News Flash
CCES Winter School

Cut in your stakeholders

Today, scientists need to tackle complex social and environmental issues with society. This newsflash introduces a technique that can help individual researchers manage complex interactions with stakeholders and other disciplines.

Critical Rehearsal Time

Scientists should be clear on how their research relates to society and what methods aid the collaboration process. Learning these new techniques fits very well with the intentions of the Winter School. Such training helps an individual researcher manage interactions with stakeholders and other disciplines.

A coach at the Winter School is Dr. Christian Pohl. He is a lecturer of transdisciplinary research at ETH Zurich. A useful technique taught by Dr. Pohl at the Winter School is the "Stakeholder Constellation" method.

About Christian Pohl

Christian Pohl (*1966) is senior environmental scientist at ETH Zurich. His main interest is using transdisciplinarity as an intellectual tool to address socially relevant issues in environmental research and sustainable development. He focuses on knowledge co-production processes that integrate research and societal change towards sustainable development.

Christian Pohl demonstrating how the "Stakeholder Constellation" technique works with participants of the Winter School 2013 who were acting out the various roles of stakeholders and disciplines.

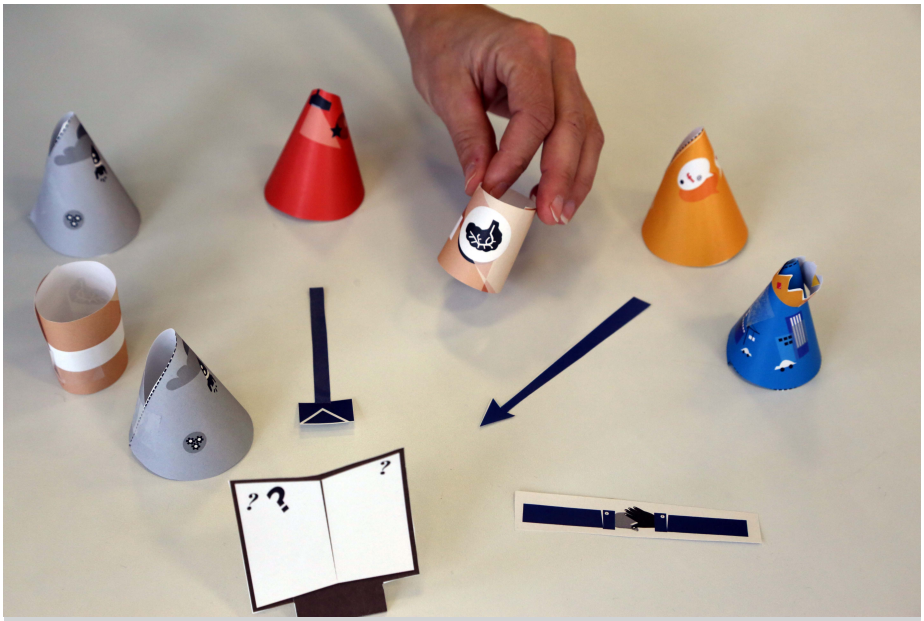
Each year, however, Pohl's experience teaching this method at the Winter School varies. According to him the success of this exercise depends on the clarity a scientist has on the research outcome. In his opinion, researchers at the early stages of their projects should ask themselves the question, "What types of disciplines and stakeholders should be involved in my research?" During the exercise at the Winter School it became evident that important stakeholders are often omitted and sometimes the influence of a stakeholder is over- or underestimated by students. Dr. Pohl finds it fascinating to observe how this technique changes the researchers' perception of stakeholders involved in their research projects.

Paper props for scientists

Next year each participant of the Winter School can avail of new props that have been developed for the "Stakeholder Constellation". This is a unique opportunity that enables a researcher to experience this technique and learn how it can be applied in the individual research context.

The "Stakeholder Constellation" technique is divided into two stages, first the identification of the ten most important stakeholders and disciplines, followed by an alignment of the stakeholders and disciplines according to the influence on the specific research question. The latter step involves physically positioning a stakeholder in relation to a research question and therefore this prop can facilitate this step.

Now it is possible to explore the constellation dynamics between stakeholders and a research question using paper cut outs.



