



POPULYTICS

What would you do?

Introduction to Participatory Value Evaluation (PVE)

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Introduction

The Participatory Value Evaluation (PVE) is a method for participation increasingly utilized by ministries, provinces, municipalities, and parliaments. Developed at Delft University of Technology in 2017, the PVE method allows policymakers and politicians to discern the values, principles, and preferences of large groups of citizens. Simultaneously, the PVE consultation serves as an effective means of involving citizens and stakeholders in decision-making. The essence of a PVE consultation lies in citizens experiencing a policy dilemma in an online environment. Subsequently, they can provide advice to policymakers or administrators. By participating in the consultation, citizens gain a better understanding of the complexity of policy choices. The results enable policymakers and administrators to align their decisions more closely with the preferences, values, and concerns of citizens.

THIS MANUAL OUTLINES:

- **What is a PVE?**
- **What goals can you achieve with a PVE, and what are the benefits?**
- **What are the steps? What are the costs and the timeline?**
- **When do you use a PVE in policy making, and when do you not?**

1. What is a Participatory Value Evaluation?

In a nutshell: What is a PVE?

Amidst various forms of citizen participation methods, it can be challenging to navigate the options. What distinguishes a PVE from other participation methods?

The PVE is an online participation method designed to engage a so-called ‘maxi-public’. A maxi-public refers to a large and diverse group of people. Through a PVE, you uncover the values, principles, preferences, and concerns of a large, diverse, and representative population.

The essence of a PVE consultation lies in citizens spending 20 minutes in the shoes of a policymaker, administrator, or politician, and experiencing the policy dilemma. In a PVE consultation, participants are confronted with the government’s decision-making challenge in an online environment. They view the policy options that a policymaker or administrator is considering, along with the constraints involved. Participants answer the question of what they would recommend if they were in the position of a policymaker, administrator, or politician, providing reasons for their advice. After offering their advice, participants respond to open-ended questions where they can contribute their own ideas and identify concerns and opportunities; see Figure 1.

FIGURE 1 – THE PVE METHODOLOGY EXPLAINED





Watch in three minutes how the Participatory Value Evaluation helps improve decisions

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1D_g-HTnS50

What are the strengths of a PVE?

The overarching idea of a PVE consultation is to connect the ‘the drawing board’ and ‘the kitchen table.’ On one hand, thousands of citizens (the kitchen table) see the considerations policymakers must make. From this perspective, they communicate in their advice what they find most important to policymakers. After participating in a PVE consultation, they better understand the policymaker’s situation. On the other hand, policymakers (the drawing board) receive clear advice from thousands of ‘kitchen tables.’ A PVE consultation enables policymakers to align their choices as closely as possible with the values, preferences, and concerns of citizens.

The distinctive strength of a PVE compared to other participation methods lies in a unique combination of three interconnected elements.

1) The high usability of insights from a PVE enhances the quality of policy: The distinguishing feature of a PVE consultation is that the policy dilemma that participants experience aligns with the reality faced by policymakers. This creates a strong connection between the consultation outcomes and the policy dilemma. In this way, a PVE significantly enhances the usability of insights for policymakers. In contrast, an opinion poll provides an overview of the extent to which citizens agree or disagree with statements or measures. The challenge then becomes how to translate these results into policy, as policymaking is more complex than answering a series of agree/disagree statements. In a PVE, participants experience the pain of decision-making. They realize that not everything is possible everywhere at the same time and that there are constraints such as a limited budget. As a result, a PVE generates insights that are challenging or impossible to obtain with other methods. How do citizens assess (the effects) of policy options in relation to each other and within constraints (*‘I find this important, but if I have to choose, I find that even more important’*)? How do they prioritize public values concerning a specific theme? What are the common values that bind different groups of citizens? What are the values of citizens that can explain certain preferences? What is the societal added value of one or more policy options? Policymakers can use these insights to better align their policies with the values, preferences, and concerns of citizens. Policies become more ‘citizen oriented’.

2) Involving a large, diverse, and representative group of citizens in policy choices: A PVE meets the participation needs of a large and diverse group of citizens. Many PVE consultations have a high number of participants (in Dutch consultations usually 5,000 participants and up). Participant satisfaction with the tool is also high. The significant number of participants is the main difference from methods such as a town hall meeting, a world café, or a citizen assembly where only a limited number of citizens can participate. The PVEs conducted, including those for the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, provide representative outcomes for the population.

3) The legitimacy of a PVE is high. It is accepted when decisions are made based on a PVE: Executives, policymakers, citizens, and other stakeholders perceive decisions based on a PVE as legitimate. Methods like a

