



ACTION AREA 1: STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION, ENGAGEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT

Key messages

- For inclusion of all sections of society in access to infrastructure and its benefits, it is crucial to first understand which stakeholders – people, groups or communities – are at risk of being excluded and what are the specific opportunities and barriers to their inclusion.
- Traditional stakeholder mapping and engagement will tend to most readily identify those stakeholders with the most influence on the implementation of an infrastructure project, or those who are most impacted by it. This approach may, however, overlook persons, groups, communities or organisations who are at risk of being under-served or excluded during the development and implementation of the project.
- Stakeholder identification and engagement should commence from a very early stage of planning the project, when there is most scope for successfully influencing options and implementing change to respond to needs. It must also continue throughout the lifecycle of the project, offering opportunity to further strengthen benefits and feedback to future designs. There should be a documented process to collect feedback, to present it to technical teams for consideration, to evaluate proposed changes and to feed this back to stakeholders.
- Weak stakeholder engagement on a large infrastructure project decreases the likelihood of it being endorsed by society as a whole (the so-called ‘social licence’ to proceed) and increases the social risks, leading to delays and cost overruns.
- Consideration of stakeholders can occur at a number of different levels, from the provision of information to stakeholders to empowerment of stakeholders. Successful stakeholder engagement should seek to empower previously excluded groups, whereas information campaigns, in which feedback is not adequately provided, can lead to stakeholder fatigue and disengagement.
- The relevant stakeholders, and the barriers they face, will be specific to each project. For example, people or groups that may have been previously excluded could include low-income groups, women, children, the elderly, people with disabilities, minority groups, and those without formal land title.

Three key practices have been identified under this Action Area, for which further detail and guidance is given in the sections below:

Data Collection and Stakeholder Identification

Inclusive Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder Empowerment

DEFINITIONS AND CONTEXT

Definitions

Stakeholders are generally considered to be a person, group, community or organisation who are impacted by, or can influence, the implementation of an infrastructure project.

In the context of inclusive infrastructure, **stakeholder identification** refers to the identification of persons, groups, communities or organisations who are at risk of being under-served or excluded during the development, implementation and operation of an infrastructure policy, program or project.

Stakeholder engagement is the process of interacting with and involving a person, groups, communities or organisations who may be affected by the policy, program or project, and **inclusive stakeholder engagement** should involve all disadvantaged target groups, including low-income, women and other marginalised groups, that are often at risk of being overlooked in stakeholder consultations. A structured and thorough stakeholder management approach identifies the relevant stakeholders for the specific policy, program or project, and defines processes that establish a positive and transparent relationship with them¹⁰.

Stakeholder empowerment is the process of increasing the ability and confidence of stakeholders to make choices and decisions, and access opportunities relating to their personal development and issues that concern them. This may be through access to information, resources, capabilities or institutional changes¹¹.

Context

Stakeholder engagement is crucial to the successful delivery of any policy, program or project. However, it is particularly important to inclusive infrastructure because, when well-targeted, it can enable the identification of and engagement with persons, groups, communities and organisations at risk of being excluded and, consequently, not able to benefit from the infrastructure asset being created.

Stakeholders who are the most vulnerable and at risk of not being given an opportunity to share their expectations and opinions should be given special attention throughout the stakeholder engagement process. This targeted approach increases policy-makers' and project planners' understanding of who is under-served or vulnerable and why, and their needs. As a result, they are better able to address the issues preventing inclusion; to design for specific stakeholder requirements; and to broaden the scope of intended beneficiaries for the infrastructure service.

Likewise, considering elements of inclusivity in infrastructure development can also result in increased stakeholder engagement and awareness throughout the project lifecycle. It is crucial to begin the process at an early stage, to inform the upstream phases of infrastructure planning and provide insights into potential improvements, rather than leave it until later stages when fewer aspects of the project can be changed. By starting with only a narrow view of project options and limited consideration of stakeholder groups, infrastructure planners can miss the opportunity to explore more innovative solutions that may offer better social value¹². Early stakeholder engagement may also benefit the project in supporting the identification of wider economic benefits, intangible benefits and unanticipated tangible benefits that help to strengthen its business case.

A robust stakeholder engagement and communication plan provides a framework applicable throughout the project lifecycle, starting from the planning stage. This plan can be developed to favour proactive, targeted and direct engagement with groups at risk of being excluded in a manner sensitive to their requirements¹³. Following international best practices by ensuring groups at risk of being excluded or under-served have access to information will create greater transparency of intention(s) and content.

Proactive engagement and the provision of communication platforms, where all stakeholders can access information and freely express their opinions, empowers people. It helps them to understand infrastructure plans and to have a positive influence on the design of the infrastructure and services that affect them.

¹⁰ Further resources can be found at <https://www.apm.org.uk/resources/find-a-resource/stakeholder-engagement/>

¹¹ Voice, Empowerment and Accountability: Topic Guide, (Combaz & Mcloughlin, 2014)

¹² The Green Book, Central Government guide on appraisal and evaluation, (HM Treasury, 2018)

¹³ International best practice includes Free, Prior and Informed Consultation (FPIC)

As illustrated in the *U.S. Bank Stadium Case Study*, an oversight committee (the Stadium Equity Oversight Committee) proactively hosted monthly meetings, which were open to the public, to start a conversation with the community, communicate the values of the project, and listen to issues associated with the development of the project.

