

Stakeholder mapping – an introduction

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Why do we map stakeholders?

As an orchestrator or network organisation working on landscape restoration, you are constantly trying to connect (with) stakeholders and facilitate improved cooperation on important topics. A networking organisation, therefore, needs to have a good overview of all the (important) stakeholders in a landscape or network, their activities, relationships, and stakes.

What is stakeholder mapping and what does it include?

Stakeholder mapping is the studying of the human ecosystem as it occurs in a landscape. An important notion is that the ‘stakeholder’ is often referred to as an organisation or institution. This is far too generic: the stakeholder should be the person within the organisation. In our experience it matters a great deal whom you are speaking to within an organisation; each individual has their own opinion, role, stake, and influence in/over a project.



Through our work in the landscapes, we have identified 4 key steps:

1. **Identifying key stakeholders:** To get to a basic stakeholder analysis there are two ways you can do this:
 - Through a desk study: identifying the actors through a “snapshot” exercise mapping out existing initiatives, organisations, and individuals in your landscape. This can be done by your team through brainstorming and desk study. In the beginning, your awareness of the main stakeholders will be limited and will grow richer as you engage with more parties in the landscape.
 - Stakeholder mapping workshop during a field trip: Organise a workshop session with some of your trusted and like-minded key stakeholders in the landscape. Each participant shares his/her top 10 most important actors in the landscape to get a first sense of the collective actor landscape. An additional benefit of this approach is that these “early allies” are more likely to become your co-conveners and ‘champions’ throughout the landscape restoration process.
2. **Do a power analysis:** This is an important step to better understand the power dynamics in the landscape in relation to your initial objectives for the landscape. You need to get to know each actor (group) to understand what their position is and how that will help or block you from achieving the change you would like to see happening. This includes identifying the Blockers, Swingers, and Champions in your landscape:

a) Blockers: actors with a high stake in keeping business as usual operating, and likely to block or hinder your interventions.

Blockers



Swingers

b) Swingers: actors that currently ‘sit on the fence’ and are not yet convinced of your proposed way forward but are also cognizant that business as usual is not viable. The interesting thing with this group is that these could potentially become your champions over time.



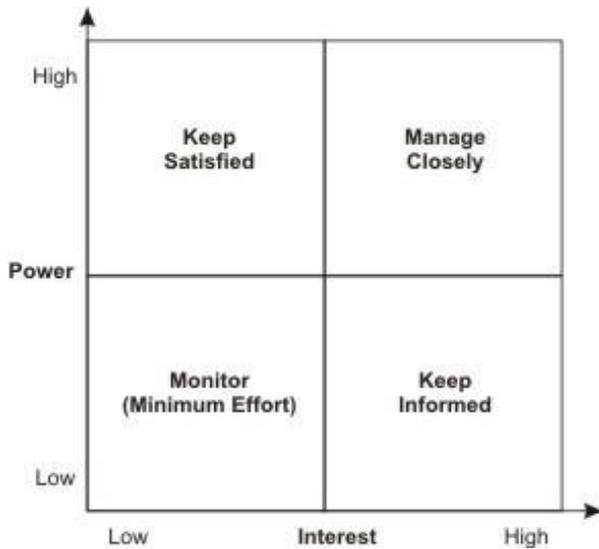
Champions

c) Champions: actors that are key and closely aligned to your goal and are protagonists and ambassadors of the change you are trying to achieve.



Here are some simple and concrete formats that you can use for the power analysis related to your initial objectives in the landscape:

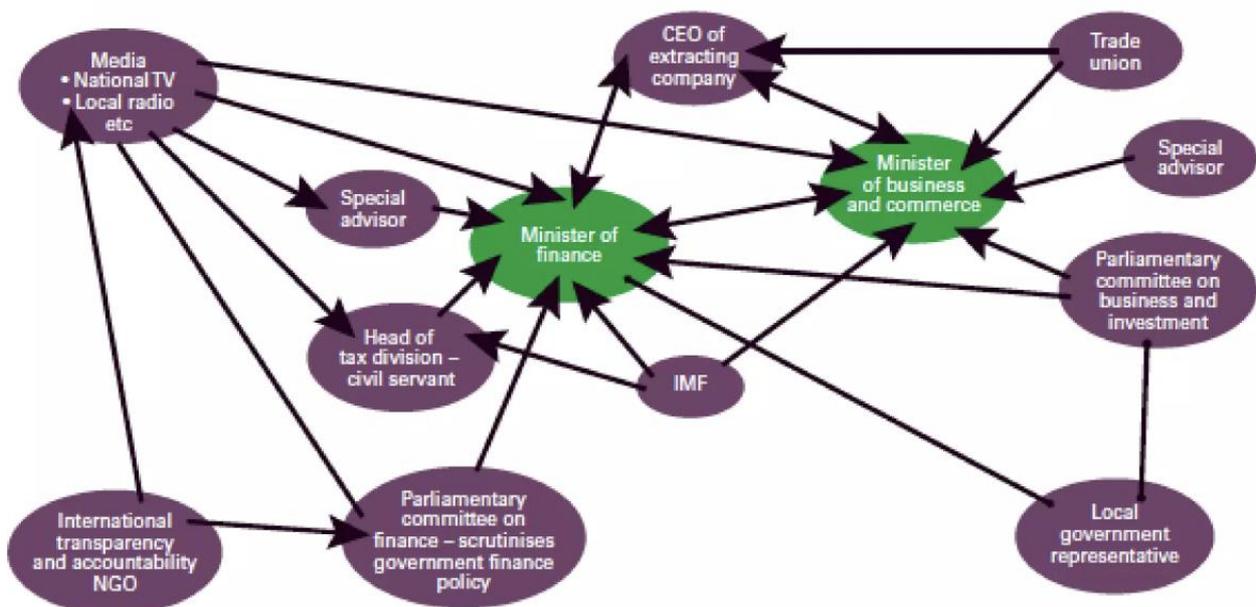
1. Power-interest quadrant
2. Blocker-swinger-champion grid
3. Visual power map



The power-interest quadrant. You can also fill it in in [this Mural](#).

High influence			
Medium influence			
Low influence			
	Blocker	Swinger	Champion

The Blocker-swinger-champion grid



The visual power map. From Oxfam Novib, find it [here](#).

3. **Start engaging with stakeholders:** Once you've walked through (some of) these steps, your team will have a minimum common understanding of the stakeholders in the landscapes. In reality, you will have already spoken to some of these actors in the landscape and this has probably helped inform these steps.
4. **Loopback and follow through:** In case the stakeholder and power mapping workshop went well and calls for action, it is vital that you loop back to your key stakeholders that attended the first workshop and that you follow through with follow-up actions as soon as possible not to lose momentum. A concrete output that you could share with the participants is a worked-out version of the stakeholder analysis with proposed next steps. These kinds of workshops must be two-way traffic. By giving the participants a map of the system as a product, they also get something out of the workshop and are more inclined to participate.

The time is now to see where your interventions could add value to the existing actor-landscape and help you move closer to achieving positive change in the landscape. Hopefully, the stakeholder and power mapping exercises will help you in identifying whom you should talk to first, and from which actors you might expect some pushback.

Although above we discerned four distinct steps, remember stakeholder and power mapping is an ongoing iterative process. Over a period of 20 years, a lot can change in the network, so it is important to keep your understanding up to date.



Is there a difference between a power analysis and a stakeholder mapping?

A stakeholder mapping will map out all the actors involved in an issue (e.g., all the actors involved in the prevention of child labour). A power analysis is more focused and more specific. The power analysis is really focused on a) the key people and institution you need to target to bring about the change you have identified in your advocacy objective; b) the people or institution who can influence your key targets.

Source: [Open Learn Create](#)

What are the key do's and don'ts for good stakeholder mapping?

- Ensure you follow up with key stakeholders after the first workshop. Do not leave them hanging.
- Ensure the process of getting to stakeholder analysis is – as much as possible – a co-creative process to allow for ownership and a common understanding amongst some of your key stakeholders.
- Ensure you have clarity with your workshop participants about whether or not the stakeholder map can be made open source/shared or not.

Some key questions to ask

- Who are the decision makers and institutions that define the policy and practice changes that need to happen?
- At what level are key decisions made? (cooperatives, buyers, retailers, advisors, chiefs of divisions/departments, ministers, prime ministers, head of state, parliaments, etc...?)
- Through which decision-making process? Who is consulted in the process? Who has formal and informal power within the process?
- Among the various targets, which individuals have a decisive influence (power to propose or oppose; power of the 'final say'), and which ones are secondary/intermediate targets (consulted in the decision-making process but not the ultimate decision makers)?
- Of the various targets, which ones are supportive of the changes we would like to see happening? Which ones are opposed to it? Which ones are 'wingers' (undecided, may be persuaded to support the change we would like to see happening)?
- What are existing coalitions in the landscape? Why were they established, what results do they achieve?
- What are the stakes/agendas of each stakeholder?

Source: [Open Learn Create](#)