



Integrated Environmental Management Information Series

Stakeholder Engagement 3



Department of
Environmental Affairs and Tourism

Other topics in the series of overview information reports on the concepts of, and approaches to, integrated environmental management are listed below and the first six are currently available on request. Further titles in this series are being prepared and will be made available periodically. Sequence of release and titles are subject to change.

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PREFACE

This document is one of a series of overview information reports on the concepts of, and approaches to integrated environmental management (IEM). IEM is a key instrument of South Africa's National Environmental Management Act (NEMA). South Africa's NEMA promotes the integrated environmental management of activities that may have a significant effect (positive or negative) on the environment. IEM provides the overarching framework for the integration of environmental assessment and management principles into environmental decision-making. It includes the use of several environmental assessment and management tools that are appropriate for the various levels of decision-making.

The aim of this document series is to provide general information on techniques, tools and processes for environmental assessment and management. The material in this document draws upon experience and knowledge from South African practitioners and authorities, and published literature on international best practice. This document is aimed at a broad readership, which includes government authorities (who are responsible for reviewing and commenting on environmental reports and interacting in environmental processes), environmental professionals (who undertake or are involved in environmental assessments as part of their professional practice), academics (who are interested and active in the environmental assessment field from a research, teaching and training perspective), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and interested persons. It is hoped that this document will also be of interest to practitioners, government authorities and academics from around the world.

This document has been designed for use in South Africa and it cannot reflect all the specific requirements, practices and procedures of environmental assessment in other countries.

This series of documents is not meant to encompass every possible concept, consideration, issue or process in the range of environmental assessment and management tools. Proper use of this series of documents is as a generic reference, with the understanding that it will be revised and supplemented by detailed guideline documents.

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Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at are those of the authors and are not necessarily the official view of the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism. Any misrepresentation of views or errors of fact are those of the authors and are not a reflection of the individuals acknowledged.

All sources used have been acknowledged by means of complete references.

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SUMMARY

This document provides an introductory overview of stakeholder engagement as it applies to integrated environmental management (IEM).

In order to overcome existing problems with the process stemming from the use of different definitions and interpretations of "public participation", it is proposed that stakeholder engagement is a more appropriate term to describe the spectrum of increasing levels of engagement between stakeholders. Levels of engagement between stakeholders range from stakeholder protest, to informing, consulting, involving, collaborating with, and empowering stakeholders in the decision-making process. Various examples of stakeholder engagement in IEM are identified, along with references for further information.

The objectives associated with these different levels are provided, and the need for setting objectives that are more specific for different stages of the process is highlighted. The responsibilities of various stakeholders, environmental consultants and stakeholder engagement practitioners are clarified.

The appropriate level of engagement should take into account a number of factors such as the objectives for engaging with stakeholders, the social profile of stakeholders, context-related issues (such as the levels of literacy), the spatial scale of the proposed activity, the number of people involved, the resources available for conducting the process, legislative requirements and the norms and societal values defining a particular context.

Approaches to stakeholder engagement and techniques for facilitating the process are suggested and brief summary descriptions provided. The need to use approaches that are more appropriate and techniques for stakeholder engagement is highlighted, particularly for processes that are run in developing country contexts.

An overview of stakeholder engagement in environmental decision-making is provided, which identifies current challenges, shortcomings and lessons learnt. The document draws largely from the experience of stakeholder engagement in South Africa. However, many of the principles and outcomes are expected to be more generally relevant and applicable.

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1. Introduction

There is growing dissatisfaction by stakeholders around the world at being inadequately engaged in processes and decisions that affect their biophysical, social, cultural and economic environment. This dissatisfaction is reflected, for example, in anti-globalisation protests such as those that took place in Seattle in 1999 and Genoa in 2001, and in calls by the business sector for co-regulation. An increasing number of cases are being taken to court because the concerns of interested and affected parties (I&APs) have not been adequately taken into consideration in the decision-making process. Opportunities for stakeholder engagement have, however, been increased by democratic governance, the increasing degree of decentralization in decision-making and the growing influence of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs) and the private sector.

Effective and equitable engagement between stakeholders contributes to the identification of key issues of concern and possible solutions, as well as of relevant local or traditional knowledge. This helps to ensure that environmental considerations are taken into account in the planning, design and decision-making for proposals that may have a significant effect on the environment. In this way the potential negative impacts of a proposal or activity may be minimized and the positive benefits

Furthermore, through engaging stakeholders proactively proponents and decision-makers are able to understand and clarify the degree to which other stakeholders will be willing to accept any trade-offs which may be required (IAP2, 2002). This ensures more informed decision-making and ultimately more sustainable development. Greater transparency in the decision-making process, along with the opportunity for interested and affected parties to play a role in this process, helps to build the credibility of environmental assessment and management processes.

These potential benefits of stakeholder engagement are, however, often discounted. Poorly run stakeholder engagement processes have led to a large degree of cynicism by proponents, authorities, I&APs, environmental consultants and stakeholder engagement practitioners on

the value of stakeholder engagement. Proponents often regard the process as an opportunity for political grandstanding by I&APs, which leads to little more than standoffs and costly delays. In addition, if there are unrealistic demands for the disclosure of sensitive information, proponents may be hesitant to voluntarily enter into a stakeholder engagement process. On the other hand, in some cases I&APs may regard the process as being nothing more than a token effort at engagement without any real commitment to incorporating their opinions in

The negative perceptions of stakeholder engagement processes described above stem from two fundamental problems with the process. The first relates to a lack of clarity on the definitions used to describe the engagement process. This leads to poorly defined objectives for the process and for the responsibilities of the different stakeholders, environmental consultants and stakeholder engagement practitioners. The result is often that the expectations of different stakeholders regarding the outcomes of the process are mismatched.

The second problem relates to the use of inappropriate approaches and techniques in the stakeholder engagement process. The outcome of the process, and consequently the perceptions of stakeholders regarding its value, will be influenced by the context within which stakeholder engagement is conducted (such as the levels of literacy). The combination of these problems and challenges has led to accusations in some cases of token stakeholder engagement, which takes advantage of unequal balances of power and resources to force proposals through the decision-making process.

This cynicism heralds an urgent need to refocus on the definition of, and approaches to stakeholder engagement in order to ensure that, within the constraints imposed by external circumstances, the stakeholder engagement process is as effective, efficient and equitable as possible.

Effective, efficient and equitable stakeholder engagement refers to a process that achieves the desired objectives (effective), without waste of effort and resources (efficient), while ensuring that the process is fair and just (equitable).

2. Purpose of this Document

The purpose of this document is to provide an introductory overview of stakeholder engagement as it applies to IEM. It is proposed that 'stakeholder engagement' replace the term 'public participation' in order to clarify some of the current misconceptions related to the process. It highlights the need for more careful selection of approaches and techniques in order to meet the desired objectives of the stakeholder engagement process. The document considers stakeholder engagement in its broader application, extending beyond its more traditional role in environmental impact assessment (EIA).

The rationale for replacing 'public participation' with the term 'stakeholder engagement' is explained, a working definition of stakeholder engagement is proposed and the general objectives associated with different levels of engagement are introduced (Chapter 3). The concept of IEM is described and examples of the opportunities for stakeholder engagement within the broader IEM framework are provided (Chapter 4). The overall purpose and benefits of stakeholder engagement are identified, as well as the need for setting specific objectives for different stages of the process (Chapter 5). The responsibilities of various stakeholder groups, environmental consultants and stakeholder engagement practitioners are highlighted (Chapter 6). A range of approaches and techniques for identifying stakeholders, engaging with stakeholders and for facilitating the process are summarized (Chapter 7). An overview of stakeholder engagement in IEM is provided, including current challenges and shortcomings and the lessons learnt (Chapter 8). The appendix provides a brief description of some of the commonly used stakeholder engagement approaches and techniques (Appendix A).

3. Defining Stakeholder Engagement

The engagement of I&APs in the decision-making process is frequently referred to as public participation. However, a review of definitions for public participation reflects some of the current difficulties associated with the term and provides the motivation for replacing it with 'stakeholder engagement'.

Canter (1996) defines public participation as "a continuous, two-way communication process which involves promoting full public understanding of the processes and mechanisms through which environmental problems and needs are investigated and solved by the responsible agency; keeping the public fully informed about the status and progress of studies and implications of project, plan, programme, or policy formulation and evaluation activities; and actively soliciting from all concerned citizens their opinions and perceptions of objectives and needs and their preferences regarding resource use and alternative development or management strategies and any other information and assistance relative to the decision."

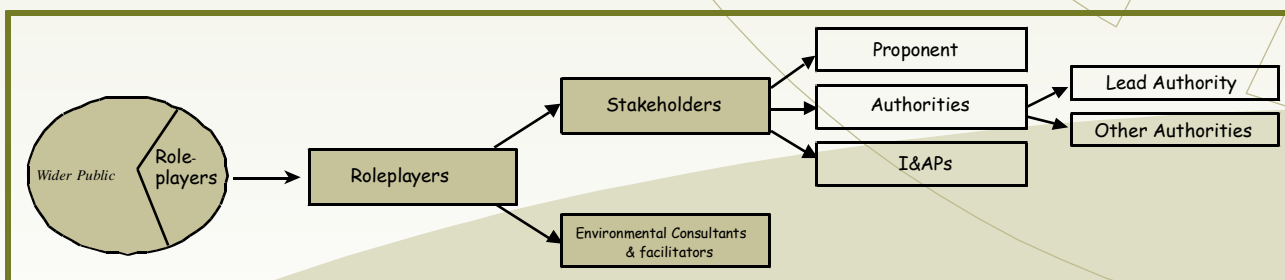
By this definition public participation refers to a process of two-way information exchange and consultation without any reference to sharing responsibility or delegating authority to I&APs for decision-making.

On the other hand, Creighton (1993, as cited in Glavovic *et al.*, 2001) defines public participation as "a mechanism by which the public is not only heard before the decision, but has an opportunity to influence the decision from the beginning to the end of the decision-making process."

