2. Stakeholder involvement and participatory management planning.

2.1. Introduction

The questionnaire that Eurosite circulated to managers of protected areas revealed that reconciling the needs and wishes of stakeholders with the management objectives of a protected area is a difficult issue. What are stakeholders. The definition says: "a stakeholder is an agency, organisation, group or individual who has a (direct or indirect) interest in the intervention (the management) or who affects or is affected (positively or negatively) by the implementation and outcome of a plan". (*"Tools for Analysing Power in Multi-stakeholder Processes - A menu" by Brouwer, Herman et.al. Wageningen 2014*). With this definition in mind protected area managers have to deal with wide variety of stakeholders including those who live in and around the area, visitors, institutions working in the field of nature protection, water managers, environmental agencies, local and regional environmental NGO's, tourist boards, regional and local authorities, etc etc.

Early engagement with stakeholders helps to harmonise their needs and wishes with the management objectives of the protected area and this increases the likelihood that rules and restrictions are adopted and applied. Furthermore, the early involvement of stakeholders opens up an important source of knowledge that reduces the likelihood of mistakes in management planning and helps to mediate unexpected negative outcomes of management interventions. Well managed engagement of stakeholders facilitates learning and builds trust between participants; this helps to mediate conflicts. Establishing the reason(s) for engagement is a critical first step to take before any engagement is undertaken. Existing literature suggests that the benefits of engagement can far outweigh the risks of not engaging. If well-planned and adequately resourced, successful engagement can enrich management and thus improve outcomes for biodiversity and society. Engaging with stakeholders is also important when identifying the ecosystems services of a protected area and who should benefit from these services. For this engagement to be credible and effective, we should consider the different interests of the identified stakeholders and the power balance between them   with dilemmas and trade off's recognized and discussed. See document below for further guidance.

2.2   Why involve stakeholders in protected areas management

There are a number of reasons for undertaking stakeholder engagement. Some of the most common reasons include:

- Promoting links between protection and society;
- Gaining access to additional information or resources,
- Improving the relevance of protection for users and beneficiaries.

Engaging with stakeholders helps to harmonise the needs and wishes of stakeholders with management objectives of the protected area and by doing so increasing the likelihood that rules and restrictions are adopted and applied. Furthermore, by considering local knowledge in management it becomes possible to avoid mistakes in planning management interventions and helps to mediate unexpected negative outcomes of management interventions. Well managed engagement of stakeholders facilitates learning and building trust between participants and helps to mediate conflicts.

2.3 How to engage stakeholders

Establishing the reason(s) for engagement is a critical first step to take before any engagement is undertaken. Existing literature suggests that the benefits of engagement can far outweigh the risks, including those risks posed by lack of engagement. If well planned, and adequately resourced, successful engagement can enrich management and thus better outcomes for biodiversity and society

It has been recognised that stakeholder engagement should be undertaken with credibility, relevance and legitimacy (sometimes referred to as 'CRELE').

Dealing with stakeholders, it is important to take into account the power they possess and the influence that they might have. Each stakeholder group requires specific communication, mediation and facilitation skills. With the increasing demand to include stakeholders in decision making some say that these soft skills are more important for a manager of protected areas than the knowledge of ecosystems and ecological processes of the area. Protected area management is recognised as a distinct, multidisciplinary profession with its own specialist occupations and standards.

The elaboration of a management plan should therefore preferably start with a situation analysis followed by a thorough stakeholder inventory and analysis. This means "understanding the status, conditions, trends and key issues affecting people, ecosystems, and institutions in a given geographic context at any level (local, national, regional, international)"(See *"Tools for Analysing Power in Multi-stakeholder Processes - A menu" by Brouwer, Herman et.al. Wageningen 2014* http://www.mspguide.org/msp-guide). (See also the introduction chapter of this toolbox and the chapter on the project management cycle).
The stakeholder analyses can be considered as part of the situation analyses and is aimed to:

- Identify and define the characteristics of people, groups or institutions who might be affected by an intervention or can affect its outcome
- Identify local institutions and processes upon which to build
- Provides a foundation and strategy for participation: mobilisation of key stakeholders
- Understand the needs and interests of the key stakeholders
- Understand the relation between stakeholders and potential conflicts
- Assess the capacity of different stakeholders to participate

Different approaches are available to carry out a stakeholder analyses of which the three most relevant ones are shown here:

2.3.1 Methodologies of stakeholder analysis

Rapid Appraisal of Agricultural Knowledge Systems (RAAKS)
The outcome of the RAAKS method is a ranking of power and influence of identified stakeholders and stakeholder groups on management activities. Based on the RAAKS method a basic stakeholder analysis can be made by mapping all relevant stakeholders and how they relate to the protected area through a Characteristics & Roles Matrix. The matrix reveals whose interests need to be taken into account as well as their potential influence and contributions to the planning process. This matrix should be used in combination with an Importance and Influence Matrix. The outcomes of this systematic stakeholder analysis enables developing a stakeholder specific approach and strategy. See http://www.mspguide.org/tool/stakeholder-characteristics-and-roles-matrix. And http://www.mspguide.org/sites/default/files/resource/menu_of_tools_for_tlp_power_in_msps_v3.pdf

DFID Importance Influence Matrix.

This method is relevant when it is relevant to gain more insight in the importance and the influence of stakeholders on the decision making process. Although developed to be used in aid projects it also useful in site management. In this approach **influence** is the power which stakeholders have to control what decisions are being made and the extent to which stakeholders are able to persuade others into making decisions and following a certain course of action. **Importance** is the impact stakeholders (can) have on the outcome of the management of the area. This analyses will result in the following diagram:


Fig 1. Taken from "Tools for Analysing Power in Multi-stakeholder Processes - A menu" by Brouwer, Herman et.al. Wageningen 2014(http://www.mspguide.org/tool/stakeholder-analysis-importanceinfluence-matrix)

VENN Diagram

Venn diagram shows the key institutions and individuals in a certain area and their relationships and their position in decision-making. Using a VENN diagram stakeholders are ranked in a "onion"; in the most inner peel are those who are most relevant and are directly involved or impacted and to the outer peels are the stakeholder groups with lower importance of influence.

The VENN diagram distinguishes various categories of stakeholders in:

- Primary stakeholders:
    - ✓ Those who are ultimately affected/benefit from the intervention.
    - ✓ Project beneficiaries.
- Secondary stakeholders:
    - ✓ Government agencies, NGOs, research institutions, etc.
    - ✓ They participate in the project because they have a stake / interest in or can contribute to it.
- External- or other- stakeholders:
    - ✓ People, groups and/or institutions that are not formally involved in specific project activities but can have an impact on or be affected by a project.
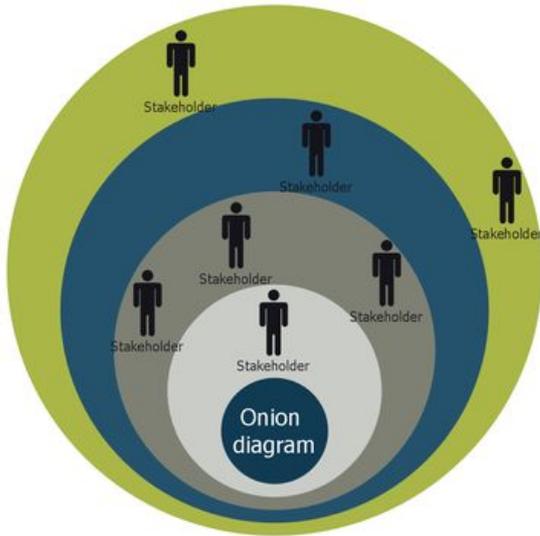
2.4 Levels of stakeholder involvement

