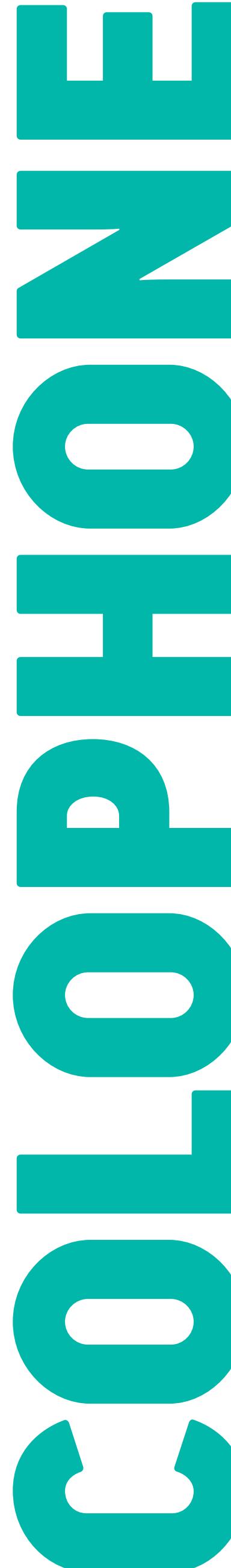


# TIME FOR DEMOCRACY

GROUP  
NAC

EMBRACING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION  
IN DESTINATION GOVERNANCE  
White Paper January 2023





## ABOUT GROUP NAO

Group NAO is a creative strategy bureau based in Copenhagen, Denmark. We exist to strategically, creatively and curiously empower the change we believe is needed in the global visitor economy, in culture and urban habitats in general. We work internationally on projects and initiatives that address the transformative potential of places, cities, and businesses towards a sustainable and collective future, rooted in our strong backgrounds as strategic agenda setters, targeted fundraisers and policy analysts.

Group NAO was established in the summer of 2019. In three years, we have established Group NAO as a global brand with a client base across Europe, North America and New Zealand. Since we started, we have developed and delivered strategy and ideation processes to +40 client accounts, mostly cities or municipalities, destination management organizations, international associations, cultural institutions, and real estate owners.

Today, we are a strong core team in Copenhagen working closely with our associated partners in Europe and North America – all lead experts in the experience and visitor economy, destination development, urban planning and placemaking.

To learn more about our work please visit us on [www.Groupnao.com](http://www.Groupnao.com) or [www.linkedin.com/company/groupnao](http://www.linkedin.com/company/groupnao).

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## ABOUT TIME FOR DMOCRACY

Time for DMocracy is a collaborative project and a curious journey into citizen activation and empowerment, the challenges, and imperatives of dialogue, power-sharing, and new modes of governance in tourism development. The project is relevant to any destination – urban or rural, national, or regional – that wants to empower their local communities towards the future of tourism and that puts value to the shift from tourism as a goal to tourism as a means to build better societies and communities.

The initiative was originally initiated and designed by Group NAO, and launched in association with Global Destination Sustainability Movement, The Travel Foundation, TCI Research and City Destinations Alliance, as well as University of Surrey. In Europe, 22 participating destination partners have supported and contributed to the project, including by participating in surveys, interviews, case studies, learnings labs, DMocracy Bootcamp, and conferences.

Miles Partnership is strategic partner to Group NAO and has led the Time for DMocracy program in North America and facilitated project activities for 21 participating destinations at the city, regional, State, and provincial level. Miles Partnership has also authored and produced the six Time for DMocracy toolkits, referenced in this white paper and available on the project website, along with more information about the European and North American project editions: [timefordmocracy.com](http://timefordmocracy.com)



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

On behalf of Group NAO, the authors want to thank all our project partners for their support, insights, and contributions to this initiative. Without your backing, this work would not have been possible. In Europe: Global Destinations Sustainability Movement, The Travel Foundation, TCI Research, City Destinations Alliance and University of Surrey.

A special thanks to our lead partner in the US, Miles Partnership in association with their academic, agency and association partners; the University of South Carolina, North Carolina State University, Coraggio Group, Destination Analysts, Longwoods International, and Destinations International, DMA West, STS and TTIA.

And of course, a big thank you to all 42 trailblazing destination partners who share our professional curiosity and passion for strategizing the visitor and experience economy:

**European Destination partners:** Amsterdam & partners, VisitAarhus, Athens Development and Destination Agency, Visit Brussels, Bordeaux Tourism & Congress, Simply Munich, City of Belfast with Visit Belfast, City of Barcelona, Wonderful Copenhagen, Marketing Liverpool, OnlyLyon, Visit Oslo, Visit Tallinn, City of Stockholm, Tel Aviv Global, Zürich Tourism, Marketing Oost, Northern Norway, Swedish Lapland Visitors Board, Toerisme Veluwe Arnhem Nijmegen, Netherlands Board of Tourism and Conventions, VisitGreenland.

**North American Destination partners:** NYC & Company, Destination Toronto, Visit Anaheim, Destination Vancouver, Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board, San Francisco Travel Association, Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau, Tourisme Montreal, Arkansas Tourism, Travel Alberta, Visit Arizona, Maine Office of Tourism, Travel Oregon, North Carolina, Visit Sarasota, Visit Park City, Breckenridge Tourism Office, Visit Galveston, Mammoth Lakes Tourism, Visit Estes Park.

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## PROGRAM INITIATOR AND EUROPEAN LEAD:

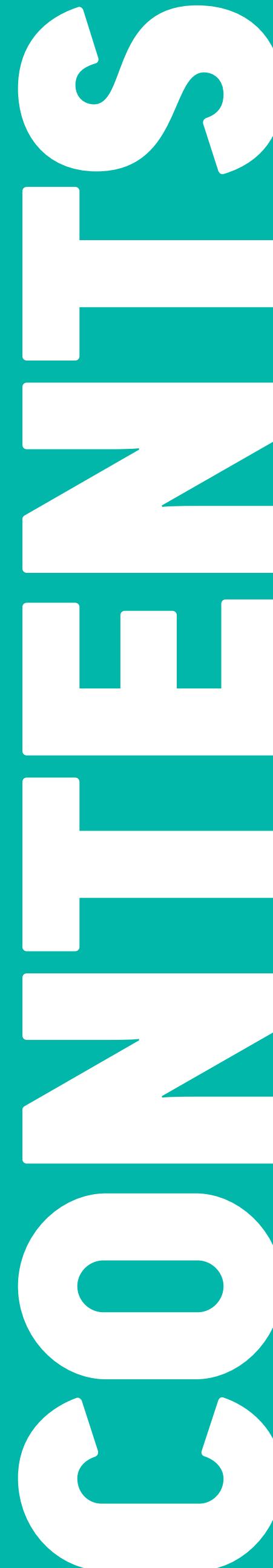


## TIME FOR DMOCRACY EUROPEAN EDITION KNOWLEDGE & EXPERT PARTNERS:



CITY DESTINATIONS ALLIANCE





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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



With these questions and many more, Time for DMOcracy is a direct reflection of – and perhaps a natural reaction to – a highly disruptive decade in the history of travel and tourism. Notably, the global visitor economy has become much more politicized as years of unbroken growth in international visitor numbers made its clear impact on local communities and ecosystems around the world.

For good and bad, the global visitor economy unfolds in places and communities, where people live and make their living. Tourism has become a key item in public debate on matters such as climate change and concerns, nature conservation, visitor pressures, traffic and congestion, cost of living, housing and

Time for DMOcracy is an initiative in search of new, more inclusive, and participatory approaches in the governance and development of tourism in destinations at all levels – local, regional, and national. It might also be one of the world's biggest collaborative research projects in tourism and destination governance (that's just our guess ;-). 42 destinations – cities, regions and nations – across Europe and North America joined the project with leading universities, consultancies and international tourism associations. Together, we asked ourselves:

gentrification, human trafficking, safety, working conditions and much more.

Often, public debates draw strong lines between the tourism industry on one side and local interest and resident groups residents on the other. The DMO often finds itself somewhere in the middle, balancing the disconnect between the main stakeholders of the visitor economy: Political decision-makers, the commercial tourism industry, and the local community and citizens.

The disconnects are likely worsened by the pandemic crisis. Pressure from industry associations to rapidly regain tourism growth faces opposition from hesitant local populations

that seek liveability over visitability. The success of the DMO is measured by its ability to ensure continued growth, while expectations are building for the DMO to also act as a bridge or mediator between different interests – industry, political, and community – without the actual mandate to do so. In this 'twilight zone', the DMO is at risk of losing support and license to operate from all sides.

This white paper aims to imagine possible ways to reinvent the social contract of the destination and the DMO in building stronger connections to the local community. The paper is an explorative research journey into what works and what doesn't in shaping a more informed discussion and co-create the future of tourism and destination governance.

## EIGHT DEMOCRATIC APPROACHES

...identified and discussed in Part 3:

1. Resident Sentiment and Citizen science.
2. Strategizing and ideation.
3. Digital engagement and online participation.
4. Citizen assemblies, councils and panels.
5. Participatory Place branding and storytelling.
6. Placemaking by community.
7. Volunteering for tourism welcome.
8. Community funding and participatory budgeting.

## KEY OBSERVATIONS AND LEARNINGS

### We are at the beginning of something significant:

Time for DMOcracy marks a shift for destinations that "market or manage tourism" as an isolated economic activity, towards tourism as part of a much bigger and broader movement; towards stronger democratic principles and governance, accountability, and meaningful citizen agency. This observation of a shift is based on interviews, learning labs, seminars, conferencing, literature reviews and research activities throughout the project. See the project introduction and methodology, part 1.

Across Europe and North America, the majority of DMOs agree that resident engagement and participation are paramount to managing the visitor economy in a sustainable manner. Almost 8 in 10 believe that resident engagement and participation will be more important to their organisation in the future. Still, the main focus of most DMOs is on stakeholders, though increasing attention is paid to residents. Almost three in four DMOs see resident engagement as a complex and uncontrollable process. In short: DMOcracy may be the new name of the game, but it still feels uncertain and difficult to join in. See the results of the first transatlantic survey of participatory practices in destination management in part 2.

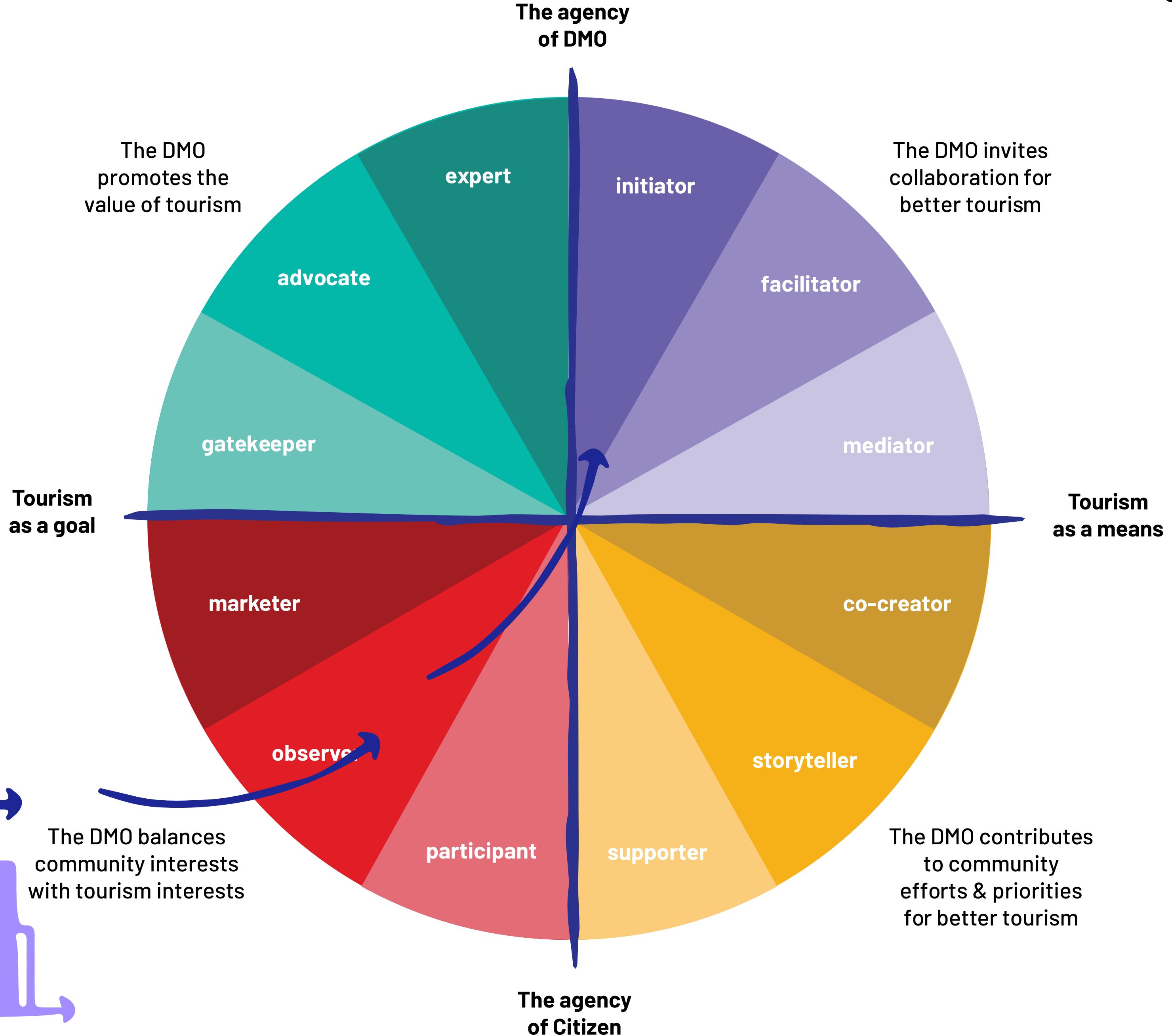
Many destinations face a struggle with establishing and maintaining meaningful, mutually beneficial, and trusting connections with local residents and communities. Fostering public participation in tourism involves more than securing tourism acceptance and must focus more on the actual participation process: how residents can participate in and influence the decision-making that shapes the future of tourism for their communities. The core idea of public participation is that those affected by a decision (i.e., to invite tourism to the community) have a right to be involved in the process of making that decision. Yet, the

degree and nature of the involvement can take on many different shapes and forms. In part 2, we explore the full spectrum of participation and the era of the citizen.

### Eight participatory approaches that offer the potential to put DMOcracy into practice.

Participatory practice in tourism is not a one-size-fits-all. We have identified multiple approaches to designing and initiating participation to involve, engage, and empower residents in tourism planning and development. In part 3, we elaborate on eight participatory approaches to unfold DMOcracy, each exemplified with case studies.

DMOcracy does not imply less relevance of the DMO, nor does it pinpoint one single fix-all role for organisation. Instead, DMOcracy calls for a much more fluid approach and understanding to destination governance. An approach, where the relevance of the destination organisation relies on its ability to understand which roles to undertake to create the most value in a given context. In part 4, we elaborate on the possible roles inspired by the eight approaches and the case examples.



HELLO  
WORLD,  
MEET  
*DEMOCRACY* ;)



## INTRODUCTION

# WHY DMOCRACY? WHY NOW?

### WE ARE AT THE BEGINNING

*Time for DMocracy starts as a quest to reinvent the social contract of any destination that invites tourism to where people live. As the name implies, DMocracy is about the role, relevance, and legitimacy of the DMO in a broader conversation on tourism, shifting from securing local tourism acceptance and avoiding resident discontent, to actual and relevant resident engagement and co-ownership in shaping the future of tourism planning and welcome.*

As a sector that lives in the public domain and depends on the well-being of the ecosystem in which it takes place, it is time for tourism to become a prime case for active citizen involvement and decision-making. Time for DMocracy marks a shift for cities and destinations that “market or manage tourism” as an isolated economic activity towards developing tourism as part of a much bigger and broader movement, towards stronger democratic principles and governance, towards accountability, and meaningful citizen agency.

### THE POLITICS OF TOURISM

In recent years, the politicization of tourism has undoubtedly become more widespread and more public, shifting from public celebration of visitor growth numbers to increasing attention to the negative impacts and burdens of tourism, tourism and climate change, net-zero scenarios, and the inequities of those who travel and those who don’t, the rise of global pandemics and the role of tourism in spreading it.

### THE ONE WHO MUST NOT BE NAMED

While globally debated tourism is site-specific, and often that site is wholly or partially public space – a space shared with those who live there. The impact of tourism is felt by the local communities that receive it, and as global numbers of travellers grow, so do the negative externalities of tourism and the local experience of ‘overtourism’ and the issues typically associated with this.

In simply typing the word, we hear the deep sigh from tourism and destination professionals around the world. ‘Overtourism’, as a term, is believed by many to distort the debate, because it lacks nuance, it has proved difficult to measure, and easily leads to oversimplification. Destination organisations have even asked that the word be avoided altogether, like the Voldemort of Tourism, the one who must not be named. But is the word really the problem? Indeed, words matter, and language is power, but who are you to define the vocabulary of a debate that starts with the people who experience tourism as part of their daily lives? Whether factual or perceived, the word is intuitive, and if you have banned it, what room does that leave us to discuss it further? Probably a room, where you, as destination organisation, are no longer part of the conversation, and where the nuance, you are looking for, might not be either.

### SOCIAL MOVEMENT ON THE RISE ... AND HERE TO STAY

Democratic principles are under threat around the world, yet we are seeing the global rise and promise of large and broad social movements, perhaps most comprehensively seen in relation to the global climate emergency. Citizens are taking active ownership and responsibility to make the necessary change and to demand action and accountability for the decision and policymakers in positions of power.

From a government level, a “deliberative wave” (as coined by the OECD) has been building with new and innovative ways to involve citizens and offer a more direct role in setting agendas and shaping public decisions. Citizen assemblies, councils and panels bring together people from all walks of life to discuss different issues and make recommendations for policy and decision-makers. [OECD](#) has compiled a database of representative deliberative processes and institutions with over 570 different examples, and a digital space, [Participo](#), presenting more practice cases and research on innovative citizen participation.

While climate is a major and widely adopted topic for public deliberation and participatory government, it is far from the sole topic for public decision-making and shaping. As a sector that lives in the public domain, that depends on the well-being of the ecosystem and community in which it takes place, tourism should and could be a prime case for a new era of local democracy, of active citizen participation and decision-making.

None of this is going away soon. The politicization of tourism is here to stay simply because it is driven by the meta-agendas and structural shifts of our time – the climate emergency, the biodiversity crisis, social inequity, geopolitical tensions, and pandemic disruption to mention a few. And that is why we believe now is the ‘time for DMocracy’.

### DMOCRACY, A NEW GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

This is where the quest starts, and while our key focus is on citizen engagement and involvement, our main object is that of the role and relevance of the DMO (hence, DMocracy): *How could and should the destination organisation / DMO become a legitimate, trusted, and trusting part of the conversation on the future of tourism for the communities they represent?*



# DESIGNING OUR QUEST

This quest was designed as an open and explorative journey with all the program's destination and expert partners with the shared aim of unfolding DMocracy and a future of stronger local participation and influence in tourism planning and destination development.

# ONE GLOBAL PROGRAM, TWO EDITIONS AND FORTY TWO DESTINATION PARTNERS

Starting with 22 European destinations in late 2021, Time for DMocracy was designed and launched by Group NAO in collaboration and partnership with expert and knowledge partners Global Destination Sustainability Movement, City Destinations Alliance, The Travel Foundation, TCI Research and the University of Surrey.

Early 2022, the North American edition of Time for DMocracy was launched and led by Miles Partnership in collaboration with Group NAO, and with academic, agency and association partners: the University of South Carolina, North Carolina State University,

Coraggio Group, Destination Analysts, Longwoods International, and Destinations International, DMA West, STS and TTIA.

This report primarily describes the process and findings of the European edition of Time for DMocracy; however, we also share 'DMocracy in practice' cases from outside Europe, and link to the many resources and results of the North American edition, wherever relevant.

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# EXPLORATIVE STUDY: LEARNING LABS, INTERVIEWS, BOOTCAMP AND SURVEYS

Time for DMOcracy has been shaped and informed by its participants, in particular the active participation of destination partners, who shared curious questions, best practices, and challenges along the way. Time for DMOcracy and the findings presented in this paper are centred on the following research activities:

## INDEPTH DESTINATION INTERVIEWS

To understand applied definitions of participation, approaches to involvement and engagement, mapping destination challenges, and questions for further exploration.

## DMO SURVEY IN EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

Mapping the current state and scope of participation and engagement with local communities and residents.

## 6 ONLINE LEARNING LABS

with inspiration from experts and case examples across different DMOcracy-related topics.

## DMOCRACY BOOTCAMP

in Copenhagen with almost 80 pct of the European destination partners participating and sharing case examples of their own work within sentiment & research, representation, volunteering, branding and placemaking, strategy development, digital participation and citizen assemblies and panels. The bootcamp also included a deliberative democracy masterclass and expert speakers addressing volunteering, youth involvement, and community relevance.

## DESK RESEARCH AND CASE STUDIES

to inspire the joint explorative studies and learning labs and serving as theoretical foundation "beyond tourism" for this whitepaper.



# LEARNING LABS

...towards this white paper:

## Learning Lab #1

Resident sentiment research with TCI Research/Travelsat as expert input, Bordeaux Tourism & Conventions and Visit Oslo as 'DMOcracy in practice'-cases.

## Learning Lab #2

Online participation & consultation with Bang the Table (now Granicus) as expert input, and Atout France as case presenter.

## Learning Lab #3

Deliberative processes and institutions with expert input from OECD and 'in practice' presentation by Barcelona City & Tourism Council Secretariat.

## Learning Lab #4

New era of the citizen with inspirational presentations from The New Citizenship Project (UK), Engage Liverpool and We Live Here (Amsterdam).

## Learning Lab #5

Citizen science with inspiration and case from the Urban Belonging project by Gehl Architects & Techno-Anthropology Lab (AAU).

## Learning Lab #6 (transatlantic)

Short-term rental with expert presentations by AirDNA, WTTC, Toposophy and case presenters from Netherlands Board of Tourism and Conventions (NBTC) and Visit Greater Palm Springs.

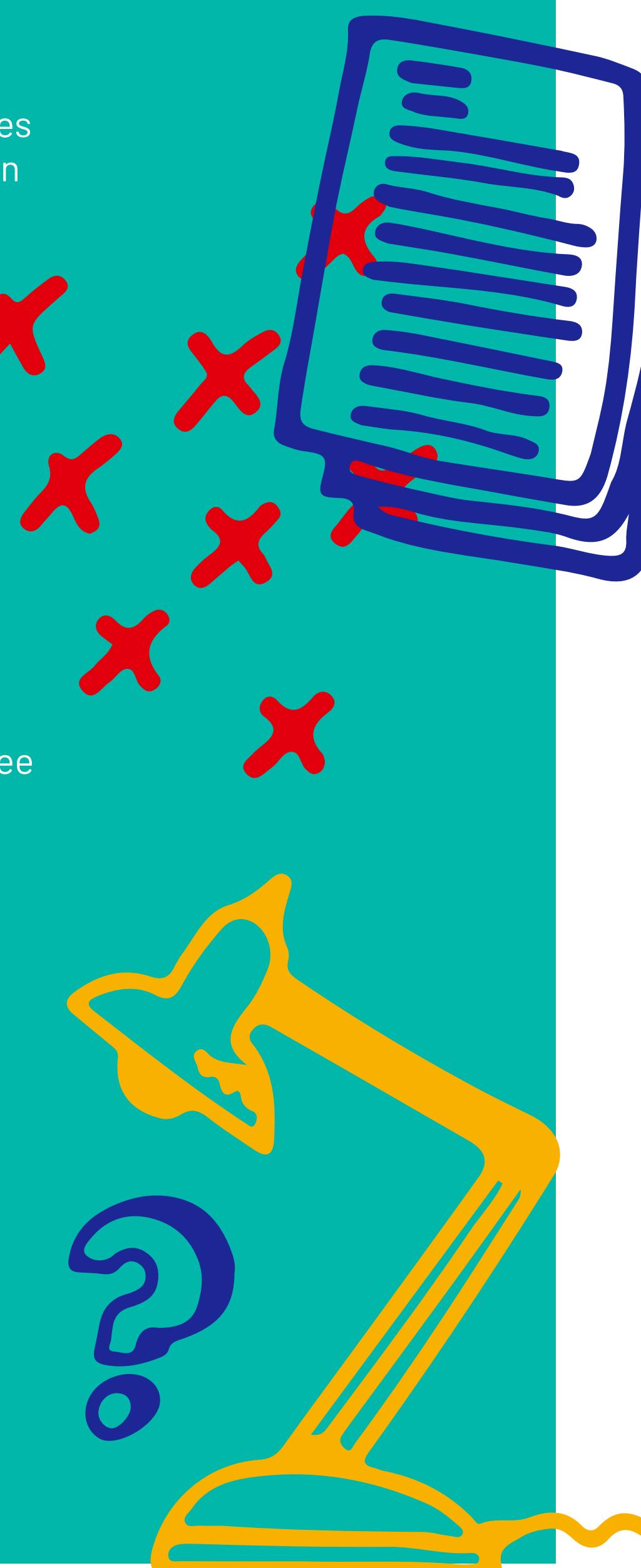
The North American edition identified six priority themes for in-depth research, analysis and recommendations on best practices in community engagement:

- 1. Community Participation Models**
- 2. Resident Sentiment Research**
- 3. Workforce and Staffing**
- 4. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**
- 5. Media and Communications**
- 6. Short Term Rentals**

In each of these areas, the findings, recommendations and resources are summarized in a series of 'toolkits. See these at: <https://northamerica.timefordmocracy.com/>

**These toolkits consist of 3 parts:**

1. "What to Know" outlines the primary and secondary research and insights from the destination and knowledge partners.
2. "What to Do" highlights key actions that DMOs should prioritize in order to effectively engage with their community.
3. "Resources to Use" lists the critical research, reports and other resources that provide useful support for taking action.



# HOW TO USE THIS WHITE PAPER

You may be reading this paper because...

1

**You represent a destination organisation** (whether city / DMO, regional / RTO or national / NTO) and you are looking for inspiration for ways to engage with communities and residents within your destination, to compare your destination's approach to others, or to shape your organisation's strategy and approach.

2

**You represent local, regional or national government**, and you are looking or new participatory approaches to tourism planning or to understand how other destinations are approaching the challenges of discontent among locals towards tourism.

3

**You are a citizen**, and you want to actively inspire your community and/or local DMO and policymakers in how to collaboratively shape the future of tourism in your community.

4

**You stumbled across this** because you are interested in active citizenship and participatory design and hadn't thought of tourism as a relevant/interesting field to unfold this.

Either way, we hope it will be helpful in showcasing why citizen involvement in tourism planning is essential to becoming a sustainable and thriving destination. We also hope it will inspire further development of approaches and models of involvement and participation, reflecting different levels of ownership, empowerment, and decision-making.

# GLOSSARY: KEY DEFINITIONS

## *Citizens, residents and locals*

In this paper, all three terms are used synonymously. In the visitor economy and in the working language of destination organisations, resident and local are more used terms. In the fields of participatory governance, citizen is a more commonly applied term due to its more formal meaning and the legal rights and duties connected to the concept of citizenship.

When the term citizen is used in this paper, we take our cue from the work of Jon Alexander and Arian Conrad, defining citizenship as related to interdependence, to living as part of a community - as a practice more than a status ("Citizens: Why the key to fixing everything is all of us", J. Alexander with A. Conrad, 2022).

## *Involvement, participation and engagement*

We use these terms with a view to the difference in agency that they indicate explicitly or implicitly. DMOs involve or invite residents, whereas residents who accept are then participating.

Engagement is the purpose and promise of both; the DMO invites to inspire and motivate engagement, whereas citizens that engage don't need an invitation to do so; see the description of Engage Liverpool (part 2) and this will all make sense.

