

SFU

MORRIS J. WOSK
CENTRE FOR DIALOGUE

Strengthening Participation from the Inside Out



SLIDO: Ask Us Anything!

Throughout the presentation, feel free to share questions via Slido



Audience Q&A

① The Slido app must be installed on every computer you're presenting from

Warm Up Discussion

Think of a public engagement process in your community that did not go well...

- What happened?
- What were the impacts on trust, relationships and decision-making?



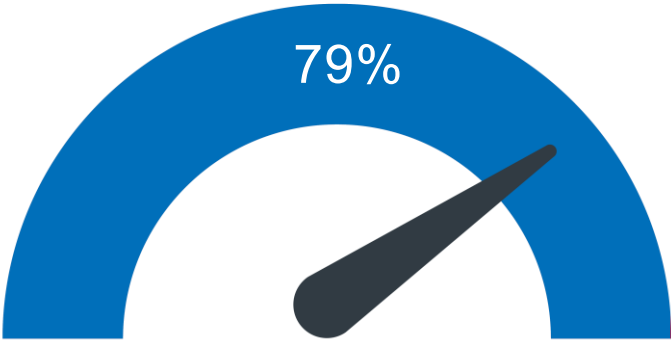
What do you find is the biggest barrier to engaging the public more meaningfully?

Engage- but why?

- **We don't have time** for another conversation – we need to act now
- **We have all the information we need** from staff expertise
- **People are uninformed** and don't understand the constraints – they ask for more than we can offer
- **We always hear from the same 10 people** – and often they are shouting!

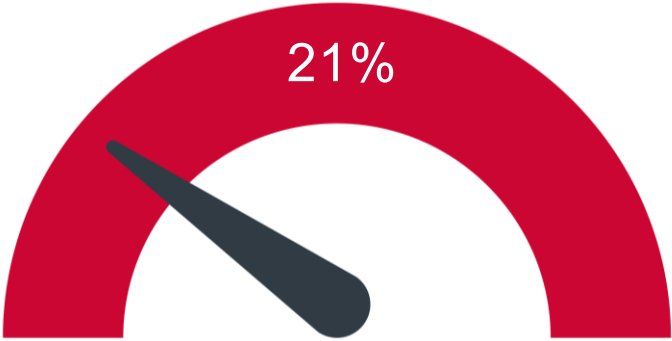
Public Participation as a Driver of Trust

Levels of trust in government among...



People who feel they have a say

vs



People who don't feel they have a say

Source: OECD Trust Survey, 2024



The State of Public Participation in Canada

40% believe that the political system allows people like them to have a say in what government does

40% believe that the government is responsive to public input

Source: OECD Trust Survey, 2024

Imagine if engagement could...

- **Use modern methods** to seek public input that is representative, informed and actionable
- **Identify hidden consensus** and long-term solutions
- **Break through polarization** and partisan gridlock
- **Co-create new narratives** at scale so that public opinion could enable political action
- **Foster relationships** of trust and respect

SFU

MORRIS J. WOSK
CENTRE FOR DIALOGUE

A MATURITY MODEL FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

→ A framework for elevating public participation in decision-making



Our Questions

What are the “minimum specs” for quality public participation?

How can organizations equip themselves to consistently enact good practices?

A Maturity Model for Public Participation

TOOL A

Organizational Capacity:

Characteristics, structures and resources that enable quality public participation

TOOL B

Assessment Matrix:

