

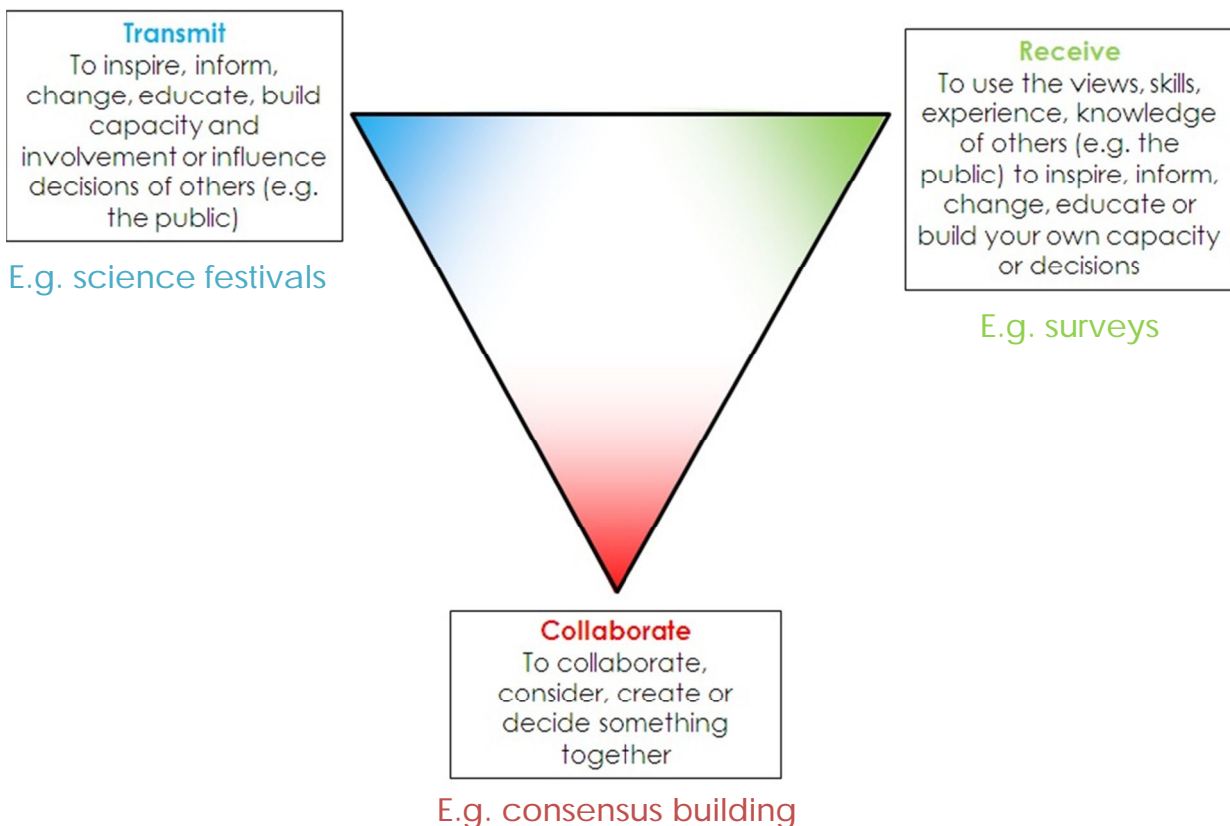
## The Public Engagement Triangle

This tool has been designed to help people explore their reasons for carrying out any public engagement activity (or any engagement activity more generally).

Three broad but often overlapping purposes are defined ('transmit', 'collaborate', 'receive') and the emphasis of any planned activity towards these purposes can be located on the 2-dimensional triangle below. We hope that this tool will be useful in helping people to, for example:

- plan, design and draw out objectives for communication and public engagement activities
- form a strategy: match the type of public engagement technique to the identified needs and help in considering what range of techniques are available
- evaluate an activity against its objectives

This tool is not designed to impose a hierarchy on the engagement strategies outlined below: all are useful and valid in their own way and no activity is likely to fall entirely under one category. There is a wide variety of techniques available and most often an activity will contain a blend of these types, with one predominating.



