Enlightened trust in governance

EnTrust

CIVIL SOCIETY EUROPE

Introduction to Civil Dialogue

Training Manual

This publication has been developed by Civil Society Europe in the framework of EnTrust, a Horizon 2020 project.

WP7: Civilising trust/distrust: role models and recommendations

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EnTrust is a multidisciplinary and international research project dedicated to providing novel insights into trust and distrust in governance, and measures to support sustainable and democratic societies in Europe. It consists of a consortium of seven research teams from the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland and Serbia, with expertise in sociology, psychology, political science, media and communication studies, as well as a civil society practitioner active at the EU level.

Civil Society Europe (CSE) is the coordination of civil society organisations at the EU level. Through its membership, CSE reaches out to millions of people active in or supported by not-for-profits and civil society organisations across the EU. Since its foundation in 2016, CSE has become the point of reference for EU institutions on transversal issues concerning civil dialogue and civic space.

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BEFORE THE TRAINING

1. Introduction to the manual

1.a Background: why this training?

The EU institutions' duty to an 'open, transparent and regular dialogue with representative associations and civil society' is inscribed in the Treaties (Art. 11 of the Treaty on European Union). However, as of now, there is no legal framework in place to implement the Treaties' commitment. The Commission has developed, over the years, a Better Regulation framework, the latest version of which is in the form of a Commission's Communication, guidelines and a toolbox, which includes the involvement of stakeholders in consultation. However, there is no streamlined way of application of such provisions, which still remain non-legislative in nature and whose implementation varies from the different Commission's Directorates-General (DGs). Furthermore, neither the Parliament, nor the Council of the European Union or the European Council have established protocols to involve stakeholders and civil society. Indeed, the EnTrust report on practices of enhanced trust in governance showed that civil society organisations are dissatisfied with the lack of culture on civil dialogue within the European institutions.

In that sense, this manual aims to contribute to developing a culture of civil dialogue in EU public officials, by providing trainers with exercises to raise awareness about the importance of civil dialogue, and to effectively implement the principles of civil dialogue and of accessibility for citizens to the EU policy-making.

1.b What is the training about?

1.b.1 Aims

By taking as a reference the Better Regulation Toolbox from the European Commission, in particular, Chapter 7 on 'Stakeholder consultation', this training aims to:

- Operationalise key concepts on stakeholders' involvement in the policymaking process (civil dialogue), and on how to better involve citizens in it.
- Reflect on the definition of civil society organisation, the different needs and requirements for participation that citizens and civil society have, including underrepresented categories and stakeholders.

1.b.2 Learning outcomes (goals)

- To reflect on the definitions of civil society organisation and of civil dialogue.
- To identify the different needs, facilitators and obstacles to citizens' and civil society's meaningful engagement in policy-making.
- To identify the stakeholders and the formats of civil society involvement when organising civil dialogue for an institution on a policy file.

1.c Who is this manual for? Who are the trainers?

This manual is aimed at those who seek to prepare a training session on civil dialogue for public officials and policy-makers at the European level.
The trainers therefore can be:

- members of civil society organisations (CSOs),
- public officials from outreach units (in policy departments, or secretariat general or equivalent),
- policy-makers' assistants and advisors to policy-makers.

To such trainers, the manual gives a structured way to engage with some of the key concepts of civil dialogue. It is also possible that the trainers come from a combination of the abovementioned fields: such a possibility could be useful in integrating different perspectives when preparing and conducting the training.

The trainers can also be professional moderators and trainers: to those, the manual gives content on civil dialogue that can also be adapted to different exercises from those presented here.

It is recommended that a combined approach is adopted, by involving an external trainer (skilled at conducting training) under the supervision of a person with expertise in civil dialogue.

1.d Target group for training

The target group for training are public officials, both civil servants and policy-makers. It is aimed at:

- the personnel of the European Commission, when they organise consultations with stakeholders and plan the citizens' involvement in policy files and consultations;
- the Members of the European Parliament and their staff, when they

want to engage with civil society organisations (both from their constituency and at the European level) to input on policy files;

- the personnel of Ministries and of Permanent Representations of the Member States to the EU, when they plan to involve stakeholders from their countries in providing input to the policy-making process.

Even if the target group is composed of public officials, it is beneficial and highly recommended to involve civil society organisations as participants in the training, in order to allow an exchange of perspectives and experiences between both groups.

1.d.a National adaptation of the training

While the training is aimed at complementing the Better Regulation Toolbox, the content of this manual can be of interest also for training at the national level. In fact:

- The points of interest for the European Commission officials can be of interest also to civil servants working for national governments;
- The points of interest for the Members of the European Parliament can also be of interest to the Members of National Parliaments and their staff;
- The points of interest for the Permanent Representations can be of interest to the representatives of those National Parliament chambers made up of governments of federated states (e.g., German Bundesrat).

Furthermore, in December 2023, the Commission published a recommendation on promoting the engagement and effective participation of citizens and civil society organisations in public policy-making processes. The recommendation, in particular its section entitled 'General framework for the effective participation of citizens and civil society organisations' can be used as a reflection tool for Session 8.c when applied at the national level.

A national adaptation of the training should be conducted in the local language, which means:

- providing all the material (the annexes and surveys) in the local languages;
- using case studies (Annex VII) that are relevant for the local context;
- reflecting on the translation of key terms such as 'civil society', 'civil dialogue' and 'stakeholders', and on the differences between the international context and their local translation.

While the European definitions (Annex IV) and tools (Annexes III, V, VI, VIII) can be used, local definitions and tools could also be implemented to complement or substitute their use, depending on whether the aim of the training is to make participants reflect on the European 'standards', compare the European and the national 'standards', or use national 'standards' to make them more relatable to the participants. Such a choice also depends on how sophisticated the debate on civil society and civil dialogue in the country is: complementing European and national definitions and tools could be useful to further the reflection on aspects that otherwise might not enter into the national debate. On the other hand, the European definitions and tools should be used as ways to reflect on the national context, and not as 'the benchmark': the aim is to critically reflect on them.

1.d.b Sectoral adaptation of the training

This training is aimed at public officials from different sectors and administrative divisions (e.g., Directorates-General, Parliamentary Committees, Council Working Parties). It could also be useful to organise sectoral training, by involving public officials and civil society organisations from the same sector or field. That way, the training could go into more detail on the topics and methods of engagement of the specific field. In order to do so:

- Exercise 8.c on civil dialogue in the different EU institutions should focus on the concrete sectorial structures and propose concrete actions to better civil dialogue;
- Exercise 9.a should provide concrete case studies (Annex VII) that are relevant for the sector, for instance policy files that are being discussed, or are anticipated as relevant in the policy-making process when training is under way.

1.e What is the trainer's role?

The training harvests the collective intelligence of the participants, their knowledge and their experience to acquire new knowledge, develop new skills and engender new attitudes. The role of the trainer is to facilitate such learning by creating a positive environment where everyone can contribute, and where all the necessary resources are available.
It is important that the trainer:

- is knowledgeable on the topic;
- acts as a facilitator, rather than a lecturer;
- appreciates the experience and knowledge of the trainees;
- admits when further research is needed in order to answer a question;
- acknowledges his or her own values and biases;
- behaves in an open, non-judgemental way towards the participants.

1.f Recommended group size

The training involves trainees carrying out exercises in smaller groups or as one large group. The ideal size ranges from 10 to 15 participants. Bigger groups are possible; in such cases, activities done in plenary should be carried out in smaller groups of 10 to 15 people, with the results of the discussions reported and commented on in the plenary, while the activities planned for small groups would need more time for the plenary stage of reporting, as there would be many groups presenting the outcomes of their discussion.

1.g Location and room set-up

In-person training is the recommended format. The room must be well lit and aired, and be a comfortable temperature; it must have enough chairs for all the participants, as well as the possibility of moving them into different formats (e.g., circles). It must have a good sound system and, if the number of trainees is high, at least two microphones have to be available (one for the trainer, one for the trainees). Considering that the training foresees breakout sessions, the room should be big enough to accommodate the work of several groups without disturbing each other, or there should be several rooms available that can fulfil that function. In case participants need to write exercises on loose leaf paper, clip folders should be made available to facilitate this process. Check that the room is accessible for people with physical disabilities (e.g., presence of lifts, ramps leading to the room), and that there is at least one toilet that is adapted for people with physical disabilities. Also provide a quiet room where people can rest, if needed. You can find a checklist to comply with accessibility requirements in the EDF guide for accessible meetings for all.

1.h Training duration and schedule

The training is conceived to last for a full day. It is made up of two parts, which can either be done on the same day (starting in the morning and finishing in the afternoon, with lunch in between), or over two days (with the first part taking place in the afternoon of the first day, and the second part being done in the morning of the second day). Below you can find a proposed schedule for the training. The timing is indicated starting from the 'hour zero' 00h00 and then by adding the times of the sessions: therefore '04h50' means that four hours and fifty minutes have passed since the start of the training. The schedule proposes dividing the session 'Civil dialogue in the different EU institutions' into two parts, to be done before and after lunch; however, if you opt to carry out the training over two days, keeping the session as a single activity to be carried out on day 1 is recommended.

