A tool to support policy making and implementation for sustainable consumption

STAVE

Systematic Tool for Behavioral Assumption Validation and Exploration

An Introduction

If you are interested in understanding and addressing citizens' everyday behaviour in any policy context, then STAVE may suit you

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This Introduction aims at helping potential users of the STAVE tool to get a feel for what the tool does, and how it can help in policy making and policy implementation for sustainable consumption

What is the STAVE tool?
Why should I use it?
How can I know if it suits my needs?

A comprehensive description of the STAVE tool may be found in the STAVE Good Practice Guide

The STAVE tool was developed and tested in the climate change and sustainability context in the framework of the EU funded project Pachelbel. Its characteristics and capabilities enable the STAVE tool to serve meaningfully in other policy contexts where citizens' daily behaviour is a fundamental concern

What is STAVE?

A tool to support policy making and implementation for sustainable consumption

A strategy to link the sphere of policy-making with the sphere of everyday lay citizen behaviours

A set of procedures/methods to address policy-makers' concerns, engage citizens in reflecting about the policy area, capture the related everyday behaviours and discourses, and feed them back to the policy makers.

During the course of the Pachelbel project, the STAVE tool was used to support policy-making and policy implementation for everyday live sustainability-related issues being addressed by a range of public policy organizations across six European Union countries.

Why should I use STAVE?

✓ STAVE provides useful support for the practical activity of policymaking, in timely, relevant and relatively speedy and inexpensive ways.

✓ STAVE generates rich and meaningful data on citizens' daily lives, and helps to shed light on the reasons for the gap that sometimes exists between citizens' stated environmental aspirations and their real behaviours.

✓ STAVE promotes self-reflection by both citizens and policy makers.

✓ STAVE makes possible the exploration or validation of assumptions underlying policy initiatives concerned with citizens' daily behaviours.

✓ The STAVE trials generated strikingly high levels of satisfaction among both citizen and policy-maker participants.

✓STAVE can open new doors within the policy process; gently promoting reflection and new perspectives within discussion about citizen-related policies.

Is STAVE a suitable tool for me?

Yes
- Does your policy issue relate to "everyday citizen behaviours"?

Yes
- Are you ready to commit to an "engagement" process?

Yes
- Are you ready to involve a "STAVE operator" (with social research skills) in the process?

STAVE is a deceptively simple yet sophisticated tool. It requires deployment by an operator with mature social research skills.

To make the best of using STAVE, your policy organization would need to be committed to working with the STAVE operator in an interactive process of design and data appreciation.

STAVE is probably best used for policy issues that are *not* associated with *very high* levels of public controversy, as this feature could make the findings less reliable.

The STAVE process

If you are considering the possibility of implementing STAVE , these are the four key steps to be followed

1. Clarifying objectives

2. Designing the intervention

3. Implementing the process

4. Providing feedback

The STAVE process

*A visual representation of the key four steps to be followed if you are considering the use of STAVE*