Approaching stakeholder engagement with inclusivity in mind may increase the credibility of the project developers and/or owners. If all members of society are considered, acceptance of a project can increase. It can also help to create a shared and binding mission. If everyone is given the opportunity to understand how they can benefit from a development, it can give them a sense of belonging, ownership and responsibility, which contributes to the longer-term sustainability of the project. Stakeholders may also recognise the impact of the project on society and the economy, going beyond individual outcomes.

Where vulnerable stakeholders, or those representing the needs of vulnerable groups, influence the final design, the project will better respond to their needs. If the developer takes measures to proactively address specific needs, there is likely to be greater support and buy-in for a project.

Whether it is at policy or project level, stakeholder engagement can also prompt long-term behavioural changes and influence people's perception. Increased engagement improves awareness and demonstrates greater social responsibility. Such interventions may also reduce social risk on a project and, consequently, related costs¹⁴.

In general, there may be some variation in the optimal level of stakeholder engagement and empowerment in different contexts, such as between developing and higher income countries, particularly in regard to certain types of infrastructure, such as utilities. In developing countries where access to water and electricity is limited, women, who bear much of the burden of water collection, should be involved in key decisions, such as where water points should be located. In higher income countries with universal access to water, which is taken for granted, any stakeholder input into decision-making is more likely to be related to payment mechanisms and how they are managed to ensure that people with lower incomes can maintain access.

¹⁴ The 2017 Australian Infrastructure and Community Survey conducted by the Next Generation Engagement Program found that stakeholder and community pressure was the leading cause of project delay.

ANALYSIS AND GUIDANCE ON PRACTICES

DATA COLLECTION AND STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION

Overview

For improving inclusion in access to infrastructure and its benefits, it is crucial to first understand which stakeholders are at risk of being excluded or under-served. This is supported through the collection of disaggregated data and analytical methods focusing on inclusive criteria to identify stakeholders and their needs. Where available, existing data and methodologies for data analysis can be built upon, amended or adapted to ensure inclusive benefits are maximised. This information can then be used to proactively influence the policy process and project planning activities in favour of vulnerable groups at an early stage.

Robust data collection methods, including quantitative and qualitative surveys, enable specific stakeholder groups to be identified; allow decision-makers to be more targeted in the formulation of a policy or the development and implementation of a project; and enable longer-term monitoring and evaluation of outcomes against a baseline. This information can also feedback into reforms and future project planning.

Relevance

Data collection and assessment methods are relevant at a policy and project level.

At the policy level:

- *Creating a legal requirement for project and program data collection.* Collection and assessment requirements and guidelines for programs and projects can be mandated by law.
- *Informing policy and decision-making and future good practice.* The data collected and assessments undertaken can be used as a basis to develop policy documents (e.g. white papers, consultation papers, cabinet proposals) that aim to inform the legislative body and support the decision-making process.
- Further consideration of the assessment of the needs of vulnerable groups in the development of policies and strategies is given under Action Area 3: Policy, Regulation and Standards.

At the project level:

- *Using data for strategic purposes throughout the project lifecycle.* Data can be used to help determine the project's strategy, mission, objectives, stakeholder engagement approach, communication plans, improved design, and as an overall guidance framework.
- *Monitoring and evaluation of impact.* Data can be used to define the parameters for project monitoring and long-term evaluation of inclusivity impacts.
- *Sharing of data.* Appropriate sharing of data and evaluation findings between projects has the potential to help strengthen future projects and improve beneficial outcomes on inclusiveness.

This practice is applicable to all infrastructure sectors, however there is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach. The resources and level of effort put into data collection will differ according to the specific inclusivity objectives of the project, its scale and its location. For example, in the water sector, low-income groups are often at most risk of lacking access to services. As noted above, the responsibility for collecting water often falls to women. Women with disabilities who are not able to perform this physically demanding role may, therefore, not have access to clean water or safe sanitation. Collecting data on the disaggregated needs of different stakeholders is crucial to evaluate their needs and incorporate them into the project design.

Guidance**1. Create disaggregated data by gender, income, age, location, occupation, expenditure profile, education, disability, etc.**

As an example, disaggregated data will provide the necessary basis for gender analysis and gender responsive planning and management.

Existing data sources should be assessed and used, but the existing databases may not provide the extent of disaggregation required, in which case supplementary data collection will be necessary. Useful existing sources of information may include census data, demographic health survey information, poverty mapping surveys, etc.

2. Use disaggregated data to identify stakeholders and to help decide which groups may require specific attention in the development of the project.

It is important to establish a clear baseline with a good understanding of the demographics of the communities – such as whether there is a high homeless population, elderly population, migrant population, people of low socioeconomic status, etc.

Care should be taken to ensure that potentially under-served or vulnerable groups are part of the stakeholder engagement process and its design. Connecting with local social services and non-government organisations (NGOs) to get their input on issues of inclusion for the location in question can help to define the specific needs in the communities, especially in terms of mental health, gender, disability, language, etc.

