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Course script for the 2nd ELD Initiative Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on ‘Options and pathways for action: Stakeholder Engagement’ May 5 – June 29, 2015

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THE ECONOMICS OF
LAND DEGRADATION

2nd Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) - ELD Initiative

May 5 - June 29, 2015

‘Options and pathways for action: Stakeholder Engagement’

ELD MOOC 2015

‘Options and pathways for action:
Stakeholder Engagement’

Prepared by Dr Emmanuelle Quill rou & Dr Thomas Falk

Some of this material has been published as part of a practitioner’s guide after the end of the MOOC:

ELD Initiative (2015). *Pathways and options for action and stakeholder engagement*, based on the 2015 ELD Massive Open Online Course “Stakeholder Engagement”. Practitioner’s Guide. Available from: www.eld-initiative.org

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2nd Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) - ELD Initiative

May 5 – June 29, 2015

‘Options and pathways for action: Stakeholder Engagement’

ELD MOOC 2015 Week 1

May 4-10

Stakeholder engagement and the Economics of Land Degradation (ELD) Initiative

Dr Emmanuelle Quill rou, Dr Thomas Falk¹



Still from "The Value of Soil" movie
<https://youtu.be/fH0wZSO705E>

¹ We gratefully acknowledge suggestions and inputs provided by Prof. Lindsay Stringer, Ms. Claudia Musekamp, Mr. Ali Salha, Ms. Laura Schmidt and Dr. Richard J. Thomas to establish this course script.

Why engage with stakeholders?

Let's start with who stakeholders are. The online Oxford dictionary defines stakeholder as "a person [individuals or group representatives] with an interest or concern in something, especially a business"². A stakeholder is, literally, someone with something at stake currently, or in the future as current circumstances evolve or if changes are introduced. Stakeholders can influence processes or be influenced by them (Blackstock *et al.* 2007, Reed 2008, Aaltonen and Kreutz 2009).

There are different ways of categorising stakeholders³. As an example, the types of stakeholders identified by the Economics of Land Degradation (ELD) Initiative in relation to land management are:

- **Government i.e. political decision makers**, including national (ministries, national agencies) and sub-national government authorities and agencies. Policy-makers can design (dis-)incentives to influence individual land use;
- **Private businesses**, including multinationals and other big corporations, small and medium enterprises, farmers and smallholders; and
- **Civil Society** represented by international development and environmental non-governmental organisations (NGOs), local communities and civil society bodies, professional groups, etc.

Academic researchers and research institutes are sometimes but not always considered as stakeholders (although the donors funding their research may be!) but play a role in improving knowledge and understandings to feed into evidence-based discussions for decision-making by relevant stakeholders.

Stakeholders may have common, conflicting or 'neutral' (neither common nor conflicting) perspectives within areas of common interest or concern. A few areas that may be of common interest or concern to stakeholders in relation to land and land use include for example land degradation, land use externalities, sustainable land management practices, economics, property rights regimes, social or environmental issues around land management, organisations and institutions around land management, policies related to land management, economic instruments such as taxes and subsidies related to land or its products (e.g., agricultural crops), etc.

Stakeholder engagement refers to specific forms of stakeholder participation which go beyond information and consultation⁴ (Reed 2008). Engagement is based on a 2-way communication process to exchange information and ideas on an equal footing and in a systematic way around an issue, with active participation of stakeholders in a dialogue (Reed 2008, Dyer *et al.* 2014, Reed *et al.* 2014). It can be applied to diverse processes such as research processes or decision-making

² <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/stakeholder> [accessed 18/04/2015]

³ An overview of a few stakeholder categorisations is provided in week 3 of the course.

⁴ More details in week 2 of the course.

processes with varying levels of intensity (Arnstein 1969, Davidson 1998, Reed 2008, Schmidt *et al.* 2013, Dyer *et al.* 2014). The choice of a specific form of stakeholder engagement is a social construct inherently rooted in social and cultural values and mindsets that shape social organisation and choices.

Stakeholder engagement can be called for in development work and in research for a number of reasons. It can be based on the normative acknowledgement that the people affected should be part of processes assessing and changing the system. Another reason might be to expect better process outcomes if the knowledge of different stakeholders is combined (Fiorino 1990). Involving stakeholders can in some cases be a legal requirement (Wesselink *et al.* 2011). It can further be driven by the idea to develop their multidimensional capacities (Hage *et al.* 2010).

In research processes, stakeholder engagement is increasingly called for with an objective to establish platforms where information and ideas from varied sources are shared and local and scientific knowledge merged together (Reed 2008, Stringer and Dougill 2013, Bracken *et al.* 2014). Stakeholder engagement is one way for stakeholders and researchers to challenge each other and jointly undertake research that considers their needs and interests. It has the potential to expand research breadth and scope while meeting stakeholder needs for information. It is one way for academics to communicate research results to potential 'end users' to help them better understand what research results are, what they show and what their limitations are, so that such results are used inappropriately. Stakeholder engagement can be seen as a means to bring academic 'ivory towers' down and make research applicable, salient, relevant and useful to its potential 'end-users' - stakeholders who can take action (Reed *et al.* 2013, Bracken *et al.* 2014, Stringer *et al.* 2014).

Another objective of stakeholder engagement is building mutual trust and respect between researchers and stakeholders, and between different stakeholders through dialogue and social learning (Fiorino 1990, Reed 2008, Stauffacher *et al.* 2008, Stirling 2008, Delgado *et al.* 2010, Hage *et al.* 2010, Bracken *et al.* 2014). Stakeholder engagement has the potential to increase the transparency over research and decision-making processes, interest for the issues at stake, research assessment and active participation to decision-making processes, and acceptance of credible and 'neutral' research results and political decisions (Reed 2008, Reed *et al.* 2009, Schmidt *et al.* 2013, Stringer and Dougill 2013).

Stakeholder engagement has become more widespread in research processes following ethical concerns over the way research involving stakeholders has been previously conducted (Reed *et al.* 2009). In particular, ethical concerns arose from research in humanities and social sciences that relied on studying stakeholders or asking them for information without giving them something back in return. Such ethical issues added to the greater value of mutually beneficial interactions between stakeholders and researchers highlighted by an increasing number of scholars, have contributed to changing participatory research practices. Instead of the "I

participate, you participate, he participates, we participate, you participate, **they profit**" of Figure 1, stakeholder engagement aims to reach a situation where "I participate, you participate, he participates, we participate, you participate, **we all benefit**" (emphasis added).



Figure 1: Stakeholder engagement, the antithesis to "I participate, you participate, he participates, we participate, you participate, they profit." May 68 poster by Atelier populaire ex-Ecole des Beaux-Arts (hand with brush). Source: gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque Nationale de France

Perceived need for stakeholder engagement for improved land management

We are facing a situation where land has become an increasingly scarce resource (ELD Initiative 2013). There is a need to make better use of the available land, in the short as well as in the longer term. There are increasing demands on land to produce a diverse range of products such as timber and fuel but in particular food for an expanding population. As a result the competition between land users and land use forms increases. Not only is the quantity of land available for production under current technical and economic conditions fairly limited, but there is increasing evidence that its quality is degrading (e.g., farming practices that result in water and wind erosion, the loss of organic matter, topsoil compaction, salinisation and soil pollution, and nutrient loss, FAO 2011). Popular proposals to address these challenges are to intensify current land use or to expand into marginal lands. Others suggest that increases in production could be achieved through structural reforms (see for instance Masters *et al.* 2013 describing variation in farm structures associated with varying inclusion into markets and levels of demographic transition).

In many places, the way land has been managed over the past 30 years has not managed to reduce the pace of land degradation, let alone reverse it (ELD Initiative 2013). There is increased demand from stakeholders for management approaches based on inputs from different stakeholders (**co-management**) and multiple disciplinary perspectives (**integrated management**) (Bracken *et al.* 2014). Such a shift has driven a demand for **co-generation of solutions** that integrate multiple forms of knowledge, in which researchers as well as stakeholders can take a role (Blackstock *et al.* 2007).

The Economics of Land Degradation (ELD) Initiative and stakeholder inputs for knowledge sharing

The Economics of Land Degradation (ELD) Initiative was set up out of demand from decision-makers for economic information that could help inform adoption of more sustainable land management practices and reduce land degradation. One of the objectives from such an initiative is to focus on inputs from the social sciences, as more technical inputs from science are fairly well known and established already. It is hoped that the added layer of information in addition to stakeholder engagement will help address some of the remaining barriers to adoption of more sustainable land management. Such information primarily draws insights from economics and is complemented by additional insights from other disciplines.

There are two different types of dialogues in the ELD Initiative as it is set up currently that can help knowledge sharing and the building up of a common knowledge base:

- 2-way dialogues between researchers from different academic disciplines (economists from various sub-branches of economics, social geographers, physical geographers, ecologists, agronomists, foresters...) as part of an interdisciplinary approach⁵ to build up a stronger scientific case for improved land management;
- 2-way dialogues between researchers and decision-maker representatives from the public and private sectors to compile and share case studies and experience from a range of different perspectives.

⁵ 'Interdisciplinarity' in this script encompasses approaches that rely primarily on inputs from one academic discipline with complementary inputs from other disciplines to identify conditions for success to 'transdisciplinary' approaches that recognise various sources of knowledge as equally valid for addressing complex societal problems (see Jahn *et al.* 2012 for a more detailed definition of 'transdisciplinarity').

There are a few opportunities within the ELD Initiative for such dialogues to emerge:

- organisation and participation in joint meetings and side events to international conferences;
- consultation of stakeholders to help researchers find out about current initiatives and projects and stakeholder needs for information and scientific support;
- involvement of stakeholder representatives in the writing and reviewing of the ELD output reports; and
- establishment of regional 'ELD hubs' that could foster knowledge sharing at the regional level

The Economics of Land Degradation (ELD) Initiative and stakeholder inputs for knowledge *building*

Knowledge sharing within the Economics of Land Degradation Initiative has led to the identification of a few operational and implementation gaps. The ELD Initiative has attempted to address some of those gaps through establishment of case studies including stakeholder engagement as well as capacity building elements. The 2-way dialogue between researchers and stakeholders has helped customise existing academic knowledge in a way that meets stakeholders' needs for operational knowledge.