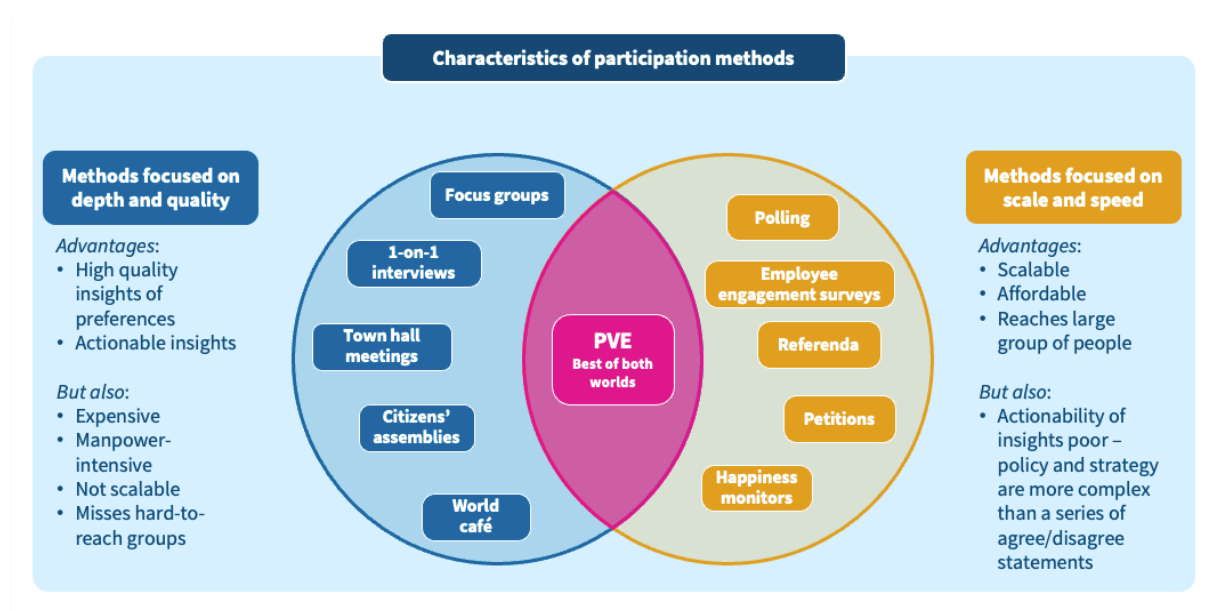
referendum or an opinion poll often struggle with legitimacy issues because the questions may not capture the complexity of the decision the policymaker has to make. This can quickly raise questions about the applicability of the results. The legitimacy of intensive participation methods, such as a citizen assembly or a town hall meeting, is often debated because there are doubts about whether the advice of a small group of citizens can serve as the basis for decision-making for a larger group. Doubts increase when concerns are raised about the representativeness of the participating citizens. Experience shows that a PVE is hardly affected by these legitimacy problems.

The legitimacy of the PVE is further enhanced by the scientific underpinning of the method and the strong involvement of stakeholders in designing the consultation.

In summary:

- Unlike a poll or a referendum, in a PVE you aim to incorporate the complexity of the policy issue as effectively as possible.
- The number of participants in a PVE is much higher than in a citizen assembly or a community meeting.
- In a PVE, a large representative group of citizens provides advice after experiencing the policy dilemma of the policymaker. Because the consultation's questions align with the decision problem of the policymaker, the outcomes are highly usable. A PVE yields concrete actionable perspectives.

FIGURE 2 – THE PVE METHOD HAS A SOLID SCIENTIFIC UNDERPINNING. ANY CONSULTATION INVOLVES STAKEHOLDERS IN THE DESIGN PROCESS. COMBINED WITH THE OTHER CHARACTERISTICS, THE OUTCOMES OF A PVE CONSULTATION ARE HIGHLY LEGITIMATE AND ACTIONABLE



What can you always use a PVE consultation for?

A PVE can be utilized for various purposes. Table 1 summarizes these along the three main reasons for citizen participation.

TABLE 1 – GOALS ALMOST ALWAYS ACHIEVED WITH A PVE. GROUPED BY THE THREE MAIN REASONS FOR PARTICIPATION

Substantive reason	Normative reason	Instrumental reason
ALIGNING POLICY WITH THE VALUES, PREFERENCES, AND CONCERNS OF CITIZENS. ENRICHING POLICY WITH PRACTICAL IDEAS AND EXPERIENCES OF CITIZENS.	INVOLVING A LARGE, DIVERSE, AND REPRESENTATIVE GROUP OF CITIZENS IN POLICY CHOICES THAT MAY HAVE SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS ON THEM ENSURING THAT YOU HAVE HEARD NOT ONLY THE 'USUAL SUSPECTS' OR CITIZENS WITH STRONG OPINIONS	DELIBERATE PARTICIPATION CAN LEAD TO INCREASED ACCEPTANCE AND LEGITIMACY OF THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS AND POLICY CHOICE SHAPES A MORE TRANSPARENT AND INCLUSIVE NEW GOVERNANCE CULTURE
In a PVE, thousands of citizens provide advice after experiencing the policy dilemma. Because the consultation's questions align with the decision problem the policymaker faces, the outcomes are highly usable. A PVE yields concrete actionable perspectives.	A PVE meets the participation needs of a large and diverse group of citizens. We observe high participation numbers and participant satisfaction with the tool. In a healthy democracy, the government aims to provide as many citizens as possible with the opportunity to participate in a way that suits them.	In a PVE, participants experience the policy dilemma. They become more aware of the challenges the government faces, the decisions that need to be made, and the pros and cons of the various options available. They gain a better understanding of the (complexity of the) choices.
<p>A PVE can provide the following types of information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You learn about the problem that, according to participants, the policy should address; Values, preferences, and concerns that were previously unknown come to light; You learn which values, preferences, and concerns should have more or less priority according to citizens; You learn about shared values, providing a basis for policy; You gain insight into groups of citizens and their different value systems, which helps with tailoring communication; You gain insight into policy goals and options that citizens do not prefer. You learn about the origins of concerns and resistance; You acquire (practical) experiential knowledge from participants. In a PVE, citizens provide advice, but they will also share policy options, considerations, consequences, and concerns that may not have been on your radar. This information can be useful in the implementation of your policy. 	<p>A PVE can achieve the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A PVE provides representative outcomes for your entire target audience (municipality, province, region, or the entire country); A PVE reaches many citizens who have not participated in a particular issue before; A PVE engages citizens with a nuanced opinion (the silent majority), not just outspoken individuals with strong opinions; Because a PVE is online, it meets the participation needs of citizens who may be less verbally assertive or unable to participate in other forms of engagement (citizen panels, community meetings); A PVE is politically neutral: the method is appreciated by citizens with both left and right political affiliations; A PVE is accessible, leading to less participation fatigue; The costs per participating citizen are low. 	<p>Executives, policymakers, citizens, and other stakeholders perceive decisions made based on a PVE as legitimate. The legitimacy of a PVE is high because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A PVE enables citizens to weigh all values, preferences, and concerns around an issue in an equitable manner; A PVE is conducted by a representative group; A PVE is a scientifically grounded method; All methodological choices are transparent; Stakeholders are involved in the design of the PVE consultation; The outcomes are highly usable, with a good alignment between the questions answered by participants and the decision problem of the policymaker. <p>Participants indicate that PVE consultations increase their trust in the government.</p>

