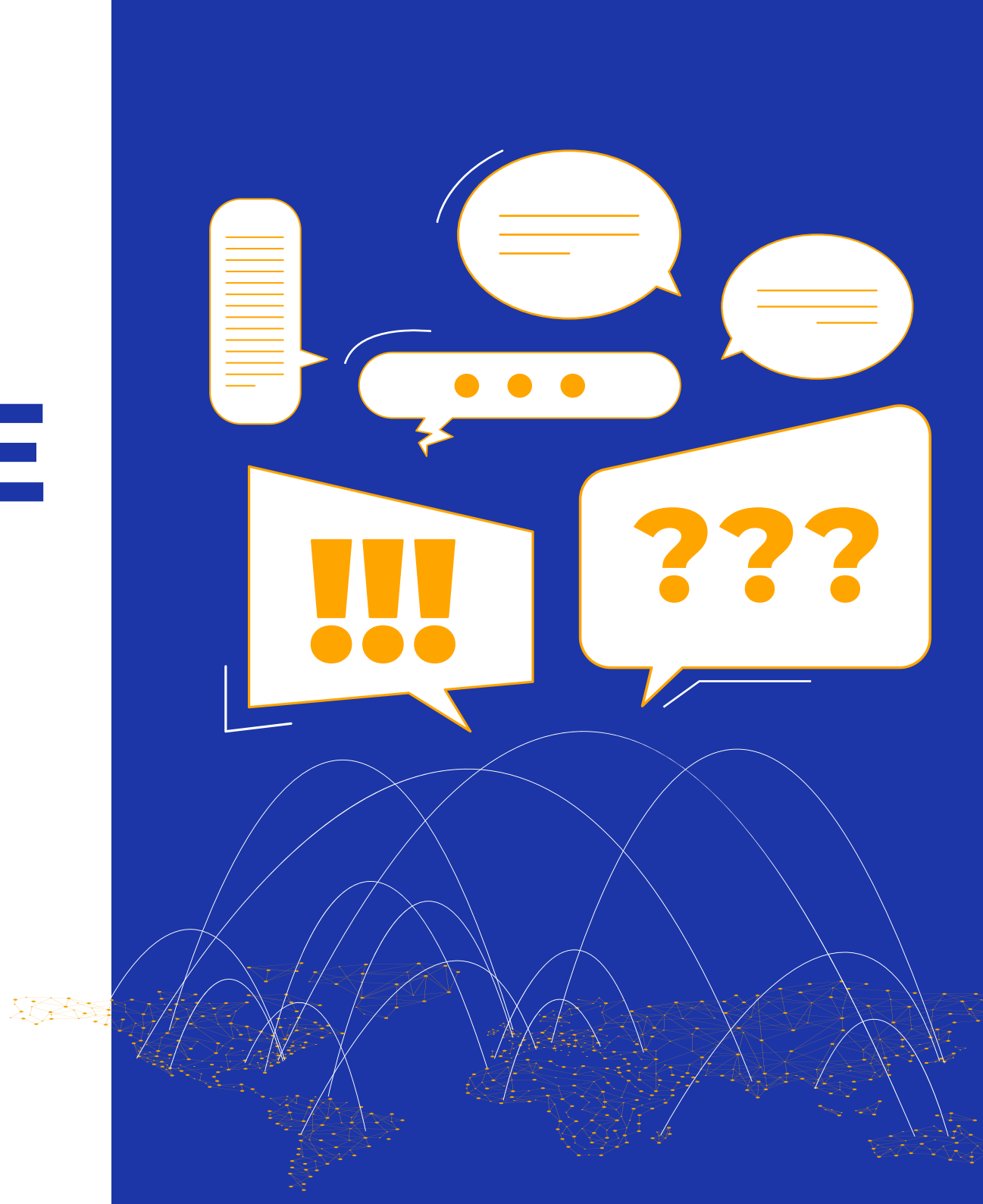


Pathways to **PRACTICE**

— A PRACTITIONER'S TOOLKIT —

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS IN INTERNATIONALISATION

By Douglas Proctor & Sabine Sainte-Rose



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TOPIC IN CONTEXT

Whether you are developing an internationalisation or global strategy, or leading international education initiatives and programmes, it is crucial to have a clear understanding of who your stakeholders are, both within your organisation and beyond.

