# A GUIDE TO ENGAGING CITIZENS IN ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

A resource produced in partnership from the Defra funded Citizen Engagement on the Environment Project

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# INTRODUCTION

Developing environmental policy is a complex task. Policy makers must navigate between scientific evidence, economic concerns, political pressure, local, national and international law and policy, and the concerns and interests of diverse groups of stakeholders to find policy solutions to complex and urgent issues.

Public-participation, when done well, can help with that task in a number of ways. It can help to build trust between the public and decision-makers, contribute to solving complex problems, introduce innovation and diverse perspectives, improve public understanding of how policy gets made, and encourage active citizenship beyond those who traditionally engage with decision making on environmental issues.

When planning for public-participation, there are many factors to consider, and many approaches to choose between. The aim of this guide is to simplify that process as much as possible, and to direct your focus to the factors that are most crucial to a successful outcome. Planning for public-participation requires choices and trade-offs, and no guide will eliminate the need for good judgement in that regard.

Public-participation is not one-size fits all; it is a flexible process that can be responsive to many different contexts. The key to getting public-participation right is to understand its components and the process for combining them in different configurations and at different scales to achieve the desired outcomes.

The guide also focuses on approaches to public-participation that have deliberation and dialogue at their heart. We have done this with consideration to some of the particular challenges facing policy makers on environmental issues.

Deliberation and dialogue are well suited to issues that are complex, contentious, moral, and/or constitutional. Most environmental issues will fall under at least one of those, and in some cases all four. It is highly likely that you will need to commission a suite of engagement to support any deliberative engagement you decide to undertake and is also important to note that there will be circumstances where deliberative engagement is not appropriate and other forms should be considered instead.

Public-participation that is based on dialogue and deliberation can produce the following benefits for decision makers:

1. It can happen at any scale, from a dozen people to thousands.
2. It can be done on or offline.
3. It is flexible to timescales, budgets, geographic spread, the complexity or contentiousness of the issue, and stage in the policy cycle.
4. Deliberation encourages people to think in a less self-interested, more cooperative way, supporting social cohesion.
5. It improves the quality of decision making because it is able to respond more closely to people's needs.
6. People are better informed about how public institutions work, improving trust.
7. It improves governance by providing democratic legitimacy to decision making
8. It is especially effective in overcoming polarisation because it develops the conditions necessary for participants to change their minds.
9. The opinions of participants after taking part in deliberation are typically more considered judgements than they held prior, therefore decision-makers can trust them as systematically thought-through.

This guide is divided into two parts:

**PART 1** introduces the components of a structured approach to planning for public-participation, the key decisions to be made at each stage, and the best order in which to make those decisions.

**PART 2** is an at-a-glance guide to picking the best approach for achieving a clearly defined output. The aim of this approach is to take the focus away from particular methods as the starting point, and instead to put those methods in their place as just one part of a whole.

For further information on many of the elements we cover in this guide we'd suggest also visiting Involve's Knowledge Base: **https://www.involve.org.uk/resources/knowledge-base**

# PART 1
# CHOOSING HOW TO ENGAGE

Conversations about how to engage with the public very often begin and end with the method. Often, a particular method can take the spotlight for several reasons - because it is novel, because it has previously produced a high profile outcome, or because it is being advocated for by influential groups.

However, the method is the wrong place to start.

This guide aims to put methods in their place as just one component in an overall participation design. The design of participation is driven by a clear sense of purpose, and is a legitimate, timely, and appropriate exercise as part of the decision making process.

For that reason, this guide starts with a set of underpinning practical considerations to help identify the context, constraints, and the decision-making infrastructure within which the participatory process is set. It then goes on to offer guidance on defining the broad scope and purpose of the process, how to identify what outcomes are being sought and what outputs are required to achieve those outcomes (including the types of data produced by different processes), and who needs to be involved. We also highlight other considerations that are likely to impact on your approach, such as whether you want to run your process on or offline, how to evaluate your process, and the steps involved in securing an institutional response.

**START HERE**

UNDERPINNING PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

DEFINE SCOPE AND PURPOSE

IDENTIFY OUTCOMES AND OUTPUTS

WHO NEEDS TO BE INVOLVED?

