

## GovLabAustria - #GLAInno1 - Transparency and Participation in Legislative Enactment Procedure/Law-Making



source: <https://blogs.ec.europa.eu/eupolicylab/files/2018/04/Logo-e1523550075198.jpg>

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### Introduction and organization

GovLabAustria is a public sector innovation lab operated by the Austrian Federal Ministry for the Civil Service and Sport and the Danube University Krems (Austria). It is an interdisciplinary laboratory fostering innovation in the public sector through collaboration between experts from the Ministry of Civil Service and Sport, the Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs as well as experts for E-Government and knowledge- and communication management of the Danube-University Krems. GovLabAustria should make it possible to address central public sector challenges in an open and interdisciplinary experimental space and to develop cross-organizational approaches to solutions involving the respective relevant stakeholders in a scientific and practical context. This case study analyses a specific initiative the co-creation of GovLabAustria's project about "Transparency and Participation in Legislative Enactment Procedure".

### Context

GovLabAustria is a public sector innovation lab operated by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Civil Service and Sport and by the Danube University Krems, department of E-Government. Both institutions have a long history in finding ways to bring innovation to public administration and both have experience in interdisciplinary and collaborative partnerships. The expertise in science, industry and civil society represents a great potential for Austrian administrative and government work. If, for example, charitable organizations are considered, a total of 236 000 people are employed in Austria in this area and 28 percent of

the population are formally volunteers at a non-profit organization<sup>1</sup>. Many of these organizations work on societal issues and develop innovative solutions to present and future challenges. Transparency and participation are two essential principles of good governance. In order to put these principles more in the focus of its activities, the Austrian Federal Government has formulated in its work program the goal of "better integration of civil society organizations in political decision-making processes". Cultivating a "more transparent and open design of the legislative process" has been agreed upon. In doing so, it also addresses the improvement potentials identified by the OECD in the area of the transparency of assessment processes and the involvement of civil society at the earliest possible date, for example, in advance of an official assessment procedure.

New media has revolutionized communication in the private and corporate sectors in recent years. As part of E-Government, the public sector is increasingly using digital communication technologies. In the area of legislation and publication, different systems are used in Austria. However, these systems (Regulatory Impact Assessment IT Tool, Legal Information System RIS, or the homepage of the Austrian Parliament) are only partially networked or integrated into a structured and transparent IT-based legislative, review and publication process. In addition, there is potential for optimization in particular with regard to the accessibility of relevant information and the possibility of a structured and transparent introduction of external expertise, in the sense of participatory legislation.

The Federal Performance Management Office and Department for Strategic Public Administration Management and Civil Service Innovation within the Federal Ministry for the Civil Service and Sport works on several core activities related to innovation in public administration such as performance and innovation management as well as better regulation. The department mainly focuses on activities such as process and project development, quality assurance, consultation and dissemination (circulating knowledge about innovation in administration). Other tasks of the department are on one hand the CAF, i.e. Common Assessment Framework. This is a self-assessment tool that is used to start and monitor innovation processes in administration. The other issue is "knowledge management" in administration due to the challenge that the public service in Austria will lose 50% of its employees to retirement over the next 13 years. Furthermore, following the introduction of a new impact-oriented budgeting and management framework at the federal level of government, a shift in the working mode from input-focus to outcome-focus had to be administratively accompanied.

The introduction of the new budgeting and management framework ("Wirkungsorientierung"), starting in 2013, and encompassing over 130 000 civil servants, was an extremely resource consuming process, that was managed by this department. Other topics, especially 'innovation topics' such as digitization, new services for citizens, new administrative processes, new working methods and new cooperation were second in line. In other words, there was a lack of capacities to cope with new themes that would determine the future of public administration.

Additionally, public sector specific innovation barriers arose and they needed to be overcome. These includes legal frameworks, budget restrictions, risk sensitivity and a

risk-averse culture as well as silo-thinking, pressure on impacts, barriers in competence, capacity and/or willingness and a missing focus on end-users.

