



Advanced

Evaluating Stakeholder Engagement and Public Consultation

A Practical Guide to monitoring and evaluate key stakeholders





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CHAPTER ONE

What is Evaluation?



Introduction

This e-book details a simple yet effective Evaluation Framework that you can use or adapt for evaluating your engagement and consultation processes. The Evaluation Framework developed by Allison Hendricks of Darzin Software came from the work done in creating the “Brisbane Declaration” at the United Nations conference on Community Engagement.

It also provides a brief overview of some other approaches to evaluation that have been developed over time in the public participation and community engagement industry. We look at some of the key challenges and barriers to evaluation.

Evaluation continues to be a challenging topic. We hope this Evaluation Framework can help you on your journey to developing an evaluation approach for your process/organisation.





It is useful to differentiate evaluation from assessment, the former referring to the structured process of establishing success ... against preset criteria, the latter referring to the relatively unstructured analysis of an exercise without preset effectiveness criteria, as occurs in the conducting of descriptive case studies.

(Frewer, 2005: 94)



Why Evaluate?

What gets measured gets done!

Accountability –to make sure the best use of resources has been made: public money, stakeholder's time and efforts.

To establish whether or not a fair process was run; whether the participants views and needs were accurately and fairly represented in a decision process.

Learn from past experiences for the purpose of making future improvements.





Challenges

Why we don't evaluate more often

Evaluating consultation or engagement processes has a number of challenges:

1. How do you define the 'end' point of a process? It is not always clear cut. The broader social and environmental impacts of a process may take many years, and can be hard to disentangle from other events.
2. How to determine the best measurement criteria – should they be process based or outcome based? If a mix of both, should they have equal weighting? The lack of broadly accepted criteria or evaluation methods makes this more of a challenge.
3. Participation satisfaction is always a challenge – the issue of perceived versus actual impacts can be problematic.
4. Lack of time, resources and expertise to undertake evaluation is usually a significant barrier. But often the lack of commitment to evaluation from senior management can be the biggest challenge of all.



*Do good processes necessarily
produce good outcomes?*





CHAPTER TWO

How to use the Framework





How the Framework was developed

Evaluation continues to be a challenge for stakeholder engagement and consultation practitioners. How do we judge success – is it when everyone likes you/the outcome or is it the number of people who participated in your process? We still see too many people relying on very basic criteria (number of participants) to judge the effectiveness of their engagement process, or worse, not evaluating at all.

Some years ago as a representative of the International Association for Public Participation Australasia (IAP2) I was involved with Dr Lyn Carson and Max Hardy (also representing IAP2) and the Queensland Department of Communities in drafting the document that became known as the Brisbane Declaration – a draft United Nations Charter on community engagement. We ran a brief international engagement process to obtain input and feedback from the wider profession as well as from conference participants.

Subsequent to that I developed a framework for evaluating community engagement processes based on the Brisbane Declaration. I presented a draft outline of a framework to people in the industry and asked for their assistance in developing it further, specifically asking if they could test it in their organisations or projects. A number of people tested the framework on projects and in university assignments. I think the Framework still has relevance today and I hope you find it a practical source of information to help you design your evaluation processes

Allison Hendricks

Director, Darzin Software



How to use the Framework

The framework has three parts:

1. A list of core principles and indicators for each principle –drawn directly from the wording of the Brisbane Declaration
2. A rating scale to measure performance against each of the principles and indicators.
3. A set of questions that provide more clarity on the indicators and that could be used to guide evaluation processes.





When using the evaluation framework

Consider

Context

–Context –document the context within which your organisation is working, or your project is set. Part of this context analysis may involve assessing your community engagement plan using the framework. What level of performance on each of the criteria is your project/process aiming to achieve. These will help form some specific objectives in your community engagement plan.

Outcome

–Outcome –define the parameters around how you will measure the outcome of your process. Measuring outcomes is challenging and difficult (eg: how do you determine the start/finish times to measure the outcome?).

