Grant Agreement Number: IEE 12/794/SI2.646306

BEST GRID
testing better practices

D6.1 Improving Public Acceptance and Speeding Up Permitting in the Marine Environment – Action Plan

nationalgrid

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Co-funded by the Intelligent Energy Europe Programme of the European Union

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Introduction

Modernising and expanding the European electricity grid is an imperative building block to enable the transition of Europe's energy system from fossil fuel dependence towards renewable energy. However, planning and realising grid development projects is often difficult and time consuming due to local opposition, complex permitting procedures and the challenges of minimizing impacts on nature and host communities.

Background

BESTGRID

The BESTGRID project is an international project focused on sharing and delivering environmental and stakeholder engagement best practices in the delivery of energy infrastructure projects. It aims to improve the practices of Transmission System Operators (TSO) and stakeholder groups to facilitate better relationships and enable the transition to more sustainable energy production and transportation.

Through exploring different European grid connection projects the BESTGRID project seeks to find new and innovative ways to develop new approaches that aim to;

•*increase the public acceptability of new infrastructure*

•*speed up permitting procedures*

•*maintain high environmental protection standards*

A key element of delivering best practice is to first understand what constitutes best practice. The best way to do this is to directly engage with stakeholders and obtain their views and feedback.

Work Package 6

National Grid's contribution to BESTGRID is Work Package 6 (WP 6). WP6 focuses on the marine and land interface environments in the development of subsea infrastructure through a retrospective analysis of the stakeholder engagement undertaken on Project Nemo.

NEMO Link Project

The veLink® Interconnector is an electrical connection between the UK and Belgium. Nemo Link® is a joint venture between National Grid Interconnector Holdings Limited ("NGIL"), a subsidiary company of the UK's National Grid Plc, and the Belgian Elia group. The 130km subsea cable will run from Pegwell Bay in the UK to Zeebrugge in Belgium and will pass through English, French and Belgian waters. Ultimately Nemo Link® will give both countries improved reliability and access to electricity and sustainable generation[1].

National Grid selected to study the NEMO project as it had recently completed the permitting and stakeholder engagement phases. This provided an ideal opportunity to engage with those involved through a series of surveys and workshops to better understand what had and what hadn't worked so well and identify how processes could be improved based on recent experiences. As other BESTGRID projects were at less advanced stages in their development NEMO was able to offer a retrospective view and highlight lessons learnt. Another unique element in using NEMO for a case study was to provide an offshore perspective as all other BESTGRID case studies were based onshore.

[1] *More details on NEMO can be found at The NEMO Link Project.*

Knowing your stakeholder

Context

Infrastructure projects, particularly those of a linear nature, have multiple stakeholders who both need to be or want to be engaged and consulted with at various stages. Stakeholders come in all shapes and sizes from statutory organisations through to local groups or individuals. Each has their own individual interests and drivers. Some may have more influence than others and some will be more experienced in engagement with greater experience of the processes involved. For others this may be the first time they have engaged with any form of infrastructure development or developers. In many instances it is likely that stakeholders will, at worst, perceive development as a threat to their environment and at best seek to successfully influence outcomes in some form.

For developers stakeholder engagement is a necessary and integral part of any infrastructure project which they will have undertaken on numerous projects. The requirement to consult is set out in both primary and secondary legislation in the UK and most European countries, being derived in turn from a number of EU Directives. Even if this were not the case, it would be a mistake not to consult.

Stakeholder engagement, in a variety of different formats, is an ongoing process throughout every stage of a project and as the project develops so should the stakeholder engagement. When done well it has multiple benefits for the developer such as informing the design and routeing based on local knowledge, the ability to increase public acceptance and therefore a greater potential to speed up or improve the efficiency of the permitting process.

Developers often don't recognise that there may be a necessity to inform stakeholders first to enable a higher level of understanding of the need for the technologies used and the impacts involved in the project, prior to consultation beginning. Well informed, engaged and consulted stakeholders are likely to be more accepting if they are assured that as a result of their input, environmental concerns have been dealt with in a comprehensive and sensitive way. If done badly the opposite is likely to be true with strong objections leading to delays and budgetary implications. As the stakeholder engagement process is the public 'face' of any project development the reputational risk to developers should not be underestimated.

Certain stakeholders are designated as 'statutory' by governments and they will need to be engaged with as a matter of course. Statutory stakeholders in the marine environment include national environmental and scientific organisations, marine licensing bodies, local government administrative bodies and those bodies responsible for maritime safety and

security. These high level stakeholders are easily identifiable and remain a constant presence across most projects.

Aside from these statutory stakeholders there are many other local stakeholders who need to be identified and engaged. These stakeholders will have a range of different drivers and levels of interest and influence. In the marine environment this can include the fishing community, members of the aggregates industry and a variety of leisure users and local interest groups. These local groups can be much harder to locate and engage with, but are crucial to the engagement process. Marine projects have added complexity as they can often cross multiple international boundaries with different sets of stakeholders working within different administrative frameworks.

Some groups may have national stakeholder bodies which are assumed to also represent the local area. In these instances the developer may have identified a contact at the national level, unaware that the national body may not necessarily represent the local group. For example in the UK the National Fisherman's Federation do not necessarily represent local fisherman's groups – this is the role of local groups an example of which in the case of Nemo is the Thanet Fisherman's Association. It is the local groups who need to be identified to ensure directly affected stakeholders can input their local knowledge and views into the project.

The exponential growth of marine based developments over the last 10 years has resulted in many new potential stakeholders to be consulted and establishing contacts for these can be difficult. This difficulty is increased with the transition of responsibility/authority between the offshore and onshore bodies where marine projects reach landfall. Co-ordination and understanding of these roles and responsibilities can be unclear and cause uncertainty on who should be engaged resulting in delays and misunderstanding.

Marine projects often undertake options analysis on a number of landfall sites, thus the number of stakeholders, and the associated difficulties in identifying them, increases. In these instances the developers desire to engage with stakeholders to understand and inform their decision-making in respect of landfall sites needs to be balanced against the potential to cause undue concern and opposition amongst stakeholders who ultimately may not be affected.

As local groups can be much harder to identify it makes sense to talk to existing and known stakeholders to help identify other stakeholder groups who may be 'under the radar'. The local administrative authority, which is usually a key stakeholder, should have a good appreciation of other stakeholders in the area and their advice should be sought.

Stakeholder engagement involves identifying, listening, understanding, consulting, engaging, informing those affected and is a challenging yet crucial task which can have far reaching consequences to any project. Taking the time to determine stakeholders and understanding their motivation(s) is necessary to provide the foundation for comprehensive, informative and most importantly productive stakeholder engagement.

Solution

Taking into consideration issues and context described in the previous section the following proposals are offered as potential solutions to the issues raised. Some of these may be considered 'obvious' or 'normal' and that may be the case in principal, but our research has shown that whilst known by some such actions are often not implemented properly. This will be addressed within this action plan in the form of suggestions for the communication of good practice and ways to embed the knowledge/actions into an organisations operational culture, so that good practice becomes second nature and the 'norm' .

Identifying stakeholders

As highlighted, some stakeholders are much more easily identifiable than others these are usually statutory consultees or larger Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) such as the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) in the UK. Idfentifying others can be more problematic – developer unfamiliarity with the 'players' in any given area can be a hindrance.

In these instances by taking a more high level approach, and using what they do know about their own project, developers should look to analyse the potential risks to and issues around the project. These could include issues such as landscape impacts, economic impacts on local businesses or cultural issues. Articulating these provides the first high-level assessment of potential stakeholders to involve and provides a basis of information to share with stakeholders in order to validate the data.

Effective stakeholder mapping

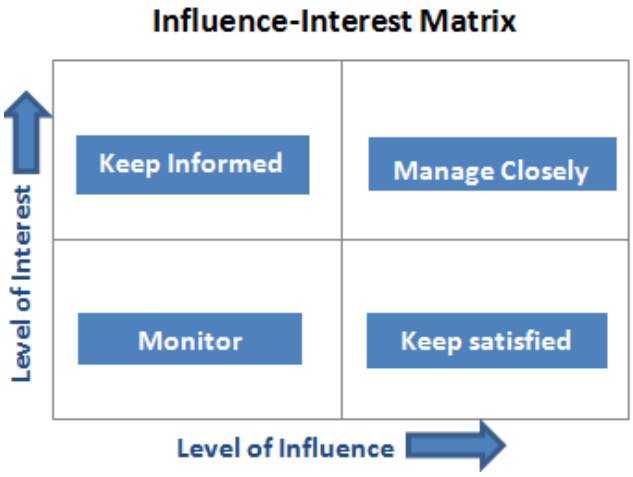
In many countries undertaking a stakeholder mapping exercise is a common and vital feature of infrastructure projects. It should be done at the earliest stage of any project development and then be kept under constant review throughout the project lifetime.

However, although it may be common practice, stakeholders are very often missed, forgotten or ignored due to the task having been undertaken as a 'desktop' exercise.

Stakeholder mapping is important to identify, analyse and prioritise the people and organisations with a stake in a projects features and performance. Undertaking this from the earliest stages of project development will assist in determining project requirements and ultimately it will help to manage and communicate with stakeholders effectively.

Broad principles to apply when undertaking stakeholder mapping

- Begin as early as possible to facilitate early engagement with stakeholders.
- Utilise colleagues' knowledge/previous experiences to identify stakeholders. Use them to sense check the first 'long list' of stakeholders and offer suggestions.
- After the first iteration of mapping is complete, ask identified stakeholders to suggest/identify if there are other stakeholders that should be included.
- Consider whether stakeholders will be affected by or have a policy/principal based interest in the project (some may fall into both categories)
- Define stakeholders' roles and expectations. Use a matrix to map stakeholders (see below) according to their influence and interest. This gives an indication of stakeholders' level of involvement and therefore the type and nature of engagement required. It also indicates stakeholder motivation and how engagement can be proactively managed.
- Classify stakeholders through assessing their potential impact on a project. These can be defined in the following way
- High influence and low interest people – work to keep these people satisfied but not so much they become bored with the messages
- High influence and interest in the project – these are the people who should be fully engaged with and greatest efforts made to satisfy
- High interest and low influence – maintain adequate levels of information and keep lines of communication open to ensure no major issues arise. Often this group can provide detailed information on individual aspects of the project.
- Low interest and low influence – monitor these people but do not overload them with excessive communications



- Keep mapping under review as stakeholders and their influence/interest levels will change during the project lifetime and further stakeholders may be identified.
- A dedicated stakeholder engagement lead/liaison would be ideally placed to lead on stakeholder mapping
- Keeping stakeholder commitment high throughout (usually) years of engagement requires careful consideration and a variety of different approaches to suit each stakeholder. Stakeholders may have preferences for how they wish to engage with the developer whilst local groups may not know how to engage and need guiding through the system. It is worth stressing that non-engagement is not a recipe for a quiet life for developers at any stage. Such an approach will, at some point, cause issues.
- The key is to keep a variety of lines of communication open and to let stakeholders know the different methods are there for them. Offering a number of different forms of communication allows each stakeholder to utilise the method it feels most appropriate or effective to its own objectives, interest and resources, improving relationships.
- Developers should keep accurate records of these communications in order to identify how they have or have not taken comments on board and their reasons for doing so. Transparency in this area is very important in building up trust with stakeholders and ensuring that it continues throughout their engagement in the project.
- Having undergone a stakeholder mapping exercise developers are ideally placed to identify potential groupings of stakeholders. The purpose to suggest that groups or individuals work together for mutual benefit. From the stakeholder angle this approach enables similar interest groups to learn from one another and understand each other's perspectives better. From a developer point of view engaging with a collection of groups rather than individual

groups is a more time effective approach and offers up the opportunity of greater integration of outlooks and learning in a more concentrated manner.

