Online edition

Electionville

A game of democracy
and local governance

Instructions

Game instructions | SI. Swedish Institute

Start page of the online edition of Electionville.

ELECTIONVILLE – ONLINE EDITION

Welcome!

Just like the analogue Electionville floor game, the online version is designed as a tool to explore the fundamental concepts of local democratic processes. The players of the game will act as council members representing fictional parties, with a limited set of resources at their disposal that they need to debate and agree on how to use.

Playing online enables connectivity between players regardless of geographical distances or physical whereabouts. To play the game, each player and the game master therefore need access to a computer, a stable internet connection, and access to a video conference tool (e.g. Zoom, Google Meet, Windows Teams, Skype).

These instructions, for the online edition of the board game Electionville, complement the instructions to the analogue version. For an overall introduction to the Electionville material, please read more here: sharingsweden.se/toolkits/welcome-to-electionville
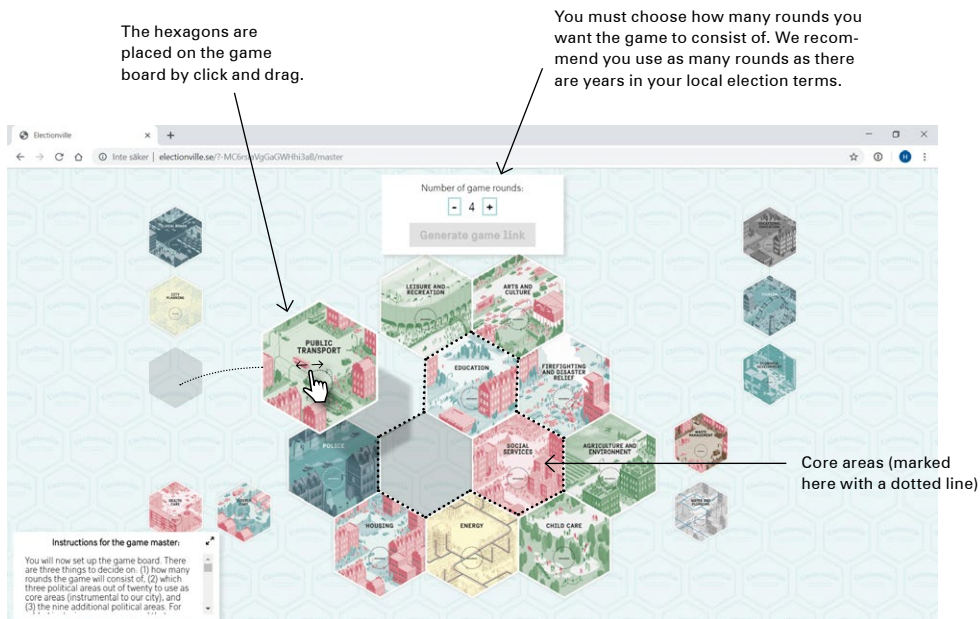
PREPARATIONS

Having the layout of a traditional board game, the Electionville online edition is played in smaller groups of 3–6 players. Furthermore, each game session is led and supervised by a specially appointed *game master*. The task of the game master is to guide the players through the game as well as to initiate debate and moderate discussions whenever appropriate, and/or when instructed by the *written prompts* (see next section).

Moreover, it is up to the game master to plan, prepare and set up the game according to the local political context. For this reason, it is recommended that the game master does a *preparatory game setup* (see next section). This setup is only used for your planning and for communicating the political areas to the players, as mentioned under 'Inviting the players' below.

SETTING UP THE ONLINE GAME BOARD

In good time before inviting the players, it is suggested that the game master starts by browsing through the 20 available *political areas* and choosing which 12 areas that fit the local context. These areas will subsequently make up the game board.

The easiest way to do the *preparatory setup* is by clicking the 'Set up game' button on the electionville.se start page. The political areas will be visible on both sides of the game board. At this point it is recommended that you read the online 'Game instructions', also available on the start page.

