

ISGAN virtual Workshop

29 October 2020

«How can we create new channels for systematic knowledge exchange between the ISGAN network and key stakeholders at national level?»

1. Recommendations

The main recommendations based on the workshop discussion are:

- A. Establish a new (national) role as connector between the international and national level in each country.
- B. Make use of national mirror groups in connection to ISGAN projects.
- C. Web meetings, including the services of the ISGAN Academy, are important tools to strengthen the connection and dialogue on concrete issues and projects between the international and national levels.

2. Background and rationale

Based on the experiences from various projects and work within ISGAN annexes, a workshop was organised by the ISGAN KTP¹ Team at the virtual ExCo 20 week in October 2020. The challenge addressed in this workshop was the barriers for knowledge flow and engagement between stakeholders at national level with the international level, and vice versa. The rationale for the workshop was based on the assumption that the knowledge and experience from developments nationally – both at policy level and in practice – could be captured in a more systematic way to inform and influence dialogue at the international level, whilst at the same time opening up for involvement from a greater number and a more diverse set of stakeholders to create a more holistic picture of challenges and solutions.

¹ [Knowledge Transfer Platform](#)

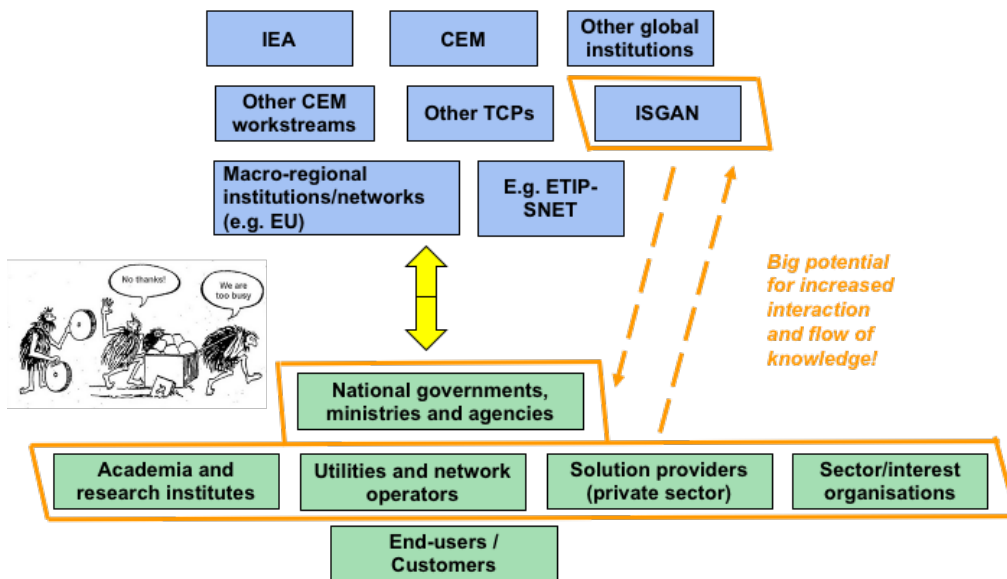


Figure 1. Illustration of the potential for increased interaction and flow of knowledge.

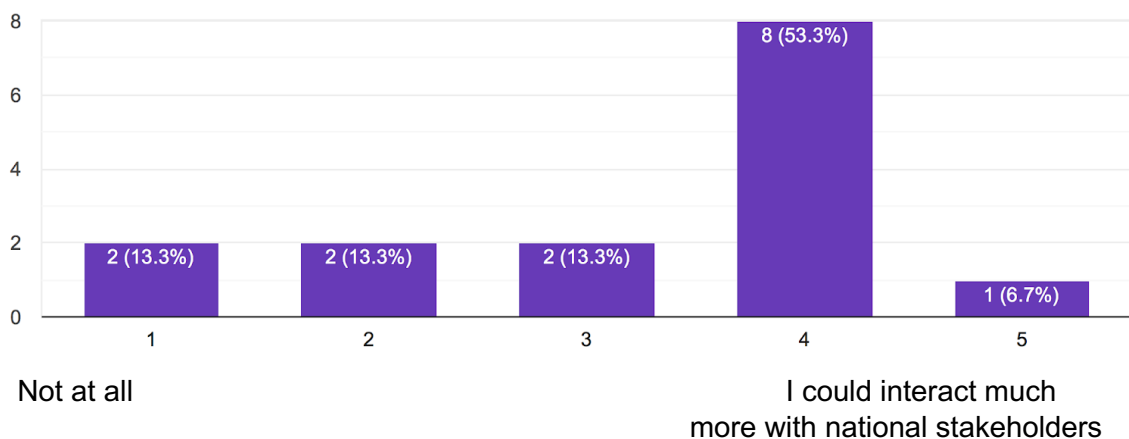
The workshop was arranged to discuss and co-create ideas on how this could be achieved in practice in various areas of work within the ISGAN network.

