

# Successful Stakeholder Collaboration in Health Systems Evaluations - From Theory to Practice

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## Background

**Successful stakeholder engagement** is recognized as an essential component of an evaluation. Starting from scoping, to planning, data collection, analysis, and reporting, stakeholders play an essential role in evaluation. This interactive poster explores factors that determine successful stakeholder engagement in complex health systems evaluations, and evaluators attitude and current practice in stakeholder engagement.

## Who are stakeholders?

The definition of "stakeholder" in evaluation often varies based on the context of the program and practitioner. **Stakeholder** refers to an individual or group who is responsible for or affected by the decisions that can be informed by evaluation evidence. In healthcare setting this includes:



Patients



Clinicians



Family



Governance/Managers



General Population



**Primary stakeholders**<sup>1</sup> are a subgroup of stakeholders that includes a) people who have decision authority over the program, including other policy makers, funders, and advisory boards; and/or (b) people who have direct responsibility for the program, including program developers, administrators in the organization implementing the program, program managers, and direct service staff.

## What factors impact stakeholder engagement?

From the perspective of the stakeholder, factors that impact stakeholder engagement fall under **three main domains**<sup>2</sup> based on the extensive work by Thompson (2015):

- 1. Organizational domain**
  - Resource allocation
  - The organizational norm
  - Integration of evaluation activities as core functions of the organization.
- 2. Evaluation domain**
  - Clarity of evaluation purpose
  - Stakeholder role clarity
  - Stakeholder empowerment
  - Required time and effort
  - Trust and interpersonal relationship with the evaluators
- 3. Individual domain**
  - Stakeholders' evaluation knowledge and skills
  - Evaluation outcome expectations

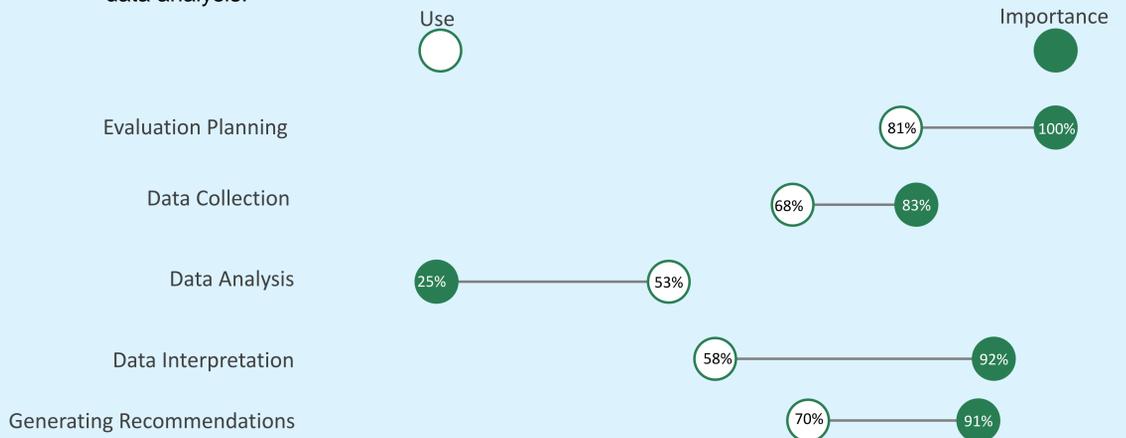
## References

1. Bryson, J., Patton, M., & Bowman R. (2011). *Working with evaluation stakeholders: A rationale, step-wise approach and toolkit*. Evaluation and Program Planning, 34:1-12  
 2. Thompson, A. (2015). *Why get involved in program evaluations? Toward a model of stakeholder involvement motives* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from <https://curve.carleton.ca/system/files/etd/04ea720b-80dc-4b1d-ad21-e13a6f074b94/etd.pdf/bc567c5510ef6d4fcbea5ddeebf03e91/thompson-whygetinvolvedinprogramevaluationstowarda.pdf>

## When is it most important and practical to engage stakeholders?

A short survey about stakeholder engagement was sent out through the Alberta Evaluation Network and reached 53 evaluators across Alberta and British Columbia. Respondents were asked to compare how **important** they felt primary stakeholder engagement was in evaluation and whether they engaged primary in their most recent evaluation (use).

Participants rated most aspects of evaluation as **important** to engage stakeholders, but in their most recent projects were not able to **use or engage** stakeholders in all aspects, except for data analysis.

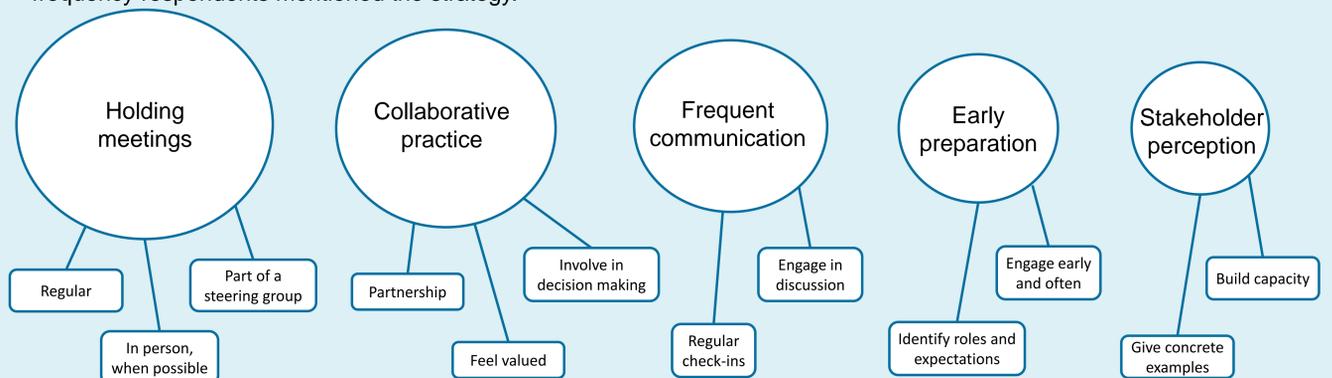


Stakeholder engagement in evaluation planning was consistently ranked as important, although respondents only reported being able to engage stakeholders 81% of the time in their last evaluation project. The largest gap between importance and use was in data interpretation, with 92% of respondents saying it was important, but only 58% of respondents engaging stakeholders in data interpretation during their last project.

In contrast, only 25% of respondents said that engaging stakeholders in data interpretation was important, but 53% of respondents did so in their last evaluation.

## Strategies for Successful Stakeholder Engagement

Survey respondents also provided techniques they use for successful primary stakeholder engagement. These strategies aligned with the evaluation and individual domains expressed in the literature. The size of the bubbles correlate to the frequency respondents mentioned the strategy.



## Dotmocracy: Let us know your experiences!

	How <b>important</b> is it to engage stakeholders in:	In your last evaluation <b>did you engage</b> stakeholders in:
Evaluation Planning		
Data Collection		
Data Analysis		
Data Interpretation		
Generating Recommendations		

### Legend

- Very important/ Often
- Somewhat important/ Sometimes
- Not important/ Rarely

What challenges have you experienced with stakeholder engagement? Leave us a note!