

Stakeholder engagement for Transnational Management of Invasive Alien Species in the Sava River basin

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Introduction

The *Preserving Sava River Basin Habitats through Transnational Management of Invasive Alien Species* project is aimed at reducing habitat fragmentation and improving connectivity of the transnational Sava River Basin (SRB) ecological corridor by developing cross-sectoral measures for monitoring, controlling and eradication of invasive alien species in the protected areas network of the SRB.

To achieve this goal, the project will establish coordination and cooperation of protected areas and other stakeholders in the Sava River Basin for better management, control and eradication of invasive alien species in SRB. This requires a systematic initial assessment of stakeholders in each beneficiary country, to identify and prioritise stakeholders for inclusion in the IAS management and to identify their role in the process.

To do this, project partners need to conduct a stakeholder analysis for all pilot sites, and this chapter of the training manual provides a detailed methodology for doing this.

Why stakeholders engagement planning?

Stakeholders engagement is the active involvement and participation of others in any planning process, project, some aspect of a project or certain activity.

Stakeholders engagement planning in SavaTIES project will secure participatory approach to IAS management in which recourse users (individuals, groups and organizations), protected areas managers and other stakeholders gather to discuss and / or take decisions that affect them in relation to IAS issue. It will contribute to more applicable project results using local knowledge, better understanding of projects and issues, integration of various interests and opinions. What is more, it will secure public acceptance of the decisions made during the project, and a sense of ownership over the project outcomes.

Properly planned stakeholders engagement will bring numerous benefits to SavaTIES project team, to stakeholders as well as to wider stakeholder community in Sava River basin.

- Benefits to project team:
 - Useful contacts for future actions
 - Improved dissemination of project results
 - Enhanced impact of project in whole Sava River Basin
 - Increased support for follow up of the SavaTIES project
 - Better knowledge
 - Opportunities for learning

- More resources provided
- Potential to improve methods

- Benefits to identified stakeholders
 - Opportunities for learning
 - Better access to knowledge
 - Improved decision making
 - Improved IAS related policies
 - Access to better methodology for IAS eradication and monitoring
 - Sense of involvement
 - Job opportunities
 - Opportunity to influence planning process
 - Sense of ownership

- Benefits to wider stakeholder community
 - Better knowledge applied in policies and practices
 - Reduced barriers between decision makers (policy creators) and society
 - Improved trust in the IAS management process
 - Better evidence on IAS

Levels of stakeholder engagement

There are different levels of stakeholder engagement, depending on the ultimate aims of engagement activities and the project. For the purpose of SavaTIES project, four levels of engagement have been accepted:

Inform. Informing is the lowest level of engagement. It is communication with passive stakeholders in form of sharing information about the project or delivered outcomes. Informing is typically a one-way flow of information and does not actually provide the opportunity for stakeholder engagement, but is included as a form of engagement because it still requires the project team to communicate in a way that suits the stakeholders.

Consult. Consulting is the basic minimum opportunity for stakeholders input to a process. Consult simply means to ask for opinions or information. There is no invitation to sit down together and work on things in any cooperative way.

Involve. Involving is more than a consultation. At the involve level, the stakeholders are invited into the process, usually from the beginning. At this level project team work directly with the stakeholders and consider their input throughout the planning process.

Collaborate. To collaborate means to work together. This is highest level of engagement where stakeholders are effectively partners with the project team, and actively participate in IAS management planning.

Challenges and limits to stakeholders engagement

The literature provides a wide range of case studies illustrating the advantages and risks of participation. It is important, before implementing a specific participatory system, to know all the risks in order to optimize the participation process.

Passible risks of participation

- Expensive process
- Time consuming process
- Potential stakeholder frustration
- Identification of new conflicts
- Involvement of stakeholders who are not representative
- Empowerment of an already important stakeholder

Steps in stakeholders engagement planning process

Stakeholder engagement should occur throughout the entire Invasive and alien species (IAS) management process in Sava River basin, during and after project has been finished. That is why proper planning is necessary. Whole process is divided into 4 steps as presented below.

Step 1. Scoping phase

The first, and the very important step in the stakeholder engagement planning is to identify purpose and desired impact of the engagement. No stakeholder engagement strategy can be drafted without considering the reasons for engagement, and what is being sought from the process. It is defined as the “scoping” phase because the scope and extent of engagement is defined at this point.

The scoping phase has to consider the context of the engagement - the background to the subject being addressed by the engagement process. Understanding the context also helps to ensure that the engagement process builds upon previous experience and incorporates lessons learnt, rather than simply duplicating previous efforts.

