

# **Creating Space, Aligning Motivations, and Building Trust: Key Elements of Stakeholder Engagement in 12 Ecosystem Services Case Studies**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Ecosystem services inherently involve people whose values help define the benefits of nature's service. Therefore, it is important to involve stakeholders in ecosystem services research. However, a broad framework to guide such engagement has not been well explored, particularly from a researcher's perspective. Here we use experience from the 12 case studies in the pan-European Operational Potential of Ecosystem Research Applications (OPERAs) project to propose a stakeholder engagement framework comprising three key elements important to consider before getting to specific details such as who to involve and how to involve them: space, motivation and trust. Involving stakeholders in research demands thoughtful reflection from the researchers about what kind of space they want to create, and what will best meet the needs of the stakeholders. In addition, understanding their own motivations, as well as what motivates stakeholders, will help researchers decide when and how to involve stakeholders, identify areas of common ground and potential disagreement, frame the project appropriately, set expectations, and ensure each is able to see benefits of engaging with each other. Finally, as with any relationship, building relationships with stakeholders can be difficult but considering the roles of existing relationships, time, approach, reputation and belonging can help build mutual trust. Although the three key elements and the paths between them can play out differently depending on the particular research project, we suggest that a research design that considers how to create the space in which researchers and stakeholders will meet, aligns motivations between researchers and stakeholders, and builds mutual trust will help foster productive researcher-stakeholder relationships. Our hope is that the insights from this paper will be used in practice by academics looking to meaningfully engage stakeholders in ecosystem services research.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In order to meet sustainability challenges, researchers from different disciplines need to collaborate both with each other and with practitioners and other stakeholders to develop solutions (Future Earth, 2014). Such collaboration promises to increase legitimacy, ownership, and accountability for the problem as well as for the solution options (Lang et al., 2012). While the number of publications on collaborative approaches between and among academics and non-academics has exponentially increased (Zscheischler and Rogga, 2015), such collaborative

settings have also been increasingly expected from environmental research (Küffer and Hirsch Hadorn, 2008).

The reasons for engaging stakeholders in research are many, including gaining knowledge from those most deeply connected to a particular resource, issue or community; achieving buy-in by those most likely to be affected by the research results, and building stronger connections between science, policy and society (Durham, Baker, Smith, Moore & Morgan, 2014). Truly collaborative, transdisciplinary settings seek towards solving true societal problems (Durham et al., 2014) with a strong integration of knowledge from various scientific and societal bodies of knowledge (Lang et al., 2012). The degree of stakeholder integration in these processes can vary depending on the purpose of the collaboration, from low (participatory, multidisciplinary), to fully integrated (interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary), (Tress et al., 2005), with new frameworks involving stakeholders at varying strengths in the process of co-designing, co-producing and co-disseminating knowledge (Mauser et al., 2013).

The need to engage stakeholders in research is particularly true for ecosystem services research, as what can be considered as an ecosystem service inherently involves the perceptions, needs, and values of the people who make use of and/or depend on the ecosystem. The identification of ecosystem services is therefore dependent on the careful assessment of which ecosystem structures and processes contribute to a population's needs and desires (Harrington et al., 2010; Hauck, Go, Varjopuro, Ratama, & Jax, 2012; Spangenberg, Görg, & Settele, 2015). As such, the identification of ecosystem services should go hand in hand with the identification of the stakeholders who rely on and appreciate these services. Yet, many ecosystem service projects are driven by biophysical data and experts, who act as 'superior referees' and in a preliminary stage identify which ecosystem services are relevant to be studied (Spangenberg et al., 2015). Reviewing local to regional ecosystem service case studies, Seppelt et al, (2011) showed that only 39% of the included publications reported some form of stakeholder involvement. Menzel & Teng (2009) warn that current ecosystem service projects 'do not effectively include people's actual values and needs and run the risk of being irrelevant for policy' (p. 908). If we are to integrate insights from ecosystem service research with environmental policy and practice, a better engagement of stakeholders – throughout different stages of the research project – is invaluable.

