

Networking: Stakeholders management



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Introduction

Stakeholders are important influencers of an NGO and its community. Therefore, special attention should be given to them by the management of any NGO, aiming to gain their trust and engage them.

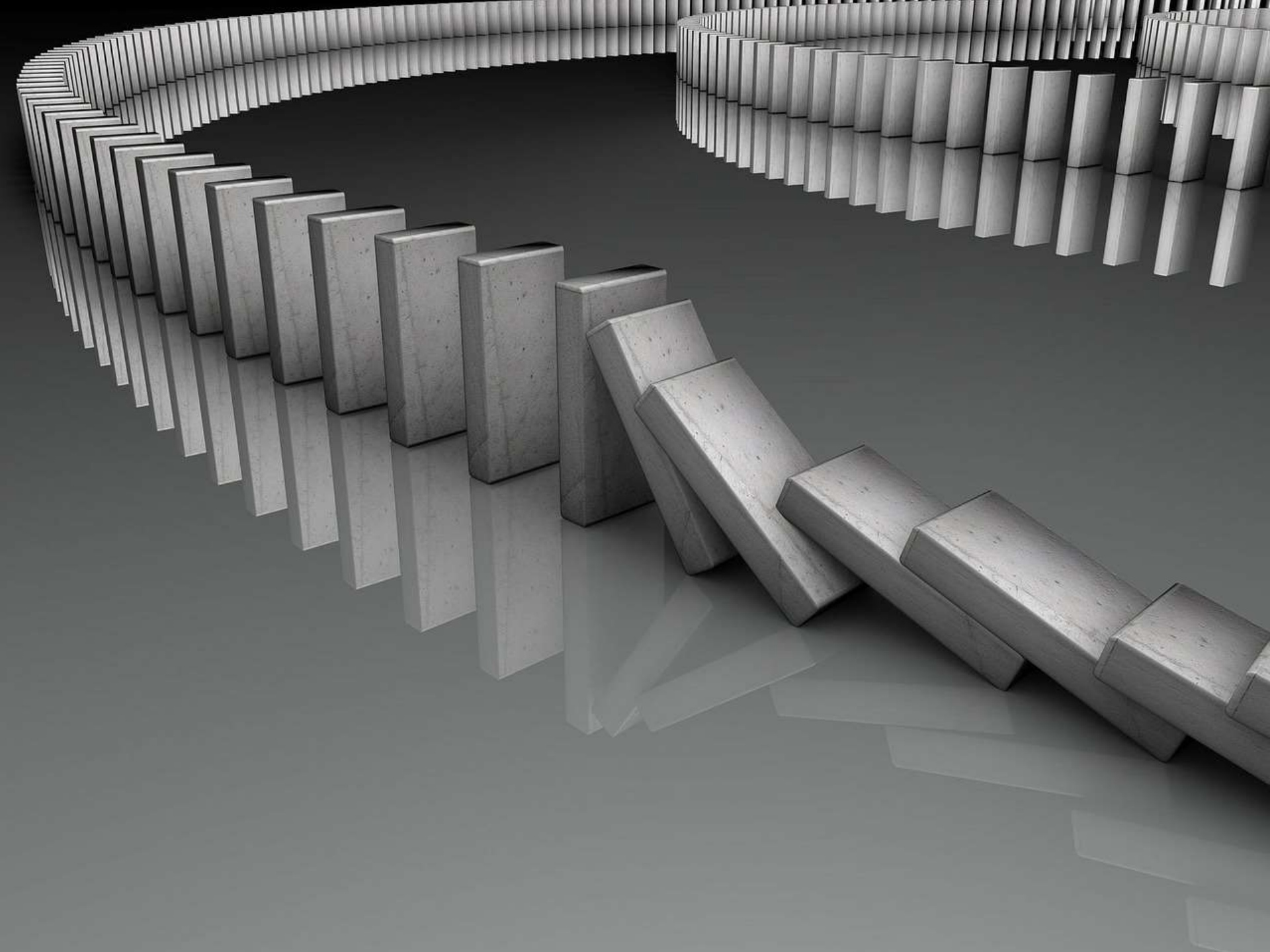
Outline of Stakeholder management

NGO's stakeholders

Stakeholders management at a glance

Stakeholders mapping and action decisions

Communicating with stakeholders



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NGO stakeholders

Stakeholder

R. Edward Freeman defined in 1984 the stakeholder as “any group or individual **who can affect or is affected** by the achievement of the organization’s objectives”. Because such persons influence the activities and the outcomes of an NGO, they are of particular interest, and special attention is given in management and marketing strategies.

Who are the stakeholders?

Each NGO has different stakeholders from other organizations. Nevertheless, some broad categories could be identified:



For each category specified above, sub-segments could be considered for a better identification.



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Stakeholders management at a glance



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Stakeholder management in a nutshell

Each organization should identify its own set of stakeholders. Not all categories specified already influence the activity of all NGOs. For instance, for some organizations policy makers are extremely relevant and are constant partners in discussions, while for other organizations this category of stakeholders is practically irrelevant. Therefore, the **stakeholder map** for each organization is unique. It not only identifies specific stakeholders – with names and characteristics, not as general categories – but it also groups them according to their importance.

Based on the stakeholder map, strategies of stakeholders management are developed and partnerships are established.

