



Facilitation Tools for Enhanced Stakeholder Collaboration in Clean Energy Transition Planning

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**Why
are
facilitation
tools
important**

The transition to clean energy is a complex and multifaceted process

This requires the **active involvement of a broad spectrum of stakeholders**, ranging from government entities and private sector organizations to local communities and individual end-users.

Engaging these diverse groups is crucial for ensuring that the resulting policies are just, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of all affected parties.

However, this engagement process is not without its challenges. It demands a **shift in energy culture** and often entails navigating conflicting interests and perspectives.

One of the primary goals of involving stakeholders is to **promote the development of public policies that support a just clean energy transition (CET)**. This requires not only gathering feedback but also designing and facilitating complex, participatory processes.

These processes must allow actors with varying interests to engage in meaningful dialogue that informs and influences policy decisions. In doing so, policy-makers can ensure that the voices of all relevant stakeholders are heard, and that the policies being developed reflect a broad consensus.

At local level, effective engagement ensures that stakeholders influence and shape policies, fostering local ownership and acceptance. Facilitation tools will help entities setting objectives and **identifying needs**, responding to reactions, building consensus and social acceptance, and continuous improvement.

By employing these tools, entities can enhance collaboration and drive successful clean energy transitions.



Neighbourhood walk in Orba
Local Action Plan, 2022. Valencia, Spain

**What
facilitation
tools are
useful for
stakeholder
collaboration**

There are **plenty of tools that are useful for a participatory process** that intends to involve multiple stakeholders in the clean energy transition planning.

The following are a compilation of some tools that have been tested in different participatory processes, and intend to tackle different phases:



To get started and break the ice among participants



To raise all voices and hands



To dig deep into a topic or complexity



To wrap up



**To get
started and
break the
ice among
participants**

People engage with different wishes, fears, uncertainties, values, expectations...

Emotions of happiness, motivation, anger or surprise might have led them to participate in the process. As facilitators, **it is crucial to pay attention to all these inner drives**, and design participatory processes accordingly.

One of the most important keys to having successful participatory processes is to **spark comfortable spaces** and closeness among participants. Setting the stage for a session is crucial for participants to really engage, express their ideas, questions, experiences, and worries.

Don't plunge straight into the content of the workshop from the very beginning; dedicate a bit of time to sharing information and creating a welcoming space.

At a minimum, people need to know where the toilets are! Most participants will also benefit from getting to know each other a little. **Giving time to building trust** and relationships enables people to share more.

Reiterate information about the process and dynamics of the workshop.

In a workshop, facilitators may have more information about the process than the participants. It is important that facilitators are **constantly referring to why are participants there**, what is that session and the whole participatory process about. Especially at the beginning and the end, it is important to explain at what stage of the process you are at, **how long the session will be**, **what dynamics will take place**. All this information needs to be clear in order for participants to engage, understand and embrace the process.

It is always nice to count with a "refuge" space, which can be a table with a few bottles of water, juices or an outdoor area for people who need to take a break during the session.



Personal introductions

Many people will be more relaxed if they know a bit more information about everyone else in the room. This dynamic is a real ice breaker!

PROCESS

1. Sitting or standing in a circle, each person gets a chance to introduce themselves in turn. For example, you could ask each person to explain in one sentence why they've come to the workshop, or what is their relationship with the topic being covered (energy, climate change, technologies). You can also add less 'intense' questions such as "Where do you live?" or "What is your favourite spot in the city?".
2. Clapping after each person introduces themselves, or once everyone has done so, can create a sense of celebration of the kick off of the process.



Space for participation, listening and cohesion among women
Imagina Madrid Project, 2019. Madrid, Spain

Pair introductions

Pair introductions give people the chance to have a more in depth introductory conversation with one other person, with a shorter whole group introduction as a follow up

PROCESS

1. Ask people to pair up with people they don't know or know less well.
2. In their pairs people take turns introducing themselves to each other. You could provide a set of questions to prompt people. Questions could include the reasons why the person is there, what they are hoping to learn or achieve during the event, and what problems/needs they have in relation to energy.
3. Facilitators then invite people to introduce their partners to the whole group. The person introducing their partner may feel awkward, but it also generates funny moments that create an atmosphere of closeness.



