

# **Community meetings and thematic committees**

Organisational document on community participation mechanisms

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This document has been drafted through collective work in different community working groups. After some meetings and discussions, we have synthesised the agreements in this document. The aim is to clarify how the main mechanisms of community participation work: the meetings and the thematic committees.

Thanks to all those who participated in the drafting of the documents.

# 1/ Community Meetings

## Introduction

In recent months, several requests have been made to open community meetings. As a result of the requests made by some members of the Decidim Association and the [open debate](#) in Metadecidim, it is necessary to establish some minimum operating rules for the different types of community meetings.

We want to encourage greater community participation, promoting bottom-up dynamics, as well as establishing a space for regular contact that allows for the exchange of information, knowledge and proposals.

The following document defines four types of meetings:

- Community Calls
- Thematic committees meetings
- Community LABs
- Decidim days or similar events

# Community Calls

## Definition

Community Calls are meetings that take place on a regular basis, with the aim of sharing information, getting updates on the status of the project, learning about new initiatives and generating collaborative synergies between the community. It is a space open to new ideas and where anyone can add an item to the agenda. These meetings are always online.

## When are convened?

Community calls are convened regularly every two months. The announcement of the next Community Call must be made, at least, two weeks in advance.

## Who can assist?

It's open to the whole community, so everybody can join the Community Calls.

## Who is going to manage it?

The Coordination Committee, the Team, and the Community Stewardship Thematic Committee are responsible for managing the convening. Roles should be rotated in order to share responsibility.

## How can I add an item to the agenda?

Everybody can suggest adding an item to the agenda. Just write a comment in the Metadecidim meeting explaining what you want to add and why it is relevant for the community.

## What kind of issues can be addressed in a Community Call?

In general terms, anybody who wants to share something with the rest of the community. For example:

- A developer who made a new module and wants to make a demo of how it works.
- A researcher who published a paper on Decidim and wants to share the findings.
- A participation practitioner who wants to present a use case.

# Thematic committees meetings

## Definition

Meetings promoted by thematic committees with the aim to discuss a specific topic or work on any project. These meetings can be open to everyone, although in some cases they may not involve the whole community because they focus on specific areas/topics.

## Who can convene them?

The meetings of these groups are convened by their promoters/organizers.

## When are convened?

When the thematic committee secretary decides. The meeting must be announced through Element at least.

## Who can assist?

These meetings are addressed to the participants in the thematic committee, but it must be open to anybody who's interested in the topic discussed.

## Who is going to manage it?

The coordinator: defines priorities and acts as a spokesperson with the Decidim Association.

The secretary: schedules meetings, publishes them and summarizes meeting minutes.

Other participants: full autonomy on everything else inside the thematic committee.

## What kind of issues can be addressed?

The issues decided by the thematic committee, for example:

- Organizing a release party
- Organize a Lab Metadecidim to discuss a research topic
- Discussing the community stewardship
- Discuss design system and components of Decidim

# Community Meetings

## Definition

Meetings open to the whole community with the aim to discuss in depth about a specific topic, bringing in the insights and help from experts in the field discussed. It could be related to product, governance, design, participatory democracy or other key issues.

## Who can convene them?

These meetings are promoted and organized by Decidim Team.

## When are convened?

When it's necessary to discuss a key issue with the community and the help of external experts.

## Who can assist?

The entire community.

## Who is going to manage it?

The Decidim Team

## What kind of issues can be addressed?

Some examples of what it's done and what could be done:

- Presenting a new feature: For example electronic vote
- Discussing the new redesign for Decidim
- Discussing how to improve the API

# Decidim Days or conferences

## Definition

An event organised by a group of Association members or partners where the central theme is Decidim. It can focus on any aspect related to the project: Implementation and use of Decidim for participatory democracy, design of participatory processes, deliberative democracy using Decidim.

## Who can convene a Decidim Day?

Only Decidim Association members and Partners can propose a Decidim Day.

## Approval of the Decidim Day proposal

In order to ensure that the event meets the requirements and is aligned with the vision of the project, the coordination committee must approve the event.

The proposal will be assessed on the basis of:

- Complying with the Social Contract
- There's a positive impact and a return to the Decidim's community
- There's no a commercial interest behind the event

## How to submit a proposal

To submit a proposal of a Decidim Day you must upload your proposal in the proposals components on the Coordination Committee assembly. In the next meeting of the Coordination Committee it will be discussed. To submit a proposal, you must specify:

- Title
- Dates and location
- What is the main objective?
- How this event is going to have a positive impact on the community?
- Program and speakers (draft)
- Partners



## **What is the role of the association?**

A Decidim Day or a similar conference is a meeting organised using the Decidim Association Trademark. This means that the Coordination Committee must approve the general content and the program of the conference. A Decidim Day can be organised in collaboration with other partners, just as the Decidim Fest.