There are a few opportunities within the ELD Initiative for such dialogues to emerge:

- organisation and participation to joint meetings and side events to international conferences;
- commissioning of case studies which include stakeholder participation and capacity building;
- involvement of stakeholder representatives in the writing and reviewing of the ELD output reports; and
- establishment of regional 'ELD hubs' that could potentially foster knowledge building at the regional level in relation to regional capacity and needs

The Economics of Land Degradation (ELD) Initiative 6+1 step approach

ELD is an assessment and aims to identify all possible options available to decision-makers in a comprehensive way from a range of case studies across the globe. It is based on a 6+1 step approach to assessing the net benefits from increasing current land productivity or developing land use and livelihood options (ELD Initiative 2013, p.42):

1. Inception

2. Geographical characteristics

3. Types of ecosystem services

4. Role of ecosystem services and economic valuation

5. Patterns and pressures (scenarios for cost-benefit analysis). The following sub-steps can be taken to choose the appropriate valuation method under available data, resources, local capacity, and specific objective to be achieved:

- (a) deciding the type of environmental problem to be analysed;
- (b) reviewing which valuation method is appropriate for that problem and the type of environmental value to be captured (use value or total economic value);
- (c) considering what information is required for the identified environmental problem and chosen valuation method, and;
- (d) assessing what information is readily available, how long it would take to access it, and at what monetary cost.

6. Cost-benefit analysis and decision-making

7. Take action: Implement the most economically desirable option(s). This may require adapting the legal, political, and economic contexts to enable the adoption of most economically desirable option(s), and removing existing barriers to adoption.

Such an approach allows for stakeholder participation throughout the first 6 steps, ranging from mere consultation to various levels of engagement in building up the assessment itself, depending on research capacity, stakeholder capacity, and stakeholder needs and demands. The final step, however, demands action from stakeholders (rather than researchers), which is beyond participation and is assumed to be facilitated by successful engagement.

How can research assessments such as the ELD Initiative provide support to stakeholders and inputs to discussions within a decision-making process to identify or create possible options and pathways to achieve successful implementation of these options 'on-the-ground'? Scientific assessment can help compile a portfolio of case studies illustrating successful options and pathways with their factors of success to help promotion of similar options and pathways in other places and circumstances. Options and pathways that will be successful when implemented and bringing out actual change may however differ between countries with very different social and cultural values and mindsets. For example, a fee on plastic bags in Ireland and France curbed their use drastically when introduced because people did not want to purchase something that was previously free primarily out of

'principle' or money considerations. The same measure did not work in Malawi where plastic bags are deemed more valuable than the money charged for them. In this case, the same option and pathways were adopted but with different results. It is important to be aware that there is no "one option for action fits all" or "one pathway fits all" and what has worked in one place may not work in another. Options and pathways may need to be adapted in relation to social choices. Original options and pathways can be socially constructed to best fit specific circumstances, with research providing inputs to such social constructions.

The ELD Initiative aims to provide stakeholders with scientific information summarised in dedicated reports over a portfolio of scientific assessment methods and possible options and pathways supported by case study examples. The Initiative will actively engage with stakeholders to raise their awareness over a range of non-exhaustive possibilities. Stakeholders can explore the scientific and operational knowledge and evidence compiled by the Initiative which can inspire them in their decision-making and action-taking in relation to their specific situations, to their social and cultural values and mindsets.

This course is set up as a follow up from the 2014 ELD MOOC "The Economics of Land Degradation – Assessing the socio-economic benefits of land ecosystems". This ELD MOOC focuses on engaging with stakeholders in scientific processes for enhancing decision-making processes in relation to adoption of land management options through socially and culturally suitable pathways. This course provides some insights into how different stakeholders can be involved in the different stages of the ELD Initiative 6+1 step approach to increase the likelihood of adoption of more sustainable land management options. The course concept is based on the belief that stakeholder engagement is necessary for actual 'on-the-ground' change to happen and is pursued by the members and key partners of the Initiative. Because of the way the ELD Initiative is set up, most of the work so far has focused on compiling existing knowledge and case studies across the globe (ELD Initiative 2013), commissioning stakeholder consultations (e.g., Kenya in 2014 as described in Juepner and Noel 2014) and new case studies, some of which specifically designed to engage with national and international researchers and stakeholders (e.g., Botswana as described in Favretto *et al.* 2014, Central Asia which has recently started). All these help compile possible options and pathways for action that have been recommended and tried out across the globe.

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2nd Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) – ELD Initiative

May 5 – June 29, 2015

‘Options and pathways for action: Stakeholder Engagement’

ELD MOOC 2015 Week 2
May 11-17

Options & pathways for action and stakeholder engagement

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  Jean-Paul David

Options & pathways for action: a compilation from existing case studies and experience

Three major types of options for action by land users have been selected from previous research for economic assessment (Figure 2):

- **change nothing** (carry on with business as usual);
- **improve productivity of current land use** through adoption of alternative land management practices; and/or
- **adopt alternative livelihood (economic) activities** to diversify current activities or to introduce a full change of land use system.

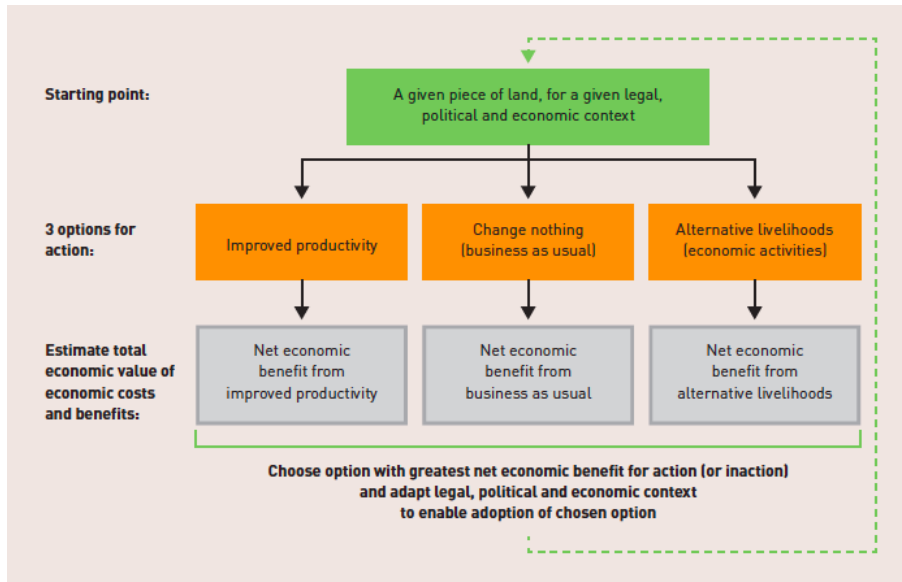


Figure 2: A decision-making framework with net economic benefit as choice criterion (i.e. economic benefits minus costs) (ELD Initiative 2013, p.39)

Often different options can be adopted in parallel when they are hardly interlinked, when there are synergies or at least only weak trade-offs. For instance, an alternative livelihood activity such as the production of arts and crafts does not necessarily compete with agriculture for land but rather for available labour (competition for time rather than space). Production of arts and crafts can be fairly easily combined with improved agricultural land management practices, especially when such practices free up labour time.

Each of these general land use options has an associated impact pathway (Figure 3). There is no “one size fits all” to adoption of more sustainable land management and each impact pathway can take very different shapes and forms to facilitate adoption depending on the context. Associated impact pathways enabling adoption of land use options should help remove technical, political, legal, cultural, social, environmental and economic barriers to adoption and establish incentives for adoption of sustainable land management. Impact pathways are in essence a social construct because they are intrinsically linked to cultural and social values. A few examples are documented in the ELD Initiative interim report (2013, figure 7 p.39 and box 4 p.40-41):

- **the removal of perverse incentives**, i.e. existing incentives that have adverse economic and environmental impact on land management.
- **the use of economic instruments**. Economic instruments to reverse land degradation include subsidies, taxes, bans, norms, quotas voluntary payments for environmental conservation, market premium payments (certification), payments for ecosystem services, the setting up of new markets (e.g., carbon storage and sequestration), and access to microfinance and credit;

- **facilitation of change through adaptation by decision-makers of the legal, social, and policy-focused environment** to favour adoption of more sustainable land management and remove existing barriers to action from the local to the global level;
- **facilitation of change through development of human and institutional capacity** to avoid mis-/overuse of land and associated natural resources as the result of externalities; and
- **facilitation of change through information diffusion and exchange** with establishment of research, policy, and stakeholder networks and platforms for exchange, increased awareness and greater information and data availability

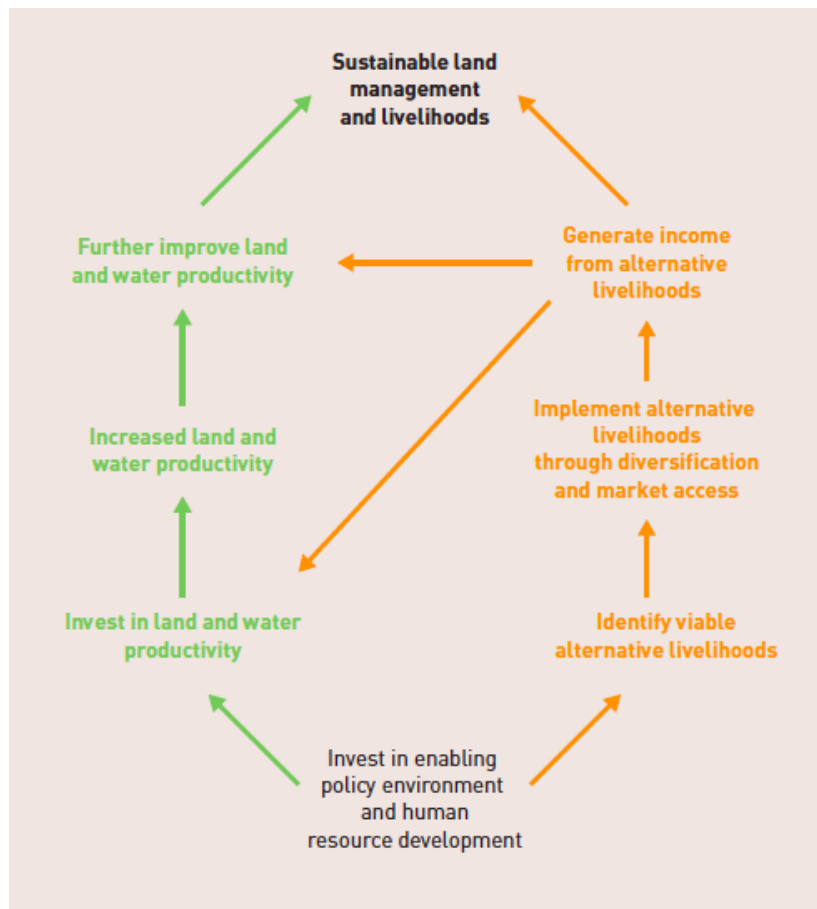


Figure 3: Pathways to sustainable land management, considering agricultural (green) and alternative livelihoods (orange) (ELD Initiative 2013, p.17)

Such a list of possible impact pathways for enabling action is not meant to be exhaustive. Development literature lists many more possible impact pathways that could be drawn upon. Such examples can, however, encourage a discussion with and between stakeholders. For instance, in a case where stakeholders have identified a specific economic instrument as a potentially suitable pathway for action to be tried

out (e.g., a payment for ecosystem services), a transdisciplinary research process can allow to test the instrument and to work out context-specific adaptations (e.g., scale the level of payment, institutional set up for payment administration, enabling policy needs). This will support further considerations and discussions between stakeholders and decision-makers.

