

Policy Brief on Stakeholder Engagement in Joint Programming Initiatives

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1 Context and scope of this policy brief

ERA-LEARN 2020 Policy Briefs serve the purpose of providing succinct information on topics that are of vital importance for advancing Public-Public-Partnerships (P2Ps). The Policy Briefs build on the contributions of experts provided at workshops, findings from good practice cases performed by ERA-LEARN and experiences of the work of P2Ps. They review current knowledge, highlight trends and controversies, and open perspectives for policy planners at EU and national level, decision makers and stakeholders in the community.

Involvement of a wide range of actors, such as national policy makers, research funding organizations, relevant research communities from academia and industry as well as user communities in Joint Programming Initiatives (JPIs) and other Public-Public-Partnerships (P2Ps) is seen as a key prerequisite for **achieving long-term impact on tackling societal challenges** through research and innovation (R&I) actions.

The most recent evaluation of the Joint Programming Process² highlighted the view of JPIs that there is a strong **need to involve end-users and industry** “when facing a societal challenge”. The evaluation concludes that challenge-based R&I needs the active involvement of societal stakeholders and industry to achieve maximum impact.

However, most JPIs “still wonder what would be the best way”. Against this background, this policy brief on stakeholder engagement summarizes the current state-of-play of stakeholder engagement among JPIs, highlights existing approaches of engagement, and introduces possible ways to advance stakeholder engagement.

2 Who are the relevant stakeholders?

The concept of stakeholder engagement among P2Ps remained largely undefined for a long time and relevant groups were identified without a systematic procedure or methodology³. Finally, a neutral and universal definition of “stakeholder” was suggested in a second stakeholder engagement workshop⁴, which gathered views of representatives from all JPIs:

“A stakeholder may be any person, group or organisation, which can influence or be influenced by a program, intervention, or problem.”

² European Commission (2016), Evaluation of Joint Programming to Address Grand Societal Challenges - Final Report of the Expert Group., Brussels.

³ Conclusion from a first stakeholder involvement workshop hosted by JPI MYBL in June 2015, which gathered views of representatives from all JPIs.

⁴ ERA-LEARN 2020 & JPI MYBL, Second Stakeholder Engagement Workshop, Brussels, January 2016.

This broad and encompassing definition of stakeholders is in line with the conceptualization of stakeholders in many JPIs. For instance:

- Water JPI sees stakeholder as “a person, group or organisation / institution which has a (pro-active) interest in water resources”.
- JPI Urban Europe sets out that stakeholders involved shall reflect the general stakeholder environment relevant for JPI Urban Europe’s thematic focus. This implies the integration of civil society, academia, private sector, and policy-makers, which represent the local, regional, national, and European level.
- In FACCE-JPI, stakeholders are organizations active in the food, environment or agricultural sectors. FACCE-JPI aims to cover all actors involved in the agricultural food value chain who will be impacted by climate change.

In this regard, the good practice case studies on stakeholder engagement performed by ERA-LEARN 2020 demonstrated that for each JPI, different types of stakeholders can be identified which, despite some variations, fit into the classification in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Main stakeholders in Joint Programming Initiative



Source: Own illustration

3 What are the main purposes of stakeholder engagement?

Among JPIs, stakeholder engagement is considered crucial for⁵:

- developing and updating Strategic Research and Innovation Agendas (SRIAs);
- the identification of new trans-national research challenges in specific JPI areas;
- proposing topics and issues for joint actions within the framework of the SRIA to be included in the JPI Implementation Plans;
- providing advice on ways to implement the joint actions, e.g., via joint calls, knowledge hubs, training, capacity building, infrastructure-sharing, and knowledge transfer;

⁵ ERA-LEARN 2020 & JPI MYBL, Second Stakeholder Engagement Workshop, Brussels, January 2016.

- supporting dissemination activities, communication, and promotion of ideas as to raise visibility of the R&I activities being performed through the initiatives; and
- speeding up knowledge circulation and transfer for the exploitation of research results by many different stakeholders.

Stakeholder participation also **increases the possible impact** within the European Commission and European policy making. The involvement of various stakeholder groups helps JPIs to better meet the needs of stakeholders and thus assures the societal relevance of research output. This means that stakeholder engagement can also contribute to the realization of the philosophy of **responsible research and innovation (RRI)**, which implies that societal actors (researchers, citizens, policy makers, business, third sector organizations, etc.) work together during the whole R&I process in order to better align both the process and its outcomes with the values, needs, and expectations of society⁶.

