Graduation Assignment Report

Lukas Rauser

Research Report on the EDGaR Research Leaders’ Level of Organizational Identification and Influencing Internal Communication Factors
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Executive Summary

The Energy Delta Gas Research (EDGaR) program is Europe’s largest research program investigating the usability of natural and unconventional gas within the energy transition towards a sustainable future. Established as a research consortium in 2010, the EDGaR program comprises the knowledge and the technology of ten Dutch organizations from the private gas industry and the educational sector in order to support the current strong position of the Netherlands in the natural gas industry towards the renewable energy market especially in Europe. To achieve these ends, the research consortium accommodates 30 different research projects along three major fields of investigation. Every research project is composed of different research teams coming from at least two of the geographically dispersed consortium partners. Due to the physical distance of the collaborating research teams the 250 researchers are using predominantly computer-mediated communication (CMC) as a means of exchanging information and performing research towards a common goal. The geographical dispersed nature and the predominant use of CMC at the expense of regular personal face-to-face interactions makes the EDGaR program a virtual organization in which effective internal communication processes are necessary to jointly achieve the organizational objectives.

The Program Manager of the EDGaR research consortium addressed the communication consultant since he believed the internal communication of the EDGaR program to be insufficiently effective. The underlying cause for the current internal communication situation the Program Manager assumed to be the concourse of the several organizational identities of the ten consortium partners in which the 250 EDGaR researchers are originally employed. More specifically, the Program Manager presumed this composition of scattered organizational identities would inhibit the researchers to fully identify with the EDGaR program and thus influence their commitment and motivation to achieve the objectives of the research consortium. Thus the communication consultant conceptualized an internal communication research that was aimed at diagnosing the researchers’ current level of organizational identification (OID) with the EDGaR program and the extent to which it is influenced by the research consortium’s current internal communication situation. Due to their manageable group size and their importance for the internal communication within the EDGaR program, the communication consultant had chosen the 20 research leaders that are respectively in charge of supervising one or more EDGaR research projects as the subjects for the internal communication research.

A review of academic literature from the fields of organization theory, organizational behavior and organizational communication indeed revealed that organizational identification, which is defined as
“the extent to which an organizational member defines himself/herself with reference to his/her organizational membership” (Hongwei and Brown, 2013, p. 12), is especially a challenge in virtual organizations exerting direct influence on the employees’ motivation to contribute towards the organizational objectives. From the literature review it emerged that the level of organizational identification is dependent on three antecedents: The extent to which an employee desires to belong to a group (need for affiliation), the amount of contextual cues, such as rituals and signs, that suggest the employee to be an integrated part of the organization (work-based social support) and the extent to which the employee perceives his organization as having a positive image to outsiders (perceived external prestige). Furthermore, it was found through the literature review that there is common acknowledgement among scholars that the quality of internal communication has an impact on organizational identification as well. More specifically, it is commonly assumed that the extent to which an employee’s needs and preferences with regard to internal communication are met considerably determines his/her level of organizational identification. Especially the use of parallel communication, which is non-personalized internal information disseminated by one sender to the entire workforce (e.g. newsletter), is believed by some scholars to be of significance for the level of OID.

Using the theoretical notions as the parameters for organizational identification and internal communication, the consultant designed a diagnostic internal communication research with the aim to detect the current organizational identification of the EDGaR research leaders and to what extent the overall communication needs and deployed parallel communication is influencing their OID. For this purpose, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 13 out of 20 research leaders either via personal face-to-face meetings or via telephone calls. On the one hand, the interviews were aimed at obtaining quantitative data in order to ensure a valid diagnosis of the research leaders’ OID level towards the EDGaR program. On the other hand, the semi-structured conversations with the subjects were aimed at generating qualitative in-depth responses to receive substantive insights into the impact of the research consortium’s internal communication on organizational identification. Whereas the generated quantitative data were processed statistically, the qualitative research data was processed into quantitative categorizations in order to allow the communication consultant to reveal possible correlations.

The findings of the internal communication research revealed that a slight majority of the EDGaR research leaders do not identify with the research consortium. Furthermore, the research suggests that the work-based social support provided by the EDGaR program seems to be the most important antecedent for the researchers’ organizational identification with the research consortium, followed by the perceived external image. Moreover, it has been found that all research leaders that do not
identify with the EDGaR program are employed by service organizations with a client portfolio in which the research consortium might be perceived as “one of many”. With regard to the influence of the EDGaR program’s internal communication the internal communication research has detected a significant influence between the fulfilment of the research leaders’ information needs and their level of organizational identification. Precisely, the more the respondents felt that their information needs were not met by the research consortium’s internal communication the more they displayed a lack of organizational identification. In addition the research data obtained from the interviews indicate that the level of organizational identification influences the research leaders’ acceptance and absorption rate of parallel communication media. Interestingly, the research leaders that did not identify with the EDGaR program were more inclined to visit the official EDGaR website at the expense of the quarterly issues newsletter.

Based on the research results obtained from the interviews the communication consultant advises the research consortium to fulfil the most salient information needs of the EDGaR research leaders as identified by the communication research, to improve the external communication/public visibility of the EDGaR program and to reconsider the internal dissemination of news that are meaningful to the research leaders. It has to be mentioned that there been almost no research effort so far that would have investigated the organizational identification within a consortium. Thus, the conducted internal communication research can be regarded as one of the first research attempts within this field.
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1. Project Context

The aim of this communication research report is to diagnose the current organizational identification of scientific research leaders with the EDGaR program (the client organization) and to give advice on improving it based on the research results. The research project is a collaboration between Lukas Rauser, student for International Communication at the Hanze University of Applied Sciences Groningen - hereafter called the communication consultant - and Jean-Francois Auger, Program Manager and member of the client organization’s management bureau – hereafter called the EDGaR Direction. Since Mr. Auger is ultimately responsible for the internal communication within the client organization, he acted as the liaison contact person for the communication consultant providing support in research coordination and the establishment of contacts with internal stakeholders.

Established on the 1st January 2010, the EDGaR program is Europe’s largest research program on gas and sustainability with a predetermined lifespan of five years (presumably completed by July 1st, 2015). Guided by the mission to “conduct strategic research on gas and sustainability [...] to ensure that economic development and growth take place in a sustainable way” (EDGaR Foundation, 2012, p. 3), the research consortium generates scientific knowledge and technologies in order to support the current strong position of the Netherlands in the natural gas industry towards the renewable energy market, particularly in Europe.

To achieve these ends, the research consortium has a budget of 44 million Euros at its disposal. Fifty percent of the budget (22 million Euros) have been granted by the European Funds for Regional Development program, the Province of Groningen, and the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation (Ministerie van Economische Zaken, Landbouw en Innovatie). The other 22 million Euros of the client organization’s budget is being provided by the ten consortium partners. From the total budget, 42 million Euros have been allocated to the scientific research and development. The remaining 2 million Euros are being deployed for the overall management of the EDGaR Foundation and the diffusion of knowledge (external communication). In particular, the communication budget of the client organization amounts to 300,000 Euros in order to “disseminate the knowledge produced by the projects to a national and international audience” (EDGaR, 2012, p. 6).

The tangible and intangible products of the client organization, that is technologies and scientific knowledge in the field of natural gas and sustainability, are generated by currently 30 research projects that are categorized along three main themes:
• From Monogas to Multigas
• Energy Systems of the Future
• Changing Energy Markets

These research projects are undertaken by geographically dispersed research teams coming from the ten national research consortium partners from across the Netherlands (See Figure 1).

![Figure 1: The 10 EDGaR consortium partners as located within the Netherlands](image)

Every research project comprises at least two research teams coming from different consortium partners (See Figure 2). The research projects are supervised by respectively one research leader, being a member of one of the consortium partners involved in the respective research project. Often,
one research leader supervises more than one of the 30 research projects. Bearing in mind the geographically dispersed structure of the research consortium, it can be presumed that the EDGaR program constitutes a virtual organization, which by definition relies primarily on computer-mediated communication (CMC) to enable the collaboration of organizational members from different locations in order to accomplish a common goal (Robbins and Judge, 2013).

In the scholarly literature of organizational theory and organizational behavior, it is widely acknowledged that virtual organizations pose a challenge to the development of organizational identification among their employees. As Berry (2011) recognizes, “The absence of physical presence is considered by some to be the major drawback of virtual teams and virtual work” (p. 197). The author further points out that “difficulties in reaching shared understanding, in coordinating perspectives, and in establishing a sense of social presence are perhaps exacerbated in virtual interactions” (p. 202).

The results of the two initial intake interviews conducted by the communication consultant with Jean-Francois Auger, EDGaR Program Manager, suggested that the organizational identification of the researchers with the research consortium indeed may be insufficient. In summary, Auger detected that there is insufficient reception among all 250 researchers to the internal communication efforts initiated by the EDGaR Direction. More precisely, he assessed that
researchers do not respond to invitations to external conferences, being a channel for the external communication of the client organization. In addition, Auger expressed concern about the research leader’s contractual duty to formulate progress reports about their respective research projects. These papers that are to be sent to the EDGaR Direction every six months, are considered to be one of the most important means of internal communication as they serve as a significant basis for the client organization’s strategic planning, financial management and external communication. Although specified in the contractual agreement between the EDGaR Foundation and the research leaders, 36 percent of the progress reports are not delivered in time. Regardless of the deadline, the content quantity and quality among the progress reports varies markedly. In this respect, the communication needs of the EDGaR Direction are not sufficiently met.

Reflecting self-critically, the EDGaR Program Manager admitted that (at the time of the interview) there was insufficient internal communication about the EDGaR program as a whole that would provide all researchers with “a big picture” of the research consortium. In addition, the EDGaR Program Manager questioned whether the expectations that the client organization has towards the researchers are well communicated internally. In order to counteract this situation, Auger has envisaged to involve the communication departments of the respective EDGaR partner organizations into the research consortium’s internal communication in order to increase the probability of message reception. Moreover, the Program Manager was planning an internal audit in order to research the researcher’s attitudes towards the internal EDGaR newsletter.

The client organization’s virtual nature as well as the internal communication situation as revealed during the initial research phase led the communication consultant to conduct a communication research into the research leaders’ perceived organizational identification with the EDGaR program and its mutual effect relationship with the research consortium’s internal communication effectiveness. The research leaders had been chosen as the subjects of the research for two reasons. First, they are ultimately responsible for the timely delivery of one of the most important internal communication means – the progress report. Second, choosing the research leaders as a generic group of subject enabled the communication consultant to identify a specific category among the 250 EDGaR researchers and thus to obtain a reasonable sample size of respondents within the temporal and budgetary limitations of the communication research.
2. Organizational Context

An understanding of organizational identification within the EDGaR program can be obtained if one considers the research consortium’s organizational structure and internal communication. The EDGaR program was established as a national research consortium consisting of six Dutch private energy companies and four Dutch research institutes, all of them geographically dispersed within the Netherlands.

By definition, a consortium is

“A group made up of two or more individuals, companies or governments that work together toward achieving a chosen objective. Each entity within the consortium is only responsible to the group in respect to the obligations that are set out in the consortium’s contract. Therefore, every entity that is under the consortium remains independent in his or her normal business operations” (Consortium, 2013).

As mentioned above, the EDGaR research consortium is being presumed to be a virtual organization that is by definition a “group of geographically and/or organizationally dispersed coworkers that are assembled using a combination of telecommunications and information technologies to accomplish an organizational task” (Townsend, De Marie & Hendrickson as cited in Berry, 2011, p. 187). The corporate structure of the client organization meets this definition of a virtual organization by two aspects:

1. The client organization is geographically and organizationally dispersed
2. The client organization deploys predominantly computer-mediated communication (CMC) and other telecommunications such as the traditional telephone for internal communications

The managerial backbone of the client organization is the EDGaR Direction (See red box in Figure 3). In contrast to the other organizational units of the research consortium, the Direction is only composed of personnel designated solely by the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen (RUG), rather than by a wide range of EDGaR consortium partners. The Direction is responsible for the daily operations and management of the client organization in terms of finances, planning, control, program coordination, as well as internal and external communication. With regard to the internal communication management, which is under custody of the Program Manager, the EDGaR Direction performs a significant intermediary role between the Board of Governors (BoG) and the Project Steering Committee on the one hand and the 30 EDGaR research projects on the other hand. The BoG is the highest decision-making unit within the client organization, being composed of ten representatives of
the ten partner organizations. Under the direction of an independent chairman, the BoG ultimately decides about the initiation of new research projects and the budget allocation thereof. In doing so, the BoG receives strategic advice of an external independent body – the Advisory Council (See Figure 3) – consisting of eminent individuals from the academic, industrial and political field. The PSC is composed of the scientific director (member of the EDGaR Direction) and four research leaders in order to supervise all 30 EDGaR research projects in terms of scientific progress and content requirements. In cooperation with the external and independent International Advisory Council (See Figure 3), the PSC furthermore assesses research project proposals in order to assist the BoG in deciding upon the initiation of new research projects.

In order to ensure “that internal communication takes place smoothly between partners, which are scattered over the Netherlands” (EDGaR Foundation, 2012, p. 6), the EDGaR Direction deploys a variety of communication channels to serve its intermediary function between the BoG and the PSC on the one hand and the 30 EDGaR research projects on the other hand.

For *formal line communication* the following internal communication channels exist. Once per annum, all research leaders of the EDGaR program meet with the PSC in order to discuss the research progress and possible bottlenecks in the execution of their research projects. In addition, the PSC organizes so-called “cluster meetings” with the research leaders and their respective research teams (eight meetings in total) usually between September and November of every year. For the PSC to function optimally, it holds eleven meetings per annum. Furthermore, the EDGaR Program Manager realizes to meet up to 10 researchers (not research leaders) per month in individual F2F meetings throughout the entire year, except for three months during summer time. All other communication
between the EDGaR Direction and the research leaders occurs mostly via E-mail and telephone and supports the primary process in the first instance. Usually this communication is initiated by the EDGaR Program Manager in order to ensure the “realization of EDGaR’s objectives, especially in relation with program coordination, communication and knowledge valorization” (EDGaR Foundation, 2013). The type of information sent can be subsumed as management information, whose function is the coordination of employees’ activities and processes by designating responsibilities and time frames in which tasks have to be performed (Vos and Schoemaker, 2005).

**Formal parallel communication** is exclusively channeled through quarterly published newsletter (four issues per year) that is received by the recipients via E-mail as well as the official corporate website http://www.edgar-program.com/. In between the newsletter publications the EDGaR Program Manager issues two agenda updates in order to remind researchers of internal appointments and obligations.

In addition to the aforementioned means of internal communication, the client organization organizes two conferences per year. The annual EDGaR Research Day is designed as an internal conference for all constituents of the EDGaR program with an informal communication climate. Usually six months after the Research Day, the research consortium organizes the International Conference which is set out as both an internal as well as an external conference in cooperation with international partners from the gas industry.
3. Theoretical Framework

3.1. Virtual Organizations

A first definition of what constitutes a virtual organization has been presented earlier in the report. For the reader’s convenience it shall be quoted here again. Townsend, De Marie and Hendrickson (as cited in Berry, 2011) define virtual organizations as a “group of geographically and/or organizationally dispersed coworkers that are assembled using a combination of telecommunications and information technologies to accomplish an organizational task” (p. 187). It is commonly stated in the scholarly literature that a major challenge of virtual organizations is the employees’ limited exposure to concrete physical and/or visual experiences, leaving behind the perception of being separated from the actual organization (Wiesenfeld, Raghuram and Garud, 2001; Berry, 2011; Fay and Kline, 2012). More precisely, Wiesenfeld, Raghuram and Garud (2001) suppose that “spatial distance between organizations and their members [...] may reduce individuals’ contact with the organization, the visibility of their organizational membership, and their exposure to the organizational structures and processes that facilitate self-categorization as organization members” (p. 216). Although the term ‘organizational identification is not used by the authors in the original text, this quote reveals that the identification of virtual employees with their organization is a key concern in virtual organizations. Indeed, the importance of organizational identification in virtual organizations is supported throughout the scholarly literature (Larson and Pepper, 2001; Berry, 2011; Hongwei and Brown, 2013). Similarly, Robbins and Judge argue that “Cultural alignment and shared goals can be lost because of the low degree of interaction among members. Team members who are geographically dispersed and communicate infrequently find it difficult to share information and knowledge, which can limit innovation and slow response time” (2013, p. 492).

The common scholarly acknowledgement of the interrelation between virtual organizations and organizational identification does lead many scholars to the conclusion that a sufficient organizational identification is a necessity for any virtual organization. Thus, Wiesenfeld, Raghuram and Garud postulate: “If an organization is to have meaning to individuals in a virtual work context, it will be because members feel that they are a part of the organization” (2001, p. 214). Larson and Pepper (2001) even argue that organizational identification could contribute towards influencing the behavior of internal publics since “it may replace or otherwise compensate for the loss of aspects of traditional organizations that facilitate cooperation, coordination and the long-term effort of employees” (p. 215).
3.2. Organizational Identification

The organizational management scholars Hongwei and Brown (2013) consider any organization as a social category bearing the potential of employees developing a strong identification with it. Based on this preliminary consideration, the scholars derive the following definition of organizational identification (OID):

Organizational identification occurs when employees perceive oneness with an employing organization and feel that they belong to it. Hence OID refers to, in general terms, the extent to which an organizational member defines himself/herself with reference to his/her organizational membership (p. 12).

Although the notion of organizational identification is widely used in scholarly literature, the notion of involvement is sometimes used interchangeably (Vos and Schoemaker, 2005). The theoretical foundation of organizational identification is the concept of social identity which is by definition “that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership” (Tajfel, 1978, as cited in Ashforth, Harrison and Corley, 2008, p. 327).

Within the academic field there is the common agreement that the degree of an employee’s organizational identification determines his/her motivation to fulfill the corporate objectives (Wiesenfeld, Raghuram and Garud, 2001; Fuller et al., 2006; Nakra, 2006; Hongwei and Brown, 2013). For instance, Wiesenfeld, Raghuram and Garud link organizational identification with “the degree to which employees are motivated to fulfill organizational needs and goals, their willingness to display organizational citizenship and other cooperative behaviors” (p. 215). Taking another perspective, Nakra (2006) even claims that “organizational identification presents a less obtrusive and potentially more effective means of organizational control” (p. 44). This suggestions appears reasonable since a sufficiently developed organizational identification inclines the personnel to act more consciously in accordance with the corporate objectives (Fuller et al., 2006).

Now, that the likely outcomes of a strong organizational identification have been described, it is to ask about the important predictors of OID within the virtual context in order to develop the anticipated communication research for the client organization. The predictors of OID in a virtual organization are different from those of conservative organizations since a virtual organizational context “may reduce individuals’ contact with the organization, the visibility of their organizational membership, and their exposure to the organizational structures and processes that facilitate self-categorization as organization members” (Wiesenfeld, Raghuram and Garud, 2001, p. 216). Two
basic predictors of OID in virtual organizations - one being intrinsic to the employee, the other being extrinsic through the organization - have been identified and accepted throughout the scholarly literature: The employee’s need for affiliation on the one hand and the work-based social support provided by the organization (Wiesenfeld, Raghuram and Garud, 2001; Hongwei and Brown, 2013). The need for affiliation describes a personal characteristic that expresses itself in an individual’s need for social exposure and membership by which social rewards are sought from harmonious relations and the perception to belong to a collective of people (Wiesenfeld, Raghuram and Garud, 2001). Work-based social support, as an extrinsic predictor, describes the extent of “contextual cues suggesting that an individual is a member of (belongs to) the organization” (2001, p. 217). These contextual cues may be organizational artifacts, signs and rituals and acknowledge by scientific research to positively influence the OID of employees (2001). In using these predictors for the assessment of employees’ OID, one has to consider the direct feedback effect between both the need for affiliation and work-based social support. As Wiesenfeld, Raghuram and Garud suggest:

In particular, for individuals with low need for affiliation who may be less intrinsically motivated to self-categorize themselves as belonging to the organization, it may be especially crucial to their organizational identification to receive cues that others in the organization consider them to be in-group members (2001, p. 219).

