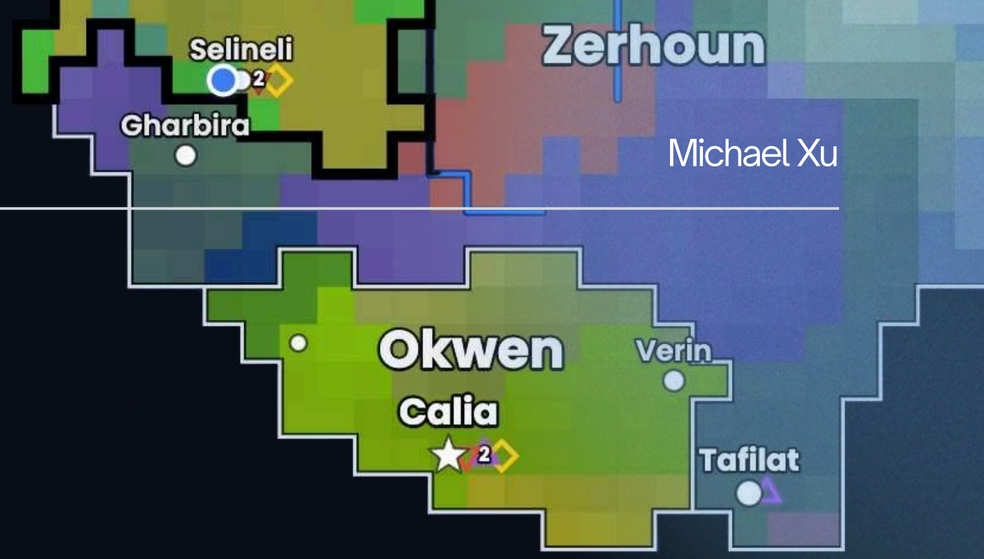
mxworld.xyz



Michael Xu

ountryGov

an AI-driven political simulation



Environmental hydrologist ar
cooperative adviser
Ilyora Produce Exchange

Relationship

Power

What do you do?

Speak, decide, investigate, tr

Contents

1 Overview

2 A Playthrough

3 Evolution

4 My Process

5 Design Explorations

- Rules and Room to Unfold
- Intention and Outcome
- Understanding the World

6 Schematic

7 Worlds & Stories

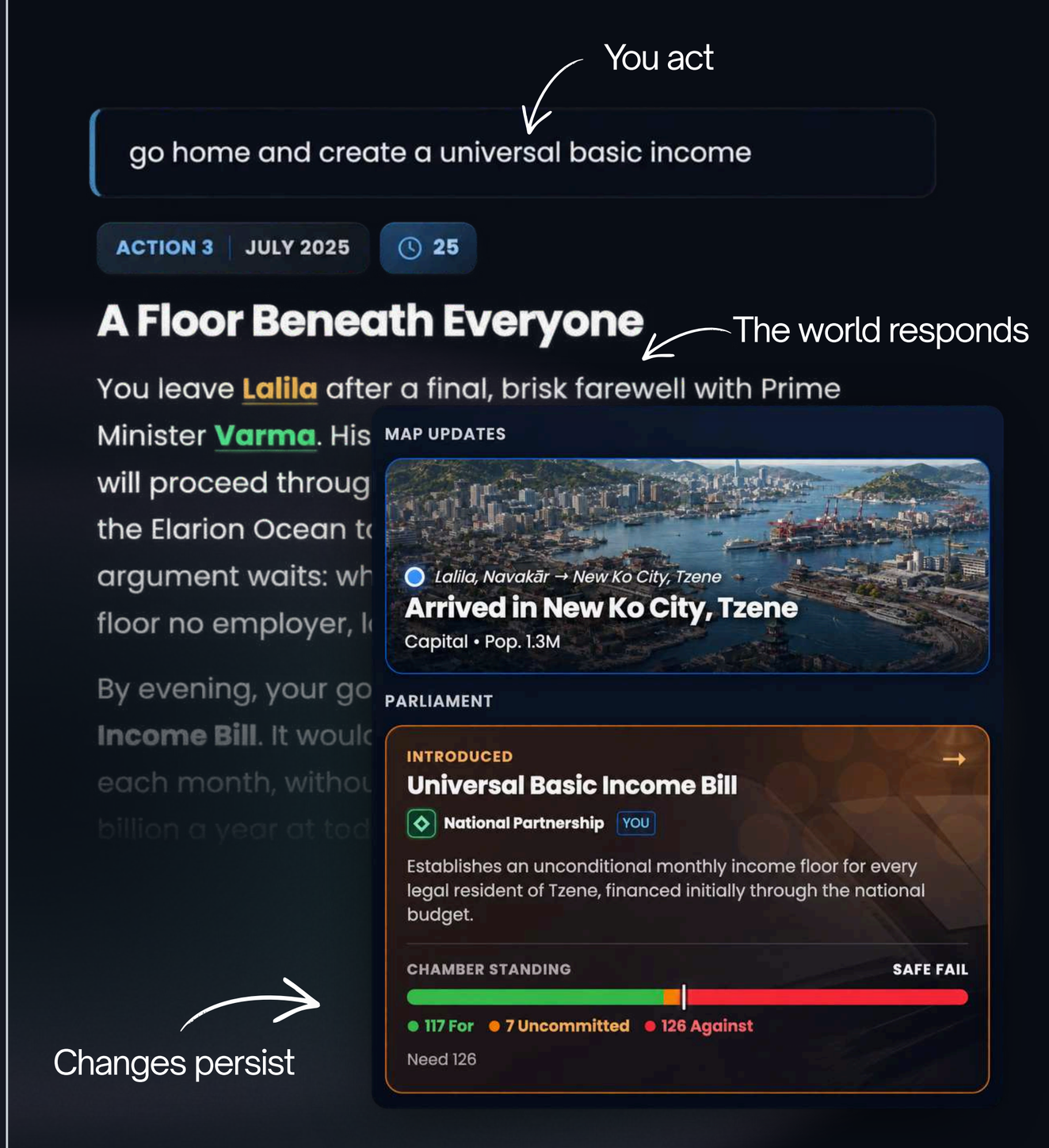
8 What Comes Next

1 Overview

CountryGov is an **AI-driven political simulation** where you govern a fictional country through **open-ended actions.**

You negotiate, act, and respond, all while relationships and conditions change, while the surrounding world **acts on its own** over time.

CountryGov began as a childhood talking game about leading fictional countries. In 2024, I began turning it into a simulation.



A Playthrough 2

World Development · Minor

Mirvenza Plant Sends Smoke Over Homes

A failed emissions-control line at the Northbank chemical works in Mirvenza sent a grey-yellow plume across the river estates on a windless March afternoon, forcing two primary schools to keep children indoors and sending dozens of residents to clinics with breathing complaints. The works has cut production while inspectors test the drainage channel and the ground beside the loading yard, but its operator says the failure was brief and disputes that it can explain every local symptom.

Nadia Brooks, who has organised the neighbourhood's air-quality campaign, has filed for an independent inspection and published photographs of residue on window ledges. The incident gives **Mirvenza's industrial-pollution crisis** a new, visible flashpoint rather than a distant line in an emissions register.

> *"They call it a short release because they measure it in minutes. We measure it in the air our children breathe."*
> — Nadia Brooks, Northbank Clean Air Campaign organiser

MAR 2025 A corroded scrubber line fails at Mirvenza's largest chemical-processing works, sending a visible plume over nearby housing.

APR 2025 The plant remains on reduced output while inspectors test soil and runoff channels; the company contests responsibility for the full cleanup.

IMMEDIATE EFFECTS

Environment −4 · Public Health −4

ISSUE WORSENED
Industrial Pollution Crisis
+5 67 → 72 Systemic

WORLD UPDATES

Disruption CREATED
Northbank Chemical Works Emissions Failure
A failed emissions-control line at Mirvenza's Northbank chemical works has left the plant on reduced output while inspectors assess airborne residue, runoff and possible exposure in…

Continue →

Events introduces a local incident.

Public health and environmental conditions worsen as pollution rises; a disruption is created.

In Mirvenza, a **chemical plant failure** sends pollution over nearby homes. Residents demand an investigation, while the company **disputes responsibility.**

My response:

> go and confront the boss of Northbank Chemical Works

go and confront the boss of Northbank Chemical Works

APRIL 2025 | ACTION 3 | 10

Northbank's Boss Comes to the Gate

At **Mirvenza**, you cross the outer gate of Northbank Chemical Works under the eyes of workers gathered beside idled tankers. The plant's manager has made himself available in the control building: **Gareth Linwood**, chief executive of Northbank Chemical Works, a careful man in a dark raincoat whose office overlooks the scrubber stack that failed.

He does not deny the failure. A corroded valve bypassed part of the emissions-control line during a pressure surge, he says, and the company shut that line down once its alarms confirmed the breach. But he refuses the wider conclusion being made beyond the gates. Northbank's own records, he insists, cannot yet show whether the plume caused the respiratory complaints or whether the drainage channel received its discharge. The works will provide logs, maintenance records, and staff access to an independent inquiry; it will not accept a declaration of guilt before the samples are tested.

Outside, **Brooks** listens from the cordon as his words are relayed. Her photographs show pale residue on homes nearest the plant, and the **industrial-pollution crisis** has already made too many residents accustomed to being told that evidence will arrive later. Linwood's offer is real, but it also preserves his central objective: keep the reduced-output plant alive while responsibility remains unsettled.

What order do you give for Northbank while the testing proceeds?

WORLD UPDATES



PERSON INTRODUCED

Gareth Linwood

Chief Executive · Northbank Chemical Works

Story feedback | Report

SUGGESTED ACTIONS

- **Order a temporary shutdown** — ↳ Order Northbank Chemic...
- **Allow a supervised limited restart** — ↳ Permit Northbank Chemic...
- **Launch the independent inspection** — ↳ Order an independent ins...

In 📖 **Story**, freeform action takes me to the factory.

The boss of the plant, Gareth, is introduced as a 👥 **Person**.

