CLEAN ENERGY COUNCIL

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GUIDELINES

For the Australian Wind Industry

June 2018

This publication is sponsored by the following organisations

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In the last two years, Vestas has built the 111 megawatt (MW) Waterloo wind farm in mid-north South Australia and the 206 MW Collgar wind farm in Western Australia's wheat belt. It is in the process of constructing the 420 MW Macarthur wind farm in south-west Victoria and the 168 MW Musserole Wind Farm in Tasmania.

AGL Energy is committed to becoming an integrated part of the communities in which it operates. As a long term owner, operator and developer of wind farms and other major infrastructure projects, we strive to make a sustainable contribution that builds relationships which allow us to become an accepted part of the community both as a company and as individuals living and working in it. We engage with surrounding communities from the earliest phases of development, and welcome these guidelines to provide a framework that the industry can work towards to build and maintain the social licence required for us to succeed with communities and other stakeholders.

ACCIONA Energy is a global leader in the development and management of renewable energy. ACCIONA Energy has built and owns three wind farms in Australia, one through a joint venture, and has developed a strong pipeline of projects for construction. Our wind farms at Waubra in Victoria, Gunning in New South Wales and Cathedral Rocks in South Australia produce 304.5MW of green energy, equivalent to the energy needs of 205,000 households.

At ACCIONA Energy, we engage with the local community in the development of all our projects. Community support is essential to the success of our projects and we place a high priority throughout the project lifecycle in engaging with the communities within which we operate.

The new Wind Industry Community Engagement Best Practice Guidelines provide a common-sense framework and tools for engaging communities about wind developments, built upon the industries considerable achievements in this regard. We welcome the new guidelines as an important step forward for industry, communities and governments to continue to work together to grow wind energy in Australia.

RATCH-Australia is a leading power producer with a diversified portfolio of high quality power generation assets in Australia. We are a committed long term owner of power projects, and currently own 7 power stations located around Australia including 3 wind farms. RATCH-Australia also owns a portfolio of wind farm development sites representing more than 1,300 MW of potential installed capacity.

With origins stretching back to 1986, Goldwind was the first Chinese wind company now with operations in Asia, Australia, Europe and the Americas. In 2011 Goldwind became the second largest wind turbine company in annual sales. Goldwind now has more than 10 GW of wind energy installed. This installed base is equivalent to the displacement of eight million tons of coal per year, 19.95 million tons of carbon emissions reduced per year, or 10.93 million cubic meters of newly planted forest.

Infigen Energy is a specialist renewable energy business. We have interests in 24 wind farms across Australia and the United States. With a total installed capacity in excess of 1,600MW (on an equity interest basis), we currently generate enough renewable energy per year to power over half a million households.

As a fully integrated renewable energy business in Australia, we develop, build, own and operate energy generation assets and directly manage the sale of the electricity that we produce to a range of customers in the wholesale market.

For further information please visit our website: www.infigenenergy.com

Senvion (formally REpower Australia), has constructed and now maintains many of Australia's wind farms. We know that wind farms provide significant benefits for rural communities and also, that we have a fundamental responsibility to respect the broad range of views and concerns that a local and wider community may hold about a wind farm development. Engagement with community throughout the life of a wind farm project is essential. These practical Guidelines document how this engagement should be undertaken and REpower Australia is committed to incorporating them into our day to day operations.

We believe in the power of natural thinking.

Since our first hydropower development almost a century ago, Hydro Tasmania has been a leader in renewable energy development and is Australia's largest producer of renewable energy.

Today, we use a combination of water and wind power to harness natural energy that we sell on the national grid.

Our company also owns Momentum, the Victorian specialist electricity retailer. And through our consulting arm, Entura, we share our expertise in energy and water with governments, utilities, developers and international companies.

Pacific Hydro is a leading renewable energy company, producing clean power from natural resources.

For 20 years, we have lived our vision – powering a cleaner world – by identifying, delivering and operating clean energy projects and providing carbon abatement products and services to our customers across the globe.

With hydro, wind, solar and geothermal power projects at varying stages of development, construction and operation in Australia, Brazil and Chile, we continue to provide strong returns for the environment, local communities and investors.

Founded in Australia in 1992, our operating assets include the 30MW Ord hydro plant in Western Australia, which provides clean energy to the East Kimberly and local diamond mine, and wind farms in Victoria and South Australia with a combined generating capacity of 260MW.

Pacific Hydro is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Industry Funds Management (IFM) Australian Infrastructure Fund. IFM is an investment management company specialising in the management of investment products across private equity, infrastructure, debt and listed equities portfolios, and is wholly owned, through Industry Super Holdings Pty Ltd, by a large number of Australian superannuation funds.

Through its ownership structure, Pacific Hydro provides sustainable infrastructure investment opportunities for around 5 million Australian members of Industry Superannuation Funds.

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Introduction

A key objective of the Clean Energy Council is to accelerate the development and deployment of renewable energy and energy efficiency technology (clean energy), and to ensure at least 20 per cent of Australia's electricity is generated by clean energy by 2020. Technological advances and effective community relations are both equally vital in achieving this goal.

The Clean Energy Council's Community Engagement Guidelines for the Australian Wind Industry (the Guidelines) is a comprehensive, best practice approach to community engagement that addresses six key stages of the wind farm lifecycle and offers practical advice for action. Such an approach to community engagement offers both developers and communities the opportunity to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes and to increase clean energy development in Australia.

The Guidelines also provide community members and planning authorities with a reference point to understand the industry's best practice expectations for community engagement, the principles supporting this engagement, and the ways in which a developer engages with the community during each phase of wind farm development.

Background to the Guidelines

The Guidelines were commissioned in 2011 by the Clean Energy Council and a group of nine forward-thinking wind development companies including: Acciona Energy, AGL, Goldwind Australia, Hydro Tasmania Infigen Energy, Pacific Hydro, Ratch, Senvion, and Vestas who together formed an Industry Steering Committee.

Through a series of workshops and interviews, representatives from these companies engaged in discussions on the topic of community engagement for the wind industry in Australia. Their experiences, viewpoints and feedback provided valuable analyses of the context and the priorities for the industry.

In addition, the Clean Energy Council convened an External Reference Group comprising representatives of community organisations, local councils and state governments. The group participated in workshops to share their opinions and provide feedback from an external perspective.

The Committee aimed to develop a set of guidelines and tools capable of fostering good relations between the industry and its stakeholders, based on the understanding that building long- term relationships and trust with communities affected by wind farms, is key to the sector's growth and development in Australia.

Theses Guidelines are complementary to two other works currently under development by the Clean Energy Council; The Best Practice Wind Farm Technical Guidelines and the Community Expectations Handbook.

Goals and objectives

Ultimately, the Guidelines aim to help the industry strengthen and maintain its social licence to operate in communities located near wind farms.

Building long-term relationships and trust with communities, is key to the sector's growth and development in Australia.

What is a social licence to operate?

The notion of a social licence to operate has become widely accepted by developers and community members, particularly in recent years. While a social licence is intangible, it's practical, financial and even legal implications are significant, and recent work has made it possible to measure accurately the level of social licence granted by a community to a developer. This means that developers implementing the Guidelines have the opportunity to measure and track their performance concerning their social licence to operate, allowing them to benchmark, set targets and improve community engagement performance, while reporting objective figures to communities about this performance.

Such information offers a powerful tool to assist developers to better understand local community perceptions of and expectations for engagement, thereby reducing project risk and improving the likelihood of mutually beneficial outcomes.

For the purpose of theses Guidelines, the social licence to operate is defined as:

The general level of acceptance or approval continually granted to a wind developer's proposed or actual project by local communities and other stakeholders.

To this end, the Guidelines highlight the necessary steps a developer should take at each stage of the project lifecycle to:

- deliver a robust and consistent approach to community engagement
- develop effective engagement processes and tools
- build trust and constructive relations between the wind industry and local communities
- build confidence in communities about the benefit of the wind farm
- improve the wind industry's credibility and reputation
- provide a consistent and agreed mechanism for accountability for community engagement practices across the industry
- allow effective community input to wind farm developments

The social licence is not something that, once earned, is fixed and unchanging. It varies over time in response to changes in the community and developers' behaviour. Different parts of a community might be more or less accepting of a wind farm. The social licence is therefore something that has to be renewed and earned every day; it is a goal towards which the industry must constantly strive.

The social licence helps us to understand public sentiment toward wind farms and guides actions that garner community acceptance and approval. It is therefore underpinned by the assumption that only genuine dialogue and willingness to understand and negotiate community expectations will enable successful wind farm development in the long-term.

The social licence may be granted to varying degrees, ranging from low to high. Developers should aim for a high level of social licence, enabling them to build support within communities, reduce opposition and avoid or lessen regulatory risk.

The remainder of the Guidelines detail the principles, frameworks and approaches which offer individual developers and the Australian wind industry, the tools with which to earn and strengthen their social licence to operate through strong community engagement.

Who can use the Guidelines?

The Guidelines are written first and foremost for developers and operators working to achieve best practice in community engagement. Therefore terms such as 'we' and 'Guideline users', mean 'wind farm developers' and 'operators', unless otherwise noted.

Throughout the Guidelines, the terms 'stakeholders', 'community' and 'communities' are used interchangeably. When the Guidelines refer to a community or communities, they refer to the network of individuals and organisations in the area affected by a wind farm project.

A community is not necessarily bound to specific distances to a wind farm and will not have a consistent or uniform set of opinions about it. Different groups within a community will have different stakes in a project, and their attitudes and perceptions will vary and evolve along the project lifecycle.

What are the benefits of using the Guidelines?

Industry: the Guidelines offer developers a clear understanding of the value of community engagement to project success. Wind farm projects are not isolated events – the decisions made in one project will influence perceptions and attitudes towards the entire wind industry, thereby influencing the industry's long-term development. The Guidelines should play a key role in the strategic planning and decision-making processes of a company, making community engagement a priority from senior management down to everyday operations.

To assist implementation, the Guidelines describe a process-oriented approach teamed with a suite of community engagement tools that can be tailored to the particular needs of a project and its community.

Local communities: The Guidelines offer communities a better understanding of industry expectations for best practice. They'll also act as an information source to improve their understanding of the phases of project development, what they can expect from their engagement with the industry, and how they can participate in the process.

Regulators: Regulators are key stakeholders throughout all the stages of a wind farm project. The Guidelines offer a benchmark for analysing and assessing wind farm developers' performance or establishing criteria for reviewing project applications, relative to community engagement.

How to use the Guidelines

The Guidelines are divided into two parts for accessibility. Part One applies widely respected community engagement principles, methods and frameworks specific to the wind industry. These principles, methods and frameworks underpin the Guidelines' recommended approach to community engagement. By incorporating these principles and practices into their operations, wind farm developers can demonstrate best practice community engagement, thereby reducing project risk and improving outcomes.

Part Two focuses on specific community engagement actions developers can implement at each stage of the wind farm lifecycle to improve communication, ease and address community concerns, and improve the likelihood of project success.

The Guidelines conclude with Community Engagement Toolkit containing tools and templates to be applied and customised by developers to their specific circumstances.

The Guidelines should play a key role in the strategic planning and decision-making processes of a company, making community engagement a priority from senior management down to everyday operations.

Overview

This section outlines:

- what community engagement means
- the mutual benefits possible through community engagement
- how to map community engagement against the wind farm lifecycle
- four foundational principles for community engagement
- the leading global frameworks
- the practical steps in a community engagement process

Part One concludes by relating these principles, frameworks and processes to each of the six key stages of wind farm project development, namely:

1. **site selection**
2. **project feasibility**
3. **planning and approvals**
4. **construction**
5. **commissioning and operations**
6. **decommissioning**

In doing so, the Guidelines offer developers a comprehensive, principles-based approach to community engagement, steeped in international best practice, with key activities clearly defined for each project stage.

1 What is community engagement?

To achieve mutual benefit from community engagement, it is first necessary to understand what community engagement means:

Project feasibility often depends on a communities' level of acceptance as much as on technical and physical factors. In other words, wind farms are not simply technical projects, they are social projects. The Guidelines encourage developers to consider the social dimensions of a wind farm to help them think through the attitudes and actions necessary to address key community concerns throughout the development of the wind farm.

While the goal of community engagement is not always to reach agreement on specific outcomes, engagement must enable the input of community to identify local values and inform the decisions and activities of project.

Effective engagement goes beyond simply informing communities of project information, decisions and actions, it also includes:

- providing information about wind power and the wind farm development in a clear and timely manner
- being genuinely available to meet and talk to community members
- providing opportunities for communities to communicate local values, raise concerns or support and responding to questions and concerns respectfully
- prioritising achievement of mutually agreed outcomes, wherever possible

Community engagement is the process through which a wind farm developer interacts with a community to inform the decision-making processes of a wind farm project.

Benefits of community engagement

2

Strong community engagement creates mutual benefits for wind farm developers and communities, including outcomes such as:

- the establishment of respectful relationships which can foster community support for and identification with project operations and goals
- decreased levels of misinformation about the project and wind energy
- reduced reputational damage
- mitigated risk to projects
- reduced financial and legal costs for developers

Each of these considerations has implications for a project's social licence to operate and, by extension, its ultimate success.

