

IRENA Project Navigator Webinar

07/16/2013

Summary

Introduction and Background

Renewable energy technology (RET) projects often face difficulties in demonstrating their bankability to funding institutions, in part because of a lack of information about the project development process and funding options for renewables. IRENA's RET Project Development Guidelines Initiative, or "Project Navigator", aims to help project developers during the implementation of renewable energy projects. In the medium term, the tool will cover all world regions and all renewable energy types.

The Project Navigator consists of four substantial parts: Written Guidelines, Interactive Guidelines, the Financial Navigator and a Communication and Coordination Platform. The Written Guideline makes recommendations on technology as the main concern as well as legal, environmental, socio-economic, organisational and financial aspects. The Interactive Guidelines will support the Written Guidelines in a more practical manner. It is a software tool providing progressive and systematic guidance through the different development phases. The Financial Navigator distinguishes between the countries or regions, the RET and the project size to identify existing funding opportunities. The RET-Project Development Communication and Coordination Platform allows the exchange of experiences and ideas and provides with the opportunity to update the Guidelines and the Navigators simultaneously. In addition, the RET-Project Development Communication and Coordination Platform completes the Interactive Guidelines and the Financial Navigator by actively involving all stakeholders.

Purpose of the Webinar

IRENA prepared a first draft of the Written Guidelines. The initiative started in November 2012 and it has still a long way to complete a global vision. An early involvement of experts and stakeholders in the development of the Project Navigator is very important to ensure the attainment of a useful, applicable and high-quality tool. Therefore, the aim of the webinar consists in collecting feedback from experts in the field of developing renewable energy projects and discussing challenges in project planning. A small group of experts was invited to evaluate the draft via a questionnaire. The Webinar was held virtually. It consisted of various presentations followed by a discussion of the Project Navigator.

Presentations on developing renewable energy technology projects:

- Timo Basteck (Fichtner Engineering)
Project development- *Major planning steps for a successful wind farm development*
- Dr. Louy Qoaidier (DLR)
enerMENA project – *Sustainable implementation of CSP technologies in the MENA region*
- Sergio Oceransky (Yansa Group)
Project development and community involvement - *The case of Mexico*

Feedback on the Project Navigator

The results from the questionnaires were presented and the feedback was discussed. Generally, the Project Navigator was welcomed by the attendees and seen as a useful tool that will help project developers, administration and communities to deliver well-structured and consistent project proposals. According to the attendees, the tools, methods and definitions provided in the Project Navigator are well explained and presented in an understandable and user-friendly manner. Another positive aspect that was highlighted is the fact that users can identify in which phase of development are their projects. However, feedback for potential improvement was also received and discussed during the webinar.

Potential improvements discussed:

- The participants recommended to adapt the contents included in the Project Navigator to the different groups of users. This would help to reach a higher number of users and make easier the utilization of the tool for them. With regard to this point, further measures are taken in the Interactive Project Navigator.
- In order to ease the utilization of the tool for inexperienced users, the attendees suggested to include a case study to test the Navigator. This case study would contribute to illustrate how the process and the Project Navigator work.
- The participants of the webinar highlighted the importance of planning capacity building activities to ensure a useful handling of the Project Navigator.
- Including donor investments together with private investments was suggested to make the Project Navigator more applicable in small countries. This will be considered in the further development of the Project Navigator.
- Recommendations were given to link the Project Navigator to other on-going IRENA activities, such as Costing Alliance or studies on patents and standards. IRENA will offer more detailed information of this type as the Project Navigator evolves.

Project Navigator Next Steps

After the discussions, IRENA announced a number of forthcoming activities during the webinar. The following list summarizes the publications, concepts and events scheduled in a short term:

- Completion of the written Guidelines by November 30, 2013
- Technical Concept utility-scale PV by November 30, 2013
- Larger Expert Workshop in December 2013
- Pilot Projects to be developed with partners till the end of 2013
- Implementation of the Financial Navigator by February 1 , 2014
- Implementation of the Interactive Project Navigator by December 15, 2013

Conclusions

In a first round of discussions, a small group of experts was brought together. The discussions and suggestions arising from the IRENA Project Navigator Webinar will serve to conduct a larger workshop. This workshop is planned for the end of the year.

According to the feedback received, additional efforts will be done to: (i) identify pilot projects, (ii) adjust the contents to different groups of users, (iii) include donor investments, (iv) develop capacity building events and, (v) adapt the given framework and the regulatory information provided to diverse communities. A particular emphasis will be given to include costing information and match-make the Project Navigator with other on-going activities that IRENA carries out in the field of finances, as well as, with the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development.

The meeting was considered an enriching experience for IRENA to approach the users and stakeholders of the Project Navigator. As such, IRENA thanked the participants of this meeting for their valuable feedback and collaboration.