Establishment of suitable viable solutions very often requires an iterative process to adapt both options for action and impact pathways to changing circumstances and lessons learnt (ELD Initiative 2013, Case study 5, p.26-27). We live in a changing world and need to keep adapting!

Different types of stakeholder participation

There are many reasons for wanting stakeholder involvement and participation, and the level of stakeholder involvement and participation typically vary with the objective of such participation. One of the reasons for stakeholder participation is linked to a need to build impact of research outputs over decision-making processes, decisions and practices. Some of the factors that are perceived to be impact-enhancers are stakeholder **ownership** over research processes and outcomes, stakeholder **empowerment** and greater **accountability** (Dyer *et al.* 2014, Reed *et al.* 2014).

There is however no blueprint in how to achieve stakeholder participation successfully and proficiently (Bracken *et al.* 2014). Stakeholder participation can take various forms and there exist a few typologies of participation (summed up in table 1 of Reed 2008):

- Typology based on **different degrees of participation on a continuum, referred to as a “ladder”** - term coined by Arnstein in 1969 - **or a “wheel” of participation** (Davidson 1998). The original ladder of citizen participation is represented in Figure 4. The ladder has several variants conceptualised in slightly different ways depending on specific study context and what is emphasised, but the bottom line remains the same. A variant by Biggs (1989) details four modes of participation outlining different degrees of power sharing: contractual, consultative, collaborative and collegiate (Blackstock *et al.* 2007). The original “wheel” variant is presented in Figure 5. Stakeholders participation can range from passive involvement as research subjects (e.g. a respondent to survey, interviewed, observed), participation in events, being a member of a steering or advisory group, a funder where research is commissioned, or a project partner where the stakeholder may just be interested in the academic results, a partner who supplies resource (money, time, data) or a partner where the research is devised through negotiation (Bracken *et al.* 2014).

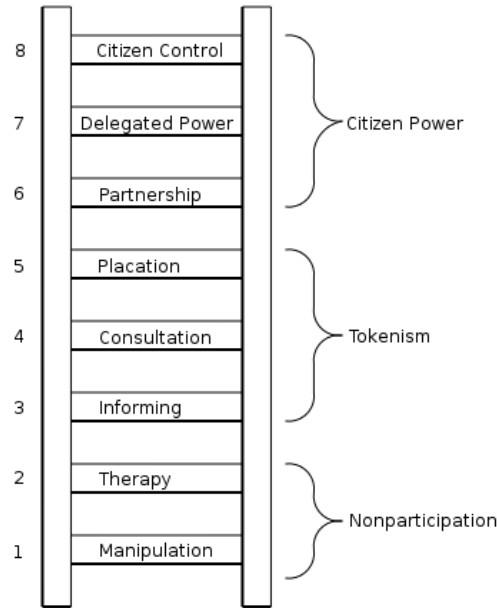


Figure 4: Eight rungs on the ladder of citizen participation (Arnstein 1969)

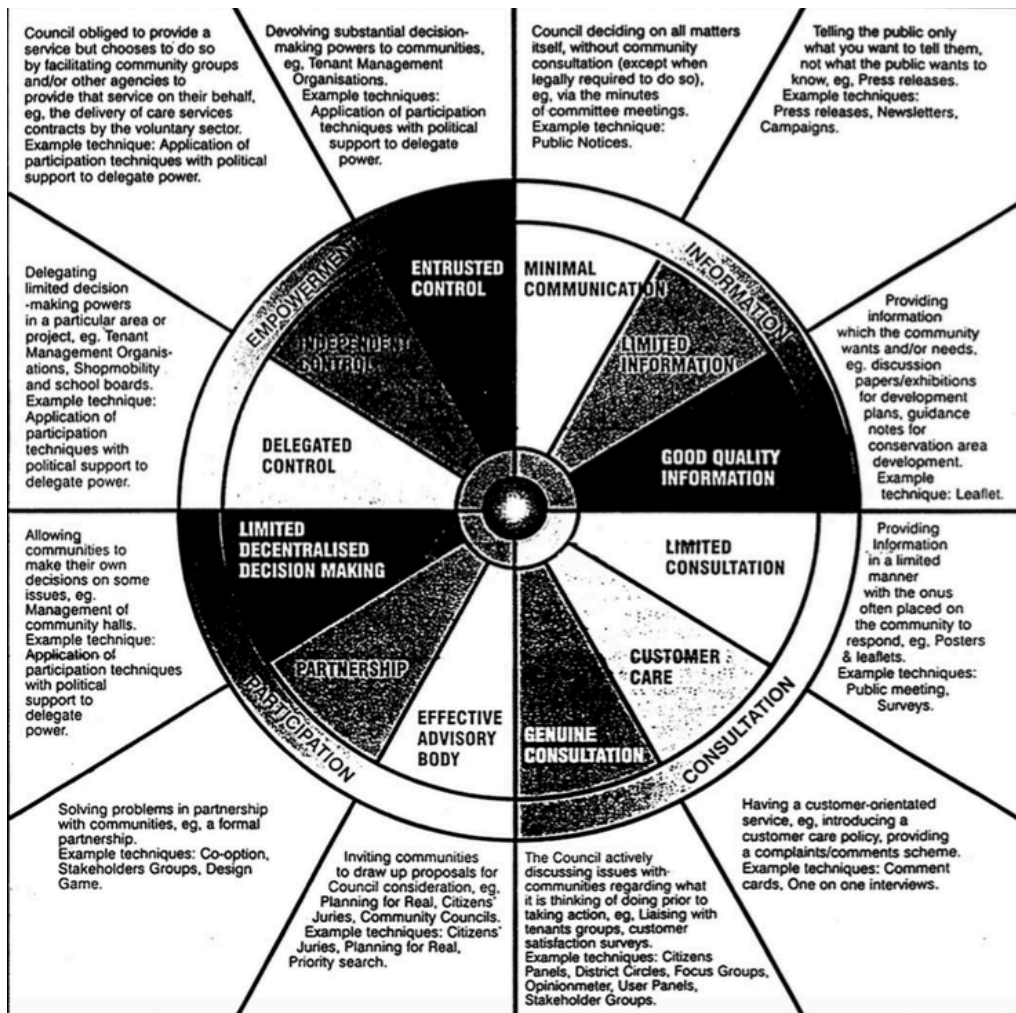


Figure 5: Wheel of participation (Davidson 1998, p.15)

- Typology based on **the nature of participation according to the direction of communication flows** – distinguishing between “communication” of information to passive recipients, “consultation” of participants for information gathering, and “participation” i.e. two-way communication between participants and organisers where information is exchanged in some sort of dialogue or negotiation (Reed 2008).
- Typology based on **a theoretical basis**, essentially distinguishing between normative (people have the right to participate and should do so) and/or pragmatic participation (with participation seen as a means to delivery of higher quality decisions) (Reed 2008).
- Typology based on **the objectives for which participation is used** – for example (Reed 2008):
 - research-driven vs. development-driven,
 - planner-centred vs people-centered,
 - “diagnostic and informing”, “co-learning” or “co-management” methods,
 - “inform”; “design active engagement processes”; “consult”; “deliver implementation of management plans”; or “monitor and learn from the effectiveness of participatory practice”.

A note on level of participation:
Higher or lower levels of stakeholder participation may be appropriate depending on the envisaged nature and objective of participation as well as level of stakeholder capacity.

Table 1 lists a few options for choosing different levels of stakeholder involvement in research processes (Blackstock *et al.* 2007). A more detailed version can be found in Hage *et al.* (2010, table 1).

Table 1: Guidance on choosing different levels of public involvement in research processes (adapted from Blackstock *et al.* 2007, Table 2 p728)

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| <i>Inform when</i> | Factual information is needed but the decision is effectively made |
| <i>Consult when</i> | The purpose is to listen and get information (when decisions are being shaped and information could improve them) |
| <i>Co-decide when</i> | Two way information is needed because individuals and groups have an interest in and/or are affected by outcomes and there is still an opportunity to influence the final outcome |
| <i>Delegate when</i> | Stakeholders have capacity, opportunity and influence to shape to policy that affects them |
| <i>Support when</i> | Institutions want to enable and have agreement to implement solutions by stakeholders, stakeholders have capacity and have agreed to take up the challenge to developing solutions |

Stakeholder motivation to participate and contribute to a research process

Stakeholders have a range of motivations to participate to research processes. A non-exhaustive list includes (Bracken *et al.* 2014):

- **increasing their level of knowledge**, for its own sake or around a particular issue,
- **widening their information base** for use in their professional or personal lives and **increase their credibility**,
- **improving understandings** of other people's perspectives to find solutions to complex, real world problems, through negotiation processes and working iteratively,
- **having their voices heard** as part of research processes that are open, based on dialogue, flexible, iterative, where there are multiple measures of success and multiple types of tangible and intangible benefits,
- **contributing to improve research relevance and quality** for increased impact on stakeholder practices or knowledge

Identifying the reasons behind stakeholder participation and their expectations over benefits they could derive from such participation early on in the process can facilitate successful engagement for knowledge sharing and co-creation of solutions.

Principles for the practice of knowledge exchange in environmental management

Knowledge and research recommendations on their own are very often not capable of inducing change. How many reports and guides are left on office shelves to gather dust rather than being effectively used for design and adoption of evidence-informed practices or policies by decision-makers?

