



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



SWAP

Sustainable solid WASTE management and Policies



SWAP

Sustainable solid WASTE management and Policies

Deliverable 4.5

GUIDELINES FOR MANAGEMENT OF MULTI-STAKEHOLDER TEAMS

Project Acronym	SWAP		
Work Package	WP4		
WP Leader	IFOA		
Deliverable	D4.5: Guidelines for management of multi-stakeholder governance teams		
Deliverable responsibility of:	IFOA (IT)		
Type	Training material		
Dissemination Level	Department/Faculty; Local; Regional		
Contractual delivery date	M26 (15/03/2023)		
Actual delivery	M31 (04/08/2023)		
version	1.0	date	28/07/2023





August 2023

This document is copyright of partners of:
SWAP – Sustainable solid waste management and policies
(Project n°. 618723-EPP-1-2020-1-DE-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP).

It is released under a Creative Commons license Attribution – Share alike 4.0 international.

You are free to:

- Share: copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format.
- Remix: remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially. The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms.

Under the following terms:

- **Attribution** – You must give **appropriate credit**, provide a link to the license, and **indicate if changes were made**. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.
- **Share Alike** – If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original.

Table of contents

Table of contents	3
ABBREVIATIONS	5
INTRODUCTION.....	7
Project context.....	7
The training hubs.....	7
Why this guide.....	8
PART 1 - Setting up a multi-stakeholder group.....	9
1.1 Foreword.....	9
1.2 Engaging stakeholders.....	10
1.2.1 Stakeholder analysis: who are your key stakeholders?	10
1.2.2 Stakeholder engagement	15
1.3 Structuring the group to respond to your needs.....	19
1.4 Identify the right coordinator	20
PART 2 - Running a multi-stakeholder group.....	22
2.1 Foreword.....	22
2.2 Create a plan	22
2.3 Prepare meetings	22
2.3.1 Choose a format.....	22
2.3.2 Prepare your meetings.....	23
2.3.3 Facilitate your meetings	23
2.3.4 Report and learn from meetings	24
2.4 Organise your communication channels.....	24
2.4.1 Internal Communication	25
2.4.2 External Communication	25
2.5 Maintain stakeholders committed	26
2.6 Possible difficulties and troubleshooting.....	26
A FINAL REMARK.....	28



ABBREVIATIONS

CBO	Community-Based Organisation
EU	European Union
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OOLMS	Open Online Learning Management System
PDCA	Plan Do Check Act
SWM	Solid Waste Management
SWOT	Strengths - Weaknesses - Opportunities - Threats
TH	Training Hub
VET	Vocational Education and Training

INTRODUCTION

Project context

Project SWAP openly addresses capacity building of partners based in Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam with regard to developing the Higher Education sector within society at large, by pursuing two main regional thematic priorities:

1. university-enterprise cooperation, entrepreneurship and employability of graduates; and
2. definition, implementation and monitoring of the reform policies.

Thanks to its multi-actor approach based on a quadruple-helix structure, SWAP aims at the improvement of knowledge, competences and skills in the field of solid waste management by:

- developing modern teaching and learning technologies and tools, including specific methods required to address the needs of specific target groups in Southeast Asia;
- providing governance models, to modernise, increase and sustain the quality of institutions in the Higher Education sector.

The first priority above is addressed either by developing educational products at different levels and by establishing regional “Training Hubs for Sustainable Solid Waste Management and Policies”, physical places where training can occur, services can be delivered, and Academy, VET and the labour market can meet and cooperate, in a true multi-stakeholder environment, well beyond the project duration. Such spaces are intended to support the multi-stakeholder approach of the project: academy professors and researchers, VET trainers, students will access and exploit the OOLMS (Open Online learning Management System, that is, the learning platform of the project), while universities, training providers, local institutions, companies and associations will cooperate to physically start the Training Hubs and govern them, complementing technical contents with the topics of sustainability, occupational health, emission control, safety issues and business creation in the sector, overall increasing the know-how and skills of the graduates in the sector.

The training hubs

Training Hubs have been designed by conveying indications and experience coming from the EU partners (e.g. quality standards, management procedures, etc.) and needs/requirements driven by local contexts in Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand. The design process follows a full PDCA approach, starting from the needs analysis embedded in previous project activities, and keeping into account quality standards the Hubs should fulfil. At this stage, partners started defining goals and indicators of success (e.g. number of training courses delivered vs. proposed, expected number of participants, etc.), followed by a first, overall identification of tasks, programmes, services to be delivered. In this phase, a number of strategic choices were made by the Asian partners, regarding e.g.:

- the scope of each hub;
- the structure, role and responsibilities of players participating in governance bodies;
- the resources required: human, premises, financial sustainability, etc.

Downstream this planning phase, partners went on further detailing their Hubs, like for example refining the number and type of programmes to be delivered, a forecast on the number of participants, and –most important– of funding sources. At present, all hubs are moving their first steps.

In all countries, each University chose the leading domain for the corresponding Training Hub, based on own specialisation and skills and on the local, regional or national needs and development priorities, as follows:

Country	University	Training Hub domain
Cambodia	RUA – Royal University of Agriculture	Municipal Solid Waste Management
	UHST – University of Heng Samrin Thbongkhmum	Waste management through segregation and recycling
Thailand	CMU - Chiang Mai University	Plastic waste segregation and circular-based utilization
	MJU - Maejo University	Agricultural waste utilization
Vietnam	HUAF - Hue University of Agriculture and Forestry	Solid Waste Management
	TUAF - Thai Nguyen University of Agriculture and Forestry	Municipal Solid Waste Management

Why this guide

SWAP is a capacity building project. This document is meant to support the establishment and functioning of local Training Hubs (TH) in Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam, by providing some guidelines and references for their governance and running. The paper does not claim to provide all solutions, nor does it claim to indicate the only possible way forward. Rather, it aims to provide suggestions, based on the experience of the European project partners. However, it remains essential that the Asian partners adapt these indications to their specific political, economic and social context.

All Asian partners have well-established networks and are fully embedded in their local and national systems. Consequently, this document may also be useful for reviewing the steps and operational methods adopted so far, and drawing insights for improving the functioning and governance processes of the respective THs.

PART 1 - Setting up a multi-stakeholder group

1.1 Foreword

By definition, multi-stakeholder groups gather individuals and organisations sharing some kind of interest to a specific duty, task or policy challenge. A stakeholder is any group, organization or individual that can influence or be influenced by some project or activity. So, decisions aiming at improving the effectiveness of the functioning of a TH for solid waste management (SWM) should well take into account all the players involved, with their roles, interest and perceptions. In fact, the success of your TH depends also on your capacity to include the stakeholders into the governance process, taking advantage from their “pluses” to build collective strength. You should not underestimate the risk of neglecting the needs and the priorities of the stakeholders in your territories.

