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**PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT: PERSPECTIVES FOR THE BRAZILIAN
ELECTRICITY REGULATORY AGENCY**

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The present paper focus on analyzing the interactions between society and state, which are, the public involvement instruments developed by the Brazilian Electricity Regulatory Agency (ANEEL). Therefore the paper firstly describes the Brazilian current public administration scenario and then contextualizes the public involvement process. The second part of the paper is dedicated to ANEEL, having the agency's mission, purpose and actuation described. At this part, the paper also points out and analyses the public involvement instruments presented on ANEEL's *Carta de Serviços ao Cidadão*, an initiative regulated by the Decree 6.932/2009, with the main purpose to establish that public agencies in the Executive Branch inform and publicize society about the services the institution provides. At the end, some better practices of public involvement are presented, in an attempt to offer ANEEL some guidelines.

Key words: public involvement, participation, Carta de Serviços ao Cidadão, ANEEL

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Introduction

For many authors, democracy is related to the fact that liberal and democratic societies present electoral procedures which guarantee that the citizens can choose among eligible candidates who would represent them in the decision-making process. This idea is not wrong, but it is restricted to a view of democracy known as representative democracy, in which legislators make decisions in the name of the citizens.

Others believe that the advancement of the information technology added to a more informed society leads organizations, public or private, to strengthen their policies. Due to that, the search for efficiency and transparency became important principles that allow citizens to participate more actively and closely to the government, being able to rebuild democracy in a more participative way. In other words, the concept of democracy has been broadened and is now related not only to the right to vote for someone, but also to the right of a society to express its desires and needs in the public sector in a more participative way.

This new idea enables us to understand the concept of public participation or public involvement, which is any process by which organizations try to involve the public in the problem solving or decision making (IAP2, 2012).

In this context, public participation has become an important practice adopted by some organizations, as it enables public input to be considered in the decision making process.

Because of its values to all the stakeholders involved, including the organization itself, public participation should be a current practice, and not an isolated event inside the institutions. It should also be seen as an educational process, in which the citizens are invited to learn about how to express themselves, to construct arguments, to formulate collective proposals, to listen to a variety of concerns and,

most importantly, to realize that the final result will affect different actors (MINISTÉRIO DO PLANEJAMENTO, 2011)

Based on this idea, the main purpose of the present paper is to analyze the interactions between society and state, which are, the public participation instruments developed by modern public organizations in Brazil. Therefore the paper will also briefly describe the current public administration scenario in the country.

Structured in five chapters, including the present introduction, the paper will firstly describe the administrative reforms Brazil has been through, focusing on the reform proposed by President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, which was based on the New Public Management movement. It will mention the principles brought up by the reform and the interactions between society and state developed during the governance of President Lula and President Dilma Rouseff.

The following chapter will contextualize the public participation process, presenting its benefits both to public organizations and to society as a whole.

Chapter four analyzes public involvement instruments adopted in Brazil. In order to narrow down the qualitative research, the chapter is dedicated to the Brazilian Electricity Regulatory Agency – ANEEL, having the Agency's mission, purpose and actuation described. It will also point out and analyze the public involvement instruments adopted by ANEEL. The analysis will be done by observing the instruments presented on *Carta de Serviços ao Cidadão*, an initiative regulated by the Decree 6.932/2009, with the main purpose to establish that public agencies in the Executive Branch inform and publicize society about the services the institution provides.

The fifth and last chapter presents some better practices of public involvement focused on citizen's education, transparency and public value, in an attempt to offer ANEEL some guidelines.

The Brazilian Public Administration

The actual democratization process in Brazil corresponds to the contemporary epoch in the history of the country, which started at the end of the authoritarian military regime (1964 to 1985) and the restoration of civilian government in search of a more democratic political regime. Considering the mentioned period, it is possible to recognize that democracy in Brazil is a quite new process.

