

Tool 12: Stakeholder Analysis: Importance/Influence Matrix

Aim of the tool

To capture the degree of influence and level of interest of each stakeholder over the relevant issues or possible objectives of the MSP.

When to use it?

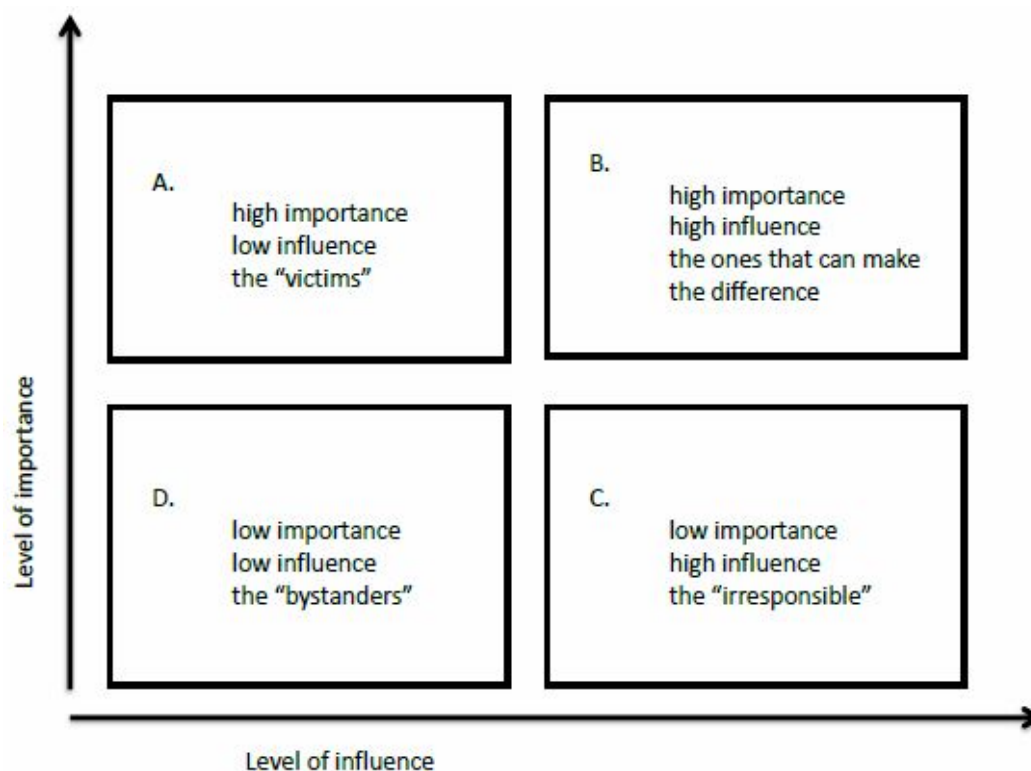
Issue exploration and shared language stage: This tool can be used when initiating an MSP, but also to review a situation with an established MSP. It specifically helps to identify (potential) stakeholders who might not yet be on board.

What is the Importance/influence Matrix?

Making an *Importance* versus *Influence* Matrix helps to map out stakeholders and their relation to the issue at stake in the MSP. It generates insights on the importance and influence of each stakeholder. With this information, it becomes possible to develop a specific approach and strategy for the identified stakeholders.

Importance: The priority given to satisfying the needs and interests of each stakeholder.

Influence: The power a stakeholder has to facilitate or impede the achievement of an activity's objective. The extent to which the stakeholder is able to persuade or coerce others into making decisions, and following a certain course on action.



Source: APMAS Knowledge Network

Importance/Influence Matrix – Step by step

Materials needed

All that is required is a flipchart or whiteboard and some markers. Draw four quadrants and the two named axes.

How to make an Importance versus Influence Matrix:

1. Identify the most important stakeholders in the MSP
2. Assess the importance that each stakeholder attaches to the MSP issue
3. Assess the influence of each stakeholder on the MSP issue
4. Position the stakeholders on the identified quadrant and validate with participants

Variables affecting stakeholders' relative importance and influence:

Within and between formal organisations:

- Legal hierarchy (command & control, budget holders)
- Authority of leadership (formal, informal, charisma, political, familial or cadre connections)
- Control of strategic resources
- Possession of specialist knowledge & skills
- Negotiating position (strength in relation to other stakeholders)

For informal interest groups and primary stakeholders:

- Social, economic and political status – degree of organisation, consensus and leadership in the group
- Degree of control of strategic resources
- Informal influence through links with other stakeholders
- Degree of dependence on other stakeholders

After the Importance versus Influence Matrix is completed, it becomes clear that ideal stakeholders will have both a strong influence over and high interest in the objectives of the MSP. However, it is rarely so clear cut.

By classifying stakeholders in this way, one can determine cases where:

- Significant awareness-raising is required to turn a highly-influential but low-interest stakeholder into an interest potential stakeholder
- Significant capacity development is required to turn a stakeholder with high interest but low influence into a stronger potential stakeholder.

Questions which can be used to analyse further:

- Which problems, affecting which stakeholders, does the MSP seek to address or alleviate?
- Whose needs, interests and expectations will be met most by the MSP?
- Which stakeholder interests converge most closely with the MSP objectives?

- Which stakeholders can have a negative influence on the MSP? How can this be countered or mitigated?

Learn more

DFID (2003). [Tools for Development – A handbook for those engaged in development activity](#).

Hunjan, R. & Petit, J. (2011). [Power: A practical guide for facilitating social change](#).

CDI course materials