EirGrid Engagement Toolkit

24 February 2016

EIRGRID

Toolkit Contents

Chapter 1: About This Toolkit

Every project that we develop is part of the transmission network that serves the Republic of Ireland and we are committed to involving you in our plans. This toolkit sets out some of the methods we may use to seek your input as we go through the steps needed to develop a transmission project.

This engagement toolkit is part of a set of resources we have developed for anyone involved in and affected by our work. Our engagement handbook describes the steps we take in developing a project, how you can make your views known to us and what you can expect from us. This document, our Engagement Toolkit, describes the different tools we can use to work with you to hear your views. We hope you will find it useful and work with us to choose the tools that best meet your needs during each step of a projects development. The toolkit is designed to give you (our stakeholders) and our project teams, the information to decide together what kind of engagement best suits each project.

This toolkit sets out:

- A clearly defined set of engagement tools, suitable for a range of settings,
- An explanation of how each tool can help us hear your views,
- A description of each method, what steps they are most appropriate for and how to use them,
- A guide for evaluating each method, and how successful it was.

Our aim is to make sure that we work with you, in an open, effective and constructive way. We know some engagement methods will work better in different situations. In the descriptions, we include when, and for what purposes, particular engagement methods are best.

The methods we have included are drawn from good practice examples by engagement experts and practitioners.

Why you should get involved

We have to make decisions about the future of the electricity transmission network which can affect people. We want to make decisions which people understand, and to do that we need to hear from you. We know that where people have different views on our projects we will not be able to make decisions which everyone agrees with. However, we do want everyone to understand that their views are carefully considered.

1.1. Reading this document

This document has three sections:

- About the toolkit - sets out the aims of the toolkit;
- Table of engagement methods–summarises the engagement methods;
- The engagement methods - outlines all the engagement methods in detail.

1.2. How we decide what methods to use

Designing an electricity transmission project is a complex and lengthy process. Because of this, we use the same process in each project, to explore options and make decisions.

We start every project by asking a number of questions:

- Who might be affected by our project or have a particular interest in it?
- What kind of engagement suits this project best? Which representatives can we work with to agree a plan?
- What decisions do we need to make on this project? When, and how can the people and representatives we talk to influence these decisions?
- What are the best ways to involve people who might be affected by our project, or groups with an interest in the project?

This toolkit helps us answer the second question: what kind of engagement suits this project and the people affected best? We want to involve you, our stakeholders, in making this decision, so the toolkit is designed to help us consider what kind of engagement is needed on a particular project at a particular time.

At the beginning of each step we consider the different options available and design an engagement plan: for all our large projects we will do this through a conversation with our stakeholders. That could be the local authority, or local people: we want to hear from everyone. We'll listen to everyone's views about what kind of engagement is right for the project and the community and make a decision that takes both factors into account. We won't always be able to use every method you choose, but we'll do our best to use methods that are acceptable for everyone. We'll make sure that you can find out which methods we choose and why by publishing it on our project website.

1.3. What's in the toolkit?

Some of the methods in the toolkit are best for small numbers of people working together; others can involve many more people but might be best for giving out information. We want to choose the best method for each situation, so our toolkit provides information about the advantages and disadvantages of a method, who and how many people it's suited to, how much time and resources are needed, and what opportunities it gives people to influence our decision-making.

For each method, the toolkit set outs:

Which project step does it suit best?
When we identify a need to develop the transmission network, we set up a project. We develop the project following our project development process. This is a set of steps we follow on every project.

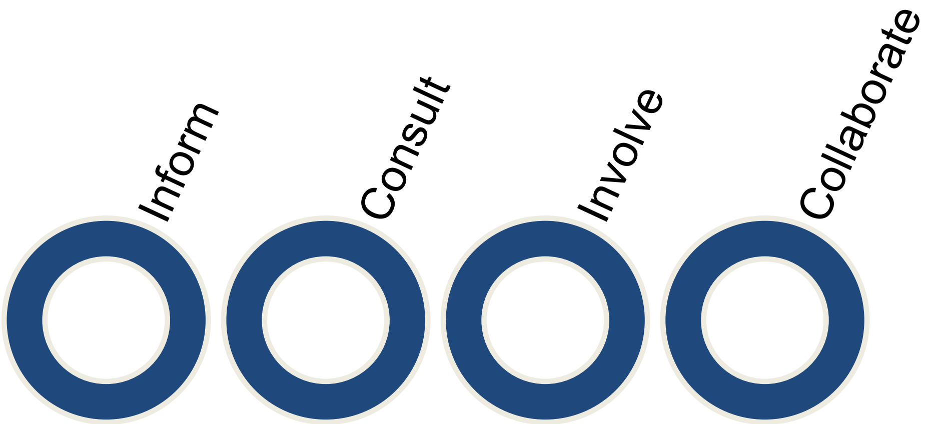
There are defined opportunities for you to influence our plans at each step of the process, from identifying the need for a project to deciding where exactly we will build it, as shown in the chart below:

Step 1	• Is there an issue that may need grid development?
Step 2	• What technical solutions can meet the needs of this project?
Step 3	• What's the best technology choice, and what route could it take?
Step 4	• Where exactly should we build?
Step 5	• The planning process
Step 6	• Construction, energisation and benefit sharing

The decision-making tools we use, and the amount of engagement we carry out at each step, depend on the scale and complexity of the particular project. For a simple project such as upgrading equipment on an existing site, we will generally involve those directly affected. However, for a project involving new lines or cables we will consult widely from the start.

What kind of influence can you have?
At different steps of our projects, you will have opportunities to influence our decisions. The engagement spectrum is a tool commonly used to categorise different types of engagement. It gives us one way of understanding how a decision can be influenced.

The engagement spectrum:



We want to make decisions which are accepted by the people they affect, but we have to balance that with our obligations to develop the transmission network and the fact that different people will have different views about our projects.

Wherever possible, we will involve and collaborate with you in our work so we know your views as we develop our projects at every step.

At certain points, we will formally consult you, landowners and other organisations. This means providing you with the information you need to tell us your views, considering these views and showing how your feedback influenced our decision.

We will always inform you of how and why we made decisions.

Each of the methods in this document can be used to support one or more types of engagement, and we have indicated which to help you choose the method that works best for you.

Remember the earlier you take part in the process, the greater your influence. Also talking to us even if you don't agree with our plans, helps us to reach the best solution for everyone.

Who does this this method suit best?
A stakeholder is anyone who has an interest in or is affected by a project; it can refer to individuals or organisations. The list of people affected may change throughout the course of a project.

For example, in the early technical steps of a project we will work mostly with national and regional organisations. For the detailed steps when we know more about where we might build a project we will work more with local people and landowners. Different engagement methods may work better for particular groups of people or, for different numbers of people.

Many other factors can affect whether a particular method of engagement is right for the situation, so the toolkit also address practical questions such as:

- How many people can this method involve?
- How much resource does it take?
- How much time does it take?
- What kind of content does it work best for?

It also highlights the pros and cons of each method, how to evaluate its effectiveness and gives an example of how it has been used in the past.

Chapter 2: Table of Methods

This table is a full list of the methods included in this toolkit:

Method	Project step	What kind of influence?	Who is it best suited to?	Similar and related methods	Page no.
Blogs, podcasts, and vlogs	Any step	Inform and/or consult	Anyone with internet access	Newsletters Social media	10
Citizens' panel	Any step	Involve	Any group (but only a sample of them)	Deliberative workshops	14
Participatory Mapping workshop	Steps 2 and 3	Involve	Local communities and environmental groups	Deliberative workshops	17
Consultation	Steps 1, 2 and 3	Consult	Stakeholders and the wider public	Questionnaires	20
Deliberative workshops	Steps 1 & 2 (and for strategic, non-project engagement)	Involve and/or collaborate	Stakeholders or the public (typically small number of people)	Participatory mapping workshops	23
Design workshops	Step 3	Involve and/or collaborate	Local communities, stakeholders and environmental groups	Participatory mapping workshops Deliberative workshops	26
Discussion packs	Any step	Consult	Anyone (as long as they can gather in small groups)	Deliberative workshops Consultation Focus groups	29
Drop in sessions	Steps 2 and 3	Inform and consult	Local communities	Outreach processes	32
Focus groups	Steps 0-3	Consult	Selected groups from any audience	Interviews Outreach	34

				processes Webinars	
Independent mediation	Step 3	Collaborate	Small groups from any audience	None	37
Interviews	Any step	Consult	Individuals	Focus groups Outreach processes Questionnaires	40
Reference group	All steps	Consult and involve	Small group of key stakeholders	None	43
Mobile ethnography	Steps 2 and 3	Consult	Members of the public or local stakeholders	Interviews	46
Newsletters	Steps 1-3	Inform	Local communities	Social media	49
Outreach processes	Steps 2 and 3	Inform and consult	Hard to reach or distrustful groups	Public meetings Drop in sessions	51
Public meetings	Steps 2 and 3	Inform	Local communities	Outreach processes Deliberative workshops	54
Site visits	Steps 2 and 3	Inform	Stakeholders or members of the public	None	57
Social media and digital tools	Steps 1-3	Inform and/or consult	Anyone with internet access	Newsletters	59
Surveys and questionnaires	Any step	Inform (the project team)	Communities or other groups	Consultation	62
Webinars	Any step	Inform	Anyone with internet access	Public meetings Social media	65

Chapter 3: The Engagement Methods

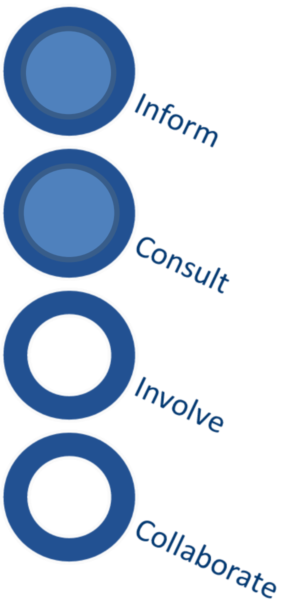
The remainder of this document outlines all the engagement methods in detail. For more information on any of these methods please contact the EirGrid project team on:

(01) 702 6642

For other contact details, or to find out more about any of our projects, please visit:

www.eirgridgroup.com

3.1. Blogs, podcasts, and vlogs



Blogs, podcasts, and vlogs are online tools that help with providing information about the organisation or a particular project.

- A blog is a regularly updated web page containing short written pieces in a conversational style, typically by an individual or small group
- Podcasts are a form of blog, with spoken content rather than written
- Vlogs are a form of blog for which the content is shown or spoken through video.

They are used to share information and to invite discussion on topics of interest. . They can also be used to share meeting minutes or to provide a regular update on developments and decisions.

Twitter is an online service where users can post (publicise) very short statements (up to 140 characters) which can be seen by anyone using the service. The service is often used to share information, using links to other websites, or for discussions. Twitter allows users to sign up to receive updates from other users and also allows for direct communication between users.