The hexagons are placed on the game board by click and drag.

You must choose how many rounds you want the game to consist of. We recommend you use as many rounds as there are years in your local election terms.

Core areas (marked here with a dotted line)

Setting up the game board. Just like the original Electionville floor game, the online game board is made up of 12 political areas that together form the political infrastructure of the community.

While choosing political areas, the game master needs to first decide which 3 areas are most relevant. These so-called *core areas* are placed in the *inner circle* of the game board cluster (core areas in the example on the previous page are 'Education', 'Social services', and 'Public transport'). The remaining 9 areas are randomly placed in the *outer circle* of the game board cluster. The other 8 political areas will not be used in the game.

By choosing the political areas ahead of time, you will be able to include this information when you send out invitations to the participating players.
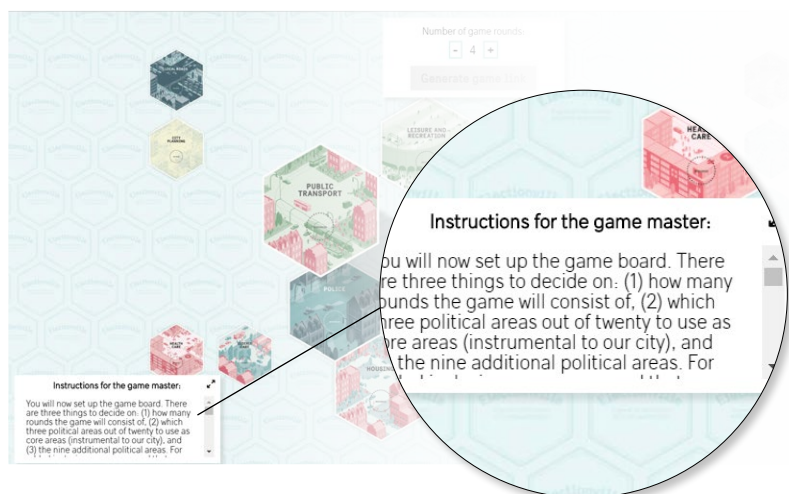
Written prompts

During the game, as a game master you will be guided through the different stages of the game by written prompts. These are not seen by the players. You can choose either to read the prompts from the screen, or study them beforehand to lead the game according to your wishes. Please note: anything in *italics* is intended as a script to be read to the players. Anything in normal typeface is intended only as instructions for you.

INVITING THE PLAYERS

Now it is time for the game master to invite the players. First, invite the players to a digital *video conference* call as mentioned above. This will function as the communicative platform throughout the game. Make sure to include as much information as possible about the game and intended outcome already in the invitation.

Include that the game consists of 12 political areas and a limited set of resources. The player who succeeds in allocating most resources to her or his prioritised political areas will win the game. Also, depending on how well they together have prioritised the core political areas for the city, they will get a rating on how well they succeeded in ruling the city (see more below).

Do not forget to inform the players about the selected political areas, as this will help them to come up with suitable names and political profiles for their respective *political parties*. This is done either by enclosing a cut-out image or screen shot of the game board (see image), or by simply listing the areas as text in the invitation.

Approximately 15 minutes before game start, the game master needs to set up the game once more, making the actual game setup identical to the preparatory game setup. Only this time complete the setup by selecting the number of *game rounds* (choose as many rounds as there are years in your local election terms), and then pressing 'Generate game link'.

Selecting the number of game rounds.

