

D8.4 Minutes of meeting with key stakeholders

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Introduction

This document gives an overview on Germanwatch's activities in communicating ideas and experiences from BESTGRID with a broad range of stakeholders, such as policy-makers, stakeholders with planning responsibility (TSOs and staff of planning authorities) and other relevant stakeholders (NGOs, citizens' actions groups and scientists).

Germanwatch used its expertise in energy and climate policy as well as its background and experience with stakeholder-related projects and science to address important stakeholders from various groups. At the beginning of the project, several assumptions and approaches to public engagement were discussed in multi-stakeholder groups. The results of these discussions were discussed within the BESTGRID consortium and were used as an input to the first part of the BESTGRID handbook on participation and transparency in power grid planning, which was published in April 2015. During the following months, several meetings were held. Germanwatch together with RGI and several BESTGRID partners met various policy-makers, representatives of authorities and non-BESTGRID TSOs and discussed the outcome of the projects and future possibilities how to use the experience for further European projects of common interest (PCI) or other future transmission grid projects.

Depending on the purpose and the interest of the invitees or due to time restrictions, each meeting described in this document had a different character, i.e.

- expert workshops with a broad range of stakeholders, politicians and scientists related to transmission grid planning in Berlin, Germany,
- an expert workshops with a variety of stakeholders and policy-makers involved in Slovenia, 20 - 40 people,
- meetings with key decision-makers / stakeholders in transmission grid planning in Brussels (EU) ENTSO-E, EU-COM and Bonn (D): Bundesnetzagentur and
- meetings with TSOs in European member states where projects of common interest (PCI) are going to be realised (APG, Austria; RTE, France).

Several meetings took place in European countries where PCIs shall be implemented. The following countries were chosen:

- **Slovenia**, as an Eastern European country with a very different cultural and political background,
- **Germany**, because of the large number of PCIs in Germany. Another reason is its importance for the European power grid development due to its location in the centre of Western Europe and due to its decision on the "Energiewende" which has led to a high share of fluctuating renewable power generation (27 % in 2014) and, at the same time, various hot spots of local opposition to transmission power projects.
- **Austria** as a neighbouring country to the BESTGRID TSO 50Hertz Transmission's transmission grid. The Austrian transmission grid operator has also a long history of public controversy about new projects and is welcoming an intensified exchange on future common activities.
- **France**, as the French transmission grid operator has also faced strong public resistance to transmission grid projects (especially regarding the PCI interconnector between France and Spain through the Pyrenees) and is open to new good-practice approaches in power grid planning.

1. Berlin, Germany, 8 May 2014

"Civil participation during the planning process of the electricity grid expansion"

Expert workshop organised by Germanwatch and the "Institut für ZukunftsEnergiesysteme" (IZES, Institute for Future Energy Systems)

Participants: 22 people from different organisations, Federal Ministry for Economy and Energy, authorities, NGOs and science

Issues of discussion and outlook

The planned expansion of the electricity grid confronts society with numerous challenges and raises the question of feasible civil participation. In previous workshops, psychologists from the German "Institut für ZukunftsEnergiesysteme" (IZES, Institute for future energy systems) and Germanwatch identified quality criteria of good participation, resulting in the acknowledgement of the particular importance of the early stage of the planning before the decision on the corridor finding has been taken. To further expand this discussion, a third expert-workshop "Civil participation during the planning of electricity grid expansion" was held in Berlin on the 8th of May, 2014. In particular, the workshop aimed to discuss the research results, suggest recommendations for action and substantiate methods and approaches in regards to criteria of good participation. The workshop was structured into three parts, including the presentation of the Germanwatch's position paper on participation and transparency in the context of electricity lines and the proposed 5-step-approach for participation.

The workshops' participants generally agreed that the presented approach was helpful and should be included into the handbook on participation and transparency under development by Germanwatch. They estimate fairness of the process by civil society and stake holders being essential for realizing political goals regarding grid expansion. However, the complexity of the planning procedure remains a major obstacle for a better local understanding about the background of new power line projects. Due to the complexity of the topic, there is a significant knowledge asymmetry. This makes it challenging to translate information for non-professionals and empower them to get involved in the debate. Furthermore, it proves difficult to close a knowledge gap between experts and stakeholders on the national level and local stakeholders. To be perceived as trustworthy, information transfer at the local level should be conveyed to citizens through local representatives, and events that are suitable for specific target groups.

