Stakeholder Participation Guidance

Guidance to support stakeholder participation in design, implementation and assessment of policies and actions

May 2018

How to identify and map stakeholders

5. Identifying and Understanding Stakeholders

Effective stakeholder participation involves identifying all types of stakeholders and understanding their differences across many dimensions, with special attention to those that may be marginalised. Stakeholder mapping helps to understand the relative influence, impact or other characteristics of different stakeholder groups and to prioritise them with respect to different objectives and strategies for stakeholder participation.

Checklist of key recommendations

- Establish criteria for identifying stakeholders
- Establish a participatory process for identifying stakeholders and their legitimate representatives
- Follow a transparent and participatory process for understanding the interests, power and influence of different stakeholder groups, their stake in the policy and the way and extent to which they may be affected, as well as their expectations of the participation process
- Identify the opportunities and barriers affecting the participation of different stakeholders, particularly for women, indigenous peoples, youth and other groups that may be marginalised, and involve these stakeholders in identifying appropriate methods and approaches to enable their effective participation

5.1 Importance of identifying and understanding stakeholders

Identifying and understanding the full range of stakeholders relevant for the design, implementation and/or assessment of policies is important to:

- Identify all parties with an interest and/or stake in the policy who will be interested or have a right to participate
• Build an understanding of the power and influence of the stakeholders and how they can influence the policy, to help harness their support and avoid risks caused by lack of stakeholder support

• Promote inclusiveness and raise awareness among stakeholders about other stakeholders, and, in the case of divergent interests, the potential need to collaborate and compromise to find a solution that is fair to all parties

• Enhance understanding of the extent to which stakeholders may be impacted positively or negatively by the policy, as a basis for revising the policy to reduce negative and enhance positive impacts

• Understand the capacity of individuals and groups participating, and the incentives and obstacles to their participation so that appropriate methods to facilitate their participation can be adopted

5.2 Criteria for stakeholder identification

It is a key recommendation to establish criteria for identifying stakeholders. The criteria should identify all individuals or groups who may:

• Be affected, either positively or negatively and directly or indirectly, by the implementation and associated impacts of the policy, including those who are potential actors in the design or implementation of the policy and those who are actors in the issues that the policy aims to address

• Directly affect the design, implementation and/or assessment of the policy either positively or negatively

• Have an interest in the policy, including those who bring expert knowledge into the process

Some stakeholders may be identified or may be marginalised through a country’s policies, laws and regulations, which should be taken into consideration in developing criteria for the inclusion of stakeholders.

5.3 Methods for stakeholder identification

It is a key recommendation to establish a participatory process for identifying stakeholders. Stakeholders that are identified early in the process can help to identify further stakeholders and appropriate methods for their participation. It may be necessary to revisit stakeholder identification throughout the process as new information becomes available as the context for, or the details of, the policy change. All stakeholders who want to participate should be provided with equal opportunities throughout the process to participate and contribute to outcomes.

Stakeholders can be identified, considered and selected using a combination of approaches including:

• Experts: Ask staff, government agencies, non-governmental organisations, local people, interested groups, or academics who have a lot of knowledge about the policy context

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1 Adapted from World Bank Group 2016

2 Adapted from Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) and UN-REDD Programme 2012
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- **Self-selection**: Make announcements at meetings, in newspapers, on local radio or other media to invite stakeholders to come forward. This will attract those who believe they will gain from communicating their views.

- **Other stakeholders**: Ask stakeholders to suggest other stakeholders who share their views and interests, as well as those who may have a different way of looking at the issues relevant to the policy.

- **Written records and population data**: Use census and population data, which can provide useful information about the numbers of people by age, gender, religion and residence among others, including directories, organisational charts, surveys, reports or written records issued by local authorities, donor agencies, government bodies, experts, academics, non-governmental organisations, business and industry.

- **Oral or written accounts of major events**: Ask stakeholders to describe the major events in the relevant to the policy context and the people who were involved in these events.

- **Checklists**: Use or modify the checklists provided in Box 5.1 and Box 5.2.

