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2005 TIAS summer school participants

The Society

The Integrated Assessment Society is a not-for-profit entity created to promote the community of inter-disciplinary and disciplinary scientists, analysts and practitioners who develop and use integrated assessment. The goals of the society are to nurture this community, to promote the development of IA and to encourage its wise application.

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Feature

Participatory test and evaluation processes: why, how and when

Melanie Muro and Paul Jeffrey, School of Water Sciences, Cranfield University, UK.

The search for appropriate interventions to better manage natural resources is embracing wider social and institutional constituencies. Interest in participatory planning processes and requests for earlier involvement from these constituencies provides challenges to conventional approaches to the evaluation of intervention option selection and deployment. Such options might include the deployment of technologies, new pricing structures or educational programmes. However, there is no common definition and no off-the-shelf approach to participatory evaluation. A useable definition of participatory test and evaluation is contingent on local circumstances and the flavour of participation being pursued.

In this short paper, we wish to provide an overview of the principles and design of participatory evaluation processes. Table 1 gives an overview of the general differences between conventional approaches to test and evaluation and participatory evaluation.

Table 1: Differences between conventional and participatory test and evaluation

	Conventional evaluation	Participatory evaluation
Who	External experts	Community members, project staff, facilitator
What	Predetermined indicators of success, principally cost and production outputs	People identify their own indicators for success

How	Focus on 'scientific objectivity'; distancing of evaluators from other participants; uniform, complex procedures; delayed, limited access to resources	Self-evaluation; simple methods adapted to local culture; open, immediate sharing of results through local involvement in evaluation process
When	Usually upon completion of programme/project, sometimes also mid-term	More frequent, small-scale evaluation
Why	Accountability, to determine if funding continues	To empower local people to initiate, control and take corrective actions

(Source: Narayan, 1993)

Why use participatory test and evaluation?

The distinguishing feature of participatory test and evaluation is that it is, in some form, conducted with the public. Participation is generally believed to be a good thing and is attributed with a range of benefits (Beierle 1998). When it comes to participatory evaluation, two main rationales are often distinguished. One view suggests that participatory evaluation aims to support decision-making and problem solving. This approach is often termed practical participatory evaluation. Another interpretation is based on principles of emancipation and social justice. According to this view, participatory evaluation empowers the public or members of the public who are less powerful or oppressed by dominant groups.

This concept is often referred to as transformative participatory evaluation (Cousins and Whitmore 1998). Even though these two concepts differ in their primary goals and functions, one has to assume that there are multiple overlaps when it comes to their practical application (ibid.).

Participatory test, monitoring and evaluation approaches have gained a lot of attention in recent years, mainly evolving in development contexts where participatory appraisal and planning have been standard procedure for many years. Guijt (1999) claims though that the associated benefits, such as being 'empowering', 'cost-effective', more 'accurate', still need to be confirmed.

Still, the scope of the potential impact of participation very much depends on when it is taking place in a process. An involvement in testing and evaluating different options can result in a return to the design stage or in the identification of appropriate solutions. Case studies by Johnson et al (2003, p23) conclude that "the earlier users were incorporated into the process the more impact their input had on project appropriateness".

Key principles in participatory test and evaluation

The focus on participation is what distinguishes the approach discussed here from conventional test and evaluation. We have already pointed out that different conceptions of participation exist and that these influence the set up of the test and evaluation process. Nevertheless, there are basic principles for participation processes that should also be observed when convening a participatory evaluation. Many authors (e.g. Hemmati et. al. 2001) have tried to describe what makes a good process. With slight variations they include in some form or the other attributes like openness, transparency, inclusiveness, flexibility, continuity etc. The following set of guiding principles should be considered when conducting a test and evaluation process with stakeholders:

- **Test and evaluation must involve and be useful to the stakeholders.** Participatory evaluation should involve the people affected by the results of the evaluation. A heavy emphasis on users in the participation process may confirm established views. Equitable participation of stakeholders, both between and within groups, should be ensured.
- **Test and evaluation must be context-specific, taking into consideration the concerns, interests, and problems of the stakeholders.** The context and the purpose of the evaluation define how it is designed and applied. It needs to address the issues relevant to the following actions or decisions and include the information relevant to the stakeholders to base their future actions on.
- **The test and evaluation methodology incorporates the knowledge and experience of the stakeholders.** Stakeholders should contribute their practical experience and local knowledge to the evaluation. Decisions cannot be solely based on scientific or technical knowledge, as natural resource management takes place in a social context. It also enables stakeholders to learn and generate new knowledge for application and action.
- **Test and evaluation supports collective methods of knowledge generation.** Participatory evaluation supports the generation of collective knowledge. Unlike conventional approaches, it is not just one person presenting results, but a group of stakeholders discussing and reflecting and drawing conclusions.
- **Evaluators and facilitators share power with the stakeholders.** Experts, administrators and facilitators must be willing, comfortable and confident enough to let people take control of the evaluation process and decisions taken throughout the process. He / she has to establish trust in the stakeholders and in

their abilities. The early and continuous engagement of stakeholders is of great importance when doing an evaluation. If the involvement is restricted to only a few stages they are effectively prevented from gaining an appreciation of the methodology in full.

