ENGAGE YOUR STAKEHOLDERS

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT TOOLKIT FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CONTENTS

Involving stakeholders in the decision-making processes in cities helps the local authorities to build mutual trust between citizens and policy-makers and therefore also increases the transparency, interest and acceptance of political decisions. Stakeholder involvement benefits the entire community: it deepens democracy, increases information flow by improving listening and learning from each other, prevents possible conflicts and it can also improve the image of the local authorities among citizens.

Stakeholders are described as those who have an interest in a particular decision, either as individuals or representatives of a group. This includes people who influence a decision, or can influence it, as well as those affected by the decision. Through the involvement process the opinions of the stakeholders are heard and taken into account in a systematical way.

In this toolkit, a full process of stakeholder involvement is described. This includes understanding the key terms and analyzing stakeholders as part of planning of the stakeholder involvement, implementing the most suitable method for the topic in question and reaching an outcome. The focus is on reinforcing the use of involvement methods as part of the decision-making in the cities and challenging the local authorities to go beyond the legally required involvement of stakeholders.

The toolkit introduces a set of tested stakeholder involvement methods for the use of local authorities. These methods can be used separately or in combination with other methods. The examples in the toolkit provide further inspiration for the reader on how to use the methods.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Stakeholder **involvement** toolkit is meant to inspire **local authorities*** who are ready to involve **stakeholders** more in their daily work. The toolkit provides practical advice on how to organize the involvement process, engage the stakeholders and finally to carry out an interactive participatory method. It enables local authorities to go beyond the legally required involvement of stakeholders. It reinforces the capacity of civil servants to create a sustainable and livable municipality/city**, where stakeholder involvement is an integrated part of their management.

The toolkit assists the local authorities to use a participatory approach to **empower** their communities and citizens through direct involvement in major decision-making processes. The toolkit reinforces the use of involvement methods as a part of decision-making.

INVOLVEMENT, PARTICIPATION, DIALOGUE – MANY TERMS, ONE MEANING

Many terms are mentioned within the topic of stakeholder involvement. In different contexts the terms of involvement, **participation**, participatory approach, multi-stakeholder process and stakeholder dialogue occur. All in all, it is about the following: giving power to the stakeholders to participate in decision-making with their knowledge and interest, to hear and take into account their opinions and views and to make a decision that is accepted by the majority of those who had the chance to participate.

In fact, stakeholder involvement and public participation is a dialogue between the decision-makers or the local authorities and their stakeholders. In this dialogue, "representatives not only state their views but also listen to what others have to say for the purpose of developing mutual understanding, including each other's value-base, interests, **goals** and concerns."[1] The dialogue supports the political decision-making and enables the work of the local authorities. This is based on the mutual willingness to participate and to have a dialogue.

In this toolkit, participation is understood as a wider term and stakeholder involvement as a form of participation where defined stakeholders are practically involved in a certain topic, decision-making etc. through an involvement method.

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*   Terms in Bold are described in terminology, p. 76.
** In the toolkit, the word city refers to local authorities of all sizes and levels.

WHO IS A STAKEHOLDER?

Many definitions of stakeholders exist and some can be quite abstract and confusing. In fact, depending on the situation and institution using the term (company, global organization, local authority, NGO) the definition can vary a lot.

In this toolkit, stakeholders are described as those who have an interest in a particular decision, either as individuals or representatives of a group. This includes people who influence a decision, or can influence it, as well as those affected by the decision.[1]

Stakeholders are also described as "interest groups", which clearly shows that already the interest in the organization/project makes the stakeholder a stakeholder. This implies that every citizen can be a stakeholder in topics that are affecting them. They can possess relevant information, resources and expertise needed in the process or can control relevant instruments for it.[2]

Stakeholders become important when decisions are about to be made. The decision planned to be made will affect and influence the stakeholder in a certain way as individual or as a group, in the same way the stakeholder also has an opportunity to influence on the decision-making process: through its own action! Stakeholders can also simply be interested in a topic without being personally influenced; nevertheless they can care about what is going on in their community.

Stakeholders are defined in figuring out who and what groups have a "stake" in the cities, have a claim. Interested stakeholders may be citizens, associations, companies, housing associations, politicians and various municipal authorities. The involvement of stakeholders in the local authorities starts from the involvement of internal stakeholders through cross-departmental work[3] and increases by the engagement of external stakeholders.

The stakeholder approach combines the public sector, private sector and the civil society. The different concentrations of the society sectors– rights, profits and values - create challenges that need to be addressed in well-planned processes.

1. INTRODUCTION

INVOLVEMENT AS A PART OF INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT

In this toolkit, stakeholder involvement implies that it goes beyond every day informing and consulting into more demanding levels of participation. In a minimum level the stakeholders are consulted and have a clear role in the process towards decision-making and implementation. Local governments play a significant role in making sure that the stakeholder involvement is an ongoing process in the city. True stakeholder involvement requires a change of attitudes and ways of working towards a joint process working with the stakeholders. The stakeholders need to understand the issues at stake and together with the authorities find appropriate solutions.

Stakeholder involvement is crucial for all steps of **integrated management** systems[4] in cities. A city can be illustrated as a tree, where the roots and ground offer the conditions where the city is located and the history to which it leans to. The stem of the tree forms the base for involvement and communication inside the city. The branches of the tree form the **organizational set-up** and the leaves can be seen as the processes in the city. These involvement processes can result as "fruits" to the citizens.

The five steps of integrated management system are a cyclical process in which the cities work. The model includes a baseline review of the situation, target setting, political commitment, implementation and monitoring of the process and also evaluation and reporting which ensures a systematic way of decision-making. Stakeholder involvement has to be an integrated part in all of the steps. It is an ongoing involvement process that can change by scope and content over time. The success of the work of the local authorities is largely due to the results of involvement and communication actions that are carried out within and outside their own organizations.

EVALUATION & REPORTING

IMPLEMENTATION & MONITORING

ORGANIZATIONAL SETUP

BASELINE REVIEW

TARGET SETTING

POLITICAL COMMITMENT

INVOLVEMENT & COMMUNICATION

CITIZENS IN FOCUS

The city is it´s people. For the local authorities the use of involvement methods can be a way to increase the mutual trust between stakeholders and policy-makers. This way the authorities become initiators of discourse and engagement with the citizens. Stakeholder involvement is not a threat to a representative system. On the contrary it supports the political decision-making by increasing the political acceptance. All plans and processes in the city need to have the political support at the highest level. Without this the stakeholder involvement becomes only informing.

The cities´ focus is on the wellbeing of their citizens and other stakeholders. Stakeholder involvement increases the acceptance of the decisions among the citizens. This improves the understanding and interest in complex issues, such as the **sustainable development** process in the city. Through improved participation the local authorities increase the information flow and transparency. Feedback is received immediately and the decisions become more binding. It benefits the entire community by improving listening and learning and therefore preventing possible conflicts.

Often the local authorities take the lead in the stakeholder involvement process but stakeholders are increasingly more and more active themselves. An involvement process enables to create favorable local conditions that make the implementation of the actions easier and faster as the challenges are addressed by a wider group of people involved in the process.

Introduction

INVOLVEMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Involvement is a major element of the concept of sustainable development. The Agenda 21, the main strategy for implementing sustainable development which was signed by 179 countries at the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro (1992) points out:

"One of the fundamental prerequisites for the achievement of sustainable development is broad public participation in decision-making."[5]

Sustainable development requires thorough understanding of the interdependence of economy, environment and social questions. The old way of thinking deals with these issues separately and among each stakeholder group the issues may have different degrees of risk for conflict, interest and level at the political agenda. Some even claim that sustainable development without participation does not work. This was further emphasized at the UN Johannesburg Summit in 2002.

WHY STARTING A STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT PROCESS?

Good governance is an important element as local authorities have to deliver adequate and cost-effective services to their citizens. Good local authorities ensure visionary leadership and long-term planning that goes beyond the specific political mandate received. In this task principles of accountability and **subsidiarity** are essential. Local authorities can and should have multiple roles ranging from decision-making to facilitating dialogue among multiple stakeholders. However, there are major political as well as technical challenges to overcome in changing the attitudes of the local government and others'. It is important to improve the capacity of the local people so that they have the confidence and the skills to hold local officials to account. Through this one moves from a situation of 'participatory' to an 'accountable' government.[6]

In a representative democracy stakeholder processes should be integrated in the existing decision-making procedures in order to clarify their role and status in the entire decision-making process.[7] Stakeholder involvement is to be understood as a complementary instrument to the existing political and administrative institutional arrangements in community development. While actors of the civil society can take over complementary responsibilities and initiatives, the local authorities and democratically elected bodies need to play a key role in enabling the stakeholder involvement processes to become successful.[6]

ASSESSING THE NEEDS FOR PARTICIPATION

In the beginning, the decision-making bodies need to clearly decide and formulate in what steps of the integrated management cycle the stakeholder involvement will be used and how the results of it will be incorporated into the process. Ideally stakeholder involvement is integrated in all steps of the integrated management system and becomes an ongoing part of the decision-making processes. As a general guideline – the stakeholder involvement should start from a realistic level and parts of the process. It can enlarge, as the local government bodies acquire the skills to implement participatory planning processes and to ensure that the interests of all their constituents are taken into account.

Wise stakeholder involvement requires accurate reading of the current political situation in question. For each topic, it has to be analyzed whether the topic has high or low priority on the political agenda, how likely it is to create a **conflict** and what is the level of interest towards the issue. If the topic is placed highly on the political agenda, has a risk of conflict and high interest among stakeholders, it is likely to cause a lot of discussion in the community. In that case the local authorities should clearly prioritize the stakeholder involvement actions as vital part of the process.

"The current situation requires more involvement of citizens into the planning processes. Also the development of the social society has resulted in active participation of citizens in social and economic life of the town and region. How to combine and balance the demands for mutual benefit - that's the question that gets more focus through active involvement."

Ms Olga Kareva, Head of crossborder cooperation, Vyborg District of Leningrad Region, Russia

2. PLANNING

Stakeholder involvement is a very important factor in all aspects of the work in the cities. Early engagement of stakeholders in the planning process ensures the recognition of the community interests and enables the ability to make changes that would cost more time and money in a later stage of the process. Stakeholder involvement secures the process acceptance among decision-makers and the wider public. The chapter "Planning" includes the understanding of the purpose of the aimed involvement, issue identification, managing the involvement process and carrying out a stakeholder analysis.

PURPOSE OF INVOLVEMENT

The purpose of the stakeholder involvement in each topic needs to be clearly expressed as this creates the basis for analyzing the stakeholders and also choosing the most appropriate method for the case. Traditional public participation methods of informing people and obtaining their feedback on project and program proposals have not been effective in engaging citizens in community decisions and in resolving conflicts. Stakeholder involvement generally has three main purposes:

> 1. Avoid conflict: collaborative efforts aim to engage stakeholders in a process of resolving conflicts among them through negotiation, mediation, and collaborative learning.
>
> 2. Develop a "shared vision": collaborative efforts are intended for the stakeholders to come up with a vision or direction that they can agree on.
>
> 3. Formulate creative solutions: all collaborative efforts hope to use dialogue and group processes to develop creative solutions that may not have emerged from traditional planning exercises.

The **aim** of stakeholder involvement may also have more specified meaning in each case. Here are several purposes that may give inspiration to understand the reasons for starting the process.[8]

- *Getting approval/pushing through*: Means are employed to persuade stakeholders to agree to a proposal

- *Enabling discussion*: Stakeholders are informed about the project through various channels and they are given a chance to react.

- *Consultation*: Stakeholders are asked to give their views, responses and feedback.

- *Consensus-building*: Stakeholders affected have different interests, consensus must be reached on the topic.

- *Group decision-making*: Decision-making is shared; stakeholders are directly involved in decision-making.

- *Delegation of decision-making:* the decision-making power is fully/partially delegated to stakeholders, ie neighbourhood councils etc

- *Joint implementation*: Stakeholders are directly involved in realizing the project.

LEVELS AND FORMS OF PARTICIPATION

The level of participation is an important factor. There are several attempts to analyze the stakeholders´ level of participation in current literature. As a basis, the following graphic was developed as it elaborates the involvement level combined with the influence that the stakeholders can have on the issue in question.

Graphic 1: Levels of Stakeholder participation in the process.[9]

In this toolkit, the term involvement is used for mid and high levels of participation where the stakeholders have a two-way possibility to communicate with the local authorities. As the intensity of the involvement grows towards the high level of participation, the communication transforms into involvement and the role of the local authorities becomes more even with the stakeholders. It has to be remembered that national laws in each country normally define the minimum level of participation required in particular topics.

Depending on the topic in question, different forms of participation processes are appropriate. The decision on the most appropriate form for the issue needs to be based on the analyses of the case.

Ad-hoc participation processes are developed for a special need and have a short "life" e.g. workshops, internet consultations, presentations etc. Those processes are initiated for a certain special purpose.

Formalized participation e.g. committees, advisory boards and partnerships are considered to be more sustainable stakeholder involvement methods as they usually exist for a longer period of time and for a more general purpose.

Most common are hybrid forms, a mixture of ad-hoc and formalized participation processes.[7] In general, stakeholder involvement methods, ways of feeding the results into decision-making and concrete follow-up measures are mostly being organized and prepared on a rather ad-hoc basis.

When talking about participation, it is important to remember that participation takes place at different political levels – on the supra-national, national, regional and/or local level. This vertical cooperation of various political and administrative levels and also horizontal integration of various stakeholders in the society are crucial in a process for sustainable decisions.

2. Planning

ISSUE IDENTIFICATION – TOOLS FOR ANALYZING THE STARTING POINT

It is important to clearly formulate why the stakeholder involvement process is started and what should be achieved with it. Understanding the starting point enables the definition of clear **objectives** for the process and for the stakeholder involvement in it in a later stage.

To define the starting point and to analyze the situation several tools can be used to formalize the analyzing process in regards to the content and stakeholder involvement in particular. Some of the tools are presented here.[10]

SWOT-ANALYSIS

The **SWOT Analysis** is a strategic planning tool used to discuss and analyze the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats involved in a topic, a business or an organization and its environment. Strengths and weaknesses refer to things inside the organization; opportunities and threats refer to things outside.

Strengths S	Weaknesses W
Opportunities O	Threats T

A SWOT-Analysis can be used to make the most of the strengths and opportunities and at the same time improving the weaknesses and minimizing the threats. It is especially beneficial when identifying the objectives for the process.

The SWOT analysis can be used in combination with other tools, for example with the PESTLE-tool.

PESTLE ANALYSIS

The **PESTLE** tool complements the SWOT analysis by analyzing the external environment in which a city operates. **PESTLE** is the abbreviation for **Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal** and **Environmental** factors that are considered when creating a strategic plan.