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3 Adapted from Chevalier, Jacques M., and Buckles, Daniel J. 2008
Box 5.1: Illustrative checklist for stakeholder identification

1. Individuals (such as company owners)
2. Families and households (such as long-term local residents)
3. Traditional groups (such as clans)
4. Community-based groups (such as self-interest organisations, neighbourhood associations, gender or age-based associations)
5. Local traditional authorities (such as a village council of elders, a traditional chief)
6. Political authorities recognised by national laws (such as elected representatives at the village, local or district levels)
7. Non-governmental bodies that link different communities (such as a council of village representatives, a district or local-level association of fishermen or natural resource management groups)
8. Local governance structures (administration, police, the judicial system)
9. Agencies with legal jurisdiction over natural resources, land and water
10. Local governmental services in areas such as education, health, environment, agriculture and forestry
11. Relevant non-governmental organisations at the local, national or international levels
12. Political party structures (at various levels)
13. Religious bodies (at various levels)
14. National interest organisations (such as workers' unions or people's associations, women groups)
15. National service organisations (non-governmental voluntary service clubs)
16. Voluntary cultural associations
17. Businesses and commercial enterprises (from local cooperatives to international corporations) and business associations
18. Universities and research organisations; technical or professional organisations or agencies
19. Local banks and credit institutions, and national banks
20. Government authorities at the district and regional levels
21. National governments including ministries and agencies responsible for relevant sectors
22. Foreign aid or development cooperation agencies (government and non-government)
23. Staff and consultants of relevant projects and programs
24. International multilateral agencies (such as UNICEF, FAO, UNEP, UNDP)

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4 Adapted from Borrini-Feyerabend, G. and M. Brown 1997
25. Other international organisations (such as IUCN, WWF)

Box 5.2: Checklist of questions to deepen stakeholder identification

1. Are there specific communities, groups or individuals who may be affected by the policy or impact assessment? For example: Are there indigenous communities or nomads, or traditional resource users with customary rights in the national context? Are there recent arrivals? Non-residents? Absentee landlords? Are there local communities or non-profit organisations concerned with the issues?

2. Are there business people or industries (across a wide range of sectors) that might be negatively affected by the policy, impact assessment and other decisions? Who, including businesses, has invested in the economic activities that will be affected?

3. Are there research, development, conservation, mitigation or adaptation projects and programs to be considered? Are there employees (national and international) who will be affected by policy? Identify who among these people are active in or affected by the policy.

4. Who are the main traditional authorities in the jurisdiction who can speak about the implications of the policy – and about what is at stake? What are the respected institutions that people rely on?

5. Who has access to and/or uses the land, forest, air, water or other resources that are likely to be affected?

6. Which communities, groups and individuals are most dependent on or have a stake in the policy or impact assessment processes? Is this related to livelihood or economic activity?

7. Who is responsible for claims, including customary rights and legal jurisdiction, in the territory or area to be affected? Are there communities with historic and/or other types of acquired rights involved?

8. Which government agencies are officially responsible for the policy?

9. Are there national and/or international bodies involved because of specific laws or treaty obligations?

10. Which communities, groups or individuals are most knowledgeable about, and capable of dealing with, the issue and the policy? So far, who has a direct experience in managing them or facilitating their participation in managing them?

11. How does use of the resources change depending on the seasons, the geography and the interests of the users? Are there seasonal migration patterns? Are there major events or trends (such as development projects, land reforms, migration, disaster, natural increase or decrease in the population) affecting local communities and other interested parties?

12. Are there co-management projects around that people are familiar with? If so, to what extent are they succeeding? Who are their main partners? What experiences do people have with co-managing GHG mitigation initiatives or sustainable development initiatives?