EirGrid's twitter account is @EirGrid.

Is this method right for you?

This type of online tool is ideal if you want regular updates on a project, particularly at the later steps when things are moving quickly.

Why we would use this tool

Blogs, podcasts, and vlogs can be used to inform you about our decision-making. They can be a valuable tool for explaining how a project is developing, because the information is accessible and you can see each update in turn. When they're updated regularly these online tools provide up to date information about a project. You can provide comments and we will listen to your views, but we'll usually use this kind of tool alongside other methods to make sure we're getting the full picture.

What step of the process is it best for?

Blogs, podcasts and vlogs can be used at any step of the process, particularly when there is a lot to update you on: for example at Stage 6 we may use a blog or twitter account to give people in the local area regular updates on the progress of construction work.

Who is this engagement best for?

This method can be used by anyone who has internet access.

More about Blogs, Podcasts and Vlogs	
How many people can it engage?	Online tools can reach a large number of people, but are limited to those with access to the internet.
What resources does it take?	Various sites provide free hosting for blogs, podcasts, and vlogs making them cost effective. The main resource is time to produce updates.
How much time does it take?	A blog can be used throughout a project; there is no set time limit.
What kind of content does it work best for?	Blogs, podcasts and vlogs tend to be concise and are best used to address one topic or question at a time. They may not be suitable for very complex technical information, but could provide a comment or introduction that the audience uses alongside other sources of information (such as a consultation document or environmental impact assessment). Blogs, podcasts and vlogs can be useful as a part of a combination of engagement methods. This method is not appropriate for sensitive or private discussions.

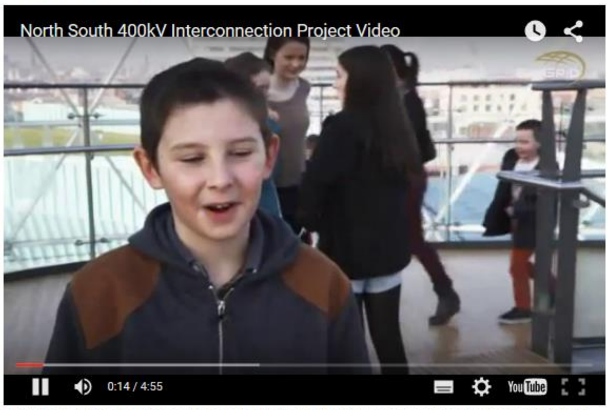
Pros	Cons
Using online media can help you find common and frequently used information quickly and easily because it can be browsed and searched more easily than paper.	We won't always be able to provide more complex information quickly enough for a blog, for example when we need to do technical assessments to answer a question.
Blogs can help us be open and transparent about what's happening on a project, for example, by posting meeting notes and actions.	We may not be able to have longer discussions with you as these tools aren't suitable for giving very detailed feedback.
Provides a quick and informal way to share information publicly or with specific groups – blogs, vlogs, and podcasts can also have restricted access, and don't always have to be public.	The owner of any website has a responsibility to make sure that comments aren't offensive or personal so may need to moderate what is published.
Using videos and podcasts can make information more accessible, rather than publishing lots of documents.	We know that not everyone has access to the internet, or is comfortable using. Therefore, this tool is best to use alongside other methods to ensure

	everyone is included.
	Sometimes we recognise you will want to talk to us privately, and this type of media is generally more public.

How its effectiveness is measured

We can measure how many people have accessed or commented on online information, for example by recording visits to a website. It's also possible to include simple feedback questions so you can tell us how useful you found the information.

North South 400kV Interconnection Development Project Video



EirGrid has published a key new report on the North South 400kV Interconnection Development. Find out what is happening with this major electricity infrastructure investment.

Good examples

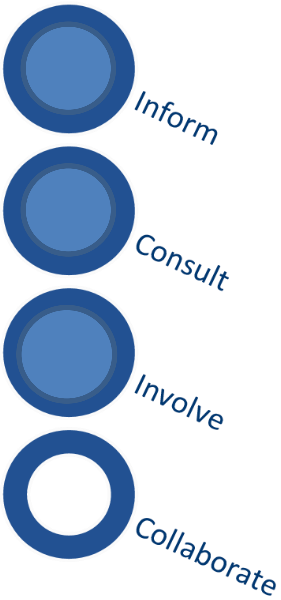
A blog that is kept up to date throughout a project can be a useful way of keeping people informed about progress.

EirGrid already use videos to communicate about our work through EirGrid TV: http://www.eirgrid.com/aboutus/eirgridtv/

Similar and related methods

- Newsletters
- Social media

3.2. Citizens' panels



A Citizens' panel is made up of a group of people – anything from 12 to several thousand – who are asked to take part in different types of research or engagement on a regular basis. Citizens' panels are a good way to understand people's views on a range of issues, or over a period of time. For example, some local authorities use a citizens' panel to carry out regular surveys about their work. This type of panel usually involves a large and diverse sample of local people, so that surveys of panel opinions are broadly reflective of public opinion.

Panel members can be invited to take part in many different types of activities, from surveys to focus groups or workshops. Online only citizens panels are increasingly common, because members only interact online they don't have to be in the same geographical location, but of course they do exclude people who aren't online. If citizens' panels exist for a longer period of time, new members may join so that the panel remains representative.

Why we would use this tool
Citizens' panels can be used in different ways. They can be used to survey people's views on a project, or to consult with people as part of a decision-making process.

What step of the process is it best for?
A Citizens' panel could be used throughout a project to help understand people's views on each step. However, because panels only involve a sample of people (rather than being open to everyone who's interested) they may need to be used alongside other methods.

Is this method right for you?

A Citizens' panel can be useful to collect views from a representative sample of people over a long period of time, for example it could run throughout a large project to give a representative picture to compare with responses to open methods like consultation.

Who is this engagement best for?
A Citizens' panel can be set up to represent a particular group or the general public, but it will always be a sample of the population and only involve people who are recruited using specific sampling criteria. In general (and depending on the size of the panel), a Citizen's panel will be a broadly representative cross-section of the population it is recruited from.

More about Citizens' Panels	
How many people can it engage?	As many as recruited to the panel. In some cases t panel members talk to their friends or relatives about the topics and report back.
What resources does it take?	Panels can be resource intensive to run, taking a lot of time to set up and manage. For a panel to be representative and robust specialist skills are needed to design the project.
How much time does it take?	Online Citizens' panels are less resource intensive to run than face to face ones, and it's possible to buy ready-made panel software, but this can be expensive to start with.
What kind of content does it work best for?	It depends how long a panel runs for, but to make the most of them it's typical to run them for at least several months.

Pros	Cons
Once they are set up panels can be a good way of getting views on a specific topic quickly and easily.	Citizens' Panels need specialist skills and a lot of time to set up and manage.
Panels can be set up to be broadly representative of a population. When properly run, with enough members, they can be used to research the views of the wider population.	Panels need to be used alongside other methods because on their own they don't allow everyone who is affected to take part.
Panels can be used to understand how people's views change over time, through repeated engagement with the same members.	If panels are run online they can exclude those who don't have access.
Panel members can help sharing information or raising awareness by telling others about their involvement.	As panels typically run over a long period of time members may drop out or lose interest. Regular engagement helps people stay involved but it may be necessary to recruit new members.

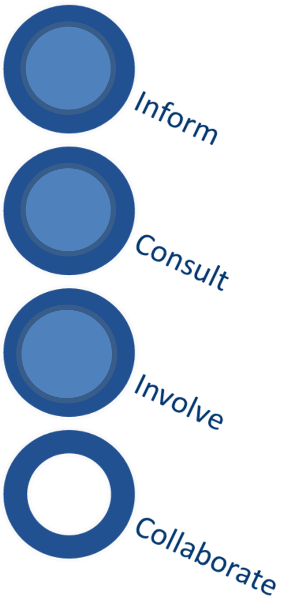
How will its success be measured?
Measuring how often people take part in panel activities can show how well they are working, and adding feedback questions to each activity can help the panel organiser to understand whether people find them useful.

Good examples
The European Union ran two citizens' panels in the Irish Border region in 2006, which brought together 50 citizens from both sides of the border. The first event asked citizens to identify the issues important to them and compile a list of the policymakers they would like to speak to in relation to these issues. The selected policymakers then acted as witnesses before the panel in the second event, responding in detail to all of the questions that citizens had.

You can read about this project online at:
http://www.borderireland.info/info/adetail.php?aref=3789

Similar and related methods
- Deliberative workshops

3.3. Participatory mapping workshops



Participatory mapping is a way for a group of people to develop an understanding of a geographical location which takes into account the shared and distinct perspectives of the people involved. It captures the physical features of a place and rich data about the social, economic and political factors at play there. It can be used to explore the aspects of a place which people value, or feel are unique, as well as identifying where different groups or individuals might contest the use or value of a space. In the context of infrastructure development, participatory mapping is a way of understanding what local people see as constraints (issues that should prevent a particular plan going ahead) in a particular area, and how these might differ from the constraints a technical assessment identifies.

In practical terms participatory mapping is best done in small groups (<20 participants) with an experienced facilitator to guide the group as they create their map. The map can be created in any medium, either working from scratch to draw out the original area, or starting with an existing map and adding to it. The output of the session is not just the map itself, but the discussion which takes place around the process; this is where a facilitator can encourage participants to identify why they value a particular aspect of a place. Understanding the strength of feeling, and the deeper reasons behind people's initial identification of constraints can help us to respond better to concerns.

Why we would use this tool

Participatory mapping is a way for you to help us understand your local area and what's important to you in it. When we are designing a project we can use technical studies to find out about the physical characteristics of an area, but we need your input to understand how a place is used. By sharing this information with us we can take it into account in our work.

Is this method right for you?

Participatory mapping is ideal for the middle steps of a project, when proposals are becoming more concrete and specific. It can help EirGrid and the community reach a shared understanding of what's important in the area, which can directly influence the proposals.

What step of the process is it best for?
Mapping is about looking at a specific geographical area, so is best for steps 2 and 3 of a project, when we know roughly where new infrastructure could be built.

Who is this engagement best for?
This type of mapping can involve people who live or work in a local area (particularly land owners) as well as organisations with a particular interest like environmental groups.

More about Participatory Mapping	
How many people can it engage?	Participatory mapping is best done in small groups, 6 to 8 people is ideal, but this could be several groups working on individual maps and then combining them. Several workshops may be needed if the project covers a large area?
What resources does it take?	It is also possible to do a version of participatory mapping online, which would involve us asking you to mark important features on a digital map.
How much time does it take?	Having an independent facilitator to lead the workshop can help everyone contribute equally. We would also provide a basic map of the area.
What kind of content does it work best for?	A workshop can take up to several hours, depending on the size of the area and the level of detail we ask you to work to.

