2015/16

Electricity Transmission Stakeholder Engagement Incentive Scheme

Part One Submission

Contents

Finding a better way p1

Our engagement strategy p2

Tailoring our engagement p5

Our engagement activity p7

Acting on feedback p9
Finding a better way

I am immensely proud to be introducing this year’s Stakeholder Engagement Incentive Scheme Submission for National Grid Electricity Transmission.

Over the past year in National Grid we have made changes that put our stakeholders at the heart of our business. This has been led by our Executive Board of Directors who have committed to ‘Finding a Better Way’ for our stakeholders. We’ve then tailored that overarching ambition to our own Electricity Transmission business activities. This means we are challenging our ways of working, to drive performance improvements that achieve our business priorities and benefit those with a vested interest in what we do. We have had some notable achievements and we will continue to challenge our teams to do even more.

I know however that we don’t always get it right first time, but by reviewing our performance we are continually learning new lessons. I am committed to ensuring we put our learning into practice, which will help achieve our priority of building trust with people. I strongly believe the updates to our Stakeholder Engagement Strategy, especially our alignment to the ‘gold standard’ AA1000 Stakeholder Engagement principles will support us in becoming even better at building relationships, as we collaborate ever closer with our stakeholders.

Our Electricity Transmission business has focused its efforts this year to ensure we are delivering on our business priorities and that every engagement activity brings benefits. We have done this by:

Clearly identifying the outcomes our stakeholders are seeking from the engagement.

Improving our processes to maximise value to the stakeholder. When people tell us we could have done things better, we listen and act. They said our approach to gaining consent for developments needed to change, so we did exactly that. We have now improved how we engage with communities and capture and act on their feedback.

My teams in Electricity Transmission are fully committed to delivering for our stakeholders, and through this submission I believe we will demonstrate the great steps we have made this year. The submission will also identify where we will continue to focus our efforts in the future so we can evolve and embed our approach to engagement.

Acting on feedback and using this to inform our future strategy. We had feedback from our stakeholders that we could do more to encourage wider industry participation in Demand Side Response initiatives. To address this we launched Power Responsive to make entry to this market easier and encourage participation. So far we have brought together 700 individuals from 260 organisations. Ultimately this will support us to develop our future strategy for managing supply and demand on the Transmission Network, while minimising the carbon impact to the environment.

Organising our business to focus on what stakeholders value

Over the last year we have reorganised our Electricity Transmission business so we can focus on delivering the most value to our stakeholders.

Our engagement activities are centred on the following three strategic initiatives (and our Part Two submission is structured around them):

- Shaping the market, Developing the electricity market to meet the needs of people and businesses.
- Managing the network, How we plan, build and maintain our network to meet our stakeholders’ current and future needs.
- Delivering energy, The short and long-term operation of the energy network to balance supply and demand.

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Evolving our strategy to improve performance

This year we have evolved our strategy to make sure we become more consistent in the level of service we provide to our stakeholders and to honour our service commitments.

From feedback we know we don’t always do right, and that our senior leaders have a responsibility to make sure we are delivering tailored, high quality engagement right internally, so we provide a consistent service. However, it is hard to plan and prepare our engagement activities in a diligent fashion across the organisation.

We have improved our understanding of what ‘good’ engagement means. We’ve done this by listening to our stakeholders and learning from things when they have gone well and not so well. To create and promote a common understanding of ‘good’ engagement we’ve developed our service commitments (see below).

Our ambition is to become the leading Electricity Transmission Owner. Meeting stakeholder requirements is crucial, and AA1000SES is the gold standard for achieving improvements to how well we engage.

We know that having the right people and skills in place will drive the right culture and behaviours in our organisation to help us improve the way we interact with our stakeholders. We also recognise that to develop these behaviours, the environment needs to be right, and that our senior leaders have a responsibility to make sure this happens.

To support this in 2016/17 our Executive Board launched a ‘Customer and Stakeholder Transformation Programme’. This will impact all of our National Grid UK businesses.

