



EUROPEAN FOREST INSTITUTE
CENTRAL-EAST EUROPEAN REGIONAL OFFICE – EFICEEC

Communication and Facilitation during Stakeholder Interactions

Filip Aggestam

COST Action FP1201 (FACESMAP)
Training School on Stakeholder Interaction





Overview

- **Tools and methods**
- **Facilitation and active stakeholder participation**
- **How does research fit into the context?**
- **Case Study on Wetland Restoration**
- **Discussion**



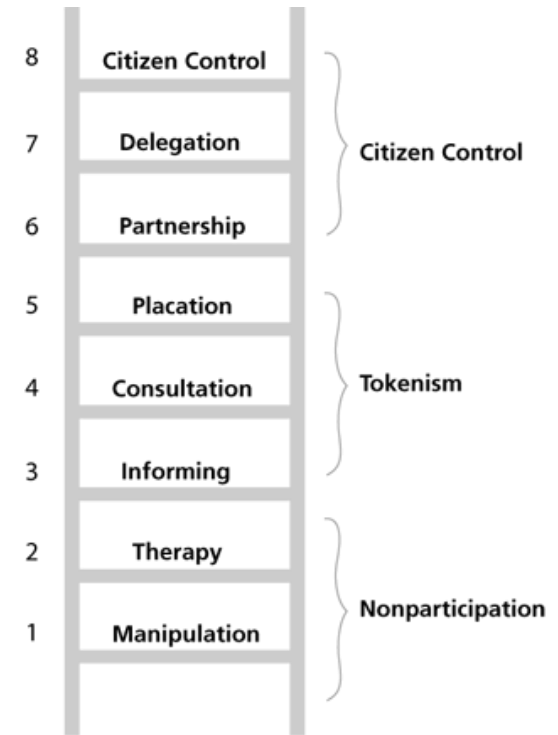


Stakeholder participation

Levels of participation

- Information
- Consultation
- Active Participation

The basic premise for how you communicate or facilitate differs substantially depending on the level of participation.



Arnstein's Ladder (1969)
Degrees of Citizen Participation



Tools and methods available

- Brainstorming
- Focus Group
- Interviews / Questionnaires
- Problem analysis
- Public hearing
- Scenario building
- Round table conference
- Role playing
- GIS
- Reframing
- Stakeholder analysis
- Blogs and forums
- Group model building
- Participatory evaluation
- Journals
- Fish bowl
- World café
- ...



Active Participation





Facilitation

What is the role of a facilitator?

Openness	Ensuring that the process is fair and collaborative
Protect core values	Ensuring that stakeholder values are respected
Speed	Help the participants stay focused
Substance	Focus on the substantive components of the process





Facilitation

What is expected from a facilitator?

- Monitoring of emotions and communication among/between participants in a participatory process.
- Understanding when to intervene to enhance the participatory process.
- Being prepared in terms of understanding what is happening outside the participatory process that may affect the behavior of stakeholders





Facilitation

Differences in communication styles

- Age
- Gender
- Socio-economic status
- Education
- Culture
- Language





Facilitation

Patterns of communication

- Language
- Gestures and body language
- Eye contact
- Vocal tone
- Familiarity
- Communication format (e.g. written or oral)
- Protocol for who speaks and in what order

Verbal and non-verbal patterns of communication





Facilitation

Effects from different forms of communication

- Differences in communication style may block people from listening
- Differences in communication may lead to escalating emotions or even conflicts
- ...

Learning and demonstrating good communication skills are essential to effective facilitation.





Facilitation

Who says what? Who does what?

Who looks at who when talking?

Who avoids whom?

Who sits besides whom? Is it always like this?

What is the general level of energy?

What is the overall level of interest?

Are they watching the clock?

Are they walking in and out?

Are they distracted easily?

...





Facilitation

What to think about...

