∞ Meta

Guide for conducting inclusive stakeholder engagement

This guide gives an overview of how Meta conducts inclusive stakeholder engagement

What is this guide for?

This Guide not only outlines Meta's approach to inclusive stakeholder engagement, but also offers actionable guidance for those interested in adopting similar practices.
The Guide is designed to be a resource to develop and implement stakeholder engagement strategies.

The Guide focuses on three core areas anchored in Meta's inclusivity values, which act as "prompts" to consider while developing a stakeholder engagement strategy. Under each of the core areas, the Guide provides illustrative questions to inform concrete application. These are designed to provide examples of operational decisions that can be made when developing and implementing engagement strategies.

This practical resource is also tailored to assist professionals outside Meta – including small and large businesses, civil society organisations, government departments, and private companies. It is a valuable tool for those looking to understand and navigate meaningful stakeholder engagement, whether as part of stakeholder mapping, corporate social responsibility initiatives, human rights impact assessments, due diligence processes, risk assessments, compliance efforts or content policy development.

Who developed it?

The Guide is an output of the Content Policy Stakeholder Engagement team at Meta, with input from several internal cross-functional teams, external organisations and engagement specialists.

01 Content policy stakeholder engagement at Meta

Creating an inclusive stakeholder base has always been a core principle for Meta. This effort is part of our commitment to external engagement, as a means of building legitimacy for our policies.

Gathering input from stakeholders is an important part of how Meta develops its content policies, including Facebook's Community Standards and Instagram's Community Guidelines. Meta Content Policy has a dedicated Stakeholder Engagement team to contribute to the development of our content and product policies. Whenever the Content Policy team revises the Community Standards, it develops and implements an outreach strategy for connecting with global stakeholders who are most affected by the policy change, and who have relevant expertise and lived experience.

For details on how this approach contributed to our policies on COVID-19 misinformation, *see here.*

When the team engages with external stakeholders, we share Meta's thinking about proposed policy changes, including what led us to reconsider a given policy, as well as the pros and cons of policy options we have identified. The feedback we receive is then integrated into the review process and shapes our ongoing deliberations.

When the views of stakeholders conflict, as they often do, we analyze the spectrum of opinion and points of disagreement. Our task is to identify which views are most persuasive and instructive for us, but we do not necessarily try to reconcile every viewpoint. Rather, our goal is to understand the full range of opinions about our policy proposals and, in some cases, we return to stakeholders for additional input as our thinking develops. We make a consistent effort to inform stakeholders of the outcomes of our policy development.

Why stakeholder engagement matters

Stakeholder engagement helps us better understand how our policies, products and enforcement actions impact the people who use our services. From culturally-sensitive content moderation to the inclusive development of the Metaverse, Meta's policies, products, and actions directly affect billions of people from all backgrounds. We need to understand that impact, especially on marginalised communities often not included in policy discussions. This Guide represents a step towards embedding Meta's inclusivity values – *diversity, meaningful access, and equity* – into a stakeholder engagement process.

Effective engagement requires planning and effort to understand the unique perspectives of stakeholders and to address their questions. The critical components of a successful engagement strategy include identifying relevant stakeholders, understanding their interests or concerns and establishing clear communication channels. The active engagement of a broad spectrum of stakeholders in the policy-making process helps ensure better outcomes and a positive experience for stakeholders in their engagement with the company. This approach enables us to gather and scrutinize policies against a comprehensive set of views, thereby strengthening our policies and contributing to user trust.

We seek to make stakeholder engagement a two-way street, benefitting the groups, individuals and experts we engage with. We also provide stakeholders with sufficient follow-up information, informing them of how their input helped shape Meta's policies. This feedback helps build strong stakeholder relationships and ultimately policies that are more inclusive of all relevant opinions and perspectives.

Finally, we encourage stakeholders to give us their feedback on how we conduct stakeholder engagement. See the Annex for questions that can be used to elicit feedback from stakeholders.