It was proposed that the Germanwatch guidelines on participation and transparency under development for the BESTGRID project especially address local stakeholders, thus empowering them in participating in the planning procedure at "the right" planning level with the highest options to influence.

It was also argued, that one must consider the question of the grid expansion's necessity in the context of the political and technical reasons besides the assessment of local needs. Sufficient communication of information by defining technical terms and energy policies, as well as raising the question of centralized versus decentralized grid systems, is fundamental to the entire process.



Participants also recommended that independent moderators support dialogue events, allowing suggestions from civil society to be taken seriously. For civil society to establish trust towards the process, it is required that decision-makers commit to their decisions and therefore, are perceived as responsible.

Results from the workshop were discussed during the following BESTGRID internal workshop in May 2014 and several suggestions have been included in the Germanwatch BESTGRID handbook on participation and transparency published in April 2015.

2. Ljubljana, Slovenia, 22 May 2015

Power grid planning and nature conservation

Expert workshop organised by DOBBS, the Slovenian bird protection organisation, including a presentation by Germanwatch on public participation

Participants: 40 people from different organisations, ministries, authorities, NGO

In the BESTGRID project, BirdLife Europe's partners organised a series of roundtables on grid development and nature, bringing together grid operators, NGOs and government officials responsible for energy and the environment. The round table explored practices that should help planning and delivery of power lines, in particular EU priority projects, while protecting nature and improving public support.

Slovenia is heavily forested, and has very rich biodiversity including bears and eagle owls. Because of the European importance of its wildlife, it has many Natura 2000 sites. This rich natural heritage is a great asset to be proud of, but it undoubtedly adds to the challenges of environmentally sensitive grid development. These challenges were explained by representatives of the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning and by the national transmission system operator (TSO), ELES, which hosted the roundtable. NGOs and independent wildlife experts provided detailed advice on bird protection issues, and related these to specific projects in Slovenia. The BESTGRID partner Germanwatch contributed experience with early cooperation between TSOs, NGOs and local stakeholders to the group.

The roundtable prompted all parties to consider others' perspectives and priorities, and created a strong basis for further dialogue and cooperation.

3. Brussels, Belgium, 18 June 2015

Workshop "What more can NGOs do to make grid development work for climate and nature?"

Participants: 10 people from different European environment NGOs organised by Birdlife Europe, including a presentation by Germanwatch

Issues of discussion

As part of a NGO grid workshop held in Brussels on 18 June and hosted by Birdlife Europe, Germanwatch presented and discussed its newly released handbook on transparency and public

participation in power grid planning. The presentation was well-perceived and triggered a fruitful discussion on "who should when and how be involved" in the planning process. Of particular interest was the draft legal opinion accompanying the handbook, which discusses legal obstacles at the EU and national level for public participation. Questions were also raised during the session on the two-level planning procedure and the experiences made during site visits as part of the various best-practice projects.

The workshop participants highlighted the importance of national peculiarities for enhancing engagement of local stakeholders. This is particularly evident with regard to the Stevin project, according to one participant who gave a brief input on the role of the public in promoting underground cabling in Belgium. The participants welcomed the initiative to compile findings gathered from various European best-practice projects in one handbook and discussed options for further outreach activities.

4. Berlin, Germany, 1 July 2015

How to proceed when reasons for rejection of power lines are not considered during the planning process?

Expert workshop organised by Germanwatch and the "Institut für ZukunftsEnergiesysteme" (IZES, Institute for Future Energy Systems)

Participants: 20 people from different organisations, ministries, authorities, NGO (full documentation in German see Annex I)

Issues of discussion

When planning new power lines, protests from local residents often conflict with the interests of energy policy goals of decision makers. To think about this huge challenge, an expert discussion took place in Berlin on July 1st 2015, where a heterogeneous group of planners, network operators, representatives from the ministry of energy, associations and a representative of a civil initiative gathered to discuss the "non-process-relevant" reasons for protest, their interactions and how to better handle these protest reasons.

