Citizen participation in Sweden

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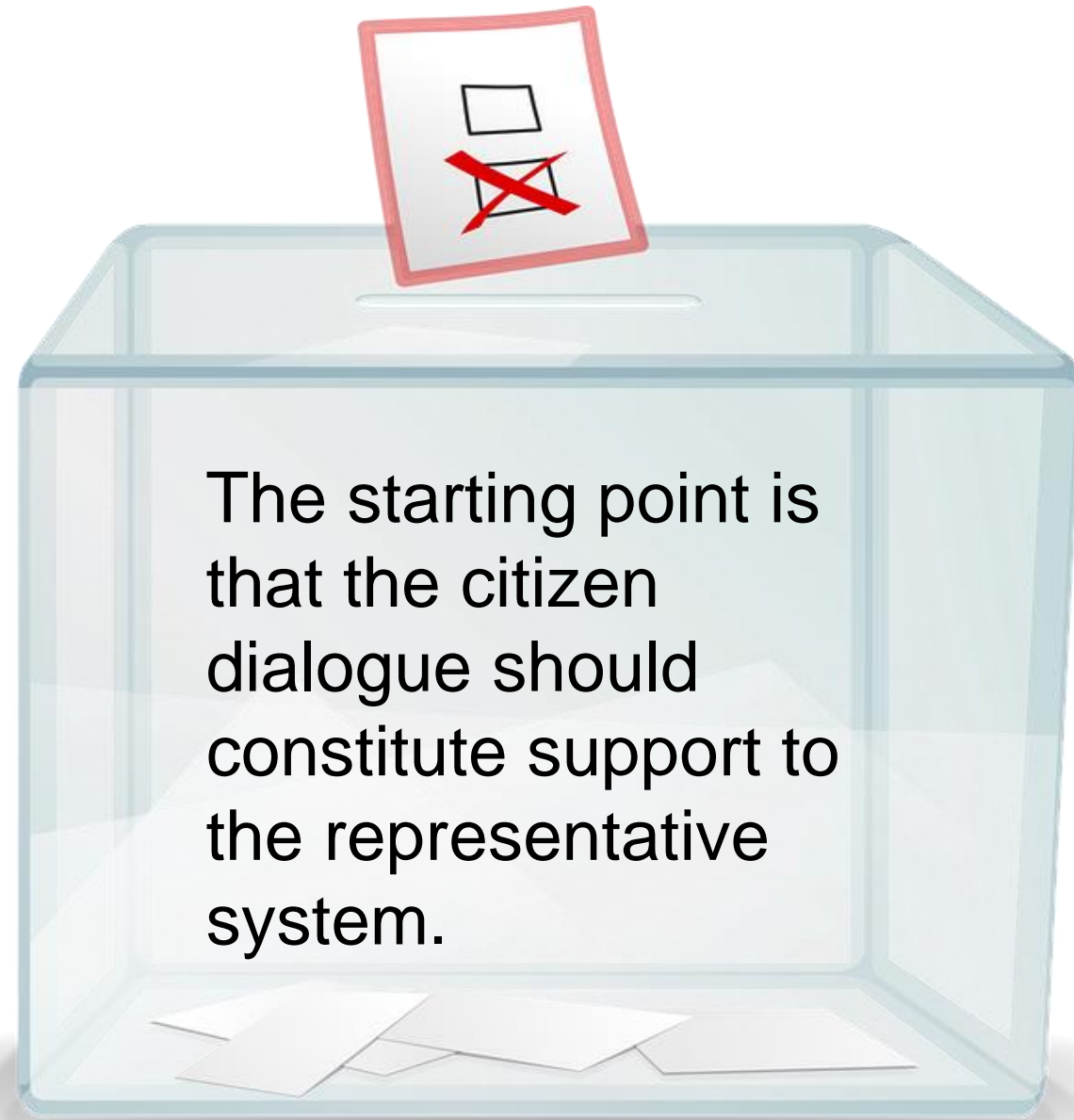"SALAR will support it´s members in the work to

- develop the dialogue and co-creation with citizens

and to

- integrate the results in governance processes and business development for a socially sustainable society"

