

Game book

Choose your own collaborative adventure in sustainable energy

Authors
Stefania Ravazzi and Gianfranco Pomatto
with the support of the ENLARGE research team

Project **ENLARGE**

ENergies for **L**ocal **A**dministrations
to **R**enovate **G**overnance in **E**urope



This project has received funding
from the European Union 2020
Research and Innovation Programme
under Grant Agreement n°727124

This gamebook is not about events that have actually happened, but the story of situations that could occur.

You will experience the story of a local government that is attempting to formulate and implement an energy saving plan.

Based on real-life cases, analysed by the ENLARGE research team, the story develops in a variety of scenarios that change according to the decisions of the reader.

The game book is intended to be a living tool for all communities wishing to kick off collaborative processes.

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ENLARGE is a 2-year project, funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme. The initiative aims to raise awareness of and provide information on participatory governance in the sustainable energy field, through a process of dialogue and exchange involving policy makers, civil society actors and practitioners

ENLARGE has been realised by Istituto per la Ricerca Sociale (IRS) – leader, Turin University, Stockholm Environment Institute Tallinn Centre –(SEI T) and the European Association for Local Development (ALDA).

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Online version of the CYOA book: <http://www.enlarge-project.eu/>

Comments and suggestions are welcome. Please send them to contact@enlarge-project.eu

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Credits

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to Luigi Bobbio,

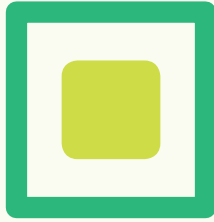
*a master of policy analysis
and conflict management*

1944-2017

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An introduction to the CYOA book

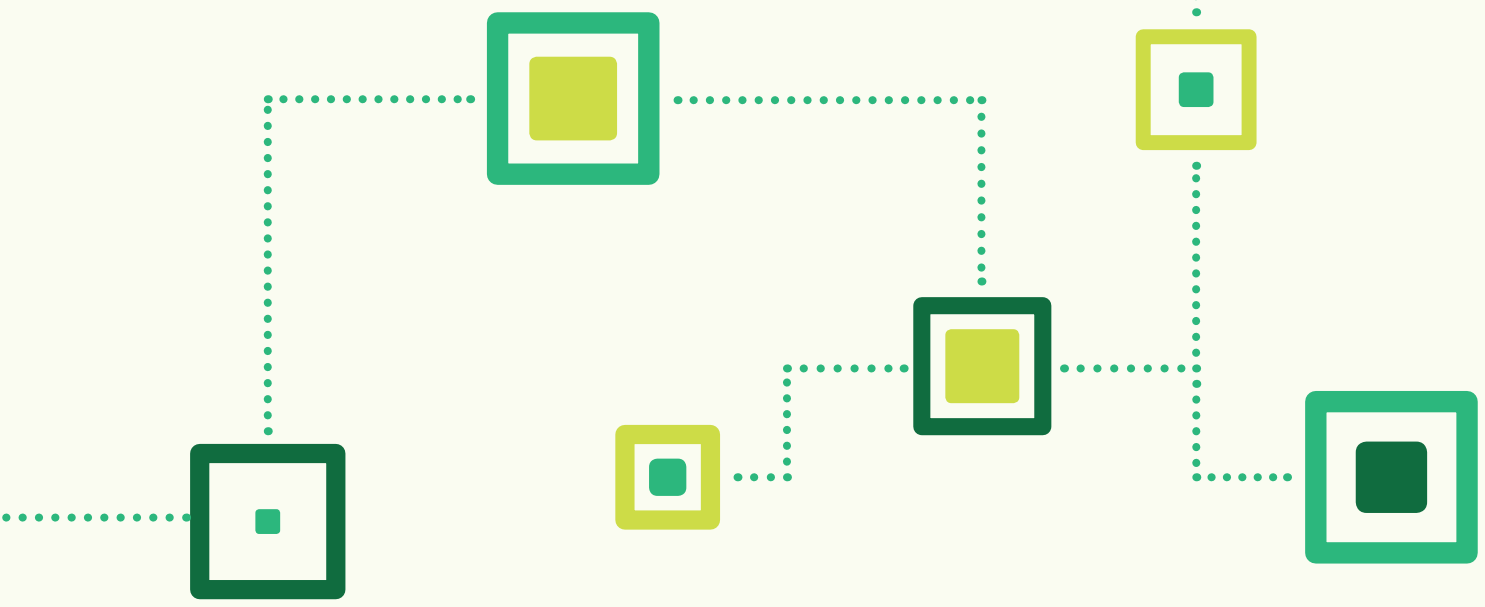
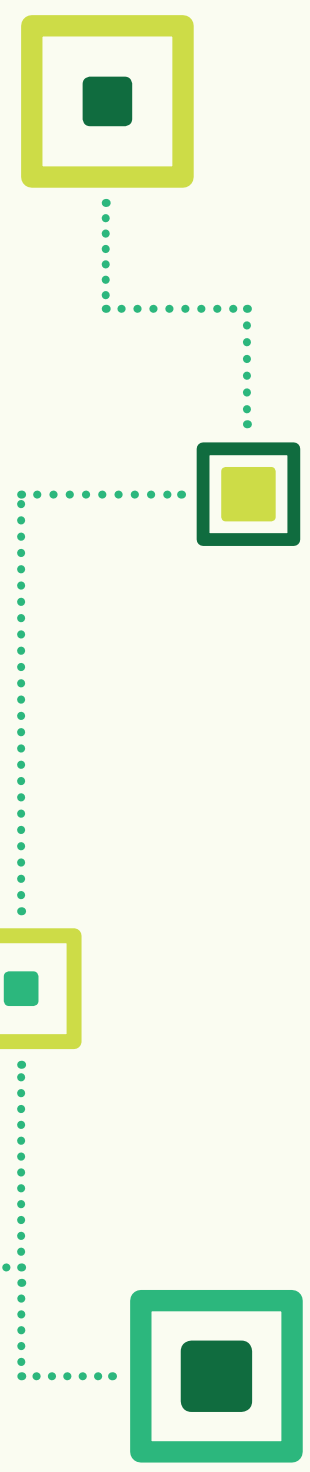
The ENLARGE Choose your own adventure (CYOA) book aims to support policy makers and stakeholders undertaking collaborative processes, by unveiling how different choices could contribute or hamper the achievement of positive policy results.

This book is not about events that have actually happened, but about stories that could happen in real life. Therefore, the legal and technical elements may be in contrast or differ depending on the national and local context. However, the structure of the events (i.e. public policies, the issues at stake, the actors' viewpoints, the conflicts that arise between them, the conflicting dynamics and the outcome of certain conflicts and negotiations), is based on decades of scientific literature and the real-life experience of the public administrations, public officials, professionals, stakeholders and other members of civil society that have contributed to the ENLARGE project.

Our story develops within a variety of different scenarios that change according to the decisions of a Mayor and an Executive member of the local government, who have decid-

ed to involve local citizens in the planning and implementation of a sustainable energy improvement plan in their community. Those involved in collaborative governance processes often face heated and frustrating scenarios that can create either a fruitful or disappointing outcome. This can depend on many factors, some of which can be unpredictable or uncontrollable. At other times, these factors may be intentional, such as the adoption and implementation of specific tools and strategies for the design and management of collaborative processes. Intentional decisions, which require careful evaluation of both the opportunities and their effectiveness, can also be challenged by unforeseen events. Based on the specific intentional decision made, the various turning points in our story give life to different dynamics and outcomes.

It's up to you to choose your path and reflect on the consequences of your decisions, many of which, as you will discover, can be ambivalent and not without necessary compromise.



The ENLARGE project

The ENLARGE project is founded on the idea that there is no optimal design in collaborative governance. This does not mean that the way in which you involve citizens in policy making is of little importance. On the contrary, the ENLARGE project is based on the assumption that project design and management choices can really make a difference. However, the ENLARGE project also aims to broaden peoples' perspectives on this issue. Until today, the academic studies on democratic innovations have attempted to evaluate the effectiveness of these processes in terms of achieving quality standards based on specific ideal models or principles. In this book, we take a look at these processes from a systemic perspective, chiefly their ability to be integrated into the democratic systems where they are introduced.

In particular, we investigate three dimensions, which are fundamental for the full integration of these processes into the democratic system:

- *Social legitimacy*: the ability of the collaborative process to be viewed by the public as a legitimate policy-making tool, especially by the civil society actors and citizens who do not take part in the process.
- *Institutional sustainability*: the ability of the collaborative process to be integrated into traditional democratic processes, without generating conflict and resistance from politicians and public officials
- *Policy effectiveness*: the ability of the collaborative process to influence official decisions and projects.

The ENLARGE project analysed these dimensions in two phases:

- Firstly, the ENLARGE Consortium conducted a review of the scientific literature on collaborative governance and sustainable energy and analysed 31 selected cases of collaborative policies promoted in various European states;
- Secondly, it gathered policy makers and stakeholders of the 31 cases in a deliberative event, during which they shared their experiences of and views on collaborative processes, paying particular attention to the three above-mentioned dimensions. The research team collected and analysed the speeches of the participants in the deliberative event. Based on the materials collected, the research team started drafting the CYOA book. It chose a topic that could fit both a co-design and a co-production process and developed a series of stories, realistic even if not real.

The ENLARGE project aims to provide an ongoing platform for policy makers and stakeholders to share collaborative experiences and shortcomings. The readers' contribution to the CYOA book is welcomed and the online version of the book allows policy makers, practitioners and scholars to contribute to the text and to make the book more complex, and realistic.

To consult the online version of the book and participate in the ENLARGE debate, please visit the website of the project or contact the ENLARGE team by e-mail: <http://www.enlarge-project.eu>
contact@enlarge-project.eu

CYOA book map and structure

The book is about a local government that is attempting to formulate and implement an energy consumption reduction plan. The plan involves the location and construction of a new wind farm and the implementation of a series of interventions to improve energy efficiency in public and private buildings. Two main stories are described: a *co-design story* and a *co-production story*. Each story develops around a number of key decision-making stages:

- How should the public be involved? (co-design vs. co-production);
- How much leeway should citizens be given in the co-design process? (broad vs. limited);
- Which co-design steering model is the best option? (political steering with in-house management of the process vs. establishment of a stakeholders' committee and outsourcing the project management process to public participation professionals);
- Which citizens' involvement model should be used in the co-design process? (open door, direct interactions between politicians and citizens and

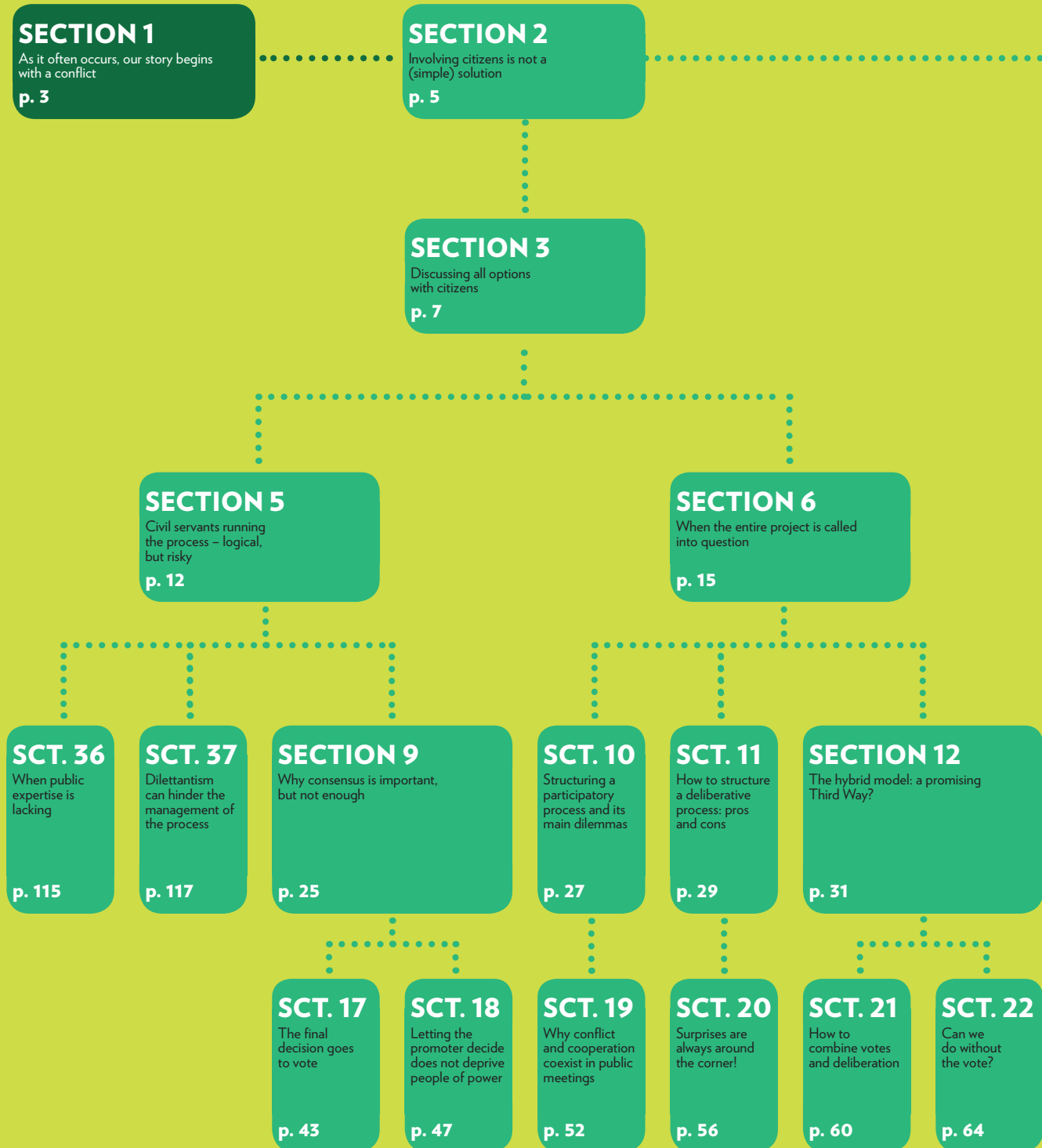
weak facilitation vs. random selection of participants, involvement of technicians and experts, strong facilitation by PPPs vs. a combination of open door and random selection of participants, public interaction with politicians, civil servants and experts, mixed facilitation and conflict management styles);

- What are the final recommendations for the deliberative stage of the co-design process? (vote vs. unanimous recommendations vs. unanimous proposal+vote or final report);
- How can you promote public participation in the co-production process? (material incentives vs. immaterial incentives);
- How do you help citizens maintain the co-production initiatives? (in-house management by public officials vs. peer-to-peer mentoring by specifically trained citizens).

Throughout the book these decision-making stages will unfold sequentially but, in real life, they can also often occur in parallel. The following maps describe in detail how the stories unfold.



CO-DESIGN MAP



SECTION 4

Limiting co-design from the start:
a predefined project

p. 10

SECTION 7

Maintaining the political leadership of
the process

p. 20

SECTION 8

Managing conflict through external
facilitators

p. 22

SCT. 38

Risky decisions
and their
implications

p. 118

SCT. 39

Many possible
combinations

p. 119

SECTION 13

The stages of the participatory model
and its pitfalls

p. 34

SCT. 14

Rischi del
modello
partecipativo e
strategie
per ridurli

p. 36

SCT. 15

Le tappe
del modello
deliberativo
e le sue insidie

p. 38

SECTION 16

Le tappe del modello
ibrido e le sue insidie

p. 40

SCT. 23

Normal
dynamics and a
few unexpected
events

p. 69

SCT. 24

Putting the
participatory
model into
practice

p. 73

SCT. 25

When the vote
leaves everyone
bewildered

p. 77

SCT. 26

The other
side of the
deliberative
process

p. 81

SCT. 27

Many ingredients
make a recipe
harder to
manage

p. 86

SCT. 28

The hybrid
model: more
opportunities or
more risks?

p. 91

CO-PRODUCTION MAP

SECTION 1

As it often occurs, our story begins with a conflict

p. 3

SECTION 29

When citizens contribute directly to policy implementation

p. 96

SECTION 30

Why activating citizens is not as simple as it seems

p. 98

SECTION 31

What it means to adopt non-monetary incentives

p. 101

SECTION 32

Tools matter

p. 103

SECTION 33

Mentors' role in co-production processes

p. 106

SECTION 34

The difficult path of non-monetary incentives

p. 109

SECTION 35

When 'peer-to-peer' mentoring can make a difference

p. 112

As shown in these maps, the book includes 39 sections, which unfold in different ways depending on the readers' choices.

The events bring to light various viewpoints and implications and also include *quotes* from real experiences of collaborative processes made by the ENLARGE stakeholders, who contributed to them either as protagonists, participants or observers.

Each section will clearly describe the following issues:

- The motivations of the various actors;
- The potential consequences of the planning and management choices in terms of social legitimacy (i.e. the ability of the collaborative process to be viewed by the public as a legitimate policy-making tool), institutional sustainability (i.e. the ability of the process to be integrated into the traditional democratic processes) and policy effectiveness (the ability of the collaborative process to influence policy decisions and have an impact on the implementation stage);
- The strategies that could be adopted to correct, at least partially, the negative effects of certain decisions or to react

to unexpected events that can destabilise the collaborative process.

When a story ends (i.e. no other decision-making alternatives are available) a *moral* will help the reader to understand why things happened the way they did. You could of course choose to go back and make different choices (a prerogative that usually is not available in real policy making!).

It is worth noting that the 39 sections included in this book do not exhaust all the possible choices that can be faced during a policy process. In fact, the decisions behind the establishment and management of a collaborative process are countless. The decisions included in the CYOA book are the most relevant ones unveiled during the ENLARGE project debate.

As the goal of the ENLARGE project is to represent an ongoing platform for policy makers and stakeholders on collaborative processes, we encourage the readers to send us other alternatives and examples that will contribute to make the book more complex and realistic. For instance, sections 36, 37, 38 and 39 have been added following the suggestions of the stakeholders engaged in the testing of the CYOA book.

The story

This book tells a very unique story.

It is unique because it is both imaginary but also firmly based on reality. It is not about events that have actually happened, so it does not adapt perfectly to every context from a legal, political, organisational or technical perspective. However, the structure of the events (i.e. public policies, the issues at stake, the opinions of the actors, the conflicts that arise between the same, the conflicting dynamics and the outcome of certain negotiations) are based on decades of scientific research in conflict management and citizens' engagement and on the real-life experience of the public administration, officials, professionals, stakeholders and other members of civil society that have contributed to the ENLARGE project.

In this story, in the role of the Mayor and the Executive member for the environment (the potential promoters of a participatory process), the reader must decide how events will develop by making some key decisions that lead to a variety of different scenarios. An imaginary Mayor and Executive member for the environment have decided to involve local citizens in the planning and realisation of a sustainable energy improve-

ment plan within their community. However, they are not working alone: governing a territory and creating public policies means interacting and meeting with numerous public and private actors (in fact, the story starts with a brief description of the actors who will appear as events unfold). As such, when planning and managing the collaborative process, they will need to make some important decisions, while also bearing in mind the differences of opinion and conflicts that could arise between the various actors. In addition, they also have to consider that during the planning of collaborative process many decisions reveal themselves to be ambivalent and not without necessary compromise.

In this book, the readers create their own story, as they steer the administration through the different scenarios or make U-turns on their decisions. The various turning points in our story take into account the different events that can occur, as well as their benefits and consequences.

Are you ready to choose your role in the process and start your adventure?



The context and actors

The municipal territory: a medium-sized, imaginary borough, without any specific references to a particular distribution asset, territory or jurisdiction. Bearing in mind any eventual inconsistencies between specific national contexts, this choice makes the story more applicable to the various local contexts in different democratic countries, also potentially allowing it to be extended to supralocal decision-making processes.

The Mayor is a young, political activist, who is a militant supporter of her party and has recently been elected for the first time. She constantly finds herself having to reckon with political consensus, the other councillors and citizens. Therefore, the evaluations she makes and her position tend to be extremely influenced by the possible repercussions in terms of public opinion and short-term implications, as her mandate is only temporary and the elections are always around the corner. Although she did not lever on public participation during the electoral campaign, she is not entirely against the idea of extending the decision-making arena to specific issues that directly affect her fellow-citizens, especially in the face of controversial decisions that could cause conflict.

The executive member for the environment is a long-standing supporter of the environmental party. Like the Mayor, he has to measure himself against political consensus, public communication and the short-term consequences of his actions. However, unlike the Mayor, he is much more in favour of public participation. In fact, he believes it is a fundamental tool for promoting local environmental policy and facing and resolving conflicts that can arise within the community. Moreover, he firmly believes in the reduction of energy consumption and the use of renewable sources of energy and sees this

as a great opportunity to implement policies he has fought to put forward for many years.

The municipal councillors are politicians and, just like the Mayor and the Executive member for the environment, they are extremely attentive to political consensus, communication and the short-term consequences of their decisions. They come from different parties (both the majority and minority). At times, political conflict between majority and minority parties can also spill out into the public collaboration processes put forward by the governing administration – even among those who are favourable or neutral towards the adoption of the same processes and policies. Furthermore, they have all been elected by campaigning for votes from specific social groups or wards in the town. As such, their position and actions within the municipal Council are very focused on the daily concerns, fears, demands and complaints put forward by these reference groups.

The municipals managers and staff are civil servants, who have the role of implementing political decisions. However, their role is not purely limited to this task. They also play an extremely important part in the decision-making stage. These professionals have in-depth knowledge of the sectors in which they work, because they have held the same positions for many years and can help politicians resolve problems, through the comparison of different solutions and by analysing the feasibility of the proposals and their potential impact. As such, they play a key role in our story and are not merely executors of top-down decisions.

The environmental association is the local branch of an important, national, environmental association that has been based

in the town for many years. The association has several hundred active members, who try to influence the decisions of the public administration to safeguard and protect the environment and the landscape. Associations of this kind promote their causes in a variety of different ways: organising public awareness events, petitions and public protests, gaining coverage in the local press and liaising with politicians who are sympathetic to their cause.

The local SMEs association is a local branch of an important national association, with a member base of hundreds of entrepreneurs and small artisanal firms established throughout the town and surrounding area. One of the association's objectives is to encourage political decision-makers to promote policies that facilitate the growth of the member companies. These associations operate in a variety of different ways: elaborating strategic programmes that are proposed to the politicians during electoral campaigns, collaborating with the public administrations most receptive to their requests and, in some cases, organising protests and media campaigns.

The retail association is the local branch of an important national sector association, with a membership of over two-hundred small and medium-sized retailers. The association's objective is to protect the interests of retailers against the expansion of large-scale distribution chains, whose policies could threaten sales or the region's appeal for consumers. These associations work in a variety of different ways: submitting proposals and requests to politicians and collaborating with public administrations who are more sensitive to their cause. When possible, they also promote themselves through the press and never fail to organise protests (e.g. inviting their members to close their shops). However, the use of protests is usually very rare and only used in extremely serious circumstances.

The citizens' committee is a spontaneous committee that has been founded on initiative of a group of citizens to oppose the public policy that the Municipality is about to launch, because they feel it will penalise the territory. The main way in which spontaneous committees of this kind work is to collect

signatures, organise public protests, and implement media campaigns. They often make contact and partner with other groups or organisations that have similar interests or missions to their own. In the events in this book, the environmental association will become the committee's main interlocutor.

The big chemical company is a long-established, paint pigment producer that was founded in the last century and that is now owned by a British multinational. The factory, which is located in the borough, employs 500 workers and relies on a few-hundred smaller companies that form part of its supply chain. The company's main interest is containing production and energy costs and reducing emissions. The company maintains direct relationships with the public administrators, regardless of their political leanings, with the aim of putting forward specific requests and proposals. Relationships with the company's trade union tend to alternate between highly conflicting and more relaxed and collaborative.

The company's trade union is a workers' union based in the borough, which is also part of one of the biggest active unions in the country. The main interests of the organisation are to safeguard and increase employment at the company and improve the economic and working conditions of the employees. Generally speaking, trade unions tend to liaise with politicians who are sensitive to their objectives, implement media campaigns to raise awareness among the public and, when necessary, promote strikes and protests. The trade union also shares the company's desire to reduce production costs, which would help avoid cuts on labour costs.

The group of farmers is a group of a few dozen small and micro farming enterprises that, over the years, have launched a variety of production initiatives across the territory to promote organic cultivation. They are closely tied with the wine and food sector that is under development in the area, which is also connected to the tourism industry. Their primary objective is to promote further tourism development in the area, while conserving the area and the landscape. For this reason, as events unfold in this book, they will establish relationships with both the environmental association and the citizens' committee.

The renewable energy experts are a team of specialists who work at the university in the regional capital and at the regional research centre. They are highly specialised in the field and their objective is to contribute to the development of sectoral policies aimed at adopting the most advanced and promising technologies. They do not answer to public opinion nor to any other social group, other than the scientific community to which they belong. They regularly collaborate on the formulation of public decisions, acting as consultants to the decision-makers. They also implement media campaigns, using accessible language, to raise awareness of their work amongst the public.

The expert in public engagement in processes of public decisions is a specialist with in-depth expertise and knowledge on a specific subject, which in this case involves public engagement. However, unlike the renewable energy experts, his main interest is finding ways to reduce conflict, ensure the process runs smoothly and in a constructi-

ve manner, and identify solutions that are agreeable to the various parties as much as possible. He is not interested in promoting specific technical solutions, because his ability to include all the voices and to reach broadly unanimous consensus on a local level is his guiding criteria.

The local press is represented by a group of journalists who work for a local newspaper and television station, who have a huge following among the residents. Their job is to provide news on the development of public issues and the administration's decisions. Nevertheless, their actions are also aimed at maximising audience attention. Consequently, they often tend to simplify communication, through exaggeration of the facts or by introducing sensationalism and less objective and personal elements into the news. They particularly focus their attention on the scandals that regard political actors, because they view it as an important theme that will capture the interest of the population and increase audience ratings.



Sections

Section 1. **As it often occurs, our story begins with a conflict**

‘E.’ is a small town situated in a hilly region. The district consists of an ‘upland’ area, characterised by a historic centre and a combination of residential buildings and commercial activities, and an area of ‘lowland’, located on more level ground, composed of a variety of residential, commercial and manufacturing buildings.

The territory of the borough also comprises two other areas that are in disuse: a hill, located a few kilometres away from the residential areas, which is the site of a disused mine that has been closed for several decades, and an area of flat land, on the confines of the commercial and manufacturing district, which was used as a military training area for a long period, but has been in disuse for several years. Overall, the territory of the borough is renowned worldwide for the excellence of some of its agri-food products, its landscape and historic centre. Every year the region attracts a consistent stream of tourists. As well as its agricultural potential, the borough is also the headquarters of a large chemical company and of a number of small- and medium-sized companies that process agri-food products, all of which are in the flatter region of the borough.

During the last election, a new administration came to power and decided to promote a new, medium-term energy efficiency plan, including reduction of energy consumption, through a regional tender for the co-financing of energy refurbishment of the area under the European Union Structural and Investment Funds programme.

The plan, which has been drafted with the help of a team of renewable energy experts, complies with the current legislation and has already been approved by the regional government in charge of the European investment and structural funds. It foresees the implementation of two key projects: the construction of a big wind farm within the territory of the borough, and an energy efficiency programme for public and private buildings.

Our story starts at this point, when news of the plan published in the local papers is immediately subject to criticism from civil society. The environmental association, which has been fighting to protect the soil and landscape for decades, launches a protest. In the months that follow, the Chairman of the association gives various interviews, in which he criticises the idea of building a wind farm in a region of such outstanding natural beauty, also warning the administration about the risks of a tourism crisis due to the farm’s visual impact on the landscape.

The group of farmers that has been adopting organic cultivation methods for years and the retail association are also alarmed by the news because they fear that the plan will have negative repercussions on tourism. However, the local association for small and medium-sized businesses is divided: some entrepreneurs view both projects favourably because they see them as a tool to save energy, which could help reduce their production costs. The large chemical company, which consumes an enormous amount of energy to run its plants, is strongly in favour of the initiative, especially of the wind farm one, and contributes to

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- 1 “They’ll always be opponents, but we need to confront ourselves with the opposition.”
- 2 “Very often, politicians consider it a risk to involve citizens, because they think that people mainly take part to throw a spanner in the works”.
- 3 “The problem with citizens’ involvement is that it takes up so much time.”
- 4 “Citizens have no knowledge of the technical aspects of matters like sustainable energy.”
- 5 “It’s not true that a process is more efficient when it doesn’t involve the citizens. Failure to involve them can actually lead to the need for increased resources and delays in implementation times”.
- 6 “The challenge is to change the way citizens think and behave.”
- 7 “The municipality has to convince landowners that energy efficiency of their houses is in their best interest. In this way they save.”

the debate through local information channels, proclaiming its support and praise of the Municipality.

In this climate of growing debate, the executive member for the environment proposes to move the Plan forward by involving citizens both in the planning of the wind farm and in the implementation of the energy efficiency programme in private buildings. The Mayor declares she is in favour of the idea, as do some of the majority councillors. Various councillors from the opposition [1], but also some of the majority councillors, oppose the plans or raise various concerns, particularly with regard to the idea of establishing a co-planning process for the farm. Some believe that opening the project to citizens could become an obstacle, predicting significant opposition to the Plan from local committees and protest groups. Others believe that a participatory process is detrimental to the project because it would increase its design costs and time [2]. Meanwhile, other councillors are worried they will lose control over a strategic decision on which their election campaign had been based and had gained them the support of the citizens.”

Discontent is also spreading among municipal managers and technicians because many of them believe that involving common citizens, who do not have the necessary technical skills or knowledge [3],

could weaken the project or, worse still, produce unfeasible project proposals [4]. Nevertheless, some officials are enthusiastic about the idea of the Executive member for the environment and agree to actively collaborate on the initiative.

In any case, with the support of the Mayor and several councillors, the executive member for the environment decides to forge ahead with his idea. They organise a press conference and publicly declare the project will involve a participatory process that will enable citizens to contribute to the Plan [5].

After the press conference, a newly-founded citizens’ committee openly opposes the construction of the wind farm, sustaining that the works would cause a decline in tourism, with a subsequent knock-on effect for local shops and businesses. The citizens’ committee starts a petition and contacts the environmental association that has publicly opposed the wind farm [6]. At the same time, the Public Relations office begins to receive an alarming number of letters from the residents of several condominiums built in the 1950s, who are concerned they would have to use their savings to finance the energy efficiency interventions in the buildings where they live [7]. The Trade Union of the large chemical company does not oppose the project to build a wind farm, due to the possibility of reducing its energy costs.

- To proceed with the planning of a wind farm (co-design process) go to **section 2**.
- To proceed with the energy efficiency plan for buildings (co-production process) go to **section 29**.



Section 2. Involving citizens is not a (simple) solution

After the Environmental Impact Assessment and thanks to the help of several municipal technicians and engineering consultants from a large construction company specialised in wind farms, the executive member for the environment already has two preliminary project ideas on the table. These plans are different in terms of location, technical characteristics, advantages and disadvantages.

The first hypothesis consists of a wind farm with twelve high power (800 kW each) turbines, located on the hill with the disused mine, far away from all the residential areas. Given the distance of the turbines, the noise generated by the blades would not disturb the residents. However, in this location, the wind turbines would generate a significant impact on the landscape and the so-called ‘flickering’, which is the rapid alternation of light and shadow produced by the blades.

The second hypothesis is the construction of the wind farm in the flat area that was previously used for military training. In this case, the impact on the landscape would be minor than in the first option, but given its closeness to the residential area, the noise caused by the farm could disturb residents. Also, due to the decreased wind speed, economic profits would be lower.

Now the Executive member for the environment and the Mayor must decide at which stage to involve the citizens in the decision-making process. Making this decision is difficult, because the pressure from the various civil society actors is contrasting.

In this case, for example, the owner of the big company and the internal trade union is pushing for the administration to proceed with the plans for the wind farm as soon as

possible, without debating the project with citizens, committees and environmental associations in an open arena. Meanwhile, the group of farmers and the retail association support the idea of a broader planning process that is open to citizens’ contributions, because they hope to substantially change the Plan, reducing the impact of the wind farm within the territory.

Moreover, when establishing and managing decision-making processes there are usually no ideal solutions and the effectiveness and success of a collaborative process can depend on many factors. In fact, these processes are parentheses that must be integrated into the democratic system, by obtaining the support and consensus of civil society and public opinion (the challenge of social legitimacy), but they must also be accepted and followed through by politicians and public officials.

In other words, they must be institutionally sustainable [1] and be able to impact public policies (this refers to the effectiveness challenge) [2].

Often, a decision that might assist the co-design process in one sense can sometimes weaken it in another. In some cases, this trade-off is unavoidable, while in others corrective or adaptive strategies can be implemented to facilitate the integration of the collaborative process within the representative democratic system

This leads us to the first significant turning point in our story. The Executive member for the environment and the Mayor have two options. They can decide to let the citizens debate and decide on several differ-

1 “In participation, it’s important to involve not only the citizens but also politicians of every political alignment.”

2 “Even in the planning stage, the primary objective is to promote change and get results.”

ent aspects of the project, such as the choice of location, the technical characteristics of the farm, and how the profits from the sale of electrical energy will be used. Alternatively, they can decide to leave the definition stage of the preliminary project in the

hands of politicians supported by technical staff and experts and only involve citizens in the design of the complementary aspects of the project, such as, for example, secondary works aimed at valorising the project as an instrument for local development.

- If the collaborative process requires citizens' involvement already in the feasibility evaluation stage and in the definition of the location and specifications of the wind farm, go to **section 3**.
- If, however, the Executive member for the environment and the Mayor decide to involve citizens only after these decisions have been made, go to **section 4**.



Section 3. Discussing all options with citizens

The Executive member for the environment and the Mayor propose to involve the citizens throughout the entire definition stage of the project, including the choice of location of the wind farm, the technical aspects, the complementary public works, and the use of the profits [1]. The reasons for this proposal are presented during a heated debate at a Council meeting.

The Executive member for the environment poses three main reasons why it is essential to involve the citizens in the decision-making process during the initial planning stage. Firstly, it can help improve planning specifications, while also ensuring that the needs of residents are taken into consideration [2]. Secondly, it can help to deal more constructively with the concerns and doubts of the citizens and organisations opposed to the wind farm [3], such as the environmental association, citizens' committee that petitioned against the project, the group of farmers and the retail association, concerned about the negative repercussions on tourism. Finally, should the plan to build the wind farm be approved, the joint definition of the technical specifications of the farm can help the public administration avoid, or at least mitigate, the possibility of boycotts and resistance during the implementation phase.

However, some municipal councillors, in line with the stance of the owner of the chemical company and some of the small and medium-sized businesses in the supply chain, feel that the population should be involved at a later stage, when the project location and technical specifications have already been defined, limiting the residents' contribution to the secondary valorisation works of the farm. The councillors pose two reasons of fundamental importance: citizens' expertise and the credibility of the politicians.

In their opinion, ordinary citizens understand the problems of their everyday lives very well, but they generally do not have the knowledge and skills to formulate adequate solutions, nor are they able to present conscious and well-founded ideas when it comes to the many complex technical issues of the project [4].



Therefore, the risk is that the participatory process becomes merely a 'sounding board' for 'dissatisfaction, complaints and demands [5], increasing the risk of having to deal with a wide variety of unfeasible proposals which, rather than resolving the matter in hand, would end up complicating the issue even further. Moreover, the current municipal administration won the previous election also on a promise to implement a consistent energy reduction programme, as such the citizens already demonstrated they were in favour of this policy. Thus, embarking on a participatory process with such a broad mandate could lead people to believe that the administration was not so convinced about this policy after all.

The Mayor argues that she is doubtful of this outcome. She understands and shares the concerns of the councillors and of a part of the civil society, but at the same time she does not want to publicly discredit the Ex-

1 "To overcome conflict, we involved public officials and representatives from civil society right from the very start."

2 "Involving everyone is really important and it's a clear-cut way to understand the citizens' needs."

3 "The mistake was to involve them too late. To overcome opposition, it's important to inform the citizens and explain the added value of the project."

4 "Ordinary citizens do not have the necessary technical skills."