During the first years, Brazil worked as a representative democracy, having the legislators decide in the name of the citizens. Lately, though, considering the advance of the information technology in a more informed society, the country has been living an era of search for efficiency and transparency, in which the citizens try to participate more actively and closely to the government. In other words, the country tries to rebuild its democracy in a more participative way. To achieve this stage, some administrative reforms were implemented in the country

The first significant reform was proposed by President Fernando Henrique Cardoso in the 1990's. Known as the Managerial Reform of the State, the reform focused on trying to improve and democratize the services provided by the state: activities which were not considered essential were to be transferred for the private sector and regulated by the state.

This idea was based on the international movement known as the New Public Management, whose main purpose was to modernize and to render the public sector more effective. In order to succeed, the Managerial Reform of the State brought to the Brazilian public administration some new initiatives, such as the strengthening of transparency, the search for efficiency and the adoption of social control.

Finally, these three principles combined reflect the main purpose of public participation.

- i. *The strengthening of transparency*: to better understand the purpose of this principle, it is important to recognize that transparency is different than publicity. Whereas publicity is related to the fact that every public institution must publicize its acts, transparency comprehends the possibility the citizens have to participate in the decision making process of the administrators.
- ii. *The search for efficiency*: the principle of efficiency is the most recent principle established by the Brazilian Federal Constitution. It establishes that public administrative activities must be prompt and well developed, in order to provide better services to society. Nowadays, society searches for better quality in the services, and that is why the principle is relevant to public involvement.
- iii. *The adoption of social control*: the principle stands that citizens can help public institutions to avoid misconduct and wrongdoing which can lead to corruption, by monitoring and controlling public acts.

In 2003, the adoption of the three formerly mentioned principles allowed Brazilian government to incorporate the theme of social participation as a major component of government policies. At that time, President Luis Inácio Lula da Silva, focused on broadening the interactions between state and society, in an attempt to strengthen not only social control, but mainly accountability. The main difference in this case is that the first term is related to the ability to force another actor to obey one`s demand based on restrictions, penalties and incentives. The second term, on the other hand, is a broader concept that is related to the fact that it enables citizens to participate and be involved in the definition and evaluation processes of public policies (PÓ; ABRÚCIO, 2006).

Due to that, in Lula`s period of governance, from 2003 to 2010, more than five million people participated in the 74 processes of National Conferences¹ about different

¹ National Conference is a participatory process in which different stakeholders from the state and from society get together and try to elaborate a public policy (IPEA, 2012).

themes, such as public defense, communication and racial issues, among others. The National Councils for Public Policies² were reformulated; and new instruments of public participation were developed, such as “negotiation tables³” and “roundtables”.

President Lula also helped Brazil to be known for its good practices in the transparency field. The following table contents a brief summary of the practices adopted in the country⁴.

Table 1: Transparency initiatives in the Brazilian Federal Government

Practice focused on transparency	Description of the practice	Year of reference
Complementary Law 101	It established transparency tools for fiscal management, which should be broadly disclosed to society	2000
Law 10.520 – Electronic Bidding	The Federal, State and local level should adopted a new bidding modality, in which the lower level of acquisitions would be considered	2002
Transparency Portal in the Federal Level	It enables society to have access to federal government’s spending and the usage of financial public resources	2004
Decree 6.170 - SICONV	It established rules and procedures for government transfers to non-profitable private entities	2007

² National Councils are specific board institutions that enables public to participate in monitoring and controlling public policies.

³ Meeting with interests groups.

⁴ The practices presented in table 1 were developed during the governance of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso and the governance of President Lula. It is possible to recognize the authorship of each initiative by the year of reference.

In 2011, during the earlier years of president Dilma Rouseff's term, Brazil became a member of the Open Government Partnership, a global effort in an attempt to make governments more effective, transparent and accountable.

Based on that, the law 12.527 was published in 2011. Known as the Access to Information Act, the Brazilian regulation establishes some proactive transparency mechanisms and also details the procedures of openness and disclosure of public information to society.

Even though Brazil has become an international reference in the transparency field, the adoption of good transparency practices does not automatically guarantee social participation in the decision-making process in public institutions. Thus, the following chapter will focus on describing the principles and the benefits of public participation instruments.

