

***kia tūtahi***

***communities and government standing together***



**The Kia Tūtahi Relationship**

**Accord Engagement Guide**

**Supporting government agencies to engage effectively with citizens and communities**

**August 2016**





**Contents**

[Who is the guide for? 3](#_Toc462141745)

[Introduction 3](#_Toc462141746)

[Kia Tūtahi principles 4](#_Toc462141747)

[Strong and inclusive relationships 5](#_Toc462141748)

[Engagement with Māori 6](#_Toc462141749)

[Engagement with Pacific people 8](#_Toc462141750)

[Engagement with ethnic communities 8](#_Toc462141751)

[Engagement with people with disabilities 9](#_Toc462141752)

[Online engagement 10](#_Toc462141753)

[Planning and undertaking an engagement process 11](#_Toc462141754)

[Supportive work environments 16](#_Toc462141755)

[Starting a dialogue in your agency 19](#_Toc462141756)

[Checklist for engaging with stakeholders 19](#_Toc462141757)

# Who is the guide for?

This guide is for the government sector at all levels that interact with communities. If you are new to working with communities, this guide will help you learn about organising consultation processes, working in partnership, and building trusting relationships. The guide also contains information specifically for managers interested in creating workplace cultures that encourage internal and external participation.

The community sector may also find the guide useful, both in their own community engagement, and as a reference guide when working with government agencies.

The guide should not be viewed as a one-stop shop for engagement practices and used in conjunction with other engagement resources. This guide is based on the 2011 Department of Internal Affairs’ publication *A Ready Reference Engagement Guide*.

The Department of Internal Affairs provides community advisory services across 16 regional offices throughout New Zealand, and can also offer advice on approaches to engaging with communities and provide links with key local networks. Further information is available on the Department’s communitymatters.govt.nz website.

# Introduction

This guide outlines the key elements of good practice that government agencies need to follow when engaging with citizens and communities in the development of policy and services. To address complex issues in society, government agencies need to work with community organisations, tangata whenua and businesses. Citizens need to be involved in defining and resolving issues that affect them. Building relationships and engaging others in discussion are, therefore, a vital part of government activity.

The aim of this guide is to make community engagement practices more effective and consistent across government. This guide’s practical advice will support government agencies in implementing the Kia Tūtahi Relationship Accord, which was signed and endorsed by Cabinet on 13 June 2011.

Government engagement with citizens and communities fosters good decision making. By building strong external relationships, you create connections that can easily be drawn on when you need input into your work. By collaborating with others, you can pool resources and skills to achieve mutual goals.

To be effective in your engagement, the challenge is to balance good process, inclusiveness and cost.

# Kia Tūtahi principles

The Kia Tūtahi Relationship Accord between the Government and communities includes the following principles to guide your engagement practices.

Further information about the Accord can be found on the Department of Internal Affairs website:

[www.](http://www/)dia.govt.nz.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **We will respect**  **Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi)** | * we recognise the Treaty as a foundation document of   Aotearoa New Zealand;   * we respect all commitments that parties make under the Treaty; and * we will weave the Treaty through the work we do. |
|  | **We have a collective responsibility to hear and respond to the voices of all:** | * we will reach out to those who are not usually included and respond to the diversity in our communities; * we will take account of the people whose daily lives are affected by our work; * we will work to enable communities to determine their own destinies for the betterment of all; * we will increase opportunities for people to   participate and flourish in their communities; and   * we will champion the principles and intent of the Accord. |
|  | **We will act in good faith:** | * we will do what we say we will do and put in place ways of making this clear to everyone; * we will work cooperatively to resolve issues arising between us; * we will act in the spirit of generosity towards each other; and * we will share our knowledge, celebrate success and learn from our experiences. |
|  | **Our work together will be built on trust and mutual respect:** | * we will be honest and open; * we will develop and promote effective communication; * we will be responsive to each other’s guidance and advice; and * we will respect the different roles and responsibilities we have. |

# Strong and inclusive relationships

The first step towards effective community engagement is to get to know your stakeholders– that is, the people who are interested in, or affected by, your work.

Fostering strong and trusting relationships is important in order to:

* draw the wisdom of a wider audience into your work;
* spread knowledge of your role and interests;
* enhance your understanding of the needs and views of citizens and communities;
* build the trust needed to work together collaboratively; and
* ensure you have networks to draw on when tricky issues need tackling.

## Building networks and relationships

Each work area in an agency needs a database of stakeholders relevant to their particular business. These stakeholders may be in central

and local government, community and voluntary organisations, and businesses.

