



# RETOUCH NEXUS

REsilienT water gOvernance Under climate CHange  
within the WEFE NEXUS

Stakeholder engagement approaches and guidelines  
for WEFE Nexus and beyond



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RETOUCH  
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## Preface

*This “Stakeholder Engagement Template for WEFE NEXUS” serves as a hands-on practical manual to support the six European case studies in their ongoing process of planning and implementing stakeholder engagement activities, such as workshops, awareness raising activities, podcasts, and school summer camps. It serves as a guiding document for practitioners interested in effective and sustainable stakeholder engagement in the RETOUCH NEXUS project and beyond. It includes guiding sections on how to engage with stakeholders in the WEFE NEXUS, as well as practical tools, checklists and templates for collaborating with stakeholders.*

## Who is this document for?

*This guide is for everyone who is (in)directly involved in stakeholder engagement activities – as stakeholder, facilitator, leader or partner. It provides you with both the conceptual foundations as well as practical tools to foster successful partnerships.*

**Primary Target Group:** Case Study owners and partners within WEFE NEXUS

**Secondary Target Group:** Water governance professionals and practitioners (interested in) implementing stakeholder engagement activities especially in the WEFE NEXUS but also beyond.

## How to use this guide

- *This guide is structured around three key sections—the **3 Ps**: Purpose, Principles, and Practice. The first section, “**Stakeholder Engagement: What It Means and Why It Matters**,” introduces key definitions and explains the importance of stakeholder engagement within the WEFE NEXUS. The second section, “**Designing the Process**,” provides guidance on how to structure an effective engagement process—whether you’re planning a one-day workshop or a longer-term initiative. It outlines core principles for success and shares best practice examples from the WEFE context. The third section, “**From Design to Practice**,” walks you through the typical steps of stakeholder engagement. It offers practical tips, addresses common challenges, and presents a set of tools to support planning and implementation.*
- *Note that there is a toolbox with 16 **practical templates** and step-by-step instructions in the appendix of this guideline document. You can use and complete these templates and get started right away, because this guide is, above all, a practical, hands-on tool rather than a theoretical treatise. The document repeatedly refers to the (numbered) **tools from #1-#16**, often with the symbol of a light bulb.*
- *Feel free to use the guide as needed. If you want to start from scratch and remind yourself (and others) why stakeholder engagement is important, read the first chapter. Are you already in the middle of the process and looking for inspiration for your next workshop? Then feel free to jump straight to the tools. Keep in mind, however, that it is still recommended to work through the guide step by step, as the recommendations at the end are based on the previously developed strategy.*



## Questions this guide will answer

- *How to design and facilitate improved stakeholder engagement activities in the WEFE NEXUS processes and beyond*
- *How to find suitable and innovative stakeholder engagement tools for your specific case example*
- *How to address existing challenges within the case studies with regards to stakeholder engagement*
- *How to initiate and manage long-term stakeholder partnerships beyond the scope of the RETOUCH NEXUS project*



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## 1. PURPOSE – Stakeholder Engagement: What it means and why it matters

### 1.1. Defining stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder engagement means informing, listening to, or collaborating with stakeholders of an organization or project. It can also be a combination of all three. Depending on the level and intensity of the process, stakeholder engagement can be an overarching framework or individual components of that framework. As preparation for the actual engagement activity, the process includes identifying, mapping and prioritizing stakeholders (and their needs). This is the basis to develop the best strategy on how to engage them and to make the best use of available resources. It goes without saying that it is not just about efficiency; stakeholder engagement helps to proactively (and preventively, before a potential conflict arises) consider the needs and desires of anyone who has a stake in an organization or project to ensure long-term success.<sup>1</sup> In the case of the RETOUCH NEXUS project, each Case Study (CS) engages with their own circle of stakeholders that were mapped and described at the beginning. The description included an overview of the sectoral affiliation of stakeholders involved (water, energy, food, ecosystem) as well as the type of their relation to each other (joint interest, cooperation, conflict).

In a nutshell, stakeholder engagement means:

- the process by which an organization involves people who may be affected by the decisions it makes or can influence the implementation of its decisions
- **proactive interaction** and collaboration with individuals or groups affected by a project or business activity
- **understanding, involving and responding to expectations and concerns** to ensure the success of the project or operation

### 1.2. Who can be a stakeholder?

Stakeholders are not just the general public, they are specific groups of people or individuals, each with different needs. A stakeholder is anyone who has a stake in your organization, project or activity, either through interest, influence or both. In the WEFE NEXUS, depending on the scope of the project, stakeholder groups can range from government and policy makers (like ministries or departments of water, energy, agriculture, and environment), to private sector (such as agribusinesses, water utilities or technology providers), to civil society and local communities (such as farmers, CSOs, NGOs, or residents), to universities and research institutions, international organizations, as well as consumers and the general public. In the RETOUCH NEXUS project, stakeholders from all these categories are engaged which not only broadens the circle of people involved but also enriches the quality of discussions, implementations, and upscaling around WEFE NEXUS solutions. This diversity of potential stakeholders already shows why integrated governance and participatory planning are key in the WEFE NEXUS approach. To identify the “right” stakeholders and develop a strategy for effective communication, a thorough analysis is necessary.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.smestrategy.net/blog/stakeholder-engagement-management-for-strategic-planning>

### 1.3. Why is it important to engage stakeholders?

When done well and at the right time, stakeholder engagement can improve connection, trust, and buy-in for your key initiatives. It goes beyond merely informing stakeholders, because they themselves can be actively involved as experts by providing information that was previously not known. Moreover, well selected stakeholders can also give feedback on the feasibility of a project or activity to ensure that planning does not fail reality and that needs are met. For example, in the context of modelling, which is done a lot in the case studies Germany and Spain, stakeholders can assess different scenarios in which water is used more sustainable through the implementation of economic incentives and policies. Bringing consent and reservations to light and ensuring that diverse perspectives from politics, water providers, and users are considered in decision-making can have tremendous effects. Furthermore, stakeholder engagement can foster transparency and mutual understanding by identifying and mitigating potential risks and conflicts at an early stage, including uncertainty, dissatisfaction, disengagement, and reservation to change.