## *Destination organisations, Destination Marketing and/or Management Organisations, DMOs*

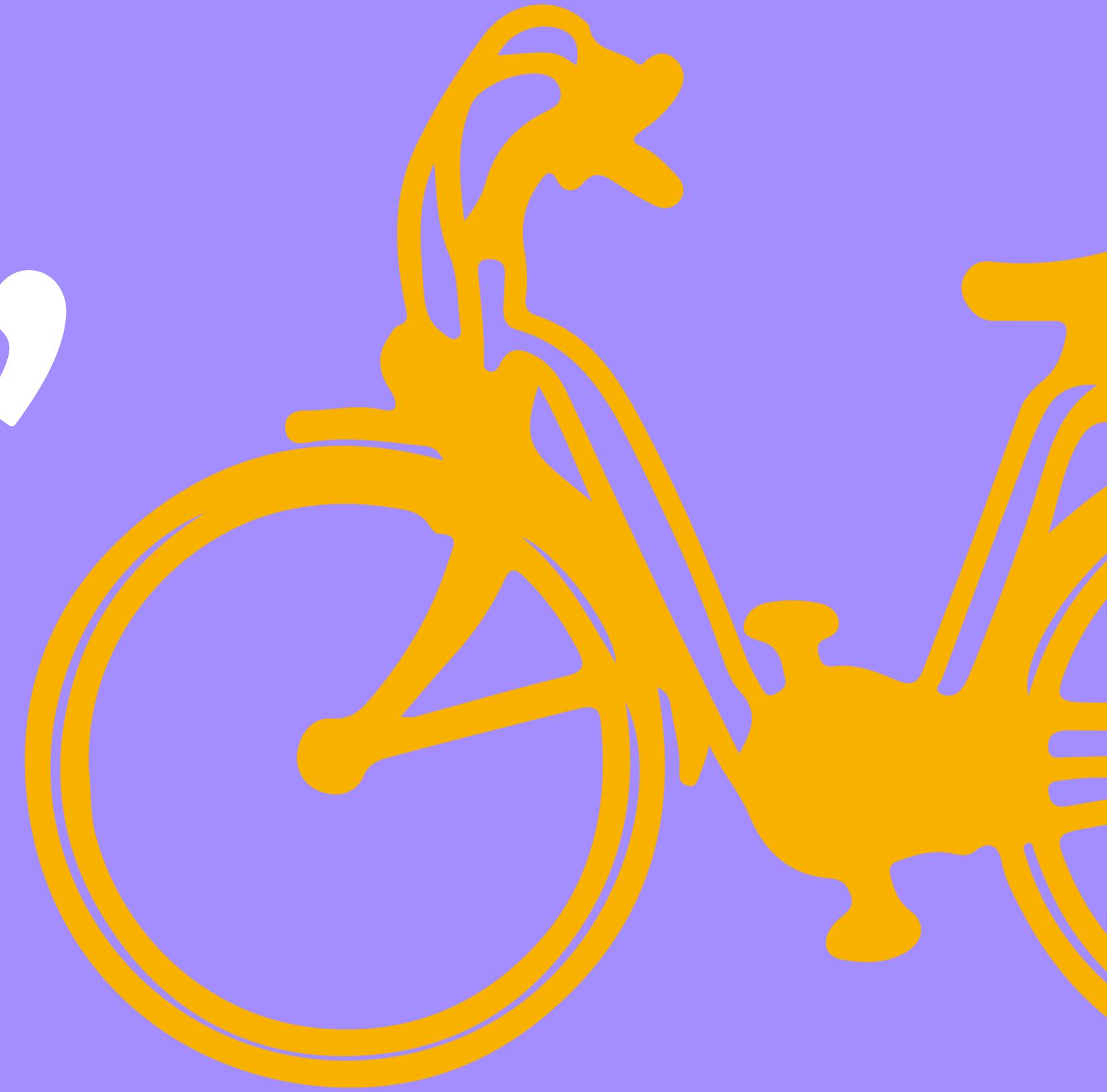
These terms denote the *official tourism organisation or the visitors and convention bureau of a destination*, traditionally responsible for the promotion of a town, city, region or even country - and in some cases, for the development of a community through travel and tourism. DMOs can be organized in many different ways, funded either primarily by industry membership, by public funding, or as an entity within local government.

We primarily use the abbreviation DMOs throughout this paper, as DMOs are of course the main object and audience of the concept of DMOcracy (get it? ;-). We don't open the debate on whether the M in DMO stands for marketing or management, because really, because haven't we talked about this enough already?

## *DMOcracy*

We hope you will read the full paper, where we unfold the concept and meaning of DMOcracy through eight participatory approaches and loads of great case studies.

HELLO  
DESTINATION,  
MEET YOUR  
COMMUNITY.)



## FRAMEWORK

# FROM SPECTATOR TO PARTICIPANT

Many destinations face continuous challenge in establishing and maintaining meaningful, mutually beneficial, and trusting connections with local residents and communities. The past years have seen growing interest and awareness of the need to shift focus from tourism as a goal in itself, to tourism as a means to ensure the well-being of people and places, seeking a better balance between liveability and visitability. This shift in focus calls for a shift in destination leadership and governance and, as part of that, a reimagined role for the destination organisation. In this chapter, we unfold the terminologies and frameworks of citizen participation and engagement, looking at the promise and position it entails for destination organisations.

## FROM LOCALHOOD TO LOCAL GOOD

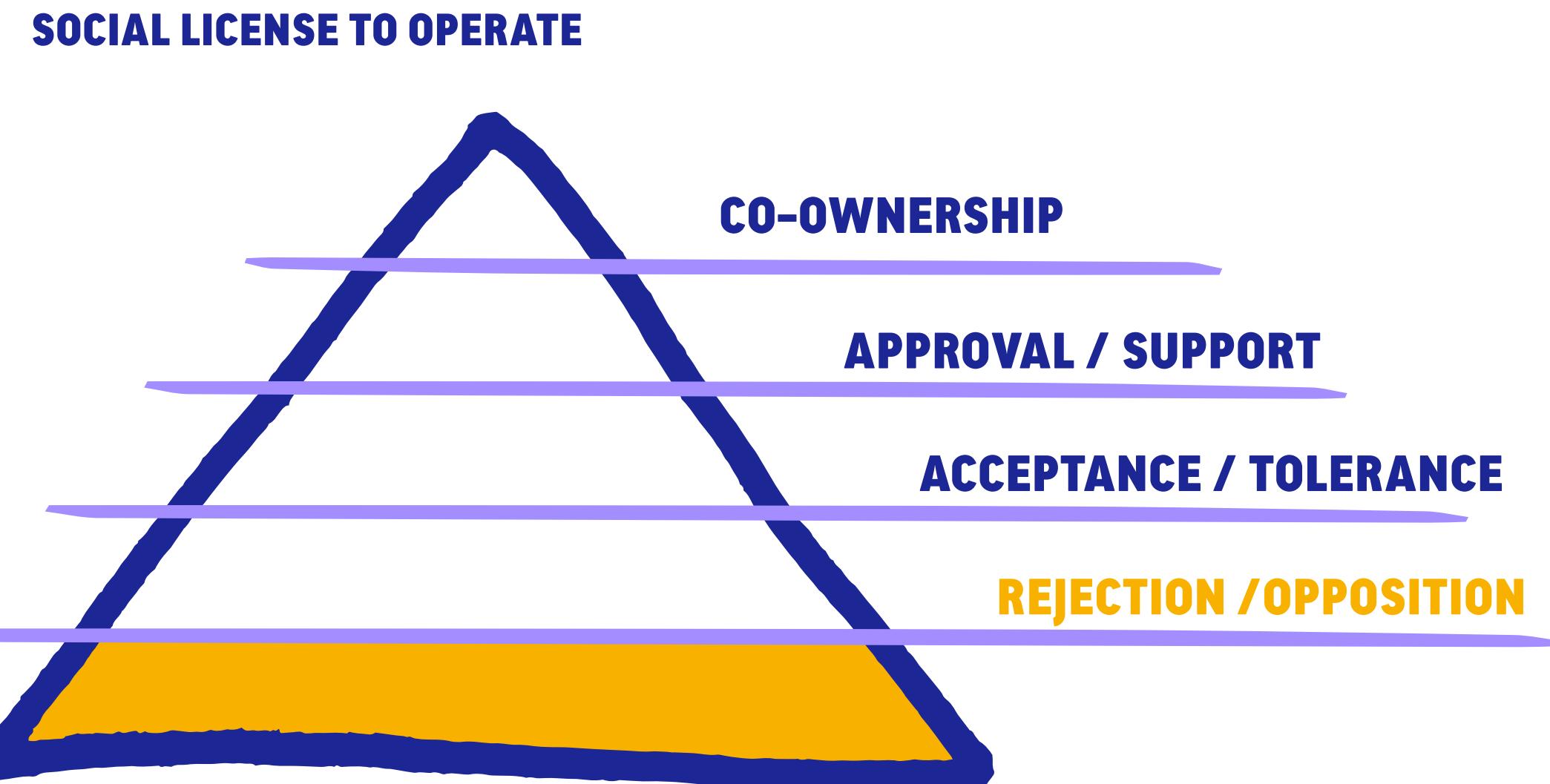
The first step towards DMOcracy started with the rise in demand for authentic and local experiences. This led many destination organizations to shift from a separate touristic narrative (primarily targeting visitors) to storytelling that better reflected local identity and offering. Starting in Copenhagen, the term localhood was widely adopted as a reflection of such experiences, but also with an early view to how 'offering local' also necessitates a shift in priority that puts *locals first!*

From local tourism promotion to local tourism pushback and local tourism benefit, the resident and host communities have become full-fledged stakeholders of tourism to be considered – and expecting to be so. As John De Fries, CEO of Hawai'i Tourism Authority said at the Skift Destinations and Sustainability Summit 2021: "Communities are not going to be spectators to their own future, communities are going to become extremely engaged, so shaping the future of tourism is a big component of that" (quoted by Lebawit Lily Girma, SKIFT Megatrends 2022).

## THE RESIDENT IMPERATIVE AND SOCIAL LICENSE TO OPERATE

It is not just about the 'experience of local'. It is about the experience *by and with* locals. This means that local residents should experience tourism as also relevant to them, that tourism benefits their communities, and that tourism planning and development reflects local priorities and values. To ensure this, it is imperative that destination organisations identify ways and methods to involve and empower residents in shaping and prioritizing the future of tourism for their communities.

This moves the ambition beyond the threshold of tourism acceptance and towards support and co-ownership, referring to the "social license to operate" pyramid model developed by Thomson & Boutilier (2011).



Adapted from Boutilier and Thomson; "Modelling And Measuring The Social License To Operate: Fruits Of A Dialogue Between Theory And Practice" (2011)

Converted to the social license of destination organisations in a local community, the different levels of the model can be summarised as:

**Co-owning it**  
Finally – at the **highest level of the pyramid** – co-ownership, where mutual trust is the foundation of the relation, and the community identifies with the tourism invited to the community.

**Acceptance of tourism**  
Above the threshold of rejection, the **next level of the pyramid denotes acceptance**, where social license is granted based on a minimum level of tolerance and legitimacy.

**Cheering tourism**  
With increasing credibility, the level increases to **approval with higher levels of support** for tourism and the work of the DMO.

**Rejection of tourism**  
The base level is where social license is rejected and lost. Residents directly oppose tourism and the role of the DMO in inviting and managing tourism to their communities. We have seen this with protests and counter-movements in multiple destinations across Europe.

While the pyramid model of *social license to operate* was originally developed to describe the social acceptability of mining operations, we find it helpful to illustrate the core idea of differences in levels of community acceptance and support in relation to tourism planning and welcome and how building trust towards co-ownership solidifies a more sustainable and resilient relationship between tourism (incl. the DMO as representative hereof) and local community.

***“Communities are not going to be spectators to their own future, communities are going to become extremely engaged, so shaping the future of tourism is a big component of that”***

(quoted by Lebawit Lily Girma, SKIFT Megatrends 2022).



In September of 2022, the CEO of Barcelona Tourism (the DMO) was reportedly fired due to disagreements with the executive management, and internal sources pointed to poor relations with the city's community stakeholder body as background (see Chapter 4 for case on the community stakeholder body: Barcelona City Tourism Council).

Later the same month, residents of Barcelona protested on World Tourism Day (September 27th), calling for “Collapse Tourism Day” outside the offices of the DMO. As proclaimed in travel industry media SKIFT: ***“Its [Barcelona’s] next tourism chief will need to be a master at community relations.”***



Photo: Thomas Høyrup Christensen

# A FULL SPECTRUM OF PARTICIPATION

*Social license to operate* denotes the local community's approval or support of tourism as an activity that takes place within the community (and the legitimacy of the DMO's role as part of that activity).

Looking at public participation in tourism involves looking beyond that of acceptance or approval. The focus is less on positive sentiment towards tourism as the objective. Instead, the focus is on the process of participation itself: how residents take part in and influence the decision-making that shapes the future of tourism. The core idea of public participation is that those affected by a decision (i.e., to invite tourism to the community) have a right to be involved in making that decision. Yet, the degree and nature of the involvement can take on many shapes and forms.

There are multiple ways and methods of approaching the engagement of residents, the community, and stakeholders. Different destinations and communities represent different challenges and possibilities and must be adapted to match. Still, across all approaches and invitations for participation, each entails a promise of influence, namely that the contribution of time and input will ultimately influence the decision-making.

Developed by the [International Association of Public Participation](#), the Spectrum of Public Participation (see model below) summarizes different levels of participation, and the goals and promises they entail.

The levels of participation are listed below with examples of approaches or methods in the context of the DMOs' interaction with local community and residents. These examples are also inspired by the work of the Danish Agency, [We Do Democracy](#), who delivered the DMOcracy Bootcamp Masterclass on participatory democracy in May 2022<sup>1</sup>:

## INFORM THE COMMUNITY

where the DMO shares information with the community but remains in control of the information shared. The approach or form could, for example, involve newsletters, press releases, publications.

## CONSULT WITH THE COMMUNITY

where the DMO is looking for feedback and dialogue on activities, strategies, or decisions made. Consultation entails a promise of listening to feedback, and it opens the possibility of adjusting the initial decision or starting point in reflection on the feedback. The form could involve collecting feedback, sentiment research, dialogue sessions, and presentations.

## INVOLVE THE COMMUNITY

in the process that ultimately arrives at a decision. The community is invited to give input as part of the process towards a decision or strategy. This could, for example, be in the form of surveys, focus groups, or interviews. It entails a promise that the concerns, input, and priorities of the community are directly considered in the decision-making process, and that the DMO provides feedback on how it has influenced the final decision.

## COLLABORATE WITH THE COMMUNITY

where the DMO partners and co-creates with the local community in ideating, developing and identifying possible solutions, actions, or recommendations. The promise is that the DMO will not only listen, but actively apply and incorporate the ideas, advice and recommendations of the community to the fullest extent possible. Approaches could include workshops, open ideation or development processes (online and offline), citizen councils, or panels.

## EMPOWER THE COMMUNITY

where the DMO either enters into equal partnership with the community (equal voice to everyone) or leaves the decision up to the community and residents. The promise is one of full decision-making power; what you decide – or what we decide together – will be implemented. Approaches could involve citizen panels or assemblies, citizen councils, participatory budgeting, or actively support and empower community- or citizen-driven initiatives. The DMO doesn't have to be the inviting party (see Engage Liverpool case study).

There are many nuances across the spectrum and the exemplified approaches and methods are just that: examples to inspire new ways of ensuring influence and creating room for participation.

This is by no means an exhaustive description of deliberative and participatory process design. It is simply an attempt to introduce these frameworks of thought and practice and the core values of accountability, transparency, and outcome promise that they reflect to the field of tourism and destination planning.



## THE PARTICIPATION SPECTRUM

	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC
<b>1. INFORM</b>	Provide public with balanced and objective information; assist in understanding the issue	We will keep you informed
<b>2. CONSULT</b>	Obtain public feedback on analysis / decisions	We keep you informed, listen, acknowledge concerns, share feedback on how your input was used
<b>3. INVOLVE</b>	Direct involvement with the public throughout the process to ensure public input are considered	We work with you to ensure your concerns and input are directly reflected in output
<b>4. COLLABORATE</b>	Partner with public in all aspects of decision making, including development of ideas & solutions	We will look to you for advice, ideas and innovation and use these as much as possible
<b>5. EMPOWER</b>	Place final decision in your hands	We will implement what you decide

1. Day 1 of 2 of the DMOcracy Bootcamp organized by Group NAO took place at Democracy Garage – a meeting place and lab for democratic innovation and everyday participation, initiated by We Do Democracy.

# TO ENGAGE OR BE ENGAGED, THAT IS THE QUESTION OF AGENCY

In our key focus on the role of the DMO in building meaningful and trusting community relations and participation, the spectrum of public participation can come across as unidirectional; the DMO informs, consults, involves, collaborates, and empowers. But participation is not a one-way street. It doesn't work only from the top-down, and it doesn't serve at the pleasure of your DMO priorities.

In Time for DMocracy Learning Lab #4, the social innovation lab [The New Citizenship Project](#) urged us all to embrace the emerging era of the citizen in a movement they've named the #CitizenShift. The shift lies in changing our thinking of people as Consumers to prompting us to think of ourselves and others as Citizens. In this context, the Citizen is given not only the freedom to "choose between the options offered to us; but to play an active, creative role in shaping what those options are. This is a greater agency, and a greater responsibility [...]" (From ["This is the #CitizenShift" report](#)).

This denotes a shift for the DMO in both mindset and approach. It is not always and not only the DMO that holds the agency to initiate participation as it relates to tourism. In more destinations, residents – or rather the Citizens – are themselves taking initiative to address, protest, debate, or shape the future and welcome of tourism to their communities.

As Jon Alexander of The New Citizenship Project writes with Ariane Conrad in the book "Citizens"<sup>2</sup>:

**"[...] once embraced, the citizen also mandates that we become active instead of passive, that we commit rather than complain, that we extend empathy rather than sink into apathy".**

<sup>2</sup> "Citizens: Why the key to fixing everything is all of us", book, by Jon Alexander with Ariane Conrad, 2022

## CITIZEN-LED FUTURES

### We Live Here

**A community of residents in Amsterdam Red Light District are sharing their local lives in the hope of inspiring better visitor behavior.**

In Amsterdam, local residents of the Red-Light District were part of the brainstorming session that led to the [We Live Here campaign](#). Massive human-size posters of local residents standing outside their doors, sitting in their homes, posted around the neighborhood with big white letters on red, stating: "I LIVE HERE" and adding: "Enjoy it like you would in your own neighborhood."

In the Time for DMocracy Learning Lab in April 2022, Edwin Schölvink - a long-time resident of Amsterdam city center - (re)presented the campaign, as well as the citizen-led visitor information center in the same area. Through

the campaign, residents have not only been given a face and increased awareness of local liveability, but also gotten to know each other and strengthened their own sense of community within the neighborhood.

The initiative receives funding from the local council and works with the local police and municipality. Despite the focus of their efforts, the resident community doesn't see much relevance or need to work closer to or with the DMO.



### Engage Liverpool

**A social enterprise, run entirely by volunteering residents of Liverpool Waterfront and City Centre.**

The [shared mission of Engage Liverpool](#) is "to improve the quality of life for people living in Liverpool City Centre and Waterfront neighborhoods by empowering residents through aspirational engagement and action to bring about positive transformation and progress." In 2021, the thematic focus of Engage Liverpool was "[Destination Liverpool: Tourists versus Residents?](#)" as part of an exploration on how everyone can and should take responsibility for the experience of visitors (and locals) in Liverpool. In 2022, the theme was continued with a series of open conversations entitled "Daytripper", based on the core idea that "Cities that work for residents work for tourists."



Photo: Roos Trommelen and We Live Here



Photo: Roos Trommelen and We Live Here

While We Live Here in Amsterdam is reflective of an unsustainable situation of poor visitor behavior and large visitor numbers to the city centre, the situation in Liverpool is more proactive. The citizen-led initiative has observed the developments in other cities and has taken lead on an early conversation on the future of tourism to the city to avoid similar situations of unhealthy visitor pressures.

Engage Liverpool has established seminars, conversations, and events with leading national and international speakers, with expertise in the field of tourism and citizen engagement to inspire the future of tourism in their city. They are not waiting for the DMO to invite them to such conversations, but are rather inviting the DMO and many more to join in. As they describe the key outcome of their recent "Daytripper" series:

*"What we are proposing is a citizen's forum that can help to supercharge the city's offer. To make it more authentic. To release the city's best and biggest asset, its people. This is about trying to acknowledge and celebrate something the city already has in abundance. It's about giving real pride and ownership to residents regarding the city's tourism offer. It is empowering and encouraging everyone to play their part in welcoming and assisting visitors 'In our Liverpool Home'. [...] Our aim is to pull together a list of commitments for both the city and the people that live and work here. We're thinking of this as a new Welcome to Our Liverpool Home. A vision for the most authentic version of the city and one that relies on us all to play our part."*

**This is a future of tourism truly shaped and led by citizens, inviting participation from both city and DMO.**

# THE STATE OF DMOCRACY TODAY

Across Europe and North America, the vast majority of DMOs agree that resident engagement and participation is paramount to managing the visitor economy in a sustainable manner. Almost eight in ten believe resident engagement and participation will be more important to their organisation in the future. Still, the managerial focus of the majority of DMOs lies with the organization's stakeholders, and few have their eyes on the needs and wants of the residents. Almost three in four DMO's see resident engagement as a complex and uncontrollable process. In short: DMocracy may be the new name of the game, but DMOs are still uncertain how to play it. Below, we look at the state and scope of DMocracy among destinations today.

## FIRST SURVEY TO MAP THE STATE OF DMOCRACY

In the summer of 2022, Group NAO and Miles Partnership launched two parallel surveys among DMOs and tourism authorities in Europe and North America. The surveys are the first to map the practices, perceptions and problems for tourism organizations venturing resident engagement and participation. See text box.

The surveys were designed based on insights and guidance from over 20 1:1 interviews with tourism managers across Europe. The interviews indicated:

- First, resident sentiment surveys seem to be trending among many DMOs as a direct response to the risk of overtourism and community opposition.
- Second, resident engagement is becoming a more integral part of the strategy process, especially when the topic is sustainability.
- Third, DMOs appear to be dispersed across the spectrum of public participatory practices not only in their choice of methods and tools but also in the purpose of application.

Based on these initial findings, the survey was designed to map not only the level of engagement – who does what? – but also the purposes and perceived risks and barriers with public engagement.

## WHAT WE DID

The DMocracy surveys were launched in parallel in North America and in Europe in June and July 2022.

In Europe, the surveys targeted 120 DMOs and urban tourism authorities and 25 national tourism authorities (NTOs). 78 organizations responded to the survey, which resulted in a completion rate of 68%.

On average, the organizations in the European sample have 59 employees. 79% identify as DMOs, 46% as part of the city administration. Only 9% and 8% identify as NTO and RTO, respectively. The North American survey consisted of 208 responding organizations, both urban and regional DMOs at local and state level.

The European survey was launched with support and collaboration from City Destinations Alliance and Global Destination Sustainability Movement.



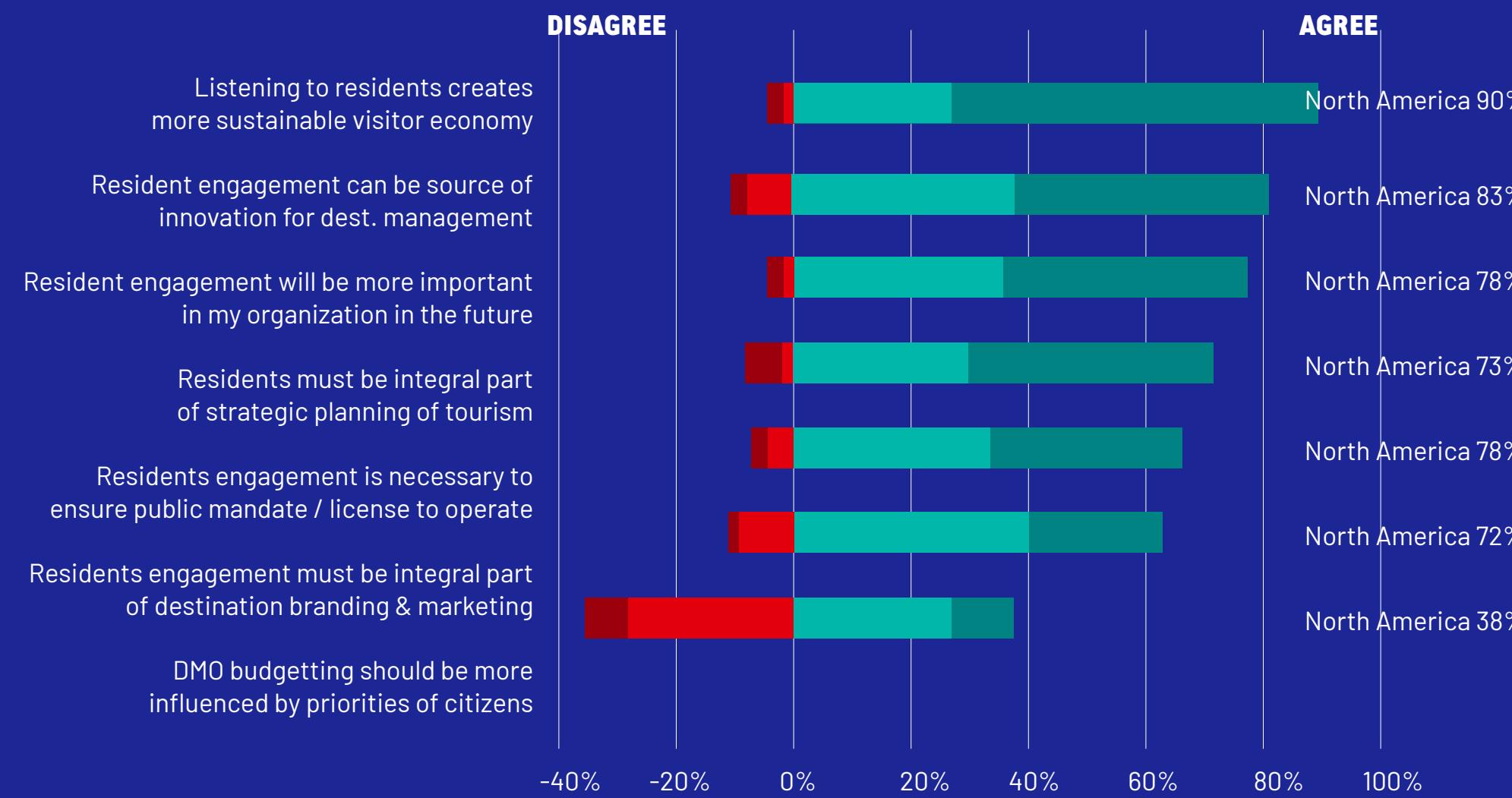
# KEY TO STRATEGIZING A SUSTAINABLE VISITOR ECONOMY

Across Europe and North America, tourism organizations appear aligned in their belief that listening to the residents creates a more sustainable visitor economy – almost 80% of the European and 90% of the North American organizations share this view.

They also see resident engagement as a potential source of innovation in destination management and agree that resident engagement will be more important in the future. Finally, three in four organizations on both continents believe residents must be an integral part of the strategic planning of tourism.

Even though this survey is among the first mappings on this topic, it indicates that strategic planning and management of tourism are undergoing changes in orientation and methodology. This also follows from our review of recently published destination strategies, reflecting a shift from top-down strategic analysis to more inclusive and listening strategizing of the destination. Looking ahead, 79% of the European and 78% of the North American destinations believe community engagement will be more important in the future.

## ENGAGEMENT KEY TO STRATEGIZING



N=51

Note I: results from North America survey (N=215).