## **Trademark policy**

A Decidim Day or a similar conference is a meeting organised by the Decidim's Association, this means that it can use the Decidim's name and logo, according to the [trademark policy](#) defined.

## 2/ Thematic Committee

### Definition

A thematic committee is a community-led group that work on a specific purpose. Elected by the Coordination Committee, they will have all they need to work transparently and efficiently.

### Who can convene them?

A thematic committee can be proposed by anyone to the coordination committee. The coordination committee is accountable to dialogue with the proposer in order to find a common agreement on the thematic committee goals&purpose.

### When are they convened?

As the coordination committee will elect and will need to help new committees, it's up to the coordination committee to choose when they are ready to accept new thematic committees proposals.

### Who can join?

Anyone can join a thematic committee. The only membership restriction is about the committee spokesperson who must be member of the Decidim association.

### Who is going to manage it?

We trust the thematic committee to mostly organise by themselves. The minimal governance required is:

#### Spokeperson

Bring transparence on the commitee on-going operations and plans.

- Present the thematic committee work on the General Association Meeting
- Participate on meetings with the coordination committee
- Define priorities and strategies for the committee

## Secretary

Plan meetings on meta-decidim and write down next-actions/plannings/meeting minutes

- Create regular thematic committee meetings in MetaDecidim.
- Write down meeting minutes.
- Give a clear view of current next-actions and planning in a public document.

## Thematic Committee Member

Help the committee to progress toward their purpose.

- Respect each other
- Welcome new members in the best conditions possible.
- Look after the Decidim Product well-being.
- Be transparent on available time and energy.
- [Address and welcome conflicts as they rise.](#)

## Online spaces

Each thematic committee will have the right to have an Element room and a MetaDecidim participatory space.

- **Element room:** When a thematic committee is approved they will have an element room in the Decidim space.
- **MetaDecidim:** After a few months of work and with a clear roadmap, a space can be opened in MetaDecidim for the organisation and participation of the thematic committee. In this space the committee will be able to use the components it wants. The opening of the space in MetaDecidim should be requested to the coordination committee.

To welcome proposals

- a MetaDecidim page will preset the process and the possible delegation of coordination committee's attributions.
- a MetaDecidim component to allow anyone to propose a new thematic committee.

## How to submit a proposal

Any Decidim Association member can propose a thematic committee. To propose a thematic committee, the proposer must full fill the following items:

1. proposed spokesperson: \_\_\_\_\_
2. thematic title: \_\_\_\_\_
3. why is it needed **now**? \_\_\_\_\_
4. what happens if we don't have this thematic committee? \_\_\_\_\_
5. how many persons are already volunteer (min 3)? \_\_\_\_\_
6. give an example of things this thematic committee would look after: \_\_\_\_\_

This proposal will come as a suggestion to the Coordination Committee, who will be free to define clear rules to accept/deny a suggestion. We trust the coordination committee to keep the process transparent.

## Amendment of a thematic committee

Both the thematic committee and the coordination committee can propose amendment to a thematic committee at any time. This amendment can be done to reflect better the reality, or to improve the committee's purpose.

To agree on a thematic committee amendment, both the coordination committee and the spokeperson need to see no harm in amending the thematic committee.

Before an amendment decision, this amendment need to be published to all the thematic committee members at least a week before the decision making process.

The Community Stewardship thematic committee ends up helping more the community to interact than just focus on the governance. We should amend the thematic committee Community, with a purpose of "Decidim community organically grows and more diverse, high-quality contributions are made".

## Dissolution of a thematic committee

The coordination committee can at anytime dissolve a thematic committee without notice. The coordination committee bring the dissolution of a thematic committee on the General Assembly Meeting.

At anytime, if more than half of the thematic committee agree on dissolution, the thematic committee is dissolve immediately. No particular explanation is required to dissolve a thematic committee by its members.

## **Right to quit a thematic committee**

At anytime, a member of a thematic committee can quit the committee. To act his/her demission, the member need to publish his/her decision in the thematic committee element space. No particular explanation is required to quit.

In the case of the spokesperson quit, the thematic committee will be paused and will wait another spokeperson election from the Coordination Committee. If no spokesperson is elected, the thematic committee will be dissolve.

## **Conflict resolution**

As a thematic committee member, I stay accountable:

- To do no harm on purpose
- To address and welcome conflicts as they rise.
- In case of conflict, to explore
  - What is ***happening*** that is creating this situation?
  - What ***needs*** are arising for the individual, or for the community?
  - What ***changes*** can we make to address those needs moving forward?
- To talk as much as possible directly with concerned people
- To seek help of a facilitator if the conflict sticks
- If the conflict can't be alleviated and need to quit.
  - to give others time for peace.
  - after a year, to consider coming back to concerned people for making peace