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Stakeholder Engagement in Environmental Decision-Making Processes

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Synonyms

Participants; Shareholder

Definitions

A stakeholder is any entity with a declared or conceivable interest or stake in a policy concern. The range of stakeholders relevant to consider for analysis varies according to the complexity of the reform area targeted and the type of reform proposed and, where the stakeholders are not organized, the incentive to include them. Stakeholders can be of any form, size, and capacity. They can be individuals, organizations, or unorganized groups. In most cases, stakeholders fall into one or more of the following categories: international actors (e.g., donors); national or political actors (e.g., legislators, governors); public sector agencies (e.g., interest groups); (e.g., unions, medical associations); commercial/private for-profit, nonprofit organizations (NGOs, foundations); civil society members; and users/consumers (World Bank 2007).

A stakeholder can be defined as: Any individual, community, group or organisation with an interest in the outcome of a programme/project, either as a result of being affected by it positively or negatively, or by being able to influence the activity in a positive (+) or negative (x) way (Department for International Development, DFID 2003).

Introduction

According to the World Bank, a stakeholder is any entity with a declared or conceivable interest or stake in a policy concern. The range of stakeholders relevant to consider for analysis varies according to the complexity of the reform area targeted and the type of reform proposed and, where the stakeholders are not organized, the incentive to include them. Stakeholders can be of any form, size, and capacity. They can be individuals, organizations, or unorganized groups.

According to Donaldson and Preston (1995), stakeholder in an organization is (by definition) any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives. Thus, a group qualifies as a stakeholder if it has a legitimate interest in aspects of the organization's activities (Donaldson and Preston 1995) and, thus, according to Freeman (1984), has either the power to affect the firms' performance and/or has a stake in the firms'

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performance. The fundamental basis of the stakeholder theory is normative. It redefines an organization as a stakeholder interests coordinating and optimizing entity which requires the firm to accept two key concepts: (I) Stakeholders are persons or groups with legitimate interests in procedural and/or substantive aspects of corporate activity. Stakeholders are identified by their interests in the corporation, whether the corporation has any corresponding functional interest in them. (II) The interests of all stakeholders are of intrinsic value. That is, each group of stakeholders merits consideration for its own sake and not merely because of its ability to further the interests of some other group, such as the shareowner (Donaldson and Preston 1995). Furthermore, even from scientific point of view, there are several attempts on forming a theory on stakeholder participation, the latest one is published in Lovrić et al. (2018). This study points out that although stakeholders can protest and actually "achieve victory," they are not agents of change of the structure of decision-making, and so when another process comes, stakeholders will repeatedly have to make strong efforts to reach the outcomes that they desire.

There are numerous attempts in finding the best way for proper and efficient stakeholder identification and engagement. Koonz (2005) had an approach for empowering a community of stakeholders to contribute meaningfully on the impact of stakeholder participation on policymaking at local level, did a multiple-case analysis on county level, and revealed patterns of policymaking processes and the near-term impacts of collaborative planning. Gleason et al. (2010) are providing clear science guidelines and effective decision support to ensure access to the best readily available scientific information, local knowledge, and spatial data by stakeholders, scientists, and decision-makers in a joint fact-finding approach. This planning was well-resourced and highly structured public process that successfully delivered science-based alternatives, was designed by stakeholders for a regional component, it was consideret as a good example even though the plan was abandoned 6 months after the public meetings. Facilitating stakeholder participation is a necessity for ensuring transparency in a public process. Stakeholder participation, while strongly beneficial, may often lead to highly charged planning discussions as participants often have strong feelings. Lovrić et al. (2018) make an attempt in defining a participation theory which links stakeholder participation practices to socioeconomic framework, spatial planning outcomes, and actors' role and perceptions, and this theory could be further replicated and tested to different circumstances, fields, and cultural settings. Hübner et al.'s (2014) study shows that there is urgent need for stakeholders – public and private – to reconcile the means of protected areas for the ends (conservation) by clarifying responsibilities as well as structures and processes that determine decision-making. All that is followed by decentralized policymaking, which is a fragmented concept impacted by bureaucratic burden, lack of institutional capacities, top-down processes, and little benefit sharing. (Pomeroy and Douvere 2008) show that due to the interdependency that exists between the ecosystem resources and its users, successful implementation of ecosystem-based management depends on the identification and understanding of different stakeholders, their practices, expectations, and interests. Many scientists and resource managers agree that the involvement of stakeholders is a key factor for a successful management regime in environmental protection. Comprehensive stakeholder identification, assessment, and engagement that can be met in Cleland (1999), who identifies stakeholders and their interests, measures these interests and attempts to predict their future behavior and its impact on the project and on the project team. In contrast to this, Briiner et al. (1996) focuses on communication as important part of stakeholder management. Fletcher et al. (2003) describe stakeholder identification as a process for mapping stakeholders' expectations based on value hierarchies and key performance areas (KPA). Frooman (1999) gives an analysis of ways through which organizations can plan their stakeholder's management strategies, rather than only response strategies. Turner et al. (2002) use more holistic approach to stakeholder identification, which encompasses

