# Guide to public participation and group facilitation

lisode

lien social & décision

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# ABOUT LISODE

Lisode is a cooperative consultancy firm that specialises in public participation. Since 2008, we have been working with public sector organisations, designing, facilitating and assessing all types of projects that involve public participation, including land management, local development projects, natural resource management and governance of public organizations. Our expertise is fuelled by our research work, which enables us to constantly improve, adapt and update our public participation processes.

# PREFACE

We are pleased to be able to share with you this second edition of our guide to public participation and group facilitation. We have drawn on our recent experiences of public participation processes in France and abroad to enhance the first version of the guide, and have revised the layout to better respond to the questions and concerns frequently raised during the training sessions we deliver.

In this latest edition, we have updated the section on the regulatory framework as this has evolved since 2017. This edition also includes a typology of participation processes and a comprehensive toolkit.

Finally, as the knowledge shared in this guide was acquired through public projects, in keeping with our approach of sharing information, this publication is available to download free-of-charge.

# FOREWORD

It is becoming increasingly challenging to develop public policies on urban planning, environmental protection, natural resource management, large-scale infrastructure construction, as well as many other fields. We live in a complex and uncertain world where opinions are often at odds with one another and where uncertainties make scientific studies inconclusive. At the same time, civil society holds high expectations and is no longer afraid to challenge public authorities' decisions.

Consequently, it is no longer enough to propose the best technical solution that has been agreed by politicians and experts behind closed doors. Instead, it is necessary to build a project that includes the diverse aspirations of our society. One way of achieving this is through public participation, with a view to bringing stakeholders together (citizens, interest group representatives, users, etc.) to collectively design public policies.

Public participation redefines the link between the public authorities and civil society, and entails a number of questions:

- Who has the legitimacy to participate to the process?
- How can we create a dialogue between participants with conflicting opinions or interests?
- How can we move on from the expression of individual interests to formulate collective agreements?
- What public participation format is required to deliver the expected outcomes?
- Where does the participants' role end and the public authorities' role begin?

While public participation seeks to find generic answers to these questions, these responses also depend on the specific local context. This guide does not therefore offer a 'turnkey' solution. It instead provides areas for consideration and advice to accompany you through each phase of a public participation process: assessing the context, planning the process, selecting tools and methods, facilitating workshops and evaluating the public participation. It also sets out 'ethics' for public participation, formalised through principles to be respected, which also safeguard against the manipulation of participants and against superficial participation processes.

The participation process that we describe in this guide is, above all, inspired by our involvement in public participations both in France and abroad; however, it is also based on our literature reviews and research work. Finally, it draws on the highly fruitful discussions we have been able to hold with the large community of researchers and practitioners working in the field of public participation.

We hope you find this guide useful and informative.

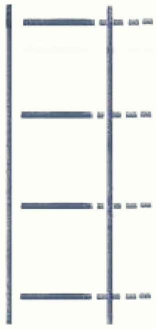
The Lisode Team

# The Foundations of Public Participation

- DEFINITION
- OBJECTIVES
- PRINCIPLES

# DEFINITION

There is a wide range of definitions for the term public participation. We have drawn on the work of Arnstein (1969), who proposed different levels of citizen participation in public decision-making processes.



› *Co-decision:* Making a decision with stakeholders who have legal responsibility for the project.

› *Public participation:* Engaging stakeholders to collectively develop proposals for a project

› *Consultation:* Seeking the opinion of stakeholders on a project.

› *Information:* Providing information to stakeholders about a project

Unlike Arnstein, who focuses on citizens, our vision of public participation includes all types of participants, whether citizens, representatives of organised groups, NGOs, institutions, etc. (→ see the 4 types of public participation page 28). We refer to the people taking part to public participation processes as participants or stakeholders. Under our definition, public participation means involving a certain number of participants in collectively developing proposals for a project.

In this document, we use the term stakeholders and participants indifferently.

→ see more Public participation dictionary: http://www.dicopart.fr (available in French only)

Public participation differs from consultation in that it goes beyond simply asking for opinions. A public participation process requires a collaborative effort, which involves discussing different viewpoints, defining shared objectives, generating new ideas and working together to formulate proposals.

Thus, public participation is distinct from co-decision-making as it does not culminate directly in a decision, but lays the groundwork for a decision to be made. As part of a public participation process, the final decision is taken by the people legally responsible for this task, such as elected officials and government agencies. However, while decision-making authority formally remains in their hands, these decision-makers are nonetheless required to examine the proposals made during the public participation process and provide feedback to the participants explaining which proposals were or were not selected and why (→ Principles, page 10).In conjunction with its instrumental aims, public participation also has social, democratic and political objectives.

# OBJECTIVES

## 1. Why to launch a participatory process?

> *Within the ambiguity of this term (local democracy), there are generally three analytically distinct issues that are often more or less confused in stakeholders' minds: that of incorporating the energies of 'simple' citizens into local management, that of (re) constituting the 'social bond', and that of*


> *participatory democracy in the strictest sense, which enables the politicisation of ordinary citizens and their involvement in decision-making (Yves Sintomer in Haegel et al 2000).*

Using this analytical framework, it is possible to discern three main types of public participation-related objectives.

### *Instrumental objectives that seek to increase the effectiveness of a project/decision:*

- Find a consensus in order to foster stakeholders' buy-in to the project or decision;
- Develop more appropriate and operational solutions to a problem by drawing on the knowledge of the people involved;
- Anticipate or identify bottlenecks (diverging objectives of the people involved) and overcome these;
- Improve the management of institutions and public resources by enabling a form of citizen oversight.

### *Social objectives that seek to bring about social change:*

- Create a social bond between different stakeholders;
- Create a learning process (on the specific topic, on how to work together, on how to resolve conflicts);
- Create empowerment among stakeholders.

### *Democratic objectives that seek to bring about political change:*

- Create a political and social culture of dialogue and mutual respect;
- Give the people affected by an issue a voice and thereby improve the quality of democracy in decision-making;
- Bring together decision-makers and other stakeholders and thus build trust between politicians and the public.

It goes without saying that these objectives vary widely from one public participation to the next and can even compete with each other within the same participation process. They can also be supplemented by policymakers' strategic objectives, such as more clearly identifying the local population's expectations, needs or motivations, in order to tailor the set-up of their political project in the hope of being re-elected.

## 2. Objectives for the participants

From the participants' perspective, the motivation for engaging in public participation is somewhat different from that of the initiator of the participatory process. The philosopher Joëlle Zask (2011) has identified three distinct motivations:

- *The desire to "take part in…"*, which encompasses the satisfaction of getting involved in collective action;
- *The desire to "contribute to…"*, which encompasses the satisfaction of passing on knowledge, ideas and experience to the rest of the group;
- *The desire to "benefit from…"*, which involves seeking out individual or collective benefits relating to the problem being addressed.

During the public participation planning phase, it is vital to review these objectives in order to clarify exactly what each stakeholder (decision-makers, organisers and participants) is expecting and can gain from the process. Anticipating their expectations will make it easier to design a more tailored and effective public participation.

# PRINCIPLES

Below is a list of principles that we believe need to be respected in order to ensure the public participation process is successful, both from an instrumental viewpoint (the public participation achieves its initial objectives) and from a social and democratic perspective (it adheres to certain ethical guidelines). These principles are a way of reminding decision-makers that, although organising a public participation provides a tremendous opportunity for achieving ambitious objectives, there are also certain standards that need to be met.

### Public participation has an impact on the decision

For there to be proper public participation, the work carried out by the participants must have an impact on the decision-making process. The exact arrangements for this (for instance, considering the proposals and providing explanations of why proposals were selected or rejected) should be defined beforehand.

### Public participation has precise objectives but should remain open to a variety of proposals

If we want public participation to have an impact, it is essential that we define on what. Thus, the objectives of the public participation should be defined upfront and widely disseminated to potential participants. These could be technical, social or democratic objectives, such as: to develop a consensual decision, strengthen the social bond between participants, or create a more legitimate decision, etc. A public participation process addresses an issue that has no predefined solution. Decision-makers should thus be ready and willing to consider all of the stakeholders' proposals for resolving this issue, even if these run counter to their own expectations.

### *The willingness of participants to take part*

Participants are free to decide whether or not to take part in the public participation process. This means that they cannot be forced to participate through any type of subordination relationship and must agree to take part of their own volition and based on an informed decision.

### *All stakeholders are represented in a public participation*

All stakeholders, or their representatives, concerned by the issue being addressed are legitimate and should be invited to take part in the public participation so as to ensure that all viewpoints are heard. Involving these stakeholders from the very start of the process will help significantly improve the quality of subsequent interactions.

### *The public participation process should be transparent on three levels*

- *With regard to the final decision:* In any public participation, there is always at least one final decision-maker with ultimate responsibility for the decision. While the different levels of dialogue that take place during a public participation help inform the decision through the proposals produced, it is the elected officials (or their representatives) that retain decision-making authority. Nevertheless, the participants should be kept informed as to how their contributions will be taken into account when determining and implementing the final decision.

- *With regard to implementing the process and the participants' role within this process:* The participants should be provided with information on how the public participation process will be conducted and on what is expected of their participation. They should thus have a clear understanding of who does what and when, and how decisions relating to the process will be made.

- *With regard to uncertainties:* Participants should be clearly informed if there are any uncertainties relating to the project or its underlying data. In addition, should any information be missing, the public participation should enable stakeholders to develop shared assumptions so that they can move forward with the decision-making process.

### *The public participation process recognises the diverse range of views*

The public participation accepts that the various (technical and practical) knowledge-holders can have different perceptions. The participation process does not seek to pit these views against each other but to highlight their similarities. However, to achieve this, impartial and high quality facilitation is required.

### *The success of any public participation is determined by the impartiality and quality of the facilitation*

Facilitation skills provide the neutral space for discussion that is essential to the success of a participation process. Facilitation aims to place all participants, and their contributions to discussions, on an equal footing. Facilitation not only provides participants with the opportunity to speak, it should also ensure that all participants have been able to express their views during the process. Finally, it seeks to build consensus among participants. However, while facilitation can provide the necessary means (quality of the interactions between participants), it cannot guarantee the outcome (level of consensus achieved following these interactions), as this is impossible to predict (→ see the chapter on facilitation, page 75).

### Public participation is an iterative and adaptive process

A public participation process is built up step-by-step. In practice, this means that the planned phases of the process can change as new needs (including those of the participants) come to the fore. The approach remains open to incorporating feedback from the participants.

### Public participation requires stakeholders to be given access to resources

All participants should be guaranteed access to the various resources available as part of the public participation (information, time and/or material resources) to enable them to participate effectively in the process.

### The resources available should be relevant and aligned to the matter being addressed

A public participation process should be tailored to its environment, and the resources made available should be designed to meet the values outlined above.

→ see more

Certain public sector organisations have defined their own principles, set out in charters. Below is a list of interesting examples that have been developed using a participatory approach:

- The Conseil Général du Gard public participation charter, co-produced by a citizen panel;
- The public participation charter for the French Ministry of the Environment, Energy and the Sea, jointly developed with stakeholders;
- The Paris City Council Parisian participation charter.

# Historical and Regulatory Background

# HISTORY OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN FRANCE

Public participation in developing projects and standards forms an intrinsic part of the French democratic construction process.

## 1. Public participation at the heart of the democracy project

The French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen had the dual aims of reminding citizens of their inalienable rights and duties and reminding the public authorities of their responsibilities to these citizens "so that the demands of citizens, based henceforth on simple and indisputable principles, will always seek to uphold the Constitution and the welfare of all". Adopted in 1789, it states that all citizens have the right to participate in formulating the law (article 6) and that society has the right to require any public official to account for his or her administration (article 15).

## 2. The public enquiry: the primary tool for protecting people from arbitrary actions conducted by the state

The 1789 revolutionary spirit can be seen in the creation of the public enquiry in 1807, which was set up to protect the rights of landowners against arbitrary expropriation that was being carried out by the state as part of the French empire's urban planning policies. This first public enquiry, which recognised the interests and needs of citizens affected by the state's deliberate top-down approach, involved determining whether expropriation was in the public interest and ensuring that the landowner was fairly compensated.

Successive reviews of the public enquiry procedure have since enhanced citizens' involvement in internal affairs of state. Thus, in 1983, the law to democratise public enquiries and protect the environment (known as the Bouchardeau Act) extended the use of public enquiries to all projects that potentially had an impact on the environment. It made public participation mandatory and, for the first time, made it possible for the public to express their "views, suggestions and counter-proposals" on development projects likely to affect their living conditions.

Since then, participation legislation has been expanded to form a dense, but not particularly binding, set of regulations that particularly cover urban planning, health and the environment.

These regulatory developments were accompanied by local initiatives that started to appear from the 1960s onwards: rural councils developing (collaborative) local projects to stem rural exodus; urban movements campaigning for the right to take action through better civic education, etc.

## 3. Recognition of the principle of participation as a right guaranteed under the Constitution

The Environmental Charter gained constitutional status in 2005. In 2012, a non-profit organisation (France Nature Environnement) made use of the principle of participation contained in Article 7 of the Environmental Charter to lodge an appeal with the Constitutional Council to allow electronic participation. At the hearing, the Constitutional Council recognised the constitutional right of the public to participation. It also authorised the legislator to implement this right[01]. Article 7 affirms that "everybody has the right, under the conditions and limitations defined by law, to have access to information relating to the environment held by the public authorities and to participate in making public decisions that have an impact on the environment". In 2014, a further decision taken by the Constitutional Council defined individual rights[02]:

> *"Participation gives the public the right to:*
> *1. Access relevant information to enable their effective participation;*
> *2°. Request that a participation procedure be implemented (...);*
> *3. A reasonable period of time in which to formulate observations and proposals;*
> *4. Be kept informed as to how these observations and proposals have been incorporated into the authorisation or approval decision."*[03]

The Constitutional Council decisions have helped considerably expand French public participation legislation, as can be seen in the current provisions of the Environment Act.

01 – Access relevant information to enable their effective participation;
02 – Request that a participation procedure be implemented (...);
03 – Environment Act Art. 121-1-A

# THE PARTICIPATION REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

## 1. The role of the law is to define what is prohibited or mandatory

The minimum mandatory framework required for public participation and the projects concerned by public participation is now legally defined. This in no way prevents project managers and promoters from going beyond the regulatory framework and initiating a *voluntary public participation* process involving a more ambitious type of participation than that set out in the legislation. This is a public participation that does not have to follow pre-defined implementation arrangements, in which case a different process to that used for a regulatory public participation should be adopted.

## 2. Focus on definitions

*Principle of participation:* a constitutional principle guaranteeing public access to information and the opportunity for the public to put forward their views and suggestions. This can relate to either public or multi-stakeholder participation. Participation methods are the means of implementing this principle.

*Public debate:* a method for ensuring citizen participation. It is overseen by the CNDP (→ see page 17), and its implementation arrangements are set out in the Environment Act[04]. A public debate must last no longer than 4 months for a project and 6 months for a national plan. It can be extended by two months if deemed necessary by the CNDP.

*Regulatory public participation:* there are two types of public participation enshrined in law. One is set out in the Environment Act and the other is in the Urban Planning Act. Environmental law-related public participation is a citizen participation process that is implemented over a period that can range from 15 days to 3 months. Urban planning-related participation can involve citizens and/or stakeholders. This is carried out either prior to a project or throughout the project cycle until the start of the public enquiry.

*Consultation:* there is no legal definition of consultation, nor are there any special requirements. This appears to be considered a way of implementing a regulatory public participation process and the two terms are often used interchangeably.

*Public enquiry:* a procedure used in the advanced stages of a project and that provides the public with information on the project and a registry for recording people's views and suggestions.

If we were to place the regulatory public participation processes on the participation ladder (→ shown on page 08), they would sit alongside consultation and information; however, they can in no way be considered akin to co-construction or co-decision.

## 3. Environmental law

There are two distinct types of public participation set out in environmental law: *public debate* and *preliminary public participation*. They are endorsed by the National Public Debate Commission (CNDP) and the public participation guarantors.

04 – Articles L121-9 onwards

## The National Public Debate Commission (CNDP: Commission Nationale du Débat Public)

The CNDP was created in 1995 by the Barnier Act, and became independent in 2002 through the Vaillant Act. It is responsible for ensuring public participation forms part of the project development process for development or infrastructure projects that could have either major socio-economic repercussions or a significant impact on local development or the local environment[05].

It is mandatory to refer all development projects to the CNDP that have an environmental impact and a budget of over a certain amount, or that have specific features listed in the legislation in force. The CNDP then organises the public participation process, which takes the form of either a public debate or a public participation (implemented as a consultation). Other projects can also be voluntarily referred to the CNDP, such as those that deal with social issues: nanotechnologies, debate surrounding assisted dying, etc.

The participation tool prioritised by the CNDP is the public debate. Information on how to implement a public debate (→ is provided on page 29). When it "considers that a public debate is unnecessary, it can decide to organise a preliminary public participation"[06]. The difference between these two processes resides predominantly in their length: a public debate can run for up to 8 months, whereas a preliminary public participation is restricted to a maximum of 3 months.

## CNDP guarantors

Guarantors are third parties appointed by the CNDP to support projects for which a preliminary public participation process is required. Their role involves:

- Ensuring that the right to information and participation is respected;
- Ensuring that the information provided to citizens and the debates are of good quality, sincere and easy to understand, and also to ensure that each person has the opportunity to ask questions and receive a response;
- Guaranteeing the quality of the participatory tool being used by ensuring it adheres to CNDP principles.

05 – Environment Act, Art. L121-1
06 – Environment Act, Art. L121-9

## 4. Urban planning law

The Urban Planning Act sets out two types of public participation: so-called ‘traditional’ *mandatory public participation* (Art. L.103-2 s); and *optional public participation* (Art. L300-2).

