Stakeholder Analysis – a set of tools

Identifying actors relevant to the cooperation system and getting to know their perceptions and perspectives.

Background

Why should you undertake a stakeholder analysis for your project, your organization, your strategy? There are ten key benefits of conducting a stakeholder analysis:

1. To identify and getting to know the key stakeholders (and other actors) that are involved in your endeavor.
2. To broaden your perspective and enrich your perception of the environment and relevant circumstances through knowledge sharing and learning
3. To get additional resources (i.e., people, knowledge and expertise, time, money) by engaging with influential stakeholders.
4. To increase the quality and outreach of the project / organization by tapping the experience and expertise from stakeholders.
5. To make visible the diversity of identities and interests and adapt the design of the project to the real needs and interest of key stakeholders.
6. To strengthen the participation of key stakeholders in strategy formulation, problem-solving and monitoring.
7. To better focus on critical issues and risks that should be mitigated.
8. To broaden and sharpen your perception of risks and strengthen your resilience.
9. To better communicate the benefits of the project within the organization and facilitate the mainstreaming of results and procedures.
10. To enable and facilitate the mainstreaming of the experience and a faster adoption of the change that a project brings.

Stakeholder analysis is a basic management tool that contributes to programme and project design by helping to identify and analyse the stakeholders, their interests and their interrelations. The stakeholder analysis helps to better understand the dynamics in your organization or project.

Stakeholder or actors´ analysis should be used as an integrated tool along the programme management cycle because the best fit set of actors to work with can and will change according to the dynamics of the context.

Objectives

Understanding the context

Every development programme is part of its context and interacts strongly with all the different stakeholders that form the programme environment.

Various actors are either directly involved in the programme or are indirectly influencing the programme through their position or their specific resources. The stakeholder analysis allows us to identify and analyse the different parties that can make or break a development programme in a specific context.

Analysing the different stakeholders

Development programmes face different realities. Each party involved has a different perspective and perception. The stakeholder analysis helps us to find out about and take into account the variety of perspectives and perceptions of the different actors.

Identifying conflicts / coalitions / alliances between stakeholders

The stakeholder analysis helps us to find out what the relations are between different stakeholders.

- Knowing who's in conflict with whom prevents the cooperation programme 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

Selecting the right partners

Successful development programmes are planned, implemented and monitored by multiple actors. To be able to find partners that match our profile, we first have to be clear about what resources we are looking for, and second finding out which actor has specific resources at his disposal that would bring an added value to the programme.

When choosing cooperation partners, it is important to not only focus on the most powerful actors in the programme environment but to try to identify the actors that dispose of complementary resources to the ones our cooperation system already has.

Identifying and working with resistant and sceptic stakeholders

Cooperation programmes are always about change. Change always sparks resistance and scepticism as it forces people and institutions to move away from deeply engrained mental models. Change can create uncertainties and worries among the actors involved, that could lead to open or hidden resistance.

Localising resistance, scepticism and worries among the different actors, and dealing with them in a constructive way is key for the success of every cooperation programme. Try to work with resistant actors, don't exclude them.

Process: Selection of Tools

The following tools can be used separately or in different combinations, depending on the depth of the stakeholder analysis you wish to do.

(A) Stakeholder Mapping: getting a general overview of the stakeholder landscape

1. Focus

To get an overview of the people and organisations liable to have an influence on the planned programme activities, we map out the relevant stakeholders, and identify the different kinds of stakeholders as well as their interrelations. This allows us,

- to draw basic conclusions about alliances as well as power imbalances and potential conflicts among the various players

- to make first assumptions about the influence certain actors have on the cooperation programme.