I confront the chemical plant's boss. He admits **broken equipment let pollution escape**, but says there's no proof it made people sick. He agrees to let inspectors investigate, but **wants to keep the plant running.**

My response:

regulate heavy industry more and slap linwood with a fine

I order tighter controls and a fine. The plant's failed equipment stays shut, and independent inspectors take over monitoring. **The company is fined $18 million.**

regulate heavy industry more and slap linwood with a fine

APRIL 2025 | ACTION 4 | 20

Northbank Faces the Emergency Order



At **Mirvenza**, you make the line plain at the gate: heavy industry does not get to treat a failed control system as a private inconvenience. **Northbank Chemical Works is placed under an emergency compliance order.** Its scrubber line stays shut; every active discharge point is

IMMEDIATE EFFECTS

ISSUE IMPROVED

Industrial Pollution Crisis

−2 81 → 79 Systemic



BUDGET EFFECTS

ANNUAL COMMITMENT

Independent industrial compliance monitoring +$72M/yr

Environment · <0.1% of annual spending

WORLD UPDATES

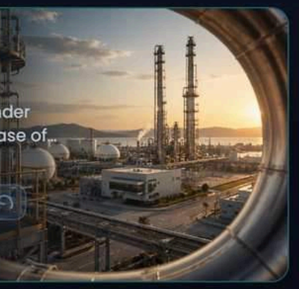
Executive Action CREATED

Heavy Industry Emergency Compliance Order

A six-month emergency environmental order places Northbank Chemical Works under independent monitoring, restricts it to certified segregated processes, requires release of...

MONTHLY

Industrial Pollution Crisis → 72 holding | Environment → 30 · holding | Public Health → 60 · holding



Disruption UPDATED

Northbank Chemical Works Emissions Failure

A failed emissions-control line at Mirvenza's Northbank chemical works has left the plant on reduced output while inspectors assess airborne residue, runoff and possible exposure in...



The order lasts six months and adds $72 million a year in monitoring costs. Pollution severity falls, but the crisis remains.

World Development | Moderate

Northbank Monitor Finds the Plant Safe to Reopen

Six months of independent sampling at Mirvenza found that Northbank's failed scrubber line caused the spring plume but did not produce a continuing discharge after the damaged valve was replaced. The monitor cleared certified units for full operation in October, ending the emergency regime; the $18 million penalty was released into riverbank cleanup, neighbourhood respiratory screening and a new stack-monitoring system.

Linwood returned the works to full output, while Brooks called the result a narrow victory rather than an absolution: the immediate breach was contained, but the city's older pollution burden remains.

OCT 2025 The emergency compliance order expired after independent testing cleared certified Northbank units for full operation.

IMMEDIATE EFFECTS

ISSUE IMPROVED
Industrial Pollution Crisis
−5 77 → 72 Systemic



Events feedback | Report

The six-month order I issued reaches its end.

Pollution severity falls again.

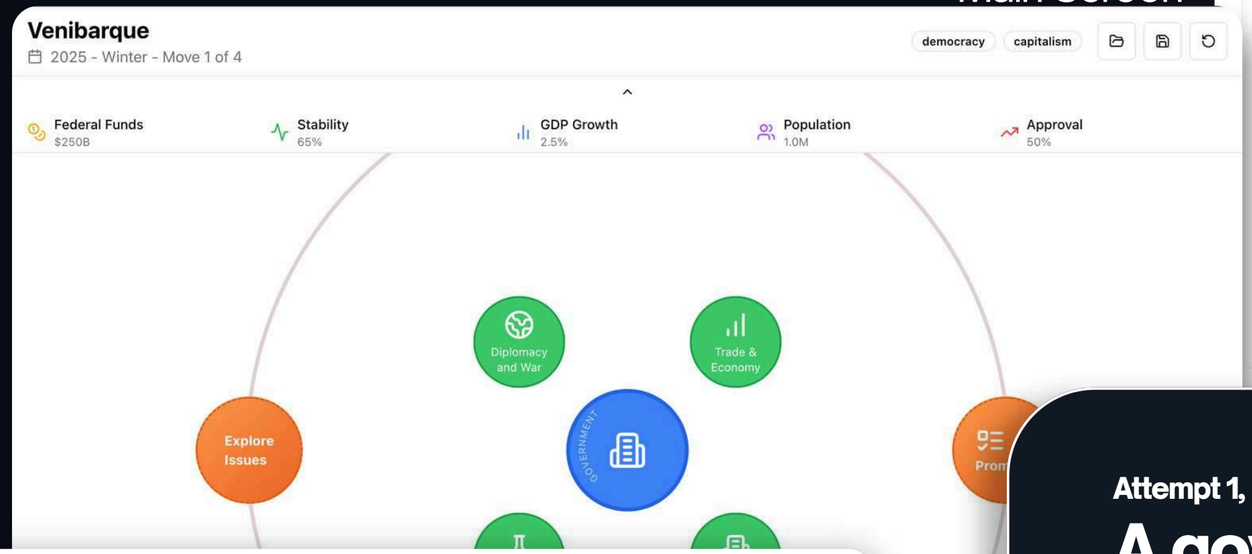
Six months later, inspectors confirm that the broken valve caused the pollution. With the valve replaced, **the plant reopens.**

The $18 million fine pays for the cleanup.

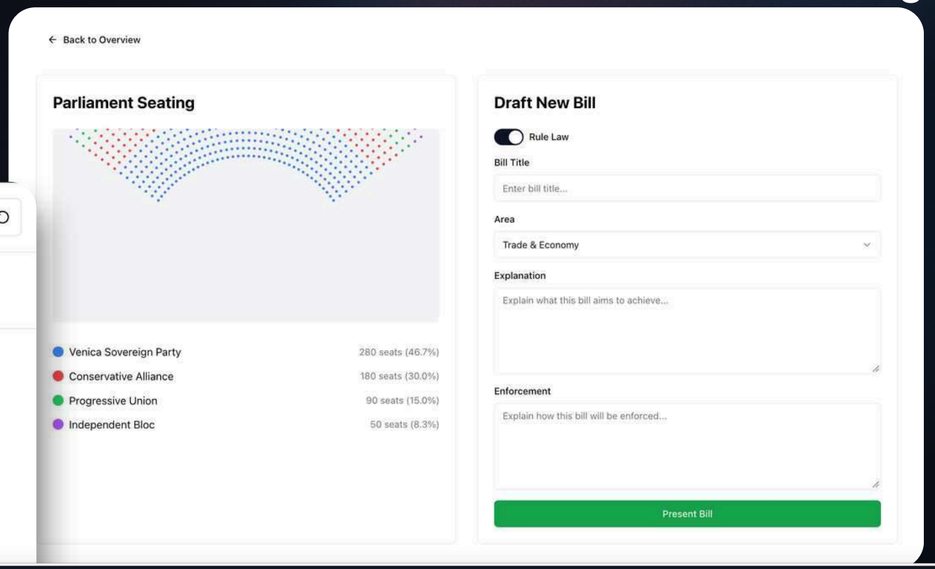
This incident ends, but **the city's wider pollution problem remains.**