- Considering the use of time and space
- Choosing the right format/method for stakeholder interactions
- Adapting your communication style (verbal and non-verbal)
- Engaging in active listening





Facilitation

- Make participants aware that they are in charge of the process
- Assist in the communication among/between participants
- Set the tone of the discussion
- Help to find common ground and identify positive solutions
- Remain objective and listen
- Gender- culture- and power-sensitivity
- Monitor the participation process to intervene if necessary
- Protect members of the group from attacks
- Control the flow of questions and information
- Introduce and summarise discussions
- ...





Facilitation

- Belief
- Empowerment
- Communication skills





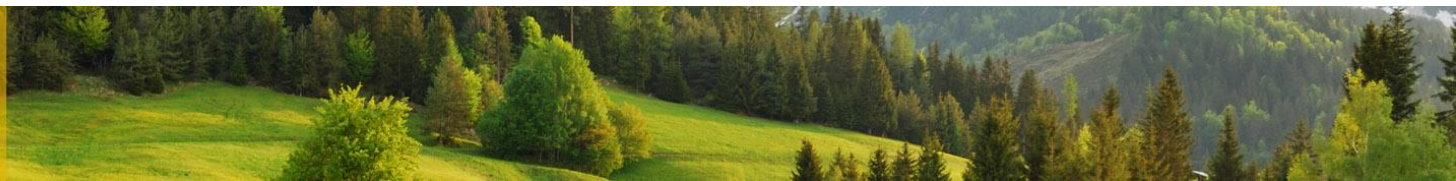
Stakeholder Interaction and Participatory Research





Case Example: Wetland Restoration

What impact can the facilitator have on stakeholder participation?





Study area



- Two catchment areas, Kävlinge River and Höje River, in the County of Scania in south Sweden
- Intention was to **restore wetlands** (e.g. rehabilitating formerly-existing wetlands) as well as **constructing new wetlands**, ponds and riparian zones.





Methodological approach

- Value-systems interact and influence individuals (and/or actors) preferences and perspectives on nature
- Environmental ethics was applied as a framework to analyse values, preferences and perspectives on nature.
 - Anthropocentrism
 - Econcentrism
 - Biocentrism
- Data was collected through a questionnaire, interviews and group discussions.