The following principles have been conceptualised by Reed *et al.* (2014) for effective practice of knowledge exchange as part of a research process. Application of these 5 principles should help increase the relevance, legitimacy and accessibility of the knowledge produced and its actual use by decision-makers to inform their decisions. The following principles should be taken into account in relation to the specific objectives of stakeholder participation:

1. **Design:** why knowledge exchange is needed and how it can be embedded into the research process should be identified during the design stage of the research process. This should include a clear statement of intended outcomes and assumptions behind planned activities, with leeway for tailoring activities and revising intended outcomes following stakeholder inputs. This principle is crucial if the intention of the stakeholder participation is to build ownership of the research process and reciprocal trust between stakeholders and researchers, and between different stakeholders. Inclusion of highly skilled facilitation throughout the engagement process also needs to be

considered at this stage. Securing sufficient funding for knowledge exchange and follow up iterative processes to build impact needs to be thought of from the start of the research design process. Not everything may be feasible under available resources (human and financial resources in particular), with decisions over trade offs to be made explicit.

2. **Represent:** Stakeholders should be identified in a systematic way so that all relevant stakeholders are identified and their behaviours, interests, agendas, and possible influence on decision-making considered as early as possible in the research process. This can be done through the use of various techniques such as stakeholder analysis, stakeholder mapping, and interest-influence matrices. Three types of stakeholders should be paid attention to: those who have decision-making power, those who can disseminate the findings widely and effectively (sometimes called 'knowledge brokers'), and those who are not always included or taken into consideration (marginalised) in decision-making processes. Depending on the specific stakeholder participation objectives, stakeholders who should or can be represented in the research process should be identified very clearly. Stakeholder representation can be ensured through financial compensation but this leads to ethical concerns that need to be openly discussed. Ethical concerns over intellectual property rights, recording and attribution of comments, access to preliminary findings prior to publication in peer-reviewed journals and the creation of unrealistic expectations also need to be openly discussed as early as possible in the research and stakeholder engagement process so as to ensure clarity over processes and outcomes and build mutual trust between the different parties involved in the engagement process.
3. **Engage:** This principle involves the creation of a 'safe space' for open, honest interaction on an equal footing within the group of researchers and stakeholders, with actual listening and understanding of other perspectives, sharing of knowledge and skills, and exploring of new ideas. Effective communication from researchers over processes and expected outcomes is essential as well as good communication between stakeholders⁶.
4. **Generate impact:** Outputs from the research and engagement process that stakeholders potentially find useful include the publication of the knowledge co-created by researchers and stakeholders in synthesis reports, briefings, and the provision of access to useful data, models and expertise that stakeholders did not have prior to the research. Communication over uncertainties and risk to decision-makers should be considered carefully if they are to be conveyed effectively. Shorter-term contribution needs should be clearly identified for timely provision of information for decision-making -

⁶ Some pointers for effective communication will be covered in the course script in more details in week 4.

e.g. coinciding with policy or legislation review cycles – in addition to an iterative stakeholder engagement process.

5. **Reflect and sustain:** We can always do better and should aim for improvement over time! Self-reflection, intake of feedback, discussion with peers and stakeholders can help improve knowledge exchange practices to generate outcomes that are truly valued by stakeholders and consider ethical implications very seriously.

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2nd Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) - ELD Initiative

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‘Options and pathways for action: Stakeholder Engagement’

ELD MOOC 2015 Week 3
May 18-24

Basics of stakeholder analysis

Dr Emmanuelle Quillérou

Stakeholder analysis

Stakeholder analysis is a fairly loose concept and can take very different shapes and forms. It can be disconcerting to see how different resources available on stakeholder analysis can be and know which one to choose faced with such variety. There is no unique answer unfortunately. The below aims to provide a possible guide (not a ‘blueprint’!) to help you set up and structure your own stakeholder analysis.

A review by Reed *et al.* (2009) has defined stakeholder analysis as a process that:

- i) defines aspects of a social and/or natural system affected by a decision or action,
- ii) identifies individuals and groups who are affected by or can affect those parts of the system (this may include non-human and non-living entities and future generations); and
- iii) prioritises these individuals and groups for involvement in the decision-making process.

Stakeholder analysis can help effectively involve relevant stakeholders in research and/or decision-making processes through providing an understanding who has a stake in the social and/or natural system affected by the decision or action, and through understanding the nature of their claims and inter-relationships with each other. Stakeholder analysis can sometimes be used with the objective to increase the probability of success of projects through enhancing the transparency and equity of decision-making in those projects (Reed *et al.* 2009). However, stakeholder analysis can also have adverse effects such as increased or new conflicts between stakeholder interests, or a lack of objectivity depending on perspectives of those

conducting the analysis and expected outcomes. Ideally, stakeholder analysis should be conducted in a systematic, critical, and sensitive approach that considers the dynamic nature of stakeholder needs, priorities and interests throughout an engagement process (Reed *et al.* 2009).

Stakeholder analysis can have very different objectives depending on the field of application (Reed *et al.* 2009). For example, business management uses stakeholder analysis to mobilise, neutralise or defeat stakeholders in order to meet the strategic objectives of firms. Policy, development, and natural resource management use stakeholder analysis as a means to empower marginal stakeholders to have some influence within decision-making processes. Political science uses stakeholder analysis as a means to work more effectively with stakeholders, facilitate transparent implementation of decisions or objectives, understand the policy context, and assess the feasibility of future policy options.

A wide variety of tools and approaches have been used for stakeholder analysis in the fields of business, policy, development, and natural resource management for multiple contexts. These have been categorised as methods used for (Reed *et al.* 2009):

- i) identifying stakeholders;
- ii) differentiating between and categorising stakeholders; and
- iii) investigating relationships between stakeholders.

Identification of stakeholders

Stakeholder engagement processes bring together researchers and stakeholders, in particular when aiming to co-generate solutions that integrate multiple forms of knowledge, in which researchers as well as stakeholders can take a role.

The identification of stakeholders relies on a clear definition of what constitutes a **legitimate and rightful stake**, and the debate around whether to consider stakeholder **legitimacy or influence** (Reed *et al.* 2009). Stakeholder analysis provides a diverse range of criteria for inclusion of individuals and groups. Such criteria include notions of **who or what** affects or is affected by an organisation's activity (with for instance the use of the "rainbow diagram" designed by Chevalier and Buckles 2008, cited in Reed *et al.* 2009); **theories** of national capital investment; **externalities**; and **property rights**.

Issues that may need to be considered critically are linked to how diverse stakeholders are, how inclusive the process needs to be (e.g., including of those who are "stake-less" if relevant to achieve the objective of the process), the stakeholder structure, how legitimate stakeholder are (Aaltonen and Kreutz 2009, Reed *et al.* 2009). Choices around these issues need to be very clearly stated, and critically discussed and justified when possible. The main methods used for stakeholder

identification are focus groups (brainstorming sessions, selected experts), semi-structured interviews, and 'snowball sampling' where identified stakeholders are asked to identify others (Aaltonen and Kreutz 2009, Reed *et al.* 2009).

Academic researchers and research institutes are not usually considered stakeholders. In the fields of business, policy, development, and natural resource management, researchers tend to be working "at the periphery" and not so much influencing or influenced by an organisation's activity in their professional lives. As such they constitute a relatively 'neutral' party. As an example, the main types of stakeholders in relation to land management identified by the ELD Initiative are:

- **Government i.e. political decision makers**, including national (ministries, national agencies) and sub-national government authorities and agencies;
- **Private businesses**, including multinationals and other big corporations, small and medium enterprises, farmers and smallholders;
- **Civil Society**: international development and environmental non-governmental organisations (NGOs), local communities and civil society bodies, professional groups

Each of these groups is not necessarily homogeneous and can be subject to wide internal differences. For example, stakeholders from the private sector can have very different structures, interests, modes of operations, etc. A small subsistence farmer will be very different from a big international corporation. A second example is the wide variation in what is referred to as "community". "Community" does not have a set definition, sometimes referring to geographically-bound populations, sometimes to groups that utilise shared practices or social norms, or sometimes to an extent of shared cultural identities (Agrawal and Gibson 1999, cited by Dyer *et al.* 2014).

This classification of main stakeholder types can provide a basic starting point to set up focus groups, semi-structured interviews or 'snowball sampling' so as to identify all potential stakeholders. The presentation by Stacey Noel from the 2014 ELD MOOC (ELD MOOC live session II, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-RSGdhpVhnM>) provides a really good illustration of actual stakeholders behind for each of these general stakeholder types for the Economics of Land Degradation (ELD) Initiative. You are strongly encouraged to watch it!

Differentiating between stakeholders, categorising stakeholders, and stakeholder "mapping"

There are different methods, which may be called different names depending on the field they are taken from, available for categorising identified stakeholders. The below does not aim to provide an exhaustive overview of all possible methods, but rather give a feel for different methods available to you. Choices of method(s) need to be very clearly stated, and critically discussed and justified when possible.

Possible methods for categorising identified stakeholders are (Reed *et al.* 2009):

- **Interest-influence matrices**, an analytical categorisation method (top-down). Stakeholders are placed on a matrix according to their relative interest in and influence over the issue under consideration (see Figure 6 for an example) (Aaltonen and Kreutz 2009, Reed *et al.* 2009).
- **Radical transactiveness**, an analytical categorisation method (top-down), which consists in snowball sampling to identify fringe stakeholders and development of strategies to address their concerns (Reed *et al.* 2009).
- **Stakeholder-led stakeholder categorisation**, a reconstructive categorisation method (bottom-up) where stakeholders create stakeholder categories and categorise other stakeholders (Reed *et al.* 2009).
- **Q methodology**, a reconstructive categorisation method (bottom-up) which is based on stakeholders sorting statements drawn from a concourse according to how much they agree with them, and analysis allowing for social discourses to be identified (Reed *et al.* 2009).

Stakeholder “mapping” involves representing the different stakeholders into a diagram and visually separate them into different groups. An example of “mapped” stakeholder for the **interest-influence matrix** is provided in Figure 6.

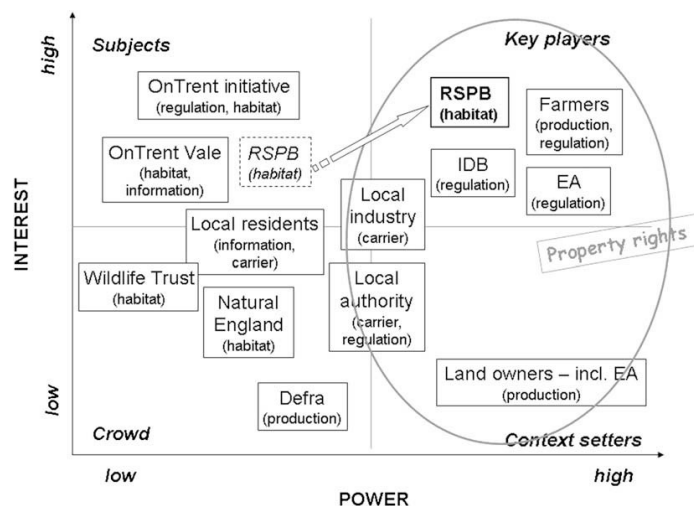


Figure 6: Interest-influence matrix for the Integrated Management of Floodplains project part of the Rural Economy and Land Use Programme (RELU) showing stakeholders with property rights (Reed *et al.* 2009).

