

# Composition and initiation of agricultural innovation platforms

Iddo Dror

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# Objectives of the module

The main aims of the module are:

- To introduce the process of setting up and implementing an effective innovation platform
- To provide an overview about the process of stakeholder analysis
- To examine the question of equity and power dynamics in innovation platforms

# How to set up innovation platforms

- Innovation platforms can be formed at three levels - operational (local), intermediary and national levels.
- They may deal with different sectors such as livestock, food crops, horticulture, and natural resources among others and may have different objectives.
- All however deal with common problems found in a specific sector or sub-sector for which solutions depend on more than one actor.

(Source: Schut et al., 2013)





# How to set up innovation platforms



- Innovation platforms can be set up in different ways. However, for it to be functional and effective, an innovation platform must have:
- Cohesion
- Unite stakeholders on the commodity or system in which there is mutual interest
- Potential to meet the interests of individuals on board

(Source: WorldBank, 2012).

# Formation of innovation platforms

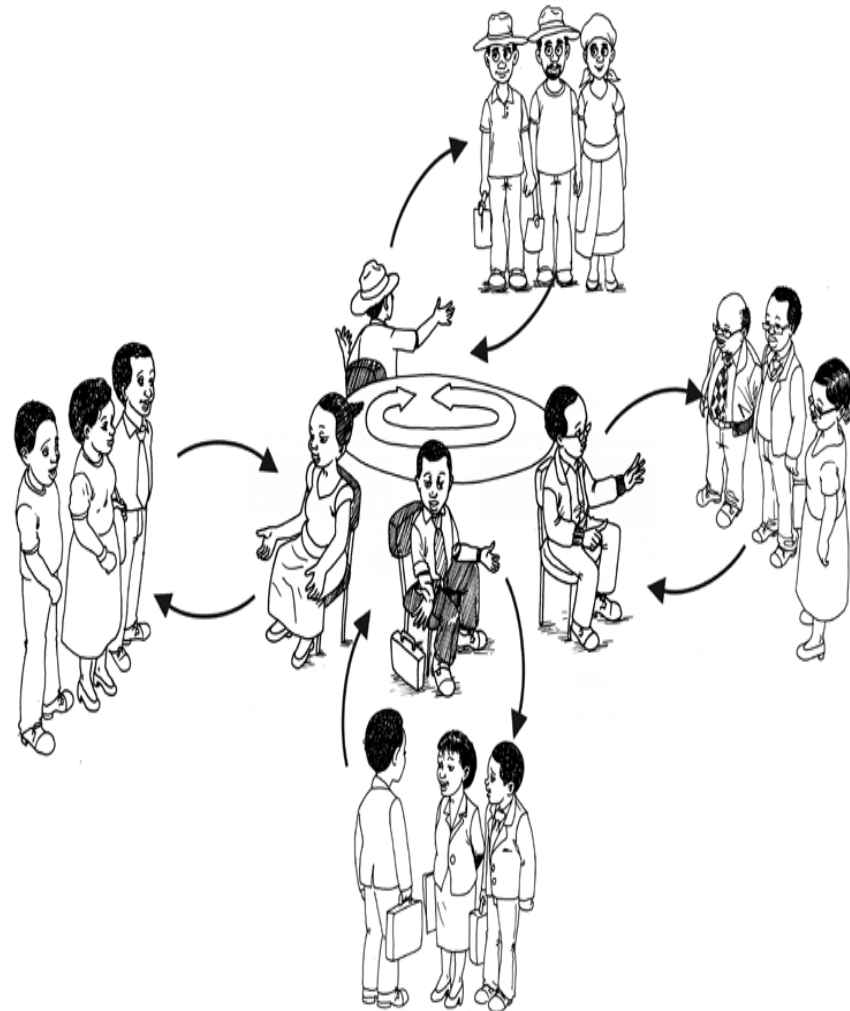
Formation of Innovation platforms falls into three broad phases

- Engaging with stakeholders (this includes initiation and visioning)
- Planning, learning and assessing (includes establishment and management).
- Ensuring sustainability (includes management and sustainability measures ).