1 **Clarifying objectives** → **2** **Designing the intervention**

3 **Implementing the process**

TOOLKIT

Meeting 1   Meeting 2   Meeting 3

4 **Providing feedback**
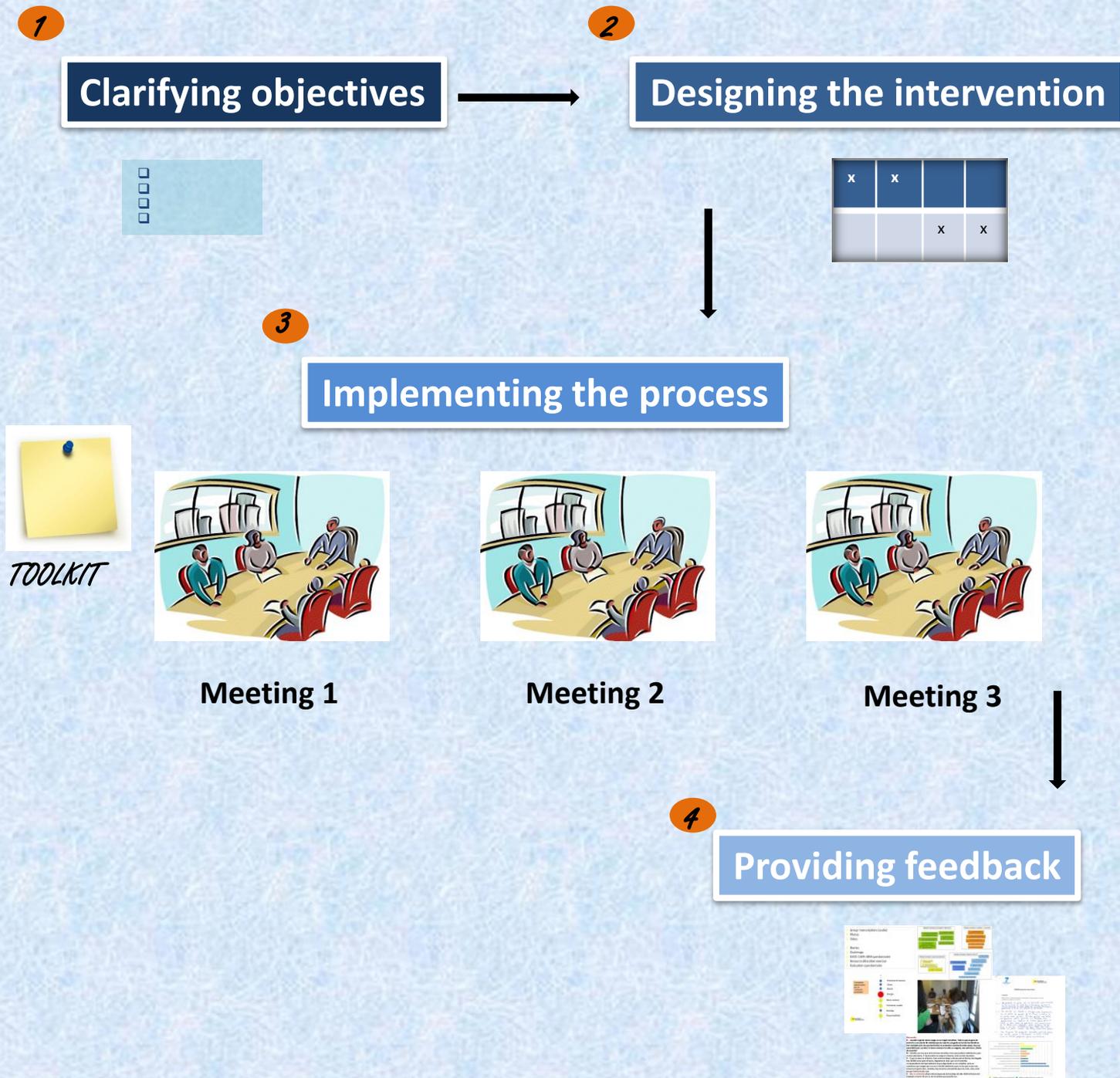
1. Clarifying objectives

This first step will help you clarify your concerns and needs, and the job you wish STAVE to perform

1 Clarifying objectives → **2** Preparing the intervention

3 Implementing the process

Meeting 1   Meeting 2   Meeting 3

4 Providing feedback

1

Clarifying objectives

Characterize your policy context

Specify your "policy issue"

Characterize your citizen context

A reflection focused on these three aspects will facilitate the proper definition of your objectives.

To this end, a *"Project Group"* involving one or more representative(s) of your organization together with the STAVE operator will be established to ensure that your STAVE process will benefit from the most effective design to address your needs.

Characterize your policy context

Your way of using STAVE will be closely linked to your policy profile, so please identify your institutional profile according to your level of government, and experience with social research as well as with public participation processes.

Level of Government: Central, Regional, Local

Experience with social research: + / -

Experience with public participation processes: +/-

The STAVE trials showed that your specific policy profile will have a significant influence on the type of intervention you will wish to implement, and the type of feedback from the STAVE process that will be most useful for you.

Characterize your policy issue

This step will help you to specify the policy issue suitable for your STAVE process as well as the particular questions that may guide its most appropriate design and implementation

Specify your policy issue

The STAVE trials showed that the tool can properly address a wide range of policy issues; for example: domestic energy savings (including citizens' interaction with smart meters), transportation habits, recycling, buying domestic appliances, etc.

Define the specific policy questions

Questions STAVE can address include:
→Knowledge gaps? Need to know more about specific citizen behaviours, or gain evidence on lay persons' reasoning and actions.
→ Acceptability of policies/strategies? Public views on specific policy options.
→ Engaging specific groups in policy strategies (problems of access?)

Consider the exploratory/validatory dimension

Depending on your policy issue and specific questions you may use STAVE to explore new policy options or to validate existing ones. Most of the STAVE trials entailed a combination of both options.