Some key findings

The starting point is that the citizen dialogue should constitute support to the representative system.
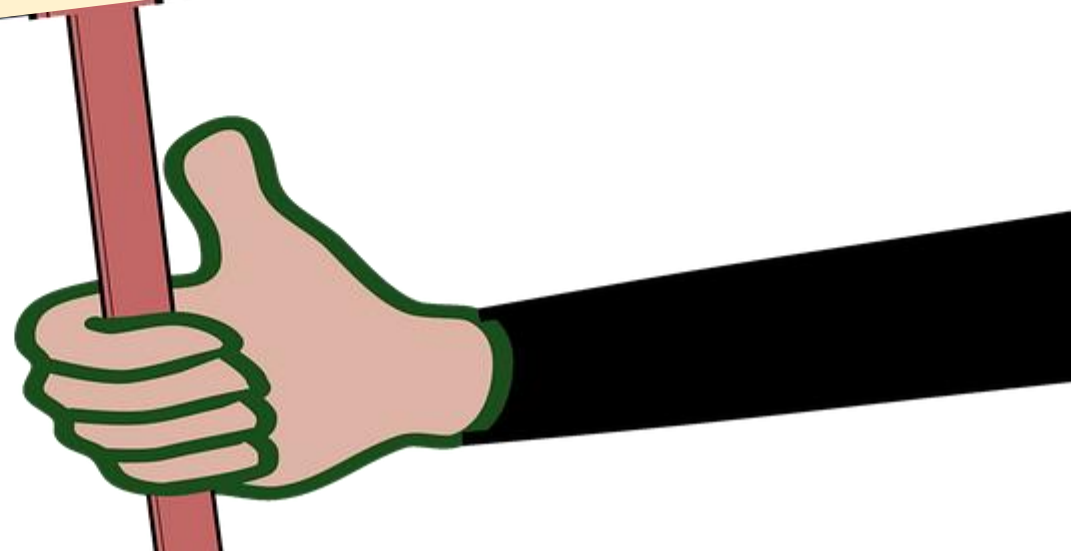
Some key findings

Mainstreaming citizen dialogue and engagement requires, among other things, clear internal structures with policy documents, clearly defined responsibilities, and a changed municipal culture.

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Some key findings

Municipalities and regions need to design system to invite to dialogue, but the system also needs to be able to handle initiatives that come from others such as citizens, other authorities or civil society.
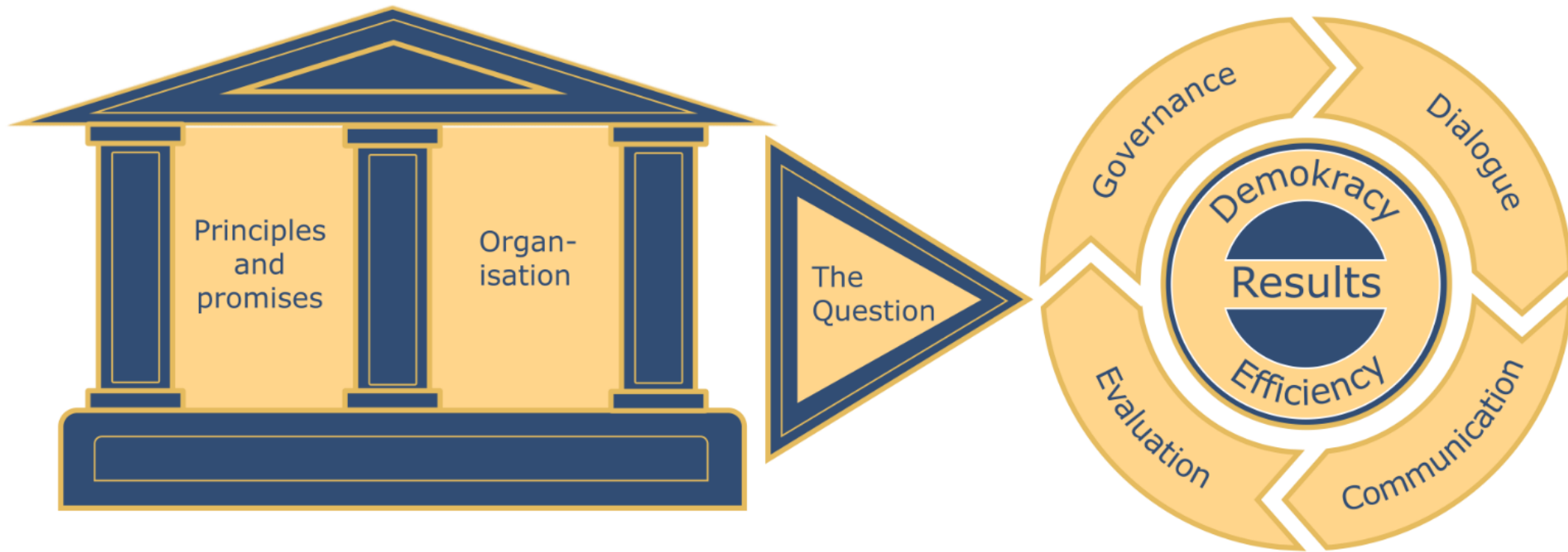
Some key findings