–Use the questions to measure not only participant satisfaction, but also the viewpoints of the decision makers, the team implementing the process, non-participant stakeholders, etc.

Process

- Involve the community in the engagement process –eg: get them to design a set of questions, or describe a standard that would exemplify the level that they think the project/organisation should be at for each Principle.



CHAPTER THREE

The Evaluation Framework





360 degree Evaluation

Your evaluation process should seek formal evaluation from multiple perspectives in order to create a 360 degree evaluation.

The three groups are:

- 1 Stakeholders (participants and non-participants)
 - . The process implementers (your consultation team)
- 2 Decision makers
 - .

3 Stakeholders	Implementers	Decision makers
Participants	Consultation team	People who will make the decisions
Non-participants (randomly selected stakeholders who did not participate in your processes)	Broader team who have been involved in the project/process	People who will assess recommendations of the participants



Principles

Integrity



Inclusion



Deliberation



Influence



Capacity



Sustainable Decisions



Principle: Integrity

Participants are not clear about how/what they can influence

Participants have a clear sense of the scope of the process and their role in it at all times

Poor relationships characterised by suspicion and mistrust

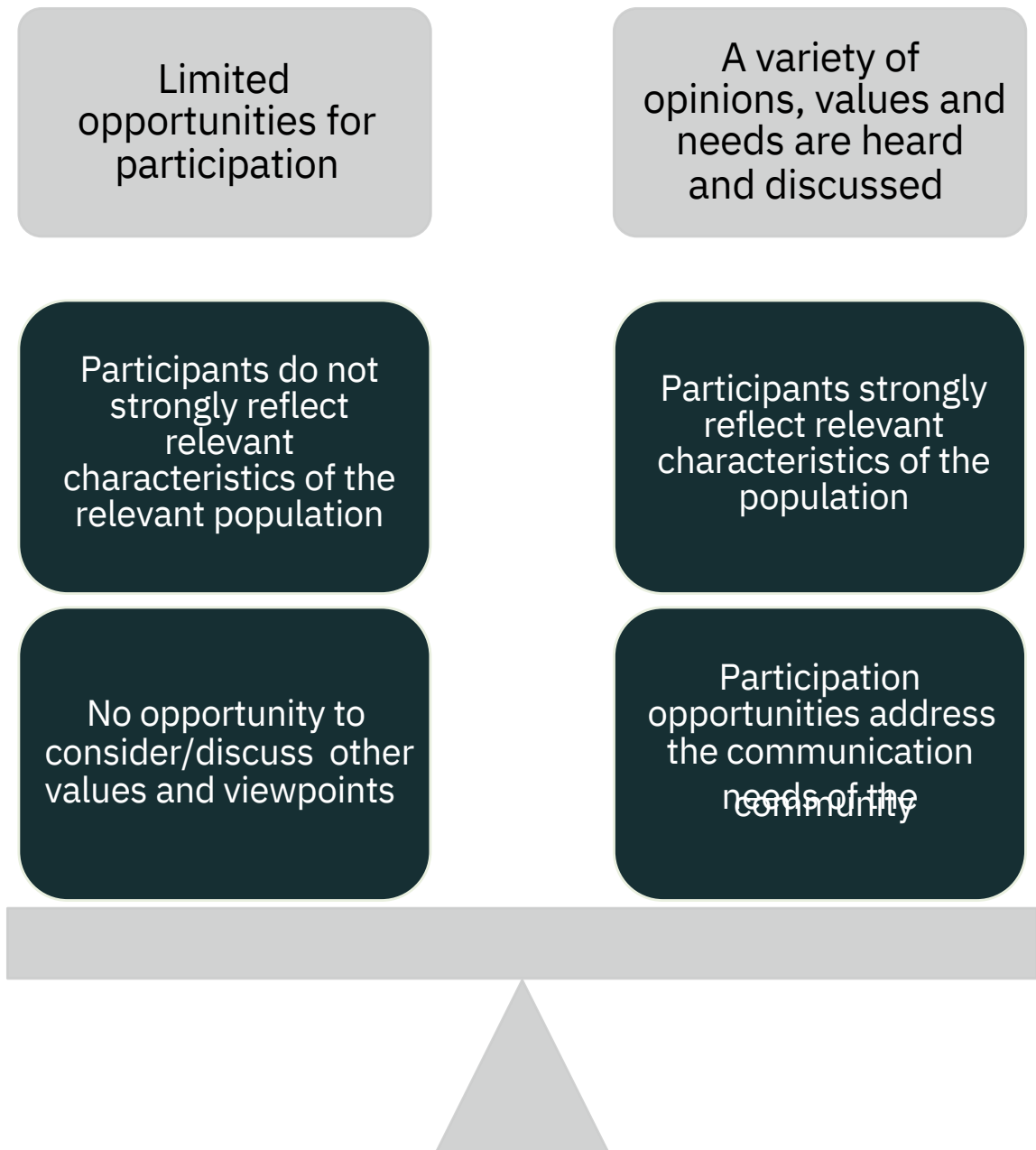
Scope, timing and process of decisions not clearly communicated

