



IDB Invest
Guidance on **Virtual
Stakeholder
Engagement**





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Acronyms

AWS IAM	Amazon Web Services Identity and Access Management
CDC	Centers for Disease Control
CLO	Community Liaison Officer
COVID-19	Novel Coronavirus Disease
CR	Community Relations
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EIB	European Investment Bank
E&S	Environmental and Social
ESHS	Environment, Social, Health and Safety
ESIA	Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GM	Grievance Mechanism
FPIC	Free Prior and Informed Consent
IAP2	International Association for Public Participation
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IDB	InterAmerican Development Bank
IDP	Internally Displaced Person/People
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IFC PS	International Finance Corporation Performance Standard on Environmental and Social Sustainability (2012)
iOS	Operating System for iPhone
IP	Indigenous People
IT	Information Technology
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
MFI	Multi-lateral Financial Institution
MS	Microsoft
OS	Operating System
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
RAP	Resettlement Action Plan
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
SMS	Short Message Service
TV	Television
VPSHR	Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights
WCA	Web Content Accessibility Guidelines
WHO	World Health Organization

Definitions

Affected Communities	Communities potentially impacted by business activities that are financed by IDB Invest.
Afro-descendants	Herein refers to people of African descent that face exclusion due to their racial or ethnic status or origin.
Asset Inventory	Study required during the resettlement planning process to document all fixed assets belonging to or used by individuals, families, and communities to be resettled.
Census Survey	Study required during the resettlement planning process to document all persons to be resettled.
Client	Used interchangeably to refer to the borrower, beneficiary of a guarantee, investee, or the sponsor of an IDB Invest-financed transaction.
Community Liaison Officer (CLO)	Individual hired by a company to develop and maintain relationships with Affected Communities.
Community Relations	The relationship between a company and community.
Consultation/Public Consultation	A process that provides Affected Communities with opportunities to express their views on project risks, impacts, and mitigation measures, and allows a client to consider and respond to them ¹ .
Contextual Risk	Risk deriving from the project context.
COVID-19 Pandemic²	Infectious respiratory disease caused by the novel coronavirus first detected in China in late 2019. It was declared a pandemic by the WHO in March 2020. The illness is currently being studied by medical experts and, at the time of writing, according to the WHO, may be transmitted in one of two ways: 1) person to person through droplets in the air when those droplets come into contact with another person through their eyes, mouth, or nose; and 2) through contact with surfaces or contaminated objects, when someone touches a contaminated surface and proceeds to touch their eyes, mouth, or nose.
Crisis	Used in this guide to refer to any time when face-to-face engagement is not possible, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic, local epidemics, other global pandemics, following natural disasters, or in security situations that reduce freedom of movement.
Dialogue	Two-way communication between two or more parties; in this context between a company and a group of stakeholders, normally ongoing and around specific topics of mutual interest.
Engagement	Ongoing process of building relationships and trust with stakeholders, including provision of information, consultation, dialogue, and, where possible, participation and collaboration.
Epidemic	A widespread occurrence of an infectious disease in a community.

¹See IFC PS 1, Paragraph 30.

²See <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index-sp.html> and <https://www.who.int/es/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/q-a-coronaviruses>

Definitions

Force Majeure	Unforeseeable circumstances that prevent someone from fulfilling their contractual requirements.
Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)	There is no universally accepted definition of FPIC ³ . It is a process and an outcome ⁴ : a mutually accepted process between a company and Affected Communities of Indigenous Peoples and agreement between the parties as to the outcomes of negotiations, established through good faith negotiation. It does not necessarily require unanimity.
Gender Based Violence	An umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will, and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between males and females ⁵ .
Grievance Mechanism	A process to receive and facilitate resolution of concerns and grievances from Affected Communities in relation to a company's environmental and social performance.
IDB Invest	Private sector arm of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) Group.
Internally Displaced Person/People (IDP)	Individual or group that has been displaced within the borders of their own country owing to a crisis such as a conflict or natural disaster.
IFC Performance Standards⁶	Standards on environmental and social sustainability developed and adopted by the International Finance Corporation to manage environmental and social performance on investment projects.
Indigenous People (IP)	IP is herein used in the generic sense to refer to a distinct social and cultural group possessing a set of characteristics in varying degree including self-identification as indigenous, collective attachment to geographically distinct habitats or ancestral territories, customary cultural, economic, social, or political institutions separate from the mainstream, and/or a distinct language or dialect. In some countries in Latin America and the Caribbean it has a legal meaning relating to a particular group or groups recognized as indigenous by the government ⁷ .
Information Disclosure	The act of one party making specific information available to another. In this context, the company making project-specific information available to stakeholders for review and consultation, such as information relating to the potential impacts of a project on the physical, natural, or socio-economic environment.
Information Dissemination	The act of distributing information widely, in this case by the company to the community.
Multipliers	Individuals who will actively spread information within their community, especially to other community members without access to information owing to disability, connectivity, or another issues.
Natural Disaster	A negative and/or damaging natural event such as a hurricane, earthquake, or tsunami.

³IFC PS7, Paragraph 12.

⁴IFC Guidance Note 7, GN 25.

⁵Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC).

⁶See <http://www.ifc.org/performancestandards>

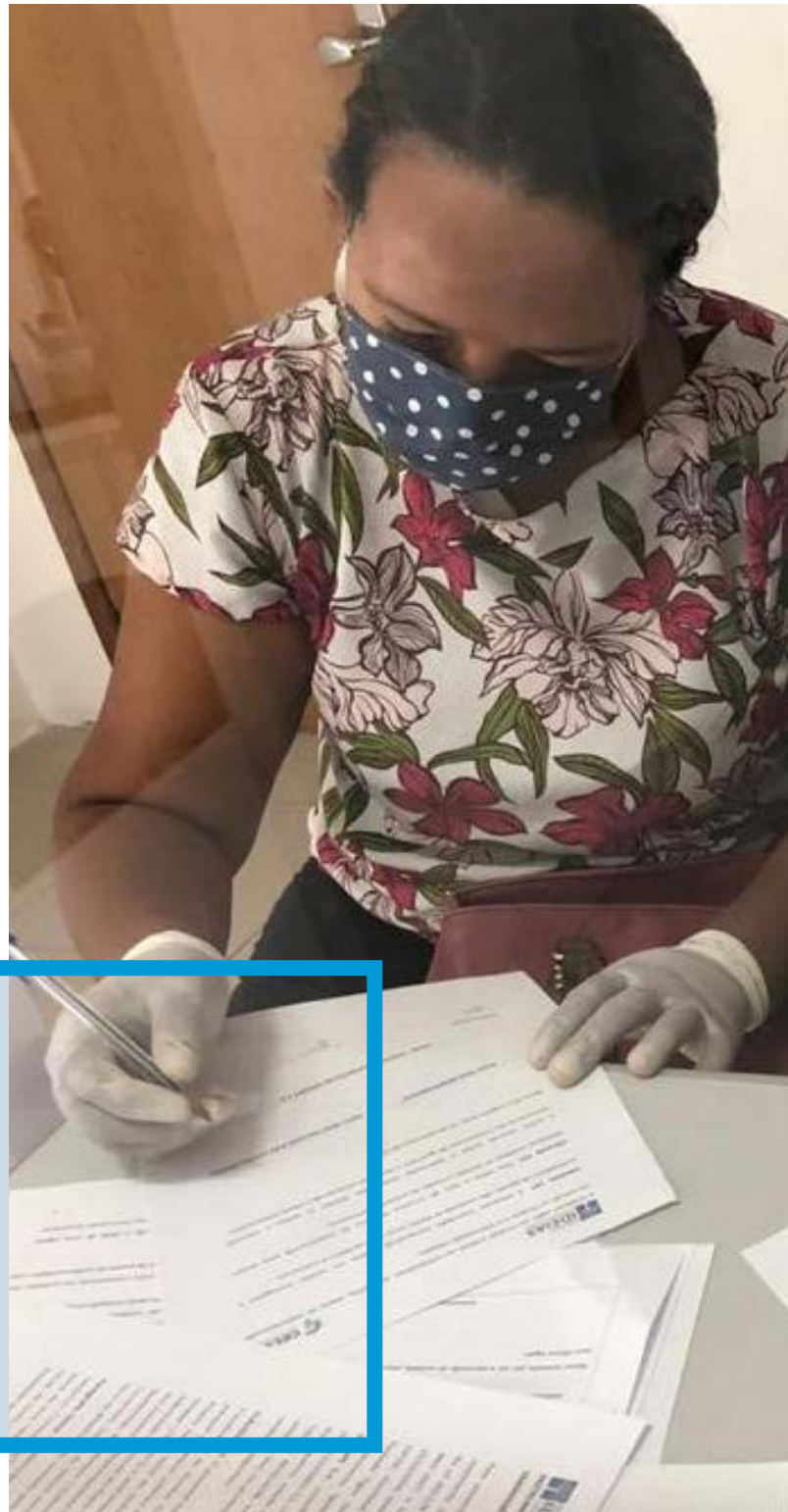
⁷See IFC PS1, Paragraph 29.

New normal	Phrase used during the COVID-19 pandemic to describe the new way of living, working, and communicating adopted to reduce disease transmission.
Outreach	The act of one party actively seeking communication with another, in this context the company reaching out to the community.
Pandemic	A widespread occurrence of an infectious disease that has spread over a large region (multiple continents) or worldwide.
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	Equipment used to protect and preserve the health and safety of people. In the context of a pandemic, it generally refers masks and medical protections such as face shields, gowns, and gloves. Following a natural disaster, it would normally include hard hats, boots, and high visibility vests.
Quilombolas	Afro-Brazilian residents of quilombo settlements first established by escaped slaves in Brazil and legally recognized as traditional communities.
Refugee(s)	Individual or group that has been displaced over the border of their own country owing to a crisis such as a conflict or natural disaster, to any other country.
SMS Messaging	Formal name for the technology used for text messaging, sending a short message in text format from one phone to another.
Social distancing	The practice of maintaining a distance of at least 2 m between any two individuals at all times, whether during conversation, out walking, standing in queues, or in shops and offices. Sometimes known as physical distancing.
Stakeholder	Any group with an interest in or influence over a project.
Stakeholder Engagement	An ongoing process that may involve, in varying degrees, the following elements: stakeholder analysis and planning, disclosure and dissemination of information, consultation and participation, grievance mechanism, and ongoing reporting to Affected Communities ⁸ .
Stakeholder Engagement Plan	Plan developed by a company to guide its engagement with groups, communities, and individuals that have an interest in or influence over its project.
Traditional communities	Communities normally living lifestyles marked by language, culture, or way of life that is outside the mainstream of post-colonial society. Has legal status in some countries (e.g., Quilombolas in Brazil).
Virtual Engagement Processes	A mechanism for real time one-to-one or group-to-group communications that does not require face-to-face meetings.
Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights	Created in 2000 when the governments of the United States and the United Kingdom, companies, and NGOs engaged in a dialogue about security and human rights. Although originally developed for the extractive and energy sector, the principles are implemented by a variety of industries.

⁸See IFC PS1, Paragraph 25.



Concesionaria Ruta del Cacao S.A.S



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AUTHORS

Fiorella Pino Luna and Catherine Stevens.

CONTRIBUTORS

Gabriel Todt Azevedo, Angela Miller, Michelle Shayer, Milena Cafruni, Greg Lockard, Natalia Valencia and Romina Aramburu.

DESIGN

Arterleria

1. Introduction and Objectives

Strong relationships between companies and communities are built on trust. Engagement with Affected Communities and other stakeholders, focused on increasing mutual understanding and addressing issues of concern to all parties, is essential to build trust as part of the project design and development process, and to maintenance of operations. Without it projects risk, at best, missing opportunities to improve design and decision making by drawing on the knowledge, understanding, and needs of local communities and, at worst, losing the support of affected people and its associated consequences. It helps communities to understand their rights and supports sustainable development outcomes. To achieve it, engagement must be meaningful and community centered.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has imposed significant constraints on engagement. When face-to-face engagement techniques cannot be utilized, how is it possible to conduct meaningful engagement so that projects can continue to move forward? Are there circumstances when meaningful consultation cannot be conducted and projects or processes should be temporarily delayed?

The objective of this guide is to support IDB Invest clients in Latin America and the Caribbean in making decisions about how to engage during the COVID-19 pandemic, when face-to-face engagement is not possible. While the guidance was developed specifically in response to COVID-19, many of the virtual consultation and engagement methods described herein will also likely be applicable to future pandemics. Some of the methods are also applicable to other types of crises, such as natural disasters or security situations that reduce freedom of movement. In fact, Section 7 specifically addresses virtual consultation and engagement during these other types of crises. Some of the methods may also be useful to continue even after the COVID-19 pandemic (or other crisis) is over, as part of a “new normal” as described in Section 9.

The guide is a living document that should be updated regularly to take advantage of the rapidly growing experience of virtual engagement, international good practice in its application for development projects, and the evolving marketplace for virtual consultation technologies.

Consultation is a requirement of IDB Invest Environmental and Social Sustainability Policy (2020)⁹ and several national laws in Latin America and the Caribbean. Maintaining worker health and safety is also a foundation of the policy, which incorporates the IFC Performance Standards¹⁰. As such, maintenance of both worker and community health are also conditions of financing by IDB Invest, and fundamental to engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic and other crises.

⁹See IDB Invest Environmental and Social Sustainability Policy (2020), Page7: “disclosure and engagement will be commensurate with the nature of the social risks and impacts and the environmental and social risk category of the project in accordance with PS 1 (Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts).”

¹⁰See IFC PS 2, Occupational Health and Safety, and IFC PS 4, Community Health and Safety.

How to use this document

The following list describes how this guide is organized.

- Sections 2 and 3 are focused on process, designed to produce a robust and sustainable engagement plan when face-to-face engagement is not possible. It walks the reader through why community engagement should be adapted, how to adapt it to a specific set of circumstances, and what needs to be taken into consideration when designing a new approach.
- Sections 4 and 5 review available tools and techniques for engagement when face-to-face engagement is not possible, and specific issues around virtual consultation and other forms of engagement. It can be utilized for reference.
- Sections 6 through 8 describe issues to consider when adapting grievance mechanisms, engagement under different types of crises, and adjusting to a “new normal” after the COVID-19 pandemic or other crisis is over.
- Annex 1 contains a set of examples and tools that can be used to support the design or adaptation of an existing approach to consultation and engagement
- Annex 2 provides an indicative list of virtual engagement tools currently available on the market.

The guide contains tips and examples throughout. All examples are based on how real companies have adapted engagement during COVID-19. They do not necessarily represent good practice in all circumstances since they were designed for a specific site or set of needs.

Clients are advised to follow the process for adapting consultation and engagement processes set out in Sections 2 and 3, and for Grievance Mechanisms in Section 8, to remain in compliance with IDB Invest financing requirements. The other sections can be utilized as references, as necessary.

2. Meaningful Consultation and Engagement when face-to-face engagement is not possible.

2.1 What is Meaningful Engagement?

Meaningful engagement can help to build trust and create community by increasing mutual understanding and addressing issues of interest and concern to all parties. Ideally, this is done face to face, complemented by other methods. However, the ability of projects and Affected Communities to communicate is severely impacted when the ability to physically move around is restricted by disease, disaster, or security.

The 10 **principles** ([Box 1](#)) and **elements** ([Box 2](#)) of meaningful engagement are always the same and apply in all circumstances. There are 10 additional actions for meaningful engagement when face-to-face engagement is not possible ([Box 3](#)). During the COVID-19 pandemic, the context in which engagement takes place and the risks associated with that engagement change. As a result, while the goal of engagement – to create trust and gain/maintain a social license to operate – may remain unchanged, the short-term objectives, and the approaches, tools, and techniques employed to meet those objectives, may need to be adapted. How this translates into a revised plan for engaging stakeholders will depend on variables such as the nature and stage of the project, risks, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic or other crisis on Affected Communities.