For Electricity Transmission this means we will:

1. Use our Performance Excellence tools (a lean way of working) to ensure we put our customers and stakeholders at the forefront of what we do. For example, we will work with these groups to really understand what they value and use this knowledge to target our process improvement projects.

2. Use materiality to develop a robust and transparent strategy. We will develop a Maturity Ladder, which identifies four maturity stages for an organisation (see right). These stages have been used to evaluate our maturity within the AA1000SES health check. We will use this information to plan, prepare, implement and follow up in a diligent fashion through our Engagement Strategy.

3. Develop a consistent and transparent approach to communication with them if they feel we are not delivering on our promise.

We launched our service commitments as part of our Customer Service Week campaign. We have shared our service commitments with our teams, giving them commitment stickers and animations they can use to remind them why great service is so important.

Our six service commitments

To find a better way for our stakeholders we will:

1. Listen to their views so we can understand what they need and expect, and find solutions.

2. Actively engage and build trust through close working relationships based on openness and honesty.

3. Help them understand our business by clearly explaining our perspectives and how these may influence overall decision making.

4. Work together to find innovative ways of building a network for the future.

5. Deliver what we say we will deliver and do even better whenever we can.

6. Act on feedback.

Our promise to our stakeholders

We have improved our understanding of what ‘good’ engagement means. We’ve done this by listening to our stakeholders and learning from things when they have gone well and not so well. To create and promote a common understanding of ‘good’ engagement we’ve developed our service commitments (see below).

This means our stakeholders know what to expect from us, and they can hold us to account through our communication with them if they feel we are not delivering on our promise.

Our stakeholder engagement strategy

In collaboration with them. Overall this approach has already been used and made positive changes.

Where we have used the AA1000SES framework. This has allowed us to develop an objective understanding of our strengths, and our improvement areas, to effectively engage stakeholders and shape the industry.

The independent health check

We commissioned Accountability (who created the AA1000 standard) to complete a detailed independent assessment of our stakeholder engagement strategy, processes and practices, with a clear focus on engagement that goes above and beyond our daily interactions with people and organisations. This has allowed us to benchmark ourselves against an external standard, ensuring that our stakeholder strategy and methodology are robust and meet best practice. It has also allowed us to develop an objective understanding of our strengths, and our improvement areas, to effectively engage stakeholders and shape the industry.

The results

The assessment concluded that National Grid is at the advanced stage across the AA1000SES stakeholder engagement stages.

The feedback we received from our stakeholders, as well as our improved engagement practices, has set us on a clear path to achieving mature status.

AccountAbility’s report highlighted key strengths in our business, including executive and senior management commitment to the new customer and stakeholder engagement model (delivered by our UK Transformation Programme). Other strengths identified were planned improvement schemes, robust internal governance and account coordination to monitor and evaluate engagements, and our stakeholder engagement toolkit. The toolkit helps us focus on outcomes, tracking and evaluation of the benefits of engagement planning and implementation.

Benefits to stakeholders

From feedback we know we don’t always do right, and that our senior leaders have a responsibility to make sure we are delivering tailored, high quality engagement right internally, so we provide a consistent service. However, it is hard to plan and prepare our engagement activities in a diligent fashion across the organisation.

For Electricity Transmission this means we will:

1. Create a consistent approach to engagement.

2. Outcomes focused to ensure delivery for stakeholders.

3. Benefits will be clear and measurable.

4. How decisions are made will be clearly communicated.

5. Committed to continually improving our engagement.

Driving up standards

Following on from aligning our strategy with the AA1000SES, we looked to see how well the principles were being followed within our Electricity Transmission business.

Overview

We wanted to identify exactly where we are now, and to set out a clear path for how we could improve our future engagement.

The independent health check

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The results

The assessment concluded that National Grid is at the advanced stage across the AA1000SES stakeholder engagement stages.

The health check found positive evidence of stakeholder engagement integrated into operational strategy and management, solid engagement practices, strong awareness of stakeholder engagement priorities and dedicated resources to build engagement competencies and plans. Accountability determined that our improvement schemes have set us on a clear path to achieving mature status.