Greyling (1999) regards public participation as a collaborative process by defining public participation as "a process leading to a joint effort by stakeholders, technical specialists, the authorities and the proponent who work together to produce better decisions than if they had acted independently."

Two conclusions can be drawn from these different definitions. First, the use of the term 'public' is misleading. Although every citizen, regardless of association, forms part of the public, the term may be misinterpreted as excluding the private sector and non-decision-making authorities. These groups may therefore feel excluded from the 'public participation' process. Furthermore, 'the public' may be misconstrued as being a homogenous group with a set of agreed common interests and aims (Lee & George, 2000). The term 'stakeholder' is thus proposed as a more appropriate alternative and one that implies a diversity of opinions and interests. Stakeholders can be considered a sub-group of the public whose interests may be positively or negatively affected by a proposal or activity and/or who are concerned with a proposal or activity and its consequences. The term therefore includes the proponent, authorities (both the lead authority and other authorities) and all I&APs. The principle that environmental consultants and stakeholder engagement practitioners should be independent and objective excludes these groups from being considered stakeholders. However, they are role-players in the environmental decision-making process (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Clarification of the term "public" versus "stakeholders"



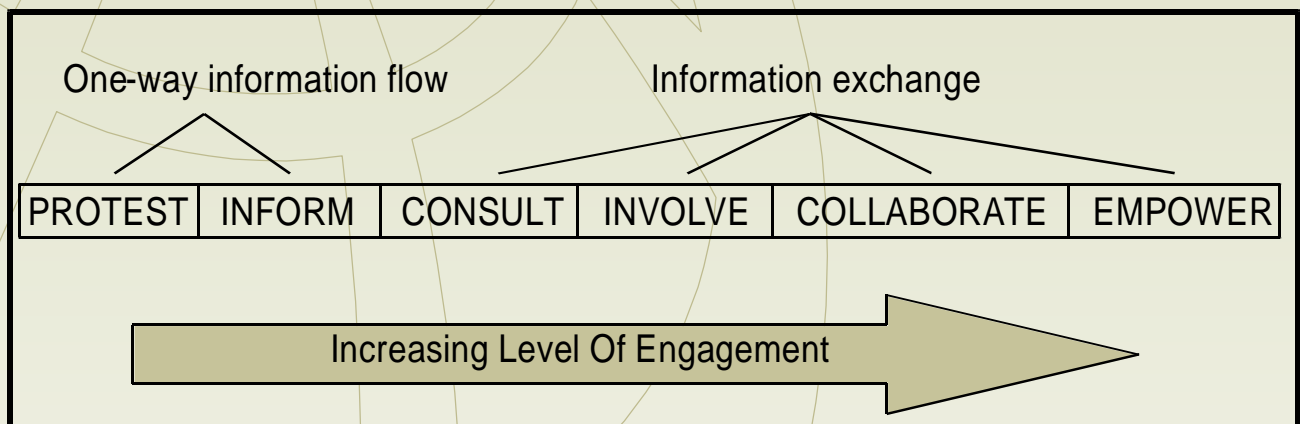
The second conclusion to be drawn from the range of definitions presented, is that definitions for 'participation' differ widely in the degree to which I&APs influence decision-making. The concept of a spectrum of different levels of influence on decision-making provides a useful starting point for addressing this issue. The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2, 2000) describes public participation as a spectrum of increasing levels of public impact on decision-making. This spectrum ranges from the public being informed, consulted, involved, collaborating with decision-makers, or fully empowered through delegated decision-making.

However, some modifications to the IAP2 spectrum are required, including the replacement of the term 'participation' with 'engagement'. This is based on the reflection that being *informed* does not constitute participation and that it is therefore more appropriate to speak of 'engagement' between stakeholders in the decision-making process. In this document the term 'stakeholder

engagement' is thus used in preference to 'public participation'.

A further modification to the spectrum included in this document is the addition of *protest* as the lowest level within the stakeholder engagement spectrum. Although undesirable and indicative of a breakdown in the stakeholder engagement process, it should be recognized that through protest I&APs may have a significant impact on the decision-making process. As *protest* sits at the opposite end of the spectrum from *full empowerment*, it is incorrect to describe the shift across the spectrum as reflecting an increasing impact on decision-making. Engagement between stakeholders, however, does increase along the spectrum. Based on these changes, stakeholder engagement can be defined as a spectrum of increasing levels of engagement between stakeholders in the decision-making process (Figure 2).

Figure 2: The stakeholder engagement spectrum (adapted from IAP2, 2000)



The following definitions are used in the interpretation of the different levels of the spectrum. Although there may still be some disagreement around the finer details of these definitions, it is hoped that the degree to which misunderstanding has previously taken place will be substantially reduced.

Protest: This refers to the efforts of I&APs to influence decision-making through challenging specific, visible targets (e.g. events, issues, sites, proponents and authorities). The existence of protest reflects a breakdown in relationships because of the failure of proponents and/or authorities to effectively and equitably engage with I&APs. It can be seen as a demand by I&APs to be more effectively and equitably engaged in decision-making processes that may have a significant effect on the environment. Protest activities may take a number of forms, including petitions, marches, strikes, boycotts and vandalism. There has recently been an increase in protest, for example, in connection with the impacts of international trade agreements, globalization and the activities of mining and oil companies. Protest is adversarial and will not be dealt with further in this document.

Inform: This refers to the provision of information to

inform stakeholders of a proposal, activity or decision. The information provided may be designed to help stakeholders in understanding an issue, alternatives, solutions or the decision-making process (IAP2, 2000). Information flows are one-way. Information can flow either from the proponent to other stakeholders or vice versa. Advocacy and lobbying is a way in which I&APs, on their own initiative, can inform and influence the decision-making on environmental issues. If this level of engagement is not coupled to a process of consultation, there is no opportunity for stakeholders to comment on the information received.

It is important to stipulate that within the spirit and principles of IEM "informing stakeholders" is not about trying to influence or change opinions and attitudes. This falls under public relations and should not be confused with stakeholder engagement (Greyling, 1999).

Consult: Consultation involves an exchange of information between stakeholders, which provides an opportunity for stakeholders to raise concerns and comment on the impacts and merits of a proposal or activity before a decision is made. In principle the proponent or authorities should take into account the concerns and views expressed by

I&APs in making the final decision.

Involve: Involvement builds on the consultation process and refers to the process in which stakeholders work together to ensure that concerns and issues are directly reflected in the planning, assessment, implementation and management of a particular proposal or activity (IAP2, 2000). However, the responsibility for decision-making is retained by the proponent or the authority.

Collaborate: This refers to the process of shared decision-making in which all stakeholders constructively explore their differences and develop a joint strategy for action (London, 1995). Collaboration is founded on the belief that decision-making does not have to be a zero-sum game with “winners” and “losers” or where the result is an unsatisfactory compromise. Rather, it is based on the ethos that, through dialogue, the provision of appropriate information, collectively defined goals, and the willingness and commitment to find a solution acceptable to all parties, it is possible to overcome the initially limited perspectives of what is achievable and to reach a decision which best meets the interests of the various stakeholders. At this level, responsibility for decision-making is shared between stakeholders.

Empower: When stakeholder engagement has reached the level of full empowerment, the responsibility for decision-making and accountability for the outcome have been delegated from the authority to the proponent and/or I&APs. Empowerment, as it is used elsewhere, is often associated with partnerships between stakeholders which are entered into for financial reasons. However, it should be borne in mind that not all financial partnerships empower effectively, and empowerment does not imply financial gain. In the context of this document, empowerment refers to the delegation of the decision-making authority, which is initiated without the primary objective being the realization of

¹ The requirement that goals are collectively defined distinguishes “collaboration” from “cooperation”. The latter is based on parties working together due to similarities in pre-established interests (London, 1995).

financial benefits.

It is important to bear in mind that in IEM, stakeholder engagement processes will typically move through a number of different levels in the spectrum over the course of the engagement process. For example, the engagement of I&APs and authorities in an environmental impact assessment (EIA) will initially require that I&APs and authorities are *informed* about the proposed development. After that the process moves to *consultation*, when I&APs and authorities are given the opportunity to identify issues of concern that should be addressed by the environmental consultants. When authorization for the activity is granted, the subsequent implementation of the recommendations included in the EIA may support the establishment of an environmental monitoring committee (composed of representatives of different stakeholder groups) to monitor and review the activity regularly. In this event stakeholders are *involved* in the operational management phase of the proposal.

It is important to recognize that, due to the range of different stakeholders that may be interested or affected by a particular proposal or activity, it is likely that the stakeholder engagement process may operate simultaneously at different levels for different stakeholders. For example, the process of commenting on environmental impact reports may involve facilitating *collaboration* between the different authorities that will be affected by the outcome of the final decision and responsible for enforcing the conditions attached to an authorization. At the same time, comments from a wider group of stakeholders may be obtained through a process of *consultation*.

Each level of the stakeholder engagement spectrum is characterized by a different set of objectives and implicit promises (Table 1). Explicitly locating any stakeholder engagement process on the spectrum at the start of the process should help to reduce the problem of mismatched expectations between stakeholders.

Table 1: Objectives and implicit promises associated with each level of the stakeholder engagement spectrum

Level of Stakeholder Engagement	Objective	Promise to Stakeholders
Inform	To provide balanced and objective information to improve understanding of the issues, alternatives, and/or solution.	“We will keep you informed.”
Consult	To obtain feedback from stakeholders on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	“We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns, and provide feedback on how stakeholder input influenced the decision.”
Involve	To work directly with stakeholders throughout the process to ensure that issues and concerns are consistently understood and considered.	“We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and issues are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how stakeholder input influenced the decision.”
Collaborate	To partner with the stakeholders in each aspect of the decision, including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	“We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decision to the maximum extent possible.”
Empower	To place final decision-making in the hands of the stakeholders.	“We will implement what you decide.”