International experience shows that in order to institutionalize citizen dialogue, principles / guidelines need to have a long-term focus.

SALAR has, in close collaboration with municipalities and regions, developed a governance model.

The governance model describes what is required for mainstreamed and systematic citizen dialogue at two levels.

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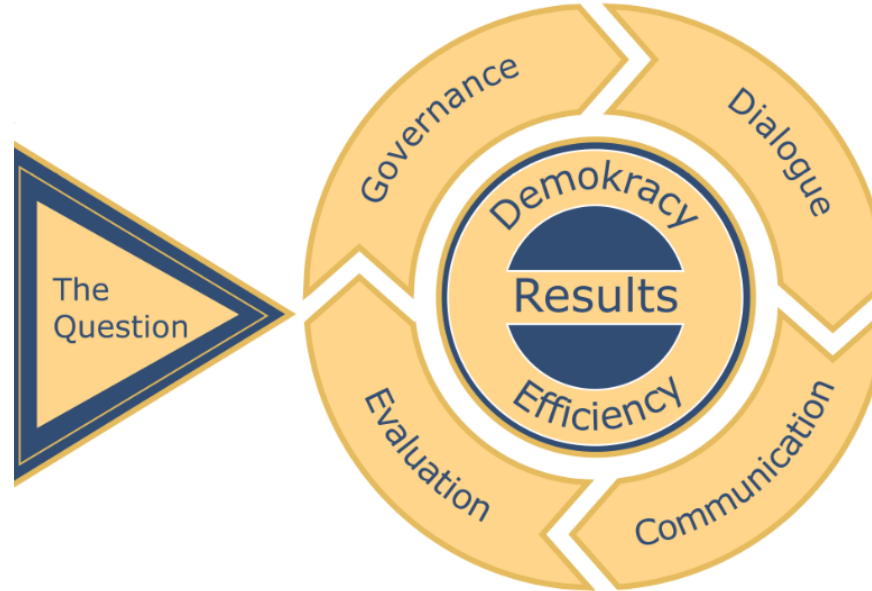
Principles and promises
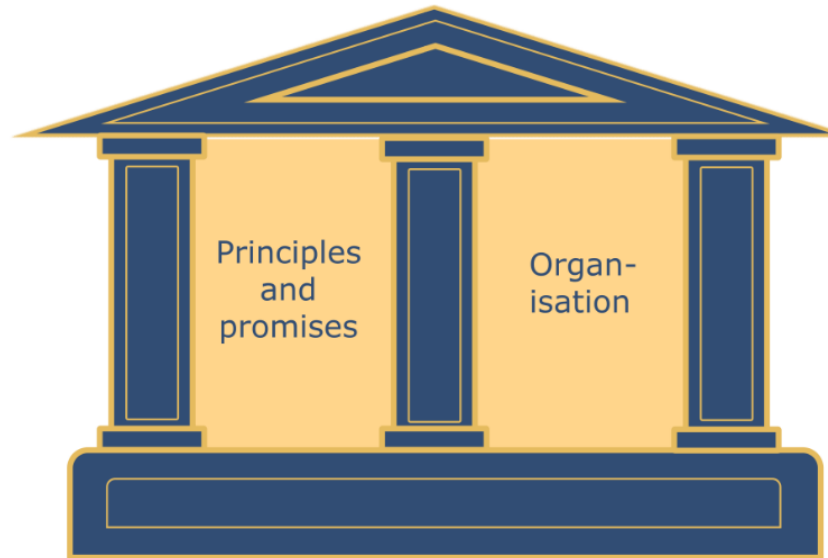
Organ-isation

A systematic level for the overall organisation

The governance model describes what is required for mainstreamed and systematic citizen dialogue at two levels.

