



Photo Credit: Elisa Obermann

6

STAKEHOLDER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

6 - STAKEHOLDER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Author: Dr. John Colton

WHAT DOES THIS MODULE COVER?

The purpose of this module is to provide information on concepts, processes, and tools to support effective community and stakeholder engagement related to tidal energy development. Because tidal energy development is in its infancy, lessons learned from other renewable energy sectors provide significant insight into effective community and stakeholder engagement.

IS THIS MODULE FOR YOU?

This module is for anyone who is interested in better understanding the range of stakeholder issues and how to determine stakeholders associated with tidal energy development. It also provides information on how to effectively plan a stakeholder engagement strategy.

This module outlines a series of steps and methods on how to effectively commence and manage a stakeholder engagement process. In doing so, it addresses several key issues:

- setting out principles for engagement,
- identifying how to define and locate stakeholders,
- identifying stakeholder concerns and issues,
- engaging First Nations,
- setting out an engagement strategy, and
- choosing the right tools and methods for effective engagement.

MODULE ORGANIZATION

This module is organized into several themes. The first part of the module focuses on principles of engagement, such as transparency and respect. The module then discusses methods for identifying stakeholders, including First Nation stakeholders. Methods and strategies for stakeholder engagement are then discussed.

6.0 - INTRODUCTION

Effective community and stakeholder engagement will likely determine the success of a tidal energy project. There is no better strategy for mitigating the risk associated with developing a tidal energy project than to develop a stakeholder engagement process that is inclusive of all stakeholders.

Given that communities represent a diverse range of interests and stakeholder perspectives, this module does not differentiate between communities and other stakeholders.

Many examples used to discuss engagement are drawn from offshore and onshore wind energy projects, as development of tidal energy is in its early stages. Included in this module are principles and strategies for effective community and stakeholder engagement.

6.1 - TIDAL ENERGY DEVELOPMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

Tidal energy projects will require approval from various levels of government prior to proceeding (Module 4- The Regulatory Regime for Tidal Energy). Because of this, organizations, including local government and industry, spend a great deal of time engaging stakeholders as they move through the regulatory process. Successful development of a tidal energy project will also depend on the support of the local community, businesses, and other organizations. Past experience has clearly demonstrated that neglecting these stakeholders in the early stages of the development process imperils the success of the project in both the short and long term.

The purpose of community and stakeholder consultation is to enable all stakeholders to make their views known and to work together to ensure they are addressed.

DISCUSSION: WHAT IS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?

Community engagement includes following a process that ensures communities determine local priorities and all stakeholder groups are represented. Citizens need to be at the center of the community engagement process. This process ensures communities are empowered and have control over their resources and the decision-making process. For further information, see: Tamarack: An Institute for Community Engagement. <http://tamarackcommunity.ca/>

6.1.1 - PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF TIDAL ENERGY

Stakeholders form opinions on renewable energy developments based on their perception of the environmental, socioeconomic, and emotional impacts the proposed development has on them and their area. Opinion studies conducted in Europe and the US generally indicate the public is supportive of developing alternative energy sources, specifically onshore and offshore wind energy. Public acceptance of offshore wind energy in Denmark and the UK show strong trends in the following topics:

- 1) The public is in favour of offshore wind energy, including in the region where they reside.
- 2) Visual impacts appear to be the primary issue of public concern.
- 3) NOISE is a concern here; information can rectify/address this concern.
- 4) Offshore wind park development appears to gain public approval as the community is exposed to operational projects.
- 5) Early local input to the planning process is critical to gain public acceptance.

Successful development of a tidal energy project will also depend on the support of the local community, businesses, and other organizations.

TIDAL PROJECTS: HOW TO GET A COMMUNITY'S THUMBS UP

In Tidal Today, author Elisabeth Jeffries discusses the importance of early community engagement. She notes that nearly half of the applications for wind farms are rejected. While this is most often due to technical reasons, many projects are rejected due to local opposition. It makes sense to engage stakeholders. Articulating the benefits of tidal energy projects and addressing stakeholders' concerns are paramount. Doing this in the early stages is critical. Involving stakeholders in the naming of the energy project might be one useful suggestion for engaging stakeholders.

For more information, see Tidal Today, April 2012.

Coastal and offshore regions are used by a multitude of users, often with differing interests, which may result in space-use conflicts. Potential space-use conflicts common to all types of offshore renewable energy projects include:

- commercial fishers,
- subsistence fishing,
- marine recreational activities (boating, fishing, sea kayaking, diving, surfing, etc.),
- sand and gravel extraction,
- oil and gas infrastructure,
- navigation,
- ecotourism (whale watching),
- aquaculture, and
- proximity of designated conservation areas and/or other renewable energy projects.

VIGNETTE: REAL TIME INTERACTIVE MAPPING TO IDENTIFY STAKEHOLDER CONCERNS

Using a real-time interactive mapping device (touch- table) and stakeholder workshops, researchers gathered data and facilitated negotiation of spatial trade-offs at a potential site for tidal renewable energy off the Mull of Kintyre (Scotland). Conflicts between the interests of tidal energy developers and those of commercial and recreational users of the area were identified, and use preferences and concerns of stakeholders were highlighted. Social, cultural, and spatial issues associated with conversion of a common pool to a private resource were also revealed. The method identified important gaps in existing spatial data and helped to fill these through interactive user inputs. The workshops developed a degree of consensus between conflicting users on the best areas for potential development, suggesting this approach should be adopted during Marine Spatial Planning (MSP).