Source: Adapted from IAP2 (2000)

This document does not advocate that any particular level is the most desirable level of stakeholder engagement. The “right” level of engagement will depend on the particular situation and circumstances (Chapter 7). Of critical importance is that the level and objectives of engagement and the boundaries to engagement are clarified and agreed upon by all stakeholders from the outset. Initiating a stakeholder engagement process without explicitly clarifying what is understood by the term can lead to confusion, misinterpretation and conflict. The door is left open for each stakeholder to bring along his/her own implicit assumptions regarding the outcome of the stakeholder engagement process, based on his/her own particular understanding of the term. Engagement based on differing, unexpressed objectives and expectations has little chance of success.

4. Stakeholder Engagement in Integrated Environmental Management

Integrated environmental management (IEM) is a philosophy which prescribes a code of practice for ensuring that environmental considerations are fully integrated into all stages of the development process in order to achieve a desirable balance between conservation and development (DEA, 1992).

The IEM philosophy is interpreted as applying to the planning, assessment, implementation and management of any proposal (project, plan, programme or policy) or activity – at local, national and international level – that has a potentially significant effect on the environment and sustainable development. To implement the IEM philosophy, a number of tools have been developed. These include environmental assessment tools (such as EIA, strategic environmental assessment, sustainability assessment and risk assessment), environmental management tools (such as monitoring, auditing and reporting) and decision-making tools (such as multi-criteria decision support systems or advisory councils). Selection and application of the appropriate tool will depend on the particular proposal or activity. However, the opportunity exists for stakeholder engagement to form an integral component of any IEM tool in order to inform and improve the decision-making process. Examples of these opportunities are provided in Table 2. These examples highlight that stakeholder engagement extends beyond EIA alone.

5. The Objectives of Stakeholder Engagement

The objectives associated with each of the different levels of the stakeholder engagement spectrum have been summarized in Table 1 (Chapter 3). This section deals with the purpose and benefits of improving engagement between stakeholders, as well as the specific objectives of stakeholder engagement at different stages of any proposal or activity.

The purpose of consultation, involvement, collaboration and empowerment of stakeholders in the decision-making process include (Canter, 1996; IAP2, 2002):

- raising awareness, educating and increasing understanding between stakeholders (a two-way information exchange);

- assisting in the identification of key issues of concern that need to be considered;
- raising a diversity of opinions and perspectives and obtaining a balanced perspective of key issues;
- identifying common interests and opportunities for meeting these;
- identifying sources of information and the knowledge of local and other stakeholders;
- learning from the knowledge and understanding of the environment of local and other stakeholders;
- commenting on the findings of technical studies;
- identifying reasonable alternatives;
- managing and minimizing conflict;
- identifying creative solutions to problems or deadlocks;
- informing and improving decision-making;
- ensuring greater credibility and legitimacy in the decision-making process;
- establishing trust and cooperation;
- generating a sense of joint responsibility and ownership for the environment;
- assisting in the review and monitoring of activities that may negatively affect the environment;
- contributing to the development of appropriate policy, legislation and regulations; and
- promoting democracy.

Ultimately, the goal of stakeholder engagement is to improve communication between stakeholders (including the proponent) in the interest of facilitating better decision-making and more sustainable development.

Sustainable development implies some degree of trade-off between economic growth, social equity and ecological integrity. The stakeholder engagement process enables decision-makers to understand and clarify to what degree stakeholders are willing to accept or live with the trade-offs involved (IAP2, 2002). This allows decisions to be made that take into consideration the limits of acceptability. This is the foundation for making decisions that have a wide level of support. In the face of unpopular decisions, sustainable development is an unlikely achievement.

Bearing in mind the overall goal of sustainable development, a prerequisite for effective, efficient and equitable stakeholder engagement is setting clear, specific, achievable objectives for each stage of the IEM process, taking into account the context of any specific proposal or activity and the level of engagement required. These objectives relate both to the process and the content of the proposal or activity. As an example, the objectives associated with each stage of the EIA process are provided in Table 3.

Table 2: Examples of opportunities for stakeholder engagement in IEM

Increasing spatial scale

	Planning and Assessment	Implementation and Management	Selected References for Further Information
International Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involvement in international agreements e.g. Kyoto Protocol - Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint implementation, Clean Development Mechanisms and carbon trading opportunities as provided for in the Kyoto protocol. 	IPCC (2002)
National & Regional Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of policy, legislation and regulations at national, provincial and local government level. Negotiation of voluntary agreements between government and industry. Allocation of natural resource extraction quotas and licences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation and review of environmental management co-operation agreements (EMCAs). Water allocation and licensing through catchment management agencies. 	Acutt (2001) DEAT (2001) Motteux(2001) Spash (2001) Scott (2000)
Programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of natural resource management strategies. Strategic environmental assessment. Sectoral multi-stakeholder reviews e.g. Mining, Minerals and Sustainable Development (MMSD) project, World Commission on Dams (WCD). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation and review of the Reconstruction and Development Programme. Partnerships between government, business and civil society. 	DEAT & CSIR (2000) Hoadley <i>et al.</i> (2002) IIED (2000) WCD (2001) Business Partners for Development (2002)
Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development planning (e.g. integrated development plans). Strategic environmental assessment. Sector planning (e.g. energy planning, integrated catchment management plans). Town and regional planning. Community-based planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation and review of strategic environmental management plans. Implementation and review of integrated catchment management plans. 	DEAT & CSIR (2000) DPLG (2001) Motteux (2001) Neudoerffer <i>et al.</i> (2001) Glavovic <i>et al.</i> (2001) Khanya (2002)
Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental impact assessment. Risk assessment. Development of project-level environmental management plans/programmes and policies. Development of project-level resettlement action plans. Socially responsible investment (investment screening). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk management. Waste management. Community-based natural resource management. Implementation and review of environmental management plans/programmes/policies. Environmental monitoring committees. Socially responsible investment (shareholder activism). Partnerships between government, business and civil society. 	WESSA (2000) Bisset (2000) Stone (2001) Isaacs <i>et al.</i> (2000) Scott (1999) Shandler (2001) World Bank (1990) Social Investment Forum (2002) Business Partners for Development (2002)

Table 3: An example of specific objectives of the stakeholder engagement process for different stages of an EIA

Stage	Process-related Objectives	Content-related Objectives
Screening**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify stakeholders. Inform stakeholders about the proposal. Establish rapport and initiate cooperation and commitment to the stakeholder engagement process. Establish boundaries for stakeholder engagement process (time, extent and decision-making framework). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify potential “showstoppers” at the outset (projects for which it is clear that authorization will not be granted). Ensure environmental considerations are taken into account as early as possible in the planning and development of proposals.
Scoping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all relevant stakeholders have been identified and invited to engage in the process. Inform stakeholders about the proposal. Provide opportunity for stakeholders to contribute issues of concern and suggestions for enhancing potential benefits. Maintain rapport and ensure ongoing cooperation and commitment. Agree on plan and approach for future stakeholder engagement. Identify potential issues of conflict and engage in proactive conflict management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain feedback on the proposal. Identify key potential issues and impacts to be addressed by the specialist studies. Review alternatives being considered and ensure no viable alternatives have been omitted. Identify feasible alternative project designs and locations. Agree on outline terms of reference for the environmental assessment and the specialist studies.
Specialist studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform stakeholders on what is being assessed. Keep stakeholders informed during the course of the specialist studies to maintain interest and prevent alienation from the process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate stakeholder knowledge (e.g. existing databases, information on sensitive sites and processes, local expertise). Stakeholders’ values, comments and input can help establish project-specific criteria, assign significance to potential impacts, and define maximum acceptable levels of change.
Environmental impact statement/report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide opportunity for stakeholders to comment. Test the acceptability of proposed mitigation measures. If trade-offs are required, identify areas of conflict and adopt a proactive approach to conflict management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review draft documents. Ensure key issues identified in scoping have been considered adequately. Ensure all reasonable mitigation measures have been integrated into the project design.
Decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform (with reasons) stakeholders of the decision made. Explain conditions attached to the decision (including the opportunity for ongoing involvement in monitoring of the construction and operational phases of the development). Provide opportunity for stakeholders to appeal against the decision. Conflict management and resolution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use stakeholder values or preferences to determine the limits for trade-offs. Assist in the selection of the most desirable alternative.

Source: Adapted from Canter (1996).

** Not all stakeholder engagement processes are initiated at the screening stage of an EIA. Where stakeholder engagement starts during the scoping stage, the objectives for the screening stage will automatically shift to the scoping stage.

Although stakeholder engagement is often regarded by proponents as being a costly exercise resulting in delays to the authorization process, a well-planned and appropriate stakeholder engagement process can potentially result in significant tangible benefits for proponents.

Benefits to proponents through proactively engaging with stakeholders may include the following:

- **Cost savings:** By ensuring that specialist studies focus on and consider key issues identified by the stakeholders, resources are not wasted on irrelevant or inappropriate studies.
- **Improvements in the proposal design:** By capturing and capitalizing on local and traditional “wisdom” and understanding of the particular environment, the risk of failure is reduced.
- **Minimize conflict:** By identifying and understanding environmental issues at the outset which may cause later difficulties if not addressed, conflict may be minimized or avoided.
- **Avoidance of possible legal costs:** Proactive engagement may assist in identifying and mitigating issues which may otherwise lead to a later dispute or non-compliance entailing legal costs.
- **A reduction in delays in the authorization process:** Late stakeholder inputs may delay the decision-making process.
- **Reduced cost of repair** (in cases where lack of support is shown through vandalism or theft).

6. Responsibilities of Stakeholders, Environmental Consultants and Stakeholder Engagement Practitioners

All stakeholders, environmental consultants and stakeholder engagement practitioners have a responsibility to ensure that the agreed objectives of the stakeholder engagement process are achieved. It is possible to identify generic responsibilities for the different groups (Table 4), but it should be borne in mind that the division of responsibilities will be influenced to some extent by the level of engagement entered into. Increasing responsibility will be placed on I&APs as engagement increases from consultation to empowerment.

