

# Better Reykjavik

## Digital Tools for Citizens Participation

Oslo June 2017

Unnur Margrét Arnardóttir, Project Manager  
Office of the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer  
City of Reykjavík

# Iceland 2009



# Best Party - Mayor Jón Gnarr



# Before municipal election 2010

- Better Reykjavik (BR) put online by Citizen Foundation NGO
- Welcomed by the Best Party
  - What do you want us to do?

# After municipal election 2010

- Citizens took part in forming government
- 1000 priorities created by 5000 users
  - Some made it to the new government agenda
- Promise to include BR in city governing
  
- Steering group formed to formally include BR in city administration
- 2011: Better Reykjavik opens



# Better Reykjavík – in general

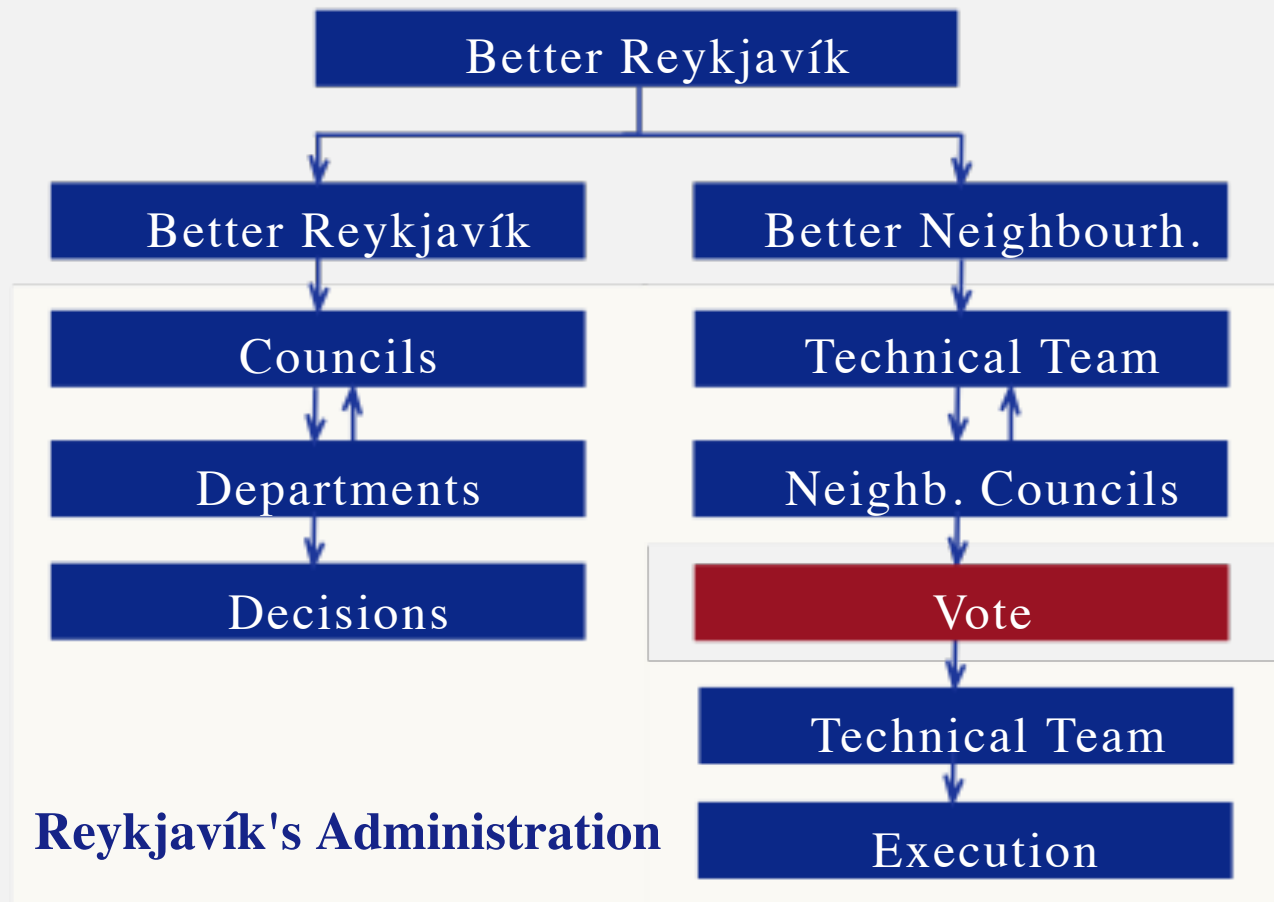
## Objectives

- Use modern technology to create a window for citizens into the administration
- Engage citizens, politicians and administration in a better conversation
- Empower citizens, increase their participation and encourage democratic deliberation