What are the core steps in developing participatory test and evaluation?

This process can be roughly divided in four essential phases. The first of these is the planning phase. Planning is crucial to the success of any participatory process. Before the process can start, stakeholders need to be identified and selected. At this stage the objectives of the test and evaluation, criteria and indicators have to be defined. This means that the stakeholders are required to negotiate, collaborate and find an agreement; they need to voice their objectives, expectations, needs and concerns. It is absolutely vital that objectives are developed before indicators are designed. Participants need to define which activity or dimension will be monitored. Indicators in participatory evaluations do not need to be extremely precise, and rather be easy to collect and useful to the decision-making process.

The second step is to determine how to collect information. Which of the techniques and tools is used, largely depends on the context and the indicators. Questions that need to be addressed, include: Where can the information be obtained? How can the information be obtained, with which tool or process? Who will collect the data? An evaluation and monitoring plan should be established, indicating responsibilities and timing of activities.

The third phase involves the analysis of data that has been monitored and collected and which needs to be analysed and interpreted. In many cases this step is conducted by outside experts or administrators. The idea of participatory evaluation is to involve stakeholders in all evaluation phases, including their engagement in the data analysis. How the data is analysed mainly depends on the tools and techniques chosen for gathering data and on the information required by the participants.

Finally, once the data has been analysed and interpreted, the main question arising is how the results will be used. What are the implications for further actions and decisions to be taken? The participants should discuss this issue and find an agreement. There are several possible outcomes of this discussion: the evaluated project, program or intervention might be adjusted or the evaluation process itself could be altered, if it failed to generate the necessary data to make a fully informed decision.

In conclusion, we would note that by extending the franchise for consultation on issues of natural resource management, the whole decision and implementation process is open to wider scrutiny. Whilst participative test and evaluation procedures are in their infancy, they do hold significant promise as frameworks for mediating not only change itself, but also the value of that change.

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Events and Courses

11 - 14 September, 2005. **Complexity and Ecological Economics Conference: Complexity, Science & Society**

Fritjof Capra - Conference Keynote Lecture and Kozo Mayumi - Ecological Economics Keynote Lecture. Liverpool, UK.
www.liv.ac.uk/ccr/2005_conf

12 September - 01 October 2005, The International Agricultural Centre (IAC) hosts **Facilitating Multi-stakeholder Processes and Social Learning: Advanced Course in Upscaling Participatory Approaches**, Wageningen, Netherlands. Deadline for applications: 15 August 2005.

<http://www.iac.wur.nl/iac/index2.htm?courses/module.cfm?code=61/50/2005>

October 4, 2005, The **final conference** of the EU-funded project **Harmonising Collaborative Planning (HarmoniCOP)** will take place in Osnabrück, Germany. Results on Participation in Water Management and the European Water Framework Directive will be highlighted from various perspectives:

- Participation and use of Models and Tools
- Fostering Social Learning
- Participation in Europe - Differences and Similarities

See www.harmonicop.info or contact Dagmar Ridder, dridder@usf.uni-osnabrueck.de

10 October - 14 October 2005, Post-graduate course: **Innovative approaches in sustainable management of biodiversity**.

Closing date for applications: 01 September 2005.

For more information on training programmes organized by the International Agricultural Centre in Wageningen, Netherlands see

<http://www.iac.wur.nl/iac/index2.htm?courses>

20 - 21 October 2005, 1st EMCO workshop, **Analysis and removal of contaminants from wastewaters for the implementation of the Water Framework Directive**, Dubrovnik, Croatia.

<http://www.cid.csic.es/dubrovnik2005/home.htm>

25 October 2005, **First EWA Brussels Conference, "European River Basin Management Policy"**, Brussels, Belgium. For more information:

<http://www.ewaonline.de/>

9 - 12 November, 2005. 1st open science conference. **DIVERSITAS: Integrating Biodiversity Science for Human Well-being**. Oaxaca, Mexico. Registration deadline: 15 August 2005.

<http://sustsci.harvard.edu/events.htm#diversitas-oscl>

22-25 November 2005. XIIIth World Water Congress from, **Water for Sustainable Development - Towards Innovative Solutions**. New Delhi, India.

<http://wc.worldwatercongress.org:5050/index.jsp>

April 4-8, 2006 International Symposium on **Water and Land Management for Sustainable Irrigated Agriculture**, Adana, Turkey. Hosted by Cukurova University. For more information:

<http://symp2006.cu.edu.tr> or contact the Symposium Secretariat yazarat@cu.edu.tr or symp2006@cu.edu.tr

July 15-19, 2006, **2nd EuroScience Open Forum (ESOF)** will take place in Munich, Germany. www.esof2006.org

Scientists, journalists and experts in politics, industry and research have submitted proposals for scientific sessions and outreach activities. For late submissions, contact the organizers:

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July 9-12, 2006, 3rd Biennial meeting of the International Environmental Modelling and Software Society, **"Summit on Environmental Modelling and Software"**

Burlington, Vermont, USA, <http://www.iemss.org/iemss2006>

Participation welcome in on-line discussions to define the scope and products of the conference. Volunteers are invited to organize and chair a session or workshop.

