

# Effective Stakeholder Engagement for NREN Sustainability: Experiences from RENU

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UbuntuNet  
CONNECT 2025

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# Overview

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## Outline

01	About RENU
02	Defining key concepts
03	Examples of stakeholders – RENU case
04	Forms of stakeholder engagement
05	Why stakeholder engagement
06	RENU's journey
07	RENU's 10 principles of stakeholder engagement
08	Stakeholder Mapping
09	Results and lessons so far

# About RENU



Established in 2006



Ugandan NREN



Not-for-profit membership-based organisation



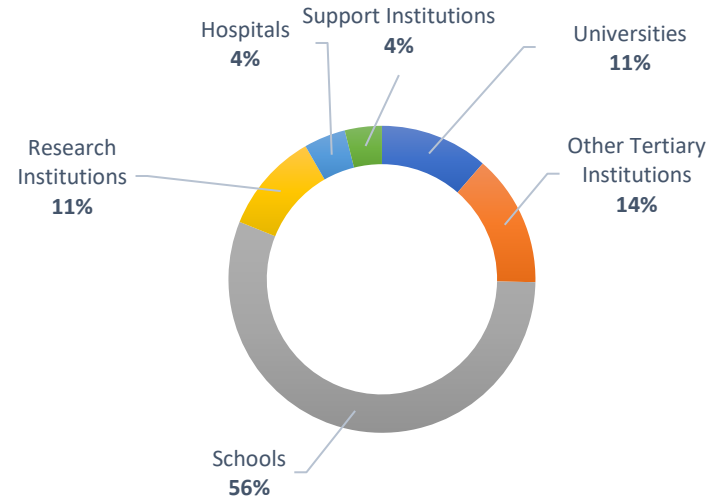
454 members



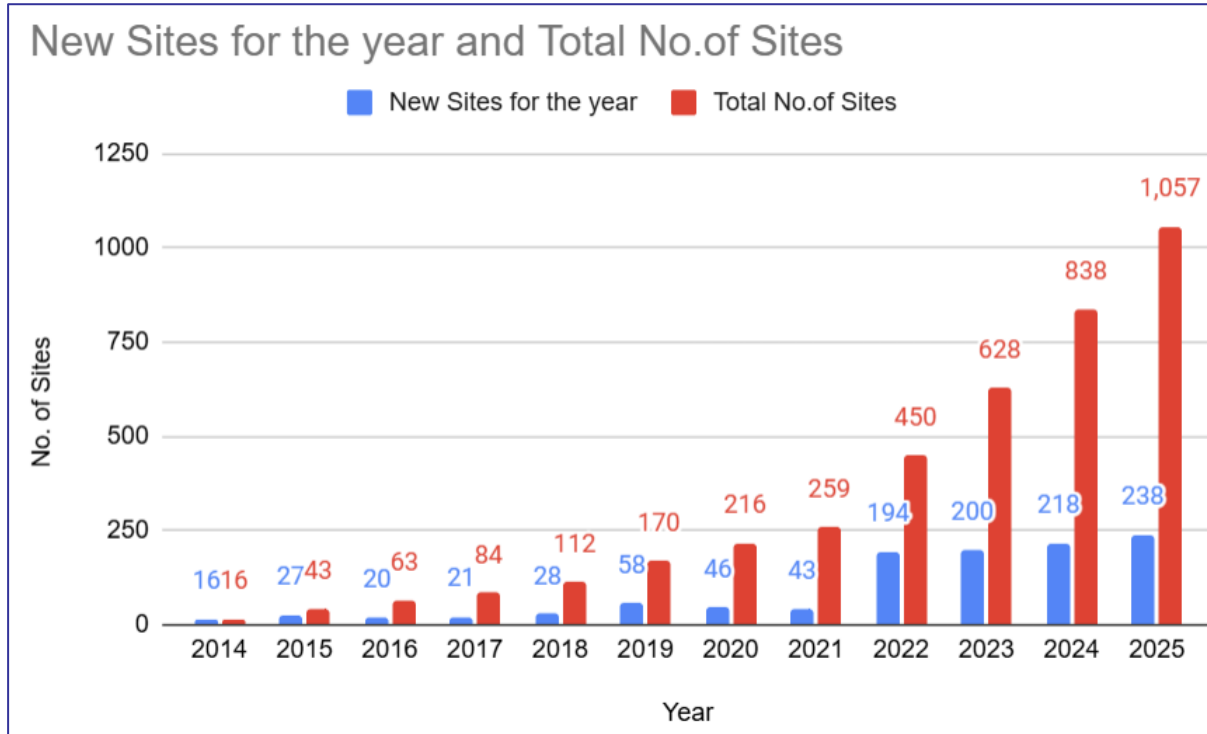
1,057 connected sites

## Goal

To improve the quality of education and research through the provision of reliable connectivity and other ICT services tailored for R&E.



# About RENU



# Defining the Key Concepts

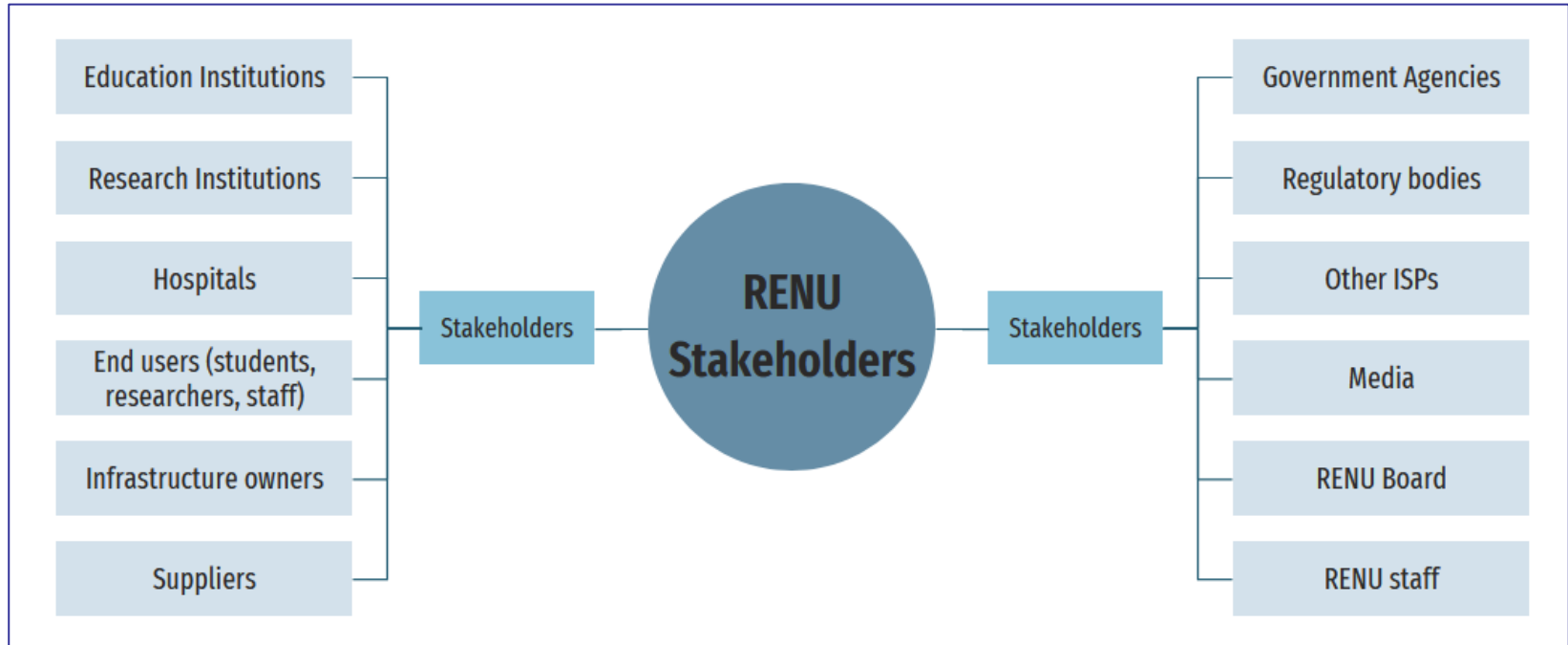
## Who is a stakeholder?

Any individual, group or entity that can affect, or is affected by the operations of an organisation.

