



Good practice: RSES Consultation Process

This extensive consultation process is the first time a diverse range of stakeholders engaged on an equal basis to shape the regions vision & objectives

The Southern Regional & Economic Spatial Strategy (RSES), a 12-year strategic development framework, presented an opportunity to tap into the Regions full potential for:

- Economic prosperity
- Improving the quality of life for all citizens and
- Promote the regions international reputation as a sustainable, innovative, healthy & green region.

The RSES is a strategy to safeguard the future of the region and its citizens and as such, needed to be reflective of societal needs prompting the need for an effective consultation process.

Key to success of this process was establishing and following a clear protocol:

- Outline purpose & objective of the consultation
- Defined approach & timeline
- Establish who to consult with
- Determine how to ensure the most effective & meaningful consultation
- Define the major topics to be covered and
- Anticipate the potential issues likely to be raised.

The consultation was extended to each stage of the process to reflect a true & meaningful process:

1. Pre-draft issues paper
2. Pre-draft & draft workshops with key stakeholders
3. Technical working groups & committees coming together regularly
5. Material amendments.

Availability of the regional planning team throughout the process was critical to successful publication.

Stakeholders include Gov. Depts, State Agencies, Local Authorities, Elected Reps, education & research, sectoral interest groups, business org's, community & voluntary groups and citizens

Resources needed

Staff and resources of the Southern Regional Assembly. Limited budget to run the workshops and meetings.

Evidence of success

- No & detail of submissions reflect importance & strength of engagement, over 200 participants across 4 themed workshops & approx. 150 formal submissions
- First time a diverse range of stakeholders engaged on an equal basis to shape the regions vision & objectives

- Positive partnerships fostered between SRA and diverse stakeholders locally
- Collaborative approach established between the 3 regional Metropolitan Areas
- Ongoing engagement from all cross-sectors is evidence of success

Potential for learning or transfer

Public consultation has long been recognised as a critical tool when developing policy/strategy however, there is no clear formula as to how best approach this or how extensive the process should be. This consultation process details an effective process that can be replicated and adapted dependent on requirements. It demonstrate how to approach a wide spectrum of stakeholders with different agendas working at different levels reflecting true participatory decision-making. It can work at any level i.e. local, regional or national.

It outlines a systematic process of meaningful engagement and sharing of knowledge including those outside the policy-making process in order to better inform that process. By enabling the public to participate in policy development, they will gain a greater sense of confidence and trust in the development of the strategy. The meaningful participation demonstrated increases the legitimacy and quality of decision-making.

Tags: Planning , Regional , Regional policy

Project

COHESION

Main institution

Southern Regional Assembly

Location

Southern and Eastern,

Start Date

November 2017

End Date

January 2020

Further information

Contact

Karen Coughlan

Please [login](#) to contact the author.