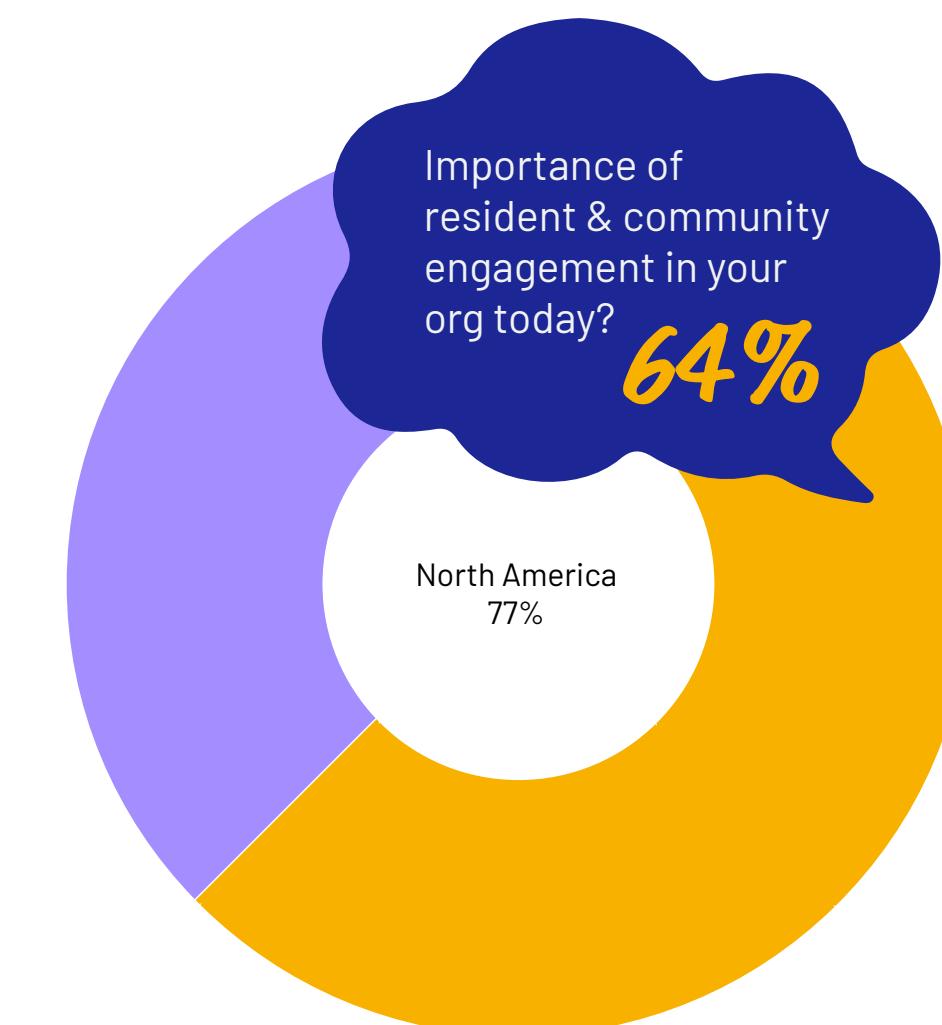
Note II: % of NA respondents selecting "partly agree" or "strongly agree".

# STAKEHOLDER ORIENTATION STILL PREVAILS

Almost two-thirds of all respondents in the European survey state that resident engagement is important to their organisation today. In the North American survey, this number is even higher – almost eight in ten organisations say resident engagement is either important or very important.

Simultaneously, however, even more – nine in ten – in both Europe and North America say engagement with industry stakeholders is important too, while focus on residents is expanding. Destination management is no longer – if it ever was – only about growing the visitor economy on behalf of industry stakeholders. It is about understanding and balancing the interests and practices of all parties in the visitor ecosystem.

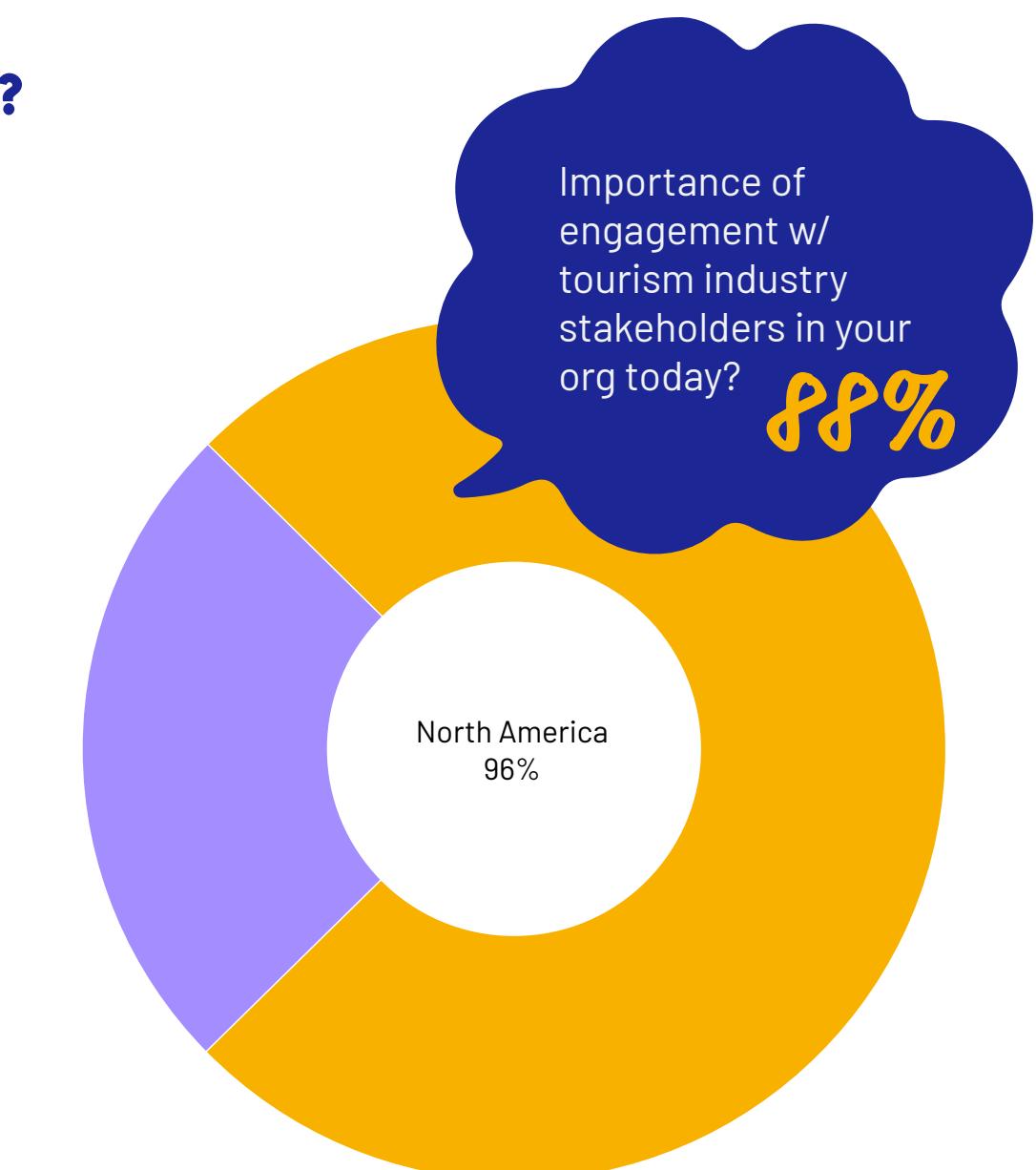
## RESIDENTS OR INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDERS?



N=72

Note I: Does not add to 100% as neutral answers are excluded.

Note II: NA = results from North American survey (N=215)



Very Important - High Priority      Not Important - No Priority

# RESIDENTS SURVEYS ARE BECOMING MAINSTREAM

Resident sentiment surveys have become a widely applied tool for European destinations. Almost three in four have deployed resident surveys at least once or do it on a regular basis. In North America, the numbers are smaller – more than half of the destinations have never conducted a resident sentiment survey.

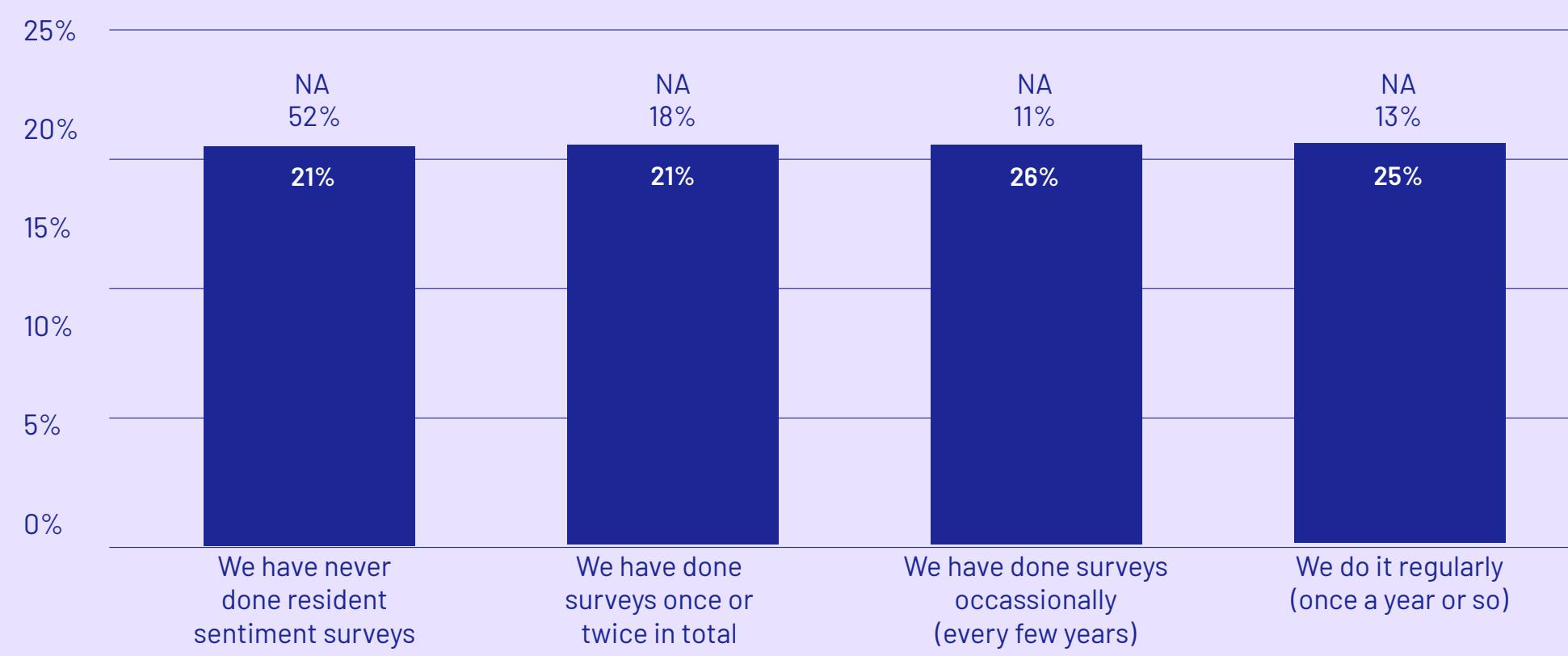
25% of the European organizations do resident surveys on a regular basis – once a year or so – as a way to monitor public opinion in the destination. Another 26% do it occasionally.

Resident sentiment surveys are often used by destinations as part of the strategy process. This is true for half of the European destinations, and in North America the figure is even higher: eight in ten destinations use resident surveys as a component when strategizing the destination.

Only 24% of European destinations say they communicate the results of the surveying to the wider public. 26% discuss the results with industry stakeholders and 14% with the local government entities.

In other words: **Resident sentiment surveys appear to be a means for 'social listening', but without reporting back the results of that 'listening' transparently and openly, the practice appears more instrumental to the DMO than as shared input for further discussion.**

## MANY DO RESIDENT SENTIMENT SURVEYS



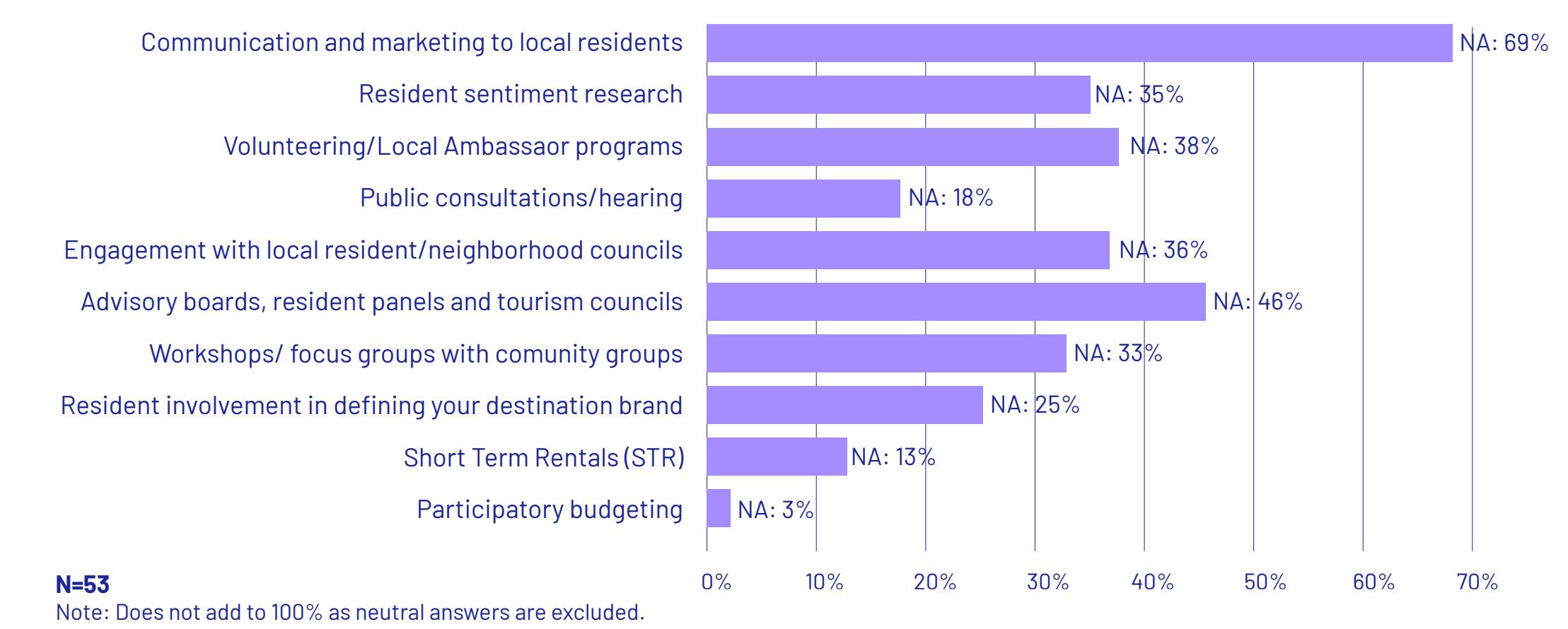
# THE SWISS ARMY KNIFE OF DMOCRACY

Resident Surveys might be one of the most used tools in the box (by almost 60%), but not the only one. Across Europe and North America, about seven in ten DMOs have communication and marketing activities directed at their local communities, which indicates the DMOs are not only listening to their communities with survey, but also speaking to them with means of market communication.

In the deeper end of the participatory spectrum, we find volunteering, where local residents take active part in the welcoming, servicing and communication with the visitors and, more broadly, with the needs of the local community affected by visitor flows. Volunteering in tourism has become an important form of social value creation and authentic service delivery, for instance when the destination is called by cruise ships or hosting major events. More than half of the European and almost four in ten of the North American destinations have programs for volunteer ambassador corps in place.

About half of the destinations participate in public consultations/hearings and engaging with local community councils, and four in ten with advisory boards, resident panels, etc. Like a Swiss army knife, DMocracy unfolds with a range of tools for various occasions and purposes. The mapping shows that DMOs are practicing DMocracy in a variety of ways, across the participatory spectrum from (just) social listening, and over democratic conversation to (a rather few) examples of destinations empowering communities and co-creating strategies, experiences, and solutions. In other words, more listening and speaking to residents rather than speaking with residents.

## HOW DO DMOS ENGAGE AND PRACTISE TODAY?



# DEMOCRACY IS COMPLEX AND UNFAMILIAR TO MANY DMOS

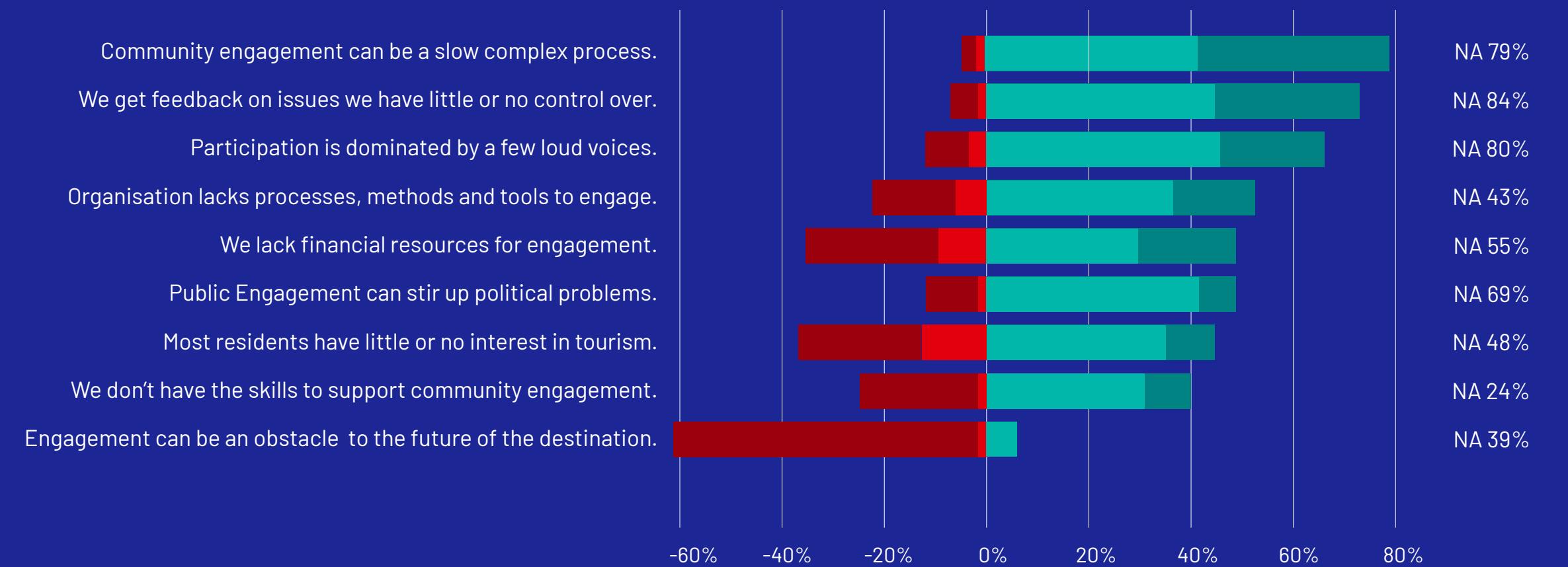
In Europe as well as in North America, eight in ten destinations agree inviting participation can be a slow and complex process. There is also wide agreement that it can be a somewhat uncontrollable process concerning matters and issues that the DMO often has little to no influence over. One risk with resident participation, as perceived by the DMOs, is the possibility of stirring up political controversy and conflicts in the community.

Furthering this, DMOs appear to think the public dialogue on tourism matters are biased and dominated by "a few loud voices" (68% of the European DMOs, 80% in North America).

More than half of the DMOs indicate that they lack the skills, methods, and tools to engage properly with the residents. Finally, many also point to a lack of financial resources to engage.

**Even with all this in mind, only few destinations see resident engagement as an obstacle to the future of the destination. On the contrary, almost two in three say the opposite. So, despite the shortcomings and potential pitfalls, DMOs in both North America and Europe agree community engagement is paramount to strategizing the future of their destinations.**

## CHALLENGES WITH RESIDENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

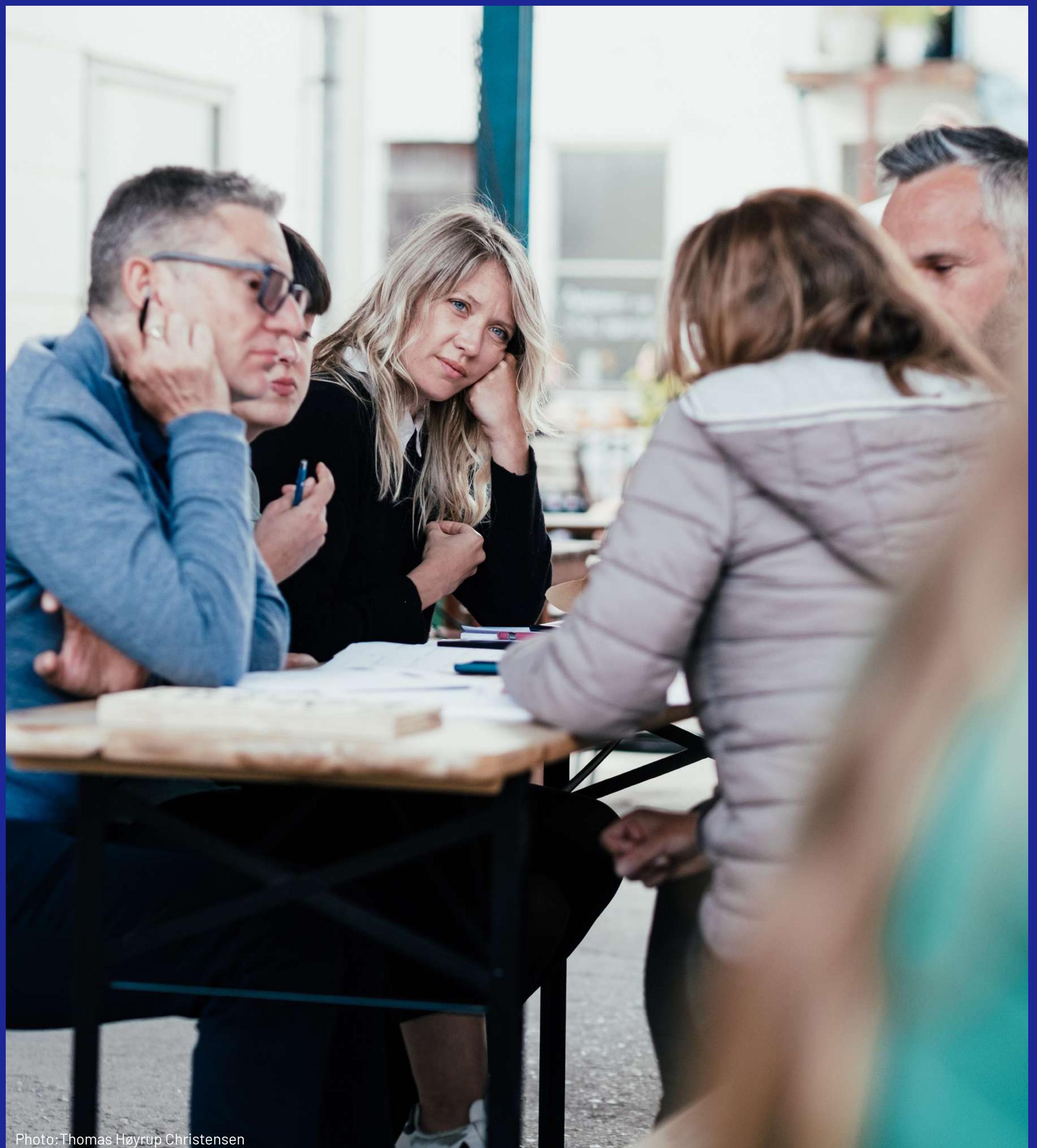


N=49

Note I: % of NA respondents selecting "partly agree" or "strongly agree".

Note II: Does not add to 100% as neutral answers are excluded.

Note III: NA = results from North American survey (N=215)



# DEMOCRACY IN PRACTICE



## PRACTICES AND CASES

# INTRODUCING 8 PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES

With the participation spectrum as our backdrop, it is now time to explore DMOcracy in practice. In our project research, we have identified multiple approaches to designing and initiating participation with the purpose of involving, engaging and empowering residents in tourism welcome and planning.

We have selected eight participatory approaches to demonstrate how DMOcracy unfolds in practice. Some of these approaches are widespread, others only used by a few leading destinations (by choice or necessity). Finally, some approaches are mostly seen outside tourism but offer unique inspiration for destinations to connect with their communities. In this chapter, we focus on the eight participatory approaches and demonstrate with selected case studies and examples how these are put to practice or could be applied in a DMOcratic context. Each approach points to a role for the DMO in unfolding a future, where DMOcracy is the guiding principle of local value creation and community relevance.

**GOOD THINGS COME IN THREES,  
ALL THINGS GREAT COME IN EIGHT...**

In this chapter, we present eight overall approaches to DMOcracy. In our research, we have identified many forms and approaches to participation, and so this is not an exhaustive list of all participatory approaches and designs within or of relevance to tourism. They are, however, eight participatory approaches that show promise and potential – either because they are widely used, because there is a low threshold to shift these approaches towards more or higher levels of participation, or because they inspire new ways of inviting participation or sharing decision-making power.

Each approach will be described with case studies and examples, mostly within tourism, but also venturing outside tourism and visitor economies for inspirational perspective.



## APPROACHES AND TOPICS

All eight approaches can be applied across multiple different topics, issues and target groups that relate to tourism. As part of the North American edition of Time for DMOcracy, four of the Learning Labs focused on specific topics of high relevance to DMOs and destinations:

- Workforce & Staffing
- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- Media & Communications
- Short Term Rentals

In addressing these topics, different participatory approaches can be applied – depending on context and needs. You can explore the toolkits from each of these sessions on the Time for DMOcracy project site. Other relevant topics and issues, where participatory approaches are or could be applied include cruise tourism, safety, nightlife, traffic and infrastructure, housing, events, and much more. In the DMOcracy Bootcamp in Copenhagen, one session focused specifically on youth engagement, as resident sentiment data (from TCI Research) indicates that younger generations are more negative towards tourism than other generations.



Photo: Thomas Høyrup Christensen

# RESIDENT SENTIMENT AND CITIZEN SCIENCE

Resident sentiment research involves the measuring and monitoring of residents' experience of and sentiment towards tourism. The method is often based on surveying a sample of residents, while other – including more qualitative – methods can also be part of uncovering and understanding local attitude and perception of tourism.

According to [TCI Research](#) – knowledge partner of Time for DMocracy (European edition) – the most common purpose of DMOs to carry out resident sentiment research is preventive. 40% of the DMOs that work with TCI Research carry out sentiment research to ensure they stay “on top of” local attitude towards tourism. For 20% of the DMOs, the purpose is focused on providing a possible defense against claims of dissatisfaction or negative sentiment. Finally, 10% carry out sentiment research to position the DMO in wider political discussions.

Asking residents to respond to a survey implies the promise that the resulting insights will, at the very least, be considered and possibly used in shaping plans and efforts, perhaps inspiring or adapting the destination or DMO strategy.

