



How To

---

# Stakeholder Map

## Digital Agriculture Landscape Assessment Toolkit

---

JengaLab



TechChange



DEVELOPMENT  
GATEWAY  
An IREX Venture

# STAKEHOLDER MAP : DIGITAL AGRICULTURE LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT

AUG 2023



---

The Digital Advisory Support Services for Accelerated Rural Transformation (DAS) Program is a facility funded by a grant from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The DAS consortium of partners includes Development Gateway: an IREX Venture, Tech Change, and JengaLab.

This document has been produced with the financial assistance of IFAD. The findings, opinions, interpretations, and conclusions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IFAD, its Executive Board, its Members, or any Member State they represent. IFAD does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this work. The boundaries, colors, denominations, and other information shown on any map in this work do not imply any judgment on the part of IFAD concerning the legal status of any territory or the endorsement or acceptance of such boundaries.

---

## Authors:

### TechChange

Annie Kilroy and Lindsey Fincham  
with support from Kelley Sams, Andrea Ulrich, Victoria Blackham, and Christina Hernandez

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

Table of Contents	3
Part 5 : Stakeholder Map	4
Introduction	4
Uses for Assessment Teams	4
How to Create a Stakeholder Map	5
Step 1 - Define Use Case for Mapping	5
Step 2 - Define Boundaries	6
Step 3 - Define Stakeholders	6
Step 4 - Define Variables of Interest	8
Step 5 - Map and Analyze	10
How to Map Your Variables	12
1. Lines	12
2. Shapes	13
3. Plots Review	15
4. Combos : Get Creative	16
Common Pitfalls	17

# PART 5 : STAKEHOLDER MAP

The most important part of the stakeholder mapping process is not the final output itself but the process of developing and discussing it. Utilize stakeholder maps early and often to get rapid feedback and buy-in from stakeholders. This will ensure that your analysis meets their needs.

## INTRODUCTION

Stakeholder mapping can be a fun way of testing your knowledge of a data ecosystem, especially if you do it in an interactive or collaborative way. **In fact, one of the strongest use cases for a stakeholder mapping exercise is not the final product so much as the analytical exercise itself:** the process of mapping stakeholders (through an interactive, discussion-based team meeting of varying degrees of formality) clarifies everybody's individual relationships with each stakeholder in an ecosystem. More often than not, even stakeholder mapping skeptics admit that they learn something new or valuable from the exercise.

## USES FOR ASSESSMENT TEAMS

Stakeholder maps can also be a valuable internal project management resource for teams implementing a digital ecosystem assessment. In other words, the mapping can be conducted without the involvement of any external partners and based purely from the point of view of the assessment team.

These maps can be used in the early phases of an assessment to distinguish the players in a given data ecosystem, inform a strategic communications or dissemination plan for the assessment outputs, or identify potential blockers, bottlenecks, or risks to data use or assessment usability. They can also be used to highlight key insights and recommendations during the assessment and recommendation drafting process and serve as a great evidence base for reports and action plans.

# HOW TO CREATE A STAKEHOLDER MAP

**There are five basic steps to stakeholder mapping:**

1. Define use case for mapping
2. Define boundaries
3. Define stakeholders
4. Define variables of interest
5. Map and analyze

## STEP 1: DEFINE USE CASE FOR MAPPING

Before doing any kind of stakeholder mapping, consider why and how you want to use the analytical output:

- **Informational/factual:** Is it to visualize a complicated network of data, resource, or decision flows?
- **Communications/engagement:** Is it to understand which stakeholders to prioritize, or look for opportunities for more strategic engagement?
- **Risk management:** Is it to identify potential barriers, bottlenecks, or loose ends?

### Example

#### Defining the Use Case for Your Stakeholder Map

*--> TIP: Do not overthink the use case. "I'm confused about or unfamiliar with this space and I'd like to map it to better understand it" is a perfectly good use case for any map!*

Then, define the goals of the stakeholder map as needed. Outlining goals at the onset of stakeholder mapping helps determine what variable(s) should be analyzed and establishes a "use case" on how the stakeholder map will be used. However, you can refine the goals of the stakeholder mapping if they change as insights from the maps emerge.

