



for a better environment

Green Sports Games

# HANDBOOK

STRATEGIES AND TOOLS FOR EFFECTIVE  
GREEN CITIZEN PARTICIPATION  
WITH TRADITIONAL  
SPORTS AND GAMES

Co-funded by  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



Erasmus+



# Index

Introduction	3
Objectives	4
Head Topic 1: The faces of participation prism	5
Head Topic 2: Benefits, challenges and best practices	6
Head Topic 3: The context and purpose of participation	8
Head Topic 4: Identifying who participates	9
Head Topic 5: Plan an assessment	12
Head Topic 6: Tools for participation	13
Conclusion	17
Bibliographic References	18

## Introduction

This handbook presents some of the principles and best practices for public participation, possible tools that can be used in the different stages of a participatory process and strategies to assess the effectiveness of the process.

Youth participation through sport is widely recognized as a critical aspect in a variety of accountability, policy, regulation and environmental processes.

Since the crucial objective of the project through sport is to promote, in a non-formal education process, the development of skills to change human behavior or attitudes towards greater critical environmental awareness, this document was designed to offer that opportunity and to introduce tools and useful knowledge for such a process.

Through effective youth public participation, it is expected that the processes and results of planning, politics and decision-making in the participatory process via sport will be more efficient, equitable and sustainable.

Scientists who conduct or use alternatives to animal-based experiments need public participation skills to ensure that their work considers society's demands on the use of animals in science. Research and experience in the natural resources and health management sectors around the world has proven that public participation leads to better decisions, and by providing local or independent sources of information and examining alternative management strategies, it builds trust. It also reduces uncertainties, delays, conflicts and legal costs. Despite this, few decision makers and policies, managers and scientists involved in these processes have formal training or professional development opportunities to develop their ability to plan and implement participatory processes.

Briefly and in light of what has been said, we want with this handbook to participate in a pilot trial where, in a non-formal educational aspect and through sport with young people, they can learn to lead alternatives that allow them to raise their public participation skills to a greater critical environmental awareness with their coaches / staff and NGO leaders.

## Objetivos

The objectives of this manual are to assist coaches, decision makers, managers and social scientists in the development of:

1. an understanding of the basic concepts and best practices for participation;
2. a familiarity with the different tools that can be used for effective public participation and an awareness of which tools are appropriate in different circumstances such as in sport;
3. strategies for assessing the effectiveness of participatory processes.

To this end, the manual focuses on answering the following questions:

- ✓ What is a public participation?
- ✓ Why we need to make public participation?
- ✓ Who should participate?
- ✓ How we do it, that is, what possible tools are available?
- ✓ When and where we use a specific tool?

The manual describes the six head topics of “learned” material from the public participation curriculum designed by Ambus and Krishnaswamy (2009):

**Tópico 1.** The faces of participation prism

**Tópico 2.** Benefits, challenges and best practices

**Tópico 3.** Context and purpose of participation

**Tópico 4.** Identifying who participates

**Tópico 5.** Plan an assessment

**Tópico 6.** Tools for participation

Each topic will be discussed separately in the sections that follow.

## Head Topic 1. The faces of participation prism

The learning outcomes of this Topic are:

1. Articulate a clear definition of participation;
2. Identify different levels of participation in decision-making processes.

Participation is ... “various forms of direct public involvement, where people, individually or through organized groups, can Exchange information, express opinions and articulate interests, and have the potential to influence decisions or the outcome of specific issues (UN FAO, 2000 cited in Beckley et al., 2005, p. 14).

It is where individuals, communities and groups of stakeholders can exchange information, articulate interests and have the potential to influence decisions or the outcome of natural management issues (Means et al., 2002; DSE, 2005a). It is a bidirectional process between the public and specialists or managers, and should not be confused with the unidirectional flow of information in public relations exercises. **Participation is a willingness to respect and make room for other people's opinions.** Participation may not be ideal for many situations. But it should not be said that they are participating when, in fact, they are not or if the situation is not appropriate for participation. For this reason, participatory approaches are often classified along a continuum (Beckley et al., 2005; Arnstein, 1969; Auditor General of British Columbia, 2008; IAP2, 2007a). The following table (Table 1) describes the different stages in the continuum of public participation, together with examples of appropriate tools for each stage.

