Engagement methods
for climate, energy and mobility transitions

SSH CENTRE

Social Sciences & Humanities for Climate, Energy aNd Transport Research Excellence

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Editorial: using the infosheets toolbox to explore engagement

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This toolbox presents 13 one-page infosheets, each of which describes a different method for engaging stakeholders and citizens in climate, energy and mobility transitions.

The toolbox has been developed by the SSH CENTRE project (*Social Sciences and Humanities for Climate, Energy aNd Transport Research Excellence*) which engages directly with stakeholders across research, policy, business and citizens to strengthen social innovation, interdisciplinary collaboration, transdisciplinary policy advice, inclusive engagement, and SSH communities across Europe, accelerating the EU's transition to carbon neutrality. Our primary objective with the toolbox is to offer a resource that can aid those who want to use stakeholder and citizen engagement methods, and support them in doing so in a responsible and reflexive manner.

Addressing climate change requires us to make rapid, extensive, and unprecedented changes in all areas of society to decrease greenhouse gas emissions. If the EU's ambition to reach carbon neutrality by 2050 is to be reached, it is crucial to acknowledge that this transformation will involve significant interventions into individual lifestyles and societal organisation as we know it. Transitions towards low-emission societies will thus drastically change how we live our lives and require engagement of a broad base of people who are willing and able to advocate for change and make personal efforts to reduce emissions.

Consequently, attention on stakeholder and citizen engagement is increasing and it is now often recognised as a necessary part of decision-making on climate, energy, and mobility issues. Engagement methods are important tools for ensuring that decision-making processes are transparent, inclusive, and informed by the perspectives and needs of the communities affected by the decisions. In this sense, engaging stakeholders and citizens is crucial for successfully implementing new climate, energy, and mobility policies and projects. Not only can they lead to more effective solutions and greater community ownership, but also increase acceptance and trust.

However, whilst engagement methods can create new spaces for deliberation and inclusion, they can also reinforce unwanted social structures and power dynamics. When engaging with stakeholders and citizens it is thus important that we: (i) carefully consider *how* we do engagement, which includes recognising that different methods may be appropriate for different situations; (ii) are attentive towards issues of diversity and marginalisation; (iii) are reflexive about the assumptions that we take with us when we choose a particular engagement method; and (iv) have a clear plan for how the results will be used. If we are interested in creating meaningful interactions, we need to facilitate processes based on dialogue and thus need to build flexibility and feedback channels into engagement design, in order to allow the input to have impact.

We should also remember that conflicting opinions are likely to occur when difficult and complex issues are discussed, and that it is important that input is not down-played even when it may conflict with existing priorities and dominant political interests. Build-

ing trust requires acknowledging that everyone wants their voice to be heard, respected, and reflected (e.g. in measurable actions or discussions) and engagement methods such as those presented in this toolbox provide an opportunity to establish a mutually beneficial relationship by sharing visions, knowledge, expertise, and outcomes.

How to use the toolbox

Social Science and Humanities (SSH) scholars work at the forefront of novel engagement methods that aim to give participants real influence on decision-making. There are numerous methods available nowadays; our toolbox includes infosheets on 13 diverse engagement methods in order to support the selection process and demonstrate the wide variety available. The toolbox is intended to showcase some of the engagement methods particularly suited to address climate, energy, and mobility related issues.

The infosheets offer key information on benefits, participant groups, implementation processes, and expected outcomes for each of the methods. In addition, every method brings its own constraints, and the infosheets deliberately include cautionary notes on the limitations they carry. We hope they can inspire the choice of good solutions for creating participatory processes that are efficient in design and attentive towards the challenges and limitations each method brings.

While the sheets provide insights into the methods (particularly aimed at those new to each method) they do not offer a comprehensive understanding, and there are often various approaches to implementing each method with plenty of room for customisation. Therefore, we have also included real-life examples and a few resources as a starting point for further investigation before starting your own engagement activities[1].

Importantly, it is highly beneficial to involve Social Science and Humanities experts in implementing engagement activities as they can provide valuable insights in creating effective processes, analysing outcomes, and raising issues with decision-makers. Specifically, their involvement may be essential in identifying relevant participants, defining problems that can guide the activities, and rigorously evaluating data obtained from the processes.

Overview of the 13 methods

The 13 engagement methods showcased here have been chosen to cover a diverse range of public engagement approaches, as well as aligning with the expertise within the SSH CENTRE consortium partners. Some of the methods could be considered as wider methodological approaches (e.g. Co-creation), others have significant scope to be flexibly adjusted to different contexts (e.g. Storytelling, Living Labs), while some entail more fixed approaches (e.g. MAMCA, SIS).