The scale of the proposal or activity generally determines whether the stakeholder engagement process is run by an environmental consultant or whether a specialized stakeholder engagement practitioner is contracted to run the process. When both an environmental consultant and a stakeholder engagement practitioner are involved, the division of responsibilities will depend on the contractual agreement.

Accountability for the stakeholder engagement process will depend on whether or not stakeholder engagement is a legal requirement and to whom accountability is assigned by law. It may also depend on agreements made between the stakeholders at the outset of the stakeholder engagement process.

Table 4: Differentiating the responsibilities for different roleplayers in the stakeholder engagement process

Roleplayer	Responsibility
Proponent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand that the responsibility of environmental consultants and stakeholder engagement practitioners is to act independently and objectively in order to improve communication between stakeholders (including the proponent) in the interest of facilitating better decision-making and more sustainable development. • Ensure that adequate resources (human resources, time and finances) are available to conduct an effective, efficient and equitable stakeholder engagement process. • Ensure that communication from different sectors of the proponent's organization does not contradict and thus undermine the stakeholder engagement process. • Clarify level of stakeholder engagement. Be open to negotiation around increasing level of engagement. • Assist in the identification of stakeholders that should be engaged in the process. • Provide adequate information to the authorities, environmental consultants or stakeholder engagement practitioners and I&APs. • Avoid raising unrealistic expectations. • Avoid taking a defensive stance. • Listen, hear, show respect and empathy.
Lead authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop guidelines and incentives to encourage stakeholders to engage in the process. • Assist in the identification of stakeholders. • Ensure that the requirements for decision-making do not limit the rights of stakeholders to engage adequately in the process. • Review the stakeholder engagement plan early in the process to ensure adequate and appropriate measures are proposed and to allow recommendations and additional requirements to be built in before the process is too far under way. • Where appropriate, ensure proponents have appointed independent and objective environmental consultants and/or stakeholder engagement practitioners. • Allow adequate time for stakeholder engagement. • Appoint an independent mediator, conciliator or arbitrator in cases of extreme conflict. • Take into account all relevant information and factors raised by stakeholders in making the final decision. • Provide a record of decision. • Allow for stakeholders to appeal against the decision. • Build capacity for improving the effectiveness, efficiency and equitability of the stakeholder engagement process (in other authorities, environmental consultants/stakeholder engagement practitioners, the proponent and I&APs). • Listen, hear, show respect and empathy.
Other authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform themselves of their legal rights and duties. • Engage according to the agreed procedures and time frames. • Representatives of authorities must ensure that the views they express are those of their constituents and not their own. • Avoid making unrealistic demands. • Provide appropriate information. • Act in good faith. • Listen, hear, show respect and empathy.
I&APs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform themselves of their legal rights and duties. • Engage according to the agreed procedures and time frames. • Representatives of NGOs, CBOs and different sectors must ensure that the views they express are of their constituents and not their own. • Avoid making unrealistic demands. • Provide appropriate information.

Roleplayer	Responsibility
Environmental consultant or stakeholder engagement practitioner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid raising unrealistic expectations and undue fears. • Listen, hear, show respect and empathy. • Act as independent, objective information professionals and not as service providers acting in the interests of the proponent. • Adhere to the principles of integrity, fairness and inclusivity. • Obtain appropriate training and experience to conduct an effective, efficient and equitable stakeholder engagement process. • Convene, facilitate and sustain the stakeholder engagement process. • Ensure buy-in to the process by all stakeholders by clearly communicating the potential benefits of the stakeholder engagement process. • Avoid raising unrealistic expectations or undue fears. • Suggest an appropriate level of stakeholder engagement. • Plan the process, so that reasonable opportunity is provided for stakeholders to engage with the process. • Allow stakeholders to have a say in how they want to be engaged. • Ensure that the stakeholder engagement process meets minimum legal requirements and aims to be effective, efficient and equitable. • Clarify the level of stakeholder engagement. • Clarify the objectives of the process, the procedures and time frames for stakeholder input, and the decision-making framework. • Identify all stakeholders that should be engaged in the process. • Establish and maintain a database of stakeholders, including information on who has attended meetings, sent in comments and received information. • Provide detailed record of concerns, inputs, comments and responses (a "paper trail"). • Identify and use appropriate stakeholder engagement approaches and techniques. • Identify the underlying issues of concern. • Ensure all issues raised are considered in an objective manner. • Ensure local and traditional knowledge is utilized and incorporated. • Ensure information is provided in a manner understandable by a diverse audience • Avoid taking a defensive stance. • Listen, hear, show respect and empathy. • Differentiate issues from personalities, cultural perspectives and emotions.

Source: Adapted from DECAS (2001) and Consultative Forum on Mining and the Environment (2002).

7. Approaches and Facilitation Techniques

A diversity of stakeholder engagement approaches and facilitation techniques have been developed, which range widely in creativity, complexity and the technology used. Each has advantages and shortcomings. Effective, efficient and equitable stakeholder engagement depends largely on selecting the right combination of approaches and techniques for a particular process.

There is, however, no single recipe for making this selection - particularly when operating in the context of a multi-cultural, developing country. The choice of approaches and techniques will depend on the level of stakeholder engagement decided upon for each stage of the proposal or activity. The selection of the level of engagement will depend on a number of factors, including the objectives for engaging with stakeholders, the social profile of stakeholders, context-related issues (such as the levels of literacy), the spatial scale of the proposed activity, the number of people involved, the resources available for conducting the process, legislative requirements and normative criteria. The last factor refers to underlying societal norms and values that determine the principles of stakeholder engagement. For example, these may determine whether or not there is support and demand for participatory, transparent

decision-making, co-operative governance, equitable access to information or procedurally fair administrative action (Glavovic, *et al.* 2001).

The following sections provide an overview of various options that are available for identifying stakeholders, engaging with them, and for facilitating the process to achieve a more satisfactory outcome.

7.1 Identification of stakeholders

It is generally the responsibility of the environmental consultant (or the stakeholder engagement practitioner) to identify those stakeholders, other than the proponent, whose interests may be positively or negatively affected by a proposal or activity and/or who are concerned about the consequences. This process will include identifying stakeholders such as relevant local, provincial and national government authorities, traditional leaders, community organizations, environmental organizations, development groups, special interest groups, trade unions, landowners, sport and recreational bodies, tourism organizations, business associations, and vulnerable and previously disadvantaged or underrepresented groups, including the elderly, women and the youth. Stakeholders may be either individuals or group representatives.

The following means of identifying stakeholders are commonly used:

- Social profiles or probes provide a comprehensive summary of the key characteristics of the people of a community or area and can serve as a starting point for identifying stakeholders.
- Brainstorming sessions with the proponent and/or authorities, based on previous experience, to identify key stakeholders who may be interested or affected by the proposal.
- Established lists and databases, held by consultancies, authorities or research institutions, may hold additional contact details of residents, NGOs, CBOs or constituents.
- Public announcements, advertisements and notices can be placed strategically to invite and encourage stakeholders to engage in the process (self-identification).
- Network or chain referral systems according to which key stakeholders are asked to assist in identifying other stakeholders.

7.2 Approaches to stakeholder engagement

Environmental consultants and/or stakeholder engagement practitioners have a range of approaches to choose from, and generally a number of different approaches will be used in combination over the course of the stakeholder engagement process. Possible approaches have been summarized in Table 5 according to their suitability to meet the objectives of the different levels of engagement. A brief definition of each of these approaches, as well as references to texts which provide more detailed information, are provided in Appendix A.

In countries such as South Africa, the concept of co-operative or participatory democracy has opened the arena for consultation, involvement and collaboration to play a greater role in national, provincial and local governance and decision-making. Hence, “imbizo” and “indaba” have joined the suite of stakeholder engagement approaches. Imbizo refers to the process of building partnerships between government and stakeholders to implement government initiatives. Indaba involves fostering open, transparent dialogue between government and stakeholder groups in order to address common concerns.

In addition, the potential for participatory rural appraisal (PRA) approaches and techniques to achieve successful outcomes in IEM in developing countries is increasingly being realized (Versfeld, 1995; Motteux, 2001; DWAF, 2001). PRA stems from development theory and practice and “...enables local people to share, enhance and analyze their knowledge of life and conditions, to plan and to act” (Chambers, 1994 as cited in Motteux, 2001, p27). The use of the term “rural” is misleading. However, as these techniques can be applied with equal success to urban settings where more commonly used, technocratic stakeholder engagement techniques may be inappropriate, ineffective, inefficient and inequitable. The use of the term “appraisal” is also incorrect, since this implies that PRA is a technique by which consultants or stakeholder engagement practitioners gather information, consult and make an assessment without the greater involvement of stakeholder engagement practitioners. To overcome these definitional problems, there is a shift towards using the term “participatory learning and action” (PLA) to describe the process of building the capacity of stakeholders to engage more effectively in the decision-making process, irrespective of the level of engagement (Versfeld, 1995; Chambers, 1997).

Table 5: Examples of common approaches to stakeholder engagement

Information	Consultation	Collaboration and Empowerment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal notices • Advertisements • Magazine or news articles & press releases • Background information material • Exhibits or displays • Technical reports • Websites • Field trips • Press conferences • Radio or talk shows • Expert panels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public meetings • Public hearings • Open days/open house • Briefings • Central information contact number or person • Field offices or information centres • Comments and response sheets • Surveys, questionnaires and polls • Interviews • Telephone hotlines • Electronic democracy • Participatory rural appraisal (PRA)/participatory learning and action (PLA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops, focus groups or key stakeholder meetings • Advisory panels and committees • Task force • Citizen juries • Charrettes/consensus conferences • Imbizo • Indaba • Participatory rural appraisal (PRA)/participatory learning and action (PLA)

Source: Adapted from Chambers (1997), Shell International Exploration and Production B.V. (1999), LAP2 (2000) and Motteux (2001).