How do citizens experience participation in a PVE consultation?

Each PVE consultation includes questions to participants about their experience with the consultation. In most consultations, 90% to 95% of participants rate the tool positively. Those with practical education backgrounds tend to be slightly more positive about the method than those with theoretical education. In a consultation on environmental policy, two-thirds of participants indicated that they had never before expressed their opinion on this theme to the government. In the consultation on the Lelylijn, 70% expressed that trust in the government could increase if the government involves citizens more often in thinking about such decisions.

Goals for which you can use the PVE under certain conditions

- **Improving the relation between citizens, stakeholders, and/or government:** You can use a PVE to structure and make conflicts more manageable, increasing focus in stakeholder dialogues. Polarized stakeholders and/or citizens learn from each other by designing the PVE together. Condition: Involve interest groups, and a broad spectrum of individuals and parties intensively in designing the PVE and interpreting the results.
- **Calculating the societal value of policy options:** Not only understanding *that* citizens derive value from policy options and their effects but also *how much* (measured in utility or monetary value). Condition: You must have insight into the concrete effects and costs of policy options, and this must be incorporated into the PVE. If you want to use a PVE for this purpose, you need to invest time in obtaining concrete information about the costs and effects of policy options. You can only use PVE for this purpose if you have this concrete information.
- **Assessing policy options in line with broad prosperity:** Understanding how large and diverse groups of citizens assess the influence of policy options on different dimensions of their quality of life. Condition: This requires investment in the design phase. Working with different versions of a PVE can accurately map citizens' sensitivity to different dimensions of broad prosperity.
- **Giving all citizens in your municipality/country the opportunity to voice their opinions:** You can conduct a PVE with a representative group from an online panel and additionally open it up to all citizens. So that anyone who *wants* to participate *can* participate. This increases the legitimacy of the participation process. Condition: For such an 'open consultation,' there is a need for administrative commitment to provide feedback to participants on what has been learned from the consultation and what has been done with the results.

Who has already used the PVE-method and for what purpose?

Some *case studies* where the PVE method has already been applied for in the Netherlands:

- The National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM) has used the method for developing long-term COVID-19 policies^{i,ii};
- The Amsterdam Transport Region conducted a PVE consultation for the evaluation of regional transport policiesⁱⁱⁱ;
- The Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management has used the method in various instances, including the design process of a new, highspeed railroad^{iv}, decision-making regarding Schiphol airport^v, creating policies for protection against flooding^{vi}, and shaping the National Environmental Program^{vii};
- The Dutch Parliament utilized the method to involve citizens in the formation of climate policies^{viii}. Municipalities such as Eemnes, Amsterdam, Utrecht^{ix}, Heeze-Leende, and the province of Gelderland have engaged their citizens in this manner for the energy transition;
- The municipality of Hoeksche Waard successfully navigated the politically sensitive topic of the Sabbath through a values assessment using a PVE^x;