Principles of stakeholders management

Communication

Respect and
openness

Consultation
and
cooperation

Acceptance of
them and their
opinions

Planning

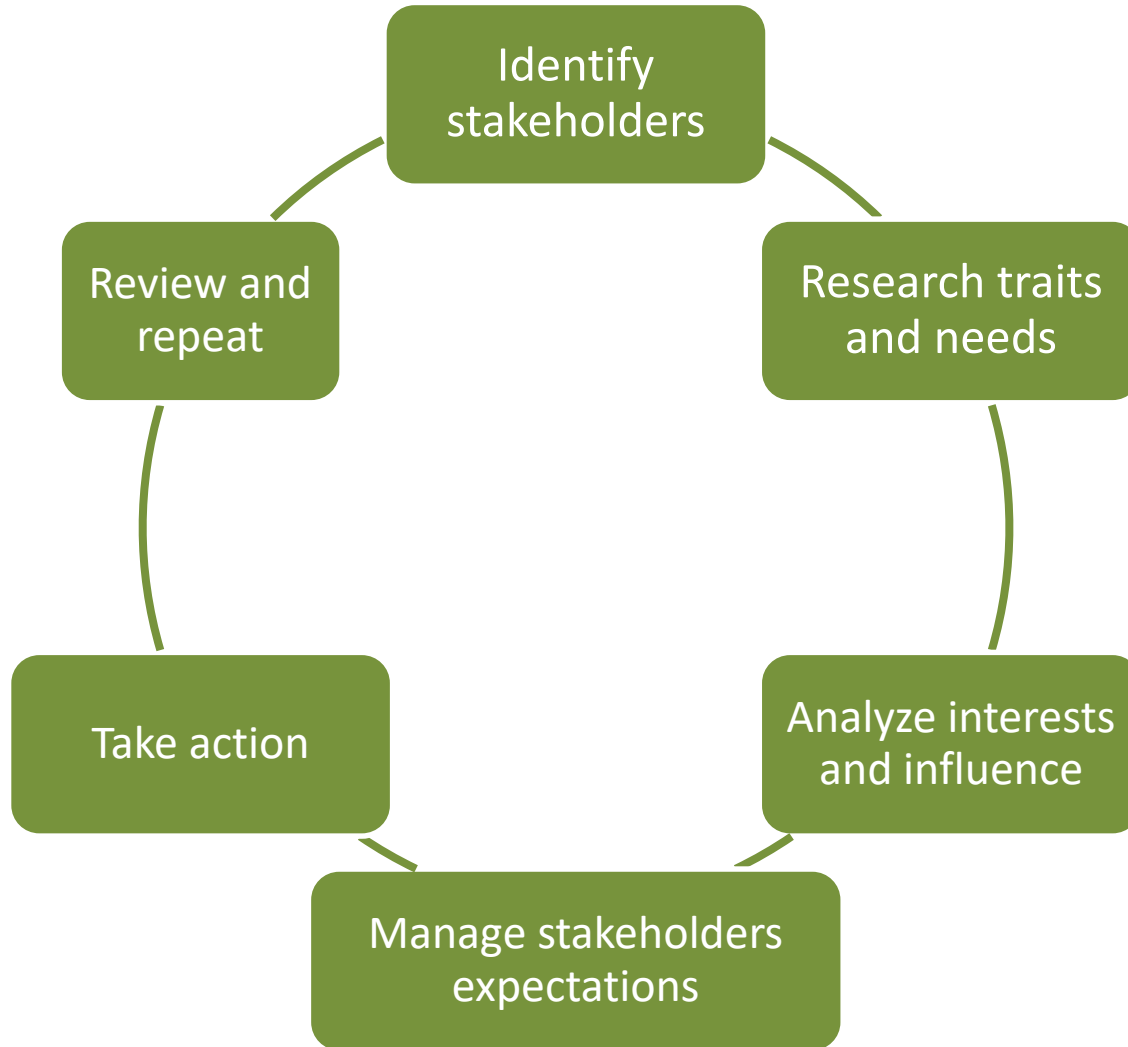
Relationship
building

Negotiation and
compromise

Accountability

Agile thinking

Stakeholders management cycle



Stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder engagement is the process by which an organization **involves** people who may be affected by the decisions it makes, or they can influence the implementation of its decisions. They may support or oppose the decisions, be influential in the organization or within the community in which it operates, hold relevant official positions or be affected in the long term.

Stakeholder engagement should be part of the stakeholder management process, aiming to **interact** with and **involve** stakeholders of a specific project of the organization. They could be involved in all stages of the project – design, decision-making, implementation etc. This approach positively impacts on the outcomes and make the results **sustainable**.

From stakeholders management to stakeholders engagement



Stakeholder Engagement complements stakeholder Management
Both are needed for project success
Source: Laurence Davidson 2017



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Stakeholder mapping and action decisions