## What is stakeholder engagement?

The continuous process of building mutually beneficial relationships with the organisation's stakeholders.

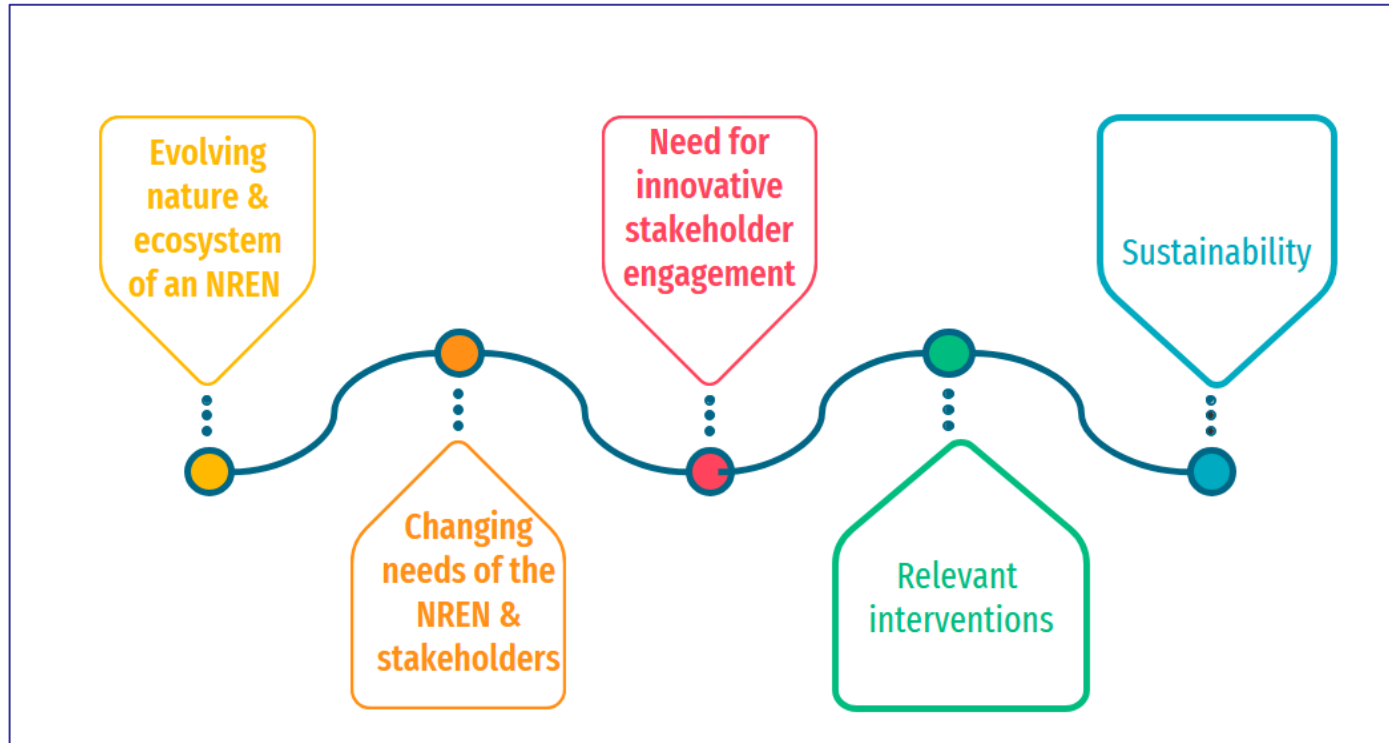
# Examples of Stakeholders (RENU Case)