**Table 1.** Diferent stages in the participation continuum (adapted from Krishnaswamy, 2012)

Exchange of Informations	Query	Collaboration	Co-management / Control
Information is communicated mainly in one direction, with limited opportunity for dialogue	Public opinion is sought and considered in decision-making. Information flows in two directions, but decision makers are not required to integrate comments received	Public representatives are actively involved in the development of solutions and directly influence decisions. This usually involves activities	Decision-making authority and sometimes responsibility for organizing public participation is partially or fully delegated directly to the public or its representatives
Examples: Discussion document, comment sheet	Examples: Public hearing, Inquiry, Open house	Examples: Round tables, workshops, Public advisory committees	Examples: Community Sports Council

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION CONTINUUM

The “continuum” that covers nominal participation (for example, exchange of information) and total participation (for example, co-management or joint management) that helps to conceptualize the level of participation expected when using a specific tool.

A person in a public participation process must be aware of where their experience or participatory approach fits into the continuum. This awareness will increase the transparency of the participatory process. It will also help the professional to select the appropriate tools for a participatory process. Participation covers a variety of approaches, processes and tools. There is no right way to "make" participation; it is an art and a craft and requires practice. However, there are some guiding principles and best practices that help to design effective participatory processes, which will be discussed in the next section.

## Head Topic 2. Benefits, challenges and best practices

The learning outcomes of this Topic are:

1. Recognize the common benefits and challenges of participation.
2. Understand the best practices of public participation (values and ethical principles).

There are benefits and challenges to participation (Beckley et al., 2005; DSE, 2005a). Professionals should be aware of this when planning a participatory process.

### **Some of the benefits of public participation are:**

- ✓ Participatory decisions are more inclusive from different perspectives and values;
- ✓ Participation can result in better and more informed decisions;
- ✓ Participation can generate durable and sustainable solutions;
- ✓ Participation gives legitimacy and encourages compliance with decisions.

### **Some of the challenges involved in participatory processes are:**

- ✓ Participation takes more time, effort and resources;
- ✓ Participation can achieve the results of the “lowest common denominator”;
- ✓ If done poorly, participation can exacerbate existing conflicts.

In addition, a stakeholder-driven public participation process generally responds to organized interest groups and may not lead to the same results as a more general public process.



Based on the experience and analysis of case studies, professionals and academics have identified some principles and best practices for participation (DSE, 2005a).

The International Public Participation Association (IAP2, 2007b) identified the main values of participation.

**The fundamental values of IAP2 are:**

Public participation is based on the belief that those affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.

- ✓ Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
- ✓ Public participation promotes sustainable decisions, recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
- ✓ Public participation seeks and facilitates the involvement of people potentially affected or interested in a decision.
- ✓ Public participation seeks the contribution of participants in the design of how they participate.
- ✓ Public participation provides participants with the information necessary for them to participate in a meaningful way.
- ✓ Public participation communicates to participants how their contributions affected the decision.

Finally, the International Association for Public Participation (IPA2, 2010) also has a code of ethics for its members, which we believe to be transversal to any project.

**The code of ethics is:**

- 1. Purpose.** We support public participation as a process for making better decisions that incorporate the interests and concerns of all affected stakeholders and address the needs of the decision-making body.
- 2. Role of the practitioner.** We will increase public participation in the decision-making process and help decision makers to respond to public concerns and suggestions.
- 3. Trust.** We will undertake and encourage actions that create trust and credibility for the process among all participants.

