

Stakeholder Analysis and Mapping

Summary – what and what for?

Stakeholder Analysis is a basic planning and management tool that contributes to project design and policy reform by helping to identify and analyse the stakeholders involved and their interrelations. Stakeholder Analysis is the backbone of a cooperation strategy: it shapes a solid base for understanding the political economy of reforms and helps to evidence who are the real beneficiaries of a specific reform. It sets the domain of people, groups and organizations (including donors) whose interests and influence on policy should be taken into account when conducting the impact analysis for a particular policy. The basic output is the identification and description of actors that a policy is explicitly designed to help, as well as those whose involvement – or at least assent – is required to make policy work. The identification process disaggregates these actors in terms of socio-economic and political characteristics.

Stakeholder Analysis is a must. You want to know the interest groups, organizations and persons affected: they may help you or block your way. The analysis should be used as an integrated tool along the Programme cycle; it should be reviewed and repeated because the best-fit set of actors to work with can and will change according to the dynamics of the project and the policy reform. However, every situation is different: browse this paper to get some ideas for answers in your context.

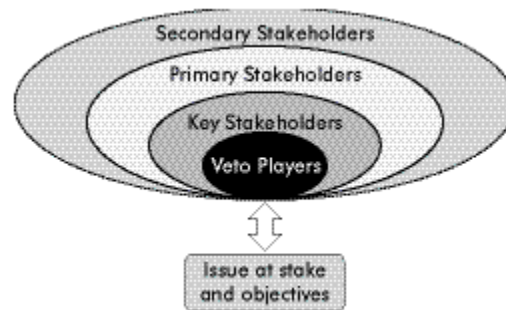
Who are the stakeholders?

Every cooperation programme interacts with different stakeholders that form the social and economic programme environment. Various actors are either directly involved with or are indirectly influencing the programme or policy reform through their position or their specific resources. Actors who hold at least a potential stake in a project or reform and its change objective are usually termed stakeholders. The concerned actors wish to protect these interests and avoid losing them at all cost. The material resources, social position and knowledge of these stakeholders make them particularly potent, which enables them to wield significant influence over the design, planning and implementation of the reform project.

The term primary stakeholders is usually applied to those actors who are directly affected by the project, either as designated project beneficiaries, or because they stand to gain (or lose) power, economic resources and privilege, or because they are negatively affected by the project in some other way, for instance if they have to be resettled.

Secondary stakeholders are actors whose involvement in the programme is only indirect or temporary, as is the case – for instance – with intermediary service organizations.

Actors – rich and poor, men and women, young and older people – who are able to use their voice, skills, knowledge or position of power to significantly exercise influence on a reform are termed key stakeholders. Key stakeholders are those actors without whose support and participation the targeted results of a programme normally cannot be achieved, or who may even be able to veto the programme, in which case they are termed veto players.



The benefits of a Stakeholder Analysis and Mapping

To become aware of the different actors likely to have an influence on the issue at stake, you can map out the relevant actors (both organizations as well as key persons) and identify the different kinds of stakeholders and their inter-relations. Interdependent stakeholders shape a so called policy network.

Stakeholder Mapping is the best-fit tool for a Stakeholder Analysis. The mapping provides an overview of the stakeholder landscape. It visualizes people and organizations likely to have an influence on the planned reform. It maps out the relevant stakeholders and identifies the different kinds of stakeholders as well as their interrelations. This helps

- to get valuable information that can be used for strategic programme planning;
- to identify relevant stakeholders;
- to get important hints about the actors (enough information, missing information, not considered by the programme or reform, etc.);
- to see potential cooperation partners that are disadvantaged, excluded, marginalised and discriminated and therefore need to be empowered;
- to draw basic conclusions about relations and alliances as well as power imbalances and potential conflicts among the various actors;
- to make first assumptions and formulate impact hypotheses about the influence certain actors have on the proposed reform;
- to produce valuable information on how to shape participation in policy negotiation and public debate on reforms.

Stakeholder Analysis is a prerequisite for result-oriented cooperation. While stakeholder maps can be established out for any type of reform, they are particularly helpful for structural and sector policy reforms. Basic Stakeholder Analysis should precede the reform design and should be consistently deepened as reform elements are finalized.

