Stakeholder Engagement Guide

Guyana's Experience Strengthening Forest Governance

This **Stakeholder Engagement Guide** was compiled from materials and ideas drawn from various publications and experiences of stakeholder engagement practitioners in Guyana.

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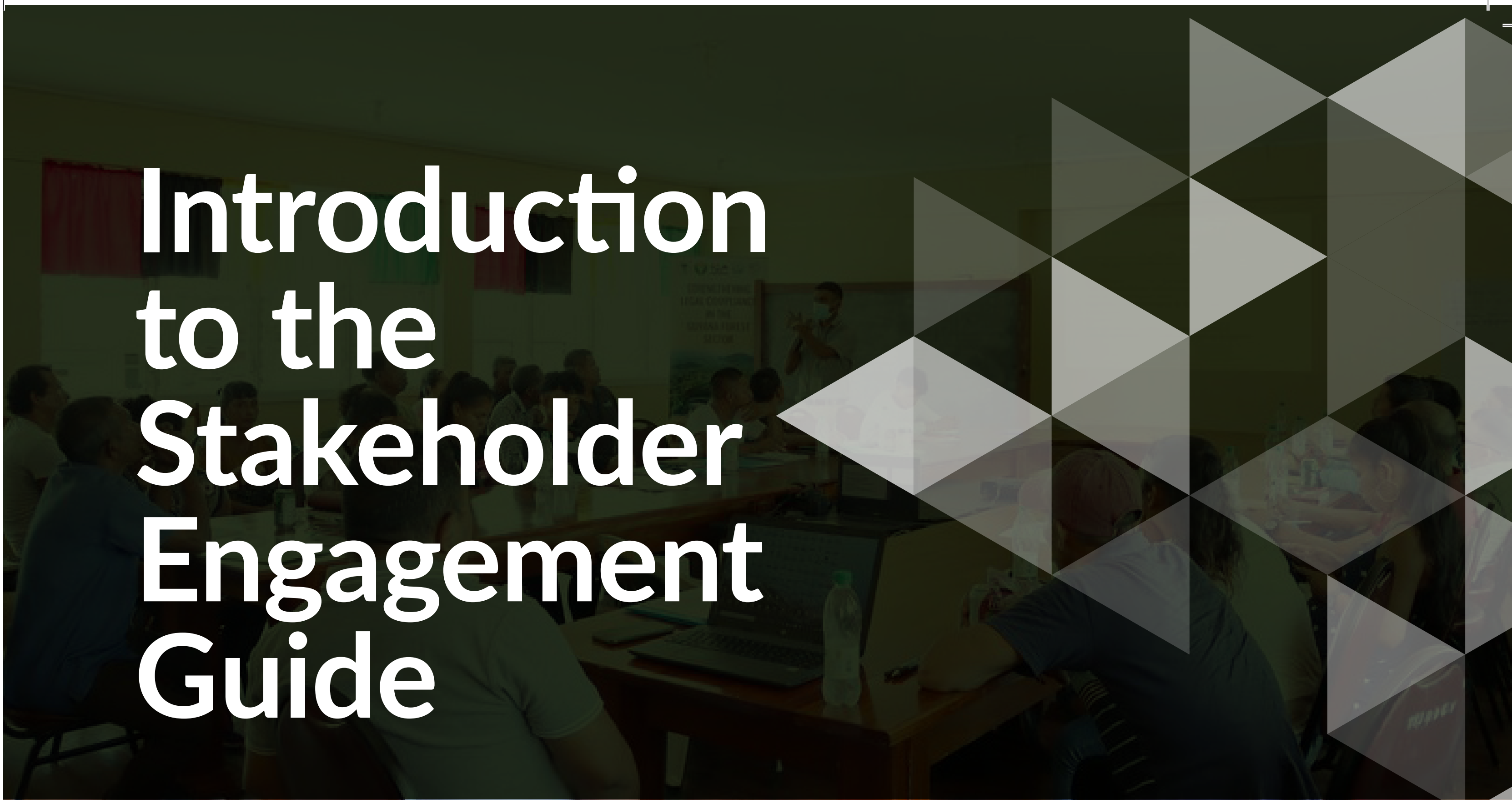


This Stakeholder Engagement Guide was designed to assist government agencies, project teams, or anyone undertaking stakeholder engagements.

The purpose of the guide is three-fold:

1. To distil into a practical, user-friendly form, the knowledge and experience of practitioners who have already been undertaking stakeholder engagements,
2. To provide guidance through a step-by-step approach for all persons and institutions pursuing Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Voluntary Partnership Agreement (FLEGT VPA)-related engagement of stakeholders using a variety of tools, and
3. To support the stakeholder-engagement work of other forest-related institutions, such as Timber Legality Assurance System (TLAS) agencies, Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC), Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission (GLSC), international NGOs, etc.

The guide was developed by a working group comprising practitioners from several natural resources agencies, the University of Guyana, the private sector, indigenous groups, and local experts.

Approach Used in Preparing the Stakeholder Engagement Guide

Recognising the need for guidance on conducting stakeholder engagement, the Guyana FLEGT Secretariat, with support from the Forest Governance Facilitator and the European Forest Institute Technical Assistance Project (EFITAP) drafted a 'Concept Note' which outlined the importance of Stakeholder Engagement in the Guyana-European Union (EU) FLEGT VPA process. The concept rationalised that when effective, this approach empowers stakeholders to engage in the decision-making processes. The concept also highlighted types of stakeholder engagement and noted some issues to be considered when planning stakeholder engagement. It also outlined a 'process' for the development of a stakeholder engagement guide.

Members of the National Implementation Working Group (NIWG) for the Guyana-EU FLEGT VPA process were invited to volunteer and to identify other suitable organisations to participate in a working group which, after discussions and clarification, would adopt the five-step 'process' proposed in the concept note.

Process

STEP 1 - Establishing of a working group to lead the process of developing the stakeholder engagement guide

STEP 2 - Hosting of a panel discussion with a large group to discuss the benefits and challenges to stakeholder engagement in Guyana

STEP 3 - Holding an experience sharing session with practitioners of stakeholder engagement

STEP 4 - Developing the guide in the working group based on best practices

STEP 5 - Developing a Stakeholder Engagement Plan

The 'process' was accepted at the first meeting of the working group and a sub-committee was identified to brainstorm a structure for the panel discussion and the logistics involved. It was accepted that there would be four panellists representing the main groups involved, namely the private sector, state agencies, community organisations/civil society and Indigenous groups. The panel would answer questions from the moderator. It was also decided that after the panel discussions, small groups representing the same groups as the panellists would discuss and report on questions proposed by the moderator. A flyer was designed and distributed with information on the panel discussion. The members of the working group were tasked with inviting participants. The panel discussion was held, and a report was prepared.

The members of the working group noted that many of the experiences from the panel discussion covered the group members' experiences. As such, it was recommended that Step 3, which looks at 'experience sharing session with practitioners of stakeholder engagement' be skipped.

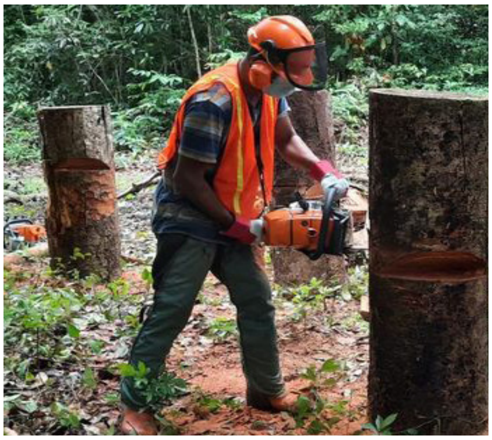
For the development of the Guide (Step 4), a draft Table of Content was provided for discussion and reference materials from other countries where similar stakeholder engagement guides/plans were developed. The initial draft Table of Content was restructured after discussion by members of the Working Group, and it was recommended that the working group members volunteer to draft chapters in sequential order by sections which would be reviewed by other members before going forward to the next section. The final document was edited by the EFITAP Project Manager.

Background

Forestry Sector and Stakeholder Engagement

The forestry sector plays an important role in contributing to economic and social development as well as to climate change mitigation and adaptation. Despite the tremendous benefits forests provide globally, forests continue to be degraded at an alarming rate. The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has reported a significant reduction of forest area from the years 1990 to 2020, with a net loss of approximately 178 million hectares of forest (FAO & United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), 2020). With a total of 30.8 per cent of the global land area covered with forests, many countries are focusing on strategies for the implementation of sustainable and effective forest protection and development (FAO & UNEP, 2020).

Initiatives such as REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation and foster conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks), which provide financial benefits for reduced deforestation rates have already set the stage to encourage countries to manage their forest resources sustainably. The reported reduction in net loss of forests between 2010 and 2020 is a key example of the positive impact of initiatives such as REDD+. The financial and technical support from international organisations and a wide variety of stakeholders including the private sector and NGOs also play a fundamental role in supplementing these programmes across many nations.



Similarly, programmes such as the EU FLEGT Initiative that target governance and law enforcement in the forestry sector, play a fundamental role in how forests are managed, and indirectly, on the way stakeholders are integrally involved in the processes of managing forest resources.

Many countries around the world have embraced stakeholder engagement as a key factor in successful implementation of policies, initiatives, and management of resources in forestry. For example, a study conducted by Thuy, et al (2020) in Vietnam highlighted the priorities of stakeholders in forest protection and development which focuses on direct benefits and conservation with strategies and programmes to improve community-based forestry and governance. However, knowledge and analyses of different forestry sector stakeholders' priority are limited, and a comprehensive picture of the sector's opportunities and challenges is often elusive. Many lessons can be learned from experiences in stakeholder engagements to help channel a pathway for greater success, and outcomes of this approach.

Guyana Context

Guyana is rich in natural resources and is poised to become one of the global leaders in the oil and gas industry. The country has a land area of approximately 21 million hectares (ha) of which 87 per cent is covered in tropical forests. The country, broadly speaking, has two geographic areas: the coastal plains that occupy 430 kilometers of coastline in the north (making up five per cent of the country), and the interior highlands, a series of plateaus, flat-topped mountains, and savannahs that extend from the coastal plains to the country's southern borders.

In Guyana, forestry resources are utilised for many purposes including timber and non-timber products and the provisions of ecosystem services. The sector provides employment for approximately 26,000 people. The growth of the forestry industry has a stimulating effect on the development of other manufacturing and service industries.

While the country has recorded a low rate of deforestation ranging from 0.02 per cent to 0.079 per cent per year, there are several key activities that result in degradation (GFC, 2019). An analysis of the drivers shows that mining, forestry, and agriculture make up 97 per cent of Guyana's greenhouse gas emissions from the land use sector, and infrastructure is largely driven by expansion of these industries.

Recognising this, Guyana is developing its National REDD+ Strategy to guide the contributions established in its Nationally Determined Contributions, and thus respond to the national circumstances adequately, incorporating the different perspectives and needs from the interested stakeholders. In December 2022, Guyana ratified the important EU FLEGT VPA. The country's most recent strategy, the Low Carbon Development Strategy 2030, has also placed it on a path to become an economy that demonstrates that development can be achieved within the realm of sustainability.

Also, important to note is that Guyana's middle-class economy has made notable strides, positioning itself as a trailblazer in navigating a path of sustainability in its forestry sector. The harmonisation between forestry development and socioeconomic development objectives in Guyana has been gaining momentum with stakeholders and is much needed. Over the years, a suite of measures aimed at strengthening and improving the sector has been implemented in collaboration with the private sector, indigenous communities, and other stakeholder groups (GOINVEST, 2020).

Notably, key forestry areas, such as forest conservation and development and climate change adaptation, have received consistent support from different stakeholders including indigenous groups throughout the years.

Guyana's Experience with Stakeholder Engagement

Guyana has a long, yet troubled, history when it comes to stakeholder engagement. Perhaps related to our conflictual past, where power struggles dominated society and governance (e.g., enslavement, colonialism, and authoritarianism), stakeholders have tended to engage more aggressively than collaboratively in pursuit of their interests. The approach of trade unions is a typical example of how stakeholder engagement evolved over generations.

Thankfully, Guyana appears to have turned the corner when it comes to improved stakeholder engagements. While conflicts arising from different interests or mistrust, for example, are typical elements of any stakeholder engagement process, these appear to be gradually reducing as the quality of processes improve. The introduction of a more democratic era post-1992 culminated in 2001 with the institutionalisation of the rights of citizens to be involved in decision-making processes of the State that affect their well-being (Article 13 of Guyana's revised Constitution).

A high point for stakeholder engagements in Guyana occurred around the National Development Strategy (NDS), which was finalised in 2001 – the same time that Article 13 was adopted. The process to produce the NDS was highly inclusive, deliberative, consensual, and stakeholder- driven.