Source: Alexander, et al. (2012). Interactive marine spatial planning: Siting tidal energy arrays around the Mull of Kintyre. PLoS ONE 7(1)

While people are generally supportive of renewable energy development, often a “Not in My Backyard” (NIMBY) effect occurs. Therefore, it is important to learn about the stakeholders, in particular the community stakeholders. Do your homework first and consider the types of effects on the following:

- onshore and coastal use—both locally and regionally;
- marine ecosystems;
- possible tax increases;
- greater tax revenues;
- employment opportunities;
- landowner opportunities;

- tourism development;
- service industry (accommodations and food) opportunities;
- local commercial and recreational fishery;
- local and regional economic development opportunities; and
- opportunities for local businesses/suppliers to transition to supplying new economic development opportunities.

6.2 - UNDERSTANDING PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

Credibility is important to the process of stakeholder engagement. Without credibility, the support needed to review tidal energy projects, explore site locations, administer development agreements, and develop a management plan will become increasingly difficult over time. Engaging stakeholders early and continuing engagement throughout the duration of the project can establish credibility. Providing access to research and other relevant material for stakeholders is important as well. Examples from wind energy development describe the impacts of the development process where credibility has been lost among certain stakeholder groups. In these cases, development was delayed significantly or stopped altogether. Among the most often cited issue in these cases is the lack of transparency.

Other key principles to guide the stakeholder engagement process include:

Respect – Acknowledging the inherent worth, dignity, diversity, and the abilities of individuals, families, community groups and businesses to contribute to decision-making processes.

Transparency – Beginning the entire process by stating the specific objectives and expectations of what is possible and what level of commitment is sought.

Inclusive Participation – Recognizing the broader community, and making efforts to reach out to marginalized groups and engage them in an appropriate and empowering process.

Coordination – Managing and implementing engagement initiatives to minimize duplication and the potential of ‘consultation fatigue.’

Information for Participation – Sharing information that is objective, clear, sufficient, timely, and in appropriate formats such as Fact Sheets.

Appropriate Timelines – Recognizing that engagement should begin as early as possible and should have a defined period for each stage.

Responsiveness – Respecting that decision-makers must use community input as a key source of information and expertise.

While people are generally supportive of renewable energy development, often a “Not in My Backyard” (NIMBY) effect occurs.

FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPT: TRANSPARENCY IN STAKE- HOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Transparency is a process in which all decision-making is carried out publicly. This includes public and other stakeholder access to all background documents for and against a proposed project, and all final decisions; additionally, the decision making process itself is made public and remains publicly archived.

The importance of the process in planning and conducting successful stakeholder collaboration cannot be overemphasized. Good-faith efforts are often derailed because the parties are not skilled in the collaboration and facilitation process, and because insufficient attention is given to designing and managing it.

Accountability – Demonstrating how and where stakeholder input received was incorporated into decision-making.

Evaluation – Ensuring engagement efforts are meeting established objectives and sharing best practices to improve future engagement activities.

Additional principles drawn from the United Kingdom's experience in wind energy development include:

- Responsibility for the process and the feedback needs to be shared - Many consultation processes fail because needs of stakeholders are not met or because participants feel they have not been kept fully informed of what has been done with their ideas and opinions. It is up to those convening the process to ensure everyone's needs are met and to take responsibility for disseminating the results and information about how their input is linked to decision-making processes.
- The use of independent professional facilitators should be considered. Independent facilitators can ensure that meetings are conducted impartially, and as balanced and even-handed as possible.

Framing the process around these or other agreed-upon principles is important. Having the conversation with other stakeholders about these principles is even better.

The importance of the process in planning and conducting successful stakeholder collaboration cannot be overemphasized. Good-faith efforts are often derailed because the parties are not skilled in the collaboration and facilitation process, and because insufficient attention is given to designing and managing it. Using an inclusive, transparent approach during project development and implementation will help build the necessary relationships.

6.3 - IDENTIFYING STAKEHOLDERS

Identifying your stakeholders, seeking methods for meaningful engagement, and working to understand their values and perspectives is good stakeholder engagement. A stakeholder can be defined as any person, group, or organization that has a stake in a tidal energy development and who can affect and be affected by the actions taking place prior, during, or after the development, and also affect or be affected by the objectives and policies involved (EquiMar, 2011). At the initial stages of an array development, the stakeholder body might typically include owners (shareholders), developers, suppliers, employees, the three levels of government, unions, and individuals or whole communities located in the vicinity. When the array is fully operational, creditors and energy end-users could be included as well.

The British Wind Energy Association (BWEA) conducted extensive stakeholder processes with offshore wind farm developments in the UK. The BWEA developed a document titled “Best Practice Guidelines: Consultation for Offshore Wind Development,” which can be of use for tidal energy stakeholder engagement processes.

The BWEA breaks down stakeholders into the following groups:

- **Statutory consultees**

Statutory consultees are authorities, agencies, groups, or bodies defined in local, national, or international legislation, which the developers are obligated to consult. The developer usually follows a pre-defined statutory process, but at the same time, no restrictions exist on including this category of stakeholders in non-statutory consultation as well.

- **Strategic stakeholders**

This category includes local, regional, national, or international organizations (and their representatives) that have important information, experience, and expertise to contribute to the overall progress of the development. If the development refers to an array of onshore or near-shore marine energy converters with onshore support facility requirements, landowners may be part of this category as well.

- **Community stakeholders**

This category includes any individual, groups of individuals, or organisations, whose lives, interests, and welfare can be affected by the development.

- **Symbiotic stakeholders**

Symbiotic stakeholders can be owners or organisations who may have an interest in or who may have mutual benefits from a co-development.

