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**Title:** Analysis of major practices of citizen consultation

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## **Deliverable 7.1**

**Title** Analysis of major practices of citizen consultation

### **Summary**

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is tasked with producing a set of guidelines and methodologies for stakeholder inclusion at the EU level (work package 7 of the European Framework for Measuring Progress).

The guidelines will take account of the impact on citizens, relevant stakeholders and policy makers that have emerged from the Council of Europe's methodological guide 'Concerted development of social cohesion indicators'.

For this deliverable, the ONS analysed contributions from a questionnaire developed to identify citizen consultation practices in the development of progress measures within the EU and beyond.

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Annex B: Summary of those who completed a questionnaire on stakeholder inclusion in the development of progress measures.

## 1. Method of analysis

### 1.1 Thematic approach to the analysis work

The UK Office for National Statistics (ONS) is responsible for delivering a set of guidelines and methodologies for stakeholder inclusion at the EU level (due in January 2014).

This report summarises ONS findings relating to citizen consultation practices of initiatives designed to measure progress/well-being/sustainable development. It covers responses to an ONS questionnaire designed specifically for this work as well as outcomes from a workshop on 'methodologies for stakeholder inclusion', held in June 2013.

The ONS decided at an early stage to include experiences beyond the EU in this consultation exercise, so that approaches from some of the larger consultations could be taken into consideration.

### 1.2 Designing the questionnaire

ONS developed a questionnaire on 'stakeholder inclusion in the development of progress measures' to capture experiences of practices of citizen consultations used in the development of progress measures.

The questionnaire was structured using ONS' own experience of citizen consultation (namely the Measuring National Well-being National Debate) and was piloted internally with colleagues involved in citizen consultations.

Information requested included the types of groups engaged with, method of engagement, and the stage in development at which citizens were consulted. The questionnaire can be found at Annex A.

### 1.3 Identifying stakeholders to contribute to this exercise

Stakeholders were identified in the following ways:

1. Those that engaged with ONS during the Measuring National Well-being National Debate in early 2011.
2. Networks such as e-FrameNet News.
3. Contacts identified from on-line case studies, articles and papers where experiences of citizen engagements were reported.
4. Generic 'contact' e-mail address via websites where a direct contact could not be found.

Stakeholders were then contacted and asked whether they had carried out stakeholder inclusion activity in developing wellbeing/progress/sustainable development measures and would be willing to participate in our research. Stakeholders were also asked to recommend others who had experience in this field.

Contributions were received from national statistics Institutes, non-government organisations and academia and civil society groups.

## **2. Findings from the consultation exercise (questionnaire)**

### 2.1 Questionnaire responses

The ONS sent questionnaires to stakeholders in 27 countries within the EU and beyond. A breakdown of the responses can be found below:

- 8 countries, representing 9 responses, submitted a nil return as they were not involved in any citizen engagement for developing measures of progress.
- 10 countries, representing 17 responses, completed and returned a questionnaire to ONS.

Countries that failed to respond were chased at least three times.

The list of those who provided a completed questionnaire can be found in Annex B. These returns will be featured as case studies in the final guidelines and methodologies for stakeholder inclusion at the EU level (due in January 2014).

### 2.2 Questionnaire analysis

Responses to the questionnaire highlighted a variety of different ways in which citizens and stakeholders were consulted with. In addition there was much variation in the numbers consulted with, for example some consultations were very large – the ONS consulted with more than 34,000 citizens whilst ‘Dialogue on Germany’s Future’ had some 2.4 million visits to their consultation website. Ten of the initiatives consulted with more than 100 citizens, whilst seven initiatives consulted with fewer than 100.

