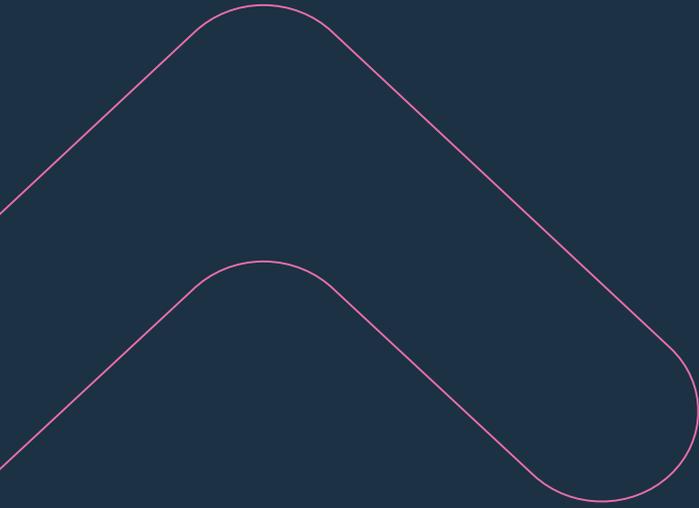




**European Capital
of Democracy**

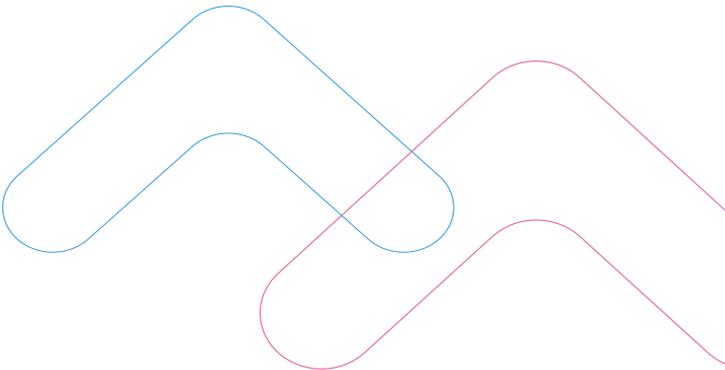


ECOD 2027 APPLICATION

Ankara

Submitted: November 2025

Content



Mission statement

- Teaser 5
- Summary..... 5
- Democratic Ambitions..... 6
- Achieved Successes 7
- Future Challenges 8

Projects

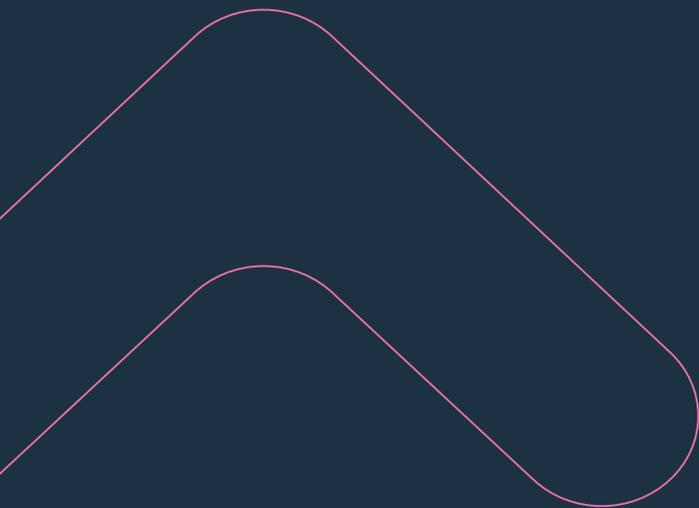
- Eco-Climate Summit 10
- The Capital Youth Assembly..... 13
- Citizenc of Ankara Re-Assemble 16

Project Ideas

- Democracy Biennial 20
- The New Democracy Academy..... 23
- Facilitative AI Protocol for Deliberation 26

ECOD 2027 APPLICATION - ANKARA

Mission statement



Mission statement

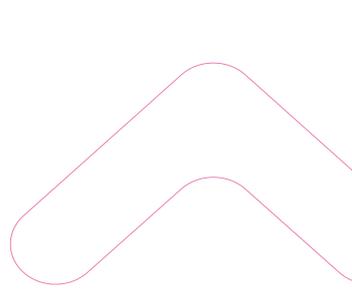
From Capital City to Capital of Participation

Teaser

Ankara aims to upscale participatory democracy at a metropolitan level by mobilising its broad civil-society coalition and voluntary citizen base to counter political polarisation, strengthen trust in public institutions, and transform citizen participation into a shared, resilient, solidaristic and future-oriented model that inspires other cities across Europe.

Summary

As the heart of the Republic, Ankara presents its candidature for ECoD 2027 not simply to showcase successful projects, but to demonstrate how a metropolitan city can rebuild democratic capacity by transforming citizen participation into a systematic, policy-shaping ecosystem. Over the past five years, Ankara has developed one of Europe's most ambitious democratic infrastructures through its Citizen Council, an independent and broad-based platform uniting more than 3200 institutions and over 10,000 active citizens across 50 thematic working groups and 10 assemblies. This network has become a decisive actor in shaping urban policies—ranging from climate adaptation and mobility to culture, accessibility, neighbourhood governance and disaster readiness—by institutionalising continuous, structured and knowledge-based citizen input. Internationally recognised through the IAF Award-winning “Citizens of Ankara: Re-Assemble!” initiative and the OIDP shortlist, the Citizen Council has shown that democratic innovation can flourish when large-scale participation is treated not as consultation, but as co-creation of public policy. Proposals generated within this system have been adopted unanimously by the Metropolitan Council, evidencing how bottom-up deliberation can overcome entrenched political polarisation. Ankara's model has created an urban trust ecosystem in which civil society organisations, youth networks, professional chambers, academics, local communities and municipal institutions engage in transparent, iterative dialogue. The Capital Youth Assembly further strengthens this ecosystem by enabling thousands of young people to experiment with democratic decision-making through simulations, participatory design processes and digital engagement tools. Meanwhile, Ankara's response to the 2023 earthquakes—mobilising thousands of volunteers for several months—demonstrated the capacity of participatory governance to produce rapid, coordinated and socially legitimate crisis action. What distinguishes Ankara is its creative and innovative content production across citizen working groups, thematic assemblies, urban rights dialogues, climate forums and co-designed cultural programmes. These processes generate a continuous stream of new ideas, evidence-based proposals and public debates that strengthen collective intelligence and broaden the democratic public sphere. Instead of limiting participation to traditional formats, Ankara has turned citizen engagement into an engine for creativity, social learning and policy innovation. By applying for ECoD 2027, Ankara seeks to scale this metropolitan participation model to



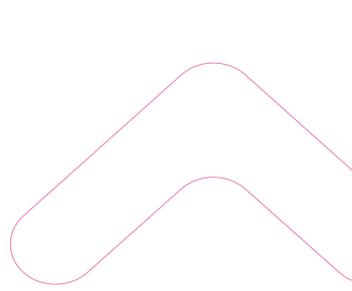
a European level, demonstrating how co-governance structures can counter democratic backsliding. Ankara aims to become not only a political capital, but a Capital of Participation, proving that democracy in large cities can be renewed through openness, trust and shared authorship of the urban future.