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Next steps

To improve our current performance to mature status, Accountability highlighted key recommendations for us to act on.

Over the next year, we will:

1. Use our improved customer and stakeholder engagement strategy to create an understanding of best-in-class stakeholder engagement in our business.

2. Strengthen the step of formalising the accountability process of our engagement with stakeholders (see right).

3. Develop a communication plan to support reporting of our engagement activities.

4. Continue to develop our engagement maturity through our website and on social media.

5. Improve our understanding of our stakeholders, as well as giving us a consistent way of measuring how we’re doing against our objectives.

Chris Isaac
Exertnal Affairs Manager

AA1000SES stakeholder engagement maturity ladder

AA1000SES evaluates maturity in stakeholder engagement through a Maturity Ladder, which identifies four maturity stages for an organisation (see right). These stages have been used to evaluate our maturity within the AA1000SES health check.

Our current position

Our current position is at the advanced stage on the ladder with a score of 61% maturity of ‘good’ engagement we’ve developed our engagement maturity.

Over the next year, we will:

1. Use our updated customer and stakeholder engagement strategy to create an understanding of best-in-class stakeholder engagement in our business.

2. Strengthen the step of formalising the accountability process of our engagement with stakeholders (see right).

3. Develop a communication plan to support reporting of our engagement activities.

4. Continue to develop our engagement maturity through our website and on social media.

What this will mean for our stakeholders

National Grid’s vision is to create and implement a leading stakeholder engagement strategy aligned to AA1000SES. We will ensure our stakeholders’ experience is great, and make sure we are delivering tailored, consistent and valuable engagement. We will review the effectiveness of what we’re doing to continually improve our approach.

Sustainable value and use this knowledge to target our stakeholders, as well as giving us a consistent way of measuring how we’re doing against our objectives.

Chris Isaac, External Affairs Manager

Source: Accountability Institute, 2015

Maturity stage (76-100% maturity score)

Proactive Engagement. Highly integrated and systematic processes across the organisation.

Advanced stage (51-75% maturity score)

Advanced stage (51-75% maturity score)

Early stage development (25-50% maturity score)

Ad-hoc engagement. Low degree of consistency across the organisation.

Beginner stage (0-25% maturity score)

No stakeholder engagement practices in place, or minimal efforts at best.
Tailoring our engagement to meet our stakeholders’ needs

Understanding and engaging

As the energy market changes, so does the range of stakeholders we engage with. We have to adapt to make sure we understand their needs through better quality conversations.

Overview

We have reviewed our stakeholder groups and diversified the methods by which we engage. Not everyone has time to read a lengthy consultation document, or spend a full day at a workshop, but we want as many people as possible to contribute to the debate and be able to influence the proposals we are developing.

Our stakeholder groups

It’s important to understand which stakeholder groups we should be engaging with for specific projects. Once we have established that, we use tools to try to understand their interest and influence on a particular topic. This allows us to target our conversations so our stakeholders are involved in only the topics that drive the most value.

A new approach

We recognise that stakeholders have different needs and some may require more support than others. To help these groups we have established a dedicated Electricity Account Management Team. This team supports our stakeholders by:

• Providing them with technical guidance and support especially if they are new to the market, and are uncertain how to connect to our network.

Making engagement accessible

We continue to use our traditional engagement methods of workshops, seminars, publications, consultations and meetings, which we know from feedback are highly valued by our stakeholders. However, recognising that our stakeholders are busy people, we have again sought to diversify the ways people engage with us using digital channels. This means they can use a channel and time that is convenient to them. For us it means we are able to broaden the range of people we talk to, and gain a greater depth of feedback on our proposals.

• As part of Power Responsive (pictured below), we set up an independent microsite which provides a one-stop shop for background information and updates, including summaries of meetings and webinars for those unable to attend. So far 700 people have subscribed to this site.

