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D3.1 Practical actions plan to improve public acceptance and to improve permitting procedures

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Introduction

With nine partners, comprising European Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Transmission System Operators (TSOs) and one research institute, the EU-funded BESTGRID project works towards modernising and expanding the current European electricity grid for the integration of a larger share of electricity from renewable sources.

Launched in April 2013, BESTGRID is made up of four pilot projects located in Belgium, Germany and the UK. During the project, TSOs and NGOs work together to improve local public acceptance for grid development processes, to speed up permitting procedures by proactively addressing or even surpassing environmental protection standards, and to encourage the implementation of improved permitting procedures for European "Projects of Common Interest."

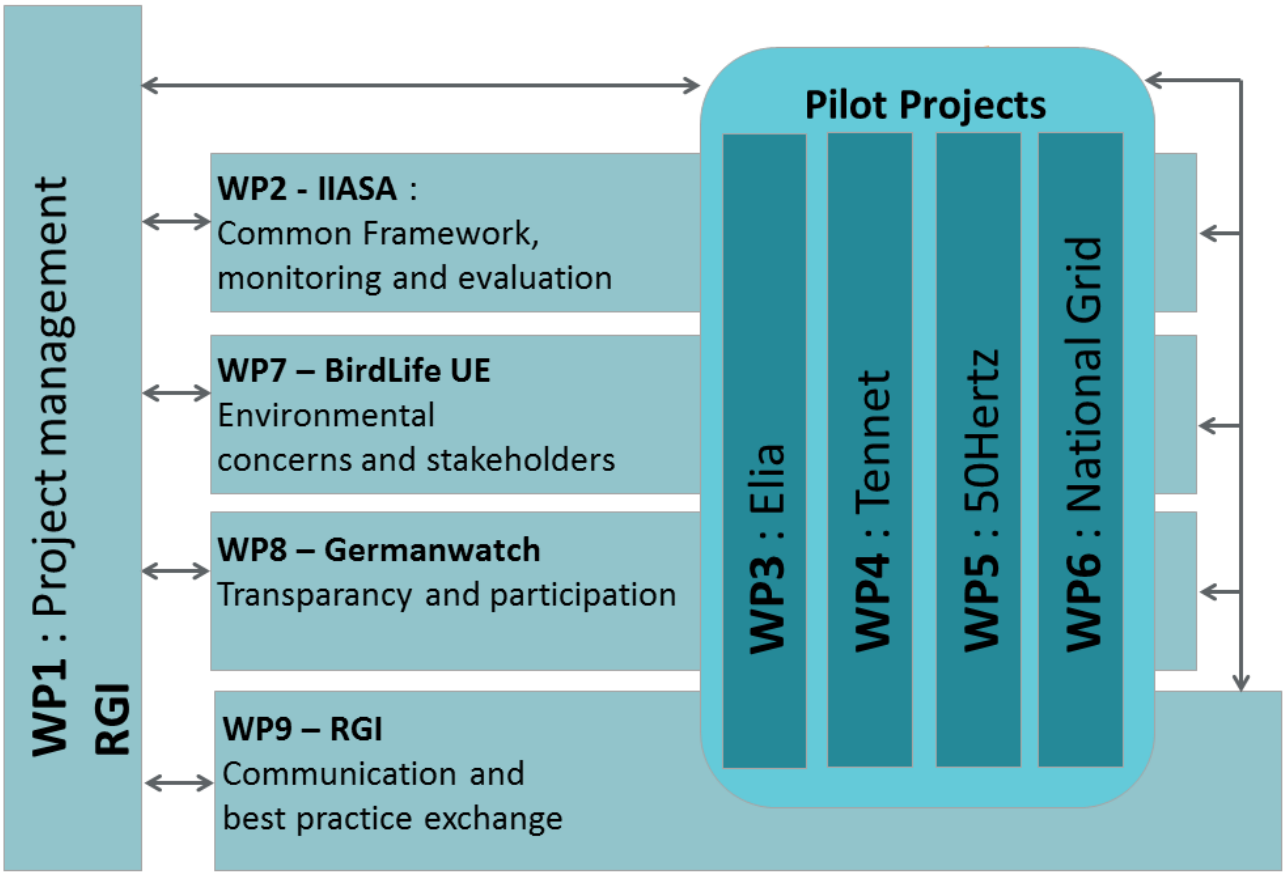
Jointly, partners will learn about how to implement better practice in developing the grid. Some pilot projects will have a stronger focus on designing and testing new activities, while another one will focus on evaluating activities that have already been developed and implemented. The International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) will lend support by evaluating the activities from a scientific perspective.

For more information, please visit www.bestgrid.eu.

This document is the deliverable "D3.1: Practical action plans to improve *public acceptance* and to improve *permitting procedures* by early stakeholder engagement (tasks 3.1.1, 3.2.1; M7)".

BESTGRID partners include: 50Hertz, BirdLife Europe, Elia, Germanwatch, IIASA, National Grid, Renewables-Grid-Initiative, TenneT and Terna.

This project is structured in 9 work packages (WPs) as follow.



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Presentation of Elia

Elia is not just Belgium's transmission system operator – it is also a key player at European level.

Elia is Belgium's high-voltage transmission system operator (30 kV to 380 kV), operating over 8,000 km of lines and underground cables throughout Belgium.

Our company plays a crucial role in the community by transmitting electricity from generators to distribution systems, which in turn deliver it to the consumer. Elia also plays an essential part in the economy, as our system supplies power directly to major companies connected to the grid.

Boasting a pivotal location in Europe, Elia is also a key player in the energy market and the interconnected electricity system. Our company has set up multiple initiatives promoting the development of an efficient, transparent and fair electricity market for the benefit of consumers.

Elia employs more than 1,100 professionals in Belgium who are not only committed to dealing with future challenges but who also handle the day-to-day operation of a system considered to be one of the most reliable in Europe.

Presentation of Inter-Environnement Wallonie (IEW)

There are more than 150 environmental conservation organisations in Wallonia.

Mainly comprising volunteers, they defend choices made by citizens and politicians who respect our shared heritage.

Inter-Environnement Wallonie (IEW) is the federation of these organisations. For nearly 40 years they have been offering advice and support in the form of expertise, legal services, topical training and information material.

IEW also generates momentum that fosters debate amongst its members and enables the emergence of consensual positions.

Being anchored at the local level, the IEW views its efforts as part of society's broader attempt to rise to the global challenges we face.

The IEW champions sustainable development and fights any attacks on the environment, whether at local, regional, federal or European level. The aim of the action it takes is to ensure that environmental issues are taken into consideration in all sectorial policies, alongside social, economic and cultural dimensions, above all by making sure that the environment features more prominently in legal texts and political choices.

The IEW is independent of any political, philosophical or religious organisations.

http://www.iew.be

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Why is Elia involved in BESTGRID?

The BESTGRID consortium brings together European NGOs, local NGOs (as subcontractors) and Transmission System Operators (TSOs).

Four pilot projects will be implemented within the BESTGRID project, each focussing on improving local public acceptance of grid development and speeding up permitting procedures through early engagement with environmental stakeholders.

Elia is participating in BESTGRID because a continuing lack of public acceptance makes it difficult to obtain permits to build new grids. Yet there is a growing need for grid development to maintain energy security and connect new sources of power generation.

All four pilot projects are different and complement each other, enabling us to assess a wide range of electricity infrastructure as well as its environment. Elia's pilot project concerns an onshore underground cable in an urban location which impacts on the local economy (SMEs). This project is indirectly involved with the integration of renewable energy.

One of the main benefits of this project is that it provides an opportunity to work closely with regional and local NGOs. It will entail the joint development of a new method aimed at enlisting public engagement and invite environmental stakeholders to consider environmental issues. This unique form of cooperation will generate findings of use to both TSOs and NGOs with respect to future grid developments.

Elia will pilot a new approach to communication, collaboration, information and participation, analyse and evaluate its results and then share its experience with other TSOs and go on to expand its know-how in this domain.

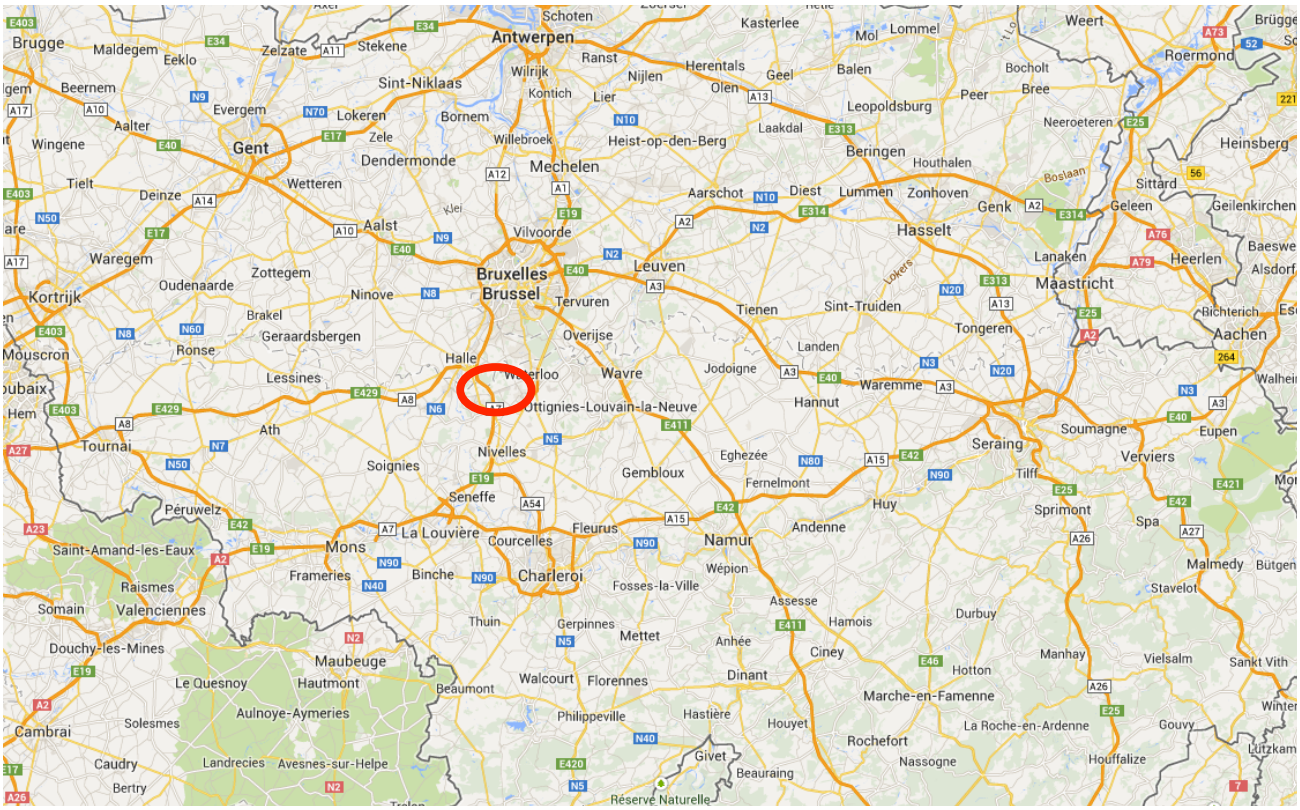
Elia expects its involvement in BESTGRID to enable it to improve its management of permitting procedures and facilitate the acceptance of grid development by local residents and environmental stakeholders.