Box 1

10 PRINCIPLES OF MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT

1. Community centered
2. Ongoing and iterative
3. Equitable and non-discriminatory
4. Transparent
5. Based on prior information
6. Respectful and free of intimidation and coercion
7. Confidential
8. Documented and disclosed
9. Tailored to different stakeholder groups
10. Accountable

Adapted from *Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement*.
IDB Invest: Joint MFI working group
on Environmental and Social Standards

Box 2

10 ELEMENTS OF MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT

1. Stakeholder identification and analysis
2. Understanding the context and contextual risk
3. Identification of issues
4. Engagement planning, including tools and techniques, responsibilities, and timelines for different groups
5. Prior information/disclosure
6. Inclusion of recommendations in design and decision making
7. Documentation and feedback
8. Grievance mechanism
9. Integrated into the ESHS management system
10. Ongoing throughout the life of the project

Adapted from *Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement*.
 IDB Invest: Joint MFI working group on
 Environmental and Social Standards



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Box 3

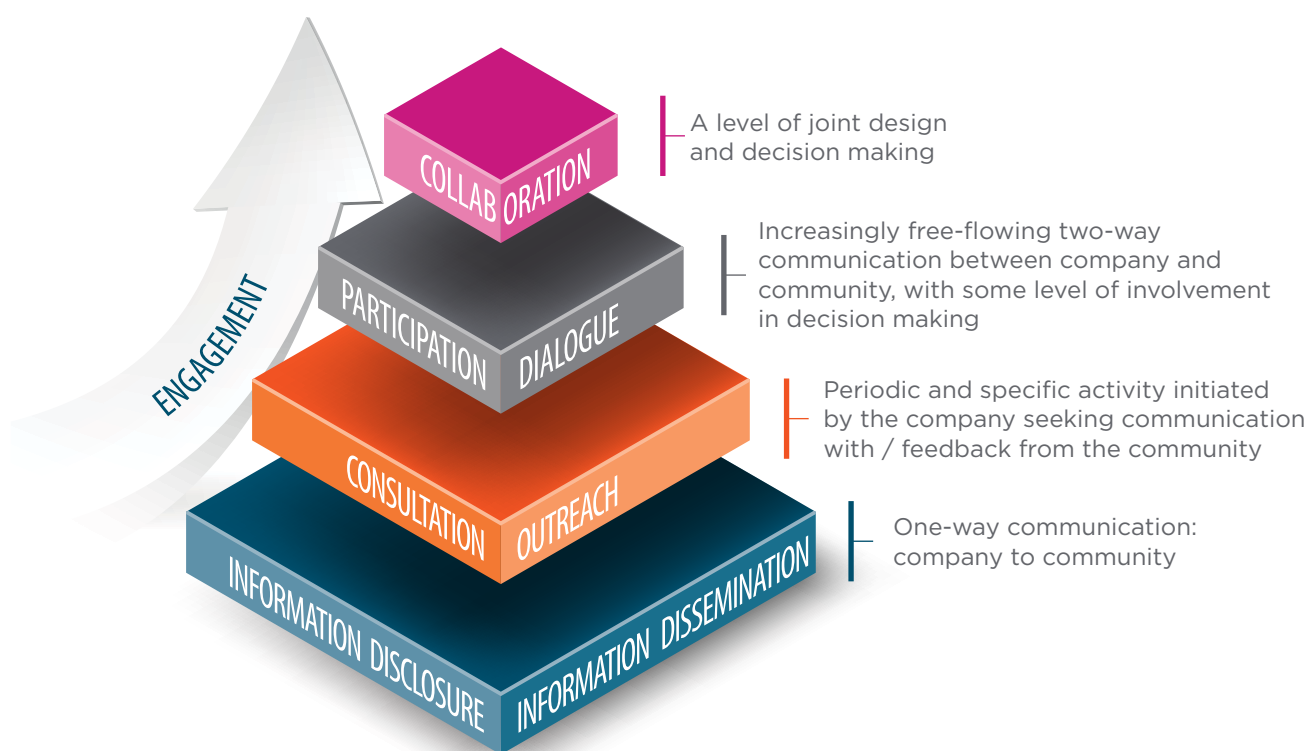
**10 ACTIONS FOR MEANINGFUL
ENGAGEMENT WHEN FACE-TO-FACE
ENGAGEMENT IS NOT POSSIBLE**

- **Avoid all engagement processes that could endanger the health and safety of workers, community, or both** (e.g., that could result in disease transmission between the project and the community, or within or between communities, or in security risk to community members).
- **Develop risk-based protocols that govern how staff and contractors interact with local communities and train them** on how they should be implemented.
- **Develop a revised approach to Stakeholder Engagement** that determines with whom, how, when, and on what to engage ([Figure 3](#)).
- **Consult the community and socialize protocols** as part of your revised engagement process. Understand how the community wishes to engage, on what, and its issues and constraints.
- **Demonstrate your commitment to the community** with appropriate and tailored actions.
- **Keep communities informed** as your plans for engagement and for all project or operational change (see [Section 5](#)).
- **Respect the issues, concerns, and stresses facing authorities, communities, individuals, and families** as they deal with the crisis.
- **Review the Grievance Mechanism** to make it pandemic/crisis appropriate (see [Section 6](#)).
- **Plan for your return to a normal or a new normal** (see [Section 8](#)).
- **Abide by all national and local regulations**, which may have changed.

2.2 Consultation vs. Engagement

Consultation is one aspect of engagement (Figure 1) and a requirement on many IDB Invest projects¹¹. Other aspects of engagement, such as information dissemination and disclosure, are also frequent requirements. Virtual options for consultation and other aspects of engagement are discussed in more detail in Sections 4 (Engagement tools and techniques) and Section 5 (Conducting virtual consultation and engagement).

Figure 1
Engagement Hierarchy



2.3 Developing a New Engagement Plan

Meaningful engagement is designed to build trust. Building trust normally requires an element of face-to-face contact. As a result, there is a real question as to whether it is possible to conduct meaningful engagement in a context where there has been no previous engagement with a project or company. The following are options to consider for this scenario.

¹¹See IDB Invest Environmental and Social Sustainability Policy (2020), Page 7: "disclosure and engagement will be commensurate with the nature of the social risks and impacts and the environmental and social risk category of the project in accordance with PS 1 (Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts)."

1. The project and its associated engagement process should be postponed until the pandemic has passed, unless there is a compelling reason to move forward rapidly, such as a direct link between the project and positive outcomes for the pandemic.

2. A standard approach to developing a stakeholder engagement plan should be followed, taking any restrictions on movement or face-to-face consultation into account. This includes maximizing the use of secondary literature and virtual tools such as Google Earth to identify potential stakeholders, in addition to conducting virtual meetings with community leaders and maximizing the use of virtual options in the choice of approaches, tools, and techniques. Particular effort should be made to use visual platforms for engagement, if cultural norms and penetration of technology allow.

- Consider using trusted third parties in which the community already has confidence, to support the relationship development process.
- Avoid using drones for stakeholder identification or any other purposes, until relationships are well established and make sure that stakeholders know in advance if they are to be used.

Once the pandemic has passed, the approach, stakeholder map, and analysis will need to be reviewed and may need to be revised following an in-person ground truthing exercise. There is a greater chance that some stakeholders may not have been identified or have been willing or able to engage than normal. When conditions return to normal, focus on stakeholders who were not accessed during the pandemic and start to build the types of relationships that are more easily forged face to face across the whole community.

It may also be possible to develop a hybrid option that starts the engagement process so that the project can begin to move forward with the minimum engagement possible, followed by a full engagement process once the situation returns to normal.



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3. Adapting Stakeholder Engagement

Strong relationships between companies and communities are based on trust. Trust takes time and effort to build and can be shattered in seconds. Trust is undermined during a pandemic that heightens a sense of isolation, deprivation, uncertainty, disease and death, and the inability of those in authority to act decisively or intervene effectively. Building and maintaining community confidence during a pandemic requires a company to demonstrate that it is prepared to take decisive action to protect both the workers and community from the impacts of the pandemic. During the pandemic, those impacts may relate to the potential for disease transmission (Figure 2), to controls put in place by the government, actions taken by the company, collateral damage to the local or national economies or education system, or to the disease itself.

Figure 2
Worker/Community Risks for Disease Transmission



Failure to adapt engagement to respond to changes in the project or operation and the changed risks and operational context in a way that maintains IDB Invest’s requirement for meaningful engagement can be negative to development and maintenance of trust.

When face-to-face engagement is not possible, a company should remember the following:

- The situation is normally dynamic, and the approach should evolve as the situation evolves to meet the ever-changing needs of the company and community. Therefore, a plan for meaningful engagement should never be static. It should be kept flexible and live.
- It is possible that some of the information required to develop a revised and appropriate approach may not be available. Absorb new information as it becomes available and adapt the plan on an ongoing basis.
- It may not be possible to reach all stakeholders equally under the circumstances. Weigh the associated risks and plan to remedy the situation as soon as possible once conditions return to normal.
- Allocate appropriate resources.

To maintain meaningful engagement with stakeholders, engagement can be adapted using a four-step process (Figures 3 and 4). It will require participation of different teams within the company and new plans for engagement that should be integrated into the company management system with revised resources, timelines, roles, and responsibilities.

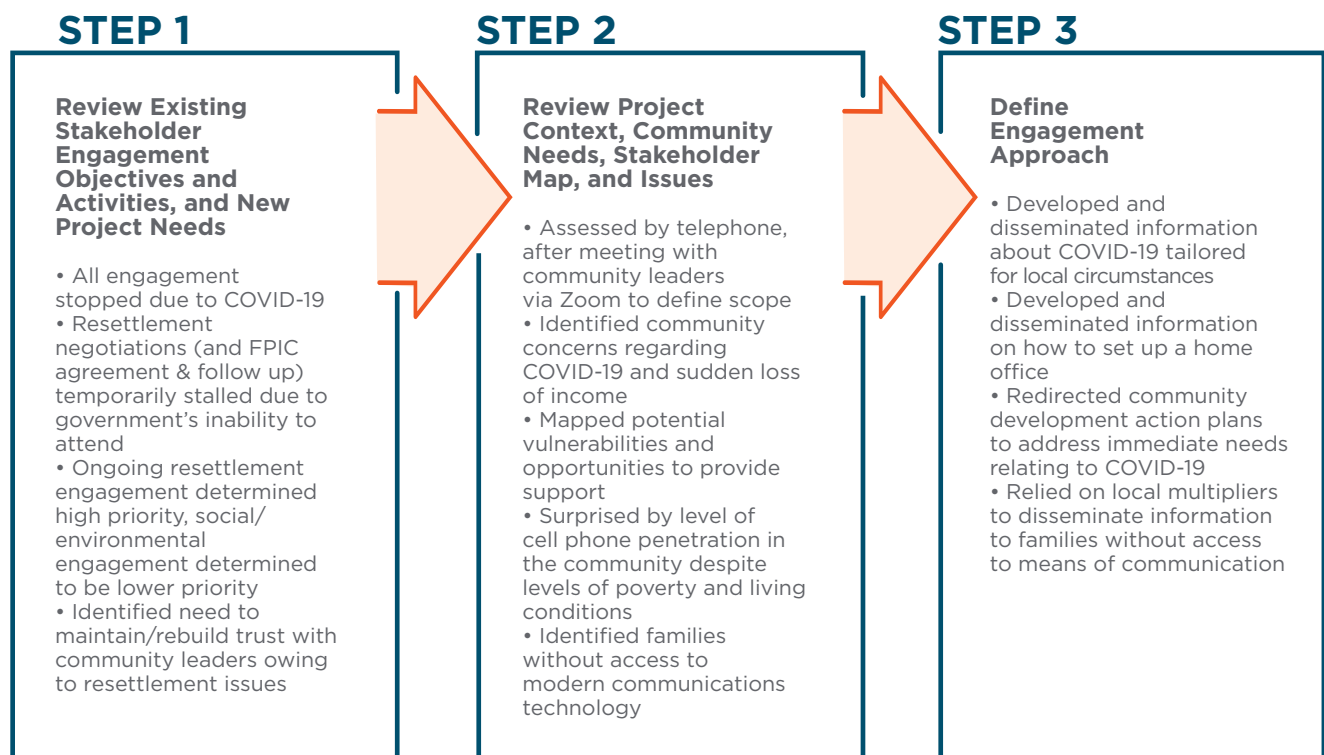
When adapting a company's stakeholder engagement plan due to the COVID-19 pandemic or other crisis, it is important to consider the following as initial actions:

- Immediately stop all engagement that could result in disease transmission.
- Let the community know that face-to-face engagement has stopped owing to safety concerns and will continue, as much as possible, as soon as there is an alternative plan in place that will keep them safe, and within "x" number of days. Listen to their concerns.
- Use immediately available means such as telephone calls and virtual meetings with community leaders, and messaging, trusted third parties/community multipliers, notices in physical offices, or posters to provide information about what is happening and how to contact the company until further notice.

Figure 3
Process for Revising Stakeholder Engagement



Figure 4
Example of One Company’s Experience Applying the Process for Revising Stakeholder Engagement



Outstanding /Other Issues

- Postponed engagement with traditional communities not involved in resettlement due to high risk of poor outcomes if disease was transmitted
- Postponed engagement on all issues with low priority in current climate
- Grievance Mechanism did not require amendment as already considered COVID-19 appropriate
- Considered options for resuming other engagement priorities following return to new normal

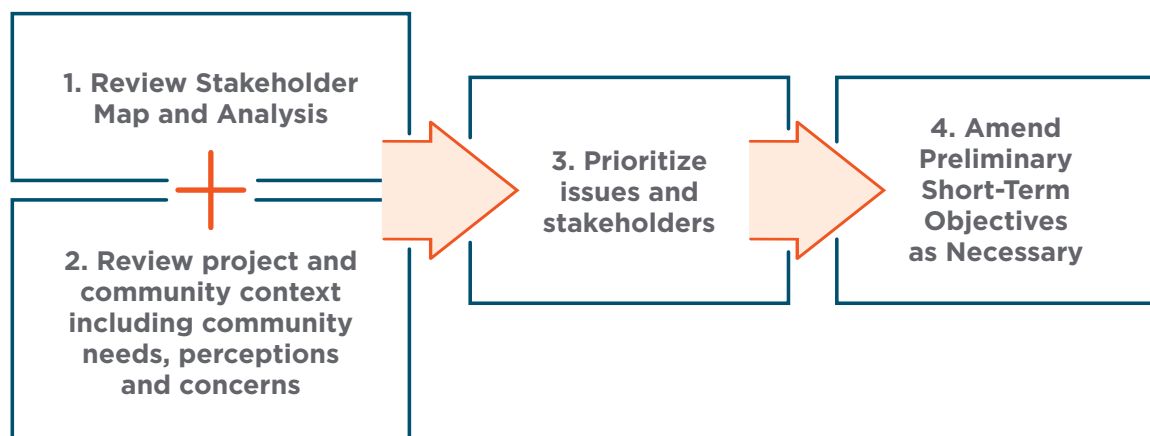
3.1 Step 1: Review Project/Company Position

Step 1 in revising stakeholder engagement is to identify the company’s engagement needs and set preliminary new and appropriate short-term engagement objectives, as they may have changed. Factors to be taken into account when applying Step 1 include the following:

- The stage, nature, and scale of the project or operation
- The risks associated with that project or operation, such as financial, operational, or reputational risks, including:
 - A stalled process or inability to operate; and
 - Risk of disease within the workforce or the risk of disease transmission between stakeholders, including workers, suppliers, contractors, local businesses, and members of the community
- The following two types of engagement:
 - Engagement related to pre-pandemic issues, such as existing and ongoing engagement or engagement that is planned and about to begin (should it be continued, adapted, or postponed?); and
 - New pandemic-related engagement (are there new engagement needs arising from the pandemic?).

