

WP2.2. EMPATHS CASE STUDIES

Mapping of Stakeholders and Community Participation



EMPATHS

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1. Introduction

The objective of this document is to establish a robust methodological framework and to equip Pilot Partners with a coherent set of operational tools for the development of Participative Heritage Interpretation. Central to this endeavour is the strategic mobilisation of local actors through inclusive, collaborative, and context-sensitive engagement approaches. The document opens with a conceptual and practical introduction to **Stakeholder Mapping**, conceived as a critical first step in constructing effective and inclusive social networks that support interpretive planning.

Stakeholder mapping is here understood not merely as an exercise in identification and classification, but as a dynamic process embedded within the broader logic of social networks and community structures (Granovetter, 1983). The approach emphasises the importance of recognising different forms of social capital - bonding, bridging, and linking - as essential assets in the mobilisation of stakeholders (Coleman, 1990). By mapping these relational assets, the process enables a nuanced understanding of how actors are embedded in their social environments (*embeddedness*) and how their roles, positions, and relationships may influence or facilitate interpretive initiatives.

Particular attention is devoted to identifying and engaging sensitive and marginalised groups, whose active participation is fundamental not only from an equity perspective but also for enhancing the cultural resonance and democratic legitimacy of Heritage Interpretation. Their inclusion is analysed through the lens of network brokerage (Burt, 2007), highlighting the role of key actors who can bridge otherwise disconnected social groups, mediate conflicting interests, and foster communication across structural holes within the social network.

Furthermore, the document proposes targeted strategies for engaging these identified stakeholders, aiming to foster meaningful participation in the Heritage Interpretation process. These strategies are designed to promote a collaborative and inclusive approach, ensuring that all relevant voices are heard and considered in the development of heritage interpretation frameworks.

The document subsequently presents a repertoire of engagement strategies tailored to the complexities of stakeholder diversity and potential conflict. These approaches



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are informed by principles of network theory and participatory governance, promoting deliberative practices that balance power asymmetries and cultivate mutual trust among participants. Emphasis is placed on iterative and adaptive processes that can respond to changing relational dynamics and community needs over time.

Drawing on empirical evidence collected via a structured survey that synthesises the prior participatory experiences of the Pilot Partners, the document advances a preliminary analysis of relevant stakeholder constellations in each local context. These insights are visualised through concrete stakeholder mapping examples that illustrate not only the diversity and positioning of actors but also the relational patterns, strengths of ties, and potential channels for collaboration. The visualisation also helps identify brokers: individuals or organisations occupying strategic network positions that can act as catalysts for participation and innovation in heritage interpretation.

In doing so, the document aims to foster a relational understanding of participation: one that transcends instrumental inclusion and recognises the social fabric in which heritage values are negotiated, co-produced, and sustained over time.

2. What is stakeholder mapping?

Stakeholder mapping constitutes a foundational phase in any participatory project, particularly in domains such as heritage interpretation, where collaborative engagement is not merely beneficial but essential. Within such contexts, mapping stakeholders is more than a procedural exercise. It is a strategic and analytical process grounded in social network theory and participatory planning. Stakeholders are here defined as individuals, groups, or institutions with an actual or potential interest in, or influence over, the outcomes of a project. However, effective mapping must go beyond mere identification to uncover the structure, quality, and function of relationships among these actors.

Drawing from the principles of Social Network Analysis (SNA), stakeholder mapping involves understanding the relational architecture that underpins the stakeholder ecosystem. This includes not only direct connections (e.g., formal partnerships, communication channels) but also indirect ties and latent relationships that may

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influence the flow of information, resources, or support. Capturing such dynamics enables the project team to identify central actors, peripheral stakeholders, brokers, and structural holes, all of which have distinct implications for participation and influence.

Visualising these relationships through network graphs or matrices provides a critical tool for project promoters. Such visual representations, commonly referred to as *sociograms*, reveal the density, centrality, and clustering patterns that characterise the stakeholder landscape. They help to distinguish between those actors who are well-embedded within existing networks and those who are isolated or marginalised, thereby enabling tailored strategies for engagement. For example, actors exhibiting high “*betweenness*” centrality may function as brokers or gatekeepers, playing a pivotal role in connecting otherwise disconnected groups.

In the context of the EMPATHS project, which aims to promote participative heritage interpretation, stakeholder mapping is particularly instrumental in ensuring that interpretive strategies are inclusive, context-sensitive, and socially embedded. Here, relevant actors include local communities, heritage professionals, NGOs, cultural institutions, government agencies, and especially underrepresented or vulnerable groups whose voices are often absent in heritage discourse. Mapping enables promoters to identify these groups and understand how they are positioned relative to the network of influence, power, and knowledge.

Promoters are thus encouraged to construct comprehensive stakeholder maps that go beyond static listings to reflect *functional interdependencies and power asymmetries*. These maps should indicate not only the identity and role of each stakeholder but also the *strength, direction, and quality of their connections* with other actors, including the promoter. Doing so provides a basis for analysing **patterns of social capital**, whether bonding (within groups), bridging (across groups), or linking (to institutions), which are crucial for fostering resilient and participatory heritage processes.

