MA/PA*

USER'S

MANUAL

* **Machine for generating participatory processes**

GOALS

The main goal of the Machine is to encourage the participation of various stakeholders in the design, implementation and management of urban projects, in order to take their needs and aspirations into account. This tool aims to generate realistic, coherent yet inventive and ambitious participatory processes, to activate and disseminate knowledge production on citizen participation while fostering creativity.

HOW TO USE IT?

The Machine is a brainstorming tool for anyone – municipal agents, project managers, designers, or facilitators – wishing to set up participatory processes in the framework of urban projects. The Machine can be used at different stages of a project, whether alone or in a group, online or on paper. For collective sessions, we recommend 5 participants at the most. The maximum duration of a group brainstorming is 3 hours. In order to keep time, each step's estimated length is notified in the manual and on the posters.

ROLES

THE INITIATOR

Someone who's involved in the project initiates the brainstorming. In the case of a collective session, this person is responsible for choosing and contacting participants, as well as designating a facilitator. The facilitator prepares a brief description of the project that is (or will be) the subject of a participatory process, including one or more visuals.

FACILITATOR

For group use, plan to have a facilitator present. Before the session, his or her role is to set up the visual aids (see "Preparation" below) and to fill in certain fields if necessary (project description, project visuals, constraints). Afterwards, they are responsible for taking notes, moderating, keeping time and documenting the session. Finally, they are responsible for communicating the results to the participants.

TIP

When working on paper, be sure to photograph each poster at the end of the session. This will make it easier to share the results.

PARTICIPANTS

The brainstorming session works best with a group of 3 to 5 participants. Ideally, participants are (or will be) stakeholders in the project and the proposed participatory process. At the very least, participants should have a basic understanding of the project and its context.

TIP Do not hesitate to form a mixed group representing various roles in the project.

THE GUARDIAN OF THE MACHINE

At the beginning of the session, the group designates a participant who has the power to decide among several possible options. This could be the person who initiated the brainstorming.

TIP Throughout the process, participants can take note of important ideas, or point out conflicting opinions by storing them on post-its in the "Idea Attic". This allows them to express themselves without interrupting others, and to come back to these points at a later time.

PREPARATION

You will find here all the download links and resources needed to use the tool: urbanspecies.org/en/mapa

WORKING ON PAPER

Assemble the posters according to the assembly diagram. The side posters can be downloaded and (re)printed with an A3 printer. The central (blue) posters can be reused. Ideally, the tool is placated on a wall. It can also be placed on a large table. In order to make it easier to remove and reuse the posters, you should use fastening systems such as sticky paste or painter's tape. Remember to prepare a sufficient amount of post-its and pens.
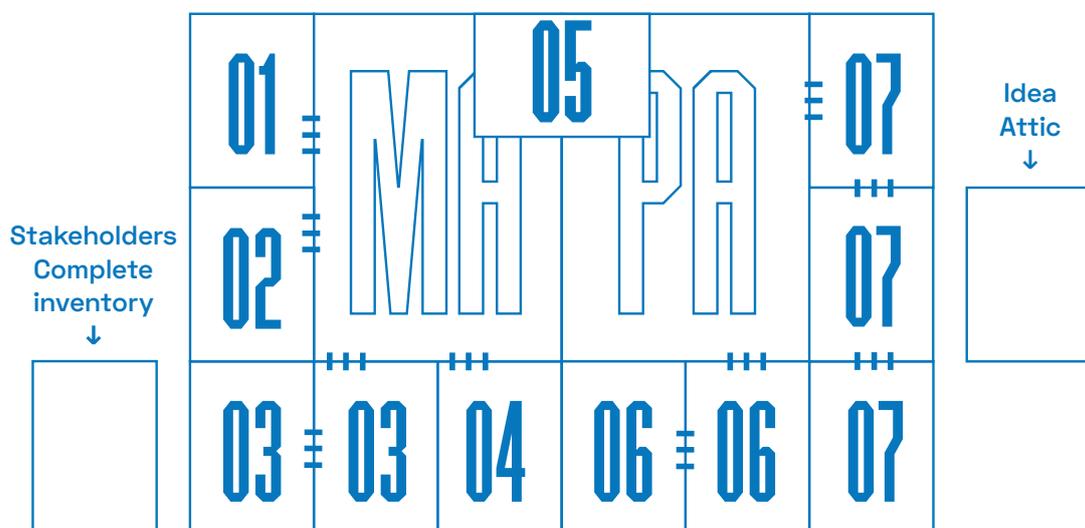
WORKING ONLINE

For online use, access the template on the Mural platform (or download the image file for use on the collaborative whiteboard of your choosing).