Be they friendly and supportive, uninterested and apathetic, or perhaps suspicious and undermining, careful identification and management of these stakeholders is key to ensuring the success of your international strategy, initiative, programme or project.

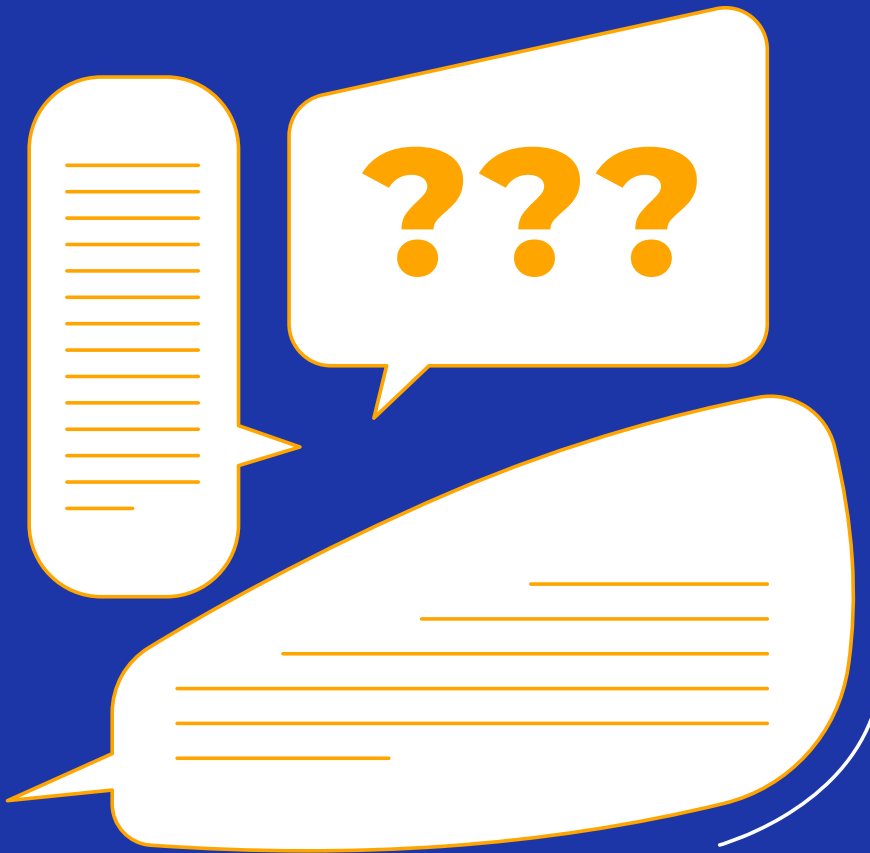
With a clear understanding of your stakeholders and their various interests (both positive and negative), you will be in a strong position to manage those stakeholders – for example, by developing a communications strategy for key stakeholders, by identifying mechanisms to influence different groups of stakeholders, or by putting in place plans to isolate and neutralise any negative stakeholders.

Taking a strategic approach to managing internal and external stakeholders will support the success of your international initiative.

WHAT PROBLEM DOES THIS 'RECIPE' SOLVE?

It is commonly understood that internationalisation and international initiatives require buy-in and action from many to be successful. Indeed, the implementation of most international programmes or projects stretches across an institution/organisation and beyond.

Ensuring optimal support from individuals and groups outside your immediate environment (that is, your stakeholders) is therefore a crucial step to success.



WHO

NEEDS TO BE INVOLVED IN THE SOLUTION AND DELIVERY?

