

A. ANALYSIS OF THE CHALLENGE

1. Which was the challenge before the implementation of the initiative?

Nowadays, the greatest challenge for governments and public leaders is **creating change in systems** aiming to improve results and create **humane and sustainable development** in our territory. These are changes that would improve the democratic function of our public administration processes and enable us to **generate networks, listen, serve and share** with the public, thus carrying out our work in a more effective, transparent and responsible way.

The public has many **misgivings** about politics, political representatives and everything related to the public sphere and its institutions. The administrative and political spheres also have their own **misgivings and fears** about opening up management and public decision-making processes to citizens.

The public now demands greater communication, participation and transparency and calls for a **new, more participative form of governance**. They do not wish merely to be receptors of goods and services: rather, they demand to **participate more actively in the construction of future scenarios**.

To this, we can add the fact that Spain has **the highest level of litigiousness of all of the countries surrounding it**, with the corresponding negative effects that this has on investment, public spending and the economy in general.

This new model is **not just a citizen demand or an obligation on the administration**. It is a necessity, given that governments cannot face new and increasingly complex social transformations on their own. What we need now is implication, and co-operation, between the government and citizens which goes beyond bureaucracy-based management models and focuses on more agile models which are better able to connect with citizens.

This involves **transforming the public sphere into a shared responsibility** instead of delegating it out to politicians and institutions. This change in paradigm requires an administration which **enables, promotes and develops spaces** which allow for correspondence, based on principles such as subsidiarity. Only through the real and effective participation of our citizens, and through a political management that facilitates this participation, will we be able to achieve a **cohesive, inclusive and innovative territory which is capable of transforming, generating richness from diversity and being an engine for sustainable progress**.

For this reason, from the Basque Government, through the **2014-16 Government Programme and through the Public Innovation Plan**, we assume the responsibility of deepening participatory democracy and promoting a process of **political regeneration**, reinvigorating the principle of dialogue and transparency; an administration that is closer to the citizens, under the principles of efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and responsibility. The materialisation of these principles can only be achieved through moving forward in a more participative, collaborative administration. This is what led to the 2014 initiation of a process to construct, in an open and collaborative way, a "White Book for Citizen Participation and Democracy in Euskadi", the pledges of which are being rolled out at present.

We want an effective government which is capable of doing things well. We are aware that it is necessary to improve, that we can and will do things better, and that better things can indeed also be

done.

B. SOLUTION AND INNOVATIVE APPROACH

2. Which was the solution?

- **Recognising and acting upon public and private capacities** of Basque society to create public values, mobilising collective power to get into a common cause
- **Involving civil society as well as different departments of the Basque Government** in the rolling out of the “White Book for Citizen Participation and Democracy in Euskadi”, to act from a **shared government framework**
- **Generating a collaborative, value-based culture** based on negotiation of interests between the technical and political personnel of the Basque Government, and the citizens, promotion the prevention of conflict as a key point in relations with the citizens (through the practice of collaborative law and rights).

3. How did the initiative solve the challenge and improved people’s life?

This initiative has allowed for the generation of a **process involving different departments of the Basque Government in order to improve the value of participation** in public actions and to establish **permanent mechanisms for dialogue, negotiation and agreement** with citizens. With this initiative, it has been possible to create a Euskadi (Basque Country) which is more participative in public affairs, and to **develop the beginnings of a special governance model for Euskadi.**

- 1) **Encouraging citizen participation as a basic principle of public administration**, through the identification and activation of projects in every Department of the Basque Government that can be carried out in a participatory way in order to teach, learn and establish protocols which show the viability, and the value, of team work.
 - Directors of Territorial Planning (Environment; 2015)
 - Strategy for Participation in Health (Health; 2015)
 - Participatory Evaluation of the Equality Law (Basque Institute for the Woman; 2016)
 - Employment Plan (Employment and Social Policies; 2016)
 - Governance + 65 (Employment and Social Policies; 2016)
 - Planning and Basque Observatory of Housing (Employment and Social Policies 2014-16), premiered in 2016 by the International Observatory of Participatory Democracy http://www.garraioak.ejgv.euskadi.eus/r41-ovad04/es/contenidos/informacion/noteovv20160508_premio_ovv1/es_def/index.shtml

Around 2,000 people have participated in these processes, without taking the Housing project into consideration, given that the latter deals with a permanent system of citizen participation in the planning of Housing policies.

