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Short
Guides for
Citizen
Participation

Guide to Evaluating Participatory Processes



Generalitat de Catalunya
Departament de Governació
i Relacions Institucionals



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Short Guides for Citizen Participation, 3
Guide to Evaluating Participatory Processes

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Introduction

This Guide is intended to offer some practical guidance for anyone trying to conduct a planned and organised evaluation of the processes of citizen participation sponsored by a public administration.

Before approaching the subject, however, it should be said that one of the basic principles of the citizen participation sponsored by administrations must be its capacity to adapt imaginatively to the circumstances of each issue and each territory. **There are no magic recipes for running quality participatory processes.** Quite the contrary, a good participatory process will be one that finds a way to fit into the specific conditions of the community in which it is conducted. So **there is no single way to evaluate a participatory process**, but depending on the nature of the process itself and its objectives, it will make more sense to evaluate it by using some criteria and methodologies and not others. This Guide, then, does not aim to establish the way of evaluating participatory processes, but to offer a series of tools that, depending on the needs of each process, we think may be of use in its evaluation, without denying the existence of other perfectly valid criteria and methodologies. In any event, it is for each evaluating team or sponsor to decide what objectives are to be achieved through the participation, and following on from that, to identify the best evaluating strategy.

So before evaluating the participation, we must ask ourselves which model of participation we want and which objectives we are pursuing. As participation is not a neutral event and there are many possible ways to understand it, we considered it appropriate to devote the first section of this Guide to proposing a definition of the concept, and to exploring different theoretical and normative approaches.

The second and most central section of the Guide offers a series of guidelines, reflections and methodologies for the evaluation of a participatory process.

Following on from these, the third section focuses on defining a proposal for evaluation criteria and questions to bear in mind when planning any evaluation of participation.

Finally, an example of evaluation is given in the form of a real-life participatory process taking place in Set-cases in May 2010, to compare theory and practice. Although the process was evaluated two years ago, we considered it appropriate to keep it in the Guide due to its methodological validity.

A photograph of a group of people sitting in a room, possibly a meeting or discussion. The image is partially obscured by a yellow overlay on the right side. The people are seated in a semi-circle, and some are looking towards the camera while others are looking towards each other. The room has a modern, minimalist aesthetic with a white wall and a lamp in the background.

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What is citizen participation?

It is not easy to establish a single definition of the term *citizen participation* that can be shared by everyone and that can also encompass all the many practices and experiences that from different fields - governments of various areas and colours, social movements, actors in civil society and even private companies - have been ascribed to *this label*.

However, in spite of the different approaches to the concept and the great heterogeneity of participatory practices carried out in highly diverse contexts, we can identify in the literature some points in common that allow us to put forward a generic definition of the concept. It is the following:

Citizen participation can be defined as all the political and social practices that citizens use to influence any dimension of public affairs.

Under this umbrella we can include a large number of very different forms of participation: from voting in representative elections to any form of collective protest action. For us, then the key element defining citizen participation is the will of citizens to influence the public sphere.

Apart from that, within the wide range of options that this definition embraces, we can identify different degrees of intensity and empowerment among citizens. In this respect, Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation, reproduced below, is highly enlightening, although we can only really refer to citizen participation if we include the areas of consultation, deliberation or decision:

Table 2.1: Degrees of participation

Citizen Power	Decision Management
Tokenism	Placation Consultation Information
Non-participation	Manipulation

Source: Arnstein (1969)

2.1 DIFFERENT WAYS OF INTERPRETING PARTICIPATION

Citizen participation in public affairs is not something that can be appropriated by any ideology or school of thought in particular. Although it is true that each tradition of thought has its own way of interpreting participation. This interpretation is important when referring to evaluating citizen participation, since we evaluate according to a set of criteria that will themselves define what the evaluating team understands as a *good* participatory practice. And obviously, that will depend on what is understood in each case by *good* or *bad* participation.

Three major traditions of thought in relation to current democratic theory can be identified and we will see how each interprets participation very differently.

The first tradition of thought belongs to the currently predominant **liberal approach**. According to this approach, social conflict must be dealt with by the State, but without limiting the freedom of individuals. So liberalism postulates that the State should not interfere in the freedom of the individual beyond guaranteeing the basic rights and freedoms of other individuals. Under this per-

spective, citizen participation in the public sphere is limited to choosing one's representatives, who must establish the rules of the game, and being able to act freely in the public sphere while respecting the rules of the game. The model of democracy that comes closest to this approach is **representative democracy**, and the forms of citizen participation that are seen as positive are, as well as the representative system itself, those that:

- a. Are based on the idea that citizens participate **freely**. So it is not seen as a bad thing if citizens do not wish to participate, nor is it thought necessary for the State to promote spaces for participation beyond those of the representative system itself. Participation promoted by the State is only required if it contributes to improving efficiency and effectiveness.
- b. Intend to give citizens the freedom to choose **individually** their own preferences, above any which the State may promote. In this respect, for example, the free choice of services in the market will be seen as a form of citizen participation.
- c. Are sustained by the **representation of interests**, since citizens must be able to organise so that their interests are taken into account by the State. In this respect, new forms of governance are promoted that involve different actors (from both the private sector and civil society) in the act of governance, particularly if these new forms of governance take power away from the State and increase the influence of the market and the private sector, since this is perceived as more efficient.
- d. They are characterised by the organisation of citizens voluntarily and **without interference** from the State, provided that common rules are respected.

Before liberalism gained its current predominance, however, there was another and much more ancient tradition of thought: republicanism, these days adapted to fit the liberal framework in the form known as **neo-republicanism**. For neo-republicanism, democracy,

through the State, is the mechanism used for resolving social conflict and achieving complete freedom. Freedom, unlike liberalism, is not seen as lack of interference, but must be based on the fact that no individuals or groups dominate others, and understood as the collective construction of common rules that are accepted by everyone. This means that the State must guarantee the application of universal rules of the game. Rules, however, that are consented to by citizens in as far as they are the expression of their democratic will. So under neo-republicanism, citizen participation is seen as a basic element of democracy. However, this participation is not conceived in terms of individual interest, as is the case with liberalism, but is firmly based on the general interest: the individual must not participate in the public sphere to defend his or her own interest, but to contribute to building a communal and universal regulation that is then accepted by society at large and that as a result goes beyond the sum of individual interests. The model of neo-republicanism, then, is closer to **participatory democracy** than to representative democracy, and considers as positive forms of citizen participation that:

- a. Are **promoted by the State**, since is the State that must democratically build the universal regulations to be applied to the whole of society.
- b. Encourage citizens' **cívic commitment**. Citizens must participate, and must do so in consideration of the general interest. Non-participation or the defence of individual interests over and above the collective interest are seen as undesirable practices. Conversely, forms of participation based on citizen deliberation to define the general interest together are looked on with favour. A general interest that, if universal and universally agreed, should be defined under a logic of **consensus**.
- c. Guarantee **equality** between citizens, since for neo-republicanism, achieving full freedom means guaranteeing non-domination. So neo-republicanism questions all forms of participation that reproduce existing inequalities in our societies. If participation cannot

reflect the will of society in conditions of equality, this threatens the role of the State as the only institution responsible for defining the general interest.

Lastly, we can identify a third tradition of thought that we have called **autonomy**, that mixes aspects of the earlier two traditions with elements of Marxism and anarchistic humanism. Like liberalism, autonomy also proposes a clear distinction between the State and civil society, and posits that society can be organised freely without the State. In this case, freedom is linked to emancipation, going beyond republican non-domination since, for autonomy, the State is a form of domination from which society must free itself. Unlike the homogenisation and universal values defended by republicanism, autonomy is based on the recognition of differences. Also for autonomy, conflict is intrinsic to society and is the basis of democracy as defined by defenders of so-called **radical democracy**. Participation is considered as a value in itself, but must be seen as a value for the self-organisation of civil society without State interference. This approach views as positive forms of participation that:

- a. Occur **without State involvement** and as a form of confrontation against the State. This is the place for all forms of collective action that are engaged in by civil society, and that as forms of protest or vindication, enter into conflict with the State.
- b. Are based on **citizen empowerment**, and promote autonomous forms of community development.
- c. Encourage **plurality** and diversity, both of organisations and of discourses, recognising the differences of society and making social conflict visible.

In short, then, we can say that there is no tradition of democratic thought that denies citizen participation in public affairs. However, every tradition sees participation in a different light and as a result, suggests different ways of formulating it. So in each case, one particular form of participation will be seen as desirable, depending on the normative values applied.