Moreover, stakeholder maps serve as decision-support tools in the design of communication, consultation, and co-creation strategies. They help to identify the most effective pathways for dialogue, the risks of exclusion or conflict, and the



potential alliances that can amplify the project's impact. In essence, by embedding stakeholder mapping within the analytical framework of social networks, the EMPATHS project can move toward a more reflexive, equitable, and strategically informed approach to participatory heritage interpretation.



Figure 1: Understanding Stakeholder Mapping

EXAMPLE: A Basic Stakeholder Map Structure

To operationalise the principles of stakeholder mapping within a participatory heritage interpretation project, a simplified [stakeholder map template](#) (Fig. 2) can be employed to illustrate the relational dynamics between the project and its associated stakeholders.



Figure 2: [Stakeholder map template](#) (from Mural)

The example provided here adopts a flowchart-style stakeholder map, offering a basic yet effective means of capturing both influence and impact pathways within the

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stakeholder network.

In this template, the project entity is centrally positioned, symbolising its role as the focal point around which stakeholder relationships are organised. Inbound arrows directed toward the project represent stakeholders who exert influence on the project's design, decision-making processes, or interpretive outcomes. These may include funding agencies, expert advisors, community leaders, or institutional partners—actors whose input or authority directly shapes the project's trajectory.

Conversely, outbound arrows extending from the project toward various stakeholders indicate those who are likely to be affected by the project's activities, outputs, or decisions. These may encompass local residents, tourists, educators, cultural users, or marginalised groups whose interests and lived experiences are impacted by interpretive strategies, site modifications, or policy recommendations.

While simple in form, this stakeholder map template serves as an entry point for more nuanced network-based analyses, helping project promoters to begin visualising relational flows, power dynamics, and potential intervention points. It is especially useful in early-stage planning, where clarity about stakeholder roles, directions of influence, and target groups for engagement is critical. As the project evolves, this schematic can be further enriched with additional layers of information - such as relationship strength, frequency of interaction, or degree of trust - to support a more detailed Social Network Analysis (SNA) and guide a strategically informed stakeholder engagement process.

3. Defining Heritage Stakeholder Categories

Effective stakeholder engagement in heritage interpretation relies not only on identifying who the stakeholders are, but also on understanding their network positions, relational functions, and the forms of social capital they mobilise. Building on the principles of Social Network Analysis (SNA), stakeholders can be meaningfully categorised based on their functions, expertise, and relational embeddedness within the heritage ecosystem. This typology enhances the ability of project promoters to devise engagement strategies that reflect the interdependencies and power asymmetries among actors. The four primary heritage stakeholder categories



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relevant to participatory heritage interpretation - Institutional, Cultural, Tourism, and Community stakeholders - each occupy distinctive positions within the social network and contribute uniquely to the interpretive process.

- **Institutional Stakeholders: Decision-Makers and Experts in the Field**

Institutional stakeholders are typically central actors in the heritage network, often occupying positions of high degree centrality and influence. These include public authorities, cultural heritage agencies, museums, research institutions, and policy-making bodies operating at various scales. Their roles are often regulatory, strategic, and technical: they set the rules of engagement, define funding priorities, and offer expertise that shapes interpretive frameworks.

From a network perspective, institutional stakeholders may function as authority nodes or anchors, whose decisions ripple through the network, affecting multiple actors. Their linking social capital - connections to powerful institutions or trans-scalar governance bodies - makes them essential for accessing resources and ensuring legitimacy. However, their top-down perspective may sometimes clash with the bottom-up logic of participatory engagement, necessitating brokerage roles that mediate between institutional and community interests.

- **Cultural Stakeholders: Volunteers and Cultural Associations**

Cultural stakeholders often emerge as *bridging actors* within the network, connecting institutional authorities with local communities. This category includes universities, local cultural associations, NGOs, informal networks of heritage volunteers, and educators. These actors often hold valuable cultural and social capital derived from their embeddedness in local contexts and their ability to articulate lived heritage experiences.

Their position in the network is frequently characterised by intermediary centrality, meaning they can facilitate cross-group communication and mediate between diverging interests. They are also well-placed to activate horizontal ties across communities, sustaining cultural continuity and building trust. By supporting co-creation processes and acting as cultural translators, these stakeholders help



mitigate asymmetries between expert and lay knowledge.

- **Tourism Stakeholders: Hotels, Travel Agencies, Tourist Information Centres, Restaurants**

Tourism stakeholders - including hotels, travel agencies, tour operators, tourist information centres, and hospitality providers - represent a distinct set of actors who interface directly with the broader public. While often under-recognised in heritage governance, they play a pivotal role in disseminating heritage narratives, shaping visitor experiences, and mobilising economic capital.

In network terms, these actors tend to occupy structural bridge positions between heritage content providers (e.g., museums, interpreters) and end-users (tourists). Their position allows them to relay feedback, adapt interpretive materials to public expectations, and foster cross-sectoral alliances that can integrate cultural, educational, and economic objectives. Their participation also supports the development of resilient interpretive ecosystems, where heritage value is co-produced and re-circulated among diverse actors.