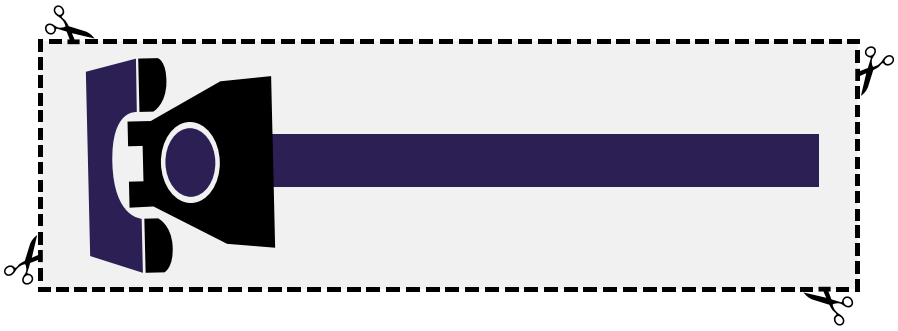
Paper cut outs that can be used by individual scientists when conducting the "Stakeholder Constellation".

CCES Winter School - Science meets practice

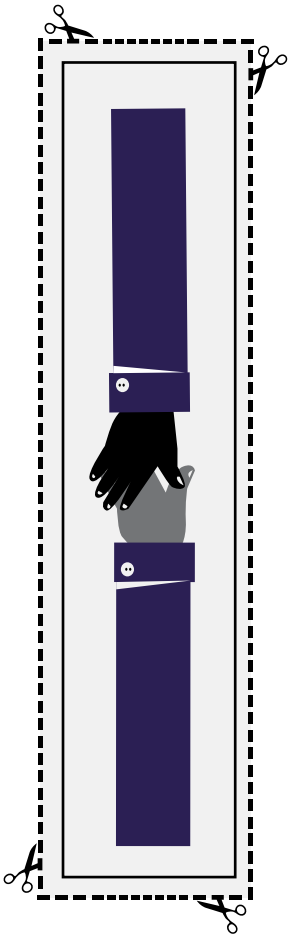
The CCES Winter School is designed for doctoral candidates and Postdocs to develop and strengthen skills for a better dialogue between science and practice. The participants learn methods, how to exchange knowledge with people outside the academic community. They test the concepts together with stakeholders representing local people, administration, private companies, and NGOs.

CCES is the Competence Center Environment and Sustainability of the ETH Domain. Its goal is to strengthen collaborative research in the field of environment and sustainability and to foster dialogue with people outside the academic community.

www.cces.ethz.ch/winterschool



Inform (Obj. 4a)



Collaborate (Obj. 4d)

How to work with paper props

You will require paper, a printer, a scissors, sticky tape, a pen and you're ready to go.

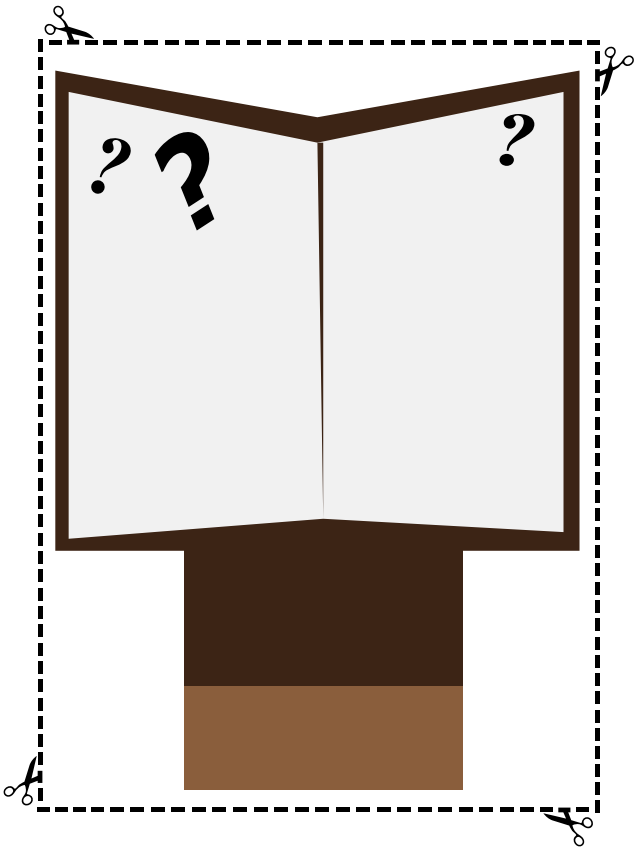
The goal of this exercise is to set up the constellation on a table and take the time to arrange the objects to reflect the interaction between the stakeholders, disciplines and the research question. Feel free to arrange and re-arrange the props until you are satisfied with the constellation.