Why is inclusion in stakeholder engagement important?

Inclusivity is our intentional ongoing effort to ensure that the broadest and most diverse range of external stakeholders can meaningfully contribute to our work.

Here are some of the benefits of an inclusive approach:

01 DIVERSITY OF PERSPECTIVES:

Prioritizing inclusion enables the participation of diverse groups of stakeholders with a varied range of experiences and from a wide range of backgrounds and geographies. This diversity can enrich discussions, providing unique insights that foster innovation and creativity.

02 EQUITY AND FAIRNESS:

Inclusive stakeholder engagement ensures that all stakeholders, including different user groups, developers and experts, are given equal opportunity to have their voices heard. This promotes equity and fairness in decision-making processes, mitigates biases and ensures that technology serves the needs and values of a wider range of people.

03 BETTER DECISION-MAKING:

Prioritizing inclusivity in external stakeholder engagement helps tech companies to make better decisions by accessing diverse perspectives, identifying potential impacts and gaining stakeholder buy-in. Involving a wide range of stakeholders enables tech companies to make informed and inclusive decisions that consider the needs and perspectives of groups that may be affected, leading to improved outcomes and increased stakeholder support.

04 BUILDING TRUST:

Prioritizing inclusivity helps tech companies build trust with external stakeholders by demonstrating a commitment to diversity, fairness, transparency, and collaboration. By incorporating diverse perspectives, addressing stakeholder needs, and acting responsibly in capturing the feedback received, companies can foster strong relationships, enhance reputation, and align the company's actions with the expectations and values of external stakeholders.

05 MITIGATING RISKS:

Involving diverse stakeholders helps us to identify risks to our users and develop mitigations. This is particularly crucial during times of crisis, conflict, or social change. Prioritising inclusivity in external stakeholder engagement helps tech companies to better tailor risk management in challenging contexts, by enabling early identification and comprehensive assessment of risks, gathering stakeholder input on potential policy impact, and fostering trust and credibility through timely action.

Intersectionality in stakeholder engagement

Intersectionality is also integral to Meta's stakeholder engagement. "Intersectionality" is a concept that refers to the interconnected nature of social identities, such as race, gender, sexuality, class, and ability, and suggests how these categories can create unique experiences of oppression and privilege. In the context of inclusive stakeholder engagement, intersectionality means recognizing and addressing how different social identities intersect and impact the needs of stakeholders.

To engage inclusively with stakeholders, it is important to consider how their multiple identities intersect and influence their views and needs. This can involve creating a safe and welcoming space for stakeholders to share their experiences and perspectives. It also helps to account for power imbalances or inequalities and tailors engagement approaches to meet the unique needs of diverse stakeholders.

By understanding intersectionality and its implications for stakeholder engagement, we can ensure that all stakeholders feel valued and included in the engagement process. This leads to more effective and equitable outcomes for all stakeholders.

02 Our commitment to inclusivity: *Our Values*

To ensure that our external engagements are inclusive and aligned with our values and mission, it's crucial that we have a clear understanding of what inclusivity means to our company and how to practise it.

DIVERSITY

Diversity means we are proactive in identifying a broad range of stakeholders who may be affected by our policies. This includes considering their socio-economic background, demographic, education and professional background, geographic location, cultural and linguistic diversity, cognitive and, experiential perspectives. Furthermore, we strive to expand the spectrum of stakeholders with whom we engage. We acknowledge that we do not always know whom we should involve, particularly with new or emerging issues. Here, we work with local, regional, global and internal teams, external experts, and existing partners to identify new stakeholders.

MEANINGFUL ACCESS

We recognize that each of our stakeholders has different needs, whether technical (e.g., access to high-speed internet), linguistic (e.g., carrying out engagements in second or third languages), contextual (e.g., current understanding of Facebook's Community Standards), social and political context (e.g., safety concerns), or in terms of physical accessibility (e.g., stakeholders with disabilities). These can become barriers to engagement. We build flexible plans in order to meet stakeholders where they are, ensuring that all stakeholders can meaningfully participate.