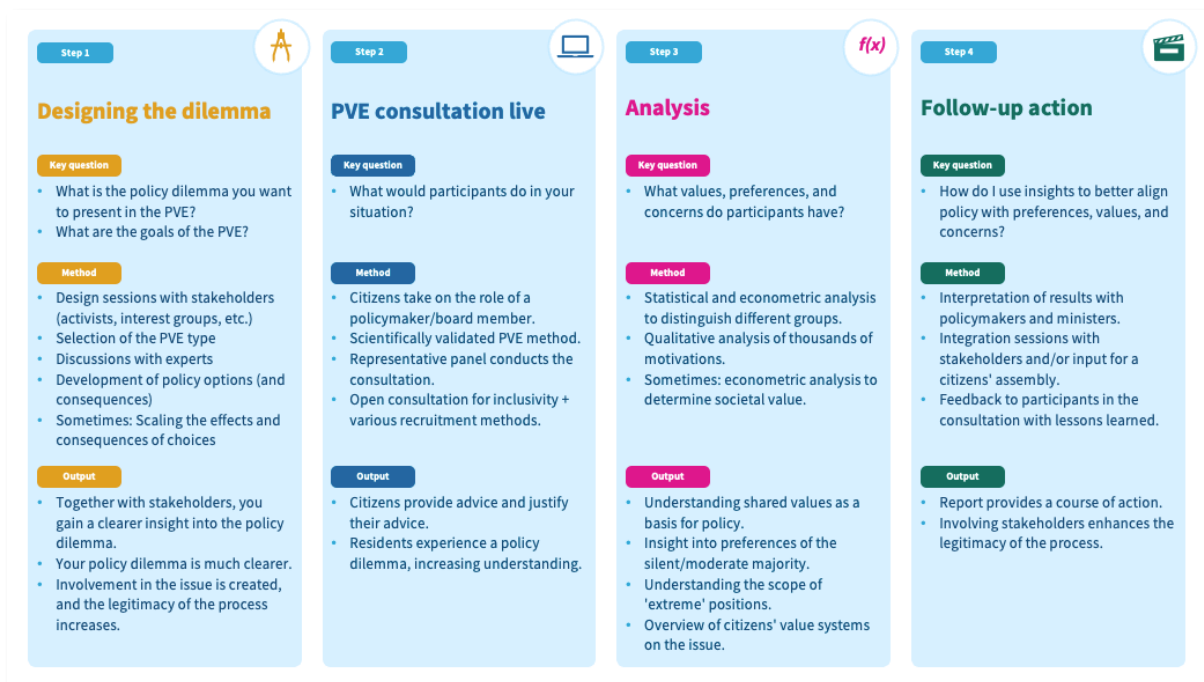
Additionally, the method has been internationally applied in Israel, Norway, Australia^{xi}, Austria, and Peru^{xii}.

2. How do you conduct a PWE? And what types of PWEs are there?

Which steps do you follow?

A PVE consultation involves four steps; see [FIGURE 3](#).

FIGURE 3



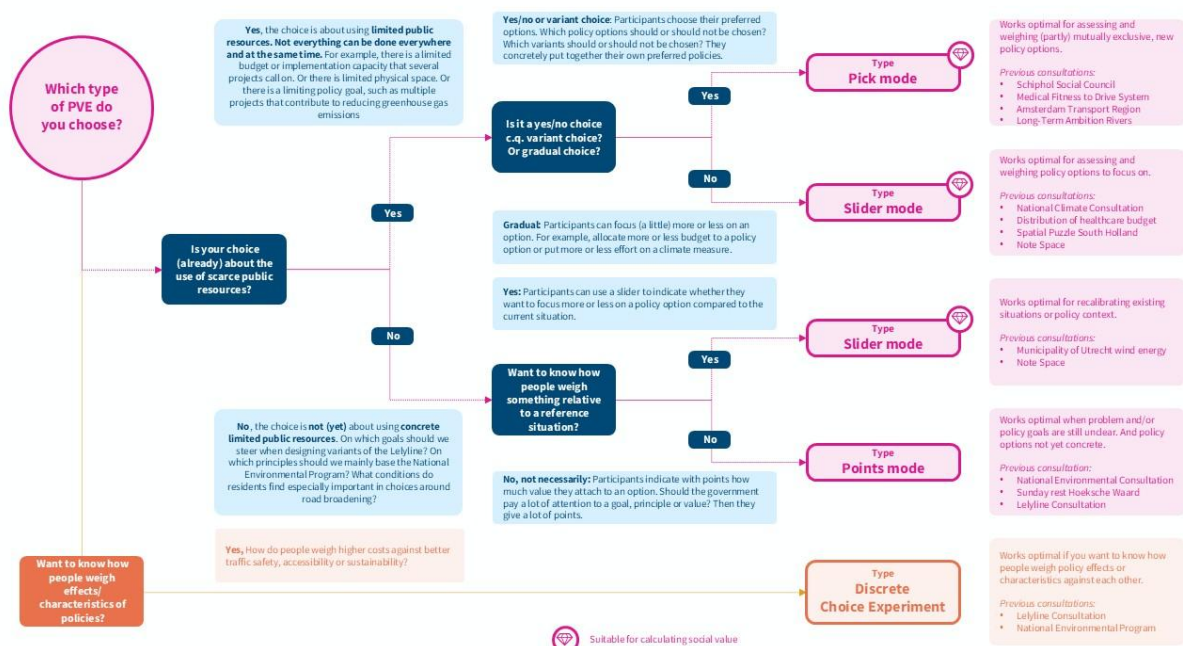
As a policymaker, you can provide input at various stages of the process and you are crucial at different points. Your understanding of the policy dilemma is essential in step 1. In consultations with broad communication and significant political importance, policymakers often dedicate a significant amount of time in the week before the consultation goes live. For example, the minister opened the consultation on the new highspeed railroad, and the Dutch national eight o'clock news covered the opening. Experience shows that policymakers put a lot of effort into finetuning the PVE in the last weeks before going live. This happens less when the consultation is conducted only with a representative sample. Also, your time is needed to consider how the consultation's outcomes can be used to improve policy in step 4.

