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Stakeholder engagement in evidence syntheses



The Stakeholder Engagement Series

CEE SE Methods Group

CEE2016 Thematic Session



Current members:

Member	Affiliation
Neal Haddaway (Group Leader)	MISTRA EviEM, Stockholm Environment Institute
Ruth Stewart	Johannesburg University
Steven Cooke	Carleton University
Natalie Rebelo da Silva	Johannesburg University
Christian Kohl	Julius Kühn-Institut
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Ralf Wilhelm	Julius Kühn-Institut
Jeremy Sweet	Sweet Environmental Consultants (SEC), UK
Armin Spök	Alpen-Adria Universität

Need for guidance and better reporting

Outputs

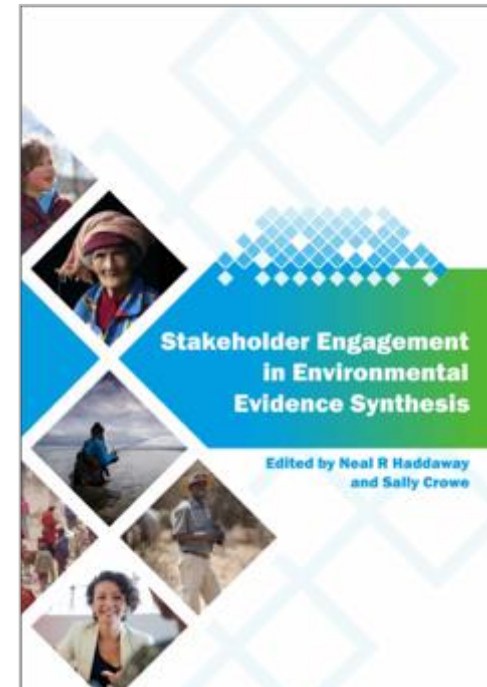
- Special series (ongoing)
- Book (first edition, 2018)
- Community of practice

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Stakeholder engagement in systematic reviews and maps

Stakeholder engagement is an integral part of all systematic reviews to some degree. However, there has been little discussion of this important process in systematic review guidance to date, particularly in the field of environmental management and conservation. This series of commentary articles discusses various aspects of engaging with stakeholders: describing the ranges of methods available, outlining experiences from various systematic review experts, and discussing issues relating to conflict, the benefits of training, engaging directly with decision-makers, and communicating review results.

Edited by Neal Haddaway and Sally Crowe



The special series

Title	Authors
A framework for stakeholder engagement during systematic reviews and maps in environmental management	Haddaway et al.
Knowledge production and environmental conflict: managing systematic reviews and maps for constructive outcomes	Kløcker Larsen and Nilsson
How stakeholder engagement has led us to reconsider definitions of rigour in systematic reviews	Langer et al.
Much at stake: the importance of training and capacity building for stakeholder engagement in evidence synthesis	Eales et al.
A five-step approach for stakeholder engagement in prioritisation and planning of environmental evidence syntheses	Land et al.
Lessons for introducing stakeholders to environmental evidence synthesis	Taylor et al.
Transdisciplinary working to shape systematic reviews and interpret the findings: commentary	Oliver et al.
Inclusive development and prioritization of review questions in a highly controversial field of regulatory science	Spök et al.
Rethinking communication: integrating storytelling for increased stakeholder engagement in environmental evidence synthesis	Sundin et al.
Experiences and lessons in stakeholder engagement in environmental evidence synthesis: a truly special series	Haddaway and Crowe
Engaging environmental policy-makers with systematic reviews: challenges, solutions and lessons learned	Collins et al.

Haddaway et al. *Environ Evid* (2017) 6:11
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Environmental Evidence

METHODOLOGY

Open Access



A framework for stakeholder engagement during systematic reviews and maps in environmental management

N. R. Haddaway^{1*}, C. Kohl², N. Rebelo da Silva³, J. Schiemann², A. Spök⁴, R. Stewart³, J. B. Sweet⁵ and R. Wilhelm²



Overview

- What does 'stakeholder' mean?
- Why engage with stakeholders?
- Stakeholder identification/selection
- Stakeholder analysis/mapping
- Achieving stakeholder balance
- Phasing engagement



Defining 'stakeholders'

stake-
boat race etc.
stake-body *n.*
having a flat open
the sides.
stakebuilding /'steɪkbiːldɪŋ/
up of a shareholding.
stakeholder /'steɪkəʊldə/
with whom each of those who
the money etc. wagered. **2** a per
concern in something, esp. a b
stake-net *n.* a fishing net hur
stake-out *n.* colloq. a period
Stakhanovite /stə'kɑ:nəv/
former USSR) who is
zealous. □ **Stakhanovite**
/-vɪst/ *n.* & *adj.* [from
Russian coal miner d
stite /'stæləkt/
down like

A 'stakeholder' is...