Effective engagement also enhances communication, minimizes resistance, and helps align stakeholder expectations with project goals. By actively involving those who are affected by or can influence a project, projects or organizations can gain valuable insights, and create more sustainable, widely supported outcomes even in complex contexts. In summary, stakeholder engagement can have many positive effects:

- a better **understanding** of the stakeholders and project risks
- more effective **management** of stakeholder **expectations**
- improved acceptance of decisions among all parties
- more **success** through increased **trust** and **goodwill**

### 1.4. Stakeholder engagement in the WEFE NEXUS

Since 2010, the WEFE NEXUS approach has been adapted in various regions and in different programs and projects. The community is actively working towards integrating water, energy, food, and ecosystem considerations into policy and practice. Much has already been achieved, for example, common financing and funding schemes, tools, frameworks and dialogue platforms. Besides the RETOUCH NEXUS project and its sister projects GOVAQA and INNWATER, recent examples include the RECREATE project, the WEFE NEXUS INTERNATIONAL Conference in Rabat in February 2025, the annual Dresden Nexus Conference as well as online platforms such as The Water, Energy & Food Security Resource Platform or the WEFE4MED Knowledge Hub. These examples are part of the outreach and engagement strategy of the RETOUCH NEXUS project.

**Stakeholder engagement in the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems (WEFE) Nexus is especially critical due to the complex, interconnected nature of resources and services.** As mentioned in [Deliverable 2.1 \(p. 5\)](#), we need water in all areas of life and sectors, otherwise our ecosystem would collapse. At the same time, various actors from different sectors have their own vested interests in this increasingly scarce resource while climate change is exacerbating this scarcity. To ensure that European countries are well prepared and promote robust, integrated, sustainable, inclusive and up-scalable water governance practice, it becomes more and more important to involve stakeholders systematically and as early as possible. This is why stakeholder engagement is a key component of RETOUCH NEXUS building on the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystem Nexus (WEFE).

As mentioned in [Deliverable 2.1 \(p. 56\)](#) "...stakeholder engagement in the RETOUCH NEXUS case studies aligns with different spheres of influence and interests, with a range of stakeholders representing societal, government, private, and research sectors. Collaboration, coordination, and proactive outreach are essential to address common interests, potential conflicts, and foster effective engagement for sustainable water management."

Stakeholder engagement provides the basis for participatory decision-making and integrated planning. However, there are still major reservations within the WEFE sectors, as stakeholders fear to lose decision-making power and that it causes additional effort to involve other sectors in decision-making process. Stakeholder engagement can help to resolve this misunderstanding. First, by making processes of collaboration more effective and efficient in the long term. Second, it helps to raise awareness for the opportunities of a WEFE NEXUS approach, not only because different sectoral perspectives are heard, but also to emphasize that the WEFE NEXUS itself offers a solution to the dilemma of increasingly scarce resources. Third, stakeholder engagement can help to clarify roles and responsibilities, especially at political level and opens opportunities for exchanging perspectives and interests: What are the priorities of each stakeholder? What matters most? What aspects are negotiable? And what shared goals can we work toward? Forth, stakeholder engagement also helps build bridges between diverse stakeholder groups—for example, exploring how research can inform policy and practice, and how this knowledge can be effectively communicated to practitioners such as farmers. Due to growing application and recognition of the WEFE NEXUS approach, it also leverages new funds and funding sources which did not exist before. And again, stakeholder engagement plays a central role, as it represents the common ground on which all collaborations – including financial ones – are built. Finally, ongoing interaction fosters a two-way exchange of knowledge: not only from the RETOUCH project to stakeholders, but also from policy and practice back into research. This dynamic was evident for example in the Netherlands CS, where a workshop on stakeholder participation was organized from project side to facilitate such engagement.

In a nutshell, stakeholder engagement in the WEFE NEXUS helps to

- inform and raise awareness for the added value of the WEFE NEXUS approach
- bring people and different WEFE NEXUS voices together
- develop a common understanding on how to best manage our resources

## 2. PRINCIPLES - Designing the process

### 2.1. Key principles for successful stakeholder engagement<sup>2</sup>

The content of this subchapter 2.1 is largely adapted from [Brouwer, H., Woodhill, J., Hemmati, M., Verhoosel, K., & van Vugt, S.] (2019), who provide a comprehensive overview of seven principles that make multi stakeholder partnerships (MSPs) effective (p. 40 ff). Some of the seven principles have been applied, summarized and rephrased to suit the context of this document and of RETOUCH Nexus.

#### 2.1.1. Navigate power dynamics

Politics and underlying power structures play a major role in managing the WEFE NEXUS. Power can bring about change. However, what matters is how it is used and towards what end – especially when looking at it from a less powerful position. Power dynamics will inevitably play a role in any stakeholder engagement process. How you deal with them will influence the levels of trust, openness, and overall legitimacy of the process. If you want to bring about transformative change means that you need to be aware and in a best-case scenario also tackle the underlying issues that have created power differences. An example could be to give small-scale farmers access to information about market prices. Another possibility is to address often neglected target groups through a conscious choice of media. For example, young people through a podcast series such as [RETOUCH NEXUS Narratives](#). Finally, the opening of spaces for certain target groups, such as women is another option. Be aware that powerful stakeholders could capture the process and further disadvantage already disempowered stakeholders (Brouwer et al., 2019, p. 80). If women or farmers cannot speak freely in mixed groups due to power imbalances, organizing separate discussion rounds for them can help. While this doesn't solve the underlying issues, it allows voices and perspectives that might otherwise be missed to be heard.

If you include prior work with less influential stakeholders, you can ensure that they participate more meaningfully and take part in a dialogue with those with more power. At the same time, you may need to work with more privileged groups to raise awareness and increase their willingness to share and delegate power. Moreover, language and phrasing play a central role in shaping, maintaining, or challenging power structures. Try using different words (instead of 'power' talk about politics or contributions so that power structures are not reinforced by the choice of words). And keep in mind, that in some cases, terms can have a different meaning when translated. Apart from that, when scientific or technical language is used (as it is often the case in the WEFE NEXUS context) make sure that it is accessible to the target audience – no matter whether you are talking to a politician, a farmer or a tenant. (Interim) results should always be communicated in plain language. Avoid acronyms (or explain them if they cannot be avoided), use short sentences, visual aids, like infographics or videos and engage local intermediaries whenever possible.

In the context of the WEFE NEXUS, differing expectations, interests, and power dynamics inevitably converge. These tensions exist both vertically—from individuals, such as residents and farmers to regional organizations and national political institutions—and horizontally, across the WEFE NEXUS sectors. Increasing resource scarcity and the impacts of climate change demand a departure from siloed approaches, urging us to adopt more integrated and holistic strategies. The WEFE NEXUS offers a valuable framework for facilitating the transition towards a future in which we learn to live well with limited resources.

