

# Stakeholder power analysis

## Tool

### Purpose:

Stakeholders are the people who matter to a system. This tool helps understanding of how people affect policies and institutions, and how policies and institutions affect people. It is particularly useful in identifying the winners and losers and in highlighting the challenges that need to be faced to change behaviour, develop capabilities and tackle inequalities.

### Activities:

**Develop purpose and procedures of analysis and initial understanding of the system.** Consider institutional level and purpose, create conditions for quality multi-stakeholder dialogue, and develop initial understanding of the system.

**Identify key stakeholders** through key informants, written records, stakeholder self-selection an identification and verification by other stakeholders. Make special efforts to include the usually voiceless and to establish validity of representation.

**Investigate stakeholders' interests, characteristics and circumstances** to better understand their aims, resources and influences. Techniques from group brainstorming to secondary data collection help to develop and share this understanding.

**Identify patterns and contexts of interaction between stakeholders** to explore factors conflict and cooperation, and thus to enable the identification of common ground, or prevailing conflicts and potential trade-offs.

**Assess stakeholder power and potential** to control decisions that have effects on critical policies and institutions – this helps to establish tactics for working with each group.

### Keep in Mind

★ *Stakeholder power analysis* is particularly useful for assisting in decision-making situations where various stakeholders have competing interests, resources are limited, and stakeholder needs must be appropriately balanced.

★ *Stakeholder power analysis* can be used progressively to empower important but marginalised groups, and to improve policies and institutions. But the techniques can also be used more cynically to work out who should be manipulated, undermined or disposed of.



### Four general strategies for stakeholder relations management

| Stakeholder power / potential | High potential                               | Low potential                    |
|-------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| High power                    | Collaborate with                             | Mitigate impacts, defend against |
| Low power                     | Involve, build capacity and secure interests | Monitor or ignore                |

**Assess options and use the findings to make progress.** To be useful, the analysis of the first five steps needs to be summarised in a form where everyone's interests and issues can be seen together. A series of stakeholder tables may be used to organise information about interests, power, influence and involvement of each key stakeholder or group. This can lead to stakeholder-specific recommendations as a basis for stakeholder dialogue.

Stakeholder power analysis may be used at a variety of **levels and purposes:**

- **Broad-level strategic process** - to scope, build momentum and monitor a process
- **Institution or business** - to examine the health of an organisation and plan changes
- **Project or programme** - to design, steer and monitor a project
- **Particular decision** - to predict the consequences of a decision, and plan to deal with them

★ *Stakeholder power analysis* can get to the heart of a problem – but on its own is unlikely to provide full solutions. Those conducting stakeholder power analysis need to be aware of and responsible for the "Pandora's Box" of stakeholder relationships that open up.

#### Further information

Find full tool and other related tools and resources at:  
[www.policy-powertools.org](http://www.policy-powertools.org)

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