
Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)8 of the Committee of Ministers to member States with a view to the implementation of the European Landscape Convention of the Council of Europe – Landscape and democracy: public participation

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 16 October 2019
at the 1357th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, under the terms of Article 15.b of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Considering that the aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve a greater unity between its members for the purpose of safeguarding and realising the ideals and principles which are their common heritage;

Having regard to the provisions of the preamble of the 2000 European Landscape Convention (ETS No. 176), according to which “landscape is a key element of individual and social well-being and that its protection, management and planning entail rights and responsibilities for everyone”;

Having regard to the provisions of Article 5.c of this convention, according to which each Party undertakes “to establish procedures for the participation of the general public ... and other parties with an interest in the definition and implementation of ... landscape policies”;

Having regard also to the provisions of Article 6.D of this convention, according to which each Party undertakes to “define landscape quality objectives for the landscapes identified and assessed, after public consultation”;

Recalling that under Article 1.c of this convention, “‘Landscape quality objective’ means, for a specific landscape, the formulation by the competent public authorities of the aspirations of the public with regard to the landscape features of their surroundings”;

Recalling the provisions of Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)3 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the guidelines for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention on participation (Part II.2.3.A), as well as Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)7 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the contribution of the European Landscape Convention to the exercise of human rights and democracy with a view to sustainable development;

Considering that the procedures for the participation of the public with an interest in the definition and implementation of landscape policies contribute to fostering better governance based on co-construction of knowledge, active citizenship and the provision of services that meet the needs of the population;

Wishing to respond to the public’s wish to enjoy quality landscapes and to play an active part in their protection, management and planning,

Recommends that the governments of the States Parties to the European Landscape Convention consider, where necessary and appropriate, the forms of participation of the public with an interest in the definition and implementation of landscape policies, as they appear in the appendix to this recommendation.

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Introduction

Some forms of participation of the public with an interest in the definition and implementation of landscape policies can be used to facilitate public information, consultation, dialogue, influence on decision making and decision making as such. The considerations that follow facilitate their implementation.

– Building the public's knowledge is essential to the process of its participation in the definition and implementation of landscape policies.

Courses or training sessions may be organised for the public and administered by those who participate. This approach can be followed when it comes to sharing a common vision of the future of a landscape. The acquisition of knowledge can even become an important aspect of landscape analysis. The courses should, when they end, lead to tangible results.

– To enable effective participation, it is important to ascertain at an early stage who is concerned and who should be included in the process.

It is necessary to identify all the stakeholders involved in the definition and implementation of projects. Each of them may have a preference for a particular method or collaborative tool. In addition, some stakeholders may not be interested in participation, while their participation is necessary to achieve a good result. The best way to get an overview of the different people involved is to meet the inhabitants of the area concerned and ask them: which interest groups and networks are active there; who are the key people; what are the resources of the different stakeholders to participate; and which of any associations and local authorities should be involved?

– The landscape being complex, its understanding requires the use of various disciplines.

It is important to create networks of professionals and experts (geographers, geologists, hydrologists, climatologists, biologists, historians, archaeologists, farmers, foresters, public works engineers, urban planners, architects, landscape architects, developers, lawyers, economists, sociologists, artists, etc.) to discover and know all the dimensions of the landscape. Everyone should keep an open mind to various disciplines and be curious about what others have to say. Processes on a large scale should also be considered, overcoming traditional categorisation: even in an area of high natural value, social issues are important. In addition, an extensive network makes it possible to share experience that can be of benefit to all.

– The involvement of experienced public figures helps to reach target groups much more effectively.

Experienced public figures with good communication skills can become referents or supporters to carry out local development projects or to facilitate contact with certain groups of people who have difficulty in making their voices heard (children, adolescents, vulnerable people).

– Discovering the landscape reveals its values.

Discovering the landscape encourages discussion and is a good way to start a participatory process. Participants' expectations should be identified and the participation of those who wish to be involved – regardless of their age and mobility – should be facilitated.

– Supporting documents with a descriptive or evidential value facilitate the discussion on a landscape.