During a brainstorming session at the beginning of the workshop, the following reasons for rejection were mentioned most frequently: decrease in real estate value, health concerns, fear of electricity, fear of change, size and visibility, threat and dominance of technology in the surrounding, fairness, general rejection of energy policy, lack of opportunities to participate in the decision-making on the technology (overhead line / underground cable), home identity and impact on living quality. For further analysis of handling the different reasons for rejection, they were divided into those with relevance to the planning level dealing with the needs assessment and into those important during the following planning level of corridor and route planning.

The question of necessity usually is decided at an early stage of the planning process. This is often difficult, as citizens seldom are aware that they might be affected by the decision in future planning. More and more, they are given the opportunity to participate at this early stage, i.e. in Germany, but

nevertheless, the level of influence in the initial phase remains comparatively low for stakeholders without deep expertise in scenario modelling, energy markets and energy policy.

New ways need to be developed to take local stakeholders interests in questioning and discussing the need for new power lines into consideration during the planning process and beyond, for instance, by means of political education. On the one hand, local stakeholders' views must be integrated into the dialogue during the assessment of necessity, since the residents are ultimately the ones affected. Although on the other hand, participation at the early stage of scenario making and needs assessment is difficult to implement, because at this stage of planning, spatial impacts are not defined yet.

Concerns related to an impairment of the landscape, the fear of a loss in value and a vague fear of change and technical implementation often affect the corridor and routing planning phase. They often result in the request for underground cable technology which is mostly restricted by law or regulatory framework for transmission lines due to several economic and technical reasons. On the other hand, the size and visibility of pylons and overhead lines are crucial factors for the impairment of living quality. Those concerns need to be taken seriously. National regulations on distance to residential areas could be a way to strengthen residents' concerns about the place they feel at home or attached to. Also, ways should be developed on assessments of landscapes and places of special local interests. However, such regulations are not specified nationally and this is still a field of research.

The aspect of fairness plays a decisive role in the context of corridor- and route planning. To counteract the citizens' apprehension, trust must be restored by listening to concerns and taking suggestions seriously. Another point of discussion was the discrepancy between the needs of man and the protection of nature, which may sometimes seriously challenge the planning work by grid operators. Grid operator representatives and planners expressed their view that sometimes they feel that the interests of local residents are not considered as important as nature conservation issues within the German national legislative framework.

A complete objectification of the topic is barely possible, as issues related to the living environment and attachments to familiar surroundings depend on subjective perception. Despite the numerous efforts to integrate subjective evaluation, a fast planning process is in favour of climate political goals. The complex process and discussions, may take some time which can and should be used to work out locally acceptable planning options.

Recommendations for politics concerning issues like home identity, landscape impairment, fear of change call for a clear reference of the landscapes transformation to the energy transition and explaining its background. Furthermore, local residents should be included early in the process of landscape evaluation. Suggestions for the dialogue process regarding pylon design and aesthetics involve visualisation as a dialogue tool to improve the evaluation of the impacts for those affected. Other suggestions include technical alternatives, civil society initiatives, trust-building, local media and a better link between informal and formal results.



5. Bonn, Germany, 20 August 2015

Lessons learnt from the BESTGRID projects pilot SuedLink and Bertikow-Pasewalk on public participation

Exchange between German BESTGRID NGOs (Germanwatch, DUH and NABU) and TSOs (TenneT and 50Hertz) with planning authority Bundesnetzagentur (BNetzA), 20 August 2015, 1 - 3 pm

organised by Germanwatch

Participants: 7 members of the German BESTGRID team (3 TSO members, 3 NGO members, RGI representative) and 7 employees of the Federal State planning authority Bundesnetzagentur: the head and an employee of the department for participation, the head and an employee of the department for environment, the head of the Bertikow-Pasewalk planning department and staff of the Suedlink permitting department