13. Who are the legitimate representatives of these stakeholder groups?

5.4 Understanding stakeholder profiles and characteristics

It is a key recommendation to follow a transparent and participatory process for understanding the interests, power and influence of different stakeholder groups, their stake in the policy and the way and extent to which they may be affected, as well as their expectations of the participation process. An
understanding of the different profiles and characteristics of stakeholder groups and individuals can be
developed by systematically seeking to understand their relationship to the policy in terms of their:

- Knowledge of the issues related to the policy
- Existing relationship with the design, implementation and/or assessment of the policy (e.g., close
  or distant; formal or informal, level of support or opposition)
- How the policy affects them (e.g., positive or negative, direct or indirect)
- Perceived power and ability to advance or hinder the design, implementation and/or assessment
  of the policy and/or the participation processes
- Relationships with other stakeholders and interests
- Expectations of the participation
- Willingness to engage in the participation
- Type of organisation (e.g., civil society, government, consumer, producer, trader)
- Socio-cultural context
- Relationship to the geographical scale of the policy
- Capacity to engage in the participation (e.g., language barriers, information technology literacy,
disability)
- Legitimacy, role in governance and representation mechanisms

5.5 Mapping to prioritise stakeholders and identify appropriate approaches for their participation

“Mapping” stakeholders helps to determine which groups and individual representatives are most
important to engage with in relation to the purpose and scope of the participation (see Chapter Error!
Reference source not found. on identifying objectives). There are various methods for mapping
stakeholders. Two common methods of stakeholder mapping, the “rainbow diagram” and the “stakeholder
matrix”, are described below. Use the method that works best for the context.

The rainbow diagram (see Figure 5.1) is often used to understand the extent to which stakeholder groups
are affected compared with the extent to which they are influential.

5 Adapted from AccountAbility 2015.
This rainbow diagram can be adapted to understand any characteristics that describe the main differences between the stakeholder groups. For example, the semicircles can be used to identify stakeholder groups working at local, regional and national levels and the pie-shaped wedges can be used to show the extent to which these groups are affected by the policy.

Mapping can be based on any of the criteria used in advance to characterise the stakeholders. Mapping of stakeholders can be done using several criteria on one diagram or “map” - and may involve several maps to gain better insight. For example, potential stakeholders’ level of influence (the pie shaped wedges in Figure 5.1) can be mapped against their willingness or capacity to engage (in the semicircles), or their knowledge of issues can be mapped against their expectations.

Similarly, a “stakeholder matrix” can also be used to map stakeholders by understanding the relationships between the stakeholders and the policy (see Figure 5.2). The level of interest and influence of stakeholders will depend on a range of issues such as the nature of the policy, the timing and extent of their involvement and their ability to impact the outcomes.

Figure 5.2 illustrates how the stakeholders for a solar photovoltaic (PV) incentive policy might be mapped on a stakeholder matrix. The stakeholders are mapped according to their level of interest in and level of influence on the policy. The eligible sectors for this policy include residential (all types of residential buildings), institutional (schools, health institutions), social sectors (community centres, welfare homes, old age homes, orphanages, common service centres), commercial and industrial facilities. In the stakeholder matrix below installation is focused on residential buildings, therefore the relevant stakeholders might have the following levels of interest in and influence on the policy:
- **Residential building owners** are likely to have a high interest in and medium influence on the policy given the potential payback they could receive from installing solar panels and the high upfront cost of installation.

- **PV manufacturers** may have both a high interest in and high influence on this policy given their interest in selling their product and their role in producing the product in order for such a policy to be implemented.

- **Utilities** are likely to have a high interest in and a high influence on the policy due to their key role in connecting the solar PV installation to the grid and their interest in maintaining their critical role in the energy system.

- **Consumers** are likely to have a relatively low interest and low influence on the policy because they are likely to continue consuming electricity from the grid regardless of the energy source unless prices increase dramatically or the supply becomes unstable.

*Figure 5.2: Stakeholder matrix*

The following method can be used when completing a stakeholder matrix:

1. Make a list of stakeholder groups (see Section 5.2 on how to identify stakeholders)
2. Draw a set of two-by-two quadrants with one criterion increasing on the x-axis and the second criterion increasing on the y-axis
3. Write the name of each stakeholder group on an index card or post-it note
4. Rank the stakeholders on a scale of one to five, according to the two criteria on the matrix, such as ‘interest in the policy outcomes’ or ‘influence on the policy’
5. Consider the following:

- Are there any unexpected placements?
- Which stakeholders have the most and least opportunities to participate?
- Are there stakeholders for whom additional efforts should be made to ensure engagement?