Table 2.2: Traditions of thought, democracy and participation

	Model of democracy	Priority value	State-society relationship	Forms of participation	Values in participation
Liberalism	Representative	Freedom	Non-interference of the State in the individual. The State must guarantee basic rights and freedoms.	Free choice of services. Representation of interests. Partnerships.	Freedom. Representation. Individual interest.
Neo-republicanism	Participatory deliberative	Equality	The State is the expression of the general interest and must	Institutional participation. Direct participation. Deliberation.	Equality. Quantity. Deliberation. Consensus. General interest.
Autonomy	Radical	Diversity	Society must be emancipated from the State, as a form of domination.	Collective action of civil society. Protest. Empowerment. Community development.	Plurality. Equality. Conflict. Collective interest.

Source: own figures.

2.2 Participatory scenarios

Different traditions of thought can therefore be associated to a greater or lesser extent with different models of democracy and different ways of framing citizen participation in public affairs.

Arnstein (1969) proposed a Ladder of Citizen Participation with different degrees of involvement. Taking this ladder, we can build a typology that identifies four major participatory scenarios: the first (non-participatory) under which the mere right to information is deemed to be enough; the second, where participation is seen as communication and dialogue; the third, where it is inter-

preted as deliberation, and a last scenario, in which participating implies taking decisions collectively. In each of these four possible scenarios, the role that the actors have to play, the type of legitimacy of the public action, and the value attributed to participation itself all vary.

The following table contains definitions of these four possible scenarios of participation, and analyses for each scenario first, the role of politicians, technicians and citizens; next, legitimacy; and finally, the value attributed to the participation. So when evaluating participatory processes, we must decide both where we stand, and which participatory scenario we think is the most desirable.

Table 2.3: Participatory scenarios

SCENARIOS OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION				
A. Limits to participation	Information	Communication (or dialogue)	Debate	Decision
B. Responsibilities				
The role of the citizens	Passive: apart from participation in elections, restricted to receiving information.	May facilitate information/opinion when asked (consultations, etc.).	May participate in debate as one more actor and may even persuade with their preferences.	May initiate opportunities of citizen participation and even take decisions.
The role of the politician	Take decisions and keep citizens informed.	Manages resources and looks after common property, of which he/she is the guarantor.	Contextualise: create awareness, lead, initiate processes, establish regulations, topics, etc. Ultimately responsible for taking decisions.	Assumes that he/she will delegate (the initiative, decision). The role may occasionally involve "not acting".
The role of the technician	Assess and efficiently execute the politician's ideas.	Keeps the politician informed of the best decision according to objective knowledge.	Provide specific/technical elements with a specific weighting and that condition	Their arguments are as valid as others, but are at the service of politicians and citizens.
C. Legitimacy	The politician possesses this through an electoral process.	The politician has this, but often delegates it to technicians.	A priori, everyone has the right to participate. The politician may restrict debate depending on his/her leadership.	Everyone must be able to participate. Everyone's representativity must be guaranteed.
D. Value of citizen participation	Participation does not make sense and, in any event, taking decisions must be legitimised.	In certain fields, knowledge about citizens is needed. There will be participation when politicians or technicians require it.	Citizens must be taken into account in the debate on management of public affairs whenever possible. This is fair, and improves policies.	Must permit joint management of public affairs. Enables a sense of community and improves policies.

Source: Grau et al. (2009: 74)

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Evaluation of the participatory processes

After reviewing the different focuses from which citizen participation can be approached, the next section is an attempt to respond to the central aim of this Guide: the evaluation of participatory processes

Citizen participation can take the form of the use of different instruments. This section sets out a proposal for evaluating participatory processes, which in recent years have been the most popular and frequently used mechanisms used in Catalonia.

A participatory process is a sequence of participatory transactions carried out over a specific time, with intervention by social and institutional agents and aimed at including citizens in drawing up public policy.

Evaluation here is understood as a systematic process for obtaining information directed at making value judgements about certain established criteria. Evaluation, therefore, is not restricted to judging whether a participatory process has been carried out well or badly, but aims to use a pre-established strategy to analyse the degree of compliance with these predetermined criteria. This means that evaluation requires planning to indicate what will be examined, and where and how to examine it.

The planning of evaluation is therefore one of the most important preliminary phases. This involves reflecting on the objectives, in each case determining the criteria to be used, the type of information required and how best to obtain it, and finally, who the evaluators will be and their role in the process. The following section takes closer look at all these aspects.

Logically, the purposes pursued in the evaluation and the different ways of approaching it will determine the design of each of these items. So this is where we begin.

3.1 PURPOSES OF AND APPROACHES TO EVALUATION

Considering the purposes of evaluation, at least five objectives that evaluation may pursue *per se* can be identified, regardless of the objectives that the participatory process being evaluated may hope to achieve. These are:

Compliance with a norm: sometimes, evaluation arises due to an external or official requirement. In other words, one of its objectives may be to comply with pre-established regulations that define it as the last required step of a process. Obviously, when this is its only purpose, the evaluation has a very limited use.

Legitimacy: can also be used to justify a participatory practice, giving it an air of respectability and neutrality. This kind of evaluation is often solely under the control of those running the process, but nevertheless may still be useful in setting out the arguments in support of a political action, and giving transparency to the process itself.

Effectiveness: technically speaking, the purpose of evaluation may be the continuous improvement of participatory processes to develop the most effective mechanisms and methodologies.

Co-responsibility: another objective may be the co-responsibility of local agents in certain public actions or policies, focussing on co-management and joint work with the Administration. Here the evaluation permits reflection and the appropriation of a sense of participation.

Construction of citizenry: evaluation can be used to develop citizens' reflection and their participatory abilities, both as individuals and in groups. Evaluation may therefore form part of a wider strategy aimed at teaching, training and involving citizens in public affairs.

Apart from this, and beyond the objectives of the evaluation, literature in the field of public policies and their analysis has identified other approaches to evaluation, summarised in the following table:

Table 3.1: Approaches to evaluation

	Evaluation as measurement	Evaluation as management	Evaluation as judgement	Evaluation as negotiation
What does it mean to evaluate?	Measure tangible results.	Analyse correspondence between criteria, results and causes.	Determine the quality of the process and/or results in relation to ideals.	Joint definition of success – what it is and what it consists of.
Purpose	Compliance of objectives.	Improvement of processes and results.	Familiarisation with an ideal.	Collective reflection, negotiation and consensus.
Focus	Positivist approach.	Positivist approach.	Regulatory approach,	Constructivist approach.
Role of the evaluator	The evaluator as scientist.	The evaluator as technician.	The evaluator as judge.	The evaluator as mediator.

Source: Jorba and Anduiza (2009: 142) 142)

The four models mentioned focus on different aspects of the object evaluated and involve different concepts of evaluation. If we concentrate specifically on the evaluation of the participation processes, the following should be borne in mind.

First, to be fair to the object evaluated, evaluating strategies used should allow the involvement of all the agents who have taken part in the participatory process. **Participatory evaluation** means an opportunity for learning and assuming co-responsibility in the participatory process.

Second, if evaluation is considered as a management strategy, the dynamics of the **continuous evaluation** put into place must allow the improvement of the process as it develops.

Finally, **evaluation must begin at the beginning** not the end of a participatory process, at least as regards definition and planning. Evaluation requires that data and information are gathered through a range of channels, so it must be known in advance what information is to be collected, how it should be collected, and the criteria that it will respond to.

3.2 WHAT ARE WE EVALUATING?

Before an evaluation process is begun, the object to be evaluated must be precisely defined, then the aspects of the object of study to be evaluated must be established, along with the criteria and methodology to be used.

When evaluating participation, and specifically participatory processes, at least three main fields of evaluation can be identified:

- **The context in which the process takes place.** Some evaluations focus on seeing whether or not the context in which a participatory process has developed are appropriate for facilitating the success of the participation, on the understanding that if the context is improved, the possibilities of success are also im-

proved. In this type of evaluation, elements analysed can include the community's social capital, the characteristics of its institutions, previous experiences of participation, etc. The objective is therefore to analyse causes external to the process itself that may explain its success or failure.

