



## **Participation process and outcome interactions: Exploring participation in water resource management**

G. Carr (1), D.P. Loucks (2), and G. Blöschl ( )

(1) Centre for Water Resource Systems, Vienna University of Technology, Vienna, Austria, (2) Civil and Environmental Engineering, Cornell University, Ithaca NY, US

Evaluating participation programmes, projects and activities aids understanding of effective mechanisms and enables the identification of improvements to current strategies. Characteristics of participation processes, such as whether the process is cost effective, adequately facilitated, accessible, includes a representative section of society or interest groups and allocates power equivalently between participants, are commonly described and evaluated in the literature. A key question concerns whether effective processes lead to desirable outcomes. Two types of outcomes can be identified from participation programmes - tangible and non-tangible. Tangible outcomes include resource management changes or resource quality changes. Non tangible outcomes include developing and strengthening communication and action networks, building trust between individuals and/or organisations, developing innovative solutions, or developing shared knowledge and understandings of issues. To better understand how participation impacts upon resource management it is necessary to identify i) how non-tangible outcomes lead to resource management outcomes and ii) which characteristics of the participation process are connected to achieving non-tangible outcomes. This has been attempted with a literature based meta-analysis. Literature has been analysed to identify outcomes from participations programmes, and the process characteristics present that are associated with promoting or inhibiting their achievement. Preliminary analysis shows that process characteristics such as representation, facilitation and accessibility are important for achieving non-tangible outcomes. The relationship between non-tangible outcomes and resource management outcomes is less clear in the literature. This may be due to the different timescales over which the different types of outcomes emerge (resource management outcomes emerge over longer time periods) and the different contexts or settings in which participation takes place.