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January 2017

External evaluation of PE2020

Final evaluation report

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Göran Melin, Elin Berglund

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1   Introduction

Technopolis Group, represented by Associate Professor Göran Melin, has been appointed as external evaluator of the research project Public Engagement 2020 (PE2020). Julia Synnelius has made valuable contributions during the work with the interim evaluation report and Elin Berglund has similarly done so during the work with the final evaluation report.

The following is the final evaluation report of the PE2020 project, thus concluding the evaluation process. The objective of this report is to offer a status update in relation to the interim report presented in March 2016.

The work with the concluding part of the evaluation has been done during the period October–December 2016. In the evaluation process, we have taken into account the following central questions, specified by the project management:

1. What is the current status/maturity of the project, and what issues should be paid particular attention to in order to meet the goals of the project?

2. How does the internal communication and project coordination work in the consortium?

3. How does the project perform in terms of dissemination and communication with relevant stakeholders, and how can these operations be developed?

4. Any suggestions for future collaboration with other similar or neglected stakeholder groups should be presented

5. Any other ideas for developing the project and its working performance should be present

With the objective to adequately answer the above questions, we have conducted a scrutinised review of the documents that the project management has kindly made accessible to us. The evaluator participated during a two-day PE2020 consortium meeting in Brussels, 14-15 November 2016, and gathered a magnitude of important information regarding the progress of the project, as well as the plans for finalising the tasks of the work packages. We have also examined additional information available on the project's website. In addition, three members of the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) have been interviewed, in order to fill some gaps of information. All interviews have followed a semi-structured format with a prepared interview guide, open to subsequent spontaneous follow-up questions, depending on the answers given. We wish to thank the interviewees for generously taking their time and sharing their views.

Following this introduction, we present a status update of the deliverables of each work package, in relation to the status of them in the interim report from March 2016. Chapter 2 includes status updates of the deliverables from work packages 1-6, thus corresponding to the first part of question 1. The deliverables from WP5 and WP6 will be further elaborated in Chapter 3, where we discuss the dissemination, communication and management of the PE2020 project, answering question 2 and 3. Finally, Chapter 4 will present a discussion based on question 4 and 5, as well as the second clause of question 1 and 3. This discussion will result in some final remarks and recommendations on how to finalise the PE2020 project in the best possible way.

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2   Status update

The following chapter will give an overview of the progress of each activity in the work packages 1-6. The objective is to chart the status of the deliverables in order to distinguish the development since the interim report written in March 2016.

2.1   Work Package 1: Updated inventory and case exploration of European PE innovations[1]

The aim of WP1 is to develop an up-to-date inventory of current and prospective European public engagement innovations. This inventory will provide a background for the selection of a minimum of 50 cases of innovative PE processes related to the governance of science in society. These case explorations will collectively form a catalogue of innovative PE activities in Europe. The results of WP1 will inform the conceptual refinements envisaged in WP2.

Source: PE2020.eu/Activities

The first work package includes the following deliverables:

- D.1.1 Inventory of PE procedures and practices in 37 European countries

- D.1.2 Catalogue of 50 PE case descriptions

- D.1.3 Presentation at an international conference

- D.1.4 Summary report on European PE innovations

D.1.1 resulted in the report *Inventory of PE mechanisms and initiatives* in July 2014 and was the first output of the PE2020 project. The main content of the report is an up-to-date inventory of current and prospective European public engagement innovations.

D.1.2 builds on the findings in D.1.1 and elaborates on 38 of the 250 identified initiatives. The deliverable is a catalogue where 38 cases are structurally described, with further references to similar initiatives. The objective of the catalogue is to provide a "platform for international learning and inspiration in efforts to promote public engagement at large". The *Catalogue of PE initiatives* was published in June 2015.

D.1.3 was a presentation and discussion of PE2020 and WP1 specifically, at the Public Communication of Science and Technology Conference in Brazil in May 2014. The deliverable from this task was the report *Presentations at an international workshop* published in June 2015.

D.1.4 is a summary report that was published in June 2015, thus concluding the work of WP1.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the deliverables of WP1 have all been concluded, and had been so already by the time of the interim report, thus the status of this work package has not changed in relation to the evaluation in March 2016.

