Project Stakeholder Management in the SUPERA Innovation and Technology Park

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The SUPERA Innovation and Technology park in Ribeirão Preto, Brazil, is a major effort at regional development, established to promote scientific research, promote technology-based companies, and promote economic development driven by innovation. The project was developed through a partnership of the University of São Paulo (USP), FIPASE, the Municipality of Ribeirão Preto, and the State Secretariat for Economic Development, supported by federal funding from FINEP and MCTI, and went through a long development process for nearly a decade from when it was originally conceived in 2005, until its inauguration in 2014 (Pacagnella Júnior et al., 2015). The design incorporates the “triple helix” model of government, industry and academia with an intention to apply the research developed in these institutions to new technologies and to support regional competitiveness.

Stakeholder Identification and Prioritization

Identification Approach

Consistent with PMBOK protocol, the project team started with identifying all actors capable of impacting or being impacted by the park’s development. This search would also find regional universities, research centers, government organizations, and early-stage investors, to name a few. Using interviews, planning workshops, and analyses of regional capabilities, the project team was able to be clearer on each stakeholder’s motivation, contribution, and influence on the project (Pacagnella Júnior et al., 2015).

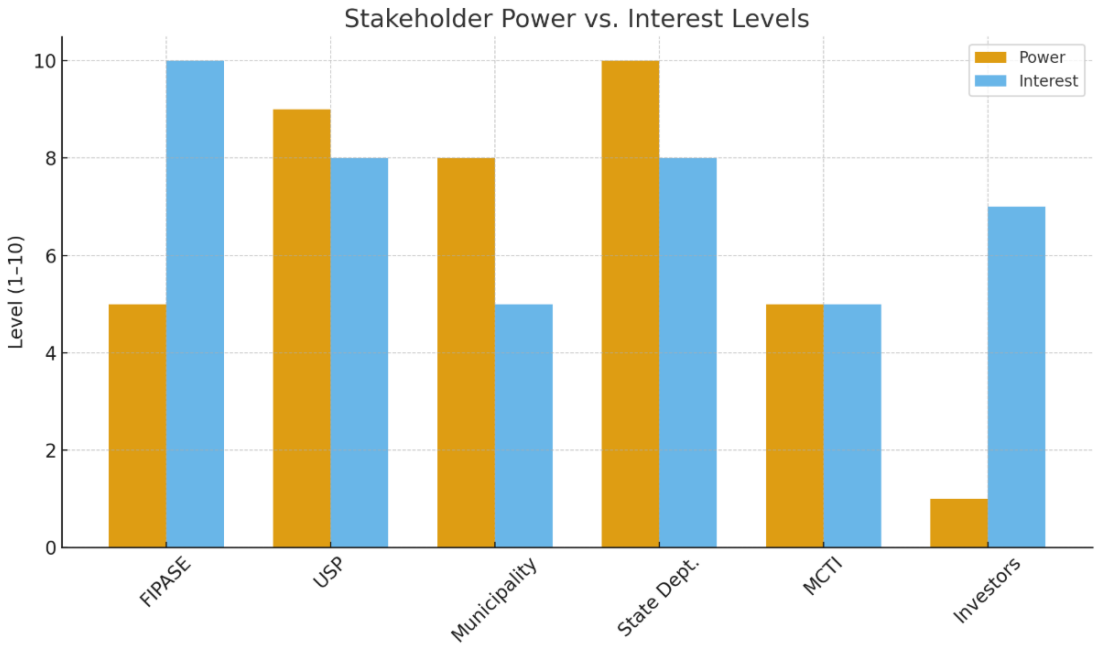
Classification via Power/Interest Matrix

Using the power/interest matrix, the stakeholders were categorized, which then facilitated the identification of the level of engagement required. USP and the State Government were described as both high power and high interest, which placed them in the "manage closely"

position. The Municipality of Ribeirão Preto was high power but moderate interest, which required a "keep satisfied" approach. The private investors were low power but had notable interest; therefore, they were at the "keep informed" position (Pacagnella Júnior et al., 2015).

