Stakeholder Engagement: Planning and Budget Resource
December 2015

Purpose: This resource was developed as part of the Society of Practitioners of Health Impact Assessment (SOPHIA) Stakeholder Engagement Working Group. The goal of the resource is to provide health impact assessment (HIA) practitioners with practical tools for planning and budgeting for various activities to involve stakeholders, including decision makers, community members, and others who might be impacted by a decision; and build meaningful stakeholder engagement into their HIA budgets upfront.

Intended audience: HIA Practitioners, stakeholders, and impacted communities.

How to Use This Resource

This resource includes information on common stakeholder engagement activities used in HIAs, including meetings, focus groups, interviews, surveys, and other activities. For each activity presented, we provide a brief overview of the benefits associated with the activity, a summary of cost considerations, and tips for cost savings. In addition, a sample budget worksheet is included for each activity. These worksheets can help practitioners think through potential costs associated with specific stakeholder engagement activities and plan a robust, thorough budget for their project. Common budget items are included in the worksheets and extra space is available for customization.

This resource is meant to serve as a platform for brainstorming stakeholder engagement activities, developing a stakeholder engagement plan, and building stakeholder engagement into an HIA budget, rather than a comprehensive, step-by-step guide for conducting stakeholder engagement. Levels of stakeholder engagement vary greatly across HIA projects based on decision-making timelines, budget restrictions, and stakeholders' preferred level of participation. This resource can be used in collaboration with a Stakeholder Engagement Plan. Additional stakeholder engagement resources are included at the end of this resource.

This resource was developed using data from 30 HIA projects completed in the US, UK, and Australia. The Stakeholder Engagement Working Group broadly distributed an online survey through the SOPHIA newsletter to learn from practitioners about specific costs and staff time associated with stakeholder engagement activities. The most commonly used activities included meetings, focus groups, interviews, and surveys. Costs and staff time for these activities varied widely across the projects surveyed. We describe this range at the end of the resource to help support planning efforts. We did not collect information about HIA completion date or timeline.

Overview

Stakeholder Engagement Activities

This resource covers four common stakeholder engagement activities in detail: meetings, focus groups, interviews, and surveys. Depending on the specific needs of your project, you could consider other creative methods to engage and involve important stakeholders. Other activities have a range of costs, and could include:

- Designing and maintaining a website, blog, or email listserv to keep stakeholders informed about HIA progress, host online surveys, or share updates about the project
- Attending community-hosted forums, street fairs, or community events
- Providing training for stakeholders in HIA methods
- Inviting community members or other stakeholders to join a panel discussion
- Engaging stakeholders in collecting information for the HIA, such as a through a walking audit, park audit, PhotoVoice project, or other community-based participatory methods

Planning for Stakeholder Engagement in your HIA Budget

Stakeholder engagement is a critical component throughout all phases of an HIA. In an online survey created by the Stakeholder Engagement Working Group to inform this resource, HIA practitioners were asked to estimate the portion of their total HIA budgets that supported stakeholder engagement activities. **Results from the practitioner survey highlighted that there is no standard one-size-fits-all approach to budgeting for stakeholder engagement; however, the following general themes emerged:**

- Anecdotally, we often hear that practitioners regret underestimating the amount of staff time and other resources required for authentic, purposeful stakeholder engagement. Of practitioners surveyed, 27% indicated that their actual costs were greater than the original budget.
- Projects with restricted budgets or timelines, such as rapid HIAs, typically include a lower budget for stakeholder engagement. For projects with a total budget less than $75,000, most practitioners reported spending between four and 14% of their total budget on stakeholder engagement, although one project spent as much as 25% of a $63,000 project budget on stakeholder engagement.
- Projects with larger budgets or longer timelines generally budgeted more for stakeholder engagement. Three of five HIAs with a total budget over $75,000 devoted 30-44% to stakeholder engagement methods, while the remaining two of five spent 2-5% on stakeholder engagement.
- For some projects, practitioners may choose to subcontract with community-based organization, faith-based organizations, or other groups to plan, manage, and conduct stakeholder engagement activities. In these cases, anticipated stakeholder engagement costs should be included in subcontract or consultant lines of HIA budgets.

This data reflects findings from the field as of September 2015. Through careful, thoughtful advanced planning, HIA practitioners can budget effectively for the most appropriate stakeholder engagement activities for their unique projects.

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Meetings

To help plan your budget for meetings with stakeholders, consider the goals and expected outcomes of your meetings. To begin, consider answering the following questions:

1. How many staff or project team members will attend meetings?
2. Which stakeholders will attend the meetings? Will you need separate meetings for your project team, advisory or steering committee members, and community members? How will you recruit meeting participants and track RSVPs?
3. What are the goals for your meetings? Do you plan to collect data, actively engage stakeholders in decision-making, or briefly share project updates? Will you present a PowerPoint or distribute any resources?
4. How many meetings will you need? Are you planning regular check-in meetings with your advisory committee, or a one-time community forum?
5. Are in-person meetings preferred, or can any meetings be conducted over phone or webinar?
6. How long will your meeting(s) be? Will you need a full day or more, or only an hour or two? Will you need to provide people with meals or light refreshments?
7. Will you or your meeting participants incur travel and lodging expenses?

