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# 4 Planning effective stakeholder participation

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*Planning and sharing of plans for stakeholder participation help stakeholders to understand the opportunities for participation, and the role they can have in designing, implementing and assessing policies. It helps them to decide how and when they want to participate, and to prepare for their participation. Planning stakeholder participation involves identifying activities, methods, timing, roles, responsibilities and resources to meet the defined objectives of stakeholder participation effectively and efficiently throughout the policy design and implementation cycle.*

## Checklist of key recommendations

- Commence stakeholder participation at the start of, and continue it throughout, the policy design and implementation cycle
- Determine the objectives and scope of stakeholder participation before starting stakeholder participation activities
- Make an initial identification of stakeholder groups at the start of planning, and establish processes for representatives of these groups to inform decisions on planning, including on the objectives of, and opportunities for, stakeholder participation
- Develop a stakeholder participation plan that specifies the activities, methods, timing, roles, responsibilities, reporting and resources that are required to meet the identified objectives of stakeholder participation
- Publish the stakeholder participation plan and disseminate it to stakeholders
- Revise and improve the stakeholder participation plan iteratively after each phase of its implementation

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### 4.1 Identifying the objectives for stakeholder participation

It is a *key recommendation* to commence stakeholder participation at the start of, and continue it throughout, the policy design and implementation cycle. Stakeholder participation must have a purpose. It is a *key recommendation* to determine the objectives and scope of stakeholder participation

before starting stakeholder participation activities (see [Box 4.1](#)). The primary objective may be to ensure that the policy design, implementation and assessment processes are informed by a well-represented understanding of stakeholder views, knowledge and interests. Stakeholder participation can also foster positive stakeholder relationships, including interpersonal relationships, during a process that might involve a wide divergence of views, opinions, interests and expectations. It can enable stakeholder learning – including learning about the perspectives of other stakeholders. This understanding and learning can enhance the contributions of stakeholders, and enable them to assume and share responsibility for policies (see [Chapter 1](#) for rationale and [Chapter 2](#) for potential objectives of stakeholder participation). When defining the scope of participation, it is important to determine the extent to which participation can influence design of a policy without compromising the policy goals (e.g. emissions reduction goals).

The mandate for conducting stakeholder participation should be clearly established and assigned by the entity responsible for the design, implementation and assessment of the policy. Where the lead entity lacks the appropriate competencies for conducting stakeholder participation, assistance from others should be sought to facilitate and manage the different elements of participation (see [Part II](#) of this guide for details on the elements of effective stakeholder participation).

It is a *key recommendation* to make an initial identification of stakeholder groups at the start of planning, and establish processes for representatives of these groups to inform decisions on planning, including on the objectives of, and opportunities for, stakeholder participation. When starting to plan stakeholder participation, users should conduct an initial identification of stakeholder groups and involve stakeholders from these groups in defining the objectives of the participation. The initial objectives and scope of the participation should be adjusted based on input received from stakeholders.

**BOX 4.1****Examples of requirements relating to involuntary resettlement, indigenous peoples and cultural heritage**

When setting objectives, identify and ensure conformity with:

- national legal requirements and norms for stakeholder participation in public policies
- requirements of specific donors
- international treaties, conventions and other agreements that the country is party to.

These are likely to include requirements for disclosure, impact assessments and consultations. In the case of policies involving involuntary resettlement, indigenous peoples or cultural heritage, special requirements for stakeholder participation in country legislation, donor policies and/or international law may apply. The World Bank's *Environmental and Social Framework* (2017)<sup>13</sup> provides standards relating to involuntary resettlement, indigenous peoples and cultural heritage, as well as standards for information disclosure and stakeholder engagement:

- Environmental and Social Standard 5: Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement
- Environmental and Social Standard 7: Indigenous Peoples
- Environmental and Social Standard 8: Cultural Heritage
- Environmental and Social Standard 10: Information Disclosure and Stakeholder Engagement.

United Nations documents outlining special provisions relating to indigenous peoples include:

- Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007)
- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) *Indigenous Peoples and the United Nations Human Rights System* (2013)<sup>14</sup>
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) *Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples' Issues* (2008)<sup>15</sup>
- OHCHR *Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights* (2011)<sup>16</sup>
- UN-REDD (reducing emissions from deforestation and from forest degradation) Programme *Guidelines on Free, Prior and Informed Consent* (2013)<sup>17</sup>
- OHCHR reports of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples<sup>18</sup> and the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to the Human Rights Council<sup>19</sup>
- OHCHR reports of the Working Group on the Issue of Human Rights and Transnational Corporations and Other Business Enterprises (2013).<sup>20</sup>

**4.2 Developing a stakeholder participation plan**

It is a *key recommendation* to develop a stakeholder participation plan that specifies the activities, methods, timing, roles, responsibilities, reporting and resources that are required to meet the identified objectives of stakeholder participation. Once engaged, stakeholders should be involved in

a review of the initial stakeholder participation plan to increase the likelihood that it meets its intended purpose and objectives. It is a *key recommendation* to publish the stakeholder participation plan and disseminate it to stakeholders.

<sup>13</sup> Available at: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/383011492423734099/pdf/114278-WP-REVISED-PUBLIC-Environmental-and-Social-Framework.pdf>.

<sup>14</sup> Available at: [www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/fs9Rev.2.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/fs9Rev.2.pdf).

<sup>15</sup> Available at: [www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfi/documents/UNDG\\_guidelines\\_EN.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfi/documents/UNDG_guidelines_EN.pdf).

<sup>16</sup> Available at: [www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/GuidingPrinciplesBusinessHR\\_EN.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/GuidingPrinciplesBusinessHR_EN.pdf).

