



CIPAST
citizen participation in
science and technology



Evaluation

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CIPAST Workshop, Procida
17-21 June 2007

Outline

- The problem of evaluation
- Why evaluate?
- How do you measure effectiveness?
- Some evaluation criteria
- Their limitations
- Evaluation instruments
- Internal and/ or external evaluation
- Internal evaluation of Meeting of Minds
- Internal reflection of CIPAST workshop

The problem of evaluation

- The concept of participation is complex and value laden
- Attempts to specify criteria have had certain limitations so not widely influential
 - focused on a single/specific criteria
 - criteria procedural rather than substantive, i.e. relate to what makes for an effective process rather than how to measure effective outcomes (e.g. quality of final decisions)
- Lack of appropriate benchmarks against which the quality of participation exercises can be compared and measured
- There are no agreed upon evaluation methods
- There are few reliable measurement tools
- Large number of ‘evaluation’ variables
 - procedural, contextual, environmental, implementation, lack of standardised measurement instruments (questionnaires)
- Need more comprehensive sets of criteria to determine whether a particular innovative approach or method is successful

Why evaluate?

- Wider recognition of the necessity and value of participatory initiatives
- Participation methods often employed in recognition of a need to involve public in some way, assuming that involvement is an end in itself, rather than a means to an end
- The number and increasing complexity of initiatives available for use

How do you measure effectiveness?

- What constitutes ‘effectiveness’?
- Effectiveness is not an obvious, one-dimensional and objective quality that can be easily identified, described and measured
- Is it possible to talk about a definition of public participation effectiveness in any general sense?
 - A more general phrasing of what is meant by effectiveness is necessary?
- Effective according to whom?
 - Seek acceptance of ‘effective’ definition from parties involved
- In defining effectiveness, a dichotomy exists between the *outcome* of an exercise and the *process* associated with the exercise (Rowe & Frewer 2000)
 - An exercise that has good acceptance but poor process is unlikely to be implemented by sponsors or decision-makers
 - An exercise that has good process but poor acceptance is likely to be met with public/ stakeholder scepticism, boycott

Evaluation criteria

- Acceptance criteria (also democratic (Fiorino), fairness (Webler))
 - Related to the potential public acceptance of a procedure
- Process criteria (competence (Webler))
 - Related to the effective construction and implementation of a procedure
- Evaluation criteria proposed by Rowe and Frewer should not be taken as definitive but rather as a focus for debate and to encourage further experimentation

Acceptance criteria

- Representativeness
- Independence
- Early involvement?
- Influence on policy
- Transparency

Representativeness

- The participants should comprise a broadly representative sample of the population of the affected public
- Use of random stratified sample/ questionnaires to determine spread of attitudes
- Hindrances caused by large publics, logistical/ financial limitations

Independence

- Process conducted in an independent, unbiased way
- Unbiased, diverse management team
- Use of respected, unbiased facilitator
- Public representatives independent to sponsors
- Balancing participation of stakeholders, of management, sponsors and speakers

Early involvement?

- Public involved as soon as value judgements become salient
- Public debate should be allowed on underlying assumptions and agenda setting and not just on narrow, pre-defined problems
- Balance extent and the stage at which public should become involved in policy matters – as soon as is reasonably practical

Influence on policy

- Outputs should have a genuine impact on policy and be seen to do so
- Participation methods often seen as ineffectual, used to legitimise decisions or to give an appearance of consultation without any intent of acting on recommendations (e.g. How GM Nation? was perceived)
- Clear acceptance from outset on how input will be used and how it might direct policy
- Importance of media to inform general public about specific ways in which output has influenced policy

Transparency

- Process should be transparent so that the public can see what is going on and how decisions are being made
- Transparency might involve releasing information on aspects of the procedure from how participants were selected, to how a decision is reached, to publication of management meeting minutes

Process criteria

- Resource accessibility
- Task definition
- Structured decision-making
- Cost-effectiveness

Resource accessibility

- Participants should have access to the appropriate resources to enable them to successfully fulfil their brief
- Access to appropriate and relevant information for effective decision-making
- Necessary resources include: information resources (summaries of pertinent facts); human resources (access to scientists, witnesses, decision analysts etc) material resources (overhead projectors, flip charts) and time resources (sufficient time to make decisions); financial (sufficient funds provided by sponsors)
- Restriction on any of these is liable to have an impact on the quality of the participation process.

