

Work Package 4

Public Participation

ComCoast

Do's and Don't's & Key Messages





Public Participation ComCoast

*Subtitle The Do's & Don'ts & Key
Messages of Public Participation*

Report title: Work Package Four Public Participation
Subtitle: The Do's and Don'ts of Public participation

This report has been prepared by (Environment Agency) in co-operation with (Rijkswaterstaat & the University of Oldenburg)

The ComCoast project is carried out in co-operation with ten partners.

- Rijkswaterstaat (NL - leading partner)
- Province of Zeeland (NL)
- Province of Groningen (NL)
- University of Oldenburg (D)
- Environment Agency (UK)
- Ministry of the Flemish Community (B)
- Danish Coastal Authority (DK)
- Municipality of Hulst (NL)
- Waterboard Zeeuwse Eilanden (NL)
- Waterboard Zeeuws Vlaanderen (NL)

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Work package 4

Participatory Action

Report Title

Subtitle: The Do's and Don'ts & Key Messages of Public Participation

Final Report

Acknowledgement:

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1. *Preface*

1.1 Mission statement ComCoast

MISSION OF COMCOAST (COMBined functions in COASTal defence zones)

ComCoast is a European project which develops and demonstrates innovative solutions for flood protection in coastal areas.

ComCoast creates and applies new methodologies to evaluate multifunctional flood defence zones from an economical and social point of view. A more gradual transition from sea to land creates benefits for a wider coastal community and environment whilst offering economically and socially sound options. The aim of ComCoast is to explore the spatial potentials for coastal defence strategies for current and future sites in the North Sea Interreg IIIb region.

ComCoast Goals:

- developing innovative technical flood defence solutions to incorporate the environment and the people and to guarantee the required safety level;
- improving and applying stakeholder engagement strategies with emphasis on public participation;
- applying best practice multifunctional flood management solutions to the ComCoast pilot sites;
- sharing knowledge across the Interreg IIIb North Sea region.

ComCoast Solutions:

Depending on the regional demands, ComCoast develops tailor-made solutions:

- to cope with the future increase of wave overtopping of the embankments;
- to improve the wave breaking effect of the fore shore e.g. by using recharge schemes;
- to create salty wetland conditions with tidal exchange in the primary sea defence using culvert constructions or by realigning the coastal defence system;
- to cope with the increasing salt intrusion
- to influence policy, spatial planning and people
- to gain public support of multifunctional coastal zones.

ComCoast runs from April 1, 2004 to December 31, 2007. The European Union Community Initiative Programme Interreg IIIB North Sea Region and the project partners jointly finance the project costs of 5,8 million.

1.1.2 Information

Information on the ComCoast project can be obtained through the Project Management, located at the Rijkswaterstaat in the Netherlands.

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Aim: This document has been produced to provide a tool to project managers to enable them to quickly assess whether or not participation is the right thing to do and the key Do's and Dont's of participation.

2. Definitions

Public participation – This term has wide uses and definitions.

Public Participation can be defined as ‘providing opportunities for people who are affected by, or interested in, a Council (or otherwise) decision to participate in the decision making process in order to enhance the resulting decision.’

Participant – A stakeholder who chooses to be involved in a process

Stakeholder – A person who has a stake in the outcome includes those who have an interest in, or are affected by, the decisions being made (includes the sponsoring organisation)

Key Stakeholder – A stakeholder who is essential to the process. Key stakeholders

include people who.

- Hold statutory responsibility
- Hold crucial information
- Have resources they can use for implementation

Stakeholder analysis – The process used to work out who to include, levels of tension and likely concerns.

Stakeholder dialogue – A decision making process that is deliberately designed and facilitated by a trained and skilled person. It is inclusive and aims to share decision-making power as much as possible.

2.1 Core Values for the Practice of Public Participation

Inviting people to participate should be because there is a genuine opportunity for them to influence the outcome. It should not be used to rubber stamp decisions that have been already made. If people think their time has been wasted in poorly run workshops, or their attendance makes no difference to the outcome, they will feel disillusioned and lose trust and respect.

1. The public should have “a say” in decisions about actions that affect their lives.
2. Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
3. The public participation process communicates the interests and meets the process needs of all participants.
4. The public participation process seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected.