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION OF THE SESSION	TIMING
Participants arrival	Participants arrive to the venue	0h00-0h30
Welcome	The trainer welcomes the participants and conveys the importance of the training	0h30-0h33
Introduction of the training and review of agenda	The trainer presents the rationale of the training, the expected learning outcomes, the agenda and the logistical details	0h33-0h43
Introductory icebreaker	Everyone briefly introduces themselves, from a professional and personal point of view	0h43-0h58
Ground rules	Rules of conduct for the training are presented and agreed on	00h58-01h05
Gathering expectations on the training itself and beyond the training	The trainees reflect on the needs they would like the training to fulfil, and the impact they would like the training to have on their professional life	01h05-01h20
What are CSOs?	Trainees agree on a definition of civil society organisation and on the categories included in it	01h20-02h20
Break		***02h20-02h30***
What is a 'true' civil dialogue?	Trainees agree on a definition of civil dialogue and on the dimensions of action for the institutions	02h30-03h00
Civil dialogue in the different EU institutions; Part 1: brainstorming	Trainees identify the reasons why the individual EU institutions should uphold civil dialogue, and in what specific forms	03h00-03h25
Lunch / End of day 1		03h25-04h15
Civil dialogue in the different EU institutions; Part 2: presentation of the results	Trainees present in plenary the reasons why the individual EU institutions should uphold civil dialogue, and in what specific forms	04h15-04h30

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION OF THE SESSION	TIMING
Citizens' & civil society's involvement: needs, facilitators and obstacles	Trainees identify the needs, facilitators and obstacles for citizens and civil society organisations to contribute to the EU policy-making	04h30-05h10
Break		05h10-05h25
Apply the six tests for stakeholder identification	Trainees identify the categories of stakeholders and civil society organisations to be involved in the consultations for a policy file, with a reflection on the identification of underserved/ underrepresented groups	05h25-06:55
Break		06h55-07h10
Reflection on the Stakeholder credibility test	Trainees reflect on the pitfalls of the stakeholder credibility test and on how to apply it intelligently	07h10-07h40
Self-reflection: skills, knowledge and attitudes for citizens' and civil society's involvement	Trainees identify personal strengths and shortcomings in skills, knowledge and attitudes when involving citizens and civil society in their own work	07h40-08h00
Sharing of learning outcomes and their possible application	Trainees reflect on what they have learnt during the day and how they can apply it in their everyday work	08:00-08h10
First feedback on the training	Trainees give some initial first feedback on the training	08h10-08h20
Closing and refreshments		08h20-09h00

The training is predicted to last a full day. However, if more time is allowed, it can be extended by providing further exercises to the participants. In this respect, you can find in Section 12 on page 59 some further exercises that can be added to the training. Ideally, Exercise 12.a 'Civil dialogue: strategies to involve under-represented groups' and exercise '12.b Civil dialogue: agenda setting and policy evaluation' should be held after exercise 9.a 'Applying the six tests for stakeholder identification', while Exercise 12.c 'Current practice sharing and enhancement' should be held after exercise 9.b 'Reflection on the Stakeholder credibility test'.

1.i Structure of the manual

The manual is structured in twelve parts and annexes.

BEFORE THE TRAINING	
Part 1	It sets the scene for the training.
Part 2	It gives an introduction to civil dialogue at the European level, its legal bases and its (lack of) implementation in the main EU institutions, the Commission, the Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Council. It also introduces some of the points on stakeholder involvement present in the Better Regulation Toolbox which will be used in the training.
Part 3	It gives an overview of all the activities of the training, the methodology used, their duration and the materials required.
Part 4	It describes the methods used during the training.
Part 5	It explains the skills that the trainer, as a facilitator, needs in order to carry out the training.
Part 6	It provides a checklist to be used before the training starts
TRAINING CONTENT	
Part 7	It presents the introductory activities of the training, in order for the participants to break the ice, get to know each other, their expectations for the day and to present the learning outcomes of the training and common rules of behaviour for it.
Part 8	It presents a needs assessment session to introduce the concepts of civil society organisation and their needs vis-a-vis other stakeholder categories, and of civil dialogue, its advantages, facilitators and obstacles.
Part 9	It presents a case study in order to apply the reflections carried out in the previous section, as well as the guidelines given in the Better Regulation Toolbox.

Part 10	It presents the closing session on the day, which includes feedback from the trainees.
EVALUATION OF THE TRAINING	
Part 11	It provides a sample questionnaire that can be used to evaluate the training and its impact on the trainees.
STANDALONE EXERCISES	
Part 12	It provides additional exercises that can be integrated into the training when extending the delivery time of the training is envisaged.
RESOURCES	
Part 13	It provides the list of resources cited in the manual
ANNEXES	
Annexes	It provides the resources to be printed for the training.

1.j About the authors and the development of the manual

The manual has been developed by Civil Society Europe within the framework of the Horizon 2020 project 'EnTrust – Enlightened Trust in Governance'.

Civil Society Europe is the coordination of civil society organisations at EU level. Through its membership, CSE reaches out to millions of people active in or supported by not-for-profit and civil society organisations across the EU. Civil Society Europe was created by several civil society organisations as a follow-up to the European Year of Citizens, and was established as an international not-for-profit under Belgian law in 2016. Since then, Civil Society Europe has become the point of reference for EU institutions on transversal issues concerning civil dialogue and civic space.

EnTrust is a multidisciplinary and international research project dedicated to providing novel insights into trust and distrust in governance and measures to support sustainable and democratic societies in Europe. It consists of a consortium of seven research teams from the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland and Serbia with expertise in sociology, psychology, political science, media and communication studies, as well as Civil Society Europe.

The manual has been developed under Work Package 7 of the project, dedicated to the relationships between civil society organisations and public authorities at the European level, and the dynamic relationship of trust and distrust in which they are engaged. It has been inspired by other manuals, such as the 'Training manual for trainers - CGVPA Tool' (Akhter, Islam & Chowdhury, 2022), 'Training of trainers' (Hamers, 2018), 'Tips on Evaluating "Train the Trainer" Workshops' (Sullivan, 2014), 'Training of trainers: A manual for training facilitators in participatory teaching techniques' (Partners in Health, 2011), 'TREE Training Methodologies' (ILO, 2009), 'Steps to becoming a conscious trainer - a train the trainer manual' (TRESA, 2006), and 'Train-the-Trainer Workshop: Planning & Implementing Active Learning Workshops' (SIAP, n.d.). It has been revised by a lifelong learning expert (Michiel Heijnen), and tested out in two training sessions: one in Brussels, Belgium, (6th December 2023) and one in Prague, Czechia, targeted to officials and civil society organisations (22nd January 2024). The training in Brussels was attended by four representatives of European Civil Society Organisations, two officials of the European Commission, two representatives of the Permanent Representations of the Member States to the EU, and one advisor of a political group in the European Parliament, while the Czech one was attended by six representatives of Czech Civil Society Organisations, six representatives of Czech Ministries, and one representative of a regional office. We thank them for their participation and their feedback on the training sessions. We also thank Glopolis for organising the Czech testing of the manual and providing insights into the national adaptation of the manual. We finally thank Nadège Riche for moderating the Brussels training and providing insightful feedback on the draft version of this manual.

2. Introduction to civil dialogue

This section provides an overview of the main concepts of civil dialogue. The EnTrust project has also developed a wikisite with thematic sections that delves deeper into the topics, and gives hands-on instruments to do advocacy work at the EU level: you can find it at: https://entrust-wiki.eu/.

2.a The concept of 'civil dialogue' and its role in the Treaties

While no legal definition for 'civil dialogue' exists at the EU level, it has been defined by the European Civic Forum and in the Civic Space Watch as 'civil society's engagement in the entire cycle of EU law- and policy-making [from] specific thematic areas throughout the policy cycle [to] programmatic issues and agenda-setting'. The European Economic and Social Committee identified three complementary forms of civil dialogue:

- Vertical dialogue: sectoral civil dialogue between civil society organisations and their interlocutors within the legislative and executive authorities;
- Transversal dialogue: structured and regular dialogue between EU institutions and all of these civil society components;
- Horizontal dialogue: dialogue between civil society organisations themselves on the development of the European Union and its policies.

Art. 11 of the Treaty on European Union - TEU is the legal foundation for the establishment of civil dialogue within the EU policy-making. In fact, while not directly mentioning civil dialogue, Art. 11 of the TEU says that the institutions shall maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with representative associations and civil society. CSOs, therefore, call for the 'implementation of the Article 11 of the Treaty on European Union', as was the case in a joint letter co-led by Civil Society Europe and Civil Society Organisations' Group of the European Economic and Social Committee and signed by 156 civil society networks, organisations and representatives from 26 Member States. You can read the proposals by the European Civic Forum and Civil Society Europe to the Commission in the section 'Foster real dialogue and meaningful participation' of the policy paper: 'How can we enable, protect and expand Europe's civic space, to strengthen democracy, social and environmental justice?'.

2.b Civil dialogue and the European Commission

A legislative provision that implements Article 11 does not exist yet. However, the Commission has adopted a communication to the other institutions called: 'Better Regulation: Joining forces to make better laws'. In this communication, in the complementary staff working document and in the toolbox, the Commission identifies public consultations via the *Have your say* portal as the main way to gather input from citizens and stakeholders, while targeted consultations with stakeholders are preferred when the subject is deemed too technical or of limited interest for the general public.

The public consultations are normally organised in two stages: input for the impact assessment, called 'call for evidence', where it is possible to send documents in the format of policy contributions; and the public consultation, which is made of a web questionnaire with both open and closed questions. Typically, public consultations (and accompanying calls for evidence) should stay open for 12 weeks (extended to 14 weeks if during the summer holidays), while calls for evidence not associated with a public consultation should stay open for four weeks. When presenting the policy, the accompanying document must report on the results of the call for evidence and the consultation, in a section called 'synopsis of the consultation results', which should also explain which proposals from the consultations were accepted, which were not, and why. After the publication of the proposal, it is possible to give feedback on the proposal for eight weeks: the collected feedback will be summarised by the Commission and presented to the European Parliament and Council, with the aim of feeding these views into legislative debate.

The Better Regulation Toolbox also provides indications on how to plan a consultation strategy in a way that is representative of the different interests at stake. In particular, it provides a mapping of the categories of stakeholders, a six-step approach to avoid missing stakeholders (especially among the underrepresented), and it provides a 'stakeholder credibility test' to weigh the answers received by them. What is important to notice is that, among the stakeholder categories, civil society organisations are not explicitly mentioned, or identified, even if they are in practice among the stakeholders consulted.

BOX 1. STAKEHOLDER CATEGORIES (NON-EXHAUSTIVE LIST):	
Citizens	■ The general public: individual non-expert citizens ■ Individual expert citizens responding on their own behalf
Businesses	■ Large-sized enterprises ■ SMEs ■ Microenterprises ■ Self-employed
Social partners and representatives of professions and crafts	■ Chambers of commerce ■ Employers' organisations ■ Business organisations ■ Trade union organisations ■ Representatives of professions or craft
Non-governmental organisations	■ Non-governmental organisations ■ Platforms ■ Networks ■ Similar associations
Consultancy	■ Professional consultancies ■ Law firms ■ Self-employed consultants
Research and academia	■ Think-tanks ■ Research institutions ■ Academic institutions
Organisations representing regional, local, and municipal authorities, other public or mixed sub-national entities	■ Regional, local, or municipal structures ■ Other sub-national public authorities ■ Transnational associations and networks of public subnational authorities ■ Other public or mixed entities created by law whose purpose is to act in the public interest
National public authorities, EU decentralised agencies and other bodies (EU agencies) and international public authorities	■ National and regional/local governments ■ National and regional/local Parliaments ■ National and regional/local public authorities or agencies ■ EU institutions, EU decentralised agencies and other bodies (EU agencies) ■ Intergovernmental organisations

Source: Better Regulation Toolbox, p. 463-464.