Although much has been written about the importance of engaging stakeholders and at least one "how-to" guide exists that suggests specific details of how to do so in research (Durham et al., 2014), what is missing is a level of "general principles" that help can provide a common framework to guide the logic and motivation behind such engagement. In other words, what are the key elements that ecosystem services researchers should consider to better understand their goals and motivations for engaging stakeholders and shape their overall approach, before jumping to details such as who to involve or how to involve them? To answer this question, we conducted interviews and focus groups with the scientific experts leading 12 ecosystem services case studies, reflect on their stakeholder engagement processes thus far, and suggest, from the

perspective of the researcher, key elements researchers should consider to set them up for effective stakeholder engagement.

## METHODS

### Case description

We conducted this research within the pan-European Operational Potential of Ecosystem Research Applications (OPERAs) project. OPERAs aims to better integrate ecosystem services into EU policy and practice and includes 12 ecosystem services research case studies across different scales, geographies and ecosystems that are working with stakeholders to better measure and manage ecosystem services (Table 1). The 12 case studies have all engaged stakeholders to various degrees, and with varying amounts of challenge and success. They thus provide an excellent opportunity through which to explore the nitty-gritty, “behind the scenes” aspects of how stakeholder engagement actually plays out – and what researchers wish they would have known before starting the process.

Table 1: The 12 case studies in the OPERAs pan-European ecosystem services research project.

Case Study Region	Project Title	Objective
Balearic	Co-beneficiary management of marine/coastal ecosystems for Blue Carbon on the Balearic Islands	To assess the co-beneficiary management of seagrass ecosystems for blue carbon in the Balearic Islands in order to develop strategies for mitigation of CO2 emissions through conservation of coastal marine ecosystems.
Barcelona	Barcelona's hybrid dunes	To learn to construct and maintain dunes on urban beaches to optimize the flows of ecosystem services such as protection against sea level rise, and to learn how to shape social attitudes to make intensive recreational use of beaches compatible with the protection of the dunes.
Danube	Trans-boundary river and wetland management of the Lower Danube	To identify and raise awareness of the societal, economic, and environmental values of wetlands, and to explore the relationship between restored and sustainably-managed wetlands and socio-economic welfare to inform decision-making in the Danube river basin.
Dublin	Urban-rural fringe of the Greater Dublin region	To research the expression of cultural ecosystem services values in a coastal setting, and to consider the contribution of ecosystem services approaches to consultation within land use planning.
European	Land-based EU policy and ecosystem services in Europe	To evaluate how recent and forthcoming EU policy developments affect the levels of ecosystem services and natural capital in Europe.
French Alps	Land use and ecosystem services in the Grenoble Urban Area	To analyse future land use trajectories and their effects on networks of biodiversity and ecosystem services in the Grenoble urban area, in order to inform territorial planning and management.
Global	Global scale prediction of ecosystem services to inform international policy	To use the ecosystem services concept to identify and communicate geographic areas and management solutions that support the multiple goals of biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation, and feeding an increasing global population.
Mediterranean	Circum-Mediterranean agricultural land abandonment	To assess how changes in the way farmers manage their land in the Mediterranean can lead to changes in human wellbeing, both now and in the future.
Montado	Conservation of cultural landscapes in the region of Montado in Portugal	To employ the ecosystem services and natural capital concepts to combine the productive, ecological, and cultural aspects of socio-ecological systems in order to promote improved management of cork trees and help facilitate the wellbeing of the Montado for generations to come.
Scottish	Multi-scale implementation of environmental policy in Scotland	To match the needs of land use management and biodiversity policy in Scotland by contributing to the science, information, and assessment methods necessary to support policy implementation.
Swiss Alps	Matching regional supply of and demand for mountain ecosystem services	To answer the question: Which policy strategies can balance the supply of and demand for mountain ecosystem services in the future?
Wine	Translating from consumer values to environmental structures and functions	To understand how different players in the wine value chain (producers, retailers, consumers) influence wine production, and thus the ecosystem services provided by vineyard ecosystems, and to promote more sustainable vineyard management to increase ecosystem services.

## Study design

To understand the key elements of stakeholder engagement in ecosystem services research, we asked the researchers leading each of the 12 case studies questions about the following five aspects of the stakeholder engagement process from start to present:

- Stakeholder identification
- Timing of stakeholder involvement
- Methods of stakeholder involvement
- Nature of stakeholder relationships
- Inter-stakeholder interactions

Case study leads were first asked to fill out a short email survey (Appendix 1), after which they were individually interviewed (Appendix 2) either in person or via video-conferencing. Both the survey and the interview questions addressed the same five factors. The survey was aimed at gathering background information and thus asked about the “how” – e.g., “How did you identify stakeholders?” The interviews sought to gain insight into how successful the researchers felt the different aspects of the process were and thus focused on the “how well?” – e.g., “Do you feel that your method of stakeholder engagement worked for you? Was there anything you would have done differently?”