- 2) **Developing tools** for the promotion of participatory processes in Basque administrations:
 - Travel Guide. Participation. 100 guides for exploration, approaches and routes
 - Model of Evaluation for Participatory Processes in Public Administration
 - Transparency Manual
 - Guide for participation in health and pilot project in collaborative practice
 - Video tutorials about conflict prevention through the practice of collaborative law

- 3) **Creating the “Elkarlan Awards”** to promote innovative citizen participation practices and encourage the identification of best practices at a local level, in order to value and encourage peer to peer learning. 2 editions released, 108 projects presented.
- 4) **Training and enabling people in public positions, and those with a high level of technical responsibility** that are dedicated to planning, designing and evaluating policies regarding skills for participation, innovative negotiation techniques and collaborative law
 - 3 training and orientation workshops for more than 120 public functionaries from 8 departments of the Basque Government (Presidency, Public Administration and Justice, Economic Development, Environment, Security, Education, Health and Employment and Social Policies).
 - 87 formative actions, in which 1,065 legal professionals, political leaders, justice co-ordinators and tax managers have participated (2015-2016)

Alongside all of this, we have been required to simultaneously promote **a greater transparency, accountability and integrity for all citizens**, activating processes which allow for the right to demand that the administration accounts for its activity, and that the right to freedom of information is exercised, and also ensuring that it is possible to share the opinion of the general public with political and technical representatives of the administration. All of this means that in the last three evaluations that Transparency International has carried out, this autonomous community has managed to move from being 14th out of 17 in 2010, to holding first place in the transparency rankings of 2012, 2014 and 2016 with 97.5 points, 100 points and 100 points (out of 100) respectively.

To sum up, the initiative has enabled the **securing, within the administration, of a different method of administering the public, in collaboration with citizens**, improving citizen and administrative capacity in order to develop responsible processes which **incorporate citizens and social actors in the process of making public decisions**.

4. **What makes this initiative creative and innovative?**

- **This initiative starts from a blank page, without prior constraints**, in order to construct a governance model for Euskadi. The White Book for Citizen Participation and Democracy is the result of a **shared construction process without preconceived actions or mechanisms of control and permanent contrast**. We know of no other process of such significance to have been initiated in this way.
- **Making participation in public action a part of the mainstream**. From the beginning, political and technical personnel from different departments have actively participated in the White Book sessions, and together with the important task of monitoring and counselling, they have brought about a solid and sustainable unrolling of the commitments made by the Government before Basque society.
- **Achieving a model for administrating “the public sphere,”** which goes beyond public administration and involves constructing broad and binding **agreements** between civil society (social agents, universities, political parties, companies, the third sector) and Basque institutions (the Basque Government and Basque Parliament).
- Sharing values and principles based on trust (“win-win” models of negotiation as opposed to previously-established “win-lose” models) and implementation of **new methodologies which integrate the negotiation of interests with design thinking as a helpful tool for collaborative creation**.

C. IMPLEMENTATION

5. Who implemented the initiative and on how many people has this initiative impact?

The implementation of the initiative has been overseen by an interdepartmental team of 10 people (Direction of Citizen Service, Innovation and Improvement of Administration, Direction of Coordination and Direction of Open Government and Direction of Justice), which has relied, in turn, on the methodological support of Innobasque – the Basque Agency for Innovation. Furthermore, each department has provided the project with the technical and human means which are crucial for its development. This is a selection of agents that have led each development process in the form of public-private collaboration:

- Directors of Land Management: Vice-Council of Administration and Territorial Participation, in collaboration with social and neighbourhood agents
- Strategy for participation in Health: Vice-Council of Health in collaboration with Osakidetza - the Basque Health Service, BIOEF-Basque Association for Health Innovation and Research and Patient Associations
- Evaluation of the Equality Law: Basque Institute for the Woman - Emakunde, in collaboration with the Universidad del País Vasco [University of the Basque Country]
- Employment Plan: Vice-Council of Employment in collaboration with social and economic agents
- Governance + 65: Vice-Council of Social Policies, with the participation of Innobasque
- Planning and Basque housing observatory. Vice-Council of Housing in collaboration with financial entities and housing promoters
- Training and educational actions in negotiation and creative design skills: Direction of Justice and Direction of Citizen Service, Innovation and Improvement of the Administration in collaboration with the Association of Collaborative Law in Euskadi

In total, more than 3,000 people and 200 organisations have participated in more than 150 workshops, participatory sessions or processes of consultation and training, as well as visual interactions via the digital participation channels. This is without taking the Housing project into consideration.