## Examples

- A user preference survey may fall almost entirely under the **Receive** category
- A consultation to inform future policy may fall under a mixture of **Receive** but also **Transmit** if the public are being educated about the topic in the process and **Collaborate** if something is being decided together
- An information campaign may fall entirely under **Transmit**
- The activities of a researcher wanting to respond to the concerns of the public and be influenced about the direction of their research may fall between **Receive** and **Collaborate** as their research is shaped by the community with which they are engaging

Starting the discussion: What is the emphasis of your activity?					
Transmit		Collaborate		Receive	
Terms	Activities	Terms	Activities	Terms	Activities
Inspiration	Festivals	Partnership	Open Space events	Insight	Surveys
Shift perceptions	Exhibitions	Co-design	Stakeholder dialogue	Information gathering	Datamining
Raise awareness	Champions	Conflict resolution	Regulatory negotiation	Extractive research	Feedback forms
Outreach	TV/Radio	Mediation	Partnership broking	Market research	Citizens' juries
Education	Open days	Multi-party agreement	Consensus workshops	Social research	Focus groups
Understanding	Newsletters	Negotiation	Steering groups	Influencing	Ballots/voting
Communication	Debates	Consensus	Conversations project	Democratic	Polling
Behaviour change	Lectures	Co-inquiry	Mediation	Accountability	Suggestions
Marketing	Advertising campaigns	Co-governance		'Giving a voice to...'	Advisory panels
Promotion	Viral marketing	Shared decision-making		Understanding strength of feeling	Public meetings
Opinion-forming	Websites				Deliberative workshops
Dissemination					

Acknowledgements: Development of this tool was led by Lindsey Colbourne (Sciencewise Expert Resource Centre) for the Science for All Follow Up Group, and we are grateful to all those who contributed to a workshop and commented on an earlier version online.

## The public engagement triangle – supporting notes

What sort of tool is this?

We hope that this tool will be useful *in conversation*. It is not designed to be a stand-alone framework but one that will be continually adapted and developed. Used flexibly, and in conversation, we think this tool can help to test, challenge, analyse, broaden and draw out explicit and implicit (public) engagement objectives in a range of situations including:

- When promoting (public) engagement needs or benefits (matching purposes to types of engagement)
- To broaden awareness (and use) of full range of (public) engagement available
- to help design engagement/ clarify what type engagement is sought
- undertaking a skills (or training needs) audit for individuals or organisations
- in evaluating engagement, including what is being delivered against what is being promised (myth debunking)
- mapping different engagement activities or volume of activity

Three types of public engagement:



For whom is this tool designed?

We envisage this tool being used by 'engagement protagonists and intermediaries' in conversation with those that they are supporting, liaising with, convincing, funding, evaluating, inspiring and commissioning in the field of public engagement *from an organisational point of view*. We hope that its use will enable different forms of public engagement to be valued and applied appropriately for different purposes. Indeed it is possible to extend the use of the model to cover how the public engage with institutions<sup>1</sup>.

The tool will need to be adapted and used differently when applied to different levels of activity. For example, when using it to clarify an organisation's engagement strategy, it is likely that the tool will assist in considering which (if not all) types of engagement might be appropriate, and how to use and deliver those. By contrast, when using the tool to clarify what type of engagement is sought in a specific situation, the focus may be on drawing out the underlying 'direction' of engagement sought.

When using it to raise or broaden understanding of the range of public engagement activities available, it is likely that each part of the tool will need to be covered and drawn out in some detail.

Because it is a flexible tool, we hope it can be useful across all types of 'public engagement'. Indeed, it can be applied to 'engagement' (including stakeholder engagement) more generally.

