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Abstract
<p>Regarding the objectives of the INSPIRE-Grid project, “Enhancing participation for power lines planning processes”, this deliverable contains a set of preliminary guidelines for engaging stakeholders in transmission development projects. It presents a ten step process in order to help Transmission System Operators (TSOs) or other leaders of transmission development projects in their interactions with stakeholders.</p> <p>This report proves, that poor engagement not only negatively affects stakeholders but can also adversely impact the leader of an engagement process – in this case the TSO or government agency charged with managing the project development process. Despite the value to companies undertaking transmission projects, in many cases stakeholder engagement is still lacking. Common challenges faced by leaders of stakeholder engagement include: failure to adapt engagement to the specific project context; failure to identify the right stakeholders; failure to choose the right engagement activities; lack of effective stakeholder engagement early in the process; lack of a strategic approach to engagement; and lack of capacity and support for effective engagement. To minimize the mentioned challenges to possible smallest extent, ten points as guidance for TSOs or leaders of transmission development projects are listed. They go as following: identifying the stakeholders, mapping the stakeholders, defining key issues, understanding stakeholder values, determining the engagement level, selection of assessment methods and engagement tools, draft engagement plan, preparation for engagement, implementation of the engagement plan and the review of the engagement process. This deliverable was built on the theoretical framework developed in Deliverable 5.1 and produced on data used in Work Packages 2 and 3.</p>

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ACRONYMS AND DEFINITIONS

EMF	Electromagnetic Field
LCA	Life Cycle Assessment
MCA	Multi-Criteria Analysis
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
TSO	Transmission System Operator
WebGIS	Web-based Geographic Information System
WP	Work Package



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This deliverable contains a set of preliminary guidelines for engaging stakeholders in transmission development projects. Following on from the work undertaken to date in Work Packages 2 and 3 and building on the theoretical framework developed in Deliverable 5.1, a ten step process is proposed to help guide Transmission System Operators (TSOs) or other leaders of transmission development projects in their interactions with stakeholders.

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to stakeholder engagement and, after recapping the benefits and limitations of public participation or engagement (as outlined in Deliverable 3.2), continues by demonstrating the importance of stakeholder engagement. Poor engagement not only negatively affects stakeholders but can also adversely impact the leader of an engagement process – in this case the TSO or government agency charged with managing the project development process. However, despite the value to companies undertaking transmission projects, in many cases stakeholder engagement is still lacking. Common challenges faced by leaders of stakeholder engagement include: failure to adapt engagement to the specific project context; failure to identify the right stakeholders; failure to choose the right engagement activities; lack of effective stakeholder engagement early in the process; lack of a strategic approach to engagement; and lack of capacity and support for effective engagement.

Chapters 2 and 3 contain the proposed guidelines. Chapter 2 outlines five overarching principles that are intended to provide general guidance as to how the engagement process should be structured. The five principles are:

- Consistency – engagement should be consistent across multiple projects. This does not necessarily mean that each project will follow the exact same process but rather the overall approach to engaging stakeholders should be consistent.
- Transparency – the entire engagement process needs to be open and transparent. The scope and objectives of the process should be made clear from the outset along with a timeline and details of how stakeholders will be consulted and how their input will be considered.
- Timeliness – involving stakeholders as early in the process as possible is vital to the success of the engagement activities. Early involvement of stakeholders is beneficial not only for the stakeholders themselves but also for the leader of the engagement process.
- Proportionality – in addition to being clear about the scope of the process, it is important for stakeholder engagement to be adequate in context of the stage of the project. By this it is meant that, if stakeholders are asked to provide input to a particular issue then there must be a mechanism for including that input in the decision making process.
- Inclusiveness – the engagement process should include as broad a range of stakeholders as possible so that the process accurately reflects the views and opinions of those who will be affected by the project. Particular attention should be paid to including underrepresented stakeholders who might not otherwise have a voice in the process.



In addition to these five principles, it is important to keep in mind the issue of project context. There is no single correct way of undertaking a stakeholder engagement process as each project will present different opportunities and challenges and, due to its inherent nature, stakeholder engagement will always be context-specific.

It is important to remember that the guidelines suggested here should not be interpreted as being set in stone. It is not the intent of this deliverable to provide a ‘cookie-cutter’ or a ‘tick-box’ approach to stakeholder engagement. Instead, the guidelines should be seen as general principles that require tailoring to the project in question. With this in mind, the guidelines comprise ten steps, outlined in Chapter 3:

1. Identify stakeholders – both individual stakeholders and stakeholder groups, along with individual representatives of those groups, should be identified and their roles and positions understood.
2. Map stakeholders – stakeholders should be mapped according to defined criteria. Given the impact of power lines on nearby communities, it is important to include the typically hard to reach stakeholders.
3. Define key issues – a number of key issues that stakeholders are concerned about were identified in Deliverable 5.1. Although many, if not all, of these issues will be at stake in most new transmission projects, the relative levels of concern about each issue will likely vary, depending on the characteristics of the proposed line and the make-up of the stakeholder group.
4. Understand stakeholder values – while there are likely to exist competing values, to the greatest extent possible, the project should be placed in the context of the overall societal value system. Values to consider can range from the nature of the energy system (avoiding waste, reliability, long-term trajectories) to process criteria (fairness, honesty and transparency) via more general concepts about rights (autonomy and freedom, choice and control) and the environment (environmental protection, nature and naturalness).
5. Determine the engagement level – four levels of engagement are specified: information provision, consultation, co-decision and empowerment. While it is accepted that it is not always feasible to grant stakeholder full empowerment rights when it comes to transmission development, TSOs are encouraged to involve stakeholders in the decision making process to the greatest extent possible.
6. Select assessment methods and engagement tools – when undertaking stakeholder engagement it is important to know which tools to use and when to use them. Figures 8 and 9 represent a first attempt at a framework to help with these decisions.
7. Draft engagement plan – The engagement plan should document the engagement process and be available to all stakeholders. It is suggested that, at a minimum, the plan should cover: the mandate for the engagement; the purpose and scope of the engagement; the owners of the engagement, their roles and responsibilities; the methodology for and results from identifying stakeholders; the methodology for and results from profiling and mapping stakeholders; the pre-engagement activities; the engagement level(s) and methods; and the boundaries of disclosure.



8. Prepare for engagement – stakeholder engagement is an involved, time-consuming process and resources are required for both the engagement process and to incorporate any changes to the project that might arise out of the engagement process.
9. Implement the engagement plan – it is important that stakeholders have access to all the required information and that the information is understandable to the stakeholders. The engagement process should be adequately documented and received feedback needs to be addressed.
10. Review the engagement process – both the quality and the effect of the engagement process should be reviewed. Activities found to be wanting should be identified and steps should be taken to improve performance in these areas. Results of the process should be reported to stakeholders, the wider public as well as internally with the organisation leading the process.

Chapter 4 concludes the deliverable by recapping the guidelines and further information concerning the identified tools is provided in Annex 1. The next step in Work Package 5 is to test and validate the proposed guidelines in the field. This will be done using primary data to be collected in Work Packages 6 and 7 and through discussions with our TSO partners. Using this information, Deliverable 5.3 will contain the final guidelines for stakeholder engagement in transmission development projects.



1 INTRODUCTION

The goal of this deliverable is to propose a set of preliminary guidelines for engaging stakeholders in electricity transmission development projects. The guidelines build on the work undertaken in Deliverable 5.1 as well as the findings to date of Work Packages 2 and 3.

Over the past few decades there has been an increasing emphasis placed on involving people in decisions which affect them. This has been particularly true with regard to environmental issues (Luyet, Schlaepfer, Parlange, & Buttler, 2012) and is becoming more common in the development of new power lines. In Deliverable 3.2 it was discussed how a number of European TSOs have signed the 2012 European Grid Declaration on Transparency and Public Participation and, in doing so, acknowledge the important of public participation in grid planning.

While Work Package 3 relates more to public participation in general, there exists an obvious overlap – both in terms of the literature and tools – between public participation and stakeholder engagement. Here, the term ‘stakeholder’ refers to groups or individuals who can affect, or are affected, by a transmission project. Stakeholders differ depending on the phase of a project, in accordance with the general rule that the less advanced the project is, the less localized stakeholders are (e.g. at the need definition stage, the stakeholders are more likely to be national level groups rather than local groups or individuals).¹ Whereas WP3 discusses public participation in general terms, the goal of this deliverable is to develop preliminary guidelines for the stakeholder engagement process.

Work Package 3 outlined a number of benefits of public participation along with a number of challenges that are often encountered when involving the public in the decision making process. Both these benefits and challenges relate to stakeholder engagement as well as public participation more broadly and are worth recapping here. As listed in Table 2 in Deliverable 3.2 “Establishing the best practices and determining a tool box”, the benefits of public participation include:

- Improvement of democratic decision making processes, increase of confidence-trust, contribution to public accountability, promotion of solidarity.
- Decrease of opposition, diffusion of conflicts, creation of ownership and empowerment.
- Improvement of policy effectiveness credibility and legitimation of projects
- Elicitation of different perspectives, values, interests, etc.
- Co-production of knowledge among those affected by a decision (typically expert and lay knowledge).
- Adaptation of policy design to local issues.
- Contribution to raising public awareness and support for decisions.
- Bringing to light new problem-solving options.
- Create consensus or compromise towards shared choices.

