Stakeholder Engagement Guide

Sustainability & Excellence in the Reconstruction Process of Ukraine

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Ukraine is facing immense reconstruction and recovery challenges. The total amount of direct documented damages inflicted upon Ukraine’s infrastructure due to the full-scale invasion by Russia as of January 2024 stands at $155 billion (at replacement cost).1

Post-war reconstruction and recovery is projected to cost $486 billion over the next decade, up from $411 billion estimated as of 2023. The highest estimated reconstruction needs are in housing (17% of the total), followed by transport (15%), commerce and industry (14%), agriculture (12%), energy (10%), social protection and livelihoods (9%), and explosive hazard management (7%). Across all sectors, the cost of debris clearance and management (and demolition where needed) reached almost $11 billion.2

All stakeholders should actively make a recovery and reconstruction process transparent and strategically feasible. All decisions should be transparent and participatory. They should also be discussed and made with the long-term consequences for the community and state in mind. The stakeholders and citizens must signal the need to increase their influence on decision-making.

The principle of engagement was also enshrined at the Lugano conference. The Civil Society Manifesto3 states that Ukrainians should be included in decision-making about their future at all levels.

Ukrainians explicitly consider the recovery and reconstruction process. According to the survey conducted at the request of Transparency International Ukraine, 76% of Ukrainians and 78% of business representatives advocate for the decentralization of the reconstruction process. Also, 50% of Ukrainians and 68% of businesses support project-based reconstruction assistance. They also call for transparency of information about the reconstruction and as much involvement in the decision-making process as possible.

Following the “build back better” approach, which aims to rebuild more robust, safer, and disaster-resilient infrastructure, it is crucial to lay the foundations for developing trust in inclusive institutions, decision-makers, and the government.

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2 Ukraine. Third Rapid Damage & Needs Assessment (RDNA3) February 2022 — December 2023
3 Civil Society Manifesto. Lugano
The purpose of the Guide

This document aims to guide policy and decision-makers at national and local levels in planning and executing stakeholder engagement initiatives to enhance medical services, improve efficiency, and boost workplace and sustainable community impact during Ukraine's reconstruction and recovery process.

This guide:
- describes basic concepts of stakeholder engagement;
- outlines the stakeholder engagement process;
- describes methods for building stakeholders’ trust.

This guide could be used by government and local elected and appointed officials, leaders of community civic organizations and non-profit groups, and representatives of public service agencies.

Stakeholder & Citizen Engagement

Stakeholder engagement is the process of involving individuals, groups, and organizations interested in, or may be affected by, a particular decision, policy, strategic plan, or project. Stakeholder engagement aims to improve the quality, legitimacy, and implementation of policies, strategies, and plans by incorporating the insights and concerns of stakeholders throughout the decision-making process. Stakeholder input also helps to articulate the positions, values, and concerns of the broader community affected and align policy recommendations, project and plan implementation, or particular decisions with these expectations. The stakeholder engagement process envisages that the information is gathered systematically and analyzed to define the interests and involvement of various actors clearly.

Citizen engagement ensures everyone’s voices are heard, allowing the public to help shape outcomes that align with their needs and aspirations. Citizen engagement aims to gather their input, insights, concerns, and feedback to make informed decisions, build better relationships, and create outcomes that are acceptable and beneficial to all involved parties.

Successful stakeholder and citizen engagement in decision-making involves multiple components: a regulatory framework at the level of legislation and local regulations; the political will of decision-maker representatives, primarily officials and employees of executive bodies; and an active local community and consolidated interest groups.
Stakeholder engagement is crucial during the following stages of decision-making:

- Agenda setting: the decision-maker identifies the need for a particular decision, policy, or project to be implemented.
- Analysis: information is gathered and analyzed to determine the importance of and urgency of a new policy.
- Formulation: policies or projects are designed based on the analysis results.
- Evaluation: the value of the policy or project is assessed.
- Implementation: specific steps and actions are made.

