



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Finance**



Planning in Partnership Guide for Commissioning Community Services

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Introduction

This guide has been developed to provide direction and assistance on the planning, preparation and implementation of co-design and stakeholder engagement when commissioning community services. The purpose of the guide is to clarify when and how co-design can be used in the commissioning cycle and identify existing co-design tools and resources.

This guide is intended to assist State agencies in carrying out co-design activities in the commissioning of community services. However, it also provides guidance for general stakeholder engagement.

What is stakeholder engagement?

Stakeholder engagement is a planned process of working with identified stakeholders to achieve a defined purpose. The [Delivering Community Services in Partnership \(DCSP\) Policy](#) specifies that stakeholder engagement can occur during the planning, co-design and delivery of community services. It is important to remember that while co-design includes stakeholder engagement, not all stakeholder engagement is considered co-design. Stakeholder engagement often involves a shallow level of engagement, such as keeping stakeholders updated on project activities, rather than stakeholders engaging in collaboration as they would for a co-design process. The DCSP Policy outlines some of the enablers for effective stakeholder engagement.

While the structure of this guide predominantly takes you through the detail of the co-design process, many of the concepts discussed may also be applied for general stakeholder engagement.

What is co-design of community services?

Co-design means to collaboratively design services with stakeholders such as service users, organisations, service providers, and government agencies.

Co-design is a requirement of the DCSP Policy and involves ongoing, genuine, respectful engagement. Stakeholders' contributions and expertise must be considered and should influence services.

Co-design allows for stakeholders to have meaningful and significant influence over the community services being planned. The emphasis on co-design and stakeholder engagement acknowledges that community services are complex and can greatly benefit from the input of those who are impacted by those services. Government agencies should be flexible around co-design considerations and adopt a genuine and transparent partnering approach when co-designing services with service providers and service users.



Policy framework

The DCSP Policy was developed to improve outcomes for Western Australians by building partnerships between stakeholders to plan and deliver sustainable community services. The DCSP Policy is centred on the needs of key stakeholders - service users and the community. It is focused on determining what service users' needs are, how those needs are best met, and the most suitable mode of service delivery. The best way to achieve effective outcomes is to engage with stakeholders to co-design services. Before you commence a co-design process, familiarise yourself with the Partnership Principles and Behaviours in the DCSP Policy.

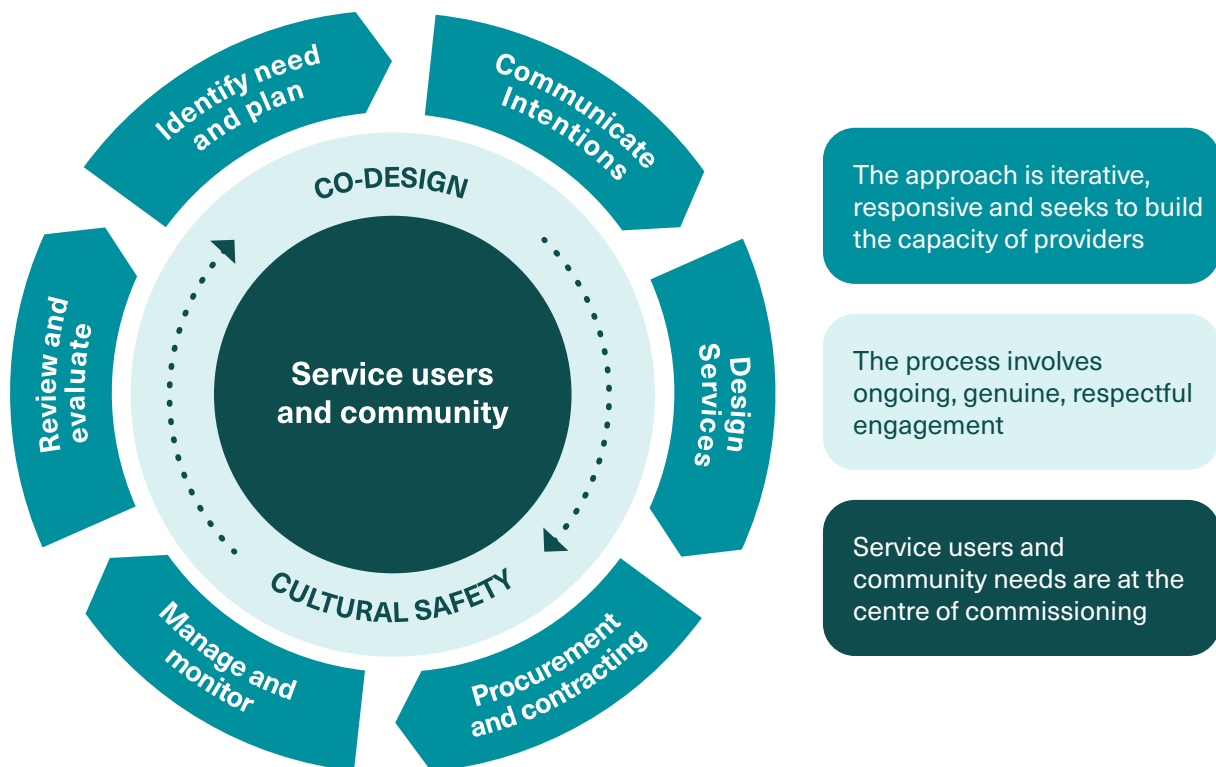
The [State Commissioning Strategy for Community Services \(SCS\)](#), launched in 2022, outlines the strategic role commissioning will play in transforming the delivery of community services in Western Australia. It provides a high-level strategic approach that includes key themes, guiding principles and initial actions to provide a platform for a driven and focused implementation period enabling positive long-term change.

