

# Methods and tools for Dialogue Support

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Below are some ideas for Dialogue Support in the context of TNO's Early Research Program 'WISE Policy Making'. More specifically, these ideas are meant to organize workshops with the WISE Cube, with policy makers, with stakeholders, and possibly also with citizens. These diverse people can collaborate in various stages of policy making. We recognize that each workshop needs to be tailor-made for each situation and composition of participants. One can think of a 3-hour session with five people at a Ministry, or for a 3-day session with 50 citizens, e.g., in a World Café methodology, with 10 groups of 5). Or indeed anything in-between and beyond. Therefore, we have taken a modular approach. Below is a series of modules, which can be combined to create effective workshops.

The goals of these workshop modules are the following:

- To prevent and mitigate participants' biases, e.g., biases in perception and cognition. Fewer biases lead to better dialogues. Biases of different sorts, and ways to prevent and mitigate these, as much as possible (see other documents about bias and bias mitigation).
- To promote wisdom: in people's dispositions, e.g., empathy, perspective, care, compassion; and in the process of deliberation, e.g., dealing with uncertainty and integrating diverse views (some of the sources underpinning these approaches are discussed in elsewhere).
- To facilitate structure to the dialogue, notably by distinguishing between facts (blue), values (orange) and making careful connections between facts and values. This approach follows *propositional logic* (there is another document on with more details on that).

We developed a series of modules that can be combined to create and host tailor-made workshops.

