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A practical guide for multi-stakeholder collaborations

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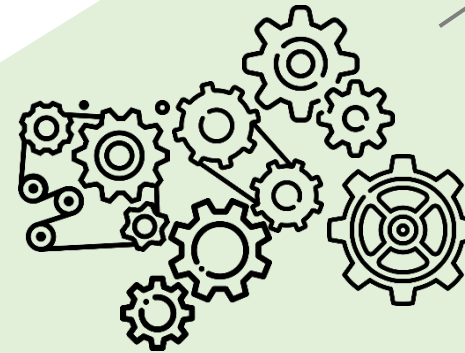


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A practical guide for multi-stakeholder collaborations

Audience: researchers, company representatives, foresters, civil society activists, presidents from trade federations, political actors

Aim: offer guidance for initiatives that require collective action, implementing solutions jointly beyond sectors, institutions, nations and cultures



Result-orientation

Complex problem ➤ Collective action

Stakeholder dialogues

- Innovation to master global challenges
- Integration in a respectful manner
- Ability for collective action

Simple problem ➤ Individual action



By Nele Schmitz, inspired by *the Art of Stakeholder Collaboration* workshop of The Collective Leadership Institute. www.collectiveleadership.com

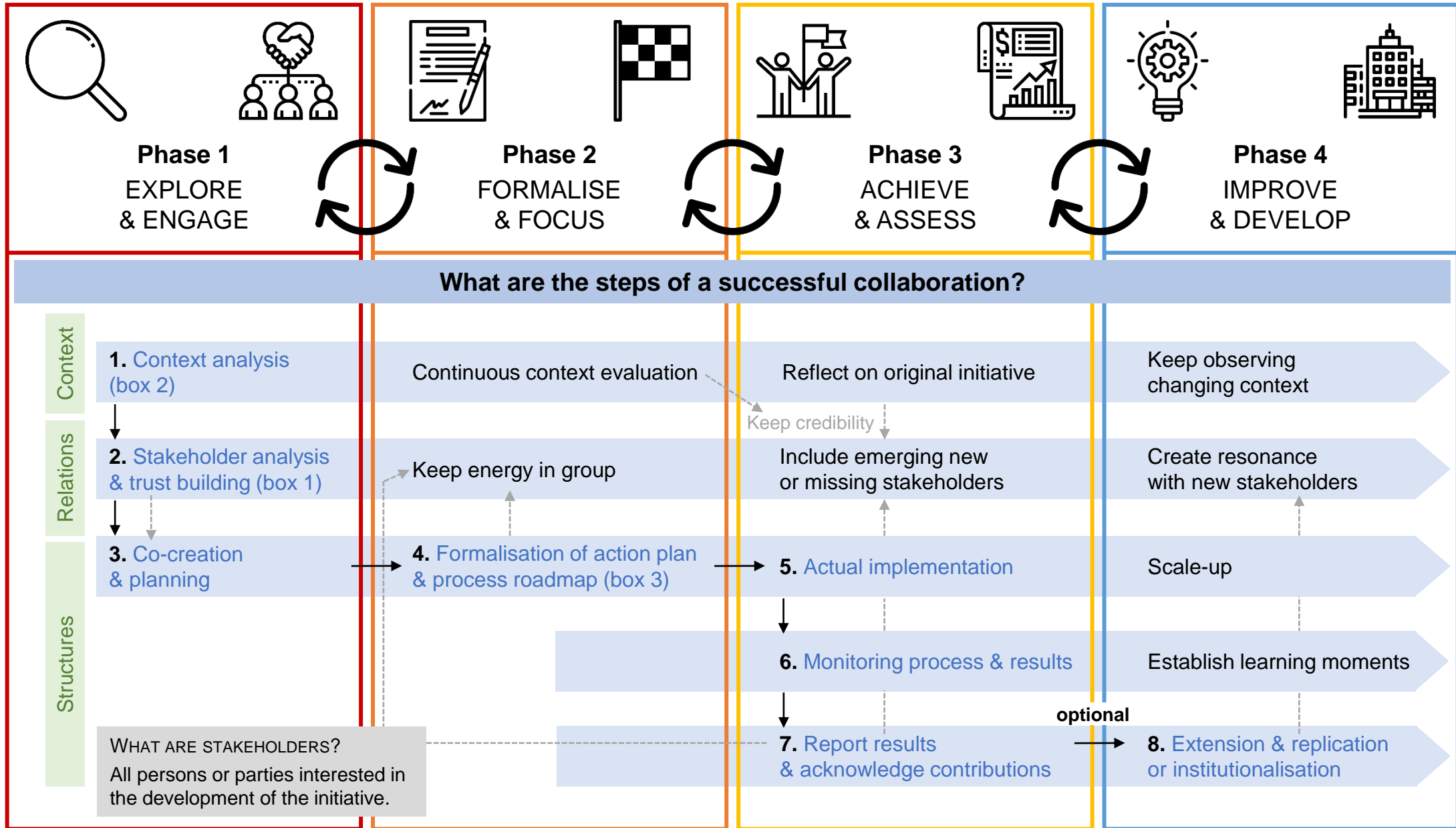
Further reading: Künkel, P., S. Gerlach and V. Frieg (2011). Stakeholders dialogues – Key concepts and competencies for achieving common goals. A practical guide for change agents from public sector, private sector and civil society. Collective Leadership Institute.