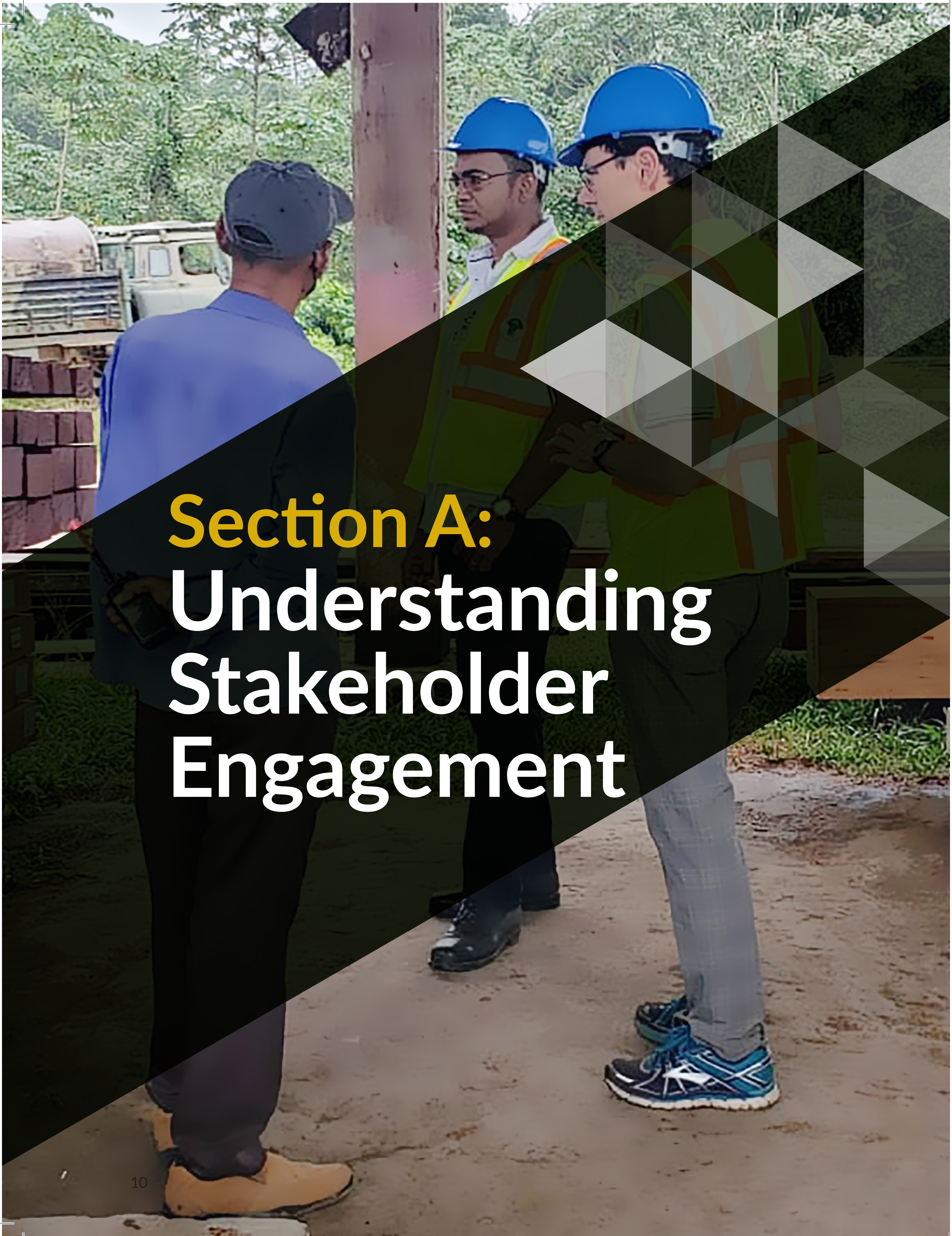
The forestry sector has also demonstrated significant commitment to the use of improved stakeholder engagement processes with the introduction of REDD+ and the EU FLEGT initiatives.

The EU FLEGT VPA scheme is a good example where stakeholders, such as the private sector and Indigenous peoples collaborate actively with the government in seeking to strengthen the timber legality assurance system in Guyana. Stakeholders are being engaged for various purposes, including information sharing and empowerment. In this regard, stakeholders are being empowered to effectively provide inputs to policies and consequently share in high-level decision-making processes.

For example, over a hundred stakeholders attended four local sessions and identified barriers to their compliance with forest-related rules and regulations, as well as recommendations to overcome these barriers. The views of stakeholders were captured in a working paper that was validated at a hybrid (in-person and virtual) event at the national level in December 2021.

Guyana, therefore, has diverse opportunities for strengthening stakeholder engagement capacity.

This guide is developed specifically to address stakeholder engagement in Guyana's context and sets out key principles that can be used to highlight the contribution of stakeholders involved in forestry and related activities to ensure active engagement and participation from all relevant stakeholders.



Section A: Understanding Stakeholder Engagement

In this section, we address key concepts of stakeholders and stakeholder engagement, and explore why stakeholder engagement is important, principles of stakeholder engagement, types of stakeholder engagement, benefits, challenges, and limitations of stakeholder engagement.

Who Are Stakeholders?

A stakeholder is any individual, community, group, or organisation with an interest in the outcome of a project or programme, either because of being affected by it positively or negatively or by being able to influence the activity in a positive or negative way.

There are three main types of stakeholders: Key stakeholders, Primary Stakeholders and Secondary Stakeholders as described in Figure 1 below. In reality, the distinction may not be as clear-cut, with overlaps between these main types: some primary or secondary stakeholders may also be key stakeholders.

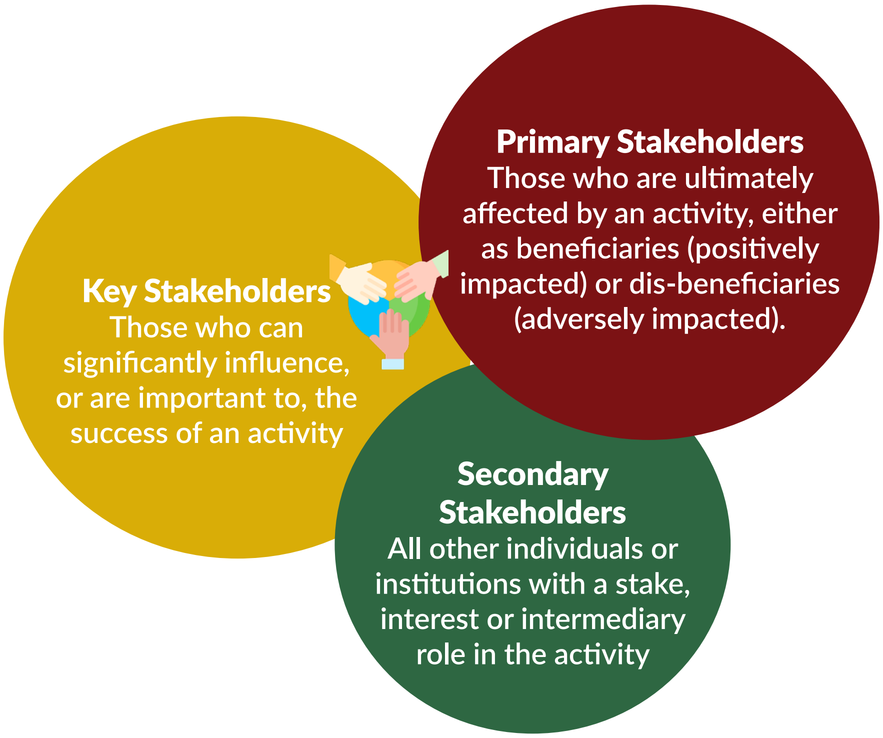


Figure 1. Three main stakeholder types.

The National Communication Strategy and Implementation Plan 2020-2023 for the Guyana-EU FLEGT VPA has identified stakeholders in these categories in relation to that process.

What Is Stakeholder Engagement?

Good practice defines stakeholder engagement as "(structured) processes that are used to ensure participation on a specific issue and are based on a set of principles, sometimes inspired by the rights-based approach to development".[1] They aim to ensure participation, equity, accountability, and transparency, and to develop partnerships and networks amongst different stakeholders.

Why Is Stakeholder Engagement Important?

Stakeholder engagement and stakeholder management are arguably the most important ingredients for successful project/programme delivery, and yet are often regarded as a fringe activity or one that can be outsourced to business-as-usual functions. Project managers depend on people to respond to the outputs and benefits that they deliver. People will only respond if they are engaged.

The phrase "stakeholder management" implies that stakeholders can be made to respond positively to a project, but the truth is that a project manager frequently has no formal power of authority and therefore must rely on engagement to achieve his/her objectives.

Stakeholder engagement helps teams or organisations to proactively consider the needs of their stakeholders, which can foster connections, trust, confidence, and buy-in for initiatives. When done well, stakeholder engagement can mitigate potential risks and conflicts with stakeholder groups, including uncertainty, dissatisfaction, misalignment, disengagement, and resistance to change.

Figure 2. Importance of stakeholder engagement

To sum up, and as outlined in Figure 2, stakeholder engagement can help an organisation (and the people around it) achieve better outcomes, whether it is education, connection, engagement, or profit.

Ten Key Principles of Stakeholder Engagement

Ten Key Principles of Stakeholder Engagement were developed out of a joint project between the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) and the Association of Project Management (APM). The principles are:

[1] United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 2006 Conference Paper #7: Multi-Stakeholder Engagement processes.

Principle 1. Communicate

- Seek to understand the people you will be working with and relying on throughout the phases of the project/programme lifecycle.
- Gathering information about your stakeholders is essential.

Principle 2. Consult Early and Often

- In the early stages, the purpose, scope, risks, and approach of a project may be unclear to stakeholders.
- Consult early and regularly to agree on requirements and create space for negotiated solutions.

Principle 3. Remember, They're Only Human

- People do not always behave in a rational, reasonable, consistent, or predictable way.
- Understand the root cause of stakeholder behaviour to find better ways to maintain a productive relationship.

Principle 4: Plan It!

- A more conscientious and measured approach to stakeholder engagement is essential.
- Investment in careful planning before engaging stakeholders can bring significant benefits.

Principle 5: Build Relationships

- Identify and build stakeholder relationships to increase confidence, minimize uncertainty, and speed up problem-solving and decision-making.

Principle 6: Anticipate and Act

- Use foresight to anticipate issues and problems and take simple and timely actions with stakeholders to significantly improve project delivery.

Principle 7: Identify and Manage Risks

- Stakeholders are important influential resources.
- Treat stakeholders as potential sources of risk and opportunity within the project.

Principle 8: Set Baselines and Assess Stakeholder's Relative Important

- Establish the most acceptable baseline according to stakeholders' diverging expectations and priorities.
- Assess the relative importance of all stakeholders to establish a weighted hierarchy against the project requirements.

Principle 9: Define Success

- Project success means different things to different people.
- Establish what success means to each stakeholder in the context of project delivery.

Principle 10: Stakeholder Engagement is Everyone's Responsibility

- Everyone must understand their role, responsibilities, and expectations.
- Everyone should follow the right approach to communication and engagement.

The principles identified are not meant to act as a manual describing what to do in every situation, but are instead designed to embody best practice, harnessing feedback from the survey and workshops held with RICS and APM members. In this regard, they are offered as what practitioners should strive for, while a series of brief 'real world' examples illustrate how the principle can be applied.

Figure 3. Ten key principles of stakeholder engagement

Types of Stakeholder Engagement

As articulated in the hierarchy of stakeholder engagement (Figure 4), there are five main types of stakeholder engagement processes – information sharing, consultation, collaboration, joint decision-making, and empowerment. Each process type produces different results. Almost all processes can deliver a degree of transparency and awareness. Some processes can produce higher-level results, such as national ownership and consensus. Depending on the objectives, stakeholder engagement may consist of a combination of these processes. At the lowest level information sharing is the key interaction and may be most suited to stakeholders who have little impact on the project/programme, but still need to be kept in the loop. However, this should never replace sustained interaction throughout the engagement process.

Degree of Participation

HIGH

Types of Engagement	Description
Empowerment	Transfers control over decision making, resources & activities
Joint decision making	Joint collaboration with shared control over a decision
Collaboration	Joint activities without decision making authority and control
Consultation	Two-way flow of information & exchange of views
Information sharing	One-way flow of information

LOW

Figure 4. Five types of engagement based on the degree of participation
Source: Adapted from United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), 2017. Introduction to Stakeholder Engagement, REDD+ Academy Journal 11.

The opportunities for improved stakeholder engagement have been well articulated in the REDD+ process as well as in the rationale for Guyana's VPA stakeholder communication strategy. In summary, these processes anticipate that stakeholders, once adequately informed (such as via an effective stakeholder communication strategy), are empowered to engage effectively in higher-order tasks, such as providing inputs to policies and sharing in decision-making processes.

Further, during the National VPA Communication Strategy development process, the various types and goals of engagement were articulated as per Table 1. It was pointed out that while the communication strategy will fulfil the requirements at the first level (information sharing), an engagement strategy would aspire to the higher levels, which are consultation, collaboration, joint decision making and empowerment.

Table 1. Types and sample goals of engagement related to the Guyana FLEGT VPA process

Types of Engagement	Description	Applicable Stakeholders	Illustrative goals of Engagement
Empowerment	Transfers control over decision-making, resources and activities	National development partners	To create national ownership for the TLAS.
Joint decision-making	Collaborative partnership with shared control over a decision	JMRC GCB NIWG	• To inform stakeholders of developments in the VPA process. • To create institutional support for a whole-of-government approach to the VPA generally and to the TLAS in particular. • To foster a shared understanding of challenges and opportunities, and the timely identification and implementation of consensus-based solutions.
Collaboration	Collaborative partnership without decision-making authority and control	Private sector CFOs	• To achieve voluntary compliance with VPA verifiers + improve access to EU markets. • To secure a commitment for measures geared to achieving sustainable livelihoods.
Consultation	A two-way flow of information and exchange of views	Forest dependent communities EU stakeholders	• Information sharing and eliciting the inputs of stakeholders that will have a specific stake in the VPA. • Same as above but for EU stakeholders.
Information sharing	A one-way flow of information	Citizens and communities at large	• To create a broad base of support for the VPA process by sharing simple, compelling information.

How Does Stakeholder Engagement Create Change?

Fundamental to stakeholder engagement is that stakeholders themselves change in the process of being engaged. This personal and group change is key to sustaining any agreements that come from engagement.

In addition to tangible inputs, such as concept notes, information sharing, logistics and so on, stakeholder engagement also benefits from – and produces – vital but less tangible elements, such as open-mindedness, respect, fairness, trust, and empathy. These more emotive dimensions of inter-personal and inter-group relations are crucial for more complex types of engagement processes, such as collaboration and joint decision-making, which often require compromise and consensus. Dialogue processes in conflict prevention processes illustrate these dimensions well.

According to Otto Scharmer, dialogues have four modes. Practitioners will need to recognise these modes in designing stakeholder engagement. The modes are:

- **Talking Nice:** people listen from within their own story, but without any self-reflection. They only hear that which confirms their own story and therefore only reproduce what is already known. It is about being polite and people not saying what they think.
- **Talking Tough:** people start listening to each other and to ideas (including their own ideas) objectively, from the outside. But people say what they think and focus on the differences, which often results in a conflict or a clash.
- **Reflective Dialogue:** people listen empathetically, viewing causes and effects as part of a continuum. They start surfacing their own paradigms and assumptions and focus on unity.
- **Generative Dialogue:** people listen with an appreciation for the whole system and begin to co-create solutions.

Designing and implementing effective stakeholder engagement must therefore accompany stakeholders on a journey through politeness, mistrust, fear, subjectivity, and unawareness to arrive at a point where new possibilities are generated through co-creating solutions with others.

