

ENERGY & SOCIETY | Public Workshop



Power of Participation

Advancing Public Engagement in Grid Development

23 October 2025
La Tricoterie, Brussels

**Agenda
& More**



WiFi: Tricofree
Password: fabriquedelians

Renewables
Grid Initiative



ACER
European Union Agency for the Cooperation
of Energy Regulators



AGENDA

Renewables
Grid Initiative 

10:00 **Welcome and Setting the Scene**

KEYNOTE SESSION

10:20 **The need for public engagement in grid development and its impacts on social acceptability, local benefit creation and regulatory frameworks**

PITCHES

10:35 **Best practices for local and community benefit schemes**



AGENDA

Renewables
Grid Initiative 

PRESENTATION

10:50 **Steps taken and guiding ideas behind the roadmap for Public Engagement Plans (PEPs)**

PANEL DISCUSSION

11:05 **What's strong, what's weak, and what's missing from the current roadmap towards Public Engagement Plans (PEPs)**

PITCHES

12:00 **Best practices for local and community benefit schemes**



AGENDA

Renewables 
Grid Initiative

12:15 **Lunch & Free walk around Best Practice Fair**

13:45 **PANEL DISCUSSION & PRESENTATIONS**
Measuring the effectiveness of public engagement activities

15:15 **Coffee Break**



AGENDA

Renewables 
Grid Initiative

INTERACTIVE SESSION

15:30 Integrating insights from today into principles for local and community benefit schemes

16:45 Wrap up and final remarks

17:00 Networking drinks

WELCOME & SETTING THE SCENE



Antonella Battaglini

CEO

Renewables Grid Initiative



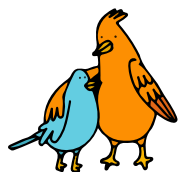
Andrzej Ceglarz

Director – Energy Systems

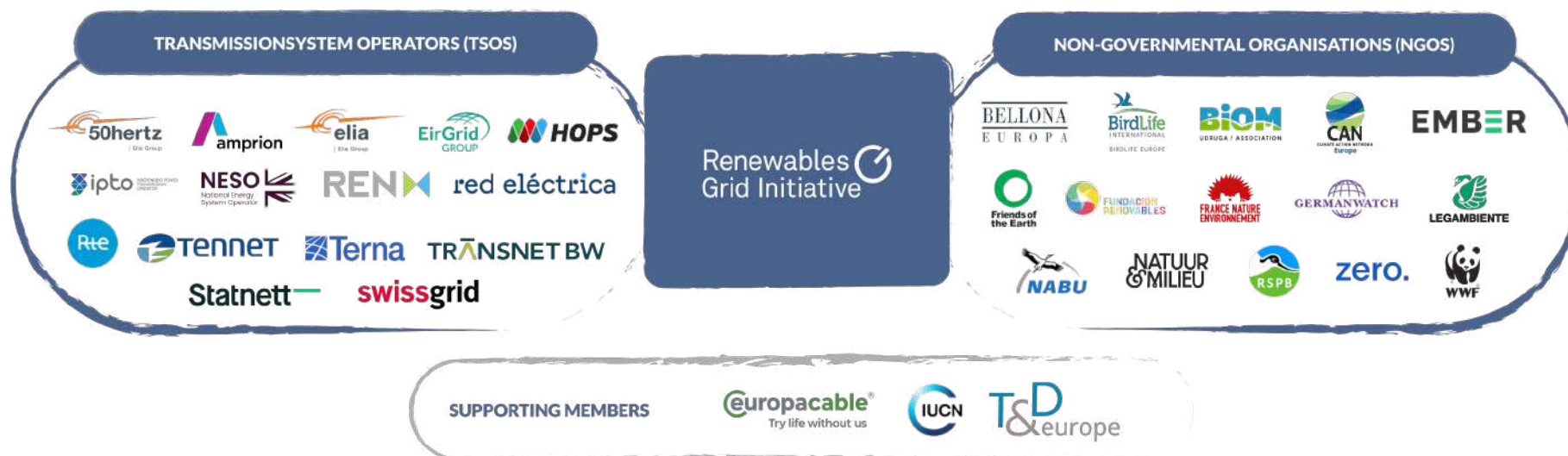
Renewables Grid Initiative



Who is RGI?

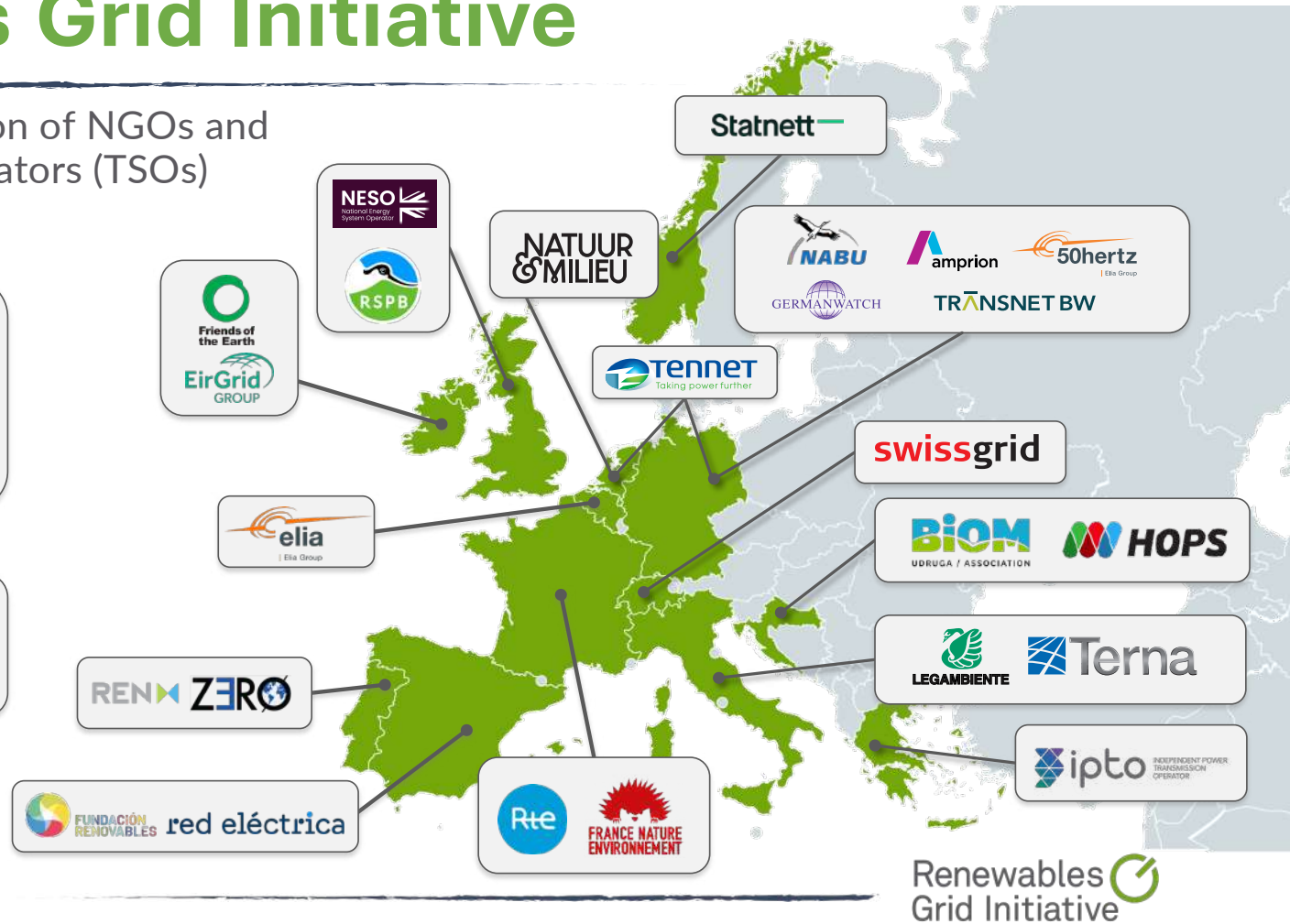
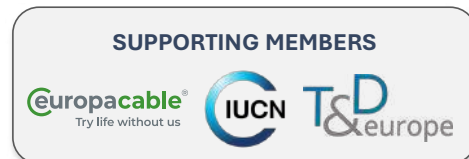


We engage in an energy transition ecosystem of actors and promote **fair, transparent, sustainable grid development** to enable the growth of renewables to achieve full decarbonisation in line with the Paris Agreement.