Identify new contacts by talking with people who already have the networks you need. They may be within your own agency or external stakeholders. Start with a couple of key people and ask them who else you need to know.

To foster relationships based on trust, respect and mutual understanding, you need to:

* invest time in developing relationships with key individuals;
* be friendly, polite and approachable;
* listen well to understand their interests and concerns;
* communicate clearly and honestly;
* recognise the pressures and issues they are experiencing;
* be aware of any perceived power differences between you and the stakeholder(s); and
* keep any commitments you make.

It helps to be self-aware about your own values and biases. Show an interest in learning about other people’s perspectives and backgrounds. Look for shared interests and common ground.

Build contacts with people who can help you reach diverse communities. If you are new to your agency make enquiries about internal people

and networks that can help you. When seeking to involve communities who will be impacted by a particular project consider ways to include people whose voices tend to be marginalised due to socio- economic disadvantages, ethnicity, age, gender, remote location, disability, communication and language barriers, and sexuality.



# Engagement with Māori

Māori, as tangata whenua, have a partnership

with the Crown. When seeking to engage, consider

whether you are approaching Māori as:

* citizens who comprise a significant segment of

the community; or

* tangata whenua, with particular rights derived from the Treaty of Waitangi.

The Treaty of Waitangi places a responsibility on government agencies to effectively facilitate whānau, hapū and iwi participation in policy development and service delivery. All agencies must understand how the Treaty obligations of the Crown relate

to their particular business. Some agencies have legislative requirements to actively engage with Māori on specified matters.

The principles of the Treaty have been variously interpreted. Three principles commonly recognised are:

* **partnership** – interactions between the Treaty partners must be based on mutual good faith, co-operation, tolerance, honesty and respect;
* **participation** – securing active and equitable participation by tangata whenua; and
* **protection** – government must protect whakapapa (genealogy), cultural practices and taonga (treasures) including protocols, customs and language.

## Relationships

Invest time in building relationships with whānau, hapū and iwi in order to build trust and respect. Be committed to acting in good faith, fairly, reasonably and honourably toward the Treaty partner. Be respectful of whānau, hapū and iwi expectations to exercise tino rangatiratanga (self-determination) by operating independently on particular issues. Look for ways to develop shared understandings and work together to advance the common good.

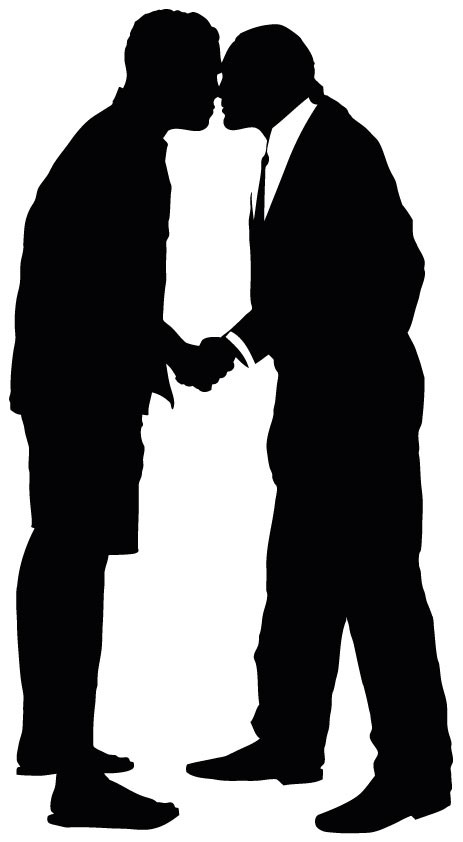
Here are some key pointers to be mindful of:

* seek advice on project design and implementation from staff who have been appointed to support relations with iwi/Māori, and/or from Te Puni Kōkiri;
* seek Māori involvement as early as possible, particularly if the issue has been identified as significant;
* collaborate with Māori to agree mutual

outcomes and processes for the engagement;

* recognise the diverse realities of Māori and tailor events to meet the expectations of the specific group you are engaging with;
* make contact with the appropriate traditional representative of the group; and
* consider how you will address their needs, and contact organisations and collectives that represent their interests and views.

## Planning a meeting

In planning a hui (meeting) there is no such thing as one size fits all. Seek advice on the best way to plan your process so that positive mutual outcomes can be achieved.