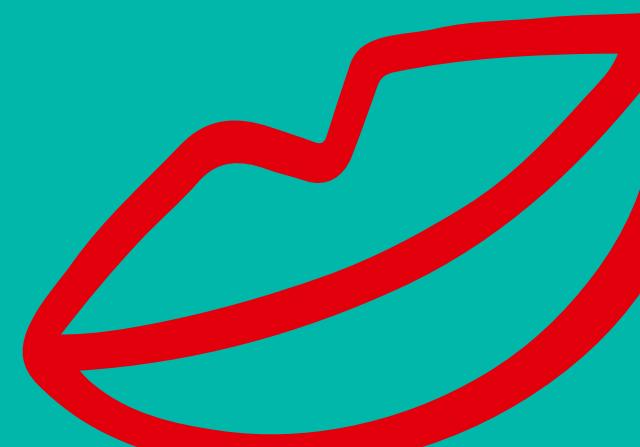
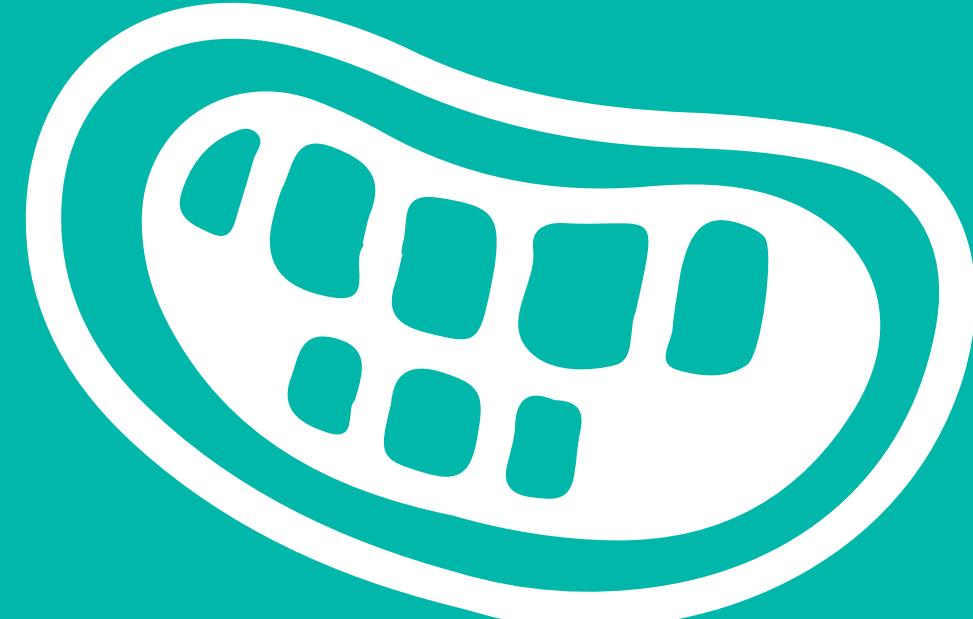


## TO SHARE OR NOT TO SHARE?

Sharing results and insights from surveys is an important perspective to consider when undertaking resident sentiment research. The survey on the state of DMocracy today (see chapter 2) shows that only 24% of European destinations communicate the results of their resident research to a wider public, while 26% discuss the results with industry stakeholders. There is a strong DMocratic argument to:

- 1) share the results more openly and widely to build trust by laying out the land' for everyone to see and engage with
- 2) share insights to invite further conversation and broader collaboration on addressing the issues identified.

Not everything, and not every issue, points to the DMO. However, by not sharing the results, the possible space of relevant action from others is limited.



# THE *DOS* AND *DONTS* OF MONITORING SENTIMENT



TCI Research has developed the TRAVELSAT<sup>©</sup> Resident Sentiment Index (RSI) for measuring and benchmarking resident sentiment across 30+ key indicators, including tourism impact perception, resident support, key issues and challenges experienced, as well as resident willingness to participate in tourism planning. Based on their experience in resident sentiment research, they have identified 10 Do's and Don'ts for the DMO:

**DON'T** wait for bad media reports or protests until you start measuring: the sooner, the more helpful in developing a sustainable tourism policy and approach.

**DO** ask residents openly and objectively what they really think about tourism. Most likely, they are more positive than you think!

**DO** share the results so they can be used as a starting point to engage in further conversation or deeper exploration.

**DO** include all neighborhoods and districts in your research, not just residents within the most visited areas.

**DO** sample sufficient respondents to be able to zoom in on specific districts or areas of concern, i.e., those living close to cruise terminals or large venues.

**DO** regularly carry out resident sentiment research, at least once a year to observe the development and changes in local sentiment around tourism.

**DON'T** survey during unusual time periods, like during major events that could bias results.

**DO** use established index questions to enable benchmarks with other destinations.

**DO** develop profiles on your tourism ambassadors and detractors among residents; these can guide your targeted invitations for further involvement and participation (i.e., targeting younger generations that demonstrate more negative sentiment towards tourism than other generations).

**DO** Mirror resident sentiment with that of visitor sentiment to prioritize efforts and assets for sustainable and competitive destination development.

## CASE STUDY

# FIRST TIMER AND OLD TIMER

From our survey of European DMOs, we can see that 25% carry out resident surveys regularly (i.e., once per year), while 21% have never done one. It is perhaps becoming more commonplace, but far from a common DMOdus operandi.

Zooming in on a first-timer, **VisitOslo** conducted the city's first resident sentiment study with TCI Research in 2021 to understand local sentiment towards tourism, particularly cruise tourism. The purpose was primarily proactive, keeping an eye out for any overlooked burdens or issues. The results indicate a positive and supportive local population. The study confirms that Oslo's residents are less positive about cruise tourism. It also points to a low willingness among residents to participate in tourism planning, and a younger Oslo resident population notably less positive towards tourism than the average local population.

Following the study, Visit Oslo has introduced resident satisfaction as a focus within their new strategy, including measurable targets for this. The results have meant that Oslo residents will now be involved in developing new community guidelines for cruise tourists and for international visitors in general.



## WONDERFUL COPENHAGEN

is more of an old-timer in the practice of monitoring resident sentiment. The first study of resident sentiment was done in 2016 as part of the organisation's strategy process (later known as the Localhood strategy). Sentiment surveys since became a once or twice annual exercise. In 2018, however, the DMO launched the 10xCopenhagen project – a major research project to rethink tourism to Copenhagen towards 2030. Extensive quantitative and qualitative research on resident perception and experience of tourism was carried out and published on [10xcopenhagen.com](http://10xcopenhagen.com). In 2022, Wonderful Copenhagen increased to monitoring resident sentiment on a monthly basis, as well as increased their sample size for higher validity. The DMO is planning to launch a publicly accessible dashboard in 2023 that includes resident sentiment data.



# TOURISM QUESTIONS FOR ONGOING DIGITAL CITIZEN PANEL

In the city of Stockholm, the digital citizen panel ([Medborgarpanelen](#)) focuses on many aspects of the city's development. Everyone can participate in one of the two panels: The large panel for everyone above the age of 15, or the "youth panel" for citizens between the age of 11 – 15 (who receive the panel questions through a parent).

As of December 2022, the large panel consists of approximately 4,300 Stockholm residents, who receive questions about the city's development a few times per year.

In the summer of 2022, **Visit Stockholm** asked the citizen panel questions regarding their attitudes towards visitors, and asked their perspective on co-creating Stockholm as a destination with visitors. The results demonstrate a primarily positive sentiment towards tourism and future tourism development and strong local pride in welcoming visitors to their hometown.

As with all research involving the citizen panel, the results of the tourism questions have been widely published (available in Swedish [here](#)), and more interaction around results is planned. For example, in 2023, all 13 districts of Stockholm will have a presentation of the results specifically relating to their district. Visit Stockholm has already recorded a presentation of all the results, and shared it on YouTube, which will be promoted and shared across the city's own news board and on the city administration's intranet for all departments to access.



## Resident Empowerment Through Scale, RETS

The RETS model was introduced by Boley, B. B., & McGehee, N. G. (2014). [Measuring empowerment: Developing and validating the Resident Empowerment through Tourism Scale \(RETS\)](#). *Tourism Management*, 45, 85-94. The RETS is presented as a scale ready for use to measure the extent to which residents perceive themselves as being empowered or disempowered by tourism. It distinguishes between three types of empowerment that, within the context of tourism are defined as:

### Psychological empowerment (pride)

When an individual's pride and self-esteem are enhanced from outsiders who recognize the uniqueness and value of the culture of the resident's community, natural resources, traditional knowledge.

### Social empowerment (connectedness)

When one perceives tourism as increasing their connection to the community.

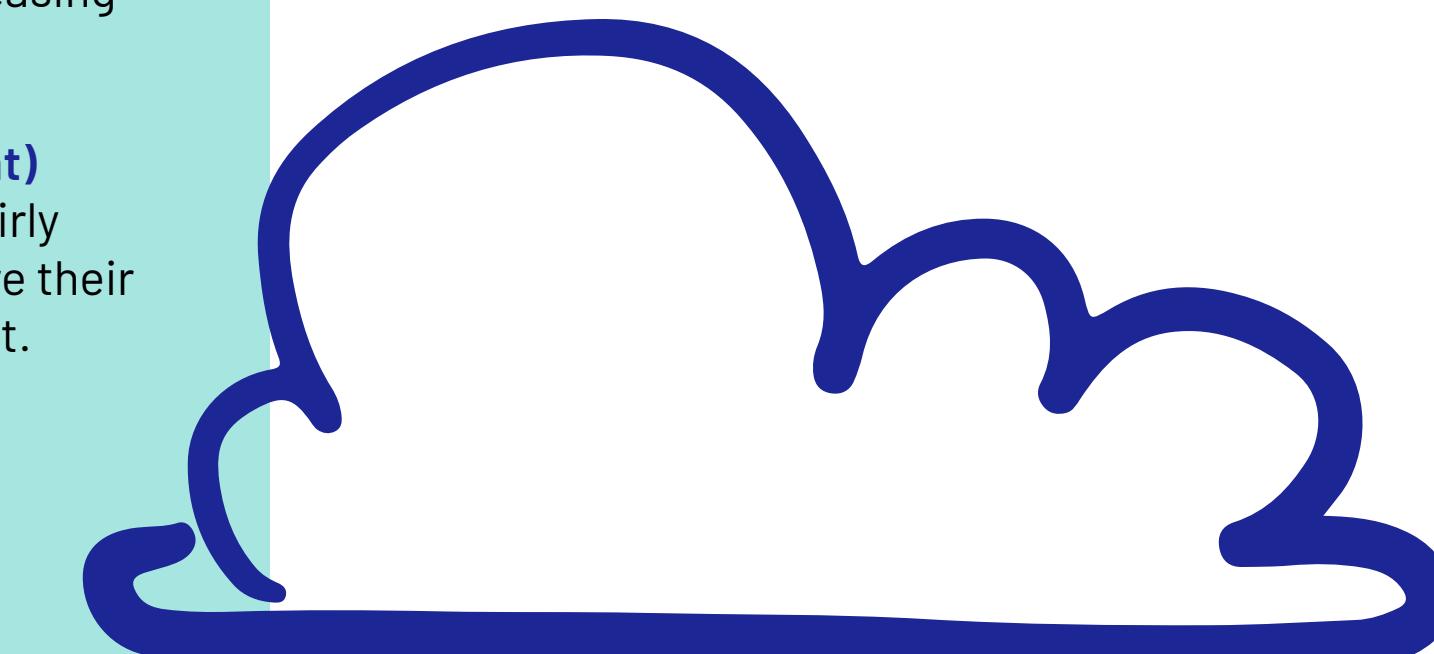
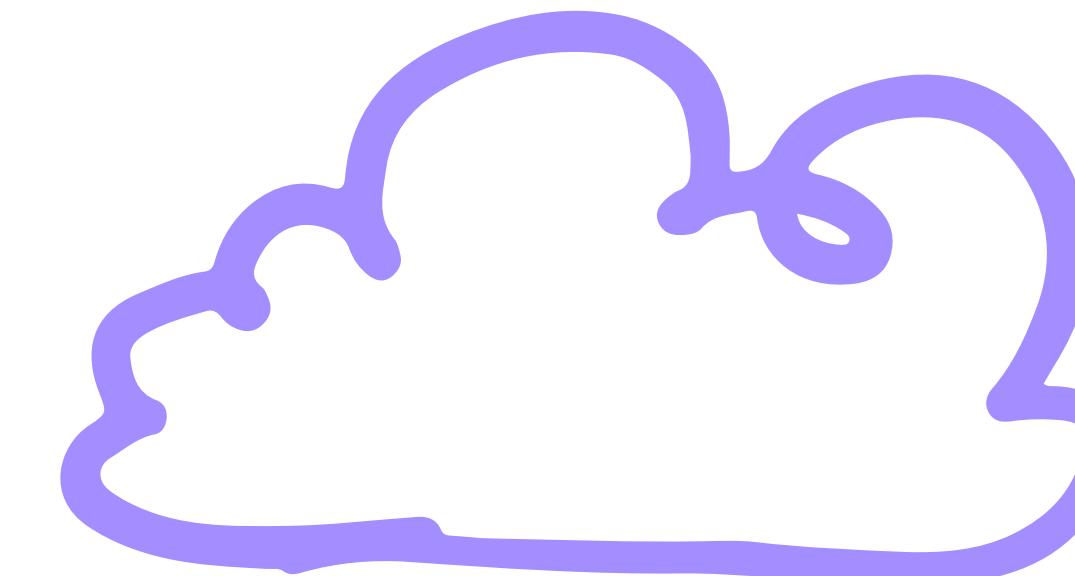
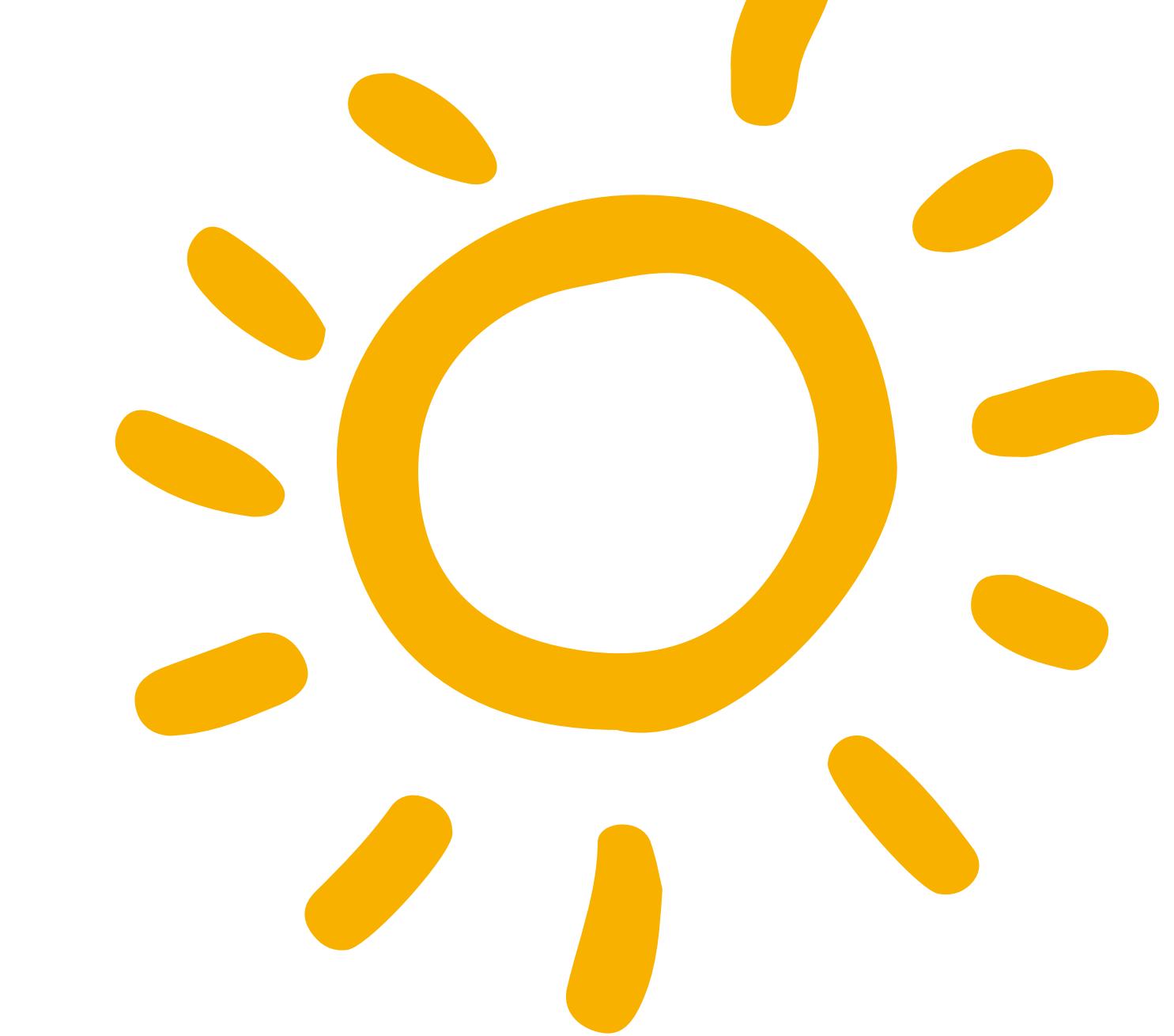
### Political empowerment (engagement)

When all community members are fairly represented and have outlets to share their concerns about tourism development.

### CASE STUDY

# SENTIMENT ACROSS THE DUTCH BOARD

In the Netherlands, resident sentiment is researched at both national, regional and city/local level. Each level offers different insights and use-cases. The [national study](#) was inspired by a global 2019-study from UNWTO and Ipsos on the perception of residents towards city tourism. This study offers an overall idea of sentiment towards tourism across all cities/towns of the Netherlands. On a [regional level](#), the international model of RETS (Resident Empowerment Through Scale) is applied across several regions, allowing for deeper insights into the different aspects that determine the opinion of residents towards tourism and examining the relation between these aspects (see text box). On a local level, like in Amsterdam, resident sentiment research with TCI Research has been part of guiding and reshaping the city brand.



***"Having the right knowledge and understanding of the communities that welcome our visitors, is an essential building block to becoming a more sustainable destination. Research on national level provides us with the insights about general overall sentiment of tourism. This allows us to develop more sustainable tourism strategies to meet the needs of host communities. This national framework functions as a benchmark for regional and local sentiment research. Regional and local tourism organizations can then implement the strategy that fits their local context based on local sentiment and objectives."***

Jos Vranken, Director Netherlands Board of Tourism and Conventions.

# CITIZEN SCIENCE AND CITIZEN GENERATED DATA ECOSYSTEMS

While still not broadly applied as a method for empowering locals and residents in the context of tourism, citizen science, and similar approaches that involve citizen-generated data offer interesting approaches to the collection of data and developing new insights.

## FROM OBJECT TO SUBJECT

Citizen Science and citizen-generated data are included as part of DMOcracy in practice because of the open and inclusive foundation and philosophy of these methods. It rests on the idea that citizens can shift from passive objects of research to active and empowered subjects in advancing and co-producing relevant knowledge and innovation. The challenges of disclosure and publication of resident sentiment research have a different flavor in the context of citizen science, where 1) public and if possible 2) open access, as well as 3) feedback to the participating citizen scientist, are all core principles of the methodology ([10 Principles of Citizen Science, EACS](#)).

There is reason to believe that this could also prove relevant and valuable in the context of sustainable tourism development and to build trust and shared ownership of destination well-being. The following case studies are not directly tourism-related but demonstrate the use of citizen science methodologies in relation to connected topics of urban health and well-being, inclusivity and engagement.

## But, what is Citizen-science?

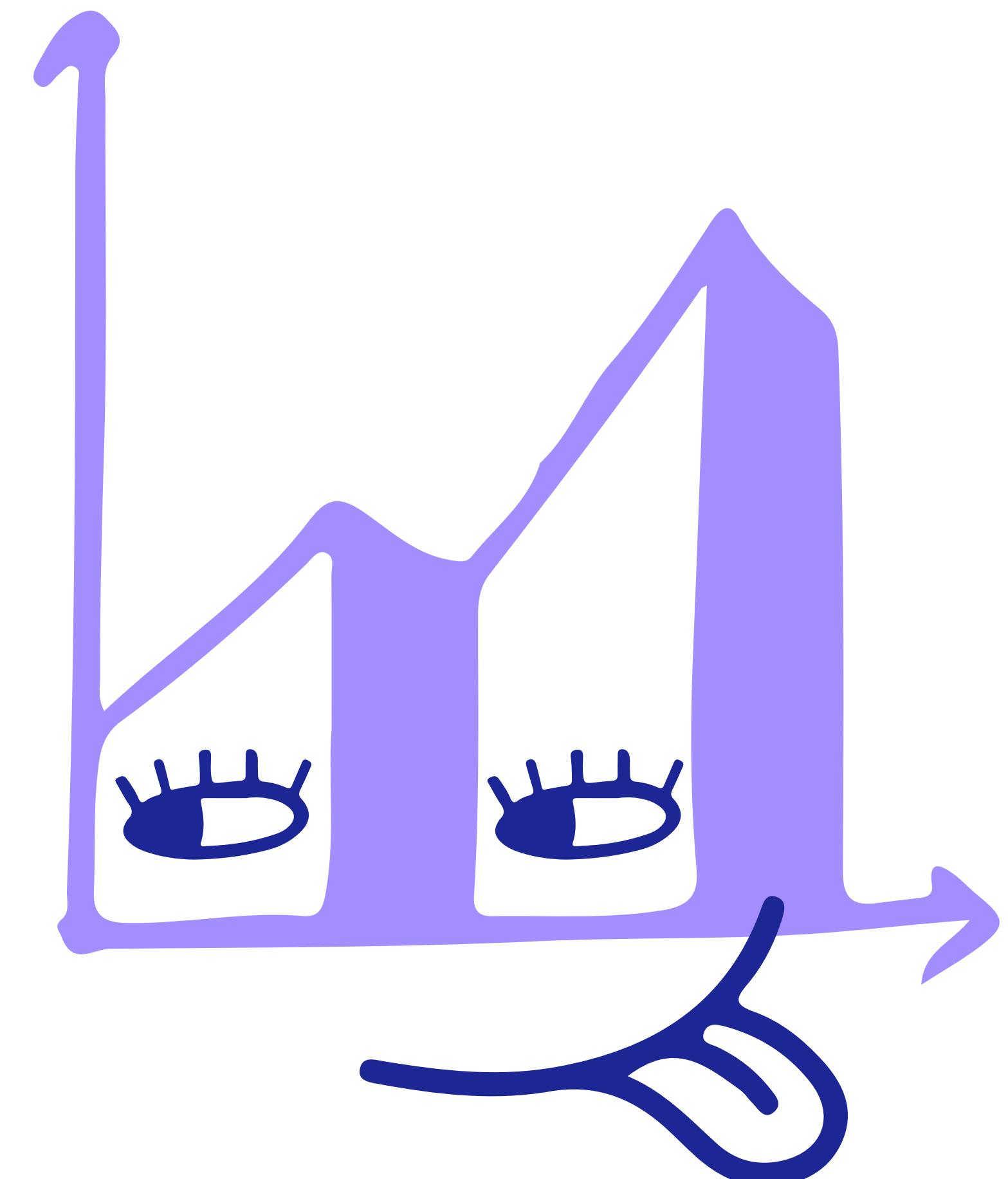
Citizen science (CS) is the practice of public participation in scientific research as described by the 1st principle of citizen science by the [European Association of Citizen Science \(EASC\)](#): **"Citizen science projects actively involve citizens in scientific endeavour that generates new knowledge or understanding. Citizens may act as contributors, collaborators, or as project leader and have a meaningful role in the project."**

10 Principles of Citizen Science

## And Citizen-generated data?

Citizen-generated data (CGD) is defined as **"data that people or their organisations produce to directly monitor, demand or drive change on issues that affect them. This can be produced through crowdsourcing mechanisms or citizen reporting initiatives. This is distinct from "big data" or social media data, which is indirectly created by citizens through interaction via media platforms."**

As defined by Wilson, C., Rahman, Z. 2016. Citizen Generated Data and Governments. DataShift. (via Maccani, G., Creus, J., Errandonea, L., ["Support to the Mapping of CGD Cases and Actors for the Project Catalunya un-Pais de Dades", Ideas for Change, 2021](#).



## CASE STUDY

# CITIZEN SCIENCE AND URBAN WELLBEING



CitieS-Health is a citizen science project on environmental and urban health. The project takes place in Barcelona, Kaunas, Ljubljana, Amsterdam and Lucca to evaluate air pollution and urban noise, wood burning, urban design and mobility at local level. Citizens participate in all project phases, from defining research questions, designing and implementing the studies, to analysis and interpretation, and communication of results.

In Barcelona specifically, the CitieS-Health project first collected citizens' concerns about air pollution and health. Then, 1,000 strawberry plants – 100 plants in each of the ten city districts – were distributed to map pollution in collaboration with the citizens of Barcelona. Similar projects have been carried out across Spain by the citizen science initiative Vigilantes del Aire.

The Urban Belonging project is a collaboration between researchers, architects, and local community organizations in Copenhagen. The focus is to examine issues of bias and exclusion in urban planning and citizen engagement by mapping spatial experiences of belonging among minorities.

The project rethinks citizen engagement and creates new ways to engage minorities in urban issues. In the project, written or oral forms of participation are replaced with visual forms to make participation more inclusive and accessible to more people. It engages participants not only in producing but also interpreting data.



## Citizen Science Toolkit

The CitieS-Health Toolkit is a collaborative and accessible toolkit to empower anyone to engage communities in solving issues of shared concern and take part in making the world – community, neighborhood, city – a better place to live. The toolkit is collaborative, and anyone can add their tools to share with the broader citizen science community.

## Citizen Science for Tourists

There are numerous examples of citizen science initiatives that target visitors and tourists aimed at making participation a learning experience for visitors, while contributing to locally relevant projects, like data collection or conservation.

For example, the Happy Whale project that encourages whale watching guides, naturalists, and passengers (tourists) to upload their images of whales and support science in tracking the whales through the world's oceans.

Or Traffickcam that enables frequent travellers to support the fight against sex trafficking, by uploading the pictures of hotel rooms they stay in. As traffickers often post photos of their victims in hotel rooms for online advertisements, investigators can use these ads as evidence to prosecute if they can determine where the photos were taken. By using the TraffickCam database of hotel room images, law enforcement can securely submit photos of rooms used in advertisement of sex trafficking victims. Then, room features like patterns in carpeting, furniture, accessories and window views are matched against the database of traveler images, providing law enforcement with a list of potential hotels where the photo may have been taken.