It is recommended to discuss the arrangement with a colleague as maybe together you recognize whether or not some stakeholders are missing or if stakeholder influence is wrongly represented in your arrangement. This exercise should help you to think about the relationship your research question has with stakeholders and enable you to manage this interaction more effectively in your work.

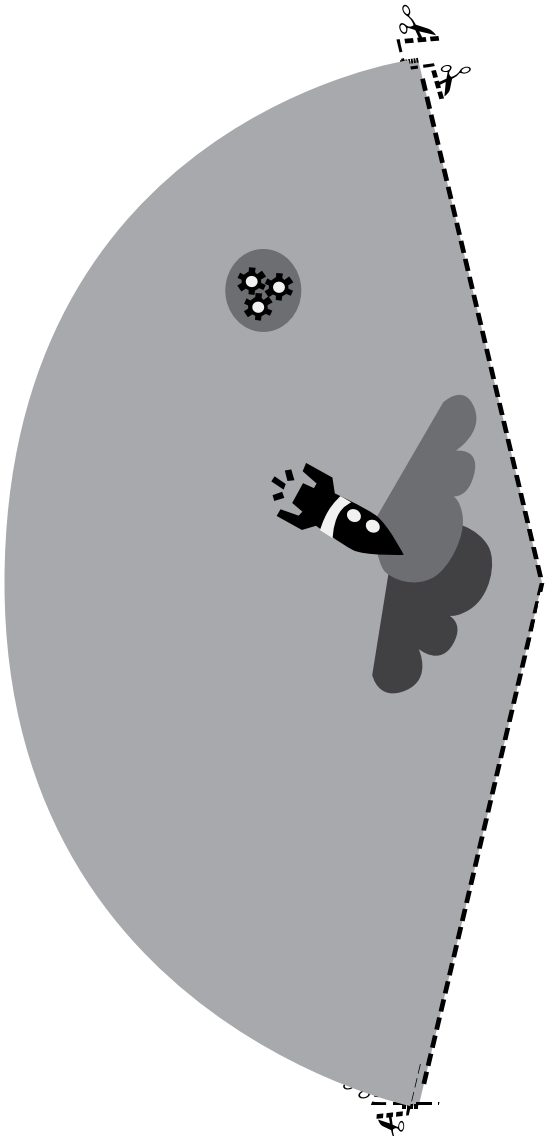
Instructions

First step: Define the stakeholders and disciplines in your research. Print out these pages of the Newsflash and cut out the below Research Question (Obj.1). Write the research question on the available space in Obj1. Fold this object & place upright on the table.

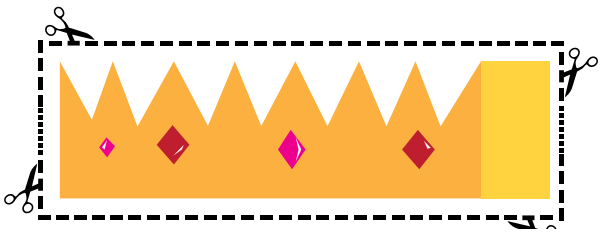
Second step: For each stakeholder you need to print out a cone (see Obj 2a). Write the name of the stakeholder on the relevant cone. Fold and stick the cone and place on the table close or far away from the Research Question (Obj 1) depending on its power and influence.



Research Question (Obj.1)