One of the challenges with engaging vulnerable or marginalised stakeholders is that they may not be readily identifiable in the first place. They may be excluded groups who are not immediately apparent on the radar of the government or developer. Tools, including stakeholder network analysis and early, community-based interventions (e.g. town hall events, information sessions) may help in identifying stakeholders. The 'weak ties' identified through network analysis can be particularly helpful, if a thorough analysis is completed.

A powerful tool to identify land use in communities in relation to the proposed infrastructure development is geographic information system (GIS) mapping.

3. Identify the responsible government entity and process of collaboration for data collection and assessment.

For example, the bureau of statistics may be responsible for data collection, and then provide data to other government departments to design the project and assess its feasibility. This requires collaboration, interface management and information sharing amongst different government agencies, and a clear mandate to set out the responsibilities of the departments involved.

Other government agencies, in particular health services, should be able to provide additional insights.

4. Use various data collection methods to collect disaggregated data, such as door-to-door surveys and focus group discussions.

For the Cairo Metro project in Egypt and the El Metropolitano Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project in Peru, interviews were conducted on the street to share the project objectives and identify the needs of the community directly impacted by the project (see *Cairo Metro Case Study* and *El Metropolitano BRT Case Study*). For large data collection requirements, an e-survey method is more productive and cost effective, as demonstrated by the Ningxia Liupanshan Poverty Reduction - Rural Road Project in China, (see *Box 1: Illustrative example – Ningxia Liupanshan Poverty Reduction - Rural Road Project*,

China)¹⁵. Regardless of the method of data collection, the questionnaire should frame questions to reveal pertinent answers in relation to inclusivity. Social media may, in the future, also be increasingly used to help collect data.

5. Integrate inclusivity into conventional data collection methods through the formulation of a specific hypothesis or using query methods.

To formulate a hypothesis, start by asking questions about the topic to be addressed, and then come up with a prediction or possible explanation. Query methods will involve questioning the user directly about the subject to be addressed. This may be during a face-to-face interview, or in writing as a questionnaire. Make sure the surveys represent women, young people, people with disabilities, the elderly, low-income groups etc. and are tailored to the project. Ask open questions to ensure the needs and opinions of people at risk of being neglected are being captured when undertaking a survey.

6. Ensure that ethical guidelines are followed in the collection of data. Participants should have the assurance of being anonymous if participating in the survey poses any potential risk to them.

7. Include information on perceptions of the quality of service in the survey, i.e. infrastructure quality, demand studies, reasons for non-travel, affordability, opportunity cost, and mobile and internet use.

8. Build capacity for data collection and analysis, and employ social inclusion specialists (e.g. social specialists, gender specialists, etc.) to train the people implementing the survey program, to ensure inclusivity is taken into consideration.

9. Use findings from the data analysis to determine the project design in the feasibility and project planning stage.

This will ensure specific inclusivity-related issues are understood, and policy or project objectives are designed to address these issues. Findings can also be used to determine the specific criteria for project evaluation and monitoring.

10. Agree a preferred feedback method and allocate resources (e.g. budget, time) to return to the stakeholders with feedback on how their information was used and what influence it had on the project

Example

Data collection and stakeholder identification approaches are outlined in several of the Case Studies (see *Section 4*). An additional illustration is shown below.

BOX 1: ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE – NINGXIA LIUPANSHAN POVERTY REDUCTION – RURAL ROAD PROJECT, CHINA

An e-survey was conducted to understand the socioeconomic parameters of the project and evaluate its impact on low-income areas.

The Ningxia Liupanshan Project improves 267km of rural trunk roads and 168km of rural feeder roads in the Ningxia Liupanshan Area in China. The capital expenditure (CAPEX) is USD 265.54 million and the project focuses on the seven counties in the area with the lowest income groups.

As part of the stakeholder engagement and integration process, an e-survey was conducted (using mobile technology) to collect and assess data on the socioeconomic parameters of 30 villages. It covered 1,188 households and captured data such as household income, household expenditures, household income type and number of jobholders per house. The project team considered the needs, concerns and interests of stakeholders in low-income areas and used the data collected to evaluate the project and measure its socioeconomic impact. It improved understanding of socioeconomic indicators prior to commencement and provided a baseline against which the benefits of the project could be measured in the long-term. It also increased public acceptance of the project.

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¹⁵ Impact Evaluation of Road Improvement and Rural Poverty – Baseline Survey in the Ningxia Liupanshan Area of the People's Republic of China, Asian Development Bank, (Nishimura, Sieber, & Wang, 2018)

The findings of this type of survey can be used for multiple purposes:

- a) at project inception to establish baseline conditions and to map (identify) specific target stakeholder groups;
- b) during project development to inform the technical design; and
- c) during construction and operation to monitor and evaluate progress against the initial baseline.

Source: Impact Evaluation of Road Improvement and Rural Poverty – Baseline Survey in the Ningxia Liupanshan Area of the People's Republic of China, No. 13 ADB East Asia Working Paper Series 2018

INCLUSIVE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Overview

Inclusive stakeholder engagement is a process that specifically targets and considers the opinions of individuals and groups at risk of being excluded or under-served. This can lead to higher public acceptance of a project and informs the project to maximise social benefits.

To maximise benefits, the relevant stakeholders, engagement objectives, framework and engagement process should be considered as early as possible, and engagement should continue throughout the entire project lifecycle. It is important to use the feedback from public engagement to improve the project design and ensure the result reflects the needs of beneficiaries.