A practical guide for multi-stakeholder collaborations

By Nele Schmitz

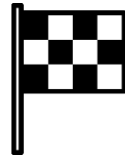
Ref.: [The Collective Leadership Institute](#)

KEY WORDS: QUALITY DIALOGUES - COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE - RESULT-ORIENTATION

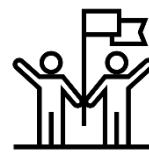




Phase 1
EXPLORE
& ENGAGE



Phase 2
FORMALISE
& FOCUS



Phase 3
ACHIEVE
& ASSESS



Phase 4
IMPROVE
& DEVELOP

How to implement the different phases?

- Informal conversations
- Bilateral meetings

- Written & signed collaboration agreement
- Multi-stakeholder meetings (max. 20 people first time)

- Monitoring with core-team
- Public event for extended group to launch initiative

- Create new core team(s) & management structures
- Public event, celebrating successes

Why are the different phases required?

- Engagement & dialogue (box 4) ↓
- Common goal = everyone has a function and knows it

- Transparency & agreement on everyone's concrete roles and resources
- Concrete goals

- Report on achieved milestones, beginning with the quick wins
- Gain credibility

- This phase is optional
- Consolidate outcomes in sustainable structures

Before going to phase 2:

- ✓ Have **strong core team**, representing all sectors & visions
- ✓ **Know all stakeholders**, their positions and reactions when together

Before going to phase 3:

- ✓ **Co-created plans** and all decisions taken by the full diversity of stakeholders
- ✓ All are willing to work together, feel **ownership** of the initiative

Before going to phase 4:

- ✓ All goals & roles are clear & the process **transparent** for everyone
- ✓ Ambitions are in line with **capacity**

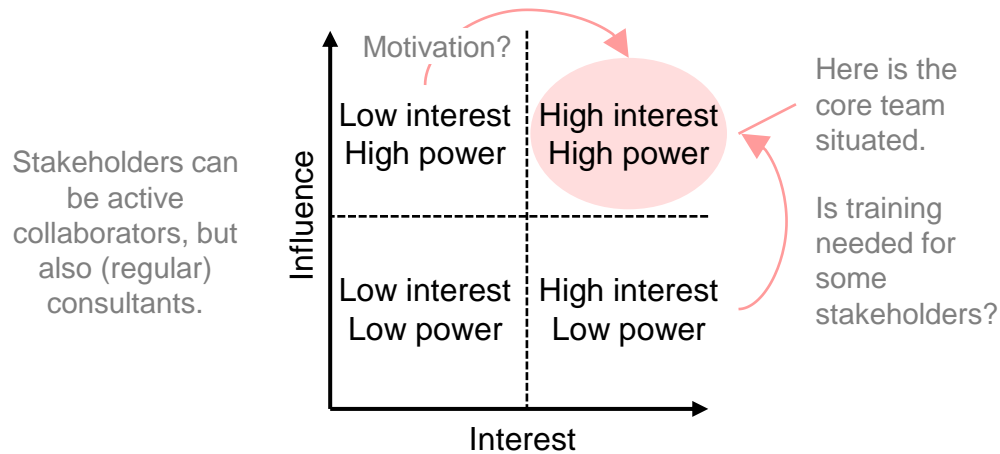
Be aware:

The four phases are iterative
↓
Keep legitimacy & credibility at all times via dialogue, co-creation & transparency



Box 1. Stakeholder analysis

- Do a **stakeholder mapping**:



- Know the **intentions & motivations** of your stakeholders
- Evaluate if **all action modes** are represented in the stakeholder group:
 - ✓ Movers ———— drive, advocate
 - ✓ Opposers ———— offer corrections
 - ✓ Followers ———— complete actions
 - ✓ Bystanders ———— inquire & open perspectives
 - × Blockers ———— don't allow veto players!