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

METHOD
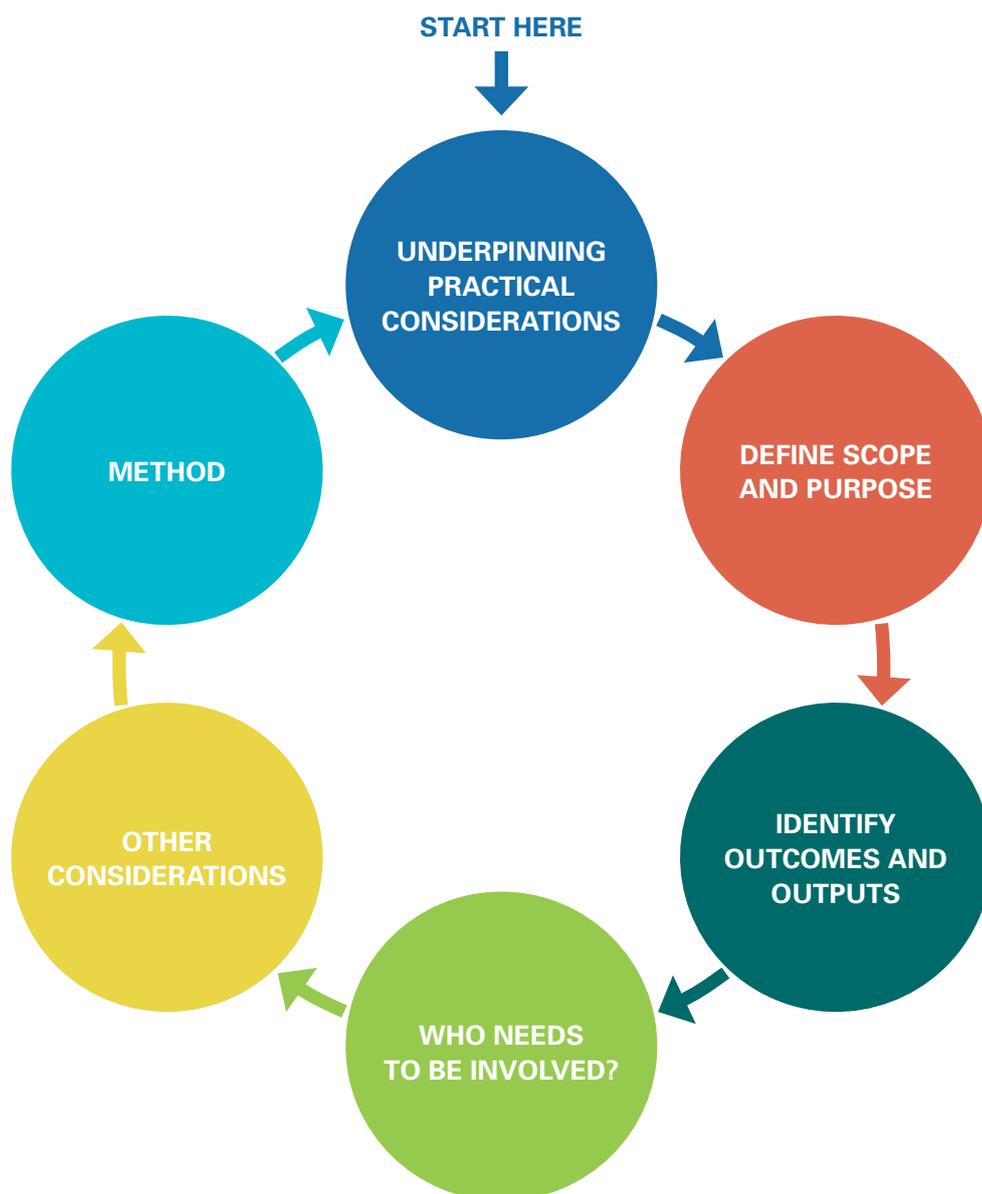
# UNDERPINNING PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

These considerations can and should be bigger than the immediate scope of the participatory process being planned, to encourage a joined-up, strategic and long-term approach to participation. Environmental policy making is inherently long-range, and while there may be time constraints on individual processes, it is still possible to think about how the participation you are designing now connects and contributes to future engagement. Policy development is cyclical, and though the outcomes, and therefore approach, will change at different stages in that cycle, there is never a point at which participation is unnecessary or unhelpful.

Once considerations around budget, timescales, and institutional buy-in have been clarified, greater definition can be brought to the overall scope and purpose of the engagement process, determining what outcomes and outputs the process should produce, and what the ideal method to deliver them will be.

## BUDGET

**How much budget is available for the project?**

One of the most obvious and intractable constraints on what participatory approach you can take will be financial. The cost of participation can range from £10,000 to £500,000 and up. In this guide, we have highlighted options across that range.

## TIMESCALES

**When do you need the results by?**

**How does this project connect with the medium and long term participation strategy for this issue?**

In this guide, we have highlighted options that can be delivered in short and medium timescales, and have indicated where a method can be extended over a longer timescale where appropriate to the aims of the project. However, we want to emphasise that for long-range issues like environmental policy-making projects should never be thought of in isolation from longer term goals.

## INSTITUTIONAL BUY-IN

**Do the people with ultimate decision-making authority know about the project? Do they support it? Have they committed to respond in detail to the recommendations?**

Institutional buy-in is critical to achieving the desired outputs of a participatory project. The extent to which decision-makers can commit to a particular institutional response, and the process for gaining that response should be agreed early in the process. If institutional buy-in cannot be secured before the project begins, we would advise reviewing the plan and revising if necessary rather than proceeding without it.

Deliberative engagement processes sit on a spectrum. At one end are those that are largely consultative activities which aim to understand public perspectives in order to better inform public policy. In the middle are those that aim to share power 'co-productively' with participants, sharing responsibility for shaping the policy question and response to this. At the other end are those that aim to hand decision-making and implementation power over to communities. Engagement processes will be more or less successful depending on the extent to which institutions, and particularly those at the top of the institutions, understand how much power they are giving away over decisions when they commission a particular form of engagement and are willing and able to commit to delivering on this at the end of the process.

Clarifying the process for gaining the institutional response is therefore vitally important because it:

- establishes a commitment to change from the outset by recognising that some response will need to be made;
- provides a framing for the overall process which will support the participants to understand what they are part of including;

- explaining to participants exactly what will be done with their effort, how the process will be managed and how its outcomes will affect / change things. As a result, it helps to manage expectations;

- bounding the process by identifying what is and is not up for discussion;

- clarifying the roles of the different participants and what is expected of them all at different stages of the process;

# DEFINING SCOPE AND PURPOSE

Defining the scope of a participatory process involves clarifying what the boundaries to the exercise are in order to be able to define an appropriate and achievable purpose.

A well-defined purpose will have clear outputs and outcomes, will be highly focused and easy to understand for everyone in the process, regardless of specialist knowledge, including members of the general public. It should be clearly stated and specific enough to prevent it being open to interpretation. It is essential that all those with an interest or influence over the process in a commissioning organisation are aligned to its purpose. A clear purpose anchors the process and enables the commissioners to put mechanisms in place to transform process outputs into outcomes.