Relevance

At the policy level:

- *Implementing and enforcing policies on inclusion.* Inclusive policies should include stakeholder engagement, which can be implemented and enforced by public authorities, who control and administrate the delivery of social inclusion activities.
- *Focusing on proactive engagement.* This applies to all infrastructure sectors. There should be a special focus on proactive, participatory engagement methods, which empower targeted groups. As an example, the Guide to Community Engagement for Power Projects in Kenya has developed community engagement principles with a strong emphasis on inclusive participation, gender equality and the empowerment of women¹⁶.
- *Mandating inclusivity at the policy level.* A government or contractual mandate is the best way to ensure inclusive engagement processes are applied at project inception. Participation should be free and made public (e.g. online, through public consultations, or through targeted focus group discussions).
- *Strengthening citizen trust in policies and the government.* Citizen and stakeholder engagement can be used to strengthen and legitimise policies which, in turn, increase people's ownership and overall trust in government. This is discussed further under Action Area 3: Policy, Regulation and Standards.

At the project level:

- *Implementing inclusivity plans.* The project approval processes (e.g. cabinet papers, laws, decrees, project proposals and financing agreements) should require the implementing agencies or organisations to develop social inclusion plans and make them an integral part of the project. They may be referred to in a number of ways, such as a 'Social Integration Plan', a 'Community Benefits Plan', or a 'Social Benefits Plan'. The plans create accountability and responsibility throughout procurement, operation, monitoring and evaluation, and decommissioning. For instance, the International Crossing Agreement between the State of Michigan in the United States and the Province of Ontario in Canada mandated the development of a community engagement process across all project stages for the construction and operation of the Gordie Howe Bridge (see Box 2: Illustrative example – Gordie Howe Bridge Project, Windsor-Detroit).
- *Creating and enforcing inclusivity targets.* The procurement stage should include contractually agreed inclusivity targets to be achieved by the private sector organisation (or any other organisation responsible for project delivery), such as workforce utilisation targets.

¹⁶ The Guide to Community Engagement for Power Projects in Kenya, (Power Africa, 2018)

Guidance

1. Ensure stakeholder engagement commences at an early stage of planning and continues throughout the project lifecycle by considering the following:

- Source feedback through public dialogue, surveys or focus groups. There are a variety of engagement methods used to build relationships, gather information, consult with stakeholders and provide information about the project. Regardless of the method used, the process needs to be proactive and culturally appropriate. Sustained activity throughout the project makes the engagement genuine and dynamic.
- Consider practical means to overcome barriers to engagement of under-served or vulnerable stakeholders, e.g. mobile consultations with communities in remote locations, or the provision of bus services, etc. In scheduling engagements, consideration should be given to stakeholders' work and time commitments, and the opportunity costs to women and low-income groups, etc. in attending the consultations.
- Build capacity amongst stakeholders for informed engagement. This is particularly important for vulnerable members of society and those at risk of exclusion, so they have the knowledge and capacity to give informed feedback.
- Ensure all stakeholders (contractors, designers, communities and vulnerable groups) understand the objectives of the stakeholder engagement and the wider project and how it relates to their interests.
- Use the project's website to disclose information and share updates with stakeholders. It is one of the most efficient and direct ways to communicate.
- Recognise, however, that some under-served or vulnerable groups, such as low-income people, the elderly or those in remote locations, may not have access to the website and will need to be kept informed through other methods, such as regular meetings or printed newsletters. Multiple formats should also be used for the sharing of information, including for the hearing and vision impaired. Keep the language simple and support text with the use of appropriate diagrams, infographics and illustrations
- Manage and address grievances to show people that a genuine effort is being made to incorporate the concerns and needs of vulnerable groups into the design and implementation of the project, rather than react to escalations of tension. Consider establishing a formal grievance mechanism for each project.

The Guide to Community Engagement for Power Projects in Kenya¹⁷ integrates inclusivity principles and activities into its guidelines. Beyond the conventional aspects of stakeholder engagement, such as careful planning and preparation, the guide recommends other inclusive principles to be followed, of which the most relevant are Inclusive Participation, and Gender Equality and Female Empowerment:

- *Inclusive Participation:* Some groups may face social, political, cultural and communication barriers that preclude them from participating effectively during the planning and design phases. Consideration must be given to these groups. Specific interventions should be designed based on an informed analysis, and additional resources set aside to facilitate effective participation by these groups.
- *Gender Equality and Female Empowerment:* Gender equality is a fundamental principle that should guide community engagement. It is often assumed that, when the community is invited for consultation, both men and women will participate equally, but this may not always be the case. There needs to be a strategy to ensure women's meaningful engagement within the specific cultural context. For instance, women can speak in women-only groups, prior to their opinion being shared in a larger setting.

An example of a robust engagement process that was defined from the outset is the Gordie Howe Bridge project (see Box 2: *Illustrative example – Gordie Howe Bridge Project, Windsor-Detroit*).

2. Consider the needs of all groups within a community.

Engagement efforts need to respond to the priorities of all, especially under-served or vulnerable groups (such as women, the elderly, young people, religious and cultural minorities, indigenous and other ethnic groups, and people with disabilities). Failing to address these priorities could lead to investments that do not reflect people's true needs¹⁸. Engagement teams should include representation from the local populations where possible and demonstrate gender, cultural and age diversity.