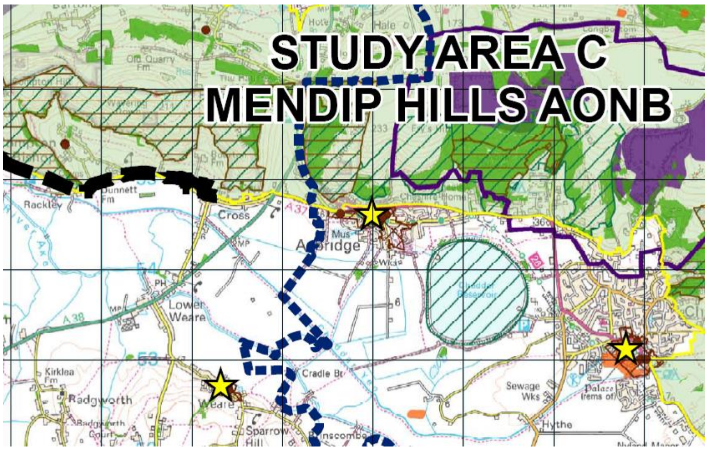
Pros	Cons
Participatory mapping can help us get a better understanding of a local area. It allows you to show us clearly what's important to you.	It's important to think carefully about whether the people in the workshop represent all the different views on an area.
It helps to involve local people more actively in the process of designing new infrastructure.	In contentious situations where people have differing views a workshop can be difficult to organise, or difficult to run productively. Having an independent facilitator can help with this.
Having a digital version of the mapping can open it up to a wider group than a workshop, and is less resource intensive.	Using digital mapping alone can exclude people who don't have access or skills to use online tools.

How will its success be measured?

It is good practice to ask for feedback after any workshop, so the participants can let us know if they have found it useful. Sharing the outputs of the workshop with a wider audience is a good way of checking whether it has captured their understanding too, for example it could be put on the project website, or shared with a reference group.

Good examples

The National Grid in the UK has used participatory mapping on the Hinkley Point C Connection project to find out what local people valued in the area around its proposed

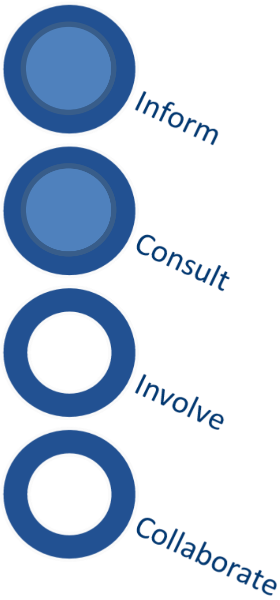


route. The project team arranged workshops with local people affected by the project via the local community forums which had been set up along the route. The lines and colours show features identified by the project team, the stars areas the community felt were particularly important to them.

Similar and related methods

- Deliberative workshops

3.4. Consultation



Formal consultations ask for views on specific topics or proposals for introducing or changing services, infrastructure and policies. Government departments and agencies use public consultations regularly and provide a report and a response to the views expressed. On major infrastructure projects, the consultation process must be robust and fully auditable – that is, it must be possible to track individual responses from receipt to report, whether they are posted, emailed or submitted online.

The topic for consultation must be outlined in clear detail, so that people responding can answer the questions from an informed perspective. The most common method of presenting information is in a consultation document, that can be provided online or in print (or both). Whichever approach is taken, it is important that the questions relate to specific sections of the document, so that people can engage easily with the information provided.

Tips on Questions

Every question asked should serve a specific purpose.
Be careful that questions aren't ambiguous or confusing.
The number of questions should be kept to a minimum.
If you have time and resource, test consultation questions in advance.

Why we would use this tool

Consultation is one of the most common tools used by organisations like EirGrid to understand people's views. It allows us to provide information about the project, and because it is an open process anyone who is interested can respond. We can then review all the feedback systematically and consider whether we can change our proposals in response to it. We can then let people know how we have taken their views into account.

Is this method right for you?

Consultation is best for getting the views of a wide range of people on a proposal, or options, which can be clearly explained. For example at step 2 of our project process we will have a range of options for the project which we can share with you to feedback on before we decide which to take forward to step 3.

What step of the process is it best for?

Consultation can take place at any step but we are most likely to use it at steps 2, 3 and 4, when we have clear proposals that we can communicate.

Who is this engagement best for?
Consultation can be used for any type of audience because it is open to all. It is particularly suited to consulting widely with the public.

More about Consultation	
How many people can it engage?	Because of its open nature a consultation can involve an unlimited number of people, as long as they hear about it. This makes communicating about the consultation extremely important.
What resources does it take?	Preparing for a consultation takes time to make sure all the information we give out is correct and complete. It is then important to think about how you can respond, by letter, email or through a website, and how we will analyse the feedback that is received. The number of responses can be difficult to predict, making it hard to say in advance how long it will take us to consider all the feedback.
How much time does it take?	There is no set time frame for consultation in Ireland, but there are recommended periods in other countries. The European Commission suggests eight weeks, while the UK government specifies twelve. The important thing for us is to be clear about our deadline so you do not miss it.
What kind of content does it work best for?	A consultation can cover all kinds of topics, and because you can respond in your own time, we can provide lots of information. However, we need to bear in mind that when we are consulting we are asking you to give up your time, so we have to make sure we think about how long it may take you to digest the information and respond to the questions.

Pros	Cons
Offers a transparent and accountable method to seek people's views and feedback on a specific issue or proposal.	It can be resource intensive for us to read, analyse and respond to a large number of responses.
Document-based consultation avoids some of the risks of face-to-face processes such as discussions being dominated by a few individuals.	Respondents are self-selecting, rather than representative, so the results of a consultation cannot be generalised to a wider population.
Consultation allows you to respond in your	Unless we make it very clear what can be

own time, rather than at an event where the time is fixed.	influenced by a consultation, we risk putting you off by a process you see as not having the power to influence decisions.
A consultation document can be used to explain complex issues and give background information.	Long consultation documents or a long list of questions can put you off responding.
With a good system in place it is possible for us to handle a large amount of responses securely and efficiently.	If some groups choose not to take part (or do not have the opportunity, for example because of language or literacy barriers) then the findings can be skewed towards particular groups of people.

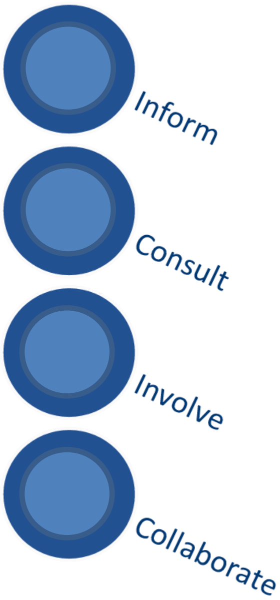
How will its success be measured?
We will often include a question in the consultation about the process, to gauge how satisfied people are but it is also important to understand what they think after a decision is made. We could, for example, follow up with a sample of respondents after the outcome is published, or to test the reaction of our stakeholders in a meeting with a draft decision.

Good examples
We recently consulted on our grid development strategy. People could respond online or visit our local information offices. http://www.eirgrid.com/yourgridyourviews/

Similar and related methods

- Questionnaires

3.5. Deliberative Workshop



Deliberative engagement is based on the principle of exploring a problem, issue or situation in a collaborative way with people. It typically involves sharing detailed information with participants and allowing them to interrogate different perspectives on the issues. This process elicits rich data on views, attitudes and values, as well as insights into the rationale and beliefs underlying particular views. It can be a powerful tool to produce outputs or solutions which address the needs of multiple groups and, where those groups are involved, gain buy-in from them.
The distinctive feature of deliberative work is that it doesn't just look at people's initial responses or existing views, it uses discussion between participants, experts and facilitators to develop new understandings and views on contentious issues.

There are many different ways to use deliberative workshops, but there are some basic requirements:

- They should involve a mix of different stakeholders, to represent the different views on an issue.
- All stakeholders take part equally in the discussion, being an expert doesn't give your view more weight
- Everyone should be free to ask for more information, or challenge the information that is given
- People should be free to change their minds, or not, based on the discussion

In practical terms workshops can feature any number of people, broken into small discussion groups (around 8 participants) with a facilitator each.

Why we would use this tool
A deliberative workshop allows you to work with us to solve a problem or reach a decision. The discussion should allow everyone involved to understand why each party holds the views that they do and show where there is space for compromise.

Is this method right for you?

Deliberative workshops are a good way of getting under the surface of a difference of opinion, for example you might want to use them to have an in depth conversation about what type of infrastructure could be built, with someone independent to run the meeting and ensure all voices are heard.

What step of the process is it best for?
Deliberative processes are particularly good for complex and abstract topics so are best suited to the early steps of a project, or for discussions that go beyond a single project, for example our longer term strategy.

Who is this engagement best for?
Deliberative workshops can involve any kind of stakeholder, or a mix, but they typically involve a small number of people so it is important to think about whether the people in the room can represent all the views we need to consider.

More about Deliberative Workshops	
How many people can it engage?	A deliberative workshop can involve anywhere from eight people to a hundred, but most of the discussion will need to happen in small groups, eight is ideal. More than one deliberative workshop can be run on the same topic to involve a larger number of people. For high profile discussions, selection criteria may need to be employed for choosing participants in the workshops.
What resources does it take?	Deliberative workshops need careful planning to ensure that the information presented is clear, accessible and fair. They also need careful management on the day to ensure everyone has an opportunity to participate, which might mean an independent facilitator to run the meeting.
How much time does it take?	To really get into a topic requires several hours, and some deliberative processes will involve several meetings to allow people time between sessions to reflect on what they've heard. Including planning and recruiting participants a deliberative process can take several months to prepare.
What kind of content does it work best for?	Deliberative techniques are ideal for taking complex information which may be unfamiliar to those taking part and allowing them to get to grips with it in their own time. They are very adaptable and can be used for most topics, although they are not suited to very specific questions, like the location of specific equipment.

Pros	Cons
Deliberative processes can help people get beyond their initial differences to an understanding of why they differ and where there might be common ground.	It's always possible that a deliberative process will reveal that differences in opinion can't be reconciled to reach consensus.

By giving everyone involved time to engage with an issue in depth even very technical or complex information can be covered.	If the information provided isn't accessible or clear then people may find it difficult to take part.
When deliberative processes are run well the conclusions that are reached can be shared more widely, and those not involved can see clearly how decisions were arrived at.	If the information presented doesn't represent all sides in a balanced way then the process may be seen as unfair and question the outcome.
	Deliberative workshops can be lengthy and ask for a lot of people's time and energy. It's common to pay people for their time and expenses, to allow them to take part regardless of their circumstances.

How will its success be measured?

Like all engagement processes it's important to remember that people will have different views on what the 'right' answer is – in a well-run process even if the outcome is not the one we would prefer, we can see that it has been made fairly. This is the real test of whether a process has been collaborative. Like any workshop it is good practice to ask the participants for feedback, and it can also be valuable to share the process and outcomes with the wider community so they can see how the decision has been reached.

