



D3.7 Summary report input focus group

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**EEW4 project team**

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2	GUIDEHOUSE GERMANY GMBH	GUIDEHOUSE	DE	Company
3	O.OE. ENERGIESPARVERBAND	ESV	AT	Regional agency
4	BORG & CO AB	BORG & CO AB	SE	Company
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Executive summary

This summary report on the input of the focus group will sum up the findings of the focus group and serve as input to the next project phase. They will be published on the project website soon after the event.

Task 3.6: Input gathering from focus group

The Focus Group, consisting of selected single members of all stakeholder groups involved in the process, will be consulted to sharpen the essence of the findings of tasks 3.2 -3.5 [i.e. NPWS, Survey, Business Stakeholder WS, input from network partners] and add, where applicable, their own pointed views.

The on-demand focus group meetings (3-4 meetings) will be virtual, i.e. taking place via group phone calls / video conferences (each max 1.5 hours). Before a meeting, the Focus Group will receive a written overview (ppt slides) of the results of tasks 3.2 – 3.5, accompanied by requests for specific input on certain questions which require a ‘second opinion’ or further interpretation. Depending on the case, this will happen as discussion with the whole group or in interview style with one or more members, the outcome of which then to be shared and discussed with the full group. In some cases, members of the Focus Group may also be asked for written commenting. All results will be documented in a written summary, including also meeting documentation.

Number Participants: 6-10

The original concept of the focus group, as outlined in the project proposal, had to be altered due to the impact of the pandemic. Originally it had been planned to compose the focus group as a small group of experts with special commitment to the topic, to be identified during the in person meetings with business stakeholders, Members of Parliaments et al. A first ‘large’ focus group meeting took place in Berlin in January 2020, generating valuable initial inputs for first directions in which to search for narrative examples. It had been planned to further use this meeting format, gradually narrowing the composition of the group to the size and scope which had been aimed at, for further discussion and refinement of the findings from the input phase. As it turned out when the input phase had just started (1st business stakeholder workshop took place in person by end January 2020, others planned to follow as of March 2020), no more in person meetings were possible due to the pandemic. The approach of stakeholder workshops had therefore to be shifted rapidly to online formats. At first, this was meant to be on preliminary basis, as not all countries felt comfortable with online workshops. The intention was to offer them, when possible again, a later engagement at in person meetings, but finally all envisaged input had to be gathered in online events. Accordingly, the focus group approach had to be shifted to a remote format, which then took place via phone calls with individual experts and consultations embedded in other online events.

In essence, those consultations helped to select interesting cases from the large amount of inputs given during the stakeholder workshops, to shape them as clear-cut cases and identify the main narrative structure, also in relation to the other cases.

The selected cases at this stage were:

1. Wanting to be a front runner
2. EE as integral optimization of production cycle

3. Only talk about a real business case
4. Transparent foundations for EE achievements
5. Understand your clients: working with the image of technologies
6. Just transition – (where) is compensation really needed?
7. Communication is key – the role of stakeholder dialogues
8. Research and innovation
9. The right pace for workforce qualification
10. Who is price sensitive and how to discuss cost distribution

Story line definition happened via slide decks following a standard pattern (examples):

Wanting to be a front runner

Starting point / past narrative:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some countries (e.g. DK) have achieved broad societal consensus: ,It is good for us to be a front runner' – this facilitates innovative thinking / active and smooth transformation
Changing narrative:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In many European societies, transformation is connotated primarily as an uncertainty or even a threat• But even in 'change sceptic' contexts there is regional or sectoral experience / ambition to become pioneer in certain areas• Often strongly linked with image / overcoming old & unwanted perceptions
Practical and policy implications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify such potential and develop convincing front runner narratives• connotate transformation as beneficial by showing pioneer advantages

EE - integral optimization of production cycle

Starting point / past narrative:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Energy efficiency = linear relation between energy input and economic output (in macro-economic terms as well as on business level).• Narrow view on the economics of EE → reduces EE measures to issues like “payback period” → results in low priority for EE measures in many businesses (where energy prices are not sufficiently relevant)
Changing narrative:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EE is in some contexts thought of and communicated in a more integrated manner → optimization not only of the energetic performance but of the overall production process via EE measures → positive implications on quality of output, cost of production and overall competitiveness of business (not just with a view to energy costs).
Practical and policy implications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Energy audits require a comprehensive understanding of the respective production cycle (thus requirements for high quality EAs may be more clearly defined)• Companies need to discuss EE not as a single matter but as a means to modernize the production process and improve the product / offering → at higher management level

