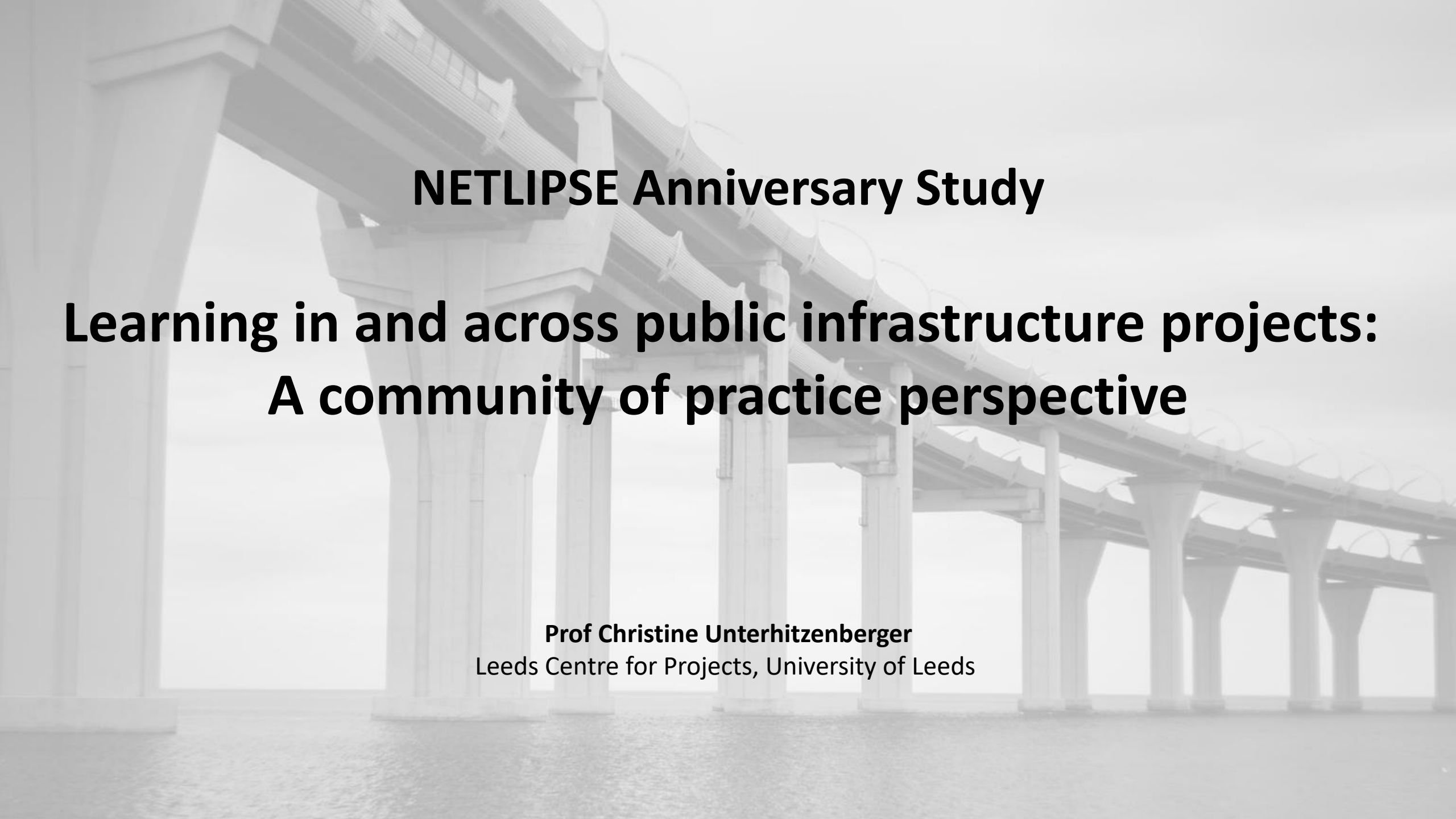




# **NETLIPSE Anniversary Study**

## **Learning in and across public infrastructure projects: A community of practice perspective**

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# Research Team



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# Motivation



- NETLIPSE 20 year anniversary
- 15 years of IPAT® Assessments
- What has changed? Has it made a difference?

