



Institut für Politikwissenschaft, Fabrikstrasse 8, CH-3012 Bern

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**UNIVERSITÄT
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Wirtschafts- und
Sozialwissenschaftliche Fakultät

Departement
Sozialwissenschaften

Institut für Politikwissenschaft

Criteria for evaluating the regional participation procedures used during the search for sites for deep geological repositories for radioactive waste

Basic document from the research project on
"Participatory waste disposal policy"

Claudia Alpiger (project handling)
Prof. Dr. Adrian Vatter (project management)

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Summary/conclusion

As far back as the late 1990s, in a research project on the topic of *handling technical risks in a democratic manner*, 14 evaluation criteria were developed which could be implemented in democratic participatory procedures to reduce technical risks. The explanations of the criteria are based on somewhat older texts, such as the book *Fairness and Competence in Citizen Participation* by Renn et al. (1995) or also on the "earlier version" of the 14 evaluation criteria by Linder and Vatter, which were elaborated in 1996 in the book *Planung und Kommunikation* by K. Selle (publisher). The 14 criteria were then re-applied by Jordi (2006) within a comparative study of six participatory procedures dealing with disposal of radioactive waste in Switzerland and Belgium. This study showed that the criteria drawn up by Vatter were also suitable for evaluating participatory procedures in the radioactive waste disposal sector and constitute comprehensive criteria for assessing procedures.

Since 1998, much new literature focussing on participatory procedures has been published. After reviewing the new approaches to the evaluation of participatory procedures (e.g., Rowe and Frewer 2000; Hebestreit 2013 and Goldschmidt 2014), it has become apparent that the majority of these "new" criteria follow the pattern of the "old" criteria and that in fact no new criteria have been added¹. This does not mean that no new aspects and/or indicators for checking criteria have been added. However, such can also be sub-categorised to supplement the original criteria.

After having studied the recent literature (and coming to the conclusion that no new criteria are needed) and because thesis supervisor, A. Vatter, and the head of the regional participation procedure being evaluated, S. Jordi, have worked with the 14 evaluation criteria, such will be used once again for the evaluation in question. In this case the 14 criteria will not be applied as they stand – the evaluation, or the evaluation criteria used in this case, goes one step further. The original criteria will be supplemented with further aspects gleaned from recent literature and will also include the recommendations from the PLANVAL report (Lessons Learned). A further change to the original evaluation criteria involves classifying the 14 criteria, which were formerly viewed in a standalone manner – they will now be divided into 4 groups, namely *Process features*, *Participants*, *Information/resources* and *Effect*. The greatest added value is created by defining sub-criteria. On the one hand the sub-criteria simplify the evaluation process for the assessor and on the other make the evaluation process more transparent and comprehensible than in the case of Vatter (1998). To help with checking the sub-criteria, questions or aspects are formulated which have to be studied and which finally can be used to determine whether a sub-criterion can be assessed as having been *fulfilled*, *largely fulfilled*, *partially fulfilled*, *barely fulfilled* or *not fulfilled*.

The catalogue of criteria consists of five criteria which are used to evaluate the participation process and the features of the process. Is the process fair and transparent? Are all the relevant players involved in the process early enough and iteratively? Are the rules for decision-making and the

¹ The criterion for the efficiency of the procedure is an exception. The regional participation procedures currently being studied will not be concluded at the time the evaluation is concluded, so the efficiency of the procedure (e.g., cost efficiency) cannot be analysed. For this reason no reference is made to the efficiency criterion.

rules of the process determined jointly? Has the participation process been tested and proven practical and can it be integrated in the overriding decision process?