These platforms allow you to manage virtual post-its, text and images. However, they require a brief learning curve: consider getting to know them before the session so that you may explain their features to the other participants.

TIP When working on paper, select a quiet room with a blank wall, a table and enough chairs for the individual work phases. Keep the well-being of participants in mind by providing drinks and snacks during the break.

TIP For online use, consider creating a deck or individual workspace for each participant on the collaborative whiteboard.

TIP If time is limited, the initiator and/or facilitator can fill in key information for phases #01 (the project) and #02 (constraints) in advance. These can be discussed, completed or amended together during the session.

TIP Before the session, suggest that each participant visits the project site to get a feel for it and talk to some locals.
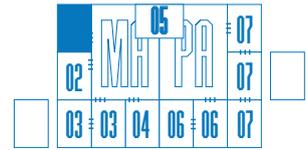
PARTIE I DATA ENTRY

1 H 20 MIN

Enter the project data here. The more accurate and detailed the database, the better the Machine will be able to generate a participatory process.
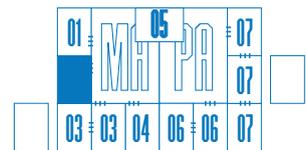
#01 THE PROJECT

Enter known background information about the project, regardless of its state of progress. Identify the possible participants, as well as their reasons for attending.

5 MIN

→ What is the project's name?
→ How has it been defined so far?
→ What are its primary purposes?
→ Why is it important to involve the public?

#02 CONSTRAINTS

Write down defining marks of the project that could constrain the participatory process. Legal, administrative, budgetary or temporal constraints, as well as the scope of intervention and specific challenges such as sensitive issues or people working against the project.
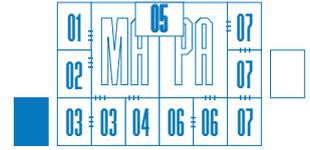
Then share your ideas. When a post-it is shared, participants with the same idea can put their post-it next to it.

10 MIN

2 minutes individually followed by 8 minutes of sharing

#03 STAKEHOLDERS

50 MIN

Do you know who is affected by the project and to what extent?

IF SO
Use that data here.

IF NOT
Try to imagine the possible stakeholders affected by the project.

5 minutes individually + 15 minutes of sharing

In the first step, identify all the entities – human or non-human – that are concerned by the project. First, each one writes down as many stakeholders as possible. They are then assembled in the complete inventory on the dedicated poster. When a stakeholder is mentioned, the participants who have the same one can stick their post-it next to it.

TIP

The designers of this tool are particularly attached to the idea that all stakeholders may be heard, even the most unexpected ones, such as animal species or other non-human entities. It appears essential to take into account the multiple and specific concerns and interests at stake within each project, even if they cannot all be satisfied.

**5 min individual
+ 20 min sharing**

Secondly, the aim is to get into the specifics of each stakeholder. Each participant completes the column for one or two particularly interesting groups.

→ What are their interests, what
   challenges do they face?
→ Which places matter to them?
→ What's their use of these places and
   what activities do they engage in?
   Are they already committed to the
   site in one way or another?
→ Could there be any conflicts or tensions between
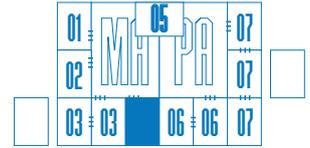   their interests and the proposed project?

5 min

Finally, add a random stakeholder from the MA/PA repertoire (urbanspecies.org/mapa/persona) that you may not have thought of, and process it collectively like the others.

→ What new interests, places, uses,
   or points of tension does this bring
   up? Fill in the column together.

#04 RESOURCES

15 MIN

3 min individually
+ 12 min sharing

What levers or resources are available to implement this project and, by extension, its participatory process? These could be budgets, time, people involved, employees, a dedicated space, objects or tools.

TIP

Could some of the constraints (#02) or tensions with different groups (#03) be turned into resources?

For example, if there are groups or entities that might oppose the project or be adversely affected by it, it might be interesting to involve them at the outset. That way, you can take their requirements into account and avoid any blockades later on.