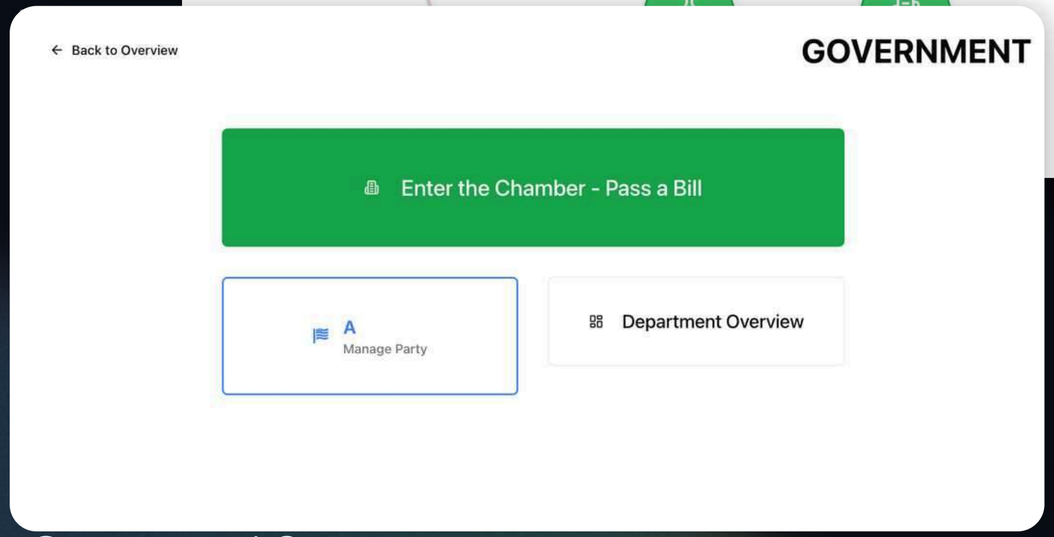
3 Evolution

Main Screen



Bill Drafting





Government Screen

Attempt 1, December 2024

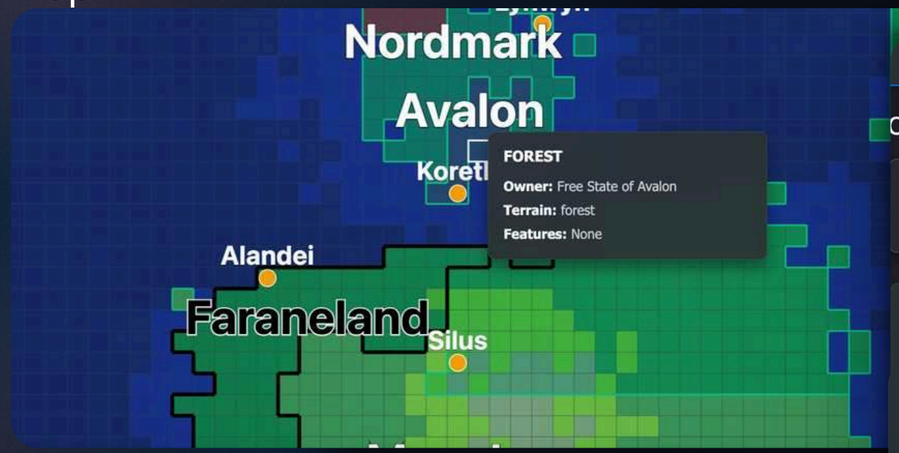
A government of menus

01

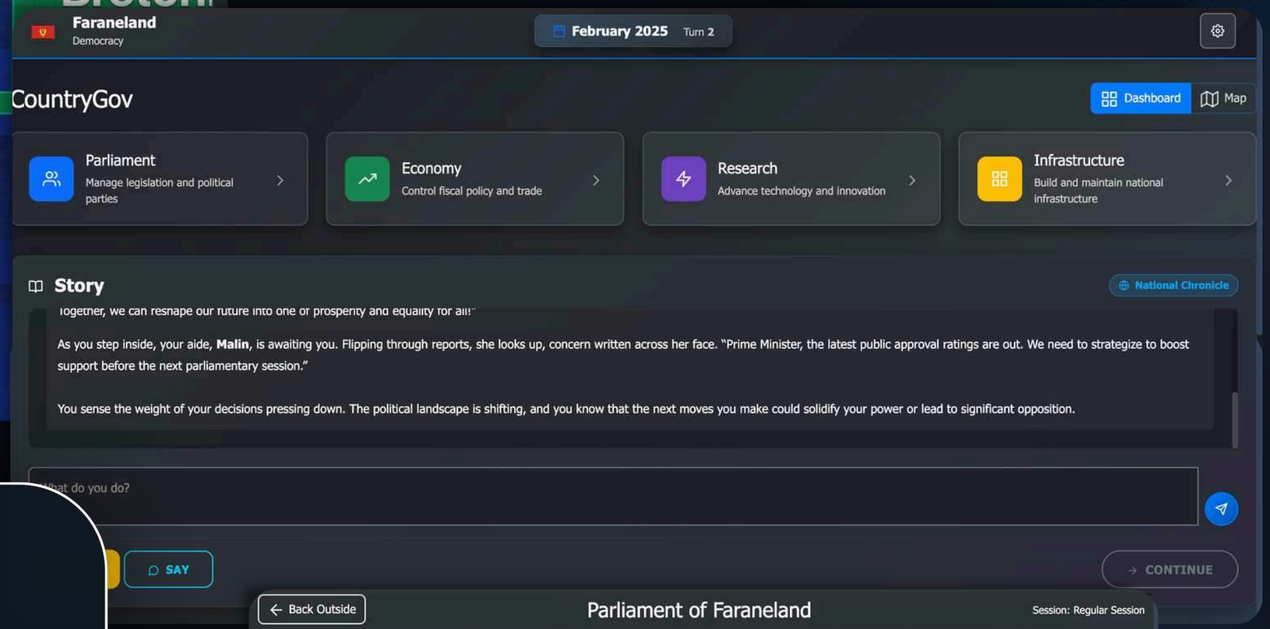
My first attempt featured **separate areas of governance**, each with its own screen. Players could write their own bills, but I hadn't figured out how the game could interpret those proposals.

It left a larger question: **how could they attempt something I hadn't built a menu for?**

Map



Dashboard



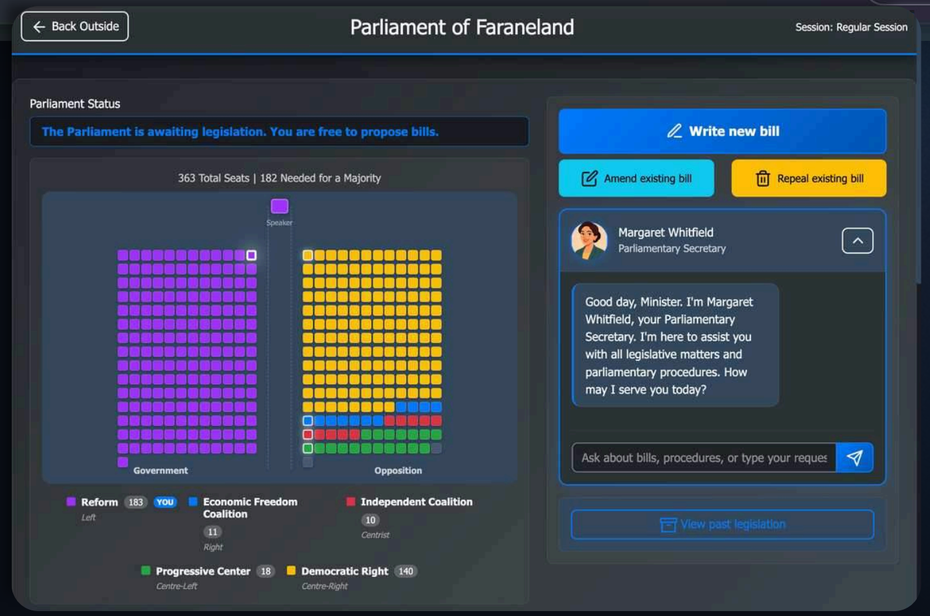
02

Attempt 2, October 2025

Disconnected Systems

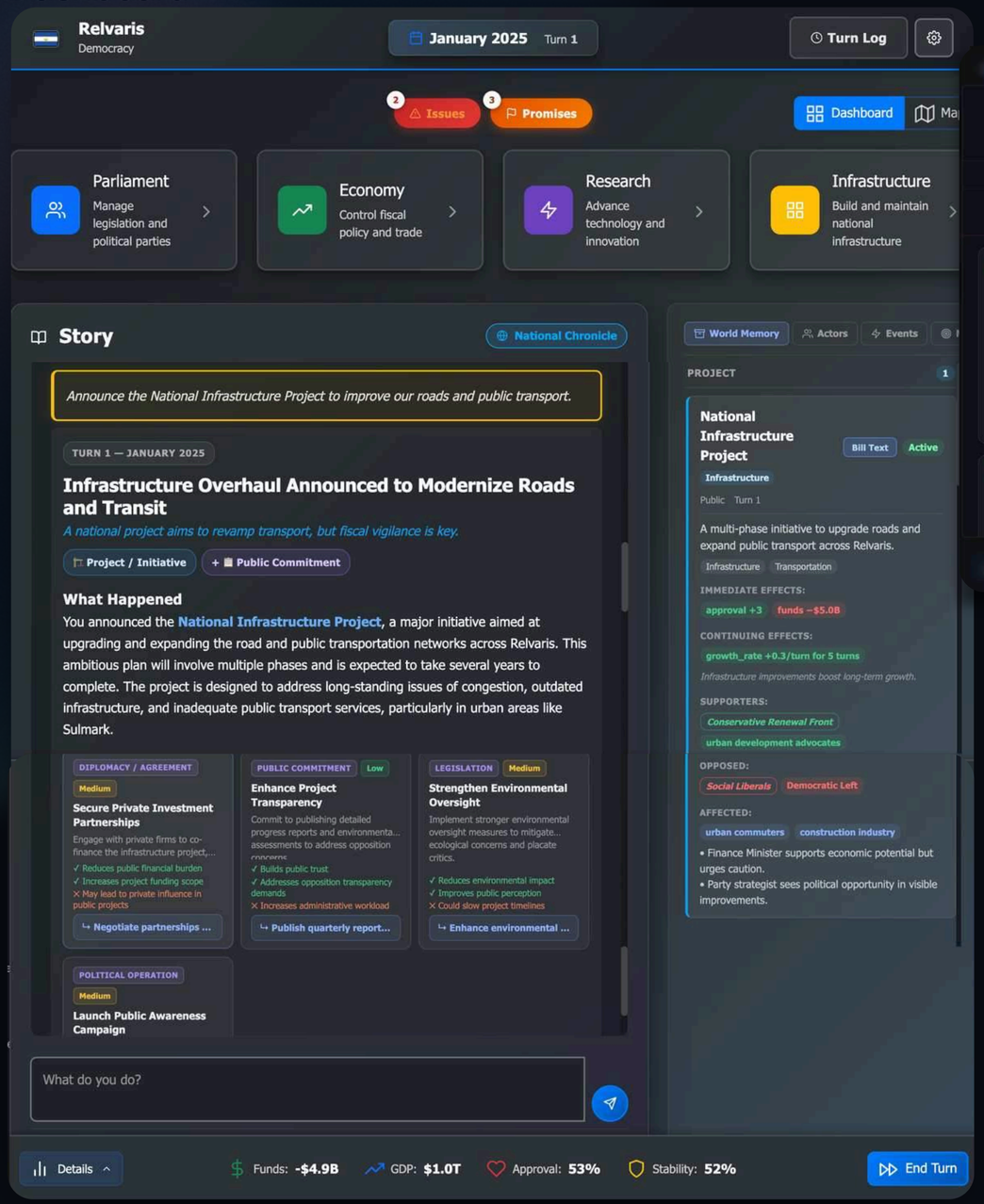
My second attempt introduced **AI assistants** into separate departments alongside a main Story interface.

But Story could **only respond through more prose**. Its events weren't reliably reflected in the simulation, while the map and Parliament remained largely decorative.

