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TS Batbold
Advisory Professor,
Department of Political
Science, National University of
Mongolia, Mongolia

Models and Approaches for institutionalizing deliberative democracy in Mongolia

TS Batbold

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Abstract

This article provides a comprehensive theoretical, methodological, and practical examination of models and approaches for institutionalizing deliberative democracy. The proposed model is distinctive in that it offers the potential to correct the distortions of representative and direct democracy in Mongolia without generating major social conflicts or confrontations. Although elements of deliberative democracy have been applied sporadically and in incomplete forms across various localities in many countries—yielding positive outcomes at the level of municipalities, provinces, or districts—such practices have not been implemented at the national level, and thus have fallen short of addressing systemic distortions of democracy. If Mongolia succeeds in fully adopting this model, it could mitigate the adverse effects of corruption, clientelism, and excessive partisanship, thereby enabling more rational policy-making and delivering positive outcomes and impacts.

Keywords: Democratic distortions, shortcomings of representative and direct democracy, “centre for deliberative democracy,” the right to demand deliberative processes, deliberative discussion technologies, “citizen council,” referendum and deliberative process

Introduction

Democracy, in its various forms, has long been regarded as the most legitimate system of governance, offering citizens a voice in shaping political decisions. Traditionally, representative democracy has been the dominant model, enabling citizens to exercise their will through elected officials. However, scholars have increasingly highlighted the structural flaws and distortions within this system, where elite interests often overshadow the voices of the majority, weakening both inclusivity and accountability. Direct democracy, envisioned as a corrective mechanism, similarly encounters limitations such as unequal access to information, populist pressures, and voter fatigue, which compromise its effectiveness in addressing complex policy issues. Against this backdrop, deliberative democracy has emerged as a promising alternative that emphasizes informed dialogue, mutual respect, and reasoned decision-making. By fostering structured citizen participation and embedding it within institutional and legal frameworks, deliberative democracy seeks to correct distortions inherent in both representative and direct models. Its institutionalization holds potential to deepen citizen engagement, strengthen transparency, and enhance the legitimacy of policymaking in contemporary governance.

Democratic Distortions: Theory and Practice

Within contemporary democratic governance, representative democracy has long served as the primary mechanism through which citizens exercise political participation via elected representatives. However, many international scholars have criticized this mechanism as institutionally flawed and insufficient in reflecting the preferences of the majority. For instance, Martin Gilens and Benjamin Page (2014) ^[11], through an extensive analysis of U.S. policy data, concluded that when the interests of elite’s conflict with those of the majority, the latter have little to no influence on policy outcomes. This phenomenon undermines the foundational principles of representative democracy by revealing how real-world policy decisions are predominantly shaped by elite interests. Similarly, E.E. Schattschneider (1960) ^[12] argued that the system of political influence is “skewed, biased, and disproportionately responsive to a small minority,” thereby emphasizing the institutional distortions inherent in representative democracy.

Corresponding Author:
TS Batbold
Advisory Professor,
Department of Political
Science, National University of
Mongolia, Mongolia

Although representative democracy is theoretically designed to articulate citizens' interests and formulate policy within institutional frameworks, its implementation often displays a range of distortions and weaknesses:

1. **Inadequate Representation of Citizens' Voices:** In practice, the genuine preferences of citizens are often underrepresented, while the interests of political elites dominate. Party leadership tends to constrain the autonomy of elected representatives. Moreover, limited access to information and insufficient policy knowledge among citizens negatively affect electoral choices and the quality of representation.
2. **Short-Termism:** Representative democracy frequently fosters short-term political behaviour tied to electoral cycles. Elected officials, seeking re-election, prioritize quick, visible outcomes over long-term strategic policymaking. In addition, electoral system design can distort proportional representation, marginalize smaller parties, and even allow parties lacking majority support to gain disproportionate power.
3. **Weak Accountability:** Another major distortion lies in limited accountability. Citizens typically evaluate representatives only at the end of electoral cycles, leaving little room for ongoing oversight. This phenomenon, widely referred to as a "democratic deficit," is compounded by the growing influence of money and lobbying groups, which bias policy outcomes toward affluent actors and corporations.
4. **Declining Citizen Engagement and Limited Inclusivity:** Representative democracy is also challenged by reduced citizen participation, declining political activism, and insufficient inclusion of minorities. Lack of diversity in representation—whether by ethnicity, gender, social status, or geography—undermines the fairness and inclusiveness of policymaking. Furthermore, political polarization and partisanship erode opportunities for compromise and weaken the quality of issue-based deliberation.

