

How to use the Toolbox? A short manual.

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1 Guiding Principles

Please consider the [Guiding Principles](#) of the toolbox before exploring it.

1.1 Toolbox Guiding Principles

- The Toolbox offers support for organisations who
 - have the overall responsibility for the management (governance) of a decision-making process
 - are responsible for planning or implementing public participation
 - who are (or want to be) stakeholders in a decision-making process

You may wish to act either as an organiser of participatory measures or gather information to help you bring forward recommendations / requirements to the responsible organisations.

- Independent of the tools that are used in a specific context, experience from research and practical implementation reveals a set of principles that should be considered as preconditions for successful participation processes. A summary of these principles, taken from “The IPPA Knowledge Base, Version 1” (2011) report, can be found as an attachment to this paper.
- It is recommended that a participation process should be started as early as possible. If possible it should accompany the development of the decision-making framework before the plan or project itself is being discussed.
- A participation process and the tools which are used in this context have to evolve alongside the progress of a plan or project. Regular evaluation can support the optimisation and adaption of the participation process.
- The Toolbox offers information on tools that support different levels of public participation. An interactive exchange with stakeholders takes place at the “consult/exchange”, “collaborate” and “joint decision making” levels. The lower levels “listen” and “inform” are non-interactive and thus offer only a very small degree of public involvement, which does not equate to the preconditions for successful participation processes (see no. 2). They are, however, a necessary complement to the interactive tools, and can be used to disseminate information or listen to the concerns of the broader public.
- In complex process, such as site selection for a radioactive waste repository, the use of more than one tool is normally required. For example if you wish to create a Citizens Advisory Group, you will still need to use other tools such as Public Meetings, Websites, Printed Information, Newspaper Inserts, Media Releases, Press Conferences, Information Centres, Mobile Information Displays.

1.2 Before you start your search

Before searching for an appropriate tool or tools, please think about the likely conditions and framing of your proposed public participation process.

- In which phase of decision-making are you? Are you in the plans/programs phase, or are you already in the project phase?
- Which level of society (national, regional or local) is affected by the current stage of the plan or project? At which level(s) do you expect stakeholders interested in participating to emerge?

- What is the degree of stakeholder participation that you want to achieve with the participation process that you are planning? To what extent and in which way will the outcomes of the participation process influence decision-making?
- Who do you want to involve? Decision-makers? The public? Scientific experts?
- How much time do you have?
- Who will be responsible for implementing the tool(s)?

You do not need to answer all these questions, but use them to help develop an impression of the overall context of the intended public participation process before beginning your search.

1.3 Additional Explanation: The difference between Tools, Methods and Processes

The Toolbox contains information on a number of tools, methods and processes, but in order to increase the readability we have sometimes only used the term "tools". Our understanding of the differences between the terms is as follows:

- *“Processes” include the use of different tools. Examples include Regional Dialogue Forum, Mediation, RISCOS and Local Partnership.*
- *“Tools” include Expert Group, Citizens Panel, Roundtables and Discussion Meetings. In the socio-scientific context tools can be anything from a rather complex instrument for including stakeholders to moderation tools such as the use of simple cards for brainstorming.*
- *“Methods” are tools which are described in the literature and where the specific design and precise methodology are fixed. Examples include Foundation Discussion Workshops, Focus Group and Consensus Conference.*

2 Structure of the Toolbox

The Toolbox includes **33 tools**¹, methods² and processes^{3,4}. Each tool is briefly described and further characterised by means of several attributes:

¹ “Processes” include the use of different tools. Examples include Regional Dialogue Forum, Mediation, RISCOS and Local Partnership.

² “Methods” are tools which are described in the literature and where the specific design and precise methodology are fixed. Examples include Foundation Discussion Workshops, Focus Group and Consensus Conference.

³ Processes include the use of different tools. Examples include Regional Dialogue Forum, Mediation, RISCOS and Local Partnership

⁴ To increase the readability we will use the term “tool” only. But the reader should be aware that the toolbox contains tools, methods and processes.

- the type and number of stakeholders normally involved,
- the implementer of the tool,
- the frequency of meetings usually needed,
- the intended participation level (from informing only to joint decision making)
- the level of decision-making anticipated (local, region, national),
- the phase of the decision-making (according to the Aarhus stages) and
- the objectives which are supported by the tool.