Many statutory or key stakeholders are engaged repeatedly by developers on different projects. In these circumstance communication could be improved at a more strategic rather than project specific level. This could be done through the introduction of short term secondments or industry interchange programmes to enable those involved to gain a better understanding of the constraints and processes both work under. Understanding these pressures could have the added benefit of developing organisational relationships and increasing trust across parties, which ultimately could assist in streamlining engagement and speeding up the overall permitting timescales.

A stakeholder matrix is a useful way to plan for engagement requirements based upon what is known about individual stakeholders and it should be kept updated by a nominated person (or role) throughout the lifetime of the project. This can include details such as organisation name, remit, previous contact on other projects, stakeholder contact, stages to consult and methods of consultation and engagement. Essentially the matrix is a useful tool for the developer and should include whatever they consider the most useful information to consider for each project. The matrix could also refer to other projects that key stakeholders are consulting on/involved in to enable an understanding of resource constraint and cross referencing of information/responses.

Action Points

Knowing your stakeholders		
Recommendations	Actions	Project Stage
1. Develop risk register	Identify potential high level risks associated with project	Definition/Initiation
	Identify issues that may arise from identified risks and use to inform targeted stakeholder mapping	Definition/Initiation
2. Undertake comprehensive stakeholder mapping exercise	Contact/review/research any known earlier projects in area to help inform scope of stakeholders	Definition/Initiation
	Learn/engage from how other marine sectors e.g. aggregates have undertaken stakeholder mapping and engagement in the areas of interest	Definition/Initiation
	Identify known key stakeholders and seek advice from these regarding other key stakeholders/less visible stakeholders	Definition/Initiation
	Seek to understand the engagement drivers of stakeholders	Definition/Initiation
	Categorise relationships across/between stakeholders. Identify and utilise any synergies across stakeholders. Consider where stakeholders have conflicting agendas i.e. between themselves	Across all stages
	Identify levels of interest and influence of stakeholders across the different stages of project	Across all stages
	Ensure project team are involved in stakeholder mapping process to raise awareness of stakeholders and their interests within team	Completion of each stage
	Develop and continually update stakeholder matrix. Include information on name of organisation, legal role in process, typical stages to engage with, previous experiences with organisation, contacts at the stakeholder organisation and who dealt with the stakeholder in the past	Across all stages
	Review and update mapping when transitioning from one project stage to the next	Completion of each stage
3. Look for alternative, non-project specific ways for developers and stakeholders to foster better relationships	Consider introducing industry interchange programme for developers/stakeholder to enable better understanding of processes and constraints both work under	Across all stages

Facilitating stakeholder engagement

Context

Knowing and identifying stakeholders is the first stage in a relationship that could last for the lifetime of a project which is often many years. How stakeholders are engaged can have a big impact on the success or failure of the project being delivered on time and on budget. From the stakeholder perspective it is the main way in which they will interface with the developer and as a result will formulate their relationship and opinion of any developer. In essence this will be where the reputation of the developer could be enhanced or lost.

How stakeholder engagement is undertaken needs to be informed by the type of stakeholder, the project stage and the resources available (of both the developer and the stakeholder). What worked on one project may not be successful on the next, depending on the stakeholders involved – stakeholder engagement planning has to be informed by the stakeholders.

Some stakeholders will have a preference for face to face meetings, although resource constraints can be a limiting factor. Large stakeholder meetings are a popular way of getting multiple stakeholders together, but can often mean that not all attendees get the opportunity to contribute and leave feeling as if they have wasted their time. There is a danger in this that they then may not engage further and their insights will be lost. Records of such meetings can be poor and action points lost, again leading to the view that the engagement is not valuable or valued.

With the increasing use of social media frustrated or disengaged stakeholders can use this medium to get their views across, not only to the developer but, quite literally, the rest of the world in an inexpensive and instant manner. Again this could have a reputational impact for the developer.

Other methods such as websites, email updates, telephone updates, text messages, blogs and newsletters are all useful ways to regularly engage with stakeholders however problems can arise in identifying contact points and preferred method of contact and frequency of contact. Many stakeholder groups are often made up of volunteers and have limited time/funding available, contact methods should be agreed in order to obtain maximum input/benefit on all sides.

By their nature infrastructure projects are relatively few and far between. Often the public, and even some statutory consultees, do not have direct experience of dealing with different types of infrastructure and tend to adopt a default position of viewing any development as a

threat to their interests or the environment. This may result in a slower response causing additional delays and frustration to the developer.

In contrast developers are familiar with the processes involved and usually have extensive experience and resources to draw upon from previous projects. As a result of their own familiarity developers may not always appreciate the lack of knowledge that stakeholders have and how this could impact upon their project programme. This can lead to complacency on the part of the developer.

Being a relatively new area of development, stakeholders' lack of understanding can be especially pronounced in the marine environment. Developers often don't recognise that there may be a necessity to inform stakeholders first to enable a higher level of understanding of the need for, the technologies used and the impacts involved in the project prior to commencing consultation. Neglecting this 'informing stage' can then have detrimental effects at later consultation stages by causing confusion, uncertainty and mistrust for stakeholders and delays and additional costs for developers.

The lack of a dedicated 'stakeholder engagement lead' is seen as a problem by developers and stakeholders alike at a working level. Often this role is performed by the project manager by necessity, but this is not ideal as they are usually too involved in the detail of the project and do not always have either the engagement skills required for such a pivotal role or the time required to fulfil the role properly…. A perception also persists that this is the role of a communications team, although such roles tend to be more focussed at the national or regional level as opposed to the local level affected by the individual projects. In addition, procurement processes and a lack of understanding of the cost benefits of employing a stakeholder engagement lead appears to result in the role being considered a 'nice to have' rather than an essential and valuable project team member.

All developers will undertake some form of stakeholder engagement and some will place greater emphasis on it than others. Commercial considerations are an important and potentially overriding factor. The aim is to get the project completed on time, within budget and move onto the next project. In these instances stakeholders can end up feeling that they haven't had the opportunity to engage, they feel 'steamrollered' by the developer and resentful of the outcomes. This negative experience could then be applied toward the next project in that area, regardless of the thoroughness of engagement for the next project irrespective of whether it is a different developer or not. This 'engagement memory' can cause delays and frustrations for future projects which could have been avoided had the first developer allocated more resource for effective and meaningful stakeholder engagement. An example of this is where the developer of an offshore wind farm did not consult the

fishing community in the UK prior to making significant progress towards project delivery. As a consequence of this the fishing community objected in principle to all later wind farm applications by any developer and significant work was required, and indeed delay and consequently cost and reputational damage incurred, before the appropriate mitigation measures were introduced. i.e. genuine, open engagement and consultation to understand issues and develop solutions/compromise.

Conversely other developers can be acutely aware of the risks to their reputation of poorly executed stakeholder engagement and therefore make every effort to undertake it a comprehensive manner. Adopting this approach can usefully help to refine the design and routeing of a project in light of local knowledge, however it can in itself also cause problems as described below, which should be considered at an early planning stage.

Marine projects are a good example of this situation. Often they undertake options analysis on a number of possible landfall sites. By doing this the potential number of stakeholders increases, with associated problems in identifying those stakeholders. In these instances the developers desire to engage with stakeholders to understand and inform their decision making in respect of landfall sites needs to be balanced against the potential to cause undue concern and opposition amongst stakeholders who ultimately may not be affected.

This highlights the issue of when stakeholders should be engaged. There is often an aspiration from developers, and a desire from stakeholders, to be consulted as early as possible in the process. In reality the timing and nature of stakeholder engagement needs to be carefully considered to ensure that stakeholders get the opportunity to engage at the point(s) where they can be most effective. There needs to be something appropriate to consult on.

Resourcing issues for stakeholders mean that they are not always able to engage as comprehensively as they may want to during the lifetime of the project. This can be particularly acute in the early stages of a project where developers who are keen to get informed advise/feedback provide stakeholders with considerable amounts of information. If developers have not had initial contact with stakeholders to outline project proposals then stakeholder resources may not be available to offer advice at this stage.

Developers themselves can also be reluctant to engage early because ‘they don’t have all the answers’ during the early stages and are therefore nervous to talk with stakeholders. In some cases this nervousness can also be fuelled by a changing need case for development. However these early stages are the point at which stakeholders can have the most influence on a project and these opportunities should be utilised by developers to elicit meaningful and

effective participation, which builds trust and helps establish positive working relationships over the duration of the project.

Some developers recognise the resourcing constraints of stakeholders and have investigated the possibility of funding stakeholders in order to facilitate engagement an example of this in the UK is a mechanism called Planning Performance Agreements (PPA) where resource support for the process is covered by a fee in return for commitments to undertake assessment work. Outcomes are not guaranteed but time and resource access for the developer is improved. However for many NGO stakeholders this is an unpalatable prospect as it could be viewed as an incentive to agree to the development and will be refused.

Solution

Stakeholder engagement lead

Having a dedicated stakeholder engagement lead is considered to be a pivotal role in successful engagement by both developers and stakeholders at a working level yet rarely seems to be a priority for developers at a strategic level. Employing a person in this role brings the multi-faceted nature of engagement on an infrastructure project together in a consistent and co-ordinated manner. The role provides a point of contact for stakeholders whilst offering the project team advice and direction on whom to consult, how to consult and when to consult with them.