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<sup>2</sup> Adapted from: Brouwer, H., Woodhill, J., Hemmati, M., Verhoosel, K., & van Vugt, S. (2019). *The MSP guide: how to design and facilitate multi-stakeholder partnerships*. (3rd ed.) Practical Action Publishing. <https://edepot.wur.nl/543151>

### 2.1.2. See conflict as an opportunity for growth

Conflict is inevitable and normal in any multi-stakeholder process. We talk about conflict when parties or individuals have genuinely different interests and struggle over them. When facilitating a process with different stakeholders try to understand and work with the underlying causes. You cannot ask other people to change their beliefs. But you can achieve that benefits and synergies are becoming obvious and more likely to choose than following the old path, characterised by sector singularity. Therefore, support people in becoming aware of their beliefs and the beliefs of others. Through dialogue, we can provide a safe place for people to shift their perspectives. Also don't be afraid of conflict, we naturally surround ourselves with people from *our bubble*, but if we want to work towards systemic change, we will also need to deal with other perspectives, so **dare to disagree!**

**External facilitation** In some cases, it might be advisable to get an external moderator or mediator to support you as a third party with no stake in the conflict or process. Advantages range from impartiality and fairness to improved communication and focus. The Maltese CS, for example, engaged an external facilitator for all their workshops to support the process with the necessary distance and neutrality as the invited stakeholder group was very diverse – ranging from public and private institutions over all WEFE sectors – and as such their interests as well.



### **Useful Tools: #3 Six Thinking Hats, #4 The Wheel of Multiple Perspectives**

### 2.1.3. Facilitate clear communication

People being able to communicate with each other in an open, respectful, constructive and empathetic way is one of the key factors of a successful stakeholder engagement process.

**Non-violent communication (NVC)** NVC is a communication approach developed by Marshall Rosenberg that focuses on fostering understanding, empathy, and connection. It encourages individuals to express their feelings and needs without blame or judgment, while also actively listening to others' emotions and needs. NVC emphasizes using "I" statements, avoiding defensive or accusatory language, and seeking collaborative solutions to resolve conflicts peacefully.<sup>3</sup>

Ensure that you invest time in understanding the different views of the problem and their underlying assumptions. People often assume that all stakeholders understand the problem or issue in the same way, but it can be seen rather differently. So rather than moving too quickly to the solution and possible strategies, dare to spend time analysing the problem. There are various approaches, for example you can play through the scenario by asking "what is the worst thing that can happen?". As a facilitator, help participants to identify, understand, and create awareness about communication patterns. Help your stakeholders to

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.scienceofintelligence.de/the-power-of-non-violent-communication/>

become active listeners and break bad habits (Brouwer et al., 2019, p. 100). Help your participants to recognize and acknowledge their emotions and those of others. It can be difficult to listen properly when you are triggered emotionally. Try to build trust and resolve conflicts through open communication and increasing understanding of the different points of view.



### ***Useful Tools: #2 SWOT Analysis, #3 Six Thinking Hats, #4 The Wheel of Multiple Perspectives, #5 Power Ranking, Role Plays***

#### **2.1.4. Promote participatory learning**

Participatory learning happens when stakeholders learn from each other's experiences to solve problems and innovate. You could think of the process as a play (or a battleground) for dealing with strategic challenges (Brouwer et al., 2019, p. 109). Create learning environments that are safe but challenging enough to inspire people to think outside the box. If divergent groups come together, choose a neutral location. Include group work and peer-to-peer learning such as in a community of practice (CoP), to emphasize learning with and from stakeholders, not just delivering information to them. Jumping too early to decisions and action will hinder the learning process. Remember that learning is not only about building capacity it is also about innovation: understanding the challenge, identifying new options, and testing until something works. Use creative methods like social media or visual harvesting. When collecting feedback, play with different variations, like oral/written, anonymous/public, online/offline, and more.

#### **2.1.5. Support systemic change**

When it comes to systemic change, we know that human systems are complex and will not change overnight. This is both good and bad news. You don't need to expect to bring about change in the shortest possible time, because it's simply not feasible. So, stay realistic here, systemic change is complex, takes time, and only works if all relevant stakeholders are involved. In the context of RETOUCH NEXUS, systemic change is achieved through a holistic perspective – not only on different sectoral stakeholders but also by (a) taking into account the lived realities of the six case studies, by (b) analysing governmental processes, and finally by (c) working on economic models to identify new strategies on how to achieve sustainable water use across Europe with spillover effects beyond.

As mentioned in the beginning, on a broader level, the WEFE NEXUS community is actively working towards integrating water, energy, food and ecosystems to foster systemic thinking. Achievements include common funding schemes, tools, frameworks and dialogue platforms. Also in RETOUCH NEXUS, through collaborative efforts, knowledge sharing, and practical demonstrations, different stakeholders are making remarkable progress in addressing complex challenges. Two compelling examples from the RETOUCH NEXUS illustrate how stakeholders are addressing the challenge of enhancing water resource management, in Malta the project partner EWA (Energy and Water Agency) is spearheading innovative efforts by integrating energy and water. Meanwhile, in the Netherlands the key stakeholder HNKN – the regional water authority – has established an entirely new department, the Freshwater Availability Program to meet the increasing demand for freshwater amid declining freshwater supplies. A participation process is a core component of their implementation strategy. part of their strategy to implement.

Another global example is South Africa that restructured its cabinet, merging several ministries to promote integrated governance. Notably, the Department of Water and Sanitation was combined with the Department of Human Settlements, and the Department of Agriculture was merged with the Department of Land Reform and Rural Development. These actions aimed to streamline responsibilities and enhance coordination across sectors.<sup>4</sup> These examples show how the WEFE NEXUS community has catalysed systemic thinking and structural reforms to improve the resilience and sustainability of resource systems.

Acting systemically also means aligning change processes with the way in which systems evolve. So don't expect things to go as planned, include multiple cycles of reflection, planning, and action so you can always adapt your plans to unexpected change. Recognize that change happens because of the actions of many different actors and try out a range of options and tools. Expect failure and learn from it.



### ***Useful Tool: #15 Constellations***

## 2.2. Best Practice and innovative approaches

Innovative approaches to stakeholder engagement in the WEFE NEXUS are helping to make participation more inclusive, impactful, and forward-looking. **Mobile engagement platforms** such as the [RETOUCH Indicators App](#) or the [GTI App](#) bring data and information directly to communities, increasing accessibility in rural and under-served areas. **Digital storytelling and podcasts** like [RETOUCH NEXUS Narratives](#) humanize technical content by sharing real-world experiences from diverse voices across sectors reaching broader audiences. Tools like **virtual reality (VR)** offer immersive simulations of nexus trade-offs, helping policymakers, communities, and others visualize complex future scenarios as it was done by CS Netherlands with their VR nexus game. **Youth engagement** at kindergarten, schools, and universities through dedicated WEFE NEXUS session is building long-term awareness and empowering the next generation of decision-makers. Meanwhile, **Communities of Practice (CoPs)** on stakeholder engagement itself, or on WEFE NEXUS monitoring approaches foster continuous learning across sectors through webinars and online forums. Finally **physical spaces** such as the Waterprof Experience container from CS Belgium are being used to simulate resource trade-offs, encouraging empathy, systems thinking, and collaborative problem-solving.