assessment of awareness, support, and influence, all of which culminates in development of a stakeholder knowledge base. Brown et al. (2001) outline an approach to natural resource management that incorporates multiple objectives for protected area management within a decision-making framework. Both regulators and other major stakeholders are directly incorporated into the approach to enhance decision-making processes by trade-off analysis. The process of stakeholder involvement makes explicit the diverse perceptions and values of the different actors that create opportunities for decision-making and management based on consensus rather than conflict.

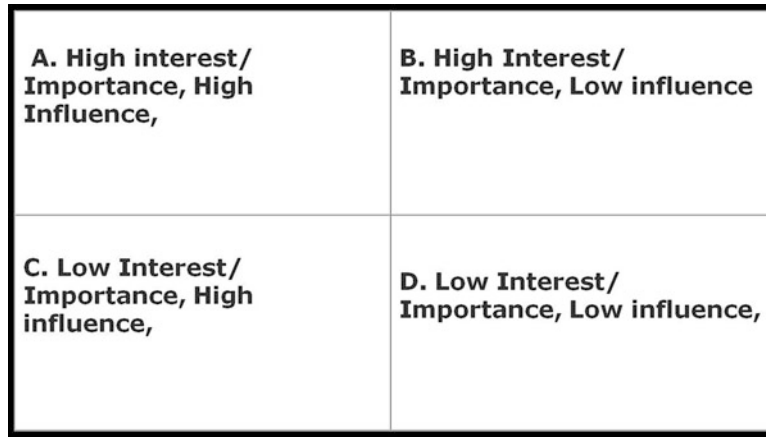
Stakeholder Typologies and Identification

Savage et al. (1991) and Mitchell et al. (1997) gave interesting definition of categories of stakeholders. According to them, there are four generic types: supportive, mixed blessing, non-supportive, and marginal. They develop an eight-part stakeholder typology based on assessment of the strength of three attributes: power, legitimacy, and urgency. Comprehensive stakeholder identification, assessment, and engagement that can be met in Cleland (1999), who identifies stakeholders and their interests, measure these interests and attempt to predict their future behavior and its impact on the project and on the project team. In contrast to this, Briiner et al. (1996) focuses on communication as important part of stakeholder management. Fletcher et al. (2003) describe stakeholder identification as a process for mapping stakeholder's expectations based on value hierarchies and key performance areas. Frooman (1999) gives an analysis of ways through which organizations can plan their stakeholder's management strategies, rather than only response to strategies. Turner et al. (2002) use more holistic approach to stakeholder identification, which encompasses assessment of awareness, support, and influence, all of which culminates in development of a stakeholder knowledge base. In order to assess the power relations of stakeholders in more detail, the "power tools" ("stakeholder power analysis," "stakeholder power mapping," and "the four Rs") of the International Institute for Environment and Development could be used (IIED 2005).

