



FRANCE STRATÉGIE

ÉVALUER. ANTICIPER. DÉBATTRE. PROPOSER.

In the evaluator's shoes: lessons from a participatory evaluation experiment

From 2019 to 2022, France Stratégie conducted an original participatory evaluation experiment. It added two groups of “non-expert” citizens to the committee responsible for evaluating the National Strategy for the prevention and fight against poverty. One made up of people directly affected by poverty or situations of vulnerability and the other made up of people from the general population¹.

Including a participatory dimension in an evaluation – an exercise unfamiliar to the general public – had several objectives. In a context of rising mistrust towards institutions and expert opinion, the purpose was to bring the work of evaluators closer to the concerns of the general public. The aim was to improve the relevance, accessibility and quality of the evaluation by involving citizens throughout the process, in particular by incorporating their questions “as they ask them”. The two groups, each comprising around thirty people, received training and were consulted five times over the three years of the evaluation of the National Strategy for the prevention and fight against poverty 2018-2022. Their opinions were acknowledged by the evaluation committee in its reports and notes, and published in full.

The overall assessment of this process is positive. The views of people experiencing poverty and representative citizens strengthened - and even legitimised - those of the evaluation committee; they also provided qualitative input for its deliberations. Most of the participants were satisfied with an experience that they found rewarding, during which they felt useful, and which helped them develop new skills on the subject as they gained an in-depth understanding and in the practice of collective debate (public speaking, presenting arguments, etc.).

However, putting non-professionals or non-experts “in the evaluator’s shoes” proved to be a complex task. A number of difficulties had to be overcome: the breadth of the area covered by the policy under evaluation, the changes in its scope, the highly technical nature of the exercise – with data that was sometimes incomplete – and a form of fatigue that developed over the course of a process that lasted a long time and required a high level of commitment from the participants.

Despite these challenges, it would appear worthwhile to repeat such an experiment. However, a number of conditions must be met for it to be a complete success. There needs to be an appropriate choice of subject to be evaluated; real and explicit room for manoeuvre for the participants both in the upstream and downstream the evaluation work; appropriate methods for participation and professional support; effective foresight with close supervision, requiring dedicated resources; and familiarisation of the sponsors and experts with the participatory evaluation dimension. Finally, the valuable investment of the individuals involved must be recognised and valued, as they contribute with their experience, thoughts and “life skills” to improving public action.

1. This note summarises a study assessing this experiment. See Barasz J. and Montaignac M. de (2024), “Dans la peau de l'évaluateur. La participation citoyenne à l'évaluation de la Stratégie nationale de prévention et de lutte contre la pauvreté”, Working Paper, no. 2024-01, France Stratégie, January.

SUMMARY NOTE

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AN ORIGINAL EXPERIMENT

Evaluation and participation: a dual dynamic

Great national debate, Citizens' Climate Convention, reform of the Economic and Social Council opening the door to citizens selected at random, opening up of the Court of Auditors (Cour des comptes) to citizens... In recent years, France has seen a proliferation of initiatives advocating greater citizen participation². At the same time, public policy evaluation has developed. The fruit of a long and delicate process of institutionalisation, its aim is to provide decision-makers and the general public with scientific information that will enable them to assess the value of public action and improve it³. In this way, it responds to the dual challenges of effectiveness and legitimacy.

At the crossroads of this dual dynamic, the use of 'bottom-up' participatory mechanisms has accompanied the growth of public policy evaluation in France since the 2000s⁴: it is part of a democratic aspiration that calls for greater account to be taken of what citizens have to say and for political representatives to be held more accountable for their actions⁵.

From recommendation to practice

The three-year participatory evaluation experiment conducted by France Stratégie was undertaken within this context. It originated in the report *Expertise et démocratie*, published in 2018⁶. Noting a crisis of confidence in so-called "expert" opinions, this study recommended "coping with mistrust" to prevent it from undermining public action. To this end, it recommended the introduction of mechanisms designed to "make expertise more transparent and accessible, to bring cultures closer together and, above all, to answer citizens' questions as they are asked". The aim was to integrate the voice of "mistrust" into the very process used to produce expert advice for public action, for example by involving non-specialists in evaluation processes. Following in the footsteps of the philosopher Bruno Latour, who felt that it was impossible to claim to have "consulted on an issue those who have not been given the opportunity to reformulate the terms of the question"⁷, the authors of the report called for particular attention to be paid to participation from the outset of the evaluation process, particularly when the evaluative questions were being formulated.