EQUITY

We recognize that there is a power imbalance between Meta and external stakeholders, and that there are similar imbalances within the global external stakeholder community. Our commitment is to create an environment where all stakeholders can actively and equitably participate in shaping policy outcomes. To address this power disparity, we prioritize structured and regular engagements, enabling us to sustain and develop relationships.

Our approach to each of these values is explained further below.

03 How we implement our inclusivity values: *The Inclusivity Framework*

Although this Guide encourages Meta teams and other organizations conducting stakeholder engagement to consider all the questions below, some may be more or less relevant for different engagement strategies. Examples have been included to show how the Guide can be applied. The case studies provide additional insights into how we implement our inclusivity values.

DIVERSITY

Does the engagement strategy involve a diverse range of stakeholders?

Diversity is the cornerstone of inclusive stakeholder engagement. Proactively identifying a diverse range of potentially-affected stakeholders for engagements, both in terms of diversity of background, opinion, and expertise, is *essential*.

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

01   What is the scope of this policy's potential impact and have I heard from the stakeholder groups most likely to be impacted by it (defined in whatever way is relevant to the policy)?

02   Have I considered the full range of relevant stakeholder groups, e.g., policymakers, academics, experts, civil society, victims and survivors, or individuals with specific cultural or contextual knowledge/lived experience relevant for this engagement? Are there key individuals or constituents beyond the "usual suspects" with whom I can productively engage? Can I leverage other Meta teams' knowledge to identify relevant stakeholders? Can I tap into communities of stakeholders in existing networks with whom we have not yet engaged on this particular issue?

03   Have I identified stakeholders across all relevant spectrums, such as region, language, race, religion, gender expression, sexuality, political opinion, disability, and age?

04   Can I incorporate any relevant stakeholders who are often underrepresented in policy and product discussions, such as racial, religious, and ethnic minorities, LGBTQIA+ communities, people living with disabilities, or others whose perspective is consistently overlooked?

05   Have I identified stakeholders who have traditionally opposed our current policy, regardless of whether the opposition has been publicly expressed?

06   Where can I seek internal or external advice that could deepen my understanding of the policy area and identification of stakeholders? Has this advice been integrated into the stakeholder identification process?

07   Have I identified stakeholders outside of traditional power structures? Some stakeholders may have more influence or resources than others, which can lead to unequal power distribution and make it difficult for all stakeholders to have an equal say.

CASE STUDY ON IMPLEMENTING DIVERSITY:
Emerging policy issues in the Caribbean

We hosted a roundtable among experts and civil society groups from various Caribbean nations and territories. The discussion touched on several crucial topics, including digital rights, online safety, women's safety, and LGBTQIA+ safety. Our inclusive approach helped us gather valuable insights and collaborate more effectively in addressing emerging content policy issues. This engagement also helped build new relationships and expand the stakeholders involved in policy development and integrity work in the Caribbean region.

During the development of our policy on our approach to violent and graphic content when shared in human rights abuse contexts, we conducted engagements with external experts. Members of the Caribbean roundtable provided key insights on several factors that must be taken into account when evaluating trade-offs between safety and voice in discussing violent and graphic content in the region. These factors include the potential for viewer trauma, the potential real-world risks to the individuals depicted, and the possibility of adversarial behavior to misuse the policy. Feedback from this group was considered along with that of other stakeholders we consulted in updating our violent and graphic content policy.

MEANINGFUL ACCESS:
Is the engagement accessible for all stakeholders involved?

Diversity alone cannot achieve inclusivity. Once stakeholders have been identified, the engagement process must be designed to support stakeholders in providing meaningful feedback. This requires knowledge of their unique needs - from language barriers, connectivity and accessibility needs for stakeholders with disabilities, to the potential risks of engaging with us. This entails us making reasonable accommodations to meet stakeholders where they are.

