

# Discussing Germany's Future: The Evaluation of Federal Online Citizen Participation

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## Federal participation projects in the context of e-participation and open government

In recent years, many countries in the world have engaged on a path to more transparent, participatory and collaborative governments. The trigger for this modern open government movement is commonly attributed to the Open Government Memorandum by Barack Obama (2009) and it has led to the formation of the international Open Government Partnership in which 64 member states have pledged to make “their governments more open, accountable, and responsive to citizens” (Open Government Partnership, 2014). Despite the fact that Germany is not yet a member<sup>1</sup>, efforts to increase transparency, participation, and collaboration are starting to change the face of the country's administration and policy making.

While most efforts in Germany focus on open data (Gesellschaft für Informatik, 2012), e-participation projects have become more and more common (Oertel, Kahlich, Mayer et al., 2014).<sup>2</sup> While most of them still take place on city or regional levels<sup>3</sup>, two noteworthy projects were recently conducted on federal level<sup>4</sup>. The parliament's Enquete Commission on Internet and digital Society (EIdS) gathered the citizens' input via the online platform [www.enquetebeteiligung.de](http://www.enquetebeteiligung.de) (*Enquetebeteiligung.de*). For the first time ever, citizens were able to directly influence the work of the parliament. Chancellor Angela Merkel also counted on the citizen expertise in her so-called Zukunftsdialog (*Future Dialogue*), in which the online consultation on [www.dialog-ueber-deutschland.de](http://www.dialog-ueber-deutschland.de) (*Dialog-ueber-deutschland.de*) was part of a larger foresight process.

Both projects embraced their novelty and understood themselves as experiments to not only generate input, but also test and learn about new forms of citizen participation. Accordingly, the Future Dialogue's frequently asked questions (FAQ)<sup>5</sup> states: *The Future Dialogue is an experiment that encourages discussion and collaboration. It allows for mistakes and its main goal is to learn.*

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<sup>1</sup> Germany has, however, declared its willingness to join (Bundesregierung, 2013).

<sup>2</sup> We use e-participation to summarise all projects that use online tools to open up decision preparation processes for citizens (Albrecht et al., 2008).

<sup>3</sup> Examples are Liquid Friesland.de or OffeneKommune.de as well as the Baden-Württemberg participation portal ([beteiligungsportal.baden-wuerttemberg.de](http://beteiligungsportal.baden-wuerttemberg.de)) or the openNRW activities (<http://www.nrw.de/opennrw/>).

<sup>4</sup> While there have been some other attempts, these two are the most noteworthy ones. A consultation by the then transport minister Ramsauer about fines and penalties for breaking traffic regulations ([Punktereform.de](http://Punktereform.de)) seems to have influenced the undertaken measures, but there is no available documentation on the process. The “BürgerForum 2011” by then president Christian Wulff was not open to the general public but used randomly selected citizens ([Buergerforum2011.de](http://Buergerforum2011.de)). While this might be an interesting project to examine, it differs significantly to the theoretically open for all e-participation projects that are the focus of this paper. Also, its learnings greatly influenced Angela Merkel's Future Dialogue as is stated in the FAQs.

Nonetheless, until now, limited attention has been directed to the evaluation of these projects. This might be due to the fact that, not surprisingly, such an evaluation is not a simple task. Many different expectations are placed upon the experiments from many different stakeholders. A prominent German example of divided opinions is the participation Liquid Friesland. Friesland, a region in northern Germany, integrated online citizen participation in its council processes, was widely praised for the innovative approach and was seen as innovator in politics and administration. And while many still share this sentiment, others have taken to harshly criticising the project and titling it a failure (Eisel, 2014). Enquetebeteiligung.de shared a similar fate: Politicians initially expressed their disappointment with the project, pointing to the low number of users and overall contributions. Head of the EldS, Axel E. Fischer remarked during the parliament debate on January 20th in 2012: “The number of comments does not fulfil our expectations”, (translation by author). By now however, the project is mostly described as successful due to the high quality input. EldS members praise the high value of the quality-input for the commission’s work (general parliament debate on January 20th 2012).

