



On behalf of



**7th Status Report
Participatory Budgeting in Germany
Buergerhaushalt.org**

June 2014

In cooperation of:

Federal Agency for Civic Education
Service Agency Communities in One World

Imprint:

Published by:

Federal Agency for Civic Education
Adenauerallee 86
53113 Bonn

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This is now the seventh time that Germany's Federal Agency for Civic Education and the Service Agency Communities in One World (a division of Engagement Global gGmbH) have published the status report on participatory budgeting (PB) in Germany. The report provides detailed information on trends in the development of PB as a tool for the participatory planning of local authority budgets. Since 2008 a status report has used a standard set of status categories to describe PB processes across Germany (see page 5). This brings to light trends in the PB landscape in Germany, thus providing important pointers for anyone wishing to study participated budgeting in greater depth.

Over the last few years the typology of PB processes in Germany has diversified very significantly. The Status Report 2013 therefore for the first time introduced comparative standards (see annex) to capture more precisely the various features of the growing number of PB processes. The present Status Report 2014 is therefore able to compare PB processes in relation to their specific features, such as mode or channel of participation.

For the Status Report 2014 we researched all the local authorities listed in the *buergerhaushalt.org* database (as at 11 February 2014). This database contains all the local authorities in Germany with a population of more than 40,000, plus some smaller local authorities that came to be included in the database in the course of continuous reporting on PB¹. This year our research covered a total of 432 local authorities. The present report thus covers 29 more local authorities than the Status Report 2013. As in previous years, all the research for this report was performed online.

N.B.:

If you possess more up-to-date information on a local authority that is not included in the present report, then please let us know. We continuously update the information published at *buergerhaushalt.org*.

We recorded comparative data on the specific contours and current status of the various PB processes using a set of standardised analytical categories. All the data are continuously updated on the website *buergerhaushalt.org*. The entire database on the local authorities and procedures researched can be downloaded using the open data interface at *buergerhaushalt.org*.²

To begin with it makes sense to take a closer look at the basic definition of participatory budgeting. This was developed by Herzberg et al.³ According to this definition, a process must meet five conditions to qualify as PB:

- Participation revolves around financial matters; the issue at stake is limited resources.
- Participation takes place at the level of the city as a whole, or at the level of a district that has its own political and administrative competences.
- The procedure is designed as a permanent one that will be repeated regularly.
- The procedure is based on a public deliberation process (conducted e.g. online or at public meetings or gatherings).⁴
- Some form of accountability must be provided for the outcome of the procedure.

¹ These local authorities also include some of Germany's rural and urban districts. The database does not include PB processes at the level of Germany's federal states.

² To access the open data interface, click here: <http://www.buergerhaushalt.org/en/map>.

³ To obtain more detailed information on the definition of participatory budgeting according to Herzberg, click here: <http://www.buergerhaushalt.org/en/article/history-and-definition-participatory-budgeting>.

⁴ This condition is the key criterion for distinguishing between PB proper and provisional PB, which was particularly important when performing our research for the present Status Report.

Information on the database used for the Status Report 2014	
Total number of local authorities (including rural and urban districts) researched ⁵	432
Total number of full current procedures included (status 'introduced' or 'established')	87
Total number of full current procedures included in both 2013 and 2014	72
Type of local authority included	All local authorities with a population of at least 40,000 plus a small number with fewer than 40,000 inhabitants
Type of research	Online only

The following status report is in two parts. Part 1 describes the current distribution of the status categories, and draws comparisons with the data from previous years. In part two the report concludes by focusing on comparative aspects in order to describe the participatory procedures in more precise detail.

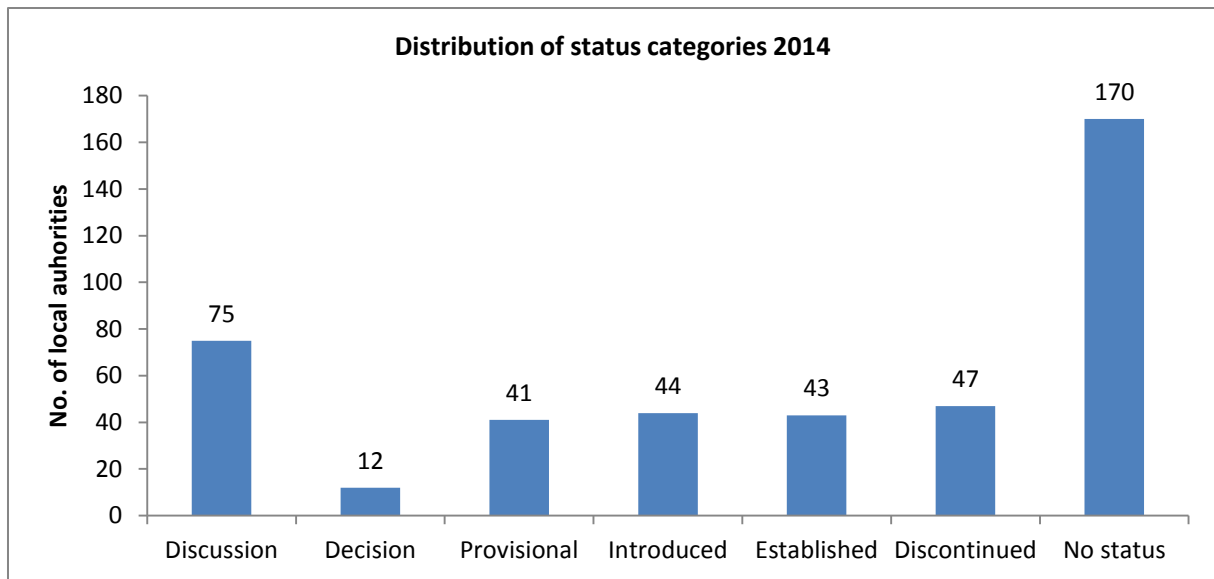
1. Trends in participatory budgeting in Germany:

A synopsis

To gain an overview of participatory budgeting in Germany we first of all classified all the municipalities in the database according to the status categories already established. One particular feature that distinguishes the Status Report 2014 from those of previous years is that this report for the first time no longer uses the status category *information*. When studying the system of categories for classifying the procedures before pursuing the research, it emerged that this particular category could no longer be clearly distinguished from others, particularly the category *discussion*. Leaving out the status *information* therefore improves the clarity of the classification system, and helps more accurately reflect the changes in the PB landscape over the last few years.

The diagram below shows the current distribution of status categories in the 432 researched municipalities (including rural and urban districts) (as at February 2014):

⁵ A list of all the local authorities included in the present Status Report is attached as an annex.



Status category	Status Report 2014	Status Report 2013	Change
Discussion	75	104	-29
Decision	12	15	-3
Provisional	41	8	+33
Introduced	44	70	-26
Established	43	26	+17
Discontinued	47	28	+19
No status	170	129	+41
<i>Information</i>		23	
Total	432	403	+29

The current data show that of the 432 local authorities included, a total of 87 have either introduced PB (status: *introduced*) or are currently establishing it (status: *established*), and are thus making active use of PB as an instrument for citizen participation in local financial management. Compared to the previous year, this represents in the first instance a slight decline in the number of PB processes by a total of nine. However, if we also include the 41 municipalities that have introduced a *provisional* form of PB (e.g. email survey with no option for discussion), the number of municipalities rises to 128. If we consider all three status categories together this represents an increase of 24 compared to the previous year's figure.

Although there was a sharp increase in the category *provisional* (from 8 to 41 municipalities), there was a steep decline in the category *introduced*. To a certain extent this trend is due to the fact that in the Status Report 2014 the category *provisional* has been applied more strictly, i.e. PB processes previously categorised as *introduced* have now been classified as *provisional* in cases where they did not meet the criteria for a PB process according to Herzberg et al. (see page 2).

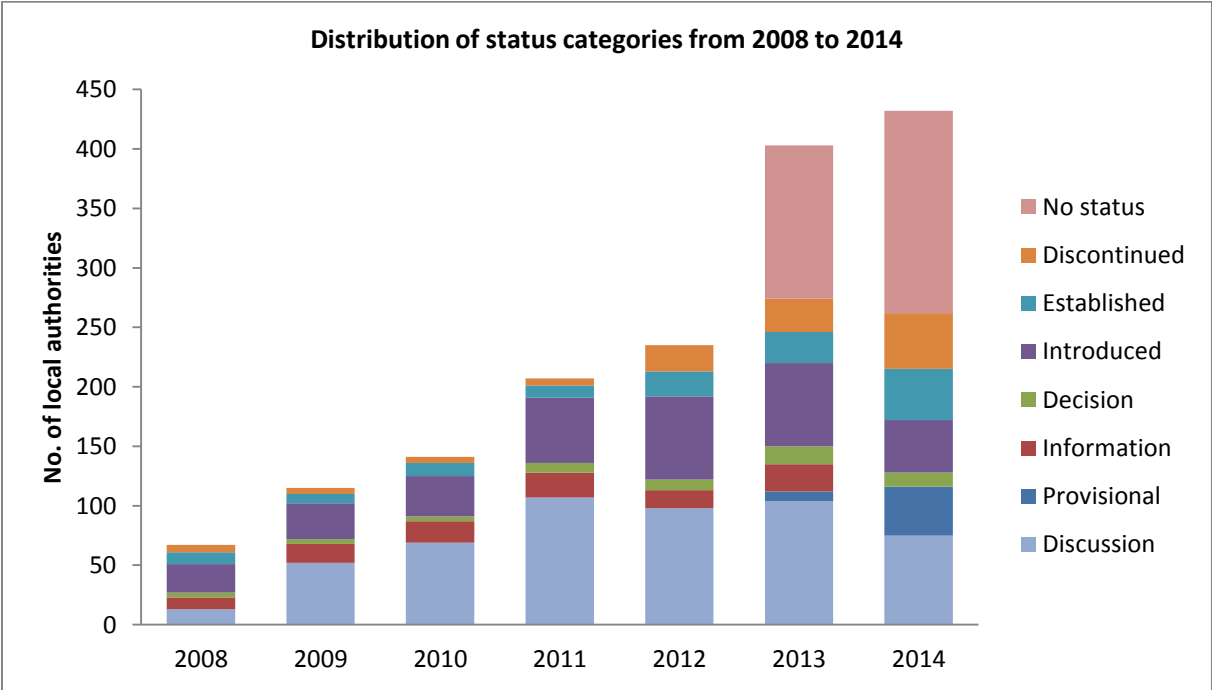
In the category *established* an increase is evident relative to the previous year's figure. In this category the number of local authorities rose by 17 to the present figure of 43. However, there was also an increase in the number of municipalities that are no longer carrying out PB, and are