- Types of stakeholders (IIED 2005):
  - Key stakeholders – those who can significantly influence or are important to the success of an activity
  - Primary stakeholders – individuals and groups who are ultimately affected by an activity, either as beneficiaries or disbeneficiaries
  - Secondary stakeholders – all other individuals or institutions with a stake, interest, or intermediary role in the activity
  - External stakeholders – those not formally involved in activity, but who may impact or be impacted by it
- Stakeholder identification

  Stakeholder identification according to the World Bank
  - Who might be affected (positively or negatively) by the development concern to be addressed?
  - Who are the "voiceless" for whom special efforts may have to be made?
  - Who are the representatives of those likely to be affected?
  - Who is responsible for what is intended?
  - Who is likely to mobilize for or against what is intended?
  - Who can make what is intended more effective through their participation or less effective by their nonparticipation or outright opposition?
  - Who can contribute financial and technical resources?
  - Whose behavior has to change for the effort to succeed?

  Stakeholder identification according to the DFID (Department for International Development)
  - Have all primary and secondary stakeholders been listed?
  - Have all potential supporters and opponents of the project been identified?



Stakeholder Engagement in Environmental Decision-Making Processes, Fig. 1 Stakeholder interest/ importance grid. (Adapted from World Bank Guidance Note: Stakeholder Analysis)

  - Has gender analysis been used to identify different types of female stakeholders (at both primary and secondary levels)?
  - Have primary stakeholders been divided into user/occupational groups or income groups?
  - Have the interests of vulnerable groups (especially the poor) been identified?
  - Are there any new primary or secondary stakeholders that are likely to emerge as a result of the project?
- Stakeholder categorization (World Bank)
  - "Influence" is the power a stakeholder has to facilitate or impede the achievement of a plan's objectives.
  - "Importance" refers to stakeholders whose problems, needs, or interests are the priority of the plan (Fig. 1).

Regulations Related to Stakeholder Engagement

The 2012 OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) Recommendation on Regulatory Policy and Governance recommends that governments "actively engage . . . all relevant stakeholders during the regulation-making process and design . . .consultation processes to maximise the quality of the information received and its effectiveness" (OECD 2012). OECD member countries acknowledge the importance of listening to the voice of users, who need to be part of the regulatory development process. Moreover, stakeholder engagement is commonly considered as a key element of an open government policy.

A majority of OECD member countries have implemented a requirement to engage stakeholders in developing both primary and subordinate regulations. Most countries also ensure easy access to regulations and have policies on using plain language. Many countries are using tripartite consultations to make sure that the views of workers and employers are reflected in newly developed regulations. On the other hand, involvement of stakeholders in performance assessments of regulations and regulatory systems is rather rare. Stakeholder engagement should be part of all stages of the regulatory governance cycle (OECD 2015) . Most OECD member countries engage with stakeholders especially when developing or amending regulations. Countries use various types of consultations in various phases of the regulation-making process; however a typical engagement takes place through a public consultation over the Internet at the final stage of the process when a legislative draft is submitted to the government. Attempts exist to involve stakeholders in the process of reviewing the stock of available regulations. Some countries such as Denmark now actively seek stakeholders' input on shaping regulatory reform programmes such as those focusing on administrative simplification. Stakeholders are still rarely engaged in the final

delivery stage of the regulatory governance cycle, implementation, and monitoring (OECD 2016).