As can be seen, the notion of success is multifaceted. Still, an evaluation is essential to improve subsequent participation projects that the German government or parliament might undertake. Our goal is thus to develop a framework that adequately captures the many dimensions of success and provides a tool to extract the crucial learnings from these participation experiments to continuously improve participation processes in Germany.

The subsequent paper will describe the work that we have done and are still engaged in regarding these two federal participation projects. We developed an initial model for the evaluation of Enquetebeteiligung.de and adapted it based on our findings and experiences in order to continue the learning with the Future Dialogue. We will therefore firstly present the two cases before describing the initial development of the model. We will then lay out the evaluation results and the subsequent adaptations made to the model.

## **Federal e-participation in Germany**

### **Case I: Enquetebeteiligung.de**

#### **The Enquete Commission on Internet und digital Society**

On March 3<sup>rd</sup> in 2010, the German parliament decided to initiate the *Enquete Commission for Internet and digital Society* (EldS) in order to identify the need for state action to grasp the opportunity for democratic development that resulted from the increasing digitalisation (Deutscher Bundestag, 2010).

The EldS was formed by 17 members of parliament and 17 experts. The latter were nominated by the parties according to the strengths of their representation.<sup>6</sup> The topic range included the fields of culture and media, economy and environment, education and research, consumer protections, law and interior, society and democracy (Oertel, Kahlich, Mayer et al., 2014). The respective fields were each treated by various project groups.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> A complete list of the members can be found at <http://www.bundestag.de/internetenquete/mitglieder>.

<sup>7</sup> The project groups were: media competency; copyright law; net neutrality; data protection; privacy rights; education and research; democracy and state; economy, work, and green IT; access, structure, and security in the internet; consumer protection; interoperability, standards, open source; international issues and internet governance; culture, media, and public sphere.

The initial time frame for the commission was set at 24 months, in which 12 different project groups were to complete work. However, as the EldS did not entirely complete its work by summer 2012, it was prolonged till the end of 2012 (Fischer, 2012). Its work will be continued on the long term by the Permanent Committee for Internet and digital Society (Deutscher Bundestag, 2012).

### **Enquetebeteiligung.de**

Starting February 2011, citizens were invited to participate in the EldS's work on the website <http://www.enquetebeteiligung.de>. 3,305 users registered till the end of the project of which 2,212 also joined one of the project groups (Oertel, Kahlich, Mayer et al., 2014). This means that only these 2,212 users took the opportunity to follow or engage in the topical discussions.

The online participation was implemented with the adhocracy software developed by the Liquid Democracy association<sup>8</sup>. The site was also hosted and maintained by the association. The reasons for this will become apparent in the following paragraphs. The software enables users not only to discuss and rate comments but also to collaboratively work on text. Another main feature is the delegation of votes, which was however disabled in this instantiation.

Enquetebeteiligung.de started with significant delay compared to the EldS's work, which is why the first four project groups were well underway before citizens were able to participate. Even though already in September 2013, the EldS decided unanimously to start a system for online participation (Deutscher Bundestag, 2011a), this decision met resistance later on. The commission's chairman Axel E. Fischer had doubts about the added-value of such a project (Reißmann, 2011a) and the parliament's chairman Norbert Lammert decided that the parliament's so-called Council of Elders should look into the issue (Matzat, 2011).<sup>9</sup> On the 27<sup>th</sup> of January, the council decided against the implementation of an online participation based on adhocracy. Instead it proposed a working group to evaluate existing means of online participation before engaging into a new one (Deutscher Bundestag, 2011b; Klingbeil, 2011). The council reasoned their scepticism with expected costs of 80,000 Euro for the adhocracy platform and the need for very short-term action. They also shared the doubts about the actual added value of an online participation (Reißmann, 2011b) and criticised the lack of a suitable system for user identification (Klingbeil, 2011).

