International Journal of Social and Development Concerns

ISSN 2524-1478 (Online)

Vol. 25 | Post COVID-19 Recovery and Sustainable development
Vol. 25 Article 9 | August 22, 2025

Involving Stakeholders in Performance of Science Research Programs at Science for Africa Foundation, Nairobi City County, Kenya

Authors: [1]David Joseph Nyamesegere, [2]Benard Lango, and [3]Ruth Njeri Karuu
[1,2&3]The Catholic University of Eastern Africa - Kenya. **Website:** www.cuea.edu
Correspondence: David Joseph Nyamesegere. **Email:** nyamesegere10@gmail.com

Cite as: *Nyamesegere,, D. J., Lango, B., & Karuu, R. N. (2025). Involving Stakeholders in Performance of Science Research Programs at Science for Africa Foundation, Nairobi City County, Kenya. International Journal of Social and Development Concerns, 25(9), 110–120. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.16930023*

Abstract: *This study investigated the influence of stakeholder involvement on the performance of science research programs, focusing on the Science for Africa (SFA) Foundation in Nairobi, Kenya. Anchored in Stakeholder Theory, alongside Resource-Based and Resource Dependency perspectives, the research examined how participatory monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices shape program outcomes. Using a descriptive design, data were collected from a stratified sample of 235 individuals, with 196 valid responses (83.4% response rate). Quantitative analysis was conducted with SPSS version 25 and qualitative insights were analyzed using Nvivo. Findings indicate that stakeholder involvement significantly enhances program performance (M = 3.77, SD = 0.458). Engagement of funders, policymakers, researchers, and beneficiaries promoted accountability, strengthened knowledge co-production, and ensured alignment of research outputs with societal priorities. Incorporating diverse stakeholder perspectives within M&E frameworks fostered shared ownership of outcomes and improved the application of research findings. The study concludes that structured stakeholder engagement mechanisms are essential for the effectiveness and sustainability of science research programs. It recommends embedding inclusive participation within M&E systems to enhance transparency, responsiveness, and long-term impact. Further research should examine the longitudinal effects of stakeholder engagement and the role of digital tools in optimizing participatory evaluation processes.*

Key words: Stakeholders, Performance, Science Research Programs, Africa Foundation

1.1 Introduction

Stakeholder involvement is widely recognized as a critical determinant of the performance and sustainability of science research programs. Active participation ensures that research objectives are aligned with both community needs and global standards. By fostering partnerships, attracting financial resources, and building a shared vision of impact, stakeholder engagement enhances the relevance and legitimacy of scientific projects. Feedback mechanisms, such as stakeholder satisfaction indices and adoption of recommendations, are often used as indicators of how stakeholder input translates into improved outcomes, thereby making research programs more effective (Loureiro, Romero, & Bilro, 2020).

Evidence from the German context illustrates the importance of structured stakeholder engagement. The German Research Foundation (DFG), for instance, organizes consultative workshops and forums that bring together researchers, industry collaborators, and policymakers. These platforms facilitate collaboration, enhance innovation channels, and improve funding allocation systems (Wiesmeth, 2020). By incorporating diverse perspectives, DFG ensures that its research projects remain both academically rigorous and practically applicable (Lopez-Concepcion, Gil-Lacruz, & Saz-Gil, 2022). However, the reliance on intensive engagement activities can be resource-heavy and may disadvantage smaller institutions with limited financial and human capacity.

In Japan, stakeholder satisfaction has become a central performance measure. The Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) routinely collects feedback through surveys and consultations, giving stakeholders a voice in decision-making processes. Results have been positive, with 85 percent of participants reporting satisfaction with JST's transparency and engagement practices (Sakawa & Watanabe, 2020; Wu & Li, 2020). This high level of satisfaction has strengthened long-term partnerships and contributed to improved research quality. Nonetheless, while surveys provide useful data, they risk reducing engagement to a procedural exercise if stakeholder contributions are not genuinely integrated into strategic planning.