5. The public participation process involves participants in defining how they participate.
6. The public participation process provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
7. The public participation process communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

3. Key questions to ask your self to evaluate whether or not the proposed participation is the right thing to do.

- ❑ Is there a genuine commitment to listen and take on board what others say?
- ❑ What is the scope of the participation process?
- ❑ Will their input make a real difference?
- ❑ What is the history of the project/subject?
- ❑ What does the public expect from you?
- ❑ Do key people (partners and managers) understand and support the use of this approach?
- ❑ What is the level of tension around the issues?
- ❑ Will involvement raise conflict and if so how is this to be handled?
- ❑ Are there particular cultural considerations?
- ❑ Are there other decision making processes going on which duplicate or overlap?
- ❑ What kind of process do they follow?
- ❑ If so how will the two processes be reconciled?
- ❑ Is there time for a participatory process? (A process with a single event takes about 2 months).
- ❑ Are there in-house skills and time to design and facilitate a good process or does this need to be brought in?
- ❑ Is there sufficient funding available to hire rooms and provide refreshments and to use a specialist if needed?
- ❑ Is there the time and skills capacity amongst staff to support a process? (maintaining a database of stakeholders, handling mail outs, preparing displays, writing talks or text)
- ❑ What are the alternatives to a stakeholder dialogue and what will be the costs and benefits of these (lack of 'buy in')?

3.1 Preparing for participation

Identify likely issues and subjects.

For example:

- Rural,
- Coastal and marine
- Infrastructure
- Recreation
- Interpretation and research
- Business and tourism

3.2 Who to include (steering group to decide)

- What are the likely issues and decision areas?
- What organisations or interests would be affected?
- Who could represent their interests (if you don't know ask them!)?
- Is the mix representative and balanced?
- Are there too many or too few representing particular interests?

- Who are the key ‘movers and shakers’ who can help marshal resources for implementation?
- Who are the opponents? (Better for them to be involved than outside the process)

3.3 Clarity: External

It should be made clear to participants whether the exercise is for:

Information gathering - **i.e. no influence on use of information**

Consultation - **i.e. views will have some influence**

Shared decision making – **where they are directly helping to make the decisions**

3.4 Clarity: Internal

Clarity should also come from internal understanding of the project as a basic requirement. General information about the project should be transparent before you consider participation.

Questions to ask yourself:

- Who is the project lead
- Who is the project executive/principle
- What is your role in the project
- Who took the initiative for the project
- Is the project mandatory
- What is the project deadline
- What are the project goals
- What are the key problems
- In what stage of the project are you
- Who are the end users
- What are the key risks
- Who has power to steer
- Who are your partners

4. Public Participation Do's & Don'ts List

The Do's can also be called the Principles of public participation

Is public participation the correct approach?

Do consider if public participation is the correct approach.
Do set up a core group to share responsibility for the process.
Don't expect 100% consensus from the process.

Specialists: public participation is a skilled process!

Do consider using specialists or consider training staff to be able to plan and prepare for public participation.

Be clear

Don't invite people to participate unless there is a genuine opportunity to influence the outcome.
Do make sure they know what can and cannot be changed as a result of being involved.
Do find out if key people support the participatory process and identify both benefits and problems that may occur.

Clear planning

Do make a clear plan so stakeholders can see the step process i.e. when they will be involved and receive feed back.

Fair for all

Encourage everyone who has an interest in, or who could be affected by, a decision to take part.
Do make a list of groups to contact and then ask them whom else should be involved and how do I contact them?

When identifying stakeholders think about:

- Who needs to be kept informed & involved directly?
- What are the likely issues and decision areas?
- What interest groups and organisations would be affected?
- Who could represent their interests?
- Are there too many or too few representing particular interests?
- Who are key players who can help with the process and who are the opponents?
- Do provide different ways for people to participate.
- Do identify cultural and language differences.
- Do identify good times to provide workshops i.e. not during holiday periods or school Pick up times.
- Do choose an accessible venue with good public transport links

Show respect

Do show respect by showing that all people's views really do count and will be included wherever possible.
Show that you want to understand other opinions and contributions.

Take action

There is no point in spending money and time on working with communities if you are not willing to listen to their views. If people think their views will not be taken seriously or make a change they will not take part.

Feed back

Do provide feed back on time to let communities know about decisions.
Do give people the opportunity to give & receive information and ideas anonymously.

Remain independent

Don't become too close to any particular interest group, remain independent.