NOVA SCOTIA IN CONTEXT: NOVA SCOTIA’S MRE STRATEGY

Guiding principles of the Nova Scotia Marine Renewable Energy Strategy include:

- Embracing collaboration and consultation, and
- Recognizing and respecting other uses and users of the ocean and balancing interests. To support these and other values outlined in this strategy, a Tidal Energy Stakeholder Forum has been established and will serve as an advisory body to the formative stages of tidal energy development. Access to a range of information of tidal development activities will be provided. Members of this committee include industry, academia, government, Mi’kmaq, and communities.

For more information on this strategy, see the following: Nova Scotia Marine Renewable Energy Strategy.

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/energy/resources/publications/Nova-Scotia-Marine-Renewable-Energy-Strategy-May-2012.pdf>.

Table 6-1: Examples of Stakeholder Categories

STATUTORY CONSULTEES	STRATEGIC STAKEHOLDERS	COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS	SYMBIOTIC STAKEHOLDERS
First Nations	University/R&D Partners Investors	Resident Associations	Offshore Wind Energy Industry
Department for Environ- ment, Food, and Rural Affairs	Marine Archaeological Interests	Individual Residents	The Wind Industry Supply Chain
Department of Culture, Media, and Sport	Marine Conservation Society	Sailing Clubs	Offshore Oil Industry
Department of Trade and Industry	National Fishermen's Organisations	Recreational Groups	Electrical Grid Owners
Department of Transport, Local Government, and the Regions	National Trust	Regional or Local Fisher- men's Associations	
Centre for Environment, Fisheries, and Aquaculture	Ramblers Association	Local Companies	
Civil Aviation Authority	Societies for the Protection of Birds	Local Touristic Agents and / or Agent Associations	
Countryside Agency	Yachting Association	Women's Institutes	
Local Authorities	Fishery Committees	Community Councils	
National Heritage and Na- ture	WWF	Church Groups	
Ministry of Defence	Greenpeace		
Maritime and Coast Guard Agency	Surfers Against Sewage		
National Parks	Surfriders Foundation		
	The Wildlife Trust		
	Trade Unions		
	Land Owners		
	Project Developers		

Source: EquiMar. (2011). Deliverable D5.8 Impacts upon Marine Energy Stakeholders, p. 2-2.

Identifying stakeholders may be a challenge; however, it is important to include as many stakeholders as possible to avoid excluding a stakeholder who may be crucial to the process. Experience from wind energy development demonstrates that not addressing local stakeholder issues at the local level can cause delays or cancellations in the overall development.

NOVA SCOTIA IN CONTEXT: COMMUNITY FEED-IN TARIFF

The Community Feed-In Tariff (COMFIT) program is designed to increase local ownership of small-scale renewable energy projects throughout the province. Community engagement is a requirement for the COMFIT program and stipulates that at least two community/stakeholder meetings be organized to address community issues. Evidence of community engagement can include a resolution adopted at a municipal meeting and/or minutes of a public forum. Evidence must be provided of this engagement and must be completed within 12 months of receiving the COMFIT award. For more information, see: Community Feed-in-Tariff Program FAQ - <http://nsrenewables.ca/comfit-frequently-asked-questions>.

The following questions aid in identifying stakeholders:

- Who is investing in the development?
- Who will the development affect, either positively or negatively?
- What changes will the development bring and who supports or opposes such changes?
- What are the official leadership positions in the community?
- Who is influential in the local community?
- Who are the representatives of local organisations with environmental or social interests?
- Who are the representatives of local organisations with economic interests?
- Who are the representatives of similar (if any) developments in the area, such as existing offshore wind farms?
- Who has been involved in similar issues in the past?
- Who are the local policy makers?
- Who are the representatives of the local / regional research community?
- Who else should be involved?

6.3.1 - ENGAGING FIRST NATION STAKEHOLDERS

First Nation organizations have indicated an interest in tidal energy development. Given that their perspectives have largely been marginalized over the last several decades, it is reasonable to expect a level of distrust towards governments and resource developers. Yet, there are increasing examples across Canada where First Nation communities have developed strong collaborative relationships with stakeholders and played an equal role in decision-making related to renewable energy development.

In the case of wind energy, First Nation communities have invested heavily in its development. In Nova Scotia, Canada, for example, significant research that explores the potential for wind energy development on aboriginal lands and the ensuing socio-economic benefits from this type of development has been supported by the Atlantic Chiefs Policy Congress (Campbell, 2012). In Nova Scotia, First Nations have submitted several COMFIT applications for wind projects.

When considering the potential for tidal energy development in an area, it is important to identify any First Nation communities in the region. Keep in mind that these communities do not have to be necessarily close to the proposed tidal energy site to be considered an important stakeholder. Treaty rights can extend across hundreds and, in some cases, thousands of square kilometers, including both terrestrial and marine ecosystems.

When considering the potential for tidal energy development in an area, it is important to identify any First Nation communities in the region. Keep in mind that these communities do not have to be necessarily close to the proposed tidal energy site to be considered an important stakeholder. Treaty rights can extend across hundreds and, in some cases, thousands of square kilometers, including both terrestrial and marine ecosystems.

IN NOVA SCOTIA: ENGAGING THE MI'KMAQ

Aboriginal community engagement is important in Nova Scotia. In the early stages of development, it is important to communicate with local Mi'kmaq communities, the Atlantic Chiefs Policy Congress and the Confederation of Mainland Mi'kmaq. It may also be important to partner with local Mi'kmaq communities to conduct cultural/archaeological site assessments to determine if potential sites for tidal development are located adjacent to these significant cultural areas.

For more information on protocols for engagement with Mi'kmaq, refer to the Proponent's Guide: Engagement with Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia.