#### Groups engaged

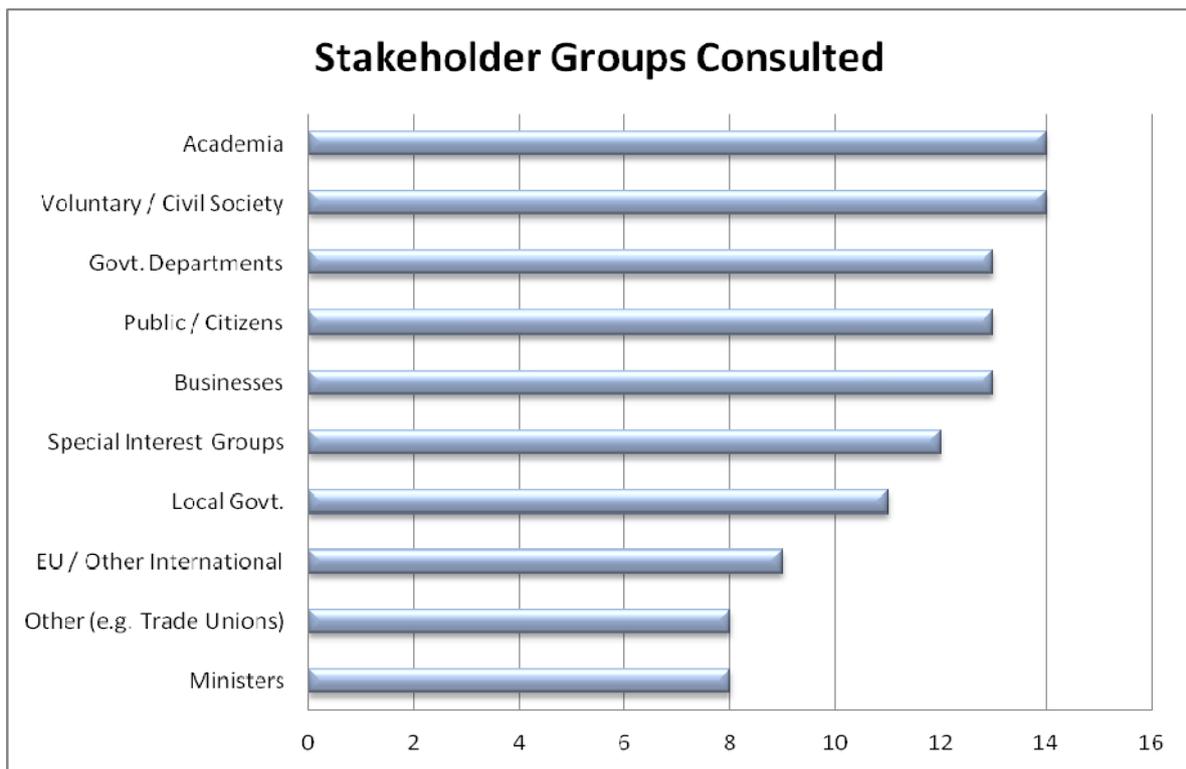
Figure 1 illustrates that the groups most engaged with were academia and voluntary/civil society. These were closely followed by businesses, public / citizens and government departments. The group least engaged with were ministers.

Those defined as ‘other’ included journalists and trade unions.

Most consultations engaged with special interest groups. These groups represent people living with disabilities, in minority religion / belief groups, children and young people, older persons, etc. In most cases, these groups represent the most vulnerable people in our society.

Whilst consultation with policy makers could have been captured under the umbrella of government departments and ministers, nothing was explicitly mentioned.

Figure 1: Stakeholder Groups Consulted



### Methods of engagement

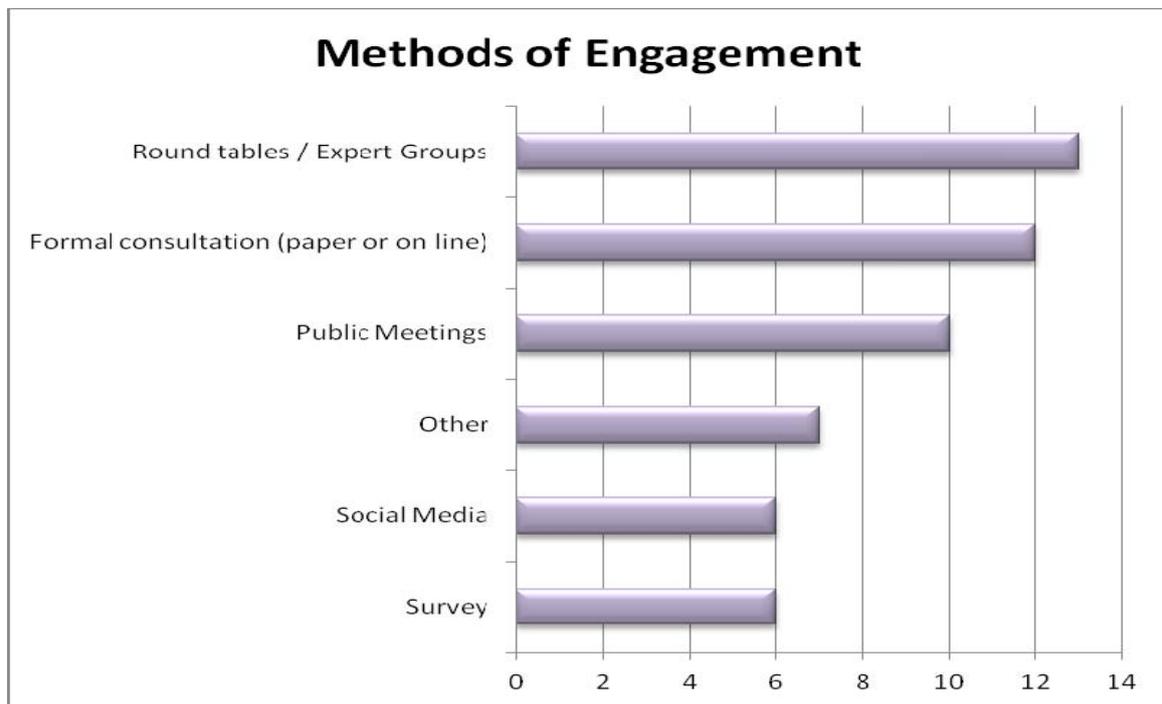
Figure 2 highlights the preferred method for consulting with citizens was the use of round tables and expert groups. This was closely followed by formal consultations and the use of public meetings.