Specific practices that uphold or advance core principles

Four Levels of Maturity



**Establishing
Engagement**

**Embedding
Participation**

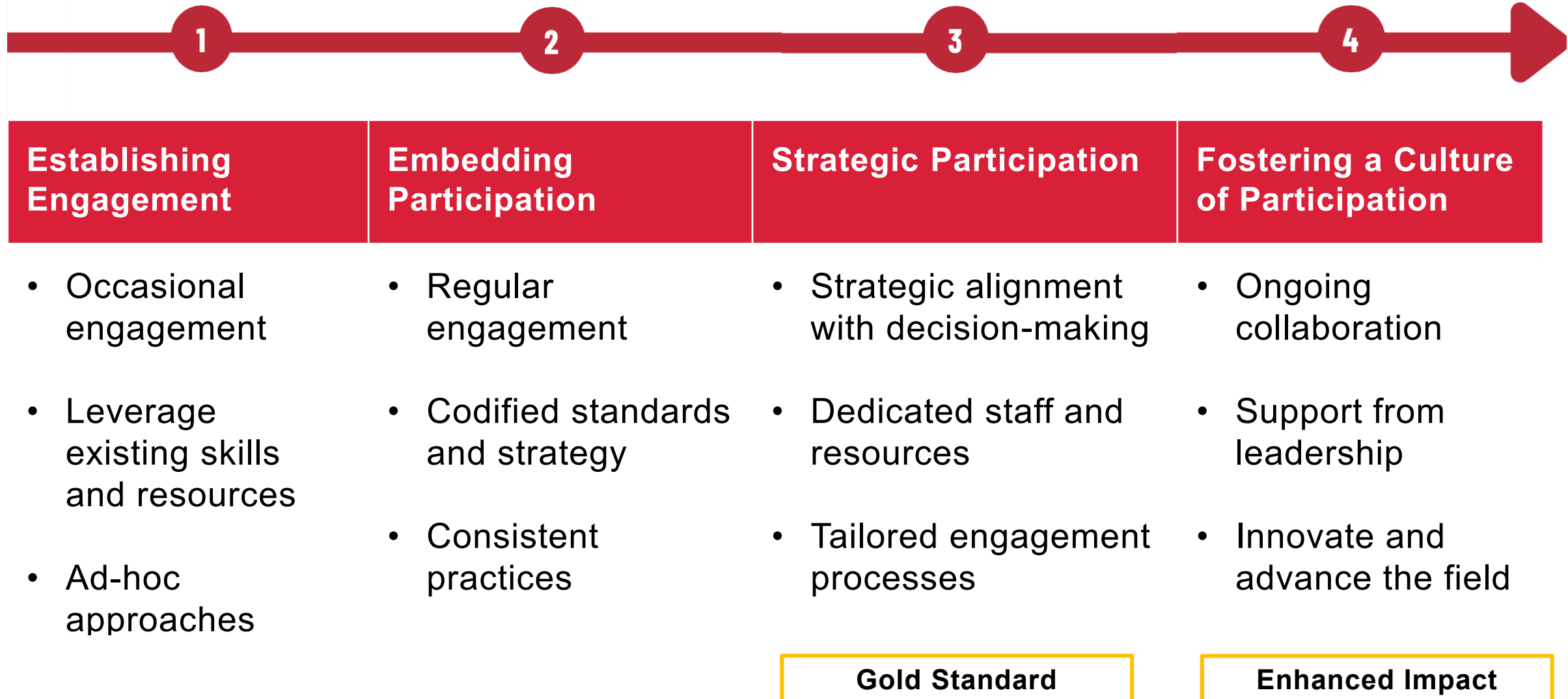
**Strategic
Participation**

**Fostering a
Culture of
Participation**



What best describes your local government/organization's approach to public engagement?

Four Levels of Maturity





Activating the Maturity Model

1. **Assess your organizational capacity** for public participation **Use Tool A**

2. **Assess your standard engagement practices**

3. **Evaluate past engagement projects**

Use Tool B

4. **Scope potential projects**

1

2

3

4

Establishing engagement objectives and commitments

Informal practices

Commitments regarding the role of public input in the decision-making process remain implicit or are broadly defined.

Formal processes

Organizers articulate a specific commitment regarding the extent to which public input will inform the decision-making process.

Tailored plans

Organizers work closely with decision-makers to ensure the framing of engagement objectives and questions align with the decision-making process and constraints.

Innovation and leadership

Organizers collaborate with stakeholders and communities to frame engagement objectives and questions that are relevant to both decision-makers and the public.

Role of decision-makers

Informal practices

Decision-makers receive public input for their consideration.

Formal processes

Decision-makers sponsor the engagement and actively engage with public input to inform decisions.

Tailored plans

Where appropriate, decision-makers are present as active listeners in the engagement process.

Innovation and leadership

Organizers proactively share public input with other relevant internal and external stakeholders to help reduce duplication and facilitate collective action.

Communication of outcomes

Informal practices

Relevant outcomes may be reported to the public, often independently from the engagement process.

Formal processes

Organizers report confirmed outcomes to the public in a timely manner and in association to the engagement project.

Tailored plans

Decision-makers report back on how public input influenced final decisions. Regular progress updates are provided for long-term outcomes.

Innovation and leadership

Decision-makers offer a formal response to public input, detailing the rationale by which ideas were incorporated or not in final outcomes. Where possible, the public is involved in monitoring, guiding or supporting future action.

A flexible assessment tool

Identify strengths and weaknesses across different engagement practices



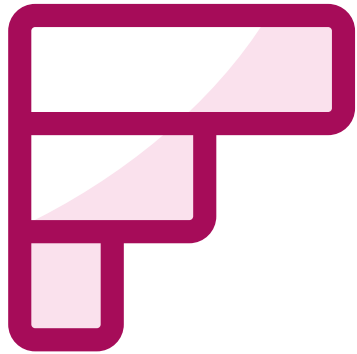
Audience Q&A

① The Slido app must be installed on every computer you're presenting from

Small Group Discussions

How would you describe the current state of engagement in your local government or organization?

- What practices contribute to this?
- Where would you like to be?
- What is holding you back?



Rank the following aspects of organizational capacity for public engagement in your context, from strongest to weakest:



Audience Q&A

① The Slido app must be installed on every computer you're presenting from

3 Key Take-Aways

- **Public engagement mitigates downstream costs of decisions that unravel**
- More engagement is not better engagement—what matters is **strategic alignment with decision-making**
- **Closing the loop** protects institutional trust



Download your copy today



Dialogue & Engagement Resources

Scan the QR code to access our resources.