Renewables Grid Initiative

RGI is a unique collaboration of NGOs and Transmission System Operators (TSOs) from **across Europe**



How did we land here?

Nov 2023

Launch of the Pact for Engagement as part of the EU Action Plan for Grids



July '24

Regular Pact for Engagement Meetings



July-Nov 2024

Development of Ten Guiding Principles for early Public Engagement + sharing best practices



Nov 2024

PCI Energy Days – additional signatories of the Pact for Engagement



10/09/2025

How did we land here?



Communication efforts on the need for grids



National-local level cooperation (permitting)



Enhanced regional cooperation (PCIs)



Regulatory support for engagement



Organisational support for implementation of the Pact

ENERGY SOCIETY | Targeted Stakeholder Survey

Implementing the Pact for Engagement as part of the EU Action Plan for Grids



Add your voice by 02 March 2025



A Pact for Engagement

Ensuring early, regular and meaningful stakeholder engagement in grid development

The cornerstone of our energy transition and economic recovery will be an electricity system to which renewable energy will contribute to around half of the generation in 2030 and which will be fully decarbonised well before 2050. We will be deploying renewable energy capacity at a pace that is many times faster than today which will require an integrated and interconnected European infrastructure. Accelerating the development of electricity grids in parallel with the massive scale-up of renewable energies is thus key to Europe's spearheading its energy security and climate ambitions.

None of this can be achieved in isolation or at the expense of the environmental protection of our most vulnerable habitats. The revised TEN-E Regulation will continue to serve as a guiding framework for identifying and building Projects of Common Interest (PCIs) if and where needed to connect demand and supply across Europe. Decision-making processes, whether at the selection stage for the PCI label or later on, during the ground routing and construction, have been strengthened to be more inclusive, more transparent and accountable towards the views and needs of those communities affected by the construction. Whilst best practices are promoted and shared amongst project promoters, delays in grid development at both transmission and distribution level still occur due to lack of acceptance by communities affected by energy infrastructure projects. Quantifying and monetising the benefits of successful stakeholder engagement and avoidance of delays can be challenging in a complex regulatory framework for building infrastructure that crosses several jurisdictions and competences. There is a need to reinforce the engagement framework towards the public into a regular and meaningful collective effort that harnesses trust and participation in grid development, softens the impact on communities and nature, redistributes benefits and enhances nature protection.

In its Communication 'Grids, the missing link: An EU Action Plan for Grids', the Commission announces the launch of a Pact for Engagement to ensure early, regular and meaningful stakeholder engagement in grid development, together with Member States, ACER and national regulatory authorities, ENTSO-E and transmission system operators, EU DSO Entity and distribution system operators, project promoters and project sponsors.

1. Designing and carrying out national and European communication efforts on the key role of transmission and distribution grids as enablers of the energy transition;
2. A joint cooperation effort between national and local authorities in ensuring effective implementation of permitting provisions for grid and renewable energy projects and best practices adopted and/or recommended at local, national and EU level;
3. A commitment from Member States to strengthen their involvement in the regional cooperation fora such as the established High-Level Groups in order to accelerate the implementation of PCIs, prioritising the most mature and concrete ones. This work will involve transmission system operators and project promoters, as well as national regulators and stakeholders;
4. An open dialogue between ministries, regulatory authorities and transmission and distribution system operators on adequate regulatory support for early, regular and meaningful stakeholder engagement activities on the basis of dedicated chapters on stakeholder engagement accompanying grid investment plans;
5. Providing for the necessary organisational conditions among all parties involved in permitting or stakeholder engagement processes aligned with the significant needs for grid deployment.

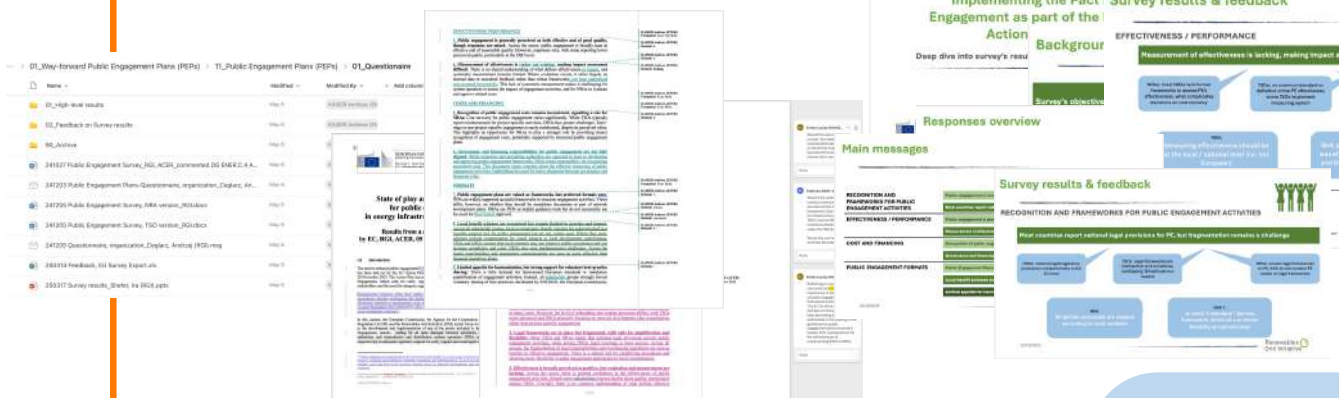
The Commission will work closely with all parties adhering to the Pact for Engagement within appropriate grid-related cooperation fora, such as the PCI Energy Days, the Energy Infrastructure Forum (Copenhagen Forum) and the National Competent Authorities' Platform (NCA Platform) in order to support the implementation of the four pillars of the Pact. Within these fora, the Commission will also monitor the progress achieved by these initiatives, as well as promote the exchange of practices inspiring further efforts from all parties in developing and sustaining engagement processes that rise up to the EU's grid challenge.

The Commission invites Member States, national regulatory authorities, transmission and distribution system operators, project promoters and civil society to join the Pact for Engagement and contribute through their collective actions to an enabling framework for early, regular and meaningful stakeholder engagement in grid development.

How did we land here?

Q1 2025

Survey to enhance stakeholder engagement and explore opportunities for Public Engagement Plans (PEPs)



June '25

Energy Infrastructure Forum, Copenhagen

Sept '25

Launching of the Focus Group work

10/09/2025

Building on Action 12 of the EU Grid Action Plan, the Forum invites the **Commission, RGI and ACER**, in collaboration with **EU DSO Entity and ENTSO-E** and other stakeholders, to **co-create a roadmap for the development of Public Engagement Plans** and to prepare a set of **recommendations** as the basis for future guidelines. These recommendations should be presented at **the next Forum in 2026**.