The stakeholder map corrects premature assumptions concerning individual actors and the relationships between them. Seen in the context of other actors, supposedly important actors become less significant and apparently insignificant actors move centre stage.

How to proceed – 7 steps that boost your reform project

STEP 1 – Define the scope of the mapping

Form a small, well-performing and interdisciplinary working group. To prepare an accurate stakeholder map be aware of the three entry tasks:

Be clear about the issue of the mapping. To limit the number of actors appearing on the map, the mapping should be based on a clearly defined issue. □ Guiding question: What is the issue at stake and what is the change objective?

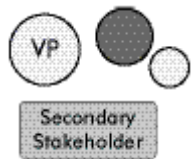
Define time and periodicity. Actors build a dynamic and interdependent network of relations that can evolve quickly. Hence, the moment actor's relations are analysed does matter. □ Guiding question: When do we draw up the stakeholder map, and when does it need to be updated?

Take into account different perspectives and perceptions. Each actor has his/her own perspective and perception, thus each actor acts upon his own mental map of the other actors and makes assumptions about their behaviour. A stakeholder map reflects only the perspective of the ones drawing up the map. □ Guiding question: Whom do we wish to involve in drawing up the stakeholder map? Which stakeholder maps shall we compare with each other?

STEP 2 – Identify the relevant actors and set up their basic profile

First of all, it is necessary to identify and list all the actors relevant to the programme or to the proposed policy reform.

Graphic elements



Key and primary stakeholders are represented by circles, secondary stakeholders by rectangles.

The bigger the circle, the bigger the influence of the actor in the issue at stake. Circles with the letters VP stand for veto players, meaning that these stakeholders may have the power resources to seriously hinder or block the proposed reform.

To get a detailed overview of the different actors, we can draw up profiles of all relevant actors, applying the method of the 4 A's:

Actor Name, function	Agenda Mandate / mission, strategic objectives	Arena Field of action, outreach	Alliances Relations with other actors according to A B C D*
Actor 1			
Actor 2			
Actor 3			
Actor n			

* A: Institutionalised relation

B: Regular exchange of information

C: Coordinated activities

D: Co-production using joint resources

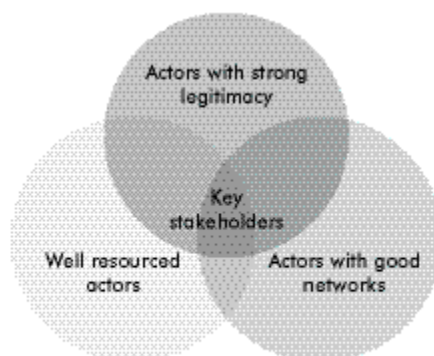
STEP 3 – Identify key stakeholders

The listed actors should then each be assigned to one of three groups, namely key stakeholders, primary stakeholders and secondary stakeholders. To narrow down the number of key stakeholders further, it is helpful to differentiate between three core attributes or features that are crucial for holding a key position regarding the issue at stake:

- **Legitimacy**
Institutional position of the key stakeholder, ascribed or acquired rights that are – for instance – underpinned by the law, the institutional mandate and public approval, loyalty of other social groups, and are considered legitimate. This also includes key stakeholders without whose explicit approval the proposed reform would be inconceivable. These veto players can create key impetus and scope, or can obstruct the reform.
- **Resources**
Knowledge, expertise, skills and material resources that enable the key stakeholder to significantly influence the issues at stake and the change objective, or to steer and control access to these resources. This is also linked to the question of whether the key stakeholder disposes of the necessary resources.
- **Networks**
Number and strength of relationships with other actors who are obligated to, or are dependent on, the key stakeholder. Key stakeholders are usually well-connected, i. e. they have a large number of institutionally formalised and of informal relationships with other actors. Key stakeholders therefore wield significant influence on the participation of other actors, structuring some decisions as to whether certain actors will be included or excluded.

