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Shaping the future together



# The Public Participation Manual

In collaboration with:



Büro Arbter





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Austrian Society for  
Environment and Technology

# The Public Participation Manual

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Shaping the future together

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# Participating means helping to shape the future

**More and more people want a say in shaping their surroundings: their part of town, their community, their region. They want influence on future developments, and thus on their own quality of life. Numerous decision-makers in politics and the administration are increasingly aware of the benefits of exchanging ideas and of working together with citizens concerned.**

You may be familiar with one or more of the following situations:

- As a **citizen** you have been invited to take part in a process of participation (→Glossary). Or maybe you wonder how you can seize the initiative and make your ideas known in projects.
- Ordinary citizens approach you as a **politician** with their wish to contribute ideas of their own to a particular project. Or you would like to involve people in your community in a development process.
- As a **representative of the administration** you are faced with the wish – both from politicians and from ordinary citizens – to involve those interested in developing and/or implementing a project.
- As an **entrepreneur** you want to expand your activities. You aim to implement your project with the widest acceptance possible, and therefore to start a dialogue with stakeholders (→Glossary).
- As the **representative of a common-interest group** you aim to make the interests of the people you represent as well known as possible in decision processes.

When a variety of stakeholders (→Glossary) – ordinary citizens, lobbyists, entrepreneurs, politicians, administrators – participate in a planning process, the number of ideas and the amount of knowledge on hand increase dramatically. The more people are involved, the more perspectives and suggestions are presented and discussed. Comprehensive solutions that take a wide range of interests into account can be developed in this way. Involving the general public in reaching a decision can improve both the quality of the decisions reached and their acceptance.

This manual shows how you can take an active part in shaping your surroundings and in reaching decisions on issues important to society.

You will learn

- what involving the general public means,
- how processes of participation can proceed,
- what framework and what criteria of quality are essential for success and you will get to know the variety of ways in which the public can participate, on the basis of selected case histories.

# Public participation – what exactly does that mean?

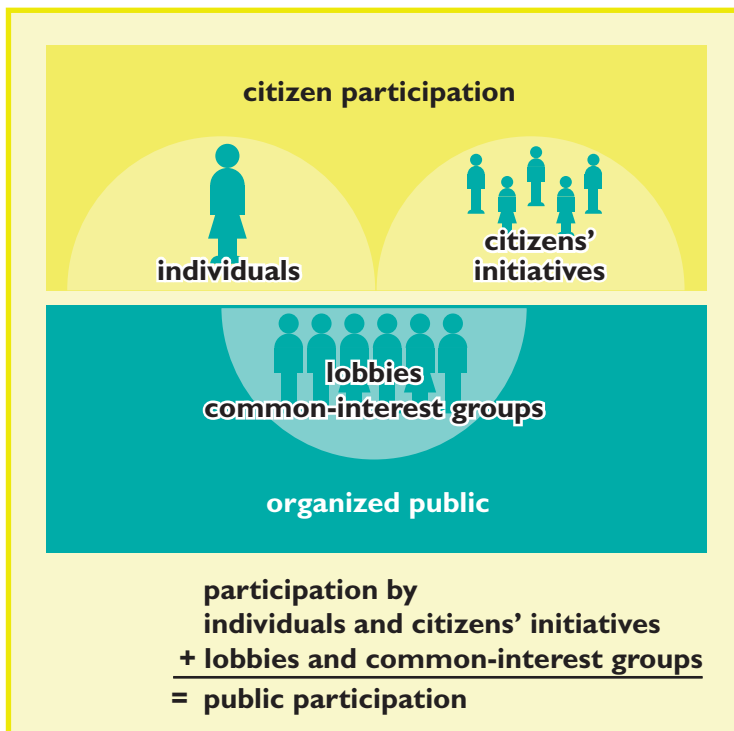
A new road is being planned, a regional tourism strategy developed, an industrial plant is to be expanded – examples of projects that affect our surroundings are legion.

Ordinary citizens, entrepreneurs and lobbyists want to be informed in detail before (political) decisions that affect them are taken. Or they want a say in developments, an active part in current projects and quite possibly direct involvement in decisions. Participation comprises all this.

Participation is a basic principle of democracy. Voting in elections/referenda, and supporting petitions, are established forms of participation. Today opportunities of taking part in planning and development processes in the public sphere as an ordinary citizen

or as a lobbyist are coming to be seen more and more as a desirable supplement to these established forms, to be called for and promoted.

Where individuals or citizens' initiatives participate in a planning process, so as to make their interests as private persons or as a group of private persons known, we call this **“citizen participation”**. The notion of **“public participation”** refers to involving various groups of stakeholders in a process of participation – individuals or citizens' initiatives just as much as representatives of lobbies such as environment organizations, youth clubs or professional associations that make the concerns of the group they represent known. Lobbyists and common-interest groups are known as **“the organized public”**. As far as possible any process of participation should be open to all stakeholders and everyone interested, i.e. to a wide public. In some cases, though, that is not feasible, because the resulting group would be too large to function effectively. Then it is up to **“the organized public”** to represent all stakeholders' interests.



# Fields of application for participation

**What fields of application are possible for processes of participation?  
Which tasks can the public be involved in?**

**The answer: hardly any restrictions apply!**

**The list of sectors and case histories from Austria below documents this.**

→ section on  
case histories  
p. 22 ff.

## Transport and mobility

- Mobile communities – multi-community mobility initiative in the Rhine valley (→ p. 40)
- Open planning process for the second tunnel on the A10 (Tauern) motorway (→ p. 43)

## Waste management

- Strategic environmental assessment of the Vienna waste management plan (→ p. 44)
- Mediation process for waste incineration project at the Leube cement plant in St. Leonhard

## Water management

- Participative development of an overall concept for the Möll valley (→ p. 26)
- “Watermark” – project to return the Große Mühl to its natural state

## Energy supply

- Citizens’ meetings and regular discussions about the Oberzeiring wind power project
- Participative development of an energy concept in Güssing

## Tourism/leisure

- Developing a tourism strategy with the people of Hinterstoder
- Mediation process for a golf-course project in Telfs

## Participation within companies/organizations

- “Sustainable administration” – inhouse development process in the district administration in Kirchdorf an der Krems (→ p. 38)
- Mobility management in Austrian companies (involving the workforce) to promote environmentally acceptable means of transport

## Community work

- Developing a community concept for integrating migrants in Krems (→ p. 46)
- Resolving a conflict between skaters and residents at the housing estate “Am Schöpfwerk” in Vienna (→ p. 23)

## Regional development

- Regional cluster in Hartberg – developing a regional economy (→ p. 36)
- Regional Agenda 21 in the Mühlviertler Alm

## Political/social development

- Juveniles’ declaration on sustainable development for the region around Lake Constance (→ p. 32)
- Delphi process to obtain experts’ views on the future development of technology in Austria
- Neo-socratic dialogue on ethical issues of transplanting organs from animals to human beings

## Conservation

- Mediation process on using a Natura 2000 zone in the Montafon (→ p. 24)
- Participatory process to conserve biodiversity in woodland in Mödling
- Ozone consensus conference between the provinces of Vienna, Lower Austria and Burgenland

## Design and use of open spaces, parks etc.

- Workshop for girls on shaping the future in connection with arranging the Odeonpark in Vienna Leopoldstadt
- Citizen jury on redesigning the Neutorgasse in Graz (→ p. 30)

## Renovating housing and improving residential surroundings

- “GOAL – Gesund ohne Auto und Lärm” (= healthy without cars and noise) – improving the surroundings of three residential areas in Graz (→ p. 28)
- Focus group on renovating housing as part of the program “House of the future”

## Community development

- Local Agenda 21 in Vienna Alsergrund – traffic calming in Himmelportgrund (→ p. 42)
- Local action plan for employment and education – Munderfing (→ p. 34)

→ See also [www.partizipation.at](http://www.partizipation.at)

# Putting public participation to work

Processes of participation can take effect at many different levels:

## Policies and legislation

Define goals and general direction of development, usually expressed in an abstract way  
e.g. Province of Vienna statute on waste management

## Plans and programs

Bundle of highly differentiated measures to reach a given goal, expressed in a more concrete way  
e.g. Vienna waste management plan

## Projects

Individual measures planned or described in detail  
e.g. third waste incineration plant in Vienna

- at the highest level, i.e. **policy** (→Glossary) – where strategies, general approaches and overall concepts are developed – and **legislation** (statutes and decrees),
- in **planning activities and program** development,
- in concrete **projects**.



No misunderstandings, please:  
mediation is quite different from mediTation



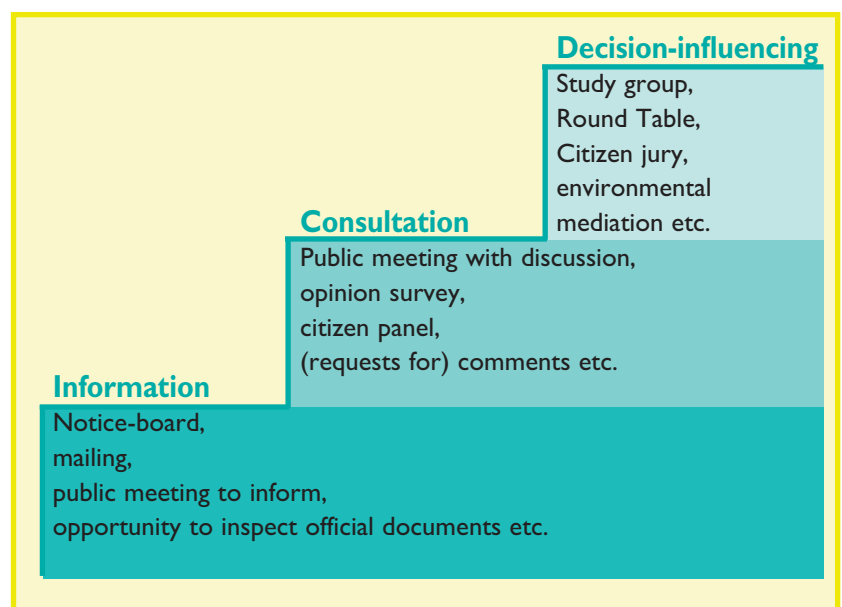
# Stages of public participation

How far opportunities for and rights of participation extend in a particular process depends on several different factors.

How far the interests of ordinary citizens and/or lobbyists and common-interest groups can be taken into account largely depends on the type of process involved (formal or informal → p. 10) and on the method selected. Independently of this, though, the willingness of decision-makers in politics, the administration and business to accommodate ordinary citizens' ideas in planning and taking decisions is crucial.

Depending on the framework

- stakeholders and other interested parties are informed about the project and its effects, e.g. at a public meeting or where plans are made available for inspection. The aim of **involving the public informatively** is to make plans or decisions known and comprehensible to a wide public – which in this case has little opportunity of influencing the decision in question.
- ordinary citizens and lobbyists/representatives of common-interest groups can comment on official proposals and contribute ideas and suggestions, e.g. in connection with making a zoning plan. The aim of **consultative public participation** is to obtain stakeholders' reactions to proposals, plans or decisions, so that these can be taken into account at the final decision stage.



- it is also possible for stakeholders and other interested parties to have a say in developing and implementing the project in question, as in the case of a Round Table or of a mediation process (= **decision-influencing**). How much say those concerned actually have varies, from jointly developing suggestions to the citizens participating exercising extensive powers of decision.

# Formal and informal public participation

In virtually all cases where constructing plants, roads or shopping centres is envisaged, approval is required from the authorities, and the relevant legal regulations lay down who is entitled to take part in the procedure. On the other hand, if the aim is to draw up a community program or to discuss the opportunities and hazards associated with new technologies, there are no legal requirements applying to the participation process.

→ section on  
methods  
p. 58 ff.

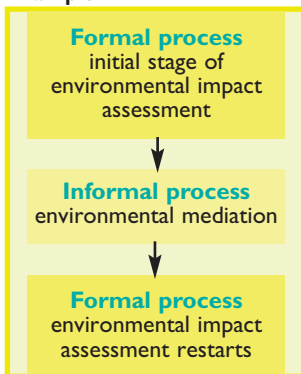
**Formal processes** are mandatory; legal regulations lay down who takes part, how far rights of participation extend, how the process is structured and what is done with the findings. The most extensive rights in a formal process go with party status (→Glossary). As a party to the process you have wide-ranging powers: you are entitled to

- obtain all the information available (inspect the files),
- make a statement, which must be discussed,
- file a petition, e.g. requesting an additional expert's report,
- raise objections to decisions or contest these at a higher administrative level.

Formal processes include approval procedures such as environmental impact assessment or project assessment as regards nature conservation for plants or hydraulic engineering projects, and planning procedures for zoning plans or regional programs. A formal process results in an administrative decision (e.g. by a civil servant) and/or a political decision (e.g. by a local council).

**Informal participation** processes are not rigidly regulated and can be structured in various ways, depending on the circumstances. They are entirely voluntary; the central principle is tackling an assignment together. The aim can be to gather information, to exchange ideas or to find a solution together – and in some cases to implement it together, too. Who takes part, how the assignment is tackled and what rules govern the procedure are either determined in advance or agreed by the participants themselves. The methods of informal participation are varied and flexible; they include Round Tables, Local Agenda 21 (→Glossary), mediation processes etc. How binding the solutions worked out in informal processes are depends on what has been agreed about how to treat the results. As a rule the results consist of recommendations and serve to aid formal bodies such as local councils in reaching their decisions. Alternatively, a council resolution can make results binding. Formal and informal processes are often dovetailed (see diagram). The Austrian environmental impact assessment act provides for such an audit to be interrupted by informal mediation, on application by the organization behind the project. The result of mediation – often made binding in the form of a contract – can be incorporated in the formal approval process when it restarts.

## Example



# Benefits of and limits to public participation

**Participation processes can yield substantial benefits for everyone involved. But they should not be regarded as a way of solving any problem anywhere at any time by magic.**

## Benefits of public participation

Participation processes bring together people with differing interests, views and ideas, who might not otherwise have met. As they express their various perspectives, needs and stock of experience, a common pool of knowledge about the manifold facets of the project accumulates. Subsequent decisions can take this pool of knowledge into account, which makes them more robust.

Where all interested parties are given the chance to collaborate on a project that would affect them, they are much more likely to identify with the result and to accept it wholeheartedly. This means that in many cases the results of a participation process achieve more general acceptance and are more durable; they are implemented earlier and there is less likely to be need of subsequent adjustment (i.e. time and money can be saved once again). If conflicts of interest are tackled within the framework of a participation process, this may well help to avert the threat of legal action.

As an **ordinary citizen** you benefit from the chance to present your ideas, views and thoughts about a topic or a project. In addition, your information about the project is more complete and up to date – and you gain insight into how decisions are reached.

As a **politician** you acquire a clearer picture of the needs of different groups of people from a participation process, and you can therefore communicate with ordinary citizens better. Participation processes make it easier to accommodate conflicting interests, and promote a culture of collaboration and dialogue – in which people's interest in politics can reawaken, and ordinary citizens can be encouraged to get more involved in politics.