*Mandatory public participation* was created in 1985 by a law that stipulates how to define and implement development principles. It requires "inhabitants, local associations and any other people concerned" to be involved throughout the development of certain projects[07], and provides them with the opportunity to share their views upfront, during the project development phase. This is thus not a process aimed only at citizens. Unlike Environment Act public participation, there is no legal framework that defines its length or how it is to be implemented.

*Optional public participation* was created in 2014 through the ALUR Act and is used for certain procedures that require building or development permits in areas covered by a local cohesion scheme (SCoT), local development plan (PLU) or local authority map. The decision as to whether or not this type of public participation is required lies with the authority responsible for issuing the permit.

## 5. Enforcing the right to participation

The three components of access to information, formulating observations and proposals, and obtaining a response from the relevant authorities on their inclusion in the decision are mandatory and inextricably linked. The Constitutional Council has thereby affirmed that an electronic publication is not a valid participation principle implementation method as it does not provide the public with the opportunity to share their observations and proposals.

Nevertheless, although the principle of participation is considered a guaranteed right under the French Constitution, it is not possible to take legal action against a project for failure to include public participation[08]. However, a case for unlawful action can be brought against the ruling setting out the public participation objectives and procedures when these are unclear or not being respected. The sincerity of how the defined procedures are implemented is assessed by the judges, who work on the basis that these procedures "cannot be considered respected, even if strictly implemented, if they have been implemented under conditions that render them effectively useless"[09].

## 6. Recent developments

In 2019, during the Gilets Jaunes protests, the French government launched the *great national debate*. This was a ‘crisis recovery consultation tool’ built around 4 predefined topics. Its aim was to provide the people of France with the opportunity to air their grievances.

07 – The development or review of an urban development plan (PLU) or local cohesion scheme (SCoT); the creation of a joint development zone (ZAC); the implementation of development or construction projects or activities, a list of which is defined by decree by the Conseil d’Etat; the implementation of urban renewal projects
08 – Conseil d'État, Section, 05/05/2017, 388902, published in the Lebon Report.
09 – Bordereaux, L.: Du risque contentieux de la concertation, La gazette des communes, 2019.

### *The Inter-Ministerial Centre for Citizen Participation (CIPC: Centre Interministériel de la Participation Citoyenne):*

On 5 June 2019, in the midst of the Gilets Jaunes crisis, the Prime Minister issued a circular asking all central government authorities to submit proposals for improving citizen involvement in public policy design. Six months later, the CIPC was set up in order to support government agencies with the implementation of their citizen participation activities.

In 2019-2020, 150 French citizens were selected at random to take part in the *citizens' climate convention* (convention citoyenne pour le climat) in order to propose greenhouse gas reduction measures. This convention was one of the proposals that came out of the great national debate. The convention participants formulated 149 proposals that Emmanuel Macron promised to submit "unfiltered" to parliament or for referendum. These proposals have been partially adopted into legislation and no referendum has ever been organised.

In 2020, the ASAP Act (the public action acceleration and simplification act) increased the project public participation requirement threshold (from €150 million to €300 million), as well as the mandatory CNDP referral threshold (from €300 million to €600 million).

→ see more

Outside of the regulatory framework, the role of public participation facilitator is becoming increasingly developed and officially recognised, as is public participation research. For more information, please visit the following websites:

- The French public participation practitioners network, Institut de la concertation (www.institutdelaconcertation.org) – available in French only
- The French national Research Group on Participatory Democracy and Public participation in Decision-Making (www.participation-et-democratie.fr) – available in both French and English
- The ALLISS platform (www.alliss.org)
- Community of Practice for Participatory Approach Designers (www.particip.fr) – available in French only


Identification des causes et leviers
DES OBJECTIFS
légitimer la problématique / la concertation
Structurer / partager les connaissances disponibles
Construire une vision commune
Décliner cette vision en actions / solutions
atelier lancement sur enjeux / risques
Cartographie participative à l'échelle Durance-Crau
BRAINSTORMING

# Strategically Planning a Public Participation Process

- CONTEXT ASSESSMENT
- ASSESSMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS' POWER RELATIONS
- PARTICIPATORY PLANNING OF THE PROCESS
- ASSESSMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS' POWER RELATIONS

Public participation takes place over a period of time and involves a series of steps, each of which has clear objectives and uses specific methods and tools. This is referred to as a process, which differs from a procedure as it is both adaptable and flexible. Due to the complex nature of the issues addressed, coupled with the wide variety of stakeholder objectives and uncertainty over how these stakeholders will react, planning a public participation process is no easy task. To facilitate this, we have developed a three-stage strategic approach: (1) context assessment; (2) assessment of stakeholders' power relations; (3) participatory planning of the process. This approach should ideally be implemented by more than one person at the outset of the project.

Set up a team to support you with this strategic planning. This involves bringing together a group of people who are directly responsible for final decision-making on the project. This group will often contain elected officials and, sometimes, the technical staff leading the project. The team can also consist of stakeholders or external consultants if deemed useful for subsequent stages. This team (which is often similar to a technical committee or steering committee) should clarify any questions regarding the place of public participation in the project.

As public participation is an evolving process, it is a good idea to adopt an iterative approach and repeatedly return to each stage to adapt the process as you go along. The appropriate methods to be used often emerge as new needs arise.Our strategic planning approach should help guide your development of the process and your choice of suitable methods and tools. We also provide a checklist of the questions you need to ask yourself prior to embarking on a public participation process (→ page 25).

## CONTEXT ASSESSMENT

This involves gaining an insight into the circumstances that led to the public participation being requested. This stage should enable you to check that public participation is relevant for this project (rather than information or consultation) and that the appropriate resources for implementing the process have been put in place. In all cases, large-scale stakeholder involvement must be avoided if there is insufficient political will to take the stakeholders' contributions into account as this can cause widespread disappointment and disillusionment with the public participation process. Thus, if the decision-makers want only to provide stakeholders with information, go no further with the process and be very clear about what you believe is realistic (→ also see the section on principles, page 10). At this stage, it can also be useful to review your own legitimacy for facilitating this public participation (am I the right person for this project?).

### Method

We have summarised this context assessment in six key questions that you can discuss with your project team:

1. *Overall approach:* Does the public participation form part of a longer approach? If so, which one?

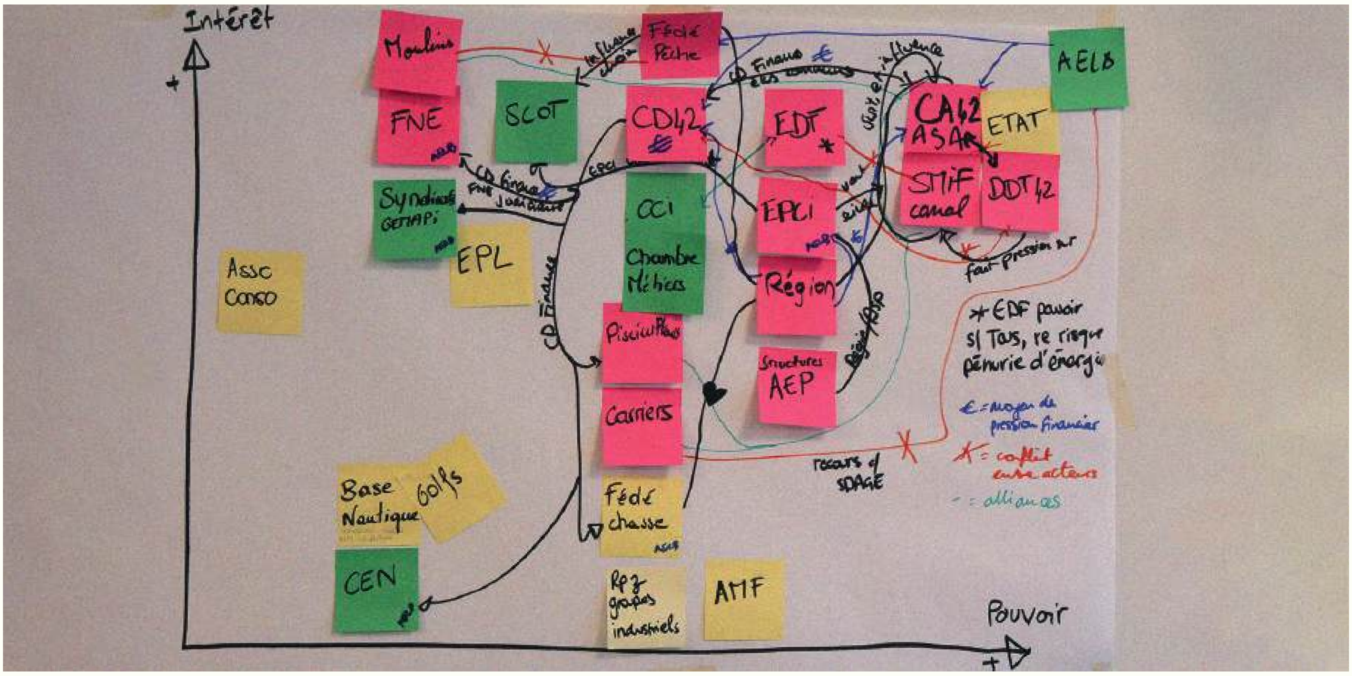
2. *Promoter/objectives:* Who decided to hold the public participation? Why?

3. *Espace/temps :* Au sein de quel périmètre géographique va se dérouler la concertation ? Pendant combien de temps ?

4. *Participants/expectations:* Who are the participants? What are their expectations likely to be?

5. *Obstacles:* Is it possible to foresee any potential conflicts?

6. *Impacts:* What will become of the public participation outcomes?




This team-based context assessment is often supplemented with interviews (the people to be interviewed can be selected based on the assessment of stakeholders' power relations, see below). It is also often supplemented by a literature review of studies and recent regulation relating to the issue to be addressed by the public participation (it is not necessary to become a subject matter expert, but it is also important not to be completely ignorant of the topic at hand).

## ASSESSMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS' POWER RELATIONS

The second stage seeks to understand and assess the power relations (or influence) between the stakeholders involved in the public participation. It should help you to define your strategy (→ page 33), as well as the dialogue platforms and their relationships (who will participate in what? Do you need a technical committee, a steering committee, a committee for each topic or type of stakeholder? What objectives will each of these committees have?). This stage should also help to identify potentially obstructive stakeholders and to determine how best to involve them in the public participation process.

### 1. Method

In the first instance, note down the stakeholders concerned on different coloured Post-it notes based on their opinion of public participation:

- Green for stakeholders open to the process;
- Yellow for stakeholders who are neutral;
- Red for stakeholders opposed to the process.

Then place the stakeholders on an 'Interest – Power' matrix:

- Their position on the 'Interest' axis shows the importance the stakeholder affords to the issue;
- Their position on the 'Power' axis denotes their capacity to influence the decision-making process.

*Optional:* you can also use arrows to further clarify stakeholders' influence over each other, or describe this influence (using symbols or words).

*Note:* It is up to the participants themselves to decide how much detail is required for the stakeholder descriptions (for example, in certain instances, it will be enough to differentiate between staff and elected officials from within the same institution while, in others, individual names may be required, etc.)

## 2. Reading the results

The results should be read in conjunction with the context assessment described above. The two assessments should thus be carried out together. However, there are a number of general points that can be made:

- There can be doubts over the spontaneous involvement of the stakeholders located in the lower left of the matrix (with low power and low interest). If these stakeholders are important to you, you will no doubt need to make a specific effort to foster their participation.

- It can be tempting to overlook the stakeholders located in the lower right of the matrix (with considerable power but little interest) as they are not closely involved in the issue being addressed. The 'state' is usually part of this category. While it is not always appropriate to invite them to all the meetings, it is worth keeping them regularly informed of any progress made in discussions so as to avoid any surprises at the end of the process.

- The stakeholders in the top half of the matrix are, by definition, easier to mobilise as they are motivated by their interest. However, as they do not all have the same level of power, it can be useful to ensure that the 'weakest' are able to participate effectively (have sufficient information, able to express themselves orally, etc.). For instance, it is sometimes necessary to organise specific discussion forums for certain user groups to help them articulate what they want to say before joining a larger arena.

- Finally, it can often be useful to meet with the stakeholders identified as opposing public participation in order to understand their concerns and determine their requirements (conditions) for participating.

# PARTICIPATORY PLANNING OF THE PROCESS

The third stage helps you to set out the various elements of the public participation process in a strategic plan. We recommend setting out the process in a table containing the following five columns:

- Steps
- Objectives
- Tools
- Participants
- Resources

The 'resources' column should be used to note any preparation required and the number of facilitators, etc. A timetable can be added that contains deadlines. At this stage, you should already start thinking about how to evaluate your process in order to plan ahead for this (→ see the section on evaluation, page 89). At the end of this stage, you can draft a mission statement to define the framework of the process.

# QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF PRIOR TO EMBARKING ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Below is a list of questions to guide you in your strategic planning.

### What 'topic' is being addressed and what is the context?

- Do you know enough about the issue on which the public participation is to focus?
- What is the political context? Is it conducive to public participation or not? Will policy-makers (or others) take the outcomes of the public participation into consideration? If so, how?
- How much conflict is there around the issue?

### What are the relevant obligations and practices?

- Have you fully considered the regulatory aspects? Are there any specific forms of public participation that are imposed, proposed or excluded?
- Have there been any similar cases and, if so, have you drawn on these?

### What are the objectives of the process?

- Have you sufficiently clarified the technical, democratic or social objectives of the public participation process, both for the various people involved and for the different project phases?
- Have you properly taken the potential opinions of stakeholders into account when formulating the issue to be addressed?
- Are the various stakeholders' needs and interests relating to the process and topic sufficiently clear?
- Is there a clear (geographic, timebound, decision-making) process scope?

### Who will be the participants?

- Have you sufficiently clarified your role in the process: impartial, supporting participants, stakeholders?
- Who will be involved in managing the process, both within and outside of your organisation?
- Who will be the participants? Are the reasons for selecting these participants clear (representativeness, legitimacy, motivation, etc.)?

### How will they participate?

- Have you clarified how the participants will be involved, at what step and in which way?
- Have you defined what support the participants will need to contribute to the process (additional information, funding, experienced facilitators)? Can you provide this?
- Have you prepared a transparent work plan for the process that sets out the decision to be made, key points in the decision-making process and public participation events, the format to be used for these events (public meeting, participatory assessment, consensus conference, etc.), who will be involved in these events and what influence will they have, etc.?

### What are the risks and constraints?

- What and where are the potential bottlenecks in the process and what mechanisms can you use to overcome these?
- Have you identified the risks should the process fail and what alternative processes could be implemented?

Using the answers obtained, and referring to the public participation principles, you can then: adapt, correct, rearrange, update, etc. your process.

# Examples of Processes

- THE 4 TYPES OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
- PUBLIC DEBATE
- CITIZEN JURY
- COMPANION MODELLING (COMMOD)

# THE 4 TYPES OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

It is possible to identify different types of public participation based on their objectives and participants. A simple typology is provided in the table below.

| | 1. Citizen participation* | 2. Multi-stakeholder participation | 3. Peer-to-peer participation | 4. Institutional participation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Objective** | Co-construct and submit a 'public' opinion to a public decision-maker on a specific issue | Reach a compromise between different interest groups, including public institutions | Resolve an issue specific to a group of stakeholders but which has a public interest element. | Improve coordination between public institutions that are independent but linked by a common issue |
| **Participants** | People selected for their representivity of a target population, or for their diversity. The panel format is commonly used | Representativeness from organised groups of stakeholders, public institutions | A specific type of stakeholder (taking into account their diversity), public institutions | Public institutions |
| **Issues covered** | Potentially all types of issue, often those that are controversial | Generally relating to the management of a tangible or intangible common good | Specifically linked to a type of stakeholder | Potentially all types of issue, often those that are complex |
| **Outcome** | Improved public policies that are better aligned to civil society's expectations | Co-construction of projects, plans, programmes, standards and/or rules in the public sector | Co-construction of projects, plans, programmes, standards and/or rules in a specific section of the public sector | Improved public sector effectiveness |
| **Main challenges** | (i) democratic;<br>(ii) ownership of the issue by non-experts;<br>(iii) managing knowledge imbalances | (i) deliberations between different interests of various types set up to compete with each other | (i) deliberations between stakeholders;<br>(ii) deliberations between these stakeholders and public institutions | (i) deliberations between public institutions that could be in competition with each other;<br>(ii) watering down of responsibilities, for both the issue and coordination support |

*Citizen are often referred as "community" in English speaking contexts.

These four types of public participation can be implemented in different ways. Three distinct methodologies are set out below in order to illustrate the available scope. The first is regulated by law (public debate), the second is based on international practice (citizen jury), and the third comes from the academic world (companion modelling).

# PUBLIC DEBATE

## 1. Definition

As seen in the Historical and Regulatory Background chapter (→ page 16), public debate is a formal process set out in environmental law and carried out under the authority of the CNDP. Public debate should enable everyone to have a say on the projects and policies that relate to our environment.

## 2. Process

- Refer the project to the French national public debate commission (CNDP). The CNDP has two months to decide whether or not to initiate a public debate; it appoints a special public debate commission and its chairperson.
- The project manager then has six months to compile a project management report (the DMO) that should provide the public with sufficient information on the project and its features to enable them to determine whether it is appropriate.
- The special commission approves the report and defines the timetable, the communication methods and public participation.
- The special commission facilitates the debates that take place over a period of 4 months:
    - The commission must ensure that no question remains unanswered;
    - Stakeholders are able to submit well-argued 'contributions' to the commission, who will ensure they are put forward for debate;
    - The commission can opt to formalise and disseminate certain contributions in the form of 'stakeholder specifications' (the aim is to provide stakeholders with the same means of expression as the project manager).
- Two months after the debate, the commission's chairperson publishes both a detailed report and short review. They should be impartial and not offer an opinion.
- The project manager then has 3 months to publish information on the action they wish to take on their project, how they plan to continue the public participation and whether or not they want to appoint a 'guarantor'.
- These documents will ultimately form part of the public enquiry.