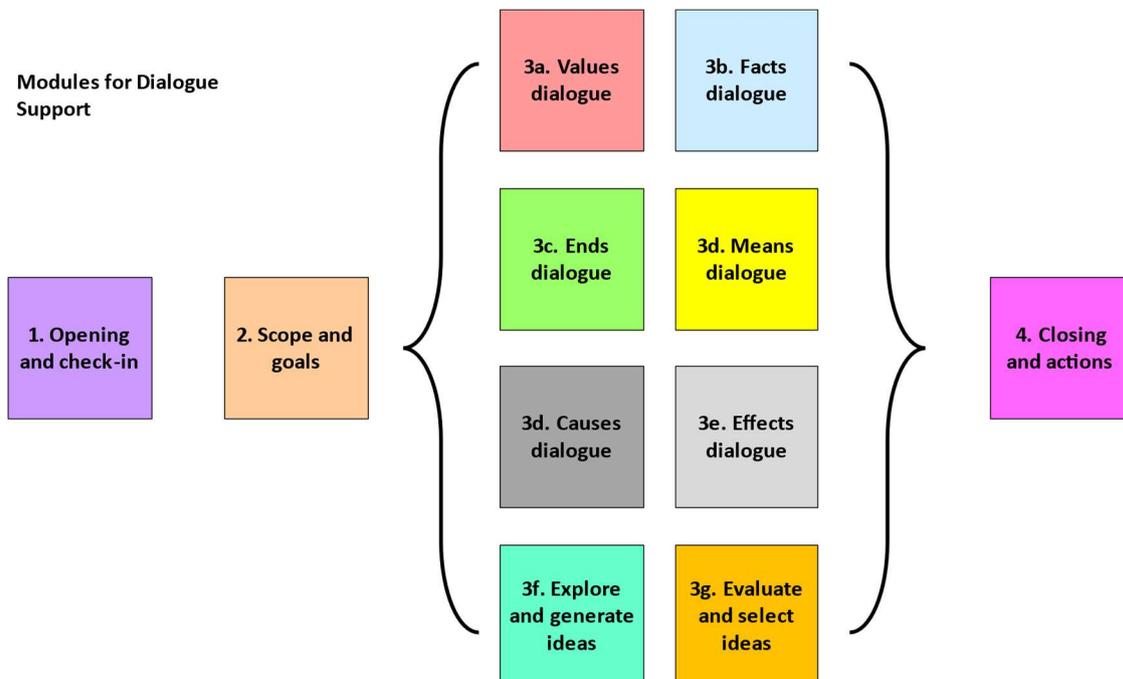


Figure 1: Modules that can be used to create and host tailor-made WISE workshops

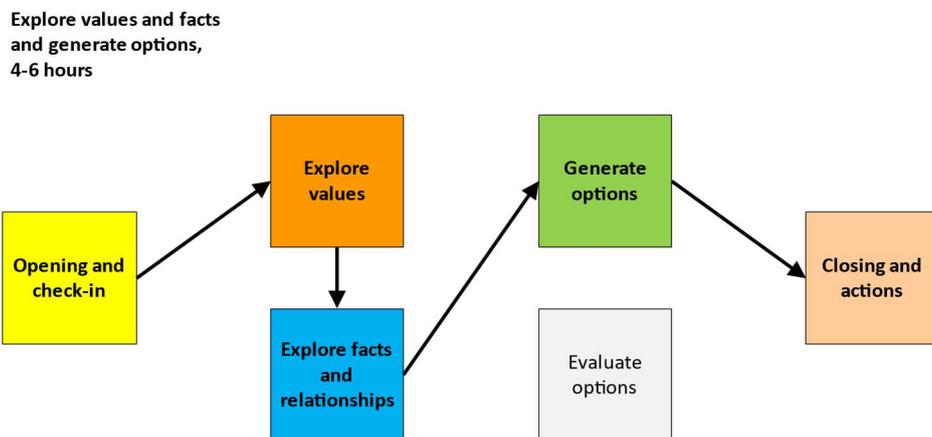
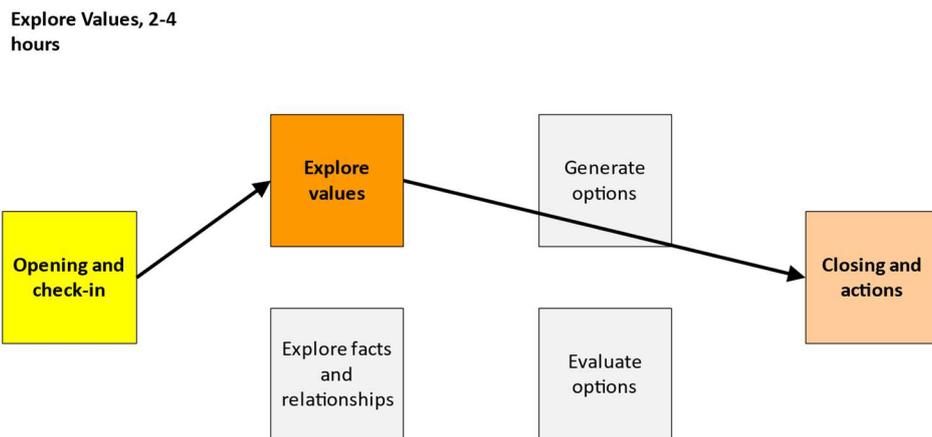
Each session starts with some opening and check-in (1), and discussing scope and goals for that session (2), ends with some closing and articulation of further actions (4)—see Figure 1.

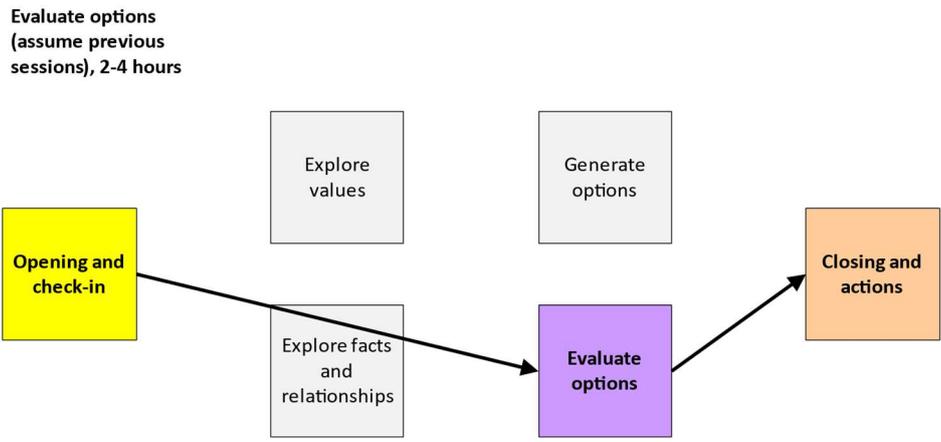
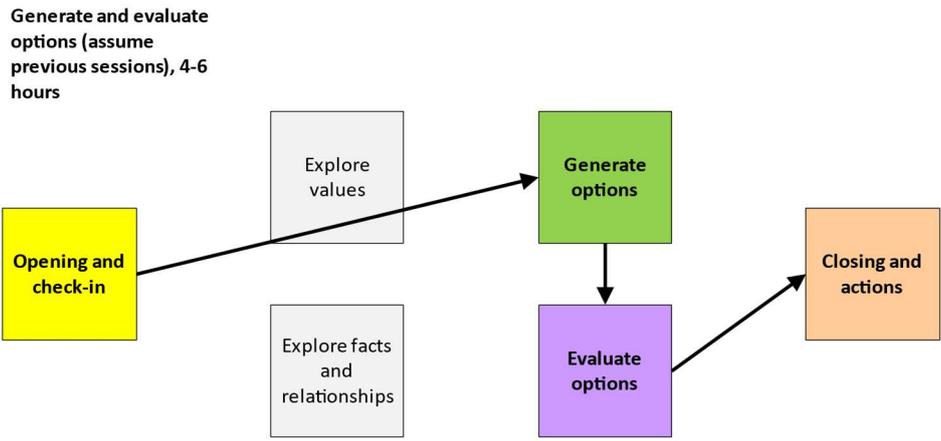
The body of the session can be modified to fit the purpose of the session and the process the participants are in at that moment; these are the modules 3a to 3g (Figure 1). These modules form pairs that can be combined and alternated between rather swiftly and flexibly: a discussion can go into facts for a while (3a), and then the facilitator can invite participants to also discuss values (3b).