Stakeholders are a relevant resource to develop a synergic territorial approach to environmental policies. In line of principle, a multi-stakeholder group should be set up with people involved in the process right from the beginning. The deployment and validation of each step should then be a participative undertaking, envisaged to strengthen partner commitment and with a view to sustainable implementation. There many existing conceptual models referring to “participation” imply diverse levels of involvement. The diagram below shows an example.

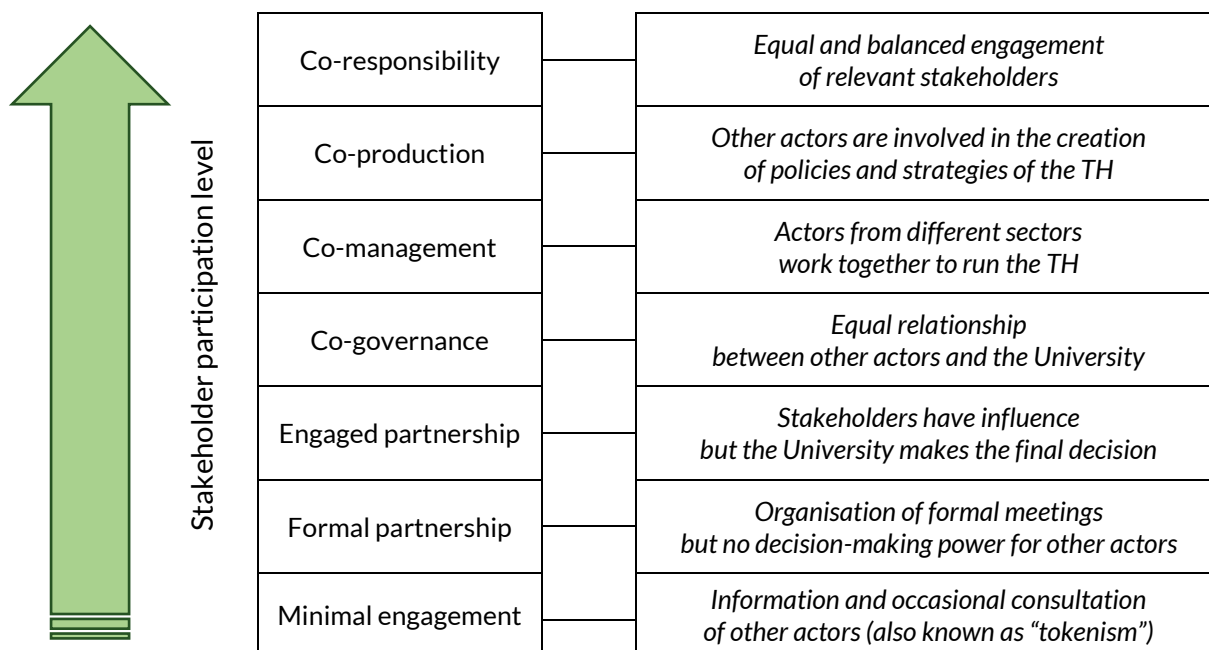


Fig. 1 – Levels of participation
(based on “Urbact Guidance - Setting up and running a multi-stakeholder group”, EU, 2019¹)

¹ European Union; Urbact guidance - Setting up and running a multi-stakeholder group, 2019 https://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/urbact_guidance_-_setting_up_and_running_a_multi-stakeholder_group_0_1_0.pdf

It is worthwhile underlining that there is no best degree of involvement, absolutely speaking. Different levels can fit best different territories and different situations. What is most important, is being aware of which level is achievable and “right” for one’s context at the moment, and which could be a target level for the future, to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the TH and fulfil its mission.

In line of principle, at present the European approach is in favour of co-production and co-responsibility, believing that it is better to actively involve and engage with other relevant players, rather than just inform them once decisions have been taken. Using these kind of approaches can increase the chances of successful implementation, by favouring effective local dynamics and enforcing capacities of local players, contributing to an harmonic territorial development.

Bringing all the relevant stakeholders working together is possibly the best way to provide a sound foundation for the design, planning, coproduction and implementation of your TH. Gathering the proper components in a multi-stakeholder group can be a hard task, however. The organisation of the group should be customized to match your specific context and situation, and there is no unique solution. The objectives, activities and composition of your group will depend on the main topic addressed by the TH, on the nature of activities you plan to undertake and on your country regulations, needs and experience in developing collaborative approaches. In other words, it is essential that the right stakeholders are identified, selected and invited to join, and that the group is adapted to your TH needs.

In order to decide who should be invited, and the contribution you expect by them, you should better set-up a mapping process. This chapter describes 4 possible steps to that aim:

- identifying who should be involved;
- engaging stakeholders;
- structuring the group to respond to your needs;
- identifying the features of the coordinator.

1.2 Engaging stakeholders

A **stakeholder analysis** should be performed in order to understand who they are and then engage them. This implies considering the existing categories of interested parties, who among them might be especially interested and relevant to your TH, what are the relationships among them, how they could cooperate. It can provide crucial information about who will be affected by a project/activity and who could influence it, positively or negatively. It gives us information about which individuals, groups or entities need to be involved, how they should be involved and whose capacity needs to be built to enable them to actively participate.

The stakeholder analysis has a lot to do with personal relationships, understanding people, their attitudes and feelings. Trust-building is a key element of it. This chapter describes the stakeholder analysis process, how to identify possible stakeholders for your TH, and describes how to characterise them, giving practical insight into their typical interests, constrains and needs.

1.2.1 Stakeholder analysis: who are your key stakeholders?

Stakeholder analysis is extensively used in numerous different fields by policy makers, controllers, governmental and non-governmental associations (NGOs), business and media. Stakeholder analysis identifies who will be affected by a process/design or could impact a process/design appreciatively or negatively. It helps to understand the social and institutional

environment. It helps to assess the requirements and to plan for the participation of the stakeholders. Moreover, stakeholder analysis indicates how to empower them and include them in the conditioning, if the informal sector actors are playing an important part.

Crucial questions that stakeholder analysis helps to answer are, for instance:

- how can we take into account the interests and the relevance of different stakeholders?
- How can the different stakeholders be correctly represented?

Stakeholder analysis supports enabling less represented stakeholders to influence decision-making processes.

Thinking of the THs, the stakeholder analysis process allows to:

- identify who to involve and to which extent, in the different steps of the planning and implementation processes;
- understand who has what interest and who is influential in supporting or in delaying/jeopardizing the activities;
- identify conflicts of interests between stakeholders;
- identify relations that should be improved and enforced;
- understand how to deal with different people (who needs to be granted more responsibility, who needs to be informed, who should be dealt with in a specially careful way, etc.).