Roles and responsibilities not clearly defined

Participants have a high degree of trust and good relationship with the proponent

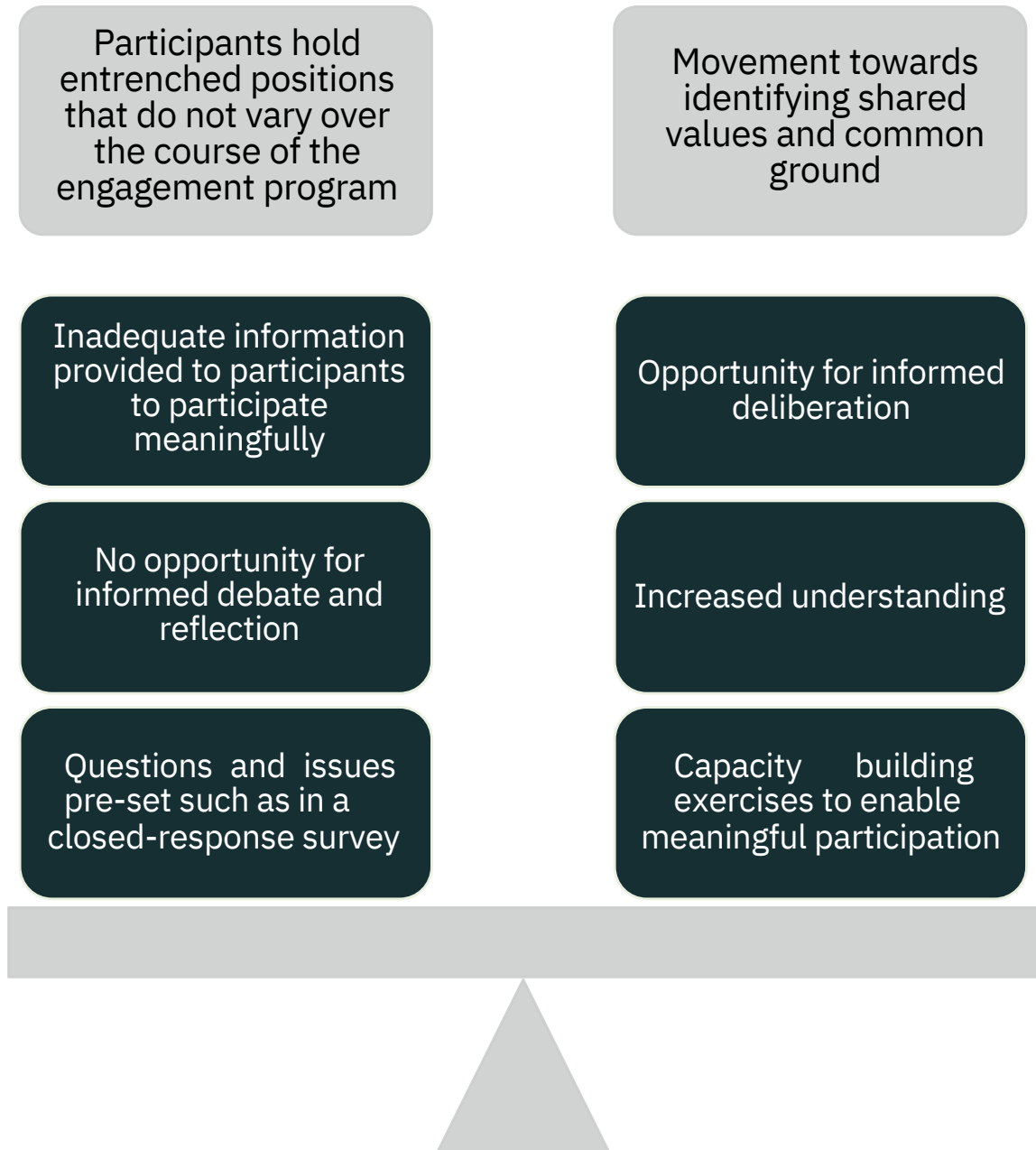
- Openness and honesty about scope and purpose
- Appreciate respective roles and responsibilities

