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# Improving local acceptance for grid development and speeding up permitting procedures: some practical tools and experiences

Ostend, October 23, 2015

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# Today's agenda

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- Who is talking – the Renewables Grid Initiative
- Why does this topic matter?
- Considerations on local acceptance
- Considerations on speeding up permitting
- Some recommendations and a suggestion

# Who is talking – Introducing the Renewables Grid Initiative

## Focus of electricity grid operators:

„We need to build power grids without delay“

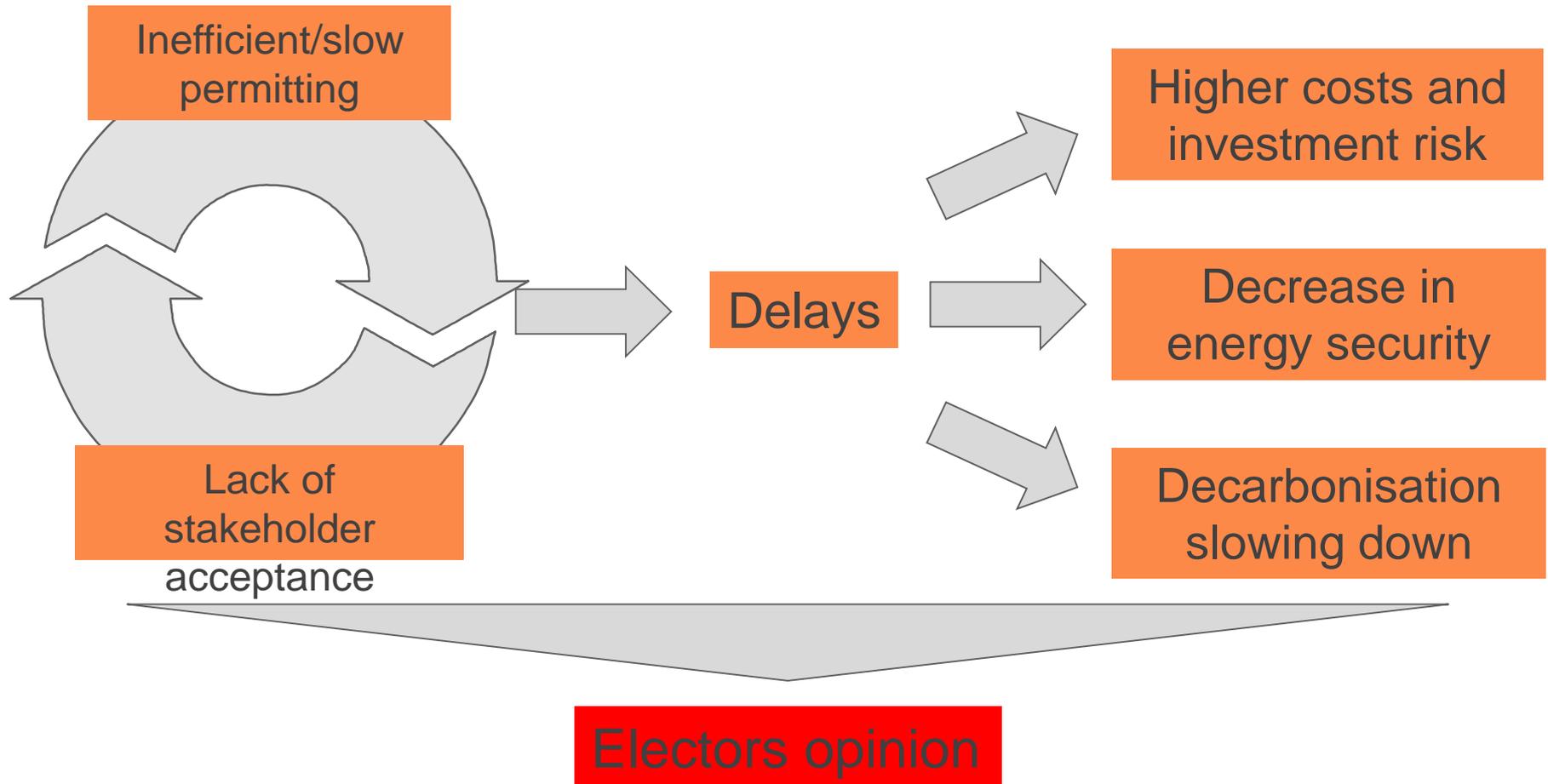


## Focus of NGOs:

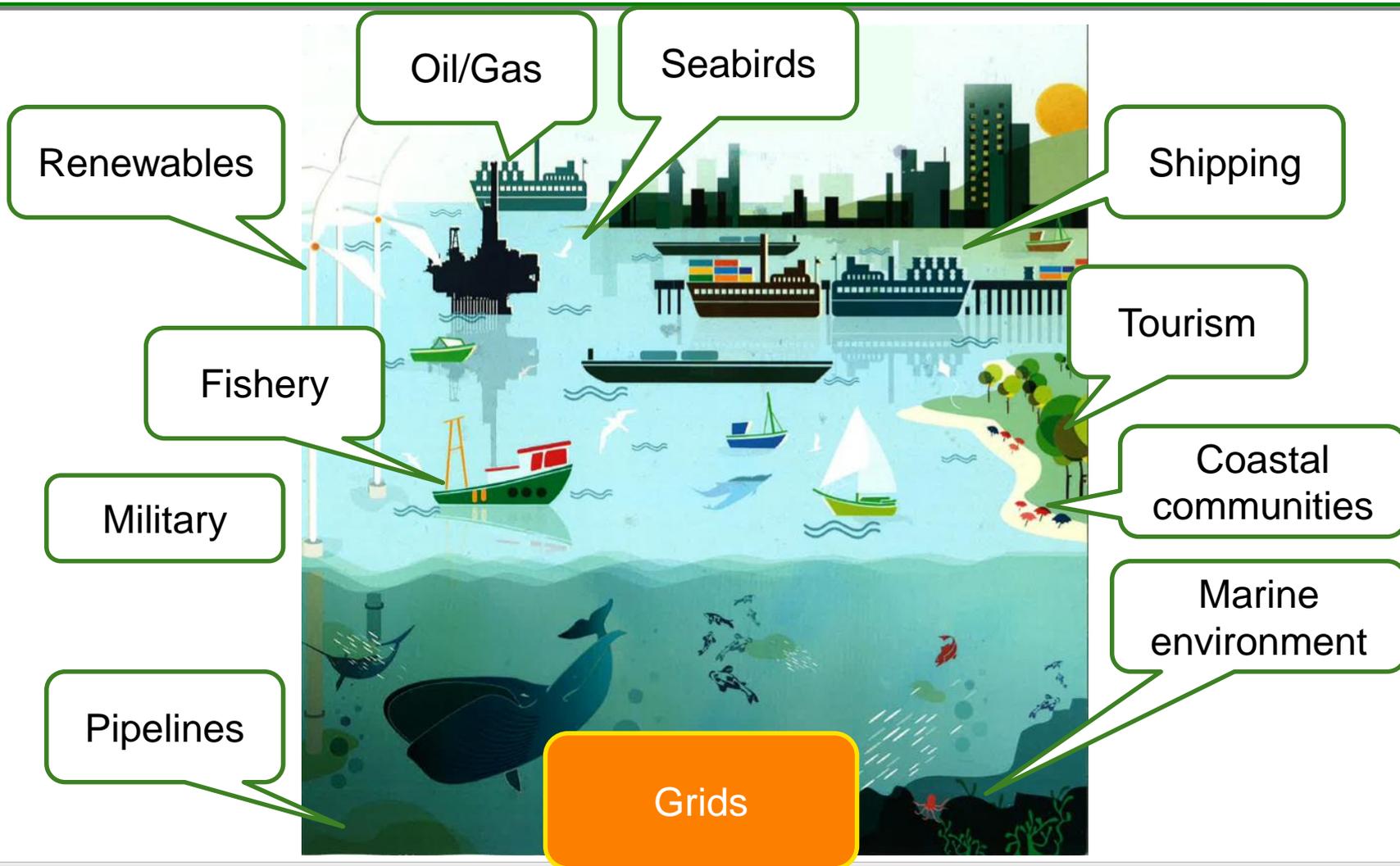
„We need renewable energies – without negative impact on nature and people“

“We want a grid built in time and in line with environmental objectives and with people’s concerns”

# Why do we need to talk about acceptance and pace of permitting?



# The sea has many users



# Stakeholder acceptance is to a large extent a procedural issue

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## Acceptance of the process/legitimacy