Engagement with stakeholders and citizens is indispensable to increase people’s awareness of the recovery and reconstruction process, to gain public acceptance for decisions and plans to be adopted, or to gather the views and concerns of different groups to inform decision-making and to shape better quality decisions for the national and local environments.
Benefits & Challenges of Stakeholder Engagement

Engaging stakeholders transparently and collaboratively is not an obligation imposed by international partners or a formal procedure to follow; it is a strategic imperative for achieving positive results and ensuring sustainability in Ukraine’s reconstruction and recovery process.

By engaging stakeholders, decision-makers benefit from:

- Improved decision-making and outcomes result from various stakeholders and communities input. Different experiences and expertise provide a multifaceted perspective on the decisions.
- Increased efficiency and effectiveness, as well as a better understanding of the issues facing individuals, communities, and other organizations, are vital for making quality decisions.
- Improved risk management practices — allowing risks to be identified and considered earlier, thus reducing future costs.
- Challenging the established methods and ideas encourages innovation and creativity.
- Better informed prioritization and scheduling.
- Improved evidence resources and enhanced institutional confidence.
- Increased trust in the developed plans and/or policies for fewer impediments during the further implementation.

By being engaged, stakeholders benefit from:

- Greater opportunities to contribute directly to program or policy development.
- More open and transparent lines of communication and increased government accountability.
- Better access to decision-making processes results in the delivery of more efficient and responsive services, recovery plans, and policies.
- Early identification of synergies between stakeholder and government work, encouraging integrated and comprehensive solutions to complex issues.
- Increased sense of ownership of issues and of being valued.
- Better knowledge, awareness, and understanding of issues and processes.

Ensuring effective stakeholder engagement is a common challenge for many public entities that need to:

- Manage large numbers of stakeholders and substantial data.
- Cover extensive territories when considering a nationwide perspective.
- Assess convergent relationships between stakeholders.
- Map stakeholders and maintain up-to-date stakeholder lists.
• Follow stakeholder engagement activities conducted by other entities.

• Report stakeholder engagement outcomes.

• Create a shared understanding of the engagement value between people involved in managing the stakeholder engagement activities.

• Consider threats and impediments to offline engagement from the perspective of martial law and safety.

Transparency. Establish clear and consistent communication flow on engagement activities’ goals, processes, and outcomes to build trust and accountability.

Accessibility. Provide information and engagement opportunities in formats accessible to all stakeholders.

Equality. Everyone participates on an equal basis. It should be clear that a small group does not control decisions. Leaders must ensure that open discussion occurs and all ideas are respected.

Collaboration. Build strong collaborative relationships with stakeholders whose involvement is valued and respected. Create an environment that encourages people to share and allows the group to prioritize ideas. The process should lead to consensus.

Responsiveness. Show that stakeholder input is considered and impacts policy decisions, providing feedback on how their contributions have influenced outcomes.

Accountability. Hold decision-makers and stakeholders accountable for their roles and contributions in the engagement process. Share feedback constructively for accountability.

Evaluation & Adaptation. Regularly evaluate the engagement process and be willing to adapt methods and approaches based on feedback and changing circumstances.

Decision-makers may now have fewer resources, especially human resources, to engage stakeholders, even though this dialogue is essential for guiding government action & maintaining social cohesion.

Principles of Stakeholder Engagement

Inclusivity & representation. Ensure all relevant stakeholders, including marginalized groups, are identified and involved.

Diversity. Encourage broad involvement of stakeholders to represent different viewpoints and interests. Sometimes, unconventional views are the key to needed solutions.
Stakeholder Engagement Objectives

Motivations and objectives for planning and engaging in national, regional, and local strategies may vary, especially depending on the scale (nation-wide, community-based) and issue (policy formulation, reconstruction planning, service provision, etc.).

Engagement with stakeholders (e.g., businesses, research and education institutions, different levels of policy-makers, non-governmental organizations, professional groups, and groups affected by the decision) typically seeks to develop networks and collaboration between organizations in support of the activity, to inform and influence policy-shaping, programs and plans development, and to induce strategic perspectives to recovery planning instead of ad hoc temporary decisions.

