



Engagement planning framework

| Step | Details | Vital checks | Example tools and information |
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| 1. Set objectives | | | |
| Clarifying aims and goals and the reasons for wanting public engagement | This is a key issue for the team. You may want to invite a small select group of external commentators to discuss and validate your ideas | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visioning • Delphi technique |
| 2. Lay the groundwork | | | |
| Understanding the context | Find out about the area's landscape, political, economic and social drivers, and history. Understand the site demography – use Census and similar information to build a clear picture of users, potential users and interest groups. Find out more about dominant local issues (housing, unemployment, transport), social groups and territories (e.g. particular housing estates or streets). | Have you gathered information about the local as well as catchment demography? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Henderson and Thomas (2001) • Census & demographic data See references section in introduction booklet. |
| Identifying stakeholders | Think of the widest group of key stakeholders including non-traditional forest users and potential stakeholders. | Have you made contact with groups and organisations that represent the whole demographic? Have you identified and contacted local groups and agencies with particular influence in the area? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder mind-map • Stakeholder analysis |
| Anticipating conflict and difficult situations | Identify conflicting interests. Consider use of facilitators and arbitrators in the engagement process if this is likely to be helpful. | Have you considered whether all stakeholders can mix, at the same meetings – have you asked stakeholders about any limitations to this (timing, cost, venue, food, drink, mixed groups)? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder analysis • Trade-off analysis |
| Managing expectations | Ensure a consistent message comes from all members of the team working with the public. Be clear and honest about the objectives of engagement. Do not make promises that cannot be kept. | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public meetings • Displays |
| 3. Design the engagement | | | |
| Match objectives to participation styles | Look carefully at who to involve at what stage in the process, and using which kind of engagement approach. | Are you content that you have a fully representative group at each stage? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder analysis |
| Clarify which groups of people are important to include and ensure their engagement in planning | If working for a public sector body remember to consider general and specific duties linked to the Equality Act 2010. Plan engagement early. Contact other agencies and organisations able to provide specialist support. | Have you made contact with groups that represent the whole demographic? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder analysis |
| Time-scales | Consider the length of process and change in process style over time. | Are your stakeholders aware of the commitment that will be asked of them? | |

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| Monitoring plan | Have you thought through who collects what data when? Have you organised how the data will be stored and used? | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Davis-Case (1999) • Gujit (2004) • The Community Engagement Network (2005). See references section in introduction booklet. |
| Practicalities and resources | Venues? Number, length and type of meetings and events? Timing of activities and events? Mix of invitees and participants? Materials needed? | Have you asked and allowed for any situations that would prevent all your stakeholders from attending (timing, cost, venue, mixed groups, food/drink)? | |
| 4. Prepare a working plan and budget | | | |
| | Detailed working plans and budgets are needed not only for approval by funding bodies but also to act as a project management guide for the engagement team. | Have you ensured your costs are realistic and take into account unplanned-for events and activities? | |
| 5. Implementation | | | |
| Instigate engagement working plan | Begin the process of engagement with confidence! | Are all your stakeholders involved – have you discussed and tried to overcome issues that have prevented their engagement? | |
| Engagement activities | These will be activities based on the issue in question, i.e. forest design planning, taking part in designing a new urban woodland, discussions on the provision of facilities, inclusion in policy and strategy discussion. | Have you considered the type of tools and activities that will best suit the needs and characteristics of the stakeholders you are engaging? | Many of the tools listed and suited to the degree of engagement required |
| Monitor activities and engagement | Have you taken account of who will do this and at what stages? | Are all your stakeholders still involved – have you discussed and tried to overcome issues that have prevented their engagement? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys • Response cards • Public meetings • Head, heart, bag, bin • Ladder of change |
| Evaluate impacts and experiences | Have you taken account of who will do this and at what stages? | Are all your stakeholders involved – have you discussed and tried to overcome issues that have prevented their engagement? | As above |
| Build in sustainability – agree future actions | Have you taken account of recurring costs and how these will be met? Have you designed in public engagement in maintenance or design of future activities and operations? Have you clarified or set a timetable for future plans or reviews? | Will all your stakeholders continue to be involved – have you discussed and tried to overcome issues that have prevented their engagement? | This should be covered in the design and planning stage |
| 6. Bringing the process to an end | | | |
| Evaluate overall process and outcomes | Will this be done by the engagement team, by an external agency or by the stakeholders themselves? | Will all stakeholders' views be captured – have you discussed and tried to overcome reasons why not? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys • Response cards • Public meetings • Head, heart, bag, bin • Ladder of change |
| Celebrate end of process, thank all those involved | Even though it is useful to think of the engagement processes as an on-going relationship between everybody involved, it is useful to mark the end of a particular phase of activity celebrating achievements. Inform people with a clear message about what has been achieved and what will happen next. | Have you included all your stakeholders – even those who were unable to complete this particular engagement? Is the celebration a suitable event for all your stakeholders to attend (timing, venue, food/drink)? Have you informed all your stakeholders – even those who were unable to start or complete this particular engagement? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events |