The choice of stakeholder engagement lead is crucial to the success of the role. The person needs to be capable of developing a presence and gaining respect, there should preferably be some local resource involved, either as the lead or a key member of a team, with good insights of the key players in the area. They need to have a level of standing with stakeholders whilst also being approachable. An ability to discover other less obvious but interested groups, encourage links between existing groups and enable stakeholders to find common ground are all key skills that need to be bought to this role.

The stakeholder engagement lead needs to be able to communicate effectively with the project team, particularly the project manager and be able to challenge any preconceived perceptions of who should/shouldn't be consulted.

Whilst there are many advantages to employing a dedicated stakeholder engagement lead, as identified, it is not common practice to do so. There is often a cultural perception within developers, particularly within procurement processes (when considering appointment of consultants or communications agencies), that employing someone to perform this role will

add additional, unnecessary costs to the project or because stakeholder engagement is not seen as a priority and can be done by existing team members.

In order to overcome these barriers it will be necessary to challenge these perceptions through quantifying the cost benefits a stakeholder engagement lead can generate. In doing so the question needs to be asked, 'what are the cost implications to the project and reputational risks for the organisation (with costs for future projects) of not undertaking effective stakeholder engagement as a result of not employing a stakeholder engagement lead?' Assessed in this way a case can be made to procurement and the project manager that the costs of employing a stakeholder engagement lead are minimal when compared against the potential costs due to delays and the long term reputational impacts of poor engagement. Once the value of the role has been proven across a series of projects then such analysis will not be necessary and culturally it could become the norm to employ a stakeholder engagement lead on projects.

In this respect the cultural change required is similar to that of the approach to Health and Safety considerations. At one time such considerations were minimal and didn't form part of mainstream project thinking. More recently, driven in part to changes in legislation, a much greater emphasis has been placed on Health and Safety with projects automatically considering, and resourcing, these considerations. Such a change in approach could be applied to stakeholder engagement, without the necessity of legislation requiring it.

Resources

Stakeholder engagement is a resource intensive process for both the developer and the stakeholders. It makes sense to use what resources are available in the most effective and efficient manner possible to ensure the right input is requested and received at the right time. In order to do this it is advisable to understand the resourcing constraints all parties face and how this will impact on their ability to engage.

Developers need to acknowledge and understand their own resourcing constraints. The headline constraints are usually time and financial – the infrastructure needs to be delivered by a certain date within an overall budget of X. Cascading from this headline picture there are multiple other time constraints from timing of environmental surveys to satisfy EIA/HRA requirements through to procedural timeframes set down by decision making authorities. Taking time to understand these constraints and their implications within a programme that includes stakeholder engagement as a discrete activity (but integral to delivery) will assist in accurately assessing the resources required to deliver on each element of the project.

Developers must also be cognisant of their own procurement procedures and understand how this will affect their ability to procure resources. Contact with procurement departments should be undertaken in the earliest stages of project preparation to enable discussion over the amount and timing of appropriate resources, scope of tenders and critically the award criteria for Request For Proposal responses. Doing this in the early stages has the benefit of developing a two-way working relationship with procurement. Procurement develops a greater understanding of the project and its resource pressures/blockers whilst the project team gain greater awareness of procurement processes (this assumes that the developer utilises specialised external resources for environmental, planning, communication, land evaluation works).

Once developers have understood their own 'internal' constraints they should then make every effort to understand the constraints of their stakeholder in order to maximize the effectiveness of engagement with them.

The impacts of cuts in funding to 'statutory' stakeholders are acknowledged by both developers and stakeholders alike. This requires a shift in how and when stakeholders are engaged. Developers should seek an open dialogue with stakeholders, asking them the 'how' and 'when' questions to find out individual stakeholder preference. In doing this it is also incumbent upon stakeholders to honestly articulate their ability to engage and ensure they respond within the agreed timeframes.

Planning for engagement

Understanding how best to engage stakeholders is a major factor in achieving successful engagement. A 'one size fits all' approach will not work. A variety of methods should be employed, specific to each project and depending upon what stage the project is at as well as the intended audience.

Potential methods for reaching the public include;

- Public consultation/engagement events. Include a variety of media such as physical or digital models as well as information boards/notices. Consider a variety of methods for attendees to respond. Some attendees will prefer to take information away with them and respond later whilst others will be happy to respond immediately. Consider use of video booths to record comments.
- Mobile consultation van to access more remote communities

- Hiring a vacant shop in town centre as information points (manned and unmanned)
- Advertising the project and project events on public transport, posters in public places e.g. libraries, pubs, village/town halls
- 'Piggy back' on existing community events/gatherings
- Identify hard to reach groups and go to them e.g. for young adults consider events at sports facilities/competitions/schools/colleges/universities. Older populations could be reached via clubs, community events, sheltered housing accommodation
- Offer to establish community forums with an independent Chair
- Talk to local administrative bodies/community groups to ask how they conduct their consultation and what techniques work well in the area
- Look beyond the energy sector to see how engagement is conducted e.g. health sector, public planning and utilise appropriate techniques

Potential methods for engaging key stakeholders include;

- Face to face meetings
- Video/teleconference
- Small, topic focussed groups
- Larger stakeholder groups
- Issuing topic specific guidance/information notes

In the early stages small face-to-face meetings are desirable, as a minimum personal contact, whilst later emails or video conferences may be more appropriate. Make the purpose of meetings/events clear – are they for information or consultation, ensure they are accurately recorded, articulate the 'what happens next' and the point of contact for stakeholders.

Adopting a tiered approach[2] to stakeholder engagement is useful to plan effectively. Essentially this identifies which stakeholders need to be consulted and when. In practice this usually means that statutory bodies and key stakeholders are engaged and consulted with first. Local stakeholder groups are then engaged when options are more defined. Developing a stakeholder matrix as previously described will help in identify different tiers of stakeholders. If this approach is adopted it is important to be able to clearly articulate why it has been used in order to not alienate those groups who have not been engaged in the very early stages.

At whatever point stakeholders are engaged, key to their continued engagement is to keep them informed of what is happening on a regular basis. Again, a variety of approaches should be adopted depending on the stakeholder, their level of involvement and their own preferences. In some instances an email update may suffice whilst for others a meeting or telephone conversation would be more suitable, particularly if the relationship is key or has been difficult. Updates should be done on a quarterly basis as a minimum, even if the update is nothing more than 'there is nothing to update; the project is in the XX phase'. Contact details should always be readily accessible.

A Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) can be used by developers and local decision makers to agree timescales, actions and resources for handling particular applications. It should cover the pre-application and application stages but can also extend through to the post-application stage. PPAs can be particularly useful in setting out an efficient and transparent process for determining large and/or complex planning applications. They encourage joint working between developers and local decision makers, and can also help to bring together other parties such as statutory consultees. PPAs are voluntary and agreed prior to the application being submitted, and can be a useful focus of early discussions about the issues that will need to be addressed.

For infrastructure projects the PPA may also provide a basis for any voluntary contributions which the developer has offered to pay to assist with abnormal costs of processing the application; any additional resource provided in this way needs to be used for additional capacity that is genuinely required to ensure a timely and effective service.

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[2] *This approach has been adopted by National Grid. For details refer to National Grid's 'Our approach to the design and routeing of new electricity transmission lines'*

Time spent upfront establishing these 'approaches to engagement' and tailoring them to each project will show benefits later in the development process. Stakeholders are better informed and can allocate and engage their resources accordingly whilst following early stakeholder input, developers can abandon 'show stopper' options earlier in the process thereby saving time, money and addressing environmental concerns sooner. The development of a stakeholder engagement plan covering all of these points is an invaluable source of reference for the project team and should be considered. Ideally a stakeholder engagement lead should co-ordinate these different elements.

Action Points

Facilitating stakeholder engagement		
Recommendations	Actions	Project Stage
1. Employ dedicated stakeholder engagement team	Identify person with (local if possible) knowledge and experience of engaging with wide range of stakeholders to lead team.	Definition/Initiation
	Identify local stakeholder liaison lead(s) with knowledge of and standing in local development area and experience of engaging with stakeholders	Definition/Initiation
	Use as main point of contact for stakeholders and for liaison with project manager	Across all stages
	Undertake cost benefit analysis to evidence benefits (reputational risk management) to developer of employing stakeholder engagement lead(team)	Definition/Initiation
	Promote culture change in respect of stakeholder engagement. It's a necessity, not a 'nice to have'. Use adopted change in Health and Safety culture as a guide to do this	Across all stages
2. Establish resourcing needs/restrictions of developer and stakeholders	Developer – understand own procurement/commercial policies	Definition/Initiation
	Developer – liaise with stakeholders to understand their resourcing restrictions and impacts on ability to engage	Definition/Initiation
	Stakeholder – articulate resource limitations to enable developer to	Definition/Initiation
	Identify ways to facilitate stakeholder engagement e.g. developer covering costs of stakeholders, providing	Initiation/Planning

	meeting rooms Explore potential for Planning Performance Agreements (PPA) with stakeholders	Initiation/Planning
3. Create stakeholder engagement plan	High level, overarching plan for project team reference to provide context for stakeholder engagement methodologies Detail which type of stakeholders will be consulted and when in project Provide guidance to team on 'do's and 'don'ts' in respect of stakeholder engagement. Review plan when transition from one stage to next Identify project sensitivities.	Initiation/Planning Initiation/Planning Across all stages Across all stages Across all stages
4. Consider appropriate methods of engagement for each stakeholder	Face to face meetings/personal contact with individual or small groups of similar stakeholders in early stages Use public events for information dissemination and/or consultation Consider use of video conference to help minimise costs but ensure appropriate materials are produced Identify if engagement is 'for information' or consultation Consider what format and content of documentation is appropriate relative to type of event/audience Assess potential impact of social media usage by stakeholders Encourage fragmented stakeholders to form groups/committees to represent their common interests and consider how developer can assist in this e.g. provide venues to enable meetings Consider establishing community forums with independent Chair. Be clear on their purpose/outputs/membership	Definition/Initiation Initiation/Planning Initiation/Planning Initiation/Planning Initiation/Planning Initiation/Planning Across all stages Initiation/Planning
5. Ensure regular stakeholder updates and contact	Agree frequency and type of updates e.g. quarterly newsletter/briefing, phone call with individual stakeholder Update even if it's 'nothing to report' to ensure continuity of contact and relationship building Ensure local communities are appraised of potential community benefits of development	Across all stages Across all stages Across all stages
6. Develop a tiered	Consider engaging with individual key	Initiation/Planning

approach to engage and secure input from stakeholders	stakeholders at a strategic level e.g. Management Board level prior to project preparation to explain needs case and identify likely resource implications	
	Consider timing of consultation for different stakeholders – early is appreciated but not always useful. Consult when there is something appropriate (and supporting information available) to consult on.	Initiation/Planning and across all stages
	Offer key stakeholders face to face meeting in early stages with overview of project and timescales and continue to engage as agreed with key stakeholders	Initiation/Planning and across all stages
	Consult local stakeholders and public when project more refined e.g. route options stage and there is material & information available to consult on.	Initiation/Planning

Project Discipline

Context

The delivery of major infrastructure projects is a complex and long term undertaking, with projects involving numerous stages, team members, stakeholders and outcomes, over a timeframe normally measured in years. These factors combine to make the management of such projects a challenging proposition. It brings to the fore the necessity to ensure that projects are managed in an integrated and effective manner to facilitate and achieve the desired results.