(Source: World Bank, 2012)

# Initiation and composition of innovation platform

- At each of these phases of the innovation process, the aim is to change the role of the participants from interest to active collaboration and finally ownership and leadership.
- The role of research and development organizations changes from initial leadership to facilitation of the process and finally to providing backstopping when and as required .



(Source: WorldBank, 2012)

# Initiation and composition of innovation platform

- The initiation phase is the entry point into starting off the actors' interaction process in an IP.
- The initiation of an IP is done by an innovation broker who is also referred to as a leader or initiator.
- Initiation should be done with due consideration of various elements which have a bearing on interactions that take place in the later phases of the platform.

# Guiding principles of the innovation process

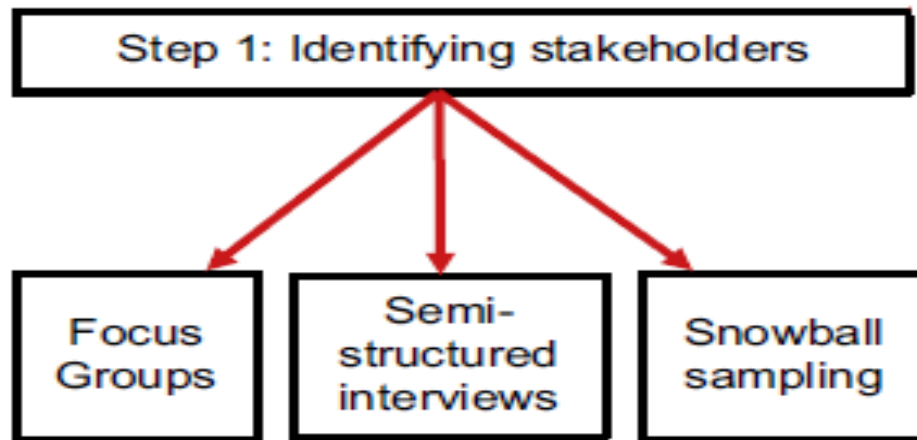
- Innovation is a multi-stakeholder process involving not only researchers, extension workers and farmers, but many other value chain actors and value chain supporters.
- Different stakeholders hold different kinds of knowledge.
- Innovation is an on-going, evolutionary process.
- The context matters in terms of enabling or constraining innovation processes.





# Stakeholder Analysis

## Identifying stakeholders



# Stakeholder Analysis

## Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

### What is a FGD?

- A homogeneous group of six to fifteen people led through an open discussion by a skilled moderator.
- Uses a discussion guide comprising no more than 10 open-ended questions - includes suggested probes to be used to ensure the topic is explored in depth
- Moderator probes until full range of ideas and opinions explored (45 – 90 min)

# Stakeholder Analysis

## Semi-structured Interviews

### What is a semi-structured interview?

- An interview conducted in person between an interviewer and a respondent.
- Many questions are open-ended and the interviewer may stray from the interview guide if there is a chance of uncovering unanticipated insights.
- Interviews usually tape recorded so that responses can be quoted verbatim.

# Stakeholder Analysis

## Snowball sampling

### What is a snowball sampling?

- A (non-probability) sampling technique used by researchers to identify potential respondents in studies where they are hard to locate
- Similar to chain referral
- Each respondent interviewed is asked to nominate another person with the same profile.