Issues to consider are:

* what level of formality is appropriate? A formal meeting involves traditional customs and protocols and may require sufficient time for decision making by consensus. A less formal event may involve karakia (prayer) and mihimihi (a short greeting);
* what capabilities are required of the team? A formal meeting requires at least one team member who is skilled in te reo Māori and knowledgeable in tikanga. Although this capability is desirable for less formal events, it is not a requirement;
* what is the best venue for the event? A formal meeting will take place at a marae or an alternative venue at which marae tikanga is used. Less formal venues, such as school and sports halls, are appropriate for less formal events; and
* what aspects of the events should be carefully managed? Payment processes need to be determined. This may require koha (financial or other contribution) as well as payment for contracted services such as marae/venue hire and catering. In your communications strategy, consider the use of Māori radio, television or press, as well as organisations that represent Māori interests such as iwi authorities and providers of services to Māori.

## Principles

The principles that generally underpin engagement

processes involving whānau, hapū and iwi are:

**whakamana I te tangata (respect)** – show respect by understanding and supporting Māori tikanga and kawa (ceremony), including any regional differences;

**whakapapa (kinship)** – connections are important. When you meet, find out, where people come from, be clear about who you represent, and acknowledge any connections you have;

**whanaungatanga (relationship)** – foster a sense of connection when engaging with a group. Relationships between participants are important irrespective of who they may represent;

**rangatira-ki-te-rangatira (chief-to-chief)** – make the best endeavours to have a staff member involved in the engagement with similar status to those they are meeting with;

**kanohi-ki-te-kanohi (face-to-face)** – engage in person, where possible, and not just by paper or email;

**manaakitanga (caring for others)** – you should show hospitality, for example, by spending time together over food. Also show integrity and caring in how you relate to people, for instance by acknowledging contributions that people have made; and

**kotahitanga (unity)** – while people may hold diverse views, it is important to identify a shared sense of purpose. Meeting with facilitators in advance helps achieve this.

Also note the following:

* the Māori worldview is holistic, so be prepared to consider issues that may seem outside your immediate focus;
* pay attention to the atmosphere in the room to judge whether the process is working well; and
* while strong views may be aired, facilitate a process that enables everyone to respect the mana (authority) of others at the event.

The *Crown-* *Māori Relationship Instruments: Guidelines and Advice for Government and State Sector Agencies* provides detailed information in developing and formalising relationships with whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori organisations. Further information can be found on Te Puni Kōkiri’s website: [www.tpk.govt.nz.](http://www.tpk.govt.nz/)

# Engagement with Pacific people

The Pacific population is very diverse and made up of people from many Pacific ethnicities, primarily from Samoa, Cook Islands, Tonga, Niue, Fiji and Tokelau, with smaller numbers from Tuvalu, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands, and the small island States of Micronesia.

Good consultation amongst Pacific people involves the creation and the maintenance of relationships. Take the time to observe protocols and practices, which are often upheld through prayer and the recognition of church and community leaders.

Pacific people will be encouraged to participate if

you:

* invest time in building relationships and linking with Pacific people in your agency, Pacific churches, or Pacific community groups;
* ensure that Pacific-focused meetings take into account the distinct cultures, languages and values within each of the Pacific nations;
* show respect for Pacific customs and protocols

such as opening the meeting with a prayer; and

* acknowledge individuals who have cultural status in the meeting, such as Tongan nobility, church ministers and Samoan matai (chiefs).

Further information about engagement with Pacific people can be found on the Ministry for Pacific Peoples’ website: [www.mpp.govt.nz.](http://www.mpp.govt.nz/)

# Engagement with ethnic communities

When engaging with ethnic communities, remember that there may be different groups, tribes or religions within one community. It is important you check for and acknowledge these differences. Do not assume that communities are homogeneous.

Some broad values that ethnic communities may identify with are:

* collectivism – the well-being of the individual in the context of the collective is more important than individual well-being in isolation;
* hierarchy – elders and those who hold positions of esteem have influence and are viewed as the ‘spokespersons’ of a particular community;
* family – the immediate and wider family unit is important to well-being;
* faith and religion – for some ethnic communities, their faith forms a central part of the community identity; and
* self-sufficiency (‘for us, by us’) – a desire to contribute to New Zealand’s future, and to build self-sufficient lives for their communities and families.

Before you engage:

* learn about the communities’ worldviews and settlement history (some may have been in New Zealand for several generations while others may be more recent immigrants);
* remove barriers to participation like complex documents full of jargon or venues requiring considerable travel for attendees;
* identify people with influence and credibility in the community, and those who have the community mandate;
* find out whether different sections of the community need separate opportunities to discuss important issues such as men, women, youth and elderly;
* use interpreters and translate documents if necessary;
* be sensitive to cultural values and protocols, such as prayers, and recognise the important community institutions, such as places of worship;
* understand how the community passes on and shares information (who gets it and who does not);
* be aware of times in the calendar that may not be ideal for consultation for some communities, for instance, the month of Ramadan (Ramadan is the ninth month of the Muslim year, during which strict fasting is observed in daylight hours.); and
* use media that specially focus on the community you are trying to reach.