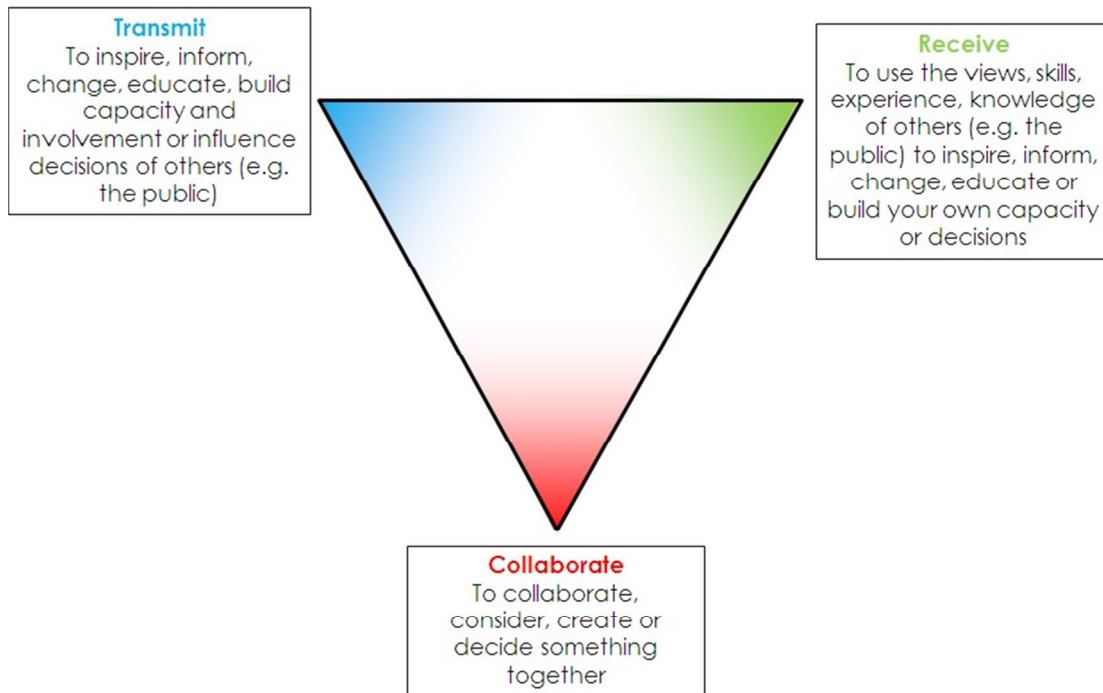
It is important however, that this is not be confused with a tool to assess the amount of '*interaction*' used to deliver different types of public engagement. Each of the three 'types' of public engagement (and the sub types within those) described overleaf can be achieved with more or less interactivity, skill and depth of engagement. Each has an equally valid role within the most appropriate situations and it should be emphasised that rarely will an activity fall *entirely* within one category.

## The tool

The tool is designed to encourage honest discussion of three *key purposes* for engaging with the public. Very often more than one purpose will lie behind public engagement, but a simple starting point is to clarify which one is *predominant*? Which type of public engagement will help achieve the underlying reason for needing to do it at all (for example, to meet social needs, to build trust, to deliver an effective programme or make a robust decision)? It is likely that there will almost always be a bit of each public engagement purpose in play and so we are presenting the tool as a continuum, allowing honest exploration of where the *dominant purpose* lies. In exploring that, it is possible to consider which are the other purposes serving or supporting that dominant purpose. Encouraging clarity, and honesty at this level will help tease out some of the myths that can – and do – hamper public engagement. Once clarity has been reached, conversations can then be turned to refining and combining the types of purpose to identify the *type* of engagement that is most suited to the purpose(s) identified.

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<sup>1</sup> Open University (2006) 'S802 Science and the Public: Science Promotion, Investigating Science Outreach', pp. 7-10.  
*Science for All - Public Engagement Conversational Tool. Version 6.* 25 October 2010



At one corner the purpose of engagement is to transmit - to inspire, inform, change, educate, build capacity or involvement, or influence decisions of the public. At a second corner, the purpose of engagement is to receive - to use the views, skills, experience, knowledge of the public to inspire, inform, change, educate or build one's own capacity or decision making. These two are the most common purposes and types of engagement. At the third corner is a place that is less practised (although much talked about), which is about collaborating - considering, creating or deciding something together with the public.