Democratic Ambitions

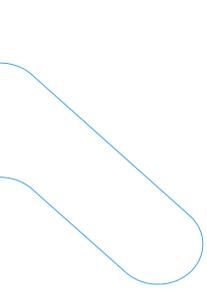
Ankara's democratic ambition for ECoD 2027 is to redefine what metropolitan democracy can achieve when participation becomes a structural, knowledge-driven and innovative governance capacity. The city envisions a model in which democracy is not a periodic exercise but a continuous, collaborative process that shapes policies, strengthens social cohesion and generates collective intelligence. Ankara aims to demonstrate that large capitals—often viewed as vulnerable to democratic erosion or polarisation—can instead become sites of renewal when citizen participation is treated as strategic public infrastructure. Central to this ambition is the transformation of Ankara's Citizen Council into a metropolitan engine of democratic co-creation. Rather than functioning as a consultative forum, it operates as a governance ecosystem where civil society, youth networks, professional bodies, neighbourhood groups and municipal actors jointly articulate problems, analyse evidence, formulate proposals and monitor implementation. Ankara seeks to deepen this model so that participatory inputs influence major policy domains, including climate adaptation, mobility planning, cultural development, accessibility, digital transformation and social inclusion. The objective is to institutionalise participation as a consequential layer of policymaking, capable of shaping long-term urban futures. A second pillar of Ankara's ambition is to counteract political polarisation by cultivating an urban trust ecosystem. The city aims to strengthen predictable, transparent and inclusive democratic spaces that encourage dialogue across ideological and social boundaries. Through structured interaction, Ankara seeks to normalise cooperation, reduce conflict-driven narratives and reinforce trust in public institutions. This ambition positions participation not only as a governance tool but as a mechanism for democratic resilience, capable of repairing fractures and restoring social confidence. A third ambition is to harness creativity and innovation through human interaction. Ankara views citizen participation as a generative force that can produce new cultural expressions, digital tools, policy experiments and civic imagination. The city intends to expand citizen labs, youth-led studios, thematic design processes and collaborative workshops, ensuring that democratic engagement becomes a catalyst for creativity and a driver of innovation in public life. Finally, Ankara aims to emerge as a European reference city for participatory metropolitan governance. The ambition is to share its methodologies, institutional arrangements and anti-polarisation practices with European partners while learning from their digital, ecological and social innovations. Through ECoD 2027, Ankara seeks not only recognition but active collaboration to co-create the next generation of democratic practices suitable for complex urban environments.



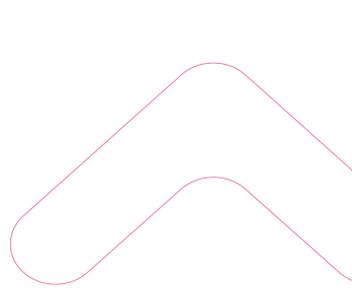
Achieved Successes



Ankara's achieved successes show that a metropolitan city can renew democratic practice even amid rising national polarisation. Through its Citizen Council, Ankara has built a governance ecosystem where civil society, local government, central-government representatives, youth groups, professional chambers and neighbourhood actors engage in structured, transparent and evidence-based interaction. This has enabled participation to move beyond symbolic consultation toward policy co-creation in climate adaptation, mobility planning, accessibility, cultural life and neighbourhood services. A central success has been the emergence of a participatory policy culture. Thematic assemblies and working groups have contributed to municipal strategies, producing analyses and proposals that strengthen institutional capacity and reinforce public trust. Ankara has also succeeded in bringing actors with different political identities into shared deliberative spaces, demonstrating that cooperative policymaking is possible even in a polarised national environment. This is a rare achievement in Türkiye: civil society, local administration and central authorities working together within the same participatory structure. Another major success is the city's ability to activate broad solidarity networks. During the 2023 earthquakes, Ankara's participatory system rapidly transformed into a coordinated platform for relief, logistics, temporary shelter and psychosocial support. This response revealed the existence of a trusted metropolitan reputation network—a system citizens and institutions willingly mobilise because it is credible, open and collectively owned. In climate and youth engagement, Ankara has developed democratic spaces that combine expertise with civic input. Climate assemblies and public dialogues have shaped adaptation priorities, while the Başkent Youth Assembly has turned young people into active contributors through simulations, design processes and digital platforms. In mobility and public interaction, participatory processes have guided approaches to public transport integration, accessibility and public-space design, showing that metropolitan-scale participation can produce more equitable and user-focused outcomes. Ankara's most important success is the establishment of a metropolitan participation and trust ecosystem. Continuous dialogue, shared policy design and solidarity-driven action have cultivated a democratic culture that is resilient, collaborative and future-oriented. The city now possesses not only participatory mechanisms but a functioning civic environment in which institutions and citizens interact constructively, strengthening both policy quality and social cohesion.



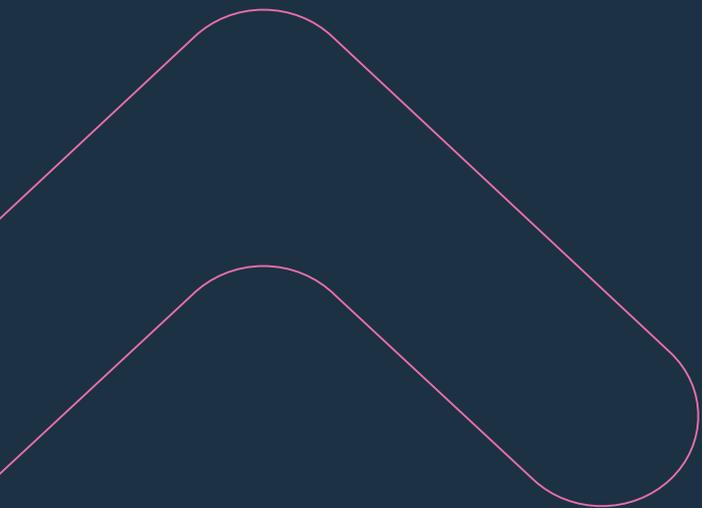
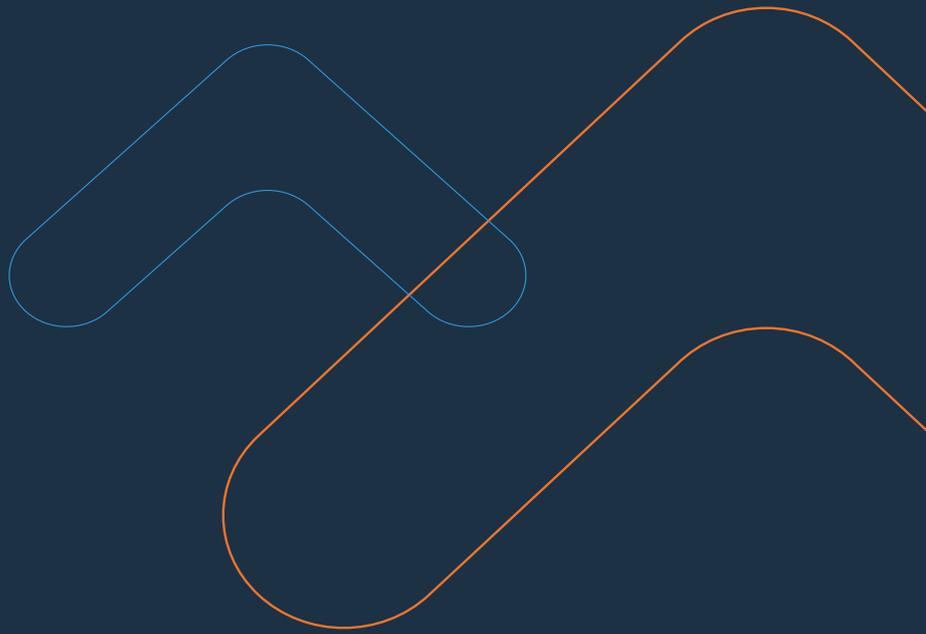
Future Challenges



