



Institutionalising public deliberation

#delibWave | @oecdgov

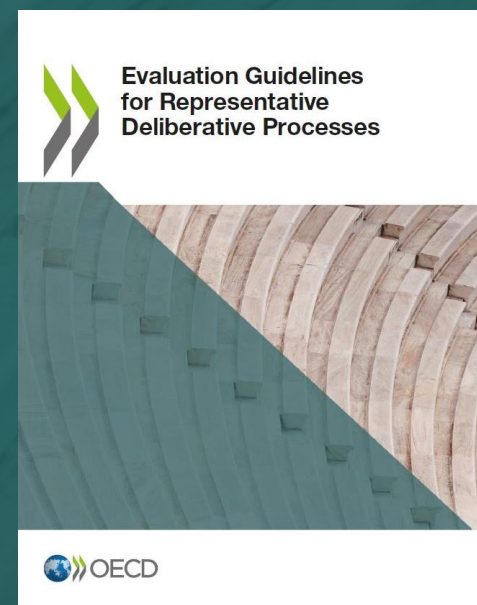
OECD Deliberative Democracy Toolbox



Step 1
DISCOVER



Step 2
IMPLEMENT



Step 3
EVALUATE



Step 4
EMBED



**Innovative Citizen
Participation and New
Democratic Institutions**
CATCHING THE DELIBERATIVE WAVE

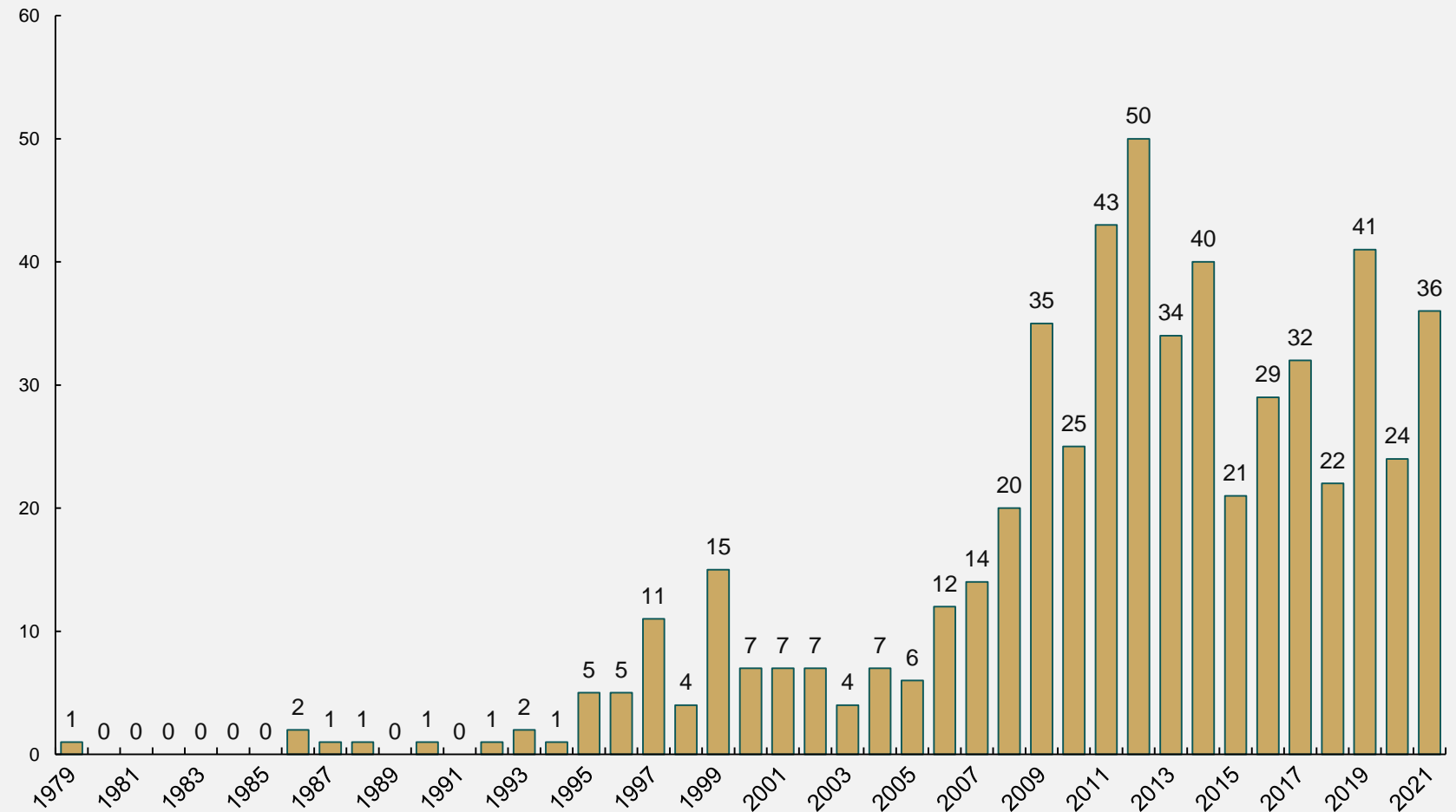


First empirical, comparative study of representative deliberative processes for public decision making

- **289** examples from **1986 – Oct 2019**
- **18** OECD countries + international level
- **All** levels of government
- **12** models of deliberative processes
- **11** principles of good practice

The “deliberative wave” has been building since 1979, gaining momentum since 2010

Number of representative deliberative processes per year, 1979 – 2021



Note: n=566; Data for OECD countries is based on 24 OECD countries that were members in 2021 plus the European Union. Processes that spanned over multiple years are noted by the year of their completion (except for permanent ongoing processes).

