

Web Sites Survey for Electronic Public Participation

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1. Introduction

Public acceptance has been a key factor in nuclear industry as well as other fields. There are many ways to get public acceptance. Public participation in making a policy must be a good tool for this purpose. Moreover, the participation by means of Internet may be an excellent way to increase voluntary participation. In this paper, the level of electronic public participation is defined and how easy and deep for lay public to participate electronically is assessed for some organization's web sites.

2. Review and Survey

In this section, the level of public participation was classified and the definition of each level was described. On the basis of classification, the evaluation criteria for electronic public participation were set up and the survey for some administrative body's web sites was carried out.

2.1 Classification

The key dimension considers to what level, or how far, public are engaged. The OECD report argues that democratic political participation must involve the means to be informed, the mechanism to take part in the decision-making and the ability to contribute and influence the policy agenda, specifically it usefully defines the following terms [1].

Information: a one-way relationship in which government produces and delivers information for use by public.

Consultation: a two-way relationship in which public provide feedback to government. It is based on the prior definition of information. Governments define the issues for consultation, set the questions and manage the process, while public are invited to contribute their views and opinions.

Active participation: a relationship based on partnership with government in which public actively engage in defining the process and content of policy-making. It acknowledges equal standing for public in setting the agenda, although the responsibility for the final decision rests with government.

Using these terms as a basis, we have developed three levels of electronic public participation such as instruction, communication and collaboration.

The first level is the stage of instruction that is about supplying relevant information that is both more accessible and understandable to public. In this level,

government should provide on-line aids and materials for people who wish to educate themselves in structuring decision problems, constructing and evaluating alternatives for the related policy. Performance tools for level 1 might be E-mail notice for new policy issue, on-line publication of annual reports and construction of internet portal site for electronic public participation [2].

Communication is next level that is about consulting a wider audience to enable deeper contributions and support deliberative debate on policy issues. In this stage, government should provide public not only with a useful on-line system to communicate with other people and relevant authorities but also with a pertinent on-line tools to give some input and recommendation for performing decision analysis and creating policy. Public participation for this level could be accomplished by digital debate which means panels (experts, officials and public) have a controversy on-line [3]. The connected people in the web site could listen the debate and propose their comments via bulletin board and e-mail.

The final level is collaboration. It is subjected to supporting an active participation and facilitating bottom-up ideas and input to influence the political issues. Government should provide opportunity for public to participate in the decision-making through such as on-line vote and survey. Furthermore, the reasonable grounds about the decision-making for enhanced public acceptance should be addressed to public. In this level, the authority should also offer the performance tools such as on-line survey, electronic petition and referenda. The three steps above mentioned are illustrated in figure 1 [4].

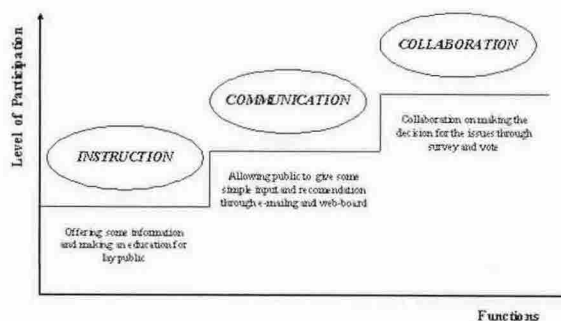


Fig. 1. Levels of electronic public participation

2.2 Web Site Survey

The survey examined the web site of some administrative bodies. Each web site was reviewed for nine elements, separated into three categories followed

by the same levels of participation [5]. The first three elements cover instruction, level 1 - that is, the one-way presentation of information from the agency to the public. These elements were:

- 1-1 On-line access to laws and regulations
- 1-2 On-line quick and open announcement for specific issues
- 1-3 Information about opportunities for on-line and off-line public participation

The second category was communicative participation, which refers to the ability of the public to interact on-line with agency personnel as well as other people. The interactive elements examined were:

