

PRESS RELEASE

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The wind industry wants to raise the acceptance of wind power through greater public involvement

The Fraunhofer Institute for Systems and Innovation Research ISI is researching the social acceptance of onshore wind power within the EU project "[WISE Power](#)". One insight from a workshop held as part of this project is that the wind industry already has many measures to better inform and advise the public, but is not always implementing these in a targeted manner. This is precisely where the strategies developed in "WISE Power" come into play. They aim to expand citizen advice and participation and raise the acceptance of wind power as a result.

The "WISE Power" project is part of the EU's Intelligent Energy Europe Program and is being carried out by the Fraunhofer ISI, the German Energy Agency (dena) and other European partners. It addresses the social acceptance of wind power by developing so called "social acceptance pathways" (SAPs) and social acceptance strategies that aim to improve the planning security for new wind power installations. In cooperation with the German Wind Energy Association (BWE), the Fraunhofer ISI and dena presented the results gained from the project so far at a workshop during HUSUM Wind, the leading trade fair for the industry. These results are based on an analysis of 40 guides and manuals, 15 scientific articles and reports, and an expert survey on the acceptance of wind power installations with more than 200 participants from 13 countries.

The main result of the workshop is that stakeholders in the wind industry are very interested in tailored knowledge and strategies concerning how social acceptance pathways (SAP) can improve the acceptance of wind power and believe these to be both desirable and relevant for their work. These strategies were developed based on previous project activities, can be applied across Europe, and were recently published as a [draft version](#). They are intended to help develop a comprehensive and tailored participation strategy for wind power projects and include measures for the innovative financing of such projects (financial participation measures) as well as information and engagement measures. Participants at the workshop representing manufacturers, municipalities, environmental groups, project developers and energy cooperatives particularly emphasized the topics of citizen information

and engagement. In the future, citizens should be considered much earlier or to a greater extent when problems occur in the planning process of new wind plants. The workshop not only emphasized the benefits of such strategies, but also that acceptance measures are already often a fixed component of wind power projects. However, they are not always systematically implemented due to parallel requirements such as approval procedures. This is where the SAPs come into play by offering support in implementing strategy at different stages of the project.

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Dr. Elisabeth Dütschke, who coordinates the "WISE Power" project at the Fraunhofer ISI, mentions several challenges facing acceptance measures in wind energy projects: "Our workshop confirms the results of our survey: There are often capacity bottlenecks at the level of the projects, for instance a lack of staff to implement communication activities. In addition, from the viewpoint of the wind industry, challenges result from the changing legal framework conditions such as the introduction of a tender system for power generation from renewable energies – this makes it more complicated to include a discussion process at an early point in time with the affected communities and citizens." Dütschke also points to other framework conditions that can hinder the communication process in wind energy projects: These include changing social and cultural factors such as citizens' understanding of democracy that is increasingly related to individual projects and less to upstream processes like regional planning procedures.

Based on the findings of this and other workshops in the partner countries, the social acceptance strategies are validated and further developed. Finally, they will be provided to all the relevant wind energy stakeholders in the form of an interactive tool. These stakeholders can then derive the relevant knowledge they need in the context of their projects.

More information:

- [WISE Power project website](#)
- [Preliminary version of the "Social Acceptance Pathways" developed in the project](#)

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