France Stratégie was quick to apply this recommendation to its own practices, by including it in the work of one of its evaluation committees. The committee steered the reflections of two types of audience who are not experts in the evaluation of public policies: on the one hand, individuals directly affected by the policies under evaluation and, on the other hand, individuals from the general population.

While it is becoming increasingly common to interview stakeholders and people directly affected by the issues examined during evaluations, it is much rarer to involve non-specialists as evaluators in this work. What makes France Stratégie's approach original is that it is neither a simple consultation of the public nor the inclusion of stakeholders in an evaluation committee. Here, citizens contributed directly to the evaluation, from the design of the evaluation questions to the interpretation of the results.

Objectives

The aim of this experiment was twofold. On the one hand, putting citizens "in the evaluator's shoes" was intended to complement – but not replace – the reflections of an evaluation committee by providing a new perspective – different from the experts and, as such, likely to shed light on the blind spots of the evaluation. On the other hand, it was part of a reflection on the ways and means to strengthen public confidence in public action by appropriating the issues at stake in the policies being evaluated, based on increasing the skills of the participants.

Principle

Participation as envisaged at first was intended to reflect these objectives, with a process in two phases: upstream, to contribute to the framing and questioning of the evaluation; and downstream, to participate in the interpretation of the evaluation results. It can be represented schematically (see Diagram 1 on the following page).

This note provides feedback on the process implemented. Its aim is to highlight the factors of success and the challenges associated with involving citizens in the evaluation of public policies, in order to encourage the development of a culture of participation among those involved in evaluation. What are the most appropriate methods? Which players should be involved? What type of management is best suited to the objectives mentioned?

2. "Les nouvelles formes de participation citoyenne", on the Vie publique.fr website, accessed on August, 2nd 2023.

3. Lacouette-Fougère C. and Lascoumes P. (2013), "L'évaluation: un marronnier de l'action gouvernementale ?", *Revue française d'administration publique*, vol. 148(4), p. 859-875.

4. *Ibid.*

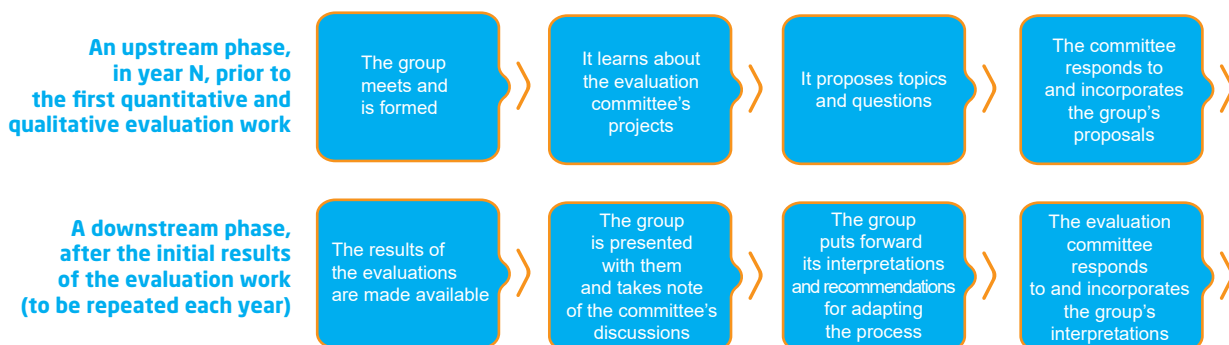
5. Blondiaux L. (2008), *Le Nouvel Esprit de la démocratie. Actualité de la démocratie participative*, Paris, Seuil.