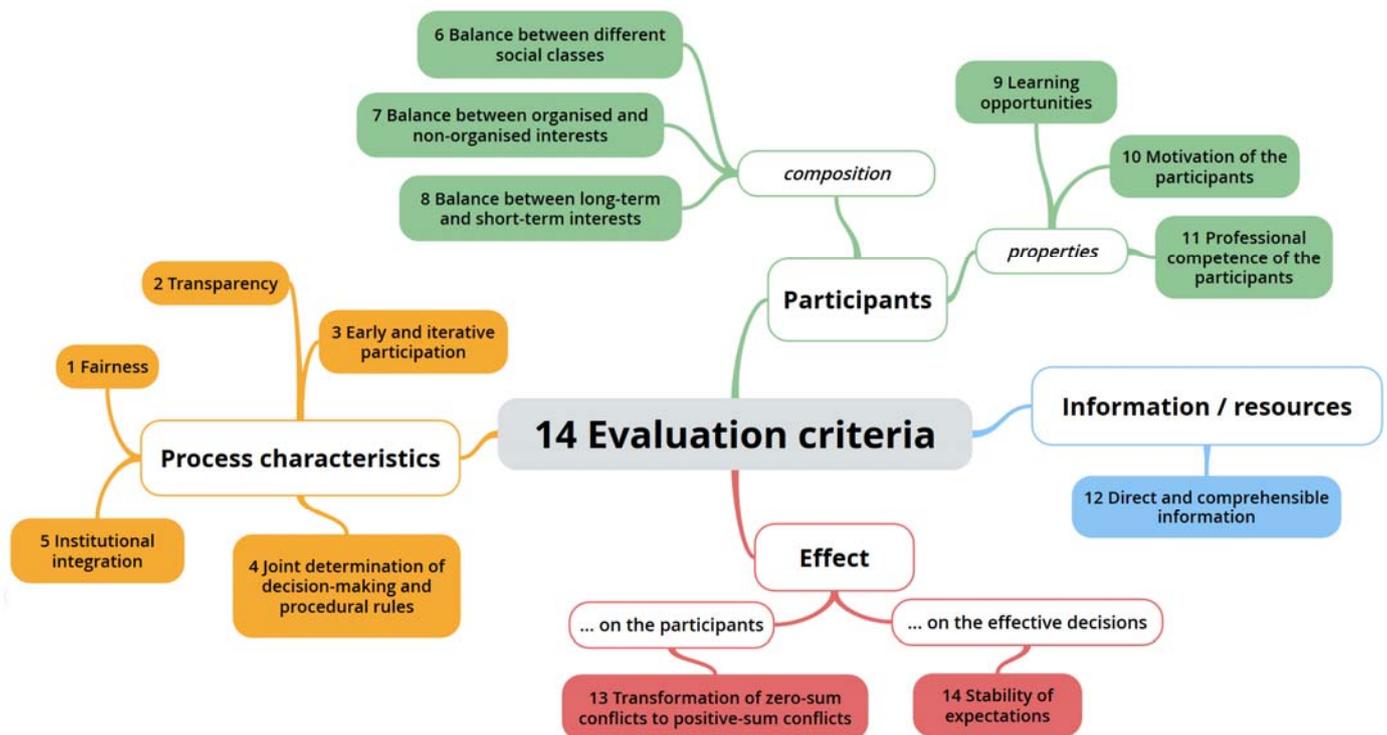
Three criteria will be used to evaluate the composition of the process participants who constitute the principle bodies or groups. The members of these bodies should represent various social strata, various interests whether organised or non-organised, as well as various short and long-term interests in a balanced manner. Three further criteria should give information about the characteristics of the participants. Are the participants prepared to learn? Are participants strongly motivated? Do those involved have sufficient professional competence?

In addition, various indicators concerning access to information provided and the quality of such will be implemented to evaluate the criterion of information.

In the last group, two criteria are used to determine the effect of the procedure. The criterion for the transformation of zero-sum conflicts into positive-sum conflicts will be used on the one hand to assess the effect on participants themselves. On the other hand, the stability of expectations criterion will be used to assess the effect on the definite decision.

The figure printed below provides an overview of all 14 criteria, which will be implemented within the "Participatory waste disposal policy" research project.

Figure 1: Overview of all 14 evaluation criteria



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