Once the players have all joined the video conference call, the game master copies the link and pastes it into the chat function for the players to open in their own browsers.
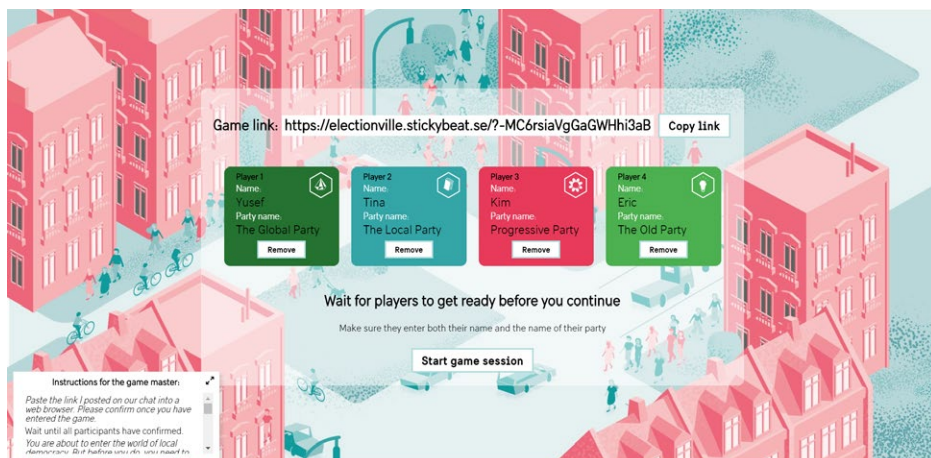
FORMING THE PARTIES

Entering the game, all players will now fill in their names (including party names) in the digitised party sheets and take a minute to think about their party and which voters they are appealing to.

Forming the parties, players' view. When entering the game, the players need to write their names and the name of their political party in the *party sheet* formula. Each player will also be automatically assigned a random colour and a symbol.

Their political priorities should be based on the political areas chosen by the game master. Each player will then hold a short speech, presenting the party's overall profile and political priorities. Any additional instructions the game master might need at this point are given by the written prompts at the bottom left of the screen.


Forming the parties, game master's view. After all players have filled in their names and party names, the game master will ask them all to hold a short presentation before pressing 'Start game session'. Use the written prompts for any further assistance.

Before starting the game, make sure the players understand that they will have to complete the game once started. If any one player leaves the game, the others won't be able to complete. Also make sure that all players have a stable internet connection.

