



**RESHAPING EUROPEAN ADVANCES TOWARDS GREEN LEADERSHIP
THROUGH DELIBERATIVE APPROACHES AND LEARNING**

D3.2: Online multilingual deliberation platform with integrated deliberative tools

**WP3 Testing and validating innovative
deliberative formats and tools**

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Project Summary

REAL DEAL will stimulate a pan-European debate to reshape citizens' and stakeholders' active participation through deliberative processes around the European Green Deal (EGD). It brings together researchers and practitioners of deliberative democracy from a wide range of disciplines including environmental rights and the law of public participation, ethics and responsible innovation, gender studies and ecofeminism, psychology, geography, urban planning, and sustainability studies. It includes the EU's largest civil society networks advocating on the environment, climate, sustainable development, local democracy, and the European movement. It teams up with youth climate, social justice and women's organisations, SMEs, universities and research institutes, mobilising networks with thousands of CSOs, uniting millions of citizens and activating contacts to thousands of policymakers. In a large co-creation exercise, REAL DEAL will develop, test, and validate innovative tools and formats to propel deliberative democracy to the next level. It will test its innovations at citizens assemblies for the transition in at least 13 countries. We will scrutinise pan-European formats ranging from digital deliberation through our online platform www.realdeal.eu to in-person processes such as an Assembly for a Gender-Just Green Deal and a pan-European Youth Climate Assembly. REAL DEAL will co-create a comprehensive protocol for meaningful citizens' participation and deliberation to work towards the objectives of the EGD. It will validate recommendations on how to design such processes and how they can be applied by European institutions, Member States, and civil society alike. Gender equality will be embedded into the project's DNA. It pays specific attention to the leave-no-one-behind principle, fostering the engagement of disenfranchised groups that are disproportionally burdened by environmental damage. REAL DEAL will develop a new model of environmental citizenship across Europe.

Project Information

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Website	www.realdeal.eu

Consortium partners

Logo	Partner	Abbreviation	Country
	Forschungsinstitut für Nachhaltigkeit (Research Institute for Sustainability)	RIFS	Germany
	EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENTAL BUREAU	EEB	Belgium
	ALLEANZA ITALIANA PER LO SVILUPPO SOSTENIBILE	ASviS	Italy
	ASSOCIATION DES AGENCES DE LA DEMOCRATIE LOCALE	AADL/ALDA	France
	CENTRAL EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY	CEU	Hungary
	CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK EUROPE	CAN EUROPE	Belgium
	DIALOGIK	DIA	Germany
	EUROPEAN MOVEMENT INTERNATIONAL	EMI	Belgium
	GLOBAL CLIMATE FORUM	GCF	Germany
	FORENINGEN NYT EUROPA	NYT EUROPA	Denmark
	SOLIDAR	SOLIDAR	Belgium
	TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF BERLIN	TUB	Germany
	TRILATERAL RESEARCH	TRI IE	Ireland
	WAGENINGEN UNIVERSITY & RESEARCH	WR	Netherlands
	WOMEN ENGAGE FOR A COMMON FUTURE	WECF	Germany
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1 Executive summary

With the rise of ICT technologies in the last decades, online elements have become increasingly central in the field of participatory and deliberative democracy, offering new perspectives in the design and implementation of participatory and deliberative processes. The use of ICT has provided several advantages to initiators participatory and deliberative processes, such as for instance, in terms of inclusion of some fringe of the population (especially youth), or of scalability of the process (in regard to the number of participants in time and space), to name but a few. The use of ICT in such processes is also linked to various limitations, such as the inclusion of populations not using internet, or motivating participants to participate online.

This document is for the deliverable D3.2 ("Online multilingual deliberation platform with integrated deliberative tools") of the REAL DEAL project, with the aim of offering a digital tool so to address online and hybrid deliberative processes in Europe.

Building on research findings and the assessment of existing digital tools and platforms for deliberation and participation, the project set up an online platform with integrated tools and formats to support the digital component of the deliberation and participation platform processes which are going to be implemented in the REAL DEAL project.

Built upon existing digital deliberation tools, the platform has been branded according to REAL DEAL overall design. The platform is reachable from the project's website www.realdeal.eu and has its own URL <https://my.realdeal.eu/>, i.e. the title is also clearly associated with the project's website.

REAL DEAL is aware of the potential of online deliberative platform, as much as of the possible issues created by these tools (digital divide, limited access in areas without good internet connection (such as in some rural areas etc..)). The project will address these issues in the implementation of the platform.

In term of actual usage, the platform has been adapted to match the action lines of the projects, and especially to support the implementation of some participatory and deliberative processes. REAL DEAL aims indeed to make use of information technology to bridge physical distances in national and pan-European deliberative processes and to support the implementation of physical formats such as focus groups, citizen assemblies enhanced by Delphi procedures, or round tables, to name but a few.

Based on the main requirements stipulated in the grant agreement (multilingualism, open source) and some additional requirements defined in the course of the project (integrative, adaptable, easy to use, scalable, privacy issues), the platform creation has been subcontracted, following a call for tender with the most advanced participation platform providers.

REAL DEAL has agreed with the Commission Services not to set up a online platform for deliberation with the sister project; however, the two projects will present their results through a joint online repository, with a common entry point and search function.

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1.2 List of acronyms/abbreviations

Abbreviation	Explanation
WAI	Web Accessibility Initiative
WCAG	Web Content Accessibility Guidelines
EU	European Union
EGD	European Green Deal

Table 1 List of acronyms/abbreviations

1.3 Glossary of terms

Term	Explanation
Deliberative tools	Online instruments used to support the implementation of participatory processes
Hybrid process	Participatory process including both online and real deliberative and participative elements
Spaces	Specific pages of the platform, where participatory processes can be organised and displayed in different ways.