“any group or individual who is affected by or can affect the achievement of an organisation's objectives”

Freeman R. Stakeholder management: a strategic approach. New York: Pitman; 1984.

Stakeholders and systematic reviews

A survey of experience systematic reviewers

- “People who are either **affected by the issue** or **those who may be able to influence the issue**: includes **local people** (e.g. **producers**), **NGOs** and **governments**”
- “**Anyone with an interest** in a particular issue or **anyone likely to be affected** by an **issue or a decision**: includes **poor people** and **researchers, research experts** (systematic review methodology experts).”
- “**People that have an interest in the subject** matter: includes **researchers** and **experts**. Those **generating evidence** and the **end-users of evidence**. Also includes subjects of conservation and development projects.”
- “A **person or representative of an organisation** that is **affected by an activity** that is being reviewed in one way or another: includes **scientists**.”
- “**Those who have a stake in the question**, e.g. **policy-makers, academics, educators, NGOs**.”
- “Someone who has a stake in the findings—the issues have real meaning in their lives; **someone affected by the review findings**.”
- “Those **in one way or another that use the information** from a systematic review: **mainly those in decision making** (e.g. **ministries, agencies—on all levels, local, national and international**), includes **scientists**.”

Why a broad definition?

- ‘Public goods’ SRs often widely used – not just our typical ‘end users’
- Less likely to exclude marginalised groups
- Better planning – more resilience
- Identify and mitigate risk of unforeseen bias (e.g. conflict of interest)
- Actors can have multiple roles and perform multiple actions
- Focus less on ‘who’ are more on ‘how’ engagement works

When not to call stakeholders 'stakeholders'

- 'Stakeholder' can clearly hide lots of detail – lumps different groups together
- Often disguises the need for tailored engagement
- When the term is contentious
 - E.g. Sami (Indigenous people in Scandinavia) object to the term
 - Because it has been used in a financial/rights perspective around land ownership (Sami reject the idea of land ownership)
 - The term has excluded them historically
- Better to talk about 'stakeholder engagement' generally (plans, methods) – then be specific – who?

Why engage?



Reasons for stakeholder engagement

- Moral obligation (public issues, public funds)
- Access to more knowledge¹
- Greater public acceptance of projects²
- Higher likelihood of success³
- Broader communication⁴
- Increased impact on decision-making⁵

¹ Reed MS, Dougill AJ, Baker TR. Participatory indicator development: what can ecologists and local communities learn from each other. *Ecol Appl*. 2008;18(5):1253–69.

² Richards C, Carter C, Sherlock K. *Practical approaches to participation*, Citeseer. 2004.

³ Dougill A, Fraser E, Holden J, Hubacek K, Prell C, Reed M, Stagl S, Stringer L. Learning from doing participatory rural research: lessons from the Peak District National Park. *J Agric Econ*. 2006;57(2):259–75.

⁴ Reed M, Dougill A. Linking degradation assessment to sustainable land management: a decision support system for Kalahari pastoralists. *J Arid Environ*. 2010;74(1):149–55.

⁵ Deverka PA, Lavalley DC, Desai PJ, Esmail LC, Ramsey SD, Veenstra DL, Tunis SR. Stakeholder participation in comparative effectiveness research: defining a framework for effective engagement. 2012.