Benefits of Stakeholder Engagement

The wheel of benefit of stakeholder engagement created by the Forest Products Council lists five (5) key benefits of engagement (Figure 5). Stakeholder engagement provides the space for sharing experiences, managing conflict, improving trust, allowing for collective decision making and tailoring solutions.

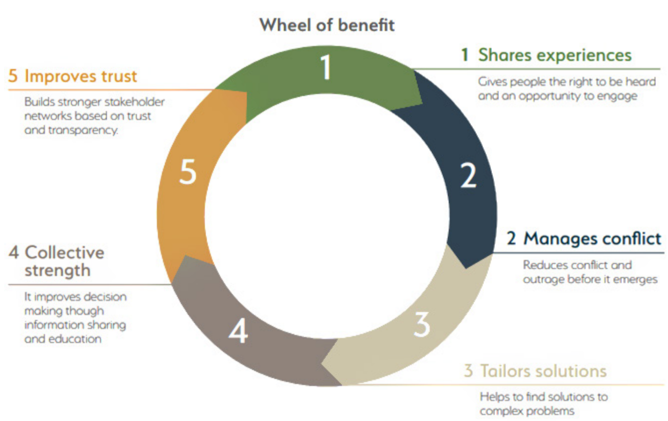


Figure 5. FPC's Wheel of Benefit

Why Stakeholder Engagement Is Important in the VPA Process

The world of development practice has, over the years, identified numerous principles that lend themselves to sustainable human development. Many of these principles are embedded in the practice of stakeholder engagement, making engagement an essential strategy for development efforts such as the FLEGT VPA. Included among the principles are:

- **National ownership:** Separate from the principle of governmental leadership, a well-entrenched principle in democratic development processes is the principle that stakeholders need to also understand and be committed to development interventions.
- **Consensus:** Depending on the topic being engaged on, consensus is a vital principle to confirm the support of stakeholders for key decisions and directions.
- **Transparency and accountability:** Through proactive information sharing and open access policies to data and information, engagement effectively increases levels of transparency for those specific topics around which engagement is organised. The knowledge and awareness thus created is essential to increase the accountability of all stakeholders.
- **Inclusivity:** The principle of inclusion underpins participation, as it permits other principles (such as transparency, accountability, ownership, and consensus) to be achieved. By being included through engagement, stakeholders are given concrete opportunities to contribute towards decisions that will affect them.
- **Equality:** Stakeholder engagement can give meaning to and help promote, through fair inclusion, equality. Equality is a key principle in development and has been pursued in recent years through comparing socio-political and economic inequalities. Among the specific types of inequality that stakeholder engagement can help mitigate are gender inequality, ethnic inequality, regional inequality, and other inequalities, such as those associated with leadership, age, education, and religion.
- **Sustainability:** Some projects are inherently concerned with the sustainability of natural resources benefit from engagement which adds the socio-political dimension by generating longer lasting and more effective policymaking and implementation.
- **Rights and obligations:** Engagement can help secure the rights of all stakeholders, including women, men, and youth.
- **FPIC:** “Free, Prior, and Informed Consent” is a key concept to support the full participation of forest-dependent rights-holders, particularly indigenous peoples, and other forest dependent communities, including equitably women, men and youth within them.

Challenges and Limitations to Engagement

Through a panel discussion held on 7 October 2021 with a wide cross-section of practitioners in stakeholder engagement in Guyana, the following challenges and limitations to stakeholder engagement were highlighted:

Challenges to Stakeholder Engagement

- Ensuring relevance to stakeholder groups: The engagement should be relevant and meaningful to each stakeholder group and the context in which each group operates.
- **Important to know your audience:** If we know our audience well, we can prepare better. Also, bear in mind that grassroots people are not always academically inclined. Methods of sharing information on stakeholder engagements e.g., websites, might be a challenge for someone, even if they possess a smartphone, to find and navigate.

- **Communicating the purpose of the engagement:** It is important that stakeholders know the purpose of the stakeholder engagement, whether it would be for information sharing and raising awareness, capacity building, or consent required.
- **Communicating the benefits of the action:** If stakeholders do not fully understand the benefits, they may not have an interest in the action.
- **Planning for continuity:** Experience has shown that there is need for planning for when there is change in leadership in communities, as sometimes you need to start processes all over again. There are various stakeholder group representatives who exit the process prematurely and others are called to pick up without background knowledge. There must be measures in place for continuity.
- **Stakeholder fatigue:** This could occur where promises of reports were made and not kept, creating fertile ground for mistrust.
- **Timely Feedback:** Timeliness in providing updates is important – if the feedback is not timely it hinders stakeholders' interest and continued support.
- **FPIC:** Ensure that all engagements are grounded in Indigenous peoples' rights of Free, Prior and Informed consent (FPIC) and inclusion.
- **Quality control is important:** The engagement should not just be a tick that consultation has been done with a community/stakeholder group.
- **Resource constraints:** Cost to mobilise is an important consideration.
- **Careful not to raise expectations:** Be careful about raising expectations of providing incentives for participation.
- **Need to engage stakeholders in the planning process:** Stakeholders can identify the best time to meet, advise on the level of participation, who should be coming, etc.

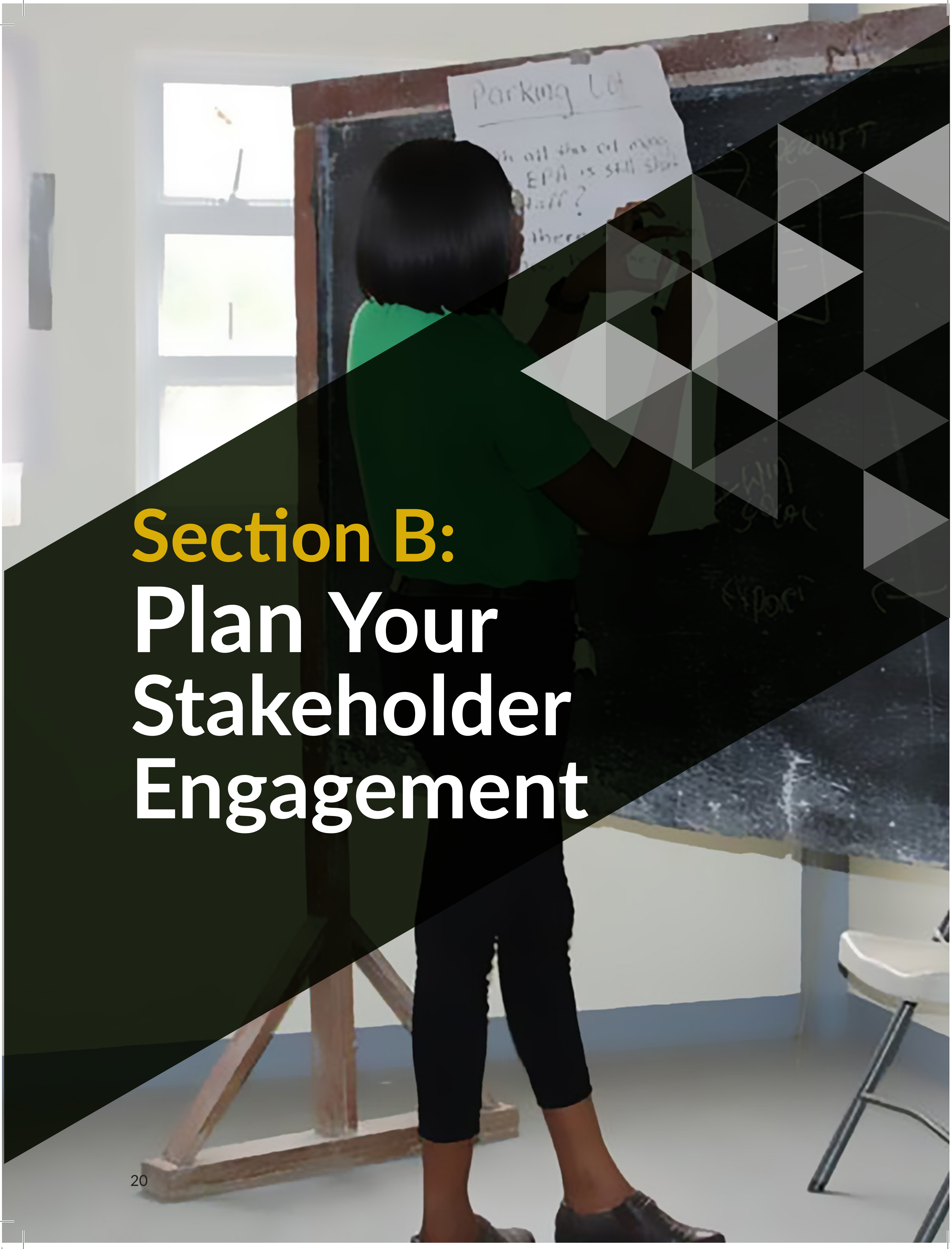
Limitations of Stakeholder Engagement

Much emphasis has been placed on what stakeholder engagement is, with little focus on what it is **not**. It is essential for those involved in planning and implementing stakeholder engagement to be aware of the pitfalls and assumptions that create barriers to effective engagement leading to less desirable results.

Many may have a well-designed blueprint for stakeholder engagement without carefully reflecting on misconceptions and misrepresentations about this process. What does not constitute stakeholder engagement should be clear in the minds of those who are responsible for the engagement process. Key misconceptions to reflect on are:

- Stakeholder engagement must not be confused with stakeholder management. Stakeholder management has become a frequently used term that implies that stakeholder behaviours and actions can be predicted, planned and controlled. Stakeholder engagement is a dynamic process that goes beyond the process of stakeholder management and focuses on building, maintaining and managing those relationships built during the process.
- Stakeholder engagement is not functional interaction. It is a regular, yet meaningful interaction aimed at producing a consensual outcome.
- Stakeholder engagement is not a static, narrowly defined process aimed at fulfilling a predetermined task. Stakeholder engagement is needed throughout a project's/programme's lifecycle and should be iterative. It is unlikely that a single form of engagement will ever suffice for stakeholders with differing needs and agendas.
- Stakeholder engagement is not a cosmetic add-on but should seek to prioritise key players, learn their wants, needs, and preferences, with a view to adjusting interventions accordingly.

- Strategic stakeholder engagement is not 'bringing stakeholders around to our way of thinking'. Stakeholders may consider this arrogant and disrespectful and will feel less inclined to be engaged.
- Stakeholder engagement is not transactional but based on mutually beneficial and continuous and proactive engagement. Successful stakeholder engagements all have one thing in common; they have all engaged with stakeholders and managed these relations proactively.
- Stakeholder engagement is never an "afterthought". Early constructive and pro-active engagement with a focus on creating and communicating meaningful alignment with local stakeholders should receive strategic attention.
- Stakeholder engagement is more than making a list of stakeholders and meeting with them. Remember, engaged stakeholders can become powerful allies, offering support and insights to help you succeed. Stakeholders who are not engaged cannot fully support your project and may become barriers to successful implementation of projects.
- Stakeholder engagement is more than information sharing. The process entails identifying, mapping and prioritising stakeholders to determine the best tactics for effective communication while making the best use of available resources.



Section B:
Plan Your Stakeholder Engagement

In organising any successful stakeholder engagement, it is important to first craft a plan of the engagement. This section of the Guide is dedicated to outlining the steps to be taken in planning your stakeholder engagement.

Step 1: Define the Purpose and Scope

The first step in every engagement is to identify why stakeholder engagement is needed, then define the goals, outcomes, objectives, who to involve, and other desired results the engagement is expected to produce. Once these results are clarified, it will become more obvious what type of engagement process is required to permit the engagement design process to begin.

The following are key elements in defining the scope of the stakeholder engagement.

(a) Determine the Type of Engagement

The tool at Figure 4 'Five types of engagement based on the degree of participaton* illustrates that stakeholder engagement can be used to achieve increasingly complex purposes. Importantly, the tool confirms that the more complex a stakeholder engagement purpose is, the higher will be the degree of stakeholder participation.

The simplest purpose of stakeholder engagement is information sharing. Here, the degree of participation needed from stakeholders is low as the type of engagement is merely to have a one-way flow of information from those who have information to those who are thought to need that information.

The most complex type of stakeholder engagement process seeks to empower stakeholders. Here, participation is high as stakeholders are expected to have control over decision-making, resources, and activities.

As a general matter, much of Guyana's stakeholder engagement processes are located at a slightly higher level of participation via consultations. Here, the focus is on eliciting feedback from stakeholders, usually in response to information shared. In recent times, numerous consultations have been held as a means of encouraging public participation on the **Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS)**, **electoral reform**, **local content policy**, and **gas-to-shore project**, for example.

Stakeholder engagement has added considerable value to the forest governance strengthening process over the years. Information sharing has been done in all forest-related stakeholder engagement processes. Without sufficient information, stakeholders can hardly participate in the more complex processes of consultation, collaboration, joint decision-making, or empowerment.

To this end, a **communications strategy** was developed in 2020 to help satisfy the information needs of stakeholders in the Guyana-EU FLEGT VPA implementation phase. This Stakeholder Engagement Guideline complements the communications strategy.

Guyana's natural resources sector typically engages stakeholders for the purpose of collaboration. The REDD+ process over the last 15 years produced a myriad of collaborative outputs. In 2021, for example, forest dependent communities and TLAS agencies collaborated in the production of a Working Paper focused on improving legal compliance in the forestry sector.

Stakeholder engagement processes were also used to foster collaboration in the introduction of GFC's code of practice and the revision of the National Forest Policy and Plan (2018). In describing these engagement processes, Quacy Bremner (Head, FTCI), identified these positives: "The process allowed for various cross-sections of people to be involved. We were able to meet with grassroots stakeholders."

Guyana also has experience with stakeholder engagement processes that promote empowerment. Indigenous village planning within the LCDS implementation process is a good example of how the purpose of empowerment can be pursued through stakeholder engagement. The following graphic summarises the four workshops that are held with villages to develop Village Sustainability Plans (VSPs). These plans will be implemented by villagers themselves, or with their consent.

Figure 6. Village sustainability planning process
Source: MoAA and CI, 2021

The actual design of a stakeholder engagement process will obviously differ, depending on the purpose of the engagement. It is important to note that simpler stakeholder engagement purposes can resemble single events in practice. More complex purposes that require higher levels of stakeholder participation tend to engage stakeholders through multiple steps (often collectively referred to as processes).

