SUCCESS FACTORS

1. OVERVIEW

WHAT ARE SUCCESS FACTORS?

WHY USE THIS TOOL?

This tool helps keep track of the quality of your Stakeholder Dialogue process by focusing on 8 key factors essential to the success of any dialogue.

WHEN TO USE THIS TOOL?

This tool should primarily be used in Phase 3 on a regular basis to keep track of the different factors influencing the success of a Stakeholder Dialogue. It can, however, also be used in Phase 1 in order to...

Make sure you've read and understood the 8 key factors for successful Stakeholder Dialogues in the Learning section before using this tool.

2. INSTRUCTIONS

1. Familiarize yourself and your team with the 8 key factors for successful Stakeholder Dialogues
2. Download and fill out the self-assessment tool or use the online tool individually or with the members of your core group
3. Answer the questions based on the current status and not the desired state.
4. Bring the results together and discuss why a specific key factor was assessed to be low
5. Discuss what measures need to be taken in order to improve this point and plan concrete next steps
6. Keep a copy of the filled out self-assessment and repeat the exercise after 3 6 months to evaluate the impact of any actions taken to improve specific area-
7. Rate the 3 statements related to each of the 8 success factors on a scale of 1 - 6, where 1 is a strong no and 6 is a strong yes. These statements can also serve as guidelines for a more in depth discussion, helping to identify required action points related to each of the individual success factors.

3. THE TEST

1/8: LEADERSHIP/ SPONSORSHIP

There is a strong and committed core group (Container) which well represents the larger system of collaborating actors.

There is appropriate high-level sponsorship for the Stakeholder Dialogue.

There are enough committed participants beyond the core group. High-level management in the collaborating institutions is committed to goal and process.

2/8: COHESION/RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

Relationship-management gets sufficient attention. People can meet as people and feel fully respected.

Informative and inspiring communication is in place.

The relationship between participating stakeholder representatives and their respective institutions gets sufficient attention.

3/8: GOAL AND PROCESS CLARITY

The contribution of the Stakeholder Dialogue to an overall goal is clear to all stakeholders.

Participating stakeholders are sufficiently aligned behind the overall goal.

Process designs and participation patterns are transparent and reliable.

4/8: KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCE

Knowledge and information about all necessary content areas is available and sufficiently distributed. Content capacity building is built into the process design.

Capacity building for the methodology of Stakeholder Dialogues is built into the process design.

Sufficient resources for the Stakeholder Dialogue process and implementation are available.

5/8: CREDIBILITY

Initiators, the core group and/or a process-management team have a sufficient mandate and are trusted by all stakeholders.

All relevant stakeholders are adequately represented.

Decision-making procedures are transparent, agreed upon by stakeholders (if possible), adequately efficient, and take into account different stakeholders' organizational cultures.

6/8: INCLUSIVITY

Weak stakeholder groups are adequately integrated into the process. Stakeholder Dialogue meetings and events are conducted in a way that ensures that all voices are heard.

There is an agreed-upon procedure in place on how to deal with critical voices and complaints. Critical voices are either integrated, or good relationships with them are maintained.

Stakeholder Dialogue meetings and events are conducted in a way that ensures that all voices are heard.

7/8: OWNERSHIP

The relevance of goal, objectives and outcomes is regularly reviewed with all main stakeholders.

All stakeholders contribute their points of view and/or decision-making input equally. Decision-making takes place on the basis of consensus building.

The contributions of different stakeholders are sufficiently acknowledged.

8/8: DELIVERY AND OUTCOME-ORIENTATION

Stakeholder meetings are designed to allow collaborative task completion and always have meeting results reviews. Decisions made in the Stakeholder Dialogue are implemented collectively or by the participating stakeholder institutions.

Clear roles and implementation, or steering structures, are in place.

Stakeholders have agreed on implementation-monitoring and progress-review procedures. Progress reviews take place regularly.