Benefits of improving the engagement process for the industry include but are not limited to:

Reduced project risks:

A better understanding of community values, concerns and expectations prepares developers better to develop their projects. By establishing early dialogue with communities, developers can address issues early and avoid potential challenges that might result in rising costs, delays or dismissals of planned projects.

Ease approval processes:

During the approval period, better engagement with communities reduces opposition as a result of misunderstandings or lack of information, and also demonstrates to regulators the developers' commitment to decisions and activities that benefit the community.

Improve the social licence to operate:

Developers improve their acceptance within communities by behaving in respectful ways that take community needs and preferences into account. The establishment and maintenance of a social licence to operate is therefore directly related both to community acceptance and to an improved reputation - key components in the future development of the sector.

Benefits of improving the engagement process for the community includes but are not limited to:

Active participation:

Communities can play a valuable role in project investigation decision-making processes by raising questions, sharing and requesting information, and interacting with wind developers in a constructive fashion throughout the project development. This ensures a better understanding of the project stages, its potential impacts and contributions to the community.

Community development:

Developers want to be good neighbours and participate in their communities from project inception to decommissioning. Their presence will bring a range of benefits to local businesses, local employment, education, and other community projects. Strong community engagement helps developers explain these potential benefits more clearly to communities and allows communities to benefit more fully from projects.

3 Mapping community engagement against the wind farm lifecycle

Community engagement is essential throughout all phases of a wind farm. Communities begin to form perceptions and attitudes toward projects long before construction begins. Being proactive in community engagement can reduce uncertainty for communities and mitigate risks for developers. Unsuccessful experiences in project development can be the result of inadequate engagement with communities in the earliest project stages.

The wind farm lifecycle

The six key stages in a wind farm project lifecycle include:

1. site selection
2. feasibility
3. project planning and approval
4. construction
5. commissioning and operations
6. decommissioning

Key community engagement activities should be carried out in each stage, as summarised in and further detailed in Part Two of the Guidelines.

Figure 1: Wind farm project development stages mapped against community engagement activities

Priorities and implications for community engagement at each project stage

Each of the project development stages detailed above have particular implications and priorities for community engagement, as shown in Table 1 below. It is important that wind farm developers take these considerations into account in planning and implementing successful community engagement.

In particular, Table 1 demonstrates the importance of assisting local communities to gain a clear understanding of each of the six project stages. Developers will find Table 1 particularly useful when explaining to community members the major phases of wind farm development, as well as the common concerns and priorities that communities might expect to be addressed in each development phase. The issues summarised in Table 1, are further detailed according to project stages in the following chapters.

Stage	Site selection	Feasibility	Planning and approvals	Construction	Commissioning and operations	De-commissioning
Descriptions	Investigating an area's potential for wind energy generation.	Determining the physical and financial viability of the project.	Project preparation and application submission to regulatory bodies and review period.	Building the wind farm.	Routine maintenance and monitoring.	Closure and dismantling of operations.
Implications for Community Engagement	Physical conditions are a key determinant of a project, but the social context (demographics, cultural heritage, unemployment, past experiences with wind projects, etc.) can equally determine whether a project moves forward. This is the key time to identify stakeholders and their issues and introduce the project to involved landowners and planning authorities.	Visible signs of feasibility testing, such as wind masts to measure wind, can create curiosity, questions or expectations that need to be addressed.	Communities want to have input into the design of the project. While the project awaits approval, there are no new advances. Engagement needs to continue to avoid the possibility that silence will be filled with speculation.	This stage may cause temporary disruptions to the community that need to be communicated, managed and minimised.	At this stage the project becomes part of the community. Ongoing relations include participation in the life of the community befitting the nature of the project.	If a project finishes its lifecycle this implies some temporary disruption to the community that can raise questions and uncertainty about the future.
Priority	Understand the social context around a possible site, mapping and profiling key stakeholders and key community concerns. This can entail exploration of possible engagement with landowners, local authorities or planning authorities, ensuring that everyone is aware that the project is at a very early stage and may not proceed.	Handle information sharing and disclosure carefully to manage expectations and concerns as it is not certain whether the project will move forward. Developers should start their first introductions to the community and factor their input in the decision-making process via one-on-one consultations, interviews, telephone, etc.	Factor community input and build a positive feeling about the project. Developers must create opportunities for interactions with community and establish open and proactive dialogue to address any questions about the project via various tools, such as telephone information lines, community reference groups, websites, open houses, etc.	Maintain a positive environment around the project by ensuring awareness of the benefits of the project for the community and addressing potential negative impacts, demonstrating commitment to remedy when needed via formal meetings, reference groups, complaints management, media management, etc.	Ensure that wind farms become part of the community's life, benefiting their economic and social development, including activities for collaborations with local partners, continuing regular communication channels, open meetings, updates, etc.	Reduce and avoid negative impacts for communities and reduce concerns. Developers must demonstrate proactivity to identify and address any questions raised by communities and support their development by having a clear policy on the process for this.

Table 1: Project stages, implications and priorities for community engagement

4 Our approach to community engagement

Holly Marsh, Community Relations Coordinator at Pacific Hydro and her daughter, Portland, Victoria

Adoption of the Guidelines offers the entire wind energy industry the opportunity to follow and apply the same principles and framework for community engagement, improving the industry's ability to earn and maintain a social licence to operate, and to act consistently and respectfully in relation to communities. These stakeholders, in turn, have the opportunity to gain a well-informed and realistic idea of what to expect from a wind farm development, its benefits and impacts.

Before achieving best practice community engagement, it is essential to understand the four foundational principles that underpin community engagement in the wind industry. Every aspect of community engagement must uphold these common principles within an overarching framework of best practice. Used together, the principles and framework outlined below provide developers with a structured approach to actively engage with a community.

Four foundational principles

Principles are accepted rules of conduct. By defining the principles for community engagement, the Australian wind industry commits to conducting itself in a consistent and ethical manner wherever they seek to develop a wind farm.

The principles described in these Guidelines represent generally accepted principles for community engagement in many industries around the world. By committing to these principles the Australian wind energy industry sends a powerful signal to communities and regulators that they expect to play a role as a valued and trustworthy corporate citizen and good neighbour wherever and whenever they operate.

The industry is committed to four principles for effective community engagement. These include:

- **Openness**
- **Inclusiveness**
- **Responsiveness**
- **Accountability**

The manner in which each of these principles is applied will vary during the project lifecycle, however developers should be mindful of each principle at all project stages, as they represent the foundation for effective community engagement processes and activities.

Openness

Openness means sharing relevant information about the decisions and activities of the developer with communities in a way that is:

- clear, so any person can understand it
- accurate, so it is consistent, comparable and complete
- timely, so it is available when requested and can be used to make decisions
- honest, so information is available to avoid misleading assumptions

It is important to note that the principle of openness does not affect the right of a developer to maintain confidential and private information that might otherwise negatively impact its interests.

Openness is important to develop successful projects because it enables the community to have a better understanding of the wind farm and its activities and reduce uncertainty about a project. This enables wind developers to build greater rapport and trust within the community.

Inclusiveness

Inclusiveness means identifying and interacting with all project stakeholders to ensure their perspectives are understood and taken into consideration. This principle means that all the relevant groups who are potentially affected by the wind farm (not only the most visible ones or those who engage) have the opportunity to communicate their opinions, expectations, needs and concerns to developers.

Inclusiveness means providing appropriate channels and opportunities for communities to participate in activities related to the wind farm and the decision-making processes, as relevant to each phase of the wind farm lifecycle.

Inclusiveness is important to the development of successful projects because it enables developers to:

- gain a better understanding of community sentiment about a project, thereby facilitating better-informed decisions
- review performance for continuous improvement
- reduce the risk of conflict (between developers and communities but also within communities)
- produce mutually beneficial partnerships
- increase the legitimacy and acceptability of decisions through community involvement

Responsiveness

Responsiveness means listening and responding to community concerns and needs as relevant to the wind farm. This principle means that every individual has the right to ask reasonable questions about a wind farm project and to expect a response from the developer.

Responsiveness means providing mechanisms to collect questions about a project and to provide answers in an open and timely manner, informing individuals about the status of their queries, for example by either one-on-one interactions or public meetings. Responses are factual, reflect independent information and involve third parties where relevant. Where a developer does not have an answer, an explanation to that effect or effort to obtain the relevant information is appropriate.

Responsiveness is important to the development of successful projects because it helps wind developers to:

- better understand communities
- identify elements of wind farm development that might need more proactive explanations
- recognise and respond to opportunities for communities (e.g. sponsorship of local events, partnerships with local business, etc)
- address risk issues in advance

The concept of responsiveness is in part related to complaints management, which is included in the Community Engagement Toolkit.

Accountability

Being accountable involves the ongoing process of monitoring, evaluating and disclosing information about the activities, and positive and negative impacts of the wind farm at every stage of the wind farm lifecycle.

Accountability means establishing systems to track and communicate decisions, policies, activities and performance over time in a balanced, comparable, reliable, accurate and clear manner. This principle also includes the proactive approach of wind developers to prevent possible risks and mitigate potential negative impacts as a consequence of decisions made and activities implemented.

Accountability is important to develop successful projects because it provides wind developers an opportunity to continually analyse and improve their performance, and to create a better understanding by communities of the project development to reduce uncertainty. Managing uncertainty is a key element for risk and reputation management.

Openness... enables the community to have a better understanding of the wind farm and its activities and reduce uncertainty about a project.

4 Our approach to community engagement

Applying the foundational principles

While the Guidelines encourage developers to always keep the principles in mind, there are specific actions that can be taken to ensure the principles are applied in practice. Ultimately this involves developers asking themselves key questions along the project lifecycle, ensuring that decisions and activities consider and ideally uphold these four principles.

	Site selection	Feasibility	Planning and approvals	Construction	Commissioning and operations	De-commissioning
Openess	• Have we introduced ourselves to the relevant landowners and local government authorities as needed? • Are we providing clear information on the exploratory status of the project? • How are we communicating information to the local authorities and landowners?	• Have we clearly described the basis on which we make decisions about citing turbines? • Are we disclosing balanced, timely, clear and complete information about the project process?	• Are there mechanisms in place to ensure that stakeholders are up to date with the planning and approvals process? • Is information about these processes clear and accessible?	• Is the information about project timeframes, location, etc. publicly available? • Is information about project risks and opportunities disclosed?	• Is there enough publicly available information for the community to assess our progress? • Are we proactive in demonstrating our performance to the community (i.e. site visits)?	• Have we informed the community about the process of decommissioning and the potential impacts for the community in a clear and complete manner? • Is the community aware of the steps that we will take?
Inclusiveness	• Have we identified all the stakeholders who might be affected by the project and approached the relevant ones (i.e. involved landowners and local councils) at this stage? • Have we investigated all the relevant issues?	• Is the process of decision-making sufficiently open to community participation? • Do we have a good record and understanding of all the stakeholders' concerns and expectations?	• Are there opportunities for all stakeholders to raise questions and input their opinions in the project design? • Are planning decisions sufficiently open to discussion?	• What degree of participation do the community have in our decision making process? • Are all relevant groups represented in our engagements?	• Are we partnering with relevant local groups? • Is all feedback from the community related to our operations considered in our decisions and activities?	• Are there open channels for the community to comment on the approach to decommissioning?

Table 2: Key questions to self-check principles during project lifecycle stages

Table 2 presents the core questions developers should ask themselves, at a minimum, to ensure the principles inform project stages. Developers are encouraged to develop and ask further, principle-based questions as each project or project stage demands.

Stage	Site selection	Feasibility	Planning and approvals	Construction	Commissioning and operations	De-commissioning
Responsiveness	• Are there any issues we need to address at this stage?	• Are there mechanisms in place to ensure that stakeholders can request and receive information? • Have we identified non-negotiable aspects of the project? • Have we responded to the issues raised by stakeholders?	• Have we established a system to register and address any issues that the community might have with the planning process? • Are we aware of the questions from the community during the approval period and providing answers as needed?	• Are we responding to any questions raised by community? • Are there mechanisms to track complaints and ensure remedy when needed?	• Do communities feel that their opinions are relevant to us and that we answer them?	• Are we addressing community concerns about the future? • Are we communicating our intentions to the community?
Accountability	• Are we providing timely information on the status of the research to relevant stakeholders? • Do we have clear processes for communication? Are community members aware of these processes and how to use them?	• Have we identified all the potential impacts of the wind farm and communicated these to all relevant stakeholders?	• Are we providing regular updates to the community on the status of the project approval?	• Is there a mechanism to monitor, evaluate and report significant impacts as a result of the construction?	• Is there a reporting system in place to account for and regularly communicate activities?	• Are we sufficiently accountable for all the environmental, social and economic impacts that might result from decommissioning?

4 Our approach to community engagement

Framework for a community engagement plan

While the Guidelines set out foundational principles that should guide developers' community engagement, they also offer a framework within which to apply these principles. The framework outlined in this section provides a set of ideas and practices aimed at helping developers put into action the Guideline's central goal: to earn and maintain the wind energy industry's social license to operate.