Participation processes can well take pressure off you as an **administrator**, since the project in question has been discussed or worked out together with the stakeholders – so you are less likely to be confronted with objections and subsequent complaints. In addition, participation processes play an important part in increasing people's trust in the administration.

Dialogue with stakeholders can help you as an **entrepreneur** to defuse conflicts with neighbours, or to avoid such conflicts in the first place. Willingness to discuss things promotes mutual understanding and trust – which can help to avoid appeals during an approval procedure, and thus cut costs.

For you als a **lobbyist** or a representative of a common-interest group taking part in a participation process is a way to make the interests and ideas of the group you represent

→ section on  
benefits /  
arguments  
p. 50 ff.

## Benefits of and limits to public participation

better known and to improve your chance of influencing the course of events. Interaction with other points of view hones the group's image, and can make it more capable of negotiating acceptable compromises in future.

When people with differing ideas, differing job backgrounds and differing experience of life meet up, their views are likely to clash. That is why participation needs time and a willingness to look hard at other ideas and to engage in discussion and argument. In many cases, though, confrontation between differing points of view is a prerequisite for deeper insight into the problem in question, leading to new ideas for solutions. So don't shy away from argument – it can move you closer to a joint solution!

### Limits to public participation

Participation processes can contribute significantly to improving the quality and acceptance of decisions on matters of public interest. But they do have limits.

Participation processes have little chance of success if

- there is no scope for action, because the main decisions have already been made.
- social diversity and differing degrees of access to participation processes cannot be evened out, if (say) the organizers are unsuccessful in involving groups that are hard to reach or disadvantaged (such as migrants).
- stakeholders are reluctant to take part, because (say) they are afraid of being “pocketed”, their previous experience of participation processes has put them off, or they believe that they can achieve their aims better in other ways.
- decision-makers do not support such processes, possibly because politicians and/or administrators are worried about their power to decide being curtailed.

# Legal and political framework for public participation

**There is a close connection between the aims of establishing public participation more firmly and of promoting sustainable development (→Glossary) .**

International agreements such as the Rio Declaration, the Charter of Aalborg or the Aarhus Convention are milestones on the road to sustainable development and to involving the public in decision-making. In the meantime the ideas defined in these documents have found their way into laws and policies (→Glossary) – both within Austria and at EU level.

Examples of Austrian statutes that feature arrangements for public participation include the Gewerbeordnung (trading regulations), the Wasserrechtsgesetz (statute on water and waterways) or the individual provinces' statutes on land use.

The Austrian constitution includes provisions for rights of participation, in particular in the form of direct democracy by way of petition, referendum and official opinion poll. Which legal regulations apply to a participation process depends on the actual case in question. The best place to start collecting information is either the administrative department concerned or (in Austria) the environmental ombudsman in your province.

## Milestones on the road to sustainable development and public participation

### **Brundtland Report, 1987**

Sustainable development is “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. So sustainable development must be aligned with four principles: conserving the environment, economic development, social justice and political participation.

### **UN Conference in Rio de Janeiro, 1992**

Resolutions accepting the Rio Declaration and the Agenda 21, the working program for the 21st century: comprehensive involvement of the population in political decision-making is a key prerequisite for sustainable development. A program of action at community level, the Local Agenda 21 (→Glossary), is drafted.

### **European Conference in Aalborg, 1994**

Charter of Aalborg: the signatory states and communities commit themselves to developing long-term plans of action for their communities in tune with the Local Agenda 21, and to involve the population in this on a large scale.

### **Aarhus Convention, 1998**

Regulates public access to information about the environment, public participation in certain decisions relevant to the environment, and recourse to courts of law in environmental matters.

### **White Paper on “European Governance”, 2001**

Lays down general principles of good governmental and administrative practice, including public involvement in shaping policy and reaching decisions at all levels within the EU (national, local etc.).

### **Austrian Strategy for Sustainable Development, 2002**

Defines a comprehensive long-term policy in which ecological, economic and social aspects are integrated. Transparency and public participation are seen as the keys to implementing the Strategy.

### **Aalborg +10 Conference, 2004**

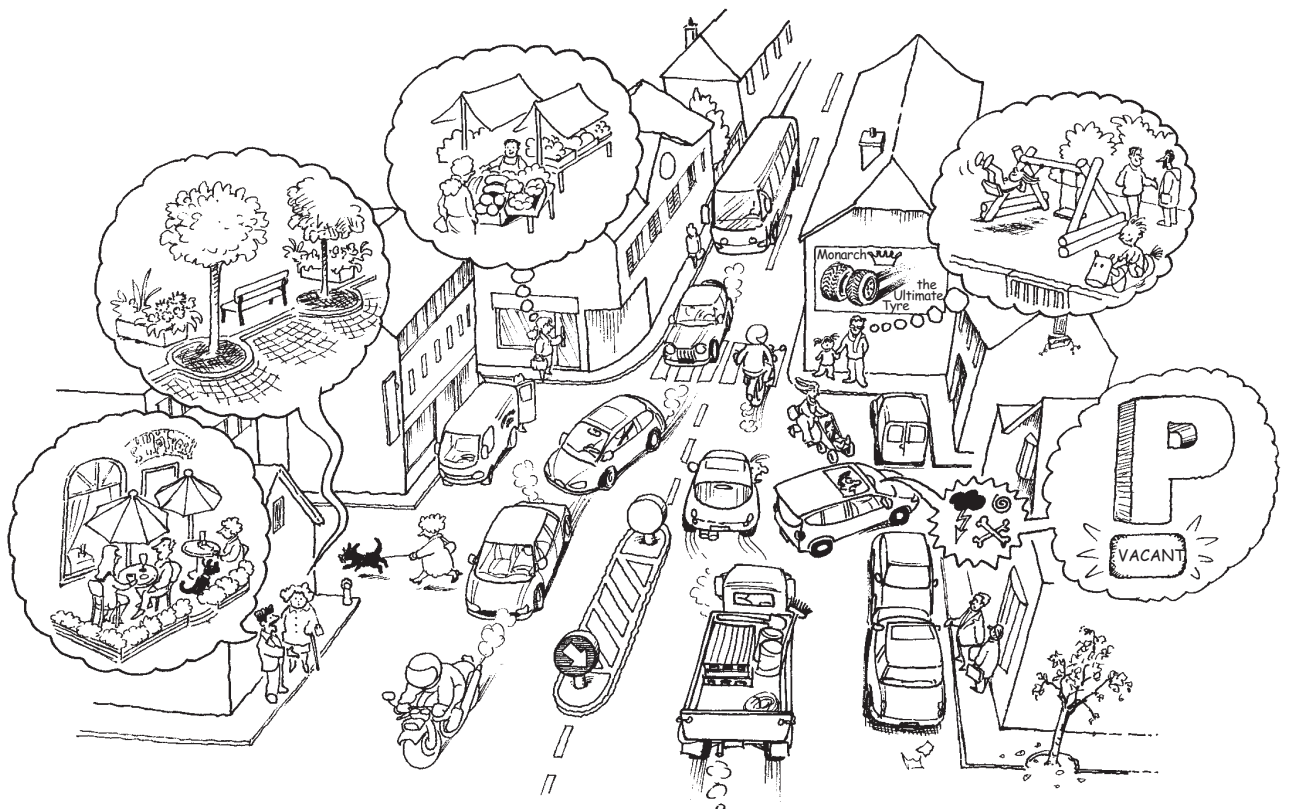
Resolution accepting the so-called “Aalborg Commitments”: measures to safeguard the quality of life in and the long-term future of cities and smaller communities in ten thematic fields (including planning, mobility, health and good governance).

# How public participation begins

## So what concrete steps does it take to launch a participation process?

Anyone can take the initiative here:

- Ordinary citizens join forces to insist on noise abatement measures along the new motorway approach road.
- Environmental organizations launch a campaign to preserve a protected or amenity area.
- Administrators receive instructions to draw up a broadly-based regional transport plan, and ensure assent by the various groups of stakeholders.
- Local politicians want to work out an overall approach to developing their community long term, in collaboration with ordinary citizens.
- An entrepreneur plans to expand a production facility, and wants to agree a framework for this with the neighbours in advance, so as to ensure that the project is accepted and to avoid conflicts and delays.



## How public participation begins

### Get and spread information

- Gather full details of the circumstances and less obvious aspects. Have activities already started? What demands, ideas and/or suggestions are stakeholders putting forward? What are they concerned about? Where are the areas of conflict? Research the issue in print media and the internet, and meet up with people from your community or locality. You can also make enquiries at Citizens' Guidance Bureaus, the regional environmental ombudsman's office or your local council offices.
- If you (as a lobbyist or an ordinary citizen) are looking for allies/supporters for a campaign, publicize the issue – via newspaper articles, public meetings, posters, mailings, fliers or face-to-face talk. If no campaign is running on your particular issue, and you intend to launch one, get together with other interested people to define your aims as clearly as possible. What do you aim to achieve? What should the result look like at the end of a successful participation process? Imagine your goals in vivid, pictorial terms – visual images are excellent motivators. The important thing is to concentrate on realistic goals; you can distinguish between ones you are committed to reaching and ones where you could conceivably lower your sights.

- As an applicant for project approval, a politician or an administrator, communicate information about the project in question (and about access to information) actively to the general public. All information should be concrete, graphic and easy to understand. It is important to present both the project's advantages and its possible drawbacks in a balanced way – this helps to create an atmosphere of trust.

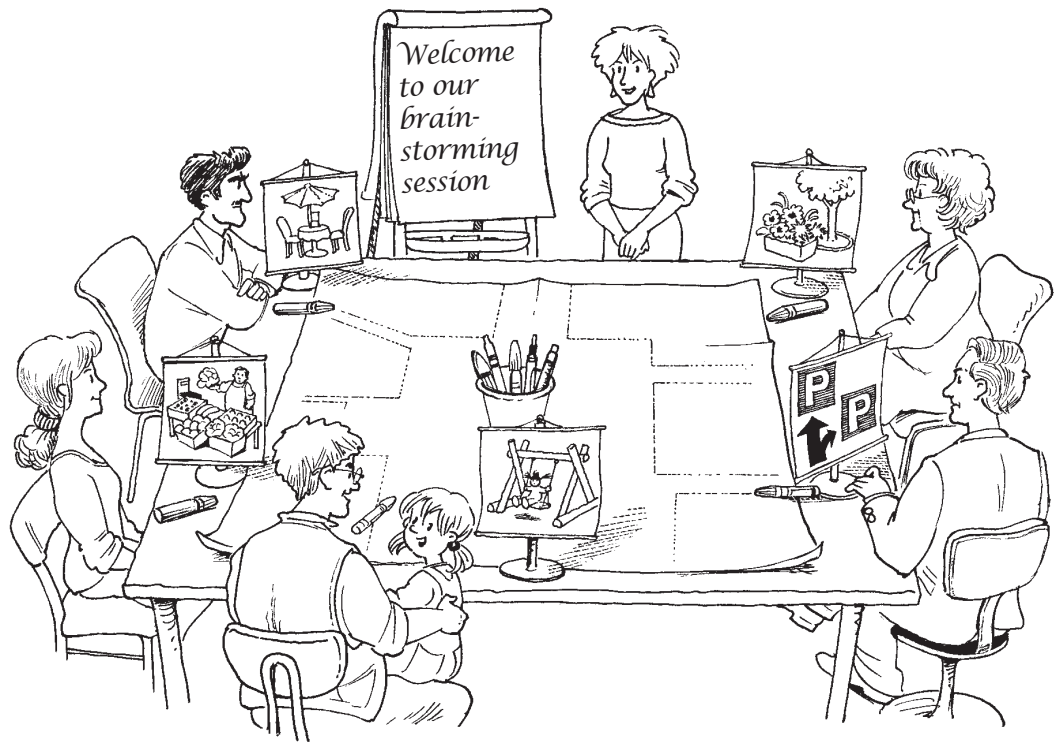
### Find out whether the conditions necessary for a formal participation process are fulfilled

- If a matter of concern or a project is brought before the authorities, they will check whether public participation is mandatory, e.g. in an environmental audit, in strategic environmental assessment (→Glossary), in land use planning or in water management planning.
- As a lobbyist/representative of a common-interest group or an ordinary citizen, find out when you can intervene and in what form, and watch out for deadlines. You can enquire about this at your local council offices, at the authority concerned or at the regional environmental ombudsman's office.

→ checklist on  
launching  
p. 53



## How public participation begins



### Weigh up the possible benefits of an informal participation process

- If obligatory forms of participation are planned, consider whether they are adequate for reaching your particular goal, or whether a more intensive participation process might generate better (sustainable) results.
- If no formal public participation is planned, consider the possible benefits of an informal participation process – particularly if the issue is controversial, if you as a politician or administrator are seeking new ways of involving ordinary citizens, or if you want to achieve the widest possible degree of acceptance for a given project.

### Develop ideas for the course of the participation process

- If you'd like to carry out a more intensive participation process, think about what a suitable process for your particular issue might look like.
- Write your ideas down and draft an initial outline; this will make your ideas accessible to other people who you wish to convince that your aims make sense. At this stage you should also think about what benefits a participation process can yield for other groups of stakeholders, for politicians or for the administration, and where opportunities and risks are involved. On p. 50 (→section on benefits) you will find arguments that may help you to convince other people.



## How public participation begins

- In the course of planning your participation process you can also obtain useful tips and information from professional facilitators (→Glossary).

### Identify the possible forms of a participation process with other stakeholders, politicians and the administration

- As a lobbyist/representative of a common-interest group or ordinary citizen, get in touch with the politicians or administrators responsible and find out whether they would support a participation process in connection with the issue that concerns you. Present your basic approach for a participation process, and highlight the benefits it would provide (→p. 50).
- For lobbyists/representatives of a common-interest group and ordinary citizens it makes sense to take the stage as a group, so as to show that the idea in question is supported by large numbers of people, not just a handful of individuals.
- Discuss the next moves needed to launch the participation process, and make clear arrangements about who takes care of what with whom by when.

- Agree on who will take charge of managing/coordinating the participation process, and how it will be financed.
- Agree the basic approach to the participation process with the other people involved.

→ section on  
funding  
p. 57



**If you have succeeded in convincing other people, preparations can start for carrying the participation process out.**

Step by step to a participation process

# How public participation succeeds

**In-depth preparation is essential for the participation process to succeed. This way you achieve favourable conditions for the process to go well, before the first event starts. While the process is being carried out, it is well worth checking repeatedly whether the necessary quality criteria are being observed, so that your project stays on course.**

→ checklists on preparing and implementing p. 54 ff.

## Clarify aims and assignment

■ It must be clear to everyone involved what the aim of the participation process is and what the actual assignment is. To get things into focus it helps to spotlight the initial situation and recent developments, e.g.: What is our concern? How did we get involved? Who is affected?

■ The outcome must not be a foregone conclusion, so room to manoeuvre is essential. If decisions have already been taken in some areas – if, say, it has been decided to build a road, and the process is concerned only with the details of implementation – these fixed points must be identified. For the process to succeed, it is important that everyone involved is aware which issues are to be discussed and which are not (no longer).