The stakeholder analysis method proposed here follows an approach of “analytical categorization”, based on levels of interest and influence through several “attributes” or “categorisation factors” to identify who is important and/or influential and why. In order to better define the activities required, 3 steps are proposed:

- a. identification and preliminary characterization of the stakeholders;
- b. characterization and selection of key stakeholders;
- c. review of key stakeholders.

Findings from stakeholder analysis are best recorded in tables and matrix diagrams.

a. Identification of stakeholders

Identifying stakeholders is an iteration process during which additional subjects can be added while the analysis goes on, for example, using expert opinion, focus groups, semi-structured interviews or a combination of these. It is all about contacting the “right” persons, who know the situation well and have access to the most important and influential stakeholders.

The more people you meet, the less likely it will be that any of the important stakeholder groups are missed. Physically mapping stakeholders in a graph can be a tool to visualise them all, together with their relationship.

In general, stakeholders who should be involved in a TH planning process are²:

- **Municipal authorities** – the mayor; municipal technical services (environment, sanitation, public health, etc.); municipal police.
- **Regional and national authorities** – different Regional Directorates e.g. Sanitation, Urbanisms & Habitat, Local development, Environment.

² For a more comprehensive list, see Reymond, P. (2014). Stakeholder analysis. In L. Strande, M. Ronteltap, & D. Brdjanovic (Eds.), *Faecal sludge management. Systems approach for implementation and operation*. (pp 319-340). IWA Publishing. <https://www.dora.lib4ri.ch/eawag/islandora/object/eawag%3A11402>

- **Utilities** – public, semi-private or private.
- **Traditional authorities and influential leaders** – ethnic leaders, religious leaders, etc.
- **Small-scale business** – mechanical services providers; business owners; business owners association or interest groups; manual service providers; collection groups or individuals; waste pickers; truck operators.
- **Organizations active in the SWM sector** – community-based organizations (CBOs); local or international NGOs with sanitation activities; universities and research centres; donor agencies.
- **Potential suppliers and end-users** – households; commercial activities owners; recycling plants owners; farmers and farmers associations; local market, etc.

To complete the process, you should ask yourself the following:

1. have all the potential supporters and opponent of the initiative/project been identified?
2. have vulnerable groups with a possible interest in the initiative/project been identified?

Please note that identifying potential opponents is as relevant as identifying supporters, allowing to cope with possible misunderstandings, obstacles and objections at an early stage, and avoid problems afterwards.

Of course, stakeholders vary in each context. The institutions, modes of organization, environment and culture vary from region to the other, including the attitude towards solid waste. The above list can be used as a guideline, but any case should be investigated on a one-to-one basis.

b. Characterisation of stakeholders

Stakeholder characterization provides information on how to best involve each player and how to attribute possible roles and responsibilities. It also opens the door for the selection of most relevant stakeholders.

Here follows a list of the main criteria you can use, in order to best characterize your stakeholders³:

- **Main interests** – consultation with the stakeholders should be carried in order to determine how each interest can be taken into account in the future SWM system.
- **Strengths** – establish the main strong factors stakeholders could bring in.
- **Weakness** – establish if any kind of information, empowerment and capacity-building is required by the stakeholders.
- **Opportunities and threats** – characterise the potential positive and negative perspectives for the initiative/project.
- **Relationships among stakeholders** – this includes for example, hierarchy, friendship, competition and professional links. Good, or bad, relationships may determine which working group can be built and where the best alliances to push the project forward lie. Trust and diplomacy are very important.
- **Impact** – the type of impact that the project has on a stakeholder also determines the measures needed to maximise positive impacts and mitigates negative impacts.
- **Involvement and training needs** – the action required results mainly from identified interests, weaknesses and potentials.

³ cfr. Reymond, P., cit.

Analyses of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are part of the wider SWOT analysis. All the information collected can be organized in a stakeholder table, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 – Example of a stakeholder table to summarise the stakeholder’s characteristics.

Stakeholders	Interests	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities/ threats	Relationships	Impact	Involvement needs
Stakeholder A							
Stakeholder B							
Stakeholder C							
...							

The relationship between stakeholders can be represented in a diagram of relationships. Fig. 2 shows an example referring to India.

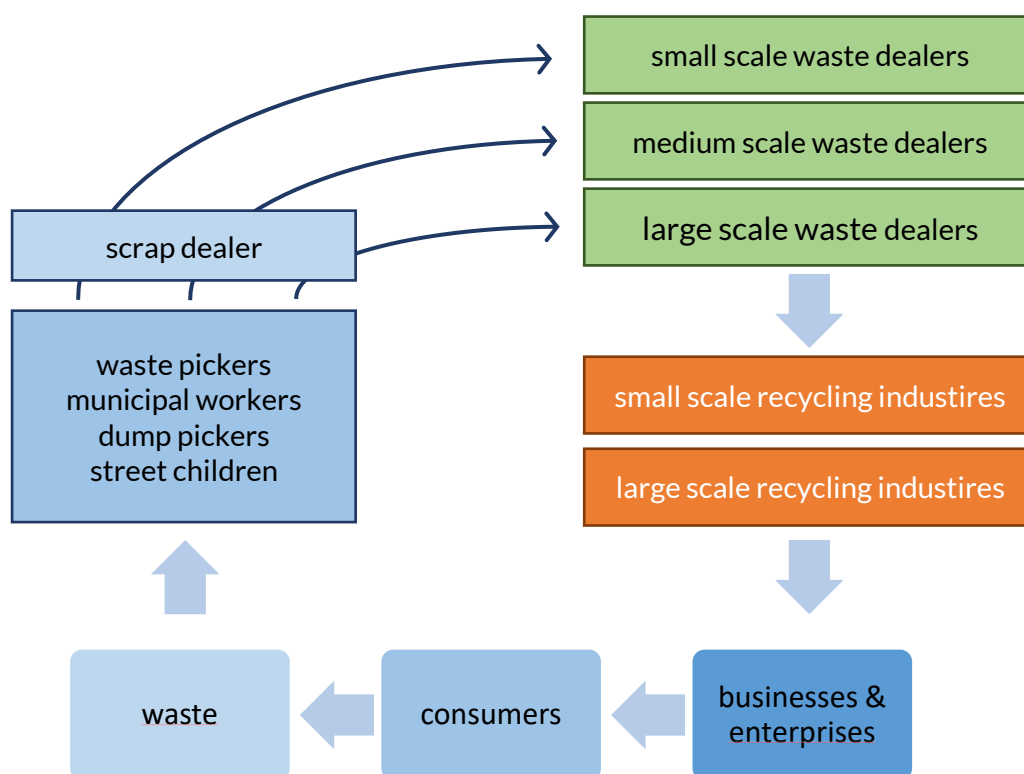


Fig. 2 – Example of a diagram of relationships between SWM stakeholders⁴

⁴ Adapted from Biyani, N.; Anantharaman M., 2017, Aligning Stakeholder Frames for Transition Management in Solid Waste: A Case Study of Bangalore, in *Aligning Stakeholder Frames for Transition Management in Solid Waste: A Case Study of Bangalore*; International Development Policy, 8.2-2017; ISBN 978-2-940600-04-5; <https://doi.org/10.4000/poldev.2483>

It is important to differentiate between two types of opportunities and threats: the influence over the project and the interest in the project.