Aligning how we engage to our stakeholders’ understanding

Overview

We are keen to expand the coverage of our best practice conversations about stakeholder engagement. During the past year we have reached out to potential partners and taken the lead on forming a virtual community around stakeholder-related best practice. This work is still at an early stage, but in addition to our existing collaboration with the two Scottish TOs, we are now in conversation with the electricity distribution networks (through their existing forum), EirGrid in Ireland, Elia in Belgium, Open Grid Europe in Germany, RTE in France and outside of the energy industry, Severn Trent Water and Network Rail. Internally, we share best practice across our community relations agencies, and are looking to replicate this process more widely across the rest of our Transmission business.

Partnerships and collaboration

We recognise there’s a lot we can learn from other organisations, which will ultimately help us to deliver a better service for our stakeholders. We also know we can benefit others by sharing our knowledge in areas where we may have more experience.

We have made good progress in collaborating and sharing best practice this year, as outlined to the right. In 2016/17 we are going to do more because of the improvements it can generate. We’re establishing a best practice strategy to help us to build on existing relationships and identify partnerships that will deliver value for our stakeholders. And we won’t limit these relationships to other energy industry partners: we’ll also look beyond the industry so that we can gain the most benefit.

Putting our language skills to use

When we build and maintain the electricity network, we always work with local communities. Sometimes we know people find it difficult to engage with us, particularly if their native language is not English.

To provide a more diverse service for our stakeholders we have created a database that captures all of the language skills of people who work in National Grid. There are 300 people on this database who are able to speak 37 different languages between them. With this information we are able to tailor our conversations to meet the needs of the people with particular language requirements. This means we can build a stronger relationship with those who previously would have found it difficult to engage with us.

Building a best practice sharing group

The Power Responsive website, launched this year, has so far attracted 700 subscriptions.
Engaging with a wide range of stakeholders

We’re collaborating with a broad range of stakeholders on important issues.

Overview
This year, making sure our engagement delivers value has been a priority for us, and this has given us the impetus to engage with a broader range of stakeholders than ever before. A lot of the challenges our Electricity Transmission business faces are shared by our stakeholders, especially those related to minimising our industry’s carbon footprint and driving positive outcomes for the environment. We know that we can play an important role in bringing stakeholders together to collaborate on these important topics. This year we have engaged with a broad range of groups and industries in our commitment to a sustainable future.

Managing the network

Activity Stakeholders engaged Over 15,000 stakeholders engaged Outcomes

Visual impact 648 stakeholders including communities and their representatives, National Grid’s project teams, customer and partner organisations, and businesses. 1. Four projects selected by the Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) for major engineering works, after taking account of all the evidence, information and stakeholder views. 2. Landscape Enhancement Initiative launched with £15 million set aside for ameliorative improvements. 3. A technology called partial discharge monitoring, which provides an alternative approach to perform inspection of the system.

Dinowirry-Pentir circuit engagement 27 stakeholders from our supply chain, the energy industry and other industries. 1. We created a film, at a cost of £1,000, to explain major technical issues, resulting in greater traction with stakeholders. 2. The generator remained connected to the grid, securing future supply. 3. An estimated £200 million investment to develop a Carbon Interface Tool (CIT), which produced £31 million saving by reducing carbon in the Whitcote tender process. 4. One industry award in recognition of our work to develop the CIT.

Carbon management 420 stakeholders from communities and their representatives, the general public, educational institutions, NGOs, landowners and small businesses. 1. We created a film, at a cost of £1,000, to explain major technical issues, resulting in greater traction with stakeholders. 2. The generator remained connected to the grid, securing future supply. 3. An estimated £200 million investment to develop a Carbon Interface Tool (CIT), which produced £31 million saving by reducing carbon in the Whitcote tender process. 4. One industry award in recognition of our work to develop the CIT.

North Wales connections Over 10,000 stakeholders including communities and their representatives, the general public, educational institutions, NGOs, landowners and small businesses. 1. New equipment for a playground close to a primary school. 2. Interview training for local students delivered. 3. A local Citizens Advice group was given funding to help redesign its website.