Principle: Inclusion



- Opportunity for a diverse range of values and perspectives to be freely expressed and heard
- Representative of the population
- Appropriate and equitable opportunity for all to participate

Principle: Deliberation



- Sufficient and credible information for dialogue
- Space to weigh options, understand and reframe issues, movement towards developing shared understanding, identifying common ground and shared values

Principle: Influence

Decision processes
are not transparent in
demonstrating the
impact of participation

A clear demonstration
of how participants
have influenced the
outcomes

Little promise of
enactment of
recommendations

Strong contract to
enact
recommendations

Scope of influence
is not defined or
understood by
participants

The community
plays an active
role in deciding
how they will
participate

- People have input in how they participate
- Policies and services reflect their involvement, and their impact is apparent

Principle: Capacity

People feel unable to participate meaningfully in discussions

Participants are given adequate information and resources to participate meaningfully

Participants demonstrate low level of ownership or commitment to the process

They do not believe that their participation will have any impact

Participants do not understand key elements of the discussion

Poor and marginalized communities are not involved in the engagement process, and they do not benefit from it

People have a high degree of confidence in the process and believe that their contribution will have an impact

Participants share a high degree of ownership of the process and outcomes, and they benefit from it equitably

- Address barriers
- Build capacity and confidence of people to participate meaningfully
- Develop confidence in the process and the value of their participation
- Engender a shared sense of ownership and commitment to the process and outcome
- Adequately resource indigenous peoples and the poor and marginalised to participate meaningfully in the broader community
- Ensure that they have a stake in the outcome and benefit equitably as a result of being involved

Principle: Sustainable Decisions

Poor relationships
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suspicion and
mistrust