Boxes A, B and C in the matrix are the key stakeholders of the policy. The implications of each box are summarised below:

- **Box A**: These are stakeholders appearing to have a high degree of influence on the policy, who are important for its success, and who also have high interest in the policy. It is important to construct good working relationships with these stakeholders to ensure an effective coalition of support for the policy. Examples might be senior government officials, politicians or trade unions.

- **Box B**: These are stakeholders with high interest in the policy but with low influence. Their interests may need to be protected. An example may be marginalised groups such as indigenous peoples, youth or the elderly, who might be beneficiaries of the policy but who have little ‘voice’ in its development.

- **Box C**: These are stakeholders with high influence, who can therefore affect the policy outcomes, but whose interest in the policy is not high or not necessarily aligned with the overall goals of the policy. An example might be financial administrators who can exercise considerable discretion over funding. These stakeholders could be a barrier to success of the policy and may need specific monitoring and engagement.

- **Box D**: These are stakeholders with low interest in and low influence on the policy. Limited monitoring and engagement is needed for this group, though they should be kept informed.

The interest or influence of a stakeholder may change as the policy progresses. Therefore, it is important to reassess and identify new stakeholders and the level of stakeholder participation at each phase of implementation of the stakeholder participation plan as discussed in Chapter 4.

Setting clear criteria for mapping stakeholders helps to avoid being driven by non-strategic considerations such as the “noisiest” stakeholders, the short-term focus of the media, or the comfort zone of managers or government personnel.

Initial profiling and mapping can take place without the systematic involvement of stakeholders. However, as planning continues, identified stakeholder representatives should be involved in the stakeholder selection process and adjustments made based on their input.

Further references

For guidance on approaches to stakeholder analysis and mapping, see the following references:

- Better Evaluation’s *Stakeholder mapping and analysis* provides guidance on identifying stakeholders to inform data-collection and evaluation processes⁶

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• Morphy’s *Stakeholder Analysis* provides step by step guidance on how to analyse stakeholders by their influence and interest.  

• Requirements Techniques’ *Stakeholder Power/Interest Analysis* provides step by step guidance for using the stakeholder matrix to identify stakeholders.

### 5.6 Identifying legitimate stakeholder representatives

It is a *key recommendation* to establish a participatory process for identifying legitimate representatives of stakeholder groups. Stakeholder representatives are important to facilitate the participation of larger stakeholder groups, including disseminating information to and receiving information from the members of these groups.

When identifying stakeholder representatives, it is important to ensure that these individuals are indeed true representatives or advocates of the views of their constituents and can be relied upon to faithfully communicate information back to their constituents. Stakeholder representatives should have sustained interest and time to engage in the participation process and to communicate with their stakeholder group, as well as the capacity and resources to fulfil their role.

Based on agreed criteria, stakeholder groups should select their own representatives through a mechanism that they define based on their bylaws and/or norms. Provisions should be made to enable these representatives to share and receive information and to discuss issues with their constituencies to ensure effective participation.

One way to validate legitimacy of representatives is by talking directly to a sample of the stakeholders to assess how well or perhaps how inconsistently stakeholder views are being represented. Another way is to validate that stakeholders have indeed transparently selected their own representatives.

### 5.7 Enhancing opportunities and reducing barriers to stakeholder participation

It is a *key recommendation* to identify the opportunities and barriers affecting the participation of different stakeholders, particularly for women, indigenous peoples, youth and other groups that may be marginalised, and involve these stakeholders in identifying appropriate methods and approaches to enable their effective participation. Barriers to participation can reduce the effectiveness of stakeholder participation. While it may not be possible to remove all barriers, it is important to make efforts to enhance participation of all stakeholders. Being respectful of differences and acknowledging that invisible barriers to communications exist is critical.