A further significant predictor of employees’ OID that has been extensively researched and acknowledged within the academic field of organizational theory, behavior and communication is the employee’s perceived external prestige of his/her organization (Fuller et al., 2006; Ashforth, Harrison and Corley, 2008; Hongwei and Brown, 2013). Regarded as a “top-down process” (Ashforth, Harrison and Corley, p. 340), meaning the impact an organization has on its employees’ OID (2008), perceived external prestige is defined as “the individual’s evaluation of the extent to which organizational outsiders hold the firm in high regard or esteem because of the positive, socially valued characteristics of the organization” Fuller et al., 2006, p. 819). The importance of perceived external prestige on employees’ OID – Hongwei and Brown (2013) even regard it as one of the “major antecedents of employee OID” (p. 14) – appears to be consequential since “membership in a prestigious organization enhances self-esteem and meets the need for self-enhancement” (Fuller et al., 2006, p. 816). Indeed, as Hongwei and Brown review, recent research has confirmed that the more favorable an employee’s evaluation about his/her organization’s external image is, the more likely these employees identify with their organization (2013). The extent to which an employee perceives his/her organization prestigious, depends on three antecedents (Fuller et al., 2006):
• Organizational visibility among external publics
• Organizational performance
• The employee’s personal benchmark for prestige

Whereas the organization’s visibility is the extent to which it possesses a “publicly recognized name” (Fuller et al., 2006, p. 820), and organizational performance is the “reputation arising from success” (Shenkar and Yuchtman-Yaar, as cited in Fuller et al., 2006, p. 820), the employee’s personal benchmark for prestige means that “the less prestigious an individual’s prestige anchor, the more likely they are to perceive their present employer as being prestigious” (p. 821) and vice versa.

A more summarized understanding about the antecedents of employee’s OID provide Wiesenfeld, Raghuram and Garud (2001) who identify the following three predictors:

• The amount of contact moments between the employee and the organization
• The employee’s awareness of the organizational membership
• The employee’s attraction to the organizational identity

Another conclusive construct has been provided by the Corporate Communication Centre at the Erasmus University of Rotterdam in the form of the Rotterdam Organizational Identification Test (ROIT) as described by van Riel and Fombrun (2007). According to the ROIT instrument “Identification with the organization is influenced by antecedents like ‘employee communication’, ‘perceived organizational prestige’, ‘job satisfaction’, ‘goals and values’, and ‘corporate culture’” (p. 95). Note, that also within this evaluation instrument that has been considerably researched among many organizations (2007), perceived external prestige once more is being regarded as a significant antecedent for employee’s OID.
The ROIT instrument as an influential measurement tool does furthermore highlight the notable role of **internal communications** in developing a sustainable organizational identification among employees. Bearing in mind the commonly held notion that communication is at the ground of identity and identification (Scott, 2007), there are several scholars supporting the contributory role of internal communication to OID (Miller et al., 2000; Nakra, 2006; Ashforth, Harrison, Corley, 2008). In this vein, Miller et al. (2000) define that “Organizational identification is derived from messages from the organization and/or the self that link the receivers’ values and goals to those of the organization and provide receivers with a means of reducing uncertainty in their organizational roles” (p. 628). Evidence of the influence internal communication has on OID is provided by Nakra who recapitulates: “research has found that communication can affect employee attitudes that may be strongly related to organizational identification” (2006, p. 45). The authors Ashforth, Harrison and Corley even presume that “Indeed, some of the more common antecedents to OI listed above (prestige, distinctiveness, fairness, etc.) may be proxies for the effectiveness of internal and external communication tactics” (2008, p. 342).
3.3. Communication Needs

Presumably the most supporting argument for interdependence of internal communication and OID, and thus for the communication consultant’s anticipated communication research for the client organization is put forward by Nakra (2006):

If employee identification is both a process and a product that is influenced by an organization’s communication as brought out by the above cited studies, then organizational managers are likely to benefit from research which identifies the relationship between the level of communication satisfaction of its employees to their levels of identification (p. 46).

Since communication satisfaction is the extent to which communication needs of employees are met, the notion of communication needs shall be considered in more detail.

As Grunig (1992) states, internal communication needs to meet the needs of employees “to make sense of how they fit into the organization, to communicate openly with top management about plans and policies, and to understand the activities of the organization in the outside environment” (p. 569). This quote of the renowned public relations scholar indicates that the fundamental communication needs of employees are an understanding of their role within the organization as well the awareness of the organization’s activities. Hence, it can be argued that the fulfilment of these communication needs fosters organizational identification. Indeed, Vos and Schoemaker suppose that “Knowledge about the organization as a whole may increase the involvement of employees and their motivation to work. Within this context, we can think of the self-image, the image one has of his or her own organization” (2005, p.79). However, as Gillis (2006) states, communication needs do not only refer to the information sent, but also to the suitability of internal communication channels as perceived by the employees. Consequently, the communication needs of the research leaders within the client organization have to be divided into information needs and communication channel preferences. According to Vos and Schoemaker (2005), there are four categories of information types that can be linked to the information needs of employees. First, task information is the information an employee requires in order to accomplish the tasks assigned to him or her. Second, management information is needed to delegate tasks to certain people for a certain point in time, such as work planning. Both of these information are fundamental to ensure the primary processes of the organization (2005). A third information type is policy information that informs in a parallel communication manner the organization’s policy in action. Fourth, motivating information is aimed at maintaining and reinforcing the employee’s within the organization towards achieving desired results.
A deliberate insight into the precise communication needs that are likely to foster an employee’s OID is given by van Riel and Fombrun (2007) who posit:

> Internal communication enhances identification: (1) when employees perceive that they are receiving enough information with which to do their jobs, (2) when employees perceive that they are receiving enough information about what the organization as a whole is doing, and (3) when employees perceive that they are taken seriously by their managers (p. 76).

Similarly, Fuller et al. constitute that “knowledge of organizational issues like goal achievement helps employees to distinguish their organization from others. This facilitates social categorization and makes the organization a more salient source of identification” (2006, p. 834). Even more precisely and most relevant to the anticipated communication research are the employee’s communication needs within a virtual organization, as described by Altinöz (2009): Communication in virtual offices is important for two reasons: firstly, the need to equip employees with the information necessary to do their work and share this information, and secondly the need to create values towards coordination, performance, and job satisfaction” (p. 223).

### 3.4. Parallel Communication

Parallel communication has been defined by Vos and Schoemaker as the internal communication towards employees from one point in the organization whereas every employee receives the same information (2005). Channels of parallel communication entail the internal newsletter or other printed or digital publications on a regular basis. Evidently, this type of internal communication is an important tool in enhancing organizational identification, or as the authors claim “...parallel communication [...] has an important role in strengthening involvement.” (2005, p.93). More specifically, they identify two distinct functions served by parallel communication for organizational identification:

a) To foster familiarity with the organization  
b) To enhance involvement with the organization and with change processes  
c) To nurture the organizational culture

Similarly, Gillis describes the objectives of employee publications (such as newsletters) as enhancing employee’s comprehension and patronage for the organization’s activities, its goals, plans and
conduct; appreciating employees’ achievements; and informing employees about the contribution expected from them towards organizational objectives (2006). In order to achieve this, the author explains, “the frequency of publication and the method of distribution should be determined by evaluating the needs and preferences of the audience members as well as the messages being shared” (2006, p. 260). However, Vos and Schoemaker give caution about the mere use of parallel communication when communicating with internal publics. They even argue that parallel communication cannot be isolated from line communication (2005). “What the staff experiences in its direct contacts with managers and colleagues has, in general, more influence than parallel communication; nevertheless parallel communication can fulfil an important supporting role” (p. 96).

The clarification of Vos and Schoemaker illuminates that besides parallel communication, one has to determine the general communication needs when assessing the influence of internal communication on organizational identification, as it has been described in the previous section.
4. Research Design

4.1. Research Objective

The anticipated internal communication research is of a practice-oriented nature aimed at providing knowledge and information that contributes to alter the current internal communication situation within the EDGaR Foundation. It is conceptualized as a diagnostic opinion research in order to identify the organizational identification of the research consortium’s research leaders and the factors that have an influence on it. This research intervention stage appears to be the most suitable since the communication issue is realized and acknowledged by the client organization’s internal stakeholders, however particular causes have not been uncovered yet. In order to clarify the contribution of the opinion research to the current communication situation within the client organization, the research objective is going to be stated here in terms of the external and internal aim:

The goal of the anticipated research is to provide recommendations for the EDGaR program manager to enhance the researchers’ organizational identification with the EDGaR program

(external aim)

by

diagnosing the current organizational identification of the research leaders and to what extent the overall communication needs and deployed parallel communication is influencing the OID with the research consortium

(internal aim).
4.2. Research Framework

In order to demonstrate the reasoning of the anticipated internal communication research a research framework (See Figure 5) and a conceptual model (See Figure 6) are used below.

The anticipated internal communication research is based on theoretical concepts from the academic field of organizational theory, organizational behavior and organizational communication/public relations. These concepts are organizational identification (OID), communication needs and parallel communication (a). This provides the parameters for the communication audit (research perspective) that are confronted with the research object – the research leaders (b), which are then used to analyze the current communication situation (c). The findings are then going to be analyzed and interpreted resulting in final recommendations for enhancing the research leaders’ organizational identification (d).

Figure 5: Research Framework

Figure 6: Conceptual model (research perspective)
4.3. Research Questions

It is assumed that the confrontation of the research perspective with the research objects – that is, the research leaders (See Figure 5) - will elicit quantitative and qualitative answers revealing the current research leaders’ perceived organizational identification with the EDGaR Foundation and factors of internal communication that have an influence on it. In order to obtain relevant data from the respondents, the research were divided into three main research questions (RQ), which were in turn subdivided into several sub-questions (SQ).

The first main research question was aimed at evaluating the research leaders’ subjective perception of their organizational identification with the client organization at the moment of the research data collection. As it has been unraveled in section 4.2. (Organizational Identification), the three main antecedents or predictors of OID are the individual need for affiliation, work-based social support and the individually perceived external prestige of the organization. For each of these predictors one research sub-question was designed. In summary, RQ1 and its related sub-questions for the anticipated communication research were as follows:

**RQ1: To what extent do the EDGaR research leaders identify with the client organization?**

**SQ1.1:** To what extent do EDGaR research leaders evaluate the need for affiliation and to what extent is it satisfied within the client organization?

**SQ1.2:** To what extent does the client organization provide work-based social support to the EDGaR research leaders and to what extent does it foster their organizational identification?

**SQ1.3:** To what extent do the EDGaR research leaders value external prestige of the client organization and to what is the current perceived level of it?

The second main research question was intended to determine the degree to which the information needs of the EDGaR research leaders were met at the moment of the research data collection. In section 4.3. (Communication Needs) the influence of the overall internal communication on employees’ OID has been revealed and thus deserved attention within the anticipated research of the communication consultant. Section 4.3. has also provided an insight into the most meaningful communication needs of employees as identified in prior scientific research of organizational communication and public relations. According to this, a shared knowledge of the workforce about
their role within the organization and the organization’s (future) activities appear to be salient claims to an organization’s internal communication. However, not only the needs, but also the means by which they are communicated – that is, the communication channels – should be tailored to the employees’ preferences. Since RQ2 was anticipated to generate solely qualitative data, two rather broad sub-questions had been designed in order to not constrain the EDGaR research leaders’ reflection on their communication needs. Nonetheless, the qualitative answers were later quantified within the data interpretation according to Vos and Schoemakers’ information types as presented in section 4.3. In short, RQ2 and its related sub-questions for the anticipated communication research were as follows:

**RQ2:** *What general communication needs that are likely to foster organizational identification with the client organizational do the EDGaR research leaders have?*

**SQ2.1:** What are the information needs of the EDGaR research leaders with regard to the client organization’s internal communication?

**SQ2.2:** What are the communication channel preferences of the EDGaR research leaders with regard to the client organization’s internal communication?

As section 4.4. (Parallel Communication) has revealed, an organization’s parallel communication can play a valuable complementary role to the overall internal (line) communication. Specifically, Vos and Schoemaker have been quoted in this section with the words: “What the staff experiences in its direct contacts with managers and colleagues has, in general, more influence than parallel communication; nevertheless parallel communication can fulfil an important supporting role” (2005, p. 96). However, since the client organization operates in a virtual context, direct personal F-2-F contacts are rather infrequent and seldom. Hence, bearing in mind the benefits of parallel communication to OID, the communication consultant regarded it necessary to assess the extent to which the client’s organization parallel communication was likely to fulfil that role at the moment of the research data collection. The channels of parallel communication, as described in section 3 (Organizational Context), the client organization’s channels of parallel communication were at the moment of the research data collection the EDGaR newsletter and the official EDGaR website. For a relevant and complete insight to obtain, it was first necessary to research the amount of the EDGaR research leaders’ exposure moments to the EDGaR newsletter and the official EDGaR website as determined by the respondents’ selective attention. The second and third sub-questions for RQ3 were aimed at disclosing the extent to which the parallel communication was likely to meet the
information needs and the communication channel preferences of the EDGaR research leaders at the moment of the research data collection. In brief, RQ3 and its related sub-questions for the anticipated communication research were as follows:

**RQ3**: To what extent is the parallel communication within the client organization likely to foster the organizational identification of the EDGaR research leaders?

**SQ3.1**: To what extent is the parallel communication within the client organization absorbed by the EDGaR research leaders?

**SQ3.2**: To what extent does the parallel communication of the client organization meet the information needs of the EDGaR research leaders?

**SQ3.3**: To what extent does the parallel communication of the client organization meet the internal communication channel preferences of the research leaders?

4.4. Research Strategy and Methodology

The anticipated diagnostic communication research was of an exploratory nature and sought to reveal the extent of the EDGaR research leaders’ organizational identification with the client organization as well as the influence of the respondents’ overall (line) communication needs and the research consortium’s parallel communication on the status quo of OID. To achieve this end, interviews of approximately 40 minutes were administered by the communication consultant with 13 of the 20 EDGaR research leaders in the time between May, 7th and May 28th 2013. The instrument used for the data collection in the light of the research questions was a semi-structured questionnaire which comprised closed as well as open questions in order to generate quantitative and qualitative data from the respondents. These interviews were planned predominantly as personal F-2-F encounters, however due to time and financial constraints only four of the 13 interviews could be conducted this way. The remaining interviews were administered by telephone or the instant messaging program Skype™ via a personal computer.

The composition of data types that were anticipated to be collected varied across the three main research questions. The first main research question (RQ1) and its three sub-questions were designed in order to elicit closed responses, that is quantitative data. In the subsequent phase of the data interpretation these data were statistically ranked and made visible in pie and bar charts. The
quantification of the first main research question ensured a comprehensive way to evaluate the status quo of the EDGaR research leaders’ OID with the client organization. The second main research question (RQ2) was set out entirely as a means of generating qualitative data. By posing open questions, the communication consultant aimed to avoid constraining the respondents’ cognitive reflection about their true desires and needs in terms of the overall internal (line) communication. These qualitative, or non-numeric, research data gathered was subsequently transcribed and quantified by the parameters of information types as proposed by Vos and Schoemaker (2005). The third main research question was designed to generate both qualitative and quantitative data from the respondents. On the one hand, the first sub question (SQ3.1) was supposed to produce a quantitative evaluation of the amount of the EDGaR research leaders’ exposure moments to the EDGaR newsletter and the official EDGaR website as determined by the respondents’ selective attention. Thus, the internal communicative impact of the parallel communication could be conveniently assessed. The remaining two sub questions (SQ3.2, SQ3.3) were designed, such as the RQ2 as open questions in order to yield qualitative insights into the EDGaR research leaders’ demands on the client organization’s parallel communication. The qualitative data sets were then transcribed and quantified according to Vos and Schoemaker’s information types and according to the channels of computer-mediated communication.
5. Research Results

In this section, the final research results that have been yielded by the conducted communication research between May, 7th and May, 28th are going to be presented. For each research question (RQ) and their respective sub-questions (SQ) first the responses generated are going to be presented. In a second step, the revealed correlations of the data generated by the communication research are going to be introduced.

**RQ1: To what extent do the EDGaR research leaders identify with the client organization?**

**SQ1.1: To what extent do the EDGaR research leaders evaluate the need for affiliation and to what extent is it satisfied within the client organization?**

On the question “Do you genuinely feel as an integrated part of the EDGaR program?” six respondents (46%) answered with “Yes”, whereas seven persons (54%) reflected not to feel as an integrated part of the client organization, and hence gave the response “No”.

![Figure 7: Do you genuinely feel as an integrated part of the EDGaR program?](image)

When asked whether they find it important to perceive themselves, or to be perceived by other people, as a part of the EDGaR program, 46 percent of the research leaders said “Yes”, of which one respondent however limited his answer at the same time to the prerequisite that the EDGaR program should have achieved higher visibility among external publics first. Another six respondents
indicated that they do not attach any importance towards their intrinsically as well as extrinsically perceived membership within the client organization. One respondent had no opinion on this question.

**Figure 8: Is it important for you to perceive yourself/to be perceived as a member of the EDGaR program?**

SQ1.2: To what extent does the client organization provide work-based social support to the EDGaR research leaders and to what extent does it foster their organizational identification?

When asked for the amount of contact moments (correspondence) per week with the EDGaR Direction or issues explicitly related to the entire EDGaR program, the respondent could not give an indication on a weekly basis, but on an annual rate. Hence, four respondents (31%) estimated having more than 48 contact moments per year, three research leaders (23%) rated them on 12 contact moments per year, whereas the remaining six interviewees (46%) guessed a frequency of less than six contact moments per annum.
However, a vast majority of ten research leaders (77%) evaluated the frequency of communication with the EDGaR Direction as “Good” indicating a perceived sufficient level of contact moments. Out of these ten respondents, one person nonetheless required some more contact moments with the EDGaR Direction. The remaining three interviewees (23%) even assessed the communication with the EDGaR Direction as “Very Good” which for them means a very effective communication combined with an all-time availability of addressees whenever there is a need for communication.
SQ1.3: To what extent do the EDGaR research leaders perceive external prestige of the client organization and to what is the current perceived level of it?

On the question “Do you feel proud to work for the biggest gas research program in Europe?” six respondents (46%) stated to be indeed proud to work for the client organization. Four interviewees (31%) in contrast indicated to not feel pride in relation to their involvement within the EDGaR program. Two individuals (15%) were not able to decide on one of both extremes and hence gave the answer “Neutral”. One other person evaluated the personal involvement within the client organization as “Useful” instead of feeling proud about it.

When asked whether the respondents would be inclined to be more proud of their involvement in the EDGaR program if the external communication or visibility was enhanced, only one person clearly stated “No”, but nevertheless stressed the benefit of enhanced public visibility for the client organization. Almost half of the respondents (46%) answered the interview question with “Yes”. Twenty-three percent (three persons) of the research leaders gave a more uncertain “Likely” as a response, whereas another three interviewees had no opinion to this interview question.
In relation to the prior question, the interviewees were asked to assess the EDGaR program’s external communication efforts and public visibility to be either sufficient or not. Six respondents (46%) were not able to assess the client organization’s external communication and hence indicated “Don’t know”. Almost the same amount of interviewees (five persons) regard the external communication and visibility among external publics as “Not sufficient”. Only two persons (15%) regarded the research consortium’s external communication efforts as “Sufficient”.

Figure 12: Would you be more inclined to feel proud about the EDGaR program if the external Communication/visibility of the EDGaR program was enhanced?

Figure 13: Would you assess the external communication efforts of the EDGaR program as sufficient?
During almost all the interviews, a valuable finding could be made which was not generated by any question on the official interview questionnaire. In relation to the most recent question about the EDGaR program’s external communication, it has been mentioned by the respondents six times that the client organization is believed to have insufficient visibility among the Dutch general public. Furthermore, it was indicated five times on the other hand that the EDGaR program has insufficient visibility within the Dutch gas industry, but also within Europe.

After the research data of RQ1 had been obtained and processed quantitatively, they were researched on their correlations. First, it was revealed that from the seven people who did not perceive themselves as an integrated part of the EDGaR program, only three thought that it is actually important to perceive oneself, or to be perceived by others, as such. Out of the six respondents who indeed perceived themselves as being an integrated part, only the half considered it as important, whereas one person had no opinion on this.

Researching the extent to which the research leaders perceived themselves as an integrated part of the client organization, and its correlation to the amount of contact moments, it emerged that four out of the six research leaders who felt as an integrated part of the EDGaR program have more than 48 contact moments per year. In contrast, all seven interviewees who did not perceive themselves as integrated parts of the research consortium, have not more than 12 contact moments per annum.

Another interesting correlation has been uncovered when the organizational type of the consortium partner organization, in which the research leaders are working respectively, was confronted with the extent to which they perceived themselves as an integrated part of the EDGaR program. All seven persons who did no perceive themselves as an integrated part of the research consortium are employees of organizations with a service nature and client portfolio. Opposed to this finding, four out of the six research leaders who perceived themselves as an integrated part of the EDGaR program are employed by educational institutes (universities).

As described in Section 4.2. of this report, perceived external prestige of an employee’s organization is an important constituent of his/her perceived organizational identification. Therefore, the research data obtained from the EDGaR research leaders on this interrelation were confronted and revealed the following findings. On the one hand, four out of the six research leaders who perceived to be an integrated part of the EDGaR program indicated to feel proud of their involvement within the research consortium. The remaining two respondents stated to feel “Neutral” about it. On the other hand, only two of the seven interviewees who perceived themselves as not being an integrated part within the client organization responded to feel proud of their involvement
within. Four out of these seven research leaders did not feel proud of their involvement within the EDGaR program and one person described his feeling towards his involvement as “Useful” rather than proud.