Source: OECD Database of Representative Deliberative Processes and Institutions (2021).

Good Practice Principles for Deliberative Processes for Public Decision Making



Why is deliberation different?

Better policy outcomes because deliberation results in considered public judgements rather than public opinions.

Most public participation processes are not designed to be representative or collaborative. Deliberative processes, on the other hand, create the space for learning, deliberation, and the development of informed recommendations, which are of greater use to policy and decision makers.

It gives public officials and policy makers greater legitimacy to make hard choices.

These processes help policy makers better understand public priorities, and the values and reasons behind them, and identify where consensus is and is not feasible. Evidence suggests that they are particularly useful in situations where there is a need to overcome political deadlock and weigh trade-offs.

Enhance public trust in government and democratic institutions by giving citizens a significant role in public decision making.

People are more likely to trust a decision that has been influenced by ordinary people than one made solely by government.

Why do representative deliberative processes work?

1. Independence:

Thanks to civic lotteries, the members of a deliberative body can avoid being 'captured' by interest groups or influenced by powerful or wealthy people and organisations.

2. Cognitive diversity:

Research has shown that, for developing successful ideas, diversity is more important than the average ability of a group.

3. Favourable conditions for quality deliberation:

Information, time, and skilled facilitation lead to informed, detailed, and rigorous recommendations, which consider trade-offs.

4. A focus on the common good:

The members are not there to represent any particular interest group, company, political party, etc. They are there to collectively develop recommendations for the common good.

5. High levels of trust:

People have lost trust in politicians and experts, but they do trust everyday 'people like them'. At the end of a deliberative process, it is its members - a microcosm of the population - who explain their recommendations to the public.

Why institutionalise?

- 1. To allow public decision makers to take more hard decisions better,** as well as more decisions with long-term impacts (such as on climate change, biodiversity, emerging technology, urban planning, infrastructure investment, and other issues of this nature).
- 2. To enhance public trust.** Public trust has been declining for decades. A one-off deliberative process can make a difference, but it is the regular practice of public deliberation that gives people and decision makers the opportunity to build mutual trust.
- 3. To make representative deliberative processes easier and less expensive.** Costs and resources are saved by not starting from scratch every time.

Institutionalisation also reinforces democracy.

Adding public deliberation and civic lotteries to democracy **extends the privilege of representation to a much larger group of people.**

These processes **strengthen people's agency, harness collective capacity, and awaken a collective consciousness** that connects people to one another and to something bigger than themselves.

It often leads to **increased levels of political efficacy** amongst members of deliberative bodies as well as the broader public.

Seeing 'people like me' participating in complex public decision making **can have a similar effect on those not directly involved** but aware of the process.

Institutionalisation **scales the positive impact** that participation has on people's perception of themselves and others, strengthening societal **trust and cohesion.**

8 ways to institutionalise deliberative democracy

1.

Combining a **permanent** citizens' assembly with **one-off** citizens' panels

2.

Connecting deliberation to **parliamentary committees**

3.

Combining **deliberative** and **direct** democracy

4.

Standing citizens' advisory panels

5.

Sequenced deliberative processes throughout the **policy cycle**

6.