- **The process itself and its instruments.** Most evaluations concentrate on analysing the process itself: how many people have taken part, the profile of participants, how deliberative methodologies have functioned, the influence of participants on the result, etc. In some cases the evaluation covers the whole process (globally or in phases) while in others, specific instruments are evaluated (a workshop, a citizen consultation, a deliberative survey, etc.).
- **The impact of the process.** Finally, there are the most ambitious evaluations, which assess the impact of the participatory process. In these cases the evaluation must be done ex post and usually two main types of impact are analysed: the tangible (concerned with the content of the process) and the intangible (concerned with the improvement of relationships created by the process). The latter can be measured with a certain immediacy, while the former often require some time while the impacts take effect. There are also evaluations that only consider the direct impact arising from the process (outputs), in other words, whether or not particular actions have occurred, and others which go further and try to gauge the capacity of the process to achieve certain objectives of social, urban or democratic transformation (outcomes), in other words, how far the actions carried out have achieved the objectives of transformation pursued.

The participatory process in itself is an instrument for improving relations between citizens and administrations. Evaluation cannot therefore focus only on impacts or the relationship between objectives and results, but must involve evaluation strategies specifically oriented towards the processes.

3.3 WHO SHOULD EVALUATE? THE SPACES OF EVALUATION

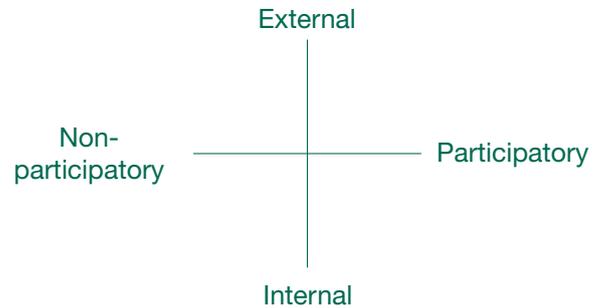
All evaluations should have responsible technicians (external or internal to the participatory process) whose job it is to methodologically coordinate the evaluation process and the different work spaces, design the instruments to obtain the relevant information and analyse it.

The persons responsible for evaluation may be either technicians from the participatory process itself or the sponsoring public administration (**internal evaluation**), or professionals external to the process (**external evaluation**). Whether evaluation is external or internal, however, the role to be played by the different agents that have taken part in the participatory process to be evaluated must be defined.

In any evaluation, however *participatory* it may be, not everyone *participates* throughout. In addition, it must be recalled that evaluation is a process with its own dynamics and, beyond this process, in a territory where there are other spaces and dynamics of participation under way. So best idea would be to start off from the existing situation and adapt the organisation of the evaluation to every context. With this in mind, different evaluation spaces can be distinguished, with different levels of involvement and different roles in the evaluation process.

As already indicated, the duplication of organs and structures must be avoided. So the functions of these different spaces can often be attributed to organs and spaces that already exist in the framework of the operational process itself. The evaluation team can be identified with the participatory process driving group, the monitoring space may be the participatory process monitoring committee (if any); while some consultation mechanisms can be coordinated or incorporated at certain times of the process, for example, a questionnaire at the end of a workshop.

Figure 3.1: Evaluation types



Source: own figure.

Table 3.2: Evaluation spaces

	Members	Characteristics	Functions
Evaluation team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technical heads of the process. - Administration responsible for the process. - Several citizens committed to the day-to-day routine of the participatory process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small team who undertake to coordinate and carry out the evaluation. - Meet very frequently to implement the evaluation. - Day-to-day interlocutor of the technical team. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carry out the complete and systematic evaluation. - Define the criteria to be evaluated. - Make value judgements about the global results of the evaluation. - Define actions to be taken.
Monitoring spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agents and participants of the process who wish greater involvement in the evaluation, to be informed and to be able to contribute. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More numerous spaces or organs with a lower frequency of meetings. - Permanent spaces meeting at specific stages of the evaluation to validate it and make contributions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have a group of people who are constantly informed of the evaluation process. - Make contributions and validate the dynamics, the content and the results of the evaluation.
Consultation mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Potentially, all participants in the participatory process. - At least the main agents who have participated in the participatory process. - May also be extended to actors and/or citizens who have not taken part in the participatory process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consists of the application of occasional mechanisms (questionnaires, interviews, discussion groups, workshops, etc.) to study evaluations in greater depth and be able to reach a greater number of people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Obtain the opinions and perceptions of participants and/or citizens in general.

Source: own table based on Jorba et al. (2007)

3.4 WHAT SHOULD IT BE LIKE? EVALUATION STEP BY STEP

The first thing to do before starting an evaluation process is to prepare it. It is in this preliminary phase that the **general framework** of the evaluation must be defined and a response given to questions like:

- Why do we want to evaluate?
- What exactly do we want to evaluate?
- Who will evaluate?

Once these questions have been responded to, the next phase of evaluation follows: defining the **evaluation criteria and questions**. This is the most important task in the evaluation, since the criteria defined will form the basis of our evaluation. In section 4 of this Guide a proposal is made for criteria for evaluating participatory processes. However, it must be recalled that not all criteria can be applied to any process and that, depending on the objectives of the process and the evaluation, different criteria than those proposed here may be considered. In any event, the selection of criteria must respond to both the objectives of the participatory process itself and the objectives set by the evaluating team. It is also important to define our own set of criteria, bearing in mind the following aspects:

- **Simplicity.** All criteria required for conducting a satisfactory evaluation must be introduced, but only any that are strictly necessary. Wishing to evaluate too many criteria can lead to exhaustive and meaningless work. It is better to have few criteria but to ensure that they are clear and well defined.
- **Specificity.** The criteria must respond to the needs of the specific process to be evaluated, and must be observable and measurable within the process itself.
- **Consensus.** The criteria selected should respond to the concerns of the parties involved in both the process and the evaluation.

Once the evaluation criteria have been defined, each criterion must be translated into *evaluation questions* that allow for measurement of the degree of compliance of the criterion. In some cases, these can be formulated as quantitative indicators, while in others the questions formulated must be of a qualitative nature. In section 4, some potential evaluation questions are suggested for each of the criteria proposed. In any event, it should be borne in mind that these question should be:

- **Simple.** Simple questions make evaluating and obtaining information easier.
- **Observable.** Questions must be specific and must guarantee a response.
- **Accessible.** Questions must refer to information that is accessible to the evaluator.
- **Valide and credible.** For both participants and evaluating agents.

At this point, **the strategy for obtaining the information must be defined**. This is the phase when the methodological tools to be used to obtain the information must be planned, as must the sources from which the information can be drawn. Each evaluation question defined must therefore be associated with one or several instruments for obtaining the information, and one or several sources where it can be sought. Section 4 of this Guide gives more information about possible instruments for information collection.

Once we have designed the evaluation process, the work begins in earnest and we move on to the phase of **obtaining and processing information**. Obviously, this point should be reached before the participatory process begins. We have already said that for a better evaluation, it should be in place from the beginning of the process, and be both participatory and continuous. So when the participatory process is presented, we should already have defined the general evaluation framework, the evaluation criteria and questions, and the strategy

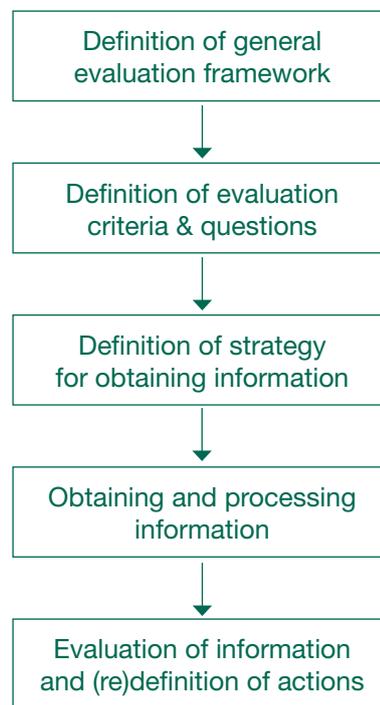
for obtaining information. In fact, planning the design of the participatory process and its evaluation in parallel can help in the design of the participatory process by taking into account the quality criteria to be used later in the evaluation.

The stage of obtaining and processing information is an operational stage, during which the techniques envisaged for obtaining and processing information respectively are put into practice. Before that, the protocol for each instrument to be put into practice must have been designed. Then both the obtaining of the information and the occasions when this is to be done must be planned. Lastly, once the information has been obtained, it must be processed.