Table 2 Glossary of terms

2 Online multilingual Platform with integrated deliberative tools

2.1 The set-up process of the platform

2.1.1 General goals

The REAL DEAL online platform will support innovative participatory and deliberative processes in two ways. First, it will provide a set of tools enabling initiators to communicate with citizens and stakeholders and gather ideas and deliberation from them. Second, it will display, in a very understandable way, all required information on participation processes being implemented in the context of the project (timing, milestones, theme, steps of the process, results etc..). These processes are expected to be working and supporting both online and hybrid participation processes to be implemented in and across various European countries. As such, the online platform will represent a strong complementarity to the physical events, enabling participants which are not participating to such events, for instance to provide comments, deliberate, or vote on various topics. Therefore, the online platform aims to scale up - in terms of participants and reach - the various deliberative processes being implemented within the REAL DEAL project.

The platform is also expected to integrate various participation tools and formats, both standard ones, and those derived from the preliminary results of the project. The platform aims therefore to provide a diverse package of online tools (or modules) both for web based and mobile participation, which will support the implementation of online and hybrid formats.

Through this platform, initiators of participation processes can, on the one hand, choose the tools or combination of tools, which suits their participation process best. The tools should be combinable in a way, that allows different actors to configure standardized participation processes via the platform. On the other hand, it should enable initiators to set up a webpage with all necessary information on the participatory process. All in all, this online platform should make the implementation of participatory and deliberative process easier to its initiators by providing online tools, for instance to gather ideas and comments from citizens and stakeholders, but also giving them the opportunity to display results of the processes.

In terms of design, the platform and its various tools are aligned to the REAL DEAL digital environment. Moreover, the platform is easy to use and intuitive enough to enable both initiators of processes, on the one hand, and citizens/stakeholders, on the other hand, to use it without considerable efforts.

As REAL DEAL has a 'Leave No-one Behind' and intersectional feminist ethos, the platform will try to address as far as technically possible these elements in its design, its functionalities and in its use. In terms of accessibility for instance, the platform will apply the WAI (WAI Accessibility Initiative) standard adopted by the European Union and will aim to comply with the AA level accessibility guidelines defined by the WAI standards (WCAG 2.0).

Therefore, a person with a disability, or other person in a situation that makes it difficult to access information on the platform, can reliably access the content.

2.1.2 Requirements

The platform is designed and developed according to the following requirements:

- **Multilingual:** As the platform is expected to support participative and deliberative processes which will take place in international and various national contexts, and reach out various kinds of actors in the EU, the translation of written language in another shall be secured.
- **Integrative:** It integrates the various tools and formats of the platform into the REAL DEAL environment and to adapt the design of the platform according to the REAL DEAL branding guidelines.
- **Adaptable:** The platform offers various online tools such as ideation, voting, commenting, survey tools, but should also be adaptable to the expectations and needs of the consortium, especially following the various testing that will take place during the project. For instance, various adaptation in the design or the development of add-ons should theoretically be possible, if required.
- **Easy to use:** the platform is intuitive and friendly to use, as many citizens from different countries are expected to be using it during deliberation processes. Moreover, the consortium will be trained in order to get used to the platform.
- **Scalable:** In order to address as many persons as possible, the platform should be easy to use on both desktop and on the various mobile devices (laptops, tablets, cell phones).
- **Privacy Issues:** As participants are going to register (using a unified authentication process) on the platform and leave personal information on it, the platform will respect privacy issues and be aligned with the GDPR regulation. The server collecting the data will be based in France and respect the European data protection law.

The platform is set up and to show the following information:

- Design of the landing page with the various categories of information to be displayed on it
- Various tools that can be integrated and how these tools are (or can be) displayed on the platform
- Design of the page where the participation process will be displayed, as well as the various features, which can be used (information page, timeline, integration of the tools, results, etc.)
- Platform cockpit with all features, such as moderation or analytical features that can be used by the initiators of the process

2.1.3 Subcontracting

The REAL DEAL consortium has subcontracted the platform implementation, strictly following the EU procedures.

Prior to the subcontracting, and based on the results from D.1.2., “An assessment of participatory and deliberative techniques and processes relevant to the EGD”, the TUB Team carried out a scouting of the most advanced participatory platform on the market and reached out the various technical providers of such platforms. In that way, the team could present the project the various potential subcontractors, and adjust the expectation in terms of what is feasible or not with such platforms.

The selection criteria were set as below:

- Concept in line with our needs
- Experience
- Timing
- Best Value for Money

The selection procedure saw four submissions, and two of those were shortlisted. A consortium providing the DECIDIM platform was, in the end, granted for the subcontracting. The following table shows the various milestones defined to be implemented by the technical contractor for the development of the platform.

Milestone	Deadline
Kick-off meeting	15.03.2023
1 st Version of the Platform	15.04.2023
Training on how to use the platform and testing	18.04.2023
Deadline for review feedback from consortium	25.04.2023
Adapt the platform according to the feedbacks	25.05.2023
Technical support for the various processes	Regular meetings from 01.06.2023 until end of the project

Table 3 Platform Roadmap

2.2 Presentation of the platform

The platform has been branded according to the REAL DEAL overall project design (See Figure 1), and is linked to the project website. The platform is reachable from the project's website www.realdeal.eu and has its own URL <https://my.realdeal.eu/>, i.e. the title is also clearly associated with the project's website.

