8

The Short-cut

PRINCIPLES OF STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION AND PARTNERSHIP

The following are suggested as key principles and strategies of multi-stakeholder processes:

PRINCIPLES	STRATEGIES
Accountability	Employing agreed, transparent, democratic mechanisms of engagement, position-finding, decision-making, implementation, monitoring, evaluation; making these mechanisms transparent to non-participating stakeholders and the general public
Effectiveness	Providing a tool for addressing urgent sustainability issues; promoting better decisions by means of wider input; generating recommendations that have broad support; creating commitment through participants identifying with the outcome and thus increasing the likelihood of successful implementation
Equity	Levelling the playing-field between all relevant stakeholder groups by creating dialogue (and consensus-building) based on equally valued contributions from all; providing support for meaningful participation; applying principles of

	gender, regional, ethnic and other balance; providing equitable access to information
Flexibility	Covering a wide spectrum of structures and levels of engagement, depending on issues, participants, linkage into decision-making, time-frame, and so on; remaining flexible over time while agreed issues and agenda provide for foreseeable engagement
Good governance	Further developing the role of stakeholder participation and collaboration in (inter) governmental systems as supplementary and complementary vis-à-vis the roles and responsibilities of governments, based on clear norms and standards; providing space for stakeholders to act independently where appropriate
Inclusiveness	Providing for all views to be represented, thus increasing the legitimacy and credibility of a participatory process
Learning	Requiring participants to learn from each other; taking a learning approach throughout the process and its design
Legitimacy	Requiring democratic, transparent, accountable, equitable processes in their design; requiring participants to adhere to those principles
Ownership	People-centred processes of meaningful participation, allowing ownership for decisions and thus increasing the chances of successful implementation
Participation and engagement	Bringing together the principal actors; supporting and challenging all stakeholders to be actively engaged
Partnership/ cooperative management	Developing partnerships and strengthening the networks between stakeholders; addressing conflictual issues; integrating diverse views; creating mutual benefits (win–win rather than win–lose situations); developing shared power and responsibilities; creating feedback loops between local, national or international levels and into decision-making

Societal gains	Creating trust through honouring each participant as contributing a necessary component of the bigger picture; helping participants to overcome stereotypical perceptions and prejudice
Strengthening of (inter)governmental institutions	Developing advanced mechanisms of transparent, equitable, and legitimate stakeholder participation strengthens institutions in terms of democratic governance and increased ability to address global challenges
Transparency	Bringing all relevant stakeholders together in one forum and within an agreed process; publicizing activities in an understandable manner to non-participating stakeholders and the general public
Voices, not votes	Making voices of various stakeholders effectively heard, without disempowering democratically elected bodies

A Checklist For MSP Designers

Summarizing the considerations and recommendations discussed in Chapter 7, the following is a brief list of key points which need to be addressed when designing MSPs. 'Addressing' does not mean that all processes have to include all respective components – in fact, this will hardly ever be the case – but you may find it useful to consider them.

General points

	Yes	*No*
Are you prepared to learn and change? (Ask yourself why/why not)		
Are you in danger of imposing your ideas, eg agenda, time lines, issues, participants, goals?		
Could others perceive you as imposing? With whom should you communicate, and how, to address that?		
Are you sure you are keeping records of all that you are doing, including how the process was developed?		

	Yes	No
Are you making sure that all procedures are designed to ensure the core principles of MSPs?		

Context

Process Design

	Yes	No
Have you found all the best people to design the process together?		
Have you got a core coordinating group of representatives of all relevant stakeholders? (Reflect on the criteria you are using)		
Are those you are working with formally representing their groups; are they well connected within their groups?		
Have you consulted with stakeholders who else should be involved?		
Is the coordinating group developing suggestions regarding issues, objectives, scope, time lines, procedures of preparation, dialogue, decision-making, rapporteuring, documentation, relating to the wider public, fund-raising?		
Have you dealt with issues around confidentiality?		
Is there conflict over the issue you have in mind or is it likely to develop in the process?		
Do you know how to resolve possible conflict?		
Have you considered abandoning the MSP idea for the time being due to too much conflict?		
Have you considered developing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Terms of Reference (TOR) for the MSP?		
Have you decided on the language(s) of your process?		
Have you considered translation services?		
Are you keeping the process flexible?		

Linkage Into Official Decision-making

	Yes	No
Is your process linked with any official decision-making?		
If yes, have you established continuous communication links with officials?		
Has the institution issued a document that clearly states the purpose, the expected outcomes, deadlines, and status of the outcome in the official process?		
Do you have an MOU with the institution? (If not, consider suggesting it)		
Have you considered suggesting more than an informing role for your process? (eg implementation; monitoring; reporting back)		
If not, do you know how officials will perceive your process		
Do you want to include officials somehow? Or try to keep them out?		