6. France Stratégie (2018), *Expertise et démocraties. Faire avec la défiance*, rapporteur Daniel Agacinski, December.

7. Latour B. (1999), *Politiques de la nature. Comment faire entrer les sciences en démocratie*, Paris, La Découverte, quoted in France Stratégie (2018), *Expertise et démocratie. Faire avec la défiance* op. cit.



Diagram 1 – Citizen participation in the evaluation of the Strategy, in two phases



Source : France Stratégie

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Background

Steered by the Interministerial Delegation for Preventing and Combating Poverty (Délégation interministérielle à la prévention et à la lutte contre la pauvreté, DIPLP) and with a provisional budget of €8.5 billion, the *National Strategy for the prevention and fight against poverty 2018-2022* is built around five major commitments: equal opportunities from the earliest ages to break the cycle of poverty; guaranteeing children’s fundamental rights on a day-to-day basis; a guaranteed training pathway for all young people; towards social rights that are more accessible, fairer and provide greater incentives to work; and lastly, investing in support for everyone towards employment. In 2019, the Minister for Solidarity and Health (Ministère des solidarités et de la santé) entrusted France Stratégie with the *ex-post* evaluation. It was within this context that France Stratégie proposed the creation of an experimental participatory evaluation process, in addition to setting up a joint evaluation committee made up of leading figures from civil society and academia (presidents of anti-poverty associations, qualified experts and researchers), chaired by Louis Schweitzer. Citizens – both those living in poverty and those who do not – would contribute over time to the work of the evaluation committee.

The two groups

To reflect both the experience of those directly affected by this policy and the views of ‘representative’ citizens, France Stratégie chose to adopt an original approach, based on the constitution of two distinct and complementary groups. Not directly involved in the committee and consulted separately, the former were asked to contribute their “life experience”, while the latter were asked to provide a more generalist view.

The group comprising people directly affected by poverty was made up of members of the “college” of persons in poverty or precarious situations of the National Council of policies against Poverty and Social Exclusion (Conseil national des politiques de lutte contre la Pauvreté et l’exclusion sociale, CNLE), also known as the “5th College”⁸. The CNLE reports to the Prime Minister and provides the government with opinions on all general issues relating to the fight against poverty and social exclusion. Participation was open to members of this college on a voluntary basis.

At the same time, a citizens’ panel was formed, comprising around thirty people recruited through a public opinion research institute⁹. Although it could not be described as ‘representative’ due to its limited size, the composition of this group aimed to achieve a certain socio-demographic diversity, with its members having varying degrees of proximity to poverty.

The composition of these groups was intended to remain unchanged until the end of the exercise, both to develop a degree of expertise among those involved and to establish a relationship of trust between all the “evaluators” (committee, people directly affected by poverty, citizens). In practice, the composition and number of participants changed slightly over the course of the experiment, as a result of changes in the composition of the 5th College of the CNLE¹⁰ and a certain level of attrition within the two groups.

The five consultations

The consultations were organised within a framework shared by the two groups. Each consultation involved several phases: a period of training and information (see Box 1 on the following page), a period of group discussion and preparation of opinions and written contributions, the submission of these contributions to the evaluation committee and, finally, a period of feedback.

8. Members of this college are appointed by the Prime Minister following a call for expressions of interest from associations working to combat poverty and social exclusion (CNLE website). The number of members was increased from 8 to 32 in 2019. See footnote 10 below.

9. For more information on the composition of this citizens’ panel, please refer to the associated working document. See Barasz J. and Montaignac M. de (2024), “Dans la peau de l’évaluateur. La participation citoyenne à l’évaluation de la Stratégie nationale de prévention et de lutte contre la pauvreté”, *op. cit.*

10. Decree no. 2019-1077 of 22 October 2019 introduced radical changes to the composition of the CNLE. The number of “people directly affected by poverty” included was increased from 8 to 32, making them half of the council’s members, and the number of colleges was reduced from 8 to 5.

Box 1 – Outline of citizen training programmes for the preparation of opinions

In the first year of the evaluation, it was important to provide the citizens' panel with a broad overview of both the subject and the method. The training therefore covered the current state of poverty in France, the Strategy itself and the issues involved in evaluating public policies. High-level experts and associations were called upon, given that the needs were not identical for the members of the 5th College, some of whom had been members of the CNLE for several years.

