Country Experience in Relationship Management

Effective engagement strategy between national statistics office and it's national stakeholders

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Importance of Stakeholder engagement

- **Is the process by which a NSO involves Stakeholders/people who may be affected by the decisions it makes or can influence the implementation of its decisions**

- **Represents the Department's ongoing commitment**
  - **to work effectively with its stakeholders**
  - **learn from past stakeholder engagement experiences and**
  - **continue to improve performance**

- **Mutually beneficial for the DCS and our stakeholders**

- **Who are the Stakeholders:**

  - Individuals or groups who will be impacted by, or can influence the success or failure of NSO activities

- **Importance of management of relationships**

  - Is vital in **resolving issues** faced by the NSO

  - It enables the NSO to build **positive relationships** with its stakeholders via the appropriate management of their expectations and agreed objectives

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Benefits from stakeholder consultation

a. improves the **quality of decision making**, since those with a vested interest **contribute from the initial stages**;

b. identifies controversial issues and difficulties before a decision is made;

c. brings together different stakeholders with different opinions, enabling an agreement to be reached together and preventing opposition at a later stage, which can slow down the decision-making process;

Benefits from stakeholder consultation

d. Eliminates delays and reduces costs in the implementation phase;

e. Gives stakeholders a better understanding of the objectives of decisions and the issues surrounding them

f. Creates a sense of ownership of decisions and measures, thus improving their acceptance

g. Renders the decision-making process more democratic, giving citizens and local communities the power to influence decisions and, as a result, a greater sense of responsibility

h. Builds local capacity

i. Enhances public confidence in decision makers and

j. Creates opportunities for stakeholders and decision makers to learn from each other by exchanging information and experiences

Involvement of stakeholders

The involvement of stakeholders should be regarded as a permanent and long-term activity.

It can be implemented at all stages of the policy-making process:
a. planning,
b. implementation
c. and/or evaluation..

Participation in planning

Participation in implementation

Participation in evaluation
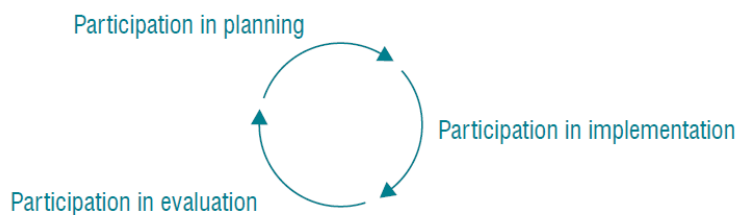
Stakeholders of the DCS

Generally, stake holders can be grouped into in to following categories:

- **Employees of the DCS:**

- **Respondents:**
    - All the respondents or potential respondents including household members, private Enterprises, Agricultural Holdings, Government organizations & entities, and Non-profit entities.

- **Funders:**
    - The government and Non-Government agencies who provide funds to fulfill DCS's Mission including: Ministry of Economic affairs, Ministry of Finance, and Other government funding Agencies; WB, IMF, FAO, and other international UN Agencies; (They provide funds and closely monitor the programs to ensure that the DCS fulfills its mission)

Stakeholders of the DCS contd..

- **Oversight Bodies:**

    - Those who monitor the execution of major DCS programs to ensure it fulfills its mission, and the International agencies who provides international manuals and guidelines to standardize DCS activities

        - Government Agencies like: Central Bank of Sri Lanka, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Commerce and Industrial Development, Ministry of Agriculture etc.

        - International Agencies like: WB, FAO, IMF, ILO, and other UN Agencies

Stakeholders of the DCS contd..

- **Journalists/media**

- **Academia and researchers:**

  - **Universities, Schools, Individual academics or researchers, specialist interest groups, research institutes, data intermediaries, professional organizations, Students, and learned societies**

- **Data users:**

  - **Government Data Users:**

    - **The Government Ministries, Departments, Provincial Councils and other Government Agencies which are involved in mainly as data users, but not as monitor or funders of DCS's Programs**

  - **Private Data Users:**

   - **Business Entities, Non-profit organizations, and the General Public**

Stakeholders of the DCS contd..

- **Data Suppliers:**

  - The State entities that supply data to the DCS for use in DCS programs. DCS maintains its branch office at most of these entities in order of facilitating data supply and data processing activities of those agencies (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Customs, Registrar General's Department, Board of Investment, Tourism Development Authority etc.)

- **Trainers and Advisors:**

  - Those who provide expertise and Training to the DCS or its Staff about how best to fulfill its activities, by providing methodological expertise, and insights about how to reach different inputs and business types (UNSIAP, US Census Bureau, NASA-India, US Labor Bureau, IMF, Individual experts, Universities etc.)

- **Advocacy Groups:**

  - those who represent specific special interests or subpopulations (Chamber of Commerce, Chamber of Industries, etc.)

Classifying Stakeholder types

- The DCS mainly uses the Influence/Interest model to classify its stakeholders.