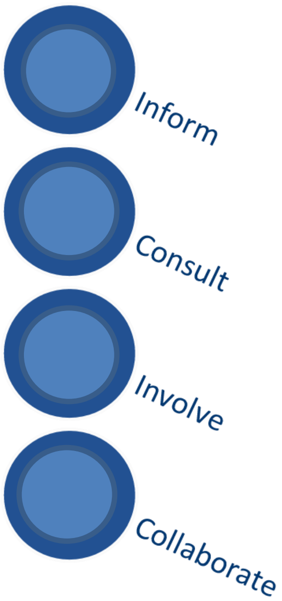
Good examples

The Irish Constitutional Convention was an example of a large scale deliberative process where a group of 100 people, including politicians and members of the public came together to discuss and make recommendations on eight amendments to the Irish constitution. You can read about it at www.constitution.ie

Similar and related methods

- Participatory Mapping Workshop

3.6. Design Workshops



Design workshops are a tool for working collaboratively with a group of people on a design. Instead of asking people for information which is taken away and incorporated into a design, the design is developed together. This can be done at a range of scales, for example it is sometimes used at the level of a whole town or community, or at a smaller scale for a particular building. For us this approach is likely to be most useful for working out detailed siting of equipment in a small area.

For design workshops to be effective it is important to be clear about what is and is not up for debate. For example, there may be technical requirements which limit where a substation can be sited; these need to be communicated clearly to participants so they can take these into account. Design workshops are similar in some ways to participatory mapping, as they allow you to understand not just the practical features which affect a design, but also the ways in which local people value and understand their environment.

Design workshops can be time intensive, so work best with small groups. It's important to have people present who are able to provide the kind of technical information which limits a design.

Why we would use this tool
A design workshop is one of the most direct ways for you to influence our decisions. This is because it allows us to work together to come up with a design that incorporates our constraints and your preferences. It's important to remember that people may have different views on what the best design is, but by taking part in a group discussion everyone can see those views and understand why a particular decision is taken.

Is this method right for you?
Design workshops are great if you want to influence the detail of a project, for example at Step 4 when we're considering where exactly a project should be built.

What step of the process is it best for?
A design workshop only works at the latest steps of a project because it is only then that we can be specific about what needs to be built.

Who is this engagement best for?
This type of workshop can involve local people who live in an area (particularly land owners) as well as organisations with a particular interest like environmental groups.

More about Design Workshops	
How many people can it engage?	The design process is detailed and workshops can be intensive, so it works best with small groups, 6 to 8 participants is ideal. However a workshop could involve several groups, or there could be several workshops on the same design. It's important to think carefully about how to deal with different designs that emerge if there are several workshops.
What resources does it take?	Participants can be recruited using to represent a range of views, on the basis of interest, or because they represent certain communities or interests.
How much time does it take?	A design workshop needs the involvement of technical specialists who can help everyone involved understand what is technically possible. An independent facilitator can be helpful, particularly where there may be different views on the best design.
What kind of content does it work best for?	A design workshop is an intensive process and may take several hours, or even a full day if it covers a large area.

Pros	Cons
A design workshop is one of the most collaborative methods available; it allows you to influence our decisions directly.	It's important to think carefully about who is at the workshop, to make sure that decisions involve all those affected.
	There is a danger with this type of workshop that those with the loudest voices can have more influence on the design. A good facilitator can help to ensure everyone present is heard.

How will its success be measured?

It's important to remember that in a process like this people will have different views on what the 'right' answer is – in a well-run process even if the outcome is not the one we would prefer, we can see that it has been made fairly. This is the real test of whether a process has been collaborative. Like any workshop, it's good practice to ask the participants for feedback. It can also be valuable to share the process and outcomes with the wider community so they can see how the decision has been reached.

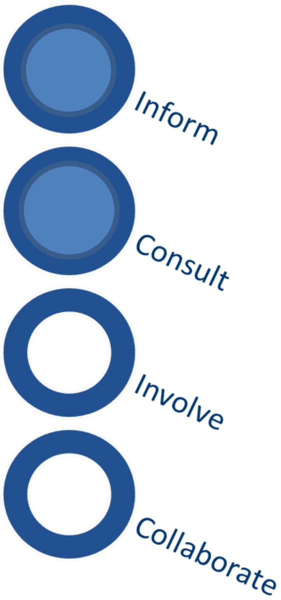
Good examples

EirGrid has used design workshops with landowners to help come up with route alignments which minimise any disruption to their land.

Similar methods:

- Participatory Mapping Workshop
- Deliberative Workshop

3.7. Discussion Packs



A discussion pack is a good way of widening the number of people involved in a project, or of enabling a group of people to run their own session on a topic. They allow community groups to run their own discussions on these issues, and send back notes on the content of the discussion.

A typical discussion pack might contain:

- Information about the project or topic to be discussed. Explanatory diagrams, text or video can be included on a website or a memory stick in the pack.
- A set of questions or prompts to guide the discussion.
- Pre-prepared forms to help record information to send back – this can be on paper or through a web form.
- Information about how the answers sent in will be used to inform our decisions

Discussion packs are particularly useful where there aren't sufficient resources to organise professionally facilitated workshops or to engage with a larger group of people. They can work well when the topic for engagement is complex or contentious, because they allow information to be set out in a clear and concise way to be considered. It can also help communities to get together and discuss an issue in private if there are concerns about confidentiality.

For effective discussion to take place, it's really important that someone leads the discussion and captures notes. Sometimes the organiser will provide specialist guidance or training to those discussion leaders about how to hold a fair and balanced conversation and help them to think about what kinds of people should be invited.

After a discussion pack is used we will make sure that all those involved are informed of the final decision, and how their feedback was taken into account.

Why we would use this tool
A discussion pack allows a group of people to collect their views and feed them in to a decision making process.

Is this method right for you?
A discussion pack is a useful tool if you want several groups to be able to hold their own discussions on an issue and feedback.

What step of the process is it best for?
Discussion packs can be used at any step of a project, with the right information and questions. They are typically used alongside other methods, for example deliberative methods, or even consultation.

Who is this engagement best for?
A discussion pack can work for any type of stakeholders, as long as you can gather in a small group.

More about Discussion Packs	
How many people can it engage?	A discussion pack is typically used for a small group discussion, but there's no limit on the number of groups that can be invited to take part.
What resources does it take?	Preparing the information that goes into the packs is the most resource intensive part of the process for those organising them, but for those taking part it's organising the discussion group.
How much time does it take?	One or two hours is typical for the discussion group, allowing time to get into the detail but not asking for too much of a commitment from those taking part.
What kind of content does it work best for?	A discussion pack can work for many different kinds of discussion, but because there is no way for those taking part to ask questions the topic needs to be explained fully in the pack.

Pros	Cons
Allowing people to organise their own discussion groups can help in situations which are contentious; it means a full discussion can be held privately.	There is considerable effort needed both to produce materials and publicise the discussion packs, as well as to encourage and support self-managed groups to take part properly.
A good discussion pack enables people to have discussions about complex issues in an approachable and accessible format.	If the discussion pack covers complex or technical information it can be difficult for participants to have effective discussions.
If lots of groups can be involved it allows a larger audience who might not otherwise	If some participants have strong views they can be over-represented, and others

have the opportunity to discuss the issues in-depth	may find it difficult to make themselves heard.
	In order for the information to be taken into account in the decision making process it needs to be recorded carefully and objectively.

How will its success be measured?

Each discussion pack can include feedback questions to find out how useful the participants found it. It can also be useful to telephone some or all of the discussion leaders, and some of the participants to get more insight into how the discussions went.

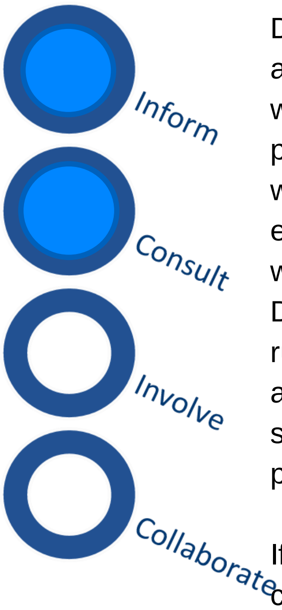
Good examples

More than 75 community groups in West Cumbria in the UK held discussions about the possible disposal of nuclear waste in their area using a discussions pack. The feedback they gave contributed to the decisions of the three local authorities to withdraw or continue the process of looking for a disposal site.

Similar and related methods

- Deliberative Workshop
- Consultation
- Focus groups

3.8. Drop-in sessions



Drop-in sessions are run in local communities, usually over the course of a day, where you can come and speak to a member of the project team when it convenient for you, rather than have to attend (for example) a public meeting at a particular time. They allow the project team to engage with a wide range of people who either may not be able to attend other engagement activities or who have specific issues they want to discuss with the project team.

Drop-in sessions need to be advertised well in advance, and should be run at a variety of times to ensure that as many people as possible are able to take part if they want to. As much information about the project should be available as well, so that people can find out more about the project.

If we run drop in events we will have a plan for how any feedback given can be recorded and feed in to our decision making.

Why we would use this tool

We would use this tool to ensure that our activities give as much opportunity as possible for people to engage with us, regardless of their working patterns or location.

Is this method right for you?

Drop-in sessions are a useful tool to allow a wide range of people to find out more about a project, for example at the end of step 1 when a project is confirmed you may want a series of drop-in sessions in local towns or villages.

What step of the process is it best for?

We would use this tool in steps 2 and 3, when we have specific options or routes to engage people about.

Who is this engagement best for?

This tool is best for members of the public, particularly those who might not be able to participate in other engagement activities or who have specific issues to raise with us.

More about Drop-in Sessions	
How many people can it engage?	Many people can be engaged over the course of a day, but there may well be 'peak' times when lots of people attend the drop in session at once.

What resources does it take?	Project information materials will need to be produced and venues hired.
How much time does it take?	You can stay for as long as you like, and we can hold drop-in sessions at a time that's convenient for people, for example on a Saturday.
What kind of content does it work best for?	This works best for content about specific options and routes for the project.

Pros	**Cons**
People have the opportunity to raise issues and ask questions in an informal setting.	They can be poorly attended if run at the wrong time or location.
They can provide people with dedicated, one-on-one time with the project team and therefore help build trust.	There may be a rush of people at particular times of day and the project team may not be able to speak to everyone.
A good experience of a drop in session can encourage people to become more involved in an engagement process.	If drop in sessions are not well prepared for, they can be worse than no engagement at all.