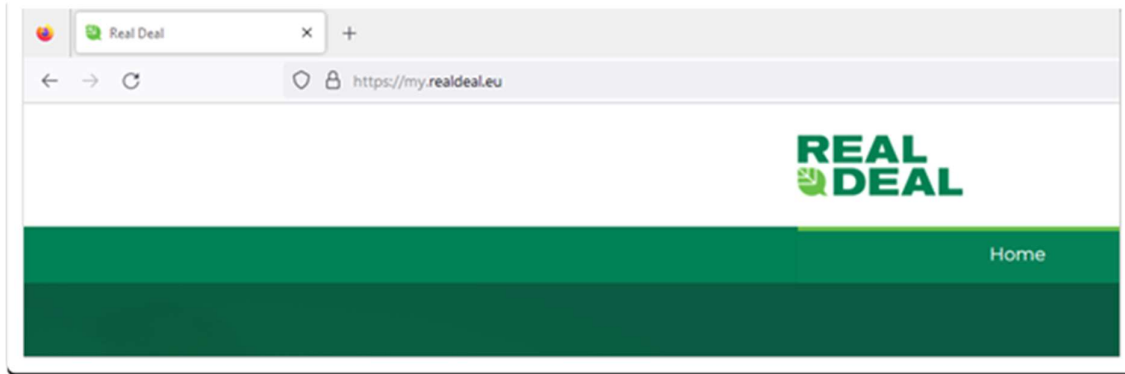


Figure 1 Landing page (1)

The platform offers also direct link to the project's website, making easy for any users to get more information about the ongoing activities, beyond those of the platform.

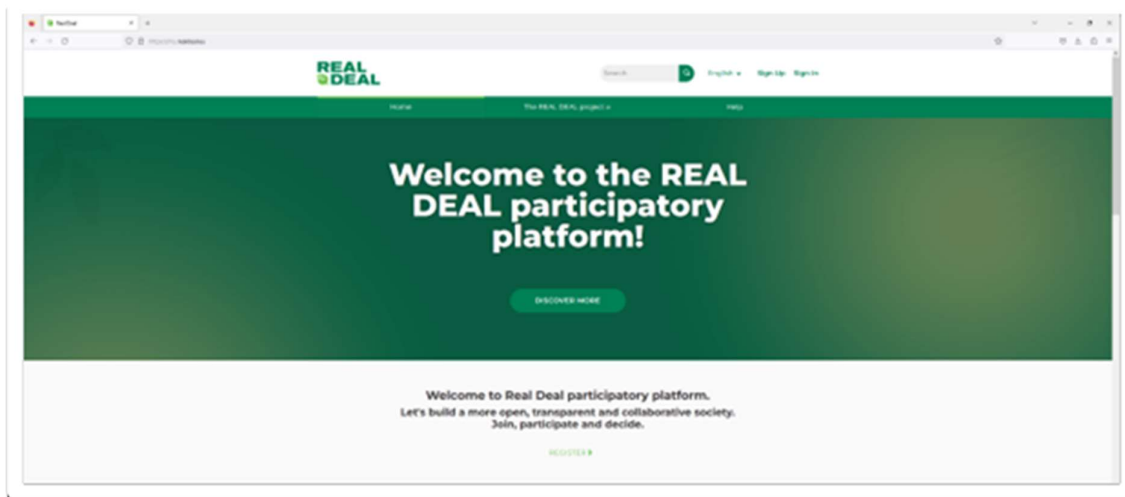


Figure 2 Landing page (2)

Scrolling down in the home page of the platform, more general information is available, as much as upcoming meetings and current activities. The first part of Figure 3 shows the different national spaces, as well as one pan-European space, where various deliberative formats will be implemented. The Platform offers initiators the possibility to design four different kinds of participatory spaces, each with each own dynamic (processes, assemblies, initiatives, conferences). Users willing to take part in one or several processes happening in one country targeted by the REAL DEAL project can easily access the processes and directly get an overview on the processes launched in their countries. Moreover, the various meetings can be displayed on a map, which enable the users to easily see which event is happening where and when.

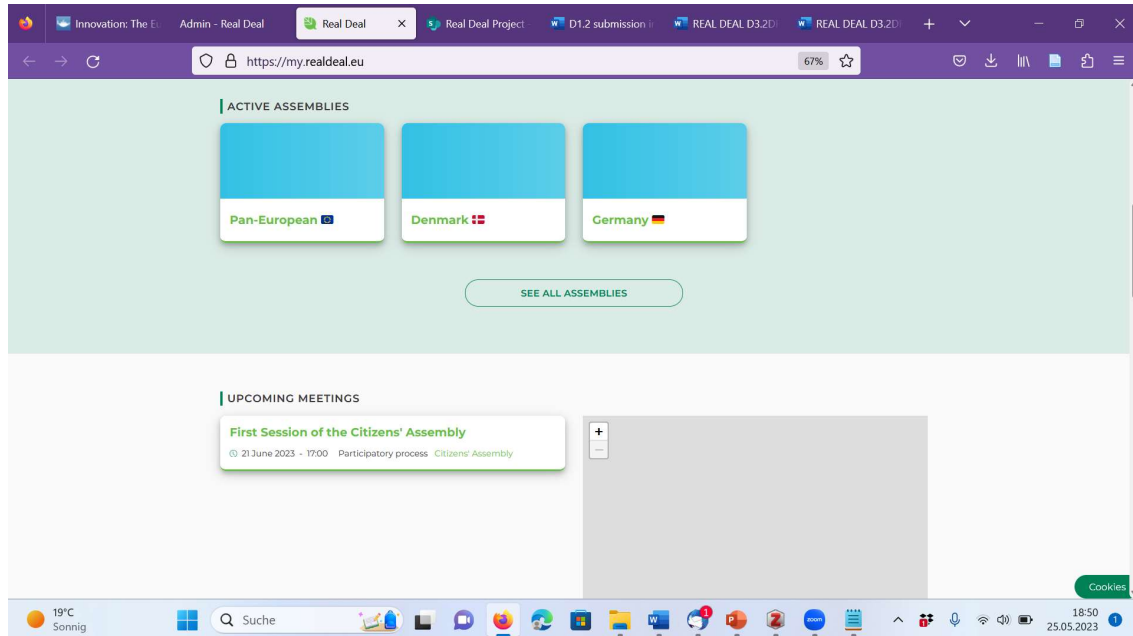


Figure 3 Landing Page (3)

In order to use the platform, any user needs to sign up first, a procedure which is user-friendly and requires a minimum of information (Figure 4).