The goals of a stakeholder mapping in a digital/data ecosystem could include:

- Brainstorming how to expand the digital/data user base or reach those in highest need
- Determining which data stakeholders to engage and how to do so
- Determining which data use cases to prioritize and how to do so
- Identifying ways to optimize sharing, sending, and receiving of data

## STEP 2: DEFINE BOUNDARIES

You will also want to be specific about the boundaries of this map, otherwise it will lose its value if it gets too large (a common pitfall in stakeholder maps!) . A “fill in the blank” data ecosystem is broad, and there are many stakeholders within it to map — which ones are most important for your scope? For more on defining your data ecosystem, see Section 07: Data Ecosystem Mapping of the Toolkit.

As an example, assume you are assessing the data ecosystem of a specific agricultural resource or value chain, such as seeds. To define the boundaries of your stakeholder map, ask yourself if you are interested in mapping.

- The entire agriculture ecosystem, all the way down to smallholder farmers
- The policy ecosystem., focusing mostly on policy actors rather than farmers
- The agricultural data ecosystem, focusing on data related to seed research (source = academia, government data) or seed supply chain and markets (source = private sector)

In other words, think back to the overall use cases and user stories you defined in Toolkit Part 05. **What is the main use case for the data you are interested in, or the specific landscape assessment you are conducting?**

## STEP 3: DEFINE UNITS/STAKEHOLDERS

In ecosystem assessments, a **stakeholder** is anyone who stands to benefit (or suffer) from the assessment or the digital or data ecosystem in question. Generally, your list of stakeholders will be longer than your list of users: For example, a smallholder farmer could be impacted by seed data use (meaning that the farmer becomes a seed data stakeholder). However, the farmer may not necessarily be a key user of your seed value chain data dashboard or the seed data itself. Depending on the goals of

your stakeholder mapping, you might need to include *current* stakeholders as well as *future* or *ideal* stakeholders.

### Questions to ask yourself when identifying stakeholders:

- Who will influence the success of your project?
- Who will be impacted by your project?
- What potential benefits and risks arise for each actor if the project succeeds or fails?
- What is the actor’s interest in the issue/problem?

- What prior experience does the actor have on the problem/issue to be addressed?
- To what degree are the actor's interests aligning or conflicting with other actors' interests?
- What options exist to increase the actor's interest and engagement, or dismantle obstacles?
- To what extent are marginalized stakeholders visible?

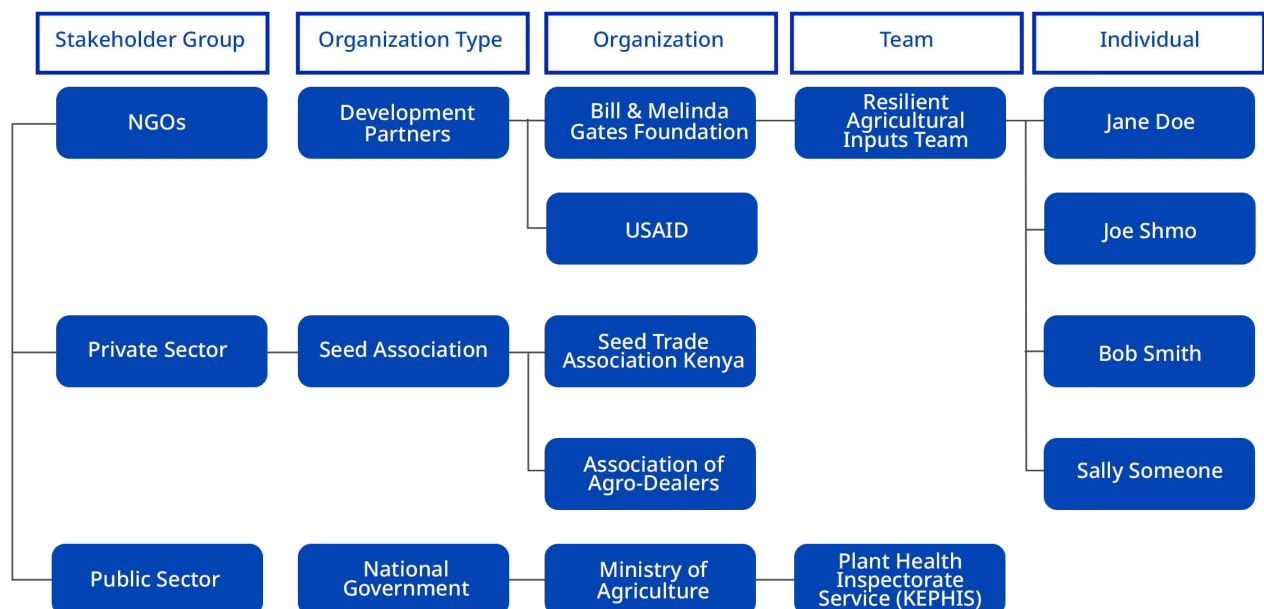
## How to Define Your Stakeholders

FIRST: Consider the use case for your assessment or the problem in the digital ecosystem you are trying to address with the assessment. Common stakeholder types for data and digital ecosystem assessments include:

- Government organizations
- Development organizations
- Civil society organizations
- Network associations - civil society or private
- Special interest groups - public or private
- Advocacy organizations
- Individuals/ beneficiaries

SECOND: Consider the boundaries and variables of your ecosystem to understand which stakeholder to exclude. Continuously refine and narrow your stakeholder list to exclude individuals falling outside the boundaries of your use case, and ensure your map is at a scale that is actually usable to you.

THIRD: Start to organize stakeholders in units and scales that make sense to the scale of map you need. Scales can range from broad categories like *organization type* to smaller units like individual teams or departments, all the way down to people.





## Example

### Choosing the Right Stakeholders

--> *TIP: To determine what scale or level of stakeholder to use, it helps to just start by naming any unit of analysis that you can think of (person, team, organization, group) and work your way up or down from there.*

**Continuing with the seed data example, consider these exercises:**

1. Start by naming every department, team, or individual that works on designing or implementing seed policy
  - a. For example, the Ministry of Agriculture policy team, , private consultants with their “noses in everything,” shady lobbying firms, and that one epic project Sally Someone at USAID just finished
2. List the people or groups that inform that policy
  - a. For example, academic or research institutions, lobbying or advocacy groups, and local citizens
3. List the people or groups that were upset or happy about those policies.
  - a. For example, farmers, retailers, seed producers, wholesalers, distributors, and importers/exporters
4. List the people or groups that could or are currently doing something differently, or doing the same thing well
  - a. For example, the innovative AgTech app that is trending with farmers or open data initiatives.

Thereafter, you can start to organize your stakeholder list to land on a scale that makes the most sense for the goals of your mapping. In the example above, it probably makes sense to use organization as the unit of scale for the stakeholder map, rather than individual or organization type.

## STEP 4: DEFINE METRICS/ VARIABLES

The next step is to choose your variables: what exactly are you going to plot, map, or analyze?

Variables turn a list of stakeholders into a map that you can visualize and analyze.

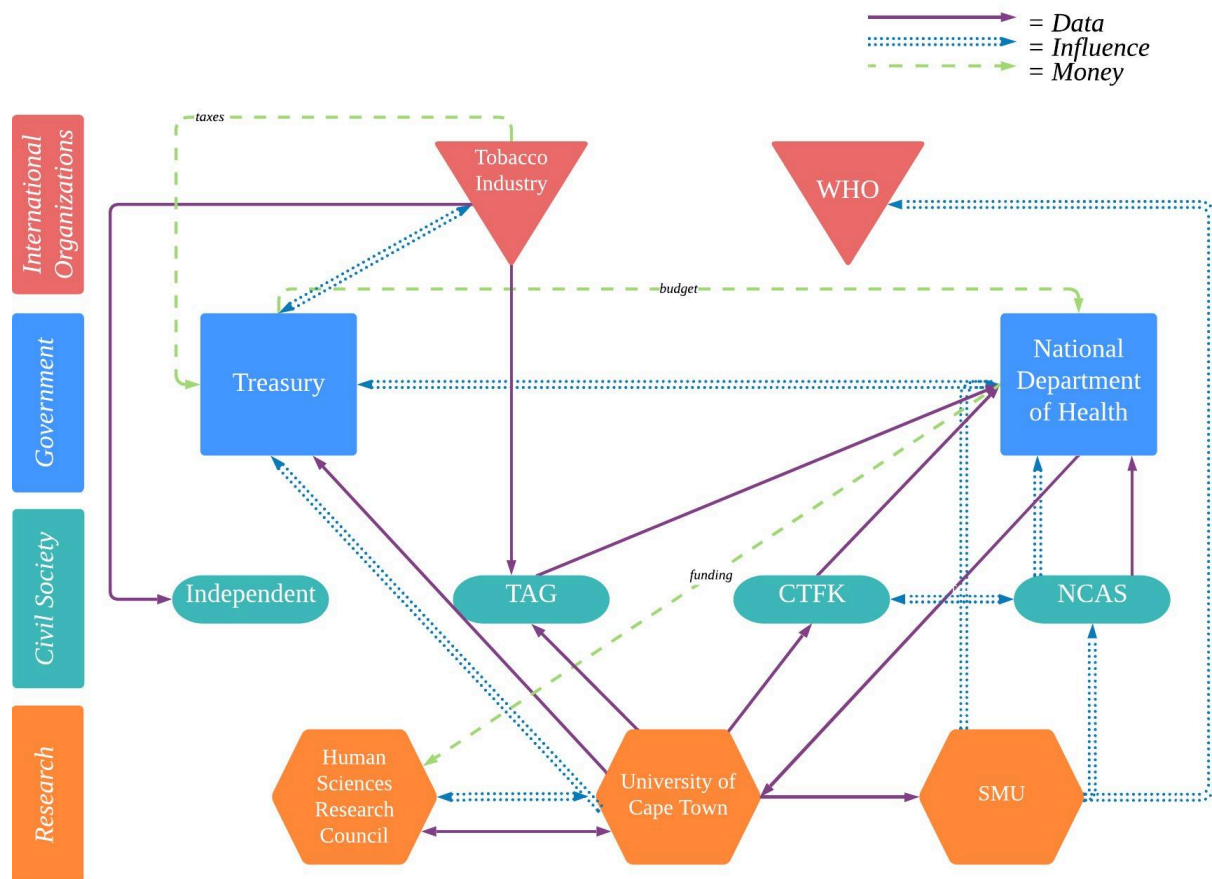
There are infinite numbers of variables and combinations of variables that you could use to analyze stakeholders. Some commonly used variables in stakeholder mapping include:

- Data/technology use
- Power
- Influence
- Interest
- Buy-in
- Awareness
- Access

### How to choose the right variables:

- An “**access**” variable is useful for identifying opportunities to increase the uptake and use of technology by stakeholders and ensuring or strengthening reach to priority stakeholders.
  - This could be stakeholder access to technology or vice versa (access to stakeholder tech)! Be sure to clarify in step #1.
- An “**interest**” variable helps prioritize stakeholder groups or identify opportunities to expand the user pool.
- You can also think of variables in terms of **value chains or processes**: value chain mappings can be useful for determining at what stage(s) in a particular cycle stakeholders should be engaged, such as when and how to receive or disseminate data from suppliers.

In the example below, a scoping assessment for a tobacco control data dashboard mapped variables of data, influence, and money:



## Example

### Clearly Defining Your Variables

--> *TIP: Ensuring a common understanding of each variable's definition is critical to developing and using a stakeholder map. It should also be a critical step to any stakeholder mapping workshop.*

Consider, for example, the variable of “interest” in the seeds example.

In this case, “interest” could mean:

- Interest in seed data, generally
- Interest in dataset XYZ
- Interest in availability of higher-quality seed

Similarly, “influence” could mean:

- Influence on seed data (supply, demand, use, etc.)
- Influence on seed policymaking
- Influence on seed routes to market
- Influence on seed use
- Influence on seeds project implementation

Refer back to your use case from Step 1 and your boundaries from Step 2 to define and refine your variables. In a stakeholder mapping workshop, ensure that all participants of the mapping exercise understand the definitions of each variable and the ways of measuring them. In an analytical report output or deliverable, ensure that the reader or audience understands exactly how to interpret each variable.

## STEP 5: MAP AND ANALYZE

Now that you have your stakeholders and your variables, the last step is to plot the map. There are two main ways to do this:

1. **Freehand:** Simply draw stakeholders from Step 4 based on decisions you made in Step 3
2. **Mathematical:** Map each stakeholder from Step 4 on a scale by assigning numerical values for each variable and stakeholder, much like you would plot (X,Y) coordinates on a graph in your algebra class or longitude/latitude coordinates on a map

Drawing freehand is not precise but can be efficient, especially for mappings that only utilize lines or shapes to analyze variables. Assigning numerical values is more accurate when using plots in stakeholder maps, but can be tricky: who gets to assign those number values, and on what grounds? It also can introduce risks and headaches related to fatigue from repeated/lengthy assessments.