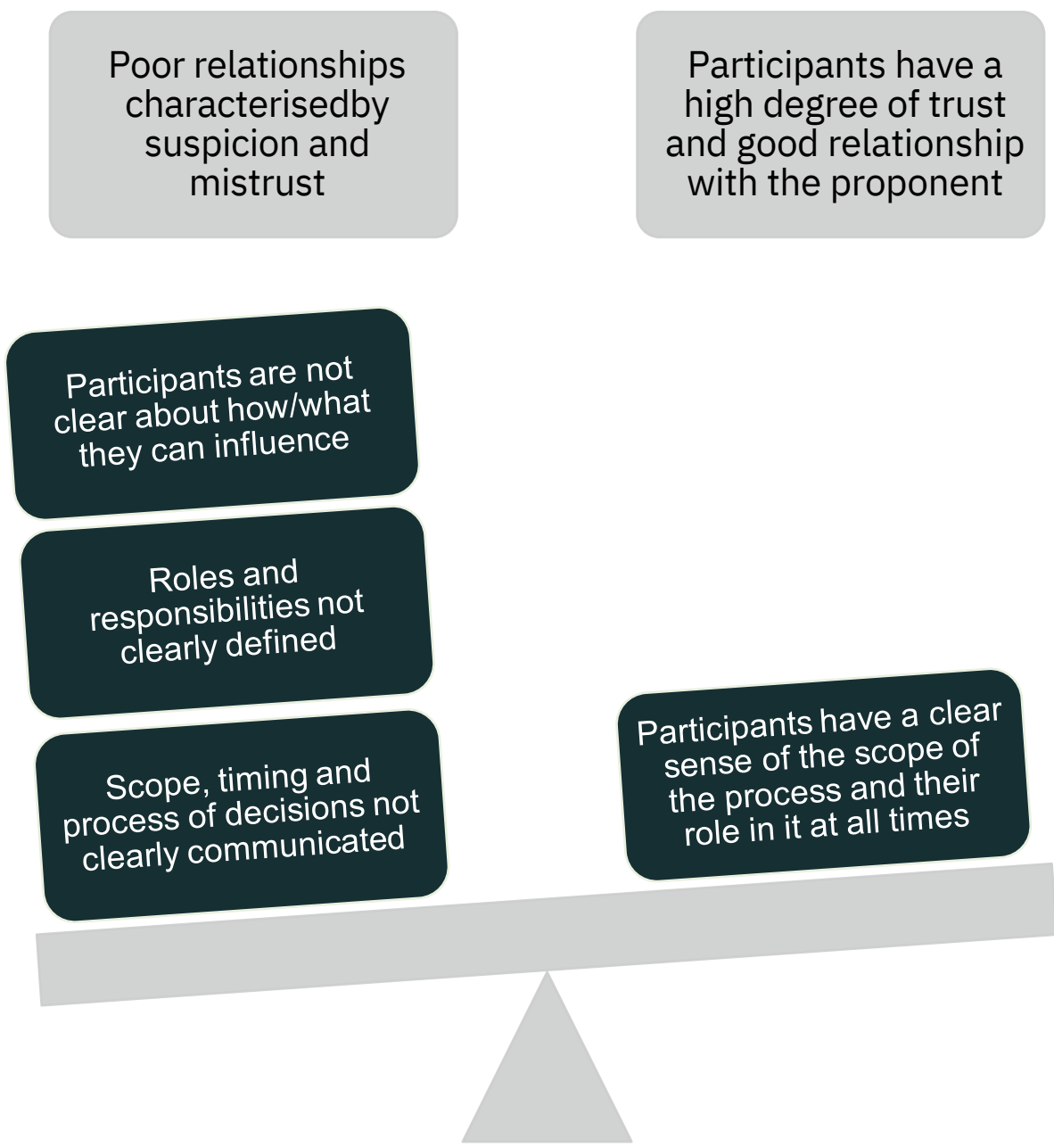
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role in it at all times

- 
- Openness and honesty about scope and purpose
 - Appreciate respective roles and responsibilities



CHAPTER FOUR

Evaluation Questionnaires





How to design your questionnaire

- ❖ Use the indicators provided for each of the principles to craft a simple questionnaire. Some recommendations:
- ❖ Use a rating scale of 1 to 7 for all your questions
- ❖ Keep the language simple and avoid value-laden terms
- ❖ Frame the questions neutrally
- ❖ Don't skip any of the principles –or you risk skewing the results in a direction that will be seen as a manipulation of the outcome. For example you may not have done any capacity building exercises for your project, this does not mean that you should remove those criteria from your evaluation. It is important to understand the need for capacity building to enable meaningful participation. When interpreting the results the reasons for excluding capacity building from the program can be presented for the low score.
- ❖ Remember that the purpose of the evaluation is not to just get the highest score possible, but to also look for areas for improvement. “What would it take for us to improve our engagement and consultation processes?” should be the key driver when interpreting results.