In order to do this it is essential that the project team have a clear understanding of what needs to be achieved in each phase of the project and subsequent round(s) of engagement. This clarity of purpose should be communicated with the stakeholders so they are able to contribute throughout the engagement process. Robust stakeholder engagement requires active management to obtain results and to manage expectations of both the developer and stakeholders. It then needs to be applied in a consistent manner throughout the lifetime of the project.

No project can move forward without the need for meetings between developers and stakeholders – they are a necessary and inevitable part of the process. They are also resource intensive and can be particularly time intensive. There is a general appreciation from both developers and stakeholders that face to face contact is preferable, yet this often appears to be in direct contradiction to the willingness of people to take time to attend. In some instances this can be a result of financial constraints.

Budgetary cuts for statutory stakeholders mean there is now a greater reluctance to pay for costs of travel to meetings, yet a face to face meeting, particularly in the early stages of a project, can often prove more productive and help build beneficial relationships that enable greater developer/stakeholder understanding and stakeholders/stakeholder understanding and education.

Developers have concerns that stakeholders express a strong desire to be consulted early, but then will say they don't have the time resource to do so. Then, if developers are willing to pay further to cover stakeholder expenses, stakeholders are often unwilling to accept payments as it may make them appear to have compromised their independent status.

Resourcing issues are something developers need to consider right from the outset if they want to ensure the right people are around the table in discussions. The issue of paying for attendance is a sensitive one for both stakeholders and developers. In some countries

developers must pay statutory consultees a fixed amount for pre application consultation and have an expectation that this fee will result in appropriate advice and direction and they may be unwilling to contribute more to cover other consultee costs. Elsewhere the approach can be different – in Scotland, for example, developers have paid the fishing community to attend meetings in order to get their input.

A lack of clarity around the purpose of the engagement or meeting is a major issue for stakeholders. Not knowing if the meeting is purely for information or if any decisions will be made makes it more difficult for stakeholders to self-select and decide if the meeting is a priority to attend. Many stakeholders can also feel that their time has been wasted if they feel their expertise has not been utilised – they may have attended only to find out that the meeting didn't include their topic area. Similarly developers may feel disappointed if a particular expert stakeholder isn't present to impart information that can help to inform their decision making processes.

Multiple stakeholder attendance meetings are not considered to be the most effective way of engaging, particularly in the early stages of a project. Although such meetings are often perceived to be an inclusive and efficient way of gaining stakeholder views the opposite can be the case. Certain stakeholders may dominate the meeting and give little opportunity to others to speak and get their views across. It may also cause stakeholders with differing views/interests to disagree with each other and denigrate opposing views. This clearly is counter-productive to the purposes of any such meeting and may result in some stakeholders becoming disengaged with the whole process. Re-engaging with them will take additional time and resources which could be spent elsewhere.

Furthermore such meetings can be hard to minute and action points difficult to agree and assign. This can result in a loss of direction and transparency in the engagement process and does little to move the project forward in terms of stakeholder acceptance.

Meeting minutes are an important part of project discipline, but can be late, inaccurate and sometimes inaccessible to attendees. In order to overcome this some meetings may be recorded however this approach is not always welcome as it can inhibit discussion and ultimately may deter some stakeholders and even developers from wishing to participate.

Poor planning, preparation and a lack of communication with stakeholders can also result in the wrong people attending. Due to a lack of clarity around objectives stakeholder representatives may not be in a position to authorise decisions on behalf of their organisation/group and may need to go back to colleagues to gain this authorisation. This results in delays and frustrations for the developer. Similarly if the meeting is of a technical

or specialist nature then it is not appropriate for the stakeholder to send a non-specialist representative. This does not assist in informing the project direction and causes further delays.

Often the format of communication materials is not considered or appropriate to the type of meeting being held, the audience attending and the stage the development is at. For example the format of information used at a face-to-face meeting may not be appropriate for a teleconference. This can result in the engagement being less effective for all parties involved and involve more post meeting work potentially delaying progress.

Solutions

Purposeful meetings

Every meeting, whether it is with an individual stakeholder or with groups of stakeholders/public, should always be organised with the overall objective of gaining the maximum amount of benefit for all of those involved. To do this, meetings should always have a clearly defined and articulated purpose and effectively manage stakeholder and developer expectations.

Is the purpose of the meeting to impart information only? If so stakeholders need to be told this i.e. not consulting but passing on information to enable stakeholders to undertake more informed engagement later in the process. If the meeting is for decision-making then this needs to be explained beforehand to ensure the right people empowered to make those decisions are present. If technical issues are to be discussed similarly the people with the right technical knowledge should be present.

These requirements need to be articulated by the developers to the stakeholders. It is good practice on behalf of the developers to gain confirmation from the stakeholders who will be present and to try where possible to ensure the right people attend. Equally developers should ensure empowered members of the project team are present. Developers' consultants can give details on their findings but they may not be authorised to make decisions on the project, if so a project representative should always be present. Such direct contact is valued by stakeholders and helps build good working relationships. Sending the wrong representative can have a negative impact on all parties, make progress more difficult and heighten concerns about the effective use of constrained resources.

If technical expertise is required then it needs to be utilised in the correct manner. When arranging meetings assign specific timings for technical discussions and input if it is to be done as part of a larger meeting. This allows the technical experts to attend only for the

relevant section rather than attending the whole meeting. In addition value needs to be gained from their input. People can become offended if they feel their expertise is not being properly utilised and their attendance is a waste of time.

Through engagement developers should be prepared to receive locally based information, which may be contradictory to their own information, and may also be more accurate or up to date. For example on one scheme the developers' consultants had indicated that there were no significant bird numbers present whilst local expertise had recommended that bird deflectors should be fitted to the new development. In these instances further engagement and investigation to establish an agreeable solution will be necessary.

Understanding the concerns of individual stakeholders who may be small in number but have a significant impact on reputation within a community is important – these stakeholders also need to be heard by the project team at meetings during engagement and their issues addressed. Often their specific issues can be 'easy to fix'. A simple example of this related to an individual who kept horses close to a construction site. When piling commenced the horses became startled and the owner was concerned they may become injured. Following engagement with the developers an agreement was reached to contact the owner 30 minutes before works commenced to enable the horses to be stabled. This solution proved successful to both parties and prevented any problems/dissatisfaction from escalating further.

Consideration should be given to the timing of surveys in preparation for development. Key community players should be notified beforehand that surveys or sampling may be undertaken within the area prior to it actually happening. Undertaking and delivering a commitment to do this is good project discipline and should engender better relationships, understanding and trust within local communities.

Well prepared, purposeful meetings with agreed agendas, defined objectives and the right attendees are key to effective engagement and consultation. Many of the solutions identified here would ideally fall into the remit of a stakeholder engagement lead working closely with the project team and stakeholders in addition to allowing appropriate time to plan, organise, prepare for and research content prior to meetings.

Documentation

As part of the meeting arrangements consideration also needs to be given to the relevant documentation pre, during and following any meeting.

Any meeting documentation needs to be circulated far enough in advance for attendees to have time to consider it and prepare for the meeting. This becomes particularly important during the planning stages as documentation tends to become longer, more detailed and therefore more time consuming to read. It is important that developers give stakeholders every opportunity to comment upon the documentation and suggest changes/additions/seek further clarity or agree with findings. If documentation is circulated in advance then some issues could be raised/agreed in advance of the meeting, thus allowing time for more contentious issues.

Similarly agreeing the agenda beforehand with stakeholders is good practice. If engagement is truly to be a two-way process then stakeholders should be enabled and encouraged to contribute to the agenda. Addressing any stakeholder issues in this manner will facilitate relationship building and potentially deal with problems early in the project timeline.

Consider carefully if the type of documentation for the meeting is applicable to the type of meeting being held. A large public meeting designed for information giving is not necessarily suitable for detailed, technical drawings or large amounts of text. Pictures, summaries, models, CGI are likely to be more appropriate in these instances. On the other had face to face meetings with individual stakeholders or small groups of stakeholders are likely to be more successful if the detail is present. Again take time to consider this beforehand and set the meeting up to succeed rather than to fail. Utilise earlier work and findings derived through the stakeholder mapping process to inform what type of documentation is likely to achieve the desired input.

Minutes

Meeting minutes are a fundamental part of any form of meeting. They may take different formats depending on the meeting; some may be a verbatim record of the meeting, others may be more descriptive whilst other may simply record the top 10 points raised. What all do need to record accurately are the agreed action points, who these were assigned to and the delivery date. Minutes then need to be agreed and circulated in an accurate and timely manner.

If needed it is good practice to pay for someone to take notes and minutes. In order to produce accurate minutes it should be best practice throughout the meeting to regularly summarise the points discussed and agree on any action points. This enables the minute taker to highlight these at the end of the meeting and ensure any inaccuracies are amended

accordingly. It also gives the opportunity to check that the meeting objectives have been achieved and relevant issues discussed. Post meeting, minutes need to be agreed by all attendees.

There may be parts of a meeting that for various reasons e.g. commercial confidentiality should not be minuted. All parties at the start should agree this.

Careful consideration needs to be given in advance regarding the potential audio recording of a meeting. Adopting this approach allows for the accurate recording of proceedings albeit at additional costs of equipment and transcribing expenses. Agreement for such recording needs to be gained in advance from all attendees. In many instances this may not be forthcoming either because some developers may not wish to have proceedings recorded or because the recording of meetings in some countries is not encouraged e.g. Belgium. Whatever the situation it is paramount that agreement for this approach has been given by all parties – otherwise it should be avoided.

Once minutes have been agreed they need to be made accessible to those with an interest in the project. This can be done in a number of different ways e.g. on project website or emailed to interested stakeholders. It is important for the project team to ensure that minutes are stored correctly and are readily accessible at any time should the decision making authority request them at any point during the project lifetime.