Workshop on public space
Logroño Open Streets, 2019. Logroño, Spain



To get started and break the ice among participants

Check-in

(How are you)

Check-ins can help people get to know each other, especially if done regularly. Check-ins can also be a good way for people to voice their distractions and set them aside.

For some people, focusing on their feelings can help them to be more aware of what they need in order to feel better

PROCESS

1. In a check-in each person shares something about how they are. This could be very brief, for example one or two words about how they're feeling at that moment. A more specific check in could be focused on people's feelings about the participatory process of the project.
2. Hearing how people are can help others in the group take things less personally - for example, if someone is having a hard time, others might be ready to forgive them for being impatient in a meeting.
3. Finally, it can help the facilitator to read the mood of the room - for example, if lots of people are anxious about the same thing, then it could be brought forward on the agenda.



Green Jobs Discussion Group
Greener Future, 2022. Madrid, Spain

Personal object game

A fun way of getting participants to know each other and create a cosy environment is through an introduction of themselves by bringing an object and sharing something personal

PROCESS

1. Ask participants beforehand to bring an object that for them means energy/climate change/ environmental care/resilience (or any subject you would prefer to start with). If there are people who have not been able to plan what to bring, they can use whatever they have on them. They can take something out of their bag, pocket, wallet...
2. Standing in a circle, everyone should leave their objects in a table in the middle. One person should pick one object, and whoever it belongs to introduces their name and explains about the object and why they have chosen it. This person then chooses another object, and the process continues until there are no objects in the table. You may clap right after everyone has introduced themselves and objects.



Personal object game with teenagers about climate change and food systems
Food Wave Project, 2022. Madrid, Spain



To get started and break the ice among participants

Archive space

Workshops should have concrete objectives that help tackle more general objectives of the whole participatory process; however, participants might bring up questions or ideas that deviate from the session's intention

PROCESS

1. In order to keep on track while recognizing other topics, an imaginary archive may help. This can be a large sheet of paper on the wall or table, where facilitators can write topics to be approached in other moments. This makes sure all ideas and questions get recorded, and participants don't feel like they've been ignored.
2. Allow time at the end of the workshop or meeting agenda to deal with the archive space. Otherwise, make sure you include those questions/concerns in a separate workshop or call.



Interdepartmental archive space workshop
URBREATH Project, 2024. Madrid, Spain



Participative workshop with children
Project for the transformation of school playgrounds and environments, 2019. Madrid, Spain



To raise voices and hands

Certain facilitating tools can also help to raise the participation of different people...

...extroverts and introverts, men and women, people from different ages, or experiences and expertise. Getting to know ideas, perceptions, desires of different people will be very enriching!

Gender roles also tend to associate femininity with being more quiet and masculinity with raising more ideas or doubts and occupying more space. To prevent the monopolisation of the workshop by a small group, several facilitation tools can be used. **Facilitators might also need to interrupt participants** in order to hear more voices.

If the number of people is very large it can be divided into groups that work simultaneously

It will be tried as much as possible that **the groups are mixed and representative**, that is, with people of different ages, origins, studies, etc... In each group there can be **a person in charge of collecting the contributions** and later they will be shared so that everyone has the information.

On some occasions it may be necessary to create non-mixed groups, or groups with some common characteristic if people do not feel comfortable speaking in the general plenary due to dealing with a sensitive issue, for example.



Round of voices

A round of voices from all participants ensures hearing from everyone in the room on the same topic. Everyone takes a turn to speak on a subject without interruption or comment from other people.

Go-rounds help equalise participation and give everyone some clear space to express their opinion.

PROCESS

1. Clearly state what the topic of the go-round is and set a time limit for speaking. If someone exceeds the time too much, interrupt asking them to wrap up to give space for others.
2. Give each person in turn a chance to speak. You can either go in turn round the circle, or do a 'pop-corn' round, where people go in a random order when they are ready.



Workshop about future scenarios
ManzaEnergía, 2022. Madrid, Spain

Brainstorming

A tool for sparking creative thinking and quickly gathering a large number of ideas.

