

Who should regional NRM bodies develop partnerships with?

For natural resources to be managed as effectively as possible, a regional NRM body needs to develop partnerships with individuals and groups that have a stake in the future of the region's natural resources.

Stakeholders can be people who rely on the land for their livelihood, protect the land, manage the land, or simply care about the welfare of the land.

How do you know who the stakeholders are?

Developing partnerships with stakeholders takes considerable time and resources. By analysing your stakeholders early on in a project or activity, you can ensure that the resources available for developing and maintaining these partnerships are used as efficiently as possible.

Stakeholder analysis is useful at all stages of NRM, from planning and prioritising investments through to incentive programs, monitoring and evaluating.

A full stakeholder analysis is necessary when the risks or gains are significant. Most projects require some understanding of stakeholders. Wherever people are involved, stakeholder analysis adds value to your activities.



Related topics

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[How do you develop effective partnerships in regional NRM?](#)

[How do you develop partnerships with research, development and extension providers?](#)

[How do you encourage community participation in NRM activities?](#)

4 steps to analysing stakeholders

1. Know your purpose

Why identify and analyse stakeholders for your project? Stakeholder analysis helps to determine who to work with first, how to prioritise resources and how to match the most effective incentives with various stakeholders. Ask yourself:

- Are you managing risks or mitigating the negative effects associated with activities?
- Are you making the most of opportunities?
- Are there social justice objectives to meet?

2. Identify who the stakeholders are and why they are stakeholders

Stakeholders are most commonly categorised according to their sectors or activities. For example, they may be landowners (graziers, cotton farmers); community organisations (schools, churches); or conservation groups. However, identifying stakeholders in this way does not help with developing and maintaining on-going partnerships.

Mitchell, Agle and Wood (1997) have developed a useful stakeholder analysis that looks at the relevant issue/s or action/s, and categorises the involved groups and individuals in relation to:

- the power that they hold

Who influences the situation? Who should influence the situation? Do they have the capacity to influence the situation?

- the legitimacy of their claims

Who is impacted (positively or negatively) by the situation? Are there any invisible stakeholders?

Who benefits or should benefit from the situation?

Are there any other groups that may be involved? It's useful to break down broad categories like 'government' or 'community' into smaller identifiable actors and groups, such as specific government departments, churches and schools.

- the urgency of problems or issues for stakeholders

To what degree do stakeholders recognise the NRM issues or problems affecting them or others around them? How are they responding?

7 categories of stakeholder

1. **SP** – stakeholder with power and little legitimacy or urgency
2. **SL** – stakeholder with a legitimate claim to be involved, but with little power or urgency
3. **SU** – stakeholder with urgency but little power or legitimacy
4. **SPL** – stakeholder with power and legitimacy but little urgency
5. **SPU** – stakeholder with power and urgency but little legitimacy
6. **SLU** – stakeholder with legitimacy and urgency but little power
7. **SPUL** – stakeholder with power, urgency and legitimacy



3. Understand your stakeholders

Understanding your stakeholders—their attitudes, awareness levels, skill levels etc—may require you to collect existing information, especially economic information, from various community profiles.

You may then need to source information on the region's history and geography, production systems, social groupings, networks and relationships. If this information is not documented, you may need to compile it yourself—it can still save you time and resources in the long term.

Are they ready?

The groups you engage with need to be ready for an NRM partnership. You can measure the readiness of a group in stages using a practical research tool such as the Community Readiness Model, which was developed to better understand a community's ability to undertake change (Edwards et al, 2000). The model, shown in the following table, lists nine stages of organisational and community readiness. Goals and example strategies to help groups reach the next stage of readiness are also listed in the table.

Community Readiness Model: Nine stages of organisational and community readiness

Stage	Description	Goal	Example Strategies
1. No awareness/ tolerance	issue(s) not recognised or community norms actively tolerate the behaviour	raise awareness of the issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> one-on-one visits with community leaders and members
2. Denial	recognition of issues, but no awareness of relevance to a local problem or that solutions can be effective	raise awareness that the problem or issue exists in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> continue one-on-one visits and encourage those you've talked with to assist
3. Vague awareness	recognition of the local issue but no motivation or leadership	raise awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> present information at local community events and to unrelated community groups
4. Preplanning	understanding of the problem and solutions tend to be stereotyped and leaders and committees are incapacitated in planning	raise awareness with concrete ideas to combat condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> introduce information about the issue through presentations and media visit and develop support from community leaders in the cause
5. Preparation	active and energetic leadership and trial programs begun	gather existing information to help plan strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> conduct community surveys sponsor a community event to kick off the effort
6. Initiation	program may be starting or still on trial; enthusiasm still exists because limitation and problems have not been experience	provide community-specific information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> conduct in-service training for professionals plan publicity efforts associated with start-up of program or activity
7. Institutionalisation/ stabilisation	established funding with administrative support; no sense of the need for change or expansion though limitations may be recognised	stabilise efforts/program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> plan community events to maintain support for the issue conduct training for community members and professionals
8. Confirmation/ expansion	funds for new programs being sought or committed; programs viewed as valuable and authorities support expansion through new programs or outreach of current programs	expand and enhance service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> formalise the networking with Qualified Service Agreements prepare a Community Risk Assessment Profile publish a localised Program Services Directory
9. 'Professionalisation', Collaboration/ synthesis	highly trained staff running the programs; supportive authorities and community involvement; effective evaluation	maintain momentum and continue growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> engage local business community and solicit financial support from them diversify funding resources continue more advanced training of professional