PLACING THE PRIORITY WIDGETS

Once all parties have held their short presentations and the game master has pressed 'Start game session', it is time for the players to place the priority widgets (hearts) on the now fully visible game board. Moving from top to bottom, the players will choose their party's *main political priorities* by placing the *double heart* widgets on the game board by a simple drag and drop, finishing by pressing 'Continue'. Please note that main political priority widgets may only be placed in the outer ring.
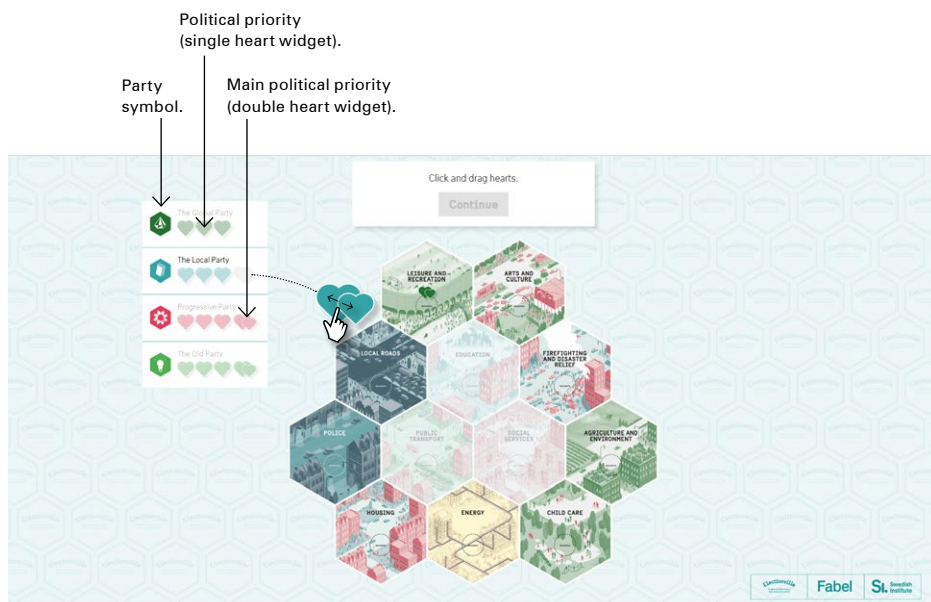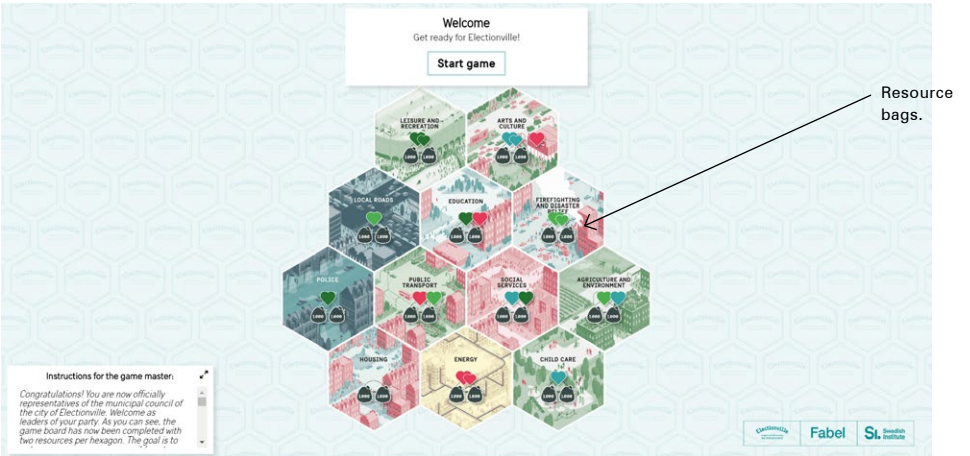

Placing the priority widgets, players' view. The players will be asked to place their priority widgets with a simple click and drag.

The procedure will be repeated with the *single heart* widgets. Only this time, the widgets can be placed anywhere on the game board.

Ask the players to remember both their own political priorities as well as those of their opponents, as the heart symbols will later disappear from the game board.

When the players have placed all their political priority widgets on the game board, resource bags will appear on the screen.

Placing the priority widgets, game master's view.

HOW THE SCORING WORKS

Before pressing 'Start game', it is suggested that you as game master take a moment to explain to the players how the score is calculated. For example, each resource bag on a player's *main political priority* (double heart widget) is worth 2 points.

 + **1.000** = 2 points

Each resource on a player's additional *political priorities* (single heart widgets) is worth 1 point.

 + **1.000** = 1 point

 + **1.000** **1.000** **1.000** = 3 points

FINAL CITY SCORE

Go on by explaining that a 'Final city score' will also be presented at the end of the game, measuring how well the players have ruled the city together. The 'Final city score' works as follows: Each resource on the political areas in the *inner circle* is worth 2 points. Each resource on the political areas in the *outer circle* is worth 1 point.

A piece of advice: sharing political areas with other players will make it easier to form alliances during the game. The ability to form alliances and achieving consensus will also be reflected in the overall final city score.

Complete the process of selecting priority areas by pressing 'Start game'.

PLAYING THE GAME

The game is now officially on, and the first *event card* is shown.
Event cards present the players with different tasks they need
to solve, either individually or by voting (see more about voting
below). As game master you should read the card out loud
and press 'Start round'. Be sure to follow the written prompts
at all times.

A horizontal bar in the top left corner
helps to keep track of the number of
rounds played.

The party whose turn it is,
has the word 'Turn' below it.

For year one, 'Kim' is
the current chairperson,
meaning that in the event
of voting, 'Kim' will have
the casting vote.

