

LCN Fund Full Submission
Supplementary Answer Form

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Project code:	NGT203	Question Number	22
Question date	03 October 2013	Answer date	11 October 2013
Submission section question relates to	Expert Panel Bilateral		
Topic	Staff		
Question	<p>We note that NPG will be using its own staff for a large part of the customer engagement. Please explain -</p> <p>(a) What work will these staff undertake?</p> <p>(b) What are these staff currently doing in the business?</p> <p>(c) How will you determine whether staff have the appropriate skills to work on the project (and what do you consider those skills to be?)</p> <p>(d) What training programme do you consider to be necessary for these staff?</p>		
Notes on question			
Answer	<p>The recruitment and continued engagement of participants for each of the trials is critical to the success of the project. The success of this activity is important in two ways: first, we need to recruit sufficient participant numbers to demonstrate robustly the effectiveness of the individual DSR propositions being trialled (once recruited); and second, we need to achieve this recruitment economically to demonstrate the potential long-term viability of the trials when scaled up to GB level (including recruitment costs).</p> <p>The key recruitment / engagement aims for the wider community and schools trials are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the DSR propositions in a specific geographic area; • Persuade customers to participate in the trial; and • Retain customer interest to drive and maintain the required response <p>The critical success factors for the achievement of these aims are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design an engaging and fun proposition that is attractive to individuals and community groups; and • Implement effective and low cost communication channels / methods 		

that can be replicated by all DNOs.

This will be achieved by good trial design and by number of design / engagement channels:

- Oswald Consultancy will design the customer interface for the DSR propositions;
- The design of the customer engagement will be guided by the expertise of Durham University and Exeter University and a social marketing specialist;
- We shall target community champions by seeking influential individuals within community groups;
- We shall use well connected and trusted intermediaries to work with the Northern Powergrid staff to find our community champions:
 - Durham County Council will provide publicity in public buildings and newsletters and provide contacts for community groups; and
 - The Voluntary Organisations Network Northeast (VONNE) is keen to promote the project via its links in the voluntary sector.
- (a) What work will these staff undertake?

Northern Powergrid employees will make design decisions and carry out the day-to-day engagement with the intermediaries, the community champions and the trial participants. This work will be centrally managed by Northern Powergrid employees; the ACE DSR trials project manager, the ACE communications manager and the ACE project support office, supported by the mainstream stakeholder engagement people in our Commercial Directorate.

(b) What are these staff currently doing in the business?

The tasks being undertaken by Northern Powergrid staff fit comfortably with the way in which the company has been increasing its reach into communities over recent years. The ACE objectives are closely aligned with our existing priorities to engage more with our communities and our wider stakeholder base to deliver more effective customer service and an improved range of services to assist the more vulnerable in society. Our staff have over recent years been extending the reach and awareness of the DNO in our region through the use of online communities, web sites, social media, e-bulletins as well as traditional mailshots and personal contact. The ACE project will make use of this expertise within Northern Powergrid to promote the DSR propositions.

For DNOs to deliver DSR propositions we need to be closer to our customers and that is why we are taking this lead responsibility on the project. Having said that, we recognise the importance of working with other capable organisations and trusted brands and that is why we are working with Durham County Council and VONNE.

(c) How will you determine whether staff have the appropriate skills to work on the project (and what do you consider those skills to be?)

The ACE trials draw on similar skillsets to our existing community engagement with councils and locations where our activity impacts on a neighbourhood (e.g. construction activity). The core skillsets required are

	<p>relationship management competencies to engage in a meaningful dialogue with the trial participants as well as effective project management competencies to ensure that we deliver on our commitments for these customers as well as the overall output commitments for the project. We have established organisational capability in this area that has been recognised by Ofgem. In July 2013 Ofgem awarded Northern Powergrid a discretionary reward for stakeholder engagement. We will leverage our existing processes and staff knowledge on local issues and key stakeholders within communities. To fill the positions on the team we will either redeploy existing staff or employ new people who have the requisite relationship management and communication skills.</p> <p>(d) What training programme do you consider to be necessary for these staff?</p> <p>Training will be provided as necessary, in particular, by drawing upon the expertise of existing and future project partners. For instance, Durham County Council have had tremendous success with recruiting customers for the "Warm up North" partnership with British Gas to install energy efficiency measures in homes in the Northeast. Also, they have successfully delivered past CERT programmes. Therefore, in addition to the established Northern Powergrid best practice, the Durham County Council experience will provide useful learning that can be transferred into the recruitment, selection and development of staff engaged on the ACE project.</p>
Attachments	Presentation provided to the Expert Panel on 25 September 2013
Verbal Clarifications (Consultants)	

Q5: Management of the customer engagement elements

We will be deploying specialist resources for the customer engagement aspects of this project.

Key tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote the DSR propositions in a specific geographic area• Persuade customers to participate in the trial• Retain customer interest to drive and maintain the required response
Success factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Design an engaging and fun proposition that is attractive to individuals and community groups• Implement effective and low cost communication channels / methods
Channels / resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Well connected and trusted intermediaries:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– DCC will provide publicity in public buildings and newsletters and provide contacts for community groups– VONNE is keen to promote the project via its links in the voluntary sector• Community champions – influential individuals within community groups• Oswald Consultancy will design the customer interface for the DSR propositions• Design of the customer engagement will be guided by the expertise of Durham University and Exeter University and a social marketing specialist• Northern Powergrid will make design decisions and carry out day-to-day engagement with community champions and trial participants• Extend our reach with online communities, web sites, social media, e-bulletins as well as traditional mailshots
Skills and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The ACE trials will draw on similar skillsets to our existing community engagement with councils and locations where our activity is impacting on a neighbourhood (e.g. construction activity)• Leverage our existing processes and staff knowledge on local issues and key stakeholders within communities• We will either redeploy existing staff or employ new people who have the requisite relationship management and communication skills• Training will be provided as necessary – drawing upon the expertise of existing and future project partners