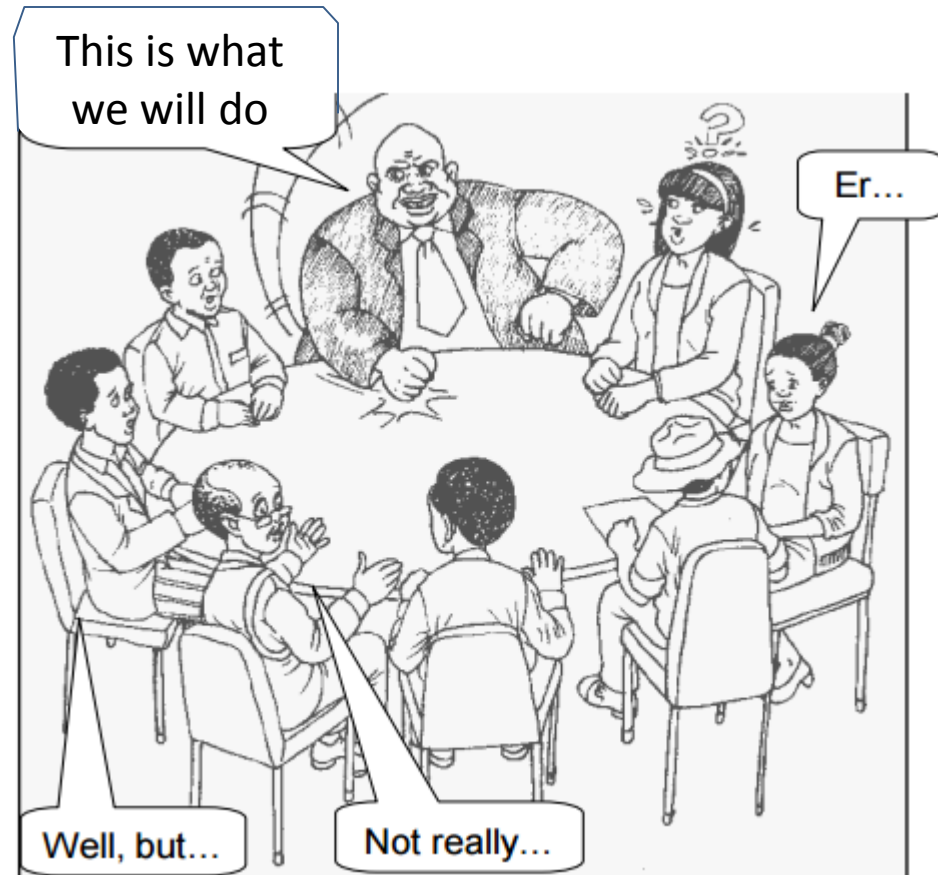


# Stakeholder Analysis

## Functions

### Functions of Stakeholder Analysis

- To identify existing conflicts between stakeholders to ensure that they are not exacerbated by future work.
- To understand power dynamics to enhance the transparency and equity of decision-making
- To understand agendas of members