6. How was the strategy implemented and which resources were applied?

The framework process strategy elements are outlined below:

- 18 December 2013: launch of the citizen challenge, Co-Creation of a White Book
- January – December 2014: General process and group process for writing it
- 19 December 2014: Public presentation of the White Book
- January – December 2015:
 - Development of tools to promote participatory processes in Basque government offices
 - Skills and awareness processes with technical and political personnel
 - Development of the action plan to implement the White Book commitments
- November 2015 and 2016: promotion of innovative experiences that generate public value upon the initiative of civil society – Elkarlan Awards
- December 2015 and 2016: a compilation of best practices in local citizen participation
- January 2016: report on the implementation of the commitments
- January – December 2016: assistance with the participatory processes involved with the implementation of the White Book mentioned in section B3

The cost of the project was paid for by the Basque Government. 112,812.45 euros were invested in the development of tools and publications and a 50,000 euro yearly grant was awarded to the Euskadi collaborative law association for promotional work. The rest of the costs were paid for by the departments promoting the projects as collaborative or participatory planning, evaluation and management do not add costs to the consulting job which was going to be outsourced in any case but rather adds a different methodological approach to the evaluation, planning and management work. Internal resources were used for the training and collaboration was promoted at zero cost among stakeholders within the territory (space free of cost, dissemination of conferences, speeches, conference leaders...) so that it would be possible to develop the project with a minimal budget.

In all, the process was led by a technical team of 20 people.

7. Who were the actors involved in the design and implementation of the initiative?

The process featured the political/technical leadership of 3 Basque Government departments (Directorate for Open Government, Director for Coordination and Directorate for Citizen Services and Administrative Innovation and Improvement). Their tasks were to transparently outline the process, goals and expected impacts, emphasize participation, responsibility for the process and results as well as participation as another party to the participatory process without any rankings.

A contrast group was also created for guidance and recommendations. Made up of people of renowned prestige and experience in participation (from other Basque public institutions, the university or civil society), elements such as age and gender as well as the diversity of opinions regarding participation were taken into consideration. It provided guidance, issued recommendations and supervised the process, contrasting its design, mid-term results and final results. It also worked as a network of networks, activating stakeholders around them.

Joining them were technical and political teams from different Government departments in collaboration with: environmental organisations, neighbourhood associations, patient associations, women's associations, senior associations, business associations and unions, housing developers, financial institutions... and the general public.

The Euskadi Collaborative Law Association was also essential to the promotion of collaborative law from a prevention perspective as well as directly as concerns conflict management and dispute mitigation.

Innobasque – The Basque Innovation Agency offered consulting work and acted as a facilitator as the natural connection between the government offices and civil society.

In all, more than 3000 people and more than 200 entities participated in more than 150 workshops, participatory sessions and contrast and training processes as well as virtual interactions in digital participation channels.

8. Which were the more successful outcomes and why was the initiative effective?

The working process of writing and implementing the White Book involved the same premise aimed at fostering the SDGs: through the generation of inclusive alliances between civil society and institutions to enable a shared vision of general public value. More specifically, all of the actions

developed helped make the Basque government a more efficient, responsible and transparent institution. What follows are 5 results that can exemplify what has been achieved throughout this process:

- 6 significant participatory processes implemented through the framework relating to public policy design, planning and evaluation following the White Book framework (co-created with civil society in a one-year process)
 - Territorial Organisation Guidelines
<http://www.irekia.euskadi.eus/es/debates/1056-revision-las-directrices-ordenacion-territorial-dot-capv?stage=presentation>
 - Evaluation of the Law on Equality
http://www.emakunde.euskadi.eus/contenidos/informacion/politicas_evaluaciones/es_def/adjuntos/2015.evaluacion_cualitativa.pdf
 - Participation in healthcare (2020 Strategy)
http://www.osakidetza.euskadi.eus/docs/estrategias_salud_2020_es.pdf
 - Basque employment strategy
http://www.gizartelan.ejgv.euskadi.eus/contenidos/informacion/eve2020/es_def/adjuntos/EVE%202020%20-%20Memoria%20de%20participacion%202016%2006%2021%20.pdf
 - Governance+65 <http://www.irekia.euskadi.eus/es/debates/1038-estrategia-vasca-envejecimiento-activo-2015-2020?stage=presentation>
 - Collaborative law
<http://www.derechocolaborativo.es/>
 - Basque housing observatory
http://www.garraioak.ejgv.euskadi.eus/r41-ovad04/es/contenidos/informacion/noteovv20160508_premio_ovv1/es_def/index.shtml
- Support tools to design, implement and evaluate open participatory processes
http://www.gardena.euskadi.eus/transparencia-general/-/contenidos/informacion/herramientas_trans_part_bgob/es_def/index.shtml
- The generous collaboration of more than 3000 people who participated in the processes
- A database of best practices in participatory processes fostered by citizens which outlines more than 100 citizen experiences.
- Training for 1065 people with technical and political responsibilities in the Basque government and public and private law professionals so they may develop the ability to track participatory processes following the White Book model. Particularly standing out is the training received on negotiation techniques and new ways of overcoming conflicts by putting the focus on citizens as the users of the service and as an opportunity for collaboration as well as in collaborative law.

9. Which were the main hurdles and how were they overcome?

It is a radical process of change within administrative culture where transparency, participation and collaboration are the cornerstones. Fear of change and the assumption of risks have been the main obstacles. They were handled by means of an open innovation process and successful and careful experimenting with pilot projects.

Transfer: a working method based on an open innovation process was used throughout the process. In other words: no one standardised participatory method was used but rather the aim was the utmost

opening of the book content creation process so everyone who wanted to was able to offer their own contributions through any channel and everything was organised and collected in the final document. Three lines were activated to guarantee the transfer of knowledge and coherence with the framework established: the development of tools (guide, manual, etc.), training and consulting from the Directorate for Citizen Services, Innovation and Administrative Improvement.

Identification of internal projects: the process of identifying inter-departmental projects that could be done in a participatory manner with citizens was not easy. Areas of citizen interest and relevance were sought which also enabled processes for testing, learning and establishing protocols to demonstrate the feasibility of the collaborative work and value generated. In order to overcome this obstacle, sessions were conducted with the various departments so they themselves could be the ones to identify the processes that could be worked on in a participatory manner. Therefore, each department measured its own capabilities and resources and determined which project they wished to develop alongside citizens.

D. RELEVANCE, IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY

10. For the citizenship, which were the key advantages of the initiative?

The impact of the initiative can be summarised in relation to the following elements:

- Developing the principles of a governance model that makes Euskadi a more participatory region in public affairs through the co-creation of the White Book for Democracy and Citizen Participation for Euskadi along with citizens.
- Establishing permanent mechanisms for dialogue, negotiation and agreement with citizens on the most important decisions that affect them directly. In order to do so, a draft transparency and citizen participation law was drawn up.
- Generating credibility among citizens, trust in the efficiency and value of participation in public actions and respect and close relationship between government offices and citizens. By activating different participatory processes in diverse areas and scopes, more than 200 Basque socio-economic stakeholders were able to see first-hand how the Basque government is committed to a more open and participatory model for public action design, implementation and evolution. A database of more than 3000 people willing to continue collaborating on the implementation of the White Book was activated and processed.
- Improving citizen and administrative capacity to develop participatory processes through teamwork with other institutions and stakeholders to include citizens and relevant social stakeholders in public decision-making processes.
- Introducing conflict prevention and management through collaborative law as a management tool and action tool from government offices in their relations with civil society.
- Dispute mitigation. Although other factors also intervene, the line involving fostering collaborative law and other ADRs will lead to a lower rate of disputes in the medium-term. This rate is currently quite high although the number of cases filed per every 1000 inhabitants in the Basque Country has dropped from 127 to 122.8. This methodology provides a higher level of satisfaction among the parties when resolving conflicts, as is being seen with its application to family and business law.