Requiring public deliberation **before certain types of public decisions**

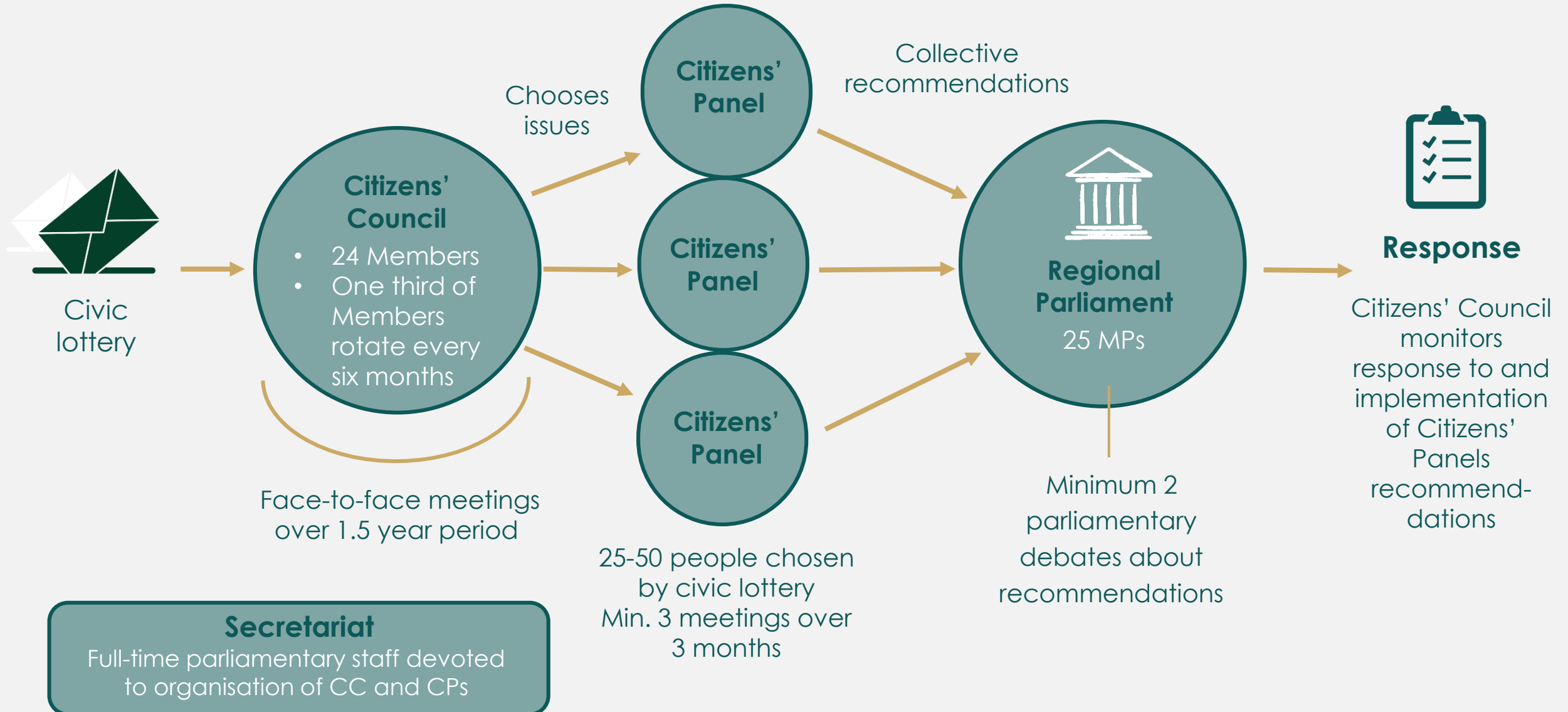
7.

Giving people the right to demand a deliberative process

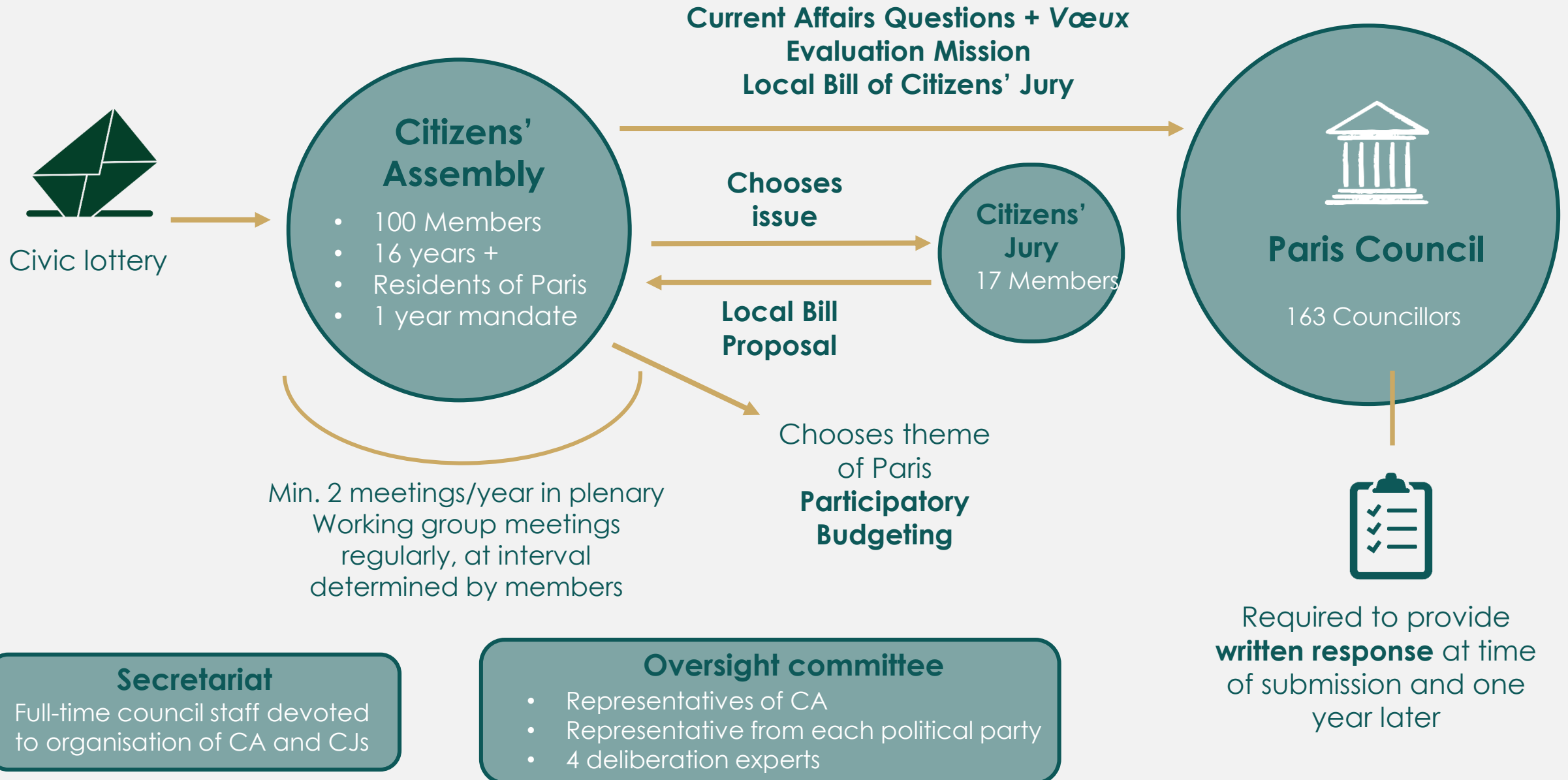
8.

