

Stakeholder engagement for gene drive: best practices and challenges

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Why to engage stakeholders on gene drive?

- Reasons to engage are diverse:
 - Ethical reasons – respect for persons, justice and equity, transparency and accountability, human rights and agency
 - Co-development reasons – knowledge engagement, risk identification, better design
 - Instrumental reasons - acceptance, conflict prevention, reputation management
 - Strategic reasons – political influence, advocacy, power sharing
 - Regulatory reasons – compliance in key moments with obligations to have public consultations



Existing ethical and policy guidance

- Ethical and policy guidance on gene drive research all highlight the need for stakeholders engagement.
- Distinction between communities, stakeholders and publics with different ethical obligations.
- Clear guidelines about the inadequacy of individual consent and the need for a community-level authorisation.
- Limited benchmark about what is an appropriate or sufficient level of engagement
- Literature from practitioners sharing their experience in engagement for gene drive



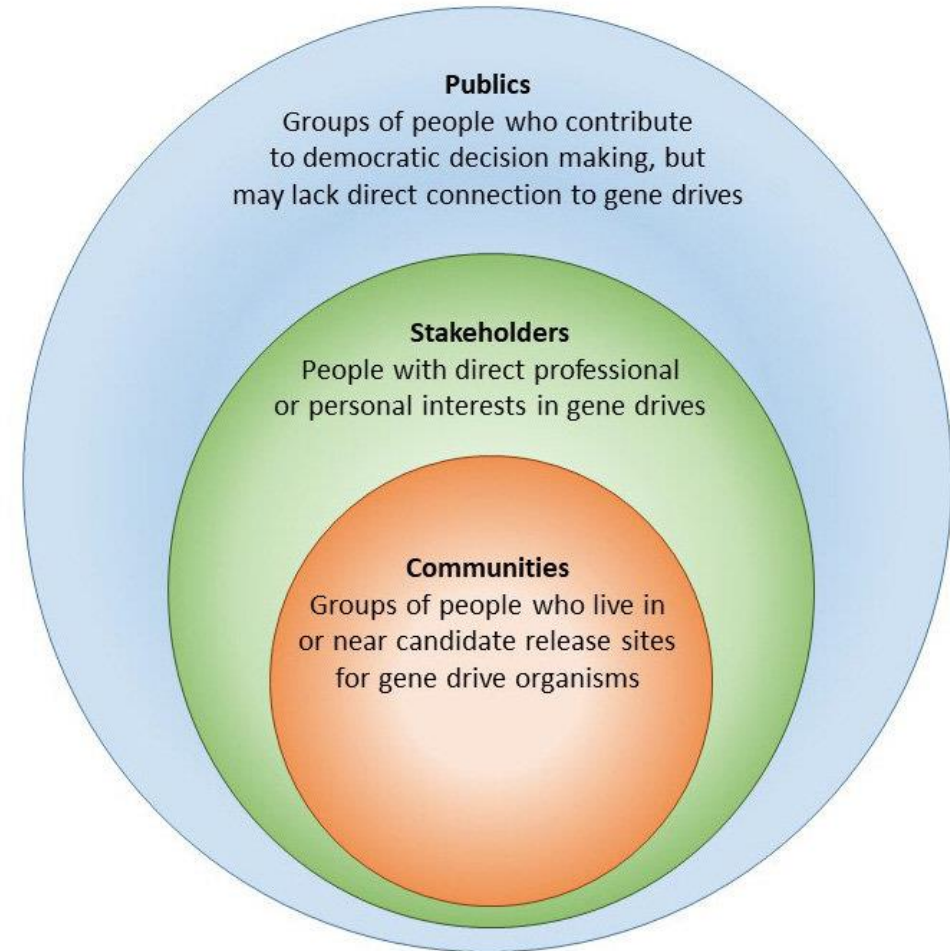


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Community and stakeholder engagement should be undertaken early, at the start of the phased testing pathway for genetically modified mosquitoes, and be tailored, iterative and sustained.