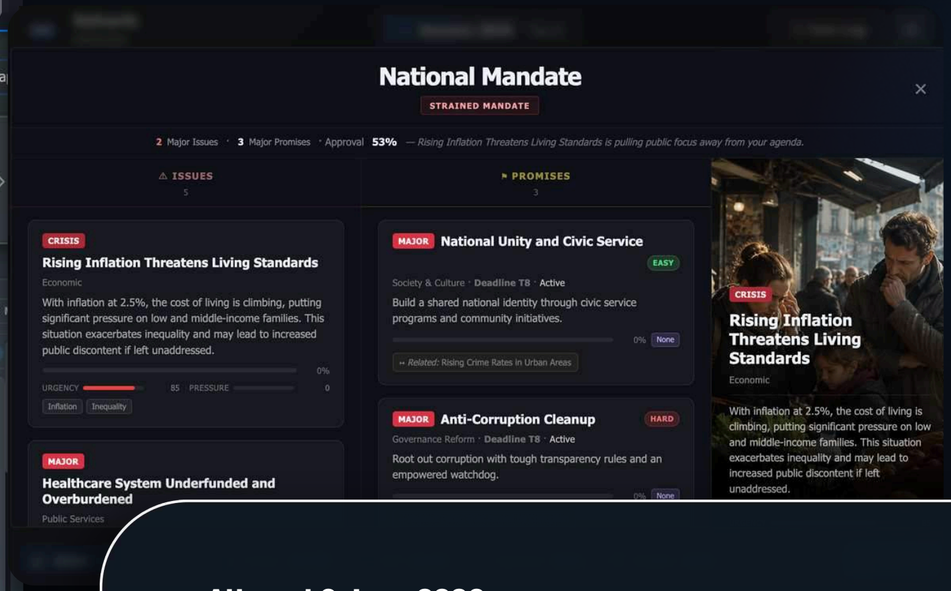


Parliament

Dashboard



Issues & Promises Viewer



Attempt 3, June 2026

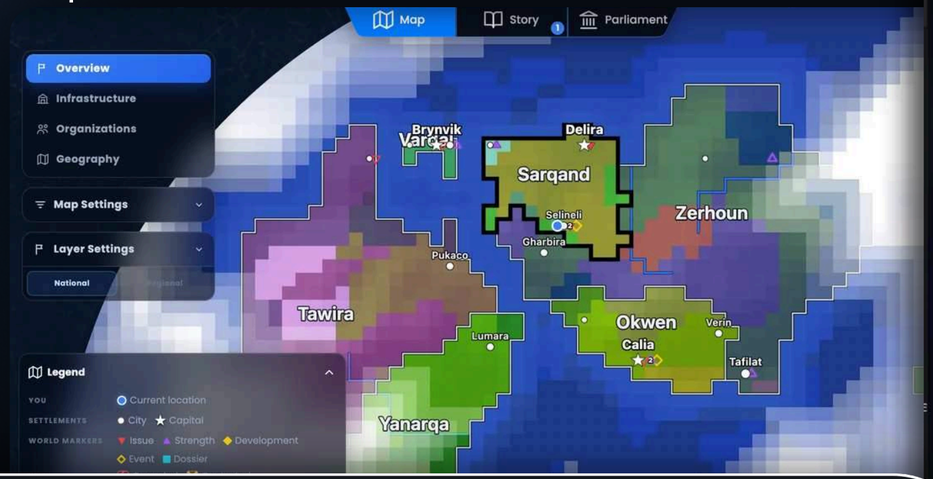
Connecting Story to the world

03

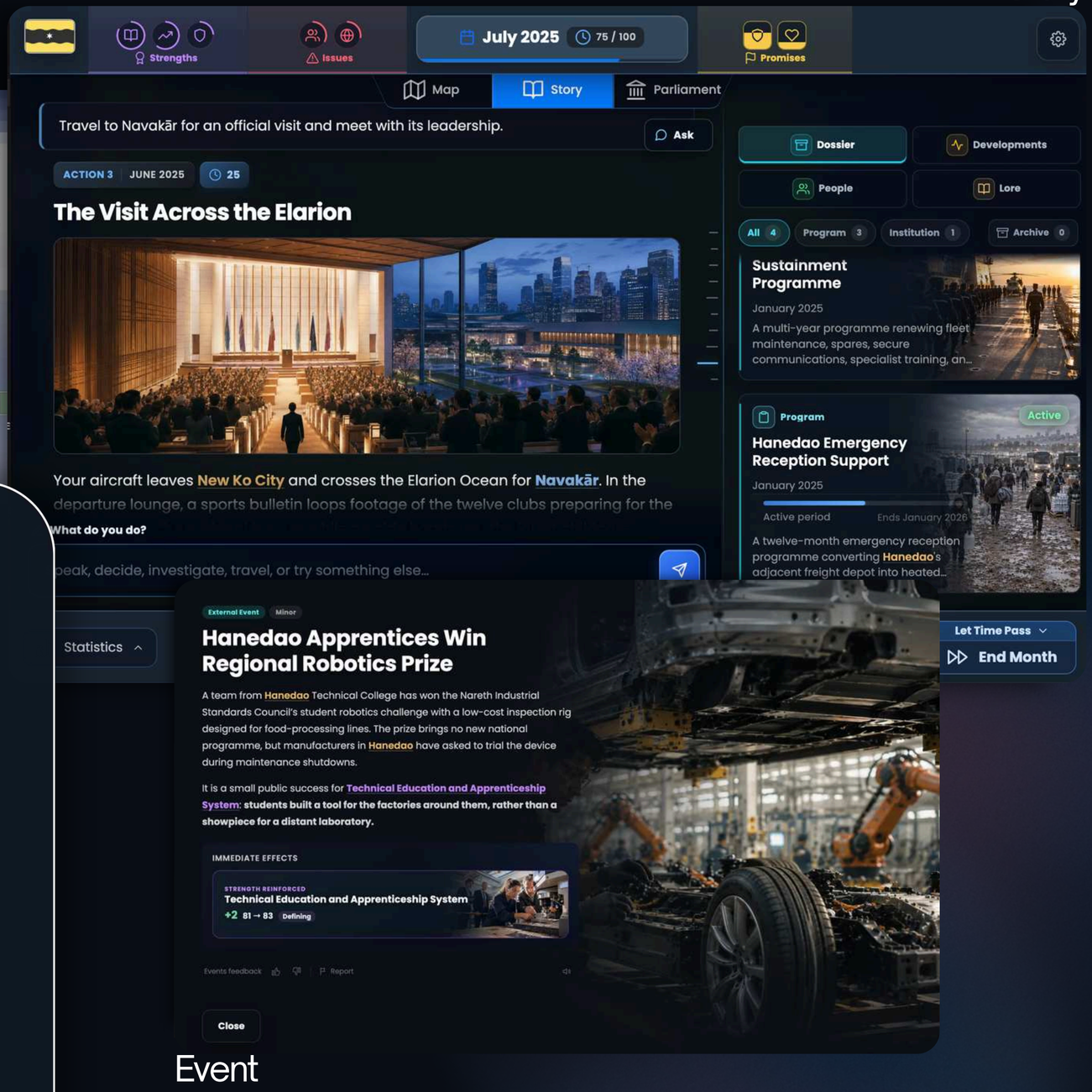
Story began creating **persistent objects with immediate and recurring effects**. Actions could now do more than just direct the written story.

But the growing incoherent pile of records, mechanics and option cards introduced a new problem: making it all **understandable.**

Map



Story



Event

Modern CountryGov, October 2026

04 One world, centred on Story

By connecting the game's systems into Story and loosening rigid structures, CountryGov could tell **richer, more natural stories** within a deeper simulation.

The game could finally revolve around one question: **What do you do?**

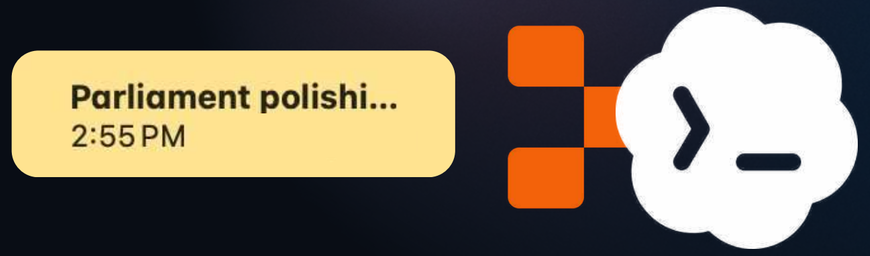
My Process

SKETCH & PROTOTYPE



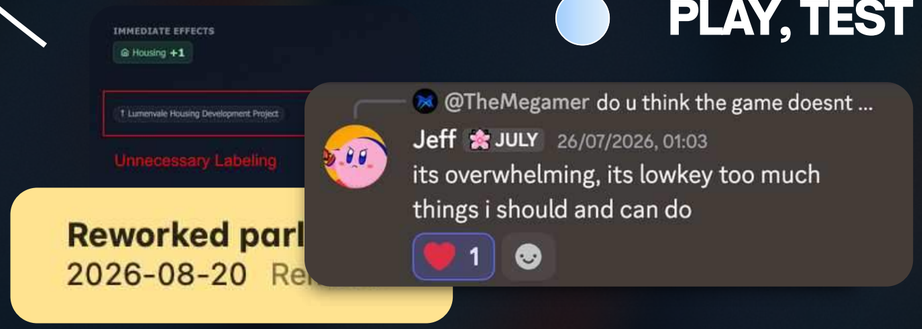
I sketch ideas and prototype features in Google Slides.

PROMPT & DEVELOP



I define the systems and interactions, then direct and refine their implementation using Replit and Codex.

PLAY, TEST & REVISE



I test the game, gather player feedback, and revise what doesn't work.

Design Explorations

5

What needs rules, and what needs room to unfold?

I had a clear sense of how I wanted CountryGov to feel, but its best moments were often ones I hadn't imagined. I struggled with shaping that experience without prescribing **too much structure or templated rigidity.**

⚠ **Issues**, July 2026



Urgency, pressure, and resolution progress each had their own measure, alongside linked statistics, actors, histories, and more. I kept adding detail to describe how a problem should behave.

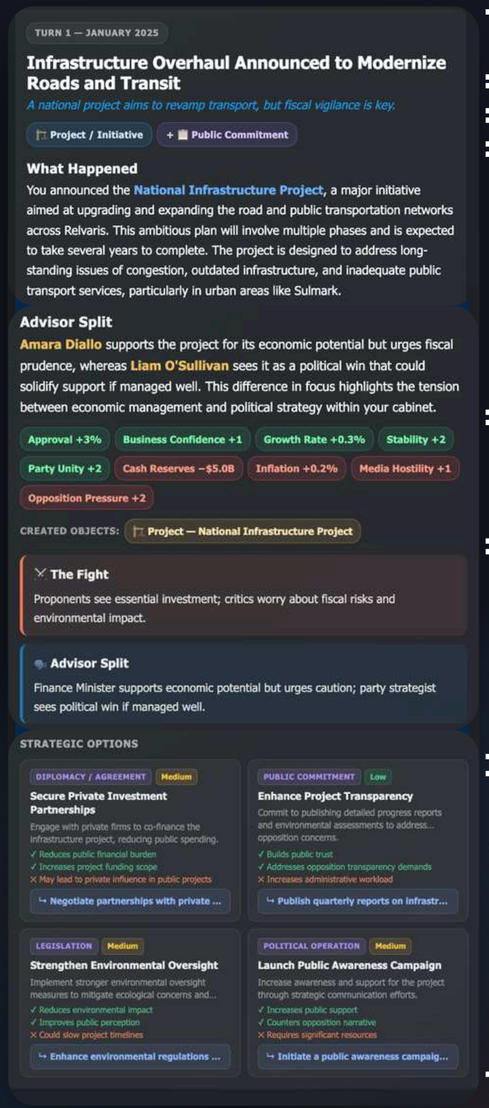
⚠ **Issues**, Today



I reduced the core measure to severity. The surrounding Story supplies the complexity that numbers cannot.

What needs rules, and what needs room to unfold?

