

Stakeholder Analysis

There are many forms of stakeholder analysis. This version has been developed specifically for use in advocacy and campaign planning. It goes beyond mapping of stakeholders' interests by also looking at potential and real power and provides a framework for making strategic choices on influencing strategies. As a result of using this tool, you should be able to select the main target audiences for your advocacy and the influencing objectives for each audience.

The starting point for doing a Stakeholder Analysis is that you have already agreed your aim and objectives (see **Mini-Guide #2: Know what you want to change**), have a good understanding of the change process you want to influence (including the identity of the key decision maker responsible for the policy) and have assessed the wider context and your capacity to influence change (see **Mini-Guide #3: Identify Best Influencing Strategy**).

Who are stakeholders?

Stakeholders are people and organisations who are affected by a particular issue, or who can influence the issue. For the purposes of the analysis, stakeholders can be individual people and organisations, or they can be groups or categories of people and organisations who share a broadly common position and interest on the issue.

Some of them will be real or potential allies, some will be real or potential opponents, some will be neutral or undecided. All of them can be subject to influence to a greater or lesser extent. Your task is to identify where you can most effectively tilt the balance of power and ideas. With limited resources and recognising that it takes considerable effort to change someone's position on an issue, you have to be very selective so that you can focus on a few stakeholder groups with whom you can make some real impact. This is much more effective than spreading your efforts thinly across a wide range of audiences and making impact with none of them.

Doing a stakeholder analysis

The analysis is best done with a small group of people. To facilitate maximum participation, all writing should be done on wall charts or flip charts. The participants should be familiar with the stakeholder analysis technique, the advocacy/campaigning issue being addressed and the advocacy/campaigning context around the decision maker (through having previously used other analysis tools such as SWOT, PESTLE, Decision Flowcharting, Target Mapping, etc).

There are four stages to go through:

1. Identify all the stakeholders
2. Analyse the stakeholders
3. Sort the results of the analysis
4. Select your target audiences and influencing approaches

Remember that the analysis is not possible if the objective is not clear and specific, and if the relevant decision maker or policy maker has not been identified.

Stage 1: Identify all the stakeholders

The aim here is to get a long and comprehensive list, so the best technique is to do a brainstorm. Participants should be encouraged to be creative in their suggestions, so the rules of brainstorming should be strictly applied (all suggestions accepted and written down, no discussion or criticism of ideas until the brainstorm is over, keep the pace quick and the mood light-hearted). Include both allies and opponents, official and from civil society, and with direct or indirect influence. Don't forget affected communities and their organisations.

When the brainstorming is over, you may need to clarify how some of the stakeholders are defined so that their description is specific. You may also need to divide some stakeholders into smaller groups (or perhaps combine stakeholders into larger groups) so that each group can be said to share a broadly common position and interest on the issue.

Stage 2: Analyse the stakeholders

To do this, you are going to assess the stakeholders against three basic questions using simple categories for the answers:

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>1. How influential, relative to the others, can the stakeholder be over the decision maker or decision-making process?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High • Medium • Low | <p>2. To what extent does the stakeholder currently agree or disagree with your objective or position on the issue?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solidly Against – so against their interests/values they won't change • Against – instinctively opposed /sceptical but open to persuasion • Neutral • Pro (In favour) –sympathetic but open to persuasion • Solidly Pro – so aligned with their interests/values they won't change | <p>3. How importantly, relative to the other issues that they face, does the stakeholder currently view the issue?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High • Medium • Low |
|---|--|--|

The results can be recorded by drawing a table on your wall chart:

Stakeholder	Influence of stakeholder over DM	Attitude of stakeholder to our objective	Importance of issue to the stakeholder
Stakeholder 1	L	PP	H
Stakeholder 2	H	A	H
Stakeholder 3	H	A	L
Stakeholder 4	H	P	M
Stakeholder 5	M	PP	L
Etc			

AA = Solidly Anti; A = Anti; N = Neutral; P = Pro; PP = Solidly Pro;
L = Low; M = Medium; H = High

Hopefully, you and your colleagues will be able to make informed judgements to answer these questions without further research, based on your existing knowledge of their attitudes and professional interests. Disagreement in your team about the answers may indicate that the category of stakeholder needs to be divided into more specific groups. If you still can't decide, then further research may be needed. It is worth noting that just looking at a stakeholder's potential influence has little advantage unless you also assess how important they see the issue, and therefore how likely they are to use their influence. Note also that being solidly in favour or against an objective does not mean that they see the issue as important; it is just about alignment with their core values or interests.