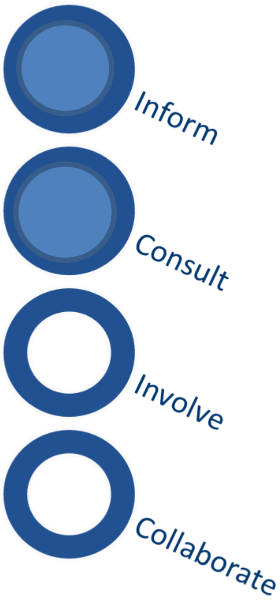
How will its success be measured?
We will have feedback questionnaires available at the drop in sessions, to give people an opportunity to tell us how they have found them. We will also record how many people attend each session at each location.

Good examples
National Resources Wales held drop in sessions for people to ask about felling at Cwmcarn forest and the temporary closure of the forest. They ran these drop in sessions to explain the reasoning behind this decision (to combat a forest disease) and hear feedback and views from the public.

Similar and related methods

- Public meetings
- Outreach processes

3.9. Focus Groups



Focus groups are groups of people (usually 6-12) recruited to reflect a particular population and meeting once, typically for 90 minutes, to discuss a topic. They may involve people with the same characteristics – age, gender or ethnicity for example – or who share attitudes or behaviours – for example, liking cycling or using a specific public service. This allows the organiser to explore a particular topic or viewpoint in a lot of detail. Focus groups are designed to tease out the depths and subtleties of people's views, and the values and emotions that underlie them.

Focus groups need to be carefully run by someone independent of the topic and with the right expertise. It can be useful to have another person there to observe, note how the group responds to particular discussions and take notes. The findings of the focus group are typically analysed in depth by researchers, and presented in a written report.

Focus groups are really a type of research method, designed to find out about people's views rather than involve them in a decision. They can be very helpful in getting to the bottom of an issue or dispute, but need to be used alongside other methods to ensure a range of views are heard.

Why we would use this tool

Focus groups are a tool for gathering information and views on a particular topic, this information then forms part of the evidence on which a decision is made. This makes focus groups a good consultation tool.

Is this method right for you?

Focus groups are a useful tool to use alongside a consultation, for example if you think that there are more detailed issues that EirGrid should understand as we make a decision.

What step of the process is it best for?

Can be used throughout the project but because they are designed to cover a specific topic and involve a small number of people they need to be used alongside other methods.

Who is this engagement best for?

Focus groups involve small groups of people who are carefully selected. These could be members of the public, landowners or representatives of organisations.

More about Focus Groups	
How many people can it engage?	The maximum group size for an effective focus group is around 12 people, but there can be multiple groups on the same topic. Typically, focus groups are selected using a sampling frame, designed to recruit a broadly representative cross-section of the general public or local population.
What resources does it take?	Focus groups require a skilled moderator to run smoothly, and they take some time to set up and recruit. In some cases we may need to provide information about the project in the session. This will take time and resources to produce.
How much time does it take?	Focus groups usually run for about 90 minutes each.
What kind of content does it work best for?	A focus group is a detailed discussion. They're not suited to cover a wide range of content, for example a whole project, but could be used for a specific aspect, like a location or type of technology.

Pros	Cons
Interaction between participants, enabled by the small size of the group and the skill of the facilitator, can be very productive for enabling the facilitator to get to the heart of difficult issues.	Some people have more confidence to participate in groups than others. This can lead to some voices or views being left out of the discussion
This type of focused discussion is good for understanding of *how* people think about issues, and *why* they hold particular views	Focus groups involve small numbers of people, so it's not really possible to generalise the findings unless there are many, carefully sampled groups.
A focus group can help understand the views of a particular community, demographic group who might be difficult to hear otherwise. This might be because of language or literacy barriers, or because they are more comfortable participating with people they have something in common	It can be difficult to find an experienced facilitator with the required language skills for focus groups involving non-English speakers.

with.	
	Focus groups involve a select group of people, so need to be used alongside more open methods to make sure all relevant voices are heard.

How will its success be measured?

We will ask for feedback from those taking part, either at the end of the focus group, or in a follow-up email or call. This helps us understand how they experienced the discussion. It can also be useful to compare the results of a focus group with information gathered in other ways.

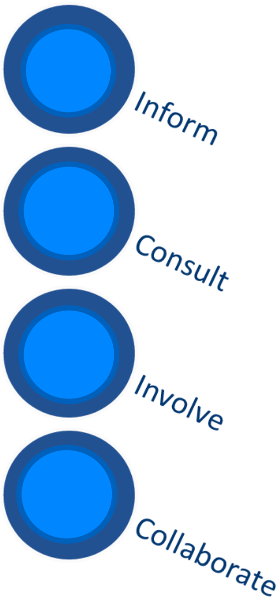
Good examples

In 2013, the Irish Council for International Students undertook a series of focus groups with students in Dublin, Cork and Galway. The purpose of these focus groups was to capture international students' views on the review of Ireland's international education strategy being conducted by the Department for Education and Skills. The focus groups discovered that international students had a generally positive view of higher education in Ireland, but identified a number of areas (such as integration and accommodation) that could be improved and highlighted in Ireland's strategy.

Similar and related methods

- Interviews
- Outreach processes
- Webinars

3.10. Independent Mediation



Independent mediation can help people reach an agreement or settle a dispute. It involves an independent expert guiding the disputing parties through a series of meetings to try and resolve their differences.

The mediator's role is to support communication between the parties, helping them to clarify their position, understand the positions of others, and work towards common ground.

Independent mediation is a wide-ranging method, effective at engaging groups of individuals, organisations and even states. Mediation can take place between two or more parties. It offers techniques and approaches to examine a situation, achieve mutually agreed outcomes and resolve differences.

Why we would use this tool

Independent mediation is a useful tool for resolving disagreement, so we'd only use it when we couldn't agree with a stakeholder on a particular issue, for example deciding part of a route with a landowner. Both parties have to be willing to compromise for mediation to work.

Is this method right for you?

Independent mediation is best when there's a single point of disagreement that other methods of engagement haven't been able to resolve.

What step of the process is it best for?

Mediation is most useful towards the end of a project when there are more specific issues up for discussion.

Who is this engagement best for?

Independent mediation can be used with individuals, small groups, or organisations via representatives. It's a personal approach, involving one to one and group conversations. These could be with members of the public, landowners or representatives of organisations.

More about Mediation	
How many people can it engage?	Independent mediation is most effective face to face, which means it is most often used for small groups, or large groups that can decide on representatives to meet on their behalf.

What resources does it take?	The main resource required is a mediator: it's important to find an experienced and professional mediator who both sides can agree is independent.
How much time does it take?	This method requires flexible time lengths. The timing will depend on the nature of the conflict and the pace of progress; it could take place over several months, or just a single meeting.
What kind of content does it work best for?	Mediation is usually most appropriate when there is some kind of conflict and parties want to reach a consensus. For example, mediation might be an appropriate way of resolving conflict between landowners and EirGrid over the routing of a particular connection.

Pros	Cons
Mediation helps people to set out their points of view clearly and objectively	Mediation requires trained and understanding professionals to lead the process, which can be expensive.
Mediation involves independent specialists, so may be acceptable when other options aren't because of a lack of trust.	Requires commitment from participants to engage in the process, the issues and to follow ground-rules.
Works towards resolution and settlement, not just repeating disagreements.	Mediation can only do so much: some disagreements can't be resolved because neither party will compromise.
Mediation can be particularly useful for long-term conflict resolution, when other methods have failed.	It's difficult to say at the start of a mediation process how long it will take, so is hard to plan into a project.

How will its success be measured?
Mediation aims to reach a mutually acceptable agreement, so its success should be measured in terms of whether participants believe that this has been achieved. This could be assessed informally, or through questionnaires after the mediation process has completed.

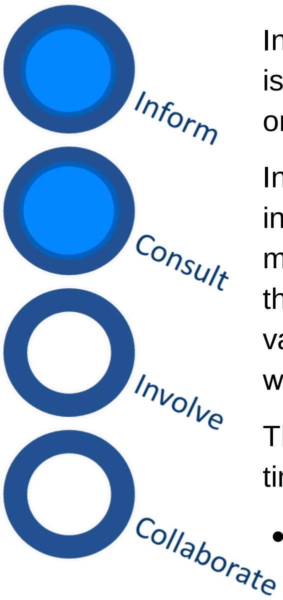
Good examples
In Scotland, a dispute arose between the local authority and community groups in Ratho, near Edinburgh in relation to a planning application. The parties weren't able to agree on whether or not the application should be approved, so a mediator was brought in to see if the disagreement could be resolved. The parties came together through formal

mediation and managed to achieve a resolution that allowed them to move forward. As part of this, the community groups were able to provide important input to the local authority on their concerns about the matter. A key part of the process was re-building trust which ultimately helped improve relations.

Similar and related methods

Mediation is not similar to any other methods in this toolkit.

3.11. Interviews



Interviews involve talking to people to establish an in-depth understanding of issues and experiences. They can also be used to lay the foundations for an ongoing relationship.

Interviews often take place privately in a one-to-one setting. In this situation, individuals may be more likely to speak openly on issues, and share insights they may not otherwise raise in a written process or a group meeting. This makes them useful when addressing with sensitive issues, such as the impacts of various route options on particular home or landowners. They can also be helpful when it's necessary to get input from people who can't come to events.

The structure and tone of interviews will vary depending on their purpose, the time available and the subject. They may take one of the following forms:

- Short interviews are most appropriate for initial background research before embarking on larger process of engagement. The interviewer will ask questions to get a sense of the local context, particular issues, and the sort of subsequent engagement methods that might be most appropriate. These can be very useful for understanding what specific individuals value most in their local area.
- In-depth interviews typically last 45-60 minutes and are useful for exploring the depth and range of individual views. They can be resource intensive and require a skilled interviewer, but can help to gather detailed information, for example about an area.

Why we would use this tool
We use interviews to get detailed information from individuals, and to begin and build relationships with them over the course of the project.

What step of the process is it best for
Interviews can be used at any step of a project, with the right information and questions. Typically, they should be used to supplement other engagement methods.

Is this method right for you?

Interviews are a tool for gathering information: you may prefer a series of interviews to collect views from a small number of people independently, for example when there may be concerns about confidentiality.

Who is this engagement best for?
This engagement is best for individuals or very small groups, usually those directly affected or interested in the project.

More about Interviews	
How many people can it engage?	Interviews engage a relatively small number of people, and one-to-one meetings can take up a lot of resource: video tools can reduce costs, but they are not always appropriate. It is unlikely that interviews will be the only engagement method used.
What resources does it take?	Costs for the organiser could include hiring external interviewers and travel to the location of interviewees, but for the individuals taking part the interviews rarely take up more than an hour.
How much time does it take?	The method is very time intensive for the organisation carrying out the interviews; they require significant preparation and interviewers may need training. Interviews need to be recorded and analysed to make sure all the information is captured. However, for the interviewees the time commitment is usually small.
What kind of content does it work best for?	Interviews are best used for receiving feedback and understanding the perspectives of specific individuals.