10 MIN   Break

PARTIE II CALCULATING THE ACTION PLAN

1 H 30 MIN
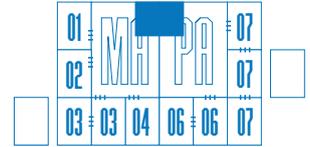
Now proceed to set the parameters: configure the Machine and introduce the reference data it will need to generate the action plan for your participatory process. Please be aware that the computation may take some time.

#05 SYSTEM PREFERENCES

No machine is neutral: specify which algorithm governs yours. Choose your collective system preferences: one or two values guiding and informing the project and its participatory process.

→ What should the machine pay particular attention to?

→ Inclusiveness, transparency, social justice, sustainability, representation, minority advocacy, economic development…?

#06 INSPIRATIONS
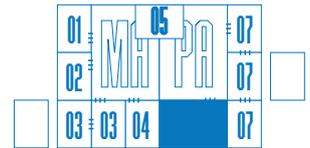
25 MIN

8 min individually
+ 17 min sharing

Now feed the Machine reference data in terms of participation: inspiring and relevant experiences and tools to get people involved, to survey opinions, to foster co-creation and public debates... Share, glean and choose some of these methods. Remember to note each of their strengths and weaknesses.

For this step, each participant brainstorms individually:

→ First, pick an action, method or tool from your personal experience that could be used for the project (you may have tried it yourself or heard about it)

→ Then, choose one of the following approaches:

    → Search the Participedia database (www.participedia.net) for a suitable method.

    OR

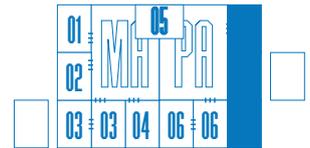   → Pick one or two method cards from the MA/PA directory. (urbanspecies.org/mapa/methods).

Briefly share elements that seem relevant to the case at hand.

TIP

Participation is not limited to debate and discussion. What are some other – playful, aesthetic, manual – ways to get involved?

#07 ACTION PLAN

60 MIN

The Machine is now ready to develop an action plan for your participatory process using the data encoded in the database (#01 to #04) and your settings (#05 and #06).

→   What will your participatory process look like?

ERROR 404 – PAGE NOT FOUND

Due to a technical error, the Machine cannot deliver an action plan. Try to develop it collectively. Take the opportunity to make it as lively and interesting as possible.

Together, try to imagine at least three initiatives that could ensure a participatory dynamic in your project. If you are particularly inspired, you can add more. Do so by combining the elements of the project's framework, the stakeholders, the places, the issues and resources detected during fieldwork with your most inspiring methods, while paying particular attention to the principles that define your "system preferences"...

15 min

45 min

OR

20 min in sub-groups and 25 min sharing

Detail each of these initiatives collectively or in sub-groups. For each of them, define the stakeholders you want to reach first, as well as the specific areas you want to engage them in and the actions, tools, events, and methods you'd like to implement.

Consider developing a detailed schedule and custom responsibilities.

Make sure that each measure has a follow-up system for all stakeholders involved, in order to keep them informed about the effects of their contributions and minimize any frustrations.

Lastly, look at the generated action plan.

→   Does this plan hold up?
→   Is it realistic?
→   What will its effects be?
→   Will you be able to deliver on its promises?
Be mindful of each initiative's risks and how you think you can address them.

Feedback: If the action plan is indeed implemented, it may be interesting to look back on the experience and register it in the Machine. That way, you can assess what has been implemented and adjust or integrate your findings in future projects.

CONGRA—TULATIONS!

You have created your very own action plan with MA/PA, the "Machine for Participatory Processes". Remember to take a picture of the results in order to share it with the other participants. Feel free to reuse the machine with different stakeholders or at various times during the project to generate more ideas.

MA/PA is a collaborative and open source tool.
Feel free to send us feedback and suggestions at info@urbanspecies.org, as well as documentation of your sessions, if possible.

CREDITS

The MA/PA tool was developed by Urban Species (ULB, Luca School of Arts), as part of the p-lab project: Identifying and Amplifying New Forms of Urban Participation. It was funded by Innoviris (Anticipate 2018-2021 program).

It was developed in partnership with Perspective. Brussels and benefited from critical feedback and user tests from various Brussels parties (public authorities, administrations, non-profits...).

Some elements are inspired from the Participation Game and Oma Stadi (cc) Hellon & City of Helsinki. It uses the collaborative and open source database participedia.net

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GRAPHIC DESIGN
Studio Alvin