



IMPROVING STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT IN LOCAL STRATEGIC PLANNING

Experience sharing based on Portuguese examples

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Motivation

Practice-driven research

- Dissemination of participatory governance initiatives across the country and internationally
- Willingness to confront our practical experience with the current state of knowledge concerning local participatory initiatives, particularly the commonly reported benefits, risks and critical success factors

Objectives

To share our experience gained through the participation on 3 collaborative local strategic planning initiatives, presenting the specific practices that have been put in place to enhance stakeholders' engagement and avoid some of the reported risks of participatory processes.

To provide an evaluation of the methods used, envisioned to support future similar initiatives.

Experience sharing

Cases' presentation

Project Title	Terras de Sicó (promoted by the Local Development Association)	Agenda Ansião 2020 (promoted by Municipality of Ansião)	PARU – Batalha (promoted by Municipality of Batalha)
Deliverable output(s)	Local Development Strategy to be submitted to the CLLD instrument (ESF support)	Working sessions partial reports Final report including the Local Strategic Development Plan and Action Plan Documents to be used as a guidance for local authorities	Local Action Plan for Urban Regeneration, to be submitted to the Region Centro Operational Programme (ESF support)
Context of stakeholders engagement	Mandatory; formal partnership as part of the application	Not mandatory	Mandatory, but not needed to be converted into a formal partnership
Scope of stakeholders engagement	Different sectors; 6 different counties; private (majority) and public members	Different sectors; 1 county; private (majority) and public members	Different sectors; 1 intervention area within the County; private (majority) and public members

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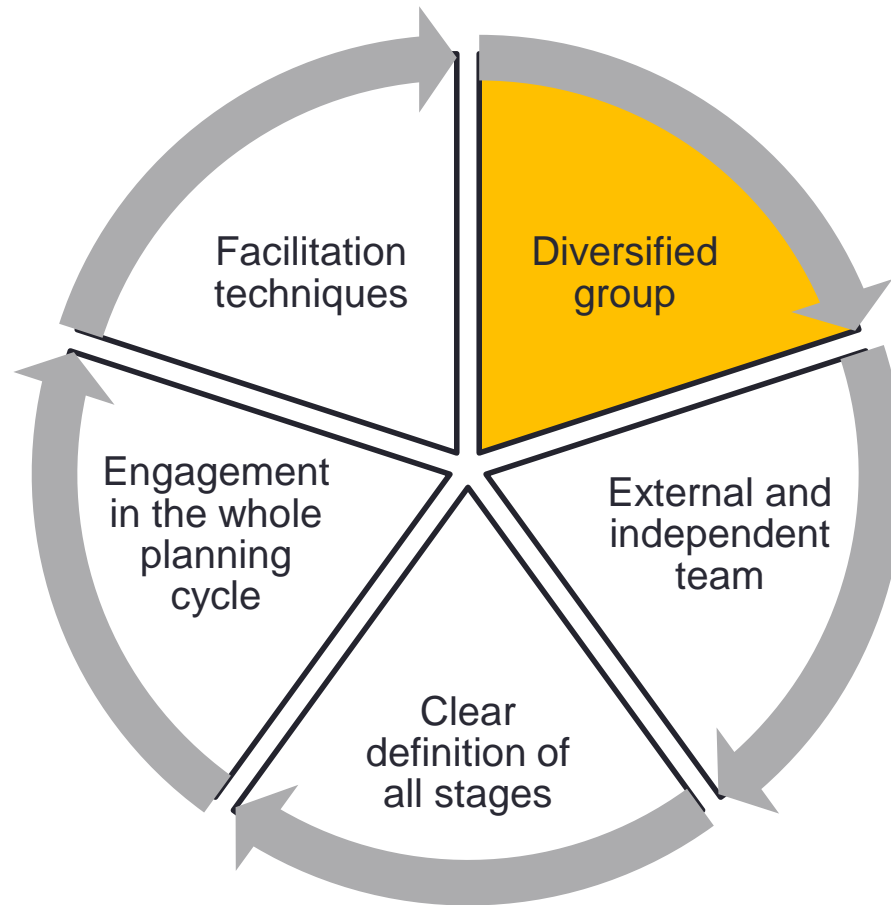
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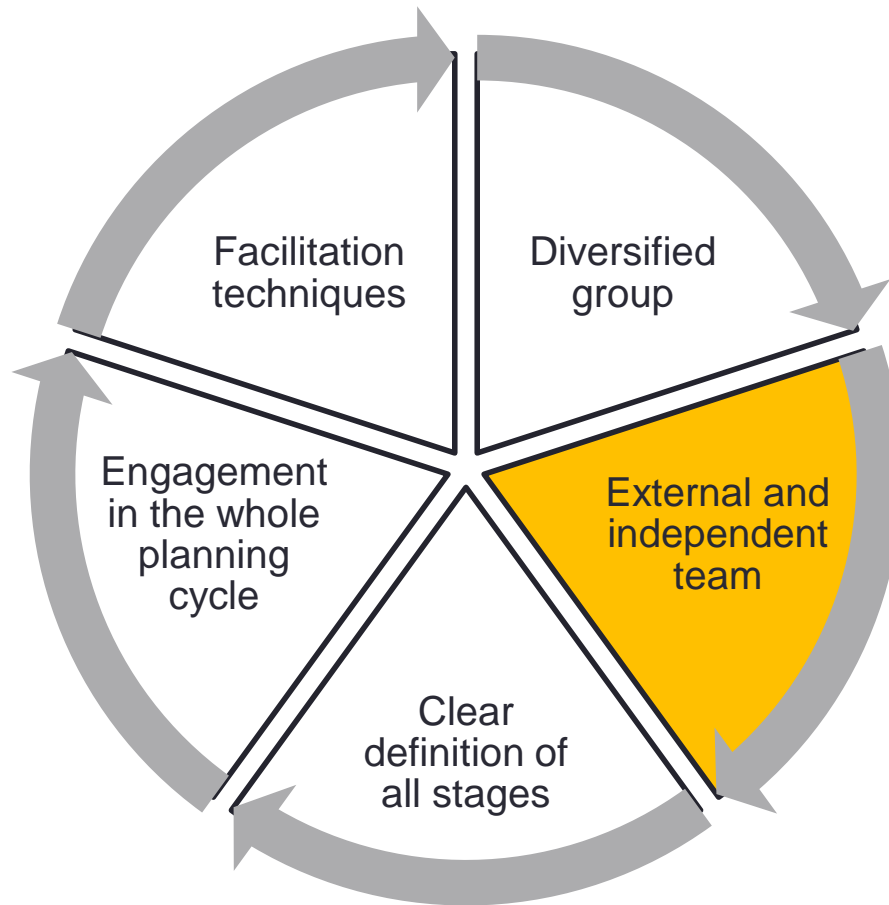
Experience sharing

