



**GUIDANCE SHEET 9**

## **HOW TO SET UP A CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS?**

Listening to stakeholder concerns and feedback is a valuable source of information that can be used to improve the design and outcomes of SHERPA MAPs, and help MAP Facilitators and Monitors to identify and control external risks. It can also lead to future stakeholder engagement and collaboration.

Stakeholder consultations are a useful tool to help SHERPA MAP Facilitators and Monitors with the following:

- Identifying and tracking stakeholders' needs and expectations
- Identifying and tracking stakeholders' perceptions and attitudes
- Gathering feedback from stakeholders on specific developments of the MAPs, including evaluation of progress.

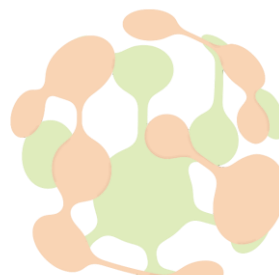
The inputs collected through a consultation from internal and external stakeholders can be key to the success of MAPs development, and the longer-term success and direction of the SHERPA project.

There are several objectives that can be pursued through stakeholder consultations:

- Consultation on specific developments within MAPs
- Consultation to establish future stakeholders needs and ensure these are taken into account into the development of MAPs' work, as appropriate.
- Consultation to ensure buy-in from relevant stakeholders and to ensure the MAPs are not moving away from the expectations and needs of those who have an interest in them.
- Consultation to present new positions being discussed within the MAPs or remind of existing positions and collect stakeholders' feedback.

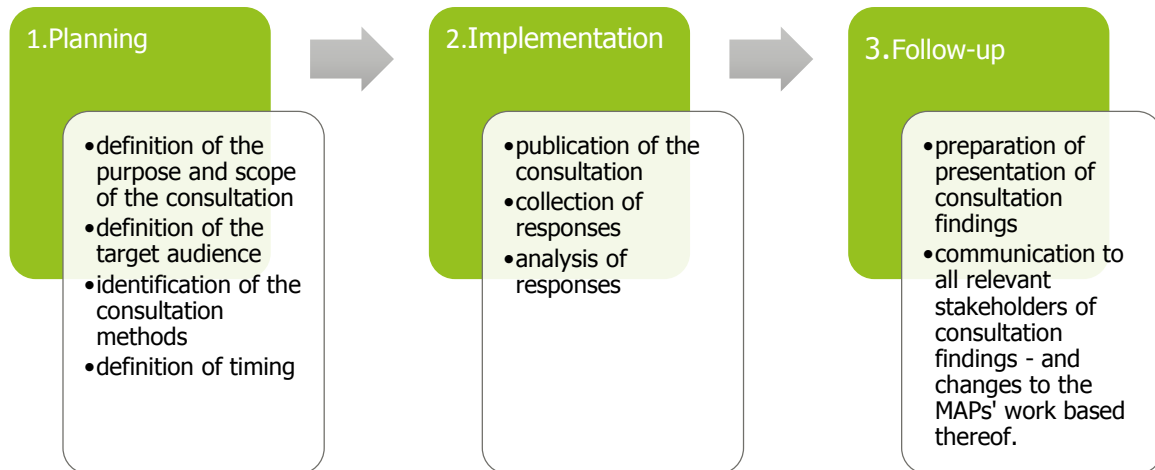
Carrying out a targeted stakeholder consultation could bring a series of benefits to SHERPA MAP Facilitators and Monitors, including:

- Decision making within MAPs will be more informed and in tune with those whom the actions will affect.
- Contribute to increase engagement and sense of ownership for the MAPs' work in the consulted stakeholder, as they will feel they have inputted into the final outcome and that their views have been taken into account.



- Contribute to highlight the need for stakeholders to compromise on their positions, as by reading the findings of a consultation they will also understand that their perspective may not be shared by all.
- Contribute to increase transparency of working methods and thus build trust among stakeholders, as it proves determination to engage with them in meaningful two-way communication, and recognises the important role stakeholders at all levels can make to the work of the MAPs which will directly or indirectly affect them.