Commissioning is a cyclical process of planning, purchasing, managing, monitoring, and evaluating services. Commissioning and procurement are not the same thing: there are multiple levers used to undertake commissioning and procurement is only one of these levers. Procurement is the process of obtaining goods, services or works by purchase, lease, licence, public private partnerships or other means; and disposing of goods or works, as defined by the Procurement Act 2020.



The commissioning cycle (Figure 1) presents the cyclical process and the steps available to drive sustainable change in systems to improve outcomes and people's lives. Although most co-design and stakeholder engagement typically occurs during the planning and service design stages, co-design principles can be used at each stage of the commissioning cycle.

Figure 1. Commissioning Cycle





Useful resources for co-design

The following resources offer additional information to guide you in the co-design process:

- The Connect with Me Co-design Guide and Connect with Me Toolkit Training developed by People with Disabilities WA, available at pwdwa.org/our_campaigns/connect_with_me [Accessed July 2024]
- The International Association for Public Participation Quality Assurance Standard, available at iap2.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/IAP2_Quality_Assurance_Standard_2015.pdf [Accessed July 2024]
- Kimberley Co-Design Guide, Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Cultural Centre, available at kalacc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Co-design-Guide-for-the-Kimberley-Aboriginal-Youth-Wellbeing-Partnership-28Oct22-r1.pdf [Accessed July 2024]
- The WA Council of Social Service (WACOSS) Co-Design Toolkit, available at wacoss.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/co-design-toolkit-combined-2-1.pdf [Accessed July 2024]
- The Co-Design Toolkit by the Agency for Clinical Innovation, available at <https://aci.health.nsw.gov.au/projects/co-design> [Accessed August 2024]
- 101 Co-design and community collaboration – initiative design superheroes developed by the Western Australian Community Impact Hub, available at [Co-design and community collaboration – initiative design superheroes. | Western Australian Community Impact Hub](http://Co-design_and_community_collaboration_-_initiative_design_superheroes._Western_Australian_Community_Impact_Hub) [Accessed August 2024]

Further resources for co-design and stakeholder engagement can be found in the list of references at the end of this guide.



Planning co-design

It is essential that government agencies have a commitment to engaging in co-design with stakeholders, that facilitators of co-design have the capacity and capability, stakeholders understand their role and that the process is well planned and underpinned by the elements described below. Importantly, co-design should be undertaken in alignment with the risk, scale and scope of the services being commissioned.

