



## **INFORMAL AND FORMAL ARENAS FOR INTERACTION** (Paradigm-preserving methods)

This method helps participants to structure how and where to discuss and generate ideas on the green transition in a health and care organisation. The working questions are (1) what are the informal and formal arenas for interaction in the organisation, (2) what kind of informal and formal arenas for interaction are needed to discuss green transition related issues, and (3) how do individuals and the community interact and influence each other in these arenas? This analysis will help to identify the most effective ways of communicating, making decisions and building green transition related cooperation in different settings.

### **What is required:**

- Openness to examine your own and your community's ways of communicating
- Ability to reflect on the meaning of interaction in different situations
- Group work and discussion

**Level of difficulty:** 1 (easy and adaptable to many situations)

**Time required:** 20-45 minutes depending on the scope of the group discussion

### **Materials:**

- A flipchart or whiteboard
- Post-it notes or paper
- Pens
- Possibly a separate interaction diagram

**Participants:** 3-20 people; can be applied to larger groups

### **How to use:**

1. Introduction to the topic: what is meant by informal and formal arenas for interaction and how they relate to the individual and the community.
2. Individual reflection: everyone thinks of examples from their own life or work environment.
3. Group work:
  - The group will be divided into two parts: one will discuss informal arenas, the other formal ones.
  - The groups answer the questions: where and how does the interaction take place? What is its importance?
4. Sharing the results: the groups present their findings and discuss their differences and similarities.
5. Summary: Discussion on how to identify and utilise these forms of interaction in your community or work environment.



### When to use:

- As part of a workshop on communication, decision-making or organisational culture
- To strengthen environmental engagement and the exchange of knowledge and experience within the community
- For leadership and teamwork development

### Why to use:

- Helps to identify the role and impacts of different communication situations
- Strengthens participants' understanding of when to use informal and when to use formal means of interaction
- Provides a basis for developing interaction strategies for the green transition in the workplace

### How to document:

- Notes on group work
- Photos of the flipchart or charts
- Participants' comments and insights compiled into a report

**The roots of the method can be found here:** The analysis of informal and formal arenas for interaction is based on theories of social interaction and organisational communication. Goffman's (1959) *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* discusses the different roles and arenas of interaction, while Schein's (2010) *Organizational Culture and Leadership* examines the role of organisational culture in formal and informal communication. Habermas' (1984) *The Theory of Communicative Action* offers a perspective on how interaction builds structures of community and power. The method is also related to the concept of social capital (Putnam, 2000), where informal and formal interactions create and maintain a sense of community and trust.