

Evaluating representative deliberative processes



Evaluation Guidelines for Representative Deliberative Processes



- Build on the OECD Good Practice Principles
- Minimum evaluation standards
- Comparable data
- Increased uptake of evaluation activities
- Learning

Definition

Evaluation of a representative deliberative process: The structured and objective assessment of the design, implementation, and results of a one-off or institutionalised representative deliberative process.

More specifically, evaluation refers to ex-post evaluation in a broader sense (throughout or after the deliberative process) as opposed to ex-ante evaluation (assessing the opportunity to initiate a deliberative process in a specific situation).

Content

- **Part I** Conducting an evaluation: Why, who and how?
- **Part II** What to evaluate? Framework, criteria, and measurement methods
- **Part III** Going beyond: building on the minimum criteria
- **Annexes:** Evaluation questionnaires

Why evaluate?

1. **Strengthening the trust** of policy makers, the public, and stakeholders in any recommendations developed by a deliberative body as it can demonstrate the quality and the rigour involved in generating them.
2. **Demonstrating the level of quality and neutrality** of a deliberative process. By making a process subject to evaluation, the authorities commissioning it demonstrate a commitment to transparency and quality, earning them greater legitimacy.
3. **Creating opportunities for learning** by providing evidence and lessons for public authorities and practitioners about what went well and what did not. It gives a basis for iterative improvement.

Good Practice Principles for Deliberative Processes for Public Decision Making



READ THE FULL PRINCIPLES:



Who evaluates?

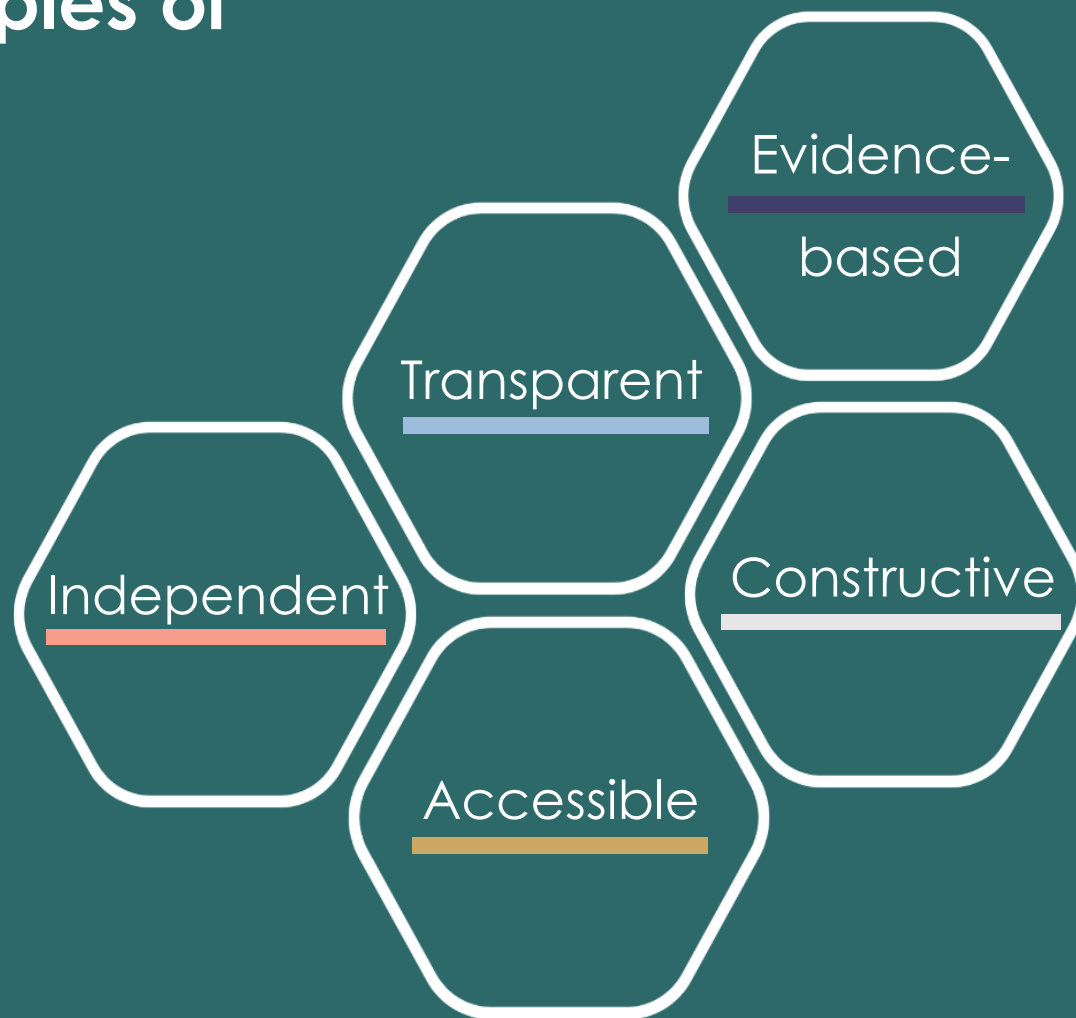
Independent evaluations

Self-reporting by organisers

Self-reporting by members

Independent evaluations are the most comprehensive and reliable way of evaluating a deliberative process.