(b) Be Aware of the Context for the Stakeholder Engagement

Guyana's Constitution establishes several "principles and bases of the political, economic and social system" (Articles 9-39). Citizen participation in the affairs of the nation is constitutionally guaranteed through elections, political parties, and local government, for example. Stakeholder engagement provides a concrete opportunity to realise the ambition of Article 13, which takes citizen participation to a new and higher level, as stated below:

"The principal objective of the political system of the State is to establish an inclusionary democracy by providing increasing opportunities for the participation of citizens, and their organisations, in the management and decision-making processes of the State, with particular emphasis on those areas of decision-making that directly affect their well-being."

The Constitution of Guyana therefore establishes a strong basis for stakeholder engagement to be used as a means of effecting an inclusionary democracy with all Guyanese.

In addition, Guyana's forest-dependent communities comprise Indigenous peoples as well as non-Indigenous communities. The latter communities comprise Guyanese drawn from other ethnic groups, particularly the African and Indian communities. According to data from the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs (2022), there are approximately 131,000 people living in hinterland villages, satellites and Community Development Councils (CDCs). While villages and satellites are Indigenous, CDCs are of mixed races. Details are shown in Table 2 below. Data for hinterland Neighbourhood Democratic Councils (NDCs), such as Kwakwani, are not included in this table.

Table 2. Population of hinterland villages, satellites and CDCs

Type	Number	Population
Villages + Satellites	177	119,597
CDCs	63	11,808

Source: MoAA, 2022

Indigenous peoples are a special stakeholder group in Guyana, being the original forest-dependent communities. A key principle for engagements with Indigenous peoples is Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). Embedded within international human rights law, FPIC is a specific right granted to Indigenous peoples recognised in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which aligns with their universal right to self-determination.

There are many definitions of FPIC. The UN FAO, which has a focus on forests, defines FPIC as follows:

- **Free** refers to a consent given voluntarily and without coercion, intimidation or manipulation. It also refers to a process that is self-directed by the community from whom consent is being sought, unencumbered by coercion, expectations or timelines that are externally imposed.
- **Prior** means that consent is sought sufficiently in advance of any authorization or commencement of activities, at the early stages of a development or investment plan, and not only when the need arises to obtain approval from the community.
- **Informed** refers mainly to the nature of the engagement and type of information that should be provided prior to seeking consent and also as part of the ongoing consent process.
- **Consent** refers to the collective decision made by the rights-holders and reached through the customary decision-making processes of the affected Indigenous Peoples or communities. Consent must be sought and granted or withheld according to the unique formal or informal political-administrative dynamic of each community. Indigenous peoples and local communities must be able to participate through their own freely chosen representatives, while ensuring the participation of youth, women, the elderly and persons with disabilities as much as possible.

In Guyana, the Amerindian Act (2006) governs relations with and between Indigenous peoples. Calls have been increasing over the years for the amendment of the Act to, among other things, clarify and strengthen FPIC mechanisms. In late-2022, the government signalled the imminent formation of a committee to revise the Act.

(c) Do a Stakeholder Analysis

In engaging stakeholders, it is first important to define who are the stakeholders.

Stakeholder Analysis is used to identify:

- The interests of all stakeholders who may affect or be affected by a project/programme;
- Potential conflicts and risks that could jeopardise a project/programme;
- Opportunities and relationships to build upon in implementing a project/programme to help make it a success;
- The groups that should be encouraged to participate in different stages of the activity cycle;
- Ways to improve the project/programme and reduce, or hopefully remove, negative impacts on vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

Stakeholder Analysis should be undertaken at the **Identification** and **Design** stages and can be undertaken at every stage of an activity cycle/ stakeholder engagement. A review process at subsequent stages should be built into the design of the activity. Stakeholder Analysis throughout the life of an activity/stakeholder engagement is needed to fulfil different functions at different stages.

A project will have specified aims and objectives, for example, there may be different things happening at different times. Each unique phase of the project/stakeholder engagement may have a change in the kinds of stakeholders who may need to be involved. An evaluation at different points along the project cycle will allow for all relevant stakeholders to be included, even if a particular group may not have been identified or was not considered an essential group at the commencement of the project.

(d) Determine Structures Needed for Engagement

At this stage of the engagement design process, it is important to have identified the key, primary and secondary stakeholders, and what sorts of structures are needed to facilitate the effective participation of the identified stakeholders, bearing the purpose of the engagement in mind. It is also wise to identify stakeholders who can add considerable value to the engagement process ("champions") as well as those who can undermine the process ("spoilers").

In every stakeholder engagement process, there are those who are responsible for implementing the process ("implementers"), and those who are being engaged ("stakeholders"). In this section, *structures* refer to the mechanisms that need to be put in place to help design and implement the engagement. *Structures* essentially create a connection between the implementers and stakeholders over the duration of the process. "Champions" and "spoilers" may be included in these structures if it is considered useful to the purpose of the engagement.

As a general rule, the simpler the stakeholder engagement type (reference Figure 6), the simpler the structure needed to implement the process. Put differently, the higher the degree of participation needed from stakeholders, the more complex will be the implementation structures.

What do *structures* look like? The following sample of structures builds on Figure 6 by drawing on local experience. These examples of structures illustrate how key actors (implementers and stakeholders) have worked together in Guyana to achieve specific purposes through stakeholder engagement.

Table 3. Sample structures for stakeholder engagement

Engagement purpose	Sample Structures	Sample Engagements
Joint decision making	*Working Group structure*, where multiple entities representing key stakeholders establish a process for making decisions jointly	NIWG (2019+) Learning Event (2021)
Collaboration	*Committee structure*, where multiple entities representing key stakeholders establish a process for their respective stakeholders to collaborate	SLIFF (2020) Outreach (2022)
Consultation	*Expanded project activity structure*, where additional entities (e.g., MSSC) work with the implementing entity (e.g. DECC)	LCDS (2022)
Information sharing	*Project activity structure*, where the implementing entity deploys all the technical, financial, and organisational capacity needed to share information with stakeholders.	VPA negotiation phase (2012-18)

Why are *structures* important? For one, structures help ensure that items of significant importance to stakeholders are considered in the design and implementation of the engagement process. Without these items being addressed, the risk of stakeholder disappointment increases. More importantly, however, structures help stakeholders to *own* the engagement process. Carefully structured participation allows stakeholders to better appreciate the outcomes from a process. This *ownership* is a vital element in any change management process, particularly where stakeholders are the ones being asked to change.

Step 2: Design the Engagement Process

Now that the stakeholders and stakeholder engagement purpose have been identified, and a structure for implementing the engagement established, the next step is to design the engagement process itself.

As explained in Section A, stakeholder engagement is the systematic identification, analysis, planning and implementation of actions designed to influence stakeholders. Taken together, all these elements make up the stakeholder engagement process.

The design of a stakeholder engagement process must begin somewhere. Typically, the lead organisation (such as GFC is within the VPA process), with strategic others (e.g., TLAS agencies), will begin the design process by establishing the stakeholder engagement purpose, identifying key stakeholders, and obtaining the needed resources, for example. A useful tool for lead organisations at the design stage of a stakeholder engagement process is the concept note. This note articulates, in a clear, concise and logical fashion, the essential details of the desired process. A suggested guide to creating concept notes follows below.

Concept note guidance

1. ***Why* is this engagement necessary? (background)**
2. ***What are we trying to achieve? (purpose)***
3. ***Who* needs to be involved for this engagement to succeed? (stakeholder analysis)**
4. ***Who should be involved* in engagement process to make it a success? (structure)**
5. *What, where and when* **(the approach to be taken)**
6. ***How will the engagement be implemented* based on available resources (planning meetings, testing, communications, materials, reporting, team, oversight).**

A lesson from stakeholder engagements is that there is no such thing as a perfect process. It is important in the stakeholder engagement design process to maintain a degree of flexibility, ideally within the confines of the engagement purpose, although this - indeed, the entire concept note, might be amended based on reflections and discussions.

Instead of designing in a "straight line", stakeholder engagement processes very often evolve in an iterative manner as a result of the interactions between those tasked with the engagement design and implementation. This evolutionary approach benefits from dialogue between members within the structure as well as from the feedback of key constituencies.

Thus, for example, a private sector representative on a working group should ideally be keeping his/her colleagues in the private sector updated on developments in the design of the stakeholder engagement process. Feedback from those colleagues should then be solicited and fed back into the design process for consideration. Apart from deepening the pool from which ideas can be drawn, this iterative process helps secure stakeholder ownership for the entire process. Such buy-in deepens and sustains the achievement of the engagement purpose.

Most stakeholder engagement processes include at least one event, where stakeholders are brought together. For more complex processes, where the purpose of the engagement calls for a higher degree of stakeholder participation, multiple events are typically required. While budgetary constraints will impact on the number of events possible, it is important to maintain flexibility by using the structures set up to design and implement the engagement process.

During the process to develop Guyana's revised National Forest Policy Statement and Plan in 2017, for example, it was agreed to undertake a second round of local workshops to have stakeholders validate the revised Statement and Plan. This extra round of events, together with deliberate communications (via Facebook, a website, e-mails etc.) helped build stakeholder confidence in and ownership of the eventual Statement and Plan.

A stakeholder engagement event, such as a workshop, training, consultation, or focus group, represents a concrete milestone in the stakeholder engagement process. The design of events is a crucial element typically requiring significant investments in time and money. It is vital that events are well designed, to increase the prospects that they contribute positively to the engagement process. Badly designed events are likely to undermine if not destroy an engagement process. The following list illustrates some of the weaknesses associated with badly designed events.

- Last minute planning
- Late invitations
- Limited stakeholder preparation
- Logistical challenges
- Vague agendas
- Poorly prepared facilitator
- Unclear allocation of roles
- Late starts and finishes
- Stakeholder frustration

It is worth noting that the odds of a badly designed and implemented event are significantly reduced if the earlier steps identified have been followed. A clear engagement purpose, accurate stakeholder identification, an inclusive design and implementation structure all contribute significantly to higher quality events.

A tool used in the design of events within the forest governance reform process is the annotated agenda. This tool seeks to identify, as best possible, all the details associated with the implementation of an event. The annotated agenda fleshes out the flow of the entire event and contains information such as session descriptions and estimated duration, who leads which session, what methodologies are being used (e.g., small groups, online polls), and so on. One of the key benefits of the annotated agenda is that it helps the implementation team be on the same page as to the details of the plan. While the annotated agenda explicitly aims to pre-plan as much as possible, it is important to also bear in mind that no agenda is carved in stone. Realities, such as the late arrival of participants or low literacy levels, may require adjustments to the plan. Wisely designed annotated agendas anticipate these realities. The following graphic showcases the annotated agenda used in the 2021 FLEGT stakeholder outreach process.

Item	Description	Time (Mins)	Responsibility	Comments
1. Welcome	Brief opening remarks and COVID-19 meeting rules and expectations. Also, inform participants what is in their package.	10	Team Leader	Team to ensure participants are masked and sanitised.
2. FLEGT VPA	Put presentation on the screen and discuss the following: 1. Meaning/Acronym 2. Purpose and Objectives 3. Benefits to Guyana 4. GTLAS: Supply chain, Compliance, Licensing, Audit, etc. 5. Implementation Phase 6. Milestones – 2012 to 2020	25	Team Member	Expand on the FLEGT VPA acronym for clarity.
3. FLEGT VPA – Providing Opportunities	Showcase video.	12	Team	
4. The JIF	Put presentation on the screen and discuss the following: 1. Meaning/Acronym and Purpose 2. Background 3. Strategic Tasks	15	Team Member - Tanika	Expand on the JIF acronym for clarity.

Figure 7. Example of an annotated agenda

(a) The Role of Communications in Stakeholder Engagement

Communications play a crucial role in stakeholder engagement. It is the primary means by which an initiative, like the FLEGT VPA, is conveyed to stakeholders and is essential to successful stakeholder engagement. Effective communication helps build trust and understanding between the Government and forestry stakeholders, leading to more productive and positive connections. By communicating openly and transparently, an organisation, entity or initiative can foster strong relationships with partners and stakeholders and achieve its goals collaboratively and sustainably.

The National Communication Strategy and Implementation Plan 2020-2023: Guyana-EU VPA Implementation Phase is a blueprint for achieving effective stakeholder involvement presenting three strategic communication goals focusing on information exchange between the Government and forestry stakeholders and associated actions.

Understanding these goals sets the foundation for utilising communications to maintain a strong influence and high interest among stakeholders, increasing engagement where it is low:

- Active consultation,
- The constant flow of information on progress, and
- Creating and identifying allies.

A review of the goals can guide how to communicate engagement goals strategically -

Strategic Goal 1: Inclusion – Involve all stakeholders in implementing the VPA in Guyana, providing timely and relevant information through several mechanisms that enable them to make informed decisions and participate effectively. Based on their stakeholder type, they must clearly understand why they are involved in the process and to what degree. Also, capture stakeholder feedback through these mechanisms and address their concerns and needs to give them a voice. This helps the Government gain support for the VPA process.

Strategic Goal 2: Transparency - Information should be simple and user-friendly to facilitate implementing the Guyana Timber Legality Assurance System (GTLAS). Transparency also fosters dialogue, addresses criticisms, provides a better understanding of the sector's legal framework, showcases advances on the implementation and operationalisation of the GTLAS and presents the forest sector as a transparent and accountable sector within the Guyanese economy.

Strategic Goal 3: Promotion - Advocate and demonstrate the benefits of the VPA to secure stakeholder support for its implementation by promoting contributions of the VPA to national development, forest policies, thematic priorities and other linked or similar forest initiatives such as REDD+, forest conservation and sustainable development. Additionally, promote the image of Guyanese timber as a legal, quality product and the forestry sector to encourage businesses to improve their operations and products. By doing so, forest sector businesses will comply with FLEGT licensing requirements and compete more effectively in the EU and other markets, which are tangible VPA benefits.