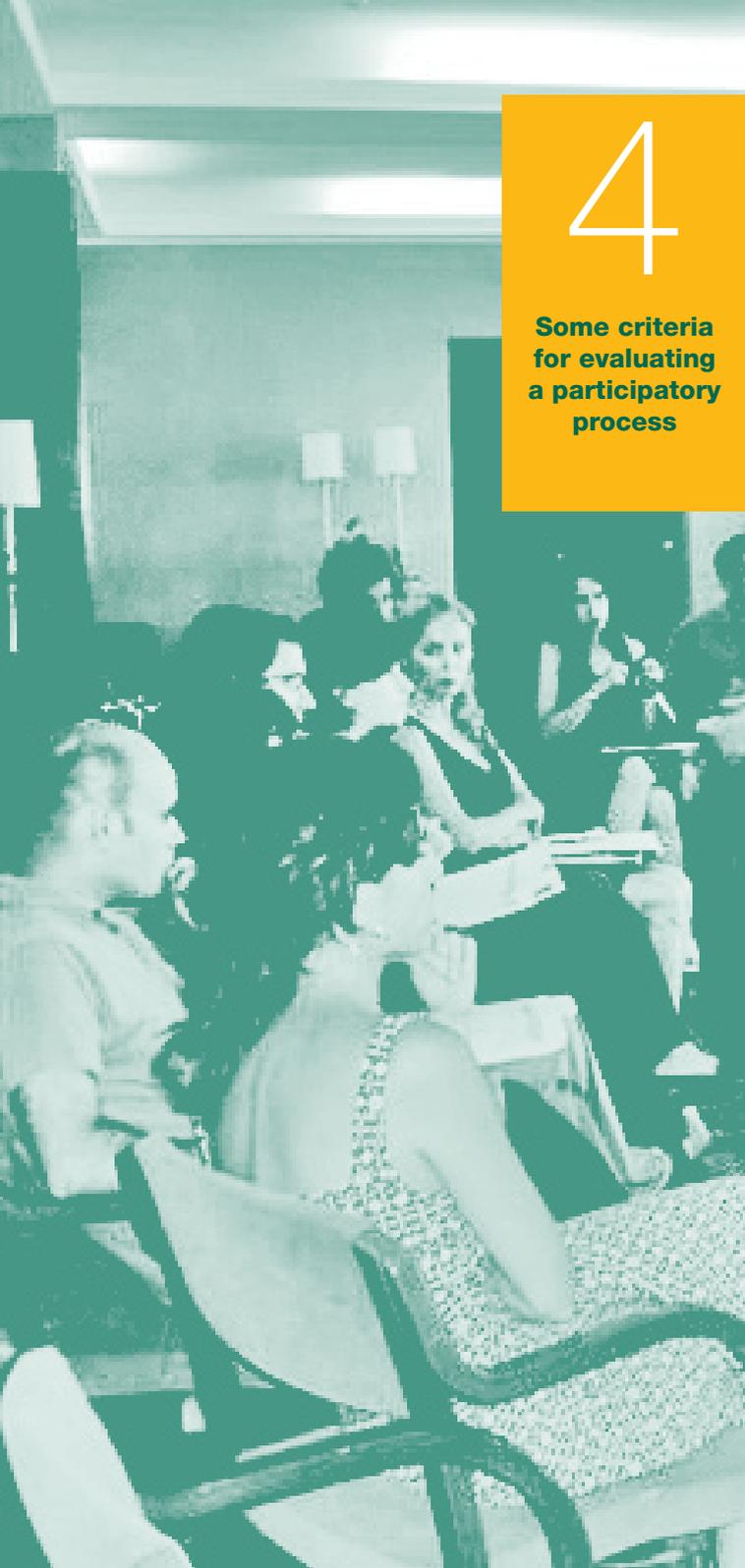
Finally, once all the information for the evaluation has been obtained and processed, we come to the last phase. **The information obtained must be evaluated and actions (re)defined** for improving any deficiencies detected in the evaluation. However, it should be borne in mind that this must be a continuous process. Not only is information being obtained during the course of the participatory process for its evaluation (to improve future processes), the information must also be evaluated continuously during the process itself, to enable actions to be defined to help improve it as it occurs. At this phase, therefore, we must:

- Discuss and evaluate the results of the analysis
- Agree actions for improvement of the participatory process

Figure 3.2: Evaluation phases



Source: own figure.



4

Some criteria for evaluating a participatory process

In this section, some criteria are proposed that should be borne in mind when planning and evaluating a participatory process. But we repeat the warning given at the start of this Guide: there are no magic recipes for quality participatory processes, and each process must respond to the context and circumstances in which it takes place. So the criteria proposed are for guidance only and are not exclusive (others may be suggested), nor should they be interpreted as a unit (some of the criteria without others may be employed). The challenge here is to find criteria that allow evaluation of the objectives planned for the participatory process that both fit the circumstances and can be measured reasonably simply.

We present this proposal for evaluation criteria grouped into five areas: process coordination, participants, subject, method and consequences. The **criteria** represent aspects that are *desirable* for our participatory process to comply with to make it a quality process. The **evaluation questions**, which may be responded to either qualitatively or quantitatively, specify and qualify the specific elements of each criterion that we wish to evaluate. Finally, the **evaluation methodology** refers to the method to be used to obtain the information necessary to respond to each question that we formulate.

4.1 COORDINATION OF THE PROCESS

Table 4.1: Criteria for coordination of the process

Criterion	Question	Evaluation methodologies
Agreement	What is the degree of political acceptance of the process?	Sociogram Interviews Discussion groups
	What is the degree of social acceptance of the process?	Sociogram Interviews Discussion groups
	What is the degree of technical acceptance of the process?	Sociogram Interviews Discussion groups
Transversality	What is the degree of political and technical involvement of the different areas of the administration?	Analysis of the project Interviews Internal discussion groups
	Are there spaces of transversality in the coordination of the process? How can the transversality be developed?	Analysis of the project Internal discussion groups
Political commitment	Have the politicians responsible for the process shown their commitment to the results of the process?	In-depth interviews Analysis of documents
Co-leadership	Who holds leadership of the process? Is there an impulse group? Is it plural?	Sociogram Internal discussion groups
Integration into existing participatory dynamics	How is the process related to stable participation structures?	Discussion groups
	How is the process coordinated with other participatory initiatives?	Discussion groups
Clarity of objectives	Do participants perceive that the objectives of the process are clear?	Evaluation questionnaire
	Have process objectives been accomplished?	Evaluation questionnaires Evaluation workshops Discussion groups
Resources	Has the participatory process been properly planned? Has the planning been complied with?	Internal discussion groups
	Has the process been given the necessary economic resources?	Analysis of documents Interviews
	Has the process been given the necessary human resources?	Analysis of documents Interviews

Source: own figure.

4.2. PARTICIPANTS

Table 4.2: Criteria for participants

Criterion	Question	Evaluation methodologies
Extent	What is the percentage of participants in relation to the reference population?	Records of participation
	What is the percentage of actors organised over the total reference?	Records of participation
	What is the percentage of attendees in relation to participants selected?	Records of participation
Diversity	Have all people interested taken part?	Sociogram
	What is the percentage of a particular social collective or group?	Records of participation
	What is the profile of participant organisations?	Records of participation
Representation	Is the flow of information between representatives and represented given?	Analysis of documents Interviews
	Is representatives' discourse faithful to that of their organisation?	Interviews Direct observation
	Were representatives chosen democratically?	Questionnaire

Source: own figure.

4.3 SUBJECT OF THE PROCESS

Table 4.3: Criteria for the subject of the process

Criterion	Question	Evaluation methodologies
Relevance	Do citizens perceive that the issue subject to participation is important?	Evaluation questionnaire
	What is the budget affected?	Analysis of documents Interviews
Capacity for intervention	Does the Administration sponsoring the process have the competencies to put the results into effect?	Interviews
Origin	Where does the demand to subject a particular subject to participation come from?	Interviews

Source: own figure.

4.4 PARTICIPATORY METHOD

Table 4.4: Criteria for the participatory method

Criterion	Question	Evaluation methodologies
Level of participation	What is the level of participation in the process?	Evaluation questionnaire Evaluation workshops
Capacity of proposal	Does the process envisage the possibility of making proposals?	Analysis of documents Evaluation questionnaire
Quality of information	Were the information and dissemination channels effective?	Evaluation questionnaire Internal discussion groups Evaluation workshops
	Is the information produced plural?	Evaluation questionnaire Internal discussion groups Evaluation workshops
	Is the information produced clear and useful?	Evaluation questionnaire Internal discussion groups Evaluation workshops
Quality of deliberation	Were techniques of deliberation used?	Analysis of documents Direct observation
	Were participants able to express their ideas?	Evaluation questionnaire Direct observation
	Were new ideas and points of view generated after deliberation?	Direct observation Analysis of documents Pre and post questionnaire
	What was the degree of depth of the debate?	Evaluation questionnaire Direct observation
Evaluation:	Was an evaluation of the process carried out or envisaged?	Analysis of documents Interviews
	Is or will valuation be participatory?	Analysis of documents Interviews

Source: own figure.

