Engaging stakeholders in regulatory science: Practices and perspectives from the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment

Leonie Dendler, PhD
Unit Crisis Prevention and Coordination
Department for Risk Communication
Forms of Engagement at BfR

**Information**
- BfR-Opinion, Press releases, Scientific publications, Leaflets, RSS Feed, Newsletter, FAQ, Explanatory videos, Twitter, (Mobile) Website, Apps

**Consultation Perception Research**
- Delphi Studies, Surveys, Focus Groups, (Social) Media Analysis, Consumer Conferences

**Dialog**
- Scientific and public events, Training courses, Advisory dialogues (scientific advisory board, science commissions), Individual meetings with business and civil societal associations

**Participation in Decision Making**
- “Measurement Concept of **Reputation** for Non-University Research Organizations” (literature reviews, expert interviews)
- “Public Participation and **Stakeholder Management** in Science based Consumer Protection” (public & expert survey / interviews, literature reviews, documentary analysis, participatory observations)

Based on Rowe and Frewer, 2005; Arnstein, 1969

Leonie Dendler, 20.09.18, EFSA's 3rd Scientific Conference
## Literature and interview based criteria for successful stakeholder management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning</th>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Defining a goal  
Consider external conditions  
Consider internal conditions  
Identifying stakeholders  
Assessing stakeholders  
Categorizing/selecting stakeholders  
Deciding a management strategy | Effective communication  
Relationship management  
Capacity management  
Leadership  
Ownership  
Flexibility  
Monitoring, evaluation & adaptation | Effectiveness  
Relevance  
Impact |

Source: Dendler & Böl, in review
Public Survey Responses: How important do you consider the engagement of the following groups in the work of BfR?

- **Science**: 53.2% very important, 36.9% important, 1.24% less important, 4.4% not at all important
- **Consumers**: 45.8% very important, 39.3% important, 6.5% less important, 2.5% not at all important
- **Public Authorities**: 33.2% very important, 50.1% important, 15.4% less important, 3.1% not at all important
- **Consumer, environmental & other NGOs**: 26.3% very important, 45.7% important, 12.6% less important, 4.4% not at all important
- **Media**: 23.0% very important, 37.1% important, 18.7% less important, 8.8% not at all important
- **Business**: 18.7% very important, 40.6% important, 19.5% less important, 9.6% not at all important
- **Politics**: 19.6% very important, 34.9% important, 22.2% less important, 10.8% not at all important

In percent of all those that provided a response | Science n=950, consumers n=953, public authorities n=942, NGOs n=935, media n=953, business n=945, politics n=947 | Divergent to 100 = answer "partly"

*Source: Götte et al. (2017)*
Public Survey Responses: How big do you think is the actual influence of the following groups on the work of BfR?

In percent of all those that provided a response | Science n=910, consumers n=919, public authorities n=904, NGOs n=896, media n=915, business n=914, politics n=911 | Divergent to 100 ≙ answer “partly”

Source: Götte et al. (2017)
Main points of interview discussion

- What is the „right“ identification and selection of stakeholders (pragmatic vs. strategic vs. normative selection)?

- How to avoid stakeholder fatigue?

- How to engage heterogeneous stakeholders with different capacities and/or interests?

- How much decision making power should be attributed, especially in the scientific context?
Conclusion & Prospects

- Engagement as an overall societal trend.
- In the case of BfR, demands for greater engagement especially of consumers.

But:

- Demands are not coherent.
- Controversies around the “right” selection of stakeholders, the engagement of highly heterogenous stakeholders, potential stakeholder fatigue and the distribution of decision power, especially in science.
- Controversies are shaped by the topic, the stakeholders and the framework adopted (pragmatic vs. strategic vs. normative) but also core epistemological, regulatory, discursive and critical questions.
- Need for well supported and communicated participatory opening with preparations for its unavoidable challenges and conflicts.
Acknowledgements

Gaby-Fleur Böl
Torsten Herold
Deniz Kocak
Mark Lohmann
Thank you for your attention

Leonie Dendler

Federal Institute for Risk Assessment
Max-Dohrn-Str. 8-10 • 10589 Berlin
Phone +49 30 - 184 12 - 2186
leonie.dendler-rafael@bfr.bund.de • www.bfr.bund.de
Literature