State of play and way-forward
for public engagement
in energy infrastructure development

Results from a survey conducted
by EC, RGI, ACER, 05 February-02 March 2025

Introduction

The need to enhance public engagement¹ (PE) in energy infrastructure development was highlighted in the **EU Action Plan for Grids**, adopted by the European Commission on 28 November 2023. The Action Plan paved the way for the **Pact for Engagement**, which calls for early, regular, and meaningful engagement with the public and other stakeholders, backed by appropriate regulatory support.

In this context, the European Commission, the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER), and the Renewables Grid Initiative (RGI) have partnered to advance one of the Pact's objectives: fostering open dialogue between ministries, regulators, and transmission and distribution system operators (TSOs and DSOs) on regulatory support for effective stakeholder engagement, supported by dedicated chapters in national grid development plans (NDPs).

As currently envisaged, these chapters in NDPs, termed '**Public Engagement Plans (PEPs)**' would outline engagement activities across four key stages to facilitate early, meaningful and effective engagement, supporting smoother permitting and reducing

Where will we go?



KEYNOTE

The need for public engagement in grid development and its impacts on social acceptability, local benefit creation and regulatory frameworks



Joachim Balke

Head of Unit at the Infrastructure Regional Cooperation, European Commission (DG Energy)



PITCHES

**Best practices for local
and community benefit schemes**



Building community resilience with grid enhancement

Elia Transmission Belgium – Mechelen, July 2024

23 October 2025 | Lotte Van der Stockt

Building community resilience with grid enhancement



Building community resilience with grid enhancement



Stel je vraag

vr̃ nws

Regio Mechelen

"Knap, die solidariteit": inwoners van Mechelen geven gehoor aan oproep netbeheerder en verbruiken gevoelig minder stroom

De Mechelaars geven gehoor aan de oproep van netbeheerder Elia om minder stroom te verbruiken. De oproep kwam er nadat 9 hoogspanningsmasten tegen de grond waren gegaan door noodweer. Voorlopig moet niemand worden afgeschakeld. Intussen hoeven de Mechelaars niet langer minder stroom te verbruiken.

Kevin Calluy

© za 13 jul, 2024 10u29

Thank you.





Ministry of Climate Policy and Green
Growth

A scheme benefiting local governments/communities:

'Regional investments for onshore high voltage energy infrastructure' (€197 mln.)

Martijn Bax – Project lead energy-infrastructure

Contact details:

Email: m.w.j.bax@minezk.nl

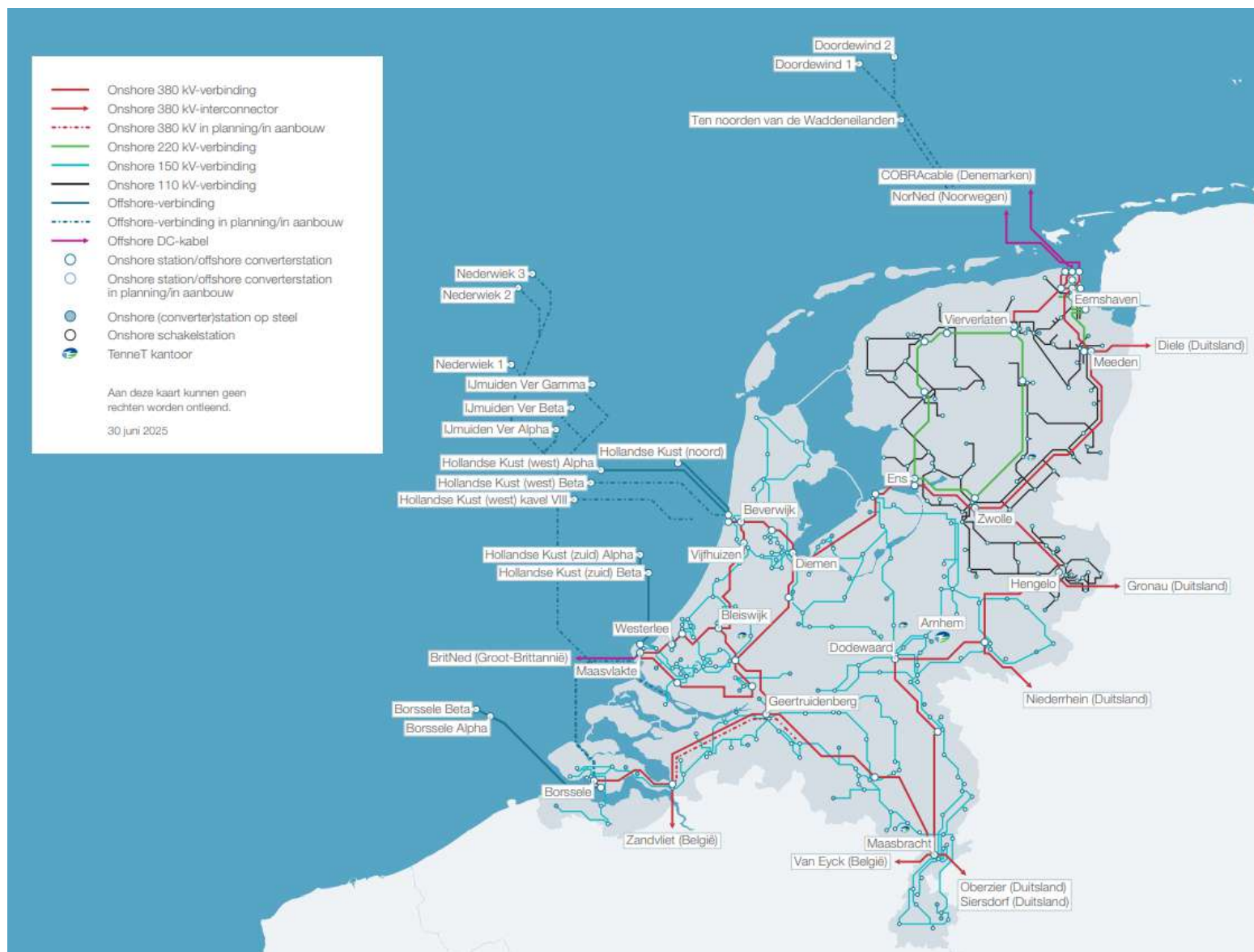
Telephone: +31 631923796



Dutch scheme

- Upcoming years extensive peak in expansion of the national extra-high-voltage grid (220 kV/380 kV).
- These projects are crucial to maintain and ensure the quality/security of the (future) Dutch energy supply.
- These projects, due to their relative size, have a significant impact on the local community (communities).
- Dutch government (April 2025): €197mln. available to invest in these areas.
- Objective: contribute to improving the quality of living for the people directly affected by the planned projects within the municipality.
- Participation by the people affected of utmost importance (also: Dutch law).







Creating Space for Public Discourse

A Case Study of the 50Hertz Annual Offshore Excursion

24.10.2025 | Dimitrij Umansky





Community Liaison Coordinator.