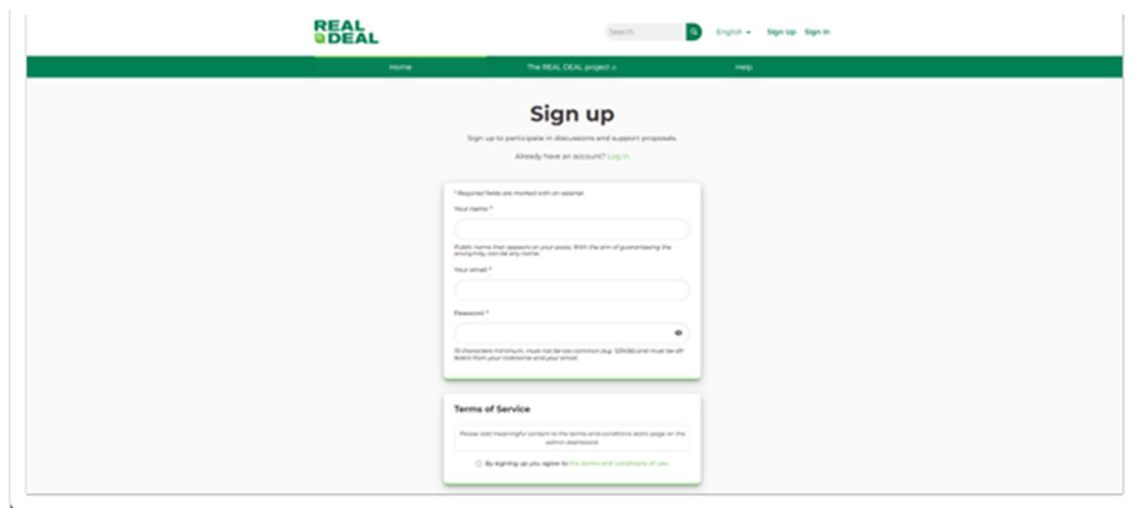


Figure 4 User Log-in page

2.3 Integration of formats and tools into the platform

2.3.1 Introduction to the formats

Taking stocks on the results of the previous pieces of research carried out in the project, the platform will support the implementation of several participative and deliberative formats, which were analysed in D.1.2 “An assessment of participatory and deliberative techniques and processes relevant to the EGD” and further discussed and selected in D.1.4 “Selection of techniques for citizen deliberation on the EGD”.

Focus groups, Citizen assemblies enhanced by Delphi procedures, as well as Round Tables belongs for instance to the formats, which have been defined in D.1.4 as effective instruments to develop national and pan-European debates needed for the European Green Deal to succeed. Further formats might be integrated into the platform in the course of the project. These different formats will be implemented in different countries in the course of Work Package 3. The Platform aims to introduce these different formats, presenting them in a simple and informative way (see Figures 5 and 6), and to enable the members of the consortium to rely on its various participation and deliberation tools in order to enhance the implementation of such processes in various national contexts with online elements. Through the multilingualism of the platform, it is also expected that the results of processes taking place in one specific country can be further discussed in other national context, providing therefore a European dimension to the various debates.

