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Key words: participatory budget, Covid-19, discretion, soft approach

1. Introduction

The aim of the paper is to present the functioning of participatory budget practices in municipalities in Slovenia in pre- and during Covid-19 era and its impact on citizen engagement in the process. The paper will therefore focus on the question whether Covid-19 had a negative impact on the use of participatory budget in Slovene municipalities either by diminishing its use (or some of its instruments), or a positive impact, causing the development, promotion and use of new instruments, enabling enhanced citizen participation. The paper will present empirical evidence on the way Corona-19 affected the usage of instruments for the proposition and voting phase of the participatory budget projects in 2020 by analysing and comparing the processes before 2020 and in time of the pandemic.

For the purpose of the article, participatory budget is a form of direct budgetary democracy, which offers citizens above all the opportunity to learn about the work of the local executive, participate in consultations and discussions, and affect the use of public funds. It is also a tool for learning, collaboration and training citizens and strengthening the requirements of good governance. Increasing transparency and accountability, provided by the use of participatory budget, can reduce managerial inefficiencies, limit clientelism, patronage and corruption.¹

¹ Sgueo, Gianluca, *Participatory Budgeting: An Innovative Approach* (2016), p. 2.

In general, participatory budget is a process that allows non-elected citizens to participate in decision-making on priorities or the distribution of public funds. To work properly additional five criteria must be met: (1) The participatory budget must deal with financial and/or budgetary matters,(2) the city level or (decentralized) district with an elected representative body must be involved or have certain impact on public administration, (3) participatory budget must be a repetitive procedure,(4) there must be some kind of public consultation in the context of special meetings/forums, (5) there must be at least some accountability regarding the outcome of the participatory budget.²

The article will present facts relating to the wide(r) use of municipal participatory budget before and after the Covid-19 pandemic.

2. Participatory municipal budget in light of fiscal autonomy

Entities that enjoy some self-government or autonomy on the territory of a state generally enjoy this by having been explicitly granted special status by the state (e.g. universities, municipalities). Pitamic argued that municipalities do not enjoy natural rights that would make them inviolable contrary to the constitution or the law, but enjoy those powers that are transferred to them by the state through its legislation.³ With the formation of local communities and the subsequent normative regulation of their position, a certain degree of autonomy was reserved for them, and thus local self-government was formed. European Charter of Local Self-Government mentions in its preamble, that building Europe according to the principles of democracy and decentralization of power, requires the existence of local authorities with democratically appointed decision-making bodies and a high degree of autonomy regarding their powers, which is limited by existing legislation. The Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia emphasizes the autonomy of (self-governing) local communities when defining the scope of work of municipalities as those matters that the municipality can regulate independently and concerning only the inhabitants of the municipality.

Local financial autonomy is also defined as the extent of control that local representatives (officials) have over decisions in fiscal matters for which they are (politically and legally) accountable. It is usually of limited scope.⁴

Contrary to the prevailing understanding of autonomy as an area of limited state intervention, Shanske argues that state interventions may even increase the autonomy of local communities. If the state e.g. restricts the possibility of free choice of measures in areas over which local communities do not have (sufficient) influence, necessary experience, or are not sufficiently informed about them e.g. environmental standards, (unregulated borrowing), thus enabling them “survival” and the possibility of

² Sintomer Yves, Röcke Anja, Herzberg Carsten, Participatory Budgeting in Europe: Democracy and Public Governance, Routledge, London and New York (2016), p. 20

³ S. Vlaj v Komentar Ustave RS (2002), p. 952 and L. Pitamic, Država, Ljubljana (1996), p. 395 and 396.

⁴ M. A. Pagano, The Success and Challenges of the US Federal System: State-Local Finances v Giancarlo Pola (ed.), Principles and Practices of Fiscal Autonomy - Experiences, Debates and Prospects, Ashgate Publishing, 2015, p. 81 and 86.

choosing better measures in the medium and long term, which ultimately strengthens their autonomy. Through its interventions, the state thus frees (and restricts) municipalities from making decisions that can be avoided and do not need to be made.⁵ The argument develops a public interest that justifies state interventions that may have the affect of limiting or even strengthening the autonomy of local self-government.