The Step 1 process is outlined in Figure 5. Supporting tools and examples can be found in Annex 1A.

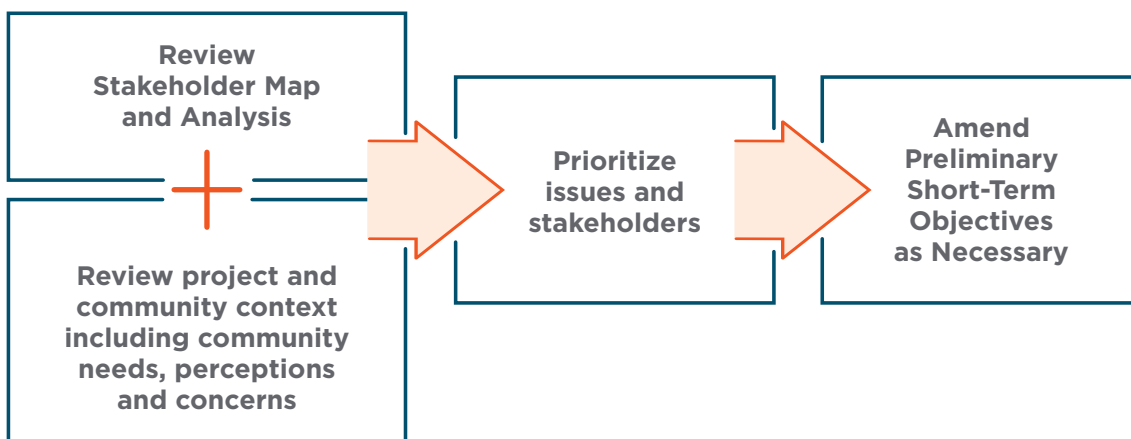
Figure 5
Step 1 - Review Project/Company Position



3.2 Step 2: Review Community/Context

The objective of **Step 2** is to understand the new project/operational context to build as accurate a picture as possible of the project/operation’s social context and stakeholders, and how that might have changed as a result of the pandemic. The process is outlined in Figure 6. Supporting tools and examples can be found in Annex 1B.

Figure 6
Step 2 - Review Community/Context



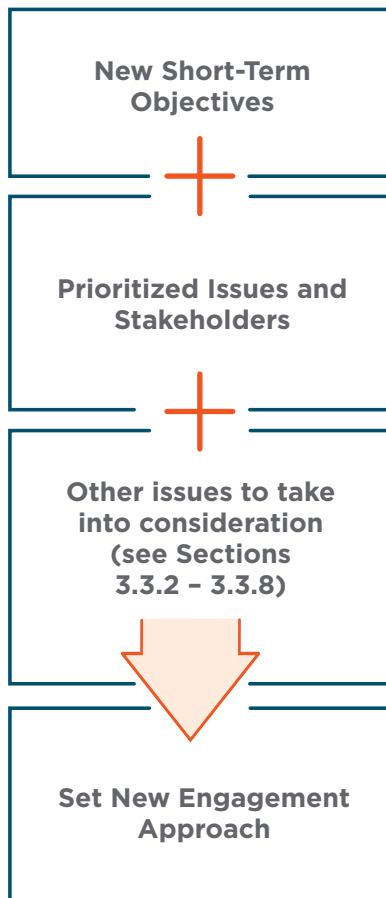
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3.3 Step 3: Define the Engagement Approach

3.3.1 The Process

The objective of **Step 3** is to define the revised engagement approach to engagement based on the new objectives and context. The process is presented in Figure 7. The project or operation should ensure that the approach designed demonstrates company commitment to the community, as appropriate for the nature and scale of the project or operation.

Figure 7
Step 3 - Define Engagement Approach



Under normal circumstances, there is a typical set of engagement activities required according to the stage of project development ([Table 1](#)). The level and complexity of the engagement is determined by the nature, scale, and risks associated with the project or operation.



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Table 1: Typical and Adapted Engagement Activities

Project stage / level of risk	Typical engagement activities according to the nature and scale of the project and project risk	Typical measures that may be required to meet new short-term engagement objectives
Design and development / low risk project or operation	Studies for licensing, ESIA in various formats, consultation, FPIC, risks and impacts workshops, complementary studies	Measures to maintain health, safety, and security of workers and local communities
Construction / medium risk project or operation	Information and consultation relating to construction plans, ongoing resettlement, clarity over roles and responsibilities between company, contractors and sub-contractors, establishment of procurement processes with local businesses, management of grievances, land acquisition, negotiations, training, local workforce development, agreements on development projects, participatory monitoring	As above plus additional measures to manage and mitigate impacts on the local community/local businesses and infrastructure, such as health services resulting from company actions and activities
Operations / high risk project or operation	Maintenance of relationships, community development programs, management of grievances, as well as potential for ongoing expansions or developments including ESIA, RAPs	As above plus additional measures to support the community through the pandemic, such as reorienting social investment programs to meet the immediate needs of local communities to address the pandemic through activities such as donating masks, PPE, and ventilators to local hospitals

During a pandemic, there is a similar correlation between the nature and stage of project development, the level of risk, and the approach to engagement. Broadly speaking, a project in design and development will need to consider implementing the same types of measures as a low risk project or operation¹².

Table 2 provides examples of how different companies have approached engagement according to the stage of project development and level of risk.

Table 2: Examples of Engagement Approaches Adopted during COVID-19

Stage/nature of the project and/or level of risk	Examples of engagement approaches adopted by different companies during COVID-19
Design and development stage or small, low risk project/operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protocols for worker/community interaction, agreed with community leaders and socialized (virtually) with community • Telephone contact with communities, leaders, and local authorities on issues directly related to changes in construction schedules/operational requirements/stopped work schedules • Contact with communities, leaders, and local authorities on issues directly related to changes in construction schedules/operational requirements/stopped work schedules • Contractually binding guidance for contractors and sub-contractors in line with company protocols, including building capacity for workers on COVID-19 protocols, and with specific instructions to contractor community relations teams concerning options for communicating with impacted communities • Virtual engagement around stalled resettlement program and information on how and when it will continue • Cafeteria food for workers with appropriate disease control measures to reduce community contact outside direct family and to prevent sailors coming into port from leaving port boundaries • On site hostel facilities for migrant agricultural workers, including on site testing and transportation to work locations • Set up free phone line to allow community to call • Information to workers on how to prevent transmission to families

¹² The risk level described includes risks associated with the project context

Table 2: Examples of Engagement Approaches Adopted during COVID-19

<p>Complex construction or medium risk project/operation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a leadership commission within the community to support engagement activities, designating multipliers to disseminate materials, and information to families without digital access • Provide alternative business planning support for small businesses that normally supply lunch and snacks to the workforce within the company buildings through a virtual fair • Constantly track level of infection in workforce and community and communicate it transparently to support credibility and help maintain calm • Provide local authorities and communities with information about how workers are being discharged temporarily back into the communities by testing them all and ensuring that they are healthy on discharge • Put the strategic community relations plan on stand-by, including education, tourism, and economic development programs, to provide immediate COVID-19 relief to families with the intention of starting it up again once conditions allow • Modify the community development programs to allow them to continue safely and recognizing constraints for community participants during the pandemic • Maintain previously embedded (spell out) Community Liaison Officers (CLOs) living in communities with prior local authority permission that are able to circulate freely with social distancing precautions
<p>Large, complex or high-risk operation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide additional support to resettled families on how to access additional public assistance • Provide medical information to communities, including medical staff to explain transmission issues and how to stay safe • Cancel large celebrations for the remainder of the year and consider diverting budget to other community support activities • Build capacity for local communities in use of technology including support to download and use relevant software • Maintain contact with fishers through the association of fishermen, resettled families, and other stakeholders via telephone and WhatsApp to keep abreast of emerging issues

Some projects rely on being “open for business” to engage with stakeholders who approach them to discuss issues of interest or concern. Their doors are open, and availability advertised, but there is limited or no associated outreach. This approach to engagement is not meaningful or recommended and, during a pandemic, will be even less effective, resulting in unmanaged risk. Companies need to engage proactively with stakeholders by reaching out to them to initiate and maintain dialogue.

3.3.2 Engagement Approaches in Low Risk Situations

If the project context, the risk of disease transmission, and poor outcomes are assessed as low, it may be possible to make minimum adaptations to current engagement approaches. However, protocols to reduce the risk of transmission should still be developed in most circumstances and socialized with stakeholders. Projects and operations should consider providing PPE for use during stakeholder engagement activities and capacity building around basic hygiene and disease prevention during these activities. Projects and operations should be aware of the following potential issues:

- Incomplete information from the government or media, leading to a lower perception of risk
- Silent introductions of disease and inter-community or community-worker transmission prior to detection (asymptomatic carriers, long incubation period, super carriers, poor recognition ability, lack of effective testing)
- High vulnerability of individuals or stakeholder groups within communities
- Potential need to change risk profile and protocols for worker/community interaction on short notice



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3.3.3 Delaying/Postponing Engagement

There are several reasons why engagement may need to be delayed or postponed during a pandemic, including when a company declares force majeure owing to issues beyond its control. The following are examples:

- The government has imposed a lockdown and the company is unable to operate
- The government has temporarily banned communications with the community (e.g., with indigenous communities owing to health risks, or with one or more communities under a security situation)
- Reliance on government or a third party for negotiations regarding an ongoing resettlement or land acquisition process, and they are unable to operate
- The risks of disease transmission and unacceptable outcomes are too high

If this is the case, the project or operation should continue to monitor the situation. Where there are existing relationships or processes in place, it should try to communicate with the community using virtual means to reassure them that the situation is being monitored and activities will be resumed as soon as the situation changes. This should be done without risking the health of the company or community, and without raising legal liabilities.

If there is uncertainty as to whether or not the company should postpone a process such as baseline data collection or consultation due to risk, the project or operation should consider using the process set forth in Figure 8 to assist in making a decision.

Free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) specifically applies to Indigenous Peoples. Given the sensitivity of engaging with Indigenous Peoples during a pandemic, owing to their susceptibility to non-native disease, and the intensive level of consultation required to achieve FPIC, it is unlikely that FPIC should be sought or could be achieved during a pandemic.

In terms of risks associated with stopping or slowing ongoing engagement activities: in most cases, the earlier the project is in the project cycle, the more the engagement will be regulation driven, the newer the relationships with members of the community, and the fewer the impacts of the project. At this point, the community may be less sensitive to change so the risk of slowing or stopping an engagement or licensing process on community relationships, until the pandemic has passed, may be lower. However, there may be other business risks associated with a delay linked to existing contracts and agreements, and, if

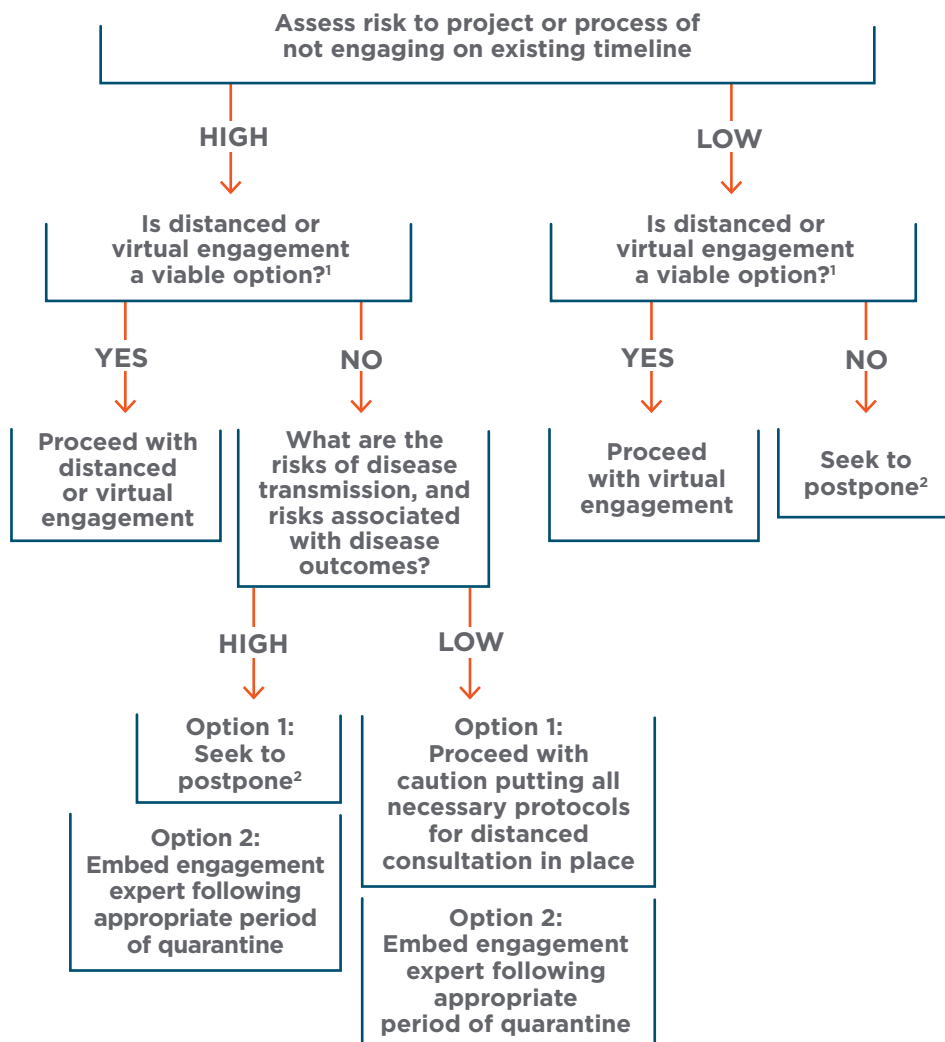
MEETING LEGAL AND REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

When consultation is required by an agreement, contract or as part of the regulatory requirement, any proposal to modify or postpone it should be addressed directly with the relevant contracting party/authority.

Legal and regulatory requirements should always be met.

the community is aware of large potential impacts associated with a proposed project, emotions may already be running high. Generally, it is more difficult to move face to face engagement onto a virtual platform when relationships with stakeholders are less well developed. Conversely, the longer the relationship is in place, generally the easier it will be to work with the community to move engagement onto a virtual platform, technical issues permitting.

**Figure 8
Go/No Go Decision Tree**



¹ Note the limitations of virtual engagement as a complete replacement for face-to-face engagement and the need to follow up with in person ground truthing at a later date in many cases.

² Approach all parties where failure to engage would result in breach of agreement, contract, or regulatory requirement to secure their agreement. Also, if possible, without endangering them in any way, communicate the postponement to the community.

3.3.4 Working with Third Parties to Support Engagement

When a company is unable to access a community, it may be possible to work through trusted third parties including government, media, civil society groups, professional third-party facilitators, or representative councils, community councils, community leaders, schools, or other trusted individuals. Identifying and working through third parties requires trust that has been established through open communication channels and experience of “good faith” on all sides. It is easier if those relationships have been established prior to the pandemic. However, unique circumstances often call for unique approaches, and there may be options worth investigating that were not considered necessary previously. Sufficient time and resources should be dedicated to the establishment of a strong working relationship to support success.

During a pandemic, a new set of interested stakeholders may become available to the project. For example, during a health emergency, local, regional and national health authorities may be willing to:

- Partner to plan and prepare preventive measures
- Share their communications channels with the company and communities
- Provide advice on different engagement approaches given their understanding of the context and the stresses and strains faced by specific groups or individuals
- Provide expert advice on draft protocols for company/community interactions
- Act as a third party to communicate health-related messages most effectively

Where programs have already been developed with or for delivery by third parties prior to the pandemic, it may be possible to adapt or extend those programs to serve immediate needs ([Example 1](#)).