These sessions assume the following roles:

- A process facilitator; to facilitate, e.g., curiosity, creativity and collaboration
- A content expert; to give input when required (not steer the discussion itself)
- If software tools are used, e.g., for modelling: an operator of these tools
- Somebody who keeps notes on the level of content, e.g., also record action points
- Most importantly. the participants: policy makers, stakeholders, experts, citizens etc.

Below are some examples of different types of sessions:





Some of these modules are further elaborated below.

Opening and Check-in: Promote curiosity, creativity and collaboration..... 4

Problem setting, Scope and Goals: Promote shared understanding..... 4

Values: Explore values, identifies key values and shared values..... 4

Facts: Explore contents, variables and relationships (qualitative argumentation) ..... 5

Generate options/solutions (combine values and facts)..... 6

Evaluate options/solutions (combine values and facts) ..... 6

Closing and Actions: Promote clarity and support going forward..... 6

## Opening and Check-in: Promote curiosity, creativity and collaboration

- *To mitigate biases: Thinking, reasoning and judging from self-interest*
- *To promote wisdom: Orient towards a mindset and intentions that promote the common good*
- **Check-in, with questions like:** What is important for you at the moment? What do you want to learn today? What values do you feel important, looking towards the future? (Kramer 2018: 60-64) These questions can steer the rest of the meeting, create a safe and shared space
- Participants express their humanity, e.g., one's favourite pastime (rather than formal, 'political' role), care for one's (grand)children (longer-term perspective), etc. To promote engagement, and become aware of one's different *roles and qualities* (Kramer 2018: 44-50) (divergence)
- Wrap-up by facilitator: Identify several shared values and common ground (convergence)
- **Results: Participants have started to express themselves and to open-up to others**
- **Time needed:** 5-20 minutes (depends on number of participants; 1-2 minutes per participant)

## Problem setting, Scope and Goals: Promote shared understanding

- **Problem setting**, analysis, structure
- Also discuss and clarify: system boundaries; what do we want to include and what not
- Results: shared understanding of scope and goals, both of this particular session and of the larger process of which it is part.
- Time needed: 30-60 minutes

## Values: Explore values, identifies key values and shared values

- *To mitigate biases: Status quo and confirmation, Conformism to own group, and Self-interest*
- *To promote wisdom: promote empathy and compassion*
- *This activity addresses the orange part of Henk's diagram*
- Brief intro of the content—e.g., the issue of urban mobility, carbon emissions, urban planning and use of space; and several policy options, e.g., for sharing electric vehicles. Only to a certain level of detail, only to get a conversation starting about values.
- **Facilitator asks: Given this case: What values are important for you?** Participants react in popcorn-style (not a fixed order)
- **Five-step process** (Kramer 2018: 64-78) to explore alternatives and 'dissent'
- Collect all perspectives; anybody can say anything anytime
- Look for 'alternatives'; facilitator summarizes and then asks: 'Anything that was not mentioned yet?'
- Spread the 'alternatives'; facilitator summarizes and then asks: 'Who else can say something about this? Who recognizes something of this?'
- Add the minority's wisdom; facilitator summarizes all that was said, by majority and by minority, and then asks what the minority needs in order to go along with the summary (this is very different from manipulating the minority to conform to the majority, and very different from not hearing the minority and only listening to the majority)
- Work with the undercurrent > see separate module
- Sometimes the facilitator will up-chunk the discussion: move from 'too many' details to more abstract, e.g., 'You are talking about charging the car's batteries. Can you please tell more about

what is important for you with regards to charging the car's batteries?' Sometimes the facilitator will down-chunk the discussion: move from 'too abstract' to more details, e.g., 'You are talking about freedom. Can you please tell more about how freedom plays a role in this concrete case with the electric car sharing?'

