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## Lisbon and Grenoble: citizens'

There is a wide range of tools to bring the process of political decision making closer to citizens, from referendum to initiative, from Participatory Budget to Direct Democracy. Two pioneer cities are the Portuguese capital Lisbon, and Grenoble, in

## LISBON: A DECADE OF PARTICIPATORY BUDGET

by Miguel Silva Graça

Amongst the many European cities that have made their experiences with Participatory Budgeting (PB), Lisbon, in 2008, was the first capital city. The experience has shown that PB clearly lead to a better performance of the municipality itself, by providing a better public service and pursuing fairer public policies, and therefore local policies that are more inclusive, sustainable and that promote social and territorial equity.

In the framework of the Lisbon PB, throughout the last 10 years citizens presented more than 6000 proposals. Almost 2000 projects were put to the vote, amongst which 120 gathered public support, corresponding to a total value of investment of more than 33 million euros.

Among the most important projects that were voted and implemented were the "Start Up Lisbon", an SME incubator, "Centro de base Local", a public library, the creative hub "Mouraria", a green corridor, cycling tracks, a public garden and a public climbing wall.

The process is in constant evolution, and the most important recent innovations are

a greater democratisation of the process through its "de-digitisation" — promoting less digital and more face-to-face methods, as well as the involvement of parts of the populations usually excluded from public participation, like young people, seniors and migrants. And also a greater commitment to sustainability through the award of a "Green Seal" to PB projects that contribute to a more environmentally friendly city.

Notably, in the field of sustainability, future activities are currently being prepared, some of which are linked to the Lisbon European Green Capital 2020:

- the "Green" Participatory Budgeting 2020/21 will redirect the existing Lisbon PB exclusively to proposals that contribute to a more sustainable, resilient and environmentally friendly city.
- A Participatory Budgeting for Schools 2020/2021 will give students of five elementary schools in Lisbon the possibility to propose, vote on (and see realised) green ideas for a total amount of €10,000 per school.

- A "Lisbon Climate Citizenship Commitment" Platform that will allow different stakeholders (from companies to citizens) to commit to specific targets, encouraging, for example, companies to promote sustainable mobility schemes for their employees, or citizens to commit to using public transport or not using plastic bags.



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