



# GUIDE 4

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

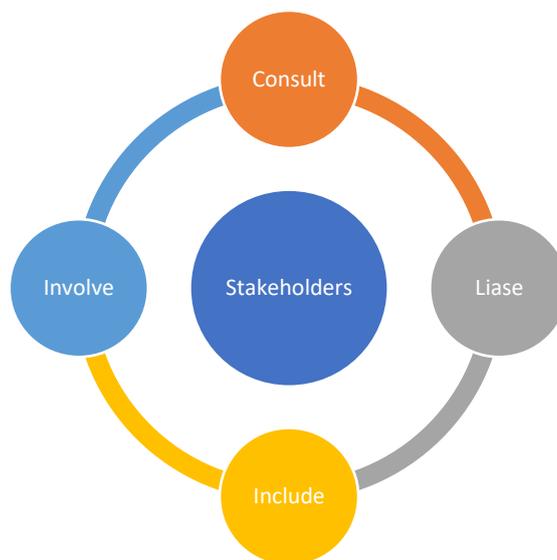


### Knowledge Translation, Dissemination, and Impact

#### A Practical Guide for Researchers

## 1. What is stakeholder engagement?

Stakeholder engagement means involving those who might be interested in your study, or who may be knowledge users, in the process of designing and sharing your research. It might include the active involvement of stakeholders in the research process (including knowledge translation and dissemination) or as recipients of information and knowledge during the research or when it is completed. Knowledge users should be at the heart of research decision making and it is advisable to involve them at an early stage of the planned research and to maintain communication throughout.



Researchers could engage with stakeholders by:

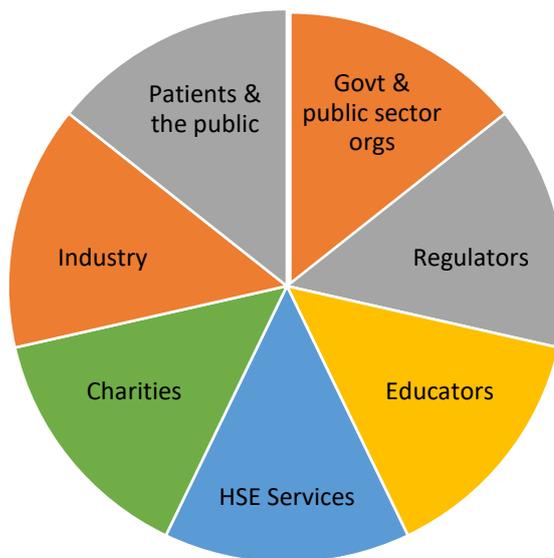
- Consulting about research questions to ensure the questions are relevant, useful and address the needs of those who will benefit from the research.
- Consulting about the best methodology.
- Liaising about bids for funding.
- Including them on project teams or project management groups during the delivery of the study.
- Involving them in knowledge translation (KT) and dissemination of findings from a study.

## 2. Who are the stakeholders?

The stakeholders might differ depending on the research study and what outcomes and impact you are trying to achieve. To identify stakeholders for your project, consider the following questions:

- a. Who will be affected by the research you are carrying out?
- b. Who will benefit from the research? \*
- c. Who are the key influencers who can facilitate your research?
- d. Who will/can contribute resources or funding for your research?
- e. Who might present barriers to the research or to its outcomes having an impact?
- f. Will the impact of the research be local, national, or international?
- g. Are there any groups whose voices should be heard but who may be excluded?

(\*in considering who might benefit from the research, refer to *Guide Number 5 - Planning for Impact* to consider the types of impact that might be achieved by your study).



The following are some examples of stakeholders that you could consider in relation to your study:



Government departments  
 Policy makers  
 HSE  
 Hospital groups  
 Hospitals  
 Community Health Care  
 Organisations  
 Regulatory bodies  
 Research funders  
 Industry partners



Service managers  
 Clinicians – Doctors, nurses  
 Allied Health Professions  
 Pharmacists  
 Public health specialists  
 Professional bodies



Patients  
 Public  
 Advocacy groups  
 Community groups  
 Charities  
 Non-Governmental Organisations  
 Educators  
 Trainers  
 Media

### 3. Stakeholder mapping

In identifying stakeholders there are two stages:

- Identify
- Analyse

Make a list of relevant individuals, groups, and organisations who could have an interest in your study or who might be knowledge users. Consider:

- Their relationship to the study.
- Their level of influence.
- Their level of importance to the study.

- At what point in the study they may be important to you and contribute the most.
- What level of support they will give you and whether that will be active or passive?
- Equality, diversity, and inclusion – how your research will ensure different perspectives are included and seldom heard groups are not overlooked.