5 "Citizens start behaving as if they're in a claims office. They only come in when they want something."

ecutive member for the environment, who fully supported the electoral campaign and whose opinion she respects and values. At the same time, she also does not want to aggravate the conflict with the environmental association, citizens' committee and business associations, which are in favour of opening the decision-making process in the initial planning stage. After several months of deadlock, the Executive member for the environment manages to convince the Mayor and to obtain the support of a part of the councillors. He calls a press conference [6], in which he publicly promises that the citizens will be involved in the decision-making process right from the initial evaluation stage of the project, including the debate on the opportunities of the works.

The declaration of the Executive member for the environment *increases the social legitimacy* of the process because, despite the fears and reservations, even those opposed to opening the decision-making process to the citizens would rather play a part in the project than be excluded. There are various reasons for this: gaining public consensus, political visibility, the opportunity to acquire information and establish contacts within the administration. The representative of the environmental association asks to meet with the Executive member for the environment to ensure that the promise to the public is genuine. After the meeting, he publicly declares that he is not only satisfied with the farsightedness of the decision, but that he is also willing to contribute to the planning process himself. The citizens' committee remains sceptical, but the petitioners call a temporary halt to the protest campaign whilst awaiting further developments. The group of organic farmers and some of the local SMEs still have reservations, but finally agree to contribute. The owner of the

chemical company declares they do not wish to be part of the process, while the internal trade union agrees to participate.

After the positive response of a number of local cultural and voluntary organisations, some councillors offer to support the initiative, on condition that the collaborative process is not detrimental to the project objectives and that it is steered in accordance with current local policy.

However, *the institutional sustainability becomes more complicated*. Besides the previously mentioned resistance from some of the councillors, the civil servants overseeing the planning of the site and the tender for the construction of the wind farm raise several concerns about the involvement of inexperienced citizens. The two key issues of concern are the observance of the legal [7] and technical obligations and keeping within the available budget [8]. In fact, to guarantee the safety and correct function of the plants, the planning of a wind farm needs to comply with a wide variety of legal restrictions and technical standards. These restrictions involve numerous aspects, such as, for example, the design and planning of the access roads to the wind turbines and the minimum distance between the turbines to comply with Health and Safety regulations, etc. To the layman, these elements may seem of secondary importance, but they are actually essential factors that can put considerable limitations on planning options. Also, some project variations that might be requested by the citizens, such as, for example, the installation of devices to reduce noise. These devices often lead to a significant increase in the implementation costs, which could reduce the profitability of the wind farm, consequently jeopardising the economical sustainability of the project.

6 "When it comes to the process, it's essential that politicians communicate their intentions in a clear and timely manner."

7 "Laws can help to guarantee a process, but, at times, they can also be an obstacle."

8 "The real problem was that we didn't have enough money. We constantly had to take baby steps, which jeopardised the sustainability of the project."; "The most important thing is the budget. You need to be certain that you have an adequate budget for the policies and priorities put forward by the administration."

9 "The involvement of experts is essential to provide accurate information and respond to questions of a technical nature."

10 "The scientific and technical professions have an important responsibility, because the know-how and technologies they develop have an enormous impact on the environment, the economy and society."

Strategies for facilitating the institutional sustainability of the co-design process

To facilitate the integration of the co-design process within the mechanisms of the democratic system, the group of technicians overseeing the tender and planning of the site could be involved during both the co-design and implementation process [9].

During the preparation stage, the technicians could anticipate and explain the legal and technical restrictions that must be respected to the person leading the co-design process. In this way, these restrictions can then be easily explained and shared with the participants at the start of the process.

During the co-design stage, the technicians could take part in the meetings to answer questions and clarify any doubts raised by the citizens, allowing them to directly intervene in the discussion on the planning decisions [10].



The question now is to decide how the collaborative decision-making process should be managed. This represents another turning point: they can entrust the management of the process to a group of professionals specialised in the facilitation of collaborative processes and conflict mediation, or they can implement a purely political process that is managed exclusively by municipal

personnel. Entrusting the task to professional facilitators would incur significant costs, which would vary depending on the process and the number of participants involved. On the other hand, managing the matter internally would considerably increase the workload for the municipal employees, councillors, executives and technical staff [11].

- If the public administration decides to manage the process directly, go to **section 5**.
- If the management of the process is entrusted to public participation professionals, go to **section 6**.



11 “Each decision has its consequences: some are positive, some are negative.”

Section 4. Limiting co-design from the start: a predefined project

The municipal administration starts with the choice of the site. To do this, a private company, specialised in the planning and installation of wind farms is tasked with elaborating a draft of the general project, which will be analysed and refined by a technical panel, composed of municipal officials and three external consultants (an engineer specialised in wind power technologies, a geologist and an urban planner). The citizens' involvement process will be implemented at a later stage and will regard complementary project works, as well as a few secondary specifications of the wind farm that will be financed with the profits obtained from the energy production activities. The objective of the citizens' participation process will be to refine, improve or revise the project, with the aim of improving the quality and integration of the wind farm within the territory. The reasons for this decision are discussed during a Council meeting.

The Executive member for the environment poses two key reasons why the technical panel must be a pivotal part of the planning stage. First, from a technical perspective, the experts have the necessary knowledge to formulate feasible technical solutions and select the best project solutions. Second, starting the citizen involvement process from a well-defined project makes it easier to provide the public with all the necessary information. In this way, citizens can help fine-tune the project and present proposals that can have a positive impact on the territory and mitigate any possible negative repercussions of the same [1].

However, some councillors feel that the citizens should be immediately involved in the preliminary planning stage of the wind farm. This would enable

them to discuss the potential opportunities of the project and also provide an opportunity to debate whether the wind farm should be built at all. The councillors raise two key points: i) allowing specialists to design the wind farm would undoubtedly make the project technically flawless, but it would probably not be very attentive to the social repercussions [2]; ii) citizens' involvement would be perceived as unequal, as they would feel they are only able to contribute to a project that is almost completely decided.

The Mayor states she is doubtful of this outcome. She fully understands the councillors' concerns, but she also does not want to publicly discredit the Executive member for the environment, who has been her ally during the electoral campaign, or aggravate the conflict with the environmental association and citizens' committee who have expressed their discontent at a process that leaves them with only a marginal role. After several months of deadlock, the executive member for the environment manages to proceed with the establishment of a technical panel for the preliminary planning stage. He then calls a press conference [3], in which he tells the citizens the reasons for this decision.

His declaration *strengthens the institutional sustainability* of the process. The technical panel starts work on the analysis of the two possible locations for the wind farm: the one on the hill where the old mine is located and the other in the flat area, which was used for military training. To make the comparison, the technical panel involves renewable energy experts from the university and the regional research centre.

1 "It's important to communicate what the desired objective of the participatory model is to the citizens. If you don't, you can jeopardise not only the trust in the institution but also the participatory process itself."

2 "It's difficult to put technical and social obligations together."

3 "Politicians have to become good communicators and start using the media effectively"

Reassured by the decision to involve a specialist panel, some of the councillors divert their attention to other matters on the local agenda.

However, the question of *the social legitimacy of the project appears to become increasingly problematic*. Various representatives from the environmental association, citizens' committee, group of farmers and retail association (some of whom have been mobilising against the construction of the wind farm) are interviewed by the local papers and television stations, which use the protests to increase the salience of the issue at stake and, thus, increase their audience and sales. They all concur that the Mayor's promise of citizen involvement is a ploy to hide their true

intention [4] of making decisions 'behind closed doors', without any transparency. Furthermore, the environmentalists reiterate that the wind farm's impact on the landscape would be devastating. Meanwhile, the members of the citizens' committee declare that they are extremely concerned about the potential noise pollution that citizens would be forced to endure, for a negligible series of economic and environmental benefits. A number of minority councillors also ride the wave of protest [5], declaring that they fully share the concerns of the environmental association and the citizens' committee, also suggesting that the Mayor and the Executive member for the environment have personal interests to defend.

Strategies for increasing the social legitimacy of the delayed co-design process

A number of strategies could be implemented to improve the social legitimacy of the co-design process.

The technical panel could also involve a landscape architect (with experience in working with environmental organisations on a national scale), who would have the task of studying how the wind turbines can be integrated into the landscape as harmoniously as possible.

Furthermore, the technical panel could establish a listening and dialogue channel with the local community, to give maximum transparency to the planning activities. They could also organise a meeting with the representatives of the environmental association and the citizens' committee to understand their concerns further and discuss any possible proposals. After each meeting, a detailed report of events could be published on the municipal website, allowing citizens to keep up-to-date with every step of the work process.



After a few months, the technical panel presents a wind farm project on the hill where the old mine is located. The proposed farm consists of ten wind turbines installed in a slight basin, surrounded by vegetation. According to the experts, this would decisively reduce the visual impact of the turbines on the landscape. At the same time, this would also make the wind farm financially sustainable: the overall realisation costs (wind turbines, road works and transport links) would amount to approximately 12 million Euro, while the municipal annual income would be around 500.000 Euro.

The question now is to decide how the collaborative decision-making process

should be managed. They can entrust the management of the process to a group of professionals specialised in the facilitation of collaborative processes and conflict mediation, or they can implement a purely political process that is managed exclusively by municipal personnel. Entrusting the task to public participation professionals would incur significant costs, which would vary depending on the process and the number of participants involved. On the other hand, managing the matter internally would considerably increase the workload for municipal employees, councillors, executives and technical staff.

4 "Often citizens are suspicious. They see conspiracy theories everywhere."

5 "It doesn't matter what the content is: inevitably, when a political party decides to start a process, the other party – the opposition – will try to stop them and vice versa."

- If the process will be managed and led directly by the municipality, go to **section 7**.
- If, however, the process will be managed by an independent, external body go to **section 8**.



Section 5. Civil servants running the process – logical, but risky

A few weeks after the press conference, the Executive member for the environment sets up an informal work group to define the key specifications and framework of the various stages of the co-design process. To achieve this, he involves a number of majority councillors; two young female officials from the energy sector, who are particularly interested in getting involved in the project, and a university researcher, specialised in co-design processes, who the officer met at a conference. Due to the different opinions that emerge, the meetings go on for several weeks.

The Executive member for the environment and some of the councillors want to keep a rein on the co-design process. In this way, they will have more visibility, and it could also enable the administration to gain increasing political consensus. However, the two officials raise several concerns about this decision [1]. On the one hand, they believe that many citizens do not have the necessary knowledge to understand technical matters. On the other hand, they are worried they will be dragged into conflicts that could arise between politicians and the public during the planning stage [2]. The researcher warns them of the potential criticism an exclusively political steered process could raise, because it could be viewed as a way to manipulate the process to suit the positions of the mayor and the executive member for the environment [3].

1 “Municipal officials often ignore the overall institutional sustainability of the policies, because they’re often focused on their own specific tasks.”

2 “Sometimes, there’s a discrepancy between politicians’ and civil servants’ expectations and wills.”

3 “Participation is difficult. People often presume that the decision has already been made and that they are just being manipulated.”

4 “Politicians’ commitment is of fundamental importance.”

5 “The administration must present the project to the citizens and provide information.”

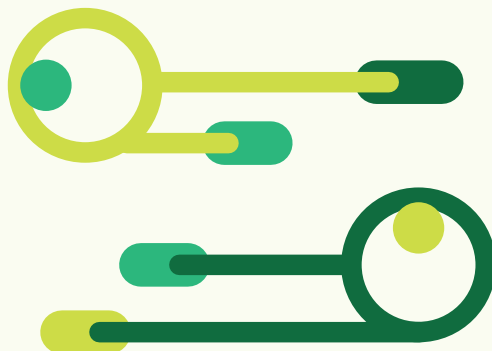
6 “This form of participation is also appreciated by public staff, because it is seen as a potential opportunity.”

Despite these views, the Mayor defends the strategy to maintain political control during both the definition and management stages, as she believes it is important to give the image of an administration that is capable of putting itself on the line and directly taking responsibility for its actions [4].

In the face of the firm position of the Mayor, the two officials declare that they are willing to contribute directly to the management of the process. They propose the drafting of a short, preliminary dossier which will help define a framework for the matters under debate. The document will describe what a wind farm is; how wind power technologies work and produce electricity; the type of wind turbines on the market and their costs; the characteristics of the two potential construction sites for the farm, and the efficiency and impact the wind farm will have in terms of noise pollution, surface area, visibility, etc., depending on the chosen location [5]. Everyone agrees that this preliminary, informative stage is essential and that they will need to build a website specifically for the co-design process, where they can publish the informative dossier and provide regular updates on the project.

The decision to adopt a politically steered management approach *helps to strengthen the institutional sustainability of the process*, because politicians will not feel they have been totally divested of their power to influence decisions and officials will still play a key role in the co-design process [6].

However, this decision *could weaken the social legitimacy of the process*, for the reasons raised by the researcher. Without calling the good faith of the political promoters



of the initiative, or the neutrality or professionalism of the technicians, into question, the fear of a top-down decision or a conflict of interests that could drive politicians to manipulate public opinion is common in many democratic contexts. Any administration that promotes a co-design process must accept that it will have to deal with widespread scepticism and the public's fear

of being manipulated. However, this does not mean that a politically steered, in-house management approach is necessarily wrong. Indeed, there might be several reasons for adopting such an approach, such as, for example, the ones mentioned by the Mayor. In this case some corrective strategies should probably be put in place to strengthen the social legitimacy of the process.

Strategies for increasing the social legitimacy of a politically guided co-design process

Firstly, the work group could also be composed of one or two minority councillors. This action will make it clear that the process aims at being politically unbiased and that it is open to the citizens' contributions, including those who do not support the currently elected administration [7].

Secondly, the preliminary information provided to the public at the start of the process should not be solely published on the website, but also presented at public meetings in the various wards of the borough, to help increase the transparency of the process. As well as an opportunity to present the potential project options, these preliminary meetings would also help to underline that the plans are not definite and that they can be changed (even significantly) by the citizens that take part in the co-design process. This also provides an opportunity to discuss and clarify any doubts, concerns and fears of the residents so that the technicians can address them during the design process [8].

Finally, the informative meetings could be organised in active collaboration with the regional groups and associations, including those that are more sceptical of the process, which in this case, for example, are the citizens' committee, the environmental association, the retail association and the trade union of the chemical company.



The work group must now define the framework of the citizens' involvement process. At this point, there are three viable approaches: the participatory, deliberative and hybrid models [9]. The confines of these approaches are not as clear-cut as their names, but, on the whole, they all cover different ideas about the objectives and procedures of the co-design process.

Participatory processes involve citizens in a less structured and prevalently voluntary manner: meetings open to all, forums with associations, collecting proposals, etc. They do not usually employ specific or structured techniques for recruiting participants, holding debates or planning. Therefore, even when roundtable events are organised, you tend to get a direct interaction between politicians, technicians and citizens.

Deliberative processes have a slightly different objective: create opportuni-

ties for open, in-depth discussions with citizens who have differing or opposing opinions and interests, with the aim of presenting and debating the reason for certain decisions and devise constructive solutions [10]. These meetings are usually very structured because they require well-defined plans and sharing of unbiased information and different viewpoints on the matter under debate with the public. The process also involves small group discussions between citizens, experts, interest groups and the public authorities to find common ground on which to build constructive solutions. Deliberative processes may also employ participant recruitment methods that differ to the voluntary approach of the participatory model. This usually involves a targeted selection process, as well as the involvement of professional facilitators, who are expert in the management of group dynamics, complex decision-making processes and alternative conflict resolution.

Finally, hybrid processes combine elements from participatory and delibera-

7 "We invited representatives from all the political parties, so we could find a common ground."

8 "We consulted the citizens by organising public meetings, so we could find out what their expectations were."

9 "It's easy to work with someone who's enthusiastic about a project, but if you don't involve the opposition, you'll always be up against conflict."

10 "In my experience, combining different approaches is more effective."

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11 “Each situation requires a specific approach, even though it’s often difficult to work out the right one to choose.”

12 “The choice of the approach to adopt is usually a top-down decision made by the administration, but it could also be subject to discussion by the citizens involved.”

tive approaches, such as integrating or alternating ‘open door’ participatory stages with co-design groups involving small teams of citizens selected randomly, or by combining deliberative sessions with referendums, etc. Naturally, the hybrid process aims to improve the qualities of each

model and limit any potential weaknesses [11].

At this stage, the Mayor, Executive member for the environment, the researcher and the councillors, must decide whether to opt for a participatory, deliberative or hybrid model [12].

- If they choose the participatory model, go to **section 9**
- If they choose the deliberative model, go to **section 36**
- If they choose the hybrid model, go to **section 37**.



Section 6. When the entire project is called into question

A few weeks after the press conference, the Executive member for the environment decides to call in a team of professionals, who managed a co-design process for a municipality in another region a few years before [1]. They organise a preliminary meeting with the facilitators, the Executive member for the environment, the Mayor and the municipal officials, who will be in charge of designing the wind farm.

The facilitators immediately raise some fundamental points about their work, underlining the primary measures that need to be taken with any inclusive decision-making process. Firstly, they suggest that the Executive member for the environment or the Mayor herself make a public declaration to the citizens, in which they clearly explain the boundaries of their decision-making powers. This will instantly help to promote the maximum transparency of the process, as well as generate public interest and engagement in the project [2]. Secondly, they also stress the importance of guiding the process through a 'steering committee', that does not solely represent the administration or public institutions involved in the energy saving plan, but a plural arena of representatives who are potentially interested in or affected by the public works (i.e. the trade associations, trade union, citizens' committee, environmental associations, regional public bodies that deal with the environment, energy and landscape) [3]. Finally, with the assistance of municipal technicians, they recommend the drafting of a short, preliminary dossier that will enable all the interested parties to get an overview of the issues at hand. This document will provide a description of the potential sites, technological aspects and expected impacts of the farm, as well as a breakdown of the more controversial issues and different

opinions on the project. The dossier will be based on a thorough analysis of all the available information sources and will also map any areas of potential conflict (facilitators commonly call this mapping process a 'conflict assessment').

The Mayor is reluctant to establish a steering committee, because she fears it will slow down the process and make it harder to make decisions on how to proceed, as she expects the various stakeholders will push in different directions. Meanwhile, the Executive member for the environment is particularly concerned about the costs that his department will incur due to the external management of the process and immediately asks the facilitators to provide a budget for the management of the entire participatory process [4]. Naturally, the facilitators explain that it will depend on the approach adopted, but the cost will range from 30.000 to 60.0000 Euro, also bearing in mind the support activities for the detailed planning stage.

Despite some initial opposition, the Mayor and the Executive member for the environment decide to entrust the project to the facilitators, following the three recommendations proposed during the meeting:

- i) the public promise of the Mayor and the Executive member for the environment;**
- ii) the establishment of a steering committee composed of public and private representatives with different political leanings and skills;**
- iii) the implementation of a preliminary conflict assessment stage to compile an informative dossier for the residents.**

1 "When dealing with these types of processes, it's important to work with mediation specialists."

2 "Often, the main problem is a lack of interest: people are not always interested in certain projects or situations."

3 "To overcome some of the obstacles, we established a steering committee, which included players with different political leanings and opinions."

4 "Funding the project and the related activities is one of the fundamental issues."

How this decision will affect the social legitimacy of the process, as well as the institutional sustainability and its influence on the administration's final decision, is uncertain.

There are two quite opposing views on social legitimacy. On one side, organised civil society feels that any opinions that conflict with those of the administration can be better protected within a plural and balanced steering committee [5]. On the other side, the management of the process by a specialist company does not necessarily quell public fears that the proposal to engage citizens' in the decision-making process is not completely sincere. In fact, although facilitators usually have a reputation of defending and follow a professional code of conduct, they are, in effect, employed by the administration. Therefore, in the eyes of the public, facilitators cannot be considered entirely neutral.

The administration's public promise to the citizens and the establishment of a plural steering committee tends to increase the institutional sustainability of the process. This is because, in a certain sense, these decisions 'tie the hands' of the administration in power, forcing them to stick to their original intentions and consider the varying points of view on the matter in hand. This approach helps to mitigate the resistance and opposition which can arise in an institutional setting, such as opposition from minority councillors, for example. [6] Furthermore, these choices favour the ability of the process to influence the final decision of the public administration, which will be conscious of the fact that they are being closely monitored by both the citizens and the representatives of the steering committee. However, a public promise can also pose a potential risk to institutional sustainability. The realisation of a large-scale project like a wind farm can take several years, and it is possible that the context and situation can change significantly during this time. For example, national regulations could be passed that considerably reduce the profitability of the farm or new construction restrictions could come into force. Even the materials used could increase in price, and so on. These changes, which are not

easy to predict and cannot be controlled by the municipal administration, could make it harder to respect the promises made at the start of the process. In order to create the steering committee, the team of facilitators, in collaboration with the Executive member for the environment and a number of officials, launches a preliminary inquiry on the potential public and private representatives to involve [7]. At the end of the enquiry, and after a series of interviews, the steering committee (also presided over by the Executive member for the environment), is now composed of ten members, among whom three in favour and three against the construction of the wind farm. In detail, the members include a majority councillor in favour and a minority councillor who has reservations about the project; a representative from the environmental association that opposed the project; a representative from another environmental association who, on the contrary, strongly supports the project; a representative of the citizens' committee, who is worried about the impact of the farm for local residents; the chairman of a local association that promotes the regeneration of disused land, who is neither against or strongly in favour; a spokesperson from the business associations; a representative of the chemical company's internal trade union; a spokesperson from the group of organic farmers, and a representative from the retail association.

After the first committee meeting, the representative of the environmental association who was against the project leaves the steering committee, after an interview given by the Executive member for the environment, in which he seems to imply that the aim of the co-design process is to decide how and where the wind farm should be built and not a forum for also discussing whether it should be built or not. The group of organic farmers and the retail association give fervent support to the environmental association by handing out flyers at the fruit and vegetable markets and shops in the historic centre. The Executive member for the environment and Mayor quickly respond to the opposing association, publicly stating that many matters will be discussed during the co-design process, including the possibility of rejecting the idea to build

5 "The steering committee distances itself from the public administration."

6 "If the committee members help the politicians during the process, it's easier to keep a more open vision of the project."

7 "The project involved citizens, voluntary workers, regional organisations and the local authorities."

the wind farm. Despite this, however, the environmental association sticks to its decision to abstain itself from the steering committee. This move to sabotage the plan

is also shared by the retail association, which now leaves the steering committee making it slightly biased in favour of the wind farm.

Strategies to give voice to opinions not represented by the steering committee

Abandonment of the process by some of the committee members is a common occurrence in co-design processes. This is particularly so when the issue at stakes creates conflict and tension due to the differing views of the representatives.

An unbalanced steering committee tends to weaken the process in terms of social legitimacy and institutional sustainability. To limit the damage caused by this setback, it is possible to intervene by implementing a number of adaptive strategies.

Firstly, it is necessary to respond publicly and provide well-formulated reasons as to why the representatives have decided to abandon the process, inviting them to return and maintain dialogue, even on an external basis [8].

Secondly, throughout the co-design process, it is essential to ensure that any criticism, concerns and arguments raised by the representatives who have chosen to leave the committee are in any case taken into consideration and discussed by the steering committee. A number of approaches can be adopted to deal with this, for example: the facilitators can invite important experts that share the same opinion as the absent representative to participate in the process; they can ask the stakeholders to send written documents that explain and support their argument, which will be shared with the committee and the public; mention the arguments of opponent parties during specific auditions or facilitators' intervention throughout the process.



The steering committee gets to work. The first order of the day is the identification and mapping of potential conflicts. Although the work is being carried out by the facilitators, the steering committee plays a crucial role also at this stage, because its members have a more extensive overview of the context and arguments of the various actors [9].

In the end, the analysis phase throws light on the essential elements of some of the project options. In terms of the technological solutions, the turbines will consist of 60 to 100-metre high steel towers with 20 to 60-metre long blades that will be built on solid foundations to withstand unexpected gales. The higher the towers, the better the turbines can take advantage of the wind power. However, taller wind turbines require stronger foundations, which will not only increase the farm's impact on the landscape but also the construction costs.

Furthermore, the preliminary study underlines that the two sites identified for the farm would have differing degrees of impact on the residents and the environment.

Building the farm on the hill with the old mine would have a significant impact on the landscape because the turbines would also be visible from very far away. The plan would also require the construction of access roads to the wind farm. These access roads would need to cross small and fragmented parcels of land held by different owners. Thus, the compulsory purchase of these lands and compensation of their owners could be a lengthy process. An advantage of this option consists in the fact that the noise generated by the turbines would not disturb local residents.

Constructing the wind farm in the area that was previously used for military training would require the clearing of any remaining military equipment – a matter that had already been the subject of opposition in the past. The works would also require the levelling of the land, due to the hollows left by the tracks of armed vehicles and tanks. In this case, however, it would not be necessary to create new access roads to the farm, as these have already been built by the military. However, the construction works could cause inconvenience to residents, especially to the chemical company, as the vehicles would be using the ordinary roads, potentially causing traffic jams, noise and dust. The company would also

8 “To manage conflicts you need to maintain an open dialogue with and between all the interested parties.”

9 “The committee has a crucial role in giving continuity to the initiative.”

be expected to temporarily give up an area of land that is currently used as a parking space for its employees. Furthermore, once operational, although the turbines have to be built at least 500 metres from residential areas, they would still be audible by nearby residents. An advantage of this option consists in the fact that the visual impact on the landscape would be significantly reduced.

The conflict assessment reveals two principal areas of dispute [10].

The first regards the objective to transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy itself. In fact, many people sustain it is time to make bold advances in this direction, viewing it as a strategic move for the development of the local economy. Others believe that there are more pressing priorities and that investing in renewable energy could have a boomerang-effect on local development because the funds used for other policies would be diverted to the project. Similarly, the second dispute also raises two conflicting opinions.

Both those who are most in favour of renewable energy development and those who are more sceptical are divided about which of the negative aspects of the project raise the most concern.

Some believe that conserving the landscape and minimising environmental impact is a top priority, while others think the priority should be to mitigate the inconvenience to residents during the construction stage and when the wind farm is fully operational

The results of this preliminary inquiry are summarised in an ‘informative dossier’ that will be distributed to the population and made available for download on the website of the project. The staff of the facilitation company will write the document, making sure it can be clearly understood by all. The document will include the various viewpoints that emerged during the analysis and conflict assessment stage [11].

Meanwhile, under the supervision and with the support of the steering committee, the facilitators establish the principal stages of the co-design process.

At this point, there are several available options. Generally speaking, three main models can be adopted: the participatory deliberative or hybrid model [12]. The

confines of these approaches are not as clear-cut as their names, but, on the whole, they all cover different ideas about the objectives and procedures of the co-design process.

Participatory processes involve citizens in a loosely structured and prevalently voluntary manner: meetings open to all, forums with associations, collecting proposals, etc. They do not usually employ specific or structured techniques for recruiting participants, holding debates or planning. Therefore, even when roundtable events are organised, you tend to get a direct interaction between politicians, technicians and citizens.

Deliberative processes have a slightly different objective: create opportunities for open, in-depth discussions with citizens who have differing or opposing opinions and interests, with the aim of presenting and debating the reason for certain decisions and devise constructive solutions [13]. These meetings are usually very structured because they require accurate plans and sharing of unbiased information and different viewpoints on the matter under debate with the public. The process also involves small group discussions between citizens, experts, interest groups and the public authorities to find common ground on which to build constructive solutions. Deliberative processes may also employ participant recruitment methods that differ to the voluntary approach of the participatory model. This usually involves a targeted/randomly selection process, as well as the involvement of professional facilitators, who are expert in the management of group dynamics, complex decisional processes and alternative conflict resolution.

Finally, hybrid processes combine elements from participatory and deliberative

10 “In these processes conflict is unavoidable.”

11 “Facilitators act as a bridge between the citizens and the administration making the proposal.”

12 “The project involved citizens, voluntary workers, regional organisations and the local authorities.”

13 “It’s easy to work with someone who’s enthusiastic about a project, but if you don’t involve the opposition, you’ll always be up against conflict.”



approaches, such as integrating or alternating 'open door participatory stages with co-design groups involving small teams of randomly selected citizens, or by combining deliberative sessions with referendums, etc. Naturally, the hybrid process aims to

improve the qualities of each model and limit any potential weaknesses [14].

At this stage, the facilitators and the steering committee must decide whether to implement a participatory, deliberative or hybrid process.

- If they choose the participatory model, go to [section 10](#).
- If they choose the deliberative model, go to [section 11](#).
- If they choose the hybrid model, go to [section 12](#)



14 “In my experience, combining different approaches is more effective.”

Section 7. Maintaining the political leadership of the process

A few weeks after the press conference, the Executive member for the environment sets up an informal work group to define the key specifications and the framework for the various stages of the co-design process. To achieve this, he involves a number of councillors, two young municipal officials from the energy sector, who are particularly interested in getting involved in the project, and a university researcher expert in co-design processes, who the officer met at a conference. Due to the differing opinions that emerge, the meetings go on for several weeks.

The Executive member for the environment and the supporting councillors want to keep a rein on the co-design process. In this way, they will have more visibility, and this could also enable the administration to gain increasing political consensus.

The municipal officials do not raise any specific objections to this proposal because the principal elements of the project have already been defined, so there is no risk of unfeasible proposals from inexperienced staff. However, the researcher criticises the idea to maintain the political reins of the process, especially as most of the project has already been decided [1]. In his opinion, the administration will find itself having to manage a highly conflicting co-design process that it will not be able to handle on its own, because it is also partly the cause of the conflict.

Despite these views, the Mayor defends the strategy to maintain political control in both the definition stage and practical management process. She believes it is important to give the image of an administration that is capable of putting itself on the line and directly taking responsibility for its actions [2].

Concerned about the researcher's warn-

ings, the two municipal officials propose the drafting of a short, preliminary dossier which will help citizens understand the project and the reasons that led to its formulation. The document will illustrate the specifications of the wind farm, highlighting the details that have been perfected and changed after the meetings with the environmental associations and the citizens' committee, and the listening sessions and proposals gathering stage. The document will also include the reasons why the technicians have made certain decisions and the overall advantages and disadvantages of the plan.

The researcher agrees with the municipal officials and strongly advises them also to clearly explain which aspects of the farm will require public participation and the level of freedom citizens will have to propose ideas about the use of the profits from the wind farm once it is fully operational. Everyone also agrees that they will need to create a website specifically for the co-design process, where the project dossier can be published and downloaded by the general public. [3].

The decision of the Executive member for the environment and the Mayor to establish a politically guided approach and management process *undoubtedly increases the institutional sustainability of the process*, because the councillors will not feel they have been completely divested of their power to influence decisions about the wind farm – even later down the line – also leaving the municipal officials and technicians with room to manoeuvre when defining the finer details of the project [4].

However, this decision *could weaken the social legitimacy of the process*, for the reasons raised by the researcher. Without calling the good faith of the political promoters of the initiative, or the neutrality or professionalism of the technicians, into question, the fear of a conflict of interests that could drive

1 “Keeping the project hidden from the public can cause conflict during the implementation stage.”

2 “The commitment of politicians is of fundamental importance.”

3 “It is fundamental to guarantee that citizens have access to all the information and knowledge they need.”

4 “In this case, the municipal officials saw participation as an opportunity.”

politicians to manipulate public opinion is common in many democratic contexts [5]. However, this does not mean that opting for a strictly politically guided approach is neces-

sarily wrong, as there are often good reasons to do so. In fact, in these cases, a number of strategies can be adopted to help strengthen the social legitimacy of the process.

Strategies for increasing the social legitimacy of a politically guided co-design process

Firstly, the work group could be composed of one or two minority councillors. This will make it clear that the process aims at being politically unbiased and that it is also open to the contributions of citizens who do not support the currently elected administration [6].

Secondly, the representatives who oppose the construction of the wind farm could invite well-known experts who share the same views to participate in the co-design stage of the project [7]. These experts would be required to analyse and evaluate the municipal project, point out any errors or weaknesses, discuss the project requirements and propose alternative solutions.

This role could be carried out by both the experts in person at the meetings, through direct interaction with the public and by written notice to the planners that must be publicly disclosed.



The work group must now establish a framework for the co-design process. At this point, there are usually three viable, approaches: the participatory, deliberative and hybrid models [8]. The confines of these approaches are not as clear-cut as their names, but, on the whole, they all cover different ideas about the objectives and procedures of the co-design process.

Participatory processes involve citizens in a less structured and prevalently voluntary manner: meetings open to all, forums with associations, collecting proposals, etc. They do not usually employ specific or structured techniques for recruiting participants, holding debates or planning. Therefore, even when roundtable events are organised, you tend to get a direct interaction between politicians, technicians and citizens.

Deliberative processes have a slightly different objective: create opportunities for open, in-depth discussions with citizens who have differing or opposing opinions and interests, with the aim of presenting and debating the reason for certain decisions and devise constructive solutions [9]. These meetings are usually very structured because they require accurate plans and sharing of unbiased information and different viewpoints

on the matter under debate with the public. The process also involves group discussions between citizens, experts, interest groups and the public authorities to find common ground on which to build constructive solutions. Deliberative processes may also employ participant recruitment methods that differ to the voluntary approach of the participatory model. This usually involves a targeted/ randomly selection process, as well as the involvement of professional facilitators, who are expert in the management of group dynamics, complex decision-making processes and alternative conflict resolution.

Finally, hybrid processes combine elements from participatory and deliberative approaches, such as integrating or alternating 'open door' participatory stages with co-design groups involving small teams of randomly selected citizens, or by combining deliberative sessions with referendums, etc. Naturally, the hybrid process ideally aims to improve the qualities of each model and limit any potential weaknesses [10].

At this point, the Executive member for the environment, the Mayor, the researcher and councillors can opt for a participatory, deliberative or hybrid process

5 "Citizens are often afraid of being politically manipulated."

6 "We invite representatives from all the political parties, so we can find a common ground."

7 "How do you combat public scepticism? By involving external experts."

8 "The project involved citizens, voluntary workers, regional organisations and the local authorities."

9 "It is easy to work with those that are enthusiastic about the project. However, when you do not involve those that are opposed to the project, the conflict risk is higher."

10 "In my experience, combining different approaches is more effective."

- If they decide to opt for the participatory model, go to **section 13**.
- If they decide to opt for the deliberative model, go to **section 38**
- If they decide to opt for the hybrid model, go to **section 39**.



Section 8. Managing conflict through external facilitators

A few weeks after the press conference, the executive member for the environment decides to call in a team of professionals, who managed a co-design process for a municipality in another region a few years before [1]. They organise a preliminary meeting with the facilitators, the executive member for the environment, the Mayor and municipal officials, who will be working on the wind farm project.

The facilitators underline that, despite the measures adopted in the preparatory phase of the preliminary project, initiating the co-design process after the plan has been defined, only allowing the public to intervene in more marginal aspects of the project, will make it harder to defuse the opposition to the works.

Therefore, they recommend two fundamental measures that should be implemented before the co-design stage. Firstly, they propose the establishment of a 'steering committee', composed of the representatives of the various groups that are against the construction of the wind farm and the citizens who will be subject to the most inconveniences and incur the most costs of the works [2] (i.e. the environmental association, the citizens' committee, the group of farmers, the retail association and the residents who would be obliged to give up their land).

Together with the technical team, the role of the steering committee will be to examine the previously defined technical specifications of the wind farm and work with the facilitators to establish the key stages of the co-design process that should be integrated into the preliminary project. Secondly, they suggest that the Executive member for the environment and the Mayor

participate in public meetings in the various wards of the borough. Managed by the facilitators, these meetings will be held to ascertain which elements of the project the public will be able to influence in the co-design stage.

The Mayor raises a number of concerns about the idea of an overly biased steering committee that represents concrete or potential opposition to the project. She is worried that this decision could increase tension between the administration and the factions opposed to the works which, in turn, could also spread discontent even among more neutral citizens. Furthermore, she fears that the information disclosed to the committee members could be used by the opposition to put the administration in a bad light. Meanwhile, the Executive member for the environment is worried about the potential risk of planning delays [3], because he feels the steering committee may try to raise objections and pose resistance, also with the covert intention of stalling the entire process.

Despite their concerns, the Mayor and the Executive member for the environment decide to follow the advice of the facilitators. This move can at least partially help to increase the social legitimacy of the co-design process. And even though the margins for correcting and integrating the project are somewhat limited, some opponents of the wind farm might still be interested in participating and contributing to the project [4]. However, it is also possible that these measures will not help in influencing public acceptance of the co-design process. In fact, it is also plausible that some critics of the wind farm may refuse to take part in the steering committee for fear of being politically manipulated or damaging their reputation by taking part in a process for a

1 "When dealing with these types of processes, it's important to work with mediation specialists."