# Stakeholder Analysis

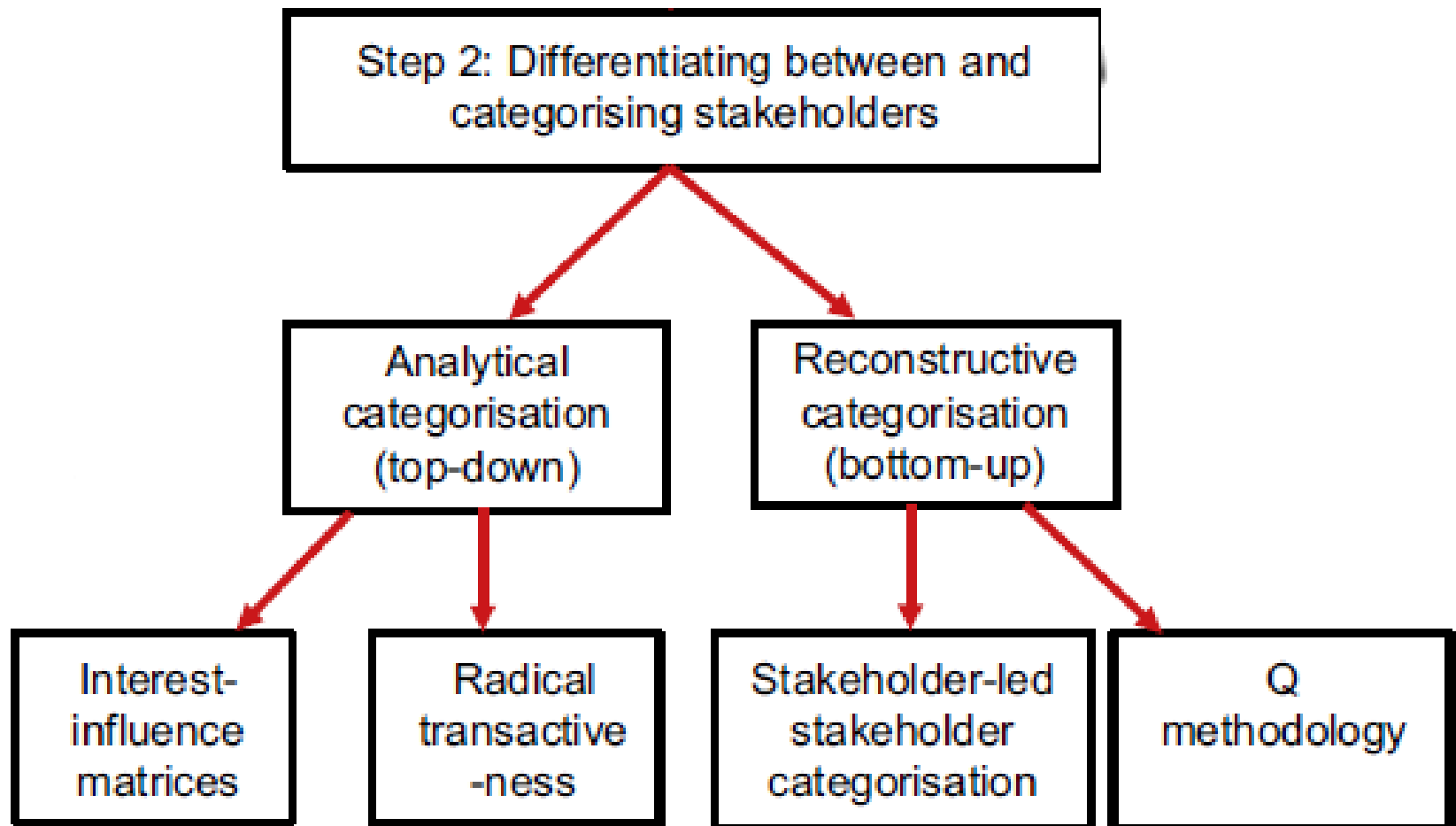
## Identifying stakeholder interests

### Questions to ask:

- What are the stakeholder's expectations of the IP?
- What benefits are there likely to be for the stakeholders?
- What resources will the stakeholder wish to commit (or avoid committing) to the IP?
- What other interests does the stakeholder have which may conflict with the goals of the IP?
- How does the stakeholder regard others in the list?