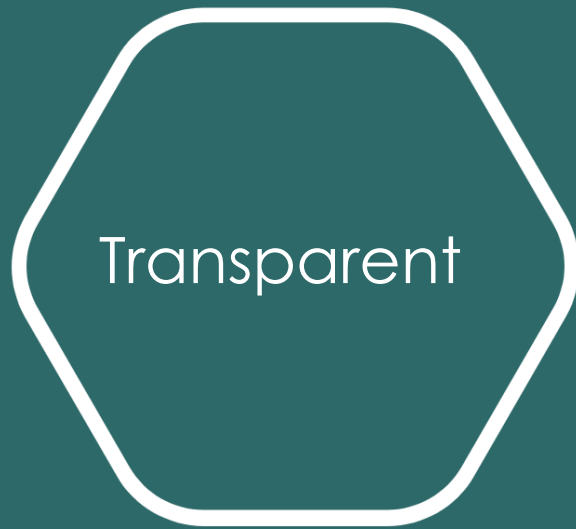
Five principles of Evaluation





Independent

For deliberative processes lasting a significant amount of time, evaluations should be impartial and thus independent. Independence entails being at arm's length from the commissioning public authority and the organisation implementing the process. The evaluators should have no stake in the outcome of the process and ideally have expertise in deliberation. For shorter, smaller-scale processes that are not evaluated by external evaluators, efforts should still be made to ensure a maximum degree of independence of evaluation.



The selection of the evaluators should be clear and transparent. The evaluation process and the final evaluation report of a deliberative process should be made accessible and open to a peer review process. The evidence on which the evaluation is based should be published at an aggregate level, to the extent that it does not impede candid assessments or compromise confidentiality.



Evidence- based

Evaluations should be based on valid and reliable data. Evidence can be collected through a variety of methods, such as surveys, interviews, observation, and a review of materials used during a deliberative process. The standard measures in these guidelines should be used.



Accessible

Evaluators should have access to sufficient financial resources and all necessary information required to assess a deliberative process, including recordings and controlled access to small group discussions. There should also be dedicated time in the programme for the evaluation team to access the members of a deliberative process for the purpose of filling in the evaluation survey(s), while ensuring that members are not burdened by such tasks and with due respect to the privacy and non-publicity of members' identities.



Constructive

A useful evaluation allows organisers and commissioning authorities to learn good practices and identify shortcomings to inform future processes. The evaluation should focus on the quality and impact of a deliberative process.

2.

Deliberative experience

Evaluating how a deliberative process unfolds

3.

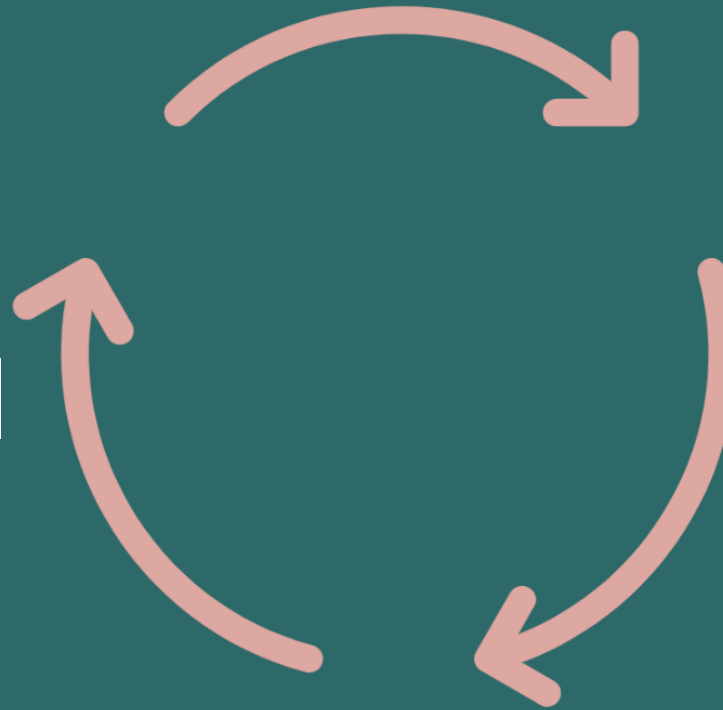
Pathways to impact

Evaluating influential conclusions and/or actions of a deliberative process

1.