4. EVALUATION

Key success factor	Recommendations
Leadership/sponsorship	
There is a strong and committed Container representing the collaborating actors.	Good relationship building can be the key to creating and maintaining a good container. Make an effort to create a small cross–sector Container. Carrying out a stakeholder analysis can help identify potential members of your Container. Later is a Stakeholder Dialogue, this container needs to be fully committed to implementation and delivery of results in order to carry the process forward.
There is appropriate high-level sponsorship for the Stakeholder Dialogue.	Without high level support, change initiatives tend to stop before they've even started. In Phase 1, seek out individuals with influence, but who do not take part in the actual dialogue themselves. They need to have a positive, supportive attitude towards content, goal and approach.. It is important to keep high-level sponsors well informed throughout the course of the Stakeholder Dialogue, especially in Phases 3 and 4.
There are enough committed participants beyond the Container. High-level management in the collaborating institutions is committed to goal and process.	Assure that the goals and process objectives harmonize with those of the core group members' respective institutions. Transparent communication of common ground can increase institutional buy-in. This buy-in will be a deciding factor during the implementation process (Phase 3), so it is important that decision-makers in participating institutions need to support the Stakeholder

	Dialogue.
Cohesion/relationship management	
Relationship-management gets sufficient attention. People can meet as people and feel fully respected.	Invest sufficient time and effort during Phase 1 in building strong working relationships within the core group. A climate of mutual respect helps avoid conflicts and overall contributes to a better collaboration. During the first stakeholder meetings in Phase 2, give stakeholders the chance to meet 'people as people', by allowing informal settings before or during Stakeholder Dialogue events. This helps develop strong formal – and informal – working relationships.
Informative and inspiring communication is in place.	It is important at the beginning of a Stakeholder Dialogue to establish good communication practices in order to actively engage stakeholders. In most cases too much communication is better than too little. Meeting in person at the beginning of a process can often improve communication for the duration of a dialogue process. In Phase 3, a project secretariat can take over the important role of ensuring transparent communication between all stakeholders.
The relationship between participating stakeholder representatives and their respective institutions gets sufficient attention.	Different members of the Container will tend to have different relationships with stakeholders directly concerned by a particular issue. It is helpful to identify who is responsible for engaging each of the stakeholders to ensure that they stay on board and continue to contribute actively to the dialogue process. Keeping the goal clear is an important task for the core group and the representatives from stakeholder groups.
Goal and process clarity	

The contribution of the Stakeholder Dialogue to an overall goal is clear to all stakeholders.	It is important to establish within the core group how the stakeholder Dialogue will directly contribute to achieving short and long term objectives. The advantages of using a dialogic approach should be identified early. As the dialogue develops, involved stakeholders should reflect regularly on how the dialogue itself is contributing to achieving specific objectives. In phases 2 and 3, goal and process clarity is greatly supported by good communication and transparent facilitation of events.
Participating stakeholders are sufficiently aligned behind the overall goal.	Work on creating a common vision of the future. The core group should be in full agreement regarding the overall goal. As the dialogue progresses, make sure this goal is kept clear in internal and external communication. This helps keep stakeholders onboard.
Process designs and participation patterns are transparent and reliable.	Focus on creating an action plan which takes the dialogic aspects of the process into account – don't just leave them to chance. Don't be afraid to integrate container building elements of Phases 1 & 2 even in the middle of Phase 3. These can only strengthen existing relationships and facilitate the integration of new stakeholders into the dialogue.
Knowledge and Competence	
Knowledge and information about all necessary content areas is available and sufficiently distributed. Content capacity building built into the process design.	In order to thoroughly understand the context, it can be helpful to carry out a SWOT analysis with several members of the core team. This can help identify capacity building needs amongst key stakeholders. It also offers the opportunity to jointly explore the different roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder group. Integrating capacity building throughout the

	course of a Stakeholder Dialogue can help keep weaker stakeholders engaged and interested.
Capacity building for the implementation of Stakeholder Dialogues is built into the process design.	If the need for capacity building has been identified, it is important to integrate elements into key stakeholder meetings. Not fully understanding certain aspects can lead stakeholders withdrawing from the dialogue. As the dialogue continues to advance, pay special attention to weaker stakeholders' capacity building needs. These can be anything from expert inputs, focus group discussions, to workshops, e-learning and exposure trips.
Sufficient resources for the Stakeholder Dialogue process and implementation are available.	If sufficient project management and subject matter expertise are not present within the core group, make sure to identify what competencies the dialogue requires in order to succeed and plan next steps in to ensure that these needs are met. As the dialogue advances, constantly review resources and evaluate capacity building needs.
Credibility	
Initiators, the core team and/or a process management team have a sufficient mandate and are trusted by all stakeholders.	Without a sufficient mandate, it is difficult to get buy-in and commitment from key stakeholders. This should be a main focus in phase 1 of a Stakeholder dialogue. The core team needs to be recognized as a credible dialogue initiator/facilitator. Later in the dialogue process, joint progress review mechanisms can be built into the process to keep credibility high during the implementation phase (Phase 3).
All relevant stakeholders are adequately represented.	Lack of representation can lead to certain stakeholders feeling that their voice is not heard. In order to initiate a dialogue process, the container needs to adequately represent