Characterize your citizen context

You can use STAVE to engage with, and investigate, specific groups of citizens, relating directly or indirectly to your questions, by capturing relevant behaviours and discourses (step 3). This knowledge will then be fed back to you via your project group (step 4), allowing you to use it in your policy making & implementation .

Define your target group: The STAVE trials can engage with lay citizens living in relevant types of buildings, neighborhoods or areas (segmented across significant socio-demographic variables), or alternatively, specifically-identified stakeholders (such as shopkeepers) from a well-defined neighborhood.

The target group	• **Citizens** • **Stakeholders**
The target behaviour	• **Does it entail daily or infrequent behaviours?**

Define your target "behaviours" (the ones that policy seeks to understand or influence): Within the PACHELBEL project, the STAVE trials dealt with **daily** behaviours, related to energy consumption, transportation, etc. STAVE also worked well with mundane but less frequent behaviours, such as purchasing home appliances.

The STAVE Good Practice Guide and Operator will help you to define your target groups and target behaviours

2. Designing the intervention

The second step aims to help you design your STAVE intervention with the support of the STAVE operator and the STAVE Manual

2

Designing the intervention

x	x		
		x	x

Defining the policy makers' role

Deciding the sampling of your target group

Deciding on research tactics

1 Clarifying objectives → **2** Preparing the intervention

3 Implementing the process

Meeting 1   Meeting 2   Meeting 3

TOOLKIT

4 Providing feedback
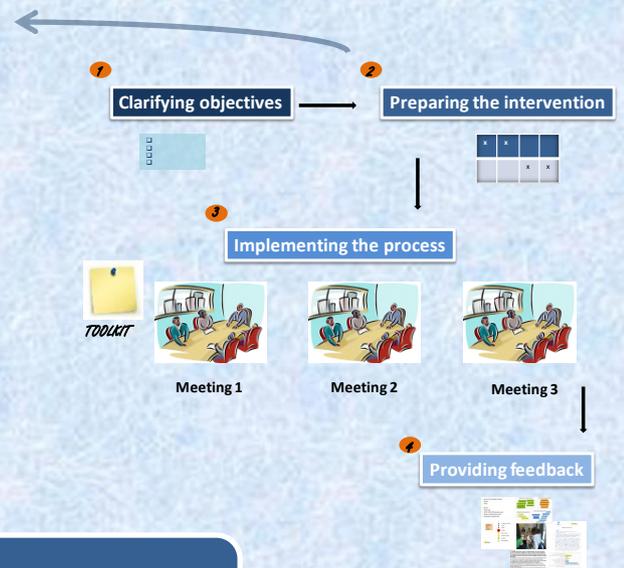
Defining the role of policy makers

In Step 1 we mentioned the need to create the *Project Group,* involving representatives of the policy organization and the STAVE operator. In this way, your STAVE process can benefit from, and properly integrate, the most pertinent inputs.

Now we specify the requirements for such a project group to perform properly.

Requirements for the Project Group

→ You need to be ready to engage with feedback provided by the STAVE operator during the STAVE process.

→ You also need to be actively involved in working with the STAVE operator to refine your objectives and questions throughout the STAVE process.

→ It is best for the policy organisation to designate at least one person to be actively involved as a 'monitoring partner' to the STAVE operator throughout the implementation process.

The likely scale of resources required in a standard STAVE intervention are as follows:

➢ **Time resources of the policy partner:** 1 or 2 people available for e-mail and phone contacts, plus attendance at three or four meetings during a 3 months period

➢ Time **resources of the STAVE operator:** From 2.5 up to 4 persons/month full time. This estimations will indeed vary depending on the complexity of the issue, the familiarity of the policy partners and the sort of feedback that would be most appropriate.

➢ **Costs relating to the running of the citizen groups,** including financial incentives for the participants, room hire, refreshments, etc.

In the STAVE trials one or two policy officials were involved in dialogue with the STAVE operator through the process, by means of meetings, phone conversations or electronic interactions. During the STAVE trials, refinements of the intervention (adjusting the objectives or adapting the process) were shaped by ongoing interactions between the policy partner and the STAVE operator .

Deciding on the sampling of the target public

A sample of citizens from your "target public" has to be defined in order to recruit your citizen group(s). Once your citizen groups are ready to meet, the STAVE tool will "translate" your questions to them in terms that relate to their everyday lives, capture rich detail about their related everyday behaviours, and then feed these findings back to you in meaningful ways.

How to make a decision on the most appropriate segmentation for your citizen group(s)?