The least popular methods for consulting with citizens were through surveys and social media.

It is not surprising that surveys were not a popular choice as they can be expensive and resource intensive. However, the results for social media were surprising. With such a vast audience, generally at very little cost, the opportunity to consult with people from all walks of life through an open and responsive medium is not being used fully to reach wider audiences.

Those categorised under 'other' included the use of telephone consultations, connecting with citizens via a travelling bus, events with parliament and use of postcards.

Figure 2: Methods used in stakeholder consultation

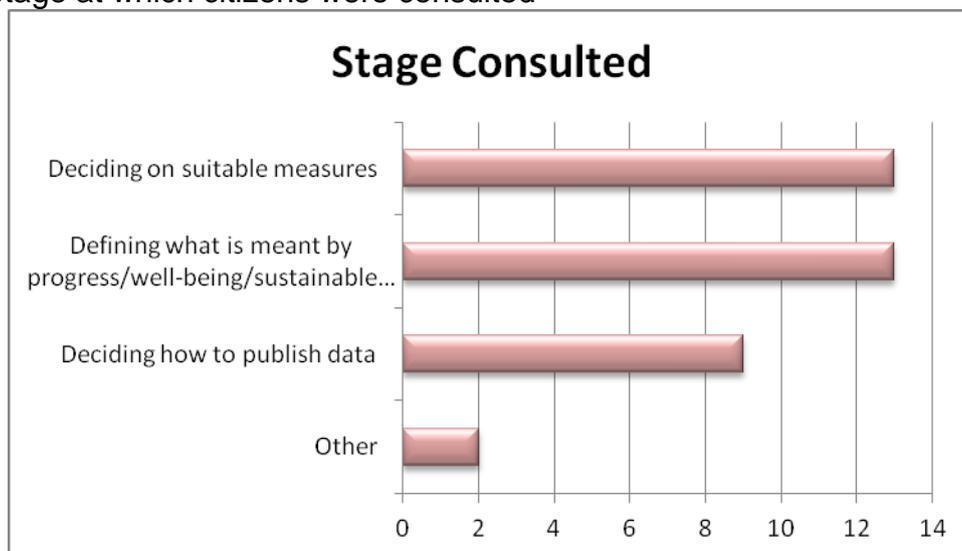


Stage citizens were consulted

Figure 3 shows the stage at which citizens were consulted during the initiatives concerned with the development of measures of progress. Defining what is meant by progress/well-being/sustainable development and deciding on suitable measures were most often used stages to consult with citizens.

Those under 'other' noted that citizens were also consulted on the weights of indicators and how to assess them, for example use of a traffic light system (red, amber, green).

Figure 3: Stage at which citizens were consulted



## 2.3 Outcomes from the workshop

The findings from the questionnaire were used at the ONS 'Methodologies for Stakeholder inclusion and activation of deliberative processes' workshop in London on 26 June 2013.

Discussions at the workshop centred on sharing of best practice, knowledge and experiences. The key outcomes, in terms of recommendations and best practice, listed below will form the basis of the final set of guidelines and methodologies for stakeholder inclusion at the EU level.