🕮 **Story**, June 2026



Title
Subtitle
Action Tags

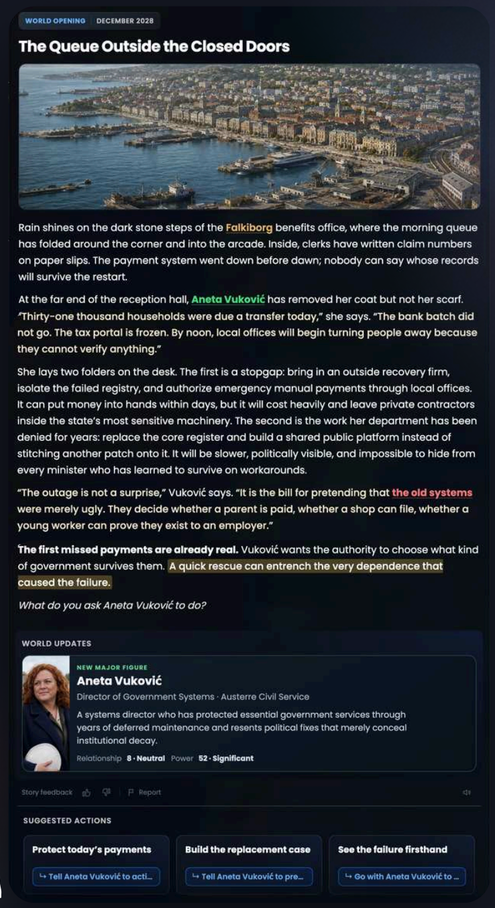
Required sections: what happened and how others reacted

Changes to the game world

Summary Cards

Categorized choices with commitment levels and pros/cons

🕮 **Story**, Today



Optional Title

Optional Image

Freeform Prose

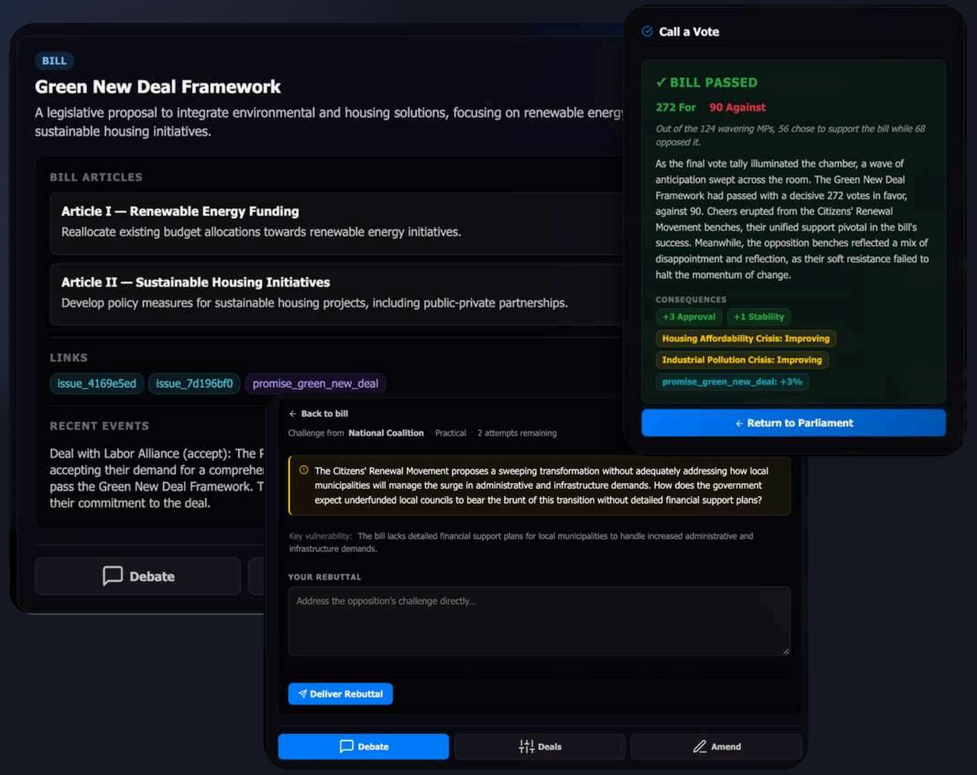
Changes to the game world

Brief, contextual suggestions

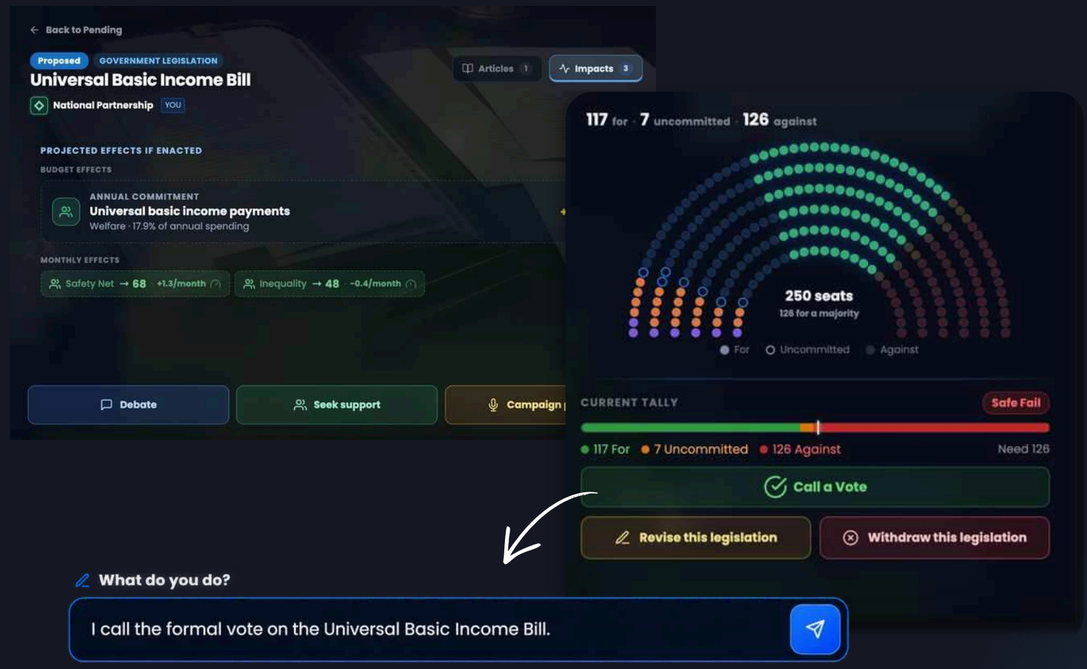
I loosened the structure so stories could unfold at their own pace.

What needs rules, and what needs room to unfold?

🏛 **Parliament**, July 2026



🏛 **Parliament**, Today



Early Parliament confined debates, deals, and votes to separate interfaces. I moved political action into Story, allowing persuasion, voting, and more to happen **in natural language, wherever an encounter led.** Parliament remained a dedicated view of the legislative process – and Story delegated vote calculations to the engine.

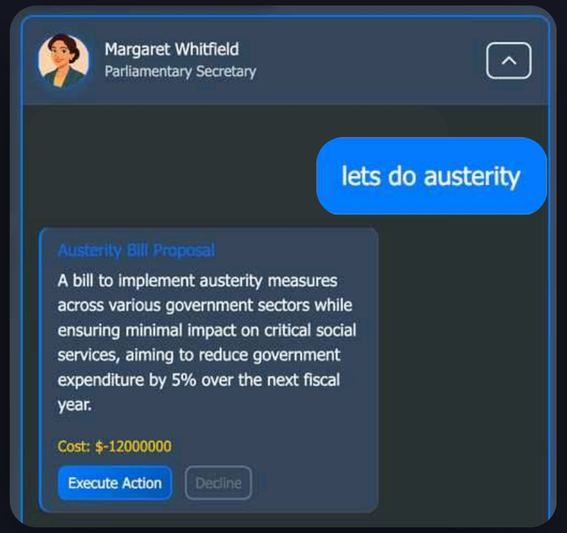
Design Explorations

5

What stands between an intention and its outcome?

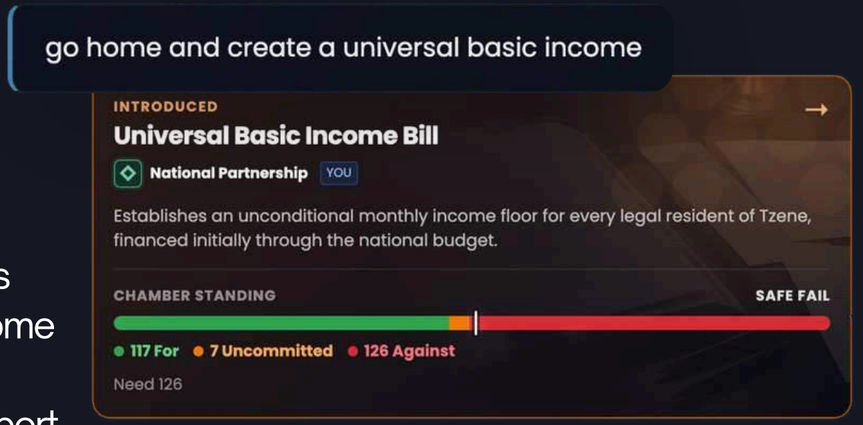
Players could attempt anything through Story, but simply wanting success couldn't mean it had really happened. I needed the player to **face resistance** a storyteller couldn't write around.

Parliament, October 2025



The parliamentary secretary could create and enact legislation within her own AI chat.

Parliament, Today

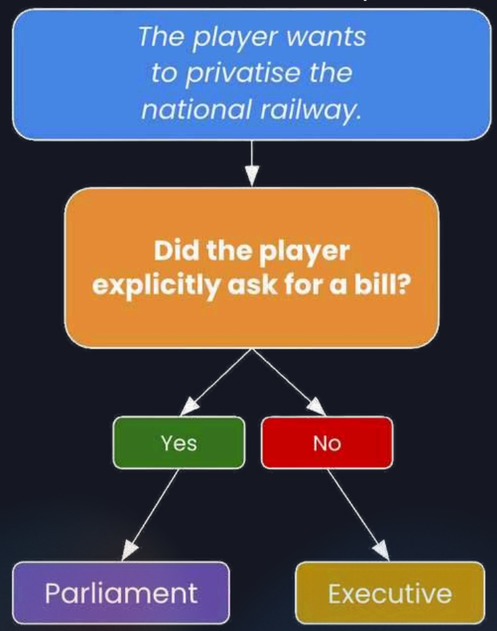


Whether a player's wishes actually come true depends on parliamentary support.

What stands between an intention and its outcome?