Embedding deliberative processes in **local strategic planning**

1a. Ostbelgien Model



1b. Paris Citizens' Assembly



2a. Deliberative Committees



Response

Deliberative Committee reconvened for one day. Government and parliament are obliged to respond to all recommendations



MPs involved in the committee follow up on recommendations within 6 months

Citizens – secret vote

MPs – public vote

Collective recommendations



Information evening + minimum 4 days of face-to-face meetings



Citizen initiated (1,000 signatures)
OR
MP initiated

Secretariat

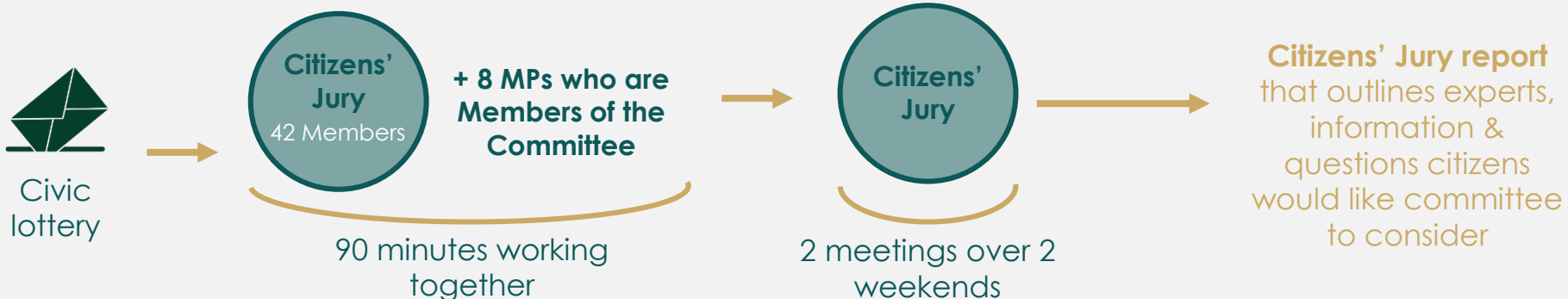
Full-time parliamentary staff devoted to organisation of committees

Oversight committee

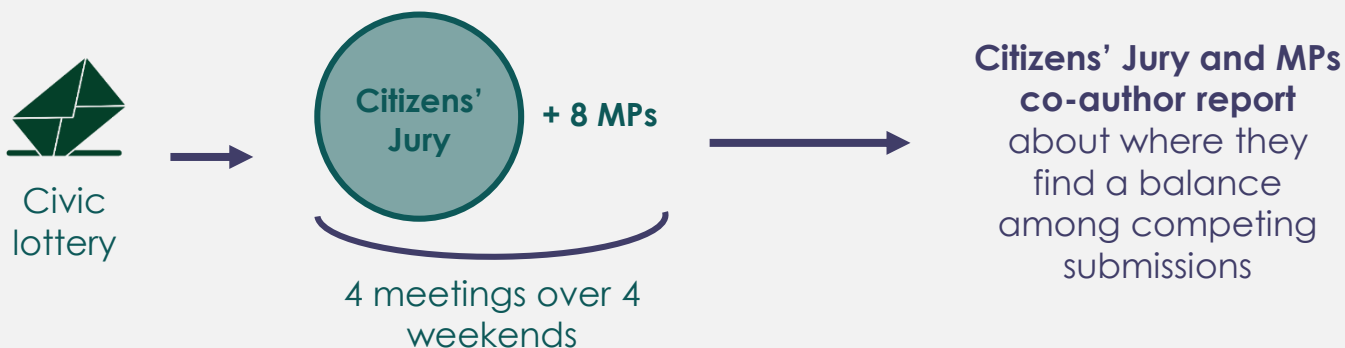
- 2 parliamentary staff
- 4 experts on topic of deliberation
- 4 deliberation experts