An insurmountable obstacle to the full financial autonomy of municipalities in Slovenia is the fact that financing of municipalities comes mainly from the state budget, and therefor largely depends on the respective legislator. Some analyzes place the level of financial autonomy of municipalities in Slovenia even among the lowest in the EU.⁶ Fiscal autonomy is one of the key concepts of fiscal decentralization, as any form of decentralization results in the establishment of a certain amount of autonomy in the area that is being decentralized.⁷ An important indicator of the degree of financial autonomy of municipalities is the ratio between their own and other revenues of municipalities - the higher the ratio, the greater the autonomy.⁸ Modern approaches are more complex and examine financial autonomy on the revenue⁹ and expenditure¹⁰ sides separately - the later, is directly connected to questions related to municipal participatory budget. When discussing participatory budget, we are of course dealing with the expenditure part of municipal financial autonomy.

Slovene municipalities enjoy a high level of financial autonomy on the expenditure side and a wide margin of appreciation when dealing with the use of participatory budget measures on local level as presented in the following chapters.

3. Use of participatory budget in Slovenia

Slovenia is a small country with two million inhabitants and two hundred and twelve municipalities. The use of participatory budget in Slovenia has not been prohibited by state legislation, yet it was never used in practice, until a few years ago. The first pilot was “tested” in one municipality in 2015. Later in April 2018 amendments to the Local-Self Government Act regulating participatory budget were adopted and came to power in May 2018. A new article 48a was added saying that, “In the process of preparing the draft budget, the municipality *may* determine the amount of funds intended for funding of projects proposed by citizens. The municipality carries out citizen consultation regarding proposed projects

⁵ D. Shanske, Local Fiscal Autonomy Requires Constraints: The Case For Fiscal Menus, *Stanford Law & Policy Review*, vol. 25, issue 1, 2014, p. 13, 24 and 31.

⁶ Cigu E. and Oprea F., Method of Determining the Degree of Autonomy of the Administrative-Territorial Units, *Journal of Public Administration, Finance and Law*, Issue 1, 2012.

⁷ Bird M. R., Threading the fiscal labyrinth: some issues in fiscal decentralization, *National Tax Journal*, 46 (2), 1993, p. 207 – 227.

⁸ Y. Psycharis and M. Zoi, Decentralization and local government fiscal autonomy: evidence from the Greek municipalities, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, vol. 34, 2016, p. 266

⁹ Blöchliger H. and King D., Less Than You Thought: The Fiscal Autonomy of Sub-Central Governments, *OECD Economic Studies* 43, Paris, 2006.

¹⁰ Bell M. E., Ebel R. D., Kaiser K. and Rojchaichainthorn J., *Measuring Fiscal Decentralization: A New Perspective*, 2006, Draft for Discussion, The World Bank.

consultations no later than the submission of the budget to the municipal council for adoption.” The government proposal of the new article 48a of the Local-Self Government Act¹¹ explicitly stated that one of the main purposes of proposed solutions of the new legislature was “regulation of participatory budgeting as a form of citizen participation”.

3.1 A soft optional approach

The government proposal sheds a light onto governments understanding of participatory budgeting as a form of citizen participation that is increasingly becoming the standard in modern local government. Proposal stated that examples of good practice, not only foreign, but increasingly domestic, show that it is a relatively simple but effective mechanism for citizen participation in deciding on the financing of projects concerning the inhabitants of a certain area of the municipality. The proposed solution is not obligatory for municipal bodies, but it is regulated if, or when municipal authorities decide to use it. Article 48a of the Local-Self Government Act stipulates that the municipality determines the share of municipal funds, to be allocated for the projects to be proposed and voted on by the population, by budget decree (Table 1). At the same time, the municipality is obliged to - when they decide on such a solution - to consult the citizens (Table 2). The law does not even prescribe what the determined share of the budget should be, nor does the law predetermine a concrete method of citizen (co)decision making. It is left to municipalities themselves to decide on the way they determine the voting order of proposed projects etc. The law also does not stipulate the voting procedure. As a consequence, different voting practices have been established in Slovenian municipalities e.g. it is not uncommon for residents over the age of fifteen to be invited to participate even though they do not have the right to vote in general (or local) elections. While the reasoning for lowering of the voting age (even for local elections) is often disputable¹² the ability of young people to propose or vote on participatory budget is not. In Slovenia municipalities often use special participatory budget mechanisms when deciding on youth projects. There they want the voices of the youth to be heard.