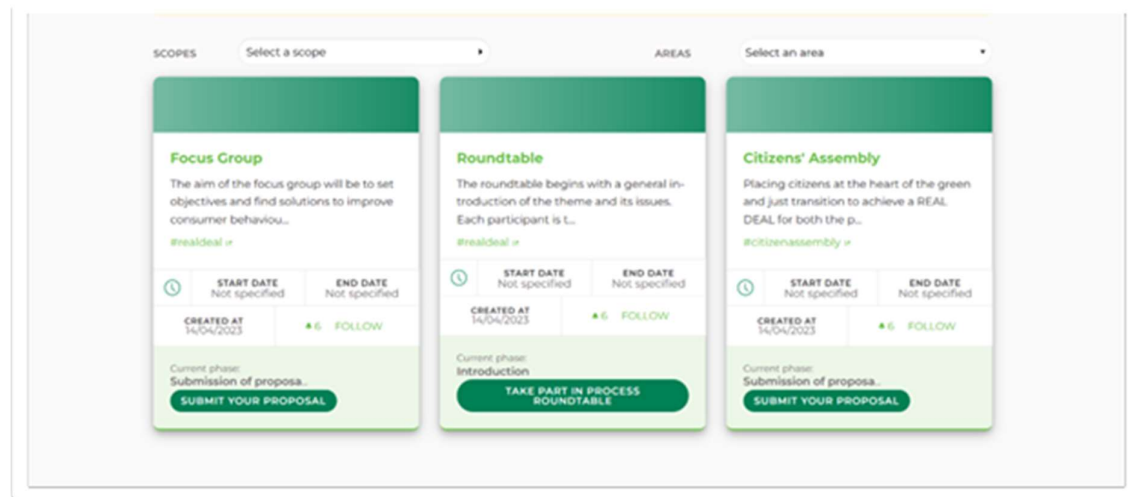


Figure 5 Overview of formats integrated into the platform

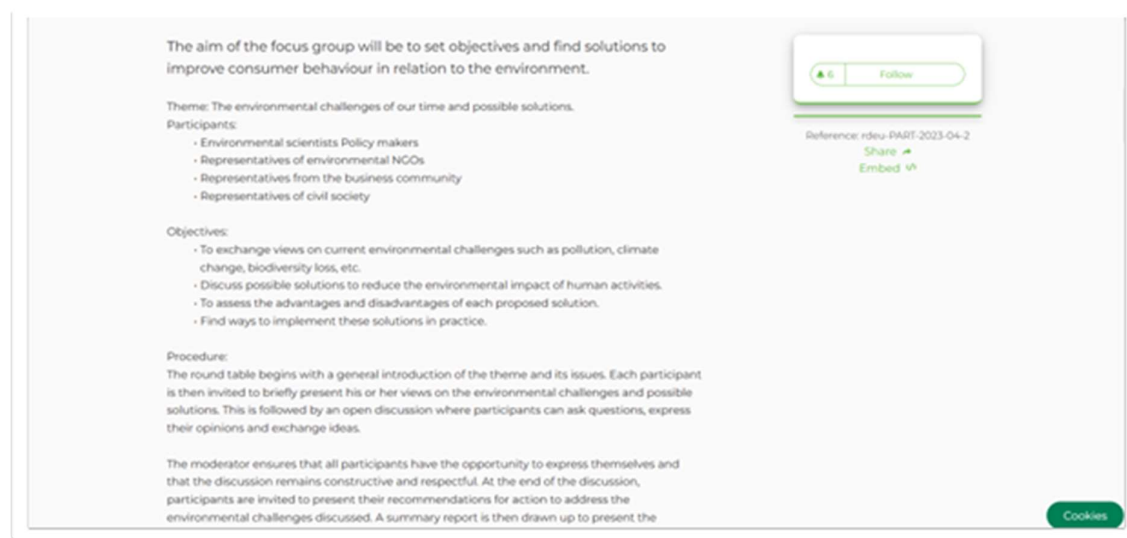


Figure 6 Focus group page

2.3.2 Introduction to the tools

As previously state, the online platform offers several participatory tools (such as survey, polls, collaborative writing etc..) to support the implementation of online and hybrid deliberative and participatory formats, which were already identified and analysed in D.1.2 "An assessment of participatory and deliberative techniques and processes relevant to the EGD". Some tools available on DECIDIM are the following:

Tool	Short description
Proposal	Collection of ideas which can be endorsed, geolocalised or categorised
Survey	Implementation of various kinds of questionnaires
Meetings	Reinforce the link between digital and physical participation by informing on physical events and tracking their progress
Sortition	Enable sortitions among various proposals
Debates	Similar to proposal but allowing longer thread of comments
Poll	Allow for voting on a specific topic according to rules defined by the initiator of the process
Accountability	Aims to make the progression of a process more visible
News	Allow interaction among users via comments (similar to blogs)
Page	Allow for setting up information pages with the inclusion of various sources such as video or pictures

Table 4 Overview of tools available on the platform

The following Figures 7 and 8 show examples of tools which have been integrated into the REAL DEAL Platform.