A level which details the process which must be undertaken to shape each individual citizen dialogue.

Municipalities and Regions need to make a conscious choice to institutionalize citizen engagement in governance structures.

- Why should we have citizen dialogue?
- What are our goals for citizen dialogue?
- What strategies do we have to achieve the goals?
- How should the results be used and how should they get into control?
- How should feedback take place?
- How do we handle internal initiatives for citizen dialogue?
- How do we handle external initiatives for citizen dialogue?
- Which decision-making body decides whether a dialogue should be carried out?
- What internal culture is required to achieve our goals?
- What strategies do we have to achieve the culture we want?

The first form of principles is based on it being developed internally in the organization and describes how the organization should work with citizen dialogues.
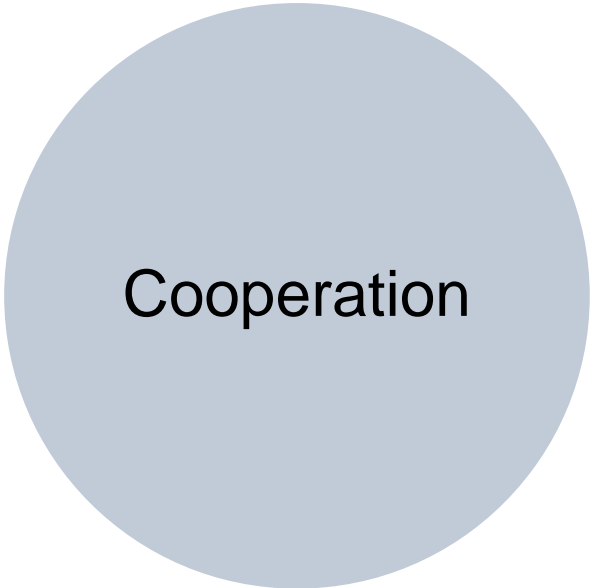
Internal structure
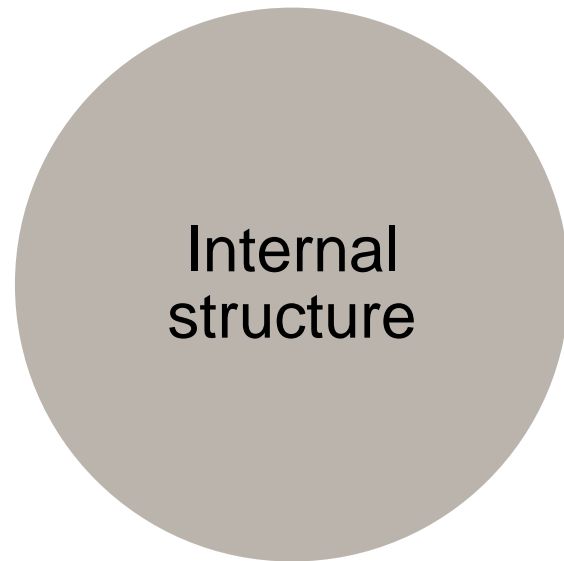
- It often includes the clarification of the division of responsibilities, how the process for citizen dialogue should take place.

- They also raise points of departure about why the municipality / region should conduct citizen dialogues.

- It can be about which groups are to be prioritized, how accessibility is created, how results are to be used and what benefits are intended to be achieved.

The second form of principles is also an internally produced document, but focuses on what the organization promises citizens in terms of influence and participation in order to influence local development.

Internal with promesis

- It can be about openness and transparency, the degree of influence that is given, how accessibility is created and how feedback takes place.

- They also often include what the elected representatives promise to the citizens.

The third form of principles is developed in collaboration with the citizens and constitutes some form of agreement. Often referred to as a charter, for how the citizens, the municipality and other actors together shall work for a good development of the local community.