Costs to Consider

Staff time to prepare, host, facilitate, and follow-up, including:
- Identifying and recruiting participants and following up with participants after meetings, including sharing resources or making new connections
- Preparing presentations and activities
- Developing meeting agendas and distributing summary notes following meetings
- Planning meeting logistics, including locating a suitable meeting space, ordering food, and coordinating audio/visual needs
- Traveling to and from meeting locations

Meeting space and supplies, including:
- Venue rental, food, and materials, such as flip charts and markers
- Audio/visual needs, such as projectors and microphones
- Gift cards or other incentives, such as childcare or parking reimbursement

Communications before, during, and after meetings, such as:
- Designing and printing materials or recruitment flyers
- Developing a press release
- Phone conference lines and webinar programs
- Recording or transcribing meetings
- Translation and interpretation

Sample budget worksheet: Meetings

Staff time (per meeting)

Activity	Staff member	Hours	x	Hourly rate	=	Cost / meeting
Example: Invitation/RSVP tracking	*John Smith*	*3*	*x*	*$15/hour*	*=*	*$45.00*
			x		=	
			x		=	
			x		=	
			x		=	
Total staff time costs per meeting					**=**	

Travel costs (per meeting)

Trip description	Cost description	# of trips		Trip cost		Cost / meeting
Example: Drive to meeting location	*20 miles roundtrip @ $0.56/mile*	*2*	*x*	*$5.20*	*=*	*$10.40*
			x		=	
Total travel costs per meeting					**=**	

Venue and supplies (per meeting)

Item	Description	Qty.	x	Cost estimate	=	Cost / meeting
Venue rental			x		=	
Food and beverages			x		=	
Audio/visual and technology			x		=	
Materials (e.g. flip chart, pens)			x		=	
			x		=	
Total venue and supply costs per meeting					**=**	

Communications (per meeting)

Item	Description	Qty.	x	Cost estimate	=	Cost / meeting
Material design and printing			x		=	
Phone or webinar costs			x		=	
Transcription/recording			x		=	
Translation			x		=	
			x		=	
Total communications costs per meeting					**=**	

Other costs (per meeting)

Item	Description	Qty.	x	Cost estimate	=	Cost / meeting
Incentives/paid stakeholder time			x		=	
			x		=	
			x		=	
Total other costs (per meeting)					**=**	

(add the light blue total sums) → **Total costs per meeting**

x Number of meetings x

= Total meeting costs =

Focus Groups

To develop a budget for focus groups, consider your goals for the focus groups and the following questions:

1. Why are focus groups the best method to achieve your goals (in other words, why hold focus groups rather than one-on-one interviews or surveys)? How much time will each focus group take?
2. Will you need a presentation, flipchart, map, or other materials to achieve your goals? Will participants be required to bring anything or do "homework"?
3. What methods will you use to recruit and track RSVPs?
4. Are there specific individuals or populations who should be included? If you'll involve different populations (e.g. students and teachers), will you group participants by population? How many focus groups would you like to hold? How many participants will attend each focus group?
5. Will you provide refreshments, travel support, or incentives to thank people for participating?
6. Will you need to hold focus groups in other languages? Will you have your focus group guide reviewed for cultural relevance and accessibility?
7. Will you record and transcribe focus groups, or rely on notes? Will you need to pay for transcription?
8. Will your focus group approach, guide, and consent form require Institutional Review Board (IRB) review?

COST SAVING STRATEGIES FOR FOCUS GROUPS:

Look for volunteers from the community for low-cost or donated help with translation, interpretation, transportation, and child care services. Free venues, such as libraries or community centers, can reduce focus group costs. If paying for IRB review is an issue, look into local educational institution review boards for free or lower-cost options.