Further information about engagement with ethnic communities can be found on the ethnic communities’ website page [www.](http://www/)

ethniccommunities.govt.nz. This is administered by the Department of Internal Affairs.

# Engagement with people with disabilities

Giving everyone a ‘fair go’ is a core value of New Zealand society. It reflects a long-standing ambition for a society that promotes the equal enjoyment of human rights. Disabled people and their families seek a society in which we can all feel we have that ‘fair go’; an inclusive and non-disabling society, which is good for all New Zealanders.

The aspirations of disabled people are as ambitious or as simple, and certainly as diverse, as those of the general population. However, the barriers to achieving these aspirations are quite different to those facing non-disabled people.

If you are planning a meeting, consider who will be attending and how to make your meeting accessible. Enquire about what assistance participants may need. This could include:

* a wheelchair accessible venue;
* user friendly furniture and lighting;
* special parking or transport requirements;
* a hearing loop;
* New Zealand sign language interpreters;
* special dietary requirements;
* a support person;
* a guide dog;
* video conferencing for people who cannot easily attend; and
* online documentation in accessible formats for people with visual impairment.

Further information about engagement with disabled people, including guides and toolkits can be found at the Office for Disability issues’ website: [www.odi.govt.nz.](http://www.odi.govt.nz/) This is administered by the Ministry of Social Development.

# Online engagement

The use of effective online engagement methods has enormous potential to help improve the quality of government decisions and consequently outcomes.

## Key principles

The following key principles will help you when designing, implementing or evaluating online engagement with citizens and communities.

## Clarity

Be clear and open, and transparent about the objectives, limits, resources and potential impacts of online participation. Be clear about:

* what the issues and questions are and how the process works;
* the role played by government– as the instigator, facilitator or observer of public participation;
* who will make the final decision, how they will make it and how they will inform participants about the outcomes;
* the fact that disagreement is natural, but should also be cordial; and
* the time, energy and resources needed to participate effectively.

## Respect

Be respectful of the contributions, perspectives and values of citizens and communities. Demonstrate respect for:

* the unique knowledge and customs of the diverse peoples of Aotearoa;
* terms and conditions for online engagement that promote civil behaviour, constructive criticism, active listening and discussion;
* different levels of ability and the need to use multiple channels when providing information and seeking engagement; and
* people’s time by ensuring engagement with them is co-ordinated across government to minimise duplication and overlap.

## Confidence and commitment

Build confidence as a basis for commitment by:

* making it easy for citizens and communities to engage online for many this may be a new and challenging channel;
* providing timely feedback; and
* evaluating online participation to learn from your experience and improve quality in the future.

## Creativity

New tools mean new approaches. Success hinges on

innovation. Be creative about:

* involving people in designing online participation and inviting their feedback on how it went;
* how you build public awareness and encourage people to participate;
* creating content that will hook people into your process; and
* who you work with to mobilise resources and ensure success–build sustainable relationships with community groups, civil society and others.

## Inclusion

Make every effort to ensure accessibility and connect with all relevant communities online. Be inclusive by:

* taking a broad perspective of who needs to be informed and engaged;
* designing online participation to fit the needs of

citizens and communities;

* reducing barriers to online participation; and
* adhering to the Government’s Web standards for accessibility and usability.

## Accountability

Online participation is a multi-stakeholder process where everyone is accountable. Be accountable for:

* the use of public funds in undertaking online participation;
* ensuring that people’s time has been well used and recognised;
* fair and appropriate management of content generated by public participation;
* the process of public participation and its outcomes;
* actions and behaviour online given the terms and conditions established for online engagement (for the public) and the State Services Commissions’ *Standards of Integrity and Conduct* (for agencies); and
* decisions once they are taken, and for providing feedback to participants.

## Achievement

Strive for, build on and celebrate achievements in using online participation as a means for citizens, government, communities and businesses to achieve their goals. Ensure a sense of achievement by:

* explicitly recognising individual and collective contributions;
* providing evidence that people’s online participation is making a difference;
* designing the online process to deliver immediate benefits in terms of knowledge, understanding, new skills and a sense of personal efficacy;
* ensuring that online participation is tightly coupled to actions that lead to clear

improvements in decision-making processes and outcomes; and

* highlighting the obstacles or challenges that online participation may help to overcome, and communicating and celebrating results.

