

# TRAINING AND REFLECTION MODULE FOR PROFESSIONALS AND STAKEHOLDERS

## Stakeholder identification and engagement



### In a nutshell

Who should you involve in creating transformation? This tool helps get you started identifying and engaging with potential stakeholders to your project.

### What for?

To work with my community on transforming the food system

### How long?

3 hours initially, followed by continued efforts

### For whom?

Facilitators of transformative change processes

### Created by

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### Something to share?

Leave us a comment about this tool on [the platform](#).

This tool was developed as part of FIT4FOOD2030 project, see this tool and others on the [FIT4FOOD2030 Knowledge Hub](#).

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How to cite?



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## What will you gain from this?

Transformative change requires broad mobilization of local, national and international actors, as well as representatives from across sectors and activity areas.

Facilitators of such processes may be unsure where or how to target their efforts, and participants who are invited into such processes may have questions about what is expected from them.

This tool gives facilitators a starting-point and helpful hints concerning stakeholder identification and engagement for transformation and provides answers to common questions participants may raise.



## STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

You want to foster change. Where do you begin? Grand societal challenges like the sustainability and equity challenges facing the food and nutrition system, are generally complex and fraught with uncertainties and contestations, making it difficult for any single actor or institution to address them in a meaningful and coherent way. In light of this, researchers and policy actors increasingly seek to stimulate transformation through collaborative and inclusive planning and problem solving and by inviting a wide range of relevant actors and organizations. Through joint exploration of values, concerns, ideas and priorities, different actors can empathize, participate, and help each other see opportunities for collaborative action across sectors.

Knowing where to turn, who to involve, and how to engage them, however, can be daunting tasks for facilitators undertaking transformative change projects. The goal of this tool is to provide some starting-points for engaging with stakeholders, in a format suitable for three one-hour sessions.



*Members of the FIT4FOOD2030 project's Hungarian City Lab in discussion on needed competences for food system transformation*

*I changed the whole office into a space for the map, basically. And then from there, the initial criteria was that I took ... all the actors from the quintuple helix, and from each dimension the aim was to invite a regime actor and a niche actor. That was the general approach I took in the beginning. (FIT4FOOD2030 lab coordinator on identifying stakeholders)*

## Thematic area

Food and nutrition. Also applicable to other activity areas.

## Target audience

Process facilitators

## Prior knowledge required for participation

Some subject area knowledge preferred

# GETTING PREPARED

## Set the scene

The question of who the stakeholders are for your particular project will have different answers depending on your focus and goals. Perhaps you know of large, important players whom you know will help you foster positive change. But maybe there are actors with different views or interests, or others that are easily forgotten?

If you are unsure where to start, taking a broad approach can be a good way to begin – you can always adjust your approach later. The following definition can help you think broadly about who your stakeholders are:

*A stakeholder is an individual, group or organization which is either affected by, and/or should be allowed to influence, and/or should be invited into the process of realizing the vision of the project.*

Notice that in this definition, many actors will be counted as “stakeholders” and it can be hard to draw a line for where to stop (food, for example, affects everyone).



### TIPS & TRICKS

Can you think of an organisation or community initiative that represent larger groups of people? Engaging with organisations can help you reach wider audiences.

## Materials

- Pen and paper
- Internet access
- Imagination

# FLOW

STEP 1: Identify stakeholders according in light of your project's goals

STEP 2: Try to understand your stakeholders, for instance by using exercise 1 and 2 below. Ask to meet and learn more about them

STEP 3: Engage and integrate, using exercise 3 below

STEP 4: To meaningfully integrate stakeholders' input into your project, make sure to have plans for what comes next. Make sure stakeholders know what to expect.

## FACILITATOR TIPS

During multi-stakeholder dialogues you as a facilitator (or moderator) have an important role to play to ensure the active participation of all the participants in the given time frame while also reaching the session goals.