A shared value strategy for community engagement in grid Infrastructure development.

red eléctrica



Daniel Pérez Varela

Infrastructure Director in the
Canary Island



Ainara Irigoyen

Regional Representative in
the Canary Island



Isaura María Armas

Community Liaison
Coordinator

PRESENTATION

Steps taken and guiding ideas behind the roadmap for Public Engagement Plans (PEPs)



Christopher Göpfert

*Public Engagement Officer
TransnetBW*

Renewables 
Grid Initiative



ROADMAP TOWARDS GUIDANCE ON PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PLANS

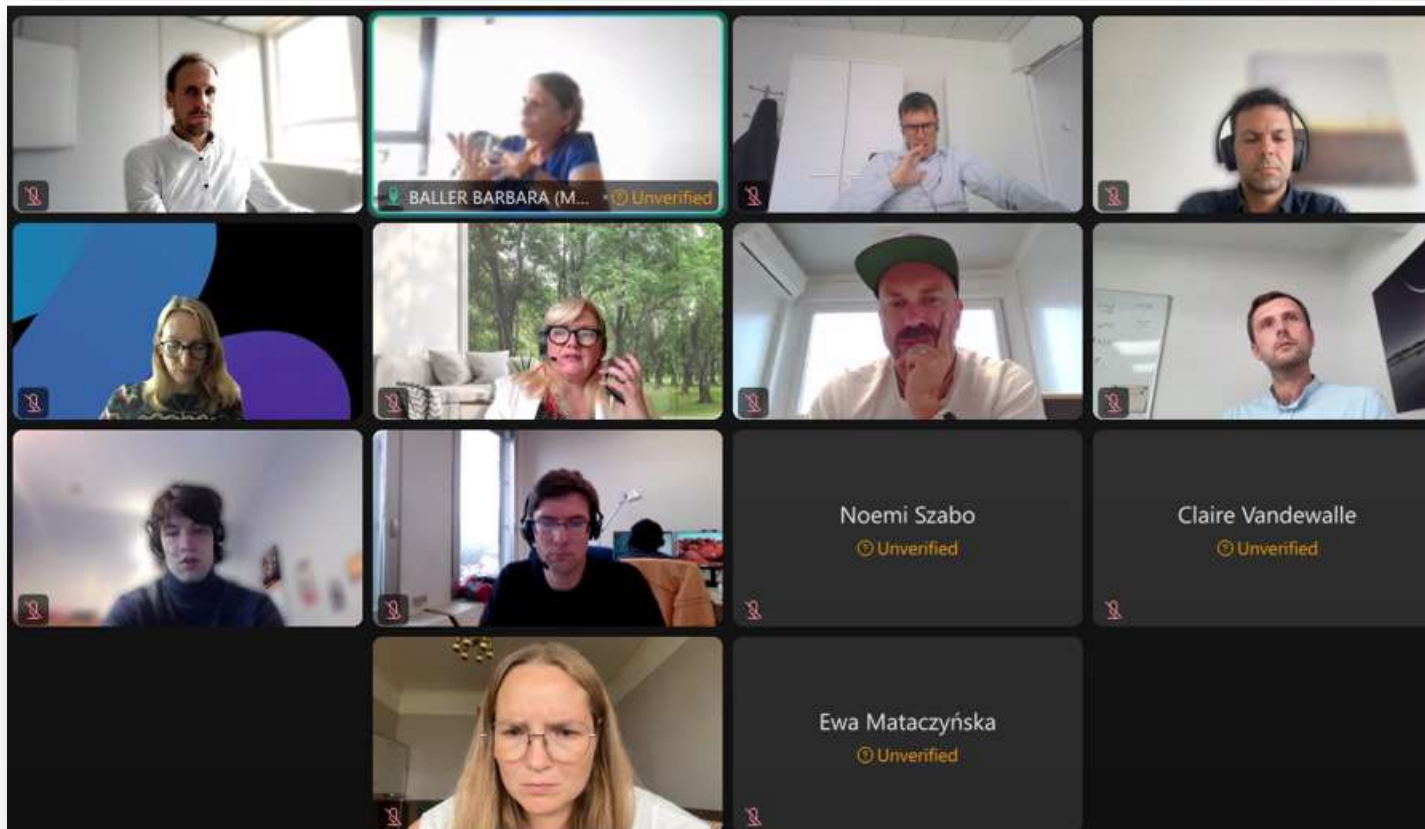
Focus Group

CHRIS GOEPFERT

Brussels, 23.10.2025

01 Roadmap towards Guidance on Public Engagement Plans

FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS



IE Government
TSOs
DSOs
ENTSO-E
EU DSO Entity
NRA
European Comission
RGI
ACER

FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IN ELECTRICITY INFRASTRUCTURE – DEFINITION

Public engagement in electricity infrastructure development refers to transparent, inclusive and structured involvement of the public and other relevant actors (such as public authorities, regulators and others) across all stages of grid development – including:



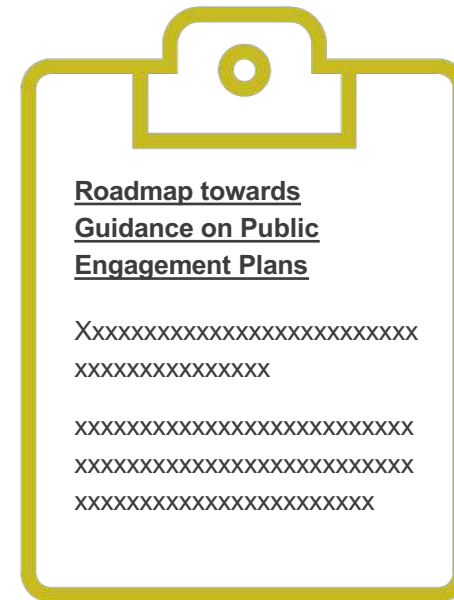
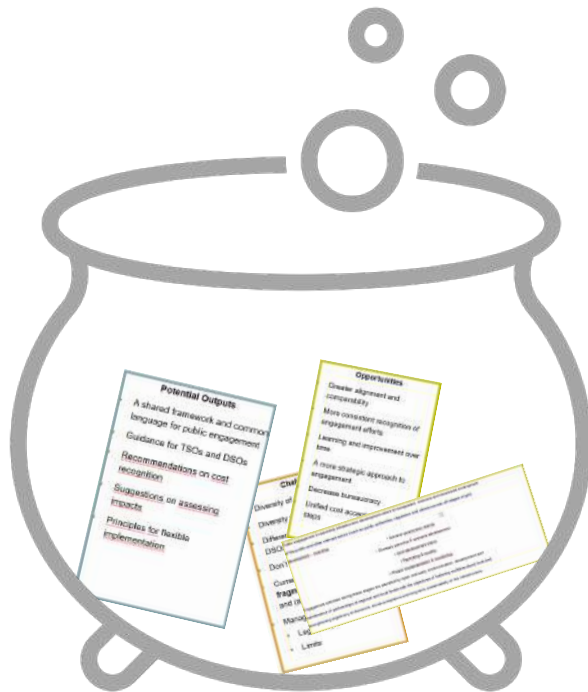
- *General awareness raising,*
- *Strategic planning & scenario development,*
- *Grid development plans,*
- *Permitting & routing,*
- *Project implementation & monitoring,*

Engagement activities during these stages are elevated by open and early communication, development and maintenance of partnerships at regional and local levels with the objectives of fostering multidirectional trust and strengthening legitimacy of decisions, social acceptance and long-term sustainability of the infrastructure.

STEPS TAKEN AND GUIDING IDEAS BEHIND THE ROADMAP FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PLANS



WHAT'S NEXT?



PANEL

What's strong, what's weak, and what's missing from the current roadmap towards Public Engagement Plans (PEPs)



Moderator: Andreas Kaiser
*Energy Infrastructure Unit at DG
Energy, European Commission*



Jan Kostevc
*Team Leader Infrastructure
ACER*



Christopher Göpfert
*Public Engagement Officer
TransnetBW*



Catharina Sikow-Magny
*Advisor
Renewables Grid Initiative*



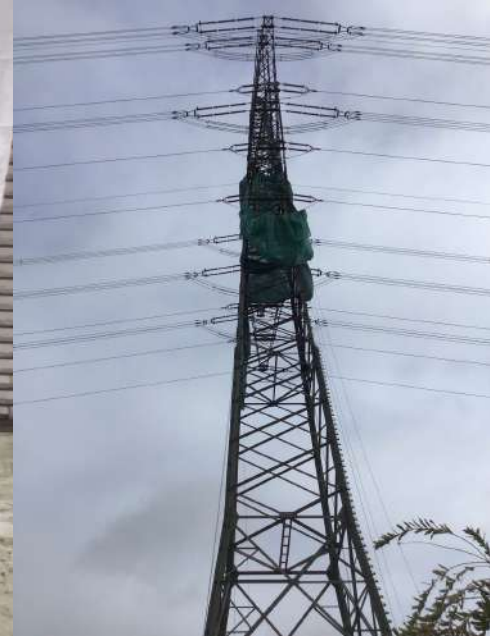
Seda Orhan
*Head of Energy
CAN Europe*



Claire Vandewalle
*Senior Advisor – Strategy & Regulatory
Affairs
EU DSO Entity*

Renewables 
Grid Initiative





PITCHES

**Best practices for local
and community benefit schemes**



NEW MEDIUM VOLTAGE UNDERGROUND LINE

Maximizing engagement, increasing local benefits

October 22, 2025

Project Context

1. ¿WHY?