Background

During the BESTGRID project, the German TSOs TenneT and 50Hertz have closely cooperated with several German NGOs on the German BESTGRID pilot projects Suedlink and Bertikow-Pasewalk. Both German BESTGRID pilot projects are following a new legislation, the German NABEG and BBPlG laws, providing extended possibilities for public participation. Planning and permitting authority for both projects is the Bundesnetzagentur which is obliged by NABEG law to provide a considerable scope of public participation. At the same time, the BNetzA employees are very open to an extended approach to public participation in power grid planning. Accordingly, Germanwatch's request for an exchange on the BESTGRID findings regarding both German pilot projects attracted a large interest within several departments of the BNetzA and led to a lively debate, especially on how to proceed with the planning procedure for the Suedlink project.

The meeting took place one year after the scoping conference for the Bertikow-Pasewalk project and way before the start of the formal corridor planning procedure for the SuedLink project which is currently delayed due to a recent policy decision in Germany on 1 July 2015. This agreement between the German chancellor, vice-chancellor and the prime minister of the federal state of Bavaria foresees to determine the underground cable technology as the new standard technology for planned DC lines in Germany in the course of an upcoming amendment of the German legislation for the planning of extra high voltage lines.

Issues of discussion and outlook

After a short overview on the BESTGRID consortium and its pilot projects, the Germanwatch team member presented the idea and the most important recommendations to local stakeholders from the Germanwatch handbook on participation and transparency. The NABU policy officer added an overview on the main findings of two round tables on nature conservation issues regarding the SuedLink project, led by the nature conservation organisation NABU Lower Saxony.

The following debate mainly focused on these points of discussion:

- **Alternative corridor options for the SuedLink project:** A controversial point of debate was how many routing alternatives should have been presented to the public and the stakeholders that

were invited during the two series of TenneT info markets. The TenneT info markets has taken place before the scoping conference which opens the first step of the formal planning procedure (Bundesfachplanung). Preparing the scoping conference, the planning TSOs develops several possible corridors for the project including a priority corridor. At the scoping conference, which will be organised by the planning authority BNetzA, statutory stakeholders and the public can propose their views on the plans. They also can propose alternative corridor sections and relevant information to the planning. The BNetzA gathers all this information and uses it to determine the area to be further examined and later on to take their decision for the final corridor.

BNetzA staff had taken part in the series of 30 info markets organised by TenneT in 2014. From their perspective, the conception of the info markets was good but should have been spread to all possible corridor options. A BNetzA employee argued that at this stage of the planning, it was too early to ask local stakeholders for their proposals on how to improve a single corridor option prioritised by the grid operator. Instead, it should have been explained more clearly that the final decision on the large-scale corridor finding had not been taken yet. TenneT and Germanwatch representatives pointed out that, on the other hand, there had been good reasons to run dialogue events along just one, prioritised corridor option. With an infrastructure project as large as the SuedLink, it would have been impossible to provide resources for dialogue events along each of the four possible large-scale corridor options. Otherwise, once you present a corridor option to a potentially affected stakeholder, the debate will never be on an abstract planning level. BNetzA, TSOs and NGOs agreed that further efforts need to be taken to develop and to explain the methodology for the selection of several corridor options and - at a later stage of the procedure - for the final decision for a corridor. This learning shall be used for the conception of future dialogue events after the upcoming revision of the planning legislation for the SuedLink project.