therefore classified as having *discontinued* their PB procedure. The number of municipalities in this category rose to 47.

A slight decrease was observed in the category *decision*. A total of twelve municipalities where a council resolution to implement a PB process has been adopted were placed in this category. A significant decrease was also noted in the number of municipalities discussing the introduction of PB (*discussion*). Compared to the previous years the number fell by 29 to the current figure of 75.

Overall, compared with the data in the Status Report 2013 the current data clearly show that the PB landscape in Germany remains dynamic. The growth in the category *established* relative to the previous year indicates that some of the PB processes in Germany are consolidating into a permanent instrument for local citizen participation. The increase in the cumulative total number of municipalities in the categories *introduced*, *established* and *provisional* clearly shows that many municipalities have either established new PB procedures as participatory instruments or that local administrations are taking first structural steps in this direction. On the other hand, the growing number of PB processes that are being discontinued demonstrates that PB is an instrument which is not accepted in all local authorities. Moreover, it appears that fewer municipalities are discussing the introduction of PB.

Comparison with the data contained in the last six status reports enables us to identify long-term trends. The diagram below shows the distribution of the status categories from 2008 until today:



First of all it clearly emerges that the total number of local authorities included in the status reports has risen continuously. The marked leap between 2012 and 2013 is explained by the fact that the research came to include all municipalities with a population of more than 40,000. Looking more closely at the trend in the individual status categories, we note that the numbers of PB processes classified as *established* and those classified as *discontinued* have both risen continuously since 2009. The number of PB processes *introduced* seems to have peaked between

2011 and 2013, before slowly falling back toward its level in 2010. However, we should remember that the category *provisional* was first included in the Status Report 2013. The picture regarding the status category *discussion* is a similar one.

The individual status categories are explained in detail once again in the key below.

Status	Explanation
Discussion	The introduction of participatory budgeting is being discussed within the municipality. PB is being called for e.g. by a political party or a non-governmental organisation. Introducing PB is often controversial. A council decision has not yet been taken. The most recent call for PB to be introduced was made no longer than two years ago.
Decision	The council has decided (preferably unanimously) to introduce participatory budgeting. A council resolution is in place.
Provisional	The procedure currently being implemented by the municipality to enable citizens to participate in the budget does not yet meet all the criteria for participatory budgeting (see definition on page 1). To do so it would require broader forms of interaction with administrators and/or policymakers. These might be created for instance in the form of an online platform for participation, or public meetings for citizens. A constitutive element of PB is the possibility of a public discourse on the budget. If the only possibility of participation is the submission of proposals by e-mail, then the procedure should be classified as 'provisional'. Participatory procedures with this status do not offer opportunities for interactive discussion of the budget, although the municipality does explicitly and visibly invite citizens to participate by providing feedback (see above). This status is assigned to municipalities that describe the way they involve citizens in the budget as 'participatory budgeting' (even though this is de facto not yet the case).
Introduced	Participatory budgeting is being conducted for the first or second time. The public is not only being informed about the budget (for instance through a brochure), but also consulted. Citizens are able to prioritise proposals made by the administration, and/or submit, discuss and prioritise proposals of their own. Furthermore, the municipality intends to provide accountability concerning whether and how the citizens' proposals were included in the budget. A procedure can only be classified as 'introduced' if the last participatory budget was no longer than two years ago.
Established	Participatory budgeting is being carried out for the third time or more. It is now finally emerging that citizen participation can become or already is a fixed and permanent component of the budget planning procedure. A procedure can only be classified as 'established' if the last participatory budget was no longer than two years ago. If it is more than two years since the last participatory budgeting procedure the status 'discontinued' must be assigned.
Discontinued	Participatory budgeting, or provisional forms of it such as information events for citizens, are no longer being carried out. The council has rejected or for some other reasons discontinued the introduction or establishment of participatory budgeting. It is more than two years since the last participatory budgeting procedure or a provisional form of it. The local authority may have issued an official statement concerning the discontinuation of participatory budgeting. No participatory budgeting process is planned in the foreseeable future, nor is this a topic of discussion.
No status	'No status' is assigned particularly when a municipality has no plans to introduce participatory budgeting.