Immediate Release:
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**The GovLab Presents Research and Launches Website to Examine How Technology Can Enable Public Participation in Lawmaking**

BROOKLYN, New York – Today, The Governance Lab at the NYU Tandon School of Engineering has launched a research initiative to investigate the potential impact of technology on the process of making law. It also launched a website for the initiative, Crowd.Law, and will be presenting its recommendations for building public engagement into the lawmaking process before the Madrid Regional Assembly and Madrid City Council this week.

With the support of The Rockefeller Foundation, The GovLab will convene lawmakers, legislative staff, technologists, and legal and political theorists from six continents at The Rockefeller Bellagio Conference Center in Italy in March. The gathering will explore specific pilot projects for engaging the public in lawmaking and set standards for collecting and sharing data on how parliaments can use “crowdlaw” to enable an evidenced-based approach to research about participatory lawmaking.

“Trust in government is at an all-time low,” says The GovLab Director Professor Beth Simone Noveck. “But technology offers the promise of opening how lawmaking bodies work to new sources of expertise and opinion and making lawmakers accountable to the public on more than just Election Day. This is not the same as direct democracy but involves new and unexplored methods beyond the plebiscite. We hope that our work — together with a network of global practitioners and scholars — can help to uncover new and more legitimate ways to forge more active citizenship and better-quality laws.”
The term crowdlaw describes the relatively new practice of using technology to draw on the intelligence and expertise of the public to improve the quality of lawmaking. The Crowd.Law website details over two dozen examples of local legislatures and national parliaments turning to the Internet to involve the public.

The goal of the Crowd.Law project, which builds on three online convenings among crowdlaw practitioners from more than a dozen countries hosted by The GovLab beginning in 2014 and a semester-long graduate research project undertaken in Noveck’s Clinic on Governance Innovation, is to study the theory, investigate the practice, document the learning, and, above all, enable legislatures at the city and national level to operationalize.

The Crowd.Law website will operate as a platform for the new initiative, and support collaboration among stakeholders, promoting two-way conversation to spur and incorporate more and diverse opinions and types of expertise into lawmaking. To that end, the new site currently includes six key elements:

1. An in-depth analysis and explanation of crowdlaw;
2. Short case studies of 25 global examples of crowdlaw initiatives;
3. A Twitter list of leading thinkers and practitioners of crowdlaw;
4. A bibliography of selected readings on crowdlaw;
5. In-depth recommendations for designing crowdlaw processes and platforms; and

Next spring, a multi-disciplinary group of students at the NYU Tandon School of Engineering, led by Noveck and The GovLab, will conduct a research project with the city council of a major U.S. city to map the process for how a bill becomes a law, how that legislation is implemented into regulations, and identify potential benefits and risks of greater public engagement at each step.

To learn more about the initiative and the Crowd.Law website, visit https://crowd.law/.

About The Governance Lab
The Governance Lab’s mission is to improve people’s lives by changing the way we govern. Our goal at The GovLab is to strengthen the ability of institutions — including but not limited to governments — and people to work more openly, collaboratively, effectively, and legitimately to make better decisions and solve public problems. We believe that increased availability and use of data, new ways to leverage the capacity, intelligence, and expertise of people in the problem-solving process, combined with new advances in technology and science, can transform governance. We approach each challenge and opportunity in an interdisciplinary, collaborative way, irrespective of the problem, sector, geography, and level of government. For more information, visit thegovlab.org.

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About the New York University Tandon School of Engineering
The NYU Tandon School of Engineering dates to 1854, the founding date for both the New York University School of Civil Engineering and Architecture and the Brooklyn Collegiate and Polytechnic Institute (widely known as Brooklyn Poly). A January 2014 merger created a comprehensive school of education and research in engineering and applied sciences, rooted in a tradition of invention and entrepreneurship and dedicated to furthering technology in service to society. In addition to its main location in Brooklyn, NYU Tandon collaborates with other schools within NYU, the country’s largest private research university, and is closely connected to engineering programs at NYU Abu Dhabi and NYU Shanghai. It operates Future Labs focused on start-up businesses in downtown Manhattan and Brooklyn and an award-winning online graduate program. For more information, visit engineering.nyu.edu.

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