- **Community Stakeholders: Primarily Local Residents**

Community stakeholders are often the most deeply embedded actors in the heritage network, possessing strong bonding social capital within their social circles and neighbourhoods. They include local residents, elder community members, youth, minority groups, and others who maintain an intimate relationship with heritage sites often rooted in memory, identity, and everyday use.

Despite their crucial role, community stakeholders may be marginalised in formal decision-making structures, occupying peripheral positions in the network with limited access to resources and institutional power. This can result in structural exclusion or network disconnection, particularly for sensitive groups whose perspectives may diverge from dominant heritage narratives. Nevertheless, their engagement is vital for ensuring cultural relevance, social equity, and the sustainability of interpretation strategies.

Promoters must therefore adopt inclusive engagement mechanisms, such as participatory mapping, community storytelling, and deliberative workshops, which

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elevate the voices of these stakeholders and foster trust-based ties. When effectively mobilised, community actors can serve as custodians, narrators, and mediators of heritage, embedding interpretive processes in local contexts and practices.

While these categories help organise the stakeholder landscape, it is critical to emphasise their interconnectedness. Institutional, cultural, tourism, and community stakeholders do not operate in isolation; rather, they are part of a relational web where influence, knowledge, and resources circulate through formal and informal channels. Stakeholders may simultaneously belong to multiple categories or shift roles depending on the project phase or thematic focus.

Understanding these dynamics through SNA enables project promoters to identify network gaps, redundancies, and opportunities for synergy. It also facilitates the identification of brokers and boundary spanners who can help overcome fragmentation and promote more cohesive, communicative, and responsive interpretive processes.

Despite the advantages of a network-informed approach, several challenges may arise:

- **Conflicting interests** between stakeholders, particularly between sensitive groups and more powerful actors, may lead to tension and resistance.
- **Lack of trust**, especially between marginalised communities and institutional stakeholders, can hinder collaboration and openness.
- **Resource constraints** may limit the ability of promoters to meaningfully engage with all stakeholder categories, especially those requiring more tailored outreach.

To address these challenges, the EMPATHS project advocates for:

- **Transparent dialogue and co-decision-making processes** that give all actors, particularly sensitive groups, agency in shaping interpretation.
- **Trust-building measures**, such as long-term engagement, cultural mediation, and participatory facilitation methods.



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- **Resource allocation** dedicated to the **inclusion** of underrepresented voices, ensuring equitable participation.

By adopting this network-based approach to stakeholder categorisation and engagement, participatory heritage interpretation can evolve into a more systemic, inclusive, and socially embedded practice, one that reflects the complexity of heritage ecosystems while promoting shared ownership and long-term sustainability.

4. Stakeholder Analysis

In the context of participatory heritage interpretation, Stakeholder Analysis emerges as a critical methodological tool for understanding the capacities, relational positions, and structural roles of the actors involved. More than a static listing of interested parties, stakeholder analysis - when enriched by Social Network Analysis (SNA) - provides a dynamic understanding of how individuals, groups, and institutions interact, influence one another, and affect the trajectory of a heritage initiative.

Positioned at the outset of a project, this analytical process serves to identify and assess the capacities, strengths, and constraints of stakeholders, understood both as resources they control (such as knowledge, legitimacy, or capital) and as positions they occupy within the broader network of relationships. This dual focus allows project promoters not only to determine who matters, but also how and why they matter, providing essential intelligence for the co-design of participatory processes that are both inclusive and effective.

Stakeholder capacity should be understood holistically, encompassing tangible and intangible resources (e.g., technical expertise, financial assets, legitimacy, and local knowledge), as well as structural positioning within the social network. For instance:

- A stakeholder with high *betweenness* centrality may act as a broker or gatekeeper, connecting otherwise disconnected groups (e.g., a local cultural association linking institutional actors and grassroots communities).
- A stakeholder with *strong bonding capital* within a particular community (e.g., a respected elder or a neighbourhood leader) may facilitate deep local engagement, even if they lack formal authority.



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- Conversely, *actors with considerable resources* may face structural constraints such as institutional inertia, limited bandwidth, or low embeddedness in the local community, limiting their participatory efficacy despite their potential influence.

Such an analysis provides a nuanced view of each stakeholder's capacity to influence, potential to collaborate, and need for support or mediation, thus informing strategic decisions about who to engage, how, and when.

The stakeholder analysis process should be iterative and reflexive, grounded in both documentary research and participatory methods such as interviews, surveys, and network mapping. The following steps, adapted to the heritage interpretation context and enriched by SNA, provide a structured approach:

1. Clarify the Purpose and Scope of the Heritage Project

Begin by articulating the objectives, values, and expected impacts of the initiative. Understanding the project's thematic focus, geographic scope, and intended outcomes is essential to identifying which networks are relevant and what types of influence are needed.

2. Identify Stakeholders and Map Relationships

Determine which individuals, groups, or institutions have a stake, whether as contributors, beneficiaries, or opponents. This includes actors from all four stakeholder categories (Institutional, Cultural, Tourism, and Community). Use network mapping tools to visualise their positions, connections, and flows of influence, information, and resources.