Stakeholder types

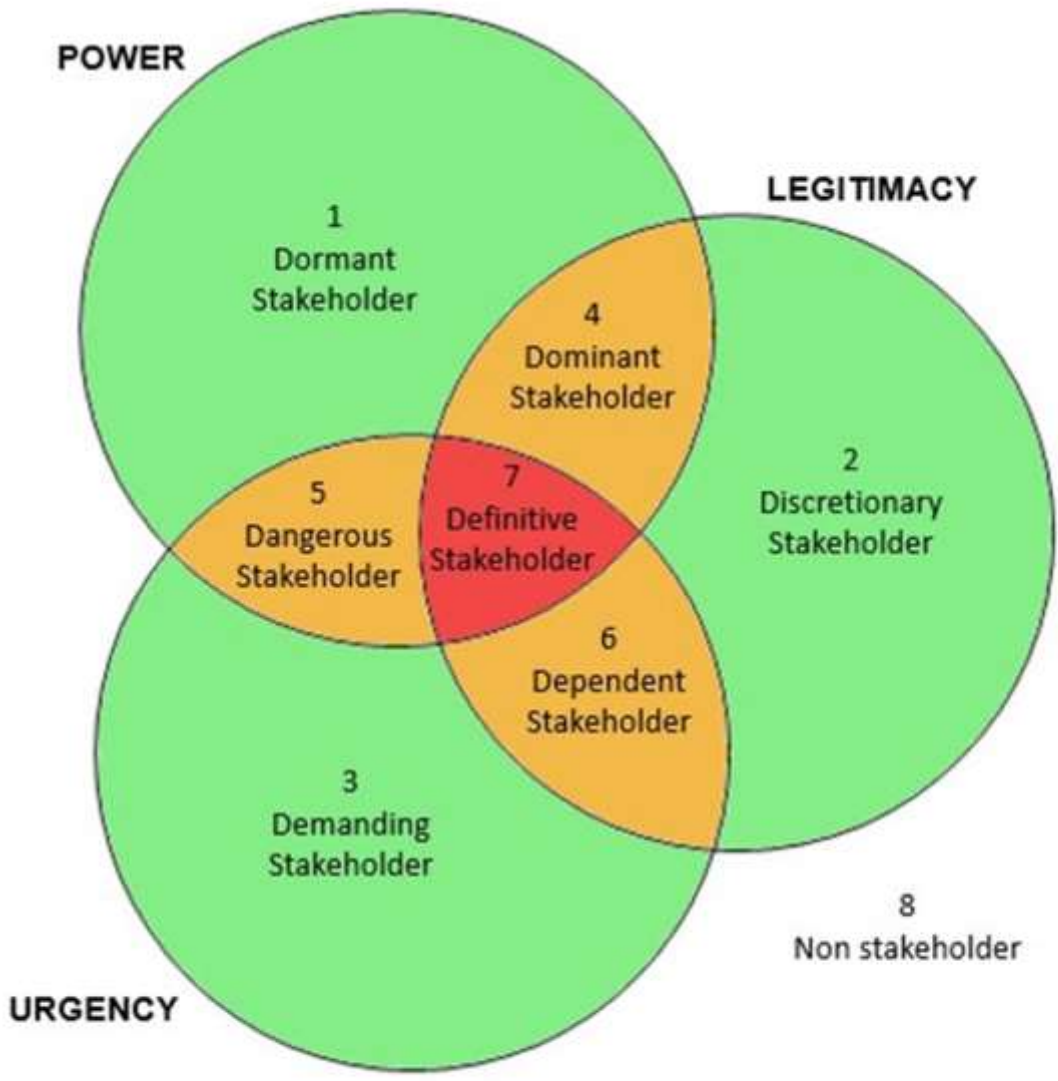
Stakeholders can be grouped according to the following characteristics, which define the **stakeholder salience**:

Power to influence
the NGO

Legitimacy of the
stakeholders
relationships with
the NGO

The **urgency** of the
stakeholder claim
on the activity of
the NGO

The most important stakeholders, who have the most significant power, are legitimate and have urgency in their attitude are called **definitive stakeholders**.



Stakeholders mapping

The key element of an effective mapping process is, as far as possible, to replace subjectivity with **objective measures** in order to be clearly understood, facilitate review and **update** as appropriate.