Pros	**Cons**
Produce in-depth understanding of individual views	Requires a sensitive and skilled interviewer to engage with participants and capture the data
Ability to produce rich qualitative data covering a range of people's views, experiences and expertise on an issue	Interviewing needs careful preparation to avoid leading or biased questions
Ability to explore issues in depth or gather background information quickly	Collating and presenting interview results can be time-consuming
Face-to-face processes can lay foundations for longer-term relationships	Qualitative data can require detailed analysis
Interviews, particularly one-to-one, can allow the interviewer to reach individuals unwilling or unable to participate in other engagement processes	

How will its success be measured?

We'll usually measure two outcomes when we use interviews. We'll assess whether participants feel that they have been adequately listened to during the interview process, that their views have been taken into account and that they understand how the interviews will inform decision-making. We'll also assess how interviews have affected our project development process.

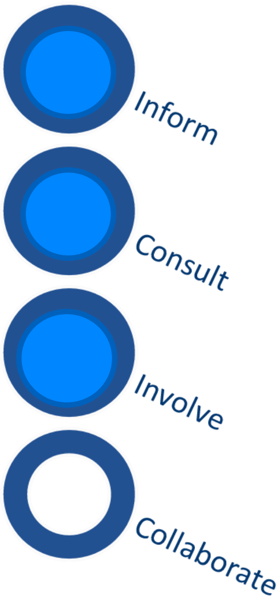
Good examples

Growing Up in Ireland is a study of children in Ireland, which follows 11,000 children over a number of years, run by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. As part of this, the researchers conduct detailed interviews with children and parents, to give a comprehensive picture of the life experience of children and parents and to make sure that participation in the study is enjoyable and meaningful for both children and parents.

Similar and related methods

- Focus groups
- Outreach processes
- Questionnaires

3.12. Reference groups



Reference groups provide a regular channel of communication between decision makers and those affected by their decisions. They tend to involve a relatively small group of people, sometimes only half a dozen, whose job is to keep open the lines of communication for others and ensure that issues are raised promptly and results communicated back to those who have reported them.

Reference groups are particularly useful for:

- establishing a long term working relationship with a local community;
- building trust;
- adding a sense of legitimacy to the process.

There are two types of reference groups: community or stakeholder.

A community reference group reflects the views of the wider community whereas a stakeholder group might reflect particular interests or sectors.

Reference groups may have a specific timescale to deal with a particular set of issues, but can last for many years for ongoing projects or situations. In this case, the membership may change over time, as new interests emerge.

Minutes are taken at each meeting and these are shared with all participants and published where appropriate.

Why we would use this tool
We use a reference group on our larger projects to provide a forum for those affect to engage with EirGrid throughout the lifetime of a project. This allows us ensure that groups and communities are represented formally. Stakeholders can also provide us with feedback on engagement mechanisms.

Is this method right for you?

A reference group is a good tool for a large project that will last a long time. It ensures there is a regular forum for stakeholders to discuss the project, with updates for everyone affected, whether they are members or not.

What step of the process is it best for?
Reference groups are intended to run throughout the entirety of the project, to provide a regular forum that is closely involved with the project throughout.

Who is this engagement best for?

A reference group requires a commitment to take part regularly, potentially over a long period. It is a good way of involving organisations as well as representatives of the community. To work well a reference group cannot be too large, so not everyone affected by a decision can be involved.

More about Reference Groups	
How many people can it engage?	Reference group members will be a relatively small group of people – about a dozen is typical, but they can be larger if the project needs it.
What resources does it take?	For the organiser of the reference group it can mean a lot of time setting up meetings, managing invites and taking minutes. Some reference groups will have an independent person to chair the meetings as well. For those attending a reference group requires a regular time commitment of a few hours. The frequency of meetings will depend on the progress of the project; four times a year is typical, with extra meetings when there are key decisions or changes to the project.
How much time does it take?	Setting up and maintaining a reference group can be time consuming and involve considerable administrative work.
What kind of content does it work best for?	Reference groups work best for projects with several steps and longer time horizons and are less appropriate for small or quickly completed projects where it is possible to keep in touch with those affected directly.

Pros	**Cons**
Provides a regular and reliable channel of communication	Some members of the community may seek to by-pass and isolate the reference group, gradually reducing its effectiveness if there is a lack of trust.
Those involved get to know each other very well and can establish effective working relationships, which may extend into the wider community	The wider community may reject the reference group's recommendations – this is a risk of having people represent their communities.
Early warnings of future problems for a	Maintaining regular contact can become

project can be flagged up and acted upon	very time-consuming in complex situations
Regular contact can be an effective use of resources	There is a responsibility for the members of the reference group to represent their communities; this can be difficult if those you represent have differing views.
Reference group members can provide a channel for engaging with much larger groups of people, for example a group may have a representative from each community affected who can feed back after each meeting.	

How will its success be measured?

We will typically use the reference group as a way of measuring other engagement activities. For example, we might use a reference group to get feedback and views about our proposed engagement programme for a project.

We will also use surveys to ensure that members of the group feel that their participation in the group is worthwhile and that their feedback is being taken into account.

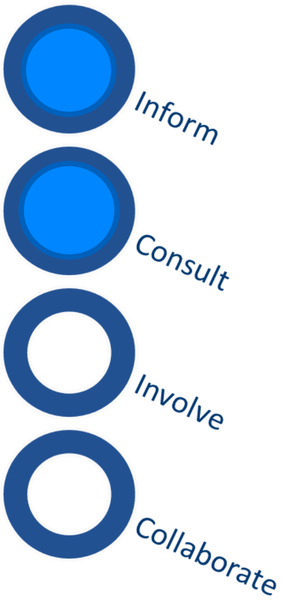
Good examples

The Justice Department in Ireland has a National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan. As part of this, in 2015 they established a Disability Stakeholders Group, to guide the development of the plan, to help identify actions and targets that can be achieved in the three year programme of work and to help monitor delivery against these targets.

Similar and related methods

There are no similar methods to having a reference group.

3.13. Mobile Ethnography (for constraints mapping)



Ethnography is the process of observing and studying people's behaviour and cultures in their natural context. Mobile ethnography encourages participants to use their own digital tools such as mobile phones or video recorders to capture this process. The digital aspect enables researchers (who are not present when the data gathering is going on) to be less noticeable and capture clues about the context that may otherwise not be noted or revealed.

Participants may be asked to download a project specific app to guide them through the process or simply use the software already on their phones. Tasks may range from taking notes to recording video/audio. The data is then submitted to the project team and their feedback analysed. It is a good idea to provide regular feedback to participants about how their data has been used.

Why we would use this tool
We would use mobile ethnography to understand how participants are attached to, or value particular aspects of their local environment.

Is this method right for you?

You might ask us to use ethnography if you wanted us to understand more about a local area, and simpler methods like workshops or interviews haven't worked.

What step of the process is it best for?
Mobile ethnography is best when it's focused on a small geographical area, so usually at the beginning of a project the potential project area will be too large.

Who is this engagement best for?
This can work for anyone, but particularly for those who live and work in an area, like landowners and local citizens.

More about Ethnography	
How many people can it engage?	Anybody can participate using this engagement method, provided they have access to the necessary mobile technology.

What resources does it take?	Depends on the approach employed and the level of interest. For those taking part it can be as little as a few minutes to submit a picture or comment, but it works best when people spend more time, for example a few minutes a day for a week or two. All data received from participants will need to be looked at by relevant engineering and environmental staff, which can be resource intensive for our team.
How much time does it take?	Mobile ethnography can be an ongoing activity or only take place within a highly defined time period.
What kind of content does it work best for?	It works best for written, photographic and video material about a specific place.

Pros	**Cons**
Ethnography can help us to really understand a place, not just in technical details or words, but through pictures or videos.	In sensitive situations people may not want to share pictures or video – it's important that everyone taking part is clear about how information will be used.
Because this can be done digitally it can be an efficient way to engage with a lot of different people at the same time.	The downside of this is that not everyone has access to a smartphone or digital camera.
Experiences/thoughts can be quickly captured and shared so nuances are not lost due to fading memories	This approach is only as good as the data that people share, so it relies on people getting involved.
	It can be difficult to interpret what people share.

How will its success be measured?

We would measure the success of this method by asking participants how satisfied they are with how the mobile ethnography is implemented. We would also seek to demonstrate how the analysis of mobile ethnographic data has informed the decision-making process at the step for which it is used.

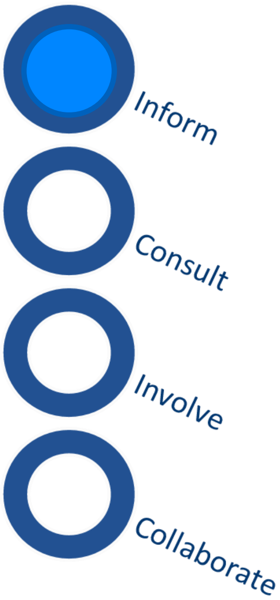
Good examples

The UK Government Digital Service used mobile and digital ethnography techniques when designing the new Government-wide website. They recruited users to provide mobile feedback regularly on different versions of their design, providing an account of how they had used this feedback on a fortnightly basis.

Similar and related methods

- Interviews

3.14. Newsletters



Newsletters are one of the cheapest and most effective methods to keep people informed throughout a project, though they are a communication, rather than engagement tool.

Newsletters can help raise awareness of an issue. Describing a project clearly in a newsletter helps to generate interest in other activities. For example, newsletters can outline opportunities for public involvement, such as workshops and feedback on the results of activities. Newsletters can include opportunities for feedback too, such as 'below the line' comments on online newsletter.

Newsletters should be short and sharp: two pages are plenty. Regularity and quality are more important than quantity. The style should be lively and engaging and include images where possible – for example, pictures of your team, or of people involved in activities. Newsletters can also spread information about other issues of local interest in addition to the particular project being explained.

Contact details should be included for where people can find out more about the project and there should be signposts to additional information (such as the project website).

Why we would use this tool
We use newsletters to keep members of the community informed of the latest updates and progress about our projects.

What step of the process is it best for?
We would typically use this tool between Steps 1 and 3, in advance of making our final scheme decision.

Who is this engagement best for?
This method is best for communicating with local communities.

More about Newsletters	
How many people can it engage?	There is no limit to the number of people that can be engaged with this method.
What resources does it take?	If professionally written and produced, newsletters can become expensive. It is useful to consider using electronic newsletters if you are communicating with a very large number of people.
How much time	The project team will need to spend time developing and agreeing

does it take?	content for the newsletter and liaising with designers.
What kind of content does it work best for?	Newsletters can only be used to convey relatively brief information. They should not be used to convey very complex or lengthy information about a project.