There are some exceptions, for example, UK's Better Regulation Delivery Office's have cooperation with stakeholders in improving regulatory delivery and inspections, this is also the case in Canada where regulators are required to develop interpretation policies in cooperation with stakeholders. Countries could more actively engage with stakeholders at this stage to find ways to implement regulations most effectively, to limit unnecessary burdens, and to target better their enforcement methods. Enhanced contact between regulators and regulated entities could result in improved measurement of compliance and a better understanding of the reasons for non-compliance. The use of ICTs in engaging stakeholders in regulatory policy is widespread. It has become a standard practice that countries publish draft regulations on ministerial websites or dedicated consultation portals. An increasing number of countries experiment with more innovative tools such as social media, crowdsourcing, wiki-based tools, etc. The experience so far shows that ICTs have failed to significantly increase the level of engagement in policymaking or to improve its quality. Despite the fact that the mechanisms of engagement have changed, the nature of the process has remained essentially the same as in the pre-digital era. In general, the effect of the use of ICTs on the quality and quantity of stakeholder engagement is behind expectations, since there are various applications and tools being developed since then.

An OECD pilot database on stakeholder engagement practices exists, and their objectives present concrete examples of stakeholder engagement in regulatory policy from OECD member and partner countries. It illustrates how countries have implemented the 2012 Recommendation of the Council on Regulatory Policy and Governance in practice. While the database examples may serve as inspiration for other countries, they are not blueprints for good practice. The effectiveness and suitability of stakeholder engagement tools depend on country-specific institutional and cultural contexts, as well as the goals and circumstances of a specific consultation. In 2015, following the adoption of the 2015 Better Regulation Guidelines, the European Commission has extended its range of stakeholder engagement methods to enable stakeholders to express their view over the entire life cycle of a policy European Commission (2016c, d, e) and OECD website on regulatory policy in the European Commission.

Stakeholder Analysis Overview

A stakeholders' analysis is a tool used in the design and management of policy processes to recognize the interests of all stakeholders who may affect or be affected by a policy, potential conflicts and risks that could jeopardize the process, opportunities and relationships to build upon in implementation, the groups that should be encouraged to participate in different stages of the process, and ways to improve the process and reduce, or remove, negative impacts on disadvantaged groups.

According to the World Bank, DFID, and IFC (DFID 2007), stakeholder analysis (SA) is a methodology used to facilitate institutional and policy reform processes by accounting for and often incorporating the needs of those who have a "stake" or an interest in the reforms under consideration. With information on stakeholders, their interests, and their capacity to oppose reform, reform advocates can choose how to best accommodate them, thus assuring policies adopted are politically realistic and sustainable.

SA is a good tool, it is a technique developed in management studies (Varvasovszky and Brugha 2000) and is variously used as an approach or tool for generating knowledge about actors (individuals or organizations), to understand their behaviors and interests, and for assessing their value to decision-making. Stakeholder analysis is a critical tool in clarifying the micro political economy of a policy area and can help identify interested parties that should be incorporated in the decision-making process, in addition to understanding the basis for their inclusion.

There are three key benefits identified for undertaking stakeholder analysis. By using a stakeholder analysis, one can facilitate inclusion of stakeholders that otherwise would be overlooked or marginalized. There is a descriptive and normative approach to the process that reveals power relationships that ensure values. The process can be a contribution to democracy with improvement of the decision-making as well as bringing legitimacy to the process by incorporating a wide range of stakeholders' knowledge.

Although stakeholder analysis originated from the business sciences, it has evolved into a field that now incorporates economics, political science, game and decision theory, and environmental sciences. Current models of SA apply a variety of tools on both qualitative and quantitative data to understand stakeholders, their positions, influence with other groups, and their interest in a particular reform. In addition, it provides an idea of the impact of reform on political and social forces, illuminates the divergent viewpoints toward proposed reforms and the potential power struggles among groups and individuals, and helps identify potential strategies for negotiating with opposing stakeholders. It is very important to analyze the level of participation of different stakeholders on the one side and their motivations for the enrolment in the participation process on another. The importance of inclusion of stakeholders in decision-making processes is stressed by Kiran (2009), who analyzed the relation between stakeholder enrollment in decision-making and success of development projects related to non-wood forest products in Pakistan. A similar conclusion was given by Christie (2004), who (without the usage of SA) did a comparative study of four marine protected areas in Southeast Asia and found that just by looking at biological elements of protected area without recognition of social demands of stakeholder groups – especially local people – the protected area management regime was in fact a failure. To this end the work of Renard et al. (2001), which gives an overview of six SA applications in protected areas of the Caribbean region, states that for effective enrollment of stakeholders in decision-making, capacity building and project manager communication skills are essential.