4. **Defining the role of the public.** We will accurately consider and portray the role of the public in the decision-making process.
5. **Opening.** We will encourage the disclosure of all information relevant to the public's understanding and assessment of a decision.
6. **Access to the process.** We will ensure that stakeholders have fair and equal access to the public participation process and the opportunity to influence decisions.
7. **Respect for communities.** We will avoid strategies that risk polarizing the interests of the community or that seem to “divide and conquer”.
8. **Advocacy.** We will defend the process of public participation and will not advocate for the interest, party or outcome of the project.
9. **Commitments.** We ensure that all commitments made to the public, including those of the decision maker, are made in good faith.
10. **Practice Support.** We will guide new professionals in the field and educate decision makers and the public about the value and use of public participation.

### Head Topic 3. Context and purpose of participation

The learning outcomes of this Head Topic are:

1. Recognize the variety of contextual factors in which public participation occurs;
2. Develop clear objectives for effective public participation in planning and decision-making processes.

Effective participation requires careful planning and a clear understanding of why participation exists. Why is participation necessary and in what context?

There are some framing questions that the proponent of a participatory process needs to ask before starting a participatory process (DSE, 2005b) and which we present in the following table (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Framing issues in a participatory process

WHY?	WHAT?	WHO?	HOW?	WHEN?	WHERE?
The situation that requires or produced the need for public participation	The desired objectives or results	Profile of potential participants - what are their interests, experiences, values, etc.?	The approach, tools and methodology to be used	The deadline for public participation	Location for public participation





There are several factors that affect participation (for example, social, political, cultural, economic and personal); all of this must be recognized when developing an effective public participation process. The historical, legal and political context needs to be taken into account when developing a public participation program.

A critical step in planning for effective participation is to identify what you want to achieve. Before starting a participatory process, managers must identify the “SMART” objectives: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Realistic and Deadline (DSE, 2005b).

#### Head Topic 4. Identifying who participates

The result of learning from this module is to identify different interest groups, stakeholders and citizens and how they can affect (or be affected by) decisions made in a public participatory process.

Planning for effective public participation involves identifying who should be involved from the start. This can embrace the involvement of the “general public” and organized interest groups. The “general public” encompasses several potentially conflicting values and perspectives.

Stakeholders in a participatory process are people or groups that affect or are affected by issues, decisions or results.

Groups and individuals who have a formal or informal participation in resource management decisions and include: tenure holders, resource users, local community groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and research institutions.

Stakeholders need information on how they will benefit from participation (reasons or gains).

Some of the reasons that can be used to explain the benefits of participation are:

- ✓ They are part of the property in the design, process and decisions (they have part of the role of “owners”);
- ✓ Learning and improving knowledge through participation (Individual and institutional self-improvement);

- ✓ Building relationships and networks (increasing your contact networks and influencing power);
- ✓ Emergence of diverse perspectives (self-realization and collective transcendence);
- ✓ Conflict reduction (fulfillment of its organizational role as a “peace maker”);
- ✓ Increase the chances of success of the decision or solution (fulfilling its organizational role as a solver, a changemaker).

For effective participation, people need to recognize and respect that other people may see the same problem from different perspectives. The participation professional needs to recognize and respect different values.

**One of the main values of participation is to be as inclusive as possible** (BC Auditor General, 2008). However, this is sometimes easier said than done. Some participatory processes used frequently are not widely inclusive, despite best efforts.

It is also important to consider the level of influence that different stakeholders have on the process and its results, the perspectives of stakeholders on issues involved in the process and past experience with participatory processes (Crosby, 1992). The DSE (2005c, pp. 87) suggests using a stakeholder analysis matrix to help identify which are the most important to be involved in a public participatory process. This matrix represents the level of “importance” of the stakeholders in relation to their level of “influence” according to the table below (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Stakeholder analysis matrix in the participatory process

INFLUENCE \ IMPORTANCE	High / Medium	Low / Unknown
	High / Medium	<p><b>A</b></p> <p>These are the most important. The implementing organization must consider its expectations and interests to ensure an effective coalition.</p>
Low / Unknown	<p><b>C</b></p> <p>These stakeholders must be adequately informed to protect their interests. They require only limited monitoring and management.</p>	<p><b>D</b></p> <p>These stakeholders are the least priority. Only require limited monitoring and management.</p>

The person(s) and organization(s) responsible for the development of the participation process must also be aware of their own interests, prejudices, and personal involvement in the process (DSE, 2005c).