An organization’s external prestige as perceived by its employees it in turn dependent on the organizational visibility among external publics. Therefore, this correlation was also researched by confronting the related research data. Three out of the six research leaders who perceived to be an integrated part of the EDGaR program stated to be more proud of their involvement within the research consortium if its external communication/public visibility was enhanced. One out of the six research leaders who perceived themselves as being a part of the client organization answered with “Likely”, two respondents had no opinion on this. From the seven research leaders who did not perceive as an integrated part of the EDGaR program, three respondents indicated to be more proud if the research consortium’s external communication/public visibility was enhanced, two responded with “Likely”, one person answered with “No” and one research leader had no opinion about this.

In order to obtain insight into the research leaders’ OID and their perceived external prestige of the EDGaR program further, the extent to which they felt proud of their involvement in the research consortium and the assessment about the sufficiency of its external communication was confronted. As it was revealed earlier in this section, only two EDGaR research leaders assessed the research consortium’s external communication as sufficient. The confrontation has revealed that these two positive evaluations were given by research leaders who indicated to feel proud of their involvement within the client organization. Two other interviewees of the six who felt proud about the EDGaR program regarded its external communication as insufficient, whereas the remaining to research leaders stated “Don’t know”. Out of those respondents that clearly expressed not to be proud of their involvement within the research consortium, two assessed its external communication as insufficient, the other two could not give an evaluation (“Don’t know”). Of the two research leaders who felt “Neutral” about their involvement within the client organization, one person regarded the EDGaR program’s external communication as insufficient, the other one could not give an evaluation. The research leader who linked his feeling attached to his involvement within the client organization as “Useful” was not able to evaluate the sufficiency of the research consortium’s external communication (“Don’t know”) as well.
**RQ2:** What general communication needs that are likely to foster organizational identification with the client organizational do the EDGaR research leaders have?

**SQ2.1:** What are the information needs of the EDGaR research leaders with regard to the client organization’s internal communication?

When the EDGaR research leaders were asked the interview question “What kind of information would be likely to help you feeling more connected and involved with the EDGaR Foundation?” (Here the respondents were not restricted to one answer), four of the 13 interviewed research leaders (31%) indicated not to have any information needs with regard to the internal communication within the EDGaR program. Six interviewees revealed the need for information on how the 30 different EDGaR research projects are interlinked was expressed, of which three persons demanded the activity by the Project Steering Committee (PSC, see Section 3). Five respondents expressed the desire to receive more information on the EDGaR program’s external environment within both the Dutch and the European context and its influence on the EDGaR research projects. Another five interviewees demanded information on the future direction of the EDGaR program, specifically with regard to EDGaR II. Three respondents expressed the need for more information about other research projects within the research consortium. The research leaders’ information needs with regard to the internal communication of the EDGaR program can be seen in its entirety in Figure 14, ranked according to the amount they were mentioned.

![Figure 14: What kind of information would be likely to help you feeling more connected to and involved in the EDGaR program? (According to the amount of mentions)](image-url)
On the question with which individuals or organizational units of the EDGaR Foundation the research leaders would want to have an increased frequency of communication, seven respondents (54%) answered with “None” indicating that there was no desire for increased contact moments with any constituents of the client organization. Four interviewees (31%) expressed the desire for increased communication with the Project Steering Committee (PSC, see Section 3) of which two research leaders explicitly demanded information on what this organizational unit is doing and how it is thinking about the EDGaR program. Another one respondent reasoned the need for more contact moments with the PSC with the need to receive more information on how to link the EDGaR research projects in an interdisciplinary manner. Two out of the 13 interviewed research leaders (15%) indicated the need to obtain more information from the Board of Governors (BoG, see Section 3), both reasoning that they would like to know what the members of the BoG are thinking about the EDGaR program and its future direction.

SQ2.2: What are the communication channel preferences of the EDGaR research leaders with regard to the client organization’s internal communication?

When asked on which internal communication channels were likely to enhance the EDGaR research leaders’ feeling to be involved and connected to the EDGaR program, the vast majority of nine respondents (69%) indicated no preference, meaning that no additional channel of communication nor the increased use of an existing one was desired. Three interviewees indicated their preference
for personal face-to-face (F2F) meetings. The remaining one research leader demanded an increased use of the professional social networking site LinkedIn® for the internal communication of the EDGaR program.

![Figure 16: What kind of communication channels would be likely to help you feeling more connected to and involved in the EDGaR program?](image)

After the research data of RQ2 had been obtained and processed quantitatively, they were researched on the correlation between the EDGaR research leaders’ organizational identification and the current internal communication situation in order to evaluate the influence of the client organization’s internal communication on the research leaders’ OID. First, three out of the six research leaders that perceived themselves as being an integrated part of the EDGaR program stated to not have any internal information need. In contrast, only one out of the seven respondents who did not perceive themselves as an integrated part of the research consortium indicated to not have any information needs with regard to the client organization’s internal communication. Moreover, for the three research leaders that perceived themselves as an integrated part of the EDGaR program, but still recognized unfulfilled information needs within the internal communication, the most salient desires were the need for information on how the research projects are interlinked in an interdisciplinary manner (two respondents) and the need for information on the external environment of the research consortium and the influence on it within both the Dutch and European context (two respondents). For the six research leaders who did not perceive themselves as being an integrated part of the research consortium and who indicated to have certain information needs with regard to the client organization’s internal communication, the most important information needs were information on how the research projects are interlinked in an interdisciplinary manner (four
respondents), information on the future direction of the EDGaR program (four respondents), and information on the external environment of the research consortium and the influence on it within both the Dutch and European context (three respondents).

In order to obtain more insight into the influence of the current communication situation within the client organization and the research leaders’ OID, the extent to which research leaders perceive themselves as an integrated part of the EDGaR program and their communication preferences were confronted and revealed the following findings. All six research leaders who perceived themselves as being an integrated part of the EDGaR program indicated no preferences for internal communication channels over those currently deployed within the research consortium. Three out of the respondents who did not perceive themselves as an integrated part of the EDGaR program could not identify any internal communication channels that they would have preferred over the ones that were in place at the time of the interview, another three interviewees named personal F2F meetings as the preferred means of communicating internally, and only one research leader indicated a preference for the professional social networking site LinkedIn® as a channel for the internal communication within the client organization.

To further shed light on the influence that the current internal communication within the client organization has on the research leaders’ OID, the extent to which the respondents perceived themselves as an integrated part of the EDGaR program and their need for an increased frequency of communication with individuals or organizational units of the EDGaR Foundation were confronted. It has been revealed that three out of the six research leaders who perceive themselves as an integrated part of the EDGaR program did not request increased contact moments with any constituents of the EDGaR Foundation, two interviewees desired more information from the BoG, and one research leader felt the need for more communication with the PSC. Among the research leaders who did not perceive themselves as an integrated part of the EDGaR program four had no request for increased communication with any individual or unit within the client organization. All the remaining three respondents exclusively identified the need for more contact moments with the PSC.
RQ3: To what extent is the parallel communication within the client organization likely to foster the organizational identification of the EDGaR research leaders?

SQ3.1: To what extent is the parallel communication within the client organization absorbed by the EDGaR research leaders?

When asked on whether they would read the EDGaR newsletter, six research leaders (46%) stated to read the newsletter on a regular basis, however one of the respondents directly added that this parallel communication medium was not necessarily needed. Three interviewees (23%) indicated to read the EDGaR newsletter occasionally which implies that likely not every published issue of the newsletter is absorbed by these respondents. Four out of the 13 interviewed research leaders admitted not to read the client organization’s newsletter at all.

Due to the prior obtained responses, the following interview question “How much time do you spend reading the EDGaR newsletter” does consequently only apply to nine out of the 13 research leaders. It revealed that only one interviewee spends more than 30 minutes on reading the newsletter. Five respondents estimated to dedicate some ten minutes to the EDGaR newsletter. The remaining three research leaders stated to read the newsletter approximately up to five minutes.

The official EDGaR website http://www.edgar-program.com/ does, besides informing external publics about the research consortium, also serve the function of an internal communication channel. Hence, the EDGaR research leaders were also asked about their usage pattern of this
parallel communication medium. Three out of the 13 researchers (23%) indicated to use the EDGaR website on a regular basis, of which one person indicated to visit the website once every two weeks, another respondent once a month, and yet another interviewee once every two month. Three out of the 13 respondents stated to visit the official EDGaR website occasionally, at which every one of those three research leaders mentioned to search for persons and contact details within the EDGaR program as the reason for visiting the website. Six (46%) respondents admitted to never visit the client organization’s website. One research leader had no opinion on this interview question.

**SQ3.2: To what extent does the parallel communication of the client organization meet the information needs of the EDGaR research leaders?**

When the research leaders were asked what they like about the content of the EDGaR newsletter, six out of the 13 respondents (46%) could not specifically mention something that they would like about the newsletter. Five out of the 13 interviewed research leaders (38%) stated that they appreciate the EDGaR newsletter’s function of providing information updates on the EDGaR program. The aspects of the EDGaR newsletter that were mentioned to be liked by the research leaders are shown in its entirety in Figure 18.

![Figure 18: How frequent do you visit the official EDGaR website http://www.edgar-program.com/?](image-url)
On the question “Which information do you miss in the EDGaR newsletter?” (Here the respondents were not restricted to one answer) the majority of eight research leaders (62%) stated to not miss any specific information in the quarterly newsletter. The remaining five respondents (38%) indicated to miss several scattered information needs of which the desire for information on the annual EDGaR Research Day was the most salient one (two respondents). The information that were regarded to be missing in the EDGaR newsletter can be seen in its entirety in Figure 19, ranked according to the amount they were mentioned.

![Figure 19: What do like about the EDGaR newsletter?](image)

On the question “Which information do you miss in the EDGaR newsletter?” (Here the respondents were not restricted to one answer) the majority of eight research leaders (62%) stated to not miss any specific information in the quarterly newsletter. The remaining five respondents (38%) indicated to miss several scattered information needs of which the desire for information on the annual EDGaR Research Day was the most salient one (two respondents). The information that were regarded to be missing in the EDGaR newsletter can be seen in its entirety in Figure 19, ranked according to the amount they were mentioned.

![Figure 20: Which information do you miss in the EDGaR newsletter? (According to the amount of mentions)](image)
SQ3.3: To what extent does the parallel communication of the client organization meet the communication channel preferences of the research leaders?

When asked what communication channel they would prefer for the dissemination of the EDGaR newsletter as such, or the information contained in it, nine researchers (69%) evaluated E-mails as the preferred channel for receiving the newsletter. However, five of those nine respondents indicated that it would be thinkable to receive more frequent news feeds via the website in combination with an E-mail notification system. One of the nine research leaders preferring E-mails for the newsletter dissemination regarded news feeds via the professional social networking site LinkedIn® as feasible. Two out of all 13 respondents had no opinion on this interview question and hence did not give a final answer. One out of all 13 research leaders stated a preference for the official EDGaR website as a means to receive the research consortium’s newsletter, another one interviewee expressed the preference for the professional social networking site LinkedIn®.

After the research data of RQ3 had been obtained and processed quantitatively, they were researched on correlations with the respondents’ perceived OID in order to reveal valuable findings on the specific influence parallel communication has on the perceived OID of the research leaders with the EDGaR program. When confronting the extent to which the EDGaR research leaders perceive themselves to be an integrated part of the research consortium and the extent to which the client organization’s newsletter is absorbed, it has been found that from the four research leaders who indicated not to read the newsletter at all, only one belonged to the group of respondents that
perceived themselves as being an integrated part of the EDGaR program. All other three interviewees not reading the EDGaR newsletter at all, did not perceive as an integrated part of the research consortium. However, out if the six respondents who claimed to read the newsletter on a regular basis 50 percent were research leaders who perceived themselves as being an integrated part of the EDGaR program and 50 percent who did not. In addition, out of the three research leaders who stated to at least absorb the EDGaR newsletter sometimes, two did perceive themselves as being an integrated part of the research consortium whereas one respondent did not.

Another correlation that was researched was the one between the extent to which the EDGaR research leaders perceive themselves to be an integrated part of the research consortium and the amount of visits on the client organization’s official website. Interestingly, this confrontation has shown that those research leaders who did not perceive themselves as being an integrated part of the EDGaR program visit the research consortium’s official website far more often than those who did perceive themselves as an integrated part of the EDGaR program. Particularly, it has been revealed that four out of the six respondents who admitted not to visit the official EDGaR website at all did perceive themselves as being an integrated part of the research consortium. Only two research leaders who do not perceive themselves as being an integrated part of the EDGaR program never visit its official website. Out of the four research leaders who claimed to visit the client organization’s official website on a regular basis three were those who indicated to not perceive themselves as being an integrated part of the EDGaR program, whereas only one research leader who does so, stated a regular website usage pattern. Furthermore, whereas only one out of the research leaders who perceived themselves as being an integrated part of the EDGaR program responded to visit its official website at least occasionally, the same was true for two research leaders who did not perceive as an integrated part of the research consortium.

Since the communication research has revealed no significant discrepancies for SQ3.3. these research data were not confronted with other responses generated previously.
6. Conclusions

Within the following section the previously obtained and processed research data are going to be evaluated and put into the context of the client organization in order to finally answer the three main research questions and thus diagnosing the research leaders’ organizational identification with the EDGaR program and uncovering the impact of the research consortium’s current internal communication situation on it.

With regard to the main research question 1 (RQ1) the communication research within the client organization has revealed that a slight majority of 54 percent of the EDGaR research leaders do not identify with the research consortium (SQ1.1.). Furthermore, it has been found that the research consortium’s work-based social support as perceived by the research leaders appears to be the most important antecedent of the research leaders’ organizational identification with the EDGaR program, followed by perceived external prestige that seems to be of less significance. The need for affiliation does not appear to be of any significance for the OID of research leaders with the research consortium.

A very interesting finding in relation to the research leaders’ organizational identification is that all seven respondents that do not identify with the client organization are employed in partner organizations that provide services to a varied portfolio of clients. In contrast, out of the six research leaders who identify with the EDGaR program the majority of four respondents is employed by universities. This correlation indicates the OID with the EDGaR program is facilitated among university research leaders since they might be inclined to more focus on the research consortium than those research leaders of service organizations for whom the EDGaR program is presumably “one of many clients”. However, in spite of an assumed lack of OID among the EDGaR research leaders with the research consortium, it has to be clarified that out of the six research leaders who do not identify with the EDGaR program, only the half perceives this identification to be of importance which indicates that only those three individuals have the need for affiliation (SQ1.1.). Moreover, the same amount of respondents from the group of research leaders that do not identify with the research consortium appears to have the need for affiliation as well. Therefore it can be concluded that the organizational identification of the research leaders with the EDGaR program is insufficient or at least leaves room for improvement most notably among research leaders from partner organizations. In turn it can be argued that university research leaders are more likely to identify with the research consortium and moreover might be more likely to be motivated towards
acting as organizational ambassadors. The findings also might indicate that university research leaders might show higher commitment toward the objectives of the EDGaR program and that they are more likely to be motivated to fulfil their organizational duties. However, since the concept of motivation is multidimensional it would be frivolous to regard OID as the exclusive prerequisite for their motivation.

As reviewed above, the communication research could not identify the need for affiliation as a significant antecedent for the EDGaR research leaders’ organizational identification with the research consortium. In terms of the provided work-based social support (SQ1.2.) the communication research has yielded that the extent to which the research leaders identify with the client organization appears to be dependent on the annual amount of contact moments (correspondence) between the EDGaR Direction. More specifically, the majority of four respondents identifying with the client organization are engaged in more than 48 contact moment per year. Opposed to this, the entire group of research leaders who showed no organizational identification have not more than 12 contact moment with the EDGaR Direction throughout the year. However, it clearly has to be mentioned here that the full majority of the EDGaR (100%) indicated to assess their respective communication pattern with the EDGaR Direction as either “Very good” or “Good”, whereby those research leaders who perceive themselves as being an integrated part of the EDGaR program were more inclined to give the former answer (two respondents). There are two explanations for the at first sight paradoxical finding. First, the EDGaR research leaders simply do not require work-based social support by the client organization. Since there is almost no research on the OID within consortiums, but only on single organizations, this might be possible. Second, the EDGaR research leaders do not consciously perceive the work-based social support as important to their OID with the research consortium. Indeed, during the qualitative interviews most researchers appeared to evaluate the communication pattern with the EDGaR Direction on its pure operational effectiveness using terms such as “effective” or “sufficient”. In conclusion, it appears that for the research leaders within the EDGaR program the perceived work-based social support is rather likely to be an important antecedent of their organizational identification with the research consortium. Certainly it can be summarized that the work-based social support determines the EDGaR research leader’s OID more than their need for affiliation. Hence, it can be presumed that the research leaders of the EDGaR program need more “contextual cues suggesting that an individual is a member of (belongs to) the organization” (Wiesenfeld, Raghuram and Garud, p. 217), such as organizational artifacts, signs and rituals (2001).

As demonstrated in Section 4, a further significant antecedent of organizational identification is the external prestige of the organization as perceived by its employees. The communication research
within the client organization could validate this correlation also with regard to the OID of the research leaders with the EDGaR program (SQ1.3.). First, an interesting finding has been that four out of the six researchers who perceived themselves as being an integrated part of the research consortium do feel proud of their involvement within, whereas only two out of the seven respondents who did not perceive themselves as being an integrated part of the EDGaR program gave the same answer. In fact, none of the six respondents who perceived themselves as being an integrated part of the research consortium answered with “No” to this interview question. In contrast, there were four researchers that do not perceive themselves as an integrated part of the EDGaR program and that indicated clearly to not feel proud of their involvement within the research consortium. Even one other respondent was inclined to describe his feeling towards his involvement within the EDGaR program as “Useful” which might indicate a rather opportunistic stance towards the membership within the research consortium. This finding already clearly indicates that perceived external prestige is lacking among those research leaders that do not identify with the client organization. Nevertheless, the communication research could only detect a very slight probability that those researchers who did not perceive themselves as being an integrated part of the EDGaR program would be more proud of their involvement within the research consortium if its external communication or public visibility was enhanced. More specifically, whereas respectively the same amount of respondents (three persons) of both groups of interviewees, who either perceived or did not perceive themselves as an integrated part of the EDGaR program, stated to be more proud of their involvement within the research consortium, there was only one more respondent within the latter group that answered the interview question with “Likely”. A further slight indication that the communication research has yielded is the fact that only research leaders that perceived to be an integrated part of the EDGaR program clearly assessed the research consortium’s external communication and public visibility to be sufficient (two persons). In conclusion, the communication research conducted within the EDGaR program revealed that there seems to be a likely influence of the client organization’s external prestige as perceived by its research leaders and their organizational identification with it. However, it should be borne in mind that, again, this communication research is one of very few empirical investigations on organizational identification within a consortium. Hence, there is no possibility to compare this finding with similar research results.
With regard to the main research question 2 (RQ2) the communication research within the client organization has yielded that the general internal communication needs of the EDGaR research leaders are likely to have a direct influence on their organizational identification with the research consortium. Most notably, the extent to which the research leaders’ desire for certain types of information is fulfilled appears to have the biggest impact on their OID. The extent to which the EDGaR research leaders’ channel preferences for internal communication are met seems to only have a slight impact on their OID. A significant correlation between the extent to which the EDGaR research leaders desire an increased frequency of communication with individuals or organizational units of the EDGaR Foundation and the research leaders’ OID could not be detected.

The communication research within the client organization found that the more the EDGaR research leaders identified with the research consortium, the less information needs (SQ2.2.) they perceived. More specifically, 50 percent of the EDGaR research leaders who perceived themselves as being an integrated part of the EDGaR program indicated to have no information needs at all and thus assessed the content of the client organization’s internal communication as sufficient. In contrast, it was only one respondent among the seven research leaders that did not perceive as being an integrated part of the research consortium who was completely satisfied with the types of information disseminated internally. Indeed, this finding is congruent with the results from academic scholars such as Nakra (2006) who concluded that “organizational managers are likely to benefit from research which identifies the relationship between the level of communication satisfaction of its employees to their levels of identification” (p. 46). A further valuable finding of the communication research has been the correlation between the extent to which EDGaR research leaders perceive themselves as a part of the EDGaR program and their needs for certain types of information. Concretely, four out of the seven respondents who did not perceive themselves as being an integrated part of the EDGaR program respectively demanded information on how the EDGaR research projects are interlinked in an interdisciplinary manner as well as information on the future direction of the EDGaR program. Three interviewees moreover expressed the desire for information on the external environment of the research consortium and the influence on it within both the Dutch and European context. Also, this result of the communication research within the client organization coincides with the theory found in the scholarly literature, for instance by van Reil and Fombrun (2007) who declare: “Internal communication enhances identification: (1) when employees perceive that they are receiving enough information with which to do their jobs, (2) when employees perceive that they are receiving enough information about what the organization as a whole is doing” (p. 76). However, this finding appears not only relate to those EDGaR research leaders with little organizational identification with regard to the research consortium. As the
communication research yielded further, two out of the three research leaders, who indeed did perceive themselves as being an integrated part, but still recognized unfulfilled internal information needs, respectively demanded information on how the research projects are interlinked in an interdisciplinary manner as well as information on the external environment of the research consortium and the influence on it within both the Dutch and European context. This finding underlines the necessity for the client organization to at least incorporate information on the interdisciplinary integration of its research projects. It is also advised to increase the dissemination of information on the external environment of and its impact on the EDGaR program (Dutch and European context) as well as the future direction of the research consortium. In conclusion, the communication research within the client organization has revealed rather saliently that unfulfilled information needs within the internal communication of the research consortium can be assumed to negatively influence the research leaders’ organizational identification with the EDGaR program.