It is important to ensure the overarching goal for the priority issue, campaign, or policy is clear before starting any stakeholder activity.

The key questions to be asked:
- What is the goal of this particular activity?
- How are you going to achieve it?

These can then be applied to working with stakeholders.

- What role do stakeholders play in helping achieve this policy/campaign/planning objective?
- What are the benefits of engaging with stakeholders for this purpose?
- What are the risks of doing it wrong or not doing it at all?
- What level of support or resources will you need internally?
- How will you evaluate this activity?

- To involve stakeholders in designing and developing recovery projects and strategies while addressing their concerns and empowering them to contribute to their community’s recovery, service provision, and decision-making effectiveness.

- To build a participatory engagement process adapted to the context, challenges, and local stakeholder needs, which links with existing and foreseen projects to generate environmental, social, and economic benefits in the communities.
To strengthen co-management capacities and encourage collaboration among interested groups.

To ensure diversity in citizen engagement and make it central to the governance transformations to be carried out.

**Stakeholders Mapping**

Before beginning any activity, you should elaborate an understanding of the current landscape and those stakeholders that will be vital for engaging with.

Clearly articulating the issues around which stakeholders are brought together is a must. These issues will drive the purpose of the mapping and help narrow the scope of stakeholder involvement to those most relevant to the issue on the agenda.

Research on key stakeholders and previous activity will make the policy or decision more effective.

Two essential steps should be made in stakeholder mapping:

- **Proximity mapping** — the stakeholders are plotted according to their relationship and communication with them. The stakeholders with whom there are already established good relationships and frequent communication are plotted closer to the center, while those with little communication are on the outer circle.

**The key questions to be asked:**

- Has anyone done any stakeholder activity around this issue or policy area before?
- Are there any existing relationships already? Have other departments or teams been working with stakeholders in this area?
- Who will be interested in this area?

- **Interest/Influence Matrix** — The same stakeholders are then plotted on a matrix. Influence represents the potential influence stakeholders can exert upon our ability to deliver the strategy and meet our targets. Interest reflects the stakeholders’ current concern for our agenda and strategic direction.

**The key questions to be asked:**

- Can you prioritize stakeholders?
- What are the current views about your campaign and/or policy area?
- What do you know about their online activity and social channels?
- What motivates them?
- Who influences their opinions? Therefore, do some of these influencers become important stakeholders in their own right?
Once this analysis is complete, you can map them to a quadrant to determine the level of engagement required. The Interest/Influence Matrix is a key identification tool that helps you identify and categorize stakeholders consistently and clearly. Brainstorming key stakeholders and where they fit on the matrix with your team is beneficial.

**High influence / High interest.** Engage closely and influence actively — these are the stakeholders with whom you must fully engage. They may prove trusted advisors, vital in developing policy, and should be considered partners whose opinions are valuable. This includes joint planning, campaigning and press activities, partnership agreements, secondments, joint research, and joint governance.

**High influence / Low interest.** Keep satisfied — make sure there is awareness, understanding, and support of your campaign or decision among these stakeholders. Put enough engagement tactics in place to ensure that they are informed, satisfied, and updated, but do not push or bore them with your messages. This includes open forums, round-table discussions, advisory groups, seminars, and conferences.

**Low influence / high interest.** Consult with — keep these stakeholders adequately informed, listen, and engage. Often, these stakeholders are happy to take on finer details and can be an essential sounding board. If you can involve them, then they will act as ambassadors. This includes focus groups, task groups, visits, and deliberative meetings.

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**Stakeholder Mapping**

Stakeholder mapping is an exercise to help you determinate who your stakeholders are and how much engagement, communication or consideration they need.

By mapping and prioritizing your stakeholders, you can focus your attention in the most impactful way.

**Low Interest & High Influence**
- Monitor regularly
- Anticipate needs

**High Interest & High Influence**
- Regularly engage
- Keep satisfied

**Low Interest & Low Influence**
- Essential information
- Minimal contact

**High Interest & Low Influence**
- Inform completely
- Monitor closely
Low influence / low interest. Keep informed — These are the stakeholders you will need to spend the least time on, although you should still keep them informed. Once you have plotted your stakeholders, you can prioritize them and identify where and how to concentrate your efforts. This includes newsletters, websites, speeches, press, and mailings.