Project discipline can be seen as ‘project housekeeping’. When time is taken to establish and implement comprehensive procedures that seamlessly meet the needs of the project developer, the stakeholders and also the decision making authority, then it is time well spent upfront. If such ‘housekeeping’ is not undertaken then it can lead to delays, confusion and almost inevitably additional budgetary costs.

Action Points

Project Discipline		
Recommendations	Actions	Project Stage
1.Organise meetings with the aim of gaining maximum benefits for all attendees	Recognise resourcing constraints of stakeholders and how this may impact on their ability to attend	Across all stages
	Identify clear purpose and objectives of meetings and ensure all attendees are aware of them.	Across all stages
	Stakeholders should be provided with enough information to make an educated decision whether to attend or not	Across all stages
	Allow time for meeting preparation for both developer and stakeholder. Circulate any documents for discussion in advance	Across all stages
	Consider location of meeting venue in order to maximise attendance	Across all stages
	Consider if all stakeholders need to attend for duration of meeting. Identify in agenda when certain topics will be discussed to allow attendees to arrive/leave at appropriate times.	Across all stages
	Stakeholders should outline their commitment levels to developer to enable thorough assessment of consultation requirements	Across all stages
	Mass stakeholder meetings often used but these can result in only the most vociferous being heard so assess if this approach will achieve the desired outcomes. If not adopt alternative approaches.	Across all stages
	Inform communities of proposed survey work prior to undertaking it	Across all stages
	1.10Appoint a designated Chair	Initiation/Planning
2. Consider attendees carefully to ensure the right people attend	The right people with the right delegated authority to make decisions should attend if decisions are made to prevent delays in the decision making process	Across all stages
	Someone with the appropriate technical knowledge should attend meetings if technical questions are	Across all stages

	to be asked. Someone with appropriate authority from developer should always attend – meetings with consultants with no authority can be seen as a waste of time/resources.	Across all stages
3. Clearly document and circulate the outcomes of meetings	Agree timeframe for dissemination of meeting minutes Consider how meetings are to be minuted. Confidentiality of some elements of discussion should be respected and not minuted – agree this in advance. Meeting minutes should detail and allocate actions with timescales Aim for transparency of meeting discussions. Ensure minutes are disseminated and made accessible to all e.g. on project website Consider whether to record meeting (noting that this may inhibit open discussion or preclude the developer or stakeholders from attending). Consult with and gain consent of prospective attendees beforehand if this is the preferred approach. Need to consider transcribing time/costs.	Across all stages Across all stages Across all stages Across all stages Across all stages
4. Ensure actions allocated at meetings are delivered	Agree clear timeframes for delivery of actions Record completion of actions or delays to completion to ensure continuity and transparency and minimise delays to overall project time lines	Across all stages Across all stages

Data access and co-ordination

Context

The complexity of major infrastructure projects leads to both a necessity and a requirement to generate considerable amounts of data throughout the lifetime of the project. These considerations are particularly acute in the marine environment, especially where consideration needs to be given to both the offshore and onshore environments.

Further complexity is added for interconnector projects such as Nemo Link as different countries are involved (in this instance the United Kingdom and Belgium) who may have different data and legal requirements, procedures and timeframes for decision making. In these instances the generation and co-ordination of data across the different countries involved is a vital component to successful project development and delivery.

Knowing what data is publically available can differ from country to country and this can add to the complexity of data access and co-ordination. For example in Belgium soil data from offshore wind farm development becomes the property of the state and available to anyone who wishes to see it. This situation is not repeated in the UK where commercial sensitivities over data appear to preclude any such sharing. Having a clear picture of what data is available and where it can be obtained is not an easy task.

Another issue, arguably more prevalent in marine based projects, is the availability of existing data.

Onshore planning and data collection regimes are well established and there is a depth of knowledge based upon years of experience and sheer volume of projects to draw upon. Data requirements are understood and this engenders not only familiarity and confidence in the data required and how to use it, but also a wealth of examples to draw upon. Therefore, it is much easier to understand what 'good' data looks based upon previous examples and experience.

In comparison marine projects are still relatively new. It is only in the last ten years or so that numbers of marine based projects have increased significantly. This increase has highlighted the lack of existing data that can be used by developers to help inform the design and routeing of projects. It also brings into sharp focus application of the precautionary approach whereby the onus is on the developer to prove that their proposal does not cause harm – this is usually done through the gathering of additional data.

The gathering of marine data itself presents greater challenges than onshore data collection. The number of available survey vessels is limited and demand for their services high. Seasonal variations can also influence the ability to gather data due to adverse weather conditions and/or safety considerations. These factors have a direct bearing on the costs associated with data collection in the marine environment.

There may be circumstances whereby data in a particular area has already been generated as the result of previous developments. Unfortunately this does not necessarily mean that the data will be made available. The costs of marine surveys tend to be considerably higher than those done onshore and there is usually reluctance from developers to share information that may have cost a substantial sum of money. From a commercial perspective this is a understandable, but overall can lead to similar surveys being repeated and the information held in isolation by each developer. However, were data be shared there could be cost benefits to developers as they would not need to repeat surveys from scratch, which in turn could assist in speeding up the permitting process.

In some counties the licensing bodies dealing with major projects may themselves be relatively new or legislative requirements may have changed. As a result they may lack the breadth and depth of knowledge and experience that can only come with having dealt with numerous applications. To some extent they may be 'learning on the job' which can cause delay or frustrations for the developer who wishes to proceed as speedily as possible.

Data gathering and co-ordination of marine projects can be most difficult at the onshore/offshore interface, particularly those areas with conservation designations. In such circumstances there will be a requirement for additional environmental data to ensure that issues concerning the impacts on designated areas have been fully considered. From a developer perspective this can considerably slow down the process and add additional costs to the project. More complexity can be added if stakeholders disagree with what data should be collected or, once collected, question the validity of the data.

The onshore/offshore consultants and consenting bodies find it difficult to work in an integrated and co-ordinated manner. There can be mismatches between onshore/offshore documentation, legislation and approaches which in turn can affect the consenting body's ability to provide timely advice/input. The fact that marine planning regimes are relatively new can mean that onshore planning personnel are less familiar with their requirements to consider marine plans in their decision making processes leading to confusion and delayed permissions.

The need for and emphasis placed upon data generation will continue to play a central role in the design and permitting of all infrastructure projects. As data levels are relatively low in the marine environment, and gathered on an individual basis, a greater emphasis on obtaining that data is likely to continue into the foreseeable future. It will be essential for developers and stakeholders alike to ensure the necessary data is generated to inform and guide marine developments whilst minimising environmental and socio-economic impacts of development.

Solutions

Available data

Considering the financial and time costs of data gathering, especially in the marine environment, it makes sense to first scope out just what information may already be available. This could be done in a variety of different ways;

- Through the stakeholder mapping process identify similar projects and speak to those involved (both developers and stakeholders) to establish what data was required/how it was obtained/recommended survey teams/indicative costs/timescales/pitfalls to avoid/good practice to follow
- Also make contact with developers in other countries. Data requirements may be different so ask for advice and guidance. In addition ask if any data is publically available
- Approach local interest groups for any data they may have e.g. a local diving group will have good local data on wrecks. This has the additional benefit of building relationships with these stakeholders
- Undertake web based research of projects and also local stakeholder groups to see if any data is publically available and gain additional contacts
- Approach relevant licensing bodies to confirm data requirements. In the UK this would be the Marine Management Organisation (MMO). At this point if a developer is aware the MMO has relevant data and asks for it the MMO should supply that information.
- Again in the UK contact The Crown Estate (the seabed owner out to 12 nautical miles) to ask for any data they may hold.

Understanding the usefulness of this data is key. It may not provide a complete picture or all the data that is required, but it establishes a baseline upon which project specific data can be built. For example in Belgium offshore wind farm data becomes the property of the state. This builds up a database of information which gives developers an insight into the working conditions and seasons. This in turn informs them if their timescales/proposed construction

methods are realistic. Such information can also be used to inform licensing conditions. Clearly such an approach has benefits in terms of its potential to make the permitting process more efficient and enhance stakeholder engagement.

Currently the situation in the UK is very different. With a large coastline and a high level of natural offshore energy resource a highly competitive sector has emerged. As a result commercial sensitivities around data limit what data is publically available. Whilst developers are reticent about revealing data most would like to see a more efficient permitting process. It may be necessary for parties within the UK to look again at the current approach and identify a more collaborative way of working with regards to data sharing for mutual benefit. Developers, alongside the MMO and The Crown Estate could lead this.

On cross boundary projects such as interconnectors it is essential to understand the different legal and regulatory requirements and how they are interpreted in each country as this can have a significant effect on the overall project.

Examples of this nature are the different number of authorities and timescales involved between the French and UK administrations. The UK has integrated its permitting processes into the responsibility of the MMO whereas France has a number of authorities and bodies, both national and regional that are responsible for different aspects of permitting. Understanding the potential timescales for interaction and gaining permits for surveying and construction etc. is necessary to develop a realistic project programme and importantly identify appropriate timing for engagement with these stakeholders.

Action Points

Data access/co-ordination		
Recommendations	Actions	Project Stage
1. Scope availability of data	Consider what data is already available and other potential data sources in order to speed up project planning and avoid repeating surveys with associated costs. In UK this could be the Marine Management Organisation, The Crown Estate and other developers and environmental organisations If a cross boundary project check what data is publically available as it may be different in other countries e.g. in Belgium some project data becomes property of the state If requesting data be clear on what	Definition/Initiation Definition/Initiation

	information you are requesting and how it will be used e.g. insights into working conditions/seasons to inform timescales/viability of proposed construction methods Understand implications of commercial sensitivity of data and potential reluctance to divulge. Consider confidentiality agreements to mitigate concern if not a competitor. Aim to provide licensing bodies with enough information to pre-empt their request for additional information	Definition/Initiation Across all stages Across all stages
2. Understand the different legal, structural and regulatory requirements	Identify if/how different countries interpret legislation differently e.g. in UK offshore cables do not require EIA whereas other countries will e.g. Belgium, France Ensure the requirements and implications of the TEN-E regulations are understood and applied Allocate additional time in programme to deal with such requirements Ensure suitably experienced specialist advice e.g. legal is available/kept informed to advise quickly Be prepared to explain legal context to stakeholders	Initiation/Planning Definition/Initiation Initiation/Planning Initiation/Planning Across all stages
3. Allow for additional considerations over impacts on intertidal areas due to added sensitivities	Ensure sufficient detail on installation methods Ensure sufficient data is collected to informs environmental assessment Ensure onshore and offshore consultants work in a co-ordinated and consistent way to provide data	Initiation/Planning Initiation/Planning Across all stages

Knowledge transfer and continuity

Context

Major infrastructure projects will have different deliverables and outcomes such as a new overhead line or a marine interconnector. Whilst these may vary, in general the basic processes of obtaining the necessary consents, licences, the consideration and mitigation of environmental constraints and the requirement to undertake stakeholder engagement remain a constant across the majority of projects.