- **Facilitator** helps the participants to identify most important values, into a summary
- **Operator** simultaneously enters these values into a model; this is visualized in real-time
- **Results: Overview of values that participants find important for this specific case, including less-obvious values and alternative perspective**
- **Time needed:** 30-50 minutes.

### Facts: Explore contents, variables and relationships (qualitative argumentation)

- *To mitigate biases: Focus on own knowledge and ideas, Availability bias, Belief bias (knowledge illusion)*
- *To promote wisdom: knowledge and dealing with uncertainty; intellectual humility*
- *This activity addresses the blue part of Henk's diagram*
- **Content expert** presents basic ingredients of the case at hand: electric car, emissions, charge-poles, sharing, finance, mobile app, etc.
- **Participants** can ask questions about variables and facts (not about values; the facilitator will ask to write these down and bring these up in another part of the session)
- **Facilitator** helps the participants to identify most important *concepts / variables*, and most important *causal relationships*
- **Operator** simultaneously enters these values into a model; this is visualized in real-time
- **Results ('beeldvorming'):** **Overview of variables, ordered into causal relationships, that the participants understand and can work with; shared understanding**
- **Time needed:** 30-50 minutes.

How to proceed after this:

- Either policy options or potential solutions are clear or clear enough so they can be evaluated
- Or participants need to start exploring and generating policy options or potential solutions
- Or anything in-between: participants can modify options or solutions, during evaluation

We have here the Collingridge dilemma: either the options/solutions are so clear that they can be evaluated—but they cannot be changed easily; or the options/solutions are not yet clear, so they cannot be evaluated. Organizing an iterative process, to move back and forth between problem-setting and solution-finding is one way to deal with this dilemma (Steen 2013a; Steen, Buijs, and Williams 2014).

Another way to organize generation and evaluation, is to organize (sub)groups, e.g., so that one group *generates* options and another group *evaluates* these options; or to focus on generation *in one session* and focus on evaluation *in a following session*.

## Generate options/solutions (combine values and facts)

- This module is needed when there are no options/solutions yet, or to modify options/solutions
- *To mitigate biases: Status quo and confirmation (out of the box)*
- *To promote wisdom: promote the common good, integrate different views*
- *This activity addresses the grey part of Henk's diagram: what-is-currently <> what-you-want*
- Options/solutions are generated by moving back and forth *between* values and facts. Helpful approaches are: Participatory design or Co-design (Steen 2011); Value Sensitive Design (Friedman and Hendry 2019); or Creative Problem Solving (De Bono 2014)
- **Facilitator** helps participants to move between values and facts productively, to promote curiosity, creativity, collaboration, reflexivity (Steen 2013b)
- **Results: A set of approx. 3 clear, viable and feasible policy options or potential solutions**, preferably in the form of short stories, use cases, vignettes (practical; not abstract) + assumptions of impacts on different elements of wellbeing (short – long)
- Time needed: 60-120 minutes

## Evaluate options/solutions (combine values and facts)

- This module requires that clear options/solutions are available for evaluation
- *To mitigate biases: Status quo and confirmation (out of the box)*
- *To promote wisdom: promote the common good, integrate different views*
- *This activity addresses the grey part of Henk's diagram: what-is-currently <> what-you-want*
- Options/solutions are evaluated by moving back and forth *between* values and facts. Helpful approaches are:
- Value Sensitive Design (Friedman and Hendry 2019)
- MAMCA (Multi-Actor Multi-Criteria Analysis) (not necessarily in economic terms) ... (we discuss what to put into MAMCA, and we discuss what MAMCA produces)
- Multi-Stakeholder Multi-Criteria Costs-Effectiveness Analyses
- **Facilitator** helps participants to move between values and facts productively, to promote curiosity, creativity, collaboration, reflexivity (Steen 2013b)
- **Results: Clear evaluations of the available policy options or potential solutions**, preferably in the form of a statement like 'Option A offers wellbeing P for group X; Option B offers wellbeing Q for group Y; taking everything into account, we recommend Option A with modifications C
- Time needed: 60-120 minutes

## Closing and Actions: Promote clarity and support going forward

- To bring the session to a closure, both on the level of content (options and evaluations) and on the level of process and relationships.
- Moreover: promote support, commitment, participation going forward = actions that people will actually take-up and carry-out

## References

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