

D4.1 Practical Action plan to improve public acceptance and permitting procedures

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SuedLink

BESTGRID action plans

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I. Description of the Project

Main rationale

At around 800 kilometres, the SuedLink BestGrid project is the largest infrastructure project for the energy turnaround in Germany. With a transmission capacity of 4 GW, the power transmission line will create the urgently needed link between the wind power generated in the north and the consumer centres in the south of Germany. The project partners are the two transmission network operators TenneT and TransnetBW. According to the current state of planning, two connections are being realised within the SuedLink. **The BestGrid project is the connection between Wilster (Schleswig-Holstein) and Grafenrheinfeld (Bavaria).**

According to plans by the German federal government, renewable energies shall already meet at least 80 per cent of the electricity provision in Germany by 2050. However, the necessary generation capacities to achieve this are being primarily developed in the North, whereas the large consumer centres are situated in the South of Germany. The gap between the electricity supply and demand will continue to widen if further nuclear power stations in Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg are phased out.

This North-South gap will endanger the supply security in Germany if the necessary infrastructure is not provided in time. According to the Grid Development Plan 2013, a total of 3,600 kilometres of new transmission lines must be built during the next ten years. This particularly includes North-South connections such as the SuedLink.

This corridor is already of central importance in a literal sense: since it lies in the middle of Germany. In addition, the direct current technology used here (HVDC) enables very large volumes of electrical energy to be transported with maximum efficiency.

By expanding this transmission line system, TenneT is also making a considerable contribution to a secure and disruption-free grid operation in future. However, the development of a future-proof

electricity infrastructure is not just the sole concern of the grid operators. Rather, this can only succeed in collaboration with all actors from civil society, politics and business.

Timeline and Status

TenneT is currently preparing the communication measures that need to be implemented before the Antragskonferenz (application conference). The Antragskonferenz marks the beginning of the formal approval process (Bundesfachplanung). The fact that the possible power transmission corridors are presented in advance and discussed in dialogue events aim at creating a climate of public opinion that is as positive as possible for the approval process.

Beneath is the general timeline of the project. You will find the more detailed timeline for the actions proposed in this action plan later on in the overview “Roadmap – Measures to be taken prior to Antragskonferenz”.



Communicatively relevant challenges

The importance of the project for Germany’s energy turnaround and future energy system is incontestable. **However, the social and to some extent political environment for major infrastructure projects has seldom been so challenging as today.** A complex and contentious range of views and actions can also be expected with SuedLink, which could extend from critical monitoring by the authorities involved to open resistance from affected communities or action groups. In addition, the project will attract **considerable media attention** and experience shows that the media tend to adopt a critical stance towards infrastructure projects.

Additional challenges include:

- **New and complex procedure.** The Bundesfachplanung planning process is a new and therefore unknown instrument.

The SuedLink is one of the first projects that under the new legal procedure of the grid extension acceleration act (Netzausbaubeschleunigungsgesetz – NABEG). The new procedure puts substantial parts of informing and consulting the public in the hands of the German federal network agency (Bundesnetzagentur – BNetzA), meaning that instances to engage with the public are partially in hands of/organised by BNetzA instead of TenneT. As the legal act and resulting procedures are new, the details of implementation are currently being developed. Uncertainty about the details of upcoming steps remains high.

- **Right to dialogue.** The communicative pressure is increasing. It is not just the Federal Network Agency (BNetzA) and politicians but also the general public who are demanding to be extensively involved from an early stage.
- **High expectations with regard to underground cabling.** As a result of the Bundesbedarfsplangesetz (Federal Requirements Planning Act for planning the national grid expansion) and technical possibilities connected with DC technology.
- **Extensive examination area.** This means that many institutions and numerous stakeholder groups are affected. More than 2,000 kilometres of potential corridors have to be examined.
- **Only transit land.** The electricity will only pass through some federal states, without there being benefits resulting from feed-in or -out points.
- **Lack of knowledge with regard to technical issues.**
- **Infrastructure bundling.** Why is another power transmission line required in addition to the existing 380-KV line? Residents are concerned about being doubly burdened.
- **Need for coordination.** The communications provided by the project partners – TenneT and TransnetBW – must be consistent.

- **The worst is yet to come.** Considerable concerns can be expected around the converter sites because of their necessary industrial scale.

Communication goals

A rapid expansion of the electricity grid is essential for creating a secure and stable electricity network in Germany and Europe. **This is only possible, however, with the acceptance of both the local population in densely populated Germany and the authorities involved.** All communications measures are aimed at achieving this.

The primary first milestone is to provide sufficient information about the project, the procedures and route alternatives before they are presented in the Antragskonferenz (“application conference”) where the investigation area is specified and the requirements for the application documentation are determined. The overriding premise: the informal participation measures ahead of the conference are not an end in themselves. Instead they should sensibly supplement and support the formal approval process.

This provides the basis for the following communications goals:

- **Increasing awareness** about the project, the need for the project and the benefits from it among residents and other relevant stakeholders. Through open and proactive information and dialogue campaigns.
- **Creating a trusting and positive climate of opinion.** Even if individual people do not agree with the argumentation, it will be appreciated that TenneT is solutions-oriented and provides information on time, transparently and openly.
- **Achieving understanding for the new project** through providing information and by involving the “affected” target groups at an early stage.
- **Information flow.** Facilitating the progress of the planning process through continual information and dialogue.
- **Positive communication.** SuedLink as a key to ensuring the success of the energy turnaround – as a “main artery” for electricity provision.

- **Reputation building.** Establishing TenneT as a trusting and reliable partner.

Strategic approach

To achieve these goals – especially public acceptance – the communication is relying on a rigorous and sincere implementation of a **community dialogue** that comprises both communication aspects – informing and listening – and which takes people’s concerns seriously.

The strategic principle behind the communication: TenneT believes that all stakeholders are entitled to:

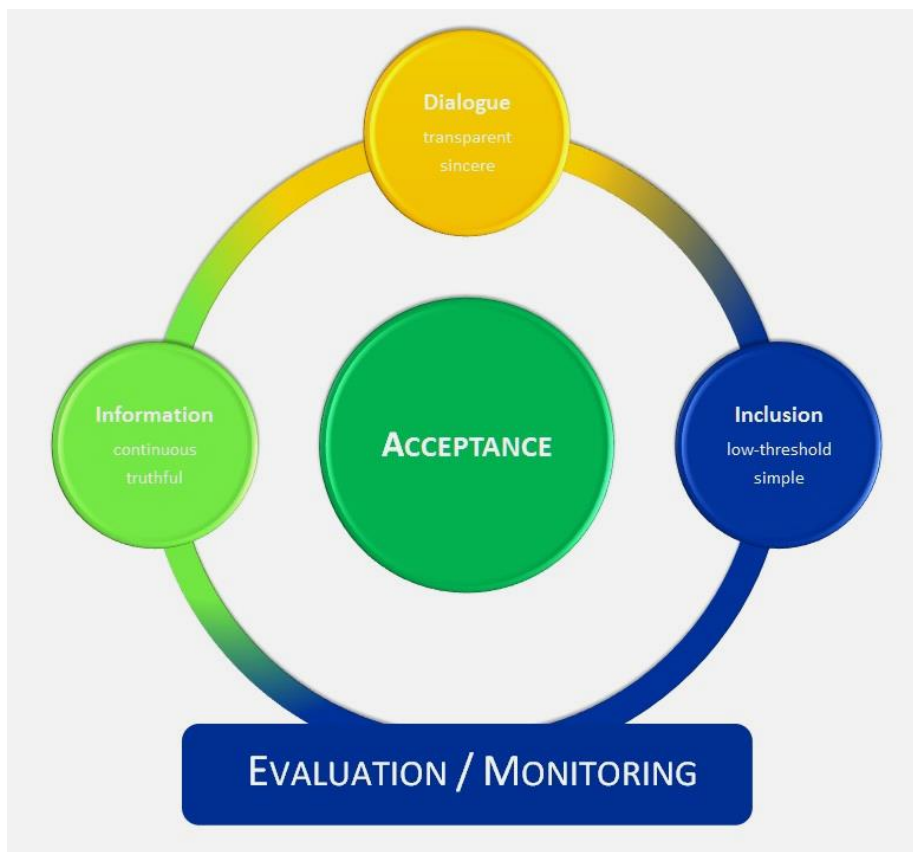
- Continuous and truthful **information**
- A transparent and **sincere dialogue**
- Simple, low-threshold **involvement**.

TenneT is a **solutions-oriented partner for dialogue, but one that is also keen to foster a critical and serious debate**:

- We **inform proactively, transparently and seek a constructive exchange of ideas** with all stakeholder groups.
- We are a **serious partner** who is not only open to criticism but is also prepared to incorporate justified objections into the planning.
- We do not consider objections to be “obstacles”; rather they should be used to **optimise the corridor together**.
- We believe that we are **entering the discussions with a very well-substantiated solution** (preferred power transmission corridor).

- However, we are also “**awkward**” in the sense that we are not prepared to accept baseless arguments such as “not in my backyard”, since that makes any factual discussion pointless.

The communication strategy at a glance:



Tactical principles

- **Quality takes precedence over time constraints.** This must be taken into account when timing the measures. This is because, particular at the beginning of a process, it is important to open stable and trusting communication channels.
- **Close integration** of the communication and dialogue measures with the (formal) planning stages.
- **Launch external communication with the announcement of route alternatives and the preferred power transmission corridor.** When entering the dialogue we lay open all criteria applied. This should enable a transparent process and discourse that focuses the discussion with well-founded arguments.
- **Show context.** Present SuedLink in the context of the energy turnaround and demonstrate its necessity.
- **Continual public information with online and offline media (information on process, project an grid related issues)**
- Position ourselves as a **serious dialogue partner at the local level.**
- **Develop a strong network** based on identification of stakeholders in the region, identify multipliers of information in the communities and gain their trust.

Tactics

We are under this action plan improving public acceptance in using two key communication elements: information and dialogue.

Information as the basis, Dialogue as facilitator.

In the very tight timeframe before the Antragskonferenz we are aiming to prepare the groundwork for acceptance: providing general information on the necessity of SuedLink, analysing and preparing potential public issues / grievances, adapting communication measures accordingly and initiating dialogue as soon as possible with stakeholders who should be involved as much as possible. Dialogue is far more than just information. Stakeholders (also those not easily reached via online tools) should get the possibility to express their thoughts and concerns. TenneT on the other hand will not only talk but listen as well. And gets the possibility to adapt planning and earn acceptance at the earliest possible point.

Providing transparent and early information for stakeholders and getting them involved already before and after the Antragskonferenz is the key to success.

Both communication elements are, of course, interlinked. However, for a better understanding, communication measures are allocated to the two different steps and are described on the following pages.

Messages

We see the following communication messages at the core of our communications, irrelevant of the respective campaign step. They are valid for all communication.

- **SuedLink is the vital lifeline for the energy turnaround.** We are bringing renewable wind power from the North into the cities and industrial centres in the South.
- **A secure grid operation is in everybody's interest!** We are creating the prerequisites for secure electricity provision in the age of renewable energies.
- **TenneT is relying on decades of experience and cutting edge technology** to ensure that the efficiency of the electricity grid is also retained with large transmission distances.
- We are giving maximum priority to **environmental protection and safety!**
- **SuedLink as an electricity bridge linking Europe.** We are not alone! Germany must assume responsibility for the grid security and expansion, including regarding the grids in countries of the European Union!
- **As a trusted partner for dialogue, TenneT is aiming at a high level of transparency**

II. Action Plan 1: Improve public acceptance

Gain insights and prepare a common ground for mutual understanding. Information on a generally understandable basis.

Transparency and dialogue. Providing comprehensive and early information for all stakeholders and get them involved already before and after the Antragskonferenz is the key to success.

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This first step parallel to planning the corridors contains the following stakeholder integration measures:

- Understand Stakeholders: Stakeholder Mapping
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Understand their issues and grievances: Issue Management and Monitoring
- Easy accessible communication: Name it and explain it
- Start communication on the general topics and relevance of the project: Agenda Setting

Parallel to planning the corridors

a. Stakeholder Mapping

The goal of Stakeholder Management is to identify and engage the right actors in the project planning and permitting process and involve them at the right time and the right place. Citizens' demands towards involvement and transparency have changed and are associated with an increased willingness to participate. An important task is to create an open-minded and faithfully basis for cooperation with identified key stakeholders and to create and maintain a broad public acceptance concerning project relevance and planning procedures as well as regarding the implementation decisions.

Stakeholders are crucial to the success of a project. If they will be neglected, they will actively work against the program. If they will be managed well, they can have a positive influence regarding the planning and permitting process.