Western link 2 stakeholders representing political organisations. 1. Scottish Power engaged its staff on a policy issue, resulting in greater traction with stakeholders.

MI road safety Working with the Welsh Government, through bilateral meetings, email and social media to look at options for the design of an MI road safety project.

Scottish Power ratings management Sharing best practice for ratings management with Scottish Power. Held bilateral meetings to help them better manage their circuit rating.

Delivering energy

Activity Stakeholders engaged Outcomes

Embedded-generating generation 40 stakeholders including the energy industry, customers, local communities and their representatives. 1. Connected 5.7GW of generation that we wouldn’t have been able to connect before the end of the process. 2. The embedded generation brought online represents enough energy to power around 18 million homes and has saved 2.6 million tonnes of CO2. 3. An engagement cost of £20,000 has saved the end consumer £140 million per year.

Customer Connections Interface tool 180 stakeholders including the energy industry, customers and energy industry and other interest groups. 1. A customer provided a partnership that will help them assess connections to the electricity transmission network, saving time and improving the application experience.

Intercoster community 20 stakeholders including energy industry, customers and energy industry and other interest groups. 1. Helps new and existing interconnector developers to build networks and relationships and so facilitate competition. 2. Builds better communication between businesses. 3. Provides an opportunity for interconnector businesses to understand and influence changes in policy areas relating to their work.

Customer seminars 180 stakeholders including customers, energy industry, regulators, and other local interest groups and political organisations. 1. Always allows customers to receive the latest updates and information from the energy industry. 2. Provides an opportunity to network and gain industry insight. 3. Customers are able to meet their account manager, ask questions, challenge assumptions, and influence the future of the industry.

Operational forum 300 stakeholders representing the energy industry. 1. Always allows industry to learn about and discuss past and future industry and company costs. 2. Provides a forum for industry participants to ask questions about changes and opportunities for the industry.

Activity Stakeholders engaged Outcomes

Activity Stakeholders engaged Outcomes

Engaging with a broad range of stakeholders

Shaping the market

Activity Stakeholders engaged Outcomes

System Operability Framework (SOF) 200 stakeholders including the energy industry, customers, regulators and educational interest groups. 1. We doubled the level of engagement from the beginning to end of the process, creating a more inclusive publication. 2. Stakeholders helped inform and influence the end product. 3. The engagement has helped develop a process to drive the development of national data in DSR.

Power Responsive 600 stakeholders including the energy industry, energy traders, energy suppliers, regulators, NGOs, media and business. 1. We’ve helped raise the profile of DSR and encouraged collaborative activity aimed at growing participation in DSR over the next five years. 2. By 2020 we want to see 30-50% of balancing services to come from DSR (at the moment this is 5%).

Future Energy Scenarios (FES) 1,023 stakeholders on our mailing list, representing the energy industry, customers, Ofgem and educational interest groups. 1. Participants found it easier to apply and as a result a quality value for the capacity auction. 2. Resulted in enough capacity acquired at auction, ensuring reliability of supply in the future as we move to low-carbon generation.

Electricity Market Reform (EMR) 2,038 stakeholders on our mailing list, representing the energy industry, customers and other industries. 1. The EMR has significantly changed the system this year so we have engaged with stakeholders to explain why and how to engage in this new market. 2. Provides an opportunity for stakeholders to discuss new ideas, issues or questions they might have.

EDF Energy 6 stakeholders including a steering group and EDF Energy to help them understanding the think behind our operational decisions.

Environment

Activity Stakeholders engaged Outcomes

Engaged with a wide range of stakeholders on important issues.

Engaging with a broad range of stakeholders

Activity Stakeholders engaged Outcomes

Empowerability Supported internship for young people aged 17-22 with learning disabilities. 48 students representing educational institutions.

Skills Working with young females to harness their interest in STEM subjects, increase their skills and build their confidence. 23 stakeholders involved representing NGOs, communities and their local representatives.