After having assessed and analyzed your stakeholders, you should:

- Organize your stakeholder lists and make them more manageable.
- Group stakeholders together for efficient, relevant communication.
- Determine which stakeholders you need to focus on (and when).

The issues of the recovery and reconstruction processes usually concern the following stakeholder groups:

- Civil society, which will be involved through sectoral and professional NGOs, associations,
- Administration departments, local government, and other public institutions.
- Council technicians. Their knowledge must be consulted in all the process stages.
- Scientific and think tank stakeholders.
- Private sector and services providers.

### Stakeholder Engagement Tools: Approaches, Selection, Strategies

There are altogether six approaches for stakeholder engagement:

- **Monitor.** Tracking or monitoring stakeholder positions via research or discussion with other parties.
- **Message.** Adapting communications scope and messaging to meet stakeholder expectations.
- **Advocate.** Activities to enlist support for a specific effort or position that may have opposition or reflect an actual or perceived power imbalance.
- **Consult.** Soliciting explicit feedback or input on a project. Implies an expectation by the stakeholders that the decision-maker will make concrete changes based on the consultation.
- **Collaborate.** Initiate or participate in two-way dialogue focused on mutual learning and solutions. This can include co-creating new ideas and approaches.
- **Innovate.** Shared work on common objectives of the decision-maker and stakeholders in particular issues. It can include co-creation, as well as co-implementation, of new ideas.

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4 Methodology for stakeholder engagement
Here are a few questions to help you identify your approach:

- Do you want to inform or help people understand a problem or opportunity?
- Do you need more information from stakeholders to make a decision? Primary informing techniques include public opinion polling, needs assessments, and public hearings.
- Do you want to get public feedback about an issue to be solved, a program, or a decision?
- Do you want to stimulate public debate about the issue? Primary methods for consulting the public include community meetings, roundtable discussions, and focus groups.
- Do you want to work directly with stakeholders throughout decision-making, drawing on their expertise to make recommendations? Primary techniques for engaging the public include dialogue sessions and public issues forums.
Identified stakeholders can be convened through a multistakeholder mechanism. By providing a forum for stakeholders to discuss, design, and develop policies or solutions, such a mechanism increases the connections among actors. It makes it possible for them to work together to address the issue.

Initially, it is helpful to determine whether existing networks, mechanisms, or platforms are suitable for bringing stakeholders together around a specified issue or set of problems. If they are not, new mechanisms can be established and launched.

After deciding on the technique that is most appropriate for you, you can consider appropriate formats and tools to engage stakeholders in the recovery and reconstruction design and implementation process.

The advisable formats include:

- **Public consultations.** The forms of consultations can be very diverse. They can be held in real-time in various forms (public discussions, round tables, briefings, debates, platforms, etc.), in electronic format, or as a survey.

  It is important that the consultation process be systematic: consultation topics are planned in advance, each consultation is announced in advance, and a report is published based on the results of the consultation. Public consultations provide an opportunity for direct communication between the authorities and citizens and for receiving feedback. Today, under martial law, consultations are mainly held online, which undoubtedly reduces their effectiveness.

- The Ministry of Development of Communities, Territories, and Infrastructure of Ukraine and the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine launched public consultations on the “Regional Dimension of the Plan of Ukraine,” dedicated to presenting the draft Plan of Ukraine and its main directions. The stakeholder list includes representatives of the Ministry of Community Development, Territories and Infrastructure of Ukraine, the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine, as well as the All-Ukrainian Association of Local Self-Government Bodies, and representatives of local executive authorities and local self-government bodies.