**Determine the right fit for your project, scope, and partners, and think creatively about how you can get the information you need to plot stakeholders on a grid.**

## Example

### Stakeholder Mapping Workshops

--> *To balance the pros and cons of drawings versus numbers while maximizing opportunities for stakeholder feedback and co-creation, DG often utilizes interactive stakeholder mapping **workshops**.*

During stakeholder mapping workshops, you should:

- Review the use case for the stakeholder map
- Review/define boundaries for your map
- Review/define metrics for your map
- Review/define stakeholders for your map
- Finalize agreements and discussions on how to map and analyze

For example, numerical values for each stakeholder and variable could be pooled from participants during a virtual workshop using a live excel spreadsheet that averages the values and plots them in real time. Virtual whiteboards could be used to develop and refine stakeholder definitions and groupings while facilitating discussions about your variables of interest.

Of course, stakeholder mapping workshops can be scaled up or down depending on the scope of your assessment - you can utilize this format to create the map from scratch with participants, or have many of these things predefined while utilizing the workshop as more of a validation session. Either way, stakeholder maps should involve some level of co-creation and feedback with the intended audience.

If you have trouble getting consensus on the final map, democratize the assessment process by allowing each participant to explain where they think stakeholders should fall on a numerical plot. Sharing the anonymized results for discussion and making appropriate adjustments to the final values (as necessary) can also help achieve consensus.



In the example above, the shapes, which are drawn to scale, represent the amount of funding provided by the stakeholder group. However, lines can also be drawn to scale to show the intensity of flows (much like a Sankey Diagram). You could also use dashed lines to demonstrate theoretical or ideal relationships and solid lines for actual or evidenced relationships.

## Example

### Drawing Lines with Stakeholder Maps

--> Consider the following example scenario and scope for your digital ecosystem assessment:

- Use Case: Identify the data use cases to prioritize
- Boundaries: Seed policymaking in Sub-Saharan Africa
- Metrics: Policy making power or influence
- Stakeholders: Political groups, government/civil servant groups, advocacy and research organizations, seed company and farmers associations, etc.
- Map: High/med/low policy making influence or power

In the above stakeholder map, the lines could demonstrate:

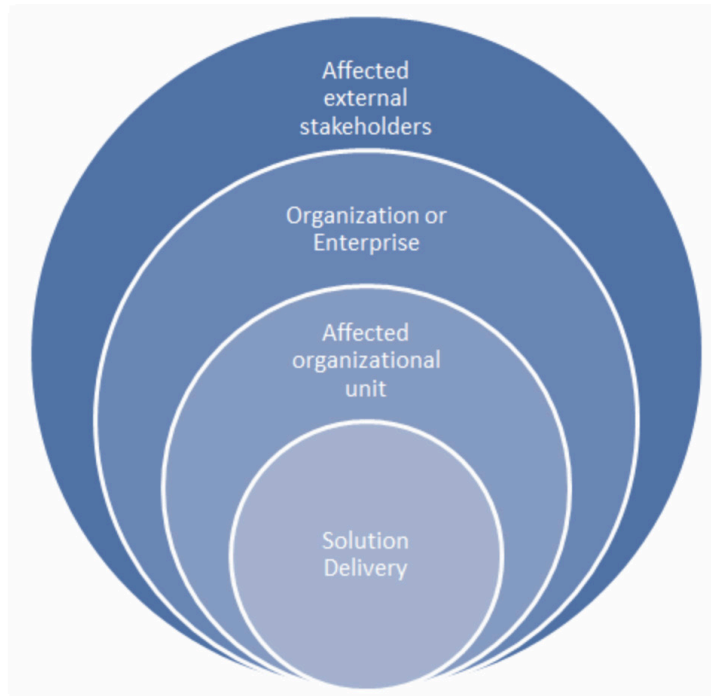
- Influence: Distinct from the variable of influence (which measures the influence of a stakeholder group on seed policymaking), influence lines could represent the effect stakeholders have on each other (evidence of collaboration, joint work, advocacy, consultations)
  - For example, lines between seed company and farmer associations and political groups; lines between advocacy and research organizations and civil servant groups

Note that if the use case changes slightly, the lines might serve a different purpose.