- **SuedLink / planned amendment of German planning legislation for DC projects:** The expected determination of the underground technology as the default technology for the Suedlink planning will be challenging for those responsible for the planning. The German policy decision from 1. July 2015, which will presumably lead to a changed legislation in autumn 2015, shows clearly that local and federal politicians may strongly influence nationally binding decision-making by the National Parliament and the Federal Council. Different opinions and arguments were discussed: Further underground cabling may provide a real chance to increase local acceptance, while on the other hand, increased costs, and low experience with the comparatively new underground technology for 500kV DC lines may also impose new risks to the planning. The NABU member explained that from an environmental point of view, the underground cable technology has many advantages but was not always the best technology, depending on the specific project characteristics and location. The participants of the meeting agreed it was of highest importance to develop clear criteria for the use of underground cable and overhead line technology under the new conditions.
- **Dialogue formats used during the Bertikow-Pasewalk project:** BNetzA staff said, the timing for the 50Hertz mobile info tour in October 2014, shortly after the scoping conference in September 2014, had been very good for a dialogue on possible corridor options. The meeting participants agreed that the experiences from the info tour show that direct dialogue with local residents is of great value. 50Hertz staff also learned that grid operators should not concentrate only on one issue such as EMF, but also react to local people's special concerns. Both the TSO and the cooperating NGOs think that cooperating in round tables before and after the scoping conference in the Bertikow-Pasewalk project help improve the planning, which was also acknowledged by the head of the planning authority.



- **Future cooperation:** BNetzA staff, especially from the authority's department for participation, expressed their high interest in the BESTGRID approach and experience of early cooperation between TSOs and NGOs planning and discussed future options and perspectives to continue the presented good-practice-approach.

6. Brussels, Belgium, 16 September 2015, lunchtime

What can decision-makers do to support power grid development for a low-carbon energy system?

Meeting with EU policy makers and ENTSO-E organised by ENTSO-E and Germanwatch

Participants: Representatives of Birdlife Europe, Germanwatch (BESTGRID NGOs) and RGI (BESTGRID coordinator), National Grid, 50Hertz, Elia, TenneT (BestGrid TSOs), REE, APG, RTE; Swissgrid (TSOs), representatives of DG Energy, EC, and staff of MEPs, ENTSO-E

Presentation DG Energy, EC: The meeting started with a presentation by DG energy on the legislative background, the current status and future perspectives of public participation in European transmission grid planning. A report recently published by ACER shows that about half of the PCI projects are delayed, important obstacles are financing, local acceptance and permit granting (see ACER report on

http://www.acer.europa.eu/official_documents/acts_of_the_agency/publication/consolidated%20report%20on%20the%20progress%20of%20electricity%20and%20gas%20projects%20of%20common%20interest.pdf). Several activities have been started in order to increase transparency in power grid planning: A transparency platform on the internet provides an overview on the PCI projects via a PCI map viewer (http://ec.europa.eu/energy/infrastructure/transparency_platform/map-viewer/).

Another activity of the EC aiming on transparency and participation in power grid planning is the "Grid Infrastructure Communication Toolkit"

(<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/multisite/gridcommunicationtoolkit/en>) which gives an overview on stakeholders and stakeholders' interests and various roles in power grid planning. Further efforts should be taken to make the platform to be found easily and to distribute the Grid Toolkit to interested stakeholders in European member states.

Issues of discussion:

- The BESTGRID project partners have made experience with the so-called "paradoxon of participation" which describes the fact that stakeholders often start being interested in the justification for a special transmission grid project during the detailed planning phase when the decision on the need already has been taken. Putting the focus on speeding up permitting sometimes misjudges that local stakeholders have a high interest in discussing the need at a later stage of the planning.
- Public acceptance means more than support for a specific project and should be based on a bigger or brighter vision of a European low-carbon energy system.
- Some member states, i.e. Germany, are planning an enhanced use of the underground cable technology in the extra high voltage grid. It was discussed whether or how this may contribute to local acceptance for specific projects and for power grid planning in general.



- The European Commission's communications toolkit should be used as a large information hub on good practice regarding participatory approaches and good cooperation with environmental and other stakeholders in transmission grid planning.

Presentations Germanwatch / Birdlife:

The handbook "Public Participation and Transparency in Power Grid Planning" from Germanwatch invites local stakeholders to contribute their experience and expertise in support of the energy transition and the much needed power grid transformation. It also provides TSOs with examples of good practice in formal and informal stakeholder engagement and encourages the exchange of experience between them. The second part of the handbook "Protecting Nature in Power Grid planning" from Birdlife Europe shows how to ensure transmission grid development contributes to protecting wildlife and nature, and to sustainable development of our energy systems. It demonstrates how grid development and nature protection interests can work together to achieve common goals for society.

