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ERA-net on Biodiversity: Towards integrated European  
biodiversity research strategy and programmes  
Environment (including Climate Change)

**BIODIVERSA TASK 2.1.  
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT:  
BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE**  
*Draft version (1)*

**Executive Summary**

Emma Durham, Elizabeth Moore, Vicky Morgan

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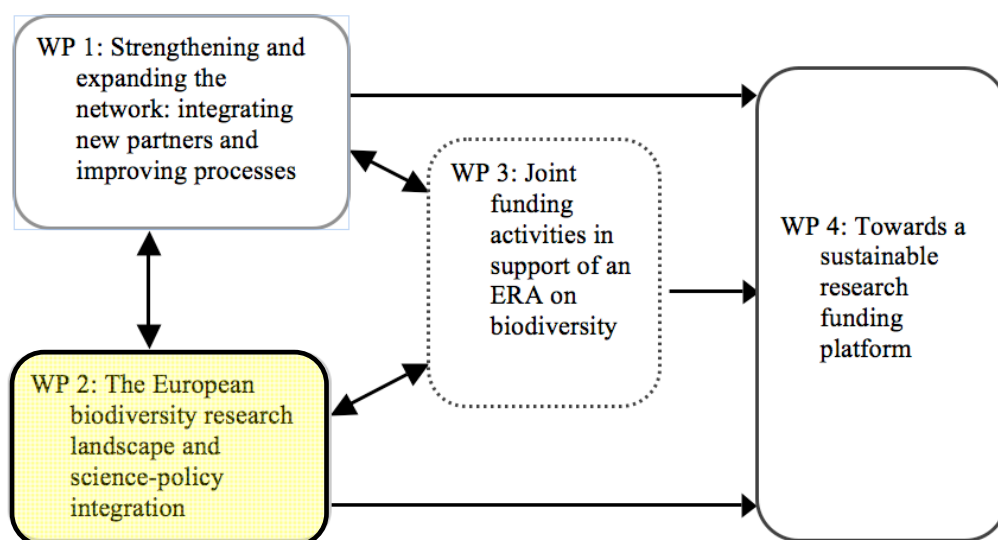


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This report meets milestone 8 “*Draft guidelines for stakeholder engagement available for use in WP3*” towards Task 2.1 “*Develop guidelines to support research project teams in stakeholder engagement*” in work package 2 (WP2) (work packages 1–4 are shown below). Task 2.1 is due to be completed in month 42 of BiodivERsA 2 (Apr 2014). For further information see the BiodivERsA website at [www.biodivERsA.org](http://www.biodivERsA.org).

#### BiodivERsA 2: Work Packages Interdependencies



#### Summary of principal versions (milestone 8 report)

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|----------------|------------------------------------|------------|
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# STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT: BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE *Draft version (1)*

## Executive Summary

The aim of the *BiodivERsA Stakeholder Engagement: Best Practice Guidance* is to support those planning and carrying out BiodivERsA research in identifying the relevant stakeholders for their work, and in designing and planning an appropriate engagement plan.

BiodivERsA exists to identify and fund pan-European research that generates new knowledge for the conservation and sustainable management of biodiversity. The customers for its research – the critical stakeholders – include policy-makers, research funders, practitioners and those responsible for implementing policies and managing biodiversity. Engagement with these groups should be a key part of most, if not all, BiodivERsA research projects. Stakeholders, however, are not confined to just customers. They are defined as “*any person or group who influences or is influenced by the research*”, and therefore stakeholder engagement may extend far beyond the critical stakeholder groups.

There are numerous reasons for biodiversity research projects to undertake stakeholder engagement, such as improving the policy relevance of the research, or gaining access to additional information and resources. Additionally, the benefits from engagement far outweigh the risks, and if well planned, and adequately resourced, successful engagement can enrich research and deliver better knowledge.

A wide range of methods and tools relevant to the stakeholder engagement process is available, each with their own advantages and limitations. Additionally, different stakeholders are very likely to have both different contributions to make and different communication needs at each stage of a project.

At present, there is no clear guidance on how to engage stakeholders in research, and in particular biodiversity research projects. Additionally, studies demonstrate that no single approach can be applied, and that successful stakeholder engagement requires an approach that is appropriate for the particular project and situation. This guidance, therefore, sets out a methodology for planning, carrying-out, and following-up and assessing stakeholder engagement through a step-by-step process, which can be used to identify ‘why’, ‘who’, ‘when’ and ‘how’ to engage.

In developing a stakeholder engagement plan and the most suitable approach to take, it is important to consider, at a minimum:

- the aims and objectives of the engagement;
- the stakeholders’ expectations regarding the outcomes of the engagement;
- available resources (in particular time and money).

This information is considered through five steps, which have been designed to assist in the creation of a successful stakeholder engagement process.

- Step 1:** Define the outcomes desired from the engagement (why);
- Step 2:** Identify the stakeholders (who), including assessing, analysing, prioritising and understanding;
- Step 3:** Identify the best times and ways to engage with your stakeholders (when and how), including types of engagement and timing;
- Step 4:** Create a stakeholder engagement plan, and initiate it;
- Step 5:** Review and assess the process to demonstrate what the engagement has achieved and to learn for future engagement exercises.

By following the five steps, and comprehensively gathering the information required and making the necessary decisions, a successful stakeholder engagement plan can be created, implemented, and evaluated.

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