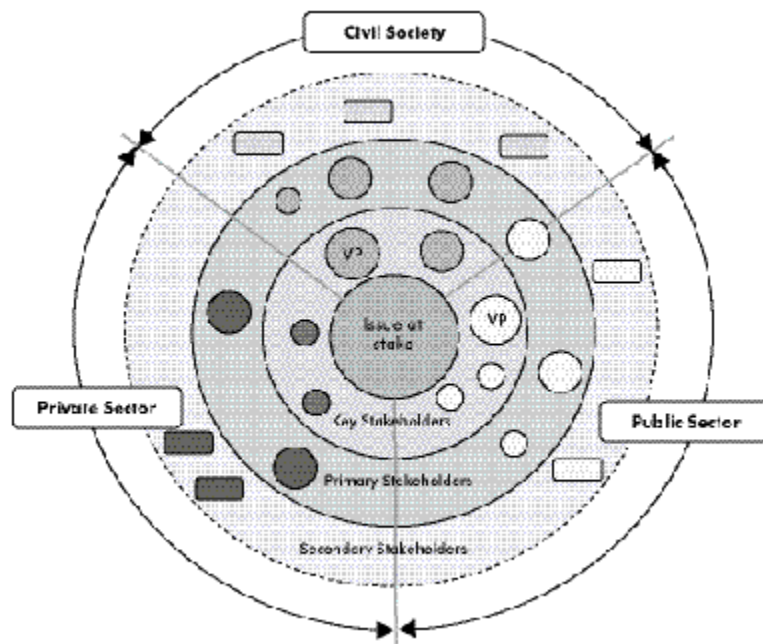
The interests of the key stakeholders are usually not entirely congruent with the proposed reform or with the change objective. This can create tacit or explicit resistance in various forms: reserve, sceptical aloofness, objection or openly organised resistance against the targeted changes.

Actors can only learn from resistance if that resistance is made explicit, so that it can be addressed. Unclear or poorly transparent information concerning the project reinforces resistance. If the resistance remains based on (tacit) assumptions or speculation, because it cannot be expressed or is not taken seriously, then it will also increase. To prevent a desired reform project from being vetoed, it is necessary to understand the interests of the actors and to create possibilities for negotiation.



STEP 4 – Put in the stakeholders

To create the stakeholder map that will yield useful information, it is important to include all important key actors, without overloading the graphic with too many cards. Use cards in different colours (metaplan technique) and place them according to their basic characteristic to civil society, private or public sector.

**STEP 5 – Be aware of the gender trap in Stakeholder Analysis**

It is common sense that every reform programme should be carried out in a gender-sensitive way. Thus, we have to ensure that the specific needs and interests of women and men are considered in the Stakeholder Analysis. A gender-sensitive Stakeholder Analysis takes into account the following issues:

- Unequal access to, and control over, resources
Access to, and control over, resources largely depends on the existing distribution of economic and political power and is defined according to various exclusion criteria. One of these exclusion criteria is gender: the rights of access to resources, voice and informed participation often discriminate against women.
- Disempowerment of women in the political arena
Social and economic factors contribute to prevent women from participating in informal and formal policy negotiations. Political participation of women can significantly contribute to the maintenance and promotion of social welfare, equality, peace and security. Without an explicit gender focus, cooperation programmes may fail to gain from women's contributions – both formal and informal – to the development of their societies.
- Men's heritage of domination patterns
Due to education and overarching value systems, men may be bound to attitudes and behavioural patterns that lead to domination and violence against women and men. In specific

circumstances these patterns are even reinforced by the gender dynamics and expectations of women.

- Women's and men's different communication and relation patterns
Research evidence indicates that women and men communicate and shape social relationship in different ways in a given cultural context. Cooperation programmes tend to ignore such differences due to time pressure and standardized procedures.
- Reinforcement of patriarchal gender relations through cooperation programmes
As a matter of fact, the common pattern of policy reforms is dominated by patriarchal gender relations, even when declarations and gender mainstreaming efforts advise a different way of thinking.

