

Tools for Local Stakeholders in Radioactive Waste Governance/short Version

WP1

Challenges and benefits of selected PTA techniques PTA-1

Antwerpen
2006

Berlin
2004

Ljubljana
2005



Tools for local stakeholders: How to choose the participatory techniques you need

Thomas Flüeler, Pius Krütli and Michael Stauffacher
Institute of Human-Environment Systems, ETH Zürich
(Comments are welcome at any time: flueeler_urg@bluewin)

short version/2005-01-29

WHY THIS? FOR WHOM?

You want to use a Participatory Technology Assessment (PTA) technique to facilitate dialogue with stakeholders in radioactive waste management. You may be an elected official, a member of a local committee, a waste manager, a concerned citizen There are certain **principles** that you should think about before seeking a technique, and there are several **criteria** that you and your partners should use to judge what kind of technique you can apply. This PTA-1 research lays out the principles, and describes the criteria. Then it applies the criteria and concludes with a **recommendation of some common techniques**. We hold them to be adequate for being used in the complex radioactive waste field. We will discuss the principles and the criteria at our WP1 and WP2 joint meeting in Madrid.

If you need and want more information turn to the **LONG version** of this contribution.

HOW TO CHOOSE?

You may be overwhelmed by the sheer wealth of techniques, procedures, tips and tricks to choose from. **Don't get discouraged!** Many of the methods presented are not more than adaptations from general research (surveys, interviews, delphi technique, focus groups) or from group moderation and workshop techniques (policy workshops, panels). Only few have been explicitly developed in the context of participatory approaches (Citizen Advisory Group, Consensus Conference). First and foremost, be aware: **Framing is more important than the technique chosen**, and **your assessment of the political context** (and the chances you have therein) **is more important than any sophisticated technique** a professional moderator will recommend you.

We recommend a 3-step procedure:

	Page
Step 1: Consider 7 framing PRINCIPLES	2
Step 2: Use CRITERIA to assess techniques	3
Step 3: SELECT your technique (Table)	5/6
Some conclusions we draw as an input to our Madrid discussion:	4

STEP 1: CONSIDER 7 FRAMING PRINCIPLES

The aim is to empower you on the local and regional level. Thus, we have to carefully look at the *real* frame (or context, setting) within which *desirable* involvement *should* take place¹.

1. Consider level of decision (local ... supra-national)

If there is *no* way that your local level debate will have any impact on the levels above, you will have to work on that first. Otherwise your – and others' – engagement is in vain. National (nuclear) energy policy has to consider the level you are on, otherwise they will have to reckon with strong opposition.

2. Guarantee for integration into policy making

Any involvement (and respective technique used) does have to be integrated into an existing or planned decision-making process, preferably in a formalised and legal procedure such as a strategic environmental assessment (SEA) or an environmental impact assessment (EIA).

3. Consider phase of decision process (problem recognition ... implementation)

Every tool has to be matched with the goals to be achieved and with the respective situation. Where is the debate in the policy cycle: in the design stage, in implementation or evaluation? To just recognise problems (what is the problem?), public consensus conferences or round tables are fine. But when it comes to project oversight or evaluation, institutionalised and empowered site committees or independent high-level bodies may have to be constituted.

4. Respect degree of escalation (fact-finding phase ... type of “trench warfare”)

The type of political debate has a bearing on the choice of technique. If the societal opinions have been cemented in a long-standing struggle, there is no use in setting up public consensus conferences, at least not in the first place. Consensus conferences with clearly identified stakeholder group representations might be, if at all, more purposeful.

5. Prove commitment and accountability

Obtain clear statements of politicians, public officials and senior management (of the organising institutions) that they truly want active participation from you and the public. Your inputs have to be accounted for by governments and other institutions (like radioactive waste implementers). Make clear that *with* your participation, the programme/project and process can be improved, *without* they may fail.

6. Grant rights and resources

Goals and restrictions of involvement have to be defined at the outset of the process so that you know what you embark in ... *before* you spend energy and emotions.

7. Ensure continuity and establish adequate mechanisms

Small-scale and one-shot activities are useless in worn out radioactive waste debates. Fresh political and administrative institutions, with a widespread societal composition, may trigger sustained and cross-level dialogue. We think of dedicated policy or advisory bodies (like CoRWM in UK, NWMO in Canada, AkEnd in Germany); specific TA institutions (like well-equipped Parliamentary Technology Assessment offices) should provide professional methodical support.

¹ Contrary to the LONG version, here emphasis is put on conclusion and not analysis or argumentation.