### KEY QUESTIONS

a. What is your reason for wanting to involve the public/ stakeholders in your decision-making?

b. What can actually change?

c. What do you want to have achieved at the end of the process (outcomes)?

d. What tangible products do you want to have achieved during and at the end of the project (outputs)?

**How you answer those questions will be influenced by two further clarifications**

1. What level of involvement from the public are you seeking?

2. What stage in the policy cycle is the issue at?

### LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT

The model overleaf was developed by the International Association for Public Participation and is a useful tool for clarifying that participation happens along a spectrum. These levels of participation represent different purposes (the 'public participation goal'), and different promises to the public about their influence over decision making at each level of participation.

Clarifying where on this spectrum your process sits is crucial in determining which approach to take.

| | PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL | PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC |
|---|---|---|
| **INFORM** | To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities, and/or solutions. | We will keep you informed. |
| **CONSULT** | To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives, and/or decisions. | We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. |
| **INVOLVE** | To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered. | We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. |
| **COLLABORATE** | To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution | We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible. |
| **EMPOWER** | To place final decision making in the hands of the public | We will implement what you decide. |

## STAGE IN THE POLICY CYCLE

The traditional policy cycle is an idealised representation of how policy is designed. In reality, the process may not look like this - the stages may not be so clearly defined, and the steps may not be sequential. We include it here as an organising principle. Its usefulness is as an aid to identifying the context for the engagement and what level of influence is available to participants based on what decisions have already been made. Knowing, even roughly, what stage you are at in the policy cycle will help you ensure you are using the most effective and appropriate approaches and methods for your purposes.

APPRAISAL

DECIDING

DEVELOPMENT

IMPLEMENTATION

VISIONING

EVALUATION
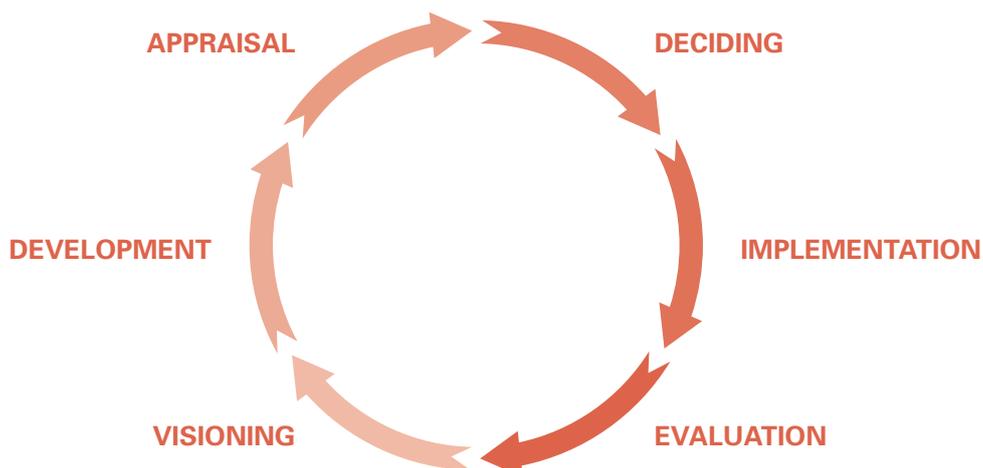
# IDENTIFYING OUTCOMES AND OUTPUTS

## OUTCOMES

Outcomes are the immediate differences that you expect a process to make to your policy development or implementation.  They are the clear statement of exactly what will change as a direct result of what your planned engagement will achieve.

It is useful to keep in mind those outcomes which are essential, such as policy change, and secondary outcomes that may be "nice to have" such as improved relationships with key stakeholders.

It is also useful to define short and long term outcomes, such as those that result from the specific process itself, and those that may depend on decisions and actions outside the scope of what you are doing, but which may be affected.

The second part of this guide identifies seven primary outcomes from public participation as a way to guide your process design, for example gaining insight into the values that underpin public opinion, generating new ideas, or finding common ground with the stakeholder. There are of course many more possible outcomes, depending on the scope and purpose of the project.

## OUTPUTS

Outputs are the tangible products of a process, such as meetings, reports, leaflets, and research findings. They are the building blocks of the process, but do not in themselves fulfil the overall purpose of the project. There should be a clear link between the outputs and outcomes, and how they help to progress the overarching purpose of the project that is understood by all those involved.

Defining the outputs is a crucial part of designing the process because it helps:

- The process designer choose the right method to get the outputs wanted, as different participatory methods are designed to produce different types of outputs

- Everyone think through how the outputs will achieve the outcomes ("how will this meeting help achieve our overall outcomes?") and therefore

- Ensure the right outputs are produced at the right time.

## DATA AND EVIDENCE FROM PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

An important consideration when designing a participation process is what sort of data and evidence is needed to produce the outputs required. Some participation processes are more effective at producing quantitative data and others qualitative data. Quantitative data will help you to better understand how many participants hold a particular opinion, or which opinions are held by different publics and so on. On the other hand, qualitative data will help you to understand which values underlie particular perspectives, or which participants are taking into account as they draw their conclusions.

This guide is focused on more deliberative methodologies. These are better suited to producing robust qualitative data from relatively small samples. While those samples can be reflective of the wider public, they are often not big enough to produce data that is statistically significant.

If statistically significant data is needed about the opinions of the wider public, these methods will need to be augmented such as by polling or surveying. Combining methods in this way is often done but goes beyond the scope of this guide. We want to emphasise that while numbers of people holding particular views can be important, for some processes what is more important is understanding the diversity and range of opinions on a topic, including unexpected ideas that might change your perspective completely, and deliberative approaches are well-suited to this.

