

## 18.13. Transparency of co-production

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Transparency of co-production	Participatory Planning and Governance
<p><b>Description and justification</b></p>	<p>Transparency is one of the basic dimensions of good co-production and participatory governance processes. It is especially important to ensure the legitimacy of the process, to create co-ownership over process and results and facilitate trust-building (Djenontin and Meadow 2018; Hölscher et al. 2019). In general terms, transparency means operating in such a way that it is easy for others to see what actions are performed. The relationship between transparency and participation is assumed to be reciprocal: while transparency is a requirement for 'good' participation, collaborative governance and co-production are a means to enhance transparency (Campanale et al. 2020). Participatory approaches reduce the information asymmetry and align preferences and incentives between service recipients and providers (Eriksson 2012, cf. Campanale et al. 2020).</p> <p>The concept of transparency is most commonly used in literature as a key principle of 'good governance'. The normative belief is that governments should report about the 'why, how, what, and how' of their activities, through information made available to citizens in the most convenient way. As such, transparency is a way to show integrity, performance and accountability, and recently became a vehicle to increase legitimacy, trust in government, improve citizen engagement and participation, and curb corruption and maladministration (da Cruz 2015; Wu et al. 2015; Council of Europe 2017). Transparency in this context is more about how willing a government is to allow citizens to monitor its performance, processes and internal workings, rather than citizen participation therein.</p> <p>While there are many definitions of transparency in this context, all of them hold the role of <b>information accessibility</b> at their core. For instance, Kaufmann and Kraay (2002) define transparency as "the increased flow of timely and reliable economic, social, and political information, accessible to all relevant stakeholders" (cf. del Sol 2013). In that sense, transparency is closely related to accountability: "Information should be available to those who can be affected by the decision-making and be understandable by its users. Accountability can be defined as the obligation of public sector organizations to account for their decisions and actions to the citizens and other</p>

stakeholders” (Campton et al. 2020; see also Wu et al. 2015). There are several indicators and frameworks to compare and promote best practices in transparency among public institutions such as municipalities and regional and national governments (Campanale et al. 2020). An example of an extensive framework was developed by da Cruz (2015). It includes a participatory approach for selecting indicators, metrics, and the weighting scheme to assess governments or public authorities. It includes 76 indicators grouped by seven dimensions, including organizational information and operation of the municipality, relationship with citizens, public procurement and economic and financial transparency (ibid.).

From the uses of transparency within participatory governance and planning literature it becomes clear that transparency also relates to a **process dimension**. In this perspective, transparency is about the provision of information about how such processes are being structured and communicated. The participatory process should be transparent so that the participants and the wider public can see what is going on and how decisions are being made (Rowe and Frewer 2000). In a general sense, this type of transparency has an internal and external implication. The internal implication relates to the transparency towards the participants of the collaborative process. The external implications relate to the transparency of how the process and results are communicated to the broader audience. Information should be communicated through a variety of online and offline means (Rosenström and Kyllonen 2006). A genuine attempt to share information means that organisers actively ensure that all stakeholders are aware of, and understand, the relevant information (Laktić and Malovrh 2018). If any information needs to be withheld from the participants or the wider public, for reasons of sensitivity or security, it is important to admit the nature of what is being withheld and why, “rather than risking the discovery of such secrecy, with subsequent adverse reactions” (Rowe and Frewer 2000, p. 15).

A first condition for process transparency is **information about the purpose of the process and the participation**. Stakeholders should be informed about what the purpose of their participation and involvement is, who can participate and how, what they can influence and how the results will be used (Laktić and Malovrh 2018). This also includes the provisioning of relevant background materials (Rowe and Frewer 2000).

A second condition for process transparency is **information about the process decision-making structure**. Relevant information includes the manner of participants selection, decision-making procedures (Rowe