Fortunately, using impact orientation as a strategic goal for public administration opened the gate for looking at possibilities to re-think and re-design processes. Within the impact orientation framework, the scope of individual employees to work on their own account became visible. And this could be used to promote innovation in administration and to design new processes. Furthermore, a long history of cooperation between the Department for E-Governance and Administration at the Faculty of Business and Globalization of the Danube University Krems helped to form the idea of a GovLab.

## Organization

**Webpage:** <http://www.govlabaustralia.gv.at>

**Country:** Austria

Initially, GovLabAustria was developed within the Federal Chancellery of Austria. It was planned to create an advisory institution, an innovation unit, for public sector innovation. By that time, the Division of Impact Management & Administrative Innovation was part of the Federal Chancellery and a few actors within that department saw the potential of creating a laboratory that was dedicated towards experimenting with new methods for administrative innovation. Together with the Danube University Krems and the Strategic Head of Digitization in the Federal Government of Austria, at that time, it was agreed to set up an innovation laboratory. Within a very short time frame the team began to set up processes, projects and structures for GovLabAustria.

The overall mission of GovLabAustria is to build an ecosystem of innovation. It bridges new partnerships and new stakeholder constellations between different fields of expertise and opens up a new realm of interaction. This helps to overcome silos and boundaries and enables collaboration and co-creation. Furthermore, GovLabAustria provides a safe-space for experimentation which includes possible failures. It sees itself as an experiment. The conceptualized governance model is subject to change. It might fail as a whole and this failure would be a legitimate outcome.

The lab is operated by the Danube University Krems and the Austrian Federal Ministry for the Civil Service and Sport, Federal Performance Management Office and Department for Strategic Public Administration Management and Civil Service Innovation. The governance model is defined in a "Memorandum of Understanding" of the two contracting parties. The "Memorandum of Understanding" includes the statement of the mission and overall goals of GovLabAustria. It is a non-profit entity which creates space for experimentation to solve challenges of the public sector in interdisciplinary, cross-organisational, cross-sectoral, multi-perspective ways.

The governance model of GovLabAustria consists of a sounding board, a leading board and a management team. While members of the sounding board have an advisory role, the sounding board evaluates the current projects of the GovLab and discusses ways of implementation. The Leading Board is the strategic steering committee of GovLabAustria

and consists of six people. It is headed jointly by the rector of the Danube University Krems and the General Director for the Civil Service and Public Sector Innovation in the Austrian Federal Ministry for the Civil Service and Sport. All strategic decisions are made during telephone conferences or personal meetings; it is important to note that all decisions are to be made unanimously to ensure that all actions are done in equal consent creating joint solutions without the risk of disadvantaging one of the parties.

The skills present in the team are very heterogeneous - it brings together scientific knowledge, especially regarding e-Democracy, with knowledge from public officials, especially about innovation in the public sector regarding 'better regulation'. The GovLab Team does not have an individual budget but uses equal budgets provided by the two contracting parties.

