



PRACTICE ABSTRACT NR. 76

AUTHOR(S):

Andy Lane
Open University

CONTACTS:

andy.lane@open.ac.uk
www.open.ac.uk

COUNTRY/REGION:

Not applicable

KEY WORDS:

#diagrams, #systems thinking, #design thinking, #reflexive monitoring, #Living Labs

Engaging stakeholders in Living Labs

Living Labs entail and depend on, the co-creation of innovative agricultural advisory services through users and stakeholders working together in a real-life setting. Identifying relevant stakeholders and engaging them through as many phases of a Living Lab as necessary is important. Stakeholders must be involved in a meaningful and timely way to ensure the implementation of the innovative service. This involves monitoring and evaluating the appropriateness of a service and the level of engagement by these stakeholders and dealing with their differing interests and views through regular dialogue. The first step when starting a Living Lab is to do a stakeholder analysis whereby each potential stakeholder is assessed depending on their interest in the situation and their influence on the outcome of the Living Lab. Once potential stakeholders with high levels of interest and/or influence have been identified, they can be brought together to develop shared understandings of the situation and common concerns. This can be done through working together to produce diagrams of the collective system of interest that could become the focus of the Living Lab and by providing an understanding of the roles and process of a living Lab using non-specialist language. Assuming stakeholder support for the Living Lab, regular dialogue through meetings and online communications can be used to consult further (ask for views, ideas, etc.) and inform stakeholders of progress (present activities and results). There are many techniques and approaches that can be used to facilitate and monitor a Living Lab to enable as much involvement and joint ownership of the process as desired by the stakeholders involved. For more on Living Labs see AgriLink PAs No. [5](#), [31](#), [45](#), [51](#).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

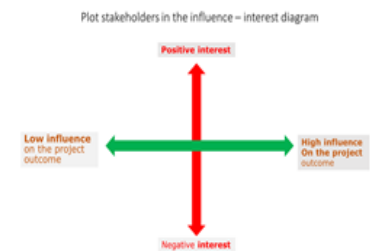
For participatory projects it is important to:

1. Identify and engage with stakeholders;
2. Plan meetings and other events involving stakeholders and
3. Facilitate events involving stakeholders.

A stakeholder is a person who has a vested interest in the outcome of your project. In other words, anyone affected by or anyone with influence on what you do. There are many ways of identifying and categorising stakeholders. It is helpful for all stages to have a person or persons who can facilitate, but not dictate, the processes that support these participatory activities. There are many tools and techniques that can help. One is the co-creation of diagrams. Diagrams can act as mediating objects in conversations between groups of people, whether produced by one member, or preferable, if created by all members of the group in a collective process. Such diagrams can include both rational thoughts and emotional feelings.

The aim of such processes is to:

- Consult stakeholders – ask for their views, ideas etc.;
- Inform them – present activities and results;
- Involve them – by actively taking part in the project;
- Encourage ownership – it becomes their project.



ABOUT AGRILINK

Agrilink is a multi-actor project funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme. It brings together 16 partners from 13 countries, including universities, applied research institutes, advisors and consultants from public organisations, private SMEs, a farmer-based organisation and specialists in communication and distance learning.

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www.agrilink2020.eu



twitter.com/agrilink2020



pierre.labarthe@inrae.fr

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 727577.

All the Practice Abstracts prepared by the Agrilink project in the EIP-AGRI common format can be found here: <https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/find-connect/projects/agrilink-agricultural-knowledge-linking-farmers>