



D4.3 Summary report testing focus group

Work Package No	4
Work Package Title	Narrative testing
Work Package Leader	Guidehouse
Issue Date	30.03.2022





Disclaimer and acknowledgements



“This project has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under Grant Agreement No. 847153”

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DOCUMENT INFORMATION	
Acronym	EEW4
Title	Energy Efficiency Watch 4
Grant Agreement Number	847153
Call	H2020-LC-SC3-EE-2018
Project Coordinator	EUROPEAN FORUM FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES (EUFORES)
Document Type	Report
Dissemination Level (PU/CO)	Public

DOCUMENT HISTORY			
Issue	Date	Comment	Author
V1	30.03.2022	As foreseen on the GA	Becker, Bruhin

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VERIFICATION AND APPROVAL		
	Date	Name
Verification final Draft by WP leader	30.03.2022	Egger
Approval Final Deliverable by Coordinator	01.04.2022	Petetti

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4	BORG & CO AB	BORG & CO AB	SE	Company
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Executive summary

This summary report on the testing with the focus group will sum up the findings of the focus group and serve as input to finalize the narrative cases. They will be published on the project website soon after the event.

Deliverable's Background

As described under D3.7, the original concept of the focus group had to be altered due to the impact of the pandemic to a remote format, which then took place via phone calls with individual experts and consultations embedded in other online events.

In this process of consultations, the cases were slightly further refined, for some, titles were altered to make them more expressive. In particular, the following considerations on selected case studies were taken into consideration:

- The aspect of 'jumping too short' with the sole energy saving narrative (suggesting that all energy users are similarly keen on saving units of energy) was discussed intensely and the need for stressing more the overall economic optimization effect was clearly articulated
- The suggestive element in the slogan 'just transition' was underlined to be potentially misleading / counterproductive, articulating the need for a better narrative on the balance between chances and risks and assumptions on potential winners and losers of the transition (Avoid a 'race for compensation' if everyone declaring himself a 'loser of the transition')
- The argument, that research and development institutions have a key role as 'agents of change' and promoters of a positive connotation of transition and favourably recognized innovation was strengthened
- The role of civil society involvement for creating acceptance for energy efficiency policies was highlighted in the case on participation and communication
- In the case on the image of technologies, the aspect of the desire of end consumers (e.g. homeowners) for modernity and comfortable living by an effective and efficient heating system / insulation standard) was underlined
- Regarding the case of transparent data bases, the hint to Eurostat as publicly available and trustworthy general data source was made, refining it by the aspects that always clear reference on the provenience of data (e.g. indicating if they stem from Eurostat) is essential but not always given, and further analysis based on such data similarly needs to follow clear, scientific and transparent methodologies
- With respect to compensation schemes under e.g. a CO₂-tax, the importance of an accompanying communication strategy from the beginning of the process was highlighted, referencing a.o. to the following experience: [Limited impacts of carbon tax rebate programmes on public support for carbon pricing | Nature Climate Change](#)
- It was critically stated that throughout the project, all involved stakeholders had not ranked aspects of energy security very high (as clearly visible in the survey), despite explicitly being asked also in the stakeholder workshops.

Finally, the order of cases was changed according to a cluster structure, and, following the actual geopolitical developments, a remark on the impact/interdependence of the Ukraine crisis was added:



Narrative cases

Cluster Participation and Transparency

Case 1: Communication, Dialogue and Participation

Case 2: Independent and transparent data base

Cluster Economic Aspects

Case 3: Only talk about the real business case for energy efficiency

Case 4: The image of technologies

Cluster Connotation of Change

Case 5: Good to be a front-runner

Case 6: Energy Efficiency as integral improvement of the production cycle

Case 7: Empowering Research and Innovation for Energy Efficiency

Case 8: Education, training and upskilling

Cluster Societal Acceptance

Case 9: Communicate on price effects and social compensation

Case 10: Just transition

Overview on the Clusters

Participation and Transparency

This comprises on the one hand transparency of data on which policies are grounded, from which their targets and functioning principles are derived, and how their effectiveness and positive impact (not only regarding target achievement but also on other relevant parameters like contribution to economic welfare) can be measured and explained. On the other hand it calls for dialogue and participation formats for all relevant stakeholders and stakeholder groups which need to be reached for ensuring the success of these policies, through their understanding, buy-in or at least for managing expectations.

Economic Aspects

Policies need to ensure more than so far that business cases can evolve, which do not remain in market niches but become mainstream through amplification and cost degression. Communication needs to focus not only on the (energy and thus cost-) saving aspect of energy efficiency measures, but stress more the overarching potential for optimizing production processes (and thus also reduce resource input and, more importantly, optimize financial performance). Beyond the area of energy policy, also the role of education, training and upskilling needs to be understood as key factor for economic success, which should be addressed in cross sectoral (e.g. energy AND education) policy packages.

Overview on the Clusters (2)

Connotation of Change

Phases of economic and technological changes in industrial societies typically come along with scepticism and fear (whether to be on the winning or losing side of change), which can significantly delay or even obstruct political reforms. Therefore, for the success of the energy transition as part of the overall decarbonization of the economy, it is required to generate on macro level a positive connotation of change, showcasing economic chances and making transparent the balance of expected gains and losses. On a more detailed level, preferences and needs of end consumers regarding their willingness to adopt new technologies need to be analyzed, to find a reasonable balance between actually required financial support and their potential replacement by image factors of technologies and economic behaviour.

The role of technological research and innovation as an agent and promotor of change in society needs to be fully understood. Also here, it is recommended to establish comprehensive policy packages (e.g. energy AND research policies) beyond the boundaries of traditional policy areas.

Societal Acceptance

Target groups need to be analyzed for their respective vulnerabilities and strengths, in order to find out where financial compensations for acceptance are really required and where not, thus avoiding a fatal 'race for the highest compensation'. This comes along with a thoroughly prepared expectation management on the meaning and impact of a 'just' transition. Where change is to be triggered by price effects, e.g. through a CO₂-tax, particular focus must be laid on communicating the *related* price increase and the level of compensation depending on the social status.



Preamble on implications of Ukraine crisis

- Ukraine crisis shows: potential of EE for energy security high but not taken serious
- In the expert survey, energy security has been ranked low
- Same in the stakeholder workshops: belief in market forces outweighed specific energy security measures
- Recognition dominated by supply side (,this is the real stuff')
- EE seen as the ,little sister'
- Gas dependence so high due to lack of strategic planning for supply
- Also under market conditions unreasonable (too low diversification)
- If now strategic planning is taken up, EE must get an appropriate role