



Atlas' Consultation

Explainer

00. Context

8 billion people inhabit our planet. As obvious as this may sound, it's clear that **we are One**: we share so many characteristics and our destiny is totally intertwined. **Yet, we have so far failed to create a global governance system** to administer our planet, tame global challenges, and nurture shared opportunities.

Indeed, curbing the effects of climate change, striving to strengthen global democracy, or taxing appropriately multinational digital companies require a higher level of cooperation compared to today's faltering international order. It requires true democratic global governance. While some supranational institutions and multilateral treaties do exist, we see their lack of enforcement mechanisms, their lack of far-reaching solutions, as well as the fact that we are no closer to implementing solutions to transnational topics. This is only worsened by their lack of legitimacy due to their undemocratic and unrepresentative processes and set up.

01. Project Recap

That's why, through the "Future of Global Governance" project, Atlas will work to **design, build, and launch such a democratic, people-led transnational governance system to unite humankind beyond national borders and truly be One.**

To do so, we are launching a multi-year project in three phases:

- A. **Global grassroots consultation on the future of global governance** (*deep-dive [below](#)*)
- B. UN Secretary General Mobilization and campaign (*more details [here](#)*)
- C. Creation of the future of global governance (*more details [here](#)*)

02. Global consultation deep-dive

From January to December 2023, we intend to **run consultations online and offline across the globe to crowdsource what a democratic system of global governance should look like.**



The aim of the consultations is to involve as many people as possible in identifying issues with democracy and the current system, prioritizing the topics to be included in any global governance system, and proposing solutions to be voted upon.

A. Format of the consultations:

- The consultations will mainly be conducted online, using an open-source software called [Consul](#), and adapted to Atlas' needs. People will be able to register and input there.
- They will be complemented by in-person events across the world - run by volunteers and in partnership with other organizations - to discuss the topics of the consultations, and then input the results online.

B. Consultation process:

Disclaimer: Atlas' values (of inclusivity, tolerance, and respect of human rights amongst others) will be clearly stated and users will be required to abide by them. Moderation will take place on the platform.

1. **Issues identification:** participants identify and submit the issues they consider fundamental when it comes to global governance & democracy. Those can be specific or a wider feeling (“eg: there are not enough checks and balances” or “the current global institution is corrupt”).
 - a. Online: for the online group of participants, they get to input into the consultation software provided by Atlas.
 - i. The key question to answer is: “What should a democratic system of global governance look like?”
 - ii. Then there are some other questions about the main issues of the topic to be addressed, which users will be able to answer openly. Users can answer the questions, debate with other people.
 1. Examples: Do you believe we should consider releasing a proprietary cryptocurrency to ensure the financial independence of the institution?; Do you believe a global governance system should use sortition to select all or part of its law-makers?
 - b. In person: based on the space, this might take different forms such as people writing on post-its their ideas and putting them on a wall, or more technological solutions. In person participants are free to do this part of the exercise alone or in groups if time allows for this. Based on the amount of time we have overall and the size of the group, they might explain in front of the group why they put down said issue.



2. **Prioritization of issues:** participants now prioritize the issues they think are the most important.
 - a. Online: this is done through the consultation software provided by Atlas, in which participants can “upvote” or “downvote” measures.
 - b. In Person: based on the space, this might take different forms such as participants being given stickers to place on the post-its they think are most important, or via more technological solutions.
3. **Creation of Citizens’ Proposals:** after issues are selected, citizens make proposals and discuss how to best address them. Those are high level proposals, not detailed down yet, such as “a global system of governance should have citizens assemblies”.
 - a. Online: users online get to discuss and make collaborative proposals on the software.
 - i. Ideas can come from Atlas (or partner organizations), the users, or both. All ideas can be supported, in order to detect which ones have more citizen support.
 - b. In person: participants are broken up into smaller groups to discuss solutions to the issues identified. They can make joint proposals or competing ones if they disagree.
 - i. All results are to be logged by the moderator into the platform
4. **Decisions on Citizens’ Proposals:** users vote on citizens proposals, or competing proposals.
5. **Final document comments:** Atlas’ policy team then drafts more developed proposals based on the citizens’ proposals adopted. In this phase any text is open to comments from users. Comments can be voted and answered, generating debates about them.
6. **Final vote:** a final vote on the entire vision for a democratic system of global governance then takes place, once the document is finalized.