Key practices applied for stakeholders' engagement



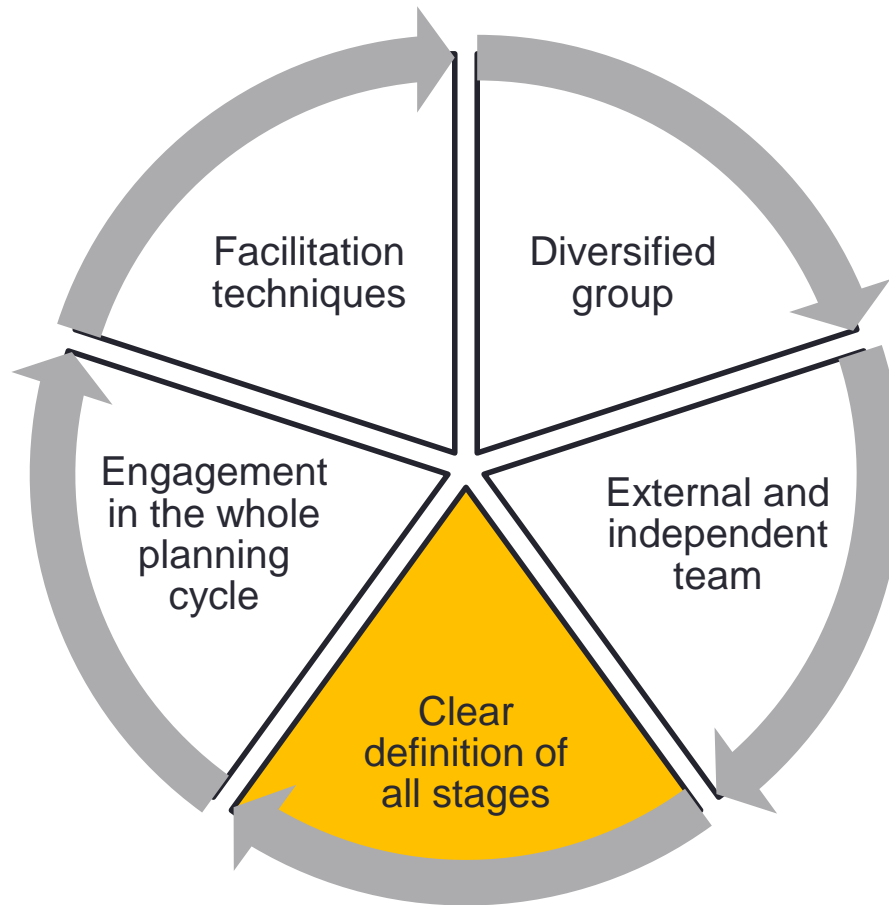
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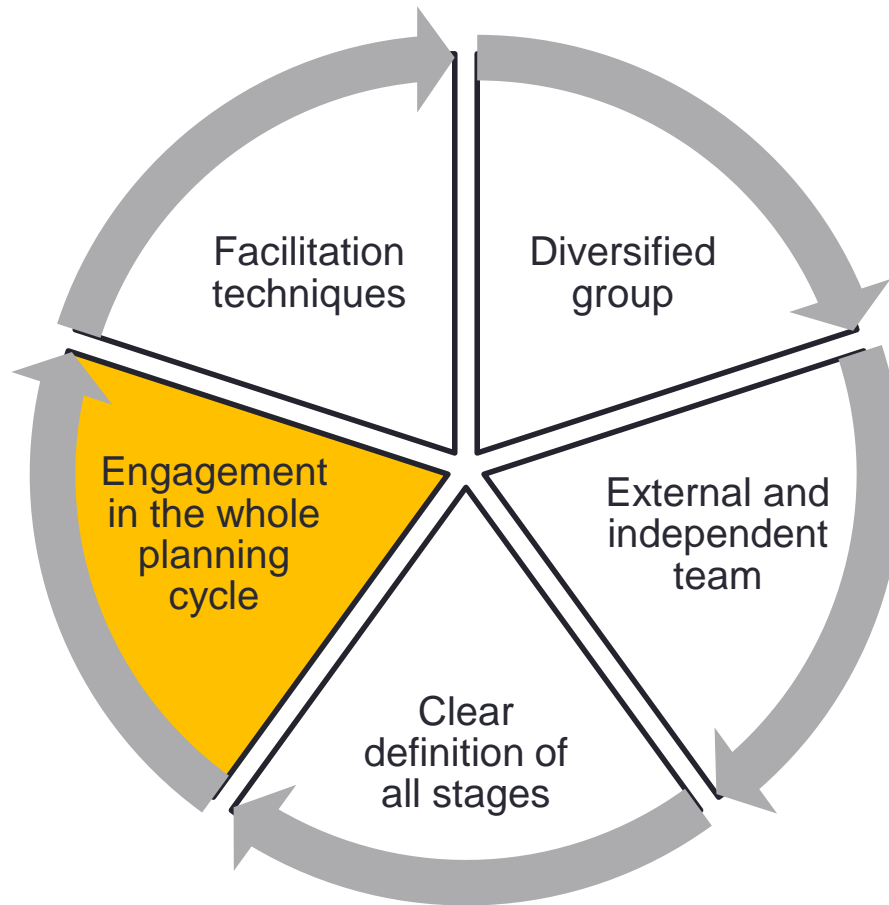
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