Not all stakeholders have the same stake in the interventions and it is important to recognize and evaluate the level of influence each stakeholder has on the project.

Prior experience shows that in most grid development projects, only a small fraction of local population tends to engage in public consultations early on or many may not even be aware of the grid development project. Reasons for this include that typical formats chosen to inform and engage with the public (e.g. public information workshops, official publications, etc.) have only a limited outreach and/or are not appropriate to reach the broad population, including e.g. people below the age of thirty, young families, people working in the evening, etc.

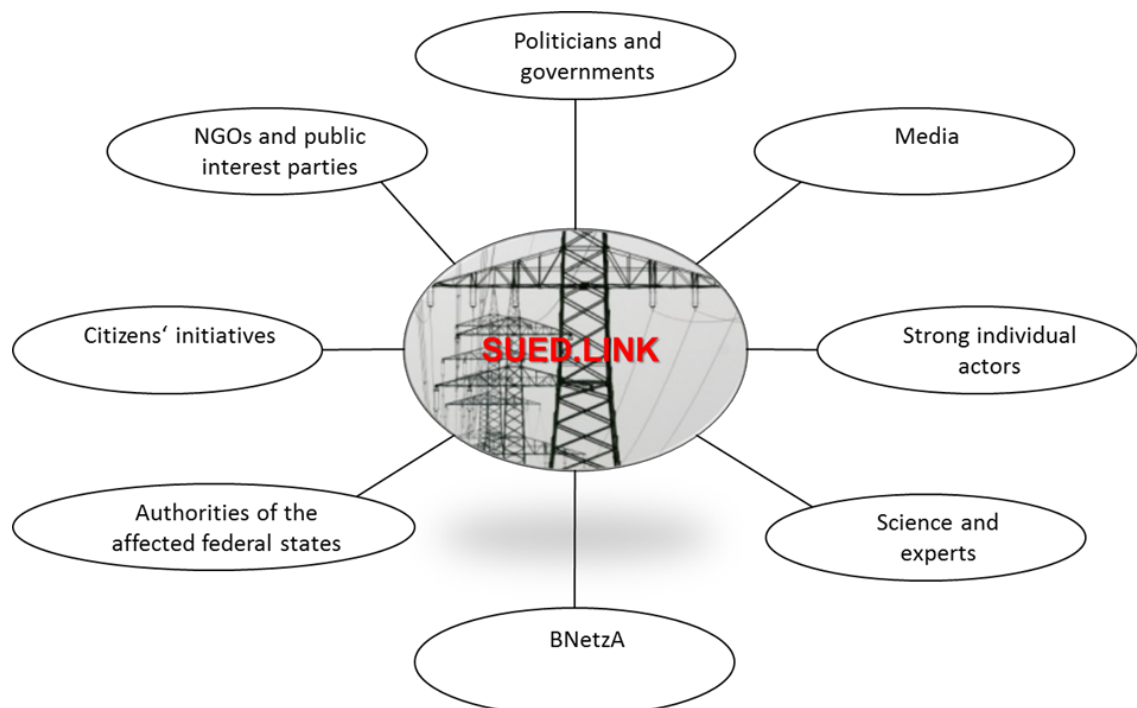
The action plan developed will therefore contain a profiling of different target groups of the local affected population, including their specific concerns and information needs, the different channels and options to raise awareness and to "activate" these groups to engage in consultations relevant to the grid development project, a detailed roadmap towards interaction with these target groups as well as a pragmatic methodology to measure success of the approach chosen.

Stakeholder Management should include 3 steps:






- Stakeholder Identification
- Stakeholder Analysis & Mapping
- Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder Identification

The first step in the process of stakeholder management is the stakeholder identification. This determines who the project stakeholders are as well as their key groupings and sub-groupings. Often the process of identifying stakeholders will result in a long list of individuals and groups. In order to correctly assign each individual, main categories have to be customised. A second step is to identify the geographic sphere of influence of each stakeholder. Both identification results will be used to understand the influencing factors and to determine who might be affected and in what way.



All identified actors will be assigned to one of the customised groups. For each group, key stakeholders will be nominated in accordance to their relevance to the project and their expressed opinion regarding the project. We are therefore using four evaluation criteria (with regards to the geographic sphere):

Person	Meinung	Funktion/ Gruppen	Kommunikation	Presseartikel	Verknüpfung	Dokumente
Netzausbau	 Positiv		1. Attitude towards the Grid Expansion in Germany			
Projekt	 keine Angabe		2. Attitude towards the project			
Relevanz	 Hoch		3. Relevance of the Stakeholder			
Relevanz Kommentar	Hatte als Senatorin in Hamburg die Funktionen des Präses der Finanzbehörde sowie des Präses der Behörde für Stadtentwicklung und Umwelt.					
Partei	 Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands					
Reichweite	 Hoch		4. Influence potential			
Bemerkung						

For some projects, the most opposition may come from stakeholders outside of affected areas. It is therefore important to also include those actors, groups or organisations that are not adversely affected, but whose “interests” determine them as stakeholders. For this case an interface management to the programme parts “Issue Management” and “Press/Media Analysis” shall be implemented to obtain information about key topics and activities and their drivers. With this process a proactive management of risks is guaranteed. In this way we can clarify the motivation of different actors and the ways in which they might be able to influence the project. Not to engage with these parties creates the risk that their issues may get discussed through other outlets such as the media or political processes.

Identifying key stakeholders and consulting with and through them can be an efficient way to disseminate information to large numbers of stakeholders and receive information from them.

Stakeholder Analysis & Mapping

Stakeholder analysis provides a more in-depth look at stakeholder group interests, how they will be affected and to what degree, and what influence they could have on the project. The analysis will be used as an integrated tool along the planning and permitting process. The results will be reviewed and repeated as the best-fit set of key stakeholders to work with. This can and is likely to change according to the dynamics of the project development.

Key Stakeholders are those actors without whose support and participation a positive project development is harder to achieve. To become aware of the different actors, we must map out the relevant ones and identify their interrelations. In addition, the completion of an interest matrix will help us to develop a communication plan that is aligned to each stakeholder's focus and concerns.

Main parts of the mapping are:

- To get valuable information that we can use for strategic process planning
- To identify the relevance of stakeholders
- To get important hints about strong individual actors
- To find potential cooperation partners
- To draw basic conclusions about relations and alliances as well as imbalances
- To make initial assumptions and formulate impact hypotheses about the influence certain actors have on the proposed project

The mapping will always be aligned to the planning process and will be adapted to changes and findings relating to the environmental and technical planning results. Stakeholder Mapping is not a separate measure; it is always related to the project development.

It is not practical, and usually not necessary, to engage with all stakeholder groups with the same level of intensity all of the time. We will prioritise the identified stakeholders and, depending on whom they are and what interests they might have, we will figure out the most appropriate ways to engage them. We have created different questions intended for analysing their attitude towards the project and their relevance in terms of influencing it. All information will be saved via a project faced software tool called ARCmap. This system allows us to adapt it just in time to the questions we want to evaluate and is able to create different kind of reports that analyse the collected and stakeholder-related information.

It is important to keep in mind that the planning and permitting process is dynamic and that both stakeholders and their interests might change over time both in terms of their level of relevance to the project and their engagement level. Some stakeholders will be more affected by a particular phase of a project than others. We are using a prioritising method aligned to the project planning phase:

- What type of stakeholder engagement is mandated by law or other requirements?
- Who will be affected by potential environmental and social impacts?
- For whom special engagement effort is necessary?
- At which planning stage of the project will stakeholders be most affected?
- What are the various interests of the stakeholders and what influence might this have on the project?
- Whose opposition can be detrimental to the success of the project?
- Who has to be engaged first and why?
- What is the optimal sequence of engagement?

A major part is also concerned with analysing the extent to which stakeholders are already networked with other stakeholders and independent decision-makers. Key stakeholders are usually well connected and therefore have significant influence on the participation of other actors. ARCMAP helps us to analyse the relations between different stakeholders. Identifying coalitions and alliances between stakeholders provides us with indications about already existing ties that can be built upon.

Stakeholder Engagement

The results from the aforementioned activities “Stakeholder Identification” and “Stakeholder Analysis & Mapping” provide the basis from which we can build up a stakeholder engagement strategy.

For us engagement means the process of exchanging information, listening to and learning from stakeholders - with the goal of building understanding and trust on issues of mutual interest.

A primary objective of stakeholder engagement is to generate a better understanding of stakeholder perspectives on key issues and, consequently, build relationships with the identified key stakeholders.

We will use the following Principles of Engagement to define and develop the right engagement strategy for the whole planning and permitting process:

- Engage on issues that matter
- Engage the right stakeholder
- Engage empowered representatives who can make decisions on behalf of their constituents and have the mandate to ‘step out of the comfort zone’

- Manage expectations and make certain that all parties have realistic ambitions and agree on clear outcomes of the engagement
- Provide adequate resources
- Choose the right format (e.g. private meetings, roundtable discussions, stakeholder panels, etc.)
- Listen to (critical) stakeholder views
- Build trust
- Be open, responsive, consistent and timely in all communications

b. Issue Management and Monitoring

Already at the earliest stage it is important that, through stakeholder mapping and issue monitoring, all issues and potential grievances from members of the public are identified in order to be able to conduct adequate communication during the whole project period.

Until the corridors are determined in the autumn/at the end of 2013, the basis for continual dialogue will be established with all stakeholder groups. An issue management system will be put in place in order to systematically identify, document and process a variety of topic, comments, questions and concerns arising from stakeholders on a broad range of topics.

- **Daily issue monitoring** for all relevant local media and energy blogs, providing a continually updated list of themes and language conventions.

c. Easy accessible communication: Name it and explain it

Name

The original name “HGÜ-C” is not easy understandable, has to be explained and is not “emotionally positive”. The first task is to find an adequate name and branding for the project.

The future name has to be agreed on by the project partners (TenneT and Transnet BW), tested in public and legally secured. The name identified in this project phase is: SuedLink.

This clearly establishes what the project is about: the connection of the north to the southern part of Germany (south = Süd).

Development of information material

To enable us to engage in an objective dialogue about the SuedLink with the various stakeholder groups, we are providing comprehensive information about the various details concerning the project. In terms of the design and text, we want to provide low-threshold material that will also be understandable to interested citizens without any special expertise. In addition, there will also be material available that provides more in-depth detail. All information material will of course include contact details that give feedback options for all questions arising.

The following documents are planned:

- Project brochure. A public information document on roughly 50 pages with a distribution of approximately 1200 copies
- Website

- Roll-Ups
- FAQs
- Presentation

- Factsheets on the following themes – depending on the input these will be supplemented using the issue monitoring system:
 - Direct current transmission
 - Underground cables versus overhead lines
 - Necessity in terms of meeting energy requirements
 - Public participation (communication approach taken by TenneT)
 - Planning transmission corridors and approval process (Bundesfachplanung)
 - Electromagnetic waves

d. Agenda Setting

Information will be provided on more general topics in order to gain public acceptance.

This will in particular contain:

- Press releases (e.g. on the name of the project, on the relevance of dc etc.)
- Interviews
- Background talks with relevant media
- Initial selected talks with most critical stakeholders (e.g. citizens' initiatives already active in the region)

- Initial talks with political multipliers

From the publication of the power transmission corridors to the Antragskonferenz

a. Information campaign

Central opening press conference

Tactics:

Start the external communications with a highly publicised launch event and initiate dialogue on the HVDC-C project. The fact that the project is discussed centrally at the beginning of the process means that no federal state can feel neglected. That would be the case, for example, if regional press conferences or information events were held at staggered intervals.

Implementation:

The project – including the preferred transmission corridor and further procedures – will be presented in detail (to the extent that the planning has progressed).

Important: Immediately before the press conference, public agencies/relevant stakeholders will be informed electronically about the project.

Active press work: Editorial visits

The project will be presented and contact partners established by conducting editorial visits along the entire corridor for all relevant daily newspapers.

Press Releases

Press releases will be regularly distributed to the media (particularly regional) as multipliers. These will include, for example:

- Information about the collaboration between TenneT and TransnetBW, planning activities, establishment of working groups, discussions with the federal states, references to milestones and communication measures.
- Information on the opening press conference: Announcement of the corridors and presentation of the project
- Information on the opening conferences with dates, venues, participants, etc.
- Information on the conference outcomes
- Information on the submitted applications / *Antragskonferenzen*

Newsletter

Production of a newsletter with news about the grid expansion and HVDC technology as well as the concrete project for press and stakeholders (the first issue will be sent parallel to the opening press conference; the second issue parallel to the *Antragskonferenz*).