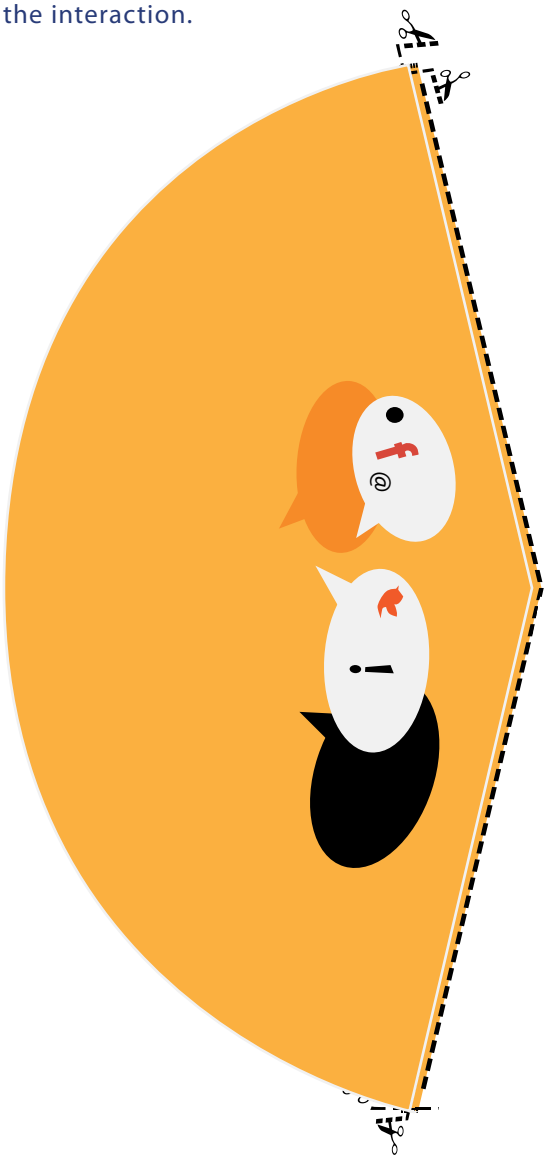
Private sector (Obj 2a - Grey cone)



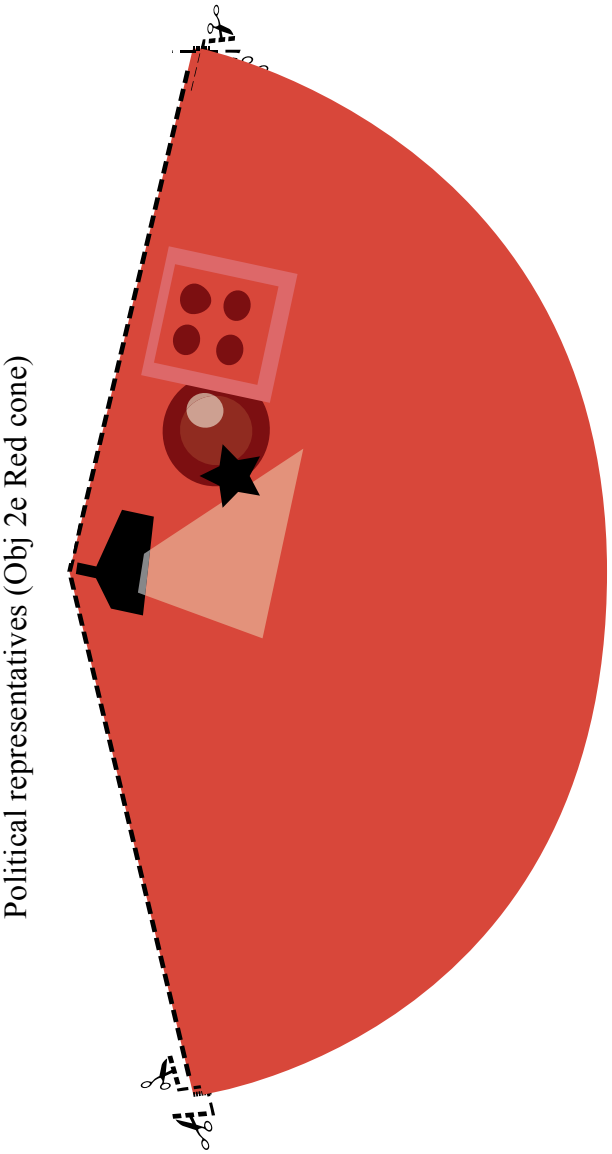
Empower (Obj.4 f)

Third step: Cut out the Disciplines (Obj. 3) relevant for your research. Write the name of the Discipline on each object, fold and stick together. Place disciplines either close by or far away from the Research Question (Obj.1) and stakeholders depending on the influence.

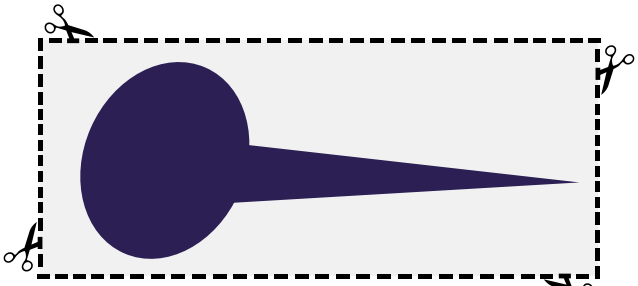
Fourth step: Cut out the relationships that should go between the Stakeholders, Disciplines and Research Question. Five types of interactions are available; Inform (Obj. 4a); Consult (Obj. 4b); Involve (Obj. 4c); Collaborate (Obj. 4d); Empower (Obj.4 f). An extra feature at your disposal are the direction arrows (Obj 5). These can be used as an alternative to the above relationship objects or can be placed together with the relationship to reaffirm the direction of the interaction.



