

Contribution from IAP2 – Information request #13

"What insight can be practitioners of engagement processes provide [on how to achieve effective long-term decision-making which earns public trust]?"

There are many resources available on our website that can answer this question -

<https://www.iap2.org.au/Resources/Search-Resources>

We have taken the approach that the biggest challenge that many project managers/engagement practitioners face is not demonstrating the return to the public (community) of good and early engagement – but actually in demonstrating a tangible Return on Investment (ROI) to the decision makers, who are often the Political stakeholders that have all the power in how projects are implemented and indeed if they proceed at all.

Therefore we are directing you to a report ‘Valuing Better Engagement’, produced by PwC with Consult Australia and in partnership with IAP2 Australasia, which is available on line. Copy below:

Valuing Better Engagement

In Australasia the practice of community and stakeholder engagement is constantly evolving; being shaped by global and local influences and events, changing democratic practices and creative minds.

Whilst there are a broad range of definitions of community engagement, the defining elements include: purposeful; planned process; shaping of decisions and actions of communities and/or organisations; recognition of the interrelationship between the decisions and actions of organisations, stakeholders, communities and individuals; and recognition of their rights.

There is no doubt that quality engagement processes build public trust and support effective long-term decision making. However, a key challenge for quality engagement processes is the influence of the political actor who can redirect or cease the engagement process or the project itself, eroding public trust and making it difficult to restore it to support future long-term decision making. Part of this challenge could be the need for engagement practitioners to demonstrate a tangible measure of the value of engagement, a return on investment approach.

The Valuing Better Engagement report (Report) is an economic framework to quantify the value of stakeholder engagement for infrastructure delivery, which may be applicable for other sectors.

The Report has been prepared to establish a high level framework to:

- Identify the benefits of conducting specific stakeholder engagement; and
- Assess the value of stakeholder engagement in a defensible and repeatable manner.

Given the challenges in developing a way to assess the potential benefit of engagement, a three step process was developed.

1. Set overarching objectives for the framework;
2. Identify the benefits commonly associated with engagement that are both quantifiable and have a strong degree of causality; and
3. Review the availability and reliability of the information underpinning the identified measurable elements.

The full Valuing Better Engagement report can be read here –

<http://www.consultaustralia.com.au/docs/default-source/infrastructure/engagement/valuing-better-engagement---economic-framework.pdf?sfvrsn=2>

Consult Australia and IAP2 Australasia encourage the broader use of the framework and publication of case studies illustrating its application.