¹ See Deliverable 6.1, Annex 1 – Glossary of INSPIRE-Grid Concepts and Terms.



And the drawbacks include:

- Lack of legitimacy and representativeness of the decision.
- Obstacles in the ‘macro-political uptake of mini-publics’², gaps between promises and results.
- Wrong assumptions about the aims: e.g. participation as a tool of legitimation of decisions rather than investigation of citizens’ needs (which are often pre-defined in the processes).
- Stabilization of existing power distributions, slower decision making.
- Time and resources constraints.
- Difficulties to communicate complex scientific information, especially to lay people.
- Difficulties to reach a compromise on the final decision (e.g. because of lack of preference change, will manipulation, etc.).

Another drawback that could be added to the list is conflict between private interests and the public good. However, despite the challenges, the benefits of involving stakeholders in the decision making process far outweigh any negative aspects. This can be further demonstrated by looking at potential implications of poor stakeholder engagement. Writing about the mining industry (predominantly in developing countries), Shift (2013) takes a rights-based approach to engagement and stresses that negative impacts from a lack of engagement can be felt both by the company undertaking the development activities as well as by the stakeholders affected by the project (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Implications of poor stakeholder engagement

Implications for stakeholders	Implications for companies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heightened risks of adverse impacts across the full spectrum of human rights, and risks of further marginalization of vulnerable groups. • Some stakeholders are excluded from dialogue with company and do not have meaningful opportunities for expressing their views and concerns about the project. • Diminished timeframe to gain understanding and prepare themselves for a project or for transitions during the project lifecycle. • Limited channels for negative impacts or grievances to be raised, discussed and remediated. • Temptation to use other means (blockages, protests) in order to get a response to concerns. • Diminished opportunity to localize benefits, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lost productivity due to project delays or disruption. • Opportunity costs arising from the inability to pursue future projects and/or opportunities for expansion or for sale. • Cost of additional staff time needed when conflict arises or escalates. • Loss of value to a company in failing to secure the benefits of building sustainable community relationships, a resilient supply chain, or a secure local workforce. • Potential alienation of stakeholders who feel that their concerns are not being heard and/or provocation of opponents. • Creating unrealistic stakeholder expectations about positive impacts and benefits, and lack of

² Term used for the first time by Goodin and Dryzek (2006), which refers to engaging local citizens in decision-making process. Authors explored and illustrated democratic possibilities which are given by different deliberative innovations which may bring into deliberative democratization.



<p>including jobs and business opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited channels for workers from communities to provide early warning about community concerns. Workers can be in conflict between their role as employees and as community members. 	<p>understanding of potential negative impacts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating suspicion that the company has ulterior motives and something to hide. • Limited appreciation of the full range of potential social and human rights impacts. Heightened political, social and human rights risks and resulting missed opportunities to mitigate such impacts and risks. • Claims, campaigns or lawsuits regarding alleged infringement of one or more human rights. • Frustration and turnover of staff in stakeholder engagement or community relation functions. • Inability to follow-up effectively on commitments and/ or respond to complaints. • Incoherent messages, actions and image in the local community.
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Source: Shift, 2013

As can be seen from the above list, the negative implications for companies from poor stakeholder engagement number more than the negative implications for communities. Engagement therefore should be viewed as an activity which will be of benefit to project developers as well as stakeholders. Indeed, there are encouraging signs that, in the electricity sector, there is a growing understanding of the benefits of a well planned and executed stakeholder engagement process. In a recent study into stakeholder engagement in the electricity sector, Working Group C3.04 of the International Council on Large Electric Systems (Cigré) conducted an online survey of 49 representatives from the electricity industry (transmission, distribution, generation and retail sectors) in 2008 (Cigré, 2013). Although not representative, the survey provides some interesting insights into current attitudes towards stakeholder engagement.

Among the organisations that responded to the survey, there is increasing awareness of the benefits of stakeholder engagement. This is not just due to commitments to sustainable development but also because there is an understanding of the benefits that engagement offers both to the organisation and the individual projects. There is a realisation of the need for transparency, trust building and social responsibility when dealing with stakeholders and that such an approach lends itself to developing good community relationships, which in turn can be seen to help with risk management issues. The survey also found that there is openness to learning from past experiences to develop best practices for engagement in the electricity sector.

In many countries there is a legal requirement to conduct at least a minimum level of engagement and Cigré found that many respondents to the survey go beyond the minimum, recognising the benefits that engagement can bring. Despite this, there does remain a perception among some of the respondents that engagement is a regulatory obligation which companies must comply with, rather than a key component of the development process. As Cigré cautions if stakeholder engagement is undertaken out of a regulatory duty then “there is a risk that organisations will not fully recognise stakeholder or customer drivers in their



businesses, and not optimally respond to the needs of the societies they serve” (Cigré, 2013, p. 66). Cigré also warns against organisations using engagement to ‘sell’ a project under the guise of ‘asking’ for input. Early involvement of stakeholders in the decision making process and integrating stakeholder input helps demonstrate that the organisation is committed to actually engaging with stakeholders and is not just using engagement as a façade to gain stakeholder approval of its proposal.

Despite the value to companies undertaking transmission development projects and the encouraging responses to the Cigré survey, in many cases stakeholder engagement is still lacking. The non-representative nature of the survey means that the results are not statistically valid so it is impossible to know whether the organisations that responded to the survey are the ones which place a greater emphasis on stakeholder engagement thus skewing the results. In investigating why organisations are still getting stakeholder engagement wrong, Shift (2013) identifies six persistent challenges related to stakeholder engagement:

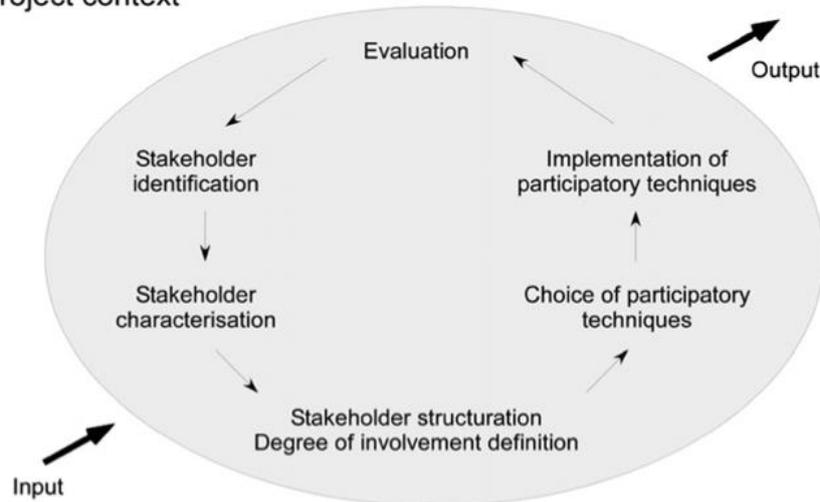
- Failure to adapt stakeholder engagement to the operational context.
- Failure to identify the right stakeholders.
- Failure to choose the right engagement activities.
- Lack of effective stakeholder engagement at early stages of exploration and project development.
- Lack of a strategic approach to stakeholder engagement across the project lifecycle.
- Lack of capacity and support for effective stakeholder engagement.

The above list highlights the fact that there are potential pitfalls at every stage of the stakeholder engagement process – from understanding the context of engagement, to choosing the right engagement tools and activities, to a lack of capacity within the organisation for effective engagement and care must be taken throughout the entire engagement process to ensure that such challenges are overcome.

As might be expected given the importance of stakeholder engagement and public participation in the decision making process, there exists a substantial literature detailing the subject, much of it reviewed in WP3. A helpful way of visualising the general engagement process is through a framework proposed by (Luyet et al., 2012). In the model (reproduced in Figure 2) there are six steps, starting with stakeholder identification and ending with an evaluation of the process. The framework also takes into account the project context, inputs (e.g. grid expansion/upgrade policies) and outputs (e.g. decisions). While the model is not adopted in its entirety here, all six of the stages in the framework can be found in the guidelines presented in the next section. Perhaps of most importance for INSPIRE-Grid is the representation of engagement as being a cyclical process. After the engagement activities have been completed it is important to review the process and apply any findings to future projects. In this way, engagement activities undertaken for a specific project should not be viewed in isolation but rather as smaller components of a larger engagement process.



Figure 2: Luyet et al.'s proposed framework for stakeholder participation
Project context



Source: Luyet et al., 2012

Also worth considering is the dynamic nature of stakeholder engagement. In studying the siting of radioactive waste facilities, Krütli, Stauffacher, Flüeler, and Scholz (2010) note that “public participation needs consideration as to the *right form* at the *right time* rather than *the more participation, the better*” (p. 865, emphasis in original). For Krütli et al. *when* to include stakeholder is as important a question as *who* to involve and *how*. Krütli et al. continue by proposing a functional-dynamic model of public participation which combines specific types of engagement with the different phases of the decision making process. More specifically, the model assigns one particular engagement tool to each step of the decision making process, depending on the stage of the project at the level of engagement desired. In terms of the level of engagement, Krütli et al. propose four levels: information, consultation, collaboration and empowerment. Fundamental to the framework is the idea that these different levels of participation fit with the constraints set by the various steps in the decision making process. In other words, if stakeholders are empowered to make certain decisions, then such decisions can only be made at a stage of the project which allows for that level of stakeholder input.