Structure your questions

- ❖ Group the questions into a structure that makes sense for the respondents. Don't group them by principle. For example if we were to ask participants who are unhappy with the outcome of a consultation process to rate us for "integrity" they might be tempted to give us a zero. But if you ask them if they "understood the scope and purpose of the engagement and if it was communicated early in the process and at every step" they might give us a more accurate rating which is one of the criteria that forms the score for Integrity.
- ❖ A better grouping for your questions would be:
 - *Scope of process*
 - *Participants*
 - *The process*
 - *The outcome*
 - *Relationships*
- ❖ If you'd like to see how Darzin Stakeholder Management Software can be used to set up and run these evaluations using the built-in survey tool, get in touch and [ask for a demo](#).



Tips for developing an Evaluation Culture within your Organisation

- ❖ Identify a group of people (stakeholders, decision makers and process implementers) who are willing to respond to your evaluation questionnaire at regular intervals over the life of the project. This will give you a good measure of how performance on various aspects of your program change over time, as well as giving you an opportunity to improve performance and outcomes.
- ❖ Get other teams/projects in your organisation to use the same evaluation questionnaires and approach—develop consistency in approach.
- ❖ A consistent approach will help you develop benchmarks for your organisation over time.
- ❖ Consider benchmarking with another organisation in a similar industry or location—see how you compare to your peers. Often your consultants or software service provider may be in a position to help facilitate some informal benchmarking between organisations of similar size/purpose while maintaining confidentiality.
- ❖ Clearly communicate the outcomes of your evaluation to the broader team. Be specific about what they can do to improve various scores. For example, saying “we need to score better on integrity” does not help much. But saying “we must always communicate the scope of influence and roles of the participants in every process” is actionable, clear and *will* improve your scores for integrity.



Want to know more?

If you'd like to see how you can implement this simple yet highly effective approach to evaluation within stakeholder management software, ask for a demonstration of Darzin.

[Ask for a Demo](#)

Or get in touch if you'd like more information on using the Evaluation Framework, such as a set of sample questions to use in your evaluation questionnaires. Email us as info@Darzin.com.



CHAPTER FIVE

Some Other Evaluation Approaches





Evaluation approaches and frameworks in the consultation/ engagement field

- ❖ Webler's "fairness and competence" framework (1995).
- ❖ Beierle and Cayford (2002) identified five broad goals to assess public participation:
 - Incorporation of public values into decisions
 - Improvement of the substantive quality of decisions
 - Resolution of conflict among competing interests
 - Building trust in institutions
 - Educating and informing the public
- ❖ Rowe and Frewer's evaluation framework (2004) (see next page)
- ❖ International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) set of Core Values:
 - The public should have a say in decisions about actions that could affect their lives.
 - Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
 - Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
 - Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
 - Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
 - Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
 - Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.



Rowe, Marsh & Frewer's Evaluation Framework

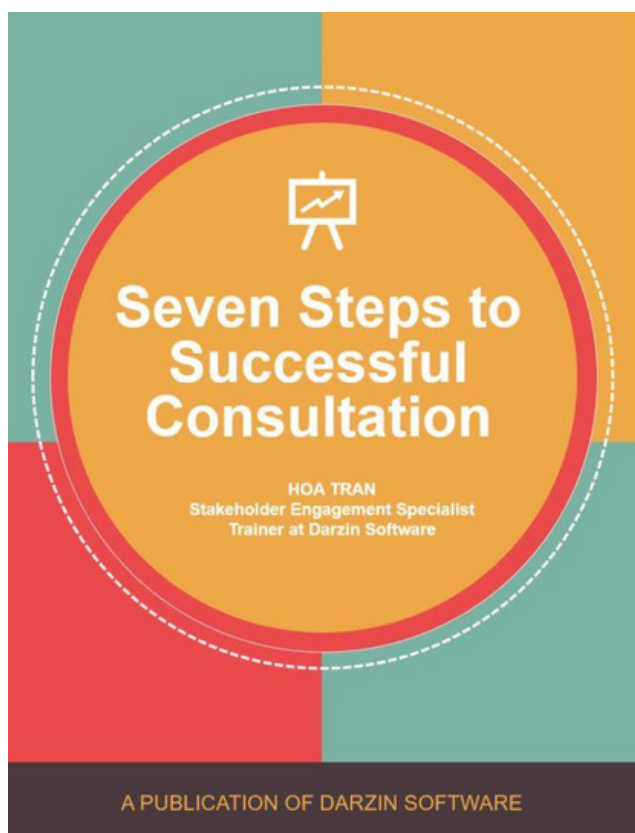
Rowe, Marsh & Frewer defined their criteria as Acceptance or Process criteria