3. Short survey ahead of the workshop

Ahead of the workshop, the ISGAN KTP Team set up a short survey to source some background information about the participants' view on this topic. The results are illustrated below and show quite clearly that there is potential to increase the interaction between the levels and create more systematic approaches to knowledge sharing and collaboration.

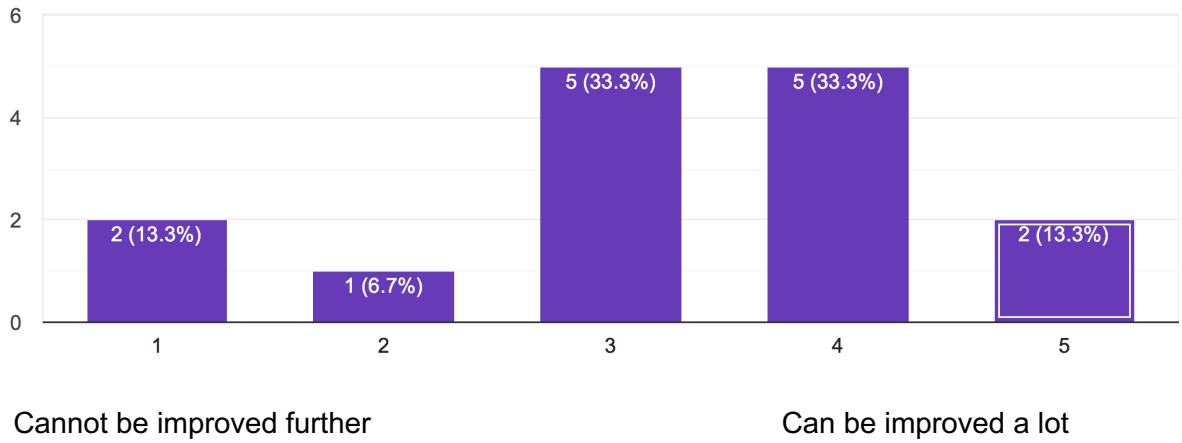
To what extent do you think you could increase YOUR interaction with key stakeholders and experts on the national level in connection with your engagement in ISGAN planning and work?

15 responses



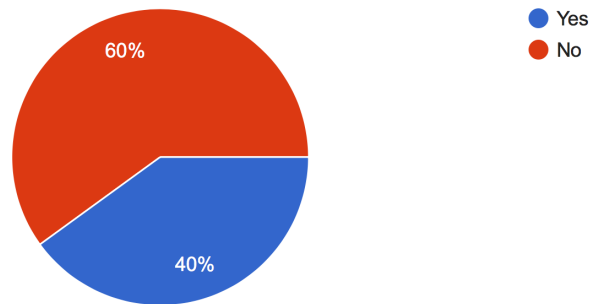
To what extent do you think you could improve dissemination of findings and recommendations from ISGAN work in your national networks?

15 responses



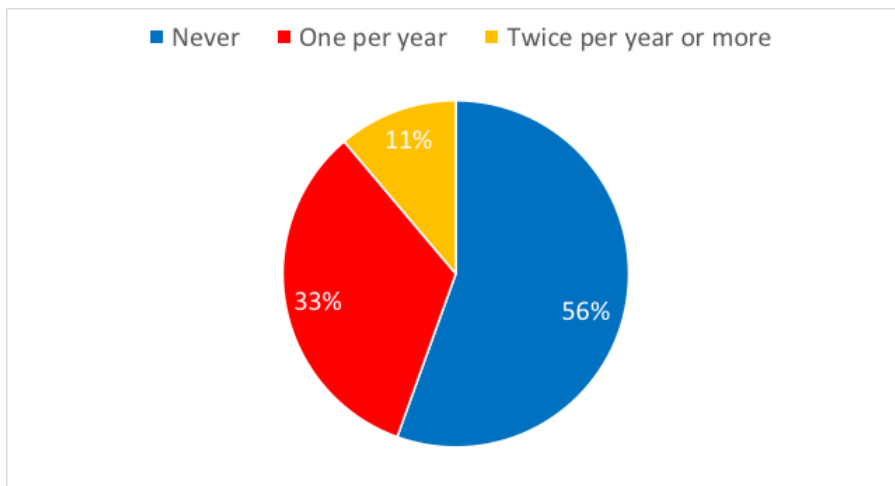
Do you have any national mirror group or similar for ISGAN?

15 responses



How often do your country arrange national seminars, workshops or similar with ISGAN as organizer or co-organizer?