The project live: Video diary

People approach issues in quite different ways. TenneT will therefore provide information in different formats and in a clear manner. For example, a video diary will be incorporated on the project website. This will record the progress made by the approval process, portray responsible corporate representatives, document events and give multipliers a say. Later,

during the construction of the power lines, life and work along the transmission corridor will be shown.

b. Dialogue campaign / Involvement

All elements described hereafter in the chapter „Dialogue campaign / Involvement“ will again have the following aspects: information and dialogue as well as participation.

We are suggesting different real events, different formats for the different stakeholders giving all identified stakeholders the possibility to actually discuss and get their opinions across. In order to reach a maximum of people we will conduct all of these different events locally – so that all 100 kilometers there will be the same events. And not only in the provincial capitals, but directly in the cities along the corridors.

The events will contain the following elements (formats are tailored to the respective audience/stakeholder group):

- Information: At the beginning, all necessary information will be presented truthfully, understandable and complete by representatives of TenneT
- Dialogue: The NGOs involved (like DUH) will discuss with TenneT and other stakeholders their perspectives on the project
- Participation: Relevant suggestions to improve the corridor as well as issues of concern raised that have to be examined will not only be documented but forwarded and included in the planning.

Further participative online communication tools, allowing consultation and involvement need time to be implemented in a useful way. This will be done and developed further after the “Antragskonferenz” – including as well the insights gained at these regional events.

Regional state conference / discussions

Tactics:

Background briefings will keep regional states affected by the project continually updated about the state of preparations, will inform them about activities and concerns, and will enable the participation of specialist authorities. Networking will be achieved by involving stakeholders and proactively informing them in advance.

Implementation:

The current state of preparation will be presented and the further steps to be taken will be discussed in regular meetings with potentially affected regional states and the Federal Network Agency (BNetzA). In addition, individual discussions will be held with all affected regional states. A bilateral meeting with authorities from the regional states and the affected regions will be offered prior to the regional launch events.

Prior to the *Antragskonferenz*, a regional conference will be organized to present possible power transmission corridors. If required, further dates will be scheduled.

Regional state conferences/discussions will be conceived as permanent, project-accompanying meetings for exchanging ideas.

Five regional launch events / Parliamentary Breakfast (first round of information events)

Tactics:

Before the formal administrative procedure begins, the launch events shall be used to provide information and initiate a dialogue with the potentially affected stakeholders and general public.

Implementation:

The project shall be publicised and the starting signal given for the work at five regional launch events along the investigated corridors (with a focus on the preferred corridor). These will be held by the project participants with the involvement of the affected federal states and the Federal Network Agency (BNetzA).

In terms of content, the launch events shall be used in particular for presenting and discussing the project's framework conditions, goals and intended measures. In addition, the consultation process shall be presented and participation sought.

The launch events are the first public measures for the dialogue process: therefore a broad and targeted promotion of the event is important in order to bring the public and the media on board right from the beginning.

The events shall be divided into two. In the first part a joint and, above all, accepted factual basis shall be created with experts and responsible actors from politics, authorities and associations. It is only in this manner that an objective and solutions-oriented discussion is possible – particularly concerning controversial aspects. The second part is conceived as a public event. Here the project will be presented in detail to the interested public and press. This framework provides an opportunity for debate and individual discussions.

During the **morning** of the **following day**, a **parliamentary breakfast** will be organised in the regional state capital of the respective federal state. In addition to the regional planning authorities (with which TenneT has developed formal contacts as part of the regional state conferences), the aim is to also involve the political level. In addition to the necessity of the SuedLink in energy and economic terms, the further progress of the approval process will also be discussed.

Regional public information markets (second round of information events)

Tactics:

- Establish direct dialogue with the affected stakeholders (show face)
- Receive suggestions and opinions directly on the ground

Implementation

Within the power transmission corridors, direct discussions will be held with potentially affected stakeholders by means further information events at the local level. Across a period of 4 hours, contact partners from TenneT will be preferably available in public buildings for discussions with interested members of the public.

Background briefings with local politicians: Parallel to the public information markets along the power transmission corridors, potentially affected local majors and councillors (also possibly parliamentary party leaders, members of regional state parliaments, etc.) will be informed during the day about the current plans.

Following this, the formal *Bundesfachplanung* planning procedure for the national grid expansion begins with the **Antragskonferenz**. This must be closely coordinated with the Federal Network Agency. In any event there should be communicative support with press information (background briefings if required) as well as stakeholder mailings. After this, the dialogue formats in the corridors (e.g. public information markets) and the regional state conferences must be continued as soon as possible.

Calendar week	Parallel to planning the corridors					From the publication of the power transmission corridors to the Antragskonferenz				
	September	October	November	Dec	Christmas / Turn of the year	January	February	March		
GROUNDWORK					No communications measures					
Drafting concept and action plan with NGO feedback										
Daily issue monitoring										
Information materials: (e.g. website, brochures, information graphics, fact sheets, FAQ)										
Determination of a project name										
Determination of interfaces/ collaboration with TransneBW										
Preparative training of relevant corporate representatives										
Crisis prevention (Information leakage)										
INFORMATION CAMPAIGN										
Press mailing lists and press releases				Coop. TNG		10.1.2017				
Central opening press conference (PC)						10.1.2017				
Active press work (editorial visits)						10.1.2017				
Newsletter										
The project live: video diary										
Stakeholder mailings						10.1.2017				
DIALOGUE CAMPAIGN/ INKLUSION										
Regional state conference/ discussions										
Five regional launch events							10.1.2017			
Regional public information markets							10.1.2017			
Background briefings with local politicians								10.1.2017		
Application conference (Antragskonferenz, AC)								10.1.2017		
MONITORING / EVALUATION										
Daily issue monitoring										
Stakeholder mapping und monitoring										
Empirical social research										

AC: Application Conference (Antragskonferenz)
 PC: Central Opening Press Conference
 PTC: Preferred Transmission Corridor
 TNG: TransneBW

Overview: From the Antragskonferenz to the conclusion of the Bundesfachplanung

The formal *Bundesfachplanung* planning procedure for the national grid expansion begins with the **public Antragskonferenz**. The *Bundesfachplanung* procedure to some extent stipulates how and in which phases the public, federal states authorities and public agencies must be involved.

As it has in the previous informal phase, TenneT will comply with this requirement by providing transparent and truthful information and through being available as a constructive partner for dialogue.

In addition to these formal obligations, TenneT is conducting further communications measures in order to create as much acceptance as possible among the public and the authorities involved.

In this regard the stakeholder integration measures must be closely coordinated both time- and content-wise with the formal stages of the *Bundesfachplanung* procedure. The timing and the detailed planning of the measures will therefore be addressed as soon as the corridors and dates for the *Antragskonferenz* have been determined.

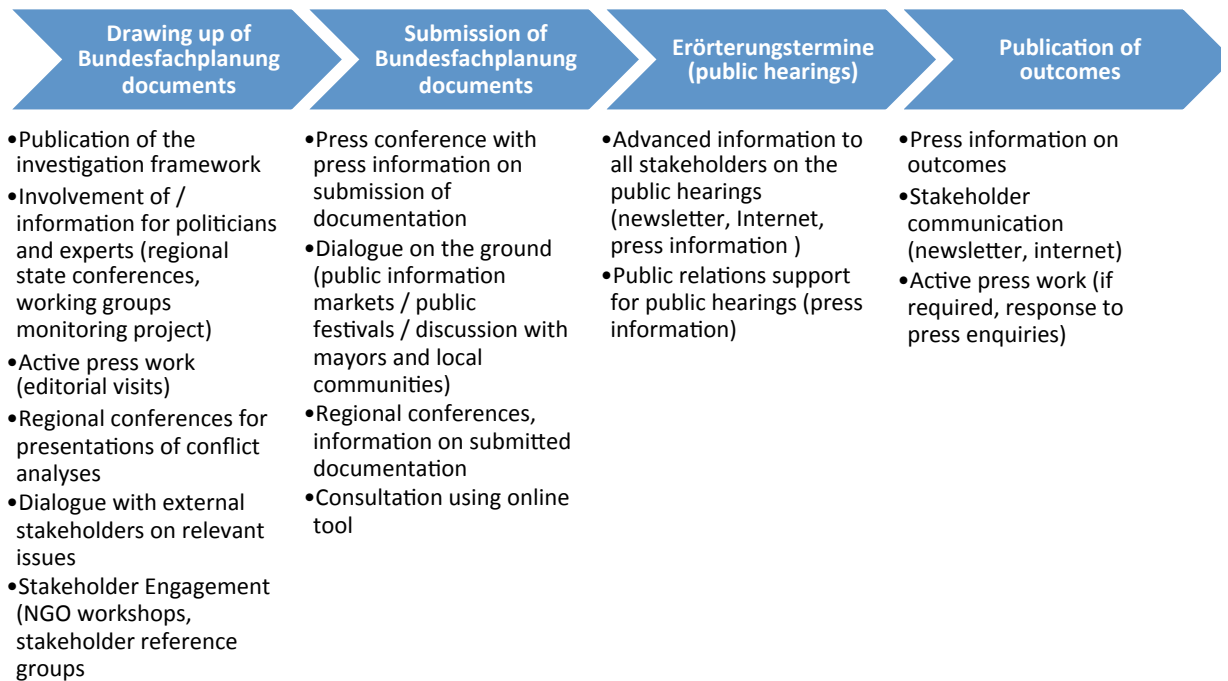
When the documents for the “Bundesfachplanung” are finally prepared there will be more room for dialogue and participation than before the Antragskonferenz. So the working groups and dialogue panels with local and regional stakeholders are aiming at collecting input from the public. TenneT takes the concerns of the affected stakeholders into consideration. And valuable input from stakeholders will enrich and also change the planning. Local stakeholder and NGOs are closely involved in the planning process and their feedback and suggestions are part of the planning process.

The NABEG sets clear time frames for the project phases steered by the regulator, like application conference and scoping. As there is no legal timeframe for the phase when the TSO is finishing the documents, the final planning and scheduling for the action plan can only be done when the final time frame is set by the regulator two months after the application conference.

Overview of the the planning:

Additional Communication

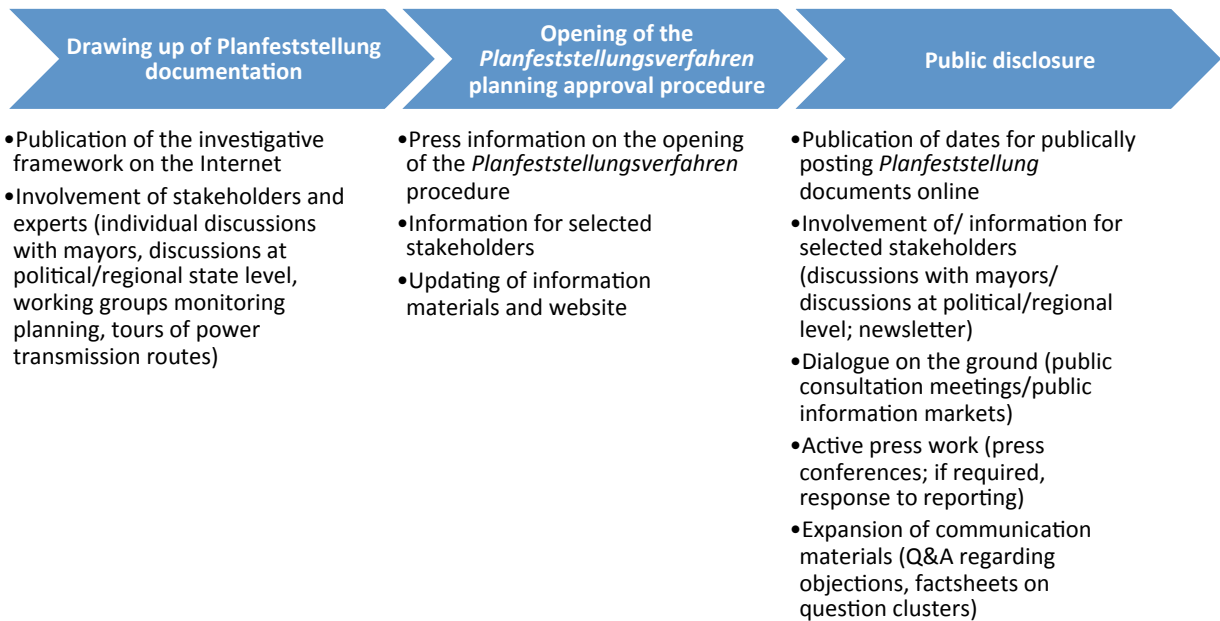
beyond legal obligations



Overview: planning approval procedure

Timing and detailed planning will be determined before the beginning of the *Planfeststellungsverfahren* planning approval procedure.