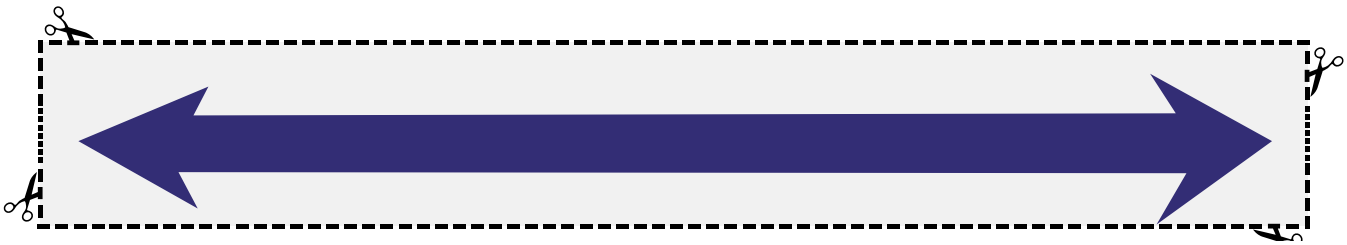
Media (Obj 2d Yellow cone)



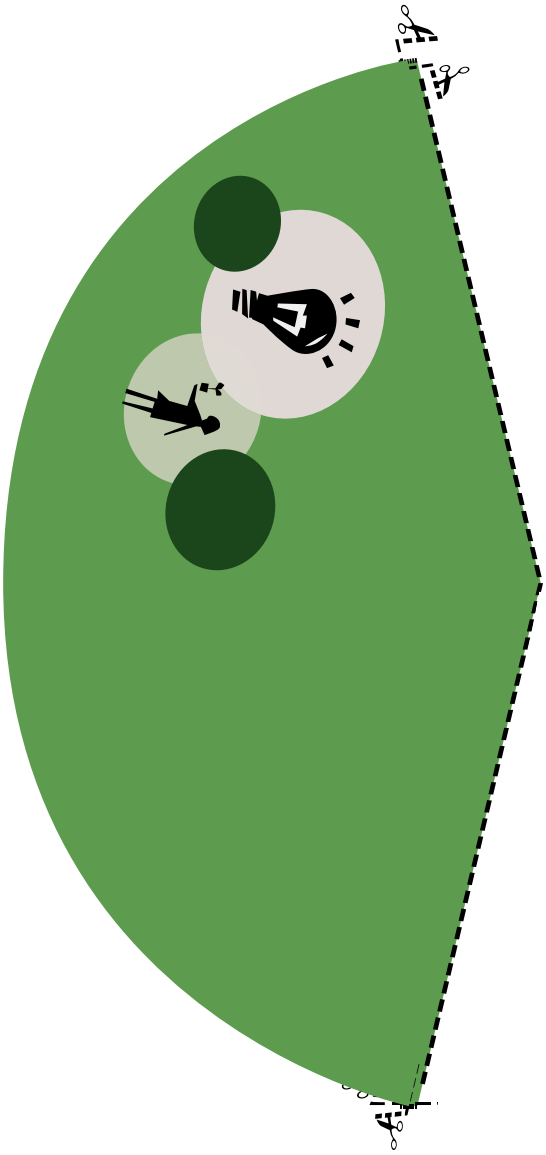
Political representatives (Obj 2e Red cone)



