

Needs and provides matrix

Who is this for: Programme leaders, people supporting programme design process, people guiding project processes

Level of difficulty: Easy – moderate

Time needed: 30 minutes – 1.5 hours

When you might need it: Clarifying expectations within a larger program

Other guides to also refer to: Needs and provides matrix – templates

What is the 'needs and provides' matrix?

This matrix provides a way of clarifying what each sub-project within a larger project is contributing to other sub-projects. Such clarification will help avoid confusion and disappointment and aid effective work in the project. It can also help research which involves interactions between multiple larger projects, by getting each project to specify their expectations for the interactions. This matrix is adapted from the original 'Give and Take Matrix' available from https://naturalsciences.ch/co-producing-knowledge-explained/methods/td-net_toolbox/give_and_take_matrix.

How to use the matrix

The matrix involves each sub-project specifying what they are wanting or expecting to provide to other sub-projects, as well as what they are expecting other sub-projects to provide to them (their 'needs'). Looking at the Needs and provides matrix template, this specifying could be done on 'Table 1' or on 'Tables 2 and 3'. The sub-projects then compare notes on expectations. Each sub-project should then clarify what they are willing to offer to other sub-projects and present their offerings back to the group.

This can be run workshop style, with several representatives from each sub-project. In this situation, representatives from each sub-project note their needs and expectations, then go into groups with representatives from other sub-projects to compare notes. The sub-project groups then reconvene and discuss the needs and expectations of the other sub-projects and decide on what they can offer to other subprojects. This process will likely need 1 – 1.5 hours to work through.

Alternatively, this could be run in a group discussion format, where each sub-project outlines what they can offer and expect. These can then be discussed together, and revisions made as needed. Depending on the number of sub-projects and amount of discussion needed, this process may take 30 minutes to 1 hour.