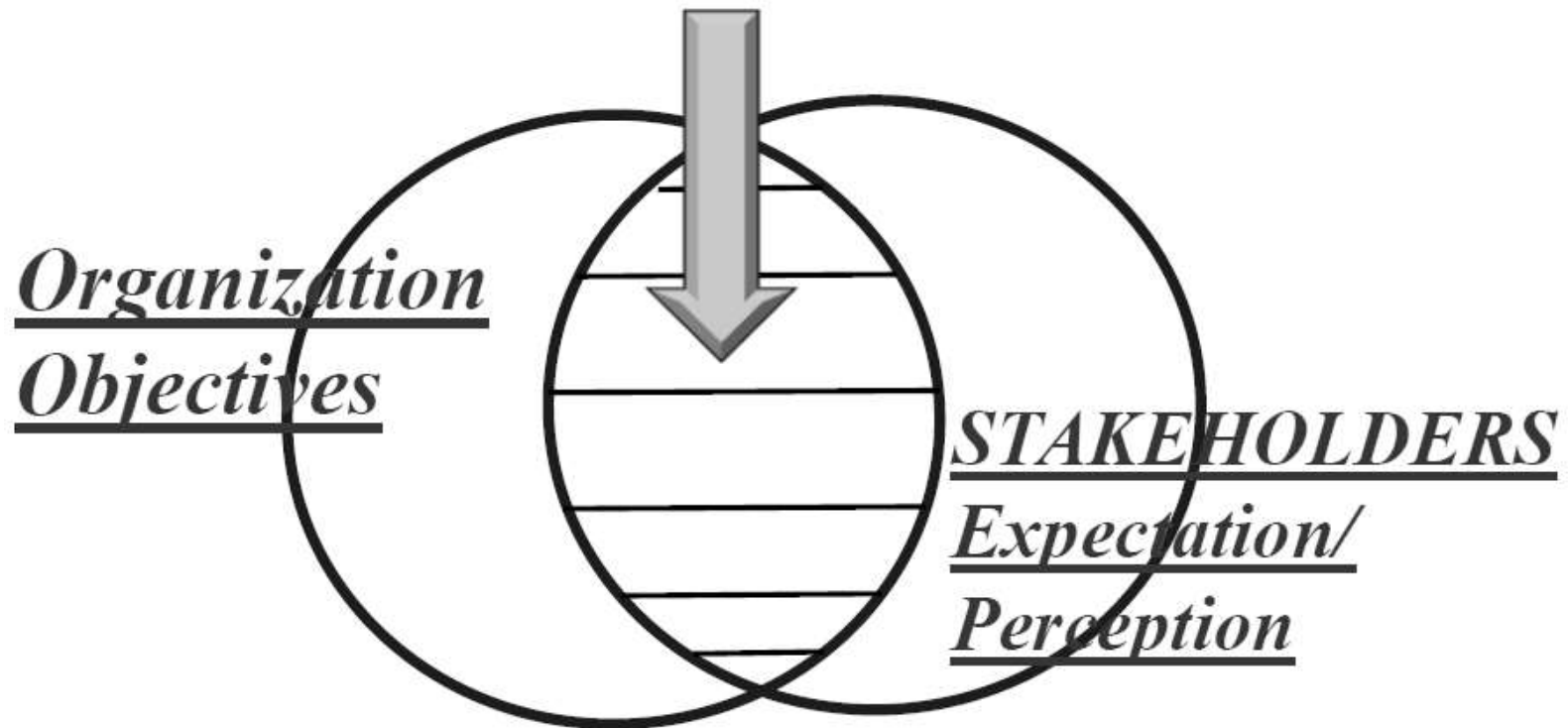


Stakeholder analysis

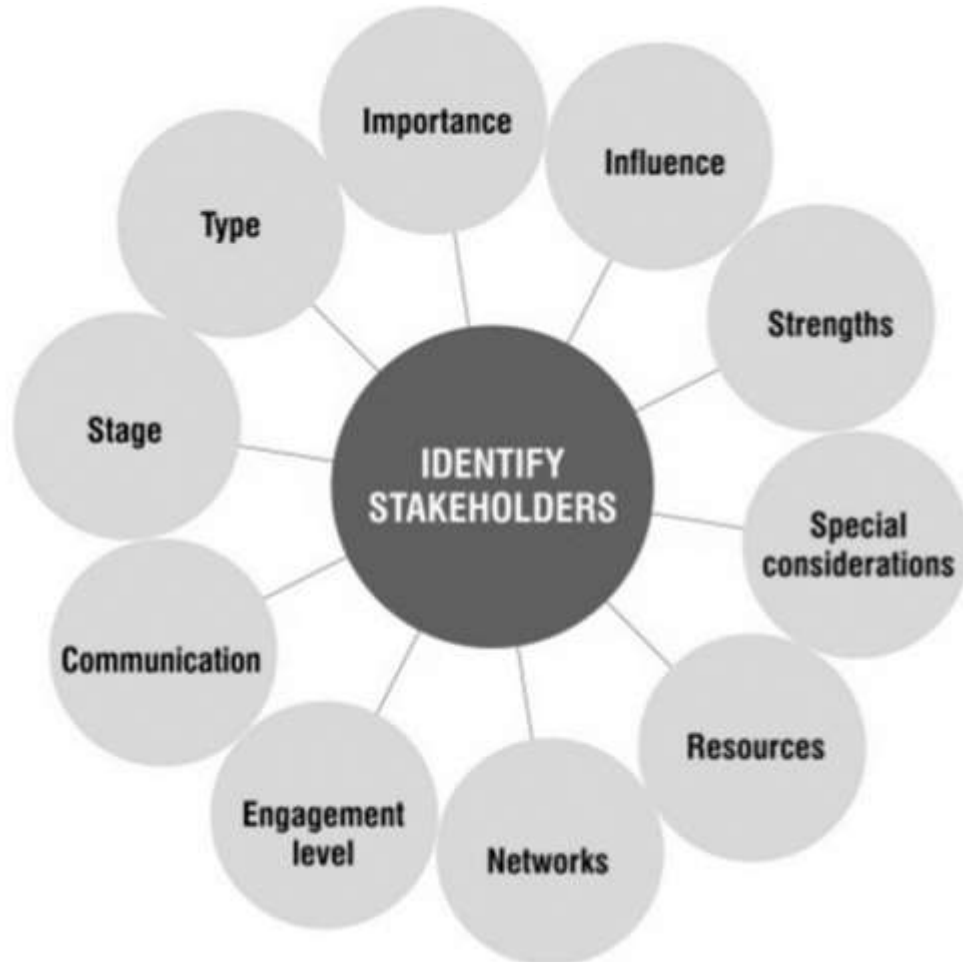
It helps identifying and understanding:

- Stakeholders interests
- The Mechanism to influence other stakeholders
- How to avoid potential risks
- To Understand key people involved
- Negative stakeholders

Managing stakeholders is a matter of understanding their expectations.