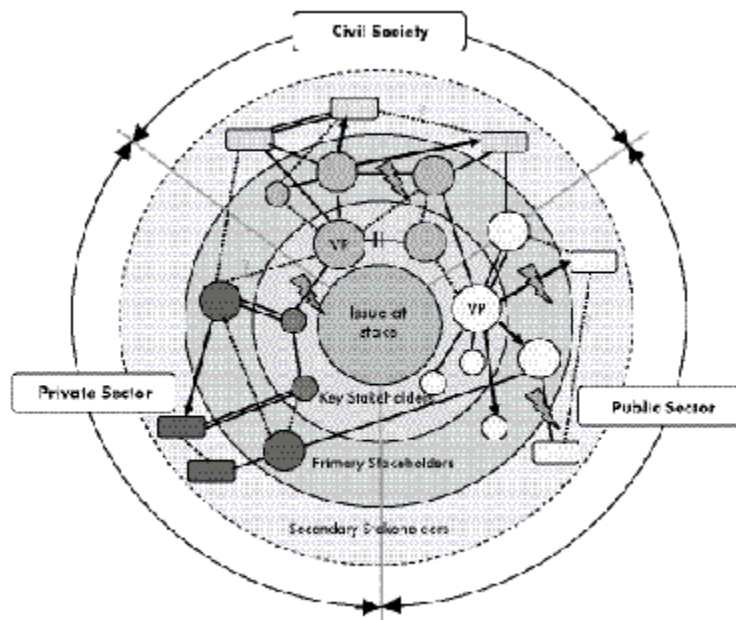
Complete and differentiate the stakeholder map by using the following guiding questions:

- How do we find out about the stakeholder's position considering gender issues?
- Do we have a clear picture about the experience in gender issues of the stakeholders involved in the reform programme?
- Can we make the gender issue visible by differentiating between men and women?
- Do we take into account the cultural heritage of gender profiles?
- Do we spot specific stakeholders that are hindered from participating in the social, commercial and political life of their communities and in public debate?
- To what extent are the stakeholders able to address gender issues in a comprehensive way that incorporates men and women equally into policy making?
- How would the stakeholder map look if we drew the actors in regard to their gender-sensitivity?
- Do we spot stakeholders that are particularly opposed to / open to gender issues?

STEP 6 – Visualize the relationships between stakeholders

The stakeholder map helps us to analyse the relations between different stakeholders. Such relations can take the form of alliances and enduring cooperation; they can also indicate tension and conflict. Knowing who is in relation with whom prevents the future cooperation from unintentionally fuelling existing conflicts by favouring one side over the other. Identifying coalitions or alliances between stakeholders gives us indications about already existing ties that can be built upon.

Finally, to make things clearer, the various graphic elements can be arranged so that the stakeholder map is easy to read. The stakeholder map might – for instance – look like one of the two examples shown in the graphics below.



Graphic elements

	Solid lines symbolise close relationships in terms of information exchange, frequency of contact, overlap of interests, coordination, and mutual trust.
	Dotted lines symbolise weak or informal relationships. The question mark is added where the nature of the relationship is not clear yet.
	Double lines symbolise coalitions, alliances and strong cooperation that are formalised contractually or institutionally.
	Arrows symbolise the direction of dominant relationships. This may also apply to solid, dotted or double lines.
	Lines crossed by a bolt of lightning symbolise relationships marked by tension, conflicting interests or other forms of conflict.
	Cross lines symbolise relationships that have been interrupted, damaged or broken.

STEP 7 – Share and discuss the stakeholder map with different stakeholders

In a last step, a joint discussion of the stakeholder map as captured by the graphic above can

- help identify commonalities between the stakeholders, for instance stakeholders of the central government administration who in a decentralisation process would see themselves as standing to lose legitimacy and influence;
- open space for further strategic options of reforms;
- enable planners to address and work through the conflict of objectives with the key stakeholders early on. In the case of a decentralisation process this could mean, for instance, broadening their mandate to include new tasks of regulation, supervision and support of municipalities;
- anticipate possible tensions and conflicts among stakeholders in a timely manner;
- build up and strengthen compliance with change objectives and as well as the commitment of the stakeholders.

When sharing and discussing a stakeholder map, be aware that stakeholders construct their own social reality on the basis of their own life experience, expectations and perspectives. Policy reform cannot assume that they are dealing with objectively verifiable problems. The various actors see and interpret these situations differently. Planning and implementation must therefore take into account the different perspectives and interests of the participating actors. Furthermore, the specific discourse on problems and deficits often obscures our vision for potentials. Joint ventures are based on identifying potentials as well as opportunities to change things. To engage with the potentials and change dynamics of the actors, projects need to create scope for dialogue and negotiation. This perspective enables us to perceive and understand the various discourses of the stakeholders and to address – together with those – the issues that are important to them. These discourses reflect their knowledge of the issues, their willingness to change, the cultural orientations, prevailing norms, preferences and power relations. The discourses consolidate their identity, and at the same time differentiate them from other actors. They remind us that reality is perceived and shaped through actor-specific semantics.