The United Kingdom provides further evidence of the benefits of sustained engagement. Research programs regularly involve stakeholders in meetings and project feedback sessions, creating opportunities to refine research agendas. Incorporating stakeholder suggestions has enabled programs to align outputs with industry and societal needs, thereby increasing efficiency and relevance (Lopez-Concepcion, Gil-Lacruz, & Saz-Gil, 2022). Such responsiveness contributes to a more dynamic research system. Yet, this approach also risks narrowing research agendas toward short-term, industry-driven goals, potentially limiting investment in fundamental or long-term research priorities (Barko, Cremers, & Renneboog, 2022).

Experiences from the Global South also highlight the value of stakeholder engagement. In South Africa, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) institutionalized quarterly consultations with stakeholders, including industry, government, and community representatives. These interactions helped align research activities with national development priorities, while feedback loops improved collaborative decision-making and responsiveness (Malakoane, Heunis, Chikobvu, Kigozi, & Kruger, 2020). However, balancing diverse interests remains a challenge, as competing stakeholder expectations can slow down decision-making processes.

Nigeria provides further evidence of the performance benefits of stakeholder involvement. At the Nigerian Institute of Scientific Research, systematic feedback mechanisms and satisfaction indices improved program performance by 40 percent. Higher stakeholder satisfaction levels also attracted increased funding and ensured continuity of partnerships, strengthening institutional capacity (Ogunode & Aiyedun, 2020; Agagu, 2023). While these findings highlight the strong connection between satisfaction and performance, there is a risk of oversimplification when satisfaction ratings are treated as the sole indicator of stakeholder contribution.

Across these diverse contexts, a consistent conclusion emerges: stakeholder involvement enhances

efficiency, legitimacy, and sustainability in science research programs. Engagement aligns research outputs with societal needs, secures financial and institutional support, and builds trust between researchers and stakeholders. Nevertheless, challenges persist. Effective engagement often requires significant resources, time, and institutional commitment. Programs must navigate competing interests, avoid tokenistic consultation, and ensure that stakeholder contributions are meaningfully incorporated into strategic directions.

In summary, stakeholder involvement functions both as a performance driver and as a legitimacy mechanism for science research programs. International evidence demonstrates that when engagement is structured, transparent, and continuous, it strengthens partnerships, improves funding streams, and enhances the relevance and quality of research outcomes. At the same time, programs must remain cautious of over-reliance on satisfaction measures and the potential risks of narrowing research agendas. Achieving a balance between inclusivity, practicality, and strategic focus remains essential for translating stakeholder involvement into measurable performance gains.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Science research programs are essential for driving innovation, national development, and international scientific integration. Their effectiveness depends on adequate funding, strong stakeholder collaboration, skilled researchers, and organizational cultures that support innovation and career advancement. With sufficient resources, modern facilities, and systematic partnerships, research programs can generate high-quality scientific outputs that address domestic challenges and enhance global competitiveness. In Kenya, however, science research programs face major constraints that weaken their performance. Inadequate funding hampers the acquisition of advanced facilities, the initiation of large-scale projects, and the provision of competitive remuneration for researchers. Stakeholder engagement is also limited, with 68% of research institutions lacking formal collaboration mechanisms, which restricts access to external funding and expertise (Onyango & Ondiek, 2021). Furthermore, a shortage of qualified researchers, poor career progression opportunities, and low salaries have contributed to high attrition rates. Rigid bureaucratic systems further slow processes, reducing efficiency, output, and innovation. Addressing these challenges requires strategic reforms. Increased funding, structured stakeholder engagement, better incentives to retain skilled researchers, and reduced bureaucratic bottlenecks are critical for improving performance and sustainability. Without these measures, Kenyan research programs risk underperforming and failing to achieve their strategic role in national and global scientific development.