Qualitative data generated in this way can be captured at a number of levels depending on the defined

scope, purpose, and outcomes of the project. For example, you may decide to only record the final decisions or recommendations made by the participants, or you may choose to capture opinions directly in response to the evidence presented as part of the process. In some cases, you may record the dialogue, producing a very large dataset with which to analyse the values that underpin participants' views, the qualities of the process, input by participants relative to each other, and so on.

The imput you capture should be shaped by the outcomes you have defined and the overall purpose of your project. It should be a major consideration in the design of the process and will have important implications for the budget.

As is noted above, deliberative processes can produce quantitative data. Generally, this is in the form of demographic and attitudinal data recorded to ensure a representative sample of the population has been recruited.

It is possible to quantify some of the outcomes of the process, such as percentage change in attitudes, opinions, values, and knowledge, with the right research design, which can then be used against existing population data for the purposes of comparison or extrapolation. For example, you may capture the percentage of participants in favour of wind power after they have heard evidence and had a chance to deliberate. You can then compare this with population-wide statistics on support for wind power, allowing you to draw conclusions about how access to evidence and opportunities to deliberate influence attitudes to wind power. However, if a purpose of your research is to generate quantitative data, deliberative approaches would not be the ideal choice.

It is really important to be clear about what sort of data is needed, not only to ensure that the outputs required are as robust as possible, but that senior decision-makers, and sometimes key stakeholders, view the process as robust and valid. These considerations need to be thought about in the early stages of designing a participation process.

# WHO NEEDS TO BE INVOLVED?

Identifying and finding the right participants is not only important to ensure that a process works well, it is also essential in creating legitimacy and credibility for the whole process.

To help ensure that the right people are involved, we suggest the following considerations:

- Who is directly responsible for the decisions on the issues?
- Who is influential in the area, community and/or organisation?
- Who will be affected by any decisions on the issue (individuals and organisations)?
- Who runs organisations with relevant interests?
- Who is influential on this issue?
- Who can obstruct a decision if not involved?
- Who has been involved in this issue in the past?
- Who has not been involved, but should have been?

Below, we highlight some of the main groupings of participants common to these processes.

### GENERAL PUBLIC (OR A REFLECTIVE SAMPLE)

This refers to the population as a whole (whether of the nation, the region, town or neighbourhood). In some cases (such as with information campaigns) the target may be the entire population, but more often participation will involve the creation of a representative sample – that is, reflecting the key demographics of a population within the group participating in your process. Demographic characteristics often used for this include gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and disability, but careful consideration will need to be given to which are important to include and why.

In some cases, it might also be necessary to oversample some minority groups to ensure adequate representation of minority views. Depending on the issue, it might also be necessary to balance the sample on the basis of attitudinal criteria (for example, level of concern about climate change). To ensure a diverse sample and to maintain involvement in longer-term processes, it might also be necessary to incentivise participation.

The gold-standard method of recruitment of representative samples for processes such as citizens' assemblies and citizens' juries is sortition or civic lottery - two terms that mean the same thing. Samples can also be derived from random probability surveys (often using randomly generated phone numbers), on-street recruitment, or from large market research panels. In most of these cases, a larger pool is generated from which the representative sample is selected.

### STATUTORY CONSULTEES

Under some circumstances, you will have a statutory obligation to consult with particular bodies or people.

### GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS OR AGENCIES

Even where there is no statutory obligation to do so, it may be necessary to include governmental organisations in the participatory process. This may be because they are a key stakeholder, have technical expertise, or are the ultimate decision-makers on the outcome of the participatory process.

### A SELF-SELECTING GROUP

This refers to people whose participation in a process is voluntary and driven by an interest in the issue or the outcome, or in the process itself. The nature of certain processes may mean that they are openly promoted through advertising in media, on community notice boards, for example, with the aim of inviting members of the public to take part. The people who turn up for these processes are therefore 'self-selecting'. However, the promotion of the process can be targeted on, for example, a geographic basis to ensure that there is some relevance to the issue being discussed.

Those turning up may or may not have particular expertise in the issue, and they may or may not be particularly affected by the outcome of the issue. They are likely, however, to have strong views on the topic. Though demographic data can be captured as part of the process, it is not the basis of recruitment, and it can be difficult to ensure that self-selecting groups are representative of the wider community. Depending on the issue, this might be the most appropriate way of recruiting participants, but it is worth noting that in some circumstances, the legitimacy of a process that only involves people who have self-selected may be questioned.

### SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS/ PEOPLE WITH TECHNICAL OR SPECIALIST EXPERTISE (INCLUDING EXPERTS BY EXPERIENCE)

Under many circumstances, you may want to hear from people with particular specialist expertise or interest in the issue at hand. This might include technical knowledge, lived experience, or groups with a special interest such as campaigners, service users etc. This group of people will often hold firm views on the issue and may be in conflict with you, or an important source of any wider societal conflict of attitudes.

### PEOPLE MOST AFFECTED BY DECISIONS

In some cases, you will want to hear from people who are likely to be most affected by decisions. This group may be different from those who are most interested in the issue, and they may be less likely to get involved in consultations.

### ORGANISED CIVIL SOCIETY

This refers to civil society groupings at various levels of formal organisation. They may be organised around local issues, identities such as faith, interests such as sports, or other shared objectives. What they have in common is that they are centres of organisation. Engaging with them on issues outside of their own stated remit can bring a diversity of voices into your process, without vested interest. It can also have the effect of empowering civil society to hold decision-makers accountable for how they respond to the outputs of a participatory process.

# OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

### ONLINE / IN-PERSON

Most of the methodologies included in this guide can be carried out online or offline. Some translate from in-person to online more easily than others, but most can be managed online with the right approach, planning, and preparation. While moving online can save on some costs such as travel, accommodation, venue hire and catering, they can also require additional resources and a significant investment in ensuring processes are accessible, such as providing technical training, equipment, and 1-2-1 support for people less confident online.

### MONITORING AND EVALUATION

How will you know if you have achieved your desired outcomes? What will you need to record or measure to be able to make claims about the legitimacy of your project and its results?

Planning how you will monitor, review, and evaluate your process in advance is important so that you can identify what you need to know before the process starts to be able to make legitimate claims about what the process has achieved.

#### Establishing baseline data

Before the process begins, you may want to know what the participants think about the issue being addressed. This can help to capture some of the intangible outcomes, such as improved relationships, enhanced knowledge or understanding, or a change in attitudes as a result of participating in the process.

Establishing baseline data can also support comparisons with larger qualitative data sets, such as population surveys, and can allow policy makers to extrapolate the findings or recommendations of reflective samples to the wider population.

**During the process**

During the process, and immediately after it, you may want to capture data to:

1. Evaluate the process, key considerations:
   - Quality of design and facilitation
   - Quality of discourse
   - Quality of evidence - comprehensiveness, balance, reliability, accessibility

2. Report on results, key considerations:
   - Who is responsible for writing it, i.e. will participants have a role?
   - What do decision-makers need to know?
   - What do the general public need to know?
   - Need for executive summary and accessible presentation of results

**INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE**

The process for obtaining the institutional response to the results of the participatory process should have been established as one of the underpinning considerations early in the planning process. We would go as far as to recommend that you don't begin your process until you have secured this.

One of the defining features of public dialogue and deliberation is that it is intended as two-way between participants and those with ultimate decision making responsibility. The institutional response to the outcomes of such processes should be specific and detailed.

It should cover:

- What aspects of any recommendations will be taken forward, how that will happen, and in what timeframe.
- What aspects of any recommendations will not be taken forward, and the reasons why not.

# PART 2
# DESIGNING YOUR PARTICIPATORY PROCESS AND IDENTIFYING THE RIGHT METHOD

Part 1 of this guide took you through the considerations you need to make in order to identify the best approach to achieving your purpose.

By following those steps, you should have a clear sense of scope and purpose, with outcomes and outputs and the data you need from the process identified.

Part 2 of this guide presents the best methods to use for 8 of the most commonly sought outcomes from participatory processes.

Those outcomes are:

- Generate a shared vision
- Insight into what people think and the values underpinning those opinions
- Capture participants' informed opinions
- Identify priorities for investment or spending
- Find common ground between participants
- Assessment of proposals or decisions
- Empower participants to make specific decisions

The information we provide on methods is initially organised around these outcomes. We then provide further detail about how the features of the highlighted methods relate to the considerations we outlined in Part 1.

The methods we highlight in this section are:

For more information on any of these methods, we can recommend:
**https://www.involve.org.uk/resources/methods**

## I WANT TO DESIGN A PROCESS THAT GENERATES A SHARED VISION

Appreciative inquiries (pg13)

Citizens' assemblies (pg14)

Stakeholder dialogues (pg21)

## I WANT TO DESIGN A PROCESS THAT OFFERS INSIGHT INTO WHAT PEOPLE THINK AND THE VALUES THAT UNDERPIN THOSE OPINIONS

Citizens' assemblies (pg14)

Citizens' juries (pg15)

Citizens' panels (pg16)

Distributed dialogues (pg18)

Public dialogues (pg20)

## I WANT TO DESIGN A PROCESS THAT CAPTURES PARTICIPANTS' INFORMED OPINIONS

Citizens' assemblies (pg14)

Citizens' juries (pg15)

Citizens' panels (pg16)

Distributed dialogues (pg 18)

Public dialogues (pg20)

## I WANT TO DESIGN A PROCESS THAT IDENTIFIES PRIORITIES FOR INVESTMENT / IMPROVEMENT / PROTECTION

Appreciative inquiries (pg13)

Citizens' assemblies (pg14)

Citizens' panels (pg16)

Crowdsourcing (pg17)

Public dialogues (pg20)

Stakeholder dialogues (pg21)

## I WANT TO DESIGN A PROCESS THAT HELPS DEVELOP NEW SOLUTIONS TO EXISTING PROBLEMS

Citizens' assemblies (pg14)

Citizens' panels (pg16)

Crowdsourcing (pg17)

Pop-up democracy (pg19)

Public dialogues (pg20)

Stakeholder dialogues (pg21)

## I WANT TO DESIGN A PROCESS THAT FINDS COMMON GROUND BETWEEN PARTICIPANTS

Appreciative inquiries (pg13)

Citizens' assemblies (pg14)

Citizens' juries (pg15)

Stakeholder dialogues (pg21)

## I WANT TO DESIGN A PROCESS THAT CAN ASSESS PROPOSALS OR DECISIONS

Citizens' juries (pg15)

Distributed dialogues (pg18)

Stakeholder dialogues (pg21)

## I WANT TO DESIGN A PROCESS THAT EMPOWERS PARTICIPANTS TO MAKE SPECIFIC DECISIONS (E.G. VERDICTS)

Citizens' assemblies (pg14)

Citizens' juries (pg15)

# HOW TO USE THE SYMBOLS

These symbols are intended as an at-a-glance reference guide to the methods in terms of the categories identified in Part 1. The symbols indicate the closest fit or most appropriate category for the method. The text provides a summary description of the method, including if and how it can be used more flexibly than the symbols suggest.