### Recommendations from the workshop

Understanding who your stakeholders are was agreed as a critical first step in determining the method used for consultation. Recommendations include:

- R1) Influential sponsors will provide visibility, new opportunities and may help to gain endorsement /cooperation from others.
- R2) Use advocates (i.e. individual experts or pre-established groups) to spread messages and act on your behalf.
- R3) Media are a powerful communication tool. Engage with them early in the process so they understand what you are trying to achieve; their messages have a wide reach and influence many.
- R5) Engage with 'hard to reach groups / disadvantaged communities' at an early stage. These groups represent many citizens and have a vested interest in what you are trying to achieve (some groups will take longer to access than others).
- R6) Social media (i.e. Twitter) is vital in reaching citizens and communicating key messages. The coverage of these communications is far reaching; depending on the number of followers and whether messages are re-tweeted.
- R7) Have a clear understanding of how outcomes can influence policy making. This should be communicated to stakeholders.
- R8) Influential stakeholders are identified as: Media; businesses; academia; hard to reach groups/disadvantaged communities; non government offices; and the voluntary sector.

### Best Practices:

- BP1) Learn from others; there is a plethora of information available from many countries on stakeholder inclusion activities.
- BP 2) Have clear communication and engagement strategies before you embark on stakeholder inclusion activity; you can achieve a lot with little resource if you target the right people with clear messages.
- BP 3) Ensure your communication and engagement strategies reflect the time table available to deliver your campaign. For example, allow sufficient time to a) engage with stakeholders, b) analysis of feedback, c) reflect on what you have learnt and d) report back to users/sponsors
- BP4) Consider engagement tools that meet everyone's needs. For example:

**On-line:** Pre-established on-line communities and forums; social media; on-line

surveys; dedicated blogs and debate websites.

**Face-to-face:** One-to-one consultations; workshops; events; focus groups; debates; stalls in busy places; interviewers for existing social surveys.

**Formal:** Consultations (available on-line and accessible off-line); interviews; media; use of existing surveys.

**Other:** Dedicated phone lines to take contributions, a dedicated e-mail address to send comments, use of 'post cards' with predefined questions for people to leave their thoughts, etc.

- BP 5) Consider 'reflections of responses' from contributors i.e. do individuals responses change over time?
- BP 6) Stakeholders should be included at the start of an initiative and engaged throughout all stages.
- BP 7) Political will for your initiative; this can add pressure to your campaign but can also add legitimacy.
- BP8) Consider holding training events with policy analysts; transform their approach to measuring progress as part of the policy making process.
- BP9) Engaging with stakeholders should not be a one-off activity, but an ongoing commitment

## Conclusion

Whilst the initiatives analysed varied size and duration, the approaches taken and stages at which citizens were consulted were similar.

Common themes that emerged were:

- The importance of consulting with a broad range of citizens was evident. This is often seen as giving the final output more legitimacy.
- Commitment to actively consult with harder to reach (or vulnerable) groups was prevalent.
- On average most initiatives consulted with citizens for a period of 10-12 weeks, although there were some exceptions where initiatives continued to consult over an 18 month period.

Areas where more impact can be achieved:

- Social media - there is a great deal of reach, debate and real-time information available using this method, but few initiatives had embraced it.
- Understanding the financial costs of consultations would have been beneficial information for those planning a similar exercise. However, this information was not known by many of the initiatives featured in this report.

- One of the main goals for developing measures of progress worldwide is to better inform policy makers. However, there was very little mention of any active engagement with or endorsement from policy makers or advisers to see what their thoughts were during the consultation process.

## ANNEX A

### QUESTIONNAIRE ON STAKEHOLDER INCLUSION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROGRESS MEASURES

In recent years there has been an increasing interest in going ‘beyond GDP’ and a number of national and supranational initiatives have begun to measure societal progress, societal well-being or sustainable development. In their paper on the development of societal progress indicators Trewin and Hall (2010: 11)<sup>1</sup> argue that ‘appropriate consultation in the development of a framework is a vital pre-requisite for a successful initiative on measuring progress.’

Including stakeholders in the development of progress measures is important for at least three reasons:

- First, it can help ensure that the indicators are considered legitimate by focusing on what matters to people
- Second, it can help ensure indicators are used and supported by giving a broad range of people a sense of ownership of the indicators
- Third, consultation is beneficial to those developing the indicators as they can tap into expert knowledge

Given the importance of stakeholder inclusion in the development of progress measures work package 7 of the ‘e-Frame Project’<sup>2</sup> aims to collect relevant local and national experiences in this field in order to produce guidelines, with case studies, for people wishing to include stakeholders in the development of progress measures.

This questionnaire has been sent to you as you have been identified as having experience in this field. I would really appreciate it if you could complete this form and return it to [sophie.ebid@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:sophie.ebid@ons.gsi.gov.uk). If you do not think you are the right person to complete the questionnaire please let us know and, if possible, recommend someone else in your organisation, or in another organisation in your country that might be able to help.