2b. Options for adding public deliberation to NSW Committees

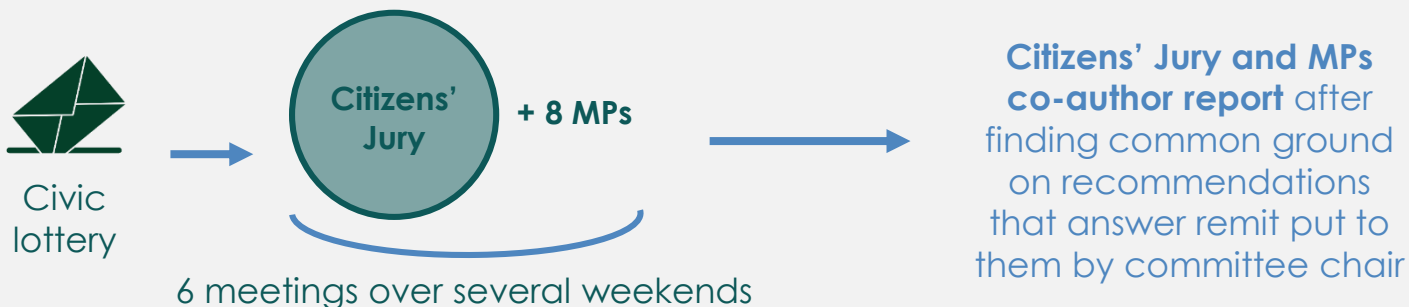
OPTION A: Considered input from citizens