It can be used for two different purposes:

- **Problem solving and decision-making:** brainstorming help to open up lots of possibilities, rather than getting stuck on the first idea someone came up with. This can support creativity and thinking

outside of the box. Brainstorming also make space for a wider variety of people to put forward their ideas.

- **Pooling knowledge:** a brainstorming can help to find out what people already know about a topic. For example, in a workshop, this format allows the group to share their knowledge and creativity with no 'top down' input from the facilitator.

PROCESS

1. State the issue to be brainstorming. For extra clarity, write it in the middle of a large sheet of paper or whiteboard.
2. Ask people to call out all their ideas as fast as possible – without censoring them or discussing them. Impractical ideas are welcome – they can spark more possibilities.
3. Have one or two note takers to write all ideas down where everyone can see them. Alternatively, people can write their ideas on post-its and stick them up on the wall as they call them out.

To be aware!

Brainstorming work best when there is no discussion or comment on other people's ideas. People can be inhibited if they feel like their ideas are being criticised. Discussing ideas can also slow down the flow of new possibilities. Encourage participants to hold back their comments on other people's ideas. Structured thinking and organising can come afterwards.



Mobility Plan brainstorming workshop
SUMP Vilagarcía, 2021. Vilagarcía de Arousa, Spain



Small groups or paired listening

This tool creates a space where everyone is heard, enabling participants to explore and formulate their own thoughts or feelings on an issue without interruption. It can help people to gather and consolidate their thoughts before a

group discussion, especially useful if the topic is complicated or likely to bring up strong feelings. This tool can also be used as a workshop exercise for people to practise their listening skills.

PROCESS

1. Split into pairs or small groups. Decide who will speak first, and who will listen.
2. The speaker talks about their thoughts or feelings on the issue that you've chosen. Some people may feel self-conscious speaking for a long time - remind them they don't need to produce a perfect speech, just say out loud some of the things in their mind! And of course, they don't have to say anything they aren't comfortable to share.
3. The listener gives full attention to the thinker without interrupting or commenting. They can provide an attentive and supportive atmosphere through eye contact, body language, encouraging noises, smiles and nods. They should give space for pauses without immediately piling in with questions. However, if the thinker

gets stuck the listener may try open questions such as "How do you feel about that? Why do you think that?"

4. The listener can offer a summary at the end to help check understanding and reassure the speaker that they've been heard.
5. After a set time (one - four minutes is usually plenty) thinker and listener swap roles.



Space to share proposals
Clever Cities, 2018. Madrid, Spain

Another option is the World Coffee dynamic

1. A large space is chosen in which a series of tables can be placed; depending on the number of participants, more tables will be needed. The idea is to distribute the participants in groups of 4.
2. A significant question is defined in relation to the project and objectives of the session, and on which different perspectives need to be explored.
3. Establish 3 or 4 rounds of conversation, and progressive rounds of 20 to 30 minutes. People change tables during the rounds (a host remains at each table to collect the comments from each group), encouraging the creation of a wide network of connections that are woven in a short period of time.
4. These rounds are followed by reflections of the whole group. Participants are asked to spend a few minutes considering what has emerged from their Coffee Rounds; what has been most meaningful to them and what ideas and projects can be derived from these conversations.



Groups to discuss different proposals
Industrial Plan, 2019. Madrid, Spain



Post-it note race

This is a way to bring out a large amount of information very quickly and increase energy and participation levels.

For example, running this exercise on 'What I appreciate about this group

/ What I would like as a result of this process' can work well at the beginning of a visioning day, collecting a large amount of positive information

PROCESS

1. Give everyone a stack of post-its and a pen. Tell the group they have X minutes to complete the task – 1 to 3 minutes is usually enough.
2. Ask them to write separate ideas on different post-it notes, and arrange them in a long line. The objective is to make the line as long as possible, or to get from one end of the room to the other. Anyone who can't move around easily, or get down to the floor has the option to give their post-its to someone else to add to the line.
3. When the time is up, ask the group to stop. Everyone can move around to see what has been written, or the facilitator / a group member can read the post-its out. For a competitive variant, participants could be in equal size teams, and race to see who can get the longest line in the time. Things to be aware of: Be aware that such a fast-paced game doesn't allow many people to do creative or analytical thinking. It is better for quick-fire revision of a familiar topic.