Issue Identification

	Yes	No
Are you making decisions on issues and agenda in a coordinating group of stakeholder representatives?		
Are you deciding upon issues in a transparent manner?		
Are you conducting the process of issue identification to an agreed timetable?		
Are you sure that those you talk to are consulting within their groups?		
Is support available for stakeholders to engage in the process of issue identification?		
Are you scoping the area of interest carefully?		
Have come across information gaps? If yes, how can you fill them?		
At the end of issue identification, have you developed a clear agenda and precise definitions of the issues?		

	Yes	No
Are agenda and issues understood and agreed by everybody?		

Information base

	Yes	No
Have you established mechanisms for sharing information and a common knowledge base within the process?		
Do all participants have equitable access to it?		

Stakeholder Identification

	Yes	No
Have you issued an open call for participation?		
Are you dealing creatively with problems of numbers and diversity?		
Have you identified all high-impact groups? (Scoping the issue area and consulting with stakeholders will tell you. Think outside the box)		
Are all those who have a stake in the issues involved? (If substantial parts of a sector don't want to participate, reconsider your MSP idea)		
Do you know how to approach them?		
Do you think all participants need to be 'experts'?		
Have you assembled a diverse group?		
Are you keeping the group open in case the need arises for other stakeholders to be involved?		
Do stakeholders need support to be able to participate effectively?		
Do suggested goals, time lines, preparations, communication channels, etc, meet their needs and interests?		
Could people feel coerced into participation?		
Does your process require government action? (Then involve officials)		

	Yes	No
Have you made decisions through consultation?		

Identification of Participants

	Yes	No
Are stakeholder groups themselves selecting their representatives?		
Do you know how they do that? (Aim to make this known to everybody)		
Have you ensured that there is an equal number of participants from each stakeholder group?		
Do you want them to meet balance criteria within their delegations? (gender, region, age?)		
Have you ensured that representatives will remain the same persons over the course of the process?		
Do you have a briefing mechanism for newcomers?		
Are governments or intergovernmental institutions involved? (Then make sure it is high level)		

Facilitation/Organizational Back-up

	Yes	No
Is it clear who is providing organizational back-up, and is that acceptable to all participants (eg a UN agency; a multi-stakeholder organization)		
Do you need to create a facilitating body?		
If yes, have you considered bylaws and other legal requirements? Have you considered the necessary time lines and funding?		
Are logistics and infrastructure agreed and funded?		

Funding

	Yes	No
Have you developed a realistic budget for the process?		

	Yes	No
Have you included external communications, translations, capacity-building, and follow-up activities?		
Have you agreed to fund-raising targets and strategies within the coordinating group?		
Have you informed all participants about the funding situation, sources, etc?		
Is the process independent, eg through mixed funding and donors who will not try to impact on the process?		

Framing

Group Composition

	Yes	No
Is your group diverse enough?		
Are all the high-impact categories involved?		
Are all groups equally represented?		
Do you have at least two representatives of each group?		
Do you expect anybody to represent more than one stakeholder group?		
Do you have overall gender and regional balance in your group?		

Goals Setting

	Yes	No
Is the goal of your process clear?		
Is it: a frank exchange of views; agreeing upon disagreements; exploring common ground; achieving consensus; making decisions; joint action; joint monitoring and evaluating; impacting official decision-making?		
Are your goals understandable and achievable?		
Does everybody agree with them?		

	Yes	No
Have you made sure that the first goal and issue on the agenda will be for participants to clarify their respective understanding of the issue(s)?		

Agenda Setting

	Yes	No
Have you developed a concrete agenda?		
Have you ensured that participants agree upon logistical and substantive aspects of the process?		

Setting the timetable

	Yes	No
Have you developed a precise timetable for your process?		
Does it meet the needs of all participants?		

Inputs

Stakeholder Preparations

	Yes	No
How shall stakeholders prepare for the process/meetings?		
Have you considered the various options within the coordinating group (eg initial position papers; developing a common vision first; preparing strategy papers based on a common vision, etc?)		
Have you ensured that preparatory papers are disseminated well in advance?		
Have you considered analysing them to point out common-alities and differences, and disseminate that as well?		
Have you ensured that all have equitable access to all information?		
Does everybody agree with the preparatory process?		

