

# ▶ **STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION AT THE EU LEVEL AND IN SELECTED MEMBER STATES**

Doris Knoblauch  
Ecologic Institute

## Content – Stakeholder participation

- ▶ What is it?
- ▶ Why would one want to have it?
- ▶ Practical examples
- ▶ Critical reflection & outlook
- ▶ Q&A

# What is it?

## What is stakeholder participation?

- ▶ A mechanism
  - to hear from stakeholders before a decision is taken
  - for stakeholders to influence the decision from the beginning to the end of the decision-making process
- ▶ A process leading to a joint effort by stakeholders, technical specialists, the authorities and the decision-makers who work together to produce better decisions than if they had acted independently.

## The Policy Cycle

- ▶ Stakeholders could be included in any stage of the policy cycle.



Source:

<http://www.climateplanning.org/content/policy-cycle-stages>.

## Know what you are aiming for...

- ▶ What goals are to be achieved through stakeholder participation process?
- ▶ What means of participation would be adequate?
- ▶ Is there (enough) openness to include stakeholder input?

⇒ Avoid frustration!

... and who your stakeholders are!

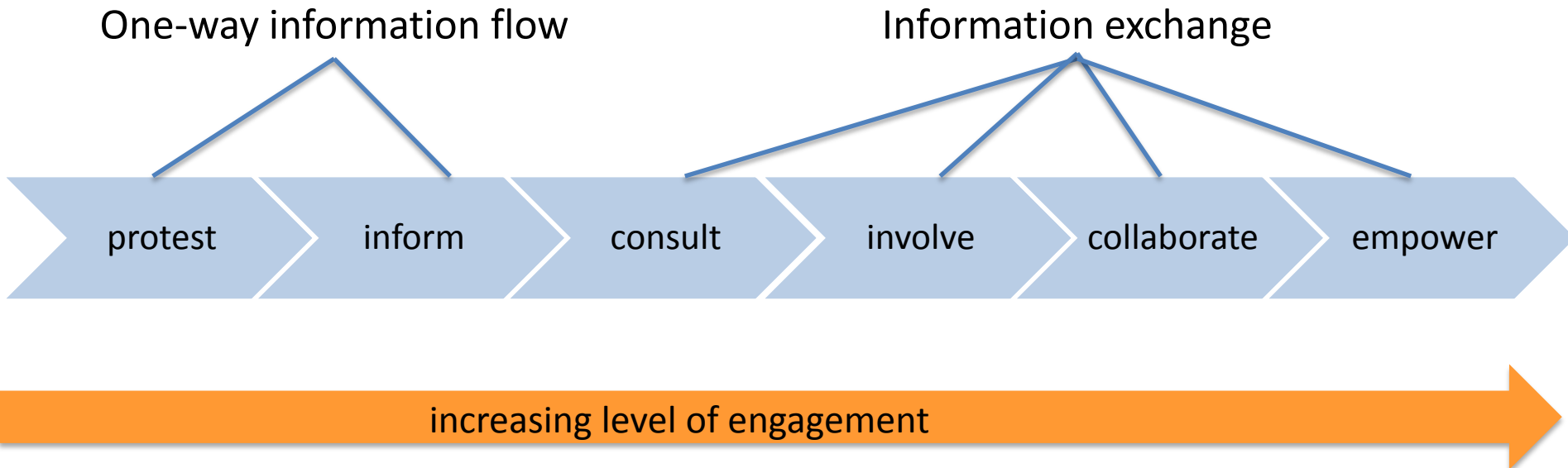
▶ Who is a stakeholder?

- Interested/affected party (group)
- Interested/affected individual

⇒ a concerned subgroup of the public

⇒ depending on the issue you are dealing with

# Engagement spectrum





## Different means of engagement

- ▶ In written:
  - Feedback on outline
  - Feedback on actual text
  - Via questionnaires
  
- ▶ Face-to-face
  - Expert interviews
  - Round tables
  - Hearings
  
  - etc.

Why would one want to have it?