Political P	Economic E
Social S	Technological T
Legal L	Environmental E

External factors are often beyond the influence of the city; however it is important to consider them when planning for stakeholder involvement. It is an advantage to know the opportunities and threats that lie within. PESTLE is often used within a strategic SWOT analysis. This means that a SWOT analysis is made out of each PESTLE factor.

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FORCE FIELD ANALYSIS[11]

The **force field analysis** can be useful for considering what are the driving and restraining forces in any decision that need to be taken into account. Often this method is used when a particular area of change is being considered. By carrying out the analysis, it should be possible to clearly identify the favorable forces for a decision. At the same time one can identify and hopefully deal with reasons not to take or implement a particular decision.

Forces for Change   Forces against Change

To actually carry out a force field analysis the following steps should give some direction:

- List all the forces (reasons) for change in one column and all forces (reasons) against change in another column.

- Give each force a value on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is weak and 5 is very strong.

- Put all of this data into a visual format:

If the total in the ´Forces for Change´ column are lower than in the ´Forces against Change´ column it may be worth re-thinking if the change is really viable and/or necessary. However, if it is decided to go ahead with the change, then the force field analysis can help you identify the 'against' factors and hopefully give a starting point to overcome resistance towards change.

NEEDS ANALYSIS

This is another way of assessing the internal situation of the city. **Need Analysis** is often based on the principles of SWOT and PESTLE, rather than identifying issues it focuses on trying to answer questions. Best results are achieved when an objective 'outsider' runs this process' and provides the questions – e.g. What is your city like in 10 years time? What is needed to get there? What is still lacking? How would the situation be changed? etc.

The Needs Analysis is like the roots of a tree – it can spread and spread! However, like a tree, although the main part may be above the ground, the real issues (or roots) are underground and need ´digging´ to bring them out. Carrying out a needs analysis using the 'tree method' is a good way for getting ´to the heart´ of an issue, but it has to be done quickly and with dynamism so as not to loose the momentum and the 'true' answers.

2. Planning

MANAGING A PROCESS

Each stakeholder involvement process should be tailor-made for the current situation and the topic in question. Regardless of where the initiative for the stakeholder involvement process comes from – the local authorities or the stakeholders - the requirements for management of the process remain the same. In this subchapter, the basis for managing a process is provided.

COORDINATION

Before starting the implementation process it is important to nominate a coordination group with a coordinator for the process. Ideally this group is composed of representatives from relevant internal and external stakeholder groups.

This coordination group ensures a cross-sectoral management and a broader identification of other stakeholders than it would be with a single coordinator. The group encourages commitment and it is likelier that they also address communication issues, such as power gaps and how to deal with dead-ends in decision-making. It is important that the group starts with defining the value base for the process, as this is the backbone of the stakeholder involvement process.

It is vital to define clearly the roles in the coordination group and also to mandate the persons to carry them out. This ensures effectiveness of the process. If the resources of the personnel are not sufficient it is recommended to use external assistance.

As in every process, the objectives for the process need to be broken down. This should be done as smartly as possible still allowing flexibility for the process. Once the objectives are clearly defined, resources need to be allocated according to the objectives. In order to allow a real impact of the stakeholder involvement process, there should be a separate budget allocation for it.

Initiating a stakeholder involvement process is challenging! It will require much more time and resources than the normal work but it will result in benefits for the planning process as well as for the whole local authority and its employees and not at least for the stakeholders.

"When planning a stakeholder activity it is easy to forget the little details that pave the way and might make the difference between a disaster and a success. It is necessary to have a coordinator who takes care of the planning process and the stakeholder activity."

Mr Josef Wårdsäter, Planning coordinator, municipality of Oskarshamn, Sweden

CLEAR OBJECTIVES

It is important to clearly formulate the aims and objectives for the process and jointly agree on them. **C-SMARTER objectives** will make the entire process easier to handle and more effective. C -SMARTER refers to Challenging, Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely, Evaluated and Recorded objectives.[12]

The objectives of the process should be clearly distinguished from goals, aims and targets, which relate to your ambition.[13] Set up your objectives in priority order to see what to do first in order to achieve something else. It is recommended to have separate objectives for the stakeholder involvement process as such.

C-
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- Challenging objectives motivate and engage the individuals to perform and develop further.

- Specific objectives ensure that everyone involved knows that the objectives include them specifically. Make sure that the objectives are understandable, all necessary terms are defined and an appropriate language is used for the target audiences.

- Measurable objectives show if the objective is also achieved. Make also sure to record your success.[13]

- Achievable is linked to measurable, the objective is achievable if you know you can do and finish the job AND tell when and if it is finished

- Realistic objectives include clear decisions about human resources, time, money and responsibilities. Realistic objectives influence the achievability: if an objective is not realistic it won't be achievable.

- Timely: set deadlines! Without deadline the objective is not measurable but the deadlines must be realistic in order to achieve the objective.

- Evaluation - You are able to show that you have reached the objective if you have thought of the ways of evaluation and indicators for it from the very beginning.

- Recorded - Recording the objectives, its constraints and enablers in a written form helps to increase the likelihood for action and success. It also ensures that all parties have a common understanding of what was agreed on.

These objectives need to be agreed on according to the decision-making process of the city. Stakeholder involvement can be also used for defining the objectives.[12]

2. Planning

PRINCIPLES OF INVOLVEMENT[14]

Here is a list of generally used principles of involvement.

Inclusiveness and Equity:
Encourage the participation of all stakeholders who have an interest in or who would be affected by a specific decision, including 'hard to reach' groups, such as young people, minorities, and socially mobile professionals. Excluding or `forgetting about` certain stakeholders holds a risk to marginalize them even more. In involving stakeholders there is always the danger to "listen to those 'with the loudest voice'" and forget about the ones that are not so active. Stakeholders have different prerequisites and live under different circumstances and that gives them different opportunities to participate.

Transparency, openness and clarity:
Ensure that stakeholders are given all the information they need, tell them where information is lacking, indicate clearly what they can or cannot influence by responding to the comments, and provide an indication of the next steps of the process. All participants should contribute to creating a climate of mutual trust, open communication and fair dialogue.

Commitment:
Show respect for the stakeholders by giving appropriate priority and resources to the process, and showing a genuine attempt to understand and incorporate other opinions even when they differ from the existing points of view.

Ownership:
Involving stakeholders and citizens in participatory processes can increase their 'ownership' of the outcomes of participation. Increasing 'ownership' is particularly important for 'later stages' in the policy-making process, i.e. implementation.

Accessibility:
Provide different ways for people to be engaged and ensure people are not excluded through barriers of language, culture or opportunity. It should also be guaranteed that all participants have access to relevant information and documents in the participatory process. This should be communicated very clearly to all those involved.

Accountability:
As soon as possible after the end of engagement processes respond to participants with an unambiguous account of how and why their contributions have - or have not – influenced the outcome. Ensure that there are ways for follow-up including reporting on final decisions, strategies and/or implementation plans.

Empowerment:
Generally, it should be clear from the beginning of the participatory process how much influence the participants have and what will be done with the results. Participants with special skills should be encouraged to take responsibility for tasks within their area of expertise.

Responsiveness:
There is no sense in spending time and money on involvement if there is no willingness to listen to its results. Those carrying out the process must be open to the idea that their existing ideas can be improved (or are wrong), and that they will, if necessary, be amended. Those being engaged must perceive that their voice will be taken seriously and that things can be changed. If both sides do not realize this, the engagement process will be regarded as a sham, and it will be harder to involve stakeholders the next time their views are needed.

Willingness to learn and productivity:
All engagement should encourage everyone to learn from each other. This means a process that is as interactive as possible and includes mutual understanding and respect. The ultimate purpose of all engagement is to make something better. How an engagement process will do this needs to be set out to encourage stakeholder participation and assure them that neither their time nor the sponsor's money is being wasted.

Voluntary participation:
All those involved in the process should be voluntarily participating.

Reliability:
Information gathered must come from respected sources. The sample size of stakeholders needs to be large enough to give some idea of a range of opinions – therefore making it easier to develop conclusive points.

It is clear that the principles of involvement can be much more complex and that there is no solution that would fit for all situations. However, if the above mentioned principles can serve as a starting point then it is likely that the right approach can be found.

2. Planning

COMMUNICATION

Systematic communication is a precondition for success! Information flow is a value as such in a participatory process and should get the highest priority in the actions. Communication is a key function of the leadership and management of local authorities. A good communication plan ensures that the right messages get to the right audiences at the right time using the right channels.

In every step of the process communication needs to be put into practice. Create a communication plan for the process for practical use. Ideally, the communication plan of the process is part of the communication strategy of the local authority. This way it can create synergy and improve the entire performance of the local authority. If there is no existing communication strategy it is important to create one.

A good communication plan includes a specific plan for each target audience with whom you are seeking to develop a synergy and to share information. This plan defines the target groups and identifies to each of them the communication aims, information needs, key messages, sender, communication channels, possible challenges and a timetable. It also defines the success indicators, feedback and issues of accessibility and availability of the information provided. For the plan it is important to define concrete actions and secure the funds to carry them out.

Communication is only powerful when it's clear: keep messages interesting and short enough to draw attention, and then provide more comprehensive information separately.

The communication plan acts as the glue between the steps of the integrated management system, organizational set-up and stakeholder involvement methods. Transparent and clear communication makes the decision-making in the cities more efficient. Therefore it is vital to make clear who is responsible of communication – responsible for overseeing the application of the communication plan and ensuring that everyone carries their duties.

In the planning process, remember to use a variety of communication channels – printed, audio-visual, electronic, events etc. for passing on the messages. A thought-through communication plan allows the process to move beyond the simple listing of events and products and integrate the efforts more strategically. The most effective communication efforts are not trying to reach every target audience through a single newsletter or training event but are tailored according to the needs of the different audiences.

By placing your target audiences on the table and analyzing each of them separately, one can make a communication plan that can be used also in stakeholder involvement.

Target group					
Communication aims					
Information needs					
Key messages					
Message sender					
Main channels					
Suporting channels					
Potential Challenegs					
Timetable/ milestones					
Success indicators					
Access					
Availability					

"Our active, long-term cooperation with mass media guarantees informing of wider groups of the community. It enables openness and trust from stakeholders side and also is considered to be an important and credible source of information."

Mr Boris Komovnikov, Director of ECAT Kaliningrad, Russia

2. Planning

PLANNING OF THE PROCESS EVALUATION

Evaluation is an important part in the stakeholder involvement process and needs to be thought through from the beginning. It can be differentiated between a process evaluation and method evaluation. This section deals with the process evaluation, its planning and outcomes.

The planning of process evaluation should be included in the planning of the whole stakeholder involvement process to ensure consistency between objectives and criteria as well as to make sure that all steps can be evaluated in the end.

Process evaluation will answer the following questions: how have actions been implemented, how can the process be improved? The evaluation aims at drawing lessons from the implementation, using the experience to improve future stakeholder involvement actions. In the end concrete recommendations should sum these up.

On-going evaluation of the process is important therefore it is also necessary to provide opportunities and resources for this. Ongoing evaluation and improvement helps to keep the process "on track" and ensures continuous involvement. In a constant monitoring of successes, even the smallest ones, will be identified and can be celebrated, which also helps to keep motivation high. Possible problems and failures can be found earlier and solved as soon as possible.[15]

The following graphic/box shows the steps of process evaluation. The questions in the box should be considered; steps should be planned before starting the involvement process and be conducted throughout the process.

"We've found that one of the greatest advantages with process evaluation was that it gave us the chance to adjust our methods during the project time, once the evaluation showed that we had not reached what we were aiming for."

Ms Annika Kruuse, project leader, city of Malmö, Sweden

STEPS OF THE PROCESS EVALUATION[16]

1. Clarifying the rationale, purpose and objective of the evaluation
Rationale – why is the evaluation undertaken and why it is undertaken at a particular point in time, what is the motivation for it
Purpose – refers to what it evaluates.
Objectives – what it aims to achieve.

2. Defining the evaluation scope
What is the scope of the evaluation? What are the issues covered, what are funds spent, time period, target groups.
Set evaluation criteria: those criteria should refer to the C-SMARTER targets that are set for the entire stakeholder involvement process, possible criteria can be: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the stakeholder involvement process.
Plan the evaluation in terms of time and money: allocate resources (time, budget, staff).

3. Evaluation methods
Choose an appropriate evaluation method to be used for the process evaluation: consider validity and reliability aspects as well as how to ensure that the evaluation is independent.
Data and information collection and processing: consider how data and information are collected, for example qualitative interviews are a good way of obtaining the participants views and opinions about the process.

4. Assessment of results
Analysis of the process through indicators (refer to objectives that should have been set before C-SMARTER).
Consultation of relevant stakeholders: define how they could be involved, to provide input for the evaluation. Think of the criteria for their selection and participation method.
Build an evaluation team: the composition should posses a mix of evaluative skills and thematic knowledge, be gender balanced and include professionals from areas concerned.

5. Information sources – sources of information have to be transparent, reliable and accurate.

6. Independence: Evaluators and stakeholders have to be independent, the evaluation process should be free and open – including access to relevant information and assured co-operation.

7. Professionalism and ethics – show sensitivity to gender, beliefs, manners and customs of all, rights and welfare of participants to be protected, anonymity and confidentiality of individuals as required by law, acknowledgement of disagreement within the evaluation team.

8. Quality assurance: Incorporation of stakeholder comments assures credibility of the evaluation as it shows that the comments have been taken into account, quality control can be provided either internally or through an external body (peer review or reference group) adhere to the principles of independence of the evaluator.

2. Planning

STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Through a stakeholder analysis one gathers and analyzes information to determine whose inter-ests should be taken into account in a certain situation. The selected topic of the work is the most important determinant in selecting relevant stakeholders for the process. Altogether stakeholder analysis needs to address three dimensions: the nature of a problem, the boundaries that this problem has and those who "own" the problem.[17]

It is important that the organizer of the stakeholder involvement process (local authority) first analyzed its own role and objectives and its relationship with the stakeholders, before starting to conduct the stakeholder analysis.[17]

In stakeholder analysis characteristics like knowledge about the certain topic, interest related to the policy, attitudes (for or against) and alliances with other stakeholders, are analyzed. Through conducting analysis it is possible to identify who are the key stakeholders, the ones that are especially important for the case. The information gathered by the stakeholder analysis can serve different purposes: increase support for the case, generate new knowledge and provide input for other analyses.