Article 48a itself does not use the term “participatory budget”. Never-the-less there can be no doubt, the text gives explicit legal ground for the use of (a facultative) participatory budget on municipal level. Keeping in mind the financial autonomy of municipalities, the legislator did not decide to prescribe participatory budget on municipal level as a mandatory tool in the process of preparing, and later using, the adopted municipal budget. The legislator rather chose to explicitly mention it as an option. It is up to every single municipality to decide for themselves whether or not they will use mechanisms connected to participatory budget, what the amount of funds will be, who can participate in proposal and decision making etc. This means that municipalities self-govern themselves regarding the use of participatory

¹¹ Proposal in Slovene is available on <https://skupnostobcin.si/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/fe1f5a819e6a9ef7f655.pdf>.

¹² Franklin M.N. (2020) Consequences of Lowering the Voting Age to 16: Lessons from Comparative Research. In: Eichhorn J., Bergh J. (eds) Lowering the Voting Age to 16. Palgrave Studies in Young People and Politics. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. p. 16 – 41.

budget and measures connected with it in the process of budget spending, but there is no more doubt that the use of participatory budget at the municipal level is a possibility. The wide margin of appreciation enjoyed by Slovene municipalities is in line with the Constitutional understanding of financial autonomy of municipalities.

3.2 The basic procedure

Keeping in mind the text of article 48a and other rules regarding municipal budget adoption, we must emphasize at some point that the only and exclusive proposer of the budget decree is the mayor of a concrete municipality, while the adoption of the budget decree is left to the municipal council. Because the amount of funds available for the use in the participatory budget is determined by the budget decree, activities for the inclusion of projects in the budget decree need to be carried out in advance. After the official proposal of the draft budget by the mayor, there is generally not enough time to carry out public consultation or gather proposals and vote on them. Some municipalities changed their statutes to the level that the statutes themselves determine the mandatory share of budget funds that need to be used via the participatory budget mechanism every year. While municipalities are free to change their statutes if they wish, such a commitment is very strong, since it must be honored every year without exception. Also, for such commitment to change, the municipal council must change the statute, and for that a two thirds majority is required, so it needs a wide political consensus.¹³ If we take a look at the amount of funds (Table 1) used for the participatory budget by concrete municipalities, and take into consideration municipalities total yearly budget expenditure, we come to the conclusion, that the amount used for participatory budget projects is usually less than one percent on average.

When preparing the municipal budget, it is necessary to take into account the Public Finance Act¹⁴, according to which the municipal administration responsible for finance provides direct budget users with instructions for preparing the municipal budget, which also contains a framework proposal for two years. Within this scope, the municipality will also be able to determine the amount of funds used to finance projects proposed by citizens. In order to include projects proposed by citizens, the population must be consulted no later than the submission of the budget to the municipal council for adoption. By including

¹³ Mandatory involvement of citizens in the preparation of the municipal budget in the form of a participatory budget can also be written in the statute of the municipality. For example, they did so in the Municipality of Ajdovščina. In addition to the general provision on public participation in decision-making procedures, the statute of the Municipality of Ajdovščina in article 103 states that “the mayor is responsible for the preparation and submission of the municipal budget to the municipal council for adoption. The mayor prepares the draft budget by allocating part of the budget funds to the financing of projects directly proposed and selected by the citizens. Unless otherwise provided by another regulation of the municipality, funds in the amount of not less than 0.5 percent and not more than 1 percent of the annual budget of the municipality shall be allocated for the financing of these projects.” The Rules of Procedure of the Municipal Council of the Municipality of Ajdovščina were also adjusted to this in the chapter on the adoption of the municipal budget and the chapter on occasional and permanent working bodies.

¹⁴ First paragraph of Article 18 of the Public Finance Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 11/11 - official consolidated text, 14/13 - amended, 101/13, 55/15 - ZFisP, 96/15 - ZIPRS1617, 13/18 and 195/20 - US).

projects proposed by citizens, the draft budget will thus be drawn up in accordance with the applicable regulations governing the drawing up and preparation of the budget. Procedural rules regarding participatory budget, if a municipality decides to use it, include some relatively strict rules and deadlines and as such present the area where municipalities enjoy less freedom in decision making since they are connected to state budget and state financing rules and regulations.

In Slovenia the prevailing participatory budget mechanism (supported also by municipality associations) is a 5 step mechanism: (1) gathering project proposals, (2) evaluation of proposals by the municipal administration, (3) voting, (4) project implementation, (5) documentation and communication of results.

