

1.0 Introduction

Many national or regional surveys include aspects of social acceptance of wind power, and studies have been conducted on the acceptance of specific wind power projects. Task 28 has been working to answer questions that go beyond these surveys and studies. For example, could it be possible to derive some indicators based on this knowledge, on a national-, regional-, or project-specific basis to visualize the status of social acceptance and/or to show its development over time?

Many actors involved in the development of wind energy projects have acknowledged the particular role of acceptance issues in the planning and communication process. If no effort is dedicated to addressing the different views, fears, and expectations of residents, non-governmental organizations, and others to wind energy projects, a lot of the work invested in preparations can be wasted.

Many national wind associations, national or regional planning authorities, and research institutions have developed guidelines and recommendations to help their partners in the development of projects that have a chance to find the necessary acceptance. Additionally, the industry has learned the hard lesson that a few black sheep among them can spoil projects when negative opinions multiply within a region. There are not many studies, however, on how those guidelines are used and what their benefit is.

Wind energy projects often include first-time encounters for responsible parties involved such as municipalities that have to decide on a project. How can the flow of information be secured and the acceptance issues be brought to the attention of the decision makers?

All those questions describe aspects of monitoring the status of social acceptance and the description of its development. Monitoring social acceptance is one of the issues that IEA Wind Task 28 is dedicated to discuss in its current project period with the aim of (1) helping IEA Wind countries to document the social acceptance developments in their countries as a support to their national policies and supporting instruments, and (2) supporting actors evaluate acceptance measures or to identify key issues.

2.0 Objectives and Strategy

IEA Wind Task 28 will support participating countries to address social acceptance issues. It will provide up-to-date information on



social acceptance of wind energy in each of the participating countries. It will identify and document successful policy strategies anticipated to be applicable. It will enable sharing among participants of practical information, learning from each other, complementing each other's approaches.

Task 28 stimulates discussion of the complex issues around social acceptance and contributes to additional insights from the broad transnational and interdisciplinary experience of the participant network. Participants work together on open issues and research gaps, including opportunities for joint research. Task 28 has enlarged the network and knowledge on good practice of institutions, organizations, experts and practitioners. These participants contribute to reports, publications, and presentations in the language of planners, developers, authorities, and other stakeholders outside the research community who need to be sensitized on the issue to develop better projects.

The intended means to provide these inputs are:

- Working group meetings, national expert meetings, Topical Expert Meetings

- Good Practice Recommendations and other publications
- Reports to IEA Wind Executive Committee and Annual Reports
- Participation in conferences, e.g., the annual European Wind Energy Association conference
- Articles in industry journals and branch magazines
- Task 28 website homepage

At each working group meeting, Task 28 participants focus on an issue to develop more detailed recommendations. The main areas of proposed work for the next period include the following:

- Monitor social acceptance
- Document existing policies and standards that have been demonstrated to increase social acceptance
- Discuss current and new issues influencing social acceptance that are being debated in the participating countries, stressing research gaps and discovering opportunities for joint research
- Determine, document, and disseminate the lessons learned, good practices, and successful strategies, to improve

Table 1. Countries and Organizations Participating in Task 28 During 2013

	Country	Institution(s)
1	Germany	Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy; Martin Luther University; University of the Saarland
2	Ireland	Sustainable Energy Authority; Queen's University Belfast
3	Italy	RSE Ricerca sul Sistema Energetico
4	Japan	National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology; Nagoya University
5	Switzerland	Swiss Federal Office of Energy; ENCO Energie-Consulting AG
6	United States	U.S. Department of Energy; National Renewable Energy Laboratory Wind Technology Center; Lawrence Berkeley Lab

projects and their implementation and to support the definition of the common understanding of “sustainable, acceptable projects”

- Elaborate on the role of intermediary persons or organizations in the management of controversial projects
- Explain the importance of a “guichet unique” for developers or public authorities in the approval of a wind energy project.

The contact and exchange with further projects in the area of social acceptance of renewable energies will also be sought.

3.0 Progress in 2013

As a highlight of 2013, IEA Wind Task 28 met for a working group meeting in Japan, which was connected to a Japanese national expert meeting. The meeting was hosted by the Japan Electric Manufacturers Association (JEMA) and organized by the Japanese working group members. Japanese experts from various institutes, community organizations and associations met to exchange information on acceptance issues of wind power. The developments in Japan since the Fukushima events of 2011, the community power movement, and the Japanese progress on the prevention of bird strikes were especially interesting for the Task 28 members from abroad.