For the most complex tools their use in a specific context is further described in one or more **case studies**.

3 Search for a tool

If you know the requirements of your participation process, go to the “**Search**” page.

3.1 Use of the search form

On the **search form** you have the possibility of selecting 8 different search terms.

By selecting between 1 and a maximum of 3 search terms that match the requirements of your participation process, you will be presented with a list at the bottom of the page of all the tools that meet them.

Please note: If you have Javascript activated the search will be continuously updated after your first choice, in such a way that for the remaining search terms only those tools that remain suitable will be displayed.

Good to know: If you do not select any of the values on the search form, a list is displayed at the bottom of the page of all 34 tools that are included in the toolbox.

Example:

1. Select “Local” for the level of decision making. The list of search results displays 23 entries.
-

Home Search Contact

- List of Generic Tools
- List of Case Studies

Search Form [Reset]

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| Level of decision-making Local | Phase of decision making Please select | Number of Stakeholders Please select |
| Combination of Stakeholders Please select | Participation Level Please select | Frequency of meetings Please select |
| Implementer of the tool Please select | The tool supports the following objectives Please select | Enter your search term here: <input type="text"/> |

Search Result

23 entries found.

Discussion Meetings
A discussion group is a forum of individuals who are discussing various topics amongst each other. In this type of meeting, people add and respond to comments that have been raised. These groups deal with one topic and personal exchanges are normally discouraged. [\[more details\]](#)

Expert Group
An Expert Group is composed of a number of experts who cover different fields of expertise and often different view points on the issue at stake. It can provide input and support to discursive issues that are complex and require highly specific input. The experts may produce written opinions and share ... [\[more details\]](#)

Local Partnership
Local partnerships are usually based on a contractual agreement between the local community and the Government or project implementer, and have sometimes involved the creation of legal entities. These partnership agreements also usually provide the community with resources (funding) to facilitate their ... [\[more details\]](#)

2. Choose "Consult/Exchange for the participation level. The list of search results then displays 7 entries

Home Search Contact

- List of Generic Tools
- List of Case Studies

Search Form [Reset]

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| Level of decision-making Local | Phase of decision making Please select | Number of Stakeholders Please select |
| Combination of Stakeholders Please select | Participation Level Consult/Exchange | Frequency of meetings Please select |
| Implementer of the tool Please select | The tool supports the following objectives Please select | Enter your search term here: <input type="text"/> |

Search Result


7 entries found.

Discussion Meetings
A discussion group is a forum of individuals who are discussing various topics amongst each other. In this type of meeting, people add and respond to comments that have been raised. These groups deal with one topic and personal exchanges are normally discouraged. [\[more details\]](#)

Expert Group
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Working groups
In a Working Group, around 5 to 15 stakeholders or experts focus on a specific topic. Their aim is to discuss this topic in detail in order to create new ideas, develop alternatives or identify the best solution to a particular problem. Their results are then presented either directly to the operator/decision ...

3. Search Result
The list of search results displays 7 entries.

Search Result 

7 entries found.

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A discussion group is a forum of individuals who are discussing various topics amongst each other. In this type of meeting, people add and respond to comments that have been raised. These groups deal with one topic and personal exchanges are normally discouraged. [\[more details\]](#)

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Future Search
A Future Search conference is a way for a community or organisation to create a shared vision for its future. It engages around 60 to 80 participants, in groups of 8 (interest, stakeholders, and mixed groups), who take part in a highly structured process lasting ideally two and a half days. It is usually ... [\[more details\]](#)

Open Space Workshop
Open space workshops provide a highly democratic framework for enabling any group of people to create their own programme of discussions on almost any theme without much preparation. They are particularly useful for dealing with general policy issues, for generating enthusiasm and for dealing with urgent ... [\[more details\]](#)

Public Debate/Public Meeting
Public meetings are familiar, established ways for people to come together to express their opinions, hear a public speaker, or plan a strategy. They can build a feeling of community and attendance levels provide an indicator of the level of interest within a community on a particular issue. The meeting ... [\[more details\]](#)

Seminar
A seminar is, generally, a form of academic instruction, either at an academic institution or offered by a commercial or professional organization. It has the function of bringing together small groups for recurring meetings, focusing each time on some particular subject, in which everyone present is ... [\[more details\]](#)

3.2 More Details - Description of the tool

If you click on [\[more details\]](#) for any tool displayed in the search result, you will be taken to a page which will show details including a description of the tool and its various attributes.