Addressing these distortions by enhancing genuine citizen participation and information accessibility is thus essential for improving the quality and sustainability of democracy.

Limitations of Direct Democracy

Although direct democracy is often viewed as a corrective mechanism for the shortcomings of representative democracy, it too faces serious limitations. Clark (2002) ^[5] highlights that in practice, direct democracy is hindered by unequal participation among voters, poorly designed referendum materials, and the disproportionate influence of special interest groups, all of which result in outcomes that fall significantly short of the ideal. Likewise, Fishkin (1991) ^[4] cautions that when complex and large-scale policy issues are decided through mass referenda without sufficient information and deliberation, the decisions of the majority risk being driven by populist impulses rather than reasoned judgment.

Direct democracy is theoretically valued for its ability to involve citizens directly in crucial state decisions, thereby compensating for the limitations of representative democracy. Yet in practice, several distortions and weaknesses emerge:

1. **Populist Tendencies:** Decision-making is often swayed by transient public moods and emotional appeals, creating a high risk of populism. Political actors and

interest groups frequently exploit simplified slogans and emotionally charged campaigns to frame complex policy questions in overly simplistic terms. This fosters short-term thinking and may undermine long-term policy stability.

2. **Unequal Access to Information:** Citizens typically participate in direct democratic processes with unequal access to information and limited expertise. As a result, referendum outcomes are often shaped less by factual or scientific evidence and more by the influence of campaign strategies, propaganda, and media framing. Furthermore, when majority decisions are automatically legalized, institutional safeguards for minority rights are weakened, raising the risk of a "tyranny of the majority."
3. **Limits of Issue Suitability:** The scope of issues that can be effectively addressed through direct democracy is inherently constrained. Complex policy areas such as macroeconomic management, defence, or environmental regulation demand specialized knowledge and nuanced analysis, which cannot easily be condensed into a simple yes/no referendum question. Consequently, referenda on such issues risk producing oversimplified or even misguided outcomes.
4. **Voter Fatigue:** The high frequency of referenda and citizen initiatives can create "voter fatigue," reducing participation rates and weakening civic engagement. Moreover, groups with substantial financial and informational resources are often able to dominate referendum campaigns, thereby distorting the authentic voice of the broader citizenry.

For these reasons, the implementation of direct democracy requires parallel development of mechanisms that ensure equal access to information, enhance civic knowledge, and safeguard minority rights.

Theoretical and Methodological Foundations of Deliberative Democracy

As demonstrated, both representative and direct democracy are, in theory, essential for empowering citizens and ensuring the legitimacy and stability of governance. However, in practice, they encounter serious challenges, including institutional distortions, unequal access to information, and risks of majoritarian dominance. To mitigate these shortcomings and foster more informed, dialogue-based citizen participation, scholars have increasingly emphasized the potential of deliberative democracy as a complementary reform pathway.

For example, James Fishkin developed the method of *deliberative polling*, which demonstrates how structured deliberation among informed citizens can improve electoral attitudes, knowledge, and judgment, thereby reducing distortions caused by uninformed voting in both representative and direct democratic mechanisms (Fishkin, 1991) ^[4]. From a theoretical standpoint, Jürgen Habermas argued that democratic legitimacy must rest on a "critical public discourse" in which citizens engage in authentic deliberation based on mutual understanding. This communicative foundation restores balance between electoral representation and direct voting, thereby correcting systemic distortions (Habermas, 1996) ^[3]. Similarly, Amy Gutmann and Dennis F. Thompson (1996) ^[7] contend that if governments and citizens can engage in open deliberation on controversial issues and provide reasoned justification

(*reason-giving*), policies will emerge in a more legitimate and cooperative form, alleviating the deficiencies of representative and direct democracy.

In contemporary democratic governance, the demand for deeper citizen engagement and more transparent, balanced policymaking is steadily increasing (Dryzek, 2000) ^[8]. Traditional state-citizen interactions, which are often one-sided and limited to electoral moments, have proven insufficient in incorporating citizens' perspectives into the policymaking process. Consequently, the establishment of independent, professional institutions that can organize continuous, systematic citizen participation through deliberation has become increasingly necessary (Smith, 2009) ^[13]. Within this context, scholars argue that deliberative democracy offers the most promising means of correcting the shortcomings of representative and direct democracy.

