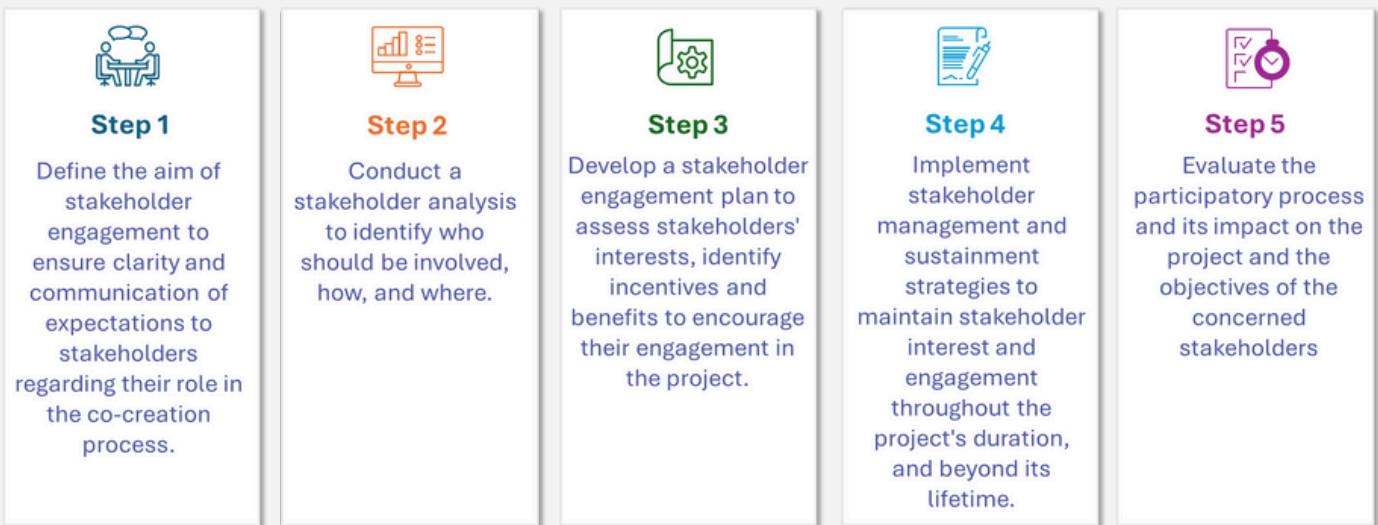
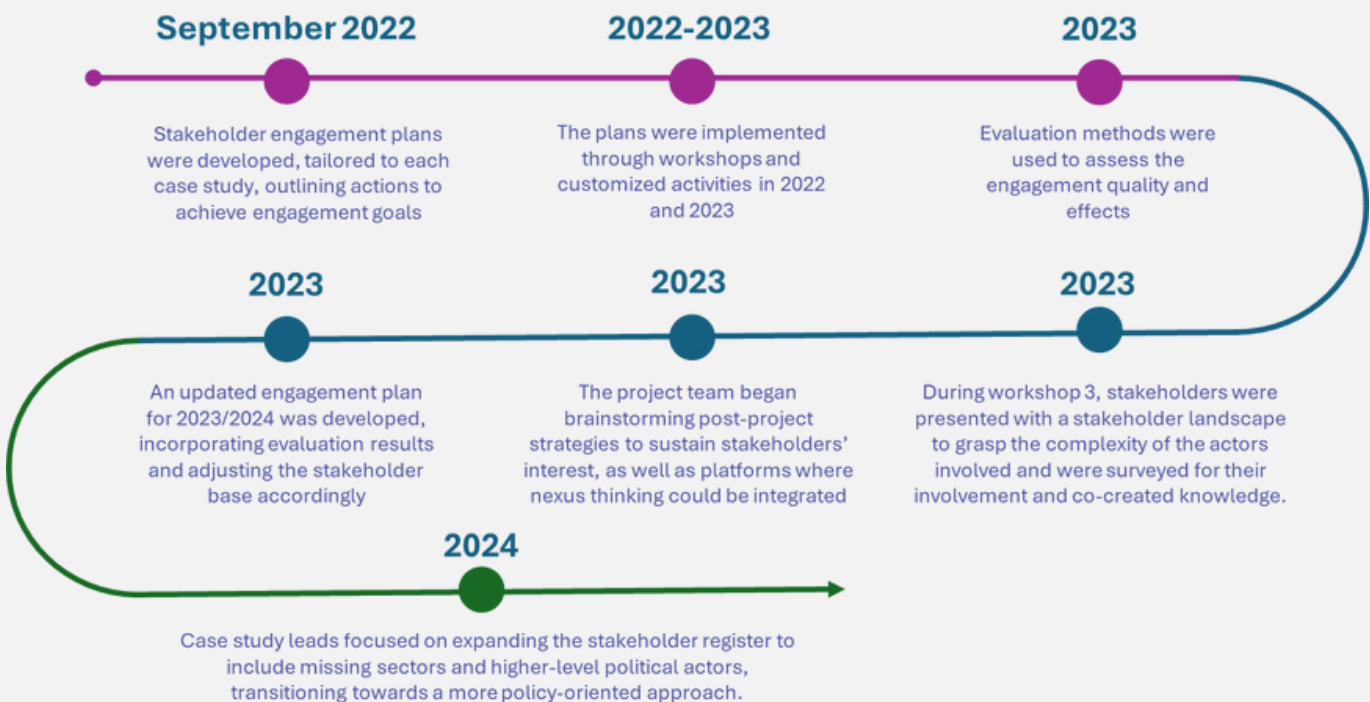