<sup>17</sup> Available at: [www.unclearn.org/sites/default/files/inventory/un-redd05.pdf](http://www.unclearn.org/sites/default/files/inventory/un-redd05.pdf).

<sup>18</sup> Available at: [www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IPeoples/EMRIP/Pages/EMRIIndex.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IPeoples/EMRIP/Pages/EMRIIndex.aspx).

<sup>19</sup> Available at: [www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IPeoples/SRIndigenousPeoples/Pages/SRIPeoplesIndex.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IPeoples/SRIndigenousPeoples/Pages/SRIPeoplesIndex.aspx)

<sup>20</sup> Available at: [www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Business/Pages/WGHRandtransnationalcorporationsandotherbusiness.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Business/Pages/WGHRandtransnationalcorporationsandotherbusiness.aspx).

#### Planning for effective stakeholder participation:

- begins at the start of the overall planning process for the policy
- continues actively on an iterative basis, as risks, impacts or new context issues arise, enabling adaptive management
- identifies methods and approaches that are gender-sensitive and socioculturally appropriate, and that address barriers to participation, using concepts, language and terminology that are understandable to stakeholders
- uses or builds on consultation and participation structures and processes already in use in the country that have proven to be effective and legitimate, based on previously reported experiences
- links or integrates with related stakeholder participation processes for other policies
- includes measures to ensure that all participation is free from external manipulation, interference, coercion, discrimination and intimidation
- ensures that a full range of stakeholders are identified and that:
  - » their differences and barriers to participation are understood (see [Chapter 5](#))
  - » multi-stakeholder bodies enable equitable and balanced representation and participation of all stakeholder groups to support decision-making (see [Chapter 6](#))
  - » all relevant information is understandable, publicly accessible and disseminated to stakeholders in a timely manner (see [Chapter 7](#))
  - » socioculturally appropriate and gender-sensitive consultations enable effective exchange of information between stakeholders, so that diverse stakeholders can provide input reflecting their needs and interests (see [Chapter 8](#))
  - » fair, impartial, accessible and responsive grievance redress mechanisms are in place to ensure that grievances are addressed in an efficient and timely manner (see [Chapter 9](#))
  - » the stakeholder participation process is documented and reported (see [Chapter 10](#)).

An example of a stakeholder participation process is provided in [Box 4.2](#). [Box 4.3](#) describes the information that should be provided in a stakeholder participation plan.

#### BOX 4.2

##### **Example of how the elements of effective stakeholder participation can be addressed iteratively throughout the stakeholder participation process**

- Make initial identification of stakeholder groups.
- Establish initial advisory group.
- Develop initial plan for stakeholder engagement.
- Refine identification of stakeholder groups.
- Revise composition of advisory group and/or other governance bodies.
- Assess opportunities for, and barriers to, stakeholder participation.
- Refine plan for stakeholder engagement, including methods to be used.
- Provide all relevant information to stakeholders, including about policies, their impacts (if known), process for impact assessment and opportunities to participate.
- Conduct consultations.
- Use information to improve the impact assessment.
- Provide feedback to stakeholders on how their input has been used.
- Communicate the impacts of policies to stakeholders.

**BOX 4.3****What is a stakeholder participation plan?**

A stakeholder participation plan describes the following:

- The objectives of stakeholder participation, incorporating stakeholder expectations for their participation.
- The process for identifying, mapping and understanding stakeholders (e.g. understanding their interest in, and influence over, the policy), and capacity-building or other approaches needed to enable effective participation of different stakeholder groups, including marginalized groups.
- The timing and methods by which stakeholders will participate throughout the policy design and implementation cycle. This includes explaining the approaches that will be used to enable effective participation of all stakeholder groups.
- The type and timing of information to be communicated to different stakeholders, setting out how communication with stakeholders will be handled throughout the policy design and implementation cycle. Dedicated approaches and different levels of resources may be needed for communication with different stakeholder groups so that they can obtain the information they need, in a timely manner, about the issues that potentially affect them.
- The measures that will be used to remove barriers to participation for stakeholder groups, including marginalized groups.
- How the input of different stakeholder groups will be captured.
- Governance arrangements for stakeholder participation, including decision-making, oversight, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the stakeholder participation process, and links with governance arrangements for the policy.
- Mechanisms for feedback and for grievance redress.
- Processes to evaluate effectiveness of stakeholder participation and improve the stakeholder participation plan after each phase of its implementation.
- Processes for reporting, disclosure and dissemination of stakeholder participation activities.
- Financial and other resources required and available for implementation of all elements of the stakeholder participation plan. These include ongoing costs, such as for the functioning of multi-stakeholder bodies, and for feedback and grievance redress mechanisms.

### 4.3 Adopting an iterative approach to planning

It is a *key recommendation* to revise and improve the stakeholder participation plan iteratively after each phase of its implementation. Stakeholder participation should be an inclusive process conducted throughout the policy design and implementation cycle. An iterative approach to planning increases the effectiveness of stakeholder participation and enables adaptive management. Through review and feedback, participants in the stakeholder participation process identify areas where improvement is needed and seek effective ways to make these improvements.

Adaptive management – involving monitoring, evaluating and adjusting plans throughout the process – allows uncertainty to be addressed by maintaining flexibility in planning. Iterative planning for adaptive management recognizes that most initiatives go through changes. For example, the

scope might expand or shrink, budgets or other resources might change, the timeline might change, the stakeholders might change, and the tasks might present new challenges.

It is helpful to discuss and plan stakeholder participation in phases – for example, revisiting the planning at the start of each stage of policy design and implementation. Users should meet with representatives of the identified stakeholder groups at the start of each phase of the stakeholder participation process, and/or each stage of policy design and implementation, to review the experiences of the prior phase or stage and consider new context for the stakeholder participation plan moving forward.