Consistency

Do be consistent. Decisions should be consistent to show people that you work to the same professional standards.

Balancing act

Don't underestimate workload and manpower needed for the process. Make effective use of your resources .

Learning

Do work together to learn from each other, build trust, respect and relationships.
Do ask what it is they value now, as this will identify what the community values?
Do ask stakeholders what needs to change, as this will help you to discover what their main concerns are?

5. An example of a Community Engagement Plan

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this document is to take you through the steps to develop a Community Engagement Plan (CEP) for a specific project or site. It is envisaged that this document will evolve as more information is gathered through the community engagement process.

The CEP can be made available to stakeholders and wider public for scrutiny. It can be developed by the organisation alone, or with key partners.

5.2 Define the issue and what decision is to be made

What is the desired outcome of the programme or project?
(i.e. not the engagement, but the project)

5.3 Understanding the community

Draw a rough sketch/map of the community interests and structures. Your sketch should indicate who is linked to whom and who is represented by whom.

5.4 Why work with the community?

5.4.1 Purpose and goals

5.4.2 What do you want to achieve through engaging with communities? Why engage? What are your objectives?

Note: You need to be very, very clear here about what specific decisions are open to influence as a result of the engagement, and whether there is anything set in stone.

5.4.3 The requirements for a community engagement plan - why do we need a planned approach to engagement?

5.4.4 What Organisation or other partner policies require it?

5.4.5 Are there any Statutory Requirements?

5.4.6 Other reasons?

E.g. past experience

5.5 Understanding the community – the people

5.5.1 Situation analysis

5.5.2 What has been the history of site or project?

5.5.3 What is the state and characteristic of stakeholder relations?

5.5.4 In the past?

5.5.5 Currently?

5.5.6 Have there been any significant events or major changes?

5.6 Stakeholder Analysis (Appendix A)

5.6.1 Who are the stakeholders and what is their interest in the site/project?

Use map Section 6.1. Record summary of results in Appendix A.

5.6.2. Desired type of engagement

See also Appendix A – for each stakeholder, note the type of engagement that is required, based on the following:

5.6.3 Partnership

Those listed here will share responsibility for reaching final decisions because they have got the relevant authority, responsibility (e.g. statutory consultees). Without their full agreement a decision can't be taken.

List (mark statutory consultees) in Appendix A

5.6.4 Involve

Those listed here we will be regularly engaged in the process because although decisions can be taken without their full agreement (ie they are not a decision-sharing partner), an ongoing influence will be critical to making informed, lasting and acceptable decisions. List in Appendix A

5.6.5 Consult

Those listed here are the ones who we will actively seek their views and concerns because there may be particular issues on which we (as those in the partnership) would like to know their views on before we make decisions. But they would probably say that their interest is probably not deep enough to warrant the time and resources required for any ongoing or more in-depth continual involvement. *List in Appendix A*

5.6.6 Inform

Those listed here will be informed about the project and we will be open to receive their views and concerns because they may well be interested in

aspects of the project and its outcomes, and they need the opportunity to know how things are developing, and how and when to give their views if they so wish. *List in Appendix A*

5.6.7 Clarify Issues, Uncertainties and Conflicts (real or potential)

5.6.9 What are the issues that this engagement programme will need to address?

5.6.10 What are the uncertainties that are around – i.e. the things that we don't know for sure

(eg how much something will cost, what people feel about X, what another agency is doing or about to do about Y)

5.5.11 What are the actual or potential conflicts (within us or any partnership as well as within the community)?

5.7 Agreeing the best way of working

5.7.1 Guiding Principles

Confirm your position and role. Review the information gathered and agree the best way of working considering the following.

5.7.2 What role is the your organisation going to take on this? (lead, partner, participant or not involved)

5.7.3 Are there any Statutory or similar guidelines for how we should approach community engagement in this situation e.g. consultation periods?