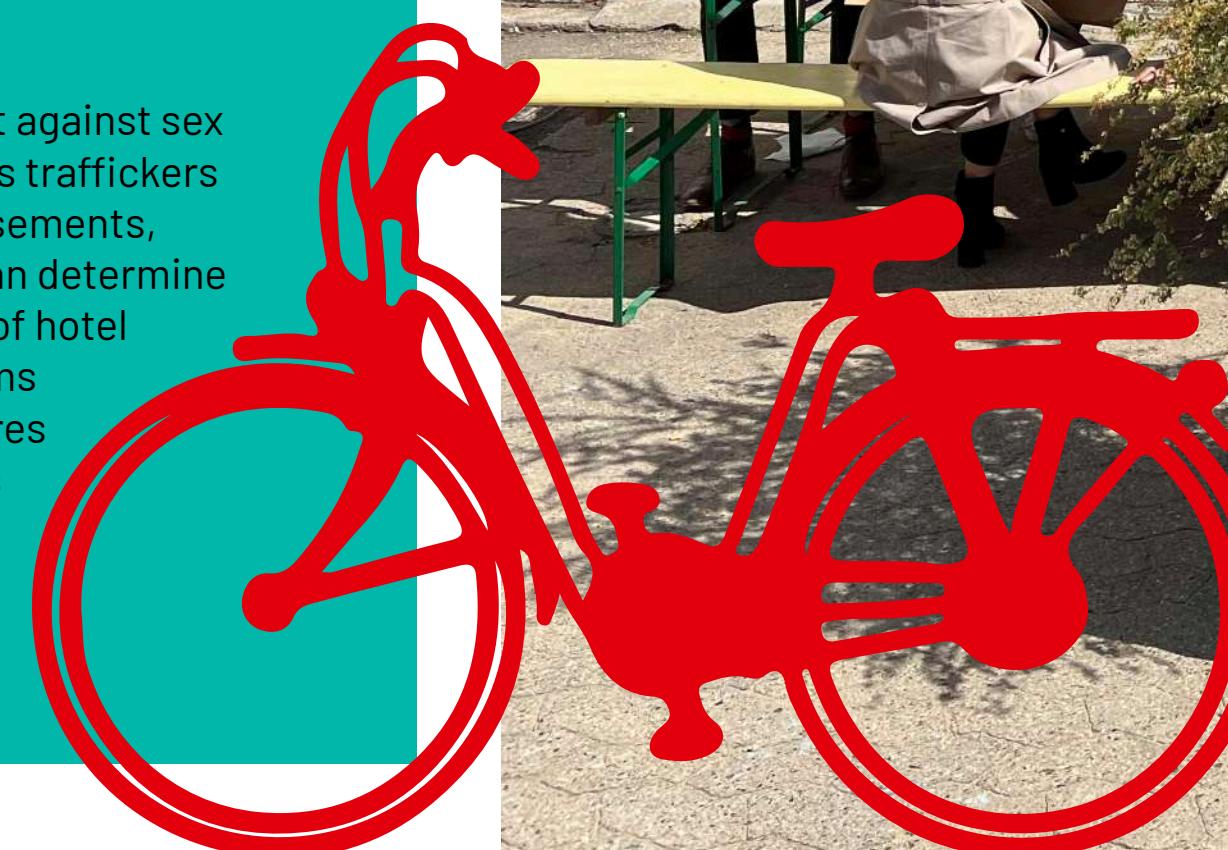


Photo: Thomas Høyrup Christensen

# STRATEGIZING AND IDEATION

In the DMOcracy surveys (Part 2), the vast majority of European (74%) and North American (73%) destination organisations believe local residents must be an integral part of strategic tourism planning within destinations, while even more organisations (80% and 83% respectively) believe resident engagement can be a source of innovation.

The extent and scope of involvement, however, can vary from consultation on a draft strategy to public hearings, surveys, stakeholder interviews, and open ideation sessions, to all of the above and much more. The purpose of inviting participation can be manifold, and similarly depend on when in the process participation is invited. The input given can shape focus and priorities to ensure local identity and mandate, license to operate, future collaboration, and partnerships, etc. The concrete promise of inviting input reflects the scope and extent of expectations in return. As a minimum, however, inviting input builds an expectation that local priorities will ultimately (though not necessarily entirely) be reflected in the final output.

**In other words, inviting is not enough** - commitment to the process also means commitment to obtain and consider input provided. Public participation is a process and not a single event. As a destination organisation asking for public participation, you must commit to the full process. However, inviting participation and input doesn't mean you have to do everything the public wants.

Though we often refer to it as such, there is no single public and rarely one united community but rather a range of views. Meaningful participation means welcoming input from a wide spectrum of interests and community representatives. As part of your commitment to the process, you must be willing to obtain and consider the views and input provided.

The final decisions must be reflected back, so people understand how their concerns and suggestions were considered. Ultimately, if people experience or perceive that their input was not taken into serious consideration, they will be dissatisfied with the outcome, no matter how much participation you invited.



## CASE STUDY

# TOURISM TOGETHER IN BANFF NATIONAL PARK

In 2021-2022, Banff and Lake Louise Tourism (DMO) in Banff National Park initiated a public engagement process towards a new shared vision for tourism. As a point, the vision was not created solely for or by the DMO but co-developed for shared ownership across the park.

As an iconic and popular destination, tourism is the sole economy of the communities within the park. However, local communities – and visitors too – increasingly experience challenges around growing visitation, including congestion and traffic, cost of living, and negative impact on natural well-being, and local quality of life.

Entitled Tourism Together, the process was designed in collaboration with Group NAO as a big conversation with the wider community around the future of tourism. It combined different participatory approaches, including interviews, surveys of tourism industry partners, members of the tourism work force, and local residents within the park, working groups, and public fora. Around 2,000 people were involved throughout the process.

The six working groups consisted of over 80 community members and residents, tourism industry representatives, not-for-profits, and more. The groups were put together through a process of open application and invitation. Through three facilitated sessions, over 560 ideas were generated, and each group put forward their recommendations for the shared vision and future initiatives in shaping and leading tourism for good. Recommendations were presented and discussed in open and public fora. The future vision will be published in early 2023.

***“Although this is called a tourism vision, it goes beyond the visitor economy and the tourist trade. We heard loud and clear this is about our communities and the future of anyone who chooses to live in the park, so we must take the steps to make sure Banff has the type of tourism we love [...] The visitor economy is our only economy, and its resilience and sustainability are essential to us. There should be no us and them when we think about Banff residents and the visitor economy – we are all us.”***

Corrie DiManno, Mayor of Town of Banff (via the Calgary Herald)



## CASE STUDY

# FROM STRATEGY PROCESS TO PERMANENT AGORA IN BORDEAUX

As a result of a resident sentiment survey indicating that only 16% of Bordeaux residents feel included in strategic decisions regarding tourism, the Bordeaux Tourism and Conventions Office (DMO) launched a participatory process with elected local representatives, residents, associations, public institutions, the tourism industry and the event sector.

Over a span of ten months, nine workshops with 195 participants co-created a roadmap for tourism in the metropolitan region. Starting with 780 ideas in the first sessions, these were summarized and prioritized into 32 actions, published as part of the Bordeaux Métropole Tourism Roadmap. The different actions are linked with 75 indicators, aligned with the UN SDGs, and have led to new environmental, social and economic KPIs being adopted by the DMO.

As part of the participatory process, to increase transparency for those unable to attend the workshops and to continue the open dialogue beyond developing the roadmap, Bordeaux launched the Agora Tourism Bordeaux platform to share the key studies and findings of the process, and also to invite further input and dialogue with a call to “Have Your Say” and the possibility of submitting more ideas and concerns online.



# DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT AND ONLINE PARTICIPATION



During the pandemic, most of us were forced into online meetings, and adapted to new channels and digital tools for activities that before required physical in-person presence. This has resulted in a lower threshold of online participation. We have also become more aware of the situations and context, where physical presence is important and learnt that online and offline are not necessarily mutually exclusive but can complement each other. As part of DMOcracy in practice, we are zooming in on digital tools and platforms to explore the potential benefits of combining offline and online in a multi-channel approach.

The **purpose and promise** of online participation and digital engagement can range from improving the visibility and accessibility of information and strengthening the process transparency, to extending the reach of the process further than to the people in the room. Online participation can also enable larger mappings of division in opinions, crowdsourcing of ideas, or shape the design of offline deliberation.

**Inviting participation online or offline?** Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of both can make for a stronger combination – resulting in deeper and broader reach. Regardless of tool or platform, you have to consider who you want to engage and whether your choice of channel is lowering or raising the barriers to participation for them.

Online participation is sometimes criticized for being less representative of the wider population, because participants are often self-selecting rather than chosen by random lottery. The tone and interaction online can also be different from offline interaction, for example where some online fora and social media have shown strong tendency towards polarization, toxicity and abuse, where the loudest voices often get the most attention. At the same time, some of the online platforms for participation offer opportunities for increased reach, transparency, accessibility to information, and much more. Below, a few platforms are highlighted to describe the possibilities and variety among platforms, followed by a few use cases from within and outside of tourism.

# MAPPING: DIGITAL TOOLS AND PLATFORMS FOR ONLINE PARTICIPATION

## DECIDIM

A free, open source, participatory platform for cities, organizations, public institutions and more. It was started in Barcelona but has since grown to cities and organizations outside Spain, including Helsinki and NYC. With Decidim, you can create participatory spaces that involve multiple different approaches and aspects of participatory processes, including surveys, network groups, assemblies, ideation and submission of proposals, voting for proposals, participatory budgeting, and publishing results.

## POLIS

An open-source participatory platform based in Seattle, USA. The platform allows for crowdsourcing of thoughts, while maintaining minority group opinions (see description of Wikisurveys for more info). On Polis, users can submit comments of less than 140 characters, which are sent out semi-randomly to other participants, who can either agree, disagree or pass, and leave a reply. Polis is not for comparing ideas, but for having a conversation among participants and moving towards consensus. Polis can be considered a Wikisurvey (see text box).

## YES, YOU PROBABLY NEED TO KNOW MUCH MORE ABOUT THIS...

In describing the potential of online participation, we are standing on the shoulders of great work already out there, so dive into some of these studies and mappings for much more insights:

Loads of great research papers from [mySociety](#), including: ["Digital Tools for Democratic Participation"](#) (2019), ["Digital Tools for Citizens Assemblies"](#) (2019) and ["Citizens' Assembly Websites: Practical Guidance"](#) (2019).

Also, great resources from [nesta](#), including:

- ["Three ideas for blending digital and deliberative democracy"](#) (2019) and ["Crowdsourcing for democracy using Wikisurveys"](#) (2019).
- [D-CENT toolbox - a Europe-wide project creating open, secure and privacy-aware tools for direct democracy and economic empowerment](#).
- ["Emerging Designs for Collective Governance: Part 2"](#) (2020), by Charles Adjovu

The below is an inspirational, inexhaustive list of platforms for online participation and digital engagement.

## OTHER PLATFORMS AND TOOLS

We have come across numerous platforms and tools for online community engagement and participation, many of which are also open source. Here a few examples for further exploration: [Citizens.Ls](#), [CitizenLab](#), [Consider It](#), [Consul](#), [Citizen OS](#), [Cap Collectif](#), and [Granicus-EngagementHQ](#).



# WHAT IS A WIKISURVEY?

You can think of Wikisurveys as a crowdsourced survey created by the people taking it. In that sense, Wikisurveys wikify the traditional survey, as respondents can add questions or statements to be part of the survey, whereas traditional surveys only allow respondents to respond to a pre-defined list of questions. Over time, as participants react to each other's submissions, the Wikisurvey builds a more and more accurate picture of the most popular and unpopular statements. In this way, Wikisurveys land somewhere in the middle of closed research methods (i.e., surveys) and open research methods (i.e., interviews). According to Theo Bass from [Nesta](#), Wikisurveys respond to several of the problems that have been identified in relation to more traditional approaches. Wikisurveys address these issues by...

- Allowing everyone to see the results evolve as the survey takes place, eliminating the black box of consultation.
- Being adapting, not prescriptive, and allowing people to respond to results over time. They can add new questions and actively shape the conversation and change its course. Empowerment by survey :-)
- Discouraging long text-based contributions, which can sometimes make online engagement rather noisy. In a Wikisurvey everyone responds to everyone else's comments in a structured way - the user interface focuses participants' attention on one or two statements at a time, and people are encouraged to reflect on other people's opinions before adding their own ideas.
- Removing the "reply" function entirely (unlike Facebook or Twitter), which means responses can't turn into spiralling threads or abusive exchanges between participants.

Pol.is is an example of a Wikisurvey that asks participants to react in a constructive way to one another's opinions in order to find points of consensus. Over time, the tool performs a "dimensionality reduction", where a machine

learning algorithm clusters and visualizes groups according to the ideas that people agree or disagree with the most. Groups are thus represented on the basis of how divided they are, regardless of how many people who agree or disagree with them. This means that even if you have a group, who mobilizes a lot of people in favor of an idea, minority ideas will still be represented with equal space on the screen.

## ALL OUR IDEAS

A research project that seeks to develop a new form of social data collection, combining qualitative and quantitative methods. All Our Ideas was the first ever Wikisurvey - and today, it works as a website, where people can create and manage Wikisurveys - as "a data collection tool that has the scale, speed, and quantification of a survey, while still allowing for new information to "bubble up" from respondents" (see more [here](#)).

Source: "Crowdsourcing for democracy using Wikisurveys", by Theo Bass, Nesta, 28.01.2019

## CASE STUDY

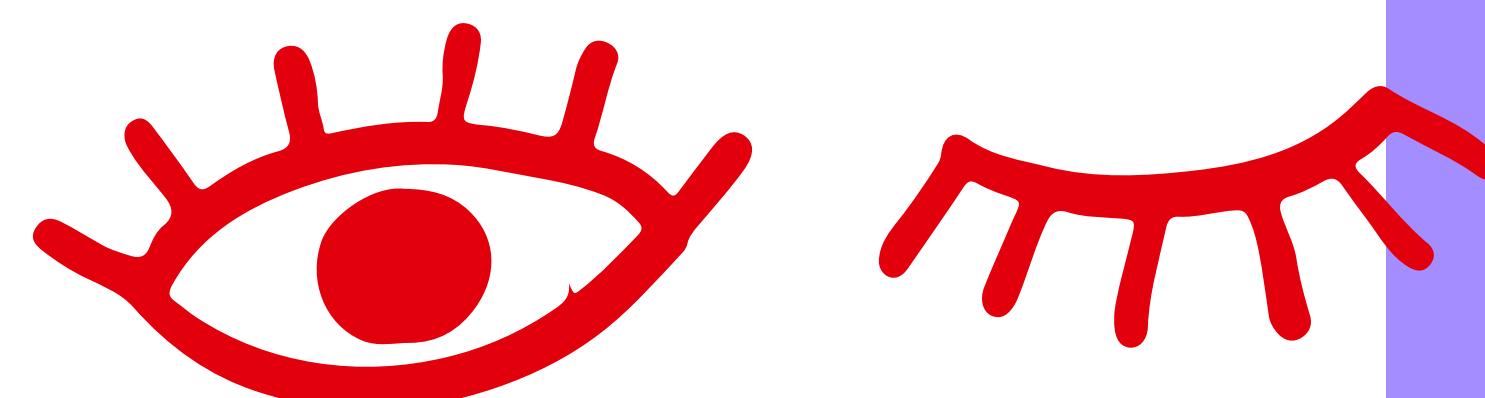
# INVITING IDEAS FOR MORE RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

In 2021, Atout France - the national agency for tourism development in France - launched a public consultation on the platform Make.org to collect ideas to create more responsible tourism to France. Participants were invited to submit ideas and vote if they agreed, disagreed or simply vote blank. In addition, the platform also allowed participants to react with statements like love, banality, absolutely not, or realistic.

The consultation campaign lasted five weeks and attracted participation from close to 50,000 participants and collected 1,800 ideas and proposals, which in total received 334,400 votes.

See the results of the consultation [here](#). In analysis of the results, sixteen popular and nine controversial ideas were identified, with nature and biodiversity, transportation, tourism and local development as the top three themes across ideas.

When Atout France presented the consultation campaign as part of Time for DMOcracy Learning Lab #2, it was highlighted that the results of the process would be used to enable the French tourism industry's activities at both national and local level and inform the national tourism recovery strategy.

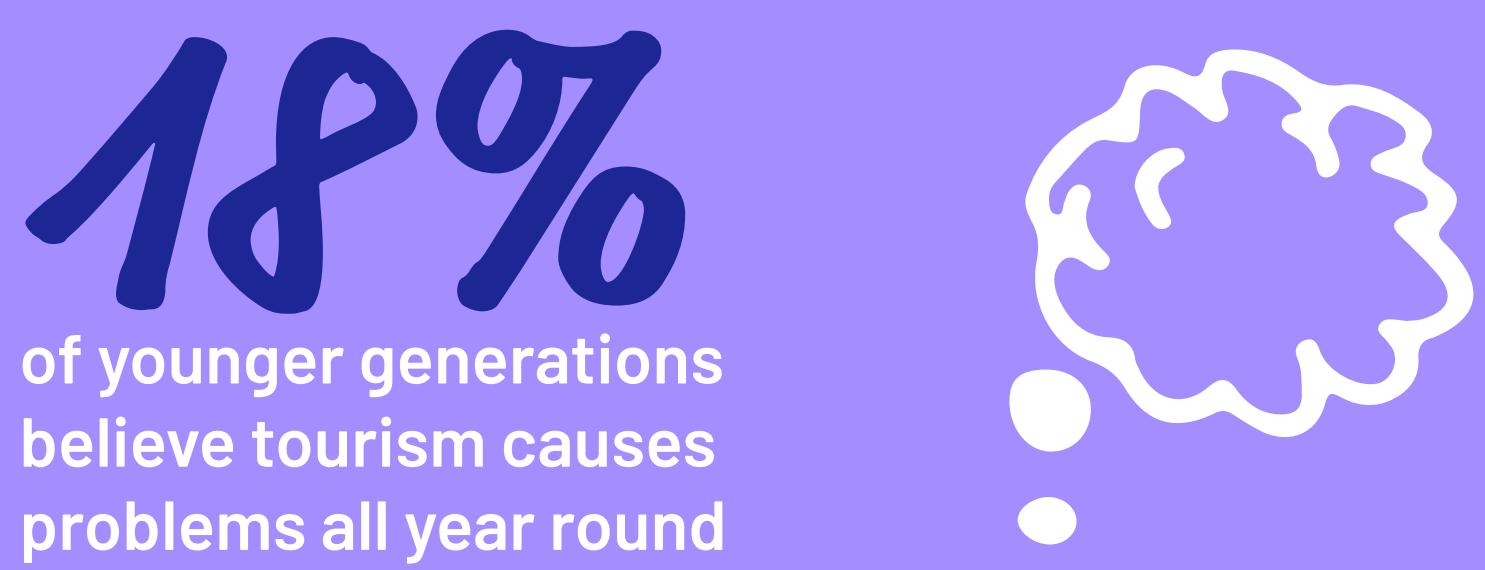


## ENGAGING YOUNG GENERATIONS

*How to better engage younger generations?* has been a consistent question from DMOs throughout the Time for DMOcracy project. The question reflects the fact that across 25 European cities, resident sentiment is more negative towards tourism among younger generations than other generations (according to [TCI Research](#)); for example, 18% of younger generations believe tourism causes problems all year round - 9% of other generations; 22% want to see less international visitors in the future - 14% for senior citizens.

[OPIN.me](#) is an online platform and digital toolkit for digital youth participation in Europe. It is the result of the research and innovation project "EUth - Tools and Tips for Mobile and Digital Youth Participation in and across Europe", funded by HORIZON2020.

The project and platform acknowledge that young people need participation processes that are appropriate for their age group, their environment, and their lifestyle. Young people are for example more active users of online forums and social media than older citizens, and they are more difficult to engage in face-to-face participatory processes, such as workshops and town hall meetings with no consideration of their age group.

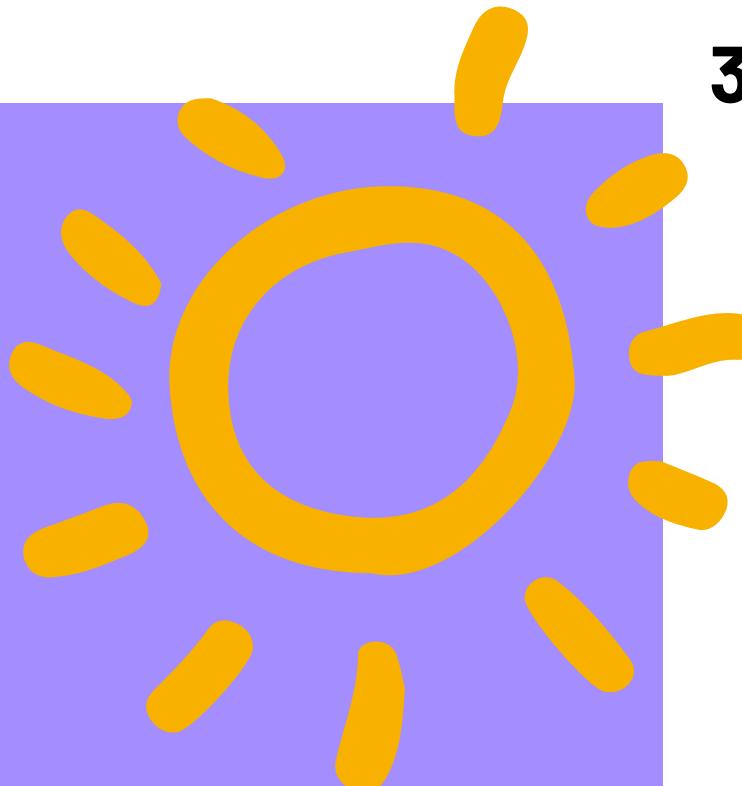


**22%**  
want to see less  
international visitors  
in the future

OPIN.ME offers loads of insights and advice for better engaging youth in your participation process. For each of the four phases outlined: [IDEA](#), [PREPARATION](#), [PARTICIPATION](#) and [OUTCOME](#), the platform podcasts and YouTube tutorials, checklists and toolkits.

The project developed [overall guidelines for OPIN](#) with tips and tricks for more and better youth eParticipation, including a guide to relevant means of communication, and do's and don'ts for privacy and data protection, also with special view to participating minors.

As demonstrated in the OPIN toolkits, engaging young people is not just a question of online tools and platforms. Read more in this communication guide from OECD on "[Engaging Young People in Open Government](#)" (2019).



## CASE STUDY

# HAVE YOUR SAY ON BELFAST STORIES

The community engagement platform of Belfast, [Your say Belfast](#), invites residents to engage with issues and decisions that affect them, their neighbourhood, or the city at large. The platform uses the software of EngagementHQ.

In 2022, residents were invited via the Your Say Belfast to give input on a coming new visitor attraction in the city centre, [Belfast Stories](#). The online consultation focused on collecting ideas and input to help shape the design brief for the new visitor attraction. A key focus of the consultation was to 'make sure that Belfast Stories is for everyone', ensuring that the building is welcoming and accessible and that everyone can see themselves reflected in its stories. The platform also includes videos, describing Belfast Stories in both British and Irish sign language.

As explained on the '[about section](#)' of the platform, the online engagement is not intended to replace face-to-face participation in Belfast but aims to make participation easier and more accessible to more people;

***"[...] we recognise that public engagement events are not always possible, especially in today's climate of social distancing, or are not everyone's cup of tea. That's why we have made this website – to make it easier for you to contribute and get involved in a way and at a time that suits you."***



# CITIZEN ASSEMBLIES, COUNCILS AND PANELS

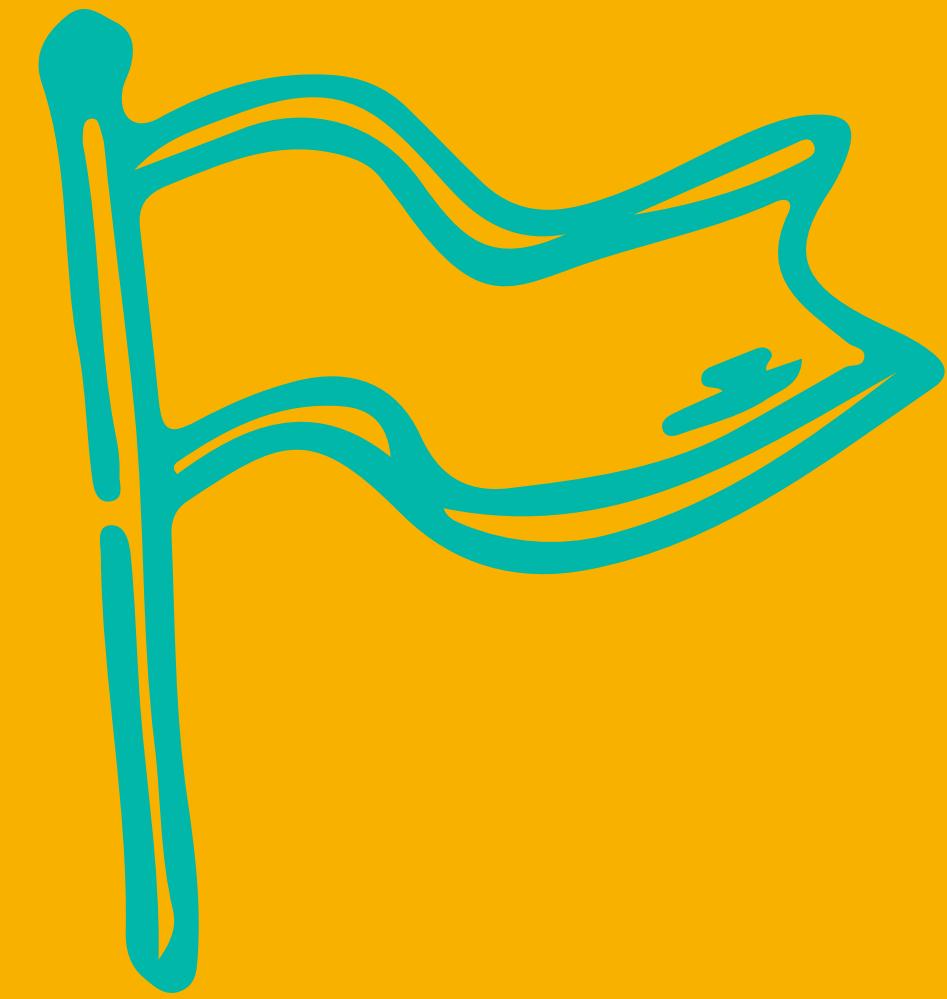
DEMOCRACY IN PRACTICE No.



OECD points to the rise and promise of a deliberative wave. This will entail a new focus on citizen panels, juries and assemblies (as a kind of deliberative mini-publics) at all levels of government to invite citizen participation into political decision-making processes.

Participatory democracy is about volume (getting as many people involved as possible); representative deliberative processes are about bringing together a smaller groups of community members, broadly representative of the whole population, to spend time learning and collaborating through facilitated deliberation in order to find common ground and form collective recommendations on certain issues for policymakers.

In the report "[Innovative Citizen Participation and New Democratic Institutions: Catching the Deliberative Wave](#)" (2020), the OECD identifies 12 models of representative deliberative processes – based on almost 300 case studies. The report outlines different



purposes of deliberative processes, ranging from informed citizen recommendations on policy questions, citizen opinion on policy questions, informed citizen evaluation of ballot measures, and permanent deliberative bodies for ongoing citizen participation.

From one-off initiatives to recurring deliberation: Citizen assemblies and councils offer space for informed and deep deliberation, building relations and moving toward collective decision-making. Deliberative processes can be one-off initiatives, but the examples explored by the OECD and in the cases below are more institutionalised processes of deliberation, for example with councils elected for longer periods of time.

As the cases demonstrate, deliberative processes require resources and broad commitment, but they also offer opportunity and time to address some of the frustrations, inform discussions and build mutual trust in a way that many one-offs rarely do.