There is no single 'right' way to effectively undertake co-design. However, successful engagement and collaboration with stakeholders relies on co-designing with stakeholders in a genuine way and abiding by the key values of respect, openness and transparency which contributes to the development of trust.¹ Building and maintaining trust with stakeholders is one of the most important elements of a successful co-design process. Every positive interaction with stakeholders contributes to the building of strong partnerships.

When planning co-design activities, consideration should be given to the government authorising environment and key touchpoints to ensure appropriate forward planning in line with Department of Treasury's [Financial Guidelines for Government Agencies – Commissioning Community Services](#).

Step 1: Identify stakeholders

The first step in stakeholder engagement and co-design is identifying and analysing stakeholders to ensure all parties with an interest in the proposed services receive appropriate communication from the government agency.

A stakeholder is a person or party that has relevant knowledge of, can influence, or is affected by the proposed service. Stakeholders can include current or potential service providers, service users, peak bodies, the community (where services are to be delivered), service experts, technical experts and consumer representatives. There may be additional internal or external stakeholders depending on the nature of the services.

A few simple questions can often assist in identifying stakeholders:

- Who is the service for?
- Who is affected by the service?
- Who can influence the service?
- Who is interested in the service?
- Who would be capable of delivering the service?

¹ As well as these values, consider the principles described in Principles of Co-design at <https://www.ncoss.org.au/sector-hub/sector-resources/principles-of-co-design/>



Where there are issues identifying and connecting with stakeholders, community services peak bodies may be able to assist.

Community readiness² to participate in co-design should be considered. If the key stakeholders in a community are not ready to take action on an issue, some additional support to improve their readiness may assist.

Engage with a wide range of stakeholders, as this will deliver a variety of viewpoints and ensure a robust engagement process. Services of a sensitive nature may require participation to be limited.

Step 2: Determine co-design timing

Commence co-design during the early planning stage of a new or existing service before any decisions are made that could affect the achievement of the outcome. If decisions affecting the outcome of the co-design have already been made, these must be communicated transparently and clearly to stakeholders.

Planning for co-design should begin at least 12 to 18 months prior to commencement of a new service agreement, and the formal procurement process should begin at least nine to twelve months prior to commencement of a new service agreement. When planning co-design, note that an approved budget must be in place for any costs associated with co-design and additional planning time should be considered if budget submissions are required.

Insufficient time is one of the most significant barriers to effective co-design. The design of a community service takes time, especially in circumstances where a government agency has a range of stakeholders to consult, and the service is complex. Allocate an appropriate timeframe for co-design, taking into consideration the needs of the expected participants, including allowing sufficient notice for participants.

Consider stakeholders' needs and any support required, including compensation for time, travel, and other costs where appropriate. Ensure that your planned co-design process is accessible to stakeholders.³ By establishing parameters and ensuring the purpose, process and expectations are clearly communicated in advance, stakeholders will be able to understand their role in the co-design process and how they can contribute. Plan for an engaging experience for stakeholders.

² From the presentation Co Design Processes with Aboriginal Communities by KALLAC, WACOSS AND NFSWC

³ The MARCIA Final Research Report, provides insight into how best to design programs and services to be accessible to people with a range of different needs, at docslib.org/doc/2772250/marcia-research-final-report [Accessed July 2024]



Step 3: Decide which aspects of the service will be co-designed

Identify the purpose of the co-design process and the outcomes you are seeking. Identify the scope of the co-design to set the parameters and outline the negotiable and non-negotiable matters. It is important to identify non-negotiable aspects early and communicate them clearly to stakeholders to manage expectations.

The [Outcomes Measurement Framework](#) (OMF) sets out the community outcomes that the Western Australian Government seeks to achieve in delivering community services and will enable a shared understanding of outcomes across agencies and the sector.

Aspects of the proposed community service that should be influenced by your co-design process include:

- Knowledge of the community need
- Local, cultural and linguistic considerations
- Costs of service delivery
- Individual, community and service level outcomes
- Potential impact of service model(s)
- Service requirements and parameters
- Challenges and solutions
- Service measures (e.g., key performance indicators)
- Limitations of past, current or proposed services
- Opportunities for service sustainability
- Possible issues and risks
- Opportunities for innovation
- Other relevant matters

Co-design is equally applicable to open tender and restricted processes including preferred service provider (PSP) and direct engagement with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCO). Where these arrangements have been approved, you should treat the service provider as a partner and work closely with them to plan and scope the renewal of the service.