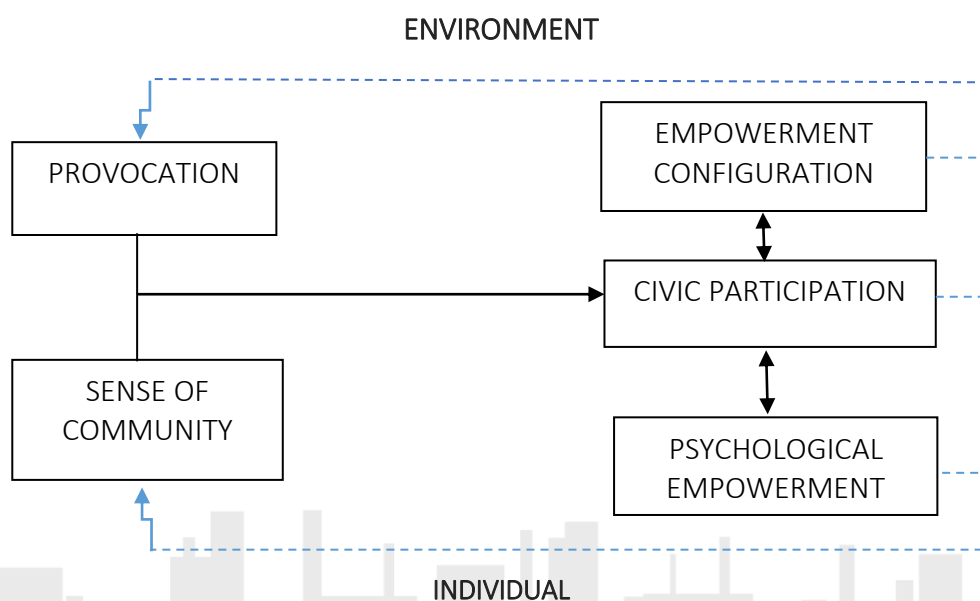
In this section it is described how the sense of community, civic participation and empowerment are related, strengthening each other.

Kieffer (1984) addresses the issue of participatory competence, which involves three factors:

- ✓ Self-perception of having skills for civic participation;
- ✓ Critical understanding of the socio-political environment;
- ✓ Cultivation of individual and collective resources for community action

The conceptual model represents the process described in the study by Kieffer (1984) and supported by studies of empowerment and civic participation. The model is based mainly on the conceptual discussions of Florin and Wandersman (1984), Zimmerman (1995, 2000) and B. McMillan et Al. (1995). It includes qualities of the individual (for example, psychological empowerment), of the environment (e.g. provocation, organization bases), and the interaction between them (sense of community, civic participation) as illustrated in the following figure (Figure1).

**Figure 1.** Kieffer’s Participatory Process Model (1984)





The model begins as an individual living within a locality or relational community, which shares a sense of community.

The sense of community includes the qualities mentioned by D. W. McMillan and Chavis's (1986) in the definition of sense of community, such as affiliation, sharing of emotional connection, integration and satisfaction of needs among members, and mutual influence between members of the community. It also includes civic duty, or a personal sense of responsibility towards the wider community.

The sense of community is threatened by provocation. This provocation may be a recent, specific event, such as a company's plan to demolish a village to build a dam, a violent personal attack, or a contractor who does not honor his commitments (Burgess, 1990; Kieffer, 1984).

A salient provocation to the community leads to the next three elements of the model: civic participation by the individual, involvement with an enabling configuration and psychological strengthening of the individual.

Citizen participation has been a concern of social scientists. Much of this research referred to the impact of demographic variables, such as race, socioeconomic status, property title and duration of residence.

