



Public Engagement
for Energy
Infrastructure

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GETTING THEM ALL ON BOARD:

Meaningful public engagement to
enhance acceptance for large-scale
energy infrastructure projects

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Why public engagement matters?



Public engagement can **coordinate diverse interests & facilitate expression of different perspective** in energy projects



Who to engage, how and why?



Key actors: Policy makers & regulators, energy infrastructure developers, civil society



How? Through collaborations, incl. integrated bottom-up & top-down approaches



Why? Energy agencies develop & implement energy & climate policies and practices.



Public engagement should be a key component





Public Engagement
for Energy
Infrastructure

The Task in a nutshell

UsersTCP's **Public Engagement for Energy Infrastructure Task**, part of IEA Technology Collaboration Programme



TASK LEADERS



Renewables
Grid Initiative 



DURATION PHASE 1

March 2023 – March 2024



FUNDING COUNTRIES

Ireland, Netherlands, Sweden, United Kingdom and Switzerland



The Task in a nutshell

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TECHNOLOGY FOCUS

Large scale wind, large scale solar, electricity grids and biomass



OBJECTIVES

- Identify **common challenges and drivers** for effective public engagement
- Collect evidence from international case studies about **effective & ineffective** approaches
- Develop **transferable and actionable guidance** for engagement around energy infrastructure



What engagement challenges do you face?

Public engagement challenges that projects promoters are facing; and that are *relevant to policy makers and civil society actors*



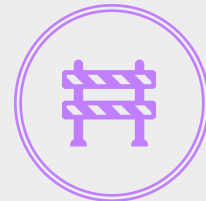
Little public engagement



Saving resources (costs & time)



Public opposition



Overcoming institutional barriers

Forms of engagement



Information

One-way communication to raise awareness, incl. digital formats. The public does not provide input



Consultation

Two-way dialogue to gather local views and knowledge. The public can shape the process but not the objectives and outcomes



Empowerment

Two-way community-led engagement. The public co-designs and help shape the process, its objectives and outcomes

All forms of participation can be useful, as various types of engagement can achieve goals in certain contexts, and stakeholders may have diverse preferences for participation.



Engagement principles

Four key principles for meaningful public engagement



Early engagement of stakeholders



Transparency about the engagement process and its outcomes



Inclusiveness of diverse individuals and social groups in the **entire lifecycle**



Developing trust in project developers and policymakers



The #Engage4Energy tool



Explore now!

bit.ly/E4ETool



Interactive PDF, available online



Subject to ongoing updates by
RGI and IEECP

Target groups:



Developers in grids, wind and solar



Policymakers at national, regional & local levels



Civil society organizations & citizens



Let's get inspired



MACHAIRWIND

2023 • SCOTLAND • SCOTTISH POWER RENEWABLES (SPR) • INFORMATION SHARING & CONSULTATION

- MachairWind will be SPR's first offshore windfarm on the west coast of Scotland.
- A special engagement team was set to accompany the project planning and implementation.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Accessible information in a designated section of its website, with regular updates and news about the project and its progress shared.
- The Community Engagement Manager was recruited from the affected community.
- Several meetings and public drop-in sessions to elaborate and receive feedback on the planned project.
- Public events and educational activities to explain about the project and generally about wind energy.

IMPACTS & OUTCOMES

- As of early 2024, engagement activities continued as planned, and construction is expected to start in the planned timeline.



Let's get inspired



BAIRRO SOLAR

2023 • PORTUGAL & SPAIN • EDP • INFORMATION SHARING

- Residents and businesses are empowered as part of the energy sharing community, with the energy supplier (EDP) maintaining ownership of the solar panels
- Involvement of recognized entities like EDP, ECODES, and local authorities likely contributed to institutional trust: by being structured as a community initiative, the projects inherently foster social trust among participants

HIGHLIGHTS

- Around 30-35% savings on the communities' energy bills, while vulnerable families receive free energy consumption, contributing to social welfare and energy poverty mitigation
- Ensures professional maintenance and operation while granting community members the benefits of shared energy without the need for personal investment.

IMPACTS & OUTCOMES

- EDP's investment in solar energy is part of a larger commitment to invest significantly in renewable energy by 2026, highlighting the economic and environmental priorities of the initiative.



Let's get inspired



SOUTH-WEST 380KV EAST

2008 • NETHERLANDS • TENNET • EMPOWERMENT

- TenneT is the Transmission System Operator (TSO) for the Netherlands, and in a large part of Germany.
- A co-design process allowed stakeholders to participate in decision-making of criteria for the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), the power line route, as well as selected specific locations and connections.

HIGHLIGHTS

- 700 interested citizens joined open information sessions that allowed the project team to harvest stakeholders' concerns, preferences, and bottlenecks along the route.
- Work studios allowed residents and other stakeholders to brainstorm ideas for siting issues, as well as discuss preferred solutions for specific locations. The project team considered concerns of opposition from non-participant groups, leading to undergrounding.

IMPACTS & OUTCOMES

- Hiring new employees to lead the engagement within the grid project ensured a trustworthy relationship could be developed with local stakeholders.
- A request from stakeholders within the Work Studios prompted an analysis of different types of pylons, which led to a change in TenneT's common practice to the Moldau model.



What you can do to support meaningful public engagement



Communicate about the energy transition and engagement opportunities



Provide resources for public engagement (time, budget, capacities)



Enable the public to become **co-owners** of the decision-making process: be inclusive, be transparent, engage early



Consider how project can create **local and regional added value** in long-term





Initiate strong and trusted multi-level and **multi-stakeholder collaborations**



Read more! And feel free to get in touch.

<https://userstcp.org/public-engagement-for-energy-infrastructure-task/>

EXPLORE THE INTERACTIVE GUIDE

Drivers and barriers of public engagement in energy infrastructure

Literature review and expert interviews

November 2023

Institute for European Energy and Climate Policy (IEECP) and Renewables Grid Initiative (RGI)




Impact assessment of case studies

Assessing the impacts of public engagement in energy infrastructure projects

February 2024

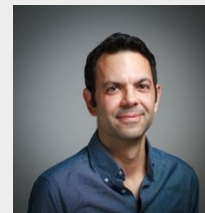
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Get in touch

If you have further questions or would like to discuss synergies, feel free to reach out to us!



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