

STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION AND ENERGY CONSERVATION

THE ENERGY CONSERVATION CAMPAIGN AT KIEL UNIVERSITY

NORA NORDING

OBJECTIVES

The Energy Conservation Campaign at Kiel University has two main aims. Firstly, quantitative targets of a reduction of electricity consumption by eight per cent and a heat energy consumption reduction by four per cent over a three-year period ending October 2016. Secondly, it aims to incorporate ecological awareness into organisational values, in order to achieve long-lasting changes in perception amongst the university's members. This participatory approach will generate an organisational change process which takes account of energy-relevant behaviour and the respective underlying values. For such change objectives a stakeholder participatory approach is incremental. Therefore, the Energy Conservation Campaign has been implemented at three different institutes of Kiel University to test the effects of a participatory approach on the organisational culture of a university.

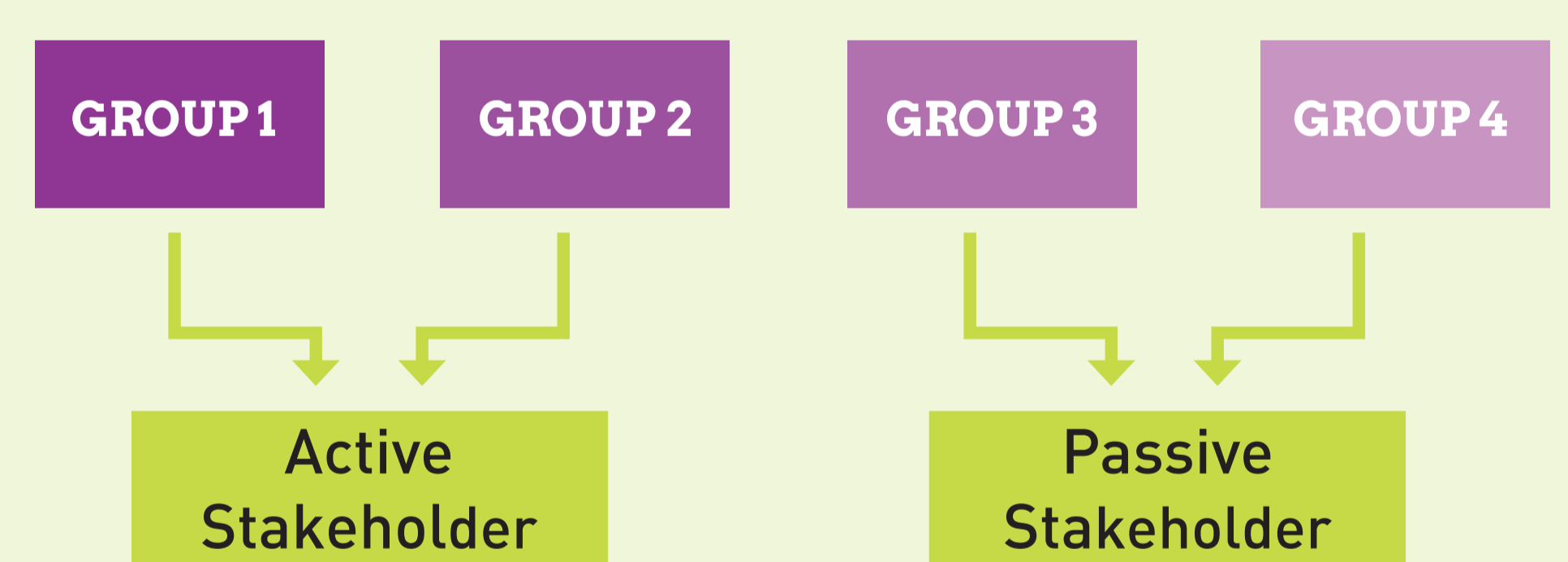
REALISATION

The realisation of a participatory approach consists of a variety of stages, namely stakeholder identification, defining levels of participation as well as frequency and the decision upon participation techniques.

STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION

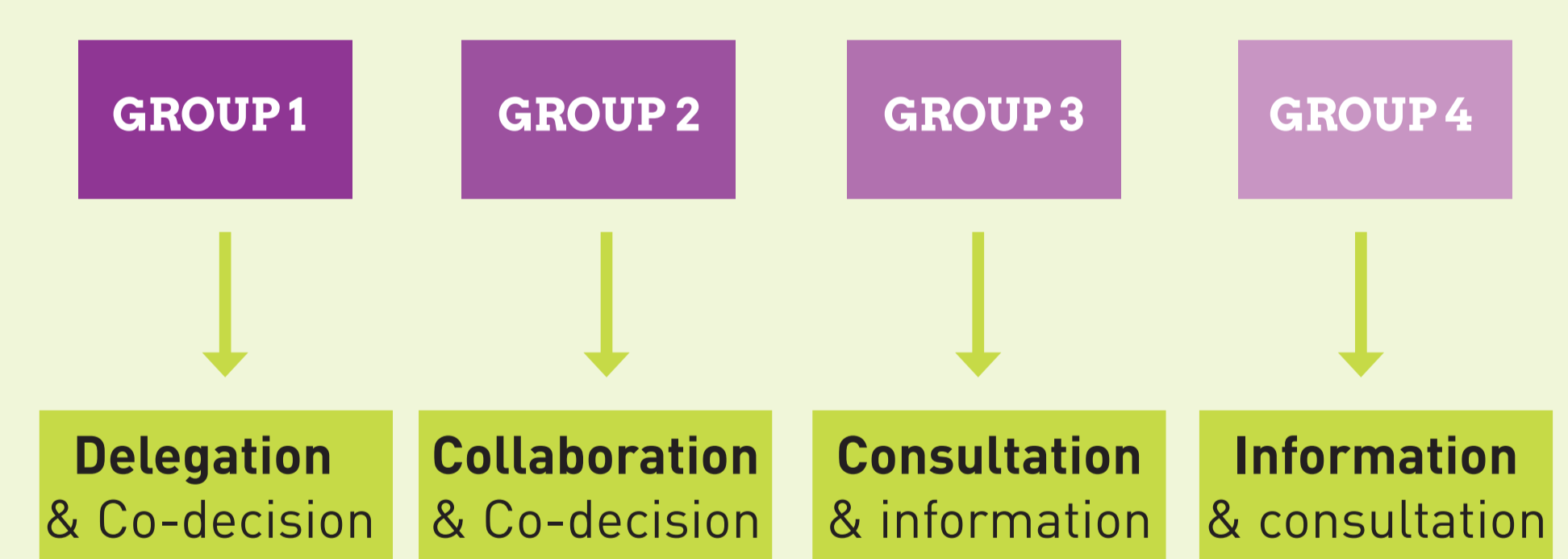
When identifying stakeholders for a participatory approach at organisations, it is important to consider that such approaches require large amounts of time and financial resources. Therefore, it is necessary for organisational purposes to keep the number of individuals involved low and to focus on intense participation with small groups. However, in order to include all stakeholders according to their level of interest and capability, it is essential to identify different stakeholder groups (SGs) which will all be encouraged to participate in different ways. For this project, four different SGs have been identified.

- SG 1 are members of each of the three partner-institutes for this project who have been selected to represent all members from their institute in respect of work groups and hierarchy differences.
- SG 2 are the remaining organisational members of the three partner-institutes, however, their participation will be less intense as they are represented by SG 1 members.
- SG 3 consists of the university's management level and additional organisational stakeholders who belong to the organisation but are not directly associated with the three institutes, such as technicians or members of the environmental working group.
- SG 4 are external stakeholders such as funders, advisers and interested members of the public, who have an interest in monitoring the progress of the project.