**How does a community of practice facilitate learning in large public infrastructure projects and beyond?**

# Approach



21 interviews



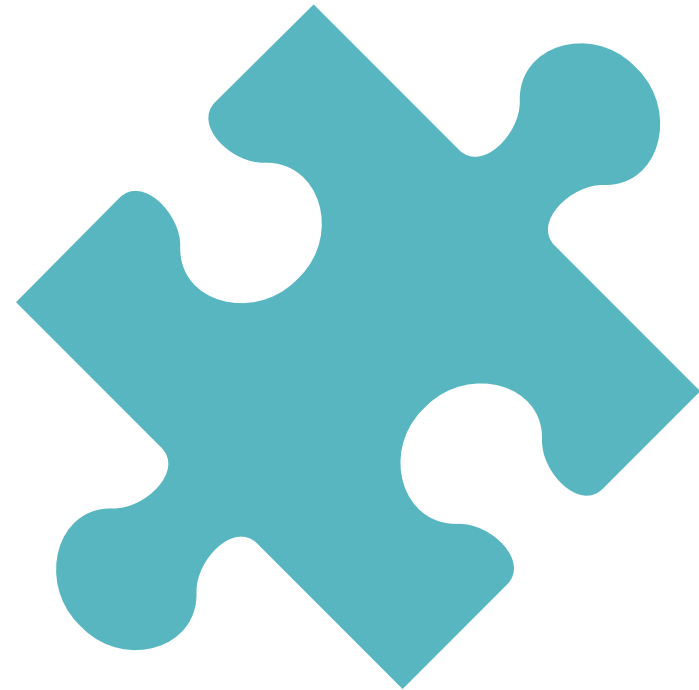
55 IPAT reports



1 focus group

# How learning takes place...

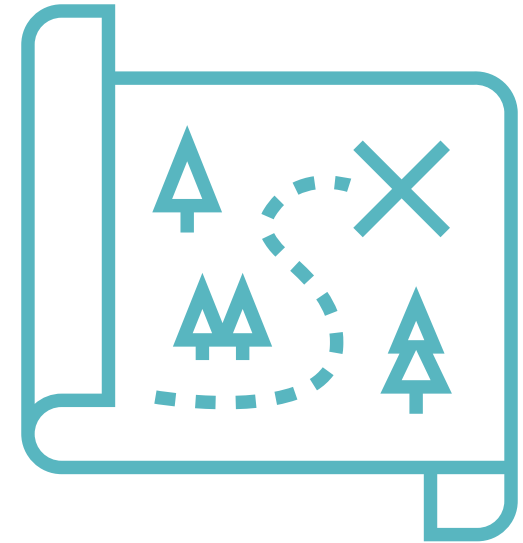
- Learning as a social phenomenon
- Learning happens through social interactions
- Learning shapes what we do, who we are and how we interpret what we do



# How learning takes place

## Situations of learning

- Assessors
  - Formal situations through assessment structure, e.g. project documentation, visit of project sites, interviews
  - Informal interactions over lunch and dinner
- Hosts
  - Formal situations through assessment structure, e.g. being interviewed, receiving results
  - Informal interactions over lunch and dinner



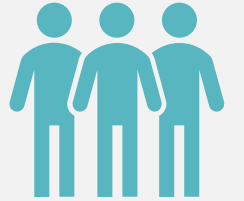
*“Especially the discussions that you have on the Tuesday dinner, that’s the dinner before giving back the results, I have good memories of it”*

# How learning takes place

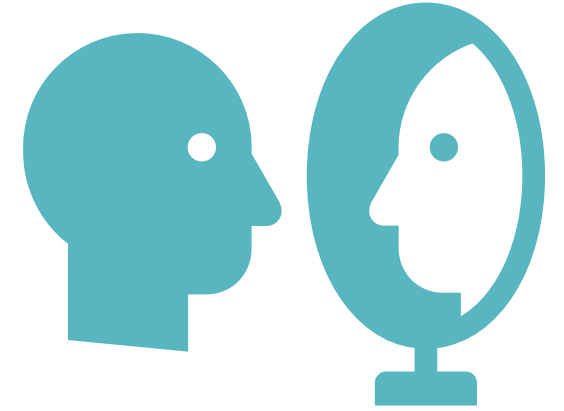
## Importance of community

- Community of practice: group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly  
→ powerful learning mechanism
- Individuals involved in assessments showed an enthusiastic approach for self-learning and sharing of knowledge
- Professionalism and accountability