Identify opportunities to increase participation and reduce barriers to participation of each stakeholder group through initial profiling of stakeholder groups and ongoing adjustment in discussion with members of each stakeholder group. This includes knowing how information is best provided to each stakeholder group, their needs for timely and continuous capacity building, the most effective methods for conducting inclusive, socio-culturally and gender-sensitive consultations and the resources needed to facilitate their

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7 Available at: [http://www.stakeholdermap.com/stakeholder-analysis.html](http://www.stakeholdermap.com/stakeholder-analysis.html)

8 Available at: [https://requirementstechniques.wordpress.com/stakeholder-analysis/stakeholder-powerinterest-analysis/](https://requirementstechniques.wordpress.com/stakeholder-analysis/stakeholder-powerinterest-analysis/)
participation. Consult participants about what might prevent or hinder their participation, and what arrangements can be made for them to feel comfortable and to become involved.

Examples of barriers to participation and ways to address them include:

- **Information**: Stakeholders may not have adequate information, in an appropriate format and language using concepts that they understand, about the policy, the process or the substantive issues to participate effectively. Chapter 7 discusses how to provide information to various stakeholder groups based on their circumstances.

- **Capacity**: Stakeholders may not have the knowledge, understanding and skills, for effective participation either as an individual or as a representative. Education, training and public awareness may be needed to build the capacity of stakeholders in each group to participate effectively. Where experienced people and resources for capacity building are limited, supportive partnerships can sometimes be developed with national or international NGOs, universities, consulting companies, or bilateral or multilateral agencies.

- **Accessibility**: Stakeholders may lack access to technology (e.g., the internet), face certain social or cultural constraints or be in locations that are not conducive to participating in in-person meetings or written consultations, online or otherwise. To address such constraints, hold meetings at a time and location identified with the stakeholder groups, and use approaches and technologies with which they are familiar and can access easily. Identify socio-culturally appropriate and gender-sensitive approaches that provide a safe setting for women and men of all ethnicities and political affiliations to participate. For example, this may involve holding separate consultation meetings with women or other groups.

- **Financial and other resources**: Stakeholders may not have adequate resources to travel and participate in consultations. Support for transportation, accommodation and food may be necessary in order for certain groups to participate; however compensation in other ways, including cash payments such as daily sitting allowances or per diems should be considered cautiously as it could potentially influence, or be perceived to influence, stakeholders’ input.

- **Timing**: The schedule should allow sufficient time for stakeholders to share information, provide or receive feedback or participate in consultations. Ensure that sufficient time is provided for effective stakeholder participation in the design, implementation and/or assessment processes. Chapter 4 discusses how to plan for stakeholder participation, including the timing for each element of effective participation.

Try to include representatives of all stakeholder groups equitably. This may require providing education and support to certain stakeholder groups in order to level the playing field across all groups. Use the stakeholder identification and mapping processes to determine the barriers faced by each group and then minimise the barriers as much as possible.
Further references

For methods aimed at increasing the participation of women, see the following references:

- UNFCCC’s Gender and Climate Change – Resources – Capacity-building
- European Institute’s Gender Equality and Climate Change Report
- Governance and Social Development Resource Centre’s Gender and Climate Change: Overview Report
- UNDP’s Guidance Note Gender Sensitive REDD
- Global Landscapes Forum’s How to walk the talk: Promoting gender equality in national climate policy and action

For methods aimed at overcoming barriers related to language and ethnicity, or based on the stakeholders’ history, location and jurisdiction, see the following references:

- UNFCCC’s Report on good practices of stakeholder participation in implementing Article 6 of the Convention
- OECD’s Encouraging Increased Climate Action by Non-Party Stakeholders

For methods aimed at overcoming barriers that can divide the stakeholders based on differentials in power, wealth, and access to resources refer to:

Moser and Ekstrom’s A framework to diagnose barriers to climate change adaptation

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9 Available at: [http://unfccc.int/gender_and_climate_change/items/9690.php](http://unfccc.int/gender_and_climate_change/items/9690.php)


11 Available at: [http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4305](http://www.gsdr.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4305)


14 Available at: [http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2014/sbi/eng/03.pdf](http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2014/sbi/eng/03.pdf)
