

Stakeholders of science

II. STRATEGY
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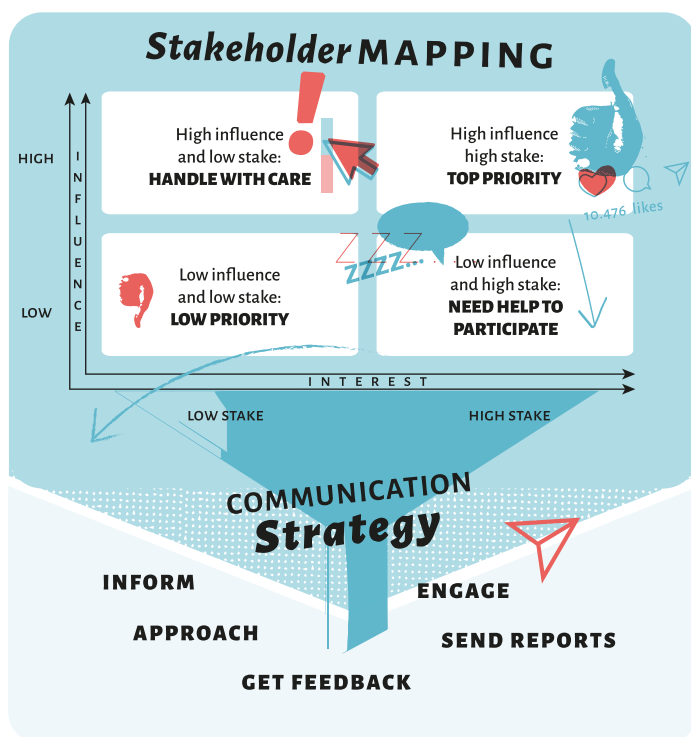
For all those who communicate science, it is essential to know their stakeholders. Be they internal or external, influential or less important. Stakeholders are people or organisations that have a special connection to you, your institute or the institution as a whole. They can significantly promote or inhibit the development of individuals and institutions and are therefore crucial to success. That is why professional stakeholder management is essential, which of course includes good communication. But who are these notorious stakeholders really?

If you look at science as a whole, at scientists and scientific institutions, then society and every single citizen are its stakeholders. Especially in the case of the pandemic or issues such as energy supply, the essential role of science for society becomes clear. On the other hand, citizens somehow decide on the funding and direction of science at the ballot box. Or they get involved in citizen science projects, where they help researchers to collect or analyse data or even find new research questions. Or they protest against animal testing in research, against research on genetically modified organisms, or against vaccinations. Society is a powerful stakeholder, and this also highlights the importance of a good relationship between science and the public. Of course, this relationship shouldn't just be managed and seen in a one-directional way. Science must learn to listen, too. And, of course, the needs and moods of society must be captured with the appropriate analytical tools. Surveys such as the *Eurobarometer* or national science barometers can help with this, as can studies on general societal trends.

For many scientific institutions, an important role is also played by local and regional businesses, NGOs, cultural institutions and, of course, politics. It is important that they develop a detailed stakeholder map and define objectives for



relations with the respective actors. What do I want to achieve with my communication towards politics or business? Which people and institutions are particularly important for my institution? Who shares the same values? And what are the right measures for addressing them? Perhaps you could involve stakeholders in a transformative research or citizen science project. Or get them involved in the next construction project on your campus. But always remember that this is not a one-way street. Respect the needs and the perspectives of different stakeholder groups and do not hesitate to put the tough questions on the table.



Recommended reads:

- ♦ European Commission Report (2021), *Special Eurobarometer 516 - European citizens' knowledge and attitudes towards science and technology*. ISBN: 978-92-76-41143-7. <https://doi.org/10.2775/071577>
- ♦ Boaz et al. (2018), *How to engage stakeholders in research: design principles to support improvement*. Health Res Policy Sys 16: 60. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12961-018-0337-6>
- ♦ Boon et al. (2021), *Open Science & Stakeholder Engagement: Why, how, and what could be improved?* https://dspace.library.uu.nl/bitstream/handle/1874/416090/Open_Science_Stakeholder_Engagement_exploratory_study_report.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y