**1. What level of involvement this method is best suited to**

**2. What stage in the policy cycle this method is best suited to**
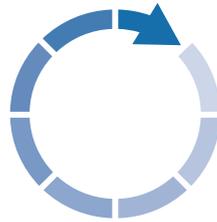
**3. What participant type this method works best with**
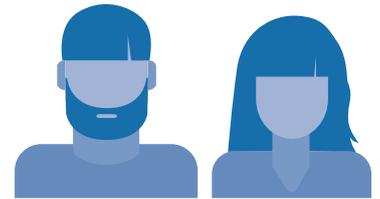
**4. Online / In person**

**0 thumbs up** not suitable for this mode of delivery

**1 thumbs up** can be done if needed, but is not ideal

**2 thumbs up** it works reasonably well with this mode of delivery

**3 thumbs up** it is designed for this mode of delivery

**5. Cost**

£££ **Low** <£10,000

£££ **Medium** £10,000-£50,000

£££ **High** >£50,000

**6. Timescales**

**Short** from initiation to completion in under 6 months

**Medium** from initiation to completion in between 6 to 12 months

Note on timescales: these timescales are estimates of how long the project will take from commissioning (excluding the internal process leading up to that point) to reporting. They may take longer if more detailed data analysis is planned. The timescales here are also based on a number of assumptions, such as an existing network of stakeholders, access to skills needed to run the project, team capacity, and so on. One or more of those factors not being in place could throw off a timeline considerably, so please take these as estimates as being on the lower end of the scale.

# APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

**INFORM**

**COLLABORATE**
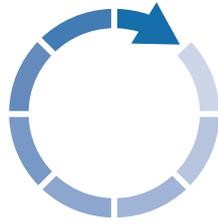
**VISIONING**

**DEVELOPMENT**
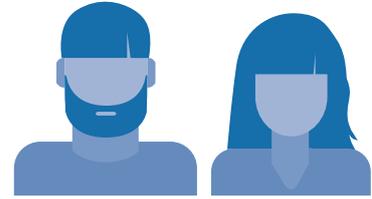
**PEOPLE MOST AFFECTED BY THE DECISION**

**A SELF-SELECTING GROUP**

**ORGANISED CIVIL SOCIETY**
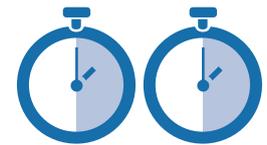
Appreciative Inquiry uses questions to build a vision for the future, focusing on past and potential future successes. It typically involves policy makers working with stakeholder groups or community leaders. These questions are then taken to the wider community. The focus is usually on what people enjoy about an area, their hopes for the future, and their feelings about their communities.

The process goes through a number of stages, with a heavy emphasis on retrospective appreciation and visioning. It is conducive to collaboration, but later stages can be argued to empower the small group of people who go through the appreciative inquiry, especially when used in its typical community development settings. When used by policy makers, it is most often used at visioning and policy development stages, but decision-makers could decide to hand over the process and empower participants to make ultimate decisions.

The process is designed around questions that encourage people to tell stories from their own experience of what works. By discussing what has worked in the past and the reasons why, the participants can go on to imagine and create a vision of what would make a successful future that has a firm grounding in the reality of past successes. This process can be implemented in a number of different ways as long as the principle of retrospective appreciation and a future vision remains.

# CITIZENS' ASSEMBLIES

**INFORM**
**CONSULT**
**INVOLVE**
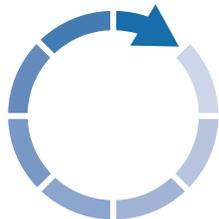
**VISIONING**
**DEVELOPMENT**
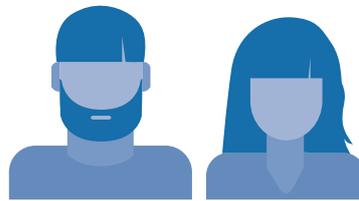
**GENERAL PUBLIC, OR A REFLECTIVE SAMPLE**

£££
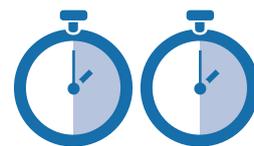
A citizens' assembly is a group of people who are brought together to discuss an issue or issues and reach a conclusion about what they think should happen. The people who take part are recruited so they reflect the wider population – in terms of demographics (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity, social class) and sometimes relevant attitudes (e.g. attitudes towards climate change). The sortition methodology is normally used for recruiting participants.

Citizens' assemblies give members of the public the time and opportunity to learn about and discuss a topic, before reaching conclusions. Assembly participants are asked to make trade-offs and arrive at workable recommendations.

# CITIZENS' JURIES

**CONSULT**

**INVOLVE**

**COLLABORATE**
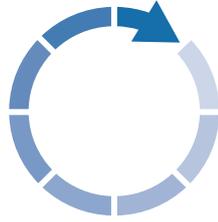
**DEVELOPMENT**

**DECISION-MAKING**
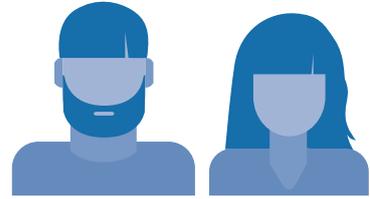
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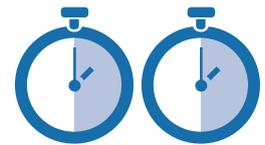
A Citizens' Jury is a method of deliberation where a small group of people (between 12 and 24), recruited to be reflective of the demographics of a given area, come together to deliberate on an issue (generally one clearly framed question), over the period of 3 to 7 days. Recruitment methods vary, but increasingly sortition is used.

