Stakeholder and Social Network Analysis

Guidance Note

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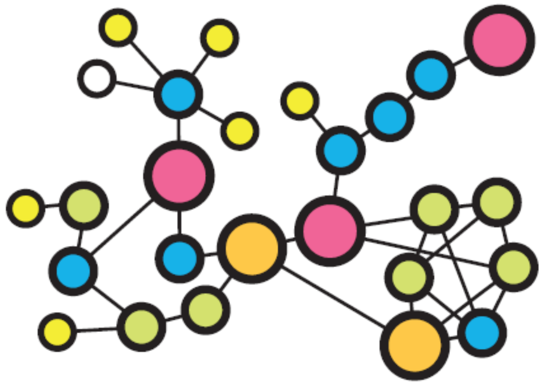


Stakeholder Analysis is used to identify the actors and relationships that influence project outcomes. It helps IRC to determine how to work and who to partner, coordinate or engage with in order to best achieve the outcome. It builds on existing stakeholder information and typically will include a participatory internal meeting or workshop. IRC has two levels of Stakeholder Analysis – **Basic Stakeholder Analysis (BSA) and Social Network Analysis (SNA).**

Why use it?

Stakeholder Analysis enables the IRC to understand which actors can influence outcomes, and how they do so, so that it can make an informed decision on how to work and who to work with to best deliver on IRC outcomes. It can:

- inform the IRC's contextual analysis and program approach for strategy action plans and new projects
- inform partner selection for new proposals and projects
- inform advocacy and communication strategies with local government and communities
- inform project Risk Matrix by identifying potential spoilers or actors that do not support the outcome
- inform project Do no Harm approach by minimizing the risk of inadvertently undermining existing civil society and government capacity
- ensure inclusivity of women, girls, and other marginalized actors in project design
- ensure coordination with other key stakeholders to avoid duplication

When to use it?

Choosing the right time

1. **For entering new geography or sector:** Basic Stakeholder Analysis is a Sub-Award Partnership Management (SPMS) required process to determine the program approach (partnership, direct implementation or both) and identify potential partners when initiating programs in a new geographic or outcome area (see SPMS Chapter 3). At a minimum, the IPD or USP office must complete a Stakeholder Analysis that includes a desk review and an internal meeting to analyze the stakeholders before selecting the program approach and commencing the intervention. The stakeholder analysis and program approach selection must then be updated at the time of annual Strategy Action Plan (SAP) revisions. This also enables teams to meet the Partner Responsiveness Good Standard.

2. **For new / improvements to project design:** To meet the Context Appropriate and Partner Responsiveness Good Standards, teams must conduct a Stakeholder Analysis during **design** to inform partner decisions. Stakeholder and Social Network Analysis may also be used during **start-up** or **implementation** to better understand particular issues that arise or difficult stakeholders, or to inform project transition and **closeout** in the most appropriate manner.

> **SPMS policy!**
>
> When developing a new program teams must ensure that the program design is consistent with the program approach determined on the basis of a Stakeholder Analysis, reviewed annually.

Choosing the right approach – Basic Stakeholder Analysis or Social Network Analysis?

Basic Stakeholder Analysis and Social Network Analysis have the same purpose of informing who to work with and how to work with them. The main difference between the approaches is the level of depth the analysis goes into and the skills necessary to facilitate it.

Basic Stakeholder Analysis is a process to identify the influence of individual actors in relation to achieving the project outcome through a desk review and participatory internal meeting or workshop and where appropriate KIIs. In short, it aims to answer who the actor is and how the actor might impact a project's success.

Social Network Analysis is a process to map the influence of individual actors *and* their relationships in relation to achieving the project outcome through a desk review, a participatory internal meeting or workshop and, where appropriate, KIIs. In short, it aims to determine who the actors are, how they are connected to each other, and how the network of actors might impact a project's success.

The table below provides some key considerations on which approach may be most appropriate to you.

Considerations		Basic Stakeholder Analysis	Social Network Analysis
Time Available	**High** *(3hrs or more)*	Yes	Yes
	Low *(2hrs or less)*	Yes	Maybe
Staff knowledge of the stakeholders in the context	**High**	Yes	Yes
	Low	Yes	Maybe
Staff familiarity with Stakeholder Analysis process	**High**	Yes	Yes
	Low	Yes	Maybe

How to use it?