2 "If you don't involve the opposition in the committee, the project risks coming to a standstill."

3 "Establishing a quality control process can often take longer than expected."

4 The project had already been done, but in any case the interest was there because there was still room to make decisions."

project that has substantially already been decided. The sustainability and legitimacy of the process will partly depend on the facilitators' mediation abilities and the transparency of the administration throughout the process.

The administration publicly declares the establishment of a steering committee, and the facilitators start to contact the various people and groups who are against the construction of the wind farm (i.e. the environmental association, the citizens' committee, the group of farmers, the retail association and a group of residents impacted by the land expropriation request). The environmental association immediately refuses to join the committee, because it feels that the project proposed by the administration will have such a drastic environmental impact that it cannot be improved by merely making a few corrections. The farmers also assume the same position. The spokesperson of the citizens' committee and the retail association initially agree to join the steering committee. However, the choice of citizens' committee's spokesperson is called into question and strongly criticised by other citizens, who fear they are being manipulated by the municipality. Following an assembly, which sees the participation of most of the committee members, to avoid dividing the group, the spokesperson decides to back down and declines the invitation to take part in the steering committee.

At this point, the only people willing to join the steering committee are three citizens who would be expected to give up their land. Meanwhile, another group of land-

owners decide to take legal action against the municipality, sustaining that the expropriation of the land would be illegal [5]. The minority councillors jump on the wave of protest, stating that the co-design process has failed before it has even begun, also insinuating that the Executive member for the environment has personal interests at heart, due to his long-standing friendship with the owner of a company that produces wind farms. The local newspapers and television stations give a lot of attention to the matter in interviews and special reports. A number of majority councillors, who had approved but always had reservations about the project, ask the Executive member for the environment and the Mayor to clarify their position.

The Executive member for the environment makes a firm stand against these accusations: yes, a friend he has known since childhood is effectively now a successful entrepreneur in the wind farm sector. However, this has nothing to do with his environmental battle to stop the use of fossil fuels; a battle that he has often been fighting alone for a very long time. His honesty has never been questioned in the past and anyone who sustains the contrary, without any concrete evidence, will be sued for libel. On her part, the Mayor defends the Executive member and the strategy to transition towards renewable energy sources. However, at the same time, she tries to alleviate the tension, stating that the project can still be changed, especially if the co-design process reveals that the impact of the farm is considered too damaging by the public.

Conflict management strategies to adopt when the co-design process is boycotted by collective actions and challenged by protests

Intense conflict can be challenging to resolve. However, these conflicts can be managed by implementing a number of adaptive strategies that can help prevent standstills and confrontation [6].

The administration can show it is open to evaluating the opponents' requests by partially involving them in the co-design process for the issue in question [7]. For example, they could announce that, even though it could be financially detrimental to the project, as long as the farm is financially sustainable once it is fully operational, they would consider other potential sites for the farm, to mitigate the impact on the landscape and the quality of life of the residents. The same would also apply to the scale of the wind farm, which could also be discussed during the co-design stage.



5 "Conflict is physiological."

6 "The fundamental question is how do you invite and ensure that the fundamental actors participate in the public meetings?"

7 "Some people have very radical views. Knowing how to be diplomatic in these situations is essential."

8 "We managed to involve some of the people who opposed the plan because we kept the process open."

With the help of the steering committee and the executive member for the environment, the facilitators organise a series of

public meetings throughout the territory [8]. In this case, the Mayor and the executive member for the environment would be

expected to attend the project presentation and co-design process meetings.

The facilitators draft a detailed dossier on the characteristics of the wind farm, according to the designs of the technical task force. The technical team and the steering committee will draft the dossier together. The document will contain information gathered by the facilitators during a territorial analysis aimed at identifying the different opinions of external parties (especially those of the environmental association that did not want to join the steering committee), but also the views of those in favour of the farm [9]. The facilitation company will draft the informative document, taking care to ensure that it is written in a way that can be clearly understood by all.

Regarding the administration's meetings in the various wards and the successive co-design process, the facilitators propose three different public engagement models: the participatory, deliberative and hybrid model [10]. The confines of these approaches are not as clear-cut as their names but, on the whole, these models cover different ideas about the objectives and procedures of the co-design process.

Participatory processes involve citizens in a less structured and prevalently voluntary manner: meetings open to all, forums with associations, collecting proposals, etc. They do not usually employ specific or structured techniques for recruiting participants, holding debates or planning. Therefore, even when roundtable events are organised, you tend to get a direct interaction between politicians, technicians and citizens.

Deliberative processes have a slight-

ly different objective: create opportunities for open, in-depth discussions with citizens who have differing or opposing opinions and interests, with the aim of presenting and debating the reason for certain decisions and devise constructive solutions [11]. These meetings are usually very structured because they require accurate planning and sharing of unbiased information and different viewpoints on the matter under debate with the public. The process also involves small group discussions between citizens, experts, interest groups and public authorities to find common ground on which to build constructive solutions. Deliberative processes also employ participant recruitment methods that differ to the spontaneous approach of the participatory model. This usually involves a targeted/randomly selection process, as well as the involvement of professional facilitators with experience in the management of group dynamics, complex decision-making processes and alternative conflict resolution.

Finally, hybrid processes combine elements from participatory and deliberative approaches, such as integrating or alternating 'open door' participatory stages with co-design processes, involving small teams of randomly selected citizens, or by combining deliberative sessions with referendums, etc. Naturally, the hybrid process aims to improve the qualities of each model and limit any potential weaknesses [12].

At this stage, the facilitators, Executive member for the environment and steering committee can decide to proceed with the definition of a framework for a participatory, deliberative or hybrid process.

9 "It's important to do an analysis before you begin. We surveyed the citizens to get further information."

10 "A universal citizen participation model does not currently exist. Each situation is different."

11 "Deliberative democracy is a model that allows citizens to discuss and share ideas.";

12 "In my opinion combining different approaches is more effective."

- If they choose the participatory model, go to [section 14](#).
- If they choose the deliberative model, go to [section 15](#)
- If they choose the hybrid model, go to [section 16](#)



Section 9. Why consensus is important, but not enough

The Mayor, the Executive member for the environment and the municipal officials who have offered to work on the project proceed with the establishment of a framework for the co-design process. The meeting with the researcher has dissuaded them from opting for a deliberative model, also because the public administration does not have the internal resources or adequately trained staff to deal with these types of processes. [1]. As such, they decide to experiment with a public engagement model that is not too structured, which will be implemented in the following stages:

- The dossier, containing information on the currently available technologies, as well as the specifications and the impact of the two wind farm options (the one on the hill and the one in the old military base), and the various stages of the participatory process, will be distributed to all the residents and available to download on the website of the participatory project;
- The Executive member for the environment and the municipal officials will meet the citizens at 'open door', public assemblies. During the meetings they will present the content of the dossier, discuss the two options for the wind farm, gather proposals and suggestions for any eventual change to the two suggested projects, and decide on how the profits from the wind farm will be used [2];
- In collaboration with the experts from the university and regional research centre, the municipal technicians will prepare two preliminary projects and propose two ideas for the allocation of the wind farm profits, which will also

take into account the requests and suggestions that emerge during the public meetings;

- The two projects will be presented in a second round of public meetings.

The decision to adopt an open participatory process, where anyone can contribute, has a positive impact on the social legitimacy of the co-design process.

Naturally, this also has a positive effect on the level of consensus towards the public institutions, because they have involved the citizens in the policy processes. The citizens and organised bodies within the territory feel and recognise that public assemblies and complete openness towards the residents provide a direct and transparent channel for expressing the requests of civil society to the public administration [3].

However, it is difficult to establish if the participatory model favours the institutional sustainability of the co-design process.

The government in office will most probably benefit from this direct engagement with the citizens. Nevertheless, there may be a tendency among some of the councillors to oppose the process, because the face-to-face interaction between the Executive member for the environment and the residents of the various wards will deprive other politicians of a primary role in the project [4]. Furthermore, the gathering of proposals from unqualified citizens will put some of the least flexible technicians on the defensive, because they will be forced to question their ideas on the basis of mostly uninformed suggestions that do not con-

1 "The public administration does not have enough people who are trained to deal with these types of project."

2 "We used a broad range of communication and engagement tools, from the Internet to more traditional methods like assemblies."

3 "The citizens were enthusiastic about the possibility of being involved and working in close contact with their local MPs."

4 "With these projects, we must always aim to involve all the administrators and politicians."

5 "The needs of the citizens are many, and it's difficult to translate them into feasible proposals."

sider the technical restrictions and legal requirements of the project [5]. For the same reason, with all probability, the ability of the public authority to adhere to the residents'

proposals in the final decision stage will be weak, which could *limit the policy effectiveness of the same co-design process within the overall decision-making process.*

Strategies for increasing the institutional sustainability of the participatory model

Several measures can be introduced to increase the institutional sustainability of the co-design process. For example, to give room and visibility to the opinions and arguments of the various political parties represented in the Council (both majority and minority parties), the informative dossier could include a specific section on the 'pros' and 'cons' that has been compiled by each political group. The other councillors could also be explicitly invited to take part in the public meetings.



After deciding on the framework of the co-design process, the administration must now decide how the participatory process will come to a close. They draw up two possibilities.

The first involves asking the participants at the assembly to make a final vote during the second round of meetings. The option that receives the most votes will be presented to the Council as a project proposed by the Executive member for the environment with the full support of the Mayor.

The second possibility consists in appointing the staff of the Executive member for the environment to draft a final report that gives an overview of the characteristics of the initial options and the proposals that emerge from the two rounds of meetings. The same report will be discussed at a Council meeting, and the Executive member for the environment will then compile the suggestions made by the councillors. Finally, these suggestions will

be presented to the Council as a preliminary project that will bear in mind all the issues raised throughout the entire process as much as possible.

The Executive member for the environment is more inclined towards the idea of a vote. In fact, he believes that this will enable them to reach a decision that will be difficult for the Council to overturn because the citizens have directly and unequivocally expressed their opinion.

Whereas the municipal officials lean more towards the second hypothesis: an accurate report of the proposals that have emerged during the citizen participation stage, but without a definitive verdict, would leave a margin of discretion for both the Council and the technicians, which could prove highly valuable during the detailed planning stage and realisation of the works.

Like many of the potential choices, this decision could lead to a variety of different scenarios.

- If the workgroup decides to conclude the second round of public meetings with a vote by the participants, go to **section 17**
- If, however, the workgroup decides to appoint its staff with the drafting of a final report that will be evaluated by the Council, go to **section 18**.



Section 10. Structuring a participatory process and its main dilemmas

With the help of the steering committee and the municipal technicians, the facilitators draw up the principal framework of the co-design process [1]. After a lengthy discussion on the feasibility and implications of the three participatory approaches applicable to the context in question, the steering committee decides to opt for the participatory model. There are some important reasons for this decision. When the previous administration was in office, various public executives and administrators were involved in a judicial enquiry due to allegations of corruption, which caused widespread public dissatisfaction with the politicians and public administration. The Mayor's election campaign was based on transparency and a change in the relationship between citizens and institutions. Therefore, the participatory model, which is relatively inexpensive and allows for spontaneous citizen engagement, seems to be more coherent with the promises made during the election campaign.

As such, the co-design process is divided into four relatively unstructured stages, which are open to the residents. The process foresees the direct interaction between the public administration and the citizens:

- The dossier, containing information on the currently available technologies, as well as the specifications and the impact of the two wind farm options (the one on the hill and the one in the old military area) and the stages of the participatory process, will be distributed to all the residents and available to download on the participatory project's website;
- The Executive member for the environment and the municipal officials will meet the citizens through 'open door' public

assemblies [2]. During the meetings they will present the content of the dossier, discuss the two options for the wind farm, gather proposals and suggestions for any eventual change to the two suggested projects, and decide on how the profits from the wind farm will be used;

- The municipal technicians, together with the university experts and the Regional Centre for Research will prepare two preliminary projects and propose two ideas for the allocation of the wind farm profits, which will also take into account the requests and suggestions that emerge during the public meetings;
- The two projects will be presented in a second round of public meetings.

The decision to adopt an open participatory process where anyone can contribute *has a positive impact on the social legitimacy of the co-design process*. Naturally, this also has a positive effect on the level of consensus towards public institutions, because they have involved the citizens in the participatory process.

The citizens and organised bodies within the territory view this as a demonstration of complete openness towards the public, recognising the public assemblies as a direct and transparent channel for expressing the requests of civil society to the public administration [3].

However, *it is difficult to establish to what extent the participatory model favours the institutional sustainability of the co-design process*. The government in office will most probably benefit from this direct engagement with the citizens. Nevertheless,

1 The involvement of a team of experts and managers from various backgrounds was a crucial part of the project."

2 "We used a broad range of communication and engagement tools, from the Internet to more traditional methods like assemblies"

3 "The citizens were enthusiastic about the possibility of being involved and working in close contact with their local MPs."

there may be a tendency among some of the councillors to oppose the process, because the face-to-face interaction between the Executive member for the environment and the residents of the various wards will deprive other politicians of a primary role in the project [4].

Furthermore, the gathering of proposals from unqualified citizens will put some of the least flexible technicians on the defensive,

because they will be forced to question their ideas on the basis of mostly uninformed suggestions that do not consider the technical restrictions and legal requirements of the project [5].

For the same reason, with all probability, the public authority's ability to adhere to the residents' proposals in the final decision stage will be weak, which *could limit the effectiveness of the same co-design phase within the decision-making process.*

Strategies for increasing the institutional sustainability of the participatory model

Several measures can be introduced to increase the institutional sustainability of the co-design process.

For example, to give room and visibility to the opinions and arguments of the various political parties represented within the Council (both majority and minority parties), the informative dossier could include a specific section on the 'pros' and 'cons' that has been compiled by each political party. The other councillors could also be explicitly invited to take part in the public meetings.

Facilitators would chair the public meetings. In this way, they can not only coordinate the assembly but also, with the help of the technicians, use techniques to help reject any unfeasible proposals right from the outset.



After deciding on the framework of the co-design process, the administration must now decide how the participatory process will come to a close. They draw up two possibilities.

The first involves asking the participants at the assembly to make a final vote during the second round of meetings. The option that receives the most votes will be presented to the Council as a project proposed by the Executive member for the environment with the full support of the Mayor. The second possibility consists in appointing the staff of the Executive member for the environment to draft a final report that gives an overview of the characteristics of the initial options and the proposals that emerge from the two rounds of meetings. The same report will be discussed at a Council meeting, and the Executive member for the environment will then compile the suggestions made by the councillors. Finally, these suggestions will be presented to the Council as a preliminary project that will bear in mind

all the issues raised throughout the entire process as much as possible.

Like many other choices, this decision could lead to a variety of different scenarios. Usually, the natural conclusion of the participatory model is the citizens' vote, but there may also be other reasons to support the adoption of the second option. In fact, the municipal officials might feel that drafting an accurate report of the proposals that have emerged during the public participation stage, but without a definite verdict, would leave a margin of discretion for both the Council and the technicians, which could prove highly valuable during the detailed planning stage and realisation of the works.

In this case, the Executive member for the environment is decisively in favour of a vote, as he believes that this will enable them to reach a decision that will be difficult for the Council to overturn, because the citizens have directly and unequivocally expressed their opinion.

4 "With these projects, we must always aim to involve all the administrators and politicians."

5 "The needs of the citizens are many, and it's difficult to translate them into feasible proposals."

- The workgroup endorses the decision of the Executive member for the environment and decides to conclude the second round of public meetings with a vote.

Go to **section 19**.



Section 11. How to structure a deliberative process: pros and cons

With the help of the steering committee, the facilitators draw up the structure of the co-design process. After a lengthy discussion on the feasibility, costs and implications of the three applicable models in the context in question, the committee decides to experiment the deliberative model. There are two main reasons for this decision. The first reason is that it is a new format which makes the test more stimulating. The second reason is that, since the issue at stake is of a technical nature but also incorporates value-related elements, it lends itself particularly well to a highly structured participation that is focused on weighing up information, arguments and counterarguments.

As such, the co-design process is established in highly structured stages, reserved for a pre-elected group of citizens who have been chosen from a representative sample of the borough's population. The discussion will be held 'behind closed doors' and chaired and managed by the facilitators. The objective of the process will be to produce a widely agreed project idea that has been chosen from one of the two proposals put forward by the steering committee or, alternatively, the proposal of a new one.

The process will be carried out in four main stages:

- The drafting of a dossier, containing information on the currently available technologies, as well as the specifications and the impact of the two wind farm options (the one on the hill and the one in the old military area) and the various stages of the deliberative process. This document will be distributed to all the residents and available to download on the participatory project's website;
- A telephone survey carried out by a public opinion polling company to recruit 23 citizens, with the aim of

creating an arena of residents with different socio-demographic characteristics. Preferably, the selected citizens will be unbiased in terms of opinions on the construction of the wind farm (i.e. those against all the options, those in favour of building the wind farm on the hill, those in favour of the old military site, those who are indifferent or do not have a fixed opinion);

- The selected citizens will be invited to a first round of meetings, organised and managed by the facilitators. During these meetings, they will discuss the information in the dossier and ask questions to the experts and technicians appointed by the steering committee, who will all have different expertise and viewpoints on the two ideas for the wind farm;
- With the support of the facilitators and the municipal technicians, the 23 citizens will work 'behind closed doors' to elaborate a preliminary project for the farm and decide how the profits will be used once it is fully operational. The starting point will be the two options put forward by the administration, but the citizens will be free to deviate from these plans or even debate the eventual rejection of the project. The Mayor and Executive member for the environment pledge to defend the verdict of the deliberative process before the Council.

The social legitimacy of an extremely structured deliberative process that is mostly carried out behind closed doors is not very high, at least at this stage of the democratic system.

This is because citizens still tend to be suspicious of a recruitment process carried out by a municipal-appointed polling company and the closed confines of a small arena that excludes the other citizens.

At the same time, the deliberative format favours the institutional sustainability of the process, because it allows the politicians and municipal officials to interact with a pre-determined group of citizens in a 'controlled' environment [1].

Through structured hearings and work sessions, where issues can be handled according to a specific timetable, using techniques that foster constructive interaction between the participants.

However, the effectiveness of the deliberative model, or rather the ability of the recommendations to influence the final decision of the political authorities, is doubtful.

On one side, the in-depth analysis, discussion and re-elaboration process that occurs

within the deliberative process usually leads to the proposal of more structured, pertinent and reasoned recommendations, than those that occur in an unstructured participatory process. Therefore, one can expect that a deliberative process produces more valid proposals that can resolve at least some of the issues on the table in a unanimous manner, and it is precisely for this reason that it is in the political authorities' interest to embrace and implement this approach [2]. At the same time, however, the works of the deliberative process are not open to anyone but reserved for a small group of pre-selected citizens. During the process, the citizens examine and discuss the information with the other participants, which can sometimes lead to a complete change in their original viewpoints. As such, the end result of the process can often be unexpected and completely incomprehensible to the citizens who did not take part. In the event of a significant discrepancy between the views of the participants and the other 'excluded' citizens, the political authorities, which are extremely sensitive to the mood of public opinion, will probably be hesitant to approve and implement the proposals put forward during the deliberative process.

1 "It's difficult for municipal officials to work outside the mould of their everyday roles."

2 "A well-structured debate often leads to better solutions."

3 "Throughout the process, citizens could obtain information on the website, via social media, or directly from the municipal offices."

Strategies for increasing the social legitimacy of deliberative arenas [3].

A number of measures can be taken to increase the social legitimacy of a deliberative process and avoid that the sessions are carried out in a completely isolated environment, 'out of view' of society.

To prevent this, it is essential to establish a communication channel between the workgroup and the outside world.

One solution could be to give individual citizens or organised groups within civil society the opportunity to send written contributions to the deliberative arena while the work sessions are in course.

Another solution could be to write a report on each meeting, which includes the information and considerations that emerged during the deliberative arena and publish the results on the project's website.

The third option could be to open a constant communication channel with the local press, so that they can provide adequate coverage of the deliberative process, which will support and reinforce the widespread disclosure of the results of the meetings.



• With the help of the facilitators, the group of citizens start working on the project. Go to [section 20](#).



Section 12. The hybrid model: a promising Third Way?

With the help of the steering committee, the facilitators draw up a framework for the principal stages of the co-design project. After lengthy discussions on the feasibility, costs and implications of the three applicable models within the context in question, the committee decides to experiment the hybrid model, which aims to combine the stronger elements of the participatory model with the stronger elements of the deliberative model.

As such, the co-design process is divided into four main stages, using a combination of ‘open door’ meetings [1] with smaller assemblies of randomly selected citizens, spontaneous discussion sessions with only the minor intervention of the facilitators, and more structured discussion sessions:

- The dossier, containing information on the currently available technologies, as well as the specifications and the impact of the two wind farm options (the one on the hill and the one in the old military area), and the various stages of the co-design process, will be distributed to all the residents and available to download on the participatory project’s website;
- A round of public meetings throughout the territory, managed by the facilitators and attended by the Mayor and Executive member for the environment, where citizens will be invited to take part in ‘open door’ public assemblies and will be able to discuss the contents of the dossier and propose the general criteria that the participants must adhere to during the co-design process;

- The co-design stage of the farm and the ideas on how the profits will be used will be reserved for 23 pre-elected citizens, who will be selected through a telephone survey carried out by a public opinion polling company. The intention is to create an arena of residents with different socio-demographic characteristics that is preferably unbiased in terms of their opinion about the wind farm (i.e. those against all of the options, those in favour of building the wind farm on the hill, those in favour of the old military site, those with no fixed opinion);
- The selected citizens will take part in a series of ‘closed door’ sessions managed by the facilitators. During the meetings, they will discuss the information in the dossier and pose questions and doubts to the experts and technicians, who will all have different expertise and viewpoints on the two ideas for the farm, appointed by the steering committee. After which, with the support of the facilitators and technicians, they will put forward a series of widely agreed project recommendations. The starting point will be the two options proposed by the administration, but the citizens will be free to deviate from the same or even debate the eventual rejection of the project.

The Mayor and the Executive member for the environment decide that they will do all they can to defend the verdict of the process before the Council.

The *social legitimacy of a hybrid process is facilitated by the participatory stage*. The citizens and organisations within the territory view this as a demonstration of complete openness towards the public, recog-

1 “We used a broad range of communication and engagement tools, from the Internet to more traditional methods like assemblies”

nising the public assemblies as a direct and transparent channel for expressing the requests of civil society to the public administration. At the same time, *the deliberative format of the successive stage favours the institutional sustainability of the process*. This is because it allows the politicians and officials to interact with a selected group of citizens, through structured hearings and work sessions, where issues can be handled according to a specific timetable, using techniques that foster constructive interaction between the participants [2].

The hybrid model should also favour the effectiveness of the process because of the ability of the recommendations to influence the public authority's final decision.

The reason for this is that well-structured and unanimously agreed recommenda-

tions, based on pondered and rational arguments, like the ones that occur in more restricted arenas, should be more convincing than the ideas proposed in a purely participatory approach.

At the same time, the recommendations obtained through a combined model are not exclusively the result of a dialogical process with a small group of citizens but are founded on a broader engagement process that is open to all. Nevertheless, there is a risk of a substantial divide between the verdict of the initial participatory meeting stage and second deliberative stage.

In fact, rather than integrating and completing each other, the two stages could end up proceeding along two parallel tracks causing *disorientation and confusion* [3].

Strategies for increasing the social legitimacy of hybrid engagement processes

A number of measures can be implemented to improve the integration of the participatory and deliberative stages: the drafting of a special report that describes the dynamics and outcome of the first stage, which will be passed on to the participants of the second stage; second stage participants must be reminded of the importance of respecting the criteria established during the first stage for the duration of the entire process; allow the citizens who took part in the initial participatory process to participate in some stages of the deliberative arena.



After establishing the co-design process, the steering committee must now decide how to close the process. The facilitators propose two possible alternatives. The first consists in asking the small group of citizens that took part in the deliberative stage to put forward a series of alternative hypotheses: two potential options for the wind farm (either remodelling the administration's current proposals or presenting new ones), and two possible uses for the profits, which are widely agreed upon by the group as a whole. Both the proposals for the wind farm and the use of the profits will be subject to a citizens' vote, and the most voted option will be presented to the Council, with the explicit support of the Executive member for the environment and the Mayor.

The second possibility consists in the drafting of a final report by the facilitators,

under the supervision of the steering committee, which highlights the characteristics of the initial options, the project criteria that emerged during the participatory stage and the proposals put forward during the deliberative stage. As well as this, the report will outline the most widely accepted ideas and also those that were more controversial or in the minority. The same report will be discussed at a Council meeting, and the executive member for the environment will then compile the suggestions made by the councillors. Finally, these suggestions will be presented to the Council as a preliminary project that will bear in mind all the issues raised throughout the entire process as much as possible.

In this case, the Executive member for the environment is more inclined towards the idea of a vote, as he believes that this will enable them to reach a decision that

2 "It's difficult for municipal officials to work outside the mould of their everyday roles."

3 "The stages of the process must all follow well-defined criteria that must be respected to the very end."

will be difficult for the Council to overturn because the citizens have directly and unequivocally expressed their opinion. The municipal officials lean more towards the second hypothesis: an accurate report of the proposals that emerge during the citizens' participation stage, but without a definitive

verdict, would leave a margin of discretion for both the Council and the technicians, which could prove highly valuable during the detailed planning stage and realisation of the works

Like many other choices, this decision could lead to a variety of different scenarios.

- If the steering committee decides to conclude the hybrid process with a series of alternative project proposals, go to **section 21**
- If the steering committee decides to conclude the hybrid process by writing a report that takes into account all the issues that emerge during the process, which will then be evaluated by the Council, go to **section 22**.



Section 13. The stages of the participatory model and its pitfalls

The Mayor, Executive member for the environment and the municipal staff who have offered to work on the project proceed with the establishment of a framework for the co-design process.

The meeting with the researcher has dissuaded them from opting for a deliberative model, also because the public administration does not have the internal resources or adequately trained personnel to deal with these types of processes. [1]. As such, they decide to experiment with a public engagement model that is not too structured, which will be implemented in the following stages:

- The dossier, containing information about the wind farm project on the hill with the old mine, the characteristics of the site, the technologies to be used and information on the impact of the same, will be distributed to all the residents and available to download on the website of the participatory project;
- The Executive member for the environment and the two municipal officials will meet the citizens at 'open door', public assemblies [2]. During the meetings they will present the content of the dossier, clarify any questions or doubts, gather proposals on how the project can be improved, and decide how the profits from the wind farm will be used once it is fully operational;
- In collaboration with the experts from the university and the regional research centre, the municipal

technicians will work on the revisions to the preliminary project, put forward various options for the integration or modification of the same, and define various options for the allocation of the profits, while taking into account the appeals and suggestions that emerge during the public meetings;

- The revised project options will be presented in a second round of public meetings.

The Mayor and the Executive member for the environment decide that they will do all they can to defend the verdict of the process before the Council.

The decision to launch an open participatory process only has a moderately positive impact on the social legitimacy of the co-design process.

The citizens and organisations within the territory perceive and recognise that public assemblies and complete openness towards the residents provide a direct and transparent channel for expressing the requests of civil society to the public administration. However, they are also aware of the limited power they have to amend the preliminary project.

Furthermore, it is difficult to establish if the participatory model favours the institutional sustainability of the co-design process.

The government in office will most probably benefit from this direct engagement with the citizens. Nevertheless, there may be a tendency among some of the councillors to oppose the process, because the

1 "The public administration does not have enough people who are trained to deal with these types of project."

2 "We used a broad range of communication and engagement tools, from the Internet to more traditional methods like assemblies"

face-to-face interaction between the Executive member for the environment and the residents of the various wards will deprive other politicians of a primary role in the project [3]. Furthermore, the gathering of proposals from unqualified citizens will put some of the least flexible technicians on the defensive, because they will be forced to question their ideas on the basis of mostly

uninformed suggestions that do not consider the technical restrictions and legal requirements of the project [4]. For the same reason, with all probability, the public authority's ability to adhere to the residents' proposals in the final decision stage will be weak, which *could limit the effectiveness of the same co-design process within the decision-making process.*

Strategies for increasing the institutional sustainability of the participatory mode

Several measures can be introduced to increase the institutional sustainability of the co-design process.

For example, to give room and visibility to the opinions and arguments of the various political parties represented in the Council (both majority and minority parties), the informative dossier could include a specific section on the 'pros' and 'cons' that has been compiled by each political party. The other councillors could also be explicitly invited to take part in the public meetings.



After deciding on the framework of the co-design process, the administration must now decide how the participatory process will come to a close. They draw up two possibilities.

The first involves asking the participants at the assembly to make a final vote during the second round of meetings. The project amendments that receive the most votes will be incorporated into the original project by the technicians and the revised version will be presented to the Council.

The second possibility consists in appointing the staff of the Executive member for the environment to draft a final report that gives an overview of the characteristics of the initial options and the revision proposals that emerge from the two rounds of meetings. The same report will be discussed at a Council meeting, and the Executive member for the environment will

then compile the suggestions made by the councillors. Finally, these suggestions will be presented to the Council as a preliminary project that will include all the issues raised throughout the entire process as much as possible.

The Executive member for the environment is more inclined towards the idea of a vote. In fact, he believes that this will enable them to reach a decision that will be difficult for the Council to overturn because the citizens have directly and unequivocally expressed their opinion. The staff lean more towards the second hypothesis: an accurate report of the proposals that have emerged during the citizen participation stage, but without a definitive verdict, would leave a margin of discretion for both the Council and the technicians, which could prove highly valuable during the detailed planning stage and realisation of the works.

Like many other choices, this decision could lead to a variety of different scenarios.

3 "With these projects, we must always aim to involve all the administrators and politicians."

4 "The needs of the citizens are many, and it's difficult to translate them into feasible proposals."

- If the workgroup decides to conclude the second round of public meetings with a vote by the participants, go to **section 23**.

- If, however, the workgroup decides to appoint its staff with the drafting of a final report that will be evaluated by the Council, go to **section 24**.



Section 14. Risks of the participatory model and ways to reduce them

With the help of the steering committee and municipal technicians, the facilitators draw up a framework for the principal stages of the co-design project. After lengthy discussions on the feasibility, costs and implications of the three applicable models within the context in question, the committee decides to opt for the participatory model.

The main reason for this is that, due to the extremely restricted decisional margin which only allows citizens to make minor amendments to a project that has been almost completely defined, organising a long and costly deliberative process would be an excessive use of energy and resources.

As such, the co-design process is divided into four main, relatively unstructured, stages which are open to the residents and centred around the direct interaction between the public administration and the citizens:

- The dossier, containing information about the wind farm on the hill with the old mine, the characteristics of the site, the technologies that will be used and the impact of the same, will be distributed to all the residents and available to download on the participatory project's website;
- The Executive member for the environment and the municipal officials will meet the citizens in 'open door', public assemblies [1]. During the meetings they will present the content of the dossier, clarify any doubts about the project, gather proposals and suggestions for improvement to the plan and decide on how the profits from the wind farm will be used. In any case, the

meetings will be structured according to very specific rules and managed by professional facilitators;

- In collaboration with the experts from the university and regional research centre, the municipal technicians will work on revising the preliminary project, while also trying to take into account the requests and suggestions that emerge during the public meetings, and provide a detailed report of the reasons for any eventual rejected proposal put forward by the participants;
- The new project will be presented in a second round of public meetings and the facilitators will collect any further suggestions for amendments to the plan.

The ability of this type of process to integrate with the traditional decision-making process will be relatively weak.

The government in office will partially benefit from this engagement with the residents, because citizens and organised bodies within the territory will view this as a demonstration of complete openness towards the public and recognise the public assemblies as a direct and transparent channel for expressing the requests of civil society to the public administration.

Furthermore, as the proposals put forward by the citizens are only minor adjustments, they will probably not cause too many problems for the municipal technicians, because the project's adherence to the final decision on the public's proposals should tend to be quite high. However, these positive effects will be counterbalanced by citizens' underlying dissatisfaction at having only been able to make a

1 "We used a broad range of communication and engagement tools, from the Internet to more traditional methods like assemblies"

minor contribution, without the possibility to make changes to the initial project [2].

After deciding on the framework of the co-design process, the administration must now decide how the participatory process will come to a close. The various members of the steering committee suggest organising a citizen referendum on the final project, which will oblige the administration to respect the verdict. In fact, this final opening to the public could help to increase the legitimacy of the participatory process, also because they are almost certain that most of the residents will accept a wind farm project that will generate profits than can be spent throughout the borough.

However, the facilitators feel there is a risk that a final referendum could mobilise citizens who are against the works, which could undermine the entire participatory process [3]. As such, they suggest drafting a final report that outlines the characteristics of the initial project and the amendments that emerged from the two rounds of public meetings. The same report will be discussed at a Council meeting, and the Executive member for the environment will then compile the suggestions made by the councillors. Finally, these suggestions will be presented to the Council as a preliminary project that will include all the issues raised throughout the entire process as much as possible.

- The steering committee decides to conclude the second round of public meetings with a citizen referendum; go to [section 25](#).



2 “The citizens involved are often enthusiastic, but they also want their opinion to count.”

3 “In the case of our project, public participation attracted the more critical citizens, which overshadowed the more constructive contributions.”

Section 15. The stages of the deliberative model and its pitfalls

With the help of the steering committee, the facilitators draw up the principal framework of the co-design process. After a lengthy discussion on the feasibility, costs and implications of the three applicable models in the context in question, the committee decides to experiment the deliberative model.

Although the decisional margin of the citizens is limited, the issue in hand is not only of a technical nature but also incorporates value-related elements.

Consequently, the situation lends itself particularly well to a highly structured participatory approach that is focused on weighing up information, arguments and counterarguments.

As such, the co-design process is established in extremely structured stages, reserved for a randomly selected group of citizens who have been chosen from a representative sample of the borough's population. The discussion will be held behind 'closed doors' and will be chaired and managed by the facilitators. The objective of the process will be to produce a widely agreed project proposal.

The process will be carried out in four main stages:

- The drafting of a dossier, containing information on the wind farm on the hill with the old mine, the characteristics of the site, the technologies they plan to use, and the impact of wind farm, will be distributed to all the residents and available to download on the participatory project's website;
- A telephone survey carried out by a public opinion polling company to recruit 23 citizens, with the aim of creating an arena of residents with

different socio-demographic characteristics. Preferably, the selected citizens will be unbiased in terms of opinions on the construction of the wind farm (i.e. those against, those in favour, indifferent or with no fixed opinion);

- The selected citizens will be invited to a round of meetings, organised and managed by the facilitators. During these meetings, they will discuss the information in the dossier, pose questions and doubts to the experts and technicians appointed by the steering committee, who will all have different expertise and viewpoints on the wind farm;
- With the help of the facilitators and the municipal technicians, the 23 citizens will work behind 'closed doors' to elaborate integrations or partial changes to the preliminary project and put forward ideas on how the profits will be used once the wind farm is fully operational.

As the project will only be subject to minor amendments and there is no risk of any drastic changes, the Mayor and the Executive member for the environment pledge to uphold the verdict of the process before the Council.

For the most part, the social legitimacy of an extremely structured deliberative process that is mostly carried out behind 'closed doors' is not very high, at least at this stage of the democratic system.

This is because citizens still tend to be suspicious of the recruitment process carried out by a municipal-appointed polling company and the closed confines of a small arena that excludes the other citizens.

Strategies for increasing the social legitimacy of deliberative arenas

A number of measures can be taken to increase the social legitimacy of a deliberative process and avoid that the sessions are carried out in a completely isolated environment, 'out of view' of society. To prevent this, it is essential to establish a communication channel between the workgroup and the outside world [1].

One solution could be to give individual citizens or organised groups within civil society the opportunity to send written contributions to the deliberative arena while the work sessions are in course.

One solution could be to give individual citizens or organised groups within civil society the opportunity to send written contributions to the deliberative arena while the work sessions are in course.

The third option could be to open a constant communication channel with the local press, so that it can provide adequate coverage of the deliberative process, which will help to support and reinforce the widespread disclosure of the results of the meetings.