5.7.4 Are there any specific principles to guide our approach to community engagement for this situation?

i.e. 'we will involve stakeholders early on in the process', or 'we need to maximise face to face meetings rather than questionnaires because we need to understand collective views', or 'facilitated rather than chaired meetings')

5.8 Project plan

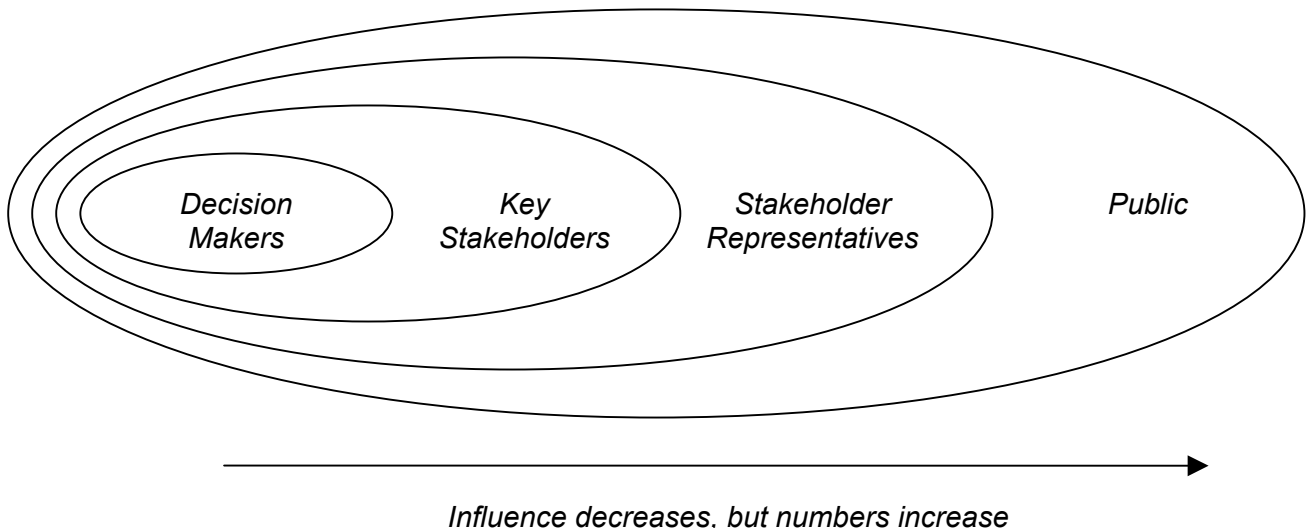
Please complete Appendix B, setting out decisions to be influenced, key project and engagement milestones and activities. See the accompanying note on 'filling in the project plan'.

Select methods and timescales for engagement that reflect the level of engagement for each stakeholder as defined in your Stakeholder analysis.

6.0 Defining Stakeholders – 6.1 Two Models for Consideration

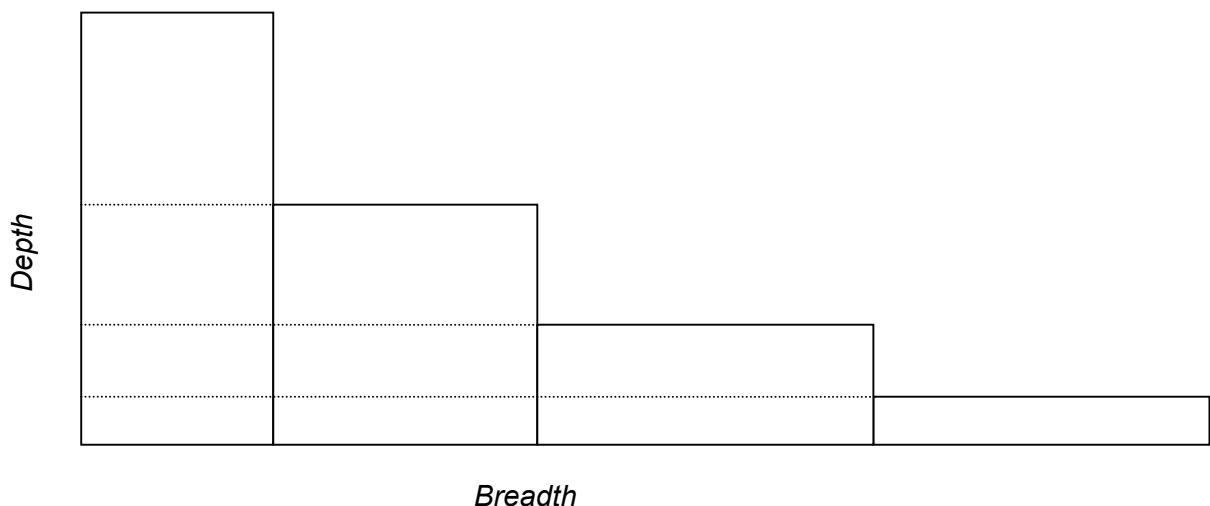
There are (at least) two useful models to bear in mind when considering the question of who your stakeholders are. The first illustrates the importance of recognising different types of stakeholder, and the second the significance of engaging each group in appropriate and often different ways.