The communication research within the client organization could not detect a significant correlation between the extent to which the EDGaR research leaders desire an increased frequency of communication with individuals or organizational units of the EDGaR Foundation (SQ2.1.) and the extent to which they identify with the research consortium. Specifically, three out of the six respondents who perceived themselves as being an integrated part of the EDGaR program did not request increased contact moments with any constituents of the EDGaR Foundation, whereas four out of the seven research leaders who did not perceive themselves as being an integrated part of the research consortium indicated the same. However, it is worth mentioning that all three research leaders who did not perceive themselves as being an integrated part of the EDGaR program exclusively demanded more contact moments with the Project Steering Committee (PSC). In conclusion, the communication research has found that unfulfilled desires for more contact moments with constituents of the EDGaR Foundation is not likely to influence the research leaders’ organizational identification with the research consortium.

The communication research within the client organization could furthermore detect a slight correlation between the EDGaR research leaders’ channel preferences for internal communication (SQ2.2.) and the extent to which they identify with the research consortium. In detail, none of the six respondents who perceived themselves as being an integrated part of the EDGaR program stated the preference for a communication channel other from those currently deployed within the research consortium’s internal communication. As opposed to this, the majority of the seven research leaders who did not perceive themselves as being an integrated part of the EDGaR program (four persons) indeed stated to have channel preferences for F2F meetings (three persons) as well as for the professional social networking site LinkedIn®. In conclusion, the communication research has yielded
again that the general communication needs of the EDGaR research leaders impact on the extent to which they identify with the research consortium, particularly with regard to the extent to which their channel preferences for internal communication are met. However, most EDGaR research leaders appear to be satisfied with the currently deployed internal communication channels within the client organization, a finding that is congruent with findings from the scholarly literature such as by Berry (2011) who discovered: “Perhaps surprisingly, most virtual team members prefer basic e-mail with attachments as the primary medium of communication and rarely use more advanced technologies; thus, the chosen computer-mediated communication systems do not need to be complex” (p. 196).
With regard to the main research question 3 (RQ3) the communication research within the client organization has found that the extent to which the EDGaR research leaders identify with the research consortium has a likely impact on their absorption and/or acceptance of the internal EDGaR newsletter. Moreover, it has been revealed that those research leaders showing no OID with the EDGaR program are more likely to visit the research consortium’s official website.

The communication research within the client organization has yielded that of the four research leaders who admitted not to read the quarterly issued EDGaR newsletter (SQ3.1.) three belonged to the group of those respondents who did not perceive themselves as being an integrated part of the EDGaR program. Also among the three researchers who indicated to read the newsletter “Sometimes” two belonged to the group of respondents that perceived as being an integrated part of the research consortium. However, out of those researchers who claimed to read the newsletter on a regular basis 50 percent belonged research leaders who perceived themselves as being an integrated part of the EDGaR program and 50 percent who did not. In conclusion, these findings suggest that the extent to which the research leaders identify with the EDGaR program is rather likely to influence their absorption/acceptance of the research consortium’s newsletter.

The communication research could moreover reveal an interesting finding with regard to the relation between the extent to which the EDGaR research leaders identify with the research consortium and the extent to which they visit the official EDGaR website (SQ3.1.). Specifically, among the six researchers who admitted not to visit the client organization’s website at all the majority (four persons) belonged to those group of respondents who perceived themselves as being an integrated part of the EDGaR program. More interestingly, out of the four interviewees who claimed to visit the EDGaR website on a regular basis the majority (three persons) belonged to the group of research leaders who perceived not to be an integrated part of the research consortium. Also, the amount of respondents who indicated to visit the official website of the client organization at least occasionally was higher among those research leaders who did not perceived themselves as an integrated part of the EDGaR program. In conclusion, these findings suggest that when EDGaR research leaders perceive themselves as not being an integrated part of the research consortium they seem to be more inclined to visit the official EDGaR website. One possible explanation for this correlation might be the previously detected need for internal information among those research leaders which they might attempt to fulfill on the EDGaR website.
7. Advice

Reviewing the internal communication research it can certainly be argued that a genuine organizational identification within the virtual context PLUS within a consortium consisting of ten different companies is not feasible. However, this conclusion can only be assumed since there is no sufficient research data from the academic field yet that could confirm or disprove this assumption. Thus, it has to be reminded here that the internal communication research for the client organization is one of a few research efforts that has sought to understand the concept of organizational identification within a consortium. Nevertheless, the internal communication research revealed partially meaningful correlations between the client organization’s current internal communication situation and the organizational identification of the EDGaR research leaders with the research consortium. Hence, the following communication advices are considered to likely enhance the research leaders’ organizational identification, but certainly to improve the overall effectiveness of the internal communication processes within the EDGaR program.

1. Fulfil the identified Information Needs of the EDGaR Research Leaders

As the internal communication research has shown, the significant contributor to the research leaders’ OID with the EDGaR program is the perceived work-based social support as provided by the client organization. However, bearing in mind the profile of the client organization being a consortium that operates in a virtual context, the classical view of work-based social support as a means to enhance contextual cues such as organizational rituals, signs and artifacts has to be constrained. Rather, the client organization is advised to provide work-based support (consciously excluding the “social” element) granting the research leaders access to information that support them to work effectively towards the organizational objectives. The content of the work-based support should clearly meet the research leaders’ information needs.

The internal communication has shown the existence of a number of information needs the EDGaR research leaders have, but which are not fulfilled by the client organization’s internal communication. More importantly, the findings of the research identified that unfulfilled information needs are likely to promote a lack of organizational identification among research leaders with the EDGaR program. Hence, in accordance with the research results it is advised to regularly incorporate the following information into the client organization’s internal communication (ranked according to importance):
1. Information on the interdisciplinary linkages between the scattered EDGaR research projects

2. Information on the external environment of the EDGaR program within the Dutch and European context and its impact on the research consortium’s research projects

3. Information on the direction of the EDGaR program in the future (EDGaR II)

2. **Improve the external communication/public visibility of the EDGaR program**

The internal communication research could not certainly validate that those research leaders who showed a lack of organizational identification would be inclined if the EDGaR program’s external communication and thus its public visibility was increased. However, the research findings clearly indicate that this group of research leaders assessed the overall external communication efforts of the research consortium as insufficient whereas those researchers who indeed identify with the client organization are more inclined to perceive the public visibility of the EDGaR program as sufficient. In addition the internal communication research revealed that six research leaders perceived insufficient visibility among the general public and five research leaders evaluated the external communication with the Dutch as well as the European gas industry as not sufficient. Combining these research results, the client organization is advised to enhance its visibility among general publics through appearances within the general media (newspapers, magazines, radio, TV) as well as to improve its external communication with national and international industry publics through classic and online media specifically addressed to this segmentation.

3. **Reconsider the Internal Dissemination of News That Are Meaningful to the EDGaR Research Leaders**

The internal communication research has revealed that the EDGaR newsletter is to a certain extent accepted among the research leaders of the research consortium. However, the research findings also suggest a lower acceptance and absorption rate among those research leaders that do not identify with the EDGaR program. Though it has also been found that the same group of research leaders visited the official EDGaR website considerably more often and regularly than those who do identify with the research consortium. Another valuable insight into the research leaders’ preferences for parallel communication was that five research leaders could also imagine to receive news feeds via the website in combination with a notification system via E-mail. Thus the client
organization is advised not to abandon the EDGaR newsletter, but to complement it with a news feed system via the website which is linked to the E-mailboxes of the research leaders. However, this advice should be followed with two important prerequisites. First, the frequency of the disseminated news must not increase dramatically since this might result in an information overload which rather fosters a loss of acceptance and thus absorption. Second, the news disseminated internally have to be sufficiently tailored to the research leaders’ information needs (See above).
8. References


Appendix

Interview Questions – Organizational Identification of EDGaR Research Leaders and the Influence of Internal Communication

1. Do you genuinely feel as an integrated part of the EDGaR program?

2. Is it important for you to perceive yourself/to be perceived as a member of the EDGaR program?

3. How many contact moments (correspondence) do you have per week with the EDGaR Direction or about issues that explicitly deal issues related to the EDGaR Foundation?

4. How do you think about the frequency of communication with the EDGaR Direction?

5. Do you feel proud to work for the biggest gas research project in Europe?

6. Would you be more inclined to feel proud about the EDGaR program if the external communication/visibility of the EDGaR program was enhanced?

7. Would you assess the external communication efforts of the EDGaR program as sufficient?

8. What kind of information would be likely to help you feeling more connected to and involved in the EDGaR program?

9. With which persons/departments within the EDGaR Foundation do you want to have (more) contact?

10. What kind of communication channels would be likely to help you feeling more connected to and involved in the EDGaR program?

11. Do you read the EDGaR newsletter?

12. If yes, how much time do you spend reading it?

13. How frequent do you visit the official EDGaR website http://www.edgar-program.com/?
14. What do like about the EDGaR newsletter?

15. Which information do you miss in the EDGaR newsletter?

16. You receive the EDGaR newsletter by E-mail. Can you imagine a better way to receive the newsletter itself or the information it contains?
Appendix

Interview #1

Q: Do you genuinely feel as an integrated part of the EDGaR program?
A: Yes.

Q: Is it actually important for you to perceive yourself/to be perceived as a member of the EDGaR project?
A: I think, it is helpful. Possibly, you talk about the EDGaR Foundation. What I would suggest for your report, is to talk about the EDGaR community. Because I think, one of the main things that EDGaR has achieved is a natural gas research community in the Netherlands. Quite a lot of people have been and are still working on natural gas issues in different fields, in different disciplines in the Netherlands for quite a long time.

Q: How much contact moments (correspondence) do you have per week with the EDGaR Direction or about issues that explicitly deal with the EDGaR Foundation itself?
A: I would say, on average, once a week.

Q: How do you think about the frequency of communication with the EDGaR Direction?
A: I think, it’s quite effective. The lines are very short to the various people within EDGaR – to JF Auger, to Bert, and also to other partners in my own project and also in other projects. It works. No problem at all.

Q: Do you feel proud to work for the biggest gas research project in Europe?
A: Yes.

Q: Would you be more inclined to feel proud about the EDGaR program if the external communication/visibility of the EDGaR program was enhanced?
A: I cannot really answer that question because I think that I would need to experience this first before I could really give a concrete answer.

Q: Would you assess the external communication efforts of the EDGaR program as sufficient?
A: I think, in terms of communication and the presence of EDGaR in the debate, also on the web could be enhanced. But then there is another side to it that is that EDGaR is a Dutch program, involving many Dutch researchers and also addressing problems and issues within Dutch gas, of course within the European context. But EDGaR is not so much oriented towards the European perspective on that progress. It is really a Dutch program, funded by the Dutch government… [Telephone call interrupted]
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I think, in general it’s well done. Yet, of course, there is a lot of competition so to say. If you are working in the field of natural gas and these kind of things, you [do/get] awfully much of communications and newsletters from the Energy Delta Institute, from the Energy Academy, from all kinds of organizations. Of course, to a large extent, these cover the same kind of things. And the question is then: “How can you stay visible as much as possible?” Another example is the European Energy Review which is also getting/sending a lot of material. So, I think within that context, EDGaR is doing well, but still there is a lot of competition.

Q: But, has EDGaR ever been mentioned in for example the European Energy Review? Have you ever seen an article in a newspaper or in a scientific journal that dealt with the EDGaR Foundation itself?
A: Yes, definitely. There were some articles about EDGaR yes. Certainly, in the European Energy Review, but also in some other things.

Q: So, you think that the EDGaR external communication shouldn’t be improved. It’s all right as it is?
A: No, it could be better. But it also has to do with the fact that a lot of projects within EDGaR are now in the move or are now in the process of being executed. Generally, with scientific work and that type of research that EDGaR is doing – the real results will not come until the second half or even the end of the project. So, the question is: “What should we communicate before we have these results?”

Even then, there have been quite much intermediate publications or papers or policy papers and these kind of things – intermediate results that have been sent out by EDGaR.

Q: Some of the interviewees said that the communication to the general public reading daily newspapers – that this communication could be improved. Do you think so as well?
A: Yes, I think so, yes. Although, on the other hand, what is also an important thing of course is, that the general public, the press, there you generally address individuals, people, working in universities or companies with concrete questions or issues. They do not address research funding foundations like EDGaR. If a journalist wants to know something, he starts calling around, talking to people at universities, firms, governments, etc. And that’s how they get their information. And of course, what you do see then is, that quite often if it is about natural gas where people of EDGaR are involved, that it is not explicitly referred to as being part of EDGaR because these people are related to the institutes in which they are working. So, when you know that the people are working on EDGaR projects, you can see that there is actually presence of EDGaR funded research and EDGaR-related people in the public debate and also in much communications, but not as being referred to as a part of EDGaR.

Q: What kind of information would be likely to help you to feel more connected and more involved with the EDGaR Foundation?
A: No, as I said, I am quite fine actually.

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Q: With which persons/departments within the EDGaR Foundation do you want to have (more) contact?
A: Actually no one I think. Because I am in regular contact with people from the board and people like [name erased for anonymity purposes]. And I am acquainted very well with [name erased for anonymity purposes]. So, I know the guys and the lines are short. It is also up to you to get in touch. It’s a bit silly to wait for the people to get in touch with you.

Q: What kind of communication channels would be likely to help you feeling more connected and involved with the EDGaR Foundation?
A: Again, I am using E-mail and I look at the website and I go to the research meetings and that’s fine for me.

Q: Do you use the LinkedIn group of EDGaR?
A: No. I know that it exists. But I am never using any LinkedIn groups actively. I am just part of it and see what is going on, but I am not using it.

Q: Do you read the EDGaR newsletter?
A: Yes, I skip it through and the things I am interesting in, I do read. Sometimes I read them very carefully, sometimes I just read them briefly, and sometimes I skip them.

Q: If yes, how much time do you spend reading it?
A: Well that really varies between one hour, two hours or 50 minutes or something like that.

Q: What do you like about the EDGaR newsletter?
A: It keeps me informed about the activities and what is going on within the EDGaR community. And also sometimes, it provides good ideas and gives new insights to which I agree or to which I protest. So it gives inspiring insights and ideas.

Q: Which information do you miss in the EDGaR newsletter?
A: Not really. As I already said before, there are so many newsletters and platforms and things around and if you skip through them all, you go crazy. I think you never can pretend having one newsletter which provides all the information you need. It’s always a matter of combining and compiling and seeking around what is going on.

But, the EDGaR newsletter... the real focus should actually be on activities, on research, on things that have to do with EDGaR, but in the Dutch context. Because for other fields of interests or aspects there are other newsletters. I think, you should never try as a newsletter to cover it all, but really focus on specific things and then it’s a newsletter that is really read.
Q: You receive the EDGaR newsletter by E-mail. Can you imagine a better way to receive the newsletter itself or the information it contains?

A: I prefer E-mail. It is perfect for me. But, you could also of course think of turning it into a kind of living document if you want. If there is news, put it on the website. But then you will get a lot of e-mails and warnings that something is on the website and that of course constricts your mailbox.

Q: How frequent do you visit the official EDGaR website http://www.edgar-program.com/?

A: Every two weeks, sometimes more, sometimes less. That depends on my mood, what I am doing and what I am up to?
Interview #2

Q: Do you genuinely feel as an integrated part of the EDGaR program?

A: *In the end, what I do during the week, is a lot of things. And EDGaR is a project which is one of those. So I am not full-time working on this project. You can also say that EDGaR is just one of those projects. So you shouldn’t exaggerate.*

Q: Is it actually important for you to perceive yourself/to be perceived as a member of the EDGaR project?

A: *Yes, well, if you compare it with the Dutch government, I don’t feel any bond with this financer. It’s the guys that pay me and I report to these guys, but they don’t seem to bother about the technical content and what you do. EDGaR is different, that’s within the program, and there are other projects that also would like to hear about your project results. Yes, so, absolutely more than just a sort of an anonymous bank of money. EDGaR is not an anonymous bank of money – they are interested the results, that’s good, yes, I like that. I like [name erased for anonymity purposes] also. He is an enthusiastic guy and he makes you feel being a part of the process. And especially in Nunspeet and also the previous one... he is really enthusiastic and you really feel it.*

Q: How much contact moments (correspondence) do you have per week with the EDGaR Direction or about issues that explicitly deal with the EDGaR Foundation itself?

A: *Well, I don’t have a lot of moments of communication with the EDGaR Direction. But at the same time, the EDGaR subjects are grouped in different topics. And one of these topics is called [erased for anonymity purposes] And the topic members is my colleague. So, he has two functions: He also a project leader of one of these projects, I am also one of these projects, but he is also the topic coordinator. So, you might say, if I communicate with him, this could be also seen as communication with the EDGaR Foundation. It’s a little bit fuzzy there.*

Q: How much is that contact with the EDGaR Direction?

A: *Only a few times per year. Maybe 4 times a year.*

Q: How do you think about the frequency of communication with the EDGaR Direction?

A: *I don’t miss anything. It’s okay. You got your own project, it’s defined. You go for the goals you have. Those meetings in Nunspeet for example that was very helpful. But that’s not particular communication with the Program Manager.*

Q: So, when you talk to JF Auger, it is more task-related, to solve problems.
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A: Yes, it’s reporting for the half-year progress report and about these kind of the research days a bit and that’s it.

Q: Do you feel proud to work for the biggest gas research project in Europe?
A: Yes, that’s what I said a little bit. I think, it makes a good impression if I tell that. So that is a way of showing that you are proud.

Q: Would you be more inclined to feel proud about the EDGaR program if the external communication/visibility of the EDGaR program was enhanced?
A: Yes, I think that would work that way.

Q: Would you assess the external communication efforts of the EDGaR program as sufficient?
A: Yes, well, I don’t hear really a lot about EDGaR I think in general, conferences and that sort of things. There is not a real EDGaR representative key note lecture or something. So, it feels a little bit like a bunch of projects on similar subjects. One is more technical than the other one. And each of those projects has managers and people working on it who feel that they have to tell something about it. But there is not an EDGaR person doing the EDGaR as a whole.

Q: What kind of information would be likely to help you feeling more connected to and involved in the EDGaR program?
A: I am not sure. In the end, myself and the [name of company erased for anonymity purposes] is very much technically oriented. So, asking for information that would help us to develop technologies or concepts or processes or that kind of things... The EDGaR Foundation... there are more partners within the EDGaR Foundation that might help us in that. But it’s not so much the EDGaR Foundation that makes it possible to contact those people. We already know these people from other projects, conferences or networks.

Let’s take an example – Power2Gas. I don’t think that was on the agenda as it is now when we started EDGaR. It grew very much and it would be one of the very interesting subjects to know. That helps to link all the projects and things together. And shale gas might do that as well. Because shale gas also influences our work and a lot of us somewhere have connections with shale gas and what happens around the world. That makes you feel as there is an opinion or a discussion that influences our work that probably makes us feel a program where all kind of things are linked together. That helps. Power2Gas is a good example that already happened, shale gas might be the next one.

Q: With which persons/departments within the EDGaR Foundation do you want to have (more) contact?
A: Not particularly I think. Of course if I have a questions, it’s more up to me to get in touch with a person. And if there is something important, [name erased for anonymity purposes] from the PSC will probably tell me.
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Q: What kind of communication channels would be likely to help you feeling more connected to and involved in the EDGaR program?
A: No, I cannot think of one. This social media, I follow the tweets of EDGaR... there are not very much feeds I think. It’s still more a news source for me.