13 responses



Other answers to the above question:

- “We had a big conference in the past, but the focus shifted. Thus, we need to take new measures.”
- “Need basis”.
- “Depends on circumstances (e.g. hosting ISGAN ExCo or Annex meetings).”
- “Every few years”.
- “It was one-off event in 2017. Would like to do it more regularly”.

In addition to the above input, the following examples and ideas were identified in the survey:

- Expanding engagement with the private sector would help increase national engagement in ISGAN.
- National mirror groups.
- Increased personal engagement by ISGAN members themselves.
- On demand/structured Expert Advice Session from ISGAN to National Stakeholders
- Within ISGAN create a template/model for events/activities that easily can be transferred to national level.
- ISGAN Presidium invites government high level officers with responsibility for smart grid.
- Technology Platform Smart Grids Austria.
- Canadian Smart Grid Action Network.

4. Workshop insights

The following **challenges** were identified in four breakout groups in the workshop:

1. “Complexity to identify who the key stakeholders are due to the large number of organisations and experts in the country. Sometimes it is hard to get an active dialogue with national stakeholders. Important to learn from other countries on how to best do this work. In Canada there are mirror groups that are interesting in this context.”
2. “Targeting the right people with the right information is challenging considering the time available. National documents can be made available internationally but then the language barrier is a challenge. Technical documents should be made available also for non-technical level.”
3. “Reaching the right stakeholders is a challenge. Now during covid-19 we get most of the information over the screen. Getting to the right people with the right information is important. Not only the national level is important – also regional levels may be important.”
4. “Time limits is a challenge. Packaging/exchanging formats that can be replicated is important. If it is well packaged it is easier to share. Templates would be good so national level can be used with copy and paste. Mirror groups may be interesting but it depends on the country. Risk of information overload due to many international organisations, lack of clear motivations – rewards systems.”

The workshop participants in the four groups identified the following **insights and suggestions for solutions**:

1. “Having regional ISGAN groups in addition to country-specific. Technology now provides the platform for more such differentiated groups. New connector² role(s) between levels (with expertise regarding content and regarding communication process) that nationally would work with knowledge exchange and also take care of understanding national thematic priorities. Can also help to synchronize knowledge generation processes. Having socializing meetings (physically) to facilitate a larger number of web based meetings.”
2. “Great success using the ISGAN Academy spreading information; that can also be used two ways. Web based meetings are good since we reach more stakeholders with better geographic spread and also organisation-wise. Successful mirror group: have all relevant stakeholders in a well established meeting and report on ISGAN results there (Technology Platform Smart Grids Austria).”
3. “Different stakeholders might have different tools. Short videos, documents with links etc. Having a clear contact person in mirror groups is important. Use web sites (nationally). We do not need more information, we need to identify the key information and gain knowledge from it.”
4. “Resources and funding of national participation is important. Closer collaboration between the national and international level goes two ways. It is important that the national level understand the amount of information and experience that is available internationally. So connectors are important to make use of all the knowledge available within the international organisations.”

² A connector is a person with a particular responsibility.

5. ISGAN KTP Team comments

A great number of ideas were suggested in the workshop that should be discussed in more depth. The KTP Team would like to add the following points in regard to this topic:

- We believe that it is possible to create some standardised models for how increased interaction and knowledge flow could be achieved between the different levels, adapted for different types of situations and levels of ambition, e.g. dialogue about broader topics of common interest or very targeted learning processes on specific issues or challenges. These models should be flexible and open for customisation to national contexts and needs.
- To capture the potential of increased dialogue between the levels, a range of tools could be used, combining top-down (from international to national level) and bottom-up (from national to international level) approaches.
 - The KTP team is currently developing ideas to implement this thinking in a project on a specific topic; in the Regulatory Sandboxes 2.0 project (working title at the time of writing) we are planning a sequence of activities involving both levels, in which each activity builds upon the result of the previous activity, i.e. a “red thread” throughout the project process.
- In general we would like to emphasise the following general aspects that we believe should underpin the ambition to increase the flows of knowledge between levels:
 - Knowledge sharing activities should be organized with a view to be as impactful as possible and ideally be based on an analysis of “which stakeholders need what knowledge”. The more a knowledge sharing activity is driven by the real need perceived by a stakeholder, the better.
 - It is important to distinguish between distribution of information and the sharing and co-creation of (new) knowledge. Knowledge involves a learning process (making sense of and contextualising information so that it becomes relevant).
 - Making knowledge products (reports, webinar presentations, etc.) available to a wider set of stakeholders nationally is important. To create more impact and ensure real learning (which can enable action) takes place, more interactive activities focusing on structured dialogue could be arranged around such knowledge products.
- We look forward to exploring this topic further together with interested participants from the workshop (and others) with a view to suggest new concrete models for effective ISGAN-national level collaboration.

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