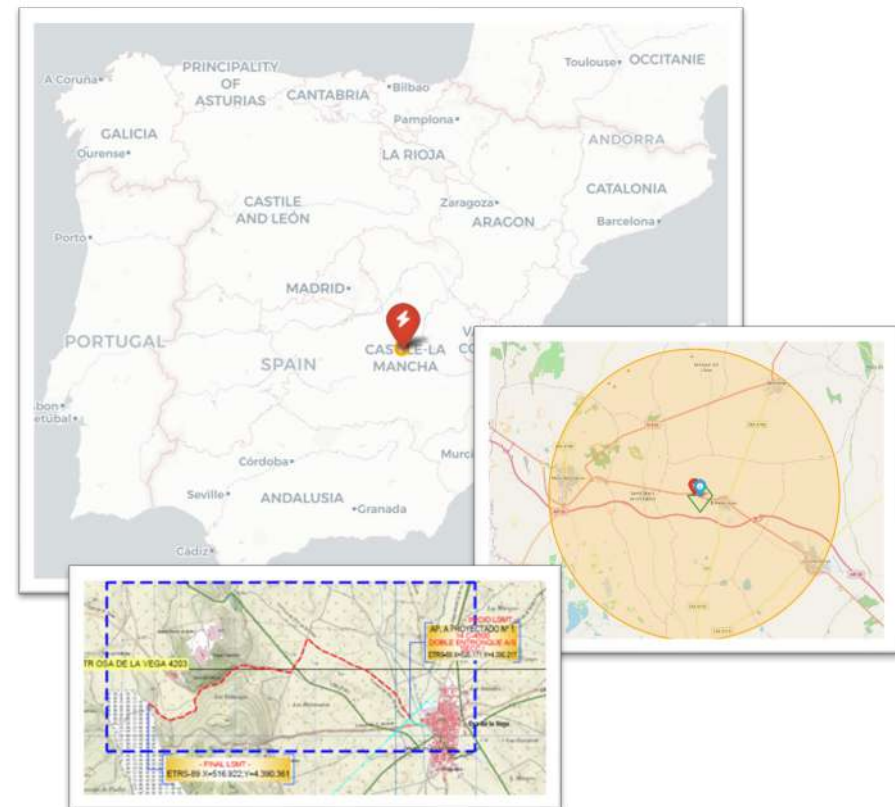
Area affected by voltage overloads and supply drops in the electrical network.

Infrastructure expansion is required to enhance supply quality and ensure continuous and reliable service.

3. PROPOSED SOLUTION

Installation of a double-circuit medium-voltage underground line.

2. ¿WHERE?



How we undertake the work?



Local benefits



Contributing to local environmental preservation

Restoring local open and natural areas to original forms



Technical Improvements

Optimized efficiency and balanced load distribution



Contributing to local participatory processes

Coordinated extensively with private individuals and various public departments throughout the project

Held multiple meetings with municipal technicians and residents to understand how to minimize road closure impacts and how to re-shape roads-redevelopment.