BOX 2. THE SIX TESTS FOR STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION

Test 1. Who is directly impacted?

- Whose daily/weekly lives will change because of this policy?
- Who cannot easily take steps to avoid being affected by this policy?
- Who will have to change their behaviour because of this policy?

Test 2. Who is indirectly impacted?

- Whose daily lives will change because others have been directly impacted by the policy?
- Who will gain or lose because of changes resulting from this policy?

Test 3. Who is potentially impacted?

- In particular circumstances, who will have a different experience as a result of this decision?
- Are there individuals or groups who will have to adjust their behaviour if specific conditions apply?

Test 4. Whose help is needed to make it work?

- Are there vital individuals or groups in the delivery chain?
- Who will have the ability to obstruct implementation unless co-operating?
- Who understands the likely impact of this decision on other stakeholders?

Test 5. Who thinks they know about the subject?

- Who has studied the subject and published views on it?
- Who has detailed know-how and expertise that those implementing the policy should also understand?
- Are there individuals or groups that will be perceived as knowledgeable on the subject?

Test 6. Who will show an interest in the subject?

- Are there organisations, authorities, bodies, or individuals who think they have an interest?
- Has anyone been campaigning about the issue?
- Is there anyone publishing or broadcasting views on this subject?

Source: Better Regulation Toolbox, p. 465

BOX 3. STAKEHOLDER CREDIBILITY TEST	
Longevity	Has the stakeholder organisation been established long enough to acquire the wisdom in the policy field?
Expertise	How well does it know the subject matter?
Representativeness	Who exactly does it represent and how well does it do so?
Track record	How useful/credible has its contribution been in the past?
Reputation	How seriously do other people take this organisation?

Source: Better Regulation Toolbox, p. 482.

Another way to involve CSOs and stakeholders in the policy-making of the Commission is via expert groups. Expert groups are consultative bodies set up by the Commission, or its departments, to provide them with advice and expertise, composed of public and/or private sector members, which meet more than once. They are asked for input both for the preparation of policy proposals, as well as for their implementation. There are five types of participants in the expert groups: Type A) individuals appointed in a personal capacity; Type B) individuals appointed to represent an interest common to several stakeholder organisations; Type C) organisations in the broad sense of the word, including companies, associations, NGOs, trade unions, universities, research institutes, law firms and consultancies; Type D) Member State authorities, national, regional or local; Type E) other public entities, such as authorities from non-EU countries (including candidate countries), EU bodies, offices or agencies, and international organisations. Apart from public entities, participation in the expert groups is decided via selection after a public call for applications, which are published in the Expert Groups' register for a period of four weeks. Individuals acting on behalf of stakeholders (Type B) and organisations (Type C) must be part of the Transparency Register in order to be selected.

2.c Civil dialogue and the European Parliament

The European Parliament does not have a comprehensive strategy for civil society involvement in its work. At the political level, after pressure from CSOs, in 2022 the President of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola, incorporated civil society relations into her own responsibilities, supported by Vice-President Pedro Silva Pereira. Furthermore, according to the European Parliament's Rule of Procedures, the Conference of Presidents tasks one Vice-President with organising structured consultation with European civil society on major topics. However, such a structured consultation with civil society is not in place, and the last major civil society events organised by the European Parliament were the citizens' agoras, which have not been organised since 2014 The Parliament's committees regularly organise hearings and workshops for exchanges of view on different policy aspects they are analysing. In such meetings, CSOs are sometimes invited to provide their expertise, but the process of compiling a list of experts and inviting civil society lacks a structured approach. In the organisation of these workshops, the administrative side of the Parliament (Parliament Policy Departments) play a role in inviting the experts. MEPs from at least three political groups can create thematic Intergroups, aimed at discussing specific topics between legislators and civil society. Intergroups are not official Parliament bodies, but are recognised by the Parliament. They are established by agreement between the chairs of the political groups at the beginning of each legislative term.

2.d Civil dialogue and the Council of the European Union and the European Council

The Council of the European Union (also called 'the Council') does not have a framework of engagement with CSOs, apart from the field of foreign affairs. Any other CSOs involvement is either based on the tradition of involvement of some organisations in the informal sectoral Council meetings, or are decided on the initiative of the rotating Presidencies of the Council. The European Council does not have any framework of engagement with civil society.

2.e The Commission's recommendation to the Member States on promoting the engagement and effective participation of citizens and civil society organisations in public policy-making processes

In December 2023, within the Defence of Democracy Package, the European Commission published a recommendation to the Member States on promoting the engagement and effective participation of citizens and civil society organisations in public policy-making processes. The recommendation covers aspects such as deliberative democracy and civic space (i.e., conditions for civil society to thrive), but it also provides indications on how to conduct civil dialogue. Among them:

- Strategic partnerships between public authorities and civil society organisations;
- Creation of structured dialogue on specific topics related to public policy-making processes, but going beyond consultations for specific policy or legislative proposals, and being regular, long-lasting and result-oriented;
- A framework of participation that is regular (not just called near the elections) from the early stages of the policy-making processes, clear in its objectives, procedures and relevant actors involved, which allows the participants to participate freely and without undue interference, and that is inclusive, transparent and with redress mechanisms when there are limitations to participation.

2.f Resources on civil dialogue from the Council of Europe's Conference of INGOs

The Council of Europe has also worked on civil dialogue, especially via its Conference of INGOs (International Non-Governmental Organisations). In particular, useful readings as an introduction to civil dialogue are the Code of good practice for civil participation in the decision-making process and the Toolkit for conducting intercultural dialogue.

In particular, the Code of good practice of the Council of Europe gives five principles and useful indications for how to structure civil dialogue in its different stages. They are summarised in the following table:

PRINCIPLES TO ENHANCE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	
Transparency	■ All processes must be transparent and open to scrutiny. ■ Timely public access to all documents, drafts, decisions and opinions relevant for participation must be ensured.
Accessibility	■ Civil participation should be propagated via the use of clear language and appropriate means of participation, offline or online, and on any device – based on agreed frameworks for participation.

Non-discrimination	■ Civil participation must avoid all measures in the proceedings, ways of publication of information, organisation of meetings and hearings, etc., which would exclude interested persons or groups from participating, especially the less privileged and most vulnerable.
Inclusiveness	■ Civil participation should specifically reach out to include all groups with particular interests and needs, such as young people, the elderly, and people with disabilities or minorities.
Accountability	■ Any process of participation must be directed at producing results and be open to changing the original proposals. ■ These results must be documented and made available to the public. ■ All decision-makers take responsibility for their decisions. ■ Decisions are reasoned, subject to scrutiny and can be sanctioned. ■ Remedies exist for maladministration or wrongful decisions.
CIVIL DIALOGUE IN THE DIFFERENT STEPS OF THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS	
Input/ incentive ideas	■ CSOs' possibility to express their ideas to the government/administration when ideas and incentives for future legislation, developments, etc. are gathered.
Agenda setting	■ Access to relevant, accurate and timely information on the policy process, documents and political decision-makers; also, via an ad hoc key government contact for civil society. ■ Organisation of consultations, hearings, public forums, with interested stakeholders to identify and interpret the sensitivities and interests of the different groups. ■ Permanent or ad hoc working groups with civil society to advise on policy preferences.

Drafting	■ Open and free access to policy documents, including single information point for policy drafting, with information available in different formats to reach the public. ■ Organisation of consultations, hearings, public forums, with interested stakeholders to identify and interpret the sensitivities and interests of the different groups. ■ Permanent or ad hoc working groups with civil society actively involved in drafting parts of the legislative process.
Decision	■ Open plenary or committee sessions to ensure open access to debates during the decision-making.
Implementation	■ Open and free access to public sector documents relating to projects and implementation decisions ■ Publicly advertised tender procedure to provide an open, transparent process for service provision. ■ Capacity building seminars to increase knowledge and capacity relevant to the implementation. ■ Events, conferences, forums and seminars to inform and discuss the implementation of policy with NGOs and the public. ■ Strategic partnership where NGOs and public authorities form a partnership to implement policy; this may range from a small pilot scheme to a full implementation responsibility.
Monitoring	■ Open and free access to information on policy progress. ■ Evidence gathering to collect cases and statistics on project delivery. ■ Evaluation of policy and its impact through conferences and reporting. ■ Feedback mechanisms to follow progress, from the side of both the users and the providers. ■ Work group or committee consisting of CSOs (both users and providers) and public authorities coming together in a strategic partnership to monitor and evaluate the policy initiative.

Reformulation	■ Open and free access to information providing evaluations, study results and other evidence about the existing policy. ■ Online consultation to gather civil society views on how to follow-up policy/project. ■ Conference or meeting to set out next steps planned by public authority. ■ Seminars and deliberative forums to involve interested stakeholders in developing new directions in policy field e.g., World café, open space, other brainstorming methods. ■ Work group or committee where NGOs form an expert group jointly with other stakeholders and public authorities with the purpose of recommending a revised policy.

Adapted from: Code of good practice for civil participation in the decision-making process (2019), p. 6-8, 11-17.