→ see more www.debatpublic.fr (available in French only)

# CITIZEN JURY

## 1. Definition

The citizen jury approach can be used to involve a small group of citizens in developing public policy. It is particularly useful for addressing controversial public policy issues on which opinions are divided.

Citizen juries involve establishing a panel of 20 to 30 citizens, who are selected at random but in such a way as to ensure all socio-professional criteria (age, profession, gender, etc.) are met. This group will be tasked with fully examining a controversial issue and formulating a 'verdict' on this issue: a view or recommendations.


Unlike many other formats (→ e.g. the 21st Century Town Meeting, page 70), the contentious issue is noted and participants are given the time and resources to produce a well-reasoned consensus.

## 2. Process

A citizen jury usually takes place over the course of three weekends. To help them reach a verdict, the citizens are trained (usually by universities) on the issue being addressed (first weekend). They then have the option of interviewing 'opinion-holders' who have different opinions or views (second weekend). The citizens are then finally encouraged to jointly consider and debate the values that best reflect the public interest. They produce their recommendations (in a citizen report) and present them to the decision-makers (third weekend). The promoter undertakes to respond to this report, either by accepting the decision recommended by the jury or by explaining their reasons for rejecting it.

→ see more

The first citizen jury to take place in France was a national citizen jury on GM crops (1999). More recently, a citizen jury has been held to address the following question: What health system do we want and how should we use and fund it to ensure it remains sustainable? www.conferencedecitoyens.fr/la-thematique/

# COMPANION MODELLING (COMMOD)

## 1. Definition

Companion modelling (ComMod) combines modelling and participation with the aim of improving knowledge and/or aiding decision-making. The public participation tools used in this methodology include participatory modelling (→ page 48) and role playing games (→ page 58).

The ComMod approach first seeks to model a system by encouraging experts and local stakeholders to work together; then, role plays are produced to simulate different scenarios in order to inform the participation process.

Companion modelling is particularly useful for working on natural resource management issues, particularly when these resources are under threat and there is uncertainty over their direction.

One of ComMod's unique features is that it incorporates technical expertise and user experience in a much more structured way than other methodologies. It does this by producing a model and then collectively examining this model through role play.
This approach is based on a clearly defined mindset, which notably involves:

- Recognising that local knowledge is just as valuable as academic knowledge;
- Using the ideas put forward by local stakeholders;
- Ensuring the impartiality of the facilitator.

Initially adopted for research projects, use of this approach has now been expanded to professional stakeholders such as consultancy firms and managers. A group of ComMod users has created an association to help further develop this approach: the ComMod network.

The formalisation of this approach has also led to the development of a participatory modelling method known as ARDI (Actors/Resources/Dynamics/Interactions), which is particularly useful for addressing social ecosystem issues, and of the Cormas computational modelling platform.

## 2. Process

The ComMod process consists of 4 participatory steps, which are set out in the table below. The more closely stakeholders are involved in developing the model and role play scenarios, the greater their ownership of the process. This sense of ownership will have a significant influence on the collective commitments that result from this approach.

| Step | Tools |
|---|---|
| Conduct an assessment of stakeholders' perceptions of the project | Surveys, context assessment and assessment of stakeholders' power relations |
| Agree on a review of the current situation | Develop a model: create a tool to map and clarify key aspects of the local area (natural resources, stakeholders, dynamics and interactions). This step helps to build a picture of the system in which the stakeholders live based on their descriptions (cognitive mapping, participatory modelling, etc.) and this enables an initial exchange of information |
| Hold discussions during concerted foresight exercises | Dynamic application of the model: explore scenarios by running the model on IT software and/or through role play. By taking known scientific data and stakeholders' descriptions of the environment into account, role play helps to create a discussion instrument that can link these two levels of knowledge together |
| Formulate collective commitments | Hold a debriefing session on the simulations/role play to define areas for improving management of the natural resource concerned |

In this modelling exercise, it is not the actual science of the model that is important but its strength as an instrument of dialogue as it will bring together all diverging views by focusing people's minds on the future. In addition, companion modelling follows an iterative and adaptive approach in which the model developed changes in line with the discussions it sparks. It is therefore common to switch frequently back and forth between the different steps.

→ see more

- The ComMod association website: https://www.commod.org
- Online ARDI guide: http://cormas.cirad.fr/pdf/guideARDI.pdf (available in French only)
- Online Cormas platform: http://cormas.cirad.fr/ (available in French only)
- Book : *The definitive reference on companion modelling*: Etienne (ed.) 2010

# Mobilising Stakeholders

- KEY REFERENCE POINTS
- HOW TO MOBILISE STAKEHOLDERS
- WHO TO MOBILISE

Mobilisation spans all steps of a public participation process and is therefore critical to its success. A public participation process requires the involvement of all stakeholders. It is thus important to particularly focus on ensuring stakeholder mobilisation.

## KEY REFERENCE POINTS

Mobilisation is closely linked to motivation. Mobilising local stakeholders against their will is not permitted. This means being aware of both participants' individual interests–which foster their motivation – and of the collective interest that gives meaning to the public participation. While it is impossible to anticipate the individual interests of each participant, there are some general questions about the group(s) to be mobilised that you can seek to answer:

- Can the participants be considered to form a single interest group? If not, what different interest groups are there?
- Do the groups have priorities that are different to those proposed in the public participation?
- Do the groups have a rightful place in the process?
- Have the groups been mobilised before?
- Do the groups have a positive view of this type of approach?
- Is there any tension within or between any of the groups?

When mobilising stakeholders, it is also important to ensure that the participants have a positive view of the group's ability to effect change. This can be achieved by raising collective awareness of the fact that, together, they have the special expertise required to find solutions to their problems. It is not easy to achieve this understanding as, outside of their own needs, participants often believe that they lack the knowledge required to hold their own against people more used to taking part in debates.

A further aspect of mobilisation is the participants' ability to take part. The following questions can be used to help determine this:

- Are the participants available and willing to commit through to the end of the process?
- Do the participants have the resources they need to take part?
- Will the participants be compensated for taking part (travel, refreshments, childcare, time spent on the public participation, etc.)?

→ see more Guide published by LabAccès on promoting citizen participation to co-produce public policy, which covers participant compensation: https://dol.roflcopter.fr/h/valorisonsimpression (available in French only)

## HOW TO MOBILISE STAKEHOLDERS

Mobilisation should have a specific, clear and transparent objective to avoid creating a sense of danger, uncertainty or mistrust that could adversely impact or discourage participants. In addition to the traditional information channels (local media, email, telephone, etc.), there are several ways of talking directly with the people to be mobilised. By way of example, and depending on the public participation context and the time and resources available, you could organise a market stall during town or village festivals, set up a travelling caravan, create a competition, put on a play, or hold a video screening or conference, etc.

The public participation meetings should be held in a congenial and neutral venue that is local to the participants and contains the necessary amenities (refreshments, toilets, etc.). It is also important to select the right moment in which to mobilise the participants by assessing each participant's availability and their willingness to take part. Furthermore, it will be necessary to ensure that opinion leaders and influencers do not oppose the project. Mobilisation must take into account all one-off events that could impact on the participants' availability (for instance, a football match or social or political event, etc.).

# WHO TO MOBILISE

To answer this question, it is essential to remember the ambitions of a public participation process, which aims above all to co-construct collective proposals that best reflect the general interest. On the contrary, public participation does not aim to statistically represent individual opinions within a given population. Consequently, the choice of participants is based above all on the identification of the various interests at stake (individual and collective) and on the choice of the right people to represent them throughout the consultation process.

Representing the interests of minority, disadvantaged or marginalised sections of the population, or people who are too young or too old to participate, is often problematic. In order to respect the principle of representing all interests (→ page 11), it may therefore be necessary to use formats adapted to the expression of "remote" audiences (e.g. on-site meetings, micro-trials, field surveys, etc.). In practice, these groups are often represented by associations or experts in the subject.

In terms of format, a diversified panel of 25 to 35 people is often preferred, as it allows a diversity of opinions, expertise and experience to be expressed, while being easy to set up and run. At the end of the public participation process, it is important to explain who took part and what criteria were used to select the participants. If there is any bias in representation (e.g. absence of certain groups), it is essential to indicate this, while recognising the limits of the process.

# Toolkit

- HOW TO LAUNCH A PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
- HOW TO ASSESS THE CURRENT SITUATION
- HOW TO ASSESS THE ISSUES
- HOW TO MAKE FORECASTS
- HOW TO MAKE AND FORMALISE DECISIONS
- HOW TO MANAGE LARGE GROUPS
- DIGITAL PARTICIPATION
- PITFALLS TO BE AVOIDED

The following section of this guide describes a number of tools and methods that can be used as part of a public participation process.

The tools used in the different phases of a public participation are presented first:

- Launching the public participation: establish a solid foundation for the forthcoming process;
- Reviewing the current situation: jointly produce a factual account of the situations and phenomena seen without making value judgements;
- Conducting a participatory assessment of the issues: provide participants with the opportunity to express their issues and visions and discuss them within the group;
- Forward planning: encourage participants to look ahead by exploring different scenarios to make it easier to agree to shared objectives;
- Jointly formulating proposals: the group of participants produce consensus-based recommendations.

These are followed by examples of formats for managing large groups and a review of the pros and cons of digital participation.

The final part of this section lists some of the most common, and easily avoidable, pitfalls.

It is to be noted that group facilitation skills will be required to successfully implement the tools set out in this guide (→ page 75).

# The moral contract

## What is it for?

During a public participation workshop, particularly the first workshop, it is vital that you clarify the workshop or process objectives and limitations. This is to ensure participants are not waiting to discuss a point that is not on the agenda, which can lead to frustration or loss of motivation. The ‘moral contract’ enables participants to formalise then share their expectations with the other participants, and provides the facilitator with the opportunity to go through the agenda. All expectations will then be sorted into 3 categories: those that will be covered during the participation process; those that are not currently on the agenda but can be added; and those that fall outside the scope of the public participation and so will not be addressed. At the end of this activity, everything will have been clarified and the participants will be able to make an informed commitment to the process.

## Overview

- Preparation time: 15 mins
- Materials required: cards, marker pens, large board
- Max. group size: 30 people
- Facilitation time: 45 mins
- Number of facilitators: 1
- Implementation difficulty level: easy

## Method

Prior to the workshop, the facilitator prepares a detailed agenda (objectives, times, activities), but does not initially display this. At the start of the workshop, the facilitator asks the participants (individually, or in twos or threes depending on the size of the group) to take 2 to 3 minutes to define their key expectation of the workshop or participation process and to write this down on a piece of card.

The facilitator then asks the participants to take turns to introduce themselves and read out their expectations. The facilitator clarifies each expectation, asks for more information if necessary, and then places the piece of card on the board. Expectations that fall under the same topic or idea are grouped together.

Once all expectations have been expressed, the facilitator runs through the public participation objectives and explains how the workshop will proceed. The facilitator then clarifies the expectations that will be addressed, those that are not on the agenda but can be included, and those that cannot be included and why.

Lastly, the facilitator establishes and seeks participant approval of the moral contract for the workshop or participation process.

## A few tips before you start

The success of this exercise lies in the facilitator finding the right balance between the flexibility of the process and the rigour required to achieve the participation objectives. The facilitator can find it challenging to explain why certain expectations are being included but not others. Consequently, not only must the facilitator appear legitimate to the participants, but this facilitator must also ensure that any changes to the initial agenda are approved by the participants themselves by asking them if the changes proposed are acceptable to the entire group.

Thereafter, the facilitator can refer back to this ‘contract’ to ensure effective time management during the workshop. Should a new topic of discussion arise that falls outside the scope of the participation process, the facilitator can say something along the lines of: "Do you remember that at the beginning of the workshop you all agreed to follow the agenda shown here? Are you still all OK with that? Shall we continue?".

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# Questions/reactions to a formal presentation

## What is it for?

A public participation process is commonly launched at a meeting through a formal presentation. This presentation is generally followed by a question and answer session, which is often monopolised by people who are used to speaking in public. If the presentation is being given to a large group but you wish to ensure that everybody has the opportunity to speak, we recommend that you adopt a more participatory and interactive approach. This tool will enable you to improve participants' understanding while encouraging and developing their reactions. The aim is also to determine which issues they consider important. This will help the project team to better manage their project by ensuring the participants' feedback, expectations and concerns are incorporated into the public participation process. This method can also be used later in the public participation process to obtain participants' feedback on other formal presentations (e.g. when presenting the findings of a technical study).

## Overview

- Preparation time: 10 mins
- Materials required: cards, marker pens, large board
- Max. group size: 30 people
- Facilitation time: 1.5 hours
- Number of facilitators: 1 to 3
- Implementation difficulty level: easy

## Method

Prior to starting the presentation, explain the following rules: "We are going to give you a 30-minute presentation of the project. To facilitate the post-presentation discussion, on the cards in front of you, could you please write your questions or requests for clarification, as well as your reactions to the points raised in the presentation?". During the presentation, the participants make notes on two differently coloured cards – one for questions, the other for their reactions.

At the end of the presentation, instead of a plenary discussion, the facilitator collects the question cards and displays them on the board. The facilitator answers all of the comprehension-related questions. The project promoter is there to answer the more complicated questions and provide any explanations required. The facilitator then collects the reaction cards, clarifies these reactions where necessary and puts the cards on the board. The participants then rank the reactions/questions or any other point by voting for the ones they consider most important. Each participant is given three small stickers (three votes), which they are to place next to their chosen cards. At the end of the workshop, all of the most important points are discussed in a plenary session.


## *A few tips before you start*

More time should be allocated to questions and discussing the participants' reactions than to the actual presentation. In order to hold the participants' attention, the presentation should ideally last no longer than 30 minutes. The presentation should be tailored to the participants (avoid the use of overly technical terminology).

If there are more than 15 participants, it can be a good idea to reduce the number of questions and reactions by dividing the group into sub-groups. This can be done in a number of ways. For instance, participants can be grouped in tables of 10 with one facilitator per table. The method used is the same as that described above, and the outcomes of each group's work are then shared in a plenary session.

Should you prefer to keep the group together in a plenary session, another option involves dividing the participants up into small groups of twos or threes. At the end of the presentation, the participants' questions and reactions are first shared in these small groups. Each small group must then select what they consider to be the most important question and most important reaction. The facilitator collects these up and shares them with the other participants in a plenary session. Thus, dividing a group of 30 participants into small groups of three means that the facilitator will only have to initially address 10 questions and 10 reactions instead of 60.

# Commitment circle

## What is it for?

One of the fundamental principles of participation is that stakeholders freely and voluntarily participate in the process. It draws on their own motivation. However, it is difficult to anticipate each person's true motivation and, therefore, know in advance on whom you can rely. The best way of determining this is to address the participants directly and ask them how involved they want to be in the rest of the participation process. Asking them to make their position clear makes the participants more aware of their responsibilities: I am not taking part in this participation process because I was asked, but because it is what I have chosen to do. In addition, participants will commit to the process in front of the rest of the group meaning that they will be even more inclined to remain involved until the end.

## Overview

- Preparation time: 5 mins
- Materials required: a large piece of paper, marker pens, post-it notes
- Max. group size: 50 people
- Facilitation time: 15 mins
- Number of facilitators: 1
- Implementation difficulty level: easy

## Method

This tool is often used at the end of a kick-off or information workshop, at the very start of a public participation process. At this stage, the participants are not always yet set in stone. For instance, certain groups may still be in the process of deciding who will represent them at the different stages of the public participation.

Once all the participants have a clear understanding of the project (objectives and process), invite them to write their name on a post-it note and place it in one of three circles that you have drawn on a large piece of paper. Written in the central circle is: "I want to be involved in all public participation workshops". The circle in the middle contains the sentence: "I want to contribute to discussions from time to time as and when I am available". And the phrase in the outside circle is: "I want to be kept up-to-date on the process".

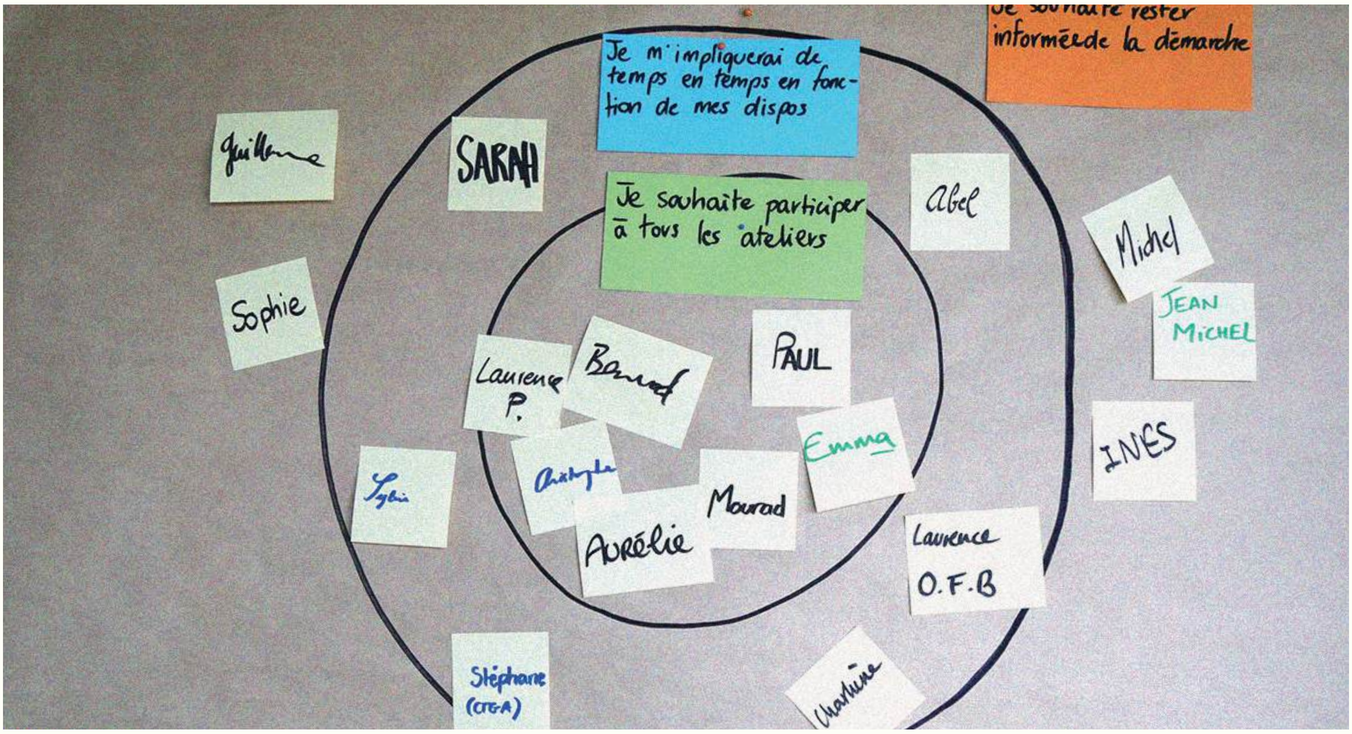
Once all the participants have placed their names in one of the three circles, the facilitator reviews the outcome with the group and makes adjustments where necessary (if there are too many names in the central circle, for example). The aim is to end the workshop with the names of those people willing to actively commit to the rest of the participation process and to make sure that everybody understands the responsibilities this entails.