Task definition

- The nature and scope of the participation task should be clearly defined
- To avoid confusion regarding the scope, its expected output and the mechanisms of the procedure, all aspects clearly defined at outset
- Otherwise, the effectiveness and credibility of procedure drawn into question by any dispute caused through misunderstandings
- However, overly prescriptive sets of definitions and rules might reduce flexibility in the face of new information or disputes

Structured decision-making

- Involves the use/provision of appropriate mechanisms for structuring and displaying decision-making process
- Allows examination of underlying reasons behind a decision as the extent to which a conclusion was well supported
- Documenting the process of reaching a decision increases transparency
- A variety of decision-aiding tools might be incorporated (e.g. decision trees, Delphi) to ensure equal weight given to social and scientific concerns
- Use of a facilitator to keep discussions on track and encourage equal participation

Cost-effectiveness

- Value for money a significant motivation, e.g. major public hearing might be inappropriate for a minor policy decision
- Take account of the potential costs of alternative methods, in both time and money, before embarking on a participation exercise



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	Citizens' Jury	Consensus Conference	Scenario Workshop	Focus Group	ITA	Future Search
Acceptance criteria						
Representativeness	Moderate (limited by small sample)	Moderate (limited by small sample)	Moderate (limited by small sample)	Moderate (limited by small sample)	Moderate	Moderate (limited by small sample)
Independence	High	High	High	High	High	High
Early involvement?	Potentially high	Potentially high	Potentially high	Potentially high	High	Potentially high
Influence on policy	Variable but not guaranteed	Variable but not guaranteed	Variable but not guaranteed	Liable to be indirect	Can be high	Variable but not guaranteed
Transparency of process	Moderate	High	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate
Process criteria						
Resource accessibility	High	High	High	Low	High	High
Task definition	Generally high	Generally high	High	Variable but may be high	High	High
Structured decision-making	Potentially high	Moderate (influence of facilitator)	High	Low	Moderate	High
Cost-effectiveness	Moderate to high	Moderate to high	High	Potentially high	Moderate to high	High

Assessment using evaluation criteria: the limitations

- As a consequence of the variety of ways in which a particular method may be applied
- + mediating effects of social and environmental factors and the
- - precision in defining and measuring criteria,
- = it is not possible to definitively state whether a particular method succeeds or fails

Evaluation instruments

- Questionnaires (structured, semi-structured)
- Interviews (face-to-face, telephone)
- Participant diaries
- Observation (structured, semi-structured)
- Content/ document analysis
- Media analysis

Internal and/ or external evaluation

- Internal evaluation involves a self-reflection that feeds directly into the planning and implementation of a participation exercise to enable progressive adjustments
- External evaluation involves an independent process to ensure a comprehensive assessment of a participation exercise's methodological and conceptual design, its outputs, outcomes and impacts.
- Utilising both an internal and external evaluation provides a 'complete picture' - informed participant knowledge on the one hand and an objective examination of a participation exercise in its entirety on the other.

Internal evaluation of *Meeting of Minds*

- Rationale: The value of an internal evaluation is particularly important to this initiative. The unique nature of this initiative – the implementation of a new method of participatory technology assessment for trans-European foresight and governance in science and technology, coordinated by an *ad hoc* consortium of organisations – requires a thorough internal evaluation. The considerable human, financial and management resources must substantiate the outcomes achieved if similarly complex participatory initiatives are to be viable in the European context.

Aims

- To feed directly into the *planning and implementation* process of the *Meeting of Minds* initiative by enabling progressive methodological, organisational and procedural adjustments
- To strengthen and enrich the ‘new’ knowledge, insights and experiences (*learning*) of its participants

MoM Instruments

- Brief questionnaires (comprised of mostly closed questions) aimed at determining the suitability of the logistics, information materials, deliberation and assessment processes
- Formal and informal feedback from the facilitators, national coordinators and/or project managers, experts and other participants throughout the course of the initiative.
- The feedback contained within the questionnaires and the observations recorded enabled the steering committee to regularly reflect upon the processes of the initiative and to make adjustments where necessary

Lessons learned

- Balancing the national/ European dimensions
 - Challenges in conducting a trans-European initiative
 - Challenges in conducting a trans-European (internal) evaluation

Challenges in conducting a trans-European initiative

- Logistics
- Communication
- Interpretation/ translation
- Facilitation
- Recording the ‘citizens’ words’
- National/ European identity
- Methodology

Challenges in conducting a trans-European (internal) evaluation

- Questionnaires
 - Response rate
- Observations



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Thank you!