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Cooperation

- The principles describe both how participation and influence should take place, but also how the various actors' responsibility for to maintain the agreement shall take place.
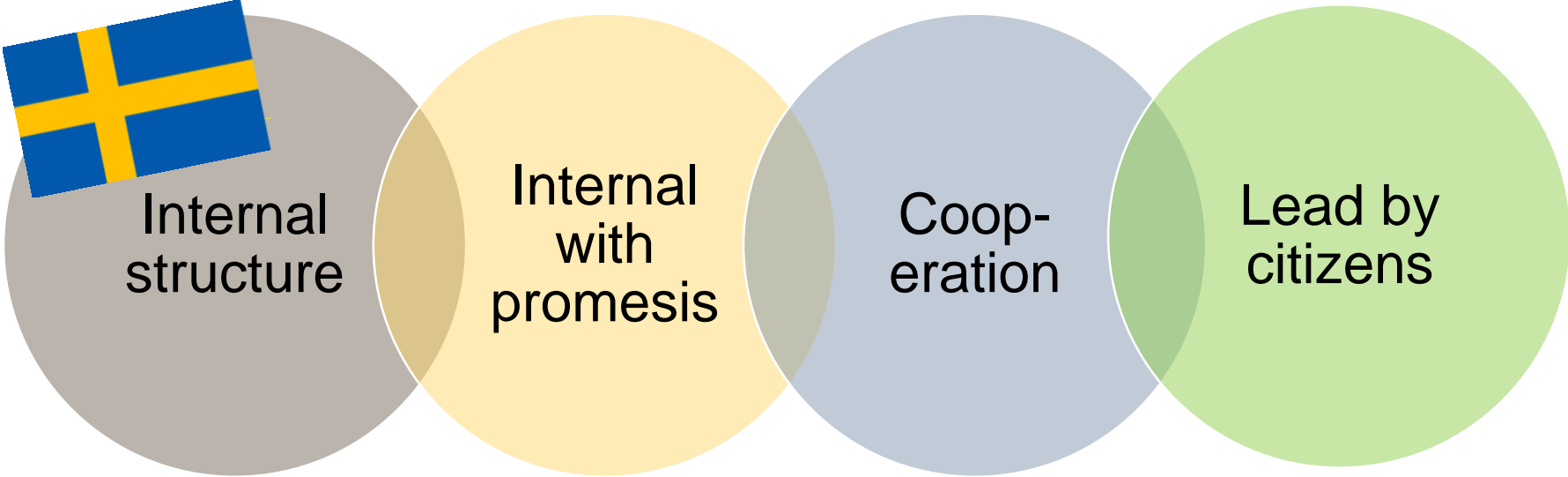
In the fourth form of principles, which mainly occurs in connection with municipalities working with participatory budgeting, it is the citizens who in dialogues develop principles for the citizens' budget and participate in revising them annually.

Lead by citizens

- It is usually a selected group of citizens who draw up proposals for principles that are approved by the municipality.

- Principles primarily include responsibility for various roles in the participatory budget process.

Charter/Principles

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Internal structure

Internal with promesis

Coop-eration

Lead by citizens

Citizen engagement needs to be institutionalised and systematised in Municipalities and Regions as part of the overall governance system.

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Principles and promises

Organisation

- What should the structure look like in order to achieve success with citizen dialogue?
- What resources should be allocated? Financial and personnel
- What culture should be developed in the organization to see the citizens as a resource in the local development?

Changed mindset – includes culture
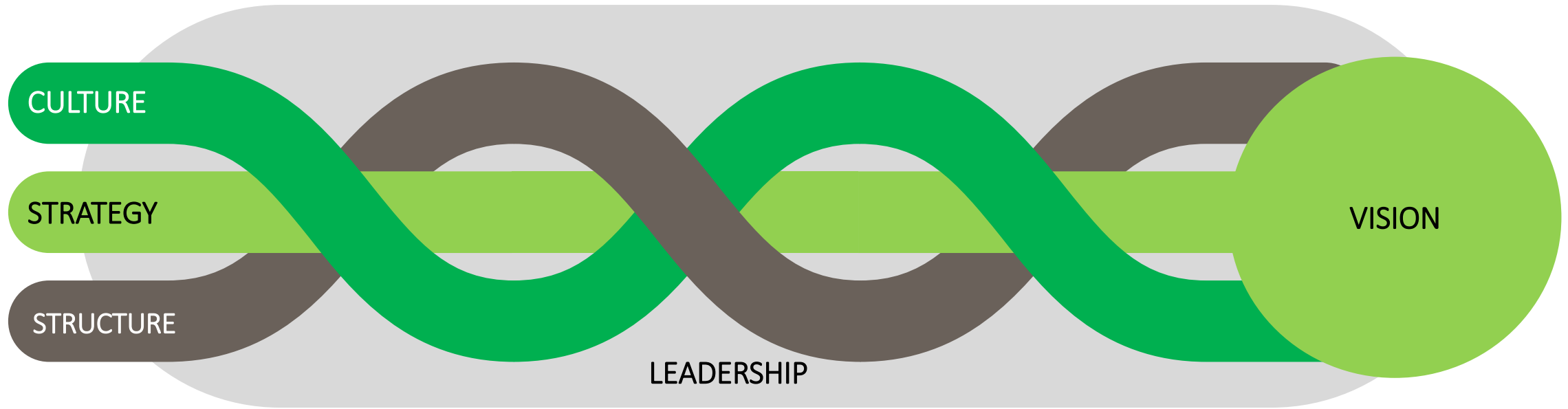
A shift is needed to a culture where citizen dialogue has clear impacts on decisions and services and where citizens are seen as an asset by Municipalities.