A random event card
is dealt for each turn.
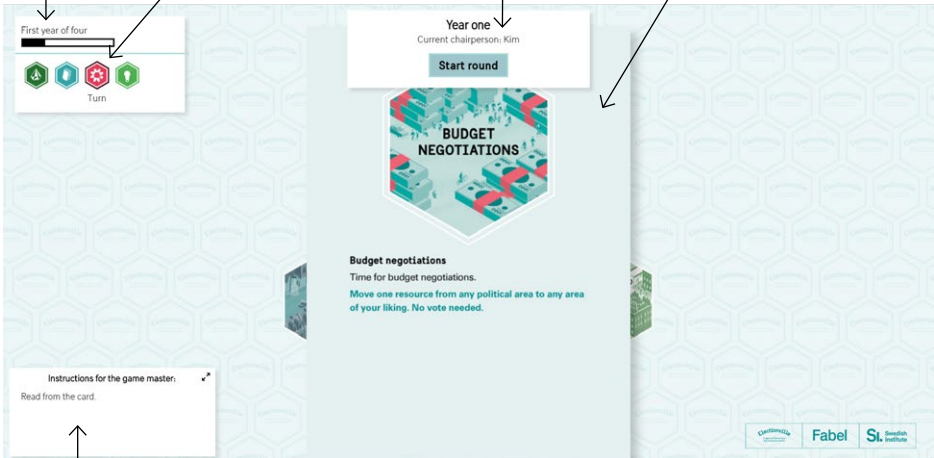
Event card, game master's view #1. In the example above, 'Kim' gets to move one resource. No voting is
needed. When the game master presses 'Start round', the event card slides to the right side of the screen.
The card remains visible until the next event card is drawn.

The written prompts
instruct the game master
to read from the card
dealt to the player 'Kim'.

Please note that for each turn, or political
year, the starting order among players will
rotate. For each year, a new player will start
out as chairperson.

Arrow showing that 'Kim' wants to take one resource from Agriculture and move it to Public transport.

If any player wants to read the card anew, they can easily do so by clicking the magnifying glass symbol.

Event card, players' view. Once the game master has pressed 'Start round', the player 'Kim' can make her move by using the click and drag function and finish by pressing 'Done'.

Once the task is completed, and you are ready to move to the next step in the game, press the 'Continue' button at the top centre of your screen (see below).

Event card, game master's view #2. The arrow indicates that player 'Kim' has now moved one resource as instructed. Before moving on, it is suggested that the game master asks 'Kim' for a brief motivation. Then press 'Continue'.

VOTING

Many event cards are focused on *voting*, meaning that the majority decides what action will be taken after a short period of presenting and discussing parties' arguments. The *player who drew the card* is the current chairperson of the city council and thus has the casting vote (an extra, deciding vote in case of an equal vote). For example: if there are four players in the game, two voting YES and two voting NO, the player who drew the card will tip the scale to win the vote. As game master, it is recommended that you repeat the players' arguments before moving on.

Certain voting will result in one or more players forfeiting their turn(s). Any player that is forfeiting a turn *will not be able to act on the next card that is drawn*. Please note that a player who is forfeiting his or her turn may still draw an event card.

Many event cards require *voting*. This is for players to sharpen their arguments in order to win over votes and form alliances with the aim to gain more resources for their chosen priority areas.

Each player suggests which area the resource should be taken from by clicking on that area. An arrow with their party's colour will appear.