Q: What about the LinkedIn group of EDGaR? Do you use that or do you like to use it?
A: No, I don’t really use that one. I know of the existence. But I am not active there. Maybe I have a strange idea, but when it’s about shale gas for example... Probably more people within EDGaR have questions about that. And I sort of ask myself: “Is there any way to ask the question and to mobilize the people within EDGaR to start a discussion or whatever move something?” At the moment, however, as soon as you sort of start the question you feel: “Well, it’s not part of any project within EDGaR so it doesn’t fit the system as it is now” And there are probably more of those questions. One of those questions I have for example is: “What is actually the major non-technical issue on green gas?” Probably that’s already part of one EDGaR project, but I don’t know the answer.

Q: So, you would preferably want to see LinkedIn as a kind of discussion board in order to generate ideas or insights into things that you don’t really know of...
A: Not sure, if LinkedIn is the way to go, but yes. There are probably more people than just me having simple questions. When you are sure that there are a lot of people within EDGaR who have at least part of the answers, “Where do I ask these questions actually? Yes, maybe I could use LinkedIn here!”

Q: Do you read the EDGaR newsletter?
A: To be honest, I don’t think I read it a lot.

Q: If yes, how much time do you spend reading it?
A: I don’t know. Not a lot, yes. It’s not more than scanning. Scanning is a good word.

Q: What do you like about the EDGaR newsletter?
A: To be honest, the newsletter is a little bit of a thing that tend to miss.

Q: So, you would say, you don’t need it...
A: Yes.

Q: Which information do you miss in the EDGaR newsletter?
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A: As you might expect I couldn’t think of one.

Q: You receive the EDGaR newsletter by E-mail. Can you imagine a better way to receive the newsletter itself or the information it contains?

A: Yes, the way it works I think is, the newsletter is one of the many E-mails I get every day. Meetings like the Research Day will cost you a lot more time of course than reading a newsletter of course, but in practice it works a lot better because I really go there and you have time the whole day to talk to all kinds of people that you meet. That’s actually the way, I also work in other programs.

Q: Would you rather be inclined to read things like news, if they were posted on the EDGaR website in regular time periods like every (two) weeks?

A: I don’t look at the website either. The thing is, that the projects which are subject-wise close to what I am doing, are actually all projects where [company name erased for anonymity purposes] is also a partner. So, there are people around in this building I work in, that I go to if I have any questions or when I want to talk to them. So I don’t feel a lot of reasons to look at the website because I don’t think that I miss a lot. Because there are a lot of subjects that doesn’t really relate to my projects. It’s nice to hear about that, but these meetings like in Nunspeet is perfectly fine for me.

Q: What about information about the EDGaR Foundation itself, so for example its future or the TKI. So, would you like to receive more information about the EDGaR Foundation itself in terms of the future and how it is embedded in the external environment?

A: That would be nice. To be honest, I don’t really know what happens when the EDGaR program stops in two years’ time. No, I know that there were all kind of discussions about EDGaR II, but at the same time I know that this Dutch TKI structures exist, also on gas and green gas is a big chunk in it (bio waste economy and green gas). I don’t really know what the relation will be between EDGaR and the TKI type of structures. Would be nice to know a little bit more about that, but at the same time I know that there is not a lot of information about that and that it’s still being developed I think.

At the same time, if I want to know more about that, there are a lot of my colleagues, I can ask. Because some are in the middle of TKI and some are in the middle of EDGaR, so there are ways for me to get this kind of information already.

The meetings like in Nunspeet that I found very interesting. Because then you are kind of forced to listen to a subject that wouldn’t be in the middle of your topic. It’s incredible, also the atmosphere. A part of that is also JF Auger. His acting, etc. makes this day a very good thing.
Interview #3

Q: Do you genuinely feel as an integrated part of the EDGaR program?
A: Well, to be honest, not really. Of course, you feel a bit, when you are at a congress or at a progress meeting. But, well, of course you know it is temporary. Primarily, I feel as an employee of [company name erased for anonymity purposes].

Q: Is it actually important for you to perceive yourself/to be perceived as a member of the EDGaR project?
A: No, not really.

Q: How much contact moments (correspondence) do you have per week with the EDGaR Direction or about issues that explicitly deal with the EDGaR Foundation itself?
A: Well, I think, once every two months.

Q: Is this communication mostly about issues – when something has to be solved – so, task-related?
A: I think, once every four months it is about contract issues or something like that.

Q: How do you think about the frequency of communication with the EDGaR Direction?
A: Well, I think it’s good, it’s efficient. When I relate it to other program, I think it’s quite efficient. So, to me it’s good.

Q: So, you don’t feel that you miss out some information and that you would like to have more contact?
A: No.

Q: Do you feel proud to work for the biggest gas research project in Europe?
A: ...

Q: Don’t you attach some degree of prestige or some pride to the membership of the EDGaR Foundation?
A: No, it doesn’t feel to me like that.

Q: So, you don’t perceive yourself as being a member of a “big thing”? Because the EDGaR Foundation is the biggest research consortium of that kind in Europe, as far as I am
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concerned. So maybe you feel like, “Okay, I am proud of it that I am part of this big project!” Doesn’t sound like that...

A: No.

Q: Would you be more inclined to feel proud about the EDGaR program if the external communication/visibility of the EDGaR program was enhanced?

A: I think, yes. But, I think of course it's good for the EDGaR Foundation to find a balance between the general interests and the own interests of course.

Q: Would you assess the external communication efforts of the EDGaR program as sufficient?

A: Huh, I can’t see really. Sorry. I don’t really know what they do. I know of course that they have communication with the DVWG, and they have communication with the European community. So, I think that this is very, very good also to prelaunch the EDGaR program after 2014. So, I think this is actually very good. Perhaps they can do more to the general public...

Q: So, normal people, that read the daily newspaper for example?

A: Yes. So for example kind of television programs, articles in newspapers...

Q: Do you think, also scientific journals?

A: I think, that would also be good. The best I think the EDGaR Foundation can do, is to influence the policy. But also the general public.

Q: So, the perception of gas and sustainability...

A: Yes.

Q: What kind of information would be likely to help you feeling more connected to and involved in the EDGaR program?

A: Well, I think the information that would be important concerning this topic, would be the connection to other organizations. For example, the cooperation with DVWG, the contacts with the European Union. Of course, there are more organizations on gas, like MakroGas and Gurk. So, let's say, connections and contacts with a lot of organizations that would be [useful and beneficial???] to me.

Because there are a lot of initiatives in Europe. A lot of organizations want the same. But it’s very hard to get those initiatives linked. Of course, everybody wants to be the father of success. Well, I think it’s very good what the EDGaR Foundation is now doing in getting more
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connected with the German initiatives and also being connected with the European Union. So, news on that is very valuable for me.

Q: Is there some other information you would like to receive?
A: Well, at least when the projects are ready, it would be good to be notified.

Q: Sorry, do you mean the progress reports?
A: I mean, final reports or final projects that would be beneficial... now they are announced in the newsletter. But I think it is the most important for me. So the final products and the end reports of the projects...

Q: So, of any other project you are not involved in?
A: Yes.

Q: And that you are notified, when this report is ready and available?
A: Yes.

Q: With which persons/departments within the EDGaR Foundation do you want to have (more) contact?
A: Well, in fact, I have no vision on this. Sometimes you meet people, for example at the last Research Day. For example, by occasion I notified that one of my tutors from the university... about 28 years ago I met him the last time... he is now professor at the [company name erased for anonymity purposes] and also involved in the EDGaR program. It is an accidental... you notify something it and then you have to contact. Okay, if I feel the need to get in contact with a person, I have the ability to get in touch with this person. It should not be facilitated by the EDGaR Foundation. If there is a good communication within the EDGaR Foundation, I think those contacts come.

Q: What about the departments of the EDGaR Foundation, for example the Direction or the PSC? Do you feel you should have more contact with them or that they should notify you more about things?
A: Well, I think there is a quite regular contact with them. Because we have the progress meetings, I think once a year, with the EDGaR Board. And they have been here two time because we held presentations of EDGaR for the [grid honors???] in Apeldoorn and there the EDGaR Board was also present. So, I think we have quite a good contact with them.

Q: So, you perceive that you have enough information and enough contacts of/with those key constituents of the EDGaR Foundation...
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A: Yes, I think so.

Q: You make a rather satisfied impression to me concerning the internal communication. Is that right?
A: Yes.

Q: What kind of communication channels would be likely to help you feeling more connected to and involved in the EDGaR program?
A: Regarding the identification and the connection, to me I think it would be good if EDGaR was mentioned in an outstanding newspaper on the scientific page, for example in the Volkskrant Wetenschap. So that would be a good achievement if there was an article on the EDGaR program in such a newspaper.

Q: That was a valuable answer. However, what I meant by the question was, which communication channels would you like to see to be used within the EDGaR Foundation?
A: I think, the best way would be personal meetings. Personal meetings with..., for example like the last meeting – the Research Day – that’s the best way. There has to be an occasion to meet and there has to be something to talk about.

Q: What about electronic means of communication. For example, in another interview I was told that the LinkedIn group is not really used. But would be maybe a good means of communication.
A: Yes, I am on LinkedIn and on Facebook also. I am more involved in other media. The problem is of course, that not all people are involved in social media. I think LinkedIn is the only one that is generally recognized. I think it is mostly used within EDGaR. It could be a possibility, but I don’t fell a big urgency for that.

Q: You said you are in favor of other communication means than social media? Which one would those be?
A: Well, I think, just the classical ones, like the telephone, E-mail or personal meetings.

Q: Do you read the EDGaR newsletter?
A: Yes, I do.

Q: If yes, how much time do you spend reading it?
A: I think, ten minutes perhaps...
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Q: What do you like about the EDGaR newsletter?
A: Well, what I am most curious is the future of EDGaR. All the efforts that have been done there and that.

Q: Which information do you miss in the EDGaR newsletter?
A: Nothing, actually.

Q: You receive the EDGaR newsletter by E-mail. Can you imagine a better way to receive the newsletter itself or the information it contains?
A: Well. For me it’s an efficient way. Because when you receive it by E-mail, it gets attention. If it would be on the website – of course it’s also I think on the EDGaR website – but it’s not my system to scan websites on a regular basis. The printed newsletter I think is a bit outdated. You should minimize that in the modern times. So, E-mail is good to me.

Q: I talked to a colleague of yours and he told me that he would like to have more news on the website – one or two news per week, instead of having just a bunch of news every four months in the newsletter. Would that be an interesting option for you as well?
A: It can be an option. It can be an option. But then, I would like to link it to an E-mail announcement, saying “We have a new item on our website. It is about this and this.” Combined by a hyperlink.

Q: How frequent do you visit the official EDGaR website http://www.edgar-program.com/?
A: No, not very much.
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Interview #4

Q: Do you genuinely feel as an integrated part of the EDGaR program?
A: Yes. I certainly feel myself as being a member of the EDGaR community. And therefore, if there is an EDGaR meeting I tend to show up. But of course the primary duty is teaching and some other things. So, when I have to give a course, I cannot go to an EDGaR meeting.

Q: Is it actually important for you to perceive yourself/to be perceived as a member of the EDGaR project?
A: Yes, it is important. If I perceive myself... I don’t know what that means. But I do perceive myself as part of the EDGaR community. I want to be perceived as a member of the EDGaR projects by the others. But EDGaR’s visibility outside the EDGaR community is not that large. But within EDGaR, I want to be known as a member of EDGaR. If it were a student association, in the Dutch language there is a word – obscuur – if you don’t show up in a student association, then you are a member that is not visible. I want to be acknowledged as one of the project leaders within EDGaR.

Q: How much contact moments (correspondence) do you have per week with the EDGaR Direction or about issues that explicitly deal with the EDGaR Foundation itself?
A: You can say, how much E-mails do I exchange with EDGaR over one year? Then I would say, so on significantly different topics, maybe 50 over a year, so once per week.
And then of course, you have some interactions about a certain project or they have a request for a convention or a day they organize and then you have a couple of mails about something. But I would say that on average, once per week would be a reasonable guess, maybe a bit less.
What we are often engaged in, are discussions on how to leverage EDGaR, how to continue with projects that we have. So, EDGaR is definitely more mentioned than just my communication with the management. I would say at least once per week. We also mention it in other connections. And usually, because EDGaR is a program, not only a bunch of projects, we increasingly look also at other projects. To figure out what is going on there and how we could use their results.

Q: It seems to be mostly about task-related things, so functional...
A: Yes.

Q: How do you think about the frequency of communication with the EDGaR Direction?
A: There are a few perspectives that I can choose. I can choose my own perspective, but I can also choose the perspective of EDGaR as a program. For my own perspective as a project...
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manager, it is enough, I can manage my projects in this way. So there is no reason for me immediately to ask anything else.

However, from EDGaR as a program, they have to show their mid-term results and also go out and present to the outside world what EDGaR is doing. From that respect, I see a bit more pressure now from EDGaR that is coming, but it is still relatively weak. So, EDGaR is not yet forcing projects, like my project, in a certain direction. So, from my perspective as a project manager I am fine. But I think, if I was at the position of the EDGaR leadership, I would try to get a bit more join the results of those various EDGaR projects.

Q: You just said, that you don’t see that the EDGaR management is putting your example for example in the right direction…

A: That’s not what I said. I said, they don’t put any pressure on me. Because I am fine. From my perspective I am in the right direction. But I can imagine, that from their perspective, I might do things a bit differently. Actually, I am a bit hesitating to say that they might exercise more pressure, because it is increasing my trouble. So what should I do?

Q: But that indicates, that you don’t know what the EDGaR management expects from you…

A: To some extent, well of course, in a formal sense I have deliverables in the project. That’s expected from me. But in the informal sense, there are certain things which are in addition to these formal things, but I can imagine that from the EDGaR Foundation a bit more guidance pressure is requested.

Q: But would you also react on that pressure? Because the Program Manager said that he has no (sanctioning) means whatsoever…

A: That is true. A couple of remarks: First of all, why are people not very responsive? Because everybody is very busy. So it’s not a matter of not willing to, but always thinking “Oh, I have to choose between seven things, that have to be done and I can only do five. So, two I will do tomorrow” And then it’s true that there are no sanctions. But on the other hand, for me, if I am not responding to these kind of requests, I perceive it as a personal failure. So, there is in my mind or emotions “Do I have to be responsive?” And in that sense, it’s not simply ignored or so. And I think, the Program Manager is very polite, is a very nice person.

But I agree, that there is no pressure. However, you can exercise pressure with a carrot or a stick when you want to have rabbit. And he says, he doesn’t have a stick. But he does have carrots. Because for everybody it is very important that EDGaR is a success and that it proceeds. And also the EDGaR results lead to new efforts, etc. And therefore, if he wants people to be responsive and if he wants people not only the reports, but also to show up at meetings, etc… the more EDGaR shows that they pave the way towards the future continuation and that people who do not participate have a problem in the future, then he can motivate by the carrot and not so much by the stick

Q: Do you feel proud to work for the biggest gas research project in Europe?
A: Yes. Therefore, it is also important to me that EDGaR is going to be a success.

Q: Would you be more inclined to feel proud about the EDGaR program if the external communication/visibility of the EDGaR program was enhanced?

A: Yes, absolutely. EDGaR suffers a bit from its narrow focus on the content matter. So, each of the projects is running, that’s it. But EDGaR has not been very active in boosting itself. There has been the Energy Convention in Groningen the last years, every last week of November. And it was organized by the EDGaR people more or less, but it did not boost EDGaR that much. Maybe it’s a bit Dutch not to shout too loud that you are here, how important and good you are, etc. But that might have done a bit more. Still, within the cultural acceptance rate in Holland. This year it will be in the last week of November in Brussels and still organized by EDGaR in cooperation with the DVWG.

Q: Would you assess the external communication efforts of the EDGaR program as sufficient?

A: I could imagine that... EDGaR is typically an interdisciplinary field, so they work between disciplines, where it is something difficult to get publications in. And I get relatively little input, but I also provide little input, on things like special issues in journals or call for conferences or something like that in the academic field. So, I could imagine that EDGaR takes more initiatives or sends, distributes the information, which journals are looking for specifically this type of academic results. Or even, which special issues are there? Or even take an initiative in such a special issue with follow EDGaR people, etc. So, the academic community in EDGaR could as a community be perhaps more effective.

Q: What kind of information would be likely to help you feeling more connected to and involved in the EDGaR program?

A: I was very pleased by the statements made at the last Research Day. And I had a kind of feeling: “Oops, it would have been much a pity if I would have missed this” And therefore, and of course there can be a good reason to miss it, because you have a bunch of obligations, etc. So, maybe for those people who missed an event, a video or at least the slides presented could be put on the website. For example, one of the members of my project team in one of the project team was not present there. And I wrote her a message saying: “Hey, you should have been present at this meeting because it was important for you! Why weren’t you there?” But then, I would have like to have said: “Have a look at the videos at the website” And here, they have even the technology to link the video to the slides. The university has this technology because, since I am a lecturer I am being recorded now and then, so I know. You can see the video and jump simultaneously from slide to slide. You not only see the lecturer, but also the slide.

Q: With which persons/departments within the EDGaR Foundation do you want to have (more) contact?

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A:  *I don’t think that this is a problem. If I identify a unit or person that I can approach, then I can do so. That’s not a problem.*

Q:  What is with the PSC? Do you get enough information from them?
A:  *No. It’s not so clear to me what they are doing. They could communicate better what they want and what they do.*

Q:  Somebody said that the BoG should at least once communicate what they think about EDGaR…
A:  *Indirectly, that was done by the guy from Gasunie. He hold a key note speech representing that group.*

Q:  What kind of communication channels would be likely to help you feeling more connected to and involved in the EDGaR program?
A:  *Well, I am completely satisfied with this I think…*

Q:  Do you read the EDGaR newsletter?
A:  *Yes.*

Q:  If yes, how much time do you spend reading it?
A:  *I browse through if there is news for me. And some things I know already and then I read quickly. Some things are too far away from my field. And sometimes I would say: “Hey, that’s interesting” How much time would I spend on that? 10 minutes.*

Q:  What do you like about the EDGaR newsletter?
A:  *Well, in general it is a good means to get a sense of what happens in EDGaR.*

Q:  This is important for you, that you know what’s going on in EDGaR…
A:  *Yes.*

Q:  Which information do you miss in the EDGaR newsletter?
A:  *It is rather factual. So, it lists facts. Maybe there would be space for either opinions, but also for the type of information that we get at the Research Day, about where the EDGaR management is heading and what they have in mind.*
Also, I can imagine, that they provide more information on what is going on in Europe – the European context. Currently, it is indeed the news of EDGaR for the EDGaR community. But I think, it could also be to inform the EDGaR community to what is going on the European level. Yes, I would be interested there.

Q: You receive the EDGaR newsletter by E-mail. Can you imagine a better way to receive the newsletter itself or the information it contains?

A: No, I think E-mail is perfect. Maybe the communication in terms of what is on the EDGaR website and the newsletter is for me not immediately clear. I cannot spell out now – I realize now – I don’t know what is in the newsletter and what is in the website. If it were a bit integrated, like you find all the newsletters on the website, but that you also find in the newsletter…. That might be a suggestion for enhancement.

Q: If I can give you an inspiration. Some people suggested that it would be better to receive weekly or monthly news on the website, etc. Because the newsletter is only published every 4 months and hence the news are always some kind of obsolete.

A: That’s true. That’s why I said, that I know certain things already by other means. Then you could have a more frequent newsletter, or a newsletter that has the nature of an update.

Q: Maybe not like a newsletter, but rather a news feed, a small text with a hyperlink...

A: On the other hand, if you get those messages, archiving becomes a problem for yourself. But if you can be sure that it’s archived in the website, you can re-find it yourself...

Q: How frequent do you visit the official EDGaR website http://www.edgar-program.com/?

A: Not often. Accidentally. It’s more like, if you want to find a name of a project, a guy, or the progress about one project. Then you go to the website and search for these information.
Q: Do you genuinely feel as an integrated part of the EDGaR program?
A: It is not a matter of interest. It is only a matter of, let’s say, permanence kind of thing. [Company name erased for anonymity purposes] will be my working area for my career and not the EDGaR Foundation. I don’t hope that the EDGaR Foundation will disappear soon, but that it can be finished by the end of 2014.

Q: Is it actually important for you to perceive yourself/to be perceived as a member of the EDGaR project?
A: ...

Q: So, do you think it is good for your credibility to be regarded as a member of the EDGaR Foundation?
A: Yes, I think that – not only personally - but I think it is a very good thing that [company name erased for anonymity purposes] is involved in the EDGaR project. And of course that’s also nice for me personally.

Q: How much contact moments (correspondence) do you have per week with the EDGaR Direction or about issues that explicitly deal with the EDGaR Foundation itself?
A: I think, once or twice a year, there is a more formal occasion to communicate with the EDGaR Direction.

Q: Can you just say an approximate number per month?
A: Say, twice or three times a year.

Q: Per year?
A: Yes.