03. Expected outcomes

1. **A grassroots, innovative, global institutional design effort:** this project will enable the people of this planet to join forces in designing the future of world governance, in designing their future. Historically, institution-building was an exercise reserved to a few (mostly male) elites.
2. **An increase in global awareness and understanding of transnational governance:** the consultation will mobilize hundreds of thousands of people across the world to discuss this fundamental topic, bring about their knowledge and best-practices, and listen to one another.
3. **Laying the groundwork for a true global democratic governance** capable of solving world issues, and consolidating it throughout the years.



04. Partnership

As we embark on this very ambitious and long term project, we can already forecast some key areas for partnership, and remain opened to more:

1. **Funding:** financial resources are obviously needed to build up this endeavor. While this project is being fueled by volunteers' time, passion & knowledge, some financial costs need to be shouldered ASAP. This includes a small full time staff team, tech costs & marketing efforts. While we will launch crowdfunding efforts, we are also looking for financial support, through
 - o traditional grants
 - o fellowships for staff members with other organizations
 - o project sponsorship,
 - o co-fundraising efforts, and more
2. **Events organization:** we are already partnering with foundations & NGOs to run in-person events on specific topics of democracy & governance, as well as general ones. See [Appendix A](#) on a suggested format.
3. **Townhalls:** we will also organise digital townhalls with speakers that are experts on the topics!
4. **Expertise:** the consultations are vast and extremely ambitious. While we have teams of volunteers ready to tackle all different areas, any support is greatly appreciated. Examples can include expertise on citizens assemblies, data science, institution building and more.
5. **Endorsement:** organizations that wish to show support for the consultations can also endorse them. What this means is their logo will be displayed on the consultation webpage and related communication material, and there will be possibility for joint communicate and promotion. Any action will always be coordinated with partners before release.
6. **Coverage:** last but not least, this project can exponentially increase its likelihood of success if well communicated and explained to the public. For this reason, we are looking to partner up with media outlets and authors to narrate this process through a documentary or a series of media pieces or journals.

05. Track Record

[Atlas](#) is a global grassroots movement advocating for a more democratic and equitable world counting 22,000 members in more than 130 countries. Since 2020, we have launched campaigns and events to protect, promote, and innovate democracy worldwide.

Examples include:

1. **The [Forward campaign](#)**, a grassroots initiative that held digital primaries to find a “people-backed” candidate to challenge the selection of the United Nations



Secretary-General. It managed to get former heads of states in the process, and more than 7,000 people participated in online primaries. The U.N. General Assembly discussed our candidate and referred her to the Security Council. This was the first time a non-state candidate was ever considered, opening the door to fairer elections.

2. **The [#FridaysForFreedom](#) campaign**, a global action that brought almost 5 million people online and thousands of people in person to demand democratic governments to protect freedom fighters worldwide.
3. Organization of a yearly pro-democracy conference, **the Freedom Marathon**, and cooperations with pro-democracy leaders such as [Joshua Wong](#) of Hong Kong and Juan Guaidò of Venezuela, among others

[Andrea Venzon](#) and [Colombe Cahen-Salvador](#) are the co-founders of Atlas. They are both political activists and have been engaged in promoting democracy and reforming international institutions since 2017. Before launching Atlas, Colombe and Andrea co-founded [Volt Europa](#), a pan-European political movement that mobilized more than 60,000 young people around the idea of true European democracy and managed to elect European and national parliamentarians in Germany, Netherlands, and Bulgaria, as well as local councilors across Europe.

More information about Atlas, including past successes, can be found here: www.atlasmovement.org/about

Appendix A - Guide for Joint Events

Foreword

This document is aimed at providing a brief description of Atlas' methodology for inclusive, grassroots, citizen-led consultations. It is broadly divided in three phases, Awareness, Consultation, and Follow-up, that do not have to be followed rigidly but can be mixed and matched based on the needs at hand. The technique described has been flexibly used in several contexts by the founders of Atlas, and has led to several successes listed at the bottom of the explainer.

Methodology

A. Awareness Phase

Description: The awareness phase opens the consultation effort by producing virality around the topic(s) of interest, fostering debates and hence supporting the creation or reinforcement of the primary audience for the consultation. By providing engaging content and a platform to crowdsource ideas and input, the awareness phase is fundamental to ensure that the consultations reach a diverse and passionate group, refine the problem/topic at hand, and clarify the added value prospective participants can extract from the upcoming process. This phase can be executed both online and offline, depending on resources and the context.

Exemplary activities:

- *Social media:* content production, targeting, and ads to get people to register for the in-person and online consultations (see below in next phase). Network effects are used to reach a wider audience, and a contextualization of the topic in the national and local realities takes place.
- *Press:* Relationship building with national and local press to - if physical town halls are foreseen - get coverage pre and during the event.
- *NGOs:* Network development with local associations and institutions to involve their existing network, co-develop social media content & press material, and include them in the next phase (eg: local pro-democracy organizations, students associations etc).