## A few tips before you start

The level of involvement can be tailored to each specific situation or project.

Instead of a circle, you could use a table in which the various levels of involvement are listed.

During the final discussion, ask whether there are any key stakeholders absent from the workshop. If yes, note their names on a different coloured post-it note so that you can contact them after the workshop.


informéede la démarche
Je m'impliquerai de temps en temps en fonction de mes dispos
Je souhaite participer à tous les ateliers
SARAH
Abel
Michel
Sophie
JEAN MICHEL
Laurence P.
PAUL
Emma
INES
Mourad
Aurélie
Laurence O.F.B
Stéphane (CTGA)

# Participatory mapping of the local area

## What is it for?

At the start of a public participation, people usually adopt different representations, words and concepts to describe the same thing or phenomenon. If stakeholders all describe the same situation in a different way, it will be difficult to accurately define the issue and thus come up with solutions. This tool seeks to unite participants around a common description of the situation. It involves participants agreeing on what they observe without interpreting this observation and while avoiding value judgements at all costs. This tool can also be used to collect very useful information in a short amount of time.

## Overview

- Preparation time: 15 mins
- Materials required: a large blank piece of paper, or satellite or ordnance survey map, marker pens, post-it notes or cards
- Max. group size: 15 people per table
- Facilitation time: 1.5 hours
- Number of facilitators: 1 facilitator per table
- Implementation difficulty level: moderate

## Method

The participants work in groups of between 10 and 15 around large tables, on each of which is a large sheet of paper (A0 format). They are assisted by one facilitator per table.

The participants begin by drawing the boundaries of the geographic area concerned. They then add the main landmarks and features (for instance: towns, roads, rivers, property lines, etc.). The marker pen is passed to each participant in turn so that they all have the chance to contribute.

Once the map outline has been completed, the participants write down on this map all the information they have on the public participation topic. The participants note what is most important to them on the map and then discuss this to reach a consensus on the depiction of their area.

## Some tips before you start

This activity can also be carried out using an actual map (in A0 format). If selecting this option, you will need to make sure that the type of map used (topographic map, satellite image, land register, etc.) is recognised by all the participants and does not cause contention.

The advantage of this collectively developed map is that it can be used to clarify what the participants consider to be important.


### *Below are three final tips for carrying out this activity:*

1. Ensure that everybody is involved in developing the map. Should a particular participant start monopolising the pen, invite the others to have their say by asking them to write down things that only they know.
2. Stick to the facts and keep things objective at this stage of the mapping process.
3. Think about adding a key to ensure that people not involved in producing the map are able to read it.

# Participatory modelling

## What is it for?

The aim of participatory modelling is to depict objects, concepts or ideas in a realistic, structured and comprehensible way. This method enables participants to jointly define a system by identifying its key constituent parts and their relationships. Participants are invited to describe the situation at hand using a predefined ontology (a knowledge representation system). The resulting model will be a simplified depiction of the situation in which the non-essential details and aspects are hidden and which provides a clearer view of this situation by focusing on the most significant features. Through this activity, the participants build a common foundation of knowledge, which they can then use to substantiate their positions.

## Overview

- Preparation time: 1 hour
- Materials required: a large sheet of paper, marker pens, post-it notes
- Max. group size: 20
- Facilitation time: 2 hours
- Number of facilitators: 1
- Implementation difficulty level: complex
- Method

The participatory modelling method to be used will predominantly depend on the object or system to be modelled and the type of model to be produced (each object can be modelled in different ways). For example, models can be displayed as: ARDI diagrams (→ also see the section on companion modelling, page 30), dynamic models, flow or sequence diagrams, schematic diagrams, etc.

In most cases, participatory modelling is carried out in two stages. The first involves identifying the model's constituent parts and the second consists of defining how these are arranged, i.e. formalising and depicting the links that connect these different parts. The first stage can take the form of a brainstorming session in which all participants contribute by noting down the constituent parts on pieces of card. Once a range of constituent parts have been identified, these can then be placed in order of priority to focus only on the most important or significant. The second, and more challenging, stage involves drawing the model on a large sheet of paper. Whenever a link is identified, we recommend drawing it in pencil as it is often necessary to reorganise and redraw certain elements as you go along. Once the model is finished, you can go over the links with a marker pen, specifying their direction.

It is also possible to use IT software and work on a large screen (whether interactive or not) or a projector.

## Some tips before you start

Note: it is vital to ensure that the ontology selected is consistent with the way in which the participants see their situation (the world or system concerned).

# Brainstorming

## What is it for?

Brainstorming enables a group of people to generate a wide range of ideas in a short space of time, to write them down, prioritise and then discuss them. This tool is based on the fact that it is often very useful to let each participant express their individual opinions at the start of a workshop prior to initiating a group discussion. This tool enables everyone to contribute regardless of their oral communication skills. It also helps highlight trends and priority ideas and topics to be explored in more detail. Finally, it provides participants with the opportunity to share all of their ideas, and to discard those deemed not relevant and which will not be covered later in the workshop. As a result, it can be used to identify local issues.

## Overview

- Preparation time: 10 mins
- Materials required: cards, marker pens, table for displaying the cards
- Max. group size: 20
- Facilitation time: 1.5 hours
- Number of facilitators: 1
- Implementation difficulty level: easy

## Method

Brainstorming starts with the facilitator posing a question to which the participants are to respond in writing. The question should be displayed on the board, and cards and pens handed out to all participants. The participants are then given time to consider the question and write their responses on the cards.

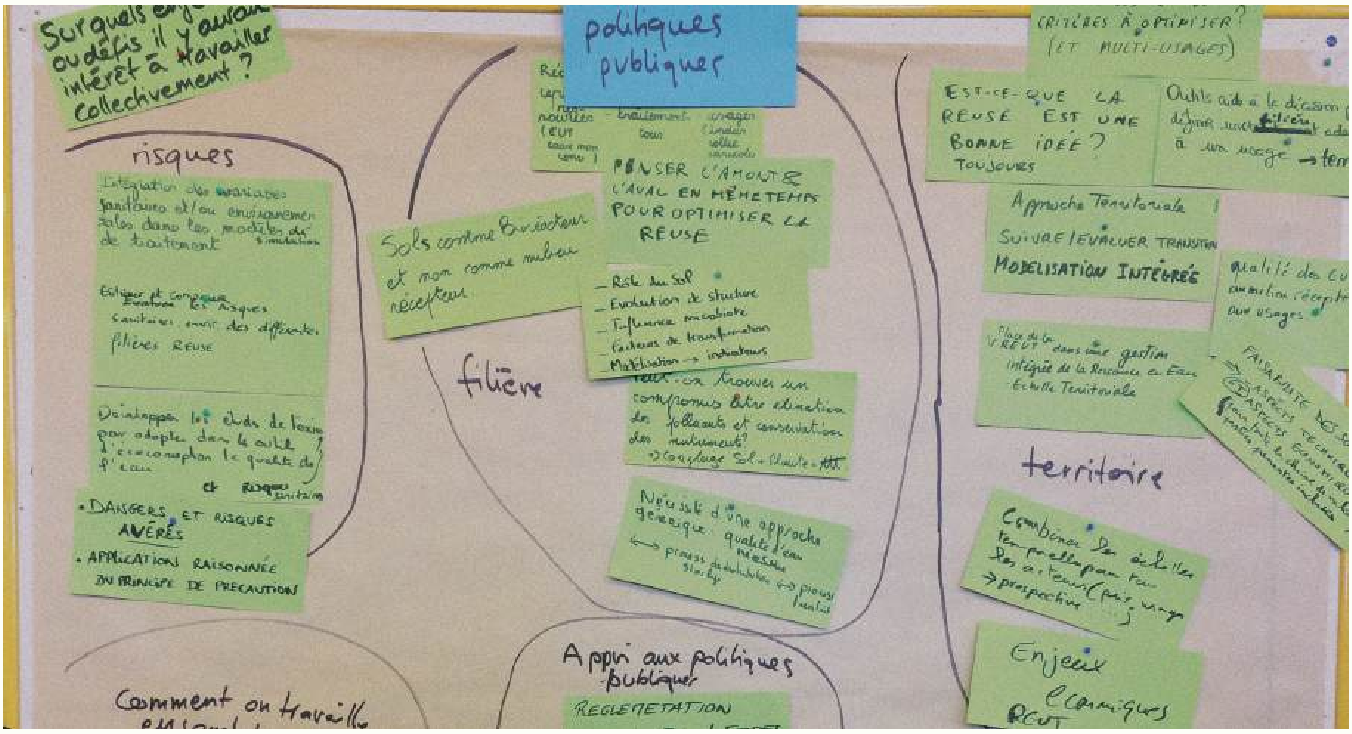
As soon as all of the participants have written their answers, these can be shared. It is recommended to go round each participant in turn first then ask them to give you the card indicating what they consider to be their most important idea. You will collect then shuffle these cards. Read out the first card, show it to the group and, if necessary, ask for clarification. Then, place the card on the board. Go through and repeat the process until you have read out and displayed all the cards, grouping similar ideas together. Go round the group again, asking each participant to provide you with a second, and different, idea. Repeat the process until there are no more cards.

The last phase involves prioritising the ideas to be explored in more detail and initiating a group discussion. You can ask participants to vote for the ideas that they wish to examine further during the workshop (e.g. 3 votes per participant), and invite them to place small stickers next to their preferred ideas. The ideas with the most votes will then be discussed by the group.

## Some tips before you start

Although widely used, if poorly implemented, this tool can prove counter-productive and even annoy or frustrate the participants. Some of the key tips for successfully using this tool are provided below.

It is important that the initial question is clear, open and relevant to the participants. It should be phrased to generate a large number of responses.




When issuing the cards, give the participants the following instructions:

- All ideas are welcome (even the most ‘off-the-wall’ ideas);
- Write one idea per card;
- Write in large letters;
- Do not worry about spelling mistakes.

To ensure full participation and self-expression, participants should be given time to consider the question and clearly set out their ideas prior to sharing them.

When you are reading out and displaying the cards, some participants may spontaneously react and state their opinion. It is important not to open ideas up for discussion at this stage. Should a major point of disagreement come to light, you can note this by drawing a small lightning bolt on the card in question in order to park the discussion and move onto the next card.

You should allocate sufficient time to the group discussion stage to ensure all of the priority topics can be covered. We recommend allocating the same amount of time to both stages of the activity, i.e. generating ideas and then discussing them.

# Problem tree

## What is it for?

We frequently encounter complex problems with a range of causes. It can thus be difficult to know how to address these problems or where to start in order to resolve them. Problem tree analysis is a simple and robust method of collectively assessing and structuring problems that stem from a variety of reasons, and of identifying the main causes of these problems in order to outline tangible action that can be taken. This tool can also be used to set out the consequences of the problem by identifying the expected impacts if nothing is done.

## Overview

- Preparation time: 30 mins
- Materials required: cards, marker pens, table for displaying the cards
- Max. group size: 20
- Facilitation time: 1.5 hours
- Number of facilitators: 1
- Implementation difficulty level: complex

## Method

The first step involves presenting the core problem to the participants and displaying it in the centre of the board. This problem is usually one that has been chosen by the participants themselves at a previous workshop (such as one held to assess the issues, for instance). The aim is to ensure that the problem selected is relevant to the participants.

The participants then brainstorm the causes of this problem (→ see the section on brainstorming, page 50). They determine the main causes and place them (with assistance from a facilitator) underneath the core problem to create the tree 'roots'. Next, they identify the causes of each of these main causes and place them below the lower 'roots', repeating this by drilling down as far as possible until the root causes of the problem have been identified.

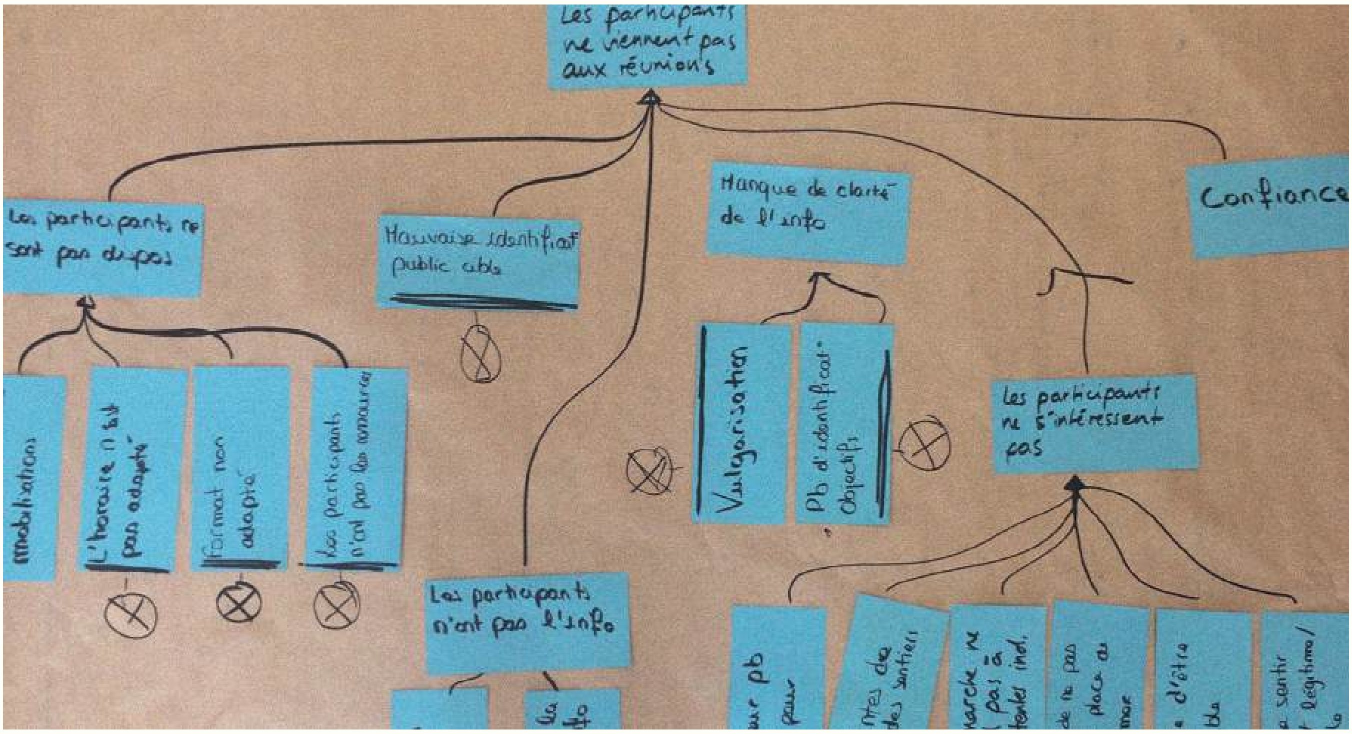
During the brainstorming session, participants usually identify both the main and secondary causes at the same time. The facilitator should thus help the group to structure the tree roots, being ready to modify the layout at any time if a new and important cause is identified. Once the position of each card has been firmly established, you can draw in the lines that link each cause to the core problem and which resemble the roots of a tree.

## Some tips before you start

This tool should only be used for problems with multiple causes so as not to be rendered meaningless. In many cases, the problem to be addressed in the workshop is so complicated that you will need to prepare beforehand as it can be difficult to structure the various causes and sub-causes on the spot during the participatory workshop itself.

In preparation, you can test the tool by answering the question "what are the causes of the problem?" yourself, and writing these causes on a sheet of paper. The aim is not to complete the exercise for the participants but to anticipate how best to facilitate it by identifying the structurally different causes, for example. This will then make it easier to propose a coherent structure for the problem tree during the workshop.

The completed problem tree can also be used to identify the consequences of the problem at hand. This is done using the method described above; however, instead of placing the consequences below the problem, you place them at the top of the board to form the problem tree's branches.


Les participants ne viennent pas aux réunions
Les participants ne sont pas dispos
Mauvaise identificat° public cible
Manque de clarté de l'info
Confiance
Mobilisations
L'horaire n'est pas adapté
Format non adapté
Les participants n'ont pas les ressources
Vulgarisation
Pb d'identificat° objectifs
Les participants ne s'intéressent pas
Les participants n'ont pas l'info

# Issues mapping

## What is it for?

Participatory mapping can also be used to identify and prioritise local issues or problematic situations. In this instance, the map is used to identify issues. It can also serve as an intermediary tool to focus the participants' attention on a shared medium.