There are various levels of stakeholder engagement in the decision making process. Expectations about the role and influence of stakeholders in the decision making process should be clarified at the very beginning of the process. See below.
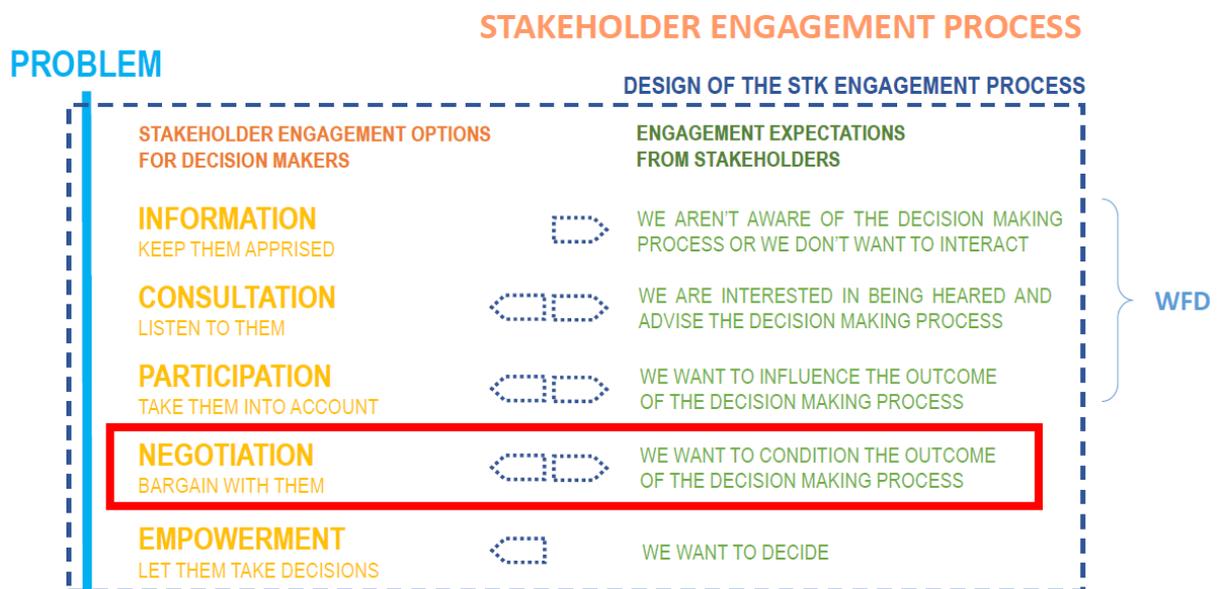
2.5 The role of the facilitator

A facilitator leads a meeting. He/she proposes, suggests, invites and then consults with the participants to generate a consensus. He/she is considered neutral and is not part of the decision making process.

What does a facilitator do:

1. Assists with designing meetings
2. Helps keep the meeting on track, focused on the topic
3. Clarifies and accepts communication
4. Accepts and acknowledges feelings
5. States the problem in a constructive way
6. Suggests a procedure or problem-solving approach
7. Summarizes and clarify direction
8. Consensus-testing

Facilitation is a form of leadership. Facilitators, like leaders, have the opportunity to play a special role: To inspire, direct, and structure participation among people so that creativity, ownership, and productivity result.

2.6 Stakeholder involvement in the N2000 process.

The implementation of the Habitats and Birds Directives has far reaching legal impacts on land use and land use planning and this has led to fierce discussions and even to protests and law suits in some EU countries. (See: *Stakeholder Perceptions in relation to the changes in the management of Natura 2000 sites and the causes and consequences of change. A survey in England, Flanders, France and the Netherlands; I.M. Bouwma, J.L.M. Donders, D.A. Kamphorst, J.Y Frissel, R.M.A. Wegman, H.A.M. Meeuwsen & L.M. Jones-Walters).* PDF 1.