## Head Topic 5. Plan an assessment

The result of learning this topic is to identify ways to assess the effectiveness of participatory processes.

A critical, but often missing or neglected part of the planning of participatory processes is monitoring. A best practice for participation is to plan the assessment to “close the loop” and generate valuable feedback and learning (lessons learned). This includes returning to participants to identify how their contributions were included in the decision-making process.

A good practice of public participation is to develop a plan to assess whether the participatory process has been successful.

When planning the development of an evaluation structure, we propose, in the table below (Table 4), a grid with a set of questions that must be considered for an effective evaluation.

**Table 4.** Grid of questions for an evaluation structure

Purpose of the Evaluation	For whom and what...	What data...	Resources..
What is the purpose of the evaluation?	Will different individuals and organizations be interested in different parts or the whole process?	What information will be collected and how will this process be?	What resources (for example, time, funding and experience) will be needed to conduct the assessment?

The “SMART” objectives described in Head Topic 3 can also be used to develop an evaluation framework for a participatory process by responding to each letter of the acronym as shown in the figure below (Figure 2).

**Figure 2.** Acronym SMART



## Head Topic 6. Tools for Participation

The learning outcomes for this last topic sum up to identifying a variety of participation tools that can be used to achieve different levels of participation and thereby provide guidelines for selecting appropriate participation tools for specific situations.

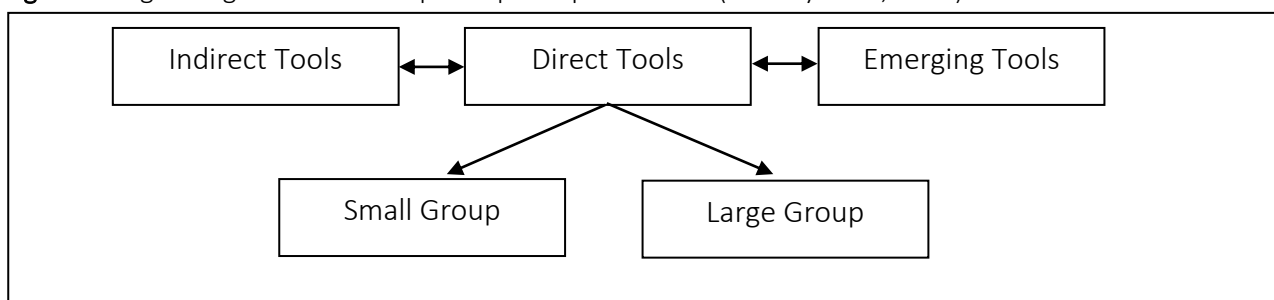
The choice of the appropriate tool (or toolkit) for participation will depend on the purpose of the participation.

Therefore, the selection of tools varies according to:

- ✓ Management goals, objectives and desired results;
- ✓ The profile of the community and the political-social context;
- ✓ Project size, budget, schedule and allocated resources;
- ✓ Skills and availability of the management team.

Beckley et al., (2005, p. 27) suggest an organizing structure to classify various tools for public involvement as shown in the figure below (Figure 3).

**Figura 3.** Organizing framework for public participation tools (Beckley et al., 2005)



They classify the tools as indirect (not in person) or direct (in person) and then divide them into useful tools for small or large groups.

Indirect tools include comment sheets, toll-free lines, referendums and surveys. Direct tools include public advisory committees, focus groups, workshops, round tables, open houses and public hearings.

In turn, emerging tools are designed to convey information or technical details visually and are generally electronic or internet-based. Examples of this are community-based mapping, 3D visualization software and participatory television-based tools (Beckley et al., 2005).

The distinction between direct and indirect public participation tools may be related to the public participation continuum (see examples in Table 1 of this Manual, p. 5).

The more collaborative participatory methods tend to be associated with face-to-face techniques (direct tools).

However, this general distinction is starting to fragment with “emerging” computer-based and “remote” participatory tools, such as social networks (for example, Facebook) and web dialogue techniques.

