Stakeholder Communication

If we lived in China, we would not have to look for support for infrastructure or mobility projects...

• We would be able to force people. And luckily, this is not allowed in our democracies

Stakeholder Communication

So we have to take our stakeholders into account...

• Even with opposing parties, which just want to stop the project.

Stakeholder Communication

As a government, how do you prevent that you end up in a boxing ring, where you are trying to knock one another out...

• No matter what, a good project is a flight against time, setbacks and opponents. But, hopefully less like boxing and more like Judo.

• So with respect. And thanks to an intense process, you learn from one another and projects get better.

Stakeholder Communication

So, we have to take into account what stakeholders think of a project...

• Which are the strategies to do that? Connect starts from the 3 support circles to create support:
  – How to create more involvement?
  – How to deal with conflicting interests?
  – How to reduce disruptions during the works?
How to create more involvement?

- A strong visualisation of the final image: can I see the result?
- An active approach to information: can I make remarks and do I get answers?
- A low content threshold: do they assure that I can understand it?
- A phased information structure: do I receive the information at the time when I need it?

How to deal with conflicting interests?

- Open dialogues with opponents
- Communicate with people who will be expropriated
- Assure that participation doesn’t lead to destruction

Some concrete tools

- Sounding board groups
  - Get opponents and supporters involved
- Information exhibitions
  - Break through bitter hearings
- Personal conversations
  - Dare to go face-to-face
- Open-plan processes
  - When possible: the public as engineer within the playing field that you determine

How do we handle a stakeholder analysis?

- This is how we did it for the redevelopment of the Antwerp Ring Road and the Eindhoven Ring Road
- Large projects with many stakeholders
- And with the risk that, if you work without a methodology, you forget important parties
- Therefore, step-by-step approach and especially a mix of broadening/deepening

Projects analysis: image that you can only write one page

- What is the goal of the project?
- Phasing? Decision-making?
- Which information is already public?
  - A project analysis is often too extensive, and only an engineer knows what is says. How can you then define the social impact…
  - After all, stakeholders are not engineers…
Impact analysis: what are the effects of the project?

- Based on the project analysis, define the impact receptors
- Example:
  - Environment
  - Mobility
  - Quality of life
- Define the impact on the receptors, both before and after the works
- Input is collected during interviews, press analysis, internal documents and ... gut feeling
- Output: impact analysis per receptor. Extensive and detailed. But no actor level yet.

Categorisation: define actor categories

- Define actor categories per impact receptor
- E.g. Impact receptor environment → actor categories:
  - Environmental associations
  - Authorised local governing bodies for environment
  - ...
- Be as intensive as possible in your categories. Better to delete later if you cannot find actors rather than to forget to screen actors...

Actor index cards: completing the categories with actors

- Per category and based on the impact analysis, you complete the actor analysis
- Make an index per actor
- Overlap: sometimes, actors are important on 2 receptors (environment and quality of life). Do include them in both impact analyses
- Make sure to save digitally and to update it. But I preferred to have 3 books with me at all times.

Example of an actor index card: Eindhoven Ring Road

- Based in this methodology, we identified 480 actors that were involved in the Eindhoven Ring Road
- Mapping them does not mean the goal has been reached. It is a tool
- A tool to develop communication: who has to be in sounding board groups, who must receive e-letters, etc.

Thank you

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