Step 4: Develop the co-design approach

Consider the best approach for your co-design process. A range of methods can be used, and planning should ensure the co-design is genuinely collaborative, fit-for-purpose and culturally safe for the range of stakeholders who will be involved.

Factors to consider in determining the best approach for your co-design process include:

- Complexity of service user needs
- The value of the service and its level of risk
- Strategic importance of the service
- Service delivery locations (e.g., metropolitan or statewide)
- Number and range of stakeholders
- Cultural considerations
- How recently a previous co-design was undertaken
- Whether the service is new or the result of a reform
- If integration with existing services will result in improved outcomes
- The expected term of the resultant service agreement

Refer to Appendix 1 Methods of engagement and co-design.

At the lower end of the spectrum, co-design may consist of a workshop that enables remote participation. At the other end of the spectrum, a high-risk service for a vulnerable cohort with multiple needs is likely to consist of several co-design opportunities using a range of methods over an extended period of time.

Each co-design will be a function of the unique characteristics of the service and a range of other variables. The elements of a service that are available to be co-designed and the co-design approach taken is a decision for agencies. Tables 3 and 4 provide examples of a small-scale and a larger scale co-design process.

Whichever approach you choose it is your responsibility to provide an opportunity for relevant stakeholders to participate and to specifically target important parties. Be flexible in your approach and tailor activities and methods to the needs of the participants. Communicate the benefit of the co-design process to key stakeholders and specify a time commitment so requirements can be met.

Procurement activities are governed by the Western Australian Procurement Rules (Procurement Rules). The Procurement Rules require government agency officers to act ethically and with integrity by treating all service providers fairly without favouritism or bias. Adherence to the Procurement Rules should not inhibit stakeholder engagement.



Many co-design processes involve the sharing and use of existing intellectual property, or new intellectual property generated in the co-design process. Consider how intellectual property will be treated, communicate this clearly to all stakeholders at the outset and obtain consent for the use of stakeholders' intellectual property where needed.

Participation and access limitations need to be addressed prior to undertaking a co-design process. You may determine a need for capacity building with key stakeholders prior to undertaking an engagement process. Peak bodies may have an interest in offering services to build the capacity of their members to participate in co-design and stakeholder engagement processes.

Not all parties will be willing or able to participate in co-design. Community service organisations often operate with limited resources and are dedicated to service delivery. Service users may believe there is an imbalance of power and be reluctant to participate. When key stakeholders are not willing, or are unable, to participate in a co-design process, propose alternative co-design methods or forms of communication that may better suit their needs.

Consideration should be given to paid participation when engagement activities require consistent demands on service users.

Consider levels of engagement

The level of engagement can be defined along the spectrum below, running from 'shallow' to 'deep'. The 'deeper' engagement levels of involve and collaborate build relationships and trust and are most closely aligned with a co-design process. Determine the level(s) of engagement and co-design to inform the methods you use, and how you combine methods to meet the needs of stakeholders and achieve the desired outcomes of the process.

The DCSP Policy encourages consultation and collaboration in decision making and designing of services based on two-way communication.



Table 1: Levels of engagement

Levels of engagement		
<p style="text-align: center;">Shallow</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Deep</p>	Inform	One way 'push' or 'pull' communication to provide information relating to the perceived needs and/or responsibilities of stakeholders.
	Consult	Limited two-way engagement: organisation asks questions, stakeholders answer.
	Involve	Two-way or multi-way engagement: learning on all sides but stakeholders and organisations act independently.
	Collaborate	Two-way or multi-way engagement: joint learning, decision making and actions.
	Empower	New forms of accountability; decisions delegated to stakeholders; stakeholders play a role in governance.