Players should click 'Done' when finished.
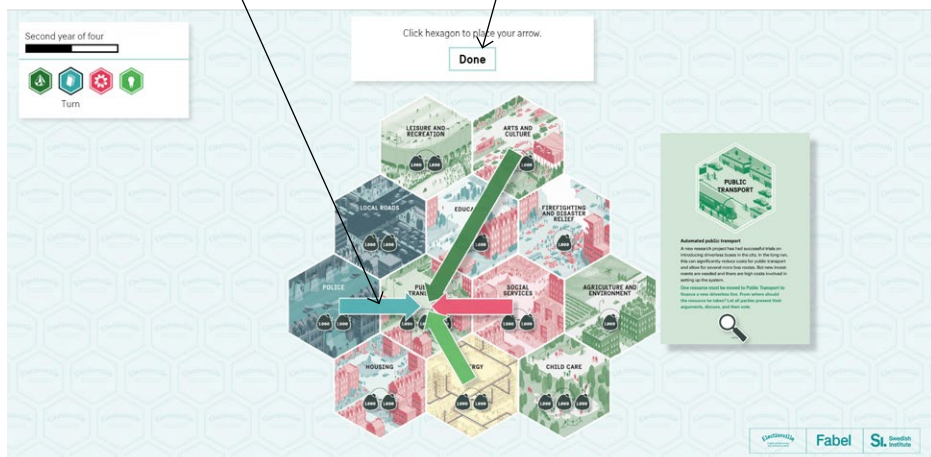
Voting, players' view #1. Voting – in this case on how to support technical investments in public transportation. The players will move resources from any other political area of their liking to 'Public transport'.

Voting, game master's view #1. Once the players have made their choices, the game master clicks 'Continue' to call the vote.

The different propsals are listed in a panel. Players vote by clicking 'Vote for this proposal' under the chosen proposal.
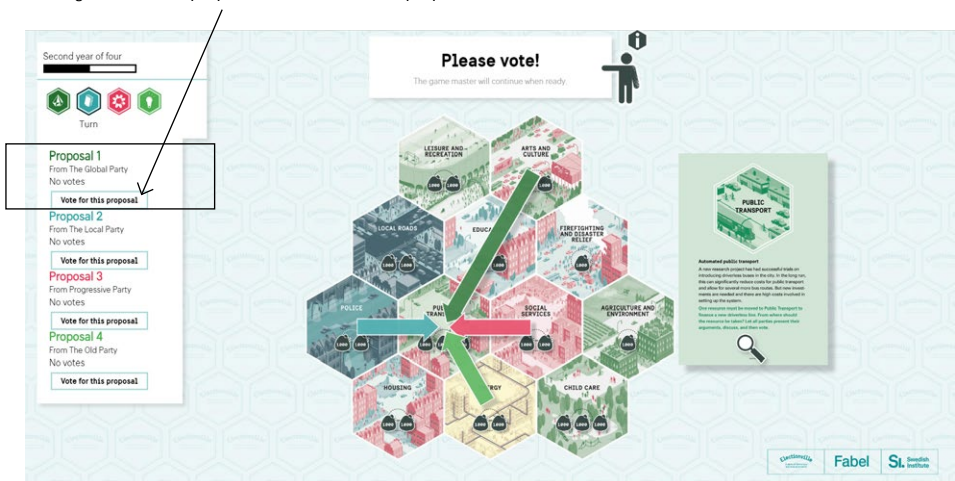
Voting, players' view #2. Next, players will place their votes on the proposal they find most appealing, either according to their own political profiles or with the aim to build strategic alliances with any of the other parties.