WP3 – Pilot project

Introduction

The pilot project Elia chose for BESTGRID was the one best suited to addressing the different needs identified within this context (timing, planning, project type, etc.).

Together with the Renewables Grid Initiative (RGI) and the European Commission, Elia chose a project involving a high-voltage electric cable (150 kV) between its Braine-l'Alleud and Waterloo substations, south of Brussels, in Wallonia (see map below).



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Needs

The project will meet a number of needs.

The first of these, which was identified by the distribution system operator (DSO) Ores, is the need for a greater energy supply to the Waterloo substation.

Ores' estimates, which have been confirmed by models created by Elia, show that by 2018 the existing facilities will no longer be able to cope with the needs of the local population due to rising demand for electricity from both residential and business customers (SMEs).

The second, which is specific to Elia, is a need to increase the density of its grid and establish 150-kV loops to optimise the transmission of energy generated by the growing numbers of local renewable energy installations (e.g. wind farms and photovoltaic facilities).

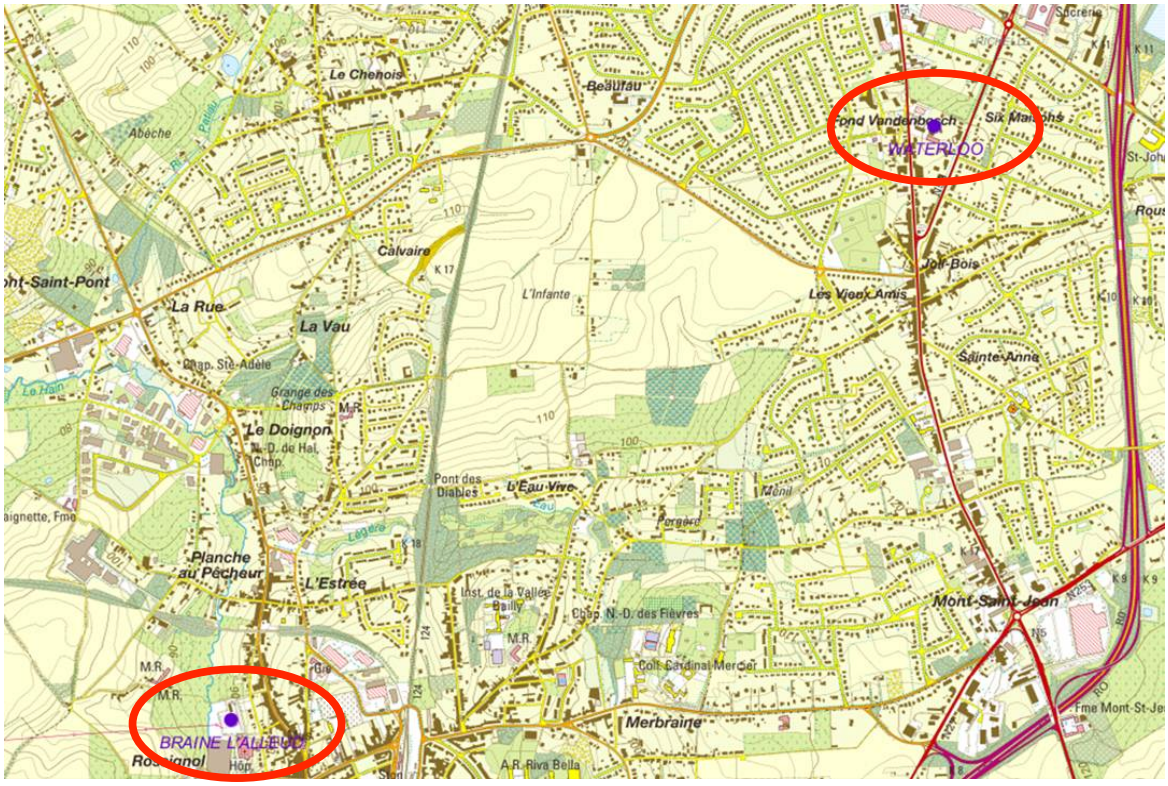
Lastly, this project will help to make the grid more secure by ensuring a reliable supply for everyone.

The environment

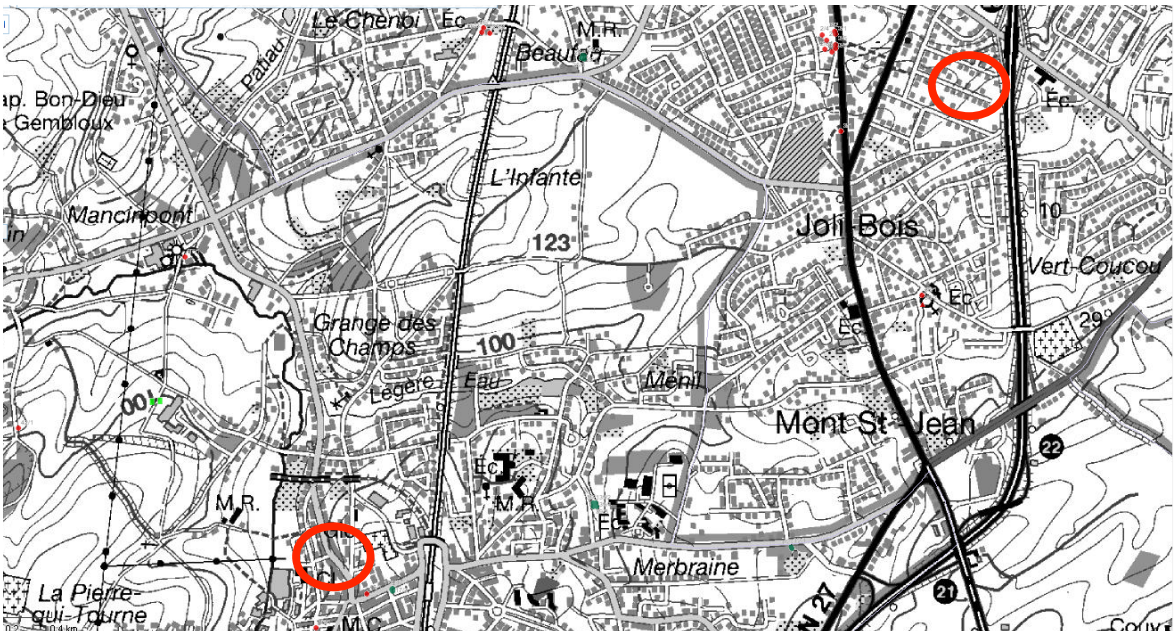
Elia is planning to lay a 150-kv HV cable between the Braine-l'Alleud and Waterloo substations.

The area is notable for:

- The dense population around these substations;
- its river;
- its railway;
- its main roads;
- its agricultural land.



The site in question is not a Natura 2000 site or other specific environmental protection area (see map below).

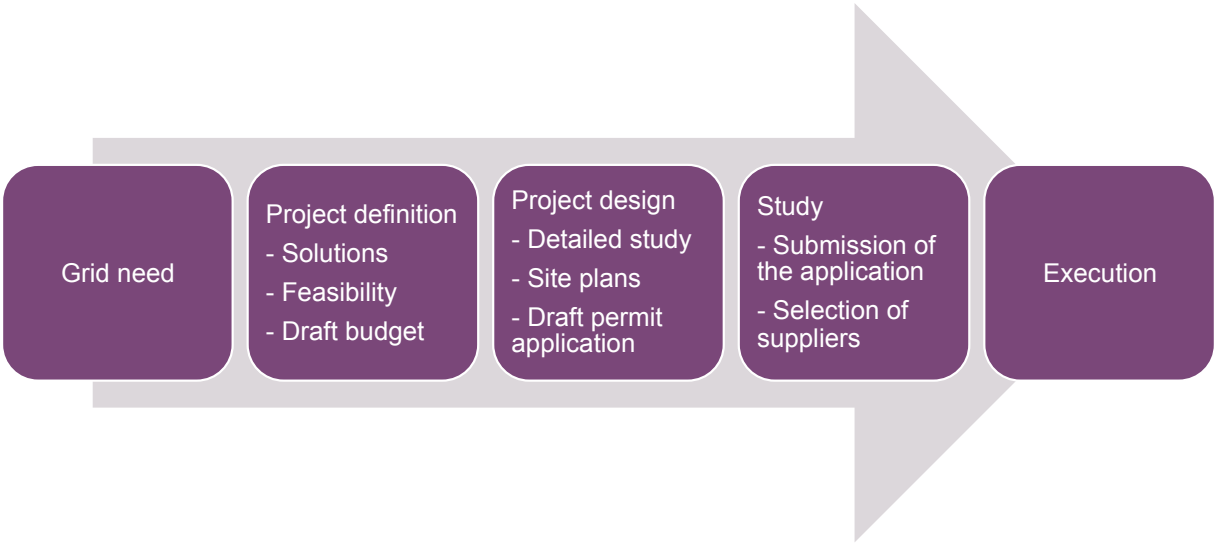


http://geoportail.wallonie.be

The phases of the project

This project, like all Elia projects, will comprise the following phases:

- Definition of the need (2011);
- definition of the project (solution, feasibility, budget estimate) (2012);
- design of the project (details, permitting procedure, planning permission) (2013-2014);
- the final study (permit application, building preparations) (2015-2016); and
- execution (2017).



The project

Elia plans to lay a new 150-kv HV cable between the Braine-l'Alleud and Waterloo substations.

An existing 150-kV HV cable between the Braine-l'Alleud and Waterloo substations follows the route indicated on the map below.

