Stakeholder Management Strategy

Multi-Sectoral | Development–Humanitarian | Government-Led | Performance-Oriented

Version Prog1.0
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Approval, Control, and Statement

Approval

SN	Name	Position	Role	Signature	Date
2	Dr. Adamu Umar Usman	Managing Director/CEO	Final review/Recommendation		20 Aug.2023

Document Version Control

SN	Version	Date	Section Reviewed	Approved By	Remarks
1	Version SI1.0	06 July 2024	NA	Dr. Adamu Umar	First Version

Distribution List

SN	Location
1	AHNi HQ – all Directorates, Departments, and Units
2	AHNi Project Offices – all Directorates, Departments, and Units
3	AHNi State Offices – all Directorates, Departments, and Units
4	AHNi Cluster Offices – all Directorates, Departments, and Units
5	Donors
6	Board of Trustees

Statement

"This Stakeholder Management strategy is approved to facilitate mutually beneficial Stakeholder engagement between AHNi, GoN, Implementing Partners, Donors, CBOs/FBOs, and Communities effective 20 August 2023."

Contents

1. Introduction

Achieving Health Nigeria Initiative (AHNi) is a national non-governmental organisation dedicated to strengthening Nigeria's health system and improving population health outcomes, particularly among vulnerable and underserved populations. AHNi designs and implements multi-sectoral programmes across HIV, tuberculosis, malaria, maternal and newborn health, nutrition, health security, livelihoods, climate governance, and health systems strengthening. These programmes are frequently delivered in fragile, hard-to-reach, and high-risk contexts that demand robust governance, accountability, and ethical standards.

2. Purpose and Rationale

AHNi recognises stakeholder management as a core strategic function rather than a peripheral engagement activity. Effective stakeholder management is essential to achieving programme impact, ensuring legitimacy, strengthening accountability, and sustaining results beyond donor funding cycles.

In complex operating environments characterised by multiple government actors, donors, civil society organisations, private-sector providers, and communities, poorly managed stakeholder relationships can lead to duplication, misalignment, resistance, and inefficiencies. This strategy therefore provides a structured framework for managing expectations, coordinating actions, resolving tensions, and fostering shared ownership across all actors involved in AHNi-supported interventions.

3. Strategic Objectives

The Stakeholder Management Strategy seeks to:

- Build partnerships that engender buy-in, trust, and long-term commitment from all stakeholders
- Reinforce government leadership and stewardship at national, state, and LGA levels
- Promote inclusive participation, ensuring no critical actor is excluded from decision-making
- Eliminate duplication and fragmentation while maximising effectiveness and cost-efficiency
- Strengthen transparency, accountability, and performance management
- Enable political and bureaucratic support to address systemic bottlenecks
- Support the sustainability and institutionalisation of programme gains

4. Guiding Principles

AHNi's approach to stakeholder management is guided by the following principles, drawn from USAID expectations and international best practice:

- Collaboration: Stakeholder management is a shared, continuous process requiring joint problem-solving and mutual respect.
- Government Leadership: Engagement reinforces statutory roles and avoids parallel systems.
- Inclusivity: All relevant actors—government, CSOs, PLHIV, private sector, donors—are deliberately engaged.
- Transparency: Open sharing of information, decisions, and results.
- Mutual Accountability: AHNi holds itself accountable while supporting mechanisms that hold all stakeholders accountable.
- Strategic Engagement: Engagement is purposeful, not symbolic, and linked to programme outcomes.

5. Stakeholder Typology

In stakeholder analysis, stakeholders are commonly grouped into **Primary, Secondary, and Key stakeholders** based on their level of impact, influence, and direct interest in a project, programme, or organisation.

1. **Primary Stakeholders:** Primary stakeholders are individuals or groups **directly affected**—positively or negatively—by a project's activities, decisions, or outcomes. They are the main beneficiaries or those most at risk.

   Characteristics:
   - Directly experience project outcomes
   - Often central to service delivery or utilisation
   - High interest in project success

   Examples (Health Programme Context):
   - Patients and beneficiaries (e.g., PLHIV, TB clients, pregnant women)
   - Healthcare workers providing services
   - Community-based volunteers
   - Local implementing staff

   Primary stakeholders must be actively engaged throughout the project lifecycle, as their participation determines relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability.

2. **Secondary Stakeholders:** Secondary stakeholders are those **indirectly affected** by the project. They may not receive direct benefits, but they are influenced by, or influence, its implementation.

   Characteristics:
   - Indirect interest
   - May provide support, oversight, or complementary services
   - Moderate influence

   Examples:
   - Local NGOs and CSOs
   - Media organisations
   - Academic institutions
   - Professional associations
   - Community leaders

   Their engagement is important for advocacy, coordination, and strengthening the enabling environment.

3. **Key Stakeholders:** Key stakeholders are individuals or institutions with **significant power, authority, or influence** over project direction, resources, or policy decisions.

   Characteristics:
   - High decision-making authority
   - Control funding or regulatory approvals
   - Can enable or obstruct implementation

   Examples:
   - Government ministries and regulatory agencies
   - Donors and funding partners
   - Board members
   - Senior organisational leadership

   Key stakeholders require structured engagement, regular communication, and strategic relationship management to ensure alignment and sustainability.

   Practical Distinction
   - **Primary = Directly affected**
   - **Secondary = Indirectly affected**
   - **Key = High power/influence**

   In practice, a stakeholder may fall into more than one category depending on context.

Effective stakeholder management requires mapping stakeholders based on **interest, influence, and impact**, often using tools such as a power–interest grid.

