the ones to choose, through voting, which projects are to be implemented.

It is a democratic, direct and universal process through which the citizens will have the opportunity to propose projects and ideas, in a complete collaborative and participative way, effectively contributing to real social impact.

Main Goals

The Portugal Participatory Budget's key objective is bringing people closer to politics and decision-making, while promoting a deeper connection between regions through projects at national level.

It also has the potential for becoming an essential tool in creating national networks and putting into practice projects that integrate coastline and interior areas, as well as rural and urban areas.

Experiences in Portugal reveal that citizens effectively participate when asked what they wish for their cities. As so, the national Participatory Budget constitutes an excellent opportunity for building a project of citizen participation and promoting a greater integration between territories by means of nationwide projects.

Public Policies in the Spotlight

For the 2018 edition, citizens will decide how to invest 5 million euro in all areas of government.

Implementation Phases

The PPB has two main phases: the phase for presenting proposals and the phase for voting the projects.

In 2018, the phase for presenting proposals takes place until April 24th. Proposals for the PPB may be presented online at the PBP portal or in person at Participative Meetings, which will be upheld in several places throughout the national territory.

The voting phase will take place between June 11th and September 30th. Each citizen will have the right to two votes – one for regional projects and another for national projects – and may choose to vote through the portal or by SMS.

Territorial Organization

The national Participatory Budget integrates groups of proposals with different territory scope - regional and nationwide. This allows simultaneously a complete coverage of the country, as well as a broader engagement between local communities and citizens.

PPB has 8 groups of proposals according to territory scope: 1 nationwide; 1 for each of the 5 regions of mainland Portugal; 1 for each of the 2 Autonomous Regions (Azores and Madeira). These groups do not compete with each other, since each one has its own financial allocation.

Furthermore, the creation of different groups of proposals allows to:

- Guarantee the integral coverage of the country's territory;
- Promote the involvement of local communities in regional and nationwide projects, connecting different areas of the country;
- Encourage a broader public participation, both regional and national wise.

Budget Amount

Through the Portugal Participatory Budget 2018, citizens are deciding where to invest 5 million euro.

Participatory Budgets in Portugal and Worldwide

Portugal presents a wide range of participatory budgets at the local level. There are more than 80 on-going exercises, which represents a significant number of municipalities in the country.

At the international level, according to the Portuguese Government research, there are no nationwide experiences on Participatory Budget, although there are many projects in large cities, such as New York or Paris, or in Federal States of a similar size to Portugal, as is the case of Rio Grande do Sul, in Brazil. This is regarded as one of the main ground-breaking aspects of the Portuguese initiative.