Ankara's democratic trajectory is strong, yet the city faces several critical challenges that will shape the next stage of its participatory transformation. The most significant challenge is the growing political pressure on local government, which threatens the continuity and autonomy of participatory initiatives. In a national climate marked by polarisation, attempts to limit municipal authority or politicise local processes can weaken citizen trust and disrupt co-creation mechanisms. Ankara must therefore protect the institutional space in which participatory governance operates, ensuring that inclusive dialogue and evidence-based collaboration remain resilient against political fluctuations. A second major challenge is the need for deep institutional transformation within the municipal bureaucracy. While the Citizen Council has developed advanced participatory capacities, the municipal administration must adapt to operate effectively within this new governance architecture. This requires updating workflows, strengthening interdepartmental cooperation, improving data management, and ensuring that citizen-generated insights systematically inform planning, budgeting and policy evaluation. Without such internalisation, participation risks remaining influential but not fully embedded. The challenge is to align administrative culture with participatory principles so that the entire municipal system becomes more open, responsive and knowledge-driven. A third challenge is the integration of digital technologies into the participatory ecosystem. Ankara has made progress with online consultations and youth-oriented digital tools, but a comprehensive digital transformation is still needed. Future participation must rely on secure platforms, real-time feedback channels, inclusive digital access, and data systems that support deliberation rather than replace it. The city must also address digital literacy gaps to ensure that vulnerable groups are not excluded. The goal is to use technology to broaden participation, improve transparency and strengthen the link between public input and decision-making. Finally, Ankara must sustain a metropolitan trust network in an era of societal fragmentation. As participation expands, maintaining meaningful engagement, avoiding fatigue, and ensuring balanced representation across diverse communities will require continuous innovation in communication and facilitation. Keeping citizens motivated to participate—and ensuring that institutions value this input—will remain an ongoing challenge. These challenges are demanding, yet they also present opportunities. By addressing political pressure, embracing institutional transformation and advancing digital participation, Ankara can reinforce its role as a resilient, collaborative and future-oriented metropolitan democracy.

ECOD 2027 APPLICATION - ANKARA

Projects



Ankara – Project 1

EVENT | ONE-OFF | 30.03.2022 – 31.03.2022

[HTTPS://WWW.INSTAGRAM.COM/EKO_IKLIM/?HL=EN](https://www.instagram.com/eko_iklim/?hl=en)

Eco-Climate Summit

Detailed description

The Ekoiklim Summit is Ankara's largest and most influential climate-oriented governance initiative, designed to bring public institutions, civil society, academia, youth networks, private-sector actors and international organisations into a shared space for climate dialogue and green transformation. As Türkiye's first metropolitan-scale "climate and economy" summit, it positions Ankara as a regional leader in ecological transition. The Summit adopts a participatory approach that connects scientific evidence, innovative solutions and citizen engagement, demonstrating how climate action can be democratised at scale. Project Description Unlike traditional conferences, the Ekoiklim Summit is built around a multi-actor participatory design model. Panels, workshops and thematic sessions are co-created with civil-society organisations, youth groups, professional chambers and academic partners. The Summit hosts interactive forums, green innovation showcases, climate literacy labs, cultural events, sectoral roundtables, start-up exhibitions and public dialogues. Over its most recent edition, the Summit welcomed more than 70,000 visitors, illustrating its strong public resonance, and generated nearly one million social media interactions, demonstrating its reach across the wider metropolitan community. The Summit's purpose is not only to inform but to create a city-wide climate participation ecosystem. It enables deliberation on climate risks, adaptation strategies, the circular economy, green financing, urban agriculture, nature-based solutions, mobility transition and climate justice. Youth-led sessions enhance climate communication, while civil-society groups contribute community-level perspectives. In this way, the Summit becomes a bridge between institutional expertise and citizen priorities, helping produce policy recommendations that feed into municipal strategies. Partners in Development and Implementation A broad coalition of actors co-develop and implement the Summit: Public Institutions: Ankara Metropolitan Municipality units (climate, environment, transport, planning, agriculture, disaster management) alongside district municipalities and relevant national agencies. Civil Society: environmental NGOs, youth climate movements, sustainability networks, rights-based groups and grassroots initiatives. Professional Chambers: engineers, planners, architects, agricultural experts and energy specialists who guide evidence-based policy discussions. Universities and Research Centres: providing scientific sessions, climate modelling, data analysis, research collaboration and student involvement. Private Sector and Innovators: clean-tech firms, start-ups, green finance institutions, energy companies and sustainable design enterprises. International Partners: European climate networks, UN-affiliated organisations and global environmental NGOs contribute as knowledge partners. This partnership structure gives the Summit strong legitimacy and operational depth, allowing it to function

Ankara – Project 1

as a metropolitan climate governance alliance. Financing and Operational Structure The Summit uses a hybrid financing model: The Municipality provides core logistics, venue support, communication infrastructure and organisational coordination. Civil-society organisations contribute content, facilitation and volunteer capacity. Universities and research institutes supply scientific expertise and training. Private-sector actors support innovation zones, exhibitions and thematic tracks. International partners provide technical input and occasional project-based contribution. This model ensures sustainability while keeping the summit free, open and barrier-free for all participants.

Collaboration

The Ekoiklim Summit ensures inclusiveness and justice by engaging a wide spectrum of participants, especially groups often excluded from climate decision-making. Schools, university students, youth organisations and women's cooperatives are actively involved through dedicated workshops, exhibitions and community sessions. The Summit is free, barrier-free and open to all, with activities held not only in central venues but also in surrounding metropolitan districts to ensure equal access. Civil-society partners and neighbourhood organisations help reach disadvantaged communities, while facilitation principles emphasise gender equality, youth inclusion and representation of local producers. This approach ensures that climate dialogue reflects the voices of the entire city, not only central or privileged groups.

Target Group(s)

The Ekoiklim Summit is aimed at a broad audience including students, youth groups, women's cooperatives, environmental NGOs, local The Ekoiklim Summit is aimed at a broad audience including students, youth groups, women's cooperatives, environmental NGOs, local producers, academic communities, public institutions, private-sector innovators and residents interested in climate action.