6. Stakeholder Landscape and Mapping

AHNi systematically analyses the stakeholder landscape to understand roles, influence, interests, and interdependencies. Key stakeholder categories include:

- Government: Federal MDAs, national programmes, state ministries and agencies, LGAs, PHC authorities, regulatory bodies.
- Communities and Civil Society: PLHIV networks, CSOs, CBOs, KP-led organisations, traditional and religious leaders.
- Development and Donor Partners: Bilateral donors, multilateral agencies, UN organisations, global initiatives, and foundations.
- Private Sector and Academia: Private health providers, supply chain actors, technology firms, academic and training institutions.
- Humanitarian and Emergency Actors: Emergency coordination platforms and facilitative security actors in fragile settings.

Stakeholders are prioritised based on their influence, accountability, proximity to service delivery, and risk exposure.

The **Power–Influence–Interest Grid** (often called the *Power–Interest Grid*) is a stakeholder mapping tool used in strategic management, programme implementation, and governance to categorize stakeholders based on:

- **Power/Influence** – their ability to affect decisions, resources, policies, or outcomes.
- **Interest** – the degree to which they are concerned about or affected by the project or initiative.

It supports structured engagement planning, accountability, and risk mitigation.

Structure of the Grid
The tool is presented as a **2 × 2 matrix**:

	High Interest	Low Interest
High Power/Influence	Manage Closely	Keep Satisfied
Low Power/Influence	Keep Informed	Monitor (Minimum Effort)

Quadrants Explained
1. High Power – High Interest (Manage Closely): These stakeholders can significantly shape outcomes and are deeply invested in the initiative.
Engagement Strategy:
- Continuous consultation
- Joint decision-making
- Active involvement in governance structures

Examples: Government ministries, major donors, boards, and strategic partners.

2. High Power – Low Interest (Keep Satisfied): They have authority or control but limited day-to-day engagement.

Engagement Strategy:
- Periodic briefings
- Strategic updates
- Ensure no emerging concerns

Examples: Senior political leadership, regulatory authorities not directly implementing.

3. Low Power – High Interest (Keep Informed): These stakeholders are highly affected but lack

formal   authority.
Engagement Strategy:
- Transparent communication
- Feedback mechanisms
- Inclusion in consultations

Examples: Community members, frontline staff, beneficiaries.

4. Low Power – Low Interest (Monitor): Limited influence and limited stake.
Engagement Strategy:
- Minimal communication
- Periodic environmental scanning

Examples: Peripheral actors with indirect relevance.

Practical Applications
- Stakeholder engagement planning
- Risk management
- Transition and sustainability planning
- Partnership governance
- Conflict anticipation and mitigation

Strategic Value
The Power–Influence–Interest Grid ensures that:
- High-risk stakeholders are proactively managed.
- Engagement resources are allocated efficiently.
- Accountability and ownership are clarified.
- Program sustainability is strengthened through structured stakeholder stewardship.

It is particularly useful in complex, multi-stakeholder environments such as public health systems, humanitarian response, and multi-sector development programmes.

7. Engagement and Coordination Approach
AHNi applies differentiated stakeholder management approaches depending on stakeholder role and level of influence:
- Strategic and Political Engagement:
  High-level engagement with political and senior bureaucratic leaders to align priorities, secure policy support, and resolve systemic constraints.
- Coordination and Harmonisation:
  Routine participation in government-led TWGs and coordination platforms, focusing on information sharing, joint planning, implementation, and oversight.
- Operational Collaboration:
  Joint implementation, supervision, and review with states, LGAs, IPs, and community partners.
- Community and Client Engagement:
  Structured dialogue with PLHIV networks and communities to support participatory planning, quality-of-care monitoring, and social accountability.

8. Communication and Expectation Management
AHNi adopts open, honest, and constructive communication to manage expectations and reduce misalignment. Communication focuses on:
- Programme objectives, scope, and limitations
- Roles and responsibilities of all actors
- Policy shifts, donor priorities, and operational changes
- Performance results, challenges, and corrective actions

Communication channels include coordination meetings, briefs, dashboards, reports, supervision feedback, and community forums. Special emphasis is placed on improving understanding of policy pivots, tools, and processes among state and local actors.

9. Accountability and Performance Management

Stakeholder management is reinforced through institutionalised accountability mechanisms, including:

- Joint performance review meetings at national and subnational levels
- Routine dissemination of results, decisions, and action points
- Support to states to track HIV/TB and health sector spending
- Clear documentation of commitments and follow-up actions

The underlying principle is explicit: AHNi holds itself accountable and supports holding every stakeholder accountable for agreed roles and outcomes.

10. Risk Management and Conflict Resolution

Potential stakeholder risks such as resistance, political interference, duplication, or misalignment are proactively managed through:

- Early and continuous engagement
- Evidence-based dialogue and data use
- Escalation pathways within government-led structures
- Mediation and consensus-building mechanisms

This reduces disruption and strengthens trust during periods of transition or uncertainty.

11. Risk Roles and Responsibilities

- Government: Provides leadership, policy direction, oversight, and decision-making authority.
- AHNi: Facilitates coordination, provides technical support, manages relationships, documents outcomes, and mitigates risks.
- Partners and Communities: Participate actively, implement agreed actions, provide feedback, and serve as co-stewards of the outcome

12. Monitoring and evaluation

Stakeholder management effectiveness is monitored through engagement records, coordination outcomes, supervision findings, and programme performance data. Lessons learned are systematically reviewed and used to refine engagement approaches and strengthen collaboration.

13. Sustainability and Institutionalisation

All stakeholder management processes are deliberately embedded within existing government and community systems. This ensures ownership, continuity, and sustainability of coordination and accountability mechanisms beyond AHNi-supported project cycles.

Overall, this Stakeholder Management Strategy positions AHNi as a credible systems partner capable of navigating complex stakeholder environments, strengthening coordination, and delivering sustainable, government-led impact across development and humanitarian contexts.