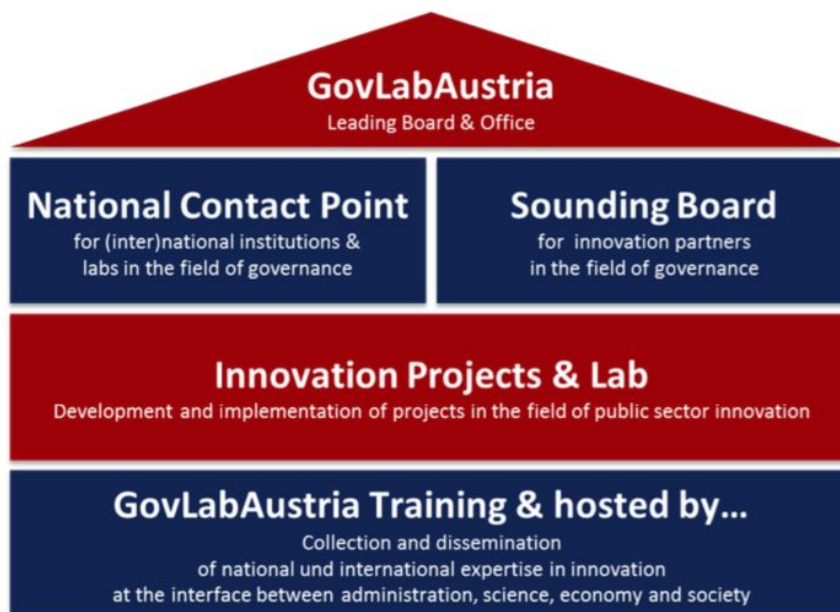


Figure 1 - GovLabAustria four major duties

The objective of GovLab is not to work on any immediately relevant topic but to work on big societal questions. Furthermore, the lab supports cultural change within public administration (Figure 1) as it acts as the central innovation and research hub of the Austrian federal government in the field of governance and public sector innovation. GovLabAustria offers different stakeholders a platform fostering intersectoral collaboration, peer-learning and implementation of innovative projects. Its central objective is to support international knowledge transfer and access to international expertise and resources. Current innovation lab projects cover the areas of knowledge management, digitalization and participation. To enable different stakeholders to collaborate in an open, modern and safe environment GovLabAustria offers facilities at the Impact Hub Vienna to all of its partners. Impact Hub Vienna is part of the international Impact Hub network and provides one of the world's largest networks focused on building entrepreneurial communities to work on the public good<sup>23</sup>.

Additionally, to safeguard the dissemination of knowledge, promote innovative projects, processes and methods and to foster the cultural change across the public sector and beyond, GovLabAustria Training offers a variety of workshops, seminars and events.

GovLabAustria emphasizes that government innovation also means governance innovation in the sense that innovation processes cannot entirely be developed within the public sector system but have to include diverse perspectives from outside the public sector. Cooperation with all societal sectors (public sector, science, private business and organised civil society and citizens) is aspired in terms of creating an “Alliance of the willing” for public sector innovation.

## Processes and tools

GovLabAustria targets central challenges of the public sector, looking for intersectoral approaches while integrating relevant stakeholders in an academic and practical context in an open and interdisciplinary experimental space. The core targets of GovLabAustria are the prototypical implementation of research and development projects in the field of public sector innovation and evidence-based policy making, international observation of innovative projects, methods and solutions in and beyond the public sector, the establishment of a National Contact Point for innovation labs in the public sector, the integration of expertise from administration, academia, private sector and the public, as well as the dissemination of knowledge through education, training and communication. The work of GovLabAustria focuses on future-relevant issues, using citizen-oriented solution approaches in the context of an open “experimental space” and taking advantage of innovative methods in a problem oriented way. All relevant dimensions, encompassing administration, political system, social system and private sector, are being considered. The team culture of GovLabAustria is based on the principle of a “free room of interaction”; it operates on the following core principles: not part of existing hierarchical structures consensual decision-making with a focus on free discourse, exchange of opinions and cooperation, cooperation is experimental and future-oriented, periodic reflection and impact assessment focused on process improvement and organizational learning.<sup>5</sup> The work of GovLabAustria is done on a project-to-project basis. Open experimental spaces, shall encourage the adaptive and situational use of innovative methods such as co-leadership, co-creation and collaboration, gamification, design thinking and agile development/rapid prototyping.

Especially the ‘co-ownership’ with the Department of eGovernment at the Danube University Krems brings in knowledge about new technologies that can be used to support co-creative processes, e.g. for citizen participation.

## The case - #GLAinno1 - Transparency and Participation in Legislative Enactment Procedure/Law-Making

The following information is taken from three interviews with Alexander Grünwald (Austrian Federal Ministry for the Civil Service and Sport, Head GovLabAustria), Ursula Rosenbichler (Austrian Federal Ministry for the Civil Service and Sport, member of the GovLabAustria

Leading Board) and Peter Parycek (Danube University Krems, member of the GovLabAustria Leading Board)