Public engagement protagonists, intermediaries and practitioners each come from one or other of these backgrounds - for example, those of us from an education, capacity building or science communicator background will be more 'transmit' experienced, consultation and market research practitioners more 'receive' experienced and mediators, partnership brokers and conflict resolvers are more 'collaborate' experienced.

The diagram aims to help users to mark the relative weight and mix of different engagement purposes. For ideas about purposes, participants and types of engagement that may arise in conversation, please see the following tables:

1. Terms that are often associated with each type of engagement

TRANSMIT	COLLABORATE	RECEIVE
inspiration shift perceptions raise awareness engender support outreach education capacity building understanding communication behaviour change campaign marketing promotion opinion-forming dissemination	collaboration partnership co-design conflict resolution mediation multi-party agreement negotiated agreement consensus co-inquiry co-governance sharing decision making	insight information gathering extractive research market research social research consultation influencing decision-making democratic accountability giving a voice to ... understanding strength of feeling

Note: However, some terms are used to mean so many things, that they may no longer hold any useful clarity. The following may fall into this category:

- engagement • dialogue • deliberation • empowerment • participation

2. How participants might be 'characterised' by the activity practitioner

TRANSMIT	COLLABORATE	RECEIVE
"Target audiences" e.g.  segmentations schools visitors students	"Stakeholders" e.g.  empowered individuals reps of interests/constituencies organisations partners activists (actors)	"Samples" of:  end-user stakeholder public citizen customer community

3. Types of approaches included in each type

TRANSMIT	COLLABORATE	RECEIVE
Exemplifying Experiential (hands on) Teaching Resource/info provision Capacity building Campaigns Marketing	Mediation Exploration Consensus decision making Co-production	Information gathering Consultation Market/attitude research Social research Delegated decisions On-going advisory Feedback loops

Note: The approaches within each category vary enormously (e.g. marketing is very different to education; mediation is very different to consensus decision making; information gathering is very different to consultation).

4. Types of methods and techniques included in each type

TRANSMIT	COLLABORATE	RECEIVE
Festivals Exhibitions Champions TV/radio programmes Open days, site visits Newsletters Debates, lectures, talks Viral campaigns Websites	Future search conference Open Space Events Stakeholder dialogue Regulatory negotiation Partnership broking Consensus workshops Steering groups Conversations project Mediation	Surveys/q'airres Data mining Feedback forms Citizens juries Focus groups Ballots, voting Polling Suggestion schemes Advisory panels Public meetings Deliberative workshops

5. Those with expertise may include:

TRANSMIT	COLLABORATE	RECEIVE
Communicators Marketers Educators Capacity builders Trainers Scientists	Mediators Conflict resolvers Partnership brokers Facilitators	Market Researchers Social researchers Customer insight personnel Consultation consultants Facilitators Scientists Communicators



## Moving on: Refining the conversation and further tools

The conversation could also lead into how a particular purpose and type of engagement can be realised in practice, discussing the placement of an initiative on the 'triangle mapping' and the suitability of that placement given the:

- the context or situation
- the broad approaches there are to achieving that purpose and type with
- the specific methods and techniques can be applied within that approach with
- who participants (audiences) might be with
- who might have suitable skills/experience to help deliver that kind of public engagement

This level of discussion could clarify issues such as how much interaction is appropriate, and distinctions between different types of engagement for each of the three motivations.

Many organisations and initiatives have started to do this for their own audiences/customers and this tool would not seek to replace these, but to place those more detailed analyses within this wider set of distinctions. Conversations could also lead on to signposting and use of more detailed 'planning and assessment tools' such as those offered by:

- National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement:
  - o <http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/what-public-engagement/frameworks>
- Involve
  - o <http://www.involve.org.uk/resources>
- Dialogue by Design
  - o <http://www.dialoguebydesign.net/resources/resources.htm>