

Understanding Levels of Engagement

Before planning how to engage your target audience it can be advantageous to look at the ways in which you could involve them. Involving them can encourage buy-in and commitment to a project, reduce conflict, manage risks, enhance technical competence, create strong leadership and provide value for money. As identified by the International Association for Public Participation there are six levels of engagement, described in Table x below.

Definition		Promise to the public	Example of methods
Empower	Place final decision- making power in the hands of the public	We will implement what you decide	Referendums
Collaborate	Partner with the public in each aspect of the decision, including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions, and we will incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	Planning forums Citizen advisory committees Joint projects
Involve	Work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public issues and concerns are consistently understood and considered.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and issues are directly reflected in alternatives developed; we will provide feedback on how public input influences the decision	Workshops Planning forums
Consult	Obtain feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	Exhibition of plans Focus groups Surveys Consultative meetings
Inform	Provide the public with balanced and objective	We will keep you informed.	Media stories Education

	information to assist them in understanding the problems alternatives and/or solutions.		campaigns Websites Information meetings
Non-participation	Influencing public support for a product or proposal.	Our product or proposal will perform as promised.	Public relations Marketing Social marketing