In the last few years, projects for participatory budget were being proposed in different ways in different municipalities. In some in person on a special form, by ordinary mail or email, while in others via the use of different online tools (applications). Similar was done in the voting phase on proposed project – people voted in person (similar as in general local elections), in general resident meetings – citizen assembly, via different online tools (applications), by ordinary mail or email (Table 2).

3.3 On (non) existing tendencies to introduce a participatory budget

In November 2018, regular local elections were held. All the candidates for mayors, were sent a questionnaire¹⁵, whether they will support and implement participatory budget in their municipality if elected – 56 of elected mayors replied they would. Two years later only 28 of these 56 candidates held their promise and implemented participatory budget in their municipality. In some municipalities participatory budget is implemented although the elected mayor did not promise to do so before elections.¹⁶ Looking at the data, provided by Association of Municipalities and Towns of Slovenia (municipal representative association), there are 30 or 14 percent (out of 212) municipalities that use participatory budget as a mechanism of redistributing municipal budget funds.¹⁷ Some municipalities are in the process of implementing it in the next year or two (because of the two year budget plan)¹⁸. Although different practices exist worldwide, regarding implementation of municipal participatory budgets, certain criteria exist such as that it must include whole or at least part of the budget, citizens must be included in the phase of proposing projects as well as the phase on deciding/voting on their

¹⁵ The questionnaire was prepared and the answers analyzed by an NGO “Danes je nov dan”, who are very active in the field of participatory budget. They also adapted and upgraded for Slovenian needs an online tool called Consul - an open source platform for the implementation of participatory budgeting.

¹⁶ E.g. Municipality of Železniki.

¹⁷ Municipalities of Ajdovščina, Benedikt, Bohinj, Brežice, Dol pri Ljubljani, Dravograd, Hrastnik, Hrpelje-Kozina, Komen, Izola, Koper, Kranjska gora, Krško, Laško, Logatec, Lovrenc na Pohorju, Maribor, Medvode, Nova gorica, Postojna, Radovljica, Renče - Vogrsko, Ruše, Semič, Sevnica, Slovenske konjice, Sveta Trojica v Slovenskih goricah, Šentilj, Škofja loka, Železniki.

¹⁸ E.g. municipality Jesenice (2022/2023).

implementation and that the practice of participatory budget is a lasting one. Some Slovene municipalities do not implement the use of participatory budget, since they believe they are already using participatory budget, although the way they do it, does not comply with the presented criteria, and cannot be considered as participatory budget in practice – consultation with citizens and the use of different “open door” policies do not measure up to a participatory budget.¹⁹

Two years after the local elections an *ex post* analysis was carried out to find out how many mayors kept their promise that they will use participatory budget mechanisms in their municipalities if elected. How many actually did, was already presented, but more interesting are the answers received from municipalities and mayors who did not keep their promise and their explanations as to why not. Some of the more interesting answers are that (1) the idea itself is fine, but in our case, the responsiveness of the young people was below expectations, (2) we are of the opinion that the annual presentations of what has been done and planned at the nine village councils in the municipality are sufficient; both then and several times during the budget preparation process, residents are urged to submit proposals, which are ultimately decided by the municipal authorities, (3) given current practice and modest budgets, participatory budgeting will not be introduced, (4) the municipality said they decided to transfer funds to municipal local communities mainly because of the epidemic and that the interest remains to introduce a real participatory budget, (5) the municipality explained that they have already met with the desire to exchange good practices with representatives of another municipality, but then the epidemic deterred them from implementing a participatory budget; however, they intend to continue with its introduction in the next budgets, (6) the municipality explained that due to other project burdens, they are currently allocating money to village communities or city districts that decide on spending, however, they add that they are aware of the importance of cooperation and that the intention remains to introduce a participatory budget in the future, (7) the municipality replied that last year representatives of municipal local communities spoke out against the implementation of the participatory budget, which was then taken into account by the municipal administration, (8) the mayor explained that he supports the participatory budget, but sees a precondition for it in the consent of the parties in the municipal council, (9) the mayor assessed that the experience in the nearby municipalities, which undertook the participatory budget, was negative, and the implementation itself expensive, (10) the mayor estimates that participatory budgeting is more of a marketing approach to participation, (11) the municipality explains that they carried out all the preparations last year, but then failed to carry out initial information workshops due to the epidemic. They currently plan to implement these next year, if necessary online, as funds are reserved in the draft budgets for 2021 and 2022 etc.²⁰ The answers given mostly show misunderstanding of the concept of participatory budget as being expensive, a burden, not interesting enough to cause a high voter turnout. One of the reasons (if not the prevailing one) behind the lack of implementation of participatory budget (in the last two years) is also the Covid-19 epidemic. On the other hand, if we would look at experience from

¹⁹ E.g. capital city of Ljubljana.