When you invite prospective stakeholders into a process or project, they may be unsure what is expected of them, why they are being invited, or what will come out of the process. Prepare by having some tailor-made responses to such questions, acknowledging that different types of actors will have different interests and time constraints. Here are some things you can emphasise:

- Networking opportunities
- An opportunity to be heard
- A chance to learn about current issues
- Be part of and contribute to positive change
- Share their expertise or unique perspective

As a facilitator you need several skills and competences, such as verbal and non-verbal skills, negotiating skills, flexibility, and leadership. You will need to create an environment in which all participants feel secure, are able to speak up and give their perspective on issues being discussed. This means that you may have to stimulate some participants to speak more often, while you may have to prevent other participants to speak too often or too long. It also means that you will need to avoid discussions on issues that are not directly relevant.



### TIPS & TRICKS

What activities and initiatives are your stakeholders already engaged in? Alignment with existing efforts can improve your chances at having a positive impact.



*Postcard prepared by the FIT4FOOD2030 project's Milan City Lab to inspire participants about taking a role in the educational module design phase. From FIT4FOOD2030 Deliverable 6.3 TOOLKIT FOR USE OF EDUCATIONAL MODULES*

# EXERCISE #1: PREPARING FOR COMMUNICATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

DURATION: 1 hour

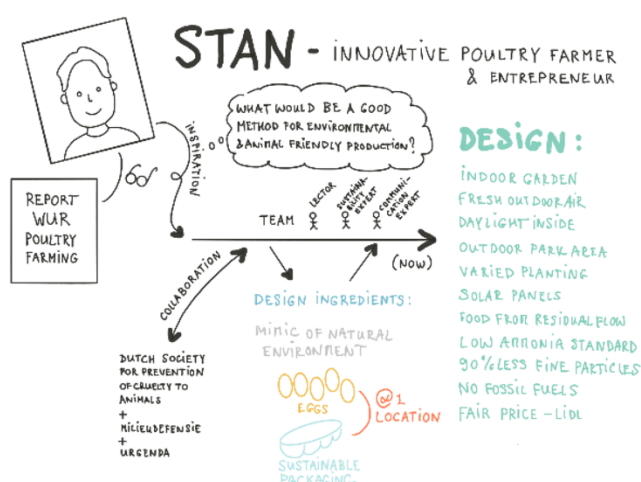
The objective of this exercise is to develop empathy for the various stakeholders to be engaged in your transformative project.

This exercise uses the creation of a Persona as a method for 'empathizing'. A Persona is a fictitious person that 'summarizes' existing individuals with particular characteristics. A Persona's purpose is to create a connection between the Persona-creator and the Persona. This differs from thinking in stereotypes, of which the purpose is more to classify people, sometimes combined with humor or a cynical note. It can be helpful to make Personas of various actors to support the development of an effective multi-stakeholder communication and engagement strategy.

Using the Persona-template (Appendix A), Persona creation comprises of the following steps:

- First, choose one actor who you are the least familiar with (or two in case this actor group is highly variable). Make a Persona of this actor by means filling out the template. Make this persona in such a way that you could feel a connection with them. Avoid taking a cynical stance towards this persona while making it.
- Write a letter / email (or create any other mean) to communicate with this persona.
- Reflect on the following:
  - What would you tell her/him about your intended activities on transforming (R&I around) food systems?
  - What life interests or motives of the persona can you appeal to?
  - What would you 'ask from' him/her?
  - In what way could the communication be more specifically oriented to this Persona in particular?

To justify/falsify the Persona, it can be useful to engage in a connection exercise with stakeholders that feel the most distant from your own network /position/context.



Persona Stan. Developed by the FIT4FOOD2030 project's Amsterdam City Lab. From FIT4FOOD2030 Deliverable 6.3 TOOLKIT FOR USE OF EDUCATIONAL MODULES

# EXERCISE #2: DESIGNING A COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

DURATION: 1 hour

The objective of this exercise is to develop a strategy for tailor-made communication with various stakeholders.

Especially when it comes to multi-stakeholder events or processes, it is recommendable to operationalize the steps towards the (first) event with the help of the 5W+H principle (who, when, why, what, where, how). Figure 2 below is an example matrix that can be used to design a communicating plan for (personal) stakeholder communication, a (multi-) stakeholder event or process, with specific attention to tailoring the communication with regard to each stakeholder separately.