At the same time, *the deliberative format favours the institutional sustainability of the process*, because it allows politicians and municipal officials to interact with a select group of citizens in a 'controlled' environment [2], through structured hearings and work sessions, where issues can be handled according to a specific timetable, using techniques that foster constructive interaction between the participants

However, the effectiveness of the deliberative model, or rather the ability of the recommendations to influence the political authority's final decision is doubtful.

On one side, the in-depth analysis, discussion and re-elaboration process that occurs within the deliberative process usually leads

to the proposal of more structured, pertinent and reasoned recommendations, than those that occur in an unstructured participatory process [3]. Therefore, one can expect that a deliberative process produces more well-founded and valid project integrations. Thus, it is precisely for this reason that it is in the political authority's interest to embrace and implement this approach. On the other side, through the acquisition of information and discussion with the other participants, the citizens involved in the process could call the initial project into question, raising issues that the administration or the technicians did not foresee in the initial plan. For this reason, the results of the process can be quite unexpected and go beyond the limited confines of the decisional mandate, forcing the administration to make a complex decision.

1 "During the entire process citizens could inform themselves through the project website, social media or by coming directly to speak with municipal officials"

2 "It's difficult for municipal officials to work outside the mould of their everyday roles."

3 "A well-structured debate often leads to better solutions."

• With the help of the facilitators, the team of citizens get to work.
Go to [section 26](#).



Section 16. The stages of the hybrid model and its pitfalls

With the help of the steering committee, the facilitators draw up a framework for the principal stages of the co-design project. After lengthy discussions on the feasibility, costs and implications of the three applicable models within the context in question, the committee decides to experiment the hybrid model, which aims to combine the stronger elements of the participatory model with the stronger elements of the deliberative model.

As such, the co-design process is divided into three main stages:

- The dossier, containing information about the wind farm project on the hill with the old mine, the characteristics of the site, the technologies used and its impact, as well as two ideas for the possible uses of the profits from the farm, will be distributed to all the residents and available to download on the website of the participatory project [1];
- A round of 'open door' public meetings throughout the territory, managed by the facilitators and attended by the municipal technicians and the Executive member for the environment, where citizens will be able to discuss the content of the dossier and put forward concrete proposals that will integrate or partially amend the project and the ideas for the use of the profits;
- The third stage will be reserved for 15 pre-selected citizens, who will be recruited through a telephone survey carried out by a public opinion polling company. The intention is to create an arena of residents with different socio-demographic characteristics

that is preferably unbiased in terms of their opinion about the wind farm (i.e. those against, those in favour, indifferent or uncertain). With the help of the facilitators and technicians, this restricted group of citizens will have the task of establishing a series of unanimously agreed selection criteria. Then, on the basis of the established criteria, they will select the suggested project integrations or revision proposals and the ideas for the use of the profits.

The social legitimacy of a hybrid process is facilitated by the participatory stage.

The citizens and organised bodies within the territory view this as a demonstration of the administration's openness towards the public, recognising the public assemblies as a direct and transparent channel for expressing the requests of civil society to the public administration.

At the same time, the deliberative format of the successive stage favours the institutional sustainability of the process.

This is because it allows the politicians and executives to interact with a select group of citizens in a 'controlled' environment, where specific questions can be posed and handled according to a specific timetable, using techniques that foster constructive interaction between the participants [2].

The hybrid model should also favour the effectiveness of the process because of the

1 "We used a broad range of communication and engagement tools, from the Internet to more traditional methods like assemblies."

2 "It's difficult for the municipal officials to work outside the mould of their everyday roles."

ability of the recommendations to influence the public authority's final decision.

The reason for this is that well-structured and unanimously agreed recommendations, based on pondered and rational arguments, like the ones that occur in more restricted arenas, should be more convincing than the ideas proposed in a purely participatory approach. At the same time, the recommendations obtained through

a combined model are not exclusively the result of a dialogical process with a small group of citizens but are founded on a broader engagement process that is open to all. Nevertheless, there is a risk of a substantial divide between the verdict of the initial participatory meeting stage and the second deliberative stage. In fact, rather than integrating and completing each other, the two stages could end up proceeding along two parallel tracks causing disorientation and confusion [3].

Strategies for facilitating the integration of the participatory and deliberative models in hybrid processes

A number of measures can be introduced to improve the integration of the participatory and deliberative stages of the process: the drafting of a special report that describes the dynamics and outcome of the first stage, which will be passed on to the participants of the second stage; reminding second stage participants of the importance of respecting the issues that emerged in the first stage throughout the entire process; allowing some of the citizens who took part in the initial participatory process to participate in some stages of the deliberative arena.



After establishing the co-design process, the steering committee must now decide how to close the proceedings. The facilitators propose two possible alternatives. The first consists in asking the small group of citizens that take part in the deliberative stage to propose a new project that is based on the initial plan but enriched or amended with some of the suggestions put forward during the participatory stage, and a hypothesis for the possible uses of the profits from the wind farm. The revised project proposal will then be subject to a public referendum. If the project is approved, the Executive member for the environment will present it to the Council for a final debate. However, if it is rejected during the referendum, the administration will go back to the original project.

The second possibility consists in the drafting of a final report by the facilitators, under the supervision of the steering committee, which highlights the essential characteristics of the original project, the integrations and corrections proposed during the participatory stage, the selection criteria of the proposals and the hypothesis for the new project devised during the deliberative stage, while also bearing in mind the ideas that were favourable, controversial or in the minority. Said report will be discussed at a Council meeting, and the Executive mem-

ber for the environment will then compile the suggestions made by the councillors. Finally, he will present to the Council a preliminary project that will consider all the issues raised throughout the entire process as much as possible.

The Executive member for the environment is more inclined towards the idea of the project being defined in a deliberative arena, followed by a final public referendum. In fact, he believes that this will enable them to reach a decision that will be difficult for the Council to overturn because the citizens have directly and unequivocally expressed their opinion. The municipal officials and various majority councillors lean more towards the second hypothesis. In the municipal officials' opinion, an accurate report of the proposals that emerged during the citizens' stage, but without a definitive verdict, would leave a margin of discretion for both the Council and the technicians, which could prove highly valuable during the detailed planning stage and realisation of the works. Meanwhile, the councillors believe that voting for the project in a referendum could undermine the entire co-design process, causing a frustrating situation that would almost certainly result in a loss of citizens' trust in and support to the municipal the administration. Like many other choices, this decision could lead to a variety of different scenarios.

10 "The stages of the process must all follow well-defined criteria that must be respected to the very end."

- If the steering committee decides to end the hybrid process with a referendum on the project that was redesigned during the deliberative stage, go to **section 27**.
- If the steering committee decides to end the hybrid process with a report that takes into consideration the issues that emerged, which will be evaluated by the Council, go to **section 28**.



Section 17. The final decision goes to vote

With the help of the experts from the university and regional research centre, the municipal officials draw up an extremely accurate and detailed informative dossier. The Mayor and the Executive member for the environment discuss the content of the document with a team of minority councillors, and they make a number of amendments and integrations. The dossier contains technical information about the two wind farm options; a section specifically dedicated to the comments and arguments of the councillors from the different political parties represented in the Council, and a section that describes the various stages of the participatory process. The dossier is published on the project's website, printed in a thousand copies and sent to the public institutions of the various wards, to ensure distribution in public places with a high footfall (e.g. schools, gyms, supermarkets, hospitals and doctors surgeries). The document is also sent to the various associations and public and private meeting centres throughout the territory [1].

A few days after the distribution of the informative dossier, the citizens' committee that petitioned against the wind farm accuses the administration of drafting a document that appears to be partially biased towards the idea of building the wind farm on the hill. In the committee's opinion, this option would have a higher impact than the project proposed for the ex-military site. The representatives of the committee underline that the Executive member for the environment has informally expressed his preference for this site and that the dossier is clearly influenced by this viewpoint, demonstrating the administration's intention to manipulate the citizens by steering them to choose the desired option [2]. The

spokesperson for the group of farmers appears in a special report, broadcast by a local television station, in which he appeals to the public to call a halt to the process, because in their view the informative dossier contains various inaccuracies and is slightly biased in favour of building the wind farm. The retail association also starts a petition against the wind farm and, in few weeks, they manage to gather a few thousand signatures. Meanwhile, in an interview with a local television station, the trade union and executives of the chemical company sustain that wind farms have been built in various other prominent locations and this had not caused a significant reduction in tourism. In fact, it actually gave a positive image of an environmentally sustainable region. Furthermore, the administration is accused of having drafted a document that is unbalanced in terms of attention paid to the conservation of the landscape and to the opinions of those against the wind farm.

Even when a dossier presents various options, the fact that the document has been drafted by the administration proposing the project tends to reduce the social legitimacy of the process, especially in the eyes of more active and militant citizens, who already have a formed opinion on the issue.

While it is legitimate for the administration or some of its prominent members to have a preference towards one of the projects, it is equally legitimate that citizens might believe that an informative dossier drafted by the administration proposing the plan may not be entirely unbiased.

1 "To inform the citizens correctly, you have to start from the most frequented meeting places."

2 "To avoid instrumentalisation, the information must be clear and impartial."

Strategies for increasing the social legitimacy of an informative dossier for a public policy that has been drafted by the administration



One way to increase the social legitimacy of a dossier that has been directly drafted by the administration proposing the public policy is to involve the various interested parties in the drafting of the document, providing them with a dedicated space to adequately express their positions and arguments [3].

Despite the protests of the citizens' committee and the threat of boycotts at the public meetings, the participatory stage begins. These meetings are structured into ten public assemblies that will be held in two stages. The first five meetings will have the objective of presenting the two project options, answering to the citizens' questions and gathering the various observations and counter-proposals. The other five meetings will have the aim of reaching a final decision.

Approximately one-hundred residents attend each session during the first round of meetings, and each session lasts for about two hours. After a brief presentation of the fundamental characteristics of the two project ideas by the technicians, the meeting continues with interventions from the citizens. The debate that follows is heated and emotionally charged. For the most part, the participants are representatives of the environmental association, the group of farmers, the retail association and the citizens' committee that are against the project, who have used the opportunity to mobilise their sympathisers. However, these interventions provide a detailed picture of the citizens' concerns about the negative impact of the works. The environmentalists are particularly concerned about the harm to the landscape; the farmers and retailers are worried about a possible decline in tourism, while the members of the citizens' committee are worried about the disturbance that the construction works and noise pollution from the turbines will cause the residents [4]. Meanwhile, the citizens explicitly in favour of the wind farm are a minority group, and their opinions are often met with opposition from the other participants.

At the end of each meeting, participants can fill in a form with their opinions, proposals and suggestions and post them in a box provided by the municipal officials. The administration promises it will take note of the proposals and evaluate the technical feasibility and repercussions in terms of impact and costs.

The municipal technicians receive citizens' proposals and start to classify them according to their technical, legal and economic feasibility. However, most of the proposals are rejected. This is because some of the ideas are unfeasible due to the nature of the technologies that are currently available; others do not comply with the European, national or regional regulations, or are too expensive compared to the predicted profitability of the farm [5]. After close examination by the municipal technicians, only three of the proposed ideas can effectively be taken into consideration.

The first idea explicitly regards the location of the wind farm on the hill. One resident suggests placing the turbines on the side of the hill that is least visible to the urban centre and planting very leafy trees to reduce and minimise the view of the wind farm from below. The second idea regards the type of turbine blades to use. A farmer proposes the use of an innovative serrated blade that helps reduce noise when the turbines are in function. The third idea regards the use of the profits. One citizen proposes that the revenue is used by the municipality to fund an incentive scheme for energy efficiency refurbishment of residents' houses.

It is perfectly normal for citizens to make suggestions that do not consider the technical, legal and economic restrictions. Therefore it is natural that the municipal officials' evaluation ends with the rejection of many citizens' proposals put forward during the process.

However, if this translates into a drastic thinning down of the ideas, the selection process carried out by the technicians can contribute to weakening the social legitimacy of the co-design process, because the participants' expectations are not met.

3 "Citizens have more trust when the informative campaign is transparent and involves the citizens and associations."

4 Citizens often have very different motivations for taking part."

5 "Frequently, citizens have no idea that many of the proposals are completely unfeasible."

Strategies for increasing the social legitimacy of the evaluation stage of the residents' proposals



To increase the social legitimacy of the evaluation stage carried out by the technicians, which must also be guided by the criteria of economic sustainability, technical feasibility and compliance with the laws in force, a number of measures can be introduced to guarantee the maximum transparency of the technical evaluation process and promote a thorough understanding of the motives and procedures.

To assist this process, the team of technicians carrying out the evaluation could also be flanked by reputable representatives from the associations and committees that are against the farm. The results of each session could also be summarised in an information bulletin and published on the website, making it readily available to the interested parties.

The second round of participatory meetings opens with a political conflict. The participatory process is taking place just before the pre-election period that will see a change in the political structure of the regional government. Two candidates for the Regional Council, who have their electoral constituency in the area to which the municipality belongs, focus on the wind farm project in the electoral campaign. One candidate, who belongs to the same party as the Executive member for the environment, sustains that the project is extremely important, and that the Region should commit to supporting and promoting the initiative. Conversely, one candidate from the opposition sustains that the project has created a wind farm lobby that is attempting to push the plan forward for financial gain.

In his opinion, the Region should clamp down harshly on this type of speculation. To push their campaigns forward, both politicians give numerous interviews to the lo-

cal press and implement an intensive leafletting campaign throughout the borough, also leading to public, verbal confrontations between the respective supporters [6].

It is not uncommon that the schedule of a co-design process clashes with the timetable of a traditional, political-administrative procedure, such as an election deadline, the substitution of an officer due to an internal conflict within the majority party, legal investigations and proceedings, etc. When this occurs, *the social legitimacy, institutional sustainability and effectiveness of the co-design process can be put at risk*, because the administration is forced to slow down the pre-established process, causing inconvenience and discontent among the participants. Furthermore, during these times, politicians' and municipal officials' attention may often be focused on other tasks and a change in the schedule can weaken the ability of the process to effectively influence the final decisions of public institutions.

Strategies for when the schedule of a co-design process clashes with the timetable of traditional political-administrative processes



As previously proposed, one way to prevent political dynamics from interfering with the co-design process consists in inviting other political representatives with different opinions to take part in the workgroup managing the process.

Another measure, which can often be helpful in the case of electoral campaigns, is to postpone the public meeting schedule to avoid holding the assemblies during the more heated periods a few weeks before the vote.

The second round of meetings is carried out over a longer timescale than initially planned. The assemblies are extremely heated and often see the Mayor, the Executive member for the environment and the municipal technicians engage in open conflict with some of the participants. The final vote, which is supposed to close the sessions throughout the borough, is boycotted during

two of the meetings by some of the members of the citizens' committee and the group of farmers, who have been against both proposals for the wind farm throughout the entire process. Nevertheless, the process ends with approximately 600 votes. There is a clear majority in favour of the wind farm project on the hill and the integration of a number of interventions to mitigate the wind farm's im-

6 "Before elections, conflict is the order of the day."

impact on the landscape, which are put forward in a proposal by one of the residents’.

The Executive member for the environment presents the voted preliminary project to the Council for final approval. At this point, the participatory stage of the project ends, and the political-administrative process continues on its usual course.

The policy effectiveness of the co-design process, or more precisely its ability to influence the choices of the administration, will become apparent over a variable timescale. The extent to which the final decision of the administration will take into consideration the results of the co-design process is partly determined by the characteristics

of the chosen approach, the corrective instruments used, the adaptive strategies adopted by the managers of the process, but also, in part, by the contingent dynamics and political events, which are impossible to influence, except for in a purely marginal manner. The co-design process can be concluded in two different ways: the municipality can define a final project that adheres to the preliminary plan voted by the citizens or it can make substantial changes to the final project. In the case of the latter, the workgroup can partially remedy the loss of social legitimacy by publicly declaring the reasons that have led it to reject some of the results of the co-design process.

This story ends here. Read the moral below (or go back and try different choices!)

How did you arrive to this end? See the turning points in the CYOA book map.



As seen in various stages of the book, decision-making processes can be difficult and full of roadblocks, often resulting in unexpected outcomes that present decision-makers with serious dilemmas.

On one hand, broad-range citizens’ involvement in the assessment of whether to build the wind farm or not, the definition of the location and site specifications, laid an initial foundation of trust in the process, even among the opposition. On the other hand, the management of the project by the administration fuelled scepticism and fears that the politicians might attempt to manipulate the opinions of the citizens during the process. The participatory model, which lacks a specific structure and tends to be based on spontaneous dynamics between citizens, was not without complications. This was due to several factors: the boycott by those who feared political manipulation; the difficulty in finding a connection between the citizens’ proposals and the technical and bureaucratic constraints, posed by the various laws and regulations, and the absence of representatives for some of the relevant view points in the participatory arenas. The final vote provided the administration with a clear overview of the citizens’ opinion on the integrations and changes to the project, but it did not shed light on the underlying reasons for their decision, limiting the administration’s understanding of local needs and issues, particularly within the higher-level political institutions.

Section 18. Letting the promoter decide does not deprive people of power

With the help of the experts from the university and regional research centre, the municipal officials draw up an extremely accurate and detailed informative dossier. The Mayor and the Executive member for the environment discuss the content of the document with a team of minority councillors, and they make a number of amendments and integrations. The dossier contains technical information about the two wind farm options, a section specifically dedicated to the comments and arguments of the councillors from the different political parties, and a section that describes the various stages of the participatory process. The dossier is published on the project's website, printed in a thousand copies and sent to the public institutions of the various wards, to ensure distribution in public places with a high footfall (i.e. schools, gyms, supermarkets, hospitals and doctors surgeries). The document is also sent to the various associations and public and private meeting centres throughout the territory [1].

A few days after the distribution of the informative dossier, the citizens' committee that petitioned against the wind farm, accuses the administration of drafting a document that appears to be partially biased towards the idea of building the wind farm on the hill [2].

In the committee's opinion, this option would have more impact than the project proposed

for the ex-military site. The environmental association also underlines that the Executive member for the environment has informally expressed his preference for this site and that the dossier is clearly influenced by this viewpoint, demonstrating the administration's intention to manipulate the citizens by steering them to choose the desired option. In a special report broadcast on local television, the spokesperson from the group of farmers asks the municipality to call a halt to the process because they feel that the informative dossier is inaccurate and one-sided. The spokesperson of the chemical company maintains a substantially favourable stance towards the idea of building a wind farm because it can help reduce energy production costs. In an interview that appears in a local newspaper, he declares he feels that the dossier is skewed in favour of the voices against the farm, a symptom of the U-turn the administration decided to make due to pressure from opponents of the project.

Even when a dossier presents various options, the fact the document has been drafted by the administration proposing the project *tends to reduce the social legitimacy of the process*, especially in the eyes of more active and militant citizens who already have a formed opinion on the issue. While it is legitimate for the administration or some of its prominent members to have a preference towards one of the projects, it is equally legitimate that the citizens might believe that an informative dossier drafted by the administration proposing the plan may not be entirely unbiased.

Strategies for increasing the social legitimacy of an informative dossier that has been drafted by the administration proposing the public policy

A way to increase social legitimacy of a dossier that has been directly drafted by the administration proposing the public policy is to involve the key players interested in the wind farm, including those who are strongly against the same, providing them with a dedicated space to adequately express their opinions and arguments [3].

1 "To inform the citizens correctly, you have to start from the most frequented meeting places."

2 "To avoid instrumentalisation, the information must be clear and impartial."

3 "Citizens have more trust in the process when the informative campaign is transparent and involves the citizens and associations."

Despite the protests and the threat of the environmental association and the group of farmers of boycotting the public meetings, the participatory stage begins.

These meetings are structured into ten public assemblies that will be held in two stages. The first five meetings have the objective of presenting the two project options, answering to the citizens' questions and gathering the various observations and counterproposals. The other five meetings have the aim of reaching a final decision.

Approximately one-hundred residents attend each session during the first round of meetings, and each session lasts for about two hours. After a brief presentation of the fundamental characteristics of the two project ideas by the technicians, the meeting continues with interventions by the citizens. The debate that follows is heated and emotionally charged. For the most part, the participants are representatives of the environmental association, the group of farmers and the citizens' committee that are against the project, who have used the opportunity to mobilise their sympathisers. During the meetings particular concern is raised about the negative impacts of the project.

The environmentalists are particularly concerned about the harm to the landscape; the organic farmers about a possible decline in tourism, while the citizens' committee is worried about the disturbance that the construction works and noise pollution from the turbines will cause the residents [4]. Meanwhile, the citizens in favour of the wind farm are a minority group, and their opinions are often subject of criticism from the other participants.

4 "Citizens often have very different motivations for taking part."

5 "Often citizens are not aware of the fact that most of their proposals are completely unfeasible"



At the end of each meeting, participants can fill in a form with their opinions, proposals and suggestions and post them in a box provided by the municipal officials.

The administration promises it will take note of the proposals and evaluate the technical feasibility and repercussions in terms of impact and costs.

The municipal technicians receive the citizens' proposals and start to classify them according to their technical, legal and economic feasibility. However, most of the proposals are rejected. This is because some of the ideas are unfeasible due to the nature of the technologies that are currently available; others do not comply with the European, national or regional regulations, or are too expensive compared to the predicted profitability of the wind farm [5]. After close examination by the technicians, only three of the proposed ideas can effectively be taken into consideration.

The first idea explicitly regards the location of the wind farm on the hill. One resident suggests placing the turbines on the side of the hill that is least visible to the urban centre and planting very leafy trees to reduce and minimise the view of the farm from below.

The second idea regards the type of turbine blades to use. A farmer proposes the use of an innovative serrated blade that helps reduce the noise when the turbines are in function.

The third idea regards the use of the profits. One citizen proposes that the revenue is used by the municipality to fund a resident incentive scheme for energy efficiency works on their homes.

It is perfectly normal for citizens to make suggestions that do not consider the technical, legal and economic restrictions. Therefore it is only natural that the officials' evaluation ends with the rejection of some of the proposals put forward by the residents. However, if this translates into a drastic thinning down of the ideas, the selection process carried out by the technicians can contribute to weakening the social legitimacy of the co-design process, because the participants' expectations are not met.

Strategies for increasing the social legitimacy of the evaluation stage of the residents' proposals



To increase the social legitimacy of the evaluation stage carried out by the technicians, which must also be guided by the criteria of economic sustainability, technical feasibility and compliance with the laws in force, a number of measures can be introduced to guarantee the maximum transparency of the technical evaluation process and promote a thorough understanding of the procedures and motives behind said decisions. To support this process, the team of technicians carrying out the evaluation could also be flanked by reputable representatives of the associations and committees that are against the farm. The results of each session could also be summarised in an information bulletin and published on the website, making it readily available to the interested parties.

The second round of participatory meetings opens on a note of political conflict. The participatory process is taking place just before the election period that will see a change in the political structure of the regional government. Two candidates for the Regional Council, who have their electoral constituency in an area to which the municipality belongs, focus on the wind farm project in the electoral campaign, which becomes the subject of great interest in the local press. One candidate, who belongs to the same party as the Executive member for the environment, sustains that the project is extremely important, and that the Region should commit to supporting and promoting the initiative. Conversely, one candidate from the opposition sustains that the project has created a wind farm lobby that is attempting to push the plan forward for financial gain. In his opinion, the Region should clamp down harshly on this type of speculation. To push their campaigns forward, both politicians give nu-

merous interviews to the local press and implement an intensive leafleting campaign throughout the borough, also leading to public, verbal confrontations between the respective supporters [6].

It is not uncommon that the schedule of a co-design process clashes with the timetable of a traditional, political-administrative procedure, such as an election deadline, the substitution of an officer due to internal conflict within the majority party, legal investigations and proceedings, etc. When this occurs, *the social legitimacy, institutional sustainability and effectiveness of the co-design process can be put at risk*, because the administration is forced to slow down the pre-established process, causing inconvenience and discontent among the participants. Furthermore, during these times, the politicians' attention may be focused on other tasks and a change in the schedule can weaken the ability of the process to effectively influence the final decisions of the administration.

Strategies when the schedule of a co-design process clashes with the timetable of traditional political-administrative processes



As previously proposed, one way to prevent political dynamics from interfering with the co-design process consists in inviting other political representatives with different opinions to take part in the workgroup managing the process.

Another measure, which can often be helpful in the case of electoral campaigns, is to postpone the public meeting schedule in order to avoid holding the assemblies during the period before the election.

The second round of meetings is carried out over a longer timescale than initially planned. The assemblies are extremely heated and often see the Mayor, Executive member for the environment and the municipal technicians engage in open conflict with some of the participants.

At the end of this stage, the staff of the

Executive member for the environment write a final report underlining the characteristics of the initial options; the proposals put forward in the first round of meetings; the evaluations of the municipal technicians, and, finally, the reactions and suggestions of the residents during the second round of meetings.

6 "Before elections, conflict is the order of the day."

The report also outlines the three main recommendations and provides a detailed description of the various changes that can be made to the two wind farm projects.

The first recommendation regards reducing the visual impact of the farm as much as possible. This can be achieved in various ways: reducing the number of wind turbines; positioning the turbines in such a way as to minimise their visibility from the urban centre; naturalising the site by planting trees and incorporating other environmental measures to camouflage the turbines. The second recommendation is to minimise the disturbance caused by the construction works as much as possible, by prohibiting the transit of heavy vehicles to the site in the urban areas during rush-hour and to establish a committee to monitor the constructions works. This committee would be composed of municipal technicians, residents and representatives of the construction company, with the objective of following the development of the works so they can quickly take action should problems emerge during the same. The third recommendation is to mitigate the noise pollution caused by the turbines. In this regard, the report develops a hypothesis put forward during one of the meetings, which foresees the adoption of an innovative serrated turbine blade, together with an analysis of the costs and an estimate of the noise reduction achieved from adopting the technology [7].

The report also illustrates and develops other suggestions for the reinvestment of the profits from the farm. As well as the proposal to use the revenue to support the energy efficiency of private homes, it also considers a variety of other ideas regarding the refurbishment of public buildings and spaces (meeting places, plazas, green areas, etc.), which, according to the citizens' views expressed during the public meetings, are in a state of degradation, abandoned or underused. Furthermore, the report also reveals that most of the criticism at the meetings was directed at the idea to build the farm in the flatter zone near the residential area. However, the plan for the site on the hill not only met with less resistance but also generated a variety of constructive proposals – some more radical than others – to re-elaborate the plan.

The report is distributed to all the councillors and discussed in various Council

meetings, where they raise a number of perplexities on specific elements of the two project proposals and the suggestions that emerged during the participatory process. In fact, it seems that many councillors are in favour of building the wind farm in the flatter area and of adopting the new serrated blades that reduce the noise pollution of the turbines.

However, the same councillors are also aware that ignoring the recommendations of the residents that took part in the participatory process would give rise to various protests and increase public frustration and scepticism towards the policy. The Mayor and the Executive member for the environment are uncertain of how to proceed. There are good reasons for trying to persuade some of the councillors to vote for the wind farm project, which is more in line with the citizens' recommendations, or simply leaving the final verdict to the councillors' vote. However, the latter will most probably result in disregarding most of the recommendations that emerged during the participatory process.

In any case, the participatory stage is closed, and the political-administrative process returns to its usual course. The policy effectiveness of the co-design process or more precisely its ability to influence the administration's final decision will become apparent over a variable timescale. The extent to which the public institution's final decision will adhere to the results of the co-design process, is partly determined by the characteristics of the chosen approach; the corrective instruments used, and the adaptive strategies adopted by the managers of the process. However, it is also partly determined by the contingent dynamics and political events, which are impossible to influence, except in a purely marginal manner.

At this stage, the co-design process can be concluded in two different ways: the municipality can define the final project that incorporates a substantial number of the recommendations and ideas proposed by the participants, or it can choose to disregard most of the participants' suggestions when defining the final project. In the case of the latter, the public administration could partially remedy the loss of social legitimacy by publicly explaining the reasons that have led to the rejection of some of the results of the co-design process.

7 “Citizens often have good ideas, and these types of processes can help them emerge.”

This story ends here. Read the moral below (or go back and try different choices!)

How did you arrive to this end? See the turning points in the CYOA book map.



As seen in various stages of the book, decision-making processes can be difficult and full of roadblocks, often resulting in unexpected outcomes that present decision-makers with serious dilemmas.

On one hand, broad-range citizens' involvement in the assessment of whether to build the wind farm or not, the definition of the location and site specifications, laid an initial foundation of trust in the process, even among the opposition. On the other hand, the management of the project by the administration fuelled scepticism and fears that the politicians might attempt to manipulate the opinions of the citizens during the process. The participatory model, which lacks a specific structure and tends to be based on spontaneous dynamics between citizens, was not without its complications. This was due to several factors: the boycott by those who feared political manipulation; the difficulty in finding a connection between the citizens' proposals and the technical and bureaucratic constraints posed by the various laws and regulations, and the absence of representatives for some of the relevant view points in the participatory arenas. The final report on the proposals and the underlying motivations provided the administration with solid information on which to base their decision, but it did not provide a clear picture of the participants' views on the final project.

Section 19. Why conflict and cooperation coexist in public meetings

A few days after the distribution of the informative dossier, the group of farmers, the retail association, the citizens' committee, and the environmental association, which petitioned against the wind farm, accuses the administration of drafting a document that appears to be partially biased towards the idea of building the wind farm on the hill. In the opinion of the environmental association, this option would have more impact than the project proposed for the ex-military area. The environmentalists underline that the Executive member for the environment has expressed his preference for this site on more than one occasion and that the dossier is clearly influenced by this viewpoint, demonstrating the administration's intention to manipulate the citizens by steering them to choose the desired option. Conversely, the chem-

ical company sends out a press release in which it accuses the public administration of substantially taking a U-turn, because the dossier is clearly biased against building the wind farm.

The drafting of an informative dossier that includes the opinions of people with different expertise and viewpoints usually tends to increase the social legitimacy of the process. Theoretically, this is because it increases the credibility of the information contained in the same. However, even when a dossier is written with extreme care and accuracy by an unbiased steering committee, it often occurs that some factions of civil society still do not trust the quality of the information. As such, content that appears impartial and unbiased to the committee members [1] can be interpreted as biased or one-sided by outsiders.

Strategies for increasing the social legitimacy of the informative dossier

A solution to increase the social legitimacy of an informative dossier (even one that is drafted and approved by the steering committee), is to invite the various interested factions to propose integrations and/or corrections to the preliminary draft of the dossier, which will allow for the full and fair expression of the different stances and arguments of the citizens [2].



1 "To avoid instrumentalisation, the information must be clear and impartial."

2 "Citizens have more trust in the process when the informative campaign is transparent and involves the citizens and associations."

Despite the protests and the threat of the environmental association and farmers of boycotting the public meetings, the participatory process begins.

These meetings are structured into ten public assemblies that will be held in two phases. The first five meetings will have the objective of presenting the two project options, answering the citizens' questions and gathering the various observations and counterproposals. The other five meetings will have the aim of reaching a final decision.

Approximately one-hundred residents attend each session during the first round of meetings, and each session lasts for about two hours. After a brief presentation of the fundamental characteristics of the two project ideas by the technicians, the meeting continues with the interventions of the citizens. The debate that follows is heated and emotionally charged. For the most part, the participants are representatives from the environmental association, the group of farmers and the citizens' committee that are against the project, who have used the opportunity to mobilise their sympathisers. However, these interventions provide a de-

tailed picture of the citizens' concerns about the negative impact of the works [3].

The environmentalists are particularly concerned about the harm to the landscape; the farmers about a possible decline in tourism, while the citizens' committee are worried about the disturbance that the construction works and noise pollution from the turbines will cause the residents. Meanwhile, the citizens in favour of the wind farm are in the minority, and their opinions are often subject of criticism from the other participants.

At the end of each meeting, participants can fill in a form with their opinions, proposals and suggestions and put them in a box provided by the municipal officials. The steering committee promises it will write a detailed report of all the meetings and, together with the municipal technicians and several external experts, they will evaluate the feasibility of the various ideas and proposals and the repercussions in terms of impact and costs.

The steering committee receives the facilitators' summary of the discussions and the ideas of the participants, but they find themselves dealing with many proposals that cannot be included in the preliminary project.

This is because some of the proposals are completely unfeasible due to the nature of the available technologies; others do not comply with the European, national or regional

regulations, or are too expensive compared to the predicted profitability of the wind farm.

After close examination by the steering committee, external experts and municipal technicians, only three of the proposed ideas can effectively be taken into consideration [4].

The first idea explicitly regards the location of the wind farm on the hill. One resident suggests placing the turbines on the side of the hill that is least visible to the urban centre and planting very leafy trees to reduce and minimise the view of the farm from below.

The second idea regards the type of turbine blades to use. One citizen proposes the use of an innovative toothed blade that helps reduce the noise when the turbines are in function.

The third idea regards the use of the profits. One citizen proposes that the revenue is used by the municipality to fund a resident incentive scheme for energy efficiency in houses.

It is perfectly normal for citizens to make suggestions that do not consider the technical, legal and economic restrictions. Therefore, it is only natural that the municipal officials' evaluation ends with the rejection of some of the proposals put forward by the residents. However, if this translates into a drastic thinning down of the ideas, the selection process carried out by the technicians can contribute to weakening the social legitimacy of the co-design process, because the participants' expectations are not met.

Strategies for increasing the social legitimacy of the evaluation stage of the residents' proposals

To increase the social legitimacy of the evaluation stage carried out by the technicians, which must also be guided by the criteria of economic sustainability, technical feasibility and compliance with the laws in force, a number of measures can be introduced to guarantee the maximum transparency of the technical evaluation process and promote a thorough understanding of the motives and procedures.

To support this process, the team of technicians carrying out the evaluation could also be flanked by reputable representatives of the associations and committees that are against the farm. The results of each session could also be summarised in an information bulletin and published on the website, making it readily available to the interested parties.



The second round of participatory session opens with an unexpected event. The regional authorities announce the launch of a three-year sustainable energy programme that foresees the investment of hundreds of millions of Euro throughout the territory.

This announcement raises doubts among both the majority and minority councillors. Some accuse the Mayor and Executive member for the environment of trying to rush the proposal forward, which would prevent them from accessing the sizeable

3 “Citizens often have very different motivations for taking part.”

4 “Frequently, citizens have no idea that many of their proposals are completely unfeasible.”

funds offered by the Region. Meanwhile, others see the announcement of the Region as an opportunity to obtain co-financing for the wind farm project, as long as they slow down the planning procedures and comply with the directives issued by the same. The environmental association, the group of farmers and the citizens' committee that oppose the wind farm ask to call a halt to the co-design process, to await further information on the restrictions and opportunities provided by the regional scheme. Whereas, the trade union and spokesperson of the chemical company ask not to call a halt to the process, but to adapt it, so that it can take full advantage of the opportunities provided by the regional scheme.

It is not uncommon for local decision-making processes to conflict with the decisional processes of other levels of government [5]. However, if this occurs, the subsequent friction obviously affects the co-design process. In these cases, *the social legitimacy, institutional sustainability and effectiveness of the process are at risk*, because it forces a change in the procedures and, at times, even the content of the co-design process itself. In fact, there is a risk that this could prevent the administration from meeting citizens' expectations. Furthermore, it could complicate relationships between politicians and public officials and weaken the ability of the process to influence the final decisions of the administration.

Strategies for dealing with unexpected intervention from higher levels of government, which slow-down procedures, redefine the stages of the process or modify some of the content under discussion.



In these cases, it can be helpful to involve the higher-level government in the co-design process. This can be done in various ways: involving the higher-level political representatives or public officials in the steering committee; participation of the higher-level technicians and officials in the public meetings; integration of the dossier with the opportunities and restrictions introduced by the higher-level government.

The Mayor and the Executive member for the environment decide to go ahead with the co-design process. However, the meetings throughout the territory take place over a longer timeframe than initially planned. The assemblies are extremely heated, but the facilitators help to manage the conflict, even when some representatives of the citizens' committee and of the group of farmers attempt to boycott the final voting session during two of the meetings. The process ends with approximately 800 votes. There is a clear majority in favour of the wind farm project on the hill, with the addition, however, of a number of interventions to reduce the farm's impact on the landscape, which are put forward in a proposal by one of the residents [6].