²⁰ More answers of municipal representatives can be found on the home page of NGO “Mešanec” (<https://mesanec.si/participativni-proracun-v-obcinah-krepi-se-zaupanje/>), who made the *ex post* analysis.

municipalities that are using participatory budget mechanisms, we can see, that they have mostly positive experiences. Even though the arguments received from different mayors and municipalities might not persuade us, it is their discretion as mayors since they are exclusive proposers of municipal budget not to propose measures for the implementation of a participatory budget in their municipality. Participatory budget is a voluntary measure on the municipal level in Slovenia, and no mayor can be legally forced to use it.

3.4 A short analysis of the current state of play

Looking at empirical data (Table 2) we can conclude that even among the 30 municipalities important differences exist in the way they implemented municipal participatory budget procedures. A wide majority (26 out of 30) have their municipality divided into areas (single or combined local communities) for the purpose of deciding on proposed local projects in a way that they will be carried out in a decentralized way, so that every part of the municipality participates in development through projects meant to improve the quality of living in a specific area of municipality. Usually only project targeting a specific population e.g. youth are voted on in a municipality as a whole. The practice of proposing projects also differs between the 30 municipalities. The common ground is that municipalities use a wide variety of possible ways local citizens can propose projects to be voted on in a certain municipality, ranging from giving proposals via the use of special online tools (applications), to different forms sent to the municipality by ordinary post or e-mail or giving proposals on site (at the seat of a municipality). Voting practices also differ between municipalities. The prevailing voting methods are (in the following order) 1. voting on site, 2. voting via special form sent by e-mail or ordinary mail to municipal or local community seat, 3. use of online tools (application, municipal internet site), 4. voting at a municipal (local community) assembly, 5. Voting with the use of mobile phones (sms - Short Message Service). Regarding the effects Covid-19 pandemic had on the use of municipal participatory budget in Slovenia we can conclude that it did not have much effect on most of the municipalities already practicing participatory budget. Some found new innovative and democratic ways to include citizens (voting via e-mail, mobile phone (sms), municipal internet site, use of online tools (applications)), while others used the epidemic to exclude citizens from participating in decision making (the projects were chosen by an appointed committee). The same cannot be said for municipalities not implementing participatory budget yet, since if we look at answers given by different mayors, many of them listed Covid-19 pandemic as a reason not to implement participatory budget in years 2020 or 2021. Based on what has been written, we can come to certain conclusions. The use of online tools facilitates the elections to be held in the entire municipality as a whole. Covid-19 did not significantly affect the implementation of participatory budgeting by selected municipalities, as many municipalities did not vote on participatory budget projects in 2020, as mayors received their mandates at the end of 2018 (after local elections), so they usually conducted the first votes in 2019, usually for the next two year period (two-year budget). That means they avoided the critical situation caused by Covid-19 in 2020 and 2021. Once the two-year budget has been approved, funds are usually split in half (one

half for each year). The exception is when a specific part of the funds is dedicated for specific projects e.g. for youth. Almost as a rule, the prevailing practice is, that the funds are evenly distributed among the various areas (local communities) within which the various proposed projects are voted on.