Box 1: The purposes of stakeholder engagement in Water JPI

For Water JPI, stakeholder engagement is relevant in all phases of the JPI policy cycle. Depending on the particular group of stakeholders relevant for the specific activity/task of the JPI, stakeholders shall contribute to the following targets along the phases of the JPI policy cycle:

- to provide advice to the Governing Board (GB) and the Management Board (MB) on specific issues on demand,
- to identify innovative alternatives suitable for decision-making,
- to participate in Water JPI activities like SRIA development and joint actions,
- to identify problems, gaps in EU and national water RTDI programs,
- to support the harmonization of national water RTDI programs,
- to contribute to overcome fragmentation of the water sector,
- to facilitate dialogue with different communities, and engage directly with practitioners and relevant stakeholders in the development of the applications and tools delivered by the project,
- to disseminate and support the uptake of project outputs / results to select relevant communities and transform results into business opportunities.

Source: Annual summary report on good practices of Joint Programming (2016)

4 How are stakeholders identified?

Identifying and engaging stakeholders requires a structured system or framework. However, there is no "one-size-fits-all" methodology for identifying and activating stakeholders; different stakeholders require different tools for addressing them. The participants of the P2Ps in the second stakeholder engagement workshop agreed that it is important to identify the purpose of the engagement and the desired level of

⁶ <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/h2020-section/responsible-research-innovation>

engagement (information, consultation, collaboration, etc.; see Figure 3) *before* reaching out to stakeholders, as these will determine the appropriate means and tools of address.

Typically, the General Assembly and the Management Boards identify and nominate relevant stakeholder representatives, either *ad personam* or per stakeholder organization. It is widely agreed that this procedure should be supported by a methodological approach. There are common tools and techniques, stemming from various application fields, for identifying stakeholders⁷. The most common ones being used by P2Ps, are:

- **Stakeholder Analysis** – in which information to determine whose interests should be taken into account for an activity is gathered and assessed, and
- **Expert Judgment** - Expert technical and/or managerial judgment (from any qualified source).

Stakeholder Analysis is a methodology often used to account for and incorporate the needs of those who have a ‘stake’ or an interest in a program, project, or reform process under consideration. Armed with information on stakeholders, their interests, and their capacity to contribute, oppose, reform, etc., relevant actors can choose how to best accommodate them and thus assuring that adopted policies are politically realistic and sustainable. A stakeholder analysis process leads to the following outputs⁸:

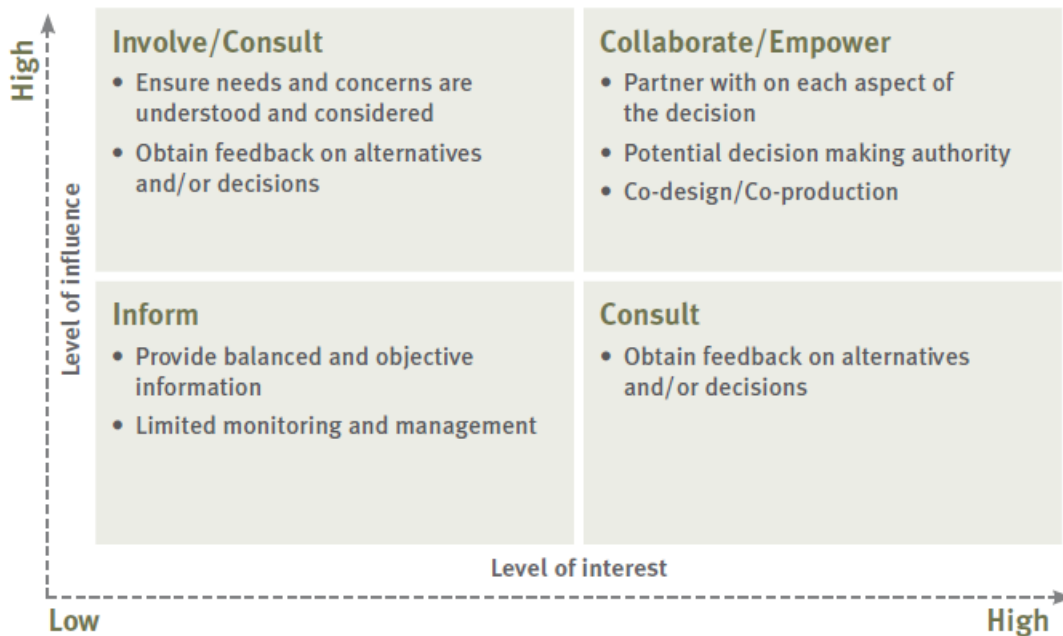
- A *stakeholder register or repository*, which collects all P2P stakeholder information, categorizes the stakeholders, and summarizes the requirements of the stakeholder in the context of the P2P.
- A *Stakeholder Management Strategy* sets out the approach for increasing stakeholder support and reducing negative impacts represented in a stakeholder analysis matrix. In this process, it is also important to keep in mind that this tool requires resources (human resources and others).