➢ **Heterogeneous composition:** members showing a wide range of socio-demographic (and other) characteristics

+ This will give access to a broad spectrum of everyday behaviours
- But it may tell you more about particular individuals you have recruited than about the social groups to which they belong.

➢ **Homogeneous composition:** members with similar socio-demographic (and other) characteristics

+ This will tap into socially-shared ways of life
- But you may feel that a rather narrow range of behaviours have been examined

Unfortunately, there is no perfect solution for sampling. So a careful trade-off of each option, considering its pros and cons, needs to be considered by the Project Group.

Deciding on research tactics

In line with other research, Pachelbel found that the way you frame your question has a direct impact on the kind of answers you will get. For instance, recycling may be seen as a personal environmental commitment to address climate change, or as the efficient way to co-operate with municipal trash collection arrangements, or as a combination of both. Citizen group members may confess that recycling helps them appear as people with green commitments, and that they like this. They may also have other views that will surprise you. The Project Group needs to consider the following STAVE design options:

How to frame the invitation to the citizen group?: in environmental terms or in a more daily/mundane terms?

How to introduce the process?: as one to explicitly address a specific policy problem or as a general discussion concerning group members' everyday lives?

Research evidence suggests that if you frame STAVE as being explicitly about environmental issues, some participants may have a tendency to respond with aspirations about how they would **like** to perform environmentally, rather than describing their **actual** practices.

Through the Project Group, the STAVE operator (and Good Practice Guide) will help in assessing the appropriate framing and approach for your own particular needs.

