

Stakeholder mapping and strategic involvement

Involving stakeholders in the planning, implementation and evaluation of nature-based solutions is essential to creating buy-in such solutions and ensuring that they are fit for purpose.

Over the lifetime of CLEVER Cities, our cities have had to identify and involve a range of stakeholders in their projects and enable their strategic involvement. You can read more about their experiences in [‘Stakeholder Engagement in the Co-design of Nature-Based Solutions: Experiences from the CLEVER Cities project’](#) as well as top tips for influencing decision-makers in [‘How to influence political decision-makers’](#).

Stakeholders were originally identified as part of project inception and through using tools such as ‘theory of change’ (see also our [guidance on this method](#)), but over the lifetime of the programme, our cities’ understanding of the key stakeholders to engage has evolved.

This short paper provides relevant tools and methods that could be used by future projects to map, prioritise and communicate with stakeholders, influenced by the learning of CLEVER Cities.

1. Mapping your stakeholders

Start by filling out the following table for your project:

Who is impacted by your project	Of these – who are the intended beneficiaries of the nature-based solutions?	Of these – who might be the connectors / community groups you might partner with?	Of these – who do you need to engage to have the necessary permissions, funding etc for your project?	Of these – who else might need to be involved?
Stakeholder A				
Stakeholder B				
Stakeholder ...				

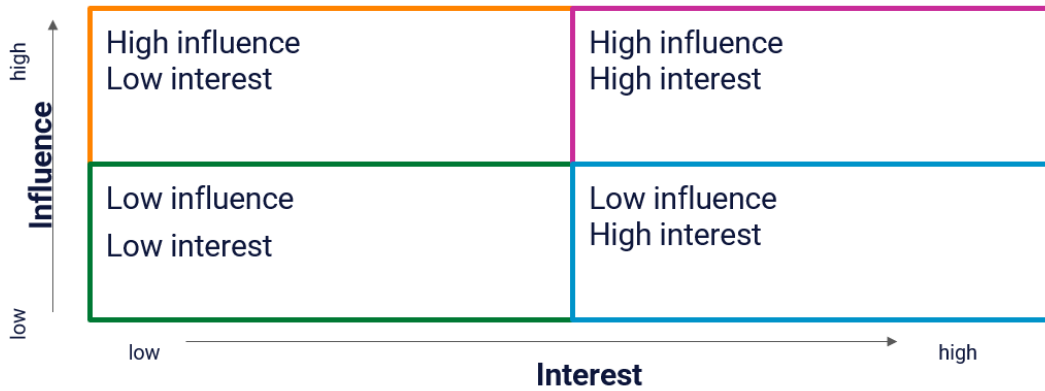
Top tips:

- Value the process itself:** Producing a stakeholder map as a project team can be a useful exercise to create consensus on who are the key groups that need to be worked with over the lifetime of a project. There is a value in the conversation that goes around the mapping as well as the final list itself. Ask each person to think of 5-10 key stakeholders, and as a group, discuss any similarities and differences in the stakeholders that emerge and where there are clusters of interest.
- Get as specific as possible:** Try to name specific individuals as well as organisations (who are the critical decision-makers that you need to work with or influence within key organisations).
- Treat this as a live document:** Make time to revisit the stakeholder map periodically throughout your project. Who else emerges as important as you go through the process and what changes over time / as you progress your project?

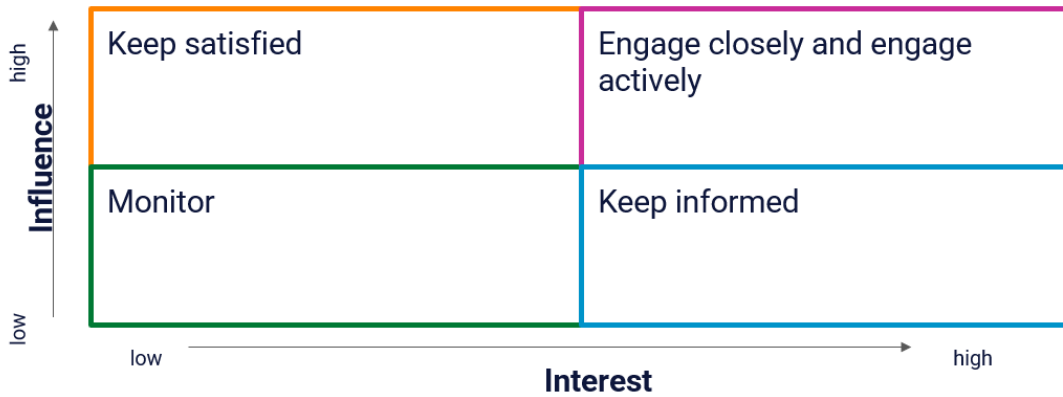
2. Prioritise your stakeholders

Use the following framework to prioritise your stakeholders – taking each one in turn and working through:

- What is their level of **interest** in your project; and
- What is their level of **influence** in supporting you to achieve your aims.



This will enable you to understand what overall approach to take with your various stakeholders:



3. Connecting mapping to communications

The following framework can help you to further plan your approach to working with stakeholders, putting the emphasis on how your stakeholders' interests and preferences should shape your communications approach.

	Incentives	Objectives	Channels	When
	Why should they engage with you? What is the benefit to them?	What are you trying to achieve and how can this stakeholder help you?	How can you reach this stakeholder?	When is a good time to try and engage them? Is it one off or a regular occurrence?
Stakeholder 1 We want to engage with... because...				
Stakeholder 2 We want to engage with... because...				

You can develop this more in more granular detail using the following questions:

	What keywords will create empathy with this stakeholder?	What messages will help them know that you understand them?	What is your proposal to them? What can you do for them and with them?	How will this benefit them or people / causes they care about?
Stakeholder 1 What do and don't they want?				
Stakeholder 2 What do and don't they want?				

Top tips: These frameworks can help you plan your approach and communications – and you can keep them live by re-visiting them as you learn what works with specific groups you are working with and their preferences.



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 innovation action programme under grant agreement no. 776604.

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