The focus on capacity-building over and above the objective of exchanging information differentiates PRA and PLA from many of the more commonly used stakeholder engagement approaches, such as open days, surveys and public meetings. The aim is more inclusive stakeholder engagement, as opposed to using techniques that rely on highly technical oral and written presentations, which exclude less literate stakeholders. PRA/PLA relies heavily on using simple visual and interactive techniques and is therefore useful in bridging gaps in literacy and cultural understanding between different stakeholders. In addition, the techniques are designed to ensure that local knowledge and wisdom is more effectively incorporated in the planning, assessment, implementation and management of proposals and activities. The principles underlying the PRA/PLA approach (i.e. capacity-building, use of more effective communication techniques and two-way learning) should form the cornerstone of any stakeholder engagement process.

7.3 Facilitation techniques

A wide range of techniques are available to facilitate the stakeholder engagement process and to ensure effective, efficient and equitable engagement (Appendix A). These facilitation techniques assist in setting goals, capturing and incorporating local knowledge and, where appropriate or necessary, managing conflict and building consensus. Generally a variety of techniques will be used during any stakeholder engagement process.

8. Overview of Stakeholder Engagement Experiences in Integrated Environmental Management

8.1 Stakeholder engagement in developing countries

Opportunities for stakeholder engagement in IEM, and the level at which engagement occurs, typically are related to the degree to which a country's economy is open or closed. In general, the greater the role of the private sector in the economy, the lower the government's sensitivity to criticism of proposals and activities and the greater the overall opportunity for higher levels of stakeholder engagement in decision-making (George, 2000).

An overview of stakeholder engagement in environmental assessment in developing and transitional countries has shown that, although many countries make reference to 'public participation' in their environmental assessment systems, requirements are often general and lack detail, resulting in difficulties in practical implementation (George, 2000). The need to strengthen the 'public participation' process in environmental assessment was highlighted as one of the pressing issues and emerging challenges in an international study considering the effectiveness of environmental assessment (Sadler, 1996). It is assumed here that these findings also apply more broadly to stakeholder engagement across the whole IEM spectrum.

South Africa serves as a best practice example of a country where the opportunity for stakeholder consultation,

involvement and collaboration in IEM is facilitated and supported by the constitution, environmental framework legislation, sectoral legislation and regulations.

The democratization and process of transformation in South Africa have led to an increasing devolution of power to local levels of government and a restructuring of the institutional network to include a range of mechanisms to allow stakeholders to become increasingly engaged in decision-making (Scott *et al.*, 2001). Many political civil groups, which had previously challenged Apartheid, have reformulated their objectives and are exercising their constitutional rights to be informed, consulted and involved at all levels of government and in the environmental decision-making process. In the tide of enthusiasm and optimism that characterized the transition from Apartheid to democracy, a wide range of stakeholders have played an active and important role in shaping the current environmental agenda and in influencing environmental decision-making.

In countries that make provision for stakeholder engagement, "stakeholder fatigue" and cynicism regarding the outcomes of the stakeholder engagement process are at times evident across stakeholder groups: among authorities, I&APs and proponents, as well as environmental consultants and stakeholder engagement practitioners.

There are a number of challenges and constraints imposed by the broader context within which formal stakeholder engagement processes operate, as well as shortcomings in how individual stakeholder engagement processes are run. Alone and in combination these challenges and shortcomings hamper open, participatory and inclusive decision-making on environmental issues.

Without understanding and acknowledging these problems, it is difficult to identify ways of addressing them.

8.2 Challenges to stakeholder engagement

Policy and institutional constraints

Stakeholder engagement in environmental decision-making is not a legislated requirement in all countries. In many cases there is thus no supporting legislation and institutional framework to ensure that stakeholders are effectively, efficiently and equitably engaged in the decision-making process. Governments may find the delegation of power and authority difficult and, although requirements to inform, consult, involve, collaborate with, or empower stakeholders in the decision-making process may exist in law, this has not always been translated into practice. The rights and responsibilities of the different stakeholder groups may therefore not be clarified, which leads to confusion and disillusionment in the process.

A further problem relating to the institutional frameworks is that a formal stakeholder engagement process is often only undertaken during the environmental assessment stage after many of the planning and strategic-level decisions have already been taken. This leads to accusations of token stakeholder engagement, which does not have a real influence on decision-making.

Cultural and historical complexities

In countries such as South Africa, which has a history of repression, a strong element of mistrust often remains between different sectors of society, despite progressive and enabling frameworks for higher levels of stakeholder engagement. Even if repressive governments have since been replaced, a strong culture of stakeholder engagement may not yet exist, because communities may still fear adverse consequences if they openly express a difference of opinion or demand a say in the decision-making process.

The difficulty of identifying the appropriate approach to stakeholder engagement is further exacerbated by the inherent complexities in social structures in many societies. This may stem from cultural hierarchies (age- or gender-based), which limit the ability of members lower down in the hierarchy to enter into the engagement process, as well as from the large income and development gap, which exists between different stakeholder groups.

Capacity constraints

In many areas there is a lack of capacity to engage effectively, efficiently and equitably, because of low levels of literacy, language barriers, the remoteness of the location, or financial and time constraints to attending meetings. Capacity constraints often extend to the NGOs and CBOs, who act as “watchdogs” or as representatives of a particular group. They are often expected to comment on, or get involved in the implementation and management of a large number of proposals and activities related to IEM. Their ability to engage is, however, often limited by time, cost and human resource constraints.

Low level of interest in environmental issues

Stakeholder engagement is often difficult, due to a lack of interest, awareness or concern among stakeholders of environmental issues. The level of support and engagement in environmental assessment and management may be low when the “environmental agenda” is seen to conflict with addressing pressing social development needs. This may arise when environmental issues are interpreted narrowly as being “green” issues, focusing on the biophysical component of the environment only.

8.3 Shortcomings of stakeholder engagement processes

Apart from the context-related challenges that pose hurdles to achieving effective, efficient and equitable stakeholder engagement, objectives may not be met due to problems with the process itself. An analysis of the issues commonly raised in connection with stakeholder engagement processes reveals that most issues relate to two underlying problems:

- The lack of clarity around the definition and objectives of stakeholder engagement and the responsibilities of stakeholders, environmental consultants and stakeholder engagement practitioners.
- The selection of inappropriate approaches and techniques to facilitate stakeholder engagement.

Lack of clarity on the definition, objectives and responsibilities of stakeholders

The range of definitions and terminology used in the stakeholder engagement arena has allowed terms to be misinterpreted, or interpreted differently by different stakeholders engaged in the same process. If the level of engagement and the associated objectives are not clarified from the outset, stakeholders may enter into the stakeholder engagement process with widely differing expectations of the outcomes. This brings with it a host of secondary problems, which undermine the success of the stakeholder engagement process.

The level of engagement and the objectives of the stakeholder engagement process influence the responsibilities of different stakeholders, environmental consultants and stakeholder engagement practitioners. A lack of clarity on the former will thus likely lead to ill-defined responsibilities. If the various groups engaging in the process do not fully agree upon and accept their individual responsibilities, commitment is not guaranteed. Ultimately the entire stakeholder engagement process is then founded on insecurity and mistrust. Trying to achieve objectives under these circumstances is difficult, if not impossible.

Stakeholder engagement may be misinterpreted as seeking to achieve consensus among stakeholders (Greyling, 1999). This may discourage certain groups or individuals from participating for fear that the pressure to reach consensus will result in co-option. While consensus may be a desirable outcome in some circumstances, reaching consensus is not the overriding objective of stakeholder engagement in IEM. The confusion between stakeholder engagement and public relations creates similar mistrust if the objectives of stakeholder engagement are not clarified at the outset.

If the stakeholder engagement process is seen as an obligatory “add-on” requirement, rather than as a process that adds value to decision-making, inadequate time and resources are allocated to the process, and stakeholder engagement is planned to meet the bare minimum legal requirements. This rarely results in effective, efficient and equitable stakeholder engagement and leads to accusations by other authorities and I&APs of reactive, token stakeholder engagement, which is undertaken without true commitment to ensuring that stakeholder input is properly taken into account in the planning, assessment, implementation and management of proposals and activities.

Stakeholder engagement practitioners and environmental consultants themselves sometimes do not fully understand the purpose and objectives of stakeholder engagement, nor their own responsibilities in the process. This is reflected in cases where consultants and practitioners act in a promotional capacity for the proponent, rather than as “independent, objective information professionals”. This may exacerbate the perception that stakeholder engagement is little more than a token exercise. A knock-on effect is the lack of interest, buy-in and commitment by other authorities and I&APs.

Furthermore, environmental consultants and stakeholder engagement practitioners may not have the right skills and experience to facilitate an effective, efficient and equitable stakeholder engagement, leading to disputes and delays. It is a misperception that anyone can be a good facilitator and run a stakeholder engagement process. However, there are currently few formal training programmes to ensure the correct skills are developed by individuals wishing to conduct a stakeholder engagement process.

A problem frequently experienced in public meetings is that of “political grandstanding”, where individuals or groups dominate the meeting to advance their own positions. This again stems from the fact that objectives (and boundaries) of stakeholder engagement have not been clarified at the outset. Furthermore, this may result in unrealistic expectations and demands being made of the proponent and the authorities, the environmental consultant and the stakeholder engagement practitioners.

The potential value of facilitating and improving the exchange of information between stakeholders in the environmental assessment process frequently remains unrealised and local knowledge is not effectively utilized and incorporated. This is largely attributed to the fact that this objective has not been made explicit in the stakeholder engagement process.

Selection of inappropriate approaches and techniques

Differences in context and challenges are often ignored in the planning for, and design of stakeholder engagement processes. The outcome is frequently the adoption of a mechanistic, “one-size-fits-all” approach to the stakeholder engagement process.