Purpose of the stakeholder engagement in SavaTIES project

- Raise awareness of the project
- Form new partnerships, and strengthen Sava Parks network
- Encourage a sense of ownership of the project by stakeholders
- Explore IAS issues, share ideas and best practice, generate ideas and identify
- Involve stakeholders to make it easier to obtain endorsement of resulting decisions
- Gain access to resources or to obtain information data
- Create new, or improved communication channels, identify effective dissemination
- Produce relevant documents on IAS management
- -

Impact of the of the stakeholder engagement in SavaTIES project

- Better understanding the likely effect of IAS impact on biodiversity, economy and human health
- Imbedding measures for monitoring, controlling and eradication of IAS across SRB
- Better understanding the local/ national policies and IAS management strategies
- Greater knowledge on controlling and eradication of IAS
- Harmonised cross sectoral cooperation in IAS management
- Contributing results to the discussion on the development of local/ national policies

Defining background and context for engagement activities in SavaTIES project

When defining background and context for engagement activities ask following questions:

- What similar projects have been undertaken previously by all partner?
- What stakeholders, or stakeholder groups, have been engaged in the past?
- What is the historical context to the **SavaTIES** project?

Step 2. Stakeholders analysis

Second step in planning stakeholders engagement is stakeholders analysis. It may seem self-evident that all the relevant stakeholders should be identified prior to any attempt to engage. However, it is surprising how often this step is omitted in projects that need to work with stakeholders. In many cases this omission can significantly compromise the success of a project. For example, the project may miss

What is a stakeholder?

A stakeholder is any person, organization or group that is affected by or who can affect a decision, action or issue, for example, invasive species management.

crucial information that could have been provided, had they engaged with the right people.

Rather than just identifying 'beneficiaries', a stakeholder analysis seeks to identify people, organisations or groups

who may be either positively or negatively affected by planning of IAS management.

In addition, stakeholder analysis seeks to identify those who might affect the outcome of the planning process, either positively or negatively. These stakeholders might not directly benefit from or be negatively affected by IAS management, but they may have the power to enable or block the planning process and/or the desired outcomes from that process.

A successful stakeholder analysis will help you:

- **Start talking early to the right people.** Projects that engage with stakeholders early lead to a greater sense of ownership amongst stakeholders, who are then more likely to engage throughout the lifetime of the project, and implement the recommendations of your work.
- **Identify to whom you need to talk to.** Don't just open your address book or talk to the 'usual suspects'. Find out who might lose out, as well as who will benefit. Find out who is typically marginalized and left out, as well as the people and organisations that everyone knows and trusts. Those who are left out are usually the first to question and criticize work that they feel no ownership over.
- **Identify stakeholders interest.** When you begin to identify stakeholders, you will find out more about the nature of their stake in IAS management, and you may need to broaden your view of what is included in your work, if everyone is to feel that their interests are covered.
- **Identify influential stakeholders.** Some stakeholders are more powerful than others. If there are highly influential stakeholders who are opposed to your project, then you need to know who they are, so that you can develop an influencing strategy to get their support. If they support your work, then it is also important to know who these stakeholders are, so you can join forces with them to work more effectively. There will be some influential stakeholders who have relatively little interest in your work. Influential individuals are often busy and inaccessible, and you may need to spend significant time and energy getting their attention, before you are able to access their help.
- **Identify marginalized stakeholders.** Stakeholder analysis is often used to prioritise more influential stakeholders for engagement. It is important not to use stakeholder analysis as a tool to further marginalize groups that are already disempowered and ignored. Many of these groups may have a significant interest in IAS management, but very little influence over this process.
- **Identify key relationships.** It can be incredibly valuable to know in advance about conflicts between stakeholders, so that you can avoid conflict and where possible resolve it. Through stakeholder analysis, it can sometimes become possible to create alliances between disempowered groups and those with more power, who share similar interests and goals, thereby empowering previously marginalized groups.

How to conduct stakeholder analysis?

Identify 2-4 cross-cutting stakeholders for each pilot site and invite them to local half-day workshop.

Cross-cutting stakeholders have wide interest in the issue, so that they are familiar with the widest possible range of organisations that might have a stake in it. In our case IAS management. So, you invite someone from a Government department or agency and someone from an NGO, not just people from different Government departments

Only 2-4 stakeholders plus project team should be present, as it is not the aim to represent all stakeholders at this workshop (this isn't possible as we have yet to systematically identify them).