For more detailed insights, take a look at [Deliverable 2.2 “Factsheets on Good Practices and Innovative Tools for Stakeholder Engagement and Public Participation”](#) as well as on the innovation handbook in Deliverable 2.5 that will further describe innovative solutions and will be released in April 2026.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.za/news/media-statements/president-cyril-ramaphosa-announces-reconfigured-departments-14-jun-2019>

### 3. PRACTICE - From Design to Practice

#### 3.1. Typical steps

##### 3.1.1. Identify and List Stakeholders

In the first step you identify and list all actors who have a direct or indirect interest / stake in your project or activity (see subchapter on “Who can be a stakeholder”). It is important that you do not limit yourself in this first brainstorming phase, think outside the box and be creative, prioritization will only take place in the next step. In the RETOUCH NEXUS project, different pathways for stakeholder engagement were chosen. Some case studies engage different stakeholders on various occasions, which is advantageous to introduce new voices, respond to changing contexts, or transition to a new project phase or scale. Other case studies maintain engagement with the same stakeholder groups over a defined period to build trust and strong relationships. Long-term involvement also enables stakeholders to deepen their understanding of nexus issues, becoming more effective co-creators of solutions. Additionally, continuity helps preserve valuable institutional memory, allowing stakeholders to recall previous discussions, conflicts, and agreements.

Also take another look at previous deliverables for key considerations for stakeholder mapping and analysis based on case studies (D 2.1, p. 55) such as defining system boundaries, considering the scale and population of the case study area when identifying stakeholders and tailoring the stakeholder involvement based on the nature and focus of the project.

##### 3.1.2. Assess influence / importance and level of impact

There are many ways to analyse and prioritize stakeholders, e.g. the Importance-Influence Matrix (see **Tool #1 “Stakeholder Analysis”**) or the Stakeholder Onion that has been used in [RETOUCH Deliverable 2.1](#).

Tailored precisely to the project context, stakeholders have been classified according to their importance and interest to RETOUCH. While the first category ‘key stakeholders’ includes all those stakeholders that can use their skills or power to influence the RETOUCH case studies and without whose participation the targeted results cannot be achieved, the second category are ‘primary stakeholders’ who are directly affected by or have direct impact on the RETOUCH NEXUS challenges in respective the case study. The third category (basically the outer layer of the onion) are ‘secondary stakeholders’ who are only indirectly affected by nexus challenges. For further details, look at [D2.1 Annex, p. 2](#).

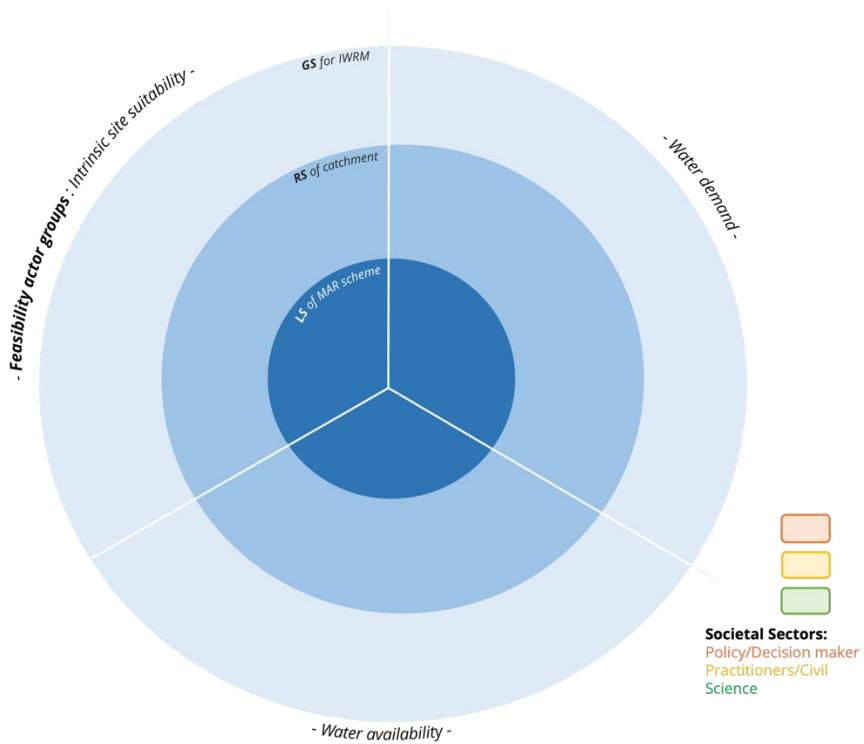


Figure 1 Template for Stakeholder Onion

[Deliverable 2.1 \(Chapter 3\)](#) shows the result of the Stakeholder Mapping Exercise for the different case studies. Traditional representatives from WEFE sectors include **farmers**, **water utilities**, **river basin organizations (RBOs)**, **environmental NGOs**, and **government authorities**. These actors are directly responsible for managing or regulating resources, making their participation crucial for designing integrated and context-sensitive solutions. However, the stakeholder landscape is increasingly expanding to include groups **beyond the conventional WEFE sectors**. Greater attention is now being given to **women** and **youth**, who often face barriers to participation but bring vital perspectives and long-term sustainability insights. **Business parks** and private sector actors are emerging as important contributors, particularly in innovation and resource efficiency. **Academic institutions** also play a key role by generating knowledge, facilitating dialogue, and training the next generation of decision-makers.

### 3.1.3. Define level of engagement and the respective goal of the activity

After prioritizing the most important stakeholders, the next step is to define their appropriate level of engagement based on the project's goals and the stakeholders' roles. Engagement levels typically range from **Inform** (providing stakeholders with relevant information), to **Consult** (seeking their feedback), **Involve** (actively including them in decision-making processes), and **Collaborate** (partnering with stakeholders in shared decision-making and implementation). Clearly defining the level of engagement helps tailor activities to each group's needs and capacities, ensuring effective communication, meaningful participation, and stronger partnerships throughout the project. It is advisable to consider at the start of the project at which point in time which engagement level can best be strategically utilized to best support the project and its objectives.

→ Note that the level of engagement often decreases as the number of people increases, so be aware of what is more important to you: reaching as many people as possible or working together effectively?

### 3.1.4. Define engagement approaches and methods

There is a variety of stakeholder engagement approaches that can be used to reach different audiences and meet diverse needs. There are both classic and innovative, out-of-the-box formats, and both are important. Sometimes you don't have to reinvent the wheel, but it can be refreshing to try something new. The important thing is that you get started.

