ClieNFarms Scaling Toolbox

The Actor Tree

The Actor Tree is a tool from the from The Visual Toolbox for Systems Innovation. The tool will help you generate a categorized list of the main stakeholders for your challenge.

Purpose

The Actor tree canvas is a visual tool that helps you identify, list, and categorise the myriad of stakeholders around your project. Stakeholders are depicted as the roots of a tree that will feed and carry out the process of system innovation, represented by the crown of the tree. The trunk, in turn, accounts for your challenge the tool will help you generate a categorized list of the main stakeholders for your challenge.

Expected outcomes of applying the tool

In an interconnected world, projects, services, and products are no longer standalone outcomes but are strongly tied to a network of stakeholders, whether they are farmers, value chain actors, politicians or potential customers. competitors, allies, etc. There is a lot of evidence that engaging that network in your project from the very beginning, leads to better outcomes; it keeps the project from derailing and builds a sense of ownership and belonging, not only to the outcome but also the process.

For this process to succeed, the first and crucial step is to identify the cohort of stakeholders you will potentially engage.

Preparation: What needs to be in place for the tool to work properly

The work can be done 1 person to groups of 10 people. The work will be based on a deep knowledge of the challenge and its context in terms of actors and institutions playing any kind of role or being potentially affected by the project. Essential: an open mind to engage/empathise with actors with opposite interests to ours. The Pentagonal problem can provide useful inputs for this tool.

Step-by-step guide to using the tool (Recipe)

The tool consists of 3 steps:

STEP 1: The Challenge and the Context
STEP2: Chunking Down into Categories
STEP3: Closing Gaps
STEP4: Debrief

Suggested follow-up steps

After having a list of stakeholders, you will need to know them better: their needs, expectations, and possible reactions. You also need to map them out to make their stances and relations clear. Consequently, you can go on with the stakeholder analysis tools such as the enlarged empathy map.

Links and references

The steps and templates related to the Pentagonal Problem are described on pages 21-27 in the Visual Toolbox for System Innovation which can be accessed here: Visual Toolbox for System Innovation - Observatory of Public Sector Innovation (oecd-opsi.org)