What types of PVE are there?

There are three types of PVE: the pick mode, the slider mode, and the points mode. Closely related is a fourth type: the *discrete choice experiment* (DCE). From a purely scientific perspective, a DCE is not a PVE. However, a DCE is frequently part of PVE consultations and is therefore included in this introduction.

In step 1 of FIGURE 3, you determine which type of PVE to choose. The flowchart in FIGURE 4 can assist in this decision. Below the diagram, we elaborate on the different types of PVEs.

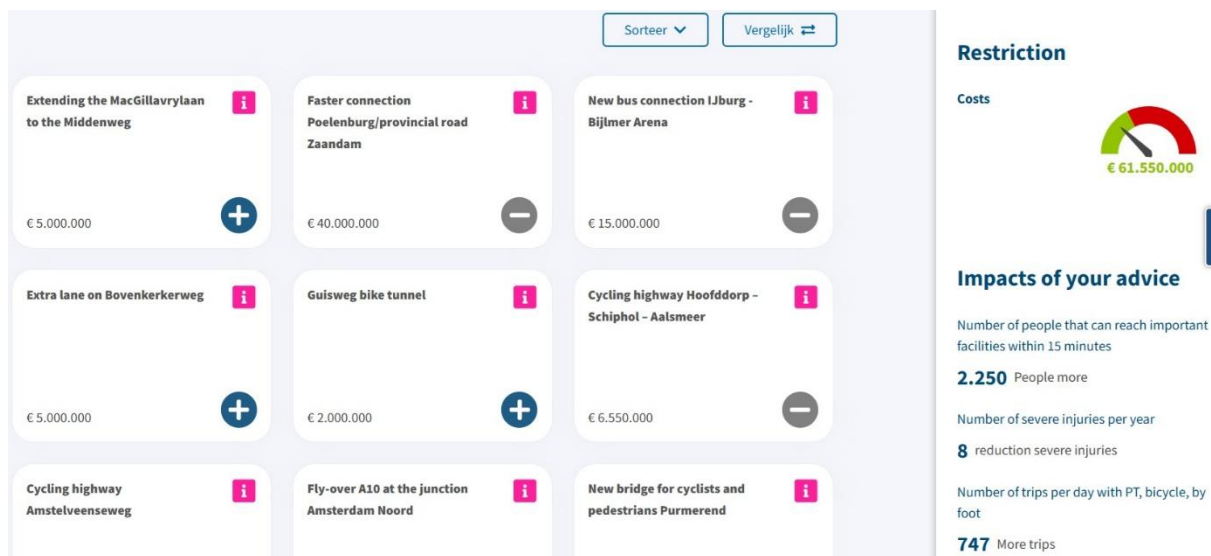
FIGURE 4



Type 1: Pick mode PVE

The first PVEs that were conducted in 2017 for the Lange Termijn Ambitie Rivieren and Transport Authority Amsterdam are good examples of PVEs that were used as decision information for a go/no-go decision. In both cases, participants were presented with a limited public budget as there were not enough public funds to finance all policy options. Participants were then asked which policy options they would recommend within this constrained public budget. They could also select no projects and in this case the budget shifted to the next period. They could select project by pressing the + button. This format can also be used to calculate the societal value of policy options to prepare decisions. Below a screenshot is shown of the PVE for the Transport Authority Amsterdam conducted in 2017.

FIGURE 5 - SCREENSHOT OF THE PICK MODE PVE ON ALLOCATING A LIMITED BUDGET FOR THE TRANSPORT AUTHORITY ADAM



Type 2: Slider mode PVE

In the Netherlands, PVEs have also been conducted where the question for policymakers in the decision-making phase was particularly about the *extent* to which citizens believe that certain measures should be implemented to achieve a specific goal, such as reducing CO₂ emissions. An example was the Climate Consultation for the Dutch government, where citizens could indicate to what extent the government should invest in ten measures contributing to the reduction of CO₂ emissions. Participants received information about each measure regarding its impact on reducing CO₂ emissions and the climate budget of the government. Using a slider, they could express their opinion on how much the province should invest in these measures. Participants had to meet the government's CO₂ reduction goal and stay within the budget.

Another example concerns the extent to which the government should choose for different measures to improve sustainable transport within the urbanized Randstad (the Netherlands). In this PVE, participants were asked to which extent they think that the government should allocate a limited public budget to eight measures to improve sustainable transport while being informed of the impact of the eight options on costs, improved public transport accessibility and opportunities to build new houses.

FIGURE 6 - SCREENSHOT OF FOUR MEASURES FROM THE PVE CONSULTATION SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT (SLIDER MODE)



Type 3: Points mode PVE

In the design sessions of the Lelylijn Consultation and the National Environmental Consultation, it was determined that policymakers primarily wanted to understand which goals citizens deem most important when making choices regarding the Lelylijn and environmental policy, respectively. The focus was not yet on the allocation of scarce resources. There was no immediate need or opportunity to assess how people weigh policy directions, conditions, or options relative to a reference situation. This led to a points mode in the form of a PVE. In the Lelylijn Consultation, participants were asked to allocate a maximum of 100 points across eleven goals of the Lelylijn. If they believed the government should give significant consideration to something, they assigned many points. Conversely, if they believed the government should not consider something, they assigned no points. The results could be used to make citizen-centered and value-based design choices. FIGURE 7 displays six of the eleven goals from the Lelylijn Consultation. Based on this PVE, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management could, for example, determine the three most important values that designers of Lelylijn routes should prioritize during the design process.