*“When you are surrounded by your peers who genuinely understand the challenges, the pressure, the loneliness and leadership needs, you really come together as a profession to do your best in terms of feeling responsible in helping and supporting your peers in terms of learning, reshaping and sharing experiences that can improve somebody else’s project because it really is a tough profession to be in especially when facing the public.”*



# How learning takes place



## Reflection and experience

- Very experienced assessors: Enjoyment in teaching and sharing rich knowledge with other assessors and the project team
- Area of specialism of assessors makes a difference to assessment

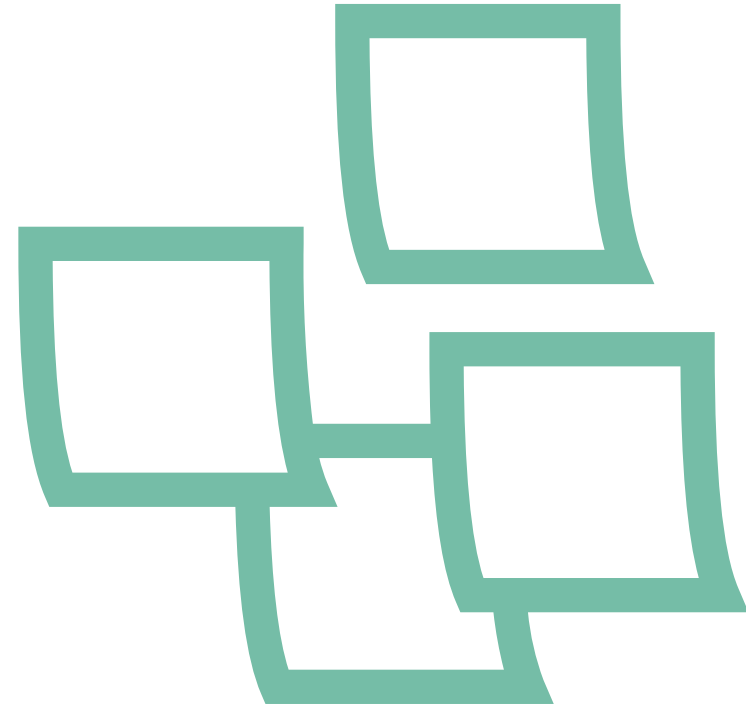
→ Individuals who engage in critical reflection were more likely to be able to identify situations of learning and what they learned compared to those who do not engage in critical reflection.

*“I can give back my experience,  
but also I learn from every other  
project that I see”*

*“Even when you have lots and  
lots of experience, you can still  
learn something new”*

# What is being learned...

- What knowledge, skills, values or behaviours are acquired by the individuals
- What is being learned gives meaning to the situations of learning → learning as experience



# What is being learned

## Evolution rather than revolution

- Continuous evolution of how things are done
- Adoption of 'translation practices' to make ideas and learnings relevant for own context
- Thinking differently and appreciating differences
- Cherry-picking of individual practices
- Learning beyond eight IPAT themes → interpersonal skills, listening, asking questions, etc.



*“If you are going abroad and reviewing a project in another context and looking at it and evaluating it, it also raises questions about why are we doing the things that we are doing.”*

*“It’s a general idea that you get from how things are done in another country that you bring back and implement in a general way.”*

# Impact of learning...

- Organisational learning as a multi-level phenomenon relying of individual learning and organisational actions and processes



# Impact of learning



## Individual

- How individuals viewed their own capabilities
- How individuals perceived others viewed them
- How involvement had influenced their career

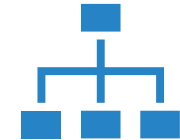
→ Structure, confidence, career



## Project

- 'Magic moment'
- Changes in project controls, schedule, organisational structure, planning, risk management, stakeholder engagement