¹⁷ The Guide to Community Engagement for Power Projects in Kenya, (Power Africa, 2018)

¹⁸ A Sourcebook for Poverty Reduction Strategy, (Klugman J. , et al., 2002)

3. Hold a separate focus group meeting for each underserved and vulnerable group.

Some groups (such as women, young people, and people with disabilities) may face social, political, cultural and communication barriers that preclude them from participating effectively. To overcome this, it is recommended that focus group meetings are held with each vulnerable group separately, for example, women-only focus groups where women can speak freely, and that they include a mechanism to share viewpoints on equal terms with other stakeholders.

Focus groups for advocates of vulnerable populations should also be considered, such as service providers working with the homeless, or representatives of local mental health or respite facilities.

4. Facilitate the introduction and interaction of various stakeholder groups.

Governments should consider connecting targeted groups to policy or project implementers and other relevant organisations. For instance, the authority responsible for the construction and operation of the U.S. Bank Stadium project was mandated to engage an employment firm (the authority chose civil society organisations (CSOs)), to specifically help it to hire women, the unemployed and young people (see *U.S. Bank Stadium Case Study*). NGOs can be used to help reach out to relevant groups in society. As part of the process, 'meet and greet' sessions with targeted groups and private sector organisations can be organised.

5. Provide community groups with knowledge, control, and authority to input to decisions and resources throughout all project phases¹⁹.

Communities who have ownership of a project are often motivated to utilise, conserve and promote the asset. Participation motivates people to collaborate and collectively recognise the positive outcomes of their involvement, and participatory approaches, such as co-design, can help facilitate this. As a result, tailored solutions are produced to address the actual needs and expectations of the stakeholders.

6. Use a participatory planning approach²⁰ as a straight forward technique for participatory assessment.

Participatory planning incorporates the local knowledge and opinion of stakeholders in the planning and management of projects. A good practice is to triangulate the findings from participatory transect walks, household surveys, focus group discussions and small group meetings on critical discussion points (e.g. land and resource claims)²¹. In the Bogotá Urban Service Project in Colombia (see *Box 15: Illustrative example - Inclusive urban development in Bogotá, Colombia*), the participatory planning approach empowered community groups and fostered ownership and involvement from affected households. The increased participation in the decision-making process for designing and planning resulted in tailored solutions that addressed the actual needs and expectations of the communities.

7. Form groups (e.g. representatives of a low-income community) to represent stakeholders' interests and formalise their involvement in the project.

For instance, as illustrated in the *Water Sector Trust Fund Case Study* in Kenya, Water Service Boards work with representatives from Community Water Associations composed of farmers (amongst others) to develop water access projects supported by the Kenya Water Sector Trust Fund. Another example is shown in the *U.S. Bank Stadium Case Study*, where it is mandated in its Equity Plan that there must be at least one female representative and a representative from a minority community on the Construction Review Panel composed of 10 people²².

It is important that members selected for such groups are truly representative and trusted by the targeted stakeholder group they represent, rather than perceived as biased towards the developer's interests.

¹⁹ A Sourcebook for Poverty Reduction Strategy, (Klugman J., et al., 2002)

²⁰ Also known as Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) or Participatory Learning for Action (PLA).

²¹ The Guide to Community Engagement for Power Projects in Kenya, (Power Africa, 2018)

²² Minnesota Sports Facilities Authority – Equity Plan for Design and Construction of the Stadium, (Minnesota Sports Facilities Authority, 2013)

8. Create a stringent oversight mechanism to facilitate the inclusion of stakeholders at risk of being excluded.

As demonstrated by the *U.S. Bank Stadium Case Study*, strong leadership and governance is required as part of the overall project management. For instance, if a contractor is required to disclose how many women or minority groups have been engaged in a project, there should be transparent and frequent reporting mechanisms to facilitate the monitoring of progress against this target.

This can be achieved by linking work approval and payment to verified accomplishment of the contractually agreed targets.

Example

Inclusive stakeholder engagement approaches are outlined in several of the Case Studies (see *Section 4*). An additional illustration is shown below.

BOX 2: ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE – GORDIE HOWE BRIDGE PROJECT, WINDSOR-DETROIT

Early integration of community or individual needs, in combination with a planned inclusivity framework and process, ensures community needs are addressed at every stage of the project lifecycle.

The Gordie Howe Bridge is a 2.5km long bridge with an estimated CAPEX of USD 1 - 2.2 billion. It connects Detroit in the US and Windsor in Canada. During the pre-construction phase, a community benefits scheme was developed to gauge public opinion and improve inclusivity during procurement and delivery.

The Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority was created in 2012 to construct and operate the Gordie Howe Bridge. The Authority is required by the bilateral agreement between the US and Canada to submit details of "community benefits plans and community consultations" to prospective bidders. The Authority created a process and framework to identify and implement a community benefits plan to ensure that positive impacts on communities reflected the stakeholders' comments. The identified focus groups are Michigan and Ontario residents, indigenous peoples, business owners and community leaders.

The following process was developed:

1. Inputs on community benefits were received from stakeholders (e.g. through public meetings, focus groups, website, email, mail).
2. The Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority shared inputs received with prospective bidders.