## General description

**Website/ link:** <http://www.govlabaustria.gv.at/projekt/rechtsetzung/> **Location:** Vienna, Austria

**Starting and ending date of the initiative:** March 2017 – end of 2019

The aim of the pilot process #GLAInno1: Transparency and Participation in Legislative Enactment Procedure is to test how expertise from politics, administration, science, industry and civil society can be brought together in the best possible way and be incorporated into the legislative process in Austria. #GLAInno1 is a research and development project which is implemented prototypically within two years, enabling targeted communication and collaboration between administration, science, business and civil society in the legislative process through the innovative use of different forms of stakeholder participation and of information technologies. Following a survey of the status quo in Austria and the identification of international examples of good practice, the national needs in this area have been assessed in a participatory process with the involvement of relevant stakeholders. On the basis of the knowledge gained, a suitable process and a corresponding infrastructure are prototypically implemented, which enables the pooling of expertise as well as transparent and participatory legislative processes. Interventions that are developed within #GLAInno1 are prototypically implemented and tested as part of a use case project involving all relevant stakeholders. The findings of this process are taken into account in the further development of processes of transparency and participation in legislative enactment procedure and law-making in Austria.

## Governance

Parallel to the development of the organizational structures of GovLabAustria, the lab team looked for suitable project ideas to start a pilot process. This was meant to help to develop both the know-how for organizational key properties as well as know-how concerning methods and general process facilitation at the same time in a sense of rapid prototyping. Therefore, the process of choosing a problem for the pilot process was rather pragmatic instead of strategically developed. By chance, the very complex issue of Legislative Enactment Procedure emerged as a challenge to be worth working on. The Interest Group of Public Benefit Organizations (IGO) contacted GovLabAustria to talk about challenges of transparency and participation within the system of law-making in Austria. On one hand, this is a topic that GovLabAustria was interested in before and additionally as being part of the Federal Performance Management Office and Department for Strategic Public Administration Management and Civil Service Innovation in the Federal Ministry for the Civil Service and Sports the issue of 'better regulation' was a key concern of the involved public officials. Therefore, the GovLabAustria team decided to further develop the project idea of 'Transparency and Participation in Legislative Enactment Procedure/Law-Making' with IGO. Several meetings of a group of core stakeholders after that managed the process together in order to create a competent team. Soon, this became the pilot for GovLab's innovation

processes named #GLAInno1: Transparency and Participation in Legislative Enactment Procedure.

There was no specific budget allocated to the pilot process. The resources consisted only of the staff hours of all involved partners, mutual support and the respective organizational resources that each partner could rely on within his or her own organization.

## Stakeholders landscape

GovLabAustria invited a group of stakeholders to form the #GLAInno1 team. The task of the #GLAInno1 team was to design the innovation process to successfully integrate other relevant stakeholders and to get to an implementation for the 'use cases'. Initially, the #GLAInno1 team consisted of 5 people from the following institutions:

- GovLabAustria (project coordinator)
- Federal Ministry for the Civil Service and Sport, Federal Performance Management Office
- IGO – Interest Group of Public Benefit Organizations (project lead)
- Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs
- Danube University Krems

All partners met to discuss and re-state commitments that were given in the bilateral talks to confirm and/or correct their commitments and capabilities that could be brought into the process. Furthermore, it was decided that IGO had the overall project lead and the meeting functioned as a Kick-off for #GLAInno.

Overall, the meetings during the initial starting phase of the process were necessary to identify common interests and to see if there was a cooperative working mode with each partner. This rather careful approach was used because of the complexity of the topic and involved stakeholders and especially because this was GovLab's pilot project. This way, the GovLab team took time to reflect the steps taken in the process. This was necessary, because conducting the pilot process logically creates a lot of learning opportunities.

IGO negotiates interests, bundles resources, and argues and advocates for common concerns to opinion leaders and decision makers in politics, administration, business and media, in order to strengthen non-profit starting off to design the process GovLabAustria conducted bilateral meetings organizations that work for public benefit<sup>7</sup>. Another stakeholder of the group was the Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs for IT supported participation processes and the E-Government department of the Danube University Krems as part of the double-ownership structure of GovLabAustria and because of the specialist knowledge about digitally supported participation procedures. A main part of coordination and facilitation was done by GovLabAustria. Additionally, the Federal Performance Management Office in the Federal Ministry for the Civil Service and Sport contributed specialist know-how on 'better regulation' within Austria. This resulted in several role conflicts which are described below.