DEGREE OF PARTICIPATION

The second step is to identify the degree of stakeholder participation. There are the five degrees of participation: delegation, co-decision, collaboration, consultation and information. Due to contextual and personal variances between the SGs scope for adaptability is required. Therefore, each group is attributed with a primary and secondary degree of participation. SG 1 is attributed with levels of delegation and co-decision, due to the group's capacity to influence and shape the decision making process. SG 2 have been attributed with primary levels of collaboration as they are not required to contribute on an intensive level and their suggestions are useful for enriching the decision-making process but not deciding upon it. Their secondary participation level is co-decision. SG 3 consists of the management level as well as university experts and is placed in the consultation level, where decisions can be shaped and the decision making process can benefit from it. The secondary degree is information, in order to keep everyone informed about the process of the project and opportunities for them to contribute. SG 4 consists of external stakeholders, their participation level is information, however, if an external stakeholder should get particularly interested about the project they can contribute in the form of consultation.

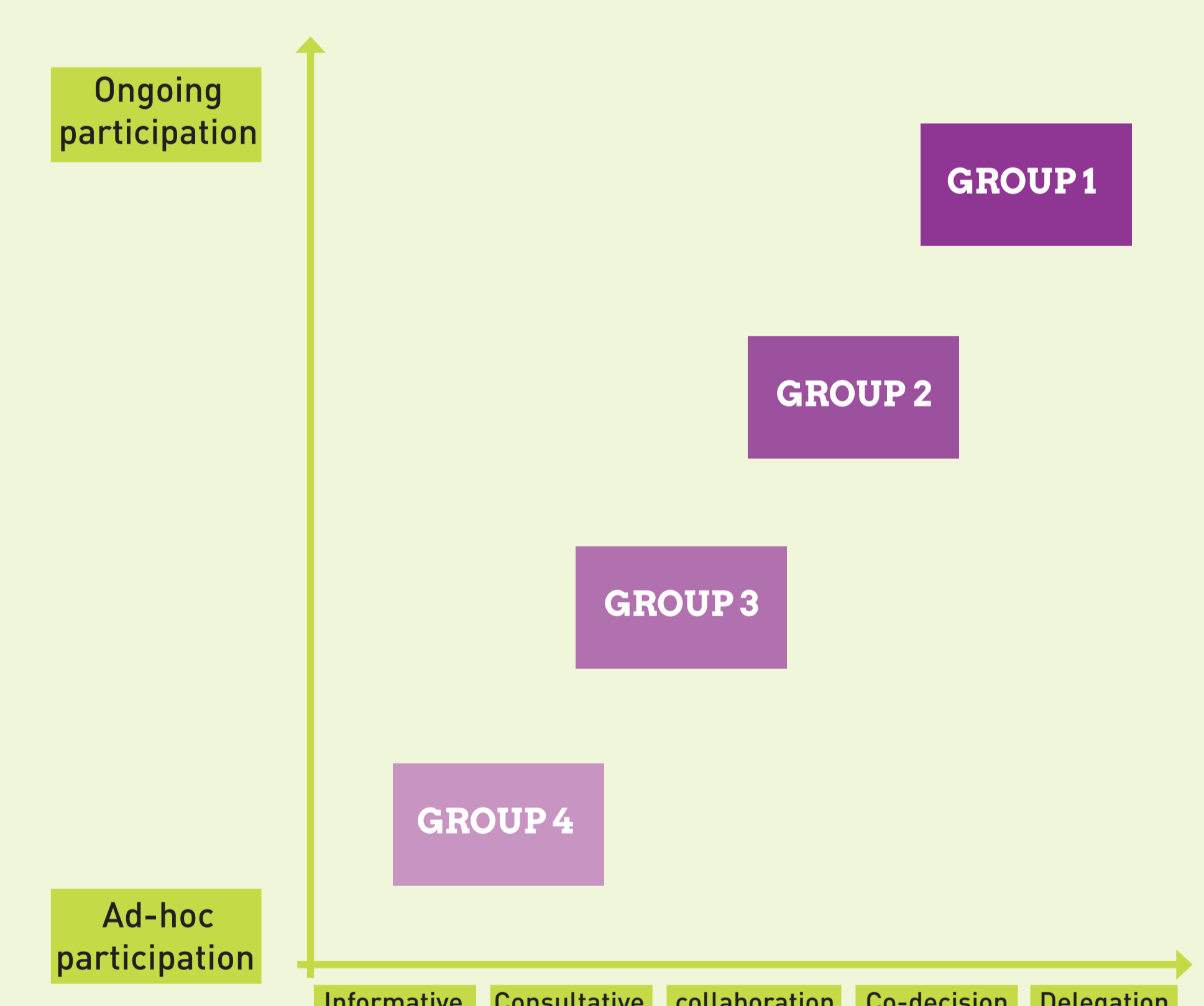


KEY CHALLENGES

The key challenge in applying a participatory approach in order to increase energy consciousness is that environmental behaviour can be considered a high-cost behaviour. This means that individuals constantly undertake cost-benefit-analyses for decision-making processes and are unlikely to engage when the outcome is unfavourable. The challenge is to overcome the costly hurdles, namely several types of internal and external control beliefs. Internal control beliefs consist of emotional and cognitive barriers (collective action problem, loose support networks) whereas external control beliefs depend on the context, in this case mainly institutional barriers, i.e. lack in time, money and understanding from co-workers. An Strengthening self-efficacy of university members through opportunities of participation has been identified as the most effective ways of overcoming such obstacles. This is what Kiel University aims to accomplish through its Energy Conservation Campaign.