Stakeholder analysis seeks to differentiate and study stakeholders on the basis of their attributes and the criteria of the analyst or convener appropriate to the specific situation. These may include the relative power and interest of each stakeholder; the importance and influence they have; the multiple "hats" they wear; and the networks and coalitions to which they belong.[17] After the analysis one is able to define if and how involvement process is to be implemented.

"We in Hägersten-Liljeholmen have analyzed our key stakeholders and their interests thoroughly. It took time, but it was worth it as it gave us a good basis for the planning process."

Mr Sebastian Wiklund, project coordinator, city of Stockholm, Sweden

IDENTIFY THE STAKEHOLDERS

The identification of stakeholders starts from gathering and analyzing all written documents relating to the case, all information about possible stakeholders and also their connection to the case. A very practical way to make an identification of stakeholders is to prepare a list of all actors who could have an interest in the case – think also beyond the "normal" boundaries. In this first list it is important to add/include all the actors as widely as possible and only then break down the results more precisely into possible stakeholder groups with more details. One can make a distinction between internal and external stakeholders in the city already at this stage.

The main stakeholder groups to consider to be involved, either to make a (more or less binding) decision or to give input to the process, include:

The involvement of policy-makers from the very beginning of the process will increase the likelihood of their support of both the process and the outcome.

2. Planning

Stakeholder identification in the context of the selected topic should take the following facts into consideration:[1]

- Diversity: relevance of different stakeholders through social mapping, experts/non-experts on the certain topic

- Inclusion: openness, voluntariness, clear criteria

- Structure: size/limits, focal groups, hierarchy, feedback loops

- Legitimacy: accountable, equitable, democratic, expertise

- Participants' identification: transparency, balances

Inclusion of diverse stakeholder interests ensures that the stakeholder method is not "captured by a group with a particular perspective or vested interest".[18] However, that is why it is important to widen the concept of stakeholders to include those who are 'stake-less', and have been marginalized by socio-economic factors. A fair process needs a balance between powerful stakeholders and those who have less power or none at all.

It is important to ensure that the structure and the legitimacy of the stakeholders are adequote for reaching the objectives of the process. A thorough analysis of participants are therefore needed to get the most out of the involvement.

SOME QUESTIONS THAT ASSIST IN DETERMINING WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED AND WHY:

- What roles do various stakeholders play in the process (authority, role)?
- Who will participate in the process?
- Who are the potential beneficiaries?
- Who will be adversely affected? Are the stakeholders organized?
- Who has existing rights? Who has control over resources?
- Who is likely to be voiceless?
- Who is likely to mobilize resistance?
- Who is dependent on whom?
- Who is responsible for the intended plans?
- Who has money, skills, or key information?
- Whose behavior has to change for success to be reached?
- What power gaps exist between stakeholder groups? How to deal with them?

Engage your stakeholders - Stakeholder Involvement Toolkit

Possible methods that can be used to identify the absent stakeholders:

- A brainstorming session – where as many interested parties as possible are identified, and as many points of view as possible are put forward. Write down all proposals without making any judgments.

- Ask experts on the topic. They might be able to help you with ideas who is important in your case.

- Scanning of existing stakeholder relations of the different departments can create synergy and increase information.

- Snowball method: ask your identified stakeholders to identify others!

- Think big – think about the different vertical and horizontal levels and look for new contacts.

Once the first identification of stakeholders has been done, it is important to consider if all the interested parties have been included, both those who will benefit and those which will be disadvantaged. In this point, a so called social mapping is essential. Do not rely only on already existing stakeholders. Search for the absent stakeholders; give opportunities to a wider audience, consult experts on the topic, use your network – use others networks.

Additionally, stakeholders and their interest can be analyzed by different criteria of reaction/influence on the project (negative, neutral, positive).

It is important that all stakeholders are invited on the same basis with the same possibilities to influence. The chosen method is supposed to facilitate this, so that not one group gets a stronger voice. Through a stakeholder involvement process the participants have a chance to give feedback on prepared issues as well as they have the possibility to initiate and introduce new things.

2. Planning

STAKEHOLDER INTERESTS AND POWER

The interests and needs of stakeholders´ regarding the process have to be identified in order to be able to respond to them. The interests of stakeholders depend always on the specific topic/project etc.

A classification of the stakeholders and their interests is useful to carry out in order to know how different groups should be considered and what role they play. Stakeholder interests are closely connected with power. The following matrix shows an example of managing stakeholder interests and classifying them.

In the matrix, power means the extents to which stakeholders are capable of persuading or forcing others to take particular decisions or act in a certain way. A potential influence of stakeholders over the final outcome emerges from special characteristics of context and location. Placing the relevant stakeholder groups into the graphic 2 will assist you to define where to concentrate on.

- o Monitor (minimum effort): Stakeholder with a comparatively low interest and power
- o Keep informed: Stakeholder with a high interest in the project but with little power, informing them will keep them satisfied
- o Keep satisfied: stakeholders with a lot of power concerning the project but with little interest should be kept satisfied, so that they do not ruin the project
- o Managing closely: the most important stakeholders show a lot of interest while also having power.

Stakeholder attributes like ´power´ (stakeholder's power to influence on something), ´legitimacy´ (the legitimacy of a stakeholder's relationship to something) and ´urgency´ (urgency of the stakeholder's claim on something) provide the basis to find out which stakeholder group should be "managed closely", "to whom attention should be paid".[17]

Graphic 2: Power/Interest Grid[19]

Engage your stakeholders - Stakeholder Involvement Toolkit

It is important to remember that in an involvement process stakeholders are given a voice. In some cases even power to decide can be delegated to stakeholders. The involvement process generally enables the different voices to be heard and taken into account therefore the analyzing of the different interests of stakeholders is vital.

Interests of different stakeholders are of course not always the same. Contradictions between those interests are usual and have to be dealt with. Also overlapping of interests takes place. To find out the possible overlaps and contradictions, the interests have to be listed and compared.

The more overlapping can be found for a certain interest the more important it is to consider it in the planning and action because it is of concern of different stakeholders. Contradictions between interests are normal. An appropriate way to deal with it has to be found (see Classification of stakeholders, how important is the interest; if evenly important see Conflict management). Stakeholder analysis can be used to predict possible conflicts on the topic and to make them explicit in the public involvement. This makes conflict handling more efficient.

Here are a few ways to deal with the different interests.

- Influential stakeholders who are against the process – the process coordination should try to influence/ gain approval for it so that the stakeholders feel the ownership of the process. These stakeholders should be approached to bring in the added value to the process.

- The stakeholders without any interest in the topic - you would need to identify their needs and try to answer to them in the context of the topic.

- The stakeholders without opinion/ thoughts about future development – a vision of the future needs to be jointly developed before any steps can be taken further.

- Stakeholders with a strong conflict between the interests – the possible conflict needs to be addressed and dealt with.

2. Planning

KNOW THE KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Stakeholders can play a different role depending on the social networks they belong to. Generally, it can be said that the degree of influence determines the roles the stakeholders play. For exaple, users use the result of the process or are affected by it. Decision-makers decide on measures, which could be proposed within the process. Experts contribute to the process with information or expert assistance. And implementers will contribute towards carrying out the results in some way. It needs to be remembered that stakeholders who act as mediators between the different roles are important to reach as they act as a glue between the different roles.

Through the stakeholder analysis the key stakeholders need to be identified. In order to be successful, one needs to know a lot about them. This includes, for example, how to engage them in the activities, and how best to communicate with them. If the process affects a large number of stakeholders, it is important to identify key stakeholders who can represent them.

The best way to get information is to talk to the stakeholders directly. People are often quite open about their views, and asking people's opinions is often the first step in building a successful relationship with them. Active communication is a key to an interactive process.

Don't let the information that has been gathered be unused! Use it for the planning of the stakeholder involvement process and it will certainly be useful in the future.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT WHEN IDENTIFYING THE KEY STAKEHOLDERS:

- What financial or emotional interests these stakeholders have? Are they positive or negative towards the topic?

- What motivates them?

- What information do they need from you?

- How do they want to receive information? What is the best way of communicating your message?

- Who generally influences their opinions?

- How to best bring in the added value, ie local knowledge and resources, to the process?

- In case they have a negative attitude, what will win them over to support your work? If you are not able to win them over, how will you manage their opposition?

Engage your stakeholders - Stakeholder Involvement Toolkit

CONSIDER CAREFULLY

Once the stakeholder analysis has been carried out, it is time to consider whether it is worth starting the involvement process. Conditions where it might be challenging to continue are following:[20]

- The conflict is rooted in basic ideological differences;

- One powerful stakeholder can be expected to take unilateral action;

- Legal issues are preventing;

- The issues are too threatening because of historical antagonisms;

- Past attempts have been repeatedly ineffective;

- Stakeholders are experiencing perceptual or informational overload and need to withdraw from the conflict;

- Maintenance of inter-organizational relationships represents substantial costs.

Nevertheless in most of the cases starting a stakeholder involvement process is worth the work and brings several benefits. It is necessary to know possible problems and even if it might look very challenging, the experiences show that it is worth it.

3. IMPLEMENTATION

In the previous chapter, the stakeholder involvement process has been planned and now it is time to start implementing it. The first thing to do is to choose an appropriate method for the topic, based on the analysis in the planning stage. This chapter helps with the important issues of choosing a method, arranging practicalities and introduces to different methods. Those methods are illustrated by practical examples.

CHOOSING A METHOD

Before starting the implementation, the most suitable method needs to be selected for the process. For choosing a method, it is necessary to know possible expectations/limitations for the process. By analyzing the requirements listed below, one can make selection criteria for the involvement method.

- **Objectives** for the process, both in regards to the topic and stakeholder involvement.
    These objectives define what kind of outcome is expected in the end of the involvement process, how results will be documented and integrated into the decision-making. It is crucial that the decision-making is transparent all the way through.

- **Resources and timetable** set for the process.
    A realistic budget, human resources and timetable will guarantee an independent process. Running out of either time and/or money is frustrating for everybody. Furthermore it can actively undermine everything already achieved. Being realistic with time and budget resources prevents from unexpected surprises.

    The timetable of the process needs to be agreed on by all participants. A well planned timetable ensures a smooth flow of the involvement process. Meaningful processes of stakeholder involvement take time. Enough time must be available for learning from each other, discussions, overcoming differences and developing the "same language".[15]

- **A clear plan and communication** flow will help to navigate through the process and find the most optimal method.
    In various methods the information can be used differently, therefore it is important to evaluate the needs of the process in comparison with the strengths and weaknesses of possible methods. Information gaps should be avoided in order to ensure smooth communication about the process for all participants.

- **Risk analysis** of the involvement process will show the potential costs (e.g. social, fiscal, political etc) linked with the topic and assist in defining the most suitable method for it.
    Many processes depend upon the good work, energy, and commitment of one or more individuals. If the individual(s) stop contributing or if the project ceases to function, the process may be blocked or it can simply fail. These risks point out the need to make the process as independent as possible from individuals and outside inputs.

3. Implementation

Once the selection criteria are clear, it is time to analyze the different methods available. It is worth finding out first what kinds of methods have been used before in your city and what kind of success they have brought. This will also help you to decide on which method to choose.

This chapter contains 15 selected methods to be used for stakeholder involvement processes. The aim of this toolkit is to inspire local authorities to really involve their stakeholders to use at least the mid-level of participation. (see graphic 1). All selected methods go beyond informing and a two-way discussion, and focus on interaction between the stakeholders together with the organizer.

To find the most suitable method for a specific case each method presented is described by certain criteria (size, time required, use, strengths and weaknesses) and with an example of the use of the method. All of the methods require the resources for organizing meetings, such as venue, catering and logistics. In this context only special resources needed are mentioned.

Methods selected:

- Arts and Creative Consultation, p. 34
- Charette, p. 36
- Citizens´ Advisory Committee, p. 38
- Citizens´ jury, p. 40
- Citizens´ panel, p. 42
- Citizens Polls, p. 44
- Community Planning, p. 46
- Consensus Conference, p. 48
- Delphi Process, p. 50
- Focus Groups, p. 52
- Future Search Conference, p. 54
- Nominal Group, p. 56
- Open Space, p. 58
- Peer review, p. 60
- Public Hearing, p. 62

Try the different methods in your own department before you carry them out with external stakeholders. You can also use the methods as a mixture if that is appropriate for your case.

ARTS AND CREATIVE CONSULTATION [21,22]

Description:
People express their views, feelings and perspectives in different ways. Not for everyone discussion is the best way to participate in an event - for some it is hard to express their views verbally. Using visual methods or asking people to create visual images is one way of engaging them at a different level. Creative approaches can include play, video, music and sculpture to express thoughts, feelings and views.

Objectives:
Arts and Creative Consultation is used when you want to improve your service or test new approaches, address a complex issue and want to get participation in a new creative way.

Outcomes:
- satisfy statutory requirements
- determine needs/desires
- increase defensibility
- improve services
- increase transparency

Strengths:
- it is a fun way to get people involved
- builds confidence and encourage expression from groups who may otherwise find it hard to participate
- it is a different and unusual method and therefore can be powerful if it is done well

Weaknesses:
- events and activities need careful planning and support
- domination by a small group or individuals should be avoided
- not all people feel themselves able to do "art"

Special resources required:
- depending on the project and the creative method chosen

The method is used:
- to enable to find out people's views and feelings on most aspects of community life
- in situations where it can be easier to express views and opinions in an unusual, creative way
- for groups of people who know each other are probably keen on trying something new

Size:
2-100, depending on the topic

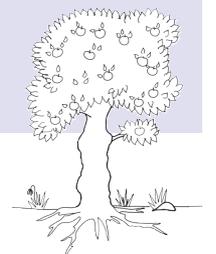**Time required:**
Medium: 6 weeks to 6 months

Practical example: Arts and creative consulting in updating a district master plan in Turku, Finland

One of the aims of the strategy for the years 2005-2008 in the city of Turku was to ensure population growth in the city. The neighbouring municipalities have offered cheaper and easier obtainable building sites for detached houses which tempt especially families with children. Turku wants to stay in the competition by creating attractive living sites and districts. These are among the reasons why effective land use and city planning are prioritized in Turku during the last years.

Hirvensalo is a large island in the south-west of Turku and it has been in the core of the city planning for around 10 years. The City Council decided that updating of the Hirvensalo Master Plan should be finalized during the council period 2005-2008. A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) was included in the plan, and a strong involvement of stakeholder groups and local residents was decided to be important part of the HIA process. The ideas and feedback of the local people were to be used as much as possible in the development of structural models.

Several participation methods were used among different population groups varying from pre-school children to elderly people. Some of the methods were conventional (e.g. public hearings and discussion) but creative consulting was used as well, especially with children and the youth. Pre-school children were asked to make drawings on "what they see from their windows", 4th and 6th graders were asked to draw a cartoon "on their way home". The youth expressed their views through photographs and elderly people were encouraged to tell stories about "the good old days". Totally around 200 people, including about 100 children and young people, participated in the planning process through these consulting methods.