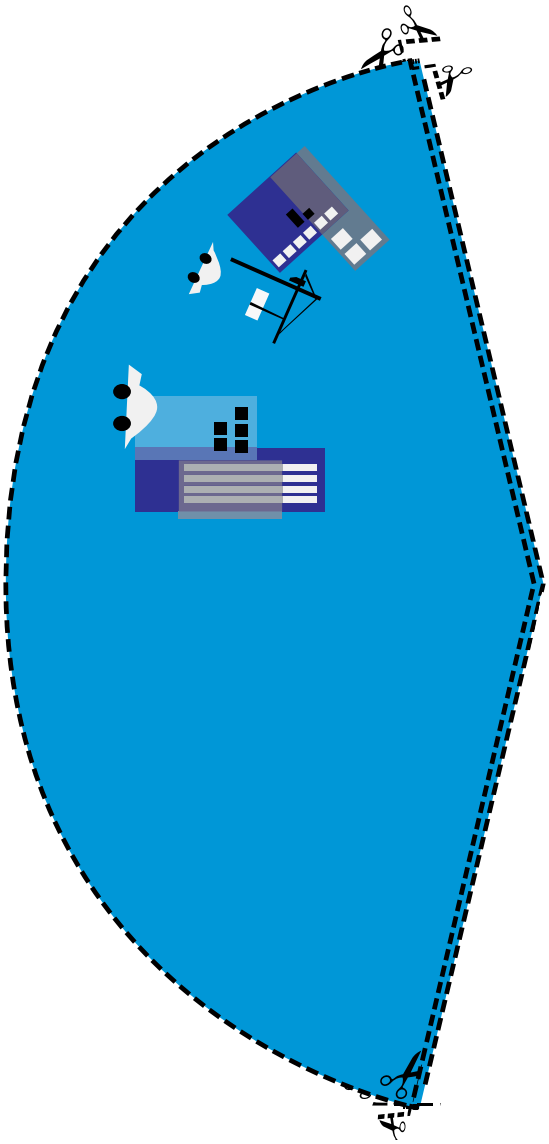
Consult (Obj. 4b)



Direction arrows (Obj 5)



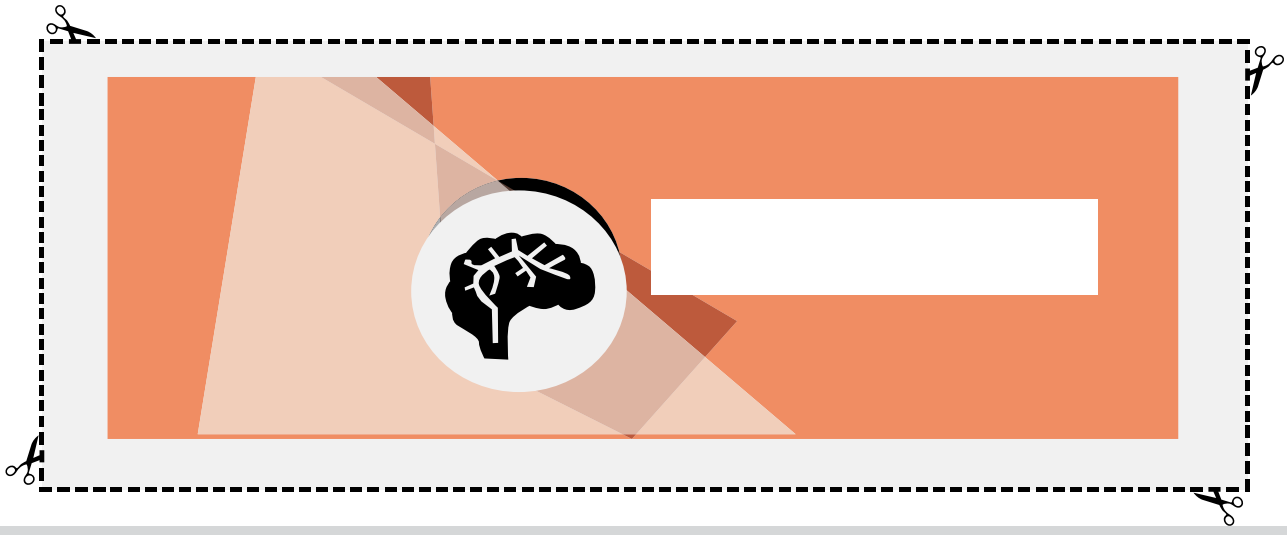
Civil Society (Obj 2c Green cone)



Public sector (Obj 2b - Blue cone)

Involve (Obj. 4c)

HINT Five different color cones are available to distinguish between various types of skakeholders;Private sector (Grey cone); Public sector (Blue cone); Civil Society (Green cone); Media (Yellow cone); Political representatives (Red cone)



Discipline (Obj. 3)

IMPRINT Publisher CCES Winter School / www.cces.ethz.ch/winterschool
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