International activities often involve multiple actors, including students and academic and professional staff. Depending on the initiative, external stakeholders may include funding bodies, government agencies, partner institutions, or third-party providers.

While multiple stakeholders might be identified through formal analysis, plans for stakeholder management are likely to be formalised and implemented locally, possibly with buy-in and engagement from senior leaders.

WHAT

ARE YOU AIMING FOR IF YOU FOLLOW THIS RECIPE?

Successful stakeholder management will ensure support for your international initiative and encourage a growing circle of others to act in its support.

Furthermore, effective stakeholder management will neutralise negative sentiments and minimise any damage that opponents might cause.



TERMINOLOGY

Stakeholder:

a person or group with an interest or concern in something.

Stakeholder analysis:

the process of a) identifying individuals or groups who are either affected by, or who may exert an influence on, the internationalisation strategy/initiative/programme/project and b) sorting those individual or groups according to their relative interest or impact.

Stakeholder management:

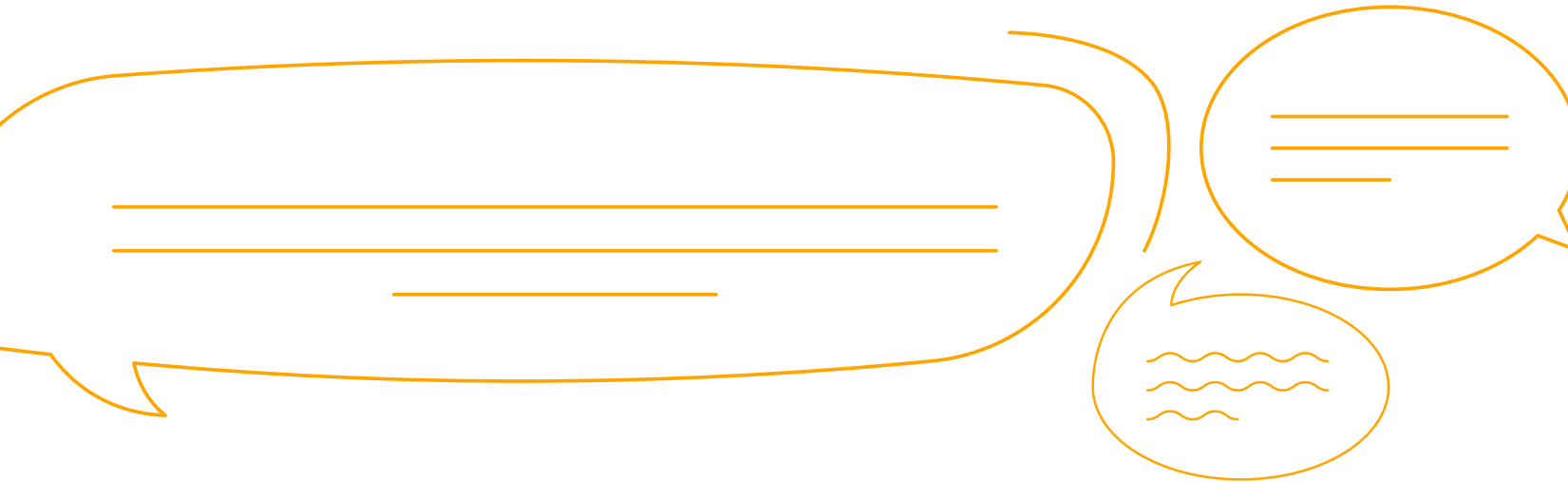
the process of engaging with individuals or groups who have an interest or concern in an initiative, programme or project.