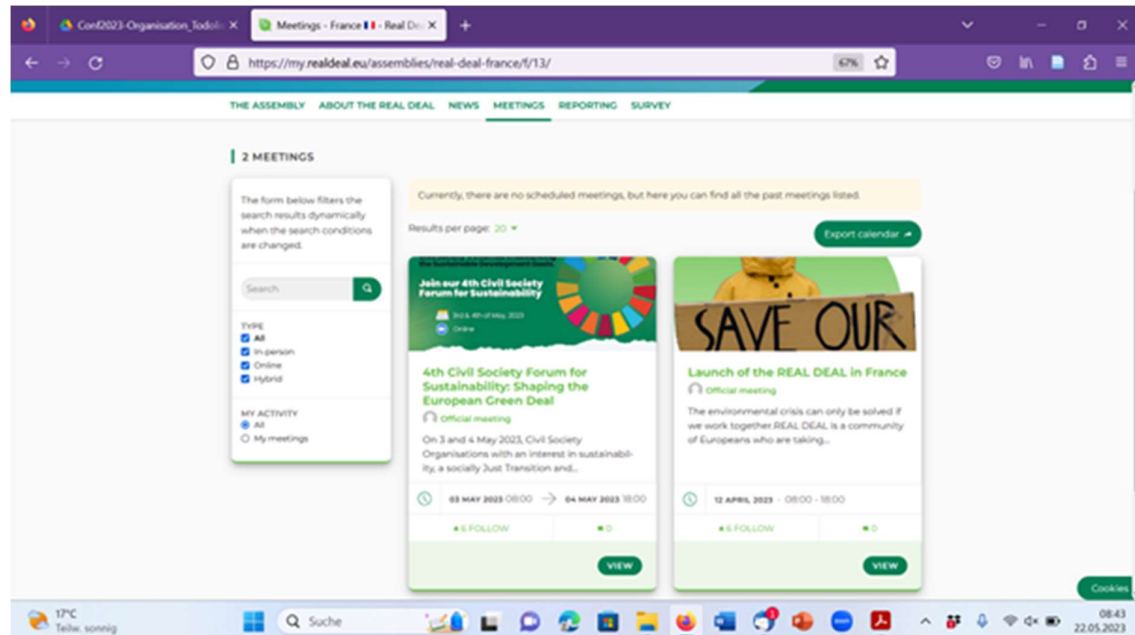


Figure 7 Meetings page

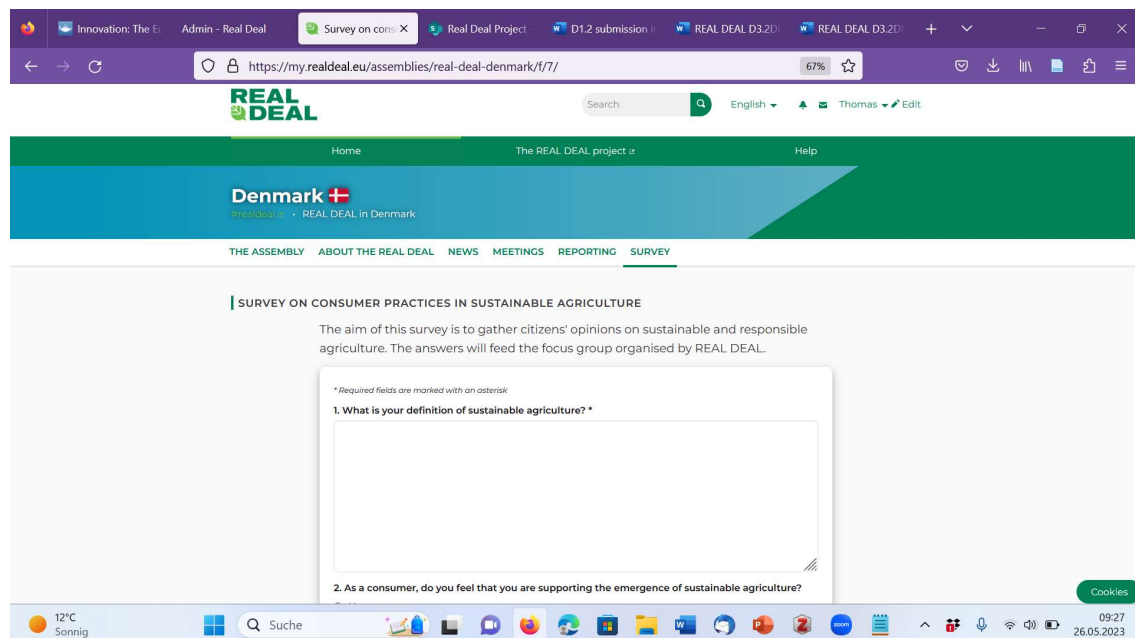


Figure 8 Survey page

These various tools, which are already integrated into the platform, will help to shape the online processes of the selected formats that will be deployed in various REAL DEAL test cases. Due to the flexibility of the platform, there is no predefined relationship between the tools and formats. Therefore, different tools can be also used for the same format being implemented in different countries. Hence, a citizen assembly being implemented in one country can decide to rely on the survey and meeting tools while a citizen assembly being implemented in another country can decide to use the poll and the news tools. The following Figure 9 shows the integration of the proposal tool into the Citizen assembly format.

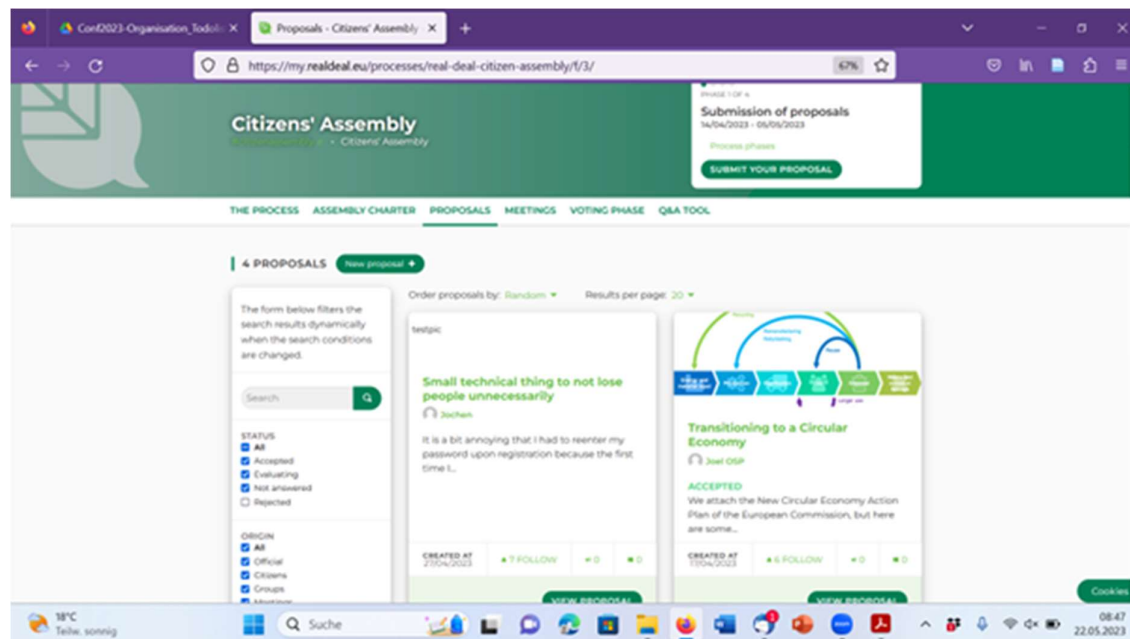


Figure 9 Citizens assembly's page

3 Conclusion

The online platform presented in this deliverable will be of great support for the implementation of the REAL DEAL test cases relying on online and hybrid participatory processes. The empirical testing of this platform in different national and pan-European contexts will also provide a great opportunity to collect further insightful experiences on online deliberation, draw recommendations for further practical implementations, and contribute to the already existing vast body of research on that topic. But the implementation of this platform in various test cases will also be the opportunity to identify and analyse some limitations of this platform that might eventually contribute to its improvement. First analysis has shown that some tools, which might be useful for the implementation of formats, are not available on the platform yet (for instance, white board or mind map tools). Through the deployment of this platform in real life context, the REAL DEAL consortium will have the possibility to test if and how such missing tools can be, for instance, integrated in the platform or be used as stand-alone tools in collaboration with the platform.

4 The Joint Repository (Update)

4.1 The process of designing the Joint Repository

Initially the above described online deliberative platform was expected to be a joint platform with the Real Deal's sister project Phoenix. However, in the early stage of both projects, this idea seemed to be difficult to realise and not desirable for both projects, especially due to the different development of the project and the required use of online deliberative tools. Therefore, it was agreed that instead of a joint online deliberative platform, the sister projects will together develop a joint repository, where the main results of both projects would be displayed after the lifetime of both projects. The division of work among both projects partners was defined as follows: the Real Deal project – which finishes 6 months before the Phoenix project – will be responsible of designing the structure of the repository, while the Phoenix project will technically implement the repository.