Over the past decade a number of sets of guidelines have been produced covering a variety of industries and addressing a range of issues. Examples of such guidelines include those produced by: the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2, n.d.); Australia’s Ministerial Council on Mineral and Petroleum Resources (2005); the International Finance Corporation (2007); REVIT (2007); AccountAbility (2011); UN-REDD Programme (2012); Australian Energy Regulator (2013); Cigré (2013); Roland Berger (2014); and the above-mentioned guidelines from Shift (2013). A number of common themes can be identified that run through the various sets of guidelines and the key points are summarized in the next chapter. The intent of WP5 is to first develop preliminary guidelines from the literature and then use primary data collected from the case studies to refine the guidelines for transmission development. The guidelines presented here will be analysed using field data collected in WP6 in order to assess how applicable they are to transmission development projects. As such, the guidelines listed below should not be taken as final, they will be developed further as the INSPIRE-Grid project moves into the case study phase.



2 KEY PRINCIPLES FOR STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Although the information provided in the above-mentioned guideline documents varies depending on the context of the project, there are a number of key principles for stakeholder engagement that remain constant across industry sectors and geographic regions. A number of these overarching principles will be outlined here before moving on to the more specific draft guidelines for stakeholder engagement. As might be expected, there is a substantial overlap between best practices for the stakeholder engagement process and broader concept of public participation. As such, some of the principles listed below are also included in the criteria for effective public participation identified in Deliverable 3.2. While there is some repetition, it was deemed helpful to still include such principles here in order to provide a full picture of the stakeholder engagement process.

First and foremost it is important to understand the context of the project. There is no single correct way of undertaking a stakeholder engagement process as each project will present different opportunities and challenges and, due to its inherent nature, stakeholder engagement will always be context-specific (International Finance Corporation, 2007). However, despite there not being one right way of conducting stakeholder engagement, there are many wrong ways of doing so and a lot of these issues can stem from a failure to appreciate the project context. Referring to the mining industry, Shift (2013) comments that “particular challenges arise where companies do not sufficiently adapt their stakeholder engagement strategies and approaches to their specific operational contexts. The best policies, procedures and intentions may fail to connect with local expectations, customs and traditions. Therefore, guidance on stakeholder engagement should not promote a “cookie-cutter” or “tick-box” approach, but rather should support the development of customized and context-specific engagement plans” (p. 10). Thus the principles and guidelines proposed in this deliverable need to be understood to general guidance that must be tailored to the project in question. As will be seen, each of the steps in the guidelines detailed in Chapter 4, requires an understanding of project-specific issues and the selected engagement tools need to fit with both the characteristics of the project and the composition of the stakeholders.

So how to design guidelines that can be consistently applied across a wide range of projects yet account for project-specific issues? Perhaps a useful starting point is to examine the core values for public participation proposed by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2). Shown in Figure 3, these seven values address concepts related to how stakeholders should be involved in the decision making process.

Figure 3: IAP2 core values for the practice of public participation

- Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
- Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
- Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
- Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
- Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.



- Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
- Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

Source: IAP2, n.d.

The seven values listed in Figure 3 make clear that public participation or stakeholder engagement is more than simply providing information to people. The values stress the rights stakeholders have along with the idea that they will have some influence in the decision. For transmission planning, these rights need to be balanced against the rights of other citizens to have a secure and stable supply of electricity and the legal mandate of the TSO. However, these various aspects of transmission planning are not mutually exclusive and it is possible to incorporate the rights of stakeholders in the planning process. The promise that the public will be able to influence the decision should not be interpreted as giving stakeholders the power of veto but rather that their concerns, values and needs will be considered in the planning process. Also worth stressing is the concept that the leaders of an engagement process (for example a TSO or government agency) should actively seek input from stakeholders and facilitate their involvement in the process. As will be seen in the guidelines below, stakeholders need to be identified and invited to participate in the process – it should not be expected that all stakeholders will enter into the process after simply hearing about a project.

Following on from IAP2's core values, a further five overarching principles, identified from the literature, provide general guidance as to how the engagement process should be structured. These principles are: consistency, transparency, timeliness, proportionality and inclusiveness.

Consistency

The concept of consistency is stressed by Cigré (2013) who note that the stakeholder engagement process should be “fundamentally consistent for all of a company’s construction projects” (p. 67). This is not to say that every engagement process will be the same, the projects will clearly vary in terms of the categories presented in the theoretical framework in Deliverable 5.1 (purpose, scale, landscape, stakeholders, past local experience, stakeholder concerns, social values, energy system values and the phase the project is in) but rather that the approach to stakeholders should be consistent. This idea of consistency refers back to the broader concepts of trust and fairness identified in Deliverable 3.2 and found throughout the stakeholder engagement literature. For stakeholders, seeing that a TSO is consistent in its approach to engagement will help foster a sense that the process is fair, that they are not being singled out or dealt with differently from other stakeholder groups.

Transparency

The entire engagement process needs to be open and transparent in order to maintain the levels of trust placed in the leader of the process. As noted by Cigré (2013), it is important that the objectives and scope of the engagement are made clear from the very beginning. Due to the nature of transmission siting, it is possible in certain cases that some issues, particularly those related to legislative and regulatory requirements, might be outside the scope of the engagement process. This might be case where there exists a clear need for a new line (for example, in the case of a bottleneck of the grid) meaning that a ‘zero’ or ‘do nothing’ approach is not feasible. In addition to the scope of the engagement process, the timescale



should also be made clear from the start, along with the steps in the engagement process, how the stakeholders will be consulted and how their input will be considered. Throughout the entire process, information should be provided in an accessible format, especially technical information which otherwise might not be understood by all stakeholders.

Timeliness

As highlighted in Deliverable 3.2, it is imperative to involve stakeholders early in the planning process. While there exist some real limitations in terms of which stakeholders can be involved (it is not usually possible to involve local stakeholders at the need definition phase of project development as the affected localities have not been identified at this stage) it is important to bring in affected stakeholders at the earliest possible stage. Early involvement is beneficial for not only the stakeholders but also the leader of the engagement process. While involving stakeholders early will help demonstrate to the public that the process is open, fair and transparent, it will also help the TSO, or other leader of the process, reduce the risk of encountering any surprises later in the process. It is important to remember that stakeholders should also be consulted early on about the scope and design of the engagement process itself, not just of the details of the project. However, that being said, stakeholders should understand that the development process is, in fact, a process and that certain details will likely not be available at the very beginning of the decision making process.

Proportionality

As discussed above with regard to the importance of transparency, it is important for the engagement leaders to be clear about the scope of the process and constraints placed upon it by the characteristics of the project. Key to this is being aware of the phase at which the project is in as different project stages will provide for different opportunities for stakeholder engagement. This is the approach taken by the functional-dynamic model outlined below. Given that resources are not infinite, it is important to understand where the most value can be gained from engagement activities. Moreover, a lot of effort expended at the margins of a project might yield few additional benefits. Furthermore stakeholder engagement “should be appropriate for the purpose and the target audience and should be proactive and meaningful” (Cigré, 2013, p. 68). One way to achieve this is to involve stakeholders at project stages where they can have some level of influence over the outcome or decision. Lastly, it might be useful to better ascertain what the stakeholders themselves feel is an appropriate level of involvement in order to understand what they deem to be a proportionate approach to stakeholder engagement.

Inclusiveness

Lastly, the stakeholder engagement process needs to include as broad a range of stakeholders as possible so that those involved in the process accurately represent those affected by the project. The first two steps in the guidelines presented below are designed to ensure that all stakeholders have the opportunity of being involved in the decision making process. It is important to remember that communities and stakeholder groups may change over time (Ministerial Council on Mineral and Petroleum Resources, 2005) and that it is not enough simply for a process to start off as inclusive. Rather, it must be ensured that the process remains representative of the project’s stakeholders throughout the life of the project. Particular attention should be paid to including underrepresented stakeholders who might not otherwise have a voice in the process.



3 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT GUIDELINES

Before embarking on a stakeholder engagement process it is necessary to ensure that the engagement activities have been adequately planned and thought through. For an engagement process to be successful it is vital to understand at the outset *why* engagement is needed, *what* to engage on, *who* should be involved in the process and *when* to engage stakeholders (AccountAbility, 2011; Krütli et al., 2010). Ten steps proposed here in order to help TSOs and leaders of transmission development projects are: identifying the stakeholders, mapping the stakeholders, defining key issues, understanding stakeholder values, determining the engagement level, selection of assessment methods and engagement tools, draft engagement plan, preparation for engagement, implementation of the engagement plan and the review of the engagement process. Every point is going to be presented more specifically below.