Actors

Advocacy groups

Business

Citizens

Decision-enforcers

Decision-makers

Publishers

Research funders

Researchers

Fig. 1 Conceptual model of stakeholders, identified by the actors, their roles and their actions

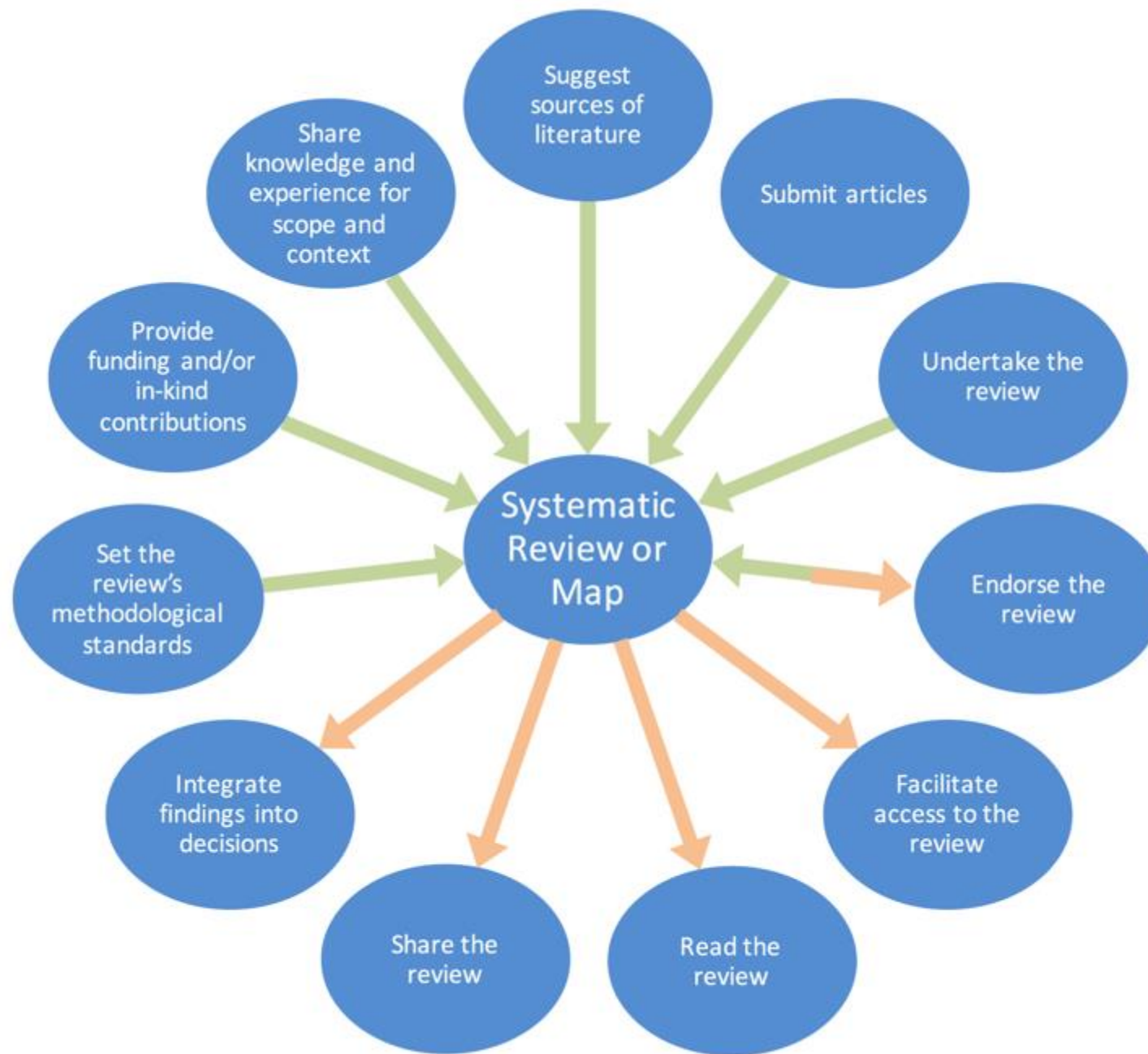
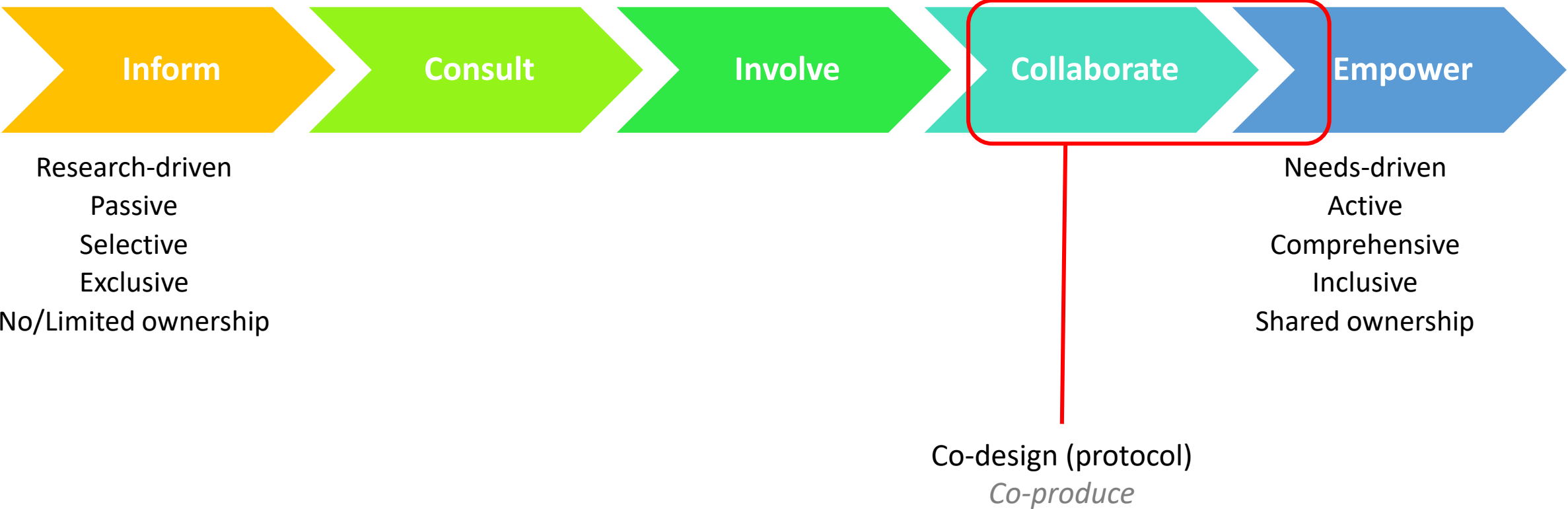