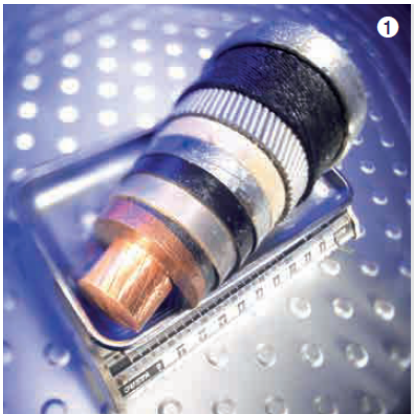
The cable will be laid in a trench 0.8 m wide and 1.45 m deep.

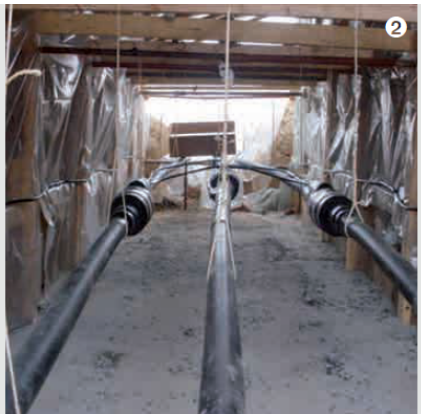
The cable will comprise:

1) The 150-kv HV cable itself;

2) cable connectors placed roughly every 600 m; and

3) cable ends.





The underground cable includes the following:

- A copper or aluminium core and conductor, essential for transmitting the electricity;
- high-quality polyethylene insulation capable of withstanding the electrical stress associated with HV;
- a screen to eliminate the electric field and currents in the event of a short circuit;
- an external sheath.

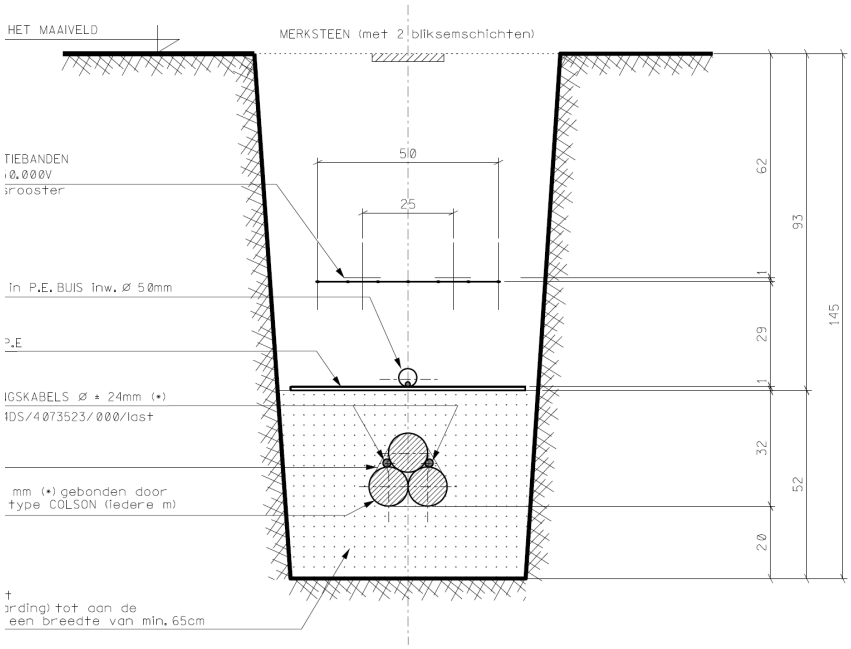
An HV connection comprises three conductors (one for each phase), which must be electrically insulated. With overhead connections this insulation is provided by the air. In underground cables it is provided by various layers of high-quality insulating material, usually polymers, that are capable of withstanding the stresses associated with the transmission of HV currents.

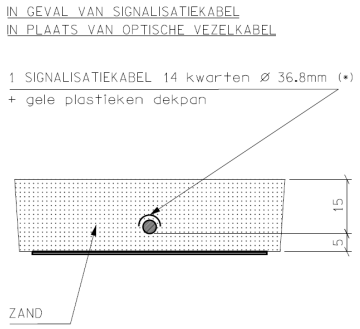
As the current passes through the cable, it generates heat in its copper or aluminium core. This heat must be dissipated to guarantee the conductors' good transmission capacity. This is why sections of cable are usually larger, to reduce both electrical resistance and the amount of heat generated.

The structure of the cable and the distance between the three conductors also influences how this heat will be dissipated. Above all, this will depend on the intensity of the current and the voltage level. The main options are:

- Bundled or composite conductors (tightly arrayed, like clover leaves);
- stranded conductors (separated from each other to enable heat to dissipate more easily).

For this project, Elia plans to use bundled conductors.





en in functie van het project

en van de sleuf zijn te interpreteren als minimum afmetingen

0 10 20 30 40 50cm

ONDERGRONDSE 150kV VERBINDING
XXXXXXXXXXXX - XXXXXXXX

VOLGNUMMER	FOLIO	REV.
0000000002	00	

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Legal framework

Elia's business activities are governed by European, national and regional legislation.

Europe

The European electricity market is governed primarily by:

- Directive 2009/72/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 July 2009 concerning common rules for the internal market in electricity and repealing Directive 2003/54/EC;
- Regulation (EC) no. 714/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 July 2009 on conditions for access to the network for cross-border exchanges in electricity and repealing Regulation (EC) no. 1228/2003.

This EU legislation is part of the Third Energy Package, a raft of legislative measures designed to further liberalise the European Union's energy market (see the European Commission's website for more information).

Belgium

Belgium's Special Institutional Reform Act of 8 August 1980 made the country's federal and regional authorities jointly responsible for energy policy.

The basic legislation for each level is based on similar principles:

- There is a legal separation between power generation and energy sales on the one hand and system operation on the other.
- The TSO retains a monopoly linked to strict rules of corporate governance.

- There is free access to the system at the approved, published tariffs.
- The TSO has a public service obligation, e.g. is required to achieve a minimum level of electricity quality or to purchase green certificates.
- The system is monitored by a regulator.

Federal level

The federal authorities are responsible for “matters which, on account of their technical and economic indivisibility, must be dealt with on an equal basis at national level”, in other words that need a coordinated national approach. This is the case for energy transmission, i.e. the 150 kV to 380 kV HV transmission system operated by Elia.

Elia has a legal monopoly as Belgium’s TSO. Its licence is valid for 20 years and can be renewed.

The federal government develops and drafts the tariff policy for the TSO and DSOs.

The basic legislation at federal level is the law amending the Electricity Act of 29 April 1999 on the organisation of the electricity market. This law was published in the Belgian Official Gazette on 8 January 2012.

Regional level

Belgium's three Regions are responsible for distributing and transmitting electricity locally via networks with a nominal voltage of 70 kV or less.

A distinction is drawn between 70-kV operating systems and those with a lower voltage. This means that distribution systems whose voltage is less than 70 kV operate alongside the following networks:

- The local transmission system (in Wallonia);
- the regional transmission system (Brussels-Capital Region);

- the local transmission system (in Flanders).

These systems have a voltage of 70 kV and link up with the federal transmission system. All these systems are operated by Elia.

The three Regions are also responsible for renewable energies (excluding federally governed North Sea wind farms) and the rational use of energy (RUE).

The basic legislation for each Region is as follows:

- Flemish Region: Energy Decree of 8 May 2009;
- Walloon Region: Decree of 12 April 2001;
- Brussels-Capital Region: Ordinance of 19 July 2001.

Regulators

Regulators are the 'policemen' of the electricity market, ensuring that it functions correctly.

The regulators oversee the operation of the electricity market and are empowered to issue opinions or approve various documents relating to system operation (tariffs, development plans, etc.). They also play a central role in:

- Awarding supply licences;
- authorising cogeneration facilities and installations that generate renewable power;
- issuing and managing green certificates.

The following regulators oversee the liberalised electricity market in Belgium:

- CREG at federal level;

- VREG for the Flemish Region;
- CWaPE for the Walloon Region;
- BRUGEL for the Brussels-Capital Region.

Legal procedure for the pilot project

For all applications submitted by Elia in the Walloon Region, the authority responsible for approving planning permission is the Walloon administration, or more specifically its designated official, known as a *fonctionnaire délégué* (FD).

Under Article 127 of the relevant legislation, permits for works of public utility are issued by the Walloon government or the FD. Work carried out by Elia falls into this category.

Applications must be submitted to the FD. If a public inquiry is necessary, it is the job of the municipal authority in question to organise it.

Permits are issued within 90 to 130 days when a public inquiry is held or when the Municipal Consultative Committee on Land Use and Mobility (CCATM) is asked for its opinion. Should no decision be forthcoming within this deadline, Article 127, paragraph 4 of the Walloon Code on Land Use, Urban Development, Heritage and Energy (CWATUPE) stipulates that the application shall be denied.

In the course of the procedure and decision-making process the FD requests opinions from a number of bodies:

- The technical departments in charge of infrastructure if they are affected by the work associated with the permit application: the telecom operator Belgacom; companies which distribute water, gas and electricity; the department responsible for underground or surface water, the Ministry of Equipment and Transport, the fire brigade, etc.
- The relevant departments at Wallonia's Directorate-General for Agriculture, Natural Resources and the Environment when the permit application covers a property near a Natura 2000 site and/or a zone which could host or already hosts establishments that pose a major threat to

people, property or the environment (a so-called 'Seveso zone') or is close to such an establishment (see Article 116, paragraph 1, number 2) or if the planned project concerns an establishment of this type.

- The CCATM must be consulted and issue an opinion on an application for planning permission when the project in question is subject to an environmental impact study (see Article R. 57 of Book 1 of the Environmental Code).

- The CCATM may be consulted at the request of the municipal authority and issue an opinion on an application for planning permission:
    - When the application entails a derogation from the Sectorial Plan, the Municipal Development Plan (PCA), regional or municipal urban planning rules or a subdivision permit (see Article 107, paragraph 3);
    - When the application necessitates a public inquiry (see Article 107, paragraph 3).

  The authority does not have to heed the opinion of the CCATM but, if it overrules it, must explain the reasons behind its decision. Furthermore, the FD can lodge an appeal.

- If the municipal authority in question has no CCATM, the Regional Spatial Planning Commission (CRAT) issues an opinion in cases necessitating an environmental impact study.

- The Walloon Environmental Council for Sustainable Development (CWEDD) issues an opinion within the framework of environmental impact studies.

- The Walloon Region's Royal Commission of Monuments, Sites and Excavations (CRMSF) issues an opinion on applications for planning permission concerning sites or buildings that are either listed or are on the Urgent Safeguarding List.

Members of the public may state their opinion in the course of a public inquiry.

The diagram below summarises the legally prescribed stages of the permitting procedure.