Furthermore, the group knew that there were other relevant stakeholders that needed to be invited and integrated at best. For internal reasons, it was decided on all sides that some of these stakeholders would receive ongoing updates on the process but they would not be actively involved in the process.

The issue of transparency and participation as a means of good governance has been a contested concept among all stakeholders. In brief, the general attitude towards Legislative Enactment Procedure of IGO and most of its member institutions is that there is definitely not enough space for participation and not enough transparency in the system and therefore public administration is asked to improve the existing system. On the other hand, the involved public officials participated more in an attitude of emphasizing that they fulfill political order, that opportunities for participation are already present and that there is likely no necessity for changing the system as it is.

## Process structuring and engagement

### **Forming of the steering group**

After forming the initial group of stakeholders as a steering group for coordinating #GLAinno1 several other meetings followed to work on the design of the participation process for #GLAinno1. It was clear from the beginning among all partners that working on Transparency and Participation in Legislative Enactment Procedure/Law-Making requires a broad, open and transparent participation process involving a great variety of stakeholders. The group developed a milestone plan which is published on the project's website. It lays out all major steps for #GLAinno1 connected to a project schedule (kick-off, research phase, stakeholder workshop, use case implementation, final report).

Acknowledging the expertise of the core group of stakeholders the team reviewed several other processes with similar aims within the Austrian public administration and developed a mapping of intersecting projects. Soon, it was found that the parliament's general administration office had also been previously working on citizen participation (e.g. implementation of a contact e-mail and simple voting system for the legislative enactment procedure). Therefore, the parliament's general administration office was invited to participate in the steering group of #GLAinno1.

### **Framing the state of the art**

In a next step, the core group decided to do a state-of-the-art study about transparency and participation in the law-making process in Austria as well as internationally. The goal was on one hand to examine needs of the civil society as well as of public officials and on the other hand to gain an overview about how these issues are discussed worldwide and to find best practice examples. In cooperation with the Hertie School of Governance, a master thesis was commissioned that collected international good practice examples about participation in policy enactment and law-making procedures. Additionally, two studies were conducted by the GovLab team, one survey for civil society organizations in Austria about the status quo of participation concerning their involvement in policy enactment and law-making procedures



the other one consisted in 15 -20 personal interviews with public officials about opportunities for participation in policy enactment and law-making procedures

The result of the survey was a rather critical assessment of opportunities for transparency and participation in law-making procedures. The sample from the interviews was quite diverse and although it was rather small it led to meaningful insights. However, the results of the interviews stood in contradiction to the results of the survey. This holds true for almost every single question of the survey. E.g. public officials were rather skeptical about using new technologies, especially social media tools, to support and improve processes of participation whereas the civil society actors stated that using social media communication could improve the system to a great extent. Overall, public officials seemed satisfied with the system as it is and only acknowledged that ways of informing citizens and civil society actors could be improved. Hence, the division between the assessment of opportunities for participation by public officials and by civil society actors became visible.

### **A model for improved transparency and participation in the law-making process in Austria**

Following this research stage, the GovLabAustria team wrote a comparative report which analyzed both surveys as well as the international best practice examples. Initially it was planned to derive a model for improved transparency and participation in the law-making process in Austria based on the insights from this research. This model should then have been presented and discussed with stakeholders. But due to the contradicting perspectives on the issue that were visible, the core group of stakeholders decided to develop the model for improved participation in a broad stakeholder workshop. This meant to include a large variety of stakeholders very early in the process and to have an open invitation process. GovLabAustria invited organizations and especially umbrella organizations, to participate in the process. Organizations were asked to forward the invitation to their members. Stakeholders had the chance to become part of the process even at a later stage (e.g. because they did not know about the process before).

For the stakeholder workshop GovLabAustria used a newsletter for invitation. Furthermore, central stakeholders have been personally invited either because they were power-relevant or because they had specific know-how about processes of law- making and policy formulation.

