

I know I'm a bit late for the Ofgem deadline but this is something I've wanted to pass on for some time, and now seemed like a good opportunity

I have already passed on my views about other failings of NGET's process (social costs missing, no cost benefit analysis etc etc). This focuses on the project process

Projects I have worked on with both BP and Shell always follow the following stages. Projects can range from developing a new oil reservoir to launching a new lubricating oil to reorganising the company structure. They all follow the same process

1 - "appraise" - broadly, is the project in line with legal, regulatory and strategic aims

2 - "select" - identify, at a high level, several options for the project, and identify a preferred option

3 - "define" - develop the detailed engineering/business changes and business case for the selected option

4 - "execute" - carry out the project

5 - "operate" - a period post execution to determine if the project has delivered its objectives

A project is only allowed to progress from one stage to the next if it passes the "stage gate". The "gatekeeper", a "single point of accountability" alone can make the decision, not the project manager/director or anyone else in the business hierarchy, only the nominated "gatekeeper"

During any stage, but mandatory before the end of "define" the project team must hold a "peer review", where "peers" from around the business, maybe selected by the "gatekeeper" and possibly other similar project teams, review the project with the project team to check they are ready to pass the "define gate"

Day to day the "gatekeeper" has little input, just staying apprised of progress

At all stages, a business case is developed, typically P50 (50% probability of being correct) at "appraise", P80 at "select" and P90-95 at "define"

I believe that this approach would be more appropriate for developing new connections, where the "gatekeeper" is not a NGET employee, but eg Ofgem or PINS. Someone independent, who can take an outside view, and who ultimately makes the decision to "pass the gate" and move on to the next stage. The "gatekeeper" can, at any gate, request the stage is reworked, or cancel the whole project.

The process would be much more transparent in decision making and "front end loaded" ... ie focus on doing the right project rather than doing the project right (a new line of pylons delivered on time and budget that impacts Anglesey tourism is the wrong project!). It also tackles the big, difficult decisions earlier on before it's too late to change. With the current process, by the time PINS examine the DCO there is only going to be one outcome and it's too late to change

All the elements of NGETs current process map across to these stages, the key thing with this process being that NGET don't make to decision to pass the "gate". With the current process, as in North Wales, we had multiple consultations, we gave the same feedback multiple times, but nothing changed. The perception was "we're not listening and we don't care"

With the stage gate process, the statutory consultation would come during "define", but earlier stages could have consultations as well. Public hearings by PINS could happen at each gate - the overall effort would be no greater than the current process, but would be "front end loaded". PINS examination would be mandatory at the end of "define"

The "gatekeeper" would have free access to any community stakeholders at any time and I would encourage more formal input from community stakeholder groups, should they want it (as requested but refused in North Wales)

Happy to expand on any of the above. A similar stage gate process is used in pharma and consumer goods new product development (that I know of) and probably elsewhere. The current legislative framework would not need to change

Hope this is helpful  
Jonathan

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