The project manager must document relevant information for all identified stakeholders. This information may include the stakeholder’s *interests, involvement, expectations, importance, influence, impact* on the project’s execution, as well as any specific communication requirements. It is important to note that although some stakeholders may not actually require any communications, those stakeholders should nevertheless be identified. When identifying stakeholders and rating their level of interest and involvement, it will become important to use some sort of a tool — a rating scale, an influence diagram, or a chart to identify the level of power, influence, interest, or impact that the stakeholder may have on the project.

⁷ See suggestions in the list of additional information sources

⁸ For examples on a stakeholder register, see for example:
https://www.truesolutions.com/pdf/identify_stakeholders.pdf

Figure 2: Stakeholder Analysis Tool - plotting influence against interest



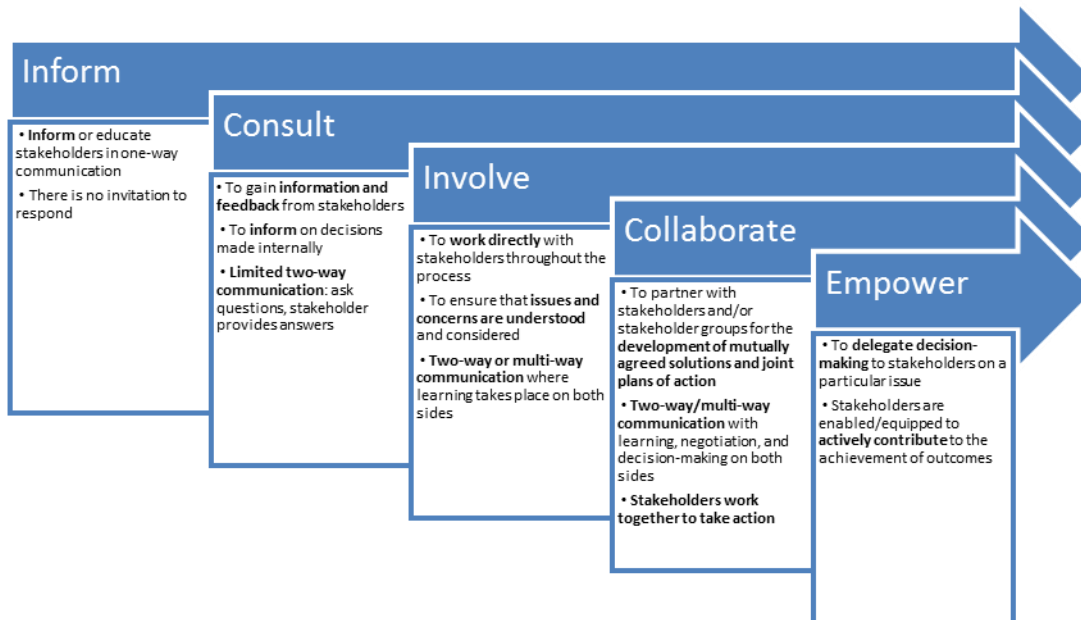
Source: Stakeholder Engagement Framework, State of Victoria (2011)

In the above example of such a rating tool, a stakeholder who has high levels of influence over and interest in the project’s outcomes should be placed in the top right quadrant. Conversely, if they have low levels of influence and low interest they should be placed in the bottom left quadrant. The placement of a stakeholder then determines the level of engagement intensity. It is important to keep in mind that the interest or influence of a stakeholder may change over time as the project or policy progresses. Therefore, there is a need to continuously reassess and identify new stakeholders at different stages of the policy cycle.