(Adapted from the Accountability AA1000 Stakeholder Engagement Standard 2015)⁴

Use the levels of engagement to explore options to deepen stakeholder engagement in the commissioning cycle and maximise the benefit of a wider discussion. Stakeholders may consider the level of influence that engagement may offer to decide whether and how to participate.⁵

Risk management

Typical risks and issues for co-design include:

- Limited capacity of participants
- Unrealistic expectations
- Stakeholder tensions
- Power imbalances amongst participants
- Power struggles amongst participants
- Not having a clear scope for the co-design
- Inability to obtain agreement/consensus
- Political imperatives
- Unwillingness to contribute solutions

Develop relevant risk management strategies prior to starting a co-design. Your agency will have processes and documentation for risk and issues analysis.

The Community Services Risk Workbook is available on WA.gov.au.

⁴ Available at accountability.org/static/940dc017198458fed647f73ad5d47a95/aa1000ses_2015.pdf [Accessed July 2024]

⁵ To understand the 'promise to the public' made by each level of engagement, see the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum at iap2.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/2018_IAP2_Spectrum.pdf [Accessed July 2024]



Step 5: Develop the co-design plan and communication strategy

The following tables assist with effective co-design planning. The examples are based on large-scale and small-scale co-design.

Table 2: Co-design plan

A simple co-design plan is shown below, with text in brackets indicating guidance.

Co-design plan	
Purpose	[What are you trying to achieve?]
Evaluation	[Clarify the evaluation criteria, evaluation methodology and process for feedback of evaluation summary to participants]
Scope	[Clarify scope of the co-design including negotiable and non-negotiable matters]
Outcomes being sought	[What is the expected outcome of the co-design process?]
Key stakeholders	[Stakeholders should be identified as per the stakeholder identification and analysis process]
Timeframes	[Timeframes for the engagement]
Levels of influence	[What level of influence is appropriate for each stakeholder?]
Method(s) and activities	<p>[What are the appropriate methods of engagement for each stakeholder?</p> <p>Who will be the owner/s of the process? Who will administer the process (coordination, invitations, scribe)? Who will facilitate the activities? Who will analyse the findings? Who will provide feedback to stakeholders?</p> <p>Where will meetings or workshops take place? Are these locations inclusive of stakeholders' needs and potential accessibility issues? How will the rooms be arranged for participants?</p> <p>Schedule the evaluation process and devise the strategy for providing feedback to participants and stakeholders / stakeholder groups and capturing relevant lessons learnt.]</p>
Risk management	[What are the potential risks relating to the process? What issues need to be resolved? How will these risks be managed?]



Table 3: Small-scale co-design

The table below is an example of a small-scale co-design plan

Department A – Re-entry to the workforce pilot	
Purpose	Department A is planning a service to support women leaving prison. The aim of the service is to help build the skills and tools that will enable them to re-enter the workforce. The budget is \$1 million per year for the two-year pilot. Department A has undertaken a needs analysis for the target group and has data on the numbers of women leaving prison.
Evaluation	<p>Clear understanding of target group's needs.</p> <p>Identification of lessons learnt.</p> <p>Summary of findings from the co-design to be shared with participating key stakeholders.</p>
Scope	<p>Target group's needs</p> <p>Service level outcomes</p> <p>Service requirements</p>
Outcomes being sought	Department A wants to understand the target group's needs, develop draft service level outcomes and inform the service requirements.
Key stakeholders	<p>Service users - women leaving prison who want to re-enter the workforce.</p> <p>Peak bodies – one representing the community services sector, one representing women's interests.</p> <p>Consumer representatives.</p> <p>Service providers who have delivered services to women leaving prison, and providers who have delivered jobs and skills services.</p> <p>Representatives from Department A's policy, procurement and contract management teams and the justice team.</p>
Timeframes	One month



Department A – Re-entry to the workforce pilot

Method and activities

Department A decided on a half day workshop facilitated by an internal staff member with expertise in facilitating groups. They held a planning discussion to prepare an outline including activities. During the discussion, stakeholders who would be valuable participants in the co-design process were identified. It was important to Department A to have people with lived experience participate or those who represented this group, providers and the peak bodies. Relevant people from Department A also needed to be involved.

An outline of a presentation was prepared, covering the objectives of the co-design workshop, overview of the proposed service, the service requirements available for co-design and elements not available to be co-designed, and next steps (sharing workshop findings, proposed procurement timeline).