Pros	Cons
Straightforward way to keep people informed and encourage further contacts	Not an interactive process so it cannot be regarded as engagement
A relatively cheap - depending on quality and medium - means to reach large numbers of people	Impersonal and will be discarded immediately by a significant number of recipients
Enables the project team/client to control the flow of information	Printing and distribution costs will raise the price of paper-based newsletters.
An excellent complement to other forms of engagement	Not suitable if the tasks require participants to respond to complex qualitative questions
Printed newsletters can be distributed in local venues, such as GP surgeries, libraries or shops	In areas with diverse populations, translation costs could be expensive

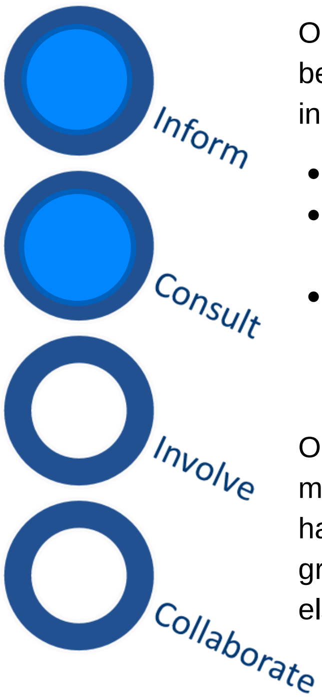
How will its success be measured?
One way we will look at the success of newsletters is by the level of knowledge of the project we encounter from the public in exhibitions and other consultation activities.

Good examples
EirGrid frequently uses newsletters on projects, such as the North-South 400kv Interconnection Development, where they are used to keep local communities informed about the project's progress.

Similar and related methods

- Social media

3.15. Outreach Process



Outreach processes provide a way to reach people who are less likely to be involved in other engagement methods, for a number of reasons, including:

- high levels of distrust and suspicion, perhaps for historical reasons;
- the sensitivity of the topic, which may mean that people are more comfortable taking part as a group, and in their own venues;
- people may be prevented through their physical circumstances (e.g. disability, language barriers, and cultural norms) from attending public events.

Outreach processes usually involve meetings with small groups, but meetings with individuals, families and even large groups can also happen. In all cases, outreach process mean going to where the target group is, either online or offline, rather than inviting them to travel elsewhere.

Why we would use this tool
We would use this engagement method when we recognise that there is a community need for us to run engagement activities as close to a person's residence as possible.

What step of the process is it best for?
Outreach processes can be used at any point during the development of a project, but are most used when there are specific proposals to engage on (steps 2 and 3).

Who is this engagement best for?
This engagement is best used for the groups outlined above.

More about Outreach Processes	
How many people can it engage?	Usually you would engage relatively small numbers of people with this method, but it can be scaled up to large meeting sizes.
What resources does it take?	Particularly in the early steps, outreach processes can be time-consuming and labour-intensive to set-up and manage. We would need to be confident that we had enough resources to run several groups if this was needed.
How much time does it take?	Can take a long time to establish a working relationship.

What kind of content does it work best for?	Outreach processes can help to establish contact and build trust, but this is only the first step of an engagement strategy. For this reason, outreach processes are often used in conjunction with other engagement methods such as interviews, surveys and workshops.

Pros	Cons
Can help you to reach people who may be difficult or impossible to engage using other methods	It may be difficult to provide the support needed in some instances. For example, some groups may only want to meet with women or may need a facilitator who speaks a particular language
Meeting with the same individuals or groups over a period of time and gradually building trust may reveal insights/findings/issues that could otherwise be missed	Sometimes there may be peer pressure to follow the group view, and it can be difficult for somebody with a different view from the group to speak up.
Good for building relationships with specific individuals and groups	Managing multiple groups can make this process extremely resource intensive. If groups do not receive similar attention, there may be perceptions of some groups being favoured.
Good for building relationships across whole communities	It can take a long time to reach someone who can facilitate access to a group: small charities and voluntary organisations have very limited resources, often work part time and are staffed by volunteers.
Outreach processes can be cost efficient, as you don't need to hire venues and may not need to provide incentives	Building trust can be a slow process which involves a huge investment of time.

How will its success be measured?
We will look at whether the groups or communities we are engaging with feel like they have been listened to and that their feedback has been taken into account. This can be done informally by the project team or through questionnaires after the outreach processes.

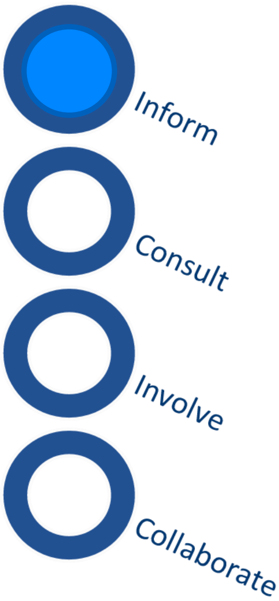
Good examples

Trafford Adult Social Care used outreach processes to engage better with South Asian communities. They held regular events such as weekly drop-ins and monthly meetings in their communities to build trust and share information. This led to these communities becoming more involved in designing and developing services for South Asians in Trafford.

Similar and related methods

- Public meetings
- Drop in sessions

3.16. Public meetings



A public meeting is open to all, in contrast to a workshop where select participants are invited. The nature of the meeting also determines the difference between a public meeting and a workshop. They are often used to inform a specific interest group, such as people living in a particular neighbourhood or with a relationship to a particular topic, about a planned development or policy changes.

If the public meeting is well designed and prepared, and an independent and experienced facilitator or chair runs the process, they can be very effective. Designing the process in consultation with some of those likely to attend can help to make sure that the right topics are covered and any information provided is clear. We make sure there are people involved who can answer different types of question on all the topics being discussed.

Public meetings can be effective in enabling a wide range of views to be expressed, questions asked, and answers given to the mass majority. They also demonstrate a willingness to talk to a wide audience and face public criticism.

Why we would use this tool
We will use public meetings to offer members of a community, in a particular area, the opportunity to come and hear about our plans for a project and offer their comments back to us.

What step of the process is it best for?
We would use this in Steps 2 and Step 3, when we have an idea of the options or the likely route, so have a better sense of which communities may be affected.

Who is this engagement best for?
This engagement method is best used for local communities who will, or may, be affected by a particular proposal.

More about Public Meetings	
How many people can it engage?	Large numbers of people can be engaged using this method, with the only practical limit being the size of venue. It is important to bear in mind that public meetings may only succeed in engaging a certain *type* of person, so other engagement methods should be considered as well.
What resources does it take?	Public meetings are a cost effective method of engagement, with the major costs being venue hire and (if necessary) an independent chair for the meeting.

How much time does it take?	Public meetings need to be prepared for by the project team and time should also be allocated for collating and responding to feedback received in the meeting.
What kind of content does it work best for?	Public meetings are best used when there are specific plans that you intend to share.

Pros	**Cons**
Public meetings offer an opportunity for people to raise issues, ask questions, and directly challenge those in positions of authority.	Public meetings can be poorly attended or dominated by an unrepresentative minority.
Public meetings are a good way to float ideas and explore possible proposals before they are formalised.	What is just an idea may be deliberately interpreted as a definite proposal, however carefully the difference is explained.
Public meetings can provide opportunities for several different organisation or groups to discuss their different roles and areas of cooperation.	Badly run public meetings can be counter-productive if some views dominate the discussion and therefore others cannot be heard.
A good experience of a meeting can encourage people to become more involved in an engagement process.	A bad experience can make people think the whole engagement process is useless or bogus.
They can be an excellent way to communicate with large numbers of people.	Public meetings can become confrontational when the topic is controversial.

How will its success be measured?
We will look at whether participants in the public meeting feel we have communicated our plans well to them and believe that their feedback will be listened to. Feedback forms may be used to capture this more formally.

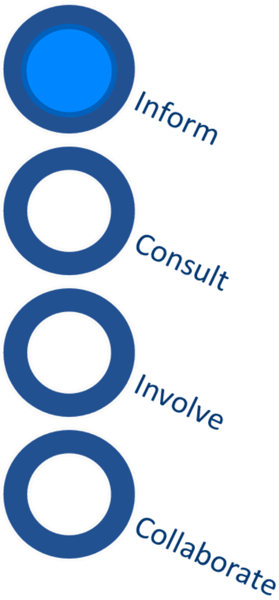
Good examples
The Irish Open Government Partnership held a series of public meetings in 2013 on developing Ireland's first Open Government Partnership Action Plan. These set up

autonomous working groups, each designed to provide feedback from civil society to the Irish Government on specific elements of the action plan.

Similar and related methods

- Outreach processes
- Deliberative workshop

3.17. Site Visits



Sometimes, there is no substitute for getting people out, and into the place where a specific problem is happening, or for arranging a meeting where something is planned. This might be a development site, a building to be renovated, or a service such as a school or hospital.

Site visits allow us to show how a real location might be affected by a proposal or to illustrate a process, for example in a science laboratory. They are also dynamic; people can mix and talk while focusing on the issues rather than on each other. With an interesting speaker to point out the salient issues, and perhaps provide refreshments on site, people will have conversations they would not usually have in a public meeting. People may see things differently or pick out different features on site, than they would otherwise.

Why we would use this tool
We would use this engagement tool to give participants a better understanding about specific options, route corridors or alignments; to explore with them the particular impacts of design decisions and to receive feedback and knowledge from participants about options.

What step of the process is it best for?
Site visits will be used in Steps 2 and 3, when there are specific options or routes under considerations.

Who is this engagement best for?
This engagement method can be used for the public or stakeholders. If public, there is a need to think about selection criteria to ensure manageable numbers.

More about Site Visits	
How many people can it engage?	Only small groups of people should be invited to site visits, so participant selection is crucial.
What resources does it take?	The only resource used is project team time.
How much time does it take?	Site visits can usually be undertaken in an afternoon.
What kind of content does it work best for?	Site visits are appropriate when there are specific locations that participants can visit and gain insights that would not be possible without a physical appreciation of the site.

How will its success be measured?

We will look at how satisfied participants are with the information provided at the site visit, and check that participants feel they are being listened to and are genuinely influencing proposals.

Pros	**Cons**
Excellent for helping people to move from the abstract to the concrete	Visits to busy or noisy locations can make conversations difficult
They provide opportunities for informal engagement while maintaining a focus on the issues	Bad weather may reduce numbers or even make a visit impractical
They may allow people who feel intimidated about speaking in a more formal setting to have their say	Health and safety issues need to be assessed and managed
It gives you direct access to the team who are working on the project.	If the proposal of a site visit stirs a lot of interest there may have to be several visits or restrictions placed on who can attend
Dynamic and interactive form of engagement as it allows people to visualise issues and proposals and ask questions.	The logistics of organising site visits can be quite demanding and so it may be possible only to involve a relatively small number of people.