5 At which levels of intensity are stakeholders engaged?

Typically, stakeholder engagement may be performed at different levels of intensity (see Figure 3). Lower levels of engagement, i.e., information and consultation, requires no more than simply ensuring that stakeholders are well informed about processes and outcomes of an activity and that stakeholders may provide feedback. Major methods of engagement at these levels of engagement are information provided on websites, fact sheets, media releases and advertising, speeches at conferences, surveys, and meetings. Feedback mechanisms can be (public) consultations, for example by means of surveys.

Figure 3: Levels of stakeholder engagement



Source: Own illustration

Activities at higher levels of engagement, i.e., involvement, collaboration, and empowerment, range from the creation of advisory panels and consultative committees up to the active engagement of stakeholders in the governance structures of the initiative. Two-way/multi-way communication prevails in such arrangements and learning, negotiation, and decision-making takes place on all sides.

Most P2Ps engage with stakeholders in both the governance structures and activities of the P2P. In the governance structures of P2Ps, the program owners, i.e. the participating representatives of member states (usually public ministries), form the main decision making body⁹. The representatives of national P2P member states have voting rights and ultimately determine the course of the P2P. However, stakeholder groups are considered in virtually all P2P governance structures, by means of either scientific and societal advisory boards, or joint advisory boards. Through these boards, the P2Ps seek to take into account the “comments” from the stakeholder community and to find a consensus between heterogeneous stakeholder groups. Even if comments are not taken into account, arguing why a specific argument is not taken into account helps to justify decisions. Some examples include:

- JPI Climate’s explicit stakeholder orientation principle that allows for active collaboration within the JPI that goes beyond mere consultation and integrates stakeholder-groups into its governance structure. Its Transdisciplinary Advisory Board, consisting of 50 percent stakeholders, advises the Governing Board on scientific orientation and revision of the JPI and aims to provide a long-

⁹ For examples, how stakeholders are engaged in P2Ps, see: 1) the specific session of the Annual Joint Programming Conference 2015: <https://www.era-learn.eu/events/annual-joint-programming-2015-new-date-2016/topic-2-engaging-stakeholders-in-public-public-partnerships>; 2) the ERA-LEARN case studies on stakeholder engagement in P2Ps: <https://www.era-learn.eu/joint-activities/stakeholder-involvement>

term strategic vision. JPI Climate also established Expert Panels of Working Groups, consisting of scientists and representatives of central stakeholder organizations, that advises the Working Groups on the development of research objectives, priority themes, and other operational and programmatic activities.

- JPI Oceans pursues activity-based and problem-oriented stakeholder engagement, aiming at higher levels of engagement. It sets out to allow stakeholders to be active and support the JPI with a high degree of latitude, ideally building up (in)formal networks in the process. JPI Oceans' Strategic Advisory Board is its formal body for stakeholders and assists in elaborating and preparing the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA). In the SRIA and implementation plan development phase, JPI Oceans held stakeholder consultations and workshops where stakeholders provided suggestions, informed about gaps and knowledge needs, identified Europe-wide synergy opportunities, and consulted on key challenges and opportunities for the future.

Box 2: Examples on the role of a Societal Advisory Board (SOAB)

The role of the SOAB in JPI – More Years, Better Lives

The task of the SOAB is to introduce the “societal pull” to the research agenda by evaluating joint activities in each phase of their development, implementation, and evaluation against societal needs. This type of collaboration between scientists and a broad spectrum of stakeholders is essential to further develop the SRA so that it can provide knowledge-based solutions for European development.

The SOAB also plays a key role in the general public engagement strategy of the JPI MYBL and supports the JPI in building up national stakeholder involvement through its networks. The SOAB collaborates with Science with and for Society (SwafS) and Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) to promote public engagement and stakeholder inclusion during all stages of the research cycle. The SOAB also cooperates with the Public Engagement for Innovation in Horizon2020 (PE2020) project.