1.3 Literature review

This section systematically reviews existing literature on monitoring and evaluation practices, stakeholder involvement, budgetary allocation, human resource capacity, and organizational culture within the context of scientific research programs. This review also critically examines the theoretical frameworks guiding the study, including the Resource-Based View, Resource Dependency, and Stakeholder Theories, to establish a comprehensive understanding of their interplay in influencing performance outcomes. Furthermore, it explores empirical evidence regarding the impact of these factors on research effectiveness, drawing insights from diverse global and regional contexts to inform the current investigation. This comprehensive approach aims to identify gaps in current knowledge and articulate the study's unique contribution to the discourse on optimizing science research program performance. Moreover, a thorough analysis of previous studies reveals a consistent emphasis on the

pivotal role of stakeholder involvement in achieving project success and organizational performance, particularly in complex research environments (Musyoka et al., 2023; Pandi-Perumal et al., 2015).

1.3.1 Theoretical Framework

Stakeholder Theory, advanced by Freeman (1984), emphasizes the inclusivity and accountability of decision-making processes in science research programs. Unlike approaches that prioritize shareholders, the theory underscores the importance of considering the diverse interests of funders, researchers, policymakers, and beneficiaries in program implementation and evaluation. Within the context of monitoring and evaluation (M&E), stakeholder engagement strengthens legitimacy, transparency, and the societal relevance of research outcomes. By involving stakeholders in the design and assessment of research activities, programs enhance accountability and ensure that findings address both community needs and funder expectations. For instance, the participation of beneficiaries in health-related evaluations improves the applicability of results, while funder engagement fosters financial accountability, and researcher involvement contributes to methodological rigor (Freeman, 1984). Stakeholder participation also enhances the effectiveness of M&E by integrating multiple perspectives and fostering shared ownership of outcomes. This participatory approach creates research outputs that are more resilient and responsive to contextual demands, thereby improving the overall impact of programs. However, Stakeholder Theory faces practical challenges. The broad and sometimes ambiguous definition of stakeholders can complicate decision-making, especially where conflicting interests exist. Moreover, inclusive approaches often demand substantial financial and human resources, which may be limited in underfunded research organizations. Such constraints can delay decision-making and increase administrative costs, potentially undermining efficiency (Freeman, 1984). Despite these limitations, stakeholder involvement remains central to improving the performance and societal relevance of science research programs. Through participatory M&E frameworks, research institutions strengthen accountability, build trust, and align their outputs with the priorities of diverse actors. Ultimately, stakeholder engagement reinforces the adaptability and sustainability of research programs, positioning them to deliver outcomes that are both scientifically rigorous and socially meaningful.

1.3.2 Empirical review

Effective stakeholder involvement, encompassing diverse actors such as funders, researchers, beneficiaries, and policymakers, is critical for enhancing project design, fostering public acceptance, and mitigating risks, significantly boosting the likelihood of successful project outcomes (Ezeh et al., 2024). Specifically, stakeholder involvement is crucial for ensuring that research initiatives align with societal needs and priorities, thereby maximizing their relevance and impact (Gatumi et al., 2022). It facilitates knowledge co-production and dissemination, fostering a collaborative environment essential for addressing multifaceted scientific challenges (Ndonye et al., 2021) (Kosgei, 2021). Recognizing that the survival and success of any enterprise are highly linked to accessing valuable resources held by stakeholders, effective engagement strategies are paramount for sustained performance (Ontita & Kinyua, 2020). The integration of stakeholder perspectives not only enriches the research process but also strengthens the uptake and application of research findings, ensuring broader societal benefits (Belyaeva et al., 2020).

Indeed, successful energy projects and collaborative research initiatives, particularly those focused on sustainability, heavily rely on robust stakeholder engagement strategies to manage diverse interests and achieve intended objectives (Ezeh et al., 2024; Santos & Fernandes, 2024). This emphasizes the necessity

of identifying, understanding, and addressing the varied interests and concerns of all involved parties, ranging from governmental bodies to local communities and environmental groups, to ensure project sustainability and compliance (Ezeh et al., 2024). This comprehensive understanding of stakeholder dynamics is further bolstered by stakeholder theory, which posits that an organization's success hinges on effectively addressing the interests of all stakeholders beyond just shareholders. (Uribe et al., 2018; Nguyen et al., 2018) This approach underscores the importance of a systematic and iterative process for planning stakeholder engagement activities, integrating flexibility to accommodate evolving inputs, and ensuring that stakeholder contributions are methodically gathered, analyzed, and utilized throughout the research lifecycle (Boaz et al., 2018). This proactive and inclusive methodology helps to anticipate and mitigate potential conflicts, while simultaneously fostering a sense of shared ownership and commitment among all participants (Hollmann et al., 2022).