→ Challenges related to organisational commitment, project lifecycle



## Organisation

- Strategic integration into organisational processes and structures required for organisational impact
- Vignettes
- 'Lone warriors'

→ Missing the opportunity for exploitation of learning

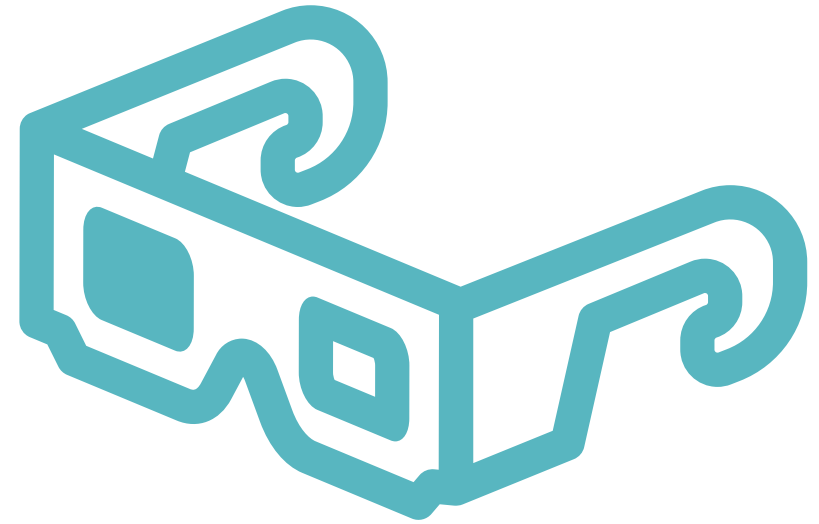
Developing good practice...  
...looking back



# Looking back

| Theme                                              | IPAT v1 | Theme                                                | IPAT v2 | Theme                                    | IPAT v2 rev |
|----------------------------------------------------|---------|------------------------------------------------------|---------|------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Highest scoring themes</b>                      |         |                                                      |         |                                          |             |
| Political context                                  | 3.7     | Political context                                    | 3.3     | Technical Management                     | 3.0         |
| Legal procedures                                   | 3.4     | Permits, Authorisations and Consents                 | 3.2     | Political Context, Objectives & Purpose  | 2.9         |
| Technology (Functional Specifications)             | 3.4     | Technology                                           | 3.2     | Permits, Authorisations & Legal Consents | 2.9         |
| <b>Middle scoring themes</b>                       |         |                                                      |         |                                          |             |
| Stakeholder Management                             | 3.2     | Objectives, Purpose, Business Case (Value) and Scope | 2.9     | Scope & Financial Feasibility            | 2.8         |
| Objectives, Purpose and Business Case (Finance)    | 2.9     | Stakeholder Engagement and Communication             | 2.8     | Stakeholder Engagement & Communications  | 2.8         |
| Contracting                                        | 2.9     | Contracting and Procurement                          | 2.7     | Contracting & Procurement                | 2.7         |
| <b>Lowest scoring themes</b>                       |         |                                                      |         |                                          |             |
| Organisation and Management (Knowledge/Interfaces) | 2.7     | Organisation and Management                          | 2.6     | Project Controls                         | 2.6         |
| Risks                                              | 2.6     | Risk Management and Project Controls                 | 2.5     | Project Organisation                     | 2.4         |

Developing good practice...  
...looking forward



# Looking forward

## Addressing pockets of weak expertise: training and development

### Recommendation for organisations:

Establish clear career pathways for professionals working on large infrastructure projects which are linked to appropriate training and development.

## Foster learning: community of practice

Recommendation for NETLIPSE: 1) create opportunities for IPAT assessors and IPAT assessment hosts to regularly interact to strengthen the IPAT community of practice; 2) create stronger links between IPAT assessment outcomes and NETLIPSE Network Meetings.