Source: <http://www.jp-demographic.eu/about-us/soab-societal-advisory-board/>

For involving stakeholders beyond selected core representatives in advisory boards, it is generally agreed among JPIs that there is not “one-size-fits-all” approach for stakeholder engagement. Different formats and different stakeholder groups (and subsets) are required during the different stages of a P2P research initiative.

Box 3: Current practices of stakeholder engagement: FACCE-JPI

FACCE-JPI has been engaging with stakeholders during the entire JPI programming cycle:

- Public consultations amongst a wide range of stakeholders were conducted to get feedback on the key priorities for research vis-à-vis each of the five Core Themes of

the SRA.

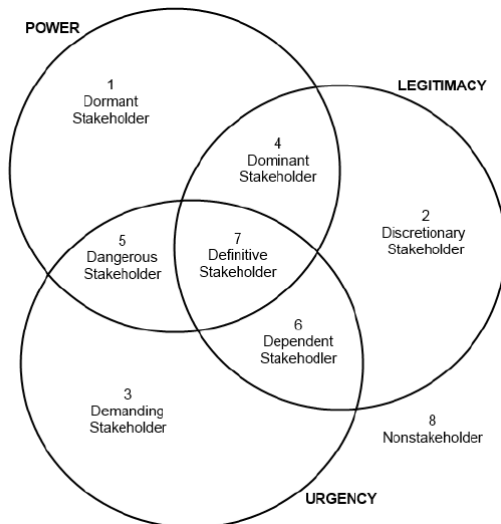
- Subsequently, stakeholders were consulted on the JPI's original and updated SRA, as well as on the more operational Implementation Plans via the Stakeholder Advisory Board (StAB).
- Stakeholders have had the possibility to make suggestions regarding new actions to be undertaken by the JPI and to comment on those proposed by the Governing Board. Such consultations have occurred on average every two years, ahead of the finalization of such Plans.
- Coordinators of FACCE-JPI joint actions have been consulted and involved selected StAB members (i.e. "StAB lead" and "StAB support contacts") in the proposals for, and design of, joint actions, via Joint Action Working Groups and related meetings.
- Several joint action Coordinators reached out to additional stakeholders beyond the StAB.

Source: FACCE-JPI Stakeholder Advisory Board meeting, 28 April 2017 (<https://www.faccejpi.com/About-Us/Stakeholder-Advisory-Board>)

Stakeholders should be represented at different levels (European/national/regional/local), keeping in mind the importance to consider different stakeholders during the different stages of the project/process. Their relevance may vary according to the stage of the process - not all stakeholders are relevant for a given stage of the process, creating the need to prioritize.

All identified stakeholders should be assessed for relevance; if someone/a group is not relevant, they should not be considered stakeholders. However, it is widely recognized that there are different types of stakeholders (key stakeholders vs. less interesting/important stakeholders). The type of stakeholder may vary throughout the process. This means that a given stakeholder may be highly relevant for a specific stage of the process, but less important for the following stage. The Mitchell typology of stakeholder salience provides a useful framework for the categorization of stakeholders based on different combinations of power, legitimacy, and urgency. Stakeholders' salience could increase/decrease during different stages of the process through changes in one or more of their attributes and as a result, stakeholders can shift from one category to another.

Figure 4: Mitchell typology



Source: Mitchell et al. (1997)

There is also widespread agreement among P2Ps that different stakeholder groups should be involved in strategic decision-making and on the operational level, keeping in mind the variety of stakeholders and consequently, the possible demand for different communication tools. Some groups may prefer or require new forms of communication such as social media, the internet, and social networks, while others tend to like more traditional outreach tools such as fact sheets, conferences, or meetings. Among P2Ps, there is agreement that social media, the internet, and social networks could be used to facilitate information sharing, collaboration, increased transparency, and capacity building. This would promote the establishment of different types of engagement and community building. Open platforms could enable the active participation of all stakeholders, thereby supporting co-creation and stakeholder empowerment. However, some concerns related to a) the prioritization of stakeholders, b) ensuring the appropriate inclusion of all relevant stakeholders, and c) safeguarding against bias in stakeholder participation remain at this highest intensity of stakeholder engagement.

6 Success factors and major challenges for effective stakeholder engagement

So far, the work of P2Ps has revealed a number of success factors of effective stakeholder engagement in P2Ps.