Deliberative democracy is not merely a matter of voting or representation; it is a form of governance in which decisions are made through informed discussions and debates among citizens. It emphasizes reasoned deliberation, consensus-building, and mutual respect as the foundation for resolving conflicts and shaping policy directions. Citizen participation in democracy entails active involvement in shaping society and influencing decisions that affect their lives. Within policymaking, citizen participation means engaging actively in the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of policies that directly impact their daily existence. Such participation enhances the legitimacy and effectiveness of policies, while also building trust between governments and citizens.

A structured sequence of deliberative processes throughout the policy cycle aims to ensure citizen input at every stage—policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation. This approach allows citizens not only to initiate or provide feedback during implementation but also to continuously express their views, recommendations, and evaluations at each stage of the policy process. By doing so, deliberative democracy creates more coherent, integrated, and impactful policies, while simultaneously deepening state-citizen mutual understanding and increasing both the quality and public acceptance of decisions.

Institutionalizing Deliberative Democracy in Mongolia: Models and Approaches

The core elements of deliberative democracy include: the right to demand deliberative processes, a "Centre for Deliberative Democracy," the organization of deliberative discussions, the relationship between referenda and deliberation, deliberative technologies, the institutionalization of mechanisms within local governance, the establishment of "Citizen Councils," cooperation between parliamentary standing committees and deliberative processes, and the linkage between government and deliberative institutions. All of these elements require firm legal and institutional guarantees.

The Right to Demand Deliberative Processes: Granting citizens the legal right to demand deliberative processes on policy issues establishes a mechanism whereby citizens, upon fulfilling certain conditions (such as collecting a required number of signatures), can require the state to convene an official deliberative forum. This mechanism not only strengthens civic initiative and participation but also

creates the foundation for addressing socially significant issues through deep and inclusive public dialogue. By institutionalizing citizens' right to initiate deliberation, direct forms of democracy are reinforced, public trust in governance is enhanced, and state institutions are encouraged to act more responsibly and sensitively to citizens' voices.

In some cases, the law may require deliberative discussions prior to the adoption of specific government decisions. Such a legal obligation is particularly relevant for large infrastructure projects, environmental impact policies, or socially sensitive issues. Mandatory deliberation ensures that decision-making becomes more transparent, participatory, and socially acceptable, thereby increasing both public legitimacy and implementation effectiveness.

Codifying citizens' right to deliberation on matters of state policy and budget is therefore a central pillar of democratic development (Smith, 2009) ^[13]. Legal guarantees for this right must be provided not only at the constitutional level but also through specific domestic legislation, such as a "Law on Citizen Participation" or "Law on the Procedure of Public Deliberation." Such frameworks regulate the interaction between state and citizens, ensuring transparency and fairness in the initiation of deliberations, petitioning, and organizing discussions.

Institutional mechanisms for participation may include establishing permanent or ad hoc citizen deliberative bodies with legal mandates. In Europe, for example, institutions such as "Citizens' Assemblies" or "Citizens' Councils" are formed by selecting citizen representatives transparently and equitably, granting them authority to directly interact with state institutions. These institutions not only make policymaking more open and inclusive but also enhance the legitimacy and effectiveness of decisions, while fostering trust between government and citizens.

The legal framework for deliberative democracy must go beyond requiring discussions to be organized; it must also oblige state institutions to integrate the results, recommendations, and citizen input into their decision-making. This ensures that citizen participation is substantive rather than symbolic, reduces the risk of political or populist manipulation, and increases governmental accountability. In this way, citizen-initiated deliberations can evolve into an institutionalized mechanism that has a real and lasting impact on governance.

Establishing a Centre for Deliberative Democracy: For deliberative democracy to function sustainably once institutionalized in law, a permanent, formally recognized organization is essential. The creation of a "Centre for Deliberative Democracy" would serve as a crucial institutional link, systematically collecting diverse citizen inputs and connecting them with policy decision-making. The constitutional and legislative framework must clearly define the Centre's functions, authority, scope of activities, and safeguards for participants' rights.