3. Implementing the STAVE process

The third step aims to help you implement your investigation

Implementing the process

Meeting 1   Diary 1   Meeting 2   Diary 2   Meeting 3

Meeting 1   **Meeting 2**   **Meeting 3**

Pattern of implementation

The Tool Kit
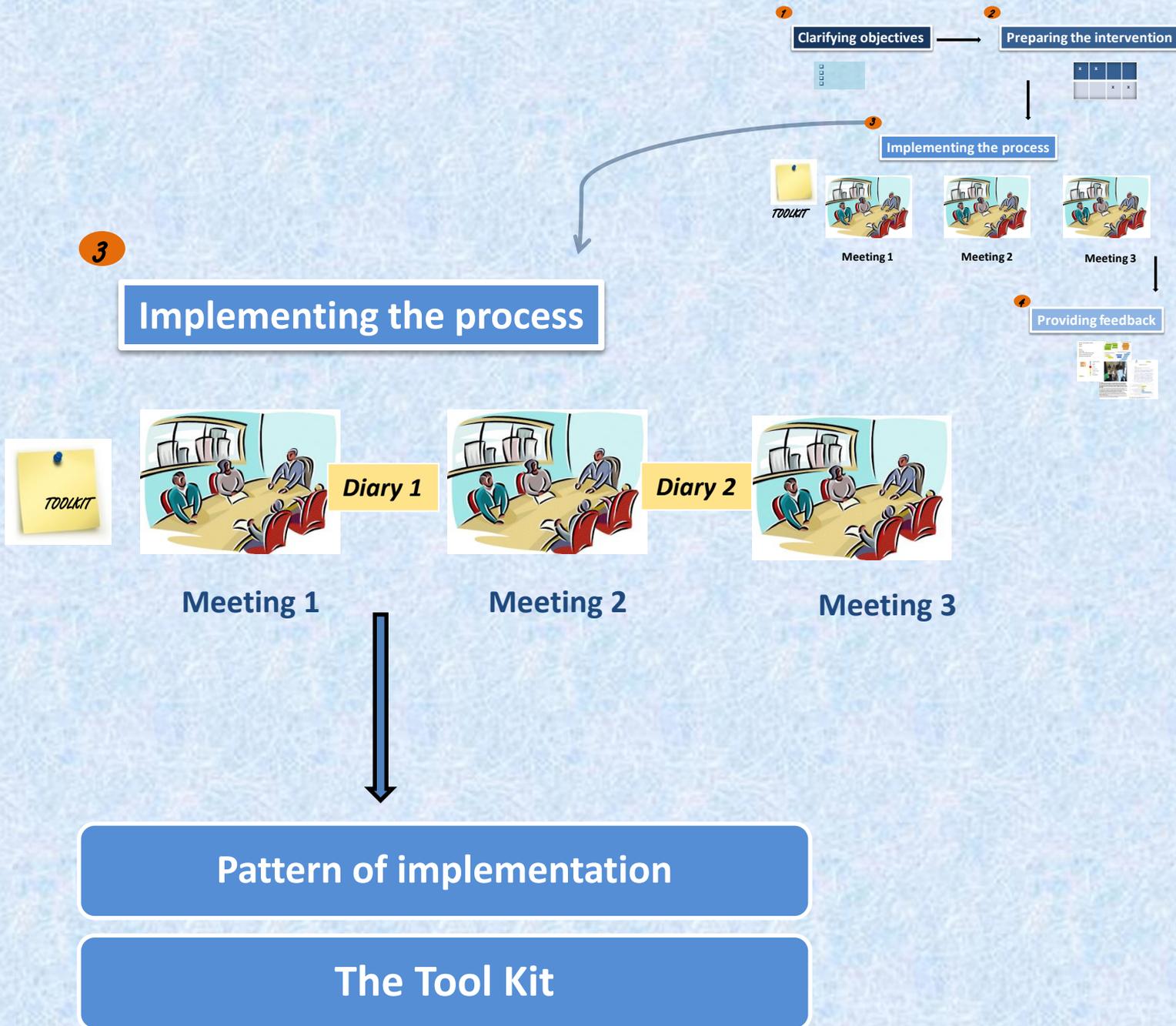
Pattern of implementation

Once your process is designed , the next step entails engaging with citizens in order to capture their real behaviours and related discourses with respect to your policy issue.

The STAVE trial "standard" sequence:
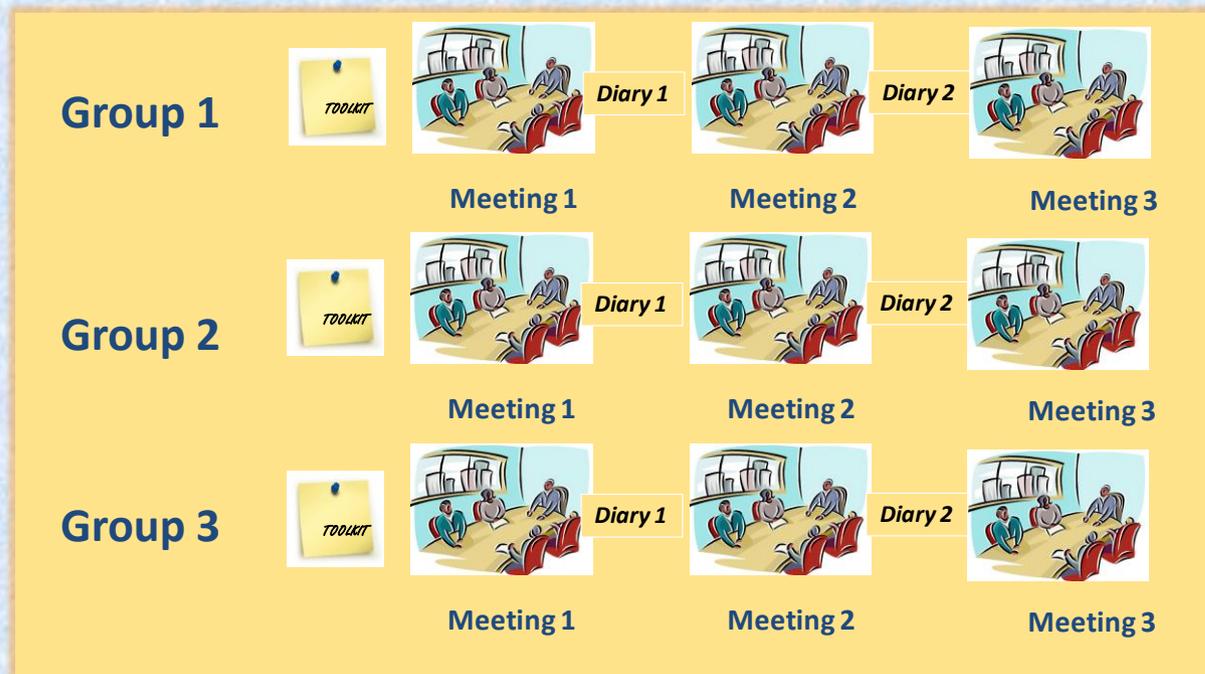
STAVE group activities are designed to generate discourse revealing the understandings and practices related to sustainability that are shared among lay citizens within given social groups.

Combining elements of research and of engagement, the STAVE process entails **three meetings** of each single group of citizens, with **interval periods of 7-10 days between group meetings**, during which a **diary** is produced by the participants.