Further information about online engagement can be found on the New Zealand Government Web Toolkit website [www.webtoolkit.govt.nz.](http://www.webtoolkit.govt.nz/)

# Planning and undertaking an engagement process

## Initial planning

Your project plan needs to identify objectives, deliverables, milestones, timeframes, costs and the project team. You will need to clarify the:

* outcomes you are seeking including your Minister’s expectations;
* scope of the issues to be addressed; and
* nature and extent of citizen and community involvement.

## Project governance

Consider involving stakeholder representatives in overseeing the project. If you choose to do so,

consider how members will be invited, for example by:

* personal invitation to a selected range of people; or
* calling for nominations through appropriate networks.

The appointment method will depend on the significance of the project. Selections may be made by Cabinet Committee, your Minister, a panel, or the manager responsible for the project.

Be clear whether the group is advisory or has decision-making power. Include people with diverse views (reflecting the main external interests) and

a chair with strong facilitation skills that can draw the group to consensus. Even if you do not set up a formal group, think which external stakeholders

you could regularly touch base with, to test out your thinking and plans. You may also need to determine fees for non-government members, which is available on the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet’s website: [www.dpmc.govt.nz.](http://www.dpmc.govt.nz/)

## Stakeholder identification

A stakeholder is a person, group or organisation who affects, or can be affected by, your agency’s actions. For each project, identify the relevant stakeholders.

Consider:

* whether the issues are of wide interest to many citizens, or of primary interest to particular audiences; and
* which stakeholders are likely to have a strong

impact or influence on the issue.

You can create a chart that maps your key stakeholders’ level of interest (low-high) against level of influence (low-high).

Stakeholders who have high interest and/or high impact generally require the most time and effort. You also need to consider hard-to-reach populations who will be impacted but may not be aware of how to input into the process.

## Planning communications

You need a communications strategy that considers:

* what key messages your stakeholders need to know;
* potential risks for your Minister, agency and other parties, and how these can be mitigated; and
* what information citizens and communities need to know in order to understand the project and contribute where appropriate.

Effective communication planning identifies who your audiences are, what is important to them, and how to reach them. This will have an impact on the language you choose, the means of communication (written, visual, face-to-face, and online) and appropriate time for release.

## Levels of engagement

Early on in planning a policy or service delivery initiative, consider the extent to which citizens and communities are going to be involved.

The following figure shows a range of citizen and

community engagement, which includes:

* informing citizens of decisions made with

minimal input (first quadrant);

* consulting citizens before making decisions (second quadrant);
* collaborating and partnering for joint decisions (third quadrant); and
* supporting devolved decision making (fourth quadrant).

A project may be predominantly focused on one quadrant such as partnering or joint decisions. However, a project may also involve a mix of these quadrants where a committee formed in partnership may consult external stakeholders, then inform them of the outcome.

## Inform

In the first quadrant of the engagement spectrum,

decisions are made by the government agency or Minister(s), and citizens and communities are advised. External input does not occur or is very selective. This may be because:

* Ministers are elected on the understanding that certain actions will be taken;
* in-depth information may already be available from previous public debate; and
* rapid action is required.

Careful consideration should be given to whether diverse perspectives have been weighed up before any decisions are made. Open communication will be needed on the implications of the decision. Consider which people will need to know first and how the information will be conveyed. Resources may be required for responding to public reactions if citizens feel their views have not been taken into account.

## Consult

Consultation involves seeking and considering others’ views on an issue where the ultimate decision-making responsibility lies with your agency, or the ultimate responsibility lies with Ministers.

By following good practice, you can ensure that:

* you obtain valuable input; and
* participants find their involvement satisfying

and meaningful.

### Legal considerations

A number of statutes require formal consultation with interested parties. If you are unsure, your legal staff can tell you which statutes relate to your agency.

### Clear purpose

Be clear about what you wish to achieve by consulting and the key questions you are looking to answer. Remember that genuine consultation involves more than simply providing information. You need to seek and be open to feedback, and respond to what you hear.

### Careful planning

Identify a consultation approach that:

* ensures external input early in the process to make sure the right issues and options are being identified;
* is in proportion in cost and scale to the

significance of the issue under consideration;

* takes into account any previous or concurrent consultations that are relevant; and
* enables a range of relevant stakeholders to provide input.