The legal guarantees should codify citizens' participation rights, the principles of public deliberation, and the obligation of state institutions to incorporate deliberative outcomes into policy. To safeguard against political influence, the Centre should be established as an independent, non-governmental institution with diversified and transparent funding sources and subjected to auditing mechanisms. A stable, institutionalized deliberative centre

would ensure the continuity, systematization, and sustainability of citizen participation in policymaking. Experiences from other countries demonstrate that citizen participation centres have successfully influenced policymaking by ensuring deep and structured civic engagement. In Mongolia, however, challenges remain, including weak legal guarantees and underdeveloped institutional structures, despite growing citizen activism in recent years. Therefore, the establishment of a “Centre for Deliberative Democracy” in Mongolia would require careful research, broad stakeholder engagement, and strong legal and institutional support.

Organizing Deliberative Discussions: Deliberative democracy aims to incorporate diverse citizen perspectives into policymaking through structured dialogue and evidence-based debate. However, in practice, deliberations may be undermined by political party interests, short-term populism, or unequal access to information. Thus, international experience highlights the importance of ensuring that deliberations are conducted in a neutral, fair, and well-informed environment, supported by institutional and methodological safeguards.

The most critical factor in this regard is the presence of an impartial organizing body. Such an institution must be legally guaranteed to operate independently from political parties and interest groups, with transparent, multi-source funding and subject to rigorous auditing.

At the preparatory stage, key measures include selecting participants through random sampling to ensure representativeness, preparing balanced information packages vetted through multiple sources, and maintaining neutrality in the design of discussion processes. The Centre for Deliberative Democracy would be responsible for consolidating citizen initiatives, managing the organization and moderation of discussions, and synthesizing outcomes. Legal guarantees must ensure that deliberations are conducted transparently, free from partisan or populist influence, and that their outcomes are reported publicly. The organizing institution should not only convene discussions but also transmit citizen recommendations to relevant state bodies, monitor implementation, and provide public accountability reports. This would elevate state-citizen relations to a new level and contribute significantly to the development of open governance.

Deliberative Technologies: From a technological perspective, employing established models such as *Deliberative Polling*, *Citizens’ Jury*, and *Consensus Conference* proves more effective in minimizing political influence. These approaches enable participants to understand issues from multiple perspectives, respect differing viewpoints, and formulate opinions based on scientific evidence and empirical data. Furthermore, to safeguard the integrity of the information environment, it is essential to integrate both online and offline formats through regulated communication channels with internal oversight. Practical experiences from countries such as Canada, Ireland, and Germany demonstrate that linking the deliberative process with third-party observation, independent evaluation, and transparent public reporting reduces political interference and enhances public trust. Equally important are adaptive facilitation techniques that guarantee equal opportunities for participants, including

methods of inclusive participation, balanced group dynamics, and impartial moderation of discussions. Such methodologies play a decisive role in ensuring neutrality. To institutionalize impartial and fair deliberation on a permanent basis, it is imperative to embed these safeguards within legal and regulatory frameworks. This ensures that citizens’ voices are consistently and substantively incorporated into policy decisions, beyond one-time projects and independent of electoral cycles. The combination of robust methodology, institutional guarantees, and public trust serves as the most reliable protection for deliberative democracy against short-term political or populist pressures.

Referendums and Deliberative Processes: In certain cases, major issues concerning national interests and security are addressed through referendums, which constitute a traditional form of participatory democracy and a direct mechanism for citizens to influence state policy and legislation. By contrast, deliberative democracy emphasizes in-depth understanding through structured research, dialogue, and debate, thereby enabling citizens to develop informed and multidimensional perspectives. These two mechanisms are complementary and mutually reinforcing. Specifically, deliberative processes can precede referendums by providing citizens with opportunities for critical discussion, balanced analysis, and civic education. The recommendations and insights generated may then inform the content of referendum questions or serve as preparatory groundwork.

Conversely, referendums can validate and legitimize the outcomes of deliberative processes by extending them to the broader electorate, thereby strengthening the democratic legitimacy of policy decisions. This synergy enhances the integration of deliberative democracy into electoral systems and policy-making processes. Nevertheless, successful implementation requires careful regulation of the interaction between deliberation and referendums, including provisions for legal frameworks, participant education, and balanced information dissemination. With well-designed regulatory and institutional arrangements, citizen participation can become both meaningful and effective, offering new ways to deepen and expand traditional democratic practices.