- Data flows: Data flow lines could represent stakeholders sharing or requesting data from one another.
  - For example, lines between advocacy and research organizations and political and government/civil servant groups

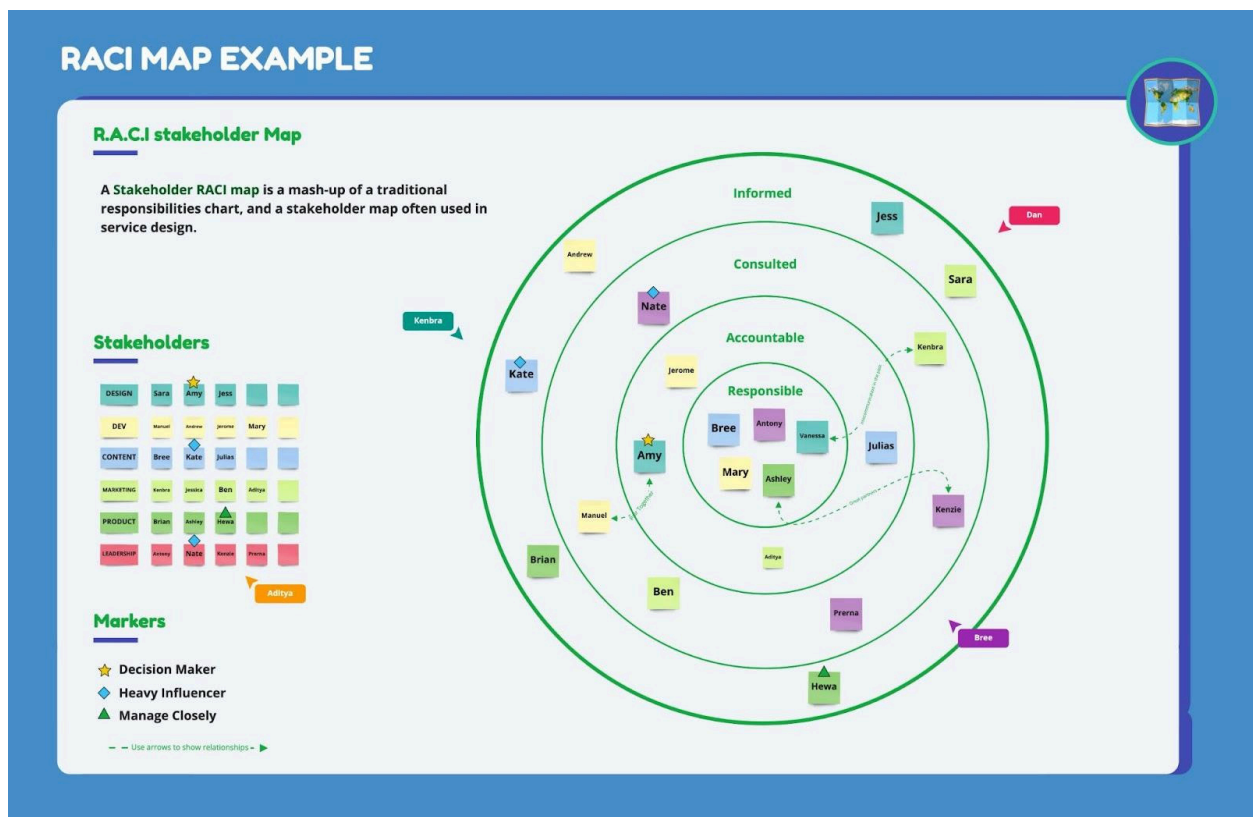
## 2. SHAPES

Shapes can also help you organize and visualize your data ecosystem stakeholders in meaningful ways. For example, onion diagrams are often utilized to organize stakeholders into primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of influence, or organize those most closely related to the use case of the assessment.



Example: Stakeholder Map - Onion Diagram Template

Shapes are also often utilized in Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, and Informed (RACI) stakeholder maps<sup>1</sup>