3. Assess Capacities, Strengths, and Constraints

Analyse what each stakeholder can offer (e.g., knowledge, access, legitimacy, funding), as well as what might limit their participation, such as lack of time, trust, resources, or network reach. Incorporate both quantitative measures (e.g., centrality scores, resource access) and qualitative assessments (e.g., perceived credibility, willingness to collaborate).

4. Design a Stakeholder Participation Strategy

Develop a targeted engagement plan that aligns with stakeholder capacities and

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positions. This may include differentiated participation formats (e.g., workshops for community members, policy dialogues with institutional actors), capacity-building initiatives, or tailored communication strategies that respect each actor's needs and constraints.

5. Anticipate and Address Conflicts of Interest

Participatory processes often surface conflicting visions, values, and priorities. Use stakeholder analysis to anticipate potential tensions by mapping areas of alignment and divergence. Design mechanisms for dialogue, mediation, and negotiation, particularly when sensitive groups are involved or when power asymmetries risk marginalising certain voices.

By **grounding stakeholder analysis in social network thinking**, heritage promoters gain a strategic advantage: they can engage not just the right stakeholders, but do so in ways that reflect the actual social architecture of influence, trust, and cooperation. This shift from a linear to a relational paradigm enables:

- More inclusive and resilient stakeholder coalitions
- Better alignment between project goals and stakeholder expectations
- A deeper understanding of informal networks and latent conflicts
- Greater ability to activate social capital and co-create value

Ultimately, this approach supports a participatory heritage interpretation process that is not only technically sound, but also socially attuned, politically sensitive, and culturally sustainable.

5. Running a Stakeholder mapping

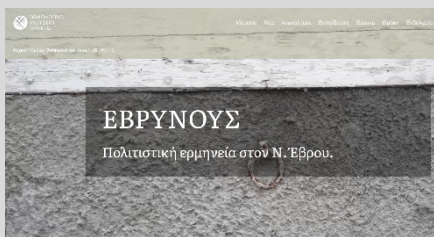
Running a stakeholder mapping is a structured, iterative process aimed at identifying, analysing, and strategically engaging key players whose roles are critical to the success of a heritage interpretation project. Far from being a mere bureaucratic exercise, stakeholder mapping serves as a relational diagnostic tool, helping project teams visualise how influence, interest, resources, and knowledge circulate across a network. When integrated with SNA, stakeholder mapping reveals not only who is



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particularly those in peripheral or underrepresented network positions, who may nevertheless hold significant cultural or social capital.

	Example 1: In the case of the Evrynous initiative managed by the Ethnological Museum of Thrace, early context analysis revealed the importance of involving local educators and youth centres, that is, actors often overlooked in traditional heritage governance frameworks, but crucial for intergenerational transmission and school-based interpretation efforts.
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2. Identify Who Has the Most Interest and/or Influence

Once the list of potential stakeholders is established, the next step is to analyse who holds the most interest in and/or influence over the success of the heritage interpretation project. Not all stakeholders are equal in terms of their ability to affect outcomes: some may play a decisive role in either enabling or obstructing progress. This phase focuses on identifying critical actors based on their power, position, and proximity to the project's goals (Fig. 4).

To operationalise this, a **Power/Interest Matrix** (or similar visual tools) is useful to categorise stakeholders across two axes:

- **Power/Influence:** The stakeholder's ability to affect project success (e.g. through decision-making, funding, policy, or public opinion).
- **Interest/Engagement:** The stakeholder's level of concern or benefit expected from the project.

This assessment informs which actors require high-priority engagement and what level of effort is appropriate for others.