OPTION B: Balance of submissions

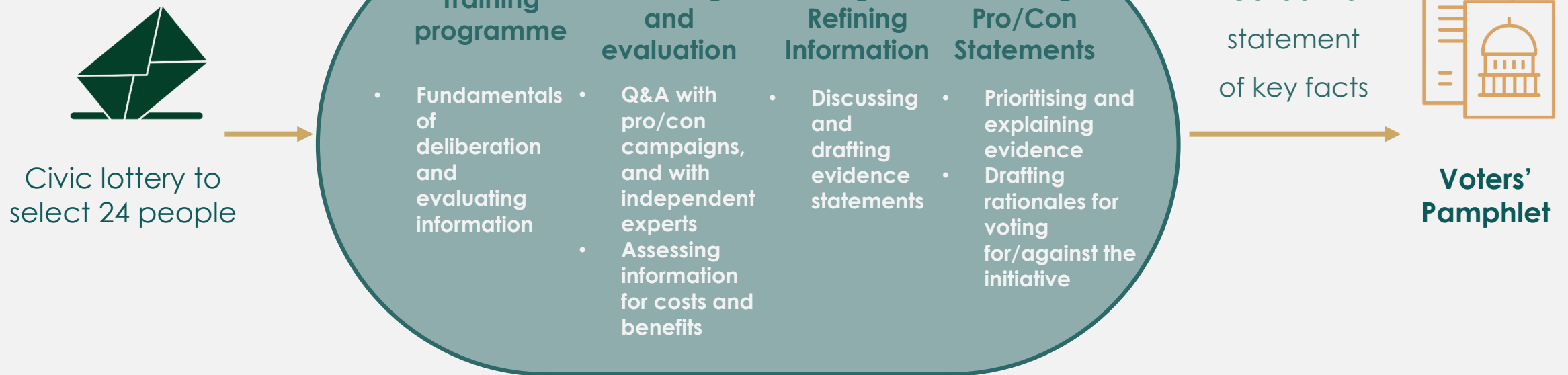


OPTION C: Citizens' Jury in partnership with Committee

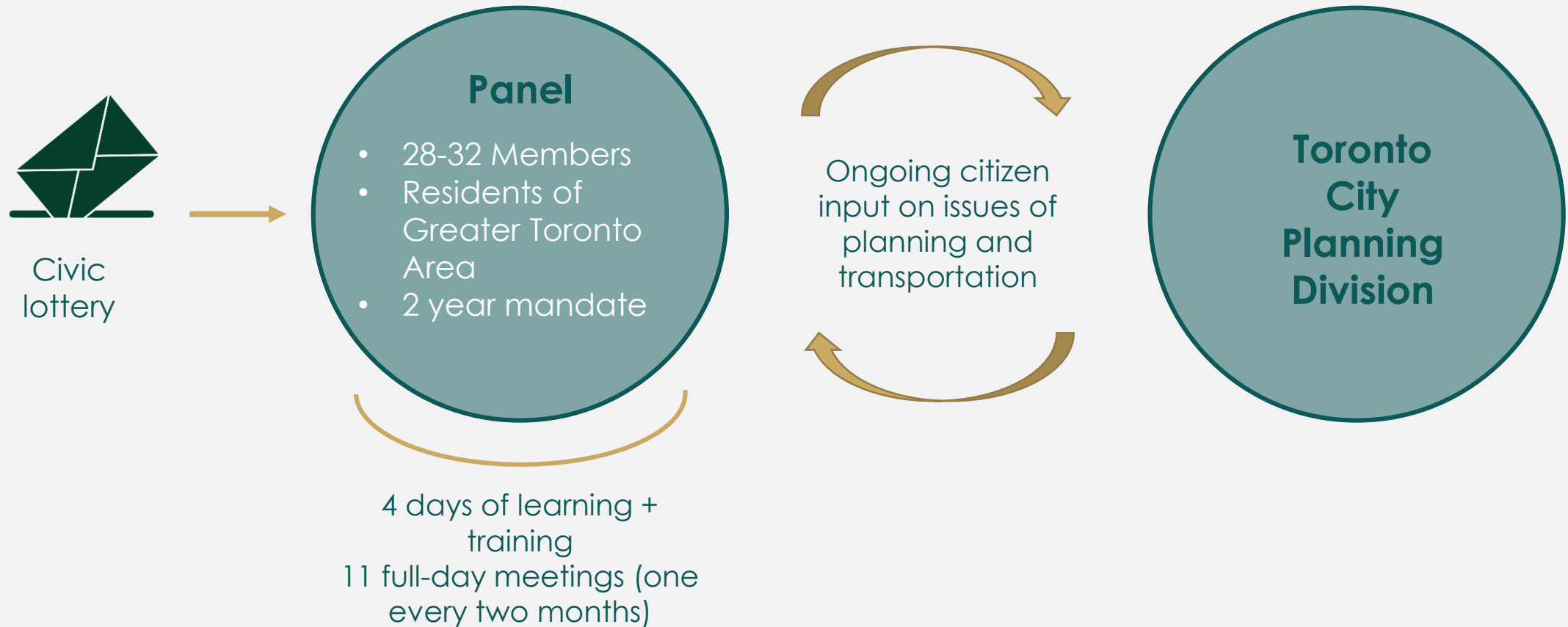


