

Project: GEMS  
<http://bit.ly/NI-GEMS>

This document provides a general overview of stakeholder assessment. You have likely entered this document thinking about planning for or monitoring a particular outcome (e.g. recreational fishing), however the method may be relevant for additional outcomes as well (e.g. environmental education, subsistence fishing, mental health). The stakeholder assessment process can be conducted for multiple outcomes at the same time, but the relevant stakeholders for each outcome will likely be distinct depending on who has interest in that outcome. For example, the neighborhood adjacent to a project site will likely be a stakeholder for almost every outcome considered, but recreational fishing outcome stakeholders will include fishers in the counties surrounding the project site, and educational outcome stakeholders could include K-12 learners and teachers in the surrounding counties.

## Background

Conduct a stakeholder assessment (also sometimes referred to as stakeholder analysis or stakeholder mapping) to understand how groups differ in terms of their participation with, interest in, and influence over specific outcomes related to your project. Stakeholders can be individuals, communities, entities, organizations, or particular demographic groups.

### **If you are applying these methods at the planning stage of your project:**

Stakeholder assessment is often completed before a project begins to understand key partners and potential opponents to the project. These methods can be carried out to help a project identify a list of key stakeholders who will be important to engage throughout the planning and implementation process.

### **If you are applying these methods for monitoring a particular outcome:**

Stakeholder assessment completed during the monitoring stage helps to identify those stakeholders who value, benefit from, rely on, or are interested in particular outcomes resulting from a restoration project. This is an important initial step for understanding key stakeholders who should be considered during project monitoring, especially for metrics that require gathering information from stakeholders via surveys or workshops. For example, if the stakeholder assessment identifies local businesses that cater to recreational fishers, these businesses should likely be engaged during the monitoring of recreational fishing expenditures associated with the project.

## Stakeholder assessment methods

Each individual [GEMS metric measurement protocol](#) that suggests stakeholder assessment offers tailored adjustments to the basics of stakeholder assessment described below.

The main goal of a stakeholder assessment is to create a list of key stakeholders. The project team should list all the individuals, communities, groups, or entities *who impact* the outcome of interest in some way, or *who are impacted by* the outcome in some way in your project context. The following are common stakeholder categories, but you should not limit yourself to these groups: state entities, private businesses, civil society groups/ non-profits, researchers, local leaders/ government officials, minority groups, neighborhoods, neighborhood associations, and local business authorities.

Below are questions that can be helpful to ask yourself when developing lists of stakeholders (adapted from [WWF](#) and [Resilience Metrics](#)).

- How is the outcome being used? By whom?
- Who is most dependent on the outcome?
- Who possesses claims over the outcome?
- Who are the people or groups most knowledgeable about the outcome?
- Who lives, works, or spends time in the project area?
- Whose economic activity, work, employment, customers, assets, markets, or value chains could be affected by changes to the outcome?
- Who attaches value or meaning to the outcome?

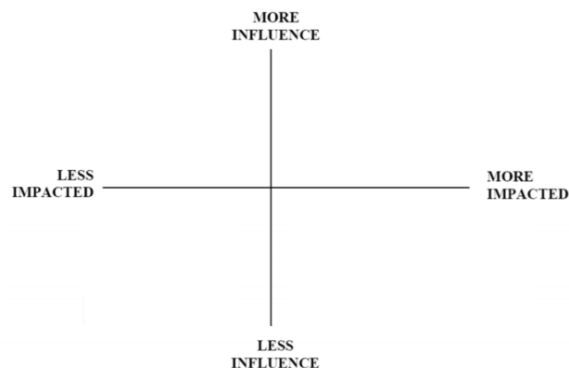
If the project team is not familiar with the project area or the outcome of interest, sometimes outreach to local partners (via in-person or virtual meetings, emails, phone calls etc.) is required. If you feel you need to consult a local partner, it is often helpful to have an initial stakeholder list to share and ask, “Who are we missing?”

While generating a list of stakeholders is the primary purpose of a stakeholder assessment exercise, you might find it helpful to add details on each stakeholder group, depending on your project and the outcome of interest. For each stakeholder on your list, think about things like:

- What is the stakeholder’s primary interest in this outcome?
- Are they (or would they be) supportive or unsupportive of the expected changes to this outcome based on the project?
- How might changes to the outcome benefit or harm this stakeholder group?
- How much power does this group have with regard to changes in the outcome?

Many stakeholder assessment guidance documents recommend filling in a stakeholder grid (see example below), visualizing each stakeholder group in terms of how much they are impacted by and how much influence they have over the outcome. *Only do this if you feel it will be helpful to your project in some way.* It is important to identify which of your stakeholder groups are known to be or likely to be vulnerable. Vulnerable stakeholders are those who do not hold a lot of decision-making power, who are marginalized in some way, or whose voices are often not heard. Vulnerable stakeholders are groups whom you will want to consider carefully in the latter steps of your “who” evaluation.

Example stakeholder grid:



## Useful Resources

Many stakeholder analysis guidance documents exist for various contexts. Some examples are below:

- WWF [Stakeholder Analysis Tool](#) for conservation projects
- Conservation International [Stakeholder Mapping Guide](#) for conservation projects
- The Resilience Metrics project has a [guidance sheet](#) for identifying and engaging stakeholders relevant to climate resilience projects
- A NOAA and NERRS guidance document on hosting resilience dialogs contains a [stakeholder role assessment](#) (see pg. 13-15)

For more information on the GEMS project metrics and protocols, visit [this page](#).