3. Overview table of training

ACTIVITY	CONTENT	METHODS	TIME	MATERIALS
7.a	The trainer welcomes the participants and conveys the importance of the training	Brief speech	3 mins	No materials needed
7.b	The trainer presents the rationale of the training, the expected learning outcomes, the agenda and the logistical details	Brief speech	10 mins	Printed version of the training's learning outcomes, one per participant; printed version of the agenda, one per participant.
7.c	Everyone briefly introduces themselves, from a professional and personal point of view, to make the participants 'lose their institutional hats'	Icebreaker	15 mins	No materials needed

7.d	Rules of conduct for the training are presented and agreed on	Brief speech	7 mins	Printed version of the ground rules, one per participant
7.e	The trainees reflect on the needs they would like the training to fulfil, and the impact they would like the training to have on their professional life	Needs analysis	15 mins	1 pre-prepared flipchart: pens (1 per participant); Post-it notes of two different colours.
8.a	Trainees agree on a definition of civil society organisation and on the categories included in it	Large group discussion	1 hour	Printed version of the Stakeholder categories, one per participant; 2 new flipcharts; 1 black marker; 1 red marker
8.b	Trainees agree on a definition of civil dialogue and on the dimensions of action for the institutions	Large group discussion	30 mins	1 new flipchart; the final flipchart from the previous exercise; 1 black marker; 1 red marker; sheet with the ECF's and EESC's definitions of civil dialogue and Council of Europe's principles to enhance public participation, one per participant
8.c	Trainees identify the reasons why the individual EU institutions should uphold civil dialogue, and in what specific forms	Small group discussion	40 mins	3 pre-prepared flipcharts; 3 markers; 3 sheets with the Council of Europe's code on Civil dialogue in the different steps of the decision-making process.
8.d	Trainees identify the needs, facilitators and obstacles for citizens and civil society organisations to contribute to the EU policy-making	Small group discussion	40 mins	2 pre-prepared flipcharts; 2 markers

9.a	Trainees identify the categories of stakeholders and civil society organisations to be involved in the consultations for a policy file, with a reflection on the identification of underserved/ underrepresented groups	Case study	1h 30 mins	1 pre-prepared flipchart; sheets of paper with the Stakeholder categories, one per group; sheets of paper with the six tests for stakeholder identification, one per group; sheets with the selected case study, one per group; pens; Post-it notes, one block per group
9.b	Trainees reflect on the pitfalls of the stakeholder credibility test, and on how to apply it intelligently	Large group discussion	30 mins	Sheets of paper with the Stakeholder credibility test, one per participant; 1 pre-prepared flipchart; 1 marker; pens, one per participant.
10.a	Trainees identify personal strengths and shortfalls in skills, knowledge and attitudes when involving citizens and civil society in their own work	Self-reflection	20 mins	Sheets of paper with the guiding questions, one per participant; pens
10.b	Trainees reflect on what they have learnt during the day and how they can apply it in their everyday work	Large group discussion	10 mins	No materials needed
10.c	Trainees give a first feedback on the training	Self-reflection	10 mins	Sheets of paper with the first feedback on the training, one per participant; pens

4. Description of methods

4.a Steps in conducting a learning activity

When conducting a learning activity, it is helpful to provide participants with clear explanations on the name of the activity ('What it is'), its functioning ('How it works'), what needs it tackles ('Need') and how it helps address them ('Benefit'): this allows the participants to relate concretely to the exercise and consciously engage with it. Normally, the order of presentation is: Need, Benefit, What it is, How it works.

Example:
Need: 'Many times, when organising a stakeholder consultation, the question of whom to invite is raised, and it is crucial for the legitimacy of the consultation itself'.
Benefit: 'In this exercise, you will work collectively to identify the different categories of stakeholders based on the six tests for stakeholder verification'.
What it is: 'This exercise is a case study'.
How it works: 'You are going to be divided into smaller groups, and given a specific case of a legislative proposal, etc.'

4.b Introduction to group discussions

Group discussions allow the trainees to collectively reflect on a topic, and possibly reach a consensus on the subject at hand. The role of the trainer is that of facilitator, i.e., the person that introduces the subject, ensures that different people intervene, keeps the discussion on track, provides clarifications and explanations, and summarises the final consensus (or the different opinions) of the discussion.
The phases of a group discussion are:

1. Introduction: the trainer presents the topic to be discussed, in the form of an open question.
2. Discussion: the group discusses the topic, either together (large-group discussions) or in smaller groups (small-group discussions).
3. Clarification: The trainer presents the results of the discussion, and the group works to refine them.
4. Closing: the final results of the discussion (consensus or diverging ideas) are formalised and accepted by the group.

The phase of discussion can be done either in large groups, or small groups.

4.c Large-group discussions

In the large-group discussions, the facilitator promotes the discussion within the whole group by using questions and by relaying the participants' answers to those of the other participants, making them reflect on the proposals of their peers. In a large group discussion, the facilitator has to keep the discussion on track, as several competing proposals might divert the discussion outside of the issue at hand. The facilitator also has to be mindful of the time constraints and to those that tend to speak more, trying to actively involve those that are quieter. At the same time, it must be taken into consideration that not everyone feels comfortable talking in large groups.

4.d Small-group discussions

Small-group discussions happen in three phases: explanation of the instructions all together; discussion in small groups; presentation of the discussion results in the plenary and possibly final comments. Groups of the size of four to six people work best in terms of group dynamics and engagement. Even if, according to the sensitivity of the subject, it can also be envisaged to organise groups based on shared affinities in order to allow safe spaces to share experiences (e.g., when discussing reproductive health, it may make sense to have groups organised by gender), in general, ensuring the diversity of the groups engenders a livelier discussion. In any case, it is important that the groups are made up of people that normally do not work together. A way to divide them is by allocating participants numbers that signify their group. It is important that a clear timeframe is given to the groups, and that the trainer gives them half-time, five-minutes and one-minute warnings before the time is up. The trainer has to walk around the different groups to see if they need help, and has to ensure that a rapporteur to the plenary is chosen within the group. After the small group discussions, the rapporteurs present in the plenary the final results of the discussions. A final plenary conversation can then be promoted by the trainer. The advantage of small-group discussions is that they allow more people to be engaged, but the final stage of summarising the different results can be complex, as each group could have followed a different thought process, and the results could be very different.

4.e Case studies

Case studies are brief stories or scenarios that present realistic situations to be solved, discussed or analysed. Case studies are useful to help apply the new knowledge, skills and attitudes learnt during the training, in order to apply the theory to real-life scenarios. Generally, case studies do not have 'right answers', but it can happen that wrong procedures or conjectures are employed, and it is the role of the trainer to correct them in order to avoid them being used again. Case studies can be tackled individually, in small groups, or in plenary. The case study has to be realistic, but simple, without unnecessary detail, and be accompanied by the task or the questions to be answered. The different stages of a case study are:

1. Introduction: the trainer (or a trainee) reads aloud the case study and the task/question(s) to be tackled
2. Analysis: based on the instructions, the participants, either individually or in (small or large) groups work to fulfil the task.
3. Discussion: the results of the analysis are presented and discussed in the plenary.
4. Closing: normally, there is not a final summary; however, if there are wrong procedures or conjectures being used, they have to be corrected before the end of the session.

The case study is a rather long exercise that requires a significant amount of time and mental energies from the participants.

4.f Icebreakers

Icebreakers are short exercises to energise a training session in its beginnings and enable more natural discussions at later stages. They are useful to ensure that participants are equal and have something they share, beyond their respective roles in their life outside of the training. The icebreakers should not last more than fifteen to twenty minutes, and need to be tailored for the audience: it has to be something that everyone can (and is comfortable and willing to) be part of. Therefore, sharing too personal or sensitive information is not suitable for an icebreaker. The trainer has to clearly explain the icebreaker and, if possible, participate themselves. Depending on the size of the group, icebreakers can require individual execution (one by one) or collective ones: large groups, therefore, have to resort to the latter, unless they are divided into smaller groups.

4.g Energisers

Energisers are fun exercises that allow trainers to increase the attention of the participants when the energy level in the room is low. They are also useful to increase confidence between participants, as they require direct interaction between them. The trainer has to explain the rules of the energiser clearly, be ready to participate in it, encourage humour and laughter. Energisers must be fun, so they need to be tailored to the audience, to ensure that everyone can (and is comfortable and willing to) be part of them. Energisers must be short (around five to ten minutes) and be stopped once the energy levels have increased (so, at the peak of the activity). It is good to plan several energisers (four to five per day of training), in order to use them when needed. A list of energisers is available here.

4.h Needs analysis

A needs analysis is an exercise to identify the contribution that the training can have in improving the trainees' knowledge, skills and behaviours. It analyses the current performance (and its shortfalls), and the expected performance after the training. This analysis can be done by different formats, e.g., surveys (open or close questions), interviews, or observation. The gap between the current and expected performance is filled by the training, which has expected learning outcomes, both broad (goals) and specific (objectives).

5. Facilitator skills

5.a What kind of skills does a facilitator need?

The facilitator has to be an attentive listener, and open, unbiased and non-judgemental towards the participants' contributions. The facilitator should proactively stimulate the discussion, be open and curious about participants' ideas, and approach them in a non-confrontational manner, with enough flexibility to adapt the content and the methods of the training to the concrete needs of the audience. The facilitator has to be engaging when communicating, using language, voice levels and non-verbal communication to engage with the participants. The facilitator should be attentive to the group dynamics and ensure a safe environment to ensure that each participant has the opportunity to contribute.

5.b Familiarisation with participants

Before and during the session, the facilitator has to ensure that the participants familiarise themselves with their peers and the facilitator. This can be done in the introductory stages of the module, and is important for shaping the group dynamics, as well as for tailoring the sessions to a specific audience. That is important, as a successful training is one that meets the needs of the audience in terms of objectives, content and method. In order to do that, it is important to understand what gaps (in terms of knowledge, skills, or even motivation) the participants have, and to assess whether the training can fill those gaps.

5.c How adult learning works

The training is aimed at adults. Adults come to trainings with their personal baggage of experiences, knowledge and skills acquired throughout the years, which influences their attitude towards the training, their engagement with it, and ultimately, its level of success. Adult learners, even more when practitioners, look for real-life applications of the knowledge acquired via the training. Since they already have well-developed personalities, learning styles and behaviour patterns, they can be reluctant in their responsiveness to the proposed methods of the training. That is why it is important to focus on the quality of the training and on understanding the trainees, and to adapt the training accordingly, as well as focusing on a diversity of training methods to ensure concepts and skills are retained, as adult learners tend to remember 20% of what they hear, 40% of what they hear and see, and 80% of what they hear, see, and do.

5.d Keeping the attention

Learning is composed of knowledge, skills, and attitude. In order to avoid audience boredom with what is presented, or on the other hand overwhelmed and therefore disengaged, it is important that the exercises have the right balance of difficulty, so that the participants feel confident in their ability to complete the exercise, and at the same time feel challenged by it. During the sessions, asking questions of the participants and using humour (ensuring that it is clearly understood as such, and does not offend anyone due to cultural differences) are good ways to stimulate the participants and to retain their attention. It is also important to be mindful of non-verbal communication: making eye contact with the participants, and using body language and changes in voice tone to emphasise elements are good ways to engage the audience.