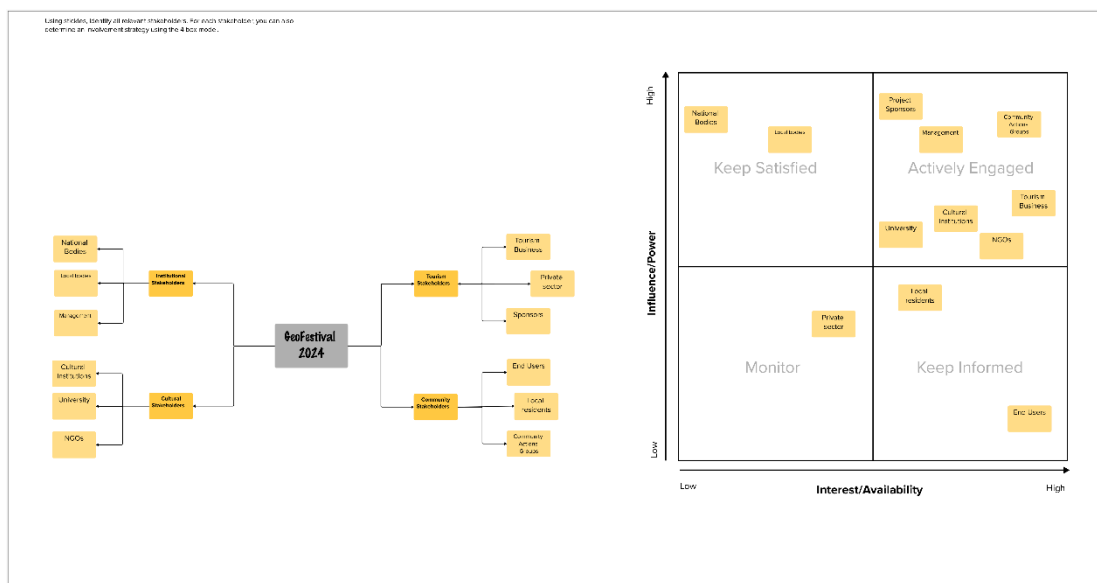


Figure 4: Stakeholder identification

This step addresses the “WHAT” column in the Stakeholder Analysis Template and informs prioritisation strategies. This phase also opens the door for network-based thinking: by examining not only individual actors but their position within the stakeholder network, project teams can identify central connectors, brokers, or peripheral influencers who may play less visible but no less strategic roles.

Example 2: In the Karawanken-Karavanke UNESCO Global Geopark, public bodies such as municipalities, regional institutions, and tourism organisations are key influencers. Their regulatory and economic functions directly affect heritage initiatives, and their involvement ensures that projects align with regional strategies and benefit from resource allocation. This is exemplified by the GeoFestival, a cross-border event supported and coordinated by multiple stakeholders to promote geological and cultural heritage across Austria and Slovenia (see: GeoFestival). (<https://www.geopark-karawanken.at/en/news/view/63>).

3. Focus on primary beneficiaries

An essential step in stakeholder mapping is identifying primary beneficiaries—those stakeholders who stand to gain the most from the project outcomes. These groups

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are often the most directly impacted and, consequently, the most motivated to engage. Understanding their profiles helps tailor communication efforts, engagement strategies, and project outputs that resonate with their needs and expectations.

In participatory heritage interpretation, primary beneficiaries are frequently local communities, sensitive groups, or young audiences with strong emotional, cultural, or historical ties to the heritage in question. Properly identifying these actors enables a more targeted and ethical outreach, positioning them not merely as recipients of interpretation but as co-creators of meaning.

In the Stakeholder Analysis Template, this corresponds to completing the "Communication" and "Engagement Priority" fields, ensuring that the outreach is both proportionate to their relevance and sensitive to their capacities.

From a Social Network Analysis perspective, this phase also involves recognising which nodes (stakeholders) are **central to value circulation**—those who may not control resources or hold formal authority, but are crucial conduits of meaning, emotional engagement, and legitimacy. Engaging them meaningfully strengthens the social fabric around heritage and reinforces **bottom-up resilience**.



Example 3: The Campi Flegrei Archaeological Park (PAFLEG) prioritised local residents as primary beneficiaries through initiatives such as the Art Residency project, part of the Art Days – Napoli Campania programme. Co-organised in 2023 with Aporema Association and promoted by Attiva Cultural Projects ETS, the project invited the local community to participate in a site-specific artistic co-creation at the Castle of Baia, home of the Archaeological Museum of the Campi Flegrei. The initiative aimed to redefine the community's relationship with the cultural site through participatory art, strengthening local identity and reinforcing the principle of community ownership of heritage. This kind of targeted action exemplifies how prioritising primary beneficiaries contributes to more sustainable and inclusive interpretation outcomes.



Example 4: In the Evrynous initiative managed by the **Ethnological Museum of Thrace**, primary

participatory



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	beneficiaries included intergenerational community groups, whose local knowledge and traditions were integrated into interpretative heritage tours. Engaging them helped not only preserve intangible heritage but also encouraged intergenerational dialogue.
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4. Map resource availability

Understanding where resources lie, and where constraints emerge, is a pivotal step in stakeholder mapping. This involves identifying stakeholders who contribute essential assets, such as financial capital, cultural knowledge, institutional legitimacy, or logistical capacity. Conversely, it is equally important to recognise limitations, such as restricted availability, competing agendas, or organisational fragility, which might hinder a stakeholder's capacity to contribute effectively.

This phase is reflected in the “Impact to the Project” section of your Stakeholder Analysis Template, where the aim is to assess both the positive potential and possible bottlenecks each stakeholder brings to the table. From a SNA perspective, this corresponds to identifying nodes with high centrality (high degree or *betweenness*) in terms of resource flows, and potential structural holes where gaps in knowledge, funding, or cooperation might appear.

By mapping such relationships, heritage interpretation projects can proactively manage dependencies, foster complementarity, and reduce vulnerability to stakeholder withdrawal or misalignment. Moreover, this resource-centric analysis enables a strategic composition of the project consortium, ensuring diverse yet coordinated contributions to the interpretive process.

Example 5: The **Ethnological Museum of Thrace** formed a strategic partnership with **Therapeion Cottage Industry**, a local business specialising in traditional crafts. The collaboration was mutually reinforcing: the business contributed tangible cultural knowledge, economic resources, and community anchoring, while the museum offered institutional credibility, curatorial expertise, and visibility. This symbiotic relationship illustrates how mapping resource availability, especially when combining grassroots knowledge with institutional infrastructure, can create hybrid models of heritage valorisation that are both sustainable and locally embedded.