In order to help navigate the collection, in the table on the following page you will find the selected methods with brief descriptions, where the SSH experts responsible for authoring each sheet are also listed. The methods are numbered in alphabetical order.

We hope this set of resources provides a useful window in to the world of engagement, and demonstrates how engaging with diverse perspectives strengthens decision-making processes by bringing both quality and quantity of ideas, as well as credibility and legitimacy.

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1 As a note for those outside academic institutions, who may not have access to academic journals, journal paper authors are usually delighted to provide access to their papers if you email them.

ENGAGEMENT METHOD AND AUTHOR(S)	BRIEF DESCRIPTION
1. Citizens' Assemblies Ester Galende Sánchez	Citizen Assemblies are a type of deliberative mini-public comprised of a group of lay citizens aiming to be representative of the broader society. Citizens undergo a process of learning and deliberation about a specific public problem and try to reach consensus in order to provide policy recommendations to decision-makers.
2. Citizen Science Gisle Solbu	Citizen Science is an engagement method where citizens participate voluntarily in scientific processes as researchers or data collectors. It entails addressing real-world problems with citizens scientists helping to develop research questions, conduct experiments, collect and analyse data or interpret results.
3. Co-creation Imre Keserü	Co-creation is a comprehensive approach to create designs, plans, services or products with the participation of end users. It can include multiple distinct participatory methods to involve people in the stages of problems mapping, co-design, co-evaluation and implementation.
4. Deliberative Forums Alevgul H. Sorman	A Deliberative Forum is a setting or space where a topic is brought up in a way that invites careful reflection and discussion among participants to contemplate lock-ins, actions and strategies forward to a problem in a constructive manner.
5. Horizon Scanning: Delphi Exercises Chris Foulds, Rosie Robison, Ami Crowther	Horizon Scanning draws on expert knowledge to signal future priorities for research, innovation and/or policy communities. This infosheet specifically looks at Delphi Exercises which, by returning multiple times to the same group of experts, identifies and refines recommendations.
6. Living Labs Helena Duchkova	Living Labs include research end users, often in specific locations or communities, to develop and test innovations in a real-life context. Their format is varied and they can be co-creative, or involve citizen science.

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7. Multi-Actor Multi-Criteria Analysis Geert te Boveldt	The Multi-Actor Multi-Criteria Analysis (MAMCA) takes stakeholder preferences explicitly into account when evaluating several project or policy options. MAMCA encourages stakeholders to reflect on what they want and on the rationale for these wants, which can facilitate reaching consensus.
8. Participatory Knowledge Mapping Luciano d'Andrea	Participatory Knowledge Mapping includes approaches and tools aimed at identifying and visualizing (through diagrams, graphs, workflows, tables, images, or geographical maps) knowledge residing within or among organisations, or in local communities.
9. Serious Games Christian A. Klöckner, Kristoffer S. Fjællingsdal	Serious Games are games designed to teach citizens about complex, systemic topics such as climate change, in an enjoyable and often sociable format. They can include computer games, board games, card games, role-plays, and games in Virtual Reality
10. Stakeholder-based Impact Scoring Geert te Boveldt	Stakeholder-based Impact Scoring (SIS) is a participatory assessment method used to predict the impact of a policy or project prior to its implementation by quantifying and visualising the negative and positive impacts on stakeholders.
11. Storytelling Sara Heidenreich, Melanie Rohse	Storytelling is a facilitation technique to help stakeholders with different backgrounds, experiences and points of view recognise and learn from the various perspectives that exist. Through facilitation that ensures everyone has a voice, it enables mutual understanding but not necessarily a consensus.
12. Transformation Labs Violeta Cabello	Transformation Labs (T-Labs) are long-term multi-actor processes with a particular emphasis on just and sustainable transformations. They are a new tool whose main value is in their experimental character and focus on reflexivity and learning, rather than necessarily finding solutions, and creating collective agency.
13. Transition Management Marianne Ryghaug, Susanne Jørgensen, Tomas Moe Skjølsvold	Transition Management seeks to enable breaking away from business-as-usual. It does so through developing transition pathways from 'locked in' situations where people and organisations may be stuck trying to addressing persistent problems. A central feature is the Transition Arena: a co-creative learning space whose goal is to develop radical ways of thinking.

Acknowledgements

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K&I Knowledge and Innovation Srls

EERA European Energy Research Alliance

CzechGlobe Global Change Research Institute CAS

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