Action plan: Improve public acceptance

General overview of the timeline of the present Action Plan

The diagram below presents an overall timeline of the Action Plan scheduled in WP3:

- Orange: Engineering work by Elia.
- Red: Events scheduled in the legal procedure. At this stage we are anticipating an official EIA.
- Blue: Events scheduled in the action plan designed to “improve local public acceptance for grid development”.
- Green: Events scheduled in the action plan to “speed up permitting procedures via early engagement with environmental stakeholders”.
- Purple: actions and documents scheduled in the Communication Plan.

The details of these steps and actions are described below.

Stakeholder s mapping	**Interviews** (IEW)	**workshop** with representative s of regional and local governments	**1st Info Event** Flyer distribution	**1st Info Event** Unformal meeting				**2nd Info Event** EMF meeting	**3rd Info Event** EIA Result meeting	
Stakeholder s mapping			**1st roundtable** Env & NGO stakeholders Share knowledge	Field trip			**2nd roundtable** Env & NGO stakeholders Discuss first EIA result			
er, E-mail adres, Newsletter, formation document, Flyer		Launch	Public information meeting announcement							

Detailed stakeholder mapping

Elia will identify all the relevant stakeholders (focussing on the local population and public acceptance issues) and any other persons who could potentially be affected by the project, either directly or indirectly. Elia will use the following methodology developed in collaboration with Inter-Environnement Wallonie (IEW).

IEW and Elia will list all the official stakeholders involved in the legal process and find the right persons to contact (local authorities, regional authorities, CRAT, CWEDD, CCATM, etc.).

IEW and Elia will identify other potential stakeholders and the right individuals to contact in the domain in question:

- Environmental associations active in the Region;
- cultural associations active in the Region;
- citizens associations active in the Region;
- economic players active in the Region;
- schools, hospitals, etc.

IEW will identify the local experts on various topics (EMF, landscapes, biodiversity, mobility, etc.) who could be brought into the consultation process.

Elia and IEW will ascertain who could be worst affected by the project, e.g. residents along the project's planned route.

Elia and IEW will use a range of tools to identify these stakeholders, including local television, local newspapers, municipal publications, the internet, IEW's local network, and so on.

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Stakeholders mapping

Run by : Elia & IEW

Tools

Local newspaper, Local authorities newspaper, Local TV, Internet, Local network of IEW,...

Targets

- Official stakeholders involved in the legal process
- Environmental association involved in the region
- Cultural association involved in the region
- Citizens association involved in the region
- Economic actor involved in the region
- School, hospital, residence for elderly,...

Different formats to reach out to and engage with the different stakeholder groups

To reach out to the relevant stakeholders and engage with them Elia will use a specific methodology developed in conjunction with IEW.

Initial contacts with selected stakeholders

Informal initial contact will be made with selected key stakeholders very early on, during months 8 and 9. These contacts will be initiated by Elia and/or IEW, depending on the stakeholders involved. Face-to-face meetings will be scheduled by phone. The choice of stakeholders to contact at this stage will be based on the history of the project. The former project manager will present his successor to those local authorities that were contacted about this project a few years ago.

Elia first contacted the relevant local authorities in 2012 to highlight the need for grid development. However, those talks were suspended that same year.

The mains focus of these renewed initial contacts will be on:

- Acting transparently to:
  - Introduce Elia and present its contact person;
  - introduce IEW and present its contact person;
  - present BESTGRID;
  - present the pilot project;
  - present the next steps in the procedure and outline any legal requirements.

- The perceived need to:
  - Explain the need for grid development;
  - present the pilot project.

- Fostering engagement to:
  - Invite each stakeholder to the relevant meeting (workshop with representatives of regional and local governments; first information event; field trip; public information meeting; etc.).

Interviews

IEW will run 10 in-depth interviews with local stakeholders to gain a general understanding of the local situation with respect to key stakeholders and opinion leaders. Any insights gained in the course of these interviews will also serve to amend the pre-defined action plan.

Interviews will then be conducted with key stakeholders. The first two interviewed stakeholders will be local authorities. Other interviewees will be identified once stakeholder mapping has been completed. The two first interviews will take place before the workshop with representatives of regional and local governments (month 12); the others will be carried out after this event (month 13). Stakeholders participating in the second wave of interviews will not be aware of the project at this stage.

The interviews will be organised and carried out by IEW.

The objectives will be:

- To gain a qualitative impression based on an 'initial feeling' generated in response to the initial information about the project given by IEW;
- to identify natural supporters and opponents of the project with a view to ascertaining the opportunities and risks involved and developing appropriate risk mitigation strategies;
- to identify project-related points of convergence and divergence between these actors;
- to determine the nature of any relations between stakeholders;
- to collect arguments in favour of or against the project from each stakeholder;
- to ascertain the issues, benefits, opportunities, etc. as seen by each key stakeholder.

Face-to-face interviews will be arranged by phone with 10 key stakeholders.

Information, contextual factors, goals and arguments will all be used to encourage stakeholder participation. The (introductory) information will be kept to a strict minimum to avoid any disruption of the *a priori* interviews and will be compiled together with Elia.

Guidelines for the interviews will be drafted with the help of a specialist.

Interviews will be maximally 2 hours in length and will take place at the stakeholder's office.

They will be informal and will discuss a range of topics in which a list of open and closed questions worded by an expert will be embedded.

10 Interviews

Run by : IEW

Tools

Face to face meeting (2 + 8)
Very small introduction on the situation
Informal discussion
Close and open questions

Targets

- Local keys stakeholders
- Collect "a priori" point of view on the project
- Identify natural allies and enemies of the project
- Identify the issues, the advantages, the opportunities,…
- Understand local particularities

Environmental impact assessment (EIA)

Under current legislation, an EIA is required whenever an HV cable crosses more than 5 km of a residential area and rural residential area. However, the authorities can always impose an EIA on any project. The current planned project crosses around 2.5 km of a residential area and rural residential area.

Elia will contact the relevant authorities during month 8 or 9 to find out which type of EIA is needed for the project in question.

As provided for by law, Elia will select an authorised expert to draw up the EIA. If the relevant authorities do not require an EIA, Elia will ask an authorised environmental expert to produce an environmental study serving as an unofficial EIA.

This expert will be selected during month 10 or 11, in accordance with Elia's internal rules of procedure.

Elia will then introduce the author of the EIA to BESTGRID, IEW and relevant stakeholders. Exchanges of relevant information between the author of the EIA maker, IEW, the local environmental expert and any relevant stakeholders (first roundtable) will take place in around month 14.

To improve transparency, Elia will adopt a proactive approach and:

- Reveal its internal rules on selection and consult IEW for its environmental expertise, to evaluate the various offers;
- give the author of the EIA additional information on:
    - The need for transparency:
        - By explaining the role of the regulator;
        - by setting out the technical methodology for evaluating alternatives;
        - by providing information on upcoming steps of the process and on the legal procedure.
    - The need for the project:
        - By explaining the need for grid development;
        - by showing that this legal procedure provides environmental answers.

Workshop with representatives of regional and local governments

A workshop with representatives of regional and local governments will be organised during month 13 to further enhance the transparency of the consultation process. This event will organised by Elia, but will also be attended by IEW.

The meeting will probably take place in Braine l'Alleud. The following persons, identified in the course of stakeholder mapping, will be invited to the workshop:

- The legal authorities (CRAT, CCATM, CWEDD, etc.) involved in the procedure;
- any relevant regional authorities;
- any relevant local authorities.

When phoning identified stakeholders, Elia and/or IEW will give them information and arguments for attending a meeting. Meetings with interested stakeholders will be scheduled by phone and confirmed by e-mail. Official invitations will then be sent out by post.

Elia will adopt a formal approach at the meeting, which will be broken down into two parts:

- One-way information: from Elia to the authorities in question;
- a two-way discussion between Elia and the relevant authorities.

The main goals of the workshop will be:

- To act transparently by:
  - Presenting BESTGRID;
  - presenting IEW and Elia;
  - providing information about Elia's pilot project;
  - providing information about subsequent steps in the process;
  - specifying the timeline;
  - providing information about the legal procedure;

  - providing information about the EIA and its author;
  - providing transparent information about the negotiations Elia will conduct to obtain any permits and gain right of way;
  - presenting the planned process for interacting with stakeholders to increase the transparency of the planned communication and consultation campaign.

- To explain the need for the project by:
  - Justifying why grid development is required;
  - providing information about Elia's pilot project.

- To highlight consideration of the environmental aspect by:
  - Providing information about the EIA and its author.

- To foster engagement by:
  - Informing local government representatives (e.g. mayors) that they might be approached for information by concerned members of the public;
  - explaining the tools that IEW and Elia will give local government bodies to help them provide initial information to interested members of the public;
  - presenting the planned process for interacting with stakeholders to increase transparency of the planned communication and consultation campaign;
  - presenting the various communication tools placed at the disposal of the public (internet, e-mail address, phone numbers);
  - presenting the field trip and public information meeting and invite stakeholders to attend them;
  - listening to those stakeholders' worries and concerns;
  - facilitating a dialogue on all topics with those stakeholders.

- To underscore the benefits of the project by:
  - Specifying that Elia will actively strive to:
    - Cooperate on mobility management during the construction phase;
    - ensure that the area around the construction is optimally restored afterwards;
    - improve the integration of infrastructure into the local environment.

A summary of the meeting will be posted on the project website.

First information event

The first information event will be organised during month 14 and either 15 or 16 and will set out to engage with local members of the public and some of the relevant stakeholders identified above.

The event will be split into two parts:

- Part one: Distribution of flyers

  Elia will organise the distribution of flyers to all residents (private and professional) in the streets directly affected by the proposed project. The flyers will be distributed by Elia employees helped by subcontractors, who will walk along all the streets in question and drop flyers into every letterbox, disseminating information informally to local businesses (e.g. butchers' shops, bars, bakeries, etc.) and some local residents.

  Flyers will be distributed around two weeks before the public information meeting.

  All the distributors will be previously coached by Elia's Communication Department to help them succeed in their mission and prepare them for informal exchanges with local residents and professionals.

  IEW will probably help Elia with the distribution of flyers.

  The flyer will be included in the detailed information document focussing on project-specific details. It will give an overall presentation of the project, inform its readers about subsequent steps of the process and the legal procedure and also alert them to the public information meeting and other communication tools (internet, e-mail address, phone numbers, Newsletters, “Elia on duty”).

- Part two: 'Elia on duty'

  Elia will be on call (probably in the local authority’s offices) for roughly 4 hours between 4 and 8 p.m. on weekdays and from 2 to 6 p.m. on Saturdays, to meet people who want clarification or to contact the TSO after the public information meeting.