Things to consider when mapping stakeholders:

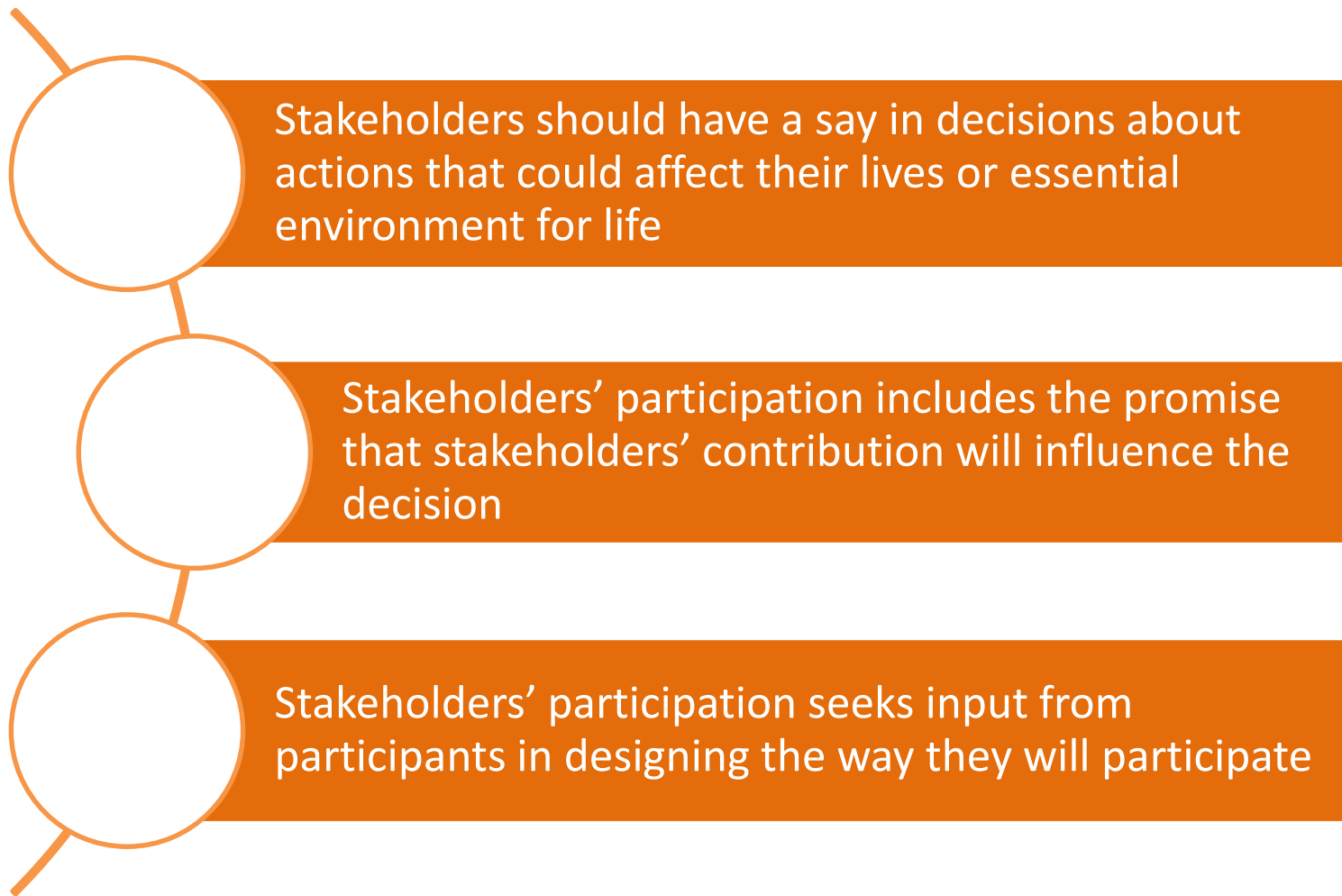


Analyze stakeholders by influence.

Which stakeholder is most likely a (very) important influencer of our NGO's activity? Rate importance from 1 to 5 (ascending scale)