Communication

To ensure wide participation, the Summit uses a multi-channel communication strategy: digital outreach through social media campaigns, livestreams and interactive content; collaboration with schools, universities and youth networks; invitations shared via civil-society partners; and announcements delivered through neighbourhood centres and municipal communication platforms. Public transport routes, local posters and community events are also used to reach residents in surrounding districts. Clear, accessible language and visually engaging content help make the Summit widely visible and appealing to diverse audiences.

Ankara – Project 1

Description

Civil society is at the core of the Ekoiklim Summit's design, implementation and public impact. Environmental NGOs, youth movements, neighbourhood associations, women's cooperatives, producer groups and rights-based organisations co-create panels, workshops and exhibitions, ensuring that the programme reflects community priorities. These organisations contribute speakers, facilitators, volunteers and thematic content, shaping discussions on climate justice, adaptation, local production, mobility and resilience. Many sessions are led directly by civil society, not by institutions, reinforcing the summit's participatory character. Through open calls, joint planning meetings and community outreach, civil-society actors influence both agenda-setting and follow-up processes. Their involvement guarantees that the Summit is not an institutional event but a multi-actor civic platform that amplifies local knowledge and democratic climate engagement.

Democracy Year integration

The Ekoiklim Summit can be showcased during the ECoD Democracy Year by hosting a European Climate & Democracy Forum in Ankara, bringing together climate assemblies, green innovation networks and civil-society organisations from across Europe. The Summit's model—interactive workshops, citizen labs, youth-led climate sessions, women's cooperatives and green start-up exhibitions—can be expanded into a continental event where cities share climate-democracy practices and co-create policy proposals. Activities can be integrated into a citywide climate festival, with thematic walks, public debates and digital participation labs. By scaling the Summit into a European platform, Ankara positions itself as a hub for democratic climate governance and strengthens collaboration between local actors and European partners.

Democracy dimension

Sustainability

One-time costs (planning and preparation)

5 Million Turkish Liras

Operational costs (per year)

Approx. 10 Million Turkish Liras

Funding provided by the City (%)

9%

Ankara – Project 2

BEST PRACTICE | PERMANENT

The Capital Youth Assembly

[Detailed description](#)

The Capital Youth Assembly (BYA) is Ankara's flagship youth-participation platform, designed to enable young people to take an active role in public decision-making and democratic life. Operating under the Ankara Citizen Council but functioning with its own internal structure, the BYA provides a metropolitan-scale environment where young people deliberate, design, create and collaborate. Its purpose is to transform youth participation from occasional consultation into a continuous and structured governance practice.

Project Description The BYA was created to address a critical democratic gap: although young people constitute a significant share of Ankara's population, they are often excluded from formal decision-making processes. The Assembly responds by offering an open, voluntary and non-partisan platform accessible to all young people regardless of socioeconomic background. Its working format includes thematic groups focusing on climate action, mobility, digital futures, education, rights and equality, culture, sports, neighbourhood development and disaster preparedness. The Assembly organises debates, simulations, workshops, hackathons, design studios, neighbourhood visits and public dialogues, enabling young participants to generate ideas, test solutions and produce creative content. These activities blend experiential learning with policy-oriented work, making the BYA a youth governance ecosystem rather than a traditional youth council. The Assembly's outputs directly inform municipal thinking, particularly in fields such as climate communication, accessibility, youth-friendly mobility choices, cultural programmes and community safety. A defining strength of the BYA is its ability to mobilise young people during crises. In the aftermath of the 2023 earthquakes, the Assembly coordinated volunteer efforts, supported logistics, and contributed to community-based relief initiatives. This demonstrated that the BYA is not only a deliberative structure but also a youth-driven mobilisation platform capable of acting effectively under pressure. The BYA also contributes to strengthening democratic culture by cultivating transferable skills such as deliberation, negotiation, facilitation, evidence-based reasoning and collaborative problem-solving. It helps young people see themselves as active contributors to the city's future, fostering long-term civic engagement.

Partners in Development and Implementation The Assembly operates through an extensive partnership network that ensures diversity, expertise and sustainability:

- Civil-society organisations:** youth NGOs, environmental groups, arts and cultural associations, equality and human-rights platforms.
- Universities:** providing academic support, facilitation training, research collaboration and space for youth initiatives.
- Professional chambers and expert groups:** contributing technical knowledge on planning, mobility, digital innovation and social policy.
- Neighbourhood organisations:** enabling grassroots connection through

Ankara – Project 2

local workshops and community meetings. Municipal departments: including youth, culture, social services, climate and transport units, integrating youth-generated ideas into city policy. International partners: European youth networks collaborating on democratic innovation and exchange programmes. This multi-stakeholder structure ensures that the Assembly is grounded in local needs while remaining connected to broader democratic trends. Financing and Operation The BYA uses a hybrid financing model. The Municipality provides coordination, physical spaces, communication support and facilitation; civil-society partners contribute voluntary labour, content, expertise and programme design; universities and international networks support training and thematic projects. This model secures both independence and institutional stability.

Collaboration

The Başkent Youth Assembly ensures inclusiveness and justice by operating as an open, voluntary and non-partisan platform that welcomes young people from all social, economic and cultural backgrounds. All universities in Ankara—public and private—are actively engaged, enabling participation from diverse student communities. The Assembly also includes youth from peripheral and underserved districts, with activities regularly held in outer metropolitan areas to ensure equal access. No political, financial or institutional barriers exist, and facilitation principles prioritise balanced representation, gender equality and accessibility. Through open calls, campus networks, neighbourhood outreach and civil-society partnerships, the project guarantees that participation reflects the full social diversity of Ankara's youth, not only those in central or privileged settings.

Target Group(s)

This activity is aimed at all young people in Ankara, including university students, high-school youth, working young adults and those not engaged in formal education. The project specifically targets under-represented groups by using low-barrier formats and events held across different districts.

Communication

Communication relies heavily on digital outreach—Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Discord and WhatsApp communities—along with campus networks, university clubs and civil-society partners. Announcements are also made through neighbourhood centres and public events, ensuring reach beyond central districts. Youth-friendly visual design, clear language and frequent event-based engagement (workshops, festivals, hackathons) help maintain visibility and ensure that diverse young audiences receive accessible, direct and motivating invitations to participate.

Ankara – Project 2

Description

Civil society plays a central role in this project through the active involvement of youth NGOs, volunteer groups, thematic associations and university student clubs. These organisations co-design activities, lead thematic workshops, support outreach, and help shape the agenda of the Youth Assembly. University clubs contribute expertise, peer networks and campus-based mobilisation, ensuring participation from diverse academic communities. Youth NGOs provide facilitation, advocacy and content for climate, equality, digital innovation and cultural programmes. All groups join without political or financial barriers, making civil society a co-owner rather than an observer of the process. This creates a genuinely collaborative environment in which young people and their organisations drive both dialogue and project implementation.