(b) Advantages of Effective Communication

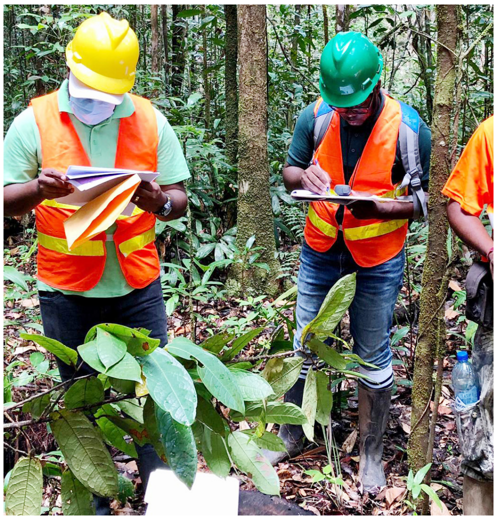
There are several advantages of communications in stakeholder engagement, which are mentioned above within the strategy's goals. Most notably, these are:

1. Relationship Building: Communications help build and maintain relationships with stakeholders. The Government can cultivate stakeholder trust and loyalty through regular transparent communication, including feedback mechanisms.
2. Information Sharing: Communications inform stakeholders about an initiative's goals, objectives, plans, and activities. This information enables stakeholders to make informed decisions and engage with the Government more meaningfully.
3. Expectation Management: Providing clear, comprehensible and practical information manages stakeholder expectations about what the initiative can and cannot do, preventing misunderstandings and creating more effectual relationships.
4. Conflict Management and Resolution: Communications can help resolve conflicts and disputes between the Government and its stakeholders. Transparency in open and honest communication can address stakeholders' concerns and, where possible, find solutions.

(c) Communications Pre-Engagement

Change Readiness Assessment

In addition to identifying the target stakeholders through stakeholder mapping and analysis, a Change Readiness Assessment (CRA) should be considered before developing a communication plan.



Through engagement and awareness, the National Communications Strategy seeks to change attitudes, raising the profile of the VPA process and FLEGT and motivating stakeholders to modify their practices.

A CRA helps evaluate stakeholders' ability to handle and adapt to changes that the FLEGT VPA brings. Therefore, assessing stakeholders' readiness for change is crucial to determine if they can respond effectively to these changes, minimise risks, and maximise opportunities.

The Communications Strategy lists a key stakeholder message, i.e., that "the VPA is not business as usual for timber producers and traders", and change is expected over time. As such, messages should be adjusted as the implementation process evolves. Most importantly, a CRA must be considered for engagements to communicate these changes, help stakeholders accept them, and make the changes needed for the VPA's implementation to succeed.

Therefore, CRAs can offer essential insights to create or improve communication engagement techniques and engagement preparedness, considering stakeholders' economic, social, and environmental well-being. It helps equip the engagement team to deal effectively with engagement challenges, bringing stakeholders the right message and information through the best communication tools and methods.

Communications and Engagement Plan

A Communications and Engagement Plan (CEP) is a document that outlines the communication strategies and tactics to engage stakeholders during a change initiative or project effectively. It provides a roadmap for how an organisation or entity will communicate with various stakeholders to build awareness, understanding, and positive relationships and foster collaboration and support for the change. CEPs also ensure that communication efforts are targeted, consistent, and aligned with the overall goals and objectives of the initiative.

CEPs are most effective when developed after conducting a CRA and can lead to successful stakeholder outreach efforts.

Key elements to include in a CEP are:

1. Objectives: Clearly define the purposes of the stakeholder engagement efforts, the communication goals and the expected outcomes to be achieved through stakeholder engagement.
2. Stakeholder Analysis: Identify and analyse the diverse stakeholders affected by the VPA. Understand their needs, concerns, expectations, and communication preferences.
3. Key Messages: Develop key messages that align with the change initiative and are tailored to different stakeholder groups. These messages should be clear, consistent, and compelling, addressing each stakeholder group's needs and interests.
4. Communication Channels and Techniques: Determine the most effective communication channels, for e.g. email, intranet, social media, and other relevant channels and engagement techniques, for e.g., workshops, one-to-one meeting, focus groups to reach each stakeholder group. Consider the preferences and accessibility of different stakeholders when selecting communication channels.
5. Communication Tactics: Define the specific communication tactics for each stakeholder group, including the timing stakeholder (e.g., daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually), frequency, and content of the communication. This may include producing quarterly newsletters, posters, videos, FAQs, and other relevant communication materials.
6. Communication Owners and Responsibilities: Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the individuals or teams to execute the communication plan. This includes team leaders, content creators, reviewers, and approvers.
7. Feedback Mechanisms: Establish feedback mechanisms to collect input and feedback from stakeholders. This may include surveys, focus groups, meetings, or other methods to gather feedback on the effectiveness of the communication efforts and address any concerns or questions.
8. Monitoring and Evaluation: Define how the effectiveness of the CEP will be monitored and evaluated. This may include measuring communication outcomes, stakeholder satisfaction, and feedback received and using the results to refine and improve communication strategies and tactics.
9. Timeline and Budget: Create a timeline that outlines the sequence of communication activities and milestones and allocate the necessary budget and resources to execute the CEP effectively.
10. Contingency Plans: Identify potential risks, unexpected situations, crises, or challenges that may impact communications and overall outreach efforts and develop contingency plans to address them proactively.

A CEP Guideline can be found in Annex 2, while Annex 3 contains an example of a Communications Engagement Activities Table.

For the activities table, the timeline can be extended to include frequency and activity start and end dates. Timelines may also vary depending on the specific scope and duration of the stakeholder outreach. Adapting and customising the CEP based on the organisers' and stakeholders' unique needs and circumstances is essential. Regular reviews and adjustments should be made to ensure the plan remains effective throughout the outreach effort.

After developing your CEP, you must implement the engagement's communication strategies by executing the communication plan, deploying the identified communication channels, and delivering the key messages using a consistent and coordinated approach to ensure stakeholders receive frequent communication across all channels.

Engagement Event Communications Checklist

A Stakeholder Engagement Communications Checklist (SECC) must be prepared after the CEP and, therefore, before the start of the outreach. Annex 3 provides an example of this checklist.

SECC contributes to effective internal coordination and communication among internal team members responsible for stakeholder engagement to ensure consistency and alignment in messaging and actions. It should include key items and activities that provide effective stakeholder communication throughout the outreach effort and ensure that mechanisms are established for two-way communication, such as feedback channels, surveys and opportunities for stakeholders to provide input, send inquiries and express concerns.

Logistical responsibilities may also overlap the communications process and should be included in the checklist. These responsibilities involve securing videography and photography equipment and ensuring projectors and microphones are set up and tested before the engagement. However, the checklist example is not a resource for the logistical activities necessary for the engagement.

The SECC can be customised based on the specific needs and circumstances of the engagement and stakeholders.

Other Considerations

Under the CRA section, several considerations can be applied throughout the communication process in developing a communications plan for stakeholder engagement.

Additional considerations include the following –

1. Ensuring that communication materials and channels are not only accessible to all stakeholders but inclusive beyond language and literacy considerations. According to the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (2003), the Inclusive Communication Approach seeks to 'create a supportive and effective communication environment, using every available means of communication to understand and

be understood'. Inclusive methods include speech, body language, signing, gestures, visual aids for spoken and written words (pictures, photos, graphics and symbols), objects and interactive approaches for those with profound learning disabilities and communication needs. It values communication differences among stakeholders and involves them in the engagement process, enabling them to express feelings and needs and make and understand choices (Inclusive Communication Essex, 2023).

2. Not shy away from negative media attention. It can be used by the engagement team as a learning opportunity and help with contingency planning for future engagements.

Step 3. Preparing Stakeholders for Engagement

Stakeholders can hardly be expected to engage fully if they are not equipped to do so. In Guyana, stakeholder capacity deficits can include a lack of technical information, a lack of information on the engagement process, or a lack of confidence that participation will be a good use of their time.

It will be recalled from earlier chapters that knowledge is a basic need for effective stakeholder engagement. This is why much of Guyana's stakeholder engagement processes have focused on information sharing (per the annotated agenda in Figure 8). A first step in a stakeholder engagement process is to ensure that stakeholders receive information that will allow effective participation. To the maximum extent possible, this information should be shared ahead of an event so that stakeholders have a chance to review, digest, and identify questions for clarification, or other inputs.

Communicating the purpose of the engagement process is another important element of the process, and how the stakeholder will add value to that process through their effective participation. In Guyana, this communication takes place typically through the invitation process ahead of an event. Communication with stakeholders can also happen via the implementation structure established for the engagement process, when, for example, a private sector or Indigenous representative will share information on the process with their constituencies. The communication process seems to work better when the information being communicated is put in a simple and concise manner.

In the forestry sector, local Forest Officers were integrated into the implementation of the 2022 Outreach. Typically, Forest Officers have served as local post offices for the distribution of meeting invitations to stakeholders, attending those meetings as observers or participants themselves. Working with Forest Officers proactively in 2022 helped promote the importance of local events by building stakeholder confidence that the event would be of value.

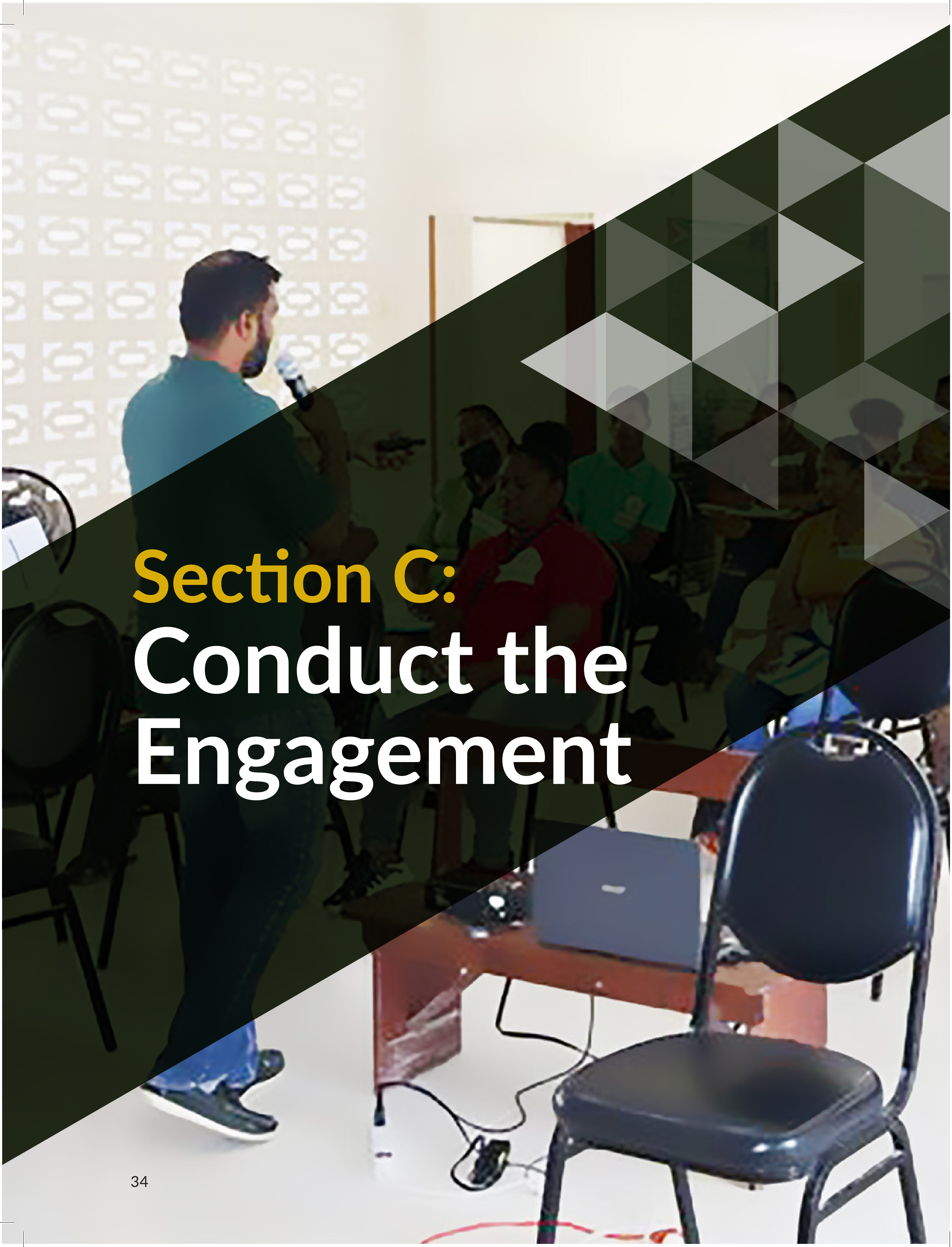
Additional steps that might be considered to help stakeholder trust and participate fully in the engagement process include:

- Assess the needs of disadvantaged groups (e.g., youth) and develop specific interventions to help them prepare better for effective participation.
- Hold bilateral meetings with key stakeholders (e.g., Toshaos, CFO leaders) to explain the engagement purpose and secure their support and participation.
- Hold preparatory meetings, as needed, ahead of larger events to identify additional issues or concerns, as well as potential conflicts that need to be considered in the engagement process.

See additional ideas on preparing stakeholders for their effective participation in engagement processes in the graphic at Figure 9.

Common Obstacles to Engagement	Possible Solutions
• Low capacity for engagement (technical and non-technical) • Low levels of trust • Limited enabling regulatory framework for engagements • How to organize for the participation of stakeholders who are diverse (e.g. private sector) • Convincing stakeholders there is a benefit to engaging • Social barriers (language, gender etc.) • Costs • Political will	• Improve communications • Strengthen relations among stakeholders (trust-building, cease-fires etc.) • Use qualified facilitators • Revise/strengthen existing regulatory framework for engaging stakeholders (including customary rights, engagement policies etc.) • Education/awareness raising/capacity-building

Figure 8. Ideas to improve stakeholder participation
Source: Guidelines for Stakeholder Engagement, REDD+, Myanmar, 2016



Section C: Conduct the Engagement

The Role of the Facilitator

Facilitate: to make easier, help bring about (Miriam-Webster Dictionary)

Events, like the entire engagement process within which the event is located, can benefit significantly from the services of a Facilitator. These persons possess the art and science of facilitation, much of which is already contained in this Guideline. A Facilitator helps make the engagement process easier in a way that leads to the achievement of the engagement purpose. Facilitating differs from other important roles, such as leading, chairing, deciding, and implementing.