Overview of the planning:



Involvement of external partners

Major tasks need new ways of thinking, exchange and co-operation. That's why TSOs were looking for a platform, to discuss and co-operate with the most relevant NGOs and expert partners. That's where BESTGRID builds this platform and is the solution for the co-operation need.

a. What is BESTGRID?

BESTGRID as initiative is very important for the success of the grid expansion. BESTGRID not only includes NGOs as BirdLife Europe, Germanwatch, and the International Institute of Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), but it creates opportunity of exchange between the grid operators as well.

BESTGRID allows for the first time real exchange and collaboration between TSOs and NGOs in order to improve processes and results. Common communication formats would have not been possible without BESTGRID. Of course the co-operation is continuously evaluated in order to share learnings and even improve future projects. This will be especially taken care of by the BESTGRID Partner IIASA.

DUH and Germanwatch (a development and environmental organisation) will support TenneT in conceiving and implementing various dialogue events within the framework of BESTGRID. This will enable the communications to be adapted in accordance with the requirements of the various stakeholder groups.

In addition, opinion polls will be conducted at regular intervals in order to gauge the attitude of the local population towards the SuedLink project. These will therefore monitor the success of the conducted communications measures and provide a survey of what citizens consider to be good public involvement in the planning and construction of infrastructure projects.

The NGO partners will also contribute to the stakeholder mapping.

A further element within the framework of BESTGRID is that TenneT will already conduct an intensive dialogue with external experts prior to the Antragskonferenz in order to clarify technical aspects and methodical criteria concerned with planning the power transmission corridors.

While drawing up the Bundesfachplanung documents TenneT will organise an additional workshop with the NGO partners addressing technological and health issues.

b. Interaction with BG consortium

Major tasks need new ways of thinking, exchange and co-operation. That's why BESTGRID as initiative is so important for the success of the grid expansion. All partners in the consortium exchange their plans and concepts, give input and create new ideas. That has happened also with this action plan. TenneT shared and discussed it with the partners in the consortium during regular meetings in Brussels as well as sharing online documents, receiving feedback and incorporating it. The progress in the project will continuously be exchanged within the BG consortium. Evaluation, steering and improvements can so be made during the project course. Partners are as well invited to visit activities.

c. Role of subcontracted NGOs

With the SuedLink, TenneT is planning to work together with the **Deutsche Umwelthilfe (DUH)** – one of the most renowned NGOs in Germany. The DUH is an environmental organisation active throughout Germany, which was founded in 1975. The organisation acts as an independent forum for NGOs and decision-makers from politics and business. In dialogue with companies and politicians, it would like to set the course for sustainable business activities and environmentally friendly products.

It is planned that DUH will help TenneT in conceiving the aforementioned regional launch events. In addition it is also intended that the DUH will moderate the dialogue events as independent experts and mediators. Once these have been completed, the NGO will also be involved in their evaluation, e.g. in the form of written questionnaires. This will enable the communication provisions to be evaluated and, if need be, adapted at subsequent dialogue events.

In addition, the DUH will also support TenneT with further dialogue events.

Of course, all communication measures and planning have been discussed beforehand with DUH as well. The communication concept/action plan was shared, input received and implemented.

In this regard, initial cooperation agreements in this phase are being implemented.

Measurement of success

As a steering instrument for our own communication measures, **daily issue monitoring** will be conducted **for the relevant media** in the investigation area and for energy blogs.

Since published opinions do not always accord with public opinion, **empirical social research** will also be conducted. In **regional surveys** the public will be questioned about overarching issues such as the energy turnaround and the infrastructure expansion, but also in particular as to whether and how they would like to be involved in the process. The surveys will be mostly conducted in the federal states / regions through which the corridors will run. In this manner it will be possible to survey the attitudes and acceptance for the dialogue conducted by TenneT – and to therefore correspondingly steer the communication. To enable the communication measures to be evaluated over the course of time, the surveys will be conducted at **regular intervals**.

Evaluation and Key Performance Indicators

Communication Goal	Communication Measure	Success Factor/ Key Performance Indicator
Understand Stakeholders	Implementation of stakeholder mapping and database	Stakeholder Database is established and in place
Understand stakeholders' issues and potential grievances	Implementation of Issue Monitoring and Issue Management	Issue Monitoring is in place
Easy accessible communication	Renaming; development of website, brochure, Factsheets	Name is in place and accepted. Comprehensive information material has been produced.
Communication on more general topics / agenda setting	Press Relations	Press releases have been issued / background briefings with the media have taken place

Involvement with external Partners/ co-operation with NGOs	Start talks with relevant NGO	Co-operation with relevant external partner /NGO has been established
Understand public opinion and establish the basis for future evaluation of dialogue measures	Empirical Social Research: Conduct regional representative surveys getting to know the opinion of the different stakeholders	Initial survey results are available, evaluated and provide the basis for further evaluation.
Awareness on project was raised	Information campaign / press conference and press releases	Media resonance analysis. Have our messages been taken up by the media?
Stakeholders participated in the dialogue	Different local events open to all stakeholders	Quantitative evaluation: Events have taken place, stakeholders were present and were able to raise their concerns and recommendations
Stakeholders participated in the dialogue	Different local events open to all stakeholders, emails etc.	Qualitative evaluation: Questions / Issues/ Recommendations of stakeholders have been documented and processed.
Information is available for all stakeholders concerned	Newsletter (online)	Newsletter has been implemented and distributed to all those who have requested information
Dialogue was accepted	All elements of dialogue campaign	Empirical social research: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Standardised questioning of visitors of events. 2. Second opinion poll building on the first one, making data comparable and showing changes and rate of acceptance

EVALUATION for sharing and learning

BESTGRID partner International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) is not only providing early input to the action plans. IIASA as neutral research organization is to provide analyses to understand the issues of public acceptance in communities.

In analysing the activities of the four different projects and their impact on and acceptance by the stakeholders IIASA is aiming to contribution to understand public acceptance and awareness issues. The lessons learned from four pilot projects will provide an input to policy-making process, for example, on how to ensure minimum standards in participation and transparency required for the “projects of common interest”.

Together with IIASA TenneT will design specific stakeholder surveys to apply at the different public information and consultation events in order to gather comparable data.

BESTGRID – TenneT Action Plan 2: Speed up approval by means of early stakeholder engagement and early consideration of environmental concerns

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III. Background: Description of the Project

Main Rationale

At around 800 kilometres, the SuedLink BestGrid project is the largest infrastructure project for the energy turnaround in Germany. With a transmission capacity of 4 GW, the power transmission line will create the urgently needed link between the wind power generated in the north and the consumer centres in the south of Germany. The project partners are the two Transmission System Operators TenneT GmbH and TransnetBW GmbH. According to the current state of planning, two connections are being realised within the SuedLink. A part of the BestGrid project is the connection between Wilster (Schleswig-Holstein) and the Region of Grafenrheinfeld (Bavaria).

According to plans by the German federal government, renewable energies shall already meet at least 80 per cent of the electricity provision in Germany by 2050. However, the necessary generation capacities to achieve this are being primarily developed in the North, whereas the large consumer centres are situated in the South of Germany. The gap between the electricity supply and demand will continue to widen if further nuclear power stations in Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg are phased out.

This North-South gap will endanger the supply security in Germany if the necessary infrastructure is not provided in time. According to the Grid Development Plan 2013, a total of 3,600 kilometres of new transmission lines must be built during the next ten years. This particularly includes North-South connections such as the SuedLink.

This corridor is of central importance in a literal sense, whereby the direct current technology used here (HVDC) enables very large volumes of electrical energy to be transported with maximum efficiency.

By expanding this transmission line system, TenneT is also making a considerable contribution to a secure and disruption-free grid operation in future. However, the development of a future-proof electricity infrastructure is not just the sole concern of the grid operators. Rather, this can only succeed in collaboration with all actors from civil society, politics and business.

Timeline and Status

TenneT is currently preparing the communication measures that need to be implemented before the *Antragskonferenz* (application conference) as well as possible grid corridors. The *Antragskonferenz* marks the beginning of the formal approval process (*Bundesfachplanung*). The fact that the possible power transmission corridors are presented in advance and discussed in dialogue events aim at creating a climate of public opinion that is as positive as possible for the approval process.

New Approval Procedure

a. For the first time: The national *Bundesfachplanung* planning procedure

The national planning procedure that the Grid Expansion Acceleration Act (NABEG) envisages for the SuedLink is known as the *Bundesfachplanung* process. It replaces the land use planning process used for inter-federal state and cross-border projects. With a unified nationwide procedure, the *Bundesfachplanung* is designed to accelerate the planning for urgently required transmission lines. The German Federal Network Agency (BNetzA) is responsible for this process.

b. *Bundesfachplanung* procedure

The start and end points for the future transmission lines for the SuedLink have already been determined as part of the newly adopted Federal Requirement Plan Act (*Bundesbedarfsplangesetz*): one line runs from Wilster into the Grafenrheinfeld region; the second runs from Brunsbüttel to Großgartach.

This is a two-stage application procedure. It begins with an application in accordance with § 6 NABEG (Grid Expansion Acceleration Act), which the project developer has to submit to the German Federal Network Agency (BNetzA). This contains a proposal for a transmission corridor and possible alternatives as well as proposals for the planned content of the completed documents that have to be subsequently submitted in accordance § 8 NABEG (including the SUP environmental report, a land use impact study, FFH-VorP/-VP, preliminary species conservation assessments). In addition, it is proposed to divide the corridor into sections that will be more closely investigated and compared (*Abschnittsbildung*).

The basis for determining a transmission corridor and possible alternatives will be provided by comprehensive preliminary investigations at the planning level. First of all, particularly contentious regional areas will be excluded as part of the rough corridor determination. Using existing data for the large-scale spatial and environmental situation and by implementing the criteria relevant for decision-making at this planning level, particularly contentious regional areas will be identified at an early point that are characterised by their particular need to be protected or their overriding uses. A further aspect being taken into account with the corridor determination is the **bundling** with linear structures. The fundamental aim here is to bundle the extra-high voltage lines with existing or planned linear infrastructure in order to minimise additional environmental impacts that would be created by a completely new line.

Within the rough corridors, the next stage is concerned with determining transmission corridors that are around 500 to 1,000 metres wide in which the lines will eventually run. These transmission corridors will themselves be defined by identifying the *Raumwiderstände* and **bundling potential** in the area under investigation (= *Umgriff der maßgeblichen Grobkorridore*: main rough corridors), and by taking into consideration general and project-related planning guidelines.

The assessment and comparison of the transmission corridors incorporates not just the findings from the *Raumwiderstände* and bundling analyses but also technical aspects and other planning principles. The latter could be of fundamental nature, e.g. derived from § 11 EnWG (economic feasibility, safety, efficiency), but could also be determined by the specific underlying conditions for the concrete project. The responsible transmission system operator proposes a preferential transmission corridor in its application to § 6 NABEG. However, it must also take other alternatives into consideration in this application.

The first task of the German Federal Network Agency (BNetzA) as part of the *Bundesfachplanung* procedure is to organise a public *Antragskonferenz* (conference on the planning application). For this purpose, it invites public institutions as well as environmental organisations and regional state authorities. In addition, interested members of the public are

also allowed to take part. During the conference it is determined, among others, which documents and appraisal reports should be submitted by the transmission system operator in accordance with § 8 NABEG and how the specific investigation frameworks will be determined for this. An important aim of the *Antragskonferenz* is to consult with the specialist authorities in the regional states affected. This is intended to ensure that the planning requirements are clarified between all stakeholders as early as possible.

As part of the *Bundesfachplanung*, another strategic environmental study is carried out by the Federal Network Agency, whereby the draft environmental report provided by the Transmission System Operator provides the main material for weighing up and checking interests. This strategic environmental study is independent of the strategic environmental study carried out as part of the Federal Requirement Plan (*Bundesbedarfsplan*) and, because a more specific power transmission corridor is evaluated with the *Bundesfachplanung*, this enables the environmental impacts to be investigated for the first time in detail for the affected area.

The Federal Network Agency publishes the environmental report together with the entire application documents. Any person as well as authorities and public institutions can comment on them. The Federal Network Agency checks all submitted statements and discusses them at a public event together with the public, authorities and organisations.

The *Bundesfachplanung* procedure is concluded with the Federal Network Agency's decision for a specific power transmission corridor. To arrive at this decision, the authority weighs up all submitted arguments. The aim is to determine a technically and economically sensible as well as spatially and environmentally compatible transmission corridor. The transmission corridor determined by the *Bundesfachplanung* procedure is adopted by the *Bundesnetzplan* (Federal Grid Plan).