This meeting will be proposed a few days after the public information meeting and will be very informal, factual, objective and open-minded.

The venue will be arranged to foster communication and participation and create an atmosphere of trust.

This event will be announced in the flyer, on the website and during the public information meeting.

The mains goals of flyer distribution and the meeting will be:

- To promote transparency by:
  - Personally communicating to concerned members of the public the same details set out in the information document (focussing on the project-specific part);
  - informing the public about subsequent steps and about the legal process;
  - providing transparent information about the negotiations Elia will conduct to obtain any permits and rights of way.

- To explain the need for the project by:
  - Justifying why grid development is required.

- To underscore the benefits by:
  - Specifying that Elia will actively strive to:
    - Cooperate on mobility management during the construction phase;
    - ensure that the area around the construction is optimally restored afterwards;
    - improve the integration of infrastructure into the local environment.

- To show consideration for environmental aspects by:
  - Introducing the EIA and the EIA author who will serve as an environmental expert at the meeting;
  - presenting the work carried out in parallel by the think tank on environmental aspects (roundtable discussion).

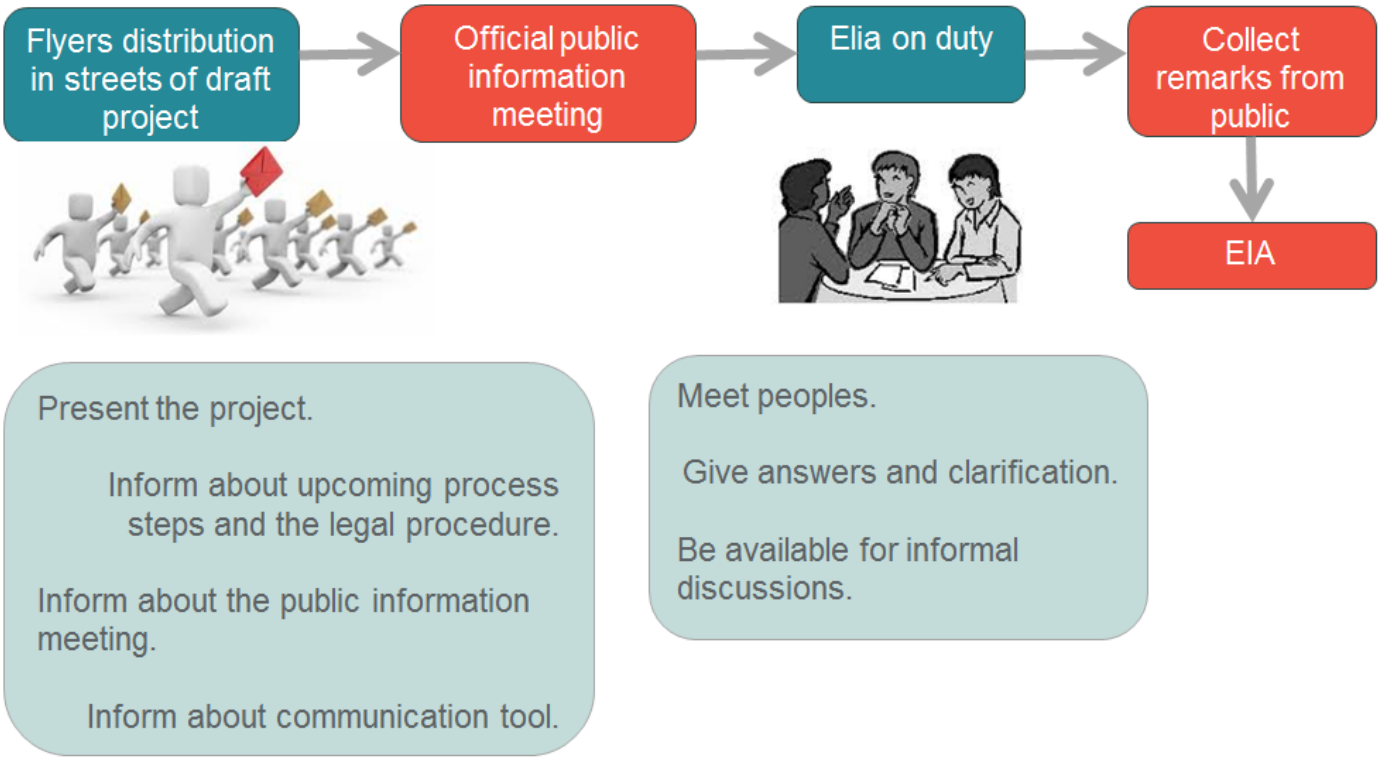
- To foster engagement by:
  - Presenting the public information meeting and inviting everyone to attend it;
  - presenting the various communication tools placed at the public's disposal (internet, e-mail address, phone numbers, newsletters);
  - listening to the worries and concerns of those stakeholders;
  - enabling a dialogue on all topics with those stakeholders;

- enabling those stakeholders to voice any fears and/or expectations;
- allowing informal communication before the public information event.

The distributed flyer and a high-level summary of the meeting will be posted on the project website.

For 2 weeks after the public information meeting, under Belgian law anyone may submit remarks, alternatives or questions to the authorities. All these will have to be considered in the EIA.

The diagram below sums up the first information event. Steps highlighted in red are part of the legal process, steps in blue are innovations by Elia.



Public information meeting

During month 8 or 9, Elia will contact the regional authorities to ascertain the type of EIA needed and find out whether a statutory public information meeting has to be organised for the project.

Depending on the answers, an official or unofficial public information meeting will be organised during month 15 in Braine l'Alleud (the municipality most affected by the project) by the local authorities with Elia's support. This meeting will be chaired by an external moderator chosen by the local authorities or Elia.

Belgian law stipulates that notice has to be given of this meeting (during month 14). Elia, together with IEW, will go further than this legal requirement by:

- Announcing it in the flyer distributed to the residents affected by the project;
- advertising it in local authorities' newspapers;
- phoning up all the cultural associations active in the area;
- phoning up all citizens associations active in the area;
- phoning up all environmental associations active in the area;
- creating a project website;
- sending out a newsletter.

This meeting will allow Elia to officially present its project to everyone, to introduce the author of the EIA as an environmental expert, explain his methodology, and allow all residents and local authorities to ask questions and submit their suggestions.

The mains goals of this information event will be:

- To promote transparency by:
    - Presenting Elia;

  - presenting and explaining the role of the regulator;
  - presenting Elia's project and its structure;
  - presenting the EIA's author and his methodology;
  - providing information about subsequent steps outside the legal procedure;
  - providing information about the legal procedure;
  - listening to any questions and suggestions from the public;
  - gaining an overview of people's initial positions and adding potential new stakeholders who were not identified at the outset.

- To explain the need for the project by:
  - Justifying why grid development is required.

- To foster engagement by:
  - Listening to any questions and suggestions from the public;
  - presenting the various communication tools placed at the public's disposal (internet, e-mail address, phone numbers);
  - When the official public information meeting is held, explaining that anyone can send an e-mail containing their remarks or questions to the local authorities and that the EIA's author will have to address these issues in his report.

The official summary of the meeting will be posted on the project website.

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Detailed information document

A detailed public information document will be drafted together with IEW and published during month 13.

This document will be 6 pages long and published in full colour. Its main aim will be to boost the transparency of the grid development project.

- Contents of the first, general section of the document:
  - What is BESTGRID? Why run the BESTGRID project?
  - The European energy challenge, Energy 2020
  - Who is Elia? (its role and responsibilities)
  - Why take part in the BESTGRID project?

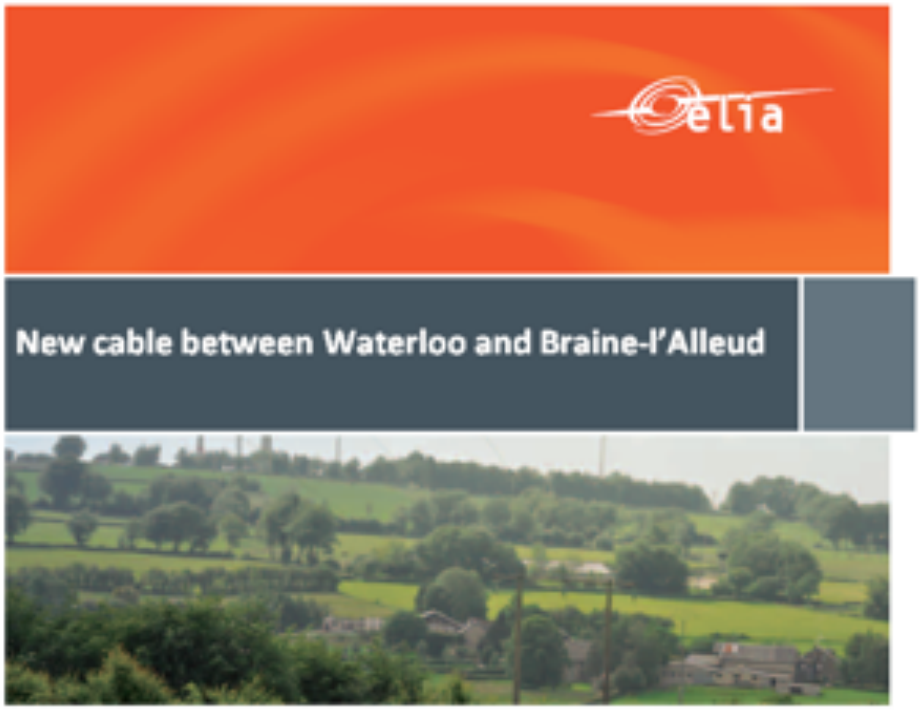
- Contents of the second, more specific section of the document:
  - The Belgian BESTGRID project: a cable link between Waterloo and Braine-l'Alleud.
  - The cable's route from Waterloo (map)
  - What is a cable?
  - Minimising the impact on the local community

- Contents of the third section of the document:
  - Which official bodies are involved and can be contacted by the public? What are their roles?
  - The planned timeline and milestones (differentiating between what is legally stipulated and what is part of the BESTGRID project):
    - Main project phases, milestones
    - General legal procedures during the project's consultation phase
    - What's new with BESTGRID? What is an environmental impact assessment? What does Elia have in mind?
  - Timeline for the voluntary information and participation measures
  - Contact information:
    - Project hotline;
    - e-mail address;
    - link to the website.
  - Information support (newsletter)

This information document will be disseminated in different ways:

- On the website (.pdf version);
- at the public information meeting;
- available from local authorities;
- distributed at key local points around the road(s) affected by the project;
- on request.