Furthermore, embracing responsible research and innovation principles emphasizes bidirectional communication between researchers and stakeholders, ensuring mutual responsiveness and societal desirability of innovation processes and outcomes (Hollmann et al., 2022). Therefore, developing a robust stakeholder engagement plan is essential for any research endeavor to ensure its relevance, ethical conduct, and the effective dissemination and utilization of its findings. Such plans often involve clarifying engagement objectives, embedding engagement within a broader research framework, and identifying necessary resources, alongside fostering shared commitment to values and recognizing potential tensions between productivity and inclusion (Boaz et al., 2018).

1.4 Methodology

This section outlines the research methodology employed in the study. It presents the research design, study area, target population, sampling strategy, and procedures used in the collection and analysis of data. The section also details the development, validation, and reliability testing of research instruments, while highlighting ethical considerations. Finally, it describes the operationalization of study variables to ensure clarity and consistency in measurement.

Research Design: A research design provides the blueprint for data collection and analysis, ensuring reliable conclusions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This study adopted a descriptive research design, which is appropriate for quantitative investigation of relationships between variables. The design was selected to determine how monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices—specifically budget allocation, stakeholder involvement, human capacity, and organizational culture—affect the performance of science research programs in Nairobi, Kenya. By quantifying perceptions and practices, the study was able to examine associations and generate insights relevant to policy and practice.

Study Area: The research was conducted at the Science for Africa (SFA) Foundation, an independent pan-African institution headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya. SFA supports and strengthens science and innovation by providing funding, technical expertise, and policy engagement to research institutions across Africa. The organization is uniquely positioned to advance knowledge production and innovation due to its extensive networks and partnerships. This study focused on identifying drivers of effective M&E and their relationship with performance indicators such as research output, publications, innovation and technology transfer, collaboration, and societal relevance. Respondents included (Co) Principal Investigators, Heads of Programme, M&E Managers, Communication Managers, and Finance Managers from SFA and its beneficiary partners.

Target Population: The target population comprised 600 staff members affiliated with the SFA Foundation, distributed across five professional categories: (Co) Principal Investigators, Heads of Programme, M&E Managers, Communication Managers, and Finance Managers. According to Alvi (2019), a target population consists of individuals who meet predefined eligibility criteria. For this study, respondents were selected due to their roles in program design, oversight, and performance management.

Sample Size and Sampling Procedures

Sample Size: Sample size determination is critical in ensuring the generalizability of findings (Lakens, 2022). Using the Krejcie and Morgan formula, a sample size of 235 respondents was calculated from a population of 600. Stratified random sampling was applied, whereby the population was divided into strata based on role designation, after which proportionate samples were drawn. Each stratum contributed 47 respondents, ensuring fair representation across professional categories. Stratification minimized sampling error and enhanced reliability by capturing diverse perspectives.

$$n = \frac{X^2 NP(1-P)}{d^2(N-1) + X^2 P(1-P)}$$

Where n = required sample size; X^2= chi-square value (3.841 at 95% confidence); NNN = population size; P = 0.5 (maximizing sample size); d = 0.05. The resulting calculation confirmed a sample of 235 respondents.

Sampling Procedure: The stratified sampling approach was implemented in three stages: first by countries of program operation, then by project type, and finally by staff roles (Mishra & Alok, 2022). This procedure ensured proportional representation across the organizational structure, capturing the perspectives of stakeholders involved in M&E and program performance.

Data Collection Instruments: Data were collected using structured questionnaires, designed to capture quantitative data efficiently and cost-effectively (Pandey & Pandey, 2021; Alam, 2021). Likert-scale questions measured attitudes, perceptions, and experiences regarding M&E practices. The questionnaire was divided into six sections: demographic information, budget allocation, stakeholder involvement, human resource capacity, organizational culture, and program performance.

