RESOURCE

A review of the State-of-the-art for Stakeholder Analysis with regard to Environmental Management and Regulation

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Author(s)
Bendtsen, Elise Broe Westergaard, Lauge Peter Foss Hansen, Steffen

Description / Abstract

Stakeholder analysis (SA) is a widely used decision-support tool. This paper reviews the state-of-the-art of SA within environmental management and regulation. In total, 48 SA studies from the peer-reviewed literature were investigated according to 7 aspects: Topic and purpose; Elements included; Geographical area; Definition of key terms; Methods used; Authors self-evaluation and Inclusion. We find that the SAs conducted cover a broad spectrum of environmental issues. The most applied data-collection methods are snowball-sampling (26 studies, 54%), interviews (30 studies, 63%) and literature reviews (26 studies, 54%). The most examined stakeholder attributes were interests (41 studies, 85%) and influence (34 studies, 71%). We find that there is a lack of clear definitions of key-terms such as "Stakeholder" (19 studies, 40%) and "Influence" (14 studies, 29%). SAs are often conducted by authors from other geographical areas than the case study, which could explain why marginalised stakeholders are only considered in 21 of the studies (44%). In only half of the studies (24 studies, 50%), the authors reflect upon limitations and biases of their own analysis. Among others, three important lessons learned from our study are: 1) Transparency with regard to methodology, results and decisions made is of paramount importance as it otherwise undermines the credibility of SA; 2) Definition of key-terms such as "stakeholder" and "influence" need to be provided in future SAs to avoid misunderstandings; and finally, 3) Clear guidelines on how to perform SA are needed, including how to determine interests and power, and how to document and report findings.

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