- **Influence** is the “power” that a stakeholder has on the project, like controlling the decision-making process, “pushing” the implementation of some decisions/actions, slow down or impact the project progress negatively. Table 2 gives some examples.
- **Interest** on the other side is typical of stakeholders who see the project as a tool to fulfil their needs, match their constraints or find a solution to their problems.

This distinction is particularly important to identify and engage less represented and low-income groups, like waste pickers, which are often not given a voice.

Table 2 – Variables affecting stakeholders’ relative influence⁵

INFLUENCE FACTORS	
formal organizations	informal groups
Hierarchy (command, control, budget holders)	Social, economic, political status
Leadership (formal and informal, charisma, political, familial)	Degree of organization, consensus and leadership in the group
Control of strategic resources for the project	Degree of control of strategic resources significant for the project
Possession of specialist knowledge	Informal influence through links with other stakeholders
Negotiation position – personal connections to ruling politicians	Degree of dependence on other stakeholders

Once you have characterized your stakeholders, you can convey them into an influence-interest matrix (Table 3 at next page) which might be useful to decide how to deal with the respective stakeholders and identify participation levels. Combined with table 1, this is a starting document that helps to communicate the situation to external persons and which can be easily updated during further steps of the process. Basically, after describing each stakeholder according to the factors stated in table 1, you should place them into the matrix of table 3, thus populating the different quadrants.

As you can easily imagine, key stakeholders for your TH are those whose interest and influence are most relevant. Besides using table 1 and 3, you can for example decide to adopt other criteria to identify them. Generally speaking, a key stakeholder is one that matches at least one of the following:

- a. carries out activities somehow linked to the goals and scope of your TH;
- b. has sufficient political power to influence the life of your TH;
- c. can, for any reason (political, economical, religious, public visibility or reputation, etc.) support or endanger your TH;

⁵ Adapted from ODA (1995). Guidance Note on How To Do Stakeholder Analysis of Aid Projects and Programmes. Social Development Department. London, Overseas Development Administration (now DfID).

d. is able to get funding, or can support you in getting funding for your TH.

Table 3 – Use of the influence-interest matrix to identify involvement needs and participation levels⁶

	Low influence	High influence
Low interest	Stakeholders are unlikely to be strongly involved in the project and require only information-sharing aimed at the general public INFORMATION	Stakeholders may oppose your decisions, therefore they should be kept informed and their views acknowledged to avoid conflicts CONSULTATION - INFORMATION
High interest	Stakeholders require special effort to ensure that their needs are met and their participation is relevant CONSULTATION - EMPOWERMENT	Stakeholders should be strongly involved to ensure their support for the project CONSULTATION - COLLABORATION EMPOWERMENT - DELEGATION

The four criteria listed above can refer either to interest, influence or both and can be classified accordingly. For example, a stakeholder who has an activity linked to the goals and scope of your TH is to be considered as having an interest; a stakeholder that has an activity linked to your TH and is able to get funding has both an interest and influence, etc..

c. Review of key stakeholders

As the activities of your TH go on and grow, you will get more and deeper understanding of the situation, and the way to proceed will become clearer. This could bring you to decide for example that some stakeholders selected in the early phases may no longer be important or may gain importance or influence, as well as you might understand that you need new ones.

So, we recommend you to monitor the situation, keep an eye on it, and act consequently. In other words, the stakeholder analysis is not just a task to be carried out during the start-up phase, but it is a continuing activity throughout the TH life span.

1.2.2 Stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder engagement or stakeholder involvement is a key factor for the successful establishment and running of your TH. It means including stakeholders in the planning process in order to take into account their needs, priorities and interests, to achieve consensus and to remove possible opposition. In other words, to make them participate. Stakeholder engagement has a lot to do with defining the participation level of people in the process and how to best answer their needs, through for example awareness-raising or training and capacity-building. Involvement needs to be defined based on the context and characteristic of the key stakeholders.

Training Hubs in the SWAP project are meant to bring benefits to the local community, as they aim at providing students, and consequently the society in the medium-long term, with skills useful to reduce environmental and health problems. Nevertheless, the benefits may not be clear to everybody from the outset, and very often people are reluctant to change some aspects of

⁶ Adapted from Reymond, P., cit.

their daily routine, especially if, in the beginning, this implies spending money and/or time. That is why, a proper information campaign is fundamental, and consultation, cooperation and empowerment are crucial to get all the relevant stakeholders to work together and set-up a well-functioning mechanism.

You should consider that sometimes different stakeholders might have conflicting interests and goals. It will be partly up to you to be able to understand and mediate. To this aim, favouring the participation in the TH governance processes can help, because involved people and organisations feel more committed to achieve the envisaged objectives. Participation empowers people and increases the sustainability of a project because it develops skills, mutual trust and reciprocal confidence required for the people to run the system once it is in place. Awareness raising, communication and capacity development should also accompany the whole process and are considered cross-cutting tasks.

Unless you have in place a system to reward your stakeholders, please remember that they participate on a voluntary basis, so they need to have an interest and see that their involvement is for their own benefit or –in certain cases– serves a greater goal. Having quoted it, it is worthwhile mentioning that stakeholder involvement is not cost-free. Apart from possibly rewarding stakeholders, you will need sufficient resources (budget, personnel and time) to devote to your TH. This activity, as well as setting up a participated governance team, should be regarded as an investment for the success of your TH.

The level of participation of the stakeholders depends on what needs to be achieved with the targeted stakeholders. In order to define such level, you might consider:

- the level of engagement/responsibility which the stakeholder feels able/comfortable to take;
- the expected “return on investment”, that is, what they will take away from the experience; this may not only be a financial return but could also consist in visibility and reputation, or in opening up new business relationships, or in having a chance to influence the skills their future employees will have, etc.;
- the factors influencing the willingness of the stakeholders and the extent of the peer pressure.