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/abor/docs/Proponants-Guide.pdf>

IN NOVA SCOTIA: MI'KMAQ ECOLOGICAL STUDIES

Mi'kmaq Ecological Study (MEKS): The MEKS Protocol was ratified in November 2007. The purpose of the MEKS is to capture Mi'kmaq traditional knowledge from elders and other knowledge holders. When conducting a MEKS, ecological information regarding Mi'kmaq/Aboriginal use of specific lands, waters, and their resources are identified and documented by the project team. MEKS I was for the Bay of Fundy in relation to the development of the FORCE project. MEKS II is focused on the outer Bay of Fundy, Digby Gut, Petit, and Grand Passages.

The Crown or government has the legal authority to consult with First Nation communities, but it is incumbent on tidal energy developers to play a role as well.

Key steps in your planning process should include:

- Approaching Chief and Council and their economic development officer. Work to understand their points of view and discuss ways to develop meaningful stakeholder relationships.
- Approaching Elders. Seek their perspectives on the project and, where appropriate, offer gifts (this is common practice for many Aboriginal communities and demonstrates respect to the Elders and their knowledge).
- Being prepared to offer financial assistance to the First Nation community to participate in the consultation process.

Be prepared for prolonged engagement; as a result, it is important to start early. Learn as much as you can about the community, their history, identify the informal leaders in the community, and communicate effectively. It is critical that you provide information to Chief and Council prior to making public announcements. This is true in all cases of community/municipal engagement.

6.4 - OUTLINING THE ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

It is important to outline an engagement strategy and to share this with stakeholders. Examples from wind energy development in the United Kingdom and Canada provide insight into the development of engagement strategies associated with tidal energy development.

6.4.1 - STAGE 1: STARTING THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

The first task is to select who will lead the consultation process (usually the developer or government) and maintain contact with stakeholders throughout the process. The steps are to:

- Identify the stakeholders and do a preliminary scoping of issues.
- Plan and design the consultation process, outline objectives and outputs, techniques, key events, timing, resourcing (including budgets), and coordinate with other statutory and non-statutory processes.
- Draft invitations when meetings are required, and indicate with whom the stakeholders can liaise. Who sends the invitations and 'hosts' the events may vary (e.g. the developer, local councils, coastal partnerships, or an independent body such as a local college).
- Prepare presentations and documents for distribution before or during meetings in order to ensure efficient planning to help build confidence in the process.

This stage may take several meetings or it may be done via phone and email. Invitations need to be sent 3-6 weeks before events; notices of public meetings need to be published 3 weeks in advance and again 1-2 days before events.

A consultation plan will benefit both stakeholders and the development team by clarifying what the consultation process is, and clarifying links to statutory organisations, regulators, NGOs, and other relevant bodies. Generic elements of the consultation plan include:

- objectives and scope of the consultation process;
- environmental, economic, and social issues raised by the development;
- why the development is being proposed;
- the time-frame for consultation, set out in parallel with the timing of related activities;
- locations and logistics of consultation;
- tools and techniques of consultation;
- roles and responsibilities of those involved;
- allocation of resources for consultation; and
- feedback mechanisms.

6.4.2 - STAGE 2: LISTENING AND LEARNING

The main interactive work of the stakeholder process starts around the same time as work on the Environmental Impact Assessment is emerging. This stage needs to:

- clarify issues;
- expose assumptions;
- identify, manage, or reduce uncertainties;
- build on common ground;
- explore ideas to solve problems and resolve differences;
- establish what changes may need to be made;
- commission independent research and fact-finding;
- establish monitoring and reporting procedures, and make arrangements for responding to them; and
- generally try to improve communication and relationships.

Working groups can be established if there are other issues that need to be addressed by stakeholders.

6.4.3 - STAGE 3: MONITORING OF THE CONSULTATION PROCESS, EVALUATING, AND MAINTAINING CONTACT

As the development process continues, the consultation process should continue checking the following:

- whether all appropriate stakeholders have been consulted;
- whether the stated objectives of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and consultation processes have been achieved;
- what changes to the project have been made as a result of the consultation process and why;
- whether the consultation process has allowed sufficient time to consider social, economic, and environmental impacts to the depth necessary; and
- whether stakeholders feel that the consultation has been conducted in a way that has enabled them to contribute fully and freely to the EIA process.

The consultation plan needs to identify techniques that monitor consultation objectives. An example might be a core group of stakeholders who meet periodically during the process or the entire life-time of the project, so if concerns or opportunities arise, there is an immediate forum to discuss them.



Photo Credit: Leigh Melanson

6.5 - STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND THE EIA PROCESS

A more specific process is outlined below that is inclusive of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process, as in many jurisdictions, this process runs in parallel with the stakeholder engagement process. Table 6-2 shows how the EIA process links to the stakeholder consultation process. Note the stages may not happen exactly in parallel, as shown in the table, and stakeholder consultation processes need to be iterative. In other words, information gained in Stages 2 or 3 may make it essential to return to Stage 1.

Table 6-2: Summary of Statutory and Stakeholder Processes

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION PROCESS	ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING PROCESS
Stage 1: Identifying Stakeholders, Issues, and Processes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create core team to advise on consultation • Identify stakeholders and issues • Establish key contacts • Draw up detailed consultation process plan • Prepare information for dissemination 	Stage 1: Site Selection and Scoping <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake pre-feasibility studies • Site selection • Screening under the habitats directive, if appropriate • Outline environmental profile • Consideration of alternatives • Scoping exercise (identification of main environmental effects) • Production of scoping report
Stage 2: Listening and Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify issues, expose assumptions, reduce uncertainties, build on common ground, and explore ideas to resolve differences • Commission independent research and fact-finding to avoid the 'adversarial science' problem • Improve communication and relationships • Manage ongoing uncertainties • Turn new ideas into solutions • Agree on changes to existing plans where necessary/possible • Develop continuing commitments • Establish monitoring and reporting procedures 	Stage 2: Commission EIA and Scheme Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of the development • Description of existing environment • Description of environmental impacts • Identify residual effects • Interpretation of scale and significance of impacts • Identification of mitigation measures • Development of management systems and controls to avoid, reduce, and enable mitigation • Propose possible monitoring and reporting measures • Advertise application and lodge in public domain for review and comment
Stage 3: Monitoring, Evaluating and Maintaining Contacts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting back to stakeholders on results of consultation • Reporting back to stakeholders on how results were used as part of decision-making processes on the development • Evaluating the consultation process • Ongoing contact • Returning to earlier stages if and when necessary 	Stage 3: Post Granting of Consents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of mitigation or compensation and control measures • Monitor and report • Continual adjustment where monitoring reveals undesirable results

(Source: BWEA, 2002).