This detailed information document will provide answers on the need for the project and its transparency.



Second information event

A second information event will be organised in around month 19 to engage with the public and the stakeholders identified above. This second information event will focus on electromagnetic fields (EMFs).

IEW, most probably working closely together with specialists amongst its members, will chair this event. An expert on EMFs will also be invited, as will Elia and the following persons:

- Local residents and professionals affected by the first draft of the proposed project;
- cultural associations active in the area;
- citizens associations active in the area;
- environmental associations active in the area;
- representatives of the relevant local authorities.

IEW will publicise and follow up on this event by taking the following actions aimed at specific target groups:

- Distributing a flyer (first information event);
- possibly organising additional actions aimed at specific stakeholder groups;
- publishing a detailed information document;
- calling and e-mailing any cultural associations active in the area which have shown an interest;
- calling and e-mailing any citizens associations active in the area which have shown an interest;
- calling and e-mailing any environmental associations active in the area which have shown an interest;
- creating a project website;
- sending out a newsletter.

The mains goals of this second information event will be:

- Environment:
  - To give the relevant stakeholders a basic introduction to the topic of EMFs.

- Transparency:
  - To give the relevant stakeholders a basic introduction to the topic of EMFs;
  - to answer any questions about the issues raised;
  - to hold a question-and-answer session.

A summary of the meeting's proceedings will be posted on the project website.

Third information event

A third information event will be organised in around month 20 to engage with the public and the stakeholders identified above. The topic of this information event will be the results of the EIA. This event will organised by Elia.

Whatever happens, this event will take place before any public surveys required by the respective authorities.

The author of the EIA will be invited along as an environmental expert. IEW, or a specialist among its members, will chair the proceedings. If necessary, IEW and Elia could produce a short summary of the EIA (max. 2 pages long), which could be distributed at this event. The following persons will be invited to attend:

- Residents affected by the first draft of the project;
- cultural associations active in the area;
- citizens associations active in the area;
- environmental associations active in the area;
- the relevant local authorities.

Elia will publicise and follow up on this event by taking the following actions aimed at specific target groups:

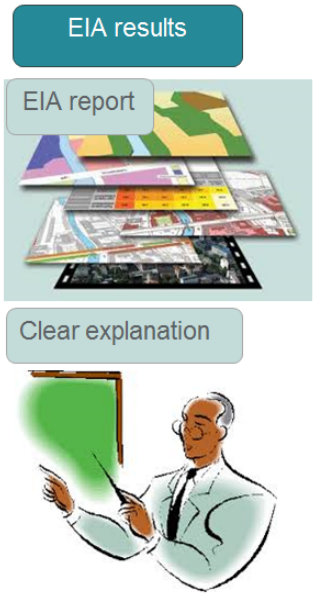
- Distributing flyer (first information event)
- Detailed information document,
- calling and e-mailing any cultural associations active in the area which have shown an interest;
- calling and e-mailing any citizens associations active in the area which have shown an interest;

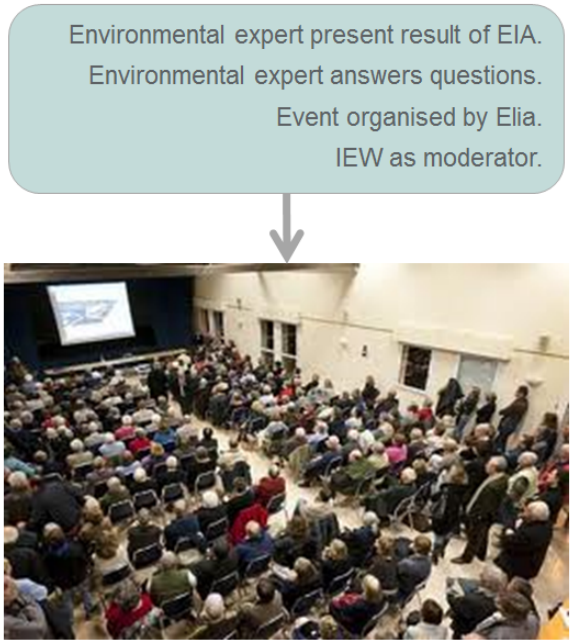
- calling and e-mailing any environmental associations active in the area which have shown an interest;
- creating a project website;
- sending out a newsletter.

The mains goals of this third information event will be:

- Transparency and the environment:
  - To give the relevant stakeholders a basic presentation on EIAs;
  - to reiterate the method used for the EIA;
  - to present the results of the EIA;
  - to answer any questions on the issues raised.
- Engagement and benefits:
  - To discuss any potential alternatives under scrutiny;
  - to discuss any recommendations made in the EIA for limiting or curbing some of the project's impact.

A summary of the meeting will be posted on the project website.





Action plan: Speed up permitting via early stakeholder engagement and early consideration of environmental concerns

Under the BESTGRID project, RGI will subcontract a local independent NGO in Belgium to provide detailed information about local environmental aspects and relevant stakeholders.

The task of this expert NGO will be to:

- Conduct research and offer advice on local conservationist stakeholders and their potential concerns so that these can be input into the stakeholder mapping process;
- conduct research and offer advice on conservation and potential permitting issues;
- travel to and participate in two roundtable meetings.

Mapping of relevant stakeholders in grid planning in the region

Elia and IEW will identify all the relevant stakeholders (focussing on environmental issues) using the following methodology:

- Having IEW and Elia identify all local environmental authorities and the right people to contact;
- conducting interviews and using internet screening, IEW and Elia will identify some potential stakeholders and the right people to contact;
- as a federation, IEW will use its local connections to identify one or more local environmental experts and local environmental NGOs.

The local independent NGO subcontracted by RGI will collaborate in the stakeholder mapping process.

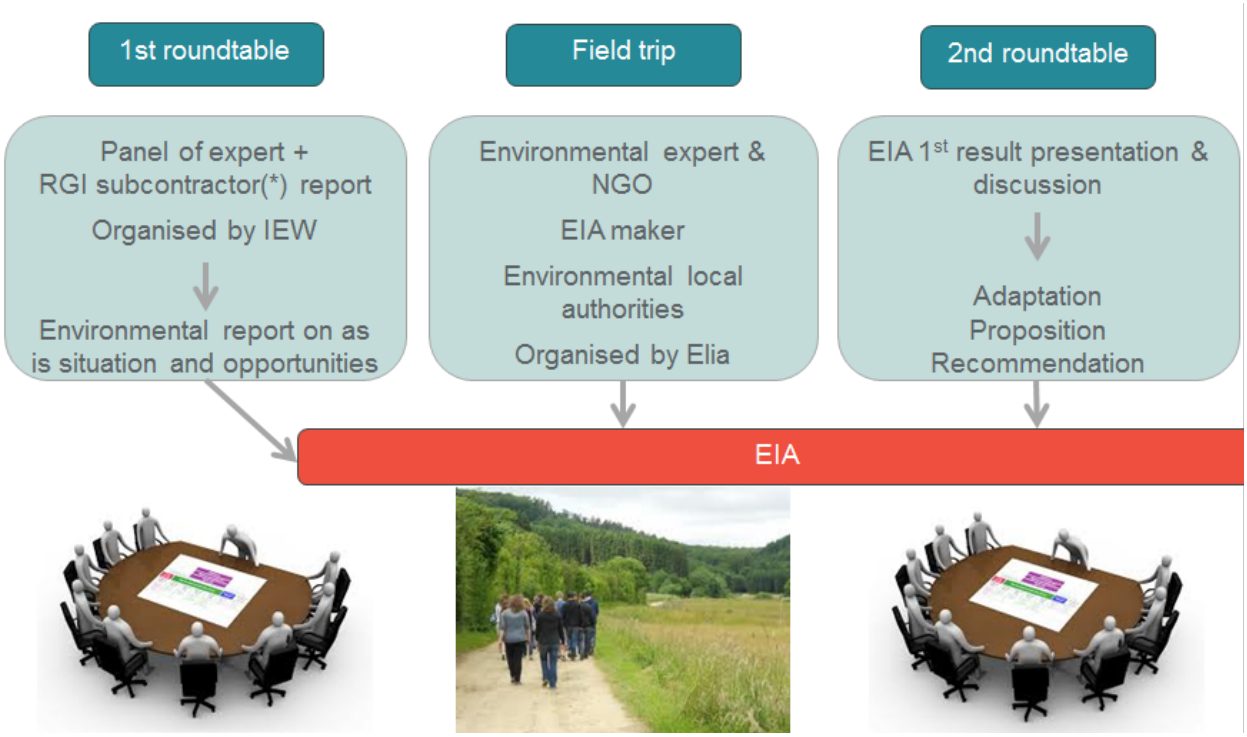
Settings and formats to engage with these stakeholders

To engage with the identified stakeholders, IEW and Elia will use a specific method never previously applied to any Elia project, including:

This specific methodology includes:

- A first roundtable;
- a field trip;
- a second roundtable.

The diagram below summarises these steps, in which the local independent NGO subcontracted by RGI will also participate.



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First roundtable

IEW will organise a first roundtable discussion with the identified stakeholders during month 14. This first roundtable will be factual, objective and open-minded. The venue will be selected to foster communication, participation and an atmosphere of trust. The EIA's author will be invited along as an environmental expert. Elia will also attend the meeting.

The local environmental authorities and all stakeholders identified in the course of the mapping procedure will now be contacted by IEW.

IEW will publicise and follow up on this event by taking the following actions aimed at specific target groups:

- Contact all identified stakeholders by phone and e-mail and invite them to attend;
- meetings with interested stakeholders will be arranged by phone and confirmed by e-mail.

The mains goals of this roundtable discussion will be:

- To promote transparency by:
  - Introducing Elia and presenting its contact person for the project;
  - introducing IEW and presenting its contact person for the project;
  - introducing BESTGRID;
  - introducing the pilot project;
  - introducing the next steps in the procedure and the legal process;
  - listening to any questions, concerns and/or suggestions.
- To explain the need for the project by:
  - Justifying why grid development is required;
- To underscore the benefits of the project by:
  - Stressing that Elia will proactively collaborate to:
    - Optimise mobility during the construction phase;
    - ensure that the area around the construction site is optimally restored afterwards;

  - ensure that the new infrastructure is optimally integrated into the local environment.

- To highlight the consideration of environmental aspects by:
  - Presenting the EIA's author and his methodology.