## Means

- Use the internet as a tool for crowdsourcing
- Establish an online forum for citizens to submit ideas, discuss them and prioritise

# One website – two projects



# Better Reykjavík

Increasing citizen participation  
and democratic deliberation



# Better Reykjavík

## How?

- Register and create a user profile
- Submit ideas and 'tag' according to categories
- Argue for or against ideas
- Prioritize ideas by voting for or against

## Role of the City of Reykjavík

- Committees process 5 most popular ideas + most popular idea in each of the 13 categories every month – 25 vote minimum
- Every month the ideas are taken from the web and sent to the 8 committees as proposals
- Committees decide on the matter, often after consultation from respective departments



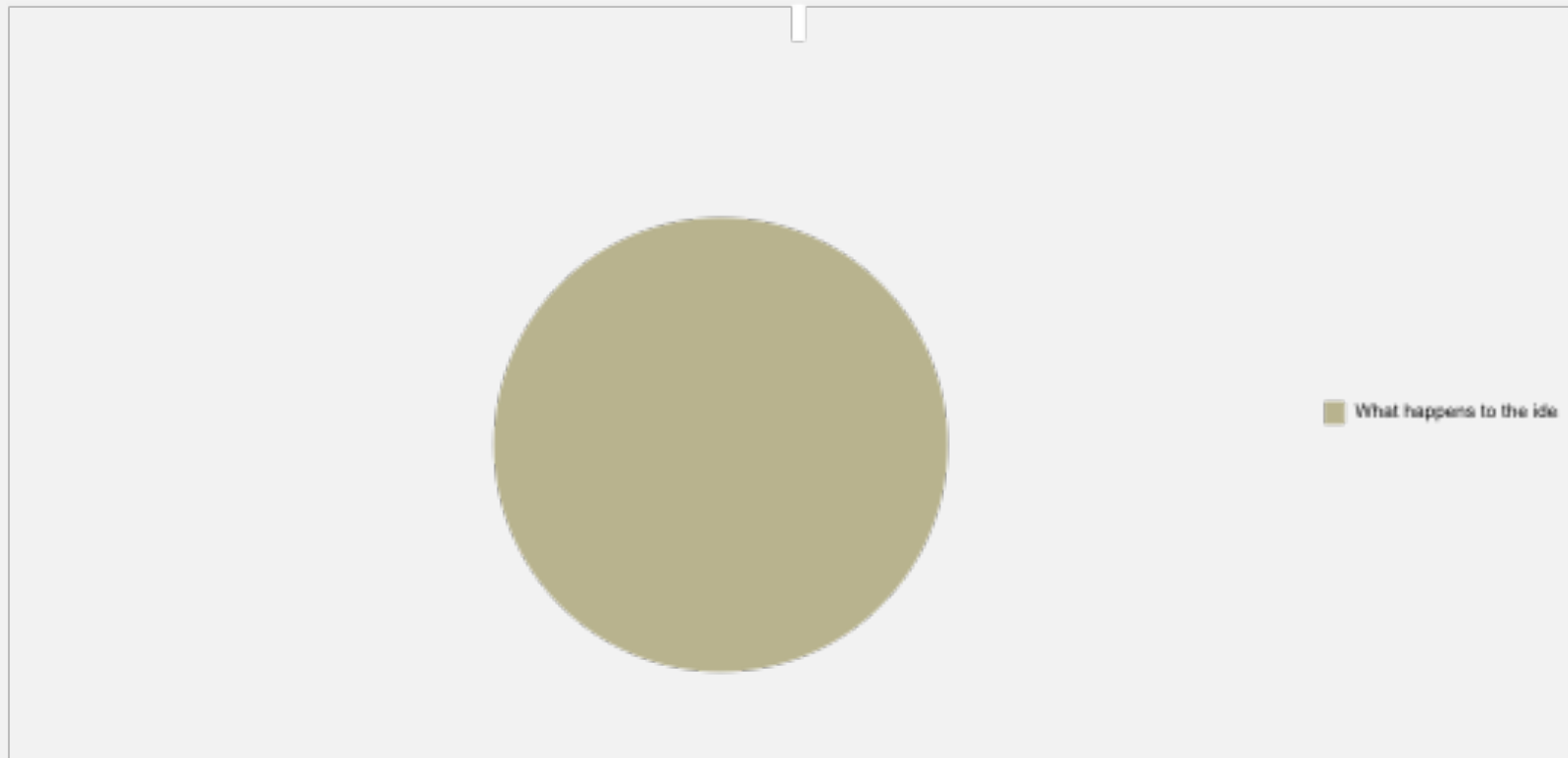
# Better Reykjavík

## Number of Users, Ideas and Proposals

- Over 19,000 registered users (Reykjavik pop. 123,000)
- Over 2,700 ideas submitted
- 811 proposals sent to committees (Nov/2011 to Jun/2017)

# Better Reykjavík

How have proposals been dealt with?



# Challenges and lessons

- Answers from committees
- Quality of ideas sent in
- Amount of ideas sent to committees for processing
- Majority of ideas go to environment and planning committee
- Information about users
- Great expectations
- Don't get too comfortable!

# My Neighbourhood

(Better Neighbourhoods)