To initiate a discussion on a landscape project, participants can refer to supporting documents (paintings, drawings, 3D plans, photographs, documentaries, films, texts or sound recordings, for example) corresponding to their vision of a landscape and discuss its valuable aspects and its weaknesses. This allows them to present their opinions. It is possible to use documentary materials on several landscapes to better understand the various opinions and agree common standards in terms of quality of landscape.

– *Landscape analysis must be the starting point of any project.*

In the work of landscape identification and assessment undertaken for the creation of landscape atlases or catalogues, landscape maps or landscape character assessment maps, the population and experts must be given the opportunity to share their knowledge. The Geographic Information System (GIS) can be used to pinpoint specific places. The public participation in this work enables the gathering of information, notably on social issues, and thus establishes an improved knowledge base. Even if an analysis is never really completed and the discussion continues, a regular inventory should be produced. The participants will be able to see how the experts have taken into account their points of view and ask for any errors to be corrected.

– *Storytelling about a landscape promotes the interests of the parties concerned with the definition and implementation of landscape policies and can reinforce their commitment to take care of the landscape.*

Stories can be told indoors or outdoors, or even via an online communication system. Participants listen to the story, and can then comment on it. Stories do not have to be extraordinary; stories that might be considered mundane are often very interesting. They may indeed describe the relationship that people have with their territory and the way they perceive the landscape. Furthermore, according to research, people understand a situation better by listening to a story that may concern them. Stories arouse emotions and activate memory. They are more easily assimilated to understand a landscape than technical terminology and statistics.

– *A process undertaken for landscape protection, management and planning, based on the particular values that the population and other parties concerned assign to it, should focus on the potential of a situation or place, rather than on any possible problems.*

In order to encourage the involvement of the public and other parties concerned with an interest in the definition and implementation of landscape policies, it is more constructive to work on positive feelings rather than on negative ones. Landscape discussions often focus on problems; while taking into account the living conditions of the population of a territory and its aspirations, it is also possible to foster a constructive approach. It tends to be the people who live and work in a place who best know the value and resources of their territory. Adopting a landscape protection, management and planning process assumes that stakeholders are well chosen, that the proposed project is appropriate, and that the exercise is time-limited.

– *A good group dynamic is a prerequisite for successful participation.*

The manner in which a meeting is organised is important. Ideally, it should simultaneously foster creativity, sustainability and efficiency. Moreover, efforts should be made to allow everyone to state their opinion. A meeting agenda is necessary, so that participants can agree on its purpose and the implementation of its results. It can be beneficial to use the services of a co-ordinator for communication. Choosing a neutral co-ordinator can encourage the participants to express themselves more freely. The choice of the meeting room and its furnishings, as well as the schedule of the meeting, and the refreshments on offer, promote good group dynamics.

– *In all group dynamics some form of conflict arises. Stakeholders may not agree, but disagreements need not lead to conflict.*

One should be prepared for situations of conflict caused by diversity of opinions, and prevent or resolve them as they arise. In cases of disagreement, it is important to focus on the subject of the disagreement, not the person: participants should be allowed to speak without interruption, but discussions that can degenerate should be forestalled. Listening is the best way to solve differences of opinion. Conversely, abuse of power is a frequent cause of conflict. It is important that professionals and experts, representatives of public administrations and policy makers consider the impact of their power. In certain issues a consensus cannot be reached. It is then necessary to take a decision at a political level.

1. Information

Informing the general public is a prerequisite for public participation in the definition and implementation of landscape policies. The public must be well informed and take note of the points of discussion. If certain subjects are not suitable for consultation, the public must retain the right to be informed of decisions taken. In addition, the public must be able to provide policy makers and representatives of public administration with information that they may wish to obtain. All parties must be informed in a transparent manner about the process of participation and the results achieved.

1.1. *General assemblies*

General assemblies are a relevant means of simultaneously informing a large number of people on an important subject.

A general assembly is essentially a one-way communication method that should not be confused with dialogue: it is primarily a method of informing the public. Its purpose and the topics to be addressed must be clear to all participants. Oral information should be supplemented with various written and support materials. It should be stated on the invitation that this is an information meeting. These types of events usually generate debate, but it is not always possible to hear all opinions. An experienced person should lead the meeting, allow various participants to speak and manage situations as they arise. A general assembly is easy to organise and makes it possible to give the same information, at the same time, to many people.

