

How to....?

A guide to successful stakeholder engagement within the context of Corporate Responsibility

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Why it is vital to engage our stakeholders.

We feel it is very important to actively involve our stakeholders on our path to improved sustainability. That goes for our customers and employees as well as our partners from the worlds of politics, society, science and industry. They are the people who are affected by our activities and who can influence our actions or perceptions thereof in some way. Engaging in dialog with them helps us recognize trends in their early stages. This dialog also strengthens existing alliances and creates new opportunities for partnerships.

Deutsche Telekom operates in a complex, dynamic environment! In order to safeguard the company's future viability, we have to listen to people affected by our activities, to those who can influence our actions or perceptions thereof in some way. Therefore, we must understand their positions, motivations and concerns, and moreover, embrace a form of coexistence, be open, listen, and be willing to learn.

We are convinced that the only way to reach our sustainability goals is by working together with our stakeholders.

This guide offers suggestions on how to organize this coexistence efficiently and successfully within the context of corporate responsibility. For any project, there is never just one correct solution; but there are always many opportunities.

Content:

- 1.1 Which steps lead to success.
- 1.2 What to remember during implementation.
- 1.3 Your points of contact within the Group

1.1 Which steps lead to success.

Five steps to bring you near your goal:

- 1.1.1 Make it clear what your targets are.
- 1.1.2 Determine the scope of engagement!
- 1.1.3 Identify your relevant stakeholders!
- 1.1.4 Think about the timing of involvement.
- 1.1.5 Choose the right format!

1.1.1 Make it clear what your targets are.

Form follows function! The same applies to the involvement of our stakeholders.

Think very carefully:

- a. Why are you planning to involve stakeholders?
- b. In an ideal scenario, what result do you anticipate?

Expert-Tip

Make a note of the answers to these questions, for example on a post-it, and question your objectives critically throughout the course of the project: Am I still on the right track, and if not, what could be the reason?

- Possible answers might be to a) Why are you planning to involve stakeholders?
- to get fresh impetus
- To benefit from expertise and/ or range
- To interlink ideas
- To inspire enthusiasm for my work
- To identify risks early on...
- To get a feel for the general sentiment towards an issue
- To obtain feedback
-?

Possible answers might be to b) In an ideal scenario, what result do you anticipate?

- Be able to minimize risks to my work
- Greater acceptance for my work
- Enhanced credibility for my work
- Improved expertise and results from my work
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Remember:

Feedback is a gift. Critical feedback can be most valuable input for your project!

1.1.2 Determine the scope of engagement

Being clear on the aims of involvement is good, but it's not enough. In order to ensure that you plan your resources efficiently and avoid giving false hopes to your stakeholders, it is vital that you are aware of the following:

- How much room for maneuver do I have?
- What actual prospects can I offer my stakeholders?

To answer these questions, it may be useful to prepare a clear overview: On one side, note all the aspects of your project that are still negotiable. Compare these with the fixed aspects, i.e. those which have already been decided and are not (or no longer) negotiable.

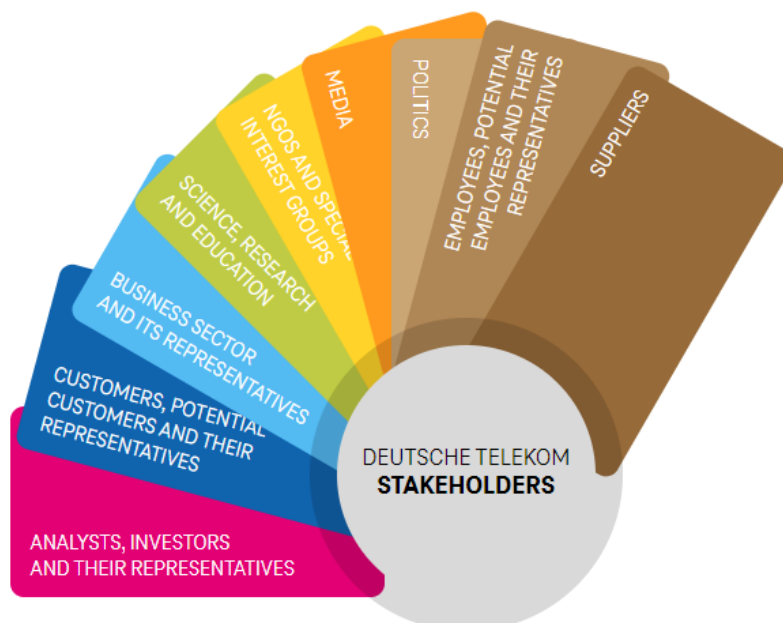
The negotiable aspects are those that the stakeholders can still influence through their input. This is where you should draw the line. Make it clear what is possible, and communicate this to your stakeholders. Only in this way will you empower them to do what you expect of them. As well, the clear management of expectations helps your stakeholders to know what they are getting into and avoids disillusion on both sides.

