

Key learnings

KNOCA workshop on Governance Structures and Practices of Climate Assemblies, 4 Oct 2022

Participants

Presentation: Jayne Carrick

Panel: Annika Agger, Roskilde University, Denmark; Lise Deshautel, former advisor to the Co-Chair of Governance Committee for the French Citizens' Convention for the Climate; Chris Shaw, Clerk, House of Commons, UK; Susie Townend, former lead of secretariat of Scotland's Climate Assembly

Learnings

- The structure and practices of governance arrangements is critical to: (1) achieving a robust process design for the assembly; (2) securing legitimacy of the process; (3) encouraging and monitoring impact by the commissioning body and other relevant bodies.
- To achieve these ends, governance arrangements will typically secure involvement of a variety of social interests and scientific experts, the commissioning body and the organisations contracted to deliver the assembly.
- Some processes have integrated assembly members into the governance arrangements and appointed a chair and/or guarantors. Inclusion of members has been a positive contribution to governance, for example in helping to break deadlocks amongst other governance actors and providing feedback on their experience. Chairs have played a useful role in raising the profile of the assembly, particularly amongst the public.
- The precise arrangements have varied across political systems, reflecting prevailing political cultures and institutional traditions and the particular political context, as well as learning from previous experiences.
- The tendency to follow the structures and practices of previous assemblies means that there is relatively little innovation in governance arrangements. The inclusion of members is widely recognised as a rare innovation that deserves replication.
- Only a few assemblies have codified rules and procedures to clarify which bodies have decision making power. The flexibility has been helpful at times, but has also generated tensions that have been difficult to resolve. Governance bodies have had to rely on a collaborative ethos. Formalising roles and responsibilities may protect assemblies where tensions emerge.
- Most observers of assemblies have little interest in governance arrangements, but if they are perceived to be biased in any way, this can be grounds for criticism.
- No "perfect" governance arrangement exists. All have their strengths and weaknesses. For example, a secretariat comprising seconded public officials from the commissioning body can be seen as reducing the independence of the assembly, but is helpful for securing impact and buy-in.

Further reading: KNOCA Briefing No.6. Governance [Structures and Practices of Climate Assemblies](#)

Other relevant material on framing and impact can be found under [Guidance](#) and [Briefings](#) on the KNOCA website.