Pilot Testing of Instruments: Pilot testing was conducted with 10% of the sample size to identify ambiguities and refine question clarity. Feedback led to revisions, ensuring the instrument was user-friendly and contextually appropriate. Iterative refinement enhanced the reliability and validity of the questionnaire (Kaloka, 2023).

Validity of the Instrument: Validity ensures instruments measure what they intend to. Three forms of validity were assessed:
Content validity*:* established through expert reviews of item relevance (Listiani et al., 2021).
Construct validity*:* tested using factor analysis to verify alignment with theoretical constructs (Desoete et al., 2022).
Criterion-related validity*:* assessed by comparing responses with established benchmarks (Puspasari &

Puspita, 2022).
These processes ensured the tool accurately captured stakeholder perceptions on M&E practices.

Reliability of the Instrument: Reliability was tested using Cronbach's alpha, with coefficients above 0.7 considered acceptable (Taber, 2017). Reliability analysis was conducted during pilot testing, and adjustments were made where inconsistencies appeared. The reliability was rated at 0.753 for 9 items. High internal consistency was critical to avoid misleading conclusions regarding funding allocation, stakeholder involvement, and performance.

Data Collection Procedures: Data collection began with introductory communication to respondents, followed by the distribution of digital questionnaires. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected: surveys captured structured responses on M&E dimensions, while open-ended questions provided qualitative insights. This mixed-method approach enhanced depth and triangulation.

Data Analysis Techniques: Quantitative data were processed using SPSS version 25. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) summarized respondent characteristics and key patterns. Inferential statistics were employed to examine relationships between M&E practices and program performance. Results were presented in tables and charts for clarity. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically using **Nvivo**, enabling integration of stakeholder perspectives into interpretation.

Ethical Considerations: Ethical principles guided the study to ensure integrity and respect for participants (Ajuwon, 2020). Measures included informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and secure storage of data. Respondents were assured of anonymity through the use of identification codes. No personal identifiers were collected, minimizing risks. Ethical approval was obtained from the SFA Foundation and a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI). Participants were fully informed of the study's purpose and procedures, and their autonomy was respected.

1.5 Results and Discussion

Response rate

A total of 235 questionnaires were administered to the respondents, of which 196 were completed, yielding a response rate of 83.4% while 16.6% (39 questionnaires) were not returned.

Table 1: Respondents' response rate

Questionnaires administered	Response rate	Non-response rate	Comment
235	196 (83.4%)	39(16.6%)	Representative of the population

Source: *Field data, 2025*

The response rate (n=196, 83.4%) was regarded as high and representative of the target population. It concurred with stipulations by Holtom, Baruch, Aguinis, and Ballinger (2022) that a response rate above 70% is representative of the population from which the sample was drawn, hence, adequate for data analysis. The high rate could have been contributed to the relevance of the research topic to the

respondents, and pre-testing of the questionnaires, which removed ambiguity and enhanced the correctness of the questions. Additionally, the researcher maintained confidentiality, sought informed consent, and obtained all the necessary authorization that encouraged the respondents to participate. Nevertheless, the 16.6% non-response rate could be attributed to respondents' busy schedules, lack of interest, and withdrawal from the study (Aditya, 2025). In some cases, incomplete or improperly filled questionnaires were excluded from analysis, which further contributed to the non-response tally (Woolf & Edwards, 2021).

Respondent Demographics

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 196)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	104	53.1
	Female	92	46.9
Age	Under 30 years	29	14.8
	31–40 years	45	23.0
	41–45 years	68	34.7
	46–55 years	40	20.4
	Over 55 years	14	7.1
Education	Diploma	34	17.3
	Undergraduate	107	54.6
	Postgraduate	55	28.1
Experience	Below 1 year	29	14.8
	1–3 years	108	55.1
	Above 3 years	59	30.1