The practical difficulties and constraints of identifying stakeholders and ensuring that they have adequate and equitable opportunities to engage effectively mean that frequently key stakeholders are excluded from the process or that participants are not representative of the diversity of stakeholders who should be engaged in the process. In particular, stakeholders outside the immediate impact zone are often overlooked, as are minority and less advantaged groups. Although it is practically impossible to engage with every stakeholder, relying only on the views presented by community “leaders”, or individuals claiming to represent a wider group, has at times led to later problems when these individuals have not acted in the wider interests of their constituents.

The selection of inappropriate approaches and facilitation techniques may also result in the exclusion of minority and disadvantaged groups and a lack of information exchange and interaction between different stakeholders. The latter may lead to an unequal balance of power between the range of stakeholders. In addition, poor facilitation techniques may lead to public meetings being used as forums for “political grandstanding” or may mean that sensitive issues are avoided entirely for fear of breaking trust and relationships. Neither achieves the objectives of stakeholder engagement.

In many cases, it may be difficult for communities to understand the affect a proposal may have on their current livelihoods. This may limit their ability to identify possible points of concern and engage effectively in the environmental decision-making process.

8.4 Lessons learnt

In order to address some of these shortcomings, guidelines and best practice manuals for public participation and stakeholder engagement have been developed by a range of organizations, including financing institutions, international governance bodies, professional associations, government departments and business. Existing guidelines highlight the range of interpretations of the term ‘public participation’ and reflect the need for more careful definition of the terminologies used. For example, Shell International Exploration and Production’s Health, Safety and Environment manual refers to “Stakeholder Consultation” (Shell International Exploration and Production B.V., 1999), the International Finance Corporation’s good practice manual refers to “Public Consultation and Disclosure” (IFC, 1998), the Australian Environment Protection Agency has consolidated best practice for “Community Consultation and Involvement” (EPA, 1995) and the South African Department of Water Affairs and Forestry has developed generic guidelines for “Public Participation” (DWAF, 2001). Nevertheless, these guidelines commonly include a set of best practice principles for the particular sector and/or a particular environmental method. It is therefore not the intention of this document to repeat these.

Public participation guidelines for mining-related EIAs in South Africa are currently being drawn up in consultation with a forum consisting of representatives from NGOs, CBOs, labour and the mining industry. Through this process, a wider group of stakeholders have the opportunity to define the engagement process. In this way greater support for, and adherence to the guidelines proposed will potentially be achieved (Consultative Forum on Mining and the Environment, 2002).

The following lessons can be drawn from current and past stakeholder engagement processes in environmental decision-making:

It is important to understand the need for, and value of effective, efficient and equitable stakeholder engagement in the environmental decision-making process

The opportunities for achieving mutually beneficial outcomes of the stakeholder engagement process need to be communicated to all stakeholders. This includes raising awareness on the value of local knowledge and experience and effectively capturing and utilizing this knowledge. Examples of successful stakeholder engagement have to be more widely communicated.

The purpose and objectives of stakeholder engagement, and the responsibilities of different stakeholders, environmental consultants and stakeholder engagement practitioners should be clarified from the outset of the process

The expectations of all stakeholders have to be managed. This involves clarifying the level of engagement, the specific objectives of different stages of the process, as well as how the decision will be made, when and by whom.

Importantly, the level of engagement selected should seek to balance the value of identifying key issues and enhancing the credibility and transparency in the decision-making process, with the potential delays that stakeholder engagement may cause (DEAT, 2001). In addition, a balance needs to be sought in which local knowledge is used and stakeholder opinions and preferences are taken into account, without compromising on good technical knowledge and science (Beierle & Konisky, 2001). Effective and efficient utilization of the former should enhance proposals and activities through an overall improvement in technical quality.

Approaches and tools should be selected to achieve effective, efficient and equitable stakeholder engagement and not only to meet minimum regulatory requirements

As long as the stakeholder engagement is characterized by inconspicuous advertisements in newspapers and stressful, ineffective and inefficient public meetings, the gap between tokenism and achieving successful stakeholder engagement will remain. It should be accepted that effective and equitable processes require continuity in order to build and maintain trust, and should not be mechanistic, once-off exercises. Frequent revision and refinement of the stakeholder engagement process may be necessary to ensure that it meets the agreed objectives. In addition, stakeholders should be engaged as early as possible in the decision-making process.

There is a range of alternative approaches on which can be drawn, depending on the particular circumstances at hand. Flexible, creative, inclusive and adaptive stakeholder engagement processes should be encouraged. Especially in a developing country context, the experience of PRA/PLA approaches used by development practitioners hold value for stakeholder engagement processes that are carried out in communities where literacy levels are low and the capacity to engage effectively is constrained. Through the use of these approaches, the values, interests and knowledge of all stakeholders are recognized and taken into account. Proponents, stakeholder engagement practitioners, environmental consultants and authorities need to be willing to learn and to be open to new possibilities and solutions.

Overall, choosing the right approach should be guided by the goals of effectiveness, efficiency and equitability. Furthermore, any approach should be underpinned by the principles of transparency, openness, honesty and integrity. Commitment to the process is required from all stakeholders.

Capacity should be built among all stakeholders to engage more effectively, efficiently and equitably
Innovative ways of building the capacity of proponents, authorities, I&APs, environmental consultants and stakeholder engagement practitioners to engage in a particular process need to be developed and implemented. This may include informing I&APs of their legal rights and

responsibilities, raising awareness on environmental issues and providing information in an accessible and understandable form and style. However, it is clear that there is a limit to what can realistically be expected of, and achieved by any single stakeholder engagement process. Many capacity-related issues need to be simultaneously addressed at a broader scale.

Stakeholder engagement practitioners should develop the appropriate skills to run an effective, efficient and equitable process

It has to be recognized that facilitating a stakeholder engagement process is a specialized skill, which depends as much on developing the right personal skills (e.g. integrity, trustworthiness and listening empathetically and respectfully) as on developing the specific facilitation and communication skills required to ensure, for example, that the right information is captured, information is communicated appropriately, capacity is built amongst stakeholders and conflict situations are managed effectively.

Conflict management should be improved

Although conflict management is not the purpose of stakeholder engagement, it is important to acknowledge and accept that conflict may arise in situations where there are differences of opinions and interests. It is crucial to manage this conflict, so that it does not derail the entire process. Conflict management should focus on identifying the underlying interests of different stakeholders, rather than on maintaining and entrenching predetermined positions. Adopting an interest-based approach provides opportunities for identifying common interests and working towards these. In the process new alternatives may be identified, which would otherwise not have been considered if different stakeholders' positions were framed in terms of inflexible options.

9. Conclusions

Opportunities for stakeholder engagement in IEM extend beyond its traditional role in EIA. This is supported in countries such as South Africa by legislation and policies promoting participatory democracy. Effective, efficient and equitable stakeholder engagement holds the potential to realize both tangible and intangible benefits for the range of stakeholders involved in the process. However, this is frequently constrained by problems associated with the context within which the stakeholder engagement process is conducted, as well as shortcomings regarding the way in which the process is designed and implemented.

Addressing context-related challenges is generally beyond the scope of any individual stakeholder engagement process. To a certain extent conflict can be managed, capacity can be built and environmental awareness raised, but it is not the objective or responsibility of individual stakeholder engagement processes to solve these higher-level, context-

related problems. The stakeholder engagement process is, however, constrained to work within a particular context and should be designed to be as effective, efficient and equitable as possible.

The success of a stakeholder engagement process hinges on clarifying definitions, objectives and responsibilities, as well as selecting the most appropriate approach and technique to meet these objectives. Creativity, innovation, flexibility and adaptability are required, rather than mechanistic, ineffective processes.

The additional resources required initially to ensure effectiveness and equitability should result in efficiency gains in the long run by ensuring greater support for proposals and increasing the sustainability of plans, projects, programmes and policies.

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APPENDIX A

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT APPROACHES AND TECHNIQUES

Table A1: Approaches to Stakeholder Engagement

APPROACHES TO STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT	
INFORMATION	Legal notices Notices informing stakeholders and the public of a particular proposal or activity that are required by law to be displayed at particular locations for a specified period.
	Advertisements Paid advertisements in newspapers and magazines to inform stakeholders and the public of a proposal or activity and the opportunity for stakeholder engagement. These should not be hidden in the legal section of the paper where they are generally overlooked.
	Magazine/news articles & press releases Feature stories or articles to provide information about the proposal or activity.
	Background information materials Fact sheets, newsletters, brochures or information flyers which can be distributed along with monthly utility bills, through mail drops, sent by direct mail, or left at accessible public locations in order to provide feedback and regular updates on progress. This may also include the proponent's annual report or, where available, the Health, Safety and Environment report.
	Exhibits/displays Information provided in an accessible location to help raise stakeholders' awareness and understanding of a plan or assessment.
	Technical reports Specialist studies report research or policy findings, which are made accessible to stakeholders and the public. Copies of reports are generally made available at public libraries, directly to key stakeholders and/or electronically for stakeholders to comment.
	Websites Worldwide websites that contain project information, announcements and documents. Interactive websites allow the stakeholders to provide their views.
	Field trips Provide site tours to inform key stakeholders, elected officials, advisory group members and the media.
	Press conference Question and answer session for the media to obtain information about a proposal or activity.
	Radio/TV talk shows Radio or TV presenter aims to elicit information about a proposal or activity on behalf of the public through questions posed to the proponent.
CONSULTATION	Expert panels Public meeting at which the experts/specialists provide information and stakeholders are then given an opportunity to pose questions. Alternatively, a selected media panel may pose questions to the experts and stakeholders sit in as a passive audience.
	Public meetings Formal meetings where the proponent meets with a wide range of stakeholders in a public place. These meetings are open to all, although some stakeholders may be specifically invited. Generally the public meeting involves scheduled presentations by the proponent, followed by a question and answer session, or the opportunity for stakeholders to raise issues or to comment.
	Public hearings Similar to a public meeting, except that these are more formal and structured and usually require a written transcript of the proceedings. These do not promote dialogue between stakeholders, but it is an approach by which the lead authority may obtain information from interested and affected parties and the proponent.
	Open days/open house Two interpretations: (1) Stakeholders are given the opportunity to tour the site/facility at their own pace. (2) Information and displays are set up at an accessible and convenient public location for a day to make information accessible to stakeholders and the public.
	Both involve exhibits/displays being set up with relevant information and members of the project team being available to provide additional information.