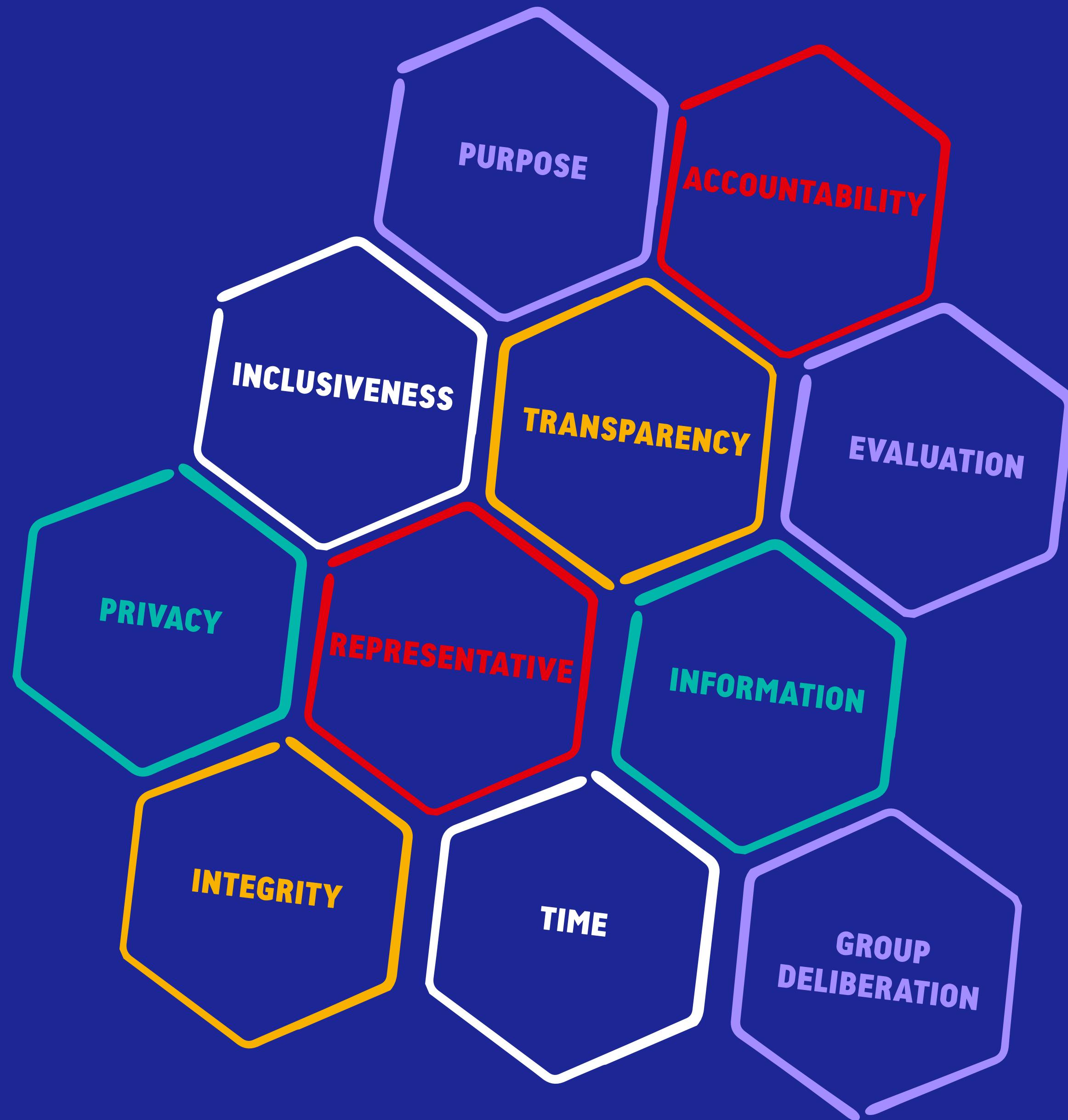
While many of the citizen councils or assemblies are government-initiated, DMOs can also find role and relevance within deliberative processes:

1. Even if government initiated, the DMO can engage in a both supportive and informative role; supporting the design of the council, contributing to setting the question(s) for deliberation, planning, providing evidence and input in the learning stages, communicating process, and promoting outcome, follow-up, and continuing to build relations and public trust in process and impact.
2. The deliberative process offers loads of inspiration for the DMO – also for designing one-off initiatives that involve residents in decision-making. The tools and methods can inspire what questions to ask and how, ensuring resident influence on process, ensuring representativeness, communicating for transparency and follow-up, accountability, and much more.

## OECD, 2020: GOOD PRACTICE PRINCIPLES FOR DELIBERATIVE PROCESSES FOR PUBLIC DECISION MAKING

OECD's good practice principles offer important guidance that can inform and inspire DMOs in their work to invite citizen participation. The OECD provides many other valuable resources for further support and exploration, including:

- [OECD Guidelines for Citizen Participation Processes](#)
- [OECD guide: Running a civic lottery](#)
- [OECD guide to the learning and deliberation stages of the processes](#)
- [A full list of resources, guides and tools for representative deliberative processes.](#)
- [Participo – a digital space of “exchange between public servants, practitioners, researchers, academics, and designers about innovative citizen and the future of democracy more broadly.”](#)



Source of model: OECD (2020)

# THE RIGHT TOPIC AND THE GOOD QUESTION

Many of the Time for DMocracy partner destinations have asked throughout the process: *How to choose the right topic and question for citizen deliberation?*

And while there is no cookie-cutter solution or answer to this, the handbook developed as part of the Innovation in Democracy program, “How to run a citizens assembly”, offer some very valuable guidelines, and do’s and don’ts.

The tables here are taken directly from the handbook, written by Involve, The Democratic Society, the RSA and mySociety – with inspiration for the do’s and don’ts of asking questions from the new Democracy Foundation (2018) Framing the Remit.

## A topic is likely to be right for deliberation if...

- A decision needs to be made, but no option is clearly preferable
- There is a clear political dilemma, ethical quandary or complex trade-offs;
- New perspectives and ideas may help people find novel solutions;
- Council action risks being financially and/or reputationally costly and politicians currently lack the confidence or clear mandate to act;
- Short term incentives or lack of public understanding obstruct long-term responses;
- Politicians have a personal or political stake in the outcome (eg issues of electoral reform), therefore external perspectives can boost the impartiality of the decision.

Taken directly from “How to run a citizens assembly”, by Involve, The Democratic Society, the RSA and mySociety

## A topic is less likely to lend itself to deliberation if it...

- Requires a purely technical solution;
- Requires a yes or no answer;
- Is a foregone conclusion and the public’s role would only be as a rubber stamp;
- Requires an immediate response;
- Is relevant only to a small segment of residents;
- Is uncontentious, straightforward or inconsequential.

# When asking questions for public deliberation...

## DO

- Start with a question, not merely a subject description.
- Ensure that it is a neat fit for what the decision maker will ultimately decide.
- The remit of the assembly should be commensurate with the authority's scope of responsibility.
- Aim for brevity and clarity.
- Make it neither too broad nor too narrow – the 'Goldilocks' option.
- Sometimes it will be useful to precede or follow a question with an explanatory statement to provide context, set parameters or state trade-offs.
- Embed the trade-offs in either the question or supporting statement.
- Test your remit – check that it makes perfect sense to an everyday citizen.
- Share the problem/dilemma; don't sell a solution to the assembly.
- Clearly state any parameters or boundary conditions (i.e., the amount of money that can be spent, the council's jurisdiction, the geographical boundaries of the problem). Officeholders can have a hand in setting these boundary conditions.



## DONT

- Don't frame a question that can be answered with either 'yes' or 'no'.
- Avoid compound questions (two questions in one). Keep each question separate.
- Avoid decontextualized questions, or questions with an imprecise remit.
- Do not lead the participants toward a pre-determined answer or even give the unintended perception that you are.
- Don't set a remit that's too small in scope to justify a costly process.

Taken directly from "How to run a citizens assembly", by Involve, The Democratic Society, the RSA and mySociety, with inspiration from the new Democracy Foundation (2018) Framing the Remit.



## CASE STUDY

# PUBLIC DELIBERATION ON DESTINATION GOVERNANCE IN BARCELONA

The Barcelona City and Tourism Council was established in 2016 as "an open and diverse citizen-participation body set up to discuss what kind of city we want and, therefore, what kind of tourism suits the city best."

The establishment of the council followed years of continued tourism growth and increasing discontent and negative sentiment among locals towards tourism – and all the negative externalities and impacts associated with a growing influx of visitors.

## A PERMANENT SPACE FOR DELIBERATION

The City and Tourism Council serves as a permanent space for deliberation between public, private, and community stakeholders that approaches tourism as an asset for the city, but also as a topic of shared and public concern. The Council advises the municipal government on tourism initiatives, policies and strategic action. It commissions the production of studies to support deliberation, shares opinions, and proposes concrete solutions to tourism-related issues.

Members of the Council represent the general public and local residents' sector, the tourist business sector, commerce, the restaurant and catering sector, sports and culture, trade unions, environmental associations, social groups and every city district, and expert professionals, technical managers, and representatives from each political group within the municipality.

## LEARNINGS FROM FIRST COUNCIL PERIOD

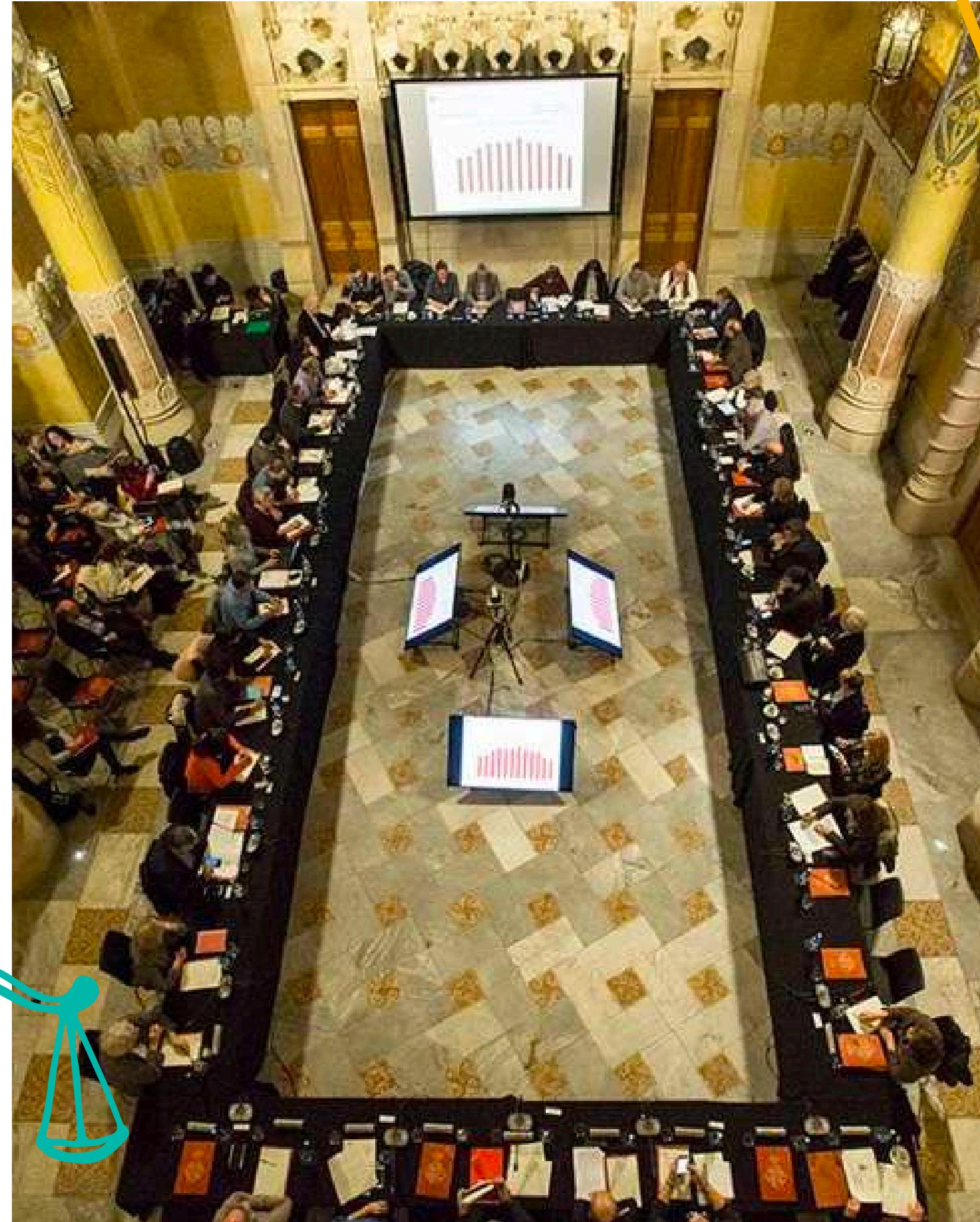
From 2016 to 2021, the Council executed its first Work Plan, which crystallized in seventeen working groups and 71 open sessions of discussion. Issues discussed included accommodation, use of public space, post-COVID scenarios, tourism taxation, and more. During the deliberations, over 400 people and 150 organisations have been included.

The Council is currently developing a new Work Plan for the coming years. The Secretariat of the Council is headed by Rosa Bada, Head of Institutional Cooperation with Barcelona Tourism (the DMO). The position is split referring to both the DMO and the municipality.

Over time, the discussions of the Council have become more constructive and based on an increasingly shared understanding of the complexities of tourism to the city. This has been important in Barcelona, where the relations between stakeholders have been characterized by mistrust. However, while trust and relationships are strengthened, challenges remain. As Rosa Bada explains it: *The Council is not a straight avenue to consensus, but rather a winding path. It requires resources and time to move forward.*

## INCREASING TRANSPARENCY

The future aim of the Secretariat is to work towards more transparency in how the recommendations impact concrete change, and why some recommendations may prove too difficult to implement. In Rosa Bada's years of experience working with the Council, she has observed a pitfall in the lack of transparency about the 'afterlife' of deliberations: How do these influence and shape the ensuing political decision-making? Hence, the ambition for the future is to strengthen the connection between the city, council, and DMO and to shift further away from declarations of intent to actual and concrete action, also beyond tourism and into related topics of housing, public transportation and broader urban challenges.



**CASE STUDY**

# VALENCIA IN BROAD DIALOGUE WITH THE CITY

In Valencia, a plenary council invites a representation of multiple city and tourism interests, including trade associations, political groups, the DMO, the cultural sector, the sports sector, festivals, and representatives of the city's resident associations (full list of members [here](#)). The council meets twice per year, and as a supplement, the council members can engage in working groups across different topics, including sustainability and accessibility, or housing and regulation.

As the DMO, Visit Valencia reports on all the activities, but the meetings are convened by invitation from the City of Valencia. Besides the plenary council, the city has also set up a Commission for Coordination of Tourism. In this commission, tourism matters are discussed across city government departments, who all have a touch point with tourism. Part of the purpose of the commission is to generate broader awareness of tourism across the different departments to ensure the consideration of tourism-related aspects as part of more general city decisions, and finally to flag future needs and necessities.

**CASE STUDY**

# A LEARNING PROCESS FOR THE CITIZEN ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR TOURISM IN BERLIN

After several years in the planning, Berlin launched a Citizen Advisory Council for tourism in 2022. The council is intended to work as a platform for the exchange of knowledge and sharing of experiences, as a potential mediator between local government and the local population, as a catalyst for new impulses and ideas and as contributor in identifying potential areas of conflict. It has been set up by an initiative of the Senate Department for Economics, Energy and Public Enterprises in cooperation with visitBerlin and the Berlin city districts.

## OPEN APPLICATION PROCESS

Following an open application process for citizens above the age of 18, a total of 155 applications were received. There are 24 seats available in the Council, two for each of the 12 city districts. Each district mayor could decide how to select the final two applicants for the two district seats in the council – and different methodologies were chosen: From juries that selected applicants based on a set of criteria to random selection among applicants by lottery, as a few examples. The selected members of the council are born between 1960 – 1999, 50/50 female to male ratio, and as it turns out, almost half of the members have a background in tourism or at least some basis of tourism-related knowledge. This could be explained by the open application process, where a background or familiarity with the topic may have spurred motivation to apply.

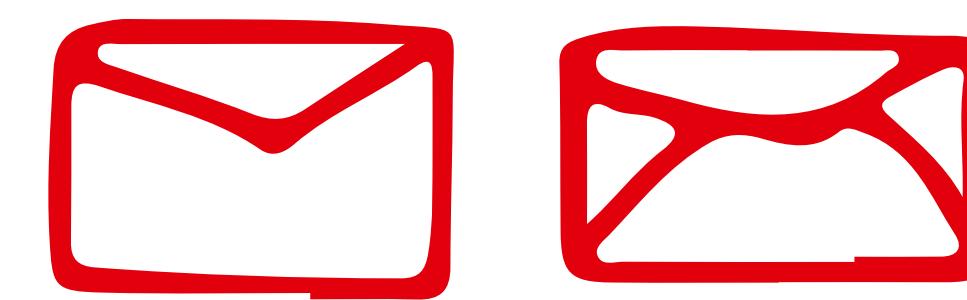
Each member has been asked to sign a code of conduct to ensure that they are each committed to the free democratic order and are not participating to pursue any economic interests. They acknowledge that they represent only themselves as individual and private Berliners, not any company interests.

## CITIZENS FORUM, FOR ALL BERLINERS

The council will hold four official meetings throughout the year, and each council member get 10 euro per hour of meeting. The secretariat of the council is set up with an external provider, [nexus Institute](#), who organizes and moderates all meetings, writes protocols, facilitates contact and requests between the council and other entities. Nexus also organizes the citizens' forum, which supplements and feeds into the work of the council. The first forum will take place on January 31, 2023, where the wider public – every Berliner – is invited to participate. The forum will include presentations and updates on tourism to Berlin, strategies and initiatives relating to the tourism sector, and the possibility to talk to all council members and give input on priorities, issues and topics for the council to address. The forum is planned to be convened twice per year.

## A LEARNING PROCESS

To all entities involved, the first 3 years of the council will be a learning process. An external provider will continuously evaluate the initiative, attending all meetings and interviewing participants. End of 2022, the evaluation report will recommend potential changes, adaptations, and tweaks to the council, the process, and the organisation.



# PARTICIPATORY PLACE BRANDING AND STORYTELLING

Destination promotion and storytelling remain key tasks and responsibilities of most DMOs. However, the way of fulfilling these tasks have changed in the past years and will most likely continue to change in the years to come. In the Localhood strategy of Wonderful Copenhagen (2017), local life and people were identified as one of the major attractions of the destinations.

However, the focus on promoting the local experience of a destination also comes with the inherent danger of commodifying local or "*localwashing*". Today, 'eat like a local', 'live like a local' or other such messaging has become mainstream. To some extent, using the word authentic in destination marketing increasingly indicates something almost certainly inauthentic or at least adapted to meet visitors' experiential demand.

DMOs are not just promoting destinations for visitors, but places where people live. This became even more evident during the global pandemic, when most destinations were forced to refocus on a primarily local audience. In reflection, the DMO cannot simply be considered responsible for presenting and promoting those places with whatever stories work best. It is also responsible for representing the values, cultures and diversity of the people who live in those places. All of these are inherent components of continuously shaping the identity of place and, by extension, the identity and brand of the destination.

Shifting from presenting to representing reaches far beyond that of identifying a few local brand ambassadors and influencers. It means inviting and including more voices to share and shape place brand and identity - voices that can authentically, credibly, and sincerely tell the stories of culture and community.



## THE SHIFT AND RESHIFT IN HAWAII DESTINATION MARKETING

In June 2022, Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) awarded Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement (CNHA) the million-dollar contract to market the destination to the US market. Choosing the community-centered non-profit CNHA over the Hawaii Visitors and Convention Bureau marked a significant shift towards prioritizing local community and culture first. The contract also included an element of destination management, and as such, the shift follows years of growing discontent among the local population towards tourism and the negative impact of tourism on local life and natural ecosystems.

In December 2022, however, [SKIFT](#) reports that the contract was rescinded by the government because the contract needed to be separated into two: one for marketing, one for visitor management and community relations.



### CASE STUDY

# TELLING THE STORIES OF COMMUNITIES WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

In late 2020, NYC & Company (DMO) created a position responsible for creating content with a focus on New York City's cultural diversity and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Colour) communities (see the press release on the appointment of Rondel Holder [here](#)).

Since then, the DMO has won awards for content that tells the formerly untold stories of city and destination. The award-winning [Freedom to Be](#) video series explores subcultures and affinity groups within New York City's Black community

that defy stigmas. In the words of Rondel Holder, NYC & Company Senior Vice President for Content + Diversity Initiatives, the content of the series

*"is unapologetically Black and not your typical Black stories. They are Black stories about joy, independence and the beauty in having opportunities to express yourself; Black stories not tied to any sort of trauma or hardship, all beauty and fulfillment."*

NYC & Company shares the series as part of their Explore-section on the NYC Go website. The section includes subsites on "[The Black Experience in NYC](#)", "[The Latino Experience in NYC](#)", "[The Asian Experience in NYC](#)".

Across these Experience sites, visitors can find Black-Owned Neighborhood Guides, Black voices on Broadway, or Culture Guides to different Latino Cultures of NYC.



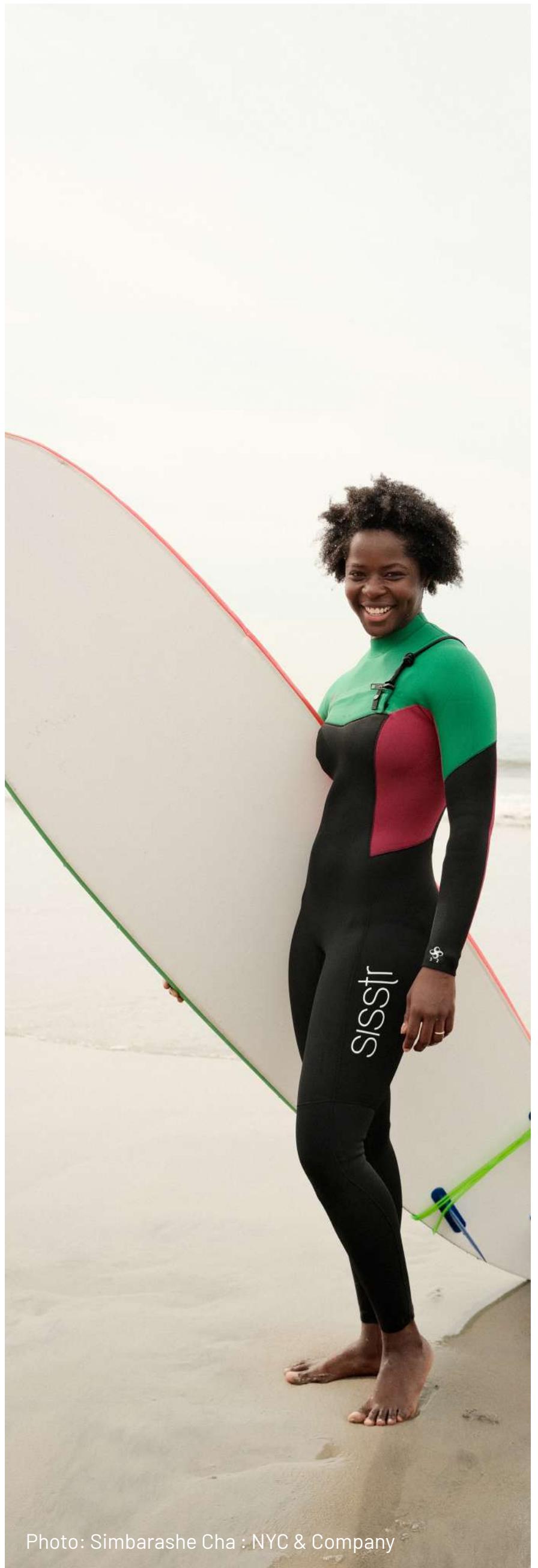


Photo: Simbarashe Cha : NYC & Company



Photo: Simbarashe Cha : NYC & Company

# Community Storytelling and Representing Diverse Communities

In October 2022, City Destinations Alliance (Time for DMOcracy Knowledge Partner) had invited Rondel Holder to its conference in Tel Aviv. Here are three of Rondel Holder's key take-aways and learnings, as he shares his perspective on community storytelling in tourism, and how NYC & Company goes about representing diverse communities in their content:

## To tell great community stories, they need to come from within the community.

Build relationships with communities. Identify storytellers, even if they're not necessarily writers, hosts or filmmakers by trade.

## Relationships and trust take time.

Often times, when you're speaking about multicultural, LGBTQ+, accessibility, these communities have been marginalized and sold a dream again and again. They may be apprehensive at first, understandably so, especially if you've never shown interest in the past. Show up to community events when you can. Meet people in person.

## Commit to a strategy of telling diverse stories and supporting these communities year-round.

Don't just pop in and out when it's convenient. For example, don't just highlight Black people during Black history month or the queer communities during PRIDE

according to  
Rondel Holder,  
Senior Vice President,  
NYC Company





DEMOCRACY IN PRACTICE No.

# PLACEMAKING BY COMMUNITY

***"Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody."***

Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 1961.

Heavily and happily inspired by [Project for Public Spaces](#), we define placemaking as a collaborative process that inspires people to collectively reimagine and reinvent public space. Placemaking is inherently participatory and community-centred. Placemaking strengthens the connection between people and the places they share.

Tourism takes place in public space, and visitors come to share this space temporarily. The purpose of placemaking in DMocracy is to shift from simply offering destinations as 'places to consume'. Visitors should be invited to participate in and contribute to making these places and spaces even better.

As suggested by [Ethan Kent](#), formerly of Project for Public Spaces, now PlacemakingX: "the best place marketing strategy is to have a great place. Engaging locals, and even tourists, in shaping a place and its brand can be very powerful marketing".

## A GOOD PLACE TO LIVE IS A GOOD PLACE TO VISIT

When you invite people to visit a place, you also share the responsibility of protecting the appeal and well-being of that place. The logic of many newer destination strategies is that an appealing place to live is also an appealing place to visit. This logic and mindset have led to a growing expectation that DMOs play a supportive or active role in placemaking activities; from supporting the development of public transportation, or cycling options, to developing events focused on both locals and visitors, and much more.

The [DestinationNEXT 2021 Futures Study](#), identifies "Greater focus on placemaking to benefit both locals and visitors" as #28 of total 100 trends for the next generation of destination organisations. The report claims that destination organisations are 'missing in action' as "community development engines and placemakers" – and that destination leaders need to engage more with communities in creating better and more resilient places to live, work, and visit.



## WELCOME TO THE PMMO: PLACE MAKING AND MARKETING ORGANISATION

In late 2022, City Destinations Alliance and Toposophy published a report "Exploring the Emerging Role of the Place Making and Marketing Organisation", that points to a people-centric role of the future PMMO. A role that puts social sustainability and local residents first, invites locals to help navigate some of the major challenges facing cities and urban destinations, and through creative place making and marketing, creates opportunity for neighborhoods and cities as a whole.

### CASE STUDY

# CO-CREATING SIGNAGE IN TALLINN

In Tallinn, the DMO is inviting residents to help co-create a new, user-friendly signage system; the Tallinn Wayfinding system. To date, the participatory design process has included:

#### Digital map-based idea collection

Creating a user-centric data-set as a basis for the wayfinding system, the digital map invites users to indicate three different types of "important places" in Tallinn: 1) Good meeting places, 2) favourite places, and 3) undiscovered places. Explore the map [here](#).

#### Qualitative user interviews

Interviews with 36 different user profiles, including users with special needs, experts, visitors, and foreign-language users.

#### City tours

City tours on foot and by bike with experts and local users to inform the process with observations and suggestions.

#### Co-creative design workshops

Bringing together city officials, students, experts and users, the workshops have been held in outdoor spaces for idea generation and input.

As part of the workshops, participants were asked to draw a mental map of Tallinn to get a sense of how differently people experience and perceive urban and shared space. Participants also sorted and grouped the most important destinations and attractions.

The process resulted in a co-created concept for the new signage system and principles for the upcoming public design competition. In 2023, signage prototypes will be developed and tested in public pilot areas before citywide implementation.