The framework used by the Guidelines was developed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2). It is used by thousands of communities, governments and wind developers globally to ensure that developments and policies which affect communities are undertaken with respect and with the participation of those organisations and individuals affected. It is a popular framework in Australia and training is readily available from licenced IAP2 trainers.

The IAP2 model

The IAP2 Spectrum outlines different levels of engagement to suit varying degrees of impacts in the community. Where impacts are less significant, for example, the Spectrum suggests approaches such as 'Inform' and 'Consult'. Greater impacts on communities require approaches such as 'Involve', 'Collaborate' and 'Empower'.

While all five approaches to engagement outlined on the Spectrum are legitimate, developers will choose particular ones, perhaps simultaneously, depending on the needs of each community group, each stage of the project lifecycle, or resources. Regardless of the engagement approach adopted, it is paramount to ensure that both communities and developers clearly understand the approaches taken and the possible outcomes that may result from the chosen approach.

Each approach, its goals, core promises to communities and a sample of implementation measures are presented in Figure 2 on the opposite page.

The IAP2 Spectrum provides Guideline users with a clear view of the paths available to earn and maintain a social licence to operate. Ultimately, greater participation levels produce greater community trust, as the decisions are not the result of developers' internal processes alone but also reflect stakeholders' active contributions.

At the same time, it is vital to remember that at any point of the engagement, and independently from the approach, the success of every interaction rests on the principles of openness, inclusiveness, responsiveness and accountability.

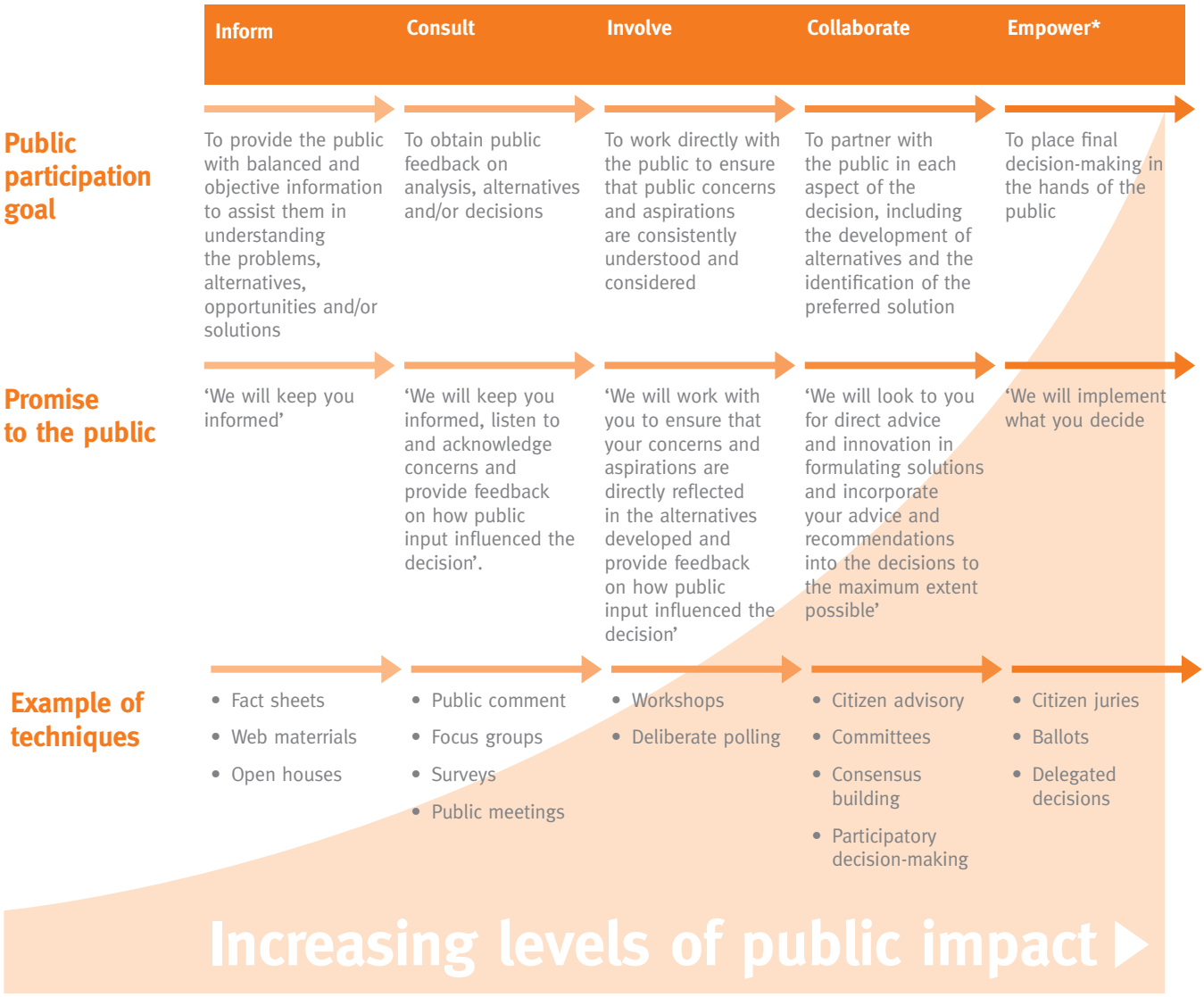

Figure 2: IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum

5 Engagement practices

Having outlined the principles that guide community engagement and presented the framework for action, this section outlines how to create a community engagement plan tailored to the reality of each community and the needs of each stage of the project lifecycle.

Several factors contribute to successful community engagement plans including:

- a clear understanding of why community engagement is so important for gaining and maintaining a social licence to operate
- a commitment from all of the company's top decision-makers to the community engagement plan
- sufficient resource allocation, such as staff to implement the plan effectively
- a clearly defined step-by-step process for community engagement linked to each stage of the project lifecycle

Developing a community engagement plan

Community engagement must start long before construction begin as relations and attitudes start to take shape at the very early stages of any project. For this reason, and before the project is approved, developers must create community engagement plans to address the community from the earliest stages. The success of a project can depend entirely on the developer's demonstration of trustworthy relations with the community, so working to a well-developed community engagement plan is a key success factor.

There are five key steps for developing a community engagement plan, all of which are interrelated. A successful community engagement plan comprises a cycle of constant learning to ensure continuous improvement, as shown in Figure 3.

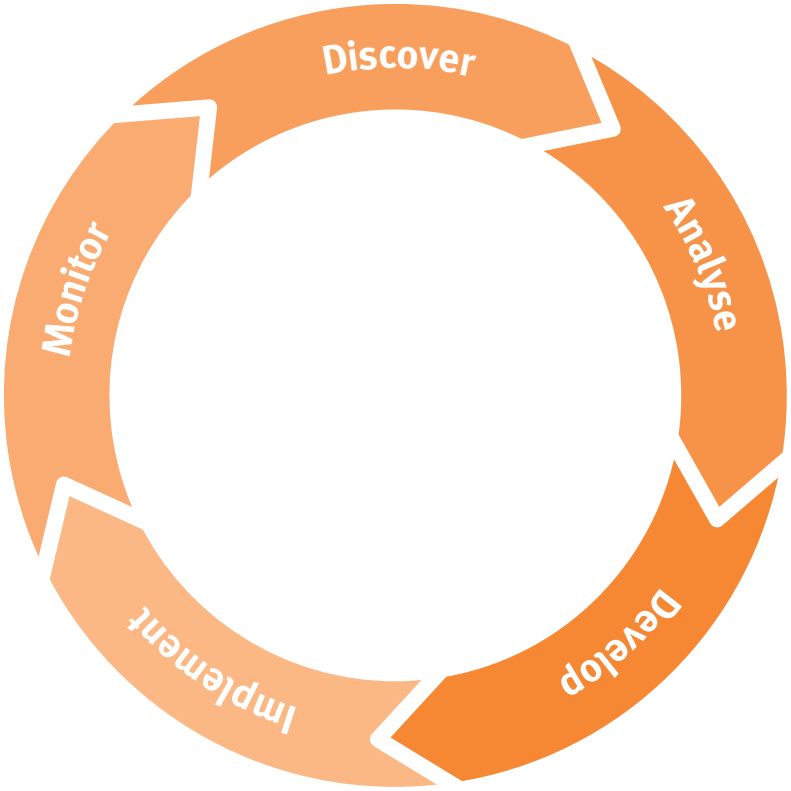

Figure 3: The cycle of community engagement

Community engagement must start long before construction begin

Discover

At the beginning of the wind farm development process, developers consider a particular area with potential for wind energy generation. It's at this stage that the developer should be assessing the social context in the community of interest. This will include determining the demographic profile of the community and the surrounding area, the economic and cultural context. The 'discover' stage usually entails using tools like social baseline assessments and stakeholder mapping, which are described in the Community Engagement Toolkit.

Some of the key aspects to understand at this stage include:

- the political, economic, social, technological, legal, and environmental context (see the Community Engagement Toolkit)
- the type of groups that make up the community (e.g. local, state or national social and environmental interest groups, schools, clubs, municipal, state or federal government departments, authorities and agencies, etc
- the community's awareness of and interest in the issues associated with the project
- existing relationships between the community and the wind farm developer
- existing relationships among different groups in the community
- the level of influence that different groups in the community may potentially have on a project
- the potential alignment of their interests with the proposed wind farm development (i.e. Do they share any goals with the proposed wind farm and how willing are they to participate in the development of the farm in some way?)
- community values

The Community Engagement Toolkit provides further detail on how to identify and map stakeholders and the social context of a potential site. This enables developers to determine the priorities of the engagement process in the next step, analyse and define.

Analyse and define

Once a developer has gathered basic information about the community where the wind farm is proposed, the next step is to analyse this information in order to define the boundary and approach to engagement.

The boundary refers to defining the relevant stakeholders and the issues to be addressed in the engagement process. The approach refers to the level of engagement and tools that will be used to build trust and constructive relations with the community – as explained in Our approach to community engagement (page 12). greater success in community engagement is linked to higher levels of community participation. Together, the boundary and approach form the foundation for a successful community engagement plan.

Table 3 below, outlines the key questions which developers should ask to define the boundary and approach of their community engagement plan.

Question	Implications
What are the key organisations and groups in the community?	Based on the information you have gathered, identify the groups most affected by or likely to affect the project and/or other community organisations or groups.
What are the most material issues for the community?	Now that you have identified the key groups, or stakeholders, for the project, identify the issues, community attitudes and expectations of the community, and also the ones that are most likely to be influenced by or to influence the project. Identify the risks and opportunities that each issue might pose to the project feasibility and your degree of control over them.
What level of engagement is best suited to address these issues with the community?	Drawing on the IAP2 framework (see Our approach to community engagement), developers decide the levels of engagement to meet the needs of the community in relation to the project. Remember – the levels of engagement can vary with each group within the community and along the project lifecycle.

Table 3: Defining boundaries and approaches to engagement

5 Engagement practices

Develop

Once information about the community has been collected and analysed, and the boundary and approach defined, the next step is to develop the community engagement plan itself. Where possible, this plan must consider the input of communities to refine the priorities, boundary and approaches. In other words, community engagement plans should be developed repetively, with allowances for regular review and refinement, incorporating both changes in the project and community feedback.

A successful community engagement plan includes:

- clear goals
- a description of the community and the relevant issues for the proposed wind farm development
- a choice of suitable tools for communicating with and interacting with the community
- clearly defined roles and responsibilities for company personnel
- a timetable of proposed actions and events
- identification of the resources that will be needed to implement the plan

The elements of a successful community engagement plan are summarised in Table 4.

Ultimately, the success of the community engagement plan depends on those who deliver it. It is therefore crucial, that these individuals have a good understanding of the process, are aware of the social context of the community, are pro-active in building relationships and are consistent. Building trust and constructive relationships takes time, and wherever possible, staff turnover should be minimised to provide communities with a consistent point of contact. Furthermore, established trust can be lost when staff leave. For example, agreements which are not well documented can be lost in transition, leaving community members with the perception that promises made are not being kept.

In addition to the developer's employees, the involvement of independent individuals can help wind developers to deliver the community engagement plan. Community reference groups, for example, (see Community Engagement Toolkit, page 47) may act as bridges between developers and communities.

Lastly, development of the community engagement plan should include defining indicators to measure the advancement of the engagement plan. Such measurement can provide feedback for continuous improvement, while also ensuring that the plan retains its relevance and usefulness.

Item	Definition
Goals of the engagement	Identification and explicit commitment to building trust and constructive relations with the community along the project lifecycle.
Results from the discover step	Explanation of the key findings from the community baseline study, profiling and mapping of stakeholders, and their issues.
Boundary of the engagement	Priority issues and potential risks for community engagement.
Approaches to community engagement and corresponding tools	Selection of the suitable levels of engagement to use along the project lifecycle and the tools to articulate them. (See the tools described in the Community Engagement Toolkit and see correspondence to stages of the project lifecycle in Part Two)
Roles and responsibilities	Distribution and definition of tasks in the organisation for community engagement.
Timelines	Drafting of the time planning for the community engagement process. This must reflect the project lifecycle, include milestones of engagement at each stage, and be flexible to incorporate changes as needed – including whether the project moves forward or not.
Resources needed	Identification of the financial, technical, technological and human requirements for delivering the community engagement plan.

