



# Reflections on stakeholder engagement

## SUFISA Work-package 5

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# Introduction

- SUFISA is not a multi-actor project, but started at a time when the first round of multi-actor projects was under way.
- It has sought to systematically involve primary producers and other stakeholders.
- SUFISA has had the specific objective of learning from stakeholder engagement.
- Reflect upon the challenges encountered when researchers seek to engage closely with their potential end-users.

# Overview

1. Level of stakeholder engagement
2. Stakeholder feedback
3. Reflections on stakeholder feedback
4. Reflections on researcher engagement with stakeholders
5. Reflections on communication and dissemination
6. Lessons learned from engaging multiple stakeholders

# 1. Level of stakeholder engagement

	Total number of stakeholders reached	1942
<b>Interviews</b>	Number of individuals interviewed	827
<b>Round tables</b>	Number of round table meetings held	31
	Total: round table participants	340
<b>Workshops</b>	Number of workshops held	32
	Total: workshop participants	454
<b>Focus Group Discussions (FGD)</b>	Number of FGD held	37
	Total: FGD participants	321

## 2. Stakeholder feedback

<b>Total number of answered feedback questionnaires</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>1. Was the meeting useful for you?</b>	Very useful	58%
	Somewhat useful	45%
	Not useful	1%
<b>2. Did you learn new things?</b>	Yes	64%
	No	10%
	Difficult to say	23%
<b>3. Did the meeting help you to widen your contacts?</b>	Yes	67%
	No	16%
	Difficult to say	10%
<b>4. Was the meeting organised appropriately?</b>	Yes	85%
	No	2%
	Difficult to say	2%

### 3. Reflections on stakeholder feedback

- Participants were at least ‘fairly satisfied’.
- A useful forum to exchange views, with a neutral facilitator.
- A need to focus more on solutions, rather than identifying problems that are often already well known about.
- Composition of the groups is critical. Key thing is developing a climate of trust and opportunity. Experienced facilitation vital.
- Provide some structure for meetings, but also flexibility.
- Clear guidelines as to what is expected from stakeholders.
- Provide outputs that are of direct relevance and value to stakeholders, rather than simply to the project.

- In the UK, feedback praised the scope for active participant involvement and the importance of having a non-judgmental space in which to freely express opinions:
  - *“Allowing time for reflection and discussion”*
  - *“Excellent mix of views and knowledge exchange”*
- In Greece:
  - *“The opportunity to meet and exchange views”*
  - *“It helped clarify and deepen understanding of the issues”*

## 4. Reflections on researcher engagement with stakeholders

- Engaging stakeholders is difficult!
- Ensure that stakeholder events are framed in relation to current and ongoing debates.
- *“We do not have the time for the type of projects which do not help us find a solution to our key problems”*. (DE report).



# 5. Reflections on communication and dissemination

- Aligning the aims of an international, comparative project with topics that are of interest to potential stakeholders is not easy.
- Make sure that realistic and achievable expectations are discussed with stakeholders early on in the project.
- Important that researchers use appropriate language and phraseology, so that messages are clear and understandable.
- SUFISA results often used, either directly or indirectly, when members of the project team have presented at a variety of fora.

- *“The success of the summary documents and policy briefs suggests the importance of taking the time to convert the lengthy research documents into an accessible and attractive format.”*
- *“The results of the SUFISA project are of great importance for farmers to change their behaviour, to adapt to possible changes and improve operations at a farm level.”*

## 6. Final lessons learned

- Engaging stakeholders right at the beginning of a project helps align aims and enable co-learning.
- Provide funding for stakeholder engagement.
- Recognise the opportunity to expand networks:
  - *“SUFISA has allowed Iddri to expand its network to a much broader range of stakeholders... The VALUMICS project builds on these networks to deepen the analysis of food chains initiated in SUFISA.”*
  - *“Intensive cooperation over several years has led to bonds of friendship being created, which further strengthens the created network of contacts.”*

A scenic sunset over a body of water with mountains in the background and a rocky shore in the foreground. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm orange glow across the sky and water. The sky is filled with soft, dark clouds. The water is calm, reflecting the light from the sun. In the foreground, there are dark, silhouetted rocks and a small structure, possibly a boat or a pier, partially visible.

Thank you!

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