

Designing a Deliberative Forum

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Deliberation comes in many shapes and sizes

- Length, size, frequency and content of deliberation are dictated by:
 - purpose, scale and complexity of deliberation initiative (e.g., local vs. national; time limited vs. on-going, one site vs. multiple)
 - available budgets, institutional requirements and legislative mandates

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Key considerations for each design feature (1)

Frequency and length of sessions

- single vs. multiple?
- hours vs. days?

Key considerations

- Ensure that adequate time (1-2 days) is built in for participants to:
 - become familiar with the deliberation issue, their fellow deliberators and organizers;
 - learn how to deliberate (i.e., listen, ask questions, share and challenge viewpoints, and produce collective output)

This is essential for trust building and high-quality deliberation.

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Key considerations for each design feature (2)

2. Size of group

- deliberative events can include large groups of 100 – 1000+ or smaller groups of 12-20

Key considerations

- Ensure adequate opportunity for small-group deliberation (6-12 people) to take place to support full and fair participation and meaningful deliberation
- Establish clear goals and carefully manage transitions between small and large groups to avoid confusion and duplication of tasks

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Key considerations for each design feature (3)

3. The content and product of the deliberation

- values elicitation?
- policy option development/evaluation?
- recommendations?

Key considerations

- Deliberation activities should be guided by the goals of deliberation and how the sponsors intend to use the output (e.g., inform/guide vs. explicit uptake)
- Purpose and intended use needs to be communicated clearly and often:
 - recruitment stage
 - beginning of first deliberation event
 - beginning and end of each session
 - prior to deliberation wrap-up