Four main participation level can be distinguished and are reported here, in the order of increasing involvement:

1. **Information** – The objective is to enable the stakeholders to understand the situation, the different options and their implications. This is a one-way flow of communication. It can be done through awareness-raising campaigns or informative meetings and related field visits.
2. **Consultation** – The objective is to obtain the stakeholders feedback on the situation, options, scenarios and/or decisions. This is a two-way communication. However, the stakeholders are not involved in the decision-making.
3. **Collaboration** – The objective is to work as a partner with the stakeholder(s) on various aspects, including the development of scenarios and the identification of the preferred solutions. The power for taking decisions is shared between the stakeholders.
4. **Empowerment/delegation** – The objective is to build the capacities of stakeholders so that they are able to make informed decisions, to take responsibility for final decision making, and to assume their role and responsibilities once the TH is implemented.

Each level can be regarded as a successive step: collaboration requires previous consultation, which, on its turn, requires previous information, etc..

Different forms of participation can be used at the same time with the same stakeholders, or in different phases. So, some stakeholders may be first informed about the project and later consulted to get their point of view, and finally called to collaborate.

The stakeholder analysis provides the basis for deciding which stakeholders should participate in the different stage of the process and at which level of participation. It also makes possible to define which involvement tools should be used with each stakeholder.

Of course, especially at the beginning, you might want to keep most of the governance of the TH in the hands of your University. This is understandable, of course. Once again, there is no “one fits all” recipe: you know your context, your needs and your goals best.

Involvement tools

After defining the participation levels for each stakeholder, the involvement tools can be selected. For each level, there are a number of possible tools (see Table 4).

There are many ways to involve people in governance processes and there is no ready-made solution for which tool to use and when. Decisions should be context-driven. The optimal selection of involvement tools varies from case to case. For example, involvement needs may differ according to the complexity and boundaries of the project (e.g. planning at the policy level in an area where no formal SWM organization exists yet, or planning a recycling treatment plant in a city where SWM operators are well structured). The personality of the stakeholders is also very important.

We present hereby a few tools that can be of use. Each of them corresponds to one or several participation levels, as shown in Table 4.⁷

Individual meetings, informal or semi-structured interviews – Meetings with stakeholders are very important, as they allow information to be collected while at the same time build trust and personal relationships. They also provide an understanding of the needs, priorities and constraints.

Focus groups – They consist of discussions in small groups, led by a moderator, whereby stakeholders express and discuss their options. Focus groups can contribute towards opinion-forming in the group and can be organized in order to elaborate documents.

Workshops aim to gather selected stakeholders together in order to push the process forward. They can be “information workshops” aiming to communicate plans, activities and current stage of the process. They can also be “consultation workshops”, aiming to collect stakeholders’ opinions and concern, build consensus and formulate solutions. In some cases, workshops or focus group can be held to acknowledge and reinforce the importance of members in the process and strengthen associations. For example, the organization of groups of stakeholders such as waste pickers into an association may greatly simplify the participatory process, increase the visibility of these stakeholders and improve empowerment.

⁷ Adapted from Faecal Sludge and Septage Management – Planning Module (Part B: Learning Notes), National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA), 2021, pp. 94-95, https://scbp.niua.org/sites/default/files/FSSM%20Planning%20Part%20B_May%202022.pdf [last accessed on 03/08/2023]

Site visits are powerful tool to expose all stakeholders to reality. Very often, authorities and people working in the office do not fully realize the situation until they can actually see and visualize it. So, bringing them “on-the-spot”, can help letting them understand, and become more keen to act and support changes.

Surveys – A representative sample of the population (e.g. students, companies, etc.) is questioned on a particular topic by means of a structured questionnaire.

Table 4 – Stakeholder involvement techniques and participation levels

	information	Consultation	Collaboration	Empowerment/ delegation
Personal meetings	X	X	X	X
Focus Groups		X	X	X
Workshops	X	X	X	X
Site visits	X	X		
Media campaigns	X			
Surveys		X		
Advocacy/Lobbying	X		X	X
Mediation		X	X	X
Logical Framework		X	X	

Media campaigns carried out with posters, advertisement, on radio, TV, internet or cell phones – They aim to inform and sensitize the public. They are especially useful in making the population understand the changes introduced by a new systems and promoting changes in habits (like separating recyclable waste for the collection).

Advocacy/lobbying – The goal is to ensure that the interest of non-organized and/or socially disadvantaged groups within the population are considered in the planning process. The groups receive advice and their interest are represented in the appropriate committees and bodies. It is a form of empowerment.

Mediation – in conflict situations, when the two debating parties cannot find an agreement, referring to a neutral third party can help reaching mutually agreed-upon solutions.

Logical frameworks can be elaborated for each of the strategic objectives of a project. This tool aims to facilitate the logical organization of projects with well-defined objectives, and can be used to promote communication between the stakeholders.

Involvement tools should be chosen on a case-by-case basis, as it depends on the local context. The best participatory approach is a combination of several tools. It is important to clarify in advance the availability of the resources required for conducting an adequate stakeholder’s involvement program (time, budget and know-how).

From a general point of view, the level of participation of key stakeholders should increase as the process develops. From information at the very beginning, it should move towards collaboration, so that when it comes to implementation and operation, smooth collaboration between key stakeholders is secured.

Awareness raising is a cross-cutting task throughout the whole process, enabling people to make informed chooses and adopt good practices. Very often, the advantages of new training opportunities, research centres and equipment may not be obvious to all. Some of them may be reluctant to participate, especially if a behavioral change is required. Some may be interested

but lack the necessary information or skills to efficiently take part in the decision-making process.

Training and capacity building - Skills and capacities are important components of the enabling environment. When it comes to implementation, the capacities of the key stakeholders at technical, managerial, financial, commercial and societal levels are crucial. Therefore, here is the domain where your TH can do the most, not only in preparing students who will be the future technicians, managers and decision-makers, but also in empowering the capacities and skills of the stakeholders, with a view to the long-term sustainability of the TH. Financial mechanisms can be defined to answer capacity-strengthening needs. Several solutions can be explored including distribution of fees, subsidies, microcredits, community development funds and so on, in order to add more challenging and ambitious achievements to your plans for the future.

