

WeGovNow

Towards WeGovernment

Collective and participative approaches
for addressing local policy challenges



Consortium partners:



infalia

empirica

Southwark
Council
southwark.gov.uk

FGB
Fondazione
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Funka



+ LiquidFeedback

GIScience

UCL



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The WeGovNow mission

Changing the relationship between citizens & government

Today, digital innovation and new technologies have become a potential game changer in the relationship between citizens and government. It is now the time where eGovernment should start undergoing its transformation from viewing citizens as mere customers of public services towards 'We-Government', considering citizens as partners. This represents a fundamental paradigm shift in which society places greater trust in – and empowers – the public to play a far more active role in the functioning of governments.

Against this background, 12 partner organisations have joined forces in the WeGovNow project to tap into the potentials provided by participatory online technologies. In particular, the WeGovNow approach enables a new type of interaction in which citizens become partners of their municipality and actors of local development. To this end, the project develops a new type of citizen engagement platform that supports communication and collaboration between the local public administrations and residents. By means of a set of integrated civic participation applications, WeGovNow further aims at offering a solution to overcome limitations of existing digital participation tools.

The WeGovNow approach is piloted in three European cities under day-to-day conditions. To this end, each pilot city identifies a set of local policy challenges to be addressed by means of a publicly accessible WeGovNow pilot service.

WeGovNow at a glance

Key facts

- WeGovNow is a Horizon2020 research and innovation project funded by the European Commission.
- The project started in February 2016 and will end in January 2019.
- 12 partner organisations from 5 European countries working together to improve the dialogue between government and citizens.
- Three European cities in IT and UK pilot the WeGovNow platform in their daily practice.

Main objectives

- To develop and pilot a digital platform for effectively engaging local civil society in the co-production of citizen-centred services and in the co-development of strategic approaches to community development.
- To involve citizens in decision-making processes and empower citizens as active local actors of and for their community as well as partners rather than customers in the delivery of public services.
- To improve effectiveness and efficiency of public administrations and to reduce the administrative burden of citizens.



The WeGovNow platform

WeGovNow strives for integrating a set of innovative software applications into a unified citizen engagement platform. To this end, a number of civic engagement applications that have already existed prior to the project have been integrated into a single online platform together with new software components developed within the project.

The WeGovNow pilot platform is the result of a multi-staged development processes, taking account both of user diversity and different user perspectives (e.g. citizens, civic society or organisations, businesses, and public administrations). A modular architecture design adopted for the purpose of WeGovNow facilitates the potential extension of the pilot platform in a straight forward manner, even beyond the duration of the current pilot project.

The WeGovNow pilot platform offers a set of core functions supporting civic participation and engagement for the purpose of addressing local policy challenges, including:

- » **Community networking & self-organisation** via *WeGovNow FirstLife*
- » **Problem identification & tracking** via *WeGovNow Improve My City*
- » **Democratic proposition development & decision making** via *WeGovNow LiquidFeedback*
- » **Crowd sourcing of knowledge & ideas** via *WeGovNow Community Maps*
- » **Exchange of volunteering opportunity & free items** via *WeGovNow Offers & Requests*

Five key components

The five key components provide several key functionalities as graphically summarised in the following figure. In general, the platform functions as a flexible “tool box” by offering open cross-component usage and allowing for numerous utilisation patterns beyond the individual components.





REPORT LOCAL ISSUES
with **Improve My City**

- Report local issues in your neighbourhood
- Route issues automatically to the correct administration department
- Track the processing of the issue



MAP AND PLAN
with **FirstLife**

- Discover what is going on in your neighbourhood
- Share experiences & news with others
- Organise working groups in your area
- Manage & promote your events & projects



DEBATE AND DECIDE
with **LiquidFeedback**

- Discuss ideas with other citizens
- Provide feedback on undertakings of your city administration
- Champion others' ideas or suggest alternatives
- Vote in a credible preferential voting



COLLECT AND SHARE
with **Community Maps**

- Create themed maps in collaboration with your community
- Contribute information on local issues
- Identify nearby events & activities
- Share your views on planned developments or other map topics



COMMUNITY EXCHANGE
with **Offers & Requests**

- Give or find free items that can be useful to others
- Offer or discover free services in your local area

LONDON BOROUGH OF SOUTHWARK



TURIN



SAN DONÀ DI PIAVE



Pilot sites

The WeGovNow pilot platform is publicly piloted in three European cities:

- England's ninth most densely populated area, the London Borough of Southwark;
- the former industrial and now 'most eco-friendly' Italian City of Turin;
- the Venetian City of San Donà di Piave which has been completely rebuilt after World War II

All three municipalities start their journey towards more participatory government models from a different departure point. This does not only refer to dissimilar public policy legislations but also to the socio-cultural challenges in the regions. Hence, each of the pilot cities has different thematic foci for which the WeGovNow platform is harnessed in day-to-day practice. However, what all three cities have in common is the desire and commitment to promote participatory approaches to community development, public service delivery and policy making; all with a focus to achieving a good quality of life for all of its citizens.