Ongoing: Discussion Group on Participatory Integrated Assessment A discussion group for PhD students and other young researchers interested in Participatory Integrated Assessment has been initiated as a collaborative effort of young researchers at the Universities of Wageningen and Utrecht. The group meets roughly every six weeks to discuss relevant literature, research methods and results, as well as exchanging experiences in participating in projects. The topics discussed include, among others, participatory methods, integrated assessment, stakeholder involvement, interactive models, (group) decision support systems, interactive model construction and participatory scenario analysis. Individuals interested in joining the group may contact Serge Stalpers, Serge.Stalpers@wur.nl.

IA NEWS

From May 24 to June 17, an e-mail discussion took place on **"Institutions and policies for sustainable agricultural water management"**. The discussion was part of a Comprehensive Assessment - a multi-institute process aimed at synthesizing existing knowledge and stimulating thought on ways to manage water resources in agriculture. The assessment critically assesses the benefits, costs, and impacts of the past 50 years of water development and challenges to water management currently facing communities. Some results can be found on the website:

www.iwmi.cgiar.org/assessment

The 2005 TIAS summer school on the theme of **Stakeholder Participation and Modelling in Sustainable Resource Management** recently ended in Osnabrück, Germany. The summer school attracted 35 participants from 10 European countries. Summer school presentations and background readings are available online:

<http://www.tias.uni-osnabrueck.de/summer2005/index.html>

Next year's TIAS summer school will be held in the Norwich, United Kingdom with the theme, "Sustainability Assessment." Information will be made available on the TIAS website.

The first International Workshop on **Complexity and Policy Analysis** was held 22-24 June in Cork, Ireland. Conference papers can be accessed at:

http://isce.edu/Cork_2005

Job Openings

Ph.D. Scholarships, The United Nations University, Institute for Environment and Human Security in Cooperation with the GeoForschungsZentrum Potsdam, Engineering Hydrology and with the German Aerospace Center (DLR) / German Remote Sensing Data Center (DFD) invites applications for four PhD scholarships including:

- Systems Engineer, Informatics/Geoscientist
- Social Scientist/Geoscientist
- Hydrologist /Geoscientist
- Remote Sensing Expert /Geoscientist

The goal of the joint project is to improve the assessment of large-scale floods in major river basins of Germany. More information:

<http://www.ehs.unu.edu>

Deadline for applications: August 31, 2005.

Recent Publications

Two volumes have been published as outcomes of last year's IAHS symposium on hydrological impacts of climate change:

Thorsten Wagener, Stewart Franks, Hoshin V. Gupta, Eva Bøgh, Luis Bastidas, Carlos Nobre & Carlos de Oliveira Galvão (eds.) 2005. **Regional Hydrological Impacts of Climate Change - Impact Assessment and Decision Making**. IAHS Publ. 295, ISBN 1-901502-08-2.

This volume focuses on the use of large scale hydrological predictions for decision making in an integrated assessment context.

Stewart Franks, Thorsten Wagener, Eva Bøgh, Hoshin V. Gupta, Luis Bastidas, Carlos Nobre & Carlos de Oliveira Galvão (eds.) 2005. **Regional Hydrological Impacts of Climate Change - Hydroclimatic Variability**. IAHS Publ. 296, ISBN 1-901502-13-9.

This volume focuses on papers analyzing the impact of climate change and variability on hydrological regimes.

Ayre, Georgina and Rosalie Callway. 2005. **Governance for Sustainable Development: A Foundation for the Future**. ISBN: 1844072088

WWF European Policy Office. **Europe 2005: The Ecological Footprint**. June 2005. Brussels, Belgium. ISBN: 2-88085-268-4

Call for Submissions

Journal Submissions

The journal Integrated Assessment is seeking submissions for upcoming issues. Prospective authors may visit the website www.iaonline.org for more details on manuscript submissions.

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Call for Posters and Presentations

OPEN CALL for contributions to 3rd Harmoni-CA Forum & Conference. The 3rd Harmoni-CA Conference takes place 5-7th April 2006 in Osnabrück, Germany. Based on priorities set within the Water Framework Directive activities for 2006, the focus of the conference is on the design of monitoring programmes and the involvement of interested parties in the implementation process.

The organisers invite operational water managers, water policy makers, researchers and technology providers to exchange their experiences related to current work on river basin management and the implementation of the WFD. Those interested in submitting a poster or preparing a presentation for the conference, can visit the project website: www.harmoni-ca.info for more information or submit an extended abstract (max 2 pages length) before 1st September 2005 to HARMONI-CA.WP1@riza.rws.minvenw.nl

Articles & News Items

Members of the IA community are invited to submit feature articles and/or news items (events, publications, job openings) for publication in future issues of the TIAS Quarterly. For more information, please contact Caroline van Bers:

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The TIAS Quarterly

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