

E. STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOPS

KEY TERM

Stakeholder workshop: A structured, facilitated discussion with participants from various parts of the industry with the goal of designing an action plan for making the target industry more competitive.



I. WHAT ARE STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOPS?

Stakeholder workshops are structured, facilitated discussions with participants from various parts of the industry with the goal of designing an action plan for making the target industry more competitive. They are typically facilitated after a value chain analysis has been conducted in order to have key value chain actors understand any recommendations from the analysis and make a plan for the sector moving forward. They can be used when there are

recognised constraints within the value chain, such as marketing bottlenecks between producers and buyers.

II. WHEN DO WE USE STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOPS?

Stakeholder workshops can be very beneficial under the following conditions:

- ▶ Market actors at all levels of the value chain have the potential to recognise similar issues that hinder the efficiency of the value chain.
- ▶ The government is actively supportive of pro-poor private sector development (where government needs to support activities and strategies emerging from workshop or where government is already a significant market actor).
- ▶ There is a willingness of participants to work in collaboration to improve the whole sector.
- ▶ There are market actors interested in the needs of very poor producers.
- ▶ The workshop can be held within a reasonable distance for very poor producers to travel, especially female producers.
- ▶ At the beginning of a value chain development project, and at semi-regular intervals from then on (e.g., annually, semi-annually) are most useful times for stakeholder workshops.
- ▶ Local NGOs are present and willing to be involved.
- ▶ Producers and other market actors are able to attend without major disruption to their activities.

Stakeholder workshops may not be an option under the following conditions:

- ▶ There is a tangible animosity or history of violence between different market actors
- ▶ Market actors are totally dismissive of producers and not likely to change their views
- ▶ Producers have to travel unreasonable distances to attend the workshop
- ▶ Producers and market actors are in a very busy period (e.g., harvest time)

III. WHAT IS THE COMMON FORMAT OF STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOPS?

Stakeholder workshops can take the following format:¹

- ▶ Introduction of participants and explanation of the purpose and format of the workshop
- ▶ Presentation of the value chain with general information including the value chain map
- ▶ Discussion of what a more competitive value chain would look like
- ▶ Presentation of the major findings of the value chain analysis, including constraints and opportunities identified during the analysis
- ▶ Discussion to determine the causes of the constraints
- ▶ Participatory identification of action needed to achieve this vision of a more competitive value chain
- ▶ Agreement on next steps

IV. HOW DO WE PREPARE VERY POOR PRODUCERS FOR STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOPS?

It is important that the producer groups are ready for the opportunities that the stakeholder workshop can provide. When the consumer is satisfied, the businesses of both the seller and the buyer will grow. The value chain can only satisfy the consumer when the value chain actors cooperate. This is the idea that underlies any attempt at building relationships.

Producers should understand how value chains work. Specifically, they should:²

- ▶ Understand the chain as a network of specialised enterprises that need each other to make money.
- ▶ Acknowledge the position of other chain actors, and respect that their interests are also legitimate.
- ▶ Understand the need for cooperation rather than fighting against each other.
- ▶ Understand that sellers and buyers may have interests that are opposed to one another - a high price and a low price, respectively. Nevertheless, they also have a shared interest - that is, to satisfy the final consumer in an effective and efficient way.
- ▶ The producer's representatives need to be prepared but not instructed on what to say. They should be aware of the purpose of the workshop and the importance of being able to voice their opinions and concerns.

Things to consider in preparation include:

- ▶ The goal of the stakeholder workshop. An important message to convey to the representatives is that they are going to have an opportunity to meet other market actors to address market problems and possible solutions.
- ▶ Making explicit and discussing sensitive social and political issues that could affect the interactions and negotiations with other public and private actors (for example caste exclusion or political violence)

1 USAID. Guide to Facilitating Stakeholder Workshops

2 KIT, Faida MaLi, IIRR. 2006. Chain Empowerment: Supporting African Producers to Development Markets. Accessed June 10, 2011. <http://www.mamud.com/Docs/chains.pdf>. p. 155-6

V. HOW ARE PRODUCER REPRESENTATIVES SELECTED?

Selecting good producer representatives for the stakeholder workshop is an important process as a way to ensure that the needs of very poor producers are considered in the way commercial relationships are structured within the value chain. Representatives should:³

- ▶ Have the trust of the other producers
- ▶ Represent the opinions of others, especially very poor producers
- ▶ Have the ability to participate effectively without personal biases
- ▶ Articulate and communicate well with other market actors
- ▶ Be able to go back to the community to report and share with others the key points and findings of the discussion
- ▶ Be able to relate to the key barriers and proposed solutions
- ▶ Be known and trusted by market actors

At least two representatives from the producers should be chosen to attend the stakeholder workshop, making up about half the number of participants. So a workshop that has more than 30 participants can have up to seven producer group representatives. The actual number of producers will depend on the size of the workshop. Fewer producers run the risk of having their opinions outweighed by other market actors, and they could end up feeling marginalised. Take into account that very poor producers are likely to be quieter than other participants, and therefore more rather than fewer participants should attend the workshop.