Public participation as an interaction between state and society

To better comprehend the concept of public participation, it is important to first understand the meaning of transparency and accountability. As it was said before, the first one is related to openness to public information, while the second one is related to the fact that citizens can execute social control of public agencies by participating and evaluating the public institution's actions. Both of them, transparency and accountability, are important principles to guarantee an effective policy of involvement and participation.

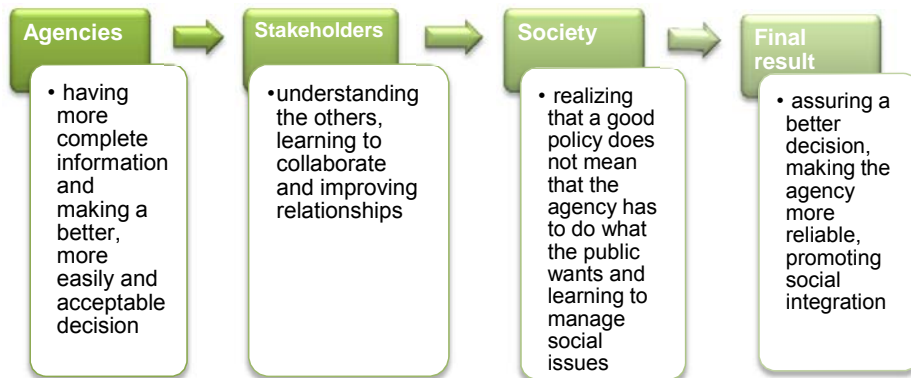
Enabling public participation requires that citizens and the other stakeholders be informed and knowledgeable about the topic being discussed, transparency becomes an essential tool to public involvement. Because society has the opportunity to participate in the different phases of the policy – planning, monitoring and evaluating – accountability and control also become important instruments to a well succeed policy.

Public participation as an essential element of democracy

Having the citizens involved in the decision-making process enlarges the understanding about what democracy is. In this context, democracy is not only related to the fact that citizens are represented by those they elected; citizens get involved and participate in the public sector by making part of it, by providing public inputs in the decision process and on the issues in which such inputs have a real potential to help the decision or the action (IAP2, 2012).

Due to this idea, public involvement should not be seen as a single event, but as an educational process, in which both sides – policy makers and society – can benefit and learn from. The following picture shows the public participation initiative as a

process and presents the different stakeholders and the way they benefit from public involvement. The result of the process can be seen as better practices and decisions.



Picture 1: The learning from a public participation process

However, to guarantee a good result, some conditions are important and must be observed before publicizing the process. These conditions can be better understood by the chart below.



Picture 2: Essential conditions to a successful public participation policy

Even though some agencies follow these conditions, this alone does not ensure public involvement. To avoid failure, some specific points should be better observed when planning and thinking about involving society in the decision making.

First of all, it is essential to know the participants and the public, as well as to develop a relationship with them. No one can participate in a process in which he or she is unknown. That is why it is required that the agency know its stakeholders and develop a relationship with them (EPA, 2012).

Secondly, it is important to provide people with communication. The agency must give transparency to its actions, otherwise society will not know what is being proposed and will not participate or monitor it.

Lastly, it is important to define the level of public participation that it is going to be used. What happens is that sometimes the agency fails and is not perceived as an open institution because it has opted for an inadequate level of participation. It is important to recognize that sometimes the opportunity for influence is quite small, while in others stakeholders have a great chance to influence.

The levels of public participation can vary according to the following flowchart.



Figure 3: The different levels of public participation

It is possible to notice that the extreme levels of the graphic show opposite potential public influence, being the left one dedicated to the policies that cannot be influenced at all, while the right one shows a total potential public influence (EPA, 2012).

The *inform* level of public participation does not provide interaction, but information. Thus, the public can have the information they need to understand the public decision. In the *consult* level there is a very limited possibility of interaction, and

society can answer what the agency asked. In the third level, *involvement*, society starts to be included in the process, even though the agency remains as the decision maker. In the *collaborate* level, the parts work together and public is directly engaged in searching a consensus solution. Finally, in the *empower* level, there is co-management and the decision authority is delegated to the public.

The next chapter of the present paper will focus on analyzing the Brazilian Electricity Regulatory Agency – ANEEL – and presenting the agency's different instruments of public participation.