Important findings and issues for discussions

- The Stevin project experience (Belgium) and the close cooperation between the transmission system operator (TSO) and an environmental organisation has revealed that project planners often assume that relevant stakeholders know the key figures and basic information on their project while in reality, they do not know the project or do not know it very well. Hence, further efforts need to be taken reach relevant stakeholders.
- The Suedlink project experience was influenced by the political controversy about the need of new DC transmission lines after the State government in Bavaria had called for a moratorium in transmission grid planning in 2014. This had large impacts on the SuedLink planning and public participation strategy and shows clearly that the support of politicians for power grid planning is crucial for a successful stakeholder engagement in power grid planning.
- Early cooperation between Birdlife and TSOs saved some time during the planning for Bertikow-Pasewalk project since the TSO was provided with data of higher quality early in the planning procedure.

TSO comments and contributions (National Grid, 50Hertz and APG)

National Grid (NG) is doing several activities of early and intense public consultations, i.e. in the MidWales project. It also offers specific stakeholder forums which are not chaired but only attended by NG which have proven very beneficial. Some local info events are chaired by local MPs which can be very helpful. Another interesting project is a recent decision by the regulator Ofgem to provide a special amount for undergrounding existing overhead lines which are not chosen by National Grid but by a stakeholder group steering the selection procedure. Furthermore, NG has started to use the newly designed T-pylon which is being preferred by several communities compared to the traditional pylon.

50Hertz also stressed the importance of clearly explaining the need for power grid extension in general as well as for specific projects. The assumptions and the underlying methodology need to be explained clearly and transparently. Politicians need to be addressed not only at an early stage of the planning, but continuously throughout the different stages of the planning. Not only politicians, but also a wider group of local stakeholders needs to be involved in the discussion about the assumptions for National and European power grid planning. There is a good window of opportunity for the

participation of local stakeholders at the beginning of the corridor finding and routing procedure. Stakeholder engagement at this stage of the planning can be of great use for everyone involved. Sometimes, the cooperation between the planning authority and the power grid planner needs to be improved to make sure, that the local interests and the consideration of high environmental standards lead to the best possible routing.

APG stated that it is hard to explain why limit values and precautionary values for electromagnetic fields in European member states differ. This sometimes leads to mistrust and uncertainties for stakeholders concerned. A harmonisation of European limit values could be an option. Furthermore, a bunch of measures could be helpful for a successful stakeholder communication in power grid projects, i.e. an improved cooperation between TSOs and distributions system operators (DSOs), an improvement of the regulatory framework by accepting the costs for communications by the regulator or a support for PCIs during dialogue events on the ground, i.e. by visits of high-level EU politicians at local events. Stakeholder engagement needed to be based on respect for the mutual knowledge, competences and the responsibilities of the respective stakeholders, which is a fundamental prerequisite for a good outcome of public participation. A lot of effort should be taken to write "easy-and-interesting-to-read" summaries on every project and to find the courage to go beyond pure technical reports and assessments.

Further issue / future task:

- Early cooperation between TSOs and NGOs in specific power grid projects helps improve the planning, but needs to be based on a reliable and independent funding. Hence, further options for financing a continuous NGO involvement in good practice projects early on is to be developed urgently.

7. Brussels, afternoon, 16 Sep 2015, APG, Austrian TSO

Public participation and transparent power grid planning: Good practice experience

Informal meeting, organised by Germanwatch

Participants: 2 members of the BESTGRID team (Germanwatch, 50Hertz) and a representative of APG, the Austrian transmission system operator

After the meeting at the ENTSO-E premises on the recommendations on transparent and participatory transmission grid planning given in the BESTGRID handbooks on the same day, 50Hertz and Germanwatch took the opportunity to intensify the dialogue with APG. The transmission system operator APG operates the bordering transmission grid in the South of the 50Hertz transmission zone.

Issues of discussion

Trendsetter coalition for transparent and participatory power grid planning: Everyone agreed that an early engagement strategy aiming at a broader public right before the formal planning procedure is a good way for power grid planning in European member states. Several possibilities on common action were discussed, such as building a "trendsetter coalition" or supporting existing organisations or parts of organisations already working in this field.

