



METHOD

NOTICE AND REQUEST FOR COMMENT

Description

Published with the intent to invite a response to proposals, often regulatory or legislative changes. Typically conducted online or through traditional methods (Canada Gazette notice, mail-in), interested parties can choose to respond or provide comments.

When to use

- You have proposals on which you want to hear from people
- There is sufficient time to allow participants to respond



METHOD

TOWN HALL

Description

An open assembly where people self-select to come to share their views and concerns. Often hosted by one or more government officials who provide information. Typically organized as an in-person event, town halls can also be conducted in an online format.

When to use

- To disseminate information or raise awareness of an issue
- To seek views or reactions
- To reach a large number of people in a single event
- Have resources and time to promote



METHOD

WEB STREAMING

Description

Use of online channels such as live streaming or social media discussions that allow people to share information with their followers and friends. It is important to consider the strength of your network before launching a web stream. Participants will self-select to participate.

When to use

- To disseminate information
- To raise awareness of a specific or set of issues



METHOD

ONLINE DISCUSSION FORUMS

Description

Web-based discussion forums that serve as arenas where people bring ideas and concerns related to planning, budgeting, and decision making. These transparent forums allow for asynchronous discussion and interaction between participants, in a public domain. Depending on the design, participants can be anonymous or self-declare their identities when they opt-in to participate, and may be required to register.

When to use

- To disseminate information
- To obtain feedback in a public forum
- Limited budget
- To access a broad audience and allow conversations across time and place



METHOD

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Description

Open forums where citizens are invited to hear proposals from public authorities and are given the opportunity to respond. Depending on the issue, there may be a legal or regulatory requirement to engage in this format.

When to use

- Time and resources are limited
- Feedback is being sought from people with high influence/interest
- To identify potential political and legal obstacles



METHOD

WORKSHOP

Description

In-person sessions focused on obtaining feedback, or collaborating on a specific topic or commitment. While there are a number of ways to run workshops, they are characterised by facilitation and interaction. Can include presentations but ultimately ends with interactive working groups.

When to use

- For discussions on criteria or analysis of alternatives
- To provide opportunity for interaction and relationships between participants
- You have access to good facilitators



METHOD

**ROUNDTABLES
(EXPERTS AND/OR PUBLIC)**

Description

Often involves a short presentation by the host and/or invited experts, followed by dialogue and discussion designed to answer specific focus questions or examine a particular issue. Ensure to allocate for preparation time.

When to use

- You want to focus on a thorough discussion of an issue
- Often with known audiences
- You have access to good facilitators



METHOD

CITIZENS JURY

Description

Participants are randomly selected from the population to deliberate on an issue, with experts present whose role is to enrich and inform their discussions. The timeframe for this method is variable depending on scope, number of participants and additional engagement activities.

When to use

- Input has the ability to influence policy decisions
- You have sufficient time and resources dedicated to running it, including facilitation and sufficient information provision for initial learning phase
- You have a complex issue or one where there is community division
- Preferably, you have access to an independent organization to run the process



METHOD

COLLABORATIVE PLANNING PROCESSES

Description

A process that brings together a range of people, to discuss and make determinations on relatively narrow issues. Discussions are analytic, reflective, and results-oriented, that focus on collaboratively developing solutions, rather than participants responding to established proposals. Can be conducted online or in person.

When to use

- To generate ideas
- To develop plans
- To enhance public support for government decision-making



METHOD

ADVISORY PANEL

Description

A body of individuals convened to meet (either face to face or through online means) to provide advice to a decision-maker, with whom final authority and accountability rests. Participant selection may be targeted to those with relevant subject matter expertise or experience.

When to use

- To inform federal decision making
- When expert advice is sought, with an expectation of a high degree of influence over recommendations, decisions or outcomes
- When there is a need for consensus on available evidence or information



METHOD

**DELIBERATIVE
DIALOGUE**

Description

Deliberative dialogue can be defined as a process of collective and procedural discussion where an inclusive and representative set of participants consider facts from multiple perspectives, converse with one another to think critically about options, and through reasoned argument refine and enlarge their perspectives, opinions and understandings. For example, Study Circles and Dialogue-to-Change processes combine organizing, deliberative dialogue, and action strategies to facilitate multiple types of change, from public policy to volunteerism.

When to use

- When you are working with a complex, political issue with high degree of uncertainty
- When one of your goals is to find common ground for action
- When there is sufficient time and resources for planning preparation, and participation



METHOD

DELIBERATIVE POLLING

Description

Small group discussions that combine deliberative processes with random sampling to consult on public policy and electoral issues. Members of a random sample are polled, and then some members are invited to gather at a single place to discuss the issues after they have examined balanced briefing materials. The participants engage in dialogue with competing experts and political leaders based on questions they develop in small group discussions with trained moderators. Estimated timeframe for the actual event is 1-2 days, with approximately four months of planning in advance of the event.

When to use

- To measure the level of informed opinion around an issue
- When you have the necessary financing and resources (license, recruitment costs, stipend for participants etc.)



METHOD

STANDING FORUMS

Description

Standing Forums build a formal relationship for frequent consultation or collaboration, often with an organization or authority that represents a target or highly affected audience. May be based on geographical communities, or pertaining to particular issues or sector interests. Timeframe for this method is long term and ongoing. i.e. bilateral mechanisms with First Nations, youth forums, etc.

When to use

- To inform decision-makers of the views and interests of partners, stakeholders, rights holders or citizens
- To ensure long-standing working relationships and/or partnerships
- To engage with hard to reach groups
- To fulfill legal or statutory requirements



METHOD

ORAL HISTORIES

Description

Oral histories are at the heart of Indigenous teaching and learning. They educate the listener about cultural traditions, beliefs, values, customs, rituals, history, practices, relationships, and ways of life (being-know-and doing). Oral histories have often passed down through many generations, and are carefully held and shared by a recognized knowledge holder. Relationships are established between the teacher and the learner through the passing of knowledge in oral history. Patience and trust are essential for preparing to listen and learn. Oral histories that have been received should be treated with respect and can only be shared with permission, in accordance with the protocols of the community or Nation.

If you are working with Indigenous peoples, consider how you might plan for any sharing of oral histories (taking into account the strength of relationships, culturally appropriate practices, adequate time for listening, etc.)

When to use

- As a foundation for holistic learning, relationship building and experiential learning
- In partnership with the community, and with appropriate protocols



METHOD

CIRCLE WORK

Description

Circle Work encourages dialogue, respect, the co-creation of learning content, and social discourse. The nuance of subtle energy created from using this respectful approach to talking with others provides a sense of communion and interconnectedness that is not often present in the common methods of communicating in the classroom.

Baldwin (1994) suggests the use of three principles concerning power questions: rotating leadership, shared responsibility, and reliance on the spirit.

Circle Work is an encompassing term which includes the circle teachings of facilitators and practitioners from diverse cultural backgrounds. Talking or Sharing Circles are a specific practice used by Indigenous peoples in discussion, deliberation and decision-making. Talking or Sharing Circles will be carried out differently depending on the traditional practices of each Nation or community. When you are engaged by an Indigenous community in circle, it is important to acknowledge and respect appropriate protocols.

When to use

- When the intention is to open hearts to understand and connect with one another
- To make sure all voices are heard in a respectful manner
- In partnership with the community, and with appropriate protocols