Facilitators are often independent professionals who are involved in the crafting of the annotated agenda. Being sensitive to the engagement purpose and stakeholders, and working within the parameters of the implementation structure, Facilitators often exercise what can be described as "process wisdom." This wisdom includes reading of situations, people, dynamics, interests and needs to allow the Facilitator to steer the engagement process towards its purpose. Facilitators have the ability to empathise with stakeholders in a way that induces trust and confidence.

Facilitators are most visible at events, where they typically play a role in managing the flow of the entire event. Being familiar with the details of the event, Facilitators must constantly monitor the use of time, the flow and content of conversations, the mood of participants, logistics, and the work of the implementation team, exercising such flexibility in the management of the event that will increase stakeholder satisfaction and generate the results being pursued through the event.

At Guyana's international learning event 2022, for example, an interactive plenary session ran out of time. Recognising that interest and participation levels were high, the Facilitator negotiated a working lunch and a late conclusion to the day so that the session could continue.

Not all Facilitators are specialised professionals. Communities, for example, often possess members with natural tendencies to "make things easier", to "help bring things about." Facilitation capacities are also present within governmental and non-governmental organisations active in Guyana's natural resource sector. In 2022/23, the LCDS tapped into the pool of talented community members to facilitate village planning processes.

Persons with facilitation capacities tend to be recognised by others around them, based on the following attributes:

- Trustworthy
- Empathetic
- Sensitive
- Confident
- Articulate
- Organised
- Modest

Few Facilitators emerge from training programmes the way doctors, lawyers, and engineers do; they rather emerge naturally in practice. Facilitators tend to learn and improve through practice. At the same time, the refining of latent skills adds considerably to the confidence and capacity of budding facilitators. Resources such as **The Art of Building Facilitation Capacities | RECOFTC** can be tapped to help build facilitation capacity. Local talent is also available, as was demonstrated through the following case.

> *In the Outreach 2022 process, 30 Forest Officers benefited from a 2-day Facilitation training programme organised at GFC's Yarrowkabra facility. The Officers, who were assessed as having the natural talent needed, were introduced to theories and tools through practical sessions that increased their capacity and confidence to facilitate stakeholder engagement events. These officers were then given a chance to practice some of those capacities during events held in their locations.*

Does every engagement event require facilitation services? This may depend on the purpose of the engagement, and the design of the event. It is possible that simpler engagement events, such as information sharing sessions, might only require a Chair – someone to introduce speakers and manage Q&A discussions, for example. However, as the stakeholder engagement process pursues more complex ends, such as consensus or empowerment, the services of a facilitator become more and more essential.

Communications During the Engagement

The communications team plays a crucial role in the engagement session, facilitating effective communication between the organisers and stakeholders. This means managing the flow of discussions, ensuring that all stakeholders can speak and be heard, and moderating any questions or discussions to maintain a productive environment.

The SECC contains a comprehensive list of other activities to streamline communications at each session. These include planning and coordination activities, visual aid and audio-visual equipment management, notetaking, communications channel management and more. The SECC should regularly be reviewed, updated, or adjusted throughout the outreach effort to ensure it remains relevant and practical.

Moreover, regularly review and update the CEP to reflect changes in stakeholder needs and expectations. It is also necessary to monitor and track the effectiveness of the CEP and the outreach efforts' outcomes so the plan can remain relevant and effective in achieving the desired engagement goals.

The communications team should further evaluate the effectiveness of the CEP by gathering feedback from the engagement group and external stakeholders. Evaluating the engagement session helps assess the CEP's usefulness. This may involve conducting surveys, soliciting feedback through stakeholder discussions, or conducting internal debrief sessions to identify areas for improvement and incorporate lessons learned into future stakeholder engagement efforts. The post-mortem, or after-session debrief, is an evaluation method that allows engagement team members to communicate what worked and what did not. This feedback can be used to adjust the CEP and SECC and improve the value of stakeholder engagement over time.

During this phase, a record of all communication efforts should be kept, including emails, social media posts, outreach session notes/minutes, and feedback received for future reference and accountability.

Overall, the communications team's role is critical in ensuring the stakeholder engagement session is well-organised, productive, and transparent.

Communications Post-Engagement

Following up on any commitments or actions promised during the engagement process is vital to building stakeholder trust and credibility.

Follow-up may involve coordinating with different departments, partners, or stakeholders to implement decisions, track progress, and communicate updates. The communications team should work with the relevant groups or individuals in the outreach effort to ensure that the action items or next steps identified during the stakeholder engagement session are pursued.

Therefore, before the end of the engagement, the team should establish timely response and follow-up mechanisms to stakeholder inquiries, concerns, and feedback, including designated points of contact and response timelines. It is also an integral part of the post-engagement process to maintain communications with stakeholders on the status or outcomes of these commitments.

Furthermore, long-term stakeholder relationship management is all-important. The communications team should maintain ongoing communication to manage the relationship with stakeholders, especially those participating in the engagement session. Therefore, it is important to provide regular or periodic updates on the progress of the outreach effort, including any changes and milestones, and later give an overall update on the outcomes of the outreach effort and future engagement opportunities.

Communicating the results of the engagement clearly, promptly and in a meaningful manner, considering language and literacy needs, reduces cynicism, mistrust, and disappointment among stakeholders and encourages stakeholder participation in future engagements (UN-REDD Programme, 2016).

Figure 9. Guidance for communicating results
Adapted from Guidelines for Stakeholder Engagement in Policies and Programmes for Sustainable Forest Management and REDD+9 (p.33), UN-REDD Programme, 2016.

The team should also –

1. Help analyse the outcomes of the stakeholder engagement session and prepare a comprehensive report. This report should highlight the session's key findings, insights, and results and can also include recommendations or next steps for the organisers to consider.

2. Ensure that the stakeholder engagement session outcomes are effectively communicated to relevant internal stakeholders, not just externally, as highlighted earlier in this section. This may involve sharing the meeting minutes, the analysis report, or other relevant information through appropriate communication channels, such as internal memos, email updates, or presentations during internal meetings.
3. Assist in developing a lessons-learned document for future stakeholder engagement efforts.

Section D: Assess the Process

There is a critical role that many processes simply do not pay enough attention to or are not sure what are the most effective ways of doing it and that is the role of assessing the effectiveness of any stakeholder engagement process. The only way to determine if you have been able to achieve the objectives you have set, is to be able to have a meaningful look at the end and critically assess that the ideas were communicated, the lessons were learnt, the attitudinal change has begun or any of a series of other aims and objectives have been met.

To be able to assess any process, those responsible for implementing an engagement should be sure to review for successes and challenges. Documenting the experience is an important contributor to improvements the next time around. Given that the VPA is still in the early phases of the implementation process, such an investment in evaluation could yield significant benefits over the longer term.

Guidance for effectively assessing the process involves a few simple steps as outlined below.

Firstly, capture event evaluations particularly if a series of the same type of event is held, compile and aggregate the evaluations from those events.

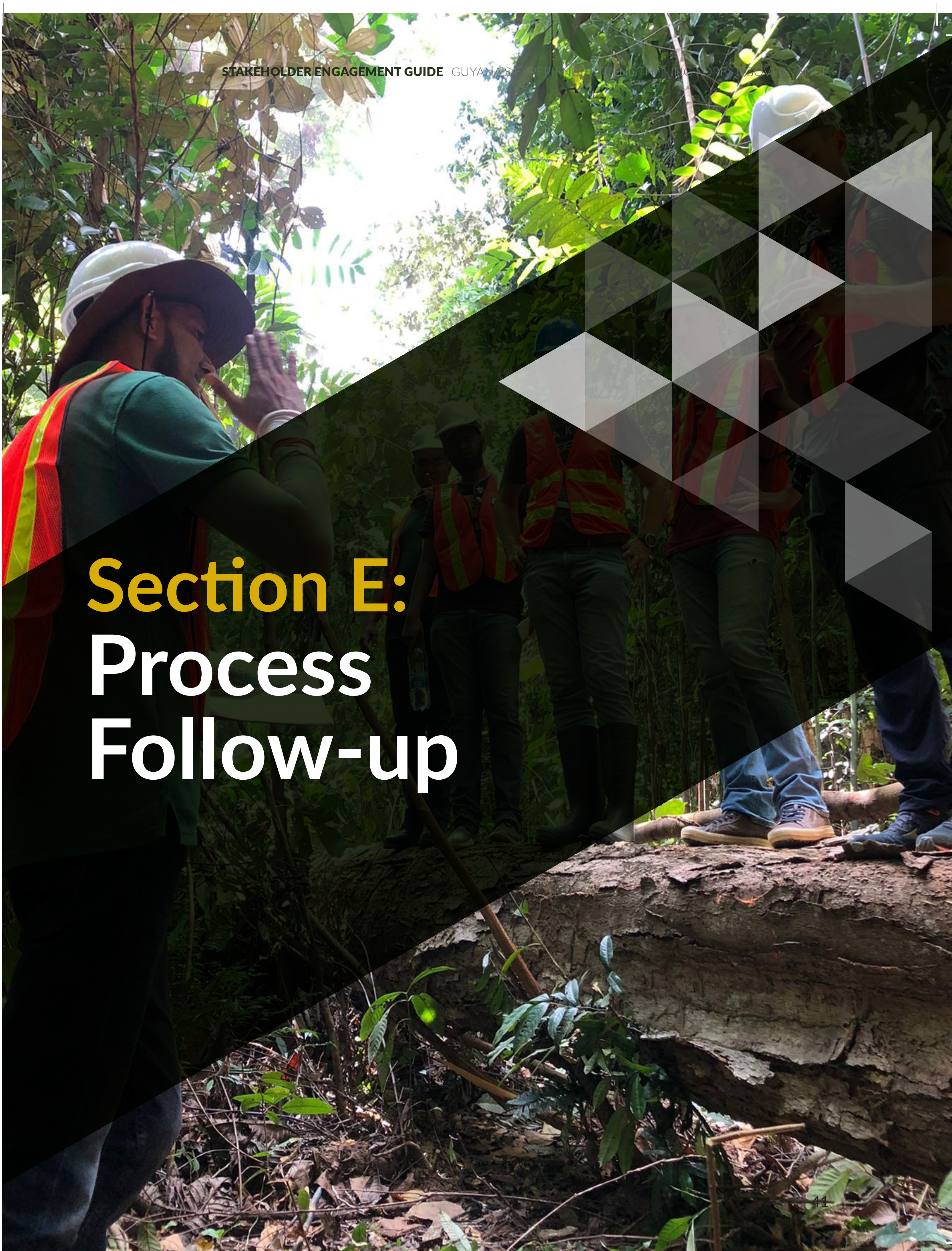
Secondly, evaluate against a results-based framework (RBF): The RBF will contain objective indicators for the process and its specific results, and ways of measuring these.

A result-based framework is both a planning and management tool that provides the basis for monitoring and evaluation. It provides a programme-level framework allowing one to monitor the achievement of results and to adjust relevant programmes and activities when necessary. It gives the reader an instant idea of what a programme is trying to achieve. Result-based Framework focuses especially on impact and the outcomes of the work done through the programme. The Results-based Framework approach has a lot in common with the **Log Frame** that is used on an individual project basis. A log frame is a tool for improving the planning, implementation, management, monitoring and evaluation of projects. It is a way of structuring the main elements in a project that shows the logical linkages between them.

The Lead Agency is responsible for ensuring that evaluation findings are collected, analysed and reported on.

Thirdly, hold a Taskforce/Organisers Retreat meeting. Those responsible for implementing the stakeholder engagement, such as the Taskforce or the Technical Working Groups (TWG), may wish to hold a review retreat to examine evaluations and generate lessons learned. This may include a review of systems used to perform the work.

Finally, review compliance with these guidelines. Since these guidelines are intended to increase the quality of stakeholder engagement in VPA readiness, the Taskforce will need to consider ways and means of encouraging its usage in practice. The quality of that usage can be integrated into the structures established, and monitoring and evaluation including on-site and rapid assessments by members of the engagement TWG and others to whom such responsibilities are delegated. In addition to assuring compliance, review processes can be used to refine these guidelines over time.



Section E: Process Follow-up

Effective stakeholder engagement is an ongoing process that requires continuous effort and attention. Once the initial stakeholder engagement activities have been completed, it is crucial to follow up to ensure that stakeholders concerns are addressed, their feedback is incorporated, and their involvement remains meaningful. This section outlines some key follow-up activities to maintain and enhance stakeholder engagement.

a. Recognition and appreciation of stakeholders' contribution

Recognise and acknowledge the contributions of stakeholders who participated in the engagement process. Highlight the value of their input and the impact it has on decision-making and outcomes.

Recognising their efforts will foster positive relationships and a sense of ownership in the engagement process. Acknowledging their contribution will encourage their continued participation in the future.

b. Review and Analyse Feedback

After conducting stakeholder engagement activities, collect and review all the feedback received. This may include surveys, interviews, or written submissions. Analyse the feedback to identify common themes, concerns, and suggestions. Categorise the feedback based on priority and relevance to determine the most critical areas for action.

c. Report and Share Findings

Prepare a comprehensive report summarising the stakeholder feedback and key findings. The report should be clear, concise, and accessible to stakeholders. Share it with all relevant stakeholders, including those who participated in the engagement activities and those who could not attend. Make the report available through various channels, such as email, websites, or community bulletin boards, to ensure broad dissemination.

d. Encourage Feedback and respond in a timely manner

Invite stakeholders to provide feedback on the shared information. Highlight the importance of their perspectives and insights in shaping future decisions and actions. Offer multiple channels for feedback, such as online surveys, dedicated email addresses, or structured feedback forms, to accommodate different stakeholder preferences.

Take cognisance of the feedback and ensure that it is acknowledged and respected. Respond to it promptly, providing clarifications/comments, addressing concerns, or explaining any constraints that may affect the implementation of suggested ideas or changes. Demonstrating that their input is valued encourages stakeholders to continue participating in future events.

e. Address Stakeholder Concerns

Identify the key concerns raised by stakeholders and develop action plans to address them, prioritising the most significant ones and creating timelines for resolving them. Communicate these plans to stakeholders, outlining the steps that will be taken to address their concerns and improve the situation. Regularly update stakeholders on the progress made, demonstrating commitment to their feedback.

f. Communication

Maintain on-going communication
Establish a system for ongoing communication with stakeholders beyond the single event creating a culture of continuous engagement rather than isolated interactions. This can include regular newsletters, email updates, or dedicated communication platforms.