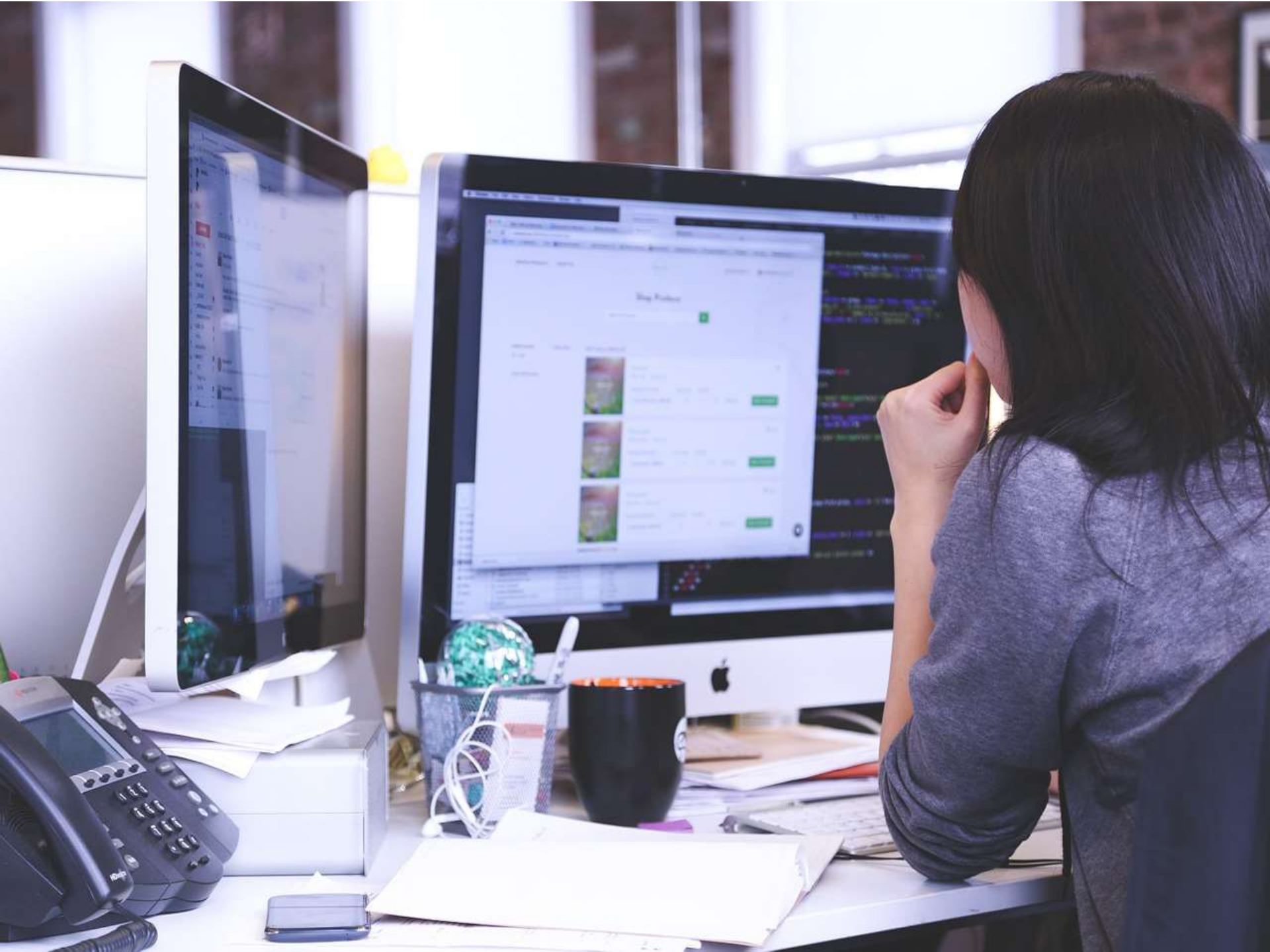
Which stakeholder is most favorable / unfavorable to our activity? Rate attitude towards our NGO / our cause from 1 to 5 (ascending scale)

Stakeholder engagement in action (1)



Stakeholder engagement in action (2)





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Communicating with stakeholders



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How to communicate effectively with stakeholders