1.2. *Websites*

Websites are simple and efficient tools for simultaneously transmitting information to many people.

A website is not a static means of communication; it must be updated continuously and adapted to new requirements. Although most people have access to computers and the internet, not all citizens can be reached through a website. It is important to consider how information is provided and to whom it is addressed.

Several levels of information can be provided by a single support: it is, for example, possible to present a comprehensive description of an issue for the attention of residents, media and other stakeholders, and to provide more detailed information to users, professionals and experts. A website is a rapid means of communication for spreading information. It must be professionally managed, which requires resources in terms of skills and tools.

1.3. *Printed documents*

Printed documents convey a clear message but may not always be relied upon to reach a particular discussion group.

Although websites and the internet support much of the flow of information, printed documents (brochures, reports, posters, etc.) are preferable in many cases. When a document intended for distribution is prepared, it is important to use clear and accessible language, avoiding the use of overly technical terminology. The target group should be defined, so that the information can reach the intended recipients. It is not always possible, for example, to address adults and young people in the same manner. The contents of the printed documents must be also available on the relevant website. Detailed information can be provided, and discussion forums can be initiated. Printed documents are also a good way to publish a programme of activities.

A method frequently used is conducting dialogues in the neighbourhood, where people are approached in the street. In such situations, it may be useful to have additional information to hand out. Leaflets or brochures that provide or explain facts are appropriate as they are easy to take away for later reading. It is necessary to know if the information to be provided in a printed format should be conserved or not. If there is no need to keep them, other means of information can be used.

1.4. *Video*

It is possible, through relatively simple tools, to produce a video that can be posted online on a website.

The use of video often brings policy makers closer to citizens. Videos are a great way to invite people to meetings or citizens' panels. The training of speakers will make them more confident during the recording. The message delivered and the content of the information are indeed more important than the visual design, and simplified production methods exist. The time required to complete a brief interview requires minimal mixing. However, the costs of the entire production, from recording to the final product, increase the cost of a video. The presentation of a video on a home page may require special software tools.

1.5. Study trips

A study trip can help inform and improve the knowledge of stakeholders.

A study trip can be an opportunity to consider the existence of various situations or to find inspiration from a project carried out somewhere else. It can take place nearby or be carried out further away, depending on what needs to be shown and the available resources. Transportation is often by bus, which limits the number of participants.

2. Consultation

The purpose of consultation is to request an opinion from a group of people on a specific topic. This group of people should be composed of professionals, as well as representatives of the public. The methods and tools used can be simple or more elaborate. In the event of a controversial issue, the representatives of the public can present the solution they prefer, justifying their position. Different projects must be prepared by professionals and experts. The public representatives must then be able to choose the solution they prefer. The process can lead to consultation of professionals on a particular point, or to a survey of a group of professionals, open to the public.

2.1. Questionnaires

Questionnaires are used in surveys (opinion polls, knowledge tests for example) to collect information.

A questionnaire can be printed out and sent to people by mail (a reply-stub can be prepared), or can be made available online. This method makes it possible to reach many people simultaneously in a short time (it would take much longer to obtain as many answers through interviews). The fact that the interviewees can remain anonymous, however, can make any further explanation impossible (in this respect, an interview is more appropriate).

2.2. Discussion groups

A discussion group facilitates easy and fast consultation of participants. However, the organisers must have enough time to form a group and bring its members together.

A discussion group is used to discuss an issue of landscape protection, management or planning through dialogue. The method is useful but does not allow for in-depth consideration of an issue. Before planning the work and inviting participants, the composition of the group should be considered: participants can be selected for their representativeness of the whole population or of some of its groups. Each meeting should last from two to three hours. The discussion should be conducted by a moderator who has good knowledge of the subject and is prepared for the discussion. It is useful to arrange the chairs in the meeting room in a semicircle, so that all participants can see the information presented. The optimal size of a discussion group is from about 6 to 12 people, so that everyone is comfortable enough to give their opinion. It may be helpful to offer coffee or a meal, to encourage people to take part in the meeting. It is possible to treat one problem in several groups. This method works best in homogeneous groups dealing with a specific subject, although groups dealing with a variety of topics may be useful at times. Discussion groups are generally quite economical but it may be necessary to plan the cost of the meeting room and miscellaneous expenses (coffee, meals and childcare, for example).