Fig. 2 Model of potential benefits of stakeholder engagement. Models shows direction of benefit with respect to stakeholders (*green arrows* benefit the review, *orange arrows* benefit the stakeholders)

Benefits

- Facilitates transparency (*glass box* approach)
- Prediction of controversies around review results [Sánchez-Bayo and Wyckhuys 2019: doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2019.01.020]
- Ensure you're using broadly accepted definitions
- Increase rigour of the methods (esp. search strategy)
- Provide access to grey literature
- Endorsement and acceptance (ownership)
- Help tailor communications
- Help document impact of your review
- Build capacity for evidence-informed decision-making (and critical thinking)

Modes of stakeholder engagement



Stakeholder identification / selection



Stakeholder
identification /
selection

Stakeholder analysis / mapping



Stakeholder analysis / mapping

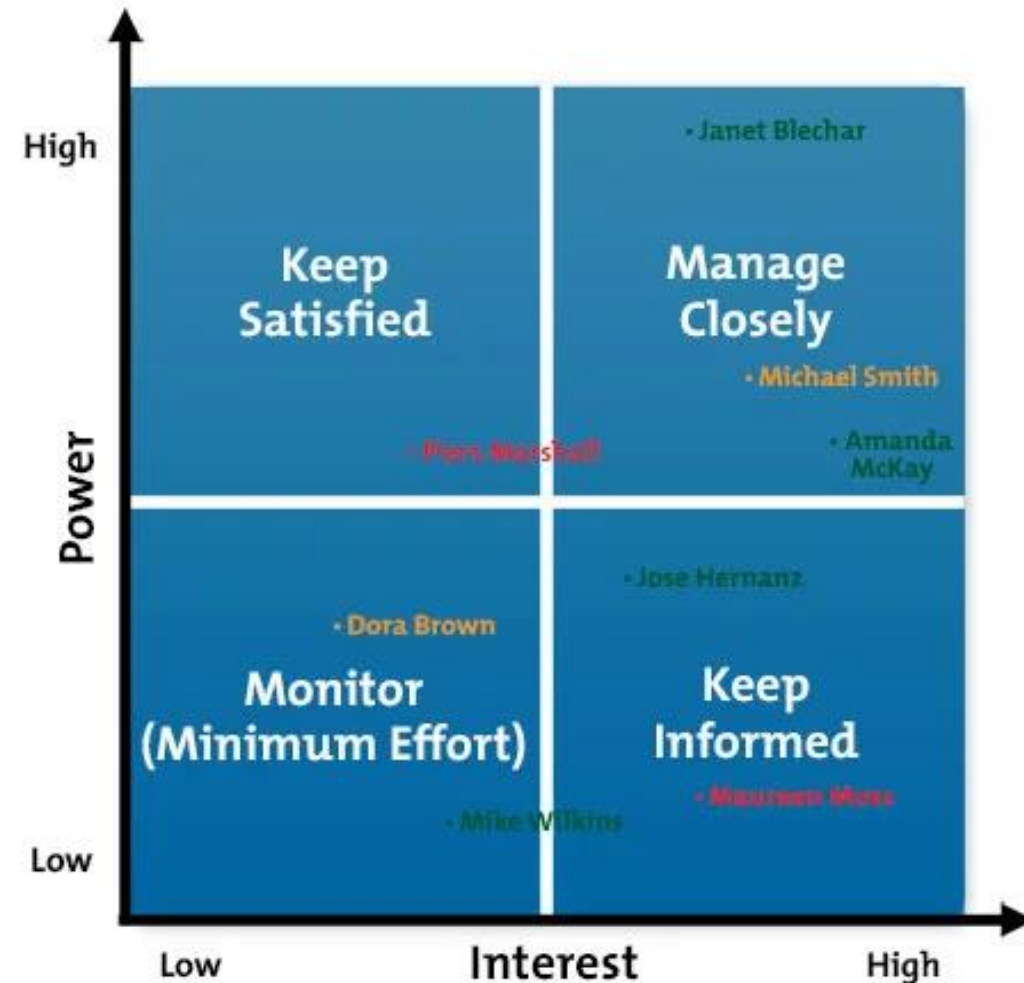
- Ensuring balance in stakeholder groups
- Prioritising certain groups of stakeholders over others where resources are limited
- Identification and investigation of possible conflicts between stakeholders
- Tailoring contact to specific types of stakeholder
- Phasing contact with stakeholders (depending on utility and benefits)

Two approaches...

- Typically 'top down' approaches
 - Reviewers or experts classify stakeholders based on knowledge about them
 - Consider how transparent you need to be...
- 'Bottom up' approaches
 - Stakeholders classify one another
 - Useful where conflict or legitimacy of the project are key concerns
 - Resource intensive

How is stakeholder analysis done?

- Often through *interest-influence matrices* (or similar)
- Classify stakeholders according to two dimensions
 - Interest (what interest do they have in the project?)
 - Influence (what influence do they have in supporting our goals?)
- Other dimensions possible
 - e.g. amount of evidence versus engagement effort, or social media influence versus engagement cost



Balance,
phasing,
and planning



Achieving balance in stakeholder engagement

- Balance – the representation of all main interests, views and opinions
- NOT – quantitative/proportional representation!
- Allow all relevant groups/individuals to have their say
- Empower marginalised groups
- *Balance is most evident when it is absent*
- Consider social equity as well as conceptual/role balance

Phasing stakeholder engagement

Action	Review stage(s)	Direction of action
Share own experiences	Early	Review ←
Share articles	Early, mid	Review ←
Endorse the review	Early, mid, Final	Review ← → stakeholders
Undertake the review	Early, mid, final	Review ←
Share missing/supplementary information for specific studies	Mid	Review ←
Provide context	Early, final	Review ←
Provide funding and/or in-kind contributions	Early, final (communication)	Review ←
Represent an organisation/group	Early, final	Review ←
Set review standards	Early, final	→ Stakeholders
Share knowledge	Early, final	→ Stakeholders
Facilitate access to the review	Final	→ Stakeholders
Read the review	Final, post	→ Stakeholders
Share the review	Final, post	→ Stakeholders
Integrate review findings into decisions	Post	→ Stakeholders

Planning engagement

- How to invite
 - Closed call / open call
 - Email / letter / phone call / in person / posting
- How to engage
 - Group meetings / individual meetings / telephone / Skype / email / questionnaire
 - Different engagement for different actors (tailored contact)
- What to ask?
 - Support / endorsement / comments and opinions / suggestions
- When to ask
 - Phased contact
- How to ask
 - Terminology and explanations (avoiding fatigue)
 - Clear objectives