5.e Handling difficult participants or situations

In order for training sessions to be effective, trainers must ensure that they create a safe environment where participants feel respected, comfortable and equal. Participants can have different levels of knowledge and engagement: it is up to the facilitator to subtly restore balance regarding speaking time by proactively involving the less talkative members by encouraging and valuing their contributions. That can be done, for instance, by relaunching their contributions to the broader audience, or to those that are not as proactive. It is also important to underline that each individual contribution is valuable, regardless of the level of experience on the subject. It can happen that the group (or some parts of it) shows difficulties in completing the exercises, or resists the indications of the facilitator. In such cases, it is important to recognise the signals early on, to address the concerns in an open and friendly manner, as well as to avoid confrontation with individuals by appreciating critical questions and asking the opinion of the rest of the group. It is important to be flexible in order to adapt the format to the requests of the group, and to tackle possible problems and find solutions together with the participants. If there are topics that arise that are outside the scope of the training, or that would require much time, the facilitator should take a note of them and communicate that a follow-up will be done, either during breaks and/or after the training.

5.f Taking into account culture, experience and group dynamics

A successful training has to take into account the background of the participants, and how that can influence the group dynamics. In multicultural contexts, the importance of the participants' culture, in terms of 'low-context cultures' and 'high-context cultures', has to be acknowledged. Low-context cultures are those cultures where openness, frankness and direct communication is appreciated, and where the focus is on persuasion and argumentation, rather than on harmony; high-context cultures tend to rely more on the non-verbal and contextual messages, prefer indirectness and value consensus and harmony. Such differences are visible during a training session, and influence the group dynamics. It is important that cultural differences are acknowledged at the beginning of the training, and that the facilitator steers the group in a way that all participants can feel comfortable and safe. In order to do that, it is important that the facilitator leads by recognising their own values and biases, while encouraging the participants to understand their own. Finding a common objective for the training, and valuing and encouraging contributions from all participants, are crucial to developing a sense of ownership of the training, and therefore its success. Furthermore, this training involves participants that have different professional backgrounds, i.e., different EU institutions and civil society organisations. In order for the training to be fruitful, it is important that all the different components are actively involved in the discussion, in order to ensure that the variety of perspectives is well represented. Finally, the trainer has to make sure that group dynamics are free from any disparities or discriminatory behaviours, for instance, linked to the gender, sexual orientation or ethnicity of the participants.

5.g Ensuring an equal participation for people with disabilities

Some of the participants might have a disability; therefore, there could be the need to adapt the training based on their accessibility needs, as indicated by them on registration to the training. It is paramount that the adapted activities are applied for all the participants, instead of creating 'special activities' for persons with disabilities, and ensure mixed-ability groups when working in breakout sessions. The trainer has to see the person with disability as a person first, not as someone defined by their disability; the trainer has to ensure that the same respect is shown by the other participants. Sometimes the degree of adaptation of the sessions might be minimal, and the participants with disabilities might already know how to adapt spaces based on previous experience: the trainer can contact the participants with disabilities in advance to get to know them and work with them about possible adaptations of the sessions. For further information on how to organise mixed-ability activities, see No barriers, no borders: A practical booklet for setting up international mixed-ability youth projects (including persons with and without a disability, and a useful checklist can be found in the EDF guide for accessible meetings for all.

6. Checklist before training

- Send the participants a registration form asking about accessibility and dietary requirements
- If needed, have individual calls with the people with accessibility requirements to get to know them, their requirements and to work out possible adaptations
- Book the venue for the training, taking into account the accessibility requirements
- Send the participants the programme with information about the training venue
- Organise the catering for the breaks, the lunch and the refreshments, taking dietary requirements into account
- Gather all the materials needed for the sessions (see the materials indicated at the beginning of each training session)
- Prepare the sessions as much as possible before the start of the training (see the preparations indicated at the beginning of each training session)
- Based on the registration list, prepare an attendance sheet, with name, institution of the participants and consider how/where attendees will sign it
- Arrive at least 30 minutes before the official start of the programme, in order to arrange everything at the venue

TRAINING CONTENT

7. Introduction to the training

Estimated time: 50 minutes

Materials: printed version of the training's learning outcomes, of the agenda and of the ground rules; 1 flipchart; pens (1 per participant); Post-it notes of two different colours (at least 10 per participant per colour)

Preparation: arrange the chairs in such a way that enough free space is created in the front of the room. Put on each chair a copy of the agenda. Prepare the flipchart writing on top left 'Needs' and on top right 'Impact'. Put the flipchart aside, together with the Post-it notes and a box of pens.

7.a Welcome

Estimated time: 3 minutes

Materials: no materials needed

Method: brief speech

Welcome the participants to the training:

'You come from different backgrounds and profiles, but the participation of each of you is essential for the training to succeed.

What you will learn today can also be used to educate your peers, or to organise similar sessions.

This training is based on an open-source manual: it will be shared at the end of the training, so that you can use it to organise your own training'.

Try to be assertive but light during this speech: make them understand the importance of the training and feel proud to be participating, but without sounding overemphatic.

7.b Introduction to the training and review of agenda

Estimated time: 10 minutes

Materials: printed version of the training's learning outcomes (see Annex I at page 67), one per participant; printed version of the agenda one per participant

Method: brief speech

Briefly present the aim of the training:
The European Treaties mandate institutions aims to involve citizens and civil society in their policy-making: this is called 'civil dialogue'.

However, there is no legal framework in the EU on how to implement civil dialogue. The Commission has developed some guidelines, but their application is not even across the institutions. Civil society organisations are not satisfied with their level of involvement in policy-making.

This training wants to present the most important traits of the Commission's guidelines, and complement them with practical ways to integrate them and implement them.

Distribute the sheet of paper with the learning outcomes of the training. Ask one of the participants to read them.

The training will be interactive and participatory: the quality of the learning will depend on your participation.

Present the agenda of the day. Go through each section individually, giving an overview of the activities that will be done in each section.

There will be a feedback session at the end of the day, and in the following days, you will receive a survey where you can give suggestions on how to improve the training.

Present the logistical details of the training, such as: location of toilets, emergency exits, location of the coffee breaks, and of lunch.

Ask if there are any questions about what has just been presented. If so, answer adequately; if the question is outside of the scope of the training, or it would take too much time to reply and is of interest only to the person that asked it, state that it will be taken up and answered afterwards, either during a break, or after the training. Note the question down in order not to forget it.

7.c Introductory icebreaker

Estimated time: 15 minutes

Materials: no materials needed

Method: icebreaker

The goal of the icebreaker is for the participants to introduce themselves, 'lose their institutional hats' and regard the other participants as equals.

Duration: 2 minutes
Make the trainees stand up and form a circle. Divide them into pairs, and tell them to introduce themselves to their pair partner and exchange one thing that makes them unique.

Duration: 13 minutes
Each person introduces their partner and what makes them unique.

7.d Ground rules

Estimated time: 7 minutes

Materials: printed version of the ground rules *(see Annex II at page 68)*, one per participant

Method: brief speech

Distribute the printed version of the ground rules to the participants.
Tell the participants:
Before starting a training, it is always important to explicitly agree on a set of ground rules for the conduct of the meeting. These can be a good starting point.

Read the ground rules, paraphrase them in your own words and, after each of them, ask if they agree with the rule.

Ask the participants if any other rules should be added. If so, ask the other participants if they oppose the new addition.

7.e Expectations on the training itself and beyond the training

Estimated time: 15 minutes

Materials: 1 flipchart; pens (1 per participant);
Post-it notes of two different colours

Method: needs analysis

Distribute the Post-it notes, giving each participant Post-it notes of each colour, and one pen per participant, and put the flipchart in the middle of the room.

Duration: 5 minutes
Tell each participant:

Write on the Post-it notes of one colour what are the needs you want to satisfy with the training. Write on the Post-it notes of the other colour the impact you want the training to have on your professional life.

There should only be one item per Post-it note, but you can write as many 'needs' or 'impacts' as you like.

Once the answers are written, stick them onto the flipchart, in the corresponding section.

Duration: 10 minutes
Ask each participant to share what they wrote: first the needs to satisfy, then the impact on their professional life.

Summarise the main needs and desired impacts of the training.

8. Introducing civil dialogue

Estimated time: 2 hours and 50 minutes

Materials: printed versions of the Stakeholder categories; sheets with the ECF's and EESC's definitions of civil dialogue and Council of Europe's principles to enhance public participation, one per participant; 3 sheets with the Council of Europe's code on Civil dialogue in the different steps of the decision-making process; 8 flipcharts; 3 black markers; 1 red marker.

Preparation: Sort out the sheets of paper with the different content in different piles. Prepare three flipcharts, one for "Commission", one for "Parliament" and one for "Council": those are the titles of the flip-charts and should be written in big characters on top of the flipchart. For each of them, write "Why" and "How" in a way that the trainees can clearly write below them without spatially confusing the answers. Prepare two flipcharts, one for 'Citizens' and one for 'Civil society organisations': those are the titles of the flipcharts and should be written in big characters on top of the flipchart. For each of them, write 'Needs', 'Facilitators', and 'Obstacles' in a way that the trainees can clearly write below them without spatially confusing the answers.

8.a What are CSOs?

Estimated time: 1 hour

Learning outcomes: Explain what a civil society organisation is; Compare the definition of civil society with the Stakeholder categories in the Better Regulation Toolbox

Materials: printed version of the Stakeholder categories (See Annex III of this manual on p. 69), one per participant; 2 flipcharts; 1 black marker; 1 red marker

Method: large group discussion

Duration: 7 minutes
Trainees sit in a circle. Put the participants in pairs. Ask them:
Reflect on the organisations you work with: are they civil society organisations? Do you involve them in the policy-making process? If not, what could you do to

involve them in your policy files? Discuss in your pair about which civil society organisations you work with and how to involve them in your work.

Duration: 8 minutes
Each pair presents the civil society organisations they work with and how to involve them in their policy files.

Duration: 25 minutes
Distribute the Stakeholder categories from the Better Regulation Toolbox. Give them 1 minute to read it.

Tell them:
These categories come from the Better Regulation Toolbox of the European Commission. It gives a non-exhaustive overview of what are the stakeholder categories that could be involved in the consultation process. Clearly, not all of them are civil society organisations.

Go through the different sub-categories, and ask if those can be considered as civil society organisations. Make them provide reasoning for their answer.

Add the categories that have been indicated as civil society organisations on one flipchart.

Ask if other types of stakeholders that are civil society organisations are missing. If so, add them on the flipchart.

Duration: 20 minutes
Ask the participants:

Based on your experience and on this mapping of stakeholders: what is a civil society organisation? What differentiates it from other forms of organisations?