All material from the stakeholder meetings was forwarded to the consultancy that was in charge of the master plan. Based on the material, the consultancy drafted three structural models for further discussion and the same groups that were involved earlier in the process were asked to comment on them by giving both positive and negative feedback. The feedback was also collected for further elaboration.

CHARETTE [23]

Description:

The Charrette is an intensive face-to-face process designed to bring people from various sub-groups of society into consensus within a short period of time. The method can be used in developing, designing and planning projects giving practical ideas and viewpoints at the beginning of the planning process. It encourages collaboration and resolving deadlocks between groups towards the end of the process. The process consists of:

- a pre-charrette: focusing on developing and working with a steering committee that will determine the primary focus of the Charrette and handle the logistics for the next two steps.
- charette workshop- intensive planning and design workshops
- post-charrette - preparing the final document.

Objectives:

- to work out common recommendations and an action plan between a wide range of participants in a short period of time
- to develop a vision for a geographic region on planning process which is based on the priorities that the stakeholders found out

Outcomes:

- increased collaboration
- shared information and common understanding
- creative decisions
- final presentation

Strengths:

- helpful in complex situations
- enables fast and interactive decision-making
- provides an opportunity for a diverse public to discuss issues with the Charette team
- enables sharing of ideas
- brainstorming
- can open horizons
- holistic analysis of a problem

Weaknesses:

- very intense process
- can be costly as specialists are required
- only applicable to certain scenarios

The method is used:

- to develop, design and plan projects at the local community level
- to assemble practical ideas and viewpoints at the beginning of the process
- to encourage input and collaboration
- to facilitate decisions on difficult complex issues
- to resolve indecision or deadlocks between groups
- to develop feasible projects and action plans
- to identify potential funding sources for projects

Size:

from 50 to 1000 people

Time required:

from 4 days to 4 weeks

Practical example: Charette in Kiruna, Sweden

Kiruna is a small town in northern Sweden and it's highly dependent on iron ore. The resent mining activity has caused such ruptures in the ground that the passing E10 road and railway as well as parts of the town have to be moved. The change is to be realized in a sustainable way, for which a close co-operation between the relevant stakeholders is a prerequisite. In this case the co-operation was formed between the concerned politicians and officials of the municipality, Vägverket (the Swedish Road Administration), Banverket (the Swedish Rail Administration) and the County Administrative Board of Norrbotten. Besides, external experts offered their own ideas.

The charrette method was considered to be the most appropriate way to co-operate, as it offered the stakeholders an opportunity to concentrate on discussion over Kiruna's future and make some sketches over the development of the railway and the E10 road. An intensive seminar was held in April 2005. However, planning of the seminar started already in autumn 2004, including details about responsibilities.

The actual charrette seminar proceeded in the following way:

Day 0: Introducing local conditions to the visitors, including e.g. a lecture of the town's history and a bus tour.

Day 1: Planning seminar. The day started with a series of presentations after which the participants were divided into groups of ten, led by a planner, architect or a landscape architect. In the end of the day each of the four groups had sketched two proposals.

Day 2: Revising the proposals. This time politicians were not present. External experts and officials of the municipality, county, Vägverket and Banverket got together. First they had a summary of the events of the previous day. The participants were divided in new, more collected groups than the day before to dimension the future of Kiruna. One group concentrated on evaluating the number of inhabitants and density of settlement. The second group prepared a time table by counting backwards from the point of time when railway and road need to have moved from the ruptured area. After a common discussion they resulted in two main alternatives which were worked further in the afternoon.

The general impression of the method was positive. Two main alternatives for the town development were created and they were further developed to a document in January 2006.

CITIZENS´ ADVISORY COMMITTEE[24]

Description:
Small groups of people representing various interests or expertise (ex. Community leaders) meet on a regular or ad hoc basis to discuss concerns and provide an informed input.
Citizen Advisory Committees can be formed to assist the City Council in making critical policy decisions that impact the community. These groups research, study and discuss specific issues with both short and long-term implications, forwarding their recommendations to the Council. Citizen input is essential to the success of local government. Participants are often chosen from interest positions that the decision maker considers to be relevant rather than a random selection as would be the case for the citizen's jury.

Objectives:
The method aims at providing participation in decision-making by small groups of citizens where public interests and values need to be made explicit and for different claims and arguments to be put forward. It is not only to inform and influence the decision but also to contribute to later decisions.

Outcomes:
- enhanced quantity and quality of citizen involvement
- enhanced communication between the legislative and executive branches of local government, between government and the community and between branches of local government
- increase defensibility
- improve services
- increase transparency
- change people's views
- empower citizens
- resolve conflicting issues

Strengths:
- can consider issues in detail and highlight the decision-making process and the complexities involved
- promotes a feeling of trust

- provide a forum for people with differing areas of expertise and varying opinion to inform one another
- source of new insights, ideas and opinions for elected and appointed government officials
- can help to defuse tensions and de-politicize the process of governing

Weaknesses:
- not all interests may be represented
- requires commitment from participants (lack of civic engagement)
- a longer-term process requiring more resources than some other method

Special resources required:
- facilitator/staff assistant to make meeting arrangements, assist with agendas, minutes and supplies, and facilitate access to city information

The method is used:
The method is used to provide ongoing advice to city councils and city administrations on a variety of issues. They are often a way for the Local government unit to engage citizens in the governing process to keep in touch with changing public needs between elections. Citizen Advisory Committee should be able to provide citizen advice and opinion on important local government matters.

Size:
Medium: 2-10 people

Time required:
Medium: 6 weeks - 6 months

Practical example: Environmental Development Board in Cēsis, Latvia

At the turn of the millennium, people in Cēsis had had enough of their deteriorated environment. A group of activists started organizing regular nature cleaning campaigns managing also to involve some stakeholders, e.g. entrepreneurs, public institutions, housekeepers and schools, to their activities. Education of people was organized along with practical work. As a result, a lot of people improved their awareness of and skills for the maintenance of the territory from biological and esthetical point of view.

The idea of the establishment of Environmental Development Board (EDB) grew out of these voluntary activities. Not only did it receive support of local environmental activists but it was also encouraged by the local municipality. The EDB was officially founded with a decision of Cēsis City Council in the spring of 2002. The aims of EDB are: elaboration of development plans of green territories in the city; promotion of sustainable land use; identifying of threats to biodiversity and development plans; and education and involvement of local community in biodiversity and landscape protection.

The Environmental Development Board consists of officers of the Cēsis City Council, representatives of NGOs, entrepreneurs, and representatives of the public administration. The Board gets together once a month on a voluntary basis. The meetings are recorded and minutes are distributed to the stakeholders. The work of the EDB is also reflected on the home page of the Cēsis City.

The Environmental Development Board is a new structural unit not only in the Cēsis City Council but also in the whole Latvia. It ensures two-way communication between the city council, NGOs and entrepreneurs. The establishment of the EDB has enabled that activities connected with environment can be planned, elaborated and implemented. The Board contributes to local democracy and sustainable development.

CITIZENS` JURYS [22, 23]

Description:
Citizens juries are used to involve a wide community on decision-making processes. It typically consists of a representative sample of citizens; a group of citizens selected in a random or stratified manner selected as far as possible to be representative of the community, with a balance of man and woman and an appropriate mix of ethnicity, employed, unemployed, etc. The citizens are briefed about the background of the topic and are asked to discuss possible approaches. Citizen's juries usually complement other forms of consulting or involving rather than replace them.

A jury lasts for three to five days. The recruited participants serve their community by taking part in deliberations on a planning decision that will affect a geographically situated population e.g. to designate a precise site for a (conventional) waste management installation. The topic should be substantial enough to justify several days` attention. The organizing institution, or officially accredited personnel, proposes a number of decision options among which the jury has to choose (these options could be developed beforehand). At the end of a process, a report is produced, setting out the views of the jury, including differences in opinion).

Objectives:
Citizen juries aim to draw members of the community into participative process where the community is distanced from the decision-making process or a process is not seen as being democratic.

Outcomes:
A citizen jury will deliver a considered report with recommendations for future actions or directions.

Strengths:
- strives to improve representation in participative process by engaging a cross section of the community in the jury;
- can be used to provide a transparent process for decision-making;
- provides a mechanism for a public democracy

- provides citizens with an opportunity to develop a deep understanding of the issue;
- involves "ordinary" citizens
- consider issues in detail and in a relatively short period of time;

Weaknesses:
- relatively high need of resources before the event (engage jury, hire facilitator, prepare briefing documents and contact experts)
- jury members need to be representative of the community in consideration
- takes up to four days for the jury to consider its "verdict"
- not all interests can be represent

Special resources required:
- witnesses
- possibly a jury`s advocate

The method is used:
- for consensus building and for problem solving. When there are clearly defined options a citizens jury engages stakeholders in taking decisions and developing an action plan for their own community

Size:
12-16 participants

Time required:
the event itself: ca. 3-5 days

Example: Citizens' jury in Norrköping, Sweden

The main objective of the citizen's jury was to work out ways of managing existing competing interests and at the same time preserving or improving water quality.

In the frame of the "River Dialogue project", the citizens' jury was held for the inhabitants of Norrköping Municipality in the Motala Ströms basin. It was organized by the Linköping University Research Team in February, 2004.

The intention of the Citizens' Jury was to give input to policy makers and to get a normative discussion on the priorities that should be given in policies on water quality. 12 jurors were selected between the persons of 18-75 years that represented Norrköping community. The research team selected witnesses/experts for the jury from a wide range of interest groups such as agriculture, fisheries, nature conservation, provincial government, environmental city department and industrial sector.

The Citizens' Jury lasted for 2 days and before the event pre-questionnaires was filled out by the jury members. During the process each witness gave a presentation on the topic and the jurors were then divided into two groups for discussion. Each group had a reporter that presented the questions at the interrogation session. Persons from the sport fishing club, the paper mill, the Union of water users, and environmental and health officer of Norrköping presented municipality's view on the tools to improve water quality. A researcher presented the models for enhancing the dialogue between users, politicians and experts. Representatives of nature conservation talked about the largest non-governmental organization in Sweden and its activities. After that the draft of the recommendations was drawn up and formulated into preliminary conclusions.

The outcomes of event, the jury recommendations were presented to the provincial governor and the democracy officer from Norrköping Municipality. The Citizen's Jury brought new insights about the municipality's activities on water quality enhancement, lack of information about background of water quality on local, regional, national and EU level, overall vitality of the water problem.

CITIZENS PANEL [21, 22]

Description:

A citizens panel is made up of a group of local people who volunteer to answer a specific number of questionnaires regarding local issues. It is a low cost way used when a representative sample of local opinion is needed. A panel involves a representative sample of the local population, who has agreed to take part in consultation activity. Potential participants are normally recruited by random sampling, or door to door recruitment. Citizens' panels can achieve high response rates and are fairly cost effective

Objectives:

The aim is to build shared community knowledge and understanding of the planning process. Citizen's panels are used to develop a range of options before deciding on one.

Outcomes:

This method is ideal for consultation on cross-sectoral issues and is most commonly used to conduct surveys. This method is appropriate for general strategic planning.

Strengths:

- low cost way of reaching a broadly representative sample of local opinion
- allows the involvement of a cross-selection of citizens in any given area, thus provides an element of representativeness in the responses received
- allows changes in community attitudes towards planning issues to be tracked over a period of time
- participant group can be very large, which allows responses in different regions to be compared
- allows the development of strong public confidence in decision-making
- citizens' panels allow people the time to consider issues in depth, on the basis of information provided from a range of sources.
- can be used for a variety of subjects

Weaknesses:

- some groups are under represented on the Panel
- maintenance of Citizens Panels database requires a devotion of resources
- a clear method for recruiting panel members needs to be developed in order to achieve successful result
- commitment from your own organization is needed
- postal surveys are not suitable for dealing with complex issues- where a high level of information knowledge is required before forming an opinion

Special resources required:

- staff to manage the database
- survey postage
- additional analysis

The method is used:

- to gain input from the public on a variety of questions (including waste management, local transport, and local health facilities). Panel members are then asked to complete surveys on a regular basis. Either the whole panel is asked to fill in the survey, or it is targeted to particular groups – such as older people or minority ethnic groups.

Size:

It involves a large number of citizens - from 50 to several thousands

Time required:

Is typically maintained over a long period of time 2-4 years

Example: Citizens' panel in Peipsi, Estonia

In November 2003, the Peipsi Center for Transboundary Cooperation carried out the citizens' panel, "Water transport on the Emajõgi River in the Alam-Pedja Nature Reserve", with the local people of Puhja and Rannu. The panel concentrated on the question what could be a compromise between the environmental protection activists, undertakings and local population in relation to water transport on the Emajõgi River in the Alam-Pedja Nature Reserve.

The participants were chosen at random. In order to summon the citizens' panel, up to 800 notices were handed out with newspapers, to which 49 responses were received. The participants were of different sex and age, educational and working backgrounds. Altogether, 14 people took part in the citizen panel. The event was guided by a professional moderator.

During two days, the witnesses presented their vision in the river transport issue. Then the citizens were divided into four groups where their recommendations and proposals to improve water traffic on the Emajõgi River were worked out.

The representatives of the local governments were very enthusiastic about the citizens' panel and were greatly interested in the results. The results of group works showed that the local population was interested in having a say in Emajõgi River water transport development issues. The citizens' panel demonstrated that the citizens were capable of passing decisions at expert level if enough information in a respective field was given to them.

CITIZENS POLLS [22]

Description:
All persons meeting a stated criterion can express their opinion. Citizens polls may be carried out using normal voting mechanisms or by post.. The method is useful for issues where everyone has a right to have a say on important local issues and the results will be acted to. A citizens poll provides a clear mandate for action, but is legally not binding (legally binding would be an official referendum). A variety of different methods can be used - postal ballots, personal voting, telephone and internet voting.

Objectives:
The citizens poll aims at putting the issue to popular vote, to involve all members of national or local population.