Additional context was provided during two working sessions in which the researchers discussed the key questions that they thought an analysis of stakeholder engagement within ecosystem services research should address, and reflected upon their experiences with stakeholder engagement thus far, as well as through materials such as project reports and websites in which the case study leads have previously discussed their work with stakeholder engagement.

Many of the interview responses pointed to factors broader than the specific topics the interview questions addressed. Thus, a qualitative content analysis of the interview responses was performed to determine groupings and themes. This was done by first capturing individual responses and grouping those that addressed similar topics. We identified these groups as the “components” of stakeholder engagement. The components were then further sorted into higher-level themes, which we identified as the “key elements” of stakeholder engagement.

The initial findings were presented to a group of ecosystem services stakeholders from policy, government, and business for feedback on whether the components and key elements we identified resonated with them. The components were also presented to a group of Lund University researchers, PhD and masters students, who were asked to do their own qualitative analysis to group them into key elements. Based on both groups’ feedback, the components and key elements were revised.

## RESULTS

We identified 12 components of stakeholder engagement, which were further grouped into three key elements – space, motivation, and trust – comprising 3-5 components each (Table 2).

*Table 2: Three key elements and their constituent 12 components of stakeholder engagement in ecosystem services research, identified via qualitative analysis of interview responses from researchers leading 12 ecosystem services research case studies. The “Description” category indicates the topics that comprise each component. The “Considerations” column illustrates different ways, both positive and negative, that the components can play out depending on the context of the project, and is addressed in the Discussion section.*

Key Element	Components	Description	Considerations
SPACE	Convening	Project such as OPERAs serve as means to bring together stakeholders who may not otherwise interact, and/or allow them to get to know each other	+ Good opportunity to build trust between stakeholders - Can lead to conflicts
	Conduit	One actor, such as an NGO, can serve as a go-between for actors that wouldn't otherwise interact	+ Can be beneficial to increase lines of communication and build understanding - Adds an additional layer between actors
	Critical Space	Need for space for critical reflection (e.g., on problem definition, conflicts between stakeholders, etc.)	+ Lets stakeholders' concerns be heard and can give them confidence they're being listened to - Can sidetrack project
MOTIVATION	Values	What some stakeholders value might differ from what researchers or other stakeholders value	+ Understanding what stakeholders value can help align motivations - Can be difficult if values differ from researchers' and/or between stakeholders
	Framing	Stakeholders may not understand the term ecosystem services, but intuitively understand the idea behind it	+ Approaching projects in ways stakeholders can relate to can lead to greater understanding - May stray too far away from ecosystem services, for researchers' tastes
	Goals	Stakeholders and researchers may have different expectations for involvement or influence in a project	+ Stating clear goals can help set expectations - May lead to chicken-and-egg situation, where researchers want to shape project to meet stakeholders' needs, but stakeholders first want to know what researchers can offer
	Benefits	Stakeholders often don't see what they'll get out of participating in a project or why they should stay involved long-term	+ Ensuring stakeholders see some benefit to participating can help attract and retain them - Desired benefits may differ between stakeholders
TRUST	Existing Relationships	Researchers often build on existing relationships and networks or select stakeholders they already know	+ May already have trust and buy-in - Could raise questions about representativeness of stakeholders and/or lead to stakeholder burnout
	Time	Relationships take time to build	+ Can be worthwhile to take the time to build relationships and networks - Time constraints may hinder the ability to build strong relationships
	Approach	Method of engagement depends in part on researchers' desired duration and level of stakeholder engagement	+ In-person methods can be good for deeper engagements - In person methods can be difficult given scale and time constraints
	Reputation	One individual can play an important role in project's start and/or success	+ A key person can be good for making connections and attracting stakeholders - Can backfire if not the right person
	Belonging	Researchers can be seen as outside the community	+ Researchers could potentially be seen as an objective third party - Can make it difficult to be accepted by stakeholders

## Space

The first key element that emerged from our interviews with the case study leads was the importance of **space**. The very existence of an ecosystem services research project creates a space – both conceptual and physical – in which to bring together different people, viewpoints and disciplines, and to foster relationships and communications that might otherwise be missing or contentious. We identified the components of space as *convening*, *conduit*, and *critical space*.