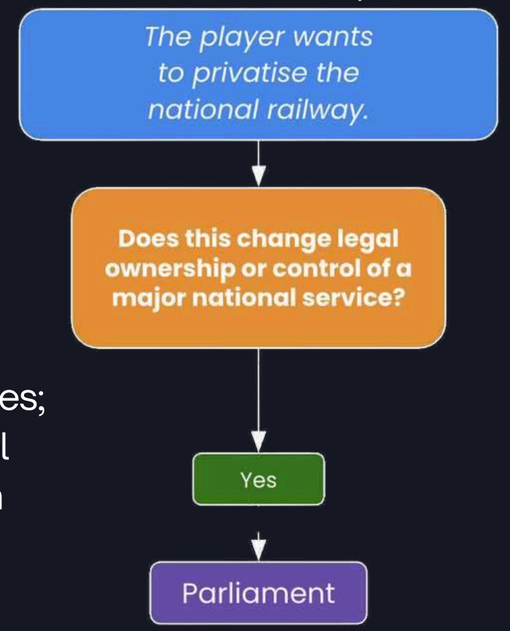
Parliamentary Boundary, July 2026

Privatisation example



Parliamentary Boundary, Today

Privatisation example

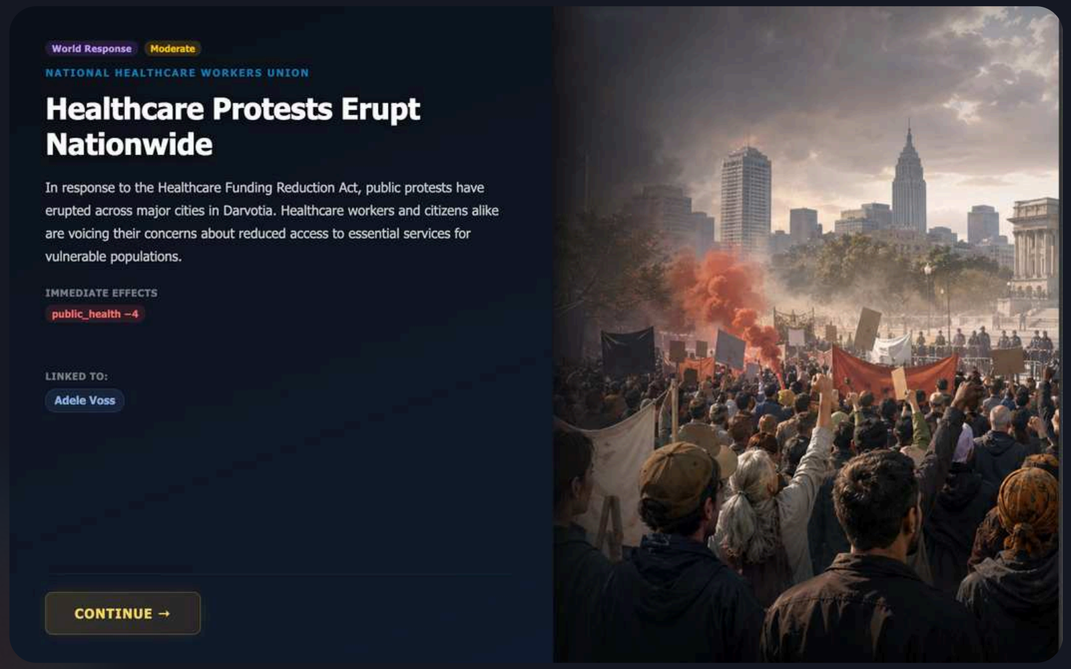


Default for democracies; enacted constitutional changes can reassign authority.

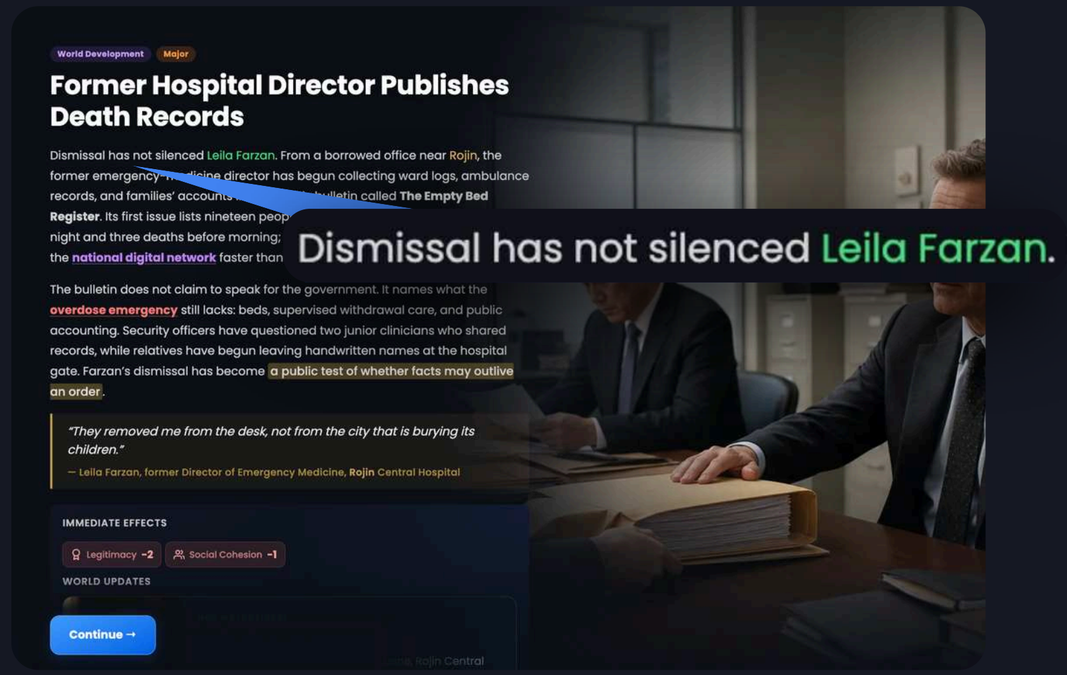
I distilled parliamentary jurisdiction into two rules: Does it change legal rules, or create, abolish, or substantially dismantle a flagship national programme? This made political authority **understandable while preserving meaningful limits on the player**—regardless of phrasing.

What stands between an intention and its outcome?

Events, June 2026



Events, Today



Events moved beyond broad public reactions to specific people moving on their own.

Events became a way for people and institutions to pursue their own priorities, beyond what the player had done. A successful order could then **produce consequences the player hadn't intended**—and couldn't simply dismiss.

What stands between an intention and its outcome?

When creating Autocracy, I had to consider what — if anything — would replace Parliament as **a primary obstacle for a ruler.**

Power Blocs

Overview Screen



Decree Reaction Screen



I designed **Power Blocs** to represent the groups a regime depends on, including military leaders, security services, officials, and regional interests.

Blocs cannot veto decrees, but their reactions can reshape what happens afterward.

Design Explorations

5

How can a player understand the world well enough to act?

When my friend Ethan tried CountryGov, he struggled with its political language and found the world too abstract to care about. His feedback made me reconsider **how the game communicated complexity.**

📖 **Story Style Guidance**, June 2026

Replace cinematic paragraphs with sharp **political briefing prose**.

📖 **Story Style Guidance**, Today

Lead with **what a reader can care about.** Use technical language only after its meaning is visible.

How can a player understand the world well enough to act?

Cabinet, June 2026

Who is angry at me and why?

Your **Chief of Staff**, **Julia Voss**, places a report on the table. "The short version: multiple groups are expressing frustration, but for different reasons."

First, the **Housing Affordability Crisis** has stirred discontent among urban residents. Rising house prices are pushing many out of the market, and advocacy groups like those

vocal. They argue that you

Report Active

Urban Anger over Housing Affordability

Turn 1 · Public

Rising house prices are pushing urban residents out of the housing market. Advocacy groups led by Marta Rinaldi and Luis Barreto argue that the government promised action but has yet to deliver tangible relief.

LATEST DEVELOPMENT

Chief of Staff Julia Voss identified unmet housing promises as a source of growing frustration among urban residents.

RELATED STATS: housing_affordability public_trust

Cabinet could change the world, too, by making "Report" objects.

Ask, Today

why is djerat so.... messed up

ANSWER

Djerat is suffering from **three crises reinforcing one another**.

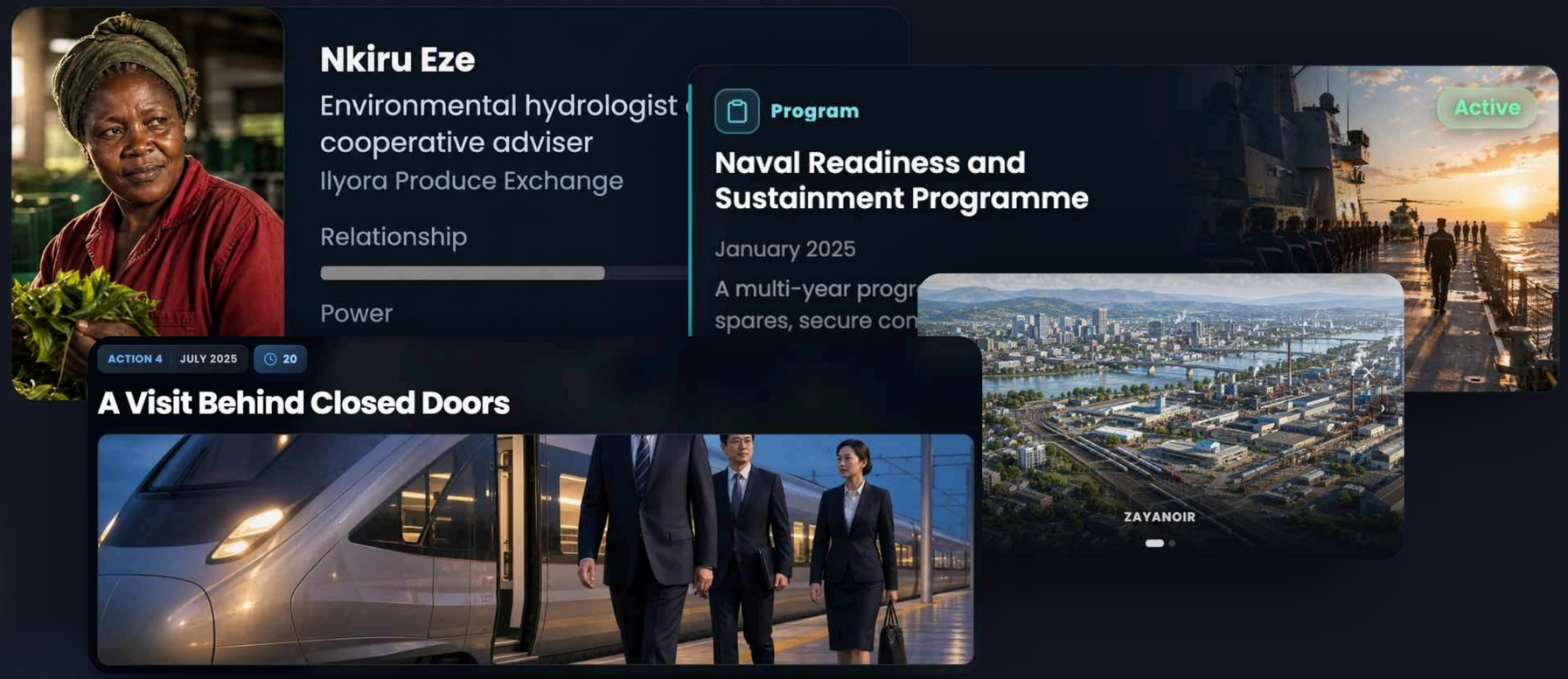
First, its theocratic autocracy has turned political dissent into a security threat. Mass arrests of labour organisers, students, and clerics who challenged the ruling hierarchy helped trigger an eight-month insurgency in the western districts. Armed councils now fight the internal-security forces; the councils are fragmented and have also looted food and vehicles, while government forces use curfews, collective detention, and artillery against communities suspected of helping them.