Figure 1

Stakeholder Power vs. Interest Levels



As shown in Figure 1, the stakeholders differ significantly in their power and interest levels, which guided the project's engagement strategy.

Influence on Engagement Strategy

This prioritization informed resource allocation and stakeholder management. Highest power stakeholders were engaged in more sophisticated negotiations, frequent meetings and possibly stakeholder engagement as they ultimately would have a substantial impact on land use decision making and funding for the project. Highest interest stakeholders, like FIPASE, were engaged on an ongoing basis in order to sustain mutual interest and project momentum. The

lower power stakeholders were updated at regular intervals, but required limited allocation of dedicated resources. All of this is consistent with the PMBOK's guidance in regard to engagement strategies that adapt to stakeholder influence and expectations.

Application of Stakeholder Management Principles

Alignment With PMBOK

SUPERA's stakeholder practices fit well with the four stakeholder management processes in PMBOK based on your feedback: identification of stakeholders, plan engagement with stakeholders, management of engagement, and monitor stakeholder community relationships. We began by identifying and planning based on scenario studies and and early coordination amongst institutions. We managed the engagement by negotiating, having informal chats and conducting technical alignment meetings. When technical or investment ownership changed, consequently as private investors separated from the process, we monitored and identified reactions and remained flexible in changing plans in order to keep the process aligned.

Examples from the Case Study

The involvement of USP had an especially important influence by contributing land, political leverage, and legal support that resolved bureaucratic issues. FIPASE was prominent in acting as a mediator, helping to sustain motivation amongst stakeholders while managing communication. When private investors withdrew due to new land-use plans, the team took a "defend" action by proposing other benefits, without disturbing the political progress, acting in ways typical of adaptive engagement with stakeholders (Pacagnella Júnior et al., 2015).

Enhanced Strategies for Stronger Alignment

While the project was successful overall, there were several opportunities that could have helped to further improve stakeholder alignment. To improve management of expectations for

the many changes that happened, it may have been beneficial to implement a more formal communications plan. Having a structure for decision-making when land-use scenarios evolved would have allowed for better transparency during the change management process. Lastly, utilizing digital-based collaboration tools similar to other more mature innovation parks such as Cambridge Science Park, may have improved transparency and coordination (Hansson, 2007).

Parallels to Broader Innovation Infrastructure Projects

Like challenges seen globally, SUPERA faces challenges of managing political will, long planning horizons, and sustaining engagement among partners and stakeholders with differing agendas. Universally, science parks are often challenged to align institutions of higher education, government counterparts, and investors with differing expectations associated with risk and rewards as agendas and priorities change. SUPERA's experience provides further evidence of the importance of continually communicating with stakeholders, adapting actions and plans, and understanding stakeholders motivations.

Table 1

Recommendations for Future Projects

Recommendation	Summary Description
Formal Communication Plan	Use structured communication to avoid confusion during project changes.
Stakeholder Expectation Mapping	Identify each stakeholder’s goals and risks to prevent disengagement
Structured Change-Management Process	Apply clear procedures to handle project modifications smoothly.
Digital Collaboration Platforms	Use online dashboards to improve transparency and coordination
Strong Early Investor	Offer clear incentives to keep private investors committed.

Engagement	
Continuous Stakeholder Monitoring	Reassess stakeholder influence and engagement regularly.

Conclusion

The SUPERA Innovation and Technology Park project showcases the necessity of effective stakeholder management in complex innovation efforts. The team successfully leveraged the power/interest matrix to identify a focus on key stakeholders, closely engaging influential stakeholders such as USP and State Secretariat, while keeping others informed. The project adhered to PMBOK stakeholder processes – early identification, using a structured engagement plan, consistent communication, and adjusting plans as necessary – to maintain project momentum despite challenges such as investor drop-out and changes in land use. FIPASE's coordination and USP's support of the project were key to project continuity. Overall, the project highlights the importance of adaptive engagement, clear communication, and being aware of stakeholder motivations as paramount to successful regional development activities.

References

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Hansson, F. (2007). *Science parks as knowledge organizations: The "ba" in action?* European Journal of Innovation Management, 10(3), 348–366. https://doi.org/10.1108/14601060710776752