Generally, a set of tools will be employed at different stages of a public participation process, starting from the reach of interested parties, building a common understanding, defining a shared vision and objectives, for evaluation and decision making.

In participation planning, it is also useful to assess the performance of the different tools based on criteria and indicators of a successful participatory process. In the context of evaluating a public participatory process, the criteria can be broadly defined as values inherent in a successful participatory process. The indicators measure aspects of the criteria and are used to assess the success and suitability of the tools used in a participatory process to achieve the desired results or the correct decisions.

The table shown below (Table 5), adapted from Beckley et al. (2005, p. 21), classifies criteria and indicators to evaluate the participation tools in three main elements: breadth, depth and results.

**Table 5.** Central evaluation criteria and indicators of successful participation tools (adapted from Beckley et al. 2005)

CENTRAL ELEMENTS	CRITERIA AND INDICATORS
BREADTH	<p><b>Representation</b> – Incorporates a wide range of public values;</p> <p><b>Accessibility</b> – Be available for all public interests;</p> <p><b>Renewal</b> – Allow new participants over time;</p> <p><b>Anonymity</b> – Protect participants’ identities when necessary.</p>
DEPTH	<p><b>Hearing and dialogue</b> – Promotes a flow of information in both directions;</p> <p><b>Flexibility</b> – Be flexible in reach;</p> <p><b>Deliberation</b> – Offers opportunities for frank and open discussions;</p> <p><b>Transparency and credibility</b> – Promotes and makes available, in a clearly understandable way, independent contributions from scientific and other sources based on value;</p> <p><b>Relationship Building</b> – Promotes positive personal and institutional relationships.</p>
RESULTS	<p><b>Relevance</b> – Influences the decision-making process;</p> <p><b>Efficiency</b> – Improves the quality of decisions;</p> <p><b>Mutual learning</b> – contributes to the knowledge of all participants;</p> <p><b>Reciprocity</b> – Reward or incentive;</p> <p><b>Cost-Benefit ratio</b> – The product or result is economical in relation to the inputs.</p>

The main element **“breadth”** refers to the degree to which a process adequately incorporates a wide range of *public values* in the decision-making process.

The **“depth”** of public participation measures the **quality of participation** and addresses the levels of exchange between participants in a participatory process.

The third main element, **“results”**, refers to the **goals of the participatory process** - how well the process met the shared vision or goals identified by the participants.

Often, agencies sponsor a participatory process and have specific goals and expectations for the process. This central element measures the extent to which the process meets these goals and expectations.

Beckley et al., 2005 have a reference guide that assesses a variety of tools for direct and indirect public participation against these criteria and indicators.

Specific public participation tools may not rank high for all criteria and indicators. For example, indirect methods, such as surveys, offer little opportunity for participants to learn more about a problem. But they are generally economical, anonymous and more representative of the general public. On the other hand, direct methods, such as workshops and round tables, offer great learning opportunities, to establish dialogue between individuals with diverse values and to identify viable solutions.

A participatory process should not be thought of as a single event or application of a single tool, but as a long-term process that integrates a series of appropriate tools.



## Conclusion

This handbook provided an overview of the knowledge, tools and skills to better implement participatory processes.

Its aim is to meet the needs of managers, coaches, staff and decision-makers in organizations that involve sports and young people, and whose work requires them to involve the public in the decisions they make. This can include researchers, consultants or university employees, politicians and the general public.

The use of the tools introduced in this Handbook can help to make decision makers talk about public participation and control dissent to incorporate meaningful public values into the planning and decision-making process. “Making” participation effectively is a technical skill that can be taught and, therefore, acquired.

Many decision makers and managers “participate” every day, but many do not have the opportunity to reflect on their practice or think of ways to do it better.

This Handbook was designed to provide that opportunity and provide useful knowledge and tools that can help these decision makers and managers / coaches to engage young communities and the general public to make good human decisions for greater critical environmental awareness through sport as privileged vehicle for the process to take place.



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