The *Bundesfachplanung* process is followed by the *Planfeststellungsverfahren* planning approval procedure. Based on the legally binding transmission corridor determined in the

Bundesfachplanung process, this determines the precise course of the transmission lines and plans them in detail, including the individual mast locations.

c. What is different compared with conventional land use planning procedures?

The *Bundesfachplanung* process is a new planning procedure for inter-federal state and cross-border power line projects in accordance with the Grid Expansion Acceleration Act (NABEG). The land use planning procedure (*Raumordnungsverfahren*) will continue to be used for all projects that only affect a single federal state. Whereas the land using planning procedure is conducted by the respectively responsible federal state authorities, the Federal Network Agency (BNetzA) is responsible for the *Bundesfachplanung* procedure.

In addition, an important innovation with the *Bundesfachplanung* procedure is the early and comprehensive involvement of the public. This is intended to ensure an open discussion in the planning process for the new transmission lines and enable comments from the public and public institutions to be incorporated at the earliest possible time.

In addition, the *Raumordnungsverfahren* procedures apply for an overall project, whereas the *Bundesfachplanung* procedure also makes it possible to examine and compare individual sections. In *Raumordnungsverfahren* procedures, conflicts relating to spatial development and regional planning goals can only be solved by means of separate procedures for permitting deviating goals. In the *Bundesfachplanung* process, on the other hand, the spatial development and regional planning goals can also be overcome in the deliberations.

There also differences with the legal implications: the *Raumordnungsverfahren* process is not legally binding; its findings merely represent an important criterion for the deliberations. This is different with the *Bundesfachplanung* procedure: here the results – in the form of transmission corridors determined by the Federal Network Agency and adopted in the Federal Grid Plan –

are binding in the subsequent *Planfeststellungsverfahren* planning approval procedure and can generally be secured via a development freeze (*Veränderungssperre*) for 5 years.

d. Why is this approval procedure being used?

With the Grid Expansion Acceleration Act (NABEG), a package of measures has been concluded that is intended to reduce the duration of the planning and approval procedures for inter-federal state and cross-border extra-high-voltage transmission lines. Through comprehensive information, dialogue and opportunities for participation, a substantial goal for the new procedure is to promote acceptance for constructing the transmission lines among stakeholders and interested people and organisations. That provides the basis for an efficient, transparent and environmentally compatible expansion of the transmission network. The responsible authority is the Federal Network Agency (BNetzA).

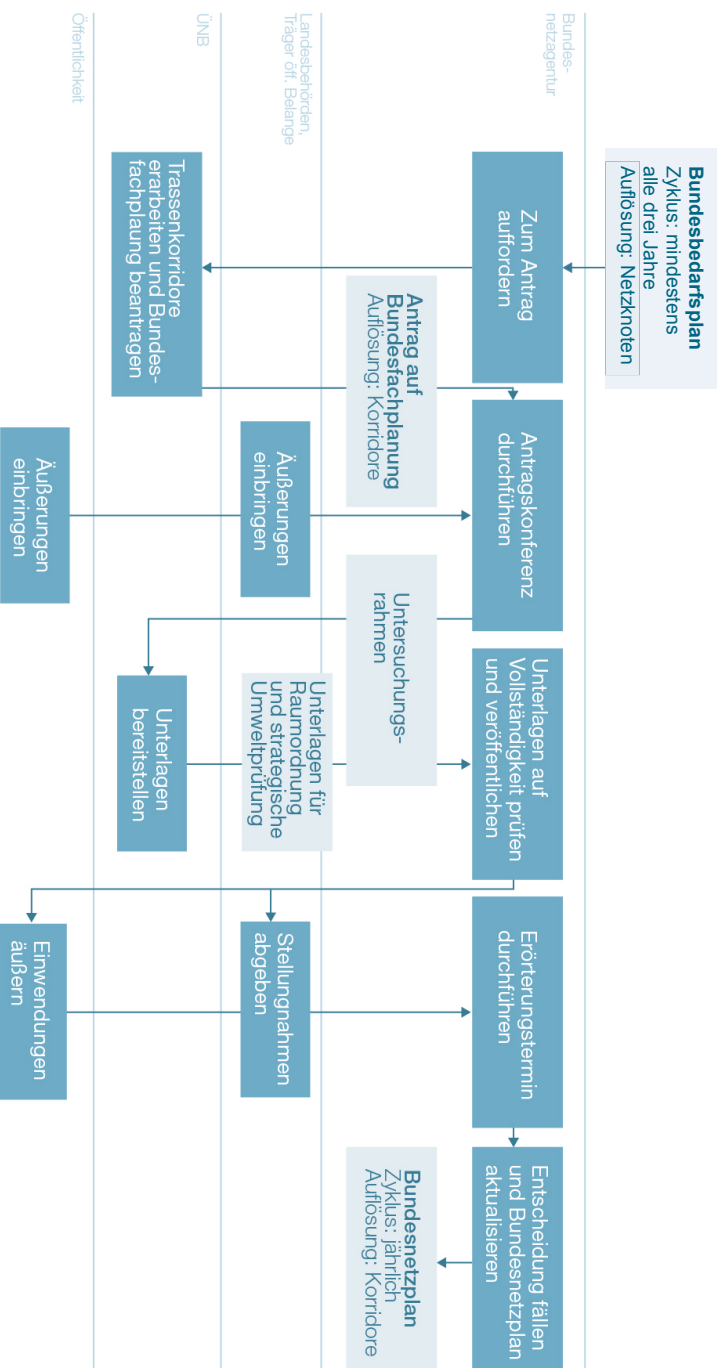
Since 2011, the Federal Network Agency (BNetzA) has been the lead administrative authority for expanding the extra- high-voltage network at the federal government level. It is tasked with conducting efficient planning approval procedures in order to accelerate the required grid expansion in Germany. Since 2013, the Federal Network Agency has also been monitoring and supporting the implementation of *Bundesfachplanung* procedures for inter-federal state and cross-border grid expansion projects in accordance with the Grid Expansion Acceleration Act (NABEG). Here it organises the public *Antragskonferenz*, secures public participation and determines the transmission corridor for the subsequent *Planfeststellungsverfahren* planning approval process. In addition, the Federal Network Agency also conducts all the *Planfeststellungsverfahren* procedures for all projects covered by the *Bundesfachplanung* process.

e. What is the schedule for the *Bundesfachplanung* procedure for the first Wilster-Grafenrheinfeld link?

With the help of its planning offices and the refined methods according to § 6 NABEG, the Transmission System Operators are currently drawing up a preferential transmission corridor (VTK) and its alternatives. By means of a comparative assessment of the determined transmission corridors, a proposal for a VTK and possible alternatives will be submitted to the Federal Network Agency as the responsible regulative authority. As part of the *Bundesfachplanung* procedure, the Federal Network Agency will then conduct the *Antragskonferenz* – the public application conference. According to our current time plan, the approval process will be completed after the *Bundesfachplanung* process in 2016.

Bundesfachplanung

Im Überblick



Planning Procedure

a. The planning ellipse

The Federal Requirement Plan (*Bundesbedarfsplan*) has determined the start and end points (grid connection points) for the SuedLink. These have been chosen so that the local need to expand the high- and extra-high-voltage network is minimised. The investigation area for determining the rough and transmission corridors has the shape of an ellipse. The precise methodological stipulations as to how this ellipse is to be spanned for a concrete project are described in the 2013 draft Environmental Report on the draft *Bundesbedarfsplan*.

b. Multiple federal states

The federal states through which the two links will run that were previously confirmed in the *Bundesbedarfsplan* will not be finalised until completion of the approval procedure to §6 NABEG. It is certain, however, that the transmission lines will run within the respective investigation ellipses between the grid connection points identified in the NEP. The investigation ellipse for the Wilster-Grafenrheinfeld region project encompasses the German federal states of Hamburg and Bremen as well as part of Schleswig-Holstein, Lower Saxony, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, North Rhine-Westphalia, Hesse, Saxony-Anhalt, Thuringia, Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria. The start points (grid connection points) for the two confirmed projects are situated in Schleswig-Holstein; the end points are in Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria.

c. Determining the power transmission corridors

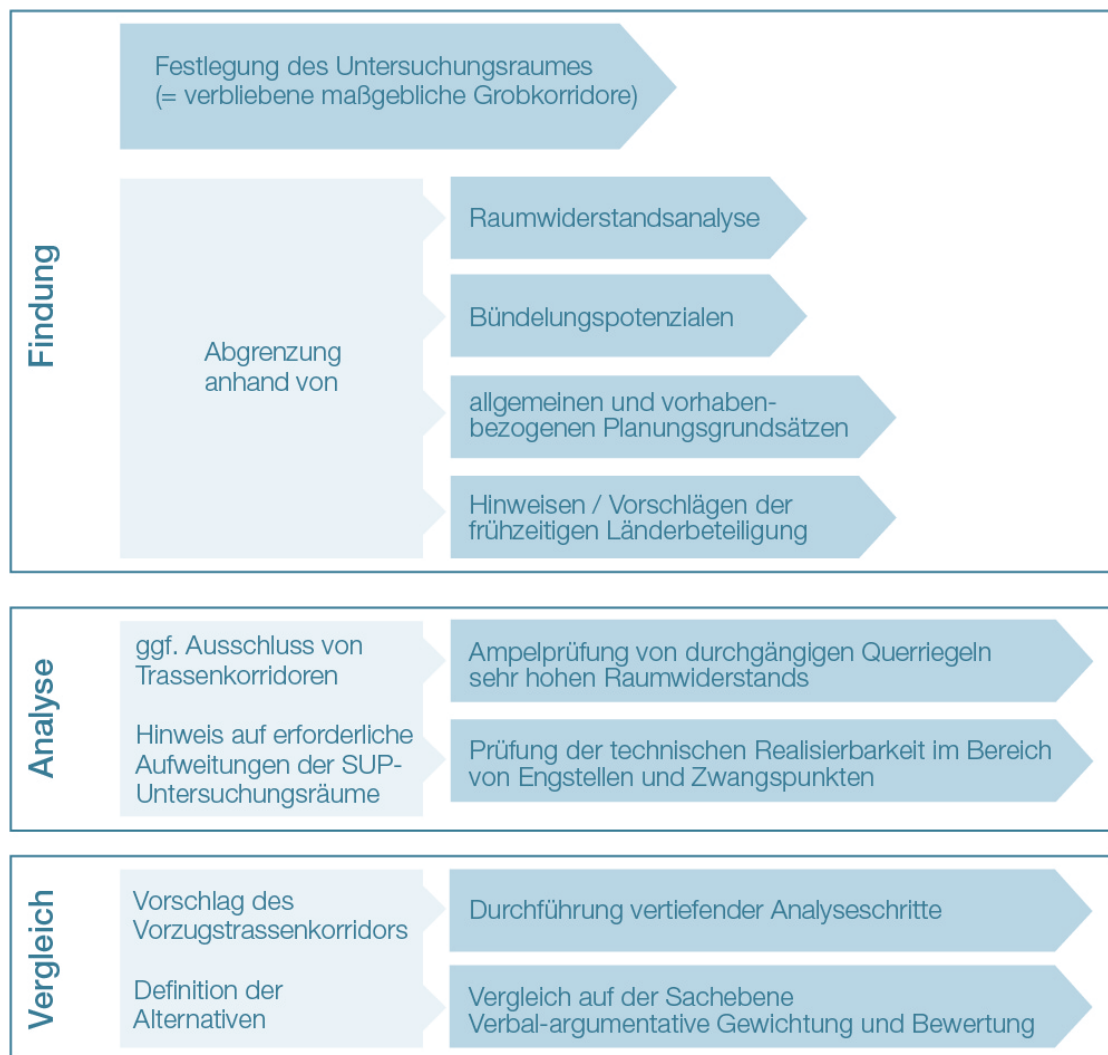
Within the identified rough corridors, transmission corridors between 500 and 100 metres in width will be determined in which the lines will later run. These transmission corridors will

themselves be defined by identifying the ***Raumwiderstände*** and **bundling potential** in the area under investigation and by taking into consideration general and project-related **planning guidelines**.

According to TenneT and TransnetBW, the proposed transmission corridor is the version that best meets all the main criteria.

