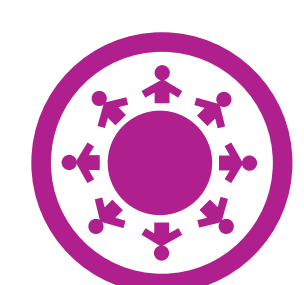


In 2011, under the guidance of the Renewables-Grid-Initiative (RGI), a coalition of Europe's 29 largest environmental NGOs and TSOs pledged to work in partnership to ensure that the goals of grid modernisation and environmental protection can be achieved side by side. The European Grid Declaration (EGD) was publicly signed in Brussels. In 2012, the EGD has been extended by principles covering transparency and public participation.

Many of the principles and ideas covered by both parts of the EGD are already being considered and tested by RGI members. Throughout 2012, RGI has collected practical steps taken to make grid development quicker, more socially acceptable, and increasingly environmentally sound. This map highlights 10 examples from across Europe covering six different themes.

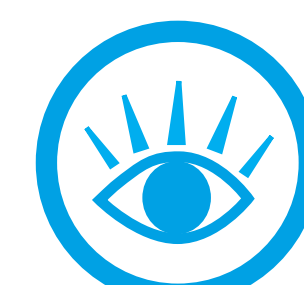
For more information on challenges in grid development projects, lessons learned, and a full collection of over 80 selected, practical experiences: Please download the European Grid Report on: www.renewables-grid.eu/activities/best-practices.html



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT
 Early stakeholder engagement is a useful way to obtain relevant input at a stage in the process where it can have an impact on the outcome of the decision-making process. Ongoing stakeholder engagement, regular consultation and easy availability of information throughout the process help to reduce conflicts.



COOPERATION WITH NGOs
 Ongoing and constructive cooperation between TSOs and NGOs benefits both parties. It contributes both to improving environmental planning and to timely grid expansion. There are still factors which can impede cooperation, especially the lack of resources among NGOs combined with the need to maintain their independence.



TRANSPARENCY
 Transparency is a prerequisite to achieve public acceptance of grid projects. Any feeling of "behind-the-scenes" decisionmaking fuels mistrust from both the public and NGOs. Only if the public and other stakeholders can comprehend and re-trace different planning steps, it is possible for them to accept the final solution as legitimate.



SOCIAL CONCERNS
 The question whether electro-magnetic fields close to overhead power lines have a negative impact on health is one of the most emotional discussion points during many grid projects. Emotionally loaded arguments cannot be responded by a one-size-fits-all solution. TSOs rather try out new formats to address this challenge.



ENVIRONMENT AND NATURE CONSERVATION
 The EU directives and guidelines on SEAs* and EIAs** provide frameworks for how environmental concerns can be systematically embedded within the grid development process. In addition to undertaking these assessments, many TSOs are working on additional and innovative ways to limit the environmental impact of grids.



CREDIBLE AND UNDERSTANDABLE INFORMATION
 To enable productive engagement by the public and NGOs, it is vital to provide credible information. While this is challenging on many levels, it is key to making discussion constructive and fruitful as well building trust between the actors involved.