Build self-awareness

Respect differences

Distinguish perspective

Recognize complexity

Avoid stereotyping

Listen actively

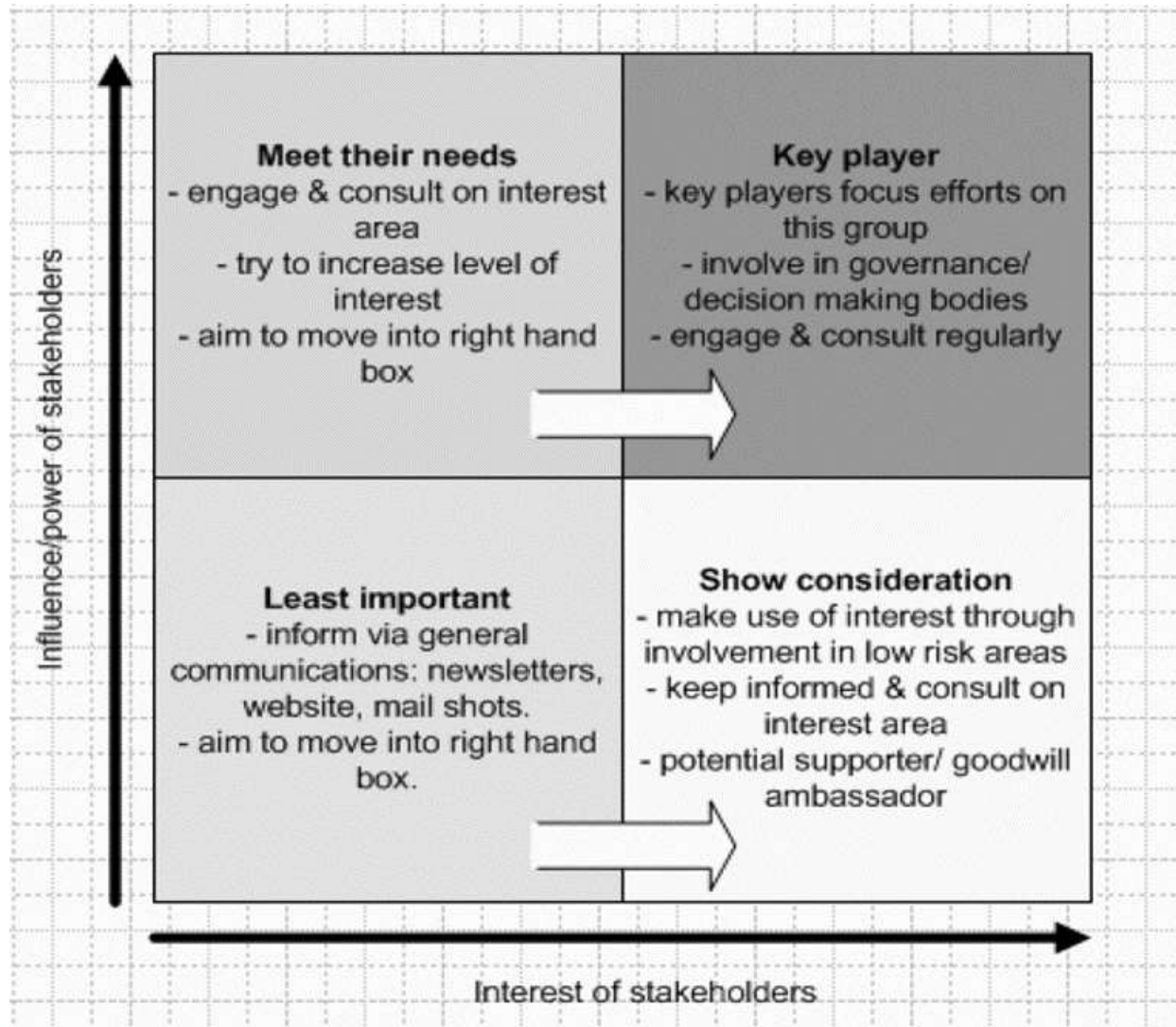
Ask questions

Be honest

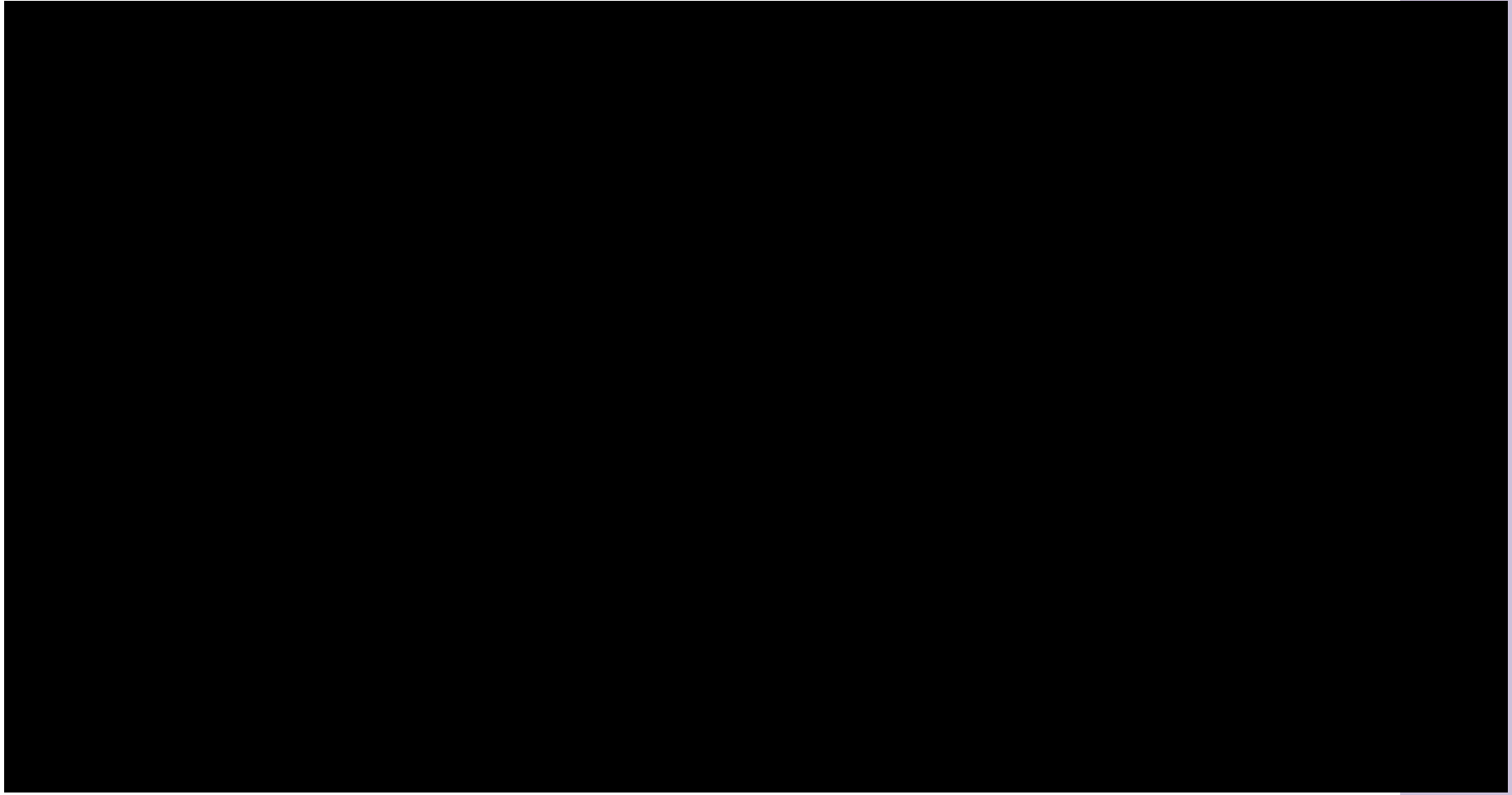
Be flexible

Think twice before sending out a message

Plan communications with stakeholders and specific reporting (1)



Plan communications with stakeholders and specific reporting (2)



Plan communications with stakeholders and specific reporting (3)

Communication with stakeholders and reporting are mandatory not only for reputation, but also for accountability. Reporting involves:

- Presenting the communication made
- Showing direct results (answers, opening of newsletters etc.)
- Showing conversion (favorable people, degree of financing obtained etc.)