Challenges of working through third parties can include:

- Inability of the company to establish direct relationships with stakeholders
- Failure of the third party to stay on message
- Going beyond the brief
- Actively undermining the relationship.

These can be addressed through follow up engagement once the pandemic has passed, and careful monitoring when possible.

EXAMPLE 1 THIRD PARTY INVOLVEMENT

A company had an existing public health program as part of its community investment plan, working closely with local health institutions and health workers in Affected Communities. During the pandemic, this was adapted to add focus on monitoring respiratory issues. All local health workers were trained on COVID-19 using telephone and WhatsApp. Since the health program provider was a respected university, they were trusted, and the program was well received by both health workers and communities.

EXAMPLE 2 ENGAGEMENT WITH GROUPS UNWILLING OR UNABLE TO USE VIRTUAL TECHNOLOGIES

These examples show different initiatives implemented by infrastructure projects at the construction stage in Latin America and the Caribbean in order to engage with stakeholders that were unwilling or unable to use virtual technologies

- To conduct a formal consultation process, community members were invited to attend a fair in small groups with appropriate social distancing measures according to local authority guidelines.
- House-to-house meetings were maintained with individual families, always outdoors and implementing appropriate social distancing guidelines and other measures in agreement with local authorities.
- Individuals previously embedded in local communities with no known infection and with the agreement of authorities, following a period of quarantine, were able to move freely while taking appropriate precautions, including use of PPE.
- Meetings were conducted with up to five people in a rural area, standing outdoors and at least 12 feet apart to further reduce risk of infection



Fiorella Pino Luna

3.3.5 Overcoming Barriers to Access

Organizations should beware of assuming that they understand barriers to access, or digital access, before choosing engagement approaches. The project or operation should conduct research using a social diagnostic or similar tool ([Annex 1, Box A6](#)). During a pandemic, barriers to access may change. An impoverished community living in informal conditions on the edge of a site, soon to be relocated, may have 90% access to cell phones. A community whose leaders have been willing to engage virtually may be unwilling to do the same despite having the available technology.

Understanding and addressing barriers is productive for the company and community in both the short and longer-term. Communities with limited experience of technology may respond well to capacity building in the use of simple devices and tools, through the training of trainers using virtual platforms (Example 3). Projects and operations should consider the following.

- Where the cost of communications, such as cell phone plans or data, is an issue, companies may arrange for charging holidays, consider paying for data services to communities for a specified period, provide free internet hotspots, provide free call in numbers for direct communications with the company, or identify and use services with free texting/calling (e.g., WhatsApp).
- Identify existing communications channels that may be available for broader use (civic, commercial, community, local, regional), especially any already existing at the community level.
- Determine if there are existing company infrastructure or services available that could be leveraged for community use during the pandemic.
- Seek out existing free media with good penetration. Find out how most people get their news. Community TV and Radio are often good options, as is internet-based messaging (e.g., WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger). Use loudspeakers to make announcements.
- Technology savvy communities where power and communications infrastructure has been shattered may respond well to consultation via social media or virtual consultation platforms, facilitated by drops of solar powered charging stations and internet hot spots.
- Negotiations with a cell network provider may be helpful to get infrastructure installed where people generally have phones but unreliable, irregular, or no data services.



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EXAMPLE 3 COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING IN TECHNOLOGY

Infrastructure projects in Latin America and the Caribbean trained communities' leaders on the following activities to enhance its virtual engagement process.

- How to make a phone call
- How to send an email
- How to use WhatsApp
- Provide temporary phones/tablets to key multipliers and build capacity on how to use them
- Support downloading software for virtual meetings and capacity building in how to use it
- Undertake diagnostic of technology use in the field to identify ways of enhancing communication

3.3.6 Engaging with Vulnerable Groups

Getting the right people to the table is critical to legitimize the engagement process. This will include community leaders or elders with authority in more traditional communities. However, without the inclusion of vulnerable groups, results will be incomplete. Groups that may have more difficulty adapting to virtual engagement include:

- People who are culturally unfamiliar with technology
- People with a fear of cameras and pictures of themselves
- People with a tendency not to speak up in large meetings
- People that are blind and/or hard of hearing
- People that are illiterate
- Migrant or seasonal workers
- People with disabilities
- The young and elderly
- Women and LGBTQ groups
- Indigenous Peoples/Traditional Communities

Some successful virtual consultation processes have shown increased empowerment for vulnerable groups, including women and LGBTQ, disabled, young, and elderly people who are better able to communicate their ideas and messages in a virtual forum, where traditional power structures are not present and/or identity may be concealed. Moving from public meetings and focus groups to one-on-one conversations on the telephone can also be empowering to some groups. Addressing groups or individuals through community leaders or other trusted third parties may be an option. Conversely, vulnerable individuals who are less comfortable with the technology or not trusting of community leaders may be more reluctant to share their views virtually, especially if there is a fear of reprisals. In this case, face-to-face follow up once it is safe to do so is critical to ensuring that these voices are heard. Providing platforms with options for full anonymity of participants is helpful.

TIPS FOR IN PERSON SOCIALLY DISTANCED ENGAGEMENT

- Cultural Practices – plan in advance for how to overcome culturally accepted practices, such as where failure to shake hands may be considered offensive
- Children – Be aware of the difficulty of maintaining social distance with children
- Multiple meetings – Consider how to work out who to invite to which meetings if the solution to avoiding large meetings is holding multiple smaller ones

Issues that can reduce the ability of vulnerable groups to engage during a pandemic may include:

- Temporary distancing between the disabled and their caretakers
- Increased pressures on women in the home
- Increased violence against the sick or any group perceived as “different”

The potential for these types of issues to be present in a community should be explored as part of the contextual review process ([Annex 1B](#)).

Indigenous Peoples, afro-descendants, and other traditional communities living subsistence lives are generally considered to be especially vulnerable to non-native diseases such as COVID-19, with the potential for poor disease outcomes. If virtual engagement is not possible, but contin-

ued engagement is seen as essential, some of the following approaches can be considered:

- Working through representative organizations
- Supplying relevant and locally appropriate communications technology and training to one or more community members to use it, putting measures in place to avoid upsetting the balance of power within the community and to avoid inadvertent disease transmission during the handover of technology¹³
- Working through a trusted third party where such an arrangement is an accepted practice and has been established in advance

In some jurisdictions, any contact with Indigenous Peoples beyond the purely virtual may require authorization from the relevant public authority/entity responsible for safeguarding Indigenous Peoples’ health.

¹³This approach may be appropriate to assure continuation of a time critical process.

3.3.7 Resettlement and Land Acquisition

There are aspects of resettlement that require face-to-face contact and therefore cannot be completed virtually. These include census surveys and asset inventories. Such processes may be planned and started using remote technologies but will need to be verified in person once the situation returns to normal, and may need to be revisited if local circumstances significantly change during the pandemic.

Issuing formal notification about a proposed resettlement, including a cut-off date, may not be possible during a pandemic, but a company may judge that the risks associated with delay are greater if there is a danger of influx into an area where people are seeking compensation. The approach chosen will depend on the circumstances of any given project. If there are significant changes within the community, through death or pandemic-related influx, the cut-off date may also need to be revisited. If a company wishes to push ahead with formal notification and the usual channels are not open, alternative mechanisms may include radio broadcasts or using loudspeakers on a truck.



EXAMPLE 4 OPTIONS FOR ENGAGING WITH THE ILLITERATE WITHOUT DIGITAL ACCESS

To continue with ongoing negotiation processes during COVID-19 quarantines, a company implemented the following actions to overcome difficulties of communication with illiterate people without digital access.

- Identified professionals to raise issues or transcribe concerns in appropriately designed face-to-face meetings and transmit them to the company.
- Asked individuals if they needed help and, if they did, asked them to provide the name and contact details of someone they trusted that the company could interact with, as necessary, to support them.
- For compensation, developed a protocol addressing how to explain the offer on the telephone with the trusted person present and then provided the document to both parties at the same time. They were given a few days to review the document and respond.

People may be less, or sometimes more, willing to negotiate resettlement terms than normally because of their perceived circumstances. It will be important not to take advantage of sudden vulnerabilities in trying to get agreements in place. Sensitive negotiations are difficult to do over the phone or by virtual means. If face-to-face meetings are required, appropriate protocols should be put in place and discussed in advance with all parties to ensure that they are well understood and acceptable. If possible, meetings should be held outdoors during a pandemic and social distancing practiced. Projects and operations should ensure that affected people are provided sufficient time to consider proposals and fully understand the information provided prior to taking decisions.

Land acquisition may be complicated owing to the temporary closure of institutions or banks. Unless alternative approaches can be developed for banking compensation payments, it may not be possible to continue. In this case, projects and operations should communicate the delay to communities and explain how the process will be restarted as soon as circumstances allow.



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3.3.8 CSR/Community Development Programs

Community development programs will often require people to congregate in a closed space for a period of time. This is not possible under a social distancing scenario. Companies should therefore do the following:

- Assess each program to identify alternative methods of working that are appropriate to the specific pandemic. In the case of COVID-19, these may include working from home, collecting materials daily on a staggered schedule, and working in the open air.
- Consult with the community to understand their interest in/level of reliance on the programs and current constraints, and feed results into the way programs are redesigned.
- Adapt company protocols for maintaining health and safety for the program(s).
- Share protocols with staff, including community enterprises or third parties who may be running programs, and train them on implementation. Monitor implementation to ensure they are being followed.

In cases where it is not possible to amend a community development program temporarily and it needs to be put on hold, projects should work with each of the community members in the program to discuss their needs, especially in cases where the program was contributing to or providing livelihood.

Issues of dependency

It is common for companies to establish CSR practices associated with providing goods and services to local communities as a means of assistance without a strategy to provide more sustainable options in the long term and no clear links to the project. In general, this approach is discouraged as there are many examples of this practice leading to community dependency and poor medium and long-term outcomes. Alternative good practices, such as working with the community to develop locally appropriate and sustainable economic development projects are encouraged.

During a pandemic, however, the landscape may shift. Under pandemic circumstances, direct assistance and support may be the most appropriate option for a temporary period when alternatives are not available and risks to Affected Communities in relation to income and food security are high. In this case, the scope of potential assistance should be time bound, consulted, agreed, communicated, and documented, with a clear exit strategy. The commitment can be revised as the pandemic evolves, as necessary. In the most extreme cases, such assistance may include temporary food or income support. In others, it may include providing assistance with transportation of essentials, temporary power or telecoms connections, medical assistance, PPE according to the nature and severity of the pandemic, and local circumstances. It should never become the norm, however, and an exit strategy should be clear from the start.



TIPS ON ENGAGEMENT PITFALLS TO AVOID DURING A PANDEMIC

Avoid spontaneous meetings.

People are more likely to forget about using PPE and maintaining social distancing. For example:

- If there have been attacks to the project's water pipeline, consider investigating with drones instead of in person
- If you are distributing food parcels, consider how to manage the distribution process to avoid crowds
- Avoid entering communities unless you have taken advance precautions, such as calling community leaders and members to help maintain safe protocols

Double exclusion.

Will the vulnerable groups most easily excluded from public meetings also be excluded from virtual meetings? Be aware, understand the issue, and, working with individuals or organizations who work with them, find creative ways to include them. Consider:

- The elderly, who are less mobile and culturally less likely to use virtual technologies
- The socially marginalized, who are often economically and therefore also digitally marginalized

Company centered engagement.

In a scenario where face-to-face contact is limited, it is easier to fall into the trap of providing information to communities, instead of listening to them and addressing their needs, fears, and concerns.

Do not mistake information provision for consultation. It is just the first step.

4. Step 4: Engagement Tools and Techniques

Step 4 describes the process of choosing the right virtual tools and techniques for meaningful engagement ([Section 3, Figure 3](#)). The available and appropriate tools and techniques will be based on the new engagement approach. The decision should consider reviewing resources, budgets, and timelines to select the most appropriate tool for the type of project and engagement needs.



TIPS ON CHOOSING TOOLS

- Consider whether you are simply transmitting information to the community, gathering data, or running a consultation process.
- Keep the numbers of tools and platforms used to a minimum for manageability, and to avoid confusing stakeholders, while ensuring that you reach as many stakeholders as possible.
- Consider the most obvious and simplest tools first (e.g., telephone, mail, community radio).
- Consider tools and mechanisms already used within the community, and with the greatest community penetration (e.g., WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger).
- Consider tools that your team or IT department are familiar with but do not require a subscription (e.g., Zoom and Microsoft Teams).

Once you have chosen the tools, consider what additional support you might need to provide to the community to support access (e.g., power, internet hotspots, support to download and use software, visual interpretation for the hard of hearing, and limited cell phone reception support, hardware, and software).

4.1 Matching Engagement Tools to Objectives

Issues to consider when choosing the right tools and techniques for engagement include the following:

- Engagement *objective*
- *Context*, including:
 - Nature of the group(s) or individual(s) to be engaged
 - Geographical spread of communities
 - Access to and familiarity with technology
 - Energy reliability
 - Internet and cell phone penetration
 - Availability/cost of data
 - Language/literacy
- *Approaches* identified

Although there are large numbers of virtual engagement options available, some of the simplest tools remain useful in Latin America and the Caribbean. Projects should mix and match the options that will give it the best engagement outcome. Table 3 provides examples of tools that can be used for different engagement approaches, and Table 4 provides examples of how some companies have adapted tools and techniques during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Table 3: Example Engagement and Disclosure Tools Available that do not Require Face-to-face Interactions¹⁴

Engagement Approach	Traditional or technology based	Tools		Application
Information Dissemination or Awareness Raising	Traditional	Traditional Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newspaper • Radio/community radio • Television/community TV • Loudspeakers/public address system • Community Information bulletins (schools, religious institutions) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notices of events • Frequently asked questions • Directions for grievance mechanisms • Changes to existing processes • Project summaries or updates • Requests for feedback • Advertise upcoming virtual consultation or engagement processes
		Mail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postcards • Leaflets • Letters 	
		Information panels Community notice boards Community Centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaflets • Signs/posters • Picture boards • Infographics • Maps • Videos/slide shows • Virtual reality videos • Interactive displays 	
		Local actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local authorities • CSOs • Worker organizations • Local multipliers 	
	Information Technology based	Telephone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call 	
		Text based messaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WhatsApp • SMS platforms and text messaging • Facebook Messenger 	
		Email	Example apps include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mailchimp.com • Sendinblue.com (see Annex 1) 	
		Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facebook • Facebook live 	
		Corporate website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website content • Blogs • Publications 	
		Virtual platforms*	Example platforms include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement HQ • Social Pinpoint • Our Say • The Hive • Platos • Jambo • PGI Global Meet 	
Video Streaming	Example platforms include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snap stream • Periscope 	Streaming single source to multiple platforms and devices simultaneously including computers, tablets, smart phones		

¹⁴Adapted from EBRD Stakeholder Engagement (PR10) COVID-19 Briefing Note, 15 April 2020.