Summarise the consensus (or the different opinions) that have emerged from the debate on the other flipchart in the form of a definition: the consensual parts with the black marker, the non-consensual parts with the red marker.

8.b What is a 'true' civil dialogue?

Estimated time: 30 mins

Learning outcomes: Define what civil dialogue is, in its different forms; Identify in which dimensions institutions should play a role

Materials: 1 new flipchart; the final flipchart from the previous exercise; 1 black marker; 1 red marker; sheet with the ECF's and EESC's definitions of civil dialogue and Council of Europe's principles to enhance public participation (see Annex IV in this manual, p. 70), 1 per participant

Method: large group discussion

Duration: 15 minutes
Trainees sit in a circle. Ask them:
Based on the definition of civil society organisation, and on the categories identified in the previous exercise, what do you think a 'true' civil dialogue is?

Write down the ideas that are proposed by the participants on the new flipchart with the black marker. If some ideas are not consensual, add a question mark next to them.

Duration: 15 minutes
Distribute the sheet of paper with the definitions given by ECF and by the EESC and the Council of Europe's principles to enhance public participation. Ask one participant to read them out loud.

Ask the trainees:
What do you think of these definitions and guidelines? Do you think they add something to the ideas you have already presented?

Add the new ideas and the corrections of the previous brainstorming with the red marker.

Copy the final result on the flipchart from the previous exercise, using the black marker. If some parts are not consensual, put them on the flipchart in red. Read the final definitions of civil society organisation and of civil dialogue.

8.c Civil dialogue in the different EU institutions

Estimated time: 40 minutes

Learning outcomes: Be able to identify the avenues of civil society involvement for the different EU institutions.

Materials: 3 pre-prepared flipcharts; 3 markers; 3 sheets with the Council of Europe's code on Civil dialogue in the different steps of the decision-making process (see Annex V, p. 72)

Method: small group discussion

Duration: 25 minutes
Assign to each trainee a number up to three, then divide them into three groups based on that number. Distribute one marker and one sheet with the Council of Europe's code per group. Bring the flipcharts with "Commission", "Parliament" and "Council" written on them and for each of them, "Why" and "How" written on.

Tell the trainees:
You are going to work on one of the three institutions: European Commission, European Parliament, and Council of the EU, plus Permanent Representations.

Based on the definitions of civil society organisation and civil dialogue from the previous sessions, write on the flipchart: 1) Why it is beneficial for that institution to enact civil dialogue, and 2) How specifically that institution can implement civil dialogue (in what stages, in what modalities, etc.).

You need to be as concrete and as precise as possible. You have 25 minutes to do the work. You can use the document distributed to inspire you: it is an adaptation from the Council of Europe's code of good practice for civil participation in the decision-making process. After that, you will need a rapporteur from the group to present the outcome. Each rapporteur will have three minutes.

Assign one institution to each group, and give them the corresponding flipchart. While they work, you should move among the groups to see how they are working, and if they need any help. Let them know how long they have remaining: at half time, five minutes and one minute left.

Duration: 15 minutes
Ask the rapporteurs to present their flipchart. After each presentation, leave up to 2 minutes for discussion or additions: if further proposals of 'why' and 'how' are given during that time, ask the proponent to write them on the flipchart.

8.d Citizens' & civil society's involvement: needs, facilitators and obstacles

Estimated time: 40 mins

Learning outcomes: Be able to identify the needs, the facilitators and the obstacles for citizens and for civil society organisations when engaging in policy-making

Materials: 2 pre-prepared flipcharts; 2 markers

Method: small group discussion

Duration: 25 minutes
Divide the participants into two groups. Bring the two flipcharts, one with written 'Citizens' and one with 'Civil society organisations' written on, and on each of them 'Needs', 'Facilitators', and 'Obstacles' written on. Give one flipchart and one marker to each group.

Tell the participants:
Taking into consideration all the discussions you had in the previous exercises, one group will write down the specific needs that citizens have in order to effectively contribute to policy-making; the other will do the same for civil society.

You will also write what factors make them easier to participate (the 'Facilitators') and what factors make them more difficult to contribute (the 'Obstacles').

In doing so, you should also bear in mind that citizens and civil society are not homogeneous, and some sections might have specific needs, facilitators or obstacles. For instance: for citizens, those could be people with disabilities, people that do not speak English, young people, women, less-educated people. For civil society organisations, they could be organisations with little financial or human resources, organisations made up exclusively of volunteers.

You have 20 minutes to do the work. You will need a rapporteur from each group to present the outcome. Each rapporteur will have five minutes.

While they work, you should move among the groups to see how they are working, and if they need any help. Let them know how long they have remaining: at half time, five minutes and one minute left.

Duration: 15 minutes
Once the time is up, ask the rapporteurs to present their flipchart.

After each presentation, leave up to 2 minutes for discussion or additions: if further proposals are given during that time, ask the proponent to write them on the flipchart.

9. Strengthening civil dialogue

Estimated time: 2 hours

Materials: 2 flipcharts; sheets of papers with the Stakeholder categories; sheets of papers with the six tests for stakeholder identification; sheets with the selected case study; sheets of paper with the Stakeholder credibility test; pens; Post-it notes; 1 marker

Preparation: Sort out the sheets of paper with the different content in different piles. Prepare one flipchart by writing, in big letters, the topic of the chosen case study at its top. Prepare another flipchart clearly by writing, in big letters and on top of the flipchart, 'Stakeholder credibility test', and below, amply distantiated in order to be able to write beneath each word, the following keywords: 'Longevity', 'Expertise', 'Representativeness', 'Track record', 'Reputation'.

9.a Applying the six tests for stakeholder identification

Estimated time: 1 hour and 30 mins

Learning outcomes: Be able to identify the categories of stakeholders and civil society organisations to be involved in the consultations for a policy file; Be able to identify underserved/underrepresented groups in consultations

Materials: 1 pre-prepared flipchart; sheets of papers with the Stakeholder categories (see Annex III, p. 69), one per group; sheets of papers with the six tests for stakeholder identification (see Annex VI, p. 74), one per group; sheets with the selected case study (see Annex VII, p. 75), one per group; pens; Post-it notes of different colours, one colour per group and one for the trainer

Method: Case study

Duration: 50 minutes
Divide the trainees into a number of groups, so that each group has a maximum of 6 participants. Distribute the pens, the blocks of Post-it notes (one colour per group), the sheets of papers with the Stakeholder categories (one per group), the sheets of paper with the six tests for stakeholder identification

(one per group), and the sheets of paper with one of the case studies (one per group) that has to be the same case study for all the groups.

Tell the participants:
What you are going to do is apply all that you have discussed so far to a concrete case of a legislative proposal.

You will have to identify all the stakeholder categories that should be consulted for this proposal. You don't have to identify specific organisations, but rather the interests and categories that should be represented.

You will be helped by the Stakeholder categories already seen, and with the six tests for stakeholder identification, also part of the Better Regulation Toolbox.

While the topic might not be within your field of expertise, the goal is to reflect outside of the usual comfort zones in order to then apply the same method in your daily work.

Write your answers on the Post-it notes, one per Post-it.

The questions of the six tests are there to help you reflect: you don't have to divide the stakeholders based on the questions.

You have 40 minutes to do the work. Afterwards, one person per group will have five minutes to present your answers.

Make one participant read the case study out loud.

While they work, you should move among the groups to see how they are working, and if they need any help. Let them know how long they have remaining: at half time, five minutes and one minute left.

While they work, think about categories that could be overlooked and not involved in consultations. Write them in your Post-it notes.

Duration: 20 minutes
Make one person per group present their findings and attach the Post-it notes to the flipchart with the title of the case study on top of it.

After the first rapporteur, all the others should add only those findings that are different from those already mentioned.

Duration: 20 minutes
Confront the trainees' answers with the underrepresented categories you identified.

For those that overlap, point them out as possibly overlooked categories, and ask those that identified them at what point they wrote them down, and whether and how the Stakeholder categories and the six tests for stakeholder verification were of any help.

After that, read the categories that were not identified by the trainees. Tell the participants:

These are also categories that could be involved in the consultation. Why do you think they were overlooked? What strategies could be put in place to involve them?

If no one mentions the concept of intersectionality in the discussion, add it yourself:

An important element to take into consideration to identify underrepresented groups is the concept of intersectionality. In this context, intersectionality means taking into account the different identities of a person, and how they interact in facilitating or hindering their participation in policy-making. For instance, women with a citizen status and migrant women experience the possibility of participating differently, even if they have common traits as both of them are women.

9.b Reflection on the Stakeholder credibility test

Estimated time: 30 minutes

Learning outcomes: Be able to recognise the pitfalls of the stakeholder credibility test and apply it intelligently.

Materials: sheets of paper with the Stakeholder credibility test (see Annex VIII, p. 78), one per trainee; 1 pre-prepared flipchart; 1 marker; pens, one per participant.

Method: Large group discussion

Trainees sit in a circle. Distribute the sheet with the Stakeholder credibility test and the pens. The flipchart has the title 'Stakeholder credibility test' on top, and below, amply distantiated in order to be able to write beneath each word, the following keywords are written: 'Longevity', 'Expertise', 'Representativeness', 'Track record', 'Reputation'.

Duration: 10 minutes
Present the Stakeholder credibility test:
The Stakeholder credibility test is a tool the Commission recommends to use

when evaluating the contributions of the stakeholders to the consultations. While it is a useful tool, it also contains some elements that should be assessed and implemented carefully.
You will have 10 minutes to individually read the Stakeholder credibility test, and note on the sheet of paper what aspects are not straightforward or objective, which ones are problematic, and which ones could lead to the exclusion of stakeholders or voices that should be involved.

Duration: 20 minutes
Read out loud each of the tests, and for each test, ask the trainees to share their reflections. Note them down on the flipchart, under each corresponding keyword.

Ask if there is any overarching issue to be raised on the test. If so, note it below the title on the flipchart.

10. Closing

Estimated time: 40 minutes

Materials: sheets of paper with the self-reflection questions, one per participant; sheets of paper with the first feedback on the training, one per participant; pens.

Preparation: Prepare the sheets of paper to be handed out.