If an issue is of widespread interest, you need to allow several months for citizens and communities to provide input. Note that:

* responding to government consultations places pressure on the resources of community organisations (many of which are run by volunteers) and they are often dealing with multiple consultation requests;
* during Christmas and January many people are on holiday and community organisations may not have anyone available to respond;
* governing boards of larger community organisations may want to provide input to, or to sign off on, their organisation’s submission, but may meet only monthly or bimonthly; and
* knowledge of a consultation often spreads by word-of-mouth, and this takes time.

Consider whether to involve external stakeholders in the project governance structure.

### Ensuring good process

Use a range of communication methods to ensure your target audience is aware of the consultation, and knows how to provide input. Publicise your consultation on the New Zealand Government website: Information and services at [www.govt.nz.](http://www.govt.nz/)

Ensure any written consultation documents:

* are straightforward and clearly presented and explains the issue being addressed;
* include clear questions on which views are being sought;
* cover the likely costs and benefits of any

proposals;

* explain what decisions, if any, have already been made;
* include an indication of expected next steps and proposed timeline;
* have instructions on who to respond to, how to respond, and by when;
* are pre-tested before release; and
* have an associated communications plan.

Many community members value face-to-face discussion. Important points for meetings are to:

* be clear at the start about the purpose and process;
  + consider culturally appropriate processes;
  + agree on any ground rules such as speaking one at a time and showing respect for each other’s views;
  + be honest about any limitations to the consultation—that is, what is on the table for discussion and what is not;
  + consider using processes that foster dialogue and deliberation;
  + pose stimulating questions and ensure everyone has a say;
  + take a record of what is said;
  + be flexible in exploring emerging issues and

ideas;

* + listen well and reflect back what you have heard;

and

* + let people know what will happen next.

Show appreciation for the input received, for instance by providing refreshments and (if possible) reimbursing the travel costs of non-government participants. Consider use of online engagement tools such as discussion forums.

### Follow-up and evaluation

Provide feedback to the people consulted on how the views gathered have been incorporated into the decision-making process. Keep lines of

communication open after the consultation, so that people are updated on progress or can advise you of new developments of relevance.

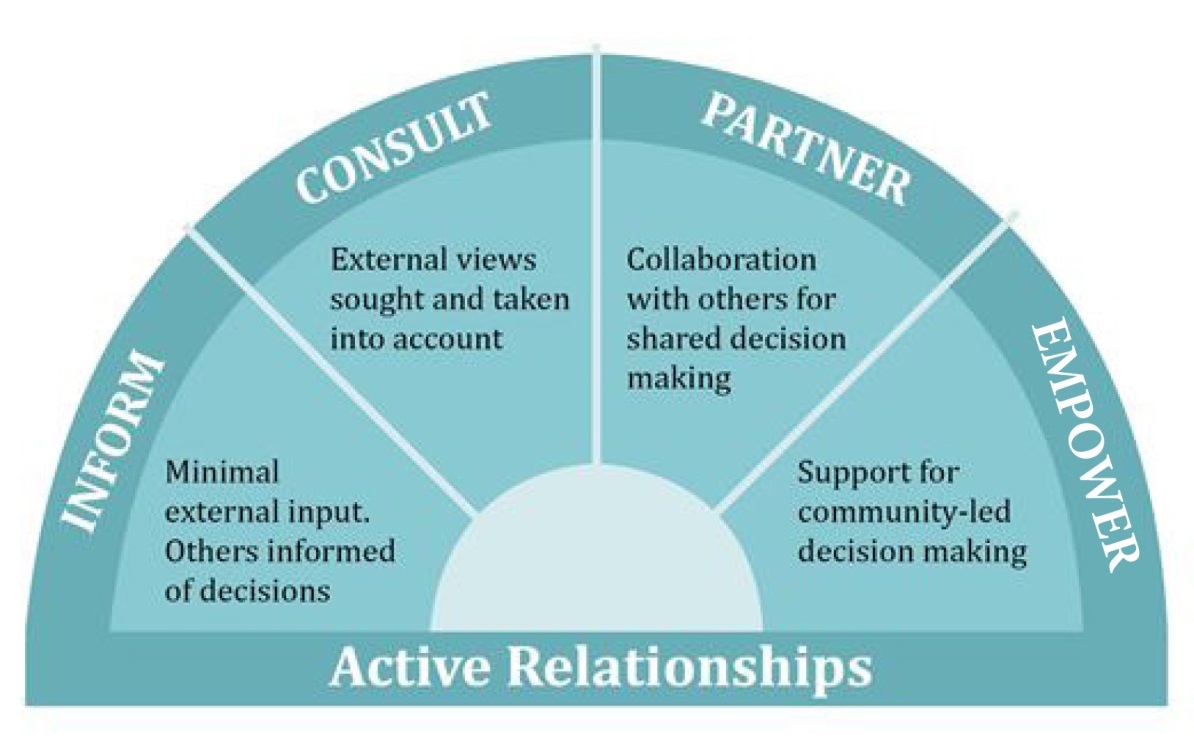
Deliver on any commitments you made during the consultation, or be transparent about any changes in plan. Seek feedback on the consultation process, for instance through a simple online survey.