Outcomes:
- recorded votes of people for or against a certain issue

Strengths:
- easy to interpret results
- easy for people to participate
- incites discussion and interest
- all votes have equal influence
- can potentially involve all members of a local or national population
- difficult for the local government to ignore the results of a referendum

Weaknesses:
- no qualitative information
- often gets low turnouts
- the techniques can be very expensive
- results can be based on superficial uninformed responses
- results can be swayed by the amount and quality information provided by supporters of each option rather than by the issue itself
- wording can present problems
- limited number of times you can use it (vote fatigue)
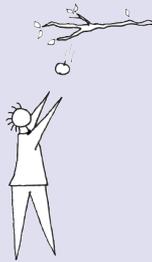
The method is used:
- to provide a clear mandate for action
- to give an opportunity to debate the issues for people
- to get citizens directly involved with the legislative process (in a referendum)

Size:
can include the whole community

Time required:
preparation, conduction and evaluation of the results can take from some weeks to months

Example: Referendum in Russia

The ecological referendum in Russia aimed to mobilize environmentalists for solving the problem on the status of independent committee on ecology and forestry service and the issue on importing the radioactive waste from abroad.

The Russian environmentalist and representative from different NGOs cooperated together in 2001. NGOs had only a few months to gather over two million signatures, under strict guidelines concerning what kind of individual or organization could gather the signatures, under what circumstances, and in which regions. With a website, a list server, and innumerable NGOs across the nation taking part, it was one of the most massive initiatives undertaken by the Russian environmental movement. People were motivated in part by the threat of losing all the ground they had gained over the past decade. There were demonstrations, street theater, and other actions to draw attention to the need for the referendum. Many groups without an environmental focus also helped gather signatures.
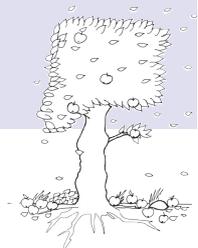
Finally, over 2,490,000 signatures were handed in to regional and central authorities for validation, and the counting began. During the very same weeks that the Florida authorities were counting and re-counting votes for US President, the Russian authorities were counting and checking the signatures gathered for the referendum.

On November 29th, the Central Election Committee announced that they had thrown out enough signatures to bring the total down to only 1,873,216-below the number required in order to hold a referendum. According to organizers, signatures were denied on such technicalities as a correction of the date without an additional signature next to the correction, or the address not containing the name of the region-although each page of signatures had the region written at the top.

The national headquarters for the initiative has claimed that this was the most successful in the entire history of attempted referenda in the country, which has yet to see a nationwide referendum. They hold that at least 500,000 of the rejected signatures were actually real, and urge organizers to appeal the unreasonably invalidated signatures in their region, and to prove that the regional election authorities prevented citizens from exercising their right to carry out a referendum.

Activists at Greenpeace-Russia feel that the rejection of so many signatures was predictable, since the Russian authorities have "shown themselves to be seriously frightened of the prospect of an expression of the people's will, and have taken all possible measures to prevent it." Alexandr Sidyakin, an attorney working for the referendum initiative, said, "The result has not surprised us, since the practice of freely expressing the will of the citizens has not yet come to life in our country. But we are not ready to give up."

Source:
http://www.sacredearthnetwork.org/Newsletters/ENews15p1.html

COMMUNITY PLANNING [21]

Description:

The method Community Planning gives local people a voice in decision-making in their own neighborhood or community. A community model is made to identify problems and issues and generate ideas and prioritize them through group working.

Community Planning uses simple models as a focus for people to put forward and prioritize ideas on how their area can be improved. It is a highly visible, hands-on community development and **empowerment** tool which people of all abilities and backgrounds find easy and enjoyable to engage in. Participants place suggestion cards on the model indicating what they want to see happen and where (e.g playground, parking, standpipe, tree, shopping). The cards are sorted and prioritized to establish an action plan which is followed up by working groups.

Objectives:

Community Planning aims to increase community involvement and knowledge of proposed changes or planning issues by placing their suggestions and concerns directly on to a three-dimensional model; this also ensures that planning and decision-making will be made with a better understanding and knowledge of community issues and needs.

Outcomes:

As an outcome of the process a design or plan that incorporates community needs and issues will be produced. That makes it acceptable and useful to the community, and will give the community a sense of ownership of the plan that may incorporate elements of community monitoring and maintenance.

Strengths:

- can be used to identify features of importance to the community and community aspirations;
- allows the community to take control and set the agenda;
- allows participation without the need for good verbal or written skills
- effective in mobilizing community support and interest
- can help bridge language barriers in mixed language areas

Weaknesses:

- needs commitment from participants to participate in the whole process
- requires commitment from decision-makers to follow through on suggestions
- developing a three dimensional model can be expensive
- follow-up and feedback can take up to three months

Special resources required:

- recorders and other technical supplies
- modeling equipment

The method is used:

- to establish local people's priorities in development of a general community action plan
- develop community capacity
- develop community issues (to establish views about a particular issue)
- to demonstrate complexity of decision-making processes

Size:

Medium 2-12 people; Large more than 12 people

Time required:

Long more than 6 months

Example: Community Planning in Pärnu, Estonia

Transnational cooperation on SUTP development has made the city realize the need for a cross-sectoral approach in transport planning, especially the need to integrate land-use and transport planning. The main goal of the process was to diminish the use of private cars in the city.

The SUTP scope and definition are set to the same targets. Therefore, the scope is to diminish the use of cars by developing a fair, accessible and attractive public transport system, by developing concrete bicycle policy for the city and by handling the seasonal transport problems accompanied by tourists.

Pärnu has taken the most important first steps to get started with the development of a sustainable urban transport. It has been possible by agreeing on the SUTP scope and definition in cooperation with the cross-sectoral stakeholders and together with a transnational experience exchange. On the local level, a number of specialists and stakeholders from various fields have been involved in the cooperation to make the definition and scope for the Pärnu SUTP.

As a result of the process, not only the scope and definition of Pärnu SUTP has been set but also a common vision for the whole functional city region has been derived. Making the quality of urban environment and living better is the key for Pärnu in the future.

CONSENSUS CONFERENCE [23]

Description:

A forum at which a group of citizen's with varied background, selected from a general public, questions "experts" on a particular topic, assesses responses, discusses the issues raised and reports its conclusions. A consensus conference allows ordinary citizens to be involved in assessing an issue or proposal. The conference is a dialogue between experts and citizens it is open to the public and the media. The citizens' panel plays a leading role which formulates questions to be taken up at the conference and participates in the selection of experts to answer them. The panel has two weekends for this preparation. The expert panel ensures that all emerged conflicts or opposing views are discussed at the conference. The overall responsibility of ensuring that the process is democratic, fair and transparent has the planning committee.

Objectives:

Aim to give members of the community a chance to have their say on community issues, increase their knowledge and gives an ability to participate in the discussion.

Outcomes:

At the end of a consensus conference, the outcome should be a position statement that reflects the joint decision of all participants on an issue or proposal.

Strengths:

- demonstrates a plurality of views on issues
- process of communicating information about the conference topic provides a strong educational component
- useful method for obtaining informed opinions from key persons
- bridges the gap between experts and people

Weaknesses:

- not all interests can be represented;
- limited timescale for consideration of issues
- recruitment method for stage 1 may not ensure representative participation
- exclusive process for stage 1
- require significant resources
- high costs for setting up and recruitment of participants and starting the event
- the process of panelist selection can be difficult. Stakeholder analysis must be undertaken to predetermine relevant groups.
- rapid production of reports and findings is required
- choice of an effective facilitator is critical to the success of the conference

The method is used:

- to deal with controversial issues of public concern.
- where the topic being investigated concerns management, science or technology
- when members of the community feel their views go unheard
- to engage community, discover community issues, develop community capacity, develop action plan, communicate an issue

Size:

2-10 people

Time required:

2 to 12 months; preparatory demonstrations and lectures to inform panel members about topic, then three-day conference

Example: Consensus Conference in Norway

The conference aimed to raise public awareness about the issue of genetically modified food as well as showing the value of carrying out a pilot project for the introduction of the consensus conference instrument into Norwegian policy-making.

This was the first consensus conference with a laymen's panel ever to be organized in Norway. The 1996 consensus conference was evaluated by Norwegian Institute for Studies in Research and Higher Education (NIFU), an independent research institution, which submitted its report55 in April 1997. As a part of the evaluation all participants filled in a questionnaire. The evaluation focused primarily on the organization and the process itself.

The National Committees for Research Ethics and the Norwegian Biotechnology

The Advisory Board initiated and arranged an open meeting on the use of genetically modified food (held on 15 and 16 November 2000 in Oslo) as a follow-up to the 1996 consensus conference. The November 2000 conference had two main objectives:

– To summarize the development in research on genetically modified food since 1996.

– To discuss and conclude on whether there should be a moratorium on the use and import of genetically modified food.

The same laymen's panel (15 of the original 16 members) was invited and posed questions to a panel of experts. Written material was sent to the laymen individually, for them to prepare questions to the experts. The answers to these questions became the basis for the panel's conclusion.

As a result, the public awareness on the issue rose. The conference was later used as a model of public participation in Norway. Following it, a number of consensus conferences – especially within the field of medicine and technology – have since been organized. The laymen's report from the 1996 consensus conference was part of the material on which the parliament based its discussions of a moratorium in October 2000.

Description:
The Delphi Method is based on a structured process for collecting and distilling knowledge from a group of experts by means of a series of questionnaires combined with controlled opinion feedback. Persons with different expertise or interests relevant to the problem participate in a series of planned, facilitated discussions (either face-to-face or by correspondence). Delphi is similar to Focus groups but Delphi groups do not have to meet physically, it is a method of generating ideas and facilitating consensus among individuals who have special knowledge to share, but who are not always in contact with each other. It is used to develop fact-based decisions and strategies reflecting expert opinion on well-defined issues. Because input is anonymous, more equal consideration may be given to the diverse views.

Objectives:
The Delphi process aims at engaging a large number of stakeholders in a process of coming to agreement without the necessity of leaving their usual domain. This usually involves circulating documents or options papers by e-mail or post so that all comments and suggestions can be noted.

Outcomes:
The Delphi process should lead to an agreed set of guidelines or recommendations that includes the input of all relevant areas of experience. The technique allows experts to deal systematically with a complex problem. From round to round the relevant information is shared, further educating the panel members. Recommendation can be made on the basis of more complete information. The method provides a reliable and creative exploration of ideas or the production of suitable information for decision-making.

Strengths:
- allows sharing of ideas and consensus decision-making by a large number of stakeholders who are geographically distanced
- can be used when the issue is complex
- provides a democratic and transparent method
- works well to produce a consensus decision
- can be conducted online or face-to-face

Weaknesses:
- can be expensive to run
- large amounts of data needs to be assessed and distributed
- time consuming for organizers (can run for several months)
- participants' commitment may falter if the process takes too long or they have other commitments

Special resources required:
- relevant communication media
- relevant technical information needs to be made available to participants

The method is used:
- to provide the benefits of a pooling and exchange of opinions, respondents can learn from each others` views
- time and cost make frequent group meetings infeasible
- more individuals are needed than can effectively interact in a face-to-face exchange
- the problem does not lend itself to precise analytical techniques but can benefit from subjective judgments on a collective basis

Size:
individual or on medium level 2-12 people

Time required:
medium: 6 weeks to 6 months

Example: Delphi Process in Germany

The Delphi process aimed to collect relevant information concerning topics and themes for future trans-national transport research programs.

The ERA-NET TRANSPORT (ENT) research program is a joint effort of 11 European countries to promote efficient trans-national research co-operation in the field of transport. ERA-NET TRANSPORT aims at developing a European vision on transport research.

The Delphi survey has been done in 2004 and over 25 European transport experts and professionals participated in two questionnaires and one workshop to identify and specify these topics and themes. The Delphi survey tried to produce a prioritized list with research areas in which several European countries want to cooperate. The list was generated in several phases, first asking experts from different countries about trends and policy areas that they find important for the long term and for which research is needed.

In second phase this list was concentrated around priority themes and the experts were asked to give their ideas about important policy tools, to be developed in trans-regional research. In the third phase a focus was made in the wide range of research issues.

On the basis of Delphi survey in March 2005 the Policy Seminar took place. The participants were the decision makers in strategic transport research programming in ENT countries managers in the Ministries and National research bodies.
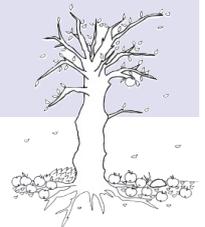
The results of this Delphi survey were put forward for discussion in the Policy Seminar "Themes for future trans-national transport research programming" and as outcome 9 research areas were identified as the most important to focus on in future research initiatives.

FOCUS GROUPS [22]

Description:
Focus groups are discussion groups with people chosen according to specific criteria (age, gender, service-user etc.) that have been strategically invited to attend and to talk about a particular issue following a defined agenda. Usually focus groups last 1-2 hours and the participants can be recruited from a variety of sources including existing network groups, or on the back of other surveys. It is good to have a trained, independent facilitator for the event as effective moderation is the key to successful focus groups. It is important to ensure that the discussion does not leave the agenda which lists the main areas of interest to be covered. It is the moderators' job to keep the discussion inline without imposing their own views and they must also ensure that particular participants do not dominate the discussion or 'shout down' others. Focus Groups are good for initial concept exploration and generating creative ideas. When you need a broad understanding or overview of an issue or service, generate new ideas, test alternative strategies. The method can help to clarify perceptions and definitions. Focus groups are cheaper and quicker to organize than in-depth interviews and the discussion may bring new ideas, with people stimulating each other.

Objectives:
Focus Groups aim to discover issues of most concern for selected groups. Discovering these issues can help to determine which out of a number of options is the preferred one, or to determine what are the concerns that would prevent a proposal from going ahead.

Outcomes:
- detailed knowledge of the issue that concern community
- change people's views
- increase defensibility
- improve service
- determine needs/Desires
- resolve conflicting issues

Strengths:
- relatively inexpensive with quite flexible format
- can be used to develop a preliminary concept of the issues of concern
- good for identifying the reasons behind people's likes/dislikes
- relatively easy to organize, especially if you already have contacts to people you can invite
- people feel more confident in groups
- discussion can stimulate thinking within the group
- method can be used to communicate with all sorts of groups of people

Weaknesses:
- if held at the end of a process without other opportunities for involvement, it does not provide opportunity for early and continuing involvement
- may be dominated by special interest groups
- feed-back obtained from this format may not be representative of the community
- formal hearings may intimidate people and restrain commenting
- excludes the inarticulate and perhaps disadvantaged groups

The method is used:
- when the public may voice opinions but has no direct impact on recommendation.
- when wider discussion is beneficial and appropriate.
- to find out what specific groups think about e.g. your service.
- get a broad understanding or overview of an issue or service.
- to clarify perceptions and definitions.
- to compare and contrast views and experiences and generate new ideas.
- to test alternative strategies.
- when people have similar circumstances/status.

Size:
- 8-10 participants+ facilitator

Time required:
- 1-2 hours

Practical example: Focus Groups in Latvia

Latvia has developed a sustainable development strategy called "Latvija 2030", according to which the Latvia of 2030 will consist of responsible people and democratic governance. To reach the goal, the Latvija2030 work group has made some research to find out the starting point. Besides a survey, that gives quite a general view of the people, a focus group discussion was organized. The date was January 30th 2008.