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[1] If nothing else is stated, the information in this section is based on the deliverables of WP1: Ravn, T., Mejlgaard, N. (2014). *Inventory of PE mechanisms and initiatives*. D.1.1.; Ravn, T and Mejlgaard, N. (2014). *Public Engagement Innovations – Catalogue of PE initiatives, D.1.2.*; Ravn, T and Mejlgaard, N. (2015). *Presentations at an international workshop D.1.3.*; Ravn, T and Mejlgaard, N., Rask, M., Mačiukaitė-Žvinienė, S., Tauginienė, L. (2015). *Summary report on European PE innovations, D.1.4.*

2.2 Work Package 2: Refinement of the conceptual model[2]

The aim of WP2 is to refine the conceptual model that will

- *inform and possibly reorient data collection (WP1),*

- *provide conceptual categories that are relevant in identifying contextual factors related to the tailoring of best PE practices (WP3), and*

- *help draw generalizable lessons of PE case studies, to be used in the development of the PE design toolkit (WP4).*

Source: PE2020.eu/Activities

Work package 2 includes the following deliverables:

- D.2.1 A refined typology of PE tools and instruments

- D.2.2 A conceptual model of PE across the Dynamically governed research policy cycle and related participatory performance factors

- D.2.3 Summary report on conceptual model of public engagement and factors of participatory performance

By the time of the interim report, only the first deliverable had been completed and the two remaining had been delayed. Since then however, both D.2.2 and D.2.3 have been delivered.

D.2.2 resulted in the report *A Conceptual Model of Public Engagement in Dynamic and Responsible Governance of Research and Innovation* in May 2016.

D.2.3, a summary report of the main findings in the second work package, was published in August 2016.

2.3 Work Package 3: Context-tailoring and piloting of best practice PE processes[3]

The pilots will be carried out in the context of research programs closely linked to Horizon 2020 Challenges. The aim of WP3 is to

- *test and refine at least 6 innovative **PE** tools and processes in the context of research programs closely collectively linked to all six Horizon 2020 Challenges;*

- *evaluate the feasibility of the using the tools tested in the pilots for other countries and for other Societal Challenges; and*

- *gain further understanding of the relevance of contextual factors in designing **PE** processes, and to provide input for the toolkit (developed in WP4).*

Source: PE2020.eu/Activities

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[2] If nothing else is stated, the information in this section is based on the deliverables of WP2: Ravn, T., Mejlgaard, N., Rask, M., Mačiukaitė-Žvinienė, S., Tauginienė, L., d'Andrea, L. (2014). *A Refined Typology of PE Tools and Instruments D.2.1.*; Rask, M., Mačiukaitė-Žvinienė, S., Tauginienė, L., Dikčius, V., Matschoss, K., Arrevaara, T., d'Andrea, L. (2016). *Innovative Public Engagement: A Conceptual Model of Public Engagement in Dynamic and Responsible Governance of Research and Innovation, D.2.2.*; Mačiukaitė-Žvinienė, S., Tauginienė, L., Rask, M. (2016). *Summary report on conceptual model of public engagement and factors of participatory performance, D.2.3.*

[3] If nothing else is stated, the information in this section is based on the deliverables of WP3: Aarrevaara, T., d'Andrea, L., Dobson, I. R., Pietilä, M., Rask, M. and Wikström, J. (2016). *Guidelines for future context tailoring workshops, D.3.1.*; Aarrevaara, T., d'Andrea, L., Caiati, G., Dikčius, V., Kaarakainen, M., Koivusilta, M., Mačiukaitė-Žvinienė, S., Matschoss, K., Pieper, R., Pietilä, M., Pulkkinen, K., Rask, M., Tauginienė, L. and Wikström, J. (2016). *Report of the PE pilot cases on Societal Challenges, D.3.2.*; and the draft of D.3.3.

Work package 3 includes the following deliverables:

- D.3.1 Guideline for context tailoring workshops

- D.3.2 Report of the PE pilot cases on Societal Challenges

- D.3.3 Summary report WP3

The first deliverable was finalised when the interim report was written, but the following two had not yet been completed. In March, two of the pilot cases to be included in the report of D.3.2 had not been finalised. The deadline was postponed, since the number of pilots carried out went from the initially planned two, to seven pilot cases. It was a deliberate decision, in order to make the reporting of the pilots more feasible and useful to the project. The scientific officer of the project also advised this. The *Report of the PE pilot cases on Societal Challenges* was delivered in September 2016, containing reports of all seven pilot cases.

D.3.3 is currently in a draft stage. Deadline was set to April 2016 according to the interim report. The draft *Activities carried out by the WP3* states however that the deliverable would be published by the end of November 2016, for the reason that more pilots were carried out than was originally the plan (instead of two it became seven). D.3.3 was submitted in December 2016.