With over 50 representatives from civil society, administration and science gathered at the Impact Hub Vienna<sup>8</sup>, the GovLab team designed a process for the workshop in a way to enable a fruitful discussion among all participants and in order to get to a phase of 'model development'. First, the team presented the idea behind #GLAInno1: Transparency and Participation in Legislative Enactment Procedure. In the framework of six heterogeneous working groups, the participants had the opportunity to discuss needs and challenges, to introduce examples of good practice and to jointly develop ideas for initial sample processes. The working groups had been selected by the GovLab team in advance (after reviewing the registration list of participants) in order to have participants from all societal sectors and with diverse backgrounds in each of the six groups. For GovLab it was important to create balanced working groups and to enable constructive discussions. For example, they

provided key rules of the art of hosting for all participants on posters in the room (e.g. listening to each other, reflecting on what was previously said, “Yes Anding”, everyone on the table has a say). Overall, the focus of discussion was on two periods: on the one hand, possibilities of increased transparency and participation were examined before the completion of the ministerial draft; on the other hand, the period of the appraisal process itself was addressed. Especially in the first phase, that of political development or policy formulation, great potential for co-creation was seen. The working groups were guided through a process from the definition of the status quo, imagining the ideal situation and developing ideas for improvement. At the end of the day, GovLab achieved its goal of creating a discussion where participants exchange perspectives and create a common understanding of what transparency and participation in policy enactment and law-making procedures could look like in the future. Afterwards, the workshop and each working group were documented with pictures and short summaries. The report was then sent to all participants for comments and refinements and is now publicly available for download on the project’s website<sup>9</sup>.

Following the stakeholder workshop, the #GLAinno1 team met for a debriefing to review what had been done so far, discuss results, what the lessons learnt were until that point and how should the process keep going.

In a next step, the #GLAinno1 team wrote a synthesis report bringing together all findings from the research phase and the results from the stakeholder workshop to create a model for improved transparency and participation in the process of legislative enactment procedure and law-making. For the shared writing process of the report the team used a cloud service and developed the text iteratively within six weeks. This was the basis to derive characteristics for the “use cases”.

The tool “Insights” was used to implement one ‘use case’ for the policy formulation process<sup>10</sup>. It enables a systematized discussion and review about policy documents via an online platform. The tool provides different functions such as half-automated collection and synchronization of individual comments to clustered topics based on algorithms on the one hand. Furthermore, the tool offers collection and synchronization of comments via up- and down-votings - the time necessary for analyzing the participation process is thus drastically reduced. Furthermore, the tool creates transparency because it makes visible which single comments compose a key consideration in the end and a participation black-box is avoided.

The #GLAinno project will be completed in the fall of 2019 with a project report and an implementation and process recommendation for transparent and participatory policy formulation and assessment processes. The results will be published and presented to the new federal government as a recommendation. A concrete follow-up project has been commissioned to develop a guide to digital participation. In addition, the results of the project were fed into various participation projects and the drafting of a new Better Regulation Strategy.

## Insights on political influence

As being part of a ministry GovLabAustria has to deal with political influences on their processes and cannot work entirely separate from day-to-day political business. Notably, changes within the Austrian national government resulted in a restructuring of ministry departments and divisions which spawned a project halt several times. For example, previous commitments of public officials to participate in the #GLAInno1 process changed after ministries were restructured. Nevertheless, GovLabAustria received continuous political support for its work since its start in 2016.

The #GLAInno1 team wanted to find “use cases” to test the model characteristics they had derived from the previous research and consultation phase. Unfortunately, due to the restructuring of government and a new political program it was not possible to find a suitable topic and to get a mandate for implementing a “use case” until spring 2019.

## Media and communication

The first year of the process consisted of several workshops which were used to create a common space for communication and exchange among all involved stakeholders. The main goal was to identify common perspectives and deviating views on several issues connected to the overall topic of transparency and participation in legislative enactment procedure and law-making. Deviating views were not used to separate groups but to be an ‘energy provider’ for finding common solutions with all participants, even if this included difficult discussions. It was a central learning that international and external communication about the process is important but that the usage of communicative measures and instruments needs to be reflected upon. Especially in the starting phase of an innovation process, decisions have to be made about when and where to communicate about what and probably also when not to communicate at all. Most information about #GLAInno1 was provided on the website of GovLabAustria and with a newsletter.