The focus group consisted of six participants – three females and three males. Participants that were asked to participate in the discussion were young adults (aged 20 - 30) from different professions who occupied fairly similar job positions.

The main reason for organizing a focus group discussion was to deepen the knowledge about barriers for sustainable consumption. Face-to-face communication gives better understanding about respondents' opinions, and it was important to see if the barriers identified in the survey are equally important in this case as well, and, secondly, discover any other factors that prevent people from sustainable consumption. The discussion was audiotaped and transcribed afterwards, using the notes in the identification process of barriers for sustainable consumption.

The participants were asked to express their attitudes to sustainable consumption, their everyday behaviour, perception of barriers and motivation towards sustainable consumption. Several areas of sustainable consumption such as waste, transport, energy and water use, household products, travelling, and others were discussed.

As a result of the focus group discussion researchers were able to understand better the obstacles of sustainable development in Latvia. Three major conclusions were made: 1. Not enough information is available for consumers, and it seems that one of the reasons for that is insufficient communication between producers and the customers; 2. The lack of possibility is another factor preventing people from sustainable consumption; and 3. Buying ecological goods and acting environmentally friendly is considered to be too costly.

FUTURE SEARCH CONFERENCE [25]

Description:
Future Search Conference is a technique for developing a shared vision of desirable future for a local community. It attempts to bring together those with power to make decisions with those affected by the decisions to try to agree on a plan of action. It develops a common view of future needs. The method is designed to encourage people to think globally, focus on the future, identify common ground and make public commitments to action. Results are recorded openly on flipcharts.

Objectives:
The Future Search Conference helps a group of people to develop a series of options for the future and agree on a plan of action which should be able to be implemented.

Outcomes:
The Future Search Conference will develop a feasible plan which incorporates the needs and wishes of those affected as well as those of the decision making departments.

Strengths:
- useful in identifying issues in at the early stages of a process
- assists in identifying priority issues
- can provide guidance on how the participation process should be run
- can provide advice to local authorities on who to involve in the participation process and gain support for ongoing process
- individuals become better informed and able to better express their opinions

Weaknesses:
- can be difficult to gain complete commitment from all participants
- large time frame may affect the availability of participants
- lack of control over the outcome

The method is used:
- when you want to bring together a broad range of people and translate detailed discussions into action plans
- to engage community and develop community capacity
- to develop action plan
- to build consensus in the early stages of the decision-making process

Size:
Can involve from 20-500 people in identifying important issues; all stakeholders should be invited

Time required:
Medium: 6weeks to 6 months

Example: Future Search Conference in Uppsala, Sweden

The conference aimed to involve the citizens and stakeholders from different social levels to discuss the problem of violence in the city.

The future search conference on the theme "A Culture of Peace and Non-Violence in Uppsala" started in 1999 and was organized by woman from Christian Council of Sweden. The head of the Department for Youth in the City Hall and the Police participated in the project group. The future search method was used to involve the citizens and stakeholders from all social classes and the following stakeholder groups were decided: members from business, politicians, media, social service, youth activity places, and culture. There were also young people in every group.

Altogether 12 meetings took place and 45 people participated in them. The participants were divided into 3 groups and they worked together discussing violence, giving examples from their own experiences and creating the concept of ideal future.

On the last day, three projects came up. One group set an agenda for dialogue, a very strong theme during the meeting and now they are working on an education program for young people to go out in schools and teach other young people about non-violence. Another group worked on the problems of youth culture in Uppsala and the last one made action plans connecting all people working the theme "How can we get a greater impact working together?"

NOMINAL GROUP [21, 22]

Description:
Nominal groups are groups "in name only" . That means the technique eliminates social and psychological dynamics of group behavior which can inhibit individual creativity and participation in group decisions. Everyone is given a structured opportunity to participate.
The nominal group technique is an alternative to brainstorming that uses idea generation, group discussion and systematic voting to help a group to choose a preferred solution or a course of action.

1. Idea – in 5-10 min the participants write down ideas based on the questions posed.
2. Each participant presents their ideas with the best one first. Those are noted down on a flipchart.
3. Clarification – each idea is discussed more in detail. The same ideas are brought together and all individual ideas are numbered.'
4. People vote for the numbered ideas on an agreed voting system
5. Action – the group discusses their plan of action based on the outcomes from the voting with the intent of reaching agreement on how they will deal with the original question.

Objectives:
- to increase participation in problem identification, problem solving and program planning.
- to ensure that participants represent a balance of the range of opinions available within a community or group.

Outcomes:
- creative problem solving and delivered group decisions that incorporate individual judgments with greater accuracy
- ideas and group consensus through a structured problem-solving process.
- individual ideas and opinions to combine them and to arrive at collective judgments

Strengths:
- ensures input from all participants (everyone is given a structured opportunity to participate)
- wide range of responses given
- useful for determining democratically derived outcomes

- useful for idea and solution generation, fact-finding
- enhance productivity out of a meeting
- balance and increase participation

Weaknesses:
- requires an experienced facilitator and certain physical facilities
- technique can deal with only one question at a time (single-purpose technique)
- inappropriate for simpler problems which can be resolved in a less structured interacting group
- clear rules need to be outlined
- not for routine business, predetermined outcome or groups requiring consensus
- can be difficult to convince people to use nominal groups for the first time
- takes considerable time, usually 60-90 minutes

Special resources required:
- independent facilitator
- recorders
- response sheet
- flipcharts

The method is used:
- to balance and increase participation, when you want to bring together a broad range of people and translate detailed discussions into action plans
- to identify elements of problem situation (problem identification), in complex decision-making situations
- to identify elements of a solution programme (solution exploration)
- to establish priorities (priority setting), where the judgments of several individuals must be decoded and aggregated into a group decision;
- widely used in health, education, welfare and industry or as an exploratory research technique for problem exploration

Size:
ca. 10 participants per group

Time required:
the event usually lasts from 3-5 hours

Example: Nominal Group in Estonia

The aim of using nominal group process was to draw on the perceptions of Estonia's mid-wives and other health care stakeholders to delineate the current situation of midwifery in the country, in the context of a sexually transmitted infection/human immunodeficiency virus epidemic.

Since the initiation of health sector reforms in 1992, Estonia has experienced a steep decline in the number of midwives and midwife graduates. At the same time, there has been a rapid increase, first in sexually transmitted infections and then in human immunodeficiency virus.

Data were obtained by sending a 32-point questionnaire, based on an agenda developed through semi-structured interviews, to all midwives in Estonia. A nominal group technique was employed with key stakeholders to determine the extent of their agreement with the questionnaire's major findings.

The response rate to the questionnaire was 75%. There was no significant association between work satisfaction and independent variables of age, ethnicity, work abroad, increased responsibility, and involvement in postpartum care and counseling. There was, however, a significant association between work satisfaction and salary. The group process revealed that although there is no agreement on the role of family doctors and midwives in antenatal care, there is a general agreement that midwives should be more involved in postpartum care and that their tasks need to be better defined.

As a result this process gave the clear view on the most sensitive topics for Estonian midwives (almost a half of them were dissatisfied with their job, especially with salary) and showed that a further reduction of the high abortion and sexually transmitted infection/human immunodeficiency virus rates is a critical challenge for Estonia, and midwives could be employed in services to do this, similar to their Nordic neighbors.

OPEN SPACE [21, 22]

Description:
An Open space workshop provides a highly democratic framework for enabling any group of people (from 20-500) to create their own programme of discussions on almost any theme without much preparation. They are particularly useful for dealing with general policy issues, for generating enthusiasm and for dealing with urgent/ important issues needing quick action. The method involves all stakeholders and is therefore a "whole system" approach. The basis of Open Space events is that people will take ownership of issues they wish to address. Open Space events work on the following four principles:
1. Whoever comes are the right people.
2. Whatever happens is the only thing that could have happened
3. Whenever it starts its the right time
4. When it's over, it's over
Participants start by sitting in a circle and decide themselves on the issues to discuss, usually guided by a facilitator. Workshop sessions are self-managed by the participants within a framework of simple principles and laws. Each workshop session develops a list of actions required and who should take them.

Objectives:
Open Space helps identifying important issues, discussing these, prioritizing them and deciding on action Outcomes: Action plan on the identified issues.

Strengths:
- can generate action plans quickly
- highly participative
- relatively low cost

Weaknesses:
- can seem to be chaotic
- all participants should get written summaries on the day which requires organization of photocopier or typist
- it might be hard to get large turnouts of the public

Special resources required:
- venue with a circle of chairs (catering)
- bulletin board with workshop locations identified
- posters indicating 'principles' and 'laws'.

The method is used:
- to gather and bring together a broad range of people and translate detailed discussions into action plans

Size:
Can involve from 20-500 people in identifying important issues

Time required:
the event can last from 1 to several days

Example: Open Space in Riga, Latvia

In December 2004, an Open Space event was arranged in the city of Riga as a part of the Kalnciema-project, the purpose of which was to modernize and restore the historical Kalnciema-street in the city centre. In the project, democratic culture and the active engagement of citizens were to be promoted and for it the Open Space-method was supported by the German partner, Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation. The tool was chosen, as it is an action-oriented planning instrument, which spurs the involvement of citizens and takes the unknown conflict-laden task and the heterogeneous interests into account.

The goal of the Open Space was to identify the interests, to create a network between the different groups, to find common goals, to develop own ideas and initiatives and working-plans for their realization. All attendees had the possibility to introduce their topics into debate, to participate in up to four different working groups and to make use of what is known the methodology of visualizing the debates by pinning self-written arguments and propositions on the wall.

The open-space event was a huge success. On their own initiative, the participants agreed on seven particular activities that would be realized during the following months:

- Public project information in shop windows on Kalnciema street
- Objects on the street that catch attention for the project
- Research on the street's historical development
- Project supporting the interests of involved actors (with the possibility to found an organization for the citizens' initiative)
- Project information centre with the offer for citizen counseling in aspects of city development, monument preservation and life in historical wooden houses; as a long-term objective: citizen-friendly administrative work in cooperation with the two adjacent district administrations
- Expertise for further development, critical analysis of the city government's strategy with participation of both citizens and independent experts
- Construction of a children's playground as the initiative of some citizens

Feedback from the participants was overwhelmingly positive. Especially concerning their impression of "for the first time being taken seriously" shows on one hand the need for such kind of support for civil society. The transparent way of the whole event, the taken responsibility and shown passion by the persons and their statements for more personal active engagement gives hope for the further debating over Kalnciemas development. The need for an independent organization that cooperates in the peoples' interest with Riga's administration was furthermore expressed.

Source:
http://www.fes-baltic.lv/cms/upload/dokumente/Kalnciema_iela.pdf

PEER-REVIEW [26]

Description:

Peer-review brings a third party, independent experts on the selected theme, assisting the stakeholder involvement and baseline review process. The purpose of a peer review is to benefit from the insight and objective view of another organization that has already been involved in a similar or comparable process that the city is wishing to be reviewed. A "peer" is a person or a group of persons, "critical friends" with similar or deeper experience in a similar role or context. The peer review consists of pre-review, review visit and feedback. The review team should decide beforehand who they wish to meet during the visit. In general interviews should be organized with the team that actually works with the reviewed practice, senior management as well as municipal politicians responsible for the subject area.

Objectives:

The peer review aims to allow the municipality to benefit from the experience of "critical friends" and offers the review of achievements and future prospects.

Outcomes:

The main outcomes is the Peer review report that includes "issues to consider" and "recommendations for future actions"

Strengths:

- provides an independent review of the achievements, progress
- sharing skills and experience
- comparison and exchange of information
- identifies key issues to consider and makes recommendations for actions
- peer review report used as a basis
- identifies good practices

Weaknesses:

- high costs
- report writing needs quite much time (1-3 months)
- the active involvement of stakeholders depends on the programme of the review visit

Special resources required:

- venue for review team (base room) with technical facilities

The method is used:

- for independent review of achievements and progress being made, future prospects, comparative analyze
- to identify strengths and weaknesses.
- to serve as a part of the baseline review and provide a gap analyses

Size:

3-7 people (Peer review team leader, 2-3 peers, reserve peers - for emergency situations)

Time required:

2-3 months

Example: Peer Review in Gdynia, Poland

As a participating city in the EU-funded project "BUSTRIP", led by the UBC Commission on Environment, Gdynia used the peer review method for investigating their transport planning.

The aim was to get a clearer picture, good comments and inspiration for developing a sustainable urban transport plan for the city.

The peer review team consisted of colleagues from Turku, Finland; Tartu, Estonia and Kaunas, Lithuania (all participants in BUSTRIP) as well as members of UBC Commissions on Environment and Transport.

These "critical friends" carried out a desk review of Gdynia's self assessment report, discussed the progress of the city and formulated concerns and important issues. The peer-review team met with different stakeholders in Gdynia including business and citizens. The team tried out the public transport system as well.

Gdynia's aim was to get new ideas for the development of the SUTP, a transport system that allows basic access and development needs for individuals, a transport system that is safe, quiet, affordable, operates well and efficiently, offers different choices of transport modes, limits emissions and waste, uses renewable resources and minimizes the impact on the use of land.

The peer review team examined processes in the city relating to the aim and found out weaknesses and strengths, gave comments and recommendation that formed the peer review report in the very end of the method.

PUBLIC HEARING [27]

Description:
Public Hearing is a form of public meeting limited in number of participants only by the size of the venue. The method tends to involve only interested citizens. It provides regulated, formal arrangements for times and places at which members of the general public and other types of stakeholders can give evidence or question public authorities about decision under consideration.

Objectives:
Public Hearings are held prior to the decision point, gather community comments and positions from all interested parties for public record and input into decisions.
The method aims at achieving a basic level of community input and to exchange information with a wide representation of community residents. It is often used to fulfill regulatory requirements.

Outcomes:
Public hearings increase awareness of an issue or proposal, and can be a starting point for further involvement

Strengths
- potential to inform citizens
- receiving community comments
- potential for improved decision-making
- potential to minimize conflicts

Weaknesses
- some consider a public hearing not to be participative at all
- if held at the end of a process without other opportunities for involvement, it does not provide opportunity for early and continuing involvement
- may be dominated by special interest groups
- feed-back obtained from this format may not be representative of the community
- formal hearings may intimidate people and restrain commenting excludes the inarticulate and perhaps disadvantaged groups

The method is used:
- Prior to decision making
- For raising awareness and enabling discussion with the participants

Size:
limited only by the venue

Time:
the event usually lasts some hours

Example: Public Hearing in St. Petersburg, Russia

The theme of current administrative hearings that took place in 2005 was the Environmental Impact Assessment of rolled stock Vsevolochskey plant. The plant planned to start the melting of primary aluminum and in case of construction occurrences St. Petersburg and Leningrad regions could be in danger of contamination. An active position was taken by citizens (around 90% were against the construction) that allowed organizing administrative public hearings where independent experts estimated the project and consulted all stakeholders.

