Participation in the context of NSDS processes

Gerald Berger
ESDN Office at
Research Institute for Managing Sustainability (RIMAS)

1) Introduction: Participation in NSDS processes
2) Participatory mechanisms
3) Participation in different stages of policy-making
4) Stakeholder involvement & different political levels
5) Degree & breadth of participation
6) Success factors of participatory mechanisms
Introduction

Sustainable development and participation

- Since Rio 1992 – participation fundamental prerequisite for achieving SD
- Broad consensus on the need of participation in SD – no SD process without participation
- SD issues concern everybody and everybody is needed for their achievement

Participation – a definition

Participation refers to the inclusion of public stakeholders, i.e. all or a selection of those actors and institutions (e.g. citizens, civil society organisations/NGOs, business representatives, social partners, sub-national authorities, etc) that are affected by the results of policy- and decision-making processes.
Introduction

Participation – key element in SD strategy processes

- Agenda 21: NSDS “should be developed through the widest possible participation”
- Participation is addressed by several policy guiding principles in the renewed EU SDS
- Participatory tools and mechanisms in NSDS processes of all EU Member States

Participation – key element of SD governance

- Exchange of information, knowledge, interests
- Engagement and commitment of stakeholder groups
- Better and more informed decisions when different interests are included early on
- Increasing acceptance of results (“ownership”)
- Better coordination of responsibilities and more effective implementation
Different participatory mechanisms:

- **Ad-hoc forms** – organised once for a specific purpose, like e.g.
  - internet consultations,
  - workshops,
  - conferences,
  - round tables

- **Institutionalised forms** – established for regular participation, like e.g.
  - partnerships,
  - committees,
  - advisory groups,
  - NCSD
Participation at different stages in policy-making:

Participatory mechanisms can be applied in

- **Preparation** of policies, strategies, etc,
- **Implementation** stage, and
- **Review** mechanisms

Preparation phase:
- *broader objectives and issues of SD strategies*

Implementation/review phase:
- *more focused on specific strategy objectives & outcomes/outputs of strategy processes*
Stakeholder involvement: Depending on scope and objectives of participation, different stakeholder groups are involved:

- No specific details given: 25%
- National level: 12%
- Sub-national level: 11%
- Business community: 13%
- Social partners: 7%
- NGOs/civil society: 16%
- Citizens: 2%
- Academia: 11%
- Others: 2%
Stakeholder involvement & different political levels

Different political levels:

NSDS refers to national level – however, participatory arrangements in related processes on sub-national levels (e.g. regional round tables, LA21 initiatives):

National level:
➔ Participation is often restricted to traditional stakeholder groups & “classic” participatory mechanisms (e.g. NCSD, round tables)

Sub-national levels:
➔ Participation is often more interactive and innovative (e.g. direct dialogues, citizens conferences), plus stakeholders have direct regional/local concern
Degree of participation:

One can distinguish between informative, consultative and decisional participation:

![Degree of participation chart]

- Informative: 17.0%
- Consultative: 73.4%
- Decisional: 9.6%
**Breadth of participation:**

Refers to full, restricted and strongly restricted forms of participation:

![Breadth of participation chart]

- **Full participation:** 35.1%
- **Restricted participation:** 43.6%
- **Strongly restricted participation:** 21.3%
Success factors of participatory mechanisms

What makes a participatory mechanism successful?

- Objectives, principles and concept are clearly defined and communicated
- Involvement of those stakeholder groups that are affected by policy- and decision-making process
- Adequate resources for participants (e.g. information, budget, time, etc)
- Results are used in the further NSDS process (strategy document, implementation, review, etc)
- To be amended and completed...
Thank you for your attention!

Gerald Berger
ESDN Office
at the Research Institute for Managing Sustainability (RIMAS)
Email: gerald.berger@wu-wien.ac.at
www.sd-network.eu