Stakeholder analysis (SA) helps to identify current/future opportunities and threats in projects to improve policy design and implementation (Blair and Fottler 1990). SA has been used for various purposes, such as to find compatibility between policy objectives and stakeholder aspirations, and helps managers to choose between short-term and long-term policy objectives or balance conflicting objectives such as conservation, development, equity, and peace (Grimble and Chan 1995). These aspects make SA particularly relevant to natural resource management (Grimble and Wellard 1997).

Practical Implications of Stakeholders Analysis

Stakeholder analysis can be a powerful tool for nature protection researchers because the method allows a visible representation of both variations of power and the different spatial scales in which the stakeholders operate (Rockloff and Lockie 2004). Mushove and Vogel (2005) used stakeholder analysis for forest reserve conservation management in Mozambique to better understand land-use disputes. Stakeholder identification and management (without categorization) uses methodologies that are robust and can be effective in environment that supports performance management and planning (Eliot 2001; Svendsen et al. 2004). Mitchell et al. (1997) gave interesting definition of categories of stakeholders. According to them there are four generic types: supportive, mixed blessing, non-supportive, and marginal. They develop an eight-part stakeholder typology based on assessment of the strength of three attributes: power, legitimacy, and urgency.

Though a stakeholder engagement may accrue a net gain for society, the benefits could go to a party that is not disadvantaged and compromises an already marginalized group (De Lopez 2003). These marginalized populations often depend on the natural resources, and it may be unadvisable to ignore their needs (Grimble and Wellard 1997). Hence, the need for dynamic stakeholders'

interactions and partnerships for conservation has been stressed across some literature (Nepal and Weber 1995; Dentoni et al. 2016). SA can help to foresee sociopolitical obstacles to PAs and identify alliances, both existing and potential.

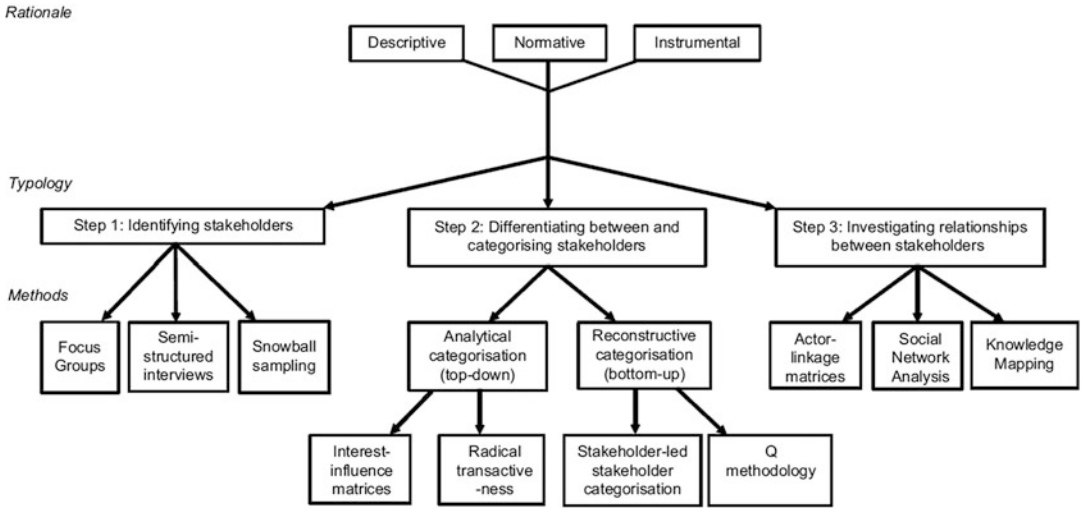
A very detailed analysis of stakeholders is the key toward successfulness of their inclusion. De Lopez et al. (2001) give a research goal with the idea to describe how the functioning of the park distributes its benefits and costs among local population and to formulate strategies for the enrollment of stakeholders in decision-making processes, by which the conservation goals could be reached. The focus of the research was on the issues of deforestation and commercial illegal logging. The high level of analysis was reached through usage of triangulation, which comprised of in-depth interviews (15% of local population), three different contingent valuation applications (targeted at visitor groups), a forest inventory study, and a cost-benefit analysis of management scenarios. Similar level of detailed stakeholder analysis was reached by Cho (2009), who developed an interpretative planning model for a national park system of Korea. His triangulation consisted of in-depth interviews (use of SWAN framework – Stakeholder Wants and Needs Analysis) in combination with Resource Protection Criteria (RPC) and Park Management Criteria (PMC).