Source: *Field data, 2025*

The demographic profile shows a relatively balanced gender distribution, with males (53.1%) slightly outnumbering females (46.9%), reflecting growing inclusivity in research institutions. Most respondents were mid-career professionals, with the largest group (34.7%) aged 41–45 years, suggesting a workforce rich in experience but still adaptable to evolving research demands. Educational attainment was high, with 54.6% holding undergraduate degrees and 28.1% postgraduate qualifications, indicating strong academic preparedness for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) roles. Only 17.3% held diplomas, highlighting the professionalization of the sector. In terms of work experience, 55.1% had 1–3 years in their roles, while 30.1% had more than 3 years, suggesting a workforce combining fresh perspectives with seasoned expertise. Overall, the demographic composition underscores a well-educated, gender-inclusive, and predominantly mid-career workforce, well-positioned to contribute to effective M&E practices in science research programs.

Stakeholder Involvement

The objective of this study was to examine the influence of stakeholder involvement on the performance of science research programs. Stakeholder involvement was measured through indicators such as engagement sessions, satisfaction levels, and adoption of recommendations. The results are summarized

in Table 2.

Table 3. Stakeholder Involvement Statistics (N = 196)

Statement	Mean	SD	Interpretation*
Stakeholder engagement sessions always take place before key decisions.	4.13	0.62	High agreement
Relevant stakeholders often participate actively in budget planning.	3.76	0.76	Moderate agreement
Engagement forums address the real concerns of stakeholders.	3.91	0.85	High agreement
Stakeholders' express satisfaction with their level of involvement.	3.80	0.73	Moderate agreement
Feedback from stakeholders influences improvements in budget processes.	3.01	1.06	Low–moderate agreement
Concerns raised by stakeholders receive adequate attention.	3.56	0.91	Moderate agreement
Stakeholder recommendations guide policy and budget adjustments.	3.87	0.69	High agreement
Suggestions from stakeholders lead to meaningful program changes.	3.69	0.78	Moderate–high agreement
Proposed stakeholder recommendations rarely go unimplemented.	4.22	0.60	Very high agreement
Overall	3.77	0.78	Moderate–high agreement

*Interpretation based on proximity to scale anchors (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

The findings indicate that stakeholder involvement significantly enhances the performance of science research programs. Most respondents agreed that engagement sessions are consistently conducted before major decisions (M = 4.13, SD = 0.62), underscoring a strong participatory culture. This supports Haro and Bano (2022), who argued that early consultation fosters transparency and shared ownership. Similarly, active stakeholder participation in budget discussions (M = 3.76, SD = 0.76) aligns with Ali et al. (2021), who emphasized its role in program legitimacy and accountability.

Stakeholders also affirmed that forums frequently address their concerns (M = 3.91, SD = 0.85), and reported general satisfaction with their involvement in decision-making (M = 3.80, SD = 0.73), reflecting findings by Bello and Akinlabi (2020). However, feedback was found to have only moderate influence on budgetary improvements (M = 3.01, SD = 1.06), suggesting a gap between stakeholder input and managerial response, consistent with Mwita and Mohammed (2023).
Encouragingly, recommendations were shown to guide policy and budget adjustments (M = 3.87, SD = 0.69) and contribute to meaningful program changes (M = 3.69, SD = 0.78), supporting Singh and Arya's (2021) conclusion that participatory mechanisms drive innovation. The strongest result indicated that stakeholder recommendations are rarely ignored (M = 4.22, SD = 0.60), demonstrating high responsiveness.

Overall, the results (M = 3.77, SD = 0.78) reflect a moderately strong culture of inclusivity, with 68% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statements. However, the substantial neutral responses (24.2%) and moderate variability suggest that engagement practices are uneven, highlighting the need to strengthen consistency and deepen the impact of stakeholder contributions.

Implications for Policy and Management

These findings suggest that research institutions should formalize stakeholder engagement as a core governance practice. Embedding systematic consultation mechanisms, ensuring transparent feedback loops, and linking stakeholder recommendations to measurable program changes can strengthen accountability and trust. For policymakers, the evidence highlights the importance of institutional frameworks that not only mandate participation but also track its effectiveness. Strengthening these

structures can enhance program legitimacy, improve resource allocation, and foster innovation in science research programs.