Engagement Approach	Traditional or technology based	Tools		Application
Information Disclosure	Traditional	Information panels Community notice boards Community Centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posters • Infographics • Videos • Interactive displays • Slide shows • Maps • Pictures 	Summary disclosure
	Information Technology based	Corporate website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Videos • Documents/summaries • Virtual reality videos • Infographics • Slide shows • Interactive displays • Maps 	Formal project / document disclosure
		Virtual consultation platforms*	Example platforms include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement HQ • Social Pinpoint • Our Say • The Hive • Platos • Jambo • PGI Global Meet 	
Surveys/Data gathering	Traditional	Face to face with previously quarantined or social distanced individual ¹⁵		Baseline surveys Census surveys Diagnostic surveys Opinion surveys Other surveys and questionnaires Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)
	Information Technology based	Telephone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call • WhatsApp 	
		Online surveys*	Example platforms include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey Monkey • Survey Planet • Typeform 	
		Virtual consultation platforms*	Example platforms include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement HQ • Social Pinpoint • Our Say • The Hive • Platos • Jambo • PGI Global Meet 	
	Other data sources	Google Earth, Google Street View, drones, directed cell phone video from a walk around a community	As primary data and for verification of secondary data	

¹⁵During a pandemic, the intention would generally be to avoid face-to-face consultation completely. However, there are circumstances, when the risks are weighed and alternatives are not available, where a decision may be taken to go ahead with consultation using strict protocols around social distancing, or using an individual who has been quarantined prior to engaging, or both.

Engagement Approach	Traditional or technology based	Tools		Application	
Consultation and Participation	Traditional	Community Radio /TV	Call in shows	On specific issues	
		Face to face with previously quarantined or socially distanced individual		ESIA consultations RAP consultations Workshops Focus groups Public meetings Roundtables / dialogue forums Ongoing consultation M&E Mapping	
	Information Technology based	Virtual Consultation Platforms*	Example platforms include: • Engagement HQ • Social Pinpoint • Our Say • The Hive • Platos • Jambo • PGI Global Meet		
			Example platforms include: • StormBoard	Workshops	
		Apps*	Example apps include: • Zoom • Houseparty • Microsoft Teams	Focus Groups Group conversations One-on-one discussions	
			Proprietary to company or already in use in the community		
Grievance Mechanism	Traditional	Telephone	• Call • WhatsApp • FaceTime	One-on-one conversations/ interviews Cell phone video and pictures	
	Information Technology based	Apps*	Example apps include: • Zoom • Houseparty • Microsoft Teams	Multi-party conversations/ discussions	
		Other	• Drones • Google Earth	Site review / photographs	

Table 4: Examples of Changes to Approaches, Tools, and Techniques Adopted during COVID-19

	Community Meeting with impacted population	Focus Groups with national level actors	Field research/ surveys	Posters	Grievance Mechanism
Adapted Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Virtual meeting with community leaders only. Multiple focus groups using Zoom. ✓ One-on-one interviews by telephone. ✓ Virtual community meeting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Virtual focus groups. ✓ One-on-one interviews by telephone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Situational diagnostic on the telephone. ✓ Questionnaire using existing platform provided by government. ✓ WhatsApp surveys, drone photography, directed cell phone video. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ WhatsApp communications. ✓ Facebook Messenger communications. ✓ No change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ No change. Grievances submitted using email and phone. ✓ Add free phone number and landlines in community.
	House visits	Meetings with traditional communities including Indigenous Peoples	Agenda of Social/ Environmental issues to be discussed	Capacity building and community development programs	
Adapted Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Telephone communications. ✓ Zoom communications. ✓ WhatsApp communications. ✓ Socially distanced meetings using PPE by embedded staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Contact through trusted individual. ✓ Meetings postponed indefinitely owing to high vulnerability and low project risk. ✓ One-on-one interviews by telephone with community leaders and some members. ✓ Socially distanced meetings using PPE. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Agenda of pandemic-related issues only. ✓ Agenda of pandemic-related issues and social/ environmental issues. ✓ Maintain engagement around ongoing resettlement plus pandemic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Third party delivery organization unable to work – postpone until after pandemic and ensure that livelihoods of participants are secure in the interim. ✓ Add virtual capacity building on new technologies and software to facilitate communication. ✓ Continue element of capacity building virtually. Return to full program in the future. ✓ Maintain programs for women with reduced numbers and social distancing measures but on a reduced schedule, taking account of increased pressures in the home due to home working and closed schools. 	

4.2 Which Tool is Appropriate for which Population Group?

Stakeholder groups have different levels of skill and experience in regard to technology that will determine the options available (Table 5).

Table 5: Technology Options for Different Population Groups

Groups	Technology Options	Applications
Technology savvy, reliable electricity and internet connections	Virtual consultation platforms Apps Streaming technologies	All
Good smart phone distribution with reasonably reliable cell phone connections and at least intermittent internet	Text SMS Email Social Media Apps Telephone	Information dissemination Surveys One on One Interviews/ Data collection and consultation Focus Groups Grievances
Little to no access to technology, internet connections and low penetration of smart phones	Telephone Limited SMS/Text Limited email	Information dissemination One on one interviews by phone
No modern technology	Potentially, phone provided by company	One on one conversations

4.3 Choosing a Virtual Engagement Platform

There is an expanding number of sophisticated virtual engagement platforms available, which includes multiple options for engagement, including virtual rooms for information disclosure and community consultation ([Annex 2](#)). Unfortunately, in 2020, most are only available in English language versions. Some companies have found these useful in contexts in which power and data are reliable and stakeholders are sufficiently familiar with the technology to use them, sometimes with help from family members.

TIPS ON CHOOSING THE RIGHT VIRTUAL PLATFORM

- Define the audience, their level of familiarity with on-line applications, reliability of energy supply, and internet access.
- Define engagement objectives: Complete a survey, make suggestions on a map, consult on a particular issue, review disclosed documents, become generally informed about a project.
- Define the approach: Public discussions, data gathering, focus groups, and one-on-one interviews.
- Identify relevant issues of gender, confidentiality, security, need for data storage, documentation, reporting, and follow up.
- Identify platform options based on the type of communications sought, flexibility, security and manageability of applications, level of interactivity (chat or private chat options, electronic hand raising, ability to share screens), and level of education required to use it.
- Consider level of facilitation and/or moderation required and available resources and skills.
- Consider language/interpretation requirements.
- Consider how intuitive the platform is to use and how much support new users will need to use it.
- Consider the types of devices available to run the software.
- Consider how much time and types of resources available to prepare to use it.
- Where feasible, engage with affected stakeholders to discuss and agree on the most appropriate platform for them.

5. Conducting Virtual Consultation and Engagement

5.1 Virtual Consultation

Consultation seeks inputs from stakeholders on a set of issues raised or plans or programs proposed by a company or project. It can also be used to “check in” with a community to better understand them, their issues, and their concerns, and to strengthen relationships. As such, the company is seeking to engage the community in a two-way process. It is both good international practice and a legally required process for licensing in many national jurisdictions. As part of a formal process such as an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA), consultation is used to seek opinions and ideas concerning the potential impacts and proposed mitigation measures for a plan or project on local communities and the physical and natural environment. It is also necessary for effective risk management during operations.

REMEMBER...

Virtual consultation is only a substitute for face-to-face engagement during a pandemic or other crisis. Otherwise, it is just one of many engagement tools available to a project or operation at any time. **It should not replace face-to-face consultation completely.**

Virtual consultation comes in a variety of forms. It is a viable option where there is cultural willingness and ability to use the technology. It helps to have appropriate technology, sufficient internet access, and reliable power in place prior to starting, but these need not necessarily be seen as a barrier when long term engagement is the goal.

There are a wide variety of options for virtual consultation available, from one-on-one, audio-visual conversations using FaceTime, Messenger or WhatsApp to the most sophisticated software platforms that allow for group conversations, facilitated workshops, and multi-dimensional information dissemination. The specifics of each type of tool, its applications, and how to choose the most appropriate are discussed in more detail in Section 4 and [Annex 2](#).

Whether virtual consultation is feasible or appropriate will depend on a variety of factors, including the objective of the activity, how many stakeholders have access to the platform, and other options available. Some of the pros and cons of virtual consultation are presented in [Table 6](#) and [Box 4](#). Example 5 provides examples of successful approaches to virtual engagement.

Table 6: Potential Positives of Virtual Consultation

All apps and platforms	More sophisticated platforms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to conduct conversations with no physical contact. • Flexible – easier to have multiple small sessions at times convenient to different groups / more easily adapted to the rhythms of the community. • Easy to replicate focus groups and other meetings. • Where the technology is available, quick to set up. • Can break down power relationships, existing hierarchies, and gender biases, creating more gender and linguistic equity and opening up and enriching the debate. • More one-on-one conversations can increase the number of voices heard and, if desired, the frequency of contact. • Reduces the need, cost, and time for travel. • Can be recorded if / when permitted by participants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to a broader group of stakeholders, including the geographically distant or isolated, those who are difficult to track down for face-to-face meetings, and people with limited time or on the move. • Securely anonymous platforms provide a safe space for people fearing identification or reprisals or fearing loss of face for raising issues and testing ideas, including some vulnerable groups. • With the right platform, it can be easier to manage the terms of the conversation, avoid polarization, and maintain a healthy dialogue. • Some platforms provide forums where it is easier for people with a lower level of literacy to engage. • Provides opportunities to dive deeply into the issues and address issues immediately, and can result in strong recommendations. • Disclosed information can be at hand and the shelf-life of the information is easily extended. • Capture feedback.



Box 4
**POTENTIAL CHALLENGES OF
VIRTUAL CONSULTATION**

- Lack of human warmth and color of face-to-face engagement. It can be a bit bland and cold.
- Small group consultation is by invitation only. It is not possible to wander in off the street.
- Digital Divide: Difficult to access by more vulnerable groups and those hampered by lack of familiarity with technology, with potential for uneven consultation.
- Potential for gate keeping by individuals with access to technology.
- Consultation with community leaders is often possible but getting even representation from community members is more difficult.
- Individual discussions can be quite successful but achieving group consensus is more challenging.
- Information dissemination is relatively straightforward, but creating dialogue is not.
- Security issues/confidentiality concerns on some platforms that do not provide an option for anonymity.
- Can be challenging to moderate, manage conflict and “noise,” and maintain the ethos of equity, empathy, establishing rapport, receptiveness, and dialogue.
- Ability to effectively explore options and develop solutions and achieving group discussion and consensus.
- Requires significant human resources, time, and technical expertise to set up and manage the sessions and, in some cases, to prepare communities for the engagement process.
- Participation is not always immediate. There can be technical delays which result in awkward conversations.
- Lack of sense of debate in some forums.
- Challenging to use in areas without reliable electricity or data transmission.
- Some platforms have been abused by participants or hackers seeking to disrupt calls, stream undesirable material, steal information, or create a chaotic environment. This may be more or less challenging to control than in a public meeting depending on the level of sophistication of the platform and the ability of a moderator to manage the process.

5.1.1 Role of Gender in Virtual Consultation

As with all consultation processes, gender must be taken into consideration during consultation design to ensure gender equity and to support results free of gender bias. Virtual consultation is generally thought to be empowering to women and the LGBTQ community, if designed appropriately, but there are also pitfalls to be understood and avoided. Potential positives in virtual consultation for women and LGBTQ people include the following:

- Increased feeling of empowerment to provide opinions in a virtual consultation space in which there is anonymity and formal and informal power structures are absent (i.e., all voices are equal)
- In situations where women are constrained by domestic ties and expectations, a virtual consultation forum may provide them with more flexible opportunities to engage that are not available in other types of engagement sessions

Some issues to consider in an inclusive virtual engagement include the following:

- Women may have less access to or familiarity in using technology than men
- The pandemic may have resulted in women having increased childcare and other responsibilities, providing less time to engage virtually or otherwise
- Third party moderators may need to be sensitized to gender issues to ensure that they encourage diverse participation and do not favor those who shout the loudest in virtual forums. Projects should therefore consider using female moderators, for example
- Platforms that lack anonymity may, in some circumstances, expose women and other minority groups to increased likelihood of gender-based violence (GBV). Discussion forums should therefore be anonymous, if possible

There may be small, female-owned business development opportunities linked to making cell phones, tablets, or laptops and computers¹⁶ through a community development program.

5.1.2 Virtual Consultation with Traditional Communities

Virtual consultation with traditional communities, including Indigenous Peoples, is an option when there is a base-level familiarity with technology and either cell phone penetration with data or internet connectivity. Increasing numbers of Indigenous Peoples and traditional communities have access to or experience with technology, and cultural willingness to use it. In areas without data, but a willingness to engage, advance planning of virtual consultation can be set up using the telephone to allow time for relevant individuals or groups to move into an area with data access. This is not practical for public meetings, but can be useful for consultation with key actors, except in a scenario where freedom of movement is temporarily restricted. For communities with no access to technology or no cultural willingness to use it, there may be no other option available than to postpone consultation until the pandemic has ended.

¹⁶See Successful IFC / Grameen Bank financed Grameen Telecom project The National Village Phone Programme in Bangladesh.

5.1.3 Preparing Consultation on a Virtual Platform

Using a virtual platform for consultation requires careful preparation to give it every chance of success. It may require rethinking the approach to materials to make them appealing in a virtual context and to maintain audience interest. In a less developed area, it may require significant preparation of participants and technology. Thought should be given to language requirements and interpretation (e.g., choosing a platform with built-in audio interpreting capacity), addressing illiteracy in relation to written materials, documenting engagement, and follow up. Projects should be sure to read the advice provided by the platform on how to best develop materials to meet engagement needs.

TIPS ON HOW TO PREPARE PARTICIPANTS AND TECHNOLOGY FOR A VIRTUAL MEETING

- Introductory call via telephone or WhatsApp to assess willingness to participate and understand issues, experience with technology, and constraints.
- Identify a time that most people can easily attend, especially in an area where some people have to move around to get clear cell phone signals or consistent internet.
- Follow up call with the company IT team to support software downloads, capacity building in use of technology, and advise on connectivity issues (e.g., advice to avoid using video options if bandwidth is an issue).
- Follow up call to discuss rules of engagement, encouraging people not to speak over each other and how to raise and address issues that allow people to express ideas and concerns safely.
- Provide information for discussion in advance so that people are prepared.
- Allow enough time at the start of the meeting, as in face-to-face public meetings, to ensure that all participants are connected, software issues have been addressed, and everyone is settled and ready to start (e.g., 20 minutes).
- Keep the meetings as short and concise as possible, respecting people's availability, especially where internet and electricity are unreliable.
- Document meeting and follow up with participants.

TIPS ON PREPARING FOR CONSULTATION ON A VIRTUAL PLATFORM

- Keep materials visual, documents short and snappy. Use pictures, infographics, videos, and slide shows. Break large documents (e.g., ESIA) up into manageable chunks. Make summaries and keep text light.
- Have clear objectives, well communicated to the target audience.
- Keep messages clear and concise.
- Pre-seed questions to promote ideas and conversations.
- Circulate pre-reads in advance, if necessary.
- Use mechanisms for active listening and facilitated dialogue (i.e., no “free for all”).
- Consider how users land on a platform and how it will drive users through it so that engagement is useful and effective.
- Consider how to promote virtual consultation options to stakeholders and encourage them to participate.
- Consider how to engage individuals without direct access (e.g., installing kiosks, providing phones to a trusted individual who can make them available, and donating tablets).
- Maintain accountability through effective moderation and follow up.
- Consider using new media specialists to provide support.



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5.2 Virtual Data Collection

Gathering data virtually can be effective under normal and pandemic circumstances, especially in remote locations. Examples include baseline data, census surveys, community health surveys, social diagnostics, and livelihoods restoration surveys. It reduces time and cost. However, when used as an alternative to on-the-ground data gathering, it should always be followed up at an appropriate time with a field-based visit for verification purposes. Some of the pitfalls of relying on virtual data include:

- Minimal to no opportunity to develop relationships with local communities or socialize them to the project
- Increased opportunities to miss stakeholders marginalized by the community
- Increased opportunities to miss data, misinterpret data collected, or for data to be biased and less objective
- Reduced understanding of the context – less opportunity to feel, sense, draw out, and discuss issues, share warmth and humor, and assess conflict

TIPS ON ENGAGEMENT AND LINEAR PROJECTS

Linear projects such as roads, pipelines, and transmission lines may cover hundreds of kilometers in a relatively narrow corridor. This provides ample opportunity for a fast-moving construction team, and an engagement team moving ahead of them, to act as unwitting vectors of disease. Also, the greater the area covered, the greater the likelihood that there will be uneven cell phone coverage, internet connectivity, penetration of technology, and literacy in some of the impacted communities.