- to get important hints about which actors we do not have enough information or that have not been considered by the programme so far (white spots)

- to get valuable information that can be used for strategic programme planning and future activities

2. Procedure

1. Identification and drawing of actors who are relevant for the issue at stake.

Graphical elements:
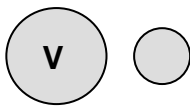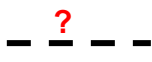
V   ◯   All actors are represented by circles. The bigger the circle the bigger the influence of the actor in this context.
Circles with the letter „V" stand for veto players, meaning that these actors have the power resources to seriously hinder or block cooperation programmes.

2. Analysis of the relations / ties between actors (strength of the ties, alliances, cooperation arrangements, conflicts etc.)

Graphical elements:

———————   Normal lines represent close relations (frequency of contacts, exchange of information, coordination, mutual trust, matching interests etc.).

? - - - - -   Dotted lines represent weak or informal relations. A question mark is added if the relation is not clear.

═══════   Double lines represent institutionally established alliances and cooperation.

——————▶   Arrows represent the direction of imbalanced relations.

——⚡——   Lines interrupted by a flash represent tensions between actors, conflicts etc.

——╫——   Cross lines represent interrupted and broken relations between actors.

3. Example for the visualisation of a stakeholder mapping:
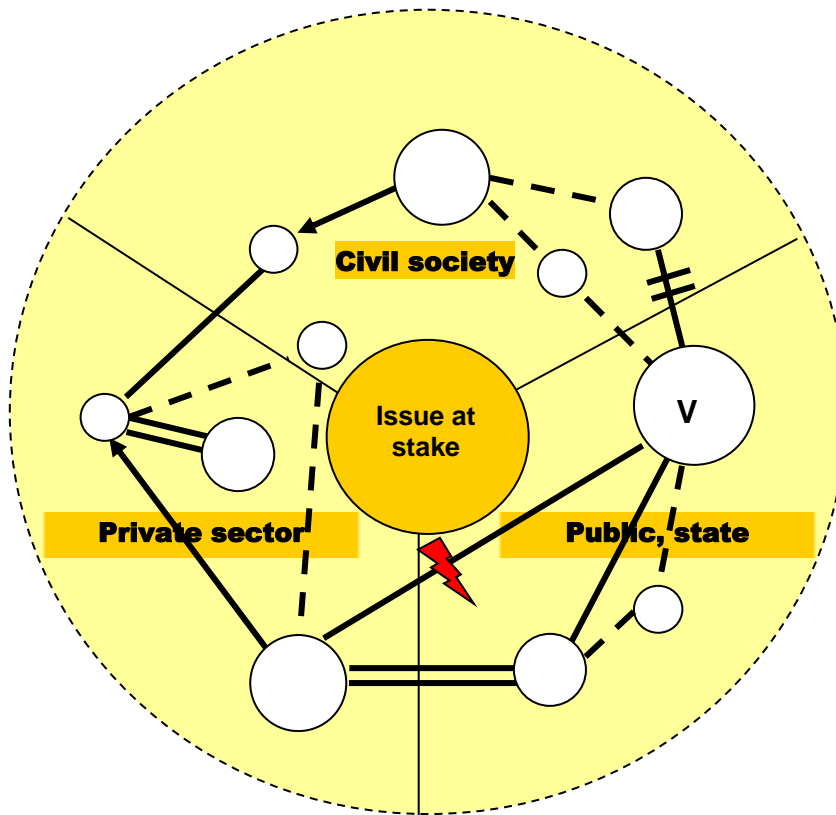
To draw a meaningful stakeholder map, three key points have to be kept in mind:

(i) Be clear about the scope of the mapping
To limit the number of actors appearing on the map, the mapping should be based on a clearly defined question.
→ Guiding question: What is the issue at stake?

(ii) Define time and periodicity
Actors build a dynamic and interdependent network of relations that can alter quickly. Hence, the moment actor's relations are analysed does matter.
→ Guiding question: In what moment do we draw the stakeholder map, and when does it need to be updated?