The stakeholder workshop participants who often talk the most are government representatives, NGO representatives, and technical experts (i.e., research institutes and universities). Market traders are sometimes reluctant to say much as they do not want to release too much information or draw attention to themselves—but if they are drawn into the discussion, they will often provide some very insightful information on the functioning of their level of the value chain.

VI. STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOPS AND VERY POOR PRODUCERS

Participating in stakeholder workshops can seem especially difficult for very poor producers. They may feel out of place and that their opinions will not be taken into consideration.



Guiding Principles for Conducting Stakeholder Workshops⁴

This table highlights guiding principles for facilitating stakeholder workshops that include very poor producers.

General Facilitation of Stakeholder Workshops	
Guiding Principal	Practical Application
Keep it short	• Participant time is valuable. Focus on activities that

³ Practical Action. 2010. Learning from Practice: Lessons on Facilitating Participatory Market Mapping Workshops, 5.

⁴ USAID. Guide to Facilitating Stakeholder Workshops, www.microlinks.org.

General Facilitation of Stakeholder Workshops

Guiding Principal	Practical Application
and simple	<p>stakeholders have an incentive to overcome, whether or not there is an external subsidy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops should never exceed two days. Some workshops can be done in two or three hours.
Emphasise short-term activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful execution creates incentives for participants to come together to work on longer-term solutions to constraints
Plan for sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make it clear that the process you are initiating will only work when stakeholders take ownership of it. Make sure you focus on activities of which stakeholders will quickly take ownership.
Pick participants carefully	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on those stakeholders who have or could have incentives to drive solutions. If there are not clear incentives to drive upgrading, your participants will not be able to take ownership of the process. • Per diems should not be offered. If per diems are the incentive, you will not get the buy-in and commitment of market actors and businesses that you need.
Prepare well	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spend more time on selecting the right participants, convincing them of the merits of participating, and on the identification of opportunities and constraints in the value chain analysis.
Reward champions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce the behaviour of stakeholders coming together to develop plans by arranging press coverage, project and public recognition. Use the opportunity for the press to follow-up on action plan results as an incentive for stakeholders to implement their action plans in a timely manner. Local stakeholders are generally responsive to local feedback.
Move seamlessly from planning to action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure that action plans include who, what, when, and follow-up. • Where project resources are available, follow up quickly with technical assistance. Lack of follow through, especially early on, can lead to stakeholder disillusionment.
Look for incentives in transactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find individuals for whom new business services have commercial value. • Emphasise new business relationships as an indicator of success. • Nothing motivates as quickly as opportunities with relatively quick returns.
Find the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of a shared industry vision is an important

General Facilitation of Stakeholder Workshops	
Guiding Principal	Practical Application
balance between quick and catalytic	part of the process but is often best built upon short-term results. Private sector ownership of a strategy to build industry competitiveness is a process with many steps: the first ones are often small and must be successful.
Do not feel pressured to resolve conflicts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is more important to help participants understand the conflicts, as the stated conflict is rarely the real issue. Instead of trying to resolve the conflict, hold to the goal of clarifying the perceptions, including assumptions and facts. However, facilitators should not let the conflict get out of hand during the workshop.
Address the underlying issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In public, people may ask a question that is one step away from the real question. Try to address the real question to get real commitment.
There is no one right way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is critical for the facilitator to refrain from preconceived notions of the “right” process. Always keep in mind the end destination: increased collaboration and specific action plans. How you get there will be determined by the stakeholders.
Be genuine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although some stakeholders will try to push the facilitator into an expert role, it is important not to accept it. If you do, conflict will be seen as a question for the expert to answer rather than as different perceptions that need to be understood by each of the participants. The skill of being able to communicate effectively will be the most valuable tool the facilitator can leave with the participants.

Ensuring Participation of Very Poor Producers in Stakeholder Workshops	
Guiding Principal	Practical Application
Invitation to producers should not come from the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very poor producers will be more willing to attend if they feel that the other value chain actors want them there.
Discuss social and logistical aspects of the workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seemingly simple things such as what to wear or what to do during a coffee break can be very overwhelming. Walk the participants through what they should expect at the event.

with producers	
Run specific sessions to address producers' constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It will be easy for the producers' voices to be unheard if they are not specifically addressed.
Conduct multiple workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct multiple workshops on an ongoing basis. • Through repeated interactions and continually revisiting issues, producers start to feel more comfortable and confident in sharing their needs.
Use small group work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the workshop it is useful to break into small groups that allow very poor producers to participate more confidently in a smaller group of people, rather than having to speak out in front of the whole workshop. If done early, this is particularly useful to build the confidence of the very poor producers.
Use participatory workshop tools to give all equal voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When prioritising information, it can be very useful to utilise methods such as getting participants to write their views anonymously on paper, which the facilitator will then read out loud or voting by putting a dot next to the selection on paper.
Provide translation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In some places, very poor producers are marginalised due to their ethnicity or language, and in such cases, it will be necessary to have an effective translation option to ensure they can communicate effectively in the workshops.
Address issues around women's involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide for logistics or sensitisation around women's involvement if it involves women traveling long distances on their own, staying overnight at hotels, or interacting with men, particularly where it is less common for women to interact with men directly or travel on their own. (See the section on the Exclusion of Women later in this Field Guide for more practical examples to address issues around women's involvement.)