Example: Stakeholder Map - RACI framework using shapes<sup>2</sup>

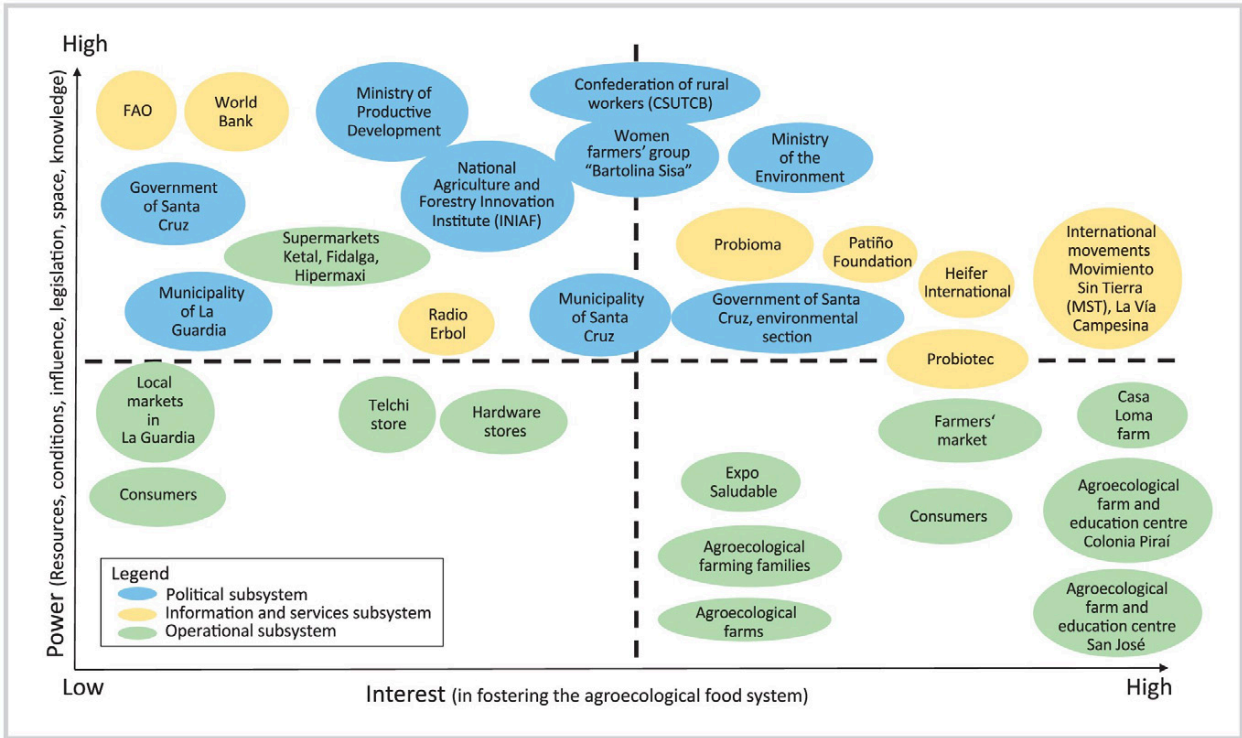
In the example above, shapes such as stars, triangles, and squares have been utilized to represent or highlight key stakeholder groups, which is another common strategy for making stakeholder maps more useful for assessments.

### 3. PLOTS

If you want to analyze stakeholders according to their level of data use, 'level of data use' would be your only variable in your stakeholder map. If you only look at one variable, your stakeholder map could be linear (like a ranking). Alternatively, you could use lines to represent relationships (like an organogram) or flows (data, financial, decision) between stakeholders, or have a bunch of shapes with their sizes proportional to some measure of data use. But this map would be a little boring, no?

**Plotting** stakeholders on a matrix against your variables of interest is another common approach to stakeholder mapping. If you want to analyze stakeholders according to their level of data use and influence on policy outcomes, 'data use' and 'influence' would be your two variables, and your stakeholder map would look like an XY graph from your algebra class.

In the image below, the XY axes on a plot represent power and influence – or buy-in and awareness – variables.



<sup>1</sup> For more information on RACI stakeholder maps, see <https://www.stakeholdermap.com/business/raci-chart.html>