In the second and third years, the aim was to take a closer look at the implementation of the Strategy and the measures examined by the Committee. The information ses-

sions, which were identical for both groups, were divided into four parts: an overview of the Strategy; information on the work in progress and the evaluation results available; a focus on key issues; and finally an exchange with the chair or members of the committee. The speakers were also high-level: the deployment of the Strategy was presented by the delegation's inter-ministerial delegate, responsible for its coordination; the discussion on the territorial aspect brought together a panel comprising a commissioner for the fight against poverty, a deputy director of social action for a departmental council and the director of the Fédération des acteurs de la solidarité (Federation of solidarity actors)

The exact arrangements differed slightly between the two groups. They were also adjusted, in particular due to the constraints associated with managing the health crisis¹¹.

The two groups were consulted five times between 2019 and 2022. They each produced three "opinions" and two "written contributions", ahead of the three annual reports and the two Covid notes published by the evaluation committee (see Box 2 on the next page). The latter, which were not planned when the consultation was launched, were intended to document the social effects of the crisis.

For the committee's first annual report, the consultation was dedicated, as planned, to the evaluation questions and methods. For subsequent reports, it was intended to focus on the interpretation of the evaluation results. However, these were not yet widely available, as the policy was still in the implementation phase and the evaluation data was still incomplete. The participants therefore expressed their views on the deployment of the Strategy, but also more broadly on the issues of interest or considered to be priorities - by the committee or by themselves - in the fight against poverty, even if they did not, strictly speaking, fall within the scope of the measures implemented. They were also asked to give their views on proposals to feed into the public policy that would follow.

In addition, the groups were asked to comment on the expected and observed effects of the health crisis on poverty, as well as on the points of concern raised by the evaluation committee for the attention of the government (and the measures put in place to address them).

THE ASSESSMENT

The assessment of this experiment is based on a dozen interviews with all those involved in the evaluation of the *National Strategy for the prevention and fight against poverty*¹², as well as on the publications of the evaluation committee, supplemented by elements drawn from the literature dedicated to participatory initiatives.

A difficult subject to evaluate

In the opinion of all the people interviewed, the *National Strategy for the prevention and fight against poverty* was particularly difficult to evaluate because of the scope covered - no fewer than 35 measures in a variety of areas (early childhood, education, health, training, support and employment, social rights) - and the lack of available data. The committee's decision to go beyond a simple technical evaluation exercise to formulate recommendations played a decisive role in the work of the participants, who were more comfortable with this second dimension.

A task too complex to "step into the evaluator's shoes"?

While they all agreed on the overall value of the process, the players also agreed that it was difficult for citizens to take on the role of evaluator, in particular due to the highly technical quantitative component of impact assessment. Furthermore, some of those interviewed felt that the added value provided by citizens' views on these technical aspects was limited.

A need for close management and resources to be made available

The unprecedented approach tested required close management and long-term investment from the France Stratégie teams, as well as permanent financial resources.

11. For more details on the arrangements for the experiment and the training programme, please refer to the appendices "Consultation of the CNLE's 5th College and the citizens' panel" in the three successive reports of the evaluation committee.

12. Members of the citizens' panel and the 5th College, chairman and members of the evaluation committee, IFOP and general secretariat of the CNLE, interministerial delegation for the fight against poverty and experts in citizen participation and the evaluation of public policies.



It appears to be sufficiently flexible to be able to adjust constantly to the demands made by citizens or by the evaluation committee, and to the various obstacles encountered, such as the lack of evaluation work to be interpreted.

A unique context

The coronavirus crisis began just as the committee was submitting its first report¹³. As well as forcing changes to the organisational arrangements, the crisis may have had an effect on the personal situation of the participants and their perception of poverty. Above all, the crisis resulted in a return to the forefront of policies to combat poverty, which led to a change in the scope of the evaluation, and therefore in the actions of the groups consulted, making the experiment more complex.