Democracy Year integration

The project can be showcased during the ECoD Democracy Year by hosting a European Youth Participation Forum in Ankara, bringing together youth assemblies, student networks and civic organisations from across Europe. The Başkent Youth Assembly can organise interactive sessions, policy co-creation workshops, cultural events and democratic simulations co-led by European partners. The event can be integrated into a citywide youth festival, creating a shared platform where young people exchange methods, present projects, and collaborate on joint democratic challenges. Public dialogues, thematic walks and digital participation labs can further connect local youth with their European peers. This approach positions Ankara as a hub for youth-driven democratic innovation while making the project a central part of the ECoD programme.

Democracy dimension

Empowerment

One-time costs (planning and preparation)

1 Million Turkish Liras (in kind)

Operational costs (per year)

2 Million Turkish Liras (in kind)

Funding provided by the City (%)

89%

Ankara – Project 3

BEST PRACTICE | PERMANENT
[HTTPS://ANKARAKENTKONSEYI.ORG.TR/](https://ankarakentkonseyi.org.tr/)

Citizens of Ankara Re-Assemble

Detailed description

The Ankara Citizen Council is the city's flagship participatory governance structure and one of the most ambitious democratic platforms in Europe. Developed to counter polarisation, rebuild trust and bring diverse groups into shared decision-making, it has transformed the culture of participation in the capital. Rather than functioning as a traditional advisory body, the Council operates as a metropolitan ecosystem of democratic co-creation, bringing civil society, experts, professional chambers, neighbourhood groups and municipal actors into continuous, structured interaction. Project Description The Citizen Council consists of thematic assemblies, working groups and open deliberation forums that address climate action, mobility, accessibility, culture, social inclusion, neighbourhood governance and disaster resilience. Its core achievement is establishing a method in which citizens and institutions jointly analyse problems, propose solutions and monitor implementation. This structure was internationally recognised when the "Citizens of Ankara: Re-Assemble!" initiative received the IAF Facilitation Impact Award and was shortlisted for the OIDP Award, demonstrating a globally significant model of democratic innovation. One of the Council's most distinctive successes is its ability to turn participation into a creative cultural practice. Over the past five years, it has organised nearly 4,000 public events, workshops, forums, thematic meetings, walks, design studios and cultural gatherings, effectively transforming civic engagement into a city-wide democratic festival. These events have strengthened collective intelligence, lowered barriers to participation and created a sense of shared ownership over Ankara's future. This creativity-driven approach ensures that participation is not an administrative obligation but a lively, inspiring and socially unifying experience. The Council has also demonstrated institutional strength during crises. Following the 2023 earthquakes, it rapidly mobilised its networks—activating NGOs, volunteer groups, technical experts and community organisations—to coordinate relief, shelter, logistics and psychosocial support. This response revealed that the Council is not only a deliberative platform but a trusted metropolitan coordination system, capable of mobilising society at scale and producing socially legitimate action under pressure. Another achievement is its contribution to policy co-creation. The Council's working groups have influenced municipal strategies in climate adaptation, mobility, urban green planning, disaster preparedness and accessibility. Many proposals generated through the Council were later adopted unanimously by the Metropolitan Council, proving that participatory deliberation can produce cross-party consensus even in a politically polarised national environment. Partners and Implementation The Citizen Council functions through broad partnerships including civil-society organisations, professional chambers, universities, community

Ankara – Project 3

groups, neighbourhood associations and municipal units. Civil society provides expertise, volunteers and thematic leadership; professional bodies contribute technical knowledge; academic institutions support research and facilitation; and the Municipality supplies logistical support, coordination and institutional linkage. Financing The Council is sustained through a hybrid model: municipal logistical support, voluntary civil-society contribution, and targeted project-based resources supplied by partner organisations. This balance protects autonomy while ensuring operational stability. Conclusion The Ankara Citizen Council has become a metropolitan-scale model of democratic renewal—creative, trusted, resilient and policy-relevant. By transforming participation into an everyday civic practice and a festival-like public culture, it demonstrates how a diverse capital city can generate collaborative governance even under political pressure.

Collaboration

The Ankara Citizen Council ensures inclusiveness and justice by functioning as an open, voluntary and non-partisan platform where civil society, neighbourhood groups, professional chambers, vulnerable communities and individual citizens participate on equal terms. There are no membership barriers or political requirements, and activities use low-threshold formats to enable broad access. Meetings are held across different districts, ensuring the involvement of surrounding and underserved areas such as Mamak, Altındağ, Sincan and Keçiören. The Council's facilitation principles prioritise balanced representation, gender equality, youth inclusion and accessibility for persons with disabilities. Decisions are formed through transparent dialogue and shared evidence, ensuring that outcomes reflect the city's full social diversity, not only central or privileged groups.

Target Group(s)

This activity is aimed primarily at under-represented, marginalised and impoverished sections of society, alongside neighbourhood groups, civil-society actors and individual residents who are typically excluded from formal decision-making. Participation is open without restrictions, fees or political conditions.

Communication

The communication strategy focuses on broad accessibility: announcements are shared through neighbourhood networks, community leaders, social-media channels, local associations, municipal communication platforms and face-to-face outreach. Meetings are held in easily reachable venues across different districts, ensuring that residents in peripheral and disadvantaged areas receive direct information and invitations. Clear language, inclusive visuals and low-threshold formats are used to ensure everyone can engage.

Ankara – Project 3

Description

Civil society is structurally embedded in this project, as the Ankara Citizen Council was founded on the principle that civil-society organisations are not external participants but core components of the governance model. Unlike many examples where participation is limited to selected or invited groups, the Ankara model is fully barrier-free: all associations, NGOs, community groups, platforms and professional bodies can join without political, financial or institutional restrictions. This openness enables a genuinely pluralistic environment where diverse organisations contribute to agenda-setting, problem analysis and policy co-creation. Civil society leads thematic assemblies, initiates working groups and shapes decisions alongside municipal units, ensuring that the project is both inclusive and co-owned by the city's social fabric.

Democracy Year integration

The project can be showcased during the ECoD Democracy Year by organising a metropolitan-scale Democracy Festival that brings together similar citizen-participation platforms from across Europe. The Ankara Citizen Council can host interactive assemblies, open forums, facilitation workshops and policy co-creation labs where European partners share methods, tools and success stories. The Council's 4.000 creative events experience enables designing a dynamic programme with neighbourhood dialogues, thematic walks, civic hackathons and public discussions. The project can also be integrated into major citywide events by creating a "European Agora of Participation," where local and international civil-society organisations engage directly with residents. This allows the Ankara model to be displayed not only as a local achievement but as a platform for European exchange, learning and democratic innovation.

