Document: Interview guide
Protocol title: Process benefits of participatory systems science methods for implementation research
Version: 3
Date: [fill in]

Getting started

Thank you for being here and scheduling an interview with me today. I'm excited to hear more about your work and experiences.

As you know, we are interested in hearing more from people like yourself about the potential benefits of engaging in the process of participatory systems science research – such as your work [tailored for subject]. Benefits of participatory systems science work are often mentioned in research, but we are worked to develop a more detailed and explicit understanding of these benefits in this study. Specifically, we're interested in learning what there is to gain from the process of using methods like group model building, agent-based modeling, system dynamics, or network analysis in collaboration with community partners, and what happens in these projects beyond the creation of a model.

Before we dive in, do you have any questions about your participation, or the consent form you received via email?

Great, so can I get your verbal consent to participate in this research project?

[provides verbal consent, recorded in research record]

Thank you, and are you ok with me recording this session? We will delete the recording once the interview transcript has been verified.

[says yes or no to recording]

[if no to recording]: That's fine, please just bear with me as I take notes during the conversation.

Recording begins

Interview

Let's start with hearing a bit about yourself. Can you give an overview of your background and how you came to be involved in research using participatory systems science research?

Could you tell us about the ***most recent*** participatory systems science project you've worked on? We would like to hear about the entire process you took.

> Probes:
>
> What was the objective of the project?
>
> What specific systems science methods were used?
>
> What types of individuals were on the project team (what types of researchers and practitioners) and how did you engage them?
>
> > When were those folks involved? At what point in the project were they involved?

What was their level of engagement? How were they involved? Who decided the level of involvement?

What was the timeline of the project?

Note to interviewer: think about whether this project is mapping, modeling, or use.

Reflecting back on this process, can you talk about the benefits of the ***participatory nature*** of the project?

And what are the benefits of the ***systems science nature*** of the project?

Now thinking about them, in what we consider ***participatory systems science***, what are the benefits of that integrated process?

Probes for each aspect:

What do you think were the benefits for researchers?

What do you think were the benefits for practitioners and/or community, those on the ground of implementation?

What things made it possible (easier?) for those benefits to come about?

What things made it or could have made it harder to get to those benefits?

Would reflecting back on other projects add or change any of your thoughts? If so, how?

Probes:

Ask about mapping, modeling, and use in past projects if they've only talked about one.

While we've been asking about the benefits of participatory work, it's clear that the process also requires time and resources *[tailored to what they've said above]*. Can you talk a bit about the difficulties of engaging in participatory systems science work, and tradeoffs between these difficulties and benefits you've discussed? *[inclusion of this question will depend on answers to prior questions & initial use of interview guide with participants]*

Thinking about your future work, is there anything you would change about your approach to participatory approaches to systems science work?

What is needed to move the field forward so that more projects can use participatory systems science methods and get the benefits you described?

Probes:

Ideas for products created by researchers?

Strategies for engaging partners?

Changes to research infrastructure (funding, longer project timeframes)?

[Summarize what they've told us]

In our last few minutes, what haven't we asked about that you think is important for us to know and communicate as we think through our results?

And as a final question, do you have suggestions for folks who are outside of academic and more practice-focused that might be good for us to talk to?

Thank you so much for taking the time to talk with me today. As a thank you for participating, we'd like to send you a $50 Amazon gift card; is the email you signed up for this interview with the appropriate one to use?