You may like to use one of the stakeholder mapping matrices below to help determine the stakeholder’s contribution:

**Matrix 1 - Stakeholder mapping by contribution, interest, and influence**

Stakeholder type	Potential contribution	Involvement/interest (High, Medium, Low)	Influence (High, Medium, Low)	Risks

In planning how to involve stakeholders, you may want to consider whether there are groups that you wish to prioritise:

- Who has power or influence to facilitate knowledge translation and impact?
- Who would benefit most from involvement?
- Who may not be interested but would benefit e.g., seldom heard and marginalised groups?
- Which part of the research are the different stakeholders interested in?

**Matrix 2 – Stakeholder mapping by level of influence and interest**

		Low	High
Level of influence	High	Keep satisfied	Manage closely/actively engage
	Low	Monitor/occasional contact	Keep informed
		Level of interest	

#### 4. Engaging stakeholders in knowledge translation and dissemination

Having identified your stakeholders and their level of influence and interest decide whether you are going to:

- Inform – provide them with general messages about your project.
- Consult – provide messages relating to specific parts of the project.
- Collaborate – provide messages that encourage engagement and collaboration with the project.
- Co-create – provide messages that set out the benefit of collaboration and co-creation.



Information and messaging need to be developed to share with stakeholders to either inform, consult, collaborate, or co-create according to the level of engagement.

You need to consider which communication channels you will use to engage stakeholders, particularly those who may be hard to reach, e.g. face to face, email, events, social media.

It is a good idea to keep a record of when and how you contacted your stakeholders and how they participated. This will allow you to monitor your engagement. The following matrix can be used:

##### ***Stakeholder tracking and monitoring matrix***

Organisation	Contact person	Contact details	Level of influence	Type of engagement	Date of contact	Follow up

#### 5. Why is it important to involve stakeholders?

Involving stakeholders will:

- Inform the research questions and make them more relevant to those who may benefit from the outcomes.

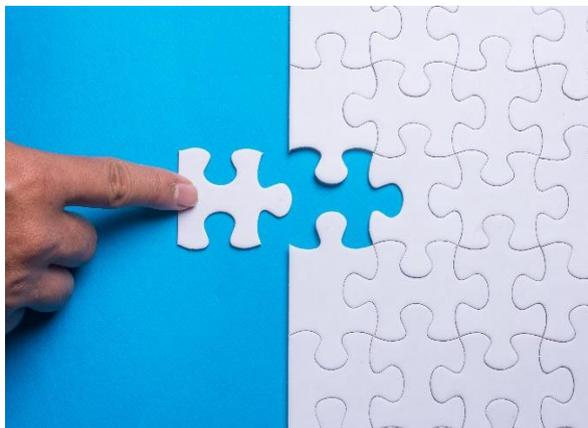
- Increase the likelihood they will have an interest in and support the research and its outcomes.
- Help in the dissemination and knowledge translation process and inform the choice of knowledge translation methods.
- Support implementation.

Consider involving stakeholders at the beginning of your project, including the planning stage, to have their engagement and interest in the project. They are more likely to be interested in the outcomes and help in the dissemination and implementation of the findings if actively engaged. Useful questions to ask when connecting with stakeholders are:

- What interests them about the topic?
- How could the study help them, the organisation, service, or group?
- What outcomes would be most useful in contributing to developing the knowledge base?
- How would they like to be involved or kept informed?

## 6. Patient and public engagement

Patients and the public are important stakeholders in clinical and health services research and their engagement should be considered with other stakeholders. Patient and public involvement (PPI) can add a valuable perspective to the KT process and is often required as part of a bid for research funding. PPI can help in reaching out to seldom heard and marginalised communities and ensuring recruitment of research participants is more inclusive.



PPI can:

- Improve the relevance and quality of research questions and the methodology and ensure it addresses the needs of the end user.
- Support dissemination and knowledge translation.
- Provide advice on how to engage in knowledge translation and who should receive the knowledge and in what format.
- Provide insight into the patient experience.

Guidance, information, and examples of patient and public involvement that you might find useful can be found at the following sources:

- HSE has resources on patient engagement including person and family engagement - <https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/qid/person-family-engagement/>
- Irish Health Research Forum – <https://hrci.ie/publications/templates>
- Irish Platform for Patient Organisations, Science and Industry (IPPOSI) has a repository of resources to assist in planning PPI in research - <https://www.ipposi.ie/our-work/research/ppi-clinical-research/>

- European Patients Academy (EUPATI) has a toolbox of resources for involving patients in research and development - <https://toolbox.eupati.eu/guidance/>
- National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) has a huge repository of resources for researchers, commissioners of research, patients, and members of the public to support involvement in research – <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/ppi-patient-and-public-involvement-resources-for-applicants-to-nihr-research-programmes/23437>

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