Local Governance and Institutionalization of Deliberative Mechanisms: Incorporating deliberative processes into local strategic planning provides a vital mechanism for formulating and implementing development policies in a participatory manner. Theoretically, embedding deliberative principles within strategic planning enhances transparency, ensures balanced decision-making, integrates diverse interests, and mitigates conflicts (Innes & Booher, 2004) ^[16]. In practice, deliberative forums involving local citizens, government representatives, businesses, and civil society organizations help jointly determine policy priorities, budget allocations, and implementation strategies. Such collaborative processes not only strengthen the effectiveness of planning but also foster trust among stakeholders and ensure more sustainable policy implementation.

Local governments are obligated to incorporate citizens’ deliberative inputs into policy decisions, while participants assume the responsibility of monitoring and coordinating planning outcomes. Ensuring transparency, fairness, and balanced participation in the process requires professional

facilitation and advisory support. In the context of Mongolia, integrating deliberative elements into local development policies and legal frameworks would significantly strengthen citizen trust in implementation. Achieving this, however, necessitates institutionalization of deliberative processes and refinement of relevant regulatory structures.

Deliberative engagement in local strategic planning aims to systematically embed citizens' voices into long-term development agendas. This approach enables policies to reflect the needs, values, and aspirations of local residents, resulting in more inclusive and responsive governance. Early integration of deliberative practices ensures that citizens actively co-create the future of their communities, thereby reinforcing trust, shared responsibility, and effective execution of strategic plans.

Linking local governance with deliberative mechanisms is essential for enhancing transparency, inclusivity, and accessibility in decision-making. Theoretically, since local governance institutions are the closest and most immediate providers of public services, introducing deliberative forums and participatory bodies constitutes an optimal strategy for decentralizing state power and directly incorporating citizen initiatives into policymaking (Fung, 2006). In practice, the establishment of citizens' councils, assemblies, and deliberative mechanisms at the local level institutionalizes citizen participation in both policymaking and implementation. This strengthens citizen trust, improves service quality and accessibility, and helps mitigate social tensions.

Institutionally, success depends on codifying the rights and responsibilities of citizen participation within local governance frameworks, ensuring that deliberative outcomes are integrated into formal decisions (e.g., through mechanisms allowing citizen councils to submit policy proposals). Clear rules of accountability and interaction among stakeholders are likewise essential. Such institutionalization promotes mutual trust between local authorities and citizens' councils, ensuring sustainable professional support and funding mechanisms. In Mongolia, adapting deliberative institutions to the specific context of local governance and civil society development would expand participation and foster policies more closely aligned with the public interest. Accordingly, both theoretical insights and practical lessons suggest the need for targeted legal and institutional reforms at the local level.

Establishing Citizens' Councils: At the local level, establishing citizens' councils represents an important institutional innovation for strengthening citizen participation in decision-making and local development. These councils bring together representatives of residents and other stakeholders to oversee local policies, monitor budgetary decisions, evaluate service quality, and act as intermediaries between communities and government institutions (Smith, 2009) ^[13]. Their mandate typically includes the right to propose, deliberate, and provide input on local policies, while their function centres on representing citizen interests and engaging in collaborative problem-solving with local authorities.

Although citizens' councils generally lack formal decision-making power, they serve as a crucial mechanism for incorporating the voices of diverse actors into policy formulation (Putnam, 1993) ^[15]. To maintain public trust

and active engagement, these councils must adhere to principles of transparency and accountability by regularly reporting their outcomes to the community. Internally, mechanisms that ensure effective cooperation and responsibility-sharing among members are also indispensable.

The significance of citizens' councils lies in their ability to improve the quality of local governance, foster participatory engagement, enhance transparency, and build social trust. In the Mongolian context, such councils could provide a sustained channel for integrating citizen input into local development policies, monitoring service delivery, and cultivating both traditional and innovative forms of participation.

Parliamentary Standing Committees and Deliberative Democracy Collaboration. The cooperation between parliamentary standing committees and deliberative democracy provides a significant opportunity to deepen citizen participation and enhance transparency and effectiveness in decision-making within modern democratic governance:

From a theoretical perspective, standing committees are core institutions of the legislative process, tasked with examining policy issues at a professional level, conducting deliberations, and formulating recommendations. Deliberative democracy, in turn, develops mechanisms that promote in-depth public debate and citizen participation; therefore, the interlinkage between these two institutions can render governmental decision-making more mature and trustworthy in the eyes of the public.