5. Develop an engagement strategy



After stakeholders have been identified, analysed, and prioritised, the next step is to design a targeted engagement strategy that considers their influence, interest, resources, and relational dynamics. This strategy translates the findings of the previous mapping stages into actionable communication and collaboration plans, tailored to each stakeholder category and role.

A well-structured stakeholder map (e.g. Figs. 5–6) offers a visual representation of relationships, showing inbound arrows (indicating stakeholder influence on the project) and outbound arrows (reflecting the project's impact on stakeholders). Based on the Power/Interest Matrix, different engagement modes can be devised:

- **High power/high interest** stakeholders: require personalised engagement (e.g., one-on-one meetings, strategic partnerships).
- **High power/low interest** stakeholders: might need targeted updates to maintain support.
- **Low power/high interest** stakeholders: are often ideal for participatory and grassroots activities.
- **Low power/low interest** stakeholders: can be engaged through broader communication campaigns to raise awareness.

Furthermore, SNA insights, such as identifying central actors, bridging agents, or isolated nodes, help refine engagement methods, by recognising which actors can amplify messages, mediate across groups, or require active inclusion to prevent marginalisation.

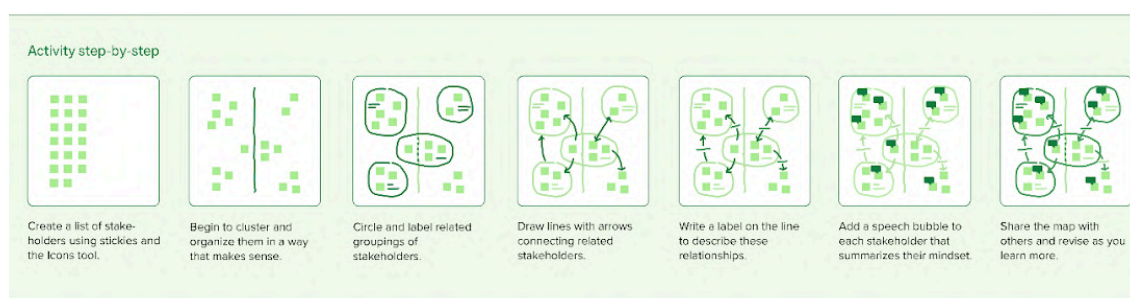


Figure 5: Stakeholder Map: Activity step-by-step (from Mural).

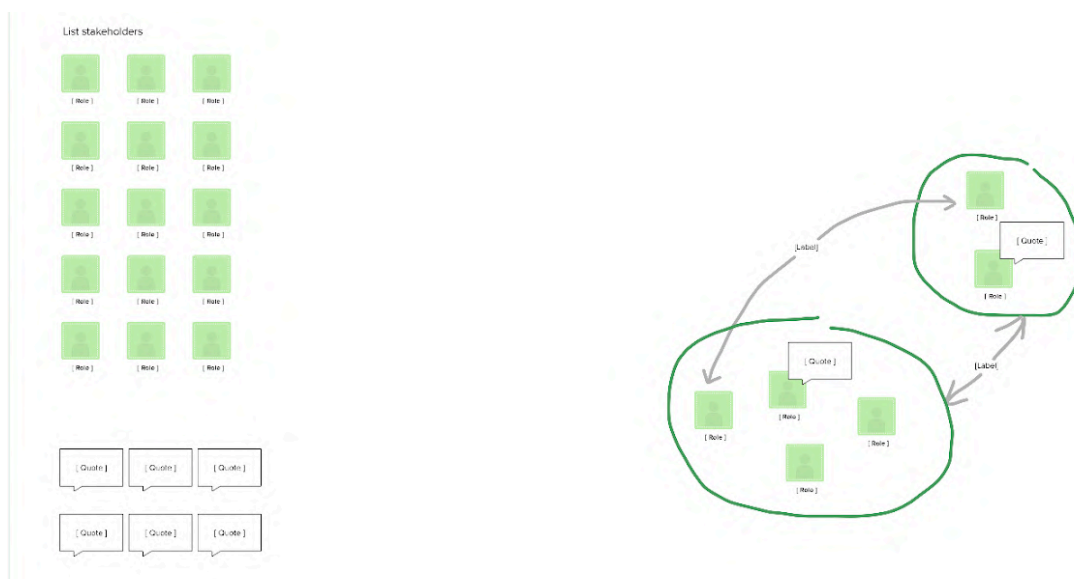


Figure 6: Stakeholder Map - Final outcome (from Mural)

This step is critical not only to **maximise contributions**, but also to **minimise frictions**, especially in participatory heritage projects where **multiple voices intersect**, and **ownership is shared**. A well-calibrated engagement strategy enhances **legitimacy, buy-in, and sustainability**, aligning interpretive efforts with both community values and institutional frameworks.




Example 6: In the **Immaginazione** project, PAFLEG launched a public open call to select NGOs and cultural associations for co-developing educational heritage services. This open and transparent mechanism not only mitigated potential conflicts of interest, but also broadened the pool of contributors, ensuring a diverse and representative participation in shaping the educational offerings.