Citizen participation  
in budgeting





# My Neighbourhood

## Objectives

- To open up for citizens's participation in budgeting

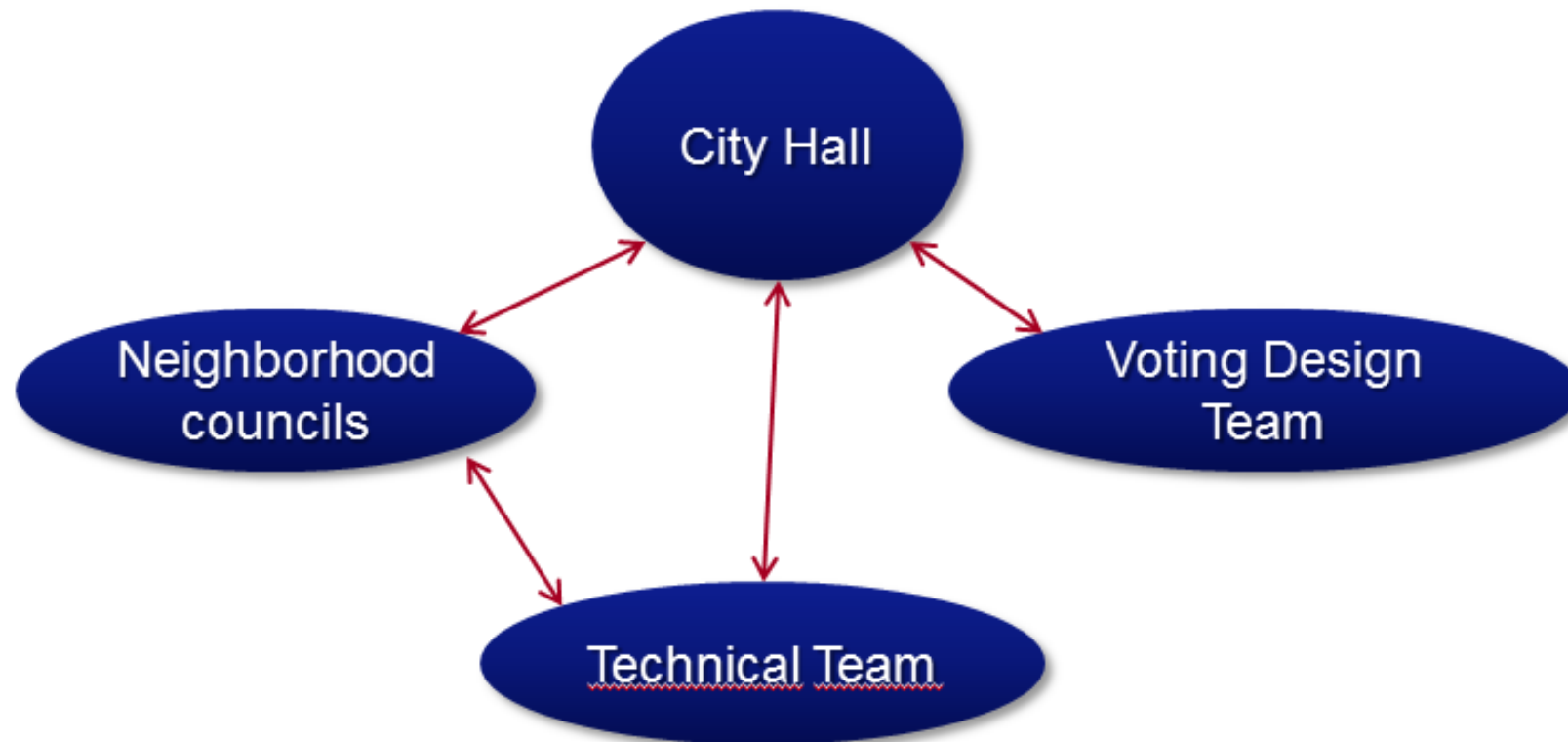
## Design

- Minor new-construction and maintenance work