3. Prospective bidders considered inputs and suggestions as they formulated their community benefits plan as part of their proposal to design, build, finance, operate and maintain the Gordie Howe Bridge. Part of the proposal needed to include the following considerations in the construction and operation of the bridge:
 - a) the manner in which stakeholders and communities would continue to be involved;
 - b) the manner in which host community inputs relating to community benefits and stakeholder involvement were to be factored in;
 - c) the manner in which bidders planned to work with local institutes of higher learning, unions and others; and
 - d) the manner in which job training and local job development would be encouraged.
4. Community plans were part of the Request for Proposal submission and part of the contractual obligation of service delivery.

The Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority had stringent oversight of the community benefits plan during construction and operation of the bridge.

Source: The Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority, Detroit River Internal Crossing Agreement

STAKEHOLDER EMPOWERMENT

Overview

As highlighted by the literature review and feedback from the consultative workshops, stakeholder engagement is about more than providing information to stakeholders. Done well, it is a dynamic and ongoing process that can transform stakeholders' experiences and situations. Targeted at low-income and other groups at risk of being excluded, through capacity building and empowerment in decision-making, it can help break cycles of disadvantage and achieve long-term gains for projects and communities.

Empowerment is a process through which individuals or groups increase their power and autonomy to achieve desired outcomes. Empowerment can increase people's autonomy, whilst enabling them to make valued contributions to society²³. This can be applied through the development of stakeholder and communication plans that set out project-specific measures for greater empowerment.

Greater transparency through information disclosure increases stakeholders' understanding of a project, and the provision of appropriate communication platforms can increase the willingness and ability of the public to communicate and share opinions.

Stakeholder empowerment can be considered along a scale of citizen participation: ranging from information, consultation and cooperation, through to delegation²⁵. In some cases, the lower levels of engagement can be tokenistic, and stakeholders can become disinterested if they have no real say in the decision-making process. The higher levels represent greater involvement in decision-making (see *Figure 6* below).

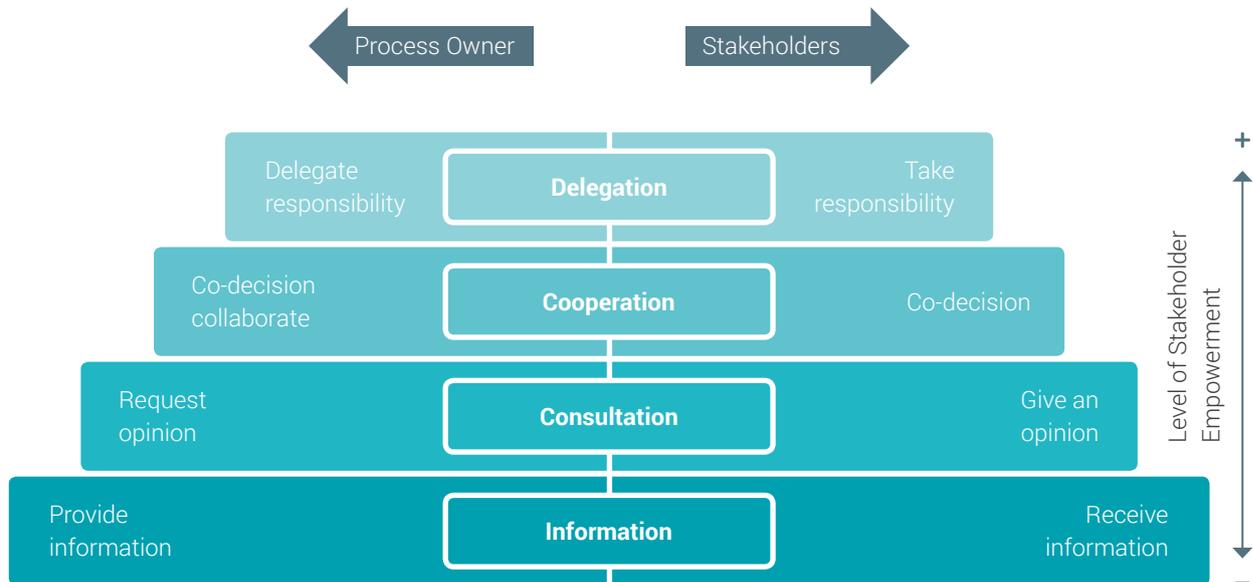


Figure 6. Four levels of stakeholder empowerment²⁴

²³ Voice, Empowerment and Accountability: Topic Guide, (Combaz & Mcloughlin, 2014)

²⁴ Stakeholder empowerment through participatory planning practices: The case of electricity transmission lines in France and Norway, (Späth and Scolobig, 2016).

²⁵ IAP2's Public Participation Spectrum is a widely used model: <https://www.iap2.org.au/Resources/IAP2-Published-Resources> Others include AA1000SES (2015): https://www.accountability.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/AA1000SES_2015.pdf and Arnsteins's Ladder of Engagement.

Relevance

Stakeholder empowerment is relevant at the policy, program and project level. The literature covers many examples of stakeholder empowerment for small-scale, community-level infrastructure (particularly in rural areas) in developing countries but contains fewer examples for large-scale infrastructure projects.