Prell et al. (2009) made a case study on Peak District National Park, in which they focused on the relations among stakeholders through application of stakeholder network analysis (more than 200 stakeholder groups identified). In the contrast to a situation with many stakeholder groups, Suman et al. (1999) did a case study on the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, in which they had focused on in-depth scenario analysis of participation of three key stakeholder groups. The following step in stakeholder analysis was done by Jennings and Lockie (2002), who on a case study of the Lower Fitzroy and Port Curtis catchments used the SA as a tool for capacity building. After performing face-to-face interviews and secondary research, the researches created "social maps" of all stakeholder groups, which were later used to build capacity of stakeholders for enrollment in decision-making processes by a series of structured negotiation sessions.

The importance of inclusion of stakeholders in decision-making processes is stressed by Kiran (2009), who analyzed the relation between stakeholder enrollment in decision-making and success of development projects related to non-wood forest products in Pakistan. A similar conclusion was given by Christie (2004), who (without the usage of SA) did a comparative study of four marine protected areas in Southeast Asia and found that just by looking at biological elements of protected area without recognition of social demands of stakeholder groups – especially local people – the protected area management regime was in fact a failure. To this end, the work of Renard et al. (2001), which gives an overview of six SA applications in PA of the Caribbean region, states that for effective enrollment of stakeholders in decision-making, capacity building and the communication skills of a project manager are essential.

Stakeholder analysis is also a building block of the ecosystem approach of IUCN to management of natural resources on local level (Shepard 2004). With this in mind, Brenner (2001) performed a stakeholder analysis in a case study of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. This research identified 29 stakeholder groups and focused on issue priorities and stakeholder power.

The importance of SA in spatial planning was stressed by Enserink (2000), who in his paper pointed out the necessity of usage of SA in the early stages of big infrastructure investments in Netherlands, where traditional reliance on secondary data about stakeholders has led to many public negative actions to big investments. He proposes a "stakeholder quick scan," which is a combination of key informant interviews and focus groups. The "problem" with stakeholder analysis is that it is not easy to define it. Reed et al. (2009) made a comprehensive effort on the topic, where they have developed a three-step ten-point typology of SA (Fig. 2). It can be seen in Fig. 2 that stakeholder analysis can be seen as a three-step process, which consists of identification of stakeholders, their differentiation and categorization, and finally on analysis of interactions between stakeholders.



Stakeholder Engagement in Environmental Decision-Making Processes, Fig. 2 Schematic representation of rationale, typology, and methods for stakeholder analysis. (Source: Reed et al. 2009)

Cross-References

- ▶ Community Based Resources Management
- ▶ Diversity in Human-Nature Relationships
- ▶ People and Community Engagement
- ▶ Social Forestry and Sustainability

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