Criteria	Definition
Acceptance criteria	
Representativeness	The participants should comprise a broadly representative sample of the affected population.
Independence	The participation process should be conducted in an independent (unbiased) way.
Early involvement	The participants should be involved as early as possible in the process, as soon as value judgments become salient.
Influence	The output of the procedure should have a genuine impact on policy.
Transparency	The process should be transparent so that the relevant population can see what is going on and how decisions are being made.
Process criteria	
Resource accessibility	Participants should have access to the appropriate resources to enable them to successfully fulfil their brief.
Task definition	The nature and scope of the participation task should be clearly defined.
Structured decision making	The participation exercise should use/provide appropriate mechanisms for structuring and displaying the decision-making process.
Cost-effectiveness	The procedure should in some sense be cost-effective from the point of view of the sponsors.
Rowe, G, Marsh, R & Frewer, L J (2004) "Evaluation of a Deliberative Conference", Science Technology & Human Values, Vol. 29 (1), Winter, p.93	



Guide to Better Consultation

Want to improve your consultation processes and outcomes and not sure how? Check out our free e-book on this topic.



[Download it now](#)

About Us

Allison is a founder and director of Darzin Software which she established in 2004. Allison has worked in senior consulting roles and led stakeholder engagement teams for many significant projects. She has advised governments and written guidelines and standards for stakeholder engagement.

Since 2004 Allison has been training clients from wide range of industry sectors in how to structure stakeholder management, data capture and analysis to ensure the right data is captured and that meaningful information can be obtained from the data.

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Darzin Software

Darzin is a specialist software package that has been designed to manage the feedback from consultation activities. It allows you to quickly perform true qualitative analysis of feedback from online and offline channels and prepare Consultation Reports in a fraction of the time it would normally take using Excel spreadsheets and the like. Darzin is easy to use and getting started is simple, particularly with the excellent training and onboarding process that is included in the license fees.

Darzin provides an end-to-end software solution to help you manage all aspects of your consultation program including:

- Managing details of stakeholders
- A central record keeping place for feedback from various channels including online forums, surveys, submissions; and offline sources such as meetings, phone calls, emails, etc.
- The ability to analyse text-rich feedback through it's unique easy-to-use qualitative analysis function. You can drill down to comments on individual topics.
- Manage tasks, grievances and other work flows
- Sending out information such as e-newsletters
- Report on consultation activities
- Create a full audit trace of all consultation activities –essential for managing the risk associated with consultation exercises

Since 2004 Darzin has helped hundreds of clients make better decisions. They run more efficient and effective community consultation and stakeholder engagement and save time and money through using Darzin.

We work closely with the industry to ensure that Darzin is always leading and supporting emerging best practice in the field of public consultation. Our focus is to provide a comprehensive software solution that is highly user-friendly and backed by excellent customer support and service.



Towards Better Stakeholder Data Management

Want to get better at documenting your consultation process and outcome and not sure how? Check out our blog post on 3 keys to successfully implementing consultation management software

[TAKE ME THERE](#)

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