Public participation in the Brazilian Electricity Regulatory Agency – ANEEL

The regulatory agencies are new institutions in the Brazilian public administration. Created at the time in which the activities which were not considered essential were to be transferred for the private sector and regulated by the state, most of the Brazilian regulatory agencies present in their mission the search for the balance among society, private sector and the government itself.

The creation of the Brazilian Electricity Regulatory Agency (ANEEL), in 1996, is related to the privatization process and the end of the state monopoly in industrial sectors, such as electric energy (PÓ; ABRÚCIO, 2006). Thus, the law 9.427/1996, established ANEEL as the regulatory agency responsible for regulating and overseeing the production, the transmission, the distribution and the sale of electricity according to the policies and guidelines of the federal government (BRASIL, 1996)

In order to fulfill its institutional mission, ANEEL is structured in 20 organizational units dedicated to technical and administrative activities.



Figure 4: ANEEL`s organizational structure according to its main processes

Carta de Serviços ao Cidadão as an instrument for the citizenry

In 2009, the Brazilian federal government published the decree 6.932, which requires that every public organization publicize to society a *Carta de Serviços ao Cidadão*, a public instrument that must focus on presenting to society a list of the services provided by the institution.

The *Carta de Serviços ao Cidadão* aims at improving the relationship among citizens and the public institution as it enables that the services provided by the public institution get widely known by the public. In this sense, it is important that the *Carta de Serviços ao Cidadão* presents a brief description of the services, how society can access the service and how long it takes for the citizen to have access to the service. It is also important that the *Carta de Serviços ao Cidadão* be written in a clear and understandable manner.

The *Carta de Serviços ao Cidadão* was developed based on (i) participation and commitment of all members of the organization; (ii) transparency; (iii) learning process; and (iv) social participation (MINSTÉRIO DO PLANEJAMENTO, 2008)

Considering that these principles are related to the process of public participation and public involvement, it is believed that an analysis of the services presented in the *Carta de Serviços ao Cidadão* enables the identification of the level of public participation of the institution.

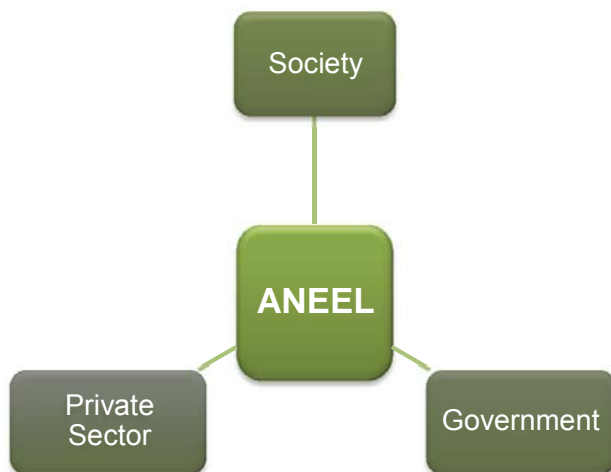
The next part of the present chapter will focus on presenting the *Carta de Serviços ao Cidadão da ANEEL* and on analyzing the level of public involvement the agency has developed.

Carta de Serviços ao Cidadão da ANEEL

Trying not only to obey what the decree 6.932 established, but also to strengthen its relationship with society, in 2010 the Brazilian Electricity Regulatory Agency published its first *Carta de Serviços ao Cidadão*⁵.

Because the instrument presents the services that ANEEL offers to society and also the different channels available to the public to communicate and integrate with the agency, the analysis of how ANEEL interacts to its stakeholders will be based on it.

Due to that, it is important to remember that, as a regulatory agency, ANEEL must search for balance among private sector, society, and the government itself, being society, in this case, known as all external stakeholders interested in ANEEL's decision. The following picture briefly summarizes this role of the agency.



Picture 5: ANEEL's mission

⁵ The second edition of the instrument was published in 2012.

All of the services described in ANEEL's *Carta de Serviços ao Cidadão* are related to the main functions of the agency, which are to regulate, to oversee and to mediate conflicts.