Table 4: Elements of a community engagement plan

Implement

The implementation of the community engagement plan starts with allowing sufficient time in advance to ensure stakeholders are aware of the process, the opportunities to participate and the possible outcomes of it.

To this end, developers should start by publicly inviting the community to participate in the process and provide information on:

- the goals of the community engagement process
- the key issues that the process will address and why
- the approach of the company to address these issues
- opportunities to participate (including practical information about how and when)
- possible outcomes of the engagement process
- timelines – advising whether or not the project will move forward

In this step it is preferable that both developers and communities have a common understanding of the basic rules of the engagement – the principles of openness, inclusivity, responsiveness, and accountability that will guide the process in order to build trust and constructive relations. All parties involved should agree to respect each other's views and opinions about the wind farm project. Confidentiality must also be agreed at this stage, if required.

Throughout the engagement process, developers must document and publicly report in detail evidence of:

- tools used
- participants
- timeframe
- summary of outcomes

This can ensure things can be tracked and enable feedback to the project development.

Developers must also acknowledge every inquiry or request made by any community member. It must respond clearly and swiftly, outlining the steps the developer will take. While developers will not always be able to accommodate all of these issues, they must respond to each of these and explain the reasons behind subsequent decisions and actions.

Monitor

This step does not signal the end of the community engagement plan but is carried out throughout the implementation stage to refine and nurture the entire cycle.

Performance indicators and documentation established in the previous steps provide the basis to establish continuous improvement throughout the project lifecycle. Monitoring allows developers to ask the question: Have we earned and maintained our social licence to operate as a result of our actions? As noted, the social licence to operate can be measured to provide insights into what actions have worked best and why.

Finally, developers must have systems in place to regularly and publicly report its engagement performance, the value created for the wind farm project as a result of it, and any commitments to next steps for continuous improvement. Reporting is an invitation for further feedback from communities and a direct reflection of the principles of openness, inclusiveness, responsiveness, and accountability. An example of a template to document engagement implementations is provided in the Community Engagement Toolkit.

5 Engagement practices

Applying community engagement: understanding stakeholders

Up to now, the Guidelines have focused on outlining goals, principles, frameworks, approaches and community engagement planning. In Part Two, the focus turns to those individuals for whom the Guidelines ultimately exist: stakeholders – those individuals or organisations affected by or with significant potential to affect a wind farm.

Stakeholder identification is essential because it provides an overview of the groups and individuals who affect or can be affected by a wind farm project. This helps developers define suitable forms of engagement. This exercise should start at the site selection stage, to provide developers with an insight into the social context of the potential wind farm and help identify suitable engagement approaches. It is important to undertake reviews during the construction stage, with regular updates during operations.

Overview

Part Two of the Guidelines sets out the specific actions that developers can implement at each stage of the wind farm lifecycle, namely:

- **site selection**
- **project feasibility**
- **planning and approvals**
- **construction**
- **commissioning and operations**
- **decommissioning**

Drawing on the principles and framework previously explained and the step-by-step process for developing a community engagement plan, these actions can help developers improve their communication with the community, ease and address community concerns, and improve the likelihood of project success.

Part Two concludes with a practical toolkit comprising tools and templates that can be applied and customised by developers to their specific circumstances.

6 Community engagement at the site selection stage

Graeme and Lyn Maconachie's farm, at Challicum Hills Wind Farm, Victoria

Context

At the site selection stage developers investigate an area's potential for wind energy. This involves mainly desk research of regional wind maps, proximity to the electricity grid and population density. The work also focuses on finding potential constraints such as known areas of endangered species, cultural significance, planning scheme restrictions, airports, telecommunication towers or other aspects incompatible with wind turbines.

While investigating the physical conditions is a key determinant of a project's viability at this stage, the social context (demographics, cultural heritage, employment, past experiences with wind projects, etc) can also determine whether it moves forward or not. For this reason, developers must research the social context around a possible site, mapping and profiling stakeholders in advance to prepare the next steps of the engagement plan, if the project continues.

At this stage, developers must establish initial engagement with landowners, local councils or planning authorities and any other relevant stakeholders. Engagement here means introducing the project to key stakeholders and providing clear and timely information on the status of the project as well as consulting on issues that might be of interest such as landscape and visual amenity, noise, health, property values, blade glint, or shadow flicker.

Engaging with landowners at this stage can help developers to better understand the social context and to secure access to the land if the project moves forward. In addition, engaging with local councils and planning authorities can provide developers background information about the area (i.e. native vegetation and biodiversity, existing infrastructure and transport conditions, etc.) and the community (i.e. social-demographic and economic factors, potential stakeholders to engage with, etc), advice on planning (i.e. necessary permits and approvals, alignment between the project and the council's objectives, etc) and identify potential opportunities to contribute to the community's development.

Engagement experiences during site selection must communicate clearly to participants that the project might not move forward, as well as the potential benefits. While openness is important to build trust in the community, the developer should determine the level of confidentiality at this stage – public acknowledgement of the site selection stage can affect the commercial interest of the site and create unnecessary stress or expectations in the community.

6 Community engagement at the site selection stage

Objectives of engagement at the site selection stage

The objectives for community engagement at the site selection stage are:

- understand the social reality surrounding a potential area of interest
- explore potential engagement with key stakeholders
- manage expectations with honesty
- create a positive feeling about the opportunities of the project in the possible interactions with stakeholders – but make clear that the project might not move forward
- be ready to respond to any questions

Key steps

The key steps at the site selection stage are:

- desk research into the social context in addition to physical and environmental conditions that might affect or be affected by the project (this can include but is not limited to native vegetation and biodiversity, existing infrastructure and transport conditions, population density, local job growth and unemployment, etc)
- explore engagement with landowners, and local councils or planning authorities on issues such as landscape and visual amenity, noise, health, property values, blade glint, shadow flicker
- determine level of confidentiality
- provide appropriate channels of communication at this stage, such as a telephone line accessible for relevant stakeholders
- provide clear and timely information on the status of the investigations on issues such as land appropriateness for wind energy, native vegetation and biodiversity or existing infrastructure and transport conditions to relevant stakeholders

Tools and tips

The key tools to apply at the site selection are:

- identifying, mapping and recording stakeholders – the Community Engagement Toolkit provides a list of potential stakeholders
- baseline community study
- one-on-one consultations with selected stakeholders
- telephone line for selected stakeholders
- establishing communication channels for open dialogue

At this stage, developers must establish initial engagement with landowners, local councils or planning authorities and any other relevant stakeholders.

Case study

In the late 2000s, a South Australian company started researching a rural area to assess its appropriateness for wind energy. After a few months of desk-based investigation, enough evidence was found to pursue further research. Because large portions of the local area were appropriate for project development, the company realised that support of surrounding landowners would be an important consideration for site selection, even from the early stages of the project.

The company first introduced itself to the local council to present its plans for exploring the possibility of developing a wind farm in the area. The council helped to identify key local stakeholders in order to prepare the next steps of engagement. Following this first meeting, the company decided to initially limit community engagement to the local council and those landowners in the main area of interest. This selective engagement allowed the company to manage expectations carefully and responsibly, given the very premature stage of the project. Early selective engagement also allowed the company to preserve its commercial opportunity. Consequently, the company expanded its engagement and met with each of the landowners to present the potential project and the actions that would likely be undertaken.

Understanding that every landowner had different expectations and that these could vary, the company held regular meetings with them in the first months of site selection. A telephone line was also offered to respond to any queries and, when available, to provide suitable information. In addition, as parts of the research were completed, the company shared findings, such as estimations of the possible location and size of the potential wind farm, with landowners and the local council.

Over the following two years of research, the company sent letters to these groups every quarter to keep them informed of the status of the project. This happened consistently, even simply to say no advances had occurred since last writing. Such regular communication ensured that the local council and especially the landowners knew that research was ongoing and that the company was available to discuss any questions.

While some landowners were skeptical about the project, relations generally advanced in a positive way. Eventually, a very large proportion of them signed preliminary agreements, enabling the project to move forward.

7 Community engagement at the project feasibility stage

Marcia Osborne and her grandson, landholders at Capital Hill Wind Farm, New South Wales

Context

At the project feasibility stage, developers determine the physical and financial viability of the project. It's at this point that most of the research moves from the desk to the field followed by feasibility testing, which may include elements such as the installation of wind monitoring, after negotiations with landowners and local council or planning authorities.

These elements can create curiosity, questions or expectations in the community that developers need to communicate in advance, being particularly proactive in presenting and discussing their significance with the relevant stakeholders.

As it is not certain if the project will move forward, developers need to handle information sharing and disclosure carefully, to manage expectations and concerns. This means that developers may start their first public introductions of the project to the community including:

- explaining what the project is about
- the potential benefits, the roles and responsibilities (who owns the project, who is developing it, possible changes of ownership, etc)
- the goals of this stage
- integration with existing land use
- what the future might hold for the community if the project moves forward

At this stage, it is important that developers provide a clear acknowledgement of the aspects of the project that may be influenced by the community and those that are not. Also, as in the previous stage, developers should actively engage with the community and local councils to address issues of interest (such as native vegetation and biodiversity, landscape and visual amenity, noise, health, property values, blade glint, or shadow flicker), developing investigations where appropriate and reporting findings back to the community.

Following the identification, mapping and recording of stakeholders and issues, developers will have a clear understanding of the boundary and approach to engagement. At this stage developers should prepare the community engagement plan and begin to implement it by initiating one-on-one consultations, personal interviews or telephone lines to engage with communities. This helps developers to gather input for the decision-making process and have a good understanding of the expectations and concerns in the community.

At this stage, developers should establish a community reference group to act as a bridge between communities and wind developers – while the owner and the developer of the project might change as the project evolves, this reference group should remain as stable as possible, and so communities need to be aware of this.

To establish a community reference group is best practice for all major wind farms. Among other responsibilities, these groups provide a forum to discuss any issues regarding the wind farm development and community concerns, give feedback and advice to developers, and help in the communication of information to the community. Guidance for establishing community reference groups is available in the Community Engagement Toolkit.

It's crucial that everyone involved in the development team focuses on building trust and constructive relationships within the community. This entails sharing information in an open and balanced way, including, the basis for the decision-making process and opportunities for the community to contribute. Wind developers need to make clear the potential benefits and impacts of the project for the community, but also clarify that the project might not move forward in the end.

7 Community engagement at the project feasibility stage

Objectives of engagement at the feasibility stage

The objectives for community engagement at the feasibility stage are:

- identify and proactively communicate all the potential benefits and impacts of the wind farm
- establish communication channels for communities to raise questions and to answer them
- gather input from communities, particularly concerns and expectations
- manage expectations with honesty and openness
- build community support for the project

Key steps

The key steps at the feasibility stage are:

- introduce the project to communities and provide clear and timely information on the status of the project
- develop the community engagement plan and begin to implement it, particularly:
  - establish two-way communication channels with communities to gather input for the decision-making process
  - create a community reference group
  - document all the interactions of engagement.
- Continue to investigate and report issues of interest to the community such as:

  native vegetation and biodiversity
  - landscape and visual amenity
  - noise
  - health
  - property values
  - blade glint
  - shadow flicker

Tools and tips

The key tools to apply at the feasibility stage are:

- finalise the identification and mapping of stakeholders
- one-on-one consultations
- interviews and surveys
- telephone lines
- websites
- advertisements
- community reference groups

Case study

In 2009, a New South Wales company identified an area with the potential for a wind farm project. From the beginning of the feasibility stage, the company was aware of a significant group in the area which opposed wind farm development and which could hamper the potential project.

The company recognised that a group of local opponents meant its entry into the community and its initial presentations about the potential project would be strongly scrutinised. Its early steps would have a significant impact on shaping community perceptions of the project. Early contacts might even determine whether the project would move forward or not. The company therefore prioritised the establishment of good relationships with the community before and during technical aspects of the project feasibility.

The company appointed a community relations manager to lead the engagement and remain in the area as a stable reference point. The community relations manager acted as the contact for the community and ensured that expectations were being managed while providing the opportunity to create positive sentiment about the project in the community.

Following this, the company sent an introductory letter to people living within five kilometres of the potential wind farm to raise awareness about the project. This letter contained some basic information about the intention of the project, its current feasibility status, the actions that the company would undertake, and provided contact details to allow readers to get in touch with the community relations manager should they have any questions.

After this first contact, during the following months and under the leadership of the community relations manager, the company organised personal interviews with people in the area, opened telephone lines for the public, regularly shared findings of the technical research, and announced opportunities for community members to provide feedback on the project.

Many people in the community showed support for the project and appreciated the efforts the company made to share information and open opportunities for dialogue and participation. Moreover, while the opposition group remained in the area, the company saw that by making itself more available to the community, it earned the trust necessary to advance the project.