As a governance and government innovation lab it is quite difficult to be in the role of the facilitator and to be seen as a ‘neutral’ instance without any biases because the lab is never completely free from political influence. For example, on one hand GovLab aims to present its work and communicate how processes are going while on the other hand there is the risk of only being heard by the audience as a part of the Federal Ministry instead of as a facilitator of innovation processes. This is an ongoing difficulty which the GovLab team has to cope with. Many activities of GovLabAustria are focused on building trust across the governance sector.

## Insights on culture, behaviors and the organization

As GovLabAustria is part of the Federal Performance Management Office and Department for Strategic Public Administration Management and Civil Service Innovation in the Federal Ministry for the Civil Service and Sport the lab team has valuable knowledge and expertise in the field of better regulation. This was an advantage and disadvantage at the same time. On the one hand, having this kind of expertise enabled the team to steer a complex process like that. Because of this the team knew how challenging the stakeholder constellation would be in the #GLAInno1 and how difficult an implementation in a use case could become. Nevertheless, GovLab decided to take the challenging problem of Transparency and

Participation in Legislative Enactment Procedure instead of going for an 'easy and nice case' for the pilot. The reason for this was to learn how GovLabAustria was, or could become, able to work on very complex, wicked policy problems. The pilot process was a test for that. Furthermore, the partners also knew that #GLAinno1 will not result in quick-wins and will challenge all involved actors. One lesson learnt for GovLabAustria is that they had become too involved with the political content of the process instead of only providing facilitation and coordination of the process. As a consequence, for future processes GovLab will try to avoid getting too involved in the role of one stakeholder (e.g. the Federal Ministry) and instead try to stick to the role of facilitator. As a governance and government innovation lab it is quite difficult to be in the role of the facilitator and to be seen as neutral without any biases because the lab is never completely free from political influence.

Concerning the survey to review the state-of-the-art in participation, GovLabAustria wanted to do online-surveys both for the civil society actors as well as for public officials. For the survey for public officials it was decided later on to do personal interviews instead of a broad survey. This decision was based on internal considerations. For example, conducting an online survey within the public sector would probably have resulted in much more publicity for the process among public officials. There is a likely chance that this would have had the potential to disrupt the whole process at an early stage. As there was agreement among the group of core stakeholders to pragmatically work through the process and to avoid or mitigate possible pitfalls a more sensitive approach towards the survey for public officials was used.

Although IGO was officially project lead of the process GovLabAustria had a strong role of project coordinator and committed a lot of resources into the project. For all following innovation processes, GovLabAustria decided not to be in a strong coordinating position but to identify one external stakeholder to take on that role. Furthermore, one lesson learnt is that big questions like Transparency and Participation in Legislative Enactment Procedure need to be broken down into sub questions in order to be workable. Overall, the milestone plan was quite ambitious and the deadlines of the project schedule could not be met due to the above mentioned barriers (political as well as organisational influences). As a lesson learnt, GovLabAustria does not publish fixed project schedules on the website anymore and uses agile time schedules internally.

## Insights on the Co-creation Process

A central learning of GovLabAustria is that there is much that can go wrong in co-creation processes but there is also a lot that can be successful. For example, looking at the first stakeholder workshop it was worthwhile to take time and to design a process that will enable discussions at a level playing field (in terms of communicative settings, systems thinking etc.). This was because all participants received tasks to work together and the facilitation created commonly shared results. This kind of outcome cannot be achieved with panel discussions and online participation. People have to personally connect and work with each other. The right setting of stakeholder workshops and communication is quite crucial if an innovation process concerns a topic which is politically contested. For example, in an event before the first stakeholder workshop took place the GovLab team wanted to present the project aims and first insights of the research phase of #GLAinno1 after public officials had

stated their perspective on the issue. The majority of the audience were members of civil society organizations and they reacted with resentment against to what had been said by the public officials about transparency and participation in processes of law-making. Unfortunately, the moderator of the panel did not allow GovLab to first present their motivation, aims and findings but instead opened the discussion immediately. Therefore, the GovLab team was in a situation where they could not frame the project and instead of bringing perspectives together, the discussion brought more divide between actors. In a consequence, GovLab was very cautious to create a level playing field for their own stakeholder workshop which took place about two months later. In order to avoid this kind of negative discussion the team designed the stakeholder workshop in a way that small discussion groups each with diverse participants could exchange each other's perspectives. Bringing all voices on the table and allowing for an exchange of different point of views. Collaborative co-working and co-creation processes require a very thought-through design of the process and a very precise planning of open, participatory working modes.

