



Press Releases

Citizen Participation

Losland Project has Started: Shaping the Future of Municipalities

With the "Losland" project, a team from the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies e.V. (IASS) is working with Mehr Demokratie e.V. to support citizen participation at the local level. In the project, citizen participation processes tailored to ten German municipalities and cities are being carried out to answer the question: "How can we shape a future in our municipalities that takes into account the interests of our grandchildren?". Losland is supported by the Federal Agency for Civic Education.

With a project period of two years, the four-member Losland team is supporting selected municipalities in creating spaces where central themes of the future can be co-created. The aim is to utilise participation processes tailored to the respective municipalities to empower citizens to develop visions and concrete solutions for a sustainable future for their villages and towns.

The participation spaces are designed in such a way that new ideas emerge through networking, dialogue, and dispute among individuals holding different views, all of which is supported by the life experiences of the citizens. This process should allow possibilities for action to emerge which go beyond the interest of individual groups. "These participation processes do not compete with representative democracy; instead, they complement it and build a bridge between politics, administration and civil society", says Daniel Oppold, who is scientifically accompanying the project on the side of the IASS.

The approach of the Losland project

The Losland processes in the individual municipalities are tailored to the respective local context. Their inspiration lies in various co-creative and deliberative methods of moderation such as those used in civic councils. The Losland team draws on experience with civic councils based on the "Vorarlberger Model".

The lottery procedure plays a special role in the selection of participants – hence the German project title "Losland" (a Los is a lottery ticket). Municipalities are encouraged to address the question of how to shape a sustainable future for generations to come with a random group of participants. This procedure makes it possible to engage with citizens beyond the scope of those who tend to get involved in such processes anyways. The talks held with mayors thus far have shown that this approach promises to offer an interesting means to develop visions for a sustainable future together with a diverse group of participants.

The current state of the project

The core Losland team is speaking directly with mayors who might be interested in collaborating with Losland. When all sides are interested in working on the project together, the planning phase will begin. Two municipalities have already begun: Leupoldsgrün in Franconia and Augustusburg in Saxony. Two more municipalities have been chosen, and talks are taking place with numerous others.



Once the planning phase begins, professional process facilitation teams, engaged through the Losland project, will join. These process facilitators will later take over the moderation of the actual participation event(s). To this end, Losland now has regional teams for North, South, East, and West who are familiar with the respective local conditions.

The next steps for the Losland team

The project will also create a platform for digital participation that is available both for local processes and for networking the Losland municipalities with one another. Citizens, policymakers, and members of the public administration will be able to use this platform to exchange ideas.

The experience and knowledge gained from the Losland project along with supporting research from the participation processes in the ten municipalities will be given to local and federal authorities in the form of recommendations upon the project's completion.

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The Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS) conducts research with the goal of identifying, advancing, and guiding transformation processes towards sustainable societies in Germany and abroad. Its research practice is transdisciplinary, transformative, and co-creative. The institute cooperates with partners in academia, political institutions, administrations, civil society, and the business community to understand sustainability challenges and generate potential solutions. A strong network of national and international partners supports the work of the institute. Among its central research topics are the energy transition, emerging technologies, climate change, air quality, systemic risks, governance and participation, and cultures of transformation. The IASS is funded by the research ministries of the Federal Government of Germany and the State of Brandenburg.

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