## Potential benefits

- ▶ Broadening knowledge base & information on solutions => better outcomes
- ▶ Incorporation of public values & priorities into design & implementation
- ▶ More cooperation, less conflict among stakeholders
- ▶ More transparency
- ▶ Education of the public on problems & solutions

## Potential benefits II

- ▶ More accountability in decision-making
- ▶ Building capacity of civil society for participation processes
- ▶ Greater sense of empowerment and social responsibility (diff. national contexts!)
- ▶ More public ownership for policies => better implementation
- ▶ Minimise public opposition => reduce costs & delays

## Potential disadvantages

- ▶ If not done properly, a participation process
  - may lead to further disillusion.
  - may lead to frustration.
  - could be undermined by lobby groups.
  - could lead to unsolved conflicts between stakeholders.
  
- ▶ A well done participation process is usually time consuming and cost intensive.

# Practical Examples

## Stakeholder participation at EU level

- ▶ Stakeholder participation is a standard procedure when it comes to drafting EU law either by
  - Consultation of interested parties or
  - Public consultation
  
- ⇒ usually through questionnaires

## Standard consultation process (EU level)

- ▶ Usually registered users
- ▶ Consultation period (8 to 12 weeks)
- ▶ Consultation activity (online questionnaires)
- ▶ Background documents are provided
- ▶ Analysis of input
- ▶ Report on results



## Examples from Member States -- Belgium

- ▶ 5-month process to revise sustainable development strategy (led by ministry for environment)
- ▶ Stakeholders: organised civil society, general public
- ▶ Mechanisms: Responses to questions in draft text, workshops



## Belgium -- Process



- ▶ Consultation document  
874 participants in 2004; 350 participants in 2008
  - ▶ Mini-Workshops (2004)
  - ▶ Conference aimed at the general public (2008,  
100-200 stakeholders)
  - ▶ Government Experts speak at events (self-  
organised by stakeholders)
- => PFDD is renewed every 4 yrs. accompanied by a  
consultation process which is highly regulated by  
law



## Belgium – Output & Outcome

### ▶ Output

- A summary of the consultation process for each plan can always be found in the year-reports
- Annual Report concerning implementation

### ▶ Outcome

- 2004: The text was adapted
- 2008: The text was only slightly adapted

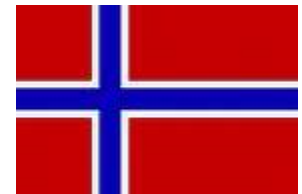
## Norway -- Basics



- ▶ 16-month process to revise sustainable development strategy (led by ministry of finance)
- ▶ Stakeholders: organised civil society, general public
- ▶ Mechanisms: peer review, consultation of experts, seminar, hearings, public consultation

## Norway -- Process

- ▶ Broad hearing  
(web-based consultation)
- ▶ Existing NSDS & indicators
- ▶ Draft strategy
- ▶ Additional Activities:
  - Peer Review
  - Meeting Place
  - Committee of State Secretaries



=> 46  
institutions  
commented

## Norway – Output & Outcome



### ▶ Output

- Peer Review Report
- Reports published (online) for every participation element (only in Norwegian)

### ▶ Outcome

- Informal institutionalisation of dialogue (Meeting Place)
- The text was adapted

# Critical reflection & outlook

## Critical reflection

- ▶ Consultation processes vary significantly throughout Europe
- ▶ Stakeholder satisfaction with the processes depended on the context and the extent, to which they were informed and taken seriously.
- ▶ Challenge: How to reach the general public and get (valuable) input?
- ▶ Challenge: How to deal with all the input?



## Outlook

- ▶ New approach: Include participation in research processes
- ⇒ to make research more relevant for those who take up research results ('applied research').
  - ⇒ because the right questions are posed and
  - ⇒ addressed in the right manner.
- ⇒ to question the approaches taken and thus make the results more valid.

## Q & A

## Links

- ▶ [http://europa.eu/eu-law/decision-making/procedures/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/eu-law/decision-making/procedures/index_en.htm)
- ▶ <http://www.dlist.org/sites/default/files/doclib/SP%20Module%201%20Intro%20NOTES.pdf#page=2&zoom=auto,0,-29>

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