2.3. Map reading

Public representatives are invited to comment on a landscape issue by identifying on a map the area concerned.

Public representatives identify on a map a specific location or area that will be discussed. They indicate it with a written mark and state whether they wish to comment on the reasons guiding the choice of this location. All responses are geographically related and can be analysed using a GIS. The survey should not last more than 15 minutes. The established questionnaire should be pretested on a group, before being used more widely. This method should allow people to express their opinion and make proposals. The information obtained can be collected without further effort, and then compared. Maps used in an internet survey can be printed and used in meetings. It is essential to have sufficiently detailed maps. The costs of using this method may vary depending on the number of professionals and experts consulted.

2.4. *Citizens' panels*

Citizens' panels imply that its participants are chosen at random, reaching people who would otherwise not be part of the debate.

A citizens' panel can be organised as a physical meeting (in a given space) or in a virtual way (e-panel). It provides quick answers and requires little material means (through the remote participation of panel members). A citizens' panel can take place over a day, in the form of a workshop with various activities. Nevertheless, management tasks do take time (inviting participants, formulating questions, processing the answers, managing the panel, communicating the results to panel members and publication of results). It is advisable not to call on panel members more than two to four times in a six-month period, to avoid disengagement.

2.5. *Public voting*

At large meetings, an electronic form of public voting facilitates the understanding of the opinions of a group of people on one or several issues.

The objectives of the meeting should be clearly formulated and the results of the votes cast during the meeting should be made available promptly, using a website or other information channels. The questions should be worded so that it is easy to answer them and they should be tested beforehand. The voting method allows for the immediate reply to questions. These answers, as well as written messages, can be presented on a screen, as and when they are received. Everyone has the opportunity to give his or her opinion; this mode of operation prevents the people most at ease from monopolising the meeting. This method also allows many questions to be asked in a relatively short time, and the answers remain anonymous. Meeting participants can quickly see if their opinion is shared by other people and if other opinions are expressed. This method is often appreciated as it provides an accurate picture of what the consulted people think on many topics. It is advisable to have suitable premises for holding the meeting (by estimating as accurately as possible the number of participants); to have appropriate voting equipment; and to send the invitations well in advance by preparing the questions submitted for debate.

2.6. *Short message service panels*

A short message service (SMS) panel operates through text messages sent from mobile phones.

The public is invited to register on a website to participate in a SMS panel. This method facilitates fast feedback from many people. Since the answers are to be given via text message, the questions must not be too complicated. Some types of questions, such as the following, would be appropriate:

- questions calling for the following responses: “Yes” / “No” / “Do not know”;
- questions requesting participants to rank elements;
- multiple-choice questions;
- questions allowing for short answers by SMS.

Questions should be easy to understand, and the answers should be published on a website. If minors are invited to participate in the panel, the permission of their legal guardians is required. Invitations should target various defined groups, such as the residents of a certain area, youth or other. It should be decided whether the cost of sending the replies is at the expense of the respondent or the recipient of the SMS message, and to inform the panel participants accordingly.

2.7. *Workshops on the quality of public space*

These workshops make it possible to measure the quality of a public space, even before time and money are invested in improving it. The opinions of the public users of the space, as well as that of professionals and experts, should be collected.

Participants take part in a workshop of half a day or more, led by a moderator to discuss the quality of public space design and how it is used. The opinions of the people who use this space should be collected, for example by asking them to fill in a questionnaire. This method can help users and managers of a public space to better understand how it works – considering its different uses – in order to identify its strengths and weaknesses.

Targeted improvements can then be proposed. It is thus possible to identify measures that can be used to encourage the public to participate in the improvement of parks, streets, playgrounds and other spaces.

3. Dialogue

It is important to place dialogue at the heart of public participation in the definition and implementation of landscape policies. It is essential that everyone can express their opinion and defend their vision of an issue, without necessarily having to reach a consensus. A number of tools to promote good dialogue exist.