Defining the right stakeholder engagement objectives and methods: It is important to define objectives for stakeholder engagement in advance for 1) P2P governing bodies and 2) for the stakeholders that are likely to be addressed. Stakeholders should not be engaged for engagement's sake. Ultimately, stakeholder engagement should contribute to achieve core goals of P2Ps. For example, one of JPI Urban Europe's Societal and Urban Policy ambitions is to co-create ideas, concepts, and solutions to better meet societal and municipal needs. This ambition is not achievable merely through the P2P's R&I projects or through setting up a stakeholder advisory board, it requires the

creation of partnerships and engagements with various stakeholders in Europe. For these purposes, individual formats of bottom-up engagement and processes to approach stakeholders outside the governing boards are needed. In JPI Urban Europe's case, the solution was the establishment of its Urban Europe Forum, a stakeholder platform responsible for strategic advice as well as contributing to the engagement of public support¹⁰.

Knowledge about stakeholders and their motivations: A precondition to raise motivation and engagement of stakeholders is to have knowledge about each stakeholder (group) regarding their interests and motivations. One of the ways to match stakeholder interests is to invite relevant stakeholders within the boards of a P2P to form so-called "Action Groups" where they can contribute to particular fields of research (e.g., as implemented for each joint action in the context of the [FACCE-JPI Implementation Plan 2016-2018](#)).

Forward looking approach: Engagement processes should be planned ahead (upstream) from the very beginning in order to promote a sense of ownership by the stakeholders. The timelines/schedules/availability of the stakeholders need to be considered during the engagement process. Sometimes, stakeholders refrain from getting more involved not because of lack of interest, but because of lack of time. If the engagement process happens early enough, the different stakeholders can adjust their schedules to the engagement process.

Right processes and good embeddedness in P2P management structures: Stakeholder engagement processes need to be geared toward the different stakeholder groups while being appropriate for P2P governing and management actors. Depending on the objectives of the engagement process and the issues being addressed, the successful completion of any stakeholder engagement depends upon a clearly defined governance mechanism that specifies ownership of the engagement. Within the P2P management structures, the specific role of advisory boards needs to be well defined. Expectations and tasks are connected with each board, which need to be communicated well by the governing authorities. Boards should be engaged in the definition of their own roles and tasks and their interests and activities should match the demands/tasks of the P2P regarding stakeholder engagement. In order to foster cooperation between stakeholder advisory boards and other boards or management structures, it is seen as favorable to have combined meetings of both boards when there is a need to do so and/or tasks and interests of both boards overlap or could lead to conflict of interest. This can lead to an increase of mutual trust and might help to find common recommendations (e.g. for research priorities of the JPI and its implementation).

Active support from JPI management structures: The JPI secretariats/management authorities play a crucial role in the preparation and communication with stakeholders as well as for the planning of stakeholder engagement (especially regarding the SHABs and SABs, which in varying forms exist in all JPIs). The central management needs to have a good overview of existing stakeholders involved (e.g., via means of databases) and the current and planned activities with stakeholders. The JPI secretariat may also serve as a first point of contact for stakeholders. Relevant information for stakeholders should be presented on the web-platforms of the JPIs where entry points for different stakeholder groups could ease access to relevant information for particular stakeholders.

¹⁰ See: https://www.era-learn.eu/events/annual-joint-programming-2015-new-date-2016/topic-2-engaging-stakeholders-in-public-public-partnerships/Topic2_Day2_Stakeholder_Engagement_SHE_JPI_UrbanEurope.pdf

Reaching out to stakeholders across all JPI members: Building on and building up networks to reach stakeholders and to have a multiplication effect is a particularly relevant approach. New ways of bottom-up engagement and processes to approach stakeholders outside the governance structures of JPIs are needed. Setting up national mirror groups that involve relevant stakeholders at country level can be an effective approach for reaching out to stakeholders.

7 Remaining challenges

Financial and time constraints are main barriers to intensified stakeholder engagement on an operational level. The **prevention of conflict of interest** is another big challenge when setting up stakeholder boards that address different interests. A key risk is that strong organizations with dedicated resources can easily interact with JPIs, while smaller organizations and their interests are not taken on board because of their limited participation. This may lead to **biases in stakeholder participation**.