Democracy dimension

Participation

One-time costs (planning and preparation)

Approx. 5 Million Turkish Liras (Not in cash but in kind as the organization costs)

Operational costs (per year)

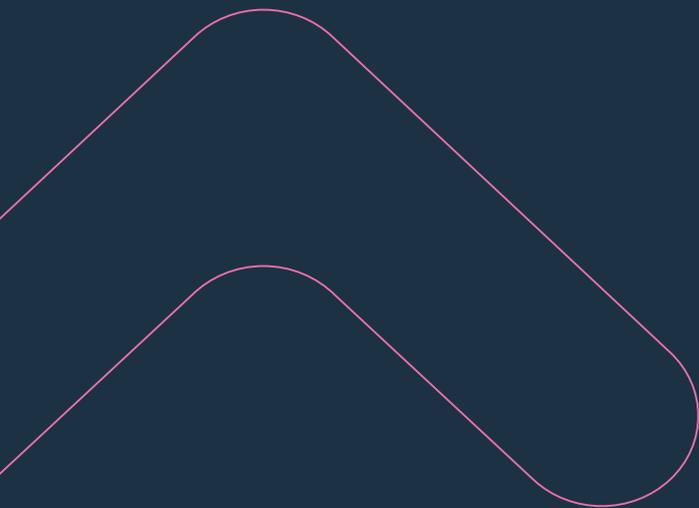
Approx. 10 Million Turkish Liras (Not in cash but in kind as the building and organization and personel costs)

Funding provided by the City (%)

60%

ECOD 2027 APPLICATION - ANKARA

Project Ideas



Ankara – Project Idea 1

Democracy Biennial

Challenge

Ankara's citizens face a growing need for public spaces where cultural expression, democratic dialogue and collective imagination can coexist. Despite a rich artistic community, many residents experience limited access to contemporary art, and public debate is often shaped by polarisation rather than creativity. This is not unique to Ankara, but the city's large metropolitan scale makes the fragmentation between artists, citizens and neighbourhoods more visible. The most significant pain point is the lack of citywide, inclusive cultural encounters where diverse groups can meet, produce, and discuss ideas freely. While art events exist, they are often concentrated in certain districts and fail to reach wider populations. As a result, citizens lose opportunities to experience democracy not only as a political process but as a shared cultural practice. The project responds to the growing democratic trend of using art as a medium for public participation, where installations, performances and collaborative works invite citizens into dialogue. The proposed citywide biennale—bringing artists to create works across parks, streets, campuses, neighbourhoods and public buildings—connects to the European movement of “art-driven democratic experimentation.” It positions creativity as a tool to rebuild trust, foster coexistence and open new channels for civic expression.

Solution

The unique selling proposition (USP) of the Ankara Democracy Biennale is its citywide approach: instead of concentrating art in galleries, it turns the entire urban landscape into an open, democratic exhibition space. Artists from Türkiye and Europe produce installations, performances and community-based works in parks, squares, neighbourhoods, metro stations, campuses and marketplaces—inviting citizens to engage with democracy through creativity rather than conflict. This distributed model transforms everyday urban life into a platform for shared reflection and dialogue. Benefits: Citizens stop losing access to high-quality art, which is often limited to central venues. They stop losing opportunities for cross-cultural encounters and neighbourhood-level engagement. Most importantly, they stop losing their sense of belonging, as the project enables diverse communities to see themselves in the city's cultural narrative. Advantages: If citizens do not participate and continue relying on conventional cultural events, they miss out on direct interaction with artists, on-site creative workshops, neighbourhood-level installations, and the chance to shape artistic interventions through dialogue. They also lose the opportunity to join a unique, inclusive cultural movement that positions art as a democratic tool. By engaging, they experience a richer, more open and participatory urban culture—something traditional exhibitions cannot equal.

Ankara – Project Idea 1

Impact

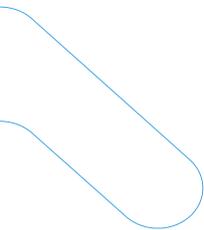
Target: Citizens engage with the Democracy Biennale whenever installations and performances appear in their daily routes—parks, streets, metro lines, neighbourhood squares and campuses. They participate by joining workshops, meeting artists, attending guided walks or interacting with site-specific works. The Biennale becomes especially relevant during festivals, citywide dialogues and local consultations, offering a cultural doorway into democratic reflection. Size: As a free, citywide event, it can reach hundreds of thousands across Ankara. Public-space artworks create natural footfall, while neighbourhood events mobilise districts with limited cultural access. Schools, universities and civil-society partners can further expand participation. Traction: Data shows strong need: – Cultural participation is uneven between districts, indicating access gaps. – Rising polarisation increases demand for creative, non-political spaces. – Public events in Ankara draw high turnout, proving appetite for open cultural experiences. – Art institutions and universities report growing interest in socially engaged art. These factors demonstrate a clear need for a citywide Democracy Biennale.

Implementation

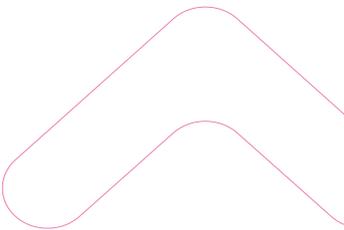
Rollout: The Biennale will be disseminated through a citywide communication strategy combining universities, cultural institutions, civil-society organisations and municipal platforms. Installations and performances will be placed in high-footfall public spaces—parks, squares, metro lines, campuses, neighbourhood centres—ensuring visibility without barriers. Guided walks, community workshops and artist talks will be promoted through social media, local media, neighbourhood councils and school networks. The rollout emphasises reaching districts with limited cultural access. Financing: The project can largely be implemented within existing municipal cultural budgets, combined with in-kind support from universities, art institutions, artist collectives and civil-society partners. Additional contributions may come from national and European cultural funds, creative industry sponsors and international artistic networks. Because many installations are site-specific and collaborative, production costs remain manageable. Future milestones: The most exciting upcoming milestone is forming the Founding Artistic Consortium, bringing together Ankara's universities, art schools, local cultural actors and European biennale networks. This consortium will curate the first edition and coordinate artists' citywide placements. The pilot neighbourhood programme—testing community-based artworks in a selected district—will follow as the first visible outcome.

Support

The project requires a broad coalition of artists, universities, cultural institutions, civil-society organisations and municipal units. Consulting needs include expertise in public art, participatory cultural design, community engagement, accessibility, and urban space management. Universities can provide academic guidance and curatorial support; artist collectives can offer production and facilitation capacities; civil-society partners can ensure neighbourhood outreach and inclusiveness. Financing needs are moderate and can be met through existing municipal culture budgets, university resources, in-kind contri-



Ankara – Project Idea 1



butions from art institutions and targeted support from national and European cultural funds. Implementation can be assured through a citywide artistic consortium coordinating the Biennale's governance. This structure will include representatives from universities, art schools, museums, independent artist networks, neighbourhood councils and municipal cultural departments. It will oversee artist selection, site approval, logistics, community co-creation processes and risk management. Pilot installations in selected districts will test methods and generate public feedback. Strong institutional backing, shared ownership and the distributed nature of the installations ensure that the Biennale remains sustainable, scalable and deeply rooted in Ankara's cultural ecosystem.