1.3 Structuring the group to respond to your needs

There are several different possible organizational structures for a multi-stakeholder group:

- a. **Closed structure:** a small group, of a maximum of 10 people, which stays stable during the project lifetime, allowing you to keep control of the group, to clearly allocate responsibilities and to better focus on completing tasks. While this kind of structure does not automatically provide the critical mass that some processes may need, it has the advantage of allowing members to get to know each other well and build strong relationships. At the same time, the risk is to get caught into the existing structure, and lose momentum and innovation capacity as time goes by.
- b. **Open structure:** allows to change and adapt the group composition along time. Depending on needs, an open membership allows you to increase participation by adding new stakeholders, for example to make specific actions on certain topics. In other words, this structure allows for a more lively organisation.
- c. **Topic sub-groups:** many networks are built on a main topic and several sub-topics. If your TH has for example 4 sub-themes, stakeholders may choose to participate in more of them. This may result in higher level of interest from participants and a better control of the development of each group. Of course, if you adopt this solution, you should also build ways to make groups share results of their actions with others.
- d. **Multiple level structures:** another possibility is a mixture of open and closed structures. A core group of some partners with a high degree of involvement could be completed by a wider local network which forms the target group for the programme of local activities that the core group develops. These could include dissemination events, local consultation events, conferences, etc..

The initial arrangements to structure the group do not have to be strictly definite. On the opposite, we recommend you to adapt the structure depending on the needs of the project, the steps and the progress. If it does not work, change it! The above list was drafted considering a potential increasing level of openness and development of the TH. For example, one could think of starting with a closed structure, to build-up the team, and then move to an open one, as the TH activities and popularity grow, in order to involve more actors. Further, if the number of stakeholders get bigger, you may think of sub-groups, and eventually of multiple levels. But, again, everything is up to you, which means you are free, but you are also recommended to continuously and carefully monitor the progress of your TH.

1.4 Identify the right coordinator

The coordinator is the person governing the TH and, if you adopt a multi-stakeholder team, the group, and is therefore a key actor. This person may be in line of principle someone from within the University or someone external recruited to perform this task. Less likely, this could also be a representative of another organisation member of the group. In principle, the coordinator should also know or be an actor in the policy issues/challenges to be addressed by the TH.

The coordinator is responsible for giving the group clear objectives, creating a positive and welcoming environment, guiding the team and managing the regular processes. Some stakeholders may not have had previous experience of participative processes so the coordinator should make sure that all members feel at ease and that their opinions are valid and respected.

Of course, the choice of the coordinator reverts in full to each University, so in this document we will just provide for some food for thought regarding his/her features.

Generally speaking, a coordinator should be:

- a **manager**, overseeing and monitoring the development of the TH plan, taking responsibility for the results, the achievements and the financial aspects, formally representing the TH inside the University and also outside, in case the TH is/becomes a legally established body; he/she should also be a HR manager to a certain extent, insofar the TH governance group members all have skills which should be used in full, so that everything is not on the coordinator's shoulders;
- an **organiser**, organising and documenting the multi-stakeholder group meetings, thinking about the TH enlargement, if and when necessary;
- a **motivator**, creating a welcoming and transparent environment, getting the multi-stakeholder group started with clear objectives, making sure that all members feel at ease and that their opinions are valid and respected;
- a **mediator**, managing potential conflicts, dealing with difficult stakeholders, listening, solving problems and brainstorming solutions, and, when necessary, compromising and finding a consensus;
- a **communicator**, reporting inside the University on the TH activities and managing the external communication, to provide the TH with the more appropriate visibility and reputation;
- an **innovator**, favouring changing mind-set and testing new tools, strategies, cooperation.

All in all, to ensure the sustainability of the multi-stakeholder TH, it is important that its organisation corresponds to the local context. A TH coordinator should think about what makes most sense in his/her context, asking him/herself questions like:

- what are the skills that I consider essential for running a multi-stakeholder group? Do I have them all?
- How can I identify and harness the skills of other stakeholders?
- If I was member of a multi-stakeholder group, what would I expect from the coordinator?
- What is in my opinion the biggest chance this group can take, and what is its biggest threat?
- Have I identified who could be the stakeholders for our TH?
- Are they aware of the project? Do they understand and support it?
- Have we carried out any active analysis of your stakeholders?
- Are there any members with conflicting views, expectations or requirements?
- Have we identified and taken actions to engage our stakeholders?



- Are our stakeholders all clear about their own roles and responsibilities and the roles of others?
- Do we have a governance structure that includes all the main stakeholders that should be involved?
- Is there a formal mechanism for coordinating the activities of different members?
- Is there a clear vision, with objectives and defined results for the group?
- Do all stakeholders understand and share such vision?
- Does everyone share a common understanding of the goals of the TH?
- Do I know how we will communicate progress to stakeholders and beyond?
- Are there any different requirements in terms of type and frequency of communication?

PART 2 - Running a multi-stakeholder group

2.1 Foreword

Running a group of stakeholders can be a rewarding but also a demanding and time-consuming task. To achieve cohesion and success you will need to invest –and to ask all participants to invest– in commitment, time and energy.

A well-working multi-stakeholder group is able to design, reach consensus upon and implement a common strategy, at the same time putting in place cohesion and a good group dynamic among all its members, no matter the organisation they belong to. Key factors to this achievement are a correct leadership, mutual trust and confidence, regular and clear internal communication, and an action plan built, agreed and owned by each and everyone in the group. In the following, we discuss briefly these factors.

2.2 Create a plan

We warmly recommend you to draw a plan, a roadmap, as a tool to keep everyone together and on track right from the start, to motivate participants and give them a clear understanding of objectives, methods and processes.

Such plan should specify the objectives, the expected results, the resources needed and available, and should describe the activities that you envisage for the short-medium term. It should include a provisional calendar and overall goals of all meetings and a time line for the delivery of planned results. The plan should be “co-engineered” and approved by all members of the group, and they should be able to clearly identify in it the advantages they will get from their participation.

In that way, you and the other stakeholders will always know where you are, i.e. the state of play of the plan, at any moment. This will improve everybody’s sense of ownership of the plan, will allow all to allocate the time and the resources required to perform the envisaged activities.

2.3 Prepare meetings

Nobody is happy to attend a meeting with no clear goals, unexpected discussions, long empty parts and poor conclusions. Who organises the meeting should therefore carefully think of that, and consider him/herself as a facilitator for participants. A satisfactory meeting will cement the group, give new boost for future activities and favour continuing and active participation in the future.

2.3.1 Choose a format

Multi-stakeholder group meetings can be arranged with different **formats**, based on your goals. For example:

- **Regular meetings** – These are usual reunions, with a set agenda and a number of topics to be discussed.
- **Community planning events** – These are collaborative events where the group, rather than following a usual meeting agenda, is called to make plans, possibly together with other experts, about the future of the TH, or some aspects of it.
- **Hands-on planning** - Methods of involvement where small groups make plans for the future using table top plans or flexible cardboard models.

- **Interactive displays** - Visual displays which allow people to participate by making additions or alterations to them. These can be either “physical” (whiteboards, sticky notes, posters and markers, etc.) or digital (screens and collaborative software).