Pattern of implementation

→ **Deciding on the number of citizen groups:**
The STAVE standard protocol, as implemented in Project Pachelbel, was based on 3 citizen groups, with each group meeting on three occasions for each STAVE implementation. This number seemed to offer an optimum arrangement in terms of minimising organisational and resource demands, whilst offering rich insights together with a degree of comparability.

→ **Deciding the temporal sequence of your citizen groups:**

Simultaneous:
All three groups run in parallel; allowing comparisons among groups

Sequential:
Group 1 can be implemented in advance to test and refine the process to be then applied in groups 2 and 3

The STAVE operator (and the STAVE Good Practice Guide) will help in identifying the appropriate number of groups and temporal sequence for your specific policy objectives.

The Tool Kit

Meeting 1   **Meeting 2**   **Meeting 3**

- Diaries
- EVOC/CAPA (Evocation and Capability questionnaire set)
- Simulated news article
- Oval mapping
- Resource allocation exercise
- Policy questions
- Evaluation Questionnaire

The STAVE toolkit integrates a number of techniques and procedures (deceptively simple but sophisticated) to engage with your citizen groups.

A detailed description of the component parts of the tool kit, together with indications on its implementation, is included in the STAVE Good Practice Guide

The Tool Kit

* The Pachelbel STAVE trials demonstrated that some components parts of the toolkit, and combinations of those components, proved especially useful in targeting specific policy-related issues.

> ***Oval mapping*** is a powerful resource to explore patterns of shared everyday practices, the relationships between these practices, and how they relate to various policy agendas.

> ***Diaries*** deliver a richness of data on daily behaviours, and serve to focus participants' attention on their day-to-day activities.

> ***Policy questions*** confront participants directly with issues raised by the policy-makers, in order to elicit perceptions and understandings of these issues on the citizens' own terms.

> ***Resource allocation exercise*** enables a straightforward ranking of participants' evaluation of the effectiveness or desirability of potential policy measures.

> ***EVOC/CAPA questionnaire set*** elicits group participants' free associations and stated preferences concerning policy issues, and delivers information on participant's profiles and degree of environmental awareness.

> ***Simulated newspaper article*** stimulates group discussion and introduces issues for consideration in a relatively naturalistic manner.

The Tool Kit

* Examples of some particularly productive combinations of parts of the tool-kit

➢ **Oval mapping and diaries:**
The group-based oval mapping revealed rich aspects of behaviours related to the policy issue. The individually-produced diaries prompted participants to notice what they "really do", triggering self-reflection and making participants re-think what was already discussed. This combination is useful for bridging the gap between self-perception and real behaviours.

➢ **CAPA and diaries:**
High scores on the CAPA questionnaire (judging one's own capability to act in favour of sustainable consumption) may contrast with the limitations acknowledged in diaries. This combination of tools proved useful in uncovering the gap between aspirations and real behaviors

➢ **Diaries, resource allocation exercise, and policy questions**
This combination produced insight by situating citizens in their everyday life (diaries) and then inviting them to take the policy maker role (resource allocation and policy question exercises)

4. Providing feedback

The final step aims to help you draw the insight from the group process

Providing feedback
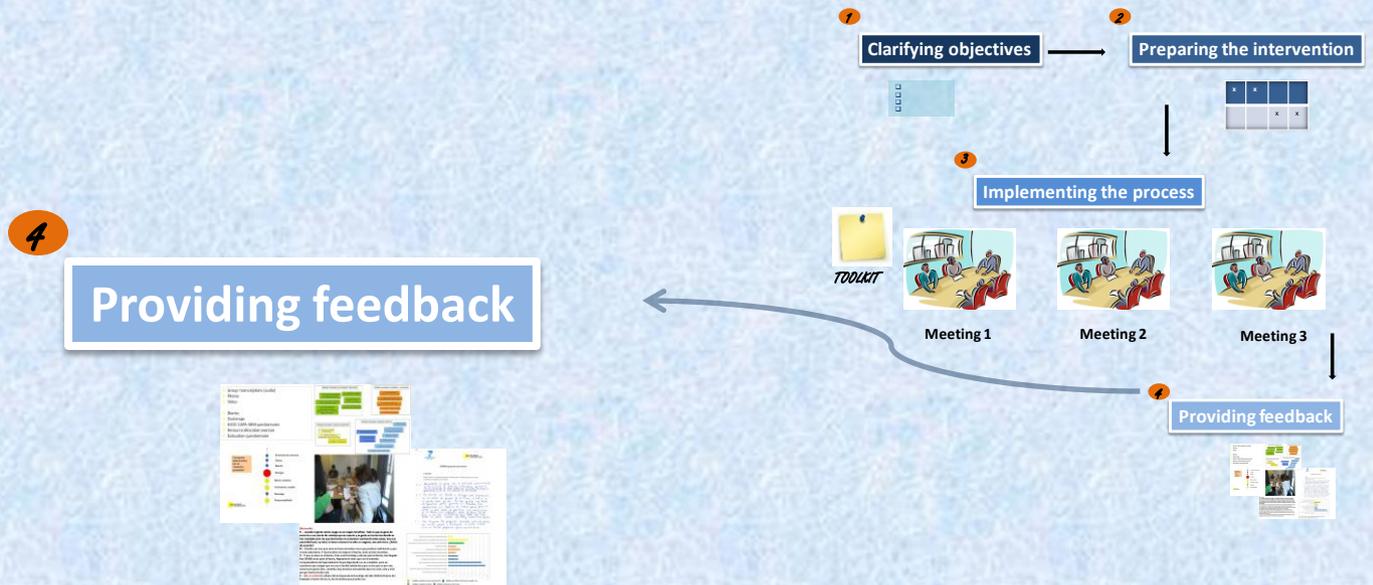
Characterizing feedback