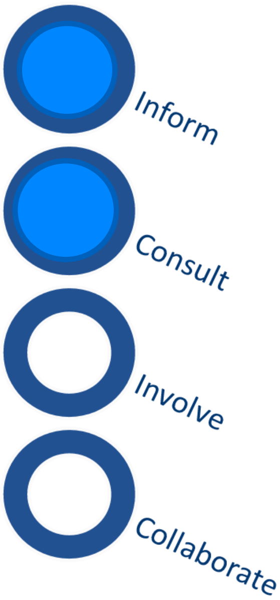
Good examples

The UK's National Grid took a group of stakeholders on a site visit to show them an underground cable being installed. This was to give them an insight into the level of work and potential disruption that can be involved in this particular approach to engineering electricity transmission.

Similar and related methods

There are no methods similar to site visits in this toolkit.

3.18. Social Media and Digital Tools



Social media and digital tools allow you to send and receive short succinct messages to and from individuals and groups, supporting the engagement process. They can be used as a channel for people to provide feedback, including reactions to information, questions or observations or to receive brief updates, questions, and prompts about an engagement topic.

Social media and digital tools enable participants to communicate with each other and with wider groups of people. They can be used during other engagement processes, such as workshops or public meetings, to provide information through links or images. They can be a useful 'help line' too, for example participants can use a twitter hashtag or handle if they have any problems with accessing consultation documents.

Tools include:

- Facebook; a social networking service which can inform and engage users in different topics and discussions. Facebook has a large audience which opens up opportunity for more people to engage and debate certain issues.
- Twitter; a social networking service which enables users to send and read short 140-character messages. This service can be used to provide information, open up engagement in topics, as well as hosting Q&As. The use of hashtags on Twitter can be a useful way to engage and capture thoughts of many different people at once.
- WhatsApp; an instant-messaging application for smartphones. This can be used to send information through Text SMS, images, video, and audio messages.
- YouTube; a video-sharing service which allows users to post videos of themselves or their surroundings. This could be used to inform and engage, as well as capture thoughts from participants.
- Vine; a video-sharing service which allows users to post short videos of themselves or their surroundings. This could be used to capture initial thoughts and concerns from participants.
- Pinterest; a photo sharing website which allows users to upload photos and text to virtual community pin boards. This could be used to capture visual data from participants, as well as sharing information for projects.
- LinkedIn; A business-orientated social networking service. LinkedIn has forums and community boards which can be used to stakeholders to engage online in their specialised subject or interest.

Why we would use this tool
We would use this tool primarily as a method of communicating with the public. It will usually complement our other communication activities, such as newsletters and posters. We may also elicit feedback from the public using social media.

What step of the process is it best for?
Social media can be used throughout a project's lifetime as an ongoing means of communication.

Who is this engagement best for?
Anyone can engage using this method, provided that they have internet access. We will complement the use of social media with traditional forms of communication for non-internet users.

More about Social Media	
How many people can it engage?	We can engage any number of people using social media, depending on their willingness to engage using this method.
What resources does it take?	Social media takes relatively little resource. The cost of using social media can increase if targeted advertising is used.
How much time does it take?	Designing social media content requires some project team time to tailor existing or new information to this specific channel.
What kind of content does it work best for?	Social media works best for communicating relatively brief information or for signposting to more comprehensive sources of information. The length of feedback received is also likely to be limited, so this should be borne in mind when designing engagement activities using social media.

Pros	Cons
Succinct and doesn't overwhelm the user with too much information	Not suitable for large amounts of information
Interactive: facilitates quick response	Social networks vary in popularity by demographic (e.g. by nationality or by age)
They can widen access to other processes, for example by allowing people to follow Twitter feeds from a conference or seminar that they are unable to attend	Difficult to relay emotion, especially as messages are usually limited in length

Flexible: can be accessed in the moment (many of these applications can be accessed on a mobile)	Would need support staff to monitor and moderate the chosen social media sites
Useful for putting information into digestible chunks making it quick to absorb (especially Twitter)	Different networks will have a specific user group, and understanding this will help you to decide which channel to use

How will its success be measured?

Our measurement of social media techniques depend on the platform being used. Most social media platforms have sophisticated tools for measuring the reach of our communication, particularly when using their paid-for options. We will generally attempt to measure both the reach and the level of feedback received when assessing the success of our social media use.

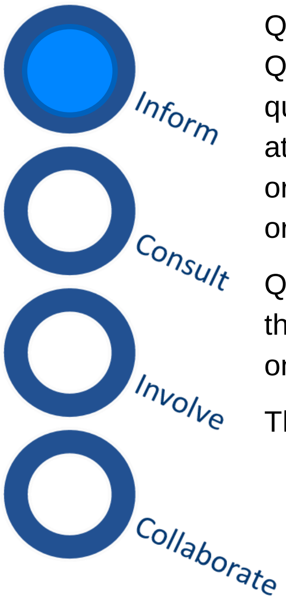
Good examples

An Garda Síochána uses a variety of social media platforms to inform and engage with the communities they serve. They provide information on traffic and community-related activities through separate Twitter accounts and host a Facebook page which showcases the range of activity across their police force. They also used their social media platforms to engage with the public and respond to feedback and criticisms, as well as an alert service – for example, they use Flickr to post images of stolen items to increase the chances that they can be returned to their owners.

Similar and related methods

- Newsletters

3.19. Questionnaires



Questionnaires are used to collect data on a particular issue. Questionnaires can include closed (quantitative) or open (qualitative) questions. They are used to canvass views or to provide insight into the attitudes of different groups – for example, men or women, young people or older people. Questionnaires can be run online, on paper, face-to-face or by telephone.

Questionnaires can be useful tools for informing engagement activities as they can usefully provide initial information on people's views. However, on their own they do not constitute real engagement.

There are different types of surveys, including:

- **Deliberative:** gives people information before asking their opinion;
- **Qualitative**: asks people to respond in their own words;
- **Quantitative**: asks people to react to various propositions by ticking boxes or marking answers against a scale.

Why we would use this tool
We may use questionnaires to try and collect quantitative and qualitative information about the views of different communities and groups. This may be to understand how they feel about a particular project or strategy in advance of other engagement activities. We will also use questionnaires to evaluate other engagement activities.

What step of the process is it best for?
Surveys and questionnaires can be used at any step during the project.

Who is this engagement best for?
This type of engagement is best used for providing initial understanding of the views of the general public and particular communities.

More about Questionnaires	
How many people can it engage?	There is no limit to the number of people who can be engaged using questionnaires. If the sample needs to be representative, then the sample should be sufficiently large and using a representative sampling method.
What resources does it take?	This depends on the questionnaire method employed – for example, over the telephone, in person, over the Internet, or via the post – each of which have their own particular resource implications.
How much time	Time will need to be taken to design questionnaires and collate

does it take?	and analyse the results.
What kind of content does it work best for?	Questionnaires will only elicit quite limited feedback on a narrow range of questions. In engagement, they are always a preliminary activity to understand perspectives better, rather than an engagement activity in themselves.

Pros	Cons
Can be focused on specific issues	Even though surveys allow us to collect qualitative information, they are not suitable for complex questions that require long answers
Can be used to gather information from large numbers of people	If respondents are self-selecting, the results will not be statistically significant
Ability to establish information that can be re-tested later on to see if results change over time	One-time questionnaires produce only a snapshot of participants' opinions
Can be adapted to most issues	Writing a good questionnaire requires skill; a poor format can produce misleading results
Surveys can be delivered online, through the post, on the phone or face-to-face, which makes them very flexible	The choice of delivery method can affect the accuracy of responses, or the ability of some groups of people to take part, for example online.

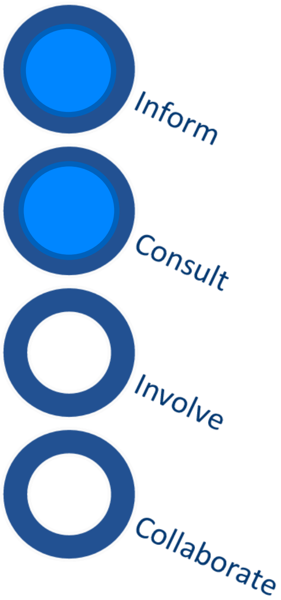
How will its success be measured?
We will build evaluation questions into our questionnaires, to ensure that we are asking the right questions in them. When using questionnaires to provide us with an initial understanding of people's views, we will then compare this initial understanding with our later conclusions, to test how effective our questionnaires were.

Good examples
NHS England used questionnaires to identify patients' views and initial attitudes on local and strategic group plans in London. This informed their plans for the next round of engagement on the future of health services in the London area.

Similar and related methods

- Consultation

3.20. Webinars



Short for web-based seminar, webinars are interactive processes that can involve a presentation, a workshop, a seminar, or even an event broadcast over the internet (a webcast).

Interaction often takes in the form of polling, question & answer sessions or a discussion. Webinars can be an educational tool, a debating table, and a networking opportunity.

Why we would use this tool
We would use webinars in a variety of different ways. We may use them as a way of providing information about our project or use them more interactively, as a way of eliciting feedback from participants in the webinar.

What step of the process is it best for?
Webinars can be used at any step in a project's development.

Who is this engagement best for?
This engagement is best used with a computer-literate audience who feel comfortable accessing the Internet.

More about Webinars	
How many people can it engage?	There is no upper limit on the number of people who can be engaged using webinars, though some software packages place constraints on the total number of participants in any one webinar.
What resources does it take?	Webinars are cost-effective, and are able to achieve a greater reach at a lower cost.
How much time does it take?	Webinars are time efficient. Project team time has to be devoted to preparing for them and delivering them. If a more interactive methodology is used for webinars, then thought must be given to the analysis of any elicited feedback.
What kind of content does it work best for?	Webinars work best when there is a concrete plan, option or question for the project team to engage or communicate on.

Pros	**Cons**
Convenient: participants who cannot or do	Technical difficulties: operating systems

not want to travel can take part from the comfort of their own home, providing they have the right technology	and internet speeds vary significantly which could disadvantage some participants
Most webinars can be recorded, archived and replayed at a later date	The presenter has no control over the audience’s environment and cannot ensure that participants stay focused during the entire session
Opportunity for webinars to be interactive	Participation requires scheduled attendance and there is a risk of low turnout
Flexibility for participants to be as involved as appropriate	Too many participants may stop structured debate or questioning

How will its success be measured?

We can use simple polls in webinars, providing the project team with instant feedback on how useful participants have found the webinar. We will also offer the opportunity for participants to provide further feedback via email.

Good examples

As part of its Digital Discussion Panel, Sciencewise (the UK body for involving the public in science policy making) uses webinars to gain rapid public input on challenging issues involving science and technology. Two hour long discussions take place using the webinar platform, with a trained facilitator, policy makers and experts.

Similar and related methods

- Public meetings
- Social media

Chapter 4: What to do Next

The toolkit is designed to give the public, our stakeholders, and our project teams, the information we all need to decide together what kind of engagement best suits each project. If you'd like to talk to one of our team about any of our projects please get in touch.

Customer Relations Team: (01) 702 6642

For other contact details, and more information about our work please visit our website at: www.eirgridgroup.com