Participating stakeholders will very likely be used to have frequent meetings, either face-to-face or online. So, we recommend you to be at the same time effective and creative, when choosing a format. For example, if the meeting is mostly targeted to communicate something or to approve something that is already well-known, choose a short and straightforward scheme. On the other side, if the meeting is targeted to discuss and decide something that is still open, or to collect opinions and suggestions, shift to a more hands-on and interactive solution.

2.3.2 Prepare your meetings

- **Choose the venue.** Think about lighting, fresh air, breaks, refreshments, access, Wi-Fi connection and other equipment needs, making sure that participants will be comfortable. When relevant, consider holding the meeting in turn at each stakeholder’s premises. This will give everyone the chance to know each other’s organisation, and will tribute relevance to each and all components of the group.
- **Circulate an agenda** no less than one week before. The agenda must include the context and objectives of the meeting. When relevant, make sure it has a good mix of activity including, for example, site visits, interactive discussions, expert presentations, etc.. The meeting agenda should allow space for giving information, but also time for participants to be active, to speak, to contribute and to exchange views, according to the format you have chosen (see 2.3.1).
- **Define and communicate the meeting’s objectives.** Be clear about the objectives: in that way participants will not be confused, surprised or misunderstanding when a topic comes at stage.
- When useful, **involve local stakeholders** in organising, preparing and delivering the meeting. Assign roles and responsibilities to participants e.g. give them 'homework' before the meeting, of course, leaving them time enough to prepare.

2.3.3 Facilitate your meetings

As we said many times, good management of meetings is a key to success. Considering the purpose of the TH governance teams, management should be a well-balanced mix of ruling, guiding and listening. Who runs the meetings should therefore act more as a facilitator, stimulate everybody to participate actively, appreciate all contributions, be assertive, etc. Here follow some suggestions:

- **Open the meeting**, by going quickly through the agenda, recalling its objectives, introducing possible newcomers, setting basic recommendations (e.g. switching-off mobile phones).
- **Set the pace, keep the timing** and follow the agenda, making sure that all topics are dealt with, allowing sufficient time for that, keeping participants on track, kindly cutting down off-topic discussions, at the same time being flexible to adapt, if any unexpected issue comes up.
- Before moving to the next point in the agenda, **summarise** what has been discussed in the current point.
- **Wrap-up the results** of the meeting, as well as the next steps to take, possible topics for the next meeting, etc. If possible, do not forget to set the date for the next meeting, or to remind it, if it was already included in your work plan (see 2.2).
- **Ask for feedback** shortly at the end of the meeting. How was the meeting? Any ideas for the future? At the beginning you can do that directly face-to-face. Once you get acquainted with participants, you can also add a short online form, asking the group to fill it in for feedback.

In this case, remember to report to the group the feedback you receive, and to take the necessary actions for improvement.

One last advice: you cannot always expect participants to agree with your opinions and views. So, how should you challenge negative behaviour?

- Set procedural rules prior to the meeting
- Try to involve all participants in the discussion
- Maintain the group energy high: this will reduce the room for, and the impact of, negative behaviours
- Gently discuss with passive or resistant stakeholders to understand the reasons for their attitude; you might prefer to do this separately, not in front of everyone, so as not to emphasise their negative behaviour in public, put them in an embarrassment and further aggravate the situation
- If you do not feel confident about a topic, or an answer, get help from another facilitator/expert/participant: people in the group are a resource.

2.3.4 Report and learn from meetings

Each meeting is a step along your roadmap. It is therefore necessary to keep track of the work done, both for you (for monitoring the progress of your plan) and for the other stakeholder (to remind decisions taken and to account for outcomes, also to those who maybe could not take part for any reason).

- **Pay attention and take notes.** If you are the facilitator and do not want to be distracted by the office of taking notes, ask a colleague to do that for you, or, in a web meeting, ask participants the permission to record the session. In the first case, make sure that you check the notes soon after the meeting, and they correspond to your memories and understanding of what happened.
- **Circulate minutes quickly** (max 2-3 days after the meeting) and thank for active participation.
- **Share regular updates with the members of the team.** Providing a follow-up on the identified action points and feedback will keep the stakeholders motivated between two meetings and show that their inputs are taken into account.
- **Assess the meeting** (see also 2.3.3). How was the meeting? Any ideas for the future? At the beginning you can do that directly face-to-face. Once you get acquainted with participants, you can also add a short online form, asking the group to fill it in for feedback. In this case, remember to report to the group the feedback you receive, and to take the necessary actions for improvement.
- Possibly **collect** pictures (or screenshots, if you are online) of meetings for potential future communication purpose.

2.4 Organise your communication channels

It has always been so, but especially in these times, communication is a crucial success factor for any undertaking. The governance of your TH should therefore be backed-up by a strong communication strategy. This should be addressed both internally, to your own organisation and to those the stakeholders belong, and externally, to public authorities, companies, citizens and the wider public.

Good communication adds visibility and reputation, attracts potential users to your TH, not only students, but also businesses or individuals who might be interested to the services and the products you offer.

2.4.1 Internal Communication

Its goal is to keep your colleagues, as well as your stakeholders, up-to-date with the activities, the opportunities and the progress your TH is making. It also ensures that someone can promptly take over, in case the manager of the TH is out of the office, or cannot play his role for a while for any reason. You can use several channels, to keep your internal communication in good health. For example:

- **Telephone:** Direct voice contacts with stakeholders and colleagues favour not only transfer of information, but also confidence and mutual trust.
- **Video calls/web calls:** This can be a cost-effective and time efficient way to keep a group in touch in between meetings, and make interim decisions.
- **E-mail:** the ancient Romans used to say “*verba volant, scripta manent*”, that is, "spoken words fly away, written ones remain". It could be a good habit to prepare and regularly send e-mails, gathering important information, to keep colleagues and stakeholders informed. Beware not to overwhelm and spam them with unnecessary messages, however.
- **Online file storage:** there are several free tools allowing you to keep and share relevant files within a group.
- **Project management software:** once your TH is on its track and is functioning regularly, you might want to adopt this kind of tool to reduce email traffic, host documents in a single place and manage tasks. Several software tools are available to this aim, some even available for free, at least in their basic configuration.

