

About this Tool

This tool will help you to map and interpret stakeholder dynamics in your initiative. In adaptive leadership, this is sometimes called ‘working politically’ (political in this context means competing values, priorities and agendas, as opposed to political parties).

This tool can be a useful at the start of an initiative when you are working out the ‘lay of the land’, if things go wrong, if there is conflict or you are not making progress.

Context

This Tool can be used in these phases of the Collaborative Change Cycle:

- The Readiness Runway
- Building the Foundations for Change
- Creating a Shared Vision for Change
- Scaling Up for Systems Change
- Achieving Transformation

And is relevant to building these enabling capabilities:

- Collaboration
- Community
- Innovation
- Leadership
- Measurement

TOOL

How to Map Stakeholder Dynamics

I want to better understand and respond to stakeholder’s views.

Effort Level

Variable – Depending on Group Size

Developed by CFI, based on the adaptive leadership body of knowledge.
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How to use this tool

Step One: Completing the tool

Completing the tool involves answering each of the questions as they relate to the initiative you are working on.

If you are using the tool for **individual reflection**:

- You can simply write out your answers in response to each question.
- You may find it helpful to draw it as a mind-map (see final page of this tool) and use different coloured pens for different questions.

If you are using the tool for **group reflection**:

You could complete this with the Leadership Group, or with a diverse group of stakeholders. Plan a 2-3 hour meeting. One member of the group (or a trusted external person) should act as the facilitator to guide people through the activity.

The 2 main options for completing it as a group are:

- Work together as a whole group to develop a single mind-map i.e. the facilitator leads the group through the questions and they or a scribe produce a mind-map based on group consensus. This approach is useful if you want and have time for lots of discussion and sense-making and a relatively cohesive group. The drawback is that you can miss out on hearing quieter or different voices.
- Have each group member develop a mind-map on their own and then discuss each person's mind-map as a group. This approach is useful if you want each person to come to the group discussion having done some reflection, and you are more likely to hear from those with quieter voices or different opinions.

Step Two: Next steps

You should then develop an action plan based on the prompt questions.

1. Mapping Exercise

1. Stakeholders

Write a list or draw a mind-map of all the stakeholders connected to your change initiative/project. Try to include everyone, from those deeply involved in the project, to people who aren't involved but might be affected, to potential partners. As you map out stakeholders, it is helpful to break them into smaller rather than larger groups. For example, rather than referring to "local council", separate out the different groups, such as councilors, community development staff, planning staff. This helps you map how different parts of one organisation might have different priorities and different contributions to make to the initiative.

2. Relationship to the community or issue

For each stakeholder or group of stakeholders, identify:

- What is their relationship to this issue (e.g. they live in the community or are personally affected by the issue, they are a service provider, they work for the local council, or they are an elected official)?
- What would be their preferred outcome?
- How can they best help your initiative?

3. Values

For each stakeholder or group of stakeholders, identify - What values matter most to them?

4. Allies

- Whose values do you share?
- Who are your allies (these could be personal allies, or loyalties based on shared values or priorities)?
- How can your allies best help the project?

5. Opponents

- Is anyone opposed to the initiative?
- If so, why are they against the initiative?
- What common ground do you share with each opponent?
- Is there anything you can do to address their concerns?
- What would it take to get them on side?

6. Senior authorities

- Who are the senior authorities regarding this initiative (think about people in positions of formal power, community leaders, cultural leaders)?
- What matters most to them?
- What signals or messages are they given about what they think of the initiative? Do they support it? Are they opposed to it?
- What would it take to secure their support?

7. 'Casualties'

- Who stands to lose something if the initiative goes to plan/if the initiative is a success?
- What might they lose (e.g. community leaders may feel like they will lose control if a broader range of community members are involved in decisions, while organisations may fear losing autonomy if they sign up to a shared agenda)?
- How can you help them name the loss?
- How can you help them succeed in other ways?

8. Dissenters

- Who are the dissenters (the people who see things in different or unusual ways, the people with unpopular opinions, 'the minority voice')?
- What ideas do they have that are valuable? What might they be able to see or contribute that is different to other people?
- How can you bring their voices into the initiative?
- How can their ideas be helpful to the initiative?
- Is there anyone who might need extra support or more safety to be heard?

2. Sense Making

- What new perspectives do you have on why things are getting stuck or how they might get stuck in the future?

3. Action Plan

- What extra information might you need to answer these questions more fully?
- What action can you take based on the insights from this exercise?