Many thanks!

Sophie Ebid  
Office for National Statistics – Measuring National Well-being Programme

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<sup>1</sup> Trewin, D. and J. Hall (2010), “Developing Societal Progress Indicators: A Practical Guide”, OECD Statistics Working Papers, 2010/06, OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5kghzxp6k7q0-en> .

<sup>2</sup> The European Framework for Measuring Progress (e-Frame) Project is a 19 partner-consortium. The general objectives of the project are to: undertake stocktaking of available results and of ongoing research activities on progress measurement; foster a European debate over the issues; define guidelines for the use of existing indicators; propose a coherent way of ‘delivering’ information including advanced ICT tools; identify new research topics for future investigation; and harmonise National Statistics Institutes (NSIs) initiatives in progress measurement area.

<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Organisation:</b>	
<b>Country:</b>	
<b>Name of project:</b>	
<b>Brief description of project:</b>	

**How did you identify which stakeholders to consult?**

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**Which of the following types of stakeholder did you consult?** (Please put an x next to all relevant options)

Ministers		Government departments	
Local government		EU and other international bodies	
Businesses		Academics	
Voluntary organisations/civil society		Special interest groups (e.g. disability groups)	
Public		Other (please specify below...)	
...			

**How were stakeholders consulted?** (Please put an x next to all relevant options)

Formal consultation (online or paper based)		Round-tables/ Expert groups	
Survey		Public meetings	
Social media (e.g. blogs)		Other (please specify below...)	
...			

**How long did the stakeholder consultation last?** E.g. was there a 12 week consultation or on-going contact?

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**How many people were consulted? Which method of consultation proved most effective?**

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**At what stage of the process of developing measures were stakeholders consulted?** (Please put an x next to all relevant options)

Defining what is meant by progress/well-being/sustainable development etc.		Deciding on suitable measures	
Deciding how to publish data		Other (please specify below...)	
...			

**How was the information obtained through stakeholder consultation used? What did you find most beneficial about involving stakeholders?**

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**How much did you spend on stakeholder inclusion activity? And, do you think you achieved value for money?**

--

**Do you have an engagement model or framework that you can send us?**

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**Any other comments?**

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**Would you be happy for your responses to be made public?** (Please put an x next to choice)

Yes		No	
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**Would you like your project to be used as a case study?** (Please put an x next to choice)

Yes		No	
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If you have any relevant papers (in English) that you wish us to read please attach them to the email along with the completed questionnaire.

If you would like to know any more about the ONS Measuring National Well-being Programme please email [sophie.ebid@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:sophie.ebid@ons.gsi.gov.uk)

**Thank you for completing this questionnaire.**

**ANNEX B**

**SUMMARY OF THOSE WHO COMPLETED A QUESTIONNAIRE ON  
STAKEHOLDER INCLUSION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROGRESS  
MEASURES**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Institution / Organisation</b>	<b>Name of Initiative</b>
Austria	Statistics Austria	How's Austria?
Finland	Prime Minister's Office, Finland	Findicator.fi-service
France	INSEE	Implementation the Stiglitz recommendations by the Official French statistical system  Production of sustainable development indicators
Germany	Federal Chancellery, Staff for Policy Planning	Dialogue on Germany's Future
Germany	German Bundestag, Study Commission	Growth, Wellbeing and Quality of Life – Paths to Sustainable Economic Activity and Social Progress in the Social Market Economy
Germany	Bertelsmann Stiftung	BürgerKompass Schsen
Italy	The Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT)	BES – Benessere Equo e Sostenibile (Equitable and Sustainable Wellbeing)
Italy	Symbola Fondazione per le qualità italiane (Foundation for Italian Quality)	PIQ- prodotto interno qualità (Domestic Quality Product)
Netherlands	Statistics Netherlands	Sustainability Monitor for the Netherlands
UK	Welsh Government	Sustainable Development Indicators for Wales
UK	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	Sustainable Development Indicators
UK	Office for National Statistics	Measuring National Well-being Programme
UK	Oxfam Scotland	The Oxfam Humankind Index
Australia	Australian Bureau of Statistics	Measures of Australia's Progress
Australia	Tasmania Together	Tasmania Together
Canada	Faculty of Applied Health and Sciences, University of Waterloo	The Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW)
Mexico	Foro Consultivo Científico y Tecnológico  Also at FLACSO-Mexico and at UPAEP, Mexico	Measuring the Progress of Societies: A Perspective from Mexico