

PREFERENCE CASE SELECTIONS

CASE IV - DEMOCRATIC INFRASTRUCTURE DECISION

The municipality of Nacka (a municipality in the greater Stockholm area) consists of several parts (sub-municipalities). In this particular instance, there was a disagreement between proponents from the parts and from the municipality at large regarding infrastructure in a certain sub-area. Many inhabitants of the sub-area desired to have their own proposals implemented, while the centralized government of the municipality felt that another solution was called for. In particular, this project was concerned with making decisions regarding the following issues in the sub-area:

- A new water and sewage system
- A new road plan
- A new commuting harbour

The decisions had been postponed on several occasions and were labelled “infected” by some of the stakeholders. The purpose of this project was to take the decision process from start to finish without unnecessary interruption or hesitation. This required determined participants and a strong belief in the capabilities of the process.

WORK DESCRIPTION

The work was carried out at three different levels. There was an outer, semi-political stakeholder process, a middle layer investigation process, and an inner loop containing the decision process.

The *stakeholder level* contained the political process and the interaction with the citizens. Often, the political process itself is rather traditional, including preparation of material in working groups and involving representatives from the political parties elected to the local parliament. The strong interaction with the citizens through Internet communication channels is a novel component, not previously tried in this setting. This is the layer where the goals are set and later measured.

The *investigation level* consisted of employees of the local government performing the investigations and assessments necessary for carrying the process further. They were responsible for processing the information from the stakeholder level, i.e. the views of the citizens and of the political governing council. Further, they took all facts available into account, ranging from environmental reports to laws controlling the various ways plans can be implemented. This is the level where most of the structuring took place along with the processing of the information obtained into decision data.

The *analytical level* consisted of a decision analytical process carried out in a number of steps. The steps are supported by the decision analysis tool *DecideIT*, which was used in this particular case. The investigation level gathered the initial information from different sources. Then it is formulated into statements and entered into the analytical level. Following that, an iterative process commenced where step by step the process participants gained further insights.

RESULTS

Each decision option had a number of consequences. During the process, these consequences were bundled together into criteria. For each of the three options, criteria were collected, communicated, and iterated with all parties involved. Examples of such criteria included:

- Cost
- Environment
- Health
- Real estate value
- Fairness

The project was analyzed through a number of evaluative phases, viz. Sanity Checks and Security Levels, and Expected Values. After the appropriate number of iterations was completed, each decision problem as well as its proposed solution(s) in the form of preferred courses of action was well understood and documented. The decision analysis could then continue, involving all relevant criteria, consequences, and preference orderings under consideration. The final analyses were also made available to the Government Council for discussions and as a basis for decision

Please contact Preference for further details.

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