Citizens' Juries are a tool for engaging citizens on a range of issues. They are relatively inexpensive compared to larger deliberative exercises, such as citizens' assemblies. Their small size allows for effective deliberation, but they are sufficiently diverse and citizens are exposed to a wide range of perspectives. Similarly to larger processes like a citizens' assemblies, they can produce a set of recommendations, but differ from them by not necessarily developing underpinning principles.

# CITIZENS' PANELS

**INFORM**
**CONSULT**
**INVOLVE**
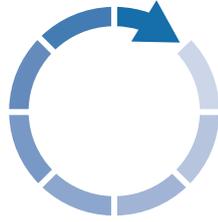
**VISIONING**
**DEVELOPMENT**
**IMPLEMENTATION**
**EVALUATION**
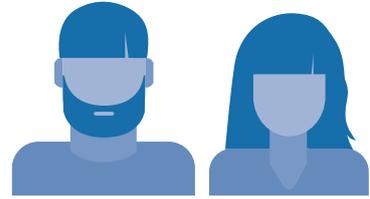
**GENERAL PUBLIC, OR A REFLECTIVE SAMPLE**
**PEOPLE MOST AFFECTED BY THE DECISION**
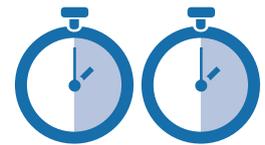
A Citizens' Panel aims to be a representative, consultative body of local residents to an area. They are typically used by statutory agencies, particularly local authorities and their partners, to identify local priorities and to consult service users and non-users on specific issues.

Participants are generally recruited through random sampling of the electoral roll or postcode address file. Postal recruitment tends to be a popular approach given its wide reach and relatively low cost. However, recruitment for some panels use other means to ensure recruitment of socially excluded and hard to reach groups.

Once citizens agree to participate, they will be invited to a rolling programme of research and consultation. This typically involves regular surveys and in-depth deliberative workshops.

# CROWDSOURCING

**INFORM**
**CONSULT**
**INVOLVE**
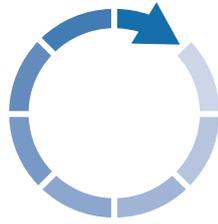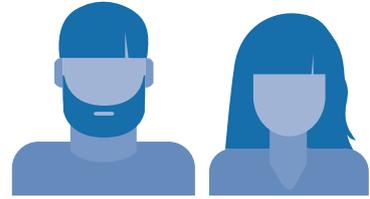
**VISIONING**
**DEVELOPMENT**

**GENERAL PUBLIC, OR A REFLECTIVE SAMPLE**
**PEOPLE MOST AFFECTED BY THE DECISION**
**A SELF-SELECTING GROUP**
**SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS/ PEOPLE WITH
TECHNICAL OR SPECIALIST EXPERTISE
(INCLUDING EXPERTS BY EXPERIENCE)**

Crowdsourcing is the practice of obtaining services, ideas, functions, or contacts from a large and undefined network of people. This process can occur online and offline, but it tends to involve predominantly online communities. Participation is generally promoted widely through various media to encourage people to contribute, and can be targeted to encourage participation from specific groups. Those who participate are therefore self-selecting and are unlikely to be reflective, as a group, of the wider population.

Crowdsourcing seeks to harness collaboration for problem-solving, innovation and efficiency. It is underpinned by the concept of openness; often an open call is made for contributions, and then any solutions or outcomes are freely distributed. It seeks to take advantage of increasing global interconnectedness, particularly via the internet, and use this to find innovative and creative solutions. What makes crowdsourcing unique is that it utilises both bottom-up processes to achieve top-down goals; it is not just consultation, where solutions are already framed, but an opportunity for deep participation with lowered barriers.

Crowdsourcing is a predominantly online practice, although it can be carried out offline. Users can edit books or web pages, post products or items, provide information or edit others' work.

It is important to think carefully about how the question or problem put to a crowdsourcing process is framed. This will help ensure that the right audience for an appropriate response is reached. It will also help ensure costs are kept low to medium by avoiding having to trawl potentially thousands of responses that don't deliver the data needed.

# DISTRIBUTED DIALOGUES

**INFORM**
**INVOLVE**
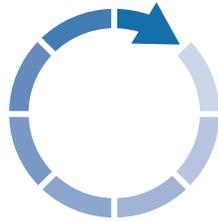
**VISIONING**
**DEVELOPMENT**
**EVALUATION**
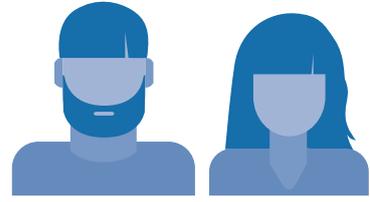
**ORGANISED CIVIL SOCIETY**
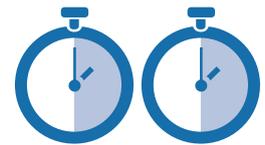
A distributed dialogue is a decentralised approach to deliberation with the aim to develop dispersed ongoing, embedded discussions around a given policy issue.

A distributed dialogue approach is based on the idea that complex issues need to involve a range of conversations that happen in different spaces. It therefore entails a number of dialogue events organised by interested parties (rather than centrally planned) which are held across different geographical areas and, potentially, through a range of different media including online forums. This is intended to give multiple entry points for citizens and other stakeholders to take part online. While the overarching policy questions are the same, the groups or individuals organising dialogues enjoy a high degree of autonomy over who is involved.

The defining feature is that the dialogue events are self-organised by groups of participants, with the aim of engaging a wide range of communities, different stakeholders, and the general public in the discussions. The final sample is unlikely to be reflective of the wider community, because groups are self-selecting. However, the aim is to involve a diverse range of perspectives.