	<p>and Frewer 2000; Laktić and Malovrh 2018; Rosenström and Kyllonen 2006). Specifically, the documentation of the process of reaching a decision (as well as the outcome) is liable to increase transparency (and hence the perceived credibility of the exercise) as well as the efficiency of the process (Rowe and Frewer 2000).</p> <p>Another condition relates to the <b>clarity of roles</b>. The (co-)definition of roles and responsibilities in the process gives clarity about what is expected from actors and help them feel comfortable in and adopting their (new) roles and functions (Ferlie et al. 2019). There are typically different, but sometimes overlapping roles in participatory processes, including participants, facilitators, technical experts and initiators (Hölscher et al. 2019). Goals and roles need to be continually deliberated and adjusted (Djenontin and Meadow 2018).</p> <p>A final condition for process transparency is the provisioning of <b>information about the content and results</b>, including relevant background materials, meeting minutes, updates about progress and changes within the process and well as results (Rowe and Frewer 2000; Laktić and Malovrh 2018; Rosenström and Kyllonen 2006). Evaluating this type of process transparency is difficult, mainly because transparency is difficult to isolate (Rowe and Frewer 2000; Laktić and Malovrh 2018). Transparency also becomes blurred, relating to questions about transparency by whom, to whom (Campanale et al. 2020). While we define transparency as a responsibility mainly on the part of the organisers, also participants need to ideally be transparent about their motivations and interests, which they bring into such processes.</p>
<b>Definition</b>	This indicator is defined as the extent to which the co-production process is transparent about the purpose, decision-making structure, roles, content and results.
<b>Strengths and weaknesses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Provides insights into the way co-production processes are structured and communicated</li> <li>+ Creates space and opportunity to reflect on co-production process</li> <li>- Indicator veils complexity and multiple perceptions of transparency</li> <li>- Qualitative data mining could be time-consuming</li> </ul>
<b>Measurement procedure and tool</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☒ <i>Quantitative P:</i> Scale inventory/Questionnaire (survey procedure, paper-and-pencil administration, computer-based administration) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ T: 4 items at measuring respondents' perception of transparency</li> </ul> </li> <li>☒ <i>Qualitative P:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ T: case study methodology – semi-structured interviews, case study analysis, participant and non-participant observation</li> <li>○ T: participatory data collections methods, such as focus groups</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<b>Scale of measurement</b>	<p>The levels of transparency can be evaluated based on responses to survey questions using a five-point Likert scale.</p> <p>(1) The stakeholders/I was aware about the goals of the process.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strongly disagree</li> <li>Disagree</li> <li>Not sure</li> <li>Agree</li> <li>Strongly agree</li> </ol> <p>(2) The stakeholders were/I was informed about how the results would be used.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strongly disagree</li> <li>Disagree</li> <li>Not sure</li> <li>Agree</li> <li>Strongly agree</li> </ol> <p>(3) The procedures and rules for decision-making and changes in the process were openly communicated.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strongly disagree</li> <li>Disagree</li> <li>Not sure</li> <li>Agree</li> <li>Strongly agree</li> </ol> <p>(4) The results of the process were regularly disseminated to a wider audience – via online and offline channels.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strongly disagree</li> <li>Disagree</li> <li>Not sure</li> <li>Agree</li> <li>Strongly agree</li> </ol>
<b>Data source</b>	
<b>Required data</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Essential: questionnaire scoring on transparency</li> <li>✓ Desirable: qualitative data on reasons and causes for (in-)transparency, and implications for how the process and results are perceived</li> </ul>
<b>Data input type</b>	Quantitative (quantitative and qualitative, if participatory data collection methods, and/or participatory action research are opted for)
<b>Data collection frequency</b>	Aligned with NBS co-production process, at least at the end of a co-production process or every 6 months if the process is longer
<b>Level of expertise required</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Quantitative data collection requires no expertise</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Qualitative data collection requires medium level expertise in social science research</li> </ul>
<b>Synergies with other indicators</b>	
<b>Connection with SDGs</b>	Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

	<p>Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable</p> <p>Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels</p>
<b>Opportunities for participatory data collection</b>	<p>Participatory methods (e.g., participatory data collection methods, and/or participatory action research) may be applied to collect data on reasons and causes for (in-)transparency, and implications for how the process and results are perceived.</p>
<b>Additional information</b>	
<b>References</b>	<p>Campanale, C., Mauro, S. G., &amp; Sancino, A. (2020). Managing co-production and enhancing good governance principles: insights from two case studies. <i>Journal of Management and Governance</i>, (2020). <a href="https://doi.org/10.1007/s10997-020-09508-y">https://doi.org/10.1007/s10997-020-09508-y</a></p> <p>da Cruz, N. F., Tavares, A. F., Marques, R. C., Jorge, S., &amp; De Sousa, L. (2016). Measuring local government transparency. <i>Public Management Review</i>, 18(6), 866-893.</p> <p>Djenontin, I.N.S., Meadow, A.M. (2018) The art of co-production of knowledge in environmental sciences and management: lessons from international practice. <i>Environmental Management</i>, 61: 885-903. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1007/s00267-018-1028-3">https://doi.org/10.1007/s00267-018-1028-3</a></p> <p>Hölscher, K., Wittmayer, J.M., Avelino, F., Giezen, M. (2019). Opening up the transition arena: An analysis of (dis)empowerment of civil society actors in transition management in cities. <i>Technological Forecasting and Social Change</i>, 145: 176-185. <a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2017.05.004">http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2017.05.004</a></p> <p>Laktić, T., &amp; Malovrh, Š.P. (2018). Stakeholder participation in Natura 2000 management program: case study of Slovenia. <i>Forests</i>, 9(10), 599.</p> <p>Rosenström, U. &amp; Kyllönen, S. (2007). Impacts of a participatory approach to developing national level sustainable development indicators in Finland. <i>Journal of Environmental Management</i> 84: 282-298. doi:10.1016/j.jenvman.2006.06.008</p> <p>Rowe, G., &amp; Frewer, L. J. (2000). Public participation methods: A framework for evaluation. <i>Science, technology, &amp; human values</i>, 25(1), 3-29.</p> <p>Del Sol, D. A. (2013). The institutional, economic and social determinants of local government transparency. <i>Journal of economic policy reform</i>, 16(1), 90-107.</p> <p>Wu, W., Ma, L., &amp; Yu, W. (2017). Government transparency and perceived social equity: Assessing the moderating effect of citizen trust in China. <i>Administration &amp; Society</i>, 49(6), 882-906.</p>