Governance in Science and Technology: Citizens’ engagement for social innovation?

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Outline

• The context
• What do we do?
• Some cases
• Some considerations
"I never realized we'd have to know so much geography!"
By way of introduction

- Specific policy context: informing & advising parliaments
  - Parliament as 'chambre de réflexion'
- Specific research context
  - Problem-driven multidisciplinary research
- Specific approach: strongly participative
- Practical attitude

- Not a significant knowledge actor in innovation policy

Strange animal
Technology assessment is a *scientific, interactive and communicative* process which aims to contribute to the *formation* of public and political *opinion* on societal aspects of science and technology.

*Source: TAMI 2004*
Some guiding principles in PTA

- Client-oriented
- Problem-driven vs technology-driven
- Constructive vs acceptance logic
- Prospective
- Evaluation ex ante
Modes of TA

**Instrumental**
- Social science and policy analysis approaches
- Main customer = parliament or committees

**Discursive**
- Deliberative processes
  - Experts, stakeholders and with lay-people
  - “Enlighten parliament” (and gov’nt) decision-making
  - Foster societal debate

**Why public participation?**
- To articulate **societal preferences**
- To make **societal interests** explicit
What do we do?

2002: * Genetically Modified Food in Flanders
2004: * ICT and Elderly
2005: * Meetings of Minds – the future of brain sciences
2007: * Poverty and Technology
2008: * The Car and our Health
2008: * Flemish energy system 2050
2009: * CIVISTI
2009: * WWViews

2007: History of the nuclear debate in Belgium (book)
2008: Youth and gaming
2009: Smart grid
2009: Biofuels
Digital gap explorations

- ICT and elderly (2005)
- Technology and poverty (2006)

- Challenge to creativity:
  - design of participatory part of the project
- Combination of literature study, interviews, Delphi studies, scenario’s, theatre plays, group discussions

Recommendations to parliament
Technology Festival: “Nano Nu“

- Appropriate method: Technology festival

- Preparatory activities:
  - expert opinion research on nanotech in Flanders
  - brochure (83000 copies in newspaper)
  - Didactical package distributed in schools
    - 3 day activity
    - Diversity
      - Lectures/discussions/theatre/expositions ...
    - Interactivity
    - Information and discussion

3400 attended resolution in parliament on nanotech
Foresight: The Road to Anoroso

- A vision of the Flemish energy system 2050 was developed in an interaction between citizens and experts
  - Experts: their knowledge
  - Informed citizens: their open and broad perspectives, their values and preferences
  - Complementary producers of useful knowledge for policy makers

- Definition phase
- Three future scenario’s – one selected
- Backcasting with experts => policy recommendations on timeline

- Conference day 13 December 2008
Results: daily live in ANOROSO

- residential nucleus (+/- 50.000 inhabitants)
  - districts with a mix of pleasure grounds, ..
  - high standard & low energy houses
  - access to local schools, jobs,

- embedded generation
  - (renewable) energy generation
  - smart grid, smart metering
  - district heating and energy storage
Results: daily live in ANOROSO

- less consumption
  - from products to services
  - avoid ownership
- Creativity as economical factor: knowledge society
- far more public transport
  - low fare trains, shuttles
  - less private owned cars
  - individual use of transport made expensive
Results: energy resources

- energy supply
  steered by international energy policy
  access is a human right

- effectiveness as a rule
  for industrial production and farming

- external costs are (always) taken into account
Citizen convention

- **Meeting of Minds** – European Citizens’ Deliberation on Brain Sciences  (2005-2006)
  - Org. by King Baudouin Foundations
  - Results presented in European Parliament

- **The car and our health** – Public Convention in Flemish Parliament  (May 2008)
  - Extensive evaluation
  - Presentation in Environment Com & Governance Com

Same method, same rigorous process and quality control
TA & Governance?

Governance = Cooperation between public authorities, citizens, interest groups and companies in solving (complex) questions in society.

Common goal:

increase the democratic quality of decision-making through participatory procedures
Resistance to public participation

- Not scientific
- Not representative – how to select citizens
- Primacy of politics
  - representative vs deliberative democracy
- Costly – time consuming ...
Evaluation criteria for public participation in governance

1. **Fairness**
   • Equal chances for participation
   • All interests are represented

2. **Content**
   • All arguments are heard
   • Integrative negotiation in a learning process

3. **Legitimacy**
   • Binding engagement of involved political institution

4. **Process design**
   • Transparency
   • multiple discourses (eg art & philosophy)
Focus on Citizens: Public Engagement for Better Policy and Services” (OECD 2009)

- Public engagement is a condition for effective governance
- Open and inclusive policy making helps improve public policy and services
- Beyond open, towards inclusive policy making

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR OPEN AND INCLUSIVE POLICY MAKING
Preventing Europe for a New Renaissance
A Strategic View of the European Research Area
First Report of the European Research Area Board — 2009
1. must demonstrate a new way to solve social problems where government serves as an investor in innovations that are developed and identified by citizens outside of government

2. guide more social innovators towards "bottom-up" initiatives, in preference to "trickle-down" philanthropy

   Eg building opera’s, invention of transistor radio

3. initiate a process by which categories of social innovations are agreed upon, and metrics can be defined for assessing the impact of innovations in each category on the social problems that they target
Conclusion

Public participation as developed in TA has a potential of being a source of inspiration for:

1. public governance that enable the political system to increase the democratic quality of decision-making;

2. S&T governance that enables the R&D system to identify and develop social innovation where societal demands and needs influence the direction of R&D and the design of innovative products, processes and services.