In practice, when standing committees collaborate with deliberative institutions such as public deliberations, citizens' assemblies, and citizens' councils, they expand the possibility of integrating diverse perspectives into legislation and fostering new policy initiatives. For example, standing committees play an active role in supporting the outcomes of deliberative processes and in ensuring that the recommendations and conclusions of such discussions are duly considered during law-making by providing the necessary legal framework. Such cooperation helps transform parliament into an open institution that substantively supports citizen participation rather than a body distanced from the public.

Moreover, standing committees contribute to deliberative processes by offering expert advice and legal interpretation, thereby enhancing the quality of deliberation and strengthening its practical significance. Defining clear mechanisms of cooperation, legal frameworks, and the roles and responsibilities of participating actors is essential to safeguard the process from narrow partisan or factional interests. Consequently, institutional reforms that provide legal guarantees for such cooperation are necessary to consolidate and strengthen the interaction between parliamentary standing committees and deliberative democratic institutions.

The Relationship between Government and Deliberative Democracy: The relationship between government and deliberative democracy is aimed at embedding citizen participation more deeply into state decision-making while enhancing transparency and effectiveness in policy formulation and implementation. The government serves as the primary institution for policy design and execution,

whereas deliberative democracy provides participatory mechanisms that aggregate citizen input and initiatives into structured processes capable of exerting direct influence on public decisions.

From the perspective of institutionalization, incorporating deliberative forums and participatory bodies into the formal structures and functions of government, as codified in law, has emerged as an effective practice. International experiences demonstrate that establishing deliberative democracy centres, citizens' councils, or deliberative platforms alongside government institutions allows citizen participation to be institutionalized during the policy-making stage. Furthermore, when governments are legally required to formally acknowledge and integrate the outcomes of deliberative processes into their decisions, the relationship becomes more stable and robust, ensuring that citizen participation transcends symbolic gestures and functions as an effective institutional mechanism.

Increasingly, modern democratic systems employ mechanisms whereby certain government, ministerial, or agency decisions are made through citizens' assemblies or other deliberative forums. However, the effectiveness of such arrangements depends on a combination of factors, including the legal framework, political culture, institutional independence, and the level of trust among stakeholders. This necessitates ongoing open dialogue, exchange of experiences, and context-sensitive adaptation.

Describes the *Citizens' Assembly* and other forms of deliberative democracy as processes in which a representative group of citizens engage in professionally facilitated, impartial discussions, enabling them to formulate well-informed, evidence-based recommendations. When such outcomes are used as official inputs in government or agency decision-making—and, in some cases, directly incorporated into policy processes—they enhance transparency and public trust in governance. Successful examples from Ireland, Canada, and Australia illustrate how deliberative bodies have been employed to debate constitutional reforms and other significant national issues (Suiter *et al.*, 2016). For Mongolia, similar mechanisms could contribute to more democratic, participatory, and impartial decision-making processes.

Key Preconditions for the Successful Institutionalization of Deliberative Mechanisms

1. Balanced and Fair Representation of Citizens:

Ensuring representative diversity is critical to both the fairness and the legitimacy of deliberative processes. Including civil society groups and social movements with opposing positions helps guarantee balanced outcomes and fosters broader acceptance of decisions.

- Inclusion of multiple perspectives leads to more robust and well-filtered outcomes.
- Conflict mitigation and reconciliation are facilitated when critical or dissenting groups are incorporated into the process, transforming opposition into consensus-building.
- Enhanced legitimacy results when participants, even those whose views did not prevail, feel that their voices were heard and their presence mattered in the system.

2. Legal Framework and Institutional Guarantees:

Legal and institutional safeguards serve as the two foundational “pillars” of successful institutionalization.

The legal framework defines the rules of engagement, while institutional guarantees ensure the structures for their implementation. A sustainable system requires both to function in harmony, supported by four key pillars: law, institutions, financing, and capacity.