Q: Does not sound that much...
A: Yes.

Q: How do you think about the frequency of communication with the EDGaR Direction?
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A:  *I am happy with the frequency and I am also with the content of what is communicated. So, I have no problems with it.*

Q:  So, is the communication mostly about issues that arise and they have to be solved? So, is the communication of a functional nature?
A:  Yes.

Q:  Do you feel proud to work for the biggest gas research project in Europe?
A:  *Proud, that’s perhaps a too strong word. But useful.*

Q:  Would you be more inclined to feel proud about the EDGaR program if the external communication/visibility of the EDGaR program was enhanced?
A:  Well, personally I am not worried about that. But I think it would be a good thing for the EDGaR Foundation itself to make itself more publicly known. Because I think the EDGaR Foundation is now mainly known by the sponsors of the foundation.

I mainly think that the general public is not yet aware of EDGaR. And it could help to convince those potential sponsors to give more finding if there is some external public audience which is also aware of what is going on now.

Q:  Would you assess the external communication efforts of the EDGaR program as sufficient?
A:  *I have no good idea about this. Of course, you have different external audiences. We mainly work for the distribution companies. And in certain parts of the distribution companies EDGaR is well known, but in other parts I think it is nearly invisible. That hat could perhaps be improved. And besides our clients, the distribution companies, you also have of course a lot of other external stakeholders. And I am not involved enough in the whole process to see whether they are informed enough. The only thing I see is that in newspapers I don’t see that EDGaR is mentioned that much. In normal newspapers I never encountered EDGaR.*

Q:  What kind of information would be likely to help you feeling more connected to and involved in the EDGaR program?
A:  *That’s always hard to tell, if you miss something. I think, I don’t really miss something. The only main issue I think, EDGaR is very diverse and it is something hard to understand what the other people are doing exactly and why they are doing things. Sometimes, I also have the feeling that some things are done twice in different variants. I think, that is something that could be improved. At least by some additional communication perhaps you can remove the feeling about it.*

Q:  You just said, that it is sometimes not clear, which person does what?
A: Yes, we have those more technical projects and we have the projects of development and theoretical aspects. And especially for the theoretical aspects – I don’t know too much about it. Sometimes I wonder, whether they are well connected with the technical aspects that we are looking after.

Q: Does this lack of understanding also relate to single persons? For instance, do you know what the Project Manager does or what he is responsible for?

A: It is difficult to say, whether it necessary that everyone knows everything about what other people are doing. But there is certainly a gap between the technical projects and the more economic theoretical projects. And I think the identification of EDGaR was used to combine these things. But on my level, I don’t see a combination so much.

Q: With which persons/departments within the EDGaR Foundation do you want to have (more) contact?

A: I am not sure about “more”. I think, the contacts, the level and the frequency... I don’t know desires in that point. I do at least have the feeling that if I need someone from the EDGaR Foundation that I just can take the phone and call him. At least, the important thing is that I have that they are accessible. So, that’s enough for me.

Q: Are you a member of the PSC?

A: No.

Q: Do you have contact with them? If there are things being discussed, do you feel well informed about that?

A: I know their existence and sometimes I talk to these guys, but I am not that well informed about their discussions. Only when it is about the projects in which I am involved.

Q: So, you don’t have a need for more information from the PSC...

A: No, I don’t think so. Of course, I think the general need is to know what their future intentions are. I think, [name erased for anonymity purposes] communicated that already. It would be good to have more detailed information sometimes - some statements by them. An even better idea were, what they are thinking of?

Q: Of the projects?

A: Yes, of EDGaR and the projects in general.

Q: What kind of communication channels would be likely to help you feeling more connected to and involved in the EDGaR program?
A: No, I think that the people I need from EDGaR, I just can phone them or mail them. For me, that’s enough.

Q: Have you ever used the LinkedIn profile of the EDGaR Foundation?
A: Actually, no.

Q: But you know, that there is a LinkedIn profile...
A: I think, I once uploaded some information and a photo.

Q: Do you actually use social media in your spare time?
A: No, not too much. But I have a lot of colleagues working with LinkedIn. But I want personal E-mail – I am a little bit old-fashioned in that aspect.

I have to prioritize what I am doing, so I choose not to get involved too much with that.

Q: Do you read the EDGaR newsletter?
A: Yes, I read it, or at least I read through it.

Q: If yes, how much time do you spend reading it?
A: Yes, I pick some items. I see it passing by and read it a little bit.

Q: Okay, so you definitely receive it per E-mail and you spend some time reading it...
A: Yes.

Q: What do you like about the EDGaR newsletter?
A: Well, of course, what I like about it is that it exists. It is good to see some information about the current state of affairs.

Q: Which information do you miss in the EDGaR newsletter?
A: This is difficult to say. I think, the newsletter itself is not that important. Because, what I need for the work, is to see what other people are giving and EDGaR also organizes also workshops and symposiums. So, we see people during the work on the projects. So, the newsletter is one of the ways of getting the information, but it is not the main part for me.

Q: So, can I say that “If the newsletter wasn’t there you would not really miss it”?
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A: Yes, let’s say, if I look at the website I expect to at least find the same information as in the newsletter. So, if I have to choose between the newsletter and the website – please keep the website!

Q: You receive the EDGaR newsletter by E-mail. Can you imagine a better way to receive the newsletter itself or the information it contains?
A: No, E-mail is good enough.

Q: Okay, so you don’t regard it as spam, etc.?
A: No, no.

Q: How frequent do you visit the official EDGaR website http://www.edgar-program.com/?
A: Yes, I think, the website could be improved. But that is not only an issue for the coordination itself, but also for the people who are doing the projects – who not keep it up to date and send more information on it. So, here I have to look at myself for that!
Interview #6

Q: Do you genuinely feel as an integrated part of the EDGaR program?

A: I feel more EDGaR than [company name erased for anonymity purposes]. Because we know, it is public funding, it’s looking straight ahead to make sure that natural gas in the future has a good position in the Netherlands. So, I see it like “What is the best for the (B.V.) Netherlands as a whole, while my project coach at [company name erased for anonymity purposes] sees it like “What is the best for [company name erased for anonymity purposes]?”

I do not feel as a part of the EDGaR community at all. We have of course projects with partners. We have several other EDGaR projects in terms of actual type of work looking into “How can materials degrade when transporting different gases?” We cooperate with them, but I don’t feel part of the EDGaR community at all.

Q: And is that a problem for you?

A: No, it’s not a problem for me. For me it’s not a problem. What I think, we should do is to complete all interrelated (interdisciplinary) projects and conclude with a final recommendation (looking at several topics). Harmonize the different boundaries and results and make one final recommendations. That is what I feel responsible for to do.

Q: Are you referring to the interdisciplinary aspect of the EDGaR program?

A: Indeed it is interdisciplinary and I do not know whether it is covered enough. But with other colleagues here and from [company name erased for anonymity purposes] we feel, since we are investigating on different topics, that we should make it an interdisciplinary conclusion. And I am not aware that something has been communicated or arranged from the EDGaR board, that it should be done or that we have to do it ourselves. Therefore we say, we should combine our results and look on each topic, on each component, “What are the limitations?” That’s an interdisciplinary approach.

Q: Is it actually important for you to perceive yourself/to be perceived as a member of the EDGaR project?

A: No. I feel part of the community here, the [company name erased for anonymity purposes], and specifically the team we are in. And sometimes we have to give presentations or meet with customers and then you are representing somebody. Unfortunately, the paper which I wrote earlier this year didn’t make it for the conference. At that time I would have considered myself as a member of the EDGaR community. But only because it is EDGaR related. So, it really depends on the occasion.

Q: How much contact moments (correspondence) do you have per week with the EDGaR Direction or about issues that explicitly deal with the EDGaR Foundation itself?
A: So, I am now a project leader for roughly three years. As a rough estimate once every three months I think. I also include there the discussions related to the half year reports. Maybe, twice a year I got some questions, for instance with regard to the guidelines on acknowledgements for papers. So, once or twice a year for specific topics, including the two half year reports. So in average 4 times a year.

Q: And this communication is mostly directed at solving issues – so task-related...
A: Yes.

Q: How do you think about the frequency of communication with the EDGaR Direction?
A: For me it’s enough. I realize to be a part of a research project funded by the Dutch government. And of course you need to be present for progress meetings and you make these half year reports. For me that’s a necessary evil, but I think everybody who likes to deal with the content considers this to be the necessary evil. So, I find it okay. And sometimes, when you have a hard time and you HAVE to do it, it is maybe a bit discomforting. I consider it as okay and the amount of contact for me is sufficient. At least, when I have a question, I know who to contact and I know that it will be solved.

Q: Do you feel proud to work for the biggest gas research project in Europe?
A: It really depends. Maybe in the future I can lay back. I think it really depends on the outcome and what the results will be. I am proud of the work I am doing and I hope that we will achieve the goals that we have thought out roughly one and a half years ago. I am proud of that. It all depends on whether or not it will be implemented and to what extent.

Q: Do you think you are on a good way?
A: In my project – yes. And of course, when you do a research project for the span of 5 years, of course the execution will be different than we have planned. I think we do a good job. But when looking to the different topics that I have investigated - especially theme 1 where we were in - I am not sure to what extent everybody will be seeing different... So, in the end, nothing can change [the impact of the results, the research] I am really curious on that and I hope that there will be some... because I feel that we should... I am very envious on Germany and how they are doing on especially solar energy. I find it a pity that we do not do it in the Netherlands more. And I hope that EDGaR will contribute to it. And in the end, when it has given its impact, then I can be proud of it. Now I am not proud just because I am a member of EDGaR.

Q: Would you be more inclined to feel proud about the EDGaR program if the external communication/visibility of the EDGaR program was enhanced?
A: Maybe. Likely. Because if you see in the local newspaper and maybe sometimes on TV about what we are doing now and in “De wereld draait door” (one of the biggest TV shows in the Netherlands between 20:30 and 21:30), then you can say: “I am working there” So, yes, it’s likely.
Q: Would you assess the external communication efforts of the EDGaR program as sufficient?
A: Maybe, if I say, that I don’t know how it really is just to give you some kind of answer. I am also not interested in for me pretty abstract topics. But I don’t really know. Once in a while you see papers or articles somewhere and I know that there is some kind of either Twitter or Facebook messages.

Q: Have you ever seen EDGaR in a journal or newspaper article?
A: We have a membership for the local newspapers of the two Dutch Northern provinces. At least once or twice I think there has been a news article in the last two or three years. There was a kind of publication somewhere of Catrinus Jepma.

Q: What kind of information would be likely to help you feeling more connected to and involved in the EDGaR program?
A: I assume that all the reports of the other projects are all on the website? I am not really sure, but that is something that should be done. I am not sure.

Q: Maybe one hint. I have heard it quite often that it is often desired that information should be sent to the people about the direction EDGaR is going to take in the future. So, what is planned for the future, EDGaR II for example, and others also said it would be quite interesting to know, what is happening around EDGaR within the external environment and how does it impact the research and the EDGaR program itself.
A: Okay, yes, that’s a good tip because indeed I am interested in what will happen to EDGaR II and whether there will be a kind of bigger group of research on a European level. Because, it is fine that we as the Netherlands have a very nice research project. But if you want to implement it, likely you need to do it on a much broader scale. So, therefore I am really interested in what will happen with EDGaR II and to what extent it will be international. In this information I would be really interested in.
And other information for me, yes, is task-related. So, who should I contact for this or that? How do I make the acknowledgements in a paper, in a presentation?

Q: You mean like a central point where you can ask such questions?
A: Yes, but that’s what I normally do with the Program Manager. I have a question and he replies – gives me an answer or redirects me to the person that can give me the answer.

Q: With which persons/departments within the EDGaR Foundation do you want to have (more) contact?
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A: I think, maybe the PSC would be the group to talk to about the interdisciplinary results. So that would be one. From an EDGaR point of view, for risk minimization and optimization of results, I at least would focus on getting these interdisciplinary results together. And maybe the PSC would be the right instrument for that.

Q: All in all, would you say that the EDGaR internal communication is satisfactory?
A: Satisfactory, indeed. The newsletter are not interesting for me. When I need information, I know at least with a maximum of one intermediate, who to contact. If the Program Manager doesn’t know, he knows who to contact. If I need information, I know where to get it. There is of course other stuff where I have little focus on. For instance, monthly updates or half-year updates that is something I am reminded by the Program Manager or his secretary.

Q: What kind of communication channels would be likely to help you feeling more connected to and involved in the EDGaR program?
A: For me, it would definitely be F-2-F. I think, the Research Day is a good format. Maybe within a particular theme or sub-theme, research leaders should be put together. That’s my way of communication. And once you know people, it’s easier to contact them. “Hey, you know, I have this in mind and I know from talking to that person that he may have some information or knowledge on that topic. I’ll contact him via mail, telephone, LinkedIn, whatever” I need to know people, I need to have met them earlier.

And maybe a suggestion would be, again for the interdisciplinary results, that project leaders... well, I think at least EDGaR should make sure that the interdisciplinary results should be made. And if that can be achieved for example by getting a few project leaders together so that they can present something on it.... That may be a possibility to improve communication. That at least works for me!

Q: Do you read the EDGaR newsletter?
A: No. But I don’t read any newsletter. It’s not because it’s the EDGaR newsletter. Maybe, I scroll through it and perhaps find something

Q: If yes, how much time do you spend reading it?
A: Nothing.

Q: What do you like about the EDGaR newsletter?
A: Not on the newsletter. Because for me, just reading is not ... Giving people by putting a message on a website, in an E-mail or a newsletter is not a way for communication. Last year, I was at the Research Day, this year I couldn’t make it, and then I found it very interesting to hear all the people talking either on a global level on EDGaR board or research topics. That, for me, is my preference for communication. In terms of newsletter and websites and Twitter...
Q: Which information do you miss in the EDGaR newsletter?
A: I can’t tell really...

Q: You receive the EDGaR newsletter by E-mail. Can you imagine a better way to receive the newsletter itself or the information it contains?
A: The website of EDGaR - that I visit at least once every month, I think, maybe to look up things like “Who is this and that?” You know, with an e-mail – you get it the moment you don’t expect it or you don’t actually want it. You are a victim of your mailbox. Then you have two choices: You do it in that moment or in the near future – the latter being rather unlikely. Whereas on the website... “Okay, maybe I have some time now, I just have a meeting in five minutes, I cannot do anything else, I just have to look up the project leader of this and that project” If it was on the website I would tend to read it more often.

Q: The newsletter is published every four months. So, some of the news in this newsletter are very likely to be obsolete. One of the other interviewees said, it would be better to get the news on a weekly or the two-weekly basis via the website or a news feed, so that it is more spread over the time. But with the newsletter you get so much information at a time and they tend to be obsolete. Do you think, you would be likely to consume more news via the website then?
A: That’s a good question because the current strategy would be then every 4 months one newsletter – pretty extensive. Instead of that you could do it more often either via e-mail or via the website. Would I tend to read more of it? Likely, if it would be via e-mail, I would delete them anyway because I would receive more e-mails instead of before. Whereas it was on the website and you get a kind of news feed... I guess, most of the website has some kind of highlights which is very daily or whatever. Well, then again, when I found the time at that moment I would tend to read it more often.

Q: How frequent do you visit the official EDGaR website http://www.edgar-program.com/?
A: That I visit at least once every month, I think, maybe to look up things like “Who is this and that?”
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Interview #7

Q: Do you genuinely feel as an integrated part of the EDGaR program?

A: No, I don’t feel as a part of the EDGaR Foundation. For your information, I have been working here for [erased for anonymity purposes] now, so I came to the [company name erased for anonymity purposes] after the EDGaR Foundation has started. So, I kind of inherited the project that I am working on, which hadn’t really started yet by then. So, the last EDGaR Research Day was the first EDGaR event I ever went to. So that might also be factor that I am not really feeling part of the research community. Because that was the first time that I was really exposed to the community. I mean, I know a lot of people from a lot of research projects. But that is, because a lot of people at [company name erased for anonymity purposes] are involved in a lot of EDGaR projects one way or another. So, that is my primary channel into EDGaR. And then, there are two EDGaR projects that I am a part of myself – in one I am the research leader. So, through those projects I also meet with people from other companies who participate in those projects. Those are mainly [company names erased for anonymity purposes].

Q: Is it actually important for you to perceive yourself/to be perceived as a member of the EDGaR project?

A: Well, that only would mean something to me, if EDGaR had established itself. Because then it means something for me and it is important to me and I say: “Hey! I am a part of that”.

Q: So, you would like to see this?

A: I would like to see that, yes, because I think, EDGaR is a fairly unique program. But the “big thing” is not really being established. Which means, when I work for the local university, and I go to a conference, I am primarily the guy from the University of Groningen. And when I go somewhere else, I am primarily the guy from [company name erased for anonymity purposes]. And I am not the guy from the EDGaR program who is going to tell you what excellent things have been achieved in EDGaR. No, I am there as the [company name erased for anonymity purposes] guy, telling you what [company name erased for anonymity purposes] did for our customer [company name erased for anonymity purposes].

Q: So, you are not mentioning the EDGaR Foundation there then because it does not have that much of an impact?

A: I definitely will mention it, if only for the fact they have paid for it. I mean, that’s only fair if somebody makes funding available that you should get the credit for that. But, to be honest, that is also the only thing I can give them credit for at the moment. Because, if you talk about guidance on where the program should go – safeguarding the coherence between the different research topics. Maybe it is happening, I don’t know. I am not seeing it. So, in that sense, I don’t feel that as a researcher I am being heard by the PSC. I have my proposal and
actually I am having a lot of freedom – which is good. But it would also be good – at a higher level – the EDGaR program as such would be more firmly established and we would know as researchers how we contribute to a bigger cause/course.

Q: How much contact moments (correspondence) do you have per week with the EDGaR Direction or about issues that explicitly deal with the EDGaR Foundation itself?
A: Per month you ask?

Q: Per week.
A: Per week it would definitely be zero.

Q: Zero? Okay, then try it per month!
A: Per month, it depends. It depends on what is going on. In the projects we had some issues about the direction the project was supposed to take in year two. So, when issues like that happen, there is frequent communication between the Program Manager and the Business Director and myself - everything is going smoothly. Then, sometimes – nothing for months. So it is hard to say. I would say on average once or twice a month maybe. But to be honest, it is so infrequent, I would have to go through my E-mails in order to count the mails. So, it is a gut feeling.

Q: Do they contact you when something is not right? I assume, it is mainly about task issues, how things are going on and the process?
A: The two major things I communicate with them about is, the project plan for the second year project and the other thing was the podcast that the Program Manager has been preparing for the Gasboard Game. So, who initiates the contact kind of depends on the topic I would say that is about 50:50.

Q: How do you think about the frequency of communication with the EDGaR Direction?
A: For me the important thing is that they are available and can help me with whatever issues I have and respond quickly whenever I need them. For me that is more important than having a frequent contact.

Q: Is it like that? Do you feel like you can get help?
A: Yes. The Program Manager always responds quickly and to the point most of the time. I feel that I have a good communication line manager with the Program Manager. With the Program Steering Committee (PSC) not so much. And that would be okay, if information from the PSC would find its way to me through the Program Manager. That’s not always the case. I mean, there were lots of discussions within the PSC about my project and I was never informed about it. I knew, there were discussions going on and I offered many times to meet
with them, to explain the issues, our point of view. And I was never taken up on that invitation. Nor did I hear anything about what the discussions in the PSC were about. There is definitely some disappointment there. I mean, I would expect that if the PSC takes itself seriously, they would make sure that their views are known to the people it concerns and also that they take the opportunity to discuss with the research leaders – especially when he offers to do so.

Q: Do you think, every one of the research leaders should be in the PSC? Or do you think that it is okay to only have a few – I don’t know how much of them are in there – in the PSC? Or do you think, you should be a part of the PSC, as well as all research leaders?
A: No.

Q: But you think, that the communication should be better?
A: Yes, I should have more visibility in what is discussed in the PSC. I don’t have any visibility into this at all. At a general level and also when it specifically concerns my project.

Q: Do you feel that you are not taken seriously?
A: Well, for me the effect is, that I get the impression that the PSC does not care too much. Which in turn makes me not care so much about what the PSC thinks.

Q: Do you feel proud to work for the biggest gas research project in Europe?
A: Now, I am mainly feeling proud about, what we as a research team achieved and it would be nice to feel proud about what we received as part of the EDGaR program.

Q: Would you be more inclined to feel proud about the EDGaR program if the external communication/visibility of the EDGaR program was enhanced?
A: Well, that only would mean something to me, if EDGaR had established itself. Because then it means something for me and it is important to me and I say: “Hey! I am a part of that!”

Q: Would you assess the external communication efforts of the EDGaR program as sufficient?
A: I think, EDGaR is a nice idea. I would like it to see more a better established brand, if you like, but I am not feeling it yet. When in the Dutch industry, nobody knows what EDGaR is, then forget about taking it to the European level.