STEP 2: USE CRITERIA TO ASSESS TECHNIQUES

A. Input: What is needed at start?

- *Available resources (time, budget, flexibility, etc.)*
- *Definition of problem, goals, rules and success criteria:* Status and follow-up of the process? Clarification of issue or consensus-orientation?
- *Existing views/conflicts:* Degree of social consciousness/concern? Are conflicts known? Is the issue gridlocked?
- *Existing knowledge/competence (content):* Sufficient knowledge/scientific understanding existing or to be fostered in the process? Knowledge evenly distributed?
- *Existing knowledge/competence (process):* Participants/project leaders familiar with structure and intent of the process? Confidence of participants in the process?
- *Institutional background:* Credibility of the lead agency, attitude towards lead agency? Necessity for independent "process facilitator"?
- *Participants/stakeholders:* Which groups? How many stakeholders? Who decides on number and recruitment? Full range of perspectives represented? Can participants easily reach meetings? Distinctive roles for different participants?

B. Process: How does/should it happen?

- *Goal formulation, success criteria:* Goals and success clearly defined? Consented definitions of terms? Tasks for all participants clearly defined? Progress reviewed?
- *Organisational structure:* Bottom up or top down? Lead agency dedicated to facilitate the process? Degree of participants' control (agenda setting, establishing rules; selecting experts and information; who presents, who interprets information)?
- *Operational structure:* Project management (milestones and regular progress review, ongoing documentation, etc.)? Early involvement of all participants? Conflict management, handling of difficulties? Lessons learnt from failures?
- *Decision-making process:* Clearly structured? Knowledge contributions? Decision making transparent, traceability of process and argumentation? Confidence in process?
- *Communication:* Good communication, focus on consensus, fairness? Regular feedback? Mutual respect? Information accessible, readable, digestible? Sufficient shared understanding/knowledge? Participants able and allowed to contribute?

C. Output: What comes out of it?

- *Written products:* How are insights recorded? Distribution of products? Usability? Media coverage? Initiation of public communication process?
- *Decisions:* Amount of additional information collected? Type(s) and relevance of knowledge generated? Degree of awareness? Common understanding of the problem? Public values incorporated in decisions? Decisions consistent? Influence on policy-/decision making? Impact on corporate policy-making procedures?
- *Process results:* Process itself as a goal? More trust/legitimacy of result? Diversity of views mapped out? Conflict resolved among competing interests, achievement of consensus? Confidence among participants increased? Knowledge gained by participants (mutual learning)? Degree of trust consolidated/restored/decreased? Networks (national, international) enlarged?
- *Evaluation:* Critical review of the process by all participants, reflection on lessons learned? Experiences documented? Adequacy, success of process and results assessed? Formal evaluation carried out?

STEP 3: SELECT YOUR TECHNIQUE

Radioactive waste governance is complex and has a long history. Therefore, it is obvious that either more multi-level mixed technique **packages** or **institutionalised variants** are top candidates (see table overleaf). Advanced conventional political instruments, such as local initiatives, referenda and vetoes, are left out.

The following techniques are recommended:

- **Consensus Conference (CC)**
- **Future Search Conference (FSC)**
- **Cooperative Discourse (CD)**
- **Area Development Negotiation (ADN)**
- ***Citizen Jury (CJ)***
- ***Citizen Advisory Group (CAG)***
- **Multi-criteria Mapping (MCA)**

SOME CONCLUSIONS

Framing is more important than the technique chosen: Watch the context!

Representation of different (social) groups is crucial: Be inclusive!

Output is more than decision taking: We might even have learnt something!

Good match of technique and context is needed: Technique alone wastes your time!

Various techniques and more intense methods are better: No one fits all!

Process matters: Process is also a product and doesn't come by itself!