4.5 CONSEQUENCES OF THE PROCESS

Table 4.5: Criteria for consequences of the process

Criterion	Question	Evaluation methodologies
Influence	Is there a document with results of the process? What was the level of influence of participants on the result?	Analysis of documents Internal discussion groups
	Were the results translated into any action, programme or policy?	Internal discussion groups
	How are the results of the process evaluated by participants?	Evaluation questionnaire Evaluation workshops
Public supervision of results	Has a return of the results been envisaged?	Analysis of documents Interviews
	Has a follow-up organ been created? Who does it include and how does it work?	Analysis of documents Interviews
	Have the results of the process been implemented?	Analysis of documents Interviews
Learning of agents	Were training sessions carried out?	Analysis of documents Interviews Internal discussion groups
	Do participants perceive that they have learnt?	Evaluation questionnaire Evaluation workshops
Dynamising of networks	Has the capacity for interlocution of citizens improved?	Pre and post questionnaire Evaluation workshops
	Have cooperation between organisations improved?	Pre and post sociogram
	Has the administration become more permeable?	Evaluation questionnaire Evaluation workshops

Source: own figure.

5

An example

The evaluation of the participatory process on Sant Miquel mountain at Setcases (Ripollès)

To illustrate more clearly the key aspects dealt with in this Guide, a real example of evaluation of a participatory process is presented. The case chosen is the participatory process on Sant Miquel mountain that was sponsored in 2010 by the Directorate General of Citizen Participation and the Directorate General of the Natural Environment¹, of the Government of Catalonia.

5.1 CONTEXT OF THE CASE FEATURED IN THE STUDY AND ITS PROBLEMS

Sant Miquel mountain is currently a publicly-owned forest belonging to the Government of Catalonia. It is located in the municipality of Setcases and occupies 3,894 ha, in other words, 78% of municipal territory. Part of the forest is included in the “Headwaters of the Ter and the Freser” Plan for Spaces of Natural Interest (PEIN), (DMAH, 2004).

Historically, this wood has been an important source of wood and other resources, both for the municipality of Setcases and other towns in the Valley of Camprodon. Ownership of these resources has never been in the hand of the municipality, but it passed from Ripoll monastery (until Mendizábal’s disentailment in 1886) to the state (which included it in the Catalogue of Public Utility Forests). More recently, in 1994, ownership passed to the Government of Catalonia. The municipality of Setcases, however, has a historic right of access for extraction of wood (70 m³ per year) and pasture. Both the state and

¹ Currently, competencies in citizen participation are attributed to the Innovation and Democratic Quality Programme through the Sub-Directorate General of Enhancement of Democratic Quality of the Department of Governance and Institutional Relations. Similarly, competencies on the natural environment lie with the Directorate General of the Natural Environment and Biodiversity, currently attached to the Department of Agriculture, Farming, Fishing, Food and Natural Environment.

the Catalan Administration have managed the forest on technical criteria, to try to ensure that exploitation of the forest, stock farming and leisure, was compatible with its preservation. This is obvious in the evolution of the different projects for organising the forest (the first dating from 1959, reviewed in 1974). It is important to note that there have already been two resolutions of the Parliament of Catalonia blocking actions in this space until a decision was made on what form its protection should take.

In 2004, the Directorate General of the Natural Environment of the Government of Catalonia carried out a second review of the planning project and incorporated criteria for protection and management of fauna and habitats. Progress towards responsible forest management was reinforced when it obtained certification for sustainable forest management, the PEFC (*Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification*, a global award) in 2007, and the FSC system (*Forest Stewardship Council*, a European award) in 2009.

In spite of this clear intention to ensure the different uses were compatible and to carry out sustainable management, after some incidents with exploitation of the forest on Sant Miquel mountain, specifically in the Baga de Carboners area (included in the Management Plan in force in 2003–2015), a serious controversy arose between the different users of the forest. As a result, the Department of Environment and Housing stopped felling and undertook to open a participatory process to debate and collectively and participatively decide on the future of Baga de Carboners and more generally, of the forest of Sant Miquel mountain.

The participatory process on Sant Miquel mountain was a pioneer in its field in Catalonia. Currently, regulations on forest organisation and management do not envisage citizen participation outside the usual channels. Although the General Forestry Policy Plan for 2007–2016 had already been drawn up using participative methods, a process of citizen participation in the management of a specific forest had never been organised.

The main objectives in opening a participatory process on the future of Sant Miquel mountain centred on four main points²:

- **Publicising instruments for planning and management of woods:** to inform on current instruments for management and planning of woods, as well as statutory limits in force.
- **Submitting these instruments to deliberation by civil society:** to deliberate on the values of the wood for the different users and how the mechanisms in force guaranteed the defence of these values.
- **Evaluating possible improvements in management of the forest:** to put forward proposals for improving planning and management of the wood.
- **Incorporating citizens in planning and management of the wood:** to explain to participants which results of the process could be incorporated into planning of the wood, which proposals were already in force and which could not be incorporated, with the corresponding justifications.

The process was arranged basically over two days: 15 and 29 May 2010. Before that, the exercise of identification of interested agents had been carried out (map of actors) and they had been invited in advance by ordinary mail, electronic mail, and/or phone calls (as well as notifying the announcement in the local press). The first day focused on explaining the values of the forest in question by means of an explanatory workshop put on by two experts and an excursion to explore the area of Sant Miquel mountain where the conflict originated, Baga de Carboners. The second day was given over to debate and deliberation, with a deductive framework, ranging from individual work to group debate and finally to a plenary debate.

² Source: Report of the results of the participatory process on Sant Miquel mountain.

In parallel, and a great innovation, a space was organised for youth debate and participation on the future of Sant Miquel mountain. The Institut Germans Vila Riera (Secondary School) of Camprodon was the educational centre chosen, with the participation of some 36 young people aged between 15 and 16. The process was organised as follows: informative day, on-line debate (as a novelty, through the social networks, Internet 2.0), sessions of face-to-face debate, and the preparation of a declaration.

The objective of this last chapter of the Guide is, then, to present an evaluation of the participatory process about the future of Sant Miquel mountain. In this respect, both the strengths and the weaknesses of the process are highlighted, to provide tools for the continuous improvement of these processes.

5.2 EVALUATION OF THE PARTICIPATORY PROCESS: METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS

Before dealing with the main results extracted from the evaluation of the participatory process, we think the general framework of the evaluation (see. section 3.1), should be defined, organised around three central issues:

- Why do we want to evaluate?
- Who will do the evaluating?
- What exactly do we want to evaluate?

As regards the first question, the evaluation process is a response to the wish of the Government of Catalonia, the organiser of the process, to take a critical and constructive look at the process itself that will lay bare its vices and its virtues. The ultimate objective being the continuous improvement of such participatory processes. On the second question, to ensure transparency and independence, the evaluation was carried out by the Institute of Governance and Public Policies (IGOP), although dialogue with the organisers of the participatory process was a constant feature throughout the

evaluation. Finally, with respect to the third question, to facilitate evaluation this part of the process was divided into its different aspects:

- coordination of the process (table 5.1)
- type of participant (table 5.2)
- subject of participation (table 5.3)
- method of participation (table 5.4)
- influence of the results (table 5.5)

Criteria, questions and evaluation indicators were allocated to each of these aspects, as were the instruments of collection necessary to respond to the questions. Criteria were selected based on the approaches already set out in this Guide (section 4), adapting them to the case being studied and its objectives and specific requirements. These criteria were in turn converted into a series of evaluation questions. Questions that were in some cases associated with quantifiable indicators and in others with qualitative indicators. Next, a strategy for obtaining information was defined. Each question/indicator was associated with one or several methodological tools. In this case, the range of instruments was wide: some were quantitative nature (registration of participants, questionnaire, etc.) and others extremely qualitative (interviews, qualitative observation, etc.). The use these of instruments followed a schedule. This meant that some were used before the process (for example, the sociogram), others during the process (direct qualitative observation), others just after the process (evaluation questionnaire³ and registration of participants), and still others once the results had been publicised (interviews with key participants). Others were used throughout the entire process, including the analysis of materials distributed and produced.