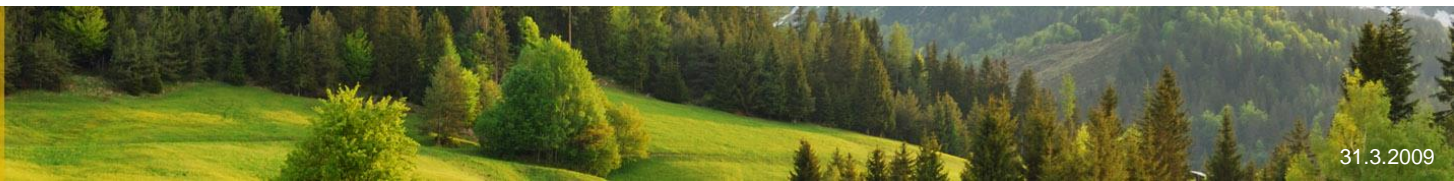
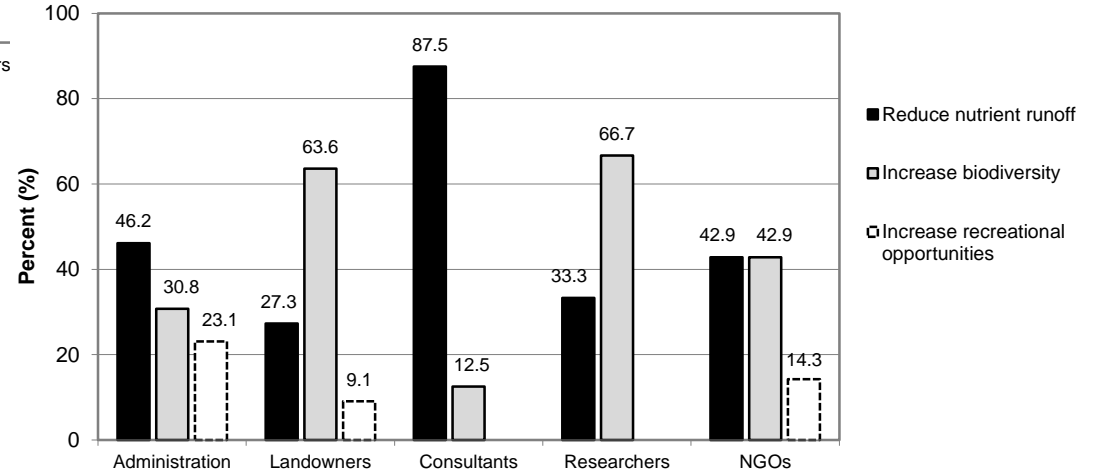
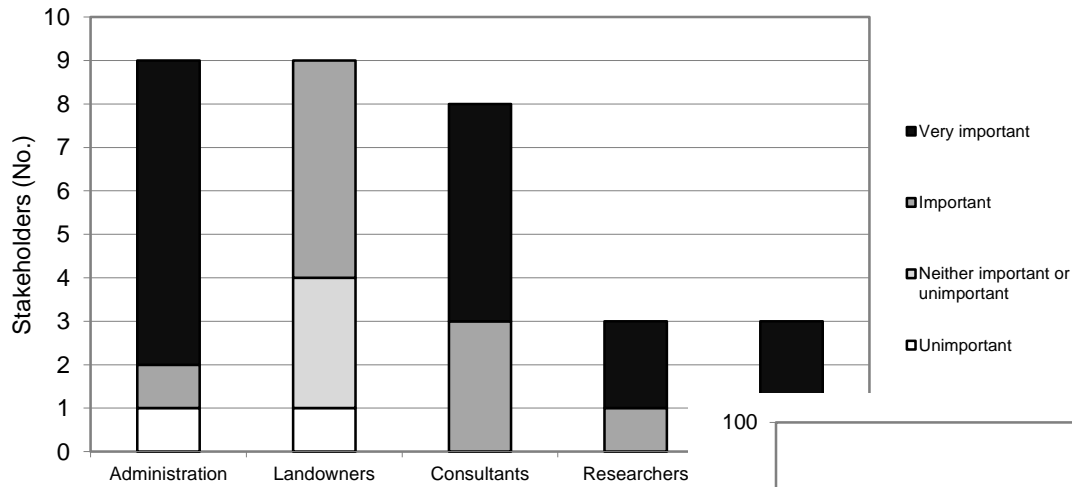
Stakeholder interactions

- The stakeholders that participated were essentially 5 groups; administration, researchers, consultants, NGOs and landowners.
- Participation in the programmes, as regards to the restoration of wetlands, was voluntary. This made the role of the facilitator (or negotiator in this case) particularly important.
- No formal participatory method was applied. Instead the programmes relied almost exclusively on the facilitators ability to convince landowners to participate.