Diverse engagements for diverse stakeholders

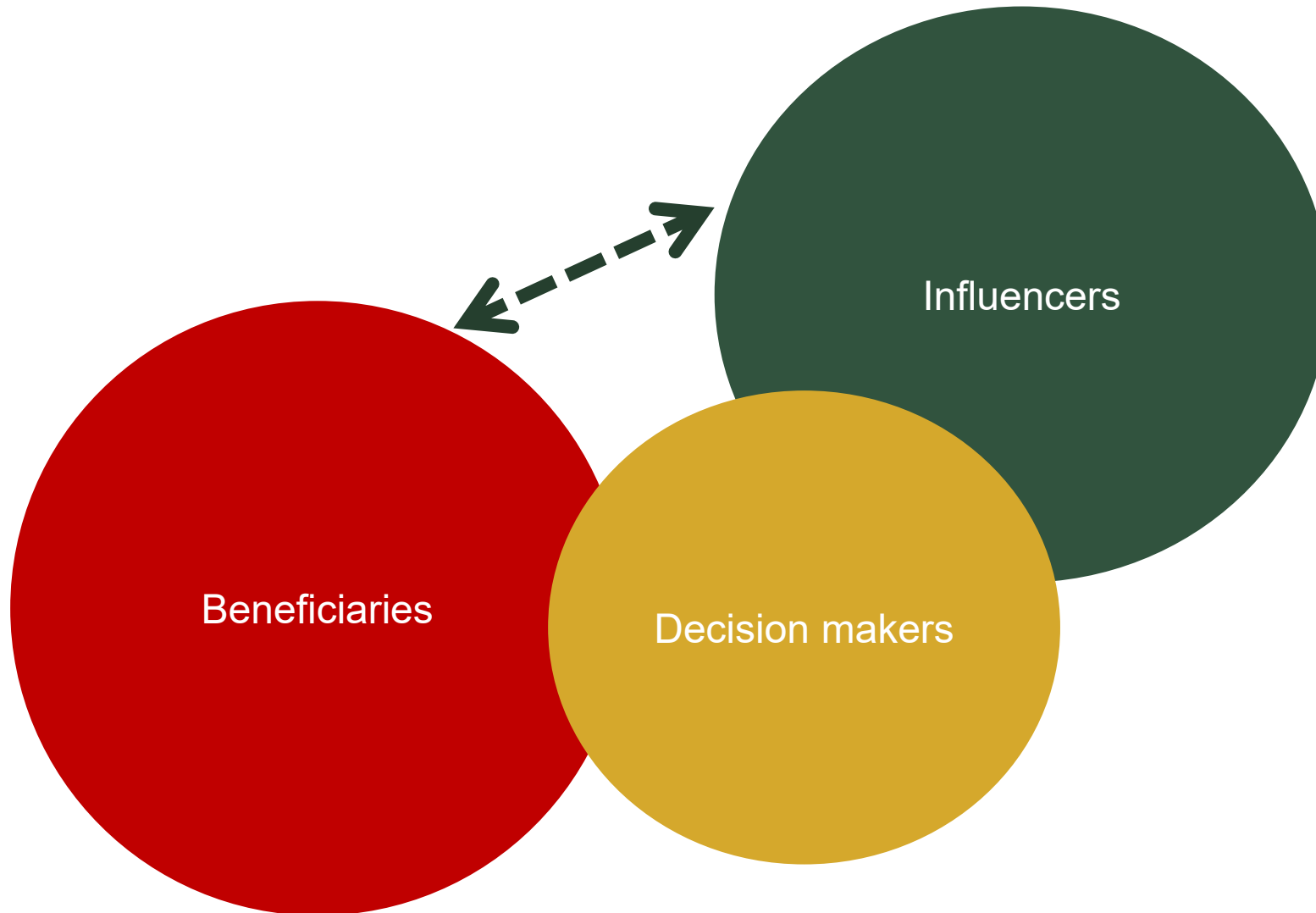
- Different stakeholders
- Different engagement objectives
- Different interests and concerns
- Different strategies
- Different engagements – from developers and from regulators



Best practices

- Strong emphasis on co-development
- Case-by-case engagement strategy, adapting to the context and to the project's approach
- Internalised or in partnership
- Locally owned and focused – glossary development, communication tools
- Acceptance as one component of the broader engagement

Different audiences



Challenges

- Trust building – who is engaging, when are they engaging and how is this engagement part of a broader relationship
 - e.g. engagement with indigenous peoples
- Complexity – scientific jargon, regulatory process
- Timing – balancing expectations with early engagement

Disinformation



Key takeaways

- Stakeholder engagement covers a diversity of activity, objectives, approaches
- It is a critical part of gene drive research
- Existing guidance and increasingly large body of evidence from practitioners
- Challenges that are common to many innovation with complex science, long development pathways
- Backlash on knowledge and science affecting also this field



Thank you!

Let's work together

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