2.4 Work Package 4: Development of the PE design toolkit[4]

The aim of WP4 is

- *to capitalize the knowledge generated through the activities carried out in the previous WP's through the development of a highly usable Toolkit that policy actors can use in the identification and transfer of PE practices; and*

- *to make it available on the web so as to make it easily accessible. The toolkit will adopt a problem-solving approach, allowing users (e.g. science policy makers, other societal stakeholders) to develop comprehensive strategies for selecting, activating and enhancing PE processes.*

Source: PE2020.eu/Activities

Work package 4 includes the following deliverables:

- D.4.1 Toolkit design document

- D.4.2 Toolkit website

- D.4.3 Summary report of the activities and deliverables in WP4

D.4.1 was delivered and uploaded to the EU participant portal in February 2016; thus it had been completed by the time of the interim report.

The toolkit website is one of the main outputs expected from the PE2020 project, why is seems suitable to put particular emphasis on this deliverable. D.4.2 is under development, and a beta version has been made available to the evaluators. *Toolkit website* is the title of the deliverable in the work plan, but in the draft, the title has been changed to *Toolkit on public engagement with science*. At the consortium meeting in Brussels it was revealed that it had been agreed with the project officer to postpone the deadline of the toolkit website until the end of January 2017. External reviewers have been looking at the toolkit, which is now uploaded to pe2020.teknoprojekt.dk.

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[4] If nothing else is stated, the information in this section is based on the published deliverables of WP4: d'Andrea, L. (2016). *Toolkit design document, D.4.1*; d'Andrea, L. and Caiati, G. (2016). *Toolkit on Public Engagement with science, D.4.2;* as well as the work plan.

One of the main objectives of the toolkit is to provide a manageable source for accessing the last two decades' findings on public engagement in science, specifically regarding developed resources and practical as well as theoretical knowledge. Another central objective of the toolkit is to constitute a platform for questions and issues related to public engagement, which previously have not been dealt with in an integrated manner. In accordance with this second primary objective, the toolkit contains four sections:

- Section A: Strategic framework

- Section B: PE methods and tools

- Section C: Institutional anchorage

- Section D: Societal anchorage

With this general yet specific platform of information, the toolkit is set out to reach "all those interested in promoting PE policies, measures and initiatives". However, there is an explicit aim to increase the involvement of European universities and research institutions, since analyses have detected their general limited contribution to be one of the main factors restricting of public engagement.

According to the work plan, the deadline for D.4.3 is set to January 2017.

2.5 Work Package 5: Dissemination and communication[5]

*The objective of WP5 is to communicate the results and insights from the PE2020 project to academic and broader communities, and to interact with science policy actors and societal stakeholders involved with research and innovation processes. The project aims to contribute to an increased awareness of best **PE** practices and to the implementation of better societal engagement in Horizon 2020.*

Source: PE2020.eu/Activities

Work package 5 includes the following deliverables:

- D.5.1 The project web-pages

- D.5.2 The publications

- D.5.3 Final workshop and summary report (with special focus on practical relevance)

D.5.1 was set in motion by the creation of the project website in February 2014. The website contains information on objective, work packages, results, partners, etc. There is also a news feed column with regular updates on the progress of the project. Naturally, the managing of the project web-pages is an ongoing task throughout the project.

D.5.2 is an overall deliverable concerning publications from all WPs. This includes multiple seminar/conference presentations, newspaper articles, four peer reviewed articles and three policy briefs. The first policy brief has been published, in English and in Italian. A second policy brief was published in November 2016, concerning how to boost public and societal engagement. At least five journal articles are to be produced. One is completed; two are under review and two are to be submitted in December 2016 and January 2017. In addition to these articles, a book on Routledge will be published. This is altogether more than anticipated and required, as goes for scientific publications.

The final summary report is currently in a draft stage. The report is a summary of the entire PE2020 project, listing the aim and tasks of each work package as well as main findings.

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[5] If nothing else is stated, the information in this section is based on the PE2020 website, the Consortium meeting in Brussels in November 2016 and the draft of D.5.3.

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2.6 Work Package 6: Management[6]

The aim for WP6 is to provide the necessary management services to the project and by so doing provide the best possible conditions for the research activities in PE2020.

Source: PE2020.eu/Activities

Work package 6 includes the following deliverables:

- D.6.1 Progress reports to the EU Commission
- D.6.2 Consortium, Steering Committee, and Advisory panel meetings minutes
- D.6.3 Final plan for using the knowledge

The work in WP6 is ongoing throughout the project. The work plan states that two progress reports is to be delivered to the European Commission, in month 18 and month 36 of the project. Thus, the first report has been delivered and the second one is due in January 2017.