Venn diagrams (i.e. circles with more or less overlap between them) may be used with stakeholders to explore the extent to which the characteristics of different groups overlap (Reed *et al.* 2009). An example of a Venn diagram is shown in Figure 7.

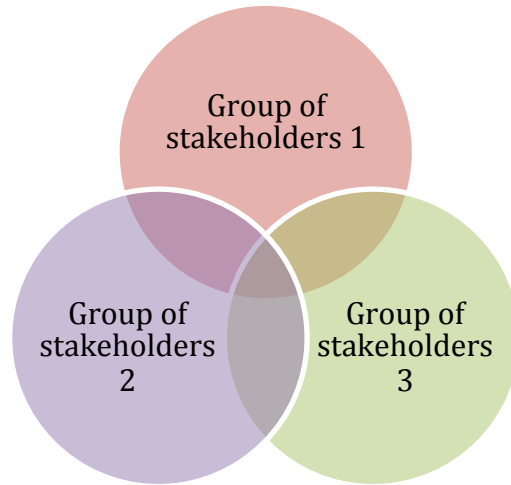


Figure 7: Venn diagram with 3 stakeholder groups and their overlap

The “**4Rs**” tool can also help inform the analysis of the relationships between stakeholders by splitting stakeholder roles into **R**ights, **R**esponsibilities and **R**evenues (benefits), and then assessing the **R**elationship between these roles (Reed *et al.* 2009). A possible template is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Possible 4Rs tool template

| Stakeholder | Rights | Responsibilities | Revenues (benefits) | Relationship |
|--------------------|---------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

Investigating relationships between stakeholders

There are different methods available for identifying relationships between stakeholders. The below summarises those detailed in Reed *et al.* (2009). There may be other methods available that could be relevant, which you are free to explore!

- **Actor-linkage matrices:** it is a method that is simple to use and flexible. It amounts to setting up a table (or matrix) with all stakeholders listed and describing the interrelations between them in the table (Table 3). Interrelations can for instance be characterised as “conflict”, “complementary”, or “cooperation”. This method can be used with a pen and paper, and does not require the use of a computer which is a major advantage in environment where computer availability is limited.

Table 3: Structure of an actor-linkage matrix

| | Stakeholder 1 | Stakeholder 2 | Stakeholder 3 | ... |
|---------------|--|--|--|-----|
| Stakeholder 1 | (same) | Key words describing interrelations between ←stakeholder 1 and stakeholder 2↑ e.g., “conflict”, “complementary”, or “cooperation” | Key words describing interrelations between ←stakeholder 1 and stakeholder 3↑ e.g., “conflict”, “complementary”, or “cooperation” | |
| Stakeholder 2 | Key words describing interrelations between ←stakeholder 2 and stakeholder 1 e.g., “conflict”, “complementary”, or “cooperation” | (same) | Key words describing interrelations between ←stakeholder 2 and stakeholder 3↑ e.g., “conflict”, “complementary”, or “cooperation” | |
| Stakeholder 3 | Key words describing interrelations between ←stakeholder 3 and stakeholder 1↑ e.g., “conflict”, “complementary”, or “cooperation” | Key words describing interrelations between ←stakeholder 3 and stakeholder 2↑ e.g., “conflict”, “complementary”, or “cooperation” | (same) | |
| ... | | | | ... |

- Social Network Analysis:** it is a method providing insights into patterns of communication, trust and influence between actors in social networks. Similar to the actor-linkage matrix, it is structured as a table of stakeholders with links between them, but this time coded by numbers (0/1) or with numbers reflecting the strength of their relationship (Table 4). A series of tables can be produced, each table representing a unique relation, such as communication, friendship, conflict, trust. The result of social network analysis is often represented as a social network map.

Table 4: Structure of a social network analysis for one unique relation (e.g., communication)

| | Stakeholder 1 | Stakeholder 2 | Stakeholder 3 | ... |
|----------------------|---|---|---|------------|
| Stakeholder 1 | (same) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence/absence of link (1/0), or • Strength of link between ← stakeholder 1 and stakeholder 2 ↑ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence/absence of link (1/0), or • Strength of link between ← stakeholder 1 and stakeholder 3 ↑ | |
| Stakeholder 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence/absence of link (1/0), or • Strength of link between ← stakeholder 2 and stakeholder 1 | (same) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence/absence of link (1/0), or • Strength of link between ← stakeholder 2 and stakeholder 3 ↑ | |
| Stakeholder 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence/absence of link (1/0), or • Strength of link between ← stakeholder 3 and stakeholder 1 ↑ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence/absence of link (1/0), or • Strength of link between ← stakeholder 3 and stakeholder 2 ↑ | (same) | |
| ... | | | | |

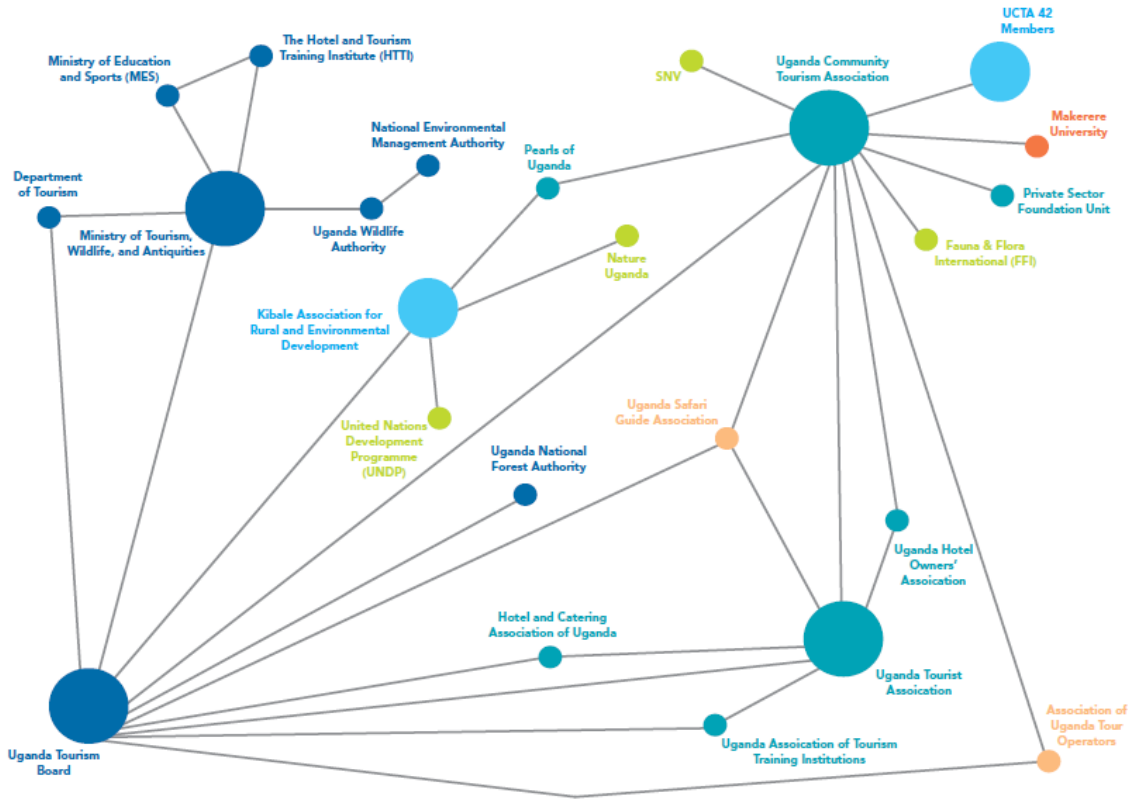


FIGURE 2: SOCIAL NETWORK MAP OF ECOTOURISM ACTORS IN UGANDA (MICROSOFT EXCEL AND NODEXL ADD-ON)

● = NGO AND INTER-GOVERNMENT. ● = GOVERNMENT. ● = EDUCATION. ● = PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS. ● = TRADE ASSOCIATIONS. ● = BUSINESS.

Figure 8: Example of a social network map of ecotourism actors in Uganda built from a social network analysis (UNU-INWEH forthcoming)

- Knowledge Mapping:** this is a method that helps analyse the information content available across the different stakeholders, across time and across locations, identify the information flows, bottlenecks and latent knowledge, locating and explaining knowledge diffusion and seepage. Knowledge mapping can provide a basis for building up mutual understanding within the stakeholder group. Knowledge mapping can inform the grouping of stakeholders for more effective learning promotion, especially for fostering innovation and competitive advantage. This method can be used in conjunction with social network analysis to derive more in-depth insights and understanding.

Prioritisation of stakeholders for involvement in stakeholder engagement

It is sometimes not feasible to include all possible stakeholder or representatives. It may, in some cases, not be relevant to include all possible stakeholders depending on what the objective of the engagement process is. Targeting important “knowledge brokers” for priority involvement may be crucial to success of participatory processes (Reed *et al.* 2009).

Setting an order of priority for involvement of stakeholders may in such cases be needed. Such an order of priority can be established in collaboration with some of the stakeholders. For example, consultation with traditional authorities (one type of stakeholder) in the Democratic Republic of Congo have led to the identification of specific communities for involvement in a sustainable livelihood project (Dyer *et al.* 2014). An alternative order of priority can be established when stakeholder categories based on interest–influence are relevant using the interest-influence matrix for stakeholder inclusion from the “map” of stakeholders (Reed *et al.* 2009). Another alternative order of priority is to involve stakeholders in academic projects based on the “matter of concern”, rather than pre-determined “types” of stakeholder or their associated knowledge and expertise (Dyer *et al.* 2014).

A drawback from prioritisation is that it may lead to marginalising specific stakeholders and groups, and it may therefore not be appropriate to prioritise stakeholders for involvement in all projects.

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'Options and pathways for action: Stakeholder Engagement'

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May 25-31

Setting up effective communication

Dr Emmanuelle Quill rou



  Jean-Paul David

Effective communication

Effective communication has been stressed as essential to successful and mutually beneficial stakeholder engagement in research processes. Anyone who has played Chinese whispers knows how easy it is for communication to break down when information is relayed through a chain of people. But communication problems may arise between just 2 people. Communication problems are often linked to a change in meaning between what a person thinks and what the other person understands. The communication process is perhaps best deconstructed by the following citation:

Between what I think,
what I mean,
what I think I am saying,
what I say,
what you want to hear,
what you hear,
what you think you understand,
what you want to understand, and
what you understand,
there are at least 9 possibilities for misunderstanding.
But let's try anyway.