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

01   Have I identified all relevant needs to ensure meaningful access for stakeholders? Has consultation with external stakeholders informed the identification of these needs?

02   Might some stakeholders (e.g., human rights defenders, religious minorities, LGBTQIA+ activists in countries where their identity is illegal) face security risks in engaging with us? If so, what measures can we take to mitigate the risks?

03   Have I taken the necessary steps to understand and address individual accessibility needs for stakeholders with different disabilities (including verbal, visual, cognitive, physical, etc.)?

04   Have I identified the full range of technology-related access needs? These include the specific needs that people living with disabilities have to use technology and digital devices. Such needs may vary depending on the individual's disability and particular situation, but some common technology-related access needs include accessible design and assistive technology for a diverse range of disabilities (including how stakeholders interact with us over Zoom and similar tools).

05 Do all stakeholders have written and verbal fluency in the language of the engagement that I will conduct? If not, have I considered using interpreters?

06 Is the content we are sharing to help inform discussion in formats and clear straightforward language that everyone can understand?

07 What efforts have been undertaken to acknowledge regional dynamics and differences?

08 Have I ensured effective hybrid participation?

09 Do all stakeholders have sufficient knowledge or time to familiarize themselves with the policy they will be engaging on? If not, how best can I prepare them for the engagement? Are there written resources I can share prior to the meeting?

10 If relevant for the engagement, how can I ensure that all stakeholders have sufficient knowledge about Facebook's Community Standards and Instagram Community Guidelines to enable a constructive discussion? Have I considered how my explanation of policy issues will come across to stakeholders who do not work professionally in this field?

11 Has the engagement been designed to enable stakeholders to provide meaningful feedback?

    A Are the questions I am asking simple, understandable, and jargon-free? Have I done my best to make the information we are presenting easy-to-grasp?

    B How can I ensure the timing of my engagement does not impact stakeholders' ability to contribute meaningfully? Things to consider include the dates/times of meetings, duration, and cultural or religious sensitivities.

    C Will the structure of my engagement allow for meaningful participation by everyone? Consider different sizes and formats for different purposes of stakeholder engagement.

CASE STUDIES ON MEANINGFUL ACCESS:
Putting inclusivity at the center of policy development

Engaging Faith Communities in policy development

We value and include stakeholders from different backgrounds, opinions, demographics, and cultural backgrounds in our engagement process. To achieve this, we have proactively expanded our outreach and solicited feedback from various communities. We have broadened our policy engagements to increase representations of Muslim communities worldwide, the Sikh community in Europe, the Baha'i community, and other traditionally-underrepresented faiths. By proactively engaging with a broader range of stakeholders, we aim to understand their concerns and better integrate their feedback into our content policy development process.

For example, stakeholders helped us determine whether we should prevent third-party users from identifying victims of sexual assault on the platforms under our Sexual Exploitation of Adults policies. In our consultations, we explored how to protect the identification of victims of sexual assault by third parties while allowing users to share their stories and supporters to amplify victims' voices. We listened to stakeholders emphasizing the importance of a victim-centric approach that gives adult victims the power to both avoid potential violations (such as identification regardless of the victim's consent) and prevent censorship of victims' voices.

Stakeholder engagement helped shape our policy development by underscoring several vital points:

- Public figures should receive the same protection as private individuals.

- Removal at scale might undermine victims' voices, particularly due to risks of abusing reporting tools by bad actors.

- The importance of giving voice to social movements/campaigns for raising awareness, supporting, and calling for justice for victims (provided that a victim's consent is available).

- The importance of making sure the third parties do not share information in excess of the scope allowed by the victim.

EQUITY:

Is the engagement designed to ensure equitable participation among all stakeholders?

Equitable participation means that **all stakeholders have the opportunity to have their voices heard,** regardless of their position or influence in society.