The need for two distinct groups, but identical formats not required

The advantages of combining two groups, each with its own specific characteristics, are clearly recognised. The decision to conduct two separate consultations was also seen as positive, in order to preserve the particular dynamics of each group - one more 'expert' in the subject to be evaluated, the other more general - and to encourage the circulation of views and the independence of opinions. On the other hand, the value of having identical consultation formats, given the differences in the nature of the two groups, is subject to greater debate.

Consideration also needs to be given to maintaining the composition of the groups over time: there was a high turnover among the people directly affected by poverty and several members of the citizens' panel dropped out, particularly in the third year.

The need for professional moderation

Professional moderators facilitated both the discussions and the drafting of opinions. The participants in the citizens' panel emphasised the quality of the debates, which ensured that everyone's opinions were respected. However, by the end of the first year, the 5th College no longer enjoyed the specialised support of professional moderators, which made it more difficult to gather their opinions.

Room for improvement in the training and consultation of citizens

The training courses organised by France Stratégie were deemed useful and interesting. They provided enough content to enable participants to improve their skills. However, some participants criticised the lack of preparatory discussions prior to the training days and the materials provided were perceived as too long or too complex. The training sessions were sometimes felt to be too dense and the time devoted to discussions insufficient. Interventions from actors implied in the territorial implementation of the Strategy were preferred to presentations on the progress of the implementation of measures by project leaders at national level.

Box 2 – The five publications incorporating the opinions of the two groups

The five publications of the evaluation committee for the National Strategy for the prevention and fight against poverty are available on the France Stratégie website.

- **March 2020:** *Evaluation of the National Strategy for the prevention and fight against poverty - Progress report, first report by the Evaluation Committee chaired by Louis Schweitzer. See appendix 7 "Procedures for involving the CNLE's 5th College and the citizens' panel", appendix 8 "Opinions of the members of the CNLE's 5th College" and appendix 9 "Opinion of the citizens' panel".*
- **October 2020:** *Combating poverty in the age of the Coronavirus: recommendations of the Evaluation Committee for the National Strategy for the prevention and fight against Poverty. See the "Contribution of the members of the 5th College of the CNLE" and the "Contribution of the citizens' panel".*
- **March 2021:** *Evaluation of the National Strategy for the prevention and fight against poverty – Report 2021, second report by the Evaluation Committee*

chaired by Louis Schweitzer. In the Appendices to the report, see appendix 12 "Consultation of the CNLE's 5th College and the citizens' panel", appendix 13 "Opinion of the CNLE's 5th College" and appendix 14 "Opinion of the citizens' panel".

- **October 2021:** *The fight against poverty at the time of the coronavirus: a look at the effects of the crisis on poverty and the points of vigilance of the committee for the development of the National Strategy for the prevention and fight against poverty. See appendix 5 "Contribution of the CNLE's 5th College" and appendix 6 "Contribution of the citizens' panel".*
- **July 2022:** *Evaluation of the National Strategy for the prevention and fight against poverty – Report 2022, third report by the Evaluation Committee chaired by Louis Schweitzer. In the Appendices to the report, see appendix 5 "Consultation of the CNLE's 5th College and the citizens' panel", appendix 6 "Opinion of the CNLE's 5th College" and Appendix 7 "Opinion of the citizens' panel".*

13. *Évolution de la stratégie nationale de prévention et de lutte contre la pauvreté - Note d'étape*, report by the Evaluation Committee chaired by Louis Schweitzer, March 2020.

Quantitative and qualitative contributions to the evaluation, but little influence

The overall value of the process was recognised by all stakeholders. From a quantitative point of view, the participatory approach was unquestionably an operational success. Qualitatively, it enabled the opinions of technicians and experts to be compared with the concerns of citizens, with mutual acculturation, thus contributing to a better understanding of the political impact of the decisions taken and the feelings of citizens.

The process also helped people to break out of their isolation and forced the experts to rethink their approach. However, the influence of this citizen participation on the priorities of the evaluation committee and on its understanding of the subject seems limited. The inclusion of citizens' views in the "deliverables" of the evaluation was more likely to support – or even legitimise - the views of the committee, even if it was able to contribute certain elements to its thinking (see Table 1).