Increased participation often takes longer and therefore requires more resources. However, in order for the process to be creative, it is necessary to have sufficient time. Dialogue can even save time by avoiding bad decisions or preventing conflicts. The public commits to issues of concern to them and they protest if they consider that projects or decisions are unsatisfactory. In addition, it should be borne in mind that the population has knowledge that can be of great help to policy makers and representatives of the public administration.

3.1. Open forums

Open forums are a totally free form of meeting, whose agenda is not defined in advance – the only known parameters being the theme, as well as the place and time of the meeting.

Open forums can be useful if there are many participants (from 10 to several hundred). They are presided over by at least one person and can last from half a day to three days. The forum takes place as follows. The participants meet and jointly decide on the specific subjects to be discussed in connection with the theme. People who wish to do so can propose subjects, and those who raise the most interest are then debated. Discussion topics are listed on the agenda of the various meetings, each of which is led and summarised by the person who suggested the theme. The day starts with an inspirational lecture and is then divided into three sessions. Participants are divided into groups in different rooms, and discussions are terminated when it is time for coffee or lunch. During discussions, participants are free to change groups, as this can enrich other discussions by the exchange of good ideas between groups. At the end of the day, the groups get together to present a summary of discussions and evaluate the results of the meeting. It is useful to distribute documentation reflecting the meeting among participants, as this provides a basis for further work.

3.2. Collective landscape reading walks

Collective landscape reading walks are based on the idea that participants of a focus group think more creatively outside a meeting room.

Collective landscape reading walks can be prepared for a group of participants ranging from 10 to 30 people. It must lead them to express their creativity and to collect their ideas and proposals. This method has the advantage of allowing participants to stay together throughout the walk. They stop at places they have selected themselves or that have been chosen by the organisers. These stops allow them to take notes that can then be used as part of a discussion. Some walks can be made to evaluate new neighbourhoods. The participants are residents, administration officials, professionals and experts. If it is useful to involve more people in the evaluation, several walks can be arranged. A number of stops are strategically decided beforehand, on the basis of their functionality. Stops could be made, for example, at the entrance to the area or a square. The participants are not supposed to exchange ideas with each other during the walk, but just to take notes at every stop. After the walk, participants gather in a room to discuss their observations and everyone can express their opinion. All opinions are presented to the participants through a flipchart or by the means of a computer with projector. This allows everyone to ensure that no observation is misinterpreted and that all contributions are taken into consideration.

A variant of this method is to organise a meeting “in the street” between policy makers, representatives of the public administration and citizens to make them walk together while asking questions on a particular subject (by means of a predefined form or questionnaire). Policy makers and representatives of the public administration then analyse the data collected and present the results at a public meeting. It is important to set the theme, meeting agenda and venue in advance. This method favours consultation but requires that work be continued so that the participants in the process can develop and implement a landscape project.

3.3. *Workbooks*

This method involves the preparation of three workbooks. It requires resources and time from both public authorities and participants.

Workbooks contain information and questionnaires distributed to defined study groups. A first workbook introduces questions to one or more study circles, which provide the answers. These answers are gathered in a second workbook, presented for comments to the population. The comments thus received are compiled in a third notebook, which presents the result of the work. Public authorities should refer to it when making decisions. This method requires about a year of work to complete, which can be a disadvantage. It is effective, however, in that it effectively communicates knowledge and establishes a well-founded dialogue between public authorities and participants.

3.4. *Online chat conversations*

Chats promote communication through short messages, in real time.

A chat could be open for a limited time, for example from 7 to 8 p.m., to allow citizens to put questions to project leaders. Given that a chat is fast and that many people can ask questions in a short time, it is necessary to involve people experienced in this form of communication in order to respond to requests. Everyone should be able to see all the questions and answers. The data collected during the session can be saved for future use and publishing. Apart from the work to prepare and conduct this activity, the effort required to use this method is fairly minimal. However, not everyone may want to participate in such exchanges as they take place at a fast pace.

3.5. *Discussion forums on the internet*

Discussion forums allow a large number of people to hold exchanges and consult a conversation, without necessarily being present at the same time.