## Overview

- Preparation time: 15 mins
- Materials required: a satellite or ordnance survey map, marker pens, cards
- Max. group size: 15 people per table
- Facilitation time: 1.5 hours
- Number of facilitators: 1 per table
- Implementation difficulty level: easy

## Method

The participants are divided into groups of 10-15 people around large tables at which they work on large-scale maps (A0) of their area (or on the maps created during a previous phase). They are assisted by one facilitator per table. First of all, the participants individually determine their area's issues (e.g. strengths and weaknesses) and note them down on cards. The participants then take turns to present their issues and locate them on the map. This is done by sticking the cards around the edge of the map and drawing a line between each card and the issue's location on the map. At the end of the workshop, the participants prioritise the various issues by placing small stickers next to them. The exact procedure and questions used can be tailored to the workshop's objectives.

## Some tips before you start

For this method, it is necessary to choose a map on which participants can easily find their bearings.


Espace

# Participatory photography

## What is it for?

Some people can struggle to formulate their ideas orally or in writing and thus find themselves at a disadvantage when in a group with other people who are better at using written or oral communication methods. In other instances, it can sometimes be necessary to visualise ideas to make them less abstract. Participatory photography enables participants to express themselves differently. It introduces a sensitive and creative aspect into public participation processes, which are predominantly guided by a structured and rational approach. This tool can be used at the start of the public participation process, during the participatory diagnostic phase, in order to identify participants' concerns and expectations or their perception of local issues.

## Overview

- Preparation time: 3 hours
- Materials required: printer, paper
- Max. group size: 30
- Facilitation time: 45 mins
- Number of facilitators: 1
- Implementation difficulty level: easy

## Method

The success of participatory photography depends on the number and type of participant, as well as on the workshop objectives. Below you will find a method for facilitating the start of a participatory diagnostic workshop. Prior to the workshop, the participants are invited to submit two photos or images that reflect their views of the topic to be addressed. The first photo (either taken by the participant or downloaded from the internet) should show something that the participant considers positive and desirable (an amenity, a resource, a landscape, stakeholders, etc.). In contrast, the second picture should show a negative and undesirable image (damage, losses, pollution, etc.). The two visions are, of course, subjective and reflect the views of the individual participant only. Once all of the photos have been collated and printed, they will be put together to create a photo wall to be used as a discussion tool.

At the start of the workshop, remind the participants of the public participation objectives and explain that the various stages should result in the development of collective proposals. Draw attention to the photo wall and provide those participants who wish to do so with the opportunity to comment on their photos. Continue by highlighting the differences and similarities of points of view. At this stage, you can explain that it is entirely normal for people to have different visions at the start of the process. The aim of the public participation is to use these different visions and a discussion-based approach to arrive at shared proposals. Thus, the success of the public participation process depends on the participants, not the facilitator. It is not necessarily a problem if the participants are unable to agree; however, it means that there is a risk that any decisions will be made by others instead.

## Some tips before you start

Participatory photography provides an additional communication channel to oral and written communication. We would, however, recommend combining these communication channels (photo + written key or photo + oral explanation) as a photo on its own can be interpreted in many different, and conflicting, ways.

Photos can also be taken during the participatory workshop itself, during a field visit or urban walks for instance. They can then be used as the basis for subsequent discussions.


Faire une zone de loisirs
La poste : maintien des services publiques dans le village (idem commerces)
qu'on s'étale inteligment en partant du centre ville
aire quelque chose
la cave coop. !
commerce, etc...)
Cadre de vie
Ruralité à conserver (maîtrise du foncier)
marché ; brocante ; commerce, événement sportif = à développer pour ne pas devenir un village fantôme !
un parc de jeu pour les plus grands ! multi/inter générations
Séniors

# Role playing

## What is it for?

There are many different types of role playing games that can be used for a variety of purposes, such as educational or serious games, psychodrama and socio-drama, business games, policy simulation exercises, experimental social sciences or ComMod (→ page 30). Role playing games are considered serious games, i.e. they are played for reasons other than entertainment. However, the specific feature of role playing games is that they present and test an issue that involves different stakeholders.

Within a public participation process, role playing games can be used for more than simply raising the participants' awareness. By encouraging new forms of interaction (especially when working towards a common objective), role playing focuses on participants' perceptions and thus on their ability to work together. These interactions are conducted within a 'demilitarised' world in which all the participants are able to speak while ensuring mutual understanding.

The distance between the role play scenario and reality enables participants to test new options or be bolder in their decisions, and then assess the implications without taking risks. This distance also means participants are able to take a step back from the situation. In addition, it provides participants with the opportunity to put themselves in other stakeholders' shoes (by reversing roles). This helps people to see the situation from an opposite viewpoint as they 'experience' the constraints and needs of other participants, which can create mutual empathy.

Developing scenarios helps participants to test alternative scenarios, and especially to look ahead into the future. As part of public participation, this shared experience can be used to help participants to agree on long-term objectives before they seek to resolve their short-term differences.

## Overview

- Preparation time: long
- Materials required: role play scenarios
- Max. group size: 20
- Facilitation time: 0.5 to 1 day
- Number of facilitators: 2
- Implementation difficulty level: complex

## Method

Designing a role playing game is a long and iterative process that is usually undertaken by several people. The game can be developed internally or in conjunction with the participants, as part of a participatory modelling workshop, for example. Once the scenario has been developed, it will need to be tested several times to ensure that it is workable.

In general, a role playing session consists of two parts, the role play and a debrief.

The session begins with the organiser explaining the rules and is followed by the role play itself. An observation plan (observers or audio-visual equipment) can be used to collate information on the role-players and the role playing session.

The debrief is just as important as the role play. It enables the participants and organisers to review the role-play, discuss the outcomes and compare all this with the actual situation.

## Some tips before you start

Note: specific skills and investment are required to develop a role playing game. Please ensure that you have all resources required before you embark on creating a role play.

→ see more

A summary of role playing in the water management sector is available at:
www.lisode.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Dionnet-2008-Les-jeux-de-roles-concepts-cles.pdf

# Forum theatre

## What is it for?

The forum theatre is an approach taken from the Theatre of the Oppressed developed in Brazil during the 1960s by Augusto Boal (Boal et al. 1978). This type of theatre is used to assess social problems through the prism of the 'oppressed and oppressor'. What we describe below is a slightly different type of forum theatre that can be used to simulate a problematic situation between different participants. For instance, this method can be used to simulate a high-stakes participatory workshop or meeting whose outcomes are difficult to predict. Used in this way, the forum theatre becomes a forecasting tool that helps anticipate potential stumbling blocks so that ways can be found to avoid them.

## Overview

- Preparation time: 2 hours
- Materials required: role descriptions
- Max. group size: 30
- Facilitation time: 1.5 hours
- Number of facilitators: 1
- Implementation difficulty level: moderate

## Method

It is first necessary to prepare the scene to be performed. This involves defining the scenario and producing the necessary supporting materials: role description sheets, scenario information sheet, etc. The role description sheets should as a minimum contain the character's name, who (s)he is or what (s)he does, what (s)he thinks of the current situation or problem and his/her objective or strategy for the meeting.

During the workshop, the facilitator sets the scene for the participants (the scenario that is going to be played out and why), lists the stakeholders represented and allocates the roles. Those participants not involved in the performance will adopt the role of observers. The facilitator answers any questions and explains the ground rules: each participant should fully take on the character of the stakeholder they are playing by defending their interests but should take care not to over-act; only the facilitator can bring the scenario to an end (a participant can ask the facilitator to end it if required); all feedback and questions raised by the scenario should be noted down and kept for the debrief (participants must not interrupt the performance to give their personal opinions).

When the participants are ready, the facilitator asks them to start acting out the scenario, which usually lasts between 30 and 45 minutes. The unique feature of the forum theatre is the emphasis placed on improvisation (nobody knows upfront how the scene will play out) and on the role of the audience who, if they so wish, can interrupt the simulation and change the performance by getting up on stage.

The final step involves assessing the performance and identifying the lessons learned. The participants end the simulation and the facilitator kicks off the debriefing session by asking the following questions: What was your strategy and how did you think the simulation went? What problems and stumbling blocks were encountered? What solutions or responses were put in place? How could the situation have been improved?

## Some tips before you start

During the debrief, it is important to start by asking each of the observers what most struck them during the simulation.

# Participatory writing

## What is it for?

Participatory writing is recommended for use in a range of situations frequently encountered during public participations.

For example, it can be used to link together the work of different working groups where these are set up to work, either at the same time or in succession, on the same topic. In this instance, it can be useful to task them with progressively adding to the same text.

It can also be used to ensure that any document produced at the end of the public participation (e.g. a report summarising the public participation's outcomes) truly reflects the participants' input and ideas. When the report or summary has only one author, certain ideas can be overlooked, reworded or diluted. This can be avoided by asking the participants for their feedback.

## Overview

- Preparation time: 1 hour
- Materials required: large-format print-outs of the relevant texts, cards, marker pens, small stickers
- Max. group size: 50
- Facilitation time: 1 to 2 hours
- Number of facilitators: 1
- Implementation difficulty level: easy

## Method

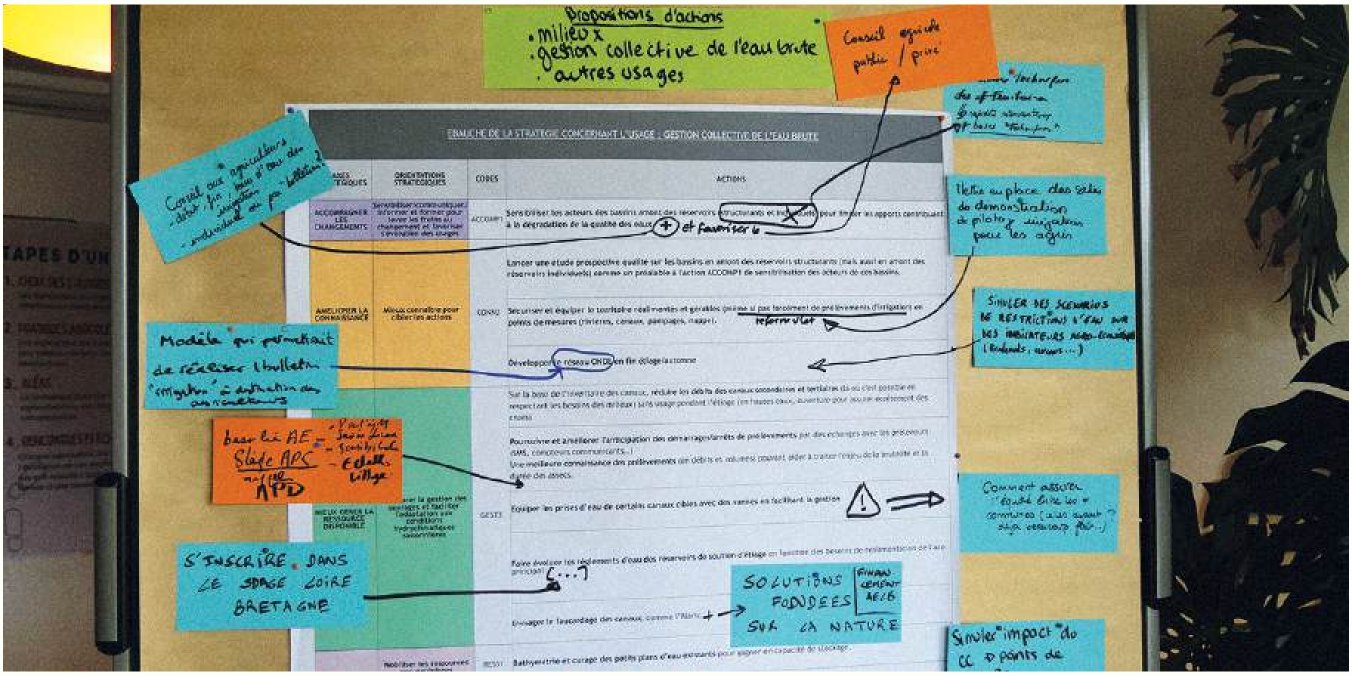
The text to be considered during the participatory writing exercise is usually the output from previous steps. This should be printed in large format (A0) so that it can be displayed on the walls.

During the workshop, divide the participants into as many sub-groups as there are sheets of paper. Each sub-group reads their part of the text and annotates it by writing their comments and suggestions on pieces of card. These comments can relate to either the text's content or form. Also ask the participants to prioritise their comments and suggestions using small stickers: What is the most important feedback?

Once each sub-group has finished, they move to another sheet of paper and repeat the process with another section of the text. At the end of the workshop, the most important points (those with the most stickers) are addressed in a group discussion.

## Some tips before you start

During the group discussion, do not forget to highlight the areas of agreement, and not just those that pose a problem. The final document should include all contributions.


Propositions d'actions
• milieux
• gestion collective de l'eau brute
• autres usages
EBAUCHE DE LA STRATEGIE CONCERNANT L'USAGE : GESTION COLLECTIVE DE L'EAU BRUTE
ACTIONS
Mettre en place des sites de démonstration de pilotage irrigation pour les agri
S'INSCRIRE DANS LE SDAGE LOIRE BRETAGNE
SOLUTIONS FONDEES SUR LA NATURE

# Consensus scale

## What is it for?

The consensus scale is a tool that helps determine whether or not there is consensus on a proposal, idea or action within a group. This tool is particularly suited to more closely assessing a working group's proposals on which there appears to be a consensus. A public participation process can easily generate ideas that are supported by the majority (they are a priority for a large number of people) yet which a minority find totally unacceptable. It is therefore vital to identify the ideas or proposals that still give rise to contention, determine why certain participants are against them and, finally, to define what accommodations are required to ensure that they become fully acceptable to all.

## Overview

- Preparation time: 30 mins
- Materials required: small stickers or marker pens, large board
- Max. group size: 50
- Facilitation time: 30 mins to 1 hour
- Number of facilitators: 1
- Implementation difficulty level: easy

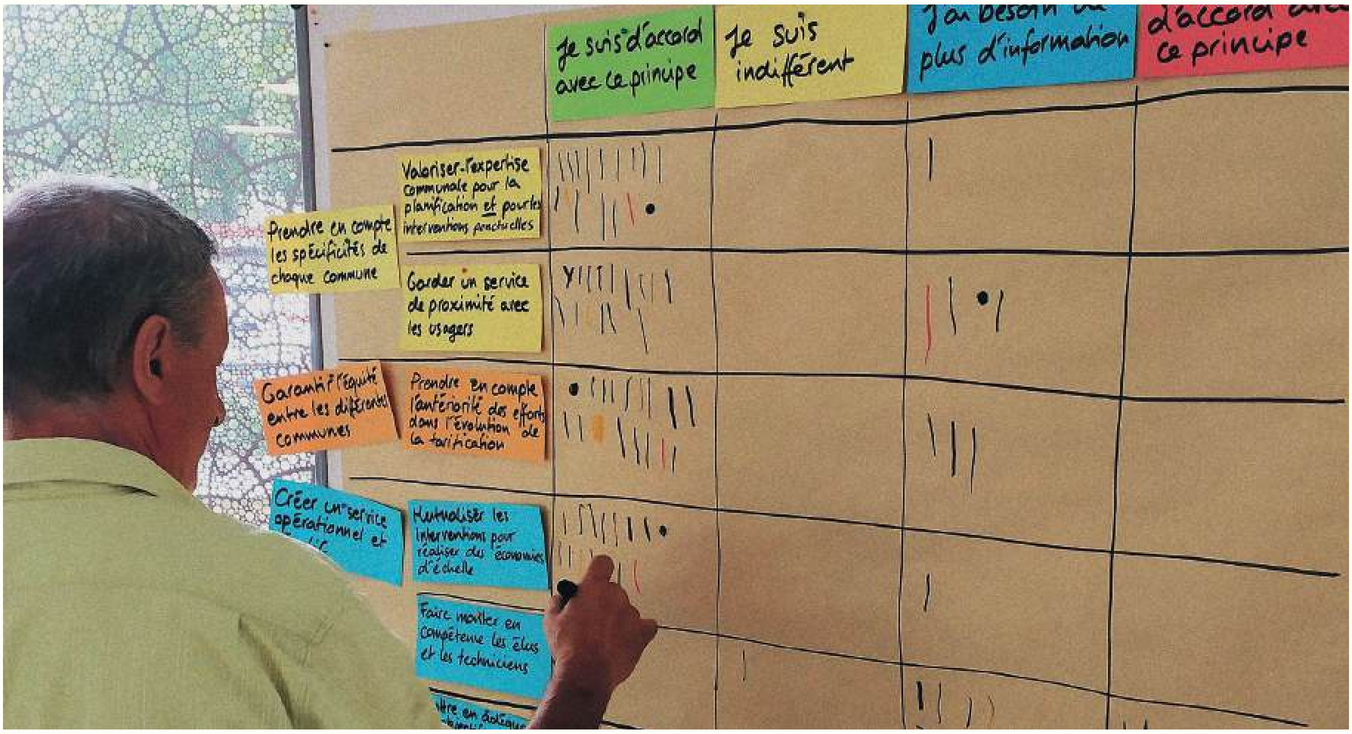
## Method

To begin, review the proposals that are to be the focus of the consensus scale exercise. Go through these proposals in more detail if necessary. Comprehension questions are permitted, but under no circumstances is there to be a discussion on the merits of the proposals. The aim is simply to ensure that each participant has a proper understanding of each proposal.

The proposals are listed in a double-entry table similar to the one shown below. The table is then turned round to enable the participants to work on it anonymously.