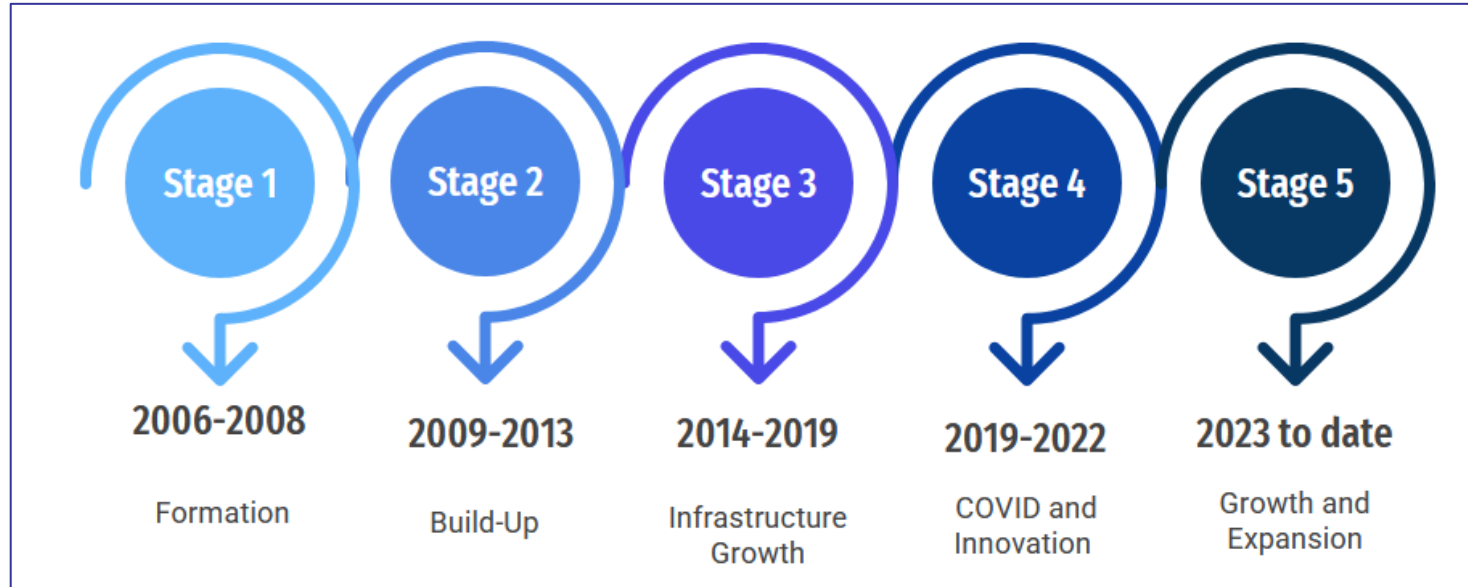
# Forms of Stakeholder Engagement



# Why Stakeholder Engagement? Why is it Important for NRENs?



# RENU's Journey of Stakeholder Engagement



# RENU's Journey of Stakeholder Engagement

2014 to 2018

## Infrastructure Growth Phase

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### Few ISPs with high-priced offers

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RENU value proposition was **low price**

### Focus on connectivity

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### Untapped market

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- Higher-tier membership growth rate
- Higher revenue growth rate

### Nurturing – NSRC, UCC, UA, Africa Connect 2

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### High member loyalty

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- Clients came in through referrals

### Lean structure – low operational costs

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## Engagement Related Actions

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- Technical engagements in the form of DEAs & workshops
- Minimal investment in marketing

# RENU's Journey of Stakeholder Engagement

2019 to 2022

## (COVID/Innovation Phase)



### ISPs enter R&E space with price drops & aggressive marketing

- Referrals became a lazy marketing strategy
- Need to prove relevancy in the sector
- Value proposition of low price starts to weaken

### Membership from bigger-tier institutions starts to slow down

- Slow revenue growth

### Remote study & working

- High need to innovate affordable services to support e-learning
- More resources are needed to innovate
- Increased operation, Admin, and staff costs

## Engagement Related Actions



- Established a Communications Department
- Developed a communication strategy
- Increased awareness engagements
- Stepped up participation in stakeholder events/forums
- Funding partnerships engagements – UCC

# RENU's Journey of Stakeholder Engagement

2023 to date

## Growth and Expansion

### ISPs become more aggressive, offer competitive prices & use persuasive advertising

- Competition for the target intensifies
- Price is no longer a major selling point for RENU
- Value proposition shifts from low price to specialized services and quality of services

### Increase in lower-tier member growth

- 454 members; over 1,000 connected sites
- More human resources needed to support growth
- Challenges in balancing sustainability & member expectations

### New technologies (e.g. Starlink satellite connections)

## Engagement Related Actions

- Deployment of more staff, 30 to 80
- Member engagement unit
- Business Development unit
- Stakeholder engagement policy
- Stakeholder mapping
- Stakeholder engagement plans
- Grant partnership engagements
- CSR activities



# RENU Stakeholder Engagement Policy



## The 10 Stakeholder Engagement Principles of RENU

01



Stakeholder-centric Engagement.