The Executive member for the environment presents the most voted preliminary project to the Council for final approval. At this stage, the participatory process ends and the political-administrative process continues on its usual course, which is no less complicated than the previous one. The policy effectiveness of the co-design process, or more

precisely its ability to influence the administration's final decision, will become apparent over a variable timescale. The extent to which the public institution's final decision will adhere to the results of the co-design process is partly determined by the characteristics of the chosen approach, the corrective instruments used, the adaptive strategies that the managers of the process have adopted, but also, in part, by the contingent dynamics and political events, which are impossible to influence, except in a purely marginal manner.

The co-design process can be concluded in two different ways: the municipality can define a final project that corresponds to the preliminary plan voted by the citizens or, for various reasons, the final project will contain substantial changes. Even in this case, the political authorities are obliged to publicly declare the reasons that have led them to partially disregard the results of the co-design process [7]. Finally, possibly on recommendation of the facilitators, a steering committee or support team could be established for monitoring the implementation of the project.

5 "The problems started when we had to interact with the higher-level institutions."

6 "People who know the territory can make a concrete contribution to the process with their own knowledge."

7 "The information provided both before and after the process is crucial in helping citizens understand the real results."

This story ends here. Read the moral below (or go back and try different choices!)

How did you arrive to this end? See the turning points in the CYOA book map.



As seen in various stages of the book, decision-making processes can be difficult and full of roadblocks, often resulting in unexpected outcomes that present decision-makers with serious dilemmas.

Broad-range citizens' involvement in the assessment of whether to build the wind farm or not, the definition of the location and site specifications, laid an initial foundation of trust in the process, even among the opposition. Furthermore, the decision to rely on professional facilitators was a constructive help in managing some of the conflicts, but it also forced the administration to divulge their decisions with both stakeholders and experts.

The participatory model, which lacks a specific structure and is largely based on spontaneous dynamics between citizens, responded to the local government's need for political consensus. However, this was not without its complications, which the facilitators helped to alleviate but were unable to resolve entirely.

The final vote provided the administration with a clear picture of the citizens' opinions on the project integrations and modifications, but it did not shed light on the underlying reasons for their decision, limiting the administration's understanding of local needs and issues, particularly within the higher-level institutions.

Section 20. Surprises are always around the corner!

A few days after the distribution of the informative dossier, the citizens' committee that petitioned against the wind farm, accuses the administration of drafting a document that appears to be partially biased towards the idea of building the wind farm on the hill. The environmental association, the group of farmers and retail association all agree that this option would have a higher impact than the project proposed for the ex-military area. In their opinion, the biased document is proof that the steering committee is pre-oriented and intends to manipulate the public opinion in favour of a project that the Executive member for the environment has previously mentioned in an interview during his party's electoral campaign. Conversely, the spokesperson

for the chemical company also has perplexities about the neutrality of the dossier, which they feel seems to be more in favour of building the farm on the old military site.

The drafting of an informative dossier that includes the opinions of people with different expertise and viewpoints usually tends to *increase the social legitimacy of the process*, because it improves the credibility of the document. However, even when a dossier is written with extreme care and accuracy by an unbiased steering committee [1], it often occurs that some factions of civil society still do not trust the quality of the information. As such, content that appears impartial and unbiased to the committee members can be interpreted as biased or one-sided by outsiders.

Strategies for increasing the social legitimacy of the informative dossier

Even when the informative dossier has been drafted with the approval of the steering committee, a number of measures can be adopted to increase the social legitimacy of an informative dossier.

It is important to make sure the dossier contains not only the relevant technical and/or scientific information but also the results of the conflict assessment stage (Section 6).

Also, the key civil society actors interested in the wind farm, who are not on the steering committee, can be invited to propose changes and/or corrections to the draft, to make sure the dossier clearly and thoroughly expresses their position and arguments [2].



1 "To avoid instrumentalisation, the information must be clear and impartial."

2 "Citizens have more trust when the informative campaign is transparent and involves the citizens and associations."

3 "We needed to guarantee that everyone had an opportunity to voice their opinion."

Despite the protests of the citizens' committee, the opinion polling company starts the recruitment process.

After many calls (also because most of the citizens do not agree to take part in the process), the opinion polling company finally manages to recruit 23 citizens.

The selected group is heterogeneous in terms of gender, age and social status. How-

ever, the voices of those in favour or relatively in favour of the wind farm being built in the ex-military area are largely in the minority compared to those against the idea. The steering committee decides to establish the group regardless, reassured by the fact that the facilitators will do their best to structure the discussions in such a way as to guarantee that this opinion has the same room for expression as the others [3].

The 23 citizens get to work, alternating informative and debate

sessions with external experts with internal discussion sessions.

The objective of these meetings is to pinpoint the questions that will be posed to the experts and discuss their answers. The experts are chosen by the steering committee, with the assistance of the universities and the environmental technical agencies of the regional government [4]. The facilitators coordinate and oversee the proceedings, to ensure that all the participants' voices are fairly and freely expressed, according to the principles of reciprocal respect, and encouraging the participants to behave in a reflective and constructive manner. However, there are two main problems to overcome.

The first is that the participants are often selective when it comes to their attention to the information and arguments posed by the experts. This means that, in the discussions that take place after the sessions with the experts, the participants only tend to bring up the information or arguments that are most in line with their own opinion, leaving out the ones that might call their views into question, even if only in part. In these cases, the facilitators' role is to remind the participants of the information and arguments that have been ignored or bring them to the participants' attention themselves by summarising the key points.

The second problem is that the participants find it hard to argue their position objectively or sufficiently, seldom going beyond a simple illustration of their own opinions. In this case, the facilitators intervene with targeted questions and cues to uncover the reasons behind their affirmations and stimulate a well-argued and informed debate on the matter at hand as much as possible.

Meanwhile, the citizens' committee and retail association, which are generally against the farm but slightly inclined towards the idea of using the ex-military site, distributes some fliers to the population in which they sustain that the deliberative process has no legitimacy whatsoever. Their accusation is that the process is not representative of all the residents' views because none of the committee's members has been invited by the polling company to take part in the process and the 23 se-

lected participants are only qualified to express their personal opinions. Furthermore, the committee sustains that the approach has been intentionally orchestrated to exclude the more competent and 'combatant' members of the committee, so that they can 'pass' decisions that lean towards the desired outcome of the administration. The retail association also believes that having representatives from specific social categories with skills that the group of ordinary citizens do not possess is beneficial to the process. The steering committee responds, reiterating the fundamental principles of deliberative processes, but the debate also continues in the local press, for the entire duration of the co-design process.

However, an unexpected event occurs during the citizens' workgroups. The regional authorities announce the launch of a three-year sustainable energy programme that foresees the investment of hundreds of millions of Euro throughout the territory.

This announcement raises many doubts among both the majority and minority councillors. Some accuse the Mayor and the Executive member for the environment of trying to rush the proposal forward, which would prevent them from accessing the regional funds. Meanwhile, others see the Region's announcement as an opportunity to obtain co-financing for the wind farm project, as long as they slow down the planning procedures and comply with the directives issued by the same. The environmental association, the group of farmers and the citizens' committee that are against the wind farm ask to call a halt to the co-design process, to await further information on the restrictions and opportunities provided by the regional scheme. Whereas, the trade union of the chemical company asks not to call a halt to the process but to adapt it, so that the administration can take full advantage of the opportunities provided by the regional scheme.

It is not uncommon for local decision-making processes to conflict with the decisional processes of other levels of government [5]. However, if this occurs,

4 "To solve problems, we involved specialists from the public and private sectors and the universities."

5 "The problems started when we had to interact with the higher-level institutions."

the resulting friction will obviously affect the co-design process. In these cases, the social legitimacy, institutional sustainability and effectiveness of the process are at risk, because it forces a change in the procedures and, at times, even the content of the co-design process itself. In fact, there

is a risk that this could prevent the administration from meeting citizens' expectations. Furthermore, it could complicate relationships between politicians and public officials and weaken the ability of the process to influence the final decisions of politicians and administration.

Strategies for dealing with unexpected intervention from higher levels of government, which slow-down procedures, redefine the stages of the process or modify some of the content under discussion



In these cases, it can be helpful to involve the higher-level government in the co-design process. This can be done in various ways: involving the higher-level political representatives or public officials in the steering committee; participation of the higher-level technicians and officials at the public meetings; integration of the dossier with the opportunities and restrictions introduced by the higher-level government.

The Mayor and Executive member for the environment decide to proceed with the co-design process. However, due to these external events, the sessions with the team of citizens progress in a climate of mild suspicion and uncertainty. A situation that the facilitators find hard to alleviate. As such, they decide to invite the representatives of the Region to the co-design table, to discuss how to integrate the lines of action of the two decisional levels (i.e. the municipal and the regional one).

Finally, the process ends with the definition of a preliminary widely agreed project proposal, an idea for the use of the profits from the farm and a few suggestions for the implementation of the works, aimed at both the Municipality and the Region.

In brief, the 23 citizens propose the construction of the wind farm on the site on the hill, with a reduced number of turbines and natural interventions (planting of trees, etc) to conceal the farm, inspired by a number of international case studies that were presented to them by the experts.

Furthermore, they propose the establishment of an advisory committee to oversee the detailed planning stage of the works and monitor the construction activities, to guarantee that the territory and citizens' needs are respected. With regard to the profits of the wind farm, they propose using them to fund the energy refurbishment of the city public buildings [6].

Although the Executive member for the environment accepts the recommendations, he is concerned about reducing the number

of wind turbines, as this would have a negative impact on the profitability of the wind farm. In any case, the Mayor presents the citizens' project to the Council for discussion and eventual approval.

At this point, the deliberative process ends and the political-administrative process returns along its usual, but by no means less complicated course. The policy effectiveness of the co-design process, or more precisely its ability to influence the final decision of public institutions, will become more apparent over a variable timescale. The extent to which the final decision of public institutions corresponds to the results of the co-design process is partly determined by the characteristics of the chosen approach, the corrective instruments used and the adaptive strategies that the managers of the process have adopted. However, it is also partly determined by the contingent dynamics and political events, which are impossible to influence, if not in a purely marginal manner.

The co-design process can be concluded in two different ways. The municipality can elaborate a final project that corresponds to the citizens' preliminary proposal or, for various reasons, the final project can be substantially changed. However, in the case of the latter, the political authorities are still obliged to publicly declare the reasons that have led them to partially disregard the results of the co-design process. Finally, possibly on recommendation of the facilitators, an advisory board or support team could be established for monitoring the implementation phase of the project.

6 "Citizens often have good ideas, and these types of processes can help them emerge."

This story ends here. Read the moral below (or go back and try different choices!)

How did you arrive to this end? See the turning points in the CYOA book map.



As seen in various stages of the book, decision-making processes can be difficult and full of roadblocks, often resulting in unexpected outcomes that present decision-makers with serious dilemmas.

Broad-range citizens' involvement in the assessment of whether to build the wind farm or not, the definition of the location and site specifications, laid an initial foundation of trust in the process, even among the opposition. Furthermore, the decision to rely on professional facilitators was a constructive help in managing some of the conflicts, but it also forced the administration to divulge their decisions with both stakeholders and experts.

The highly structured format of the deliberative model, which tends to be argument-centred, but favours the identification of the implications and motivations behind the options in the field, also gave rise to a number of problematic dynamics, such as cognitive asymmetries and the 'spiral of silence', which the facilitators were unable to effectively defuse.

Despite these limitations, in the group of 23 citizens, the broad mandate of the deliberative process led to a proposal that was, by and large, acceptable to all, modifying the original draft in some key points and providing some useful indications for the implementation phase. However, this solution may not always gain the support of the majority of citizens.

Section 21. How to combine votes and deliberation

A few days after the distribution of the informative dossier, the group of farmers, the retail association and citizens' committee that petitioned against the wind farm, accuse the administration of drafting a document that appears to be partially biased towards the idea of building the wind farm on the hill. In their opinion, this option would have more impact than the project proposed for the ex-military base. *Furthermore, they also imply that the biased document is proof that the steering committee is pre-oriented and intends to manipulate public opinion* in favour of a project that the Executive member for the environment had previously mentioned in an interview during his party's electoral campaign [1]. The chemical company also makes a public dec-

laration in the local papers, in which they heavily criticise the dossier, also sustaining that they are mildly in favour of abandoning the project.

The drafting of an informative dossier that includes the opinions of people with different expertise and viewpoints usually tends to *increase the social legitimacy of the process*, because it improves the credibility of the document. However, even when a dossier is written with extreme accuracy and attention to all the different viewpoints, it often occurs that some factions of civil society still do not trust the quality of the information. As such, content that appears impartial and unbiased to the committee members can be interpreted as biased or one-sided by outsiders.

Strategies for increasing the social legitimacy of the informative dossier

Even when the informative dossier has been drafted with the approval of the steering committee, a number of measures can be adopted to increase the social legitimacy of the document.

It is important to make sure the dossier contains not only the relevant technical and/or scientific information but also the results of the conflict assessment stage (Section 6).

Also, the key civil society actors interested in the wind farm, who are not on the steering committee, can be invited to propose changes and/or corrections to the draft or make sure the dossier clearly and thoroughly expresses their position and arguments [2].



1 "To avoid instrumentalisation, the information must be clear and impartial."

2 "Citizens have more trust when the informative campaign is transparent and involves the citizens and associations."

Despite the committee's protests, the participatory process begins. The process consists in five meetings that are open to all the residents. Each meeting commences with a short presentation of the fundamental characteristics of the two project ideas by the technicians, followed by citizens' speeches and questions.

The debate that follows is heated and emotionally charged.

For the most part, the participants are rep-

resentatives from the environmental association, the group of farmers and citizens' committee that are against the project, who have used the opportunity to mobilise their sympathisers. However, these interventions provide a detailed picture of the citizens' concerns about the negative impact of the works.

The environmentalists are particularly concerned about the harm to the landscape; the farmers about the possible decline in tourism while the citizens' committee is worried about the disturbance that

the construction works and noise pollution from the turbines will cause to the residents [3]. Meanwhile, the citizens who explicitly declare themselves in favour of the wind farm are a minority group, which prevalently consists of small businesses that are part of the chemical company's supply chain, and their opinions are often subject to criticism from the other participants.

The facilitators ask the participants to define one or a series of planning criteria which must be kept into consideration during the deliberative stage. The meetings last for approximately two hours and are attended by roughly one-hundred people. Each meeting ends with a report that outlines both the most agreed and controversial planning criteria.

The facilitators update the dossier with the report from the participatory process. Meanwhile, the opinion polling company starts working on recruiting the residents. After contacting a large number of people, the company manages to recruit a team of 23 residents, who are all heterogeneous in terms of gender, age and social status.

The voices of those in favour or relatively in favour of the wind farm being built in the ex-military area are largely against the idea.

The steering committee decides to establish the group regardless, reassured by the fact that the facilitators will do their best to structure the discussions in such a way as to guarantee that this opinion has the same room for expression as the others.

The 23 citizens get to work on the content of the dossier and the report of the participatory stage of the process, alternating informative and debate sessions with external experts and stakeholders with internal discussion sessions. On the basis of the information provided by the experts and the arguments posed by the stakeholders, the objective of these meetings is to collectively discuss the citizens' doubts and ideas. The experts are chosen by the Steering committee, and also involve the universities and the technical environmental agencies of the regional government [4]. Meanwhile the stakeholders are recruited from the active actors that were either for or against the

project during the process: i.e. the chemical company and its trade union, the SME association, the retail association, the group of farmers, citizens' committee and the environmental association. The facilitators coordinate and oversee the proceedings, to ensure that all the participants' voices are fairly and freely expressed, while promoting reciprocal respect and encouraging participants to behave in a reflective and constructive manner.

However, there are two main problems to overcome [5].

The first is that the participants are often selective when it comes to their attention to the information and arguments posed by the experts. In fact, during the discussions the participants only tend to bring up the information or arguments that are most in line with their own opinion, leaving out the ones that might call their views into question, even if only in part. In these cases, the facilitators' role is to remind the other participants of the information and arguments that have been ignored or bring them to the participants' attention themselves by summarising the key points. The second problem is that the participants find it hard to argue their position objectively or sufficiently, seldom going beyond a mere illustration of their own viewpoints. This is particularly the case with the citizens that live in the close vicinity of a potential wind farm site. In this case, the facilitators intervene with targeted questions and cues to uncover the reasons behind their affirmations and stimulate a well-argued and informed debate on the matter at hand as much as possible.

Meanwhile, the citizens' committee and retail association, which are generally against the farm but slightly inclined towards using the ex-military base, distribute some fliers to the population in which they sustain the deliberative process has no legitimacy whatsoever, because the members are not representative of the residents. The representatives of the committee and retail association complain that they have only been involved as stakeholders and that the 23 people selected are only qualified to express their personal opinions. In essence, they believe that the approach has been intentionally orchestrated to exclude the more competent and combative members of the civil society, so that the administra-

3 "Citizens often have very different motivations for taking part."

4 "To solve problems, we involved specialists from the public and private sectors and the universities."

5 "Those that are in charge of managing citizens' participation have a difficult task."

tion can take decisions that lean towards the desired outcome. The Steering committee responds to the accusations, reiterating the fundamental principles of deliberative processes. Nevertheless, the debate also continues in the local press, for the entire duration of the co-design process.

An unexpected event occurs during the deliberative process.

The Region announces the launch of a three-year programme that foresees the investment of hundreds of millions of Euro in sustainable energy throughout the territory. This announcement raises many doubts among both the majority and minority councillors. Some accuse the Mayor and the Executive member for the environment of trying to rush the proposal forward, which would prevent them from accessing the funds offered by the Region. Meanwhile, others see the Region's announcement as an opportunity to obtain co-financing for the wind farm project, as long as they slow down the planning procedures and comply with the directives issued by the same. The environmental association, group of farm-

ers and citizens' committee that are against the wind farm ask to call a halt to the co-design process, to await further information on the restrictions and opportunities provided by the regional scheme. Meanwhile, the trade union of the chemical company and the SME's association ask not to call a halt to the process, but to adapt it so that they can take advantage of the opportunities provided by the regional scheme as much as possible.

It is not uncommon for local decision-making processes to conflict with the decisional processes of other levels of government [6]. When this occurs, the resulting friction obviously affects the co-design process. In these cases, *the social legitimacy, institutional sustainability and efficiency of the process are at risk*, because it forces a change in the procedures and, at times, even the content of the co-design process itself. In fact, there is a risk that this could prevent the administration from meeting the citizens' expectations. Furthermore, it could complicate relationships between politicians and public officials and weaken the ability of the process to influence the final decision of politicians and administration.

Strategies for dealing with unexpected intervention from higher levels of government, which slow-down procedures, redefine the stages of the process or modify some of the content under discussion



In these cases, it can be helpful to give voice to the motivations and arguments of the higher-level government within the co-design process. This can be done in various ways: as well as the involvement of the higher-level political representatives, it is fundamental that higher-level technicians and officials, who can explain the implications of their interventions and the reasons for their decisions, take part in the meetings, allowing for the adequate integration of the opportunities and limitations introduced to the dossier by the higher-level government.

The citizens' meetings progress in a climate of mild suspicion and uncertainty. A situation that the facilitators only manage to alleviate by inviting the representatives of the Region to the co-design table [7], to discuss how to integrate the lines of action of the two decisional levels (i.e. the municipal and the regional one).

The process ends with two widely agreed project proposals and two hypotheses for the use of the profits from the farm.

In short, the first project foresees the con-

struction of the wind farm on the hill, on the slope that is least visible to the urban centre, and the planting of very leafy trees to reduce and minimise the view of the farm from below. The second project proposes the construction of the farm on the ex-military site, with the adoption of an innovative serrated blade that reduces the noise of the turbines. In both projects the number of wind turbines is less than originally planned. With regard to the use of the wind farm profits, the first option proposes to use the revenue to fund a citizen incentive scheme for energy efficiency of houses. The second option proposes to use the funds to pay for the en-

6 "We had problems when we had to interact with the higher-level institutions."

7 "Even when working as a team, it's important to work and communicate with each participant individually."

ergy requalification of a number of public buildings and spaces that are in disuse or in a state of degradation.

Despite his concerns about the reduction in the number of turbines, the Executive member for the environment accepts the proposals. The Mayor presents the proposal to the Council for debate and eventual approval.

At this point, the co-design stage ends and the political-administrative process returns along its usual course. The policy effectiveness of the co-design process, or more precisely its ability to influence the administration's final decision, will become more apparent over a variable timescale. The extent to which the final decision of public institution will adhere to the results of the co-design process is partly determined by the characteristics of the chosen approach, the corrective instruments used, and the adaptive strategies that the

managers of the process have been able to apply in the field. However, it also depends on the contingent dynamics and political events, which are impossible to influence, if not in a purely marginal manner.

In this case, the co-design process can be concluded in two different ways: the municipality can define a final project that corresponds to the preliminary project voted by the citizens or, for various reasons it can make substantial changes to the final project. In the case of the latter, a process that is guided by professional facilitators requires that the political authorities responsible for the final decision must publicly declare the reasons that have led them to disregard some of the results of the co-design process. Furthermore, the facilitators can promote the establishment of a support or monitoring group during the implementation phase of the project.

This story ends here. Read the moral below (or go back and try different choices!)

How did you arrive to this end? See the turning points in the CYOA book map.



As seen in various stages of the book, decision-making processes can be difficult and full of roadblocks, often resulting in unexpected outcomes that present decision-makers with serious dilemmas.

Broad-range citizens' involvement in the assessment of whether to build the wind farm or not, the definition of the location and site specifications, laid an initial foundation of trust in the process, even among the opposition. Furthermore, the decision to rely on professional facilitators was a constructive help in managing some of the conflicts, allowing the testing of a hybrid process that incorporates elements from both participatory and deliberative models. However, rather than maximising the benefits of the two approaches, combining the two formats increased both the complexity and the risk of problems even further.

Despite these limitations, the hybrid process led to the elaboration of two projects, which were, by and large, unanimously agreed by the 23 citizens. The final referendum on these two ideas also allowed citizens who had not taken part in the initial and mid-stage deliberative phases to participate in the process, finally providing a clear decision on the preferred project. However, the vote forced the Municipality to make a binary and definitive choice between the acceptance or rejection of the project, without leaving room for a more nuanced picture of the motivations behind the decision.

Section 22. Can we do without the vote?

A few days after the distribution of the informative dossier, the group of farmers, retail association and citizens' committee that petitioned against the wind farm, accuse the administration of drafting a document that appears to be partially biased towards the idea of building the wind farm on the hill. In their opinion, this option would have a higher impact than the project proposed for the ex-military site. In their opinion, the biased document is proof that the Steering committee is pre-oriented and intends to manipulate the public opinion in favour of a project that the Executive member for the environment had previously mentioned in an interview during his party's electoral campaign. At the same time, a number of members of the SMEs association express their doubts in a series of interviews broadcasted on local television. Their view is that the dossier is skewed against the project, almost as if the administration has decided

to U-turn on their intentions to build the wind farm.

The drafting of an informative dossier that includes the opinions of people with different expertise and viewpoints usually tends to increase the social legitimacy of the process. Theoretically, this is because it increases the credibility of the information contained in the same. However, even when a dossier is written with extreme care and accuracy by an unbiased Steering committee, it often occurs that some factions of civil society still do not trust the quality of the information. As such, content that appears impartial and unbiased to the committee members [1] can be interpreted as biased or one-sided by outsiders.

Strategies for increasing the social legitimacy of the informative dossier

Even when the informative dossier has been drafted with the approval of the steering committee, a number of measures can be adopted to increase the social legitimacy of the document.

It is important to make sure the dossier contains not only the relevant technical and/or scientific information but also the results of the conflict assessment stage (Section 6).

Also, the key civil society actors interested in the wind farm, who are not on the steering committee, can be invited to propose changes and/or corrections to the draft or make sure the dossier clearly and thoroughly expresses their position and arguments [2].



1 "To avoid instrumentalisation, the information must be clear and impartial."

2 "Citizens have more trust when the informative campaign is transparent and involves the citizens and associations."

Despite the protests of the group of farmers and citizens' committee and the threat of its members boycotting the public meetings, the participatory phase begins. These meetings are structured into ten public assemblies that will be held in two stages. The first five meetings will have the objective of presenting the two project options, answer-

ing the citizens' questions and gathering the various observations and counterproposals. The other five meetings will have the aim of reaching a final decision.

Approximately one-hundred residents attend each session during the first round of meetings, and each session lasts for about two hours. After a brief presentation of the

fundamental characteristics of the two project ideas by the technicians, the meeting continues with citizen discussions. The debate that follows is heated and emotionally charged. For the most part, the participants are representatives from the environmental association, the group of farmers and the citizens' committee that are against the project, who have used the opportunity to mobilise their sympathisers. However, these interventions provide a detailed picture of citizens' concerns about the negative impact of the works [3].

The environmentalists are particularly concerned about the harm to the landscape; the farmers about a possible decline in tourism, while the citizens' committee is worried about the disturbance caused by construction works and the noise from the turbines. Meanwhile, the citizens who explicitly declare themselves in favour of the wind farm are a minority group, mostly consisting of members of the SME association, who have interests in the park being built, and their opinions are often met with opposition from the other participants.

The meetings end with a report that highlights the most widely agreed and controversial project criteria.

The facilitators integrate the informative dossier with the report on the participatory phase. Meanwhile, the opinion polling company sets to work recruiting 23 citizens who are heterogeneous in terms of gender, age and social status. However, the voices of those in favour or relatively in favour of the wind farm being built in the ex-military area are largely in the minority compared to those against the idea. The Steering committee decides to proceed regardless, reassured by the fact that the facilitators will structure the discussions in such a way as to guarantee that this opinion is aired as much as the others.

The 23 citizens get to work on the content of the dossier and the report on the participatory stage of the process, alternating informative and debate sessions with external experts and stakeholders with internal discussion sessions.

The objective of these meetings is to pinpoint the questions that will be posed to the experts and discuss their answers. The experts are chosen by the Steering committee, in collaboration with the universities and the technical environmental agencies

of the regional government [4], whereas the stakeholders are recruited from the active actors that were either for or against the project during the process: i.e. the chemical company and its trade union, the SMEs association, the retail association, the group of farmers, the citizens' committee and the environmental association. The facilitators coordinate and oversee the proceedings, to ensure that all the participants' voices are fairly and freely expressed, while promoting reciprocal respect and encouraging participants to behave in a reflective and constructive manner [5].

However, there are two main problems to overcome.

The first is that the participants are often selective when it comes to their attention to the information and arguments posed by the experts. This means that, in the discussions that take place after the sessions with the experts, the participants tend to bring up the information or arguments that are most in line with their own opinion, leaving out the ones that might call their views into question, even if only in part. In these cases, the facilitators' role is to remind to the participants of the information and arguments that have been ignored or bring them to the participants' attention themselves by summarising the key points.

The second problem is that the participants find it hard to argue their position objectively or sufficiently, seldom going beyond a simple illustration of their own opinions. This is particularly the case with the citizens that live in the close vicinity of a potential wind farm site. In this case, the facilitators intervene with targeted questions and cues to uncover the reasons behind their affirmations and stimulate a well-argued and informed debate on the matter at hand as much as possible.

Meanwhile, the citizens' committee and retail association, which is generally against the farm but slightly inclined towards the idea of using the ex-military base, distributes fliers to the population in which they sustain the deliberative process has no legitimacy whatsoever. Their accusations are that the process is not representative of all the residents' views, because none of the committee members have been invited to take part in the process and the retail asso-

3 "Citizens often have very different motivations for taking part."

4 "To solve problems, we involved specialists from the public and private sectors and the universities."

5 "People who manage public discussions have a very difficult task."

ciation has only been involved as a stakeholder. Also, in their opinion, the 23 people selected are only qualified to express their personal opinions. Furthermore, the committee sustains that the approach has been intentionally orchestrated to exclude the more competent and combative members of the committee and association, so that decisions that lean towards the desired outcome of the administration can be taken. The Steering committee responds to these accusations, reiterating the fundamental principles of deliberative processes, but the debate also continues in the local press, for the entire duration of the co-design process.

However, an unexpected event occurs during the citizen discussions. The Region announces the launch of a three-year programme that foresees the investment of hundreds of millions of Euro in sustainable energy infrastructure throughout the territory. This announcement raises many doubts among both the majority and minority councillors. Some accuse the Mayor and the Executive member for the environment of trying to rush the proposal forward, which would prevent them from accessing the funds offered by the Region. Meanwhile, others see the Region's announcement as an opportunity to obtain co-financing for the wind farm project, as long as they slow down the planning procedures and comply with the directives issued by the same.

The environmental association, the group of farmers and the citizens' committee that are against the wind farm ask to call a halt to the co-design process, to await further information on the restrictions and opportunities provided by the regional scheme. Meanwhile the trade union of the chemical company asks not to call a halt to the process, but to adapt it so they can take advantage of the opportunities provided by the regional scheme as much as possible.

It is not uncommon for local decision-making processes to conflict with the decisional processes of other levels of government [6]. However, if this occurs, the resulting friction will obviously affect the co-design process. In these cases, *the social legitimacy, institutional sustainability and effectiveness of the process are at risk*, because it forces a change in the procedures and, at times, even the content of the co-design process itself. In fact, there is a risk that this could prevent them from meeting the citizens' expectations. Furthermore, it could complicate relationships between politicians and public officials and weaken the ability of the process to influence the final decision of politicians and administration.

Strategies for dealing with unexpected intervention from higher levels of government, which slow-down procedures, redefine the stages of the process or modify some of the content under discussion



In these cases, it can be helpful to give voice to the motivations and arguments of the higher-level government within the co-design process. This can be done in various ways: as well as the involvement of the higher-level political representatives, it is fundamental that higher-level technicians and officials, who can explain the implications of their interventions and the reasons for their decisions, take part in the meetings, allowing for the adequate integration of the opportunities and limitations introduced to the dossier by the higher-level government.

Due to these external events, citizens' meetings progress in a climate of mild suspicion and uncertainty. A situation that the facilitators only manage to alleviate in part by inviting the representatives of the Region to the co-design table, to discuss how to integrate the lines of action of the two decisional levels.

At the end of this phase, under the supervision of the Steering committee, the facili-

tators compile a final report that highlights the characteristics of the initial options, the proposals that emerged in the first round of meetings, the evaluations of the municipal technicians, additional information and suggestions proposed by the experts and stakeholders during the second stage of the meetings and, finally, the arguments and recommendations of the 23 residents.

The report outlines the three main rec-

6 "The problems started when we had to interact with the higher-level institutions."

ommendations and provides a detailed description of the various changes that can be made to the two wind farm projects.

The first recommendation regards mitigating the visual impact of the wind farm as much as possible. This can be achieved in various ways: reduce the number of wind turbines; position the turbines in such a way as to minimise their visibility from the urban centre; naturalise the site by planting trees and incorporating other environmental measures to camouflage the turbines. The second recommendation is to minimise the disturbance caused by the construction works as much as possible, by prohibiting the transit of heavy vehicles to the site in the urban areas during rush-hour and establish a committee to monitor the constructions works. This committee would be composed of municipal technicians, residents and representatives of the construction company, with the objective of following the development of the works so that they can quickly take action, should problems emerge during the same. The third recommendation is to mitigate the noise pollution caused by the turbines. In this regard, the report develops a hypothesis put forward during one of the meetings, which foresees the adoption of an innovative, serrated turbine blade, together with an analysis of the costs and an estimate of the noise reduction achieved from adopting the technology [7].

The report also illustrates and develops suggestions for the reinvestment of the profits from the wind farm. As well as a proposal to use the revenue to support the energy efficiency of private houses, it also considers a variety of other ideas involving the renovation of public buildings and spaces (meeting places, plazas, green areas, etc.), which, as underlined by the citizens during the public meetings, are either in a state of degradation, abandoned or underused. Furthermore, the report underlines how most of the criticism during the meetings was directed at the idea to build the farm in the flatter region near the residential area. However, the plans for the site on the hill not only met with less resistance but also generated a variety of constructive proposals – some more radical than others – to re-elaborate the plans.

The report is distributed to all the councillors and discussed in various Council meetings, where they raise a number of

perplexities on specific elements of the two project proposals and the suggestions put forward during the participatory stage. In fact, it emerges that many councillors are in favour of building the wind farm in the flatter area and adopting the serrated blades that reduce the noise of the turbines.

However, the same councillors are also aware that ignoring the recommendations of the residents that took part in the participatory process would give rise to various protests and increase public frustration and scepticism.

The Mayor and the Executive member for the environment are uncertain of how to proceed.

There are good reasons for trying to persuade some of the councillors to vote for the wind farm project, which is more in line with the citizens' recommendations, or simply leaving the final verdict to the councillors' vote. However, the latter will most probably result in disregarding most of the recommendations that emerged during the participatory process.

In any case, the participatory stage is closed, and the political-administrative process returns along its usual course. The policy effectiveness of the co-design process, or more precisely its ability to influence the final decision of public institutions, will become more apparent over a variable timescale. The extent to which the final decision of public institutions will adhere to the results of the co-design process is partly determined by the characteristics of the chosen approach, the corrective instruments used and the adaptive strategies put into place. However, it also partly depends on the contingent dynamics and political events, which are impossible to influence, if not in a purely marginal manner.

At this stage, the co-design process can be concluded in two different ways: the municipality can define a final project that incorporates a substantial number of recommendations and ideas proposed by the participants, or they can choose to disregard most of the suggestions included in the final report when defining the definitive project.

In either case, if the approved final project does diverge

7 “Citizens often have good ideas, and these types of processes can help them emerge.”

significantly from the recommendations and proposals put forward during the co-design process, it would be advisable for the municipality to publicly explain the

reasons that have led it to this decision.

This could protect both the process and the administration promoting the project from a serious loss of legitimacy.

This story ends here. Read the moral below (or go back and try different choices!)

How did you arrive to this end? See the turning points in the CYOA book map.



As seen in various stages of the book, decision-making processes can be difficult and full of roadblocks, often resulting in unexpected outcomes that present decision-makers with serious dilemmas.

Broad-range citizens' involvement in the assessment of whether to build the wind farm or not, the definition of the location and site specifications, laid an initial foundation of trust in the process, even among the opposition. Furthermore, the decision to rely on professional facilitators was a constructive help in managing some of the conflicts, allowing the testing of a hybrid process that incorporates elements from both participatory and deliberative models. However, rather than maximising the benefits of the two approaches, combining the two formats increased both the complexity and the risk of problems even further.

The publication of a final report summarising the content of the entire decision-making process and the recommendations put forward by the 23 citizens, provided the administration with some useful elements for the final design of the project. Nevertheless, some of the population most likely interpreted this decision as a way for the municipal administration to ignore the citizens' recommendations, without too much visibility and criticism.

Section 23. Normal dynamics and a few unexpected events

With the help of the renewable energy experts from the university and the regional research centre, the officials draw up an extremely accurate and detailed informative dossier on the preliminary project. The Mayor and the Executive member for the environment discuss the content of the document with a team of minority councillors, and they suggest a number of amendments and integrations.

The dossier contains technical information about the wind turbines, the characteristics of the site and the environmental impact of the farm, as well as ideas on some of the possible uses for the profits from the wind farm.

There is also a section that describes the principal stages of the participatory process. The dossier is uploaded to the website of the project, printed in a thousand copies and sent to the administrations of the various wards, to ensure it is distributed in public places with a high footfall (i.e. schools, gyms, supermarkets, hospitals and doctors surgeries). It is also sent to various associations and public and private meeting centres throughout the territory [1].

A few days after the distribution of the informative dossier, the group of farmers and citizens' committee that petitioned against the wind farm accuses the administration of drafting a document that appears to contain partial and superficial information that downplays the wind farm's impact on the landscape and environment, confirming that the administration has no intention of improving or reducing the impact of the project [2]. At the same time, the chemical company and some of the businesses in the supply chain criticise the dossier, affirming that it is slightly biased against building the

wind farm and has overestimated the costs and inconvenience to the community.

An informative dossier on a single project, especially when it has been drafted by the administration proposing the plan, tends to *reduce the social legitimacy of the process*, because the decisional margin is restricted, and the citizens will probably view the dossier as an instrument to convince them rather than involve them in the project.

Despite the protests of the various actors and the threat of the citizens' committee boycotting the public meetings, the participatory phase begins. These meetings are structured into ten public assemblies that will be held in two stages. The first five meetings will have the objective of presenting the project, answering the citizens' questions and gathering the various observations and counterproposals. The other five meetings will have the aim of defining proposals to integrate and improve the project.