FIGURE 7 – EXAMPLE OF THE POINTS MODE PVE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE LELYLIJN

What should the government consider when making choices about the Lelyline

Use the **+** **en** **-** buttons to allocate points to options
Verdeel 100 punten

0/100

<p>The Lelyline should help ensure that schools, supermarkets and other important facilities remain easily accessible for residents of the Northern Netherlands</p> <p>- 0 +</p>	<p>For residents of the Northern Netherlands, the Lelylijn should ensure more chances of getting a nice job and better accessibility to places they want to go to</p> <p>- 0 +</p>	<p>The Lelyline should ensure that people travel more often by train and less often by car or plane</p> <p>- 0 +</p>
<p>Lelyline should make Northern Netherlands more attractive to young people</p> <p>- 0 +</p>	<p>Building the Lelyline should not be too expensive</p> <p>- 0 +</p>	<p>Nature should suffer as little as possible from the Lelyline</p> <p>- 0 +</p>

Type 4: Discrete choice experiment (DCE)

In some cases policy makers want to know how citizens think that they should trade-off different characteristics of policy options against each other. How do people assess a reduction in travel time against an increase in nuisance and a reduction in accessibility for people with a disability? To answer such questions, a discrete choice experiment (DCE) is highly suitable. In a DCE, participants are repeatedly presented with two variations of a policy option differing in these characteristics. Each time, participants indicate their preference between the two variants. By having a group of citizens make such trade-offs multiple times, the relative importance of different features could be determined. For example, in the example below we could establish how many delays and nuisance people want to accept to prevent a traffic death. FIGURE 8 illustrates an example of a choice task of a DCE.

FIGURE 8 - EXAMPLE OF THE DCE CHOICE TASK FROM THE LELYLIJN CONSULTATION

Which approach should the Transport Authority Amsterdam Choose?













	Approach 1	Approach 2
How many traffic deaths are there in the TAA per year?	Reduction 30 traffic deaths	Reduction 40 traffic deaths
How often are travelers 15 minutes later than expected?	No impacts	Reduction of 20 times per year
How many people experience nuisance from traffic in their area?	Reduction 120,000 people	Reduction 40,000 people
Additional tax per household	150 euro	50 euro
	<input type="radio"/> Choose this approach	<input type="radio"/> Choose this approach

In which phase of policy formation do you use (which) PVE?

The policy compass of the Knowledge Center for Policy and Regulation (KCBR) defines five phases in the policy-making process. A PVE can add value in each of the five phases; see [TABLE 2](#).

- In the early stages 1 (defining the problem) and 2 (determining the goal), a PVE provides direction to the design process. With the PVE, you can gain more insight into the (partial) problem that citizens find most urgent and identify values and principles on which to base policy goals.
- In the subsequent phases 3 (exploring options) and 4 (determining consequences and effects), a PVE consultation can help define conditions for successful policy options, and citizens can introduce new options.
- In the last phase 5 (choosing a preferred option), a PVE can be used to weigh policy options and select a preferred variant.

TABLE 2 - THE FIVE PHASES FROM THE POLICY COMPASS AND THE APPLICATION OF A PVE IN EACH PHASE

	<div> <div>Fase 1</div> <div>Fase 2</div> </div> <div> <div>What is the problem?</div> <div>What is the intended purpose?</div> </div>	<div> <div>Fase 3</div> <div>Fase 4</div> </div> <div> <div>What are options to achieve the goal?</div> <div>What are the implications of the options?</div> </div>	<div>Fase 5</div> <div>What is the preferred option? (assessment and trade-off)</div>
How much policy freedom is there? What typifies the choice situation?	 <p>Early, designing phases have a lot of freedom. There may still be ambiguity about the problem definition. And what goals, principles, values the policy should mainly (not) be pursued.</p>	 <p>In these phases, options are developed to realize goals and solve problems. In this phase, a PVE can help define the preconditions for successful options. A choice experiment can help to find out how residents weigh effects</p>	 <p>Once a selection of promising options/variants has been made, a preferred variant should be identified. Which policy options should or should not be chosen? Which variants should or should not be chosen? Is the social added value of the preferred variant positive?</p>
What could be the purpose of a PVE?	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help identify which residents find which problems most pressing • Help set or recalibrate policy goals • Identify guiding principles and values for policy 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify limits, conditions and requirements of policies • How do residents weigh the different possible effects of policies? • Ask residents about new ideas/ opportunities 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess and weigh concrete options
What additional insights does a PVE provide?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which goals, principles and/or values do residents consider (less) important? • Which different value orientations can be distinguished? • Which common values provide a basis for policy? • Which problems or public values/goals should be prioritized according to residents? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What options do residents see? • What conditions do residents set on variants? • Where do concerns and resistance come from? • How do residents weigh effects of policies and how can we improve policy options with this insight? • What types of policy options should we look at more and less in the elaboration? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which options do residents prefer? How can acceptance of these option(s) be further increased? • What is the social added value of policy options and what is the optimal portfolio? • Which groups of citizens think differently about the desirability of certain policy options? • How can we tailor communication accordingly?
Which type of PVE do we often use at this stage?	<div>  Points mode </div> <div>  Slider mode </div>	<div>  Slider mode </div> <div>  Discrete Choice Experiment </div>	<div>  Pick mode </div> <div>  Slider mode </div>

3. For which issues is a PVE suitable or unsuitable?

For what types of policy dilemmas is a PVE suitable?