The structure of the repository, as described in the following parts, has been developed, starting in November 2024, through several meetings between the Real Deal and Phoenix projects' teams. In a first meeting, a common understanding of the repository and its functions was discussed and agreed on. Following that, the Real Deal project partners designed a structure for the repository, that was discussed and improved with the help of the Phoenix team. In the next section, we will describe the structure of the joint repository.

The joint repository will be reached out through the following url: www.phoenix-realdeal.eu.

Following the set-up of repository's structure, the foreseen next steps will be:

- The Real-Deal partners will provide the files and other contents to the Phoenix partners according to the transfer modalities defined by both projects.
- Phoenix will upload the content provided by Real-Deal on the repository as soon as possible and depending on Phoenix's project development.
- Once the content has been uploaded, the repository will be officially launched.

4.2 The structure of the Joint Repository

The joint repository is made up of different sections enabling the users to access information from two main entry points, namely,

- a) through an interactive map focusing mainly on the pilots' results, and
- b) through a document page, where all main results of both projects are listed.

In the following sub-sections, we will introduce the main sections of the repository.

4.2.1 The landing page

The landing page of the repository shortly introduces the main aim of this repository and display its main sections. Besides the interactive map, users will have the possibility to click in and go in the main sections of the repository through the menu bar as displayed in Figure 10.



Figure 10: Landing page of the joint repository

4.2.2 The interactive map

The interactive map enables users to geographically navigate through results produced by the two projects. The main aim of this map is to highlight the empirical work of both project by showing where the case studies have been implemented and providing information and results of the various pilots. It is important to note here that, while Phoenix focused on local and regional level case studies, Real Deal addressed case studies at the national and at the European levels. By clicking on the country, the users can directly obtain the list of the documents related to the case studies which have been carried out in the specific countries and get directly access to it (See figure 11). The European levels case studies will be accessible on the map by clicking on Brussel as they have mainly been organised in Brussel.

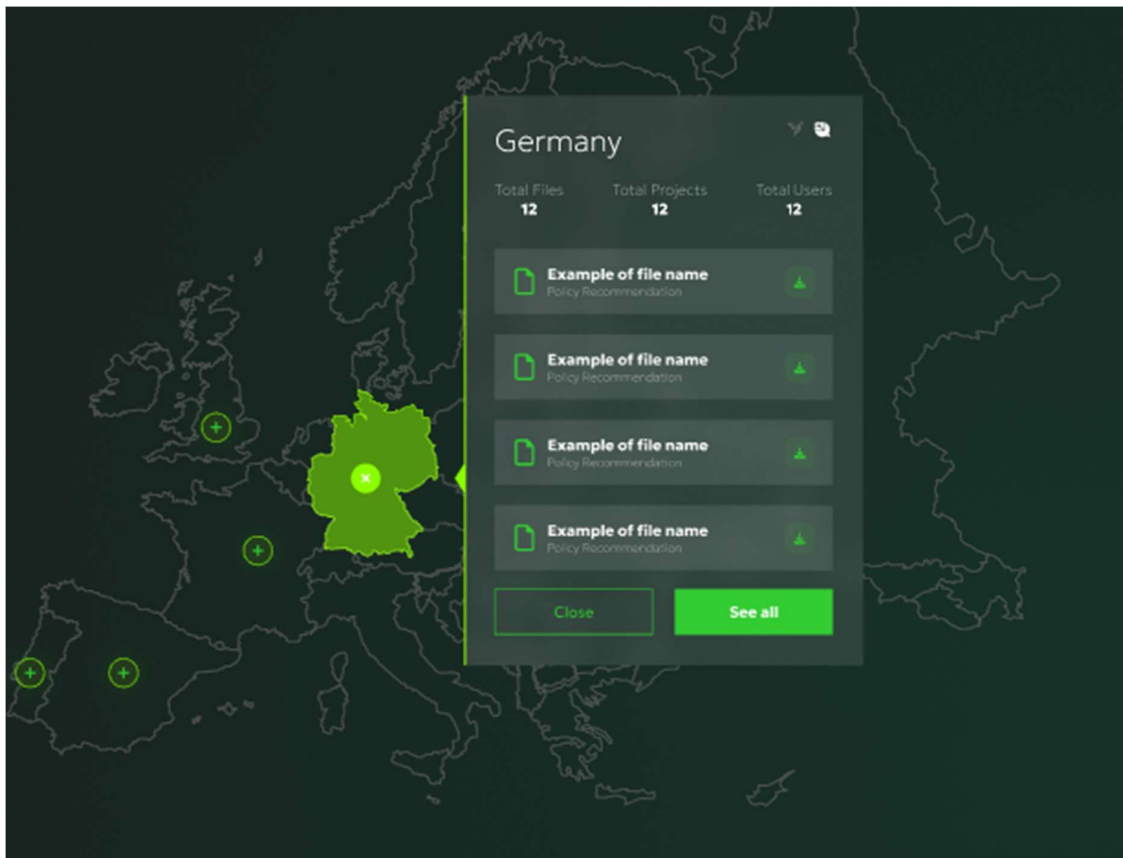


Figure 11: Interactive map of the joint repository

4.2.3 The documents section

The second entry point of the repository is represented by the documents section, which is reachable through the menu bar. This section will bring together the main relevant documents produced by the two projects and categorised into the different sub-sections (See figure 12 for the design), namely:

- Guidance documents: Guidelines and protocols
- Policy briefs and policy recommendations
- Case studies (pilots / testcases): descriptions and analysis
- Reports and deliverables
- Scientific publications
- Events (Document on past events (for Real Deal mainly: Civil Society Forum, own events (Summit, online pre-summit))

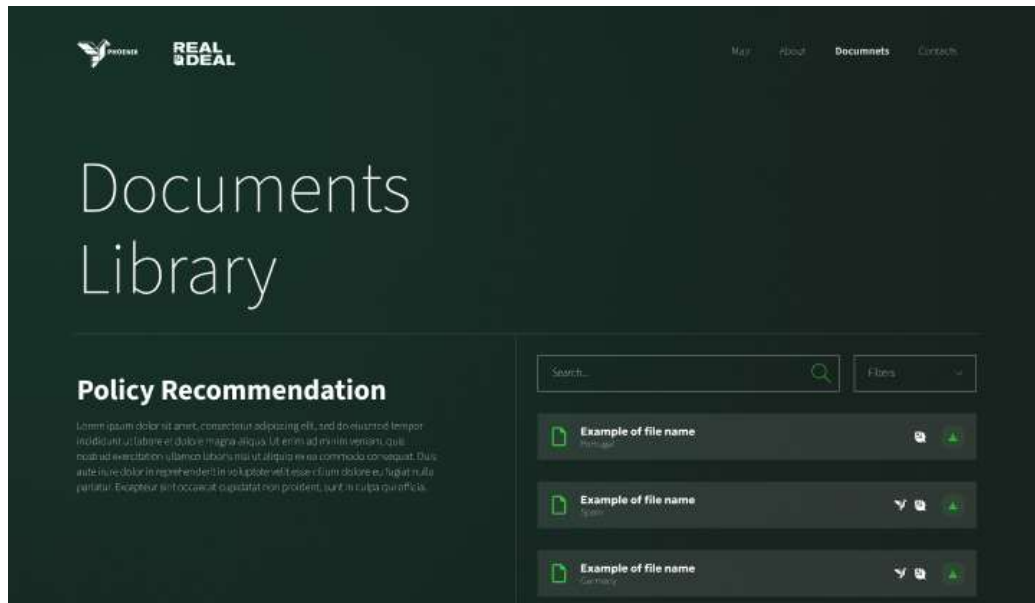


Figure 12: Documents section of the repository

4.2.4 The presentation of the two sister projects

This section provides more detailed information on each of the projects, enabling to highlight – beyond the common points of both projects - their main specificities. As displayed in figure 13, this section is made up of the respective project logo, a button linking to the respective website, and a description of the projects.

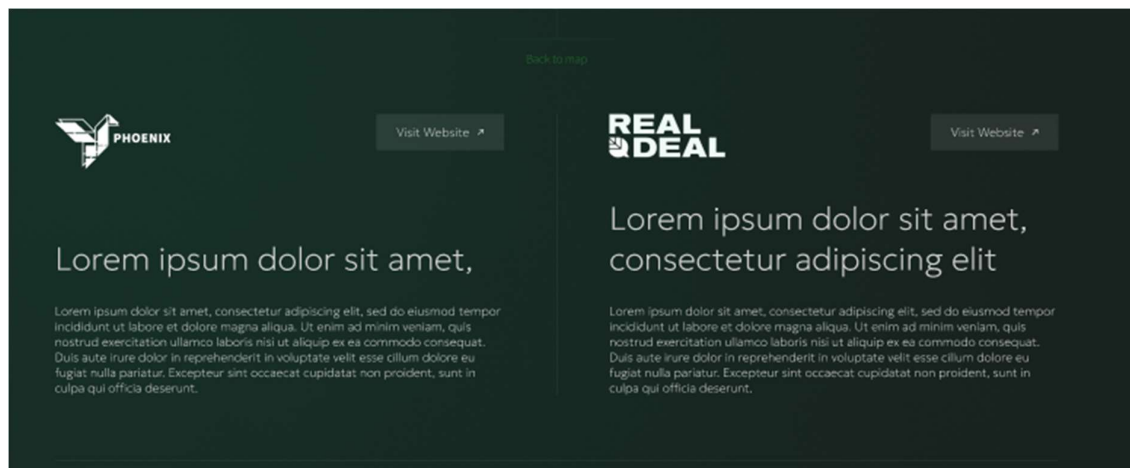


Figure 13: PHOENIX & Real Deal about section

4.2.5 The contacts' section

This section provides the different contacts and social networks for each project, enabling users of the repository to reach out directly to the coordinators of the projects (See figure 14).



Figure 14: Contacts' section

4.2.6 The search entries within the repository

The joint repository is expected to offer a search function for users looking for specific pieces of information. In this section, we present a list of tags for search, which have been clustered in different categories:

Core Themes

- European Green Deal
- Citizen and Stakeholder Engagement
- Citizen Participation and Deliberation
- Democratic Innovation
- Sustainability
- Climate Change
- Gender
- Inclusiveness
- Just Transition
- Sustainable Development Goals

Participation Methods

- Online Participation
- Online tools
- Citizen Assemblies
- Public Consultations
- Focus groups
- Delphi panels / Group Delphi
- Stakeholder Roundtables
- participatory budgeting

Policy Areas

- Climate Neutrality
- Circular Economy
- Sustainable Mobility
- Energy Efficiency
- Biodiversity
- Agriculture
- Circular Economy
- Pollution

Stakeholders

- Civil Society Organizations
- Policymakers
- Youth Engagement
- Gender Equality
- Administration
- Researchers

Governance and governance levels

- Multi-level Governance
- Local and regional
- National
- European / EU
- Environmental Governance
- Transparency
- Accountability
- Impact

Project-Specific

- REAL DEAL
- PHOENIX
- Horizon

Outcomes

Policy Recommendations
Best Practices
Case Studies
Scientific publications
Guidelines
Deliverables
Events