Social value mapping methodologies in Renewable Energy Planning

Lessons from participatory community
engagement pilots in Europe

Elif Gündüzyeli & Tijana Simonovic

The Nature Conservancy

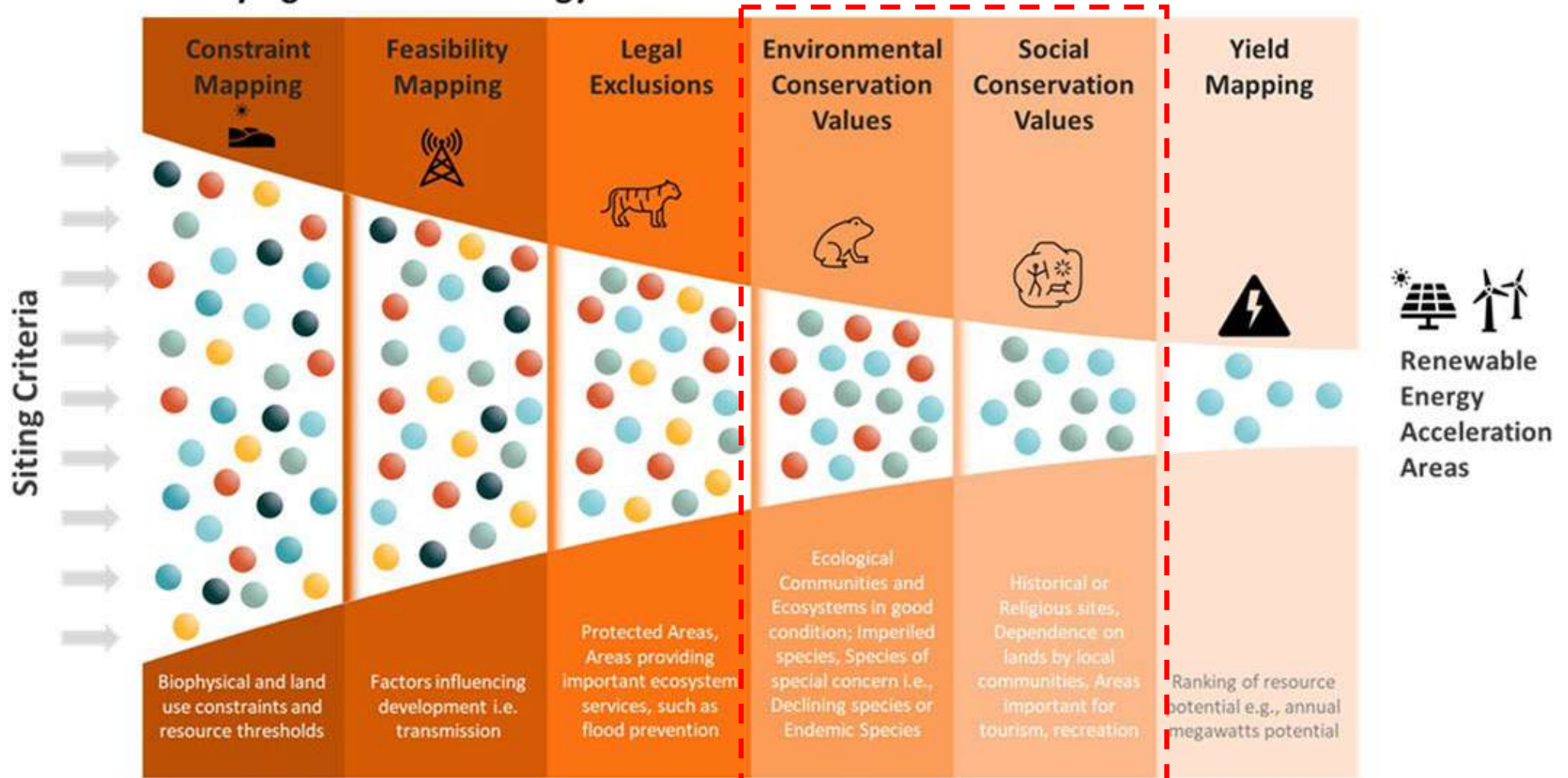
elif.gunduziyeli@tnc.org

tijana.simonovic@tnc.org

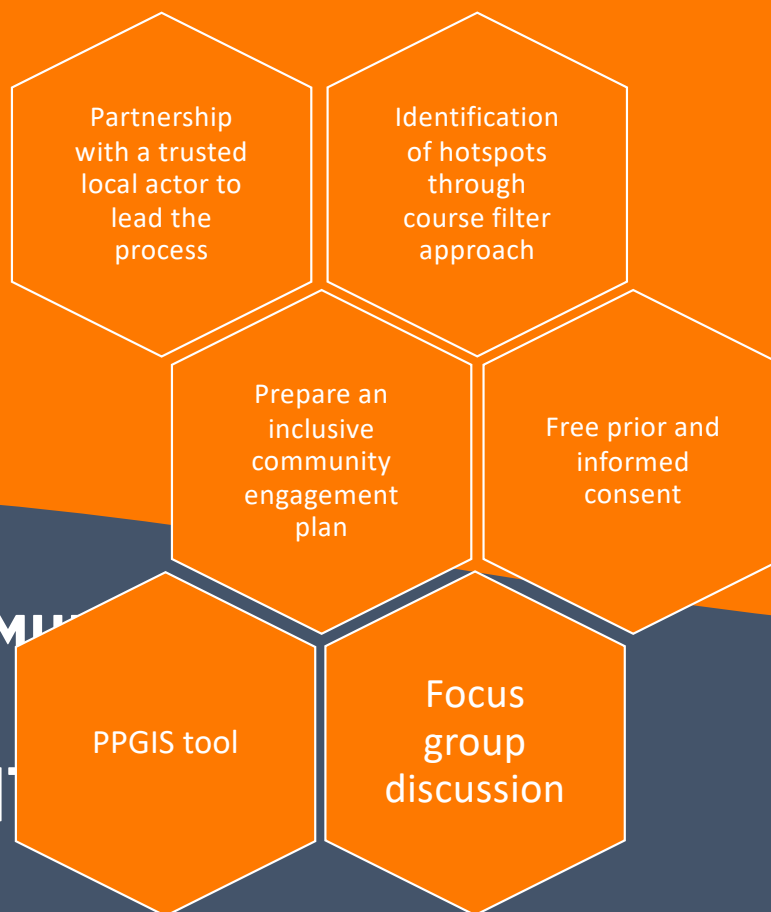
The Nature
Conservancy 



Identifying Renewable Energy Acceleration Areas



Kiesecker, Joseph M., et al. "Land use and Europe's renewable energy transition: identifying low-conflict areas for wind and solar development." *Frontiers in Environmental Science* 12 (2024): 1355508.



PARTICIPATORY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT



Thank you.

Elif Gündüzyeli & Tijana Simonovic

elif.gunduziyeli@tnc.org

tijana.simonovic@tnc.org



Best Practices for Local and Community Benefit Schemes

EirGrids Community Engagement Journey

23rd October 2025

Presented By:

Avril Wilson
Senior Lead Engagement Specialist





Community Journey



Community Forum

Community organisations from the project area have nominated representatives to participate on the project forum.

The Forum will oversee the development of the community benefit strategy in cooperation with a fund administrator.

Project Milestone
**Develop
Community
Benefit Fund
Strategy for
Project area**

Project Milestone
**Break Ground On
Construction**

Community Benefit Milestone
**Appoint Community
Benefit Administrator**

Project Milestone
Planning Consent

Community Benefit
Milestone
**Phase 1 - Release
40% of funds**

Project Milestone
**Energisation of
Project**

Community Benefit
Milestone
**Phase 2 Release
30% of funds**

Project Milestone
**Midway through
Cable Laying**

Community Benefit
Milestone
**Phase 3 - Release
30% of funds**



***LUNCH & FREE WALK
AROUND THE FAIR
IN THE SALON***



ENERGY & SOCIETY | Public Workshop



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23 October 2025
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Welcome Back!



**Agenda
& More**

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PANEL & PRESENTATIONS

Measuring the effectiveness of public engagement activities



Sinead Dooley

*Head of Public Engagement
EirGrid*



MODERATOR

Andreas Graf

*Policy Officer
ACER*



Hywel Jones

*Principal Consultant
Technopolis Group Belgium*



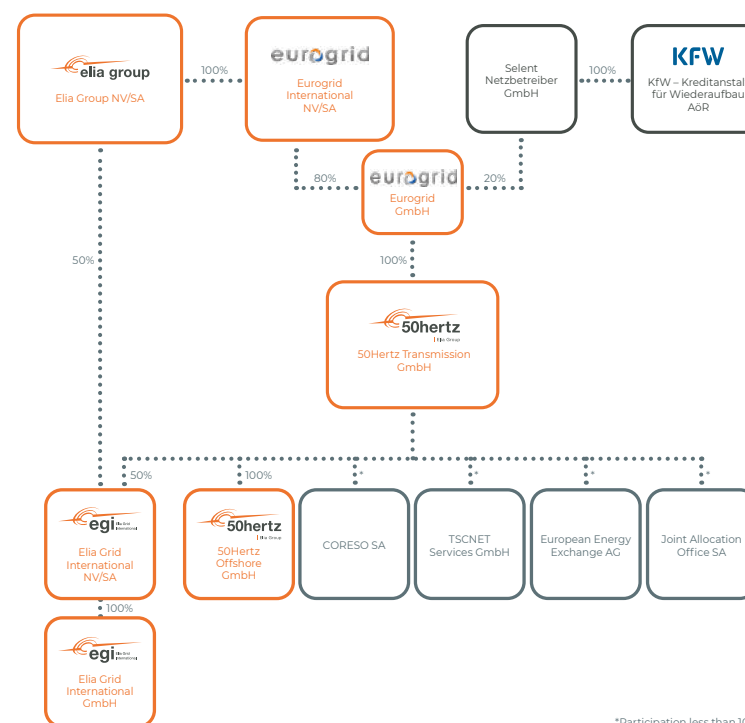
Maximilian Schulze-Vorberg

*EU Affairs Advisor
50Hertz*

Public Engagement in Röhrsdorf – Weida – Remptendorf Project



One of four German TSOs & part of the Elia Group

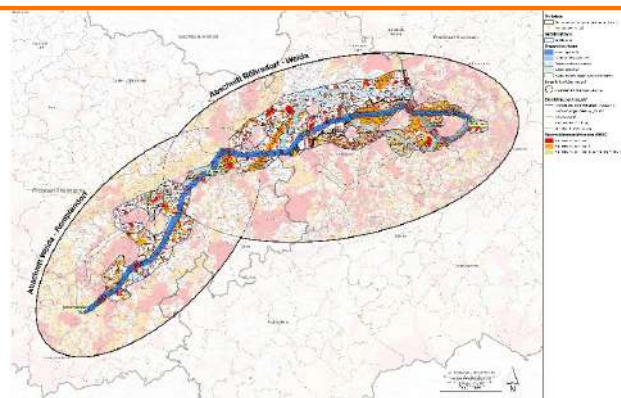


*Participation less than 10%

Measures taken: Röhrsdorf – Weida – Remptendorf Project

Project:

- **380-kV AC overhead line** from Röhrsdorf (Saxony) to Remptendorf (Thuringia)
- Replacement of existing 105 km overhead line



Ministerial working group
(target group: federal state representatives and planning authorities)

