Azerbaijan State Oil and Industry University

Those charged with governance

Stakeholder Engagement Office

Stakeholder Engagement and Collaboration Policy

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CONTENT

1. POLICY STATEMENT AND PURPOSE

Azerbaijan State Oil and Industry University (ASOIU) believes that responsible, inclusive, and transparent engagement with stakeholders is fundamental to institutional excellence, societal trust, and sustainable development. Engagement is not a one-off consultation but an ongoing, evidence-based practice that informs teaching, research, operations, and community contribution.

Stakeholder Engagement and Collaboration Policy (hereinafter the "Policy") institutionalizes stakeholder engagement as a strategic function. It provides a unified framework to identify who our stakeholders are, how we engage with them, how we integrate their feedback into decision-making, and how we demonstrate accountability. Through this Policy, ASOIU shall:

- Establish a structured approach for stakeholder identification, prioritization, and engagement;
- Define governance and accountability for planning, delivery, documentation, and disclosure;
- Promote meaningful participation and mutual accountability, ensuring stakeholder input can influence outcomes; and
- Strengthen the ASOIU's impact through partnerships and community benefit.

2. KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

This section defines essential terminology used throughout this Policy to ensure clarity and alignment with global standards:

- **Stakeholder** — any individual, group, or organization that affects, or is affected by, ASOIU's activities, decisions, or impacts;

- **Internal stakeholders** — students, academic and administrative staff, researchers, and institutional governance bodies within ASOIU;

- **External stakeholders** — government institutions, municipalities, enterprises, SMEs, suppliers, investors, NGOs, local communities, schools, media, academic and international partners, and donors;

- **Local external stakeholders** — external stakeholders located in, or directly impacted by, the areas where ASOIU operates or implements projects;

- **Stakeholder Register** — the official record of stakeholders maintained by the Stakeholder Engagement Office (hereinafter "SEO"), including categorization, and influence/interest assessments;

- **Engagement Plan** — the annually approved operational plan that sets objectives, methods, frequency, responsibilities, resources, and documentation requirements for engagement;

- **Engagement mechanisms** — structured processes for dialogue, consultation, collaboration, or partnership (e.g., meetings, forums, workshops, surveys, partnership committees, joint projects, etc.);

- **Meaningful participation** — engagement started early enough to shape outcomes, participants are informed, feedback is acknowledged and transparently addressed;

- **Mutual accountability** — a shared commitment by ASOIU and stakeholders to communicate openly and to follow through on agreed actions;

- **Grievance** — a complaint or concern raised by a stakeholder regarding engagement processes, fairness, access, integrity, or impacts, handled promptly and without retaliation.

3. SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

This Policy applies to all ASOIU faculties, research centres, administrative units, and affiliated entities under ASOIU's operational control, in Azerbaijan and internationally. It covers academic, operational, strategic, and community engagement conducted in the name of ASOIU.

Compliance is mandatory for all staff, students, volunteers, contractors, suppliers, and partners acting on behalf of ASOIU.

This Policy complements the ASOIU's governance framework, including (non-exhaustive): Procurement, Sustainable Investment, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Anti-Corruption and Anti-Bribery, Health, Safety and Wellbeing, Academic Freedom, Student-Led Society, Accommodation, Holistic Ethical Policy, and the Climate Action Plan. These policies collectively uphold integrity, inclusion, safety, sustainability, and accountability across all engagements.

4. GOVERNANCE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Effective governance ensures that stakeholder engagement at ASOIU is strategic, transparent, and accountable. A defined structure clarifies leadership roles, supports coordination across all units, and guarantees that stakeholder input informs decisions. It strengthens representation, integrity, and trust in the ASOIU's relationships with internal and external partners. The roles and responsibilities of ASOIU's governing and supporting bodies are outlined below:

RECTOR

Provides overall leadership and strategic direction for stakeholder engagement. Approves this Policy and the annual Engagement Plan, allocates resources, receives and approves the Annual Stakeholder Engagement Report, and ensures that engagement outcomes inform institutional planning and performance management.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT OFFICE (SEO)

Acts as the coordinating and reporting authority for this Policy on behalf of the Rectorate, maintains the Stakeholder Register, leads preparation of the annual Engagement Plan, issues guidance and toolkits, assures quality, consistency, and documentation standards, consolidates data from units, and compiles the Annual Stakeholder Engagement Report for Rectoral approval. The SEO facilitates capacity-building for staff who conduct engagement.