Storytelling

A relevant and effective way to communicate to stakeholders, to attract their **attention** and enhance their **trust** in an organization is through storytelling. This approach gives stakeholders the reasons to support the organization in various ways. By means of stories, stakeholders can grasp the importance of a cause, the relevance to an NGO and its mission, the impact of NGOs activities on communities etc.

Advantages of communicating through storytelling

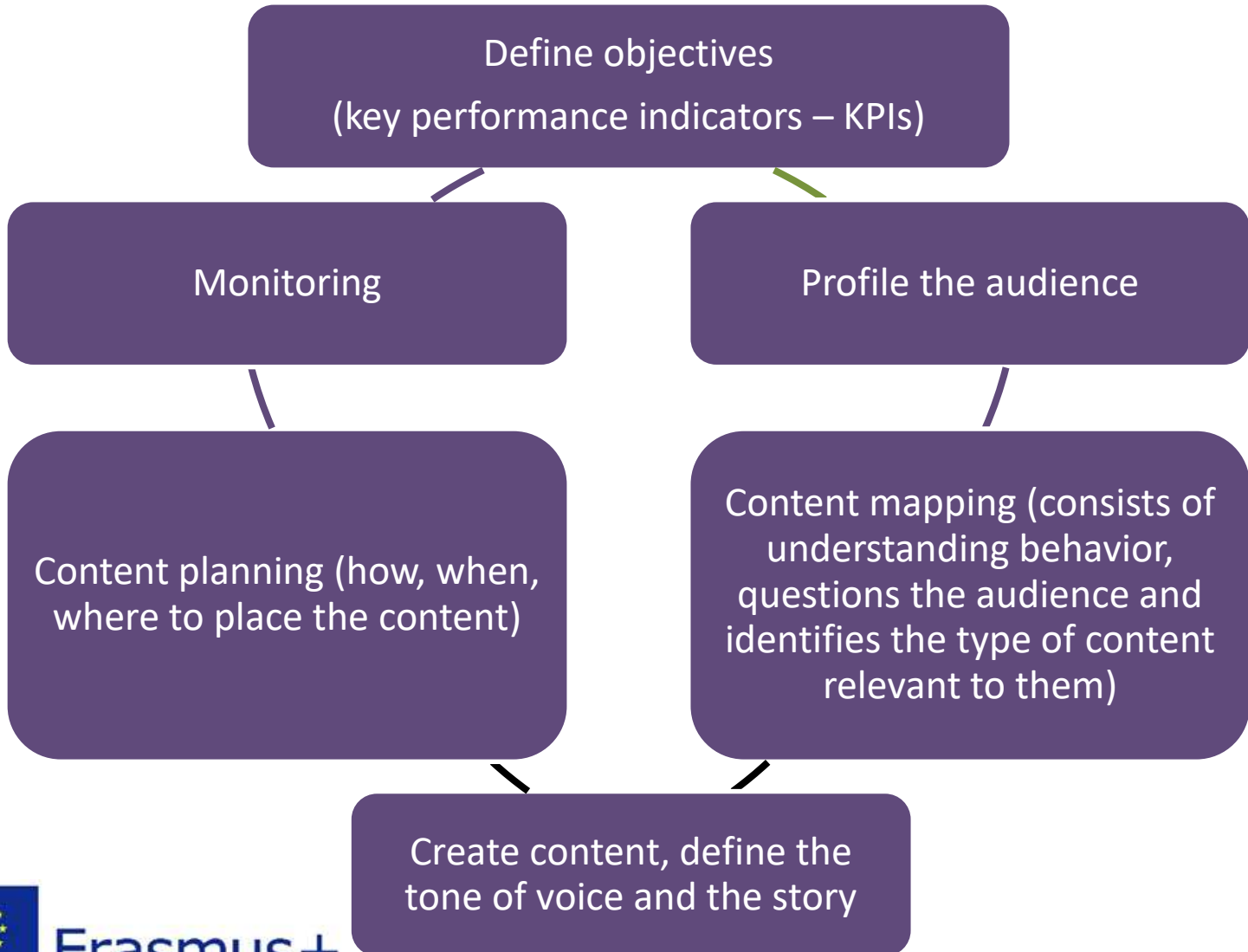
- Stories are understood both with the heart and with the mind.
- A story has a stronger impact on humans than other ways of communicating.
- Good stories make people react and become engaged.
- People remember stories for a longer period of time than they do other messages.
- Stories communicate ideas convincingly.

Content marketing

Stakeholders could be effectively reached through content marketing. It is a form of strategic communication focused on creating, publishing, and distributing “content” for a **targeted audience online** in order to **attract and influence** it.

The content refers to **valuable information**, which is **relevant** to the audience and adds value to them. This content could be actually **co-created with stakeholders** by means of social media. In order to be effective, a content strategy should be designed and implemented.

Designing a content marketing strategy



Event development

Inviting stakeholders to **personalized events** is another great way to keep them close and convince them to cooperate. To be impactful, events have to be designed having in mind the invited audience. The effectiveness of an event also depends on event management flows and on the way it effectively develops. Obtaining **feedback** and **following up** also influence long-term networking with the participant stakeholders.



Additional resources

- <http://www.seerc.org/atsiv/vle/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/trainingNGOs/>
- www.ngotraining.eu

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