- By holding a national forum titled “Networking of non-governmental organizations to represent the interests of patients,” the CHESNO Movement and the Charitable Foundation “Patients of Ukraine” launched a discussion on control tools in the healthcare sector, bringing together representatives of patients, human rights, and anti-coronavirus organizations and decision-makers.
- **Multi-purpose online platforms.** The platforms currently established in Ukraine incorporate a variety of approaches depending on the initiators of the engagement process. Online platforms created explicitly for e-democracy are secured and well-managed governmental resources for engagement.

- One of the most recent national platform is an Electronic Democracy Module (eDem)\(^5\) in the DREAM ecosystem, which is being designed to guarantee a transparent, accountable, and democratic reconstruction process. It aims to ensure active participation of the public in the restoration of Ukraine, mitigate the risks of non-targeted use of funds, and increase confidence in reconstruction. The eDem module is one of the key components of the DREAM system, which the Innovation Development Center initiated with the assistance of the Coalition of Civil Society Organizations RISE Ukraine together with the developers of the DREAM ecosystem — Open Contracting Partnership, with effective interaction with international partners and authorities, in particular with the support of the Ministry of Restoration of Ukraine.

- At the local level, the web platform “Single Platform for Local Electronic Democracy” (e-DEM)\(^6\) aims to provide citizens with easy and convenient access to several e-democracy tools. These tools are designed to establish better communication between citizens and authorities in solving various socially essential problems. The Electronic Public Consultations service allows local authorities to solicit proposals from residents on issues related to the development of cities and communities, organize discussions of draft documents before their review and approval, and conduct local surveys in various forms to study the opinions of active citizens.

- The Ministry of Education has announced the engagement of sectoral NGOs on the Education Recovery Support Platform. The platform is a format for interaction between the state and public sectors, donors, and partners to join forces in developing education in Ukraine.

- At the local level, a format of consultation platforms is being introduced. Five Platforms for Public Participation in the Restoration of Territorial Communities have started their activities in Ukraine with the support of the UK Government within the framework of the project “Efficiency of Recovery and Reconstruction Processes in Ukraine through Citizen Participation.” They are in the Bakhmach community of Chernihiv oblast, Beryslav community of Kherson oblast, Kobieve community of Mykolai oblast, Malyniv community of Kharkiv oblast, and Nyzhneduvanska community of Luhansk oblast.

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\(^5\) [https://dream.gov.ua/ua/special/eDem](https://dream.gov.ua/ua/special/eDem)

\(^6\) [https://e-dem.ua/](https://e-dem.ua/)
Also, at the community level, the scope of stakeholder and citizen engagement formats includes:

- **Public hearings.** These are meetings of community residents with representatives of the authorities to discuss critical local issues, to which residents can make suggestions. Public hearings are easy to organize, and participants can express their opinions. The authorities should consider all proposals adopted at the hearings in a mandatory and timely manner.

- **General meeting of citizens** at the place of residence. It is similar in content to public hearings, as it is also a meeting of residents who discuss issues and make proposals that are mandatory for consideration by the authorities. However, general meetings are held in a particular territory to address problems. The procedure for keeping them is much more complicated. To be legitimate, they must be attended by more than half of the residents of the relevant territory. As an option, conferences are proposed. They require the presence of more than half of the elected delegates. But they must first be elected at meetings of houses, entrances, streets, etc. This, of course, is also a challenging task, especially considering the migration in Ukraine.

- **Local initiatives.** This is an opportunity for citizens to submit an issue to the council session within its competence. You can foster and facilitate proactive citizens’ preparation of a draft decision on a relevant issue. A certain part of the community must support this initiative. If the initiative is submitted following the procedure, it must be considered at a session with the initiators’ participation. Local initiatives allow citizens to submit draft decisions to the session directly. However, citizens must be professionally prepared to make a high-quality draft decision.