It is not yet resolved how biases in stakeholder participation can be prevented and how to ensure that actors outside the scientific community have their voices heard in JPIs. As the participants of the stakeholder engagement workshops expressed, there needs to be an equilibrium between co-creation and distribution of participation - P2Ps may need to establish a balance between bottom-up approaches (such as open platforms) and top-down approaches (such as directly inviting relevant stakeholders that are not represented in these platforms). There is some evidence that wider stakeholder forums and formal, structured processes can help mitigate power inequalities among stakeholders, providing somewhat greater assurance (although no guarantee) that all voices and viewpoints are heard and considered. More importantly, formal processes can provide an incubator to nurture additional multi-stakeholder collaboration.¹¹ A systematic stakeholder analysis to identify and prioritize those who should be engaged is one such formal process. In the analysis, it is important to consider who might have most influence while not neglecting those stakeholders with significant interest, but who may be powerless or marginalized. Additionally, carefully designed stakeholder engagement activities (possibly involving a professional facilitator) with parallel activities for groups in conflict or with significant differences in power and facilitation methods that enable all participants to provide and comment on ideas (possibly anonymously) may help attenuate power imbalances.¹²

¹¹ AccountAbility, the United Nations Environment Programme, Stakeholder Research Associates (2005). From Words to Action: The Stakeholder Engagement Handbook. Volume 1: The Guide to Practitioners' Perspectives on Stakeholder Engagement. <http://www.unep.fr/shared/publications/pdf/WEBx0114xPA-StakeholderEngagement1.pdf>

¹² Durham E., Baker H., Smith M., Moore E. & Morgan V. (2014). The BiodivERsA Stakeholder Engagement Handbook. <http://www.biodiversa.org/stakeholderengagement>

8 Relevant information sources

1. Stakeholder engagement handbooks and toolkits:

- Australian Government (2005), Stakeholder Engagement Framework.
Source: <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/stake-frame>
- AccountAbility, the United Nations Environment Programme, and Stakeholder Research Associates. (2005) From Words to Action: The Stakeholder Engagement Handbook, Vol.2: Volume 2: The Practitioner's Handbook on Stakeholder Engagement, UNEP, Paris.
Source: <http://www.unep.fr/shared/publications/pdf/WEBx0115xPA-SEhandbookEN.pdf>
- Durham E., Baker H., Smith M., Moore E. & Morgan V. (2014). The BiodivERsA Stakeholder Engagement Handbook, BiodivERsA, Paris (108 pp).
Source: <http://www.biodiversa.org/stakeholderengagement>
- Morris, J., Baddache, F. (2012) Back to Basics: How to Make Stakeholder Engagement Meaningful for Your Company, Copenhagen.
Source: https://www.bsr.org/reports/BSR_Five-Step_Guide_to_Stakeholder_Engagement.pdf
- Partners for each and every child (2016), A Handbook for Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement, Berkely.
Source: http://partnersforeachandeverychild.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/P4_EngagementHandbook_ESSA_0616.pdf Union of the Baltic Cities Mission on Environment (2009), Engage-Your Stakeholders Toolkit.
Source: http://www.ubc-sustainable.net/sites/www.ubc-environment.net/files/publications/engage_your_stakeholders_toolkit.pdf

ERA-LEARN good practice cases on stakeholder engagement

- ERA-LEARN 2020 (2016), Annual Summary report on good practices in the implementation of JPIs (2016), Vienna.
Source: <https://www.era-learn.eu/publications/other-publications/annual-summary-report-on-good-practices-in-the-implementation-of-jpis>
- <https://www.era-learn.eu/joint-activities/stakeholder-involvement>

Online - Toolkits for stakeholder engagement:

- Toolkit on Public engagement with Science: <https://toolkit.pe2020.eu/>
The main objective of the toolkit is providing the readers with an easy, rapid and guided access to the huge amount of practical and theoretical knowledge and resources developed in the last two decades on public engagement with science, as well as on other relevant stocks of knowledge.
- Engage 2020 Action Catalogue: <http://actioncatalogue.eu/>
The Action catalogue is an online decision support tool that is intended to enable researchers, policy-makers and others wanting to conduct inclusive research, to find the method best suited

for their specific project needs. This project has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration.

- Guidance and templates for identifying stakeholders:

https://www.truesolutions.com/pdf/identify_stakeholders.pdf