Many of the EldS's members however, did not share this assessment. They pointed out that it was unlikely that implementing an open source software solution should generate costs of that magnitude. Further, they suggested that reasons regarding user identification seemed constructed, because neither blogs nor forums that are both used by the parliament offer a better alternative (Matzat, 2011). Instead of the stated reasons, it was suggested the resistance stemmed from fear of power loss and underlying scepticism toward citizen involvement (see for example Reißmann, 2011a; Reißmann, 2011b; Beckedahl, 2011a).

As a consequence of this decision, the German Chaos Computer Club (CCC)<sup>10</sup> offered to co-operate with Liquid Democracy to prepare and run an instantiation of adhocracy for the EldS, also covering all costs of the project (Beckedahl, 2011b). This suggestion was reflected in an official motion by five experts across parties, which the EldS discussed on February 21st (Notz, 2011). It was offered that that adhocracy could be implemented without costs as the commission's official participation tool

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<sup>8</sup> <https://adhocracy.de/>

<sup>9</sup> The Council of Elders is a council of experienced members of parliaments that, in amongst others tasks, is charged with mediating conflicts, <https://www.bundestag.de/bundestag/aeltestenrat>.

<sup>10</sup> The CCC is a European civil society association of hackers, <http://www.ccc.de/>.

within two days (Deutscher Bundestag, 2011b). The motion was rejected and substituted by a compromise (Notz, 2011): It was decided to run adhococracy outside of the parliament's official web presence, but have it administered by the EidS's secretariat. It was emphasised that Enquetebeteiligung.de would only be one of many means for citizens to participate in the commission (Deutscher Bundestag, 2011c). The other means were e.g. an online forum or blog comments. It is important to keep in mind the delays and difficulties in the participation process when discussing the success of Enquetebeteiligung.de.

## **Case II: Dialog-ueber-deutschland.de**

How do Germans want to live in the future? How do they want to work? How do they want to learn? According to Germany's chancellor Angela Merkel, these questions are essential to future policy-making in Germany. In order to answer them, the chancellor decided she needed the insights and ideas of not only her fellow politicians, but of the Germans themselves. This is why in 2011, she started a foresight process: the so-called *dialogue on the future of Germany*, shortly *Future Dialogue*.

The Future Dialogue was meant to generate new ideas and policy suggestions in order to cope with unexpected developments and trends (Merkel, 2012). The dialogue encompassed two main elements: an expert dialogue and a citizen dialogue. For the expert dialogue, selected experts were invited to meet and discuss their insights on the three main questions. Their work was supported by a private online platform for co-ordination and collaboration. The citizen dialogue took place via a public online platform: <http://dialog-ueber-deutschland.de>. Additionally, the dialogue was supplemented by three so-called citizen conversations, which took place via offline assemblies in selected cities.

The results of the expert dialogue were published in a comprehensive report. From the citizen dialogue, twenty suggestions received special attention. The authors of the ten suggestions that ranked highest in the participant voting were invited to personally discuss their ideas with chancellor Angela Merkel. So were ten more citizens whose suggestions were identified as especially noteworthy by an expert jury.

Dialog-ueber-deutschland.de, fuelled by the chancellor's popularity and featuring rather broad topics, generated more than 11,000 suggestions with 74,000 comments and 1.7 million visits (Merkel, 2012).

## **Developing a Framework for evaluation e-participation projects**

The project at hand focuses on the expectations that are placed on e-participation projects on the federal level and reflects them in the context of relevant theories in order to develop a framework for evaluation.<sup>11</sup> This model is then tested in the respective case study and subsequently adapted. The diverse levels of evaluation call for a multi-method approach that combines user surveys, interviews, and secondary analysis. So far, two projects have been identified as relevant, namely Enquetebeteiligung.de and Dialog-ueber-deutschland.de. The evaluation of Enquetebeteiligung.de marked the first step in the project. The evaluation of the Future Dialogue is still in progress.

For the initial framework a first mapping of the expectations that are commonly placed upon e-participation projects was undertaken. According to von Lucke (2010a, 2010b), e-participation is one way to improve the less than perfect relation between citizens and politicians. It offers a new way of participation that might be a solution to the alienation and frustration that plagues (not only) the

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<sup>11</sup> For a more in-depth description of the subsequent discussion, see Große et al., 2013.