Pilot activities

Customised according to the local requirements at each municipality, the WeGovNow engagement platform is utilised for various participatory processes. Generally, all pilot users are free to use the pilot service as they wish. However, each pilot city tests the WeGovNow platform under day-to-day conditions in relation to particular use cases strategically important within its specific local context. Some examples are summarised on the following pages.



WeGovNow in Turin

Co-designing a public space with the help of WeGovNow

The City of Turin utilises the WeGovNow platform for piloting a new way of co-developing public spaces. Some years ago, a former industrial area has been converted into an urban park, the Parco Dora. A remaining area within the park is still to be developed.

By means of a publicly accessible co-design process supported by WeGovNow, the City of Turin aims at involving local associations, businesses and citizens in the development of this community area. This process combines the conduction of a number of public co-design workshops with structured online deliberation of proposed initiatives with help of WeGovNow.

During the overall process, contributions posted on WeGovNow are systematically fed into subsequent off-line workshops. The outcomes of each workshop are again fed back into the online debate on WeGovNow.

Following a final voting supported by WeGovNow, the responsible municipal department formalises the final result of the overall co-design process in terms of an operational implementation plan, thereby taking account of relevant legal requirements.



WeGovNow in San Donà di Piave

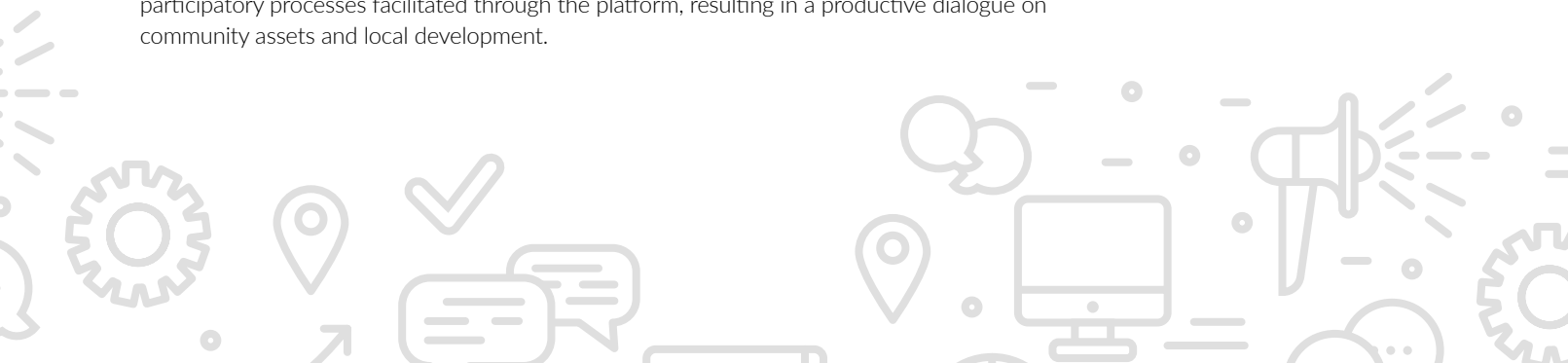
Promoting active citizenship among young people to engage in public matters with the help of WeGovNow

In San Donà di Piave, the WeGovNow pilot platform is used by local schools as part of their teaching activities for educating their students in public matters and active citizenship.

Following a formal agreement between the municipality and three high schools, over 30 students work as WeGovNow ambassadors harnessing the platform for a new culture of civil participation in San Donà.

The young ambassadors intensively use the platform in their role as citizens, creating thematic maps to identify what they deem relevant in their neighbourhoods. Beyond this, the WeGovNow platform is utilised to propose new opportunities for the community in an online deliberation process.

Stimulated by the students' enthusiasm, other citizens are encouraged to contribute to the participatory processes facilitated through the platform, resulting in a productive dialogue on community assets and local development.



WeGovNow in Southwark

Supporting young job seekers to find employment and training opportunities with the help of WeGovNow

The London Borough of Southwark is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all young people.

Following this, the WeGovNow platform is used to enable young job seekers in Southwark to access crowd-sourced information on career and training pathway opportunities in their local community while being able to directly engage with the employers or service providers.

The latter post their opportunities and vacancies on a themed local map, which can then be identified by the job/training seeker.

Moreover, young people can also publicise a more succinct version of their own résumé on the platform, and specify to prospective employers or training bodies the kinds of opportunities that they are seeking. This way, the WeGovNow platform functions as an online career and employability hub, which not only benefits young people and the local businesses/organisations targeting e.g. school leavers or graduates, but also the municipality in helping identify potential gaps in the future as well as plans to mitigate these shortages.





WeGovNow

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WeGovNow – The WeGovernment Platform