Costs to Consider

Staff time to organize, conduct, and analyze data from focus groups, including:
- Recruiting focus group participants, including developing recruitment flyers, tracking RSVP responses, and reminding participants to attend
- Preparing focus group facilitation guides and facilitating the focus groups
- Selecting a venue and planning for refreshments
- Institutional Review Board (IRB) review, if applicable

Meeting space and supplies, including:
- Venue rental and food
- Flip charts and markers or printed materials
- AV needs, including recording devices
- Additional costs, such as transportation and child care

Communications costs, including:
- Designing a one-page information sheet to recruit participants
- Interpretation, translation, and transcription services

Additional costs to consider may include:
- Gift cards or cash incentives for participants
- Transcription services and qualitative data analysis

Sample budget worksheet: Focus groups

Staff time (per focus group)						
Activity	Staff member	Hours	x	Hourly rate	=	Cost / focus group
Example: Facilitate focus group	*Jane Smith*	*2.5*	*x*	*$20/hour*	*=*	*$50.00*
			x		=	
			x		=	
			x		=	
			x		=	
			x		=	
Total staff time costs per focus group					=	

Travel costs (per focus group)						
Trip description	Cost description	#of trips		Trip cost		Cost / focus group
Example: Participant travel	*Shuttle @ $20/trip*	*2*	*x*	*$40.00*	*=*	*$80.00*
			x		=	
Total travel costs per focus group					=	

Venue and supplies (per focus group)						
Item	Description	Qty.	x	Cost estimate	=	Cost / focus group
Venue rental			x		=	
Food and beverages			x		=	
Materials (e.g. flip chart, pens)			x		=	
			x		=	
Total venue and supply costs per focus group					=	

Communications (per focus group)						
Item	Description	Qty.	x	Cost estimate	=	Cost / focus group
Material design and printing			x		=	
Translation/Interpretation			x		=	
Recording			x		=	
Transcription			x		=	
			x		=	
Total communications costs per focus group					=	

Other costs (per focus group)						
Item	Description	Qty.	x	Cost estimate	=	Cost / focus group
Incentives			x		=	
			x		=	
			x		=	
Total other costs (per focus group)					=	

(add the light blue total sums) → **Total costs per focus group**	
x Number of focus groups	x
Total focus group costs	=

Interviews

The goals and expected outcomes of your interviews can inform decisions about the structure of your interviews, as well as the participants you will interview. Additionally, the format and number of questions in an interview guide will influence the amount of time required for each interview. Consider the following questions:

1. Why are you interested in interviews? Is there a benefit to a one-on-one interview approach over larger group discussions? Who should be interviewed? How will you capture information from a variety of voices on different sides of an issue? How many interviews will you need to conduct?
2. What are your goals for conducting interviews? What information do you hope to obtain? Are you interested only in gathering data, or are you interested in creating videos or other resources from your interviews? Will interviewing certain policy-makers help to create buy-in for the decision as a side benefit?
3. How will you identify and recruit interview participants? Where will your interviews take place?
4. Will you provide refreshments, travel support, or incentives to thank people for participating?
5. What types of questions are best suited to provide the information you are looking for? Will your questions be open-ended, close-ended, or a mix of both? Will you record and transcribe interviews, or rely on notes?
6. What format will be most appropriate for your interviews? Will they be structured, semi-structured, or more of a story-telling opportunity? Will you need different formats or questions for different participants?

COST SAVING STRATEGIES FOR INTERVIEWS:

Bundle in-person interviews with other data collection efforts, if you are off-site. Phone interviewing is free. Be judicious in the number of interviews; more interviews equals more transcription and data analysis.

Costs to Consider

Staff time to prepare, conduct, and analyze data from interviews, including:
- Conducting background research or stakeholder analysis
- Inviting participants and scheduling interviews
- Developing interview guides and questions
- Traveling to interview locations, conducting interviews, and analyzing findings

Equipment and supplies, including:
- Recording devices

Communications costs, including:
- Conference or long-distance phone lines for phone interviews
- Printing materials
- Transcription services

Additional costs to consider may include:
- Gift cards or cash compensation
- Institutional Review Board (IRB) review, if applicable
- Transportation
- Qualitative research software for analysis (Nvivo, Atlas.ti, etc.)

Sample budget worksheet: Interviews

Staff time (for all interviews)						
Activity	Staff member	Hours	x	Hourly rate	=	Cost for interviews
Example: Stakeholder analysis	*Jane Smith*	*3*	*x*	*$20/hour*	*=*	*$60.00*
			x		=	
			x		=	
			x		=	
			x		=	
Total staff time costs for interviews					**=**	

Travel costs (for all interviews)						
Trip description	Cost description	#of trips		Trip cost		Cost for interviews
Example: Travel to interview site	*10 miles @ $0.55/mile*	*10*	*x*	*$5.50*	*=*	*$55.00*
			x			
			x		=	
Total travel costs for interviews					**=**	

Equipment and supplies (for all interviews)						
Item	Description	Qty.	x	Cost estimate	=	Cost for interviews
Audio recording device			x		=	
			x		=	
			x		=	
Total venue and supply costs for interviews					**=**	

Communications (for all interviews)						
Item	Description	Qty.	x	Cost estimate	=	Cost for interviews
Conference line			x		=	
Printing			x		=	
			x		=	
			x		=	
Total communications costs for interviews					**=**	