- At the beginning of the workshop **clearly establish the focus of the IAS issue that stakeholders might have a stake in**. It is important to be as specific as possible about your focus, so you can clearly identify who has a stake and who does not. You have to consider:
 - (i) the geographical scope of the project (are you interested only in stakeholders at municipality level, or is this a national issue that may involve national stakeholders?),
 - (ii) sectoral scope of the project (which sector should be included in IAS management, eg. agriculture, forestry, water management, nature protection, fishery...).
- Choose a well known stakeholder organization and run through the stakeholder analysis for this organisation as an example. Draw copies of the extendable matrix below on flip chart paper and stick to walls, so that everyone can see what is being done. Explain that interest and influence can be both positive and negative (e.g. a group's interests might be negatively affected and they may have influence to block as well as facilitate)
- Ask participants to identify organisations, groups or individuals who are particularly interested and/or influential, and list them in the first column of the stakeholder table (Annex 1). Prompts to help identify stakeholders are in Box 1.
- Ask participants to discuss and complete each column in the stakeholder table individually. Remind participants to try and identify groups who might typically be marginalised or disadvantaged, but who still have strong interest.
- Take a break, and then invite participants to present the work done. Facilitate a discussion of key points people feel should be discussed as a group about stakeholders where there is particular disagreement or confusion and resolve these where possible (accepting differing views where it is not possible to resolve differences)

Organise regional stakeholder analysis workshop

Purpose of this workshop is to present findings of the initial local workshop. Broader stakeholder audience representing main stakeholder's groups from each country participating in the project is present at workshop.

- At the beginning of the workshop summaries findings of each initial stakeholders workshop, which is stakeholder table completed for each pilot site, and invite participants to continue work in a groups per country and revise and improve stakeholder tables. Remind them not to omit marginalised or disadvantaged stakeholders with strong interest.
- Invite participants to present and discuss work done in the groups only if there are changes in comparison to the initial version of stakeholder table.

Categorise and prioritize stakeholders

The most commonly used approach is to categorise stakeholders in relation to their relative levels of interest and influence. Depending on the category, this approach suggests different ways how to deal with these stakeholders.

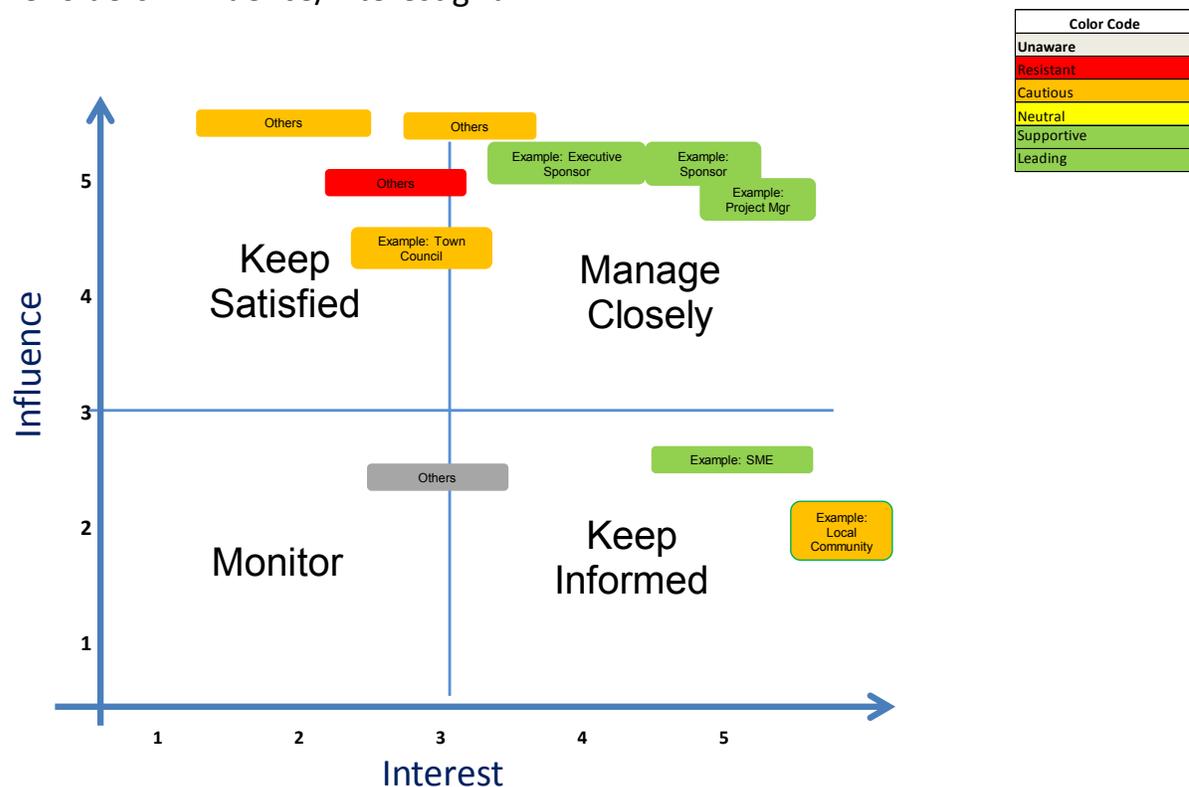
Stakeholders with high influence and low interest may represent a significant risk to the project, and should be monitored and involved. They are also called “context setters”.