A meeting room at a Department A branch was booked. The venue was accessible, and parking was more available and cheaper than in the city. Under Department A's consumer engagement policy, the cost of transport and parking for workshop participants is reimbursed.

As the number of workshop participants will be small it was decided the workshop activities could be in simple question and answer format.

Risk management

How will key stakeholders' participation in the co-design be managed if they are not available during the proposed timeframe.

Will the method and activities planned for the co-design achieve the outcomes being sought?



Table 4: Large-scale co-design

The table below is an example of a large-scale co-design plan

Department B – ‘Growth’ Counselling Service							
Purpose	<p>Department B is to commission a replacement service that combines two services previously delivered separately. The replacement service is intended to be state-wide and is aimed at young people aged 12-25 who are experiencing socio-economic disadvantage, Aboriginal people or Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) people, and with a focus on regional, rural or remote areas. The budget is \$12 million, and the term will be 7 years. Department B is funding \$8 million, Department C \$4 million.</p> <p>Department B has completed a needs analysis, researched interjurisdictional counterparts’ services and activities, reviewed the previous service agreements for both services, and sourced data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, University of WA’s Centre for Social Impact and Shire offices.</p> <p>Department B has allocated a budget for the co-design and intends to engage an expert co-design facilitator to conduct the co-design.</p>						
Evaluation	<p>Development of draft outcomes, services requirements and KPIs.</p> <p>Summary of feedback from co-design activities shared with stakeholders.</p> <p>Lessons learnt.</p>						
Scope	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Service level outcomes</td> <td>Service delivery methods</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Referral process</td> <td>Provider characteristics</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hours of operation</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Service level outcomes	Service delivery methods	Referral process	Provider characteristics	Hours of operation	
Service level outcomes	Service delivery methods						
Referral process	Provider characteristics						
Hours of operation							
Outcomes being sought	<p>The objectives of the co-design are to design draft outcomes and develop service requirements and KPIs.</p>						



Department B – ‘Growth’ Counselling Service

Stakeholders	<p>Aboriginal service users</p> <p>CALD service users</p> <p>Consumer representatives / advocates</p> <p>Representatives from Aboriginal communities</p> <p>Peak bodies including the Council of Aboriginal Services Western Australia and the Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia</p> <p>Service providers</p> <p>Aboriginal Medical Services (as potential referral organisations)</p> <p>Department C’s regional offices</p>
Timeframe	<p>Six months</p>
Method and activities	<p>Registration of Interest</p> <p>Series of face-to-face regional and metropolitan forums</p> <p>Interviews</p> <p>Telephone calls</p>
Risk management	<p>Limited response to Registration of Interest</p> <p>Ability to access appropriate culturally safe facilitators</p> <p>Co-design takes longer than planned</p>

Communication strategy

Develop a communication strategy (template available at Appendix 2) to clarify the information required by each stakeholder group to ensure transparency and consistency and avoid bias. This is particularly important where there are a variety of methods being used.

Ensure that relevant information is available to participants, such as:

- background information required by participants for the purpose of the co-design process;
- supporting evidence and information such as any service history, data and trends; and
- information about any limitations to the scope of the co-design, or items that are non-negotiable and set the parameters for the process.



Implementing co-design

Step 1: Methods of engagement

Choose the most appropriate method(s) to reach key stakeholders and achieve the purpose of the process, bearing in mind that the stakeholders may have their own views about their preferred engagement methods. A co-design process may consist of multiple methods delivered at a variety of levels to multiple stakeholder groups and include ongoing interactions.

Ideally the facilitator should have the authority to make decisions on behalf of the government agency, be a good communicator, and be able to negotiate effectively and manage conflicting views or priorities. In the case of sensitive matters, or where the necessary facilitation skills are not available within an agency, consider using an external facilitator.

The methods of engagement included in Appendix 1: Methods of engagement are provided as examples, along with relevant considerations to inform the decision-making process.

Step 2: Co-design in practice

In addition to enacting the communication strategy and co-design plan:

- explain the purpose of the process;
- outline the scope of the co-design (including negotiable and non-negotiable matters);
- outline any ground rules;
- provide a glossary of terms, if required;
- disclose relevant information; and
- pre-empt and or manage any 'live' issues.