Many case study leads found their projects to be a means to *convene* stakeholders who would not otherwise interact with each other – such as local and national stakeholders in the Danube case study. The Dublin case study lead similarly found that “the process brought together strange bedfellows, which facilitated the social learning and sharing of knowledge across the group.”

Not all stakeholder gatherings are without contention, which led to discussion of the role of particular groups or organizations serving as *conduits*. For example, the Danube case study lead mentioned that their organization, as an NGO, is often a go-between for different groups:

“We’ve had some issues with different groups not listening to each other (for example, farmers versus landowners, or residents thinking that scientists are from another world) but different groups can act as a neutral third party. For example, scientists can talk to an NGO and residents will talk to an NGO so the NGO becomes a conduit. Similarly, scientists can talk with both farmers and landowners even though the farmers and landowners may not talk to each other.”

Case study leads also discussed the importance of having a space for *critical* discussion, either about stakeholders’ different goals and agendas or about the concept of ecosystem services itself. In the Dublin case study, “Stakeholders did have strong and different concerns, but saw the project workshops as a way to air their concerns and appreciated that someone cared what they had to say. The stakeholders saw conflict as OK.” The Scottish case study lead observed, “There has to be a place for critical assessment and criticism. Not everyone likes the ecosystem services concept. For some, it’s about better resource management, not just about ecosystem services. Acknowledging this and providing a space for critical discussion opened the floor wider.”

## Motivation

Another key element that emerged from our interviews was that stakeholders need to have some intrinsic **motivation** for wanting to get and stay involved in a project and, relatedly, that their involvement is more likely if they see that the project addresses something they care about. We identified the components of motivation as *values*, *framing*, *goals*, and *benefits*.

A number of case study leads mentioned the importance – and challenges – of understanding what stakeholders *value* and adapting research approaches to those values. Inherent in this was the recognition that these values often differ between stakeholders, as well as between stakeholders and researchers. For example, as the Barcelona case study lead found, “Community residents may care about sand dunes more for flood protection than biodiversity. The researchers’ goal of building and protecting dunes to conserve biodiversity can still be accomplished, but we may need to change what benefits to emphasize so they resonate with residents.”

Understanding values helped researchers *frame* the work in terms to which stakeholders can relate. In many cases the term “ecosystem services” did not resonate with stakeholders even though they intuitively understood the concept. For example, the Swiss Alps case study lead found that “residents intuitively get ecosystem services but not if you use that word. You have to connect it to their reality – e.g. you’re benefiting from this thing, this is your ecosystem service.” The Wine case study had the most success engaging a leading wine retailer when the researchers were able to speak the “language of business” and frame their discussions using terms reflected in the retailer’s own sustainability-related publications.

Differences in values and the importance of framing also led to discussion of *goals* – particularly the importance of determining what the researchers’ goals are and when and how much they may be determined or influenced by the stakeholders, which can help set appropriate expectations. The Wine case study struggled with a chicken-and-egg situation in that “the research partners were eager to meet the needs of stakeholders, but stakeholders seemed to want a clear idea of what research could offer them before they decided to engage.” The French Alps case study “made changes along the way based on stakeholder input to ensure we produced research for them.” On the other hand, the Global case study, which builds on models whose parameters and inputs were largely defined, had less of a role for stakeholders in influencing the research direction.

Many case study leads referenced struggles to keep stakeholders engaged, noting that stakeholders are often asked to give a lot of themselves and thus need to understand what *benefits* they will get out of participating in a research project to maintain their engagement. The Montado case study lead found that “the most difficult thing is getting people to workshops. Either they don’t know what they’ll get out of it or they’re burned out because they get called for lots of different workshops and often don’t see any results or feedback after the workshops.”

## Trust

The third key element that emerged from our interviews was that of building **trust** between researchers and stakeholders. We identified the components of trust to include *existing relationships, time, approach, reputation and belonging*.