A **website** serves as a central hub for information and updates, while a **newsletter** provides regular, targeted communication to keep stakeholders informed. **Podcasts** offer an accessible and engaging format to share stories, insights, and expert perspectives. **Questionnaires** and **Online Surveys** are useful tools for gathering feedback and understanding stakeholder priorities.

Some practical examples from RETOUCH NEXUS include the [RETOUCH NEXUS project website](#), the [RETOUCH NEXUS Newsletter](#), the podcast series called [RETOUCH NEXUS Narratives](#), a tailored **questionnaire** on Stakeholder Engagement Activities (to document what kind of activities have been carried out by the different case studies and for what goal and with whom), a **survey** (CS Germany conducted a survey with representatives from different departments of the Government in Upper Franconia – responsible for water, agriculture, and ecosystems – and non-governmental stakeholders such as environmental organisations to receive feedback on vertical and horizontal coordination mechanisms which are currently in place).

While online tools are often used in the initial phase and for "information purposes", it is more effective to work together in person for a more intensive engagement. **Workshops** with 20-40 participants create interactive spaces for dialogue and co-creation. One innovative example is the so-called "WaterProof Experience container" from CS Belgium that has been developed to translate the lessons learned on water management from the WaterProof project on the business park Tielt Noord towards other business parks; it is a physical container which can be moved to different locations and people can enter it and explore sustainable/circular water use options in the context of business parks. When it comes to **youth engagement**, the CS Germany applied the WEFE NEXUS Game on water abstraction fees with students, the CS Netherlands developed a farming game with VR glasses and CS Slovakia piloted [the GTI app](#) with students. Another, more long-term engagement mechanism is a **Community of Practice (CoP)** that fosters continuous learning and exchange among professionals. Examples from RETOUCH are the CoP with RECREATE project on stakeholder engagement itself; as well as the [CoP following the Dresden Nexus Conference 2025](#) around WEFE NEXUS monitoring approach, e.g. via the [RETOUCH NEXUS indicators app](#),

You want to engage stakeholders, but you do not know where to start? Check out our **template to contact stakeholders** in the annex.

## 3.2. Tips and tricks: Facilitation of multi-stakeholder processes

Facilitating multi-stakeholder processes is no easy task, as it involves managing diverse, sometimes even opposing perspectives, interests, and goals. – not only among the target group but also within the relation between project partners and their key, primary, and secondary stakeholders. However, with the right mindset and tools, you can ensure that all voices are heard, and the group moves forward productively. Here are some tips and tricks to help you plan, manage and facilitate multi-stakeholder processes:

### 3.2.1 Set clear objectives and expectations

- **Define the Purpose:** At the outset of any activity (regardless of whether it is a one-day workshop or a process lasting several months) set a clear goal and ensure all stakeholders are on board. Clearly articulate what you want to achieve and why it matters to everyone involved. Here are some examples for objectives:
  - Share recent findings from pilot projects or research initiatives to get feedback for further development and discuss their relevance to local planning.
  - Map key stakeholders and identify synergies and conflicts in current resource use and planning strategies.
  - Align stakeholder priorities with national or regional WEFE NEXUS strategies.
  - Explore the use of digital tools or modelling approaches for cross-sector scenario planning.

**A clear and realistic objective**, which the participants have agreed upon, is essential, as it not only helps you choose the right methods and tools but also ensures that you do not lose focus during the process. As soon as the discussion goes in a different direction, keep reminding the participants of the (jointly) set goal. Make sure the goal is visualized (and visible) throughout the process.

*Tipp: You can work with a so-called “idea basket” on a board or flipchart where you store topics and questions that come up during the process but are not necessarily related to the workshop goal. In this way you acknowledge it but are still able to stick to your plan.*

- **Establish Ground Rules:** Set clear expectations for behaviour and communication. These can include respecting different opinions, ensuring active listening, and staying solution oriented.
- **Ensure clear time management:** Especially in short meetings and when there are stakeholders who like to talk a lot. Ensure a proper briefing (tell participants that you will need to cut them off after a defined amount of time to ensure a fair process for everyone) and remind speakers when they run out of time. You could also introduce a cards-based time keeping approach as part of the ground rules in the beginning. Whenever a participant exceeds the time, you hold up a (yellow, orange, or red) card.
- **Clarify Roles:** Make sure each stakeholder understands their role in the process, whether it is providing expertise, making decisions, or ensuring follow-up.

### 3.2.2 Build trust and inclusivity

- **Foster Open Communication:** Encourage transparency and honest dialogue. Let stakeholders voice their concerns, ideas, and perspectives without fear of judgment.
- **Be Neutral:** As a facilitator, it's crucial to remain impartial. Your role is to guide the process and support people in achieving common goals. In terms of conflicts of interest (e.g. because you possess another role within the discussion besides being a facilitator), assign another person with moderation such as an external facilitator.
- **Engage All Voices:** Ensure that every stakeholder can contribute. This can be challenging when there are power imbalances, so actively encourage quieter voices to participate (e.g. through different tools, group sizes, and constellations).
- **Remain patient and flexible:** Stakeholder processes can take time, especially when dealing with complex or sensitive issues. Avoid rushing the process by including time buffers in your planning. But never skip pauses as they are key for informal discussions and clarifications. Be prepared for the process to evolve as new stakeholders, issues, or perspectives arise. Flexibility is key to success.

### 3.2.3 Choose the right tools to structure the discussion

- **Develop an agenda:** After setting a goal, a well-structured agenda is critical for guiding the discussion and ensuring that all key topics are covered. Share it in advance so stakeholders can prepare and make sure it is obvious from the agenda where their explicit contribution is expected (e.g. by assigning responsibilities in each section).
- **Use interactive tools:** Include interactive and innovative tools for brainstorming and decision-making, to structure discussions and gather input (see annex). When the group is larger, break participants into smaller working groups to foster everyone's participation. This allows more focused and intimate conversations before reconvening with the large group.
- **Create Visuals:** Visual tools like diagrams, charts, and mind maps can help to simplify complex discussions and ensure everyone is on the same page.
- **Online Collaboration Tools:** In case stakeholders are not in the same location, use online tools like Miro, Zoom, Slack, or Google Docs to facilitate communication and collaboration.
- **Survey Tools:** Use surveys (e.g., SurveyMonkey, Mentimeter, Google Forms) to gather input, measure satisfaction, or gauge opinions on specific issues.

### 3.2.4 Provide opportunities for reflection and feedback

- **Check-in Regularly:** Regularly seek feedback on how to improve, use tools like surveys or (anonymous) feedback to gather insights.
- **Adjust When Needed:** Be flexible and willing to adapt the process based on feedback to improve engagement or address emerging concerns.