The PVE is a suitable tool when you want to engage citizens in issues:

1. *That impact citizens' personal living environment:* If citizens can personally experience the consequences of policy choices, they likely want to be involved. Examples include plans for wind turbines, plans for dike reinforcement and river widening, and the revision of the driving ability system;
2. *Concerning the (fair) distribution of benefits and burdens:* For example, the distribution of effects for different groups of citizens from "Congestion charging";
3. *That are strategic in nature:* Citizens can contribute effectively to goals, principles, and policy conditions. Examples include the goals of the Lelystad, national environmental policy, and mobility vision;
4. *That have a strong practical component:* Citizens' experiential knowledge is sometimes essential to improve government plans. For example, participants in the PVE consultation on the thermal energy transition in Utrecht often mentioned this point;
5. *That are controversial:* Issues where politics have reached an impasse and/or where (affective) polarization exists. A PVE is a safe way to allow all citizens to voice their opinions. For example, the consultation on Sunday rest in the municipality of Hoeksche Waard or the energy transition in Súdwest-Fryslân.
6. *That are multidimensional:* Where there are multiple perspectives and the implementation of policy options has consequences. A PVE consultation is less suitable for black-and-white decision problems.
7. *Where it is important to know how citizens assess policy options in context:* Citizens often look at policy options holistically. The Climate Consultation showed that the desirability of one climate measure depends on the extent to which the government takes other climate measures. Similarly, the consultations on COVID-19 policies and the driving ability system revealed that citizens assess different measures in context to other measures.

"Citizens also see practical points that can be crucial, and they will be more motivated to cooperate if they feel listened to."

For what types of issues is a PVE not suitable?

For certain issues, a PVE is less suitable or not suitable as the sole instrument.

1. *Purely technical issues:* Generally, a PVE is not a suitable instrument for involving citizens in purely technical issues. Questions like how strong a bridge should be or the length of an on-ramp for a highway are better addressed using other means.
2. *Very local issues:* A PVE is less suitable for street-level questions, such as the redesign of a street. In such cases, it is more efficient to engage in direct conversations with the citizens. An exception is when a particular party is dominant, and some citizens do not feel safe expressing their opinions publicly. In such situations, a PVE can provide anonymity and security. A PVE is highly suitable for issues at the national, regional, and municipal levels. The neighborhood level is a borderline case. A PVE is less suitable for issues with a clear spatial-visual component (how should the neighborhood look visually?) and more suitable for strategic choices, such as the redesign of a neighborhood.
3. *For dialogue or brainstorming:* While a PVE often provides input for dialogue or brainstorming, it is not suitable for these solely serving these purposes. One disadvantage of PVE consultations compared to offline participation methods, such as community meetings, a world café, and citizen forums, is the absence of physical, verbal communication between citizens. Some citizens prefer online participation, while others prefer offline participation. A PVE primarily caters to the needs of the former group. To accommodate participants who prefer offline participation, a PVE consultation is often combined with an offline method, such as a citizen assembly, to leverage the strengths of both online and offline participation methods.
4. *When decisions are already made:* A PVE is only useful when decisions still need to be made. For example, regarding policy goals, policy options, conditions for policy options, or the extent to which limited capacity is deployed to realize policy options. If decisions are already made, a PVE is not meaningful.

**The greater the distance between the drawing board and the kitchen table,
the more suitable the PVE is as an instrument.**

What is the timeline?

In the shortest form, you can go through steps 1 to 4 in three to four months. A factor that can extend the timeline is a more extensive consultation with stakeholders, other departments, and citizens in steps 1 and 4. Also, the longer the consultation is open, the longer the timeline. For example, the Lelylijn consultation was open for two months, resulting in the entire PVE process taking about five months.

The design of the decision situation can also vary in detail level. If there is a desire to show precise effects of each choice option, the timeline will be longer because estimating and substantiating those effects takes time.

What is the cost of a PVE?

In terms of costs, PVEs for the national government often range between 50,000 euros and 100,000 euros. There are also PVEs for the national government executed for around 30,000 euros. Costs are generally higher than for

PVEs at the municipal level because PVEs at the national level also need to be conducted with a relatively large representative sample recruited from a paid panel. Additionally, issues at the national level are often multidimensional, involving a greater number of stakeholders, making the design process more intensive. For example, the Lelylijn consultation had both the Ministries of IenW, BZK, and EZK, as well as the four northern provinces in the project team. In the National Environmental Program, over 100 individuals representing various stakeholders participated in the design phase. In contrast, some municipal-level consultations involve only three to five people, leading to a faster design process with lower costs.

The costs of a PVE can be lower if a similar PVE has already been conducted. Costs are higher if a PVE needs to be built 'from scratch.' Costs will also be relatively high if more effort is put into reaching hard-to-reach groups. For some PVEs, researchers go out with iPads to conduct the PVE with people in person, often in neighborhoods where digital literacy is low or where citizens have low literacy levels. For example, the PVEs on the medical fitness system and the Social Council Schiphol had a helpdesk where people received assistance with the PVE. In the Climate Consultation, there was a special version of the PVE for the visually impaired. The PVE on refugee policy in Eindhoven could be done in Dutch, English, Ukrainian, and Arabic.