Challenges of
stakeholder
engagement

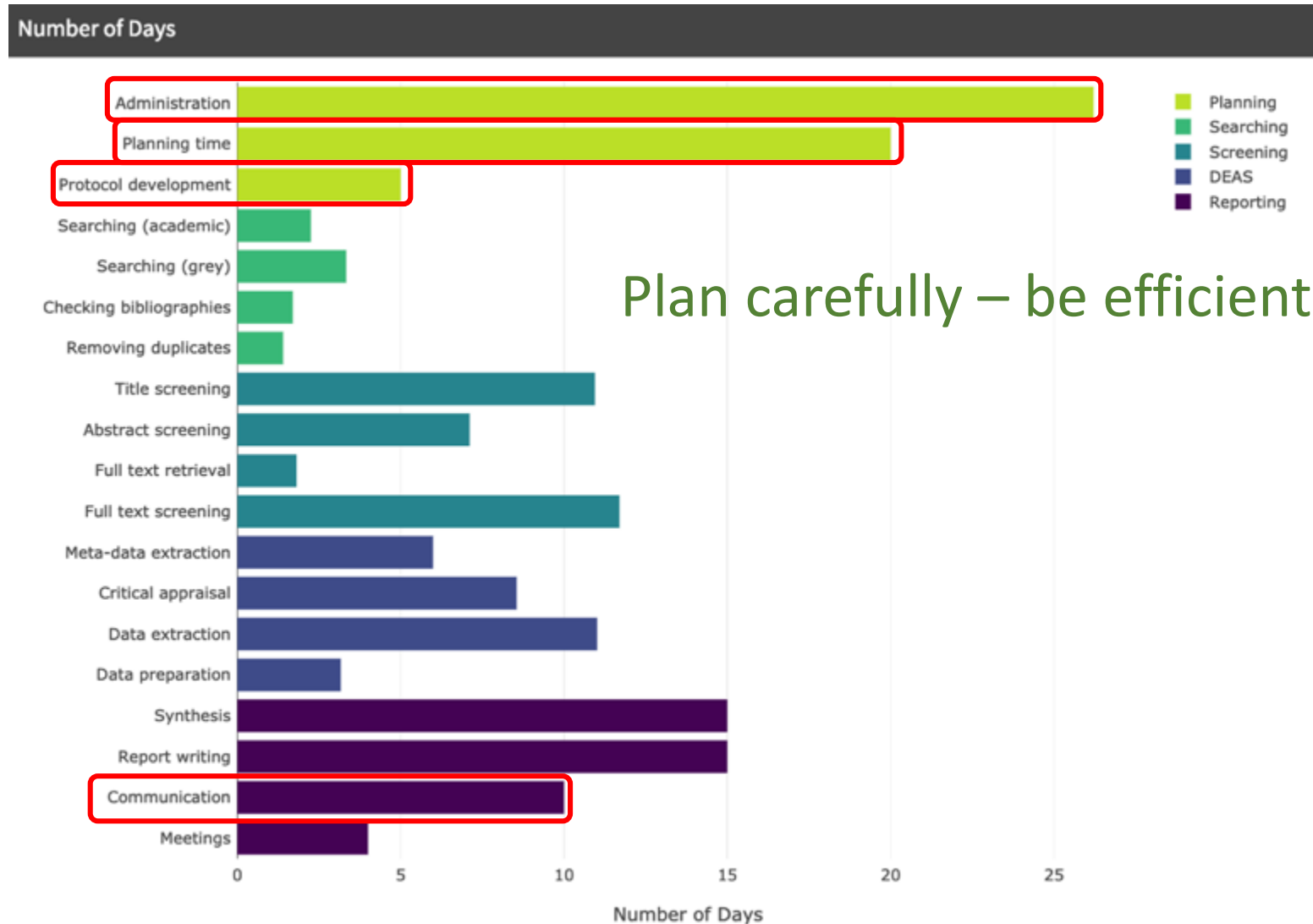


Challenge

Bias

Stage	Bias	Explanation	Mitigation
Stakeholder selection	Identification bias	Purposeful selection of stakeholders using personal/organisational knowledge or unsystematic searches may result in a biased and unbalanced group of stakeholders	Use a combination of selection methods
	Network bias	Asking others to suggest potential stakeholders may result in a biased and unbalanced group of stakeholders	Use multiple starting points (suggestees) from a range of backgrounds
	Awareness bias	Announcing an open call for stakeholder engagement may target a biased and unbalanced group of stakeholders	Advertise the open call using a range of different channels, using stakeholder analysis to identify stakeholders that may require specific forms of contact
	Self-promotion bias	Systematically searching for potential stakeholders may select only those with an online presence, producing a biased or unbalanced group of stakeholders	Use a combination of selection methods
Stakeholder response	Awareness bias	Announcing an open call for stakeholder engagement may target a biased and unbalanced group of stakeholders	Advertise the open call using a range of different channels, using stakeholder analysis to identify stakeholders that may require specific forms of contact
	Access/technology bias	Stakeholders may not have the ability to respond to invitations, producing a biased, unbalanced group of stakeholders	Provide multiple modes of engagement that do not rely purely on one technology/format
	Intimidation bias	Stakeholders may be less likely to respond if they feel their views are unlikely to be heard over the views of the majority	Provide support to minority stakeholders by tailoring contact and ensuring that views will be heard in initial invitations
	Faith bias	Stakeholders may not engage if they believe that their views will not be heard due to failures on the part of the reviewers	Undertake stakeholder analysis to help identify and categorise potential conflicts. Ensure openness and contactability to support and facilitate response from less vocal and minority stakeholder groups
	Apathy bias	Stakeholders may not respond if they feel others will perform their role for them	Encourage stakeholders to engage by explaining that all views are valid and important, and stress the need for a comprehensive, balanced group of stakeholders
On-going engagement	Commitment bias	Stakeholders may not be able to commit to involvement along the full extent of the systematic review process, causing attrition over time and leaving a biased, unbalanced group of stakeholders	Phase contact with certain stakeholders according to their likely involvement