The following tables (from 5.1 to 5.5) briefly present the criteria, the questions and the evaluation instruments of the different dimensions of the participatory process.

³ We note that the Government of Catalonia uses standard survey models to evaluate the participatory processes that they organise.

Table 5.1: Coordination of the process Criteria, questions and indicators of evaluation, and instruments of collection

Criteria	Evaluation questions & indicators	Main instruments of collection
Agreement	Level of acceptance of the process	Interviews Evaluation questionnaire
Political commitment	Clear political commitment with results of the process	Qualitative observation Documentary analysis Interviews
Co-leadership	Leadership and coordination of the process. Degree of plurality	Qualitative observation
Clarity of the objectives	Subjective perception of clarity of objectives and rules of the game	Evaluation questionnaire
Resources	Were resources earmarked sufficient?	Interviews

Table 5.2: Who participates? Criteria, questions and indicators of evaluation, and instruments of collection

Criteria	Evaluation questions & indicators	Main instruments of collection
Diversity of participants	Percentage of participants under 35 in relation to their weight in the population	Register of participants on the field trip Qualitative observation Evaluation questionnaire
	Percentage of women in relation to their weight in the reference population	Register of participants on the field trip Qualitative observation Evaluation questionnaire
	Presence of different existing interests in relation to the subject dealt with	Register of participants on the field trip Qualitative observation Evaluation questionnaire Sociogram
	Presence of immigrant groups	Register of participants on the field trip Qualitative observation
Extent	Percentage of people/organisations taking part over the reference population	Evaluation and direct observation questionnaires (count) Sociogram
Representation	Degree to which discourses of representatives expressed that of the groups they represent	Qualitative observation Interviews

Table 5.3: What is the participation about? Criteria, questions and indicators for evaluation, and instruments of collection

Criteria	Evaluation questions & indicators	Main instruments of collection
Relevance	Subjective evaluation of population and agents	Evaluation questionnaire Interviews
Origin	Degree to which the subject that is the object of participation includes or tackles demands from citizens	Interviews

Table 5.4: How do you participate? Criteria, questions and indicators for evaluation, and instruments of collection

Criteria	Evaluation questions & indicators	Main instruments of collection
Level of participation	Information and/or deliberation and/or decision	Qualitative observation
Dissemination	Degree to which information arrived to potential participants	Evaluation questionnaire Interviews
Quality of information	Subjective evaluation of plurality and clarity of information received	Direct observation Evaluation questionnaire Materials: web site, triptychs, etc. Interviews
Quality of deliberation	Opportunity for participants to express their ideas in debates	Direct observation: times each person speaks and direction of dialogue Evaluation questionnaire Interviews
	Opportunity to generate new ideas by exchanging points of view and deliberation	
	Level of depth of debate (perception of participants)	
Public evaluation	Existence of public evaluation of the participatory process	Evaluation questionnaire
	Perception of permeability of the Administration	Evaluation questionnaire

Table 5.5: Results. Criteria, question and indicators for evaluation, and instruments of collection

Criteria	Evaluation questions and indicators	Main instruments of collection
Influence	Existence of a document of substantial results and level of influence of participants	Documentary analysis
	Subjective evaluation of results	Evaluation questionnaire
Public supervision of results	Return, organs of monitoring	Documentary analysis
Learning of agents	Training sessions	Direct observation
	Perception of learning	Evaluation questionnaire
Improvement of relationships	Improvement of capacity for communication between organisations	Evaluation questionnaire Interviews

5.3 RESULTS OF EVALUATION OF THE PARTICIPATORY PROCESS ON THE FUTURE OF SANT MIQUEL MOUNTAIN

Next we present the main results of the evaluation of the participatory process on the future of Sant Miquel mountain. The text is structured along the lines of the pattern presented above, in other words, running through the different dimensions of the process set out above. Finally, some conclusions are presented to summarise the most important key points, pointing out the strengths and weaknesses and deficiencies, while noting possible improvements.

5.3.1 Coordination of the process

As regards **acceptance**, the participatory process on the future of Sant Miquel mountain was widely accepted by the agents who took part due to the importance of the subject for the area. Both the survey and the interviews clearly confirmed this fact. For example, over 75% of people surveyed¹⁴ emphasised that this

¹⁴ A total of 20 participants responded to the evaluation survey. Bearing in mind that during the process there were 39 different participants, the level of response was over 50%.

process was “very important”, while the rest described it as “important”. However, some agents interviewed questioned whether it was really necessary to carry out this process, since there had already been a resolution of the Catalan Parliament urging the protection of this space. This explained the feeling that the omission of this information made participants think that there was more room for manoeuvre than there really was. In any event, it was recognised that the participatory process had served to unblock the situation, and a project was resuscitated that had previously been shelved by the Administration (its qualification as a natural park). Another important aspect was the fact that the participatory process helped to raise awareness and understanding of the problem (educational function).

As regards **leadership of the process**, it was co-led by the Directorate General of Citizen Participation (Ministry of the Interior) and the Department of the Environment and Housing, in collaboration with the Town Council of Setcases. Although this leadership was mostly obvious, some interviewees did not perceive it with the clarity required, precisely because of this co-leadership — a dichotomy between the Department of the Environment and Housing and the Directorate General of Citizen Par-

ticipation — and above all, to the fact that the host, Setcases, was present but did not act as leader.

One important factor was the evident **political commitment** surrounding the process, from all the administrative fields taking part, but above all and very actively, from the Directorate General of Citizen Participation and the Department of the Environment and Housing. At the end of the process, the Department of the Environment and Housing undertook to collect the results of the process and to work on the subject of the natural park, also to keep the “territory” in mind during this process. The high number of political officers taking part is worth noting. This made the political commitment obvious.

In spite of initially emphasising the key point of the process, in view of the results of the survey and interviews carried out, the **clarity of objectives** of the process was one of its weakest points. Almost 40% of those surveyed said that the objectives of the process were not very or not at all clear; most interviewees shared the same opinion, although some agents found them clear. We argue that one of the major weak points that the process may have had was that it started as a response to a conflict that had sprung up over some very specific uses (felling of trees) in a very specific place (Baga de Carboners), and later greatly overstepped the scale initially planned, ending up debating the system of protection and a future natural park that included several municipalities.

As regards the **resources** earmarked for the process, the interviews speak of an optimum degree of resources invested in the process; similarly, from the surveys, in general a very high degree of satisfaction was noted with organisational aspects of the process, like dissemination, notification and prior information. The presentation was “austere but adequate”, “there was no excess or shortfall”, according to one of those interviewed. However, much emphasis was put on the fact that the subject dealt with was too complex to be covered in two mornings, and perhaps a third day would have been necessary to allow more time for reflection.

5.3.2 Who took part?

The total number of participants (people registered) during the participation process was 39 different people, 14 of whom attended both days. So 21 people participated on the first day of exploration and 32 on the debate day. The fact that it was held at the weekend reduced the presence of citizens of Setcases, since much of the population works in the tourism sector and hospitality at weekends. This was commented on in the sessions by some participants and some interviewees. We recommend rethinking this aspect in future processes (currently some participatory processes organised by the Government of Catalonia are carried out during the week).

Conversely, many bodies/agents of the Valley of Camprodon were identified who in the end did not attend the process. Nor did the mayors of neighbouring municipalities. This was also one of the most criticised points of the process, linked to the subject of scale mentioned above. This means that if we look at the initial scope of the process - Baga de Carboners, Sant Miquel mountain - notification of agents was very exhaustive and comprehensive, although more participation of forest proprietors/companies exploiting the wood would have been nice, along with representatives of the tourism and farming sectors. However, due to the dimension that the process assumed, the subject went considerably beyond the municipal scope and that of the Valley of Camprodon. This was where some key agents were missed, including the mayors of other municipalities affected by a future natural park, as well as more representatives from the county Administration.

When evaluating the quality of a participatory process it is essential to observe the **diversity of participants**. One of the basic indicators is therefore the presence of groups likely to be excluded from these processes. Table 4.6 illustrates the presence of these groups in the participatory process, and compares it to the presence of these groups in the municipality and the county. So with reference to groups more likely to be excluded, the percentage of the female population and the under-

35s were slightly lower than the proportions that these groups represent in Setcases and Ripollès. However, the values were not very distant in either of the two cases. In any case, the opening of participation to younger people was very positively viewed – the participatory process at Camprodon secondary school - as was the use of tools like Internet 2.0 and the social networks to dynamise part of the debate.