A discussion forum can be used for fully open discussions, in which everyone is invited to participate. It can also be used in a narrower setting, such as a panel of citizens, or as a way to continue a discussion after a focus group meeting. The discussion can be entirely text-based or can include sound and image, according to the objective pursued and the theme dealt with.

It is important to consider early on whether the forum will be open to everyone or closed and only accessible to a limited group, such as a citizens' panel. Facilitating contributions featuring multimedia provides support to people with difficulties expressing themselves in writing. A moderator regularly checks comments to avoid inappropriate content being posted. Many people can take part in the discussion, as it is public. This method assumes that participants have access to a computer with an internet connection and that a moderator leads the discussion.

3.6. *Dialogue cafés*

A dialogue café is a method to encourage people to discuss current topics in an informal and comfortable setting.

A dialogue café is held in a friendly setting and the debate is led by a moderator. The meeting begins with the presentation of a brief summary of the facts that are the subject of the discussion. It is advisable to provide information documents to participants. Around each table (in small groups), the participants examine the discussion theme. After a while, they change tables (and groups). The process generally follows three phases: an initial analysis; an in-depth analysis; and the formulation of a proposal. A report of the discussions is prepared. Ideas and opinions are exchanged among participants during or after the meeting. The moderator must be experienced, the topics treated must be relevant, and the questions must be asked with clarity. This method does not require a complex set-up and allows for the organisation of creative meetings. If the venue were a commercial café, with about 10 participants sitting around small tables, the meeting would entail little expense. The cost would be higher for large events gathering many participants in one place.

3.7. Debates

Debates are conducted on a given topic by a panel of policy makers and representatives of a public administration, a panel of experts and a panel of citizens' representatives. The debate is usually conducted in the presence of a large audience.

The purpose of holding a debate is to enable experts, professionals and stakeholders to make a thorough presentation of a given topic to public authorities and representatives of the general public, in order that they in turn may ask questions. It can lead to long and interesting discussions. The chair of the meeting can conclude the session by inviting participants to present their messages. The debate requires a lot of preparatory work because it is necessary to gather and define the topics to be debated, and to find and invite participants, so that the panel of professionals and experts is truly diverse. The invitations to participate should state the debate's purpose and how the results will be used. The people supervising the debate must be experienced in running such meetings and several people should keep track of the discussions, possibly by recording them. The meeting should be well-planned and publicised in a timely manner to encourage strong participation. The organisers must decide how the assessments will be communicated to panel members and participants. Sufficient resources must be available to collect information, to communicate and document the debate.

3.8. Citizens' assemblies

A citizen's assembly is intended to address important issues, create dialogue and answer questions from the general public. It must take place in a venue suitable for meetings between citizens, with the participation of local associations and policy makers.

A citizens' assembly promotes ongoing co-operation, discussion and dialogue with a local population. It cannot decide on action to be taken but proposals may be formulated. Meetings may be held periodically (every two months, every quarter or twice a year, for example). They usually take place in the evening and are led by policy makers, assisted by representatives of the public administration, to present facts and working methods. The agenda is established and announced before the invitations are sent. To make sure all questions are dealt with properly, it is advisable to establish a list in advance. During an assembly, participants should be given sufficient time to ask questions. A report of the discussions is prepared and important documents are attached. The report is signed by the president of the assembly and two people representing the public. It is sent with an explanatory letter to participants and public authorities, posted in the town hall and made available on the internet. The costs of using this method are relatively low, the main expenses being related to the staff needed to plan and hold the meeting.

3.9. Dialogue workshops

A dialogue workshop is a simplified group discussion that allows participants to examine a problem in depth, discuss different opinions and develop points of view or arguments, in order to achieve a better understanding of a topic.