Evaluate such factors as:

* did we do what we said we would do?
* who did we reach?
* was anyone left out who should have been included?
* were participants satisfied with the processes

used?

* did people feel well treated – listened to, heard or respected?
* did we provide feedback on how the input was used?
* was the process useful for achieving the project outcomes?
* were time and money used efficiently?
* were there any unintended consequences? and
* what would we do differently and why?



## Partner

Increasingly, government is looking to develop collaborations and partnerships with external organisations; based on respect and openness. Instead of government controlling the decision making, a partnership approach involves joining up with one or more organisations to:

* accomplish mutual goals such as shared services;
* share resources, risks, and benefits; and
* make decisions together.

### Setting up partnership

Be clear who your essential partners are. They may be from community organisations, private businesses, and/or other parts of the public sector. Be clear what you hope to gain from collaboration, and how risks will be addressed.

Clarify with your partners:

* what your shared interests are and mutual compelling goals (both short and long term);
* whether the partnership can be managed by existing staff, or whether a new entity is necessary;
* what resources you can each offer (for instance knowledge and information, staff time and skills, finances, equipment, networks);
* how you will work together. For example, how frequently you will meet;
* who will be responsible for which tasks;
* what your respective “bottom lines” are;
* what processes you will use to deal with

conflict; and

* what measures you will use for monitoring progress.

You may also need to consider whether having an independent chairperson who does not belong to the partner organisations would be helpful.

### Working together

Some tips are to:

* share control and talk through what partnership means to you both;
* look for common interests;
* keep focused on the outcome not just the outputs;
* ensure everyone is up to speed and kept well informed;
* allow time for trust to develop, especially if you have not worked together before, or the previous experience of doing so was less than satisfactory;
* give wholehearted commitment;
* be open and honest about possibilities, and limits on what you can and cannot do;
* think outside the box;
* value each other’s perspectives as differences can bring innovative ideas;
* regularly review progress;
* celebrate achievements together; and
* agree on processes for ending or continuing after the first phase (that is, renegotiate or manage closure).

## Empower

Community ingenuity and knowledge is invaluable in resolving local issues. Government can help create an enabling environment where strong communities:

* decline their own agendas and vision;
* work together to harness their own skills and assets;
* connect to external sources of support where needed; and
* find solutions that fit the local context.

In community-led processes, decision-making power lies with communities. If, as a government agency, you are seeking to support local action, consider:

* what is the issue that the community wants to address?
* how can I learn about this community’s priorities and concerns?
* who are the key people locally who have

networks and influence?

* how will a range of people be involved?
* what is the history of similar initiatives in this community?
* how will this initiative draw on local skills and build capacity? and
* how can my agency add value in a way that empowers this community?

To support local action, government agencies can:

* provide information on government systems, programmes and policies;
* look for opportunities to work in partnership;
* provide capacity building funding and advice;
* facilitate community meetings if such assistance is sought; and
* help build connections between different communities.

# Supportive work environments

## Organisational culture

Organisations that encourage staff to participate and collaborate internally are more likely to be effective in building relationships with external stakeholders. Organisations that excel in the future will be those that provide environments where staff feel respected and able to contribute their strengths. Participatory organisations value diverse opinions and talents, and reward people for innovating and finding solutions. Agencies getting these things right

will be better at engaging with the people they serve.

## Inspiring participation and engagement

Building a participatory culture that inspires effective external engagement requires conscious effort. Participatory leadership encourages:

* everyone in the workplace to practise good listening and model respectful behaviours;
* sharing of viewpoints and expertise across different levels and teams within the organisation, and appreciating a diversity of perspectives;
* respect for the capability of staff to find

solutions to issues;

* personal responsibility for developing and maintaining relationships; and
* regular use of feedback tools to assess the working environment, followed by action to reinforce what is working well, and to address what is not.

While the role of leaders in making decisions is ultimately important, in a participatory culture there is an increased emphasis on facilitating the

involvement of others and empowering others to act.