Democracy
dimension

Community

Ankara – Project Idea 2

The New Democracy Academy

Challenge

Ankara's citizens face a growing need for democratic literacy, critical thinking and informed participation. As the city's participatory structures expand, many residents feel unsure about how to engage effectively, understand institutional processes or contribute confidently to deliberative platforms. This challenge is not unique to Ankara, but the city's rapidly growing civic ecosystem makes the gap more visible. The most significant pain point is the lack of accessible, structured adult civic education. Without guidance, citizens with strong opinions may struggle to translate them into constructive participation, while underrepresented groups often feel excluded from public processes. The key democratic trend this project connects to is the global rise of citizenship education for adults and the creation of permanent "democracy learning spaces." The proposed "Democracy Academy," jointly created by all universities in Ankara, follows this trend by offering open, inclusive courses that strengthen civic knowledge, empower residents and prepare them for deeper participation in local decision-making.

Solution

The USP of the Democracy Academy is its ability to unite all universities in Ankara to create a shared, citywide learning platform open to every adult. Unlike conventional civic trainings, it combines academic expertise, civil-society experience and participatory practice to build a common vocabulary for democratic life. Its most distinctive value lies in helping citizens develop a culture of coexistence and cross-sector collaboration, strengthening the city's resilience against polarisation. Benefits: Citizens no longer lose confidence in participating because they gain the knowledge and skills needed for constructive engagement. They no longer lose opportunities for dialogue with people from different backgrounds, since the Academy provides safe, structured and inclusive spaces for interaction. They also stop losing influence over local decision-making as they become better prepared to contribute to public debates. Advantages: If citizens do not participate and rely on conventional sources of information, they miss out on direct access to university experts, cross-campus learning communities, practical participatory tools and the chance to build relationships across ideological, social and generational lines. Most importantly, they miss the opportunity to join a unique metropolitan alliance that strengthens democratic culture through shared learning.

Ankara – Project Idea 2

Impact

Target: Citizens would use the Democracy Academy whenever they want to participate more effectively in consultations, neighbourhood planning, budget processes or thematic forums. It becomes especially relevant before large-scale participation events, giving adults the civic knowledge, dialogue skills and confidence needed to engage constructively. **Size:** With all Ankara universities involved and the programme open to every adult, the Academy could directly reach tens of thousands through in-person courses and workshops, and hundreds of thousands via online modules. Its citywide approach allows participation from central areas as well as outer districts where civic education opportunities are scarce. **Traction:** Existing data shows strong need: – Ankara’s participation platforms attract high engagement, yet many adults report uncertainty about how to take part effectively. – Surveys highlight declining civic literacy and rising polarisation, increasing the demand for structured democratic learning. – Local consultations reveal that underrepresented groups often avoid participation due to lack of confidence or familiarity with public processes. – Universities indicate high interest in lifelong learning, but few programmes focus on democracy and citizenship education. These signals demonstrate the clear necessity for a citywide Democracy Academy.

Implementation

Rollout: The Democracy Academy will be launched through a coordinated effort bringing together all universities in Ankara and relevant European democracy-learning networks. Outreach will occur via university platforms, municipal communication channels, civil-society partners, neighbourhood centres and digital campaigns. Courses will be offered in multiple formats—public lectures, short modules, online classes and community-based workshops—ensuring accessibility for adults across all districts. The rollout strategy emphasises visibility in underserved areas through travelling seminars and partnerships with local organisations. **Financing:** The project can be implemented largely within existing budgets. Universities contribute classrooms, trainers and academic content; the municipality provides coordination, communication support and logistical resources; civil-society partners offer facilitation and volunteer capacity. Additional project-based funding may come from EU democracy, lifelong learning or civic innovation programmes, enabling expansion without heavy new costs. **Future milestones:** The nearest milestone is the creation of a founding consortium bringing Ankara’s universities, civil-society organisations and European adult-civic education networks into a single collaborative structure. This coalition will co-design the Academy’s curriculum and governance model. Following this, the first citywide pilot—open to adults from diverse backgrounds—will test the curriculum.

Ankara – Project Idea 2

Support

The Democracy Academy requires a coordinated structure that brings together Ankara's universities, local governments and civil-society organisations. In terms of consulting, the project needs expertise from academics working on citizenship education, dialogue methods, conflict transformation and participatory governance. Civil-society partners and community organisations can offer facilitation skills and help design inclusive learning environments. Financing needs are modest and can be met largely through existing university resources, municipal participation budgets and small-scale contributions from European lifelong learning networks. Additional support may come from EU programmes focusing on adult education and democratic engagement. Implementation can be assured by establishing a university–municipality consortium that jointly governs the Academy. This body will coordinate curriculum design, allocate teaching resources, manage logistics and oversee outreach. Each university contributes trainers and thematic modules, while the city provides communication, venues and integration with participatory processes. Pilot programmes will be tested with diverse adult groups, and feedback will be incorporated systematically. The shared governance model ensures continuity, while broad institutional ownership makes the project resilient and scalable across the metropolitan region.

Democracy dimension

Community

Ankara – Project Idea 3

Facilitative AI Protocol for Deliberation

Challenge

Ankara's citizens face a growing challenge shared by many large cities: as participation expands, the sheer volume and diversity of public input makes deliberation increasingly hard to facilitate. Thousands of contributions from residents, civil society and experts require careful processing, yet human facilitators alone struggle to analyse ideas, identify common ground and ensure that underrepresented voices are not overshadowed. This challenge is not unique to Ankara, but the city's rapidly growing participatory ecosystem makes it especially urgent. The most significant pain point is the difficulty of managing large-scale, multi-actor participation in a fair, transparent and inclusive way. Without new tools, public input risks becoming fragmented or dominated by louder groups, weakening democratic quality. The key democratic trend the project addresses is the rise of AI-supported deliberation, where artificial intelligence enhances—not replaces—human facilitation. The "Facilitative AI Protocol for Deliberation" will convene ethicists, democracy scholars, computer scientists, civil-society facilitators and municipal actors to design an ethical, transparent AI model that maps arguments, detects emerging consensus, highlights minority perspectives and reduces facilitator bias. The goal is to develop a tool that protects privacy, widens inclusion and helps participatory democracy function effectively at metropolitan scale.

Solution

The USP of the "Facilitative AI Protocol for Deliberation" is its combination of human facilitation with an ethical, transparent and participation-focused AI system. Unlike generic digital tools, it is purpose-built for democratic processes: mapping arguments, identifying consensus, highlighting minority views and reducing facilitator bias. It makes large-scale participation manageable, fair and high-quality. Benefits are defined by what citizens stop losing: – They no longer lose their voice in crowded discussions, as every contribution is processed. – They no longer lose time to slow synthesis, because AI accelerates analysis. – They no longer lose trust due to unclear facilitation, thanks to transparent algorithms. – They no longer lose influence, since their input feeds directly into deliberative outcomes. If citizens do not participate, they miss out on: – Equal visibility for their ideas in large-scale debates; – Direct influence over metropolitan policy; – A more balanced, bias-resistant deliberation environment; – Real-time feedback and structured dialogue; – Being part of an innovative model shaping the future of democratic participation. The project's advantage is clear: it enables citizens to engage in a system where scale, fairness and inclusion are guaranteed—far beyond what conventional participation channels can offer.

Ankara – Project Idea 3

Impact

Target: Citizens would use the “Facilitative AI Protocol for Deliberation” during any public consultation, citywide debate, thematic assembly, budget process or neighbourhood planning activity. The tool becomes essential when participation grows large—thousands of contributions needing fair and transparent synthesis. Residents can engage at all stages: idea submission, deliberation, consensus mapping and policy feedback.