Search Result

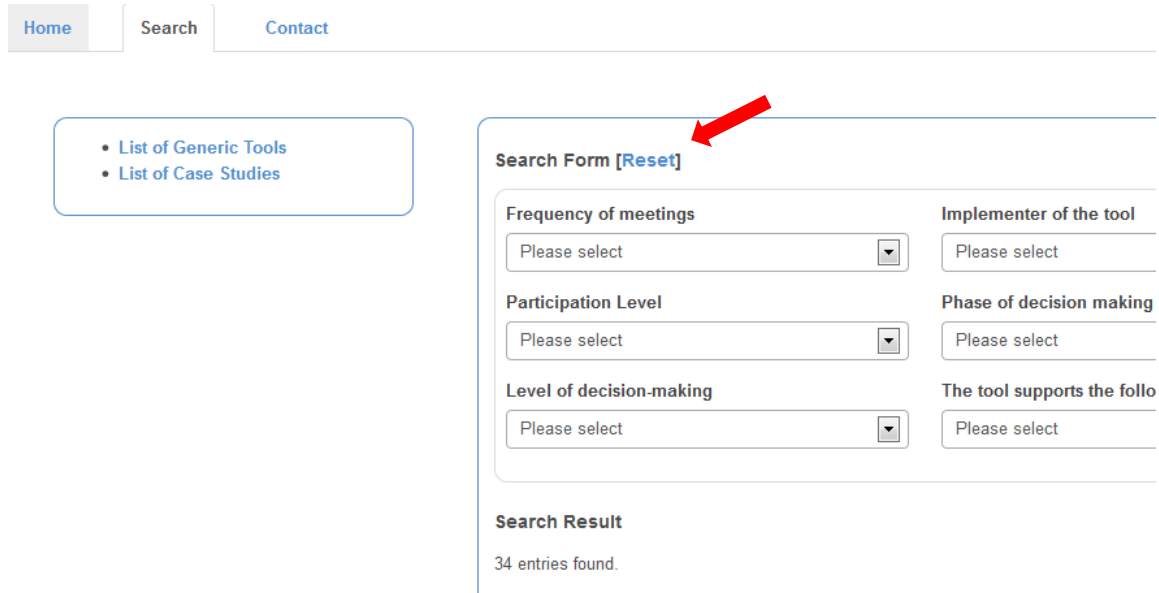
7 entries found.

Discussion Meetings
A discussion group is a forum of individuals who are discussing various topics amongst each other. In this type of meeting, people add and respond to comments that have been raised. These groups deal with one topic and personal exchanges are normally discouraged.  [\[more details\]](#)

Expert Group

3.3 New Search-RESET

If you want to start the search from the beginning, press "RESET".



The screenshot shows the IPPA search interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs: 'Home', 'Search', and 'Contact'. Below the tabs, there is a sidebar with two links: 'List of Generic Tools' and 'List of Case Studies'. The main content area is titled 'Search Form [Reset]', with a red arrow pointing to the 'Reset' link. The search form contains six dropdown menus arranged in two columns. The left column has three dropdowns: 'Frequency of meetings', 'Participation Level', and 'Level of decision-making'. The right column has three dropdowns: 'Implementer of the tool', 'Phase of decision making', and 'The tool supports the follo'. Each dropdown menu has a 'Please select' placeholder and a downward arrow. Below the search form, there is a section titled 'Search Result' which displays '34 entries found.' and a pagination bar.

3.4 Open-ended search

In the **open-ended search** box, you can enter any term you wish.

Please note: This search will be performed across the general tools (name and description), but not across the case studies.

Good to know: Please click "Reset" before you start an open-ended search. Otherwise the search will be limited to the results of your previous selections.

Example: Search on the term: "Conference".

The result list contains 3 entries:

[Home](#) [Search](#) [Contact](#)

- [List of Generic Tools](#)
- [List of Case Studies](#)

Search Form [[Reset](#)]

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| Frequency of meetings Please select | Implementer of the tool Please select | Number of Stakeholders Please select |
| Participation Level Please select | Phase of decision making Please select | Combination of Stakeholders Please select |
| Level of decision-making Please select | The tool supports the following objectives Please select | Enter your search term here: Conference |

Search Result

3 entries found.