3.1 Identify stakeholders

In order to undertake a successful engagement process, it is first necessary to know with whom to engage. Both individual stakeholders and stakeholder groups, along with individual representatives of those groups, should be identified and their roles and positions understood. As discussed in Deliverables 2.1 and 5.1, there are a number of stakeholders who might be affected by the development of a new transmission line:³

- Planning, permitting and implementing authorities
- Grid operators
- Energy providers and producers
- Construction companies
- Broad public, residents and civil initiatives
- Nature conservationists
- Tourism industry
- Landowners, farmers and forest owners
- Hunters

It is important that the stakeholder identification process itself is transparent and open to ensure that all interested parties can participate in the engagement process and that the various stakeholders are afforded equal opportunity to contribute to the decision-making process (UN-REDD Programme, 2012). To assist the managers of engagement process to better understand what drives stakeholders, AccountAbility (2011) suggest a list of characteristics that the owners of an engagement process should seek to understand (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Stakeholder characteristics

- Knowledge of the issues associated with the purpose and scope of the engagement
- Expectations of the engagement
- Existing relationship with the organisation (close or distant; formal or informal; positive or negative)

³ For consistency across the INSPIRE-Grid project, the stakeholders identified in Deliverable 5.1 have been collapsed into the categories proposed in Deliverable 2.1.



- Dependence (or otherwise) on the organisation, which would necessitate that the stakeholder group should be able to express its views independently of management in order to contribute freely
- Willingness to engage
- Level of influence
- Type (civil society, government, consumer etc.)
- Cultural context
- Geographical scale of operation
- Capacity to engage (e.g. language barriers, IT literacy, disability)
- Legitimacy
- Relationships with other stakeholders

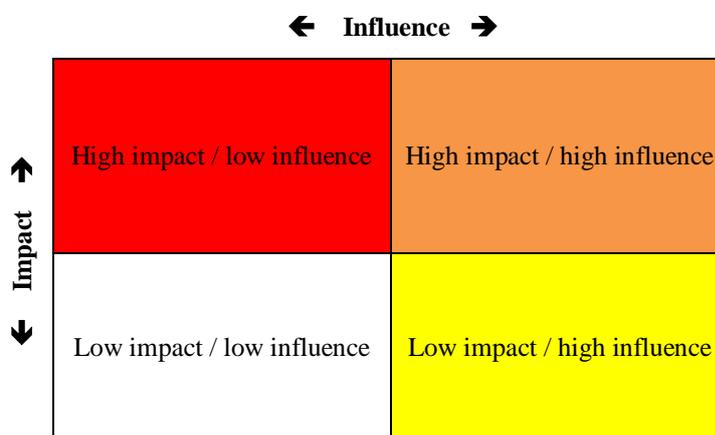
Source: AccountAbility, 2011

3.2 Map stakeholders

After identifying the various stakeholders and understanding their characteristics, the next step is to map the stakeholders according to certain key criteria. As demonstrated in Deliverable 2.1, stakeholder mapping is a powerful tool that can greatly increase understanding of both the make-up of the stakeholder group and the issues which are important to them. Stakeholders can be mapped in a number of different ways, for example according to their concerns and needs (see Deliverable 2.1), according to their level of responsibility (legal, financial, or operational) or influence (formal or informal) on the process, by their proximity (internal or external) or dependency (local residential or commercial customers, non-local entities), or by their representation (representatives from trade unions, local authorities, NGOs, etc.) (Krick, Forstater, Monaghan, & Sillanpää, 2005).

A traditional starting point is to make a distinction between the degree to which stakeholders are impacted by a project and their level of influence (International Finance Corporation, 2007; Shift, 2013). One simple differentiation is whether the stakeholders are directly or indirectly affected by the project (International Finance Corporation, 2007). A more complex approach, shown in Figure 5, is to compare the extent to which stakeholders are impacted by a project with their level of influence on the process (Shift, 2013).

Figure 5: Relationship between stakeholder impact and influence



Source: Shift, 2013



As noted by Shift (2013), there is a tendency for those running an engagement process to focus on the top-right quadrant – stakeholders who are both heavily impacted and have a large amount of influence in the process. For transmission projects, such stakeholders tend to include permitting agencies, politicians, municipalities, established NGOs and powerful community members. However, the rights-based approach taken by Shift places a higher emphasis on the top-left quadrant – those who are heavily impacted but have little influence on the outcome. For transmission development this might include local residents who do not own any of land that will be developed but who might be concerned about the risk of EMF, the visual impacts of the line, or local environmental impacts. The importance of including such stakeholders immediately becomes clear when one considers the difference between formal and informal influence. While local residents might not have much formal influence on the outcome, it is frequently from within this group that protests arise and it is these protests which have the potential to significantly affect the time it takes for a new line to be built.

The dimensions of the various stakeholders can also be mapped against each other. For example, a stakeholder level of influence could be mapped against the stakeholder's willingness to engage in the process. The type of stakeholder could be mapped against influence, or the ability to engage could be mapped against the expectations of the stakeholder (AccountAbility, 2011). As noted in the AccountAbility principles, undertaking the stakeholder mapping process in a systematic way should reduce the threat of having the engagement process dominated by certain (often the loudest) stakeholders. It is important to note that, due to the length of time that it takes to construct a new transmission line, it is quite possible that the make-up of the stakeholder group can change over time. Stakeholder mapping is therefore a task which should be repeated throughout the life of the project to ensure that new stakeholders are included in the process and to adapt to any changes in stakeholder attitudes.

Another method of ensuring that all relevant stakeholders are included is through prioritisation of the different groups and individuals affected by the project. In their guidelines, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) provide a list of questions that engagement leaders can ask themselves about the identified stakeholders (see Figure 6) to help prioritise and allocate resources effectively.

Figure 6: Questions to ask when prioritising stakeholders

- What type of stakeholder engagement is mandated by law or other requirements?
- Who will be adversely affected by potential environmental and social impacts in the project's area of influence?
- Who are the most vulnerable among the potentially impacted, and are special engagement efforts necessary?
- At which stage of project development will stakeholders be most affected (e.g. procurement, construction, operations, decommissioning)?
- What are the various interests of project stakeholders and what influence might this have on the project?
- Which stakeholders might help to enhance the project design or reduce project costs?
- Which stakeholders can best assist with the early scoping of issues and impacts?



- Who strongly supports or opposes the changes that the project will bring and why?
- Whose opposition could be detrimental to the success of the project?
- Who is it critical to engage with first, and why?
- What is the optimal sequence of engagement?

Source: IFC, 2007

Lastly, it is important to adopt a consistent approach to stakeholder mapping in understanding stakeholder attitudes, needs and expectation of the process. Given the impact of power lines on nearby communities, there needs to be a focus on engagement at the local level and there should be a commitment to including the typically hard to reach stakeholders, such as those with mobility, literacy or language difficulties and those who see themselves as too busy to partake in traditional engagement methods (Cigré, 2013).

3.3 Define key issues

In WP 2, stakeholder mapping was shown to be a powerful tool to identify and analyse stakeholder concerns and needs. The maps can reveal existing or potential conflicts between stakeholders and also assist with communication strategies. Work Packages 2 and 5 both identified a number of key issues common to power line development (see Deliverables 2.1 and 5.1 for further information and references to the literature) such as:

- Electromagnetic radiation
- Landscape impacts such as visual disamenity, cultural heritage and impacts on recreational activities
- Noise impacts
- Negative risk perception
- Loss of property values
- Safety issues such as accidents involving children and line workers or possible collisions with the line
- Environmental/ecological impacts

Although many, if not all, of these issues will be at stake in most new transmission projects, the relative levels of concern about each issue will likely vary, depending on the characteristics of the proposed line and the make-up of the stakeholder group. As demonstrated in WP 2, stakeholder mapping can be used to separate the key issues – either by individual stakeholders or by all stakeholders in a region – giving a clearer understanding of how the issues interrelate to one another.

Proposed routes that bisect scenic areas will likely have a greater focus placed on landscape issues, those that pass through residential areas will be subject to greater scrutiny about health concerns stemming from electromagnetic fields (EMF), the impact on local property values and the visual disamenity that the line might cause. The longer the proposed line, the more likely it is that the full range of concerns will be encountered as there is a greater chance of the project passing through different landscapes and regions. As noted by Shift (2013) and discussed in Deliverable 5.1, consideration should also be given to any legacy issues that may exist. These can stem from past stakeholder experiences and can affect current stakeholder attitudes to a project, especially if the issues were not adequately resolved in the past.



3.4 Understand stakeholder values

One of the key focus areas on the INSPIRE-Grid project is an attempt to better understand the values and beliefs that underpin attitudes toward grid expansion. The importance of considering how values and beliefs relate to new transmission projects is perhaps best stated by the authors of a recent study into public values and attitudes of transforming the energy system in the UK. Parkhill, Demski, Butler, Spence, and Pidgeon (2013) conclude that “meaningful public acceptability may only be achieved if it is rooted, in a significant way, in the described value system. Publics are unlikely to settle for a form of change that does not show signs of commitment to the longer-term trajectories commensurate with the values. However, pursuing energy system changes in ways that are in keeping with longer-term trajectories aligned with public values can form the basis of a social contract for change” (p. 39). The values identified by Parkhill et al. are shown below in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Energy system values

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoiding waste • Efficiency • Capturing opportunities • Environmental protection • Nature and naturalness • Availability and affordability • Reliability • Safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autonomy and freedom • Choice and control • Social justice • Fairness, honesty and transparency • Long-term trajectories • Interconnected • Improvement and quality
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Source: Parkhill et al., 2013

As can be seen, these values range from the nature of the energy system (avoiding waste, reliability, long-term trajectories) to process criteria (fairness, honesty and transparency) via more general concepts about rights (autonomy and freedom, choice and control) and the environment (environmental protection, nature and naturalness). Although certain measures can be taken to ensure that a project fits within this value system – for example, striving to make sure that the environmental impact of the project is minimised – in some cases it will not be possible to build a new line so that it fits with all of these values for all stakeholders. The situation is further complicated when one considers that values can conflict with other values. For example, designing a project with social justice issues in mind could mean that low-income, highly populated areas are avoided. However, the corollary of this decision might be that the line is routed through an area of high environmental concern resulting in conflicting values – social justice versus environmental protection. Added to this is the issue of ‘sacred values’ with some values being held in higher regard than others (see Deliverable 5.1).