(translated from the French⁷, citation attributed to Bernard Werber, *Nouvelle Encyclopédie du Savoir Relatif et Absolu*, 2009, p.7).

Communicating effectively boils down to ensuring that what people understand from you (9th step) corresponds to what you think (1st step). It also entails that there is some willingness on both sides to understand one another. A good communication facilitator is capable of “translating” what one person says to ensure it is understood in the way it was meant to by the person(s) it is intended for.

The below details *some* of the factors that can ensure effective communication in stakeholder engagement processes. These may sometimes feel “too obvious” but they are in practice often forgotten about, causing ineffective communication. The below does not really detail some of the more general factors and skills required for ‘good’ communication. If you are interested in going further, you check look through the many online sources with advice on how to improve communication in general to complement the few points outlined below.

⁷ Original citation: “*Entre ce que je pense, ce que je veux dire, ce que je crois dire, ce que je dis, ce que vous voulez entendre, ce que vous entendez, ce que vous croyez en comprendre, ce que vous voulez comprendre, et ce que vous comprenez, il y a au moins neuf possibilités de ne pas se comprendre. Mais, essayons quand même.*”

A few pointers on *how* to foster effective dialogue and mutual understanding throughout the engagement process

- **Communicate around areas of common interest**

Making people communicate around areas of common interest can create an incentive for them to be more engaged in the process and communicate their ideas and opinions. Creating opportunities for direct communication could help find out what such common interest are and how some of the perspectives differ, as was done in Falk *et al.* (2010):

“[Various] opportunities for direct communication allowed focus on the special fields of interest of the communication partners and facilitated the adjustment of the “language” to suit the needs of the target groups (e.g. government, NGO, farmer, donors)” (Falk *et al.* 2010, emphasis added).

A stakeholder is, literally, someone with something at stake now or in the future, in particular under changing circumstances. For example, stakeholders of the Economics of Land Degradation (ELD) Initiative include people or groups with an interest in land, land management and decisions around land management.

It is usually understood that stakeholders engaged in a stakeholder engagement process have areas of common interest because of the nature of the process itself. This is often implicit in the documents produced (such as Said *et al.* 2009, Falk *et al.* 2010) Making sure that people involved in the stakeholder engagement process have some common interests should therefore be a key element of a stakeholder engagement plan. The level of overlap between interests of different stakeholders will vary depending on the purpose of the engagement process, the stakeholders involved, whether participation to the process is voluntary or compulsory, the issues discussed etc.

Areas of common interest need to make sense to stakeholders. This sometimes requires to adapt communication styles to different perspectives and express general concepts within a local context. As an example, Stringer *et al.* (2014) showed that broad-scale adoption of sustainable land management technologies can be facilitated by expressing de-contextualized, scientific generalisations in a local context.

Having areas of common interest do not necessarily imply that everyone has the same level of interest: some stakeholders may have minimal interest while others have very strong interest. No everyone needs to be in agreement and there may be conflicting views over the course of action to be taken, but this is a different problem related to facilitation of the engagement process!

- **Communicate in a language understood by all**

This could be quite literal in international initiatives and development projects involving people with different mother tongues. Some finer nuances of the points expressed and made can easily get lost in translation. Even when people speak the same language, there could still be differences in “language” used: we are not always expressing the same ideas in the same way nor with the same words as other people would. This difference in semantics stems from differences in ethnicities, dialects, cultures, social values, disciplinary background, experience, local differences, etc.

“[Various] opportunities for direct communication allowed focus on the special fields of interest of the communication partners and **facilitated the adjustment of the “language” to suit the needs of the target groups (e.g. government, NGO, farmer, donors)”** (Falk *et al.* 2010, emphasis added).

Making sure that everyone speaks the same language from the start of the engagement process is often key to ensuring good communication throughout. A process facilitator can rephrase points made and expressed opinions in a systematic manner using a common language, and check with participants on an ongoing basis whether the rephrasing captures accurately what they mean. It is also possible for the facilitator to iteratively ask participants whether the language established at the beginning of the process is still appropriate at different stages of the stakeholder engagement process to ensure the language used remains appropriate throughout (ongoing language “validation” process). It is very common and perfectly legitimate to have discussions over definitions, words and semantics during such processes!

- **Communicate in a format accessible to all**

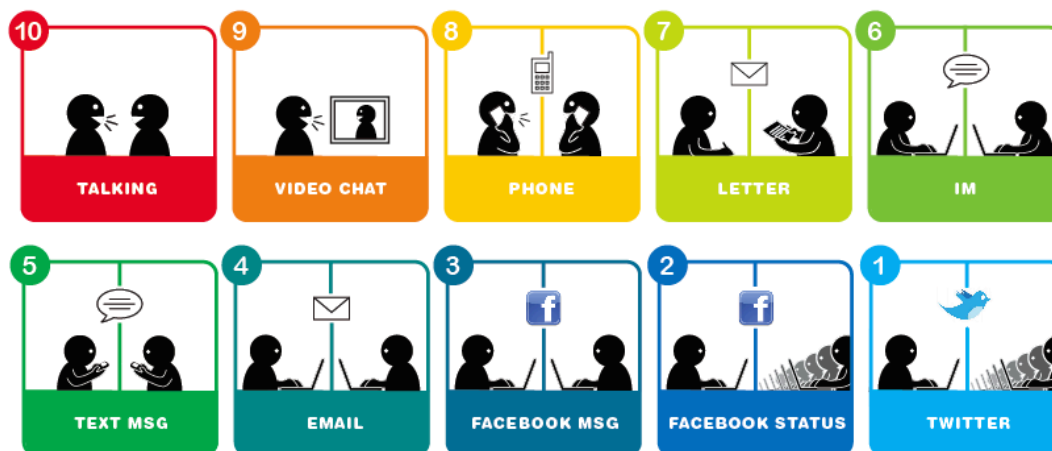


Figure 9: 10 levels of intimacy in today's communication. Source: <http://freshtightdesigns.com/10-levels-of-intimacy-in-todays-communication/>

Communication can be written, oral or non-verbal (e.g., body language). It can take a range of different forms such as written reports and articles, letters, emails, pictures, videos, drawings, graphics, etc. Each form of communication relies on different media for communication, including traditional forms of communication such as talking and letters, and forms of communications based on information and communication technologies (phone and Internet, Figure 9).

It is very common for development projects and initiatives to involve illiterate stakeholders. Illiterate stakeholders can have very valid and very valuable knowledge but can easily feel marginalised, excluded and disempowered in processes based on reading and writing (Reed 2008, Reed *et al.* 2013). Using communication formats that are not suited to every stakeholder can undermine the successful co-generation of outputs through discussions where everyone's inputs are considered. It is therefore important to think about potential alternative media and formats of communication when designing a stakeholder engagement plan so as to adapt more easily to stakeholders actually involved.

As an example, in Falk *et al.* (2010), participatory production of films provided a platform for local resource-users, government officials, traditional authorities, and NGOs to discuss, negotiate, and communicate critical biodiversity-related management challenges. Dougill *et al.* (2006, cited by Reed 2008) chose to replace use structured discussion rather than the multi-criteria evaluation (also called multiple-criteria decision analysis) they had originally planned to avoid excluding illiterate participants from the discussions.

The ELD Initiative has released a movie "The Value of Soil" to explain what the initiative is about and how it works (<https://youtu.be/fH0wZSO705E>). This movie is available in different languages and has been used as a short introduction to the Initiative to initiate discussions with potential partners.

- **Ensure everyone listens to, understands and respects what everyone else is saying**

Stakeholders usually appreciate the opportunity to contribute traditional beliefs alongside scientific findings and the recognition of the validity of all types of knowledge - formally codified or not - held by all kinds of experts (Stringer *et al.* 2014). Rules for communication can be set collaboratively or not, before or at the start of the discussion process. These rules should be set so as to create a space where participants can express themselves without feeling pressured and where they know their opinion is being listened to and respected. Respect for their opinions does not mean that everyone has to agree on the same ideas, but can "agree to disagree".

It is good to identify a few rules of communication at the early stages of the stakeholder engagement process. In addition, it could be helpful to involve

experienced and highly skilled facilitators to ensure good communication (Reed *et al.* 2014). It can be useful to think about a few people to act as possible facilitators when designing the stakeholder engagement process.

Timely communication: a few options on when to communicate what

Communication to participants about how processes will unfold can be very good but sometimes too early or too late to be retained by participants. Timely communication can be critical to ensuring smooth processes. Ongoing sustained communication has been stressed as key to avoid “stakeholder fatigue” and stakeholder frustration with participatory research (Reed 2008, Wesselink *et al.* 2011, Bracken *et al.* 2014).

- **Communication at the start of the engagement process**

The start of the engagement process is a good time to make explicit the discussion context, purpose, envisaged process to promote positive and constructive discussion and communication allowing for disagreements and questions from participants, envisaged level of involvement, stakeholder roles and the nature of potential contributions that would be expected from them, and managing participant expectations (Jahn *et al.* 2012, Bracken *et al.* 2014, Dyer *et al.* 2014, Reed *et al.* 2014). This is also the time to provide participants with basic information not only over activities and timelines of the process, but also explain clearly key issues and terms to help launch the discussions. Such basic information does not need to be prescriptive but can remain flexible to incorporate participant inputs and ensure ownership over the process and co-created outputs.

- **Communication during the engagement process**

During the engagement process, keeping an open mind and allowing for flexibility has been identified as essential to maintaining communication throughout the process (Bracken *et al.* 2014, Reed *et al.* 2014). Good communication can, when combined with good facilitation, help maintain a level of interpersonal trust between participants, thereby reducing the impact of power struggles, elite capture and conflicting interests between participants over the discussions (outlined as potentially problematic by Dyer *et al.* 2014).

- **Communication over what’s next:** follow up to the engagement process and the need to secure funding to maintain ongoing communication in the longer-term

Beside poor communication, the second main source of frustration to stakeholders involved in participatory research process is a lack of continuation of the engagement process beyond the original project timeframe (Bracken *et al.* 2014).

Maintaining discussion and interactions between various stakeholders in the longer term is a problem faced not just by participatory research projects but by any type of institution that has been set up to facilitate communication (e.g., knowledge-exchange hubs and other forms of knowledge exchange platforms). Discussions and interactions maintained in the longer term can help build up actual impact of the information co-generated through promotion of research outcomes more widely with different stakeholders.