## Actions for management

Some actions managers can take, with an internal focus, are to:

* hold regular open forums between the chief executive and staff, where staff can raise any topics of interest;
* encourage sharing of ideas across different parts of the organisation, including collaboration between policy and operational staff;
* support development of cultural networks (such as Māori or Pacific) for staff;
* experiment with innovative engagement techniques when holding staff forums;
* involve all staff in meaningful discussions about strategic directions;
* encourage conversations about work successes and difficulties, in the spirit of learning together; and
* undertake regular surveys to test how involved and engaged staff feel.

Some actions with an external focus are to:

* provide clear messages about the importance of collaboration with other government and non-government agencies, and model this;
* ensure everyone in the agency has the skills strategies and resources they need to undertake effective external engagement;
* include discussions on team meeting agendas about what engagement has recently taken place and is planned;
* convene regular forums with external organisations within your sphere of interest to discuss relationships and policy issues;
* undertake regular surveys of external stakeholders to judge their perception of the agency; and
* build staff knowledge and experience through support for employee volunteering.

## Strategy and plan

A commitment to effective external relationships and engagement, and to the Treaty of Waitangi, should be integrated into key planning documents.

Your agency’s Statement of Intent is an important place to outline how stakeholder relationships will support the outcomes your agency is seeking.



Staff responsible for stakeholder relationship

strategies for their organisations need to:

* draw on knowledge from across the agency to identify relationships that are of strategic importance and influence;
* plan ways to maintain the most important relationships sustainably over time; and
* ensure the various work areas in the agency are able to develop and implement stakeholder engagement plans.

## What you will notice

You can expect to see, hear and experience:

* policy staff who are interested in finding out

what others think and do;

* staff making appointments with external stakeholders, and more visitors to your workplace;
* less negative feedback from external sources;
* potentially fewer Ministerial and Departmental Official

Information requests, and less litigation;

* project plans that include time and funds for meaningful community engagement;
* more long term thinking about enduring relationships, beyond the life of a particular project;
* a more diverse workforce as a wide range of people are comfortable within the work environment;
* an increased emphasis in communications strategies on creating dialogue opportunities; and
* information sharing between staff about external stakeholders.

## Human resource strategies

Employ people with passion for involving citizens and communities in issues that affect them, and experience and knowledge in such areas as:

* stakeholder engagement;
* facilitation mediation and conflict resolution;
* working in or with community based organisations;
* working with whānau, hāpu and iwi, and Pacific

peoples and ethnic communities; and

* working with other diverse communities such as disabled people, seniors and youth.

Employ specialist staff who:

* are dedicated professionals in the stakeholder engagement field, including some who are located in, or strongly aligned with policy teams;
* mentor others in engagement processes and know other skilled facilitators who can be called on when required; and
* can provide advice on effectively engaging with

Māori.

Also include modules on stakeholder engagement in induction programmes.

## Performance management

In performance assessments, consider the extent of skill shown in:

* communication and relationship management; and
* organising and running processes across the engagement sphere.

Seek feedback from internal and external stakeholders on individual and team performance.

## Staff development

Encourage training, peer support and mentoring to

build confidence and capability in such areas as:

* facilitation, mediation and conflict resolution;
* giving presentations and running engagement processes;
* techniques for dialogue and deliberation including online engagement tools;
* evaluating community engagement processes;
* te reo and tikanga Māori, and working with the range of Pacific and ethnic communities; and
* communicating in ways that do not exclude disabled people.

It is also useful to develop a succession plan when staff responsible for key stakeholder relationships move on.

# Starting a dialogue in your agency

We encourage you to discuss with your colleagues:

* what are the benefits and challenges for your agency in engaging with citizens and communities?
* how does your organisation’s internal culture foster participation and good engagement? and
* what steps can your agency take to improve its engagement with citizens and communities?

# Checklist for engaging with stakeholders

Consider the following during the design, implementation and evaluative phases of your engagement.

* Are you regularly meeting with key stakeholders to build relationships?
* Are you familiar with the Kia Tūtahi

Relationship Accord?

* Have you considered how the Treaty of Waitangi relates to your work?
* Are you taking steps to build strong relationships with tangata whenua?
* When setting up an engagement process, have you considered ways to ensure diverse voices are heard?
* Do you need to involve stakeholders in the project governance or delivery?
* Are you aiming to inform, consult, partner or empower?
* Have you considered any legislation or internal policies that outline consultation requirements for your agency?
* How will you evaluate the engagement process including seeking feedback?
* Have you considered ways you can help build a culture of participation and collaboration within your agency?