The PVEs for the national government executed for 30,000 euros did not include the elements discussed above: the PVE did not need to be built 'from scratch,' the number of stakeholders to be consulted was limited, and the PVE was conducted only by a representative sample arranged by the client.

Ensure that the benefits of the PVE outweigh the costs

Executing a PVE incurs costs, but due to the large number of participants, the costs per participating citizen are low. The goal is for the execution of a PVE to yield more than it costs. An involved policymaker in the consultation around the Social Council Schiphol stated that the investment in time and money, according to him, was substantial, but the PVE also resulted in significant cost savings. Before the PVE, the policymaker was considering policy options that would cost around a million euros per year. The PVE revealed that citizens had little interest in these policy options, leading to their exclusion from consideration. According to this policymaker, the PVE incurred time and money costs but also resulted in much larger cost savings. In various cases, policymakers indicate that after a PVE, the number of WOO requests, opinions, and objections decreases. This, too, can be seen as cost savings.

4. Combining a PVE with offline Participation methods

In practice, a PVE is regularly combined with offline methods, such as a citizens' assembly or an advisory group with stakeholders. In various municipalities, including Súdwest-Fryslân (energy), Eemnes (energy), Hoeksche Waard (Sunday rest), Zaanstreek-Waterland (housing), and the provinces of Gelderland and Utrecht (climate), citizens' assemblies have been combined with PVE consultations. What makes this a good combination?

In practice, we see that online and offline participation methods complement each other. A strong point of offline methods such as a citizens' forum, an advisory group, a world cafe, or a focus group is that they provide citizens with the opportunity to build on each other's ideas, deepen discussions, understand each other's perspectives, and seek compromises. A strong point of PVE is scalability: it enables a large and diverse group of citizens to participate. In most cases, a PVE consultation is conducted first, and the citizens' forum then has the task of translating the outcomes of the PVE into recommendations. However, this can also be done the other way around: using the PVE to assess the recommendations of the citizens' forum with the general public.

Key Benefits of Combining a PVE with an offline method such as a Citizens' Forum:

1. Members of the citizens' forum can better represent their fellow citizens: Most members of a citizens' forum have the need to base their advice on the preferences of fellow citizens. They take their task seriously and want their advice to align well with the values and preferences of society. A PVE provides precisely this information. In Súdwest-Fryslân and Foodvalley, members of the citizens' forum indicated that they could start with a solid foundation because the PVE was conducted first. The results of the PVE provide a citizens' forum with reassurance and the confidence that they can speak on behalf of their entire municipality, province, or country.
2. Citizens who are not selected for the citizens' forum can also contribute. In the Netherlands, there is much support for representative democracy, where elected representatives make decisions. One reason for this support is that all Dutch citizens can influence the selection of representatives through their vote. A disadvantage of offline methods such as a citizens' forum or a focus group is their small scale and exclusivity. Not everyone can participate. The PVE on the Schiphol Social Council revealed that 30% of participants want to be involved in government decisions that significantly affect their daily lives. These individuals will not accept a citizens' forum making decisions on their behalf. However, combining a PVE with a citizens' forum resolves this issue, allowing anyone interested to participate in the engagement process.
3. Politicians have more confidence in a participatory process where the population at large can participate in a careful manner. Research indicates little support among Dutch citizens for making decisions based on the advice of a standalone citizens' forum. For example, research by den Ridder et al. (2021) shows that only 20% of Dutch citizens support a democracy where as many decisions as possible are made based on citizens' forum advice. 25% of participants believe that a citizens' forum can make a good judgment about political decisions, and 27% think that politics should adopt the advice of a citizens' forum. Previous research indicates that 5% to 10% of Dutch citizens support lottery as the basis for democracy (Jacobs, 2017). An evaluation of the participation process in Súdwest-Fryslân revealed that politicians trusted the recommendations of the citizens' forum more because they were based, in part, on a PVE consultation in which a large number of citizens participated (Itten and Mouter, 2022). Jacobs (2021) also suggests that online tools are not only a low-threshold way to obtain input from the broader society but also enhance the legitimacy of a citizens' forum by providing the broader Dutch population with the opportunity to contribute. Jacobs points to Iceland, where a combination of a citizens' forum with online tools was used to ensure that a process is broadly supported.
4. A PVE does not make decisions, a citizens' forum does. A PVE describes the preferences, values, and concerns of different groups of citizens. This provides politicians with information about policy options

that are deemed desirable or undesirable by citizens and why this is the case. The researchers identify (common) values and how these values should be translated into policies according to citizens. However, the researchers do not make decisions for policymakers. A strength of a citizens' forum is that, if the members of the forum have that mandate, they can make decisions where politicians may struggle. Citizens listen to each other's opinions and try (based on the outcomes of the PVE) to reach a unanimous decision.

5. Additional information

More information on the Participative Value Evaluation (PVE) method

The TU Delft provides comprehensive details on the following website link.

www.tudelft.nl/pwe.

More information about cases can be found via www.populytics.nl

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