Consensus Conference

Consensus conferences offer a way of obtaining and understanding informed citizens' views on controversial issues. The outcomes can be used to develop materials on the subject for public use as well as to inform media debates on the issue. In general, consensus conferences are used for issues that achieve ...

[\[more details\]](#)**Future Search**

A Future Search conference is a way for a community or organisation to create a shared vision for its future. It engages around 60 to 80 participants, in groups of 8 (interest, stakeholders, and mixed groups), who take part in a highly structured process lasting ideally two and a half days. It is usually ...

[\[more details\]](#)**Press Conference**

Press Conferences have the benefit that all media can be reached at one setting. It is a good medium for informing about the latest development of a project or to give statements related to recent events.

[\[more details\]](#)

4 Side menu

You can also access a list of all the tools and one of all the case studies via the link in the side menu.

[Home](#) [Search](#) [Contact](#)

- [List of Generic Tools](#)
- [List of Case Studies](#)

Search Form [[Reset](#)]

| | |
|--|--|
| Frequency of meetings Please select | Implementer of the tool Please select |
| Participation Level Please select | Phase of decision making Please select |
| Level of decision-making Please select | The tool supports the following objectives Please select |

5 Case Studies

For the most complex tools, case studies are available which describe their use in the context of a specific plan or project. Each case study contains information concerning:

- Background to the case study
- Phase of the decision-making process
- Formal framework of the decision-making process
- Objectives of the process
- Which tool was used?
- Status (ongoing or completed)
- Objectives and outcomes of the stakeholder engagement
- Who were the Involved Stakeholders
- Who implemented the participation process
- Financing
- Points to consider
- Further tools used in the case study (if any)

.. Individual case studies can be downloaded as pdf-files.

The case studies can be accessed either via the link at the bottom of the tool description page or from the list of all of the case studies which can be accessed via the side menu (see Section 4).

6 Comparison of tools

to be added#

7 Contact

On the "Contact" page you will find contact details for the developers of the Toolbox. Please feel free to contact us should you have questions or comments.

8 Attachment

Preconditions for successful public participation processes⁵

1. Overarching principles for good public participation processes

A successful public participation process should be guided by the following overarching principles, which can be understood as examples of democratic ideals, intended to ensure a fair, transparent and acceptable process, capable of the production of useable and tolerable outcomes:

- a) Legitimacy of the process and of the decisions;
- b) Clarity of the level of influence the public have in the process
- c) Following the aim of fairness so that all parties and the public in a broader sense benefit from the cooperation;
- d) Ensuring transparency of the process;
- e) Enhancing quality of decision making;
- f) Supporting positive economical, ecological and societal development of the region affected by the planned measures/installations.
- g) Accompanying evaluation of the process

2. Principles of the organisational framework

A successful process requires an adequate organisational framework to set the rules for the cooperation and, when relevant, the interaction between participants at the national and regional level, so as to ensure that appropriate resources are available and to provide a common understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the different actors. Furthermore, it is very important to provide clarity on how the results of the public participation will feed into the formal decision making procedure. There needs therefore to be:

- a) A supporting national policy and framework setting;
- b) Strong interaction between the national and the regional governance level;
- c) Institutionalised cooperation based on:
 - i. An agreed target and common understanding of perspectives and goals amongst all the actors;
 - ii. A regular working practice assuring the integration of all relevant stakeholders with clear accountabilities;
 - iii. Inclusive working methods assuring integration of all relevant issues;
 - iv. Professional coordination of the whole process (e.g. by an institution or an intermediary) ensuring focusing on the issue and transfer of results.

⁵ Phil Richardson and Emily Michie (Galson Sciences Ltd), Anne Minhans and Beate Kallenbach-Herbert (Öko-Institut e.V.), Kjell Andersson (Karita Research AB): The IPPA Knowledge Base, Version 1, 14 July 2011; Deliverable 1.1 of the IPPA European research project; http://www.ippaproject.eu/sites/default/files/deliverables/IPPA-Deliverable-1_1.pdf

- d) Sufficient resources (finances, personnel, knowledge, time) for all necessary activities and all stakeholder groups
- e) Integration of the public participation process into the formal decision-making procedure;
- f) Transparent roles and responsibilities of all actors – in general – and a clear definition of the specific stakeholders' roles in the decision-making process.