Of course addressing multiple values is not always a zero-sum game, the example is simply intended to highlight the difficulty of designing a project that is congruent with multiple values. It is also important not to force a project into a set value system, nor should a project be ‘sold’ to different stakeholders by highlighting the most relevant values to each stakeholder. Such an approach could lead to the impression that project developers are simply saying whatever they need to in order to gain societal approval. Rather, the project should be



placed in the context of the overall value system and information provided that demonstrates how the project fits with the values that society deems important.

One final point needs mentioning here. The energy system values identified in Figure 7 were based on a study in the UK. It is likely that similar values exist with regards to energy in other European countries but it should not be assumed that this is the case, especially when countries with a greater dependence on fossil fuels are considered. In such situations, it would be interesting to investigate the values that residents of such countries hold as these will affect how transmission lines are perceived. However, it is understood that the extent to which stakeholder values can be elicited depends on time and available resources and such a detailed analysis may not be feasible in all situations. At the very least, it is worth keeping in mind the extent to which underlying values can influence attitudes toward new transmission lines and how they might be incorporated into efforts to map stakeholder.

3.5 Determine the engagement level

Having identified the relevant stakeholders, issues and values, the next step is to define the appropriate level of engagement. As discussed in Deliverable 3.2, there are a number of levels of engagement (or participation) that can be used. When selecting the level of engagement, it is helpful to keep in the mind the what and the why of stakeholder engagement. What issues should be engaged on and why is engagement needed? One way of understand the why question is to consider the six social goals listed by (Beierle, 1999) and outlined in more detail in Deliverable 3.2:

- Educating the public
- Incorporating public values
- Increasing the substantive quality of decisions
- Fostering trust in institutions
- Reducing conflict
- Making decisions cost-efficiently

Depending on the aims of engagement, different approaches will be needed. For instance, if the goal is simply to educate the public then a different approach will be needed that if the intent is to reduce conflict and foster trust in institutions. Of course, given that the intent of the INSPIRE-Grid project is to examine ways to increase acceptance of new power lines, it is likely that all of the above goals are relevant to some extent. In many cases it will be necessary to include a public education component – particularly about the need for new lines and particularly in areas without existing grid infrastructure. As discussed above, there is a focus within INSPIRE-Grid on incorporating stakeholder values into the decision making process and issues such as trust, conflict reduction, cost-efficiency and improving the quality of the decisions are all important for grid development.

Various scales of public participation have been proposed and are detailed further in Deliverable 3.2. The scales typically range from providing information at one end of the scale, through consulting with stakeholders, co-decision making, and finally empowering stakeholders at the other end of the scale. In order for INSPIRE-Grid to examine new methods to involve stakeholders in transmission siting, the engagement process clearly needs to



include more than simply providing information or a cursory consultation with the stakeholders. Although it is not typically feasible to grant stakeholder full empowerment rights when it comes to transmission development, TSOs should involve stakeholders in the decision making process to the greatest extent possible.

One last point to consider in terms of the approach to engagement relates to the level and amount of information that is shared with stakeholders and external entities. Such boundaries of disclosure cover what information is shared with stakeholders and what information can then be shared outside the engagement process. The AccountAbility guidelines list four levels of disclosure:

- Full disclosure including attribution of who said what
- Full disclosure without attribution of who said what
- Limited disclosure agreed by the participants
- Limited disclosure controlled by the owners of the engagement

Given the public nature of transmission planning, much of the information, such as environmental impact assessments, will already be in the public domain, however, there may exist other information of a more sensitive nature. While it may not be possible to share all data, TSOs should consider what information can be made public to ensure that all participants in the engagement process have access to the information necessary to fully participate in the decision making process.

3.6 Select assessment methods and engagement tools

As detailed in Work Packages 3 and 4, there is a wide range of tools that can be used for stakeholder engagement. Within the context of INSPIRE-Grid, these tools are split into assessment methods (WP 4) and engagement methods (WP 3). Which tools are appropriate for a particular project will depend on a number of criteria such as the goals of the engagement process, the characteristics of the project, the type of stakeholders involved, the data and resources available, and what legal requirements exist regarding public involvement in the decision making process. As discussed in both the Shift and the Cigré guidelines, a variety of formal and informal techniques might be needed depending on the context of the project. The appropriate combination of methods will likely depend on the concerns, needs and priorities of the identified stakeholders and the characteristics of the project.

Regardless of the type of tools used, the objective is to increase the amount of stakeholder involvement in the process and elicit feedback which would not otherwise be obtained through a simple information campaign. Thus, it is not only important to engage with the right stakeholders (see steps 1 and 2) but also to select the engagement tools that will allow stakeholders to have meaningful input into the process (Shift, 2013). The tools should be chosen to match the required output, whether that is raising awareness of the project, developing a deeper understanding of the important issues, inviting comments from stakeholders, or facilitating constructive debate (Cigré, 2013).

In order to demonstrate the choices available, Figure 8 presents a simple decision tree to assist TSOs, or other owners of the engagement process, in deciding which tools to use. The engagement tools listed in Figure 8 are taken from two primary sources – the Roland Berger



Strategy Consultants (2014) toolkit for public participation in grid infrastructure development and IAP2's public participation toolkit (IAP2, 2004) – and augmented by two of the assessment methods (MCA and WebGIS) that will be tested in the INSPIRE-Grid project (for a larger version of Figure 8, along with a description of the tools listed, please see the deliverable's Annexes).

Four categories of tools are identified – information provision, consultation, co-decision making and empowerment – and they are organised according to the size of the intended audience (small, medium, large) and the amount of resources required to implement the tool (low, medium, high). Here resources can be understood to be a combination of money, time and capacity. The different tools will require differing amounts of each resource, some tools are relatively straightforward to implement but can be very time consuming (e.g. doorstep visits), others require a significant financial expenditure (e.g. public opinion surveys) and other require specific expertise (e.g. facilitation for focus groups, workshops etc.). Many require a combination of two, if not all three, of the resources – running a local project office for a few months is both time consuming and potentially costly as dedicated staff time will be needed to implement the tool effectively. While there are no exact numbers on the size of the audience, it is imagined here that small audiences might range from the individual level to groups of around 20-25, medium audiences might include around 100 people and large audiences might be anything from over 100 and might be very large if newspaper readers and television viewers are targeted.

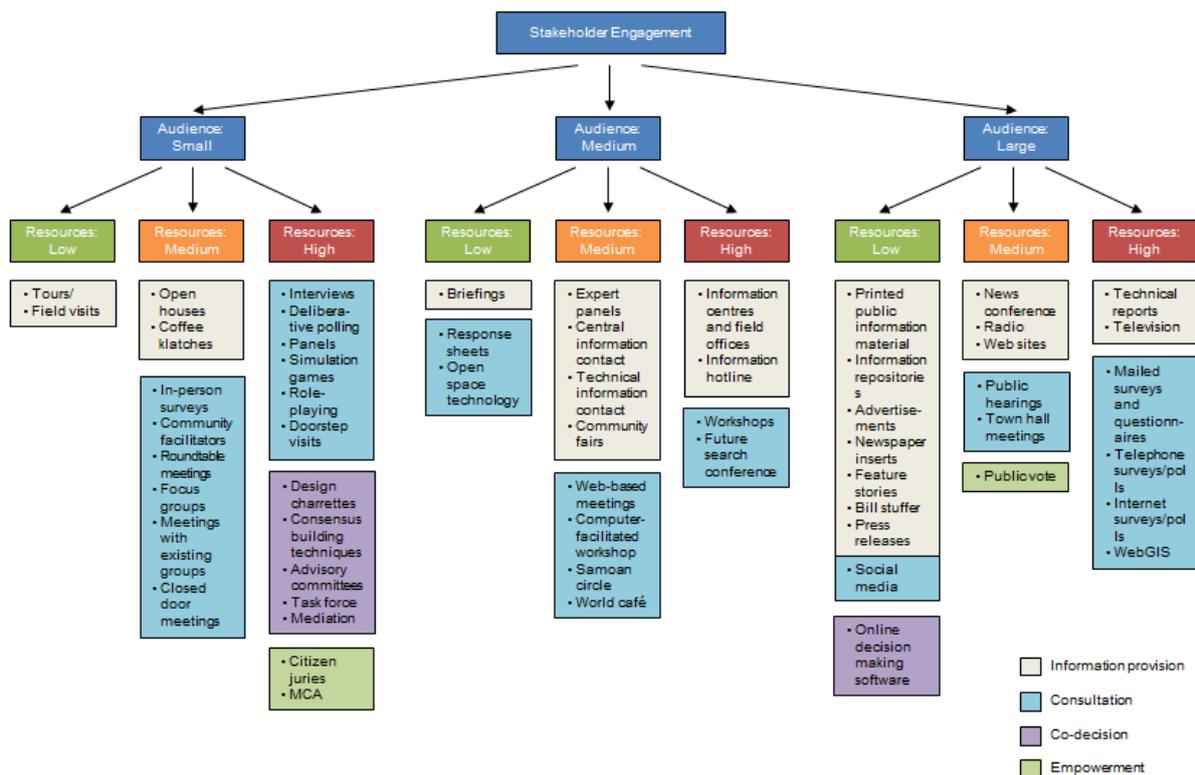
Regarding the INSPIRE-Grid assessment methods, both MCA and WebGIS are included in the decision tree. Given its wide range of applications, MCA could be used at all four decision making levels: from “Need definition” stage, through “Project Preparation” and “Spatial Planning” stages and ending up at “Permitting” stage. It must be noted that at every stage MCA will be performed at different level of detail. MCA could be used to simply provide information – either to stakeholders or decision makers – or it could be used for collaboration or co-decision purposes. It is also possible to imagine using MCA as an empowerment tool, in terms of the final decision being based on an MCA. For visualisation purposes, in the decision tree MCA is only included at the highest level (empowerment) but it should also be considered as a viable tool at lower levels of decision making. Similarly, while WebGIS can be used with audience of any size, due to its potential to be used with many people through its web interface, it is included in large audience category.