6.6 - CHOOSING THE RIGHT TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES FOR STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Choosing the most appropriate methods of communication and consultation are critical steps in the engagement process. The Canadian Wind Association suggests that in developing the engagement process and selecting tools of communication, three important aspects be considered: Opportunity, Information, and Response.

6.6.1 - OPPORTUNITY

Make every effort to inform relevant stakeholders. Carefully consider those stakeholders least able to participate and seek to include them in the process. Consider the daily routines of stakeholders, responsibilities with children, the elderly, those with disabilities, and seasonal activities that might preclude participation. This could include harvesting activities, hunting, seasonal vacations, and holidays. Ensure all public meetings are advertised well in advance.

It is important to remember that engagement goes in both directions. Provide accurate contact information on printed material, websites, and public notices in newspapers. Develop consultation sessions that provide opportunities for discussion and dialogue with stakeholders.

6.6.2 - INFORMATION

Developing a consistent message is important when communicating with stakeholders. All communication should deliver the same message. Avoid jargon and use language that is easy to understand. Consider the following means of communicating to your stakeholders:

- Tidal energy project websites;
- Town hall type meetings;
- Direct mail (the message could be included with local water bills or other items sent by municipality, if appropriate);
- Advertising in local papers;
- Community posters;
- Information booths set up at local fairs and/or farmers' markets;
- Local websites and/or on-line community forums.

6.6.3 - RESPONSE

Every stakeholder deserves responses to his or her questions. Whether you agree or disagree, it is important all questions and/or queries are responded to within 48 hours. Given that many development projects are subject to rumour, especially since a development project will involve new technology in a marine environment, it is critical to respond effectively to all questions raised by stakeholders. The quality and timeliness of your response will set the tone for your interactions with stakeholders. While this can be a time consuming process, engagement should be looked upon as an opportunity to develop meaningful relationships with all stakeholders.

6.7 - COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SPECTRUM OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The International Association of Public Participation developed the Spectrum of Public Participation, shown in Figure 6-1. Inherent in the model is the increasing level of stakeholder engagement that evolves through a series of engagement activities to the point where participants in the process are empowered by their involvement. Associated with the different levels of engagement are methods that facilitate stakeholder involvement.