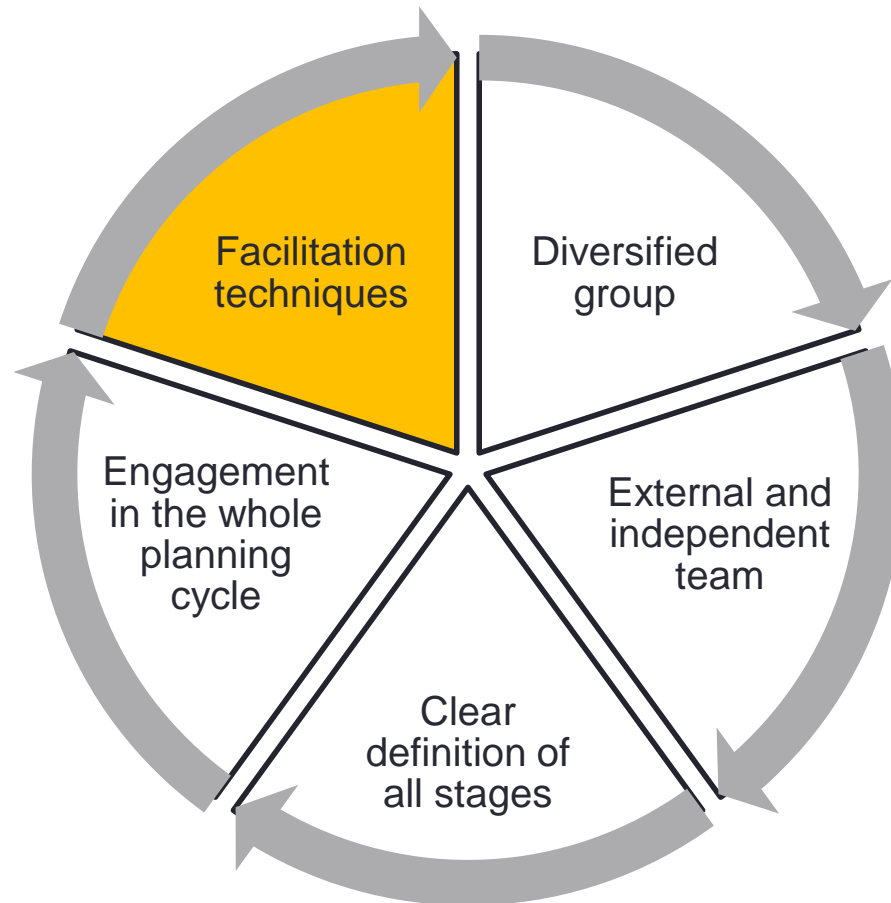
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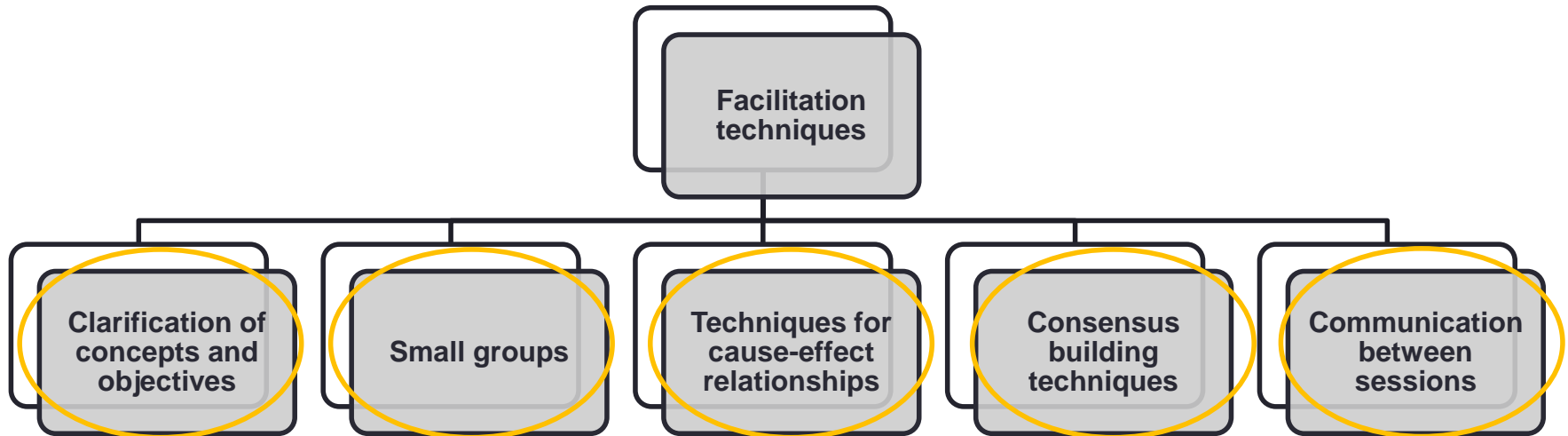
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Evaluation of the applied methods