WHO?	WHEN?	WHY? (OBJECTIVE)	HOW? (CHANNEL)	WHAT? (MESSAGE)

Figure taken from FIT4FOOD2030\_D1.1\_Tools&training for Setting Up a Transformative Network

The following steps can help to create a communication plan:

- With your stakeholder analysis and Persona(s) in mind, make a timeline with an overview of ‘who to contact when, with which means, to what goal, with which message’, etc.
- Write a letter to one stakeholder first. How do you introduce your connection with them? What information do you provide? What is the action you ask from this stakeholder? With this letter as a template, create letters for all the other stakeholders in the list. Adjust jargon and message sequence accordingly.
- Let one other person read the letter(s) before using it.
- Think about how to keep actor(s) ‘on board’ once connected and contacted.

# EXERCISE #3: CONNECTING TO INDIVIDUAL DRIVES

DURATION: 1 hour

The objective of this exercise is to create a connection between personal drives and transformation.

The idea of this exercise is to meet a (new) person with who(m) a connection is desirable, e.g. for the expansion of your network.

Take this person for a walk, e.g. outside in a green area. Either interview this person, or engage in a dialogue about the following questions:

- Who am I / who are you?
- Why am I doing my work / why are you doing your work? (work motivation)
- What would I / you need to fully realize my / your work motivation?

It is advisable to let one person speak at a time; the listener does not necessarily have to ask questions. This allows more openness for what is actually being said (and little worries about which follow-up questions to pose).

Furthermore, it is advisable to both look in the same direction / in front of you (and not in each other's eyes), to literally look at 'the future'.

In case of rain, place two chairs in front of a window with a good view, and look outside (so you do not look in each other's eyes).

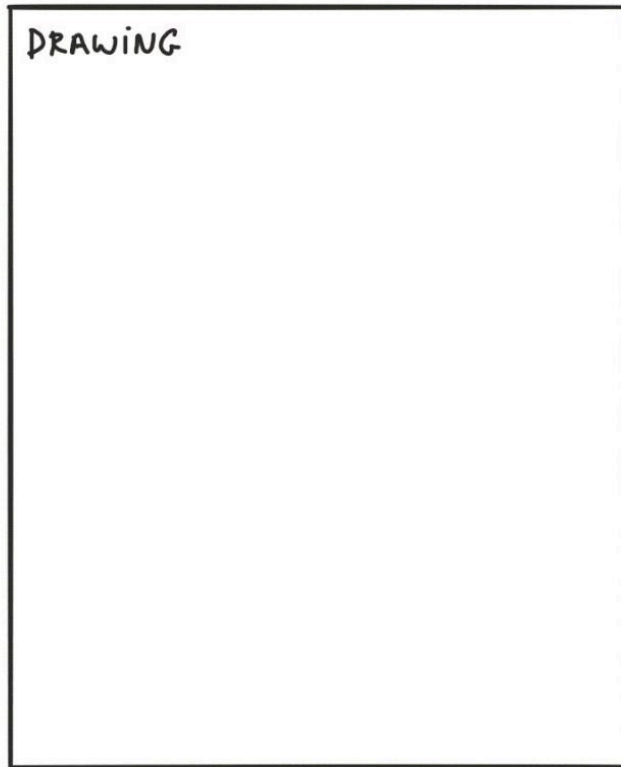
This exercise can also be done as a self-reflection exercise, e.g. by journaling for yourself. Such reflection can help change makers to keep their transformative network activities/ actions connected to themselves.

*When we identify and engage stakeholders, we get in touch with already existing networks, we are making our own network, and we are developing networks of networks.  
(FIT4FOOD2030 lab coordinator on strategies for stakeholder engagement)*

## APPENDIX A: PERSONA TEMPLATE

NAME :

DRAWING



AGE :

PROFESSION :

EDUCATION :

HOMETOWN :

FAMILY :

HOBBIES :

GENERAL INTERESTS :

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS/MEANS/MEDIA :

LIFE MOTTO :

A DAY IN LIFE OF... :



Coordinated by:



## Partners



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