Basic Guidelines for a Multi-Stakeholder Engagement Process

What is a multi-stakeholder engagement process
A coordinated series of steps for involving interested actors and organizations in exploring or addressing an issue of mutual concern.

Basic process outline
1. Frame the purpose, issue, and process
   a. Articulate the issue. For example: Recruitment of local youth by violent extremist groups to participate in armed conflicts in Syria or Iraq
   b. Articulate the purpose of the process. For example: Assessing the causes of the problem, ensuring the return and reintegration of recruited youth, and/or preventing further recruitment
   c. Define the geographic, logistical, and strategic scope of the process. For example: Limiting the process to 15 stakeholders and one meeting, youth recruitment in Amushen, and non-military strategies

2. Identify and recruit relevant stakeholders
   a. Tapping into available databases, as well as professional and social networks, list all relevant actors and organizations
   b. Select and invite the most appropriate participants on the basis of step 1 and other criteria

3. Host pre-meetings with invited and interested stakeholders
   a. To explain, refine, and gain their commitment to the process, and its articulated issue and purpose;
   b. To gain an understanding of each stakeholder’s assets, needs, and partners; and
   c. To identify other potentially important stakeholders

4. Convene one or more meetings with the following suggested stages:
   a. Participant introductions
   b. Developing shared commitments and process guidelines
   c. Sharing participants’ perspectives
   d. Brainstorming for ideas/solutions
   e. Synthesizing ideas and/or selecting a mutually-agreed upon solution
   f. Detailed planning for implementation, subsequent meetings, working groups, or other next steps

5. Follow-up, as needed

Tips
• Share leadership and decision-making. Multi-stakeholder engagement processes are most sustainable when all participants have an opportunity to contribute and are acknowledged for their contributions. Consider operating by consensus, or at least, reaching consensus around the specific decision-making process to be used.
• Remain open minded. If you expect or are attached to a particular conclusion or outcome, this process is not what you are looking for. In some cases, you may even adapt the process to emergent understandings of the group.
• Choose participants carefully. Consider a diverse and representative cross-section of participants (e.g., gender, age, ethnicity, religion, income level, vocations) from the community, including marginalized groups such as women, youth, and ethnic or religious minorities.
• Focus on relationships. Spending time to build trust and connection early on, ensures a greater openness to and investment in the process, especially when it is challenged by conflicts of identity and perspective or resource constraints.

Potential stakeholders
• Civil society organizations
• Businesses/entrepreneurs
• Schools/educational Institutions
• Religious actors/institutions
• Government actors
• Victims/perpetrators
• Law enforcement
• Youth and media