Diagnosis workshop

Local Action Plan , 2022. Valencia, Spain



Community building workshop
ManzaEnergía, 2021. Madrid, Spain



**To dig
deep into
a topic or
complexity**

One of the biggest challenges in a participatory process is to dig into the problems or complex topics ...

...such as hidden needs or novel ideas for a sociocultural change regarding the energy system. For that, certain methods can help facilitate groups to delve into complexities.

At all times, it must be clear what are the main objectives of the session and whole process.



Future scenarios

This tool serves to devise desired and undesired future scenarios, by people that think alike and differently. During the workshops, the scenarios will be discussed with and among economic, political, neighbourhood and social actors to foster strategic conversations and help define a roadmap to achieve

the future desired by local actors. Combining scenario building with the decision-making process of strategy development can help local stakeholders understand how to manage their future. Ideally, it combines 2 big sessions; however, it can be tweaked to occupy only one workshop.

PROCESS

1. For the first workshop, group participants in homogenous groups, in order to promote discussions among people with similar views and experiences. This differs depending on participants types, and might need facilitators' to conduct interviews beforehand to identify the differences. Some examples of groups could be: municipality workers, experts of energy, non-expert of energy but technologically literate, and non-expert of energy and technologically illiterate.
 - Ask each homogenous group to work on characterising two medium-term future scenarios, of what they would like to happen and the future they fear might occur and would like to avoid in the next 4-8 years. In the second part, the lines of action are co-ideated to move towards the desired future established before. At the end, invite them to add a title to each scenario envisioned.
 - Once the future scenarios have been characterised in affinity groups, all the groups will work together.
2. In the second future scenarios workshop, work is carried out in mixed groups to elaborate actions to achieve the desired future. The debate in each group should be guided by a series of questions, adapted to the groups that are formed, to ensure that the conclusions include concrete proposals for action. These questions can be along the lines of: What actions can we initiate today to move towards the desired scenario; what people or groups have the capacity to initiate them; what obstacles can be encountered; how can they be overcome?



Future scenarios workshop
Sustainable Mobility Plan of Hondarribia , 2018. Basque Country, Spain



To dig deep into a topic or complexity

Prioritisation dots

This tool helps to whittle down a long list of options to something more manageable, for example for choosing a few proposals from a brainstorming to focus on. It creates a more detailed visual picture than asking people to put their hands up. It is also a way of getting people

moving if they have been sitting down for a long time. Make sure to include an option for people who don't want to move, for example they could instruct someone else to place their dots

PROCESS

1. Write up a list of the ideas.
2. Give everyone the same number of dots, 1-6 usually works. The dots could be stickers of two different colours to mark the agreement or disagreement with an idea.
3. People can 'spend' their dots on their priority items. If you give multiple dots or stickers, people have the choice of spending them all on one item that they feel is really important/urgent or spreading them across a number of options.
4. In a circle, read which are the most agreed and disagreed upon ideas, and ask the most and least common who thought so and why. Finalise by highlighting the most important results, and how they will be used for next steps of the process.



Workshop for the proposal of urban planning
Local Action Plan, 2022. Valencia, Spain

People map

These can help to explore the different views or needs around an issue within the group. People in a group place themselves somewhere along a physical line or square to show how strongly they agree or disagree with a statement, creating a people map of a certain topic.

People's maps are often used to bring differences in wishes or opinions. In an ordinary conversation, people might not speak up if they think the rest of the group won't agree with them. In a spectrum line, you get an indication where everyone in

the group is at - which can then be the starting point for more discussion.

Gauging different values to engage in the project: If you have several possible values identified (community, environment, economic and social), spectrum lines can help you work out which ones people have the most energy for. This may show up a clear favourite. Alternatively, it could be a springboard for more exploration, e.g. 'What would we need to change about this idea to increase your level of commitment?'

PROCESS

1. Create an imaginary or real line (if you want to work with 2 ideas) or square (if you want to work with four). Chalk or masking tape on the floor are good for indoor spaces. Mark on each end the values or items you want participants to identify with.
2. Outline the issue under debate and formulate it into a statement so that they position themselves along the line according to their views. They may try out several spots before making a final choice.
3. Invite participants to share their viewpoints and feelings with the group. Repeat this exercise with other statements that explore the issue under discussion and see whether and how people's viewpoints change.