Communicating the need for new power lines: There is a big difference between Austria and Germany when it comes to answering the question why power grid extension is going to be needed. In

Germany, a large majority of the population and politicians of all parties represented in the German Parliament support the "Energiewende". The Energiewende implies the short-term phase-out of nuclear energy, the mid- to long-term phase out of coal and an increase of renewable energy, efficiency and energy saving. This general agreement makes people support, in general, policy instruments which set incentives for CO₂-reductions. Austria, on the contrary, already generates most of its electricity from renewables (water). Most of the currently planned transmission grid projects are needed for European transport necessities, due to the increase of RES generation in the countries in the North (Germany, Denmark). A high-level support by German and Austrian politicians, i.e. the energy ministers of both countries, would be helpful, explaining that the common electricity market between Austria and Germany leads to a lower level of electricity prices for both countries.

Legal framework for the planning: One of the challenges for the planning in Austria is a comparatively high legal uncertainty. More often than in Germany, permits are removed by court which leads, in these cases, to long periods for the planning.

Regulatory incentives need to be implemented in order to be able to allocate human and financial capacities within a grid investment project to communicate, prepare and sell the project in a state of the art way. It was stated that 2,5% to 4% of the total investment amount was an appropriate future standard budget for TSOs for communication & selling.

Electro-magnetic fields (EFM): It was outlined that different systems of limit values and precautionary values regarding electro-magnetic fields in Europe is hard to understand for non-experts. There were different conclusions drawn: While it was argued, that a harmonisation of European precautionary and limit value systems were easier to understand for lay people, others argued that developing a common system will take a lot of time while it remains unsure if in the end, a harmonised system will really lead to a better understanding of the impacts of EMF and helps to alleviate fears.

Further ideas to be pursued for further activities:

- Address EU-institutions in the debate on power grid planning and public acceptance who represent European municipalities such as the Group of European Mayors,
- Ask VIP people (politicians, maybe also musicians or artists) in several EU / PCI countries to support power grid planning for the RES power system in Europe.

8. Paris, France, 21 Sept 2015

Discussion on BESTGRID handbook on participation and transparency, organised by Germanwatch

Participants: 2 members of the BESTGRID team (Germanwatch / Elia), 4 employees of RTE, the French transmission system operator (permitting department, communication, team INSPIRE GRID research project)

Issues of discussion

- **Explaining national power grid planning:** BESTGRID team members from Germanwatch and Elia presented several findings from the BESTGRID pilot projects and stressed the importance of transparency about the need of specific projects. The need case has had severe impacts on several BESTGRID projects, i.e. the Waterloo-Braine l'Alleud project which has been put on hold by Elia due to a changed forecast of the power demand as well as on the German DC project

SuedLink.

The participants of the meetings agreed that TSOs have an important role in explaining the assumptions of the national power grid planning which often proves difficult because it is based on a 10-years scenario. Within a decade, a lot of things are changing which implies that the planning has to be adapted regularly. Often, the mid- and long-term planning is hard to explain to stakeholders who are not very experienced in working with scenarios or modelling.

- **Formats for stakeholder engagement:** During the BESTGRID project, several formats for public engagement were tested. Two concepts were discussed more deeply: the concept of "info-markets" used by TenneT during the SuedLink dialogue as well as the mobile info bus used by 50Hertz. Advantages of buying or renting a car were considered as well as the question of where and under which conditions to use which of the tested formats.
- **Cooperation TSO/NGO:** Elia made the experience that a good TSO-NGO cooperation needs to be based on a clear understanding of the mutual tasks and responsibilities. Thus, a cooperation based on trustful relationships can be built. This includes a transparent communication of the facts and the background of why the project is needed.

Ideas / plans for further cooperation between RTE / Elia:

- Internal workshop by RTE /Elia for TSO staff on lessons learned within the BESTGRID project
- Joint stakeholder engagement strategy for cross-border transmission project (F-B)