

THE EMPTY SEAT: HOW TO GET KEY STAKEHOLDERS INTO THE BOAT?

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**Stakeholder Participation Toolkit for
Identification, Designation and Management
of Marine Protected Areas, 2013. RAC/SPA
and IUCN-Med. Ed. RAC/SPA, Tunis. 30pp.**

*Project started in 2009 and was led by the Regional
Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas
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project*

***“Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean Sea Large
Ecosystem”***

Participation can be implemented by means of **approaches**, **methods** and **tools**. The UN FAO website proposes the following definitions:

- **An approach** can be considered as “systematic combinations of tools and strategies/concepts, held together by a guiding principle, and serving the achievement of a certain goal”;
- **A method** can be considered as “a structured way of realizing a particular participatory intervention”;
- **A tool** can be defined as “certain exercises to cultivate and implement collaborative research, analysis, planning and action”.

WHAT ARE STAKEHOLDERS?

Stakeholders are all those people who have a stake (or share) in a particular issue or system.

A possible definition is:

“A stakeholder is any individual, group or organization who affects, or is affected by the situation being studied”.

Project proposed such definition:

“Stakeholders are those who use and depend on the PAs, whose activities affect it or who have an interest in it.”

The following **definitions of stakeholders** are proposed by ICRA

(“ICRA Learning Materials – Stakeholders – Key Concepts” <http://www.icra->

[edu.org/objects/anglolearn/Stakeholders-Key_Concepts.pdf](http://www.icra-edu.org/objects/anglolearn/Stakeholders-Key_Concepts.pdf)):

- **Key stakeholders** are those actors who are considered to have significant influence on the success of a project;
- **Primary stakeholders** are the intended beneficiaries of a project;
- **Secondary stakeholders** are those who perform as intermediaries within a project;
- **Active stakeholders** are those who affect or determine a decision or action in a system or project;
- **Passive stakeholders** are those who are affected by decisions or actions of others;
- **Important stakeholders** are those whose needs are important to a project or study;
- **Influential stakeholders** are those who have the power to control decisions in an activity or who can influence others in the decision making process.

WHAT ARE THE LINKAGES BETWEEN STAKEHOLDERS?

These linkages include:

— **Structural mechanisms** which are formal and institutionally recognized, e.g.:

- Direct supervision or authority;
- Committees;
- Liaison positions.

— **Operational mechanisms** which may be informal or temporary, e.g.:

- Meetings, training events;
- Contracts, partnerships;
- Publications, broadcasts;
- Joint activities.

The different **forms** of stakeholders' **participation** can be summarized as follow:

- **Information Sharing:** from government to public, or public to government. To keep actors informed, provide transparency, and build legitimacy (e.g. presentation of results during final workshops);
- **Consultation:** exchange of views, sharing information, formal consultation processes responding to stakeholders about how their recommendations were addressed (or not, and why) (e.g. to have feedback);
- **Involvement:** collaboration Joint activities (e.g. work on tools during local workshops) or Joint Decision Making.

Although many **classifications** of stakeholders' **categories** can be found in the literature, here we propose a simple one:

- **Government or public sector:** policy-makers, state/regional/district and municipal level institutions, PA staff;
- **Civil society (not for profit):** NGOs, universities, research institutes, local community organizations, and other groups;
- **Private sector (for profit):** firms, associations, fisheries organizations, tourism, coastal developers, etc.;
- **General public.**