

The Stevin-project

Lessons learned through the BESTGRID project



Co-funded by the Intelligent Energy Europe
Programme of the European Union

BEST GRID

23/09/2015
Jeroen Mentens (Elia)
Erik Grietens (BBL)

WP3 – Stevin: evaluation

Mid 2014: pilot project Braine l'Alleud-Waterloo stopped

→ Stevin project:

- Ex post evaluation public acceptance
- Permitting phase (nearly) finished
- Many (voluntary) information/participation attempts

BBL = Bond Beter Leefmilieu

- Flemish environmental umbrella organisation
- 150 local and regional NGO's

WP3 – Stevin: evaluation

Analysis of existing documents

- **Stakeholder** mapping
- Analysis: local **inputs, objections and concerns**
- Analysis: **reactions** to the objections and concerns
- Analysis planning and permitting **procedures**

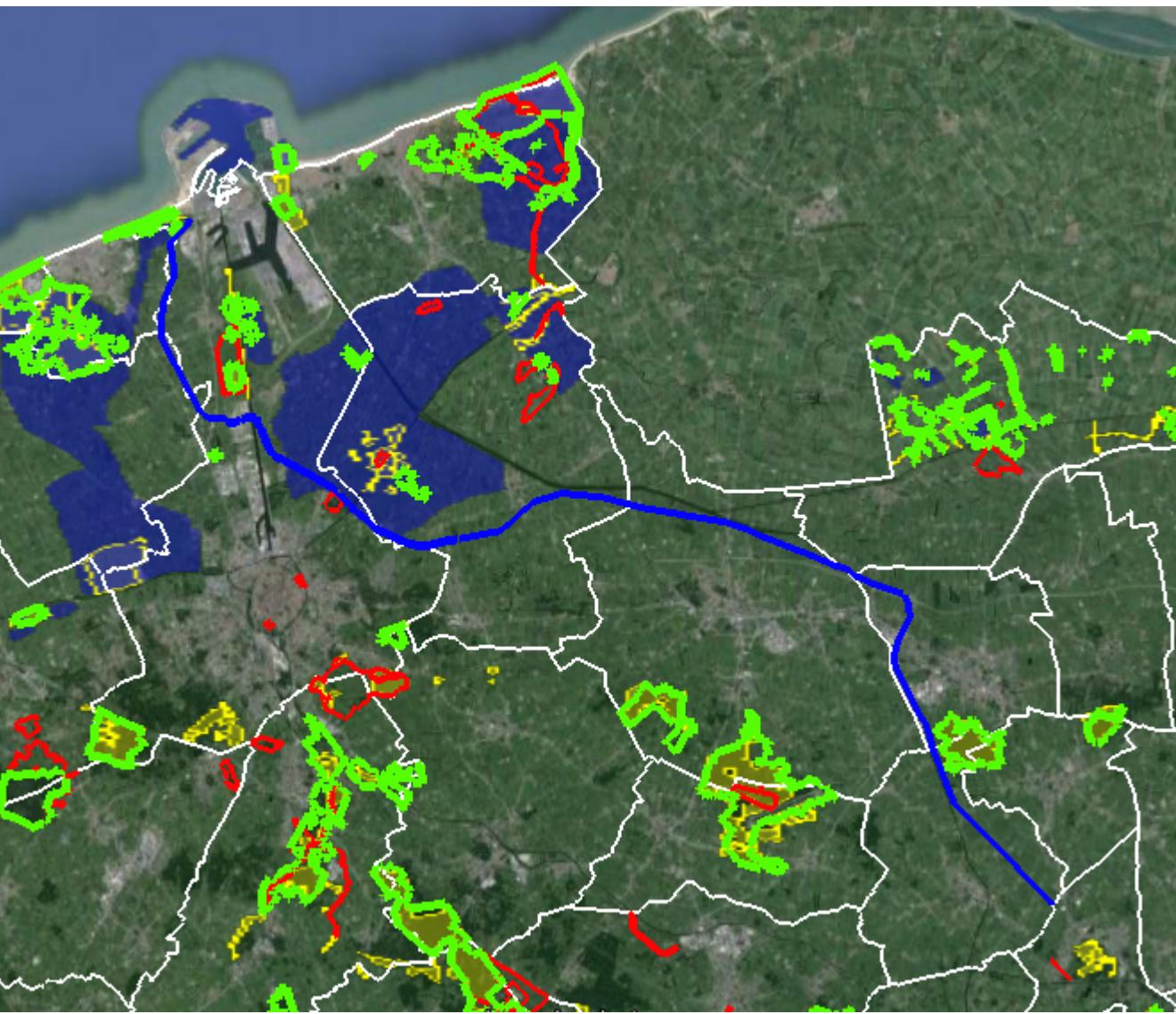
Interview, workshops with stakeholders

- 10 **in depth-interviews** with most important stakeholders
- 2 **workshops** with NGO's, farmers, public concerned, local authorities,...
 - How to improve **stakeholder engagement** in these procedures?
- 2 **focus groups** with (local) governments, administrations, consultancy offices,
...
 - How to improve **procedures**? What about the new procedure of the Flemish Government? 'What if' we would have used the new procedure for Stevin?

WP3 – Stevin: what is it?



WP3 – Stevin: protected areas



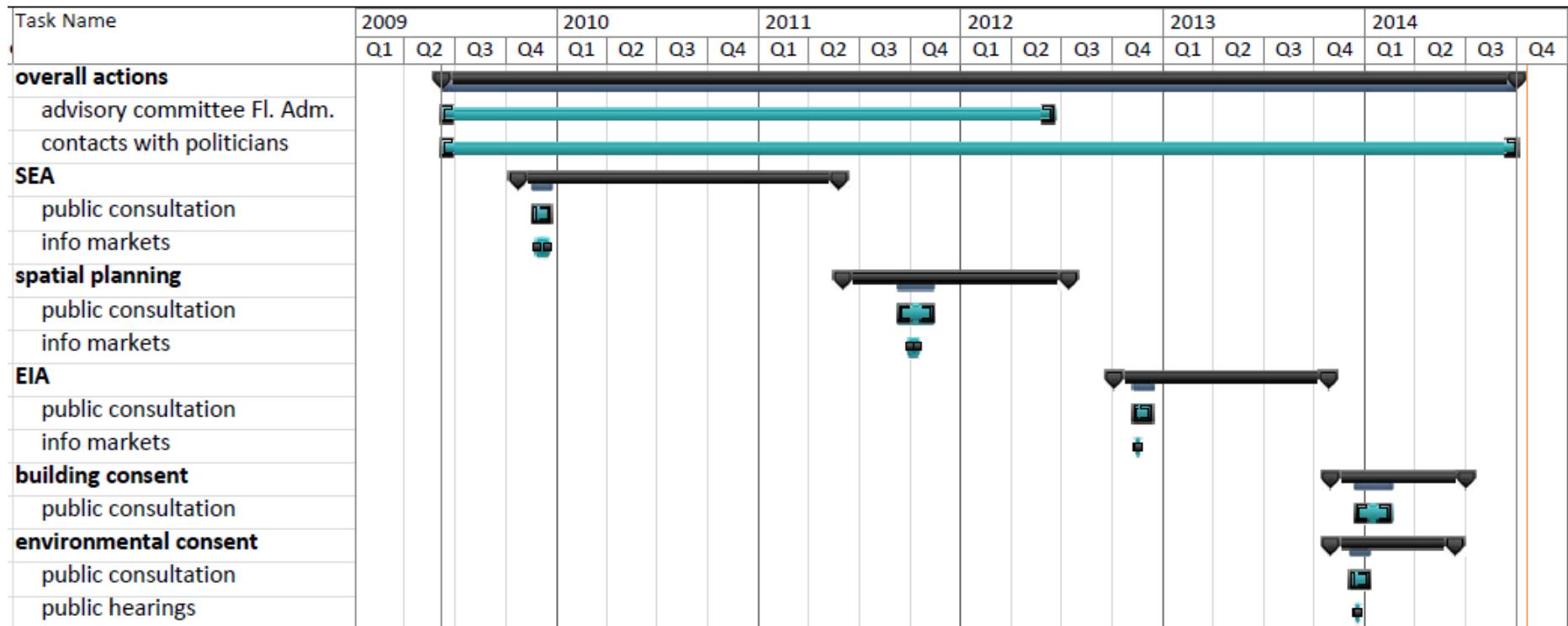
Local situation:

- 8 communities
- 2 provinces
- 1 region
- Protected landscapes (red)
- Protected nature (green, blue, yellow)
- Habitation
 - Very disperse

WP3 – Stevin: dispers habitation



WP3 – Stevin: permitting proces overview



WP3 – Stevin: ex. SEA-procedure



WP3 – Stevin: measures

Main issues throughout the process

- Visual impact
- EMF and health related issues
- Property value

Measures taken

Technical

- Routing:
 - Maximal (re)use of existing high voltage lines
 - Bundling with another line
 - HTLS-conductors
 - Undergrounding through Natura2000
- Two turns with shift in phase
- Tower design with isolated mast arms
- Demolition 2 old lines

Non-technical

- Landscape integration project
- Compensation policy for spanned houses
- Compensation policy for farmland

Results

- Rather high % of easy agreements with land owners
- Positive reactions about info markets
- “only” 8 appeals against spatial plan, less against permits

WP3 – Stevin: lessons learned

- **25 recommendations + quick wins**
- **7 topics**
 - Participation
 - Use and necessity
 - Transparency
 - Communication
 - Environmental impact
 - Synchronising policy within and between levels of governance
 - Sharing benefits and burdens

WP3 – Stevin: lessons learned

- **Early participation**
 - Participatory approach to alternatives in SEA/EIA
 - Unofficial guidance group: very useful
 - similar action with local officials/politicians and citizen groups?
- **Open Communication**
 - Translate complex matters into comprehensible information
 - technical language sometimes perceived as deception
 - explain the very basics of high voltage
 - use analogies to explain things
 - make a very short “non-technical summary” – 1 A4

WP3 –Stevin: 25 recommendations

Full report with explanations about the recommendations:

“Summarising analysis of the stakeholder engagement process and planning and permitting procedures in the Stevin project”

available at

<http://www.bestgrid.eu/publications/bestgrid-documents.html>



Extra slides – not to be used

WP3 – Stevin: 25 recommendations

Participation

- Joint fact finding
- **Participatory approach to alternatives in SEA/ EIA**
- Ongoing involvement
- Neutral process manager
- Format information exchange

Use and necessity

- Federal investment plan unknown

Communication

- **Translate complex matters into comprehensible information**
- Appoint advantages and disadvantages
- Use visualisations
- NGO's as go between

Environmental impact

- Independent study on EMF
- Communicate on mitigating measures

Transparency

- Announcement
- 1 central website
- Explain procedures
- Give feedback on comments
- Clarify position Elia & CREG

Synchronising governmental policies

- Cooperation Federal – Regional governments
- Information flow within local authorities
- Relation with other projects in the area
- Time out during election periods?

Sharing benefits and burdens

- Describe in early stage
- Not merely financial compensations
- Financial co-op renewable energy
- Protocol with nature NGO's

WP3 – Stevin: lessons learned

Participative approach to alternatives in SEA/EIA

- **Legal procedure:**
 - Initial document with proposed alternatives: public enquiry
 - SEA/EIA gets made by independent SEA/EIA-experts
 - SEA/EIA is discussed with regional and local authorities
- **Unofficial guidance group**
 - Relevant Flemish administrations (changing throughout the proces)
 - Established before start of SEA-procedure
 - High level check of alternatives before start of public procedure
 - Deemed very useful
 - similar action with local officials/politicians and citizen groups
- **Which alternatives are “relevant”?**
 - Technically and economically feasible: decided by TSO
 - Request for participation in this decision

WP3 – Stevin: lessons learned

Translation of complex matters into comprehensible information

- High voltage is very technical and complex to laypeople
- Use of technical terms perceived as deception by some
- Project details are unknown during the early stages (SEA)
 - try to avoid technical terminology
 - explain the very basics of high voltage
 - use analogies to explain things
 - explain why project details are still unknown during SEA
 - make a very short “non-technical summary”