4. Conclusion

Numerous positive affect of participatory budget mechanisms can be identified. Some of them are information sharing, oversight, accountability, knowledge, and the creation of policy net-works²¹, increasing the efficiency of spending funds, faster economic growth, more balanced development of municipalities, reducing social disparities, better management and identification of infrastructure, increase confidence in democratic processes, increasing the activation of the population, under certain conditions even more taxes collected etc. If everything is so positive when discussing participatory budget, why is it then not implemented everywhere, in every municipality. The state probably could impose to some extent obligatory participatory budget on all municipalities with some regulatory changes. In Slovenia the approach was different – a soft one. Legislative changes proposed by the government (article 48a Local Self-Government Act) were directed into promoting participatory budget at municipal level, without stipulating an obligatory use of the participatory budget measures, recognizing financial autonomy of municipalities on the expenditure side and acknowledging their wide margin of appreciation when deciding on the use of participatory budget measures. Some discretion was left to municipalities even on deciding the amount of funds intended for participatory budget, deciding on who and how can propose projects and vote on them etc. At these point discretion is not as wide since rules and regulation regarding public financing must be obeyed (eg. rules on budget proposals). One thing is also clear – a soft approach to regulating participatory budget on municipal level does not produce desired results in a short period of time. Three years after the change of legislation only fourteen (14) percent of municipalities use participatory budget – the impact is lacking. What is the reasoning behind it? Maybe it can be found in the view of some mayors, who, being exclusive proposers of municipal budget think of participatory budget as expensive, a burden, not interesting enough to cause a high voter turnout, then there were problems because of the epidemic etc. As result they decided not to propose a participatory budget, which is compliant with the discretion they have in managing the municipal budget area. Maybe the right approaches can be found in views of mayors with positive tendencies towards participatory budgeting. One of the mayors stated that it should be left to the individual municipality to develop a tailor-made “systemically, financially, personnel- and technically sustainable model for the implementation of

²¹ Touchton M. and Wampler B., Improving Social Well-Being Through New Democratic Institutions, Comparative Political Studies, 2014, vol. 47(10), p. 1442-1469.

participatory budgeting". Municipal autonomy, mayoral discretion, promotion of democracy, transparency and positive examples seem to be the right (soft) approaches for municipalities.

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6. Tables

Table 1: List of Slovenian municipalities implementing the participatory budget and amount spent in year
Source: own elaboration

Municipality/Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Ajdovščina		360.000		420.00		420.00	
Benedikt							21.000
Bohinj					65.000	65.000	65.000
Brežice						200.000	
Dol pri Ljubljani						120.000	120.000

Dravograd					100.000		
Hrastnik					6.000		50.000
Hrpelje - Kozina					120.000	47.900	
Izola						100.000	100.000
Komen		120.000					130.000
Koper					480.000		960.000
Kranjska Gora					10.000		
Krško					140.000	140.000	140.000
Laško							90.000
Logatec			50.000	50.000	50.000	50.000	
Lovrenc na Pohorju						70.000	70.000
Maribor	100.000						500.000
Medvode							100.000
Nova Gorica			250.000				250.000
Postojna						100.000	100.000
Radovljica							300.000
Renče - Vogrsko					54.800	54.894	
Ruše							32.000
Semič						75.000	75.000
Sevnica							120.000
Slovenske Konjice						100.000	100.000
Sv. Trojica v Slovenskih goricah					30.000	30.000	
Šentilj					240.000	240.000	
Škofja Loka							275.000
Železniki							74.000

Table 2: Tools used for implementing participatory budget practice 1. Practice used for proposing projects, 2. Area of usage (part of municipality/whole), 3. Voting practice, 4. Impact of Covid-19, source: own elaboration

Municipality	Practice used for proposing projects	Area of usage (part of municipality or whole)	Voting practice	Impact of Covid-19
1. Ajdovščina	Special form – via e-mail or ordinary mail. Proposal can be given by any inhabitant of municipality over the age of 15.	Municipality is divided into 6 areas – local communities, with one exemption special youth project that is intended for the municipality as a whole.	Ballot on site. Every 2 years.	No – there was no vote in 2020.
2. Benedikt	Proposals can be given via special form on site at municipal HQ, by ordinary post or e-mail. Proposals can be given by any inhabitant of municipality over the age of 15.	Municipality is divided into 3 areas.	E-mail or on site at municipal HQ using a special form available on municipal internet site.	No. Voting took place in September 2021.
3. Bohinj	Proposal can be given via special app or on site in designated locations (municipality HQ, library etc) by any inhabitant of municipality over the age of 15.	Municipality is divided into 4 areas – local communities.	Special app or ballot on site in municipality HQ, yearly voting.	No.
4. Brežice	Special form – via e-mail, ordinary mail or on site in municipality HQ. Proposal can be given by any inhabitant of municipality over the age of 15.	Municipality is divided into 4 areas – local communities.	Voting is done via special form sent by e-mail or ordinary mail or delivered personally to municipality HQ. Right to vote is given any inhabitant of municipality over the	No – there was no vote in 2020.

