



HANDOUT

System Mapping Guide for Participants

A system map helps us understand the connections between various pieces of system information, including actors, processes, structures and functions. We can think of it in the following way:

Actors use processes that operate within structures to achieve certain functions (outcomes).

For this activity, designate one group member to facilitate and record as indicated.

STEP 1: Brainstorm the pieces of the system. (15 minutes)

- a. Facilitator: Set up four columns with the following headings (e.g. one heading per flip chart page)



- b. All participants populate answers under each of the four headings above, using the appropriate sticky note colour (record 1 item per sticky note):



YELLOW: Who are the **actors** in this system?



BLUE: What are the **processes** in this system?



GREEN: What are the **structures** in this system?



PINK: What are the **functions** in this system?

- Participants write on sticky notes simultaneously, reviewing what others have added and filling in all categories.
- If there is some repetition between categories, don't worry about it.

STEP 2: Identify relationships between the pieces of system information. (30 minutes)

- **Facilitator:** Use a new flip chart to assemble a system map with the group. The first step was a warm up to familiarize participants with different aspects of the system. Now engage participants in what they want to keep as the important relationships in the system.
- Begin wherever you like. Some find it easiest to begin by posting actors on the page and drawing connections between them. It is not necessary (or possible) to put all sticky notes on the board.
- Draw arrows to demonstrate relationships and use a word to define each relationship, e.g. A funds B, X regulates Y.
- Look for flows of people, money, information, influence, etc.

STEP 3: Briefly consider outside influences shaping the system. (10 minutes)

- Record observations of sources of change that are acting on the system from outside.
- At a later stage of Horizons Foresight Method, we will delve into these external sources of change more deeply.

STEP 4: Label the system in large lettering.

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