02



Mutual Respect

03



Protecting RENU's Reputation

04



Integrity & Honesty

05



Inclusivity

06



Collaboration

07



Responsiveness

08



Sustainability

09



Accountability

10



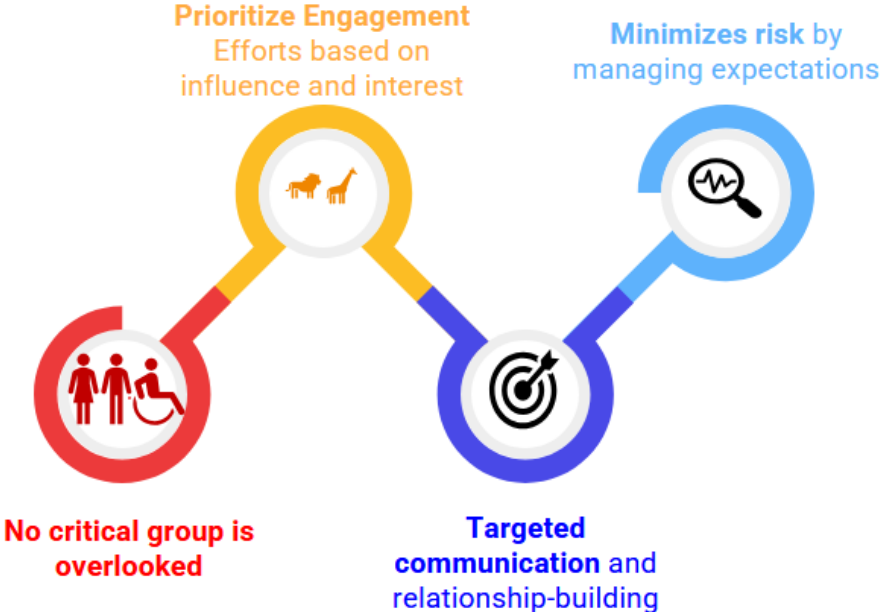
Stakeholder Mapping

# The Need for Effective Stakeholder Mapping



## Stakeholder Mapping

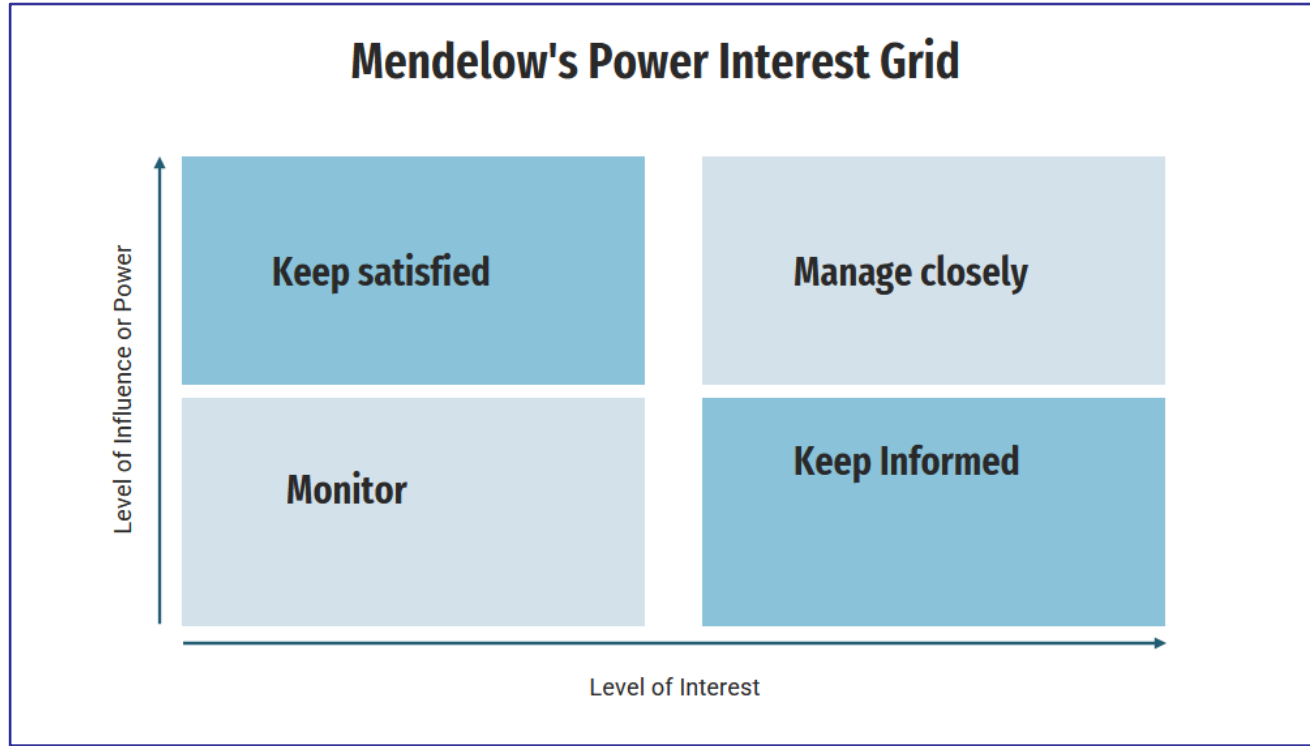
The process of identifying, and analyzing stakeholders based on their relationship to an organization or project.