Approximately one-hundred residents attend each session during the first round of meetings, with each session lasting for about two hours. After a brief presentation of the fundamental characteristics of the wind farm by the technicians, the meeting continues with citizen discussions. The debate that follows is heated and emotionally-charged. For the most part, the participants are representatives from the environmental association, the group of farmers and the citizens' committee that are against the project, who have used the opportunity to mobilise their sympathisers. However, these interventions provide a detailed picture of citizens' concerns about the negative impact of the works.

The environmentalists are particularly concerned about the harm to the landscape; the farmers about a possible

1 "To inform the citizens correctly, you have to start from the most frequented meeting places."

2 "To avoid instrumentalisation, the information must be clear and impartial."

decline in tourism, while the members of the citizens' committee are worried about the disturbance that the construction works and noise pollution from the turbines will cause the residents [3].

Meanwhile, the citizens explicitly in favour of the wind farm are a minority group,

which primarily consists of a number of SMEs in the chemical company's supply chain, and their opinions are often met with opposition from the other participants.

Obviously, the ability to bring these minority voices to the fore is undoubtedly weaker in least structured arenas that are unbalanced in terms of political leanings and opinions.

Strategies for bringing minority voices to the fore in highly unbalanced, open door arenas

In the case of open, but unbalanced arenas, a number of measures can be taken to draw attention to useful proposals or integrate the project with the different viewpoints of the other participants.

The first consists in using less direct participant interaction tools, which facilitate the expression of voices that are different from those of the majority, such as the use of sticky notes or questionnaires.

Another possibility is to enable citizens who do not attend the public meetings to take part in the debate to contribute their ideas and proposals in writing.

These ideas can then be published on the project's website [4].



At the end of each meeting, participants can fill in a form with their opinions, proposals and suggestions and post them in a box provided by the municipal officials. The administration promises it will take note of the proposals and evaluate the technical feasibility and the repercussions in terms of impact and costs.

The municipal technicians receive the citizens' proposals and start to classify them according to their technical, legal and economic feasibility.

As most of the aspects of the project have already been defined, the proposals received by the technicians are mostly minor adjustments or general ideas on the project objectives. Some minor modifications are accepted, such as the slight redefinition of the site boundaries and a few aesthetic measures to mitigate the visual impact of the farm. With regard to the use of the profits, the work-

group selects two ideas that it believes are the most feasible [5]: the first is the implementation of structural interventions in the form of a citizen incentive scheme for the energy efficient of their homes; the second is an investment plan to improve the energy efficiency of the town's schools.

If the informative dossier and the public communication campaign are able to present the project characteristics and the legal, economic and technical restrictions in a simple and exhaustive manner, the selection process carried out by the municipal technicians can be quick and advantageous to the project. If, however, the previous stage fails to convey this information in a clear and understandable manner, there is a risk that the technical offices will be inundated with unfeasible ideas, which will force them to drastically thin down the proposals [6]. This can contribute to *weakening the social legitimacy of the co-design process*, because the participants' expectations have not been met.

Strategies for communicating the technical, legal and economic restrictions of the project

A number of measures can be introduced to improve awareness of the restrictions in terms of economic sustainability, technical feasibility and legal requirements for the project drawn up by the technicians.

Before distribution, the informative document can be tested on the councillors, associations and committees that are against the wind farm, to individualise any uncertain points or possible omissions in the information provided. Furthermore, external subjects could be involved (e.g. specialist scientific journalists) who are able to explain the content of the dossier in simple terms, making it easier for the citizens to understand the information.



3 "Citizens often have very different motivations for taking part."

4 "Even the comments about the site for the project were extremely interesting."

5 "Many citizens wanted to know if the project would have positive repercussions on their neighbourhood."

6 "A clear, transparent and constant communication is key."

The second round of participatory meetings opens on a note of political conflict. The participatory process is taking place just before the pre-election period that will see a change in the political structure of the regional government [7]. Two candidates for the Regional Council, who have their electoral constituency within the borough, focus on the wind farm project in their election campaigns, generating enormous interest from the local press. One candidate, who belongs to the same party as the Executive member for the environment sustains that the project of the borough is extremely important, and that the Region should commit to supporting and promoting the initiative. Conversely, one candidate from the opposition sustains that the project has created a wind farm lobby that is attempting to push the plan forward for financial gain. In his opinion, the Region should clamp down harshly on this type of speculation.

To push their campaigns forward, both politicians give numerous interviews to the local press

and implement an intensive leafleting campaign throughout the borough, also leading to public, verbal confrontations between the respective supporters.

It is not uncommon that the schedule of a co-design process clashes with the timetable of a traditional political-administrative procedure, such as an election deadline, the substitution of an executive member due to internal conflict within the majority party, legal investigations and proceedings, etc. When this occurs, *the social legitimacy, institutional sustainability and effectiveness of the co-design process can be put at risk*, because the administration is forced to slow down the pre-established process, causing inconvenience and discontent among the participants. Furthermore, during these times, politicians' attention may often be focused on other tasks and a change in the schedule can weaken the ability of the process to effectively influence the public institution's final decision.

Strategies when the schedule of a co-design process clashes with the timetable of traditional political-administrative processes

As previously proposed, one way to prevent political dynamics from interfering with the co-design process consists in inviting other political representatives with different opinions to take part in the workgroup managing the process.

Another measure, which can often be helpful in the case of electoral campaigns, is to postpone the public meeting schedule to avoid holding the assemblies during the more heated periods a few weeks before the vote.



Consequently, the second round of meetings is carried out over a longer period than initially planned. The assemblies are extremely heated and often see the Mayor, the Executive member for the environment and the municipal technicians engage in open conflict with some of the participants.

At the end of each meeting, a final vote is made on all the project integrations proposed by the technicians. The technicians accept the project integrations or amendments that have received the most votes during the various meetings. Although the vote is boycotted by some of the farmers and

members of the citizens' committee who are against the project during two of the meetings, the process ends with approximately 600 votes and a series of amendments and integrations approved by the majority.

The project is then amended by the technicians and accepted by the Executive member for the environment who, together with the Mayor, proposes the plan to the Council for final approval. At this point, the participatory phase of the project comes to an end, and the political-administrative process continues on its usual course.

Having made minor changes to the initial project, the co-design process will most likely end with a project that encompasses most of the feasible suggestions proposed by the citizens. Nevertheless, the project

7 "Frequently, citizens have no idea that many of the proposals are completely unfeasible."

will probably still be seen as an initiative promoted by the administration that is not truly unanimously agreed, because the margin of citizen intervention was too limited in nature.

As such, the debate will likely continue among the members of

the Council and general public for quite some time.

Some members of the environmental association, the SME association, the group of farmers and the citizens' committee will probably attempt to stop or hinder the realisation of the project.

This story ends here. Read the moral below (or go back and try different choices!)

How did you arrive to this end? See the turning points in the CYOA book map.



As seen in various stages of the book, decision-making processes can be difficult and full of roadblocks, often resulting in unexpected outcomes that present decision-makers with serious dilemmas.

Citizens' involvement only in the definition of the secondary aspects of a wind farm project established solely by the administration, helped to formulate a high-level technical solution, but was subject of severe criticism from various members of civil society, which made the management of the entire process extremely precarious. While, management by the municipality favoured the active collaboration of municipal staff and politicians, it also increased distrust and criticism from members of the population.

The participatory model, which lacks a specific structure and tends to be based on spontaneous dynamics between citizens, was not without its complications. This was due to several factors: the boycott by those who feared political manipulation; the difficulty in finding a happy medium between the citizens' proposals and the technical and bureaucratic constraints posed by the various laws and regulations, and the absence of representatives for some of the relevant view points in the participatory arenas.

The final vote provided the administration with a clear picture of the citizens' opinions on the project integrations and modifications, but it did not shed light on the underlying reasons for their decision, limiting the municipal administration's understanding of local needs and issues, particularly within the higher-level institutions.



Section 24. Putting the participatory model into practice

With the help of experts from the university and regional research centre, the municipal officials draw up an extremely accurate and detailed informative dossier on the preliminary project. The Mayor and the Executive member for the environment discuss the contents of the document with a team of minority councillors, and they suggest a number of amendments and integrations.

The dossier contains technical information about the wind turbines, the characteristics of the site and the environmental impact of the farm, as well as ideas on some of the possible uses for the profits. There is also a section that describes the principal stages of the participatory process. The dossier is published on the project website, printed in a thousand copies and sent to the administrations of the various wards, to ensure distribution in public places with a high footfall (i.e. schools, gyms, supermarkets, hospitals and doctors surgeries). It is also sent to various associations and public and private meeting centres throughout the territory [1]. A few days after the distribution of the informative dossier, the group of farmers and environmental association that petitioned against the wind farm accuse the administration of drafting a document that appears to contain partial and superficial information that downplays the impact of the wind farm on the landscape and environment, confirming that the administration has no intention of improving or reducing the impact of the project. On the contrary, it seems that the administration wants to implement it as it is [2]. At the same time, several members of the SME association, the chemical company and some of the businesses in its supply chain, issue a press release in which they criticise the partiality of the dossier, which in their opinion appears to be skewed and excessively focused on the negative impact of the farm.

An informative dossier on a single project, especially when it has been drafted by the administration proposing the plan, tends to reduce the social legitimacy of the process, because the decisional margin is restricted, and citizens will probably view the dossier as an instrument to convince them rather than involve them in the project.

Despite the protests of the environmental association and the threat of its members boycotting the public meetings, the participatory phase begins. These meetings are structured into ten public assemblies that will be held in two stages. The first five meetings will have the objective of presenting the project, answering the citizens' questions and gathering the various observations and counterproposals. The other five meetings will have the main objective of gathering proposals to integrate and improve the project.

Approximately one-hundred residents attend each session during the first round of meetings, with each session lasting for about two hours. After a brief presentation of the fundamental characteristics of the wind farm by the technicians, the meeting continues with citizen discussions. The debate that follows is heated and emotionally-charged. For the most part, the participants are representatives from the environmental association, the group of farmers and the citizens' committee that are against the project, who have used the opportunity to mobilise their sympathisers. However, these interventions provide a detailed picture of peoples' concerns about the negative impact of the works.

The environmentalists are particularly concerned about the harm to the landscape; the farmers about the possible de-

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cline in tourism, while the members of the citizens' committee are worried about the disturbance that the construction works and noise pollution from the turbines will cause the residents [3]. Meanwhile, the citizens explicitly in favour of the wind farm are a minority group and their opinions are

often met with opposition from the other participants.

Obviously, the ability to bring these minority voices to the fore is undoubtedly weaker in least structured arenas that are unbalanced in terms of political leanings and opinions.

Strategies for increasing the social legitimacy of the informative dossier

In the case of open, but unbalanced arenas, a number of measures can be taken to draw attention to useful proposals or integrate the project with the different viewpoints of the other participants.

The first consists in using less direct participant interaction tools, which facilitate the expression of voices that are different from those of the majority, such as the use of sticky notes or questionnaires.

Another possibility is to enable citizens who do not attend the public meetings to take part in the debate to contribute their ideas and proposals in writing. These ideas can then be published on the project's website [4].



At the end of each meeting, participants can fill in a form with their opinions, proposals and suggestions and post them in a box provided by the municipal officials. The administration promises it will take note of the proposals and evaluate the technical feasibility and the repercussions in terms of impact and costs.

The municipal technicians receive the citizens' proposals and start to classify them according to their technical, legal and economic feasibility.

As many aspects of the project have already been defined, the proposals received by the technicians are mostly minor adjustments or general ideas on the project objectives.

Some minor amendments are accepted, such as the slight redefinition of the site boundaries and a few aesthetic measures to mitigate the visual impact of the farm.

With regard to the use of the profits, the workgroup selects two ideas that it believes are the most feasible: the first is the implementation of structural interventions in the form of an incentive scheme for energy efficiency of houses; the second is an investment plan to improve the energy efficiency of the schools in the city.

If the informative dossier and the public communication campaign are able to present the project characteristics and the legal, economic and technical restrictions in a simple and exhaustive manner, the selection process carried out by the technicians can be quick and very advantageous to the project. If, however, the previous stage fails to convey this information in a clear and understandable manner, there is a risk that the technical offices will be inundated with unfeasible ideas, which will force the officials to drastically thin down the proposals [5]. This can contribute to *weakening the social legitimacy of the co-design process*, because the participants' expectations have not been met.

3 "Citizens often have very different motivations for taking part."

4 "Even the comments about the site for the project were extremely interesting."

5 "Frequently, citizens have no idea that many of the proposals are completely unfeasible."

Strategies for communicating the technical, legal and economic restrictions of the project

A number of measures can be introduced to improve awareness of the restrictions in terms of economic sustainability, technical feasibility and legal requirements for the project drawn up by the technicians.

Before distribution, the informative document can be tested on the councillors, associations and committees that are against the wind farm, to individualise any uncertain points or possible omissions in the information provided. Furthermore, external actors could be involved (e.g. scientific journalists), who are able to explain the content of the dossier in layman's terms, making it easier for the citizens to understand the information.



The second round of participatory meetings opens on a note of political conflict. The participatory process is taking place just before the pre-election period that will see a change in the political structure of the regional government [6]. Two candidates for the Regional Council, who have their electoral constituency within the borough, focus on the wind farm project in their election campaigns, generating enormous interest from the local press. One candidate, who belongs to the same party as the Executive member for the environment sustains that the project is extremely important and that the Region should commit to supporting and promoting the initiative. Conversely, one candidate from the opposition sustains that the project has created a wind farm lobby that is attempting to push the plan forward for financial gain. In his opinion, the Region should clamp down harshly on this type of speculation.

To push their campaigns forward, both politicians give numerous interviews to the local press and implement an intensive leafletting campaign throughout the borough, also leading to public, verbal confrontations between the respective supporters.

It is not uncommon that the schedule of a co-design process clashes with the timetable of a traditional political-administrative procedure, such as an election deadline, the substitution of an executive member of the local government due to internal conflict within the majority party, legal investigations and proceedings, etc. When this occurs, the social legitimacy, institutional sustainability and effectiveness of the co-design process can be put at risk, because the administration is forced to slow down the pre-established process, causing inconvenience and discontent among the participants.

Furthermore, during these times, the attention and collaboration of politicians and officials may be focused on other tasks and a change in the schedule can weaken the ability of the process to effectively influence the final public decisions of politicians and administration.

Strategies when the schedule of a co-design process clashes with the timetable of traditional political-administrative processes

As previously proposed, one way to prevent political dynamics from interfering with the co-design process consists in inviting other political representatives with different opinions to take part in the workgroup managing the process.

Another measure, which can often be helpful in the case of electoral campaigns, is to postpone the public meeting schedule to avoid holding the assemblies during the more heated periods a few weeks before the vote.



Consequently, the second round of meetings is carried out over a longer period than initially planned. The assemblies are extremely heated and often see the Mayor, the Executive member for the environment and the municipal technicians engage in open conflict with some of the participants, especially with the group of farmers and citizens' committee.

At the end of this stage, the Executive member for the environment's staff write a final report underlining the characteristics of the initial options, the proposals put forward in the first round of meetings, the evaluations of the technicians, and, finally, residents' reactions and suggestions expressed during the second round of meet-

ings. These are mostly minor corrections or adjustments to the project that the technicians can quickly substantiate in terms of costs and realisation times.

The final report is discussed in a Council meeting. At this point, the participatory stage of the project comes to an end, and the political-administrative process continues on its usual course.

Having made these minor changes to the initial project, the co-design process will most likely end with a project that encompasses most of the feasible suggestions proposed by the citizens. Nevertheless, the project will probably still be seen as an initiative promoted by the administration that is not truly and widely shared, because the

6 "Before elections, conflict is the order of the day."

margin of citizens' intervention was very limited in nature. As such, this debate will likely continue among the members of the Council and the general public for quite

some time. It is also likely that the environmental association, farmers and citizens' committee will attempt to stop or hinder the realisation of the project.

**This story ends here. Read the moral below
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As seen in various stages of the book, decision-making processes can be difficult and full of roadblocks, often resulting in unexpected outcomes that present decision-makers with serious dilemmas.

Citizens' involvement only in the definition of the secondary aspects of a wind farm project established solely by the administration, helped to formulate a high-level technical solution, but was subject of severe criticism from various members of civil society, making the management of the entire process extremely precarious.

While, management by the authorities favoured the active collaboration of municipal staff and politicians, it also increased distrust and criticism from members of the population.

The participatory model, which lacks a specific structure and tends to be based on spontaneous dynamics between citizens, was not without its complications. This was due to several factors: the boycott by those who feared political manipulation; the difficulty in finding a happy medium between the citizens' proposals and the technical and bureaucratic constraints posed by the various laws and regulations, and the absence of representatives for some of the relevant view points in the participatory arenas.

The final report on the proposals and the underlying motivations provided the administration with solid information on which to base their decision, but it did not provide a clear picture of the participants' views on the final project.

Section 25. When the vote leaves everyone bewildered

A few days after the distribution of the informative dossier drafted by the facilitators (which is compiled also bearing in mind the different levels of expertise and viewpoints on the project), the environmental association that petitioned against the wind farm and the group of farmers accuse the administration of drafting a preliminary project that appears to downplay the wind farm’s impact on the landscape and environment.

They also criticise some of the content, claiming it is biased and superficial, confirming that the administration has no intention of improving or reducing the impact of the wind farm whatsoever [1]. At the same time, some of the members of the SME association publicly criticise the dossier,

because they feel it is slightly skewed against the farm, almost giving the impression that the administration has suddenly made a U-turn on its initial intentions.

The drafting of an informative dossier that includes the opinions of people with different expertise and viewpoints usually tends to *increase the social legitimacy of the process*, because it improves the credibility of the information in the document. However, even when a dossier is written with extreme accuracy, it often occurs that some factions of civil society still do not trust the quality of the information. As such, content that appears impartial and unbiased to the committee members can be interpreted as biased or one-sided by outsiders. In this case, the situation is aggravated by the fact the citizens’ trust and expectations have been tested further, due to the restricted margin of influence they have on the project, which has already been mostly defined.

Strategies for increasing the social legitimacy of the informative dossier

A way to increase the social legitimacy of an informative dossier, even when it has been drafted with the approval of the Steering committee, is to involve the various civil society actors interested in contributing to the dossier, providing them with a dedicated space to adequately express their positions and arguments [2].



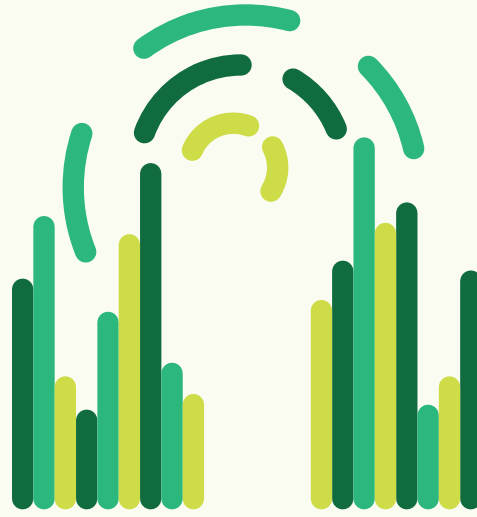
Despite the protests and the threat of the citizens’ committee boycotting the public meetings, the participatory phase begins. These meetings are structured into ten public assemblies that will be held in two stages in various wards throughout the borough. The first five meetings, which will be steered and managed by the facilitators in the presence of the Mayor, will have the objective of presenting the project, answering the citizens’

questions and gathering the various observations and counterproposals. The other five meetings will have the main objective of fine-tuning the new project elaborated by the technicians, under the supervision of the steering committee.

Approximately one-hundred residents attend each session during the first round of meetings, with each session lasting for about two hours. After a brief presenta-

1 “To avoid instrumentalisation, the information must be clear and impartial.”

2 “Citizens have more trust when the informative campaign is transparent and involves the citizens and associations.”



evaluates the feasibility of the amendments proposed and their repercussions in terms of impact and costs.

tion of the fundamental characteristics of the project by the technicians, the citizens ask questions and make proposals, using a number of public engagement techniques implemented by the facilitators. Initially, the debate is heated and emotionally charged. For the most part, the participants are representatives from the environmental association, the group of farmers and the citizens' committee that are against the project, who have used the opportunity to mobilise their sympathisers. However, these interventions provide a detailed picture of people's concerns about the negative impact of the works.

The environmentalists are particularly concerned about the harm to the landscape; the farmers about the possible decline in tourism while the members of the citizens' committee are worried about the disturbance that the construction works and noise pollution from the turbines will cause the residents [3]. Meanwhile, the citizens who initially declare themselves in favour of the wind farm are a minority group and their opinions are often met with opposition from the other participants. To remedy this, the facilitators intervene using a number of conflict management techniques aimed at encouraging constructive interaction. Over the course of the two-hour meeting, the tension subsides and the voices in favour have more room for expression.

At the end of each meeting, the facilitators write up a report of the proposals that emerged and present the information to the public administration.

Together with the municipal technicians and a number of external experts, the Steering committee

As the project has already been defined, the proposals received by the technicians are mostly minor adjustments or general ideas on the project objectives. Consequently, most of the modifications are approved, such as the slight redefinition of the site boundaries and a few aesthetic measures to mitigate the visual impact of the farm. With regard to the use of the profits, the Steering committee selects two proposals that it believes are the most feasible: the first is the implementation of structural interventions in the form of an incentive scheme for energy efficiency of houses; the second is an investment plan to improve the energy efficiency of the town's schools.

The second round of participatory meetings opens on a note of political conflict. The participatory process is taking place just before the pre-election period that will see a change in the political structure of the regional government [4]. Two candidates for the Regional Council, who have their electoral constituency within the borough, focus on the wind farm project in their election campaigns, generating enormous interest from the local press. One candidate, who belongs to the same party as the Executive member for the environment sustains that the project is extremely important, and that the Region should commit to supporting and promoting the initiative. Conversely, one candidate from the opposition sustains that the project has created a wind farm lobby that is attempting to push the plan forward for financial gain. In his opinion, the Region should clamp down harshly on this type of speculation.

To push their campaigns forward, both politicians give numerous interviews to the local press and implement an intensive leafletting campaign throughout the borough, also leading to public, verbal confrontations between the respective supporters.

It is not uncommon that the schedule of a co-design process clashes with the timetable of a traditional political-administrative procedure, such as an election deadline, the substitution of an executive member of the local government due to internal con-

3 "Citizens often have very different motivations for taking part."

4 "Before elections, conflict is the order of the day."

flict within the majority party, legal investigations and proceedings, etc. When this occurs, *the social legitimacy, institutional sustainability and effectiveness of the co-design process can be put at risk*, because the administration is forced to slow down the pre-established process, causing inconven-

ience and discontent among the participants. Furthermore, during these times, the politicians' and officials' attention may often be focused on other tasks. Also, a change in the schedule can weaken the ability of the process to effectively influence the final public decision.

Strategies to adopt when the schedule of a co-design process clashes with the timetable of traditional political-administrative processes

As previously proposed, one way to prevent political dynamics from interfering with the co-design process consists in inviting other political representatives with different opinions to take part in the workgroup managing the process.

Another measure, which can often be helpful in the case of electoral campaigns, is to postpone the public meeting schedule to avoid holding the assemblies during the more heated periods a few weeks before the vote.



Consequently, the second round of meetings is carried out over a longer period than initially planned. Although there are still many perplexities about the project that has been redefined by the technicians, most of the participants do not raise any particular objections to the new project, as they know they will have the right to express their opinion at the imminent citizen referendum.

The process closes with the referendum that sees the participation of a few thousand residents. Although the new project has less impact in terms of the landscape and noise pollution, 75% of the voters vote against the project. However, the number of votes does not reach the 50% quorum, a measure the Steering committee had decided to introduce to encourage the residents to vote.

At this point, the participatory phase is closed and the political-administrative process returns along its usual course. The Mayor and Executive member for the environment are surprised by this turn of events. They decide to forge ahead with the project regardless, leaving the final word to the Council, as the quorum for the referendum was not met and most of the residents with the right to vote did not take part. The Council is also divided. As well as the minority councillors who were against the project, a number of majority councillors, who were doubtful from the very start, sustain that even though the quorum of the referendum was not met, the citizens have made their views clear and the project should be abandoned. At the final Council vote, the project is approved by only one vote. As such, the final project for the successive construction of the works can now be launched, even though it is likely that the conflict between those in favour and against will substantially influence the implementation of the project.

Strategies for increasing the effectiveness of the final vote

A number of measures can be introduced to increase the effectiveness of the final vote and prevent the work of the participatory process from being undermined. The first consists in avoiding a quorum entirely, even though this would leave the administration without an instrument to encourage the citizens to vote. The second consists in increasing the number of project options that the citizens can choose from, to avoid holding a referendum for just one project. In the event the process only involves one project proposal, a third measure could be to vote for only specific elements of the project. This will help to preserve the core of the project as a whole and avoid the risk of calling the level of decisional power given to the citizens at the start of the process into question.



This story ends here. Read the moral below (or go back and try different choices!)



How did you arrive to this end? See the turning points in the CYOA book map.

As seen in various stages of the book, decision-making processes can be difficult and full of roadblocks, often resulting in unexpected outcomes that present decision-makers with serious dilemmas.

Citizens' involvement only in the definition of the secondary aspects of a wind farm project established solely by the administration, helped to formulate a high-level technical solution, that would not be criticised or rejected by members of the administration more directly involved in the decision-making process. However, this decision was subject of severe criticism from various members of civil society and some of the councillors.

The final decision to rely on professional facilitators helped to constructively manage conflict, but it also forced the administration to divulge their decisions with both stakeholders and experts.

The participatory model, which lacks structured and largely based on spontaneous dynamics between citizens, responded to the local government's need for political consensus. However, this option was not without its complications, which the facilitators helped to alleviate but were unable to resolve entirely.

When the final referendum did not reach a quorum, the politicians and promoters of the initiative were caught off-guard, demonstrating that the use of a vote in co-planning processes must be measured and used wisely, as an integrative and supporting instrument, to avoid the involuntary sabotage of the entire process.

Section 26. The other side of the deliberative process

A few days after the distribution of the informative dossier drafted by the facilitators (which is compiled also bearing in mind the different levels of expertise and viewpoints on the project), the citizens' committee that petitioned against the wind farm and the group of farmers, accuse the administration of drafting a preliminary project that appears to downplay the wind farm's impact on the landscape and environment. They also criticise some of the paragraphs, claiming they are biased and superficial, confirming that the administration has no intention of improving or reducing the impact of the wind farm whatsoever [1].

The drafting of an informative dossier that includes the opinions of people with different expertise and viewpoints usually tends to *increase the social legitimacy of the process*, because it improves the credibility of the information in the document. However, even when a dossier is written with extreme accuracy, it often occurs that some factions of civil society still do not trust the quality of the information. As such, content that appears impartial and unbiased to the committee members can be interpreted as biased or one-sided by outsiders.

Strategies for increasing the social legitimacy of the informative dossier

A number of measures can be taken to increase the social legitimacy of an informative dossier

It is important to structure the dossier so that it contains not only the technical and/or scientific information, but also the views and arguments of the various social actors and interested parties.

Furthermore, the various civil society actors who are not on the steering committee could be invited to contribute to the dossier, allowing them an opportunity to express their positions and arguments [2].



Despite the protests of the citizens' committee, the opinion polling company starts the recruitment process. After many calls, the company finally manages to recruit 23 citizens. The selected group is heterogeneous in terms of gender, age and social status. However, the voices of those in favour or relatively in favour of the wind farm are largely in the minority compared to those against. The Steering committee decides to establish the group regardless, reassured by the fact that the facilitators will do their best to structure the discussions in such a way as to guarantee that this opinion has the same room for expression as the others [3].

The 23 citizens get to work, alternating informative and debate sessions with external experts and stakeholders with internal discussion sessions.

The objective of these meetings is to identify the questions that will be posed to the experts and stakeholders and discuss their answers.

The experts are chosen by the Steering committee in collaboration with the university, the technical environmental agencies of the regional government and the principal actors involved in the project: the chemical company and its trade union, the SME association, the group of farmers, the citizens' committee and the environmental association.

The facilitators coordinate and oversee the proceedings, to ensure that all the participants'

1 "To avoid instrumentalisation, the information must be clear and impartial."

2 "Citizens have more trust when the informative campaign is transparent and involves citizens and associations."

3 "You need to guarantee that everyone has an opportunity to voice their opinion."

voices are fairly and freely expressed, while promoting reciprocal respect and encouraging participants to behave in a reflective and constructive manner. However, there are two main problems to overcome.

The first problem is that the participants find it hard to argue their position objectively or sufficiently, seldom going beyond a simple illustration of their own opinions. This is particularly the case of the citizens who live in the close vicinity of the proposed site on the hill. In this case, the facilitators intervene with targeted questions and cues to uncover the reasons behind their affirmations and stimulate a well-argued and informed debate on the matter at hand as much as possible.

The second issue is that the participants are often selective when it comes to their attention to the information and arguments posed by the experts and stakeholders.

In fact, the participants only tend to bring up the information or arguments that are most in line with their own opinion, leaving out the ones that might call their views into question, even if only in part. This 'selective perception' is further aggravated by a group dynamic that is typically found in un-

balanced groups, called the 'spiral of silence'. In fact, being aware they are in a minority, the few citizens in favour of the farm tend to be afraid to express their views and remain silent in the face of the prevailing opinion of the other citizens that are mostly against the project. In these cases, the facilitators' can intervene using specific techniques aimed at reducing any possible reticence (even among participants with very minority views) and persuade them to contribute to the debate, underlining that disagreement and criticism are always welcome, and encouraging constructive interaction and arguments. As the techniques used by the facilitators are non-invasive and non-manipulative, the effectiveness of these tools will vary from case to case and largely depends on the effective response of the participants and the concrete dynamics within each workgroup.

Dynamics, such as 'selective perception' and the 'spiral of silence' among minority voices can weaken the quality and credibility of the final recommendations provided during the deliberative process, making it harder to significantly influence the final decision of public institutions. In other words, unless adequately managed, said dynamics can reduce the policy effectiveness of the co-design process.

Strategies for preventing selective perception among participants and the spiral of silence among minority voices

In any group, 'selective perception' and 'spiral of silence' are difficult to defuse and are a very common social dynamic among people who feel they are in a distinct minority. However, it is possible to structure the deliberative process in such a way as to prevent, at least in part, that this occurs.

One measure that can be adopted to weaken 'selective perception' is to present stories and episodes alongside the technical and scientific evidence. This will help the participants to intuitively understand the relationship between the cause and effect of the issues at hand. In this way, the participants' attention will be more easily drawn to the information that is not in line with their own convictions and consolidated views [4].

Another measure, which can often be helpful in the case of electoral campaigns, is to postpone the public meeting schedule to avoid holding the assemblies during the more heated periods a few weeks before the vote

Another measure that can be adopted to avoid the 'spiral of silence' among minority voices is to explicitly invite the participants to identify opposing arguments to the majority views, i.e. get the participants to 'put themselves in the shoes' of someone who sees the issue differently, even in the case there are no opposing voices in the group. In this way, the discussion should become more pluralist in nature and all the participants will feel justified and less afraid to express their thoughts.



4 "Using examples proved very useful when explaining some of the more complicated concepts."

Meanwhile, the citizens' committee and group of farmers, who are against the farm, distributes fliers to the population, in which they sustain the deliberative process has no legitimacy whatsoever. They argue that the process is not representative of all the residents' views, because none of the committee members have been invited by the polling company to take part in the process and that the group of farmers have only been involved as stakeholders, whereas the 23 selected participants are only qualified to express their personal opinions. Furthermore, the committee sustains that the approach has been intentionally orchestrated to exclude the more competent and combative members of civil society, so that decisions that lean towards the desired outcome of the administration can be taken. The Steering committee responds to these accusations, reiterating the fundamental principles of deliberative processes, but the debate also continues in the local press, for the entire duration of the co-design process.

Strategies to adopt when groups excluded from the deliberative arena mobilise to obstruct the process

When citizens who have been excluded from the deliberative arena mobilise to boycott or hinder the process, it is important not to underestimate the effect this dynamic can have on the social legitimacy of the process. To adequately respond to external influences, a deliberative process needs to be adaptable. This can be achieved by implementing a number of strategies

The first strategy consists in 'opening' the deliberative arena by inviting representatives from the external groups that are attempting to hinder the process, to take part at the meeting, providing a structured context for debate, managed by the facilitators [5].

Another strategy is to introduce a participatory phase in which the members of the deliberative arena hold public assemblies where they explain to the other citizens what they have learnt, discussed and decided up until that moment.



However, an unexpected event occurs during process. The Region announces the launch of a three-year sustainable energy programme that foresees the investment of hundreds of millions of Euro in public infrastructure throughout the territory. This announcement raises many doubts among both the majority and minority councillors. Some accuse the Mayor and the Executive member for the environment of trying to rush the proposal forward, which would prevent them from accessing the funds offered by the Region. Meanwhile, others see the announcement of the Region as an opportunity to obtain co-financing for the wind farm project, as long as they slow down the planning procedures and comply with the directives issued by the same. The environmental association, the group of farmers and citizens' committee that are against the wind farm ask to call a halt to the co-design process, to await further information on the restrictions and opportunities provided by the regional scheme. Meanwhile, the trade union of the chemical company asks not to call a halt to the process, but to adapt it so they can take advantage of the opportunities provided by the regional scheme as much as possible.

However, if this occurs, the resulting friction will obviously affect the co-design process.

It is not uncommon for local decision-making processes to conflict with the decisional processes of other levels of government [6].

However, if this occurs, the resulting friction will obviously affect the co-design process.

In these cases, the social legitimacy, institutional sustainability and effectiveness of the process are at risk, because it forces a change in the procedures and, at times, even the content of the co-design process itself.

In fact, there is a risk that this could prevent the administration from meeting the citizens' expectations. Furthermore, it could complicate relationships between politicians and public officials and weaken the ability of the process to influence the final decisions of politicians and of the administration.

5 "We talked to the spokesperson of the protest group to try and come to an agreement."

6 "The problems started when we had to interact with the higher-level institutions."

Strategies for dealing with unexpected intervention from higher levels of government, which slow-down procedures, redefine the stages of the process or modify some of the content under discussion



In these cases, it can be helpful to involve the higher-level government in the co-design process. This can be done in various ways: involving the higher-level political representatives or public officials in the Steering committee; participation of the higher-level technicians and officials at the public meetings; integration of the dossier with the opportunities and restrictions introduced by the higher-level government.

In any case, the Mayor and the environment officer decide to continue the co-design process. Due to these external events, citizen discussions progress in a climate of mild suspicion and uncertainty.

A situation that the facilitators only succeed in alleviating by inviting the representatives of the Region to the co-design table, to discuss how to integrate the lines of action of the two decisional levels (i.e. the municipal and the regional one).

The process ends with a result that the Mayor and the Executive member for the environment were not expecting, which, theoretically, diverges from the mandate of the original agreement for the co-design process. In fact, the 23 citizens unanimously declare that they are against the project drafted by the municipality. Even though their mandate was to exclusively propose partial integrations or changes to the project, they explain their reasons for the rejection of the project in the final recommendations. In the final verdict, the citizens do not reject the idea of building a wind farm in the borough per se, but they propose to find alternative sites and experiment with more cutting-edge technology [7].

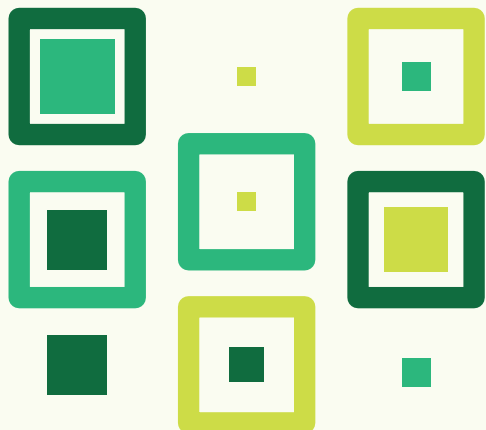
Uncertain of how to react, the Mayor and Executive member for the environment decide to pose the issue to the Council. Some councillors lean towards the idea of proceeding with the original project and ignoring the citizens' recommendations, especially as the deliberative arena went far beyond its original mandate, which, as it stands, did not provide for calling the project into question. Whereas, other councillors propose the establishment of a technical committee that will seriously consider the citizens' recommendations and try to

identify an alternative location for the wind farm, keeping in mind the recommendations provided in the final report.