1.1.3 Identify your relevant stakeholders!

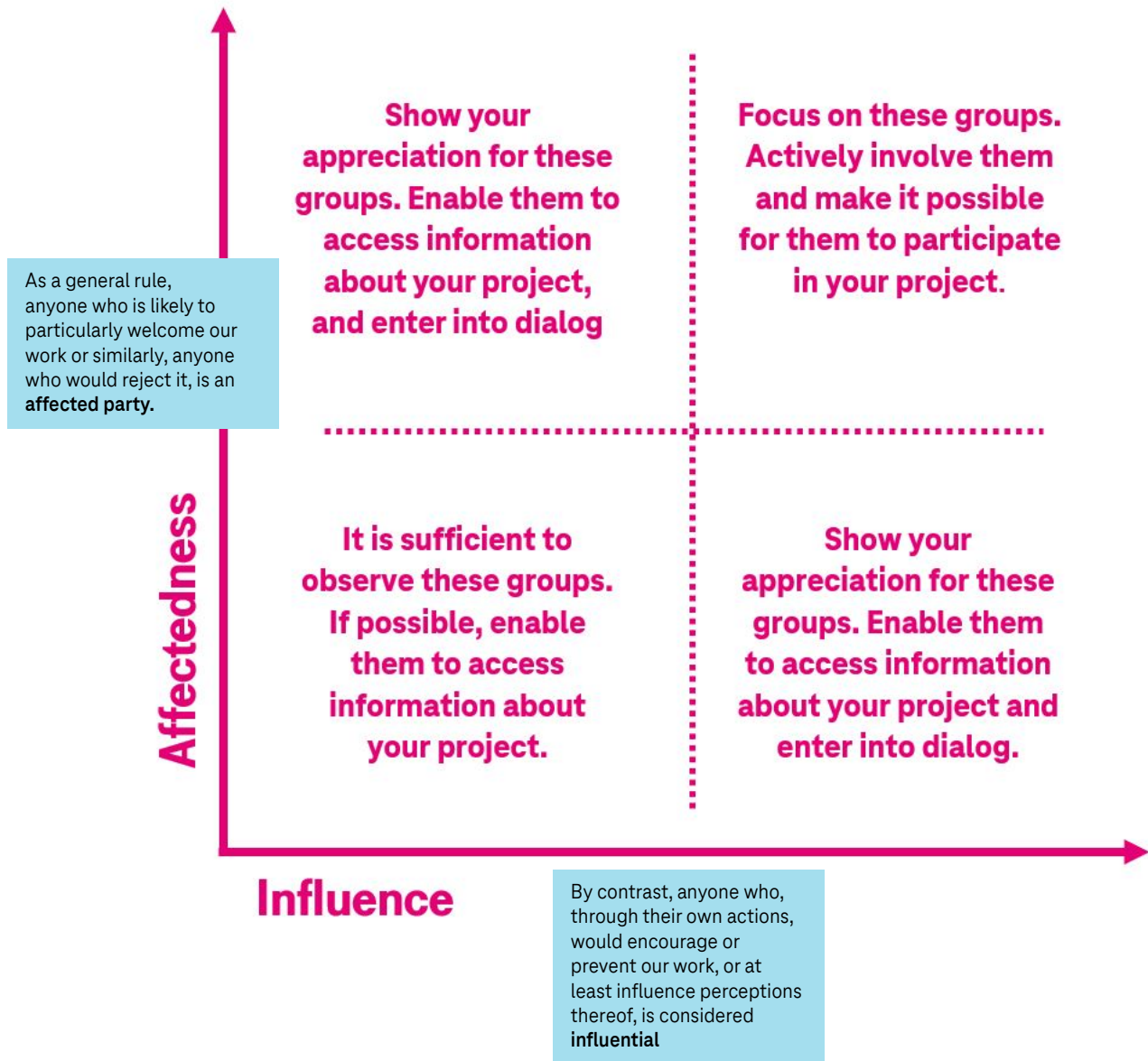
Of course, not all stakeholder groups will merit equal consideration in every project. For pragmatic reasons alone, it makes sense to focus on a few stakeholders.