# Effective Stakeholder Mapping- Process



# Effective Stakeholder Mapping – Analysis





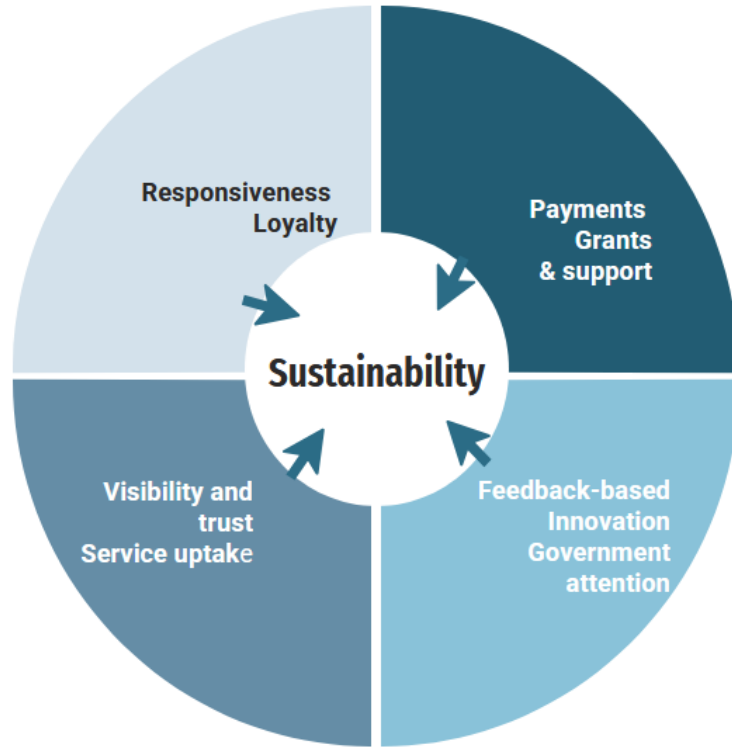
# Effective Stakeholder Mapping - Analysis

## RENU Stakeholder Map Template

Stakeholder	Relevance to RENU	Needs and interests	Associated Risks	Level of power and interest	Engagement strategies



# Engagement Results So Far



**Our responsiveness has improved. We are more timely in attending and giving solutions to members issues which has improved ownership and loyalty.**

**We have observed improvement in payments especially the big public institutions.**

**Engagements have facilitated feedback that has helped in innovating services that are most needed by the members.**

**There is increased visibility, trust, service uptake and government attention and recognition.**

## Lessons Picked So Far

01

Ineffective stakeholder engagement suffocates innovation.

02

Many times, we lose customers not because of the price we charge, rather, because we have failed to communicate the value.

03

Visibility is key in earning the trust of stakeholders.

“People support what they help create.”  
— *Marvin Weisbord*

# Thank You!