- **Legal framework:** Constitutional or statutory provisions, clearly defined procedures, accountability mechanisms, and guaranteed financing.
 - **Institutional guarantees:** Independent bodies to oversee deliberative processes, organizational structures that insulate them from political influence, professional teams (facilitators, researchers, lawyers, IT specialists), capacity-building systems (training for officials, facilitators, and citizens), monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and public communication strategies.
- ### 3. Professional Support and Information Transparency:
- Professional expertise and transparency must operate in tandem to ensure both the quality and credibility of deliberative processes. Professional facilitation acts as the “engine” of quality, while transparency serves as the “fuel” of public trust.
- **Professional support:** Skilled facilitation (ensuring equal participation, managing conflict, bridging cultural and social divides), research and analysis (evidence preparation, accessible communication of technical data), legal and policy advisory services, IT support (online forums, voting platforms, data security), and training for participants to enhance deliberative competence.
 - **Information transparency:** Accessible information, open reporting, independent fact-checking, feedback mechanisms for citizens, and safeguards for both data protection and participant privacy.
- ### 4. Integration with Governmental Decision-Making and Accountability Mechanisms:
- A key requirement for institutionalization is to ensure that deliberative outcomes are not left as mere “recommendations” but instead systematically incorporated into official decision-making.
- **Integration into decision-making:** Formal entry points into the policy cycle, participation of government officials as observers, legal obligations to deliberate on outcomes within a specified timeframe, and alignment of deliberative processes with critical phases of the policy cycle (e.g., budget planning or legislative review).
 - **Accountability mechanisms:** Official responses from decision-makers explaining which recommendations were adopted or rejected and why; public reporting comparing deliberative outcomes with final policy decisions; independent monitoring by parliamentary committees or civil society groups; and transparent evaluation criteria such as the *policy uptake rate* (the percentage of recommendations incorporated into final policies or laws).

Integrating deliberative processes into government decision-making ensures their systemic relevance, while accountability mechanisms make visible the extent to which citizen input influences final outcomes. Without both, deliberative mechanisms risk being reduced to symbolic “advisory clubs” rather than meaningful institutional

arrangements. By contrast, when certain governmental decisions are consistently channelled through deliberative forums, governance becomes more participatory, impartial, and rooted in public trust.

The Institutionalization of Deliberative Democracy: Core Elements and Their Interrelations. The interrelationship among the core elements of institutionalizing deliberative democracy is fundamentally grounded in legal and institutional guarantees. These may be outlined as follows:

1. **The Right to Demand Deliberative Processes.** This right must be enshrined in constitutional provisions and specific legislation such as the *Law on Citizen Participation* and the *Law on Transparency and Citizen Engagement in Public Policy*. Such legal frameworks formally recognize the right of citizens and civil society organizations to demand deliberation and consultation at all stages of policy formulation and implementation. Furthermore, this right should be reinforced by the ability to seek judicial remedies if the demand is not respected.
2. **Combined Institutional Mechanisms of Deliberative and Direct Democracy.** Deliberative democracy involves the participation of citizens' representatives in policy-making through impartial discussions, while direct democracy (e.g., referenda, popular votes) enables the majority decision of citizens to be directly implemented. A combined mechanism institutionalizes

citizen deliberations by incorporating their proposals and recommendations into direct democratic decisions or legislative frameworks.

3. **Institutional Structures and Functions.** The *Centre for Deliberative Democracy* should function as an independent body attached to the state, responsible for organizing citizen deliberations, training professional facilitators, collecting information, and drafting conclusions. At the local level, *citizens' councils* should be legally empowered to participate in local governance and strategic planning. The institutional process must follow clear stages: selection of representatives, facilitation of deliberations, formulation of proposals, presentation of outcomes, and oversight of implementation.
4. **Mechanisms of Interaction with Parliament, Government, and Local Authorities.** Parliamentary standing committees must integrate the results of deliberative processes into legislative deliberations, which requires codification in their internal rules and procedures. The government must be legally mandated to incorporate recommendations from deliberative institutions into policies and decisions. Local authorities should collaborate with citizens' councils to conduct strategic planning deliberations and monitor implementation. Transparency of information and reporting mechanisms play a critical role in ensuring accountability within these interactions.