10.a Self-reflection: skills, knowledge and attitudes for citizens' and civil society's involvement

Estimated time: 20 minutes

Learning outcomes: Be able to identify personal strengths and shortfalls in skills, knowledge and attitudes when involving citizens and civil society in their own work

Materials: Sheets of paper with the self-reflection questions (See Annex IX, p. 79), one per participant; pens

Method: Self reflection

Duration: 17 minutes
Trainees sit in a circle. Distribute one sheet of paper and one pen each. On each sheet of paper, the two following questions are written: on top of the page 'During my work, what knowledge, skills and attitudes do I apply to fulfil citizens' and civil society's needs in order to participate in policy-making? (Skills and assets you have)'; and in the middle of the page 'During my work, which knowledge, skills and attitudes do I lack in order to better fulfil citizens' and civil society's needs in order to participate in policy-making? (Weaknesses you have)'.

Read out loud the questions. Tell the participants:
The previous sessions were about organisations, and collective. This session is about you as an individual. Reflect on your daily work, and be honest when answering: this is a moment for you to take time to sit, reflect and self-assess. You don't have to share your answers if you do not want to. You have 15 minutes to reflect.

Duration: 3 minutes
Ask if anyone would like to share some of their answers to the first question. Then, if they would like to share some of their answers for the second question.

10.b Sharing of learning outcomes and their possible application

Estimated time: 10 minutes

Materials: No materials needed

Method: Large group discussion

Trainees sit in a circle. Tell them:
We have arrived at the last moments of the training, thank you very much for your participation and dedication! Now, think about the whole day: pick up one lesson learnt, and something that has struck you as important or unexpected. Reflect on how you could apply it to your everyday work.

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10.c First feedback on the training

Estimated time: 10 minutes

Materials: Sheets of paper with the first feedback on the training (see Annex X, p. 80), one per participant; pens

Method: Self reflection

Trainees sit in a circle. Distribute the paper with the first feedback on the training, and the pens. Ask them to fill it in. Underline that any constructive criticism is encouraged, as it will help improve future trainings, and that the answers will not be shared with the other participants.

Thank the trainees for their feedback. Before closing the training, tell them:

In the following days, you will receive a short feedback survey where you will be able to reflect on the training.

(Optional: You will also receive another survey in a month's time, to evaluate the impact of the training on your daily work).

Together with the feedback survey, you will also receive a document with the outcomes of the different sessions, so that you can re-read it whenever needed.

The training is based on a manual that is available on the website of the EnTrust project (https://entrust-project.eu/): you can use it to replicate the training in your work environment.

Thank the participants by applauding them and close the training. If there are questions that have remained unanswered, use the moments right after the end of the training to address them directly with the interested participants.

EVALUATION OF THE TRAINING

11. Evaluation

11.a Feedback survey

Within three working days after the day of the training, send the participants the feedback survey. Together with the feedback survey, send them a document where you will have transcribed the content of the final flipcharts of the exercises 7.f, 8.a, 8.b, 8.c, 8.d, 9.a, 9.b, as well as the Annexes III, IV, V, VI, VIII, the Commission's on promoting the engagement and effective participation of citizens and civil society organisations in public policy-making processes, the Council of Europe's Code of good practice for civil participation in the decision-making process and the Toolkit for conducting intercultural dialogue. Furthermore, send them the website https://entrust-wiki.eu/ for a guide on the civil dialogue opportunities and civil society's involvement at the European level. You can also send them this manual, so that they can replicate the training in their work environment, as well as the EDF guide for accessible meetings for all.

Below you will find a template for the feedback survey. Marked with * are the questions that should be mandatory for the participants to answer, while the others are optional.

This is an anonymous survey. Its contents will only be used to improve the materials and the delivery of the training.

- **Please indicate the institution you are from: ***
  - European Commission
  - European Parliament
  - Council of the EU/Permanent Representation of a Member State to the EU
  - Civil Society Organisation

- **Please rate from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) your agreement with the statement: Objectives of the training were clearly defined ***

- **Any comments on the previous answer?**
  (open field)

- **Please rate from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) your agreement with the statement: Topics covered were relevant ***

- **Any comments on the previous answer?**
  (open field)

- **Please rate from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) your agreement with the statement: The exercises proposed were understandable ***

- **Any comments on the previous answer?**
  (open field)

- **Please rate from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) your agreement with the statement: The sessions naturally built on each other***

- **Any comments on the previous answer?**
  (open field)

- **The time allotted for the different exercises, on average, was: ***
  - Abundantly insufficient to complete the exercise
  - Slightly insufficient to complete the exercise
  - The right time to complete the exercise
  - Slightly more than necessary to complete the exercise
  - Definitely too much to complete the exercise

- **Are there any particular sessions that stood out in terms of mismanagement of time? If so, please elaborate.**
  (open field)

- **Please rate from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) your agreement with the statement: The meeting room and facilities were adequate and comfortable***

- **Any comments on the previous answer?**
  (open field)

- **Which activities or parts of the training were most effective or useful for you? Why?***
  (open field)

- **Which activities or parts of the training were least effective or useful for you? Why?***
  (open field)

- **What did you learn that you will use in your workplace?**
  (open field)

- **Was there anything you did not understand? Give specific examples.**
  (open field)

- **What are your recommendations to help improve this training? What would you change (activities, handouts, topics)?**
  (open field)

- **How confident are you that you have the information needed to train others? ***
  - Not at all confident
  - Slightly confident
  - Moderately confident
  - Confident enough
  - Very confident

- **How comfortable would you be in training others with the help of the training manual?***
  - Not at all confident
  - Slightly confident
  - Moderately confident
  - Confident enough
  - Very confident

- **Do you have any additional comments?**
  (open field)

Thank you for filling in the survey.

11.b Optional: impact survey

A month after the last day of training, you can send the participants an impact survey to assess whether how useful it was for their daily work.

Below, find a template for the impact survey. Marked with * are the questions that are mandatory for the participants to answer, while the others are optional.

This is an anonymous survey. Its contents will only be used to improve the materials and the delivery of the training.

- **Please indicate the institution you are from: ***
  - European Commission
  - European Parliament
  - Council of the EU/Permanent Representation of a Member State to the EU
  - Civil Society Organisation

- **Please rate from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) your agreement with the statement: What I learnt in the training was useful in my professional duties***

- **If it was useful, please explain how you incorporated the knowledge you acquired into your work**
  (open field)

- **If it wasn't useful, explain why you could not/did not want to include it in your work**
  (open field)

- **Please rate from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) your agreement with the statement: The lessons from the training will be incorporated into my institution/organisation's planning of policy work***

- **If you answered positively to the previous question, please explain how lessons from the training will be incorporated into your institution/organisation's planning of policy work**
  (open field)

- **If you answered negatively, please explain why lessons from the training cannot be incorporated into your institution/ organisation's planning of policy work**
  (open field)

- **Do you have any additional comments?**
  (open field)

Thank you for filling in the survey.

STANDALONE EXERCISES

12. Exercises that can be integrated into the training

12.a Civil dialogue: strategies to involve underrepresented groups

Estimated time: 60 minutes

Learning outcomes: Be able to apply the concept of intersectionality when developing policies; Be able to identify and overcome the obstacles for underrepresented groups in participating in policy consultations.

Materials: One flipchart; one marker

Methods: large group discussion

Duration: 20 minutes
Participants sit in a circle.

Tell the participants:
The fact that some groups are underrepresented in policy consultations already indicates a blind spot in the involvement of those that are affected by the policies. They might face specific barriers that impede them from being aware of such consultations, or to participate in them. Therefore, they need to be actively sought out.

One important concept to be taken into account is that of 'intersectionality': different types of inequalities can be present in the same person or group of people, creating new patterns of exclusion and discrimination, and to tackle them, they should be seen holistically, with an 'intersectional' approach.

For this first part of the session, let's reflect on this question: 'What groups do you rarely see represented in your consultations? What identities are rarely represented by the people participating in your consultations?

Write the replies of the participants on the left side of the flipchart.

Duration: 20 minutes
Participants sit in a circle.

Tell the participants:
Now that we have identified some underrepresented groups, let's reflect on this question: 'Why don't they participate in consultations? What obstacles do they face in getting to know about these consultations, and participating in them?'

Write the replies of the participants in the middle of the flipchart.

Duration: 20 minutes
Participants sit in a circle.

Tell the participants:
Now that we have identified the obstacles, let's reflect on the possible strategies to overcome them. Also, take into consideration that the different underrepresented groups mentioned above might need different strategies, so let's reflect on that, too.

Go one by one for each obstacle, and write down the replies of the participants on the right side of the flipchart. For each obstacle, ask the participants if any of the groups mentioned on the left side of the flipchart might need specific strategies to overcome those obstacles.

12.b Civil dialogue: agenda setting and policy evaluation

Estimated time: 45 minutes

Learning outcomes: Be able to create a framework of CSOs' involvement in the agenda-setting phase of policy-making processes; Be able to create a framework of CSOs' involvement in the evaluation phase of policy-making processes.

Materials: two flipcharts; two markers

Method: small group discussion

Duration: 35 minutes
Divide the participants into 2 groups. Give each group a flipchart and a marker.

Tell the participants:
Two of the phases that civil society organisations indicate as crucial for true civil dialogue are the 'agenda setting' and the 'policy evaluation' phases. Indeed, many times the focus on stakeholder involvement is in shaping the policy proposals, while the possibility to propose new policy and to give feedback on their implementation tends to be overlooked.

One group is going to work on the 'agenda setting', and the other, on 'policy evaluation'. You will have 30 minutes to answer these questions: 'Why is it important to involve CSOs in the 'agenda setting'/'policy evaluation'? What strategies could be used to organise CSOs' involvement in the 'agenda setting'/'policy evaluation'? Write your answers on your flipchart.

Choose a rapporteur that will afterwards present the outcome of the discussions and what you wrote on the flipchart. Each group will have five minutes to report.

While the groups work, move around the groups and see if they need any help, or clarifications.

Duration: 10 minutes
Once the time is up, ask the rapporteurs to present, in 5 minutes, the outcome of their discussions.

12.c Current practice sharing and enhancement

Estimated time: 40 mins

Learning outcomes: Be able to self-reflect on own practices of CSOs' engagement in policy-making; Be able to provide feedback to others' practices of CSOs' engagement in policy-making.

Materials: sheets of paper; pens.

Method: small group discussion.

Duration: 25 minutes
Divide the participants into 3 groups. Distribute to each group some sheets of paper and a pen.

Tell the participants:
After all these exercises, let's take a bit of time to reflect collectively on how to improve how you involve civil society in your work.