At the Japan meeting, the working group tackled the issue of monitoring social acceptance. The issue was first described as an assessment of the "magnitude" of social

acceptance" and as the quantification of the phenomenon and the impact of social acceptance especially in places where it has been ignored. The discussion focused on how to track developments in the area of social acceptance of wind energy projects, development of methods, and possible indicators to illustrate those trends.

The working group discussed the reasons for monitoring social acceptance as well as possible benefits to various target groups for the results of such studies. Criteria for “social acceptance indicators” were defined and possible indicators assembled. The working group conclusions were circulated to IEA Wind members in a “flash note” (not yet published). What is missing from the surveys on acceptance of renewable energy technologies or specific projects, in the view of Task 28 participants, are lead indicators to summarize developments in social acceptance. Such lead indicators should represent more detailed measurements and social research. Task 28 participants recognize the complexity of the issue and the difficulties in establishing relevant indicators. However, such *lead indicators* could serve as a valuable tool to make the dimension of social acceptance visible to administrations and politicians as well as to citizens. Measureable indicators could also help evaluate policies, policy instruments, and the degree to which guidelines or recommendations are being implemented. The Task 28 working group will continue discussion of the issue in 2014 and will eventually elaborate some proposals to the countries involved in IEA Wind.

The meeting in Japan was prepared by means of a web meeting giving the Operating Agent a chance to work out the structure of the discussions beforehand and to help the working group prepare for the meeting. After the Japan meeting, another web meeting was held to discuss the results that should be presented to the IEA Wind Executive Committee.

The website was updated on a regular basis and new projects were inserted into the data base. In 2013, the exchange with interested partners from Australia was intensified and a representative from the Clean Energy Council was present at the Japan meeting. This gave the working group a chance to have an insight into the situation on social acceptance in Australia.

4.0 Plans for 2014 and beyond

Apart from the issue of monitoring social acceptance, the working group has decided to tackle the role of the intermediary in social acceptance projects in 2014. In many of the IEA Wind countries, individual persons, private enterprises, or public agencies have acted as intermediaries by bringing together the various interests involved. This role has helped move projects forward to the benefit of all parties. The working group will reflect on the various models available. It will summarize lessons learned and make recommendations for organizations aiming to establish such an intermediary function.

The highlight of 2014 will be the working group meeting in March in Milano, Italy, at the premises of RSE, the Italian partner. The meeting will be connected to an Italian expert day, bringing together for the first time Italian stakeholders involved in the social acceptance issues surrounding wind farms. The title of the experience exchange is to be “Building and Measuring Public Acceptance of Wind Energy Projects.”

References:

Opening photo: National expert meeting of IEA Wind Task 28 in Japan in May 2014

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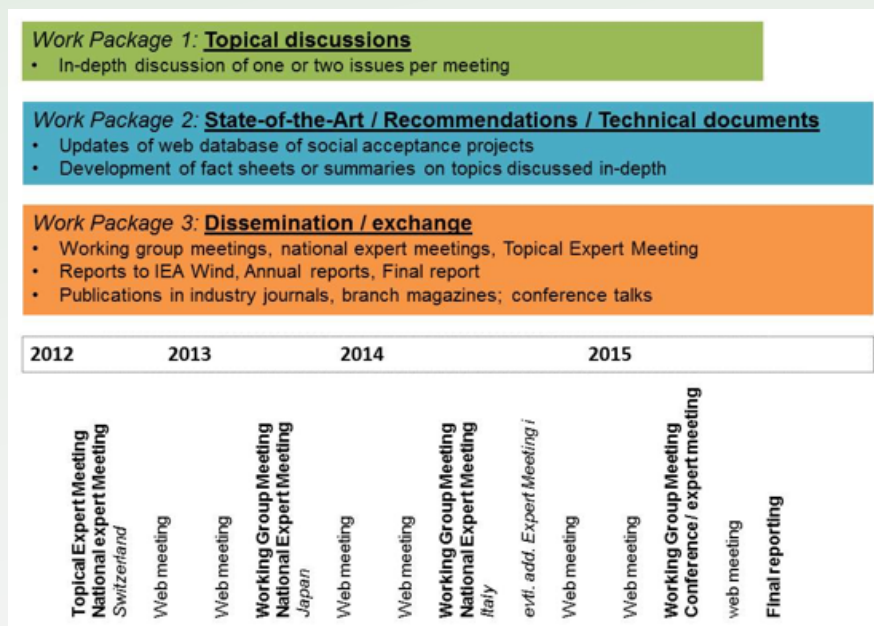


Figure 1. Work packages and timeline for IEA Wind Task 28, 2012–2015