

Create Acceptance: assessing and promoting societal acceptance of energy technologies

Press Communiqué

The current understanding of social processes affecting the (non-) acceptance of renewable energy technologies (RES) and rational use of energy (RUE) is limited. Project managers often assume that stakeholders will adopt and adapt to their innovation without resistance. In practice, however, stakeholders such as users, NGO's or local public authorities might have different (and possibly conflicting) visions about the innovation and the future world in which the innovation should fit in. If these diverging views are neglected, project implementation might face severe societal resistance in the implementation phase. There is a need for empirically based analytical research to provide a better understanding of the complex interactions between stakeholders, which block or facilitate the adoption of alternative practices and of the institutional contexts favourable to technological innovation.

The Create Acceptance project aims to improve the conditions for societal acceptance of RES and RUE by developing a tool for assessing and promoting the societal acceptance of RES and RUE technologies. The project builds upon a tool prior developed under a European Commission Framework: Socrobust. Socrobust will first be assessed for suitability to contribute to social acceptance of RES and RUE technologies by mapping its potential and limitations. Second, the key elements of social acceptance of RES and RUE technologies will be determined by assessing the (recent and past) social acceptance of RES and RUE. The Socrobust tool platform will be enhanced into a multi-stakeholder tool by integrating knowledge gained and by designing the necessary instruments and procedures. Finally validation and deployment of the multi-stakeholder tool will take place in five selected demonstration projects, covering a wide range of RES and RUE technologies as well as various regions in Europe.

The preliminarily selected demonstration projects are a hydrogen project in the Nordic countries, a biomass project in the East-European region, carbon capture and sequestration (CCS) in the West-Europe region, a wind project in Hungary and a solar thermal project in the Mediterranean region.

The multi-stakeholder tool will become publicly available to energy managers, policy makers, technology developers, intermediary energy service providers, and other possible users after conclusion of the project. This will occur by providing the tool and information about the tool on the projects website, including a manual. The dissemination of the multi-stakeholder tool and results of this project will aim to reach at least 5 targeted stakeholders per participating partner country involved in implementation of new RES and RUE technologies

The Create Acceptance project started February 1st 2006 and runs for two years. The project is coordinated by the Dutch Energy research Centre of the Netherlands (ECN). Partners represent ten institutions and nine European Member States, plus Iceland.

For more information on the project please visit www.createacceptance.net