## How public participation succeeds

### Invite all stakeholders to take part

- The participation process should be open to all individuals and groups with an interest in or affected by the issue. Where a number of people have similar interests, they can nominate a single representative to champion their cause in the participation process. Environmental interests can be advocated by environmental organizations or (in Austria) by the environmental ombudsmen at province level. It is important for invitations to go out to all groups of stakeholders. As far as possible, women and men should be involved in roughly equal numbers.
- For collaboration within the participation process to succeed, rules need to be agreed about how to treat one another and how to handle information. For instance, the arrangement might be that all participants have the same rights and duties, get the same information, have the same opportunities to speak and can influence the result of the process to the same extent.
- Taking part in participation processes is invariably voluntary! Stakeholders will participate provided that they can see benefits in doing so, and provided that possible fears can be dispelled.

### Allow sufficient time and money

- A participation process needs time. So that those affected/interested can judge whether they have enough time to take part, it makes sense to draw up a time schedule. You must allow time for (inter alia) taking part in events or public meetings, for studying documents, for acquiring additional information, for negotiations and for organizing meetings. The time frame should be generous enough to avoid time pressure, and include leeway for additional requirements that may crop up unexpectedly.
- Persons who take part in a participation process in their spare time (free of charge) ought to receive a token of appreciation for their involvement. Apart from financial compensation, one might consider an award to be made at the party to wind up the process with the mayor, other public honours, outings together, publishing photographs of the participants in the regional newspapers with an expression of thanks, or price reductions for facilities such as the local swimming-pool, the library, exhibitions, public transport etc.
- Making sure of the necessary cash for the participation process is an essential prerequisite. What expenses can arise in a participation process? How high the costs are depends on the method selected, the duration and scale of the project, etc. – each participa-

#### Get professional help

Any participation process will benefit from professional support; ideally, this is a task for so-called facilitators (→Glossary). Their job is to prepare, accompany and structure the participation process and to evaluate it in retrospect.

→ section on  
case histories  
p. 22 ff.

## How public participation succeeds

tion process needs individual costing. The global figures listed for various case histories in this manual will give you some idea of what to expect. If you intend to spend more than very modest sums, we recommend that you obtain quotations from several possible partners: for instance, fees for facilitators and experts' reports, rent for meeting-rooms, the cost of food and drink at meetings, producing and distributing informatory material, a website, possible financial compensation for persons taking part on a voluntary basis, etc.

→ section on  
funding  
p. 57

- To make sure of the necessary cash for the participation process, you should approach the organizations and groups that mainly benefit from it. That may be the administration or politicians (e.g. the local council), or groups of stakeholders, or organizations applying for project approval. It is always wise to look for more than one source of money; that ensures that the process is independent and credible, and avoids giving any impression of "The one who pays the piper calls the tune".

### Make it clear how much influence the participants have and what will be done with the results

- All those taking part must be aware from the start how much influence they have on the result and who takes what decisions in the participation process. Are the participants simply informed, can they make statements, or do they actually have a say in decisions?
- It must also be made clear what will happen to the results of the participation process, how binding they are and how they will be incorporated in subsequent formal decision structures such as a vote by the local council. Will the result be passed on to the local council as a recommendation for a decision, or will it be embodied in a private agreement between stakeholders?

### Tie the process in with existing decision procedures

- For most tasks in the public sphere formal statutory decision procedures exist, e.g. for an authority approving industrial plant. Informal participation processes are not regulated in this way, and the results of such processes thus generally count only as recommendations. Public support can give the results of a participation process more weight. However, in most cases no legal right exists for the results to be incorporated in the actual decision. That is why it is important for informal participation processes to be tied into the formal decision procedures (→p.10).

## How public participation succeeds

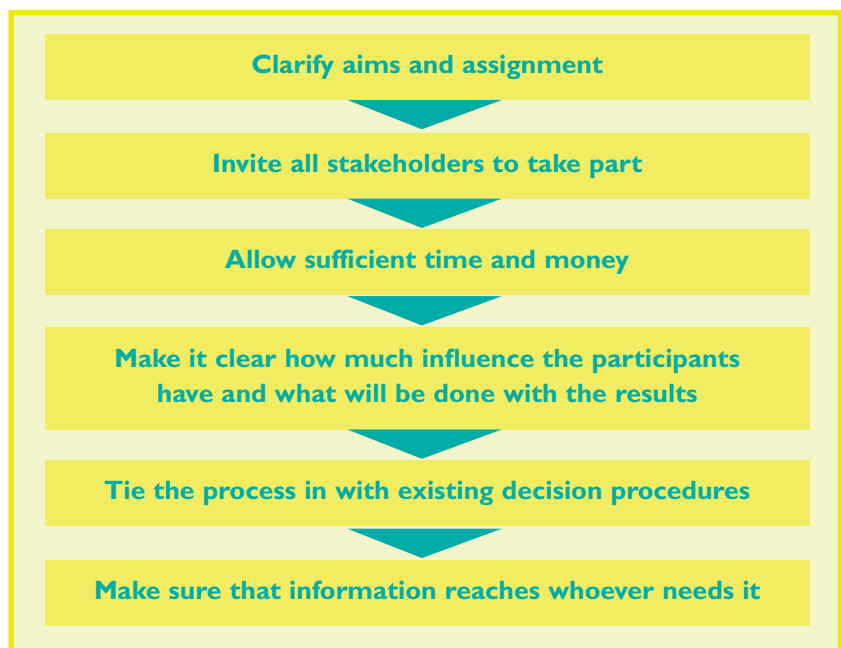
■ It is also necessary to find out how much support is forthcoming from politicians and the administration at any early stage. Ideally the political decision-makers should agree to accept the results of the participation process and to give reasons for any departures from these results. A commitment of this kind contributes significantly to the success of the participation process, signalling as it does to those taking part that politicians and the administration support the process and take it seriously.

### Make sure that information reaches whoever needs it

- To ensure that the participation process proceeds constructively and even-handedly, it is essential to make all the information relevant to the process available to everyone involved in time and without a break.
- In many cases people who are not directly involved or cannot take part throughout are keenly interested in the participation process none the less. Public-relations activities enable you to achieve transparency and may well result in widening public support for the process.

■ Proper documentation of the participation process in the form of interim reports, minutes of meetings, photos, etc. makes the results intelligible even to people not involved in the process, and facilitates argumentation vis-à-vis politicians who you want to decide to implement the results of the completed process.

→ checklist for public relations p. 56



Proper preparation sets the stage for successful implementation

# Case histories from Austria

On the pages that follow you will find various examples documenting the recent participation praxis in Austria.

→ website  
[www.partizipation.at](http://www.partizipation.at)

A total of 14 case histories are presented, covering a wide range of applications for public participation – from transport and mobility issues via regional development all the way to community work – and illustrating how varied participation processes actually are. Details are given of how participation processes have been carried out in Austria, what methods have been employed and what results have actually been achieved.

The case histories have been selected on the basis of criteria such as being of current interest, how far implementation has proceeded, how much innovative content they possess and whether they are applicable in other situations. Some examples are taken from fields in which a wealth of experience with public participation exists, others from areas in which only a handful of pilot projects have been carried out so far.

The examples chosen also vary as regards how intensive participation was. Some were mainly concerned with information and consultation; others allowed those taking part a considerable say in decisions. And the focus of the participation process varies from case to case, too: some address all aspects of a given planning procedure, others are restricted to differing variants of or to concomitant measures for a project.

A box at the top of the page lists key data for each process presented; the text below describes in brief what led to the process, its aims, how it went and the results. More details about each case history are available from the contacts and websites mentioned; **www.partizipation.at** features full descriptions of the processes (in German; some are also described in English).

The case histories on the pages that follow cannot give more than a glimpse of the variety of participation praxis in Austria. But the resulting overview of possible applications and methods should encourage you to make use of public participation in your special field, too.



# Inline skater park Am Schöpfwerk

Opening ceremony  
on 24 July 2003

Photo: Bassena



**Location:** Vienna

**Those involved:** young people and adults living on the estate Am Schöpfwerk

**Facilitation and guidance:**

Stadtteilzentrum Bassena (the local community centre)

**Cost/funding:** 46,000 Euro/City of Vienna and private sponsors

**Project duration:**

01/2003 to 06/2003

**Method:** structured discussions between conflicting parties

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## Initial cue

Conflicts between young people keen on sport who inline skate around the estate and adults living there who need peace and quiet – and thus feel bothered by the resulting noise

## Goal

Jointly developing a solution that allows for the adults' need of peace and quiet while giving the youngsters a chance to enjoy their sport

## Sequence of events

When the conflict between the people living on the estate and the young inline skaters became acute, the employees at the local community centre got in touch with everyone involved. The youngsters got an opportuni-

ty to point out what concerned them, that there is a shortage of space, on programs broadcast on "Radio Schöpfwerk" (the radio station specially for this estate).

In the course of research an acoustic test took place in one of the flats affected by noise; the inline skaters were thus able to experience the noise level generated by their sport. Subsequent mediation led to an agreement that the young people would stop inline skating on the estate, and that the adults would help them to find an alternative site. In the end the joint search identified a suitable site near the estate. After inspection by youngsters, adults and administrators

from the city council, and a meeting with the borough chairperson, the decision was taken to convert the space into a proper inline skating zone without delay. The young people took part in planning the zone.

## Results

The young people were involved in how the new skating zone was arranged

The zone was opened six months after the conflict had become acute.



*"They've actually managed to get this difficult conflict out of the estate – permanently."*

A local politician



*"I'm bound to recommend this to other young people: you just have to get together and negotiate. We really got somewhere!"*

A youngster

# Mediation process Natura 2000 Verwall

Excursion to  
Silbertal:  
negotiating  
on the spot

Photo: Wolfgang Pfefferkorn

**Location:** Verwall (in the Montafon region), Vorarlberg

**Those involved:** representatives of farming, forestry, hunting, tourism and conservation interests, the mayors of the four communities affected, representatives of the Bludenz district administration and of the provincial government of Vorarlberg (including the environmental ombudswoman)

**Funding:** Vorarlberg provincial administration

**Facilitation and guidance:** Rosinak&Partner, Vienna (a planning consultancy)



## Initial cue

■ Acute conflicts between landowners, users and the authorities in the Verwall area after the provincial government had designated it a Natura 2000 zone

■ Areas of conflict tourism, agriculture and forestry in the zone in connexion with conservation issues

■ Communication steadily deteriorating between the authorities and other stakeholders

## Goal

■ Negotiating agreements about the future use of the designated conservation zone between landowners, users, various other lobbies and the authorities

## Sequence of events

At the suggestion of the environmental ombudswoman, the provincial government of Vorarlberg decided to implement a mediation process. To start with, the mediators held exploratory talks and informatory meetings, so as to get a general picture of the conflict situation and to settle who should take part in the process for the time being. Initially the most important aspects were pooling information and reappraising the previous course of events. After three rounds of negotiations, several meetings of the various study groups (agriculture, forestry, hunting and tourism), excursions and inspections, the participants had

*“Step by step an atmosphere of trust was established between the participants – making it possible to work together and to reappraise the recent past and its legacy of resentment. Without the mediation process we would have been unable to implement the Natura 2000 zonal management scheme.”*

Max Albrecht



**The negotiating team meets Montafon**

Photo: Katharina Lins



**The far end of Silbertal in the Verwall Natura 2000 zone**

Photo: Katharina Lins



**Project duration:** 01/2001 to 10/2003; meetings of the consultative committee began in 2004

**Method:** mediation

**Contact:**

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www.partizipation.at (file with full details in German/English can be downloaded here)

jointly compiled an overall draft of the agreements. The core of these agreements consisted of proposals for harmonizing the various forms of use in Verwall with the requirements of a Natura

2000 zone. After the participants in the mediation forum had discussed this draft in their separate groups, the process concluded with an agreement.

**Results**

■ Agreement regulating future use and how the zone is to be monitored (report on the state of the zone and on implementation of the measures defined, based on specified indicators); the decree establishing the Natura 2000 zone refers to this

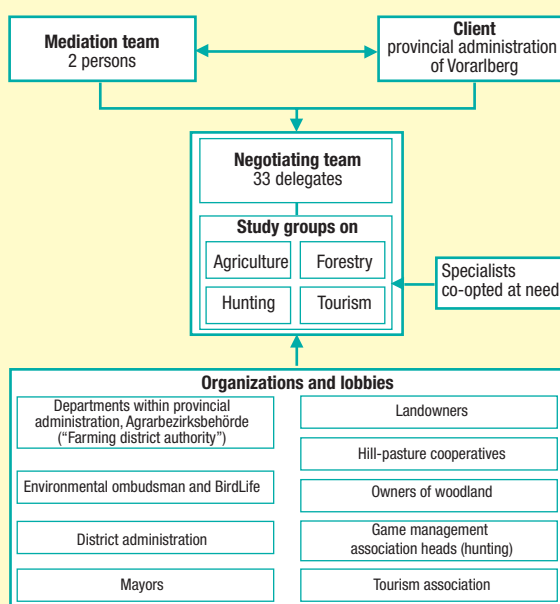
■ Decree establishing the zone (based on the agreements reached in the mediation process), in force since October 2003

■ Supplementary report listing all the viewpoints and proposals that no agreement was reached on during the process.

■ Establishment of a consultative committee in which the authorities concerned, those directly affected and

the various lobbies are represented. Since 2004 the committee has met once a year to discuss all matters of importance involving the Natura 2000 zone, including the agreements made.

**Structure of the mediation process for Verwall**



Source: Hiess/Pfefferkorn

# Developing an overall concept for the Möll valley

Discussing on the spot how best to regenerate the river Möll

Photo: Institute of Hydrobiology and Aquatic Ecosystem Management

**Location:** the Möll valley, Kärnten

**Those involved:** residents of the Möll valley, NGOs, other stakeholders (e.g. Nationalpark Hohe Tauern, electricity suppliers), representatives of local councils, the province and the federal government, a multi-disciplinary research team covering hydrobiology, landscape planning, agriculture etc.

**Facilitation and guidance:**

University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences, Vienna, Institute of Hydrobiology and Aquatic Ecosystem Management, Austrian Institute for Sustainable Development



*“The best overall concept is worthless – unless developed and backed by the people living in the region.”*

A participant

## Starting-point

■ Research project “Types of river landscape in Austria – overall concepts to develop river landscapes sustainably”.

## Goal

■ Experts were to compile a specialized approach/model with targets and measures for the Möll river landscape, complying with the Water Framework Directive and taking ecological, social and economic aspects into account to the same extent; parallel to this, the general public was to be kept informed and ordinary citizens were to work out a participatory model for the entire Möll valley.

## Sequence of events

The central element in this research project was compiling a specialized scientific approach/model with which to achieve a good ecological status of the river Möll. The research project was supplemented by four participatory elements.

### ■ 1<sup>st</sup> Möll valley workshop

Public participation started with the 1<sup>st</sup> Mölltal workshop to inform stakeholders in administration, in the relevant fields of praxis and the region in question about the content and aims of the research project. The research team then defined what the Möll ought to look like in order to meet the Water Framework

Directive’s requirement of “good ecological status”. The current ecological status of the Möll and the ways in which the river was being used were surveyed.