Q: What do you mean by “established brand”?
A: You know, that EDGaR actually means something. Also, when we talk about external communication – there are A LOT of people that I meet through my job - working in the energy sector, dealing with gas – who have never heard about EDGaR. Which I think is really strange for a 40+ million research program.
Q: I think, EDGaR is actually the biggest research program of its kind in Europe.
A: Probably. Yes.

Q: What kind of information would be likely to help you feeling more connected to and involved in the EDGaR program?
A: That is mainly more information from the PSC and, to a lesser extent, from the executive board. I need to have a better feeling of:

- Where the overall program is heading?
- Why it is heading there?
- How all the different research projects connect up to achieve that vision?
- What is the EDGaR organization doing to facilitate for me to feel a part of EDGaR? Instead of EDGaR being just the money stream.

So, I would love to get that feeling of “Yes, together we are working on something. This is why we are going in that direction! This is why the PSC has an issue with my proposal!” And I am not seeing that.

I mean, the PSC makes certain decisions, so does the executive board. Those decisions impact on my research one way or another, I think. But I don’t know because I don’t know what those decisions are and I don’t know why they are taken. That is one big black hole for me.

Q: Are there any other information you would like to receive? It doesn’t matter if they could help you to connect more with the EDGaR Foundation or not. Just in general...
A: Well, it would be nice if we were able to claim our success more and also share that with other researchers.

Q: Within EDGaR or with outside researchers?
A: Well, share it within EDGaR with the success outside of the EDGaR program.

Q: So, you would like to share your results firstly within EDGaR...
A: If somebody presents a paper at a conference that was really well received, that was part of the EDGaR program – make it known to the entire EDGaR community. Claim your success and show that you are part of something that actually matters!

Q: With which persons/departments within the EDGaR Foundation do you want to have (more) contact?
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Q: You already mentioned that you want to have more contact with or more communication from the PSC and the executive board, right?
A: Yes.

Q: What kind of communication channels would be likely to help you feeling more connected to and involved in the EDGaR program?
A: Channels are not leading for me there, I think. But a higher frequency of information in smaller bits. So, more a stream than lumps here and there.

Q: So, in smaller pieces, but more frequent...
A: Yes. You could do it via the newsletter, but I would probably still not read it... A LinkedIn group, an RSS feed. Something that I can subscribe to. That helps me stay connected to EDGaR and does not require me to invest a lot of time at any particular moment. Because a newsletter – if am not going to read it now, it is going to be way down under a pile of E-mails two days from now. As when I would get a small post in a LinkedIn group in the morning that says: “So and so has published an article there” or “The PSC has decided so and so” or an article of a conference or whatever, okay. I know that it takes me maybe 10-15 seconds and EDGaR is in my mind again...

Q: Do you use a RSS reader?
A: Yes.

Q: Do you think, it would be good to share your results in the form of small blogs, etc. with the other research leaders, so that everyone really is on the same page about what is going on within the EDGaR Foundation? That maybe every research leader writes a small blog entry monthly...
A: Yes, I am not sure if a blog entry would be a good thing. But a better more structured sharing of results would help. Because, specifically for the project that I am working on, we plan to incorporate results from many other research projects, which I would expect to be available on the EDGaR website. It is not, or it is not there where I expected it. So, one more central repository of everything that has achieved so far – that is easily accessible and easy to navigate – that would help.

Q: Do you read the EDGaR newsletter?
A: No. It is just one of the many, many, many newsletter types of e-mails you get on a daily basis. So, it takes a very low priority.
Q: You rather read the [company names erased for anonymity purposes] newsletters?
A: No. In general, I don’t read newsletters. It is just normal spam in my e-mail inbox?

Q: If yes, how much time do you spend reading it?
A: Can’t say.

Q: What do you like about the EDGaR newsletter?
A: I have no idea.

Q: Which information do you miss in the EDGaR newsletter?
A: There is one thing I want to say with respect to the EDGaR newsletter. A couple of times I was surprised about some EDGaR event taking place that I hadn’t heard about. And then the answer was: “Yes, I was in the newsletter three months ago” So, there is an assumption within the EDGaR program that people actually read newsletters. I am not sure what your research will show, but looking at myself and my colleagues, that might not be a well assumption.

Q: How would you like to receive this kind of information then? Instead of via the newsletter?
A: For me, to respond to anything over E-mail, it has to be personally directed at me. So, anything that goes out to groups, looks like newsletters – usually is not relevant. There are just too much E-mails. If somebody wants me to make an appearance somewhere, approaches me directly. Either via E-mail or by phone or whatever. But don’t do it in the mass-mailing!

Q: You receive the EDGaR newsletter by E-mail. Can you imagine a better way to receive the newsletter itself or the information it contains?
A: Yes. There is something, I talked to Jean-Francois Auger about in the past. We have this LinkedIn group which is not used at all. And I would like to rather see a news feed there and not an entire newsletter once every so many months. But that whenever there is something to report, post it there! Well, the thing is, if you have an EDGaR group on LinkedIn, etc. and you are not using it – that’s really bad I think. If you are not using it, you’ll kill it. Because you set certain expectations by creating it and if you then don’t meet those expectations you are setting yourself up for disappointment. You make it a valuable channel by putting in relevant information. And I think, many people – and especially if you look at sites like LinkedIn – I would be surprised if not 90+ percent of the people in EDGaR are a member of LinkedIn. I mean, I would never use something like Facebook for …
Q: Ah! You wouldn’t?
A: No.

Q: Because LinkedIn is more professional…
A: Yes.

Q: And of course, you make connections with people outside EDGaR within LinkedIn…
A: Yes, exactly. Which also helps to establish the EDGaR brand. Because, if I post something in the EDGaR group, everybody connected to me sees: “Marcel has posted this and this in the EDGaR group” Interesting!

Q: So, there is currently nothing going on in the EDGaR group on LinkedIn?
A: I used it once, when I was looking for participants in the serious game that we created. And I got one or two very valuable responses. So, it does work, if you use it. But you need to spend time just to put in meaningful content in there and kind of creating some activity in the group, for the group to really establish itself.

Q: How frequent do you visit the official EDGaR website http://www.edgar-program.com/?
A: Well, frequently yes. I would say once every two months maybe. But the main reason I go there is because I need to download documents. So, I don’t go there to check out if there is any news. I mean, I checked it out now, because there is a new website – Jean-Francois Auger told me. And the podcast is going to be on there, which I am a part of so of course I have a high interest in that.

Q: But you don’t use it for news gathering? Because I think, it is not really often updated…
A: Exactly. Yes. That’s what I noticed a couple of times: “This has not changed since I was here the last time” So the effect of that is that there is no trigger for me to go there again. Websites for me are a valuable means for getting information. And there are a number of websites I scan on an almost daily basis. The EDGaR website could be one of them, if there is sufficient new content.
Appendix

Interview #8

Q: Do you genuinely feel as an integrated part of the EDGaR program?
A: Yes, in a way. Although it’s a bit of a separate subject, of course, through EDGaR we got this connection between the parties in my project, so the three different institutes that are working together. I think, without EDGaR that wouldn’t have happened that easily.

Q: Is it actually important for you to perceive yourself/to be perceived as a member of the EDGaR project?
A: No.

Q: How much contact moments (correspondence) do you have per week with the EDGaR Direction or about issues that explicitly deal with the EDGaR Foundation itself?
A: Once a quarter.

Q: How do you think about the frequency of communication with the EDGaR Direction?
A: It’s fine.

Q: I guess, the communication with the Direction is rather task-related, about contractual issues, etc…
A: We need to give six months reports, time writing, that’s the stuff for results. And then there just was sort of a Research Day two weeks ago where everybody got together. So, that sort of thing. But, it is very general.

Q: Have you been to the Research Day?
A: Yes.

Q: Was it good?
A: Yes. It was interesting. There were a lot of people. I gave a presentation there. And then also you notice that “Okay, there is a presentation!” But nobody really could comment on that because for them it is an alien subject. And everyone was interested, but you don’t get it further to a higher level.

Q: I think it is good that everybody knows, what the other research projects are about…

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Q: Do you feel proud to work for the biggest gas research project in Europe?
A: No. Neutral. I am not against it, but it’s neutral. In the field where I am active, EDGaR is not very prominent. If that would have been the driver to choose an organization to be in, then it would have been a completely different one. But EDGaR....

Q: Would you be more inclined to feel proud about the EDGaR program if the external communication/visibility of the EDGaR program was enhanced?
A: I wouldn’t know if that was indeed the case...

Q: Would you assess the external communication efforts of the EDGaR program as sufficient?
A: I am not aware of the external communication of EDGaR. So, I am afraid....

Q: What kind of information would be likely to help you feeling more connected to and involved in the EDGaR program?
A: In Holland, you now have these innovation contracts – TKI: So, all the research in the Netherlands is now divided into what is called “Top Sectors”. You have one for energy, one for water, one for agriculture, etc. So, gas is in energy and this top sector in the innovation contract system goes parallel with EDGaR. EDGaR was first and only last year were these top sectors identified. So, you have two systems running parallel. SO, you want to find out as a researcher: “What is the connection between the two? How does it work?” That is the sort of thing that you also would like to be shared within EDGaR – “Where are we heading in connection to this top sector business? Are we going to survive that? Are we going to be a part of that?”

In TKI, you have various fields of research. These are nine themes and one of them is energy. And the key word is “top sector”. The idea is that all the research that is government-sponsored, is being allocated within that top sector. So, it is a combination of scientific institutes and companies. And they have to find each other and jointly come up with research topics and projects. A company “I want to investigate how to make better tables” and they go to the table top sector. There you find institutes that make very good tables and have innovative table ideas. So, the two companies find each other and the company is ready to put half a million euros into that and then the government puts another half a million euros into it.

It is a channel for the government to focus better on where the research effort is, rather than “anything goes”.

Q: And in the top sector of energy, especially gas, you would like to receive more information on what is going on within this Dutch top sector...
Appendix

Q: With which persons/departments within the EDGaR Foundation do you want to have (more) contact?

A: The BoG. I would like to find out more what they think. I would like to meet them once and to ask “What do you think about all this?”

Q: You would like to meet them personally?

A: I would be nice to be able to have a chat about what they think about EDGaR, because you never hear that. They approve something or they disapprove something and that’s all. But what is THEIR view about the future of EDGaR. Do they think now, after two and a half years, whether it works? Is it in agreement with their vision when they started it? That’s something that EDGaR should do anyways. Being a bit retrospective saying: “We are now here. What have we achieved? Is this what we wanted? What can we learn from that?” This is something, I hope, that is being discussed within the meetings. That the board is asking these questions. But then you would like to hear more. It is a bit of a big black box. And there is no secret about it. So I would say: “Have a bit more vertical communication” There is a lot of horizontal communication within EDGaR, but the vertical communication could be better.

Maybe, “The Board Member of the Month” Interview a person from the board and ask them: “Well you are in the board, what is your view on EDGaR at the moment?” That could be interesting because you have all these different people who are in there for a reason. Not just because they were asked, but they must have some passion about it. And there are all kinds of people in the board – from abroad, from the Netherlands. So asking them: “What do you think about EDGaR? And what do you think should be done in the future?” I think that would help showing always in the direction where we will go in the future.

Q: What kind of communication channels would be likely to help you feeling more connected to and involved in the EDGaR program?

A: The combination of e-mail, telephone and F-2-F meeting is good as long as they are in time and sharp [effective] and not institutionalized, so whenever there is the need, just do it. I know, all possibilities are there to be connected. It is a matter of me using them. There is a website, I suppose, I never visit it.

Q: One question to LinkedIn. To the LinkedIn group of EDGaR. Are you on LinkedIn?
Appendix

Q: But you know that there is one…
A: I know there is one. But I am not in there and hence never have been there.

Q: But out of principle, you don’t go there…
A: It’s not the principle. I don’t need it. Well, you can say that’s arrogant since I don’t know what’s in there. In LinkedIn, once in a while you get these E-mails saying: “There is a group so and so. We would recommend you to be in” But I never see EDGaR in there. But I know that there is an EDGaR group on LinkedIn because it says in the newsletter.

Q: Could the personal meetings be more initiated by the EDGaR Direction?
A: No, that’s okay. The Research Day is fine. And I arrange my own sessions with my project partners. We come together regularly F-2-F.

Q: One of your colleagues said that he would like to receive more information on a weekly or two-weekly basis – and not all news every 4 months as a bunch of information in the newsletter – so that the news are more timely. So for instance, one newsletter was published recently and two weeks later, something new, informative and interesting happens, it will be maybe only in the NEXT newsletter, so you have to wait three and a half months for that news to come.
A: See, I worked for [company name erased for anonymity purposes]. And what we had there were news flashes. So, news come in, which might be interesting. So, someone in the back office finds out that news are coming in and that they might be interesting for the EDGaR partners. And then you just make one and e-mail this as a news flash saying: “This has happened yesterday!” And that’s it. You don’t need to have then… In the quarterly newsletter you can recap that a bit because you can evaluate more on what the news meant. But the news flash itself served its purpose. Because if I get that news flash and I am interested saying: “Hey, this is something I want to follow” And then I am in time and I can react and take action if necessary. So, those news flashes are also for the people who make the communication easier. Because they just collect news flashes and at the end of the month they evaluate the news on their importance and value and collect them then in the newsletter.

Q: Do you read the EDGaR newsletter?
A: Yes, I do. It comes by E-mail, so it’s very easy to read. Okay, read is maybe too much, sometimes you just flip through to see if there is something interesting.
A: *Five, minutes. It is just a short newsletter. Two pages.*

Q: What do you like about the EDGaR newsletter?
A: *It’s just a newsletter. There is nothing special about it. There are couple of things in there which say: “Well, this is the status of the project. And we have achieved something”*

Q: Do you think, this information is valuable to you? Do you want this information in the newsletter?
A: *Not necessarily. Curiosity really. All these other projects have nothing to do with me. So, out of curiosity and interest. But, I am not waiting for the newsletter: “When does it come?”*

Q: Which information do you miss in the EDGaR newsletter?
A: *You keep up to date with the newsletter what is happening, which is fine. But, nothing more. If you have something you are very interested in, the newsletter is to shell open. In that sense, this Research Day is useful. In a way, the newsletter can prepare you for the Research Day. You say: “I read this news! This is interesting! So, I want to see that guy in Nunspeet on that day!”*

Q: So you think, you don’t need some other information that could be communicated by the newsletter. For example, about the whole strategy of EDGaR or where it should go to in the future...
A: *OH THAT I WOULD... Maybe not in the newsletter, but communication about where do we go. EDGaR has one and a half year to go then it is finished. Then there is an EDGaR II. Do we carry on? And how important is the purpose? Do we change the direction or not? So, that is something that... But that should be separate. It could be in the newsletter, but it definitely should be an identifiable document where you can also have a discussion about*

Q: You receive the EDGaR newsletter by E-mail. Can you imagine a better way to receive the newsletter itself or the information it contains?
A: *No, that’s the best. It’s cheap. One of the things about the communication in EDGaR is, that they make these glossy brochures, which I think is a waste of money. If you think about the budget we have and the money that goes to that. I think, direct mailing with e-mails is much more effective. When the first glossy brochure came – after six months of the start of EDGaR, a lot of researchers were very surprised: “Oh, we are spending our money on this?” That was the most heard reaction. So we were negatively surprised.*

Q: What was this brochure about?
A: *These brochures were about what EDGaR is. And after half a year, a number of projects were allocated, so they passed the reviews, etc. and there was a next bunch to come. And, this is*
the director, this is the budget, and this is how good we are. The tone... I mean, this is Holland and we are more down to earth than that. Maybe in another country it would work, maybe in the states. And I understand that, because everything has its purpose. But, if you have limited budget, think about how you spend your budget on this or that.

Q: In conclusion, you think that the newsletter actually serves a certain purpose and you think the information you get there is valuable to you?
A: Yes. It is interesting and it arouses my interest, if there is something like: “Hey! Now I need to follow this up!” I don’t expect the newsletter to go into depth.

Q: How frequent do you visit the official EDGaR website http://www.edgar-program.com/?
A: I have used it I think twice. To find out, where is Nunspeet. So, practical things. But, no, the website is like the glossy brochures, but it is digitally, so in that sense it is more sustainable. Maybe it’s me, so I am not blaming this on EDGaR...
Appendix

Interview #9

Q: Do you genuinely feel as an integrated part of the EDGaR program?
A: Not so very much. I feel part of the projects I work on and the colleagues from, say, other companies with whom we are working together. The connections are very stable, so we have a nice network, but these are just the staff contacts I have within the whole program. But as such the whole EDGaR program... No, I don’t really feel part of it, but I don’t see it as an issue.

Q: Is it actually important for you to perceive yourself/to be perceived as a member of the EDGaR project?
A: No.

Q: How much contact moments (correspondence) do you have per week with the EDGaR Direction or about issues that explicitly deal with the EDGaR Foundation itself?
A: The contact moments are not frequent. They are definitely not once week. I would say, once a month I receive stuff so to say. So, newsletter, an updating E-mail or something else. And I would say, once every two months I probably communicate, I take the initiative to communicate, with someone from the EDGaR Foundation to tackle some kind of issue in a project or some admin stuff.

Q: And I guess, within your projects you have far more communication...
A: Yes, yes. Of course within a project team, within our company, I have a lot of contact. But with the other researchers, say the research partners in the project, at least once a month we are in contact, that’s for sure.

Q: How do you think about the frequency of communication with the EDGaR Direction?
A: I don’t need any other communication. I cannot find the time to really digest all the news or so to say updating E-mails on the entire EDGaR program.

Q: Do you feel proud to work for the biggest gas research project in Europe?
A: Well, not particularly, no. We do many projects in a similar field. Of course, if you added all the EDGaR projects, of course the entire program is large. But then the individual projects are, say, typical collaboration projects. But not particular special in that case.

Q: You also don’t feel proud of the whole program or what the program is about or what it could achieve?
A: No, no.

Q: Would you be more inclined to feel proud about the EDGaR program if the external communication/visibility of the EDGaR program was enhanced?

A: Probably, if it’s recognized by external parties as an interesting project, like: “Oh, you are a part of EDGaR. Oh, that’s nice!” Now, if you want to share insights from the EDGaR program, you first have to explain for ten minutes what EDGaR is about.

Q: So, you would answer this question with...

A: Yes.

Q: Would you assess the external communication efforts of the EDGaR program as sufficient?

A: I think, if you consider the overall size of the entire EDGaR program, probably, normally more PR would be done, more lobbying, more PR, more visibility... But I think a feature of the EDGaR program is that it is multidisciplinary and a wide variety of topics is researched within the EDGaR program. It’s more difficult in terms of public relations and communications to the outside world. Because one day it’s about gas qualities, the next day it’s about the future of energy... It’s different topics and there is no one overall message that could be communicated.

Q: But, put differently, do you think that there is enough visibility of the EDGaR program among the general public, at least that they know about it?

A: No. I don’t think that it’s very well known, say for the general public who is working in the industry. It’s not very well known, no. I think, it would be useful to make people aware that quite a big effort is going on. Because that in turn also attracts follow-up interest. Either in the ongoing projects or in the whole EDGaR program. So, it could work if it had more profile of being a really up-to-date gas research that is ongoing. For example, I am from [company name erased for anonymity purposes]. And I also work with my colleagues in Germany and they know the word “EDGaR” because I mention it every now and then. But they have no idea what it is about. And they work in exactly the same field as I do. So, one could expect that they are aware of this initiative. But that’s not the case.

Q: What kind of information would be likely to help you feeling more connected to and involved in the EDGaR program?

A: What could work, is for example via the newsletter, some kind of series is started in which a kind of statement is given like “Gas will make a better place”, I don’t know, something a little bit more advanced, but some kind of statement, asking someone to comment on that. And then, this guy has to appoint someone else in the EDGaR framework to provide the next comment, or to comment on his comment. So, that there is some kind of sequence of discussions or comments, not very advanced but something short. And I think, people will...
follow that and they think: “Oh, that’s interesting. He is saying this. I am curious now. Let’s see what the other one says!”

Q: A few minutes ago, you mentioned that it would be good to have half a page in the newsletter about research leader from other projects, telling you about the progress and stuff. Can I conclude from that, that it is one of your information needs to receive information about other projects from the EDGaR program?

A: Yes, but it is more, say, from a curiosity point of view. And to perhaps be triggered that, what another college is doing, that there might be a link to the project that I am doing. We are connected to all the projects where we clearly see a link. So, actively we are collaborating or exchanging ideas. But I am not interacting with all the 30 projects. So, if I see a short update of only one project in one of the newsletters, it might trigger me: “That’s interesting. But how will they do this or that? So, let’s get in touch!” It’s more from a push than pull approach.