Adapted from Edwards et al 2000

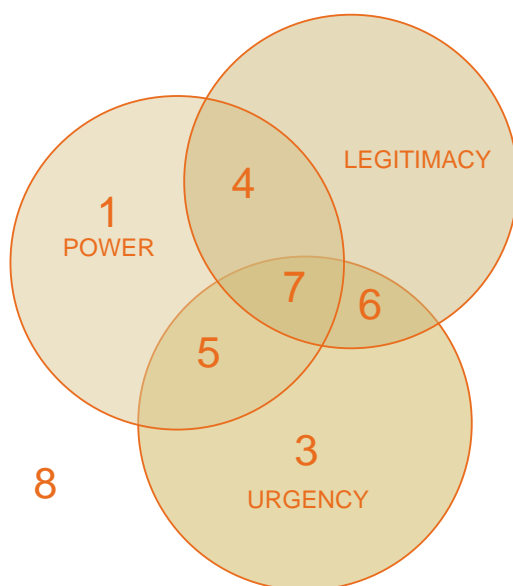
4. Analyse your stakeholders

A ripple diagram is a simple way of prioritising stakeholders using the information you have gathered. Use concentric circles, where the centre represents stakeholders who are directly affected; the second layer of ripples are interested or influential groups who are not involved; and the third level is those

with more indirect interest or influence. Build each layer based on groupings of stakeholders.

You can use Venn diagrams for planning and investment priority setting, developing incentive programs, and monitoring and evaluating.

The following example diagram, taken from Mitchell, Agle and Wood (1997), prioritises stakeholders according to their level of power, their legitimacy, and the urgency of their issues or concerns.



Stakeholders with legitimate claims and the power to create change or influence others (7 in the diagram) will be priority stakeholders.

Stakeholders who believe their issues or problems must be urgently addressed (3, 5 and 6) may ask, or even demand, to be involved in regional NRM activities. Being highly motivated, they may require little incentive to be involved, but may require additional resources to do so.

Stakeholders who do not perceive an issue or problem to be urgent to them may have a low degree of motivation. If they have legitimate claims and have the power to make changes or influence others (4), they may need more incentive to participate.

You may not need to target stakeholders who do not perceive the issue as urgent, do not have legitimate claims and have no power to make change or influence others (8).

The types of incentives that will work most effectively with some stakeholders will not be effective with others.

It is important to develop a systematic way of describing stakeholders and matching the most suitable incentives with particular stakeholder types to achieve the best NRM outcomes possible.

Useful resources

Mitchell, R, Agle B and Wood D. (1997) Towards a theory of stakeholder identification and salience: Defining the principle of who and what really counts. *The Academy of Management Review*. vol. 22 no. 4 pp. 853-886

Cooper, S, Maher M and Greiner R. (2006) The People Impacts of NRM: A Simple Training Package for Building Social and Economic Impact Assessment into Regional Natural Resource Management. Department of Natural Resources and Water, Brisbane.

To learn more about community readiness, see:

Chapter 1: Building healthy social networks for sustainable natural resource management in Partnership-based social research for sustainable natural resource management in Queensland

www.regionalnrm.qld.gov.au/research_sips/sips/social_economic/pdf/se03_partnership_research_part1.pdf

Edwards, R, Jumper-Thurman, P, Plested, B, Oetting, E and Swanson, L (2000) 'Community readiness: research to practice', *Journal of Community Psychology*, vol. 28, no. 3, pp. 291– 307

Community Readiness for Networking: Self-Assessment Toolkit (available through the websites of the Queensland Murray-Darling Committee and Condamine Alliance)

A Guide to Stakeholder Analysis

www.seqcatchments.com.au/periUrban/pdf/Guide%20to%20Stakeholder%20Analysis.pdf