- In this model, horizontal axis shows the Level of interest while the vertical axis represents Level of influence

- Accordingly, stakeholders can be divided into four categories

  a) high Influence–high interest

  b) high Influence–low interest,

  c) low Influence–high interest, and

  d) low Influence–low interest
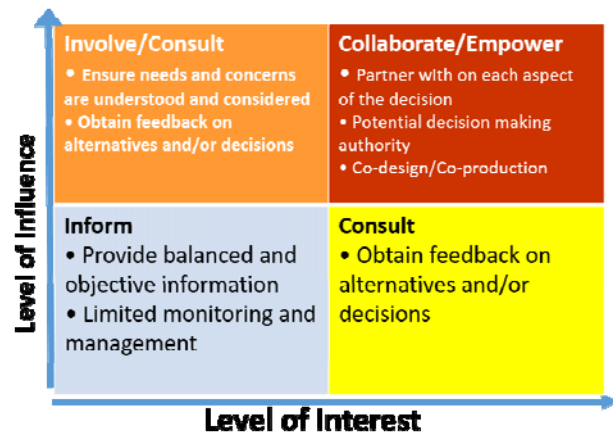
Engagement Approaches

- There are five approaches for engagement:

  i. Inform

  ii. Consult

  iii. Involve

  iv. Collaborate

  v. Empower

- The approach depends on the type of the Stakeholders that the DCS engaged

Preparation for stakeholder consultation

1. Specify the issue(s) to be addressed
2. Identify which stakeholders to involve
3. Analyze the potential contribution of various stakeholders
4. Set up an involvement strategy
5. Consult your stakeholders
6. Evaluate and follow up

Handling stakeholder involvement

1. Identify and <u>communicate</u> with stakeholders
2. Analyze their <u>objectives and resources</u>
3. Enable the <u>well-structured involvement</u> of all stakeholders
4. Identify and <u>schedule suitable decision-making</u> stages and methods for involving all the different stakeholder groups
5. Develop an <u>overall cooperation strategy</u> and principles for stakeholder involvement
6. Create a planning culture based on <u>regular communication</u>, <u>mutual consultation</u> and <u>cooperative decision making</u> and
7. Prepare and <u>follow up</u> with stakeholders for all events

Who is Responsible for Engagement

- All staff involved in the production of statistics must take ownership of their responsibility to deliver an effective user engagement

- Involvement of Statisticians or higher offices are pivotal for each team, in building and maintaining links with user forums

Engagement Mechanism

- **Depends on the circumstances**
- **Depends on each segment of Stakeholders**
- **Need to be fit-for-purpose**
- **Some Common methods of engagement adopted by DCS are:**
  - **Workshops, forums,**
  - **User focused events (Such as Conferences, seminars, focus groups),**
  - **Questionnaire,**
  - **Media (**Mainly used by DCS to make respondents aware on our Surveys, Censuses etc.)

Relationship Health

- **To measure the DCS's Relationship health with its stakeholders, a evaluation plan is prepared before the engagement process begins**

- **The main methods we commonly use to evaluate our engagement process are:**

  - **Observation and Reflection**

  - **Analyze attendant Sheet**

  - **Administering a questionnaire**

  - **Fact sheet etc.**

  - **Informal contacts etc.**

Improving Relationship Health

1. Try to act as much as possible on the results of the stakeholder consultation

2. Keep all stakeholders informed of how their input is used

3. Evaluate both the process and the outcomes of the consultation and

4. Define the indicators for the evaluation before the start of the consultation process to ensure collection of necessary information

Skills Needed by the Statistics Leaders

- **Leadership ability is a prerequisite:**
    - Because Statistics is an interdisciplinary endeavor, success ultimately depends on getting others to understand and act on our work

- **Scientific Communication Skills**

- **Positioning skills**
    - Undertake environment scanning to understand the broader research and/or policy context, and utilize this understanding to set and review relevant statistical programs with key national and international stakeholders
    - Apply economic, environment, or social knowledge to manage, implement, and innovate within the statistical process to support improved research and/or policy decisions
    - Conduct statistical work aligned to the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics Set out by the UN

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Skills Needed by the Statistics Leaders Cont…

- **Influencing skills**

    a. Establish, maintain and **leverage good working relationships** with key stakeholders in relevant fields

    b. Contribute to the **development of national and international statistical standards**, classifications, frameworks, and protocols, and promulgate their use within the wider community

    c. Champion **data access** and facilitate **data sharing** across relevant statistical and non-statistical government agencies and organizations

    d. **Negotiate agreements** on the provision of data and technical services to agreed timetables and budgets

    e. Assist data custodians to **improve data quality** at the source by improving metadata standards and implementing relevant classifications to increase coherency

    f. **Lead and connect with networks**, seminars, and groups of experts across the national and international domain to ensure consistency, coordination and collaboration of activities.

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Skills Needed by the Statistics Leaders Cont…

- **Enabling Skills**

  - Develop and leverage relevant networks

  - Build the **statistical understanding and knowledge** of data custodians

  - **Assess and actively develop** the statistical capability of users and producers of statistics and facilitate the development of necessary learning resources

  - **Ensure stakeholders know** what data is available, understand relevant statistical concepts and simple statistical analyses, and can communicate statistical information effectively

  - Facilitate the delivery of important national and international statistics to users **along with related information** to help them understand and apply the data effectively

Thank You