- **Consultative & advisory bodies.** They can be conditionally divided into public councils and temporary advisory bodies. Public councils can be general and specialized (youth councils, IDP councils, entrepreneurs’ councils, women’s councils, etc.). Temporary advisory bodies are created to address specific issues through working groups, committees, commissions, etc. The main thing is that they should include representatives of the public. Advisory bodies consider issues that fall within the competence of the body that established them and make proposals on these issues that are advisory to the authorities. Advisory bodies can be a very effective tool for engaging stakeholders, as they work in direct contact with the authorities and can directly represent the interests of their community. The problem in their work may be the need for a more active and professional public, which, if appropriately managed, cannot provide appropriate proposals. This may lead to the formalization of their activities. In the charter, it is advisable to specify the possibility of establishing public councils and temporary advisory bodies, as well as the main principles of their creation and key powers.
Civic expertise. Legislation entitles citizens to conduct public examinations of regulatory acts, including anti-corruption examinations. The strength of this tool is the deep immersion of citizens in specific policy areas and the opportunity to get acquainted with public information, submit proposals, and receive reasonable answers. The problem is the complexity of the examination procedure itself because the community must have activists of a particular specialty who can work with documents — not just read them but also make professional suggestions. Still, it is advisable to allow citizens to conduct public examinations and define their general algorithm in the charter.

Legal Framework for Stakeholder & Citizen Engagement

The ground regulations for conducting stakeholder and citizen engagement activities are outlined in various laws depending on a format:

- public hearings — “the procedure for organizing public hearings is determined by the charter of the territorial community” — Article 13 of the Law on Local Self-Government;

- local initiatives — “the procedure for submitting a local initiative is determined by the representative body of local self-government or the charter of the territorial community” — Article 9;

- general meetings of citizens — “the procedure for holding a general meeting is determined by the law and the charter of the territorial community” — Article 8.

It should be noted that the relevant law has not yet been approved in Ukraine.

Ukrainian legislation provides mechanisms for implementing them. These include different forms of public expertise: anti-corruption (provided for by the Law “On Prevention of Corruption”) and just public expertise (provided for by the CMU Resolution “On Approval of the Procedure for Facilitating Public Expertise of the Activities of Executive Authorities”), which is advisory for local self-government bodies.

In addition, the Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 996 “On Ensuring Public Participation in the Formation and Implementation of State Policy,” defines the procedure for holding public consultations and the model regulation on a public council at state authorities. However, Article 5 of the resolution recommends that local governments apply its provisions. It is also worth mentioning that the Verkhovna Rada plans to consider the draft law “On Public Consultations” in the second reading. Then, consultations will necessarily be regulated by the statute.

Stakeholder Engagement Plan Development

The impact of engagement activities on society and decision-making depends not only on the approach taken but also on other dimensions, including who participates, when engagement takes place, what issues are considered or excluded, and the power dynamics between participants.
When planning stakeholder engagement, it is essential to take into account the following aspects:

- **A clear understanding** of the engagement objectives.
- **Recognition** of interrelationships between different stakeholders.
- **Understanding** stakeholders’ needs before engaging in activities.

The key questions to be asked:

- **Purpose**: What do you want to achieve through this engagement?
- **Scope**: What level of impact will the outcome have? Is it regional? Local? Etc.
- **Audience**: Who are your target audience, and how do they connect with you?
- **Tools**: What tools do you think will be useful to engage your audience, such as email, open discussions, surveys, polls, or face-to-face meetings?

Start your plan by writing down what you hope to achieve by engaging with stakeholders — these will help you report on your progress, stay on track with goals, and drive improvement. Your stakeholder engagement plan within specific actions may include objectives:

- Reach more stakeholders through your engagement
- Improve the wellbeing of the community
- Be more accountable or transparent
- Ensure greater sustainability
- Work more efficiently
- Increase support for a specific reconstruction and recovery project or outcome
- Ensure human rights are supported
- Make better decisions based on more complete information

With all the foundations in place for your stakeholder engagement, you need to plan the activities and communication to engage each key stakeholder group in line with your objectives. Note down who you intend to target, what information you will disclose, and in what format you’ll reach them, along with the team member responsible for the task and when it will occur.

The primary advice for developing a stakeholder engagement plan:

- Consider using a mix of traditional engagement methods and digital communication methods
- Tailor your message and format to different stakeholders so it’s relevant and accessible
- Consider a more hands-on or individualized approach and a greater frequency of activities and communications for key stakeholders.
• Provide opportunities for stakeholders to respond with feedback, comments, and questions.