3. Citizens' Initiative Review

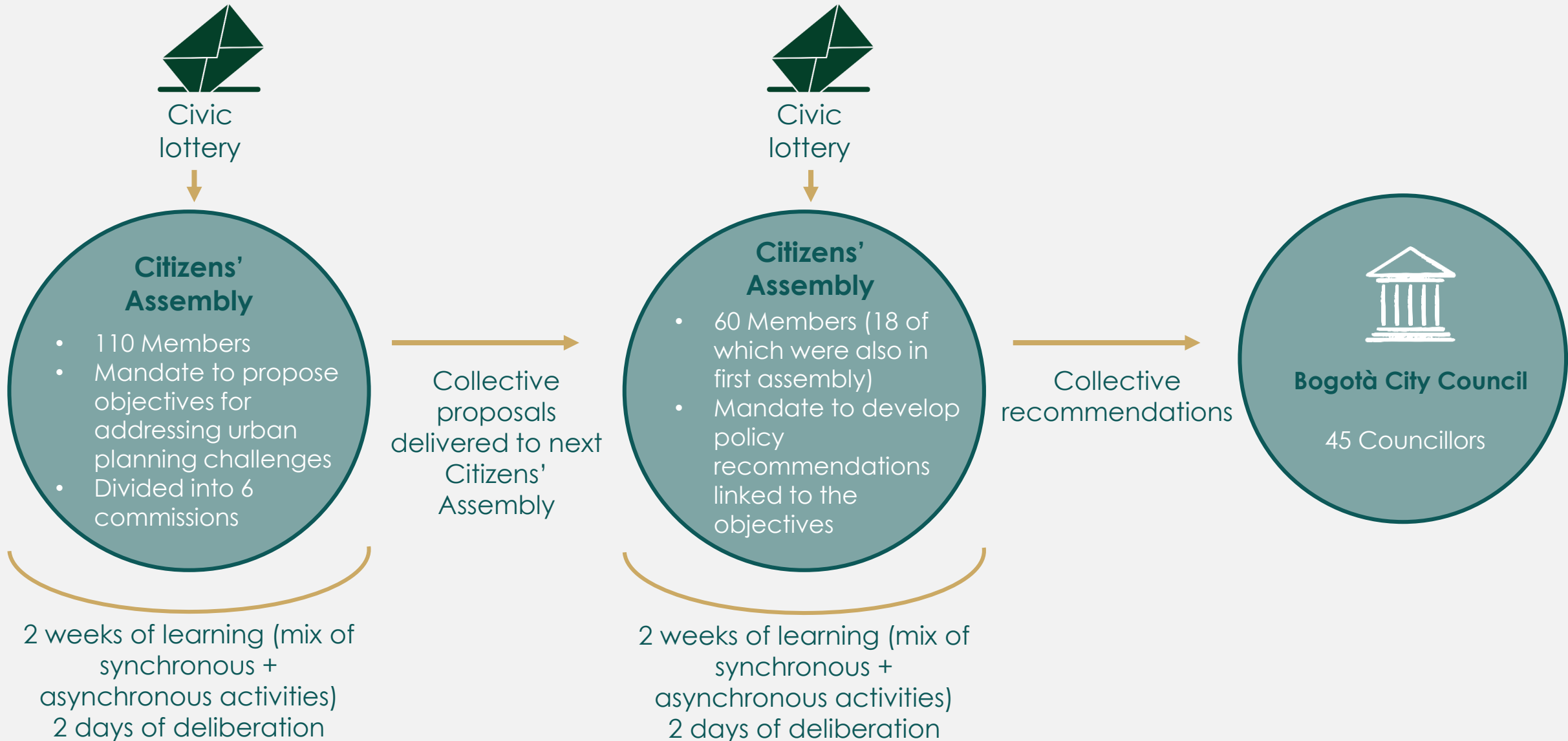
Face-to-face meetings for 4.4 consecutive days on average