Under these circumstances, the primary focus of all project developers must be to avoid acting as an agent of disease transmission between communities. This can be achieved by working closely but virtually with community leaders and local authorities to address community concerns and support appropriate management and mitigation measures according to the scope of the project.

5.3 Virtual Information Disclosure

Disclosure of project information to Affected Communities and other stakeholders is a prerequisite for consultation at key stages of the project development and implementation process, including during an ESIA, for the larger and higher risk IDB Invest financed projects.¹⁷ This information can be physically disclosed to stakeholders and is provided virtually through the IDB Invest website. Physical disclosure presupposes that not everyone in all communities has access to technology.

If public meetings to present an ESIA have to be canceled due to the pandemic, alternative virtual platforms should be considered. If well managed, these platforms could provide an ideal forum for information disclosure in the form of virtual rooms where videos, infographics, slide shows, full and summary documents, pictures, and virtual reality tours can be staged for interested stakeholders. These can be accessed at home by individuals with available technology. In some locations, they can be made available through a publicly accessible computer terminal that can be sterilized between uses, as an alternative to or alongside physical disclosure of a document. However, this approach is challenging in locations without reliable internet, or for users with minimal prior experience of technology.

Since prior disclosure is a requirement of consultation for licensing and financing, inability to appropriately disclose project information may result in project delays until those requirements can be met safely and securely.

5.4 Virtual Reporting and Follow Up

All reporting of virtual engagement should be made objectively and include notes of the limitations and constraints. As with a standard consultation process, projects should thoroughly document the process and disclose results and feedback on outcomes to participants. Documentation could include audio or video recordings of the proceedings, and feedback can be provided in the form of sound or video recordings. Projects should document the constraints and limitations of the virtual consultation process objectively and ensure that they are remedied as soon as possible. In many circumstances, virtual consultation will require validation once the pandemic is over.

¹⁷Information Disclosure is a requirement for all IDB Invest Category A projects prior to consultation during an ESIA process (IFC PSI), and at key points during project implementation (Access to Information Policy). It is therefore not relevant for projects that are not required to undertake an ESIA for project finance purposes.

5.5 Meeting Regulatory Requirements

Much consultation during the project licensing process is specifically designed to meet national regulatory requirements. Proving that virtual consultation is meaningful, equitable, and effective enough to meet licensing requirements takes careful preparation.

TIPS ON MEETING REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

- Run the proposed process by the regulator prior to starting, if possible.
- Discuss how to document the meeting with stakeholders and ensure they agree with the process, especially if you are recording calls.
- Record audio and video calls with authorization, take pictures of on-screen interactions, provide dates and times of calls with stakeholders where it does not compromise confidentiality, and print copies of documents circulated and photograph the emails/messaging services used to transmit them.
- Ask stakeholders to take photographs of calls or video sessions and send them to you as confirmation of participation.
- Carefully record feedback received with dates and times.
- For public meetings where government and company should both be present and the technology and bandwidth is available (such as in a city), consider running a video conference on a large screen with virtual presentations that stakeholders can attend with appropriate social distancing, if health constraints allow.



6. Grievance Mechanisms

6.1 Adapting a Grievance Mechanism

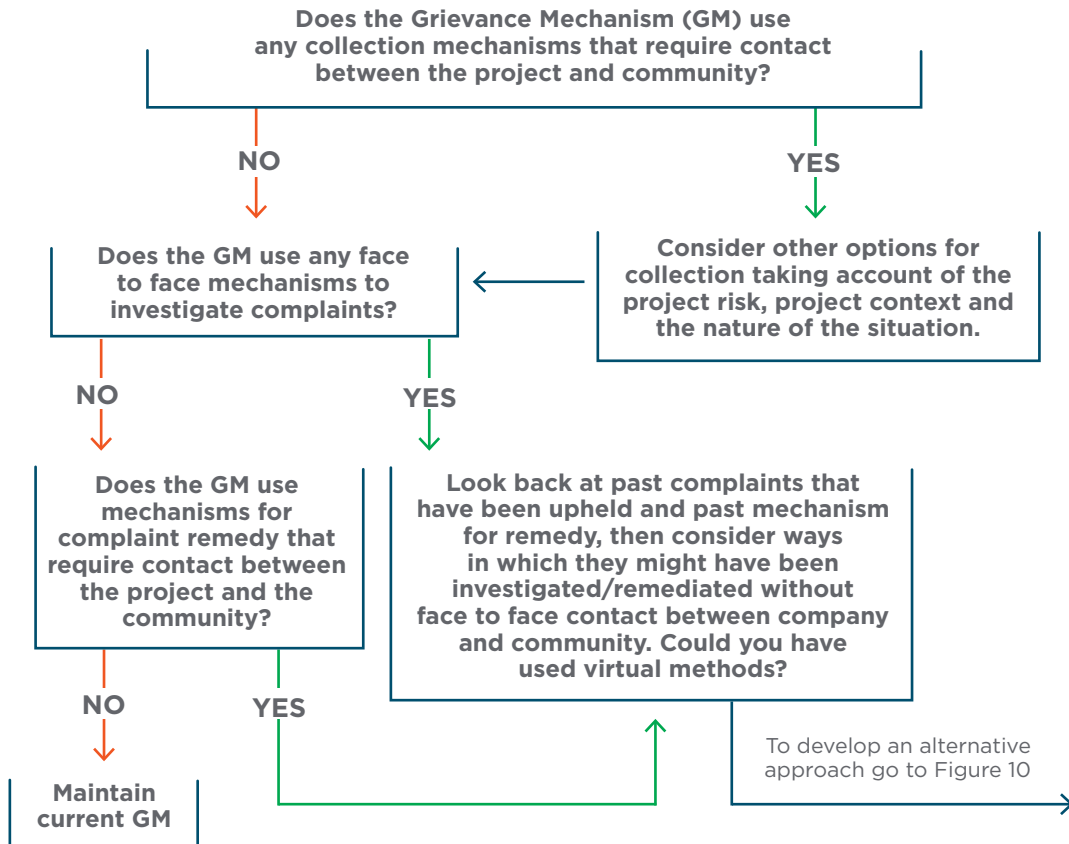
Grievance mechanisms are designed to operate on an ongoing basis. Some are designed to require minimal management by the company or community until a grievance is submitted. Others rely on regular and personal interactions between the community and CLOs.

Under no circumstances should a community be left without an operational grievance mechanism during a pandemic. Populations are especially vulnerable and frequently less empowered at that time. A functioning grievance mechanism supports empowerment. Not only could absence of a grievance mechanism be damaging to company/community relations, it also brings the project out of compliance with IFC PS 1, company management systems, and many national safeguards requirements. It is especially important during periods when grievances are typically at their highest, such as during construction or when heavy equipment is being used close to a community. In this case, any delay in investigating or resolving a grievance should be communicated to the complainant as soon as possible with a clear explanation.

Companies should consider that in some circumstances, it may be appropriate to adapt the grievance mechanism to accept grievances relating to a broader range of issues for a temporary period, especially in areas where there has been a breakdown of government services. The company grievance mechanism may be the only available vehicle for stakeholders to express themselves and their frustrations. Also, following a natural disaster, a grievance mechanism should be adapted to the specific circumstances of the disaster, taking into account access and available communications networks.

Figure 9 presents a set of steps to follow in order to ensure that a project grievance mechanism is appropriate and adapted, as necessary. Once adapted, projects should check in to make sure that it remains **transparent, fair, and equitable**, that all members of the community understand how to use it and retain equal access, and that there is no opportunity for retribution.

Figure 9
Process for Modifying a Grievance Mechanism

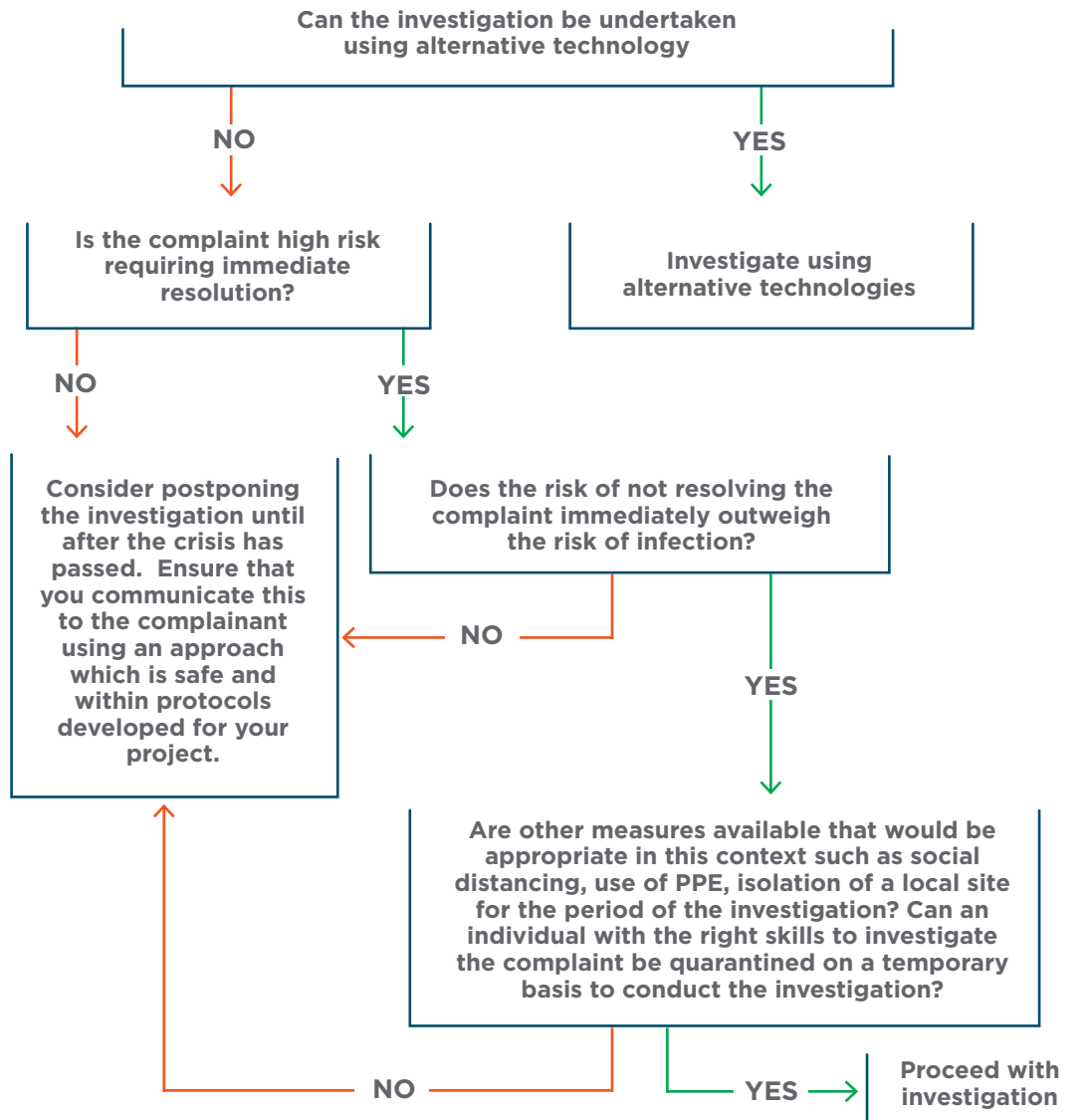


Some options for grievances collection mechanism include providing a free phone number, placing collection boxes on the perimeter of a community, designating a trusted community member to deliver grievances to a more remote location once a week for collection by the company, embedding a CLO within the community following a period of quarantine, and introducing telephone or other technology options according to community access to and ability to use these technologies. Also, when addressing complaint remedies, some options to consider include using methods such as telephone, email, mail, and video calls for communication, and bank transfer for delivering compensation.

An alternative approach to address grievances without face-to-face contact is to proceed using alternative technologies, such as photographs, cell phone videos, drones, satellite images, Google Maps street view, telephone interviews, phone-based discussion platforms, or taking additional measures relevant for the specific context, like social distancing or use of PPE. Figure 10 illustrates how to support the decision of whether to proceed with a grievance investigation when face-to-face contact is a constraint during a pandemic.



Figure 10
Alternative Approach for Grievance Mechanism in a Pandemic



6.2 Disseminate an Adapted Grievance Mechanism

Following redesign of a Grievance Mechanism, in whole or in part, projects should disclose the new process to communities using a process that is safe and secure for all parties. Projects should choose the process according to the circumstances. Options include:

- In newspapers or community bulletins
- On community radio/television stations
- Mailing posters to community leaders
- Emailing a poster to be printed to the local town hall
- Entering a community to attach a poster using appropriate PPE and at an hour when the potential for contact will be minimal
- Getting a message to an existing multiplier
- Using social media, WhatsApp, text messaging, and/or virtual chat platforms

7. Engagement in Other Crisis Situations

7.1 Adapting Engagement Following a Natural Disaster

Natural disasters are frequently characterized by impacts on communications and physical access, and sometimes by a subsequent danger of disease such as cholera and typhoid. The issues regarding how to address engagement during or following natural disasters are therefore somewhat different from a pandemic.

In addition, engagement priorities following a natural disaster will be different depending on the severity and breadth of the disaster. For example, a landslide close to a project may be devastating to one community but leave others untouched and may or may not impact the project itself. An earthquake, on the other hand, will generally be more widespread and may also affect the project.

REMEMBER...

A company that has a strong emergency response plan including stakeholder engagement will be better prepared for a crisis than one that does not.

Following a natural disaster, ongoing consultation processes will normally be low priority while emergency response takes over. However, as the situation begins to return to normal, a revised engagement plan should be put in place. The types of issues it may need to cover include:

- Disclosure of company plans for supporting long term recovery
- Information about how and when local workers may return to work
- Information about continuing with ongoing engagement processes that were interrupted by the disaster

Changes may need to be made in approaches to engagement that take new realities into account.

Finally, the plan may need to be adapted over time to provide new, relevant, or updated information. Flexibility and maintaining an eye on priorities will be key to maintaining successful and meaningful engagement over time.

TIPS ON ENGAGEMENT OPTIONS FOLLOWING A NATURAL DISASTER

Options will depend on the context, issues, needs, and priorities of the project and community. However, the following may be appropriate in some situations:

- Provide excavation and/or medical help;
- Leverage services from your operation for local communities short-term;
- Provide energy through solar powered charging packs;
- Provide simple technology that local people can train others to use;
- Work with local authorities, disaster management organizations, and other agencies to share advice, guidance, and resources, and to ensure a coordinated response; and
- Keep community level communications channels open, if possible.

Third parties may wish to take advantage of company communications or power sources for a temporary period.



7.2 Adapting Engagement in a Complex Security Situation

Adapting engagement in a complex security situation will need to take an additional range of issues into account. It may be marked by unpredictability, increased insecurity for stakeholders, increased human rights abuses, increased fear or risk of reprisals, and increased reluctance by communities to engage with any outside bodies unless strong relationships have already been established. It may require specialized analysis and solutions (Box 5)¹⁸. The process for revising an engagement approach set forth in this guidance may be used to amend the plan as the principles of engagement remain the same. The issues that need to be considered, however, will be highly context specific. Finally, it is important to consider confidentiality and security of information provided by communities in contexts of complex security situations.

BOX 5 HUMAN RIGHTS RISK ASSESSMENT

Companies already familiar with the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (VPSHR) will be better prepared to face complex security situations through their familiarity with human rights risk assessments in their engagement with public and private security providers. The VPSHR help “companies understand the environment they are operating in, identify security-related human rights risks, and take meaningful steps to address them.” Steps include training company security staff and guidance in engagement with local law enforcement to reduce the chance of human rights abuses and promote respect for human rights.