Many of the case study leads mentioned that they benefitted from having pre-existing relationships with their stakeholders. In the Swiss Alps case study, “We could profit from a parallel project in which the coordinator and the principal investigator have been in touch with these people and been working in the study region for years. We believe that this continuity is one of the success factors of stakeholder engagement in our project.” The European case study lead similarly found that “knowing the people was a great advantage for getting them to participate – without this, we would not have gotten this high-level group together.”

Relatedly, many case study leads referenced the *time* it takes to build relationships. The French Alps case study lead reflected, “The important thing is to build the network; once you have this, you can go to them with other projects and questions. We have spent a lot of time building relationships and as a result have had the same people involved since the beginning. It is very time consuming but worthwhile.”

The *approach* to building relationships with stakeholders was also identified as important, namely the importance of tailoring the approach to the desired level and duration of stakeholder engagement. A number of case study leads talked about the importance of meeting people in person, particularly if they were seeking deeper or longer-term engagement. The Scottish case study leads built an entire community of practice for ecosystem services work beyond just their OPERAs project before even developing their project ideas, the result of which is “we now have a pool of stakeholders who trust us and will come to us.”

Many case study leads discussed the important role of a key person or organization whose *reputation* can help make or break a project. The Mediterranean case study lead “had a strong relationship with one key contact (an agronomist), who has helped us be able to build out a group with strong relationships.” The lead for the Barcelona case study had a strong track record of success, having won an international prize for a previous project, which helped the current project go forward, in part because “it was seen as low risk; you can bet on a person who has done a good project.” The Balearic case study lead was “surprised at how willing people with whom we didn’t have a previous relationship were to engage” and reflected that it could have been in part because the researchers are part of a well-respected research institution.

Relatedly, several case study leads talked about the importance of being perceived as belonging to the local community. In the Swiss Alps case study, “We did in-person surveys using students born in the same area with the same dialect, which worked very well. Also, our first workshop had a researcher with close connections to the area and the people, which attracted a lot of attendees.” The Wine case study lacked this, with the case study lead reflecting, “I felt I was viewed a bit suspiciously as an outsider. It was hard to explain that I was from California, now based in Sweden, and wanting to study English wine.” However, both the Scottish and Montado case study leads saw ways to overcome this, with the latter noting, “since the goal of our project is to help

influence management decisions at the farm level, approaching stakeholders with the support of the landowner or land manager may be worthwhile.”