You will need to organize a **1-3 hour internal meeting or workshop**. Preparation will include a preparatory desk review in order to ensure the workshop builds from existing knowledge. When IRC is new to a context or there is limited available information, key informant interviews (KIIs) may be helpful. Preparation time depends on the scope of the analysis.

The facilitator will likely need to be familiar with Stakeholder Analysis and/or Social Network Analysis tools, having read this guidance and participated in a previous analysis, training, or remote support. The facilitator will also benefit from knowing the programmatic and operational elements that are relevant to the topic and area to be discussed. You will also need a note taker to ensure that the facilitator is free to moderate the discussion without distractions. An interpreter may be required in cases where the exercise includes clients and there is no one common language of communication.

Participants in the workshop will need to be knowledgeable of the context and include a gender balance. For an internal meeting this typically would include staff that either are or will be working on a specific program/project, operational staff (e.g. security, procurement, HR), and senior staff (e.g. DDP, DDO). In general, it's best to have no more than 15 people participate in a given session.

It is recommended to involve external participants, such as trusted partners and clients, wherever possible to broaden information sources. For a meeting with external participants, it is important to ensure: (a) a diversity of stakeholders – INGO, local NGO, CBOs, local and national government; (b) a diversity of community perspectives that reflects local demographics – ethnicity, age gender, religion, etc.; and (c) potential to contribute positively to workshop – trusted confidant.

In certain contexts it may be appropriate to sub-divide groups or hold separate workshops. *Given the contentious nature of topics relevant to conflicts you may find that sub-dividing your group of informants allows them to speak more freely, please especially consider the gender dimension in this sense.*

You will want to have either 2 flipcharts, or a laptop and a projector. You will also need a large number of post-its (5-6 pads of different colors should be enough).

Overview

What is a ‘stakeholder’ or ‘actor’? A stakeholder (also referred to as an actor) is any entity or individual who can significantly impact on outcomes for people, either positively or negatively. Examples of actors include: local and national government, local and international NGOs, businesses, faith-based groups, academic and research institutions, armed groups, community committees, and local leaders. When identifying actors, the IRC should pay particular attention to those whose voice and influence may be less obvious to an international organization. The IRC should ensure the roles of women and girls, youth, elderly, disabled and other groups that may be marginalized in the community are included as actors.

Basic Stakeholder Analysis Steps:

Preparation

1. Define the Outcome Question
2. Preparatory Desk Review/KIIs

Meeting/Workshop

3. List and categorize the actors
4. Quantify the level and type of influence of each actor
5. Analysis to action

Your outputs will be:

A. Stakeholder List
B. Stakeholder Analysis Matrix
C. Stakeholder Engagement Plan (optional)

Social Network Analysis Steps:

Preparation

1. Define the Outcome Question
2. Preparatory Desk Review/KIIs

Meeting/Workshop

3. List and categorize the actors
4. List and categorize the relationships
5. Map the actor and their relationships
6. Analysis to action

Your outputs will be:

A. Stakeholder List
B. Stakeholder Map
C. Stakeholder Engagement Plan (optional)

Guidance

Preparation

Step 1: Define the Outcome Question

A Stakeholder Analysis exercise is most useful when a clear question regarding the outcome IRC seeks to achieve is utilized to guide the analysis. The following two formulas may help to guide the development of an appropriate question.

- "Who can influence… / Who has influenced…"
  - For instance: "Who can influence the health-seeking behavior of women for pre- and post- natal visits in X district?"
  - For instance: "Who can influence the payment of teachers stipends in X district over the next five years?"
- "Who is currently involved in… who was involved in…"
  - For instance: "Who is currently involved in the procurement, distribution and provision of X drugs in Y district?"

Example: In Sierra Leone the IRC worked to answer the question "Who can influence the effectiveness and sustainability of community health over the next 12 months?"

Influence is the degree to which an actor can help to achieve or block the desire outcome. This can be based on formal decision-making power (e.g. government permission), material power (e.g. money, facilities), informal influence (e.g. trusted community leader), or coercion (e.g. physical violence).

It is recommended that the following elements are included in the question: (a) either a focus on the level of influence or level of involvement; (b) the specific issue (see examples above); (c) within a specific geographic; and (d) if pertinent over a particular period of time.

Who Can Influence (Outcome) for (Client) + (geographic boundary) + (time horizon)?

