



# Conceptualisation of Innovative Public Engagement

The current policy brief is the first one out of three that will be published during the PE2020 project. It presents relevant findings based on the development of an up-to-date inventory of current and prospective European public engagement innovations, a catalogue of the most innovative cases presenting them in-depth and a conceptual model based on these innovative cases. We also introduce the key criteria for the selection of the most innovative initiatives and processes which we believe to be the most relevant in terms of innovativeness in public engagement.

The inventory provides an exploration and description of the selection of innovative Public engagement (PE) processes related to the governance of science in society. The conceptual model provides conceptual categories that are relevant in identifying contextual factors related to the tailoring of best PE practices and help to draw generalizable lessons of PE case studies. The findings will be used in the development of a public engagement design toolkit to provide a most prominent form of policy and activity support upon which we base our recommendations to enhance public engagement in science.

## INNOVATIVE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT EXPERIMENTS ACROSS EUROPE

The inventory of innovative public engagement procedures and processes across Europe and overseas collects 250 innovative PE cases and presents 76 PE mechanisms.

As sources for information the PE2020 project consortium has used the survey of a parallel running sister project Engage2020, "Engaging Society in Horizon 2020", 9/2013-11/2015. The PE2020 inventory has added in these survey results.

Another source of information has been the 50 SIS case studies conducted by the Technopolis Group in 2012. Relevant examples of PE mechanisms/initiatives among these 50 case studies, which include cross-national PE activities

have been reviewed and added to the PE inventory. The third and initial starting point as a source of information were the 37 country reports of the MASIS project (2010-2012).

In addition to these data sources a literature review has been conducted comprising of both academic journals as well as reports addressing PE activities. External sources such as internet sources (e.g. homepages of institutions, organisations, centres etc. engaged with public engagement activities) have also supplemented data collection. (See for more detail in Deliverable 1.1.)

PE is understood as activities where there is a distinct role for citizens or stakeholder groups in research and innovation processes. Characteristic to such processes is that they involve new types of interactions between 'laymen' and 'scientific actors'.

PE activities have been categorized into following categories that have been constructed and informed by dominating conceptual models for PE activities.

**Public communication** – the aim is to inform and/or educate citizens. The flow of information constitutes one-way communication from sponsors to public representatives, and no specific mechanisms exist to handle public feedback (examples include public hearings, public meetings and awareness raising activities).

**Public activism** – the aim is to inform decision-makers and create awareness in order to influence decision-making processes. The information flow is



conveyed in one-way communication from citizens to sponsors but not on the initiative of the sponsors as characterizes the 'public consultation' category. (examples include demonstrations and protests).

**Public consultation** – the aim is to inform decision-makers of public opinions on certain topics. These opinions are sought from the sponsors of the PE initiative and no prescribed dialogue is implemented. Thus, in this case, the one-way communication is conveyed from citizens to sponsors (examples include citizens' panels, planning for real, focus groups and science shops).

**Public deliberation** – the aim is to facilitate group deliberation on policy issues of where the outcome may impact decision-making. Information is exchanged between sponsors and public representatives and a certain degree of dialogue is facilitated. The flow of information constitutes two-way communication (examples include 'mini publics' such as consensus conferences, citizen juries, deliberative opinion polling).

**Public participation** – the aim is to assign partly or full decision-making-power to citizens on policy issues. Information is exchanged between sponsors and public representatives and a certain degree of dialogue is facilitated. The flow of information constitutes two-way communication (examples include co-governance and direct democracy mechanisms such as participatory budgeting, youth councils and binding referendums) (Deliverable D1.1).

## CATALOGUE OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT (PE) INITIATIVES

The catalogue "Public Engagement Innovations - Catalogue of public engagement (PE) initiatives" explores some of the innovative and cutting edge practices to present the breath of PE formats. The main purpose of the catalogue is to explore and understand innovative PE practices, and provide a platform for international inspiration and learning within a PE.

The catalogue consists of descriptions of cases written by the experts who were responsible for the organization of the initiative. This first-hand information allows an in-depth and first-hand

reflections, experiences and information at a level of detail, which would have been difficult to access otherwise. (Deliverable D1.2. 2015).