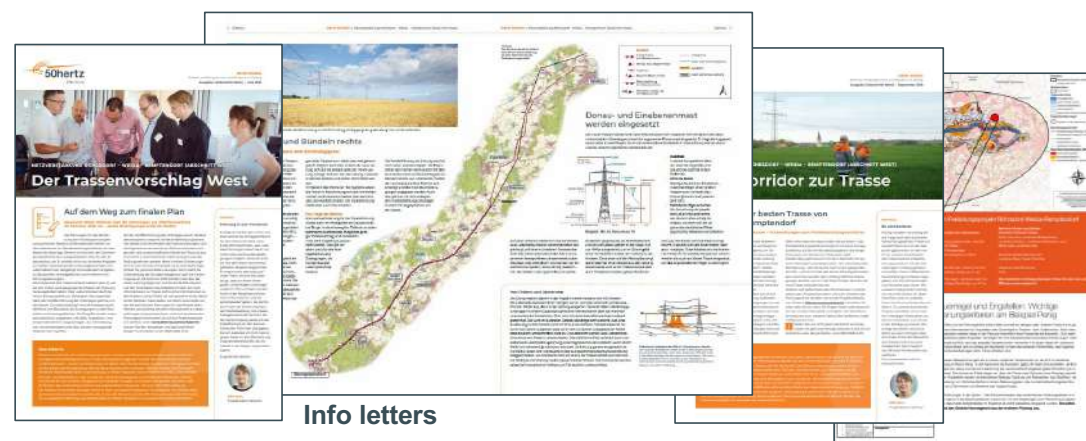


Planning fora (main target groups: local planning authorities, majors, environmental NGOs)

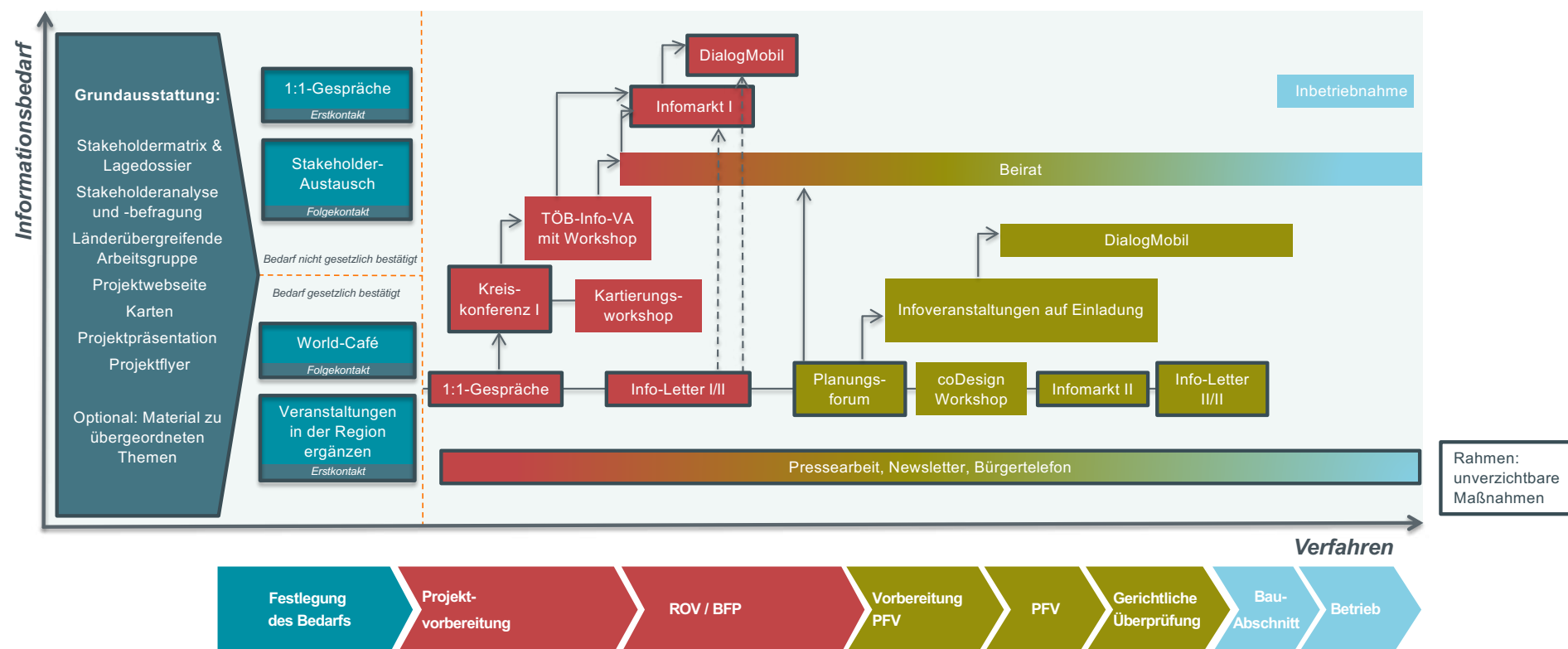
Mapping workshops (target group: nature conservation experts)



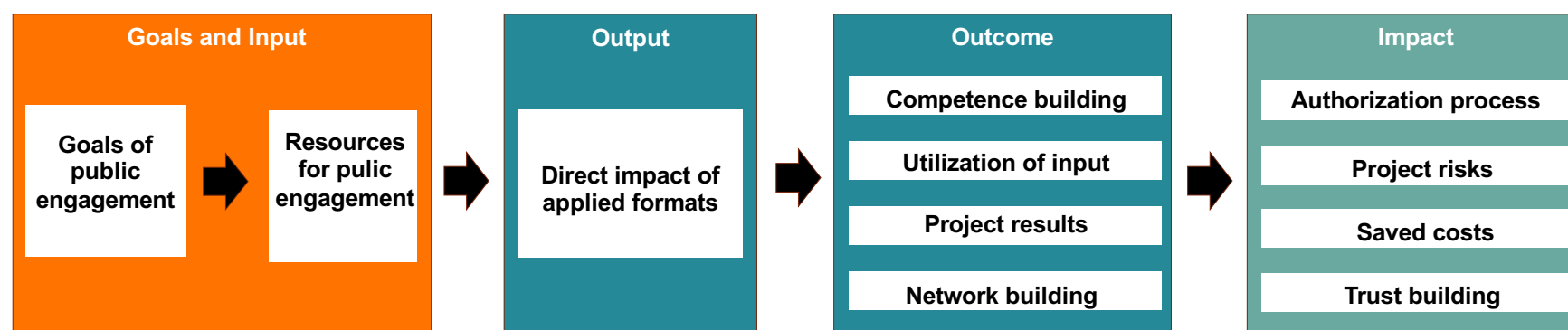
Measures taken: Röhrsdorf – Weida – Remptendorf Project



Public engagement measures along a project



Public Engagement Evaluation: Impact Model and Approach



- Qualitative study approach
- In-depth interviews with 20 stakeholders: public authorities, elected officials, NGOs, media representatives
- Questions derived from impact model

Public Engagement Evaluation: Results

- **Expected better planning results**, as relevant input shared considerably early on → **confirmed in subsequent formal processes**
- **Public engagement approach led to better informed stakeholders**, both on project and procedural specifics
- **Relevant networks built-up**, allowing for closer collaboration between project promoter and stakeholders
- **Trust built-up**, while closely linked to involved staff
- **Eased formal authorization procedure** through early conflict detection; yet, risk of marginalization of formal procedure
- **On top: Relevant feedback on how to best apply formats towards 50Hertz**

