



FACT SHEET T-02 – STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

Why involve stakeholders and the public

Stakeholders are individuals or organisations who may either be affected by strategies or measures or who have a specific interest in the development of strategic plans or projects. Not allowing them or the public to express their views and concerns early in the planning process can lead to protests at later stages and general distrust in project management and planning. This was the case, for example, with the main train station expansion project “Stuttgart 21” in Germany.

Encouraging the participation of stakeholders, including the general public, is an ideal means of:

- overcoming uncertainties, fears and misunderstandings of citizens and other parties or individuals
- increasing a project’s transparency
- ensuring that the public has a stake in the outcome and success of a project
- creating an adaptive, continuous feedback loop fed by ideas and critique from a user-perspective

Projects and development plans which adapt to the needs of those affected have been shown to have a positive influence

on the planning process. This also leads to increased political acceptance and more desirable results.

Stakeholders can include public or private organisations, individuals such as experts or politicians, the media and citizens. They can be divided into two main categories:

- **Primary stakeholders** – organisations or individuals directly affected by a measure, including citizens, businesses, schools etc; have high interest but little direct influence
- **Key stakeholders** – organisations or individuals who are in a position of power and influence due to financial resources, political responsibility or authority, skills and expertise etc.

Involving stakeholders takes place on two levels. Project-level stakeholders include residents, businesses, schools etc, in the direct vicinity of a particular project or measure. These stakeholders will have more concrete, project-related goals limited to the project’s locality. Macro-level stakeholders, in contrast, are continually involved in the ongoing, long-term planning process. This may include advocacy groups, regarding e.g. cyclists, the disabled, the environment or commerce. Many stakeholders will be involved on both levels but it is important to recognise that stakeholders need to be systematically integrated into both the long-term planning process as well as project implementation.

Factors for working with stakeholders

Cooperation is a key element for creating agreement amongst stakeholders and should focus on:

- creating equal understanding of and commitment to common objectives amongst all stakeholders
- emphasising shared interests of competing neighbourhoods and local coalitions
- maintaining a quantitative and qualitative balance amongst stakeholders, i.e. the under- or overrepresentation of certain groups should be avoided [Taschner et al. (2009)]

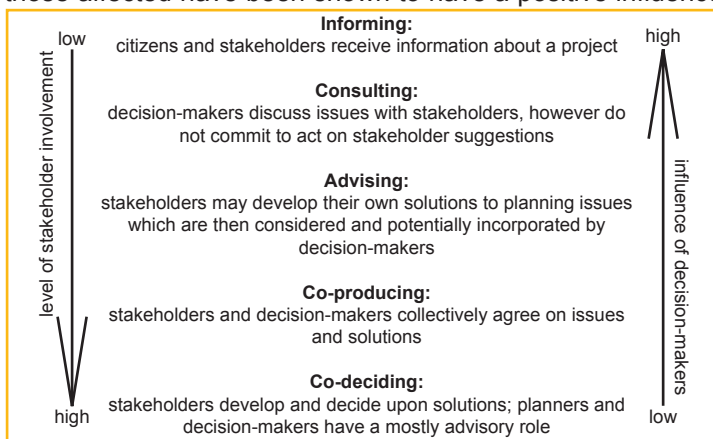


Figure 1: Interaction between level of stakeholder involvement and influence of planners on the decision-making process (based on Taschner et al. (2009), p.11)

More sustainable transport in Central European cities through improved integrated bicycle promotion and international networking

Face-to-face communication helps build a feeling of mutual trust amongst stakeholders and planners. It also helps keep the media informed, who can then keep the general public informed.

Data and timing can affect the strength of support for a project. Data is important for:

- providing necessary facts and information to support convincing arguments
- benchmarking and evaluating implemented measures

The right timing is necessary to make sure that a topic is relevant amongst stakeholders. One should consider:

- season (e.g. cycling measures have more support in summer months than in winter)
- upcoming elections
- school year
- third-party events such as European Union Mobility Week

Integrating additional stakeholders who may have an indirect but significant influence is likewise important. This may include local religious or civic leaders, members of the scientific, health or professional community etc.

Incorporating children into a project as stakeholders can give a project an additional perspective. Children are often merely informed about transport through things like mobility education in schools. However, children perceive their surroundings differently than adults and are aware of their needs along their daily route, either to school or other activities. They can therefore provide valuable input.

Lessons Learned: Involving stakeholders is a key factor in increasing the acceptance of a measure or project. Stakeholders and the public should be included early in the planning process by fostering cooperation and through face-to-face communication and data-supported arguments. The process of stakeholder involvement is a continuous feedback loop which should extend beyond the completion of a project in order to monitor project results and provide a starting point for the next project.

Best Practice: Including Children in the Planning Process

The Leipziger Kinderbüro (Children's Office) has been representing the rights and interests of children in Leipzig since 1997. Through workshops, competitions and games, the Kinderbüro supports the active participation of children and youth in the planning process. For example, the "City Investigators" workshop from 2012 encouraged children to explore their neighbourhood and find areas where children enjoyed spending time but also places that the kids thought needed improvement. The result was a map which could be presented to visitors and politicians. The Kinderbüro also provides training for politicians or others who represent children's interests. An informative flyer in English can be found on the Central MeetBike website.

Involvement process

After identifying stakeholders, it is recommended that a strategy be developed for stakeholder involvement. The strategy should contain the decision-making stages of the project along with methods for including stakeholders, such as: regular forums or meetings, special events (e.g. competitions/awards), press conferences, workshops etc. The stakeholder strategy can also include a risk assessment which identifies stakeholders who may be particularly difficult to convince. For example, a store owner may be worried about losing parking spaces in front of his store because he believes customers who drive to his store spend more than customers who walk or cycle (Thiemann-Linden et al. (2010), p.3).

It is important to recognize that communication with co-

ditions created throughout the different project stages should continue after the project has been implemented. This ensures adequate benchmarking and monitoring of project results and makes the stakeholder involvement process easier to initiate when the next project arises.

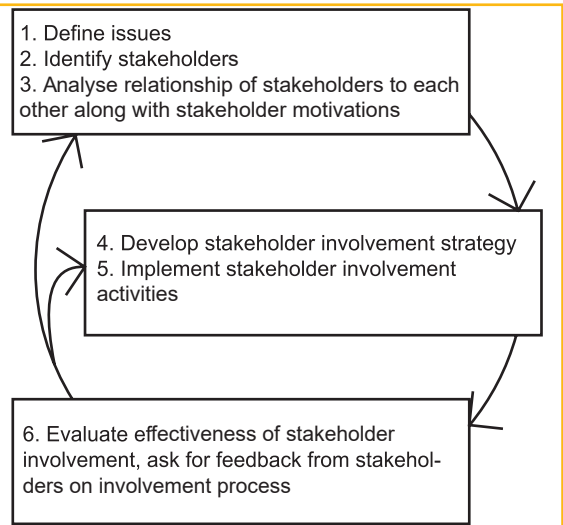


Figure 2: Stakeholder involvement process (based on S. Bührmann, *Guidance for Stakeholder Involvement* in Taschner et al. (2009), p.12)

For further resources, links and best practice examples visit the Sustainable Urban Transport Project website: <http://www.sutp.org/>