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

01 What might be barriers to people's participation? Not just technical, but stemming from lack of resources and/or other social circumstances.

02 What can I do to make sure that all the voices in the room are encouraged and empowered to be heard? Some stakeholders may not be aware of the opportunity to participate or may not fully understand the issue.

03 What are the relevant social and cultural norms of engagement among the stakeholders I plan to engage? For example, different cultures may communicate differently, such as using body language, eye contact, or tone of voice. In some settings, people may hesitate to speak up because they feel uncomfortable interjecting into the conversation. It is crucial to be aware of these differences and to communicate in a way that is respectful and appropriate.

04 How can these factors inform the design and facilitation of the engagement? For example, is it possible to leave "blank space" in the discussion so that everyone feels welcome to join in?

05 Have I connected with organizations who are already culturally tied to the target stakeholders, and who thus may be able to smooth outreach and communication? Are there any internal teams that might have this information that I should reach out to?

06 Have I consulted relationship management tools/databases to understand whether Meta has recently sought this stakeholder's input?

07   Are we representing the collected feedback fairly and inclusively? Are we giving equal and fair weight to all perspectives heard?

08   How can I effectively communicate the context and purpose of the stakeholder engagement, providing as much concrete information as possible about how the issue is framed by Meta and how the input will be used?

09   Can I include time at the end of the engagement for other issues to be discussed outside of the scope of the engagement topic?

CASE STUDY ON EQUITY:
Engaging Indigenous communities in policy development on non-medical drugs

Under our *Restricted Goods and Services Policy*, we prohibit attempts by individuals, manufacturers and retailers to buy, sell, trade, coordinate the trade of, donate, gift, or ask for non-medical drugs. We also prohibit content that coordinates or promotes non-medical drugs as well as content admitting to using or trading them.

According to our policies, non-medical drugs are defined as any drug that is:

- Not used to treat any type of physical or psychological condition

- Not used to achieve a legitimate medical purpose or procedure

- Not used for its intended purpose

- Used to achieve a "high" or altered mental state, including by misusing pharmaceutical drugs or a product that has another primary purpose (e.g., glue).

The policy did not take into account the potential religious or traditional contexts for non-medical drugs, except in cases where there is an admission of use in a recovery context. To prioritise equity and diversity, we engaged with traditional leaders, religious healer associations, and Indigenous communities in North America and Africa. Their expertise and lived experiences informed how the policy evolved. Although these stakeholders showed a diversity of religious, traditional, cultural, and legal practices, they agreed that defining indicators on what comprises a religious or traditional practice on a global scale could lead to excluding groups, contrary to the policy's aim. They also provided insights on how to handle different types of non-medical drugs used in traditional or religious practices and whether some types of non-medical drugs are too harmful to allow promotion under any circumstances.

The valuable input we received played a crucial role in helping us develop a *revised approach* to the use of non-medical drugs in traditional or religious contexts. As a result, we now allow the promotion (to speak positively about, encourage the use of, or provide instructions to use or make) and admission of a select list of entheogen drugs. An entheogen is a group of plant-based drugs that are used in religious and/or traditional ceremonies for their mind-altering effects. To ensure access is limited to adults, we will implement age-gating (18+).

04 Checklist of best practices for inclusive engagement

Below are some best practices for designing inclusive stakeholder engagements. Each section includes a brief checklist of the key steps required for building inclusive engagement processes. The checklists should be considered in tandem with the guiding questions in section 04.

01 Identify and include the relevant stakeholders

One way to initiate inclusive stakeholder engagement is through a stakeholder mapping exercise. This involves internal and external information-gathering to identify stakeholders, closely examining and categorizing them and prioritizing them based on their interests, expertise, and relevance. This process helps teams better understand their stakeholders, allowing them to determine whom to communicate with and in what manner. By conducting a stakeholder mapping exercise, teams can ensure that they engage with the right mix of relevant stakeholders and create a successful and inclusive engagement strategy.