German democracy (Leggewie, 2003). There seems to be an existential problem in the democratic interaction, it is defined by great distance and low trust (Albrecht et al., 2008). This shows in low voter turnout. Germany hit its all-time low in 2009 with 71% (Wissenschaftlicher Dienst, 2009) and the country saw an increase in large-scale demonstrations (Glodzinski, 2010a; Glodzinski, 2010b).<sup>12</sup> The entirety of this phenomenon is commonly named political alienation (Arzheimer, 2009: 8-9). There seems to be a definite need to tackle this problem and the German government is set on profiting from the potential of e-participation. In its e-government strategy, it clearly states the goal to increase the citizen involvement in the processes of decision preparation (IT-Planungsrat, 2010).

The major goal of e-participation thus seems to be the improved **relationship between politicians and citizens**. This goal was broken down into three levels for the evaluation of Enquetebeteiligung.de, respectively reflected from the EldS's and the citizens' perspective. Firstly, the most direct level of evaluation comes into play, the level of **participation**. Who takes part in the discussion? Is it a representative group or only a small homogenous faction? The answer to this question is relevant to assess the influence that any changes in the users' attitude towards politics can have on the general population. Be that as it may, it is to be expected that the user group of Enquetebeteiligung.de is not representative of the general population. Most researchers agree that online participation cannot overcome social divides that lead to the overrepresented participation of the well-educated and politically interested (Genner, 2008; Marr, 2005; Norris, 2001, Leggewie, 2003). For the citizens, on this level, the satisfaction with the participation is most important: Were all necessary features present? Was the usage intuitive? Were the support processes satisfactory? These questions are not only essential to further develop the tool adhococracy, but also to contextualise possible problems: Does a possible failure to fulfil the overarching goal stem from a systematic problem or is it merely rooted in the need for improvement of the used tool or faulty processes.

Moving away from the direct level of participation and interaction, the second level is the **perceived added value of the participation**. Only if both politicians and citizens can identify an added value can e-participation be sustainable, i.e. only then is there a chance for more and long-term projects that can in the long-run change the workings of the political system and change the actors' relationship significantly. For politicians, a major factor to add value is the influx of new ideas and impulses. The German government clearly expresses its wish to gather the broadly spread wisdom of society and include it in its decision making processes. This, so it is stated, is the only way to master the challenges that are placed upon a modern state (BMI, 2010). The citizens' perception of added value is influenced by three contributors. The first one is the possibility to exert influence on the political decision making (Schmidt, 2010). Secondly, citizens might deduce value from the discussion itself. Engaging into deliberation might prove a value on its own (Frisch, 2007; Habermas, 1969; Frey & Stutzer, 2006). However, this value seems to depend majorly on the perceived quality of the discussion (Schaal & Heidenreich, 2006). Thirdly, citizens might derive epistemic benefit from the improved problem understanding that they acquire during the discussion (Schmidt, 2010). In summary, it is important that users perceive their participation as meaningful.

Finally, on the third level, one has to ask the question of the actual **consequences of the participation**: Does it positively influence the participants' attitude towards politicians and the political system? Will citizens participate more actively? Only if this is achieved, the main goal of improving the citizen-politician relationship is within grasp. It is important at this point to take a

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<sup>12</sup> Prominent examples are the protests against Stuttgart 21, nuclear energy or construction to expand airports.

closer look at what forms attitude or rather what consequences a negative attitude can have on political participation. Recent developments have shown that it is necessary to differentiate between institutionalised and alternative forms of participation. Especially younger citizens that are thought to be especially politically alienated (Glodzinski, 2010b), are less interested in taking on political positions, join a party or donate money to them (Gaiser et al., 2010). They may however, be strongly engaged in non-governmental organisations or other political initiatives. We use the term *political activity* for traditional, institutionalised form of political participation. *Political engagement* describes the non-traditional, non-institutionalised form of participation. Political alienation does often only encompass alienation from political activity not from political engagement (Arzheimer, 2009).