- € 4.0 million divided between 10 neighbourhoods
- Citizens choose between up to 250 proposals
- Ideas > Vote > Execution

# My Neighbourhood

## Project size and process

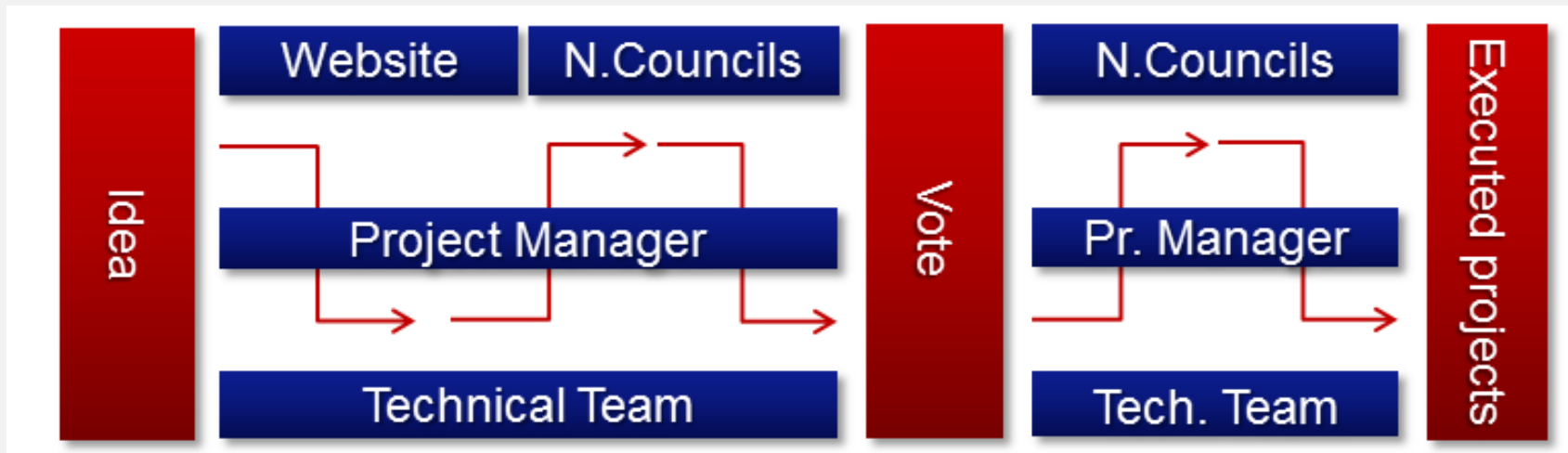
- At least 120 actors from various organizations involved