Consider the following:

- **Representation of impacted stakeholders:** Ensure your stakeholder engagement accounts for geography, language, race, culture, disability, religion, gender, sexuality, political opinion, and age. Also, consider stakeholders with traditionally opposing views. Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) may be a good starting point to learn about potential stakeholders worth approaching and assist in determining cultural norms and preferences.

- **Recognition of intersectionality:** People living with disabilities are a diverse group with a wide range of needs, abilities, and experiences. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to addressing the needs of people living with disabilities and it is important to take an inclusive approach.

- **Reassessment of cultural understanding:** Conducting regular, high-quality input from external stakeholders that deepens policy understanding and ensures relevant, timely and sensitive engagement.

In the context of policy development, it is crucial to consider the method of initiating contact with stakeholders. Consider whether an open call on the topic via public platforms could facilitate reaching new stakeholders. Furthermore, it is essential to provide sufficient information on the engagement's purpose, goals and potential outcomes. This is crucial for building trust and securing buy-in for the process while demonstrating a commitment to transparency.

CHECKLIST:

Have you conducted a stakeholder mapping? This includes identifying stakeholders already on Meta's radar as well as new stakeholders.

Does the mapping include a broad range of stakeholder groups and represent a diverse range of impacted stakeholders (considering geography, region, language, race, culture, disability, religion, gender, sexuality, political opinion, and age)?

Have you reached out to stakeholders to identify any access needs they may have? This could include technical, connectivity or language support, as well as accessibility needs and safety concerns.

Have you considered diversifying your approach to finding relevant stakeholders, for example, by publishing an open call online or via other communication channels?

02 Carefully choose the means by which you will communicate

Offering multiple ways to provide feedback is essential because not everyone communicates in the same way. When identifying stakeholders and communities, it is crucial to consider their preferred communication methods and for messages to be inclusive. Some stakeholders may prefer to communicate through an intermediary organisation they trust. Researching and understanding their preferred communication methods is vital to ensure a smooth experience for stakeholders. To keep track of their preferences, a client relationship management tool can help. Remember that there could be multiple reasons for stakeholders' preferences, such as unreliable internet access, safety considerations or general comfort and trust. To ensure all stakeholders can participate fully, providing accessible information is also crucial – including use of translations, plain language, accommodations for disabilities, and alternative formats.

CHECKLIST:

Have you reached out to stakeholders to understand their communications preferences, and have these preferences been recorded in a client relationship management tool to ensure others at Meta will be aware before potentially reaching out to them in future?

Have you considered a variety of communication formats (in-person, hybrid, online form, etc.)? Have you considered what format is more appropriate for the intended purpose of the engagement (one-to-one/group engagements, several meetings where additional trust needs to be established etc.)?

Have you clearly communicated the aims, purposes and potential outcomes of the engagement to stakeholders? Are they aware of how their input may be used?

Have stakeholders been given a main point of contact within Meta that they can reach out to directly with any questions, issues or comments? This is important to building trust and ensuring that stakeholders feel valued as individual contributors.

03 Thoroughly prepare for the engagement

Mobility, access to technology, electricity, private space, and the Internet are barriers for many people, especially those in marginalised communities. Participation and access may pose complex issues, depending on the stakeholders' context, resources, and needs. When planning online events, meaningful access should be a priority from the beginning. If hosting an in-person engagement, ensure the location has accessible facilities, such as accessible seating options, spaces for wheelchairs or adjustable seating, and trained staff who can assist people with disabilities. Teams should also consider whether participants face visa or immigration restrictions when traveling. Removing barriers to attendance and participation will show stakeholders that Meta values their inclusion and respects their needs, building vital trust. Finally, consider providing online participation options for those who can't attend in person or are uncomfortable with the chosen location.