Positive evaluation

- High level of participants' agreement towards the **quality of the group composition**, the used **techniques**, the **role of the external team** and the **achieved results**, which led them to express their willingness to participate in similar future initiatives
- Recognition that the initial goals were achieved: creating a diversified group to be involved in all stages of the participatory process contributing in an innovative manner for the local strategic plan.

Limitations

- The team did not directly control the feedback and communication between sessions with stakeholders.
- Some members' absence in some of the sessions maybe due to the sessions' length and amount.



Outcomes of the applied methods

Local strategic/action plans, built in a collective manner by the group, with which participants were highly identified

Applications to funding from European Structural Funds, approved with a high classification and with corresponding financial allocation (more than six million euros)

Social learning by participants

Conclusion

Key practices developed to improve stakeholders' engagement in local strategic plans. These practices:

- were build, refined and improved through a learning process resulting from the accumulated experience gained by the authors as facilitators in 3 cases with different aims and scope;
- avoid the major risks of participatory process identified in the literature;

Conclusion

Key practices developed to improve stakeholders' engagement in local strategic plans. These practices:

- were positively evaluated by promoters, participants and funds' managing authorities as they successfully contribute to achieve the major goals of these participatory processes;
- produce important outputs (strategic plans and funding) for local development.



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management for sustainability
research center

Conclusion

Although with the necessary adjustments (as there is no “one size fits all”), we hope our paper to be a valid framework and guideline for similar initiatives in the future and that this kind of participatory practices become more usual to develop local strategic plans.