It should be noted that the placement of MCA in the small audience branch of the tree refers to situations where stakeholders are directly involved in the development of the MCA. When this occurs, there will be a limit to how many participants can feasibly take part in the process. However, given the various uses of MCA, it would be possible to combine MCA with other engagement tools and thus expand its scope of use. For example, the results of an MCA could be presented to larger audiences at public meetings, or via mail and social media. The same can be said for LCA. Due to it being solely an assessment method (unlike MCA which is both an assessment and an engagement method) LCA does not fit directly into the decision tree. Rather, in the same way that MCA results can provide input for other engagement tools, so too can LCA. Given the specificities of communicating LCA results (complexity, low awareness of some environmental issues, uncertainty, etc.), some of these tools might be more relevant to use than others. For example, it might be more beneficial to present LCA results to smaller



groups, rather than medium- or larger-sized audiences, in order to allow participants to ask any questions they might have to understand the data. For the same reason, LCA may better be presented in-person rather than through mass mailings or social media.

Figure 8: Decision tree for selecting engagement tools



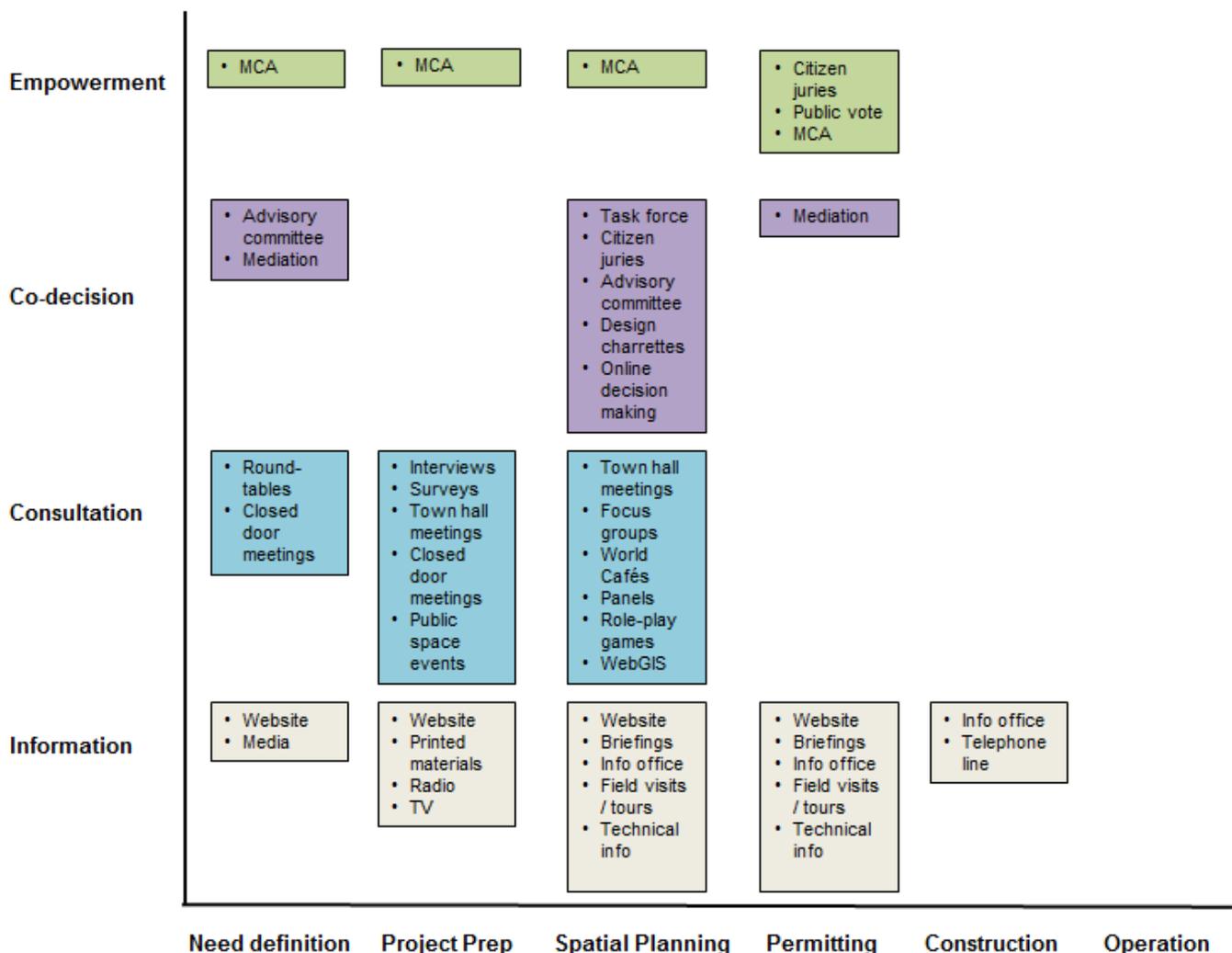
However, it is important to remember that simply because such a variety of tools exists, this does not mean that all, or even most, of them need to be implemented in any one project. Krütli et al. (2010)'s functional-dynamic model of participation emphasizes using the right form of engagement at the right time. In considering when the 'right time' is to implement certain engagement tools for a transmission project, it is helpful to refer back to the six stages of project development proposed by Roland Berger and listed in Deliverable 5.1:

- Determination of need
- Project preparation
- Spatial planning
- Permitting
- Construction
- Operation



Given the differences in the scope for stakeholder engagement between these stages, it is possible to suggest which tools might be most appropriate at different points in the planning process. Figure 9 represents a first attempt at this functional-dynamic approach and is intended to provide a starting point from which to progress from in WPs 6 and 7. It should be remembered that the tools listed under each project stage provide a range of options for the engagement process leader and not all tools will be applicable or needed in every project. For example, when considering which tool to use for stakeholder consultation in the spatial planning phase, it is unlikely to be necessary that focus groups, world cafés and panels would all be required. The schematic in Figure 9 is simply intended to show which tools are best used when, the specific choice of tool will depend on the available resources and the composition of the stakeholder group. In the model, stakeholder empowerment is assigned to the spatial planning phase. Whether this is feasible in reality remains to be seen and will be investigated through the field work undertaken in WP6 and WP7.

Figure 9: Functional dynamic model for stakeholder engagement





3.7 Draft engagement plan

After identifying and mapping stakeholders along with their concerns and values and deciding upon which engagement tools are appropriate, the next step is to draft the engagement plan. The engagement plan should document the engagement process and be available to all stakeholders. Following the AccountAbility guidelines, at a minimum the plan should cover:

- The mandate for the engagement
- The purpose and scope of the engagement
- The owners of the engagement, their roles and responsibilities
- The methodology for and results from identifying stakeholders
- The methodology for and results from profiling and mapping stakeholders
- The pre-engagement activities
- The engagement level(s) and methods
- The boundaries of disclosure

Additionally, the plan should address logistical issues, such as:

- Tasks and timelines
- Contact persons
- Technologies used
- Ground rules
- Comfort requirements
- Engagement risks
- Resource requirements and budget
- Channels of communication
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Reporting the engagement outputs and outcomes

Lastly, the plan should consider factors that can adversely affect the ability of stakeholders to participate in the engagement process, for example:

- The accessibility of the location(s) chosen for engagement events and activities
- Capacity to travel
- Availability of technology (especially when considering MCA, LCA, or WebGIS)
- Timing
- The need for anonymity
- Social hierarchies
- Local conflicts
- Lack of shared understanding of expectations, customs, conventions
- Religion
- Family and other responsibilities

Of course, not all of the above considerations will be applicable to all projects – for example there may not be much difference regarding local customs if the area in question is quite small – but the plan should at least consider the above issues. Even in projects which have a



generally high level of public support it is possible to find divisions within the community. Indeed, certain stakeholders in one of the INSPIRE-Grid case studies (Bamble-Rød) were involved in a neighbourly dispute which influenced calls for a proposed alternative routing of the line.