KEY STEPS

IN THE PROCESS



- 1. Identify relevant stakeholders**
- 2. Undertake initial stakeholder analysis**
- 3. Classify stakeholders**
- 4. Develop tailored stakeholder management plans**



1. IDENTIFY RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS

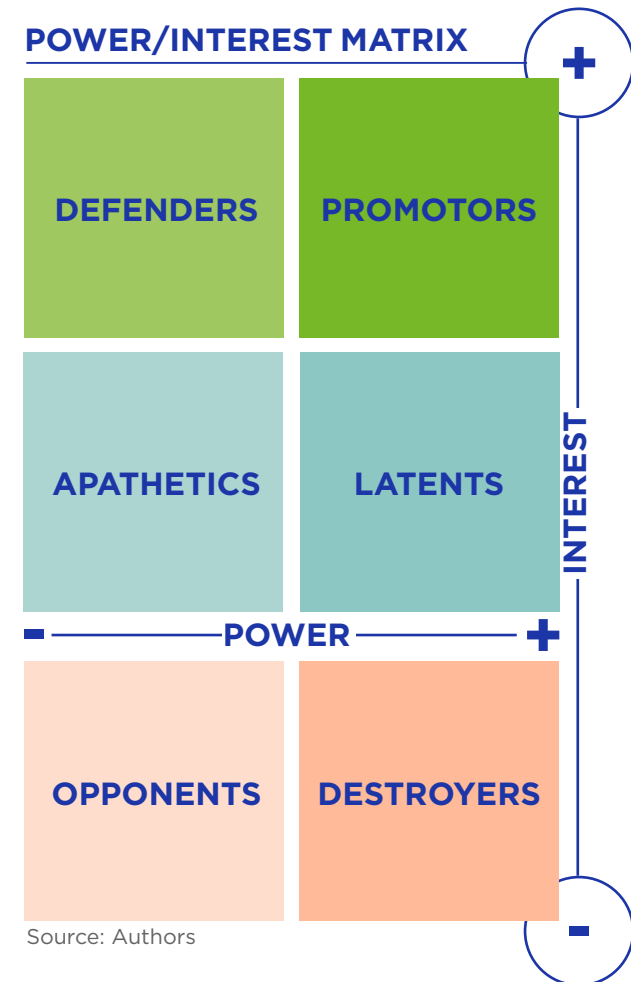
- Stakeholder analysis is the process of identifying individuals or groups who are either affected by, or who may exert an influence on, the internationalisation strategy or international initiative and sorting them according to their relative interest or impact.
- The first step to stakeholder analysis is to compile a list of all the internal and external stakeholders who have some interest or concern.
- To ensure that your list is comprehensive, start close (*ie* in your local environment) and work progressively outwards (*ie* to your department or faculty, to other departments/faculties or organisations, and then to stakeholders outside your institution or organisation).

2. UNDERTAKE INITIAL STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

- Once you have a list of all stakeholders, try and sort them based on their relative interest or impact on the initiative.
- You can use a range of different dimensions for sorting stakeholders, such as:
 - › Their support for the initiative (positive, neutral or negative)
 - › Their need for it (strong, medium or weak), or
 - › Their power/influence over it (high, medium or low), for example in regard to funding.

3. CLASSIFY STAKEHOLDERS

- From the early analysis, seek to classify your stakeholders in relation to their respective interest (high to low) and power (high to low).
- The stakeholder power/interest matrix gives an indication of how you might classify different groups of stakeholders on these two axes.
- For example, key champions for the initiative will be those individuals or groups with a combination of positive support and strong need (*i.e.* high interest) and high power/influence. In the stakeholder power/interest matrix, this group is referred to as Promoters.
- Meanwhile, those with high interest but low power can be described as Defenders, while those with lower levels of interest are classified as Latents or Apathetics.
- Of particular relevance to this exercise are those stakeholders with negative interest:
 - › Where these stakeholders have limited power/influence, they can be viewed as Opponents.
 - › However, stakeholders with high power and negative interest are termed Destroyers.



4. DEVELOP TAILORED STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT PLANS

- In line with your classification, you should now develop plans for managing and engaging with the different groups of stakeholders:
 - › What information does each type of stakeholder need to receive about the initiative?
 - › From whom?
 - › In what format?
 - › How often?
- Proactive dissemination of information about the initiative and its results or success might increase levels of interest, moving people from Apathetics to Defenders or from Latents to Promoters.
- For Opponents and Destroyers, consider what power and influence you have to engage with them. Do you need to secure support from others to help to neutralise their views?