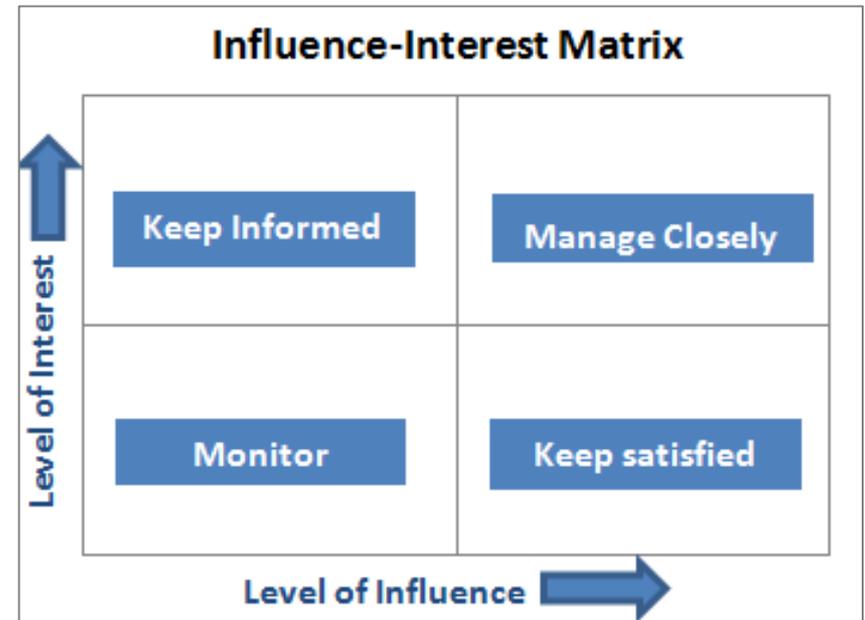
„I do not like the final decision, but I accept the decision-making process.“

## Acceptance of outcome

„I embrace the details of the final decision as my own.“

# Main first step: solid stakeholder mapping

- Local groups – sometimes hard to locate, but crucial
- Individuals can count a lot
- Seize experience of your colleagues
- Ask stakeholders for stakeholders
- Understand relationships between stakeholders
- Understand their interests, influence and what they can contribute



Source: National Grid – BESTGRID results

Stakeholder mapping is never „done“

# Some points to consider in designing stakeholder engagement

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- Type of engagement depends on type of stakeholder, project stage, context
- Often there is a necessity to inform before you can consult
- Seize the time of stakeholders well
- Be in touch on a regular basis, even if nothing is going on
- Personal relationships count
- Be reliable

Stakeholder engagement should have a dedicated resource

# Some options on how to reach local stakeholders

- Public consultation/engagement events
- Mobile consultation van
- Hiring a vacant shop in town centre
- Advertising the project/events
- Identify hard to reach groups and go where they are
- Offer to establish community forums with an independent Chair
- Ask local bodies what techniques work well in the area
- Look beyond the energy sector