- To foster engagement by:
  - Inviting every stakeholder to the relevant meeting(s) (workshop with representatives of the relevant regional and local governments; the first information event; the public information meeting; the field trip);
  - improving how environmental concerns are taken into account;
  - doing the groundwork for the EIA and helping to develop its methodology.

IEW will brief the stakeholder group using specific methodology developed by the King Baudouin Foundation, based on a panel of experts.

The goal of this methodology is to:

- Take on board and sum up the various contributions (based on studies, previous experience, etc.) of the panel of experts;

- publish a written report setting out the ideas, knowledge and recommendations regarding opportunities, needs and problems, covering topics like biodiversity, EMF, mobility requirements, landscape aspects, etc.);

- share knowledge with the EIA's author.

The panel of experts will be put together by the local environmental stakeholders identified in the course of the mapping procedure. The resulting panel must be well balanced. Its report could present different points of view on the same topics.

This first roundtable discussion will provide answers on the need for the project, its benefits, the transparency of the approach, the importance of engagement and its impact on the environment.

A summary of the meeting will be posted on the project website.

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Field trip

In around month 15, Elia will organise a field trip to visit the site of the pilot project where the grid expansion is planned. The EIA's author will be invited along as an environmental expert. The proceedings will be moderated by IEW. IEW will invite all the stakeholders identified in the course of the mapping process and who have shown an interest to take part in this field trip.

Elia and/or IEW will take the following actions aimed at specific target groups:

- Contact all identified stakeholders by phone and e-mail and invite them to attend;
- meetings with interested stakeholders will be arranged by phone and confirmed by e-mail.

The mains goals of this field trip will be:

- To foster engagement by:
  - Further helping the public authorities involved in planning and permitting the project to understand the challenges faced on the ground;
  - heightening the attention paid to the project;
  - preventing the project from being a mere reality on paper for the authorities involved;
  - building relationships that may subsequently smooth the entire process.
- To highlight the consideration of environmental aspects by:
  - Showing sensitivity for environmental concerns and/or challenges associated with the project.
- To underscore the benefits of the project by:
  - Evaluating measures that Elia could take to:
    - Optimise and ensure mobility during the construction phase;
    - ensure that the area around the construction is optimally restored afterwards;
    - Make sure that the new infrastructure is optimally integrated into the local environment.

A summary of the meeting will be posted on the project website.

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Second roundtable

Elia will organise a second roundtable discussion with the identified stakeholders in around month 18. The EIA's author will be invited to take part as an environmental expert, whilst IEW will chair the proceedings, encouraging a fruitful, dispassionate debate on all the relevant environmental aspects. With the collaboration of IEW, all stakeholders identified in the course of the mapping process and who have shown interest will be invited to this second roundtable.

Elia and/or IEW will take the following actions aimed at specific target groups:

- All identified stakeholders will be contacted by phone and e-mail and invited to attend;
- meetings with interested stakeholders will be arranged by phone and confirmed by e-mail.

The mains goals of this roundtable discussion will be to:

- Stress the transparency of the process by:
  - Presenting the initial results of the EIA.
- Highlight the consideration of environmental aspects by:
  - Presenting the initial results of the EIA.
- Foster engagement by:
  - Discussing the initial results of the EIA with local environmental experts;
  - tweaking the methodology of the EIA if need be;
  - anticipating and/or preventing challenges in the planning and permitting of the new grid expansion which could otherwise arise at later stages, potentially delaying the permitting procedures.
- Underscore the benefits of the project by:
  - Discussing the actions Elia could take to:
    - Optimise and guarantee mobility during the construction phase;
    - improve the restoration of the area around the construction site;
    - ensure that the infrastructure is more effectively integrated into the local environment.

This second roundtable discussion will seek to provide answers on the project's transparency, the participants and stakeholders' engagement and environmental aspects. A summary of the meeting will be posted on the project website.

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A pragmatic methodology to measure success of the approach chosen

Together with the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) and IEW, Elia develops methodology for measuring the success of actions foreseen to deal with issues of public acceptance and speeding up of permitting procedures. The following text is a part of the "Common protocol for data collection and recording to ensure comparability across pilot projects of the quantified indicators" developed by *Nadejda Komendantova, Joanne Bayer, Anthony Patt* from IIASA.

Stakeholders mapping

Before the start of the stakeholder mapping (January 2004), IIASA will provide informal input by phone and scientific guidance to TSOs and involved local partners on the stakeholders mapping. The stakeholders mapping in WP3 will include interviews with open-ended questions designed by TSOs and local NGOs. IIASA will analyse the reports produce by IEW and Elia with results from stakeholder mapping, interviews and collected publicly available data.

Questions common to all cases

IIASA will assist TSOs with scientifically sound methodologies for the stakeholder mapping and will provide inputs and questions to the in-depth interviews, those aim will be to map stakeholders in the affected communities, their influence and concerns about the project. Interviews should include questions aiming to provide insights on the following topics:

A. Situation in the region:

What is the level of awareness of stakeholders in the region about the planned electricity transmission infrastructure?

Where do they get their information? Who do they trust to provide information?

What is the previous experience in the region with infrastructure projects?

What is the image of the TSO, which plans to realize the project?

B1. Perceptions of the project

How do the stakeholders view the benefits and risks (to themselves, their community and to the greater society) from the project?

What are their most serious concerns about the project?

B2. Perceptions of the project

Do you feel that the TSO explore as far enough alternatives and do you receive enough information about those? In light of the risks and benefits, is the project acceptable? Is this based on their personal interests or their view of the overall benefit to society?

If they don't see the project in the local interest, do they view compensation as a legitimate option? What form should this compensation take? Question relevant for some pilots only.

C. Perceptions of the BESTGRID and recommendations

Do the stakeholders feel that they are listened to; do they feel they can influence the direction of the project?

Are they aware of actions to improve public awareness and acceptability of the project that are being carried out by the BESTGRID partners? What is their opinion of these assessments, etc.?

What suggestions would they have to improve the process?

What are expectations of people regarding planned project?

The questions from the groups A and B1 will be included into interviews to be conducted by the beginning of the project with the goal to map stakeholders and their concerns. As some of the stakeholders will not be aware of the project, we will look after "a priori" point of view.

The questions from the group B2 and C will be included into a survey or questionnaire, to be distributed by the end of the BESTGRID project.

Questions specific to each pilot project:

Specific actions, tailored to the situation in each concrete pilot project, are necessary to collect empirical evidence under each concrete case and to catch all differences, which separate pilot projects might have. These actions also will allow identifying which specific actions were more successful in terms of impact on public awareness and acceptance in comparison to other actions undertaken by all four pilot projects.

This part of data collection protocol is developed specially for each pilot case.

This is an on-going work and will require constant communication between IIASA and involved partners, mainly through teleconferences, to identify if there are any difficulties of problems with implementation of the identified actions.

IEW and Elia will provide to IIASA reports summarising workshop, roundtable 1, roundtable 2, field trip, 1st Info event, 2nd Info event, 3rd Info event. These reports will content:

- detailed description of the action, how it was organized, which resources (human, time and financial) were necessary to organize this action, if there were any problems in implementation of the action, when the action was implemented, how the communication process about the action was organized.
- a resume of the feedback received from stakeholders.

Stakeholders survey at the end of the project

The aim of this survey is to collect empirical evidence about public perceptions and acceptance in two areas:

- Process to inform public and to raise awareness about the project and different actions foreseen within this process such as stakeholders workshops, information campaigns through different media channels, kinds of information materials, content of information documents, organization of the process itself, its transparency and engagement with stakeholders.
- Outcomes of the process, for example, if people perceive implemented measures and their outcome as fair, do they feel that they had voice in the project, were their concerns addressed, which further recommendations they might to have. Ultimately, to what extent do they accept the project, and for what reasons.

Elia will organize logistics of data collection by using questionnaires. IIASA will provide scientific guidance and input as well as developed tools for data collection under all options.

Elia will distribute questionnaires during the last information event. The questionnaire (max 10 questions) will be elaborate by IIASA and discussed with TSOs and local NGOs. The questionnaire will be available on the website.

Interviews, with the same keys stakeholders from the first step will be run. Elia and IEW will conduct interviews. IIASA will provide design for interviews, scientific guidance and analysis of results. These interviews will be realized by the end of the project.

Information document

See the description above

Flyer

Roughly 2 weeks before the public information meeting, Elia will organise the distribution of a flyer to all private residents and local professionals in the streets directly affected by the proposed project. This flyer will take the form of an A5 document and it will be delivered to the mailboxes of all local residents along the planned route of the cable.

It will be distributed to residents to inform them about the project and invite them to the various information events. The distribution process will include informal exchanges with local shopkeepers, bakers, butchers, schools and such like, to gauge their initial reactions to the project.

The contents of the flyer will include:

- A brief description of the cable project and a road map;
- a timeline of the project and of the different events planned;
- contact details for communication purposes (e-mail address, phone number, website, etc.).

The flyer will end by inviting the reader to the public information meeting and all the other planned events.

A BESTGRID project page on Elia's website

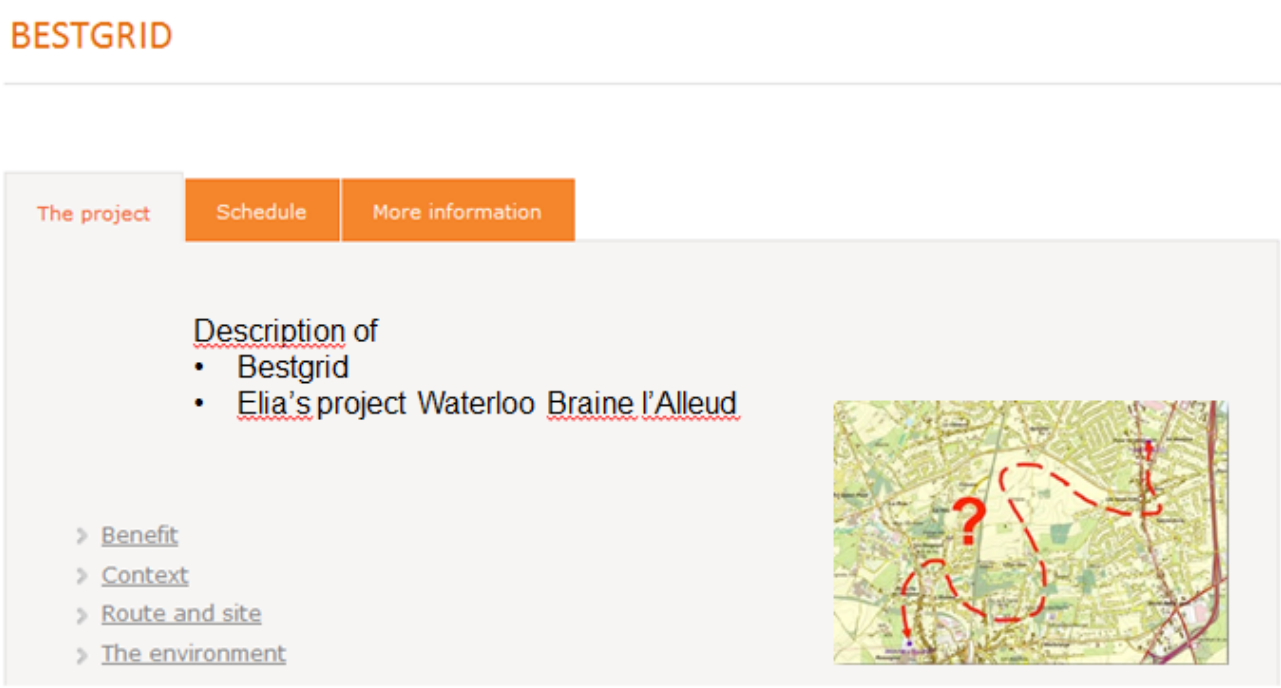
Elia's website currently describes its biggest projects on a specific web page (see below).