The precise course of the preferred transmission corridor has still not been determined. Following its proposal by TenneT and TransnetBW, the Federal Network Agency will first confirm it on completion of the *Bundesfachplanung* procedure following a multi-stage process. The decision of the Federal Network Agency does not have to follow the proposal developed by TenneT GmbH and TransnetBW GmbH. The specific course of the transmission line within the transmission corridor – including the mast locations – will first be determined in the subsequent *Planfeststellungsverfahren* planning approval procedure.

Herleitung der Trassenkorridore



Challenges

The importance of the project for Germany's energy turnaround and future energy system is incontestable. **However, the social and to some extent political environment for major infrastructure projects has seldom been so challenging as today.** A complex and contentious range of views and actions can also be expected with SuedLink, which could extend from critical monitoring by the authorities involved to open resistance from affected communities or action groups. In addition, the project will attract **considerable media attention** and experience shows that the media tend to adopt a critical stance towards infrastructure projects.

Some of the potentially affected federal states have already stated officially their opposition to building the new SuedLink.

The challenges include:

- **New and complex procedure.** The *Bundesfachplanung* planning process is a new and therefore unknown instrument, and it is still in conception with the licensing authorities and other TSO's.

The SuedLink is one of the first projects under the new legal procedure provided by the Grid Expansion Acceleration Act (*Netzausbaubeschleunigungsgesetz – NABEG*). The new procedure puts substantial areas concerned with informing and consulting the public in the hands of the German Federal Network Agency (*Bundesnetzagentur – BNetzA*), meaning that instances to engage with the public are partially in hands of/organised by BNetzA instead of TenneT. As the legal act and resulting procedures are new, the details of the implementation are currently being developed. Uncertainty about the details for upcoming steps remains high.

- **Right to dialogue.** The communicative pressure is increasing. It is not just the Federal Network Agency (BNetzA) and politicians but also the general public who are demanding to be extensively involved from an early stage.

- **High expectations with regard to underground cabling.** As a result of the *Bundesbedarfsplangesetz* (Federal Requirements Planning Act for planning the national grid expansion) and technical possibilities connected with DC technology.
- **Extensive examination area.** This means that many institutions and numerous stakeholder groups are affected. More than 3,000 kilometres of potential corridors have to be examined.
- **Only transit land.** The electricity will only pass through some federal states, without there being benefits resulting from feed-in or -out points.
- **Lack of knowledge with regard to technical issues.** Building DC power lines is a groundbreaking new technology not yet realised in the German power grid. So new standards have to be put up and techniques to be developed.
- **Infrastructure bundling.** Why is another power transmission line required in addition to the existing 380-KV line? Residents are concerned about being doubly burdened.
- **Need for coordination.** The communications provided by the project partners – TenneT and TransnetBW – must be consistent.
- **Necessity of big industrial sites for converters.** Considerable concerns can be expected around the converter sites because of their necessary industrial scale.

Planning Goals / Rationale Behind Action Plan 2

TenneT is aiming to optimise the power transmission lines taking into account all natural resources and cultural assets and to reduce the adverse effects on people and nature to a minimum.

In Germany there are no statutory requirements stipulating minimum distances from electrical transmission lines or transformer stations to nature conservation areas and other sites particularly important for nature protection, such as breeding and resting sites. Instead individual cases have to be respectively examined based on the requirements of the German Federal Nature Conservation Act. TenneT is planning and constructing all new power lines so that adverse effects to the environment and nature are kept as small as possible.

In order to realise the project and speed up approval, it is necessary to engage stakeholders and consider environmental concerns at the earliest point in time possible.

Here, TenneT is aiming to foresee and/or prevent challenges and issues in planning the new grid that would otherwise arise at later stages and would likely lead to delays in the approval procedure later on.

This project not only aims to identify issues and concerns at an early point but also to identify opportunities (e.g. ecological corridors) in order to add positive components to the discussion.

This early engagement with stakeholders will also help in achieving Action Plan 1 and improving public acceptance, since public acceptance is increased through assurance that any environmental concerns are dealt with in a comprehensive and sensitive way.

Strategic Approach and Methodology

Make it **practical, profound** and **generally applicable** at the same time.

A pilot project will be started in a geographically well-defined region selected along the potential corridor. TenneT is using the input of an independent environmental expert (Deutsche Umwelthilfe) in order to create a local stakeholder discussion format. A further local NGO will be subcontracted to provide detailed input in researching and compiling advice in regard to local conservation stakeholders and their potential concerns and ideas with respect to the specific local nature environment.

The subcontracted NGO will focus on researching whether the planned grid corridor and the future power line can be used to connect habitats by implementing a special/well adapted corridor management / *Pflegemanagement*.

Two roundtables will be organised with the support of a regional NGO with a local regional focus (*“Experten-Werkstatt”*) where environmental experts will present and discuss their findings and also discuss challenges and opportunities- Ideally this will lead to planning optimisation and speeding up of the approval process.

Regional Selection of Pilot Project

Since in order to implement the BESTGRID pilot project, an application is currently being made for the SuedLink project as part of the *Bundesfachplanungsverfahren* approval process to §6 NABEG, the plans are not sufficiently determined to describe a specific transmission line. Therefore it is still only possible to provide information on the grid connection points that were announced in the application in accordance with §6 NABEG. Planning areas and sections for the later application in accordance with § 8 NABEG will certainly lie in these regions (in northern Schleswig-Holstein and southern Bavaria). For this reason, TenneT has therefore decided to implement the pilot project in one of these planning regions.

Because there is a highland landscape in Bavaria and large parts of the future planning will also be situated in similar landscapes, preference has been given to this area. It is felt that the investigations and planning made here can be transferred best of all to other SuedLink planning sections or other projects.

Identification Topics, Issues and Role of NGOs

TenneT's ideas about new possibilities for researching environmental aspects of the planned grid corridors were discussed with the partner in the Bestgrid project: BirdLife

BirdLife came to the following conclusion about relevant topics for the project.

Between

- a) wildlife habitat creation/ management e.g. usage of grid corridors to connect relevant habitats and
- b) mitigation of impacts on certain species (e.g. black stork)

- a) is the more interesting option.

a. Plan A: Wildlife habitat creation/ grid corridor management

Although looking into the grid corridors to connect habitats is worthwhile, BirdLife asked several relevant questions that TenneT has to find answers for and which could result in restraints on that research topic.

Questions from BirdLife that have to be tackled during the project:

- Which size of territory/lengths of line is being considered here?
- Will the line be built in an existing corridor or will a new corridor be established?
- Will TenneT have access and the right to get involved in active management of vegetation in corridors or is intervention limited to preventing trees damaging lines?
- Could there be an issue of private property? (e.g. TenneT only allowed to access their lines for maintenance purpose, but not to actively management of the adjacent land).
- What happens to the idea if SuedLink simply crosses agricultural land?

- Active corridor habitat management requires substantial resources far beyond that which BESTGRID can cover – is TenneT prepared to dedicate such resources over the long term?
- What will be the main factors/institutions/decision makers that determine if TenneT will engage in corridor habitat management for this project?

What is relevant for BirdLife as an environmental expert is that it is clear about the focus, since mitigation measures for certain species may be a planning requirement anyway. In this case it is important that actions taken under BESTGRID are additional to what would have happened anyway. It might be more accurate to talk about habitat ‘enhancement’ measures under BESTGRID, to make it clear this is different and additional to ‘mitigation’ (which means reducing impacts).

BirdLife’s recommendation to incorporate a local NGO could include the following aspects:

- Kick-off meeting with TenneT environmental planning team to better understand the project timeline, specific questions to TenneT
- Analyse publication of BfN (Skripten 346) and insights from the Elia/RTE Life+ corridor project (<http://life-elia.eu/>)
- Analysis of habitat/species of risk situation in territory under consideration based on existing materials (no raising of primary data)
- Potentially joint site visit (travel costs to be covered by TenneT)
- Make recommendations to TenneT as to what kind of habitat should be put under such a line under consideration of missing habitats/species at risk in the area (Bavaria)
- Indication of further relevant stakeholders that TenneT needs to engage with to discuss the idea
- Input on methodologies for studies that may be necessary with respect to the corridor network
- Participate in two roundtable events with local authorities to present findings (official speaking slot in the agenda), answer questions and function as a sparring partner

Important Recommendation: Fall back Option!

b. Plan B: Mitigation of impacts on certain species (e.g. Black Stork, *Ciconia nigra*)

However, if TenneT realises in the process that it does not have the resources available for an extensive and continuous management of the corridor, if the corridor will mostly cross private property/agricultural land that TenneT may not be able to access or if it is generally very unclear at this stage whether TenneT will be able to proceed with this idea, BirdLife clearly recommends using the local NGO subcontract under BESTGRID for a different purpose, such as the idea of specifically looking into the EIA and recommending mitigation measures for species vulnerable to collision (e.g. for the Black Stork, Red Kite, etc):

The input that a local NGO could provide for this purpose could include:

- Kick-off meeting with TenneT environmental planning team to better understand timeline of project, specific questions of TenneT
- Screening of available information (provided by TenneT) on protection status of area and species usage of area.
- Identification of information gaps which are relevant to be covered in EIA
- Highlighting particularly critical topics, including making recommendations for a more strategic mitigation planning (longer-term perspective, thinking in an ecosystem approach)
- Identification of further key local stakeholders TenneT should consider in setting up EIA
- Participation at proposal conference (travel costs to be covered by TenneT)
- Input on methodologies for further to be developed studies
- Participate in two roundtable events with local authorities to present their findings (official speaking slot in the agenda), answer questions and function as a sparring partner

Focus on a species such as the Black Stork:

- Based on available maps on structure of forest identification of forest zones which are most interesting from the Black Stork perspective
- High-level recommendations on how to develop specific nesting habitat improvements for the storks
- Site visit (travel costs to be covered by TenneT), but budget would not be sufficient to do actual fieldwork

Procedure for identifying local environmental NGO

In both cases, irrespective whether topic A or B in the previous chapter is elaborated, a local partner (environmental NGO) will provide input and work together with TenneT. Following the official procedure required by the European Commission, there will be a Call for Proposals where suitable NGOs can apply.

This Call for Experts will be led by the Renewable Grid Initiative, in partnership with TenneT and BirdLife.

The draft Call for Experts is provided on the following pages.

Call for Proposals: Independent experts on the impacts of grid infrastructure on the local natural environment

Principal/contracting entity: The Climate Shop UG
Haydnstraße 1
12203 Berlin, Deutschland
(hereinafter referred to as "RGI")

Project Partners: TenneT TSO GmbH
BirdLife Europe

Role of Contractor: Local Nature Conservation Expert providing local insights and knowledge to the electricity grid construction project SuedLink. The detailed geography of engagement will be determined together with the subcontractor in the course of setting up the contract and should be located in a German secondary mountain region (Mittelgebirgsregion).

Duration and Scope: main workload February 2014; lower intensity workload until 3rd quarter 2014; total workload: approximately 80 person-hours.

Budget: EUR 8.300,00 excluding Value Added Tax (Mehrwertsteuer 19%)

Application Deadline: 20.01.2014

Content Call for Experts

Context: BESTGRID Project

This call seeks for local nature conservation experts to provide their expertise in the framework of the BESTGRID project. The BESTGRID project, funded by the European Commission's Intelligent Energy Europe programme, aims at allowing faster development of electricity grids needed to integrate renewable energies across Europe. This will be achieved by increasing local public acceptance for new grids and through addressing environmental concerns earlier and more proactively.

At the heart of the project BESTGRID are four pilot grid extension projects that are planned for future construction by the responsible Transmission System Operators (TSO). New and innovative forms of public

participation and inclusion of nature conservation expertise will be practiced and tested in all four pilot projects and afterwards collected and evaluated for dissemination as 'best practices' and 'lessons learned'.

The pilot project "SuedLink"

One of the pilot projects is the SuedLink connection; a direct current extra high-voltage line planned and constructed by the two Transmission System Operators TenneT TSO GmbH and Transnet BW GmbH. The SuedLink consists of two projects: The connection between Wilster near Hamburg and Grafenrheinfeld near Schweinfurt in addition to a connection between Brunsbüttel near Hamburg and Großgartach in Baden-Württemberg. Because of its transboundary character it is one of the first projects which will be licensed by the Bundesnetzagentur as a national licensing authority in a Bundesfachplanungsverfahren, a new licensing procedure that was developed to accelerate the Energiewende. This Call for Experts concerns to be determined in an exemplarily region located in the secondary mountain region (Mittelgebirgsregion).

The role of nature conservation local experts in BESTGRID

The contractor is expected to help identify the major natural environmental challenges and concerns related to the project. To identify and overcome these challenges or concerns in an early stage may help to make the licensing procedure in the future as robust as possible. This may also lead to save time and to promote a fundament for further discussions with experts and authorities and ideally to establish acceptance. Furthermore, the contractor shall provide advise as a sparring partner in the development of a generic methodology for the establishment of integrated networks of habitats via grid corridors based on the BfN script 346¹.