### ■ Discussion about the future

Meanwhile a discussion about the future took place, at which interested residents developed a participatory model for the entire Möll valley, featuring targets and measures to be taken in the areas “Life-line Möll”, natural and man-made environment, agriculture and forestry, society and culture, business and tourism.



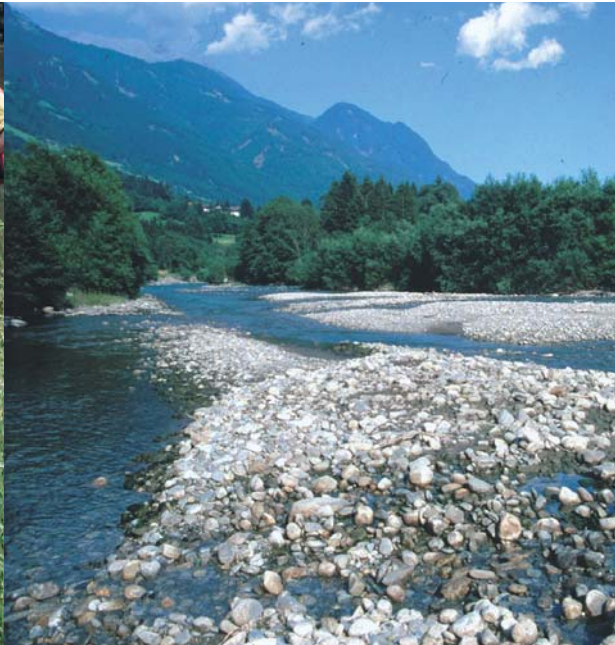
### Student excursion

Photo: Institute for Hydrobiology and Aquatic Ecosystem Management



### Close-to-nature stretch of the River Möll

Photo: Umweltbüro Klagenfurt



**Funding:** Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Culture, as part of a research program on man-made environments

**Project duration:** 02/2000 to 06/2004 (research project plus participation process)

**Methods:** workshops, discussion about the future

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### ■ 2<sup>nd</sup> Möll valley workshop

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> Möll valley workshop the participatory model for the entire Möll valley, the survey of the current status of the river and requirements of the Water Framework Directive were presented and discussed.

### ■ Specialized approach/model

The research team then drew up a specialized approach/model for the Möll, designed to achieve the sound ecological status required; it describes the typical features of the watercourse and the animals and plants that would live there if human beings had only a very limited impact on the river. This specialized approach/model

for the actual river supplements the participatory model for the entire Möll valley.

The research team also worked out specific water management measures to improve the ecology of the Möll (e.g. removing conventional river engineering measures, more water for the Möll from the reservoir upstream) and assessed these as regards sustainability and cost effectiveness.

### ■ 3<sup>rd</sup> Möll valley workshop

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> Möll valley workshop the results of this assessment were discussed with the participants and the direction taken was approved. The research team then drew up specific recommendations for improving the

quality of the river in the light of the scientific findings, the workshops and interviews with the stakeholders involved.

As this was purely a research project, no final political decision was taken about the overall concept for the Möll valley. However, the recommendations were incorporated in the approach subsequently developed for managing the river. The strategy was finalized at the end of 2004, and a start made on implementing its provisions. By the summer of 2005 the project had been successfully completed.

### Results

■ Eight specific recommendations for measures to improve the Möll's ecological status

■ Incorporation of these recommendations in the river management strategy (the key planning instrument for water management in Austria).

# A place worth living in – G.O.A.L., Graz

A LAMA  
in a discussion

**Location:** Graz

**Those involved:**

residents of three districts in Graz, Local Agenda 21 MAnagers (LAMAs), City of Graz Department of the Environment

**Cost/funding:**

approx. 140,000 Euro / 50 % City of Graz, 50 % EU LIFE

**Facilitation and guidance:**

ARGE Müllvermeidung, Graz

**Project duration:**

01/2001 to 06/2003

**Methods:** informatory meetings, opinion polls, animation, study groups



*“That was the first time the City ever showed up in my neighbourhood!”*

A resident

*“Training as a LAMA is the start of a continual process of learning, in which we LAMAs get to grips with our field of activity (together with our neighbours), amplify the skills required for this and then make fuller use of them!”*

Lisbeth Postl, a LAMA

## Framework

■ G.O.A.L. – Gesund Ohne Auto und Lärm (“Healthy without a car or noise”): campaign to lower noise and pollution levels by diminishing motor traffic, and to improve physical wellbeing and fitness

## Aims

■ In the module “A place worth living in”: joint development of measures to improve the quality of life in three districts in Graz, with residents actively involved and with support from volunteers engaged by the council

## Focus

The G.O.A.L. project contained seven modules, all concerned with various ways of avoiding traffic and noise and improving the quality of life. The module “A place worth living in” involved a new departure: in three residential areas – in the Lend district and on the two estates Laudongasse/Starhemberggasse and Terrassenhaussiedlung (Terrace-House Estate) – **Local Agenda MAnagers (LAMAs)**

## The LAMAs

LAMAs are residents from around the target areas who act as go-betweens between residents, housing estate managements and the city administration. A total of 14 applicants for voluntary work as LAMAs were given free training in structuring discussions, conflict management, public relations etc., which the City of Graz publicly recognized with a certificate. Further specialized training was available throughout. Practical work in one’s home area was supported by accompanying coaching. At informal meetings the LAMAs had opportunities to pool and reflect on their experience. An official pass – the LAMA Card – identifies the LAMAs as volunteers engaged by the council.



### Agenda party

Photos: Andrea Grabher



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[www.goal-graz.at](http://www.goal-graz.at)

developed measures aimed at improving quality of life and promoting cooperation, together with and for residents, housing estate managements and the city administration.

#### The LAMAs' activities

The LAMAs and the project management informed the residents in the three areas about the idea behind the project, and organized opinion polls and discussions on the issue of quality of life in each area. The main topics that emerged were getting along with young people (drugs and noise as problem areas), the impact of noise (both from traffic and from neighbours) and friction between tenants and

housing estate managements. In each area a G.O.A.L. committee was set up, consisting of project management, politicians and administrators, residents and grassroots initiatives, plus the LAMAs. These committees identified key issues for each area on the basis of the wishes and problems brought forward, while guaranteeing reliable implementation of the results. LAMAs and residents then worked out ideas for improvements and concrete suggestions in study groups.

#### Results

- Improved relations between tenants and housing estate managements, e.g. after the annual accounts for rent due were made clearer, or because residents were consulted about renovation projects
- Mediation processes were initiated in Lend (noise) and St. Peter (inline skating)
- A skating rink was initiated, support was forthcoming for the idea of an inline skating zone in a park (Volks-garten), and training courses in Hip Hop, streetball and football were organized for young people

- Improvements were made to the surroundings: for instance, guidelines were agreed for minimizing noise during flat conversion, dog loos were installed, an energy-saving project was launched and plants were put in place
- A "traffic and noise summit" was held in Terrassenhaussiedlung
- The G.O.A.L. project module "A place worth living in" was made a permanent element of the City of Graz' Local Agenda 21 activities
- A second training course for LAMAs was conducted

# Citizen jury for Obere Neutorgasse, Graz

Hard at work in a small group

**Location:** Graz

**Those involved:** residents, shopkeepers, elected officials, lobbies representing employers and employees, NGOs, ordinary citizens

**Facilitation and guidance:** Forum b – Büro für Beteiligungsverfahren, Fürstenau, Germany

**Cost/funding:** 40,000 to 50,000 Euro/City of Graz

**Project duration:** 11/2002 to 03/2003

**Methoden:** citizen jury, informatory meeting, workshop for target groups, Round Table



**Starting-point**

■ Unanimous vote by the City Council to extend the pedestrian precinct in Obere Neutorgasse in Graz and to conduct a public participation project beforehand

**Goal**

■ Developing proposals for traffic calming in Obere Neutorgasse

**Sequence of events**

The participation process started with an informatory meeting aimed at the general public to explain what was meant to happen. Next, residents and shopkeepers gathered ideas for traffic calming in Neutorgasse in a workshop for target groups. At a Round Table lobbyists added further suggestions. Meanwhile 65 men and women from Graz were selected at

*“For once, public-spirited citizens were able to provide a creative impulse in the shaping of the place where they live – a successful switch from “moaning away in the background” to having an active say.”*

Peter Schmidl, a citizen juror

**The sequence of events**

**PRELIMINARY PHASE**  
Council decision to implement the participation process

**GETTING TARGET GROUPS AND LOBBYISTS INVOLVED**  
• Informatory meeting  
• Workshop for target groups  
• Round Table

**CITIZEN JURIES**  
• Four juries to develop a basic approach

**FEEDBACK**  
Discussion of results with lobbyists



**Inspection on the spot**



**Ideas in course of development**

Photos: forum b



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jury report under  
[www.graz.at/cms/beitrag/10025242/422020/](http://www.graz.at/cms/beitrag/10025242/422020/)  
[www.graz.at/cms/ziel/421934/DE/](http://www.graz.at/cms/ziel/421934/DE/)

random for four study groups, the so-called citizen juries. Their work began with an introduction and a brainstorming session. Experts from city and transport planning provided them with basic information, which they supplemented on the spot in Neutorgasse. At this point the jurors worked out approaches which they concretized as actual plans. All in all they were at work on solutions for traffic

calming in Neutorgasse for one evening and two full days. They received token remuneration for this. The juries' findings were discussed with the lobbyists at a Round Table. The facilitator summarized the results in the jury report, which representatives of the four juries then counterchecked. Next, the jurors presented their findings to the politicians concerned (decision-mak-

ers for the City of Graz), including the Councillor responsible for the project, who brought the results before the inner council. All the political groups on the council accepted the juries' recommendations, and budget funds were earmarked accordingly.

**Results**

- Proposals for traffic calming in and a new layout for Obere Neutorgasse: consensus recommendation incorporating some novel ideas
- Presentation of the results in the inner council, support from all political groups on the Graz council, financial provision for implementation
- Work began on the first measures in autumn 2004

**JURY REPORT**

- Drafting
- Feedback from juries
- Presentation to decision-makers

**DECISION**

- Presentation in inner council
- Funds earmarked in budget

**IMPLEMENTATION**

- Information about implementation
- Initial steps taken

Many thanks to: Kurt Hörmann and Petra Gradwohl, Referat für BürgerInnenbeteiligung Graz; Peter Schmidl, a juror

# Young people's declaration, Bodensee (Lake Constanz)

The Declaration is presented to politicians in Vorarlberg

**Location:** Bodensee region (Germany, Liechtenstein, Austria, Switzerland)  
**Those involved:** 1200 young people from Baden-Württemberg, Bayern, Vorarlberg and several Swiss cantons  
**Facilitation and guidance:** Jugenddornbirn  
**Funding:** Bodensee Agenda 21, Office for Future Affairs Vorarlberg State Youth Council  
**Project duration:** 08/2002 to 12/2003  
**Methods:** conferences, workshops, project markets, Round Tables, internet forum



## Background

■ In 1998 the International Bodensee Conference (IBK), a forum for the regions bordering on Bodensee aimed at solving the environmental problems in this region, launched the Bodensee Agenda 21; in 2003 the focus was on children, young people and their proposals for a sustainable future

## Goal

■ Children and young people draw up a Youth Declaration on developing the Bodensee region sustainably

## Sequence of events

The Youth Declaration was prepared in a variety of settings with schoolchildren and representatives from youth parliaments, councils and other organizations. First of all, a list of topics that particularly interest young people was put together. 18 of these were put to a vote in the internet.

The topics

- Forms of political participation
- Human rights
- The job market
- Energy and climate problems
- Water

got the most votes; they were investigated further (again in the internet), and a catalogue of specific

demands was drawn up. All in all, more than 350 young people from the region made an active contribution to drafting the declaration, which was then submitted to the First International Youth Summit, discussed in depth by the delegates there, made more specific and finally adopted. Right from the start care was taken that the young people could formulate their ideas and demands without adult influence, and that they structured their discussions themselves.

*“That was the first time that politicians actually listened to young people from Vorarlberg. Now they know about our wishes and demands, and can take account of them in their decisions. I reckon they take us seriously.”*

A juvenile participant



### Preparing for the Youth Summit

Photos: Office for Future Affairs



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[www.bodensee-agenda21.net/](http://www.bodensee-agenda21.net/)

## Results

### International Youth Summit in Friedrichshafen on 14.11.2003:

young people present and discuss the Youth Declaration on Sustainable Development. More than 1200 young people taking part adopt the Declaration and present it to the Minister for the Environment and Transport in Baden-Württemberg (representing the politicians in the Bodensee region).

The First Youth Declaration on Sustainable Development in the Bodensee region is centred on the following topics and exemplary demands (specific measures are detailed in the Declaration):

- **Forms of political participation:** introducing elements of direct democracy (referendum, petition), involving representatives of the younger generation in decision-making at council level
- **Human rights and social integration:** respect for human rights around the world, importance of tolerance and social integration.
- **Job market:** better education, "Work must be rewarding", awareness-raising and information

■ **Sources of energy and climate problems:** shifting more heavy traffic from road to rail, promoting research on renewable sources of energy, taxes imposed primarily on pollutants and harmful effects

■ **Water:** constant citizen involvement in regional decision processes on water use, closer monitoring of industry in the region, ban on selling water supply systems or rights to private firms in other countries.

Young people in Vorarlberg adapted the Declaration to the special situation there. To date several politicians have given the Youth Declaration serious consideration, and instructed specialized de-

partments to provide expert assessments and to think over possible ways of implementing its demands.

The young people in the region continue to have a say in the discussion process about the future of the Bodensee region the demands presented in the Declaration; the internet platform is available to them for this, as is assistance at public discussions or in projects. In addition, it has been agreed to continue the process of dialogue between the young people concerned and the politicians responsible.

In November 2005 progress with implementation was discussed at the Second International Youth Summit.

# Local action plan for employment and education

**Location:** Munderfing, Upper Austria

**Those involved:** entrepreneurs, politicians, administrators, lobbyists, representatives of schools and other educational facilities, ordinary citizens

**Funding:** Province of Upper Austria, European Fund for Regional Development

**Facilitation and guidance:** Institut Retzl GmbH, Community Research & Consulting Linz

**Project duration:** 11/2003 to 12/2004

**Methods:** future workshops, study groups, public meetings/events, network development etc.



*“During the conference it dawned on us just how much potential is on hand in the community and among the experts taking part. In future one of the most important tasks will be to make conscious use of these strengths in collaboration with others.”*

Erwin Moser

*“Without an organized process it is very hard for individuals to introduce new ideas and implement them successfully. On the other hand, the process alone has no effect unless it is given substance by people – with their ideas, visions and knowledge.”*

A facilitator

## Motives

■ Building on positive experience with public participation in Munderfing (a community of about 2700 people) in connexion with Local Agenda 21

■ Promoting long-term economic development in the community and keeping it competitive in the circumstances obtaining (such as globalization, structural problems in rural areas)

## Goal

■ The “Local action plan for employment and education” was intended to intensify the links between business people, politicians, administrators, educators, lobbies representing employers and employees, and ordinary citizens on the spot. Key players at the local and regional levels were to be involved in intensifying various forms of cooperation, and employment and economic growth given new impetus. Special attention was to be paid to “soft” locational factors affecting the quality of life (environment, child care facilities etc.)