All of the participants get up and assess each proposal based on their personal preferences. You can use stickers or marker pens for this. Each participant is given as many stickers as there are proposals and is to place a sticker in the relevant column for each proposal. Ask the participants to write down their name (or initials) if they place a sticker in the first column (willing to support the proposal). You should also ask them to think of an alternative if they place a sticker in the final column (opposed to the proposal).

| | I am willing to support this proposal (write down your name) | I agree with this proposal (but I do not wish to get involved) | I am neither for nor against | I need more information or time to decide | I oppose this proposal |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Proposal 1 | | | | | |
| Proposal 2 | | | | | |
| Proposal 3 | | | | | |




When going through the results with the group, review the proposals that are insufficiently clear and those to which there is opposition. The facilitator or the group should clarify the proposals that are insufficiently clear to ensure that everyone has the information they need to make a decision. Where participants are opposed to a proposal, ask these participants what would be required to ensure their buy-in. The alternatives or modifications requested are then discussed and potentially submitted for another collective review.

## Some tips before you start

This tool can be used to hold participants accountable for the support or implementation of the proposals they have made. To do this, return to the proposals that received no stickers in the first column. Ask the group if there is anyone who would be willing to review their position otherwise these proposals will be rejected or postponed until a later date.

This tool is used to assess the level of consensus, not enforce it. Thus, if there is a proposal that remains contentious even after the discussion, do not attempt to impose a consensus at any cost. It is normal for a group not to agree on everything and that in itself is a very good outcome.

# Action plan

## What is it for

Once you have ensured an agreement has been reached using the consensus scale, it is then much easier to formulate action plans. However, to ensure the actions are effectively implemented, there are number of points that need to be verified first. The aim of this tool is to collectively ensure that all the necessary conditions are in place for the actions to be carried out, especially as regards responsibilities, timeframes, resources, etc.

## Overview

- Preparation time: 15 mins
- Materials required: cards, marker pens, large board
- Max. group size: 30
- Facilitation time: 1.5 hours
- Number of facilitators: 1
- Implementation difficulty level: easy

## Method

The facilitator works on a large board on which the following table is displayed:

| | Objectives | Lead | Participants | When | How | Resources required |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Action 1 | | | | | | |
| Action 2 | | | | | | |
| Action 3 | | | | | | |

The participants discuss the tangible actions to be implemented during the project. The facilitator notes down their ideas on pieces of card and places these in the table.

You can either list all the actions (or tasks) first then fill in the remaining columns: why this action is required, who is responsible for implementing it, when it should be implemented, how it will be implemented (and its performance indicators), and what resources will be required. It is also possible to go through the table line by line until all the consensus-based actions have been identified.

If an action has no lead stakeholder, if its implementation timeframe cannot be clearly defined, or if it requires too many (or non-existent) resources, implementation of this action is unlikely. In this instance, the facilitator will assist the participants to include the relevant and feasible actions only; the other actions can be parked for discussion at a later date.

## Some tips before you start

An action plan is only useful if responsibilities have been clearly defined. Ensure you have the ‘correct’ participants (those who can make a formal commitment) prior to embarking on an action plan.

Once the action plan has been completed, it can be useful to go round the room and ask each participant if they agree with this final action plan, and if they think they will be able to uphold their commitments. Some participants can get caught up in the group dynamic and end up over-committing themselves or making commitments without their manager’s consent.

# World café

## What is it for?

The World Café method can be employed to discuss several topics at once with a large number of participants (between 20 and 100 people) in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. The World Café can be used without the need for multiple facilitators as discussions are jointly facilitated by the participants themselves. This method is ideal for fleshing out a topic or opening up discussions. However, you would not use it for jointly constructing proposals or making decisions.

## Overview

- Preparation time: 2 hours
- Materials required: tables, large sheets of paper, marker pens, hot coffee
- Max. group size: 100
- Facilitation time: 1 to 2 hours
- Number of facilitators: 1
- Implementation difficulty level: easy

## Method

Tables are set up within the room to accommodate the number of topics to be discussed. A participant is selected to act as a facilitator for each table. This participant will remain at their table throughout the session and act as rapporteur. The remaining participants are divided into as many sub-groups as there are tables (ideally 5 – 10 participants per table).

Once seated at their table, each sub-group discusses the topic or question posed. The rapporteurs write down the key ideas on a large sheet of paper that has been placed on the table. At the end of the set time period (between 20 and 30 minutes), the participants change tables, with the exception of the rapporteur who remains to welcome the new group and briefly review the previous discussion. The new participants supplement and develop the previous group's ideas, enriching the discussion. An important rule is that it is not necessary for all the participants to agree. Whenever there is a point of contention, this should be noted and highlighted with a specific symbol (small bolt of lightning).

The participants continue to swap tables until the end of the allotted time (generally changing tables 3 to 4 times). It does not necessarily matter if not all participants contribute to each and every discussion. At the end, bring all the participants back together and ask the rapporteurs to present a summary of the discussions held at each table.

## Some tips before you start

The participants do not have to remain in the same sub-groups throughout the workshop. After the first discussion period, they are free to go and sit at a table that interests them, meaning that the sub-groups will rearrange themselves naturally. At the end of the last table change, schedule in time for the rapporteurs to prepare their summaries. To make it feel more like a world café, you can provide the participants with drinks and snacks!

# Open forum

## What is it for?

The open forum is a method that can be used to bring together a large number of participants (between 30 and 150) to discuss topics of interest to them and formulate tangible proposals. In an open forum, it is the participants themselves who select the topics to be discussed and they also create and manage the agenda, which involves parallel working sessions. This method primarily enables participants to address what they consider to be the most pressing questions or issues. It also empowers participants as it is they who propose the specific topics, lead the discussions and produce the outcomes. Finally, it enables the remaining participants to choose the working session that interests them the most. The discussions, recommendations, most important findings, questions to be reviewed and the immediate action plans are documented in a report that is distributed to the participants after the workshop.

## Overview

- Preparation time: 0.5 day
- Materials required: notice boards, large sheets of paper, marker pens
- Max. group size: 100
- Facilitation time: 1 day
- Number of facilitators: 1
- Implementation difficulty level: difficult

## Method for running a half-day open forum

The participants are given a blank agenda, which they are asked to complete. Each participant is free to propose a topic that interests them and on which they want to work with other participants. Each person who proposes a topic then becomes responsible for:

- facilitating a small group that will discuss this topic;
- presenting the findings of this group's discussions using the predefined format;
- taking action outside of the forum – with other interested persons – to achieve the defined objectives and implement the solutions put forward by this group.

Those participants who do not want to 'lead' on a particular topic select the topics that interest them the most from those proposed and join the relevant small groups. The topics that fail to attract enough participants are discarded. Once the agenda has been set, each sub-group gathers in their discussion area, ideally each in a specific room or together in a room that is large enough to ensure that the groups do not disturb each other. The day is broken down into several parallel working sessions in accordance with the agenda. Once the discussion time has elapsed, the findings and outcomes are presented using a predefined format (which will depend on the topics covered and the forum objectives). The findings are presented to the whole group, and this is followed by a debate.

## Some tips before you start

Prepare supporting materials to help the participants facilitate their sub-groups. For example, you could prepare a chart on a large sheet of paper that contains the following rows or columns: topic discussed; participants; key points raised; tangible recommendations (action, lead, deadline). During the working session, participants are free to change groups should they so wish. This is an extremely important rule that ensures participants' motivation and helps spread ideas between groups.

# 21st century town meeting

## What is it for?

The 21st Century Town Meeting is a working method that combines technology (electronic voting system, networked computers, large-screen projections, teleconferences, etc.) and interpersonal dialogue in a one-day meeting of between 500 and 5,000 participants (all in one place or in different locations).

The aim is to enable a large number of citizens to participate in discussing controversial issues or social problems on which the public authorities need to adopt a position. The objective is to involve a mix of citizens that are as statistically representative of society as possible in order to ensure the opinions expressed reflect the public interest.

Note: the 21st Century Town Meeting is the culmination of a process that, in reality, takes several months to complete.

## Overview

- Preparation time: long
- Materials required: various
- Max. group size: 5,000
- Facilitation time: 1 day
- Number of facilitators: 1 per group of 10 participants
- Implementation difficulty level: complex

## Method

The participants are randomly divided into groups of ten. Each group works at a table with a facilitator. Each table is connected to the coordinators, who consolidate, analyse and post the results of the electronic voting systems (one per table or per participant). The coordinators transmit the questions to be discussed in the sub-groups and the responses are sent back to the central database and displayed in real-time on a giant screen. This sequence can be repeated for several questions or topics.

The forum generally consists of four steps:

1. Setting the context
2. Discussing the values
3. Drawing up recommendations
4. Producing the minutes

The participants are given a report summarising their work as they leave the forum.

## Some tips before you start

While 21st century town meetings involving thousands of people are rare, dividing a large number of people up to work in sub-groups is very common because it is effective. It is possible to adapt this concept to less ambitious yet large (>50 people) workshops.

Electronic voting machines can now be replaced by mobile phone-based simultaneous voting applications. Should you wish to use one of these applications, first check that all of the participants have a mobile phone and allow time for everyone to download and install the application (during the registration period, for instance).

World café

Open forum

21st century town meeting / © Michele d'Ottavio photography

# DIGITAL PARTICIPATION

## 1. Definition

Digital participation tools, often referred to as Civic Tech or E-democracy tools, enable people to participate via a digital interface. There are several different participation formats that can be used:

| Examples of formats | Purpose | Timing | Type of participant |
|---|---|---|---|
| Online consultation, participatory budget, voting, survey, call for projects, etc. | To collect information on preferences or individual ideas | Asynchronous (each participant can contribute at different times) | Large audience |
| Online debate, discussion forum, wiki, etc. | To enable participants to share ideas | Asynchronous | Large audience |
| Online conference, webinar, etc. | To share information with a large audience and enable contributions | Synchronous (all participants need to be online at the same time) | Large audience |
| Digital workshop | To enable active participation | Synchronous | Limited number of people (same constraints as in-person workshops) |

Unlike in-person public participation where the number of participants is often limited by the resources available, the first three digital participation formats listed in the table above can be used to reach a much larger audience. Their use is currently becoming more widespread for public action projects with a view to (re)connecting the public authorities with the public.

In practice, these formats generally have two main objectives that are akin to consultation on the participation ladder: (1) conducting surveys prior to developing public policy to obtain information on people's preferences, expectations or ideas; or (2) informing the public about a project, plan or programme and obtaining their opinions (in the same vein as online public enquiries). In their most interactive forms, these tools can also be used to structure discussions and illustrate them through thematic charts. Some of the advantages and limitations of these digital participation tools are provided below.

## 2. Advantages

Firstly, participants are no longer hampered by travel or time constraints. Asynchronous public participation tools mean that people can participate wherever and whenever they are able to fit it into their daily schedule.

Secondly, the cost of implementing the tool is not usually correlated to the participation rate. For example, an online survey containing closed questions costs about the same regardless of whether there are 10 or 1,000 respondents. In contrast, if the survey includes free-form contributions (e.g. from open questions), the processing cost will be correlated to the number of responses.

Lastly, more contributions can potentially be collected through digital participation than through in-person workshops as workshops' time constraints automatically mean that each participant has a limited time to speak.

## 3. Limitations

First of all, when targeting a large number of people, these tools often use the types of prioritisation or voting mechanisms that public participation processes usually seek to avoid. This is because it is not possible to check consensus levels through these mechanisms, giving the illusion that the proposals with the majority of votes reflect a shared or collective opinion.

In addition, the use of large-scale digital participation (such as that used for the great national debate launched in France in 2019, for which 1,932,884 online contributions were received) can result in technical bias. Firstly, there is interpretation and categorisation bias relating to the way in which participants' contributions are assessed and ranked. Regardless of whether these tasks are carried out by human beings or algorithms, the written text being assessed can often end up distorted. Secondly, the lack of representativeness of respondents can also result in significant bias by placing importance on certain ideas that are unrepresentative of society's expectations as a whole.

Participant debates, discussions and exchanges of views are often overlooked in digital participation. They are generally confined to online forum-type features, which are unable to reproduce the complexity of a synchronous debate.

The 'digital workshop' format does, however, contain a productive (co-construction) and decision-making element. However, while these new technologies make it possible to reproduce certain facets of in-person workshops (e.g. brainstorming using a virtual wall), other mechanisms that are vital for public participation, such as legitimising the needs of each stakeholder, building trust and empathy between participants, and strengthening social ties, remain very difficult to reproduce when working remotely.

## 4. Conclusion

Shared opinions or collective proposals, which are the primary objectives of a public participation process, are difficult to obtain using the currently available digital participation tools. Thus, if we want to do more than simply collate individual viewpoints, in-person participation, which involves fewer participants but is more intense and higher-quality, remains the best way of reaching a consensus.

However, these two public participation approaches (in-person and digital) can be complementary. Digital tools can be used to introduce a greater number of opinions and ideas into in-person public participation workshops in which not everyone may be able to participate. They can also be used to test certain proposals jointly produced during a public participation with a larger audience.

→ see more

The French National Commission for Data Protection (CNIL: Commission nationale de l'informatique et des libertés) has recently published two analyses on digital participation: 'Civic tech–Une exploration critique des tensions et des usages de demain' and 'Cahier IP N°7 : Civic Tech, données et démos'. These documents can be downloaded from their website: https://www.cnil.fr (available in French only).

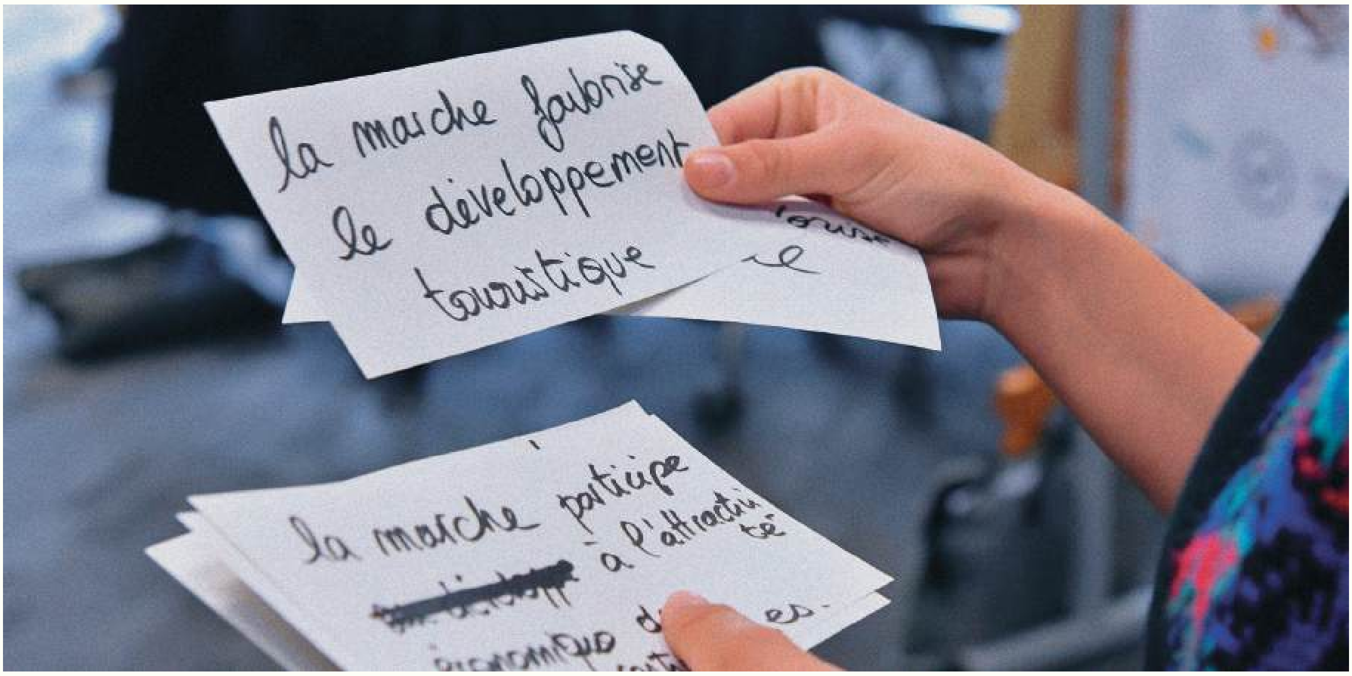
# PITFALLS TO BE AVOIDED

Some of the common pitfalls encountered during public participation processes are listed below:

- Believing that the tool will compensate for a lack of strategy or coherence in the participation process. A participatory tool will only work if the context lends itself to it
- Defining your workshop's objectives based on the tools you want to use and not the other way round
- Not preparing the facilitation of your tools. A participatory tool requires specific facilitation (→ see the section on group facilitation, page 75) that needs to be prepared in advance
- Confining the debate to a scale that is not relevant to the issues concerned (with a risk of restricting discussions to routine rather than strategic management)
- Confining stakeholders' participation to giving their opinions on ready-made proposals; treating participants as 'complainants' instead of stakeholders
- Extracting information that can later be used against the participants
- Not taking the outputs of the participatory workshops seriously or not following up on the participants' proposals
- Not writing up the workshop reports
- Not placing your work within the context in which it was produced
- Transcribing the participants' contributions by focusing on generalities and distorting ideas (be wary of simplifying and reducing ideas)
- Not making the effort to correct your reports following amendments from the participants

# Group Facilitation

- THE FOUNDATIONS
- EIGHT ESSENTIAL STEPS FOR FACILITATING A WORKSHOP
- GROUP FACILITATION TECHNIQUES




This section focuses on the techniques that can be used for facilitating a working session. Facilitation is required throughout the public participation process to ensure that the participatory workshops run smoothly and that the tools selected effectively fulfil their aim.

# THE FOUNDATIONS

## 1. Definition of facilitation

Facilitation consists of a range of skills (attitudes, values and techniques) that combine to build group momentum and ensure the group actively and dynamically interacts in order to generate:

- Team spirit;
- Collective learning;
- Results that are useful to all;
- The individual development of each participant.