First time in Russia, the public hearings and its preparations fulfilled the world practice of quasi-judicial processes because:

1. The independent public organization was the initiator of public hearings.

2. Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) documents of Vsevolochskey plant were available for citizens.

3. The independent experts were involved in the process of public hearing for giving the objective view.

4. The procedure of hearings considered the dialog of independent experts with projectors with the participation of involved citizens.

The public hearings gave opportunity for public to review EIA documents and discuss the crucial issues.

As a result, the process showed that there were many gaps in EIA documents.

Source:
http://www.ecominfo.spb.ru/debate/index.php?id=142

3. Implementation

INTERACTION WITH THE STAKEHOLDERS

In the implementation process of a stakeholder involvement method one should concentrate on the interaction with the stakeholders. It is not enough to arrange the practicalities of the method well. Every involvement method is about interaction with the stakeholders and between the stakeholders. Therefore it is important to concentrate on the interaction.

This starts from the recruitment of stakeholders and continues with **capacity building**, empowerment and motivation of the stakeholders involved.

Diversity of stakeholders is likely to create conflicts: be prepared with conflict resolution techniques for the stakeholder interaction.

RECRUITMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS

Active participants are a good sign of quality in the process and participants usually are active if they know why they are taking part. A common sense of purpose needs to be created, as well as the whole process should be kept as simple and personal as possible to allow all stakeholders to enter in the dialogue.

A recruitment criteria needs to be established. In here, the Principles of involvement described in page 16 will help. Criteria consist often of demographic and social criteria (gender, age, education, location, occupation, social status etc.). Do not forget people with special needs and children – the more angles, the better. In some methods, the participants are supposed to be representative of the population at large. Try to ensure that the numbers of participants are balanced in each stakeholder group.

Each participant has an interest and a mandate – both from an organization, a profession, or their own – and of course expectations! It must be remembered that involvement should be flexible, and designed to grow. There is no need to involve reluctant stakeholders in the beginning, and in some cases it may be that new stakeholders only get identified along the way. What is important is that the involvement can change to accommodate this growth. Stakeholder involvement helps to create ownership, and accordingly a feeling of accomplishment in working together to solve a problem. This group dynamic will, in turn, encourage other individuals to participate both from the community and government agencies.

Decide on how to reach these target groups according to the communication plan of your process. It is important to contact the stakeholders in good time before the first activity. There are different ways in contacting stakeholders, such as through newspaper advertisements, telephone screening and personal recruitment.

CAPACITY BUILDING AND EMPOWERMENT

Needs for capacity building and empowerment have to be identified. Genuine participation demands a certain number of pre-conditions. For example, local people need to improve their own capacities to be able to participate. This includes a better understanding of the issues at stake, an ability to carry out their own analysis and planning prior to participating in the involvement level. It is important to ensure that there is enough time allocated and the possibility for all members of the community to be involved.[15] Only those stakeholders that are empowered with knowledge and capacity will participate as "social actors".[17]

The possible training needs identified here all relate to the development of skills and processes that can more effectively help both the local authorities and stakeholders to work together, and deal with communication, involvement and change management.

- Interpersonal and group communication skills
Skills include active listening, assertive communication, negotiation, facilitation, relationship building, and conflict resolution.

- Managing involvement and other participatory processes
This includes reaching a broader understanding of involvement processes and the range of outcomes that can be expected.

- Stress management
Working with people can be stressful; providing a basic understanding of debriefing skills can provide effective assistance in this regard.[15]

Some ways on how to empower participants include:

- Create a feeling of belonging through a shared vision / objectives

- Ensure everyone is sufficiently prepared and briefed. Offer briefing mechanism, coaches, pre-information etc.

- Ensure stakeholders trust the organizers and allow them to assist in the process

- Involve stakeholders in defining the terms of engagement

- Help to give a voice to marginalized and minority persons and groups

- Enable an open and honest discussion

- Respect all opinions

- Be aware of your body language as it can communicate a different message than your words.

3. Implementation

MOTIVATING PARTICIPANTS

The participants of a stakeholder involvement method need to be motivated throughout the process. Part of maintaining the motivation is to ensure that possible power gaps in the process are eliminated and the stakeholders are able to get and give feedback. It is also important to ensure that the stakeholders are able to give and get adequate inputs throughout the process. This enables participants to feel ownership of the process and it stresses the interactive nature of the entire involvement.

A few ideas on how to maintain continued involvement, enthusiasm and motivation.[15]

- start with small, manageable processes that are likely to be successful, or break bigger projects into smaller 'chunks'
- document and acknowledge positive change to give participants a sense that they are making a difference
- maintain a stable structure to reassure members that the partnership is accountable to them, and that something will get done
- demonstrate the benefits of collaboration, make explicit what the stakeholders will gain and what is the added value of the process
- continually stress successes and achievements
- make it fun -- have a social hour after meetings; plan social events

The organizers of the process should show to the participants that they are open to ideas of stakeholders and try to speak to people that they have never spoken to.

FACILITATOR

A good facilitator is very important for the success of the process. Being a role-model for the participants he or she needs to be an inspiring personality, be able to build trust with the participants and be able to lead the process towards the objectives set in advance. The facilitator has to make sure about the "flow" of the event and needs to prevent open conflicts that would ruin the process. The facilitator needs to be independent, especially in highly polarized situations. Independency is important in building trust and confidence with the stakeholders.

PROMOTION OF THE EVENT

As the public needs to know what is going on, public information about the implementation of the process is crucial and it may play the decisive role whether the implementation will be successful or whether it will not happen at all. Information about the ongoing implementation processes could be combined with a call for cooperation and involvement. Obviously, the success of implementation is directly proportional to the degree of communication, public information and involvement stemming from the latter. Involved stakeholders can be further motivated to participate if the process is promoted well and using different channels.

Possible ways for promotion

- Contacting local, national and regional mass media (newspaper, radio, television) writing press releases and writing articles supporting the process and illustrating the issues

- Advertisements in newspapers and word-of-mouth advertising

- Developing and disseminating of posters and flyers

- Mailings to stakeholders

- Information of interested organizations and other groups by presentations

- Preparation of a media information package, to be given out at the event or in advance, including: agenda, project contact person and phone numbers, philosophy of the method, project overview, explanation of the selection of participants, participant list, and additional information on the issues to be discussed. Use website to deliver information as much as possible.

- Creative ideas for drawing attention to the stakeholder involvement process, like theatre and other performing arts, puzzles in flyers or local papers, comics or similar, "scavenger hunt"

"Good promotion means more than just offering information. We promote our events to targeted audiences and try to make our message clear and understandable. We should not forget to provide also attractive opportunities to take further steps and use methods to monitor and ensure peoples satisfaction with the activities we are promoting."

Ms Elena Titova, Head of Sector for Raising Public Awareness on Environmental Issues, St Petersburg, Russia

3. Implementation

MANAGING CONFLICTS

It is said that conflict is like a soup which must be kept boiling, but cannot be allowed to boil over. From this perspective the role of the local authority is to prevent and control conflict, and those in conflict -- sometimes to reduce or resolve it, but sometimes even stimulate it. Conflicts are not always bad, as sometimes through conflicts new innovative and collaborative ways can be found. However, when a conflict is not well managed it may result in negative consequences such as polarization of views, breakdown in working relationships, and irrational or violent behavior among the stakeholders.[15]

The growing public mistrust, cynicism and perception of declining legitimacy regarding professional and scientific expertise partly explain the rising interest in public involvement.[18] Solutions to overcome low public confidence in local governments and scientific expertise have often emphasized a more deliberative and inclusive form of debate and policymaking. The value of formal science is recognized, but so is the importance of citizens' perspectives as alternative ways of framing the issues in question.[18]This is all true, but how do we then minimize conflict taking place while increasing participation?
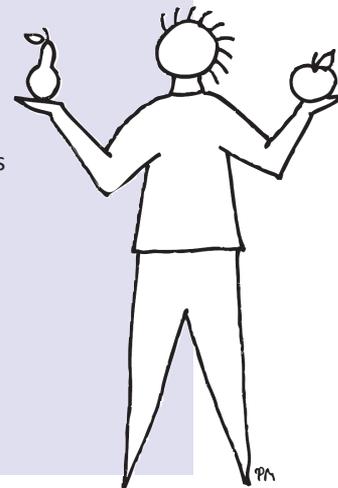
HOW TO MINIMIZE CONFLICTS?

The best way to minimize conflicts is to be prepared with background information and think defensively – if it can go wrong, it will, so trying to anticipate potential problems beforehand will improve the likelihood of not entering into a conflict at all.

Local authorities are ready for dialogue with the stakeholders when they have understood and summed up the stakeholder experiences, facts, emotions, needs and interests. On the other hand, the stakeholders themselves need to have understood the settings and conditions for the situation that the local authorities take care of. In order to reach this level, the background analyzes need to be carried out carefully. Also the objectives, mandate, rules, regulations and process procedures need to be explained well to all stakeholders involved in the beginning of the involvement.

For example, in conflict assessment, four types of stakeholders are expected: those with claims to legal protection, those with political clout, those with power to block negotiated agreements, and those with moral claims to public sympathy.[17]

In general, improved communication is the key to developing constructive working relationships and minimizing conflict. Nonetheless, conflict can be a beneficial starting point as it offers the participants an opportunity to highlight the issues that they are dissatisfied or frustrated with. It also provides a possibility for people to reassess their actions, and stimulates the search for new solutions.[15]

SOME BASIC GUIDELINES FOR COMMUNICATING DIFFERENCES IN ANY STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT METHOD:

- Simply state your needs and concerns, don't argue your position.

- Listen. Don't question the other person's values or logic.

- Ask for clarifications. Don't make assumptions, interpret, or analyze the position of the opposite side.

- Ask participants to clarify their criticism. Don't fight back or get defensive.

- Focus on problems not on personalities.

- Encourage brainstorming new ideas. Don't fight for a single solution.

- Stand up for your own feelings, concerns but be open for others, too. Don't avoid confrontation or be submissive.

HOW TO DEAL WITH A CONFLICT?

Some principals that assist in dealing and solving conflicts in the stakeholder involvement.[28]

- Include discussions of differences on the early stage of the involvement.

- Include several negotiation parties on each side to make sure that at least one of them will work during a possible crisis.

- Be prepared to provide a multistep negotiation process. This means that a dispute that is not resolved at one level of the organizational hierarchy moves to progressively higher levels. In each step of the process, there should be different negotiators involved.

- Give potential negotiators enough authority so that people with different opinions will find it worthwhile dealing with them.

- Provide easy access to intermediaries (for example, ombuds people, mediators) who can encourage negotiation or coordinate the development of a consensus.

- Teach the disputants problem-solving skills — how to listen, probe for interest, explore creative options; require that they shift away from negotiating about "positions" to negotiating about "interests".

- Build in "loop-backs" to negotiation, which move disputants from a right or a power orientation to an interest orientation.

- Start with low-cost procedures and move to high-cost ones only if the low-cost ones do not work.

- Remember that stakeholders do not want to be seen as part of the problem but as part of the solution.

4. OUTCOME

After completion of the stakeholder involvement process the question is: did it work? Were the objectives reached? How satisfied are stakeholders and organizers?

To answer those questions and to be able to prepare the outcomes for future processes a thorough evaluation is essential. In the stakeholder process, the process, the method used and the outputs need to be evaluated.

EVALUATION AND REPORTING

Evaluation is a tool that can improve the next stakeholder involvement process - which is just around the corner!

As discussed in chapter 2, evaluation needs to be planned in the beginning of the process. This ensures consistency between objectives and criteria, including important principles that need to be considered as well as it makes sure that all the steps of the process can be evaluated in the end.

Effective monitoring and evaluation requires collecting and analyzing data throughout the process. Stakeholders need to be involved also in this part, to ensure the availability of all the necessary information. Evaluation analyses what happened during the process and helps to understand why things failed or succeeded.

The evaluation contains a summary of all actions undertaken as well as comments on and interpretations of the specific achievements and deviations from the targets.

REACHING AN EVALUATION OUTCOME

Evaluation is an important input that pulls together lessons from the implementation experience and uses this experience to improve the next process. The gained experience should formulate concrete recommendations for changes. Both the process (How have actions been implemented, How can the process be improved?) and the results (Have the objectives been reached? Why, why not? What changes would have been needed to reach the targets?) need to be analyzed and evaluated.

Evaluation results in recommendations and lessons learnt for the next stakeholder involvement process. It is important to communicate these lessons learnt in the entire organization as this benefits everyone.

Make sure the evaluation answers to all relevant questions in the evaluation report. This means that there is a logical flow of the analysis, the distinction between conclusions, recommendations, and lessons learnt are evident, and an executive summary of the evaluation is clear and available to pre-defined audiences. It is worth involving stakeholders to the evaluation as this provides added value for it.

EVALUATION

Process evaluation:

How was the design of the process?

How was the organization of the process?

What were the roles of the stakeholders?

Have the stakeholder's interests been satisfied?

How were the differences addressed?

What was the degree of involvement?

Was the process done according to allocated budget and timetable?

What are the stakeholder's expectations and concerns regarding the future?

What problems occurred and how were they dealt with?

Method evaluation:

Was the chosen method appropriate?

Were the aims and objectives reached through the method?

What were the strengths and weaknesses of the method?

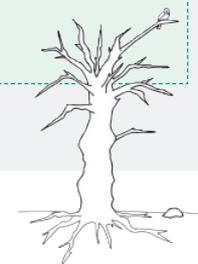Did any cultural and semantic differences occur? How were they dealt with?

Result/Output evaluation:

What are the outcomes reached?

Were the objectives realized?

Were the objectives adapted? Why?

How did the outcomes influence the decision-making process in the city?

Is the outcome credible?

Is the outcome comprehensive?

Is it clear what the outcome is used for?

Is the outcome targeted to different users?

Reporting

The evaluation report as one important outcome:

- it provides the stakeholders with information of how their input has influenced the process
- needs to be consistent and accurate
- language and style of reports may change depending on the audience
- stakeholders should have the chance to be involved in formulation of the report
- ideally circulated to a variety of audiences, including internal stakeholders in the local authority
- important tool for public relations –keep the public informed of the progress towards achieving the targets
- decision-makers can use the report as a basis for decisions
- it requires an effective communication plan to provide regular information, but also to collect feedback on the reports
- it provides the basis for the follow-up work on the topic.

