



## **Public Engagement Strategies for Wind Energy Are We on the Right Track?**

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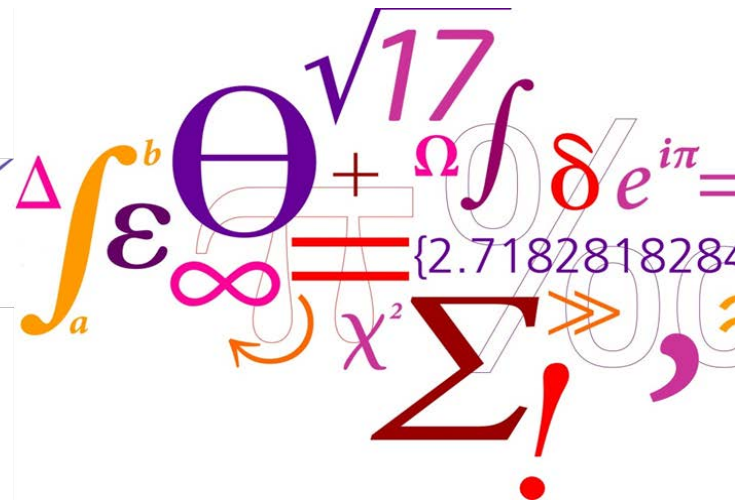
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# Public Engagement Strategies for Wind Energy: Are We on the Right Track?

$$P = \frac{1}{2} \rho A v^3 C_p$$



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# SUB-PROGRAMME on Economic and Social aspects of wind integration

## Primary Goal

“to align research activities in the area of economic and **social aspects** of wind integration so as to **lay a scientific foundation** for the long term, cost-effective development of wind energy and its **successful deployment** in energy systems.”

## SUB-PROGRAMME on Economic and Social aspects of wind integration

- “A better understanding of mechanisms and processes related to effective **local siting** of wind power and lessons learned from other areas may **avoid conflicts** and possibly **reduce uncertainties** in project lead times and development costs.”
- “At the same time, how can support mechanisms be designed in a cost-efficient way, so that they strengthen **public trust** at both national and supranational levels?”

# RT6: Public engagement strategies for wind energy

- “Identifying and prioritising the major public engagement issues for onshore and offshore wind farms”
- Recognize cultural contexts between the national, regional, and local levels
- “How to best improve public engagement in regards to onshore and offshore wind power using effective participatory approaches.”

# MOTIVATION

- Climate change urgency and public(s) health – Global grand challenges
- Large-scale integration of wind occurs within a socio-technical system
- Reflects successful deployment strategy & shifting sands of community responses

# MOTIVATION

- **Examine** & better understand the “stakes” and who “holds” them?

The publics



- » Communities
- » Families
- » Stakeholders
- » Citizens
- » Politicians
- » Voters
- » Industries
- » Planners
- » Institutions

# MOTIVATION (cont.)



- Increasing public acceptance challenges & opposition land-based and offshore wind energy
- Mostly generic lessons for ALL energy facilities, but some specific issues for wind include:
  - Spatial planning & local land use & marine conflicts
  - Ecological risks: sensitive & protected wildlife, open space, fisheries
  - Community/coastal effects: new infrastructure, transmission lines, turbine & traffic noises, new jobs
  - Social trust: developing trust & losing it, process issues & discourse analysis



# Current Track

It is common knowledge that EERA wind research focus has **NOT** had any significant investment of resources in broader social sciences

- No scientific foundation is apparent
- Very few examples of cross-disciplinary activities
- USA in similar situation

# Current Track

- However, most EERA and other EU initiatives include the need to focus on “social acceptance of wind energy” **BUT**
  - Major emphasis remains on technology innovation, engineering, resource assessment, & economics
- Meanwhile, most countries are experiencing major social transitions in energy systems & more opposition to wind energy, **BUT**
  - EU & USA research platforms and national institutions are slow to change

# Suggested First Steps-New Track

- **Prepare** inventory of existing human capacity and expertise across EERA programmes and institutions in the social sciences relevant to the wind questions
  - Examine and agree which disciplines are critical to broaden
  - Remember NGOs and local groups
  - Look across JPs (including non-renewable areas, relevant for comparative case studies)

# BUILDING A NETWORKING



- Deep thinkers on public engagement may be outside the current EERA wind arena - Recruitment needed
- Involve experts & practitioners across national and international borders
  - Current members/ institutions with different researchers?
  - Recruiting new institutions or individual experts?
  - Identify new industrial partners, e.g., insurance industry?

# Suggested First Steps (cont.)



- **Collaborate** with the EERA Joint Programme “Economic, environmental and social impacts of energy policies and technologies” (JP e3s)
  - Sub-programme 1: Public perception and engagement. Coordinated by NTNU, SINTEF
- **Utilize** others research:
  - IEA Task 28, Social Acceptance of Wind Energy
  - Wind Powering America (USA)
- **Utilize**, as appropriate, EERA mobility program resources
  - Seek out new partners -- not engaged in the EERA program; Identify senior researchers to build capacity

# Suggested First Steps- New Track

- **Conduct** an inventory of existing and planned social and economic research to find intersections, synergies and gaps
- **Organize** workshops – on specific topics, e.g., deliberative processes, risk perceptions and communication

# How to Improve Public Engagement?

- Move from "deficit model"
  - better information solves all problems
- There are many public(s)
  - Not just local activists. Who are they?
- One size does not fit all
  - Concerns and values of different publics, not just vocal minorities or media
- Pay attention to local media who provide information to publics (changes over time)

# How to Improve Public Engagement? (cont.)

- Err on the side of transparency and too much information
- Use 3rd parties - many people do not trust experts
- 2-way communication at all stages – early and often, takes time and money



# Request for Assistance to Get on a New Track

- For those EERA members present - Suggest social science experts in your organizations (and others) for potential involvement
- Invite selected experts to the November kick-off workshop (date TBD)
- Raise awareness in network for research activities and case studies relating to public engagement – land based and offshore (including transmission lines)
- Link to education and curriculum developments

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*Thank you  
for your  
attention*



# EXTRA SLIDES

# Define Public Engagement Strategies

- Political acceptance of wind energy
  - EU-wide, national, regional
  - Local planning & acceptance within a community
- Learn from other energy technology developments
- Examples of technical topics:
  - Defining a baseline of public(s) concerns, values, & risk perceptions – seek out relevant histories
  - Designing and implementing collaborative approaches to assessment and decision making - analytic – deliberative paradigm
  - Risk communication is central for effective siting strategies – ongoing 2-way communication

# Suggested Research Questions for Discussion

Relating to one priority research area of the TPWind SRA is grid integration:

- How shall the economic burdens be shared creatively when transmission lines are constructed, e.g.,
  - Give landowners permission to utilize waste heat from the new lines
  - Could influence the social acceptance of lines and cost of energy both at the consumer & producer levels

# Suggested Research Questions for Discussion

- How shall new cross-border support mechanisms take into account public trust and national energy independence?
  - Relates to opinions & values regarding national independence vs. perception of increased vulnerability of international policies
  - Could present significant barriers – both on social & political levels - to an otherwise beneficial policy