Keep them informed about progress made on their concerns, updates, and any changes related to the shared information including upcoming opportunities for engagement. Encourage them to provide additional input or participate in future activities to ensure their ongoing involvement.

Transparent Communication

Provide clear explanations of the information shared, addressing key points, insights, and implications. Be transparent about any limitations or uncertainties in the data or findings. This builds trust and credibility with stakeholders, encouraging their active engagement and feedback.

Timely Information Sharing

Ensure that you deliver on any promises made regarding sharing information with stakeholders. Share updates, reports, or relevant documents in a timely manner, using both traditional and digital channels. Make the information easily accessible and available in multiple formats to accommodate different stakeholder preferences.

g. Assessment and Continuous Evaluation

Periodically assess the effectiveness of your stakeholder engagement activities. Conduct evaluations to measure the impacts, identify areas for improvement, and gather feedback on the process itself. Use these insights to refine your stakeholder engagement strategy, ensuring that it remains responsive to stakeholder needs and expectations.

h. Create Opportunities for Deeper Participation

In addition to sharing information, provide opportunities for stakeholders to engage in more in-depth discussions or interactive sessions. Consider hosting workshops, focus groups, or roundtable discussions to explore specific topics related to shared information. This allows stakeholders to contribute their expertise and insights in a collaborative setting.

i. Implement Changes Based on Feedback

Use stakeholder feedback and recommendations to push for improvements in policies, programmes, or initiatives. Collaborate with relevant teams, departments, or agencies to implement the necessary changes and inform stakeholders about the changes made based on their feedback, highlighting how their input influenced the decision-making process. This will demonstrate the value of their engagement and maintain their interest in future activities.

j. Incorporate Feedback into Future Events

Demonstrate how stakeholder feedback has influenced decision-making and actions. Share how their input has been considered and integrated into the organisation’s plans or strategies. This reinforces the importance of their participation and encourages them to continue engaging in future events.

In conclusion, follow-up activities are essential for maintaining and strengthening stakeholder engagement. By reviewing feedback, sharing findings, addressing concerns, implementing changes, maintaining ongoing communication, and continuously learning, you can foster deeper participation among stakeholders, ultimately strengthening stakeholder engagement and facilitating more inclusive decision-making processes while building long-term relationships with your stakeholders.

Remember, effective stakeholder engagement is an iterative process that requires ongoing commitment and dedication.

Annexes: Some Tools

Annex 1. How to Do a Change Readiness Assessment

Before a CRA, there are several considerations and actions required by the engagement team –

- Review the National Communication Strategy and Implementation Plan to guide engagement activities and evaluate the clarity, consistency and effectiveness of communication channels and messages proposed within. This is necessary to determine the strategy's alignment with engagement goals.
- Develop a goal-oriented communication strategy or plan for engagement with feedback mechanisms, communication channels, tools, timelines, and information to be imparted to stakeholders. This document ensures team members are in sync and productive throughout the process, minimising conflict, errors, and other issues.
- Consider an Engagement Impact Analysis during planning to determine how an event or activity will affect the VPA's success, impact the process positively and negatively, affect stakeholders and financially impact the donor(s). The latter considers Return on Investment (ROI) and can be a source for creating a contingency plan.
- Consider the Digital Maturity of stakeholders to determine whether or how digital technologies can be used to achieve the engagement's objectives. By understanding stakeholders and the local environment, you can use technology to communicate the VPA and find communication technologies that successfully influence your stakeholders.
- Determine whether the stakeholder culture is conducive to change by identifying existing behaviours, attitudes, beliefs, and ideas in contrast to the VPA and the engagement's goals and outline an action plan to change these, if necessary, to improve the engagement's outcomes.
- Outline the stakeholders' engagement needs. This can be from reviewing feedback from past engagement efforts to determine how to use the team's skills, tools, and competencies to communicate the VPA.
- Finally, identify change readiness that includes the willingness and capabilities of those involved (GFC, FLEGT Secretariat and its partners) to implement change.

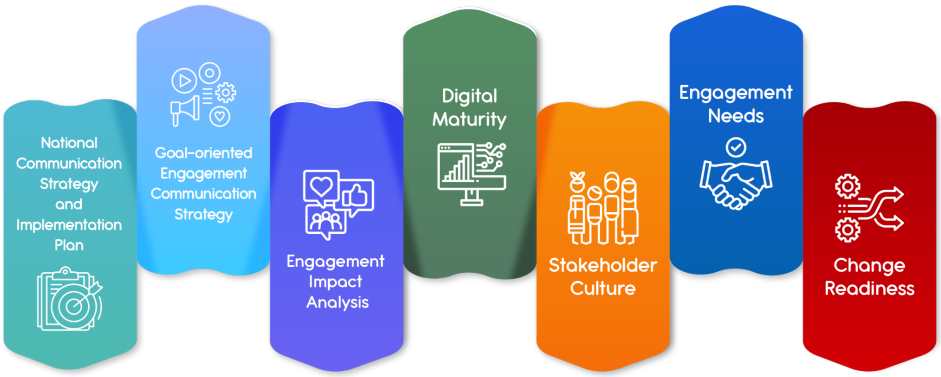


Figure 10. Focus areas when conducting a Change Readiness Assessment
Adapted from Walk Me - The Change Management Blog

Ultimately the CRA will –

- Outline the risks and challenges, such as likely opposition, which can hinder or help the engagement session and affect the change process. These risks can also include the location of the engagement (area or venue) and the village, tribe, community or regional customs and culture.
- Identify any factors such as cultural components (norms, languages, values, belief systems) and leadership that may influence communication effectiveness and change readiness. Factors identification will facilitate an assessment of stakeholders' openness to change, their abilities to adapt and their current engagement level. It will also help gauge the current feelings of stakeholders regarding the VPA, such as interests, motivation to comply legally and willingness to change.
- Evaluate how effectively the GFC, FLEGT Secretariat and its partners have engaged with key stakeholders and other relevant parties during the VPA process. Through this, stakeholders' involvement, understanding, and support are assessed, and any areas requiring additional attention or efforts to build buy-in are identified.
- Anticipate stakeholders' reactions and possible actions towards changes within the VPA and changes brought by the VPA.
- Evaluate the availability and accessibility of resources, such as training materials, job aids, and other communication tools, to support stakeholders in understanding and navigating the changes. Based on the evaluation, assess the effectiveness of these resources in stakeholders' communication needs, identify any gaps or areas that require improvement and determine specific information needed to communicate the engagement's intentions effectively. The assessment will also help select the best communication modes for engagement.
- Review the engagement's feedback mechanisms and evaluate the effectiveness of these, such as surveys, focus groups, and other means of collecting stakeholder feedback. Assessing the effectiveness of these mechanisms enables the engagement team to see if concerns, questions, and feedback related to the changes are being captured and identify any areas that may require improvement to better address stakeholders' needs.
- Assist in selecting and evaluating the engagement team, including facilitators, representatives and implementers, by examining each individual's knowledge of the VPA, communication skills and other strengths and weaknesses.
- Identify any gaps or opportunities for improvement in the communication process.

Figure 11. Key benefits of a Change Readiness Assessment
Adapted from Walk Me - The Change Management Blog

CRAs can also evaluate whether the GFC, FLEGT Secretariat or its partners are prepared for changes to come or may occur in the future from effective engagement practices. It can help review the various roles, especially the leadership's role, in driving and managing the change communication process by –

1. Evaluating their ability to communicate the rationale behind the VPA, provide vision and direction, and inspire stakeholders to embrace the changes.
2. Identifying any areas where each can improve their communication approach.

Annex 2. How to Prepare Communications and Engagement Plan

Communications and Engagement Plan Guideline	
Objectives	
Example	**Note**
1. Effectively engage stakeholders and facilitate communication to foster positive relationships and promote collaboration and cooperation. 2. Using appropriate communication mechanisms, build the capacity of private sector actors in Guyana to improve compliance and, as a result, business practices and to access markets through interactions with peers. 3. Encourage compliance among all Forest Sector Operator (FSO) types using consistent and engaging messaging to create good examples of forest operations across the sector that can be showcased locally and internationally. 4. Set the foundation for long-term, sustained actions through appropriate communication channels that will raise the regulatory compliance levels of FSOs.	Communication event objectives are not the same as the overall outreach objectives but must align. These communication objectives, therefore, can be developed using the outreach's concept note, harnessed from discussions before the CRA and based on the findings of the CRA. The central objective should be to empower stakeholders, especially small FSOs, and the Indigenous and forest communities ensuring they can handle and adapt to changes that the FLEGT VPA brings.
Groups/Types	
Example	**Note**
Key stakeholders relevant to the outreach effort - • Representatives of government agencies involved in compliance and enforcement within the forest sector. • Forest sector actors, including Amerindian and other local communities involved in forest management and/or the production of wood products, and large, small, and medium-sized forest enterprises in Guyana.	Stakeholders may include internal stakeholders such as employees and managers of the GFC and external stakeholders such as partners, regulatory agencies, FSOs and local communities.
Needs and Expectations	
Example	**Note**
1. Access to accurate and timely information to understand the potential impacts of the VPA and provide meaningful input. 2. Transparent communication channels through which there are regular updates on relevant information. 3. Have mechanisms for providing feedback on the outcomes and impacts of decisions or actions and holding decision-makers accountable for their commitments. 4. Have opportunities for post-engagement evaluations, monitoring, and reporting. 5. Prompt responses to their input and feedback and efficient decision-making processes. 6. Access to relevant information, adequate resources, support, and assistance, including translation services or technical support as needed, to effectively engage in the process.	Once a comprehensive analysis is conducted to understand the needs of each stakeholder group and their expectations, interests, and concerns, the findings can be analysed to identify common themes and areas of alignment or divergence among stakeholders. Data for analysis can be collected through surveys, interviews, focus groups, or other methods of information gathering.
Key Messages	
Example	**Note**
1. Guyana and the EU are committed to transparently sharing information about the FLEGT VPA process to ensure that stakeholders are informed and can provide meaningful input.	Develop key messages tailored to each stakeholder group based on assessing stakeholder needs and expectations. These messages should be simple, clear, concise, and relevant to the stakeholders' interests and concerns.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Communications and Engagement Plan Guideline</th></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">Key Messages</th></tr>
<tr><th>Example</th><th>Note</th></tr>
<tr><td>2. The Government of Guyana welcomes feedback from stakeholders throughout the FLEGT VPA process and are committed to giving them a voice and being responsive to their input.
3. The FLEGT Secretariat will regularly report on progress and outcomes of the VPA.
4. The GFC is dedicated to providing stakeholders with the necessary resources, support, and capacity-building measures to effectively engage in the FLEGT VPA process. This includes providing access to relevant information, technical assistance, and other support mechanisms as needed.
5. Compliance means improving the ease of doing business and protecting and sustaining our forests for the future generation.</td><td>Ensure that the messages are consistent with the overall goals and objectives of the outreach effort.

Also remember the importance of appropriate language and tone with consideration for the socio-economic system.</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">Communication Channels</th></tr>
<tr><th>Example</th><th>Note</th></tr>
<tr><td>1. Email
2. Newsletters
3. Social media
4. Website(s)
5. Forums
6. In-person meetings.</td><td>Select appropriate communication channels that are most effective in reaching and engaging with each stakeholder group.

Consider the preferences and accessibility of each stakeholder group when choosing communication channels.</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">Communication Activities</th></tr>
<tr><th>Example</th><th>Note</th></tr>
<tr><td>• Stakeholder Identification and Analysis
• Message Development
• Communication Plan Creation
• Engagement Branding and Materials</td><td>There are three considerations for communication activities, with one of these being Communication Channels. Annex 2 provides a comprehensive example of how these work together. The other considerations are –
a. Timeline: Develop a timeline per communication activities, milestones, and deadlines. However, be flexible and adaptable to changes in the timeline as needed.
b. Responsibilities: Clearly define roles and responsibilities for communication tasks and activities. Assign responsibilities to appropriate team members or stakeholders who have the necessary expertise and resources to effectively execute the communication plan. Ensure that team members are aligned with the goals and objectives of the outreach effort and understand their roles in the communication process.</td></tr>
</table>

Annex 3 - Communications Engagement Activities Table

Activity	Channel	Timeline	Responsible Party
Stakeholder Identification and Analysis			
Identify and analyse key stakeholders relevant to the outreach effort.	Stakeholder interviews, surveys, and stakeholder mapping.	Week 1-2	
Create or update the stakeholder database.	Contact details of existing and new stakeholders categorised by type. Useful for future engagement efforts.		
Message Development			
Develop key messages tailored to each stakeholder group based on the CEP, including a stakeholder needs and expectations analysis	Stakeholder workshops, messaging framework creation.	Week 3-4	
Communication Channel(s) Selection			
Select appropriate communication channels for each stakeholder group to meet CEP objectives.	Email, newsletters, social media, websites, community forums, radio, television and in-person meetings.	Week 5	
Communications and Engagement Plan Creation			
Create a comprehensive communication plan with timelines, deliverables, and responsibilities. Also include key messages and communication channels.	CEP document, internal review.	Week 6	
Engagement Branding and Materials			
In line with the organisation's and initiative's overall branding, create a unique identity for the engagement using appropriate fonts, colours and imagery.	PowerPoint presentations, invitations (including formal letterhead), agenda, factsheets, flyers, display banners, brochures, folders, pens and other paraphernalia and templates.	Week 7	
Initial Communication Deployment			
Launch communication efforts to introduce outreach and key messages.	Email, newsletters, press releases, media interviews, media kits, posters, photography, videos, social media and website updates.	Week 8	
Ongoing Communication Execution			
Continuously deploy communication efforts through selected channels, addressing stakeholder needs and concerns.	Email updates, newsletters, social media and website updates, in-person meetings, feedback channels.	Throughout the duration of the outreach.	
Feedback Collection and Analysis			
Collect feedback from stakeholders on the outreach and analyse results.	Vox pops, questionnaires, feedback forms, post-mortems, interviews, surveys.	Ongoing throughout the outreach.	

