

Democracy is in a complex situation, which forces us to focus our attention on the quality of the forms of government. There is a crisis of representation in democratic procedures.

The centralization of power has led to a feeling of disenfranchisement in the political process. **Participatory Budget (PB)** can be seen as a local response to this problematic situation.

PB aims to defend those democratic needs that aren't being met by government. It promotes governance by the people and, in principle, responsibility.

This power centralization away from the control of elected governments and citizens, has created tension and so generated waves of "democratic discontent" all over the world.

Europe has been surprised in recent years by very significant social events, bringing together groups, from various age and professional sectors, demanding more democracy, participation and transparency.

In many countries, elections are faced with very high rates of abstention. For many citizens, voting is seen as a false power that is not worth being exercised; as they believe that the real centres of influence and decision are outside the electoral process.

Trust can be seen as the engine of democracy: the power delegation through the vote. Traditional representative democracy seems to be unable to meet the new societal challenges generated in the contemporary world, and the need exists to mobilise the energy and confidence of people.

The design of public policies for a region must rely on the active citizens' involvement who live or work there.

Planning should also be responsible and be based on a sound and sustainable use of natural resources. "Citizenship and Sustainability" are therefore two sides of the same coin.

We are committed to do everything for the emergence of a new democracy founded on the rule of participation and citizenship. We speak of a democracy with a new spirit, able to rebuild trust between governments and the governed.

Cascais is committed to implement devices of co-decision in public resources, such as the PB.

**PB METHODOLOGY** has 2 cycles: decision and implementation.

The **Decision Cycle** has 4 phases:

**Process preparation** (Jan/ Mar)

**Receiving of proposals** (Apr/May)

PB receives proposals during 9 public sessions in different districts to promote equal access to population. Participants are checked and registered as residents, workers or students in Cascais and the sessions are translated into Portuguese and English and sign language. They sit at round tables and explain their ideas. Each table has a technician that leads the workflow. From each table, 2 ideas are selected, then presented to all participants in the room. Each participant has two votes to use in 2

different proposals, which he wants to validate. The proposals approved per session are proportional to the present participants.

**Technical analysis** (May /Sep)

Interservice teams are set up to evaluate and budget the proposals collected in public sessions, according to the eligibility criteria set out in the regulation:

Be sufficiently specific and delimited in the territory;

Do not exceed the 300.000€;

Do not exceed 24/36 months of execution;

Be compatible with other municipal plans.

**Voting** (Oct/ Nov)

Once the technical analysis finishes, a final list of projects is announced and the voting begins.

We invest in the street publicity through "mupis", "outdoors" etc, exhibitions and through electronic release internet (website and facebook).The campaign is increasingly being developed by proponent groups in order to publicize their projects and obtain votes.

One mobile phone number allows one vote. Votes are made by SMS and can be used to vote against or in favor of a particular project.

The announcement of the winning projects closes this cycle. Non-winning projects are saved into an ideas bank.

The **Implementation Cycle** has 4 phases:

**Schematic design and design development projects (2/3 years)**

The design consists in the definition and generic concretization of an architectural project.

**Public procurement** - Is governed by the terms of the law

**Building**

**Opening** delivered to the population

Cascais PB has an external consultant and an ongoing evaluation, since 2011, 4389 citizens have participated in the public sessions presenting and discussing ideas with their neighbors.219307 votes have been recorded in 6 years.

People get involved in municipality because of PB and then get more involved. New organizations have been instituted due to PB. The "shared conception" of a project, the "proximity of the local authority", the "easy and accessible dialogue" and the "establishment of a new relationship between citizens and local authorities" are some advantages described by people.

Other impacts of this action are the skills improvement, raise awareness of procedural constraints, better understanding of public administration procedures.(see n.6)

Cascais is keen on a democracy which is made by citizens, for citizens and with citizens.