10. Stakeholder-based Impact Scoring

One of 13 infosheets on stakeholder and citizen engagement methods for climate, energy and mobility transitions produced by SSH CENTRE in 2023.

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Stakeholder-based Impact Scoring (SIS) is a participatory assessment method aimed at predicting the impact of a policy or project prior to its implementation by quantifying and visualising the negative and positive impacts on stakeholders. It leads to 'impact scores' based on objective assessments of effects from data or expert views, and the subjective weighting of these effects by the affected stakeholders. SIS is especially helpful when a decision is not about choosing the 'best' option, but about modifying and mitigating a project throughout the course of its implementation.

SIS AT-A-GLANCE

- **Supports decision making, impact assessment and inter-stakeholder learning.**
- **Requires time to contact stakeholders and basic mathematical / spreadsheet skills as well as thematic experts to determine performance scores.**

Benefits

1. Supports decision making and inter-stakeholder learning by providing insights into the impacts of projects and policies and the distribution of benefits and burdens.
2. Provides an alternative to cost-benefit analysis by disaggregating impacts to specific stakeholder groups and does not require a translation of effects into financial terms.
3. Does not require an exhaustive set of mutually exclusive decision alternatives, but only one option and a do-nothing scenario (as opposed to Multi-Criteria Analysis).

Challenges and limitations

1. **Data availability:** Like any model, accuracy of outputs depends on quality of inputs, but data for performance scores can be hard to find and will always be an estimate.
2. **Participation:** engaging a representative sample of participants can be hard and participants may not easily be able to identify or weight all impact factors.
3. **Interpreting output:** *SIS is a tool to explore impacts, it does not 'tell' you what the impact of different options definitely will be.*

Participants

SIS can be used by anyone confronted with multi-stakeholder problems, in particular (local) governments, academics or consultants. As participants, any stakeholder relevant to the project can be included, such as citizen or business interest groups or political actors. SIS has most added value in problems with more than three stakeholders. For a rigorous assessment, experts are needed to provide factual input.

STEPS

01 IDENTIFY OPTIONS

Determine your decision alternative(s) and the do-nothing scenario.

02 IDENTIFY STAKEHOLDERS

Determine which groups are/would be affected by the project.

03 IDENTIFY IMPACT FACTORS

These are factors via which the stakeholders would be affected by each of the options, e.g. noise level or visual impact. Factors can be proposed by the organiser or participants, but the organiser must ensure minimum ambiguity and overlap between the factors.

04 DETERMINE PERFORMANCE SCORES

Describe how each option will perform on each factor and assign a score to the extent to which the effect is negative or positive (typically between -1 and +1). For a rigorous assessment this is done by thematic experts, but for exploratory purposes approximate data can be used.

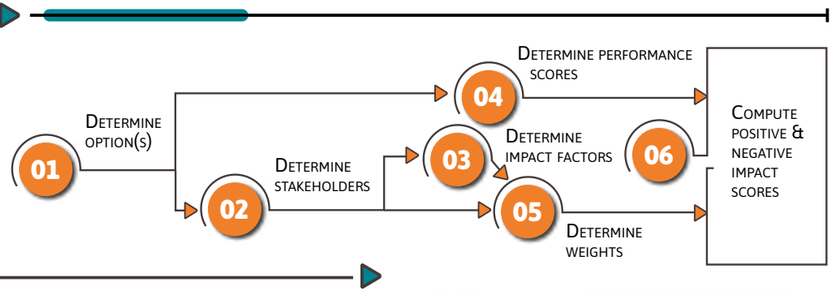
05 STAKEHOLDER ASSESSMENT

Stakeholder groups assess how important each impact factors is to them by assigning weights, in a workshop or via a survey.

06 COMPUTE IMPACT SCORES

Scores for each stakeholder are determined by multiplying the performance scores with the weights. Can be visualised in various ways.

Timeframe: *SIS can be done in a few hours in a workshop setting with approximate data, which is good for exploring a problem, but a rigorous impact analysis requires several weeks for data collection and surveys among larger number of participants.*



OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

SIS results in an overview of positive and negative impacts on the relevant stakeholders, exposing the trade-off between the largest upsides and downsides that the decision requires. As the method is intended to foster better-informed decision making, the scope of the impact is potentially as large as the scope of the project in which it is applied.

ONLINE/ OFFLINE

SIS can be run online (Excel template is available; online version is under development) but in-person workshops are helpful for guiding participants.

RESOURCES NEEDED

Use of spreadsheet software such as MS-Excel is recommended and dedicated templates exist. Skills required are basic digital literacy and familiarity with charts and numbers. If the aim is a rigorous assessment, factual information or data and experts with knowledge of the field are needed to assign the performance scores.

LEARN MORE +

Te Boveldt, G., Keseru, I., and Macharis, C., 2022. When monetarisation and ranking are not appropriate. A novel stakeholder-based appraisal method. *Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice, 156*, pp.192-205.

REAL LIFE EXAMPLE: MOBRU

An elevated motorway in Brussels is heavily used by commuters, but needs costly renovation. It also generates lots of nuisance for neighbouring residents. Would it be wise to tear it down? How would residents, commuters and transport operators be affected? The MOBRU project explored this problem.

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