Thereby, according to the instrument, the interactions between society and the agency can be perceived in the following services⁶:

- i. Public information on the website of the agency;
- ii. Sectorial *Ombudsmanship*;
- iii. Public Meetings of the director board;
- iv. Public hearings and public consultations;
- v. ANEEL's Index of Consumer Satisfaction - IASC;
- vi. Technical Forum for Integration - Fórum Forte Integração;
- vii. Citizen Service – SIC.

Public Information on the website of the agency

The website provides important information due to the agency's mission, resolutions and administrative actions. It also presents information related to the functioning of the Brazilian electricity system.

In 2009, ANEEL's website registered more than 405,000 visits and had more than 1.5 million pages consulted (ANEEL, 2010).

Sectorial Ombudsmanship

The Superintendency of Sectorial Administrative Mediation (SMA) is the organizational unit responsible for analyzing complaints between the users of the electricity services and the companies which provide them with the service. In other

⁶ ANEEL's *Carta de Serviços ao Cidadão* presents many others services that the agency offer to society, although they are not described in this paper due to their technicality and to the fact they do not promote public involvement.

words, SMA acts very closely to a sectorial *ombudsman*, having its jurisdiction restricted to the electricity service, and not to the agency itself.

There are several forms to file a complaint in SMA, such as telephone, mail and e-mail, on-line chat and electronic application.

In 2012, from January to September, 39 compliments, 835 denounces, 3.129 requirements and 6,309 complaints were registered and treated at SMA (SMA).

Public meetings of the director board

ANEEL's director board meets weekly in order to deliberate administrative processes related to technical and institutional issues concerned to the sector and under the agency's jurisdiction. The meetings are open to the public, therefore anyone can participate from it, and are also transmitted live by internet.

Public hearings and public consultations

Both, public hearings and public consultations are tools adopted by ANEEL in order to support the decision-making process of the agency. The first one allows society to participate and share an opinion about a future regulation, while the second one allows the public to help with reviewing a regulation, overseeing a process, or improving a specific task.

At the present year, from January to September, 76 public hearings happened in ANEEL, which counted with the participation of 2.689 people and 398 speakers. During the same period, 10 public consultations took place at the agency.

Table 2: Contributions received in the public hearings and public consultations process according to the different categories of stakeholders from January and September, 2012

Category of the public	Public Hearings	Public Consultations
Private companies	1449	53
Public companies	453	15
Class entities	489	11
Consumer's defense entities	135	0
Public Administration	226	1
Others	2033	3
Total	4785	83

ANEEL's Index of Consumer Satisfaction – IASC

Created in 2000, the ANEEL's Index of Consumer Satisfaction – IASC – awards the best electricity companies after a survey among household consumers. The survey is mainly about the quality of the services provided by the companies responsible for the electricity distribution.

Technical Forum for Integration – *Fórum Forte Integração*

Aiming at providing dialogue between society and the agency, the Forum is a permanent tool available at the agency's website.

Citizen Service – SIC

This specific service was brought by the law 12.527/2011, which establishes that every public institution must provide access to public information to society. The SIC service guarantees that the required information will be given to the inquiring party in 20 days, and it also stimulates that the organizations act in a more transparent way by dedicating a specific page in their web portal.

The following table presents the level of public involvement developed by the previously mentioned actions.

Table 3: ANEEL's level of public involvement

ANEEL's practice	Level of public involvement
Public information on the website of the agency	Inform
Sectorial Ombudsman	Inform Consult
Public Meetings of the Director Board	Inform
Public Hearings and Public Consultations	Inform Consult
ANEEL's Index of Consumer Satisfaction - IASC	Consult
Technical Forum for Integrations – Fórum Forte	Inform
Integração	Consult
Citizen Service – SIC	Inform

Perspectives for ANEEL

The Brazilian Electricity Regulatory Agency is a new institution in the Brazilian public administration. Created in 1996, the agency presents as its mission the search for balance among society, private sector and the government itself. However, due to the technicality of the matter, sometimes the private sector or even the government have better access to the Agency's decision. That is why, since ANEEL's creation, some instruments that allowed public involvement were adopted by the institution. These instruments are presented in ANEEL's *Carta de Serviços ao Cidadão*, published in 2010.