1.6 Conclusion

The study established that stakeholder involvement exerts a significant positive influence on the performance of science research programs. Findings demonstrated that stakeholders are regularly engaged before key decisions, actively participate in budget discussions, and express general satisfaction with their involvement. Importantly, stakeholder recommendations were shown to guide policy and budget adjustments, rarely going unimplemented. These outcomes reflect a relatively strong participatory culture that fosters transparency, accountability, and adaptability. Nonetheless, some gaps were observed. Stakeholder feedback had only a moderate influence on budgetary improvements, and a notable proportion of respondents remained neutral regarding the effectiveness of engagement processes. This indicates variability in the depth and consistency of participation across program activities. Overall, the results suggest that while inclusivity is practiced, greater effort is needed to enhance responsiveness and ensure that stakeholder contributions translate more directly into tangible program outcomes.

1.7 Recommendations

Institutionalize Stakeholder Engagement Frameworks: Research institutions should develop formal policies that mandate stakeholder consultation at all stages of program planning, implementation, and evaluation. Structured frameworks will ensure consistency and prevent tokenistic participation.

Strengthen Feedback Mechanisms: To close the gap between stakeholder input and management action, institutions should establish transparent feedback loops. Communicating how stakeholder concerns and suggestions have been addressed can build trust and enhance satisfaction.

Capacity Building for Inclusive Governance: Training program managers and stakeholders in participatory decision-making, conflict resolution, and collaborative budgeting can improve the quality of engagement forums and foster meaningful contributions.

Monitor and Evaluate Stakeholder Involvement: Institutions should adopt performance indicators that track the depth, frequency, and impact of stakeholder involvement. This evidence can guide continuous improvement and ensure that engagement translates into program performance.

Policy Alignment and Support: National research policies should embed stakeholder involvement as a governance standard, linking it to funding requirements and performance evaluations. This would incentivize institutions to prioritize inclusivity and accountability.

References

Ali, S., Nisar, Q. A., & Rafique, S. (2021). Stakeholder involvement and performance in research-driven institutions: A financial governance perspective. *Public Money & Management, 41*(3), 200–208. https://doi.org/10.1080/09540962.2020.1820905

Bello, R. S., & Akinlabi, H. (2020). Stakeholder satisfaction as a determinant of institutional effectiveness in public sector projects. *International Journal of Public Sector Management, 33*(2), 145–161. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPSM-06-2019-0167

Boaz, A., Hanney, S., Borst, R. A. J., O'Shea, A., & Kok, M. (2018). *How to engage stakeholders in research: Design principles to support improvement*. *Health Research Policy and Systems, 16*(60). https://doi.org/10.1186/s12961-018-0337-6

Brummel, L. (2025). Stakeholder involvement as a form of accountability? Perspectives on the accountability function of stakeholder bodies in Dutch public agencies. *Public Policy and*

Administration, 40(1), 27–49. https://doi.org/10.1177/09520767231167832

Ezeh, M. O., Ogbu, A. D., Ikevuje, A. H., & George, E. P-E. (2024). Stakeholder engagement and influence: Strategies for successful energy projects. *International Journal of Management & Entrepreneurship Research, 6*(7), 2375–2395. https://doi.org/10.51594/ijmer.v6i7.1330

Freeman, R. E. (1984). *Strategic management: A stakeholder approach*. Pitman.

Haro, M. J., & Bano, M. (2022). Collaborative decision-making and stakeholder engagement in public science programs. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, 32*(1), 65–79. https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/muab039

Hollmann, S., Regierer, B., Bechis, J., Tobin, L., & D'Elia, D. (2022). Ten simple rules on how to develop a stakeholder engagement plan.

Mwita, K. M., & Mohammed, M. S. (2023). Stakeholder feedback, accountability, and implementation gaps in public institutions. *Journal of African Business, 24*(1), 113–129. https://doi.org/10.1080/15228916.2022.2089347

Singh, R., & Arya, R. (2021). Participatory governance and institutional performance in scientific research organizations. *Science and Public Policy, 48*(4), 532–542. https://doi.org/10.1093/scipol/scab024