Technique	Description	Requirements	Number of participants	Duration	Application	Advantages	Disadvantages	Case studies
Consensus Conference (CC)	Panel of citizens develops understanding of technical or scientific issues in dialogue with experts and – in general – reach consensus on issues to debate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skilled facilitators • Briefing materials presenting issues • Expert witnesses • Participants representing different views 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 20 citizens (if issue open) / stakeholders (if issue already positioned) • Up to 20 experts • Facilitators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference: 3 – 5 days and preparatory week-ends • Process: 4 – 6 months 	Early phase of a decision-making process to obtain views (initial views: public CC; de-escalation attempts: stakeholder CC, e. g., radioactive waste governance RWG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public access to experts • Open events • Panel controls content of process • Can empower participants • Brings together people from different fields and perspectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time restrictions to understand issue • Cost and time intensive • Issue of representativeness • Consensus may not be reached 	Applied on the issue of genetically modified organism in various countries (DK, N, F, UK, NZL, CH); 1999: CC in RWG organised by UK CEED (Centre of Excellence in Eating Disorders)
Future Search Conference (FSC)	Tool for planning and conflict resolution and means of eliciting new ideas, enables dialogue on past, present and future desires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skilled facilitators • Creativity and divergent thinking exhibited by participants • Detailed schedule of conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimal size: about 20 participants • Several dozen up to hundreds in parallel groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference: 2 – 3 days • Process: months up to years 	Early phase of a decision-making process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100s of people • Individuals are experts • Can lead to substantial changes • Integration of intuitive and analytic modes of thought 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logistically challenging • May be difficult to gain complete commitment from all stakeholders 	Applied in a wide range of sectors (e. g., banking business, transportation issues in communities, environmental issues) all over the world
Cooperative Discourse (CD)	Three-step-procedure to identify concerns and evaluation criteria = 'values', experts to evaluate performance of policy options of all 'value' dimensions), representative citizens (to evaluate potential solutions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skilled facilitators • Both systematic and anecdotal knowledge • Variability of options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder groups • Experts • Citizens (20 – 200) • Research team • Deliberation process: up to 5 persons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen panels: Seminars of 3 – 5 days and several preparatory meetings • Process: up to 6 months 	Entire decision-making process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brings together different perspectives • Can lead to social and technical robust solutions • May foster interactive understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find relevant stakeholder groups as well as citizens randomly selected • Possible lack of experience of citizens in decision-making issues 	Applied in Germany (national energy policy, 1982), Switzerland (landfill issues in the canton Aargau, 1993) and the United States (sewage sludge management in New Jersey, 1988)

Technique	Description	Requirements	Number of participants	Duration	Application	Advantages	Disadvantages	Case studies
Area Development Negotiation (ADN)	Six step procedure using a set of methods. A core element is the 'exploration parcours' providing an assessment of stakeholder groups' preferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedded in a comprehensive case study setting • Participants authorised by law or rules • Needs a team of skilled facilitators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 – 20 stakeholders representing divergent interests • a team of skilled facilitators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 – 5 meetings of half a day • Process: 4 months up to 1 – 2 years 	Entire decision-making process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies domains of consensus or conflict potential • Facilitates consensus building • Enables negotiation and bargaining process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue of representativeness • Find partners to participate in an intensive and interactive dialogue and process • Time and cost intensive 	Applied in trans-disciplinary ETH-NSSI case studies on different issues (urban and regional development, urban mobility) in Switzerland and Sweden
Citizen Jury (CJ)	Group of ordinary citizens empanelled to learn about an issue, cross-examine witnesses, make recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires skilled facilitator • Commissioning body must follow recommendations or explain why not • Initial briefing materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 – 20 people (members of the public) • Experts from different area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting: up to 5 days or 2 weekends • Process: 3 months 	Early phase of a decision-making process to obtain views	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to develop deep understanding of an issue • Public can identify with the "ordinary" citizen • Public access to experts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource-intensive (time and costs) • Always non-binding with no legal standing • No representativeness 	Applied in the health area
Citizen Advisory Group (CAG)	Group of stakeholders representing various community interests or expertise, to provide informed input (advisory body assisting decision makers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define roles and responsibilities up front • Be forthcoming with information • Use a credible process • Select members carefully • Use third-party facilitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small group of (10 – 20) stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recurring meetings • Eventually institutionalised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At any point in the decision-making process but seems to be mostly effective in the early stages • Possibly institutional instrument 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed analyses of issues • Understanding of others' perspectives • Commissioning of expertise, sanctioning and veto depending on mandate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General public may not follow recommendations • Members may not achieve consensus • Organiser must accept need for give-and-take • Time- and labour-intensive 	STOLA/MONA, Belgium; CLI[S], France
Multi-criteria Mapping (MCA)	Group of stakeholders analyses different options of an issue in a structured way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants covering a wide range of technical and socio-political perspectives • Skilled facilitators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 – 20 stakeholders • Experts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting: 1 day+ • Process: 4 weeks+ 	Early phase of a decision-making process to obtain views or entire process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structured evaluation • Additional options/strategies covering a wide range of considerations • Values and priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited number of people to involve in process • Representativeness • Can be time- and cost-intensive 	Applied with genetically modified organism issues