Ideally one consequence of this process driven approach would be that the experiential learning from one project would naturally be used to inform the next project, thereby streamlining and improving the efficiency of the consenting/licensing, stakeholder engagement and environmental considerations.

When a project transitions from one stage to the next it is likely that there will be personnel changes, both in terms of the project team and consultants involved and even sometimes within a stage. This means that the pool of knowledge and project familiarity built up can easily be lost and cause delays or poor decision making based on ignorance. Similar situations can also arise within the consenting authority, statutory consultees and other stakeholder groups.

The loss of existing personal relationships in this way can have significant detrimental impacts on project continuity and progress. Whilst it may be recognised that such circumstances will arise putting procedures in place to address them is not always a priority meaning handovers are not done comprehensively or effectively.

In practice the dissemination of learning is often inconsistent, whilst the application of the lessons learnt can be erratic. Some developers will have adopted internal processes to undertake a 'lessons learnt' at each stage of project development. However, even under these circumstances, this is no guarantee that these lessons will be passed on or more importantly 'embedded' rather than noted, thereby consigning forthcoming projects to potentially making the same mistakes or missing out on good practice techniques. In other instances there may be no formal procedure with any lessons learnt being passed on in an ad-hoc manner or not at all.

This lack of effective communication has a variety of consequences, arguably the most significant of which is financial. Repeating the same mistakes such as submitting insufficient or incorrect environmental surveys through lack of engagement with environmental or licensing bodies and not confirming clarity on data requirements costs both time and money

as surveys may need to be repeated. In some instances this could hold a project for considerable amounts of time if surveys e.g. nesting birds need to be done at specific times in the year. An effective lessons learnt process could flag this up as a potential issue and alert any forthcoming project team to seek clarity from the relevant body at the earliest opportunity.

Many developers are required to deliver projects to short, tight deadlines. The main focus is on 'getting the job done' - on time and on budget before moving on to deliver the next project. Time spent at the beginning of a project to undertake a lessons learnt exercise will not always be a priority. Equally developers who are in direct competition with each other may not be willing to divulge their learning in case this assists another developer in obtaining a competitive edge.

Project teams will change over the lifetime of a project. This can be as a result of simply moving from one stage to the next e.g. from developing and consenting the project to the construction phase. Each stage has the potential to lose the learning relating to stakeholder engagement and management as those who have thus far worked on the project step aside and a new team takes over. Even with formal procedures in place in reality this handover may not always be as thorough as necessary, often as a result of time constraints.

The loss of project team members can have a detrimental impact on the overall pool of team knowledge and experience. The necessary time and effort is not always given to allow the transfer of this experience from the exiting member to the incoming member or the rest of the team. In these instances it's not just a case of losing a team member, but all the knowledge and contacts that individual has accrued whilst working on the project. That knowledge may have the potential to save time, money and help maintain the reputation of the developer on not just one project but others as well.

Lessons can be lost through poor communication – communication between individual team member and across different projects. There may be a culture of unwillingness to share information to ensure one project team appears more successful than the next, albeit potentially detrimental to the overall organisational aims, objectives and vision. It may be that individual project managers like to do things their own way or adopt an approach of 'this is how I've done it before' and other alternatives are not explored. Some may take a more blinkered approach and not look for good practice examples beyond a narrowly defined sector and therefore miss potential innovative examples from other sectors.

Undertaking a lessons learnt exercise does not automatically mean that the learning will be adopted. This may be because although recorded the learning is not disseminated or stored in a readily accessible, user friendly or consistent manner. With time pressures at the beginning of a project typically a team will want to obtain the information as quickly as possible. If this is the case then effort put into recording the learning will not be utilised to its full potential, with consequential results to budget and timeframes

Attention is focussed on the mistakes made rather than the success generated. Positive lessons identified through the learning process are often not celebrated fully or promoted widely. A good practice example can attract high levels of interest as projects will want to replicate a successful methodology.

Solution

Handovers

In order to maintain and preserve the project knowledge guidance/procedures should be put in place to identify when and how handovers should be conducted. At the least these should be done at project stage transition or when key personnel leave.

Identify ways to minimise the loss of knowledge. For example in MUMM, Belgium an evaluator is employed to conduct handovers. This formalises the process and ensures it happens. In the UK the MMO ensures that the developer and consultants are also included in handovers to provide and pass on information. Again in the UK, Natural England has developed an internal Renewables Energy Systems Network as well as a cables co-ordinator to take an overview on all projects and responses. These approaches help to ensure that knowledge is not only retained, but also shared across the organisation.

Lessons learnt

Undertaking and then implementing a lessons learnt approach may require a fundamental shift in culture. Within the developer culture there needs to be direction from the highest level that a lessons learnt exercise at the earliest stages of project development is a necessary, integral and accepted part of the project. Until this message is delivered and enforced project teams will be focussed on moving the project forward as quickly as possible to meet deadlines.

The benefits of undertaking a lessons learnt exercise also needs to be ingrained from a sector wide perspective down to an organisational level through to an individual project team member level. It needs to be accepted that for a relatively small investment of time a lessons learnt review could have substantial positive impacts upon a project. The benefits of this approach need to be communicated in a way that makes a lessons learnt review an attractive proposition.

Lessons learnt need to be incorporated throughout the lifetime of any project and through all its different stages. Once one stage has been completed then the project team needs to review what worked well and what didn't and identify what they would do differently next time. Effective learning does not stop at this point – it needs to be an inherent behaviour for one team to pass this learning onto the next.

This can be done by allocating time during the project planning to carry out the retrospective review and then ensuring that time is used to do the review(s). Completing the review is not the end point. Once completed the information needs to be proactively disseminated to ensure the benefits of learning are felt more widely. This can be done via exchanges of information at cross team meetings, websites, newsletters/updates, professional conferences/publications and informal, ad hoc conversations.

When undertaking a lessons learnt exercise look for similar projects to assess. These may be from the same/similar developer(s) and are likely to be within the same sector. However, lessons can be learnt from further afield – parameters should not be too limited in the early stages. Similar projects, particularly within Europe, will be subject to the same environmental considerations. It may also be useful to gain a different perspective and look beyond the same sector to explore best practice techniques and lessons learnt from elsewhere. This could be a particularly useful way to discover innovative and different methods of stakeholder engagement which have worked well in an unrelated sector and could be replicated on infrastructure projects

A desk-based survey, using internet searches to identify similar projects will give baseline information. Websites containing project pages will highlight the types of consultation undertaken and which stakeholders were involved. This could provide valuable guidance and save time when undertaking stakeholder mapping. It can also provide a wide range of similar projects, which have been delivered in different countries where approaches may be slightly different, but beneficially applied to the project. Thinking widely at this stage is desirable.

A desk-based study will also offer up contact names and details which can be followed up to gain additional information. Talking to those who have gone through the process and have learnt both positive and negative lessons is an inexpensive yet invaluable source of information. This contact could be made not only to other developers, but also to stakeholders. An understanding of the stakeholder perspective and their individual drivers will vary from project to project, but there are still lessons to be learnt.

Such an approach need not be confined to the developer. NGO's and other stakeholders could undertake similar reviews on their own experiences and input into previous projects to help them identify where their input was of most benefit and how they could improve on their approach. RSPB did this as part of informing this work package. Developers could encourage this approach and build it into post evaluation to ask main stakeholders this question

To undertake a lessons learnt exercise there needs to be something to review. This means that at the end of each project time should also be factored in to document the key learning points from the project by developers and stakeholders in order to pass on the lessons learnt – in effect creating a virtuous circle of learning across the different stages of the project.

A database could be set up at the beginning of a project and made available to any member of the project team to add to as the project progresses. Some moderation will be necessary, but the learning and embedding process does not have to be rigid and time bound. Regular additions could be reviewed at project team meetings or circulated via project bulletins/newsletters/updates. Such information, where not specifically project or developer sensitive could be shared with other stakeholders where considered relevant to improve both relationships and working practices both within and across projects. Developers could work for their mutual benefit through the establishment of a database of lessons learnt whereby developers could detail their experiences from a variety of different projects and which would be available to all. Such a common system could be rolled out to stakeholders. As a minimum those high level statutory stakeholders that must be consulted in each territory/country. Whilst there are obvious benefits to this approach there are problems inherent in its application. Who would set it up and maintain it? Would developers be willing to share information? Adopting this approach would require a fundamental shift in behaviour and culture from many developers and NGO's which could be encouraged by demonstrating how the sharing of lessons learnt can in the long term speed up the permitting process and as a result save time and money.

Encouraging positive behavioural change in respect of undertaking lessons learnt can also be done at project team and individual team member basis using tools such as Key Performance Indicators around such reviews. For individuals this could take the form of individual objectives in performance or development plans.

If an approach has demonstrably worked successfully (across parties, not just that a project was 'pushed' through to delivery) and can be replicated in similar circumstances then it makes sense to use it again. Celebrating a success is a positive way to inform and show others how and why a particular method worked well. This type of proactive approach can be adopted all levels and through a variety of different ways including discussions at team meetings, training events, articles/briefing notes, social media and websites.

During a project the focus is on delivering the end product. Budgets, targets and tight timescales drive the project forward and anything that removes this focus can be perceived as an unwanted distraction. Highlighting and celebrating a success (big or small) does not often therefore have a high priority. However, seen with a different focus these successes and the lessons learnt along the way could be regarded as advertisements for the developer and their ability to deliver a project. Developers will always be looking forward to the next project, listing achievements and showing their credentials, based on their past experiences – they are in effect advertising themselves.

By making this perceptual shift it then makes sense for developers and individual projects to keep a 'success register' as a ready source of 'advertising' through the act of celebrating these successes.

The most important factors in implementing lessons learnt are

- an acceptance at the highest level that a pre and post project lessons learnt review is a fundamental and necessary part of project planning.
- A willingness to learn
- To be open-minded and receptive to different ways of working
- To be prepared to implement them and have a plan for doing so
- Be prepared to pass the lessons on and embed good behaviour and practice.