CHECKLIST:

Do you have a clear understanding of stakeholders' access needs and barriers to engagement? Have you developed a plan to address these? This includes consideration of the following categories:

Connectivity and technical assistance

Language barriers

Accessibility needs for participants with disabilities – see the accessibility guide in the Annex. The Guide includes an accessibility checklist for in-person events, as well as guidance for addressing barriers for online participation.

Safety concerns – some participants may be particularly vulnerable and their engagement may put them at risk, so appropriate action should be taken to support them, e.g., secure communications and safeguarding their identity, anonymising their information and contributions.

For group consultations, have you considered how the presence of some groups may impact others? Have you taken steps to address power dynamics within groups, ensuring that all stakeholders have the space and time to openly share their views?

For individual consultations, have you tailored the modalities to best suit the stakeholder you're engaging with? Have you considered the most opportune time to carry out the stakeholder engagement?

Where more technical expertise or input is required, have you taken steps to bring stakeholders up to speed on the topic, e.g., by providing resources to help them to understand the subject matter?

Have you reviewed the publications produced by the stakeholder you want to engage with that are relevant to the issue of engagement?

04 Use language thoughtfully

To create a positive stakeholder experience, it's crucial to consider that people have different learning styles. When communicating with stakeholders, it's critical to ensure that they can understand the message being conveyed. Technical jargon can be confusing and frustrating, so using clear and straightforward language is essential. Providing visual aids, such as pre-reads or slides, can also help stakeholders understand the topic and participate in the discussion. It's crucial to allow stakeholders to ask questions and add comments, and to avoid making assumptions about what they know. To make language inclusive, you should use simple language, avoid acronyms, and conduct engagements in the stakeholders' preferred language whenever possible. Consider hiring a translator if it would be appropriate.

CHECKLIST:

Have you used clear simple language in communications and any resources?

Have you confirmed that the language you are using is appropriate and would not be viewed as inappropriate or discriminatory? This is particularly relevant when working in different cultural contexts.

Have you considered translating resources to ensure that more stakeholders are able to engage in their preferred language? Have you considered requesting support from colleagues with the necessary language skill?

Have you provided resources in advance to allow stakeholders enough time to get acquainted with the material?

Are you planning to share readouts/notes after the engagement?

05 Be open to feedback

To have a successful inclusive stakeholder engagement, it is crucial to understand the goals of the engagement and learn from the stakeholders' feedback and insights.
To facilitate this, provide channels for stakeholders to communicate their feedback, which can help to strengthen stakeholder engagement plans, strategies and relationships.

Numerous stakeholders have told us how important it is for them to see the impact of their engagement with us. In practice, this means keeping stakeholders informed by circling back to them and providing updates on how their feedback shaped our policy development (even if we didn't choose their preferred policy option). By consistently and transparently communicating with stakeholders, it helps to build external legitimacy for inclusive engagement. Consider holding a follow-up meeting with stakeholders to explain how you made use of their input, and/or how their insights shaped policy revisions.
Such steps can play a major role in building trust and credibility.

CHECKLIST:

It's important to check in at regular intervals to build openness and trust for future engagements. Have you taken steps to keep stakeholders up to date throughout the process?

Have stakeholders been informed of the final outcome of the engagement and how their input was considered/incorporated?

Have you actively sought feedback from stakeholders on how they found the engagement process? This can be done informally in a conversation with stakeholders, or by sending them a questionnaire after the engagement. See the Annex for some potential questions for stakeholder feedback.

Have you taken time to fully consider stakeholder feedback on engagement modalities and find ways to improve where appropriate?

Have you reported back to stakeholders to express gratitude for the feedback and also explain if/how it will be considered and incorporated to improve future processes?

Have you allocated a channel or point of contact for stakeholders to use in case they need to update personal information or have ongoing issues that impact the subject matter on which you have requested their input?