EU member states are relatively free to choose the most suitable means to achieve the main goals of the directives, and to design the implementation process and the management of the protected sites in line with the overall objectives of the directives and of national policies. Countries have adopted different, often top-down and science driven approaches, with widely varying degrees of participatory processes. The overall impression is that, in many countries, public authorities did not involve landowners. The designation of Natura 2000 sites was based solely on scientific criteria rooted in conservation biology. With the progression from site designation to the current phase of management planning and practical measures, there is growing evidence for the need of more dialogue and cooperation between nature conservation authorities and environmental groups on the one side, and agricultural and forestry authorities and land users' groups on the other

Especially the relation with and involvement of the forest sector in the N2000 process has often been problematic. The main challenges related to management of N2000 sites are related to balancing biodiversity conservation and timber production, integrating nature conservation and local stakeholders' demands, the development of an effective and accepted funding scheme for the implementation of Natura 2000 in forests, and how to integrate nature conservation policies with forest and other land use sector policies.

2.7 Case studies and examples from N2000 sites

Case study 1: (*See: Stakeholder Participation in Natura 2000 Management Program: Case Study of Slovenia; Tomislav Laktic and Špela Pezdevšek Malovrh; Forests, August 2018*). Link to case-study (PDF 2)

The Slovenian study suggests that the success of the participatory process should be based on representativeness, independence, influence, transparency, resource accessibility, cost

effectiveness, and task definition criteria. There is a positive trend from a command and control approach towards a participatory approach, which means that various groups of stakeholders could influence policy outcomes in several ways. This case also highlights the need to involve a larger group of stakeholders as some groups felt excluded from the process or were only included in the final phase (i.e., landowners and general public). A reason for that could be the methodology which organized separate workshops for different sectors, in which only a part of the stakeholders were present, or the fact that only the interests of privileged stakeholder groups were included in the decision-making process, while other marginalized stakeholders were only informed about the results of the process in the final phase. Stakeholders felt that not all their responses and proposals were taken into consideration. To improve the perceived influence of stakeholders, project partners need to connect participation with co-responsibility.

The study emphasises the role of the facilitator who should be independent and not be affected by the topic of discussion in order to improve the independence of the participatory process. To improve the management and facilitation of the process, it is important to know the role that each stakeholder plays in the process.

Case study 2: Link to case-study (PDF 1)

This study focuses on the perceptions of stakeholders in relation to changes in management as a result of N2000 designation. *("Stakeholder perceptions in relation to changes in the management of Natura 2000 sites and the causes and consequences of change" (I.M. Bouwma, J.L.M. Donders, D.A. Kamphorst, J.Y Frissel, R.M.A. Wegman, H.A.M. Meeuwsen & L.M. Jones-Walters. WOT Report 128, Wageningen UR, 2016).* In this study the perceptions of key stakeholders about the management of 91 Natura 2000 sites in England, France, Flanders and the Netherlands were reviewed. The study reveals that the majority of the respondents (63%) perceived an increase in the number of measures taken in the sites for the species and habitats that the site was designated for, following the discussion on management between the government and local parties. When asked about the impact of Natura 2000 designation and management on the future of the area, 44% of the respondents felt that Natura 2000 will have a very positive to positive impact on the local economy compared to sixteen percent felt that it has a negative to very negative impact in the local economy. Furthermore the majority of respondents (61%) felt the Natura 2000 designation will have a very positive to positive impact on the well-being of local residents. The survey shows that the majority of respondents indicated that they notice an increase in recreational use of sites.

An important aspect of the way stakeholders feel positive or negative impacts on the management of the site is whether the site was already protected yes or no.

Links to relevant background information

BIODIVERSA Stakeholder Engagement Toolkit at http://www.biodiversa.org/

Multi Stakeholder Partnerships Guide http://www.mspguide.org/msp-guide

Stakeholder analyses
http://www.mspguide.org/tool/stakeholder-analysis-importanceinfluence-matrix

and

https://www.scribd.com/document/51442602/DFID-1995-Guidance-Note-on-how-to-do-Stakeholder-Analysis-of-Aid-Projects-and-Programmes

On the VENN Diagram

https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.mparks.org/resource/collection/603744EA-89A4-40C5-B968-2B292F46C395/POLLINATORS_mParks2016-OCPR.pdf