After analyzing the level of public involvement presented in ANEEL's practices, it is possible to notice that their main goal is to inform and keep society aware about the agency's acts (inform level) and to obtain and consider society's input at the decision making process (consult level).

Both levels of public involvement do not provide meaningful participation. They enable a better understanding, but do not represent an invitation to work together in a cooperative way. At first sight, this can help people to trust the agency, but throughout time, it can lead to accommodation. In other levels of public involvement, such as involvement, collaboration and empowerment, society must show higher commitment to the issue, and that is why they become more effective.

However, some public agencies cannot simply adopt higher levels of public involvement, considering that sometimes the opportunity for influence is quite small. Thus, public involvement policies require a planning process.

First of all, it is to ensure that public participation is possible and desired. Is the organization seeking to obtain and use public input? Is there enough room to public influence over the decision? If these questions are answered in the affirmative, then the institution is ready to make a commitment to the public and invite society to participate. If not, the idea is to develop a transparency plan, focusing on informing society about the main issues involved and their results and implications. Specifically

Comment [JJF1]: I believe your point is that, by themselves, neither one of these efforts will result in effective public participation. Would you argue that all 5 stages are needed to be effective? Or is it dependent on what substance of the engagement is on?

in ANEEL`s case, it is known that the agency must organize and hold public hearings whenever a new regulatory act impacts society (ANEEL, 2007). However, citizen`s contributions in these events are pretty low (Table 2). In 2012, from January to September, ANEEL held 76 public hearings, and society was the group of stakeholders with fewer contributions (Table 2). This can be explained by the fact that most of the acts were very technical and concerned to the electric sector, and not straightly linked to society, and citizens` or consumers` opportunity to change the decision was very low. In this case, ANEEL should consider the adoption of different instruments of public involvement or mainly inform society about its results.

Second, to guarantee public involvement, it is required that the agency know its public and stakeholders and build a relationship with them. Thus, all expectations, interests and concerns will be taken into consideration. In this context, roundtables are an effective tool of public involvement, because different stakeholders have the opportunity to sit together and to know the other`s point of view.

Third, the agency must select the level of public participation. It is important to have in mind that projects are different, and so should be the approach and the level of public involvement chosen. Focusing only on informing and consulting society, ANEEL accommodates itself in a situation in which the agency does not get involved with others` perception. Take for example the case of Belo Monte, the third largest hydroelectrical dam complex being built, in which a large number of protests took place in defense of the local citizens and the environment. Adopting other levels of public involvement, ANEEL would have had the opportunity to bring together a diverse group of stakeholders to work on the process and to seek a **consensus**.

Finally, when planning public involvement policies, it is important to integrate all the stakeholders and enable them to have a common understanding of the problem to be addressed and the criteria that will be used to achieve a conclusion. Thus, transparency becomes important in all phases of the process.

Comment [JJF2]: This is the case only if ANEEL is open to ideas that differ with their own policies and/or practices. Is ANEEL really open to exploring different opinions?

In general, what can be observed is that ANEEL is commitment to develop public participation, but the initiatives adopted are not strategically planned. Different approaches should be adopted, aiming at bringing the agency closer to society.

The usage of a technical and specific language also inhibits citizens to participate, because sometimes they do not even understand what is being presented. To sit together, to be closer, and to listen carefully can enable these stakeholders to participate more in the decision process. Another important point to be observed is related to feedback. Most of the practices analyzed do not mention prompt feedback to the public. It is important to know whether one`s opinion was considered and why, and this after the fact information also makes part of a transparency policy.

In other words, even though the Agency has advanced in trying to guarantee public involvement, the practices adopted should be reviewed and better planned.

The two practices presented below are examples of well succeed actions and they serve as inspiration for those who believe that a more democratic society is based on public involvement⁷.

Canadian Blood Services Experience⁸

During the 1980`s, Canada went through a tragic health crisis, when thousands of people received tainted blood and many people who trusted in the blood they had received died. As a result, the Canadian public lost all trust in the blood system and many donors stopped giving blood.