Deciding the feedback strategy

Characterizing feedback

As soon as the citizen group process has taken place, the STAVE operator will begin to work on "translating" the evidence generated by the groups into a suitable form for consideration in a policy-making context.

The figure below illustrates the different feedback modes applied during the STAVE trials. Your STAVE operator will help you to find the suitable one for you.

This feedback mode provides findings immediately after the citizen groups have met (or possibly during this process) – responding to the policy makers' needs for quickly available and easy to understand information. The "speedy" feedback relies primarily on the materials directly produced by the citizens participating in the group

Building on the speedy feedback, the Full report includes an elaborated (social research) analysis by the STAVE operator. This will incorporate insights based upon the policy makers' comments on the "speedy" mode feedback.

Speedy mode

Full report

Combined options

From a slightly elaborated "speedy mode" to the full report

Characterizing feedback

The "speedy mode" delivers to the Project Group a visual and easy to follow presentation of the citizen group participants' direct outputs.
The STAVE operator will elaborate such a presentation for you.

The "speedy mode"

Example of a "speedy feedback" including extracts from group transcriptions and diaries, as well as results from oval maps, resource allocation exercise and EVOC.

Characterizing feedback

Building on the speedy mode, the "Full Report" mode includes an elaborated (social sciences) analysis (by the STAVE operator)

The Full Report
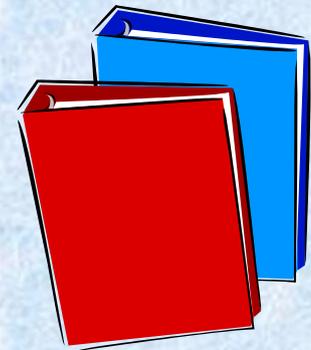
This feedback mode has a more social research oriented focus and will be elaborated by your STAVE operator.

It is based upon a qualitative analysis of the groups and diaries data (discourse analysis of transcriptions) and a quantitative analysis of EVOC/CAPA, resource allocation and policy question exercises and evaluation questionnaire.

The full report provides findings to policy makers that may detail or adjust the "speedy" findings. Ideally, it will be discussed and considered by the Project Group in interaction with the operator. This dialogue may lead to an expanded final report.

Deciding on the feedback strategy

The STAVE trials made clear that the kind of evidence policy-makers require will very much depend on their specific profile and concerns.

Policy organisations working at a strategic level, many of which will have experience of commissioning social research, will tend to have a preference for the elaborated feedback (i.e., full report). In contrast organisations more concerned with policy implementation and local issues may prefer the "speedy" mode.

Level of government

	Local	Regional	National
+	Spain 1		UK
		Sweden Germany	
	Spain 2-3		France
-		Romania	