## Sequence of events

Politicians, business people, administrators, educators, representatives of regional and supraregional organizations and interested citizens drew up the “Local action plan for employment and education” together, aimed at boosting employment locally. Council officials talked to any number of people beforehand, to make sure of getting all the important partners (firms, the local employment exchange, the local chamber of commerce, schools, parents, interested citizens etc.) involved in the project.



“Local action plan” conference

Photos: Munderfing council



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■ Conference for employment and education

The “Munderfing Local Conference for Employment and Education”, which more than 50 people took part in, marked the official start of the process. The main focus was on finding ways of improving the employment situation in the community, in the interests of business and the general public. Standards for a long-term communal employment and economic policy were laid down and strategies defined, e.g. to establish links between firms and schools in Munderfing. After the workshop that followed, seven specific projects had

taken shape. A lot of work went into setting up a local network made up of people willing to work on implementing the LABB long-term.

■ Conferences to continue

These conferences should go on taking place – and involve increasing numbers of people. Interested citizens can find out about the activities of the network, and put forward ideas of their own; this way widespread support for the “Local action plan” should be ensured among the general public.

Results

■ Development of the “Local Alliance for Employment and Education” (extending beyond Munderfing itself: coordinated and supported by the network management in council administration and by a network consultative committee)

■ Munderfing council vote to support “Local action plan”

■ 7 projects implemented autonomously by more than 50 network partners:

- Service point for local firms, operated by Munderfing council
- “Boarding pass” network aimed at improving access to the local / regional job market for job seekers

- “Cooperation triangle school – firms – parents” aimed at preparing young people for the job world effectively

- “Munderfing business workshops” (3 times a year) as a platform for exchanging information and for networking

- Regional training facilities to enable entrepreneurs and employees to obtain qualifications near where they live

- “House of the Generations” to create alternative child care facilities in Munderfing

- “Munderfing rental agency” to find production sites and office space for entrepreneurs.

# Hartberg regional cluster

Future workshop in the Hartberg region – “First visions, then deeds”

**Location:** Hartberg region, Styria

**Those involved:** entrepreneurs, residents of the region, representatives of the public sector (local councils, district administration etc.), schools and numerous local and regional organizations, associations and clubs

**Facilitation and guidance:**

Austrian Institute for Sustainable Development, Vienna (sociological management); Entwicklungs-förderungsverband Bezirk Hartberg, Hartberg; Ökologische Landentwicklung Steiermark, Hartberg; Wallner & Schauer, Graz/Vienna; Integrierte Ländliche Entwicklung, Hartberg/Graz



## Motive

■ Regional cluster as a pilot project to boost the regional economy, with the aim of improving the quality of life in the region

## Goal

■ Stimulating sustainable development of the regional economy

■ Linking up entrepreneurs from all sectors of the economy in the region, people living in the area and representatives of the public sector

■ Linking up producers in the Hartberg region (collaboration between producers and consumers)

■ Replacing imports from outside the region with local products (from farmers, manufacturers, the tourist sector and

other service industries)

■ Boosting exports from the region (slogan: “Export products and services, not commuters!”)

## Sequence of events

Roughly 150 participants were active in the future workshop and the study groups, with up to 1400 others involved in the process at some stage. The nucleus was made up of selected project partners who met at regular intervals to coordinate their activities and plan concrete measures such as regional cluster fora, for instance. The project team, which developed the process design together, was made up of all project partners, representatives of the administration, and

the board of the development promotion association.

## Starting events

The project (sequence of events planned, content, goals and benefits) was presented and the regional cluster launched in a start-up workshop for the project team and a start-up event. This motivated the participants to do their utmost in order to strengthen the region.

## Future workshop

More than 60 people invested two full days in a future workshop at which a shared vision of how to develop the region was worked out and key issues for achieving the goals were identified.

*“Future workshops are a fantastic method of maximizing the opportunities for everyone taking part to contribute to and have a say in the results.”*

Ferdinand Zisser



### Regional cluster forum in Ecopark Hartberg

Photos: Entwicklungsförderungsverband in the Hartberg district



**Funding:** Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour, Federal Economic Chamber, Province of Styria, local councils in the Hartberg region, private sponsors

**Project duration:** 10/2002 – 04/2004: initial setting-up phase

**Methods:** future conference, idea-generating groups, study groups, informatory meetings

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#### ■ Regional cluster fora

These are the transmission belt for ongoing activities. The fora are made as attractive as possible, to ensure that local people are drawn to them.

#### ■ Regional study groups

On the basis of the key issues identified at the future conference, various idea-generating groups were set up.

#### Results

■ An overall approach was agreed for the region and specific goals and measures defined

■ Cooperation between firms, local councils and consumers is being promoted

■ Projects such as an innovation prize and an oratory competition for young people were implemented

■ Young people and schools are being made more aware of the regional economy

■ Awareness of innovation as an issue is being promoted, and support provided for specific initiatives by entrepreneurs

■ An institutional structure has taken shape for the regional cluster (a committee made up of politicians, entrepreneurs and ad-

ministrators has been set up, as has a membership scheme, etc.)

During 2003 a start was made on putting the ideas developed in the study groups into practice.

Concrete examples:

• **Energy self-sufficiency for the Hartberg region:** pushing renewable sources of energy in the region to make it much less dependent on imported energy.

• **A consumers' platform has been launched:** producers and consumers in the region can now communicate with each other much more effectively (e.g. about consumers' preferences and similar issues). A regional shopping catalogue has been

published, an instant test for wideawake consumers ("Aktivkunden Schnelltest") drawn up and a consumer feedback/marketing facility set up.

• **Barrier-free Hartberg:** steps are being taken to eliminate obstacles and barriers for people with handicaps in everyday life and employment (including removal of physical barriers).

• **Sustainability at school:** various activities confront teachers, pupils and institutions responsible for school upkeep with the issue of sustainability and the effects on the region.

# Sustainable administration in Kirchdorf/Krems

The develop-  
ment concept  
is presented

**Location:** administrative district of Kirchdorf an der Krems, Upper Austria

**Those involved:** staff of the district administration

**Funding:** State of Upper Austria – Referat Bildung und Personalentwicklung; Upper Austrian Academy for Environment and Nature

**Facilitation and guidance:** SPES Akademie, Schlierbach

**Project duration:** autumn 2002 to autumn 2004

**Methods:** lectures, study groups



## Motives

- Regional Agenda 21 in the Kirchdorf district as a stimulus for the district administration to follow on with a process of internal development
- Strengthening the links between the staff of the district administration and their customers (the population of the district)

## Goal

- Developing an overall approach for the district administration with all staff taking part; the practical relevance of sustainable development to daily routine in over-the-counter dealings with the public (“What can I personally do?”) was a central issue.

## Sequence of events

- **Spreading awareness, doing research**  
After preliminary discussions with decision-makers within the district administration, the pilot project “Sustainable administration” began with a lecture on “People are what counts”. The first aim was to spread the realization that sustainability is something that people – such as the staff of the district administration – live and implement. The participants were asked to research the subject on the internet.

- **Large study group**

The next step was a large study group to consider issues such as

- How can the district administration promote (or hinder) the dis-

*“Working together has revealed how we can structure our dealings with the people in the district with a view to sustainability and in harmony with our local identity. The touchstone was that the new guidelines should improve and facilitate our work processes.”*

Knut Spelitz, head of the district administration



### The citizen service point is opened

Photos: Kirchdorf district administration



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trict's developing towards sustainability?

- Economy – ecology – the social dimension: what are the most important goods, fundamentals and values that we should preserve and guard in our district?
- What can the goal "Sustainable development" mean for (say) the departments concerned with equipment or security?
- How can I personally help to promote sustainable development?
- Where can we collaborate more effectively across administrative boundaries?
- Model region as regards sustainability: which areas should we set an example in? What does that mean in economic, ecological and social terms?

#### ■ Working in teams

After the large study group, eleven departmental teams were formed (grouped by areas of responsibility). Each team defined its primary tasks from the point of view of sustainable administration (What takes up the most time? Where is our responsibility particularly heavy?) and the yardsticks for success (What results show that we are successful?) Each team specified three to six measures with which to implement sustainability in the specialized area in question. At a subsequent meeting these measures were presented.

#### Results

- Together the staff developed an overall concept for the Kirchdorf district administration – more than 80 % of the roughly 100 staff took part in the internal process
- Staff enhancement: teamwork, holistic thinking, expanding the ability to organize one's work, personality development etc.; deepening awareness of the issue "Sustainable development"
- Developing a new "sustainable system of values": guidelines and values oriented towards sustainable development, to be put into practice in daily routine

- Practical example: the district administration staff think over ways of structuring their workflow, and thus their dealings with the general public, so as to minimize the total number of journeys needed to the district administration offices. This improves local people's quality of life, contributes to reducing traffic and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions – and the district administration staff are pleased about the positive echo from the public.

# Mobile communities – Mikro-network Rheintal

Future  
Workshop in  
Frastanz (A)

**Location:** the communities of Frastanz (A), Grabs (CH), Mäder (A), Mauren (FL), Schaan (FL) in the Rhine valley

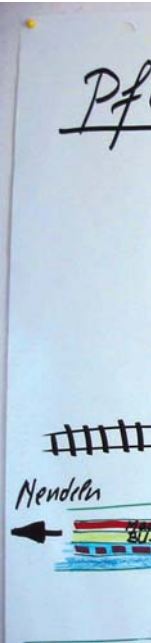
**Those involved:** ordinary citizens, administrators and politicians

**Facilitation and guidance:** Austrian Institute for Applied Ecology, Vienna

**Cost/funding:** 285,000 Euro/  
50 % Interreg grant, 50 % local councils

**Project duration:**  
08/2002 to 08/2004

**Methods:** future workshops, study groups, drawing competition, public discussions, opinion surveys, network meetings



*“Involving several communities and working across frontiers has definitely proved its worth: we discovered that very similar problems exist elsewhere, and that interesting solutions have already been implemented.”*

One of the five mayors

## Motive

- Spotighting the connexions between regional and interregional traffic problems and drafting proposals for action within the region

## Goal

- Developing ecologically sound, socially acceptable measures to reduce the volume of car traffic
- Optimizing communal transport management
- Setting up a cross-border network linking the communities involved, to pool experience, search together for new solutions and generate synergies at the implementation stage

## Sequence of events

### ■ Future Workshops in the communities

Each of the five councils taking part in the project invited the population to a one-day Future Workshop, at which anyone could point out problems, sketch visions and put wishes on record. The resulting ideas were developed further in a structured public meeting in the community concerned, to a point where specific projects took shape. 14 project teams were formed: two each in Grabs and Mäder, three each in Frastanz and Schaan, and four in Mauren, with a total of 65 individuals taking part. These teams put in more than 3000 hours' voluntary work on their respective projects.

### ■ Project team meetings

For one and a half years the 14 teams worked on their projects, planned measures and implemented them. To ensure an exchange of ideas between both the councils involved and the individual teams, meetings were organized for everyone taking part in the project, as well as meetings specially for the team leaders.

### ■ Drawing competition

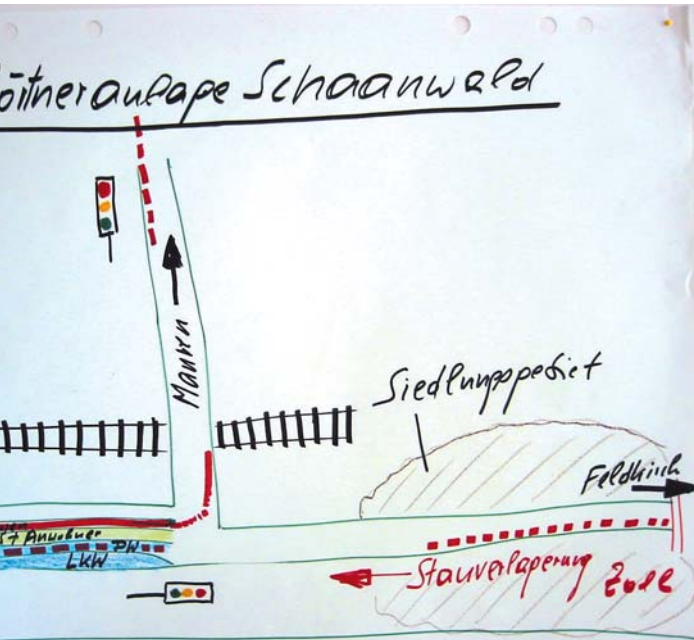
In autumn 2003 the mayors of the five communities in the “Mobile communities” mikro-network launched a drawing competition aimed at inducing children and young people to have a go at the “tough nuts” in traffic.



Sketch for a proposal to install traffic lights to meter traffic flow in Schaanwald, produced by participants in the Future Workshop in Mauren (FL)

### Future Workshop in Schaan (FL)

Photos: Austrian Institute for Applied Ecology



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### List of demands addressed to politicians:

all 14 project teams collaborated on a list of demands addressed to politicians, to implement sustainable transport systems at regional level and across borders. The list contains demands connected with: soft mobility, road safety, guidelines for coordinated land use and transport planning, the alternatives to the private car, improvements to public transport, spreading awareness, networks of paths/routes for walking and cycling.

### Winding-up event

On 9 July 2004 an international conference was held in Grabs, at which the project teams presented the results of their work, and a list of demands, to politicians at community, regional, interregional and cross-border level.

### Results

Examples of measures already implemented or in process of implementation:

- 30 km/h speed limit throughout built-up areas
- Route for a new community bus service (feasibility study in progress)
- Cycle route to link communities (installed)
- Analysis of hazard points in road network, plus list of countermeasures (pedestrian crossings, traffic mirrors, road markings, pavements)
- Arrangements for schoolchildren to eat lunch at school, thus avoiding extra journeys
- Package of measures "Roads as living space"

### Mobility DVD

"Changing over is fun" as an awareness raiser in connexion with traffic, for firms and schools

- A roundabout has been built and the road layout changed

# Traffic calming in Himmelpfortgrund

Celebrating successful implementation

Photo: Marc Diebäcker

**Location:** Vienna, 9<sup>th</sup> District (Alsergrund)

**Those involved:** ordinary citizens, representatives of the Chamber of Commerce, administrators and politicians

**Facilitation and guidance:** Lokale Agenda 21 Alsergrund; Martin Forstner, transport consultant

**Funding:** LA 21 Alsergrund

**Project duration:**

09/2003 to 06/2004

**Methoden:** study group, citizen panel, workshop

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## Backdrop

■ Considerable growth in through traffic in the Himmelpfortgrund neighbourhood, with more and more car drivers taking detours through the area

■ Residents complain about resulting danger on the roads and about the impact of noise and pollutants.

*“Ordinary citizens have jointly worked out a solution for the neighbourhood that meets with general acceptance – something that traffic planners and council employees had regarded as impossible some years earlier.”*

Marc Diebäcker

## Goal

■ Reorganizing the road network to calm traffic effectively in the neighbourhood, with the residents affected participating as much as possible.