Facilitation differs from coordination and mediation in both its role and its purpose. Unlike a coordinator, a facilitator is not central to the approach and seeks to leave the group to work without their input once they have created a sufficiently robust and autonomous group structure (Figure 4). The role of the mediator is entirely different. It consists of negotiating a way out of any stalemates that arise when stakeholders are in disagreement. Unlike the facilitator, the mediator does not seek to (re)create ties between participants, but to arrive at an acceptable solution that ensures that each party is willing to move on.

## 2. The role of facilitation

### Ensure everyone is able to participate

Make sure that everybody can take part in the meeting by giving their opinion. The aim is not to compel members of the group to participate but to create an environment that facilitates participation.

### Encourage mutual understanding

Rephrase what a participant has said if some people in the group appear not to have understood. Your role is to ensure that the participants understand each other.

### Facilitate the development of shared solutions

At the start of the meeting, propose that seeking shared solutions be considered as a value for guiding discussions: "We are here to see if we can align our objectives. I will assist you with finding sound agreements, that is agreements that each of you can approve or at least accept".

### Encourage participants to take on responsibilities

This involves helping the participants to take responsibility for implementing the outputs of their discussion after the meeting. You will thus end the meeting by developing a work plan and setting out each person’s responsibilities within a given timeframe.

## 3. Facilitation values

### Be impartial

The facilitator must be impartial and not take sides or a position with regard to either the topic being discussed or the participants. This determines the facilitator’s credibility.

### Listen with empathy

Actively listen and seek to properly understand what each participant is saying; ensure you are able to rephrase what the other person is trying to say. The facilitator should not be afraid to admit that they have not understood.

### Trust the group

- Let the group develop its own solutions: the facilitator must remain neutral on the content of the discussions.
- Give serious consideration to the group’s proposals, including those on the process being followed: this is the only way to ensure that the group will take ownership of the process and the project.

### Encourage and accept 'the unknown'

- Use serendipity by creating open situations and by attaching significance to unexpected outcomes and events.
- Clarify with the promoter whether or not they have already come up with a solution (if so, they do not need you).

### Be honest with yourself and with others

Be capable of assessing what you are thinking and feeling and able to communicate this.

## 4. Format of a 'typical' workshop

Regardless of how long it lasts (half a day, a full day or several days), a workshop should always consist of three phases that are more or less equal in length.

An opening phase in which everyone is able to share their point of view (all ideas are welcome, regardless of how 'strange' they seem). The facilitator encourages the participants, collates the ideas and groups them into topics. The aim is not to discuss each idea at this stage, but to ensure that all ideas have been shared.

A discussion phase where participants are invited to debate and defend their views while remaining aware of the opinions of others. This may give rise to tension, which it is up to the facilitator to manage (→ see the section on managing difficult situations, page 86). It is essential not to end the workshop during this second phase (which often happens in workshops with no facilitator, leading to frustration and disappointment), hence the importance of the third phase.

A summary and conclusion phase. The aim of this phase is to acknowledge areas of disagreement, focus on the main areas on which agreement has been reached and plan the subsequent activities, clearly defining the division of roles and responsibilities among participants.

# EIGHT ESSENTIAL STEPS FOR FACILITATING A WORKSHOP

## 1. Prepare a clear agenda

The first step involves clarifying and defining the objectives. This involves answering the following question: "What is the added value of this workshop compared to other types of interaction (email exchanges, working on a shared document, etc.)?".

You should then define the format you wish the workshop to take by specifying the timings, activities and/or objectives, tools and methods that you want to use for each stage of the workshop, as well as the preparation required (supporting materials, equipment, things to look out for, etc.).

This detailed agenda could look something like this:

| Time | Activity/Objective | Tool and Method | Preparation |
|---|---|---|---|
| 9:00 AM | Arrival of participants | Serve coffee, hand out blank name badges | Coffee, fruit juice, paper circles, pens, etc. |
| 9:30 AM | Faire connaissance | '2 axis' icebreaker (detail the procedure) | Pre-prepared board, small stickers, etc. |
| … | | | |

When preparing your workshop, consider the group dynamic. If possible, alternate between plenary sessions and discussions in sub-groups. Working in sub-groups provides participants with greater opportunity to get involved in discussions and thus helps generate more ideas and contributions. Plus, working in sub-groups has the added advantage of facilitating expression and ensuring people's views are heard. Prepare topics or headings for the sub-groups to discuss and display these on a board or wall.

The work conducted in small groups can be shared in one of two ways:

- A 'traditional' presentation of findings during a plenary session in which each group takes turns to present the outcomes of their discussions.
- A 'sharing of views' in which the participants remain in their sub-groups and visit each other's stations to learn about the work carried out by the other sub-groups. For this method, it is recommended to appoint a participant from each sub-group as rapporteur to briefly summarise the work carried out prior to collecting any feedback.

## 2. Organise the work space

There are numerous ways of organising the work space and the layout selected will have a decisive impact on the atmosphere, discussions and general group behaviour. If you can do without tables, do not use them. Removing physical barriers often improves communication and leads to better learning. It also naturally reduces aggression between participants. If you have to use tables, try to arrange them in circles or semi-circles. Whatever you do, avoid the traditional 'stage/audience' set-up, which polarises the room and creates distinctions between participants.

## 3. Break the ice between participants

When a person arrives at a meeting where they do not know anybody, they can often feel anxious: "who are these other people, will they understand me, what am I going to get out of this workshop or meeting?" To answer these questions, participants can often become defensive and hide behind a mask (I am strong and I am not afraid of you) and status (I represent such-and-such an institution, which carries X weight, so don't mess with me). Icebreakers serve to change this attitude to one that is open and more relaxed.

These short, fun exercises are used to help participants get to know each other in a slightly more informal and less serious way (→ see examples on page 81). An icebreaker can thus help participants to recognise things they have in common and creates an openness to dialogue.

## 4. Draw up a contract at the start of the workshop

At the beginning of the workshop, it can be useful to ask participants questions on their expectations and potential concerns relating to the workshop topic and methodology. These questions are often asked after the facilitator has given an overview of the workshop objectives and agenda (to provide a general idea of the framework to be followed, but without going into too much detail so as not to influence participants' expectations). Once the participants' expectations and concerns have been noted, the objectives and agenda are reviewed again, but this time in detail, in order to determine whether they meet the participants' expectations or not. If it is possible to incorporate new expectations into the agenda, by all means do so. If not, explain why and ask the participants if they are still prepared to take part in the workshop anyway, under the conditions you have set out. This comparison between what the participants expect and what you have planned to do (agenda) can inform a 'contract' between the facilitator and the participants and help prevent the creation of false expectations and needless frustration. (→ see page 40 for more information).

## 5. Open up discussions by allowing different view points to be expressed

Prior to reaching agreement on the topics to be discussed, it is important to open up the range of possibilities to enable each participant to express their opinion. This does not mean addressing all themes; however, raising different topics (even those that are irrelevant) helps facilitate consensual decision-making while ensuring all viewpoints are heard. This can most easily be achieved through brainstorming (→ page 50). This traditional method is used to generate a wide range of ideas in a short space of time while involving all participants.

## 6. Acknowledge agreements and disagreements

It is just as important to highlight the areas of common ground as it is the areas of disagreement. It can be reassuring for a participant to see that their viewpoint has been raised, even if this differs from and conflicts with other participants' views. The facilitator's role is not to ensure the participants agree on everything but to point out that, despite their differences, it is possible to collectively move towards a consensus by focusing on common ground (in the first instance). At this stage of the workshop, use supported dialogue techniques (→ page 84).

## 7. Refocus discussions on finding solutions

After having opened up discussions and taking the diverse range of viewpoints into account, it is important to help the group to refocus and come up with ideas for solutions and/or working together. The aim is to produce tangible and useful proposals for the rest of the process. At this stage of the workshop, you could use a consensus scale (→ page 64) or an action plan (→ page 66).

## 8. End the workshop with an evaluation

At the end of a meeting or workshop, it is essential to assess the progress that has been made, as well as gauge the participants' mindset, in order to plan for the subsequent phases; an exercise known as a debrief. This is an effective way of reviewing the lessons learned during the workshop (both for the participants and the facilitator), and can be used to check that the outcomes meet the defined objectives, both in substance and form (→ page 89).

# GROUP FACILITATION TECHNIQUES

## Icebreakers

Four examples of icebreaker are provided below. There are many others available and they can all be tailored to the specific workshop and type of participant.

### The surprise question

Materials: paper and pens

Time: two minutes per participant (plus a few minutes to think of what questions to write)

Procedure: each participant writes a question down on a piece of paper and folds it. The pieces of paper are placed in the centre of the group. Each participant takes a piece of paper, reads out the question and answers it. These questions can be either personal or professional

Note: Participants should be made aware of the fact that they could draw their own question

## Introduce your partner

Materials: none

Time: 5-10 minutes of introductions plus one minute per participant

Procedure: ask the participants to stand up and find somebody that they do not know very well/at all. Each participant is to introduce themselves to their partner and vice versa. Bring the group back together and ask each participant to introduce their partner. This method enables two participants to spend time getting to know each other that they would not otherwise have. In addition, introductions are shorter and focus on the most important details, which means there are no long-winded speeches

Note: for large groups of 30 or over, participants could also work in groups of three

## The walking debate

Materials: none.

Time: this will depend on the number of questions you ask (5-30 minutes)

Procedure: ask a question related to the workshop topic and which can be answered using scaled responses. Based on their responses, participants then go and stand in different parts of the room (e.g. those who are 'for' on the right, 'without an opinion' either way in the middle, and those 'against' on the left) and then take turns to explain their position. Participants can change positions at any time during the discussion

Note: the questions you ask should be based on your objectives and should seek either to reveal people's individual positions or foster debate (e.g. on a controversial topic)

## Two axis

Materials: a large sheet of brown paper, small stickers

Time: 30 seconds per participant

Procedure: ask each participant to state where they stand in relation to a statement using a two-axis graph displayed on a board. For instance, for a project kick-off meeting, you could draw an axis entitled: "I have understood the project" (with a scale running from 'not at all' to 'completely'), and another that reads "I know what I will be doing on the project" (also with a scale running from 'not at all' to 'completely'). The participants place their stickers on the graph (see photo) and introduce themselves to the group

Note: At the end of the workshop, you could ask them to place a different coloured sticker on the graph to see if their understanding has improved

# Energisers

Like icebreakers, energisers are informal activities that help build team spirit and boost energy levels, for instance after a meal. Laughing will put participants in a positive frame of mind, which will facilitate the running of the workshop.

## The knot

Materials: none.

Time: 5-10 minutes.

Procedure: ask the participants to form a circle, raise and cross their arms and to take hold of the hands of two other participants chosen at random. Each participant should hold the hands of two different people. The aim of the exercise is then to untie the knots this has formed, and recreate the initial circle, without letting go of each other's hands.

Notes: pay attention to the cultural setting and do not force participants into making physical contact with each other if they are unwilling.

## The floating stick

Materials: a thin stick (1.5 to 2m long)

Time: 5-10 minutes.

Procedure: ask the participants to stand in two rows facing each other about 1 metre apart. Each participant should hold out their index fingers in between those of the person opposite them so that the stick can be (carefully) placed on top of their fingers in a straight line. The aim is to work together to lower the stick to the ground at the same time while ensuring it remains in contact with each person's fingers at all times (participants must not remove their fingers from the stick).

Note: despite the participants' efforts, the stick will no doubt not remain in a straight line. Re-start the exercise as many times as necessary for the group to succeed in placing the stick on the ground at the same time.

Do not hesitate to create your own icebreakers and energisers so that they are tailored to your objectives.

## Facilitate a plenary debate: supported dialogue

Conversations within groups can very often go off on tangents. In some cases, participants can also stop listening or start talking aggressively to get their point across. This can fracture team spirit and lead to a significant drop in motivation within the group. The facilitator thus finds themselves faced with two issues that need managing at the same time: making sure everyone has the chance to speak and refocusing the discussion on a specific topic. The techniques outlined below will help you facilitate good and effective dialogue between members of a group

### Establish the ground rules

"We are going to have one hour of discussions. I would like to explain how this is going to work so that you all have the opportunity to share your points of view, and also gain an understanding of other people's views. If more than one person wants to speak at the same time, I will ask you to raise your hands and I will turn to each of you in the order in which your hands were raised. For greater flexibility, if there are strong immediate reactions to something that is said, I will allow the participants concerned to finish speaking before returning to the initial discussion. I will also summarise the conversation from time to time and if I haven't understood what you said, I will ask you to clarify. Does anyone have any questions or comments?"

### Arrange for people to take turns to speak based on the order in which they raised their hands

- Ask the participants to raise their hands.
- Assign numbers.
- Ask the participants to remember this numerical order and let each person speak in turn.
- If there is a strong reaction, allow the participants concerned to finish speaking before returning to the initial discussion.

### Encourage everyone to participate by asking:

- "Does anyone else have an idea on this?"
- "Has this discussion raised any other questions?"
- "Would anyone like to add anything who has not yet had the chance to speak?"

### Ensure there is a diverse range of opinions expressed on the topics covered by asking:

- "Now we have three opinions – does anyone have a different view?"
- "What do the rest of you think?"
- "And the rest of the group, do you agree with that?"

### Open up the conversation to the shyer members of the group or to those struggling to keep up with the discussion:

- Look at the people who have not yet said anything: look for changes in their body language and if you think that they would like to contribute to the discussion, invite them to speak: "Is there anything you would like to say/add?"
- Do not force them to speak if they are unwilling.

### Use time constraints to give the floor to those who have not yet spoken:

- "We only have 5 minutes left. I would like to hear from those of you who have not yet spoken."
- "We don't have much time left, just enough to hear from perhaps two or three other people, ideally those who have not yet spoken."

### Paraphrase to show the participants that at least one person in the room is listening to them (you). This reassures them and builds mutual understanding

- Give brief summaries.
- Start with: "If I have understood you correctly…", or "Let's see if I have properly understood…"
- End with: "Is that what you wanted to say?"

### Ask for clarification or more detail, for instance by asking:

- "Could you elaborate slightly on that?"
- "What do you mean exactly?"

### Listen to highlight areas of common ground:

- Recap the areas of agreement and disagreement in order to remind people that they share common views, without overlooking their differences: "To recap: I have heard a lot of differences but also that there is common ground."
- Ask: "Have I understood correctly?"

### Separate two topics that have become intermingled:

- Establish the two topics: "There are two conversations here, one on X and one on Y"
- Propose spending time discussing X first, then Y.

### Summarise several conversations:

- The facilitator indicates that they will summarise what is being discussed: "There appears to be three conversations taking place at the same time and I want to make sure I understand them all."
- "One conversation seems to be on X, the second on Y and the third on Z. Is this correct?"
- Stop there and, whatever you do, do not ask: "What do you want to talk about now?" The aim of this intervention is to help the group to see things from all viewpoints, not to choose between them. Let the group then continue with their conversation.

### Ask for answers in order to keep the focus on the same topic:

- "Does anyone have anything to add in response to what X has just said?"
- "After having heard what these participants have said, does anyone have any questions they would like to ask them?"

### Deliberately redirect the discussion:

- "You have spent the last X minutes discussing 'ABC'. Some people have also indicated that they would like to talk about 'XYZ'. Would now be a good time to discuss this?"
- "A while ago, Mr. X said ABC. Nobody has responded to this yet. Before his point of view gets lost, I would just like to see if anyone has anything they would like to say in response to Mr. X?"

### Refocus:

- Summarise the conversations.
- Remind participants of the initial aim of the discussion: "We are here today to…"
- Say: "The discussion has now split into several different topics. Which topics do you think we should address now and which should we park for later?"
- Make a note of the topics.
- Restart the discussion.
- Note down the off-topic ideas on pieces of card and display them in a space marked 'parked' so they can be covered later.

## Managing difficult situations

Below we set out two methods for managing difficult situations: a method for refocusing the discussion in order to address an impasse encountered during a workshop; and non-violent communication to address sensitive issues. Lastly, the table at the end of this section lists issues commonly encountered during workshop facilitation, along with typical mistakes to avoid and examples of 'appropriate' responses.

### Taking a step back from the discussion to talk about the process

The discussion can sometimes reach an impasse for no obviously apparent reason. For instance, certain participants perhaps continually return to a topic on which a decision has already been reached earlier in the workshop. In this situation, the facilitator can be tempted to simply ask: "What's going on? We seem to have got a bit stuck. Does anyone know why we've come back to this point?" This may well be enough for some of the participants to put forward an explanation; however, most people would not naturally think to analyse the situation to work out what is happening and this question could just make the situation worse. We therefore recommend that you use the following strategy:

- Describe the situation. Use facts to support your description. "We've come back to a topic that has already been discussed."
- Ask permission to provisionally suspend the discussion to talk about the process: "It is important that we adjourn the discussion and, together, work out why the conversation keeps returning to this topic. I suggest a very simple way of doing this. Is this OK with everyone?"
- Once you have obtained their agreement, ask a question on the process regarding the previous discussion: "Does anyone have any feedback they would like to give on the way we are working together?" "Is there anything you would like us to change?"
- Once you have received a few responses, ask a more specific question: "What do you think is stopping us from moving forward?" "What do we need to do to overcome this?"
- When the participants seem ready to return to the initial discussion, prepare them by asking a further question: "Before getting back to the topic at hand, does anyone have anything else they would like to add?"

### Non-violent communication

Nonviolent communication is a technique that consists of communicating an idea without causing harm to the person to whom you are speaking. It is based on compassion and helps to create empathy, even in tense and difficult situations. The aim is to replace our judgements or criticisms of other people by becoming more aware of ourselves, our emotions and our needs to avoid the common reactions people have when they feel challenged.