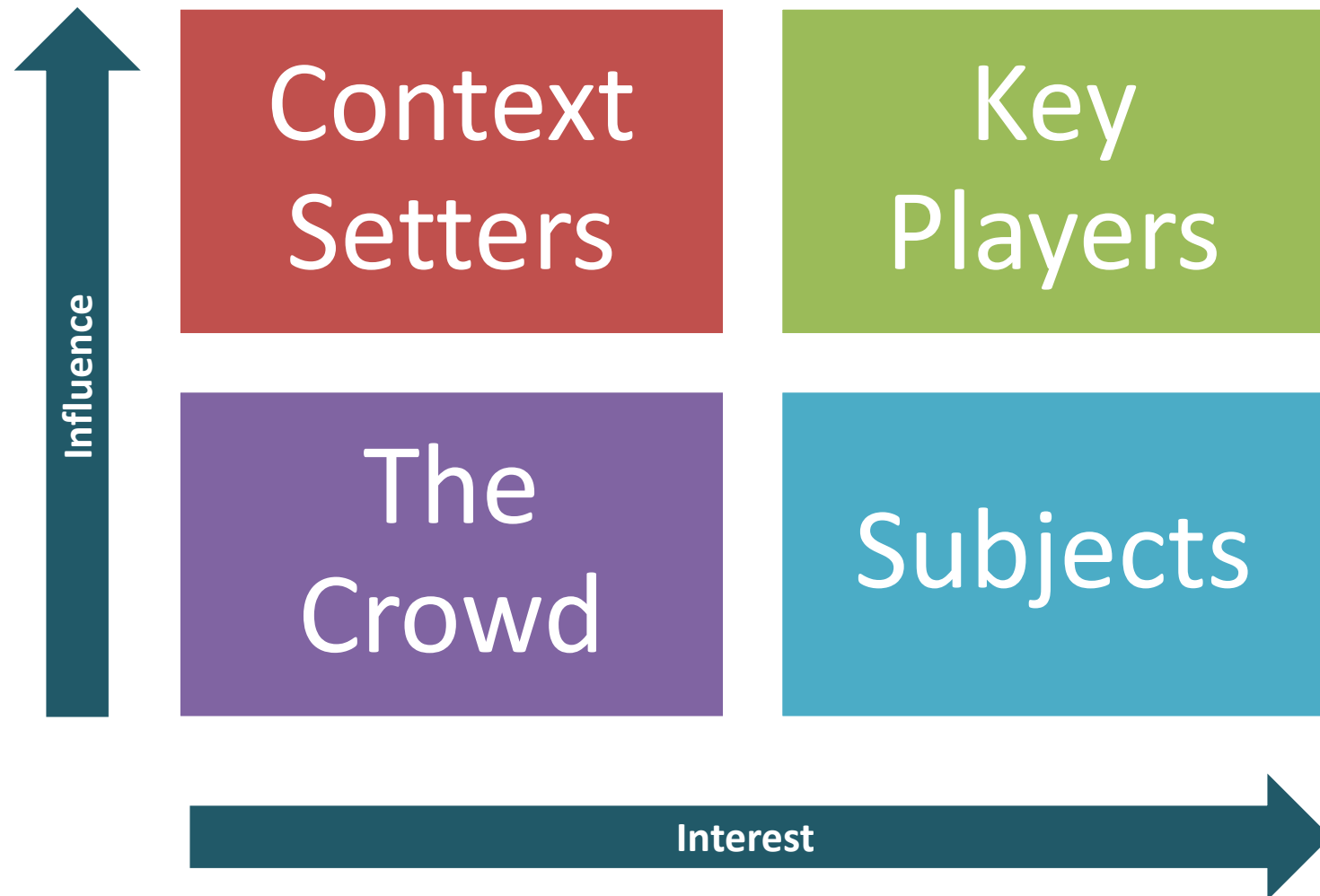
# Stakeholder Analysis

## Tools for categorising stakeholders



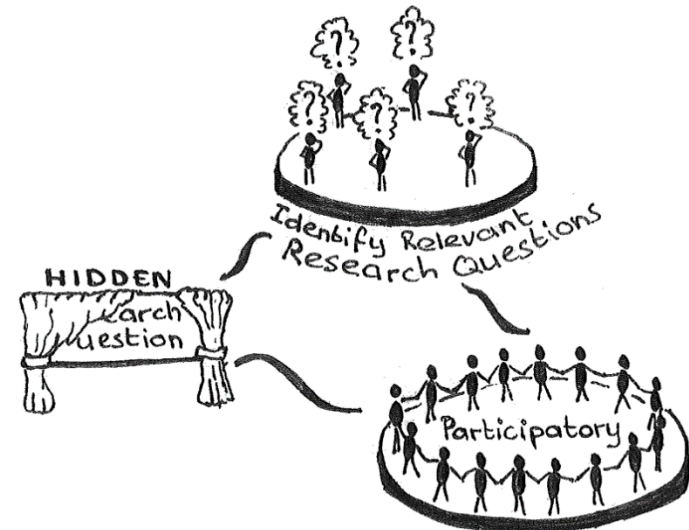
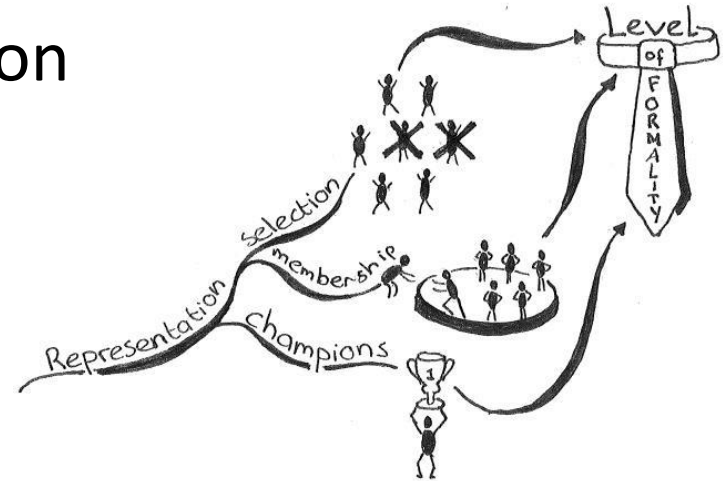
# Stakeholder Analysis Tools