Process design integrity

Evaluating the design process that set up the deliberation



Three-Step Evaluation Cycle

Evaluation criteria

	Process design integrity	Deliberative experience	Pathways to impact
OBJECTIVE	Evaluating the design process that set up the deliberation	Evaluating how a deliberative process unfolds “in the room” and “outside the room”	Evaluating influential conclusions and/or actions of a deliberative process
CRITERIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and suitable purpose • Clear and unbiased framing • Suitable design • Procedural design involvement • Transparency and governance • Representativeness and inclusiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neutrality and inclusivity of facilitation • Accessible, neutral, and transparent use of online tools • Breadth, diversity, clarity and relevance of the evidence and stakeholders • Quality of judgement • Perceived knowledge gains by members • Accessibility and equality of opportunity to speak • Respect and mutual comprehension • Free decision-making and response • Respect for members’ privacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influential recommendations • Response and follow-up • Member aftercare

1. **Process design integrity**

Selected examples of evaluation criteria

Clear and suitable purpose

- The deliberative process was connected to the broader political system or policy-making cycle.

Procedural design involvement

- Deliberative democracy experts (in-house or external) were consulted on process design.

Representativeness and inclusiveness

- Everyone had an equal opportunity, via civic lottery, to be selected as a member of a deliberative process. (For example, all residents or eligible voters.)
- The final group of members was a broadly representative sample of the general public (reflecting the demographic composition of a community, city, region, or country).

2. Deliberative experience

Selected examples of evaluation criteria

Neutrality and inclusivity of facilitation

- Enough consideration was given for marginalised communities to be heard. (For example, via supportive and mindful facilitation, creating a safe space for expression, devising specific strategies for encouraging participation by those who are not used to speaking in public or who may feel intimidated.)

Breadth, diversity, clarity, and relevance of the evidence and stakeholders provided

- The information base as a whole was neutral, with a breadth of diverse viewpoints represented.

Quality of judgement

- There was consideration of conflicting values and structural issues underlying the question at hand.

Free decision making and response

- The final recommendations represent what the members actually think (i.e. members had a final say over the wording of the recommendations).

3.

Pathways to impact

Selected examples of evaluation criteria

Influential recommendations

- The members' recommendations had an opportunity to influence opinions and decisions made by a commissioning body, other public institutions, or the broader public.

Response and follow-up

- The government or equivalent commissioning body responded to members of the deliberative process and/or to the general public. (Ideally, such a body would accept the recommendations or provide a public justification for why not.)

Measurement Methods for Evaluation

DELIBERATION OBSERVATION

PUBLIC SURVEY

MEMBER SURVEY

DOCUMENT REVIEW

POLICY ANALYSIS

ORGANISER OR EXPERT WITNESS SURVEY

OPEN-ENDED INTERVIEWS

MEDIA COVERAGE REVIEW

1.

Process design integrity

Evaluating the design process that set up the deliberation

DOCUMENT REVIEW

MEMBER SURVEY

**ORGANISER OR
EXPERT WITNESS SURVEY**

2.

Deliberative experience

Evaluating how a deliberative process unfolds

**DELIBERATION
OBSERVATION**

MEMBER SURVEY

**ORGANISER OR
EXPERT WITNESS SURVEY**

3.

Pathways to impact

Evaluating influential conclusions and/or actions of a deliberative process

POLICY ANALYSIS

PUBLIC SURVEY

**MEDIA COVERAGE
REVIEW**

The guidelines include two questionnaires:

Member questionnaire

Neutrality and inclusivity of facilitation

- How did you experience the balance between time spent in small group discussions and in plenary (whole group discussions) throughout the process?
 - a) Too much time spent in small groups, not enough in plenary
 - b) Too much time spent in plenary, not enough in small groups
 - c) The balance between small groups and plenary was just right
- To what extent did you feel that the facilitators were neutral or biased (favouring certain opinions or offering theirs)? Please answer on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means “completely neutral” and 10 means “very biased”.

Organiser questionnaire

Neutrality and inclusivity of facilitation

- What were the main tasks of facilitators?
- How were the facilitators trained?
- Were there any situations where some members were dominating the discussions? If yes, how did you manage this?

Going beyond the minimum criteria

Long-term & wider effects

- Effects on the public
- Empowering the members of deliberative process
- Effects on public officials and public bodies
- Creating space for civil society organisations
- Improving policy making (policy formulation, implementation, outcomes)
- Altering political strategy

Institutionalised processes

- Agenda-setting power
- Regularity and coherence
- Learning and capacity
- Rotation and retention

References:

- Innovative Citizen Participation and New Democratic Institutions: Catching the Deliberative Wave; OECD, 2020
- Good Practice Principles for Deliberative Processes for Public Decision Making; OECD, 2020
- Evaluation Guidelines for Representative Deliberative Processes; OECD, 2020
- Democracy beyond Elections Handbook; newDemocracy and UN Democracy Fund, 2019



#OECDORG #delibWave

oe.cd/innovative-citizen-participation | medium.com/participo