People map workshop
Industrial Plan, 2019. Madrid, Spain



Graphic facilitation

Graphic facilitation is a set of techniques that revolve around the predominant use of visual tools (images, drawings, maps, and other graphic elements) to transmit, produce, and collaboratively analyse ideas within a specific focused group of people.

Processes to take advantage of collective intelligence to seek alternatives and generate proposals about key energy and climate challenges of the municipality. Graphic facilitation techniques are procedures that explore the evocative and triggering capacity of graphical tools and the actions surrounding them. Drawing in particular, when practised in the company of others while focusing on concrete issues, is an implicative and affective activity that sparks and guides inquiry and imagination. Ideally, these techniques must be integrated within a broader methodology and coordinated by a technical team working on the process at stake.

Even if the team is responsible for enabling the exchange of opinions among participants and of helping to make clarifications when needed, it must not establish a strict order or rhythm for the sole sake of pushing the discussion forward.

On the contrary, the team should be sensitive to ambiguities and less intellectual contents and interpretations, to what is implicit or not spoken out loud, to the tacit knowledge necessary in processes of collective creation - one rarely expressed through words, but that leaves traces on paper. It is useful to remember that verbal language has several channels (auditory and proprioceptive), and that there are also non-verbal languages that manifest through movement and visual channels. In this sense, graphic facilitation is useful to open alternative means of communication and to keep the balance between participants' needs, the process itself, and the objectives to reach.

TOOLS

Graphic recording

Live visual reporting with drawings and words that records and narrates in real time one situation or event. It combines the idea of a short story with that of the diagram, creating a tale by placing ideas spatially in a non-linear order. It can be done through sketch in private or in public, with the particularity that it is carried out in a large format, visible to everyone.



Itinerary design workshop
Sustainable Mobility Plan of Hondarribia, 2023.
Basque Country, Spain

Video scribing

Visual narration based on an animated video in which illustrations and words are drawn and written following a script and often accompanied by a voice-over.

The Livingston method

This activity adopts a game format. A technician draws by hand a project or an idea following the instructions of the participants. The technician acts like an obedient draughtsman to participants' instructions, but he or she is aware of the shape and scale limitations that condition the design under consideration.

Visual template

A structured and illustrated diagram to be completed by a group to guarantee that all participants can follow the process and its steps. The use of a large format awakens and sharpens participants' attention, enhancing the group's creative potential.



Energy school tour
Manza50/50, 2022. Madrid, Spain



To dig deep into a topic or complexity

Walking and drawing

Open-air activity consists in a critical walk or drift during which participants use drawing as the main means of expression and documentation. There is the possibility to combine it with photography and note-taking. It can be useful to gather information about specific issues, or simply to learn how to observe the city and public space.



Participatory walk

Lightness Project, 2022. Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Creative collaborative mapping

Collaborative cartographies are a relatively extended technique to gather georeferenced information in a participatory manner. They've been recently boosted by digital and open-source tools such as OpenStreetMap or Cumapp. However, taking into account other procedures and layers of interest, mapping still holds a great creative and critical potential.

Graphic reinterpretation

The ideas and projects that have not been coined visually might need a graphical translation to be communicated in a friendly manner or to highlight some of their aspects.

Visual library

Set of drawings, pictograms, icons, files, stickers, templates, connectors, bullets and other elements that could be useful for graphic facilitation sessions or techniques, and as a support for another tool.



Project presentation in General Assembly

Lightness Project, 2023. Madrid, Spain

Photovoice

A community gathers photographs and narratives taken by participants to translate their experiences into practical knowledge.



Photography workshop

Photovoice Alcalá de Henares, 2023. Madrid, Spain

Street actions with paint

Subtle interventions to reclaim public space could be considered as practices of collaborative drawing in which an alternative for the city is imagined and executed. In this case, the canvas is the street itself.