At the final vote, most of the councillors call for the redrafting of the project. In fact, the majority of the councillors fear that approving the original project could cause the administration to lose consensus, as well as give rise to protests, which could hinder the realisation of the farm. The drafting of a new, revised project will be conducted by the municipal technicians and other external experts without involving the citizens.

There are two reasons for this decision: one is because the councillors are worried that involving the residents will lead to further changes in the content and the other, more practical matter is that the funds for the co-design process have run out.

The co-design phase is now closed, and the political-administrative process returns along its usual course. At this point, the policy effectiveness of the co-design process is not completely invalidated, because the final result will depend on how the municipal technicians and experts draft the new project and also on the events and contingent dynamics in the political context and the subsequent developments.



7 “Despite the clear mandate of the process, the citizens voted against the project.”

In any case, at the end of the co-design process the facilitators often recommend the establishment of a support or monitoring committee for the implementation stage. In this case, a similar body could also be established for the drafting of the new project, as well as pushing the administration and the team of external technicians to take into account the proposals that were put forward during the deliberative stage.

This story ends here. Read the moral below (or go back and try different choices!)

How did you arrive to this end? See the turning points in the CYOA book map.



As seen in various stages of the book, decision-making processes can be difficult and full of roadblocks, often resulting in unexpected outcomes that present decision-makers with serious dilemmas.

Citizens' involvement only in the definition of the secondary aspects of a wind farm project, established solely by the administration, helped to formulate a high-level technical solution that would not be criticised or rejected by members of the administration more directly involved in the decision-making process. However, this decision was subject of severe criticism from various members of civil society and some of the councillors.

The decision to rely on professional facilitators allowed the administration to experiment a deliberative process, but also forced the administration to divulge decisions with both stakeholders and experts.

The highly structured nature of the deliberative model itself, which tends to be focused on rational argumentation, helped bring to light the motivations and the implications of the various options in the field, but it also gave rise to problematic dynamics, such as cognitive asymmetries and the 'spiral of silence', that the facilitators were unable to effectively defuse.

The final verdict to reject the wind farm project by the 23 citizens group, bewildered the public administration and promoters of the initiative, who had limited the participants to correcting and perfecting the project drawn up by the technicians. This unexpected deviation suggests deliberative processes can support the design process, by structuring it within certain boundaries, but it does not enable them to determine the real dynamics taking place within the same.

Section 27. Many ingredients make a recipe harder to manage

A few days after the distribution of the informative dossier drafted by the facilitators (which was compiled also bearing in mind the different levels of expertise and viewpoints of the participants), the citizens' committee that petitioned against the wind farm and the group of farmers accuse the administration of drafting a preliminary project that appears to downplay the wind farm's impact on the landscape and environment. They also criticise some of the content, claiming it is biased and superficial, confirming that the administration has no intention of improving or reducing the impact of the wind farm whatsoever [1]. At the same time, some of the members of the SME association in favour of the farm raise a number of perplexities on the impartiality of the dossier, which in their eyes overestimates the impact of the wind farm on the environment and tourism.

The drafting of an informative dossier that includes the opinions of people with different expertise and viewpoints usually tends to *increase the social legitimacy of the process*, because it improves the credibility of the information in the document.

However, even when a dossier is written with extreme accuracy and attention to posing a balanced argument, it often occurs that some factions of civil society still do not trust the quality of the information.

As such, content that appears impartial and unbiased to the committee members can be interpreted as biased or one-sided by outsiders.

Strategies for increasing the social legitimacy of the informative dossier

A number of measures can be taken to increase the social legitimacy of an informative dossier

It is important to structure the dossier so that it contains not only the technical and/or scientific information, but also the views and arguments of the various social actors and parties interested in the wind farm.

Furthermore, the various civil society actors who are not on the steering committee could be invited to contribute to the dossier, allowing them an opportunity to express their positions and arguments [2].



1 "To avoid instrumentalisation, the information must be clear and impartial."

2 "Citizens have more trust when the informative campaign is transparent and involves people and associations."

Despite the committee's protests, the participatory stage begins. The process consists in five public meetings open to all the residents. Each meeting commences with a brief presentation by the technicians of the fundamental characteristics of the project ideas, which opens the floor for citizen discussions.

The participants' debates are heated and emotionally charged. For the most part, the participants are representatives from the environmental association, the group of farmers and the citizens' committee that

are against the project, who have used the opportunity to mobilise their sympathisers.

However, these interventions provide a detailed picture of peoples' concerns about the negative impact of the works.

The environmentalists are particularly concerned about the harm to the landscape; the farmers about the possible decline in tourism while the members of the citizens' com-

mittee are worried about the disturbance that the construction works and noise pollution from the turbines will cause the residents [3]. Meanwhile, the citizens who initially declared themselves in favour of the wind farm are a minority group and their opinions are often met with opposition from the other participants.

The facilitators ask the participants to identify one or more planning criteria, which must be taken into consideration during the deliberative stage.

The meetings last for approximately two hours and are attended by about a hundred people. The sessions end with a report that highlights both the most widely agreed and controversial criteria put forward by the participants.

The facilitators integrate the dossier with the summary of the participatory phase. Meanwhile the opinion polling company starts the recruitment process. After many calls, it finally manages to recruit 15 residents. The selected group is heterogeneous in terms of gender, age and social status. However, the voices of those in favour or relatively in favour of the wind farm are largely in the minority compared to those against. The Steering committee decides to establish the group regardless, reassured by the fact that the facilitators will do their best to structure the discussions in such a way as to guarantee that this opinion has the same room for expression as the others.

The 15 citizens get to work on the informative dossier that has been integrated with the results of the first stage, alternating informative and debate sessions with external experts and stakeholders with internal discussion sessions. The objective of these meetings is to collectively discuss the information provided by the experts and stakeholders during the sessions. The experts are chosen by the Steering committee, in collaboration with the university and the technical environmental agencies of the regional government. Meanwhile, the stakeholders are recruited from the actors who have been actively involved in the project: the chemical company and its trade union, the SME association, the group of farmers, the citizens' committee and the environmental association.

The facilitators coordinate and oversee the proceedings, to ensure that all the participants' voices are fairly and freely expressed, while promoting reciprocal respect and encouraging participants to behave in a reflective and constructive manner.

However, there are two main problems to overcome [4].

The first problem is that the participants find it hard to argue their position objectively or sufficiently, seldom going beyond a simple illustration of their own opinions. In this case, the facilitators intervene with targeted questions and cues to uncover the reasons behind their affirmations and stimulate a well-argued and informed debate on the matter at hand as much as possible.

The second issue is that the participants are often selective when it comes to their attention to the information and arguments posed by the experts. In fact, in the discussions that take place after the sessions with the experts, the participants only tend to bring up the information or arguments that are most in line with their own opinion, leaving out the ones that might call their views into question, even if only in part. This 'selective perception' is further aggravated by a group dynamic that is typically found in unbalanced groups, called the 'spiral of silence'.

This refers to the fact that the few citizens in favour of the wind farm, who are aware of being a minority group, tend to be afraid to express their views and remain silent in the face of the prevailing opinion of the other citizens that are mostly against the project.

In these cases, the facilitators can intervene using specific techniques aimed at reducing any possible embarrassment they might feel (even among participants with very minority views) and persuade them to contribute to the debate, underlining that disagreement and criticism are always welcome, and encouraging constructive interaction and arguments. As the techniques used by the facilitators are non-invasive and non-manipulative, the effectiveness of these tools will vary from case to case and largely de-

3 "Citizens often have very different motivations for taking part."

4 "People who manage citizens have a very difficult task."

depends on the effective response of the participants and the concrete dynamics within each workgroup.

Dynamics, such as selective perception and the spiral of silence among minority voices can weaken the quality and credibili-

ty of the final recommendations in the deliberative arena, making it harder to significantly influence the final decision of public institutions. In other words, unless adequately managed, said dynamics can *reduce the policy effectiveness of the co-design process*.

Strategies for preventing selective perception among participants and the spiral of silence among minority voices



In any group, 'selective perception' and 'spiral of silence' are difficult to defuse and are a very common social dynamics among people who feel they are in a distinct minority. However, it is possible to structure the deliberative process in such a way as to prevent, at least in part, that this occurs.

One measure that can be adopted to weaken 'selective perception' is to present stories and episodes alongside the technical and scientific evidence. This will help the participants to intuitively understand the relationship between the cause and effect of the issues at hand. In this way, the participants' attention will be more easily drawn to the information that is not in line with their own convictions and consolidated views [5]. Another measure that can be adopted to avoid the 'spiral of silence' among minority voices is to explicitly invite the participants to identify opposing arguments to the majority views, i.e. get the participants to 'put themselves in the shoes' of someone who sees the issue differently, even in the case there are no opposing voices in the group. In this way, the discussion should become more pluralist in nature and all the participants will feel justified and less afraid to express their thoughts.

Meanwhile, the citizens' committee, which is against the farm, distributes fliers to the population, in which they sustain the deliberative process has no legitimacy whatsoever. They argue that the process is not representative of all the residents' views [6], because none of the committee members have been invited by the polling company to take part in the process and the 15 selected participants are only qualified to express their personal opinions. Furthermore, the

committee sustains that the approach has been intentionally orchestrated to exclude the more competent and combative members of the committee, so that decisions that lean towards the desired outcome of the administration can be taken. The Steering committee responds to these accusations, reiterating the fundamental principles of deliberative processes, but the debate also continues in the local press, for the entire duration of the co-design process.

Strategies to adopt when groups excluded from the deliberative arena mobilise to obstruct the process



When citizens who have been excluded from the deliberative arena mobilise to boycott or hinder the process, it is important not to underestimate the effect this dynamic can have on the social legitimacy of the process. To adequately respond to external influences, a deliberative process needs to be adaptable. This can be achieved by implementing a number of strategies.

The first strategy consists in 'opening' the deliberative arena by inviting representatives from the external groups that are attempting to obstruct the process, to take part at the meeting, providing a structured context for debate, managed by the facilitators [7]. Another strategy is to introduce a participatory phase in which the members of the deliberative arena hold a public assembly where they explain to the other citizens what they have learnt, discussed and decided up until that moment.

However, an unexpected event occurs during process. The Region announces the launch of a three-year sustainable energy programme that foresees the investment of hundreds of millions of Euro in public infrastructure throughout the territory. This

announcement raises many doubts among both the majority and minority councillors. Some accuse the Mayor and the Executive member for the environment of trying to rush the proposal forward, which would prevent them from accessing the funds of-

5 "Using examples proved very useful when explaining some of the more complicated concepts."

6 "Those against will look for any excuse to pose opposition."

7 "We talked to the spokesperson of the protest group to try and come to an agreement."

ferred by the Region. Meanwhile, others see the announcement of the Region as an opportunity to obtain co-financing for the wind farm project, as long as they slow down the planning procedures and comply with the directives issued by the same. The environmental association, the group of farmers and citizens' committee that are against the wind farm ask to call a halt to the co-design process, to await further information on the restrictions and opportunities provided by the regional scheme. Meanwhile, the trade union of the chemical company asks not to call a halt to the process, but to adapt it so they can take advantage of the opportunities provided by the regional scheme as much as possible.

It is not uncommon for local decision-making processes to conflict with the decisional processes of other levels of government [8]. However, if this occurs, the resulting friction will obviously affect the co-design process. In these cases, *the social legitimacy, institutional sustainability and efficiency of the process are at risk*, because it forces a change in the procedures and, at times, even the content of the co-design process itself. In fact, there is a risk that this could prevent the administration from meeting the citizens' expectations. Furthermore, it could complicate relationships between politicians and public officials and weaken the ability of the process to influence the final decision of politicians and administration.

Strategies for dealing with unexpected intervention from higher levels of government, which slow-down procedures, redefine the stages of the process or modify some of the content under discussion



In these cases, it can be helpful to involve the higher-level government in the co-design process. This can be done in various ways: involving the higher-level political representatives or public officials in the Steering committee; participation of the higher-level technicians and officials at the public meetings; integration of the dossier with the opportunities and restrictions introduced by the higher-level government.

The Mayor and the Executive member for the environment decide to proceed regardless. However, due to these external events, the citizen discussions progress in a climate of mild suspicion and uncertainty. A situation that the facilitators only succeed in alleviating by inviting the representatives of the Region to the co-design table, to discuss how to integrate the lines of action of the two decisional levels, (i.e. the municipal and the regional one).

The process ends with a report that contains a partially modified and integrated project, an idea for the use of the wind farm profits, and the reasons behind the group's decisions. The various changes and integrations include, among others, a suggestion to reduce the number of wind turbines to mitigate the impact of the farm and to use the profits for the requalification of a disused public park in one of the adjacent areas.

The project is presented in an open Council meeting a few weeks later. During the project presentation, a group of citizens burst into the meeting room holding a list of over

1000 signatures of residents who are against the new amendments to the project and ask that the administration goes back to the original project.

The main reason put forward by the signatories is that reducing the turbines will not diminish the overall visual impact of the wind farm, but it would significantly reduce its profits, which would penalise the requalification of the public park in the district. In reaction to the protests, some of the councillors propose proceeding with the original project and ignoring the recommendations of the team of citizens, arguing that a thousand signatures are more significant than the few hundred people who took part in the co-design process. Meanwhile, other councillors defend the principle that the legitimacy of the new project does not reside in how many people took part, but in the quality of the work they carried out, through learning, discussing and attempting to find constructive and unanimously agreed solutions. The Mayor closes the session by announcing that both the original

8 "The problems started when we had to interact with the higher-level institutions."

and the revised project will be voted in a public referendum.

At the final referendum, the public votes for the new project that has been integrated with the partial amendments that were recommended during the co-design process.

The co-design stage is now closed and the political-administrative process returns along its usual course. At this point, the policy effectiveness of the co-design process will largely depend on how effectively the municipal technicians and experts construct the final project and also on the contingent events and dynamics in the political context and their subsequent developments.

This story ends here. Read the moral below (or go back and try different choices!)

How did you arrive to this end? See the turning points in the CYOA book map.



As seen in various stages of the book, decision-making processes can be difficult and full of roadblocks, often resulting in unexpected outcomes that present decision-makers with serious dilemmas.

Citizens' involvement only in the definition of the secondary aspects of a wind farm project established solely by the administration, helped to formulate a high-level technical solution that would not be criticised or rejected by members of the administration more directly involved in the decision-making process. However, this decision was subject of severe criticism from various members of civil society and some of the councillors.

The decision to rely on professional facilitators allowed the administration to experiment with a hybrid process, incorporating elements from both the participatory and deliberative models. However, rather than maximising the benefits of the two approaches, combining the two formats increased both the complexity and the risk of problems even further.

The final referendum, which was a vote on two project proposals, enabled the administration to get at least one of the two projects approved regardless (either the original project or the modified project). However, this also overshadowed all the arguments and motivations that emerged during the deliberative stage of the process.

Section 28. The hybrid model: more opportunities or more risks?

A few days after the distribution of the informative dossier drafted by the facilitators (which was compiled also bearing in mind the different levels of expertise and viewpoints of the participants) the citizens' committee that petitioned against the wind farm, the group of farmers and retail association, accuse the administration of drafting a preliminary project that appears to downplay the wind farm's impact on the landscape and environment. They also criticise some of the content, claiming it is biased and superficial, confirming that the administration has no intention of improving or reducing the impact of the wind farm whatsoever [1].

The drafting of an informative dossier that includes the opinions of people with different expertise and viewpoints usually tends to *increase the social legitimacy of the process*, because it improves the credibility of the information in the document. However, even when a dossier is written with extreme accuracy and attention to posing a balanced argument, it often occurs that some factions of civil society still do not trust the quality of the information. As such, content that appears impartial and unbiased to the committee members can be interpreted as biased or one-sided by outsiders.

Strategies for increasing the social legitimacy of the informative dossier

A number of measures can be taken to increase the social legitimacy of an informative dossier

It is important to structure the dossier so that it contains not only the technical and/or scientific information, but also the views and arguments of the various social actors and interested parties.

Furthermore, the various civil society actors who are not on the steering committee could be invited to contribute to the dossier, allowing them an opportunity to express their positions and arguments [2].



Despite the committee's protest, the participatory phase begins. The process consists of five public meetings open to all the residents. Each meeting commences with a brief presentation by the technicians of the fundamental characteristics of the two project ideas and continues with citizen' discussions.

The participants' debates are heated and emotionally charged. For the most part, the participants are representatives from the environmental association, the group of farmers and the citizens' committee that

are against the project, who have used the opportunity to mobilise their sympathisers. However, these interventions provide a detailed picture of people's concerns about the negative impact of the works.

The environmentalists are particularly concerned about the harm to the landscape; the farmers about the possible decline in tourism while the members of the citizens' committee are worried about the disturbance that the construction works and noise pollution from the turbines will cause the residents [3]. Meanwhile, the citizens who initially declared themselves in favour of the wind farm are a minority group and their opinions are often met with

1 "To avoid instrumentalisation, the information must be clear and impartial."

2 "Citizens have more trust when the informative campaign is transparent and involves people and associations."

3 "Citizens often have very different motivations for taking part."

opposition from the other participants.

The facilitators ask the participants to identify one or more planning criteria, which must be taken into consideration during the deliberative stage.

The meetings last for approximately two hours and are attended by about a hundred people. The sessions end with a report that highlights both the most widely agreed and controversial criteria put forward by the participants.

The facilitators integrate the informative dossier with a report on the participatory stage. Meanwhile, the opinion polling company starts the recruitment process. After many calls, it finally manages to recruit 15 residents. The selected group is heterogeneous in terms of gender, age and social status. However, the voices of those in favour or relatively in favour of the wind farm are largely in the minority compared to those against. The Steering committee decides to establish the group regardless, reassured by the fact that the facilitators will do their best to structure the discussions in such a way as to guarantee that this opinion has the same room for expression as the others.

The 15 citizens start working on the content of the informative dossier, alternating informative and debate sessions with external experts and stakeholders with internal discussion sessions.

The objective of these meetings is to identify the questions that will be posed to the experts and discuss their answers. The experts are chosen by the Steering committee, in collaboration with the university and the technical environmental agencies of the regional government. Meanwhile, the stakeholders are recruited from the actors who have been actively involved in the project: the chemical company and its trade union, the SME association, the group of farmers, the citizens' committee, the retail association and the environmental association. The facilitators coordinate and oversee the proceedings, to ensure that all the participants' voices are fairly and freely expressed, while

promoting reciprocal respect and encouraging participants to behave in a reflective and constructive manner [4]. However, there are two main problems to overcome.

The first problem is that the participants find it hard to argue their position objectively or sufficiently, seldom going beyond a simple illustration of their own opinions. In this case, the facilitators intervene with targeted questions and cues to uncover the reasons behind their affirmations and stimulate a well-argued and informed debate on the matter at hand as much as possible.

The second issue is that the participants are often selective when it comes to their attention to the information and arguments posed by the experts. In fact, in the discussions that take place after the sessions with the experts, the participants only tend to bring up the information or arguments that are most in line with their own opinion, leaving out the ones that might call their views into question, even if only in part. This 'selective perception' is further aggravated by a group dynamic that is typically found in unbalanced groups, called the 'spiral of silence'. This refers to the fact that the few citizens in favour of the wind farm, who are aware of being a minority group, tend to be afraid to express their views and remain silent in the face of the prevailing opinion of the other citizens that are mostly against the project. In these cases, the facilitators can intervene using specific techniques aimed at reducing any possible embarrassment they might feel (even among participants with very minority views) and persuade them to contribute to the debate, underlining that disagreement and criticism are always welcome, and encouraging constructive interaction and arguments. As the techniques used by the facilitators are non-invasive and non-manipulative, the effectiveness of these tools will vary from case to case and largely depends on the effective response of the participants and the concrete dynamics within each workgroup.

Dynamics, such as selective perception and the spiral of silence among minority voices can weaken the quality and credibility of the recommendations in the deliberative arena, making it harder to significantly influence the final decision of public institutions. In other words, unless adequately managed, said dynamics can *reduce the policy effectiveness of the co-design process*.

4 "People who manage citizens have a very difficult task."

Strategies for preventing selective perception among participants and the spiral of silence among minority voices



In any group, ‘selective perception’ and ‘spiral of silence’ are difficult to defuse and are a very common social dynamic among people who feel they are in a distinct minority. However, it is possible to structure the deliberative process in such a way as to prevent, at least in part, that this occurs. One measure that can be adopted to weaken ‘selective perception’ is to present stories and episodes alongside the technical and scientific evidence. This will help the participants to intuitively understand the relationship between the cause and effect of the issues at hand. In this way, the participants’ attention will be more easily drawn to the information that is not in line with their own convictions and consolidated views [5].

Another measure that can be adopted to avoid the ‘spiral of silence’ among minority voices is to explicitly invite the participants to identify opposing arguments to the majority views, i.e. get the participants to ‘put themselves in the shoes’ of someone who sees the issue differently, even in the case there are no opposing voices in the group. In this way, the discussion should become more pluralist in nature and all the participants will feel justified and less afraid to express their thoughts.

Meanwhile, the citizens’ committee and retail association that are against the wind farm, distribute fliers to the population, in which they sustain the deliberative process has no legitimacy whatsoever.

They argue that the process is not representative of all the residents’ views [6], because none of the committee members have been invited by the polling company to take part in the process and the 15 selected par-

ticipants are only qualified to express their personal opinions. Furthermore, the committee sustains that the approach has been intentionally orchestrated to exclude the more competent and combative members of the committee, so that decisions that lean towards the desired outcome of the administration can be taken. The Steering committee responds to these accusations, reiterating the fundamental principles of deliberative processes, but the debate also continues in the local press, for the entire duration of the co-design process.

Strategies to adopt when groups excluded from the deliberative arena mobilise to obstruct the process



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However, an unexpected event occurs during the process. The Region announces the launch of a three-year sustainable energy programme that foresees the investment of hundreds of millions of Euro in public infrastructure throughout the territory. This announcement raises many doubts among both the majority and minority councillors. Some accuse the Mayor and the Executive

member for the environment of trying to rush the proposal forward, which would prevent them from accessing the funds offered by the Region. Meanwhile, others see the Region’s announcement as an opportunity to obtain co-financing for the wind farm project, as long as they slow down the planning procedures and comply with the directives issued by the same. The en-

5 “Using examples proved very useful when explaining some of the more complicated concepts.”

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environmental association, group of farmers and citizens' committee that are against the wind farm ask to call a halt to the co-design process, to await further information on the restrictions and opportunities provided by the regional scheme. Meanwhile, the trade union of the chemical company asks not to call a halt to the process but to adapt it so they can take advantage of the opportunities provided by the regional scheme as much as possible.

It is not uncommon for local decision-making processes to conflict with the decisional processes of other levels of gov-

ernment [8]. However, if this occurs, the resulting friction will obviously affect the co-design process. In these cases, *the social legitimacy, institutional sustainability and effectiveness of the process are at risk*, because it forces a change in the procedures and, at times, even the content of the co-design process itself. In fact, there is a risk that this could prevent the administration from meeting the citizens' expectations. Furthermore, it could complicate relationships between politicians and public officials and weaken the ability of the process to influence the final decision of politicians and administration.

Strategies for dealing with unexpected intervention from higher levels of government, which slow-down procedures, redefine the stages of the process or modify some of the content under discussion



In these cases, it can be helpful to involve the higher-level government in the co-design process. This can be done in various ways: involving the higher-level political representatives or public officials in the Steering committee; participation of the higher-level technicians and officials at the public meetings; integration of the dossier with the opportunities and restrictions introduced by the higher-level government.

The Mayor and the Executive member for the environment decide to proceed regardless. However, due to these external events, the discussions progress in a climate of mild suspicion and uncertainty. A situation that the facilitators only succeed in alleviating by inviting the representatives of the Region to the co-design table, to discuss how to integrate the lines of action of the two decisional levels (i.e. the local and the regional one). In the end, under the supervision of the Steering committee, the facilitators write a final report that highlights the characteristics of the original project; the proposals put forward during the round of 'open door' meetings; the unanimously agreed criteria, established by the team of 15 citizens, and the arguments and counter-arguments on the best proposals to include to improve the project.

The final report is initially discussed by the Steering committee and then by the Council. At this point the participatory phase is closed, and the political-administrative process returns along its usual course. The policy effectiveness of the co-design process, or rather its ability to influence the public institution's final decision will become more apparent over a variable timescale.

The characteristics of the chosen approach, the corrective instruments used and the adaptive strategies that the managers of the process have been able to apply in the field, will determine the extent to which the administration's final decision will adhere to the results of the co-design process.

Furthermore, the contingent dynamics and political events, which are impossible to influence, if not in a purely marginal manner, will also partially influence how much the public institution will take the results of the co-design process into consideration. The co-design process can be concluded in two different ways: the municipality can elaborate a final project that incorporates a substantial amount of the recommendations and ideas proposed by the participants, or the final project can overlook most of the content included in the final report. In both cases, if there are significant changes to the approved final project, compared to the one put forward by the participants during the co-design process, it would be advisable for the administration to publicly explain the reasons for this decision. This could protect both the process and the administration promoting the project from a serious loss of legitimacy.

8 "The problems started when we had to interact with the higher-level institutions."

This story ends here. Read the moral below (or go back and try different choices!)

How did you arrive to this end? See the turning points in the CYOA book map.



As seen in various stages of the book, decision-making processes can be difficult and full of roadblocks, often resulting in unexpected outcomes that present decision-makers with serious dilemmas.

Citizens' involvement only in the definition of the secondary aspects of a wind farm project established solely by the administration, helped to formulate a high-level technical solution, that would not be criticised or rejected by members of the administration more directly involved in the decision-making process. However, this decision was subject of severe criticism from various members of civil society and some of the councillors.

The decision to rely on professional facilitators allowed the administration to experiment with a hybrid process, incorporating elements from both the participatory and deliberative models. However, rather than maximising the benefits of the two approaches, combining the two formats increased both the complexity and the risk of problems even further.

The decision to draft a final report, summarizing the content of the entire process, helped individualise the reasons for the proposals that emerged during the deliberative phase, but it also probably made the outcome of the process less visible to civil society and politicians.

Section 29. When citizens contribute directly to policy implementation

During the last election, the current administration promoted a multi-year energy saving plan to be co-financed by the Region through the European Union Structural and Investment Funds. The plan includes an energy-efficiency programme for public and private buildings. With the intention of taking advantage of the regional funding opportunity, the Mayor and the Executive member for the environment promised the launch a pilot for an energy-saving project in one of the wards of the borough.

After the election, the municipality identifies a district for the implementation of the pilot project. The neighbourhood in question is composed of numerous old public buildings and municipal flats, some of which are more recent, one or two-bed properties, and a school built in the early 1900s. Over the years, due to a lack of funds, the municipality and the agency that manages social housing were unable to guarantee the adequate maintenance of the properties. Consequently, during the 1990s, they were forced to partially privatise some of the municipal flats, by enabling the occupants to buy them. Currently, the ward is in a state of degradation. This is due to both the urban design of the area (the ward is close to an old railway yard that separates it from the other districts in the borough), and the socio-demographical characteristics of the current residents (old people living in houses they own, low-income families and immigrants living in public social houses with a low rental price).

To respect their electoral promises, the Mayor, the Executive member for the environment, and the Executive member for urban planning, who has guaranteed his

full support to the project, announce the launch of the pilot project in a press conference. During the meeting, with the support of municipal technicians, they declare the administration's intention to reduce energy consumption in the ward by 20% in two years and present the energy efficiency programme they plan to adopt [1].

On one side, the project proposes various infrastructural interventions:

- Insulation works (replacement of doors and windows, cylinder jackets, ventilated facades, thermal insulating plaster, insulated roof panels);
- Renewable energy plants (solar panels and photovoltaic systems, connection to the district's energy-efficient heating system, installation of geothermal heat pumps in apartment building);
- Installation of modern condensing boilers and multimedia devices for the remote control of heating, hot water and air conditioning systems

On the other side, to maximise the infrastructural interventions over the long-term, the administration intends to promote the adoption of new lifestyles and behaviours, aimed at reducing the energy consumption of the families that live in the ward [2].

The scheme includes several measures such as: i) reducing the temperature of the apartments by one degree; ii) optimising the use of large electrical appliances (washing machines, dishwashers, refrigerators); iii) replacing traditional light bulbs with low-energy bulbs; iv) switching off electrical devices when not in use; v) promoting the use of microwaves instead of cookers, the use of rechargeable batteries, etc.

Structural interventions are undoubtedly too expensive for the residents and there is no guarantee that the residents in the ward will take part in the initiative. Structural in-

1 It's important not to make promises that are hard to keep. The objectives must be achievable."

2 "The aim of the project was to teach people practical habits to help reduce energy consumption and save them money."

terventions are also foreseen on the school, but in this case they will be financed by the administration. As such, the administration needs to define an incentive system that will encourage citizens to take part in the project and become 'co-producers' of the ener-

gy efficiency policy. The Mayor and the officers have two choices: opt for an exclusively monetary incentive plan in the form of a tax benefit scheme or focus on non-monetary incentives that aim to improve the well-being of the residents in the ward.

- The administration opts for the monetary incentive.
Go to **section 30**.
- The administration opts for the non-monetary incentive.
Go to **section 31**.



Section 30. Why activating citizens is not as simple as it seems

During a Council meeting, and after consulting with the fiscal and legal technicians of the municipality, the Mayor and the Executive members for the environment and urban planning start to discuss which form of monetary incentive would be the most effective in encouraging residents to take part in the energy efficiency scheme [1].

Two proposals emerge from the debate. The first regards the structural interventions, while the second involves promoting changes in citizens' behaviour.

The first idea is to provide the families that take part in the scheme with tax credits or easy-access to bank financing and loans. Both tax deductions and access to loans could be awarded to home owners on the basis of the surface area of the property and the existing level of insulation. In this way, they will be able to award higher incentives to people with larger properties and insufficient or lacking insulation. In both cases, the incentives will be awarded to the residents that effectively reduce their energy consumption by at least 20%, which will be increased by one fifth in the case they succeed in reducing their consumption by over 30%. For various reasons of convenience, this hypothesis is supported by the small property owners' associations and banking institutions. In any case, both parties agree that it is a good opportunity to support families carrying out structural interventions that provide long-term benefits.

However, several majority and minority councillors criticise the idea from a financial

perspective. They reason that tax deductions and tax relief schemes would result in a loss of revenue or would need to be financed by the taxpayer. In short, the opposing councillors view both ideas as problematic.

Given the tight budget restrictions, they could opt for consistent incentives or tax relief schemes for owners of a single property which, on the whole, would amount to a limited number of families; alternatively, they could lower the incentives and benefits, which would allow a higher number of families to access the scheme.

However, this latter idea would have a limited ability to attract willing participants or public interest because the profits would be effectively lower.

In any case, in the end, the Executive member for the environment decides to launch the procedures for implementing the incentive scheme [2].

The second idea is to launch an energy consumption rights auction. In this case, first of all, the municipality would need to establish an overall energy consumption limit that is lower than the current usage in the district in question. Then, on the basis of specific parameters, such as the size of the property and the number of people in each family nucleus, they will need to establish an initial amount of energy consumption rights, i.e. a consumption limit that the family must respect. However, each family would be able to buy or sell a part of its energy consumption rights, depending on their ability to modify their behaviour and how much they man-

1 "A primary lever that attracted citizens was the offer of incentives that helped them save on their bills."

2 "Sometimes you just need to move forward without worrying too much about the criticism."

age to reduce their energy consumption. Therefore, the families that consistently reduce their energy consumption would be able to sell a share of their initial rights and the money they receive will act as an incentive to continue their conscientious behaviour. The families that are unwilling to reduce their consumption will need to increase their initial quota by purchasing more rights, as such, the monetary pay-out they would incur would act as a disincentive.

The idea of an auction is sustained by the councillors who are critical of the first option, because it would have the advantage of immediately reducing the energy consumption in the district and would not impact on the public expenditure. It would also be a highly flexible measure to implement.

However, the idea is criticised by the small property owners' association, because it views it as unfair, especially towards low-income families. This is because these families would not be able to increase their consumption by buying a share of another family's rights. Instead, they would be forced to limit their usage to stay within the initial quota of energy rights assigned by the municipality or reduce them to be able to gain additional resources from the sale of the rights.

In the end, the officer decides to test the idea of an auction regardless and, with the help of the municipal technicians, establishes a 30% energy consumption re-

duction for the district. The two measures have different effects on social legitimacy and institutional sustainability.

Tax credits or easy-access to financing and loans is perceived as a more legitimate option on a social level than an auction for energy rights.

In fact, from the perspective of social equality, the second measure is objectionable, because wealthier families have more freedom to decide whether to buy or sell their rights than families on a lower income.

At the same time, tax reductions or relief are not as institutionally sustainable as an auction.

The first instrument translates into an increase in public spending and will also require the municipality to do a lot of work to define the procedures for obtaining and allocating the incentives, and the definition of a memorandum of understanding with the banking institutions. Whereas, in the case of the second instrument, once the overall permitted energy consumption limit has been established, and each family nucleus is allocated their initial rights, the initiative automatically proceeds with the rights market that is spontaneously created between the families.

Strategy for enhancing social legitimacy of the interventions

A strategy for strengthening the social legitimacy of the interventions, without weakening the institutional sustainability, can be to promote and facilitate the establishment of a citizen energy cooperative, with the aim to provide access to renewable energies at a lower cost. Energy cooperatives of this kind are based on the voluntary support of individual citizens. They purchase energy from renewable sources on the energy market and then resell it to their members at a more convenient price compared to what they would pay if they purchased the energy on their own. Therefore, this initiative can be considered an instrument that combines material incentives aimed at reducing energy costs, with immaterial incentives aimed at fostering a community that works together to improve the environment.



In any case, regardless of the instruments adopted, the administration's real challenge is persuading the residents to take part in the scheme [3].

With the assistance of some of the municipal technicians, the Mayor and the Executive member for the environment decide to personally work on the public communication campaign and prepare an informative dossier that summarises the measures introduced and the implementation phases of the programme.

3 "In the beginning, none of the citizens wanted to take part."

Strategies for facilitating citizen engagement in the co-production scheme



To facilitate citizen engagement in the co-production scheme, the municipality could involve the administrators of the condominiums in the process, providing them with all the necessary documentation and application forms for taking part in the pilot project. In this way, the information can be delivered directly to the apartment owners with the notice for the residents' meeting.

At the same time, the documents could be sent to the small homeowners' associations so that they can deliver them to the members during their periodical meetings.

At this stage, the administration must decide how to initiate and support the implementation of the two measures, while also bearing in mind the human resources they will require and the strategies they will need to adopt for interacting with the residents.

The administration identifies two possible options for the initiation and support stage: assign the activities to the municipal officials or directly involve some of the residents to steer and mobilise their fellow-citizens (i.e. peer to peer approach).

- If the Mayor and Executive member for the environment decide to manage the support stage 'in-house', go to **section 32**.
- If the Mayor and Executive member for the environment decide to rely on 'peer-to-peer' interaction for the support and initiation stage, go to **section 33**.





Section 31. What it means to adopt non-monetary incentives

The Mayor and the Executive members for the environment and urban planning consult with the municipal fiscal and legal technicians, who show them a comparison of the existing national tax reduction schemes for structural energy efficiency interventions on private properties.

Together with the Mayor, they present these findings in a Council meeting, where they begin to discuss which form of non-monetary incentives would be the most effective in encouraging residents to take part in the energy efficiency pilot project. Two proposals emerge from the debate.

The first is an idea to implement an improvement scheme in a district that is in a state of degradation, on condition that the residents can decrease their energy consumption by at least 30% in three years. In fact, the citizens have already notified the municipality of various problems in the district (problems with the electric lighting system, the need to repair the roads which are uneven in various points and an insufficient transport network). The small homeowners and independent trading associations are in favour of this project because they would gain significant advantages from the requalification of the area (i.e. revaluation of property prices and increased customer footfall). Conversely, the idea is opposed by the minority councillors who believe priority should be given to the requalification of the historic centre, to help increase tourism in the town.

