



Public Engagement in Electricity Network Development: A Case Study of the Beauly–Denny Project in Scotland

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Abstract Ambitious renewable energy targets and an aging infrastructure necessitate a substantial upgrading and expansion of the electricity transmission networks around Europe and beyond. Although vital for the functioning of the economy, grid development projects are often met by public opposition, which increase costs and lengthy planning processes. The current planning processes have proven ineffective at resolving the conflicts among stakeholders, indicating the need for a new approach. We analyse these issues from an Economic perspective, outlining the economic characteristics of transmission developments and public engagement. We identify previously overlooked features of the planning process that are contributing to the rise in conflicts, public opposition and prolonged project realisation. The Scottish Beauly-Denny high voltage transmission development is discussed in detail and our findings indicate a need for increased engagement with local communities at an earlier stage of planning. Trust between communities, developers and government is important for future negotiations and can be achieved through transparency, specific education and set guidelines for stakeholder engagement in the planning process.

Keywords Electricity transmission, public engagement, property rights

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