

Interview guide:

Digitalization in participation processes for planning relevant to nature conservation

Notes on the guideline

Information highlighted in blue is intended to help the interviewer with the timing and/or content of the respective block. It will not be read out.

Interview section	Time in min.
Introduction	10
Block 1	5
Block 2	10
Block 3	5
Block 4	15
Block 5	10
Conclusion	5
Total	60

Information with a gray background is used by the interviewer to structure the interview and is not read aloud.

Introduction

Timing: 10 min.

Aim/background of the block:

Objective of the interviews against the background of the project and the case study is clear.

The course of the interview is clear.

Main research interest of the interview:

How are analogue participation processes changing due to the possibilities of digitalization? In other words: How do digital participation opportunities influence the culture of participation? What influence does this have on decision-making processes?

Welcome and introduction

Provide brief and neutral information about the project and the case study

Provide information on the course of the interview

Provide opportunity for further questions

Obtain consent for interview recording, reference to data protection sheet sent in advance, reference to anonymization of the interview

Start recording

Block 1: Background

Timing: 5 min.

Aim/background of the block:

Facilitate start of the interview for interview partners with questions about their own role in participation processes; if necessary, ask for additions to the information previously requested in the short questionnaire about experiences in participation processes.

1. Would you please tell me in a few sentences about your experience with participation processes?

In the event of initial difficulties, follow up on the basis of information already available from the short questionnaire.

2. From your (subjective) point of view, how do you measure whether a participation process is successful or not?

Block 2: Changed constellation of stakeholders

Timing: 10 min.

3. Did the number and composition of stakeholders in the participation processes you are familiar with change as a result of the increased use of digital applications?

If yes, ask:

- a. What changes have you noticed?
- b. Can groups be identified that tend to participate less and those that tend to participate more compared to purely analog participation processes?

If not: What do you attribute this to? In your opinion, are there nevertheless changes in participation processes? If so, which ones?

4. How does a change in the composition of stakeholders affect the participation process? First open, follow up if necessary: e.g. chaotizing or enriching?

Block 3: Time of activation

Timing: 5 min.

5. Is it easier to achieve an increase in participation at early planning stages in connection with digitally communicated information on planning and/or digital participation opportunities?

If yes:

- c. In your opinion, what is decisive for early participation? Which actors use which (digital) means particularly effectively for this?

If not:

- d. Why do you think early participation fails? Are there (digital) resources that could be used more effectively?

Block 4: Content and tonality of the discourse

Timing: 15 min.

6. Have the content and nature of discourse, conflicts, disputes, but also the search for solutions and cooperation in the context of participation processes changed through the use of digital applications?

If yes, ask, first open: How?, then follow up:

- e. What changes are recognizable both on the content level (arguments) and on the relationship level (tonality)?

- i. Follow-up on content:

What role do environmental and nature conservation aspects and arguments play in the participation procedures for nature conservation-related planning that you are familiar with? Has their role/influence in the process changed? Has their importance or weighting increased or decreased?

Are nature conservation arguments sometimes only used as a pretext?

If necessary, check whether a changed constellation of stakeholders plays a role with regard to changes at the content level .

- ii. Follow-up on tonality:

In your opinion, what role do different dimensions of discrimination such as origin, socio-economic background or gender play in disputes?

If necessary, check whether a changed constellation of stakeholders plays a role with regard to changed tonality.

Important in each case: How can the reported phenomena be attributed to the use of digital applications or new digital information options?

Block 5: Changed decision-making processes

Timing: 10 min.

7. Have the opportunities for participants to exert influence on planning decisions changed through the use of digital applications in participation processes?

If yes, ask, first open: How?, then follow up:

- f. How does this affect decision-making processes for the plans in question (due to changed content, higher number of certain stakeholders, tonality)?
- g. Can you identify different ways of influencing decision-making processes, depending on the type of planning in question? (e.g. major projects with high media attention such as Tesla vs. development plans)
8. What recommendations would you give to nature conservation stakeholders for the design and use of digital forms of participation so that they can effectively represent nature conservation interests in the decision-making process?
9. How do you think participation processes and, in particular, digital forms of participation should be designed so that the process and outcome have legitimacy and are perceived as fair and equitable by as many participants as possible?

Concluding the conversation

Timing: 5 min.

Aim/background of the block:

Thanks to the interviewee; please note that the results of the interview evaluation will be included in a project report, which we will be happy to send you.

Ask the interviewee if there are any additions → in a „relaxed“ atmosphere, interesting aspects that have not been mentioned before may come to light.

10. Is there anything else you think I should have asked or anything else you wanted to say about digitalization, social impact and nature conservation?