Stakeholder management: Think before you act

Maps showing interactions of stakeholder networks

To understand the actors, we need to understand their rules. Actors are organised in networks which are affected by rules. The rules also differ according what they think / value / can do.

There are Three general approaches to perform an actor analysis:

- Theoretical approach
- Pragmatic approach
  - (most reported approach - stakeholder analysis)
- In-between: Model-based approach

Theory guides analysis
- Policy Network Theory
- Advocacy Coalition Framework
- Stream Model
- Institutional Analysis and Development Framework
- ...

Models as basis

Pragmatic approach
- Stakeholder analysis
- Quick-and-dirty
- Checklists
- Easy to use and adapt to situational needs
- ...

- Identifying what actors think is useful for making assumptions of actors
  For instance, establish joint framework to monitor implementation of agreement

- Identifying what actors value is useful for explaining actor’s behaviour
  For instance, identify value of actors in negotiation setting
• Identifying what actors can do is useful for anticipating what they will do in case of non cooperation and analyse possibilities for alternative scenarios

Stakeholder analysis design:
• Analysis design:
  • Questions to be answered by analysis
  • Time and people available for analysis
  • Available information and access to stakeholders

• Method: Argumentative analysis

Actor analysis
• Short preparatory literature study (1-2 weeks)
• Interviews with selected stakeholders (4 weeks):
  • Representative sample (network and stakeholders)
  • “Friends” easier to access than others
  • Selected methods guide type of interviews needed
  • Common language, different culture; especially important for argumentative analysis
  • At least some interviews seem required for any stakeholder analysis to “get the feeling”
• Analysis of data, workshop and reporting (3 weeks)
  • Methods provide structures for interpretation and presentation of results
The table below shows the result of an actor analysis performed in the Philippines about a water management project. The colored areas are representing the “ways of thinking” among the several stakeholders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conclusion</th>
<th>Nat Gov’t Agency</th>
<th>Water utility</th>
<th>Local City</th>
<th>PA Managmt Board</th>
<th>Agric Dep</th>
<th>Provinc Planning</th>
<th>Cebu City</th>
<th>Water utility</th>
<th>Agric Dep</th>
<th>Community Coop</th>
<th>Neighbouring City</th>
<th>Researcher</th>
<th>Farmer Coop</th>
<th>Agr/Env NGO</th>
<th>Env/Water NGO</th>
<th>Local village</th>
<th>Nat Gov’t Agency</th>
<th>Landowner</th>
<th>Env/Water NGO</th>
<th>Researcher</th>
<th>Farmer Coop</th>
<th>Agr/Env NGO</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved gov planning needed, then rest will follow</td>
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<td>Existing laws give leading role to gov agencies</td>
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<td>DENR should take up its leading role</td>
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<td>Govemm coordination needed</td>
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<td>NIPAS Act frame for water management</td>
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<td>Watershed residents are de facto decision makers / need their cooperation</td>
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<td>People who control resources are best managers</td>
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<td>Bottom up govern needed</td>
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### Conclusions

- Think before you act, but:
  - Different approaches for actor analysis with varying levels of thoroughness and underlying theoretical basis
  - What is appropriate for your project?
    - How important is stakeholder management for the project?
    - If it is key, then it may pay to think well, before you act
  - Model-based methods do have advantages:
    - They help to gain and communicate insights that go beyond the obvious
    - Underlying theory provides starting point for developing a more substantive stakeholder management strategy
  - Important factors for actor analysis:
    - Available input data (incomplete, inaccurate, dissimilar)
    - Validity of results (also due to quality input data)
    - Efficiency (efforts required and expected quality of results)