Stakeholders with low interest and low influence over desired outcomes shall be only informed and monitored with minimum effort. There is little need to consider them in much detail or to engage with them. They are also called “crowd”

A stakeholder with low influence and high interest in a project shall be keep informed and consulted. They are supportive, they lack the capacity for impact, although they may become influential by forming alliances with other stakeholders. They are also called “**subjects**”

Finally, the **high influence, high interest** stakeholders are called **key stakeholders**. You should actively collaborate with them.

Stakeholders - Influence/Interest grid



Writing report on stakeholder analysis

Some columns can easily be converted into graphs, where there is numerical or categorical data involved. Consider carefully whether you want to all qualitative data to be made publically available in a

form that is linked to specific named organisations and individuals, especially where this concerns conflicts between organisations. For a publically available version of the report, types of conflict may be summarized and the nature of stakes and types of influence may be summarized for different types of stakeholder, accompanied by graphs of numerical/categorical data e.g. farming organisations are most likely to be interested in certain aspects and have most influence over certain policy areas. The full stakeholder analysis matrix should be retained for use by the project team.

Box 1: Prompts to help identify stakeholders

A number of questions may be asked to help identify stakeholders, for example:

- Who will be affected by the work?
- Will the impacts be local, national or international?
- Who has the power to influence the outcomes of the work?
- Who are potential allies and opponents?
- What coalitions might build around the issues being tackled?
- Are there people whose voices or interests in the issue may not be heard?
- Who will be responsible for managing the outcome?
- Who can facilitate or impede the outcome through their participation, non-participation or opposition?
- Who can contribute financial or technical resources towards the work?

Alternatively, consider examples of stakeholder categories, and ask if there are stakeholders from these categories that you should include:

- Government departments and politicians
- Government agencies
- Industry/producer representative bodies/associations
- Media
- Trading partners
- Land owners and managers
- Special interest/lobby groups
- National representative and advisory groups
- Research organisations
- Professional groups and their representative bodies
- Representative groups e.g. for consumers or patients
- NGOs
- Community groups

Step 3. Methods for engagement

The methods used for engagement depend upon objectives, the required level of engagement, the timing of when engagement activities are intended to take place, and the expected role of the stakeholders.

Methods of engagement can be considered also in terms of the level of engagement (Inform, consult, involve, collaborate) they are most appropriate for. Examples of methods and their associated levels of engagement are presented in table 1, while table 3 presents examples of stakeholders and methods based on appropriate level of engagement.

Table 1. Examples of methods and their associated levels of engagement

Level of engagement →	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate
Methods ↓				
Website	x	x		
Social media	x	x		
Leaflets	x			
Media				
Newsletters	x			
Newspapers	x			
Presentations	x	x		
Public hearings	x	x		
One-to-one meetings	x	x	x	
Site visits	x	x	x	
Interviews		x		
Working groups		x	x	x
Workshops		x	x	x
Trainings		x	x	x
Questionnaires/surveys				
Steering committee			x	x
Scenario building			x	x
Visioning			x	x

Table 2. Examples of stakeholders and methods based on appropriate level of engagement

Level of engagement →	Inform		Consult	Involve		Collaborate
Methods →	Website	Leaflets	Interviews	Workshops	One-to-one meetings	Steering committee
Stakeholders ↓				x		
SH 1		x		x	x	
SH 2		x	x	x	x	x
SH 3	x	x	x			
SH 4		x	x			

Step 4. Definitions of possible stakeholder roles/contributions during and after the SavaTIES project

This step is about effectively planning the engagement process and defining the full list of activities you intend to carry out. The matrix presented in table 3. will help you to bring together information on the roles the stakeholder will play, the timing of when engagement activities take place, the method of engagement, and the level of engagement to be adopted. Note that stakeholders may, and often will, have multiple roles to play throughout a project.

Table 3. Matrix for planning stakeholder engagement activities. This matrix will be used when planning activities for different levels of engagement with various stakeholders

	Stakeholders	Methods for engagement	Role of stakeholders during the project	Role of stakeholders after the project is finished
Collaborate				
Involve				

Consult			
Inform			

Further reading

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