When searching for the relevant stakeholders, you can of course rely on your instincts. After all, you are the expert in your project! However, we propose adopting a systematic approach to ensure that no-one is forgotten.

First, take the Deutsche Telekom stakeholder universe as your basis. This will provide an initial indication of the potentially relevant stakeholder groups for your project. An overview is shown below. Follow this [link](#) to a detailed stakeholder universe with all its sub-groups.




Secondly: The relevance of a stakeholder group is measured primarily according to two criteria: **the degree of affectedness**, and the **potential for influencing**. Consider the various stakeholder groups and their degree of affectedness and potential for influencing your project. Work your way through the stakeholder universe, and enter your assessment in the following matrix for each of the groups. Consciously broaden your perspectives: Present the results to some of your colleagues, and ask them for their suggested additions and amendments.



1.1.4 Think about the timing of involvement.

Consider the phase in the project's maturity at which you wish to involve your stakeholders in order to achieve your previously defined goals.

To this end, **sub-divide your project into phases**. For example, mark with a dot the point at which the involvement of the stakeholders you have classed as relevant could be particularly useful! Of course, this could vary for each stakeholder group.



Definition	In this phase, you define the objective and scope of the project, for example. Opportunities and risks are analyzed, and the principal content is defined.
Planning	In this phase, you organize the team, the distribution of tasks, and internal and external communications.
Execution	This phase is devoted to implementation. Additionally, at this point you monitor the project's progress and the response to events that promote or disrupt the project.
Conclusion	In this phase, you determine the results of the project, which you then document accordingly and forward to your project initiator.
Follow-Up	In this phase, you monitor success and define recommended actions for advanced development.