• Ensure you listen to your stakeholders, respond to issues, and engage in conversation where appropriate.

Your stakeholder engagement plan should also include an outline of how you plan to track, evaluate, and report on your engagement. For instance, a collection of survey responses may be linked to a specific decision, action, or change to the project or the recovery plan.

During the process of plan development, you should keep in mind stakeholder groups — their needs, interests, and preferences and:

• Focus on issues that matter to them (or that they can influence)

• Communicate in a way that’s relevant to them (based on their location, context, and more)

• Communicate more frequently and individually with key stakeholders

• Focus on specific groups first (e.g., those most likely to oppose your project or those with the most influence)

• Communicate via their preferred channel (email, SMS, phone, social media, face-to-face, etc.)

Regarding reaching all your stakeholder groups, accessibility issues are an essential consideration for your engagement to ensure you are fair, inclusive, and able to hear from various perspectives). Crucial considerations for accessibility and inclusiveness include:

• Physical access. Can people with physical disabilities participate in the event? How can their needs be accommodated? What location(s) are ideal to reach most stakeholders?

• Timing. Do you offer a variety of timeslots to accommodate various work schedules, power shortages, and other external issues?

• Information formats. Is the information available in various formats, including text, video, and audio?

• Feedback formats. Can people offer feedback in various ways, including face-to-face, paper-based forms, online forms, email, phone, and more?

• Digital literacy. Can people participate in your engagement without a computer or smartphone (or the ability/desire to use one)?

A well-developed plan should address all the matters listed above. A reference example is the Ministry of Finance’s stakeholder engagement plan for the Public Expenditures For Administrative Capacity Endurance (PEACE) project.
Roles Distribution

From the outset, identify the management structure responsible for stakeholder engagement activity. Appoint a person within the team with appropriate qualifications and authority. It should be someone who:

- **Possesses** good people skills
- Has a good **understanding** of community dynamics
- **Respects** the views of others
- Has a genuine **commitment** to the position and its goals.

As every engagement activity is unique, interested parties should encourage activity teams to be diverse in make-up and objective in their findings. Each stakeholder activity is different, but the team should at least include the person responsible for stakeholder engagement, communication specialist and/or event manager, and data and/or policy analyst.
Building & Maintaining Relationships with Stakeholders

Communicate. From the beginning, it’s crucial to be transparent about the engagement activities’ goals, perspectives, and procedural matters. Explain how their input will affect the outcomes and how much you will engage them in decisions. People are more willing to engage when they understand their influence over the outcome, the decision-making process, and what is negotiable and what is not.

Gain stakeholder trust right from the start. Communicate with stakeholders early and frequently so that they fully understand the benefits of the plan, strategy, project, or policy implementation. Understanding a situation means stakeholders are more likely to support you when necessary. It also means that even if stakeholders disagree with the final decision, they benefit from understanding the process, history, and the trade-offs made. Therefore, they will be less likely to object strongly at the final stage.

Meet with stakeholders who are resistant to change. If you avoid the opposition, you might invest heavily in a decision and then receive resistance and backlash in the final hour. To prevent this, it’s important to meet with key stakeholders who resist change regularly. The meeting could be through various means of communication.

Establish meaningful post-communication. It’s important to reflect on the insights you receive from your stakeholders and store the data obtained accurately.

Informing Stakeholders

First, it is necessary to inform the stakeholders in advance about the engagement activity and the possibilities for participating in it. When communicating the engagement issue to the stakeholders, it must be kept in mind that different stakeholder groups require a different approach.

However, the proper announcement or invitation to a stakeholder should include the following:

- the purpose and scope of the engagement, the engagement process, and the expected timelines;
- what the stakeholder is expected to contribute;
- logistical and practical information about the engagement process.
Facilitating Stakeholder Engagement Activity

During the engagement activity, facilitation is a must. To benefit most from the stakeholder engagement, focus on the following points:

- Make sure that everyone who joins is aware of the goals, format, envisaged contribution, and any helpful background information so the discussion will be as productive as possible.

