

# Field Trips

Engagement range	Inform/Consult/
Difficulty level	Medium to hard (reasonable level of skill in communication, media public event organising)
Cost	Low (up to \$1,000) to Medium (\$1,000 - \$10,000)
When might you use it	To showcase product, plan, policy To discover community issues
Number of people required to help to organise	One-three, depends on the audience size and level of complexity
Time to organise	Medium (six weeks to six months) to long (6-12 months)
Size of audience	Medium (11-30) to large (over 30)
Issues/resources to think about	Publicity; Venue; Catering; Staffing; Moderator/facilitator; Audio and visual recording and amplification; Overhead projector; Data projector/screen; Photographer Furniture; Printed public information materials; Response sheets; Entertainment and events; Children's requirements; Duty of care; Insurance
Innovation level	Low to medium

## Description

Field trips are organised trips where participants visit physical sites. They are a venue for providing information and at times, opportunities for participant input. Public input is possible when other participative activities are combined with the field trip.

A popular technique for environmental, planning and design-related participation processes, field trips are especially useful as a complement to conference presentations, or when written work, such as reports, are inappropriate.

## Objective

- To allow people to 'see for themselves' the place where a development is proposed to be placed, or to have a demonstration of a technique (e.g. water quality testing) in the environment where the technique can be tried, and where it is most able to be seen, remembered, and understood.

## Desired Outcome

- An understanding about a place and/or practice that allows them to incorporate a new method into their practice, or to provide informed opinions on a proposal or issue.

## Uses/Strengths

- Used when the issue being considered has a geographic focus.
- Used when a large number of stakeholders are involved in the process.
- Used where participants require information or education and these are best provided or explained on-site.
- Used when a demonstration will be more effective than presentations.
- Adds transparency and education to the process of participation.
- Provides opportunity for rapport with key stakeholders.
- Creates greater public knowledge of issues and processes.

## Special Considerations/Weaknesses

- Costly if a large number of experts are engaged to present on site.
- Larger numbers of participants require large number of staff/facilitators.
- Number of participants is limited by logistics.
- Potentially attractive to protesters.

## Step by Step Guide

1. Publicise the field trip.
2. Select times that suit the largest number of participants (e.g. select from after hours for full-time workers, daytime for retirees or parents with small children).
3. Field trips can run from several hours to full days to allow the greatest number of participants to attend (depending on the time participants can spare, distance to be travelled, availability of expertise and/or case studies).
4. Advertise the agenda and times of key presentations in appropriate place (e.g. local media, posters at local stores and libraries). This will allow participants to attend for shorter periods if necessary, and will allow them to choose sessions of interest.

5. Ensure adequate staff on site to provide assistance. For example, give directions, be available for first aid, organise food and drink (set-up and clean away), etc.
6. Create and display signs that publicise the location of field trip through attachment of maps/directions with a pre-posted agenda.
7. Ensure all publicity (signs, media releases, brochures) provide directions from major routes near the site.
8. Allow time for participants to approach experts for one-to-one discussions.
9. Provide printed public information materials during the field trip for interested participants.
10. Appoint staff to act as note takers during the discussions.
11. Provide feedback forms/survey/ response sheets to facilitate public input.
12. Pay attention to duty of care/safety issues. If site is difficult to access or contains elements of risk, make necessary preparations to avoid accidents with an emphasis on participants with disabilities.
13. Organise catering if appropriate.
14. Ensure toilets are available.