Example 7: In the **Karawanken-Karavanke Geopark**, public bodies and tourism organisations were identified as critical actors for event implementation. Their integration in the planning of the **GeoFestival** ensured alignment with broader regional strategies and mobilised essential logistical and financial resources.

6. Continuous monitoring and feedback

Stakeholder engagement is not static. As project dynamics evolve, new actors may

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emerge, interests may shift, and initial assumptions may be challenged. A monitoring mechanism - ideally embedded into the project governance structure - should be established to track engagement quality, identify emerging issues, and adjust strategies as needed.

This phase involves regular updates to the stakeholder matrix and map, informed by field observations, surveys, interviews, or even SNA metrics (e.g., shifts in network centrality, density, or clustering).

7. Addressing Challenges

Even with a well-designed map and engagement plan, challenges are inevitable. Common issues include divergent expectations, misaligned timelines, and power imbalances. Below are two examples from EMPATHS Pilot Partners:

- **Differing perspectives:** In *Rizia Cultural Association* (Ethnological Museum of Thrace), initial tensions between older and younger generations were mediated through participatory folklore workshops, bridging value gaps and creating intergenerational empathy.
- **Resource constraints:** The *Evrynous project* (Ethnological Museum of Thrace) relied heavily on volunteer work, exposing its vulnerability. Partnerships with academic institutions helped build more resilient interpretive teams through internships and mentorships.

Stakeholder mapping is not a one-time task but a **dynamic, iterative practice** embedded in the life cycle of heritage interpretation projects. When combined with the analytical power of SNA, it becomes a **strategic compass** for navigating complexity, fostering inclusive participation, and co-producing heritage value in a way that is equitable, place-based, and future-oriented.



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6. Pilot Partners case-studies

6.1 Karawanken-Karavanke Unesco Global Geopark

1. *Project Title:* **Annual European Geopark Week during the GeoFestival** - (diverse programme of cross-border activities)

Stakeholders: Public bodies, Private sector, NGOs, Universities & Research, Cultural Institutions, Local residents

Short description: The **European Geoparks Week** takes place every year at the **end of May and beginning of June** and is a central part of the year-round "**GEOfestival**" programme in the Karawanken-Karavanke UNESCO Global Geopark. As part of the GEOfestival 2024, visitors can learn about the geological, natural and cultural heritage of the Geopark through creative workshops, experience nature and culture on one of the guided hikes or try themselves at one of the many sport events. The GEOfestival is a colourful range of interesting events that take place all year round in the cross-border Karawanken-Karavanke UNESCO Global Geopark. The idea of the GEOfestival is to experience, learn about and discover the special features of the cross-border Geopark Karawanken-Karavanke together with us.

NGOs, Cultural Institutions, Local residents

Engagement level: Highly engaged

6.2 Campi Flegrei Archaeological Park

1. *Project Title:* **Immaginazione**. Shared strategy project for the heritage education of the sites of the Campi Flegrei Archaeological Park

Stakeholders: Public bodies, Private sector, NGOs, Cultural Institutions, Local residents, others.

Short description: The project involves the construction of an educational services program curated together with a group of non-profit organizations selected through a public notice. Six cultural associations active in museum education were involved in the Immaginazione project. The selection was made through a public call of selection of proposals. Six organisations were selected: Aporema o.n.l.u.s., Associazione Gruppo archeologico Kyme, Associazione Human Festival, Associazione



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Legambiente Città Flegrea, Impresa sociale My Way s.r.l., Cooperativa Vento del Sud). The relationship with the associations is a special public-private partnership. The Campi Flegrei Archaeological Park has identified the development strategies, the locations, the target audiences and the topics for specific study. The associations involved have developed operational proposals for educational workshops and thematic itineraries aimed at schools and families.

Engagement level: Highly engaged

2. *Project Title:* **Festival ANTRO. Festival of the Archaeological Park.** Program for the construction of a calendar of artistic performances (music, theater, dance, performing arts) through a public call of selection of proposals.

Stakeholders: Public bodies, Private sector, NGOs, Universities & Research, Cultural Institutions, Local residents

Short description: The Antro Festival is a project for the construction of an artistic program based on the relationship with the communities. Now in its fourth edition, it stands out from other Festivals for the presence of a path of co-creation of the proposal based on a selection of artistic proposals from a public notice. In this way, a program of events is built that for two weeks are hosted in the Park's locations, interpreting a specific theme each edition. The Festival is aimed primarily at the local community.

Engagement level: Moderately engaged

3. *Project Title:* **TERRA Project.** TERRA is a project of the Campi Flegrei Archaeological Park, financed by the Campania Region, which comprehends two exhibitions and a conference.

Stakeholders: Public bodies, Universities & Research, Cultural Institutions, Local residents

Description: The project based on the theme of metamorphosis of the landscape and declined it in three points of view. The first was an exhibition that contained archaeological and geological materials from the more recent excavations at the Cuma site, carried out by the 4 Universities that have been working on the site for many years. The second was a photographic exhibition of many images of Baiae



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from the historical archive of the National Archaeological Museum of Naples: it was a virtual journey through the changing landscape conditioned by archaeological excavation of the beginning of XX century. The third event was a study conference on the scientific researches in the Campi Flegrei. The project involved many public actors, as Universities of Naples Federico II, L'Orientale, Vanvitelli and Suor Orsola Benincasa, a French Research Institute, the Centre Jean Bérard, who all contributed with their archaeological and geological researches to the archaeological exhibition and to the Conference. The Campania Region financed the project. The National Archaeological Museum of Naples gave the images of the archive for the photographic exhibition. And also many scholars and students take part to the Conference exposing their studies.