Another important insight the head of GovLabAustria highlights is the impact of informal networks for successful innovation processes. Often, informal partnerships and meetings influence a process at all stages without strategic missions in the back. Furthermore, with choosing Transparency and Participation in Legislative Enactment Procedure as the pilot process the GovLab team knew that they will not gain fast results and quick-wins. Additionally, the process required so many resources that GovLab was not able to do a parallel third pilot which would have had an easier constellation in all respects and which could have resulted in quick-wins. Overall, the whole process took much longer than was initially planned. Furthermore, a more realistic and appropriate resource calculation is necessary for this kind of complex process. On the side of GovLabAustria only a 0,25 full-time equivalent position per month was available.

Results from GovLab processes are taken back into the usual policy implementation process by the Department for Strategic Public Administration Management and Civil Service Innovation as input and ideas that can be further developed. GovLab motivates other departments to present use cases which the GovLab team can work on. Furthermore, GovLabAustria is recognized by many departments as an important actor and partner for public sector innovation in Austria and maintains its role while other innovation units fall under restructuring.

After the national government elections in Austria in autumn 2017 and a restructuring of all ministries and other public administrations, the GovLab team needed to rebuild connections to old and new departments. In effect, GovLabAustria needs to constantly scan its political environment to navigate through different landscapes and to maintain perseverance and resilience. For example, current GovLab processes might become topics that are also discussed in other areas in the public sector and beyond. If a process has changed, e.g. because it has become an issue for the national parliament, resources are scarce or other interests become visible, the GovLab team adjusts their processes to the new situation. It wants to create dynamic stability to continue working. GovLabAustria works theme-specific and has not been actively engaged with issues that are highly contested on national political level at the same time. Furthermore, in an ongoing process of evaluation with the sounding board GovLabAustria reflects what went well and what went wrong in previous projects and

it reflects on the different roles the lab team had so far. In the end of 2019, the sounding board will develop a new strategy for future tasks and future roles of GovLabAustria. Public administration needs a unit that is allowed to use out-of-the box thinking and acting and be able to experiment – in what form whatsoever.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.govlabaustralia.gv.at/projekt/rechtsetzung/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://impacthub.net/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://vienna.impacthub.net/>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.govlabaustralia.gv.at/wp-content/uploads/GovLabAustria\\_Information\\_EN\\_2018-07.pdf](http://www.govlabaustralia.gv.at/wp-content/uploads/GovLabAustria_Information_EN_2018-07.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.govlabaustralia.gv.at/wp-content/uploads/GovLabAustria\\_Information\\_EN\\_2018-07.pdf](http://www.govlabaustralia.gv.at/wp-content/uploads/GovLabAustria_Information_EN_2018-07.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.govlabaustralia.gv.at/projekt/rechtsetzung/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://gemeinnuetzig.at/en/>

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.govlabaustralia.gv.at/veranstaltung/shw\\_rechtsetzung\\_2017-11-23/](http://www.govlabaustralia.gv.at/veranstaltung/shw_rechtsetzung_2017-11-23/)

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.govlabaustralia.gv.at/veranstaltung/shw\\_rechtsetzung\\_2017-11-23/](http://www.govlabaustralia.gv.at/veranstaltung/shw_rechtsetzung_2017-11-23/)

<sup>10</sup> The tool has been tested and used before in the project "#GLAInno2: Austria 2035 - The State and Me". In that project GovLabAustria develops a vision of the future, which should contain basic principles, processes and technology for efficient, effective and sustainable cooperation among all societal sectors. The aim of the project is to use the "collective intelligence " approach to develop concepts, processes and instruments for future-oriented cooperation between state and society in an open process involving a large number of relevant stakeholders; <http://www.govlabaustralia.gv.at/projekt/oesterreich2035/>