	the entire stakeholder system.
	When creating steering and management structures, don't cut out weaker stakeholder groups – make sure all voices are heard.
Decision-making procedures are transparent, if possible agreed upon by stakeholders, adequately efficient and take into account different stakeholder's organizational cultures.	How are decisions made? Is the communication of these decisions transparent? These are key issues, especially at the beginning of a dialogue. Joint agreement on decision-making procedures is therefore called for. Formalize decision making procedures in Phase 2 and ensure that decision makers have the mandate of the larger stakeholder group. This way decisions stay credible even if they are made by a smaller group of individuals.

Inclusivity

Weak stakeholder groups are adequately integrated into the process.	Use tools such as a stakeholder analysis or a SWOT analysis to identify weak stakeholder groups and design strategies to include their voices in the dialogue. As the dialogue continues, process management must ensure continuous integration of weaker stakeholder groups.
There is an agreed-upon procedure for how to deal with critical voices and complaints.	It is important not ignore criticism in the initial phases of a dialogue. Develop a culture of structured listening to critical voices and respect differences of opinion. As the dialogue continues, the potential for external critique can grow. But a solid core group and a clear common goal can keep stakeholders focused on achieving a common objective.

Stakeholder Dialogue meetings and events are conducted in a way that ensures that all voices are heard.	The core group ensures that all voices are sufficiently considered in context analysis and informal preparatory meetings or conversations. Stakeholder Dialogue meetings must continue to ensure that all voices are heard equally and provide professional facilitation, if required.
Ownership	
The relevance of goal, objectives and outcomes is regularly reviewed with all main stakeholders.	If in the initial stages of a Stakeholder Dialogue, continually test the idea for the Stakeholder Dialogue with a variety of stakeholders from different sectors (if applicable) in informal conversations or small pre-meetings. Goals and objectives can change even in the middle of a complex process. Integrating these types of changes into the dialogue process can help keep the relevance high amongst stakeholders.
All stakeholders contribute their points of view and/or decision-making inputs fairly. Decision-making takes place on the basis of consensus-building.	Ensure that input from all members of the core group is considered in decision making processes. Conflict within the core of the dialogue will inevitably have consequences on the quality of the relationships between involved stakeholders. Keeping a flat hierarchy in the early phases of a Stakeholder Dialogues can help ensure that stakeholders can continue to contribute their perspectives fairly throughout the dialogue process.
The contributions of different stakeholders are sufficiently acknowledged.	Disagreements are normal, but it is important that people feel that their opinions are respected. Try to acknowledge all stakeholders' contributions, even if they're not

	completely in line with what others think. Consensus-building should be an integral part of all phases of a Stakeholder Dialogue.
Delivery and outcome-orientation	
Stakeholder meetings are designed in a way that they allow collaborative task completion and always have meeting results reviews. Decisions made in the Stakeholder Dialogue are implemented collectively or by the participating stakeholder institutions.	Clarify the commitment of each member of the core group to take decisions back into their own institutions and ensure the dialogue continues at that level. Working in cross-sector groups can support "out of the box" thinking. If there is time in the context of a workshop or meeting, it can be helpful to report working group results back into the plenary and leave room for short discussions. Ensure a good information flow between the Stakeholder Dialogue participants and the management of participating institutions/organizations
Clear roles and implementation or steering structures are in place.	Distribute roles and responsibilities within the core group and develop a tangible plan for the initial engagement process. Once a dialogue is formalized in Phase 2, it is time to create an implementation plan, a meeting schedule or a road map, and agree upon a mechanism of process steering and how different stakeholder groups are represented within it.
Stakeholders have agreed on implementation-monitoring and progress-review procedures. Progress reviews take place regularly.	Use the self-assessment tool or another method to regularly track the progress of the dialogue. In phase 1 of a Stakeholder Dialogue, this tool should only be used for internal purposes. However, as the dialogue continues to build trust amongst stakeholders, the self-evaluation tool can be used as a method to jointly reflect

the progress of the dialogue itself and how it is contributing the accomplishment of specific objectives.