Engagement level: Highly engaged

4. Project Title: AAA Accogliere Ad Arte Project. Training sessions and guided tours of archaeological sites and museums organised to improve their ability to connect visitors with cultural sites.

Stakeholders: Public bodies, Private sector, NGOs, Cultural Institutions, Local residents, Others.

Description: From 2020 to 2022 the Campi Flegrei Archaeological Park has joined the network of museums of the AAA Accogliere Ad Arte project, coordinated by the Progetto Museo association. The aim of the project is to enhance the value of the places of art through the involvement of the professional categories involved in welcoming tourists and visitors: municipal police, taxi drivers, hoteliers, restaurateurs, public transport employees, greenkeepers, and port personnel. These categories, engaged with residents and tourists on a daily basis, are the primary storytellers of cultural heritage.

Engagement level: Moderately engaged

5. Project Title: Art Residency project, part of the Art Days - Napoli Campania (a widespread contemporary art project promoted by the Attiva Cultural Projects ETS Association), the Flegreo per il contemporaneo.

Stakeholders: Public bodies, Private sector, NGOs, Cultural Institutions, Local

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residents

Description: Art Residency project was launched in 2023 (organised by the Parco Archeologico dei Campi Flegrei in collaboration with the Aporema Association). The open call aimed at the presentation of a participatory art intervention to be realised at the Castle of Baia (seat of Campi Flegrei Archaeological Museum): the objective is the involvement of the local community, called upon to redefine its relationship with one of the main cultural sites of the Phlegrean area. The winning project was 'Panem et Circenses' by artist Edoardo Aruta. During his residency, Edoardo Aruta worked closely with the local community, collecting stories and anecdotes from local people active in preserving the heritage and cultural memory of the Phlegrean area. In collaboration with local bakeries and students from the School of Sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Naples, copies of the museum's works were made from bread dough. The 'edible finds', in the form of souvenirs, were the subject of a benefit auction, recalling a practice of local tradition, in which the community and museum visitors participated.

Engagement level: Moderately engaged

6.3 Ethnological Museum of Thrace

1. *Project Title:* **Therapeion Cottage Industry**, a small women owned business that aims by focusing on the production of traditional, organic products, without additives or preservatives, exclusively handmade, all made with passion and love for nature and culture.

Stakeholders: Private sector, Local residents

Description: Located in a rural area of Thrace by the borders with Turkey and Bulgaria, it started as a small home project and it developed into being a trademark for proud food heritage with local products and engaging older generations in sharing knowledge and recipes. Now is a cottage industry and that is thriving and keeps on involving the local community.

Engagement level: Highly engaged

2. *Project Title:* **Rizia Cultural Association** aimed to enhance the cultural development of the area, as well as to involve the residents, particularly the youth, in



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culture and their heritage

Stakeholders: Private sector, Cultural Institutions, Local residents

Description: The Association was founded in 1979 by a group of young people who believed that collective organizations should not only fund cultural products but also produce some of them, showcasing the place, the way, and the history of life on the rural frontier. Since its foundation, the following activities have been carried out: Cultural exchanges; European programs; Theatre performances; Exhibitions (photography, painting, wood carving, books, basket weaving, weaving, traditional flavours); Lectures (historical and national topics, health, ecology, organic farming); Publications (Rizios Album, Cultural Calendar of Rizios); Educational games for children; Educational visits; Established cultural events take place every summer under the name "Corn Festival... Earth, Products, Culture". The association 47 years later is going stronger than ever with almost the entire community being a participant. Within the framework of the E.M.S. Rizios, various departments have operated and continue to operate, such as: Traditional Dance, Theatre, Photography, Reading Group, Women's educational departments in collaboration with N.E.L.E. Evros, Folklore collection. This community led association is trying to engage the youth in cultural and educational activities as well as to provide a social outlet for the elder of their village. Being located in a remote rural area it recognised the need for cultural activities due of the lack of accessibility and it created a cultural hub.

Engagement level: Highly engaged

3. *Project Title:* **Evrynous**, a community based project with the aim of educating adults throughout the region of Thrace Greece in heritage interpretation.

Stakeholders: NGOs, Cultural Institutions, Local residents

Description: Evrynous aims not only to reconnect Thrace adults with their heritage but also to form an action team that can organise heritage interpretation experiences for visitors promoting their local region. Evrynous created 4 different heritage interpretation routes in the entire region and aims for the participants to continue to grow and create permanent organised team of interpreters.

Evrynous is being mentored by the museum but its aim is to become independent



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and to create an organised framework (association, ngo etc) for all residents of the region with providing heritage interpretation tours to visitors and locals. The level of engagement is high but fragile as it is a new team. <https://emthrace-org>

Engagement level: Highly engaged

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