Action Points

Knowledge transfer and continuity		
Recommendations	Actions	Project Stage
1. Undertake effective handovers to ensure project specific knowledge maintained	Conduct at all project transition stages 1.2 Conduct if team members leave (developer/consenting authority/statutory consultee) 1.3 Consider bringing in project consultants to handover meetings to provide their project perspective and to assist in establishing relationships with new team member(s)	Across all stages Across all stages Across all stages
2. Undertake regular, comprehensive lesson learnt exercises	2.1 Conduct at start of project to obtain and apply learning from previous projects. Continue as iterative process throughout project lifetime 2.2 Use risk register to inform lessons learnt process 2.2 Establish effective records keeping regime and keep updated as a matter of course to inform handovers/lesson learnt exercise 2.3 Consider ways to disseminate lessons learnt across project team 2.4 Request feedback from key stakeholders and incorporate their thoughts if appropriate 2.5 Monitor success/failure of implementation of lessons learnt and review procedures	Across all stages Across all stages Across all stages Across all stages Across all stages

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)

Context

The development phase of any project creates considerable amounts of documentation, especially with regard to the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Habitats Regulation Assessments (HRA) (i.e. the 'appropriate assessments' required under UK legislation implementing the EU Habitats Directive). It is vital to get the production and quality of such documentation right– getting it wrong has the potential to severely impact the overall timescales of a project

The marine environment is particularly affected by EIA and HRA requirements due to the number of designations, protected species and the additional complexities of the intertidal zones. As a result the scoping and co-ordination of both onshore and offshore elements becomes an important and time-consuming feature.

Different countries interpret the relevant legislation in different ways. For example in the UK offshore cabling does not require EIA, however in other European countries e.g. France, Belgium, Holland and Germany EIA is a requirement. An awareness and understanding of these differences is therefore a necessary part of any cross boundary project to prevent delays at a later stage. Consistency - in one country e.g. a mandatory EIA, it is important to undertake the same level of assessment in each territory to ensure consistency of review (both assessments will need to be reviewed by each countries authorities under the PCI regime and most regulators within Europe consider the scope of a project, not one end of a project such as an interconnector or pipeline) and minimise the risk of challenge.

Whilst it was not required in the UK, National Grid Nemo Link Ltd (NGNLL) voluntarily chose to undertake an EIA in order to demonstrate the impact on the environment and identify mitigation measures. This also enabled stakeholders and the public to be fully informed and engaged throughout the process.

Issues relating to the co-ordination of off shore and onshore EIA can also be illustrated via the Nemo Link project. Legal advice had indicated that all consents should be sought in parallel. In reality the offshore EIA works were completed sometime in advance of the onshore works in the UK. As a result offshore elements were held until the onshore elements had 'caught up'.

Given the time and resource needed to undertake EIA/HRA there needs to be clarity around the requirements and expectations from both the developer and the licensing body. In some countries the submission of a draft EIA enables the relevant bodies to offer additional input

and advice as to the suitability and robustness of the evidence presented which can ultimately avoid delays and make the permitting process more efficient. This is the approach adopted in Belgium.

Conversely on Nemo Link no draft EIA was given to the licensing body, the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), prior to the application submission. As a result the MMO requested further supplementary information, which caused a considerable delay in determination of necessary licenses.

Clearly there are benefits to submitting draft EIA/HRA and 'front loading' this important part of the overall development process. It gives the licensing body an early opportunity to provide additional input and more direction on the necessary content – an approach that would be welcomed by developers and stakeholders alike. However this approach does raise the issue of resourcing. If resources are stretched the licensing authority may not have the time or experienced personnel to review drafts or may need to request additional payments from the developer. The developer will then need to weigh up the benefits of additional payment at this stage against possible delays later in the process.

In the UK another issue relates to the identification of the lead 'competent authority' in relation to the HRA. This situation occurred on Nemo Link when the MMO and the local planning authority took some time to determine which of them could/should legally take the lead which caused some delays in consent determination.

Additionally both parties were concerned to issue their consent decisions in parallel to avoid challenge on the basis that one organisation was influenced by the decision of the other organisation.

It was also clear that there was a lack of cross regional link up between regional teams of statutory stakeholders, which again led to delays in advice and information requirements.

These issues are good examples of delays that inevitably occur when a new system, in this case specifically the UK's Marine and Coastal Access Act (2009), is put in place and those involved on all sides are 'learning on the job'. In time as more developments are consented these issues may be ameliorated.

Developers who are under pressure to deliver projects on time need to be cognisant of setting realistic timescales for undertaking an EIA. Not allowing consultants sufficient time to undertake a fully comprehensive EIA is likely to result in further work being necessary at a later stage.

Solutions

Clarity

Given the likely delays that could occur from a poorly executed EIA or HRA spending time in the earliest stages to undertake the following should prove beneficial;

- Early contact with stakeholders to establish the scope of assessments
- Ensure attendance from necessary stakeholders and gain commitment to provide information and advice throughout the process
- At the initial scoping meeting provide detailed information and maps to assist in understanding the project and discussions regarding the EIA.
- Maintain frequent contact with stakeholders to avoid any misunderstandings/clarify requirements regularly
- Where it is not an existing procedural requirement establish the potential for submitting the draft EIA for feedback from key stakeholders. If this is not possible pursue the possibility of submitting only the more contentious chapters for review

Process

The overall aim when undertaking assessments should be to provide a comprehensive EIA so licensing bodies do not have to ask for more details. This can be achieved through close liaison with key stakeholders.

Learn and adopt approaches from other sectors. In the marine environment the energy sector tends to be fragmented and competitive. Developers working in the same region can often supply contradictory environmental information. This lack of co-ordination results in environmental stakeholders needing to seek further clarity and question where they see differences in assessment in similar or the same locations, with associated delays. By comparison the aggregates industry appears to be far more co-ordinated and often submits joint Environmental Statements, even when they are in direct competition. Although there are structural differences between these sectors there are clear benefits to investigating if similar approaches could be adopted in the energy sector.

Action Points

EIA and HRA		
Recommendations	Actions	Project Stage
1. Clarify and confirm requirements and expectations for EIA/HRA with key stakeholders at earliest opportunity	Contact key stakeholders to establish scope of assessments Review information requirements of recent similar projects to ensure suitability and level of detail Hold early meeting with relevant information e.g. detailed maps to gain input from key stakeholders Listen to stakeholders and confirm points (both developer and stakeholder) to ensure clarity and consistency 1.5 Agree communication methods/frequency/input levels with key stakeholders throughout the process – regular engagement to pre-empt problems, prevent delays and assist in internal resource planning	Definition/Initiation/Planning Definition/Initiation/Planning Initiation/Planning Initiation/Planning/Execution Across all stages
2. Consider ways to ensure EIA/HRA processes do not add avoidable time delays	2.1 Agree chapters in advance with key stakeholders 2.2 Create guidance documents on scope/purpose/process/structure of EIA/HRA 2.3 Articulate purpose of circulating draft chapters to key stakeholders in order to speed up determination process to prevent additional work becoming necessary at determination stage 2.4 Key stakeholders to ensure appropriate resource available 2.5 Developers should factor in potential delays into project programme if additional information needs to be submitted	Initiation/Planning Initiation/Planning Initiation/Planning Initiation Initiation/Planning/Monitoring and Control

Communication of Recommendations

Background

A key element of the Work Package 6.1 Action Plan is to identify communication methodologies to ensure that the recommendations within the Action Plan are disseminated widely and ultimately (able to be) implemented in future marine, and potentially other types of, grid infrastructure projects.

The recommendations and actions highlighted within this report have been informed through wide engagement with stakeholders and experts actively involved in marine infrastructure project delivery, specifically Nemo Link, NSN, IFA2 and Viking link. As such they are based on recent, actual experience and reflection on what has worked (and/or is working) well and what didn't (isn't) work(ing) well. Retrospectively assessing successes/failures and lessons learnt naturally led to suggestions on how processes could be improved in order to improve public acceptance and to speed up permitting.

Obtaining these views from both the developer and stakeholder perspectives has offered a unique insight into the different drivers and constraints from 'both sides of the fence' and how these affected and influenced the final outcomes of the Nemo Link project up to this point.

Recommendations and actions evolved around the following themes;

- Knowing your stakeholder
- Facilitating stakeholder engagement
- Project discipline (records, timekeeping, planning and preparations for engagement)
- Data access/co-ordination
- Knowledge transfer and continuity
- Environmental Impact Assessment & Habitats Regulations Assessment

The next stage is to identify how these recommendations can become embedded in approaches to marine and grid infrastructure developments across Europe in order to improve public acceptance and speed up the permitting process whilst maintaining environmental considerations.

Communication

Understanding the 'bigger energy picture'

Building critical infrastructure such as interconnectors, power stations or power lines in and around communities is always going to be challenging. But important decisions – on how the need for new infrastructure is balanced with its costs and impact on the local environment – simply can't be avoided. They have to be made if energy needs are to be met and to 'keep the lights on'.

These issues have become more pronounced as the energy landscape continues to change and move away from a centralised, fossil fuelled powered generation model to a more dissipated renewable energy generation model in order to meet demanding climate change targets.

In order to facilitate greater public acceptance of grid infrastructure developments there first needs to be a greater awareness of and understanding of the energy challenge facing Europe. There is a need to explain the difficult choices that society as a whole needs to face in order to maintain levels and reliability of energy provision whilst also protecting the environment for future generations.

Solutions to these challenges also need to be explained to stakeholders and communities in an appropriate manner so they are better informed of the need for infrastructure and the consequences of not developing it. Raising awareness in a more generalised, in addition to a project specific, manner should enable stakeholders to make decisions based on a higher level of understanding rather than as a perceived threat in direct response to a development proposal. Such an approach will not make all developments acceptable to stakeholders and communities but could assist in them engaging in a more informed manner.

This approach is being adopted to an extent by National Grid and its energy partners in the UK through a 'Powering Britain's Future' nationwide conversation launched in July 2012. The campaign developed three themes;

Building trust in the energy industry - the energy industry needs to build trust if it is to be looked to as a source of information on the future of energy in the UK. People are confused about the relative roles of Government, generators, transmission, distribution and supply companies; how much each part of the industry contributes to energy bills; and whether energy security or climate change are important issues.

Better communications - Communication about the UK energy challenge should be much clearer and better coordinated. Stakeholders want a consistent high-level energy narrative or story that puts the UK energy challenge in context and in language that is understandable. They want more consumer-friendly communications for projects, as well as helping people to understand the consultation process and how their feedback can, and does, influence decisions. They also said it was important to engage with communities at an early stage and to be clear, open and honest about the technically essential aspects of a project and the things they are able to influence.

The right approach for community investment - Another area highlighted was a need for energy companies to consider community benefit/investment schemes for areas that are asked to host national infrastructure. This was recognised as a difficult issue, particularly because such investment was often described as 'bribery'.