- 2-1 The opportunity for public to provide input to the agency on-line
- 2-2 The ability to comment on regulations on-line
- 2-3 The ability to communicate with other people on-line

The final category was about the level 3, collaboration stage. The related elements were:

- 3-1 The ability to vote or survey the specific issues on-line
- 3-2 The systematic function for public to participate in the making a decision/policy
- 3-3 Agency's feedback for public participation

The results of web site survey and detailed criteria for score at category 3 are shown in Table 1 and 2, respectively. The detailed criteria for score in other categories will be presented in KNS autumn meeting.

Table 1. Survey results for some organizations

Index	Criteria	Category 1			Category 2			Category 3		
		1-1	1-2	1-3	2-1	2-2	2-3	3-1	3-2	3-3
US NRC ^a		○	○	○	○	○	■	■	■	△
MIC ^b		○	○	○	○	○	○	○	△	■
ME ^c		○	○	○	○	△	△	○	■	■
MOST ^d		○	○	○	○	■	△	△	■	■
MOCIE ^e		○	○	○	○	○	△	○	△	■

- a: U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission ○ = Good
- b: Ministry of Information and Communication □ = Medium
- c: Ministry of Environment ■ = Poor
- d: Ministry of Science and Technology
- e: Most of Commerce, Industry and Energy

Table 2. Criteria for score at category 3

Category	Criteria
3-1	Good Can vote or poll for the specific issues and public participation with much use
	Medium Can vote or poll for the specific issues and public participation with not much use or vote or poll for the impertinent issues
	Poor No opportunity to vote or poll/can't find
3-2	Good Provide public with on-line participation tools systematically
	Medium Provide public with on-line participation tools occasionally or provide off-line tools
	Poor No function/can't find
3-3	Good Addressing the reasonable grounds about making decision/policy in detail
	Medium Addressing the reasonable grounds about making decision/policy in short
	Poor No feedback/can't find

As shown in the table 1, most web site had some suitable functions to make public participation at level 1 and 2 such as E-mail newsletter, annual reports and bulletin boards. However, few functions at level 3 were equipped in the greater part of web sites. In order to reach public participation of this level, the authority should equip the implement for adopting public opinion to making-policy and give sensible grounds for making-decision.

3. Conclusion

The level of public participation by electronic tools was classified and the web site survey was evaluated on basis of the three categorized criteria in our study. It was found that the most organizations had not the systematic functions for public to participate in the making a policy at level 3.

Some obstacles will be faced to determine the site for new nuclear power plants and nuclear waste disposal facility. To resolve this problem in advance, public acceptance is a major factor. It may be the first step to accomplish public acceptance that offering the right information to public, encouraging them to participate and giving the reasonable grounds for making-policy.

REFERENCES

- [1] OECD, Citizens as Partners: Information, consultation and public participation in policy-making, OECD, 2001.
- [2] OECD, Promise and Problems of E-Democracy: Challenges of Online Citizen Engagement, OECD, 2003.
- [3] N. W. Jankowski and R. van Os, Internet-based Political Discourse: A Case Study of Electronic Democracy in the City of Hoogeveen, Prospects for Electronic Democracy, Sep., 2002.
- [4] A. Macintosh, Characterizing E-Participation in Policy-Making, Proceedings of the 37th Hawaii International Conference on System Science, 2004.
- [5] T. Beierle and S. Cahill, Electronic Democracy and Environmental Governance: A Survey of the States, Resource for the Future, Discussion Paper 00-42, Oct., 2000.

APPENDIX: WEB SITE FOR SURVEY

- U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (<http://www.nrc.gov>)
- Ministry of Information and Communication (<http://www.mic.go.kr>)
- Ministry of Environment (<http://www.me.go.kr>)
- Ministry of Science and Technology (<http://www.most.go.kr>)
- Most of Commerce, Industry and Energy (<http://mocie.go.kr>)