05 Be open to feedback

06 Analyze the stakeholder information you collect

As teams move forward with their engagement plans, they will inevitably gather a considerable amount of stakeholder information. However, simply collecting input is not enough for successful stakeholder engagement efforts. Making sense of this information is essential to gain insights that will inform engagement strategies and help build strong stakeholder relationships.

This is where an internal relationship management tool, such as Salesforce, can be beneficial. The tool can streamline stakeholder management efforts and simplify the reporting process by allowing teams to better-understand their stakeholder needs, expectations, and perspectives. This will help teams make the most of the stakeholder information they collect, allowing for more efficient and effective stakeholder engagement efforts. Overall this will help to reinforce positive stakeholder relationships and improve engagement outcomes.

CHECKLIST:

Are you actively documenting stakeholder engagement efforts and outcomes?

When undertaking new engagements, are you consulting the information in Salesforce to inform your stakeholder mapping and use of stakeholder input?

Do you have a system in place that is regularly updated to ensure records are accurate?

Have you identified the geographic, subject matter expertise or vulnerability conditions that are key for deciding the issue on which stakeholder input is required?

07   Share your learnings

Considering what happens after engagement is a key part of the process. As teams collect information from stakeholders during their engagement efforts, you may find that some of the information is relevant beyond the scope of their project.

Do not assume that the insights you have gained from engagement are valuable only to your team. Consider sharing them with other internal teams that may benefit from the stakeholder input. When organizing the information, the learnings can be grouped into themes to make it easier to visualize and understand. This can also help show stakeholders' diverse thoughts and perspectives. Visualizing the data can also help to identify patterns and trends, such as how many stakeholders agreed on a particular topic. By doing so, teams can identify areas where more engagement may be necessary and then make informed decisions based on their gathered insights.

CHECKLIST:

Have you shared your insights internally? Have you considered how best to present these insights for maximum impact? For example, a periodic newsletter, dedicated meeting or other mechanism for showcasing examples or case studies of external stakeholder engagement.

Have you directly reached out to specific teams or individuals that you feel would most benefit from the insights?

Are you able to share your insights externally? Where possible, it is helpful to consider whether insights can be shared externally, whether through a short blog post, in external presentations or in future stakeholder engagement efforts. This helps to build trust and demonstrates to stakeholders that their efforts and time are valued.

ANNEX
Questions for the feedback form –
Stakeholder Engagement

In order to enhance engagement processes and evaluate their effectiveness, obtaining feedback from stakeholders is crucial. This document provides a list of sample questions that one can use to collect feedback from stakeholders following an engagement. The responses are gathered anonymously to encourage stakeholders to provide candid and constructive feedback.

Name of the engagement:
[Include title of the engagement]

Thank you for participating in our recent engagement process. We value your feedback and would appreciate it if you could take a few minutes to complete this survey. Your responses will help us improve our engagement processes and measure impact.

Please note that your responses will be kept confidential and will only be used for the purpose of improving our engagement processes.

01   On a scale of 1-5 *(1 being poor and 5 being excellent)*, how would you rate the overall engagement process?

02   What did you find most valuable about the engagement process?

03   Were there any topics or issues that you feel were not adequately addressed during the engagement process?

04   How could we improve future engagements to better meet your needs and expectations?

05   Do you have any suggestions for how we can continue to collaborate and work together on these issues?

06   Is there anything else you would like to share with us regarding your experience with this engagement process?

07   Were the aims and context of the engagement clearly communicated to you?

08   Were you given enough information on the topic and process in order to meaningfully engage? Do you have any feedback on how to improve the onboarding process?

09   Were you kept informed on the progress and outcomes of the engagement process?

10   Were you informed about whether and how your input may be used?

11   Were the consultation documents/ resources easy to access and understand?

12   Did we reach out to you to understand any access needs? Were these needs considered and addressed? This could include technical, connectivity or language support, as well as accessibility needs and safety concerns.

13   Do you feel that you were able to freely express your opinion and that it was listened to and understood?