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The project BESTGRID started at the beginning of 2013. Four pilot projects for renewables grid expansion will be developed and implemented within 27 months. During the project, new approaches to increase public acceptance and to speed up permitting procedures, while respecting or surpassing standards for environmental protection, will be tested.

The BESTGRID consortium brings together grid operators (National Grid, Elia, TenneT, 50Hertz and Terna) and non-governmental organisations (BirdLife Europe and Germanwatch) from across Europe to cooperate in designing, implementing and evaluating the pilot projects in Germany, Belgium and the UK. The renowned International Institute for Applied system Analysis (IIASA), will accompany the project, monitor, and evaluate the success of the tested approaches.

The BESTGRID project will disseminate the lessons learned widely across Europe and establish an intensive exchange of best practices. Moreover, two guidebooks will be produced and disseminated, focusing on “Participation and Transparency” and “Protecting the Environment and Engaging Environmental Stakeholders” in grid development projects.

A special focus of the dissemination will be on countries where ‘Projects of Common Interest’ will be developed, to ensure that best practices will be applied here. The BESTGRID project will thereby be a key milestone towards implementing the EU Regulation on trans-European energy infrastructure which has been adopted by the European Parliament and Council in March.

BESTGRID Partners: 50Hertz, BirdLife Europe, Elia, Germanwatch, IIASA, National Grid, TenneT, Terna, Renewables-Grid-Initiative (coordinator)

www.bestgrid.eu

BEST GRID

testing better practices

BESTGRID has 3 overriding objectives:

- to improve acceptance for electricity grids by increasing transparency and applying best practices in participation
- to speed up permitting procedures while proactively addressing or even going beyond environmental protection standards
- to support the implementation of best practices in permitting procedures for “projects of common interest”

The project partners aim to achieve these objectives through the following activities:

Pilot projects: new approaches are developed with close cooperation between NGOs, TSOs and a research institute, and are tested in three pilot projects. Experiences will be evaluated. In the UK, lessons from an ongoing project will be used to improve National Grid’s approach in designing stakeholder engagement processes.

Dissemination: All lessons learned are widely spread across Europe through communication measures, such as workshops, a website, bilateral meetings, newsletters, and two handbooks on environmental impacts and public participation.

Best practice exchange: Terna will test a set of best

practice exchange tools. The transferability of selected best practices will be tested in a set of workshops.

Capacity building & guidance: BirdLife is organising training events for NGOs on successful and constructive engagement with grid development procedures and projects, as well as roundtables between NGOs and authorities in Central and Eastern Europe. Towards the end of BESTGRID, BirdLife and Germanwatch will write guidebooks, one focusing on “Participation and Transparency”, the other on “Protecting the Environment and Engaging Environmental Stakeholders”.

Scientific monitoring: The research institute IIASA is evaluating the pilot projects from a scientific perspective. It will analyse the action implemented throughout the pilots by applying a framework of guiding principles and collecting data. In addition, it will identify the potential of different actions taken to achieve acceptability and the conditions that are necessary for their successful application.

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