The question of whether there is a need for anonymity should also be carefully considered. There are advantages and disadvantages of conducting an anonymous process. On the one hand, participants may feel more free to provide honest feedback, safe in the knowledge that their answers or input will not be traceable. On the other hand, the cover of anonymity may encourage some stakeholders to try and game the system by exaggerating the impacts of a project, submitting multiple responses about the same issue, or simply providing false feedback. Anonymity would also result in it not being possible to follow up with stakeholders about their responses or to match up specific concerns with specific stakeholders – perhaps the residents of one town feel one way about a project and the residents of another town feel differently. Of course, anonymity is not an all-or-nothing approach. Some engagement tools could be anonymous to encourage (hopefully) honest feedback, other tools, such as participation in a focus group, could require identifiable information to allow the leaders of the engagement process to follow up with participants or link feedback to individual stakeholders. There are also levels of anonymity, ranging from requiring no personally-identifiable information to asking respondents to include basic demographic information (sex, age range, town in which they live, etc.) to requiring full contact details.

3.8 Prepare for engagement

Stakeholder engagement is an involved, time-consuming process – there are no quick fixes or simple solutions and an appropriate level of resources needs to be committed to the process. Indeed, among respondents to the Cigré survey, time was seen to be the largest constraint to engagement, more so than financial or other resource issues (Cigré, 2013).

Furthermore, effective engagement requires specialised skills that are quite different from the technical skills required to design and build power lines. As discussed above and in the earlier INSPIRE-Grid deliverables, stakeholder engagement is not simply about providing information in a public setting but requires tools and techniques to elicit and evaluate stakeholder concerns, needs, beliefs and values along with a commitment to incorporating such feedback into the design of the project.

When considering the level of resources required, it is important to remember that it is not just the engagement process itself that requires resources, rather capacity also needs to be included that will allow for any changes to the project that arise out of the engagement process. If, for example, an alternative route is decided upon on the basis of stakeholder involvement then there needs to exist the ability to implement such a decision. Resources will include financial, human and technological capabilities and should be matched to the size and scope of the project.

Capacity needs to be built within the organisation leading the engagement process – either the required skills will be required in-house or contractors should be brought in if specialised skills are required. This might especially be true if LCA or MCA techniques are used for stakeholder engagement purposes. Furthermore, the owners of the process should take into



account, and address where necessary, the a capacity gaps of the stakeholders in order to ensure they are not excluded or do not disengage from the process (AccountAbility, 2011). As the AccountAbility guidelines note, “adequate capacity to engage can help reduce engagement risks” (p. 32). In short, capacity should be built in various areas including knowledge (e.g. awareness of the stakeholders, local politics, issues of concern), skills (e.g. communication skills, ability to examine and interpret the results of the stakeholder engagement) and opportunity (e.g. availability of resources, time and access to information).

In terms of internal capacity building it is also important to consider how stakeholder engagement is seen within the TSO. There is often the tendency for companies to focus more on the technical aspects and production targets resulting in more support from within the company for the core business functions and less for external functions such as stakeholder engagement (Shift, 2013). This approach could result in stakeholder engagement functions being located in departments with little decision-making power or that are marginalized from key decision makers. There is also the danger of those involved in stakeholder engagement being contradicted or undermined by other departments – perhaps through a communication campaign that is not coordinated with those closely involved with the stakeholders. It is therefore important to ensure there is a coordinated, unified approach to engagement that is seen as a key component of the company’s operations.

The AccountAbility guidelines also stress the importance of identifying and preparing for engagement risks, such as:

- Conflict between participating stakeholders
- Unwillingness to engage
- Participation fatigue
- Creating expectations of change that the organisation is unwilling or unable to fulfil
- Lack of balance between weak and strong stakeholders
- Disruptive stakeholders
- Uninformed stakeholders
- Disempowered stakeholders

All of these issues have the potential to affect a transmission project. Conflict between stakeholders might be particularly relevant when there exist alternative routes that will affect different stakeholders to different extents. Creating unrealistic expectations of the engagement process is also a very real possibility – especially in projects where there is not a zero (do nothing) alternative. While in some cases there may be viable alternatives to building a new line (cf. the Boute-Broc Carros project in southern France, detailed in Deliverable 3.2) in many cases there will exist a legitimate need for the line and a zero alternative will not be feasible.

3.9 Implement the engagement plan

A list of stakeholders should by this stage be known based on the stakeholder identification and mapping conducted in steps 1 and 2. The AccountAbility guidelines suggest that information provided to stakeholders at the beginning of the process address topics such as:



- The purpose and scope of the engagement
- The engagement process and timeline
- What stakeholders are expected to contribute
- The benefits to the stakeholder invited to participate
- Logistical and practical information about the engagement
- How to respond
- Additional information that will be provided
- Next steps

It is important that stakeholders have access to all the required information and that the information is understandable to the stakeholders. The ongoing communication of information to the stakeholders is an important aspect of engagement and information provision is not something that is only done at the start of a project. As noted by IFC, all other engagement activities will be more constructive if stakeholders receive accurate, timely information about how the project might affect them (International Finance Corporation, 2007). This point about stakeholder receiving information early was stressed above and it is worth repeating here. The information should be designed to allow stakeholders to actively engage in the process and, given the complexity of the issues and the fact that in some cases this may be the first experience people have with a transmission project, adequate time must be allowed for stakeholders to review the information. In addition to details about the project, the information provided to stakeholders should include details concerning the purpose of the engagement, what the issues are and how they are currently managed, what policies and systems are in place and what can be done about the issues in question. It might also be considered whether the stakeholders themselves should some input into the development of the briefing materials (AccountAbility, 2011). Throughout the process communication should be undertaken in a candid, effective, open and honest manner (Shift, 2013).

For certain engagement tools, particularly those that involve a number of stakeholders (such as focus groups, world cafés, etc.) it may be necessary to establish some ground rules for participation. Such rule might refer to stakeholders allowing others to speak, respecting confidentiality or anonymity (if this has been agreed upon), honouring other's right to not contribute if they are unwilling to do so, and avoiding making assumptions about other stakeholders and their positions. Furthermore, the facilitator of any such engagement activity should be alert to, and prepared to deal with, issues that might negatively affect the engagement process, such as distrust, intimidation, rivalries, poorly defined issues, unhelpful complexity or digression, emotionally upsetting situations, unbalanced participation, or poor time utilisation (AccountAbility, 2011).

The engagement process needs to be adequately documented in order to ensure that stakeholder suggestions, comments and proposals are considered and to provide a formal record of the process (Shift, 2013). Depending upon the agreed level of anonymity, such a record might include the purpose and aims of the engagement, the methods used, who participated, the timeframe, a record of what was said, a summary of stakeholder concerns, expectations and perceptions, a summary of key discussions and interventions, and outputs (AccountAbility, 2011).



Finally, the feedback received during the engagement process needs to be addressed. In some cases the input received from the stakeholders might be incorporated into the project design, in other cases this might not be appropriate. In either case, the owner of the engagement process should report back to the stakeholders so those involved in the process understand why their feedback was, or was not, acted upon (Cigré, 2013; Shift, 2013). Engagement “entails an implicit “promise” that, at a minimum, [stakeholder] views will be considered during the decision-making process” (International Finance Corporation, 2007). This is not to say that every request, suggestion or comment needs to be acted upon, but rather that stakeholder input needs to be taken seriously and that stakeholders’ engagement is recognised (both by the TSO and the stakeholders) as an effective part of the project development process. Lastly it is important to be clear about which aspects of a project can be changed and which cannot and how stakeholder input has been used to influence project decisions. When stakeholder input has been received but not incorporated into the project design it is good practice to explain why not (Cigré, 2013).

3.10 Review the engagement process

The final step is to review the entire engagement process in order to assess both the overall quality of the process and assess its effectiveness. According to the AccountAbility guidelines, areas that should be reviewed include:

- Commitment and integration
- Purpose, scope and stakeholder participation
- Process (planning, preparing, engaging, acting, reviewing and improving)
- Outputs and outcomes
- Reporting

Each separate engagement activity should be reviewed as well as an overall assessment of the entire engagement process. Activities found to be wanting should be identified and steps should be taken to improve performance in these areas.

Lastly, it is important to report the results of the engagement process, both to the stakeholders involved in the process and the wider public. Communities understandably feel aggrieved when they participate in an engagement process and then receive little in the way for further contact from the leader of the process (International Finance Corporation, 2007). It is basic good practice to follow up with those involved in the process to inform them how their input was used, what the final outcome is and let them know what the next steps will be (whether, for example, there is the right to appeal the decision). Such reporting can help to establish or maintain credibility, manage expectations and reduce frustration and cynicism (International Finance Corporation, 2007). A report on the engagement process should be made available to the wider public, not just those who participated in the process, and could be included with other forms of public reporting undertaken by the TSO. Further, in addition to reporting to stakeholders, it is also helpful for the leaders of the engagement process to report back to their own organisation(s) both with regard to the efficacy of the engagement process and the results/outcomes (Shift, 2013).