Other organizations that support companies in assessing security and human rights risk, and developing solutions, include the international NGO International Alert through its Human Rights due diligence tool for use in conflict affected settings.



Fiorella Pino Luna

¹⁸<https://www.voluntaryprinciples.org> and
<https://www.international-alert.org/publications/human-rights-due-diligence-conflict-affected-settings>.

8. Adjusting to the New Normal

As pandemic conditions improve and pandemic restrictions are lifted, returning to a “new normal” will require a review of the pre-pandemic approach to stakeholder engagement. It may be possible to return to the original plan without amendment, but this is unlikely. It also may not be desirable. The “new normal” signifies that while certain pre-pandemic activities can be resumed, some aspects of the virtual engagement instituted during the pandemic should be retained because they worked better or effectively complemented what was being done before ([Example 5](#)).

Projects should consider what additional amendments are needed to effectively manage the transition to the new normal. The new plan should be shared with the community and they should be asked for their input.

REMEMBER...

Return to normal for you may not be a return to normal for stakeholders. Review how their lives might have changed during the pandemic or other crisis: physically, mentally, economically, balance of power/gender within the community, politically, expectations, and resources. Consider the messages that you need to communicate to them according to if and how you engaged during the pandemic. Plan your engagement accordingly

You may have engaged with fewer stakeholders, or without validation of the process, during the pandemic. You may need to ground truth data and validate consultation processes. Ensure that your new normal approach takes this into account and fills in the gaps.

EXAMPLE 5 EFFECTIVE ADAPTATION DURING COVID-19

- In **Brazil**, one company found that the virtual education and training programs established during the COVID-19 lockdown reached a wider audience than prior programs.
- In **Chile**, one organization found that virtual platforms for consultation, while quite sterile, reached a far wider audience than standard face-to-face meetings, including increased participation by women, especially in areas where stakeholders were geographically widespread.
- In **Colombia**, one company found that data collection for a social baseline in a remote area using a combination of online questionnaires with telephone follow up, combined with secondary data and cell phone videos followed by ground truthing, was quicker, cheaper, safer, and more effective than in person data collection because of the specific circumstances. They provided cell phones, tablets, and virtual training to participants, as necessary, with hardware to be returned following the process.
- In **Brazil**, one company that asked the community to vote annually on projects and programs as part of its approach to community relations discovered that using an online voting platform increased participation, reduced cost, and sped up the process. They were also able to count the votes live using Facebook live, which allowed the community to watch it.
- One company, which started to use WhatsApp for dissemination of information, found it was quicker and cheaper than printing materials, so it started to use the platform for the dissemination of other types of ongoing community information campaigns. Printed materials will be distributed only to those areas/households where electronic communication is not effective.
- One company discovered that using WhatsApp and telephone resulted in them being able to have more frequent direct contact with members of the community going through a resettlement process than the previous face-to-face method. As result, relationships with some families improved and they were able to move forward with some negotiation processes more easily than previously.
- One company in **Peru** dedicated its community relations team to calling Affected Communities daily on the telephone when it was unable to conduct face-to-face visits. CLOs reported, unexpectedly, that the more frequent contact resulted in what they felt were stronger relationships.
- One company in **Brazil** discovered that using WhatsApp resulted in them being able to enhance their participatory monitoring by having community monitors more actively involved than the previous face-to-face method. As result, they were able to collect more data and information, promoting further participation in the communities.

Annex 1: Tools to Support Adapting Stakeholder Engagement

Introduction

These tools and examples are designed to support projects/companies in completing Steps 1 & 2 of the engagement adaptation process (see [Section 3 & Figure 3](#)).

- **Section A** is focused on supporting a project/company to identify a preliminary new short-term engagement objective based on the project/operation and its characteristics, short-term needs and associated risks. With preliminary objectives set, move to Section B.
- **Section B** is focused on supporting a project/company to understand and review the changed project context, stakeholder map and analysis, community perspective and associated risks

A: Tools to support Setting New Objectives

This section is organized in three parts, first Figure A1 provides a process for setting new objectives for short-term stakeholder engagement that will support maintenance of community trust and a license to operate during a situation where face to face engagement is not possible. Second, Table A1 compiles a set of questions to address each stage highlighted in Figure A1. Finally, a set of examples are provided in Table A2 for further guidance on how to address this process.

Figure A1
Review Project/Company Position - Step 1



A team or individual can use the questions below, and associated flow charts and examples, as prompts to identify and assess the information necessary to set short-term engagement objectives that meet short-term company needs and priorities. Each set of questions maps onto a stage of the process set out in Figure A1.

Table A1: Questions to address on each stage for setting new short-term objectives

1. Identify and Assess Existing Objectives for Engagement	2. Identify and New Risks and Immediate Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the company’s ongoing/ planned engagement activities and processes? (Table A2, example 1) • How important are they to the company in the short-term? • What are the risks of not proceeding as planned? • What factors need to be taken into account? (Table A2, example 2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What new risks is the company facing as a result of the pandemic? (Table A2, example 3) • Are there ongoing conflicts that pose a risk to company or community/individual community members, and need to be taken into account in some way? (Table A2, example 4) • Has action been taken in response to the pandemic that has created new community impacts that need to be addressed? (Table A2, example 5) • Has anything been missed?
3. Assess risks and Prioritize Results	4. Set new Preliminary Short-Term Objectives
<p>Once the questions above have been answered, projects/companies can prioritize the results by assessing the risks (Table A2, example 6) and set priorities based on those risks.</p>	<p>Set preliminary short-term objectives for engagement during the pandemic based on the priorities identified (Table A2, example 7). New objectives are based on a combination of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised ongoing engagement objectives • New planned engagement needs in response to the pandemic.

Table A2 gathers seven examples associated with questions presented in Table A1.

Table A2: Examples for further guidance

Example 1: What are our ongoing/ planned engagement processes?	Example 2: What factors need to be taken into account?
<p>Examples of the types of activities that may need to be considered, include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cadastral Survey • Public consultation for an ESIA • FPIC with local indigenous population or other traditional community • Ongoing community development projects • Negotiations around compensation • Roll out of a grievance mechanism • Land acquisition • Construction management • Baseline surveys • Activities aimed at long term strengthening of relationships with local impacted communities, workers families, more distant and less impacted traditional communities within a broader sphere of influence • Participatory monitoring 	<p>The factor are stage, nature and scale of a project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • scale and nature: generally speaking, the larger and more complex a project, the greater the need for engagement, although the type of engagement will be further influenced by the location and complexity of the operating context, the nature and proximity of stakeholders, and other factors. • stage of the project: an IDB Invest client is likely to be in one of three stages of the project cycle: design and development, construction, or operations. Each of those stages is normally characterized by a set of engagement activities, scaled to and determined by the nature, scale and potential impacts of the project. For example, a large mine or oil palm plantation is likely to have significantly more impacts than a small hotel or meat packing plant, so its engagement activities will likely be more extensive. In addition, there may be ongoing non-regulatory activities focused on building or maintaining trust and managing risk.

Table A2: Examples for further guidance

Example 3: What new risks do we face as a result of the pandemic, that can be addressed completely or partially through stakeholder engagement?

Examples include:

- Temporary stop to construction or operations
- Inability to follow through with FPIC commitments that must be reported to authorities
- Inability to complete resettlement negotiations or a land acquisition process
- Community development programs providing critical income to members of the community, without staff to run them
- A stalled ESIA process
- Project reliance on migrant workers who can no longer travel
- Cancelled public meetings resulting in less information flow to stakeholders
- Impacts on local populations resulting from changes to working practices

Example 4: Are there ongoing conflicts that pose a risk to company or community/individual community members, that need to be addressed in some way?

Consider if there are any conflicts that impact the company’s ability to work with local communities, or which put those communities at risk of or in fear of reprisals. That risk may include, for example, what happens if a community member becomes ill during a pandemic, or if a community member is seen to be cooperating with a company, especially in areas with ongoing civil or military conflict.

- Company/community conflict: general conflict or around a specific issue or concern
- Local armed conflict, and its impacts on company ability to engage effectively with communities
- Intra community conflict

Table A2: Examples for further guidance

<p>Example 5: Has action been taken in response to the pandemic that has created new community impacts that need to be addressed?</p>	<p>Example 6: Assess Risks and Prioritize results based on risk</p>
<p>Examples of Potential New Project/ Operation Impacts on Communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased concern about return of construction workers to a site, or continued company operations, and associated disease transmission • Workers no longer able to use shops, restaurants or informal stalls • Uncertainty around a stalled resettlement process • Drop in income arising from stalled community development projects • Workers provided temporary on-site facilities to maintain quarantine creating temporary single parent households, while children are home-schooled <p>Check with the community to understand their views: they may see a different set of impacts from the company</p>	<p>Once there are answers to the questions set out above (examples 1 – 5), prioritize the results to set new short-term project objectives. In some cases, it will be helpful to assess the risks associated with each result as part of that prioritization process.</p> <p>To assess risk, give the answers to questions a simple risk rating of high, medium or low. The risks to consider may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business/financial/operational (e.g. risks of project delays potentially with legal/contractual implications and costs, risk to existing commitments or business critical processes such as resettlement or FPIC, risk of workers falling ill and being unable to work) • Reputational (e.g. risk to relationships, license to operate, share price) • Company/community relations (e.g. risks to existing relationships, risks to specific groups and around specific commitments) • Hardship to community (e.g. risks to local workforce and loss of income, conflict) • Others

Table A2: Examples for further guidance

Example 7: Examples of potential New Engagement Objectives

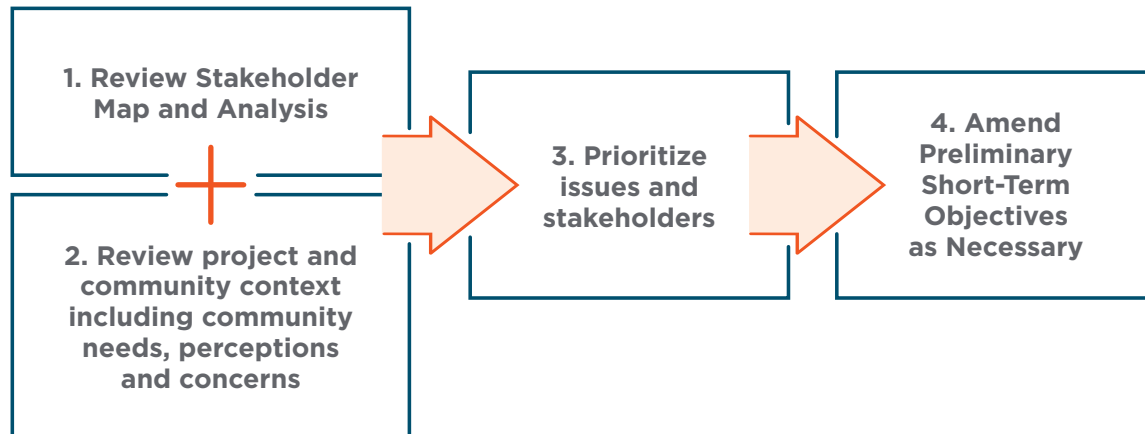
- Restart construction or operations temporarily stopped by the pandemic or other crisis
 - Socialize a worker / community interaction protocol
 - Complete the baseline data collection or consultation process for licensing
 - Continue with a resettlement process
 - Maintain healthy workforce and healthy communities
 - Create confidence in the company by communities, workers and authorities by demonstrating commitment
 - Maintain dialogue to understand ongoing conflicts and associated dangers to company and community
-

B: Tools to support Analysis of the Project Context/Community Perspective

This section is organized in three parts, first Figure B1 provides a process for a company to follow in order to understand changes to the project context during a situation where face to face engagement is not possible that will impact how and on what it should seek to engage with stakeholders. Second, Table B1 compiles a set of questions to address each stage highlighted in Figure B1. Finally, a set of examples are provided in Table B2 for further guidance on how to address this process.

Figure B1 includes revisiting the stakeholder map to see if it has changed, also the stakeholder analysis. It involves reviewing the context in which the stakeholders find themselves, their perceptions, constraints, and priorities. It tries to understand the situation that limits face to face engagement (pandemic, natural disaster, etc.) from the community perspective, including when, how and on what to engage. It also considers how engagement might take place, and any related constraints. It includes engagement with stakeholders wherever possible.

Figure B1
Review Community / Context - Step 2



A project / company can use the questions below (Table B1) as prompts to go through the process. Some of these questions are associated to examples and simple tools, included in Table B2, that can be used where necessary.

A project / company can use the questions below (Table B1) as prompts to go through the process. Some of these questions are associated to examples and simple tools, included in Table B2, that can be used where necessary.

Table B1: Questions to address on each stage for adapting stakeholder engagement

1. Review Stakeholder Map and Analysis	2. Review project and community context, including community needs, perceptions and concerns
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there changes to the stakeholder map? (Table B2, example 1) • Are there new potential partners/ different groups or individuals that have changed in relative importance or profile? (Table B2, example 2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the changes in the project context that need to be taken into account? (Table B2, example 3) • Are stakeholders still interested in the same issues, or do they have new priorities or concerns? How willing and able are they to engage, and how? (Table B2, example 4) • What are the risk factors for disease transmission within and between the local stakeholder groups and the company? (Table B2, example 5) • Are there issues around access to communities, and communications options with different stakeholder groups? What are the potential barriers to access? (Table B2, example 6) • Consider conducting a social diagnostic using simple tools like WhatsApp and Zoom (Table B2, example 4).
3. Prioritize Issues and Stakeholders	4. Amend preliminary short-term stakeholder engagement objectives as necessary
<p>Prioritize which stakeholders to engage with and issues to address. Consider the level of financial, reputational and operational risk, including risk to the relationships with local communities, and ability to address the risk through engagement on the other.</p>	

Table B2 gathers a set of examples and further guidance related to how a company understands, adapts and addresses its stakeholder engagement plan considering a context where face to face engagement is a constrained.

Table B2: Examples for further guidance

**Example 1:
Are there changes to
the Stakeholder Map?**

In reviewing the stakeholder map, consider the following questions:

- Has there been any inward or outward migration into the communities, such as families or family members arriving or leaving, heads of households leaving, economic migration, movement of refugees or internally displaced people (IDPs)?
- Are there ongoing changes to power structures, gender balance, new or disappearing civil society groups, changing relationships with government, presence of government or armed forces (civil or security)?
- Have some individuals become more prominent/important and others reduced?
- Have some stakeholders become more or less vulnerable?
- Have some stakeholders been more or less impacted by steps the company has had to take as a result of the pandemic or other crisis?
- Have different stakeholders become a priority?
- Given the issues the Company may need to address, are there any new partners to work with? (see example 2)

Issues to consider include: potential for increased vulnerability, changes in accessibility, changes in balance of power between different stakeholder groups, new set of issues of concern resulting from the changed context or as a result of changes put in place by the company (e.g. temporary arrangements for workers stopping purchasing from local stalls, reduced access to community development programs, loss of income directly or indirectly related to company activities).

Table B2: Examples for further guidance

**Example 2:
Are there new
potential partners?**

- New prominent stakeholders arising as a result of the pandemic or other crisis (e.g. the local doctor or nurse)
 - Representative organizations of traditional communities
 - Local health authorities – for advice and guidance, potential to partner for program delivery, as source of materials or existing communications networks
 - Local education authorities – regarding programs with an educational component or if there are issues relating to children and child mental health
 - New groups present in the area, such as Emergency Response organizations, or informal groups that have sprung up to support a pandemic or other crisis such as an earthquake or hurricane
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Table B2: Examples for further guidance

Example 3: What are the Changes in the Project Context the need to be taken into account?