## DISCUSSION

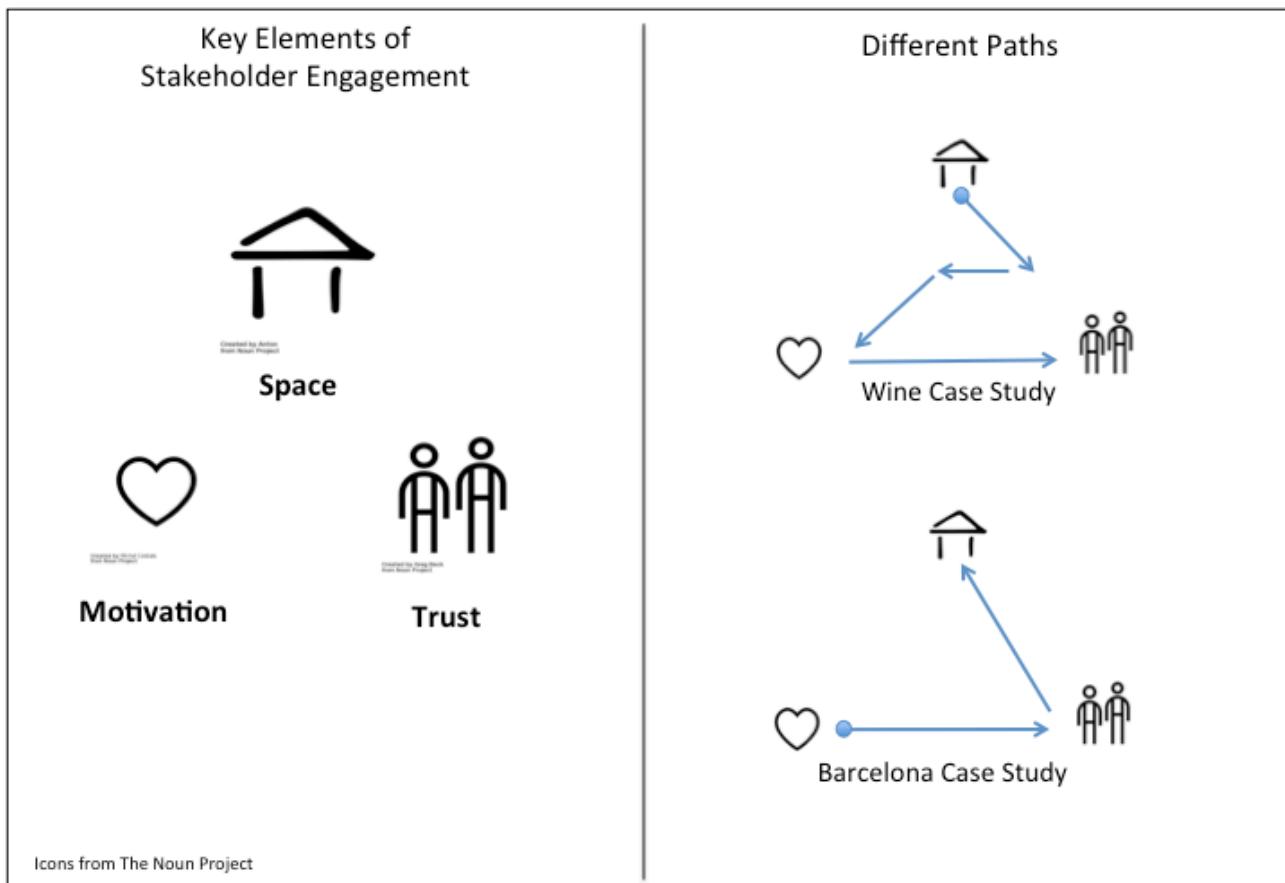
From the interview responses it became clear that many of the experiences researchers had with particular aspects of stakeholder engagement stemmed from other, bigger-picture factors. For example, when asked whether they felt a chosen method of engagement such as a workshop was successful, researchers mentioned challenges not with the workshops themselves but stemming from that fact that stakeholders were not familiar with the ecosystem services concept or that the researchers’ focus didn’t align with what the stakeholders cared about. Similarly, some of the struggles with engaging particular stakeholders were seen to be more the result of lack of clarity about what the researchers could offer the stakeholders rather than characteristics of the stakeholders themselves.

Many of these challenges likely could have been minimized or avoided had the researchers had a common framework to guide their overall stakeholder engagement approach before getting to more specific details such as what sorts of engagement methods to use and whom to involve. We propose that the key elements of space, motivation, and trust, and their associated components, can serve as this framework.

The relationships between the key elements of space, motivation and trust are complex and context-dependent, and many of the elements build on each other. For example, bringing together stakeholders with different viewpoints (space) may in turn build trust with the researchers and increase the stakeholders’ motivation for wanting to participate in a project. On the other hand, stakeholders may not be willing to come together (space) if they do not already have a relationship with the researchers (trust). Indeed, depending on the context their project, researchers followed different paths to create space, align motivations and build trust (Figure 1).

In Figure 1 we illustrate two examples of how the paths through the three key elements of stakeholder engagement can vary. In the wine case study, which was a new project, the space existed (in the form of the research project) but the researchers lacked relationships with stakeholders. In trying to build these relationships, the researchers realized that their own goals were not entirely clear, and thus it was difficult to align motivations with potential stakeholders. The researchers went back and clarified their goals, and then worked to build trust with a new group of stakeholders. For the Barcelona case study, the researchers’ motivation (building dunes) was clear. The researchers then worked to build trust with separate groups of stakeholders, namely the administration and local residents. With that trust established, the exemplar is now looking to bring those groups together (space).

Figure 1: The three key elements of stakeholder engagement (space, motivation and trust) and the paths between them can play out differently depending on the context of the particular research project. The three key elements are the result of qualitative analysis of interview responses from the leaders of 12 ecosystem services research case studies about their experiences with stakeholder engagement.