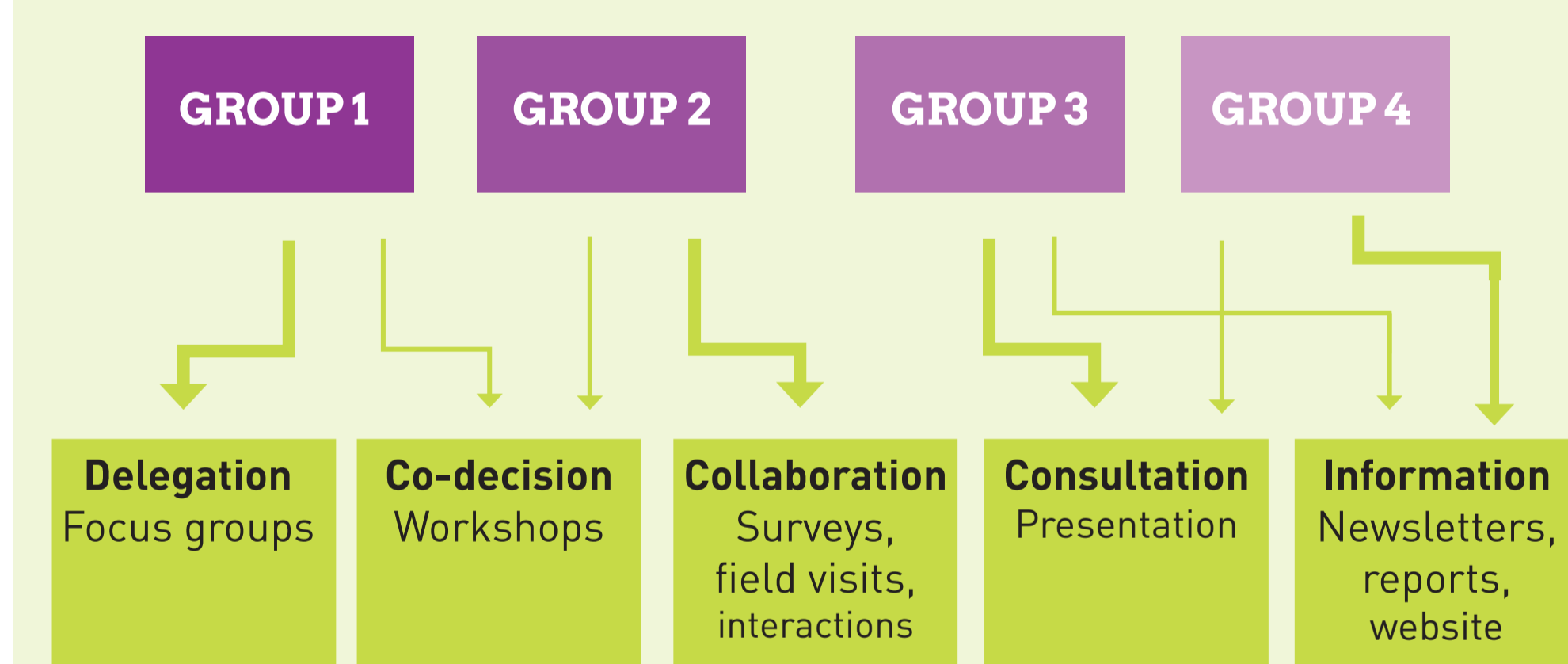
FREQUENCY OF PARTICIPATION

The next step in realising a participation project is to identify the frequency with which stakeholders participate. As there is a difference between ongoing stakeholder participation and ad-hoc participation, there is a need for combining both in order to receive a realistic picture of the participation process. Ongoing stakeholder participation has a different nature as it requires stronger commitment from participants. Furthermore, through this increased intensity it is possible to generate deeper insight into stakeholders' values and attitudes. On the other hand, ad hoc participation has the advantage of being resource efficient in terms of reducing the time which needs to be invested and also financial resources only need to be spent whenever there is a reason to participate. For the purpose of realising a stakeholder project, it is beneficial to establish a correlation between degree and frequency of participation.



PARTICIPATION METHODS

According to a classification of respective participation methods for the varying degrees of participation, the appropriate participation method for SG 1 is a focus group approach, as the central participatory element, and workshops as the peripheral approach, applying to delegation and co-decision respectively. For SG 2 the fitting participation methods consist of surveys and interaction events for the collaboration aspect while also for this SG workshops apply as part of the co-decision participation level. For SG 3, as consultation is their primary degree of participation, regular presentations need to be given in order to keep these stakeholders informed and also to collect feedback for the future process. For information purposes SG 3 should furthermore be kept up-to-date by sending of newsletters and reports. SG 4 received the same newsletters, reports and information needs to be provided for them on the website. However, as they are also secondarily being consulted, presentations for external stakeholders should be part of the participation method portfolio.



LESSONS LEARNT AND SUCCESS FACTORS

The Energy Conservation Campaign at Kiel University has provided different insight into the application of participatory approaches at universities. So far, energy consumption levels in two of the three institutes have been reduced and a stable participation process according to the guidelines mentioned above has been implemented. There have been three essential insights from the project so far which can provide learning opportunities for other universities:

Firstly, for a participation process in a large organisation it is incremental to secure the support from the leadership. In the case of Kiel University we were fortunate to be granted full support early on, which was continuously communicated from the university's chancellor to other management levels. This process of communication is particularly important to ensure that organisational members who would like to contribute are not held back by lack of understanding or support from superiors.

A second important insight is that there is a large difference between academic staff and non-academic staff regarding participating, as for scientists the time spent on meetings would essentially be their free time, while administrative and technical staff could count those hours as working time. Thus, it might be appropriate to test different strategies for these two groups in order to increase their motivation to participate.

The final insight from this project is the importance to have all hierarchy levels represented in the first stakeholder group, in order to make the construct work in terms of representativeness and multiplier-functions. It was demonstrated that the barrier to contacting a person from a different hierarchy level about energy saving advice was higher than contacting someone from another working group.



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