The final plan for using the knowledge is also due January 2017. This deliverable will be further discussed, alongside D.6.2, in the following chapters.

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[6] If nothing else is stated, the information in this section is based on the work plan of the PE2020 project.

3 Dissemination, communication and management

The following chapter will elaborate on the activities of WP5 and WP6, more specifically dissemination, communication and management. The chapter is divided into two sections, on the one hand the management and communication within the PE2020 project and on the other hand the dissemination and communication with external stakeholders.

3.1 Management and internal communication

The SAB members we have interviewed for this evaluation report are of the understanding that the project has been well managed and that the internal communication generally has been working well. However, the conflict with the Danish partner at Aarhus University related to authorship rights has been mentioned repeatedly as a signal that the internal communication could have worked better. The general conception amongst the SAB seems to be that the internal communication has worked very well since. The project management states that there should have been a written agreement on authorship policy, as suggested by the SAB before the interim report. This issue has been a source of difficulties, not only with reference to Aarhus, but also with reference to some general tension within the consortium.

It is always a challenge to coordinate different aspects of a project, but in the perspective of the SAB, the management of PE2020 have met the requirements. Judging by the collaboration between the WPs and the continuous progress of the project, one interviewee draws the conclusion that the communication within the consortium has probably worked very well, although a general notion is that a number of activities were too independent and liable only at the beginning of the project. One lesson the project management draws is that no part should have tasks only in the beginning of the project, like the Danish partner, who upon completion of their tasks had little incentive to stay in the consortium.

The communication between the consortium and the SAB is regarded as well functioning from the point-of-view of the latter. Material for the consortium meetings have been sent to the SAB in good time, about one to two weeks ahead, which is better than most EU-projects, they say. The invitation to the consortium meetings got out a bit late though, causing at least one of the SAB members to miss a few meetings. However, after the meetings the management have provided summaries of project output, which have been useful in order to follow the progress of the project.

Recurrent in the interviews with the SAB is a perception of previous worry of delays in deliverables. Particularly, this worry was directed towards the delay of reporting results from the case studies in WP2, which was probably caused by a bit of lack of communication and cooperation. However, as the project has progressed, the effectiveness of the project management has improved and most deliverables are now published or timewise under control. Another issue of worry has been the change of project officer at the European Commission. It is of course always frustrating to any project with such changes, but when they happen, it is of key importance that the new person puts efforts into understanding the project and acts in a supportive manner.

3.2 Dissemination and communication with relevant stakeholders[7]

In the interviews carried out during the evaluation, two specific activities came up concerning the dissemination and communication with relevant stakeholders: the *Policy Conference* in Brussels in November 2016 and the *Toolkit on Public Engagement with Science*. These activities will therefore be the focus of discussion in this section. They will also function as framework for discussing what has worked well and what could have worked better regarding the dissemination of results from the PE2020 project.

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[7] The information in this section is based on Dissemination plan 2014, Dissemination plan 2015, Dissemination plan 2016 and interviews with members of the Scientific Advisory Board.

3.2.1 The policy conference

From the first year of the PE2020 project, dissemination have been structured in specific dissemination plans within the framework of WP5. The plans have been updated once a year, following internal evaluations, with the latest update in 2016. The dissemination plans have identified relevant stakeholders and different channels for communicating the results of the project. The 2016 dissemination strategy states a "lively and well-functioning communication and cooperation with related EU-projects such as the sister-project Engage2020 as well as CASI".[8] The stated well-functioning cooperation with CASI[9] is concretised by the joint policy conference in Brussels 16-17 November 2016, which members of the SAB have described as successful and useful in terms of dissemination. It is with some regret that we note that the costs for the evaluator to participate at the policy conference was not covered by PE2020. It would have been most useful for the evaluation if our participation had been covered.

The collaborated effort between PE2020 and CASI in setting up the policy conference meant an avoidance of unnecessary competition between the two projects. However, one interviewee states that the timing of the conference could have been better, since it was held at the same time as the project Knowledge4Innovation (K4I) held a policy dialogue at the European Parliament. This became a bit of a challenge, since many relevant potential participants of the policy conference, mainly parliamentarians from the EU, were attending the event by K4Iinstead. Nonetheless, the policy conference had 208 registered participants, which was well over the expected amount.