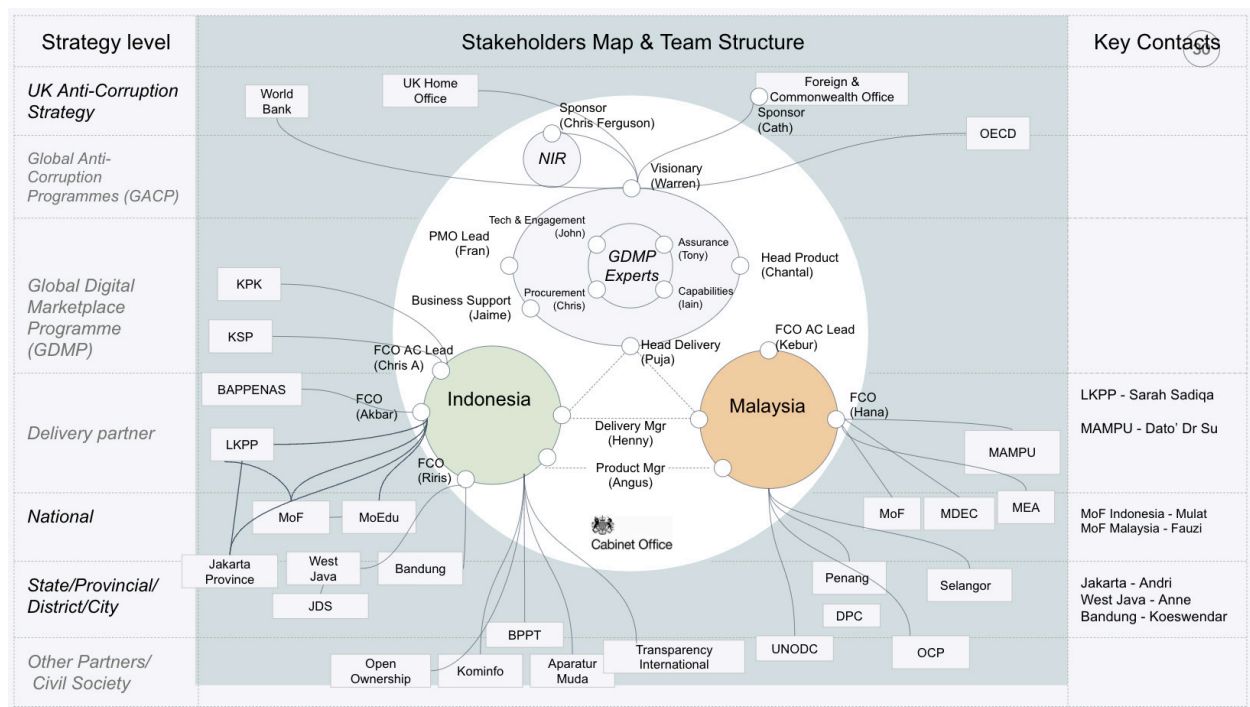
<sup>2</sup>Source: <https://clickup.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/image7.jpg>  
<https://clickup.com/blog/raci-matrix-examples/>



You probably do not want to try and plot more than two variables unless you are a really big fan of three-dimensional calculus. However, if you want to add more information to your stakeholder map, think creatively about how you could use other data visualization design hacks to demonstrate more information:

- **Shapes or colors** of each stakeholder symbol on the plot could be used to represent stakeholder group/category.
- You could even combine shapes and colors to represent more than one category. For example, squares can represent government organizations, green squares can represent Ministry of Agriculture teams, blue squares can represent ministries of finance/dev/planning teams, and red squares can represent local government teams.
- **The size** of each stakeholder symbol on the plot could be proportional to some value, such as amount of annual funding, number of employees, or reported levels of data use.

## 4. COMBOS: GET CREATIVE



Example: Stakeholder Map - Line+Shape Combo

# COMMON PITFALLS (AND HOW TO AVOID THEM)

PITFALL	HOW TO AVOID THEM
Map is too big	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Refine your boundaries (separate into distinct maps if necessary)</li> <li>- Refine your stakeholder groups and strategically combine them</li> </ul>
Map is too small	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expand your boundaries</li> <li>- Expand your stakeholders: break stakeholder groups down further into departments, teams, and individuals</li> </ul>
Too many variables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Revisit the use cases for the map and redefine your variables</li> <li>- Create separate maps as needed</li> </ul>
No useful information	<p>Is there another variable you could look at and compare this map to? For example, you may have not learned anything new after mapping financial flows. But what if you looked at the stakeholders from the perspective of financial flows versus power? Or financial flows versus decision flows?</p>
Analysis paralysis	<p>Sometimes, teams can split hairs over the definition of “influence,” (e.g., whether Advocacy Research Foundation Inc. is an advocacy stakeholder or a research stakeholder, or whether the World Bank scores a 6 or a 6.5). Remember: this is not a science, and there are no right or wrong answers. Find a way forward that leads to the most useful outcomes for the assessment.</p>
Stakeholder mapping workshop tips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Share materials (e.g., potential use cases, boundaries, workshop agendas) with participants in advance so they can prepare and know what to expect</li> <li>- Have a proactive moderator/emcee in workshops to keep things moving and encourage participation</li> <li>- Allow debates but ensure swift, diplomatic resolutions, table/punt future conversations whenever possible, and enforce time or speaking limits</li> <li>- Asking participants about where they think stakeholders should fall on a numerical plot is a good way to democratize the assessment. Share the raw (but anonymized) results for discussion and make adjustments as necessary</li> </ul>

JengaLab



TechChange



DEVELOPMENT  
GATEWAY  
An IREX Venture