Experience with public participation

Experience with social research **-** **+**
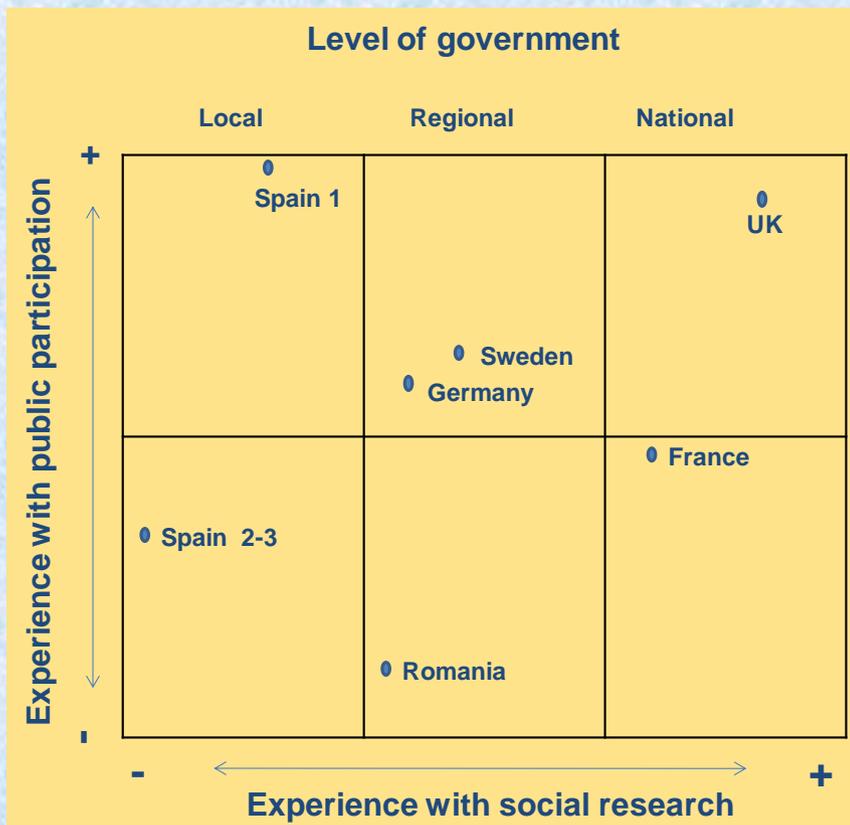
This figure illustrates the variety of policy profiles involved in our STAVE trials, according to three key factors:
1**. Experience with public participation process;**
2. **Experience in commissioning social research**;
3. **Level of Government**

Within the sample of policy-making situations that formed the basis for the STAVE trialling, we found that organisations in the upper tiers of government tended to have more experience in using social research in supporting policy-making and policy implementation. Thus, in the bottom-right box we find France, with high levels of experience in social research, but lower levels as to public participation. In the bottom-left box we find Spain 2-3, with quite a level of experience in public participation, but little experience with social research.

The STAVE Operator will help to identify, and to elaborate, the most suitable feedback mode according to your policy profile.

The STAVE team

The Pachelbel Consortium:
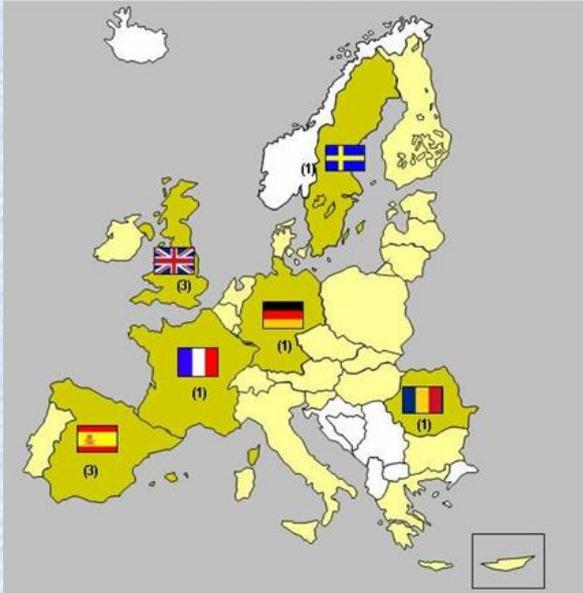
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The Policy Partners:

Spain	Barcelona City Council. Department of Environment. Agenda21. Barcelona City Council. Department of Environment. BCN Energy Agency.
UK	DEFRA. Centre of Expertise on Influencing Behaviours.
France	French Ministry of Environment: CGEDD (General Council for environment and sustainable development); ERDF (National Electricity Distribution utility)
Germany	Ministry of the Environment, Climate Protection and the Energy Sector of Baden-Württemberg
Sweden	Värmland County Administrative Board.
Romania	Caraş-Severin County Council

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An Introducton

If you are interested in understanding and addressing citizens' everyday behaviour in any policy context, then STAVE may suit you.

This Good Practice Guide provides a straightforward summary of what is involved in planning, designing and conducting a STAVE process.

Full details of the STAVE tool and process are set out in the STAVE Good Practice Guide , which is best applied in collaboration with an experienced STAVE operator.

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