In order to evaluate the contribution that Enquetebeteiligung.de can have towards improving the citizen-politician relationship, the attitude towards politicians and institutions will be surveyed (based on Arzheimer, 2004). However, improved attitude alone is not the goal. Ever since the concept of political alienation went through its first high phase of discussion in the 1990s, it is hoped that online participation will also spill-over into political activity (Katz & Rice, 2002: 120-112). Finally, it is not only the expansion of participation that politicians hope for. They also aim to mobilise people that are uninterested in politics and not engaged at all. Germany's e-government strategy for example states the goal of participation of all citizens (BMI, 2006: 18). However, the hope for mobilisation is judged unrealistic by most researchers, because e-participation users are primarily already interested and engaged in politics (while not necessarily being politically active in the traditional sense) (Genner, 2008; Marr, 2005; Norris, 2001).

In summary, Enquetebeteiligung.de was evaluated on the criteria representativeness of the user group, user satisfaction, influx of new impulses/ideas, perceived meaningfulness and improved attitude towards and participation in the political system (see Figure 1).

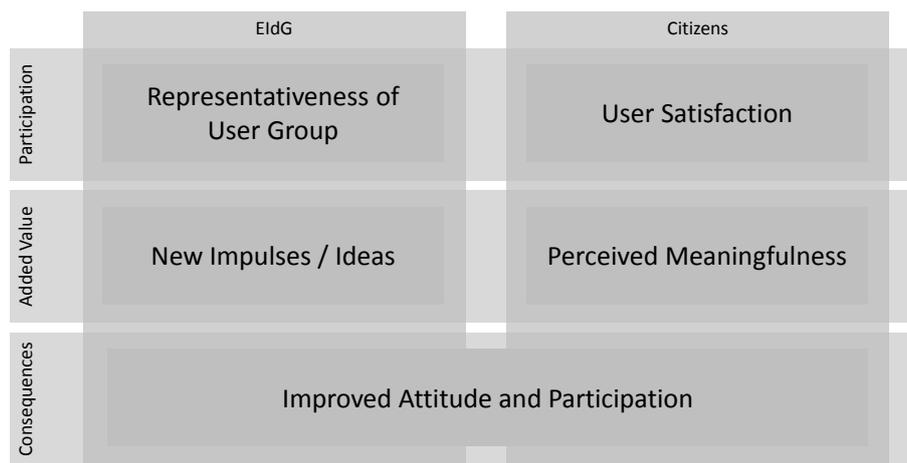


Figure 1: Criteria of evaluation - Enquetebeteiligung.de

## Applying the Framework: First Results

The framework for evaluation was applied to Enquetebeteiligung.de during a research project that was initiated by and conducted within the research network on liquid democracy (Forschungsnetzwerk Liquid Democracy, FoLD, <https://fold.liqd.net/>). All user-centric criteria were assessed by an online survey distributed amongst the participants of Enquetebeteiligung.de. The survey was filled out by 150 users. While there was an expected bias towards more active users to participate in the survey, both very active adhocracy users and rather inactive users took part in the survey.<sup>13</sup> The added value for the EldS was evaluated based on the commission's reports and official statements.

### Participation

Enquetebeteiligung.de attracted a user group that is mostly male and spends more than average time online. Users are mostly well-educated and rather well-situated. Surprisingly, the age distribution is rather diverse and while there are slightly more users of the 18-28 and 40-50 years demographic, the generation 50+ is also well presented. Still, the user group is not representative of the general population – as was to be expected. It is important, however, to keep in mind that firstly, Enquetebeteiligung.de was not widely advertised and secondly the EldS covered a rather narrow topical field and thus content-specific barriers most probably in place.

When it comes to the users' satisfaction with the participation, the general tendency is very positive, especially in comparison with other online and offline tools for participation. Users particularly value the possibility to comment and discuss in a structured way that surpasses the capabilities of regular forums or newsgroups. They do see some room for improvement in the display of new topics and longer discussions. Teasers are one possible solution. Most critique however focuses not on the tool but on the process side of the participation. More than half of the users feel they were insufficiently informed about the general process. They would have wished for more feedback from the EldS. It was unclear to most participants how their input would influence the EldS's work. Still, 71% of users would re-engage in a similar project. This might already be an indicator for the high added value that users derive from the project despite the needed improvements.

