

## **CREATE ACCEPTANCE – development of a research-based multi-stakeholder tool for managing the societal acceptance of sustainable energy technology projects**

***Eva Heiskanen, National Consumer Research Centre, Finland***

The aim of the Create Acceptance project is to improve the conditions for sustainable energy technologies by developing a tool for assessing and promoting the societal acceptance of such technologies. Create Acceptance builds upon an existing innovation management tool called Socrobust, but aims to enhance it into a multi-stakeholder tool capable of dealing with the expectations of multiple stakeholders.

There is a need for such a tool because the current understanding of social processes affecting the (non-)acceptance of renewable energy and rational use of energy technologies is limited. Project managers often assume that stakeholders will adopt and adapt to their innovation without resistance. In practice, however, stakeholders such as users, NGOs, neighbours or local public authorities often have different visions about the innovation and the future world in which the innovation should fit. Failure to engage stakeholders may lead to resistance and to failure of the entire project.

The project is coordinated by Energy research Centre of the Netherlands (ECN). Other partners include Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (CERIS/CNR) Italy, Ecoinstitut Barcelona, Spain, IAE Toulouse, France, Icelandic New Energy INE, Institute for Renewable Energy Ltd. IEO, Poland, Hungarian Environmental Economics Centre MAKK, National Consumer Research Center NCRC Finland, OEKO-Institut E.V. Germany, SURF Centre UK, and the University of Cape Town, South Africa.

The first phases of the project have included making a critical review and gap analysis of the existing Socrobust tool from a multistakeholder perspective. For this purpose, a meta-analysis has also been conducted of 22 case studies of more and less successful sustainable energy projects in different geographic regions – West Europe, North Europe, Central and Eastern Europe and South Europe – as well as in different local settings.

Currently, the new Create Acceptance tool to measure, promote and influence societal acceptance is being developed, and testing of the tool is starting in five demo projects: the hydrogen project ECTOS in Iceland, a carbon capture and storage project in the Netherlands, a biomass project in Germany, a wind project in Hungary and a solar thermal power plant in Italy. The tool will be refined on the basis of experiences gained, and the new multi-stakeholder tool will later become publicly available to energy managers, policy makers, technology developers, intermediary energy service providers, and other possible users.

The paper provides an overview of the Create Acceptance process and presents highlights of the main findings, until now, of this ongoing project.