8 Community engagement at the planning and approvals stage

Ben Mumford lives next door to Clements Gap Wind Farm, South Australia

8

Context

At the planning and approvals stage it is clear that the project is fundamentally feasible and so developers start the design of the wind farm project and gather detailed site assessment data to confirm its feasibility. After the detailed assessments are complete, wind developers submit the project application to regulatory bodies and the approval review period starts.

Communities want to see that they are part of the project from its inception and that their opinions and concerns are considered. This means that developers create opportunities for stakeholders to provide input by maintaining and expanding the communication channels opened in the previous stage. This can include methods such as telephone lines, project websites, or establishing drop-in centres, but also more proactive mechanisms such as the community reference group.

It is important that all stakeholders have access to the right levels of the organisation to engage in discussions, raise questions and express opinions on the project design and planning. All stakeholders want to receive responses from developers to their questions and opinions – even if these are not positive or meet the stakeholders' expectations; it is good practice to always provide explanations.

While the project awaits approval, there are no new advances in the project. The priority at this time is to avoid silent periods that can create uncertainty and anxiety. Developers can take advantage of this quiet time to become more visible and active members of the community. This means pro-activity in the engagement and provision of regular updates on the project if appropriate, establishing routine meetings with communities and local councils to address any questions, organising visits to the potential future site, or exploring potential partnerships with local organisations for community development.

Working closely with the local council and the community reference group can help developers to have a better understanding of the community, its needs and how to communicate with them. A key aspect at this stage is to prepare the community if the project moves forward, explaining in a balanced and clear way the potential next steps in the project and their implications for the community.

8 Community engagement at the planning and approvals stage

Objectives of engagement at the planning and approvals stage

The objectives for community engagement at the planning and approvals stage are:

- maintain communication channels for communities to raise questions and to answer them
- gather opinions and expectations about the project and address any questions about it
- avoid silent periods by proactive communications
- continue to be an active and visible member of the community capable of creating trust and constructive relationships

Key steps

The key steps at the planning and approvals are:

- establish mechanisms to gather and respond to inputs from communities to the project planning
- keep communities up-to-date with project planning and submission
- establish more proactive engagement mechanisms
- review and update the community engagement plan as needed

Tools and tips

The key tools to apply at the planning and approvals are:

- one-on-one consultations
- open houses
- telephone lines
- websites
- community reference groups
- site visits
- drop-in centres
- exploration of community partnerships

Case study

A wind developer in a South Australian farming district had completed all the stages up to submitting its application without encountering any opposition. However, once the application was submitted, a local opposition group arose and became very vocal against the project.

The company organised a meeting with the group to better understand its viewpoints and concerns and to try to find a way of resolving those concerns. At the meeting, the group presented its discontent about the project, especially with regard to its potential visual impact.

In response, the company prepared a series of photomontages to provide both the opposition group and the community at large with a more realistic image of how the project might look after construction. Following the distribution of the photomontages, the company organised an information session which allowed the community to ask questions about visual amenity and any other issues related to the project.

The company's commitment to openness and responsiveness resulted in community members approaching the company more often to both express their viewpoints and to ask questions. Although very few who opposed the project changed their minds, the community's belief that their concerns and questions were heard and responded to resulted in positive outcomes for the company. The intensity of the opposition to the project diminished and the community's trust and willingness to enter into dialogue with the company increased.

9 Community engagement at the construction stage

Stuart "Stuey" Nicolson, Lead Service Technician, REpower Australia at Clements Gap Wind Farm, South Australia

Context

When the project is approved, construction of the wind farm begins. This stage can create some temporary issues for the community because of the disruption in the area, the increased traffic, influx of workers, etc. Developers need to provide early information about the changes that will take place to reduce concerns and uncertainty – such as construction timelines, locations or specific actions.

Meanwhile, developers can also highlight the benefits of the wind farm for the community during the construction stage and once it is over – such as opportunities for local employment, local businesses or tourism in the area.

At this stage, it is advisable to review the stakeholder identification and mapping to ensure the appropriate approach to stakeholders.

Since this period is defined by change, it is essential to keep all the engagement methods open and gradually increase their intensity. While websites or telephone lines are important to provide updates to communities on the project development, it is important that the focus moves to greater pro- activity – for example by organising more regular meetings, strengthening the role of the community reference group for gathering feedback and communicating with communities, organising visits to the site, publicly advertising the drop-in centre, or establishing partnerships for community development.

At this stage, engaging with the media is particularly important to provide clear, complete and timely information about the project but also for building awareness and being more proactive in the management of issues. Equally, proactive, close and up-to-date communication with landowners and local councils is crucial to provide them relevant and timely information but also for gaining feedback that can improve performance.

Developers should acknowledge the negative impacts that construction generates for communities and provide as much information as possible, both when requested and proactively: any disruption should be communicated, managed and minimised.

An important step for this is to establish complaints management mechanisms to offer clear and formal commitments to remediation. It is important that stakeholders have easy access to these mechanisms and that the process to deal with complaints and how responses are produced and reported is clearly defined and understood.

To this end, developers should make the mechanism and the management plan publicly available. Involving the community reference group in developing and implementing the mechanism is best-practice. This is further explained in the complaints management mechanism tool in the Community Engagement Toolkit.

While construction can lead to negative impacts, developers should proactively seek opportunities to provide direct benefit to the community, for example by prioritising local sourcing, partnering with local businesses to provide catering services, accommodation to contractors, waste management, or employment opportunities.

To earn trust, communities need to see that developers have a genuine understanding of their wellbeing and are responsive to their needs. Monitoring, evaluating and reporting performance is an important component of this.

9 Community engagement at the construction stage

Objectives of engagement at the construction stage

The objectives for community engagement at the construction stage are to:

- reduce communities' stress and concerns by acknowledging and responding to any issues
- earn trust through openness and responsiveness to community interests and concerns
- demonstrate commitment to communities' wellbeing
- avoid, minimise or remediate negative impacts from construction
- seek or respond to interest in opportunities for communities created by the construction process

Key steps

The key steps at the construction stage are:

- inform communities of the project timeframes, location, etc. in advance and keep them up-to-date
- communicate the positive contribution of the project to community development
- review the stakeholder identification and mapping
- implement more proactive engagement methods, particularly complaints management mechanisms, making their framework publicly available and reporting the process and outcomes
- monitor, evaluate and report significant impacts as a result of the construction, including complaints handling and processing through the complaints management mechanism
- review and update the community engagement plan as needed
- consider opportunities to provide tours of the construction site for interested groups (schools, community groups, etc)

Tools and tips

The key tools to apply at the construction stage are:

- review the identification and mapping of stakeholders;
- one-on-one consultations
- open houses
- telephone lines
- websites
- community reference groups
- site visits
- drop-in centres
- community partnerships
- complaints management mechanisms.

Case study

Over the course of a decade, changes in a rural Tasmanian community, economically dependent on agriculture and forestry processing, led to a drastic loss of income and high levels of unemployment. Given this context, the arrival of a wind farm project was generally regarded by the community as a very positive opportunity for economic development.

In response, the company developed a very proactive engagement approach from the beginning. The project gained even stronger support through the first stages by providing one-on-one consultations, telephone lines, open houses, public meetings, and, most importantly, by appointing a permanent person embedded in the project team specifically dedicated to community engagement. This individual stayed in the area and was constantly available to community members.

The project was approved at the end of 2011 and in December of that year, wind farm construction began. While the construction is expected to last for 18 months, the subsequent changes to the area's life and routines will last much longer. In preparation for this stage of development, the company prioritised bolstering the existing good relationship with the community through ensuring that people's concerns and questions were heard and addressed. In addition to all the existing channels of communication opened in previous project stages, the company also:

developed information sessions in local schools with materials tailored to the ages and interests of students; organised site visits; agreed with the local newspaper to write a monthly update on the project status; established partnerships with local organisations and businesses to benefit from the construction stage; and established a process to channel complaints for community members to discuss any issues and try to find solutions.

At the time of writing, the construction of the wind farm is underway, and while there are several disruptions in the area, the general sentiment remains very positive as community members are aware of and participate in the company's efforts to listen and respond.

10 Community engagement at the commissioning and operations stage

Shaun Blackie, employee with Pacific Hydro at Codrington Wind Farm, Victoria

10

Context

After construction ends, the wind farm is commissioned and starts its operations. The main tasks of the wind farm are then maintenance and monitoring. At this stage, the project becomes part of the community's landscape and routine.

Developers should not however assume that the engagement is over. In fact, the focus at this stage is to ensure good ongoing relations by actively participating in the life of the community. To this end, local partnerships befitting the nature of the project are very useful – such collaborations may relate to flora and fauna monitoring, community investment etc.

Also, it is crucial that developers maintain and reinforce the role of community reference groups, complaints management mechanisms, activities like site visits, open meetings, etc. To ensure the methods of engagement are appropriate, regular reviews (for example, every 12 to 24 months) of the identification and mapping of stakeholders and their understanding of the social context are particularly important.

At this stage, communities need to know that the wind company's regard for their wellbeing is genuine and an ongoing priority. For this reason developers should provide enough publicly available information for communities to assess the progress of the wind farm, gather input for continuous improvement, and respond promptly to inquiries and requests.

Moreover, developers need to demonstrate how the wind farm is benefiting the community and the environment. For this, wind developers can establish evaluation and reporting systems to account for and communicate their economic, social and environmental performance in the community.

Engagement with media can help wind developers enhance the outreach of its messages while being more proactive in the management of issues. Similarly, close engagement with the local council can help wind developers improve communications and identify more opportunities to maximise the contribution to the development of the community.

10 Objectives of engagement at the commissioning and operations stage

Objectives of engagement at the commissioning and operations stage

The objectives for community engagement at the commissioning and operations stage are:

- become an active member of the community
- strengthen collaboration through relevant partnerships
- demonstrate commitment to communities' wellbeing'

Key steps

The key steps at the commissioning and operations stage are:

- establish partnerships and collaborations
- maintain existing engagement activities
- monitor, evaluate and report performance
- review and update the community engagement plan as needed
- offer site tours to community members

Tools and tips

The key tools to apply at the commissioning and operations stage are:

- community partnerships
- community reference groups
- complaints management mechanisms
- open houses
- one-on-one consultations
- telephone lines
- websites
- site visits
- drop-in centres
- review the stakeholder identification and mapping
- regular monitoring of effectiveness
- review social baseline study

Case study

A community reference group for a Victorian wind farm has been an important and ongoing community engagement process from the commencement of constructions to commissioning and operations stages.

Once operations commenced, the group continued to meet on a quarterly basis to receive updates about the project and provide a forum for questions and issues to be raised. Representatives of the company attend all meetings of the group to provide information, answer questions and participation in discussions about the project. The group provides both a formal mechanism for issues to be raised and also an informal means for relationships between the company and the community to be developed and strengthened.

In addition, being broadly based – involving landholders, neighbours, community members and local government representatives, the group provided an important conduit for information and feedback to the broader community.

The group recently reinforced its role and committed to continuing to meet throughout the operations period of the project.

11 Community engagement at the decommissioning stage

Typical landowner contracts require that once a wind farm is decommissioned, the turbine site is covered in topsoil so that farming activities can continue.

Context

The operation of a wind farm can extend for several decades before a decision to close and dismantle the project is made. In Australia, there are few experiences to date of decommissioning of a wind farm, but there are certain aspects to consider for community engagement should it occur.

The decommissioning stage brings as much change to a community as the construction phase – the wind farm has become part of the community's routine and the end of the project lifecycle can bring questions and uncertainty about the future. As during the construction stage, developers need to reduce and avoid negative impacts for communities. For this, it is important to be proactive in identifying and addressing any questions from the community and take steps to leave the community no worse off once the company is no longer present in the area.

Communities want to know about the process of decommissioning, its steps and the potential impacts. A priority is to communicate this in clear, complete and balanced manner by providing information and opportunities for stakeholders to comment on the approach to decommissioning.

The complaints management mechanisms and the community reference group established during earlier stages of the wind farm will be very helpful resources for developers and communities to address and solve any issues as a result of the decommissioning. Also, working closely with the local council can improve developers' understanding of the best course of action and the ways to communicate and share information with the community.

Developers should acknowledge and respond to communities, placing priority on addressing concerns about the future. Continuing with evaluation and reporting performance as occurs in earlier stages of the wind farm life cycle can help wind developers to remain sufficiently accountable for the environmental, social and economic impacts that might result from decommissioning. The social baseline study can also help developers understand the current context and prepare communities better on how the decommissioning may impact its development. Arrangements for the ongoing feasibility of any community partnerships supported by the wind farm should also be developed.

The success of community engagement at this stage is very delicate. Even well planned decommissioning may cause significant negative economic impacts in the community. Honesty and openness, inclusiveness, responsiveness, and accountability remain as the guiding principles of the developers' actions and decisions.