Only talk about a real business case

Starting point / past narrative:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Companies adjust their sales strategies strictly to commercially competitive criteria• They stress the importance to sharply distinguish between those and indirect factors such as environmental protection.
Changing narrative:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The frequently applied approach (a.o. by agencies promoting EE) of highlighting co-benefits increasing the attractiveness of energy efficiency is considered as rather counter-productive• companies argue that - although acknowledging an additional marketing effect - co-benefits could never balance out structural competitive disadvantages (e.g. high payback times of EE products in a context of low energy prices) and stress the risk of neglecting/concealing this business imperative.
Practical and policy implications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus should be laid on creating level playing fields where more EE products and services can in economic terms compete with conventional/less efficient products.

Transparent Foundations of EE achievements

Starting point / past narrative:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In various country contexts, companies complain that EE achievements (effective savings, market transformation etc.) are not visible enough / not based on the right data or even countered by fake news• Thus, public opinion questions EE, despite a clear proof of its benefits could be given
Changing narrative:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public debate needs to be steered along objective information on economic benefits and realistic cost estimations of EE
Practical and policy implications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EE policies should be accompanied by sufficient documentation (statistics, evaluation, dissemination) of benefits and achievements Those should serve for <ul style="list-style-type: none">• communicating successes and need for additional action• improving existing policies / sharpening their applicability to the target groups



Understand your clients: working successfully with the image of technologies

Starting point / past narrative:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Although many policies and support schemes replacing outdated inefficient technologies are in place target achievement is often lagging behind.• Levelling the cost difference to efficient technologies doesn't always get to the heart of the decision-making to replace a technology.
Changing narrative:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Including a socio-economic analysis of target groups shows a more differentiated choice of appropriate instruments, esp. the image/specific interest associated with a certain technology can have substantial positive or negative impact on target achievement.• Campaign focusing mainly on the negative impact of outdated technologies or the positive impact of new technologies, e.g. oil heating systems (interest in high technological standards, value development of real estate, quality of life incl. image component), Eastern European context: negative image associated with wood heating as a sign of poverty and backwardness
Practical and policy implications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Mix of appropriate instruments is needed, cost arguments are not always the decisive ones- Supportive image campaigns -> considering socio-economic aspects



Just transition – (where) is compensation really needed?

Starting point / past narrative:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In the political debate, it is broadly suggested that energy transition will require massive financial compensation for various groups• Examples show that often net effects are more positive than assumed / outweighing cost where transformation is properly implemented
Changing narrative:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The term 'just' suggests that transformation as such might be unjust (link to case study 1)• This may imply a strong societal expectation for compensation without comprehensive consideration of economic chances• If this attitude remains, policies will fail / speed of transformation will be too slow• Replace compensation-oriented debate by targeted strategies for highlighting and quantifying positive effects and according communication
Practical and policy implications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Break up negative connotation of transformation by highlighting positive net effects• Ensure that compensation is available –but only to those in actual need• Make these approaches part of larger transformational strategies, providing job perspectives and economic growth chances for vulnerable stakeholder groups, struggling regions etc.



Communication and dialogue

Starting point / past narrative:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Success of EE policy implementation depends on stakeholder involvement (e.g. entrepreneurs / end users / groups potentially affected by transformation), facilitated by proper communication• dialogue formats on all levels are not yet at required levels –large regional differences• Lack of information leading to low commitment and little ability to work with policies / establish successful business within them
Changing narrative:	Further establish <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communication of policies• Dialogue with civil society• Stakeholder involvement• Parliamentary hearings• Feedback mechanisms for target groups, etc.
Practical and policy implications:	Policies need to comprise dialogue formats such as <ul style="list-style-type: none">• early stage: what is planned, hearing who takes which position, feedback collection• Implementation phase: information & guidance on how to work with the regulation / support scheme• forward looking: regular evaluation & adjustment, incorporating stakeholder feedback