Ask can only read the world, not change it.

I first answered player questions through Cabinet, where ministers **answered the players' questions in character**. But if the player was investigating a crime scene, why were they suddenly in a cabinet meeting? I replaced it with Ask to avoid creating another storyline.

How can a player understand the world well enough to act?

Image Intent System

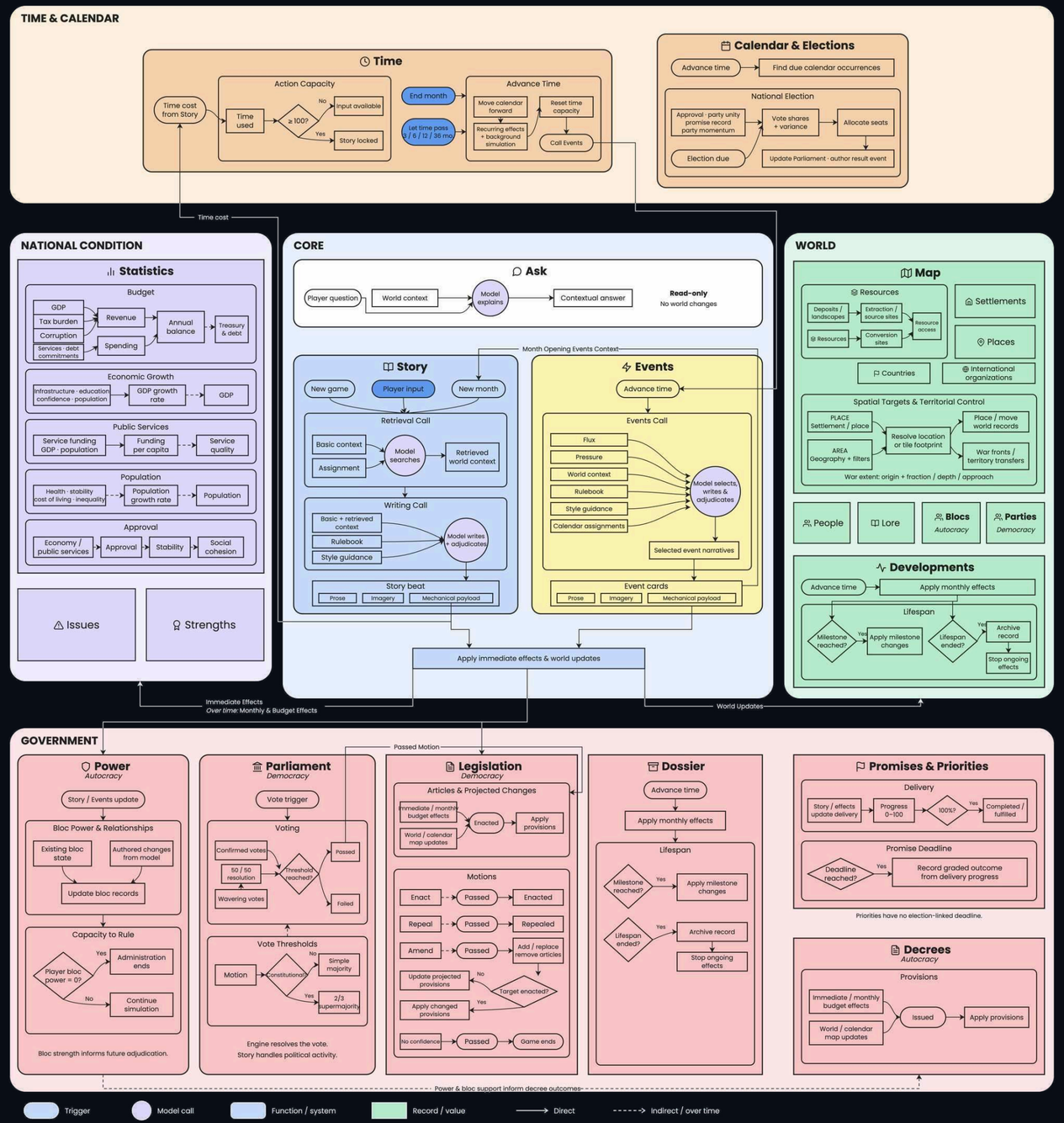


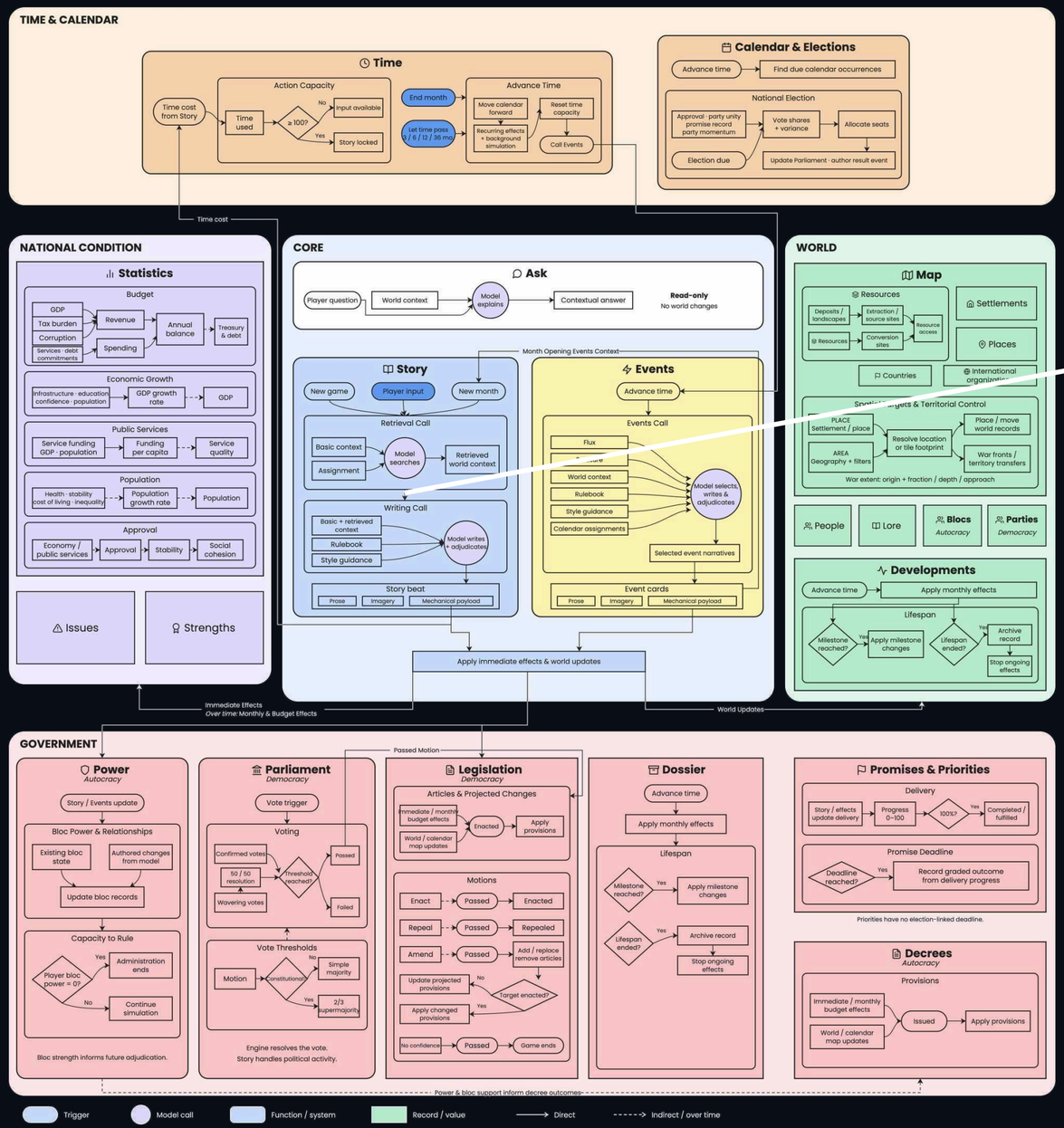
I brought **CountryGov's world into view** through illustration. The model can specify an image intent, which a search algorithm matches against a **curated library of 300+ images.**

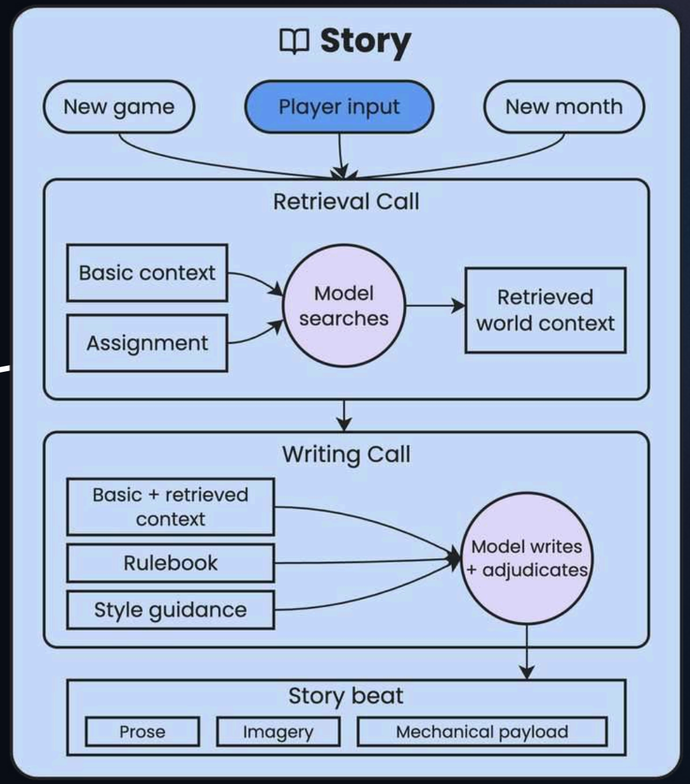
Behind every simple action in CountryGov lies a web of systems that interpret it, constrain it, and **carry its consequences forward.**

These systems **converge around Story**, where the player acts, and **Events**, where the world acts on its own.