## Sequence of events

Several residents got in touch with the LA 21 office in Alsergrund, hoping for their neighbourhood to be traffic-calmed. There they were encouraged to generate their own solution to the problem. Some years earlier a planner engaged by the district administration had failed to find any arrangement (to deal with the unsatisfactory situation on the roads) that met with general acceptance. The residents in question formed a study group,

contacted more residents and (as a first step) collected data on the current situation. With the help of a transport consultant they then worked out various different possible ways of reorganizing traffic. The aim was to identify an arrangement that would go down well in the neighbourhood concerned, without shifting the problem to adjoining areas. The variants worked out were presented and discussed in a citizen panel; all the residents present were unanimously in favour of one particular proposal, which was later presented to politicians from the district traffic commission and a representative from the Chamber of Commerce in a workshop and dis-

cussed there. The traffic commission then came to a majority decision in favour of the solution proposed. In June 2004 the new arrangement was installed provisionally for six months. After the successful test phase it has now been made permanent.

## Results

■ Reversing the direction of traffic in several one-way streets effectively eliminated through traffic, and led to a noticeable reduction in noise and pollutants in the neighbourhood.



# Open planning process for the 2<sup>nd</sup> tunnel on the A10 motorway

A study group meets in Flachau

Photo: ÖSAG



**Location:** Tauern motorway from Hüttau/Pongau (S) to Seeboden (K)

**Those involved:** representatives of 10 communities, the office of the environmental ombudsman for the province of Salzburg, representatives of the provincial governments of Salzburg and Kärnten, Spirk & Partner, Chartered Engineering Consultants, Salzburg (as the communities' advisor), the ÖSAG (motorway agency) planning team

**Facilitation and guidance:** no external structuring

**Funding:** ASFINAG

**Project duration:** 08/1999 to 08/2004

**Methods:** local study groups, regional information fora

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## Initial cue

■ Decision to construct a second motorway tunnel through Tauern and Katschberg.

## Goal

■ Working out environmental relief measures together with the local communities.

## Sequence of events

Planning the construction of a second tunnel had begun as long ago as the 1980s, and was accompanied by massive resistance from the local population right from the start. The Ministry of Transport finally gave the green light for implementing the project in 1999. An open planning process was intended to keep local people informed throughout and to give the local councils

affected an opportunity to take part in planning environmental relief measures. During a total of around 60 sessions the participants drew up proposals for relief measures and discussed the advantages and drawbacks of various measures. Exhibits were used to throw light on complicated issues and to make the associated plans clear. Regional fora provided information on the current state of planning to the local population. While parallel developments (see box) seriously annoyed people in the communities concerned, prolonged close collaboration in the planning process gave all those taking part more insight into the conflicting interests involved.

## Results

■ Noise abatement measures were worked out jointly

■ A joint declaration on implementing environmental relief measures, specifying the type, scale and location of the measures agreed, was signed by the mayors of almost all the communities concerned, the Minister of Transport, the Governors of the provinces of Salzburg and Carinthia, and by representatives of ASFINAG and ÖSAG

■ A consultative committee responsible for implementing the declaration was set up.

*“For all parties to the process a willingness to compromise was essential. The process is ultimately credible only if the relief measures agreed are implemented without delay – otherwise we would feel that we had been misused to spread optimism among local people.”*

Veronika Pfeifenberger

During the planning process the Austrian statute on environmental impact audits was amended; the Ministry of Transport then classified the tunnel project as not requiring an audit. The office of the environmental ombudsman for the province of Salzburg appealed against this decision to the Supreme Court, but in vain; so no audit was carried out.

# SEA\* of the Vienna Waste Management Plan

Key postulates for the SEA

**Location:** Vienna

**Those involved:** representatives of the city administration, environmental organizations, external consultants and scientists (20 different departments and organizations in all)

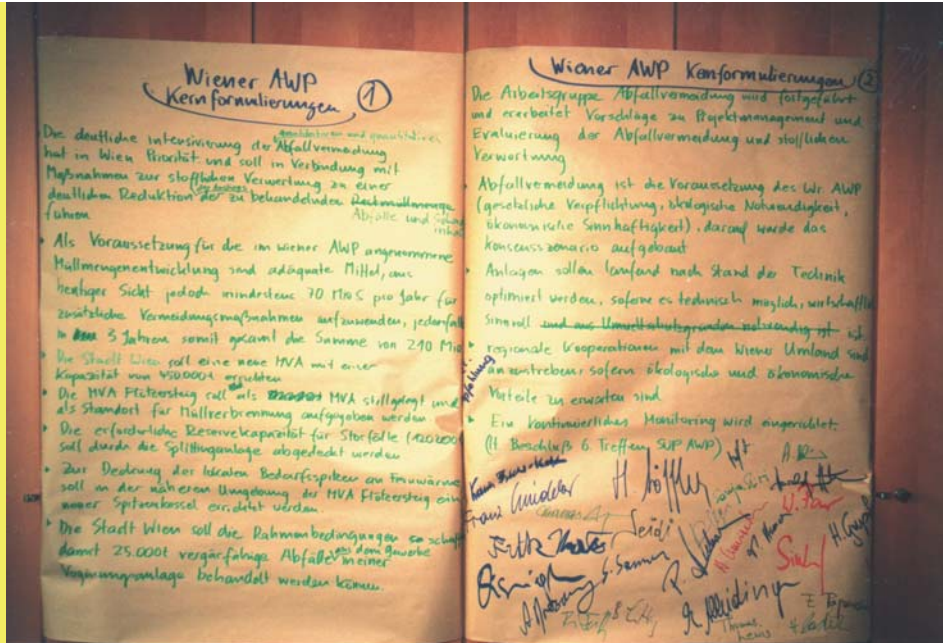
**Facilitation and guidance:**

Büro Arbter – Strategic Environmental Assessment Consulting & Research, Vienna

**Cost/funding:** about 330,000 Euro for Waste Management Plan and SEA/ City of Vienna – departments 48 and 22

**Project duration:** preparation phase 02/1999 to 06/1999; implementation phase 06/1999 to 10/2001

**Methode:** Strategic Environmental Assessment Round Table



## Backdrop

Steadily increasing volume of waste, capacity bottlenecks in the existing waste treatment facilities in Vienna

Key issue: does Vienna need additional waste treatment capacity, or is it sufficient to do more in the fields of prevention and recycling?

## Goal

Drawing-up a Vienna waste management plan, taking environmental aspects into account and with the relevant lobbies participating.

## Sequence of events

### Preparation

In the preparatory phase the organizational and financial framework for the SEA was set up, the goal of the process defined and the SEA team brought together. The SEA for the Vienna waste management plan was a team process which the city administration, environmental organizations and external experts collaborated on. All those taking part had an equal say in producing the Vienna waste management plan.

### Drawing-up the waste management plan

The SEA team's first job was to define the aims of the Vienna waste management plan; these included environmental aims such as reducing emissions. Next the current situation was surveyed and the unsolved problems in Vienna's waste management were discussed. Then the participants worked out possible ways of achieving the aims initially defined. The alternatives considered ranged from new waste treatment facilities to waste prevention measures; they were assessed in terms of their impact on the environment, the economy and society. After several rounds of fine-tuning proposals,

the SEA team reached a broad consensus about the best package (in the team's view) for Vienna's waste management. The result, the Vienna waste management plan, was documented in the environmental report and recommended to the city council for adoption. While the plan's recommendations were not legally binding, the SEA team identified very strongly with its content.

*"The big plusses were that points of view were listened to and discussed, not just blithely ignored, that experience was pooled, which meant that one's own horizon was widened, and that people learnt from one another."*

A participant

### The sequence of events

#### PRELIMINARY PHASE

Decision to carry out an SEA to produce a waste management plan for Vienna

#### PREPARATORY PHASE

Planning the course of the process with public participation



\*) Strategic environmental assessment



**SEA team with the overall results in the background**

Photos: Florian Gerlich



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Accompanying scientific study (in German) at [www.umwelt.net/article/archive/7243](http://www.umwelt.net/article/archive/7243)  
 environmental report (in German) at [www.wien.gv.at/umweltschutz/pool/abfall.html](http://www.wien.gv.at/umweltschutz/pool/abfall.html)  
 experts' report (in German) at [www.wien.at/ma48/sup/index.htm](http://www.wien.at/ma48/sup/index.htm)  
[www.partizipation.at](http://www.partizipation.at)

**Adoption**

The city council adopted the Vienna waste management plan by a clear majority. The relevant decision-makers have welcomed the plan's recommendations and set about implementing them.

**Implementation**

After adoption, the SEA's results were incorporated in the statutory waste management concept for Vienna. As soon as the SEA had been complet-

ed, work began on implementing the initial recommendations (setting up a strategic planning group on waste prevention, search for suitable sites for new waste treatment facilities). Later an environmental impact assessment was performed for the new incineration plant. The fact that an SEA had been carried out made this assessment much more straightforward. The approval procedure for the new bio-

gas plant has been completed successfully. A special monitoring group is supervising the implementation of the results and monitoring the actual effects of the waste management concept on the environment.

**Results**

Vienna waste management plan: catalogue of measures to prevent waste, to recycle waste and to treat waste in various types of facility.



Many thanks to: Sonja Sciri, City of Vienna, department 22



# Different origins – shared future

Participants in the course on intercultural education

Photo: Maria Zwickhuber

**Location:** Krems/Donau, NÖ

**Those involved:** residents of Krems, representatives of political parties, of the town council, employers' and employees' organizations, social facilities and clubs

**Funding:** Interkulturelles Zentrum Vienna, Institute of Conflict Research Vienna

**Facilitation and guidance:**

Interkulturelles Zentrum Wien, Institut für Konfliktforschung Wien

**Project duration:** 12/2002 to 08/2005

**Methods:** informatory meeting, study groups

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## Approach

- Participation in the EQUAL project “Different origins – shared future” in order to improve intercultural life in the community
- Developing social integration further (work on this had started in Krems in the 1990s)

*“The lengthy process of discussion has made me much more sensitive in my perception of cross-cultural interaction.”*

Helma Spannagl-Schmoll, a participant

## Goal

- Overall approach to social integration, plus package of measures, both to be developed by people in Krems (including migrants), politicians, administrators and representatives of employers' and employees' organizations, social facilities and clubs

## Sequence of events

The town council voted in favour of taking part in the project “Different origins – shared future”. The first step was to analyse the current state of play and identify possible ways in which migrants in Krems might be disadvantaged. At a public kick-off meeting the findings were presented and everyone interested was invited to take

part. A total of around 100 people helped to develop the overall approach and worked out specific proposals for areas such as administration, education, culture, health and employment in six study groups with between ten and 25 members. The output from these study groups was merged into a single set of principles, which the council formally adopted (with all the groups on the council in favour).

## Initial implementation

- An intercultural specialist was taken on for the nursery school sector
- A post specially for social integration was created in the town administration

■ An 18-month course on intercultural education was held

■ Intercultural get-togethers took place in various institutions, for natives of Krems and migrants to get to know these institutions better

■ Prototype intercultural parties (one each for adults and children) took place

■ A migrants' liaison committee was formed, as a link between the town administration and migrants

■ An intercultural meeting-place was established in the Lerchenfeld neighbourhood

■ Within the regional hospital a network of interpreters was set up

# Public participation – a vital task in future, too

**Public participation will be an important task in the 21st century, too – as the UN Conference resolved in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. A large number of successful participation processes in many different countries (including Austria) are evidence that we are on our way. So that this sustainable approach can continue, it is essential to work for improvements to people’s right to and opportunities to participate in political decision-making.**

## Public participation is cooperation and dialogue

Promoting public participation is a key element in up-to-date thinking about politics and administration. Good governance involves taking especial care in future that new forms of collaboration between politicians, administrators, ordinary citizens, business and NGOs (→Glossary) take shape. This applies at all levels, from specific projects via plans and programs to the development of strategy and policy at the most general level.

*“It isn’t new structures or models that make the future come alive, but people – with their skills, ideas and visions.”*

Ambros Pree\*

## Encouraging and motivating people to take part

Democratic participation involves as many individuals and sectors of the population as possible having a say in how living space and living conditions are managed. This goes beyond making use of statutory rights, such as voting in elections or signing a petition, and embraces a wide range of applications (as the examples from all over Austria reveal). Participation is an expression of voluntary civic commitment. The task of politicians and administrators is to promote and facilitate participation – as something that reinforces the social fabric and a culture of democracy, and encourages the development of a sense of responsibility for the community.

## Recognizing and supporting participation

Over and above their jobs and daily duties, individuals are active in any number of projects and organizations: people from all sectors of society, youngsters, senior citizens, women and men, involved in fields such as the environment, welfare, health or culture. Public participation, voluntary work and commitment presuppose interest, motivation and a willingness to “get down to it” on the part of individuals. At the same time, committed individuals need structures that provide purchase for their commitment, and opportunities

## Public participation – a vital task in future, too

to shape the future. Settings and meeting- points are important where experiments are feasible, where democratic participation can be tried out and where a group of people can learn together. Specialists to assist, facilitate and encourage are needed here as well. People expect commitment of this kind to pay, too, in the sense that they share successes and enjoy working together.

### **From private interests to the public interest**

How committed someone is depends crucially on his or her personal motivation. One learns to understand other people's standpoints by discussing things with them and in the give and take of debate. Individual demands and special interests can be merged into a harmonious whole of service to everyone – yielding surplus value that may have been unimaginable previously. And this process can give birth to a network of personal relationships that permanently reinforce the social fabric of a neighbourhood or a community, too.

### **Small units and the global perspective**

Participation starts small-scale – in people's immediate surroundings, in a neighbourhood, in the community: here the individuals affected can grasp how decisions are reached, and here people can detect what effect their own activities have. Direct feedback and visible success turn commitment to the public interest into a source of personal satisfaction. If opportunities to participate at a local or regional level are enhanced, people are more likely to want to participate. This acts as a counterweight to the seemingly ineluctable progress of globalization: small units are strengthened, without the overall perspective being lost. Even quite small initiatives can achieve a lot, just as decisions each of us takes every day can and do have effects beyond our own community.

## Public participation – a vital task in future, too

### From “administering” to “sharing in decisions”

The goal is to construct a mutually supportive partnership in which politicians, administrators, ordinary citizens and lobbyists from business and NGOs collaborate and everyone benefits. For this we need administrators with a new attitude toward the general public: “We are all in this together” (i.e. on the same level). What also needs to be clarified: how elected bodies such as the local council and the general public should collaborate. In no circumstances are the responsibilities of elected representatives watered down: they remain the decisionmakers and responsible for implementing their decisions together with everyone taking part. Rather, participation is a way of improving both the quality of decisions and people’s willingness to accept

them. That works only if participation is not just tolerated as window-dressing, and if a climate of trust and support develops. The political process should be structured – in a dialogue with all those affected and/or interested – so that projects worked out together are implemented, and then do in fact improve the quality of the local environment, of the economic location and of social life.