## Power-Interest Grid



# Composition and initiation of platforms

1. Representation and composition
2. Common objective
3. Relevant research questions



# Representation and composition

- Build on existing networks or create new ones?

How did you handle this in your platform?

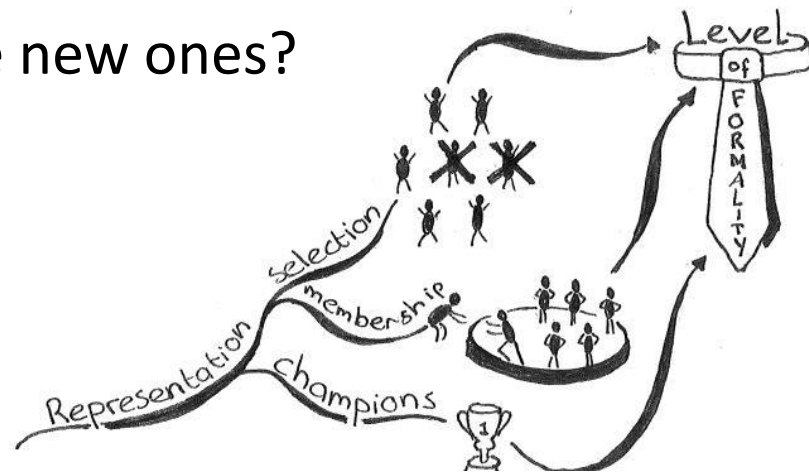


Table 3. Pros and cons of building on existing networks and creating new networks

	Pro's	Con's
<b>Building on existing networks</b>	Existing networks can form the basis for nested platforms, supporting scaling up <sup>1</sup>	Existing networks that are characterised by a strong hierarchical social and political structures may be less supportive to participatory approaches <sup>3</sup>
	Existing institutional arrangements can support joint action <sup>1</sup>	Existing institutional arrangements with vested authority can hamper joint action <sup>1</sup>
	Platform formation can be rather quick when involving existing leadership <sup>2</sup>	Risk of reproducing prejudices and asymmetric power-relations <sup>1, 3</sup>
<b>Creating new networks</b>	Potential to re-structure (existing) institutional arrangements	Relatively high transaction costs (time and effort) <sup>1</sup>
	Potential to re-structure existing power relations	Can be seen as 'competing forces' by existing networks <sup>1</sup>

Sources: <sup>1</sup> Steins and Edwards 1999; <sup>2</sup> Tenywa et al. 2011; <sup>3</sup> Cullen et al. 2013a