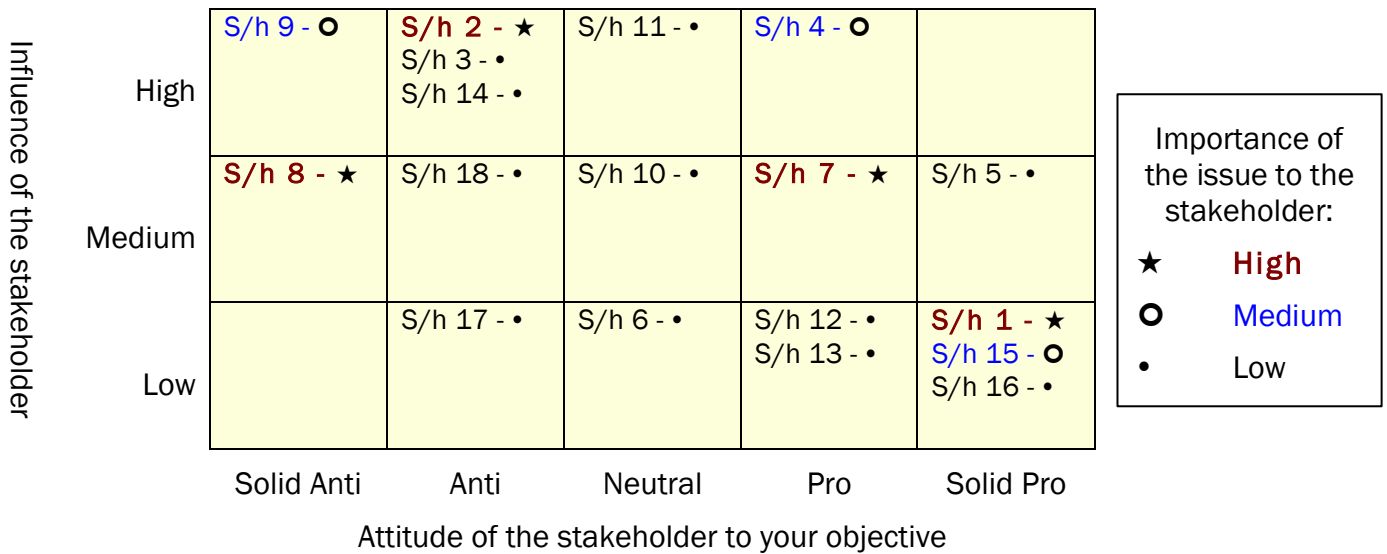
Although these three questions are simple, the combination of answers gives a deep and powerful tool to prioritise and select target audiences.

Stage 3: Sort the results

It is hard to interpret the results when they are displayed on a table, so to make it easier we transfer the results onto the *Allies & Opponents Matrix* (see below).

The Matrix should be written on large wall charts, and the names of **all** the stakeholders written in the appropriate boxes according to the analysis set out in the table. The vertical axis represents the influence of the stakeholder and the horizontal axis shows their attitude to your objective. The 3rd dimension – how important is the issue to the stakeholder, relative to the other issues they face – is represented by the use of a particular colour or symbol.

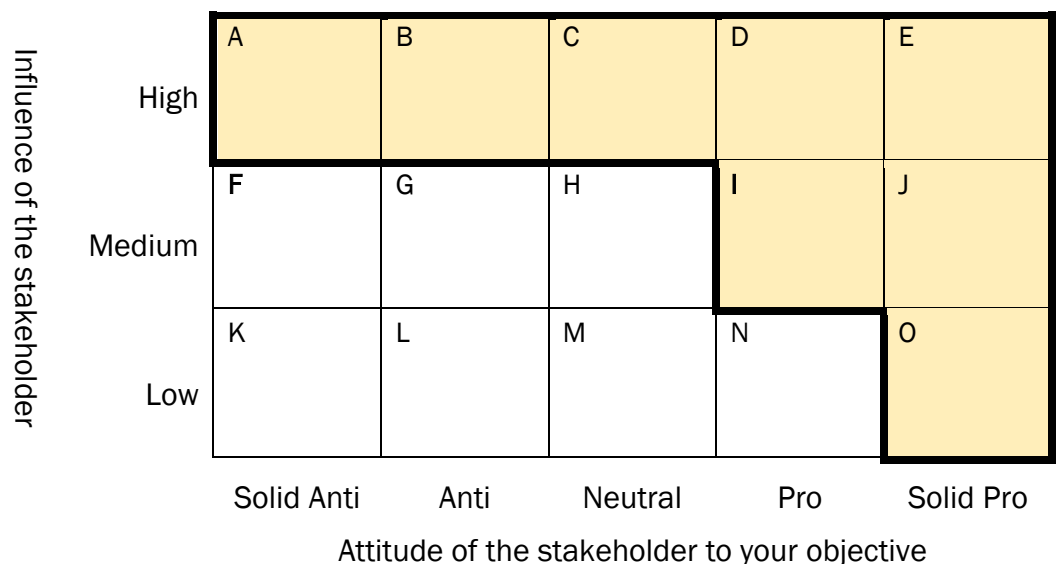
Allies & Opponents Matrix



Stage 4: Interpret the results and select target audiences

From the Allies & Opponents matrix, you can easily identify who are your most significant allies, opponents and neutrals (who we might call “the battleground”). However, the stakeholder groups are not fixed in their positions and you can try to influence them. You want to shift the balance of power and ideas in your favour, so that there are more stakeholders in the top right corner who see the issue as important.