- Share feedback from the earlier goal-setting process or invite stakeholders to share their expectations for the engagement.

- Encourage less-vocal stakeholders to participate in the conversation; create a space where this is possible and comfortable; respect each party's right to observe quietly.

- Specific topics can prove controversial or provocative, and unexpected dynamics or rivalries may surface among participants. Thorough mapping and preparation will help, but anticipating various outcomes is essential.

Documenting Engagement Activity

To use the data collected during the engagement activity and measure success and build for future activities, the following should be put in writing during the engagement:

- the purpose and aims of the engagement;

- the methods used; the participants;

- a summary of noted stakeholder concerns, expectations, and perceptions;

- a summary of discussions, and a robust list of outputs (decisions, actions, proposals, and recommendations).

This documentary record should be shared with all participants appropriately based on your stakeholder engagement plan objectives.
Data Based Decision-Making

Stakeholder engagement should involve collecting data from stakeholders for better evidence-based decision-making. In addition to involvement and building collaborative communication, you should focus on the data you obtain during the engagement activities.

A data collection, documentation, and storage system should be established for subsequent processing and analysis. Data analysis provides insights and makes a ground for developing strategies based on empirical evidence rather than intuition or assumptions. It is crucial to follow the basic rules of data processing:

- **Data Collection & Integration.** Data can be obtained from various sources, such as surveys, administrative records, external datasets, and engagement events. All the data should be cleaned, validated, and harmonized to ensure its quality and consistency.

- **Data Exploration & Descriptive Analytics.** Data analytics techniques allow policymakers and decision-makers to explore and understand the data through descriptive analytics, which helps identify patterns, trends, and relationships within the data and provides a comprehensive overview of the situation or problem at hand.

- **Impact Evaluation.** Data analytics enables the evaluation of the impact of policies and interventions. By comparing pre- and post-implementation data, decision-makers can assess the effectiveness of specific measures or programs. Impact evaluation helps identify successful policies, highlight areas for improvement, and inform evidence-based decision-making.

- **Data-driven decision-making.** By analyzing social, economic, and environmental data, policymakers can identify priority areas, define policy objectives, and develop targeted interventions. This ensures that decisions are grounded in empirical evidence and aligned with the population’s needs and realities.

- **Real-time Monitoring & Risk Mitigation.** By continuously analyzing data and monitoring key performance indicators, decision-makers can assess the progress and effectiveness of policies. Real-time feedback provides the opportunity to make necessary adjustments or interventions promptly, address risks, and improve the impact of decisions.

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*Data Analytics for Evidence-based Policy-making & Decision-making*
Assessment of the Stakeholder Engagement Process

At the end of each cycle of the stakeholder engagement process, the whole situation and its outputs should be analyzed, and the reasons for the chosen decisions and actions should be defined.

Assessment of the stakeholder engagement process is necessary to ensure that the chosen approach is successful.

The evaluation analysis should be performed and include the following:

- **achievement** of objectives and expected results;
- **effectiveness** of allocated resources and means (e.g., budget and expertise);
- internal and external **acceptance** of outcomes.

The measuring and reporting of results of every engagement activity have the following benefits:

- Increased trust and confidence across the project community;
- Increased certainty and pace of progress;
- A clearer understanding of remaining resistance;
- More robust risk management;
- Sustainability compliance management;
- Market development;
- Innovation;
- Strategy improvement.

Not measuring and reporting the progress may have the following risks:

- Uncertainty of outcome
- Likelihood of reactive planning;
- Diversion and distraction of resources;
- Silo thinking, factions, and division amongst all levels: individual, group, organizational;
- Unprofessional and unethical behaviors.

The primary focus of reconstruction and recovery projects, policies, and approaches should be an ongoing engagement to tackle strategic or systemic issues of high value. It is good practice to maintain ongoing engagement throughout program development, implementation, and post-implementation assessment.
Stakeholder Engagement Guide. Sustainability & Excellence in the Reconstruction Process of Ukraine. 2024