APPROACHES TO STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT	
Briefings	Regular meetings of social and civic clubs and organizations are used to inform, educate and consult with special interest groups.
Central information contact	Designated contact persons are identified as official liaisons for stakeholders, the public and the media.
Field offices or information centres	Offices established with prescribed hours to distribute information and respond to enquiries. Usually established in communities where a project or issue has the potential for significant impact or where there is a need for close contact with local stakeholders. Designed to encourage information interaction with the community, and staffed with people who are able to answer questions and solicit opinions.
Comments and response sheets	Forms included in information sheets, with technical reports, or at public meetings and open days to gain information on stakeholders' concerns and preferences and to identify key issues.
Surveys, questionnaires and polls	Standardized survey or questionnaire for collecting very specific information from a statistically representative sample of a population. This refers to both random telephone surveys or polls, questionnaires that respondents complete and return themselves, as well as questionnaires and surveys carried out in person by the researcher.
Interviews	One-to-one meetings with stakeholders to gain information on concerns and perspectives and/or for developing or refining the stakeholder engagement process. Generally semi-structured interviews that include open-ended questions and allow for following up unexpected information. Provide valuable information and insights.
Telephone hotlines	Easy-to-remember telephone numbers that stakeholders and the public can call to obtain information and provide views. Normally manned by staff with appropriate skills and knowledge about the project, but information could also be pre-recorded.
Electronic democracy	The internet, websites, tele-voting and on-line dialogue provides an opportunity for a larger group of stakeholders to engage in the process.
Participatory rural appraisal (PRA)/participatory learning and action (PLA)	Refers to the process that builds capacity for people to conduct their own analysis and often to plan and take action. A range of creative, low-infrastructure, low-cost techniques are available to facilitate this process.
Workshops/focus groups/key stakeholder meetings	Small-group meetings in which members of a particular stakeholder group, or representatives from different stakeholder groups, come together in an interactive forum to share and provide in-depth information about a particular topic and to discuss key issues. Meetings may be preceded by a presentation.
Advisory committees/panels	A group of stakeholders assembled to advise the decision-maker, and debate specific issues. Often composed of community leaders, NGOs and scientific experts.
Task force	A group of representative stakeholders or experts that is formed to develop or implement a specific proposal.
Citizen juries	A small group of ordinary citizens that are brought together to learn about an issue, cross-examine witnesses and make a recommendation. This is non-binding and has no legal standing, but provides an insight into public preferences.

COLLABORATION & EMPOWERMENT

APPROACHES TO STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT	
COLLABORATION & EMPOWERMENT	Charrettes/consensus conferences Meetings or workshops that have the express purpose of reaching an agreement or resolving conflicts on a particular issue in a short period of time. Critical decision-makers are brought together to reach agreement on a particular issue and these are therefore highly intense, resolution-oriented meetings.
	Imbizo Style of interactive governance aimed at building an active partnership between government and other stakeholders in the implementation of government initiatives. Any sphere of government may be involved in direct interaction with communities and sectors of society to build relations and create opportunities for stakeholder engagement around the implementation of programmes of action.
	Indaba Forum for open and frequent dialogue between stakeholders to identify and address critical issues of common concern and interest.
	Participatory rural appraisal (PRA)/participatory learning and action (PLA) Refers to the process that builds capacity for people to conduct their own analysis and often to plan and take action. A range of creative, low-infrastructure, low-cost techniques are available to facilitate this process.

Table A2: Facilitation Techniques

FACILITATION TECHNIQUES	
Goal Setting	Strategic Visioning Strategic visioning provides a way of defining and achieving a desirable future. This complements the heavily analytical approaches of traditional planning with processes that engage stakeholders in a holistic integration of their intuitive, emotional, intellectual, and physical understandings of a situation. Facilitators ask stakeholders to visualize a compelling picture of desirable future states. The group develops memorable imagery and stories about the nature and benefits of this future, and works backwards to understand the journey that could carry people to this vision.
	Theory of Constraints Theory of constraints logic is applied to identify what factors are limiting a process from achieving its goals, developing a solution to the problem, and getting the individuals in the process to invent the requisite changes for themselves. This technique allows decisions to be taken under conditions of limited resources, capacities, or demand and in situations in which constraints exist.
	Open spaces techniques Stakeholders offer topics and others have opportunity to engage according to interest.
Capturing & Incorporating Local Knowledge	Drama External actors or stakeholders are used to act as facilitators to provide a fictional context with which the stakeholders can identify. This allows for stakeholders to observe, enter into a situation through participatory experiences, and to seek options and contribute through subsequent discussions and problem-solving. This may include storytelling as a form of communicating issues and concepts.
	Institutional or Venn diagramming Using diagrams to identify the individuals or institutions important in, and for a community or group, or within an organization, as well as identifying their relationship to one another.
	Brainstorming Free-flowing lists/diagrams of all ideas and options.
	Matrices Checklist and scoring system used to compare different things and express preferences, e.g. comparing different trees or soils, land use types, or methods of water conservation.
	Seasonal calendar Provides information on the distribution of days of rain, amount of rain or soil moisture, crops, diet, food, consumption, sicknesses, prices, migration, income, expenditure etc.
	Gender calendar Provides information on the division of men and women's work throughout a year.
	Transect walks Systematically walking with local guides and analysts through an area, observing, asking, listening, discussing, learning about different zones, soils, land uses, vegetation, crops, livestock, local technologies and introduced technologies in order to seek problems, solutions and opportunities. Information can be mapped and/or diagrammed.
	Timelines Developing a chronology of events, listing major local events with approximate dates to identify changes over time and to try to identify causal links.
	Mapping and modelling Mapping, drawing and colouring on paper or on the ground using sticks, seeds, powders to make, for example, resource, social, health or demographic maps. Generally used in combination with wealth ranking, transect walks and linkage diagrams.
	Wealth/well-being ranking Grouping or ranking households according to local criteria, including those considered poorest and worst off.
	Case studies and stories An individual or group might describe, for example, a household history and profile, to provide information on how they cope with certain situations.

FACILITATION TECHNIQUES	
Handling-over-the-stick/ "do-it-yourself"	Facilitating greater stakeholder engagement and analysis through handing over the chalk, pen or stick to stakeholders to provide information.
Roleplaying	Stakeholders act out characters in predefined situation, followed by an evaluation and discussion of the interaction.
Simulation games	Exercises that simulate project decisions.
Trade-off games	Trade-off games are a tool for helping stakeholders clarify their priorities and values, providing information about what is really most important to people. Usually in a workshop setting, trade-off games involve a 'model' of a real situation with real constraints (time, budget, resources), and require individuals to make selections and choices based on their priorities. Trade-off games can be custom-designed to reflect a given situation or issue(s).
Collaborative problem-solving	In collaborative problem-solving, different stakeholder groups work side by side to solve the problem together. Rather than negotiating from opposing positions, the parties identify problems in terms of interests. An interest is the underlying need or concern that a party is trying to have satisfied. Going beyond the position to uncover the needs and concerns, the opportunity is created to explore a variety of options or possible solutions that may not have been previously considered. The aim is to move beyond agreements that are marginally sufficient to agreements that maximize solutions, meet more of everyone's needs and are "win-win" rather than "win-lose".
Delphi technique	The Delphi technique is based on the Hegelian principle of achieving Oneness of mind through a three-step process of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. In thesis and antithesis, all present their opinion or views on a given subject, establishing views and opposing views. In synthesis, opposites are brought together to form the new thesis. All participants are then to accept ownership of the new thesis and support it, changing their own views to align with the new thesis. Through a continual process of evolution, consensus will supposedly occur. The Delphi Technique was originally conceived as a way to obtain the opinion of experts without necessarily bringing them together face to face. It involved capturing the range of views of experts through iterative written correspondence. It can, however, be applied to any group or process where consensus is the desired outcome.
Negotiation	Discussions between stakeholder groups in order to reach agreement.
Mediation	Mediation is a way of resolving disputes, which helps people or parties to reach an acceptable agreement with the help of an impartial mediator. The parties in dispute (not the mediator) decide the terms of any settlement. Mediators are not responsible for making judgements or giving guidance, and therefore differ from conciliators and arbitrators. The mediator is responsible solely for developing interaction (and building consensus) between the parties.
Conciliation	Conciliation is a process where an independent conciliator meets with the parties in dispute, and explores ways to settle the dispute by agreement. The conciliator may begin by meeting jointly with the parties and asking them to share information about the dispute. Separate meetings between the conciliator and each party may also be held. Parties are encouraged to share information and to come forward with ideas on how their differences can be settled. The conciliator may also put forward suggestions. Powers of conciliators are generally wider than those of mediators.
Arbitration	When conciliation fails, a party may request that the dispute is resolved by arbitration. At an arbitration hearing an arbitrator gives all parties the opportunity to fully state their cases. The arbitrator then makes a decision on the issue in dispute. The decision is legally binding on the parties.

Sources: Adapted from Canter (1996), Chambers (1997), Shell International Exploration and Production B.V. (1999), IAP2 (2000) and Morreau (2001)

11. Glossary

Definitions

Affected environment

Those parts of the socio-economic and biophysical environment impacted on by the development.

Affected public

Groups, organizations, and/or individuals who believe that an action might affect them.