Your starting point is to identify which of the stakeholders within the shaded boxes you have the most potential to move in the matrix. You are not targeting all the stakeholders in the shaded boxes, just the ones you feel able to move. There is rarely any value in targeting stakeholders in the unshaded boxes.



There are **five different influencing options**, depending on which box you have placed the audience:

The boxes have been labelled to make it easier to refer to them in this guide. You don't need to label them in this way when doing the analysis.

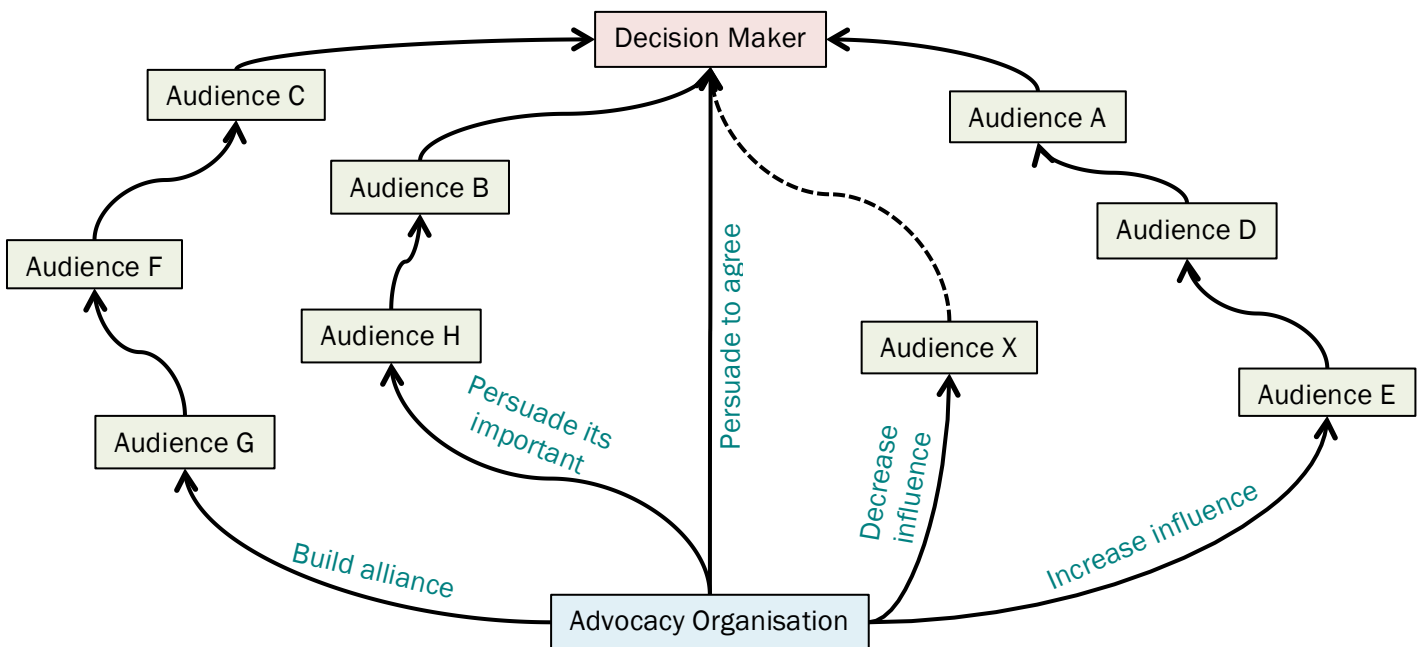
- For some sympathisers with high influence (Boxes D and E) but who currently do not see the issue as having high importance, you may be able to **persuade them that the issue is important** (so that their influence is felt more strongly).

- For some high-influence neutrals (Box C) and ‘soft’ opponents (Box B), you may be able to **persuade them to agree with your objectives**.
- For some allies (in Boxes D, E, I, J and O) who share your view that the issue is important, you could invest time and resources into **building alliances** with them to do joint advocacy.
- For some allies with low influence (Box O), who may be communities affected by the issue, you may be able to help **increase their influence**.
- For some highly influential and committed opponents (Box A), you cannot persuade them to agree with you, but you may be able to **reduce their influence**.

You should represent your choice of target audiences in an Influence Map, with the arrows from the box representing your advocacy organisation labelled with the appropriate influencing strategies.

Influence Map

An example of an influencing strategy set out as an Influence Map:



This is #4 of a series of Advocacy & Campaigning Guides written by Ian Chandler.

Each guide aims to clearly and concisely show how progressive non-profit groups can improve the impact of their advocacy and campaigning. Throughout the series, leading edge concepts and tools are introduced and explained, helping readers to focus on what is most important and make the best possible strategic choices. They can be downloaded for free from www.thepressuregroup.org. This version was published in May 2015.

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