Table 1 – Examples of how the evaluation committee incorporated citizens' opinions

PROPOSALS MADE IN THE OPINIONS OF THE TWO GROUPS	TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN THE COMMITTEE'S REPORTS OR POSITIONS
STRENGTHENING THE VOICE OF THE EVALUATION COMMITTEE	
For the March 2020 progress note on the evaluation questions and the evaluation approach	
<p>The citizens' panel expressed the wish that the evaluation committee should monitor both the actual implementation of the measures and their impact on the various dimensions of poverty, without limiting itself to income poverty.</p> <p>Members of the 5th College of the CNLE stressed the need to ensure that the financial resources announced were actually deployed.</p>	<p>In monitoring the effects of the Strategy, the Committee took into account changes in indicators not only of income poverty but also of material and social poverty, as well as indicators associated with the themes covered by the Strategy (youth unemployment, for example).</p> <p>An analysis of the amounts planned and spent on the Strategy was produced as part of the evaluation committee's 2022 report.</p>
For the March 2021 annual report on the implementation of the Strategy, the initial evaluation elements, the themes of interest or priorities in the fight against poverty	
<p>The citizens' panel called for a dashboard in the form of a timeline showing the measures implemented, the amounts actually spent and quantified results.</p>	<p>In its recommendation 3, the evaluation committee took up this request and called for the provision of a dashboard with precise data on the progress of the Strategy's measures in relation to the objectives pursued, and on actual expenditure compared with planned expenditure (also mentioned in recommendation 18 of the 2022 report).</p>
ENHANCING THE REFLECTIONS OF THE EVALUATION COMMITTEE	
For the July 2022 annual report on the implementation of the Strategy, available evaluation data and guidelines	
<p>In their opinion, the members of the 5th College stressed the need to take account of certain specific groups (people leaving prison, isolated women, etc.) who require the introduction of dedicated policies to combat poverty.</p>	<p>This request was reflected in recommendation 12 of the evaluation committee's report on taking account of the challenges faced by specific target groups.</p>
REQUESTS REGARDING CONSULTATION PROCEDURES	
For the July 2022 annual report on the implementation of the Strategy, available evaluation elements and future guidelines	
<p>The citizens' panel and the members of the 5th College wished to meet the actors implied in the territorial implementation of the Strategy , in particular the regional commissioners, in order to better identify their role and what they do in practice. They also stressed the importance of "feedback from the players on the ground, whoever they may be" in order to conduct the evaluation.</p>	<p>France Stratégie, in agreement with the committee, organised an exchange with those involved in the regional deployment of the Strategy: the commissioner for the fight against poverty, the president of an association working to combat poverty, and the deputy director general for social affairs of a departmental council. The meeting took place during the joint information session organised as part of the preparation of opinions for the 2022 report.</p>

Source: France Stratégie



Increased skills among citizens, participation that should receive greater recognition

Most of the participants found the experience enriching, felt useful and had the impression that their views had been heard. The exchanges with the chairman or members of the evaluation committee were appreciated by all. The contributions of both groups were incorporated by the evaluation committee into its work, and the opinions are appended to the committee's publications, as planned. In addition, articles on the France Stratégie website and references to the experiment in communication documents relating to the committee's publications have helped to enhance the process. However, some citizens, particularly those in the 5th College, expressed a feeling of lack of recognition – a feeling that was not specific to this consultation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue the experiment

Further experimentation with this type of participatory evaluation would be useful, with the necessary resources and clearly defined procedures. The participation of citizens as evaluators in the evaluation process allows for the acculturation and reciprocal enrichment of sponsors, experts and citizens.

Choose the right subject for evaluation

Participatory evaluation processes need to be set up to involve citizens in the evaluation of clearly defined subjects for which quantitative or qualitative data are available. This type of scheme is less suited to evaluations that are overly technical, particularly when it comes to interpreting the results. The emphasis should be on making the evaluation more general and asking questions about the relevance of the issue under evaluation and the search for qualitative and quantitative effects. A well-defined scope ensures the quality of the approach. Citizen participation must be materially possible and politically useful.