Members of the SAB that participated in the policy conference state that there was an underrepresentation of some important stakeholders. Specifically the business sector was identified as underrepresented, as well as NGOs, and people from the natural sciences and innovation areas. It was suggested that the underrepresentation might have been depending on miscommunication. The mentioned parties might be interested in the methods presented at the policy conference, but they do not necessarily use the term "public engagement".

According to one of the interviewees, PE2020 was more successful than CASI in communication during the policy conference. Instead of simply summarising the project and its findings, the PE2020 project was able to open up for discussion on general issues, thus providing more useful information to the external stakeholders participating in the conference. This statement is in accordance with the general perception observed in the interviews, that the communication and interaction with external participants of the project overall has been working very well and that the dissemination has reached relevant stakeholders.

3.2.2 The toolkit on public engagement with science

The toolkit website is still under review and will be added to the PE2020 website as a subpage by the end of the project. There is however some details to be discussed about the format and design of the toolkit; according to one interviewee, it could have been more innovative.

During the consortium meeting in November 2016 the project leaders discussed how the toolkit could be advertised and who the possible users were. It was concluded that it would not be enough to simply mail the list of stakeholders identified in the dissemination plan. The decision was that more thinking was needed on how to disseminate the toolkit in a way so that it will be of sustainable use. The sustainability of the toolkit, as well as the website, is one of the major challenges for the final phase of the project according to one interviewee.

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[8] Dissemination plan 2016

[9] Full title: Public Participation in Developing a Common Framework for Assessment and Management of Sustainable Innovation

3.2.3   Beyond PE2020

Considering the size of the project and the way it was structured, the observation we have from the interviews is that the involved stakeholders have been sufficient and relevant, and that the dissemination overall has been appropriate given what the project wanted to achieve.

The parts of the dissemination and external communication identified as troublesome are mainly referred to as general and common problems within EU-projects. Throughout EU-projects, there is a lack of partners and stakeholders from southern Europe and eastern Europe, and one interviewee states that it would have been desirable to involve partners that gave the project more geographical spread. It is also suggested to include NGOs in future collaborations concerning public engagement. NGOs could contribute with intermediation towards a more unusual public to the academic world. It is a major issue to reach a less educated public, which the NGOs could help with.

The advantages of having a specified dissemination budget has been shown, not only by the policy conference and the toolkit on public engagement with science, but also by the fact that the dissemination of the PE2020 project has resulted in collaborations that will go beyond the project's ending. One interviewee mentions the example that the pilots have led to several projects being started, especially in Finland and Italy.

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4 Concluding remarks and recommendations

In this final phase of the PE2020 project, it is naturally essential to pay particular attention to finalising all the remaining deliverables. The picture being painted at the consortium meeting in November 2016 was that the remaining deliverables are all under control to be done by the end of the project the last of January 2017.

It must be concluded already now that the PE2020 project has been successful. The goals have been reached, and in some cases, they have been reached with a good margin, like the example of number of scientific publications. Our impression is that the project and its management has been sufficiently flexible along the way, and has adapted and rearranged whenever there has been a need to deviate from the original plans. This is important in all research projects; the research activity always contains an element of unpredictability, which needs to be handled. The conflict with the partner at Aarhus University was unfortunate, but without active 'healing management' directed towards the remaining partners, the outcome could have been even worse. Now the negative impact was after all limited.

Dissemination and sustainability of the project outcomes are the only concerns. We think that the dissemination could have been more active from the beginning, and aimed at involving and informing more stakeholders than has been the case. Not least could more NGOs and also academic organisations have been involved. The very research topic as such calls for particular attention and efforts in this respect. To put substantial effort into dissemination and outreach during the project's final phase seems to be of key important in order to meet expectations from the EC and the public.

Moreover, there should be plans for how to utilise the project's outcomes after the project has ended. The toolkit is the key outcome and disseminating it seems highly important. It is however not only PE2020's responsibility to do this, but it is also the European Commission's responsibility. We feel concern regarding this, and suspect that with limited spread of information about the toolkit's existence, and with little or no maintenance of it some time after the end of PE2020, it risks becoming irrelevant and more or less forgotten. If this would happen, it would in fact mean that PE2020 was after all partly a failure. Any measure that can be taken, by PE2020 itself or by the funder, in order to secure sustained relevance of the toolkit, will be of critical importance and should be given high priority. Hopefully, the positive decision of the European Commission to fund the FIT4RRI project, which builds partly on the PE2020 project and aims to apply the toolkit in collaboration with several research performing and funding agencies in the EU, will prove to secure sustained life of the PE2020 toolkit.