



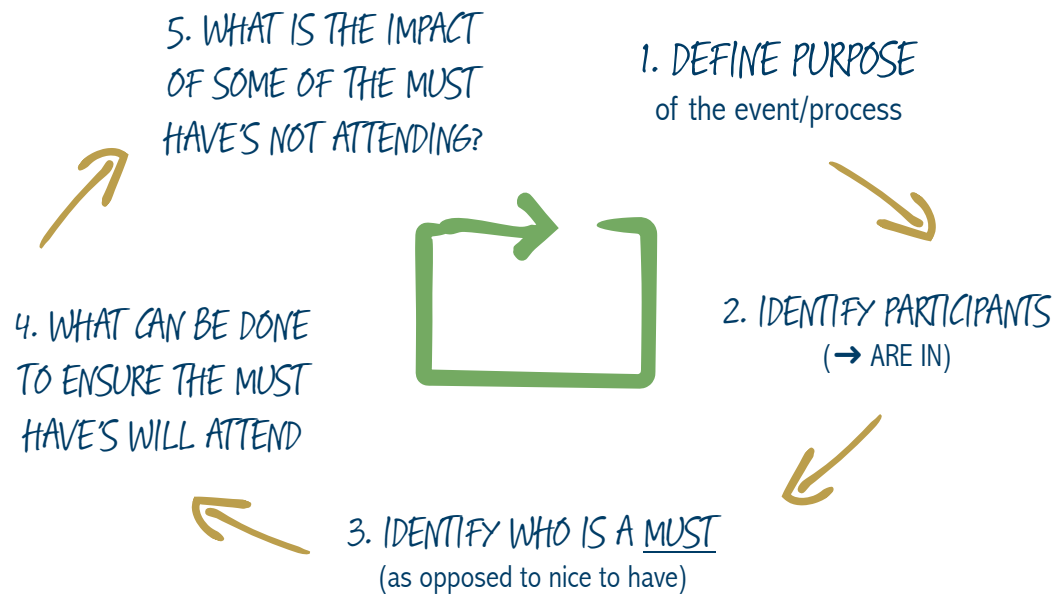
## Identifying Participants of An Event/Process

The identification of participants that need to attend or be on board of an event or process follows a 5-step cycle.

For obvious reasons it all starts with the clarification of the purpose of the event/process. Many interventions fail because of the participants not being in tune with the objectives. In many cases it is predictable before the event/process even starts that with the invited participants the event/process cannot achieve what it is set out to do.

Many interventions are unsuccessful because decisions cannot be taken, because important pieces of information and experience are missing, or because of a lack of ownership by critical stakeholders – all of this can be avoided! Given the amount of energy, time and financial means that go into events/processes, the aspect of identifying participants deserves much more attention.

### 1. The 5 Step Cycle of Identifying Participants





## 2. Applying the ARE IN Formula

Complex issues require that the “whole system” be not only taken into consideration, but also actively represented in the process of (1) understanding the complex reality and (2) coming up with an appropriate and tailored solution.

Marvin Weisbord and Sandra Janoff developed what is known as the “ARE IN” formula, which helps in defining who should be represented and participate.

ARE IN stands for:

- A Authority (to take decisions and ensure they are accepted and backed up)
- R Resources (financial, human, time, other)
- E Expertise or Experience (specialised know-how/skills about the particular situation/issue at stake)
- I Information or Insight (knowing the concrete, specific facts about the particular situation/issue at stake)
- N Need (to be involved, because one is affected by the decision, e.g. has to implement it, is a “beneficiary”, is “suffering” the consequences, and so on)

If any of these five groups are not well represented, difficulty may arise at some point. It can arise either (1) in the event/process itself (e.g. because part of the information is lacking, because decisions can't be taken, or because the availability of resources is unknown, and people feel frustrated and obstructed); or (2) after the event/process (e.g. because people key to the implementation process have not been part either of the learning process or of the solution-design process, and won't support or agree to it's outcomes afterwards).

We often take the ARE IN formula quite literally and work through it with the organisers/programme partners.



### 3. Compiling the Participant List

The following forms will guide you in assembling a complete record of who should participate in your event/process.

- a) Work through columns ①, ② and ③. List the institution (e.g. “Ministry of xyz”) or name the kind of stake (e.g. “board member” or “donor relationships” or “technical expertise on issue xyz”) you need to be represented. Then identify specific names and what it is exactly that they contribute. Do this for every “type” of participant according to the ARE IN formula.
- b) Now go through your list and mark those persons with a “x” in column ④ that you feel are indispensable, i.e. if they are absent it has a critical impact on the outcome of the event/process – the “must participate” persons.
- c) Next estimate the probability (in %) of each “must participate” attending in column ⑤. Be frank and don’t fool yourself with unrealistic expectations or speculations. The % percentage does not relate to the time a person might attend (i.e. 1 out of 3 days), but to the probability that the person will attend throughout or at least at the critical moments.
- d) Now think of what you can do to ensure the presence of the person (in column ⑥). You may have to adjust the probability of them attending in column ⑤.
- e) Lastly (see page 9) look at your list of participants, in particular must attend in column ④. Who will not or unlikely be there? What is the impact of their absence? What will be missing? What will not be achievable? What are the implications for the objectives and the purpose? Do you need to adjust or reformulate these? If you change the purpose or objective significantly, you may have to go through the participant identification cycle (i.e. the previous steps here above) once more.



Type	① Stakeholder/Institution/Organisation	② Name of participant	③ What can they contribute? Why do we need them?	④ x Must participate	⑤ %Probability	⑥ What can be done to ensure their attendance?
Authority						



Type	① Stakeholder/Institution/Organisation	② Name of participant	③ What can they contribute? Why do we need them?	④ x Must participate	⑤ %Probability	⑥ What can be done to ensure their attendance?
Resources						



Type	① Stakeholder/Institution/Organisation	② Name of participant	③ What can they contribute? Why do we need them?	④ x Must participate	⑤ %Probability	⑥ What can be done to ensure their attendance?
Expertise						



Type	① Stakeholder/Institution/Organisation	② Name of participant	③ What can they contribute? Why do we need them?	④ x Must participate	⑤ %Probability	⑥ What can be done to ensure their attendance?
Insight						



Type	① Stakeholder/Institution/Organisation	② Name of participant	③ What can they contribute? Why do we need them?	④ x Must participate	⑤ %Probability	⑥ What can be done to ensure their attendance?
Needs						





Given your estimate of which participants will be attending: What are the implications for the purpose of the event/process? In which ways does the purpose need to be revised if you cannot influence their participation? Can anything else be done to get their required input before or after the event/process?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to provide their response to the question above.