### 3.2.5 Manage conflicts effectively

- **Acknowledge Tensions:** Tensions (or conflicts) are not uncommon in multi-stakeholder processes when competing perspectives come together. Typically, underlying conflicts arise when the space is there. This is challenging, but also a great opportunity for collaborative learning. Choose tools (like the **#14 Circle of Coherence** or **#4 The Wheel of Multiple Perspectives**) to recognize the conflicts early on and address them constructively. Encourage respectful debates that can lead to better solutions.

### 3.2.6 Keep the momentum going

- **Assign Action Items and ensure accountability:** After each session, make sure that specific actions are assigned to relevant stakeholders to keep the momentum going. Ensure that there's accountability. Follow up on actions and outcomes after the meeting (e.g. via a summarizing mail) to maintain engagement and ensure that commitments are being met.
- **Document Outcomes:** Summarize what has been decided and keep detailed records of decisions, discussions, action items and who is responsible for what. Share these with all stakeholders to ensure transparency and prevent misunderstandings.
- **Communicate Next Steps Clearly:** Make sure stakeholders are clear about the next steps and timelines.
- **Create a Roadmap:** If the process spans over a long time, create a roadmap or timeline to keep everyone aligned and informed. Break the process into manageable milestones and celebrate progress along the way.

### 3.3. Challenges within RETOUCH NEXUS and how to tackle them

In the face of climate change, breaking away from business-as-usual habits is essential to make space for new and more adaptive approaches. However, institutional settings—particularly within government—tend to evolve slowly and can be highly rigid, making it difficult to implement integrative frameworks like the nexus perspective overnight. Timing becomes crucial when sharing project results, as findings may touch on politically sensitive issues or highlight tensions between scientific insights and policy priorities, potentially sparking heated discussions (see also chapter on “How to engage stakeholders in a politically sensitive environment?” on p. 23). This can complicate stakeholder engagement, which is not always easy to position, especially when key political decisions have already been made or are pending.

As mentioned in [D 2.1](#), the WEFE NEXUS community had to deal with typical challenges related to the inclusion of marginalized groups. In some cases, stakeholder communication tends to be project-based and lacks a long-term communication strategy and platform, or the scope and purpose of engagement sometimes lack an integrated nexus approach. In other cases, the administrative framework is too complex leading to high costs.

[Deliverable 2.1](#) shows a comprehensive overview of typical challenges in stakeholder engagement within RETOUCH NEXUS (see chapter 1.1, p. 13).

#### 3.3.1 Gender equity and social inclusion in the WEFE NEXUS

The lack of representation of marginalized groups such as women is a critical weakness in many WEFE NEXUS initiatives and is due to different reasons like power imbalances, communication barriers, accessibility issues, economic constraints, or resource dependency. Water issues are linked to gender, as women are mainly involved in water procurement at household level. In addition, women or youth often have fewer financial resources, making it harder to participate in unpaid engagement processes. Another obstacle are communication barriers, for example, youth may struggle to express their concerns in settings dominated by older, more experienced participants. Furthermore, power dynamics play a significant role. Often marginalized groups are sidelined, not invited or do not get the opportunity to speak. It is therefore important to create safe space where they can share their inputs and opinions.

It goes without saying that all groups should be included but especially in the development sector it is still the case that marginalized groups are seen as “beneficiaries” or “recipients” instead of experts in their own realities with vital insights into what works and what needs to change. The WEFE NEXUS community suggests frameworks and tools for moving from resource-centric to more people-centric WEFE NEXUS approaches in which stakeholder engagement plays a central role.<sup>5</sup>

While [RETOUCH Deliverable 2.2](#) already presents some inclusive engagement mechanisms (p. 24-31), here are some recommendations on how to make your stakeholder engagement process more inclusive and sustainable.

<sup>5</sup> [https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fuploads.water-energy-food.org%2Fresources%2F2.4\\_GESI\\_WEFE\\_Nexus\\_learning\\_module\\_FINAL\\_ENG.pptx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fuploads.water-energy-food.org%2Fresources%2F2.4_GESI_WEFE_Nexus_learning_module_FINAL_ENG.pptx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)

### Co-creation instead ticking boxes

Include representatives already in the conceptualization phase, not just during consultation or implementation. Identify and work with (intermediaries from) community-based, grassroots organizations, youth networks, women's groups to co-design how engagement will take place. There are many tools for co-creation to build trust and relevance (see Tools and Templates in the Annex 4.1).

In RETOUCH NEXUS, it is essential to recognize the diverse contexts in which the case studies operate, particularly the varying structural conditions. To address these differences and ensure more inclusive outreach, case studies can benefit from exploring alternative engagement formats—such as podcast series, virtual reality experiences, or educational collaborations with schools and universities—that cater to different audiences and access levels. Additionally, enhancing the visibility and participation of women remains a key priority. Examples such as a dedicated LinkedIn posts for International Women's Day or the WE-ACT webinar series highlight effective ways to spotlight female voices and leadership within the WEFE NEXUS discourse.

### Avoid Box-Ticking

Sometimes, due to donor requirements or time pressure and reporting purposes, the inclusion of youth, women and other vulnerable groups in development projects often ends up being tokenistic or “box-ticking”. If you follow the following principles, you can avoid pseudo participation.

- Be aware and address the root causes of exclusion, like unequal power dynamics and discrimination.
- Go beyond simply asking marginalized groups for their opinions – provide them with knowledge and tools and the space to raise their concerns and influence decisions.
- Ensure that the voices of marginalized groups actively shape project design and outcomes.
- Establish robust systems of accountability to ensure that these groups' participation is not just symbolic but leads to real change in project design, policies, or outcomes.

### Build capacity for participation

Partnering up with trusted organizations or individuals, NGOs, community leaders, grassroots movements or collectives often helps to ensure real participation and meaningful involvement. If you provide these (often voluntary) groups with capacity support like technical or financial support everyone could benefit even more. Practical services like childcare or transportation support could further enable participation. Pre-engagement trainings and mentorship programs are further possibilities to ensure that women, youth and other vulnerable groups can participate confidently and stay engaged.

### Meet people where they are

This includes using easy (or local) language, engaging and visual tools. Consider also digital accessibility and flexible locations and times like meetings outside working or school hours and in community-friendly, safe, and accessible spaces. Combine offline and online options, consider social media or radio to reach wider audiences, especially in rural or low-connectivity areas.

Within the RETOUCH NEXUS project, there are numerous examples of engaging stakeholders in accessible and context-sensitive ways. For instance, a workshop with the government of Upper Franconia, Germany was conducted directly at their premises, fostering a sense of ownership and convenience. In the

Netherlands, HHNK is consistently engaged through on-site visits, ensuring direct interaction with the local context. In Malta, the case study team rented a seminar room in a hotel to create a more personal and welcoming setting for stakeholder discussions. Meanwhile, the Belgian CS utilises a mobile container unit, allowing them to meet stakeholders at various locations across the country—bringing the project directly to the communities involved.