Q: Some interviewees mentioned, they would like to know about the future of EDGaR, especially about EDGaR II. That they would like to receive more information about what path the EDGaR program will take in the future. Is that also important for you to know?

A: It’s interesting to know, but I must say that at the regular meetings, the plenary EDGaR meetings such as the Research Day, people from the EDGaR Direction, etc. update the audience about what’s going on concerning Germany, EDGaR II – Yes or No?, what are the developments? I am always a bit surprised by the attendance of such events. So I think the information is there. I think, it is better to provide such updates and explanations during such a meeting, than writing all kind of newsletters. Because, like EDGaR II, it is not sure yet, there are discussions going on. And it is always tricky to put stuff like that on paper and circulate it.

Q: With which persons/departments within the EDGaR Foundation do you want to have (more) contact?

A: There is no barrier for me to contact people and if I want to get in touch with someone it is no problem. And when I am in touch, then the communication is always very enthusiastic. So, I don’t see any problems over there.

Q: What kind of communication channels would be likely to help you feeling more connected to and involved in the EDGaR program?

A: I think, personal meetings, as in the last example I mentioned, are very effective. Social media like LinkedIn groups, I don’t know. I see so many of these newsletters, I think I get some 20 newsletters every day. At a certain point, you think like: “Well, I start to look for something if I need it.” It’s impossible to keep track of all kinds of social media lures that are generated. So, to increase that, I am not sure, if that is effective. Because in the end, the group is not very large, I mean, it is a large group of researchers, but it is not thousands.

Q: Do you use the group of EDGaR on LinkedIn actually?
A: I think, I am following the group, yes, I am sure. But I do not actively use it to get in touch with people or to get updated. Yes, I am a member of the group, but I never use it actively.

Q: Do you read the EDGaR newsletter?
A: When I receive an E-mail with a newsletter, I browse it to through if it mentions something about my projects or about topics that I know. I scan it and then I selectively read. For me, that’s sufficient.

Q: If yes, how much time do you spend reading it?
A: Five minutes.

Q: What do you like about the EDGaR newsletter?
A: Not specifically. Because I really browse it selectively. So, I cannot pinpoint to anything particular.

Q: Which information do you miss in the EDGaR newsletter?
A: Not sure, but what now springs to mind. It might be interesting to have an occasional short interview with one of the research leaders in which they very briefly explain what they have been doing and the overall findings. With a couple of questions, half a page of text and a small summary, with a nice picture and that... So, what is actually another colleague whom I never talked to, what is he actually doing? So another colleague from another company in another project.

Q: So, you mean, in order for you to know what the colleague is doing. Or to know what the results are in the end...
A: Yes, what are the insights gained so far, the EDGaR program runs until the end of next year, so most projects are so to say half way. Not finished yet, but some initial findings. Sometimes I see a short summary for a project... They’re gone! Nobody actually really knows what the project was about. And I can go to the website and I read the summary. Every now and then I see a short summary of a project and think: “Okay, I have seen this guy at a conference before, but I actually don’t know what he is doing” Then it might be interesting just to have a short update or an introduction. That might be useful.

Q: Something like that is not on the website?
A: Oh, yes, it’s on the website. But I think, it’s nice for the newsletter, if somebody just on half a page explains what his group has been doing. In every newsletter one new example.

Q: Do you think that you are not updated sufficiently about the other projects?
A: No, but then again, there is no real need on my side to be updated. How much research projects do we have in EDGaR? So, I cannot update myself about on all these projects even if the information was ready and available. But occasionally, EDGaR does showcase a particular project and I will probably read it in the newsletter and I think: “Oh, yeah!” A photo of that along with a small summary of the project and then I think: “Oh, yes, I have seen this face, but I don’t know who he is. What is he actually doing? Ah, he is doing that. Interesting!” But if I really want to know that I can also go to the EDGaR website and there is a summary of all the projects, I can find such a thing. But just to showcase one project in every newsletter. That might be interesting.

Q: You receive the EDGaR newsletter by E-mail. Can you imagine a better way to receive the newsletter itself or the information it contains?
A: No, no. If it is a blog, I would need to actively go there, but I have in practice I have always other things to do, so that I would never do that. And printed... No, I don’t think so. It will end up on the desktop, probably browsed when I receive it and that’s it. So, I think in the current version it is better.

Q: How frequent do you visit the official EDGaR website http://www.edgar-program.com/?
A: If I am looking for contact details of a researcher in another project and I think: “What were his contact details again?” then I usually go and find that on the website. Because it is all compiled there. That’s about it.
Appendix

Interview #10

Q: Do you genuinely feel as an integrated part of the EDGaR program?
A:  No. It is just part of my work. I am working for my company. I am involved in EDGaR and that’s it. I like it and it is important. But there are more important things than that.

Q: Is it actually important for you to perceive yourself/to be perceived as a member of the EDGaR project?
A:  No.

Q: How much contact moments (correspondence) do you have per week with the EDGaR Direction or about issues that explicitly deal with the EDGaR Foundation itself?
A:  Not weekly, but maybe once a month or even less. Task-related.

Q: How do you think about the frequency of communication with the EDGaR Direction?
A:  It’s fine with me. It works.

Q: Do you feel proud to work for the biggest gas research project in Europe?
A:  Yes, you could say that.

Q: Would you be more inclined to feel proud about the EDGaR program if the external communication/visibility of the EDGaR program was enhanced?
A:  Likely.

Q: Would you assess the external communication efforts of the EDGaR program as sufficient?
A:  Yes.

Q: Should EDGaR communicate more to the general public?
A:  Yes, indeed that could be a bit more

Q: What kind of information would be likely to help you feeling more connected to and involved in the EDGaR program?
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A: *I cannot think of any that would.*

Q: With which persons/departments within the EDGaR Foundation do you want to have (more) contact?
A: *Meetings are very well organized and interesting. I value F2F meetings the most. LinkedIn could be used more often, but does not have to. I was there once, but there was not really much.*

Q: What kind of communication channels would be likely to help you feeling more connected to and involved in the EDGaR program?
A: *None.*

Q: Do you read the EDGaR newsletter?
A: *Sometimes.*

Q: If yes, how much time do you spend reading it?
A: *I scan it as quick as possible.*

Q: What do you like about the EDGaR newsletter?
A: *It’s a useful tool, but we get a lot of information. I certainly don’t read the newsletter on Sunday like a newspaper.*

Q: Which information do you miss in the EDGaR newsletter?
A: *Nothing actually*

Q: You receive the EDGaR newsletter by E-mail. Can you imagine a better way to receive the newsletter itself or the information it contains?
A: *No. It’s fine.*

Q: How frequent do you visit the official EDGaR website http://www.edgar-program.com/?
A: *Only very rarely. But it’s good. I usually visit it to find out “Who is doing what?” or I look for people and pictures when preparing for a meeting.*
Appendix

Interview #11

Q: Do you genuinely feel as an integrated part of the EDGaR program?
A: *I can imagine that there are a few research leaders who actually see themselves as representatives of their companies and not as persons. I am part of the EDGaR Foundation. The board members and PSC members know me as someone who can get very angry, fighting a lot, etc. That’s how much I am involved in.*

Q: Is it actually important for you to perceive yourself/to be perceived as a member of the EDGaR project?
A: *I couldn’t tell you how others perceive me. I am certainly member of the EDGaR program. I can’t tell if that is important or not. I think, three or four years ago, I would have thought it was really important that people identified me as a part of it. But now I AM part of it, whether the people perceive it like that or not, I don’t care, I am part of it. I think actually, my contributions to the content of the program and what I try to do in maintaining the quality and the original goals of the program are more important than whether people see me as part of the program or not. Yes, I am more of a content-like person. A number of years ago, I would have thought that it was more important than now. But today, I know what my contribution is.*

Q: How much contact moments (correspondence) do you have per week with the EDGaR Direction or about issues that explicitly deal with the EDGaR Foundation itself?
A: *On average, two or three times per week. This is not because I am a project leader, but because I am in the PSC. But it depends, there are weeks with zero contacts and then weeks with 20.*

Q: How do you think about the frequency of communication with the EDGaR Direction?
A: *I think that the communication works well. We contact each other when we think it’s necessary. Otherwise we don’t. When we meet there is intense correspondence.*

Q: Do you feel proud to work for the biggest gas research project in Europe?
A: *I think, I am proud that I was one of the authors of one of the biggest gas research projects in Europe. And I still think, if you read what we originally wrote on paper that is still very relevant.*

Q: Would you be more inclined to feel proud about the EDGaR program if the external communication/visibility of the EDGaR program was enhanced?
A: Yes, I would feel more proud if there was more external communication.

Q: Would you assess the external communication efforts of the EDGaR program as sufficient?
A: Well, I don’t watch much TV or newspapers. What is always the problem with that, if I look at my work, a lot of stuff that we do has an effect on the internal operations of certain companies, so they don’t necessarily want to publish anything – especially when any implications that are severe for the position in the society, they would rather not have this in the newspaper. In national gas business as a rule, and this is certainly true for Europe, they try not to get in the newspaper and TV.

Q: What kind of information would be likely to help you feeling more connected to and involved in the EDGaR program?
A: Actually I am thinking about this. The real problem with OID at the EDGaR Foundation is that the people who thought this program up, including myself, had a particular vision of what EDGaR is supposed to be and where it should go. And those of us who were associated with setting up the program, have this identification. The vast majority of the people who are participating in EDGaR do not have the same experience. But then, EDGaR is just another way to get money, in a certain sense it is.

Q: With which persons/departments within the EDGaR Foundation do you want to have (more) contact?
A: In terms of with whom I have the fewest contact with, it is the BoG. But I wouldn’t really enforce it in order to preserve the situation.

Q: What kind of communication channels would be likely to help you feeling more connected to and involved in the EDGaR program?
A: Nothing.

Q: Do you use LinkedIn and the EDGaR group there?
A: Only marginally. I think my colleagues have a profile on LinkedIn, but I don’t know anyone of my contacts who actually uses it for anything, except than “Hi”

Q: Do you read the EDGaR newsletter?
A: Yes, I do.

Q: If yes, how much time do you spend reading it?
Appendix

A: I read it diagonally because in principle as a member of the PSC I have all necessary information. I am informed well enough.

Q: What do you like about the EDGaR newsletter?
A: It gives a good overview of what is going on. It’s particularly good for the colleagues in getting an idea and a feeling of what we are doing.

Q: Which information do you miss in the EDGaR newsletter?
A: Yes, I miss something, but that is in the entire program. That is the implications of project results for other projects or other themes.

There are two levels of interdisciplinary. In principle, every research project is supposed to have some kind of an interdisciplinary aspect to it, well that’s not 100% true. What I mean is, real interdisciplinary at a higher level in a sense of being inter-themed. Because the technical things in theme 1... those results have implications for theme 2 and 3. For example I would like to say to people on theme 3, all you legal guys, think about this thing too, because this might cause this and that problem.

Q: You receive the EDGaR newsletter by E-mail. Can you imagine a better way to receive the newsletter itself or the information it contains?
A: E-mail is perfect. Blogs I almost never read.

Q: How frequent do you visit the official EDGaR website http://www.edgar-program.com/?
A: As I told you, I never look at the website. And I would never look at the website for news.
Interview #12

Q: Do you genuinely feel as an integrated part of the EDGaR program?
A: *I have been working at the [company name erased for anonymity purposes] now for 25 years. So, it’s more for the [company name erased for anonymity purposes] than for EDGaR.*

Q: Actually, do you feel genuinely as a part of the EDGaR program?
A: *I think, the conferences work like that and there have been several of them now and you know the people and it’s good to meet them again. So in that sense, you definitely feel that you are part of a bigger, bigger whole, a community.*

Q: Is it actually important for you to perceive yourself/to be perceived as a member of the EDGaR project?
A: *Definitely. It’s not just the project. It’s a bigger program to say it in a different word. I have colleagues working here, not working on the same project always, but on the EDGaR program. Also on the project, but also in the whole program. And, [name erased for anonymity purposes] for instance, member of the PSC, that gives more interaction and cooperation.*

Q: How much contact moments (correspondence) do you have per week with the EDGaR Direction or about issues that explicitly deal with the EDGaR Foundation itself?
A: *Once a week.*

Q: How do you think about the frequency of communication with the EDGaR Direction?
A: *It’s sufficient.*

Q: Do you feel proud to work for the biggest gas research project in Europe?
A: *Proud is a big word for a Dutch. But certainly happy to be part of it and that’s there, you know?*

Q: Would you be more inclined to feel proud about the EDGaR program if the external communication/visibility of the EDGaR program was enhanced?
A: *Yes, probably so. If you see this in the news and you say to your family: “I am also part of that program.” Yes.*
Q: Would you assess the external communication efforts of the EDGaR program as sufficient?
A: For me, that’s hard to judge. I couldn’t give an answer.

Q: Have you ever seen an article about EDGaR in the media?
A: No.

Q: What kind of information would be likely to help you feeling more connected to and involved in the EDGaR program?
A: What we need more is, what is going on in other projects. And what kind of overlaps or complementarities are there with the other projects. There are many projects. It’s very hard to see and to say, “Okay, I need that project, and...” And I think, many people feel like that, so there is big chance that things are done double, or similar things at least, whereas there could be more cooperation or interaction.

Q: I assume that this is linked to the interdisciplinary nature of the EDGaR program...
A: Yes, that makes the topics broader. And the approach is different and then sometimes a bit similar, but then still a bit different. And sometimes they are complementary. Yes, but that is hard to see. We work on the next 50 years. There is also the project “The bigger picture” And then it would be good to know what they are up to. So, these kind of news flashes that would be interesting. And if other people start working on bio gasification, or whatever, then it would be good to have a news flash on that.

And information about where is the EDGaR program heading to. For the external environment, that is what you as a researcher do yourself, when you read publications. But internally we can really change this.

Q: With which persons/departments within the EDGaR Foundation do you want to have (more) contact?
A: Yes, it’s on my To-do-list to have more insight information about what is going on in other projects, so the big picture. And to what extent can we cooperate and prevent overlap.

Q: What kind of communication channels would be likely to help you feeling more connected to and involved in the EDGaR program?
A: As I said, I am not into social media and things like that. Normally, there is an information overload.

Q: Are you aware of the LinkedIn group of EDGaR? It’s seldom used, although most researchers have an account on LinkedIn...

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A: It will stay that way, I guess. If you connect people, it still wouldn’t really work. It’s not really effective and will not be.

Q: So, personal meetings, E-mails, telephones, is sufficient for you?
A: Yes. Except for what I said. It’s partly my fault as well, but I am not fully aware of what is going on elsewhere in the EDGaR program. We do have the Research Day, which is helpful. Sometimes it would be good maybe to have some news flashes on things like: “We started working on bio gasification” for instance and then you say: “Hey, I didn’t know that!” And the Research Day is often too long.

Q: Do you read the EDGaR newsletter?
A: I browse them through. Very short. It’s probably in the E-mail, so that’s sometimes lost as well. And then you save it for later and then you forget about it.

Q: If yes, how much time do you spend reading it?
A: Well, at the end of the day, you sometimes ask yourself: “What have you been doing?” That’s probably these kind of things sometimes. It’s really hard to say. It could be well off. If it is in the E-mail, I cannot recall one EDGaR newsletter. I can also imagine, that there is no newsletter at all, so that this is just a trick question.

Q: What do you like about the EDGaR newsletter?
A: The fact that’s there.

Q: Which information do you miss in the EDGaR newsletter?
A: It’s too much detail actually. We have our own news of the faculty and, yes.

Q: You receive the EDGaR newsletter by E-mail. Can you imagine a better way to receive the newsletter itself or the information it contains?
A: No, except that the news are on the website of course. Well, it should be there.

Q: The newsletter is published every 4 months. So it’s in itself obsolete. Some interviewees suggested news feeds scattered across the weeks. So that the news are more current.
A: Yes, maybe. It works like that nowadays, doesn’t it? But I don’t have Twitter and FB or an iPad. And I consider myself lucky. I have E-mail and that’s awful enough.

Q: How frequent do you visit the official EDGaR website http://www.edgar-program.com/?

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A: It would be worse when it everything would be on the website. When do you visit the website? In the morning, when you start up the computer? No, I don’t!
Appendix

Interview #13

Q: Do you genuinely feel as an integrated part of the EDGaR program?
A: Yes, of course. Yes, I have been asked to hold a presentation at the last Research Day.

Q: Is it actually important for you to perceive yourself/to be perceived as a member of the EDGaR project?
A: I have no real opinion about this.

Q: How much contact moments (correspondence) do you have per week with the EDGaR Direction or about issues that explicitly deal with the EDGaR Foundation itself?
A: Within the project itself, we have weekly contact because we have to perform a lot of testing at the moment. So those moments are quite often. It is often influences of the activities, so it differs, but I would say once a week. My colleagues are in the same building, so we have easy ways of communication.

Regarding, the project, communicating with people who are not in my projects, so from other partner organizations, then we have regular contact that’s not so often. Due to the long-term nature of the projects, we have to wait a long time for results, hence we meet once every half year in order to catch up with the ongoing tests and to exchange information.

Q: And your contact with the EDGaR Direction?
A: That’s also depending on the questions that arise. But now, the tests are running, the contact frequency has dropped immensely. So, roughly, once every two months...

Q: How do you think about the frequency of communication with the EDGaR Direction?
A: Our project is not changing much and not fast. Sometimes, I have to write the progress report and this often looks quite the same – not much changes.

Q: Do you feel proud to work for the biggest gas research project in Europe?
A: Yes. I haven’t thought about that in these terms. Now, you are asking, I would say, yes I am proud of it.

Q: Would you be more inclined to feel proud about the EDGaR program if the external communication/visibility of the EDGaR program was enhanced?
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Q: Would you assess the external communication efforts of the EDGaR program as sufficient?
A: We had an update from the director of the EDGaR Foundation that the number of communication, especially the visits of the websites went up in the last period which shows that there is more interest. But who is showing that interest, that’s unclear to me. I don’t want to have information about who is that, but we got some information about the increased communication on the website, etc. We were not given these information that you can generate by Google Analytics, etc. If it’s for instance only the universities who are interested, or researchers from commercial companies or is it the general public that is interested in new ways of energy.

Q: Do you think that the external communication of EDGaR could be improved?
A: Well, I doubt if it helps to get more interest for the topic we are working on. However, what we are trying to do in my project, is to give people in the neighborhood in Apeldoorn information about what we do, so that they know.

Q: What kind of information would be likely to help you feeling more connected to and involved in the EDGaR program?
A: I would say there is nothing really. Because if I have some questions, I call the Program Manager or even one of the directors, depending on the topic, and just ask the information. What I have learned from this program is that, if the information is available, everybody is willing to share the information or getting the information from someone else. So, no, I am not missing any information from the EDGaR Direction.

Q: With which persons/departments within the EDGaR Foundation do you want to have (more) contact?
A: Nobody.

Q: What kind of communication channels would be likely to help you feeling more connected to and involved in the EDGaR program?
A: I am not such a big fan of the social media. I think, we are doing fine. We have the Research Days, we can discuss some topics. The way of communication at the Research Day is very open, so you can address the board and it’s very pleasant. Also, you can talk to many people in an informal way. And you can discuss the problems you have. And we have these conferences in cooperation with the DVWG. And they also use this to communicate the findings of the work we are doing. In that respect we have both the outcome of the research and the running of the program and problems addressed. I don’t see any more need than that.
I am one of those who is disregarding information, if I get the feeling that it is too much/too pushy. For instance, if we were addressed weekly by EDGaR with information, I just would skip it. I wouldn’t look to it, because I have too much to do. I would not recognize it as an important information. Whereas, if you get only information when it’s needed I would react. That’s the problem, you have to choose between the two. If you have too much information, some of it has to be disregarded.

Q: Do you read the EDGaR newsletter?
A: Sometimes. I have to admit that I don’t have always the time to read them fully.

Q: If yes, how much time do you spend reading it?
A: I think, some ten minutes. So, just hopping through the topics. There are some colleagues of mine who also work within EDGaR. So, I just go see them if I want to see what they do and how they do.

Q: What do you like about the EDGaR newsletter?
A: I don’t really know...

Q: Which information do you miss in the EDGaR newsletter?
A: Also to this question I have to say, I don’t know for sure.

Q: You receive the EDGaR newsletter by E-mail. Can you imagine a better way to receive the newsletter itself or the information it contains?
A: I think, it's pretty convenient. Then you see it. If you only have it on the website, you have to become active to look there and look for the newsletter. Then, I wouldn’t read it as much as now. Okay, LinkedIn could be used, but I don’t think, that adds something to E-mail.

Q: How frequent do you visit the official EDGaR website http://www.edgar-program.com/?
A: I couldn’t even tell you.