Step 2: Preparatory Desk Review / Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

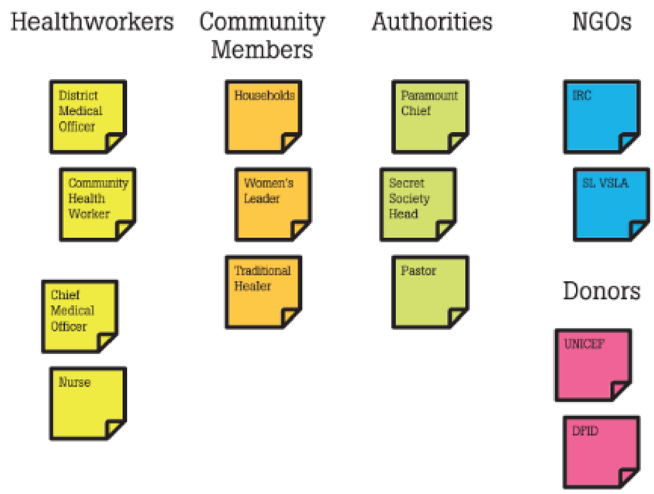
A key part of preparation is to ensure that the analysis is well-informed. These preparation activities can support in bringing external information or identifying external participants for the meeting or workshop.

Desk review: A review of existing information (e.g. from government, NGO coordination bodies, donors, etc.) can save time and resources. The desk review provides a starting point to determining who may be important stakeholders to consider, why they may be important, and any gaps in existing knowledge available. The Basic Stakeholder Analysis and Program Approach (BSA/PA) Template may be helpful as a starting point for organizing information discovered through the desk review. Included in the template are columns to facilitate the Basic Stakeholder Analysis and that help to inform an assessment of availability of partners, part of the process for determining program approach. More columns may be added to the tool as necessary to insert other relevant information that could inform future partnership decisions.

(Optional) Key informant interviews: If IRC staff are unfamiliar with the context and there is little existing information, key informant interviews (KIIs) may be necessary to building a base understanding of the relevant actors. KIIs can both fill information gaps and triangulate existing information or assumptions about the local stakeholders.

Basic Stakeholder Analysis

Step 3: List and categorize actors



The first task is for participants to list all of the actors (individuals, groups, or organizations) that participants consider relevant to the question posed. In other words, participants would answer the question: "Who can influence…(the issue identified)?" When doing this Step, it is important to be specific about the individual actors – For example, an actor is not `local government' but an actor may be `ward executive officer'.

Have your colleagues initially write them on a flip-chart page (or projector). If a desk review was conducted, you may also consider referencing back to that list. Once the list is exhausted, encourage participants to reflect on what group the actors fall into in general. Common groupings may include: government, donors, INGOs, LNGOs, private sector, etc.

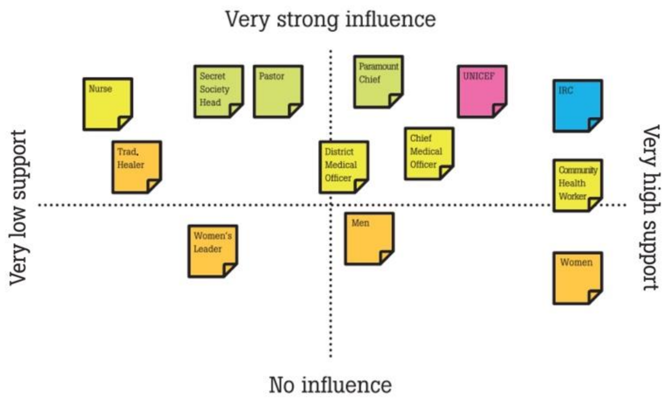
Assign each actor to a group and each group a color – then have colleagues write each actors name on a post-it nte of the color of the appropriate group. Once colleagues have listed all of the actors they can think of, check the gender of actors listed. If the majority of actors are male, ask teams to think of and try to list influential women or women's groups that may have been missed in the first listing. Add any identified to the list and categorize them.

