

# THINK TANK

Process of deliberation on new political culture: Working Document No. 15

## **DEVELOPMENT OF COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE WITHIN THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF GIPUZKOA: HOW DOES THE COUNCIL SEE ITSELF THROUGH THE EKINEZ IKASI PROCESS?**

(20 October 2021)

### **Introduction**

This Working Document No. 15 is the second of the documents from the 2021-2023 phase. The first set out the methodological bases of action research in the new phase and introduced the three projects that will serve as a framework for the action. One of these projects involves the development of collaborative governance within the Provincial Government of Gipuzkoa (DFG).

This document is a continuation of the previous one and sets out the results of the session held on 20 October 2021. At this session, participants worked to build a shared initial diagnosis of Etorkizuna Eraikiz and the conditions in the Provincial Government for tackling the development of collaborative governance internally. This diagnosis began with an analysis by María José Canel and Anne Murphy based on their experience in facilitating the Ekinez Ikasi process. This process is being developed using an action learning approach. Action learning is one of the recognised traditions of action research in the field of organisational transformation. The methodology for preparing this diagnosis is therefore in line with the principles of the think tank. Based on this diagnosis, the deliberation group worked on an exercise that allowed previous learnings to be adapted to the think tank's current challenges.

### **Initial lessons: diagnosis of the situation and key question**

María José Canel presented, as a result of the learning process at Ekinez Ikasi, a diagnosis with seven main elements:

- Separation of the political level (deputies) in the structure
- Provincial public sector separated from the Provincial Government
- Hierarchical institution, vertical work, compartmentalised departments
- Saturation of cross-cutting policies
- Important policies are not sufficiently communicated
- Difficulty in making complicated decisions
- Internal suspicions about an 'attempt at marketing'

This diagnosis was accompanied by the identification of seven challenges:

- To extend these processes internally in order to bring about change in culture
- To define the means of 'in-house transformation': going from the individual to the collective
- To reinforce the political commitment with new ways of doing things
- To improve internal communication

- To consolidate the network of collaboration between Provincial Government and provincial public sector
- To explore expectations with data
- To extend the listening process to society

In addition, a series of divides had been detected between:

- Departments
- Political and technical staff
- Society and the Provincial Public Sector
- Different tiers of public service personnel
- The theory of listening and the practice of listening

A number of positive factors were also listed to address these challenges, including:

- Willpower
- Commitment
- Professionalism
- Courage
- Care
- Shared discourse
- Awareness (both within the DFG and in society)

In light of all these lessons, challenges, divides and positive factors, a question was posed, which was used as a synthesis for defining the next steps: 'Is there enough determination to deal with the complexity of sharing authority with...?' María José Canel stressed the relevance of the term *enough*. The diagnosis has shown that determination exists; however, processes such as Etorikizuna Eraikiz require high levels of determination, and this is therefore an important question.

## Elements for deliberation in the think tank

After sharing the learnings from Ekinez Ikasi, a framework for deliberation in the think tank was proposed. This framework was based on the concept of magic, initially posed as something beyond our comprehension but which makes things happen. The word 'magic' has been used to describe what has happened in Ekinez Ikasi. The following framework was proposed to boost the elements that underpin the magic — in other words, the elements that make things happen.

Four types of value that explain the magic were identified:

- The value of being open to learning: Space for ASKING (AND ASKING ONESELF) QUESTIONS
- The value of being brave: Space for LIGHT and HEAT
- The value of being open to the new: Space for LISTENING
- The value of building on reality: Focus on ACTION

For each of these types of value, the risks and elements to be explored were also specified

Table 1. Types of value, their risks and elements to be explored

Value of...	Risks	Elements to be explored
Opening up to learning	Absence of legitimate spaces	What spaces are needed to legitimately question internal routines?
Being courageous	Mistrust in capacity to collaborate	What prevents trust in internal staff?
Being open to the new	The convenience of the comfort zone	Who have we not dared to invite?
Operating on reality	Decoupling deliberation from action	How will we know that we are making progress in our actions?

With this framework in mind, it was proposed to reflect on the risks and levers for progress, with the group co-generating the results shown in Table 2. The contents, together with those of the previous ones, will be included in the process of designing the action aimed at developing collaborative governance within the DFG, as set out in the previous working document.

**Table 2. Risks and levers for the ‘magic’ of the Provincial Government**

Suggested by Anne Murphy and María José Canel			Identified by programme participants	
COMPONENT OF MAGIC	RISK/THREAT	TO BE EXPLORED	Risks	Levers
Space for questions	Absence of spaces	What spaces are needed to legitimately question internal routines?	Transitioning from small to larger groups Lack of resources frustrating the interest/excitement Powerful sense of inertia that hinders questioning	
Space for light and heat	Mistrust in capacity to collaborate	What prevents trust in internal staff?	Silo structure Lack of good communication channels Dispersion of initiatives; the need to provide overall structure Disappointment/frustration over failures. Historical mistrust	Prominent role acquired by certain people in the Provincial Government Awareness of the depth of the process Possible encouragement for progress made
Listening	The convenience of the comfort zone	Who have we not dared to invite?	Daring to ask: <u>Who</u> breaks the comfort zone? To whom is authority given? <u>How</u> is the comfort zone broken? Bringing in non-supporters Not inviting society	Combination of political and technical profile

Action	Decoupling deliberation from action	How will we know that we are making progress in our actions?	Moving from reflection to action How do we know if the determination/action is sufficient?	The tangible results that Etorikizuna Eraikiz has already had  Knowing how to publicise; communicating what has been achieved to other departments
OTHER MORE GLOBAL ELEMENTS			The political cycle.  Non-continuity of key people in Etorikizuna Eraikiz.	Clear political commitment
			Working in the short term	
			Staff changes	Possibility of new leadership  Facilitators