Painting action on the street
Carlos París, 2018. Madrid, Spain



Children mural workshop in public school
Talaia Alai, 2023. Hondarribia, Spain



**To
wrap up**

Ending sessions is an important part of all participatory processes

as it can be a valuable moment to evaluate how it went and reiterate the next steps. There are several tools that can be used to ensure that participants understand the holistic process and how the workshops and their engagement contributes to the general objectives. It can also be a moment to celebrate the small or big achievements of the session.



Check-out

This is similar to a check-in, but at the end of the session. It gives people the opportunity to share how they are feeling. This could be about how they are their perceptions, about the group or about what has been achieved in the session.

PROCESS

Check-outs can be run in different formats, for example everyone together as a go-round or popcorn style, or in pairs or small groups.



Final steps of General Assembly
Lightness Project, 2023. Madrid, Spain

Closing circle and take-aways

Closing a workshop or meeting is key, in order to fully grasp the key takeaways and let participants know how their inputs will be used. Dynamics to forward a constructive closure will

enable facilitators and participants to understand the purpose and finalise exchanges.

PROCESS

1. Standing or seating in a circle, ask people to reflect on what they have learnt in the session and how they will apply that learning.
2. Provide everyone with pen and paper, or even a printed form and give them a set amount of time to answer a couple of questions. Think about what questions would be most useful in your setting. Here a couple examples:
 - 3 things I've learnt, 3 things I'll do.
 - Something straightforward I'll do as a result of this session, and Something that will make a big impact (and may need more effort)
3. When people have written down their points you can ask them to share some of these with each other, either as a whole group, or in smaller groups or pairs.

Encourage people to keep hold of their notes so that they can refer to them in the future.

4. Clapping at the end gives a sense of group cohesion and achievement and can be a good way of closing the session. It may be necessary to plan the date of the next meeting, workshop or steps to take and some objectives to achieve in order to continue to move forward in the process.



Participative workshop with children
Project for the transformation of school playgrounds and environments, 2019. Madrid, Spain



Before and after

This tool allows to evaluate the qualitative changes produced with the development of the workshop

PROCESS

1. At the end of the workshop or phase of the participatory process, participants are asked to write on a sheet of paper. They will need to complete 3 or 4 sentences as follows:
“I thought
And now I think”
2. Give them 10 to 15 minutes to complete each sentence individually and then they read them out in a group. Reflections can be drawn on the changes produced in terms of attitudes, knowledge, etc., in the group.



Interdepartmental co-creation workshop
URBREATH Project, 2024. Madrid, Spain



Co-creation workshop with children
La Creativa, 2022. Madrid, Spain

The Diana

The Diana is a dynamic that helps to assess in a quantitative manner different aspects of the workshop

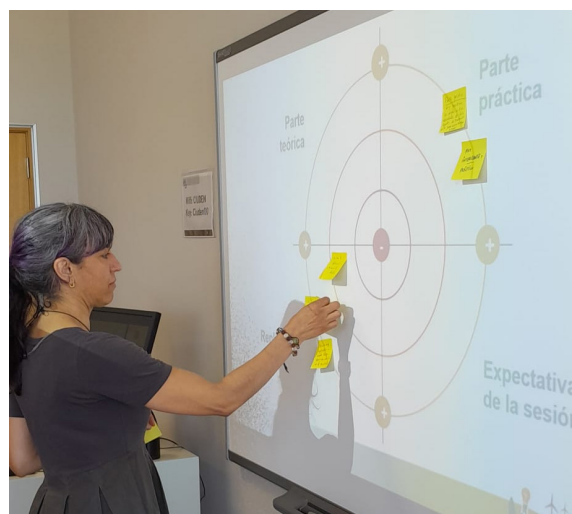
PROCESS

1. Draw and divide a piece of cardboard into as many spaces as wanted to evaluate (some ideas are: organisation, objectives of the process, content worked on, methodology used, documentation, duration of workshops, level of participation, satisfaction).
2. Ask each participant to mark each of the aspects taking into account the score raises as it's closer to the target.
3. Once completed by all participants, hold an evaluation assembly to exchange perceptions, feelings, points of view, wishes...



Process annual evaluation

Lightness Project, 2023. Wrocław, Poland



Participative evaluation of training

Training about Energy Communities, 2024. Ponferrada, Spain





Step-WISE team



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