The representativity of immigrant groups during the process requires separate attention: in neither of the two conferences was there any foreign submission. In

this respect, we should recall that it is of vital importance to involve groups of newcomers in participatory processes, since these processes create citizenry.

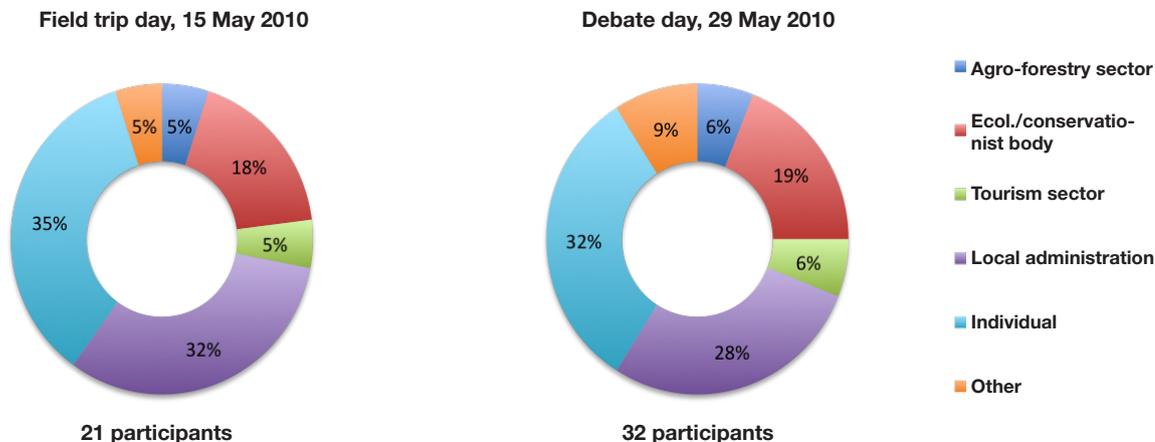
Similarly, it is also essential to analyse the presence of the different existing interests in relation to the subject dealt with. Figure 4.1 shows that most participants – above 70% on both days – came from organisations. This percentage, although very high, is justified in this case, since this is a process with a great diversity of interests and with which most of the population have a direct relationship.

Table 5.6: Socio-demographic indicators. Setcases, Ripollès and participatory process

	Setcases	Ripollès	Participatory process (1st day)	Participatory process (2nd day)	Participatory process IES Camprodon
Immigrant population (2009)	9,83%	8,80%	0%		-
Working population by sectors (2001)	Agriculture: 17.3% Industry: 8.6% Construction: 12.3% Services: 61.7%	Agriculture: 4.3% Industry: 37.1% Construction: 10.6% Services: 48.0%	See figure 5.1		-
Population <35 (2009)	26,59%	34,88%	Approx 25%	Approx 25%	All (aged between 15 & 17)
Female population (2009)	44,50%	49,80%	38%	40%	48,4%

Source: own figure using data from IDESCAT and field work

Figura 5.1: Profile of participants in the process



Source: register of participants and report of the participatory process

Finally, it must be analysed to what extent the **discourses** of participants expressed those of the group that they represented. From direct observation during the process, and above all from the interviews with certain agents, it is deduced that participants largely reproduced and formulated the discourses of their organisations (although some of the debates were too influenced by “passion”, according to one of the people interviewed), and more or less followed the guidelines/ideology/philosophy of the bodies they represented. However, it has been detected that some participants formed part of more than one group and, in the end, their postures often exclusively reflected their own opinion. Many people took part on their own behalf, and others on behalf of single-person bodies. Some of the organisations held internal debate processes prior to the process (or followed internal guidelines), as well as giving feedback throughout the process (and have sent all partners/members information from these bodies).

5.3.3 What is the participation about?

The majority of the surveys indicated that the **subject** dealt with was very important, since this is of one of the few public woods of the Government of Catalonia.

Similarly, interviews with key agents reflected exactly the same opinion, and emphasised that more processes like these should be initiated on other topics.

As we have already commented, the process initially focussed on the management of Sant Miquel mountain, but as many bodies in the territory wished to intervene in the process, it ended up turning into an instrument to unblock the project of the natural park. This meant that people the question changed from “What forest management do we want?” to “What figure of protection do we want?”

People interviewed also stated their agreement with the fact that the topic that was the object of participation included **demands originating from citizens**, an opinion shared particularly by ecologist bodies or bodies promoting the territory. These agents took advantage of the process to bring to light the subject of the need for higher levels of protection, since in their view the problem that kicked off the process - the felling of trees in Baga de Carboners and the future of Sant Miquel mountain – could not be divorced from the demand for change in level of protection.

As regards the **role of the experts**, the lack of a more profound debate between experts was remarked, mainly due to lack of time. The lack of information identified by some agents - for example, more information on what a park natural or a national park would mean for the territory - arose from the fact that these issues were not put forward initially, and emphasis was again placed on the subject of scale. In this respect, if the objective was to openly debate models and figures of management, the three different proposals could have been planned from the start. In this way, the objectives would have been stated more clearly, and there would not have been the perception of slight “disinformation” and confusion. Regardless of the territorial scale adopted, some agents missed the presence of other experts, for example, ecologists to fill in the technical information given to participants. Conversely, some of those interviewed argued that some concepts were dealt with too quickly, and this meant that experts could follow the information easily, but for non-experts, it was more difficult.

5.3.4 How can you participate?

As regards **level of participation**, following qualitative observation, it was obvious that the process had a clear intention to go further than mere information. The process was intended to achieve collective deliberation and take some steps in the decision-making process. The surveys reinforced this interpretation and also showed a high level of satisfaction with the degree of participation and involvement of participants. In this respect, all those surveyed said they were “satisfied” (50%) or “very satisfied”.

As regards the **quality of deliberation**, from face-to-face qualitative and quantitative observation it was deduced that, although all participants apparently had the same opportunities to express their ideas in the debates, differences of knowledge about the subject meant that some agents shaped and controlled the debate (something that was corroborated with the interviews). So both in the group discussions and in the plenary sessions some agents controlled the debate with their technical knowledge due to their profession, creating

asymmetry between the experts and citizens in general. In this respect, the dichotomy between individual interests (people who made their living from the wood) and group interests (ecologists and local development bodies) was notable. The debate was sometimes too polarised between those in favour of forest management and the ecologist bodies, leaving other participants in no-man’s-land.

It is just here that some people interviewed pointed out lack of leadership to prevent these situations, not only at technical level when conducting the debate — which in general was very well conducted — rather when designing the objectives and issues of the process. In fact, the role of dynamisers was highly valued: they judged the pace very well, and each party got where it wanted to. The working dynamics, although they mostly did not get top marks, were also well received (16.7%, very satisfactory; 77.8% satisfactory; 5.5% not very satisfactory). However, it was remarked that these companies should have talked more to local people before the process, which would have facilitated the dynamics or, for example, when dividing participants into groups more attention could have been given to the origin and discourse of each so as not to have unbalanced groups.

Lack of time, as already stated, was one of the points most criticised. In view of the result of the second day, it would have been interesting to arrange a third day for debating the figures of protection put forward at the end of the second day-.

Once the interviews had been analysed, we felt that the process had helped to create new ideas following exchange of points of view and deliberation. According to some people interviewed, everyone defended their ideas and was very clear what they wanted.

Most of those surveyed were very (30%) or fairly satisfied (65%) with the **dissemination** of the process. The whole process was accompanied by a communication plan, including different channels of dissemination-educational documentation, a website and other tools like

press releases. From the surveys, it could be seen that, in equal parts, participants heard about the notification of the process through their organisations (27.3%), the Town Council (27.3%), word of mouth (27.3%) and, slightly lower, through the Internet. (18.1%) Surprisingly, none of those surveyed were informed initially through the press, which could lead to rethinking the way of dissemination of future processes. It was also noted that while the initial identification of key actors/organisations was very exhaustive, some interviewees emphasised that notification had a very telematic nature — except for Setcases, where letters were distributed — and this meant that people from the rest of the Valley of Camprodon, who did not have access to the Internet, did not hear about it. This could be understood by the fact that initially, the process referred to a specific wood in the municipality of Setcases, and it was later when the scope of involvement increased and it became a strategic subject for all the valley. In this respect, dissemination was adequate for the objective initially presented, but was not if we consider the scale the process assumed towards the end. According to those interviewed, information channels before and during the process were correct. On the other hand, information *afterwards* was criticised, above all due to the appearance of the process in the programme “30 minutes” on TV3, about forest management in Catalonia, *L’home i el bosc* (Man and the forest), broadcast on 25 July 2010.