¹ Drobnik, J. et al. (2013), Skripten 346, Die Bedeutung von Korridoren im Hinblick auf die Umsetzung des länderübergreifenden Biotopverbunds in Deutschland. Hrsg. Bundesamt für Naturschutz BfN (http://www.bfn.de/fileadmin/MDB/documents/service/Skript_346.pdf)

See also: Burkhardt, R. et al. (2004): Empfehlungen zur Umsetzung des § 3 BNatSchG "Biotopverbund". Hrsg. Bundesamt für Naturschutz BfN (http://www.bfn.de/0311_publicationen.html#c5820)

Identification of ecological risks

Substantial environmental assessments are conducted in the planning and authorisation of grid projects, both at the levels of national infrastructure planning, corridor selection and detailed routing and project design. It is a legal requirement for the responsible TSOs to provide an EIA of these projects. Shortcomings in the environmental assessment processes can lead to substantial delays in permitting procedures and in objections from environmental authorities and/or the public and environmental NGOs.

To overcome this challenge and to make the EIA process as robust as possible, the BESTGRID project will include local environmental expertise at a pre-EIA scoping stage. This will help to identify the major natural environment challenges and concerns before the EIA is started, and help ensure the EIA process to be as comprehensive and inclusive as possible.

Mapping of relevant stakeholders

To ensure an inclusive process both for the Identification of risks concerning the whole SuedLink project and for the development of a methodology for the connection of habitats in a region to be defined and to get a comprehensive impact assessment of the line, it is necessary to identify knowledge carriers and experts. The subcontractor will therefore support the mapping of relevant stakeholders with environmental knowledge and stake in the SuedLink project.

The knowledge of the subcontractor should on the one hand promote the intern stakeholder mapping for authorities and experts (e.g. environmental NGOs) to be involved in the EIA process.

On the other hand the subcontractor shall help to identify local stakeholders affected by corridor management (see following paragraph), in an exemplary secondary mountain region (Mittelgebirgsregion) chosen for the purpose of the contract at hand. Furthermore the subcontractor contributes to the development of a plan to actively involve them in the planning and development of a methodology of corridor management to connect habitats. This is especially important as on the one hand, there is only very little experience with using grid corridors to connect habitats while on the other hand, building bridges between biotopes impacts many areas of human activity, especially agriculture, forestry, transport infrastructure and tourism.

Development of a Methodology: Corridor management to connect habitats

In addition to that, the local expert's role is to support and give input to the development of a methodology for a corridor management concept to connect existing² habitats with open and half-open corridors (*Offenland- und Halboffenlandhabitats*) focussed on some key species in an exemplary German secondary mountain region. The methodology

The methodology shall explain how to consider at an early stage opportunity of using the SuedLink project to connect existing habitats with a potential benefit for the chosen target species. The application of this methodology will help to inform/influence relevant decisions regarding location and mitigation/compensation measures which will be set up for the SuedLink project.

The methodology should draw upon existing practices of traditional grid corridor management (*traditionelle Trassenpflege*) and recently discussed ecologic grid corridor management as tested in other TenneT projects. The purpose of drafting a methodology for corridor management to connect habitats is to go beyond these existing practices at TenneT for ecological benefit. BfN Script 346 shall serve as a reference document to set up such a methodology.

The developed methodology shall at a later stage be applied in an area that SuedLink will cross through. The subcontractor is invited to attend the whole process beyond the contract at hand.

Definition: Corridor management to connect habitats

Fragmentation of habitat accounts for a large share of loss of biodiversity. Barriers such as urban development, industrial estates and especially infrastructure intersect habitats as barriers to migrating animals. Thus, solutions for (re-)connecting habitats and biotopes are increasingly investigated. One possibility to connect isolated habitats is the active ecological management of grid corridors along electricity transmission lines. Designing the area around pylons and the corridor e.g. as open and half-open habitat (*Offenland- und Halboffenlandhabitats*) could function as a bridge to allow certain target species to migrate

² Please note: The intention of a linkage of biotopes (as known in the cross-border linkage of biotopes "länderübergreifender Biotopverbund") is to connect existing habitats. While creating new 'artificial' biotopes might be valuable, these measures cannot compensate the intersection and division of existing and sensitive areas which have been connected prior to construction of the line.

between habitats. Note however, that the function of the habitat connection depends in every individual case on existing habitats nearby or the existence of vulnerable key species.

The Contractor's responsibilities

Identification of ecological risks: The contractor is expected to provide expert input preceding the project's environmental assessment. The contractor's activity shall contribute to improving the common understanding regarding the scope of required assessments, the choice of alternatives for consideration in upcoming environmental assessments. This involvement also aims at early identification of nature protection challenges.

After the information of the public about the SuedLink project and its preferred corridor in February 2014, the TSO invites the contractor to present the findings including maybe a site visit to a key location involving where possible the environmental authority in charge of the EIA.

Mapping of relevant stakeholders:

The contractor shall be knowledgeable about other local environmental stakeholders in the chosen exemplary region, and will assist in making contact with them and ensuring they have the opportunity to express their potential concerns regarding the specific grid project. Information on relevant stakeholders is to be shared with TenneT for the organisation of two roundtable discussions which shall serve both the purpose of discussing challenges and potential solutions regarding the environmental impact assessments and informing on the methodology development for the connection of habitats located in the grid corridor. The organisers will use the information on stakeholders to identify the most relevant parties and invite them to join these discussions.

Development of a Methodology: Corridor management to connect habitats

This involvement also aims at early identification of potential opportunities for using the power line corridor for the connection of habitats as explained above. This method is developed in cooperation with the contractor and TenneT. It should outline a generic methodology to connect existing habitats with open and half-open corridors (*Offenland- und Halboffenlandhabitate*) focussed on some key species in an exemplary German secondary mountain region.

The methodology should draw upon existing practices of traditional grid corridor management (*traditionelle Trassenpflege*) and shall at a later stage be applied in an area that SuedLink will cross through.

Some of the questions that should be discussed are listed below. Note that the contract does specifically NOT expect to respond to these questions in detail, the listed questions can be a starting point for an advanced discussion. However, any concrete informations that are easy to provide should be shared:

- Identification of existing habitats to be connected and definition of potential target species: What characterises the potential habitats to be connected (Focus on *Offen- und Halboffenland* in a German secondary mountain region)? Which species are meant to profit from the ecological enhancement? What are those into central Germany with the most potential to bring a benefit for the chosen target species? How will they probably use the corridor (transit/migration corridor or primary habitat corridor)?
- Requirements and needs of single species: What requirements does the future corridor management need to meet in order to achieve intended results and respect the specific legal species protection matters? What needs (area, flora, human intervention) have to be fulfilled for the probable target species?
- Detailed planning and design: What synergies and conflicts might arise? How will human activity (transport, agriculture, forestry, tourism) influence the corridor's habitat quality?
- Management and monitoring: How does the corridor need to be managed and maintained? How can the ecological functioning of the corridor be monitored and evaluated? How can the corridor's functions be enhanced after completion?

As described above, the focus of the subcontractor's work should be an input in the development of the methodology and to be part of the round table discussions.

Providing recommendations. The contractor will work with BirdLife Europe to develop recommendations for the upcoming EIA and for potential corridor management to connect habitats. These shall be shared with the TSO in charge and be discussed in two roundtables together with relevant local authorities (same events as in responsibility two).

The project falls under the legislation of the Netzausbaubeschleunigungsgesetz (NABEG – grid extension acceleration act). Thus, a public proposal conference (*Antragskonferenz*) will be held ~1st/2nd quarter 2014 (probably beginning of April). The planned roundtables (second and fourth responsibility) shall take place after the proposal conference, when more concrete issues can be discussed.

Both the second and the fourth responsibility are to be taken and coordinated in cooperation with BirdLife Europe.

The Contractor's Set of Tasks

The four responsibilities outlined above translate into the following set of tasks for the contractor:

Up to proposal conference (Antragskonferenz) expected not before April 2014

1. **Participation in kick-off meeting** – TenneT will invite the contractor and offer the presentation of project, grid planning procedure (permitting stages, etc), timeline, etc. (exp. January/February 2014)
2. **Provision of input preceding the project’s environmental assessment** Identification of risks, present findings at a roundtable discussion – optional during a site visit. If applicable input and feedback during the EIA process later on.
 - a. point out information gaps that have to be covered within an environmental assessment
 - b. indication of particularly critical topics that are likely to raise resistance
3. **Provision of relevant information related to the natural environment at relevant locations.**
This includes, for example
 - a. Information about area incl. its expected species inventory (note that TenneT does have base data such as border lines of protection areas, topographical data and so on which will be provided, if necessary additional data can be ordered and provided)
 - b. Interpretation of how the probable target species for which the sites are designated use the area and at which times of year (overview on maybe 2-3 key species)
4. **Support the mapping of relevant stakeholders** regarding environmental concerns
5. **Give input to the Development of a Methodology: Corridor management to connect habitats**
 - a. help to identify existing habitats to be connected in a chosen exemplary region (German secondary mountain region) and help to define potential target species
 - b. help to identify requirements and needs of single species maybe using the case of 2-3 exemplary species
 - c. help to develop the planning and design of the concrete corridor management approach
 - d. help to develop general rules for continued corridor management and monitoring of implementation
6. The contracted NGO should **participate in two roundtable events** with local authorities to present their findings (official speaking slot in the agenda), answer questions and function as a sparring partner. The roundtable events should both deal with the two following topics:
 - a. Risk Identification: presentation to planning authorities, environmental authorities, municipalities and local stakeholders on environmental impact assessments (purpose, scope, legal base) in general, and on input for SuedLink in example region – optional site visits to a key location
 - b. Corridor management to connect habitats: presentation on corridor management to connect habitats in general (*Biotopverbund*) and on the opportunities of corridor management to connect habitats along SuedLink
7. Input to final report which will be developed by **BirdLife**

8. TenneT would appreciate if the contractor was willing to visibly appear in TenneT's communication on the project, e.g. by mentioning in TenneT project flyer that the contractor is a continuous discussion partner in the planning and permitting process for an environmentally friendly alignment; availability for a joint interview with local media; mentioning of the homepage of the contractor. This is however an option that can be further discussed.

Stakeholder Mapping

The goal of Stakeholder Management is to identify and engage the right actors in the project planning and approval process and involve them at the right time and the right place. Citizens' demands towards involvement and transparency have changed and are associated with an increased willingness to participate. An important task is to create an open-minded and faithfully basis for cooperation with identified key stakeholders and to create and maintain a broad public acceptance concerning project relevance and planning procedures as well as regarding the implementation decisions.

Stakeholders are crucial to the success of a project. If they will be neglected, they will actively work against the programme. If they will be managed well, they can have a positive influence regarding the planning and approval process.

Not all stakeholders have the same stake in the interventions and it is important to recognise and evaluate the level of influence each stakeholder has on the project.

Prior experience shows that in most grid development projects, only a small fraction of the local population tends to engage in public consultations early on or many may not even be aware of the grid development project. This is because the typical formats chosen to inform and engage with the public (e.g. public information workshops, official publications, etc.) only have a limited outreach and/or are not appropriate to reach the broad population, including, for example, people below the age of thirty, young families, people working in the evening, etc.