dialogues

Sveriges
Kommuner
och Regioner

Do not forget to formulate the goals for your dialogue

Formulate what you want to achieve from the dialogue

It is necessary for the evaluation phase

Clarifying the issue has proved to be important in achieving a useful result in the dialogue

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The Question

- In general, the citizen dialogue wins if it takes place early in a decision-making process where the possibility of influence is greatest.

- The administrations are responsible to make long-term assessments of what issues that benefits from involving the citizens.

Questions that require a YES

1. Is it possible to affect the issue?

2. Am I/ are we willing to be influenced?
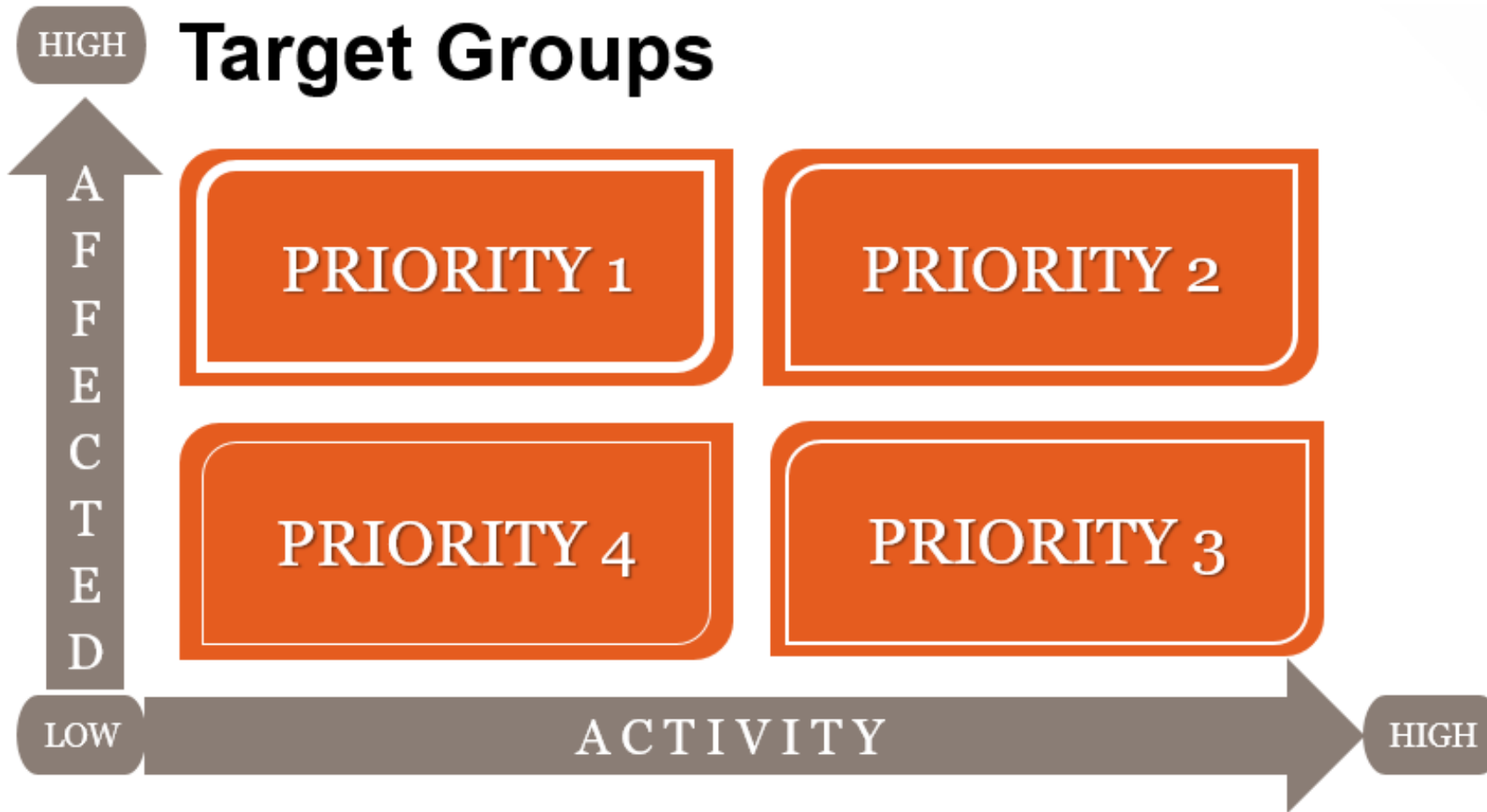
And!
Citizen participation is not……

- Anchoring the decision you already made or plan to make

- A happening to promote yourselves

- Something you just because everybody else does it

- Information in general

- Something that officials fixes

Ladder of participation

Co-desicion

Cooperation

Dialogue

Consultation

Information

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Target Groups

HIGH

AFFECTED

PRIORITY 1 | PRIORITY 2

PRIORITY 4 | PRIORITY 3

LOW — ACTIVITY — HIGH

1- The low-active people who are much affected by the issue we want to have a dialogue about?

2- The ones that are highly active and are greatly affected