## Learning beyond projects: organisational commitment

### Recommendation for organisations:

Embed IPAT assessments into organisational structures and processes to ensure resource provision and facilitate sharing of knowledge and learning

## A way forward: considering emerging topics in IPAT revision

### Recommendation for NETLIPSE:

Include future-oriented topics into IPAT assessments

# Quick Reference Guides

- Research insights translated into practical guidance for project management professionals



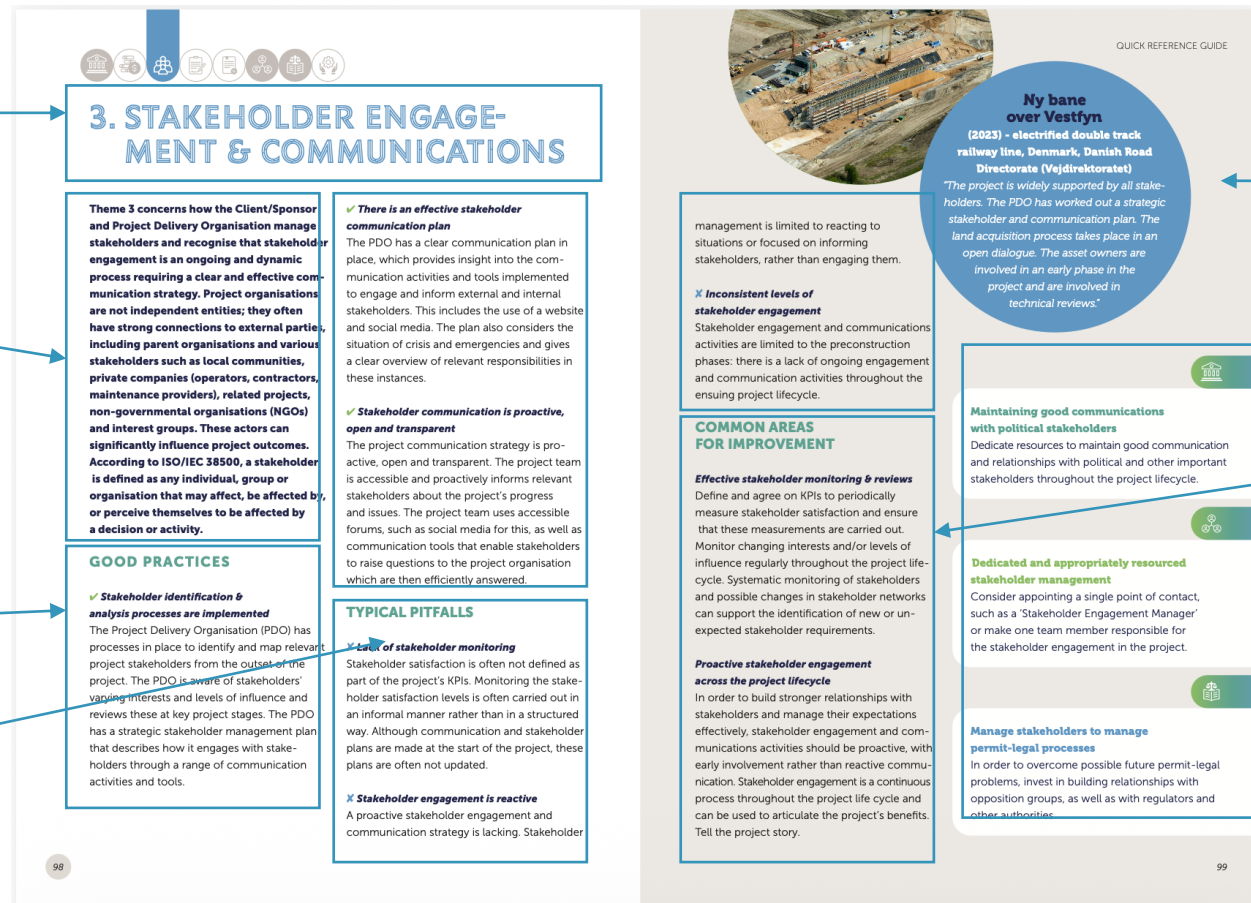
# Quick reference guides

For each of the eight IPAT themes

Definition

Good practices

Typical pitfalls



# Contact details



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Get in touch if you have any questions or would like to hear more about the research.



Find the full study here:

<https://netlipse.eu/resources>