11 Community engagement at the site selection stage

Objectives of engagement at the decommissioning stage

The objectives for community engagement at the decommissioning stage are:

- reduce community stress and concerns
- create opportunities for the community to raise issues, expectations and concerns
- acknowledge and respond to any issue

Key steps

The key steps at the decommissioning stage are:

- introduce the decommissioning plan to communities (timeframes, location, etc) in advance and keep them up-to-date
- gather input from stakeholders and respond to it
- advise how partnerships invested in will continue after decommissioning
- review and update the community engagement plan as needed

Tools and tips

The key tools to apply at the decommissioning stage are:

- community partnerships
- community reference groups
- complaints management mechanisms
- one-on-one consultations
- telephone lines
- websites
- site visits
- review social baseline study

Community Engagement Toolkit

12 Community Engagement Toolkit

There are several techniques that wind developers can use for engaging with communities depending on the stages of the project and the particular needs of wind developers and communities. The Community Engagement Toolkit contains 12 of the most effective tools to use throughout the wind farm lifecycle.

These tools and their application options during the project lifecycle are summarised in Figure 4 on the opposite page.

The toolkit provides step-by-step instructions to use each tool. These tools aim to:

- improve approaches to community engagement
- build trust and constructive relations between the industry and local communities
- foster the confidence of communities in the net positive benefit of the wind farm
- improve the wind industry's credibility and reputation
- deliver more successful and sustainable wind farm projects

The tools can also provide an important reference to communities on the processes that wind developers might undertake in the engagement.

Using the tools

While the use and application of these tools can contribute to a project's success, community engagement is a complex process where several aspects influence attitudes, perceptions, and alignment of developer and community interests. The toolkit is a reference for community engagement but it cannot ensure its success.

An appropriate allocation of resources, internal commitment, sufficient technical knowledge and the support of external experts can also help wind developers to achieve greater results.

The tools are not a substitute for legal requirements, which must be observed throughout the entire lifecycle.

Tool	Site Selection	Feasibility	Planning and Approval	Construction	Commissioning and operations	De-Commissioning
Baseline study	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Stakeholder identification & mapping	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
One-on-one briefings	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Newsletters	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Project websites			✓	✓	✓	✓
Telephone lines	✓*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Advertisements		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Drop-in centre			✓	✓	✓	✓
Open houses			✓	✓	✓	✓
Site visits			✓	✓	✓	✓
Community workshops		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Community reference groups		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Community partnerships			✓	✓	✓	✓
Complaints management mechanisms				✓	✓	✓

Figure 4: Summary of tools and application during the project lifecycle

* Telephone lines at the site selection stage should be provided for selected stakeholders only, i.e. landowners, local councils and planning authorities.

12 Social baseline study

What?

A social baseline study involves conducting research to understand the social context of an area where a wind farm project might be developed. This includes researching a community's background, culture, demographics, and attitudes to inform decision-making, identify opportunities, prevent project risks, etc.

The social baseline study provides data that developers can use to analyse change in the community as a consequence of the wind farm development. This can help developers understand their contribution and potential impacts on the development of the community.

How?

Step 1: Desktop research

The starting point to a social baseline study is to gather secondary information sources. To find data, developers may need to contact local or regional officials or institutions. At the beginning of the project the most important aspect is to establish a robust methodology for gathering and analysing data.

It is useful to analyse this information by following a Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, and Environmental analysis. Table 5 provides an example of issues to research following this model:

Political What is the political situation in the area like?	**Economic** What is the local economy like?	**Social** What is the social context in the area like?
• Government structures • Local lobbying/advocacy groups • Political trends and elections • State, local and federal political situation • Other	• Local businesses • Job growth and unemployment • Household income • Other	• Number of people • Age • Location • Population density • Social diversity • Health • Life expectancy • Education • Previous engagements • Other
Technological What is the local situation technology-wise like?	**Legal** What is the local legislation like?	**Environmental** What is the local environmental like?
• Individual access to technology • Local technological infrastructure • Other	• Current local planning schemes and regulations • Likely future local planning changes • Other	• Water and land issues • Recreational areas • Flora and fauna • Other

Table 5: Example of items to include in the baseline study

If secondary sources do not provide enough data on some issues, developers can develop fieldwork with social researchers. This fieldwork can include, for example, questionnaires or focus groups.

Step 2: Community profiling

Once all the data is available, developers can write a comprehensive profile of the current context of the community. Using the analysis of issues by area, Table 5 can help establish a table of contents for the profile.

The information of the community profile can prepare wind developers to make better decisions, identify opportunities for partnerships or prevent project risks.

Step 3: Ongoing reviews and updates

Developers use the baseline profile as the basis for further investigation later in the project lifecycle: to analyse these same issues at other stages of the development will offer an assessment of the contribution and impacts of the project on the community.

Stakeholder identification and mapping 12

What?

Stakeholder identification and mapping is an analysis of the key groups and individuals whose decisions can affect or be affected by the wind farm project. This analysis provides an overview of the relevant stakeholders in the community and informs the way developers should approach them in the engagement.

How?

Step 1: List stakeholders

The starting point is to list all potential stakeholders developers are aware of. This can include but is not limited to individuals from the community, civil society and community groups, government or members of the company. Other examples of stakeholders are:

- landowners
- neighbours
- Indigenous people
- local businesses
- tourist organisations
- electricity network service providers
- mining exploration titles
- local, regional, state or national social and environmental interest groups
- local schools and clubs
- local, regional, state or national media
- municipal, state and federal government departments, authorities, agencies, and regulators
- board of directors and top management
- developers' legal department
- employees

Discussions with these stakeholders can help expand the list of relevant groups for the project – when interacting with any individual, a key question developers should ask is 'who else should we talk to?' At this stage, the most important aspect is to ensure that no relevant group or individual is missed.

Step 2: Stakeholder level of influence

Once stakeholders have been identified and listed, developers need to understand their potential levels of influence. The level of influence is defined by three attributes:

- Power – is the stakeholder able to impose its will on the project?
- Urgency – do stakeholder claims require immediate attention/is the stakeholder of critical importance?
- Legitimacy – are the actions of the stakeholder perceived as proper and appropriate by others?

The presence of these three attributes can help profile and prioritise stakeholders. A widely used analysis is to rate each stakeholder against these attributes on a three-level scale: High (3), Medium (2), and Low (1). The sum of the ratings provides a measure of the overall influence that each stakeholder has in the wind farm project. An example of identifying stakeholders' influence is provided in Table 6.

Stakeholder (examples only)	Power	Urgency	Legitimacy	Overall influence
John Smith (Local Club)	High (3)	Low (1)	High (3)	Medium-high (7)
William Jones (Landholder)	High (3)	High (3)	High (3)	High (9)
Grace Jones (Local primary school principal)	Medium (2)	Low (1)	High (3)	Medium (6)

Table 6: Example of matrix to identify stakeholder's influence

12 Stakeholder identification and mapping

Step 3: Stakeholder alignment of interests

The alignment of interests refers to the shared goals of the stakeholders with the project and their willingness to collaborate. A widely used analysis is to rate each stakeholder's alignment of interests with the project on a three-point scale: High (3), Medium (2), and Low (1). An example of identifying the alignment of interests of stakeholders with those of the wind developer is provided in Table 7

Stakeholder (examples only)	Alignment of interests
John Smith (Local Club)	High (3)
William Jones (Landholder)	Low (1)
Grace Jones (Local primary school principal)	Low (1)

Table 7: Example of matrix to identify alignment of interests

Step 4: Stakeholder matrix

Plotting each stakeholder's level of influence and alignment of interests in a matrix can help developers map them in four categories, as shown in the example of Figure 5 to the right.

As Table 8 to the right shows, there are four possible categories of stakeholders.

These scenarios can help developers to:

- define the characteristics of each stakeholder
- identify priorities of engagement
- determine the approaches to engagement with particular stakeholders

Step 5: Ongoing review

The locations of stakeholders in the matrix are not permanent throughout the project lifecycle. Regular reviews and updates can ensure that engagement activities are suitable to the stakeholders – it is particularly important to repeat this exercise during construction, periodically throughout operations and again at the decommissioning phase.

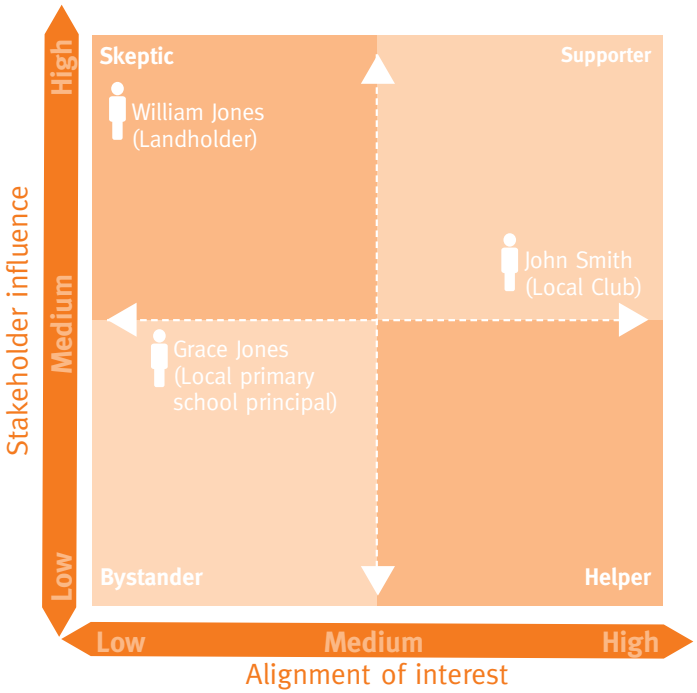

Figure 5: Example of a matrix representing stakeholder influence and alignment of interests

	Description	Implications for engagement
Supporters	High influence and high alignment of interests	Actual opportunities for mobilising support
Skeptics	High influence and low alignment of interests	Actual disagreements and challenges for project buy-in
Helpers	Low influence and high alignment of interests	Potential opportunities for mobilising support
Bystanders	Low influence and low alignment of interests	Potential disagreements and challenges for project buy-in

Table 8: Possible scenarios of stakeholder mapping

One-on-one briefings

12

What?

One-on-one briefings refer to personal meetings between developers and individuals from the community to discuss aspects of the project. While this method is a relatively informal interaction, developers should prepare materials to share with individuals and be well equipped respond to possible questions, concerns or expectations.

How?

Step 1: Invite

Individuals need to know that developers are open to discussion and willing to engage with them at a personal level. In the first stage of the project, developers should proactively seek opportunities to inform key stakeholders such as landowners or local authorities about the project. As the project moves forward, developers should extend the opportunities to the rest of the community. In case there is more demand than capacity, developers can consider organising an open house.

Step 2: Prepare

Individuals who approach developers for one-on-one briefings want to know about the main aspects of the project but also how the project might affect them as individuals. This can include but is not limited to:

- location of the turbines
- project timeframes
- lifecycle of a wind turbine
- perceived and potential project risks
  (e.g. 'is there any risk of fire?', 'is there any risk to health?')
- noise from turbines
- electricity generation capacity
- local economic benefits and impacts
  – particularly with regard to local businesses, tourism, property values, etc.
- other opportunities to engage

Anticipating some of these questions can help developers provide better answers. Nevertheless, this is a constant learning process and keeping minutes can contribute to refine the one-on-one briefings.

Step 3: Discuss

Developers need to prepare themselves for answering questions but also for building constructive relationships. For this, some aspects to consider are:

- speak plainly but in a respectful and balanced way
- acknowledge concerns and never dismiss a question as illegitimate or a myth
- facts are important, but if presented as counter-arguments they can create or strengthen opposition
- do not overwhelm stakeholders with information – keep it simple
- listen

Developers must be well prepared to answer questions but never provide one if unsure. To recognise that a question needs further insight and cannot be improvised shows honesty and truthfulness. Nevertheless, developers should provide answers as soon as possible.

Step 4: Next steps

It is good practice to write information such as leaflets to leave with stakeholders after a briefing. These leaflets should be concise, clear, balanced and complete. It is important to always invite stakeholders to continue the conversation later on and advise on other opportunities to engage.

12 Newsletters

What?

A letter sent to community members that contains information about the project, including key steps taken by the developers, opportunities to provide input and feedback on the project and any other updates of interest to the community.

How?

Step 1: Content

The content of any newsletter needs to address issues of interest to the community. As in the case of the one-on-one briefings, this can include but is not limited to:

- location of the turbines
- project timeframes
- lifecycle of a wind turbine
- perceived and potential project risks
  (e.g, 'is there any risk of fire?', 'is there any risk to health?')
- noise from turbines
- electricity generation capacity
- local economic benefits and impacts
  – particularly with regard to local businesses, tourism, property values, etc.
- other opportunities to engage

Step 2: Frequency

A great first step to communicating with a community is via a newsletter (particularly landowners at the site selection stage). As the project advances, company discretion will decide who the audiences might be, which nevertheless should provide regular updates to stakeholders on any relevant aspect of the project.

During periods when there are no advancements (such site selection or feasibility), developers should send newsletters on a regular basis to ensure that stakeholders are aware of the status of the project, next steps and they should of course publicise the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback.