Alternative proposal

A possible course of action, in place of another, that would meet the same purpose and need. Alternative proposals can refer to any of the following, but are not necessarily limited to these:

- alternative sites for development
- alternative projects for a particular site
- alternative site layouts
- alternative designs
- alternative processes
- alternative materials.

In IEM the so-called “no-go” alternative also requires investigation.

Authorities

The national, provincial or local authorities that have a decision-making role or interest in the proposal or activity. The term includes the lead authority, as well as other authorities.

Baseline

Conditions that currently exist. Also called “existing conditions.”

Baseline information

Information derived from data that:

- records the existing elements and trends in the environment; and
- records the characteristics of a given project proposal.

Decision-maker

The person(s) entrusted with the responsibility for allocating resources or granting approval to a proposal.

Decision-making

The sequence of steps, actions or procedures that result in decisions, at any stage of a proposal.

Environment

The surroundings within which humans exist and that are made up of:

- i. the land, water and atmosphere of the earth;
- ii. micro-organisms, plant and animal life;
- iii. any part or combination of (i) and (ii) and the interrelationships among and between them; and
- iv. the physical, chemical, aesthetic and cultural properties and conditions of the foregoing that influence human health and well-being. This includes the economic, cultural, historical, and political circumstances, conditions and objects that affect the existence and development of an individual, organism or group.

Environmental Assessment (EA)

The generic term for all forms of environmental assessment for projects, plans, programmes or policies. This includes methods/tools such as EIA, strategic environmental assessment, sustainability assessment and risk assessment.

Environmental consultant

Individuals or firms that act in an independent and unbiased manner to provide information for decision-making.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

A public process that is used to identify, predict and assess the potential environmental impacts of a proposed project on the environment. The EIA is used to inform decision-making.

Fatal flaw

Any problem, issue or conflict (real or perceived) that could result in proposals being rejected or modified.

Impact

The positive or negative effects on human well-being and/or the environment.

Integrated Environmental Management (IEM)

A philosophy which prescribes a code of practice for ensuring that environmental considerations are fully integrated into all stages of the development and decision-making process. The IEM philosophy (and principles) is interpreted as applying to the planning, assessment, implementation and management of any proposal (project, plan, programme or policy) or activity - at local, national and international level - that has a potentially significant effect on the environment.

Implementation of this philosophy relies on the selection and application of appropriate tools to a particular proposal or activity. These may include environmental assessment tools (such as strategic environmental assessment and risk assessment), environmental management tools (such as monitoring, auditing and reporting) and decision-making tools (such as multi-criteria decision support systems or advisory councils).

Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs)

Individuals, communities or groups, other than the proponent or the authorities, whose interests may be positively or negatively affected by a proposal or activity and/or who are concerned with a proposal or activity and its consequences. These may include local communities, investors, business associations, trade unions, customers, consumers and environmental interest groups. The principle that environmental consultants and stakeholder engagement practitioners should be independent and unbiased excludes these groups from being considered I&APs.

Lead authority

The environmental authority at the national, provincial or local level entrusted, in terms of legislation, with the responsibility for granting approval to a proposal or allocating resources and for directing or coordinating the assessment of a proposal that affects a number of authorities.

Mitigate

The implementation of practical measures to reduce adverse impacts or enhance beneficial impacts of an action.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)

Voluntary environmental, social, labour or community organizations, charities or pressure groups.

Proponent

Any individual, government department, authority, industry or association proposing an activity (e.g. project, programme or policy).

Proposal

The development of a project, plan, programme or policy. Proposals can refer to new initiatives or extensions of, and revisions to existing ones.

Public

Ordinary citizens who have diverse cultural, educational, political and socio-economic characteristics. The public is not a homogeneous and unified group of people with a set of agreed common interests and aims. There is no single public. There are a number of publics, some of whom may emerge at any time during the process, depending on their particular concerns and the issues involved.

Roleplayers

The stakeholders who play a role in the environmental decision-making process. This role is determined by the level of engagement and the objectives set at the outset of the process.

Scoping

The process of determining the spatial and temporal boundaries (i.e. extent) and key issues to be addressed in an environmental assessment. The main purpose of scoping is to focus the environmental assessment on a manageable number of important questions. Scoping should also ensure that only significant issues and reasonable alternatives are examined.

Screening

A decision-making process to determine whether or not a development proposal requires environmental assessment, and if so, what level of assessment is appropriate. Screening is initiated during the early stages of the development of a proposal.

Significant/significance

Significance can be differentiated into impact magnitude and impact significance. Impact magnitude is the measurable change (i.e. intensity, duration and likelihood). Impact significance is the value placed on the change by different affected parties (i.e. level of significance and acceptability). It is an anthropocentric concept, which makes use of value judgements and science-based criteria (i.e. biophysical, social and economic). Such judgement reflects the political reality of impact assessment in which significance is translated into public acceptability of impacts.

Stakeholders

A subgroup of the public whose interests may be positively or negatively affected by a proposal or activity and/or who are concerned with a proposal or activity and its consequences. The term therefore includes the proponent, authorities (both the lead authority and other authorities) and all interested and affected parties (I&APs). The principle that environmental consultants and stakeholder engagement practitioners should be independent and unbiased excludes these groups from being considered stakeholders.

Stakeholder engagement

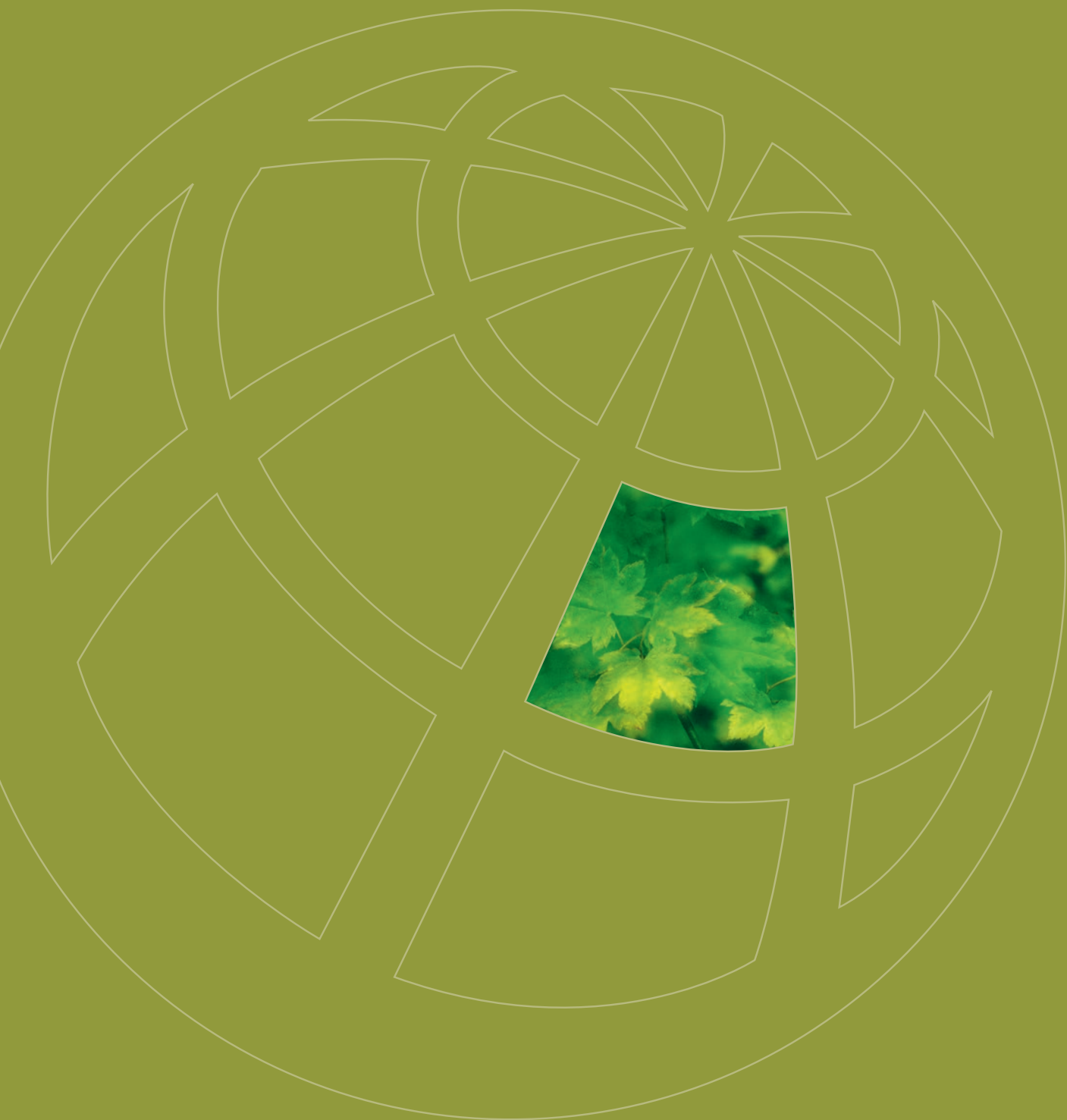
The process of engagement between stakeholders (the proponent, authorities and I&APs) during the planning, assessment, implementation and/or management of proposals or activities. The level of stakeholder engagement varies, depending on the nature of the proposal or activity and the level of commitment by stakeholders to the process. Stakeholder engagement can therefore be described by a spectrum or continuum of increasing levels of engagement in the decision-making process. The term is considered to be more appropriate than the term "public participation".

Stakeholder engagement practitioner

Individuals or firms whose role it is to act as independent, objective facilitators, mediators, conciliators or arbitrators in the stakeholder engagement process. The principle of independence and objectivity excludes stakeholder engagement practitioners from being considered stakeholders.

Abbreviations

CBO	Community-based Organization
EA	Environmental Assessment
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EMP	Environmental Management Plan
EMS	Environmental Management Systems
I&AP	Interested and Affected Party
IEM	Integrated Environmental Management
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment



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