

## Background

Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR):  
SALAR:s purpose of the e-Participation summit 2012 and SALAR:s  
mission on participation.

## Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR)

SALAR represents Sweden's 290 municipalities and 20 county councils/regions. It acts as an employer's organisation, and it defends and promotes the interests of its members, for example by working to strengthen local self-government and the development of regional and local democracy.

## SALAR:s purpose of the e-Participation summit 2012

SALAR, need input to proceed to the next level using ICT tools for participation at the local level. The main target groups for the e-Participation Summit anthology are local politicians, project managers in the civil service and CIOs.

At the present in Sweden there are several good initiatives to develop opportunities for citizens to participate through the Internet. We have through our network easily monitored and encouraged progress by trying different methods and approaches for increased participation.

Many municipalities have several tools for participation, both those who use the Internet and those based on physical meetings. Many of our project managers in the municipalities express a frustration of getting all these tools together into a whole, while there are also new opportunities for citizens to engage in dialogue in various forums on the Internet.

When we study local government websites, they are still largely bulletin boards for information to citizens.

There are of course various e-services but very few for participation.

## SALAR:s mission on participation

SALAR has a mission from its congress since 2006, the Congress's has 451 representatives from local level, elected by constituency.

*“SALAR should support its members’ efforts to create new forms of citizens’ engagement and choice, and to integrate citizen dialogue into governing processes and public service developments.”*

We fulfill this mission through two main approaches. The first is to provide more knowledge to local politicians and professionals. We invite them to join networks where they meet different researchers among others.

The other approach is to invite municipalities to take active part in networks where we try different methods for participation.

For example we have had 30 municipalities that have tried to use citizen panels on Internet, 4 that have tried participatory budgeting.

A parallel project, “citizen dialogue with IT”, with financial support from the Government has the task to scout the world and present examples and ideas for our municipalities.