The campaign has brought together people who would not routinely collaborate, yet they have been willing to bring valuable insights to the table. It has proved extremely powerful to bring together organisations representing not just the energy industry, but also groups such as countryside campaigners, green groups and others who hold National Grid to account for what it does.

In the UK Powering Britain's Future has stimulated a conversation about the energy challenge and attracted constructive contributions from stakeholders with diverse interests, identified areas of consensus and confirmed a collective approach is needed to address the issues raised.

This type of strategic approach to raise awareness could be replicated elsewhere to help increase understanding amongst stakeholders at all levels, stimulate debate and potentially result in increased public acceptance of infrastructure projects.

There is a clear need to explain the context of an individual project in the relation to the wider energy challenge to stakeholders. To properly articulate a need case to local stakeholders and to engage a wider audience than those who would ordinarily respond to consultations.

Consideration should be given to holding local events to explain the context of developments and the high level workings of the energy industry to local community groups but also schools and colleges.

Increasing developer awareness of stakeholders

Marine infrastructure development is a highly competitive and commercial sector in the UK. Across Europe, even though development is socialised in most countries for interconnection, offshore wind remains a competitive arena. Even with socialised developments competition exists due to a limited supply chain. Development costs are high and technically complex. Tight timescales are a constant and can easily be derailed by unforeseen survey results, damaged/lost equipment and poor weather conditions.

Unlike onshore developments which by their very nature tend to have greater opportunities to engage with stakeholders and communities, stakeholders for offshore development tend to be smaller in number, more disparate and broadly fall into sea user groups and nature conservation organisations who require detailed and technically specific information. This necessitates a deliberate and bespoke approach to engagement. What would be an appropriate approach onshore may not be the right approach offshore.

In addition to this marine developments have the added complexity of the intertidal interface. This will involves the consideration of both marine plans and land use planning plans, both of which have separate permitting authorities which need to co-ordinate their responsibilities.

Legislation directs that stakeholders need to be actively engaged in the development process and that evidence of engagement should be included in applications for consideration. This reiterates the fundamental importance of effective stakeholder engagement to the successful delivery of a project.

Against this backdrop marine developers will be keen to progress their developments quickly. Engaging with stakeholders can be seen as a distraction from getting the job done when in reality it is a crucial part of marine infrastructure delivery. To ensure effective stakeholder engagement is done developers should seek to gain a better understanding of both how to engage and in understanding the drivers and constraints of stakeholders.

This shift in perception towards stakeholder needs to be driven from the highest level across organisations. National Grid has invested in comprehensive stakeholder management training for its employees through its Stakeholder Academy. During the training employees learn about stakeholder mapping, understanding perspectives, building sustainable relationships and trust and facilitating action. They are then given the opportunity to apply these skills in a variety of scenarios to build confidence to apply them on live projects following the training.

Such an approach is proving to be valuable at organisational, project and employee levels. Once a commitment to invest in employees has been made it is relatively straightforward to

deliver. However there is also much to learn from engaging more closely with other developers and stakeholders in order to improve overall stakeholder engagement.

Encouraging a more open exchange of experiences from developers would be a positive step. Due to the competitive nature of the sector such an approach would require a change in developer mind-set to a more integrated approach. There could be a role for permitting authorities or developers to offer to organise annual workshops where experiences could be discussed and learning shared to the benefit of all attendees.

Alternative methods of communicating these experiences could be used such as written case studies to highlight specific issues or successes. These could be shared via communities of interest websites/social media/ professional sites, conferences and training events.

Stakeholder engagement professionals including those who are not necessarily involved marine infrastructure development are good sources of information and advice will have excellent networks for disseminating good practice examples.

Increasing collaboration

As more marine infrastructure projects are developed it is likely that similar problems will arise and need to be addressed. These issues will arise from both the developer and stakeholder perspectives.

To prevent this it makes sense for stakeholders, especially statutory stakeholders to produce guidance notes or best practice notes which can be used as a source of information and reference for developers. Such an approach has been adopted for onshore development. One example of this approach was produced in 2005 by four statutory environmental bodies in the UK. They worked together to provide advice on how to include environmental considerations in strategic plans by producing the document 'Environmental Quality in Spatial Planning'.

Adopting a collaborative approach to guidance in this way assists in integrating requirements from various stakeholders and in so doing establishes for developers a baseline of information they will be required to submit. Done well this increases clarity of requirements and enables developers to submit the right information. This also reduces the amount of time stakeholders need to spend on assessing if the correct information has been provided.

Another collaborative approach that could be more widely adopted is that of industry interchanges or mentoring. This is an approach adopted by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) in the UK to enable MMO and industry employees to better understand the procedures and constraints each operate with.

Dissemination of Work Package 6 Best Practice

Through undertaking this work package a number of common themes and issues emerged and were explored during consultation with various stakeholders. An integral part of these discussions has been the development of potential solutions to increase public acceptability of new infrastructure and to speed up permitting procedures whilst maintaining high environmental standards.

This Action Plan has detailed those discussions, proposed solutions and developed action points to help deliver those solutions. The final section highlights how these best practice solutions can be disseminated more widely and potentially become a standard part of grid development projects across Europe.

The development of a short and succinct document which effectively captures the key learning points from this Action Plan is recommended. Such a document needs to present the information in an easily accessible and visually interesting way.

National Grid has published a series of documents that outline their approach to various aspects of project development. These include 'Our Approach to the design and routing of new electricity transmission lines' and 'Our Approach to options appraisal'. An alternative format could be that adopted by Planning Aid England in its document 'Good Practice Guide to Public Engagement in Development Schemes' which provides information in an easily readable format. Any of these documents could provide a template for a future best practice document on stakeholder engagement for marine infrastructure developments.

Once the content and style of the document has been agreed the Renewable Grid Initiative (RGI)/ BESTGRID website would be the ideal location for the document.

As part of its advocacy role and wide reach throughout Europe the RGI, along with its partners, is ideally placed to circulate such a document to TSO's and major marine stakeholders. In turn these stakeholders can be encouraged to disseminate more widely through use of their own stakeholder databases.

Further stakeholders can be identified through the list of PCI and associated contributors. It should be noted that the land/sea interface unique to marine projects also involves land use planning regimes and so stakeholders from this sphere should also be included.

Another mechanism identified as an effective way to disseminate findings and best practice more widely is the proposal for developers to sign on, through PCI and offshore trade associations, to run educational workshops for stakeholder groups at early stages of projects to assist in familiarising stakeholders with the project, its more technical aspects, best practice approaches and demonstrating the transparency of the process.

This could be facilitated with the support of national (government) agencies e.g. DECC in UK and regulators (in the UK, Ofgem) to promote best practice and make material readily available to developers and stakeholders. The information could be easily aligned to information relating to the PCI regulations on their websites.

Alongside this role for national agencies it is suggested that the TSO's, through their strategic stakeholder relationships and utilising their stakeholder databases, hold awareness workshops with the stakeholders. Such workshops could be (and are more likely to be) held on a project specific basis. However there is also potential for workshops to be held to raise awareness more generally on energy transmission issues. These could be undertaken in areas where future projects are likely (but not confirmed) to take place to raise general understanding prior to any specific development proposals being put forward.

TSO's to ensure own staff are fully appraised and trained in stakeholder engagement techniques. Utilising scenario based techniques for employees involved in stakeholder engagement has proved successful. It is proposed that this type of Academy and training it disseminated more widely across TSO's. The approach could be developed further by inviting key stakeholders to participate.

Appendix 1: Generic Stakeholder Matrix

Sample Stakeholder Matrix

Stakeholder Matrix																					
WHO	WHEN	COMMENTS	WHY	DECISION	WHAT ARE WE CONSULTING / NOTIFYING ABOUT																
					Stage 1 of Consultation Framework				Stage 2 of Consultation Framework						Stage 3 of Consultation Framework			Stage 4 of Consultation Framework		Stage 5 of Consultation Framework
Consultation Body	Circumstance for Consultation	Comments	Requirement under legislation, guidance and advice	Decision to consult	Early Project Briefing	Identification of Strategic Options	Application of Options Appraisal Level 1	Consultation Strategy and stakeholder mapping	Preferred Strategic Option(s)	Strategic Options Report	Potential Route Corridor	Options Appraisal Level 2	Consultation Strategy and Stakeholder Mapping	Feedback received during public consultation	EIA Scoping – consultation carried out by PINS	PEI	Developing detailed route alignments/ siting	Draft SOCC	Consultation on proposed application under section 42	Notification and publicity of accepted application under section 56
Natural England	All applications likely to affect land in England	Consult on applications in England																			
The Joint Nature Conservation Committee	All applications likely to affect the marine environment	Consult when application is likely to impact the marine environment																			
The Marine Management Organisation	All applications likely to affect the marine area in England and Wales	Where the proposal would involve carrying on any activity in the marine area in England and Wales.																			
RSPB	All applications which are likely to affect RSPB reserves or significant other bird interests	Consult if RSPB reserves are affected or significant other bird interests - Also consult the specific regional office.																			

Appendix 2: Generic Project Stages

Definition	Initiation	Planning	Execution (Construction)	Monitoring & Control	Closure
Before a project starts the Project Director to make sure the project goals, objectives, scope, risks, issues, budget, timescale and approach have been defined. This must be communicated to all the internal stakeholders to get their agreement. Any differences of opinion must be resolved before work starts.	This is perhaps the most important stage of any project as it sets the terms of reference within which the project will be run. If this is not done well, the project will have a high probability of failure. The initiation stage is where the business case is declared, scope of the project decided and stakeholder expectations set. Time spent on planning, refining the business case and communicating the expected benefits will help improve the probability of success. It is tempting to start work quickly, but a poor initiation stage often leads to problems and even failure.	The key to a successful project is in the planning. Creating a project plan is the first task to do when undertaking any project. An effective project plan saves time, money and helps avoid many other problems. Often project planning is ignored in favour of getting on with the work.	This is where the work to deliver the project is carried out. Most of the work related to the project is realised at this stage.	Once the project is running it is important the Project Director keeps control. This is achieved by regular reporting of issues, risks, progress and the constant checking of the business case to make sure that the expected benefits will be delivered and are still valid.	Often neglected, it is important to make sure the project is closed properly. Many projects do not have a clear end-point because there is no formal sign-off. It is important to get agreement that the project has ended, and no more work will be carried out. Once closed, the project should be reviewed and lessons learnt (positive and negative) recorded and importantly disseminated/embedded into revised procedures/polices/training for future projects.