Elia doesn't have separate web pages devoted to projects on the scale of the proposed Waterloo-Braine-l'Alleud cable.

However, Elia is working with BESTGRID to develop a BESTGRID web page.

The first tab will describe BESTGRID and Elia's Waterloo-Braine l'Alleud cable project. Here we will explain why Elia chose this project for BESTGRID; set out our aims (to improve public acceptance and speed up permitting by committing to early stakeholder engagement and the timely consideration of environmental concerns); specify the benefits; and provide a detailed roadmap accompanying the project, explaining what made Elia propose the chosen route for the cable.

We will also provide information on environmental aspects along the Waterloo-Braine-l'Alleud cable route, specify which local environmental NGOs we are collaborating with, and state whether or not there are any listed bird and plant species in the vicinity of the route.



Clicking on the second tab will display a timeline of all the activities planned for the project, i.e. the first information event, the public information meeting, the first roundtable, the environmental impact assessment, the second roundtable, the second information event and the third information event.

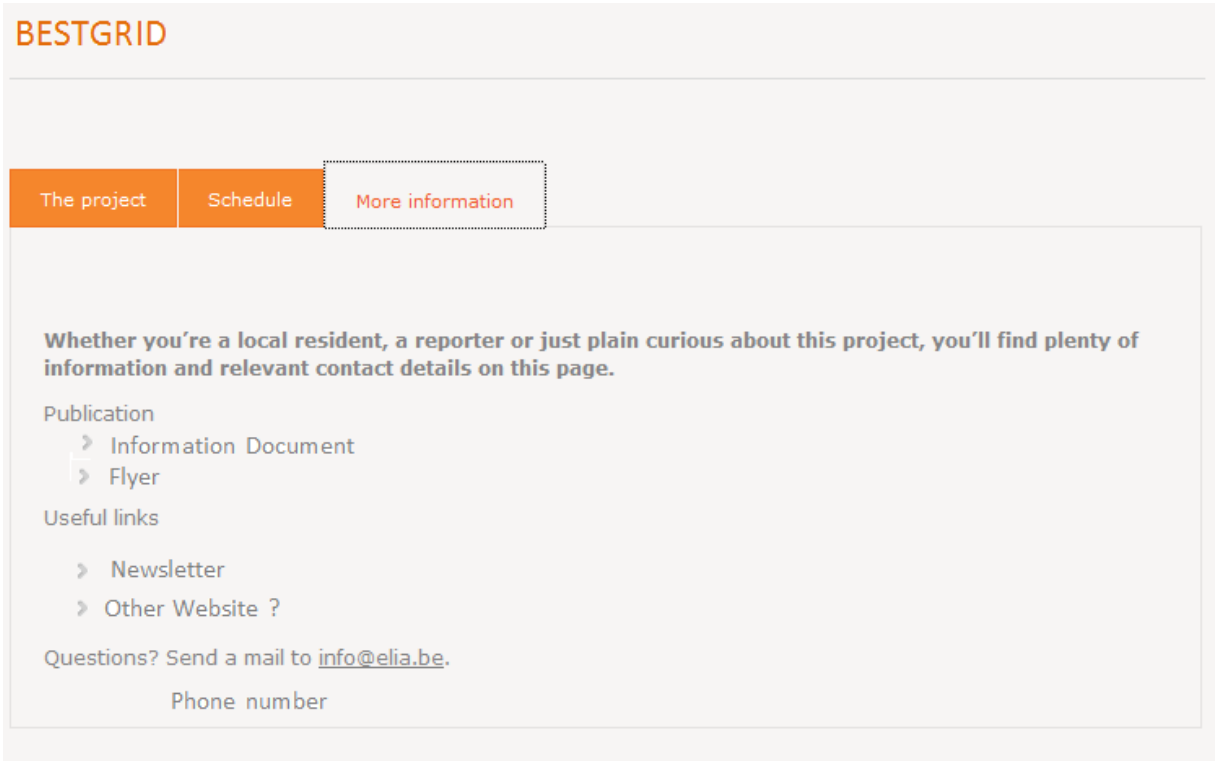
BESTGRID

The project | Schedule | More information

- Date xx - 1ste information event
- Date xx - Public Information Meeting
- Date xx - 1st roundtable
- Date xx - Environmental Impact Assessment
- Date xx - 2nd roundtable
- Date xx - 2d information event
- Date xx - 3d information event

Clicking on the third, 'More information' tab will display a downloadable version of the flyer and the information document, provide links to relevant websites (including the BESTGRID website), and offer visitors an opportunity to subscribe to the newsletter.

Anyone wishing to ask questions will be able to contact Elia by e-mail or phone (calling a project hotline).



E-mail address & phone number

In addition to all the planned information events, Elia will place these additional channels of communication at the stakeholders' disposal:

- A dedicated project hotline for any questions or comments;
- the mail address info@elia.be will be printed on all information documents and mentioned to the participants at all events.

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Elia News newsletter

Elia News is the monthly newsletter aimed primarily at our customers and all other stakeholders, as well as at anyone wishing to find out more about Elia and its activities.

In this newsletter we will publish articles designed to provide information about BESTGRID and the Waterloo-Braine l'Alleud cable project, including the following aspects:

- Why BESTGRID was chosen
- Energy 2020
- How will the handling of this project differ from similar past projects?
- What are the project's milestones?
- What has already happened and what are the next steps?
- What was said and what information was presented at the various events?

Elia currently only publishes French and Dutch versions of the Elia News newsletter, not an English version.

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Cliquez ici pour voir la version web

Elia News 8 | Août 2013

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- Le mois de juillet a battu tous les **records** en matière de **production photovoltaïque**
- **Flexibilité du parc de production** : une nécessité face au développement du renouvelable
- La **consommation** électrique en Belgique **recule** de 1%
- **La Cour** constitutionnelle **annule certaines dispositions** des lois "gaz" et "électricité"
- Les défis que représente l'**essor du renouvelable** pour la gestion de l'équilibre du réseau
- Le **Solar Team parcourera 300 kilomètres** lors du World Solar Challenge 2013
- Données de **consommation et de production** juillet 2013
- **Interconnexions** juillet 2013
- **Données Belpex** juillet 2013
- **Services système** juillet 2013
- Total **wind forecast**
- Total **solar forecast**

Le **groupe Elia poursuit sa lancée** grâce à de bons résultats en Allemagne

Malgré un recul toujours plus marqué de l'OLO belge, le groupe Elia enregistre de bons résultats semestriels. Le bénéfice net consolidé augmente ainsi de 6,2% grâce aux excellents résultats de

elia group
Powering a world in progress

Corporate magazine

Elia Echo is a bi-monthly company magazine produced for all Elia staff to present key information and interesting news clearly and make it accessible to all.

In it, we will inform readers about:

- BESTGRID – what it is and why it was chosen
- Which TSOs are involved in BESTGRID
- Why is Elia involved in BESTGRID?
- What does Elia expect to get out of its involvement in BESTGRID?
- Which project has Elia chosen?
- What is the rationale behind the Waterloo-Braine l'Alleud project?
- What is new about the project's management and communication thanks to BESTGRID?

BEST GRID
testing better practices

What is new about BESTGRID for Elia?

BESTGRID entails a new approach compared to Elia's current methodology.

The following table lists the legal requirements, improvements and innovations and explains why each aspect was categorised in the manner indicated.

Action plan: To improve public acceptance				
Event	Legal requirement	Improvement	Innovation	Why?
Detailed stakeholder mapping		X		Becoming an official step in the procedure and following a pre-defined method.
Interviews			X	Never done before
Workshop with representatives		X		Presence of a moderator to chair the proceedings
First information event (part 1)			X	Never done before
Public information meeting	X			/
First information event (part 2)			X	Never done before
EIA	X			/
Detailed information document		X		Never produced before for a project of this scale

Second information event			X	Never done before on a voluntary basis
Third information event			X	Never done before on a voluntary basis
Collaboration with NGOs			X	Never done before

Action plan: To speed up the permitting process through early stakeholder engagement and the timely consideration of environmental concerns				
Event	Legal requirement	Improvement	Innovation	Why?
Detailed stakeholder mapping		X		Becoming an official step in the procedure and following a pre-defined methodology.
Interviews			X	Never done before
First roundtable			X	Never done before
Field trip			X	Never done before for a project of this scale or with environmental stakeholders
Second roundtable			X	Never done before
Collaboration with NGOs			X	Never done before

Conclusion

This document is the deliverable "D3.1: Practical action plans to improve *public acceptance* and to improve *permitting procedures* by early stakeholder engagement (tasks 3.1.1, 3.2.1; M7)" part of the Work Package 3 – Elia – in the BESTGRID project.

With nine partners, comprising European NGOs and TSOs and one research institute, the EU-funded BESTGRID project sets out to modernise and expand the current European electricity grid to integrate a larger share of electricity derived from renewable sources.

Elia is participating in BESTGRID because a continuing lack of public acceptance makes it difficult to obtain permits to build new grids. Yet there is a growing need for grid development to maintain energy security and connect new sources of power generation.

TSOs and NGOs plan to work together to improve local public acceptance of grid development measures, speed up permitting procedures and by proactively addressing or even exceeding environmental protection standards. The partners will learn how to implement better grid development practices.

Elia wrote this document in collaboration with Inter-Environnement Wallonie (IEW) to document its expectations of involvement with BESTGRID.