Voting, game master's view. The players have now placed their votes. Note that both the 'Progressive Party' and 'The Global Party' respectively are trying to form alliances by placing their votes on proposals not their own. Discuss, then press 'Continue'.
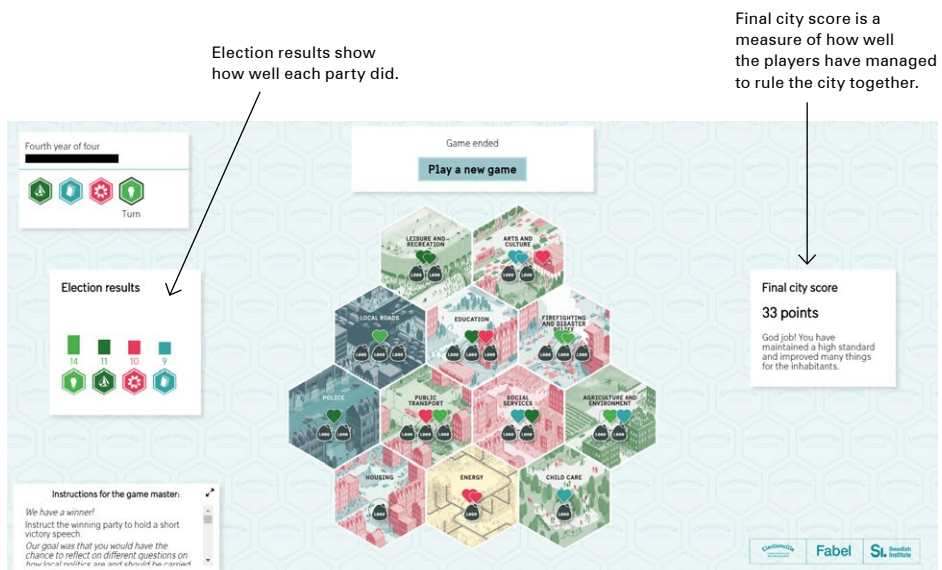
MIDTERM POLLS

After half the rounds of the game, there will be a midterm poll of how well each party is doing. The midterm poll is shown in the shape of a bar chart on the right-hand side of the screen. The bar chart shows how the score is calculated, and it will reappear at the end of the game for the final score count. At this point it could be wise to do a short recap to see how the parties are doing in terms of political strategies.

Midterm polls results.

Midterm polls, players' view. According to the midterm poll results in the example above, 'The Global Party' is ahead with 13 points.

ENDING THE GAME

We have a winner! On the screen you will now see both the final 'Election results' (bar chart to the left) and the 'Final city score' (to the right). Also, the political priorities (hearts) are now laid out on the game board for the players to see how they did.

Election results show how well each party did.

Final city score is a measure of how well the players have managed to rule the city together.

Ending the game, game master's view. In the example above, 'The Local Party' managed to score a meager 9 points, which breaks down to 4 points for the 2 resource bags on their main political priority (2x2) + 5 points for the 5 resource bags on their remaining political priorities (5x1). The 'Final city score' achieved was 33 points, i.e. 8 x 2 points for resources inside the inner circle, and 17 points for resources in the outer circle. 'The Old Party' managed to turn an average midterm poll result of 11 points into a clear win. Congratulations!

It is suggested you move from left to right, declaring the winner by first focusing the players' attention to the bar chart on the left-hand side of the screen. Then let the winner hold a short victory speech.

After the winner has been presented, guide the players to the right-hand side of the screen where the 'Final city score' is presented. Here, the resources placed in the inner circle give 2 points each, while resources placed on the outer circle generate 1 point each. The score is a measure of how well the players have managed to rule the city together. How did they do? Comment with reference to the available scores between 20 and 40 points. The results are divided into four brackets, from poor to excellent.

Final city score:
20–25 points
Shame on you! You have neglected so many of the core functions of the city and driven the economy to the brink of bankruptcy.

26–30 points
Thank you for your service. The city's economy has remained stable and very little permanent damage has been done.

31–35 points
God job! You have maintained a high standard and improved many things for the inhabitants.

36+ points
Excellent! You have showed that you are truly worthy caretakers of the city and its citizens.

Once you have presented the city score, we recommend that you sum up the game and the experience. Use the recommended questions provided in the 'Instructions for the game master' box in the bottom left corner of your screen.

Good luck!

About this material

Electionville is based on a tabletop board game developed by Fabel AB for the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions. The tabletop has been used nationwide by Swedish schools to strengthen knowledge about democracy and local governance. As of today, the tabletop game material has been produced in more than 13,000 copies.

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