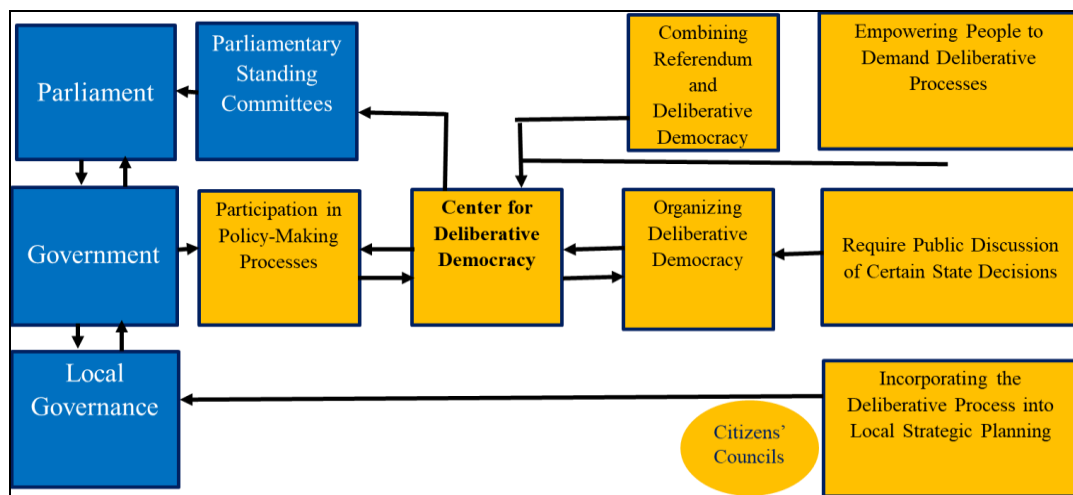


Fig 1: Model for Institutionalizing Deliberative Democracy in Mongolia

The involvement of a *Centre for Deliberative Democracy* strengthens institutional quality and process efficiency, although in some cases local-level direct interaction and organization may be sufficient. The most critical factor is embedding mutual trust through legal and procedural clarity in the responsibilities and interactions of the parties involved.

When Involvement of the Centre is Necessary

- **Institutional support and professional assistance:** Where local authorities and citizens' councils lack sufficient experience or organizational capacity, the Centre provides facilitation, training, and organizational support to improve process quality.
- **Mediation of interactions:** The Centre coordinates multiple local councils, facilitates information exchange

among stakeholders, and strengthens collaborative efforts.

When the Centre's Involvement is Not Necessary

- **Direct communication and co-organization:** Local authorities and citizens' councils may directly coordinate, draft joint plans, and conduct deliberations.
- **Transparent representative selection:** Citizens' councils must be composed through transparent and fair processes that ensure legitimacy.
- **Formalized role allocation:** Citizens' councils develop recommendations, while local authorities are formally obliged to deliberate and consider them in decision-making.
- **Mutual trust and oversight:** Mechanisms such as public reporting, participant monitoring, and open

dissemination of results must ensure accountability and effectiveness.

The Centre for Deliberative Democracy consolidates citizen initiatives, manages deliberation organization and moderation, and synthesizes outcomes. It guarantees impartiality, transparency, and insulation from political or populist influence through legal safeguards and oversight. Beyond organizing deliberations, its responsibilities include delivering recommendations to relevant state institutions, monitoring their implementation, and reporting back to the public. These functions elevate state-citizen relations to a new level, strengthening open governance and democratic legitimacy.

Deliberative democracy contributes significantly to reducing corruption by enhancing transparency, accountability mechanisms, equal participation, and evidence-based decision-making. During public deliberations, policy alternatives are openly evaluated in terms of strengths, weaknesses, and cost-benefit implications, thereby reducing the influence of closed-door negotiations and vested interests. Once deliberation outcomes are officially submitted to state institutions and publicly monitored, opportunities for corrupt practices diminish. Furthermore, inclusive representation of diverse social groups weakens the dominance of secret negotiations and elite networks, enabling decisions to be fairer and more evidence-based.

Conclusion

To institutionalize deliberative democracy, it is essential to establish independent bodies such as a Centre for Deliberative Democracy with legal guarantees, political independence, and sustainable financing. Legislation should mandate deliberations both upon citizen initiative and as a compulsory requirement for certain issues, while obligating state institutions to integrate deliberative outcomes into policy decisions. In this way, deliberative democracy can complement the shortcomings of representative and direct democracy, advancing transparent, accountable, and collaborative decision-making in state-citizen relations. Moreover, deliberative democracy not only strengthens transparency, accountability, and public oversight as mechanisms for reducing corruption, but also provides the foundation for policy stability and effective implementation.

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