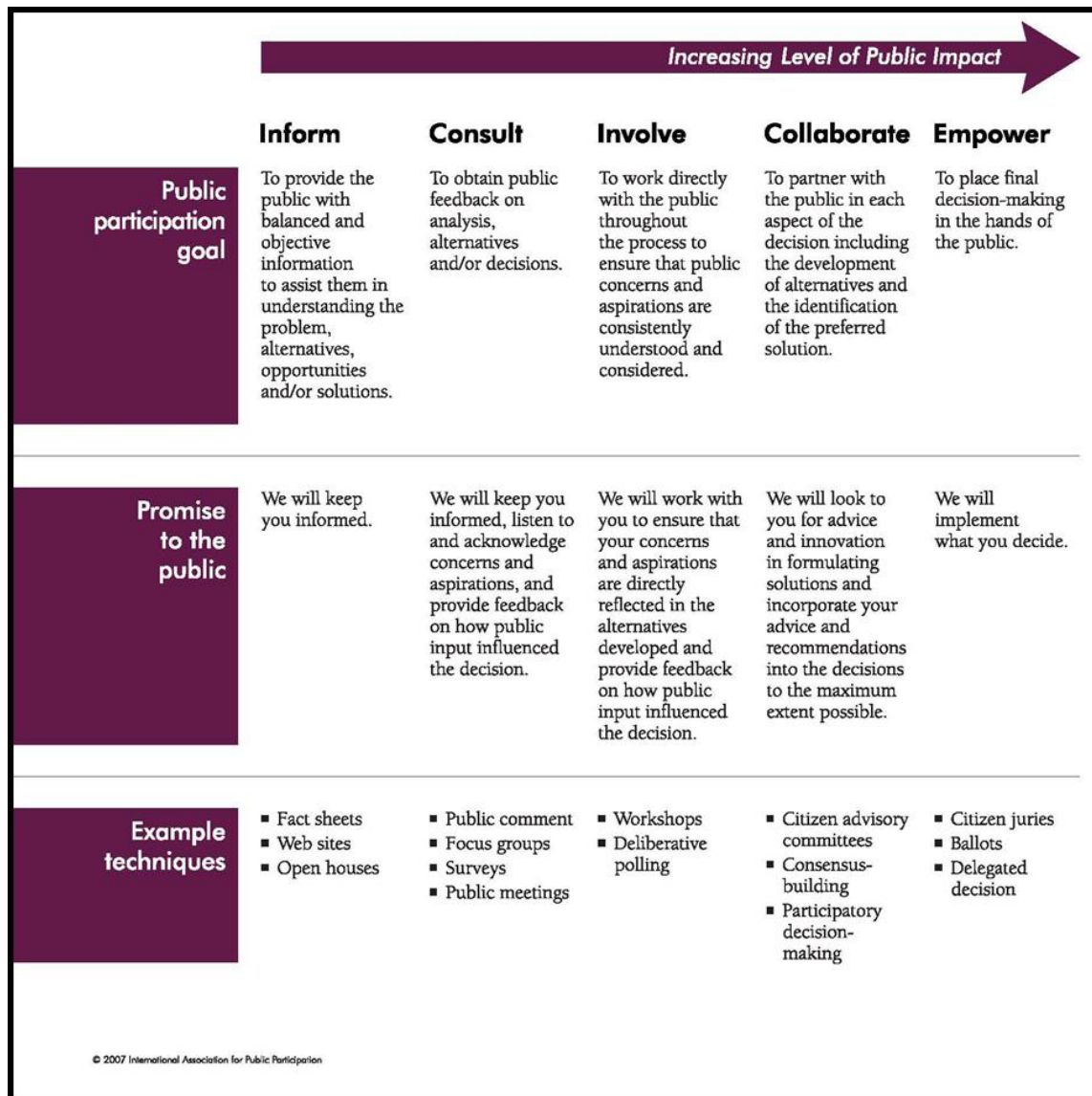


Figure 6-1: Spectrum of Public Participation

Having community and stakeholder participation in projects is typically seen as a best practice. However, some academics have pointed out that current permitting and approval processes entail lengthy and at times, ad hoc consultation procedures, which may not yield meaningful or focused results and preclude a larger participatory process.

Some communities may be willing to participate in more active and participatory ways than others; for example, rural residents may be more likely to get involved in public participatory processes than their urban counterparts because the project may represent a significant economic opportunity.

VIGNETTE: LESSONS FROM THE UK SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION'S PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME ON TIDAL POWER

The UK Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) launched a research project on tidal power in the UK in 2006, which was followed by a public and stakeholder engagement programme. General aspects of what worked best included learning, having a say and being listened to, sharing views with others, small group discussions, and making contacts and networking. Participants placed a high value on talking with and listening to each other at meetings. General aspects of what was least successful included the need for more information and reporting back to participants.

6.7.1 - INFORMING PHASE

This is an important phase for tidal energy development. It will set the tone for future engagement and requires transparency and full disclosure of information relevant to the project to inform all stakeholders.

6.7.1.1 - INFORMING METHODS

Methods useful in this phase include:

A project website: A website will describe the tidal energy project and provide links to Fact Sheets and commonly asked questions about tidal energy. Full contact information should be made available on this website.

Open houses: An open house is an effective way to present information to the public. Careful consideration should be put into promoting this event and insuring that it is held at a time a day accessible to most people and at a time that does not conflict with other major community events. A drawback to this method is that it is impossible to predict turnout, which can be low despite the amount of effort put into promotion.

Fact Sheets: Stakeholders will have many questions about tidal energy development. Many of these questions can be addressed by developing Fact Sheets to address the most common issues raised by stakeholders.

6.7.2 - CONSULTING PHASE

Tidal energy projects will likely develop significant discussion. Stakeholders will discuss issues and analysis will be conducted of site locations and environmental impact assessments. Stakeholders will expect to be consulted and have their voices and concerns heard and reflected back to them. People involved in commercial fisheries, for example, might be concerned about the impacts of tidal energy projects on the fisheries and the potential for exclusion zones.

6.7.2.1 CONSULTING METHODS

Many methods exist to support the consulting phase. These methods require careful diligence in their development. Experienced facilitators are required to lead group discussions and, if surveys are used, specific types of knowledge are necessary to develop the questions so that they are unbiased and focus on the type of information required.

Specific methods include:

Focus groups: These groups provide opportunities for dialogue among the stakeholders. The optimal size for a focus group is 8-12 people. In these organized discussions, it is important the trained facilitator encourages participation from all group members.

Surveys: Surveys can be costly but effective in gathering information from a range of stakeholders. Care must be taken in developing surveys and response categories must offer a full range of options. Important with this method is the sharing of results through community newsletters, public presentation, and the tidal energy project website.

Public meetings: This is the method used most frequently. Often public meetings become heated and do not lead to meaningful engagement. It is important to consider that for many people, public meetings offer an opportunity to vent their frustrations and time should be allowed for this process at the beginning of the session.

FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPT: FOCUS GROUPS

Focus groups ideally consist of 8-12 people focusing on one topic of discussion. A facilitator will lead the group and keep them focused on the topic. The purpose is to collect in-depth information from a group of people who represent the population of interest. The main advantage of this method is you can collect information from thorough discussion among a group of interacting people. This interaction often results in new ideas and strategies to address local issues of concern.

For more information, see: Using Focus Groups.

http://www.thcu.ca/infoandresources/publications/focus_groups_master_wkbk_complete_v2_content_06.30.00_format_aug03.pdf

6.7.3 - INVOLVE PHASE

Important in the Involve Phase is the direct participation of stakeholders, when their issues, concerns, and perspectives are considered and understood.

6.7.3.1 - INVOLVE METHODS

Typical methods used at this phase include:

Workshops: These venues provide important opportunities for stakeholder involvement. Facilitators have numerous tools that provide opportunities for stakeholders to reflect on the issues at hand and provide meaningful input. Workshops can include community mapping, asset mapping of local resources (including people and places), and other engaging techniques.

Deliberative Polling: In this method, representative stakeholder groups are chosen to deliberate on issues relevant to the topic. It is important to have an unbiased and skilled facilitator. Through a series of smaller group discussions and plenary discussions, consensus is developed around key issues and then shared with the public.