3 - Those that are highly active but that are not affected as much

4- The low active ones that are not affected so much
How do we reach the different groups? Who are they?

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Retrieved from German researchers
You can be low or high active as a citizen, the question may concern you a little or a lot.

Digital or analog – do both!

- Take advantage of the best of each dialogue form – do combine

- People want to participate when our office is closed

- Some people have difficulty catching up or being able to go to a meeting because of time, distance etc.

Meet people were they are!
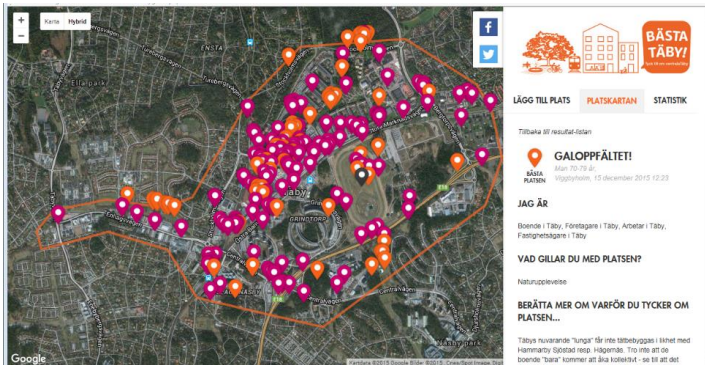
You can choose among different paths for dialogue:

- The citizen dialogue is aimed at a **specific group** in society, either on the basis that the group is underrepresented or because the issue delimits the target group.

- The dialogue takes place based on a **geographical area** where citizens are given opportunity to participate based on their everyday knowledge of living in the area.

- A **representative sample** is made by the population to highlight one or more questions.

- **All citizens** are invited and those who want to come.

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Dialogue at different stages in a process

Information

Consultation

Dialogue

Influence

Co-decision

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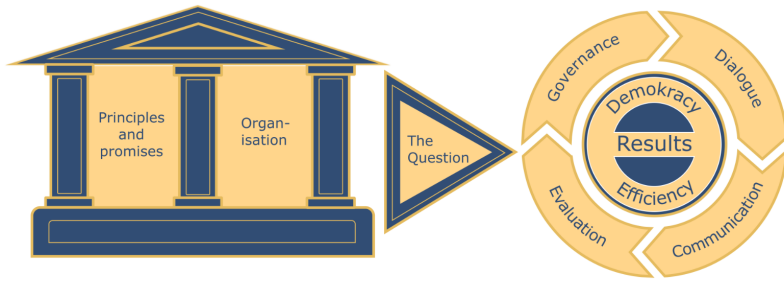and Regions

