



RESOURCE

A review of the State-of-the-art for Stakeholder Analysis with regard to Environmental Management and Regulation

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Description / Abstract

Stakeholder analysis (SA) is a widely used decision-support tool. This paper reviews the state-of-the-art of SA within environmental management and regulation. In total, 48 SA studies from the peer-reviewed literature were investigated according to 7 aspects: Topic and purpose; Elements included; Geographical area; Definition of key terms; Methods used; Authors self-evaluation and Inclusion. We find that the SAs conducted cover a broad spectrum of environmental issues. The most applied data-collection methods are snowball-sampling (26 studies, 54%), interviews (30 studies, 63%) and literature reviews (26 studies, 54%). The most examined stakeholder attributes were interests (41 studies, 85%) and influence (34 studies, 71%). We find that there is a lack of clear definitions of key-terms such as “Stakeholder” (19 studies, 40%) and “Influence” (14 studies, 29%). SAs are often conducted by authors from other geographical areas than the case study, which could explain why marginalised stakeholders are only considered in 21 of the studies (44%). In only half of the studies (24 studies, 50%), the authors reflect upon limitations and biases of their own analysis. Among others, three important lessons learned from our study are: 1) Transparency with regard to methodology, results and decisions made is of paramount importance as it otherwise undermines the credibility of SA; 2) Definition of key-terms such as “stakeholder” and “influence” need to be provided in future SAs to avoid misunderstandings; and finally, 3) Clear guidelines on how to perform SA are needed, including how to determine interests and power, and how to document and report findings.

Publication year

2021

Publisher

Journal of Environmental Management

Keywords

Stakeholder Analysis Environmental Regulation regulation

Thematic Tagging

Gender Youth

Language English
[View resource](#)

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C1.03

Source URL: <https://iwrmaactionhub.org/resource/review-state-art-stakeholder-analysis-regard-environmental-management-and-regulation>