# Common objective

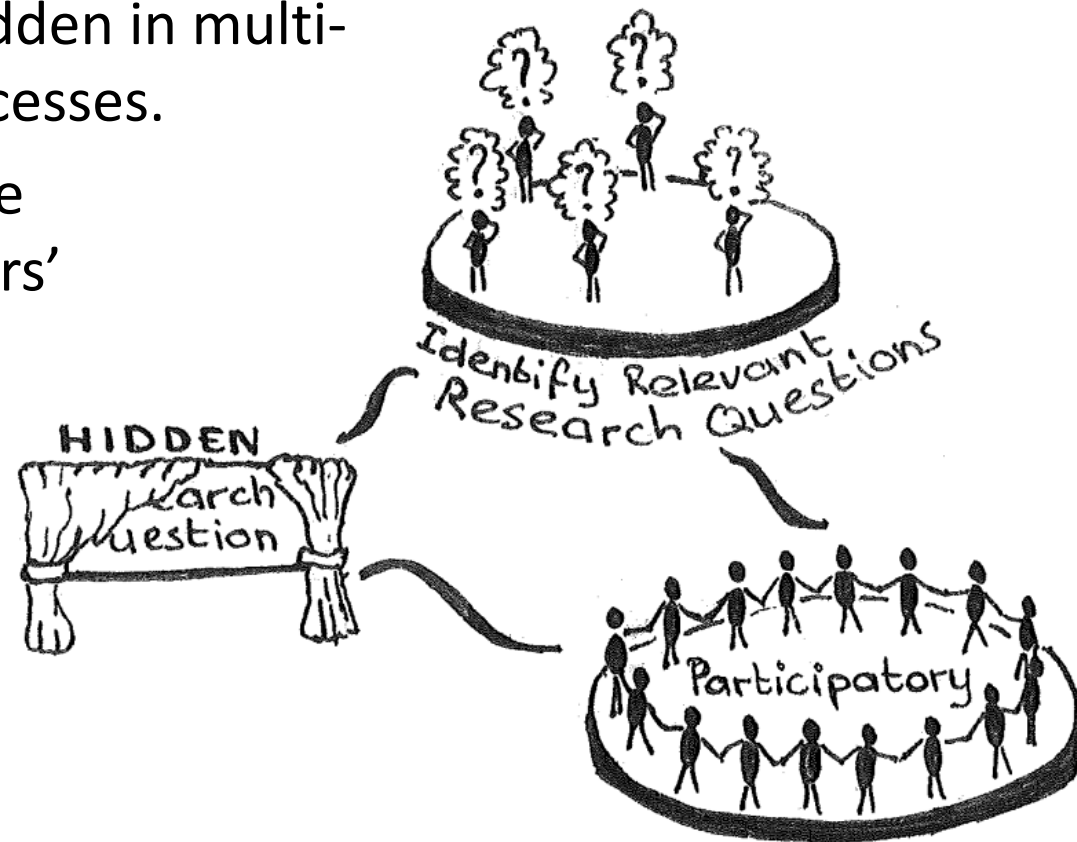
An innovation platform often needs a common objective in order to function effectively.

Setting a common vision objective of an innovation platform does not happen 'naturally', but is value-driven, and usually achieved through visioning and foresight exercises.



# Relevant (research) questions

- Important to involve all stakeholders and give them opportunities to articulate their demands - create “safe spaces”.
- Research questions often hidden in multi-stakeholder negotiation processes.
- Participatory methods can be useful to identify stakeholders’ needs.



# Role of researchers in the composition and initiation of platforms theme:

- support stakeholder mapping,
- make choices and the underlying assumptions of selection on power and equity explicit.
- undertake capacity development to ensure a common understanding on innovation platforms
- platform objective is often defined within a project proposal, before stakeholders have been consulted. This bears a risk of dominance by researchers and project management, unless they make underlying project assumptions explicit to platform members.
- what to do when the platform objective differs from the (initial) project vision and research agenda.
- Supporting stakeholders in expressing their needs and translating these needs into relevant research questions

# Key questions on composition and initiation of platforms theme:

1. Does the innovation platform build on existing networks or will new networks be created?
2. Who selects representatives? And how? Is diversity among constituencies, e.g. farmers, taken into account?
3. When innovation champions are included, on what grounds and with what purpose?
4. How and by whom is the objective of the platform defined?
5. Have stakeholders' ideas been included in the vision?
6. What to do when the platform objective differs from the (initial) project vision?
7. Are stakeholders sufficiently empowered to articulate their demands?
8. How and by whom are research questions identified? How to deal with demands that lie outside the project and research scope?
9. How, where and by whom is research conducted?
10. When and how are research findings made available?



How will  
you use this  
in your  
platform?