# My Neighbourhood

## Project size and process

Ideas > Vote > Execution



Voting system development and PR



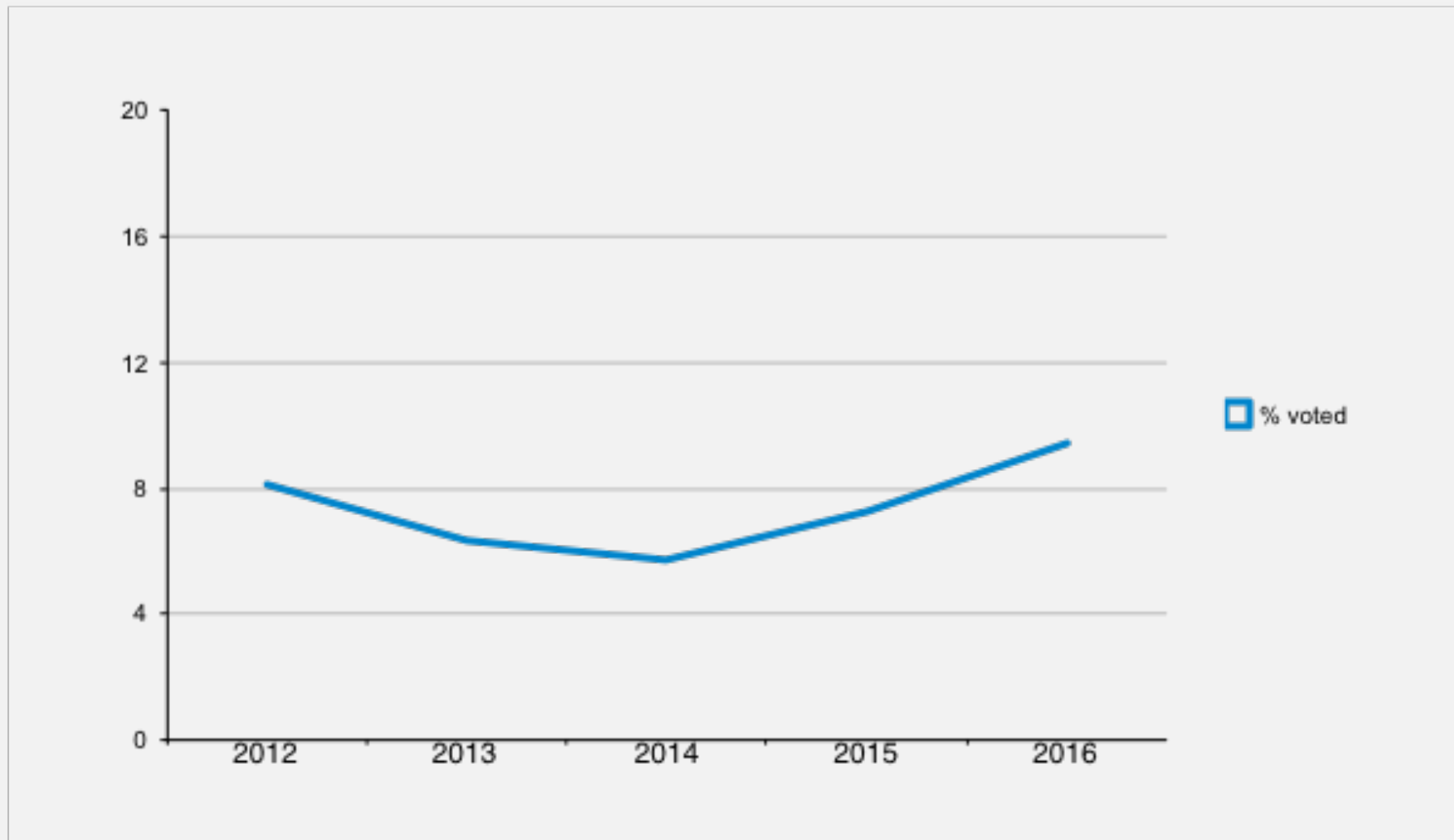
# My Neighbourhood

## Project size and process 2017 – 2018

- March 2017: Call for ideas
- Mar–Jun 2017: All 1090 ideas evaluated by team of professionals (architects, engineers, etc.).  
Have to meet pre-described criteria (e.g. fit into the budget, be on city land, not requiring extensive planning or consultation)
- May-Jun 2017: Consultation with Neighbourhood Councils
- October 2017: <250 most popular ideas that met criteria put to online vote – 9.4% participation in 2016
- Summer 2017: Execution of voted projects



# Vote participation – My Neighbourhood



# Challenges and lessons

- Scale of project – good preparation
- Voting participation – secure authentication
- Consultation with creators of ideas
- Time constraints
- Follow up is important

# My Neighbourhood - Projects





# My Neighbourhood - Projects





# My Neighbourhood - Projects





# My Neighbourhood - Projects





# My Neighbourhood - Projects





# My Neighbourhood - Projects





# My Neighbourhood - Projects





# My Neighbourhood - Projects





# My Neighbourhood - Projects





# My Neighbourhood - Projects





# My Neighbourhood - Projects





# Thank you!