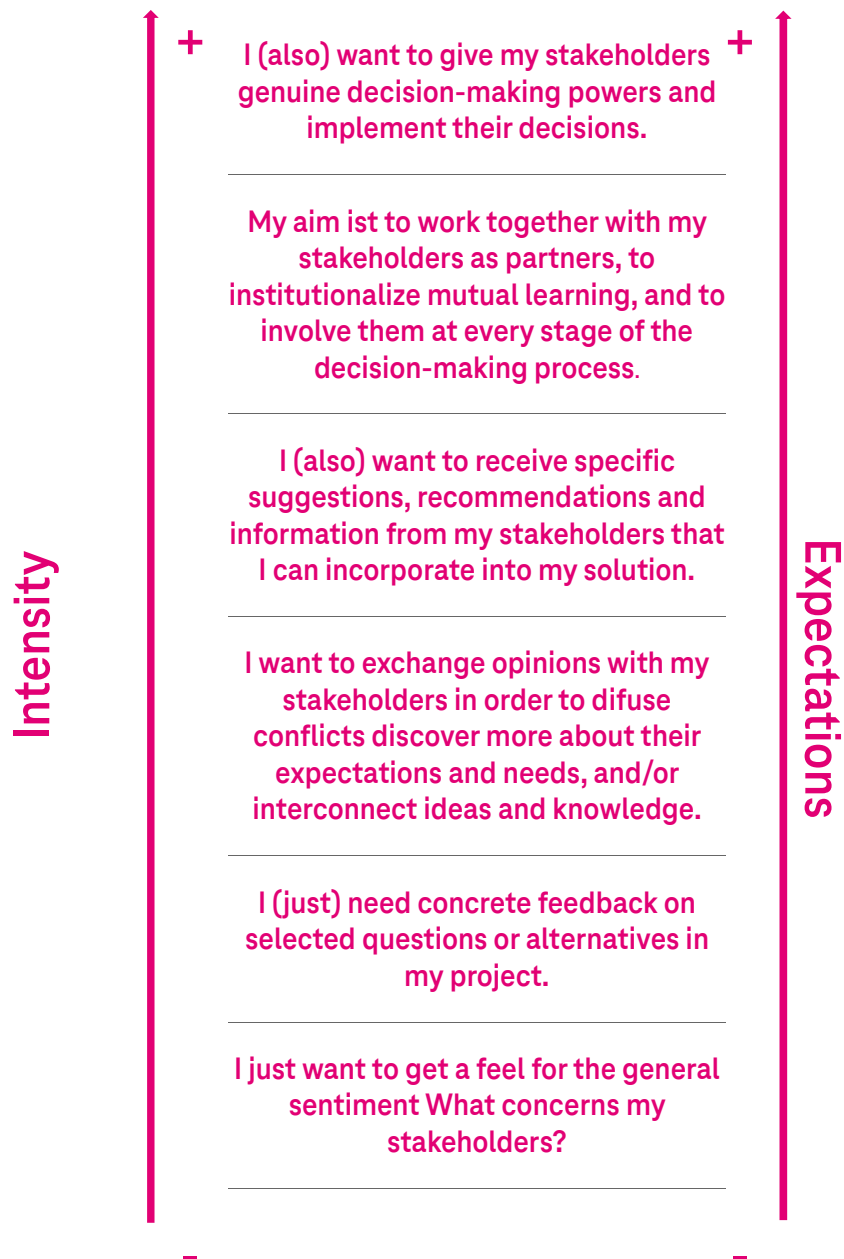
1.1.5 Choose the right format

Stakeholder engagement can be achieved in a number of ways. The method you choose depends on the specific situation you have. The form of involvement is also decisive in determining what kind of participation you want to offer your stakeholders, not to mention the kind of expectations you want to arouse. Format as well as expectations on both sides can greatly influence possible risks and opportunities. Therefore, you should carefully think about which method ›fits‹ your project best.

We would like to present some formats that have been used successfully. Let yourself be inspired by these examples.

Every form of engagement has its own particular characteristics. Different types suit different cases (e.g. information, dialog or participation). The desired intensity of engagement is key here. The greater the intensity, the greater the opportunity to become genuinely involved.

When searching for the right format, you may find it helpful to recall why you wanted to involve stakeholders in the first place. Work through the following tips, and consider your own assessment of the situation with your project.



The following pages provide an insight into which potential formats might be most effective for you. Please keep in mind that the format are a selection of examples and not a complete list.

Conference:

Format in brief

- Conferences are ideal for discussing specific topics and viewpoints with a large number of participants.
- different stakeholders are invited to a conference in order to raise the visibility of activities and to compare own actions with their expectations and requirements in dialog with them.
- Input from participants generally serves as the starting point for further work.
- Participation is by invitation only. However, the event can be opened up to a larger group of participants e.g. via live streaming.

What to consider

- Make sure that the participants come from various disciplines – you need to have an interdisciplinary audience.
- Avoid making it a mere showcase of your achievements, and consciously create closeness to your participants.
- Allow sufficient time for dialog among participants on a level playing field.
- Do not focus your attention on typical discussion and know-how topics only – you need to discuss new ideas and approaches! This will generate learning effects for yourself and your guests

Workshop

Format in brief

- Workshops are formats used for a limited period only, in which a smaller group of individuals convenes to intensively debate a topic (recommendation for participant-number is between 10-20 persons).
- the emphasis here is on working together toward a shared goal. As such, this format is suitable for developing joint strategies, solving problems, or learning from one another.
- A moderator (ideally a neutral party) leads the group cooperatively and jointly toward a certain goal or outcome.

What to consider

- Plan carefully! But be flexible enough to be able to respond to the participants' needs.
- Strive for a balanced group (e.g. 30% external and 30% internal stakeholders, 30% facilitators)
- Outline your code of conduct at the start! This includes deciding how formally you will address one another and a common understanding on how to treat other participants (e.g. "Honest and critical contributions are part of the debate. We value the diversity of opinions and treat each other respectfully").
- Where possible, avoid formalities! This will create closeness to the participants and encourage a creative atmosphere.
- Be curious! Observe and ask lots of questions.
- Plan time for breaks. Remember to care for physical needs like food / bio-breaks. In virtual workshops, a catering package might be good.
- Visualize the results of the workshop and thoughts arising during the workshop.

- Address the ideas that emerge! Make sure that they don't end up in the trash immediately after the workshop.

Crowd sourcing

Format in brief

- Crowd sourcing is a large group format used for a limited period, and is used for generating new content and innovative ideas.
- The company formulates a question and calls on the mass (the crowd) to develop possible solutions within the network of participants.
- All participation is online, and is therefore not dependent on specific timings and locations.
- Participation is voluntary. All participants may submit suggestions, and add to or rate the contributions of other participants.
- This culminates in a large mass of concepts which are commented upon and evaluated by the community itself, as well as by a jury, until ultimately, one winning idea emerges, and in a best-case scenario, is implemented by the company.

