



WHY DO I NEED THIS?

Knowing who your stakeholders and publics are, their needs, interest and influence on your research, is indispensable to achieving societal impact. This process is essential to a successful impact pathway.

IMPACT CENTRE

Co-created by the Science in Society unit, in consultation with the research divisions.



HSRC
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STAKEHOLDER AND PUBLICS ANALYSIS TEMPLATE

Relevance • Visibility • Impact

What is a Stakeholder and Publics Analysis Template?

This analysis facilitates a more comprehensive understanding of the key players, power dynamics, and social context, it improves research design, ethical considerations, informed decision-making and is an important part of a successful and effective impact pathway. This is because stakeholders and publics are targets of your research either as users or beneficiaries. Therefore, to know who they are, their needs, interests and influence on your research is indispensable to achieving societal impact.

Why is it useful?

There's no one right way to prioritise those you engage with—instead the tool empowers you to make that choice for your own, clear reasons (so you can explain why you haven't got to a particular group yet if asked). While it is easiest to think of "beneficiaries", this tool will also get you to think about whether there might also be groups who may be disadvantaged or harmed in some way as a result of your research, so you can consider how to reduce those negative impacts. Most people focus on individuals, groups or organisations, but you can use the tool to think about future generations and non-human beneficiaries.

So how does this work?

The following three questions are at the heart of a good publics/stakeholder analysis. The questions will give you a sophisticated and holistic understanding of those you may want to engage with, and help you prioritise the limited time you have available for impact. You will be able to use the analysis to identify the top three people, organisations or groups that are most important for you to prioritise.

1. Who is interested in your research?

This is highly subjective. The key thing is that you understand what aspects of your research you think each group is likely to be interested in, or if they're not interested but they are important for other reasons, write down why you think they are disinterested. You will start to notice that different groups have quite different interests, and you will be able to use this later on to craft tailored messages to each as you embark on your impact pathway.

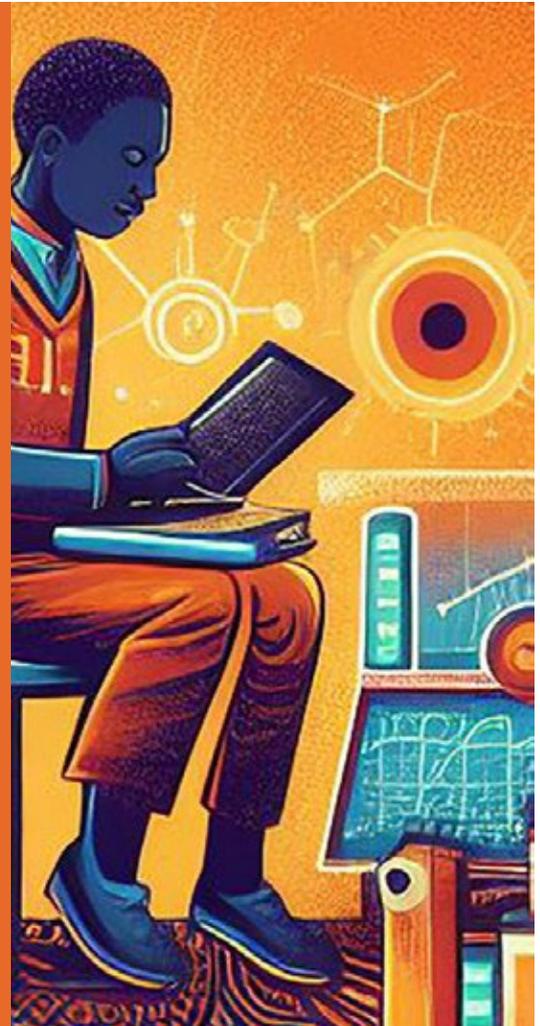
Determine who might be interested in your research. List individuals, organisations, or groups in the first column. Grade their likely interest level in the second column. Describe the nature of their interest in the third column. Consider both existing and potential interest, even if currently disinterested.

2. How might specific influencers enhance or limit my ability to achieve impact?

Evaluate groups that could indirectly influence your impact. Differentiate between those who could facilitate or block impact. Rate their influence as high, medium, or low. Describe how the actions and statements of each stakeholder might affect your ability to achieve impact in column 5. Engage early with influential groups to align goals and prevent potential obstacles.

3. Who is impacted?

Identify the groups impacted by your research. Consider the scope and nature of impact for each group. You may consider an optional question to reveal explicit and implicit impacts. Assess positive or negative impacts in column 5. Use insights to set impact goals in your summary or pathway.



Identifying hard-to-reach stakeholders

Your final task is to use the information you have collected to prioritise who you will reach out to first. There's no right way to do this—you have to decide what is most important to you. Traditionally, people used stakeholder analysis to select those with the most interest and influence, to the detriment of those with high interest and benefit but little influence. The final column of the template helps you identify individuals, groups or organisations who have low interest but high influence and/or benefit as hard-to-reach groups that may require special attention.

Act now

Prioritise your top three stakeholders for outreach. Create a clear plan for reaching out to them, acknowledging time constraints. Explain your rationale if questioned about the prioritisation. Tailor emails to each stakeholder based on their specific interests and priorities to foster genuine collaboration and empathy. Focus energies on targeted outreach rather than blanket emails. Anticipate positive responses and potential collaboration opportunities.

Additional reading on stakeholder analysis

Reed MS., Graves A., Dandy N., Posthumus H., Hubacek K., Morris J., Prell C., Quinn CH., & Stringer LC (2009). [Who's in and why? Stakeholder analysis as a prerequisite for sustainable natural resource management](#). *Journal of Environmental Management* 90: 1933–1949.

Reed MS., Curzon R. (2015). [Stakeholder mapping for the governance of biosecurity: a literature review](#). *Journal of Integrative Environmental Sciences* 12: 15–38.

Need more background?

The HSRC's Impact Centre has also compiled a range of resources relevant to understanding impact. The series of three **Impact Planning Guides** is a good place to start your impact journey .

1. [Impact Planning Guide I](#) delves into impact summaries and pathways, exploring their significance in showcasing research value. It emphasises the evolving expectations from researchers and institutions to demonstrate societal contributions beyond traditional academic metrics. The guide showcases real examples and offers guidelines for crafting impactful summaries and pathways.
2. [Impact Planning Guide II](#) extends and deepens the guidelines on stakeholder engagement focusing on principles and best practices.
3. [Impact Planning Guide III](#) presents you with research methods you can explore, experiment with and use for impact evaluation such as mapping complex impact causal pathways, comparative analysis, understanding how and why certain impact pathways are effective, and compiling impact case studies.

Stakeholder and Publics Analysis Template

Name of an organisation, group or segment of the public	Likely interest in your research H/M/L	What aspects of your research are they likely to be interested in (or why are they likely not interested)?	What level of influence might they have on your capacity to generate impact (to facilitate or block), and/or what level of impact (positive or negative) might they derive from the research? H/M/L	Comments on level of influence (to facilitate or block impact) and/or likely impact (positive or negative) e.g., times or contexts in which they have more/less influence over the outcomes of your research, ways they might block or facilitate your research or impact, types of benefit they might derive from the research.	If influence is high but interest is low, how might you motivate greater interest and engagement with the research?