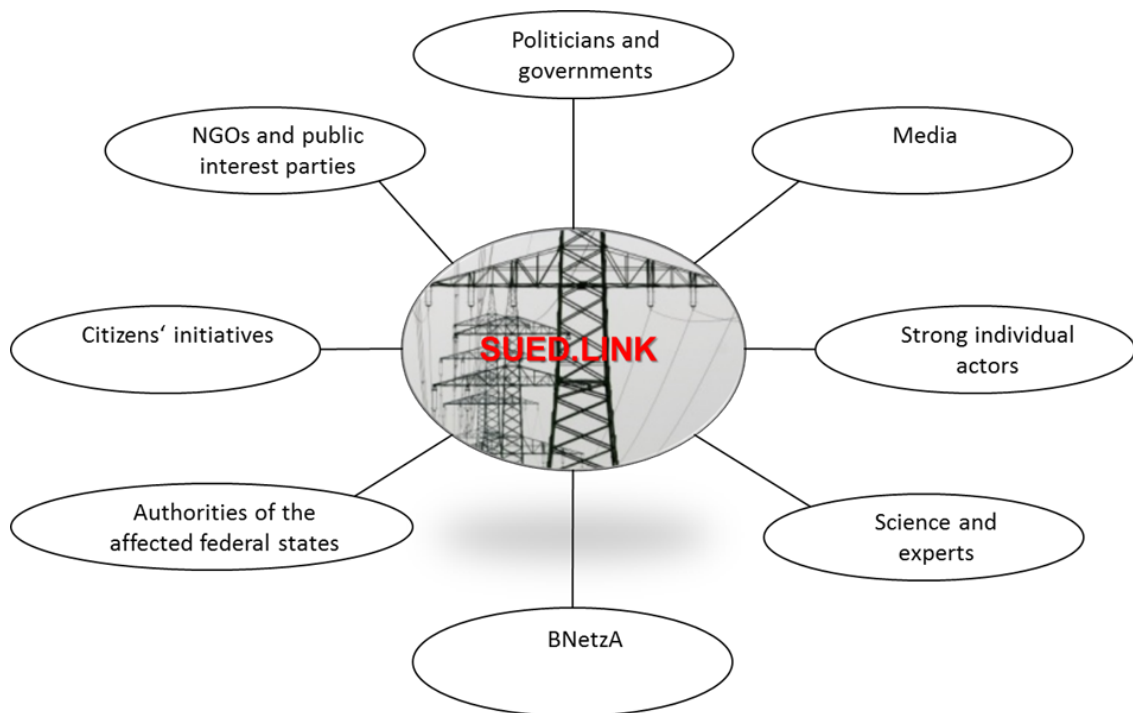
The Action Plan developed will therefore include profiling the different target groups in the local affected population, including their specific concerns and information needs, the different channels and options to raise awareness and to “activate” these groups to enable them to engage in consultations relevant to the grid development project, a detailed roadmap aimed at interaction with these target groups as well as a pragmatic methodology to measure success of the approaches chosen.

Stakeholder Management of SuedLink will include 3 steps:






- Stakeholder Identification
- Stakeholder Analysis & Mapping
- Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder Identification

The first step in the process of stakeholder management is the stakeholder identification. This determines who the project stakeholders are as well as their key groupings and sub-groupings. Often the process of identifying stakeholders will result in a long list of individuals and groups. In order to correctly assign each individual, main categories have to be customised. A second step is to identify the geographic sphere of influence of each stakeholder. Both identification results will be used to understand the influencing factors and to determine who might be affected and in what way.



All identified actors will be assigned to one of the customised groups. For each group, key stakeholders will be nominated in accordance to their relevance to the project and their expressed opinion regarding the project. We are therefore using four evaluation criteria (with regards to the geographic sphere):

Person	Meinung	Funktion/ Gruppen	Kommunikation	Presseartikel	Verknüpfung	Dokumente
Netzausbau	 Positiv					1. Attitude towards the Grid Expansion in Germany
Projekt	 keine Angabe					2. Attitude towards the project
Relevanz	 Hoch					3. Relevance of the Stakeholder
Relevanz Kommentar	Hatte als Senatorin in Hamburg die Funktionen des Präses der Finanzbehörde sowie des Präses der Behörde für Stadtentwicklung und Umwelt.					
Partei	 Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands					
Reichweite	 Hoch					4. Influence potential
Bemerkung						

For some projects, the most opposition may come from stakeholders outside of affected areas. It is therefore important to also include those actors, groups or organisations that are not adversely affected, but whose “interests” determine them as stakeholders. For this case an interface management to the programme parts “Issue Management” and “Press/Media Analysis” shall be implemented to obtain information about key topics and activities and their drivers. With this process a proactive management of risks is guaranteed. In this way we can clarify the motivation of different actors and the ways in which they might be able to influence

the project. Not to engage with these parties creates the risk that their issues may get discussed through other outlets such as the media or political processes.

Identifying key stakeholders and consulting with and through them can be an efficient way to disseminate information to large numbers of stakeholders and receive information from them.

Stakeholder Analysis & Mapping

Stakeholder analysis provides a more in-depth look at stakeholder group interests, how they will be affected and to what degree, and what influence they could have on the project. The analysis will be used as an integrated tool during the course of the planning and approval process. The results will be reviewed and repeated as the best-fit set of key stakeholders to work with. This can and is likely to change according to the dynamics of the project development.

Key Stakeholders are those actors whose support and participation is essential in achieving a positive project development. To identify the different actors, we must map out the relevant ones and identify their interrelations. In addition, the completion of an interest matrix will help us to develop a communication plan that is aligned to each stakeholder's focus and concerns.

Main parts of the mapping are:

- To gain valuable information that we can use for strategic process planning
- To identify the relevance of stakeholders
- To gain important indications about strong individual actors
- To find potential cooperation partners
- To draw basic conclusions about relations and alliances as well as imbalances

- To make initial assumptions and formulate impact hypotheses about the influence certain actors have on the proposed project

The mapping will always be aligned to the planning process and will be adapted to changes and findings relating to the environmental and technical planning results. Stakeholder Mapping is not a separate measure; it is always related to the project development.

It is not practical, and usually not necessary, to engage with all stakeholder groups with the same level of intensity all the time. We will prioritise the identified stakeholders and, depending on who they are and what interests they might have, we will work out the most appropriate ways to engage them. We have created different questions for the purpose of analysing their attitude towards the project and their relevance in terms of influencing it. All information will be saved using a project-based software tool called ARCMAP. This system allows us to continually adapt it to the questions we want to evaluate and it is able to create different kind of reports that analyse the collected and stakeholder-related information.

It is important to keep in mind that the planning and approval process is dynamic and that both stakeholders and their interests might change over time in terms of both their level of relevance to the project and their engagement level. Some stakeholders will be more affected by a particular phase of a project than others. We are using a prioritising method aligned to the project planning phase:

- What type of stakeholder engagement is mandated by law or other requirements?
- Who will be affected by potential environmental and social impacts?
- For whom special engagement effort is necessary?
- At which planning stage of the project will stakeholders be most affected?

- What are the various interests of the stakeholders and what influence might this have on the project?
- Whose opposition can be detrimental to the success of the project?
- Who has to be engaged first and why?
- What is the optimal sequence of engagement?

A major part is also concerned with analysing the extent to which stakeholders are already networked with other stakeholders and independent decision-makers. Key stakeholders are usually well connected and therefore have significant influence on the participation of other actors. ARCmap helps us to analyse the relations between different stakeholders. Identifying coalitions and alliances between stakeholders provides us with indications about already existing ties that can be built upon.

Stakeholder Engagement

The results from the aforementioned activities “Stakeholder Identification” and “Stakeholder Analysis & Mapping” provide the basis from which we can build up a stakeholder engagement strategy.

For us engagement means the process of exchanging information, listening to and learning from stakeholders – with the goal of building understanding and trust on issues of mutual interest.

A primary objective of stakeholder engagement is to generate a better understanding of stakeholder perspectives on key issues and, consequently, build relationships with the identified key stakeholders.

We will use the following Principles of Engagement to define and develop the right engagement strategy for the whole planning and approval process:

- Engage on issues that matter
- Engage the right stakeholder
- Engage empowered representatives who can make decisions on behalf of their constituents and have the mandate to 'step out of the comfort zone'
- Manage expectations and make certain that all parties have realistic ambitions and agree on clear outcomes of the engagement
- Provide adequate resources
- Choose the right format (e.g. private meetings, roundtable discussions, stakeholder panels, etc.)
- Listen to (critical) stakeholder views
- Build trust
- Be open, responsive, consistent and timely in all communications

Local Stakeholder Mapping Engagement under Action Plan 2

While the section above describes TenneT's general and overall approach to stakeholder management, a very important role of the subcontracted local NGO will be to provide their insights on the key players at a very specialised and regional level.

The data collected in the general framework will be reviewed and complemented where necessary. As well as local issues, issues relevant to the identified stakeholders will also be researched.

This detailed and locally specified stakeholder mapping will lead to stakeholder engagement on the regional level at the earliest possible point of the planning process. Two Workshops ("Umwelt-Werkstatt") will be held where findings on the issues will be presented and discussed. And, if recommended by the environmental experts and seen as feasible by the TSO, they will be included in the corridor planning. This will hopefully lead to increased acceptance for the planning process.

a. Two local roundtables: Umwelt Werkstätten

The research done and findings on the topics defined above will be presented and discussed at local roundtables.

These two events should not be "normal" roundtables with just panel discussions – they should be a real atmosphere of working together, looking for solutions and coming up with a clear recommendation for improvements and possibilities. This is why they will not be called a "Runder Tisch" (roundtable) again, but they will already have the "working" aspect in their name: Umwelt Werkstatt.

The local stakeholders identified will come together. The concept of the events will be developed together with the subcontracted NGO as soon as it is identified.

This is a first draft of the events:

Umwelt-Werkstatt 1

The participants will meet in a venue where the TSO will present the planning process in general as well as local specific features, and explain the corridor planned so far. It will also be explained what has been taken into account of in the planning process.

Following the introductory phase, there will be a short field trip or site visit. The issues researched will be explained on the ground.

After this short field trip, the participants will meet again at the venue.

The discussion work will be led by the NGO, presenting aspects and possibilities to be included in the planning. If possible, different subgroups will meet in smaller units to discuss issues that the participants (NGOs as well as TSO and others) will have to work on/clarify by the next meeting in order to come up with a concrete idea and solution.

Umwelt-Werkstatt 2

A follow-up meeting will be held as soon as possible after the first Umwelt-Werkstatt (2-3 weeks later).

The various stakeholders will present their answers / further research, ideas and solutions. Again meeting in working groups, opinions will be formed on the future steps that each group will present to the plenum.

Recommendations will be drawn up in a final discussion.

Regional media will explicitly not be invited as this is a real working event for local stakeholders. Public opinion is not the focus at this point in time but hands-on work on concrete

environmental issues. The outcomes of the Werkstätten may, of course, be presented to the media as well as the general approach.

Timeline



Evaluation

The outcomes of Action Plan 2 for speeding up approval by means of early stakeholder engagement will be measured in two ways: quantitatively and qualitatively.

On the one hand it will be measured whether the actions proposed in this Action Plan have been successfully implemented.

On the other hand, BESTGRID Partner IIASA (International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis) will evaluate the best practice application, effectiveness and general application to other future projects.

Evaluation and Key Performance Indicators

Goal	Measure	Success Factor/ Key Performance Indicator
Identify relevant local environmental concerns and stakeholder in a defined pilot region along the corridor	Stakeholder mapping	Stakeholder Database implanted, Input of subcontracted NGO included
Elaborate challenges and local possibilities on suggested topics (especially habitat connection)	Find and commission environment expert	Suited local NGO/ environmental expert is subcontracted and works on the issues
Engage local stakeholders	Two stakeholder events	Events have been implemented, results documented
Identify positive and negative aspects of the pilot project in order to learn for future projects	Distribute IIASA developed questionnaire at the two events	Input/Answers on questionnaire is included in recommendations by IIASA

What is BESTGRID

BESTGRID as an initiative is very important for the success of the grid expansion. BESTGRID not only includes NGOs such as BirdLife Europe, Germanwatch and the International Institute of Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) but also creates an opportunity to exchange ideas and information between the grid operators.

BESTGRID for the first time enables a tangible exchange and collaboration between TSOs and NGOs in order to improve the processes and results. Common communication formats would have not been possible without BESTGRID. The co-operation is being continuously evaluated, of course, in order to share knowledge and even improve future projects. In particular this will be taken care of by the BESTGRID Partner IIASA.

Interaction with BG consortium

Major tasks need new ways of thinking, exchange and co-operation. That's why BESTGRID as an initiative is so important for the success of the grid expansion. All partners in the consortium will exchange their plans and concepts, provide input and create new ideas. That has also happened with this Action Plan. TenneT has shared and discussed it with the partners in the consortium during regular meetings in Brussels and has also shared online documents and received and incorporated feedback. The progress of the project will be continuously discussed within the BG consortium. This will enable evaluation, steering and improvements to be made during the course of the project. Partners are also invited to view activities.

Especially the input of BG partner BirdLife was included in drafting this Action Plan. The role of RGI and BirdLife in the further implementation of this Action Plan 2 is of the highest value: it is only with their experience that it will be possible to find and identify a suitable local environmental expert. In implementing this Action Plan, the BG consortium has not only a consulting function but also a tangibly active interactive function.

Differentiation between what is information and what is participation

All actions proposed in Action Plan 2 are more than just information. They entail participation in the sense of real partnership: working together on a level playing field in order to identify environmental issues and possibilities in a concrete pilot project.

In addition, the planned stakeholder engagement in the two events is planned not just as mere information events but as events where engagement and participation are not only welcome but are essential and at the core of this project's success.