What to consider

- Consider a specific task but with adequate scope for creativity and interpretation! Communicate clearly the scope of influence and non-negotiables to your audience to avoid disillusion!
- Define a process and criteria for assessing the ideas submitted! Make them transparent.
- Develop a route map for implementing the ideas! And clearly communicate the resulting boundaries for the crowd.
- Get the units responsible for operational implementation of the idea involved in the crowd sourcing process! This will increase the likelihood of the idea actually being implemented, without major modifications.
- Get actively involved in the community debate! Moderate the solution-finding process, keep in mind to create an open and secure atmosphere for different stakeholders to voice their opinions.

Strategic Partnerships

Format in brief

- The partnership is designed as a long-term format in which the cooperation partners (e.g. a company and an NGO) contractually agree to work together in a structured way on jointly defined topics and issues.
- As well as making joint use of information, expertise and resources, a strategic partnership also facilitates confidential collaboration between the partners on potentially critical issues, and may positively impact the credibility of joint projects.
- The format is suitable for developing jointly supported solutions and/or for implementing projects. Partnerships allow the company to respond to challenges differently than if it were acting in isolation.

What to consider

- Be patient! A partnership is based on mutual trust which grows and matures over time, and during the course of joint projects.
- Be sensitive toward one another! Respect the other party's views and adjust to different working methods and attitudes.
- Do not shy away from criticism or alternative opinions! Listen to the other party's arguments and strive for objective dialog.
- Agree confidentiality and avoid shouting about your actions from the rooftops. There is no need to publicize every successful outcome that emerges from your partnership.

Social Media Channels

The world of Social Media evolves rapidly and since channels have very distinct features (just think and compare LinkedIn, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok or Twitch), the formats can greatly differ between the various channels, offering options for mere information, dialogue or even participation. In case you want to engage your stakeholder group via Social Media, make sure to contact the respective local social media team beforehand to discuss the medium and channel best suited to your own and your stakeholders needs. Also, discuss with the Social Media Team possible risks and how best to avoid or minimize them.

1.2 What to remember during implementation.

If you bear the following tips in mind, there is nothing to stop you achieving successful implementation.

The setting determines the sentiment!

Make a conscious effort to break the mold and choose a location where your stakeholders will feel at home and you can hold a dialog on an equal footing. This need not necessarily be a company meeting room. In case you choose a virtual form for your stakeholder engagement, check if you can work with music, pictures, colours, animations, virtual break-out sessions etc. to break the mold.

Stakeholder engagement is resource-intensive!

So plan sufficient time and personnel from the outset. Only in this way will you avoid running out of steam part way through. Keep in mind, that especially on Social Media Platforms, mere information might incite a lively discussion that has to be monitored and might have to be moderated.

Sometimes, the devil is in the detail!

So listen very carefully – you will discover a great deal. Often, it is the little things that make a huge difference.

Our stakeholders want to be taken seriously!

So please be sure to involve those who will ultimately be responsible for implementation. This will increase the chances of suggestions actually becoming a reality.

Like us, our stakeholders must be economical with their resources!

So be appreciative and create added value, and not just for yourself! Often, it can be helpful to put yourself in the stakeholder's shoes to identify the greatest incentives.

Expert Tip: »The eternal question is, »What's in it for me?« I cannot attract the WWF or a social organization by offering a high fee for a lecture. Instead, I can entice them by telling them at regular or irregular intervals what changes their lecture has brought about, what happened next, etc.«

You may find yourself being taken seriously!

So if you have promised a dialog, make sure you conduct a genuine dialog, and honor your commitments! This will head off any potential disappointment.

Not everything can be planned!

So start small and wait until the second phase to broaden your involvement. This will allow you to test the waters and gauge how much involvement your project can actually handle.

Our stakeholders expect feedback!

So please tell them whether and how their suggestions will be actioned. To a large extent, perceived seriousness is measured by the amount of time the company invests in follow-up.

Like us, stakeholders do not have infinite patience!

Do not make your stakeholders wait too long for your feedback. Even clarifying complex situations should not take longer than six months.

When you gain more experience from your stakeholder engagement activities, keep a list of lessons learned and tips for future engagement activities with your respective stakeholder group.

1.3 Point of contact within the Group:

if you have further questions, you can contact the Group Corporate Responsibility department via corporate.responsibility@telekom.de



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