4. OUTCOME

MULTIPLE RESULTS

The scale of the outcomes reached in the process depends largely on the starting questions. If the stakeholder involvement process has concentrated on a narrow topic, it is likely to bring precise outcomes. On the other hand, a development of a large multi-sectoral strategy/vision with the stakeholders can bring several benefits to many different processes. The scale of the outcomes is therefore large and varies a lot.

An evaluation report compiles all the different results of the process in one document. Here are some possible outcomes and benefits that can be gained through stakeholder involvement in different steps of the integrated management system in the cities.

BASELINE REVIEW:
- comprehensive analysis of the starting situation
- better inclusion of different interests
- better inclusion of data from stakeholder sources

EVALUATION AND REPORTING:
- better inclusion of data
- more feedback loops
- targeted evaluation reports in different forms,
- more viewpoints provided for the adjustment of targets and actions,
- multilevel monitoring reports

There are certain things to consider:
- is the credibility of the outcome in some way limited?
- is the outcome comprehensive?
- is there a risk that the utility and relevance for the users is unclear?
- have the results of the involvement been used as they were promised to be used?
- are different user-friendly formats needed?

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING:
- better acceptance of actions
- quick and better implementations, especially if the stakeholders have been part of the process from the beginning
- easier mobilization of stakeholders into the implementation of actions
- more partnerships and co-operation agreements are being made
- more target oriented information provided

TARGET SETTING:

- developing the action plan and the strategic programme together with stake holders ensures that the objectives make sense.
- decreases rumors about the planned action
- improved and targeted communication actions
- a very important step of creating ownership among the stakeholders. Targets and objectives that have been developed together with the stakeholders are more likely to be fulfilled by the whole community.
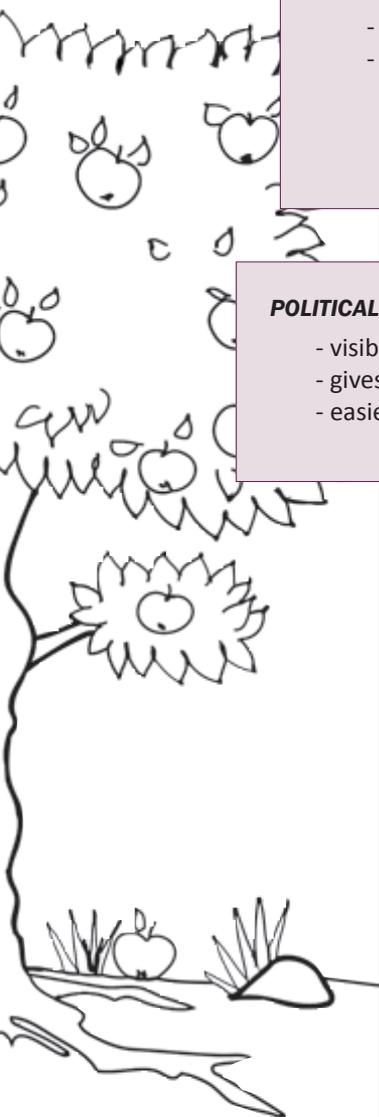
POLITICAL COMMITMENT:

- visible contribution of the stakeholder involvement in the strategies and plans
- gives more weight to the strategies and plans in the political decision-making
- easier acceptance of the plans

NEXT ACTIONS

Once the process has been completed and the results of the stakeholder involvement process have been identified it is time to act on the outcomes. This includes wide promotion of the results. Use the unique experience gained as there are not so many local authorities who have gone beyond the legally required involvement in their tasks. This will reinforce the benefits of the process even more.

Achieving change in cities on ways of involving stakeholders takes a long time. Being a pioneer is always challenging but also very rewarding. As soon as one involvement process has been carried out, it will be much easier and more beneficial to start a new one or continue with the old one. The scope of involvement can be extended in the next round in many ways. These can include enlarging the process by going deeper into process by involving more internal/external stakeholders, by covering a larger territory, adding more participatory elements or by covering more dimensions of sustainable development.

It is worth remembering that stakeholder involvement is an ongoing process in the cities. It depends highly on the learning capacity of the organization, as it adds to the human capacity of the local authorities. Therefore the more the local authorities can pass the lessons learnt in the city administration and learn from it, the more this adds value to benefits gained from the stakeholder involvement. In the best cases this creates a spiral of synergy and a flourishing city.
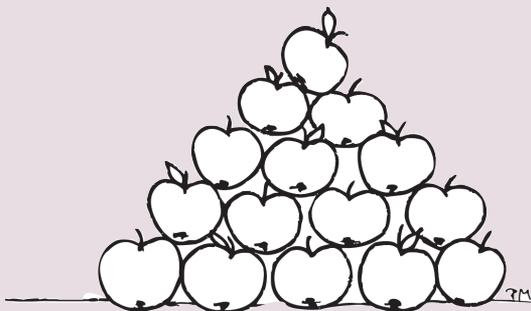
5. CONCLUSIONS

Successful work of the local authorities is largely due to increased stakeholder involvement in the city. Stakeholder involvement is a cyclical process that requires ongoing efforts from the local authorities. It is a challenging and rewarding process that can change over time in scope and content. Once concentration has been put on working with the stakeholders, new effectiveness of work can be found.

It needs to be stressed that a stakeholder involvement process is a value as such but it does not justify poor communication, unbalanced situation between different stakeholder groups and misuse of the results of the process. It is necessary to ensure that the entire stakeholder involvement process is well planned and integrated into the decision-making processes in the city. Only then the process can bring the expected results.

It is not necessary to convince everyone to change their working methods at once. Gradual changes in the local authorities' ways of work with the stakeholders will eventually influence the entire city. It is important to notice the changes that occur and reinforce them. This reinforces the process of involvement and creates motivation for the work. Stakeholder involvement enables the local authorities to move from good policies to good actions.

For development to become sustainable, a process of dialogue and ultimately consensus building of all stakeholders is required. In a stakeholder involvement process conflicts can not be avoided, but the consequences of possible conflicts can be minimized. The local authorities play a crucial role in empowering the stakeholders to take part in the decision-making and in avoiding possible conflicts.

This toolkit has used a tree symbolism for the local authorities. Stakeholder involvement is a core element for the local authorities work; it runs in the veins of the tree and can bring flourishing, growth and "fruits" for the citizens (e.g. practical actions and plans) to enjoy. We hope that you will benefit from this opportunity and engage more stakeholders into your work!

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TERMINOLOGY

Aim

An aim is an anticipated outcome that is intended or that guides planned actions;

C-SMARTER objectives

C-SMARTER objectives refer to Challenging, Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely, Evaluated and Recorded objectives. That should be formulated for the process and those objectives should be commonly agreed on.

Capacity Building

Capacity building describes human, scientific, technological, organizational, institutional and resource capabilities. The main goal of capacity building is to enhance the ability to evaluate and address the crucial questions related to policy choices and modes of implementation among development options.

Conflict

A conflict is a 'clash of interests, values, actions, views or directions. Stakeholders disagree because they see things differently, want different things, have thinking styles which encourage them to disagree, or are predisposed to disagree.

Empowerment

Empowerment refers to increasing the political, social or economic strength of individuals or communities. It often involves the empowered developing confidence in their own capacities.

Force Field Analysis

The Force Field Analysis is used for considering what are the driving forces and restraining forces in any decision that needs to be taken. The analysis should clearly identify the strong reasons for a decision and at the same time identifying and dealing with reasons not to take or implement a particular decision.

Goal

A goal is a result or achievement towards which effort is directed

Good governance

Governance is the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented). The term governance is used in different contexts such as local, national or global governance or corporate governance.

Good governance has 8 characteristics: governance is "good" when it is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective, efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rules of law.

Integrated Management

The integrated management system for managing the urban area consists of five major steps that are repeated in annual cycles. Although the system follows an annual cycle, full revision will be required only every 3-5 years, if evaluation of achievements and results at the end of the cycle does not suggest reconsideration. In cases where there are various environmental management systems implemented on the level of departments the framework system will interact with these environmental management systems by providing the strategic framework.

Involvement

Involvement is a form of participation that includes concrete engagement of stakeholders in a certain topic, decision-making etc.

Local authorities

Local authorities are the locally elected or appointed bodies which are municipalities, cities or metropolitan councils, regional and district administrations etc. These institutions can own and manage property, land and other capital resources. They have responsibility for vital functions such as education, planning, community development, social inclusion, dealing with social problems, managing transport infrastructure, providing conflict resolution services, collecting local revenue and managing their expenditure. They may also be responsible for the delivery of services to citizens.

Engage your stakeholders - Stakeholder Involvement Toolkit

Need Analysis

The needs analysis assesses the internal situation of the city with focusing on trying to answer questions like: what is your city like in 10 years time? What is needed to get there?

Objective

An objective is something that one's efforts or actions are intended to attain or accomplish; purpose; goal; target

Organizational Set-up

Organizational set-up connects all direct and indirect responsibilities and aspects of a local authority with regard to environment or sustainable development. The structure of the IMS should incorporate and make use of the existing structures in municipal administration, and not the other way around. The core parts of the organizational set-up are a coordination team and a cross-departmental coordination board. The coordination team is preferably arranged centrally within the administration to manage the coordination of the system. The coordination board is responsible for supervising the whole IMS.

PESTLE

PESTLE analyses the external environment in which a city operates. The abbreviation stands for Political Economic Social Technological Legal and Environmental factors that are considered when creating a strategic plan.

Participation

Participation is a process in which individuals or groups of people are consulted or have the opportunity to become actively involved in something. Different forms of participation are possible.

Stakeholder

Stakeholders are those who have an interest in a particular decision either as individuals or representatives of a group. This includes people who influence a decision or can influence it as well as those affected by the decision.

Subsidiarity

An organizing principle that matters ought to be handled by the smallest, lowest or least centralized competent authority. According to subsidiarity principle the central authorities should have a subsidiary function, performing only those tasks which cannot be performed effectively at a more immediate or local level.

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It includes the integrated approach of economic, environmental and social aspects of development.

SWOT-analysis

SWOT-analysis is a strategic planning tool used to discuss and analyze the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of a certain topic, business or organization and its environment.

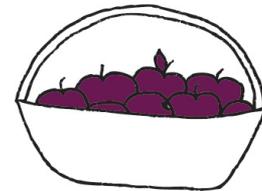# INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR RUSSIAN CITIES (MATRUSCHKA)

"Engage your stakeholders" is a result of the INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR RUSSIAN CITIES (MATRUSCH-KA) - project. It is a comprehensive tool for local authorities on how to include different stakeholders in the decision-making process. Using the toolkit, published in English and Russian, the cities/ municipalities are able to increase the stability of their work for sustainable development. To enable further integration of sustainable actions, the project also provided a Good Practice Database in the Baltic Sea Region. The Database, in English and Russian, offers a unique platform for local authorities to benchmark and further develop their actions in the Baltic Sea Region.
Visit www.ubcwheel.eu

Within two years (2007-2009) the partners of the "MATRUSCHKA" - project have worked together, and carried out a baseline review and target setting with increased stakeholder involvement. Both the Russian and EU cities/municipali-ties in the project consortium either initiated or further elaborated their Integrated Management System around a chosen theme:

• St Petersburg – Environmental management system

• Novgorod – Preparation for the signing of Aalborg Commitments

• ECAT-Kaliningrad – Sustainable transport planning

• Vyborg District of Leningrad Region- Waste management system

• Kotka – Putting Aalborg commitments into practice

• Malmö – Sustainable city development

• Oskarshamn – Development of the harbor area

• Stockholm – Sustainable city planning

Further information: wwww.matruschka-project.net

"Through the project, we at Åbo Akademi University have had a good opportunity to widen our networks with new partners in the Baltic Sea region. Cooperation and transfer of knowledge and good practices between different part-ners and actors are important for innovations and a sustainable development in our societies.

Universities are important stakeholders in the sustainable development in our cities, not the least through our most important "products" - the students. As future professionals and decision-makers they will use the knowledge and competencies they get during their studies. At the same time universities can provide new knowledge to cities and other partners in society through an active dialogue with our partners, for example through common projects. The MATRUSCHKA – project has been a good example of such cooperation."

Ms Paula Lindroos, Director for Centre for Continuing Education, Åbo Akademi, Finland

"The City of Kotka has understood that it cannot achieve the objective of the clean and safe environment alone but needs support and input from stakeholders at all levels - local, regional, national and international co-operation network. That is why Kotka has encouraged its stakeholders to be involved in the discussion and preparation of the process for sustainability.

Committed senior management is the strength of the process. I have personally participated in the process and tried to inspire stakeholders to take an active role as well.

Ongoing political support through strategy, committed senior management and the enthusiastic participation of the stakeholders will provide a good basis for further efforts. The challenge for us is to maintain the interest and dynamics in the process with the stakeholders. For this practical and visible steps are needed. "

Mr Henry Lindelöf, Mayor, City of Kotka, Finland

"During the realization of the project we came to the conclusion that it is necessary to thoroughly analyze the opinions of critics to the project. These arguments can be used for detailed elaboration of the objectives, understanding the reasoning and to milder the disagreements. In the long run, the city needs to understand what is the best direction to develop into and make own choices.

Only after we carried out a baseline review, determined the main objectives and principles for our sustainability work we realized what needs to be done. The Aalborg Commitments and a professional approach were chosen to be the key tools for us. After analyses, we established a group of people mastering these tools in the best way. Processing and openly discussing each of the aspects of the Aalborg Commitments with the stakeholders enabled everyone to join in a common process for involving more stakeholders. This way a core was created at which stakeholders from different layers of society and fields of activities were gathering like into a snowball. For us the professional approach to the involvement became a catalyst for reaching our aims.

As a result of study visits in the project it was decided to change the model of management of municipal services in Veliky Novgorod by elaborating a long-term social-economic strategy for the development of Veliky Novgorod until 2020. Principles set in the Aalborg Commitments became main ideology for the new strategy".

Mr Vladimir Sitnikov, Head of the Environment Department, Veliky Novgorod, Russia

By reading and acting from the ENGAGE YOUR STAKEHOLDERS – Stakeholder Involvement
Toolkit for local authorities – the cities are able to:

- increase the information flow and transparency.

- improve the understanding and interest towards complicated multidimensional
  issues, such as sustainable development.

- increase the acceptance of decisions among the citizens.

- improve listening and learning and therefore prevents possible conflicts.

- create favorable local conditions that make the implementation of actions
  easier and faster.

- improve their image and increase mutual trust between citizens and local authorities

E·C·A·T
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Baltic Sea Region
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