Provide citizens with effective room for manoeuvre upstream and downstream phases the evaluation work

Effective room for manoeuvre must be provided to citizens upstream and downstream of the evaluation process. They can be involved in formulating the evaluation questions, interpreting the results and drawing up recommendations. Participatory evaluations may be mobilised in *ex ante*, *LQ itinere* and *ex post* evaluation.

Explain the objectives of the scheme to stakeholders

From the outset, and throughout the process, the objectives should be made clear to the sponsors, those involved in the evaluation and citizens. For each consultation, the expectations of citizens must be set out explicitly and realistically, as well as the uses to which the various consultations will be put and the follow-up that will ensue.

Maintain the principle of two parallel consultations

It is useful to consult two audiences separately, the beneficiaries of the measures being evaluated on the one hand and the general population on the other, following the same threefold process of training/exchanges/validation of opinions. However, it is not necessary to propose absolutely identical training and consultation formats for the two groups, who have neither the same experience, nor the same needs, nor the same relationship to the policy being evaluated. On the contrary, identical formats could become restrictive, without even resulting in economies of scale, as the content of the consultation has to be adapted to the specific characteristics of each group.

Define appropriate participation procedures

The size of the groups should be relatively small to ensure that everyone can express their views, but it is important to anticipate possible attrition over time. However, it is not advisable to integrate new panellists into existing groups in the course of the process.

Anticipate and plan the process

Financial resources must be sanctuarised. As soon as a participatory evaluation is launched, the costs in terms of time and money¹⁴ must be anticipated and the process must be well planned. The aim is to establish a schedule for the entire process that ensures that sufficient new information is available to underpin discussions with citizens, while ensuring that their opinions are submitted sufficiently early in the preparation of the reports to ensure that they are taken into account by the members of the evaluation committee. A flexible framework is preferable.

Support citizens

Particular attention should be paid to supporting participants. The aim is to enlist the help of professionals specialising in citizen participation to moderate the groups and assist in gathering feedback and drafting opinions. It is also important to make information easier to grasp, by giving priority to oral presentations and the transmission

14. These costs depend on the methods used (size of the groups, face-to-face or remote sessions, duration and location of the consultation, support for moderators, *ad hoc* or existing group, etc.). For example, the cost of each consultation (including moderation, opinion gathering, provision of an online exchange platform, remuneration of participants, etc.) ranged from €10,000 to €25,000, depending on its duration and scope. These figures exclude travel, accommodation, etc., staff costs and internal costs for France Stratégie and the CNLE. These costs should be viewed in the context of the cost of the policy to be evaluated and the amounts earmarked for its evaluation.

of concise, clear and carefully prepared documents. Citizens can also be trained to express themselves. An agile process will enable the content of the training courses and the objectives of the consultations to be adjusted to any unforeseen circumstances. It is important to be explicit about the objectives of each training session and the role of each participant in order to facilitate the assimilation of information by citizens.

Educate sponsors about participatory evaluation

By familiarising sponsors and evaluators with citizen participation processes, they will be better able to understand the contribution made by citizens and how it can be incorporated into the evaluation process in a meaningful way. The success of such an approach depends on the development of mutual trust between sponsors, evaluators and citizens.

Retain participants and recognise their commitment

The active participation of citizens from both groups throughout the process is a key factor in the success of the exercise. In order to maintain the interest of partici-

pants and build loyalty, face-to-face sessions are preferable. Monetary and symbolic compensation should be provided to reward their participation. To take account of the fatigue that may set in among participants over time, the content of the training courses and the consultation methods must be varied.

Ensure close monitoring of the process

Close monitoring of the process is essential, and must not be separated from the coordination of the evaluation itself. Regular progress reviews with stakeholders and exchanges between citizens and evaluators ensure that citizens' opinions are taken into account in the evaluation committee's deliberations and that the process takes place over time.

Recognise the value of citizens' contributions

Citizens' contributions should be promoted to public authorities and the media. This helps to raise the profile of the process and publicise the contribution that citizen participation can make to the evaluation and public decision-making process.



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