

1st BESTGRID international dissemination workshop
“The Future of Social Acceptance”
21st May 2014 in Hamburg

Agenda

Morning sessions: presentations of two BESTGRID pilot projects in Germany (SuedLink) and Belgium (Braine l'Alleud – Waterloo) from responsible TSOs (TenneT and Elia) and cooperating NGOs (Germanwatch and IEW)

Afternoon sessions: three discussion groups on EU-sponsored online toolkit for increased stakeholder dialogue, innovative participatory approaches, and energy and democracy; panel discussion on lessons learned from current political discussions in Bavaria

Participation

~80 participants from TSOs, NGOs, politics, authorities, industry, and academia

Key messages

- TSOs and NGOs agree that collaboration at the early stages of a project are key to ensure satisfaction among multiple stakeholders; this includes public engagement and information dissemination prior to initiating the official permitting procedure and thus, before any decision concerning the project has been taken
- If given the opportunity, the public is willing to share their suggestions and concerns regarding grid expansion projects
- Multi-stakeholder collaboration in disseminating information can add special credibility and weight to a project (i.e. at workshops), as opposed to each party working independently
- Personal contact with local stakeholders is valuable as it can provide access to information that is not publicly available
- With varying financial compensation measures in place, there is still no consensus among stakeholders on what the most optimal measure is
- The gap between national grid development plans and local projects on the ground needs to be closed; in doing so, the interruption of projects can be prevented
- Stakeholder capacity building allows for a necessary level of understanding with respect to technological and procedural questions in grid development

Discussion groups

1. **EU-Sponsored Online Toolkit for Increased Stakeholder Dialogue**

- Once online, regular updates of the toolkit are crucial; the more updated the information is, the more likely individuals will use it
- The toolkit needs to allow stakeholders with the opportunity to provide feedback
- The toolkit should provide links to other participation tools or studies on the same topic

2. **Innovative Participatory Approaches**

- Avoiding systematic design errors in organising stakeholder engagement - caused by i.e. discrepancies in perception between legal procedures and the active public on the scopes and limitations of engagement - is key
- Proper selection of stakeholders and timing of their engagement are essential
- Expressing the need for a project is necessary at any point in time
- Emphasis is laid on maintaining, building or rebuilding the trust of stakeholders
- Participatory processes need to be enhanced and reduced i.e. simple and clear and not generating too much workload for the participant

3. **Energy and Democracy – from Participation to Ownership?**

- A democratic energy system is strongly linked to fairness and transparency as well as energy market mechanisms, market participants and support schemes
- Benefits need to be equally distributed throughout society; only then will people regain their trust in institutions and companies
- A sense of ownership is key to obtain full citizen support for the energy transition
- This sense of ownership can be emotional (this is “my project”), financial (people benefit financially when engaging in the energy transition) or brought about by collaboration towards a joint societal vision for the future

If you have questions, comments or relevant information, please contact us: Theresa Schneider, theresa@renewables-grid.eu