

Request for Proposals:

Interoperable Deliberative Tools

Purpose: To support new and existing tools for deliberation and governance, and to promote more [interoperability](#) between such tools.

Scope: Digital tools that go beyond basic voting and commenting, and provide new capabilities to the governance ecosystem—which may only be one step of a larger deliberative governance process. The processes these tools enable may be used for online community governance, AI governance and alignment, cooperative governance, citizen town halls or assemblies, or other kinds of institutional policy-making or decision-making.

Deliberative tools may support any part of the governance and decision-making process, going from ***opinions to decisions***, including but not limited to:

- identifying tradeoffs,
- drafting policies;
- editing policies;
- identifying scenarios and cases;
- mapping the problem space, solution space, or stakeholder space;
- identifying/routing expertise;
- navigating conflict, identifying and overcoming ‘cruxes’;
- coming to decisions;
- evaluating evidentiary justification for decisions;
- reconciling conflicting versions of policies;
- executing on policies;
- adjudicating using policies or cases;
- determining budgets;
- creating agendas or priorities;
- etc.

Examples of deliberative tools:

- [Pol.is](#)
- [Remesh](#)
- [Decidem](#)
- [Decide Madrid](#)
- [Loomio](#)
- [Consider.it](#)
- [Stanford Online Deliberation Platform](#)

Interoperability requirement: as a key condition of the grant, all grantees must support interoperability by incorporating a process to publish their data in a flatfile format such as JSON, JSON-LD, or CSV. This requirement is described more fully in the [draft specification and rationale](#) accompanying this RFP.

Other requirements as part of the grant:

- Funded projects must provide some public updates and present at a community call at the 3 month and 6 month marks.
- All grants approved as part of this program have a limit of 10% allocation of the approved grant to overhead costs.
- Become a member of the Metagov Slack and join the #interoperability slack channel.

Note that the receiving entity must be a legal entity, citizen, or permanent resident in a country that is not subject to US sanctions.

Additional details: projects should emphasize how the contribution fills a gap in the governance ecosystem, and how the tool might be used in practice.

Projects can fall into one of the following categories:

1. New open-source tools providing innovative deliberative and governance capabilities.
2. Existing open-source tools providing innovative deliberative and governance capabilities.
3. Providing open-source implementations of proprietary innovative deliberative governance tools.
4. Open-source tools (adapters) that enable interoperability between different existing deliberative and governance tools.

All tools are required to implement the interoperability implementation (if tools are additions to a larger system, then that system must implement it).

Grantees will be invited to optionally have their applications shared with other potential funders.

We expect to give out a total of 200,000 USD in a mix of smaller and larger grants of size between 5,000 to 100,000 USD. These amounts may change.

Applications

To apply, please use [this form](#) (which includes providing a [process card](#) for a process that the tool supports or enables).

Review Rubric for Applications

- Basics:
 - Does the tool fulfill the [interoperability requirements](#)?
 - Is the amount requested appropriate to the scope of the project?
 - Does the proposal involve a novel valuable deliberative function OR provide an open source interoperable version of an existing valuable deliberative function?
- Impact likelihood:
 - Will the team be able to execute on the proposal?
 - Will this grant likely lead to high, medium, or low impact in the context of improving deliberation and governance? (e.g. due to providing a truly valuable novel deliberative function that would actually be utilized)
- Potential Bonus
 - Does the proposed work support interoperability with single or multiple other organizations / projects?
 - Does this help create a sort of "killer app" that makes people use the interoperability protocol more broadly and would want to be part of the community and development around it?
 - Is there already a clear 'user' that is ready and interested to use the tool for meaningful decisions.

Key Dates

- April 3, 2024: Grant application opens
- April 19, 2024: FAQ session #1
- April 29, 2024: FAQ session #2
- May 15, 2024: FAQ session #3 - [RSVP here](#)
- May 31, 2024: Applications due 10p in your timezone
- July 15, 2024: Grant decisions announced
- July 31 2024, Kickoff date
 - Optional: call every two weeks for the cohort of projects to have a check-in point
- October 25, 2024 (tentative): Projects report back (open source repo + blog post or paper).
 - Projects may not be finished by then, but must do public sharing by then.
 - While the call every 2 weeks is optional, grantees are expected to join at least two calls (3 month mark and 6 month mark) to share progress
- January 31, 2025 (tentative): Projects report back.

Advisors

- Colin Megill, Pol.is
- Eugene Leventhal, Metagov

- Aviv Ovadya, AI & Democracy Foundation
- Joshua Tan, Metagov & Oxford
- Amy Zhang, University of Washington

About Metagov

Metagov is a laboratory for self-governance on the internet. The mission of Metagov is to cultivate tools, practices, and communities that enable self-governance in the digital age. Our research encompasses both theoretical and applied research, including the development of software and technical standards. On top of our research, we also build research networks and bring together communities through our tools, experiments, and events.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful for the support of the Mina Foundation in making this RFP possible.

FAQ

FAQs are now here: [☰ RFP: Interoperable Deliberative Tools FAQ](#)