At the policy level:

- *Encouraging empowerment through regulation.* Regulation can be formulated to promote and enforce activities that increase empowerment and confidence, so groups in society feel comfortable to “raise their voices” and express their opinions.
- *Removing barriers to stakeholder participation.* Specific and tailored tools remove potential barriers to participation and communication.
- Transparency is covered in more detail in Action Area 2: Governance and Capacity Building.

At the project level:

- *Integrating empowerment at an early stage of project development.* Activities leading to more empowerment and transparency should be defined in the project's overall strategy, objectives and guiding principles.
- *Continuing to integrate empowerment throughout the project lifecycle.* Mechanisms applicable throughout the project lifecycle should be part of the governance and project management philosophy.

Guidance

1. Be proactive and engage with stakeholders at an early stage.

Proactive engagement means a specific effort to reach out to targeted groups in society to better understand their issues through conversation, a survey, public campaigns, etc. Proactive engagement is not a new concept and is one of the known tools of stakeholder engagement. However, it is particularly useful when trying to understand the views and opinions of under-represented groups. It also creates a sense of empowerment and helps people engage more with the wider community and freely express their thoughts.

Project outcomes can then be tailored to better suit their needs, positively impacting that group. It may also:

Maximise acceptance, qualification and implementation of new regulations and policies;

Yield more adequate representation of groups that tend to be under-represented;

Identify barriers in inclusivity earlier, which can be addressed during policy or project design; and

Help to maximise usage of infrastructure and identify further complementary actions required.

The Bogotá Urban Service Project in Colombia illustrates these points (see *Box 15: Illustrative example - Inclusive urban development in Bogotá, Colombia*). During the project preparation stage, the project's teams sought the community's views on the sanitation systems in the corridor along the routes of the proposed TransMilenio Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system (see *Section 4 for TransMilenio Bus Rapid Transit Case Study*). Low-income areas were specifically targeted through the collection of disaggregated data. The preferences of the affected households in the process of selecting urban upgrading works were considered. This participatory approach fostered community ownership and increased participation in future community projects.

Additional evidence in support of these principles was found during the development of the GI Hub's Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Contract Management Tool²⁶, such as the I-495 Express Lanes case study described in that tool. In that case study, there is a discussion of the use of early feedback from major employers, elected officials and transport advocates, which resulted in the project team changing the scope of the project to include three major entry and exit points, rather than just one, to serve a key employment area. By proactively engaging stakeholders early, the parties were able to work collaboratively to develop a transportation solution that provided a better outcome, helping to reduce traffic congestion in the area²⁷.

²⁶ Available at managingppp.gihub.org.

²⁷ Case study: I-495 Express Lanes, Virginia, USA, (GI Hub, 2018)

The case studies found in Section 4 also provide examples of stakeholder empowerment, such as the *TransMilenio Bus Rapid Transit Case Study*, where the empowerment of people with disabilities was an explicit focus.

2. Identify further complementary actions required that empower disadvantaged groups in accessing beneficial outcomes of infrastructure services.

Low-income and other disadvantaged groups may have challenges in accessing the benefits from infrastructure services that go beyond the design and development of the infrastructure itself. For example, low-income farmers may be constrained from accessing maximum revenue from their crops, not just by the condition of the road or transport services, but also by a lack of information on the current prices that goods are obtaining at market. Complementary actions, such as information provision on market prices which can often be facilitated through mobile phone networks, or targeted training that can support better access to the employment opportunities generated, can help empower previously disadvantaged communities to access the wider benefits of infrastructure.

An example of targeted training is given in the *U.S. Bank Stadium Case Study* in Section 4, and guidance on capacity building for disadvantaged groups is elaborated further under Action Area 2: Governance and Capacity Building.

Other examples include increasing local participation by looking for opportunities to package work appropriately, as well as to structure employment opportunities and support in a way that meets under-served groups – for example, offering child care services to encourage the participation of working mothers. For further information relating to complementary actions to enable access to job opportunities see Action Area 5: Private Sector Roles and Participation.

3. Consider the Voice, Empowerment and Accountability (VEA) approach.

Voice, empowerment and accountability (VEA) interventions aim to support poor and marginalised people to build the resources, assets, and capabilities they need to exercise greater choice and control over their own development, and to hold decision-makers to account²⁸.

Research and evidence on the impact of VEA interventions is limited, however the GSDRC²⁹ knowledge series suggests that VEA interventions have led to short-term changes in policy, regulation and reform, as well as improved transparency, reduced corruption, increased community participation and improved government responsiveness to citizen demands³⁰.

In Australia, good results have been achieved by building understanding of planning and assessment processes, procurement processes, and planning and design processes to enable informed participation.

VOICE, EMPOWERMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY (VEA)

Voice, empowerment and accountability (VEA) is an umbrella term that covers a wide range of ideas about how citizens can express their preferences, secure their rights, make demands on the state and achieve better development outcomes. VEA draws attention to the role of individual agency, power relations, and processes that can enable or constrain people's capacity to articulate and achieve their individual and collective goals. Though closely connected, the terms voice, empowerment and accountability are conceptually distinct (and also widely contested).

Voice is often understood as the ability of citizens to express their preferences and to be heard by the state, either through formal or informal channels, in written or oral form. Citizens' voices are not homogenous, and sometimes more powerful voices and opinions can crowd out those of excluded or marginal groups.