4 CONCLUSION

The goal of this deliverable was to propose a set of preliminary guidelines for engaging stakeholders in transmission development projects. Following on from the work undertaken to date in Work Packages 2 and 3 and building on the theoretical framework developed in Deliverable 5.1, a ten step process was developed to help guide TSOs or other leader of transmission development projects in their interactions with stakeholders.

The guidelines consist of five overarching principles and a ten-step engagement process. The overarching principles are intended to provide general guidance as to how the engagement process should be structured. The five principles are:

- Consistency – engagement should be consisted across multiple projects. This does not necessarily mean that each project will follow the exact same process but rather the overall approach to engaging stakeholders should be consistent.
- Transparency – the entire engagement process needs to be open and transparent. The scope and objectives of the process should be made clear from the outset along with a timeline and details of how stakeholders will be consulted and how their input will be considered.
- Timeliness – involving stakeholders as early in the process as possible is vital to the success of the engagement activities. Early involvement of stakeholders is beneficial not only for the stakeholders themselves but also for the leader of the engagement process.
- Proportionality – in addition to being clear about the scope of the process, it is important for stakeholder engagement to be adequate in context of the stage of the project. By this it is meant that, if stakeholders are asked to provide input to a particular issue then there must be a mechanism for including that input in the decision making process.
- Inclusiveness – the engagement process should include as broad a range of stakeholders as possible to that the process accurately reflects the views and opinions of those who will be affected by the project. Particular attention should be paid to including underrepresented stakeholders who might not otherwise have a voice in the process.

In addition to these five principles, it is important to keep in mind the issue of project context. There is no single correct way of undertaking a stakeholder engagement process as each project will present different opportunities and challenges and, due to its inherent nature, stakeholder engagement will always be context-specific. The guidelines suggested here are not intended to promote a ‘cookie-cutter’ or a ‘tick-box’ approach but rather should be viewed as being more general guidance that must be tailored to the project in question. With this in mind, the guidelines comprise of ten steps:

1. Identify stakeholders – both individual stakeholders and stakeholder groups, along with individual representatives of those groups, should be identified and their roles and positions understood.



2. Map stakeholders – stakeholders should be mapped according to defined criteria. Given the impact of power lines on nearby communities, it is important to include the typically hard to reach stakeholders.
3. Define key issues – a number of key issues that stakeholders are concerned about were identified in Deliverable 5.1. Although many, if not all, of these issues will be at stake in most new transmission projects, the relative levels of concern about each issue will likely vary, depending on the characteristics of the proposed line and the make-up of the stakeholder group.
4. Understand stakeholder values – while there are likely to exist competing values, to the greatest extent possible, the project should be placed in the context of the overall societal value system. Values to consider can range from the nature of the energy system (avoiding waste, reliability, long-term trajectories) to process criteria (fairness, honesty and transparency) via more general concepts about rights (autonomy and freedom, choice and control) and the environment (environmental protection, nature and naturalness).
5. Determine the engagement level – four levels of engagement are specified: information provision, consultation, co-decision and empowerment. While it is accepted that it is not always feasible to grant stakeholder full empowerment rights when it comes to transmission development, TSOs are encouraged to involve stakeholders in the decision making process to the greatest extent possible.
6. Select assessment methods and engagement tools – when undertaking stakeholder engagement it is important to know which tools to use and when to use them. Figures 8 and 9 represent a first attempt at a framework to help with these decisions.
7. Draft engagement plan – The engagement plan should document the engagement process and be available to all stakeholders. It is suggested that, at a minimum, the plan should cover: the mandate for the engagement; the purpose and scope of the engagement; the owners of the engagement, their roles and responsibilities; the methodology for and results from identifying stakeholders; the methodology for and results from profiling and mapping stakeholders; the pre-engagement activities; the engagement level(s) and methods; and the boundaries of disclosure.
8. Prepare for engagement – stakeholder engagement is an involved, time-consuming process and resources are required for both the engagement process and to incorporate any changes to the project that might arise out of the engagement process.
9. Implement the engagement plan – it is important that stakeholders have access to all the required information and that the information is understandable to the stakeholders. The engagement process should be adequately document and received feedback needs to be addressed.
10. Review the engagement process – both the quality and the effect of the engagement process should be reviewed. Activities found to be wanting should be identified and steps should be taken to improve performance in these areas. Results of the process should be reported to stakeholders, the wider public as well as internally with the organisation leading the process.



Having outlined the preliminary guidelines, the next step is to assess their appropriateness and applicability to real-world transmission projects. This will be done through the use of field data collected in WP6.



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ANNEX 1 – DESCRIPTION OF ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

Tool	Description
Advertisements	Paid advertisements in newspapers and magazines
Advisory committees	A group of representative stakeholders assembled to provide public input to the planning process
Bill stuffer	Information flyer included with monthly utility bill
Briefings	Use regular meetings of social and civic clubs and organizations to provide an opportunity to inform and educate. Normally these groups need speakers. Examples of target audiences: Rotary Club, Lions Clubs, Elks Clubs, Kiwanis, League of Women Voters. Also a good technique for elected officials
Central information contact	Identify designated contacts for the public and media
Citizen juries	Small group of ordinary citizens empanelled to learn about an issue, cross examine witnesses, make a recommendation. Always non-binding with no legal standing
Closed door meeting	Meetings with invited participants, not accessible to the public
Coffee klatches	Small meetings within neighborhood usually at a person's home
Community fairs	Central event with multiple activities to provide project information and raise awareness
Community facilitators	Use qualified individuals in local community organizations to conduct project outreach
Computer-facilitated workshop	Any sized meeting when participants use interactive computer technology to register opinions
Consensus building techniques	Techniques for building consensus on project decisions such as criteria and alternative selection. Often used with advisory committees. Techniques include Delphi, nominal group technique, public value assessment and many others.
Deliberative polling	Measures informed opinion on an issue



Design charrettes	Intensive session where participants re-design project features
Doorstep visits	Individual visits with local residents and land owners
Expert panels	Public meeting designed in “Meet the Press” format. Media panel interviews experts from different perspectives
Feature stories	Focused stories on general project-related issues
Field visit	Organise visits to existing and future sites
Focus groups	Message testing forum with randomly selected members of target audience. Can also be used to obtain input on planning decisions
Future search conference	Focuses on the future of an organization, a network of people, or community
Information centres and field offices	Offices established with prescribed hours to distribute information and respond to inquiries
Information hotline	Identify a separate line for public access to prerecorded project information or to reach project team members who can answer questions/ obtain input
Information repositories	Libraries, city halls, distribution centers, schools, and other public facilities make good locations for housing project-related information
In-person surveys	One-on-one “focus groups” with standardized questionnaire or methodology such as “stated preference”
Internet surveys/polls	Web-based response polls
Interviews	One-to-one meetings with stakeholders to gain information for developing or refining public involvement and consensus building programs
Mailed surveys and questionnaires	Inquiries mailed randomly to sample population to gain specific information for statistical validation
MCA	Multicriteria analysis is a family of indicator-based assessment techniques whose development follows a procedure akin to that of composite indices (see Deliverable 4.1)



Mediation	Intervention in a dispute in order to resolve it
Meetings with existing groups	Small meetings with existing groups or in conjunction with another event
News conference	Organised news conference open to media and public
Newspaper inserts	A “fact sheet” within the local newspaper
Online decision making software	Open source software to allow for online decision making at a low cost (e.g. LiquidFeedback)
Open houses	An open house to allow the public to tour at their own pace. The facility should be set up with several stations, each addressing a separate issue. Resource people guide participants through the exhibits
Open space technology	Participants offer topics and others participate according to interest
Panels	A group assembled to debate or provide input on specific issues
Press release	Information sent directly to media outlets
Printed public information material	Fact sheets, newsletters, brochures, issue papers
Public hearings	Formal meetings with scheduled presentations offered
Public vote	Vote open to all members of the public
Radio	Radio programming to present information and elicit audience response
Response sheets	Mail-In-forms often included in fact sheets and other project mailings to gain information on public concerns and preferences
Role-playing	Participants act out characters in pre-defined situation followed by evaluation of the interaction
Roundtable meetings	A meeting for stakeholders for discussion and exchange of views
Samoan circle	Leaderless meeting that stimulates active participation
Simulation games	Exercises that simulate project decisions



Social media	Computer-mediated tools that allow people to create, share or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn)
Task force	A group of experts or representative stakeholders formed to develop a specific product or policy recommendation
Technical information contact	Providing access to technical expertise to individuals and organizations
Technical reports	Technical documents reporting research or policy findings
Telephone surveys/polls	Random sampling of population by telephone to gain specific information for statistical validation
Television	Television programming to present information and elicit audience response
Tours	Provide tours for key stakeholders, elected officials, advisory group members and the media
Town hall meeting	An informal public meeting, function or event.
Web-based meetings	Meetings that occur via the Internet
WebGIS	A web-based geographic information system for the study and assessment of spatial relationships (see Deliverable 4.1)
Web sites	A Web site provides information and links to other sites through the World Wide Web. Electronic mailing lists are included
Workshops	An informal public meeting that may include a presentations and exhibits but ends with interactive working groups
World Café	Organised meeting with a number of tables, each of which focuses on a specific issue. Participants move around the tables in order to discuss all the issues in small a small group setting



ANNEX 2 – STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT MODELS