ADVISORY BOARD

Serves as an external consultative platform comprising representatives from government, industry, academia, and civil society. Reviews and validates the Stakeholder Register and the annual priorities, advises on national, sectoral, and community needs, and promotes cross-institutional collaboration.

WORKING GROUPS

Four permanent groups — Research, Industrial Collaboration, Environmental Governance, and Social Responsibility plan and deliver engagement activities relevant to their remit, ensure evidence capture (minutes, outputs), and submit quarterly progress to the SEO.

HEADS OF INSTITUTIONS

Deans, directors, and heads of administrative divisions integrate engagement into unit plans and budgets, coordinate faculty-level dialogues and partnerships, ensure accessibility and fairness, maintain records, and provide annual data and narrative analysis to the SEO.

SPECIALIST ADVISORY FUNCTIONS

When relevant to particular engagements, subject-matter advice is provided by Health & Safety, Procurement, Finance, Data Protection/Records, Equality & Inclusion, and Compliance/Integrity to ensure that activities meet legal, ethical, professional, and risk-management standards.

All staff and students are expected to conduct engagement consistent with ASOIU's values of respect, integrity, and service to society, and to report issues through approved channels.

5. STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION AND ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Stakeholder engagement at ASOIU follows a continuous cycle. The following procedures apply university-wide:

- identify and prioritize stakeholders;
- plan and resource engagements;
- implement appropriate mechanisms;

- integrate feedback into decisions;
- monitor, disclose, and learn.

Identification and Prioritization

ASOIU maintains a Stakeholder Register as the single, authoritative record of stakeholders. The SEO coordinates an annual update, every faculty and unit submits additions or changes, including new projects and partnerships. Stakeholders are first classified as internal or external, then segmented by sector (e.g., government, industry, community, academia) and by geography, with explicit flagging of local external stakeholders to ensure community needs and impacts are addressed.

Each stakeholder is assessed using standardized influence/interest and impact/risk criteria. The assessment considers: (a) the stakeholder's ability to influence ASOIU decisions, (b) the degree to which the stakeholder is affected by ASOIU's operations, and (c) the potential risks of engagement gaps. The SEO consolidates assessments for comparability across units.

The Advisory Board reviews the Register annually. The Rectorate endorses the updated Register, and a high-level summary is included in ASOIU's annual sustainability communications. The full Register is retained internally as audit evidence and used to develop the Engagement Plan.

Engagement Planning

The Engagement Plan is ASOIU's annual, Rector-approved blueprint for engagement. Prepared by the SEO, it translates the Register into resourced, time-bound actions and sets the quality bar for practice. The plan:

- Defines objectives and expected outcomes per stakeholder category;
- Selects mechanisms proportionate to purpose and context;
- Assigns responsibilities and timelines;
- Specifies documentation requirements and evidence repositories;
- Sets accessibility and inclusion standards;
- Integrates integrity, privacy, and risk controls;
- Identifies resources and training needs to support implementation.

The Engagement Plan is reviewed mid-year to address emerging issues or opportunities.

Engagement Mechanisms and Channels

Engagement mechanisms are chosen to enable two-way dialogue and, where appropriate, co-creation. ASOIU may use, alone or in combination:

- Consultative meetings and policy dialogues with government and regulators;

- Partnership agreements and Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with industry, NGOs, and academia;
- Workshops, roundtables, and conferences to exchange knowledge;
- Community and student-led projects addressing local needs;
- Digital engagement tools (feedback portals, virtual town halls);
- Public disclosures through the University website and annual reports.

All mechanisms must meet standards of fairness, accessibility, ethics, and safety.

Feedback Integration, Learning, and Decision Traceability

ASOIU ensures that engagement leads to visible and traceable decisions. For each activity, the lead unit prepares written outputs (attendance, summaries, recommendations, action lists). The SEO classifies inputs as informative, consultative, or collaborative and tracks follow-up to closure.

Material recommendations are submitted by the SEO to the Rectorate with analysis and options. Accepted recommendations are integrated into plans and communicated back to stakeholders to close the loop. Lessons learned are recorded to inform future practice and training.