In your groups, you have twenty minutes to discuss how you involve civil society in your work, and collectively reflect on how to better it. If you have not CSOs in your work yet, this is the right moment to brainstorm ways to do it!

Choose a rapporteur that will afterwards report on your current practices of civil dialogue, and on your proposals to improve them. Each group will have five minutes to report.
While the groups work, move around the groups and see if they need any help, or clarifications.

Duration: 15 minutes
Once the time is up, ask the rapporteurs to present, in 5 minutes, the outcome of their discussions.

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13. Resources cited in the manual

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ANNEXES

Annex I. Learning outcomes (goals)

- To reflect on the definitions of civil society organisation and of civil dialogue.
- To identify the different needs, facilitators and obstacles to citizens' and civil society's meaningful engagement in policy-making.
- To identify the stakeholders and the formats of civil society involvement when organising civil dialogue for an institution on a policy file.

Annex II. Ground rules

- Every person must be treated with respect
- All questions are valuable
- Sharing of experience and expertise is to be cherished
- It's possible to ask questions at all times
- Only one person should be talking at a time, therefore no parallel
- conversations
- To speak, someone has to raise their hand
- All personal information is confidential
- Provide constructive, not destructive, feedback
- Be sensitive of language and cultural differences
- Mistakes are allowed
- Seek to understand others, even when you disagree with them
- Every contribution is valuable
- Everyone is here to learn: do not be afraid of differences in the level of knowledge

Annex III. Stakeholder categories from the Better Regulation Toolbox

STAKEHOLDER CATEGORIES (NON-EXHAUSTIVE LIST):	
Citizens	■ The general public: individual non-expert citizens ■ Individual expert citizens responding on their own behalf
Businesses	■ Large-sized enterprises ■ SMEs ■ Microenterprises ■ Self-employed
Social partners and representatives of professions and crafts	■ Chambers of commerce ■ Employers' organisations ■ Business organisations ■ Trade union organisations ■ Representatives of professions or craft
Non-governmental organisations	■ Non-governmental organisations ■ Platforms ■ Networks ■ Similar associations
Consultancy	■ Professional consultancies ■ Law firms ■ Self-employed consultants
Research and academia	■ Think-tanks ■ Research institutions ■ Academic institutions
Organisations representing regional, local, and municipal authorities, other public or mixed sub-national entities	■ Regional, local, or municipal structures ■ Other sub-national public authorities ■ Transnational associations and networks of public subnational authorities ■ Other public or mixed entities, created by law whose purpose is to act in the public interest
National public authorities, EU decentralised agencies and other bodies (EU agencies) and international public authorities	■ National and regional/local governments ■ National and regional/local Parliaments ■ National and regional/local public authorities or agencies ■ EU institutions, EU decentralised agencies and other bodies (EU agencies) ■ Intergovernmental organisations

Source: Better Regulation Toolbox, p. 463-464.

Annex IV. ECF's and EESC's definitions of civil dialogue and Council of Europe's principles to enhance public participation

ECF's definition

Civil dialogue is 'civil society's engagement in the entire cycle of EU law- and policy-making [from] specific thematic areas throughout the policy cycle [to] programmatic issues and agenda-setting'.

Adapted from: European Civic Forum & Civic Space Watch (2022).
Towards vibrant European civic and democratic space, p. 4

EESC's definition

Civil dialogue has three dimensions:

- Vertical dialogue: sectoral civil dialogue between civil society organisations and their interlocutors within the legislative and executive authorities;
- Transversal dialogue: structured and regular dialogue between EU institutions and all of these civil society components;
- Horizontal dialogue: dialogue between civil society organisations themselves on the development of the European Union and its policies.

Source: European Economic and Social Committee (2010). Towards
a structured framework for the European Civil Dialogue, p. 3

Council of Europe's principles to enhance public participation

PRINCIPLES TO ENHANCE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	
Transparency	■ All processes must be transparent and open to scrutiny. ■ Timely public access to all documents, drafts, decisions and opinions relevant for participation must be ensured.
Accessibility	■ Civil participation should be propagated via the use of clear language and appropriate means of participation, offline or online, and on any device – based on agreed frameworks for participation.
Non-discrimination	■ Civil participation must avoid all measures in the proceedings, ways of publication of information, organisation of meetings and hearings, etc., which would exclude interested persons or groups from participating, especially the less privileged and most vulnerable.
Inclusiveness	■ Civil participation should specifically reach out to include all groups with particular interests and needs, such as young people, the elderly, and people with disabilities, or minorities.
Accountability	■ Any process of participation must be directed at producing results and be open to changing the original proposals. ■ These results must be documented and made available to the public. ■ All decision makers take responsibility for their decisions. ■ Decisions are reasoned, subject to scrutiny and can be sanctioned. ■ Remedies exist for maladministration or wrongful decisions.

Adapted from: Council of Europe's Code of good practice for civil participation in the decision-making process (2019), p. 6-8.

Annex V. Council of Europe's code on Civil dialogue in the different steps of the decision-making process

CIVIL DIALOGUE IN THE DIFFERENT STEPS OF THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS	
Input /incentive ideas	■ CSOs' possibility to express their ideas to the government/administration when ideas and incentives for future legislation, developments, etc., are gathered.
Agenda setting	■ Access to relevant, accurate and timely information on the policy process, documents and political decision-makers; also, via an ad hoc key government contact for civil society. ■ Organisation of consultations, hearings, public forums, with interested stakeholders to identify and interpret the sensitivities and interests of the different groups. ■ Permanent or ad hoc working groups with civil society to advise on policy preferences.
Drafting	■ Open and free access to policy documents, including single information point for policy drafting, with information available in different formats to reach the public. ■ Organisation of consultations, hearings, public forums, with interested stakeholders to identify and interpret the sensitivities and interests of the different groups. ■ Permanent or ad hoc working groups with civil society actively involved in drafting parts of the legislative process.
Decision	■ Open plenary or committee sessions to ensure open access to debates during the decision-making.
Implementation	■ Open and free access to public sector documents relating to projects and implementation decisions. ■ Publicly advertised tender procedure to provide an open transparent process for service provision.

	■ Capacity building seminars to increase knowledge and capacity relevant to the implementation. ■ Events, conferences, forums and seminars to inform and discuss the implementation of policy with NGOs and the public. ■ Strategic partnership where NGOs and public authorities form a partnership to implement policy; this may range from a small pilot scheme to a full implementation responsibility.
Monitoring	■ Open and free access to information on policy progress. ■ Evidence gathering to collect cases and statistics on project delivery. ■ Evaluation of policy and its impact through conferences and reporting. ■ Feedback mechanisms to follow progress, from the side of both the users and the providers. ■ Work groups or committees consisting of CSOs (both users and providers) and public authorities coming together in a strategic partnership to monitor and evaluate the policy initiative.
Reformulation	■ Open and free access to information providing evaluations, study results and other evidence about the existing policy. ■ Online consultation to gather civil society views on how to follow up policy/project. ■ Conferences or meetings to set out next steps planned by public authority. ■ Seminars and deliberative forums to involve interested stakeholders in developing new directions in policy field, e.g., World café, open space, other brainstorming methods. ■ Working groups or committees where NGOs form an expert group jointly with other stakeholders and public authorities with the purpose of recommending a revised policy.

Adapted from: Council of Europe's Code of good practice for civil participation in the decision-making process (2019), p. 11-17.

Annex VI. Six tests for stakeholder verification

THE SIX TESTS FOR STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION

Test 1. Who is directly impacted?

- Whose daily/weekly lives will change because of this policy?
- Who cannot easily take steps to avoid being affected by this policy?
- Who will have to change their behaviour because of this policy?

Test 2. Who is indirectly impacted?

- Whose daily lives will change because others have been directly impacted by the policy?
- Who will gain or lose because of changes resulting from this policy?

Test 3. Who is potentially impacted?

- In particular circumstances, who will have a different experience as a result of this decision?
- Are there individuals or groups who will have to adjust their behaviour if specific conditions apply?

Test 4. Whose help is needed to make it work?

- Are there vital individuals or groups in the delivery chain?
- Who will have the ability to obstruct implementation unless co-operating?
- Who understands the likely impact of this decision on other stakeholders?

Test 5. Who thinks they know about the subject?

- Who has studied the subject and published views on it?
- Who has detailed know-how and expertise that those implementing the policy should also understand?
- Are there individuals or groups that will be perceived as knowledgeable on the subject?

Test 6. Who will show an interest in the subject?

- Are there organisations, authorities, bodies, or individuals who think they have an interest?
- Has anyone been campaigning about the issue?
- Is there anyone publishing or broadcasting views on this subject?

Source: Better Regulation Toolbox, p. 465.

Annex VII. Case study examples

Case study 1

The European Commission is proposing a regulation to regulate the installation of renewable energy plants in the territory of the Union: the aim of the regulation is to safeguard Europe's landscape and ecosystems, while ensuring the production of enough renewable energy to guarantee the green transition to a carbon neutral continent.

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Case study 2

The European Commission is proposing a directive to introduce common minimum standards for quality healthcare, which would be mainstreamed across different EU tools such as the European Semester.

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Case study 3

Following the European Parliament's resolution 'Regulation of prostitution in the EU: its cross-border implications and impact on gender equality and women's rights', the European Commission is proposing a strategy to combat sexual exploitation, online and offline.

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Annex VIII. Stakeholder credibility test

STAKEHOLDER CREDIBILITY TEST	
Longevity	Has the stakeholder organisation been established long enough to acquire the wisdom in the policy field?
Expertise	How well does it know the subject matter?
Representativeness	Who exactly does it represent and how well does it do so?
Track record	How useful/credible has its contribution been in the past?
Reputation	How seriously do other people take this organisation?

Source: Better Regulation Toolbox, p. 482.

Annex IX. Self-reflection questions

During my work, what knowledge, skills and attitudes do I apply to fulfil citizens' and civil society's needs in order to participate in policy-making? (Skills and assets you have)

During my work, which knowledge, skills and attitudes do I lack in order to better fulfil citizens' and civil society's needs in order to participate in policy-making? (Weaknesses you have)

Annex X. First feedback on the training

Reflect on the whole day of training. Answer the following questions.

Reflect on the expectations you had about the training. Were those expectations met?

What aspects of the training do you think worked particularly well?

How could the training be improved?

Civil Society Europe, Brussels, April 2024.

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Social Media

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