A consultation process is generally organised in three main steps as follows:



With regards to methods available for SHERPA MAP Facilitators and Monitors for conducting stakeholder consultations, the following three seem to be the most suitable.

- *Quantitative* consultations allow for gathering inputs from larger numbers of stakeholders and are often structured into largely closed questions and rating scales. They produce data for statistical analysis that can be very useful. Examples of these methods are surveys, and e-surveys. The main features of these methods are that:
  - They provide quantitative information
  - They contribute to raising awareness of the SHERPA MAP ongoing, past and/or future work
  - They do provide data that can be used for numerical or statistical analysis
  - They do not provide qualitative information.
- *Qualitative* consultations use open styles of discussion and debate, usually with from small to medium large stakeholder groups. MAP Facilitators and Monitors may use these methods for capturing views and perceptions which are truly held by the stakeholder, but perhaps not immediately explicit. Examples of these first methods are **focus groups** and **interviews**. The main features of these methods are that:
  - They provide qualitative information
  - They contribute to stakeholder engagement and trust building
  - They contribute to creating /maintaining relationships with relevant stakeholders
  - They may be more costly than quantitative methods, i.e. focus groups
  - They do not provide data that can be used for numerical or statistical analysis.

- *Hybrid qualitative-quantitative* allow for mixing the research for stakeholder views with the need to get comparable and measurable data at a reasonable cost. Open online debate consultations and large public meetings are examples of this third category of methods.

There are several tools that can be used by SHERPA MAP Facilitators and Monitors for carrying out online consultations. Three of them have been selected as particularly suitable and are briefly described below. The tools are presented in alphabetical order, not in order of priority.



[EU Survey](#) is an EU-based online service that can be used for collecting stakeholders' views on a specific issue and carry out satisfaction surveys. Its interface is relatively user-friendly and generates automatic reports of the responses with charts and statistics. Results can be exported in different formats and easily shared or published online. Two additional strengths of this tool are that it is free and that it is available in the 23 official languages of the European Union.



[Google Forms](#) is a tool that allows collecting information from users via a personalized survey. The information is then collected and automatically connected to a spreadsheet. The spreadsheet is populated with the survey responses. The Forms service's features include, but are not limited to, menu search, shuffle of questions for randomized order, limiting responses to once per person, shorter URLs, custom themes, automatically generating answer suggestions when creating forms, and an 'Upload file' option for users answering questions that require them to share content or files from their computer or Google Drive. Responses are neatly and automatically collected in Forms, with real time response info and charts. All data can then be exported to many formats, shared and published online. This tool allows the creation of surveys for free, but it also includes a paid upgraded version for accessing more complex features.



[JotForm](#)'s software helps design creative and personalized forms for all purposes and does so with a simple drag-and-drop mechanism. The best part of the process is that changes are synced upon completion and can therefore be retrieved in cases of sudden internet loss and work can be finished offline. It creates forms with a drag and drop creation tool and an option to encrypt user data. The competitive edge of the builder is robust collaboration, as forms can be built in groups by an unlimited number of collaborators. Where the new version of this system shines the most is definitely collaboration, as users can now connect in real time, and work simultaneously to maximize the potential of their form and bring all cool ideas on the table. As usual, edits are saved automatically on the way, which means one does not have to worry whether the good work done will be corrupted by someone else's suggestions. All form versions are stored consequently, and one gets to choose the best one in the end. JotForm is not free – although it allows a free limited trial – and has flexible pricing scheme.



[SurveyMonkey](#) is an online survey development cloud-based software that allows to conduct consultations in a single form. With this tool it is possible to create surveys benefitting from a rich range of customizing features, gather feedback via weblink, email, mobile chat, social media. The interface automatically analyses the consultation results and gets powerful analysis features, such as charts and tabs. Results can be easily exported to many formats such as CSV, XLS, PDF, PPT, and SPSS and shared or published online. This tool is not free, but offers several flexible plans and it exists in different languages.