- If using the BSA/PA Excel Template, fill-in 'Stakeholder List' Tab 1 columns for 'Stakeholder Name' and 'Type'

Step 4: Quantify the level and type of influence of each actor

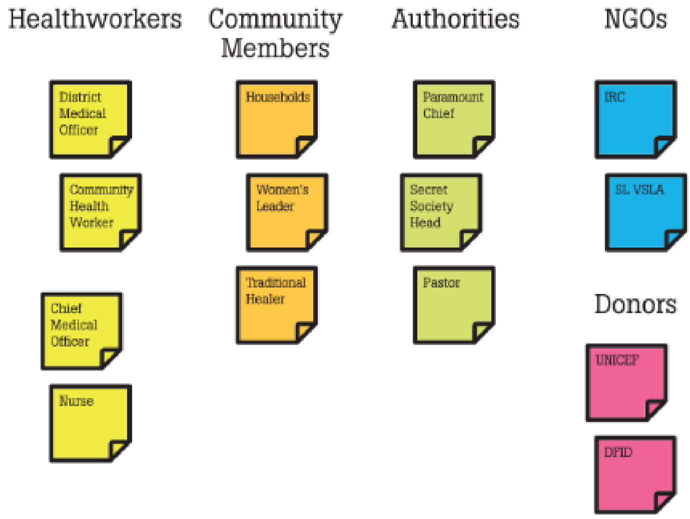
Turning to a new flip chart draw the following grid: For each actor you have noted, ask participants to quantify their influence and their level of support for the targeted outcome or question you defined at Step 1. As this step is about comparing each actor to another, it may be useful to start with either the most influential or the least influential actor, whose position is well understood. Similarly, you may wish to start with the actor who is least supportive or actively against the outcome along with the actor that is most supportive. An actor that may be indifferent to the outcome would be placed in the middle. It's important to note that the assessment is based on how and whether the actor influences the specified outcome, rather than an assessment of their general power or general support for IRC.

- If using the BSA/PA Excel Template, fill-in 'Stakeholder List' Tab 1 columns for 'Stakeholder Analysis Matrix'. This information will then populate the second 'Stakeholder Analysis Matrix' Tab 2. When rating level of influence, it is a comparative rating against another actor from very high influence (4) to no influence (0). When rating level of support, similarly it is a comparative rating from very high support/actively supporting the outcome (4) to very low support or actively seeking to undermine the outcome (0). Indifference in level of support for the outcome would be noted in the middle (2).



Social Network Analysis[1]

Step 3: List and categorize actors



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Assign each actor to a group and each group a color – then have colleagues write each actors name on a post-it note of the color of the appropriate group. Once colleagues have listed all of the actors they can think of, check the gender of actors listed. If the majority of actors are male, ask teams to think of and try to list influential women or women's groups that may have been missed in the first listing. Add any identified to the list and categorize them.

Step 4: List and categorize the relationships

Once you have listed the actors, you can then begin to develop a Stakeholder Map that looks at the relationships between the actors. There are many different types of relationship or connections that can be mapped on a social network. Connections can be formal (e.g. reporting lines), informal (e.g. friendship or conflict), resource flows (e.g. financial, in kind support, drug provision or corruption) or informational (e.g. giving/receiving advice or the flow of data). The types of connections will be slightly different depending on your defined question and the context. Common themes may include:

- Formal reporting lines
- Financial support
- Non-financial support
- Informal influence over
- Conflict

It is suggested that a maximum of five types of connection are identified, preferably fewer, so that the map doesn't become too complicated. Each relationship will need to be carefully defined in writing and documented to the side for the participants' reference during the rest of the exercise.

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[1] A more detailed guide on SNA may be found here: https://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/document/1263/socialnetworkanalysise-handbook.pdf
[2] If a desk review was conducted, you may also consider referencing back to that list and integrating any missing actor names.

Each relationship will have three (3) distinct aspects:

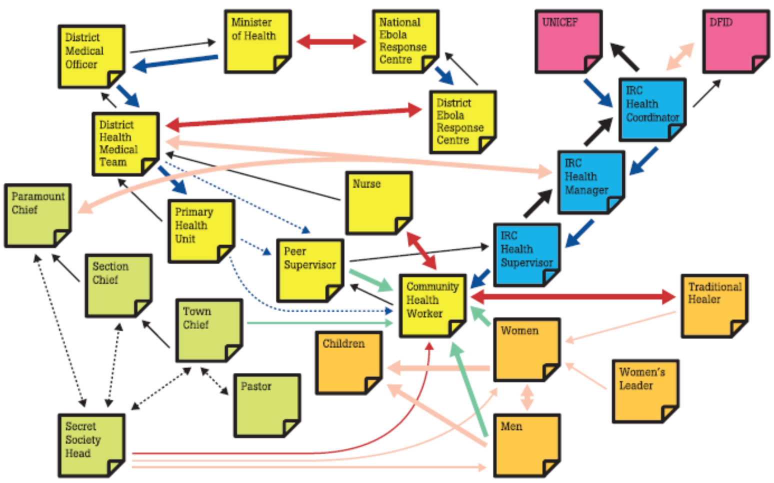
Quality – what type of relationship is it (e.g. formal, informal, conflict)?	Formal Reporting Conflict Financial Support Non-Financial Support Informal Influence
Direction – is it exclusively uni-directional or bi-directional, which way does it flow?	One directional One directional Bi-directional
Intensity – How strong is this relationship?	Weak Moderate Strong

Each relationship type should be allocated a line colour and this made clear in a legend on the flip chart. Relationships can be weak (dotted line), moderate (single line), or strong (thick line).

Step 5: Map the actors and their relationships

Once the types of relationship to investigate have been agreed, participants can start to identify the relationships that exist between actors by asking the question: How are these actors linked?

Start by clustering your `actors' around the targeted client group or outcome area (on the colored post-its) on a large work surface (several flip-chart pads taped together, or a wall to which post-its will durably adhere). As relationships are identified, participants draw connecting lines between actors (see image below).



Example - Sierra Leone Network Map

Start by simply examining the quality of each relationship. Once all the relationships have been drawn in, in terms of their quality you can investigate their direction and intensity. However, you may find that you are short on time and in this instance you may choose to identify a more limited series of core relationships. Once concluded, consider documenting the map by taking a picture or utilizing the online software Kumu to make a digital version of the map.

Analysis to Action

Step 5/6: Analysis to Action

Determining program approach for new geographies and new sectors[3] When using stakeholder analysis to determine the program approach for initiating programs in a new geographical or outcome area, or reviewing Strategy Action Plans, the IRC frames this analysis in terms of its global strategic objectives, considering the following considerations:

- Effectiveness: can partnership leverage local understanding, networks and expertise to improve effectiveness of IRC's interventions?
- Scale and Reach: can partnership expand reach due to access and community acceptance?
- Best Use of Resources: can partnership ensure better value for money by building on existing capacities and resources, rather than duplicating and undermining those capacities and resources?
- Speed and Timeliness: can partnership enable a quicker response and more adaptive response?
- Responsiveness: can partnership better respond to the needs and priorities of the communities?
- Operational Feasibility: what is the relative feasibility of partnership compared with direct service delivery (can IRC rapidly establish operational capability, are there restrictions associated with current funding, does IRC need to form new partnerships, etc.)?

The analysis will produce a decision to either:

- **Focus exclusively on working in partnership** with local, national and international civil society organizations, and/ or government and private-sector entities
- **Pursue a mixed modality approach**, working in partnership as well as implementing services directly, potentially with a plan to transition the direct service delivery to partnership in future
- **Focus exclusively on delivering services directly** in the immediate term, while preparing for partnerships in the near term.

The Program Approach decision can be documented using the Basic Stakeholder Analysis and Program Approach (BSA/PA) Template. The 'Program Approach (SPMS)' tab will be where you will document the decision taken, along with the rationale for selection of that decision.

In addition, to better inform the 'Program Approach' decision, it may be helpful to analyse each actor individually against the strategic objectives in order to determine the feasibility of partnerships in your sector or geographic area. To do so, the BSA/PA Template 'Stakeholder List' tab includes columns that allow you to compare each actor individually against how they might contribute to meeting the strategic objectives. The template will then provide you a quick snapshot in the 'Program Approach (SPMS)' whether there are partners in your area available that do indeed support the strategic objectives.

Informing project design: In addition to informing a decision about IRC's overall program approach, stakeholder analysis can be used to inform individual project design. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to moving from the mapping analysis to action planning. However, participants may wish to focus the analysis of the network map on Risks and Opportunities.