Size: Ankara’s strong participatory ecosystem suggests the project could involve tens of thousands directly and reach hundreds of thousands through digital channels. The AI protocol is scalable, able to handle input from citywide events, outer districts, civil-society networks and youth groups, ensuring metropolitan-level engagement.

Traction: Current data shows clear need: participatory processes in Ankara regularly generate very high volumes of input that exceed the capacity of human facilitation. Citizens often ask for faster, more transparent synthesis. Growing diversity—youth, neighbourhood groups, NGOs—requires tools that protect equality and reduce bias. Global trends also indicate increasing demand for AI-assisted deliberation, confirming the project’s relevance.

Implementation

Rollout: The project will be introduced through a citywide communication campaign supported by the Citizen Council, universities, youth networks and civil-society partners. Public consultations, neighbourhood assemblies, thematic forums and digital platforms will serve as entry points where citizens can experience the AI-assisted deliberation tool. Training sessions, open demos and pilot discussions will help residents understand how the system supports fairness, transparency and large-scale participation.

Financing: The project can be implemented within existing municipal and partner budgets. The core development relies on collaboration with universities, researchers, civic tech groups and volunteer facilitators, reducing costs while ensuring high technical and ethical standards. Operational expenses such as workshops, pilot processes and communication can be covered through the city’s participation and innovation budgets.

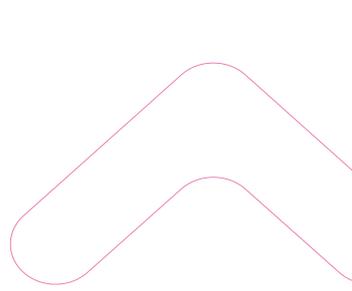
Future milestones: The nearest and most exciting milestone is the first expert convening to co-create the ethical AI protocol. This gathering of democracy scholars, AI researchers, facilitators and civil-society leaders will produce the project’s foundational framework. Subsequent milestones include the launch of a pilot deliberation process, the publication of an open-source model, and integration into metropolitan-scale participation events.

Support

The project requires a combination of technical expertise, ethical guidance, and strong partnership coordination to succeed. In terms of consulting, it needs collaboration with AI researchers, data scientists, democracy scholars, digital rights experts and experienced facilitators who understand deliberative processes at scale. Ethical advisory support is essential to ensure privacy protection, transparency and the avoidance of algorithmic bias. On the financing side, the project can rely on existing municipal innovation and



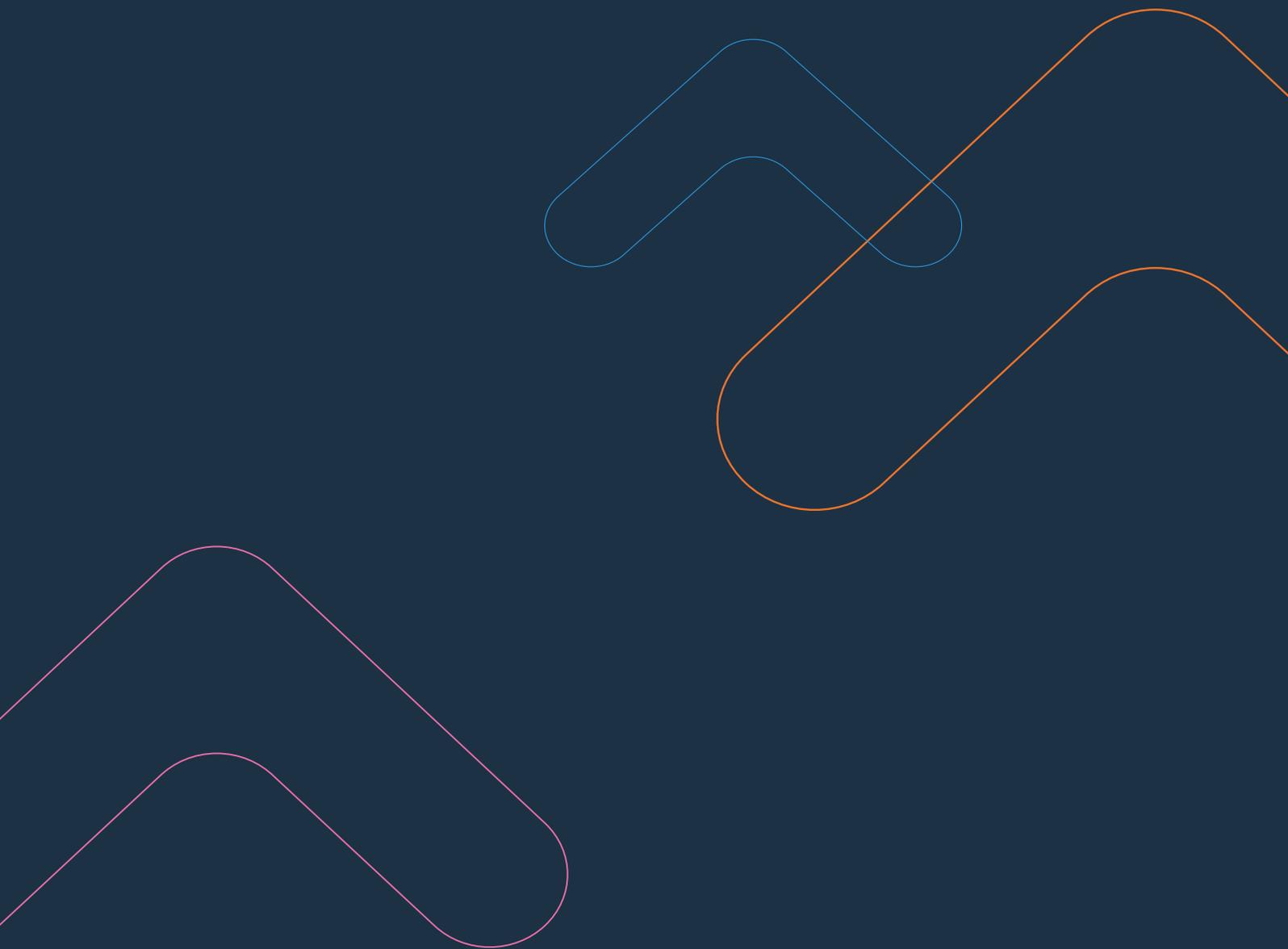
Ankara – Project Idea 3



participation budgets, complemented by in-kind contributions from universities, civic-tech communities and civil-society organisations. Strategic partners include academic institutions, open-source technology groups, participation networks, youth organisations and European democracy innovation labs. Implementation can be assured through a phased rollout. First, an expert working group will design the facilitative AI protocol and establish its ethical framework. Next, small-scale pilots will test the tool within existing citizen assemblies and municipal consultations. Results will be transparently evaluated with feedback from participants, facilitators and civil-society partners. As the system proves reliable, it will be integrated into metropolitan-level processes such as thematic forums, planning consultations and youth-led discussions.

Democracy
dimension

Technology



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