(iii) Take into account different perspectives and perceptions
Each actor has its own perspective and perception. A stakeholder map reflects only the perspective of the people involved in the drawing of the map.
→ Guiding question: Who shall we involve in the making of the stakeholder map? Which stakeholder maps shall we compare with each other?

odcp

organization development
culture & politics

(B) Stakeholder Profiles (the 4 A's): getting to know the different stakeholders

1. Focus

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

Actor: What's the actor's name, what's his function?

Agenda: What's the actor's mandate, what's his mission?

Arena: In what field is the actor active, where is he present?

Alliances: With which other actors is the actor allied, how is he interconnected?

Answering these questions allows us to make a first statement regarding the relative importance of certain actors for the programme. Alliances between actors become visible and we have an indication of the dynamics of the stakeholder landscape.

2. Procedure

Actor Name, function	Agenda Mandate / mission, strategic objectives	Arena Field of action, outreach	Alliances Relations with other actors according to ABCD[1]
Actor 1			
Actor 2			
Actor 3			
Actor n			

(C) Stakeholder Positioning: making out the different interests of the programme stakeholders

1. Focus

This instrument is focussing on the different perspectives of the key stakeholder in regard to the objectives of the cooperation programme.

To define a key stakeholder, we look at three core functions that are crucial for holding a key position in the programme context:

a) Legitimacy
The actor has been elected or nominated to legally hold an important position of a governmental or non-governmental institution.

---

[1] A: Institutionalised relation, B: Regular exchange of information, C: Coordinated activities, D: Co-production using joint resources

odcp organization development
culture & politics

b) Resources

The actor is disposing of substantial material and immaterial resources (financial resources, rights on or control over natural resources, expertise and knowledge, etc.) that make him an influential player in the programme context.

c) Network

The actor has a great number of contacts and strong ties to other key players. Hence partnering with this actor means becoming part of and benefiting from an already existing network.
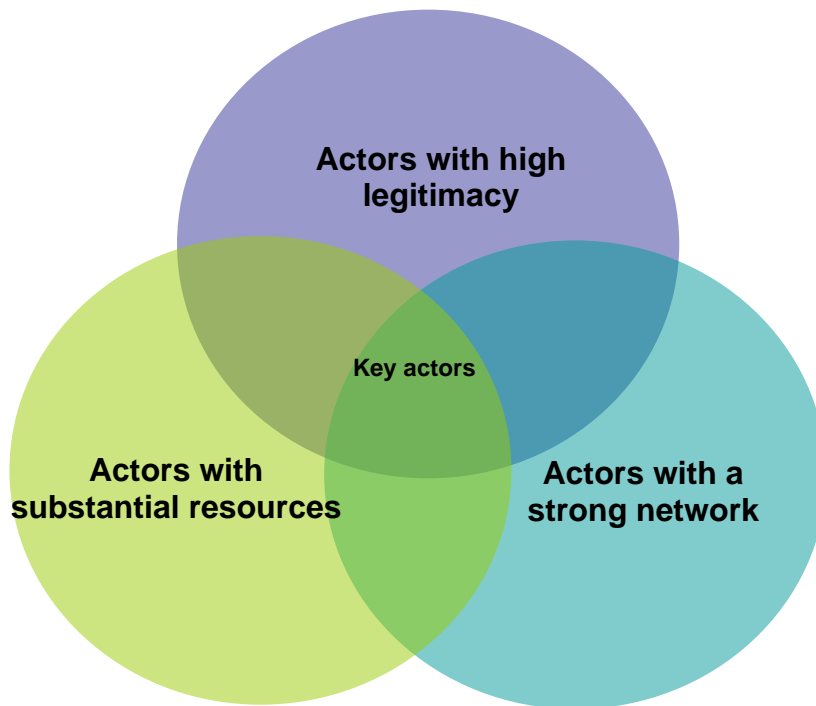
2. Procedure

To map out the interests of the key stakeholders and their position in regard to the main objectives and interests of the cooperation programme, we fill in the following tables:

Main objectives and interests of the cooperation programme:

- …
- …
- …
- …

odcp

organization development
culture & politics

Key stakeholder 1: …				
Main interests in regard to the programme objectives / context:	Are the interests in line with the programme objectives?			
	- -	**-**	**+**	**++**
• …				
• …				
• …				
Remarks:				

Key stakeholder 2: …				
Main interests in regard to the programme objectives / context:	Are the interests in line with the programme objectives?			
	- -	**-**	**+**	**++**
• …				
• …				
• …				
Remarks:				

Key stakeholder 3: …				
Main interests in regard to the programme objectives / context:	Are the interests in line with the programme objectives?			
	- -	**-**	**+**	**++**
• …				
• …				
• …				
Remarks:				

Stakeholder Matrix: Arrange and organize the key stakeholders

High Influence Influence Extent to which these stakeholders buy-in / participation / involvement is needed to move forward. Low influence	**Maintain confidence** Put enough information and keep these people satisfied, but not so much that they become bored with your message.	**Cooperate** Clear messages and trust building. You must fully engage and collaborate with these people, and make the greatest efforts to make them participate.
	Wait and see Monitor these people, but don't bore them with excessive communication.	**Keep informed** Adequately inform these people, and ensure that no major issues are arising. People in this category can often be helpful with their expertise in specific fields.
	Low **Impact** **High** Extent to which the project will impact this stakeholder	

Be aware: In the course of a project, stakeholders may change their position!

(D) Gender checklist: integrating a gender perspective into the stakeholder analysis

1. Focus

Every cooperation programme should be carried out in a gender-sensitive way. We thus have to ensure that the specific needs and interests of women and men are also incorporated in the analysis of the programme stakeholders.
A gender-sensitive stakeholder analysis in conflict situations takes into account the following issues:

- **Reinforcement of patriarchal gender relations**
  Patriarchal gender relations are often reinforced and institutionalised in conflict situations, thereby resulting in deterioration in the status of women.

- **Unequal access to and control over resources**
  Access to and control over resources largely depends on the existing distribution of power and ownership and is defined according to various exclusion criteria. One of these exclusion criteria is gender: rights of access to resources and ownership often discriminate against women.

- **Disempowerment of women**
  The denial of access to and control over resources form a barrier that hinders especially women from participating in the social, political and commercial life of their community. This exclusion prevents women from participating in the political arena.

- **Women's capacity to build peace**
  Women tend to be excluded from formal peace negotiations. Yet there is a long history of women's participation in efforts to minimise hostility and begin reconstruction. Participation of women in the peace process can contribute significantly to the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. Without an explicit gender equality focus, cooperation programmes may fail to gain from women's contributions – both formal and informal – in the reconstruction of their societies.

2. Procedure

By using the following checklist, we incorporate the gender issue into all of the tools described above (tools A to E):

Tool	Gender Check
Stakeholder Mapping	Did we make out specific gender actors that are hindered from participating in the social, commercial and political life of their communities, and therefore have little visibility? How would the stakeholder map look if we draw the actors in regard to their gender-sensitivity?
Stakeholder Profiles	Did we identify actors with specific gender agendas? Did we make out conflicts / alliances between stakeholders due to gender issues?
Stakeholder Positioning	Did we find out about the stakeholder's position considering gender issues? Did we make out stakeholders that are particularly opposed to / open to gender issues?
Stakeholder Screening	Did we identify potential partners that could support the programmes specific gender activities? Did we think about with what resources we could support marginalised gender actors?

(D) Stakeholder Screening: finding complementary partners for your programme

1. Focus

Cooperation programmes are always 'joint ventures' between a variety of institutions and organisations on different levels.
To be able to tap the full potential of such cooperation systems, it is crucial to identify and choose the right partners for a specific programme. Only if the partners are complementary in resources and skills, an added value can be generated by working in cooperation systems.