Dialogue workshops allow for in-depth discussion of a specific topic (reviewing its advantages and disadvantages, its financial implications and its long-term consequences) with some people for a few hours. They provide a better understanding of what motivates the opinions or statements of the general public. These workshops are similar to discussion groups but focus more on negotiation. Because they involve a limited number of people, they cannot be used to collect reliable statistical information to accurately measure public opinion. Dialogue workshops can last a few hours or a whole day. The fact that the points of view of the participants are developed throughout the discussion could mean that they are not representative of those of the public as a whole. However, the method could provide valuable information on the views of the public on a certain issue. The group discussion allows participants to present their opinions, compare them with those of other participants, and open up to other perspectives. These dialogues may build and strengthen relations between participants, and could provide them with new knowledge and skills. A dialogue workshop usually consists of 8 to 16 participants. The membership varies depending on the subject. Participants may be selected on the basis of demographic criteria, through interest groups, or randomly. Costs related to the use of this method are generally not very high, unless participants must be selected through a genuinely random process, which may involve fees. Incentives to participate in the workshop may be required. A budget for this activity should provide for the rental of the venue (an informal place if possible), food and special reception facilities, such as childcare.

3.10. *Analyses of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats*

This method allows for the analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats associated with a situation.

In many ways, the analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of an area can facilitate the participation of the public in the definition and implementation of landscape policies in order to ascertain the opinion of citizens about certain projects. This analysis model is usually presented as a matrix with four squares, which provides an overview of the most important factors to consider when analysing an operation, a project or a plan.

The work takes place in several phases:

- brainstorming, namely all participants raise as many different issues as they can that might affect the operation/issue/subject ahead;
- all the factors are placed on the matrix, with the agreement of the group;
- issues are evaluated on a scale from 1 to 5;
- measures are proposed: how to use strengths; how to treat weaknesses; how to take advantage of opportunities; and how to avoid or fend off threats.

The results of the analysis form the basis for the continuation of the process. It is important to clearly explain what the purpose of the meeting is and why this method is used. It is helpful for an experienced person to guide the process in order to synthesise the strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities that arise. It is also possible to use only the top two squares of the matrix simply to examine the strengths and weaknesses. This method determines how best to focus efforts, harness strengths, address weaknesses, reduce threats, and promote opportunities. It is important to have a meeting room with sufficient wall space to display notes.

3.11. *Councils*

Councils allow public representatives to meet to discuss alternative approaches in addressing a question. This may be to examine the advantages and disadvantages of a project and the consequences of its implementation.

Councils should be well prepared and organised to allow for clearly structured dialogue between the general public, stakeholders and other relevant participants. This method can be applied in situations where aims and possible courses of action remain open. For example, dialogue with the residents and stakeholders of an area may be engaged to determine what direction should be followed and what should be the basis for future changes and developments. Proposals are formulated and prioritised, and then passed to the public authorities for decision. The term “council” may be used when public authorities want citizens to prioritise one proposal, either through the internet or in meetings. They often commit to carry out the proposal which obtains the most votes. If the parties concerned by a project wish to actively participate in its implementation, a place, a specific objective and a timetable for action should be decided. The appropriate target groups or stakeholders must be identified and an adequate number of participants must be invited from the start. In order to oversee the process, an experienced co-ordinator is needed to lead the discussion. It is appropriate to define rules and clearly explain to participants to what extent they can influence the process. At the end of the project, it is necessary to communicate to them what has been decided, and how. This method requires important work and effort on the part of policy makers and representatives of the public administration, before, during and after the consultative exercise. Once the main proposals are made, no new proposals can be presented.

4. Influencing decision making

By participating in the definition and implementation of landscape policies, the public is involved in the long term, at each step of the development and formulation of a project, and can influence the decision-making process. It is important that those who can influence the decision-making process take part in the proposed exercises and that participants have confidence that their opinion will be taken into account. This is a very interesting form of citizen involvement which, however, requires time and resources (so that all points of view and proposals can be taken into account). In order for participation to be effective, adequate preparation is necessary and proper functioning of the work must be ensured.

4.1. Foresight workshops

Foresight workshops can bring out ideas and visions that are particularly interesting. The number of participants should be limited to 25 people. Work should be carried out in stages so that participants can present possible criticisms and solutions.