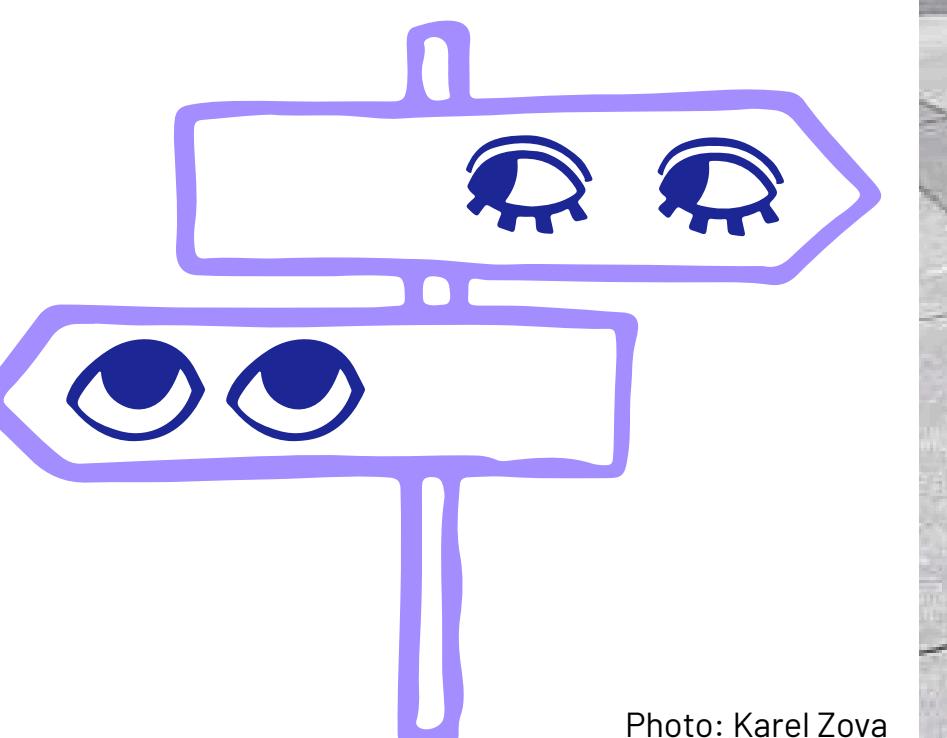


Photo: Karel Zova

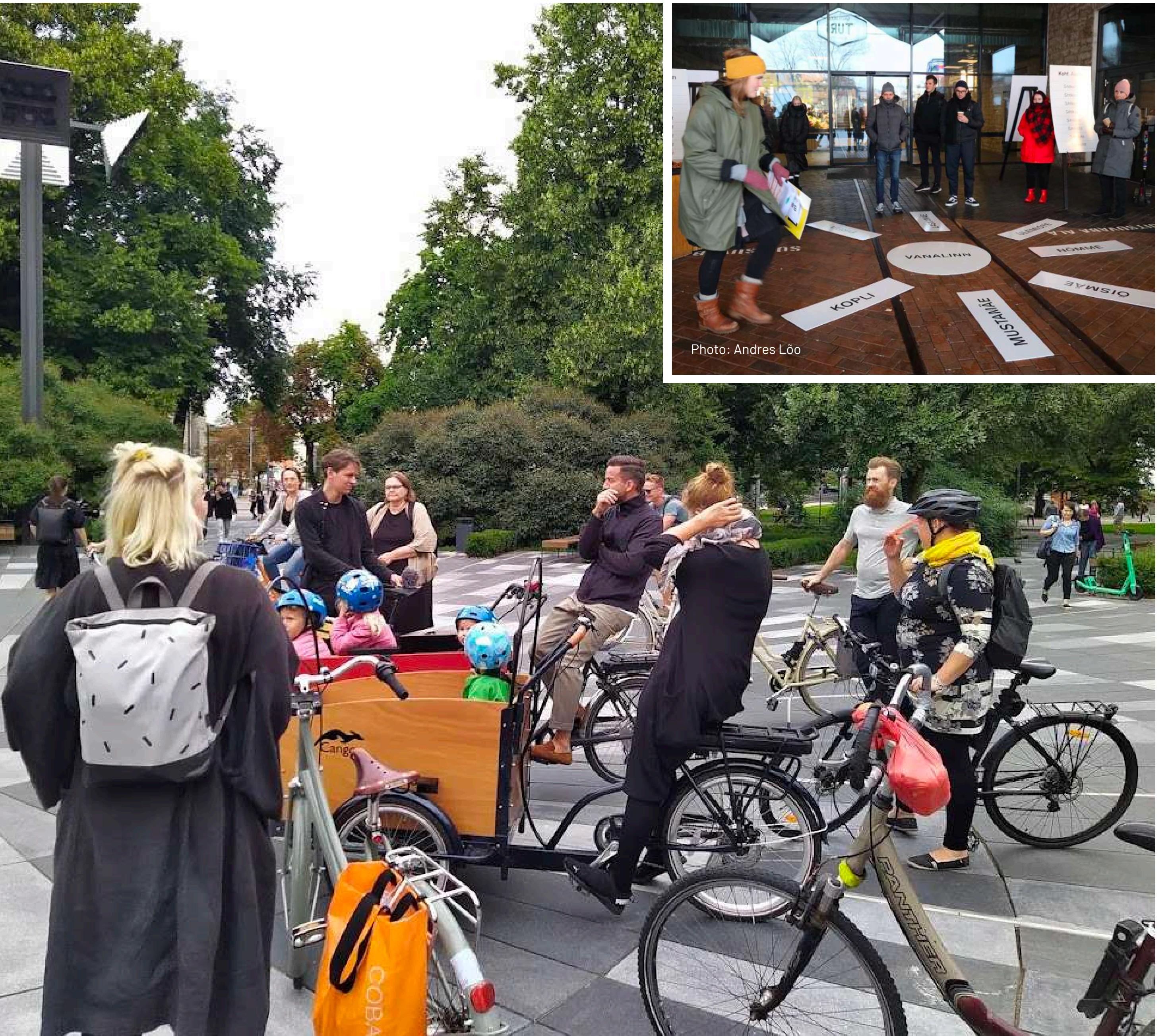


Photo: Andres Lõo

In recent years, the idea and concept of 'voluntourism' – tourists engaging in volunteering activities while visiting destinations – has received a lot of attention, especially sparked by initiatives and campaigns like [Closed for Maintenance](#) by Visit Faroe Islands or [Mālama Program](#) by Hawai'i Tourism Authority and Hawai'i Visitors and Convention Bureau.

Meanwhile, tourism has a long history of locals volunteering as part of the visitor welcome. Though volunteering is a widespread and recognized form of civic engagement, the role of the DMO in supporting, engaging and empowering locals through volunteering hasn't been widely discussed or broadcasted in recent years. However, the Time for DMocracy survey indicates 53% of European DMOs (and 38% of the North American DMOs) engage local residents through volunteering or local ambassador programs (see Part 2). Throughout the project, volunteering has continuously been highlighted as a potentially powerful way for the DMO to connect to local community.



# VOLUNTEERING FOR TOURISM WELCOME

## SENSE OF PURPOSE AND SENSE OF WELCOME

Volunteering in many ways seem like a win-win example of resident participation. Citizens, who choose to volunteer their time and efforts in local activities, feel more connected to their communities, develop important civic skills, and have a stronger sense of purpose. To destinations, the volunteers are a valuable resource in providing visitor welcome, perhaps especially needed during the hosting of major events or during the destination's high season.

Seen in a DMOcracy perspective, engaging with, and supporting volunteer programs offer more potential than additional hands and resources. It provides the DMO with a valuable opportunity to strengthen relations to local community and boosting local pride and engagement around tourism-related activities within the destination.



### CASE STUDY

## THE RETHINKERS RULE IN AARHUS

When the city of Aarhus hosted the European Capital of Culture in 2017, the theme was Let's Rethink. And rethink they did – by establishing ReThinker, a local network of active and resourceful local volunteers. The involvement of volunteers was considered key to the success of the many events during the Capital of Culture year but also as a more long-term way of strengthening citizen engagement in tourism.

Since 2017, the program has continued to grow – now with over 2,200 volunteers engaged. The program is organized and serviced by a dedicated team with VisitAarhus, with a total of seven employees and trainees. The program is founded on a strong sense of local identity and community, and a shared sense of doing something meaningful. The core mission of the volunteer community is closely aligned with the strategic vision of Visit Aarhus as the DMO: A great place to live is a great place to visit!

Today, the ReThinkers are engaged in many activities on many occasions: from the arrival of cruise ships to big sport events, smaller cultural events and festivals, conferences and business events, and more. The volunteers also engage with events like World Clean Up Day and other community supportive activities. The ReThinker community also has a dedicated space in the city, where they meet other volunteers, attend events or social happenings. Finally, as part of the ReThinker initiative, Visit Aarhus delivers masterclasses in volunteering, including how best to motivate and recruit volunteers.

### CASE STUDY

## LYON ENGAGES YOUTH THROUGH TOURISM VOLUNTEERING

Besides coordinating the activities of the Lyon City Greeters, Only Lyon Tourism and Conventions (DMO) runs a team of Tourism Volunteers, engaging six to twelve young volunteers of ages 22 to 25 years old.

The volunteers are young people with no training or special studies that are all doing a six-month mission as part of the French Civic Service program, and as a springboard for them to get further involved in the industry.

The Tourism Volunteers welcome visitors at different spots in the city with a special focus on the highly visited historical areas of Old Lyon. In these historical areas, the volunteers guide visitors to the Charter of Good Practices by distributing postcards which provide commitments for responsible visitation.



### INTERNATIONAL GREETER ASSOCIATION, IGA

The Greeter concept and idea started in New York City in 1992 and has since spread across the world. Today, IGA is a worldwide network of more than 140 city/region Greeter organizations, welcoming visitors globally, according to the [IGA website](#).

All Greeter members share a set of core values, including that:

1. they are volunteering locals
2. they welcome individuals and small groups of up to six people
3. meeting a Greeter is free of charge
4. all visitors and volunteers are welcome without any kind of discrimination
5. they support sustainable tourism and aim for a lasting positive image of each destination
6. Greeter organizations are all about creating mutual opportunity for cultural exchange.

In several destinations, the administration and activities of the local Greeters network is coordinated by the DMO. For example, in Brussels, where Visit Brussels (DMO) coordinates the network of 100 Brussels Greeters. And similarly in Lyon, where Only Lyon (DMO) also coordinates the free service of Lyon City Greeters.

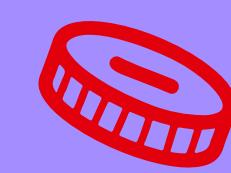
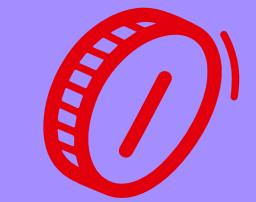




# COMMUNITY FUNDING AND PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

Essentially, community funding and participatory budgeting is about *“putting the money where the public voice is”*. It is about engaging and empowering citizens to decide how public funds are spent and exploring how this relates to the roles and activities of the DMO.

Participatory budgeting is an almost 30 years old practice, originally developed in Brazil and since spread to the rest of the world. Today, it is a practice responsible for channelling millions of dollars every year into projects proposed and chosen by citizens. In plain terms, participatory budgeting is a process in which community members decide how to allocate part of the public budget. In some cases, it also involves generating ideas for projects and then allocate funding to the best ideas.



The purpose is to increase citizen engagement and ensure public ownership of decision-making. For citizens, participatory budgeting can provide the possibility of gaining new facilities or services that otherwise would not have been a political priority (*"Participatory Budgeting"*, R. Rumbul, A. Parsons, J. Bramley, *mySociety*, 2018).

Civic crowdfunding is a subcategory of the more familiar crowdfunding, where "citizens, often in collaboration with government, propose, fund and deliver projects that aim to provide a community service or deliver public value through a local area improvement project" (*"Civic Crowdfunding: A guidebook for local authorities"*, H. Griffiths, Future Cities Catapult, 2019).

Typically, project ideas are sourced and shared online, where potential funders (often from the community) can contribute to projects that resonate with their interests, values, and priorities.

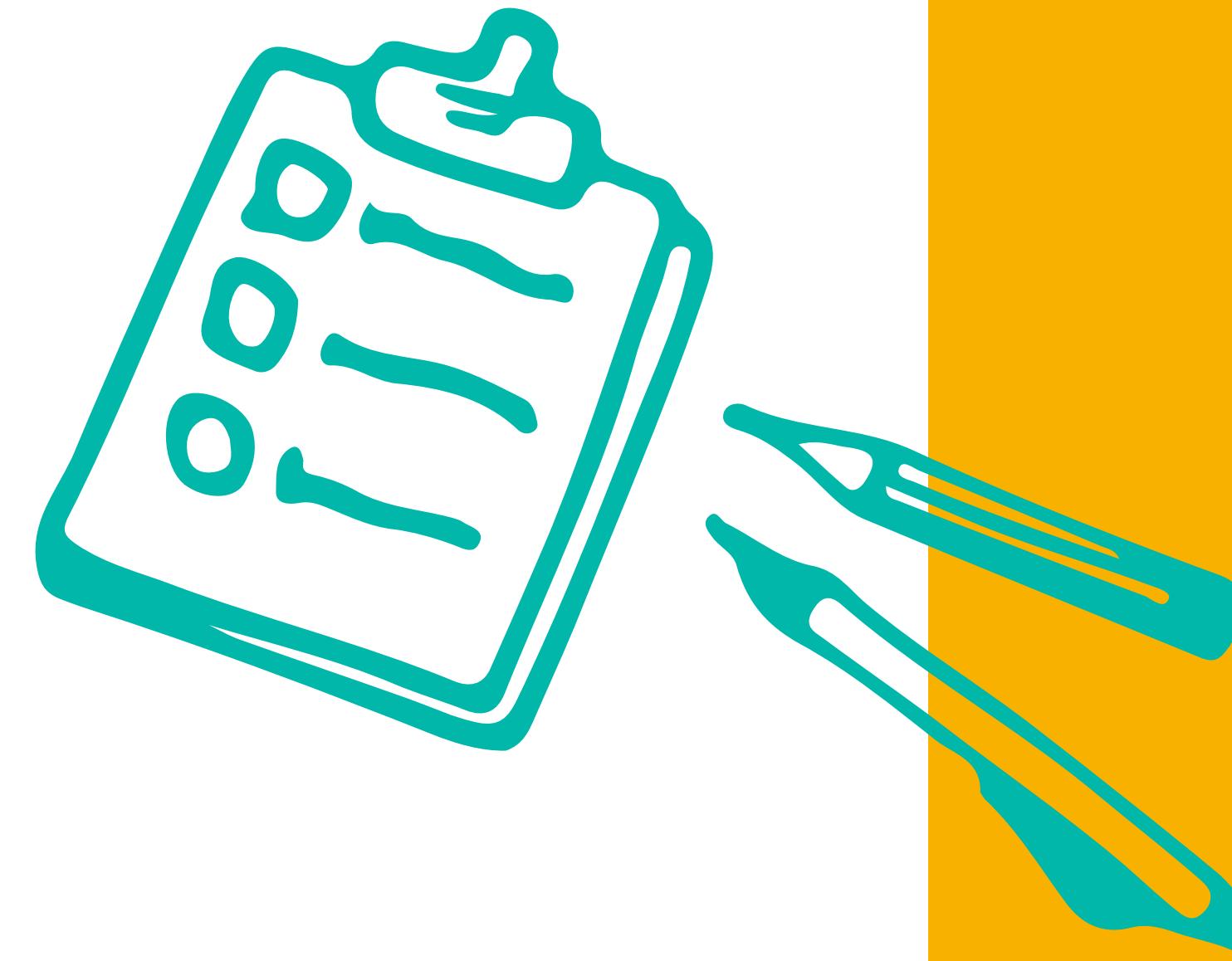
While participatory budgeting reallocates public money, civic crowdfunding means that the community is funding (or co-funding) the projects. Often, the local government either matches funding or invests according to its own criteria in the projects selected. (*"Digital tools for democratic participation"*, A. Parsons, R. Rumbul, M. Brook, 2019).

**Funds to (em)power participation?** Participatory budgeting and civic crowdfunding enable citizens not only to propose but also to allocate funds or actively invest in their preferred proposals. This ideally empowers citizens to influence the full process – from proposal as input to funding as the means to realize output.

There are challenges to both participatory budgeting and civic crowdfunding, and any offspring methods. One challenge is to actually realize projects decided by citizen vote through a participatory budgeting process (as seen from case studies in [Madrid](#)). When it comes to civic crowdfunding, there are issues related to how those who pay are also those who vote. This could suggest that the wealthy (with funds to invest) have more influence in deciding which projects succeed, even if and when their decisions don't represent those of the majority of the community (*"Civic Crowdfunding: A guidebook for local authorities"*, H. Griffiths, Future Cities Catapult, 2019).

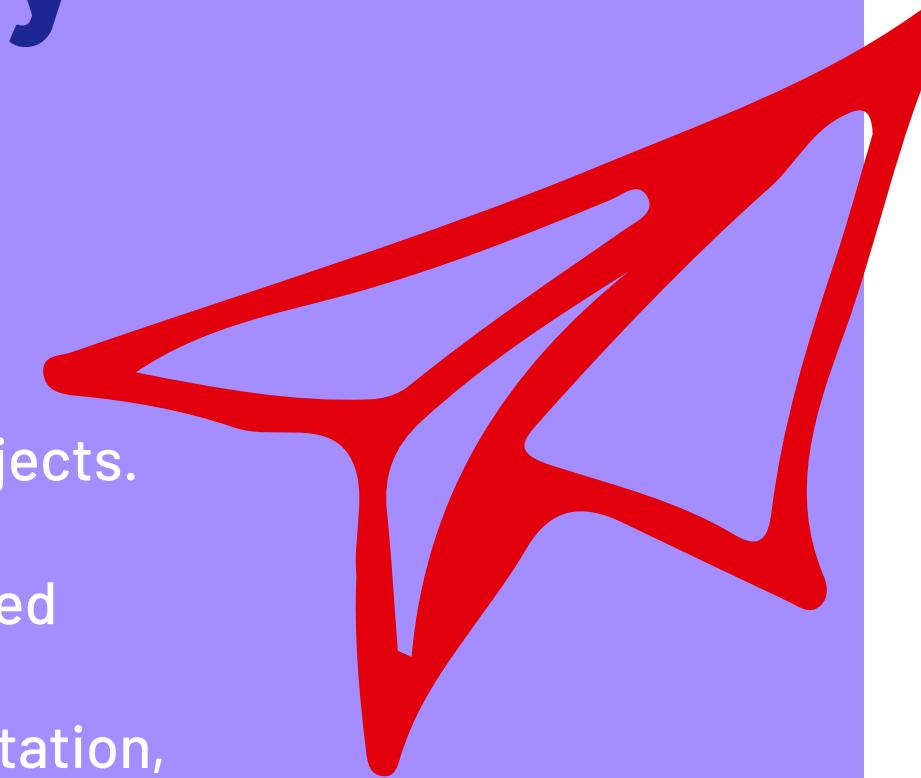
Still, both methods hold potential to inspire a future of DMOcratic governance and citizen participation. Today, for example, the [Balearic Islands Sustainable Tourism Tax](#) reinvests tax revenue into local projects relating to nature conservation, scientific research, cultural heritage, training, or social renting. Imagine a case, where tourism tax revenue was allocated (or partly allocated) to a fund for participatory budgeting or to match civic crowdfunding...

Whether funds come directly from tourism-related activity or not, the DMO can still play an active role as supporter or promoter of participatory funding activities with PR and communication, mobilizing and engaging contributors, voters, and potential funders.



## OmaStadi, Participatory Budgeting in Helsinki

[OmaStadi](#) is the City of Helsinki's platform for participatory budgeting services. In 2021, the city allocated 8.8 million euros to resident ideas and projects. Ideas were submitted to the platform. During a co-creation phase of workshops, ideas were transformed into viable proposals. A total of 396 proposals were prepared, and 75 were finally selected for implementation, as they received the most votes. Read more about the results and the voting turnout [here](#).



## Platform for Funding Community Projects

There are different platforms for civic crowdfunding or similar models of funding community projects:

[Spacehive](#) is a UK-based platform for co-funding local community projects. If you create a page for your project, it helps you raise funds from the crowds, as well as matches the project to funds from councils, foundations and companies that might want to help.

[Goteo](#) also has functions for civic crowdfunding and collaboration on citizen initiatives and other projects.

## CASE STUDY

# A DIFFERENT MODEL FOR CIVIC CROWDFUNDING, WHERE ANY AND EVERY CITIZEN CAN TAKE PART

In the municipality of Rheden, Netherlands, they have found a model that combines the ideas of participatory budgeting and civic crowdfunding.

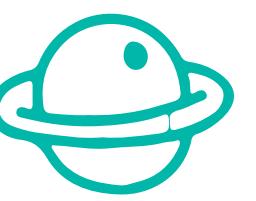
Financed by the municipality, each citizen receives a citizen check worth 7.50 euro two or three times per year. Citizens are invited to make proposals on [Ik Buurt Mee](#), a participatory platform set up in March 2020. These proposals can be suggestions for ideas and initiatives on how to make the community better, more lively, beautiful, or more connected. Fellow citizens can then support the proposals by donating their 7.5-euro citizen check. In addition to the dedicated check, citizens can also donate their own money, if they want to support an initiative further; “*The more people, the more checks, the bigger and more fun initiatives you can organize*”, according to the [Ik Buurt Mee website](#). A total of 311 initiatives have been started, and 303,395.05 euros in total donated (see statistics).

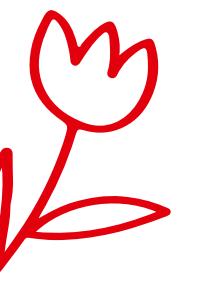
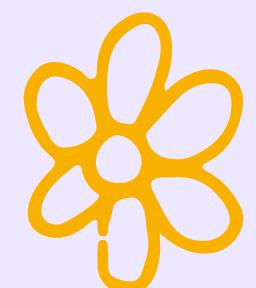
Besides donors, the [Ik Buurt Mee](#) platform also allows you to recruit volunteers for your project. However, the ‘catch’ is that you have to campaign and promote your proposal to your community in order to create support and attract your fellow citizens’ donation. The platform provides citizens with tips and advice on how to do this.

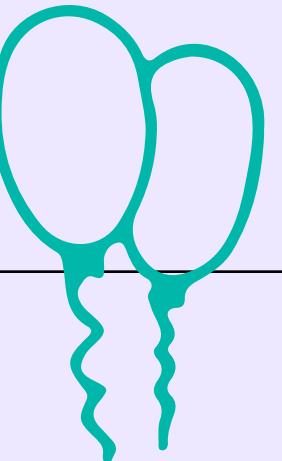
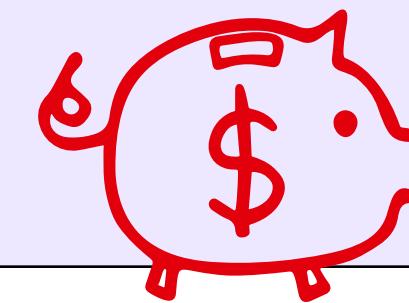
While tourism is not a direct theme of this initiative, the regional DMO Toerisme Veluwe Arnhem Nijmegen participates as an active supporter and promoter of the platform and the related activities. Many of the initiatives contribute to a more lively and beautiful community - with events, festivals, playgrounds, etc. – hence contributing to a more liveable and by extension, more visitable community.



# 8 PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES SUMMARISED



DEMOCRACY IN PRACTICE	CASE STUDIES	PROMISE AND POTENTIAL FOR THE DMO
<b>1. RESIDENT SENTIMENT &amp; CITIZEN SCIENCE</b>	<b>Visit Oslo</b> 1st time for sentiment research  <b>Wonderful Copenhagen</b> Monthly sentiment research  <b>Visit Stockholm</b> and the Digital Citizen Panel  <b>NBTC and Netherlands</b> Sentiment on all levels: national, regional & local  <b>Non-tourism</b> Citizen science & Urban Well-being	<p>The promise of resident research is that collected insights will be used in addressing issues identified and in future planning.</p> <p>There is evident potential for you as a DMO to share results openly and transparently; to build trust and motivate future engagement, and to enable others to also address the issues and possibilities identified.</p> 
<b>2. STRATEGIZING &amp; IDEATION</b>	<b>Banff and Lake Louise Tourism</b> The Tourism Together process  <b>Bordeaux Tourism and Conventions Office - Agora Tourism Bordeaux</b>	<p>Inviting participation in a strategy process involves more than a single event. It is a process, where you also commit to obtaining and considering the viewpoints and ideas provided.</p> <p>As a DMO, you will still need to make choices – be transparent about how input has been considered, and why some were integrated into final strategy and others weren't.</p>
<b>3. DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT &amp; ONLINE PARTICIPATION</b>	<b>Atout France</b> Responsible Tourism  <b>City of Belfast</b> Belfast Stories	<p>Online participation can build reach, inclusion of different groups of participants, increase the diversity of ideas, crowdsourcing of ideas, boost the scale and speed of collecting and mapping input, shaping the design of offline deliberation with online insights.</p> <p>A combination of online and offline participation will enable you as a DMO to get the best of both approaches – for both a wider and deeper participation.</p> 

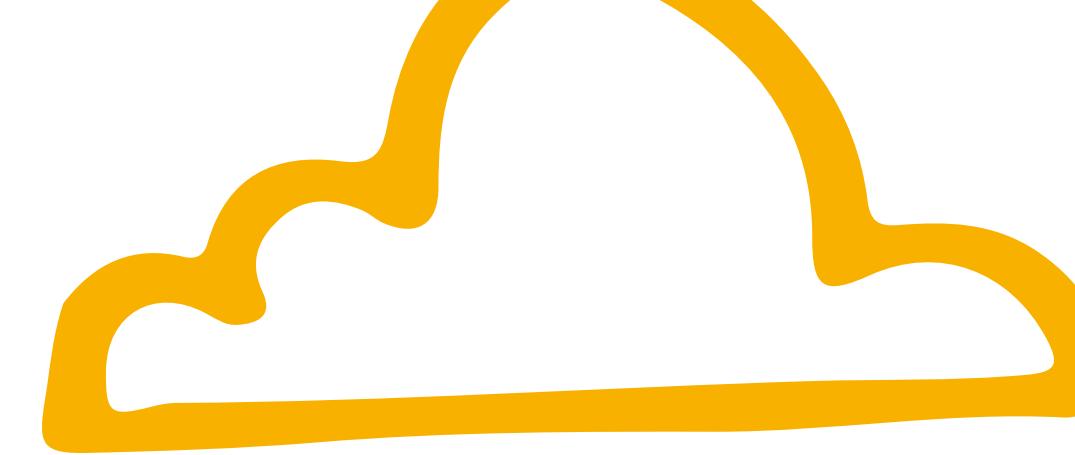
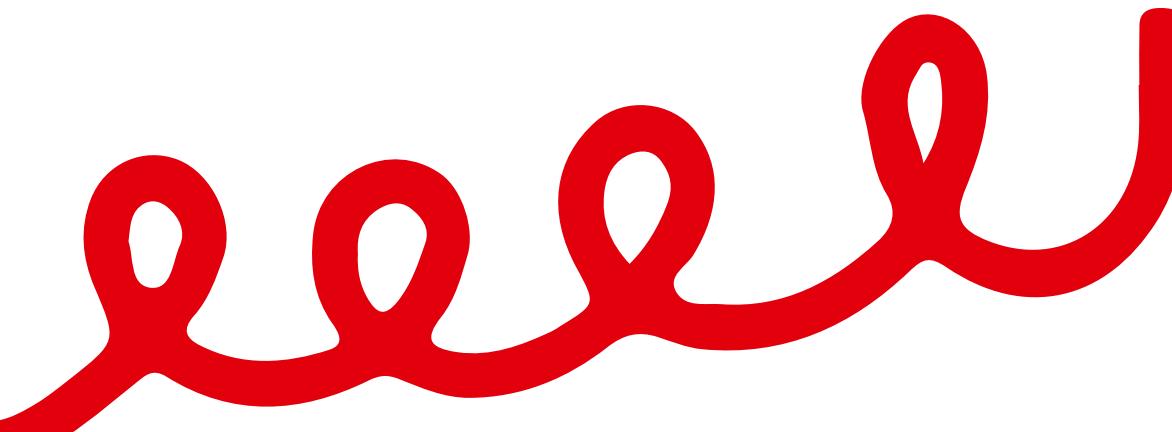
<b>4. CITIZEN ASSEMBLIES, COUNCILS &amp; PANELS</b>	<b>Barcelona Tourism</b> Barcelona City and Tourism Council  <b>Visit Valencia</b> Valencia Plenary Council and Commission for Tourism Coordination  <b>VisitBerlin</b> Citizen Advisory Council for Tourism	<p>Deliberative processes – with citizen councils, assemblies etc. – require resources, but the potential return is a basis for more informed decision-making, raised awareness of tourism as well as increased understanding of the issues that relate to tourism.</p> <p>The deliberative process can strengthen public trust. The councils can also be channels for raising awareness of tourism outside the council. As a DMO you can act as supporter, co-developer or expert contributor for an assembly or council process. You can use some of the tools and methods in inviting participation to ensure increased representativeness, relevant questioning, transparency, and more.</p>
<b>5. PARTICIPATORY PLACE BRANDING &amp; STORYTELLING</b>	<b>NYC and Company</b> Community Storytelling	 <p>Destination branding has shifted from the presentation of touristic assets to the representation of communities, which requires an increased focus on telling stories that reflect the shared values and narratives of people and place.</p> <p>As a DMO you cannot tell the stories of community without inviting and including the voices of that community.</p>
<b>6. PLACEMAKING BY COMMUNITY</b>	<b>VisitTallinn</b> Co-creating Signage	 <p>Following the logic that a good place to live is a good place to visit, as a DMO you will increasingly be expected to support or actively engage in the making of places that are good to live – and thus, inherently appealing to visit. Engaging in placemaking is an opportunity for the DMO to connect with community, engaging with locals in shaping both place and place brand.</p>
<b>7. VOLUNTEERING FOR TOURISM WELCOME</b>	<b>VisitAarhus</b> ReThinker Network  <b>OnlyLyon</b> Tourism Volunteers	<p>Volunteering creates a sense of purpose and connects people to their communities. As a DMO, you can play a supporting or facilitating role in organising volunteer programs, hence strengthening your relations to local community as well, and boosting local engagement in tourism welcome.</p>
<b>8. COMMUNITY FUNDING &amp; PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING</b>	<b>Omastadi Helsinki</b>  <b>Municipality of Rheden / Toerisme Veluwe Nijmegen Arnhem</b> Ik Buurt Mee!	<p>Putting money where your community's mouth is... participatory budgeting, granting and civic funding can motivate and mobilize participation, as well as ensure that funds are directed to the actual priorities of your communities. For you as a DMO – and especially in imagining a design, where part of those funds are redirected from the tourism sector – these methods and approaches build a strong case for demonstrating and strengthening the relevance of tourism and the commitment to "tourism as a means" to building better places to live.</p>

# THE DMO IN DEMOCRACY



# DMOCRACY AND THE FLUID ROLES OF THE DMO

**THIS IS STILL JUST THE BEGINNING...** of fully and comprehensively unfolding DMOCRACY – as an idea, as a new social contract between destination and community, as a destination mindset, and as a framework for destination governance. From the spectrum of participation to eight participatory practices, DMOCRACY does not promise to pinpoint one fix-all role for the destination organisation. Instead, DMOCRACY calls for a much more fluid approach to and understanding of destination governance – an approach, where the relevance of the destination organisation relies on its ability to understand which roles to undertake to create the most value in a given context. Value not for tourism as an isolated goal or agenda, but for the destination ecosystem of both community AND visitor economy. This fluid role of the DMO also requires mastery of understanding where and when to let others take the lead, and instead be the supporter of their initiative. In this final chapter, we outline the different and fluid roles of the DMO in a DMOCRACY framework. This outline reflects the objective of the DMO: to deliver with relevance and create value across the whole destination ecosystem. It is not simply about adding a function within the organisation or changing the meaning of M in DMO. It's an organization-wide fluidity to strengthen the DMOs long-term resilience and relevance.