			age of 15. Every 2 years.	
5. Dol pri Ljubljani	Special form – via e-mail, ordinary mail or on site in municipality HQ. Proposal can be given by any inhabitant of municipality over the age of 15.	Municipality is divided into 6 areas – local communities.	Ballot on site. Yearly vote.	Yes – in 2019 there were 6 possible voting sites in 2020 and 2021 only one – municipality HQ.
6. Dravograd	Special form – via e-mail, ordinary mail or on site in municipality HQ. Proposal can be given by any inhabitant of municipality over the age of 15.	Municipality is divided into 5 areas – local communities.	Ballot on site. Yearly vote.	Yes – in 2019 there were 5 possible voting sites in 2020 there was no voting, projects were evaluated and chosen by an appointed committee.
7. Hrastnik	Special form – via e-mail, ordinary mail or on site in municipality HQ. Proposal can be given by any inhabitant of municipality over the age of 16.	Municipality is divided into 10 areas – local communities. In 2019 in 2020 a pilot was held for only 1 area.	Ballot on site. Yearly vote. Right to vote is given any inhabitant of municipality over the age of 16.	Yes – in 2020 they did not widen the areas because of Covid-19, but they did so in 2021.
8. Hrpelje - Kozina	Proposal can be given via special app or by ordinary mail via special form. Proposal can be given by any inhabitant of municipality over the age of 15.	Whole municipality.	Special app or ballot on site in municipality HQ.	There was no vote in 2020 since the value of proposed projects did not exceed available funds – all projects were accepted.
9. Izola	Special form – via e-mail, ordinary mail or on site in municipality HQ. Proposal can be given by any inhabitant of municipality over the age of 15.	2 areas (first with 2 local communities and second with 3 local communities).	Ballot on site. Yearly vote. Right to vote is given any inhabitant of municipality over the age of 15.	No. Voting in 2020 was on site with special Covid-19 precautions.
10. Komen	Proposal can be given via special app or on special form on site at municipality HQ or by ordinary post. Proposal can be given by any inhabitant of municipality over the age of 15.	Municipality is divided into 15 areas – local communities. For 2020/2021 budget period voting was held only in 2 of them, all other projects were excepted (there was no competition). There is also a special “youth” project being selected via municipality as a whole.	Assembly of citizens in every local community where elections are needed (more projects competing).	No.
11. Koper	Proposal can be given via special app or on special form on site at municipal or local communities HQ, by ordinary post or e-mail. Proposal can be given by any inhabitant of municipality over the age of 15.	Municipality is divided into 6 areas - local communities.	Special app or ballot on site at municipal and local communities HQ. Right to vote is given any inhabitant of municipality over the age of 15. Every 2 years.	No.
12. Kranjska gora	Pilot (youth) project. Via special app.	Municipality as a whole.	Special app. Right to vote is given any inhabitant of	No. It was only carried out

			municipality borne between 1989 and 2003.	once as a pilot project in 2018, before Covid-19.
13. Krško	Proposal can be given via special form on site at municipality HQ, email or ordinary post and municipal internet page. Proposal can be given by any inhabitant of municipality over the age of 15.	Municipality is divided into 7 areas – single or combined local communities.	Ballot on site (local communities HQ) or via municipal internet site.	No.
14. Laško	Proposals can be given via special form on site at municipal HQ, by ordinary post or e-mail.	Municipality is divided into 9 areas - local communities.	In 2021 voting took place in only one local community and was done only via municipal internet site.	Yes. Voting was available only via internet site and not via assembly or ballot on site.
15. Logatec	Proposal can be given via special app or on special form on site at municipal or local communities HQ, by ordinary post or e-mail or on municipal internet site. Proposal can be given by any inhabitant of municipality over the age of 15.	Municipality as whole.	Special app available also on municipal internet site.	No.
16. Lovrenc na Pohorju	Proposal can be given via special form on site at municipality HQ, via municipal internet page or e-mail. Proposal can be given by any inhabitant of municipality over the age of 15.	Municipality is divided into 7 areas – local communities.	Ballot on site (2 locations).	No.
17. Maribor	Proposal can be given via special app or on special form on site at municipal or local communities HQ and by ordinary post. Proposal can be given by any inhabitant of municipality over the age of 15.	Municipality is divided into 7 areas of combined local communities.	Ballot on site (local communities HQ) or via special app.	No.
18. Medvode	Proposal can be given via special app or on special form on site at municipal or local communities HQ, by ordinary post or e-mail or on municipal internet site. Proposal can be given by any inhabitant of municipality over the age of 15.	Municipality is divided into 11 areas – local communities or their parts.	Digital app.	Yes. Because of Corona-19 the whole procedure (proposal, voting, evaluation) is done via (digital) app.
19. Nova gorica	Proposal can be given via ordinary post or e-mail. Since 2020 also via special app or on site at municipal HQ. Proposal can be given by any inhabitant of municipality over the age of 15.	Municipality is divided into 5 areas of combined local communities.	Ballot on site (local communities HQ) or via special app on municipal internet site.	Yes. Because of Covid-19 they decided on the possibility of voting via special app.
20. Postojna	Proposal can be given via special app or on special form on site at municipal or local communities HQ, by ordinary post or e-mail. Proposal can be given by any inhabitant of municipality over the age of 15.	Municipality is divided into 4 areas of combined local communities.	Ballot on site – different locations or via the use of special app. Right to vote is given any inhabitant of municipality over the age of 15.	Yes. In 2019 only on site voting was available while in 2021 the added the possibility of voting via