### **Create Safe and inclusive spaces**

In some cases, it might make sense to collaborate with trained experts who ensure inclusive dialogue and actively mitigate power imbalances (since there may be tensions among diverse ethnic groups as well). Sometimes, hosting dedicated events for marginalized groups can allow more open and honest participation.

Two successful examples of external facilitation within RETOUCH NEXUS include the Malta CS, which brought in an external facilitator to guide discussions, and the Upper Main CS in Germany, where consultations with government agencies were effectively supported by a RETOUCH NEXUS project partner, but not by the German CS itself.

### **Monitor, Learn, and Adapt**

Stakeholder engagement is a learning process for everyone involved. Try to learn from each engagement by obtaining and analysing feedback and adjust methods to be more inclusive over time. Tracking representation over time on who is participating (including factors like age, gender, ethnicity, disability, socioeconomic status) can provide interesting insights, but here too the focus should not lie on reporting objectives, but on doing the work better. Note that discussions around water management can be a real door opener for the empowerment of women if it is implemented in a context-specific manner, with a broader time perspective and in close cooperation with the target group and its environment.

The [Meaningful Youth Participation \(MYP\) Toolkit](#)<sup>6</sup> is a useful source as it outlines various levels of youth participation ranging from “Inform” to “Collaborate” and offers inspiring examples of youth participation at various levels.

### 3.3.2 How to engage stakeholders in a politically sensitive environment

In the WEFE Nexus, stakeholders often interact in a highly political context. It can be very crucial and sensitive to decide about how and whom to engage. Engaging stakeholders in a politically sensitive environment requires a careful, context-specific approach that prioritizes trust-building, neutrality, and risk mitigation. Begin by conducting a stakeholder and institutional analysis to understand power dynamics, interests, and potential risks. Who holds power – formally and informally? Work together with **trusted intermediaries, respected local figures or community leaders** to facilitate dialogue, and frame engagement around shared, non-controversial goals such as development, service delivery, or community well-being. Ensure confidentiality and provide safe spaces—virtual or in-person—for participation, especially for vulnerable or dissenting voices. Gradually build legitimacy and buy-in through transparent communication, inclusive processes, and small, confidence-building actions that demonstrate mutual benefit without

<sup>6</sup> Meaningful Youth Participation Toolkit:

<https://media.unesco.org/sites/default/files/webform/ed3002/NL%252BMFA%252BMeaningful%252BYouth%252BParticipation%252BToolkit%252BEnglish%252BEN%2520%25281%2529.pdf>

triggering political backlash. Depending on the context, collaborate with local facilitators with local knowledge, or facilitators that are conflict sensitive, trauma-informed or trained in mediation.

A notable example of the challenges in stakeholder engagement can be seen in one of the case studies, which involved selecting a location for a wastewater treatment plant. This decision was highly political and sensitive due to its direct impact on residents, making it difficult to integrate broad stakeholder participation as many discussions took place behind closed doors. Such situations highlight the complexity of balancing political considerations with inclusive engagement processes. Similarly, trade-offs often arise between political decisions on water usage and distribution and the real needs of key stakeholders, such as agricultural actors. These examples underscore the importance of carefully designing stakeholder engagement strategies that navigate political sensitivities.

### **Data Protection in Stakeholder Engagement**

Data protection and privacy are a fundamental part of stakeholder engagement as it aims at securing private and sensitive information. On a broader scale, interference with privacy can undermine public engagement in development and democratic processes and reshape how information flows through society. These concerns are equally relevant on a smaller scale—particularly in stakeholder engagement processes, whether conducted online or in person.

To foster a safe and trustworthy environment that encourages open, meaningful exchange, it is essential to consider appropriate data protection mechanisms early in the planning phase. The following three aspects are key to ensuring privacy and safeguarding participants:

1. **Identify sensitive topics or data** – such as personal details or confidential information.
2. **Limit access and exposure** – by controlling who can view or use the shared information (while at the same time considering transparency and reporting obligations in publicly projects)
3. **Choose appropriate engagement methods** – that align with the sensitivity of the information and the preferences of participants.

Transparency around documentation is also crucial. Participants should be clearly informed about any **video recordings or photo documentation** beforehand, with the option to consent or opt out. For example, this is important when recording podcast episodes, but also in relation to webinars. Decisions on whether and how to document an engagement process must be handled with care.

#### **3.3.3 Stakeholder engagement in formal and informal processes**

While formal stakeholder engagement such as public consultations, official surveys or panels are often more mandated with clear procedures and documentations, informal processes such as community meetups or social media conversations tend to be more flexible, spontaneous and relationship driven.

**Formal engagement** is structured, often mandated by policy or regulation, it provides transparency, accountability, and documented input at key project stages. In contrast, while **informal engagement** may lack formal documentation, it fosters trust, real-time feedback, and ongoing dialogue. Combining both approaches ensures not only compliance and legitimacy but also responsiveness and deeper stakeholder relationships.

### 3.3.4 Online, hybrid, and in-person settings

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, we've become accustomed to switching to online or hybrid formats. The advantages and disadvantages of the various formats are outlined below. Fortunately, we now have a choice again, so it makes sense to take a moment to choose the right format. We now have more options and can adapt the format even better to the context.

	<i>In-Person</i>	<i>Hybrid</i>	<i>Online</i>
<i>Outreach / Group size</i>	+ More inclusive for those without digital access  - Limited reach, especially across regions	+ Greater accessibility for diverse groups  + Combines the reach of online with the depth of offline  + Flexibility to adapt to participant needs	+ Increases reach, especially across geographies
<i>Costs</i>	- More expensive and time-consuming  - Logistical complexity (venues, travel, visas, etc.)	- Technically complex to coordinate  - Higher resource demands (both tech and facilitation)  - Needs strong planning to ensure equity and engagement across both modes	+ Cost-effective (no travel/logistics)  + Easier documentation and data collection
<i>Level of engagement / Relationships</i>	+ Builds stronger trust, rapport, and connection  + Easier to manage sensitive or political discussions  + Body language and informal interactions enhance communication	- Risk of unequal experience (online participants may feel sidelined)	- Digital divide: excludes those without access or skills  - Attention fatigue and distractions  - Lower personal connection/trust  - Difficult for complex negotiations or emotional topics
<i>Flexibility</i>		+ offers choice between physical and remote	+ Easy to schedule and time-efficient  + Allows asynchronous participation (e.g., surveys, forums)  - Moderation is less flexible, because meticulous planning is important in online settings

### 3.3.5 Strategies and further recommendations in the context of RETOUCH NEXUS

Within the framework of the RETOUCH project, the six case studies identified various challenges related to stakeholder engagement and developed strategies to address them. The following section provides a brief overview of current challenges—ranging from legal and financial barriers to issues related to target groups and engagement methods—alongside practical recommendations.