In addition, many online tools facilities for networking are constantly being developed. Among the rest, they allow for:

- creating groups
- sharing information and messages
- polling for scheduling meetings
- photo and video hosting and sharing
- collaborative content creation

In particular, when organising a web call:

- Appoint a moderator / facilitator (could be yourself, of course).
- Ensure participants have sufficient technical skills and can access the software tool you have chosen: we recommend you to check and test it before the meetings.
- Schedule carefully to ensure people are free at the appointed time.
- Prepare and circulate agenda by email in advance, including any documents to be looked at beforehand.
- Send a reminder shortly before the meeting (e.g. the day before).
- Start the session a few minutes before schedule.
- Allow 5-10 minutes at the beginning for people to join.
- Keep the duration of sessions within a reasonable time (1 – 1.5 hour max).
- Ask participants' permission and record sessions for future reference.

2.4.2 External Communication

If nobody knows about the work your TH is carrying out, your TH... does not exist. So, try and take every opportunity to communicate, disseminate and make your work visible outside the borders of your University. Also remember that communicating externally can help build political and popular consensus around your TH and team.

Well-planned communication activity can add value by:

- making evident and promoting the involvement of stakeholders;
- showcasing results to possible donors;
- setting good practices;
- building a sense of community by gaining the interest and trust of citizens in your area;
- keeping relationships and exchanging practices with corresponding SWAP THs in your and in other partner countries.

There are several instruments you can exploit to this aim, as we have been doing along the lifespan of the SWAP project:

- a **website**, to showcase the project's activities and goals;
- a **newsletter**, with articles and features about the multi-stakeholder group;
- **events**, either organised by the TH directly or by other actors, where you can take part with an information stand, or which you can organise directly, such as open days, fairs, conferences;
- **social media**, or blogs, with visual material (pictures, videos...) to raise the profile of your activity and your group;
- **press and local/national TV or radio**: if you can access these channels, of course they can give your TH great visibility and reputation.

2.5 Maintain stakeholders committed

Successful multi-stakeholder group management does not only limit to engage people in the beginning. It also implies keeping them motivated and committed along time. You could maintain your stakeholders' interest by, for example:

- keeping good relationships and mutual confidence between and with all stakeholders;
- developing a good communication strategy (see 2.4);
- regularly sharing progress and showcasing result;
- demonstrating that their voice is important, inviting them to express their points of view and ideas, asking them for feedback, and showing that such feedback is taken into account;
- adapting the group's composition (see 1.2.1 c);
- formalising the group, with some kind of written agreement, functioning rules, rights and duties, etc.;
- demonstrating results and impact, thus enhancing participants' and their organisations' reputation and visibility.

The multi-stakeholder group should also be a space for experimentation in which members have some freedom to test solutions. In addition to motivating the multi-stakeholder group members by providing some concrete actions to implement, trying out small-scale, pilot actions will encourage them to think about implementation and challenges that arise.

2.6 Possible difficulties and troubleshooting

No plan is risk-free, and nothing is generally fully accepted by everyone. Problems and divergent opinions always come up, especially when dealing with projects affecting delicate themes like the environment and its effect on related subjects (economy, health, employment, learning, etc.). Each partner knows best how to face such problems and how to manage them together and

towards the stakeholders. However, we provide here below some suggestions, springing from the EU partners' experience, as possible additional hints to overcome potential difficulties.⁸

<i>Problem</i>	<i>Suggestions</i>
Stakeholders are unresponsive	<p>Conduct an in-depth diagnosis of your stakeholders To engage with your stakeholders, it is necessary to have a clear overview of the initial situation: objectives, motivation, needs, interest and roles from the parties involved. You may organise one-to-one meetings to analyse the causes of unresponsiveness.</p>
	<p>Communicate effectively A good communication strategy will allow the potential stakeholders to be aware of your project activities and, thus, get involved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - avoid jargon and provide clear messages; - choose the right communication channels.
	<p>Motivate your stakeholders Encourage their participation by presenting the benefits they can draw from it, as in a “win-win” situation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - involve them in the decision-making process; - devote time to clarify their motivation; - show appreciation and incentivise their engagement.
	<p>Manage your stakeholders' expectations It is important that your stakeholders' expectations are clearly set from the very beginning of your project. Share your vision and make sure everyone is on the same page. Check that the vision is shared all along the project. Let your stakeholders express their ideas, needs and problems and make sure to address them.</p>
There are difficulties in maintaining stakeholder involvement	<p>Set up a positive atmosphere To encourage engagement, trust and focus, it is important to set up a good and dynamic working atmosphere. Make sure to prepare well the meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - favour participation by using different formats and shift locations; - organise site visits to places with connections to the TH activities; - do not hesitate to plan for informal joint celebrations of progress.
	<p>Organise regular meetings and follow-up To increase participation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - trust is essential, so be transparent when sharing the progress; - arrange face-to-face or informal meetings, adapting the meeting time to the needs of stakeholders; - monitor the stakeholders' engagement on a regular basis; - provide a complete follow-up on meetings and send regular, good quality memos to participants.

⁸ Table adapted from European Union; Urbact guidance - Setting up and running a multi-stakeholder group, 2019 https://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/urbact_guidance_-_setting_up_and_running_a_multi-stakeholder_group_0_1_0.pdf

Problem	Suggestions
	<p>Increase communication to engage the community Good and increased local communication will improve your TH visibility among citizens, raising their awareness and engaging them in the activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - make your TH more accessible to the community by organising out-of-the-box events; - give ownership of the project to the stakeholders. <hr/> <p>Adapt your group composition To keep your stakeholders active and committed to the project, it is important to show some flexibility when it comes to changing the composition of the group and adapting it to the stage of the project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage the involvement of new members whose experience could bring new energy to the team; - spread the membership through the development of sub-groups; - involve the right members for the specific faced issues (right scale and content). <hr/> <p>Formalise the group Stakeholders will get more involved if they feel considered as part of a structure that will continue operating after the end of the project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If appropriate give the group a legal existence to give it a sense of legitimacy; - provide them with support.
<p>There is some resistance to change the existing tools and work methods</p>	<p>Demonstrate The most effective way of convincing is through demonstration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Showcase the consequences and benefits that go with changes and the risks of not changing; - build on scientific knowledge, evidence-base and use examples. <hr/> <p>Challenge mind sets and build trust</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Change the perception of the public administration through Public Relations campaigns. Media communications should give credit to the partner contribution.

A FINAL REMARK

As we said in the beginning, this guide is a comprehensive summary of the activities and tasks that are needed to set up and run a multi-stakeholder group, for example the one guiding your Training Hub. It contains advice and recommendations that aim to provide practitioners with some understanding and concrete ideas for establishing an efficient and high quality multi-stakeholder group and keeping it up.

It is, however, only a guide – you are encouraged to innovate and develop new ideas and tools whilst maintaining a coherent and logical mode of operation, most importantly adapted to the local context.

Building on the powerful participatory tool that is a multi-stakeholder group, we wish you good luck with participative policy-making and delivery in your Training Hub!