**Mobile  
citizen  
office**



**Info  
markets**



**Authority  
round-  
tables**



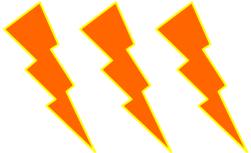
**Field  
trips**



# Improving local acceptance and speeding up is not a contradiction

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*Some are convinced:*

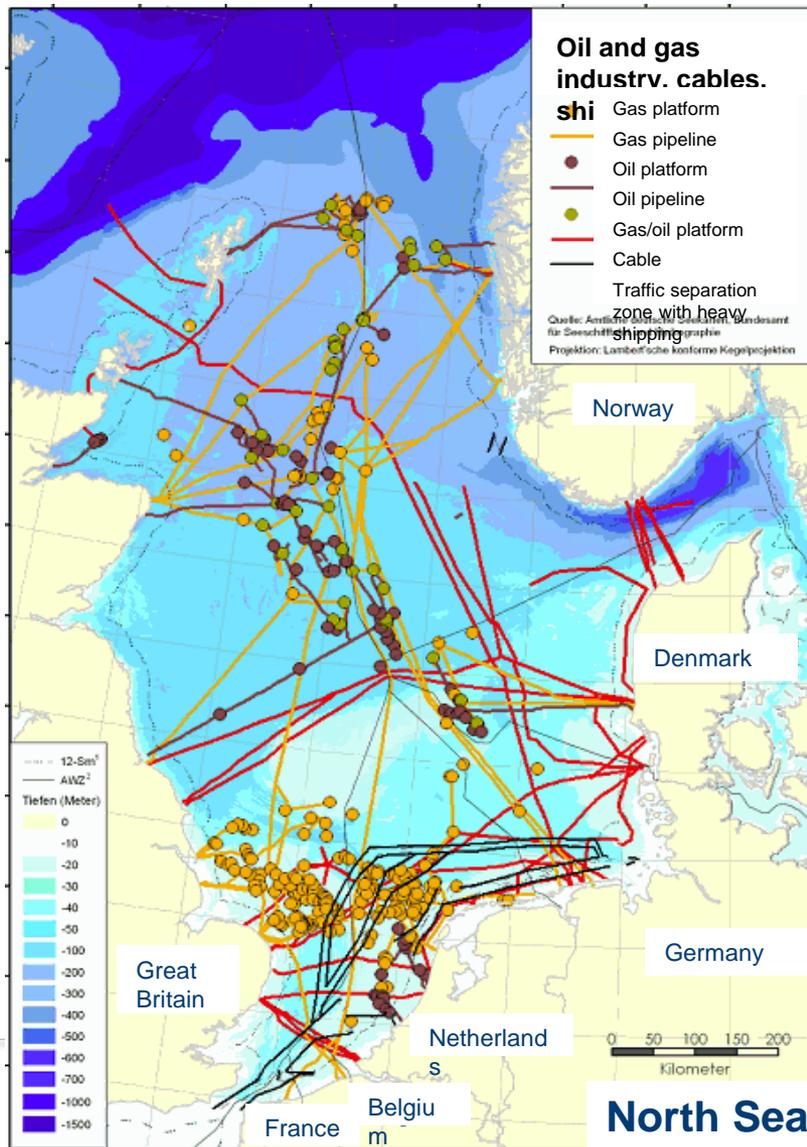
Stakeholder acceptance  Faster permitting

*However, many practitioners explain:*

Stakeholder acceptance  Faster permitting

- Seizing stakeholder knowledge → Design better projects
- Identify and resolve critical issues → Avoid going down the wrong path
- Avoid escalating conflict → Save time on „fire-fighting“
- Engaging more efficiently → Loose less time on the go

# Meanwhile, the North Sea is getting crowded...



...and this is an issue, especially for environmental stakeholders, for permitting authorities and the industry!

# Industry and authority experts agree on challenges for marine developments

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## *Challenges for marine developments*

- Uncertainty about impact of projects
- Uncertainty about cumulative impacts
- Missing information exchange
- Missing coordinated procedures
- Lack of cross-border mutual understanding