### Added Value

In its final report the EldS clearly states that some of the recommendations in its final report were solely considered because of the suggestions made on Enquetebeteiligung.de (Deutscher Bundestag, 2013). Members of the EldS praise the high quality and value of the input via Enquetebeteiligung.de (general parliament debate on January 20<sup>th</sup> 2012). The added value for the commission is apparent. However, it is unclear if this added value will actually lead to further participation projects on this level. While the work of the EldS is continued in a permanent committee, as of yet, there is no planned citizen participation (Freude, 2012). This is an indicator that when it comes to sustainable change in the political system, there is not only a need for a change of citizen attitude. There is also clear need for a change of attitude of politicians and administrators.

At first glance, it seems unlikely that the users perceive their participation on Enquetebeteiligung.de as meaningful. More than 70% did not expect their input to have significant influence. This is especially noteworthy, because, as was just pointed out, citizens actually did have a significant influence on the final recommendations of the EldS. The reason for this discrepancy might stem from

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<sup>13</sup> For a detailed discussion on the methodology, see Große et al., 2013.

the lack of feedback processes on Enquetebeteiligung.de. Commission members did not have a way to easily indicate how they were using the provided input.

However, the users consider the quality of suggestions as high and attribute them a high value for society. Also, the quality of discussion is perceived as good and constructive. However, most users do not derive added value from the discussion alone. Also, most users did not gain an improved understanding of the discussed topic. It is thus surprising that despite this, a majority of users still judges their participation on Enquetebeteiligung.de as meaningful. This might be an indicator that participants still hope that their high-quality input will influence political decision-making in the long run.

## **Consequences**

As was expected, most of the users of Enquetebeteiligung.de are interested in politics and engaged in some form. Enquetebeteiligung.de cannot achieve mobilisation. However, only 44% are politically active so there is potential for spill-over. Be that as it may, Enquetebeteiligung.de has only a marginal effect on its users' political activity. It is mostly the already politically active that feel motivated to intensify their activity. The potential of online participation to influence political participation seems limited. When it comes to the users' attitudes, the prospects appear equally bleak. Only half of the users can be classified as politically alienated, limiting the possible influence right from the start. Also, most users' attitudes towards the political system and politicians are not influenced by the online participation. There are some remarkable cases, in which political alienation is increased. This indicates the danger that unfulfilled promises regarding online participation holds. Finally, however, there are also some cases in which users actually state they gained trust in the political system and its politicians. It thus seems worthwhile to keep in mind that e-participation might be able to positively influence citizens' attitudes if tools work well and processes are well-defined. In order to reach the truly alienated though, measures are needed to reduce the social divides in Germany. Online participation will not reach the un-interested. This can only be achieved by outreach programmes and political education.

## **Summary and Discussion**

### **Consequences for the expectations on e-participation projects**

It has been shown that not all expectations that are placed upon e-participation can be fulfilled. The influence that can be exerted on political activity or political alienation seems to be limited, especially, because the user group is mainly composed of interested and engaged citizens that are not representative for the German citizenry. This reinforces experiences from other projects and studies.

This, however, does not mean that projects that cannot fulfil these expectations should be considered unsuccessful. Rather, project initiators should be aware that e-participation projects add great value to the policy process. They enable the influx of new ideas and impulses and offer citizens a unique opportunity to take part in political problem solving.

Still, the more diverse the user groups, the more varied the input. The decrease of participation barriers to include as broad a range of citizen as possible is still an important goal of any e-participation project. To achieve this, a good tool is crucial. However, online participation alone cannot mobilise alienated or un-interested citizens, it can only diminish barriers. It needs to be supplemented by programmes of political education in order to decrease the social divides that create the demographic gaps in political participation.

Additionally, a lack of feedback, unclear goals, or uncertain influence of the suggestions are a significant source of frustrations for users. It is thus not only well-designed tools, but also good support processes that are essential in order to minimise the possible disappointment and frustration of participants that might actually increase political alienation instead of decreasing it.