Theresa Marsh Leading sector expertise and a partnership approach with the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust to reassess our approach for improving wildlife habitats impacted by our activities. The aim is to achieve the greatest benefit and value for users, the community and nature now and into the future.

Erahe-Common Commitment Making a positive contribution to social and environmental issues through projects that not only improve the environment but also engage the customer, improve our reputation and increase customer satisfaction. 23 stakeholders involved representing NGOs, communities and their local representatives.

Reconducting project in Chester Through face-to-face visits, phone calls and surveys, we received a positive level of feedback caused by a conductor.

1. Future system risk from encroaching vegetation is minimised.
2. Positive contribution to local conservation programme within designated landscapes.
A more efficient process

Obtaining feedback is important to us so we know whether we’re delivering what our stakeholders need to the standard they expect.

Overview
One of our strategy focus areas for 2015/16 was to improve understanding of our stakeholders, which led us to review the way we gather feedback from them through our annual stakeholder survey. We have made some changes in this area to make it a more efficient process, and to make sure we gain tangible feedback that we can act upon, and deliver the outcomes our stakeholders want.

Making improvements
Stakeholders told us in previous surveys the questions were not always relevant to them, and our internal teams told us the feedback they were getting wasn’t always useful. To address this we have undertaken a full review of our customer and stakeholder surveys, and appointed a new independent research agency.

This has led to improving our survey process by:
- Adapting and tailoring our survey questions so our stakeholders are clear which engagement we are asking their views on.
- Conducting our surveys in a timely manner after engagement has taken place which provides us with more accurate feedback.

We have successfully used this new approach with our customer surveys, and plan to replicate this with our 2016/17 stakeholder surveys.

We have also improved our process of turning feedback into actions and will be able to address comments at an individual level and respond to them in the most appropriate way. These actions will each be assigned an owner to manage the improvements.

Capturing feedback
As well as getting feedback from our surveys, we obtain feedback all year round from regular stakeholder meetings and communications. We haven’t always been consistent in documenting this feedback and then combining this with the feedback we obtain from our surveys.

This year to bridge this gap we have introduced a distinct process for capturing this feedback, which is collated by our Electricity Account Management team. The team will be debriefed by the attendees and informed of feedback which they record centrally. This will then be compared with the survey feedback and acted upon.

In the future we plan to support this process further through the introduction of a new Stakeholder Intelligence System.

The Stakeholder Advisory Panel
Another way in which we capture feedback from stakeholders is through our independent Stakeholder Advisory Panel that meets quarterly. Our panel members help us to shape and influence our business to ensure we take into account people’s interests, aspirations and concerns now and into the future.

The panel is made up of individuals representing the diversity of our stakeholders. Their role is to provide a different perspective and way of thinking to an area of focus, because we believe that proactive and focused discussions about the things that matter most to our stakeholders will help us to improve what we deliver and how we deliver it.

We have recognised, through feedback from them, that we haven’t always given the panel the opportunity early enough to influence and shape our engagement and decision-making. So, we’ve made some changes to how we run these meetings and use the panel.

Our process for acting on feedback
To ensure we add value from our stakeholder engagement, we’ve improved our internal process for how we share feedback with relevant teams. We’ve utilised a Project Management Office to ensure actions developed from feedback are prioritised and delivered in agreed timescales. The progress on these is then reported through our central Stakeholder Strategy Team. This ensures teams are held to account and trust is built with stakeholders.

What our stakeholders said
What we have done

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<th>Our performance results 2015/16</th>
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Looking ahead to 2016/17
Our new, more focused and proactive way of working with our panel will make sure that they can really influence and shape what we do and the way that we do it for the most important stakeholder subjects. The panel’s early input will help us to develop strategies and action plans based on the needs of our stakeholders.

The Stakeholder Advisory Panel will help us to shape and influence our business and business practices to ensure they take into account the interests, aspirations and concerns of our customers and stakeholders, now and into the future.

The Stakeholder Advisory Panel Purpose Statement 2016

A public meeting in Anglesey, February 2016

Obtaining and acting on feedback