TOOL: ASSET MAPPING

Asset mapping is an important method for engaging community members and other stakeholders. This method can often reframe engagement where people move from thinking about the challenges associated with a development project to a discussion focused on community assets (and opportunities) that can be enhanced through a project. The discussion will also consider how community assets can support a project.

Various methods support this process. For example, in some cases, an asset inventory is conducted that might list the various skills of community members (e.g., trades, IT, etc.), and social networks. Knowing this information will foster greater dialogue on community opportunities associated with a tidal energy project. Other methods might involve the development of a community map that highlights its assets that might include local fisheries, tourism and recreation opportunities, and places of local cultural or historical significance.

See the handbook highlighted below for further information. Asset Mapping Handbook: http://www.planningtoolexchange.org/sites/default/files/sources/asset_mapping_handbook.pdf.

6.7.4 - COLLABORATIVE PHASE

In this phase, stakeholders work in partnership to develop alternative solutions to problems and work toward preferred options. In the case of tidal energy development, this could imply working with stakeholders to choose the most preferred site location(s) for that development.

6.7.4.1 - COLLABORATIVE METHODS

A range of methods is used in this phase and most often includes the development of citizen advisory committees and/or stakeholder advisory groups. These committees must be representative of the stakeholder groups and chaired by someone considered the least biased among the group. These have proven very effective. Other methods include:

Consensus building: Consensus building entails a brainstorming session where all options are put on the table and participants collectively weigh the pros and cons of each option, finally narrowing their choices to a select few. These choices are then discussed until an agreed upon option (one that everyone can live with, as opposed to individuals' most preferred choice) is selected.

Participatory decision-making: Participatory decision-making is a creative process to give ownership of decisions to the whole group, finding effective options that everyone can live with.

6.7.5 - EMPOWER PHASE

This phase puts the decisions in the hands of community stakeholders. While this may run counter to other tidal energy stakeholders, a well-developed process of stakeholder and community engagement can move to this point and present development options that are agreeable to all stakeholders. This can only be accomplished by adherence to the principles of engagement (i.e., transparency, etc.) established at the start of the process.

6.7.5.1 - EMPOWER METHODS

Stakeholder juries and balloting are methods used to empower stakeholders. These methods are used on rare occasions and have not been typically used in renewable energy development projects.

6.8 - STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT CHECKLIST

The following checklist highlights a series of questions that will assist in defining the scope, scale, and goals for a stakeholder engagement strategy.

Table 6-3: Stakeholder Engagement Checklist

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT CHECKLIST	
What do you want to engage about? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set a clear aim • Know what can or cannot be changed • Consider the aims of ALL potential partners • Consider how aims might be compatible • Give potential partners the opportunity to be involved as soon as possible • What can people influence? 	
Why engage? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the purpose of the activity? • To share information? Why? • To find out about needs? Why? • To be involved in setting priorities? Why? • To strengthen a community? Why? • To devolve services? Why? 	WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?
What results, benefits, or changes are wanted? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the outcomes clearly defined? • For each potential partner: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify contentious issues • Agree on compatible outcomes, targets, and milestones • Agree on how measurement will take place • How will results be used? 	WHAT OUTCOMES ARE WANTED?
Who do you want to engage with? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities of interest? • Geographical communities? • User groups? • The general public? Individuals? • Other stakeholders • Are there others who need to be involved? • Are there others who want to be involved? • Consider why each partner should be involved • What might they contribute? • Explain what is expected • Listen to what is expected of you 	WHO WILL BE INVOLVED?

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT CHECKLIST	
<p>How will trust be established?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do potential partners know each other? • Are you learning from history or ignoring local knowledge? • Is the community being “done to” or are they genuinely involved? • Is history being repeated (engagement fatigue)? Maybe it should be, but can you explain why? • What can be done to help build trust? • What can be done to remove cynicism? • Look out for saboteurs! • How will media communications be handled? 	<p>TRUST</p>
DELIVERING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: AN EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIP	
<p>What level of community engagement relationship will be effective?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is an ongoing day-to-day working relationship helpful to this issue? • What % of costs is being invested in engagement? Is it appropriate? • Are the selected techniques appropriate to this engagement? • Have non-traditional techniques been considered? • Are there examples of best practice you could draw on? 	<p>LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT</p>
<p>What information is needed for participants?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is already known? • What information is available to ensure that evidence-based decisions are made? • Is information accessible, trusted, relevant, and ‘reality checked’? • Is any information privileged? Are there conflicts of interest? • Is information managed? By whom? • What formats and methods are best? • Is written information concise, understandable, and helpful? • Have jargon and technical terms been kept to a minimum? • Are local or cultural expressions understood? 	<p>INFORMATION</p>

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT CHECKLIST

Do key colleagues have effective communication skills in:

- Listening?
- Mediation?
- Negotiation?
- Is training needed and / or practical within required timescales?
- Could a mediator or facilitator improve the process?
- How will conflicts be resolved?

SKILLS & QUALITY CONTROL

What are the incentives and constraints to participation?

- What are the incentives to participate?
- What makes it worthwhile?
- What are the constraints?
- Have issues of access, transport, availability, and 'power balance' been considered?
- Are there barriers to personal safety?
- Have special interest and 'hard to reach' groups been effectively included?

PARTICIPATION

What is the timescale to deliver the agreed outcomes?

- What are the time constraints?
- Is the timetable realistic for all partners?

TIMETABLES

What are the available resources?

- What types of resources are available (people, logistics, etc.)?
- What are the resources required to achieve the outcomes?
- Are there different ways of using resources to achieve the outcomes?
- Is any other similar work currently taking place to share resources?
- Has any similar work been done recently that could be used?