## *Lead to*

Delays in permitting/building & costs

Punitive measures on future developments

Adoption of precautionary measures

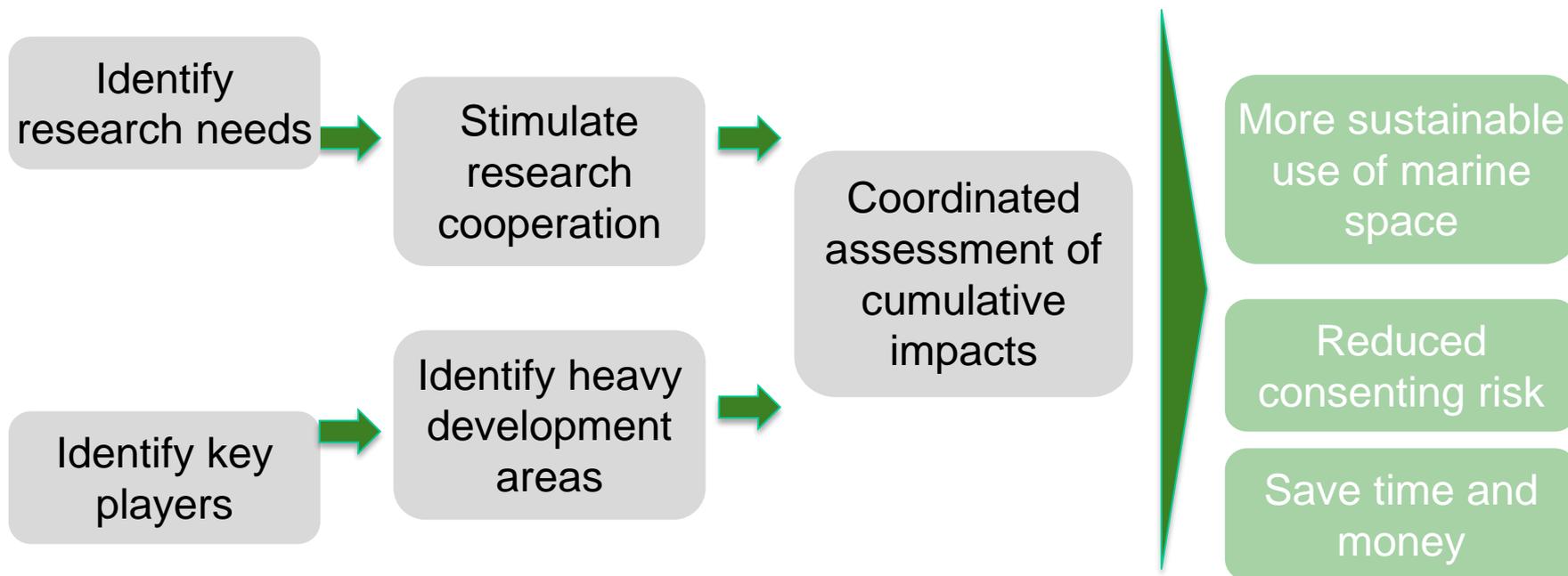
Deteriorated acceptance

All this slows down permitting processes

# Proposed work plan for an RGI activity

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*Contribution to better protection in the marine environment*



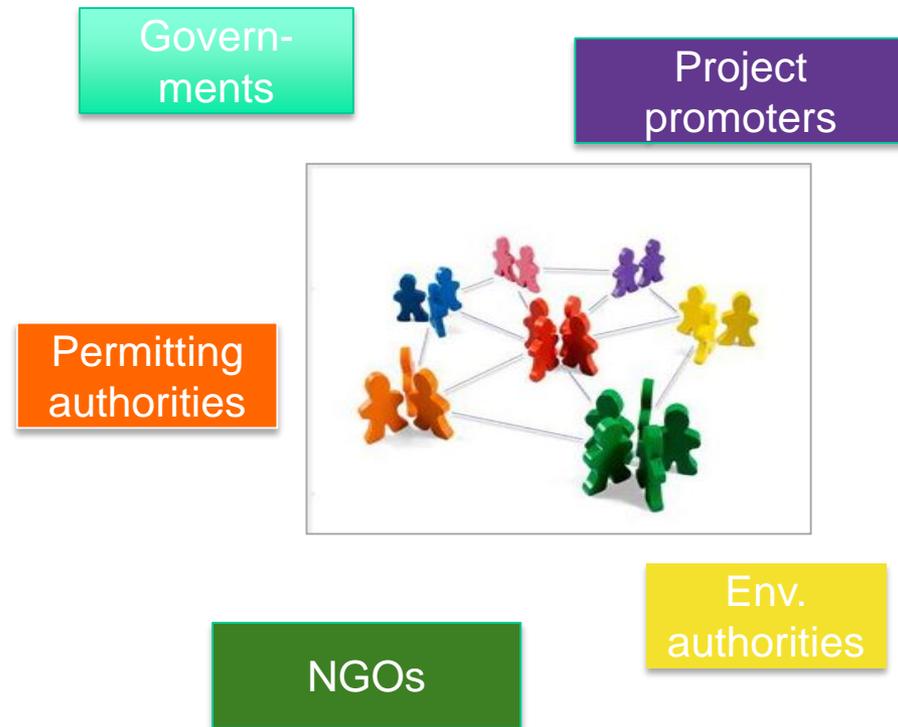
# NSCOGI & friends still have a lot of work to do

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*Realizing propositions which would help...*

- A project database for existing knowledge and contacts
- Comprehensive marine spatial plans
- Harmonized approach to spatial planning
- Common approach for environmental assessments
- Seize grid assets to raise data
- Regulatory system which supports meshed solutions

*...requires multi-stakeholder dialogue and activity*



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# Thanks a lot

## And Save the Dates

5<sup>th</sup> European Grid Conference – November 19, Brussels

Register via <http://gridconference.eu/>

RGI marine experts workshop – December 9, Brussels

Registration will soon be open at <http://www.renewables-grid.eu/>