	Yes	No
How will participants relate to the stakeholder groups they represent (if they are not there in their individual capacity)?		
Do they have enough time for consultations within their constituencies during preparations?		
Are you providing support for such consultations?		
Are participants informing each other on how they consult within their constituencies?		

Communication Ground Rules

	Yes	No
Have you agreed a set of ground rules for communication?		
Do these rules foster dialogue?		
Do they encourage people to listen, learn, be open, honest and considerate?		
Have you agreed on a facilitator (or several facilitators)?		
Does s/he enjoy the trust of all participants?		
Will s/he be competent to enhance the creativity of the group, deal with potential conflict, avoid premature decision-making?		
Do you know what to do when people don't play by the rules?		
Have you agreed that this will be brought to the group through the facilitator and in a constructive manner?		

Power Gaps

	Yes	No
Are there any power gaps within the group?		
Do you know how you want to deal with them?		
Has the group talked about power gaps?		
Have they talked about what constitutes power in this setting? (eg money; decision-making; moral ground)		

Capacity-Building For Participation

	Yes	No
Have you identified the capacities, skills and knowledge that are necessary to participate effectively in your process?		
Do all participants have them?		
Has the group talked about capacity-building?		
Have potential capacity-building measures been designed by those receiving and those offering them?		

Dialogue/meetings

Communication channels

	Yes	No
Have you considered the various options of communication channels (eg face-to-face meetings, email, telephone, fax, letters, interactive websites)?		
Has the group talked about this question?		
Have you decided which ones you want to use at which stage?		
Are they easily accessible for all participants?		

Facilitating/Chairing

	Yes	No
Have you decided if you want an outside professional or an insider?		
Have you involved the facilitator in the design process?		
Are your facilitators committed, flexible, responsive, balancing, inclusive, encouraging, respectful, neutral, problem-solving oriented, disciplined, culturally sensitive, capable of meta-communication and comfortable with their role?		
Have you decided which kind of facilitation techniques you want to use (eg flip-charts, meta-plan, brain storming, scenario workshops, future labs, and so on)?		

	Yes	No
Have you talked with the coordinating group and the facilitator which would be best and when?		

Rapporteuring

	Yes	No
Have you identified rapporteurs to take minutes?		
Have you identified who is to draft outcome documents?		
Are they acceptable to everybody?		
Are minutes and reporting done in a neutral fashion?		
Do they reflect the breadth and depth of discussions?		

Decision-making

	Yes	No
Do you have agreement on what constitutes a good decision?		
Will a decision be based on consensus?		
Does consensus mean unanimity?		
Does consensus mean compromise ('being content with the whole package')		
Will a decision be taken by majority vote?		
Are you recording minority voting?		
Do the decisions on your MSP have consequences outside the space covered by participants?		
Are you involving those affected?		
Is it clear that everybody has the right to walk away or to say 'No'?		
Are you taking enough time before making decisions?		
Could the group be more creative and integrating before making a decision? (How?)		

Closure

	Yes	No
Does the process have a clear, agreed cut-off point (for success or failure)?		

Outputs

Documentation

	Yes	No
Are you putting draft minutes and reports to the group for review?		
Have you built time for reviewing into your schedule?		
Have you clarified the status of your documents: minutes by rapporteurs; facilitators' summaries; endorsed consensus documents? (They require different consultation procedures and time)		
Are you disseminating the outcome documents to other stakeholder groups and the public?		

Action Plan/Implementation

	Yes	No
Have you agreed a precise, concrete action plan: who will do what, when, and with whom?		
Have you considered how to monitor implementation and how to deal with non-compliance?		
You planned a dialogue, now they want to continue and explore possible joint action: Is the group engaging in an MSP design process, agreeing objectives, scope, structures, time lines, funding, etc?		
Are you managing such a transition carefully?		

Throughout the process

Mechanisms of meta-communication

	Yes	No
Do participants have space to reflect upon the process?		
Do you have regular feedback mechanisms so that everybody can raise concerns and suggestions?		
Is the facilitator bringing this up?		

Relating to Non-participating Stakeholders

	Yes	No
Have you kept the process open for input from non-participating stakeholders?		
Are you sure the arrangements for that will work?		
Have you made clear how any input from outside will be used?		
In case of opposition to the process from the outside, are you addressing this in the MSP group as a whole?		

Relating to the General Public

	Yes	No
Does the public know about your process?		
Are you effectively communicating its objectives and outcomes? Have you found the right language and media?		
Are you releasing information throughout the process?		
Should members of the general public be able to contribute? (How?)		
Are you using professionals to relate to the public? (Why/why not?)		
Are you relying solely on the internet? If yes, can you do more?		
Have you discussed these questions in the MSP group?		