To overcome this frustration, it should be made from the start very clear to all that the process will be terminated when funding runs out unless other sources of funding are secured before the end of the process (Bracken *et al.* 2014). Funding constraints over potential continuation made very clear to stakeholders involved in the process so as to avoid future disappointment. It is possible to initiate discussions over possible funding options to ensure continuation of such participatory projects and institutions beyond the originally envisaged timeframe. Because of the way funding is allocated, it is sometimes necessary to take one step at a time, from one funding cycle to the next, to ensure continuity of processes. Involvement of stakeholders in such discussions where they can themselves proactively think about what is to become of the group when the process ends can help share the fundraising burden. Such a thinking process may sometimes lead to the stakeholder group itself getting organised to maintain processes in the longer term.

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2nd Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) - ELD Initiative

May 5 – June 29, 2015

‘Options and pathways for action: Stakeholder Engagement’

ELD MOOC 2015 Week 5
June 1-7

Stakeholder engagement plan

Dr Emmanuelle Quill rou



  Jean-Paul David

Stakeholder plan outline

This week draws from material covered in the rest of the course (past and future) to outline one possible structure for a stakeholder engagement plan. The below is meant as a guide rather than a prescriptive blueprint: all elements should be thought of and weighed carefully depending on objectives, available capacity and funding, stakeholders, etc. You however need to be careful to ensure that all sections of your plan are linked together well without too much repetition. The plan should be a consistent whole rather than a catalog of points: you are trying to convince a donor to fund your stakeholder engagement process and your stakeholder to participate!

The stakeholder engagement plan is, as its name indicates, a plan and even the best laid plans tend to vary. Each stage should be made flexible enough so as to allow for adaptation depending on stakeholders' comments, feedback and inputs and unforeseen elements. One of the ways to build in some flexibility is establish and describe what your ideal plan is ('plan A'), then describe briefly what your option B (and possible C) would be if some of the conditions for your plan A to be feasible are missing. Having a flexible starting point or multiple possible starting points are often useful in initiating dialogue and discussions.

1. Stakeholder analysis and selection

Different methods and tools were outlined in the script for week 3, which could be used to structure this section of your stakeholder engagement plan:

- (i) identifying stakeholders (justifying your identification methods and choices);
- (ii) differentiating between stakeholders, categorising stakeholders, and stakeholder "mapping" (clarifying methods used and why you chose them);
- (iii) investigating relationships between stakeholders (clarifying methods used and why you chose them); and
- (iv) whether you think you need to prioritise stakeholders for involvement in the stakeholder engagement and how you would go about setting up an order of priority

You should make explicit how you identify stakeholders, how diverse they are, whether you think they are 'legitimate' or not, how you differentiate between and categorise them, what the relationships between them are, and explain why you decide to include (or not!) stake-less people in the process. If you intend to use snowball sampling, how would you go about asking stakeholder for their inputs?

2. Material to prepare ahead of the discussion

This section should draw most of its inspiration from the scripts for weeks 2 and 4. This section should be set up so as to prepare the detailed explanation to be provided to stakeholders at the start of the engagement process, explaining the research project and process. In particular, you should include a description of the project objective and expected outputs and outcomes, and give an idea of you perceive this to be an area of interest to selected stakeholders (keeping in mind this perception will most likely be challenged when facing the stakeholders).

You will need to describe and justify how you choose the material you will present to the stakeholders. A brief description could cover the content of the material to be prepared (or even presentation of the material prepared as annexes), why you think such material is relevant to your identified stakeholders, the format it will be

prepared into (mode(s) or channel(s) of communication: written, picture, movie etc.) and why you think it is suited to your identified stakeholders. Last, you should give an idea of how much flexibility there is for revision or adaptation depending on stakeholders inputs, characteristics etc.

The following table may help you work through establishing a very basic description of the material you will prepare. Readings should help you develop a more refined description that you will be able to share in front of stakeholders.

| Content | Format (mode/channel of communication) | How suited to each identified stakeholder is it? | Built-in flexibility element |
|--|---|---|-------------------------------------|
| Description of project, with objective and expected outputs and outcomes | | | |
| Description of perceived area of interest | | | |
| Material to be prepared ahead of the engagement process | | | |
| ... | | | |

3. Description of engagement process and identification of facilitation needs

The previous section focused on the research aspects. This section focuses on the engagement process itself and should provide a brief description of how the engagement process is designed, with timeline and activities, the “rules” that will be applied during the engagement process to ensure everyone listens to, understands and respects what everyone else is saying, possible elements to build a common language, etc. Again you may want to describe but also justify why you think this would be an appropriate course of action and set out the constraints around expected production of outputs (e.g., end of funding, major policy discussion coming

up, etc.). You must keep in mind that some of the engagement process may involve adjusting the timeframe and planned activities following discussion with stakeholders. You need to clarify how much flexibility there is and outlines a few options to make the engagement process flexible and adaptable to stakeholder inputs.

You should also state explicitly your facilitation needs in terms of whether you need highly skilled facilitator throughout the process and what kind of person you would be looking for (ideally having a couple of identified people in mind already).

In addition, you may want to create a combined timeline of the research process and engagement process to outline how they relate to one another:

| Date / duration (+ flexibility) | Research process (objective, expected output deadlines, etc.) | Engagement process (discussion and activities) |
|--|---|--|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

4. Measures of success

These will be covered in more details in week 7. You need to include measures of success over both the research process and the engagement process, for the processes as well as their outcomes, from the perspective of researchers and stakeholders (separately or together). You need to state whether these will be jointly established through discussion or if they are to be unilaterally set up before the start of the engagement process.

5. Sources of funding for process and follow-up funding opportunities

You ideally need to describe the sources of funding secured for the engagement process, and a few possible options for follow up funding and how likely they are to materialise. You could clarify whose responsibility it is, between researchers and stakeholders, to secure follow up funding. You need to state whether this will be discussed with the stakeholders as part of the engagement process.

6. Budget table for engagement process

If you have not secured funding for your stakeholder engagement plan yet, you will need to add a budget table detailing resources you require to implement it. This can include: meeting room for discussions, stationary, flip charts, photographic and video equipment, facilitator, meals, facilitator salary, meals and per diem for participants, etc. this list is only meant to help you start thinking about your own requirements. Not all of these items need to be included necessarily in your stakeholder plan budget.

2nd Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) - ELD Initiative

May 5 – June 29, 2015

‘Options and pathways for action: Stakeholder Engagement’

ELD MOOC 2015 Week 6
June 8-14

Conditions and skills required for ‘successful’ stakeholder engagement

Dr Emmanuelle Quill rou, Dr Thomas Falk



  Nicolaz Le Corre

Conditions for ‘successful’ stakeholder engagement

Conditions for ‘successful’⁸ stakeholder engagement in research processes have been conceptualised by Reed *et al.* (2014) as 5 principles (detailed in the course script for week 2).

⁸ ‘Success’ in this case refers to successful establishment of dialogue between participants during a stakeholder engagement process. This is a very limited perspective on what constitutes ‘success’. Measures of success can be very diverse and a few examples are detailed more specifically in the course script for week 7.

Conditions for successful stakeholder engagement that are come up consistently as critical for success are those linked to timing and the nature of communication. They are included into the 5 principles but reiterated and highlighted a little further below.

In terms of **timing**, what is very often outlined in the literature is the time-sensitive nature of communication and the need to start off on 'the right foot'. Effective communication over research objectives, engagement processes and mobilisation of stakeholders around shared concerns and issues is very time-sensitive, particularly at early stages of the process (Bracken *et al.* 2014).

The **establishment of communication as a dialogue** is valued by many stakeholders, especially those engaging in research processes. Such dialogue helps setting up 'true' discussion process where expressed opinions and inputs taken into consideration for co-production of knowledge and research outputs. Establishment of such dialogue requires the **recognition and respect for all bodies of knowledge including non-academic and academic one** (Bracken *et al.* 2014). An attitude of interaction on equal footing should be self-evident. Stakeholders do not want to be lectured about their own practices in the 'real-world' by someone disconnected from their preoccupations and constraints. **Working iteratively and allowing for negotiation** further facilitate dialogue (Bracken *et al.* 2014). In addition, expectations and objectives should be clearly stated so as to ensure their complete transparency to all involved. A sense of collective ownership can be built and participants feel more confident to independently take research findings forward.

The second element to pay attention to is related to the **flexibility** in communication processes (Blackstock *et al.* 2007, Bracken *et al.* 2014). Flexibility within the research process helps make space for communication to happen: if everything has been determined in advance, there is little point for stakeholders to express their opinions over possible courses of action and their interest will likely (and understandably!) drop. Flexibility can be valuable for the definition of the issue at stake, how the research is framed, which methods and approaches are to be adopted, which outputs and deliverables are to be produced, the definition of what constitutes success and measures of success. Added to an iterative process of engagement, such flexibility provides necessary space to alter and evolve the set up and conduction of a research project.

Funding and planning frameworks of most research projects often limit possible flexibility. Calls for proposals are rarely open but rather focus on specific topics with outcomes, outputs, and activities identified before the research has started. An increasing number of research donors highlight their appreciation for stakeholder engagement but at the same time, they want and need to control how their money is spend (partly because of their own accountability). This is a real challenge for donors in setting future frameworks for research funding. One approach becoming increasingly popular is to give seed funding for processes jointly conducted by

researchers and stakeholders to identify research questions that could be pursued if research funding is made available afterwards. Some donors experiment with allowing flexible adoption of outputs and outcomes throughout a research process. It is very important to establish complete transparency over the space and the limits within which the research can be adjusted.

A note on flexibility:

Flexibility does not necessarily mean you do not need a starting point, but rather that you need to keep an open mind. You must be prepared to revise and even discard your starting point and other information prepared following on the feedback and inputs provided by stakeholders.

You may want to prepare several options of potential starting points before the discussions with the stakeholders start.

Effective engagement, timely and flexible communication have been highlighted as potentially reducing “**stakeholder fatigue**”. “Stakeholder fatigue” is a form of disengagement of stakeholders that often arises because of the ephemeral nature of knowledge and poor communication (Bracken *et al.* 2014).