## FLUID DOES NOT MEAN ALL AT ONCE

It could feel like the D in DMO has come to stand for diluted rather than destination. Visitor pressure, climate change, global pandemic – all changes that have shifted and widened the purpose and focus of the DMO to encompass so much that the profile and value proposition of the DMO have become unclear. In fact, the profile can sometimes seem weakened to such a degree that neither tourism industry stakeholders, public stakeholders, nor local community stakeholders have a clear image of the role and relevance of the destination organisation. Sometimes the DMO itself even seems uncertain of its own value proposition.

With Time for DMOCRACY, we have refocused on the role and agency of the DMO, without falling into the temptation of coming up with a new organizational abbreviation to fix it all (it wasn't easy ;-). The idea of fluidity does not mean spreading the DMO even thinner than it already is. Accepting that the role is fluid is also accepting that it requires clear and transparent choices. And accepting that creating thriving destination ecosystems requires broader ownership beyond the DMO.

## THE NEW ROLES OF THE DMO

The model here outlines the different DMO roles in a DMOCRACY. The idea of fluid roles means that the DMO will need to combine several of these roles to deliver in different situations, collaborations and contexts. This does not describe a gradual progress from one part of the model to another. It describes the continuous re-combination of roles to revitalise the relevance and value creation of the DMO.

On the vertical line, we explore the roles of the DMO according to variations in agency. Agency is defined as the ability to take action or to choose what action to take – or, simply put, who is in the driver's seat. On one end of the vertical, we look at the agency of the DMO: where the DMO has the ability to take action and is considered the appropriate or necessary agent to do so. On the other end, we look at the agency of the citizen: where the citizen has the ability to take action and chooses to do so and is the appropriate or necessary agent to do so.

On the horizontal line, we explore the difference in the primary orientation of the DMO, namely a key focus on tourism as a goal in itself, and/or tourism as a means to creating and shaping

better and thriving places. Within the whole ecosystem of the destination, both of these starting points exist, and the DMO role often (and still) spans the interest of both, balancing and mediating the interests of the tourism sector with those of the community. These interests don't have to be at odds, even if the primary focus and viewpoint differ. For example, the hotel owner is preoccupied with the well-being of the community in which the hotel is located – because this will attract more visitors and qualified workers to the hotel. The resident neighbor is preoccupied with the community's well-being and how the hotel can contribute positively by ensuring customers to local shops accessibility with public transportation, or jobs for neighborhood youth. Highly simplified, of course, but to illustrate that different perspectives don't necessarily mean conflicting endpoints.

## COCREATING THE DMOS REGENERATIVE MODEL

As part of the European edition of Time for DMOCRACY, University of Surrey developed a series of workshops with the European destination partners to envision the DMO regenerative functioning model and the open development of Sustainable Tourism Indicators; the research team from University of Surrey have summarised process and findings [here](#).

# THE FLUID ROLES OF THE DMO IN DEMOCRACY

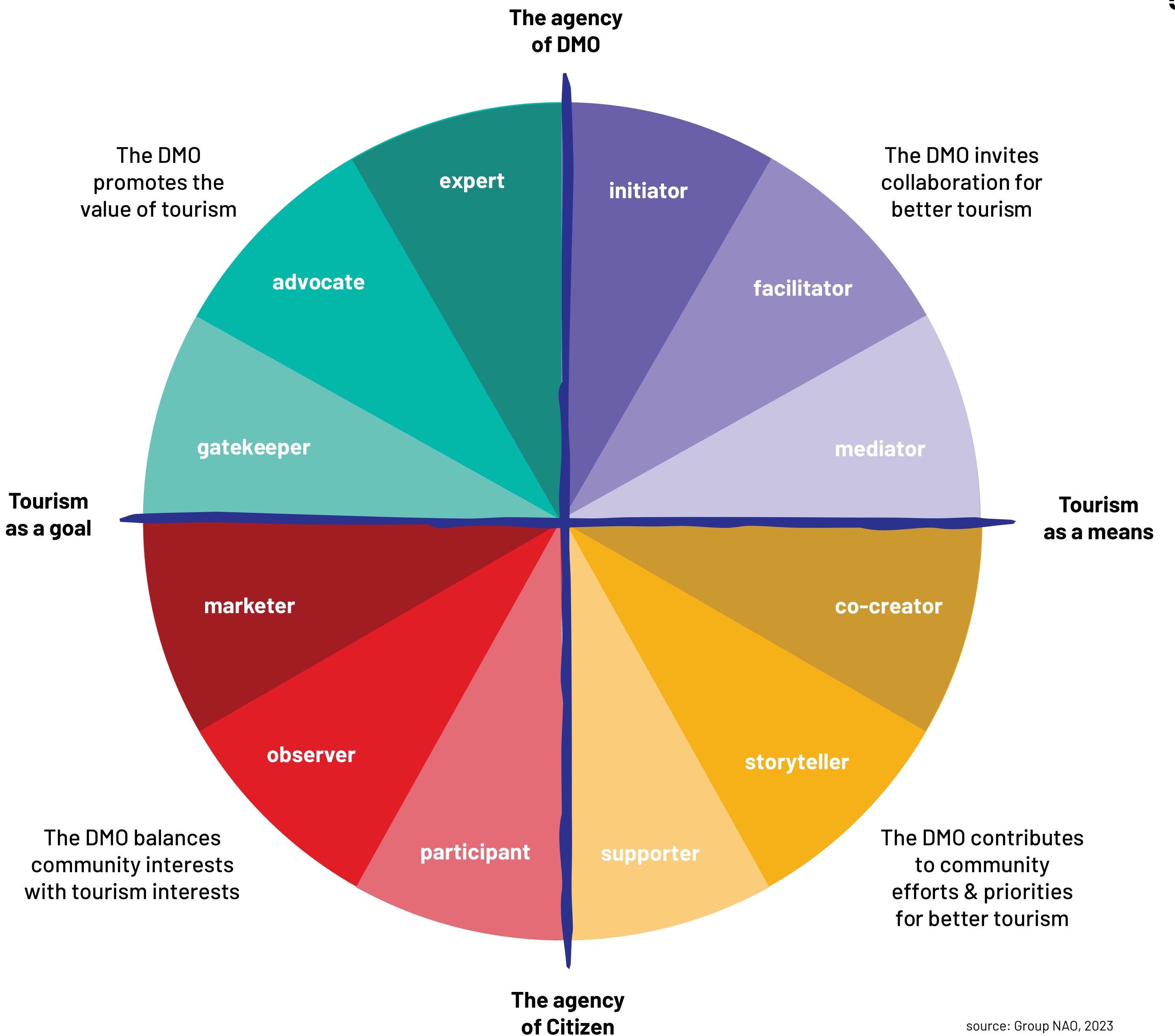
In the following, we elaborate and exemplify what these roles entail and how they could be combined. Fundamentally, it will all depend on the local context and situation, the issues at hand, the different entities involved, and more.

1 With strong agency of the DMO, and orientation towards tourism as a goal, the DMO is taking on the role of promoting the (economic) value of tourism, as well as informing the wider public about tourism as an economic and social resource. The roles shift from gatekeeper of the visitor economy to expert of the visitor economy, where the latter role entails a more nuanced and possibly critical expert view of the sector, potentially as input for the deliberations of a citizen council or as part of implementing research on resident sentiment towards tourism.

2 With strong DMO agency, shifting orientation towards tourism as a means for thriving communities, the role of the DMO can take on that of the initiator – launching projects and initiatives to collaborate on shaping the future of tourism to the destination, like co-creating signage in Tallinn or strategizing the path to sustainable tourism in Banff National Park (see part 3). In the role of facilitator, the DMO is more focused on facilitating the discussion rather than charting the new strategic course – or taking on the role of mediator between different interests, bringing them around the table for informed deliberation; perhaps as we've seen in Barcelona, where the DMO shares responsibility for the Secretariat of the city's tourism council.

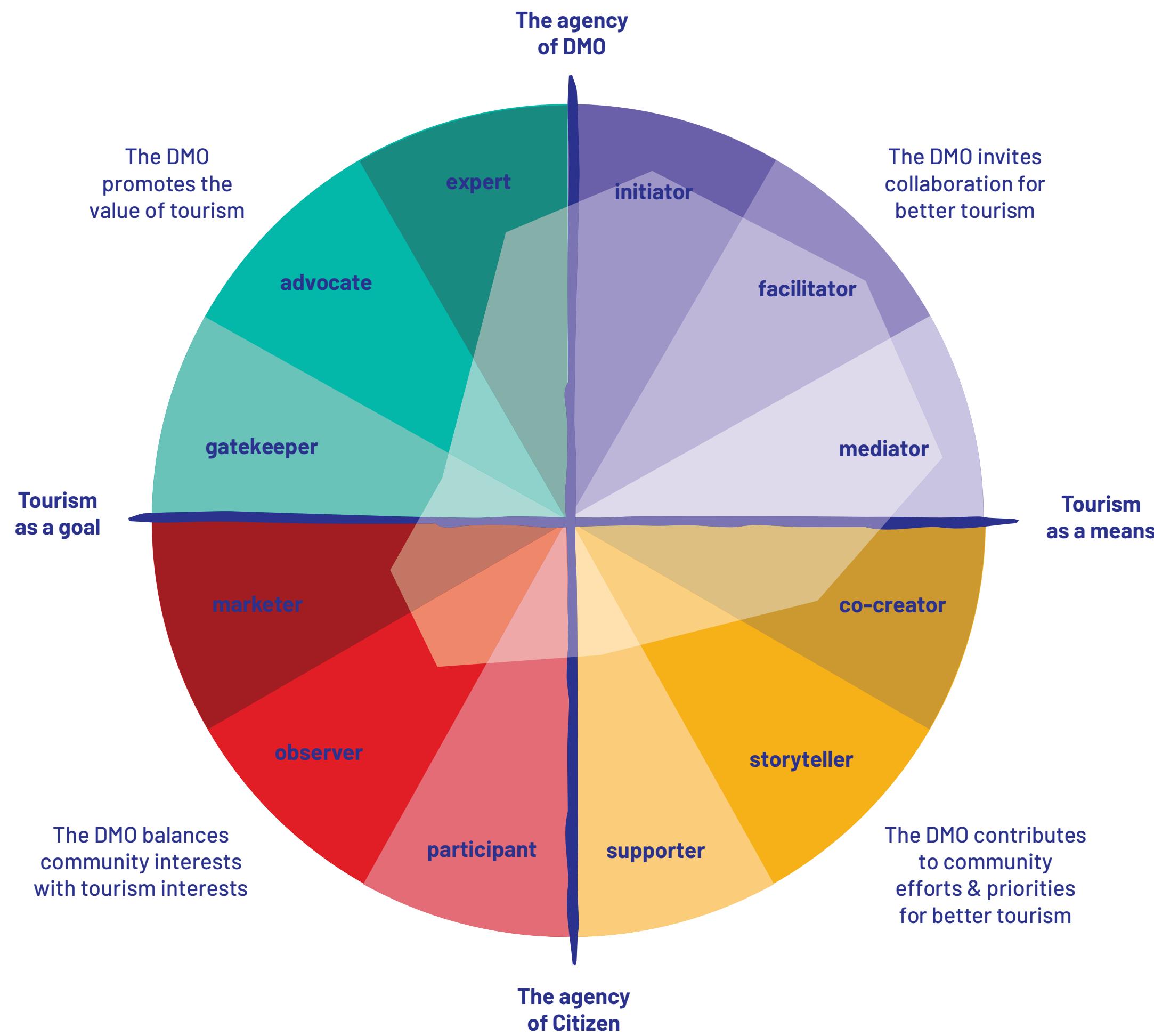
3 Strong agency of the Citizen, the DMO takes to the passenger seat. Sharing the stories of the communities or enabling community voices to share their stories, mobilizing and communicating with people to engage, or supporting initiatives that don't necessarily require a central role of the DMO, but work towards a shared vision of better tourism and thriving communities. Like when Engage Liverpool organises open conversations and events to explore the city's relationship with tourists. Or when Toerisme Veluwe Arnhem Nijmegen applies its DMO promotional prowess in supporting the communication and visibility of the participatory initiative, Ik Buurt Mee!

4 Finally, with strong agency of the citizen, and a primary focus on tourism as a goal, the DMO can rather take on roles of participating – on the same level as every other participant, representing the viewpoint of the visitor economy as part of the discussion. The role of observer can also prove the better choice, when tourism is perhaps not at the center point of discussions, but a smaller contribution to the bigger picture. The DMO marketer leans more toward the role of promoting local, with the key goal of appealing to visitors.

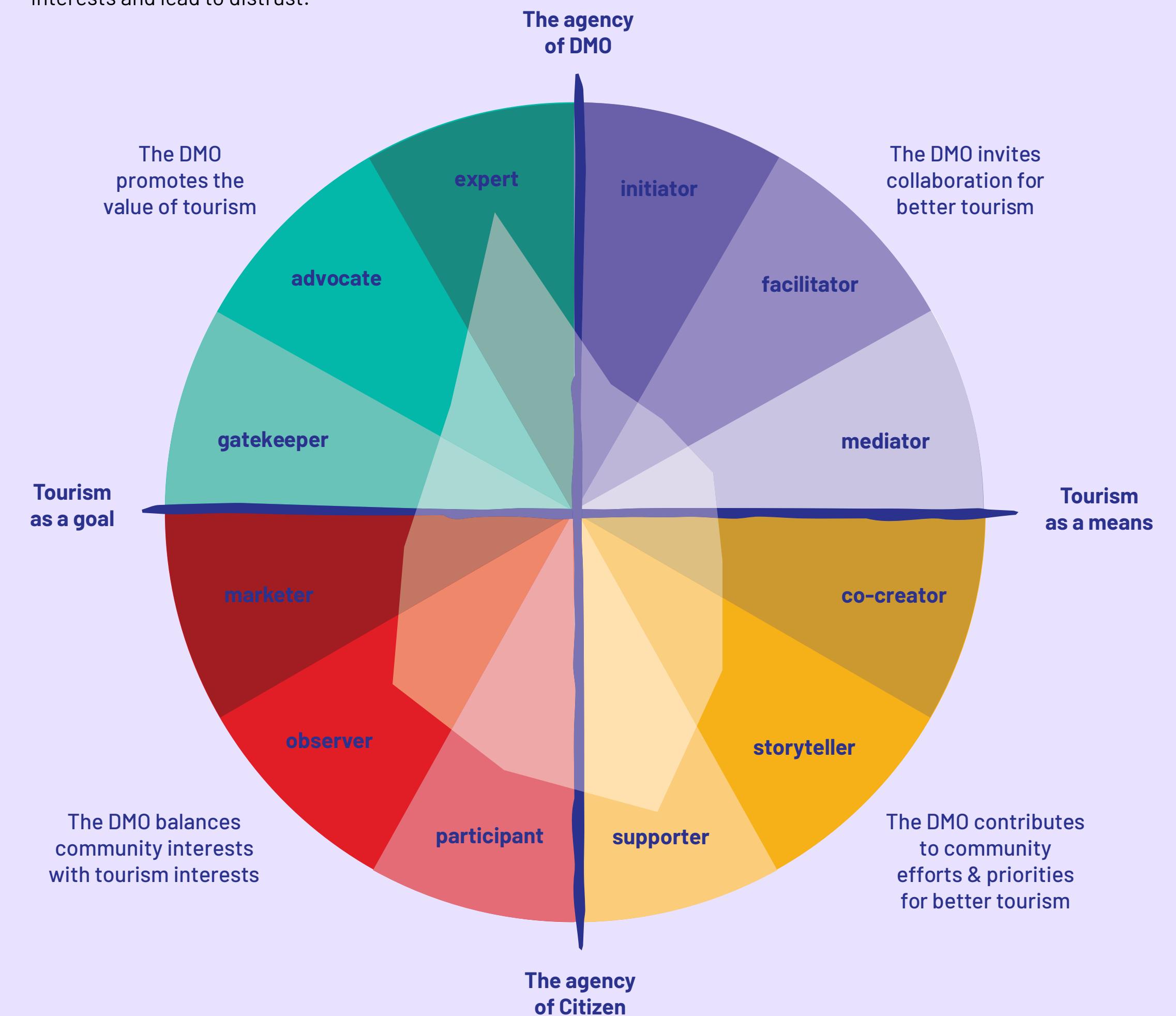


Similar to a spectrum, the idea of fluid roles of the DMO within DMocracy requires conscious consideration of the possible roles in a given context to decide where the DMO adds value and relevance.

Consider the example of DMO initiating a strategy process and inviting participation as part of the process. The role will span that of initiator, facilitator, mediator, perhaps even co-creator, but most likely less that of supporter or participant itself. In such a process, with the role as mediator, the DMO will act more expert than advocate in order to welcome more interests and voices around the table for deliberation.



Another example could be a citizen-driven initiative, where a community group has come together to reimagine the community, the shared spaces, or – as we've seen in Liverpool and Amsterdam – the future of tourism. The DMO is invited to take part, can support the initiative with visibility, with expert insights, and in giving voice to the local communities that share their stories. The DMO can also choose the role of observer or as advocate of the value of tourism. Such choices must be made with consideration of how they impact the future relevance and value added by the DMO; if the role of observer is seen as lack of support or interest in other voices, this can impact the perception of the DMOs ability to balance interests and lead to distrust.



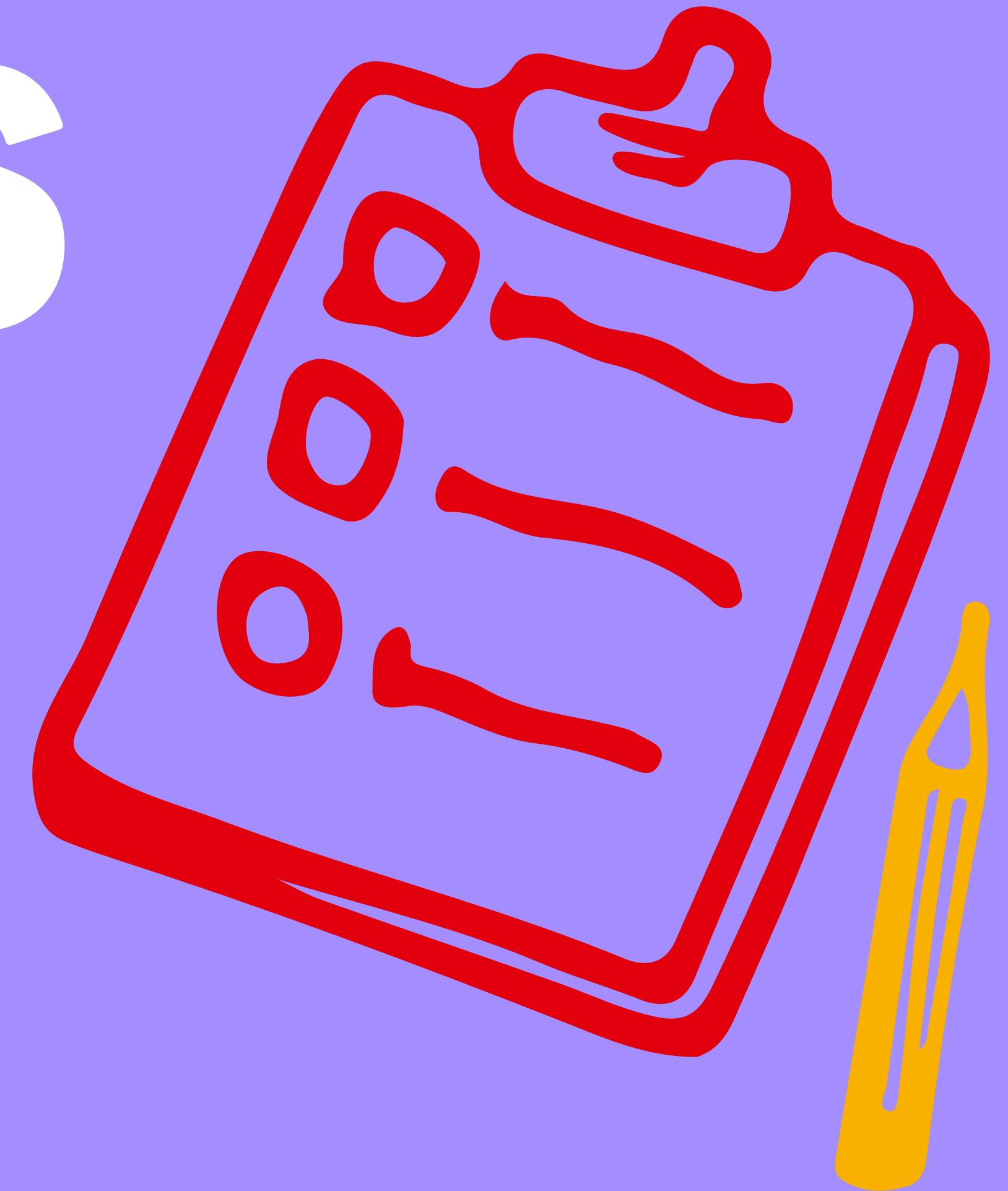
Rather than being locked into one fix-all role, the fluidity of the DMOs role in DMOcracy reflects the complexities of destination governance.

The destination – or what we identify as such – encompasses so many different interests; the visitor economy, the community and society, the environment, the people who live there and those who visit, and more. The relevance and value of the DMO is fluid and highly contextual, depending on a continuous, open and shared assessment of the needs of the whole destination ecosystem.

**That's why it's Time for DMOcracy.**



# APPENDICES



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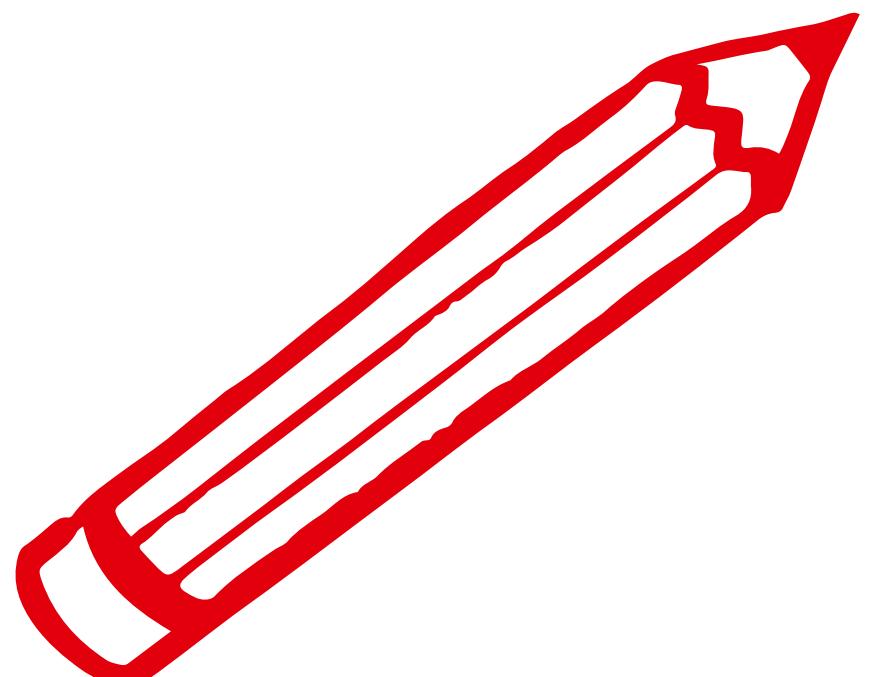
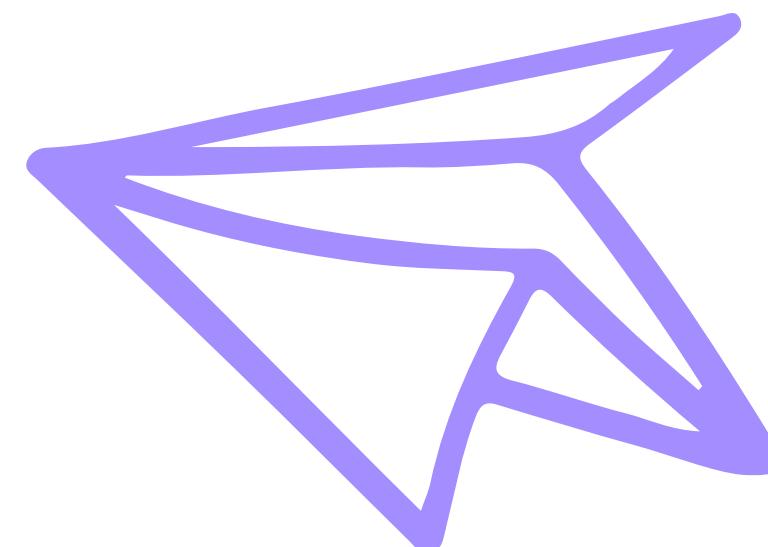
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