To this end, it is perhaps also not surprising that the same components of stakeholder engagement can play out either negatively or positively depending on the particular project. For example, in terms of creating space, responses were mixed as to whether it was a good idea to bring together stakeholders who might have opposing viewpoints. Some researchers strategically engaged different groups of stakeholders at different times to keep discussions and project progress from getting sidetracked, while others found that their project provided a venue in which traditionally opposing stakeholders could have their differences acknowledged and build understanding.

Similarly, in terms of aligning motivations, depending on the goals of their project, some researchers found it most useful to engage stakeholders right at the beginning in helping define the problem and/or approach, whereas others brought (or wished they had brought) stakeholders in later, after the project had more structure. Researchers also displayed different degrees of flexibility in changing their projects along the way, such as in adjusting their projects be more in line with particular stakeholder needs. For example, the Wine case study added an analysis of wine eco-labels, which was specifically requested by one of their stakeholders.

For building trust, nearly all of the case study leads noted the advantages of working with stakeholders who they already knew, whether to build on existing trust or engage the particular expertise they were looking for. However, this also raised questions about the representativeness of the stakeholders, and whether efficiency or transparency was more important to project success. Another component that varied depending on context was reputation. In the best case, a key person could recruit, engage, and mobilize other stakeholders. However, one case study lead found this approach to be a hindrance when it emerged that the key person identified was actually quite a divisive figure within the local community.

Involving stakeholders in research demands thoughtful reflection from the researchers about what kind of space they want to create, and what will best meet the needs of the stakeholders. In addition, understanding their own motivations, as well as what motivates stakeholders, will help researchers decide when and how to involve stakeholders, identify areas of common ground and potential disagreement, frame the project appropriately, set expectations, and ensure each is able to see benefits of engaging with each other. Finally, as with any relationship, building relationships with stakeholders can be difficult but considering the roles of existing relationships, time, approach, reputation and belonging can help build mutual trust.

Although we have identified some key elements and their respective components of stakeholder engagement in ecosystem services research, it is not possible to generalize and say any one particular approach to such stakeholder engagement is best. Rather, awareness of key questions, issues and considerations and a strategy for addressing them is needed.

## CONCLUSION

Both academics and stakeholders can benefit from insights that encourage more successful interactions between them. While further research could explore the perspective and experience of stakeholders, here we have focused on the researcher's view. We suggest that a research design that considers how to create the space in which researchers and stakeholders will meet, aligns motivations between researchers and stakeholders, and builds mutual trust, will help foster productive researcher-stakeholder relationships. Our hope is that the insights from this paper will be used in practice by academics looking to meaningfully engage stakeholders in ecosystem services research.

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## **APPENDIX 1: Written survey questions**

Each of the 12 OPERAs case study leads were asked to answer these specific survey questions via email.

### *Stakeholder identification*

*How were stakeholders identified?*

*How was it decided who not to include as stakeholders?*

### *Timing of stakeholder involvement*

*At what points in your OPERAs project were stakeholders involved?*

### *Methods of stakeholder involvement*

*What methods did you use to involve stakeholders?*

### *Nature of stakeholder relationships*

*What was the nature of the relationships with these stakeholders before OPERAs?*

### *Inter-stakeholder interactions*

*How did stakeholders interact with each other?*

## **APPENDIX 2: In-person interview questions**

These questions served to guide the in-person semi-structured interviews with each of the 12 OPERAs case study leads.

### Stakeholder identification

*Were your stakeholder identification method(s) successful? Is there anything you would you have done differently? Was anyone not at the table who should have been? Was anyone included who should not have been?*

### Timing of stakeholder involvement

*Were the points at which you brought in stakeholders appropriate? For example, did it make sense to include stakeholders from the beginning to help shape your project? Were new stakeholders identified as the project progressed? Should anyone have been brought in earlier or later?*

### Methods of stakeholder involvement

*Did you feel that your method(s) of stakeholder engagement (e.g. workshops, surveys) worked for you? Did your methods vary by stakeholder?*

### Nature of stakeholder relationships

*How did the status of your relationships with your stakeholders (e.g. whether you already knew them) affect engagement? For new partners, was there sufficient time and venues through which to build trust and understanding to successfully execute the project?*

### Inter-stakeholder interactions

*How did your stakeholders interact with each other? For example, were there any conflicts? Were these stakeholders who had worked together before or did OPERAs bring them together? Did the mix of stakeholders and/or existing relationships/conflicts between stakeholders affect the project (positively or negatively)?*