Distributed dialogues however tend to work best when there is a strong level of 'scripting' provided for the distributed events – with clear questions, background information and a planning and facilitation toolkit provided. By their very nature however the commissioning body has limited control over the quality of the discussion, the mix of people involved or the neutrality of the organisers/facilitators.

# POP-UP DEMOCRACY

**INFORM**
**CONSULT**
**INVOLVE**
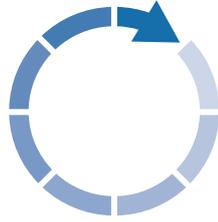
**DEVELOPMENT**
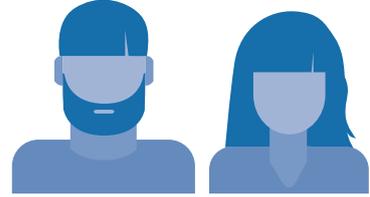
**PEOPLE MOST AFFECTED BY THE DECISION**
**A SELF-SELECTING GROUP**

The term pop-up democracy refers to the use of temporary, site-specific installations that provide opportunities for increased local political and civic participation (e.g. pop-up libraries and museums; activist spaces; pop-up food stalls etc.). The aim is to provide new spaces and opportunities for local activism and participation right in the community.

The idea of pop-up democracy is based on recent trends in urban social design towards temporary and small-scale installations to provide spaces for interaction and civic discourses in local communities. Pop-up democracy can help offset the "threshold problem" or the challenge of getting people to participate, which government institutions often face when opening up engagement processes. Rather than expecting people to attend meetings in places they might be unfamiliar with or which are too far away from where they live, pop-up democracy aims to create participation spaces where people live. In this sense, participants are self-selecting and will not be reflective of the wider community.

By using art and commerce projects most of these efforts aim to build social capital and civic skills. Temporary installations enable experimentation and encourage residents to re-imagine spaces and challenge power structures and the different ways in which these manifest spatially. Pop-up democracy is an attempt to respond to a community's specific needs; when those needs have been met, the installation or project ceases to exist.

# PUBLIC DIALOGUE

**INVOLVE**
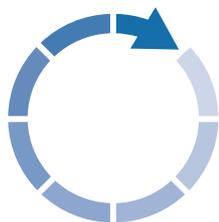
**VISIONING DEVELOPMENT**
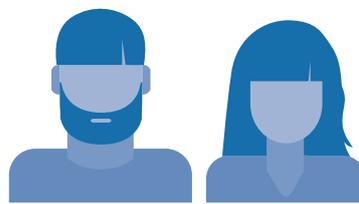
**GENERAL PUBLIC, OR A REFLECTIVE SAMPLE**
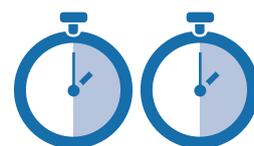
Public dialogue provides in-depth insight into the views, concerns and aspirations of citizens. In the UK it is a methodology that is primarily used in relation to science and technology.

Public dialogue is a process during which members of the public, recruited to be reflective of the wider population, interact with subject matter specialists, stakeholders and policy makers to deliberate over a relatively extended period of time on issues which are often complex or controversial. Its aim is usually to feed into future policy decisions. It supports constructive conversations between a group of citizens which has been recruited to be broadly reflective of the demographics of the wider society. Recruitment is usually carried out using random telephone numbers, or on street recruitment, panels are sometimes used for speed.

Public dialogue is mainly conducted through a series of workshops over the course of at least two days. Often workshops are held in different parts of the country. They normally follow the same broad outline. They start by providing participants with an opportunity to learn from and engage with specialists and policy makers about the key issues under discussion. Participants then have an opportunity to deliberate about the implications of what they have heard, before deliberating over the key policy implications of this discussion.

Unlike other mini-publics such as citizens' assemblies and juries, participants normally aren't asked to deliver specific recommendations, but rather invited to explore their informed reactions to the questions which are posed to them.

# STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE

**INFORM**

**CONSULT**

**INVOLVE**

**COLLABORATE**
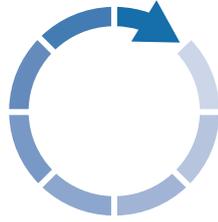
**VISIONING**

**DEVELOPMENT**

**DECISION-MAKING**

**IMPLEMENTATION**

**EVALUATION**
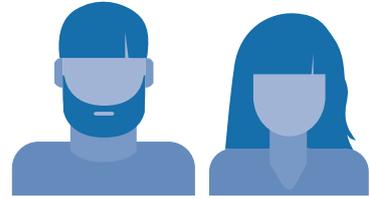
**STATUTORY CONSULTEES**

**GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS**

**SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS/ PEOPLE WITH TECHNICAL OR SPECIALIST EXPERTISE (INCLUDING EXPERTS BY EXPERIENCE)**

**ORGANISED CIVIL SOCIETY**
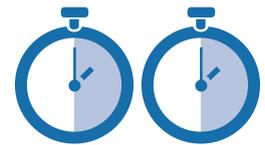
Stakeholder dialogue incorporates a range of approaches designed to help participants identify common ground and mutually beneficial solutions to a problem. Participation is through direct invitation to groups who either have a particular knowledge or interest in the issue, or are otherwise centres of energy and organisation that can bring diverse viewpoints on the issue. The process involves stakeholders in defining the problem, devising the methods and creating the solutions.

Stakeholder dialogue is mainly conducted through workshops and similar meetings. The minimum aim is to find a mutually acceptable compromise, but ideally the process seeks to build on common ground and reach a proactive consensus. Every dialogue process is tailor-made to suit the situation, the people involved and to deliver the agreed outcomes. It is ideal for issues likely to be regarded as controversial or where the facts are contested. Stakeholder dialogue remains one of the few practicable participative options once a conflict has reached a certain point.