RESOURCES

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT CHECKLIST	
ASSESSING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: A PROVEN RELATIONSHIP	
<p>How will you know outcomes are achieved?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has it made a genuine difference to local well-being? • Has something improved? • How will you ensure effective, ongoing performance management? • Who will you feedback to? • How will feedback take place? • Will feedback work both ways? • Who will performance be effective for? • How will results be used for long term benefits and to assist others? • Do partners still want to work with each other? • How will you celebrate successes? • How will you manage setbacks? 	<p>PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT</p>
SUPPORTING PARTNERSHIPS	
<p>How might a relationship become an effective partnership?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What written agreement is needed? • What governance arrangements will you set in place? • What financial 'regulations' will you need? • What codes of conduct are necessary? 	<p>PARTNERSHIPS</p>

6.9 - ADDITIONAL ON-LINE RESOURCES FOR LEARNING ABOUT STAKEHOLDER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The following on-line resources provide more information on engaging stakeholders and other communities of interest.

More than Wind: Evaluating Renewable Energy Opportunities for First Nations in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick Summary Guide. Atlantic Aboriginal Economic Development Integrated Research Program (2012)
<http://www.apcfn.ca/en/economicdevelopment/resources/MORETHANWINDSUMMARYGUIDE.pdf>

Best Practices for Sustainable Wind Energy Development in the Great Lakes Region: Community Support through Public Engagement and Outreach (2011)
<http://www.glc.org/energy/wind/pdf/bptoolkit/GLWC-BPToolkit-BP07.pdf>

EquiMar Deliverable 5.8: Impacts upon Marine Energy Stakeholders (2011)
http://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/download/attachments/9142387/WP5_d5.8_final.pdf?version=1

Best Practices Guidelines: Consultation for Offshore Wind Energy Developments. British Wind Energy Association (2002)
<http://www.bwea.com/pdf/bwea-bpg-%20offshore.pdf>

Wind Energy Development: Best Practices for Community Engagement and Public Consultation (2011)
<http://www.saskatoonwindturbine.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/canwea-communityengagement-report-e-final-web.pdf>

Guide to Developing a Community Renewable Energy Project in North America
http://www.cec.org/Storage/88/8461_Guide_to_a_Developing_a_RE_Project_en.pdf

Community Engagement Handbook: A Model Framework for Leading Practice in Local Government in South Australia
http://www.lga.sa.gov.au/webdata/resources/files/Community_Engagement_Handbook_March_2008_-_PDF.pdf

Towards Whole of Community Engagement: A Practical Toolkit (2004)
<http://adl.brs.gov.au/brsShop/data/PC12804.pdf>

REFERENCES

- Aslin, H. J., & Brown, V. A. (2004). Towards whole of community engagement: A practical toolkit. Australian Government. Retrieved from <http://adl.brs.gov.au/brsShop/data/PC12804.pdf>
- Aslin, H.J. & Brown, V.A. (2002). A framework and toolkit to work towards whole-of-community engagement. Retrieved from <http://www.engagingcommunities2005.org/abstracts/Aslin-Heather-final2.pdf>
- British Wind Energy Association (2002). Best practices guidelines: Consultation for offshore wind energy developments. British Wind Energy Association. Retrieved from <http://www.bwea.com/pdf/bwea-bpg-%20offshore.pdf>
- Canadian Wind Energy Association (n.d.). Wind energy development: Best practices for community engagement and public consultation. Retrieved from <http://www.saskatoonwindturbine.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/canwea-communityengagement-report-e-final-web.pdf>
- Chappel, B. (2008). Community engagement handbook: A model framework for leading practice in local government in South Australia. Australian Government. Retrieved from http://www.lga.sa.gov.au/webdata/resources/files/Community_Engagement_Handbook_March_2008_-_PDF.pdf
- EquiMar (2011) Deliverable 5.8: Impacts upon Marine Energy Stakeholders, Retrieved from https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/download/attachments/9142387/WP5_d5.8_final.pdf?version=1
- Great Lakes Wind Collaborative. (2011). Best practices for sustainable wind energy development in the Great Lakes Region: Community support through public engagement and outreach. Retrieved from <http://www.glc.org/energy/wind/pdf/bptoolkit/GLWC-BPToolkit-BP07.pdf>
- Meinig, B. (1998). Public hearings: When and how to hold them. MRSC. Retrieved from <http://www.mrsc.org/focuspub/hearings.aspx>
- Minnesota Department of Health. (n.d.). When to use focus groups. Retrieved from <http://www.health.state.mn.us/communityeng/needs/focus.html>
- Mosman Council. (2009). Community engagement strategy: Strategy 1 - inform. Retrieved from <http://mosmanroundtable.net/ces/strategy/inform>
- O'Brien, J. (1999). Community engagement – A necessary condition for self-determination and individual funding. Retrieved from <http://thechp.syr.edu/ComEng.pdf>
- Ontario Sustainable Energy Association. (2010). Guide to developing a community renewable energy project in North America. Retrieved from http://www.cec.org/Storage/88/8461_Guide_to_a_Developing_a_RE_Project_en.pdf
- Pierce County Planning and Land Services. (1996). Public hearing information. Retrieved from <http://www.co.pierce.wa.us/pc/services/home/property/pals/hearings/scedul.htm>
- Stagonas, D., & Myers, L.E. (2011). EquiMar: Impacts upon marine energy stakeholders. Retrieved from https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/download/attachments/9142387/WP5_d5.8_final.pdf?version=1
- Tamarack. (n.d.). Our growing understanding of community development. Retrieved from http://tamarackcommunity.ca/downloads/home/ce_report.pdf
- Taylor-Powell, E. (1998). Questionnaire design: Asking questions with a purpose. University of Wisconsin-Extension. Retrieved from <http://learningstore.uwex.edu/assets/pdfs/G3658-2.pdf>