Lessons learnt from stakeholder engagement in case studies

NEXOGENESIS' goal is to enhance policy integration and facilitate a shift towards better governance of the WEFE (Water, Energy, Food, and Ecosystem) by utilising a co-creation approach across five case studies. Therefore, a stakeholder engagement strategy was established, following 5 steps.



The timeline below outlines NEXOGENESIS's execution of the steps.



Challenges in the stakeholder engagement process

As a research project operating in the complex field of WEFE Nexus, encountering challenges is inevitable. The challenges primarily revolved around stakeholder capacities and fatigue, both among stakeholders and researchers.

The project operates in 5 case studies across at least 7 countries, each with its own systems and historical contexts. While some stakeholders favor interactive engagement methods like world cafés or preference voting, others prefer voicing their opinion in plenary sessions only. Adapting to these varied preferences requires academic flexibility. However, this flexibility can lead to variations in how results are obtained and interpreted, potentially reducing the reliability and comparability of the outcomes. Yet, flexibility is vital to prevent deadlocks.

NEXOGENESIS also encountered difficulties in scheduling meetings that are both long and frequent enough to be able to address the research demands and co-create knowledge effectively. As consortium members manage multiple research projects with similar stakeholder groups, they experience fatigue of stakeholders from the demands of continuous co-creation efforts.

Lessons learnt

Multiple lessons learnt were identified over the past 2 years regarding the stakeholder engagement process:



Engaging the entire stakeholder base in the WEFE Nexus is challenging, particularly from the energy sector.

The gender balance across all case study sites is overall fair; however biased are observed towards women in some cases and towards men in others due to historical factors.

Obtaining consent for storing and using stakeholder information under GDPR guidelines fosters a sense of ownership and helps identify unengaged stakeholders, informing adaptation of engagement strategies.

Misalignment in views between case study leads and stakeholders regarding co-creation aims exists. Acknowledging this divergence helps the project team to look at their own biases and redress them according to stakeholder needs.

Stakeholders and case study leads are requesting more and better digestible system knowledge, such as maps, statistics, and scenarios, to sustain stakeholder's interest and acknowledge their contributions to the project.

Conclusion

NEXOGENESIS is an ambitious research project aiming to enact real-world change. Its stakeholder engagement process follows a consistent 5-step framework that is tailored to each case study, considering their unique needs and stakeholder capacities.



However, during the engagement process one particular challenge stood out - stakeholders have different preferences concerning how they would like to engage, which requires a high degree of flexibility from the project partners. This can lead to variations in how results are obtained and interpreted.

While stakeholders value the co-created policy knowledge, there's a need for better translation of biophysical and socioeconomic results to the stakeholder's interests and realities.

In the project's next phase, emphasis will be placed on engaging 'missing' stakeholders while maintaining current ones. Sustaining stakeholder involvement is crucial for reaching nexus agreements in the final phase.



More about the project on our website: <https://nexogenesis.eu/>
And stay tuned to learn more about the results on our social media accounts:



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The NEXOGENESIS consortium



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