Schematic

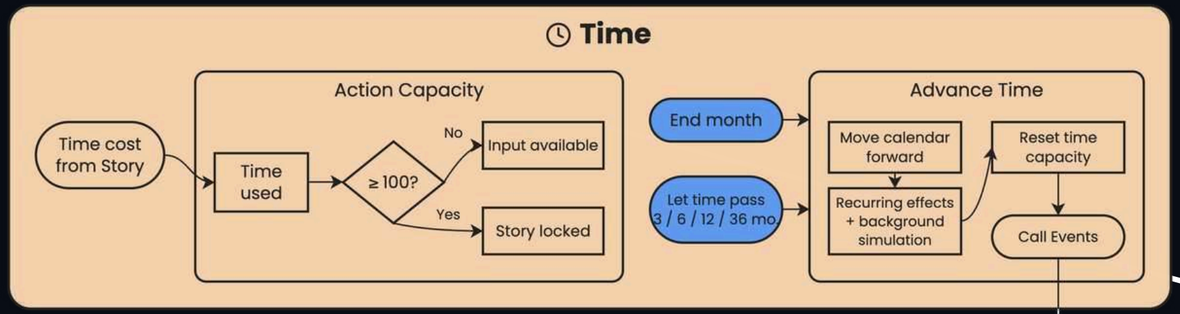




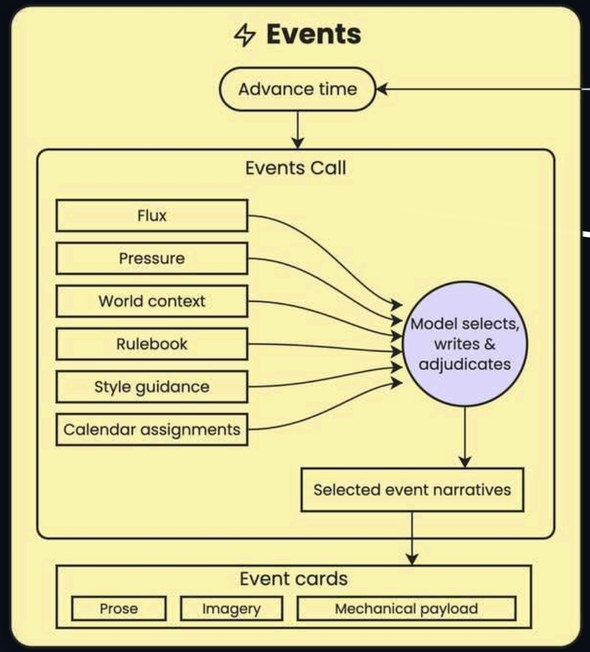


Story first retrieves relevant world context, then uses it to interpret the player's action and write the next beat.

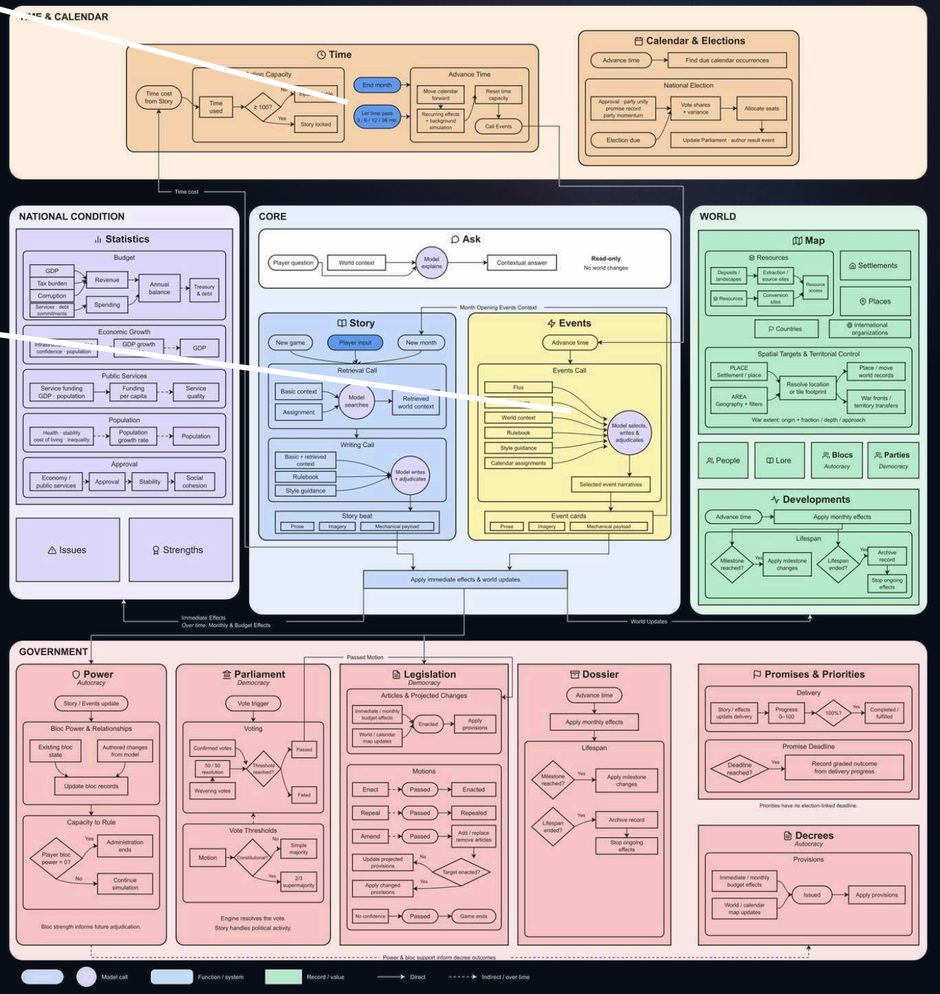
Its output includes both narrative and structured changes to the game world.



Advancing time applies ongoing effects and updates the simulation.



Events then interpret the changed world and introduce developments that feed into the next Story beat.



Sarqand

Parliamentary Republic

In Sarqand, a republic **divided by regional inequality,** the far-right Bursan Party demands help for struggling industries.

Supporting local jobs could mean **breaking your promise** to open public services to competition.

7 Worlds & Stories



Naryeo

Military Republic

You lead Naryeo after a revolution, but officers from the old regime still extort shopkeepers and residents.

Businesswoman Mai Kuroda offers evidence and support if you expose them publicly, but **acting could anger senior officers**—and give her council a stronger voice in your government.









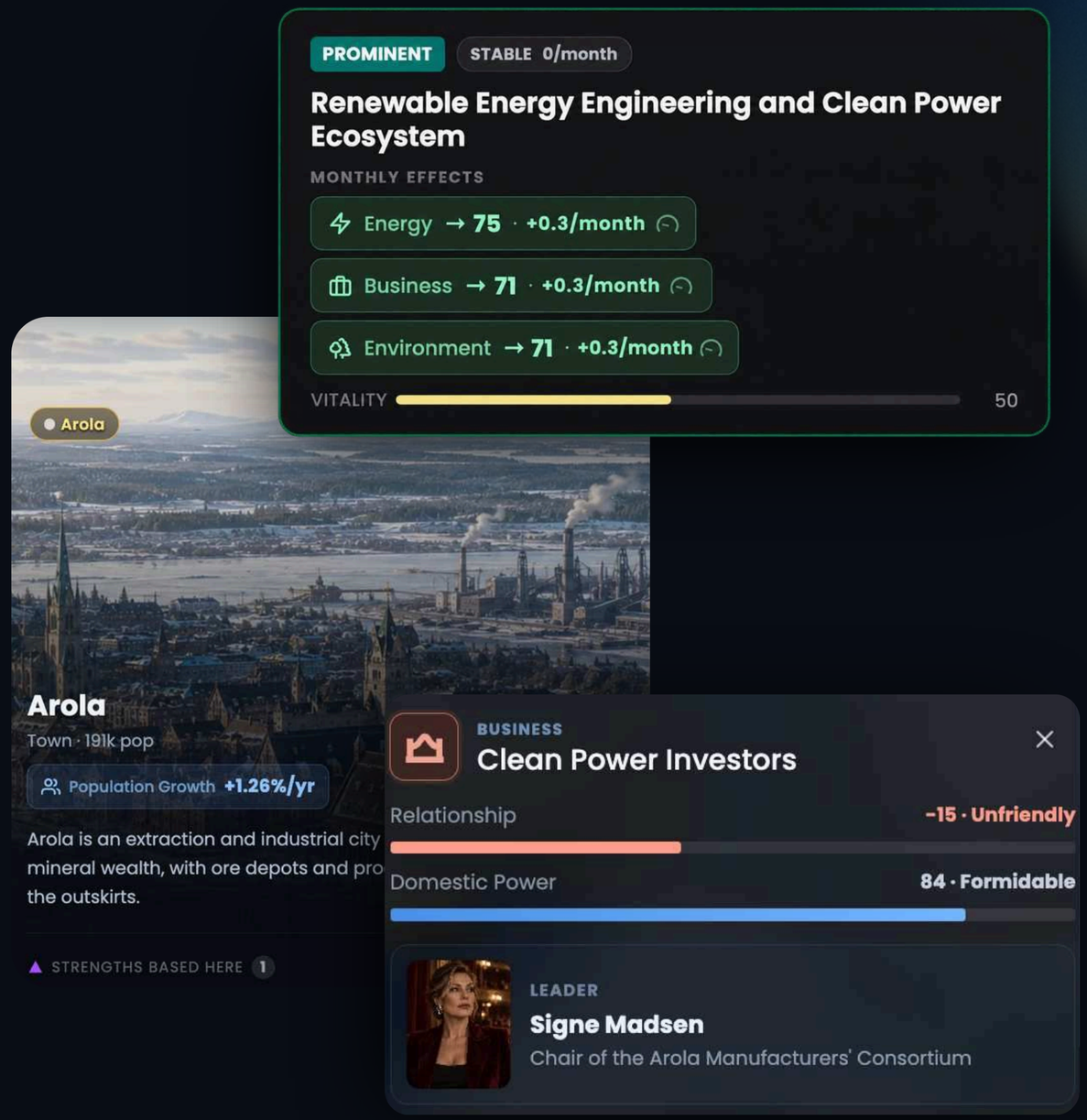


The Eirlands

Party-State Republic

The Eirlands has a strong clean-energy industry. In Arola, Signe Madsen's **manufacturers offer new investment**—but want tax cuts and privatisation in return.

Growing a national strength could mean **giving powerful investors more control** over the economy.



8 What Comes Next

Playtesting | Reaching More Players | Longer-Term Possibilities

I'm continuing playtesting with friends to see where they get lost, and what keeps them engaged.

My next priorities are building **an interactive tutorial** and optimising AI calls.

I plan to share CountryGov through **short-form videos,** showing the situations players encounter and the choices they make.

A wider audience will help me understand who returns—and why.

Multiplayer is my biggest ambition: letting players interact with each other in a shared world.

I also hope to find a sustainable way to monetise the game and **revisit the Research system** I first sketched in June.

Thank You!

Play CountryGov at **countrygov.com**.