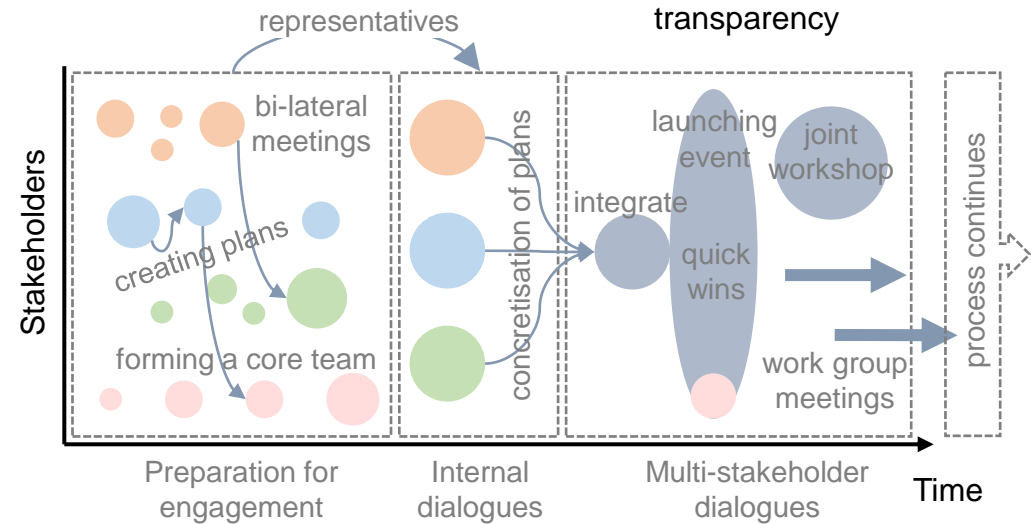
→ **balanced, productive dialogue**

Box 2. Context analysis

- Research** previous & ongoing work in the field (initiatives never start in a vacuum).
- Make fact sheets & get testimonials** about potential impact of the initiative to attract essential partners.
- Know timelines** (e.g. budget decisions, launching of laws).

Box 3. Example process roadmap

- A string of communication events to plan & assure transparency



Box 4. Characteristics of a quality stakeholder dialogue

- ✓ **Willingness** to work together → no monologues, nor win-lose debates → all input is used.
- ✓ **Inclusion** of different interests & relevant expertise → understand theory & practice of the initiative.
- ✓ **Core team** of 6-8 people, owning the initiative, representing all views, min. one having decision power.
- ✓ **Result-oriented** via documentation (as reference point) and monitoring (continuous).
- ✓ **Series** of events → co-creation, adapting to changes.

Problem solving in multi-stakeholder collaborations

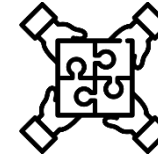
Work on strong foundations:

- Do a stakeholder analysis.
- Do a process analysis.



Practical tips for facilitators of multi-stakeholder meetings

- **Never work alone**, search an ally and start from there.
- **Don't forget your noble goals** & use this energy to inspire stakeholders.
- **Prepare** all meetings:
 - Do a stakeholder analysis.
 - Know motivations & limitations of the different sectors, manage expectations accordingly.
 - Don't allow veto players, only stakeholders open to interact.
 - Smooth out conflict & competition before bringing stakeholders together.
 - Plan next meetings.
- **If potential conflict in a group:**
 - Have a clear agenda and follow it strictly.
 - Make sure that all perspectives are being heard.
 - Start formal, decrease level of formality with increasing trust in the group.
 - Name what's going on, e.g. propose-oppose tennis in a conversation.
- **If a meeting gets stuck:**
 - Return the conversation to the topic.
 - Repeat & summarise achievements so far.
 - Suspend the meeting when no productive dialogue anymore.
 - Collect extra information and discuss in smaller groups.
 - Meet bilaterally with people taking criticism personal, not open for discussion.



THE FEED FORWARD TECHNIQUE

- To facilitate co-creation, collaborators present their ideas.
- Instead of feedback, the others give short, future-oriented, suggestions that are not critical.
- The presenters take notes, but there is no further discussion. The comments are meant to open new ideas.

A VISUAL VISION

- To create with the core team.
- Create a visual, joint vision of what success would look like.
- Drawings can first be made in small groups and then merged.