	Timescale bias	Long timescales involved with systematic reviews may mean that attrition occurs over time as stakeholders change roles, in turn leaving a biased, unbalanced group of stakeholders	Attempt to engage with multiple stakeholders from each organisation to ensure some contacts remain
	Resource bias	Stakeholders' resources may be too limited to allow full engagement throughout the systematic review process, leaving a biased, unbalanced group of stakeholders	Phase contact with certain stakeholders according to their likely involvement. Minimise necessary resources needed for engagement, for example by reducing unnecessary reading
	Access/technology bias	Stakeholders may not have the ability to respond to invitations or on-going engagement, resulting in attrition and leaving a biased, unbalanced group of stakeholders	Provide multiple modes of engagement that do not rely purely on one technology/format
	Intimidation bias	Stakeholders may be less likely to respond if they feel their views are unlikely to be heard over the views of the majority	Provide support to minority stakeholders by tailoring contact and ensuring that views will be heard in initial invitations
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	Apathy bias	Stakeholders may not respond if they feel others will perform their role for them	Encourage stakeholders to engage by explaining that all views are valid and important, and stress the need for a comprehensive, balanced group of stakeholders

Requires time, resources



Plan carefully – be efficient and smart!

Challenges of Stakeholder Engagement

- May divert resources away from review conduct
- Difficult to maintain balance and representativeness
- Need to manage SH expectations
- Avoid overwhelming with jargon/information
- Avoid undue influence from SH
- Need to provide anonymity
- Need to give acknowledgement
- Potential for SH conflict
- Need to plan how to manage conflict (compromise possible?)
- Need to maintain long-term interest
- Need to avoid tokenism
- Team may require stakeholder engagement training
- Ideally should monitor and evaluate SH engagement

Final considerations



Communication

- Systematic review publication is NOT communication
- Key messages (and links to evidence) needed
- Who are the messages for?
- What format is most likely to be effective?
- Key contacts can help tailor/test communications
- Communication easier if stakeholders engaged throughout and feel a sense of ownership

Other considerations

- Balance the need for transparency with the need for sensitivity
- Be aware of balance and power in the group identifying and analysing stakeholders
- Be reasonable and feasible in expectations of engagement (will Bill Gates really reply...?)
- Don't ask too much – MANY researchers asking for their input
- Plan carefully – and good luck!

Thank you!

<https://www.biomedcentral.com/collections/SESRM?SkipCache=true>

<http://eviem.se/en/publications/book-stakeholder-engagement-in-environmental-evidence-synthesis/>