Innovation in this regard can be understood "as novel combinations of knowledge, practices and resources..." (Rask et al. 2012:711).

Within the scope of the PE2020 project at large, the catalogue serves as a foundation for further conceptual analysis in terms of PE performances as well as for a pilot selection and toolkit construction in subsequent work packages. (Deliverable D1.2. 2015.)

The criteria for innovativeness were developed by the PE2020 consortium and are presented in Deliverable D1.1. "A Refined Typology of PE Tools and Instruments" introduces the discussion, validation and enrichment of these typologies in more detail.

The main typologies of innovativeness for the selection of most innovative initiatives were:

**Hybrid combinations** - Does the initiative combine mechanisms in new ways? Does the initiative include new hybrid ways and arenas for bringing policy makers into discussions between researchers and the public i.e. science and society?

**Methodological novelty** - Have new dialogue-based approaches to engagement been applied? Is deliberation possible among participants and/or between participants and decision-makers? What is the extent of participant empowerment and governance contribution? What are citizens' opportunities to set the agenda and articulate preferences, for being informed, taking part in conflict resolution or knowledge co-production and for influencing final decisions? (Smith 2005:7; Participedia.net)

**Inclusive new ways of representation** - Is the initiative (and the mechanisms applied) inclusive in terms of selection methods? Is it open to all or is the selection characterized by election, random selection, self-selection or appointment? (Smith



2005:7) Have new combinations of actors been introduced in the PE initiative?

**Potential impact** - To what extent can the initiative potentially bring about change? Is the impact intended or possibly unintended? Does the initiative seem potentially influential on political decision-making processes?

**Bearing on societal challenges** - To what extent is the initiative oriented towards the societal challenges specified under Horizon 2020?

**Feasibility** - To what extent can the initiative be effectively transferred to other (national) contexts and pilot tested within limited amounts of resources (financial, administrative etc.)?

## CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF RESEARCH POLICY CYCLE INCLUDING PE

The catalogue as well as the inventory have been systematically analysed in order to create a conceptual model of research policy cycle, which incorporates the idea of dynamic governance and insights into the dynamics of public engagement.

Considering governance it is essential to apply two-way communication with main direction from sponsor to public and use top-down approaches.

It incorporates the enhancing and hindering factors for public engagement (PE) combining a dynamically governed research policy cycle and a participatory performance model. Within the frame of in-depth literature review and survey analysis, the driving forces and barriers of engaging people in science and research policy were identified.

Core enhance factors for successful PE related to quality of governance and research, and better interaction and communication are

- 1) **transparency**;
- 2) **balanced inclusion**; and
- 3) improvement of policies in terms of **effectiveness** and **responsiveness**.

Moreover, PE is more successful when it is repeated, i.e. it helps to reorient public towards self-organisation and create overall dynamics.

Engagement projects are more successful when they are repeated, applied to various situations or continued.

Despite promising keywords for the success of PE, inevitably, public engagement initiatives are faced with barriers such as passivity and fatigue of lay people to get engaged.

The PE2020 project identified a plethora of these barriers: different attitudes in diverse cultures and contexts, scarce education before consultation on PE, mistrust because of former experience, memories of generations, lack of networks, uncertain impact of PE (it is hard to many lay people understand the point of the PE exercise and the technology related), then democratic deficit that is related to procedures to channel public opinion into the national democratic procedures, national culture of public debate and so on.

Such societal challenges as inclusive, innovative and reflective societies, climate change and health, demographic change and wellbeing are treated to be more susceptible for public.

Taking these issues in consideration, it is obvious that making decisions without public support results in a multiple practical difficulties among politicians, researchers and lay people.

## NEXT STEPS

The PE2020 consortium is currently organizing six PE pilots that test and develop innovative methods of public engagement in the context of European research programmes. The consortium pilots PE methods in several levels of dynamic research governance: from upstream to downstream as well as with bottom-up and top-down approaches. Find more about the pilots in the next PE2020 project's policy brief.

You can also find us in the policy conference of the Engage2020 project in Brussels in November the 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>. We are looking forward to see you there!



[www.PE2020.eu](http://www.PE2020.eu)

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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