Zones of Influence



Key Message: Recognise the different types of stakeholder that may exist for your situation, and be clear about which type you need to engage, and why.

Breadth vs. Depth of Engagement



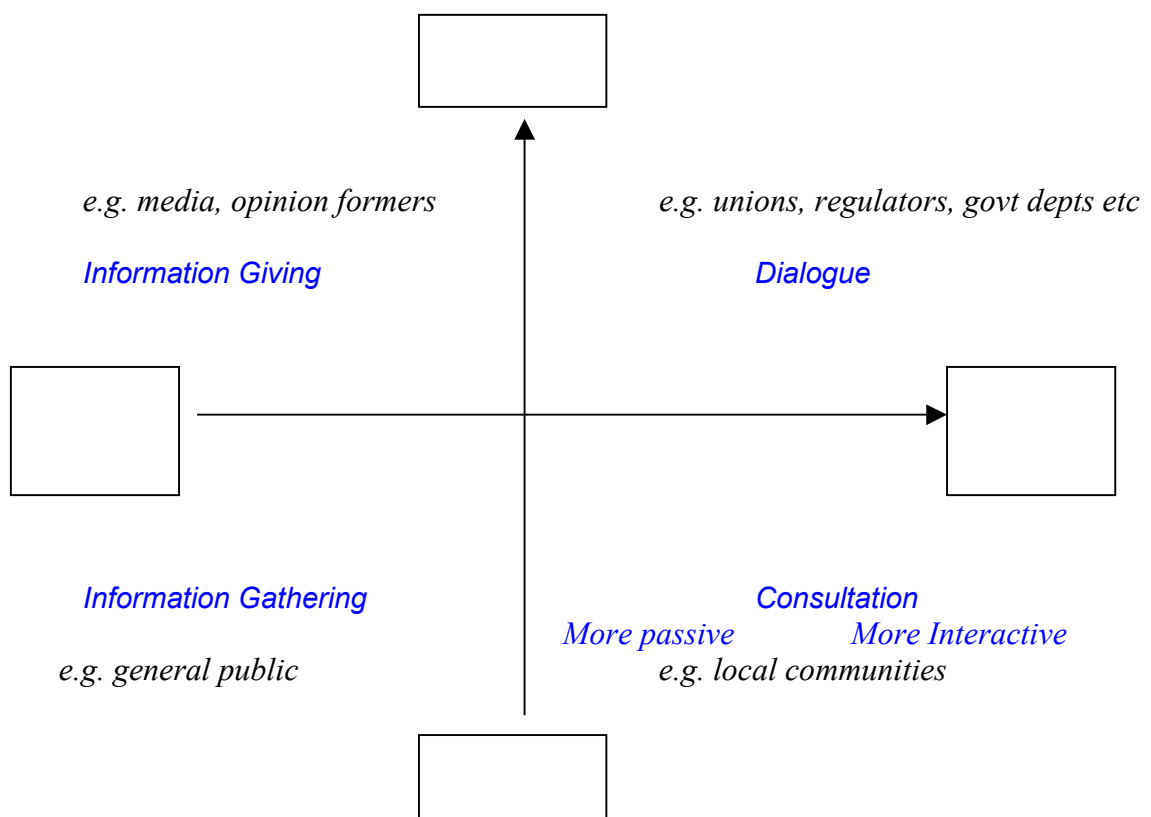
Key Message: There is always a tension between the depth and breadth of engaging stakeholders: you can't do both due to inevitable resource limitations. The tension is best managed by engaging the different types of stakeholder in different ways.

6.2 Mapping Stakeholders by Influence and Impact

This simple analysis can be helpful when there is a need to think through how different types of stakeholders might be engaged in a process of decision making. It organises different stakeholders according to (i) their likely influence over the decisions to be made and (ii) the likely impact of the decisions upon them. It is particularly useful when an integrated process is needed (i.e. many approaches or methods). **Key message:** *its aim is to inform the design of your engagement process, so do it before you start choosing approaches and methods.*

The analysis can be carried out by groups (usually process planning groups) using pieces of paper on a tabletop or on the wall with post-its, with the matrix written up on flip chart. A number of stages are useful:

- Identify stakeholders and write them on a post-it (one per post-it)
- Organise and agree placement of post-its on the matrix
- Consider the relationships (responsibilities, rights, levels of conflict etc) within and between stakeholders in each area of the matrix. *(e.g. there is generally a responsibility for those in the top right to take particular account of those in the bottom right).*
- Consider potential strategies (approaches - methods) for engaging the different stakeholders in each area.



