



Meaningful Stakeholder Consultation

What Makes Stakeholder Engagement Meaningful?

There are several criteria that should be met for a stakeholder consultation process to be considered meaningful. Above all, it should not be thought of as one or more isolated events, organized in a pro forma manner to “check a box” or to meet a licensing requirement. It should be preceded by an analysis of the project, its context and potential impacts, and who the relevant stakeholders are; and it should be followed by genuine consideration of stakeholders’ views and concerns in decisions related to project planning and implementation.

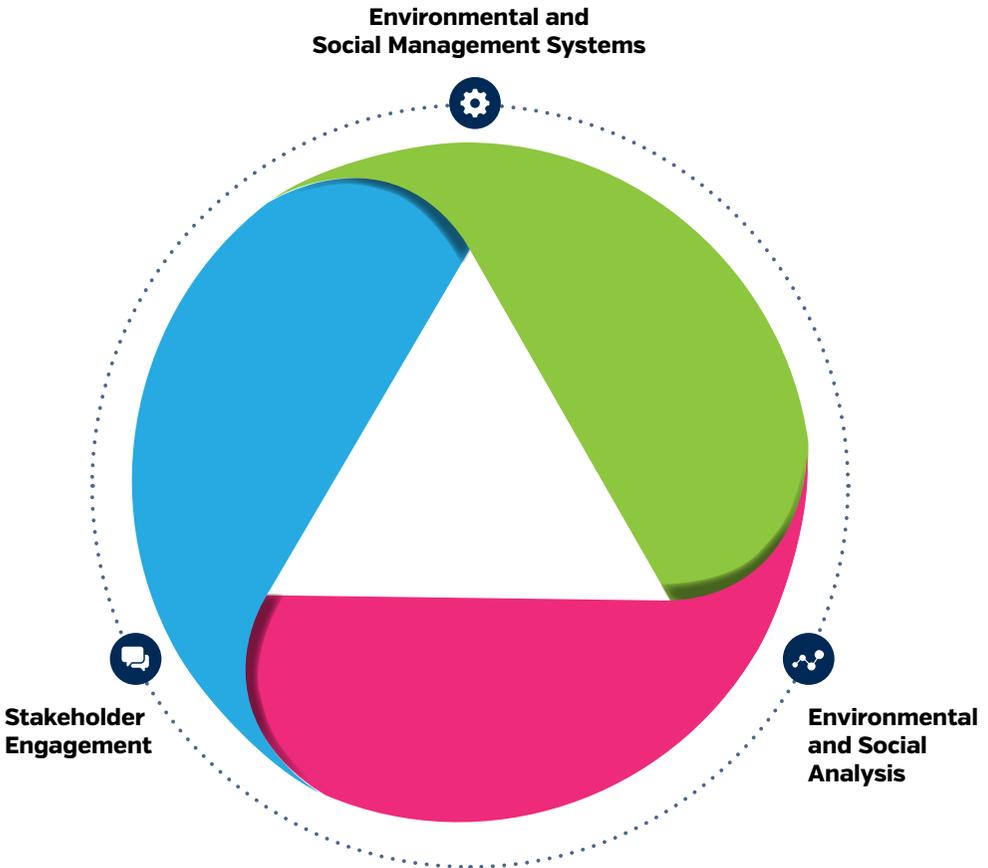
Meaningful stakeholder consultation should reflect the following ten principles:

1. The stakeholder consultation process should be **ongoing and iterative** throughout the project cycle, starting as early as possible.
2. It should ensure that **different categories of stakeholders are represented and involved**.
3. Sufficient **resources** should be allocated.
4. It should be **transparent and based on factual information**, including about the scope of consultation and ability of stakeholders to influence project decisions.
5. It should be **equitable and non-discriminatory**, and ensure that poorer or more vulnerable parts of the affected stakeholders are given a voice.
6. Stakeholders should have **prior information** about relevant aspects of the project, in a language, format, and manner that is appropriate for them.
7. Consultation events and other forums or means of engaging with stakeholders should be **respectful and free of coercion**.
8. **Confidentiality of information and stakeholders** should be ensured where appropriate.
9. To be meaningful, a consultation process should also **avoid consultation for consultation’s own sake**, or excessive discussions that do not lead to anything.
10. The process should be **systematically documented, and relevant aspects of it should be disclosed publicly**.

Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement

The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and other Development Finance Institutions are developing good practice standards and guidance to address different aspects of environmental and social opportunity and risk in projects. Systematic integration of environmental and social issues in planning and implementation of projects improves the quality and sustainability of projects; supports and strengthens national requirements; and enhances project acceptance and local ownership.

The series on assessment and management of environmental and social risk is developed with reference to the process illustrated below, where analytical and participatory content is embedded in project decision making throughout the lifetime of a project. Several tools and publications will be developed. The first of these is a publication describing good practice standards for consultation and stakeholder engagement, which is available at <http://www.iadb.org/consultations>.



Assessment and management of environmental and social risks and impacts, by ensuring that analytical and participatory content is operationalized; embedded in decision making and integrated with physical, economic and other planning and implementations elements. This is an ongoing and iterative process.

Ten elements of Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement

This publication discusses ten aspects and elements that should be present in the stakeholder consultation process, and embedded in the project preparation and execution. The ten elements are:

1. Identification of priority issues

What are the likely risks and opportunities arising from the project?

2. Stakeholder analysis and consultation plan

Who is affected by the project, and who has an interest that can influence outcomes? How will the project engage with them?

3. Prior information

How will information be provided to stakeholders prior to consultation and consultation events in a meaningful way?

4. Appropriate forums and methods for the consultation process

How should consultation events be organized?

5. Grievance redress mechanisms

How can stakeholders seek remedy if they feel the project is causing harm to them or the environment?

6. Design and implementation decisions considering stakeholder perspectives

How will stakeholder concerns and recommendations be addressed in project decision-making and the overall management system?

7. Feedback to stakeholders and transparency in decision-making

How will the stakeholders be informed about project decisions and how their views and inputs have been incorporated?

8. Baseline data, action plans, and management systems

What are the action plans that the project will implement to reduce risk and enhance benefits for project stakeholders? How will the project establish and maintain a suitable management system to address environmental and social issues?

9. Documentation and public disclosure

What are the mechanisms established to document and disclose relevant project information?

10. Ongoing stakeholder consultation during implementation

What are the mechanisms established to ensure that stakeholders are kept informed and involved throughout project implementation?



To read the full publication, visit www.iadb.org/consultations

Our Safeguards

The IDB safeguard policies and guidelines are available for our clients, partners and other stakeholders at www.iadb.org/sustainability.

Safeguard Policies

- OP-761 Gender Equality in Development
- OP-765 Indigenous Peoples Policy
- OP-703 Environment and Safeguards Compliance Policy
- OP-710 Involuntary Resettlement Policy
- OP-704 Disaster Risk Management Policy
- OP-102 Access to Information Policy

About ESG

The Environmental and Social Safeguards Unit (ESG) of the IDB identifies and manages environmental and social impacts and risks in Bank operations in order to achieve long-term environmental and social viability and foster sustainable development in the region.

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