The following issues are designed as prompts for consideration (it is not an exhaustive list).

Examples of standard contextual issues to consider:

- Urban/Rural
- Rich/Poor
- Presence of indigenous groups, afro-descendants, fishers, other traditional or vulnerable groups
- Cultural issues
- Gender issues/roles
- Literacy levels
- Languages
- Crime/public safety
- Physical security
- Access/transportation
- Active opposition to the project
- Human Rights abuses
- Informal or illegal economic activities
- Access to/quality and capacity of available health services
- Presence of Security forces
- Access to/ reliability of energy supply
- Levels of penetration of technology
- Access to/quality and reliability of digital communications links

Examples of pandemic specific contextual issues to consider:

- Government restrictions / regulations relating to the pandemic (e.g. COVID-19)
- Impacts of company-initiated changes on community (working from home, feeding workers in house so they no longer buy from street vendors, stalled resettlement processes, stalled community development projects)
- Misunderstanding of company operating parameters (why is the project still operating when the rest of the community is shut down?)
- Fear of disease transmission from workforce (foreign/non-local workers, worker / community contact)
- Fear of disease transmission within the community
- Fear of reprisals to families with infected members.
- Threats from armed groups
- Economic uncertainty and unemployment
- Reduced food security
- Sudden drop in income in the community
- Increased stress within individual families, and/or for specific family members (working from home, home schooling, inability to look after sick relatives, increased burdens on women)
- Fear of the unknown
- Potential increase in GBV, crime, insecurity for minorities
- Need for information / access to medical care
- Limited mobility between different municipalities
- Human rights abuses by security forces
- Need for PPE and understanding how to use it
- Time availability of different groups
- Changes in balance of power/gender balance within the community, rise of importance of key individuals (doctors, individuals seen as providing solutions)

Table B2: Examples for further guidance

Example 4: Are stakeholders still interested in the same issues, or do they have new priorities or concerns? How willing and able are they to engage, and how?

There are several questions raised here, and elsewhere in this section, that would benefit from direct input from the community. Consider conducting a Social Diagnostic to understand community issues, concerns and current perceptions of the company, barriers to access etc. Consider starting by interviewing community leaders using straightforward technologies such as Zoom, WhatsApp or telephone, to understand some of the perspectives, develop questions and discuss how best to access the community virtually.

Example 4: Are stakeholders still interested in the same issues, or do they have new priorities or concerns? How willing and able are they to engage, and how?

There are several questions raised here, and elsewhere in this section, that would benefit from direct input from the community. Consider conducting a Social Diagnostic to understand community issues, concerns and current perceptions of the company, barriers to access etc. Consider starting by interviewing community leaders using straightforward technologies such as Zoom, WhatsApp or telephone, to understand some of the perspectives, develop questions and discuss how best to access the community virtually.

- Choose the most straightforward means of communication possible with the community itself: telephone, text message, WhatsApp, door to door distribution of questionnaires if safe to do so, mail or community radio. If it is not possible to communicate with the community directly, work through community leaders with mail or email if necessary. Consider using multipliers for distribution of information
- Keep questions short and simple to understand community issues and concerns, impacts of disease and impacts of company activities, & expectations

Examples of what are we trying to find out

- What are the community's priorities, issues and concerns? What is their capacity to respond to company efforts to engage?
 - What additional support does the community the need? What are the barriers to access? How does the community want to engage?
 - Are pre-existing contextual risks being exacerbated by the pandemic or other crisis (poverty, communications, conflict)?
 - Is there any fear of reprisals for speaking out (company, government, third party related)?
 - Should the company consider postponing key decisions requiring community input until after the pandemic or other crisis has passed?
 - Have company actions in response to the pandemic or other crisis had an unexpected impact on the community? Have community perceptions of the company changed?
 - Are there any concerns around ongoing community development programs? Are there impacts if those have temporarily stopped?
 - Are any particular groups in the community more or less vulnerable or in need of support e.g. recently resettled families, families facing temporary loss of income, disabled?
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- Are there gender-based issues arising, or discrimination / increased marginalization of certain groups as a result of the pandemic?
 - Are there any concerns about upcoming decisions to be made? How / can the company best respond? How can the company best communicate with all members of the community?
 - What is the risk of disease transmission between company and community, and within the community?

Example questions to consider (it is a non-exhaustive list)

- Ask how their life has changed, and that of their family. Ask about their worries and concerns. Ask if they or their family are facing new day to day pressures
- Ask if new people have arrived in the community, or anyone has come home, or if anyone has left and any impacts arising (e.g. influx from cities into rural or coastal area, loss of primary income earners in search of employment)
- Ask about how people think the company has behaved. Ask if it has had any impacts on someone's family / the community at large. Ask about how the company is viewed in the company and if anything needs to change
- Ask how the company can best communicate with the family/individual/group going forward.
- Ask how well the government has communicated with the community since the pandemic or other crisis started. Ask what people would you change, whether they have all the information they need and what else they need to know. Ask if the government or military taken action that is impacting the community
- Ask is any groups or individuals been marginalized or faced threats as a result of the pandemic
- Ask women about how their roles have changed, potential pressures, GBV or other concerns
- Ask the elderly if they are receiving all the support that they need

Engagement approaches

- Check that the company has all necessary contact details to be able to contact community leaders and community members as necessary
 - Ensure that the company understands the types of technologies are available/ accessible to individual members of the community, how they want to engage going forward, on what and how often
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Table B2: Examples for further guidance

Example 5: What are the risk factors for disease transmission within and between the local stakeholder groups and the company?

Some population groups are more vulnerable to disease, and to particular types of disease, than others.

Factors determining susceptibility include:

- the nature and source of the disease
- prior exposure of the group
- strength of the individual immune system
- age
- underlying medical conditions
- ability to seek medical care

Factors determining transmission include:

- close living conditions/inability to take precautions
- imperatives to continue to earn a living
- lack of understanding about how transmission occurs
- inability or cultural unwillingness to implement necessary safeguards (e.g. social distancing, use of PPE)
- lack of inhibition (especially children/individuals with mental disabilities)
- other cultural practices such as greetings, nursing or burial rituals

- 1.** Assess risk by population group using the simple risk rating High/Medium/Low
- 2.** Develop mitigation measures where possible
- 3.** Assess residual risk and consider 100% non-contact methods of communication, or no communication, with remaining high-risk groups

Useful references relating to disease transmission and outcomes can be found at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index-sp.html>

<https://www.who.int/es/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/q-a-coronaviruses>

Table B2: Examples for further guidance

Example 6: Are there issues around access to communities, and communications options with different stakeholder groups? What are the potential barriers to access?

Adapting engagement may require new ways of accessing stakeholders during a pandemic or other crisis. In addition, there may be new barriers to access that need to be understood so that a workable approach to engagement can be developed. Barriers to access take multiple forms, normally in one of four categories: physical, economic, technological and cultural/educational. When designing or redesigning an engagement program it is important to understand the barriers in the new context, especially when face to face engagement options are more limited.

Barriers to access for consultation and engagement include physical and technological, such as:

Physical:

- Communities cut off following a natural disaster
- Communities in remote locations
- Need for physical isolation due to quarantine requirements
- Need for social distancing to prevent transmission of disease
- Need for no contact engagement to prevent transmission of disease

Technological:

- Lack of electricity / reliable electricity supply
- Lack of internet / reliable internet access
- Lack of cell phone reception / availability of landline connections
- Inability to use some types of technologies owing to physical disabilities (e.g. blind/deaf)

Annex 2: Example Engagement Technologies

Technologies available for virtual engagement have exploded in recent years. They fall into two main groups: broad platforms which claim to address all or many stakeholder engagement needs in a single platform with multiple tools; and tools which are more specialist and can be adapted for one or two aspects of engagement such as surveys, data management or texting. Most of the broader platforms have been designed for use in multiple situations in developed country contexts; some have been applied in developing countries, but experience is patchy. Experience with some of the more specialist tools for video conference and SMS is more widespread. What follows is a relatively early analysis of some of the platforms and tools that are available in June 2020 and anecdotal evidence of their strengths and weaknesses. This annex will need to be updated on a regular basis. It should be used as an initial guide only. Choices should be based on further research into specific platforms.

Table 7: Technologies that may potentially be applied for Stakeholder Engagement

Development goal	Relevant Applications	Strengths	Weaknesses	Data storage/ security	System requirements	Specific COVID-19 adaptations
Engagement HQ https://www.bangthetable.com/						
Increase the effectiveness of consultation processes between communities and government. Customizable web-based community engagement platform Engagement HQ https://www.bangthetable.com/engagementhq/online-tools/	Workshops Public Meetings Surveys One-on-one discussions Ongoing consultation Information Disclosure Polls Stories	Moderated flexible multi-functional with powerful suite of eight tools in one integrated online platform. Allows flexibility for deep customized engagement with communities. User can mix and match tools that best fit with online community engagement goals. Includes mapping options. Stakeholders elect to be named or anonymous.	Developed for use in Australia. There appears to be no provision for local data storage which may be an issue for remote locations with limited internet connectivity.		Works on all common platforms	

Development goal	Relevant Applications	Strengths	Weaknesses	Data storage/ security	System requirements	Specific COVID-19 adaptations
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Social Pinpoint <https://www.socialpinpoint.com/>

Customizable web-based community engagement platform		Projects are promoted through a unique url and can be shared on Facebook, Twitter and Google+. Comments can be collected 24/7 including images and GIS data. Project administrators can moderate and respond to comments.	Developed for use in Australia. There appears to be no provision for local data storage.		Works on all common browsers and across phones, tablets and computers	
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Our Say <https://home.oursay.org/about-us/>

Initially founded as a public sector focused tool to improve the way government engages with communities. Expanded to include wide range of private sector clients.	Offers a range of online and offline engagement, advisory services, training and education. Online forums, targeted surveys.	Ability to receive community feedback through online forums and targeted surveys. Can share information via custom branded landing and project pages with media capabilities (links, images, video, documents). WYSIWYG editor to preview, schedule and publish projects pages (no coding experience required). Engagements can be promoted and shared via social networks, email, unique URLs and integration into client company website.	Developed for use in Australia. There appears to be no provision for local data storage.	Securely hosted on AWS meeting the AWS IAM Policy. Platform is WCA2.1 compliant and informed by IAP2 global guidelines		Yes
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Development goal	Relevant Applications	Strengths	Weaknesses	Data storage/security	System requirements	Specific COVID-19 adaptations
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The Hive <https://the-hive.com.au/feature-index>

Setting up, delivering and managing the stakeholder engagement process	Website describes it as “a complete community engagement solution that supports [companies] in the online participation process”	Wide range of participation tools covering ways to identify issues, gather local knowledge and explore ideas and solutions. Allows local data storage.	Developed for use in Australia.			
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Platos (by Pax Republic) <https://www.platos.io/>

Stakeholder Forums, Focus Groups, Town Hall Meetings	Virtual deliberation and negotiation forum	Enables a neutral facilitator to manage an online conversation, or series of conversations, that form a consultation process. Developed to design and run the renegotiation of a compensation agreement between 90,000 villagers and the Ok Tedi Mining company in PNG. Then developed mediation principles and interest-based negotiation practice – the Informed Consensus process – to manage community-corporate disputes throughout Australasia. Anonymous.				
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Development goal	Relevant Applications	Strengths	Weaknesses	Data storage/ security	System requirements	Specific COVID-19 adaptations
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Jambo <https://www.jambo.cloud/>

<p>Surveying and reporting on stakeholder communications, contacts, issues, commitments, tasks etc.</p>	<p>Surveys</p>	<p>Cloud-based stakeholder engagement tool that can be used to manage both internal and external stakeholder surveys. Has been used to manage First Nations and other Indigenous consultation requirements. Website includes one-page guides for various industries including mining, oil & gas, forestry.</p>	<p>Developed in Canada. Only available in English. Strength appears to be in surveys. Reviews suggest that other features of the software are weak.</p>			
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PGI Global Meet webcast <https://www.pgi.com>

<p>Designed for interactive dissemination of information to internal and external audiences</p>	<p>Public Meetings Focus Groups Information Dissemination</p>	<p>Easy to use webcasts. Presenters and viewers participate in audio or video webcast via unique URL. Includes options for polling, testing, Q&A, document downloads, post-event surveys. Works on all devices with no downloads or apps required. Multi-party video bridging. Flexibility to be fully managed, self-service or hybrid options. Customizable reporting, email reminders and landing pages Supports live and on demand viewing.</p>	<p>Meetings can't last longer than 8 hours</p>	<p>Various security options including password protection Automatic archive</p>	<p>Works on all devices with no downloads or apps required</p>	
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Development goal	Relevant Applications	Strengths	Weaknesses	Data storage/security	System requirements	Specific COVID-19 adaptations
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Storm Board <https://www.stormboard.com/>

Businesses to run virtual workshops across multiple locations	Running virtual workshops such as stakeholder identification and mapping, consultation on project design and development	Built-in Microsoft 365 integration. Works on phones, tablets and computers. Relatively instinctive. Provides a platform for real time development of ideas and processes where participants can build on each other's inputs and develop common outcomes, sharing information and concerns through use of sticky notes and white boards. Potential to develop sense of community.	Effective use requires significant preparation by both facilitator and potentially participants to ensure that discussions that take place during the process are meaningful and result in tangible outcomes. Requires participants to be technology savvy and comfortable with virtual discussion processes. Must be well facilitated. There appears to be no provision for local data storage.	Storm Board state that all data is stored on Amazon Web Services (AWS). Their website details security protocols	Apps available for iOS, Android and Windows 10	
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Share Point <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-365/sharepoint/collaboration>

Collaborative platform integrates with MS Office.	Collaborative document management and storage system but configurable for other uses. Includes shared mailboxes, group scheduling, social collaboration, shared documents	Available in multiple languages. Requires user to design and customise SharePoint applications to suit the strategy and approach for stakeholder engagement.	Intended as an Intranet resource and as such does not appear to be suitable for community feedback by individuals outside an organization. Effectiveness would be dependent on the adoption of SharePoint by stakeholders which would be difficult for individuals.		Integrates with MS Office	
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Development goal	Relevant Applications	Strengths	Weaknesses	Data storage/ security	System requirements	Specific COVID-19 adaptations
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Zoom <https://zoom.us/>

Video conferencing with real-time messaging and content sharing	Conference calls, hosting virtual events, education/ information sharing, focus groups, interviews for surveys or grievance redress	Simple video conferencing system which allows one person to talk, and others to listen, and for other individuals to intervene as necessary. Has become very widely used globally during COVID-19 so many stakeholders will be aware of it. Easy to start, join and collaborate across any device. Simple to use.	Security has been an issue but may have been fixed		Works across all phones, tablets, computers with internet connection	
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Microsoft teams <https://www.microsoft.com/Microsoft/Teams>

Developed for collaboration within a business environment	Interviews, education, meetings, video conferencing, cloud phone system, collaborative working, file sharing, shared workspace	Available in 26 languages. Multiple applications. Many computer users will have it as part of the Microsoft 365 office suite. Easy cloud-based file sharing.	Requires a certain level of computer literacy to use.		Microsoft product. Integrates with Office 365. Compatible with Windows, Mac OS	
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Development goal	Relevant Applications	Strengths	Weaknesses	Data storage/ security	System requirements	Specific COVID-19 adaptations
Sendinblue https://www.sendinblue.com/ Mailchimp https://mailchimp.com/						
Developed for marketing purposes	Email SMS Landing pages Mailing Advertisements/ Notices Chat options Simple surveys	Multiple simple tools available at various costs for information dissemination via email, SMS, organized for sending to targeted groups. Some offer chat options and simple surveys as well for feedback and follow up interaction			Links to Facebook, twitter, Instagram mobile and web apps	

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