N.B.. *Blue text indicates common (but definitely not exclusive) strategies for engagement.* The results should be considered as a continual draft and be frequently updated.

Appendix A
Stakeholder Analysis

Column 5 Score from 1 – 5 how the proposal is likely to affect their interest
 1 = high score (major affect), 5 = low score (negligible affect). A high score (1) need not be a negative impact / affect. The proposal may well lead to opportunities that will benefit their interest(s) therefore a high score can be recorded for positive impact / affect. Score by how this proposal is likely to affect their interest.

Remember to include internal stakeholders as well as external stakeholders.

Stakeholder group Subgroups	Needs/ requirements: what do we perceive to be their interest in the site (eg how will they be affected)? Note carefully what we do or don't know!	Expectations/ perceptions: what might they want from the organisation/the site	What do we want from them?	How will the proposal affect their interest? (high, medium, low)	Type of engagement (partnership, involve, actively consult, inform) and channel
Community Sector					
Stakeholder	Needs/ requirements:	Expectations/ perceptions:	What do we want from them?	Affect on interest?	Type of engagement and channel
Public Sector					

Stakeholder group Subgroups	Needs/ requirements: what do we perceive to be their interest in the site (eg how will they be affected)? Note carefully what we do or don't know!	Expectations/ perceptions: what might they want from the organisation/the site	What do we want from them?	How will the proposal affect their interest? (high, medium, low)	Type of engagement (partnership, involve, actively consult, inform) and channel
Stakeholder	Needs/ requirements:	Expectations/ perceptions:	What do we want from them?	Affect on interest?	Type of engagement and channel
Private sector					

Stakeholder group Subgroups	Needs/ requirements: what do we perceive to be their interest in the site (eg how will they be affected)? Note carefully what we do or don't know!	Expectations/ perceptions: what might they want from the organisation/the site	What do we want from them?	How will the proposal affect their interest? (high, medium, low)	Type of engagement (partnership, involve, actively consult, inform) and channel
Others					

Project milestones with associated community engagement plan

Appendix B

Month/year →									
Decision, project output or milestone									
Engagement activity* - <i>partnership</i> level (eg partnership)									
- <i>involve</i> (eg liaison or advisory group)									
- <i>actively consult</i> (eg individually invited)									
- <i>inform/ passively consult</i> (eg newsletters, press releases with response form)									
Admin details									

Note: The stakeholder analysis summary will set out the individuals/groups that are to be engaged at each of the engagement activity types. Each box therefore simply sets out the engagement activities that are to be carried out with that set of stakeholders (e.g. newsletter sent round; public meeting or drop ins asking them to set)

All those at a 'higher' level on the table should automatically be offered opportunities for information and participation that are given to those at 'lower' levels.



Project milestones with associated community engagement plan
Appendix B (example)

Date: 2004 →	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept
Decision, project output or milestone	Organisation agrees need for engagement	Draft community engagement plan		Liaison group established		Public meetings		Draft options	
Engagement activity* - <i>partnership</i> level (eg partnership)	1:1 meetings with other organisations to get buy in	Organisation partnership formed and agrees approach						Partnership meets to take on board results Work up options	
- <i>involve</i> (eg liaison or advisory group)			1:1 meetings to explain process ideas, and find out their interests	Liaison group formed			Liaison group collates results of public meetings		Get feedback from liaison group on options
- <i>actively consult</i> (eg individually invited)				Newsletter sent out	Individual invitations sent out for public meetings	Public meetings to establish guidelines for the project		report to all participants Newsletter and web site with details of public meeting results	
- <i>inform/ passively consult</i> (eg newsletters, press releases with response form)				Newsletter sent out Establish website	Press releases advertise drop ins and public meetings	Drop ins. Public meetings (as above)		report to all participants Newsletter and web site with details of public meeting results	
Admin details		Creation of shared database of interests					Type up results, circulate reports, update website		