Project websites

12

What?

A project website is an online resource for communities to access information about the project at any time. Developers can use this tool to inform communities but also gather input from visitors to the site.

How?

Step 1: Content

The website is more useful when it addresses the questions that users want to know about. This can include but is not limited to:

- location,
- history,
- owners and approach
- information about wind energy – including Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs),
- news
- contact details and opportunities to engage with developers
- space for submitting questions or concerns which should always have a timely, clear, complete and balanced response
- reports of the wind farm's operations, monitoring, etc. also including technical details and audits as available

As in the case of the one-on-one consultations, it's good practice to write content in a plain but respectful and balanced way. Avoid overwhelming users making it easily accessible and readable.

Developers should actively seek input from communities to continually improve the content and navigability of the website.

Step 2: Maintenance

It is crucial that the website is regularly updated and includes information relevant to the community in a clear and complete manner. The website should at least include:

- news
- regularly updated performance reports of the wind farm's operations
- announcements of opportunities to engage with the project and developers
- reviews and reports of partnerships for community development

Social media is now an important part of the communication toolkit. Using platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, or Instagram may assist developers in dispersing important project information in a more timely and engaging manner, allowing greater two-way communication.

The use of social media depends entirely on the wind farm developer. Although it's recommended the decision assesses its suitability to the social context of the community and how effectively it will engage stakeholders.

12 Telephone information lines

What?

A telephone line is a useful tool for communities to ask for information, raise issues or make comments about the wind farm. Developers can use this tool to inform communities but also to gather input for the project.

How?

Steps: Invite, prepare and discuss

The invitation, preparation and discussion steps should follow the same steps as in the one-on-one briefings above. Lastly, it is good practice to provide follow-up materials to individuals after a phone conversation such as leaflets or links to online resources.

If there are messages left on the answering machine, these should be attended to in a timely manner.

Open houses

12

What?

An open house is an event organised by developers that any member of the community can attend to find information about the wind farm project. It is usually hosted in an open space format, with several desks or poster displays with information about specific aspects of the project so visitors can walk around them.

How?

Step 1: Prepare

The starting point is to gather information that is relevant for the community and develop materials to address concerns or expectations about specific issues. The experience from the baseline study and the one-on-one briefings can help developers identify the key issues for preparing these materials.

Every representative of the organisation who takes part in the open house needs to be well prepared to present information and also answer questions. The advice from the one-on-one briefings above can help representatives to prepare the facilitation.

Select a convenient and well known venue for hosting the event. The date and schedule should be generally appropriate for everyone in the community to participate.

Step 2: Facilitate

The display of the information in an open house is frequently organised by themes in panels or desks. Representatives of the company at each of these panels or desks guide participants through the issues and answer any questions that might arise.

Step 3: Next steps

It is good practice to have team debriefs after an open house and to ask participants to complete short satisfaction surveys with space for comments. This can help developers gather input to improve future events and have a better perspective of the community's perception of the project.

An example of a satisfaction survey is provided on the following page

12 Open houses

Satisfaction Survey

1. Please rate your satisfaction with the open house by (a) ticking [✓] the ONE box which best describes your experience and (b) providing comments. (Please tick [✓] one box PER LINE).

Aspects of the open house	Satisfaction 0 = Uncertain 1 = very unsatisfied 2 = unsatisfied 3 = neutral 4 = satisfied 5 = very satisfied	Comments/suggestions for improvement? (Please write them in the spaces provided below)
Personal information needs were met	☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5	....
The amount of information was right	☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5	....
Responsiveness to questions	☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5	....
Clarity of answers	☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5	....
Overall satisfaction	☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5	....

2. What part(s) of the open house did you find **most valuable** and why?.....

.....

.....

3. Is there any aspect you would like to learn more about?.....

.....

.....

4. Other comments .....

.....

.....

5. If you would like to be on our mailing list to receive information about other activities please provide your contact details:

Name .....

Address.....

Telephone number .....

Email Address.....

Site visits

12

What?

Site visits are events organised by developers to show the wind farm and its everyday operations to communities.

How?

Step 1: Prepare

Developers arrange a day for opening the site to visitors and prepare a tour. In preparation for the tour some aspects to consider are:

- consider the likely number of visitors and prepare resources as needed (e.g. transport or refreshments)
- organise a timetable for the tour
- prepare a Q&A session
- decide roles and responsibilities within staff to guide the tour
- prepare staff for answering questions (see advice from the one-on-one briefings above)
- advertise the event through local newspapers, radio or other relevant channels and take RSVPs to help plan for the expected number of visitors

When possible, invite landowners and neighbours to participate in the site visits to explain their experience and answer questions from individuals.

After publicly announcing the event, developers may also organise transport options for individuals.

Step 2: Facilitate

The site's staff delivers the tour, with a Q&A sessions and participation of landowners and neighbours.

Step 3: Next steps

It is good practice to hold staff debriefs after a site visit and to ask participants to complete short satisfaction surveys with space for comments. This can help developers gather input to improve future visits and have a better perspective of the community's perception of the project.

12 Community workshops

What?

Community workshops are forums for discussion to gather suggestions and feedback on a project. They are an opportunity for developers to explore alternatives on certain elements of the project and incorporate new issues to the agenda.

How?

Step 1: Define goals and content

Developers invite individuals to take part in the workshop, being clear about how they will use the suggestions and feedback from participants. To this end, participants need to know the issues that will be discussed and the outcomes they can expect.

Step 2: Facilitate

Expert facilitators should run the community workshops and, where possible, independent from the company.

Step 3: Next steps

Participants want to know the steps that the developers will take following the discussions from the workshop. Developers should offer clear advice on how the opinions will be considered in the decision-making process.

It is good practice to keep minutes and ask participants to complete short satisfaction surveys with comments at the end of the workshop. This can help developers gain a better understanding of participants' input and perception about the project, and also improve future workshops.

Drop-in centre

12

What?

A drop-in centre is an office or shop that community members can visit to ask questions or collect information about the wind farm project, as well as provide comments and feedback to developers.

How?

Step 1: Preparation

The drop-in centre should be operated by a community relations manager or another representative of the company with sufficient preparation and experience in communications and building and managing relationships. There are also successful experiences in Australia where community members volunteer to run or co-run these centres, providing information and gathering input from neighbours.

Step 2: Content

Individuals who approach the drop-in centre will seek information about the project and opportunities to provide feedback. It is good practice to always provide information not only in a verbal way but also in the form of leaflets and reports, as mentioned above.

Visitors should always be made to feel welcome.

Step 3: Launch

Communities need to be aware of the launch of the drop-in centre. It is important to publicly advertise its location, opening hours and the information that visitors will find there. References on the website and acknowledgement it in other communication material can also improve its visibility.

The facilitation of the services of the drop-in centre should follow the same guidance as provided in the Discussion step of the one-on-one briefings above.

12 Project advertisements

What?

Project advertisements are public notices or displays intended to inform the community about the wind farm project. This tool can help developers publicise and enhance the project visibility and the opportunities for communities to participate in engagement activities.

How?

Step 1: Select

Developers select the announcement they want to make to the rest of the community – e.g. the public introduction of the project to the community, particular aspects of the wind farm during its lifecycle, or engagement activities and opportunities, such as nominations to the community reference group.

Step 2: Prepare and publish

Developers prepare the advertisement and select the channel to publicise it, such as public banners or a page in the local press. Advertisements need to be written in plain and clear language, making it easily readable and informative to the community. The content of any advertisement should be tailored to the information needs of the community at each stage and always provide contact details for further information.

Community reference groups

12

What?

Community reference groups are formal committees of community representatives who discuss community concerns, and provide input and feedback to the project. While these groups are not decision-making bodies, they can act as a bridge between communities and developers.

How?

Step 1: Define

The community reference group helps wind developers increase their awareness of the issues around a wind farm project, inform their decisions and communicate with the rest of the community on a regular basis. As a starting point, developers need to define:

- goals, roles and responsibilities of the community reference group
- a process for communities to communicate with the group
- how to handle the advice and opinions of the group, and the process for responding to these
- the budget allocated to fund the group and its activities
- frequency and location of meetings

Initially, the committee should meet at least every quarter until the planning and approvals stage of development. If the project does not move forward, the committee would be disbanded. If the project is approved, the committee should continue its regular meetings. The group should remain as a stable committee, although roles and appointments may be reviewed from time to time.

Step 2: Select members

Members of the community reference group need to be an appropriate representation of the community. While individuals could nominate themselves following advertisements in local newspapers, it is useful to create a list of potential candidates from a wide range of backgrounds.

For this, it can be helpful to use the stakeholder matrix to list and propose candidates who are representative of the community and its values. This can also be an opportunity for developers to relate to stakeholders that fall in the 'bystander' or 'sceptic' categories, according to the stakeholder analysis.

Ultimately, the selection of members must be based upon their willingness to make a constructive and positive contribution to the project and have the experience and ability to communicate outcomes with the rest of the community.

The final community reference group should at least include an independent chairperson, representatives of the community (including landowners), the local council, and the developer (as the environmental manager and/or the community relations manager of the wind farm).

12 Community reference groups

Step 3: Launch and maintain

Communities need to be aware of the launch of the reference group and the ways to communicate with it.

The objective of the reference group is to be a forum for discussing questions about the project so developers then can take these into consideration for the project development and management. A regular agenda should be established and minutes of meetings kept. An agenda and minutes will typically include, but is not limited to, the following items:

- budget and other organisational issues
- review of previous minutes
- discussion of outcomes from earlier meetings
- discussion of existing reports about the wind farm's performance, information shared by developers with the community and feedback, complaints lodged and responses from developers (if applicable), etc
- next steps
- appoint next meeting
- While not all of the discussions of the community reference group will lead to particular actions, developers should actively work with the reference group and explain how the questions discussed are factored in the company's decisions. In a timely fashion, the developer should provide a response to any questions or advice provided by the group, as well as any other information required.

To enhance the role of the community reference group, developers can provide funding or other forms of support for training and skills development on areas such as complaints management, or environmental issues. Priorities with regard to training and skills development should be discussed and convened with the community reference group.

Community partnerships

12

What?

Partnerships are collaborations between a wind company and local government, civil society groups or local businesses towards a shared goal. Goals can be very wide-ranging and should be tailored to suit the nature of the community and participating organisations. For example, they might include partnerships to undertake wildlife monitoring, support local tourism or other economic, social or environmental project. Each of these organisations has different goals and responsibilities, but partnerships befitting the nature of the project are very useful as they can produce mutual benefits and contribute to community development. While in some cases organisations can approach wind developers to explore partnerships, it is in a company's best interest to be proactive in this regard.

How?

Step 1: Identify areas of interest

The social baseline study can provide an overview of the most relevant issues in the community.

Issues identified in the social baseline study can be evaluated for their impact using a three-level scale (high, medium, and low) against two questions:

- How much impact does it have on the community?
- How much impact does it have on our strategy?

Issues that have a high impact on both the local community and the wind farm project are often suitable areas for development of meaningful, high impact partnerships.

Issues (examples only)	How much impact does it have on the community?	How much impact does it have on our strategy?
Local housing	medium (2)	medium (2)
Biodiversity	high (3)	high (3)
Local tourism	high (3)	medium (2)

Table 9: Example of a matrix to identify relevant issues

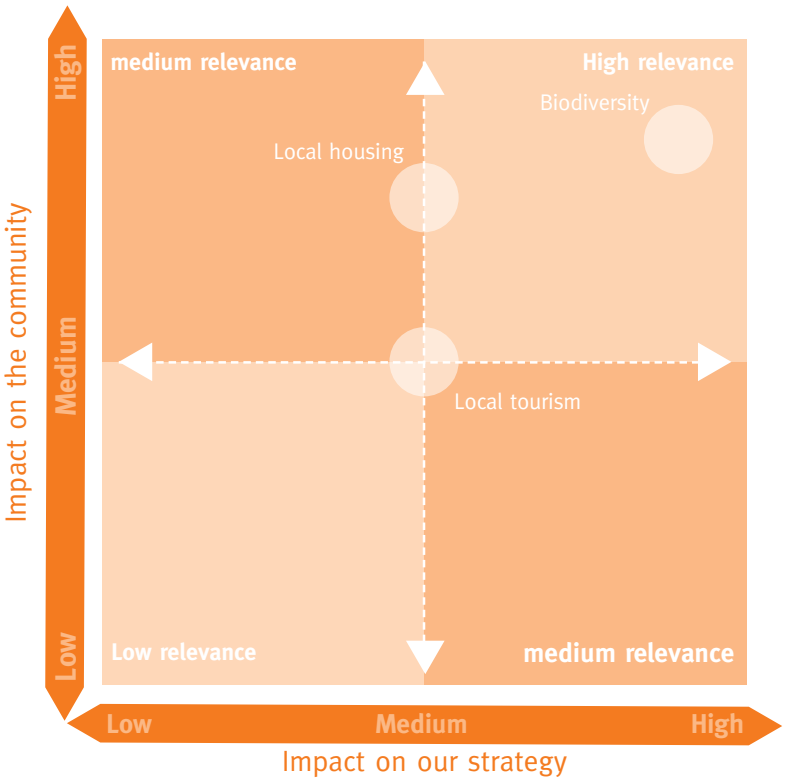

Figure 6: Example of a materiality analysis

12 Community partnerships

As Table 10 shows below, there are three different scenarios following this analysis:

	Descriptions	Implications for partnerships
High relevance	High impact on society and our strategy	Prioritise partnerships on this issue
Medium relevance	High impact on our strategy and low impact on society and vice versa	Consider partnerships on this issue
Low relevance	Low impact on our strategy and low impact on society	Not a priority for partnerships

Table 10: Possible scenarios of a materiality analysis

Step 2: List and assess potential partners

Stakeholder analysis can provide a first overview of potential partners, particularly those who rated higher on 'alignment of interests'. Dividing them by area of expertise (environment, technology, education, etc) can help developers to short-list potential partners.