Highly skilled discussion facilitator

Highly intensive stakeholder engagement processes often require highly skilled facilitation from the start of the research process Reed *et al.* (2014). A discussion facilitator needs to have excellent communication and interpersonal skills. He/She must be (Aaltonen and Kreutz 2009, Dyer *et al.* 2014):

- **Encouraging:** an ideal facilitator is non judgemental and ‘neutral’, showing respect for all opinions expressed by participants. An ideal facilitator can demonstrate the benefits of collaboration and added value of participation through regularly stressing successes and achievements and thereby giving participants a sense that they are making a difference.
- **Enabling:** an ideal facilitator displays strong assertive listening skills and assertive communication skills, negotiation and conflict resolution skills. An ideal facilitator remains independent and ‘neutral’ in situations of polarised debates between participants. Independence from opinions expressed is essential to gain trust and confidence of participants in leading a true discussion process and managing conflicts. An ideal facilitator can lead the engagement process to meet its objectives (agreed upon by all participants at the start of the process) and manage discussions to minimise open conflicts that could disrupt communication and lead to communication break down.

- **Exemplifying:** an ideal facilitator is a role-model for all participants involved in the stakeholder engagement process (researchers and stakeholders). An ideal facilitator is trusted by all participants in the stakeholder engagement process, respects all opinions in words as well as through body language.
- **Engaging:** an ideal facilitator has an inspiring personality that helps promote continued involvement, enthusiasm and motivation and maintain open and honest discussions between participants throughout the engagement process. An ideal facilitator should be able to make the process fun to its participants, through formal and informal activities and socialising.

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2nd Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) - ELD Initiative

May 5 – June 29, 2015

‘Options and pathways for action: Stakeholder Engagement’

ELD MOOC 2015 Week 7
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Measures of stakeholder engagement success

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  Jean-Paul David

The need for measures of success for evaluation and accountability

Evaluation of current and past practices and actions can be a valuable tool to improve from past experiences and inform future action. As for any action that is implemented, monitoring and evaluation of actions taken as part of processes can help identify what works and what does not, to what extent it has worked, and inform the compilation of lessons learnt and establishment of good practices. Evaluation can be one way for stakeholders to hold accountable the people responsible for leading and implementing actions.

The questions behind evaluation of stakeholder engagement processes are usually articulated around (Bracken *et al.* 2014, Dyer *et al.* 2014):

1. how successful the objective(s) and expected outcomes of the research, and
2. how successful the stakeholder engagement process itself has been.

Such questions require the setting up of measures of success to assess whether the engagement process has been successful or not. Measures of success for evaluation of stakeholder engagement are highly diverse. Not everyone judges success the same way and there are different types of successes depending on the objective(s) to be achieved (Figure 10 – getting big carrots or bigger shaded area could both be successes!). Success is something that is not always easy to “see” in the short term but could become more visible in the longer term.

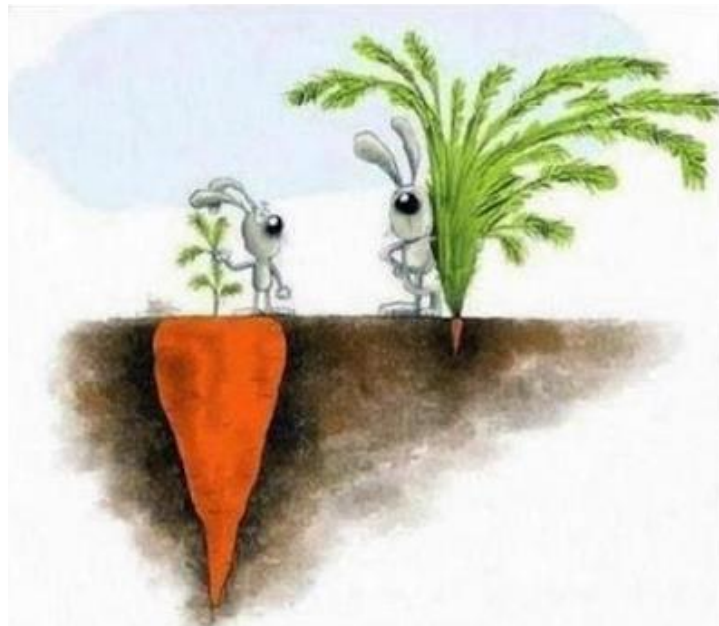


Figure 10: SUCCESS - It's not always what you see. <http://dontgiveupworld.com/motivational-cartoon-on-success/>

Success of participatory approaches tends to be measured through outcome-based indicators and criteria (in relation to question 1) or process-based indicators and criteria (question 2), or a combination of both. Such measures can be determined by academics leading the research process, stakeholders or both together. Some creative thinking by evaluators may be required to identify relevant measures of success to evaluate a given process and its outcomes.

Who defines the measures of success?

According to Neef and Neubert (2011), “research objective of a project may be derived primarily from theoretical scientific questions with little or no relation to real-world problems or, at the other end of the continuum, it may exclusively follow

stakeholders' priorities." Because of the different interests for participating in stakeholder engagement processes, measures of success (i.e. indicators and criteria⁹) can be defined very differently depending on the interests and expectations of the people defining or selecting the measures for evaluation (Bracken *et al.* 2014, Barkemeyer *et al.* 2015).

Academics may value success very differently depending on the type of research. Stakeholder engagement in basic research may for instance be more strongly driven by the idea to benefit from different bodies of knowledge. The outcomes of the research may increase more general knowledge with fewer opportunities for direct application. At the other end, adaptive research is mainly driven by stakeholder interests and the objectives of the academic and the stakeholder largely overlap. The more applied the research becomes the more important it is also to the academic how applicable, salient, relevant and useful the research is to its potential 'end-users'. It might be further relevant to assess to which extent the research and in particular the stakeholder engagement has influenced stakeholders' decision making. You should be aware that scientific publications are often critical career evaluation criteria for many academics, affecting their prospects to stay in the business.

For stakeholders, success is usually linked to their motivations for participation. It can be linked to tangible outputs (documents produced in the process, tools and technologies developed) as well as less tangible and longer-term outcomes such as increased communication between different stakeholders, knowledge accumulation and new understandings, greater confidence of stakeholders in their own knowledge and skills for expression and communication around issues in national or international debates. Eventually they would measure the value of the research on the basis of how strongly it served their major interests. This can strongly differ depending on the types of stakeholders as stakeholders and stakeholder groups can be extremely diverse. For instance, 'community' can refer to geographically-bound populations, groups that utilise shared practices or social norms, or can refer to the extent of shared cultural identities (Agrawal and Gibson 1999, cited by Dyer *et al.* 2014). Land user communities may be concerned about their long-term well-being, a private sector partner about making profit and a politician could be concerned about her prospects to be re-elected.

Between the extremes of the continuum described by Neef and Neubert (2010), academics and stakeholders jointly define measures of success. The definition of success and identification of measures of success can be collaboratively discussed at the start of the stakeholder engagement process. Such a discussion allows for measures of success to be chosen and established jointly by researchers and stakeholders so as to capture the range of interests of the different parties. In this process, it is very important to be aware of the interests of the different parties.

⁹ "Indicator" is the same as measure, but "criteria" is linked to the idea that we need to draw the line somewhere to make a decision.

It is critical that the research process remains as objective as possible for credibility of the results. It is crucial that all involved participants reach a mutual agreement to remain open to research results and not try to drive them according to their own interests. A research process with engagement with a private company should not automatically lead to the conclusion that the technology promoted by the company is the best one to achieve whatever societal goals. It must always be possible to reject research hypotheses on the basis of sound scientific methods even if it is against the interest of stakeholders.

Typology of evaluation indicators to measure success

Listing all possible evaluation indicators and criteria that have been used as measures of success for stakeholder engagement would be an impossible task. There are various typologies that can guide you and the stakeholders you are engaging with in thinking about how to best to capture some of the complexity of the engagement process. One typology is detailed below to provide an example of the types of indicators that can be used to measure success.

The following sections draw from Dyer *et al.* (2014) who categorise measures of success as outcome-based or process-based criteria. These categories are not mutually exclusive. Evaluation of success can draw from one or both categories. In real-life, it is not always easy to differentiate between outcome- and process-based indicators, with indicators that can belong to either one of these categories. Allocating indicators to one specific “type” is not so important, listing relevant indicators using the typology to be as inclusive and comprehensive as possible is. More examples of measures of success can be found in Blackstock *et al.* (2007, table 3), Said *et al.* (2009), Barkemeyer *et al.* (2015, table 1) with indicators linked to different aspects of stakeholder engagement and actions taken.

- **Outcome-based evaluation criteria**

Examples of outcome-based criteria include empowerment and ownership of the process and its outcomes; equity; trust; learning and information exchange; better accepted decisions; better quality decisions; fairness; consensus; aims and outcomes achieved; influence and impact of engagement on outcome; clear understanding of the project objectives (Dyer *et al.* 2014). These criteria are inherently subjective. They will be measured differently depending on specific research and stakeholder engagement objectives and on whose perspective is taken. Many of these criteria can be difficult to measure, especially more abstract ones (e.g., empowerment or process ownership). Stating very clearly how you operationalise the different concepts – that is how you define them to be able to measure them in practice – is often the key to good transparent evaluation.

It is possible to supplement the outcome-based criteria related to the level of stakeholder engagement achieved with criteria related to projects and actions

themselves. Criteria related to projects and actions themselves can reflect the extent to which the project has met its objectives (e.g. the level of improvement in livelihood conditions and the level of promotion of sustainable biodiversity management as detailed in Falk *et al.* 2010, Schmidt *et al.* 2013).

- **Process-based evaluation criteria**

Because of the complex and 'value laden' nature of participation, there are no standard methods for measuring participation and how successful it has been (Conrad *et al.* 2011, Dyer *et al.* 2014). This affects stakeholder engagement as well as other forms of participation. One possible way of getting around this is to use a combination of process-based criteria for evaluation of the engagement process itself.

Process-based evaluation criteria have to be adapted to the type and objectives of the research. Examples of process-based criteria include early engagement of communities in the process; identification, analysis and systematic representation of relevant stakeholders; continued engagement of communities throughout process; clear objectives set out and agreed by stakeholders at the start of the process; relevant methods chosen and tailored to the context, participants and level of engagement; highly skilled facilitation of the process; integration of local and scientific knowledge; open and meaningful information exchange and interaction with face-to-face discussion; transparency, trust and fairness; appropriate resource availability to enable participants to fulfil role; structured decision making process; cost-effectiveness; unbiased and independent management of the process; equality among stakeholders; competent management throughout process; access to project initiator throughout process; access to communities through appropriate structures (e.g. traditional authorities); flexibility in methods and an ability to respond to issues as they arise; agreed and locally appropriate definition of community.

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'Options and pathways for action: Stakeholder Engagement'

ELD MOOC 2015 Week 8

June 22-29

Selected projects for presentation and farewell - no script

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