Other costs (for all interviews)						
Item	Description	Qty.	x	Cost estimate	=	Cost for interviews
Incentives (gift cards, cash)			x		=	
			x		=	
			x		=	
Total other costs for interviews					**=**	
(add the light blue total sums) → **Total costs for interviews**						

Surveys

Many factors, such as the number and format of surveys, can influence the required budget for surveying stakeholders. It may be helpful to consider the following questions:

1. What do you hope to achieve by surveying stakeholders? Why are surveys the best approach to meet your goals? What information do you hope to gather through surveys? Will your survey include close-ended or open-ended questions, or a combination of both? Do you have validated questions or are you piloting new questions in your survey?
2. How will you conduct or administer surveys? Will your surveys take place over the phone, online, on paper, or on smart phones or tablets? If you use paper surveys, will you distribute them in-person or by mail? If you use online surveys, will you email specific survey participants or distribute your survey widely through a listserv, online news post, or other method?
3. Who do you need to survey? How can you identify and reach them? Will you need to translate your surveys into multiple languages? Will you provide incentives to fill out a survey?
4. Will internal staff conduct the surveys, or will you hire external surveyors? Are community organizations better placed to administer the survey?

COST SAVING STRATEGIES FOR SURVEYS:

Online surveys can be a quick and convenient way to reach a large number of participants. If you plan to host your survey online, consider using free software or trial services. SurveyMonkey, for example, offers a free membership. However, online surveys may not be a good fit if you hope to identify survey participants "in the field" (for example, at a health fair or at specific locations, such as fishing docks or grocery stores), and some potential survey participants may lack internet access.

Practitioners can also consider partnering with students at local colleges and universities to develop survey instruments, conduct surveys, and analyze results. Students studying qualitative research methods may be willing to contribute in-kind or low-cost time to a project.

Costs to consider

Staff time to prepare, design, conduct, and analyze surveys, including:
- Preparing survey questions
- Designing the survey and putting it into an online platform, if appropriate
- Soliciting input and feedback on the survey, including its cultural appropriateness
- Recruiting, training, and potentially paying surveyors
- Compiling, analyzing, and summarizing survey responses
- IRB review, if applicable

Equipment and supplies, such as:
- Pens, paper, and clipboards
- Smart phones or tablets
- Food for surveyors or participants

Communications costs, including:
- Online survey platform fees, such as SurveyMonkey or Qualtrics
- Printing paper versions of surveys
- Survey distribution, such as listserv fees
- Translation

Other costs, including:
- Gift cards or other compensation for survey participants

Sample budget worksheet: Surveys

Staff time (for all surveys)						
Activity	Staff member	Hours	x	Hourly rate	=	Cost for interviews
Example: Survey design	*Jane Smith*	*6*	*x*	*$20/hour*	*=*	*$120.00*
			x		=	
			x		=	
			x		=	
			x		=	
		Total staff time costs for surveys			**=**	

Travel costs (for all surveys)						
Trip description	Cost description	#of trips		Trip cost		Cost for interviews
Example: Drive to survey site	*5 miles @ $0.55/mile*	*6*	*x*	*$2.75*	*=*	*$16.50*
			x		=	
		Total travel costs for surveys			**=**	

Equipment and supplies (for all surveys)						
Item	Description	Qty.	x	Cost estimate	=	Cost for interviews
			x		=	
			x		=	
			x		=	
		Total venue and supply costs for surveys			**=**	

Communications (for all surveys)						
Item	Description	Qty.	x	Cost estimate	=	Cost for interviews
Online survey platform fees			x		=	
Survey printing			x		=	
			x		=	
			x		=	
		Total communications costs for surveys			**=**	

Other costs (for all surveys)						
Item	Description	Qty.	x	Cost estimate	=	Cost for interviews
Incentives			x		=	
			x		=	
			x		=	
		Total other costs for surveys			**=**	
(add the light blue total sums) → **Total costs for surveys**						

Additional Resources

General stakeholder engagement resources:

- Society of Practitioners of Health Impact Assessment (SOPHIA) Stakeholder Engagement Tools & Materials (available online: http://hiasociety.org/?page_id=877) presents a list and summary of various stakeholder engagement tools and materials for easy reference
- In 2011, the Stakeholder Participation Working Group of the 2010 HIA in the Americas Workshop presented Best Practices for Stakeholder Participation in Health Impact Assessment (available online: http://www.hiasociety.org/documents/guide-for-stakeholder-participation.pdf)

Society of Practitioners of Health Impact Assessment (SOPHIA) Resources:

- SOPHIA website: http://hiasociety.org/
- Locate an HIA mentor practitioner: http://hiasociety.org/?page_id=133 (membership required)
- The Equity Working Group's Equity Metrics for Health Impact Assessment Practice (available online: http://www.hiasociety.org/documents/EquityMetrics_FINAL.pdf) includes a set of process and outcome metrics related to promoting equity through HIA

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