Grievance and Escalation

Stakeholders may raise concerns through confidential email to the SEO, an anonymous online form, or written correspondence to the Rector. All grievances are acknowledged promptly, handled fairly and confidentially, and resolved in a time-bound manner with documented outcomes. No person shall face retaliation for raising a concern in good faith. Where necessary, matters are referred to compliance or legal units under ASOIU procedures.

6. MONITORING AND REPORTING

Monitoring and reporting allow ASOIU to evaluate the effectiveness, inclusivity, and impact of engagement, and to demonstrate accountability.

The SEO maintains the central evidence repository and collects quarterly submissions from Working Groups and Heads of Institutions. Data are validated and consolidated into the Annual Stakeholder Engagement Report to the Rectorate. A public summary is published on the ASOIU website.

Performance is measured through defined key performance indicators (KPIs) that translate engagement principles into measurable results. These indicators enable ASOIU to track progress, identify gaps, and continuously enhance the quality and reach of its stakeholder relationships. KPIs include:

- Number and diversity of stakeholders engaged;

- Proportion of local external stakeholders consulted;
- Number of structured activities and partnerships;
- Stakeholder satisfaction scores;
- Percentage of recommendations integrated into plans; and
- Publication of the Annual Report.

7. REVIEW AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

ASOIU is committed to continuous enhancement of this Policy and its practice. The SEO analyses monitoring results, stakeholder feedback, and audits to recommend improvements such as new digital tools, updated criteria, and staff training.

This Policy shall be reviewed at least once every two years, or earlier if required by law, regulation, or institutional change. The Stakeholder Engagement Office initiates the review and submits recommended revisions to the Rectorate for approval.

APPENDIX A — STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT MATRIX

Stakeholder Category	Representative Stakeholders	Purpose of Engagement	Typical Methods / Channels
Government and Public Sector	Ministries, regulators, municipal authorities, public agencies	Alignment of higher-education policy, research priorities, and national infrastructure initiatives	Consultations and policy dialogues; joint task forces; memoranda of understanding
Industry and Private Sector	Enterprises in energy, engineering, technology and services; business associations	Collaboration in research and innovation; student employability and skills development	Roundtables; industry forums; partnership committees under MoUs
Community and Civil Society	Local communities, NGOs, youth and environmental organizations	Social responsibility projects; volunteering; awareness and education initiatives	Community workshops; volunteer programmes; public events
Academic and Research Partners	Universities, research institutes, knowledge networks	Joint research, academic exchange and capacity building	Joint conferences; research consortia; exchange programmes
Students and Internal Stakeholders	Student representative bodies, academic and administrative staff	Student voice, feedback and co-creation of learning and governance initiatives	Student councils; focus groups; surveys; open forums
Suppliers and Contractors	Providers of goods and services	Ethical sourcing, quality assurance, compliance with standards	Supplier inductions; performance reviews; audits
International Partners and Donors	Funding and development agencies, foundations, academic alliances	International collaboration, mobility, capacity building and SDG partnerships	Project reporting; steering committees; evaluation meetings

APPENDIX B — STAKEHOLDER PRIORITIZATION

ASOIU classifies stakeholders by their influence (power) and impact / interest in ASOIU activities to determine the appropriate intensity and frequency of engagement. This ensures resources are directed where engagement adds the greatest institutional and social value.

Influence / Power →	Low	Medium	High
High Impact / Interest	Keep Informed — share regular updates and collect feedback where relevant.	Engage Regularly — two-way consultation on policies and projects.	Collaborate Closely — strategic partnership, joint planning and representation in advisory forums.
Medium Impact / Interest	Monitor — occasional communication through reports or surveys.	Consult Selectively — targeted discussions on specific themes.	Maintain Active Dialogue — invite to working groups or regular meetings.
Low Impact / Interest	Observe — maintain situational awareness without direct interaction.	Inform as Needed — ad-hoc updates on relevant initiatives	Build Awareness — potential future partners; provide access to public information.

Note: The Stakeholder Engagement Office applies this framework annually when updating the Stakeholder Register and developing the Engagement Plan. Stakeholders positioned in the high-influence / high-impact quadrant receive the most intensive and frequent engagement, while others are involved at proportionate levels consistent with their role and significance.