Empowerment is a process through which individuals or organised groups increase their power and autonomy to achieve certain outcomes they need and desire. Empowerment focuses on supporting disadvantaged people to gain power and exert greater influence over those who control access to key resources.

Continued...

²⁸ Voice, Empowerment and Accountability: Topic Guide, (Combaz & Mcloughlin, 2014)

²⁹ Governance – Social Development – Humanitarian – Conflict – Resource Centre (GSDRC) provides applied knowledge services on demand and online. It is a partnership of research institutes, think-tanks and consultancy organisations funded by UK DFID, Australian Aid and the European Commission. Available at <http://gsdrc.org/aboutus/>

³⁰ Voice, Empowerment and Accountability: Topic Guide, (Combaz & Mcloughlin, 2014)

Accountability is a process for holding individual actors or organisations to account for their actions. Accountability requires transparency, answerability, and enforceability between decision-makers and citizens.

Different communities and experts are split on the effectiveness of VEA in helping people to build the resources, assets and capabilities they need to exercise greater choice and control over their own development, and to hold decision-makers to account.

Source: GSDRC (2014), *Voice, Empowerment and Accountability, Topic Guide*

4. Create transparency objectives for the policy or project to boost stakeholders' ability to engage and provide feedback.

Data is oftentimes not published because it is confidential. However, disclosing this information can contribute towards community empowerment and allow project implementers to review the success of a project. For example, in Sao Paulo, Brazil, the PPP unit encourages the use of a digital system³¹ that enables members of the community to contribute to projects. Their comments are collected and reviewed in detail every five years (or within an agreed contract period) so that any challenges can be reviewed and changes to the project can be made to maximise benefits.

Websites can also be used at government policy level as a platform to feedback to stakeholders, for example, the Consultation Hub on the Scottish Government's website, with the outcomes of issues consulted on available in the section "We Asked, You Said, We Did"³².

A full discussion of transparency issues is found below under Action Area 2: Governance and Capacity Building.

APPLICATION OF PRACTICES TO TARGETED STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

The general principles of Action Area 1: Stakeholder Identification, Engagement and Empowerment apply to all stakeholder groups. Some points on the application of practices to specific stakeholder groups are highlighted below.

Low-income groups

Low-income groups are most likely to suffer from a lack of access to basic services. This is an important group to target and, while existing poverty mapping may help with the early stages of identification, the approach to stakeholder engagement should be developed with the support of social inclusion specialists, who are knowledgeable on the appropriate avenues of communication for each stakeholder group. For example, traditional written communication methods may present challenges to certain groups if literacy and education levels are lower in the poorest households. Participatory planning approaches can help in incorporating the views from people living in all corners of the community, particularly in low-income areas.

Gender

Data collection on stakeholders should optimise the usage of already available data sets. However, many common data sets will only go down to the household level, while men and women within households may face different challenges in accessing infrastructure services. Both qualitative and quantitative data – such as, for example, different patterns of usage and perceptions of safety when using transport systems – will be needed in helping to address barriers to access, as identified in both the *TransMilenio Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Case Study* in Colombia and the *El Metropolitano Bus Rapid Transit Case Study* in Peru. Solutions should involve both men and women, and are likely to involve both elements of design and location of infrastructure (lighting, walkways, etc.) implemented from an early planning stage, as well as operational aspects, including the need for specialised staff training, anti-harassment campaigns, etc.

³¹ The Digital Partnership Platform, available at <http://www.parcerias.sp.gov.br/Parcerias/>

³² Scottish Government Consultation Hub, available at <https://consult.gov.scot/>

Approaches to stakeholder engagement with women should be culturally sensitive and designed to avoid backlash within their own communities. Considerations in the design of stakeholder engagement plans include the use of female engagement teams, focus group discussions, and practical solutions around the languages used, literacy levels, the convenient timing of meetings and provision of crèches given childcare and other responsibilities.

People with disabilities

About 15% of the world's population are living with a disability. However, this group is often overlooked or seen as too costly for consideration. User input from consulting and involving people with disabilities can help ensure cost effective and practical solutions from an early stage³³. This is more effective than making retrospective adjustments during the construction or operational stages.

The training of persons with disabilities as interviewers to carry out engagement with other persons with disability was found to be effective in Australia³⁴. This was innovative and overcame a number of barriers while increasing participant empowerment.

The TransMilenio BRT project in Colombia has a dedicated communications program that continues to target people with disabilities (see *TransMilenio BRT Case Study*). In 2017, a simulation centre was established to help passengers with disabilities experience boarding, alighting, transferring and moving through the BRT system in a safe, inclusive and stress-free environment. The program hopes to empower people with disabilities, so they can use the BRT system on their own and familiarise themselves with the support services available.

Other disadvantaged people - such as specific ethnic groups, or those living in remote or isolated areas

Data collection, and stakeholder identification, engagement and empowerment should take into account the diversity of groups within a project's service area and be designed together with representatives from minority groups to ensure that cultural and language differences are appropriately incorporated in the project design.

³³ Disability considerations for Infrastructure Programmes, (Agarwal and Steele, 2016)

³⁴ Choice, control and the NDIS: Service users' perspectives on having choice and control in the new National Disability Insurance Scheme, (Warr et. al., 2017)