We estimate that the information received on paper was correct and gave interesting data on the wood. However, given that the information received came from only one single source, the public administration, we think that other material/information could have been included contributed by the participants themselves. It is important to mention that, if these channels had been opened initially, they could possibly have avoided publishing a manifesto of the bodies half-way through the process. As regards the information given by experts, we think it was comprehensive, but that at times, information was not differentiated sufficiently from the expression of opinion.

Finally, the existence of a **public evaluation of the participatory process** — by means of surveys and at greater length, with the preparation of this study — along with improvement in the perception of permeability of the Administration with this process, was remarkable.

5.3.5 Results

According to those interviewed, while the objectives and initial approach were partial (forest management in a specific space), the solution had a global nature (proposal of the figure of the natural park). In this respect, discussion was not about whether the forest management was well done or not, but to decide whether there were some values in the territory that required a form of protection higher than what it had now. According to one of the people interviewed, we should have first decided what level of protection we wanted, and only then which model of management we wanted. On the other hand, in the participatory process, the reverse happened. Some participants were more critical as regards the achievement of the objectives initially presented. However, in spite of this criticism, the great majority of those surveyed (73%) said that the objectives of the process had been achieved to a fairly high degree. More generally, the results of the survey show that people interviewed were fairly satisfied with the results of the process (82% fairly satisfied and 12% very satisfied).

As regards the **influence** of the process, we remarked on the existence of a results document, uploaded onto the participatory process website, where the results obtained are described in detail. Most people surveyed believed that the final results of the process reflected their own opinion fairly well. This degree of consensus was due to fact that the final results exceeded the initial level planned and led to the discussion of the conversion into a natural park. However, the process received criticisms due to the lack of specific conclusions (40% of those surveyed said that they were quite unsatisfied with how the conclusions were set out). It can be seen that the process contributed to a more favourable view of the Administration (70% of those surveyed were fairly satisfied, 25% very satisfied and 5%

not very satisfied), as well as to an improvement in the network of relationships (40% very satisfied, 40% fairly satisfied and 20% little satisfied). The fact that, after this process, those surveyed had a very high (56%) or high (44%) level of interest in participating in other participatory processes was of note. Most of those surveyed believed that the participatory process would be useful to influence decisions taken afterwards (61.5% fairly satisfied, 23.5% very satisfied and 15% not very satisfied).

As regards the **public supervision of the results**, some of those interviewed did not perceive that the result of the process was binding, but trusted that the results would be taken into account. For many interviewees, the final result of the process would not give a response to the initial objective until the natural park, and Baga de Carboners – the initial site of the conflict - had been declared an integral reserve. Interviewees also expected participatory processes to be more frequent in other fields. As regards organs of monitoring, these were not detected. For many interviewees, the end of the participatory process must be a point of departure and not a final point, and the results should be channelled towards another process or series of proposals.

The **learning** arising from the process seemed to be another weak point, according to some of the interviewees, as well as a significant part of those surveyed (36% were not very satisfied). Although the degree of learning was not as desired by all the agents, possibly due to the initial asymmetry of knowledge, the process was useful for opening the eyes of many people to the problem that had originated the process.

As regards the **improvement of relationships**, we could perceive a significant divergence of opinion. Some of the interviewees argued that the process helped to improve the capacity for dialogue between bodies (exchange of emails, during pauses in the process, etc.), and between them and the public Administration. Others said that relationships were not improved because in a territory with a small population, the organisations already

knew each other (this also meant that they already knew each other's position). Regardless of whether there had been an improvement or not, it was felt that many of these organisations were already working in a network, emphasising that, as a result of this cooperation, some ecologist bodies drew up a manifesto in favour of the declaration of a national park, which was included in the final report.

It is important to make some final reflections about the participatory process carried out at Camprodon Secondary School. This process was also evaluated by means of an adapted version of the questionnaire that the Directorate General of Citizen Participation used to evaluate participatory processes. Mostly, the young people in general valued the process very or fairly positively (always above 60%), and more specifically, they valued the preparation (topics included clarity of objectives, importance of the subject and materials), the running of the informative sessions and participatory workshops (working dynamics, level of participation of students and dynamisers), and also expectations as regards the results.

5.4 Conclusions

By describing the case on the future of Sant Miquel mountain, we wanted to present a practical example of how a participatory process can be evaluated. In table 4.7 we present a summary of the most important strengths and weaknesses, as well as some recommendations for the improvement of future participatory processes, and also for the ideal tying up of the process on the future of the mountain.

It should be said that even the Government of Catalonia itself recognises that the process arose from a conflict. The experts recommend, however, that as far as possible, participatory processes should not be initiated in times of great conflict, since this may distort the process and focus too much attention on points of conflict. In this case, this was partly responsible for a lack of definition of objectives: the process was engaged in as a

response to a conflict in a very specific place, Baga de Carboners, while also addressing the future of a much bigger area, Sant Miquel mountain, and ending up debating a still bigger field, the declaration of a natural or national park that would extend over several municipalities in the area. In this respect, one of the main weaknesses of the process was the fact of not taking into account all this information from the start, specifically the two resolutions of the Parliament of Catalonia concerning this space.

On the other hand, the process presented many positive and important aspects. First, this was a pioneer process in Catalonia in public participation in forestry manage-

ment. The process, already ambitious when it started, in moving into discussion of the model of forest management became still much more ambitious towards the end, in the debate on the suitability of introducing higher levels of protection.

Many of the weak points of the process described here are the result of its unusual and innovative nature. Far from being negative criticisms, we think that the fact that a process is evaluated gives it the chance for improvement, helping to make participatory processes into tools that can involve citizens in the most important issues that affect their lives.

Table 5.7: Strengths and weaknesses of the process. Recommendations for improvement

Dimension of the process	Strengths	Weaknesses	Recommendations for improvement
Coordination of the process	<p>Great acceptance of the process</p> <p>High political commitment</p> <p>Sufficient resources</p>	<p>Leadership of the process not very clear</p> <p>Lack of clarity of process objectives</p>	<p>To take into account earlier resolutions of Parliament</p> <p>To involve the local and county Administration more</p> <p>To watch questions of scale: they must match the objectives</p>
Who participates?	<p>Good representation of agents in accordance with the initial scale of the process</p> <p>Presence of young people (under 35) and women correct</p> <p>Participatory process in the Secondary School</p>	<p>Low participation of citizens of Setcases</p> <p>Lack of presence of local mayors (related to the scale no matching the objectives)</p> <p>No presence of immigrant groups</p>	<p>To bear in mind the time availability of the local population</p> <p>To incentivise the presence of the local Administration involved</p> <p>To incentivise the presence of immigrant groups</p>
What do they participate on?	<p>Very important subject</p> <p>The process responds to a demand from citizens</p>	<p>Deficits in certain information (due to the substantial change of scale)</p>	<p>To establish and clearly define the scale of the process before starting it</p> <p>To arrange participation by more experts who can contribute additional points of view</p>
How do they participate?	<p>Level of participation and involvement of the participants</p> <p>Correct dissemination in accordance with the initial scale envisaged</p> <p>Existence of a public evaluation of the participatory process</p>	<p>Debate controlled and polarised by certain agents</p> <p>Informative material correct, but all from the same source: the Government of Catalonia</p> <p>Lack of time to carry out debates</p>	<p>To define the question and objectives of debate better from the start</p> <p>To obtain key information from key actors, like the positions of each group, and material to bring to the debate</p> <p>To organise a third day for participation</p>

Dimension of the process	Strengths	Weaknesses	Recommendations for improvement
Results	The process has given an incentive to the agents to participate in other participatory processes	Lack of specific conclusions of the process Lack of follow-up organs for the results	To remember that the process must be a “point of departure” and not a “final point”
GENERAL	Pioneer process in forestry in the local field Pioneer process in the involvement of young people, as well as in the use of new technologies	The process arose from a conflict The final geographical scale of the process exceeded the initial scale planned	To try to initiate processes in times of low conflictivity to avoid heated debate To clearly define objectives and geographical limits from the start

Source: own figure.



6

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