It is a technique that has 4 components, illustrated below using the example of a workshop where participants go beyond their allotted speaking time:

1. Objectively describe the situation, without judging or analysing it: "I see that it is now 11:30."
2. Communicate your (positive or negative) feelings on this situation: "I am afraid we will not be able to finish the workshop on time and with all the participants present."
3. Express your needs with regard to this situation: "And I would like to finish on time after having given everyone an equal opportunity to speak."
4. Make an acceptable request so that the other person can meet your need: "Could you summarise your idea in just a few words, please?"

| The issue | Typical mistake | Appropriate response |
|---|---|---|
| A participant monopolises the conversation ('the loudmouth') | "Excuse me Mr. X, would you mind if we moved on to let someone else speak?" | If one person is participating too much, the others are not participating enough. Thus, focus your efforts on the people who are quiet. Encourage (without compelling) them to contribute while remaining attentive to the dominant participant. Asking the participants to work in smaller groups can also help. |
| A number of participants become distracted during a discussion | Reprimand them like a teacher: "Let's focus on the work at hand, please."<br>This can sometimes work, but it depends on the group and on the reasons for the distraction. | Seek to identify why the participants are distracted. Perhaps they are feeling tired or overwhelmed, in which case suggest taking a break. When there is no clear reason, use non-violent communication. |
| There is very little participation among the group as a whole | Assume that everyone agrees with what is being said and that everybody is happy with the working method being used. | This lack of participation is most likely due to high levels of anxiety among the participants, which is preventing them from expressing themselves freely. You need to find a way of relieving the tension. Small group work can often help with this. |
| Two participants continually clash and take over the discussion | Try to 'resolve the conflict'. One of the pair may have no interest in reaching a consensus. Perhaps they just want to prove to everyone that they are 'in the right'. | Focus your attention on the others. Ask:<br>"Who else has an opinion on this?" or: "Are there any other topics that need to be discussed?" |
| Un ou deux participants restent silencieux dans un groupe où les autres participent activement | "Mr. X, you haven't said anything yet. Would you like to add anything?" This can work if the participant has indicated (e.g. non-verbally) that they would like to contribute. However, if the person is shy, they will not usually appreciate this type of approach and may feel forced into speaking. | "I would like to get the opinions of those who have not yet spoken."<br>Use small group work.<br>Use individual pieces of card. |
| There is very little participant from some of the people present, who seem uninterested in the discussion | Treat their silence as agreement with all that is being said. Ignore these participants and feel happy that they are not causing any problems. | Normally, you can avoid this type of issue by setting out the participants' expectations at the start of each session and incorporating them into the topics under discussion. |
| Not starting and ending at the scheduled times | Always wait until everyone has arrived before starting. If you do this, the session will always start late.<br>Go over the scheduled end time without asking the participants if this is OK. People can always leave quietly if they wish… | Begin at the scheduled time (some flexibility can be scheduled into the very first session by including an introductory coffee, for instance).<br>With the participants, agree how the time is to be managed: "Is everyone OK with the time given for the restart?" And make sure to restart the session at that time.<br>At the end: if you need to go on for longer than planned, first ask the participants for their opinion and come to an arrangement with them if necessary. |
| The participants insist on discussing certain topics (that are of little relevance) | Consider that, at the end of the day, this is their workshop and so they can discuss what they want… | Ask the group to take a step back from the discussion to find out what is happening with the regard to the process. |
| Someone becomes insistent and continually repeats their idea | Ignore them.<br>Tell them to be quiet. | Participants in a group often become insistent when they think that nobody has understood them. That is your job! So, seek to understand them – including by 'reading between the lines'- and paraphrase what they have said. |

# Monitoring and Evaluation

- WHY MONITOR AND EVALUATE A PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS
- A GENERIC EVALUATION APPROACH
- MONITORING AND EVALUATION TOOLS

# WHY MONITOR AND EVALUATE A PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

Public participation can create high expectations, such as: achieving consensus on a project; improving the effectiveness of public policies; reducing tensions; enabling the inclusion of people who are usually far removed from circles of power; building trust and social ties, etc. (→ see Chapter 1, page 09). However, among certain people, it can also breed mistrust. Similar to 'green washing', there is sometimes talk of 'citizen washing'. There is no point in taking part in so-called participatory formats as the decision has already been made, participants only represent themselves, and the facilitators seek only to reinforce the interests of those that commissioned the process, etc.
Monitoring and evaluating a public participation process should ensure the advantages and limitations of the public participation are looked at objectively, which can help alleviate certain concerns and check whether expectations have been met. Evaluation provides strategic information for each stage of the process:

- Beforehand, it can help ensure that the benefits of a public participation process justify the cost (time, materials and equipment, human resources, etc.).
- During the public participation, it helps ensure that the process is running smoothly and that action can be taken to remedy the situation if not.
- Afterwards, it can be used to highlight the monitoring process to better showcase the results.

# A GENERIC EVALUATION APPROACH

## 1. Two key questions

According to Michael Scriven, a leading expert on public policy evaluations, an evaluation must make it possible to assess the value, merit and worth, or the product of a process[10]. When applied to public participation, evaluation most commonly seeks to answer two key questions:

### Has the public participation process achieved its objectives?

This question relates to the instrumental reasons for carrying out a public participation process (→ page 09). To answer this question, it is necessary to assess the ***effectiveness*** of the process. Has the desired outcome of the public participation been achieved, such as a joint action plan, for instance? If you want to be more ambitious, it is also possible to assess the knock-on effects of the public participation process, whether these were anticipated or not, or even its longer-term impacts.

### Was the public participation process conducted in an ethical manner?

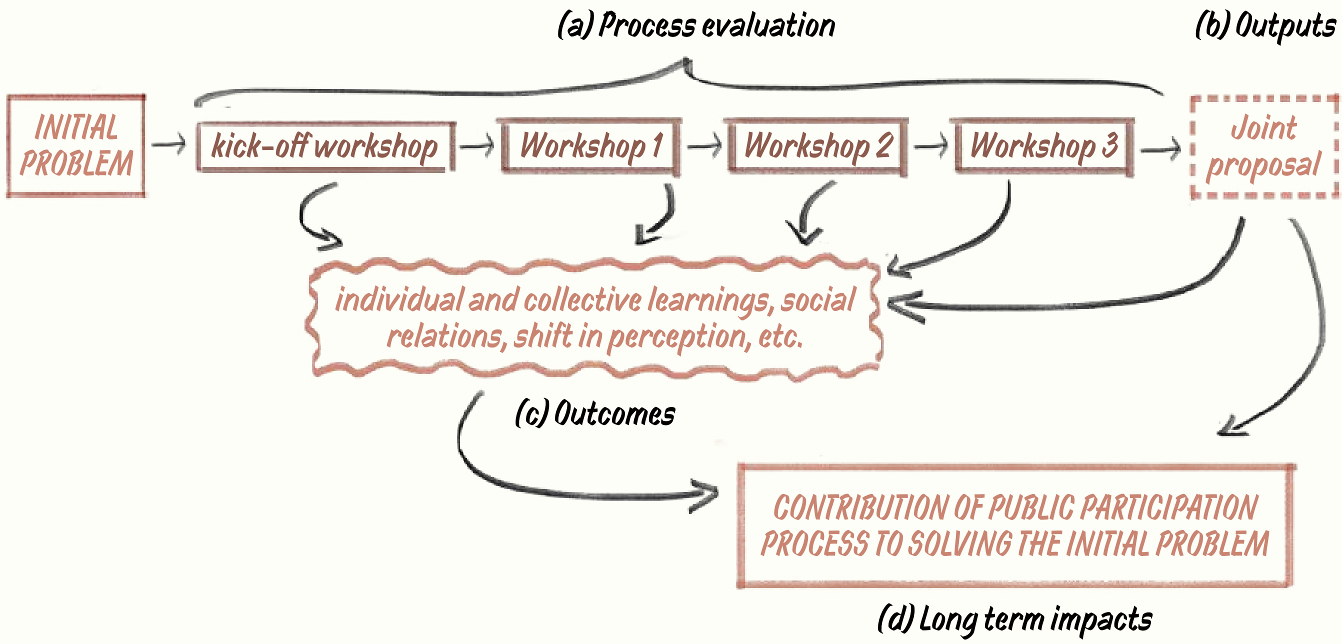
This question relates to how the public participation process was implemented. It involves assessing the quality of the process based on specific criteria. Lisode recommends evaluating the quality of a public participation using a list of principles (→ page 10) taken from scientific literature[11] and based on our field experience. These principles appear to be a necessary (albeit insufficient) requirement for ensuring the social and democratic goals of a public participation process are met (→ page 09).

10 – Scriven, M. (1991). Evaluation thesaurus. Sage.
11 – Rowe, G. and Frewer, L.J. (2004) Evaluating public participation exercises. A research agenda. Science, Technology, & Human Values, 29 (4), 512-556.

## 2. What exactly can we observe?

As summarised in Figure X, evaluating a public participation process should enable us to observe and report on a range of aspects:

- The various activities that punctuate the public participation process (a) in order to monitor this process and also to assess whether it is being implemented in line with the predefined quality criteria, particularly from a democratic point of view.
- The direct outcomes of the process (b) that can be used to assess whether or not the public participation has achieved its instrumental objectives.
- The effects produced by the process (c), such as the lessons learned, social ties or changes in participants' perceptions, which are significant individual or joint social developments that need to be highlighted.
- The impacts of the process (d), which result from the combination of the factors described above, plus external factors, and which remain visible over the longer-term.




## 3. The limitations of a public participation evaluation

Evaluating the social aspect of a public participation is a delicate process for two main reasons. Firstly, the desired social changes (lessons learned, strengthened social ties, etc.) are determined by factors that are unrelated to the public participation process itself (e.g. the history of stakeholder relations, the openness of participants, etc.). However, they can also result from events outside of the project (e.g. political and social affairs, the participants' personal situations, a parallel process involving the same people, etc.) and of which you may not always be aware. Secondly, these changes reflect social and cognitive developments that are difficult to objectively qualify without the appropriate tools. Thus, *we generally settle for assessing the participants*' perception of these changes, rather than seeking to prove that these changes have taken place (→ the sample questionnaire page 94).

Evaluating the extent to which the public participation process has had an impact on resolving a given issue is complicated by the fact that there are numerous parameters that can influence the success of a public policy. The fact that the process has been developed in a participatory manner is just one parameter of many. It is therefore particularly difficult to distinguish the 'participation' variable from all of the others[12]. This is why *an impact evaluation usually consists of establishing a conceptual chain of cause and effect* (an impact chain) rather than seeking to tangibly assess causalities. An example of an impact chain is presented below.

A final limitation relates to the people who evaluate the process. Often, there are insufficient resources to get an outside view (from an independent expert). For this reason, and in order to prevent facilitators from acting as both judge and jury, *the evaluation draws on the participants' opinions* as we ask them directly what they think of the process using an anonymous questionnaire.

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION TOOLS

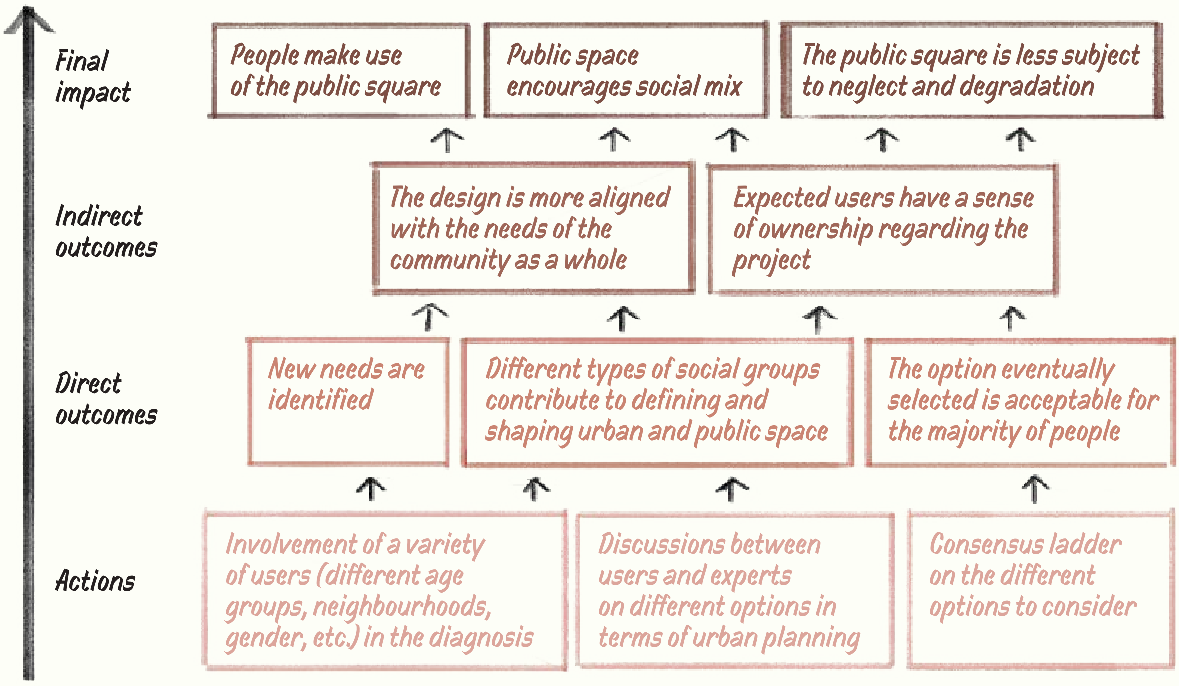
Below are four different tools that you can use for monitoring and evaluating a public participation process:

- The impact chain (ex ante and ex post)
- The post-workshop evaluation questionnaire
- The workshop report
- End-of-process individual interviews

### 1. The impact chain

The aim of the impact chain is to demonstrate the ripple effects of a public participation process through a specific outcome that is shared by all.

12 – This challenge is known as the causality issue that was analysed by John Mayne (2001). The approach that we recommend is broadly based on contribution analysis, an area in which he was a leading figure.




It involves formalising a clear and rigorous diagram of the logic behind a public participation process (→ see the example above).

Used prior to the public participation, this can help to communicate the objectives to be achieved. Once the public participation process has come to an end, this diagram can also be used to explore the impacts of the process, for example in individual interviews.

Without needing to be exhaustive, it can be useful to identify the external factors that will influence the success of the project (and which are outside your control). This will help remind you that, although you are specifying the approach, you cannot guarantee that the public participation process will have a successful outcome as there are factors at play that you cannot control. A public participation is not a laboratory experiment but a process that takes place in the real world

## 2. The end-of-workshop questionnaire

The paper-based end-of-workshop questionnaire is the best and most effective way of collecting information to help you monitor your process and answer the two key questions set out above. In addition, unlike individual interviews, the questionnaire will help you generate quantified information that can be easily transcribed into an analysis report. As it is anonymous, the questionnaire also provides you with more sincere and direct feedback than you would get if you were to pose the same questions orally.

We recommend you use a one-page questionnaire that contains a number of closed questions and that you provide space for the participants to provide further comments if necessary (→ see the example next page).

We also advise leaving a space at the bottom of the questionnaire in which the participants can write down their recommendations for the remainder of the process. Lastly, these questionnaires should be handed out just before the participants leave at the end of the workshop. Ask the participants to complete the questionnaires before they leave, explaining why it is important to collect information on their perceptions of the public participation process

| Statement to be evaluated | Somewhat agree | Somewhat disagree | Don't know | Comment |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| The public participation objectives are clear | X | | | |
| The public participation approach is useful | X | | | |
| The facilitator remained neutral | X | | | |
| All stakeholders' interests were represented | | X | | If not, what/who was missing? *The fishermen!* |
| I learned things during the workshop | | X | | *Too soon to tell* |

## 3. The workshop report

A report must be drafted at the end of each public participation workshop. This document is vital for keeping a record of the participants, the activities and the topics discussed. It can also be used to list the workshop outcomes (areas of agreement between participants, areas of disagreement, evaluation questionnaire responses, etc.), and you will need it to prepare for the subsequent stages of your process. When the time comes to assess the public participation, you can refer back to the various reports to ensure you have a true picture of the process implemented. This document generally has the following layout:

- Review of the public participation context and objectives (important for those people who were not involved);
- Specific workshop objectives;
- Workshop procedure (agenda and approach);
- List of facilitators and participants;
- Outcomes and results (in plenary sessions, in sub-groups, etc.);
- Workshop evaluation (based on the results of the questionnaire).

The report must be completed and shared with all participants within a reasonable timeframe (a maximum of two to three weeks after the workshop). The participants are then given a set time period in which to provide their feedback or request any changes. Once this time period has elapsed, the report will be approved and will form an important milestone in your approach.

## 4. End-of-process individual interviews

Once the public participation process has come to an end, it can be useful to conduct semi-structured interviews with some of the key stakeholders in order to more accurately define the various relationships listed in your impact chain. This type of interview can also be useful for collecting clarifications, ideas or anecdotes to help improve your understanding of the outcomes and results. There are a number of different techniques you can use, including comprehensive interviews that focus on listening and building empathy with the person being interviewed to encourage them to express their uncensored opinions.

→ see more

Guide sur l'évaluation de la participation édité par l'Institut de la Concertation et de la Participation Citoyenne (available in French only):
https://i-cpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/ICPC_2022_EvaluationParticipation.pdf

# CONCLUSION

Implementing a public participation process is a real challenge. Its success depends on a combination of factors. The first step is to clearly define why you want to take this course of action. You then need to develop a strategy that is aligned to the reality of the environment in which the public participation is to take place. It is also necessary to choose the 'correct' participatory methods and tools and know how to use them. In addition, you need to clarify your position and respect certain ethical rules. Finally, it is important to mobilise sufficient resources to meet the set objectives.

Unlike more technical approaches, the public participation approach cannot predict with any certainty what outcome will be produced by a given process, tool or method. It does, however, make it possible to ask the right questions and adopt a reflective stance in order to avoid the pitfalls inherent in participatory methods. We hope that this guide has provided you with valuable information that you can use to (re)develop your own public participation practices and we wish you every success in your projects.

The Lisode Team

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