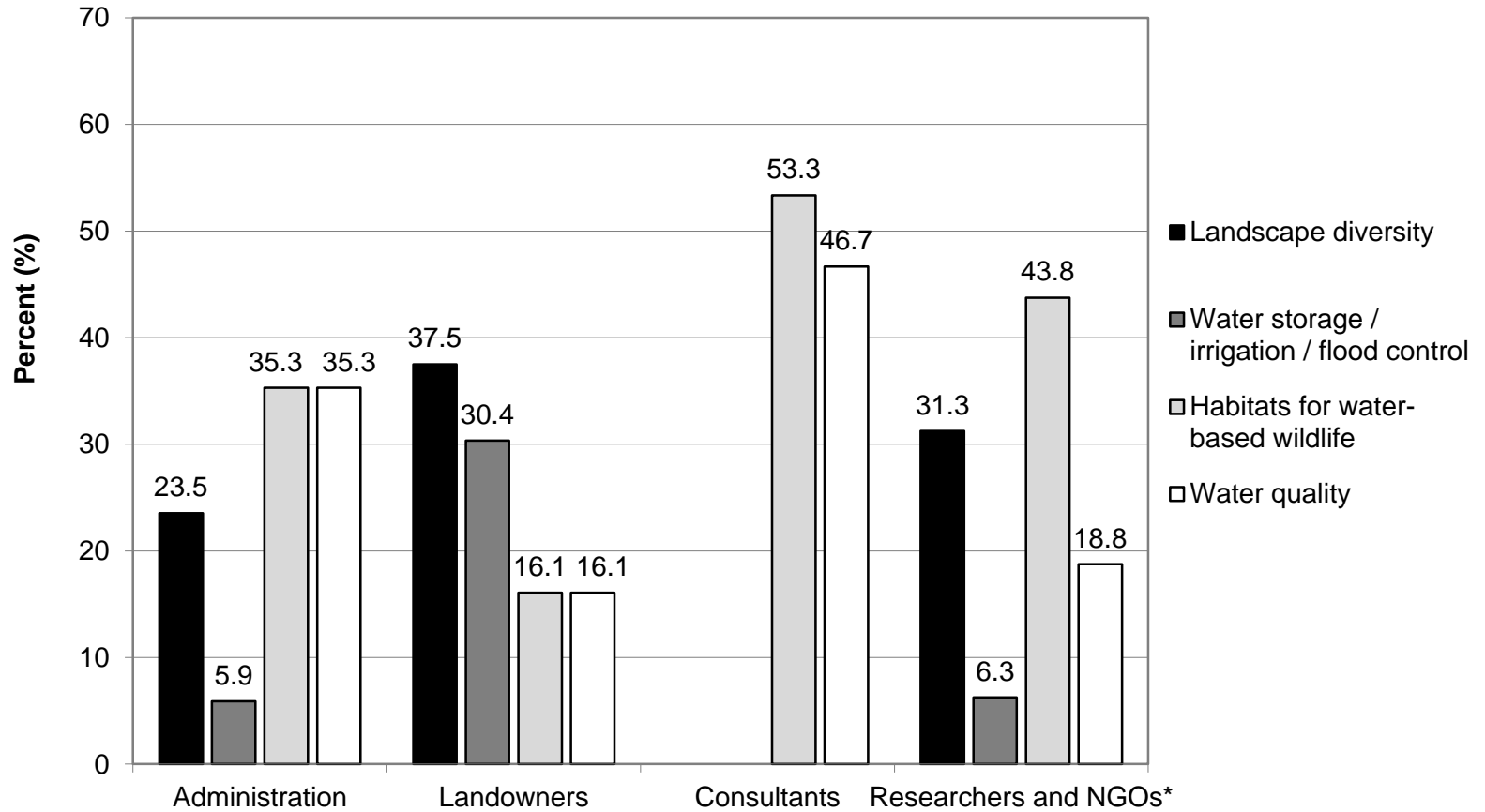


Results



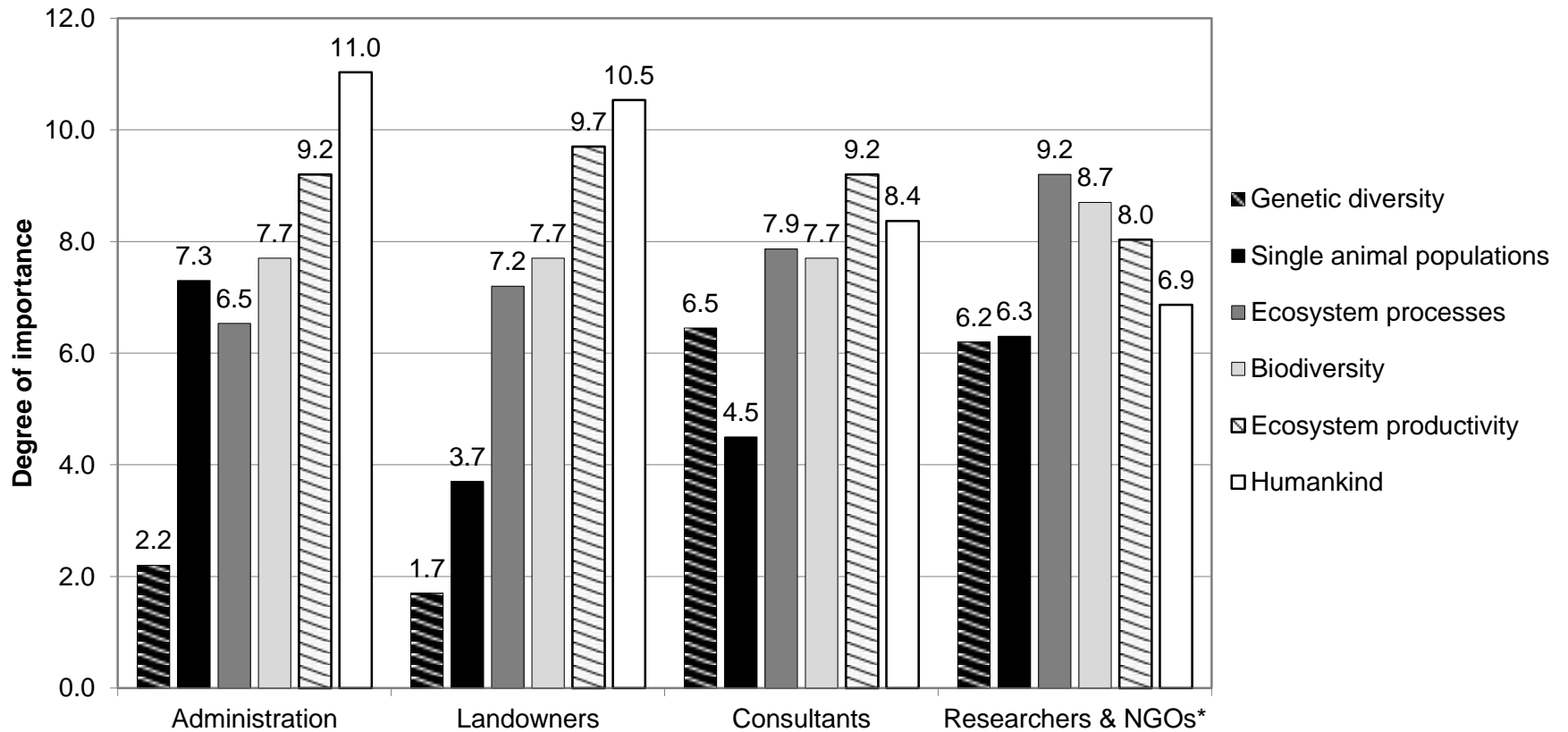


Results





Results





How did values effect the restoration process?

- The participants' value-systems were a mixture of anthropocentric and ecocentric values, rarely expressing biocentric values.
- Structural adjustments imposed by landowners and the County Administration reduced the wetlands ability to retain nutrient runoff, effectively reducing the environmental impact of the programmes.
- Separation of professional and personal value-systems.





How did the facilitator effect the outcome?

- Facilitator of the process noted as key to the success of the programme.
- Compromises made during negotiations gained stakeholder support and “buy-in”, without which nothing would have been accomplished.
- The participatory process compromised the environmental potential of the programmes. The process reduced the environmental benefits.





Questions?





Thank you!



EUROPEAN FOREST INSTITUTE
CENTRAL-EAST AND SOUTH-EAST EUROPEAN
REGIONAL OFFICE - EFICEEC-EFISEE

European Forest Institute Central-East European Regional Office (EFICEEC)
InFER - Institute of Forest, Environmental and Natural Resource Policy
University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences
E-mail: filip.aggestam@boku.ac.at