Foresight workshops bring together policy makers, representatives of the public and other stakeholders. Its purpose is to take advantage of the participants' opinions, using their creativity. Experienced moderators should conduct the debate. The participants are led to define a work theme, and develop it in order to implement their ideas and decide on the course of action to be undertaken. Working teams can be formed. Working papers are used and questions can be asked throughout the process. Participants are encouraged to contribute actively to the work by sharing their ideas and developing an action plan outlining what should be done, by whom, how, and when. The workshops can take place over a day or last up to three days. Follow-up work may be necessary as long as the schedule and deadlines are respected. It is necessary to have a large room with noticeboards on which to display notes. Foresight workshops have five phases of equal importance, devoted to the preparation of the work, the expression of criticism, the presentation of ideas and their realisation, the definition of modalities of implementation and follow-up. The participants in the workshop must commit themselves in the long term, in order to be present throughout the work.

Preparation phase – A theme is agreed and a co-ordinator is chosen. Practical matters such as the duration of the workshop, the venue and invitations to the participants must be arranged.

Criticism phase – This phase marks the official launch of the workshop. All members of the group must formulate the problems associated with the discussed theme. The participants are then divided into small groups to analyse and follow the instructions given.

Utopian phase – This phase allows participants to explore possibilities of landscape protection, management and planning. Everyone can formulate ideas and a vision of an ideal future. These ideas must be creative and attractive, even if they are not always feasible or realistic.

Embodiment phase – This is the most important phase of the workshop. The collection of problems and visions must be formulated in such a way as to be usable. Groups are formed to address the problems that have been identified. Participants then discuss how to proceed, who to involve, and the timing to be followed.

Implementation and follow-up phase – The results of the workshop are reported and distributed to all interested parties, whether participating in the workshop or not. In order for the process to continue, follow-up meetings should be organised regularly, so that the momentum is maintained by motivated people.

4.2. Charrette workshops

Charrette workshops bring together policy makers, representatives of public administration, professionals and experts and representatives of the public.

Through a variety of carefully prepared sessions led by a project manager, charrette workshops allow participants to develop a project together, and come up with a final proposal. If a workshop, in its remit, has omitted an important aspect for one of the stakeholders and a divergence of points of view arises, the sessions must be repeated. A workshop can thus take several days or up to a week. This method has many advantages, the main one being the promotion of dialogue and good co-operation between all the stakeholders involved. It is also very effective for quick decision making. However, it may not be suitable in various planning modes.

4.3. Conferences

Conferences promote connections between stakeholders: they contribute, through discussion, to overcoming certain obstacles or to promoting projects. They therefore allow for good, continued co-operation in the long term.

Conferences allow policy makers, representatives of public administration and various citizen groups, or those who may be interested in a specific issue, to meet to address certain issues in order to solve problems or initiate new action. This method involves the active participation of groups concerned in the planning process, the organisation and follow-up of the conference, the establishment of an implementation plan and the appointment of a co-ordinator.

Stakeholders are invited to take part in the discussions during the conference and ideas and proposals are presented. Preparatory work is needed to establish the programme, send invitations, book the meeting room and prepare documentation. The conference can last half a day, one or two days.

5. Decision making

A democratically elected assembly may decide to delegate its responsibilities, including its decision-making power, to a group of people chosen not for their political affiliation but on the basis of their personal capacities. Thus, there are cases regarding the management of protected natural areas or neighbourhood groups, for example, in which a group of people is given decision-making powers. The most common form of participation is, however, collaboration with representatives of the public administration to develop a project which is then validated by policy makers. Some methods of direct democracy allow citizens to participate in decision making on a particular subject.

5.1. Referendums

Referendums are a way of granting decision-making power to the public.

The result of a referendum can be binding or consultative; in the latter case, the authorities can take a decision bearing in mind the outcome of the referendum. A referendum can be conducted at national, regional or local level. The people concerned are invited to choose between very distinct alternatives. This method of consultation entails important administrative and organisational measures.

5.2. Users' committees

The establishment of a user committee allows the public to designate delegates to make decisions in certain areas.

A users' committee is an entity of participatory democracy that allows users to express themselves, to be heard and to make proposals to protect, manage and develop the landscape, in conjunction with professionals. In some cases, decision-making power may be delegated to it.

5.3. Working groups

A working group can be appointed to deal with a specific issue by making practical decisions.

A working group can be formed to define and/or implement a landscape project. The mandate and membership of a working group, as well as its working methods and decision-making procedures, should be clearly defined.