11. Did the initiative improve the integrity and/or accountability within the public sector (If applicable)?

From the start, the Basque Government decided to publicly take ownership of and assume all commitments requested by participants in this process, and has made its degree of progress public:

1. The regulation of the right to civic participation

A project for the Basque Law on Public Administration, approved on 16/09/2014, was initially created, but was later withdrawn from parliamentary processing in April of 2015. A subsequent Project for Transparency Law, civic participation and good governance in the Basque public sector was drafted, and approved on 10 November 2015. The term ended without an approval deadline, and a new regulation is currently being developed for governing, including:

- Recognition of the right to civic participation in public affairs and how to exercise it
- Registration of different interest groups
- Measures for promoting participation and participatory instruments for realising the right to participation.
- The obligation to issue an annual report by the competent body with regards to civic participation, the measures taken and their results, and proposals for improvement processes for the participatory instruments used.

2. Assume the presentation of the White Paper before citizens. The White Paper was presented publicly on 19 December 2014 in Bilbao, in the presence of Josu Erkoreka, the Minister of Public Administration and Justice, Jon Darpón, the Health Minister and representatives of the OECD. Furthermore, Josu Erkoreka, the Minister of Public Administration and Justice, presented it in Parliament on 4 February 2015. Two members of the Contrast Committee appeared with him, representing the University of the Basque Country and the 15M movement from the social activism sector. The initiative was well accepted by all political groups present, and they appealed for its immediate implementation.

3. Promote the development of innovative tools and experiences through the support of 6 pilot projects, which may be new to our democratic culture, and allow for experimenting with different formulas to favour participation.

4. Carry out internal dissemination of the White Paper within the government structures, in order for the administration to secure a different approach to managing public services.

12. Did you take special measures to ensure that the initiative benefits women and girls and improve the situation of the poorest and more vulnerable? (if applicable)

Integration has been worked on, with different themes, throughout the different phases and processes:

- Mixed participation strategy, with on-line debates and live events, with the aim of increasing the initiative's reach and obtaining a more immediate contrast of the process' steps, while keeping in mind the digital divide and difficulties associated with on-line participation.
- Groups with participation barriers, include them in the debate in order to better understand their expectations and difficulties, both in the general and specific processes. Beyond representative, aim to incorporate content outside of the usual message.

Unemployed citizens, older women, the elderly, people with disabilities, young people, neighbourhood associations, patients, etc. have participated.

- Language: the linguistic diversity was considered in both participatory meetings and the drafted reports and documents, using the two co-official languages of our region: Basque and Spanish.
- Three formats for presenting the project findings: a complete version (expert level), a summarised version (interest groups, professionals who did not participate in the process) and a citizen version (mass dissemination, simple and accessible language, include visual elements and in paper format). The use of easy reading and simple language standards has been proposed.
- Agile and creative participatory methodologies to aid in expressing not only ideas, but experiences and feelings regarding social needs and institutional responses thereof.

13. Has it been any formal evaluation of the initiative?

The creation process of the White Paper on Democracy and Civic Participation has been evaluated aimed at developing a specific assessment model for participatory processes. This model has been made in collaboration with those responsible for the seven participatory experiences developed with the Basque Government, who have provided their working knowledge of the participatory processes and aided in their development. The participatory processes of the following initiatives have been analysed:

- Development of the White Paper for Democracy and Civic Participation. Department of Public Administration and Justice.
- Active patient programme. Department of Health and Osakidetza (the Basque Health Service).
- Prest gara - Continuous teacher training. Permanent teacher training 2014-2017. Department of Education, Language Policy and Culture.
- Declaration of special conservation areas. Department of Environment and Territorial Policy.
- Decree on the reorganisation of the Basque Science, Technology and Innovation Network. Department of Economic Development and Competitiveness.
- Housing Plan. Department of Employment and Social Policies.
- VI Plan for Equality between men and women. Lehendakaritza (presidency).