Thank you



Measuring Effectiveness of Public Engagement Activities



Sinead Dooley
Head of Public Engagement
EirGrid





Stakeholder engagement & evaluation

Hywel Jones, Technopolis Group Presentation

23 October 2025




Project examples

Stakeholder engagement

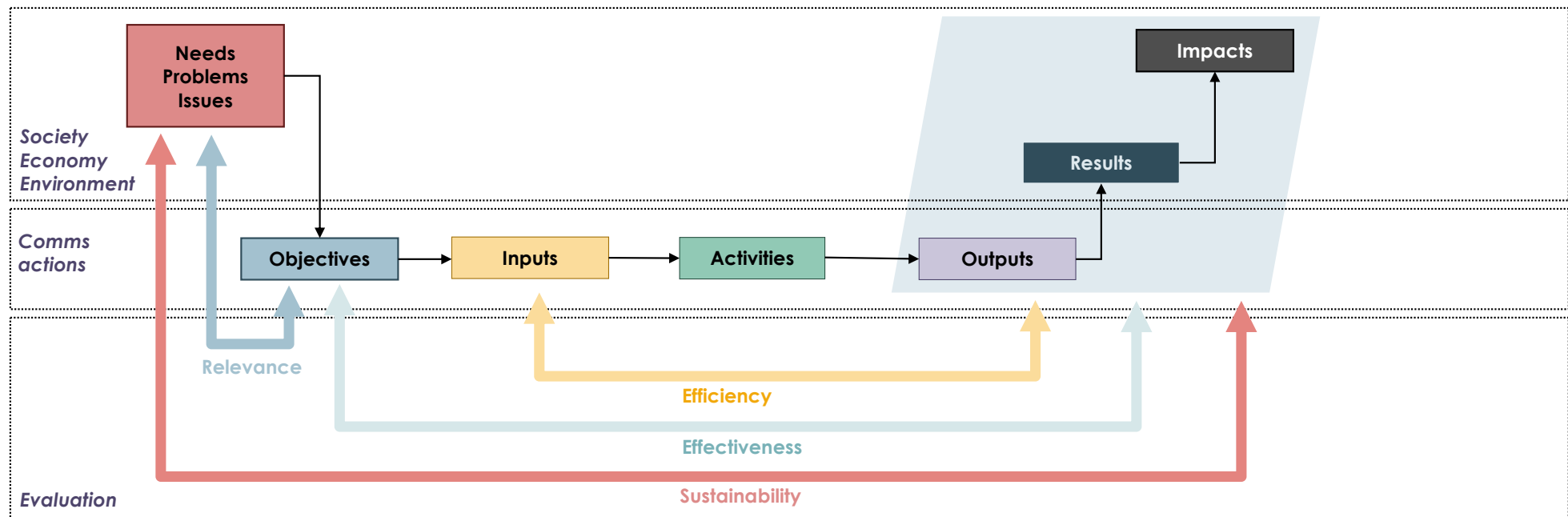
-  Green economy:
 -  Eco-innovation action plan
 -  Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform
 -  Zero Pollution Stakeholder Platform
-  Content & communities:
 -  Newsletters / websites
 -  Events / networks

Communication evaluation

-  Campaign evaluations:
 -  #InvestEU
 -  #NextGenEU / You Are EU
-  Communication strategy:
 -  DG REGIO (media partners)
 -  DG ECFIN (media/events)
-  Cross-theme/policy
 -  EU Citizens Panels
 -  EU Funding Visibility rules



Communication evaluation: Intervention logics & evaluation criteria



Source: Adapted from EC

Communication evaluation: indicator frameworks





Data collection tools

	Relevance	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Coherence	Sustainability	Added value
Quantitative						
Desk research	√	√	√	√	√	√
Monitoring data		√	√			
Survey	√	√		√	√	√
Qualitative						
Direct observation		√		√		
Interviews	√	√	√	√	√	√
Focus groups	√	√				60



Any questions?

Abidjan • Amsterdam • Berlin • Bogotá • Brighton • Brussels • Frankfurt/Main • London •
Paris • Stockholm • Tallinn • Vienna

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Coffee Break

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INTERACTIVE SESSION

**Integrating insights from today into principles
for local and community benefit schemes**

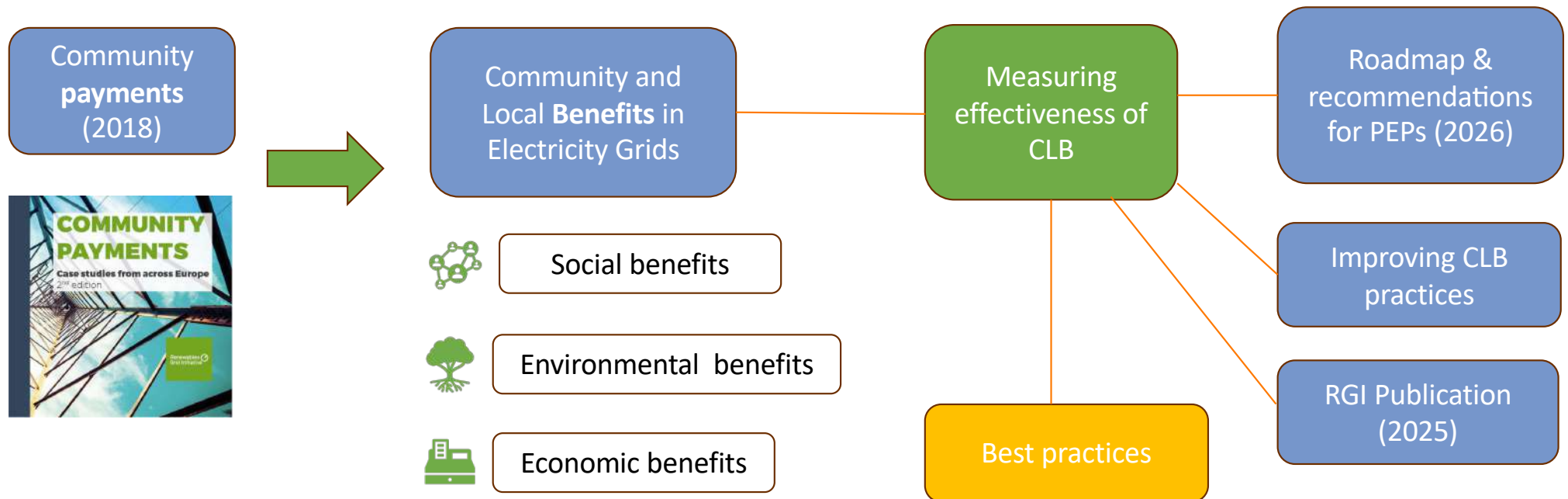


Ira Shefer

*Manager – Energy Systems
Renewables Grid Initiative*



Background and context: how and why did we get here?



Measuring effectiveness of Community and local benefits (CLB)

Whether and how to assess CLB schemes and practices?



Strengths
table 1



Weaknesses
table 2



Opportunities
table 3



Threats
table 4

40 minutes, 1 moderator per table, 1 note-taker, similar guiding questions for each table, open discussion

CLB: Definition

Community and local benefits (CLB) in electricity infrastructure refer to **measures** implemented primarily by, but not limited to, electricity grid operators that bring **added value** to local communities affected by the infrastructure in their **locality**. These benefits aim to **improve** the affected communities' and citizens' **economic, social and/or environmental conditions** including, but not limited to, targeted compensations in response to the direct impact of a grid project. Measures can include **monetary and non-monetary** benefits, and they and the **process** leading to them are **transparent, inclusive, and flexible** to meet communities' needs. Ideally, CLBs are developed in **cooperation** with local communities and as **early** as possible in the grid development process.

WRAP-UP OF INTERACTIVE SESSION



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WORKSHOP WRAP-UP & FINAL REMARKS



Andrzej Ceglarz

Director – Energy Systems, RGI



Where did we land?



NETWORKING DRINKS

IN THE SALON



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Thank You!

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