Opportunities may include:

- Friends in high places**:** You may identify certain actors that are highly influential and supportive of the outcome you are trying to achieve that will become a key ally to the project. For example, the Ministry of Health has struggled to train community health workers and would be supportive of IRC's new initiative to train health workers. Establish formal partnerships (e.g. sub-grant) or Memoranda of Understandings (MoUs) to ensure they are engaged and supporting the project.
- Popular support**:** You may find that there are actors that support the project's outcome, but have had little power to help achieve it. For example, women leaders are very supportive of ending gender-based violence in their community, but have struggled to get the local community leaders with more power to agree. Find ways to build their capacity to have more influence in their community and 'keep informed' so that they can also contribute.

[3] More detailed guidance may be found in SPMS Chapter 3 found here: https://rescuenet.rescue.org/Interact/Pages/Content/Document.aspx?id=6361

Additional **opportunities** identified through Social Network Analysis:

- Critical relationship building**:** There may be some very simple wins that you identify during development of the network map. For example, you might identify two actors who are positive and have influence, but these champions may not be connected. Facilitating relationship building between key actors may prove beneficial.
- Tap into under-utilized support**:** You may identify actors within the network who are very positive about the change you seek to bring about, but who have not been given a role or sufficient voice within the proposed intervention. Give voice to these 'champions' and empower them to play a more central role.
- Building networks within the network**:** There may be the potential for coalition building to raise the voice and influence of those who are positive about the proposed change. This can be done through more formal partnership arrangements or could be through organizing events to give a platform to those who share your ambitions.

Risks may include:

- Spoilers: You may identify powerful actors that are against the outcome and will cause problems for the project. For example, local authorities do not support the presence of refugees in their district. Start by better understanding their interests/incentives and look for opportunities to align their interest with IRC to get them on board for the project or at least neutral to the project and at least 'kept satisfied'. Also, consider finding actors that might influence the spoilers to shift their opinion, such as community leaders.
- Quiet Saboteurs: You may identify actors that are against the outcome but do not have a lot of power to entirely derail the project. For example, husbands may not be supportive of their wives participating in the economic trainings and they may prevent their wives from accessing trainings. Take steps to mitigate risks that they could have to the project. Early engagement could help to change their opinion. If it is not possible to change their behaviour, then monitor closely and address if they start to pose challenges to project success.

Additional risks identified through Social Network Analysis:

- Dependency: The network may be highly dependent on a single actor or a funding source, which can create bottlenecks and sustainability concerns. Consider a partnering approach that fosters relationship-building and coordination between actors to reduce dependence on a single actor.
- Dysfunctional / conflicting relationships: There may be certain key broken relationships which impede the entire network. New actors or interventions can also introduce conflict for resources or control. Applying a Do No Harm approach that focuses on the commonalities between actors rather than the dividers can help to navigate such situations.
- Marginalization: Certain actors or groups of people may be excluded or marginalized within the network, perhaps owing to gender, ethnicity, status, income, or other factors. Carefully plan assessments and interventions to include marginalized groups.
- Disincentives for change: Certain actors may have disincentives to support the proposed change and may try to actively oppose it. Develop engagement strategies to shift their opinion.

Stakeholder engagement planning: After identifying potential actors to engage you can then document it in a Stakeholder Engagement Plan. For risks identified, you may consider also adding that to your Risk Matrix. The following is an illustrative list of engagement strategies for various types of actors identified using the Stakeholder Analysis Matrix below:

Keep satisfied • Develop advocacy strategy to get their buy-in • Consult or involve in key activities • Work with other actors to influence them	**Manage closely** • Consult at key decision points • Establish formal partnerships • Conduct joint assessments • Hold regular coordination meetings	**HIGH INFLUENCE**
Monitor • Monitor potential negative impact of actor • Work with other supportive actors to influence and gain support	**Keep informed** • Consult at key decision points • Establish formal partnerships • Capacity building to increase influence • Provide updates on activities	**LOW INFLUENCE**
LOW SUPPORT	**HIGH SUPPORT**	

Resources

Supporting Documentation

- Basic Stakeholder Analysis and Program Approach (BSA/PA) Template
- Stakeholder Engagement Plan Template
- Social Network Analysis Data Template for Kumu Digital Map

Related Tools

- Project Risk Matrix
- Comprehensive Gender Analysis
- Conflict-Sensitivity Analysis

Additional Resources

- SPMS Chapter 3. Stakeholder Analysis & Program Approach
- Social Network Analysis Handbook
- Kumu Website for Making Digital Maps
- Urban Stakeholder Engagement and Coordination – Guidance Note
- Urban Stakeholder Engagement and Coordination – Quick Reference