This tool allows us to screen the stakeholder landscape for potential complementary partners by identifying the stakeholder's power profile and comparing them with the profile of your own organisation. We look at the power resources an actor has at his disposal and that could be an added value for the cooperation programme:

- **Financial Power**: the actor has at his disposal substantial financial resources which could be brought to the programme.

- **Position Power**: the actor holds an influential position in a relevant institutional structure and could therefore be an important door opener on the institutional level, but also increase the reputation of the programme.

- **Expert Power**: the actor has specific knowledge and experience that could help the programme to better understand the local context, specific technical issues, etc. and thus increase the programme's expert capacity.

- **Networking Power**: the actor is well-connected with other relevant stakeholders and networks and has therefore the capacity to increase the programme's leverage and outreach.

- **Information Power**: the actor controls or influences information and communication channels and could thus shape the public opinion in favour of the cooperation programme


2. Procedure

a) Visualisation

To visualise both, the profile of our own organisation, as well as the profile of potential partners, we rate the five power resources for ourselves as well as for every stakeholder and draw the profile in the structure below.
The guiding question is:

Do we / the stakeholders have this specific power resource at our / their disposal?
→ the scale goes from 0 (does not dispose of this power resource at all) to 3 (is very powerful in this respect)
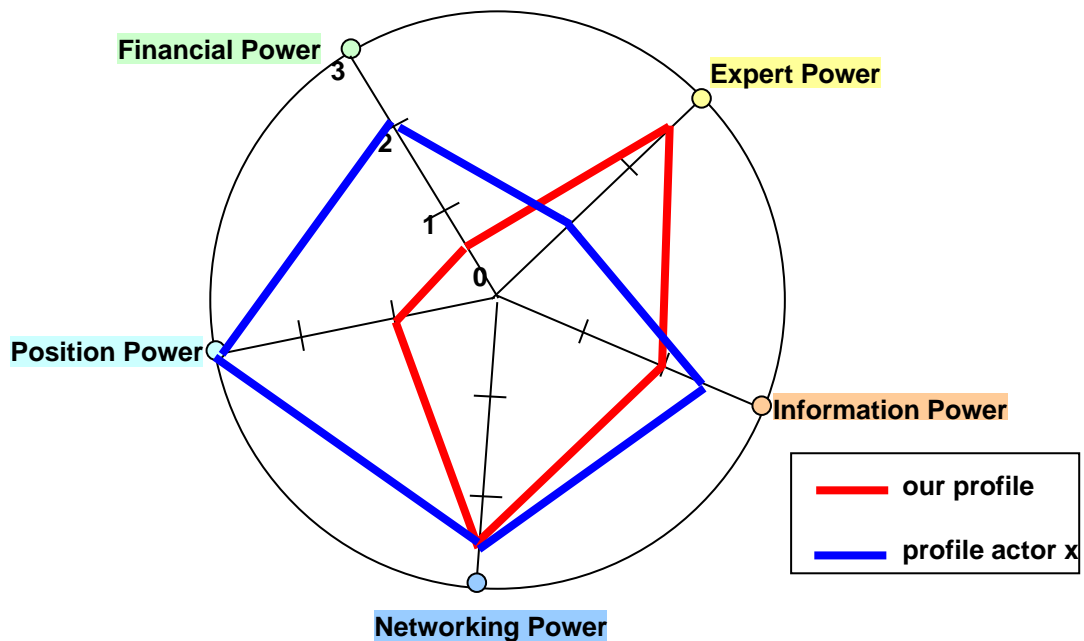
b) Analysis

By looking at the visualisation of the actor profiles we can clearly see:
    1) where we have our white spots, meaning where we need support, and
    2) where potential partners have their strengths and weaknesses

The drawing of the profiles gives us an indication whether a potential partner is able to bring an added value to our programme, respectively disposes of additional power resources to ours.

odcp.2010/2018