			Every 2 years.	digital app.
21. Radovljica	Proposal can be given via special app or on special form on site at municipal or local communities HQ, by ordinary post or e-mail. Proposal can be given by any inhabitant of municipality over the age of 15.	Municipality is divided into 5 areas – single or combined local communities.	Digital app. Right to vote is given any inhabitant of municipality over the age of 15. Every 2 years.	Yes. Because of Corona-19 voting in 2020 was possible only via (digital) app.
22. Renče - Vogrsko	Proposals can be given via special form on site at municipal or local communities HQ, by ordinary post or e-mail. Proposal can be given by any inhabitant of municipality over the age of 15.	Municipality is divided into 3 areas - local communities.	Ballot on site (local communities HQ). Right to vote is given any inhabitant of municipality over the age of 15.	No. The last vote was in 2019, before Covid-19.
23. Ruše	Special form via ordinary post, e-mail or on site in municipality HQ. Proposals can be given by any inhabitant of municipality over the age of 15.	Municipality is divided into 4 areas - local communities.	Ballot on site (local communities HQ). Right to vote is given any inhabitant of municipality over the age of 15.	No.
24. Semič	Proposals can be given via special form on site at municipal HQ, by ordinary post or e-mail. Proposals can be given by any inhabitant of municipality over the age of 15.	Municipality is divided into 9 areas – combined local communities.	Ballot on site (municipality HQ), via ordinary post or e-mail.	Yes, there were no public presentations of proposed projects, only brochures were sent to households.
25. Sevnica	Proposals can be given via special form by ordinary post or e-mail. Proposals can be given by any inhabitant of municipality over the age of 15.	Municipality is divided into 6 areas – single or combined local communities.	Voting via mobile phone – sms. Each project has its own identification number.	Yes. In 2021 voting was done via sms.
26. Slovenske Konjice	Proposals can be given via special form on site at municipal HQ, by ordinary post or e-mail.	Municipality as a whole.	Projects proposed for year 2020, 2021 and 2022 will not be voted on since total costs do not exceed provided funds. Voting was planned via municipal internet site.	No.
27. Sv. Trojica v Slovenskih goricah	Proposals can be given via special form by ordinary post or e-mail.	Municipality is divided into 7 areas - local communities.	Assembly of citizens in every local community where elections are needed (more projects competing).	No.
28. Šentilj	Proposals can be given via special form on site at municipal HQ, by ordinary post or e-mail.	Municipality is divided into 4 areas - local communities.	Voting is done via special form sent by ordinary post or e-mail.	Yes. In December 2020 ballot on site or different assemblies were not permitted.
29. Škofja Loka	Proposals can be given via special form on site at municipal HQ, by ordinary post or e-mail. Proposals can be given by any inhabitant of municipality over the age of 15.	Municipality is divided into 7 areas - local communities.	Ballot on site (local communities HQ).	No. In June 2020 when last voting took place there were no Covid-19 restrictions.
30. Železniki	Proposals can be given via special form on site at municipal HQ, by ordinary post or e-mail.	Municipality is divided into 6 areas - local communities.	Ballot on site (local communities HQ) or via special app.	Yes. Special digital app became available for those who

				could not vote in person because of Covi-19 or other reasons.
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