In the end, with a strong majority in favour and the support of the two Executive

members, the Mayor decides to launch the district requalification scheme [1].

The second hypothesis is a free initiative for the schools and families in the district, which is focused on sustainability and a reduction in energy consumption [2]. The idea of an educational programme is strongly supported by the environmental association and the managers of the schools. However, the two committees for the elderly in the district see the educational programme in schools as yet another sign of the administration's lack of interest towards the older generation, who have been asking for a programme of initiatives and spaces in the district for many years. In any case, the Mayor and the officers decide to move forward with the educational programme [3].

Non-monetary incentive schemes can be effective but they require investments in public works or services. However, they also have a less direct and weaker ability to engage citizens because they are often targeted at society as a whole, rather than individual groups, and only tend to produce results over the medium-long term.

Additionally, because they create more work for the public administration, they can cause opposition and discontent among public officials, hence *reducing the institutional sustainability of the co-production process*, especially when the various departments are already working on other tasks. In any case, the increase in the public administration's workload will ultimately also depend on the residents' desire to effectively participate in the energy efficiency programme [4].

1 "Sometimes you just need to move forward without worrying too much about the criticism."

2 "Working with schools is important, because every child becomes a messenger - when they get home, they tell their families what they have learnt."

3 "Sustainability means responding to the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to do the same."

4 "In the beginning, none of the citizens wanted to take part."

Strategies for increasing the effectiveness and institutional sustainability of non-monetary incentives



A number of measures can be adopted to increase the effectiveness and institutional sustainability of non-monetary incentives.

Firstly, the administration could publicly explain the nature and timeframe for the realisation of the works or services, which makes the interventions more tangible. Secondly, the administration could estimate the economic benefits that residents would obtain from the works or services, helping to increase the residents' awareness of what they would effectively gain from the initiative.

It is also possible to flank the monetary incentives with a hybrid strategy that combines both material and immaterial incentives, by promoting and facilitating the establishment of a citizen energy cooperative with the aim to provide access to renewable energy at a lower cost. Energy cooperatives of this kind are based on the voluntary support of individual citizens. They purchase energy from renewable sources on the energy market and then resell it to their members at a more convenient price compared to what they would pay if they purchased the energy on their own. Therefore, this initiative can be considered an instrument that combines material incentives aimed at reducing energy costs, with immaterial incentives aimed at fostering a community that works together to improve the environment.

With the assistance of some of the municipal technicians, the Mayor and the Executive member for the environment decide to personally work on the public communication campaign and prepare an informative dossier that summarises the measures introduced and the stages of the implementation process.

At this point, the administration must decide how to initiate and support the im-

plementation of the two measures while also bearing in mind the human resources they will require and the strategies they will need to adopt for interacting with the residents. The administration identifies two possible options for the initiation and support stage: assign the activities to the municipal officials or directly involve some of the residents to steer and mobilise their fellow-citizens.

- If the Mayor and Executive member for the environment decide to manage the support stage 'in-house', go to [section 34](#).
- If the Mayor and Executive member for the environment decide to rely on 'peer-to-peer' interaction during the support and initiation stage, go to [section 35](#).





Section 32. Tools matter

To launch the pilot project, the Mayor and the environmental and urban planning executive members decide to assign the co-production process to the municipal officials, as they have specific knowledge and expertise on the matter in hand.

In fact, the Mayor and Executive member for the environment believe that the skills and knowledge of the officials in question will enable them to exhaustively explain the characteristics of the project to the citizens, who will also view them as respected and

trustworthy spokespersons of the project

However, discontent begins to spread among some of the municipal officials, as they feel this will lead to an increase in workload and, above all, a change in their usual procedures that is not clear to define [1]. The urban planning officer asks a university researcher, who is expert in co-production processes, to organise a series of training sessions for the public officials, some of whom are curious and interested in taking part. At the same time, the Mayor and the officers contact the other municipal officials, so they can agree on how much leeway they will have in contributing to the co-production process [2].

Strategies for improving the institutional sustainability of co-production processes that are managed in-house by the public administration

The role of the officials is fundamental for implementing any public policy, but it is even more so when managing co-production processes in-house, because they are required to adopt strategies and engagement approaches that fall outside their usual role within the public administration, with the aim of mobilising citizens to become directly involved in the production of goods and services that benefit the general public.

A number of measures can be adopted to reduce resistance among officials and encourage them to take a creative approach when managing the co-production process.

The first could be to organise a number of meetings with other colleagues who have experimented with similar processes in other contexts, allowing them to share views and experiences.

Furthermore, the officials could also test out the behavioural changes that will be required of the citizens during the pilot project first-hand, allowing them to fully comprehend both the positive and more problematic aspects of the initiative.



At the end of the training stage, the Executive members for the environment and urban planning set up a coordination board, chaired by them and composed of officials from the various departments involved in the pilot project [3]: the environmental, heritage, tax, and public buildings divisions. The coordination board has the role of establishing the overall strategy for the work

in the field, which will be carried out by a team of officials in their offices. After a cycle of meetings, the coordination board defines an activity programme that will be implemented in four stages:

- The drafting and distribution of an informative dossier, containing information on the incentive plan (tax benefits, easy-access to credit,

1 “Municipal officials have a very fixed routine and they are not always prepared for change.”

2 “They organised informal discussions directly with the other officers.”

3 “They brought the chief officials of the departments involved in the project to the meeting table.”

how the auction system for the energy consumption rights will work);

- An information campaign targeted mainly at the residents in the district, to give overall visibility to the initiative, which will be carried out through local newspapers, television stations and social media channels [4];
- Four information points located in the most frequented areas of the district (school, supermarket, church hall, sports centre), which will be staffed by a public official at a specific time of the day to provide information to the residents;

A series of targeted meetings: three public meetings with the residents who live in municipal properties and the families who have partially purchased their apartments; two meetings at church halls with the owners of detached and semi-detached properties; two child and parent meetings at the school. The objective of this stage is to improve the effectiveness of the adopted incentive tools, by increasing awareness among the various categories involved in the scheme [5], and to work with them to define the coordination and implementation activities.

The information points immediately prove to be a very important decision. Every day, a significant number of people call in for information and application forms.

4 “All communication channels can be effective: from leafletting to newspapers, right the way through to social media.”

5 “We tried to get people to understand how much their behaviour can impact the environment and their energy bills.”

6 “Not all the people accepted to be involved in the process. For instance, families facing difficulties had other priorities.”

The monitoring data gathered by the municipality reveals that the residents in the semi-detached properties show more interest in the programme than the residents in the municipal properties. The data also shows that most of the applicants prefer the tax relief or loan incentives, whereas interest in the energy consumption auctions is very low and risks failure.

As well as providing an additional channel to provide information on the scheme, the targeted meetings allow the organisers to understand the reasons behind the response to the different initiatives among the various categories of residents. For the most part, the reason for the positive response of the residents in the detached and semi-detached properties is because they are middle class with a moderate or good income and a certain level of education. Despite the incentives, the interest is much lower among residents who are buying the municipal properties, as many of them are on a low income and do not feel they can afford to take on what they view as quite a significant investment [6]. Generally speaking, these families are not as educated and therefore have increased difficulty in understanding the procedures for taking advantage of the incentives. Furthermore, some of the interventions (e.g. roof insulation) cannot be carried out by individual property owners because they require the majority agreement of the condominium, which is often difficult to obtain. A problem that undoubtedly many of the owners of the detached and semi-detached properties do not have or have to a lesser extent.

Strategies when incentives work in a selective manner, or rather, work for some beneficiaries and not for others

A number of strategies can be adopted when incentives work in a selective manner, or differently depending on the category of beneficiaries. Firstly, to try and encourage the least interested or more reluctant citizens to join the scheme, the municipality could restructure the share of the incentives.

Also, persuasion tactics could be adopted that lever on more instinctive, less rational mechanisms (the so-called ‘nudge’ theory), such as informing the residents in one condominium that other condominiums in the district have already taken steps to launch the works, hence using the ‘bandwagon mechanism and neighbourly competition mechanisms.



Whereas, the reason for the lack of interest in the auction among all of the categories of property owners is very different. In fact, the auction is an instrument that the citizens have never heard of before and so they

find it hard to understand how it works. Consequently, they keep their distance for fear of getting involved in an overly complicated process that has unclear implications and is difficult to manage.

An adaptive strategy for when a specific instrument is unsuccessful because it is unknown to the target audience.

A number of strategies can be adopted when an instrument generates mistrust because it is unknown to the target audience.

The first strategy consists in labelling the instrument with a name that is relatively well-known by the citizens, even though the same name might be less accurate than the original (in this case, for example, replacing slogans like “Auction for energy consumption rights” with “Not using energy? I’ll use it!”).

A second strategy consists in involving the target audience in simulations that help then to understand the instrument, by demonstrating how it works in a fictional context. For example: role-playing games during a series of workshops, public events, or targeted projects (in this case, for example, with the teachers, pupils and their families).



Overall, the effectiveness of the co-production approach is strictly related to the policy instruments that are introduced. However, there is currently no empirical evidence on which combination of policy instruments and co-production approaches work better than others.

This story ends here. Read the moral below (or go back and try different choices!)

How did you arrive to this end? See the turning points in the CYOA book map.

As seen in some of the key stages of the story, co-production processes are often delicate and frustrating processes that have slightly different dynamics to those found in co-design processes.

The adoption of monetary incentives on their own did not guarantee citizens’ participation. In fact, although these incentives can be implemented using a variety of different tools, they all come with their own pros and cons. In this case, while tax deductions and subsidised loans were more easily understood and accepted than the idea of an auction, they also entailed a greater burden on public staff and finances. Overall, the people, who took part in the energy efficiency program, were mainly middle-class families, living in detached or semi-detached properties, who almost exclusively opted for the benefits of tax deductions or subsidised loans, over the auction mechanism.

On the whole, different support strategies can be put in place, but their effectiveness depends not only on the intrinsic qualities of the same, but also the perseverance and constancy of the administration in following them through.



Section 33. Mentors' role in co-production processes

To launch the pilot project the Mayor, the Executive members for the environment and for urban planning decide to manage the co-production process by directly involving a number of citizens who have already invested in the energy efficiency of their properties.

By explaining how they did it, these 'mentor' citizens can illustrate both the benefits and problems that arose, giving a tangible hand in carrying out the bureaucratic procedures, while also helping to support and incentivise the other citizens, because it leverages on reciprocal acknowledgement and the 'bandwagon' mechanism. Although this strategy makes it harder for the administration to monitor and control the work of the people involved, it is viewed favourably by the Mayor and the Executive member for the environment. In fact, potentially, this solution will not only lighten the workload for municipal officials, which favours the institutional sustainability of the process, but it also increases the social legitimacy of the project.

The Executive member for urban planning involves a university researcher, who is expert in co-production processes, to find out how they can recruit the citizens (who will act as mentors) and to define the training on the instruments and citizen's engagement approaches to adopt. Following the suggestions of the researcher, the Mayor and the two Executive members define the co-production process in five stages:

- The drafting and distribution of an informative dossier, containing information on the incentive plan (tax benefits, easy-access to credit, how the auction system for the energy consumption rights will work);

- Citizen training sessions on the incentives, led by the researcher and some of the municipal officials involved in the process;
- An information campaign targeted mainly at the residents in the district, to give overall visibility to the initiative, which will be carried out through the local newspapers, television stations and social media channels [1];
- Four information points located in the most frequented areas of the district (school, supermarket, church hall, sports centre), which will be staffed by at least one 'mentor' citizen or representative of an association at a specific time of the day to provide information to the residents;
- A series of targeted meetings: three public meetings with the residents who live in municipal properties and the families who have partially purchased their properties; two meetings at church halls with the owners of semi-detached properties; two child and parent meetings at the school. The objective of this stage is to improve the effectiveness of the adopted incentive tools, by increasing awareness among the various categories involved in the scheme [2], and by working with them to define any eventual support activities.

The citizens who will act as mentors are recruited from the residents who have already adopted energy efficiency measures in their homes and the people who immediately joined the programme. In any case, their numbers are destined to grow over time or will at least allow for some form of constructive exchange. The citizens who agree

1 "All communication channels can be effective: from leafletting to newspapers, right the way through to social media."

2 "We tried to get people to understand how much their behaviour can impact the environment and their energy bills."

to act as mentors are then asked to attend the training sessions with the municipal officials and researcher.

The information points immediately prove to be a very important decision. Every day, a significant number of people call in for information and application forms. The monitoring data gathered by the municipality reveals that the residents in the semi-detached properties show more interest in the programme than the residents in the municipal properties. The data also shows that most of the applicants prefer the tax relief or loan incentives, whereas interest in the energy consumption auctions is very low and risks failure.

As well as creating an additional channel to provide information on the scheme, the targeted meetings allow the organisers to understand the reasons behind the response to the different initiatives among the various categories of residents.

For the most part, the reason for the positive response of the

residents in the semi-detached properties is because they are middle class with a moderate or good income and a certain level of education. Despite the incentives, the interest is much lower among residents who are buying the municipal properties, as many of them are on a low income and do not feel they can afford to take on what they view as quite a significant investment [3].

Generally speaking, these families are not as educated and therefore have increased difficulty in understanding the procedures for taking advantage of the incentives. Furthermore, some of the interventions (e.g. roof insulation) cannot be carried out by individual property owners because they require the majority agreement of the condominium, which is often difficult to obtain. A problem that undoubtedly many of the owners of the semi-detached properties do not have or have to a lesser extent.

Strategies to adopt when incentives work in a selective manner, or rather, work for some beneficiaries and not for others

A number of strategies can be adopted when incentives work in a selective manner, or differently depending on the category of beneficiaries.

Firstly, to try and encourage the least interested or more reluctant citizens to join the scheme, the municipality could restructure the share of the incentives.

Also, persuasion tactics could be adopted that lever on more instinctive, less rational mechanisms (the so-called 'nudge' theory), such as informing the residents in one condominium that other condominiums in the district have already taken steps to launch the works, hence using the 'bandwagon mechanism and neighbourly competition mechanisms.



Whereas, the reason for the lack of interest in the auction among all of the categories of property owners is very different. *In fact, the auction is an instrument that the citizens have never heard of before and so they find*

it hard to understand how it works. Consequently, they keep their distance for fear of getting involved in an overly complicated process that has unclear implications and is difficult to manage.

An adaptive strategy to adopt when a specific instrument is unsuccessful because it is unknown to the target audience.

A number of strategies can be adopted when an instrument generates mistrust because it is unknown to the target audience.

The first strategy consists in labelling the instrument with a name that is relatively well-known by the citizens, even though the same name might be less accurate than the original (in this case, for example, replacing slogans like "Auction for energy consumption rights" with "Not using energy? I'll use it!").

A second strategy consists in involving the target audience in simulations that help them to understand the instrument, by demonstrating how it works in a fictional context. For example: role-playing games during a series of workshops, public events, or targeted projects (in this case, for example, with the teachers, pupils and their families).



3 "Not all the people accepted to be involved in the process. For instance, families facing difficulties had other priorities."

Overall, the effectiveness of the co-production approach is strictly related to the policy instruments that are introduced. However, there is currently no empirical evidence on which combination of policy instruments and co-production approaches work better than others.

This story ends here. Read the moral below (or go back and try different choices!)

How did you arrive to this end? See the turning points in the CYOA book map.



As seen in some of the key stages of the story, co-production processes are often delicate and frustrating processes that have slightly different dynamics to those found in co-design processes.

The adoption of monetary incentives on their own did not guarantee citizens' participation. In fact, although these incentives can be implemented using a variety of different tools, they all come with their own pros and cons. On one hand, while tax deductions and subsidised loans were easier to understand and accept than the idea of an auction, this option led to a greater burden on public staff and finances. On the other hand, the decision to rely on voluntary citizens, who had already adopted energy efficiency measures, certainly helped to reduce the burden on officials, albeit at the cost of a less uniform implementation of the programme.

Overall, the people, who took part in the energy efficiency program, were mainly middle-class families, living in detached or semidetached properties, who almost exclusively opted for the benefits of tax deductions or subsidised loans, over the auction mechanism.

On the whole, different support strategies can be put in place, but their effectiveness depends not only on the intrinsic qualities of the same, but also on the perseverance and constancy of the administration in following them through.



Section 34. The difficult path of non-monetary incentives

To launch the pilot project, the Mayor, the Executive members for the environment and urban planning decide to assign the co-production process to municipal officials, as they have specific knowledge and expertise on the matter in hand. In fact, the Mayor and Executive member for the environment believe that the skills and knowledge of the officials in question will enable them to exhaustively explain the characteristics of the programme to the citizens, who will also view them as respected and trustworthy spokespersons of the project.

Discontent begins to spread among some of the municipal officials, as they feel this will

lead to an increase in workload and, above all, a change in their usual procedures that is not clear to define [1].

The Executive member for urban planning asks a university researcher, who is expert in co-production and urban requalification processes, to organise a series of training sessions for public officials. Some of the officials are curious and interested in taking part. At the same time, the Mayor and the Executive members contact the other municipal managers, so that they can agree on how much leeway their staff will have in contributing to the co-production process [2].

Strategies for improving the institutional sustainability of co-production processes that are managed in-house by the public administration

The officials' role is fundamental for implementing any public policy, but it is even more so when managing co-production processes in-house, because they are required to adopt strategies and engagement approaches that fall outside their usual role within the public administration, with the aim of mobilising citizens to become directly involved in the production of goods and services that benefit the general public.

A number of measures can be adopted to reduce resistance among officials and encourage them to take a creative approach when managing the co-production process.

The first could be to organise a number of meetings with other colleagues who have experimented with similar processes in other contexts, allowing them to share views and experiences.

Furthermore, the officials could also test out the behavioural changes that will be required of the citizens during the pilot project first-hand, which will allow them to fully comprehend both the positive and more problematic issues of the initiative.



1 "Municipal officials have a very fixed routine and they are not always prepared for change."

2 "They organised informal discussions directly with the other officers."

At the end of the training stage, the Executive members for the environment and urban planning officers set up a coordination board, chaired by them and composed of

officials from the various departments involved in the pilot project [3]: the environmental, heritage, tax, and public buildings divisions. The coordination board has the role of establishing the overall strategy for the work in the field, which will be carried out by a team of officials in their offices. After a cycle of meetings, the coordination board defines an activity programme, that will be implemented in four stages:

- A questionnaire, drafted by the researcher and the municipal officials to analyse the needs of the district. The questionnaire will be distributed to all of the district residents to identify the critical issues in the district and to help the municipal technicians draft a requalification plan;
- Drafting and distribution of an informative dossier that contains a sort of guide on the main energy efficiency interventions and the behavioural changes that the residents in the district would be required to make. The document will also include an estimate of the timescale, the modalities and the level of impact of the requalification works and the energy-saving education programme proposed by the municipality;
- An energy consumption awareness campaign through local television, newspapers, schools and social networks [4]; a number of information points in the more frequented areas of the district (schools, supermarkets, church halls,

sports centre), and a series of targeted meetings with specific categories of residents;

- An educational programme in the school, which will be launched immediately, due to its potential to increase familiarity with energy saving behaviours among the families of the pupils.

The information points immediately prove to be a very important decision. Every day, a significant number of people call in for information and propose ideas for the requalification of the district.

However, as emerges from the municipal monitoring data, participation in the programme creates a generational and social divide.

Most of the residents who sign up to the project are young families with children of school age, with a medium-high level of income and education (high school diplomas and full-time work contracts). Whereas, the more elderly residents and municipal tenants [5] were less inclined to take part. However, this generational and social divide does not involve the owners of the detached and semi-detached properties, who are more homogenous in terms of their socio-economic profile.

As well as providing an additional channel to provide information on the scheme, the targeted meetings allow the organisers to understand the reasons behind the response to the use of non-monetary incentives among the various categories of residents.

3 “They brought the chief officials of the departments involved in the project to the meeting table.”

4 “All communication channels can be effective: from leafleting to newspapers, right the way through to social media.”

5 “Not everyone took part. Families in difficulty, for example, had other priorities.”

Strategies to adopt when incentives work in a selective manner, or rather, work for some beneficiaries and not for others

A number of strategies can be adopted when incentives work in a selective manner, or differently depending on the category of beneficiaries. Firstly, to try and encourage the least interested or more reluctant citizens to join the scheme, the municipality could restructure the share of the incentives. Also, persuasion tactics could be adopted that lever on more instinctive, less rational mechanisms (the so-called ‘nudge’ theory), such as informing the residents in one condominium that other condominiums in the district have already taken steps to launch the works, hence using the ‘bandwagon mechanism and neighbourly competition mechanisms.



Overall, the effectiveness of the co-production approach is strictly related to the policy instruments that are introduced. However, there

is currently no empirical evidence on which combination of policy instruments and co-production approaches work better than others.

This story ends here. Read the moral below (or go back and try different choices!)

How did you arrive to this end? See the turning points in the CYOA book map.



As seen in some of the key stages of the story, co-production processes are often delicate and frustrating processes that have slightly different dynamics to those found in co-design processes.

Compared to monetary incentives, the adoption of non-monetary incentives, such as the implementation of public works in the neighbourhood or the promotion of educational activities in schools, did not reduce the costs or workload for the public administration. Furthermore, the non-monetary incentives were only partially effective, as the people who took part were mostly middle-class families with children of school-age.

On the whole, different support strategies can be put in place, but their effectiveness depends not only on the intrinsic qualities of the same, but also the perseverance and constancy of the administration in following them through.

Section 35. When ‘peer-to-peer’ mentoring can make a difference

For the launch of the pilot project, the Mayor, the Executive members for the environment and for urban planning decide to manage the co-production process by directly involving a number of citizens who have already invested in the energy requalification of their properties.

By explaining how they did it, these ‘mentor’ citizens can illustrate both the benefits and problems that arose, giving a tangible hand in carrying out the bureaucratic procedures, while also helping to support and incentivise the other citizens, because it leverages on reciprocal acknowledgement and the ‘bandwagon’ mechanism. Although this strategy makes it harder for the political authorities to monitor and control the work of the people involved, it is viewed favourably by the Mayor and two Executive members. In fact, potentially, this solution will not only lighten the workload for municipal officials, which favours the institutional sustainability of the process, but it also increases the social legitimacy of the project.

The Executive member for urban planning decides to contact a company that is expert in facilitating urban regeneration and co-production processes, *to find out how they can recruit the citizens (who will act as mentors) and to define the training on the various instruments and the citizen engagement approaches to adopt.* The Executive member’s idea is to use requalification process as a non-monetary incentive for

the implementation of the energy efficiency policy, transforming the project into an urban regeneration programme integrated with an educational initiative in the school [1]. A project of this kind requires social support and voluntary citizens who, under the supervision of the facilitators, are willing to work on all of the activities. With the approval of the Mayor and the Executive members, the facilitators define the co-production process in 6 stages:

- An analysis of the needs of the district to identify critical issues and the necessary regeneration works, which will be carried out using the instruments devised by the facilitators, to help the municipal technicians draft a plan for the requalification works. A questionnaire that the volunteers will hand out to a sample of residents. A number of semi-structured interviews with the key players in the district (presidents of the cooperatives and volunteer associations, church leaders and sector-specific actors, such as shop owners, etc.), carried out by the volunteers. A number of ‘neighbourhood tours’ organised by the citizen mentors that aim to raise awareness of the initiative and explore the everyday places and spaces in district.
- The drafting of an informative dossier that outlines the energy efficiency interventions and the behavioural changes required of the residents; the regeneration initiative

1 “Contemporary society must be responsible not only for our present-day quality of life, but also for the conservation of the environmental and non-environmental resources of the future.”

in the district, and the results of the assessment of the district needs that was carried out via the questionnaire and interviews;

- An information campaign mainly targeted at residents in the district, to raise awareness on the initiative, which will be carried out through door-to-door canvassing by the volunteers, as well as newspapers, local television and social media [2];
- Four information points located in the most frequented areas of the district (school, supermarket, church hall, sports centre), which will be staffed by at least one citizen mentor at a specific time of the day to raise residents' awareness on the pilot

project and provide further information;

- A round of public meetings, assisted by the facilitators, to bring forward proposals for the energy efficiency regeneration of the district, with particular attention to the development of activities that promote changes in energy consumption behaviour;
- Three workgroup sessions, coordinated by the volunteer citizens, on three project themes: energy efficiency measures, the regeneration interventions in the district and the education and culture of sustainable lifestyles [3].

Strategies for facilitating the coordination and integration of complex projects

A complex project, like the one presented here, which aims to launch a regeneration process in various different stages, using a wide variety of tools and activities, requires a high-level of coordination and integration.

To respond to this need, it is useful to establish a single Steering committee that involves all the interested actors (i.e. the committee should be represented by key members of the public administration, as well as representatives from the social fabric of the district itself.



The citizens who will act as mentors are recruited from the residents who have already adopted energy efficiency measures in their homes and the people who immediately joined the programme.

In any case, their numbers are destined to grow over time or will at least allow for some form of constructive exchange. The citizens who agree to act as mentors are then asked to attend the training sessions with the municipal officials and researcher.

Introducing a variety of different instruments immediately proves to be an effective method [4]. Every day, numerous people call into the information points; the public meetings which are open to all the residents attract approximately 100 people; the neighbourhood walk provides a higher quality of information on the nature of the context than the questionnaires (the response to which was lower than expected), and the workgroups revealed themselves to be fundamental for analysing and devel-

oping solutions and solving problems that emerged during the public meetings.

The participatory evaluation, carried out by the citizen mentors with the support of the facilitators and municipal officials reveals that the social support stage, developed using the 'peer-to-peer' approach, led to a rate of participation on the pilot project that was far beyond expectations.

The integration of different initiatives and instruments, especially the adoption of the 'door-to-door communication and engagement strategy, saw a significant number of residents involved in the integrated project, including those from the more fragile categories (elderly people and low-income families, particularly the tenants of the municipal properties). With regard to the structural energy efficiency interventions, a certain discrepancy still persists between the various target populations. As such, the social support process was unable to completely tear down the financial barrier [5].

2 "All communication channels can be effective: from leafleting to newspapers, right the way through to social media."

3 "Sustainability means responding to the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to do the same."

4 "To reach our objective, we tried to combine different strategies and the citizens responded well."

5 "Not everyone took part. Families in difficulty, for example, had other priorities."

Strategies when incentives work in a selective manner, or rather, work for some beneficiaries and not for others

A number of strategies can be adopted when incentives work in a selective manner, or differently depending on the category of beneficiaries. Persuasion tactics could be adopted that lever on more instinctive, less rational mechanisms (the so-called 'nudge' theory), such as informing the residents in one condominium that other condominiums in the surroundings have already taken steps to launch the works, hence using the 'bandwagon' and neighbourly competition mechanisms.



Overall, the effectiveness of the co-production approach is strictly related to the policy instruments that are introduced. However, there is currently no empirical evidence on

which combination of policy instruments and co-production approaches work better than others for which purposes.

This story ends here. Read the moral below (or go back and try different choices!)

How did you arrive to this end? See the turning points in the CYOA book map.

As seen in some of the key stages of the story, co-production processes are often delicate and frustrating processes that have slightly different dynamics to those found in co-design processes.

Compared to monetary incentives, the adoption of non-monetary incentives, such as the implementation of public works in the neighbourhood or the promotion of educational activities in schools, did not reduce the costs or workload for the public administration. Nevertheless, although the energy efficiency programmes mostly involved middle-class families with children of school-age, the citizen mentors did help to encourage the spread of energy efficiency practices.

On the whole, different support strategies can be put in place, but their effectiveness depends not only on the intrinsic qualities of the same, but also the perseverance and constancy of the public administration and the citizens in following them through.



Section 36. When public expertise is lacking

The Mayor, the Executive member for the environment and municipal officials who offer to collaborate, start to define the co-design process. While discussing the three public engagement models, the promoters of the initiative find themselves uncertain of which course to take [1].

In the end, they decide to opt for the deliberative model, mainly because it distinctively sets itself apart from customary assembly procedures that the municipality has already experimented in the past, although in a least structured format, such as roundtable meetings with cultural associations and a number of informative meetings.

The researcher explains the principal stages that must be put into place to establish a serious deliberative process:

- The drafting of an informative dossier containing detailed and unbiased information on the idea to build the wind farm and its subsequent impact on the territory [2];
- The recruitment of a small group of heterogeneous citizens that is preferably balanced in terms of their opinion on the farm;
- The management of the citizen discussions with the support of experts and technicians with different levels of expertise and viewpoints, with the objective of helping the involved

citizens to elaborate widely agreed recommendations as much as possible to define the characteristics of the park and decide on its location [3].

The adoption of a highly structured process, the need for constant guidance and planning throughout the process and the significant resources that will be required are immediately seen as sizeable obstacles by the promoters of the project.

For example, who will write the dossier and how will they establish the effective impartiality of the document? Who will recruit the citizens and what strategy will be adopted to ensure the unbiased representation of the residents' views? How will the municipal officials manage the discussion sessions and co-design work groups?

This gives rise to a series of discussions within the municipality, to ascertain whether they can effectively manage a deliberative process in-house. At this stage there are two possible scenarios. In the first case, they can decide to drop the idea of a deliberative process and fall back on the participatory model, which is more streamlined and also less expensive. In the second case, the discussion raises a number of doubts among some of the municipal politicians and officials, leading to a long succession of meetings, until the citizens' engagement process is abandoned entirely.

1 "To establish the framework of the project, various meetings were held with all the interested parties."

2 "A fundamental question is ensuring that citizens have access to information and the necessary knowledge."

3 "The discussion groups were led by experts from various fields. This gave us a good starting point."

- If the group decides to opt for the participatory process, go to **section 9**.
- If, however, the planning process loses momentum and is drawn out over a long period of time, the story ends with the abandonment of the engagement process and the administration proceeds with its usual planning procedures for public works.



Section 37. Dilettantism can hinder the management of the process

The Mayor, the Executive member for the environment and the officials who agree to collaborate on the project, start to establish the framework of the co-design process. After discussing the three public engagement models, the promoters of the initiative are uncertain about the engagement model to use [1]. The hybrid model, which combines more open and spontaneous participation with moments of more structured and guided participation, seems to be a good contact point between the various viewpoints. It also appears to represent a reasonable solution for overcoming the weaknesses that characterise the ‘purer’ engagement models (i.e. deliberative and participatory). The deliberative model is an interesting and innovative option that is specifically designed to correct issues that arise in traditional decision-making procedures. However, the highly structured nature of the format risks making it difficult to comprehend for people who are unfamiliar with such an innovative democratic process [2]. At the same time, although the participatory model may seem closer to the customary procedures applied in the field of political activism, making it more appealing and easier to understand, it is precisely for this reason that it is also more inclined to creating extremely dynamic public arenas and significant divisions across the territory.

The researcher shows the administration various cases studies of hybrid processes. He underlines that the possible combinations are varied and that the design of the most suitable process for the issue to be dealt with and the implementation context depends on the planners’ experience [3].

In the eyes of the promoters of the project, the need for considerable resources and the employment of staff with specific expertise, during both the execution and planning stage, are viewed as a significant obstacle.

The discussions and considerations debated by the municipality principally involve the risks of creating an ‘unprofessional’ implementation and management process, due to the public administration’s lack of time, experienced staff and resources [4]. At this stage there are two possible scenarios. In the first case, the administration can decide to abandon the idea of a hybrid process and fall back on a more streamlined and also less expensive participatory model. In the second case, the discussion raises a number of doubts among some of the politicians and officials, leading to a long succession of meetings, which gradually lose momentum until the citizens’ engagement process is abandoned entirely.

1 “To establish the framework of the project, various meetings were held with all the interested parties.”

2 “There’s a huge difference between formal and informal participatory processes. Formal events are for few people.”

3 “Context is extremely important, because there are many cultural and technical differences to consider on this level.”

4 “Many civil servants are not used to these types of processes.”

- If the group decides to opt for the participatory process, go to [section 9](#).
- If, however, the planning process loses momentum and is drawn out over a long period of time, the story ends with the abandonment of the engagement process and the administration proceeds with its usual planning procedures for public works.



Section 38. Risky decisions and their implications

The Mayor, the Executive member for the environment and the officials, who have offered to work on the project, start to define the co-design process. After discussing the three different engagement models, the promoters of the initiative are uncertain of which model to select [1]. The Mayor and Executive member for the environment are more in favour of testing the deliberative model, mainly because it distinctly sets itself apart from the traditional assembly procedures that the municipality has already experimented in the past, such as roundtable meetings with cultural associations and a number of informative assemblies. In any case it seems the perfect opportunity to try out something new and more explorative in nature.

The researcher explains the various stages that must be implemented to construct a 'serious' and effective deliberative process:

- The drafting of an informative dossier containing detailed and unbiased information on the wind farm project and its impact on the territory [2];
- The recruitment of a small team of citizens that are preferably balanced and heterogeneous in terms of their opinions on the wind farm;
- The management of the citizens' debates by experts and technicians with different skills and viewpoints, with the objective of encouraging the

participating citizens to formulate recommendations on the characteristics of the wind farm and its location that are as unanimously agreed as possible [3].

Considering the restricted margin of influence that the engagement process will have on the specifications for the wind farm and its location, the elevated costs of conducting the deliberative process and the staff's lack of experience in planning and managing this type of highly structured process, the researcher tries to dissuade the administration from embarking on such a complicated course.

This leads to numerous discussions and debates within the municipality, to ascertain their effective ability to manage a deliberative process in-house. At this point there are two possible options. The first consists in dropping the idea of the deliberative process and falling back on a more streamlined process that is both easier to manage and less expensive. The second refers to opening the project to the public and trying to obtain the necessary resources for entrusting the planning and implementation of the entire process to external experts [4].

1 "To establish the framework of the project, various meetings were held with all the interested parties."

2 "A fundamental question is ensuring that citizens have access to information and the necessary knowledge."

3 "The discussion groups were led by experts from various fields. This gave us a good starting point."

4 Time is always an issue. Public administrations are also short-staffed. This is why it's often necessary to turn to external professionals."

• If the group decides to make a U-turn and tries to conduct the participatory process in-house, go to **section 13**.

• If the group questions the internal management of the process, go back to **section 8** and select your story again.



Section 39. Many possible combinations

The Mayor, the Executive member for the environment and the municipal officials, who agree to collaborate on the project, start to define the co-design process. After discussing the three public engagement models, the promoters of the initiative find themselves uncertain about which engagement model to select [1]. The hybrid model, which combines more open and spontaneous participation with moments of more structured and guided participation, seems to be a good point of contact for the various viewpoints. Furthermore, it also appears to represent a reasonable solution for overcoming the weaknesses characterising the two 'purer' models (i.e. deliberative and participatory models). The deliberative model is an interesting and innovative option that is specifically designed to correct issues that arise in traditional decision-making procedures. However, the highly structured and almost 'artificial' nature of the format risks making it difficult to comprehend for people who are unfamiliar with such an innovative democratic process [2]. At the same time, although the participatory model may seem closer to the customary procedures applied in the field of political activism, making it more appealing and easier to understand, it is precisely for this reason that it is also more inclined to creating extreme-

ly dynamic public arenas and significant division across the territory.

The researcher shows the administration various cases studies of hybrid processes.

He underlines that the design of an engagement process adequate to the issue to be dealt with and implementation context depends on the planners' experience [3].

The promoters consider that the need for considerable resources and the employment of staff with specific expertise, during both the planning and implementation stage, is immediately a significant obstacle to the success of the process.

This gives rise to a series of discussions within the municipality to ascertain whether they can effectively manage a hybrid process in-house. At this stage there are two possible scenarios. In the first case, they can decide to drop the idea of a hybrid process and fall back on a more streamlined and less expensive participatory model. In the second case, they can decide to try and obtain the necessary resources to entrust the entire planning and management stage to external professionals [4].

1 "Whether they are driven from the top or the bottom, there are no cut-and-dry alternatives between the various types of processes."

2 "There's a huge difference between formal and informal participatory processes. Formal events are for few people."

3 "Context is extremely important, because there are many cultural and technical differences to consider on this level."

4 "Time is always an issue. Public administrations are also short-staffed. This is why it's often necessary to turn to external

- If the group decides to make a U-turn and attempt to manage directly the participatory process in-house, go to **section 13**.
- If the group decides to question the internal management of the engagement process, go back to **section 8** and compose your story again.





Editorial Design

Asintoto

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