

Selecting the group of core stakeholders

One crucial aspect of the ESTEEM methodology is the selection and participation process of representative stakeholders. As a small group of them has to be listed and chosen with care, this selection process being particularly essential to the methodology efficiency.

During their interview, and after having elicited the project manager's vision of the future, the 'consultant' and 'project manager' will have to discuss about a stakeholders representative list. The following criteria can be useful for selecting stakeholders.

1. Advocates and opponents to the projects

The stakeholder group should represent both (expected) advocates/opponents of the project. The following distinction helps to select stakeholders according to this criterion:

- *Close-by / We*: The actors that absolutely agree, participate actively and belong to the pilot project, such as project financers or technology suppliers.
- *Affine*: The actors who agree with the project but do not belong to the project (are not partners). This category includes for example the local public authorities that are agree with the development of the energy project but do not participate as a partner.
- *Indifferent*: This category includes all the actors that know the project, but do not have a specific opinion about project success or failure.
- *Opposite*: Actors who explicitly manifest against the project.

1. Variety of social function

The consultant and project managers might want the panel to represent the variety of the society in which the technology will be implanted. The extension of this variety and its dimensions might be discussed between them. So for instance, it might be

important not to select actor policy makers alone, but rather aim for a balanced representation including civil society organizations, public administrators, private sector companies, scientific experts and non-associated persons that are not organized and usually considered the silent majority (e.g. neighbouring people).

2. Variety of social profiles

Another dimension that could be considered is the social profile of people invited. Such social representation criteria include age, gender and geographic and social origins.

3. Centrality of the actor in the project social network

One final dimension is that of actor centrality in the project network. This is a technical criterion that directly relates to the application of Social Network Analysis and Social Network maps. In the present network map elaborated earlier in step 2, project manager has positioned actors in the map according to their centrality and proximity with him/her/ the project, the project being at the centre. From a network analysis, actors can be characterised according to their “proximity” (core or peripheral). The core stakeholders are those on which the organization depends, such as consumers, owners, employees/suppliers, local community and/or those who concentrate the biggest number of relations. The peripheral stakeholders (such as NGOs and media), are those who are not be central in the network of the project and those who have few relations with other actors of the net (but can be important since they can influence the stakeholders’ perceptions).

After finishing the interview the consultant will revise the written documents and send them in a finalise version with network maps and the vision title to the project manager for a final check. The project manager’s vision is now completed and can be used in the interviews with the stakeholders.