

Practical tools for

Creative Climate Action

Citizen Engagement - Reflection Guide



60-90 min



2-6 participants

Tool description and purpose

This tool helps cultural and creative project partners reflect on the meaning, design, and impact of citizen engagement. Citizen engagement in this context is not simply about participation as audience, but active involvement in shaping the process and outcomes.

Engagement means:

Citizen engagement is about creating opportunities for people to participate as active co-creators, contributors, and stakeholders in shaping both the process and the outcomes.

- Strengthening democracy by enabling influence over public space and cultural life.
- Reducing exclusion by building bridges across different social groups.
- Increasing legitimacy of publicly funded initiatives by involving those affected.
- Contributing to sustainable development, well-being, and local identity.
- Providing artistic development through collective experiences

When to use?

- During the early planning of participatory or co-creative activities
- In the preparation of open calls or project concepts
- At key checkpoints to reflect on the quality of engagement
- After project completion for learning and evaluation

How to use?

- Use the reflection questions individually or in a group
- Apply them during planning, implementation, or evaluation
- Compare answers to identify alignment or tensions in your team
- Adapt your strategy based on insights
- Document key decisions and learning

Reflection Questions for Citizen Engagement

Use these questions when planning, conducting, or reflecting on participatory initiatives involving citizens in cultural or creative work.



1. Purpose and Rationale

Why do we want to involve citizens in this project?
Is the aim artistic, social, democratic – or all three?



2. Level of Engagement

What role will citizens play – observers, participants, or co-creators?
Are we offering deep, ongoing collaboration or one-time activities?



3. Inclusion and Access

Which groups are invited – and which are at risk of being excluded?
Are we ensuring access in terms of language, time, space, and culture?



4. Resources and Commitment

Do we have the time, flexibility, and trust-building capacity needed for genuine engagement?
Are participants compensated or otherwise recognized?



5. Reciprocity and Impact

Will participants feel that their contributions are taken seriously?
How will we make the outcomes visible and meaningful to them?



6. Legitimacy and Institutional Trust

Does the engagement process enhance public trust in institutions and funding?
Are we being transparent and fair in how decisions are made?



7. Artistic Value and Integrity

Does the engagement enrich the artistic process or practice?
Are we clear about who authors what, and who benefits artistically?



8. Documentation and Learning

Are we planning how to document the engagement and reflect on its effects?
What might we learn about participation, process, or social change?

Reflection Questions for Citizen Engagement

Use these questions when planning, conducting, or reflecting on participatory initiatives involving citizens in cultural or creative work.

☐

1. Purpose and Rationale
Why do we want to involve citizens in this project?
Is the aim artistic, social, democratic – or all three?

☐

2. Level of Engagement
What role will citizens play – observers, participants, or co-creators?
Are we offering deep, ongoing collaboration or one-time activities?

☐

3. Inclusion and Access
Which groups are invited – and which are at risk of being excluded?
Are we ensuring access in terms of language, time, space, and culture?

☐

4. Resources and Commitment
Do we have the time, flexibility, and trust-building capacity needed for genuine engagement?
Are participants compensated or otherwise recognized?

☐

5. Reciprocity and Impact
Will participants feel that their contributions are taken seriously?
How will we make the outcomes visible and meaningful to them?

☐

6. Legitimacy and Institutional Trust
Does the engagement process enhance public trust in institutions and funding?
Are we being transparent and fair in how decisions are made?

☐

7. Artistic Value and Integrity
Does the engagement enrich the artistic process or practice?
Are we clear about who authors what, and who benefits artistically?

☐

8. Documentation and Learning
Are we planning how to document the engagement and reflect on its effects?
What might we learn about participation, process, or social change?