In working through these steps, use the attached Stakeholder Analysis Template to record your plans.

TIPS AND TRICKS

- Don't forget to cast a wide net when you initially consider who your stakeholders are for your internationalisation strategy or international initiative:
 - › Have you captured all individuals and groups who have a likely interest or concern, both internally and externally?
 - › Perhaps share your initial stakeholder analysis with other colleagues for them to review, or undertake the identification and classification exercises collectively.
- It is easy to focus engagement plans solely on Promoters and Defenders, *ie* on the key champions for your initiative:
 - › Make sure to consider alternative perspectives, however uncomfortable this makes you feel.
 - › To manage Destroyers (with high power and negative interest), think about engaging senior leaders who are Promoters to support communication and engagement.
- Stakeholders don't stay still – both in terms of staffing changes and shifting balances of power and interest:
 - › Re-visit your stakeholder analysis (page 16) and classification from time to time, and consider whether your stakeholder management plans need to be updated.



TAKE- AWAYS

With a clear grasp of your stakeholders for any international strategy, initiative, programme or project, you place yourself in a commanding position regarding implementation.

Not only will your stakeholder management plans allow you to cultivate a growing circle of Promoters, but you'll also be primed to minimise disruption from any Opponents or Destroyers.

While particular individuals might change, the classification of stakeholders by group is unlikely to vary widely, making stakeholder analysis a valuable early investment for any new international initiative.

WHERE TO START

TOMORROW

Brainstorm (alone or with colleagues) to pull together a draft list of all of your stakeholders for a given project or initiative.

Don't try to classify these in any way – just list names or position titles or organisations who have some interest or concern with this work.

IN THE NEXT 2 WEEKS

Start to cluster your stakeholders into groups (for example, internal vs external) and look for any initial similarities or differences between the groups.

Also consider whether any stakeholders are missing from the initial list.

Then try to classify each of the groups using the power/interest matrix.

THIS MONTH

Using your list of stakeholders and classification, fill out the Stakeholder Analysis Template (page 16) to record how each stakeholder or group of stakeholders will be managed.

Pay attention to what different messages or tactics will be deployed, by whom and when.

THIS YEAR

Once your stakeholder management plans have been in place for a period of time, review their success and consider whether they need to be updated.

You should also review your list of stakeholders from time to time to ensure that it remains accurate.

FURTHER RESOURCES

READINGS



Casals Sala, M. & van Liempd, H-G. (2019). EAIE blog: 10 mistakes to avoid in implementing a strategic internationalisation plan

<https://www.eaie.org/resource/10-mistakes-avoid-implementing-strategic-internationalisation-plan.html>



Hendricks, A. (undated). How to strategically manage your stakeholder relationships

<https://simplystakeholders.com/strategic-stakeholder-relationship/>



Proctor, D., van den Hende, F. & Casals Sala, M. (2021). EAIE blog: Stakeholders in internationalisation: dealing with (dis) engagement

<https://www.eaie.org/resource/stakeholders-dealing-with-disengagement.html>



Proctor, D. & Sainte-Rose, S. (2020). EAIE blog: 5 questions to ask during strategic internationalisation planning

<https://www.eaie.org/blog/five-questions-ask-strategic-internationalisation-planning.html>

TRAINING



“Introduction to leadership, strategy and policy”, EAIE Academy on-demand training course

<https://www.eaie.org/training/academy-on-demand/leadership-strategy-and-policy.html>

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Dr Douglas Proctor, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement),
Swinburne University of Technology, Australia

Sabine Sainte-Rose, Secretary General, ENGAGE.EU European
University Alliance & Member of the EAIE General Council

APPENDIX

STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS TEMPLATE

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