Type of challenge	Challenges Faced	Strategies adopted	Further ideas and recommendations
Legislative and governance issues	Lack of willingness, because of already existing strong Flemish legislation	Show that the implementation of smart solutions and a more robust, sustainable and inclusive water governance might create co-benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Map the legal <b>landscape</b> (start early by conducting a legal and regulatory review to identify specific laws or policies that restrict engagement)</li> <li>Build <b>alliances</b> (work with stakeholders to advocate for legal or policy changes that enable more inclusive engagement)</li> <li>Document and demonstrate <b>impact</b> (show how stakeholder engagement leads to better outcomes like policy effectiveness and greater public trust)</li> <li>Use <b>informal</b> or <b>parallel</b> processes where formal engagement is restricted, consider alternative mechanisms like community forums or digital platforms</li> </ul>
	Frequent political changes disrupt continuity, concepts and plans change with every election	Inviting all relevant policy makers (difficult)	
	Shift in the political agenda and (partly related) delays in the previous case study focus	Shift in focus towards the Freshwater Availability Program, leveraging existing stakeholder engagement activities and collaborating with proactive, input-driven contacts (plus more scope for nexus)	
Cost-related challenges	Fear of increasing costs	Smart and innovative solutions save costs in the long run	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrate cost-savings from other contexts, such as reduced conflict and litigation and implementation that tends to move faster and more smoothly.</li> </ul>

Type of challenge	Challenges Faced	Strategies adopted	Further ideas and recommendations
Target Group	Difficult to approach broader audience, because the very technical events attracted audiences with prior knowledge in the field	Organize additional events focusing on blue-green measures that are interesting for other groups of society (youth, women, elderly, minorities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use target group specific channels, such as social media, work with influencers, collaborate with youth organizations, visit places where the target group is (for example, elderly are usually less mobile)</li> <li>• Use simple language that is accessible for a broader audience, avoid acronyms and test with intermediaries if content is understandable</li> </ul>
	Content is too scientific for non-scientific stakeholders	Keep it simple	
	Engaging non-governmental stakeholders	Attend other SH events within the study area	
	Lack of inclusion of minorities and vulnerable groups	Preparation of a specific workshop with women	
	Insufficient vertical and horizontal coordination and communication (Proposals and feedback from local authorities and SH (e.g. farmers) are often ignored	Media involvement, innovative communication, stakeholder engagement events	
	Meetings are not interactive and engaging enough	Include professional moderator to ensure participatory and engaging meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try out unconventional formats and tools to engage these groups, highlight and communicate incentives for farmers to collaborate (illustrate where they can meet their primary (economic) objectives while also meeting project goals)</li> </ul>
Methods	Little interest in RETOUCH NEXUS due to current state of the model development	Action year 2025 > Finalization of model(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try out innovative tools (some of them are also possible without external facilitation) to make meetings more interesting and fun</li> </ul>
Other	Lack of specific focus of the case study	10 issue areas based on the interviews to be further explored and selectively implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show why and how RETOUCH NEXUS is / will be relevant to respective stakeholders in the future</li> </ul>

As can be seen in the table, stakeholder engagement within RETOUCH NEXUS faces a range of legislative, political, financial, and communication-related challenges. A major barrier is the lack of willingness to change existing governance structures, particularly where strong national or regional legislation is already in place. Frequent political shifts further disrupt continuity, often causing delays and changes in focus.

To overcome these issues, stakeholders are encouraged to map the legal landscape early on to identify engagement barriers, build alliances to advocate for policy reform and inclusive governance and leverage informal or alternative engagement channels where formal processes are limited.

Cost concerns also hinder participation, particularly due to fears that stakeholder engagement will drive up expenses. However, showcasing long-term cost benefits—like smoother implementation and reduced conflict—can counter this perception.

A key communication challenge lies in reaching broader audiences, as technical language and scientific framing tend to exclude non-experts. Solutions include simplifying language, avoiding jargon, and tailoring content to specific groups, using inclusive channels, such as social media or community-based events, to connect with youth, minorities, and the elderly as well as organizing targeted workshops to engage underrepresented groups, particularly women and farmers.

Finally, weak horizontal and vertical coordination remains a barrier, with local feedback often ignored. This calls for more interactive formats, better facilitation, and innovative tools to make engagement more dynamic and inclusive.

Many of these challenges are common and can be observed across different contexts. Regardless of how advanced your process is, obstacles are inevitable. Human systems are inherently complex, and meaningful change takes time. It is also important to recognize that not all challenges are within your direct control. Tools like the SWOT analysis (see [Tool #2 SWOT Analysis](#)) can help identify effective strategies and clarify your sphere of influence. This strategic clarity not only supports progress but can also make stakeholder engagement more rewarding and even enjoyable.

Don't be afraid to make mistakes, if you stick to the recommended tools and strategies, your stakeholder engagement activities will gradually become more resilient, inclusive and impactful.

## 4 Annex

### 4.1 Tools and Templates

1. Stakeholder Analysis
2. SWOT Analysis
3. Six Thinking Hats
4. The Wheel of Multiple Perspectives
5. Power Ranking
6. Role Plays
7. Fishbowl
8. Prototyping
9. Prioritizing and Ranking
10. Speed Dating
11. World Café
12. Open Space
13. Visioning
14. Circle of Coherence
15. Constellations
16. Polls / Voting

## 4.2 Contact Form for Stakeholders

You can use and adapt this form if you want to reach out stakeholders via email:

**Subject Line:** You are invited: *(Event Name and Date)*

Dear *(Stakeholder Name / Organization Name)*,

we are pleased to invite you to an upcoming event hosted by *(your Organization/Project Team)*, as part of the RETOUCH NEXUS project, which is dedicated to tackling the growing challenge of water scarcity by promoting an integrated Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems (WEFE) Nexus approach that supports the EU water economy and relies on ecological and social considerations.

Your involvement as a stakeholder is incredibly valuable to the success of this project, and we'd be honored by your presence at our upcoming event.

- Event Name
- Date
- Time
- Location
- Purpose (Short sentence about what the event aims to achieve)

At this event, you'll have the opportunity to *(List benefits depending on your activity)*

- Hear project updates or impact stories
- Network with other stakeholders and collaborators
- Provide feedback or participate in planning

Please confirm your attendance by (deadline date) using the form below *(it can be advisable to use a Google Form if you plan with more than 20 participants)* or by replying directly to this message.

We truly appreciate your continued support and interest in [Project Name]. We look forward to your participation and valuable insights at the event.

Warm regards,  
*(Your Name, position, organization, contact details)*

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