Where co-design takes place in a workshop setting:

- circulate agendas and relevant information in advance;
- maintain the direction of the session;
- allow all participants to speak and contribute; and
- document the discussions.

Ensure feedback from a co-design process is captured and recorded accurately.



Step 3: Analysing findings

Acknowledge and address all findings and develop an action plan to provide direction for this process. Not all findings from the co-design will be able to be applied to the service.

It is possible that the findings may be somewhat inconsistent with the operational or strategic goals of the government agency in which case, further consideration needs to be given before service design can progress.

Step 4: Feedback

Provide concise feedback to stakeholders. Stakeholders have invested time and energy, and it is important to inform them of how their input has influenced decision making. Feedback can be sought from stakeholders on the process and used to inform future co-design processes.

Record feedback and outline the co-design methods and findings within relevant procurement documentation.

Step 5: Evaluation and lessons learnt

Evaluate the success of the process using the criteria agreed at the beginning. While the outcome or intentions of the process may be different to what was anticipated, you should be able to conclude that the process was conducted effectively and ethically, and that stakeholders were satisfied. Use any lessons learnt from the process to inform and improve future co-design processes.

On some occasions, a co-design process may be ineffective. It is possible that some of the challenges could not be overcome, or unexpected issues arose. In the first instance, you can apply any lessons learnt and attempt to redesign the process with consideration to stakeholder capacity and co-design methods. Where a process continues to be ineffective despite repeated attempts, you may need to reconsider the procurement strategy and/or strategic or operational goals and whether it is achievable without representation from key stakeholders.



Step 6: Progressing to procurement of services

A number of options are available to maintain contact and share information with stakeholders during a procurement process, consistent with probity, such as:

- releasing the draft request for comment;
- issuing an early tender advice;
- conducting a request briefing; and
- negotiations.

Following the co-design process, you should have a clear understanding of the key service information to inform the procurement strategy. Reflect this in relevant procurement documentation including the business case, procurement plan and request document.

Please refer to WA.gov.au which provides guidance on the procurement of community services.



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Appendix 1: Methods of engagement

Table 5: Methods of engagement

	Method	Benefits	Limitations	Notes
Inform	<p>Fact sheets</p> <p>Usually brief, paper based or online documents which summarise the key messages.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to reach a large number of stakeholders in a simple, efficient way. • Can be targeted to a particular stakeholder group and developed into multiple languages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May not be accessible to people with visual impairment or low literacy levels. • Does not facilitate two-way communication. 	Tailor to the needs of the recipients.
	<p>Information sharing</p> <p>Information sessions, emails, newsletters, circulars and websites.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to reach a large number of stakeholders. • Can be targeted to specific stakeholder groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written material may not be accessible to people with visual impairment or low literacy levels. • Does not facilitate two-way communication. 	Tailor method and content to the stakeholder group.
Consult	<p>Survey</p> <p>A research method to gauge views, experiences, and behaviours.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Straightforward. • Focussed and specific. • Can gauge a large number of opinions. • Easily adapted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to gather qualitative information. • Answers may be irrelevant. • Delivery methods can affect results. 	Always include open-ended questions and space for more detailed comments.



	Method	Benefits	Limitations	Notes
Consult	<p>Workshops⁶</p> <p>Facilitated events designed to enable stakeholders to work actively and collaboratively on a common problem or task.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussing complex issues, analysing competing options and generating ideas. • Encourages joint working and problem solving. • Builds ownership of results. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time required to organise. • Cost, especially if external facilitation is required. • Need to get stakeholders in the same place at the same time. 	<p>Always include open-ended questions and space for more detailed comments.</p> <p>Facilitation is crucial.</p>
	<p>Expert panel</p> <p>Used to gather concentrated opinions from a range of experts on a particular issue.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus intently on a specific subject. • Produce in-depth analysis. • Experts can often be objective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The process needs to be carefully focussed. • Breadth may be limited. • May be too 'exclusive'. 	<p>If the group is large, facilitation will be necessary.</p>
	<p>Public meetings</p> <p>A meeting open to all interested, rather than those specifically invited.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity for stakeholders to raise issues and ask questions. • Opportunity to gather support for new ideas and build relationships. • Communicate with large groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk of some stakeholders dominating the discussion. 	<p>Requires facilitation.</p>