A support model has been created, using these seven civic participatory experiences. It is a flexible and practical tool open to growth and dissemination, for encouraging analysis and self-criticism, and it aims to eliminate the fear of the unknown, caused by changing the way things are done. Assess in order to find out if what we do provides the expected results, and understand that improvement is key to a more effective resource management. Civic participation requires adequate time and measures to be taken, and we have assessed how far each case was oriented towards fulfilling the intended objectives, as well as, if the measures taken helped create a consensus and actually contributed to the improvement of possible decisions.

All other deployment projects have not been evaluated yet, as they are not yet considered completed.

14. Is the initiative sustainable and transferable?

The White Paper has been drafted following a work methodology based on an open innovation process.

A standard participatory method was not chosen, instead the greatest possible transparency of the content creation process was preferred, in such a way that it be highly transferable internally (Governance structures) and externally (civil society).

As mentioned, an effort has been made to identify internal projects in all Departments of the Basque Government, which could be addressed in a participatory manner with the general public. Said projects (services, plans, programmes...) have served to practice, learn and establish protocols proving the viability and value of collaborative work. It is a first step to continue examining new participatory governance models, and the continuity thereof will be included under the new Public Innovation Plan for this term.

Similarly, external dissemination of the Paper's contents is being carried out by supporting innovative civic participation practices, and by identifying good practices on a local level in order to promote and place value on peer to peer learning. In addition to financing a variety of projects, a mentoring and enrichment process of its initiatives has been designed to experiment with different formulas for favouring participation.

Finally, some autonomous communities, such as ASTURIAS and, specifically, the Bogota Science Park for Social Innovation, have contacted us looking to develop a project based on the methodology of the White Paper, to strengthen the capacity for public policy creation of social innovation and civic participation in Latin America. Within collaborative law and because of the innovativeness of integrating the negotiation of interests, in addition to the use of design thinking as the creative methodology to enhance collaborative co-creation, the Global Collaborative Law Council of Texas, together with the Massachusetts Association are interested in the transfer of experience.

15. Which are the lessons learned and how can the initiative promote the sustainable development?

The Basque White Paper for Democracy and Civic Participation is a dynamic process defined as a shared transformation between citizens and the institution, which still being created. Therefore, it is not a destination, but a starting point for advancing in more comprehensive reforms, resulting in a shared public value creation for the Basque Country, which is sustainable overtime and grounded on the collaboration between institutions and civil society.

The process followed in preparing, disseminating and implanting the initiative has allowed us to work out some guidelines, which we included in the participation guide, and can be summarised as follows:

- Before beginning a participatory process, it is important to know what has already been tested and what can be promoted. The correct starting point must be identified and assessed.
- Sharing the analysis ensures recognition and respect. The impact and reach must be shared before beginning the participatory process.
- The objectives guide the process. Filtering objectives allows for their fulfilment.
- We need new economic, social, political and cultural outlooks, which become a part of and contribute to the value and influence its message provides, not so much its representation.
- Participation is only learned by participating. It is about timing coordination, and not as focussed on management.
- The methodology must be attractive and exciting; a people oriented methodology.
- The credibility of the promoting institution is won through transparency, communication, honesty, planning and assessment.

- The risk assessment strengthens relations with the actors. The political will and commitment is a guarantee in the presence of contingencies. All processes involve risk. Unresolvable conflicts do not generally arise if they are approached naturally and with joint responsibility. Training for adversity allows for a cooperative and effective response.
- We must manage the impact of the process' limits. Many problems arise from poor communication.
- When the participatory processes are well designed people come to participate. Time and engagement management is paramount.
- Valuable ideas and proposals arise when the proper channels and dynamics are laid out. Each process requires its own instruments and is unique. The instruments must be in sync with the objectives, communities and resources.
- A wide variety of instruments and competencies are required.
- Building partnerships between institutions, organisations and collectives necessary to the process is imperative to and validates the initiative.
- Learning from recognised and valuable experiences creates safety and good connections.
- The promoters must act as active leaders in the process. Recognition of participants increases involvement.
- There must be a balance between cost, benefit and the final impact. Sharing resources facilitates the viability of the process and contributes to building more sustainable networks and connections.

It is time for implementing the civic participation mechanisms. There is no turning back on the process launched with the Basque White Paper for Democracy and Civic Participation.