*“Many little people doing many little things in many little places can change the face of the world.”*

African proverb



# Benefits of public participation – Arguments for various groups of stakeholders

**Public participation can benefit everyone involved. They all gain from participation processes, because ...**

- exchanging perspectives and tackling issues together make it possible to reconcile diverging interests;
- innovative ideas and new solutions to the problems on hand are born;
- willingness to engage in dialogue and find a consensus improves relations with the others taking part;
- personal relationships can be established, facilitating future contacts;
- from the arguments and perspectives provided by others everyone can fill in gaps in their knowledge;
- “multiplied“ knowledge is a better basis for decisions;
- people’s competence in negotiating is improved for the future;
- each individual can gain recognition and sympathy, whether as a decision-maker, citizen, applicant for project approval, etc.

**As a decision-maker in politics you can benefit further from a participation process, because ...**

- communication and the exchange of information with ordinary citizens and lobbyists are improved;
- you promote a culture of collaboration and dialogue with ordinary citizens, lobbyists and common-interest groups, thus strengthening democracy at the local level;
- you obtain a clearer picture of the interests and needs of various segments of the population;
- you can reduce the pressure of expectations and the amount of backstairs intrigue by openly involving the various lobbies in the process;
- you can integrate so-called “fringe groups“ in the community by means of a participation process;
- you can strengthen people’s confidence in political decision-making;
- political decisions have more authority if made on the basis of a participation process;
- you can improve your image by getting closer to ordinary citizens;
- you can get more of the local people to identify with their community or region (again);
- individual council responsibilities may even be taken over by active citizens who organize themselves.



## Benefits of public participation – Arguments for various groups of stakeholders

### As an administrator you benefit from a participation process, because ...

- subsequent administrative processes can often be completed sooner (since there are fewer objections and affidavits during the process and fewer complaints afterwards), so your work is made easier;
- you learn of doubts and reservations about a project or plan at an early stage, and can thus deal with these actively;
- you can reduce the pressure of expectations and the amount of backstairs intrigue by openly involving the various lobbies in the process;
- you thus promote a culture of cooperation and dialogue with ordinary citizens, lobbyists and common-interest groups, which strengthens democracy at the local level;
- you obtain a clearer picture of the interests and needs of various segments of the population;
- involving those interested and/or affected makes it easier to weigh up and reconcile diverging interests;
- individual responsibilities may even be taken over by active citizens who organize themselves;
- you can strengthen confidence in what the administration does.

### As a citizen or member of a citizens' initiative you benefit from a participation process, because ...

- you can table your own values, ideas and interests and realize them;
- you can have a direct say in decisions affecting your own quality of life;
- you have (better) access to relevant information;
- you gain more insight into decision-making processes and learn how politics and administration work;
- self-organization opens up new fields of activity and possibilities of effective action;
- you can harvest recognition and esteem for your commitment and your knowledge as an “expert on the spot“.

*“It all about achieving goals that one person in isolation would not have reached.”*

Fritz Ammer\*

## Benefits of public participation – Arguments for various groups of stakeholders

### As a lobbyist or representative of a common-interest group you benefit from a participation process, because ...

- you can table your own values, ideas and interests and realize them;
- you can give your organization more weight;
- you gain more insight into decision-making processes;
- a participation process improves the chances of tabling interests and points of view that do not often receive attention;
- you have (better) access to relevant information;
- you can demonstrate both to members of your organization and to the general public that your organization is competent and acts on its principles;
- trust can develop as a basis for future collaboration.

### As an applicant for project approval you benefit from a participation process, too, because ...

- the outcomes of participation processes are usually widely accepted, so the solutions involved “keep better”;
- projects tend to get implemented sooner, because there are fewer complaints and court cases after approval has been granted;
- thus legal certainty is improved and entrepreneurial risk is reduced;
- you can obtain more understanding – e.g. for your firm’s business requirements;
- you can embed your firm more solidly in the community/region;
- you can create an atmosphere of trust as a basis for future collaboration, and also strengthen trust in your firm’s products and services;
- you can boost the image of your firm.



## Launching participation process

As early as the launching phase essential steps can be taken to maximize the chance of a given participation process being brought to a successful conclusion. The checklist below will help you to think through the most important aspects.

	YES	NO
<b>Information</b>		
✓ Have you utilized all the relevant sources (e.g. council offices, citizens' guidance bureau, newspapers, environmental ombudsman's office, etc.) to get hold of information about your issue?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
✓ Is it clear what activities there have already been in connection with this project/issue (e.g. preliminary planning, opinion surveys already carried out, etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
✓ Have other stakeholders and the general public already been informed (e.g. by means of hand-bills, newspaper advertisements or similar) above the initiative to set up a participation process, with the idea of finding additional proponents and/or linking up with other such initiatives?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Framework</b>		
✓ Is it clear whether public participation is mandatory (e.g. prescribed in the environmental impact assessment act, the statutes on land use or water and waterways)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
✓ Have all stakeholders been contacted and informed (specially important in the case of mandatory public participation!)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
✓ Have you (as a stakeholder) obtained information about any relevant deadlines from the authorities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
✓ Has anyone looked at the possibility of an informal process supplementing and enhancing a mandatory participation process?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Approach</b>		
✓ Have you put your ideas for a participation process down on paper – possibly with the help of professional facilitators?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
✓ Have you considered what benefits the participation process may offer other stakeholders, and how you can persuade them to take part?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
✓ Have you considered what depth of participation (information, consultation, decision-influencing) the process should have?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
✓ Do you know exactly what you want to achieve with the participation process?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
✓ Are you aware what opportunities and hazards a participation process involves?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>From launching to preparation</b>		
✓ Have you contacted the politicians responsible and informed them about your ideas for participation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
✓ Do you know what the next steps are to get the participation process started, and have you informed the other stakeholders about these steps?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
✓ Is it clear who will take on which assignment in preparing and implementing the participation process?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
✓ Is it clear how the process will be funded, or (at the very least) have commitments to provide funds been made?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
✓ Have all the important groups of stakeholders (e.g. politicians, administrators, ordinary citizens, lobbyists, applicants for project approval) agreed to take part in the process or to support it?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



# Preparing participation processes

The quality of a participation process largely depends on how well it is prepared as regards content and organization. The checklist below will help you to think through aspects important for a successful process.

	I	C	DI	*)
<b>Aims and assignment</b>				
<input type="checkbox"/> Are the aims of and the assignment in the participation process clear to everyone involved?	x	x	x	
<input type="checkbox"/> Is the outcome of the process open, so that sufficient scope for navigation exists?		x	x	
<b>Participants</b>				
<input type="checkbox"/> Have all the potentially interested individuals received enough information about the content of and procedure during the process, so that they can decide whether to participate?	x	x	x	
<input type="checkbox"/> Are all the relevant segments of the population and lobbies represented (possibly by nominees) in balanced proportions (e.g. women/men, parents, young people etc.)?		x	x	
<input type="checkbox"/> Have attempts been made to inform relatively hard-to-reach groups about the participation process and to arouse their interest in it?	x	x	x	
<b>Results</b>				
<input type="checkbox"/> Do all those taking part know about the ways in which they can act and exert influence?	x	x	x	
<input type="checkbox"/> Is it clear who is entitled to take which decisions during and after the process?	x	x	x	
<input type="checkbox"/> Do all those taking part know what will be done with the results of the process, and to what extent they will be binding?	x	x	x	
<input type="checkbox"/> Is support from politicians and administrators certain, and have these committed themselves to adopting the results of the participation process / giving reasons for deviating from the results?	x	x	x	
<b>Time + money</b>				
<input type="checkbox"/> Is an adequate timescale planned for the participation process (including a safety margin)?	x	x	x	
<input type="checkbox"/> Does a precise plan/timetable for the sequence of events during the participation process exist?	x	x	x	
<input type="checkbox"/> Has the amount of time to be invested by all those taking part (particularly by unpaid participants) been estimated, and have all those taking part been informed of the amount?		x	x	
<input type="checkbox"/> Are the participants to receive token remuneration / has thought been given to the issue of how to express appreciation for unpaid work (e.g. by means of public acknowledgement, letters of gratitude, discounts on communal services etc.)?		x	x	
<input type="checkbox"/> Has the overall expense for the entire participation process (including a safety margin), e.g. for facilitation, disseminating information, assessments by experts etc., been calculated and funding ensured?	x	x	x	
<input type="checkbox"/> Will details of the sums needed, and of what they are to be spent on, be published?			x	
<input type="checkbox"/> Do all those taking part know who is/are providing funds, in what way and on what scale?			x	
<b>Structuring the process</b>				
<input type="checkbox"/> Has a competent, impartial facilitator been entrusted with steering the participation process?	x	x	x	
<input type="checkbox"/> Have preliminary talks been conducted with groups and individuals about their perspective on the participation process and their role in it, and about the benefits from and limits of the process?		(x)	x	
<input type="checkbox"/> Is the layout of the process adapted to the specific issue involved and to the resources on hand (time and money)?	x	x	x	
<input type="checkbox"/> Are the interfaces between formal and informal participation processes defined, e.g. where an environmental audit is interrupted for a mediation process?	x	x	x	
<b>Organization</b>				
<input type="checkbox"/> Is it clear who is responsible for the various organizational tasks?	x	x	x	
<input type="checkbox"/> Are suitable premises and the necessary equipment (flipchart, overhead projector, microphone etc.) available for meetings?	x	x	x	

\*) Legend: see p. 55





## Implementing participation processes

**What aspects need consideration in connection with implementing participation processes largely depends on which method is selected, how the process is designed and whether a competent facilitator steers the process and takes care of quality assurance. At any rate you should bear the following points in mind during the process:**

	I	C	DI	*)
<b>Participants</b>				
<input type="checkbox"/> Are the roles of all those taking part clear (e.g. who represents which group and with what powers)?	x	x	x	
<input type="checkbox"/> Is it ensured that the same people will take part throughout? If not, is it ensured that subsequent newcomers will be integrated properly?			x	
<b>Rules</b>				
<input type="checkbox"/> Are there clear agreements about the sequence of events, about the participants' rights and obligations and about how decisions are reached (e.g. consensus versus majority voting)?			x	
<input type="checkbox"/> Have the facilitator and the participants agreed rules for how they deal with each other and about communicating with the outside world?			x	
<input type="checkbox"/> Can all the participants express their point of view and take part in discussions?		x	x	
<input type="checkbox"/> Is care taken to keep to the plan/timetable for the sequence of events?			x	
<b>Information</b>				
<input type="checkbox"/> Do the participants get all the information relevant to the process in easily digestible form and in good time?	x	x	x	
<input type="checkbox"/> Is external expertise obtained as the need arises, so that decisions can be taken on a solid knowledge base?	x	x	x	
<input type="checkbox"/> Is the general public kept informed about the process and its progress, and is the flow of information agreed with the other participants? (See also checklist on public relations, p. 56)	(x)	(x)	x	
<input type="checkbox"/> Is the process documented intelligibly for outsiders (minutes of meetings, interim reports etc.)?	x	x	x	
<b>Results</b>				
<input type="checkbox"/> Have all the participants agreed to present the results as a collective achievement?			x	
<input type="checkbox"/> Are structures established to make it possible to watch over and understand how the results are implemented?			x	

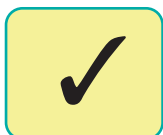
\*) The crosses in these columns show which aspects are particularly important for

**I** informatory public participation

**C** consultative public participation (standpoints are presented)

**DI** public participation leading to decision-influencing (cf. Stages of public participation, p. 9)

(x) = applies to long-term process-oriented forms of participation, but not to single events



## Public relations in participation processes

Informing the general public about a participation process at the planning stage is specially important, since those affected/interested learn of the project and of ways to take part in the process. Public-relations activities enable interested citizens to keep track of the process even if they themselves do not participate in it.

	YES	NO
<b>Information and media activities</b>		
✓ Is enough money for public-relations activities on hand?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
✓ Is it clear who is responsible for information and media activities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
✓ Is it clear what goal public-relations activities (initial information about the project, getting people to participate, ongoing reporting etc.) are intended to achieve, and what forms of information are most suitable for the specific task?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
✓ Is it clear which target groups (young people, immigrants etc.) are to be addressed and which message is most suitable for this?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
✓ Are there ways of delivering information to the population (official circular, newsletter, mailing, contributions on TV or on the radio, advertisements in newspapers etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
✓ Are there ways of making information available (public access to plans, exhibition, informatory meeting, website, hotline, call-in phone service, advice surgery etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
✓ Can ordinary citizens express their point of view about the project (suggestions box, eMail address, hotline, public discussion etc.)? Is it clear what happens to the points of view expressed/questions raised?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
✓ Will all suitable media (daily newspapers, local weeklies, specialized periodicals, club media, the internet, radio, TV etc.) be utilized to inform the general public?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
✓ Are the participants involved in deciding the content and timing of information released to the press and the general public?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
✓ Have all the participants jointly laid down rules for dealing with the press and the general public (answering enquiries, press releases, organizing press conferences etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
✓ Is it clear what information about the participation process is to be treated as confidential and what can be passed on to the press and the general public?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
✓ Have all the participants agreed not to leak confidential material, and to refrain from "loner" public-relations activities (vis-à-vis both the press and the general public)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
✓ Will journalists be invited to certain events which would benefit from public attention?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# Funding participation processes

## Where are grants available?

**Adequate funding is extremely important for any participation process. Normally those interested in the process fund it. If funds are short or funding is uncertain, it may make sense to look around for additional sources of cash, i.e. grants.**

### ■ Local Agenda 21 processes

Funding arrangements for conducting Local Agenda 21 processes vary from country to country and may be operative at national, regional or community level. The best thing to do is to ask the national co-ordination office in your country for details.

### ■ Official partners for common-interest groups

Each country has its own funding strategies for involving a variety of common-interest groups. You should therefore contact the departments concerned with your particular issue at national, regional or community level.

### ■ EU programmes

e.g. **ERDF**  
[http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/funds/prord/prord\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/funds/prord/prord_en.htm)

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) supports regional development, enhanced competitiveness and territorial cooperation.

e.g. **LEADER+**  
<http://www.leader-austria.at>,  
<http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rur/leaderplus/>  
Funding mechanism for developing rural areas as places to live, work and do business in.

e.g. **LIFE+**  
<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/news/futureoflife.htm>  
promotes environmental relief and conservation projects. Funding is available primarily for projects aimed at conserving and renaturizing habitats.

e.g. **EUROPE FOR CITIZENS**

[http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/index_en.html)

intends to encourage cooperation between citizens and their organisations from different countries to bridge the gap between citizens and the EU. Financial instruments promote active European citizenship.

e.g. **YOUTH IN ACTION**

[http://ec.europa.eu/youth/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/index_en.html)

intends to develop solidarity among young people and to increase their sense of initiative, creativeness and entrepreneurial spirit.

### ■ In CEE countries

Institutions such as the following exist specifically to fund participation processes in CEE countries:

The **REC, Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe** (Szentendre, Hungary) <http://www.rec.org/>, conducts awareness-raising and training projects, makes grants to NGO's and supports network activities in CEE countries, all within the framework of its public participation programme.

### The Environmental Partnership

<http://www.environmentalpartnership.org/> is a line-up of six institutions in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia and is focussed on supporting public participation processes. Amongst other things, it provides technical support and facilitates the transfer of know-how.