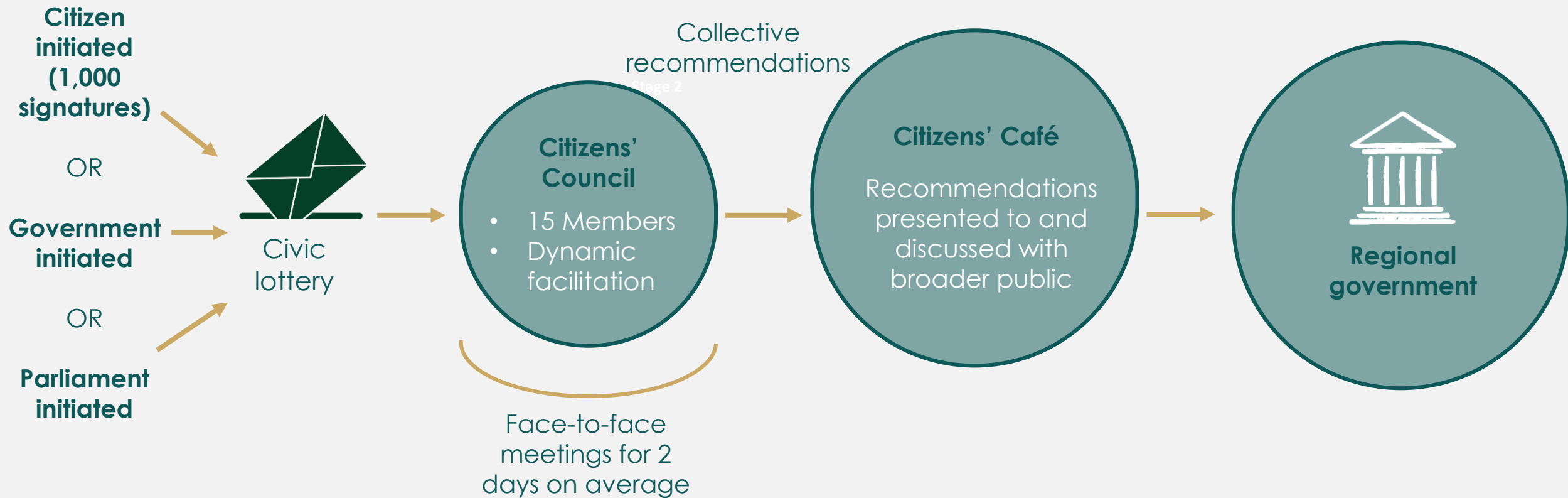
4. Toronto Planning Review Panel



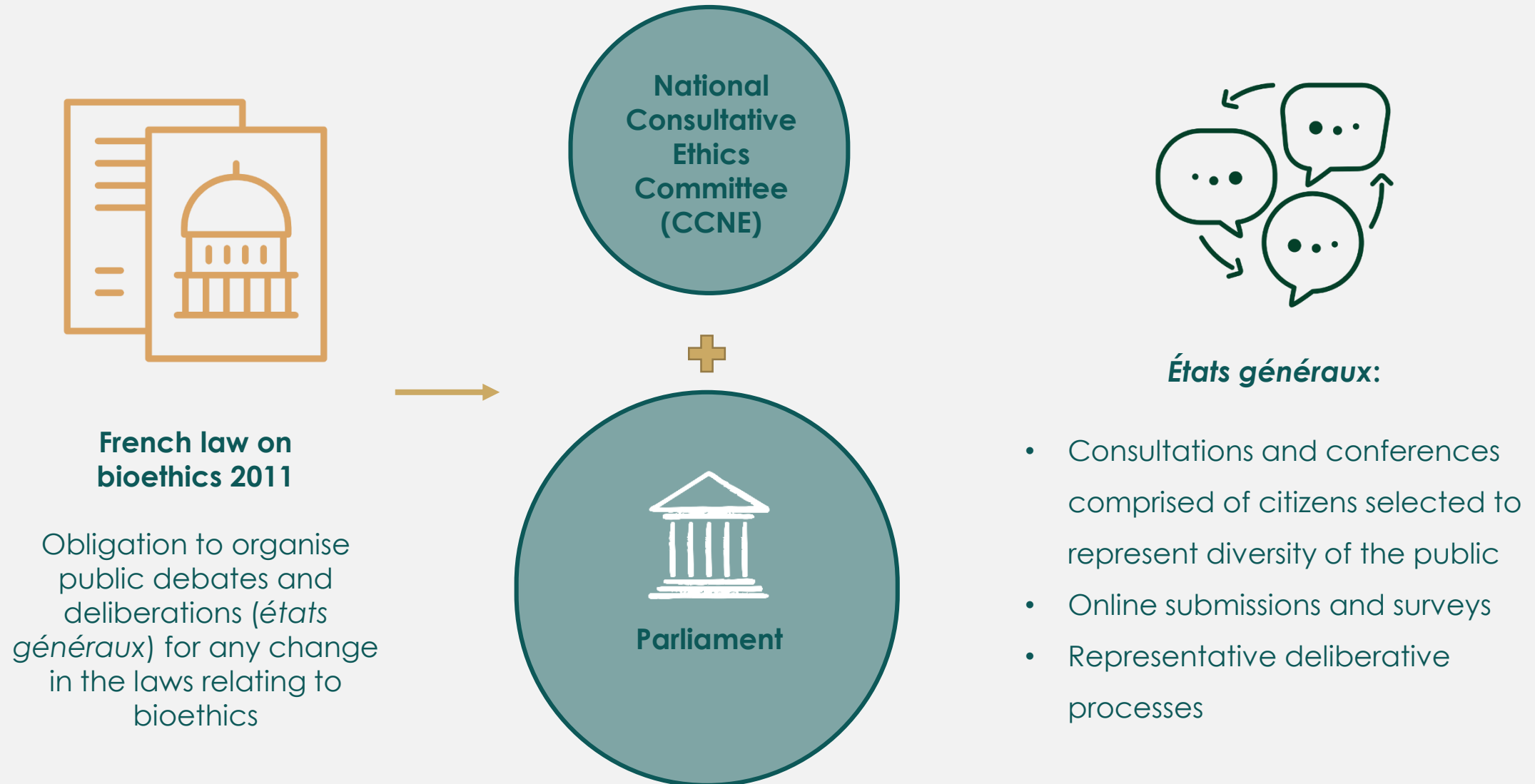
5. Bogotá Itinerant Citizens' Assembly



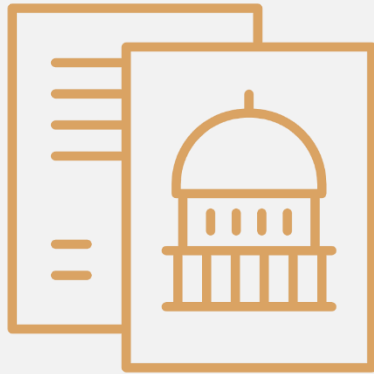
6. Vorarlberg Citizens' Councils



7. French law on bioethics 2011



8. Victoria Local Government Act 2020



Victoria Local Government Act 2020

All local councils must engage the community through deliberative practices on four strategic documents:

1. Planning and financial management plan

2. Community vision

3. Council plan

4. Financial plan



Deliberative engagement practices must follow characteristics of good design:

- ✓ Clear scope and objective
- ✓ Access to information
- ✓ Representativeness
- ✓ Impact
- ✓ Transparency throughout the process

Considerations for implementation:

Just as there are numerous considerations for the successful running of parliaments and other democratic institutions, adding public deliberation and civic lotteries to democracy requires certain commitments and infrastructure to be effective:

1. **Sustainable political commitment.**
2. **A self-governing and systemic approach that depoliticises as many aspects as possible.**
3. **Measures to enable sustainable involvement of the public:** Elements that can support this include – but are not limited to – **a special position for alumni of deliberative processes, maximum visibility through public communication, and paid leave from work** to participate in these processes (such as is the case with jury duty in many countries).

Support from and capacity of public servants is imperative to deliver ongoing, quality public deliberation and follow-up.

Public authorities should establish an office permanently in charge of deliberative processes.

Such an office could be funded by the public authority, but at arm's length to stay unbiased and trustworthy.

Professional staffing of such an arm's length body might be by civil service employees or universally respected and impartial civil society organisations or universities under contract.

References:

- Innovative Citizen Participation and New Democratic Institutions: Catching the Deliberative Wave; OECD, 2020
- Good Practice Principles for Deliberative Processes for Public Decision Making; OECD, 2020
- Evaluation Guidelines for Representative Deliberative Processes; OECD, 2021
- Eight Ways to Institutionalise Deliberative Democracy; OECD, 2021
- Database of Representative Deliberative Processes and Institutions; OECD, 2021



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