These learnings are not only important take-aways for politicians and other initiators of e-participation projects. They also hold valuable insights for the further development of the evaluation framework. Additionally, first insights can be gathered from [Dialog-ueber-deutschland.de](http://Dialog-ueber-deutschland.de)

While the evaluation for is still in progress, some notable distinctions from [Enquetebeteiligung.de](http://Enquetebeteiligung.de) can be identified. When it comes to the *representativity of the user group* it is noteworthy that the number of participants is remarkably high and exceeded expectations by far. It is thus likely that the user group is more diverse than that of [Enquetebeteiligung.de](http://Enquetebeteiligung.de). This might be due to the larger media coverage and the broader topic range.

Regarding the *satisfaction with the management and support processes*, several areas for improvement have already been identified. The unexpectedly large user group led to an urgent increase in personnel charged with the management and support of the online participation. Additionally, the feedback process from the Chancellery to the citizen proofed challenging, as no immediate feedback mechanism was included in the original design. Administration is still working on responding or assigning labels to the many suggestions in order to let participants know how their input has been and will be processed.

*The perceived values of the impulses and ideas* is, until now, ambivalent. On the one hand, the suggestions that placed first in terms of votes were: a law against the denial of the Armenian genocide; legalise cannabis; openly discuss Islam. The Chancellery is still deciding if and how to proceed with these requests. On the other hand, the Chancellery itself selected ten ideas and already initiated further steps towards implementation.<sup>1</sup>

### **Consequences for the evaluation framework**

Firstly, while it will be very difficult to achieve a representative user group in any e-participation projects, the more diverse the group, the more varied the input. While e-participation in itself cannot close social divides or mobilise the uninterested, it can minimise barriers and try to attract as diverse a user group as possible. We therefore change out evaluation criteria from representative to *diverse user group*. Additionally, the framework now reflects the importance to assure users of the influence that their impulses have on the political processes. This means that in terms of participants, there is not only a need for diversity in the citizen users, but there is also a need for politicians and administrators to be part of the processes in order for it to be more than a mere placebo project. We call this integration in the political hierarchy.

Secondly, it became apparent during the evaluation of [Enquetebeteiligung.de](http://Enquetebeteiligung.de) that it is very worthwhile to separate the processes from the functionality of the tool, because while both are crucial to the satisfaction with any project, their assessment might be very different.

Thirdly, it was clearly shown that good functionality and adequate processes are not only essential for the citizen users, but also for the politicians and administrators involved on the other side of the participation. They need processes that are integrated in their working routine and interfaces that enable them to access the input, work with it easily and give feedback without too much surplus effort. This is why we now include both, the satisfaction with the tool and the satisfaction with the supporting processes also from the politicians'/administrators' perspective.

On the level of added value it became apparent that the major factor for citizen users is the possibility to influence the political decision making process. The other factors like quality of discussion or improved problem understanding can be neglected.

Finally, while e-participation can hardly mobilise the politically uninterested or create spill-over effects for political participation, it might have a chance to improve the users' attitudes towards parties, politicians and political processes. This is why we change the evaluation of consequences to *improved attitude towards the political system*. Additionally however, Enquetebeteiligung.de showed that in order to sustainably change the citizen-politician relationship, there is a need for change on both sides. If politicians refuse e-participation despite the clear added-value, no decrease in political alienation can be expected. This is why we include a need *for improved attitude towards citizen participation* on the consequence level of our evaluation framework.

It is this adapted framework that we will use for the evaluation of Dialog-ueber-deutschland.de.

	Politicians & Administrators	Citizens
Participatns	Diversity of the user group	Integration in the political hierarchy
Participation	Satisfaction with the participation tool	Satisfaction with the participation tool
Process	Satisfaction with the management and support processes	Satisfaction with the participation processes
Added Value	Perceived value of ideas/ impulses	Perceived influence of the ideas/ impulses
Consequences	Improved attitude towards citizen participation	Improved attitude towards the political system

Figure 2: Adapted Evaluation Framework for E-Participation Projects

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