This is not an exhaustive list of funding and support mechanisms. You should ask the relevant institutions in your region/country for more information about how to fund your participation process!

# Methods

## Legend

### Stage of public participation

- Information
- Consultation
- Decision-influencing

### Duration (implementation, without preparation phase!)

- 🕒 1 day to at most 1 week
- 🕒🕒 several weeks
- 🕒🕒🕒 several months

### Number of participants

- 😊 up to about 15 persons
- 😊😊 roughly 15 to 30 persons
- 😊😊😊 also suitable for large groups of participants

There are numerous methods available for conducting public participation. An appropriate method can contribute significantly to

- conducting participation processes in a structured and efficient way,
- making them interesting and avoiding monotony,
- tracking down new solutions “off the beaten track“.

Below you will find an overview of various methods that have proved their worth. A more detailed description is to be found on [www.partizipation.at](http://www.partizipation.at) (for instance). To select the most suitable method for your particular participation process, consult your facilitator.

## Activating opinion survey

Consultation Duration: 🕒 to 🕒🕒🕒 Numbers involved 😊😊😊

In an activating opinion survey ordinary citizens are asked about their views and attitudes; at the same time they are encouraged to stand up for their interests and to join in working out improvements to the area where they live.

### Suitable for

- investigating the interests and needs of people living in a particular area
- promoting the self-determined involvement of ordinary citizens

### Sequence of events

- Trained interviewers poll residents of the area in question
- The survey results are evaluated
- Common-interest or action groups form

### Participants

interested citizens

## Citizen panel

Information, Consultation Duration: 🕒 Numbers involved 😊😊😊

A citizen panel provides a way of informing those interested and/or affected about a project and of discussing the various aspects of the project in public.

### Suitable for

- informing the public about a project or plan at community level if it is intended to gather points of view and suggestions from ordinary citizens

### Sequence of events

- Information about the project or plan is presented to the public
- This is followed by discussion (possibly by work in small groups)

### Participants

Interested citizens, lobbyists, representatives of common-interest groups, politicians, administrators, possibly experts



## Methods

### Internet forum

Consultation Duration: ⌚ to ⌚⌚⌚ Numbers involved 😊😊😊

Internet fora are on-line discussion platforms which offer ordinary citizens a way of expressing views on and discussing a particular issue with others.

#### Suitable for

- as an additional channel of information and communication for ordinary citizens, with no restrictions on time or place
- sounding out public opinion on a particular issue or project

#### Sequence of events

- an internet forum on a particular issue is set up
- internet users input their views on-line and can comment on contributions from others

#### Participants

interested citizens with access to the internet

### Consensus conference

Consultation, decision-influencing Duration: ⌚ Numbers involved 😊 to 😊😊😊

In a consensus conference mixed-composition groups of selected citizens work out an answer to a politically or socially controversial question in direct dialogue with experts.

#### Suitable for

- handling explosive issues, where interested non-experts are supported by experts
- sounding out public opinion on a particular question

#### Sequence of events

- Roughly ten to 30 interested citizens are selected
- Those selected familiarize themselves with the issue (by means of informatory material, such as statements, background reports, newspaper cuttings etc.)
- A three-day conference is held: the experts involved cover the subject from all angles, the participants question the experts and discuss the issue in depth, before composing a written

report detailing the consensus achieved (points of view, recommendations); this report is then presented to the decision-makers (politicians)

#### Participants

selected citizens, experts, politicians, administrators

### Mediation

Decision-influencing Duration: ⌚⌚ to ⌚⌚⌚ Numbers involved 😊 to 😊😊😊

Mediation is a voluntary, clearly structured process in which those involved in a conflict search for a permanent solution together and professional mediators support them in this.

#### Suitable for

- in the case of latent or open conflicts connected with specific planning procedures and problems
- to help the parties to a conflict (provided that they want to resolve the conflict consensually)

#### Sequence of events – 4 phases:

- Initiating the process: convincing all the parties to a conflict that mediation would be helpful, searching for suitable mediators
- Preparation: analysing the conflict in one-to-one sessions, defining exactly who will take part, drawing up a working agreement specifying procedure, goal, content etc. of the mediation process

- Implementation: showing up the diverging interests and needs, gathering missing information, tracking down solutions and reaching a decision
- Final agreement: drawing up a written mediation contract about the results achieved and how they are to be implemented

#### Participants

citizens affected, lobbyists, representatives of common-interest groups, politicians, administrators

## Methods

### Open space conference

Consultation, decision-influencing Duration: ⌚ Numbers involved 😊😊😊

At an open space conference there is a dominant issue or topic, but no specified speakers or prepared study groups. The participants themselves decide spontaneously who wants to work on which topics for how long.

#### Suitable for

- in cases where a large number of participants are to tackle complex issues
- as a way of kicking off a project that is intended to start by gathering ideas from a fair number of people

#### Sequence of events

- the dominant issue is presented and interesting questions it raises are collected
- these questions are tackled in small groups of constantly changing composition; minutes are taken in each group
- all the minutes taken are subsequently published

#### Participants

citizens affected, lobbyists, representatives of common-interest groups, politicians, administrators

### Citizen jury

Decision-influencing Duration: ⌚ Numbers involved 😊😊 to 😊😊😊

In a citizen jury unorganized citizens selected at random draw up a "citizens' assessment" in response to a specific question, based on their own experience and knowledge. In specialized areas they receive assistance from experts.

#### Suitable for

- planning assignments at local and regional level, for developing overall concepts
- where it is important that as many segments of the population as possible are represented in balanced proportions
- where stakeholders' everyday experience and experts' specialized knowledge are both needed

#### Sequence of events

- around 25 citizens are selected at random and disengaged from their routine obligations (loss of income is made up, child-care facilities are organized for parents)
- all those taking part are informed in detail about the project; they have opportunities to talk to stakeholders, specialists, the authorities etc.; they may inspect the site of the project

- they discuss and work through the various aspects of the project in small groups which are repeatedly reshuffled
- the results obtained are written up in the form of a "citizens' assessment" to be presented to the organization that has commissioned the process

#### Participants

selected citizens, experts

### Round Table

Decision-influencing Duration: ⌚ to ⌚⌚⌚ Numbers involved 😊😊 to 😊😊😊

At a Round Table stakeholders' representatives discuss a factual issue democratically and attempt to find a solution acceptable to everyone.

#### Suitable for

- resolving controversial issues with people representing conflicting interests
- where conflicts are looming up

#### Sequence of events

There is no standardized procedure for Round Tables. For them to work properly it is important to provide an impartial moderator, to take minutes of the discussion and to ensure that each group of stakeholders is represented by the same number of persons entitled to vote, regardless of its actual (political) strength

#### Participants

stakeholders' representatives, experts, politicians and administrators

## Methods

### Strategic Environmental Assessment Round Table

Decision-influencing Duration: ①①① Numbers involved ☺ to ☺☺

This is a special form of Strategic Environmental Assessment (→Glossary) in which stakeholders are actively involved in drawing-up a program or strategy (e.g. waste management plan, transport strategy) together with administrators and external experts.

#### Suitable for

- drawing-up programs and strategies that do justice to the environment

#### Sequence of events

- the goals of the program or strategy are defined
- the current situation in the planning area is described
- the scope of investigation is defined
- alternative ways of reaching the goals defined are developed
- the various alternatives are analysed and assessed as regards their environmental impact
- the findings are documented in a the environmental report

#### Participants

stakeholders' representatives, experts, politicians and administrators

### Future Workshop

Decision-influencing Duration: ① Numbers involved ☺ to ☺☺

In a Future Workshop the participants are stimulated by an atmosphere designed to promote creativity, so as to develop imaginative, unconventional solutions to current problems.

#### Suitable for

- where visions are to be developed, e.g. in producing mission statements, development scenarios, projects to shape the future etc.

#### Sequence of events – 3 phases:

- Criticism phase: analysing the current situation and identifying the problems
- Fantasy phase: developing ideas and suggestions – these can perfectly well be utopian, factual constraints are ignored at this stage
- "Back to reality" phase: investigating how these suggestions can be made capable of implementation and how implementation could function

#### Participants

Citizens, stakeholders' representatives, possibly experts, politicians and administrators

### Future Conference

Decision-influencing Duration: ① Numbers involved ☺☺☺

At a Future Conference hand-picked participants representing all stakeholders work out plans of action and packages for future projects; the sequence of events is fixed in advance.

#### Suitable for

- long-term planning procedures and projects at community level or in organizations
- questions concerned with the future

#### Sequence of events

- thinking over the past and current developments
- sketching blueprints for the future, reaching a consensus on which blueprint to adopt, planning specific measures

#### Participants

ordinary citizens, stakeholders' representatives, experts, politicians and administrators

# Glossary

## Actors / agents

Individuals or representatives of institutions actively taking part in the course of events.

## Agenda 21, Local Agenda 21, Regional Agenda 21

Comprehensive worldwide program of action for sustainable development in the 21st century (agenda: Latin for “what needs doing”). The key issue is striking a balance between economic, social and ecological requirements, including reducing the discrepancies between rich and poor countries. The idea is for ordinary citizens, politicians, administrators and entrepreneurs to work out and implement strategies for developing their area sustainably at the local or regional level (Local Agenda 21, Regional Agenda 21).

## Environmental impact assessment

The Austrian environmental impact assessment act (UVP-G) prescribes an environmental audit with public participation for certain types of projects which are expected to have a considerable impact on the environment.

## Facilitators / moderators

Persons qualified by their professional training, their practical experience and their impartiality (i.e. they are under the same obligations to all the stakeholders) to organize and steer a participation process. They assist the participants in working out possible solutions, but leave all decisions to them.

## NGO

Non-Governmental Organization. NGOs are organizations independent of governments who (in most cases) are active in the public interest. NGOs work in the environmental or social field; Greenpeace, Caritas and MSF are examples.

## Participants

Persons who take part in a participation process, either as private individuals or as representatives of groups of stakeholders.

## Participation process

Sequence of steps in which decision-makers and those interested in / affected by a plan or project collaborate; it can range from an exchange of information all the way to active involvement in shaping communal life.

## Party status

In a statutory official procedure party status entitles one to raise objections, to inspect official documents, to put forward one's point of view, to appeal etc.; it is accorded to citizens and legal entities who satisfy the criteria laid down in the relevant provisions (in Austria: the provisions of the AVG (statute on administrative procedure) and of the various material statutes, such as that governing environmental impact assessments).

## Policies

Policies are relatively long-term strategic decisions by a government, parliament or the top level of the administration, embodied in statements of principle, strategies or mission statements, such as the Austrian Strategy for Sustainable Development, the Austrian Climate Strategy or the National Action Plan for Employment.

## Stakeholders

All those whose interests may be affected by a project (plan, program, policy, legal transaction), both individuals and groups, e.g. neighbours, firms, clubs, politicians, administrators, etc.

## Strategic environmental assessment (SEA)

Strategic environmental assessment is a tool for taking environmental aspects into account in defining policies, plans and programs, on a level with social and economic aspects. In contrast to environmental impact assessments, the focus here is not on individual projects but on resolving issues of principle in the planning field with public participation.

## Sustainable development

Refers to a form of development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The concept of sustainable development or sustainability involves both conserving the environment and resources long-term and achieving economic prosperity and social justice.



# Literature, websites

## Literature

ALEXANDER, Nadja (2003): **Global Trends in Mediation**, Cologne  
Focuses on mediation from a comparative perspective, covers both common law and civil law jurisdictions, concentrates on the diversity of legal cultures and systems on four continents and provides a rich analysis of mediation models, standards and practices.

BEIERLE, Thomas C.; CAYFORD, Jerry (2002): **Democracy in Practice: Public Participation in Environmental Decisions**, Washington, DC  
Extensive empirical studies (data from 239 cases) examine what to expect from public participation and how participation processes can be made more effective.

CREIGHTON, James L. (2005): **The Public Participation Handbook: Making Better Decisions Through Citizen Involvement**, San Francisco  
Is a toolkit for designing and facilitating public participation in environmental and public policy decision making, featuring practical advice, checklists, worksheets, and illustrative examples.

DEPOE, Stephen P.; DELICATH, John W.; AEPLI ELSENBEER, Marie-France (2004):

**Communication and Public Participation in Environmental Decision Making (Communication Studies)**, New York  
Communication practices of various stakeholders in a variety of environmental decision-making contexts are explored, aligned by case studies.

ELLIOTT, Janice; HEESTERBEEK, Sara; LUKENSMEYER, Carolyn J.; SLOCUM, Nikki (2005): **Participatory Methods Toolkit. A practitioner's manual**.  
Joint publication of the King Baudouin Foundation and the Flemish Institute for Science and Technology Assessment (viWTA).  
Download:  
[http://www.viwta.be/files/30890\\_ToolkitENGdef.pdf](http://www.viwta.be/files/30890_ToolkitENGdef.pdf)

HERRMAN, Margaret S. (2006): **The Blackwell Handbook of Mediation**.  
Bridging theory, research, and practice. New York  
Takes an interdisciplinary approach to mediation, presents different perspectives of experts in the field, and shows which intervention techniques might work when, how and why.

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**sations in International Environmental Cooperation. Legal Basis and Practical Experience**, Berlin  
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SCHMIDT, Michael; JOAO, Elsa; ALBRECHT, Eike (2005): **Implementing Strategic Environmental Assessment**, Berlin–Heidelberg  
Handbook describing the implementation of SEA in 18 countries around the world, with analysis of different SEA methodologies, discussion on best practice, capacity building and the future of SEA.

## Websites

[www.partizipation.at](http://www.partizipation.at)  
Basic information, suggestions for further reading, details of forthcoming events, worksheets and case histories of participation and of participation processes in Central and Eastern Europe

[www.wegweiser-buergergesellschaft.de](http://www.wegweiser-buergergesellschaft.de)  
Practical aids, background information, details of forthcoming events, details of specialized literature, grants and useful organizations in connexion with civic activity

[www.toolkitparticipation.nl](http://www.toolkitparticipation.nl)  
Detailed descriptions of case histories from all over the world, tools for citizen participation, forum for discussions, links and brochures associated with local governance

[www.resolv.org](http://www.resolv.org)  
Public policy dispute resolution organization in the US, tools and techniques of consensus building, cases of environmental and public policy issues, links and project list

[www.communityplanning.net](http://www.communityplanning.net)  
Basic information about local government, methods, scenarios, case studies, checklists, broad range of contacts and websites

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# Acknowledgements



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# Public participation

- helps people to understand other points of view and promotes a reconciliation of interests. This improves the chance of finding a sustainable solution consensually.
- promotes the pooling of information and experience among the participants, and makes a network of like-minded people possible.
- can improve the quality of decisions, since the participants' knowledge is available.
- improves the chance of solutions with wide support, i.e. generally accepted solutions.
- puts decisions on a sounder footing in political terms, and makes it easier for outsiders to understand them subsequently.



- can save time and money, because delays and expense in connection with objections and court proceedings when the project is being implemented may be avoided.
- has proved its worth as an instrument for awakening interest in politics and in democratic participation, and to provide settings in which people can learn and practise democracy together.

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