Activity	Channel	Timeline	Responsible Party
Feedback Response and Follow-Up			
Provide timely responses to stakeholder feedback and follow up on commitments.	Email, direct communication, in-person meetings.	Within one to two weeks of feedback collection.	
Evaluation and Adjustment			
Provide timely responses to stakeholder feedback and follow up on commitments.	Email, direct communication, in-person meetings.	Within one to two weeks of feedback collection.	
Final Reporting and Wrapping Up			
Summarise the communication efforts, outcomes, results and lessons learned in a final report.	Final report document, internal review.	At the end of the outreach.	

Annex 4. Engagement Event Communications Checklist

Select Items, Where Applicable, Per Engagement

Please test all equipment BEFORE the engagement event.

	Activity/Item	Amount	Responsibility	Comments
PRE-ENGAGEMENT				
Planning				
√	Change Readiness Assessment		Multiple	
√	Engagement Concept Note		Multiple	Communicates the engagement's rationale and can include a brief outline of the findings of the CEP, stakeholder identification and analysis, communication messages and channels
√	Communications Engagement Plan		Communications Team	
√	Communications Budget			
√	Annotated Agenda		Multiple	Assist with content development, including header design.
√	Reporting Format		Multiple	
√	Questionnaire(s)/Online Surveys		Multiple	Assist with content development, including header design.
√	Checklists		Multiple	Each team should prepare a checklist and review for gaps and overlaps.
Engagement and Branded Materials				
√	Questionnaire(s)/Online Surveys		Multiple	Design header and share with the engagement team.
√	Registration Form(s)		Multiple	Design header and return to the logistics team.
√	Invitation Letter		Communications Team	Design header and return to the team responsible for dispersing. Assist with dispersing if necessary.
√	Main Agenda			Design and populate with agenda items from the annotated version.
√	Engagement Calendar			Date, location and time of each engagement.
√	Visual Aids			Design main template and share with presenters. Ensure that the final aids are clear and effective.
√	Certificates of Participation			Design.
√	Advocacy Materials			Compile videos and other media including print materials. A list of specific materials needed can be included within this checklist and used to guide the print process.

Activity/Item		Amount	Responsibility	Comments
√	Participants' Folders		Communications Team	Design cover, if necessary. Include, where necessary, an agenda, flash drive, pens and/or pencils, notepads,
√	Consent Forms		Communications Team	Necessary form for stakeholders to consent to vox pops, post-mortems and interviews.
√	Retractable Banner(s)		Communications Team	Design, if necessary.
Media and Public Relations				
√	Pre-event Press Release		Communications Team	Draft release and after review and approval, send to the appropriate dispatch channel, or directly to media house(s).
√	Pre-event Social Media Event Post			Design and post. Recommended for public stakeholder engagements only.
√	Social Media Event		Communications, Logistics and IT Teams	Design an event banner and setup a Facebook event and website event page, if needed, or if the event is accessible online. Fill in all the necessary information. Link these to Zoom or any other platforms that will be used to stream. Zoom, Teams or similar virtual event platforms must be set by the Logistics and Information Technology (IT) teams.
Communications Equipment				
√	Voice Recording Device(s)		Communications and IT Teams	Fully charged and tested.
√	Camera(s)		Communications and IT Teams	Ensure battery is fully charged, including additional batteries. Test what settings work best to produce quality videos and photos.
√	Participants' Flash Drives		Communications Team	Loaded with advocacy materials and presenter presentations.
√	Public Address (PA) Systems		Communications, Logistics and IT Teams	Setup and testing of microphones, amplifiers and loudspeakers.
√	Projector and Screen		Communications, Logistics and IT Teams	Setup and test.
√	Livestreaming Equipment		Communications, Logistics and IT Teams	Setup and test stream on social media and virtual event platforms.
√	Laptop(s)		Communications, Logistics and IT Teams	Transfer visual/audio visual aids onto the desktop in a clearly marked folder and ensure they are working. Charge and test.
√	WIFI and Password			Test connection on all devices especially laptops and streaming devices.

	Activity/Item	Amount	Responsibility	Comments
√	Flipchart		Communications and Logistics Teams	Along with easel stand and paper pads.
√	Permanent Markers			Multiple colours.
	COMMUNICATION DEPLOYMENT AND EXECUTION			
	Workshop Preparation			
√	Materials Table		Communications and Logistics Teams	Setup table with registration forms and participants' folders.
√	Meeting Area			Ensure that banner(s), equipment, etc., is arranged.
√	Social Media Gallery		Communications Team	Per engagement with a caption. Use tags, hashtags and geotags.
√	Social Media Post		Communications Team	Share published pre-event press release on all platforms. Use tags, hashtags and geotags.
√	Photography/videography		Communications Team	
√	Livestreaming		Communications and IT Teams	Stream event live on all social media and virtual event platforms.
√	Vox Pops, Post-mortems, and Interviews		Communications Team	Video or voice record stakeholders with consent. Create an environment that allows them to provide feedback on the engagement and express concerns.
√	Event Press Release		Communications Team	Draft a release based on status and findings of the event, etc. After its review and approval, send to the appropriate dispatch channel, or directly to media house(s).
	Workshop Session			
√	Audio-visual Equipment		Communications, Logistics and IT Teams	Assist in operating any audio-visual equipment needed.
√	Notetaking		Communications, Logistics and IT Teams	Capture minutes, post-mortems/ after session debriefs and document these for future reference. Minutes should consist of key points, decisions, and action items discussed during the session.
	POST-EVENT			
	Session Close			
√	Equipment		Communications, Logistics and IT Teams	Turn off, unplug and remove equipment.
√	Advocacy Materials			Ensure venue is cleared of all folders, banners, etc.
√	Post-mortem		Multiple	Opportunity for team to provide input and express concerns.
√	Participant Feedback		Multiple	Assist with questionnaires, surveys and surveys – input, analysis, etc.

	Activity/Item	Amount	Responsibility	Comments
	Engagement Materials			
√	Vox Pops, Post-mortems, and Interviews		Communications Team	Use recordings to create a video or blog post.
√	Post-engagement materials		Multiple	Consider email updates, newsletters and advocacy products to keep stakeholders informed and address the needs and concerns raised during engagement sessions.
	Media and Public Relations			
√	Post-event Press Release		Communications Team	Draft a release that is a recap of the engagement and a combination of engagement findings and results. After its review and approval, send to the appropriate dispatch channel, or directly to media house(s).
√	Photography/videography		Communications Team	Select the best or most appropriate images and videos from each engagement and edit these.
√	Social Media Gallery		Communications Team	Update engagement session galleries, including website gallery.
√	Social Media Post		Communications Team	Share published post-event press release on all platforms. Use tags, hashtags and geotags.
	Evaluation and Final Report			
√	Session Report(s)		Multiple	Contribute to the writing and/or editing and evaluation of these.
√	Communication Report(s)		Multiple	Document communication efforts and results.
√	Final Report(s)		Multiple	Summarise the communication efforts, outcomes, results, and lessons learned.

Annex 5. How to Do a Stakeholder Analysis?

There are three steps to follow in conducting a Stakeholder Analysis.

1. First, identify your stakeholders.

Start by brainstorming who your stakeholders are. As part of this, think of all the people who are affected by your work/the programme, who have influence or power over it, or have an interest in its successful or unsuccessful conclusion.

This activity is best done as a team or group (where possible) since it allows for ideas to be shared around a particular group or person. This allows for a clearer position and understanding of why a particular stakeholder may or may not need to be involved. If done on an individual level, a list of stakeholders should be reviewed by others who have a good understanding of what a particular project is seeking to achieve over a particular timeline. In the identification of stakeholders, it is often better to capture a particular person, group, organisation etc. and then later decide, after careful evaluation, that they are not a stakeholder, then to miss a particular group or organisation. This approach allows for careful reflection on what the project is seeking to do and what the impacts are likely to be.

2. Next, work out their power, influence and interest, so that you know who you should focus on.

You may now have a list of people and organisations that are affected by your work/the programme. Some of these may have the power either to block that work or to advance it. Some may be interested in what you are doing, while others may not care, so you need to work out who you need to prioritise.

You can map out your stakeholders and classify them according to their power and their interest, on a Power/Interest Grid (see Figure 12).

Figure 12. Power/interest grid for stakeholder prioritisation
Adapted from Mendelow, A.L. (1981). 'Environmental Scanning - The Impact of the Stakeholder Concept,' ICIS 1981 Proceedings, 20.

The position that you allocate to a stakeholder on the grid shows you the actions you need to take with them:

- **High power, highly interested people (Manage Closely):** You must fully engage these people and make the greatest efforts to satisfy them.
- **High power, less interested people (Keep Satisfied):** Put enough work in with these people to keep them satisfied, but not so much that they become bored with your message.
- **Low power, highly interested people (Keep Informed):** Adequately inform these people and talk to them to ensure that no major issues are arising. People in this category can often be very helpful with the details of your project.
- Low power, less interested people (Monitor): again, monitor these people, but do not bore them with excessive communication.

It should be noted that the position of a group in the grid may shift during a project. There is therefore a need to be "flexible" in this regard. This, though not a frequent occurrence, needs to be considered.

3. Understand your key stakeholders.

Finally, develop a good understanding of the most important stakeholders, so that you know how they are likely to respond, and how you can win their support.

You now need to discover how your key stakeholders feel about your project. You also need to work out how best to engage them, and how to communicate with them.

Questions that can help you understand your stakeholders include:

- What financial or emotional interest do they have in the outcome of your work? Is it positive or negative?
- What motivates them most of all?
- What information do they want from you, and what is the best way of communicating with them?
- What is their current opinion of your work? Is it based on good information?
- Who influences their opinions generally, and who influences their opinion of you? Do some of these influencers therefore become important stakeholders in their own right?
- If they are not likely to be positive, what will win them around to support your project?
- If you do not think that you will be able to win them around, how will you manage their opposition?
- Who else might be influenced by their opinions? Do these people become stakeholders in their own right?

You can ask your stakeholders these questions directly. People are often quite open about their views and asking for their opinions is often the first step in building a successful relationship with them.

A simple way to summarise the level of support you have from your stakeholders is to colour-code them. For example, show advocates and supporters in green, blockers and critics in red, and those who are neutral in orange. See the diagram below.

Figure 13. Example of a power/interest grid with colour coding
Adapted from Mendelow, A.L. (1981). 'Environmental Scanning - The Impact of the Stakeholder Concept,' ICIS 1981 Proceedings, 20.

In figure 13, you can see that a lot of effort needs to be put into persuading Piers and Maureen of the benefits of the project, while Janet and Amanda also need to be managed effectively as powerful supporters.

When you've completed your analysis, you can move on to use stakeholder management to work out how you will communicate/engage with each stakeholder.

Annex 6. Focus Groups

A focus group is a kind of "group interview", usually done with three to six people. It is used to test ideas and identify areas of agreement and disagreement. It also helps to reach larger numbers of people with interview questions. The interviewer may ask participants to respond to draft ideas and then assess the degree to which they agree/ disagree, and how strongly they feel.

Focus groups may be conducted with people from the same organisation or area of interest, e.g., Ministry staff or specialists in the same area, or with diverse stakeholders. The degree of formality varies, but a focus group is usually structured around specific topics and questions. The focus group is a good alternative to a workshop because you can hear from more people than you would in a large workshop. Facilitation techniques should be used to ensure that you hear from all participants and that one or two people do not dominate. For example, go "round the table" to seek comments from all participants or ask quieter people for their views.

Annex 7. Workshops

The term "workshop" generally refers to a relatively large group of people meeting to "work" on something for a period of a few hours to several days. A true workshop includes a mix of presentations and opportunities for participants to provide comments. However, in some organisations and countries, they are run as relatively formal large group meetings in which participants listen to presentations, with or without question periods. If necessary, the first couple of hours could be more formal, followed by participatory sessions.

Workshops should be used selectively as they can take considerable time and resources to organise and need careful planning. Also, in many countries, stakeholders are losing interest in workshops, especially formal ones. A workshop is best used to achieve one or more of these goals:

- To generate information or comments which cannot be collected by other techniques.
- To encourage information sharing, debate and discussion among stakeholders.
- To promote communication and collaboration among stakeholders, where appropriate.
- To discuss complex and multi-dimensional issues or controversial topics, for which there are many viewpoints.
- To ask stakeholders to come to agreement on key points or to indicate the degree of agreement or disagreement on these points.
- To involve high-level officials and senior managers in the process by giving them a high-profile public role, e.g., keynote speech.
- To reach a large number of people in a short time.

Teams should try to ensure that workshops are as participatory as possible, providing opportunities for participants to raise and discuss substantive topics and provide useful feedback. Key stakeholders can be actively involved in the workshop by being invited to help to plan or convene it, do a presentation, participate in a panel discussion, or facilitate a small group discussion. Although most workshops will include some presentations, they should not be used to present large amounts of information that could be distributed in reports. Most people do not retain much information from formal presentations. In any case, the workshop should take advantage of participants being face-to-face.

A good workshop will usually:

- Have clear written objectives, target groups, agenda and expected outputs.
- Use diverse workshop techniques, both passive (e.g., PowerPoint, speeches, plenary sessions) and participatory (e.g., Q & A, brainstorming, small group work, participatory exercises).
- Use effective facilitators or chairpersons, in both large and small group sessions, to keep participants "on time and on task" and ensure that all participants are heard.
- Have well-prepared speakers and resource persons. It may be advisable for organisers to review presentations ahead of time to check length, content and format of slides.
- Provide written materials for participants to read ahead of time or use at the workshop, so they can participate in an informed way (in the local language, if appropriate).
- Have good logistical planning and support, including:
    - A comfortable meeting place, with good signage, room temperature and light;
    - A room set-up that facilitates discussion, e.g., participants should face each other in a circle, square or U shape or sit at small tables;
    - Reliable audio-visual equipment and materials (e.g., flip charts, hand-outs), tested in advance; and
    - Well-timed breaks and mealtimes, with attractive refreshments and time for participants to interact.
    - Make sure that participants' comments are carefully captured, using note-takers, flip charts, surveys or workbooks. (Transcripts are not needed, just summaries.)
- Thank participants and follow up by sending a workshop summary and future outputs and progress reports, possibly with a request for comments.

There are two variations on the traditional workshop that could be used:

a. Mini-workshop: A shorter workshop (e.g., 1-3 hours) with a small number of stakeholders, although it still might include presentations and participatory activities.

b. Working session: Core project participants meet to accomplish a specific task. These can also combine informal training with working on a task, e.g., a session on the meaning of capacity development and its application to the conventions.

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