Resources needed: content production capacity, translation capacity, [optional] community network access

Timeline: 4-6 weeks ahead of the consultation phase



B. Consultations Phase

Description: the consultation phase represents the bulk of the exercise. It is performed both online and offline in order to ensure high levels of participation, while also enabling in person debates that tend to produce different outcomes. On the ground “meetups”, town halls, or gatherings are the focal moment of the process while a moderated, online space follows a similar structure to ensure the involvement of more people, from different backgrounds, and thus increase the amount of input. The consultation effort is divided into three main phases:

7. *Frontal presentation* of context, content, and process in a physical auditorium and online space. The “rule of the games”, or norms to participate in the exercise, are always outlined to moderate behaviors and contributions. More importantly, the way participants’ inputs, time and efforts will be used is made very clear: we will take this forward!
 - a. Online participants: they join via video conference (they are sent the link after registering)
 - b. In person participants: they join in the space booked for the event
8. *Issues identification:* both online and offline, participants identify and submit key issues. Those can be specific or a wider feeling (“eg: there are not enough checks and balances” or “the executive is corrupt”).
 - a. Online: for the online group of participants, they get to input into the consultation software provided by Atlas
 - b. In person: based on the space, this might take different forms such as people writing on post-its their ideas and putting them on a wall, or more technological solutions. In person participants are free to do this part of the exercise alone or in groups if time allows for this. Based on the amount of time we have overall and the size of the group, they might explain in front of the group why they put down said issue.
9. *Prioritization of issues:* many issues will have been outlined, and participants now prioritize the ones they want to tackle or think are the most important.
 - a. Online: this is done through the consultation software provided by Atlas, in which participants can “upvote” or “downvote” measures.
 - b. In Person: based on the space, this might take different forms such as participants being given stickers to place on the post-its they think are most important, or via more technological solutions.
10. *Creation of Citizens’ Proposals:* after issues are selected, citizens make proposals and discuss how to best address them. Those are high level proposals, not detailed down yet, such as: “a fourth branch of government involving citizens is needed”, “the executive should be disbanded and instead our leaders should be chosen by sortition” “citizens assemblies should decide what misinformation is”.
 - a. Online: participants online get to discuss and make collaborative proposals on the software.



- b. In person: participants are broken up into smaller groups to discuss solutions to the issues identified. They can make joint proposals or competing ones if they disagree.
11. *Decisions on Citizens' Proposals*: following the end of the proposals creation moment, participants vote on citizens proposals, or competing proposals.

Disclaimers:

- Number of issues/proposals tackled: this depends on the length of the event.
- Number of participants: this depends on the capacity of the space.
- Online and offline consultations: those two reinforce one another, as it is motivating for online participants to see in person debates, and in person participants will be able to draw from ideas of online participants if they struggle to get started

Typical activities

- Sharing of explanatory material, case examples, and best practices shortly ahead of the meeting to ensure that participants are provoked in thinking about the consultation
- Drafting and presentation of rules of the games to ensure behaviors are appropriate and all participants feel included and listened to
- Utilization of visual support like flipcharts or visual collaboration software such as Miro.com to foster creativity and cooperation

Resources: experienced moderators, translations capabilities, space, and basic equipment, [if online] policy-making software, [optional] visual collaboration software

Timeline: 0.5 to 2 days

C. Post-consultation Phase

Description: the follow-up phase is highly recommended to ensure that the participants remain engaged in the project, and that the proposed solutions are further refined and developed. The post-consultation phase involves:

1. *Deep-dive in adopted proposals*: participants are granted access to Atlas' consultation software and are able to draft collaboratively fully developed proposals for proposals adopted during the consultations.
2. *Other next steps*: the sharing of clear next steps and calls to action, ideally segmented by intensity and willingness to contribute to engaging as many people as possible, as well as a clear target to work toward/moment to look forward to. It normally takes place online, but light and informal physical gatherings can also be foreseen.

Typical activities

- Feedback collection process to improve the process and receive further ideas or proposals, depending on the timeline designed



- Implementation of collaborative policy-making software as well as a community platform to continue proposals development and build belonging and network
- Wrap-up moment/gathering during which participants can assess the fruits of their work and have closure or engage in further processes

Resources: content production capacity, translations capacity, experienced moderators, policy-making software, [optional] campaign capacity, [optional] event organization capacity

Timeline: weeks to months after the consultation phase