⁶ For creative activities for workshops, see How to run a co-design session: thecatalyst.org.uk/resource-articles/how-to-run-a-co-design-session



	Method	Benefits	Limitations	Notes
Consult	<p>Interviews</p> <p>Intensive face-to-face meetings, telephone conversations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best way to obtain qualitative information from an individual. • Can produce highly accurate results. • Adds a personal dimension. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Necessitates sensitivity. • Large numbers are required to ensure accurate results. • Careful preparation necessary. • Little dialogue between stakeholders. 	
	<p>Web 2.0</p> <p>Online chat, surveys, and internet forums enable stakeholders to contribute their views.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Useful for diverse and extensive input. • Enable access to views and ability to provide feedback. • Measuring website statistics can also track stakeholder interest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation limited to those with access to the required information technology. • Can be expensive to develop and maintain. 	
Involve	<p>Advisory committees</p> <p>Committees made up of representatives from a profession, industry, peak bodies, etc. who are appointed to provide detailed or specific information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value a wide range of technical and local expert knowledge. • Support a range of engagement processes (i.e. research). • Enables information to be distributed to different stakeholder groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be too brief for people to provide their full opinions. • Results may be influenced if questions are worded incorrectly. 	



	Method	Benefits	Limitations	Notes
Collaborate and empower	Participatory editing Stakeholders co-write reports and documents and endorse the final document.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds ownership. • Reflects their informed views and contributes to the quality of a document/proposal etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to consider stakeholder's organisational structures and resources. • May attract criticism if final result is not reflective of input. 	
	Co-design⁷ Use the skills and expertise of stakeholders to jointly create products and services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse contribution. • Builds relationships and increases commitment. • Enables experimentation. • Improves outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The process needs to be carefully focussed. 	

Additional to these methods of engagement and co-design, a range of co-design methods are outlined in the Connect with Me Co-design Guide.⁸ It outlines tools that help engage, plan, explore, develop, decide, and change. These tools are highly applicable to community services procurement planning.

⁷ For details on how co-design 'spaces' can work, see Experiencing, Exploring and Experimenting in and with Co-design Spaces: researchgate.net/publication/220030430_Experiencing_Exploring_and_Experimenting_in_and_with_Co-Design_Spaces

⁸ People with Disabilities Western Australia, 2018. *Connect with Me Co-design Guide and Connect with Me Toolkit Training*, pwdwa.org/our_campaigns/connect_with_me.html [Accessed July 2024]



Appendix 2: Stakeholder communication strategy template

The stakeholder communication strategy template requires editing in accordance with your government agency’s needs. Stakeholder information should be transferred from the stakeholder identification process. This template allows the identification of each stakeholder’s areas of interest/influence along with the key messages and content necessary to achieving the purpose of the stakeholder engagement.

A communication strategy should commence with the identification of relevant stakeholders and their areas of interest and influence, followed by the identification of information to be shared. Consideration should be given to the relevance and complexity of information shared to ensure it meets the needs of each stakeholder group.

Table 6: Stakeholder communication strategy template

Stakeholder groups	Interest / influence	Key messages	Content	Timing	Owner
Internal stakeholders					
Other government stakeholders					
Peak bodies / representative organisations					
Service providers					
Service users					
Community members					



Supporting material to be presented:

[Outline any documentation that will be presented e.g., draft specification, proposed community outcome, trends, usage data].

Limitations to disclosure:

[Include any information that is not appropriate to be shared].

Negotiable and non-negotiable matters:

[It is likely that there will be matters that cannot be negotiated. It is important to determine these matters upfront and disclose to stakeholders where appropriate].

Risks:

[Are there any perceived or real risks in relation to the sharing of information?].

For any queries regarding this guide, please contact the Community Services Procurement Policy team at cspp@finance.wa.gov.au.