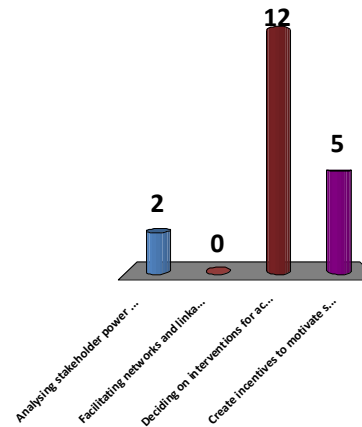
# More information / resources on composition and initiation of platforms\*

- Guidance Note on How to Do Stakeholder Analysis of Aid Projects and Programmes (ODA 1995)
- Social Analysis Sourcebook (World Bank 2003)
- Multi-stakeholder Processes Resource Portal. Stakeholder Analysis (WUR CDI)
- Rapid Appraisal
- Knowledge co-creation portal. Multi-stakeholder processes. Tools - Interests and Roles (WUR)
- Handbook for Participatory Action Research, Monitoring and Evaluation (Chevalier and Buckles 2013)
- Insights into Participatory Video: A Handbook for the Field (Lunch & Lunch 2006)
- Multi-stakeholder Resource Portal. Visioning tool (WUR CDI)
- Knowledge co-creation portal. Multi-stakeholder processes. Tools – Visioning (WUR)



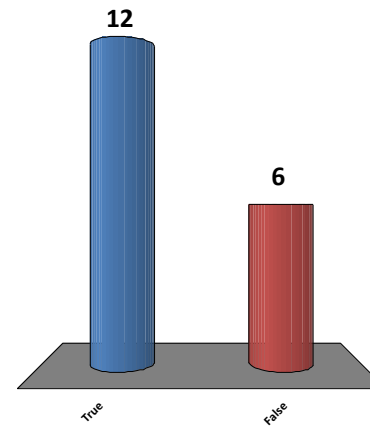
# Which of the following is NOT a task of an IP facilitator?

- A. Analysing stakeholder power dynamics
- B. Facilitating networks and linkages between actors
- C. Deciding on interventions for action research
- D. Create incentives to motivate stakeholder active participation



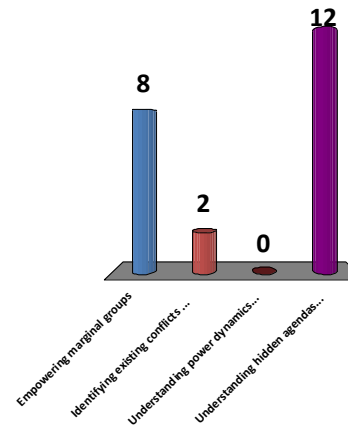
Snowball sampling is a good way for the facilitator to identify stakeholders outside his/her personal network. **True or False?**

- A. True
- B. False



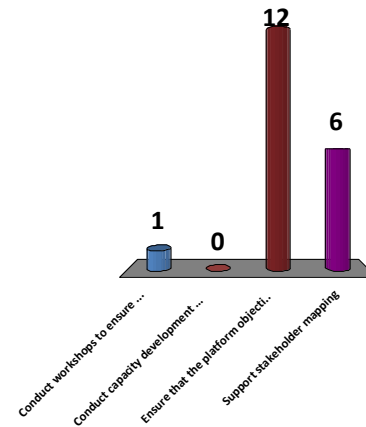
# Which of the following is NOT an objective of stakeholder analysis?

- A. Empowering marginal groups
- B. Identifying existing conflicts between stakeholders
- C. Understanding power dynamics that may influence decision making
- D. Understanding hidden agendas of members



Which of the following is NOT a useful input for a development/research organisation involved in an IP to make?

- A. Conduct workshops to ensure a common understanding of the functioning of innovation platforms
- B. Conduct capacity development exercises to empower specific stakeholder groups
- C. Ensure that the platform objective is consistent with its own funding proposal
- D. Support stakeholder mapping



# More information

This module is associated with an elearning module on 'Understanding, Facilitating and Monitoring Agricultural Innovation Platforms' available at:  
<http://learning.ilri.org/course/detail/24>

The course was inspired by a series of briefs available at:  
<https://cgspace.cgiar.org/handle/10568/33667>

# Thank You

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Box 30709, Nairobi 00100 Kenya  
Phone +254 20 422 3000  
Fax +254 20 4223001  
Email [ilri-kenya@cgiar.org](mailto:ilri-kenya@cgiar.org)

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