There are certain aspects that developers can use to assess the suitability of each organisation as a potential partner – for example:

- expertise on a specific issue
- capacity (human resources, geographical scope of operations)
- reputation

To rate each potential partner against these aspects on a three level scale (High, Medium, and Low) and then sum each rating provides a measure of the overall suitability of each organisation for establishing partnerships.

Potential Partnerships	Expertise	Capacity	Reputation	Overall suitability
Indigenous Council	Medium (3)	Medium (2)	High (3)	High (8)
Local Environmental NGO	High (3)	High (3)	High (3)	High (9)
Local primary school	High (3)	High (3)	High (3)	High (9)

Table 11: Example of a matrix to identify potential partners

Step 3: Partner

Once developers have identified the main areas of interest and the most suitable prospective partners, they should approach them with a high-level plan to address those particular areas. These plans should describe at least:

- shared goals
- why this area is relevant for both organisations
- how a partnership can address this area better than working individually
- what technical, financial, and/or human resources we can provide

Following an agreement, the partnership should develop plans to address the particular area of interest, with specific goals, actions, timeframes and measures of progress to regularly monitor its performance. In addition, both parties should determine the long-term sustainability of the projects, the partnership, its opportunities and potential challenges. This is particularly important to plan with regard to the decommissioning stage.

Complaints management mechanisms 12

What?

A complaints management mechanism is a formal process to channel and resolve legitimate issues, concerns or problems that an individual or group has in relation to a wind farm project. Its goal is to provide an alternative to legal procedures through collaboration between parties to resolve issues in a more efficient and collaborative way that builds community ownership of solutions. One of the aims and benefits of a functional complaints mechanism is that people are aware it exists and use it at early signs of discontent, thereby thwarting larger problems down the track.

How?

Step 1: Scope

An effective complaints mechanism requires sound definitions and boundaries about the type and degree of complaints which will be addressed through the mechanism. This may include, but not be limited to, community concerns or grievances about the performance or behaviour of a company, its contractors or employees. Criteria should then be set to indicate how different levels of complaints will be dealt with. On one hand, complaints classed as 'minor', according to the agreed definition, may require a phone call or site visit. On the other hand, complaints classed as 'major' may require remediation works, mediation or even legal attention.

Advice from the community reference group and information from baseline studies, one-on-one consultations, open houses, telephone hotlines or websites can help to continually review the types and degree of issues which may be best addressed through the complaints mechanism.

At a bare minimum, the complaints mechanism should act as a formal 'clearing house' for the recording of all complaints related to a wind farm. Records of every complaint channelled through the mechanism should be kept, with notes about who lodged the complaint, when, any company actions taken, and, where possible, the solutions agreed and implemented. Any other information that can help developers to improve the process or mitigate potentially related complaints should also be recorded.

Step 2: Design

The complaints mechanism must offer the community a clear, formal process that is publicly available, accessible, widely understood, and provides an agreed channel for complaints. Best practice complaints mechanisms are predictable: they offer clear processes and timeframes for redress of concerns. They are also transparent in the carrying out of agreed procedures. The complaints mechanism is ideally co-created with community members, for example the community reference group.

Communities and developers should agree to the complaints mechanism process and to common rules for using it, which can be based on the principles of openness, inclusiveness, responsiveness and accountability. The importance and relevance of community involvement in the development of the mechanism should not be underestimated. Involvement in the design of the mechanism improves community perceptions of the mechanisms' legitimacy and credibility, key factors in ensuring that communities trust the mechanism and use it effectively. A mechanism which is not understood or trusted by the community will provide little help in problem identification and consequent risk management.

Step 3: Roles, responsibilities and resources

It is crucial to identify the necessary financial, technical and human resources necessary to develop and maintain an effective complaints mechanism.

Developers need to define roles and responsibilities for using the complaints management mechanism. For complaints classed as 'major', as defined within the mechanism's scope, it is good practice to include the participation of independent mediators (for example, members of the community reference group or other representatives of non-partisan local organisations) to investigate the situation, meet with parties individually, analyse possible courses of actions with other stakeholders, and propose mutually agreeable solutions. In the case of complaints classed as 'minor', an appointed community relations team member could telephone or meet with complainants to discuss their concerns and consider possible solutions. While it will not be possible to provide solutions in all instances or to meet all stakeholder requests, the complaints mechanism provides an important means of recording and responding to

concerns, at least to the level of ensuring they are considered. It is vital that complaints mechanisms are carried out in a fair and equitable manner.

Step 4: Test and implement

Before inaugural implementation, developers should ensure the mechanism is legitimate, culturally appropriate, and that communities are aware of the mechanism and know how to use it. This is largely achievable through input from the community reference group. Other methods such as one-on-one consultations, open houses, telephone hotlines or websites can help promote the tool.

Step 5: Monitor and review

A complaints mechanism is not a static instrument. It is vital that allowances for monitoring and review are incorporated to ensure that the usefulness, fairness and effectiveness of the mechanism are checked regularly. This helps to ensure the developer is reducing project risk through use of the mechanism while also ensuring that communities feel their complaints are acknowledged and addressed appropriately.

Reporting back to the community about the mechanism, its use and any solutions implemented or responses made both encourages communities to use the mechanism and also demonstrates its legitimacy and the company's commitment to their wellbeing. For example, if a developer publishes a sustainability report, they can include a brief section about the complaints mechanism which discloses how many complaints were lodged, the nature of those complaints, and highlight any case studies of effective redress or the status of ongoing, significant complaints.

An example of a complaints management mechanism process is shown in Figure 7 below. In this example, first, a community member formally lodges a complaint. Second, the company reviews and profiles the complaint as either 'major' or 'minor'.

If the complaint is classed as 'major', the company may consider appointing a mediator as described above who would run the implementation with the involved parties, analyse possible resolutions and propose them to parties. Agreement on whether, when and how to implement proposed solutions, should be attempted through dialogue between the developer and relevant community members. Where a resolution to the community members' liking is not possible, the reasons for this should be made clear, wherever possible.

If the complaint is classed as 'minor', a community relations team member may discuss the complaint with the complainant directly (e.g., schedule a one-on-one interview, a phone call, etc.). This discussion should establish a clear understanding of the complaint. Unless a complaint is particularly minor and pragmatic to address immediately, this information should be reported back to the company and the community member advised that they will receive a response within an appropriate timeframe. It is not recommended to suggest solutions during initial discussions about the complaint, as this can result in community members feeling promises have been made and not kept should a proposed action not be taken. Once the complaint is discussed internally by the company or the authorised community relations team member has had a chance to consider the practicality of delivering a solution, the complainant is to be informed of the outcome (e.g. actions for redress, no further action, etc).

All complaints recorded, actions taken and outcomes achieved should be reviewed at regular intervals to evaluate success and to refine the complaints mechanism as needed.

Figure 7: Example of a complaints management mechanism process

Even if there is no successful solution found at the end of a process, the ultimate priority is that community members are able to formally lodge concerns and feel they are heard and responded to.\

Template for documenting engagement

Tool(s) used:.....

.....

Goal(s) of the engagement tool: .....

.....

Person(s) responsible for engagement: .....

.....

.....

Name(s) of participant(s): .....

.....

.....

Dates): .....

Summary of previous engagement (if applicable): .....

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Summary of outcomes: .....

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Next steps: .....

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13 Glossary

Commissioning and operations:	The stage of a wind farm's lifecycle in which, after construction, the project is commissioned and moved into normal operations. The main tasks at the wind farm in this stage are maintenance and monitoring. Here the operator of the project takes full responsibility for the wind farm and the day to day activities.
Community:	A network of individuals and organisations who interact with each other. A community is not necessarily bound to specific geographical locations and may not have a consistent or uniform set of opinions.
Community engagement:	The process through which a wind developer interacts with a community to inform the decision-making processes of a wind farm project.
Community reference group:	A formal committee of community representatives formed to discuss community issues regarding a wind farm, who provide input to a project and developers and assist in the communications to the community. These groups act as bridges of communication between communities and developers.
Community workshops:	Forums for discussion on aspects of a wind farm to gather suggestions and feedback on a project. They are an opportunity for developers to explore alternatives about certain elements of a project and perhaps incorporate new issues to the agenda.
Complaints management mechanism:	A formal process to channel and resolve legitimate issues, concerns or problems that an individual or group has in relation to a wind farm project. Its goal is to provide an alternative to legal procedures through collaboration between parties to resolve issues in a more efficient and collaborative way that builds community ownership of solutions. One of the aims and benefits of a functional complaints mechanism is that people know it exists and use it at early signs of discontent, thereby minimising potentially larger problems down the track.
Construction:	The fourth stage of the project lifecycle in which the process of building the wind farm begins. It includes erecting the towers and turbines, as well as the roads within the wind farm or the underground cabling. It may also include widening or altering some public roads that are used by construction vehicles to enter the site.
Decommissioning:	The final stage of a wind farm's lifecycle in which it is turned off and dismantled.
Feasibility:	The second stage of the project lifecycle in which developers continue with the research of an area's potential for wind energy generation in the field. It includes wind testing, such as wind monitoring towers to assess the wind resource.
IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum:	A popular framework for public participation, widely used and accepted by government agencies, non-profit and for-profit firms, across industries which outlines different levels of engagement to suit varying degrees of impacts in the community. Where impacts are less significant, for example, the Spectrum suggests approaches such as 'Inform' and 'Consult'. Greater impacts on communities require approaches such as 'Involve', 'Collaborate' and 'Empower'.
Landowner:	A community member who owns the land which hosts the wind turbines.
Maintenance team:	A team of people employed to manage the day to day safe operation of the wind farm. They are usually electricians with high voltage experience and usually local. The size of the team will depend on the number of turbines. The team will work during normal business hours and access the wind farm using roads through the wind farm as agreed with the landowners.
One-on-one briefings:	Personal meetings between developers and individuals from the community to discuss aspects of a project. While this method is a relatively informal interaction, developers should prepare in advance materials to share with individuals and to respond to possible questions, concerns or expectations.

Open house:	An event organised by developers where any member of the community can attend in order to find information about a project. It is usually hosted in an open space format, with several information desks about specific aspects of the project.
Partnership:	Collaboration between organisations to share expertise and resources in order to develop activities and projects for either shared or community benefit.
Planning and approval:	The third stage of the project lifecycle in which developers confirm the viability of the project and start the design of the wind farm. After all the final assessments are complete, developers submit the project application to regulatory bodies and the approval review period starts. It includes site assessments or wind monitoring, flora and fauna, and grid studies among other things. Developing a wind farm is complex and the results of all the studies impact the proposal which will be put forward to the relevant authority.
Project website:	An online resource for communities to access information about a project at any time. Developers can use this tool to inform communities but also to gather input from visitors to the site.
Relevant authority:	Planning rules differ in each state of Australia, according to the size of the project and if listed species are thought to be living nearby or on the site. The relevant authority could be local council, state government, federal government or a combination of these.
Site selection:	The first stage of the project lifecycle in which developers investigate an area's potential for wind energy generation mainly by means of desk research.
Site visits:	Events organised by developers to show the wind farm and its everyday operations to communities.
Social licence to operate:	The general level of acceptance or approval continually granted to a developer's proposed or actual project by local communities and other stakeholders. The social licence is not something that, once earned, is fixed and unchanging. It varies over time in response to changes in the community and developers' behaviour.
Social baseline study:	Research to understand the social context of an area of interest for a project. This includes researching a community's background, culture, demographics, and attitudes in order to inform decision-making, identify opportunities, prevent project risks, etc. The social baseline study provides data which developers can use to analyse change in the community as a consequence of the wind farm development. This can help developers understand their contribution and potential impacts to the development of the community.
Stakeholder identification and mapping:	An analysis of the key groups and individuals whose decisions can affect or be affected by a project. This analysis provides an overview of the relevant stakeholders in the community and informs the way developers should approach them in the engagement.
Telephone information line:	A telephone contact number for communities to ask for information, raise issues or make comments about a project. Developers can use this tool to inform communities but also to gather input for a project.
Wind farm:	A project to produce electric power that includes one or more wind turbines – a mechanical device capable of transforming the kinetic energy from wind into electricity.

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