In 1998, a new blood agency was established, the Canadian Blood Services, and started working to regain public trust.

⁷ The better practices shown in the paper were taken from the State of the Practice Report – 2012, an annual initiative organized by the International Association of Public Participation that seeks and awards better practices in the public participation field.

⁸ The *Blood donation lifetime deferral policy for men who have sex with men* was considered the project of the year 2012, according to the International Association of Public Participation.

Comment [JJF3]: I love these examples of how to restore public trust once lost !!!! I wonder how many more there are – not too many I suspect.

You could also look at Timothy Fort and his wrtings on "Trust" for business. There may be many good lessons for government agencies.

Canadian Blood Services has a policy that excludes men who had sex with men from donating blood, which has been a source of outrage and has polarized stakeholders for decades: patient groups who would like to ensure the safety of the blood supply and community groups who have fought for and made significant progress in the area of human rights. Thus, the Canadian agency realized it was time to make a change to this policy. Considering that it was necessary to guarantee that patients receive the blood they need and that there had been improvements in the blood testing technology, the agency could try to adopt a less restrictive policy. At this point, lies the challenge the Canadian Blood Services had to deal with, since the final decision due to health issue is up to Health Canada, the regulatory agency.

Aiming at changing the policy, the Canadian Blood Services considered adopting a public involvement policy and brought patient and community groups together, so that they could openly discuss each other's views, achieve mutual understanding, reach consensus and commit to work together in the long term.

The adopted methodology focused on different levels of public involvement, such as:

- i. Inform: a scientific discussion paper was prepared and reviewed by experts from various disciplines and formed the basis for detailed information on the issue; a *Questions and Answers* was created in response for public's inquiries; presentations and discussions were undertaken with regional committees; letters and electronic messages were sent to interested organizations and individuals.
- ii. Consult: an online survey was available in an attempt to gather together the views of different stakeholders and their awareness and opinions towards the issue.
- iii. Involve: a face to face deliberative poll seeking the support review for the policy review and consultative approach.

- iv. Collaborate: a three-phase approach consultation with impartial and external facilitator, representatives from national patient group organizations and representatives from the Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans, Two-Spirit, Queer (LGBTQ) community groups.

As a result, the stakeholders achieved a deep and sincere mutual understanding after sharing stories, fears and experiences. A report based on that was prepared and submitted to Health Canada, in order to show stakeholder's support to a gender-neutral screening process.

Promoting citizen participation in Tuscany: Law 69/2007 and the Regional Participation Authority⁹

At the end of year 2007, the region of Tuscany, Italy, passed the Law 69/2007, which defines the rules on the promotion of participation in the formulation of regional and local policies.

The mentioned law introduced two types of participatory processes: the first type aims at dealing with the siting of concerning large infrastructure projects having a significant environmental or social impact on a regional scale; while the second type aims at enhancing citizen engagement in relation to policies and decisions at the local level.

The implementation of the law was entrusted to an independent authority (the Regional Participation Authority) connected to the Regional Assembly, in order to guarantee its neutrality and avoid suspicions that one political party might influence participation to its advantage.

⁹ Promoting citizen participation in Tuscany: the Law 69/2007 and the Regional Participation Authority was considered the institution of the year 2012, according to the International Association of Public Participation.

The Regional Participation Authority is entrusted with a number of tasks, the main one being assessing requests and deciding on funding of local participatory processes and offering methodological advice to promoters of such process.

It is important to mention that the Law also establishes financial support to the projects.

From 2008 to 2011, the Regional Participation Authority evaluated 191 projects and discussed them with proponents. Out of this number, 103 projects have been funded and received an average contribution of 32,000 euro.

The Regional Participation Authority is also responsible for promoting the culture of participation by organizing international seminars on a number of topics, such as participatory budget, mediation of local and international conflicts and democracy.

Created specifically with the purpose of implementing the Law 69/2007, the Regional Participation Authority has not only verified public participation process, but also which projects are funded in order to promote public participation. The Authority has also been known for fostering dialogue and deliberation different from the traditional forms of engagement, developing meetings, world cafés and citizen juries.

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