The process – an example
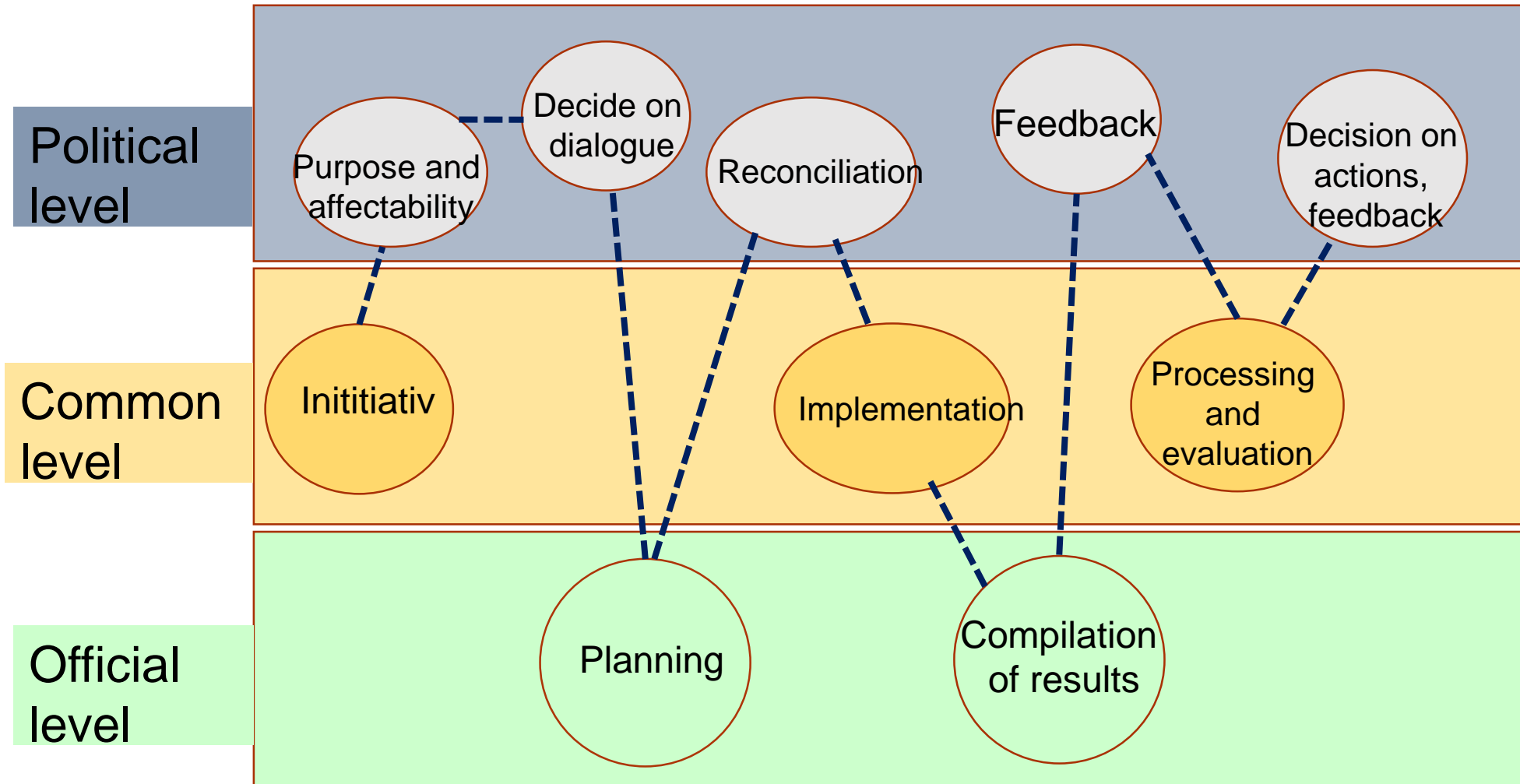
SALAR aims for citizen dialogue to be integrated as part of overall governance and business development with the overarching goal of creating a sustainable society.

In order to achieve the goals and have the effect of the citizen dialogue, there must be perseverance and an attitude where permission is given to constantly develop and to see failure as an opportunity for learning.

Those who wait to shape the perfect system before daring to try will not succeed.