

Paper 4.1 New Task Concept Note

International Energy and Climate Public Engagement

Matters for the ExCo

1. The ExCo is asked to approve the International Energy and Climate Public Engagement Task concept to move to full proposal phase.
2. The ExCo is invited to provide comments and suggestions to improve the value of the Task concept and indicate their likelihood of participating in the Task.

Background and motivation

3. As countries across the world plan for energy and low carbon transitions, public engagement will become increasingly vital. For example, in the UK, the [Climate Change Committee](#) have identified that around 60% of the emissions required to reach net zero will involve behaviour change (including technology adoption and demand reduction). This means that opportunities to decarbonise energy systems without the public noticing or being involved will be limited in the future. Furthermore, the importance of public engagement in relation to the citing, decision making, and ownership of energy infrastructure has rose to prominence over the past decade. Many countries will also need to support a transition to low carbon homes (including energy efficiency and low carbon heating technologies) – getting public engagement right will be an important first step and facilitator of this.
4. Public engagement is a term that is often used but lacks a clear and commonly agreed definition. It can be summarised as a broad concept that captures engagement of citizens in:
 - decision-making (including policy-making) about how to reach net zero, and
 - engagement of the public in the concept of and action necessary to reach net zero.

In the Netherlands, further breakdowns differentiate public participation in policy making and implementation, including five basic forms of participation in energy projects ('Participatiewaaiers'). This includes active participation of the public in project development ('projectparticipatie'), ownership and crowd finance, and other forms of financial benefits resulting from energy projects.

A key early step of the project will be to define the scope of the annex and identify which aspects of public engagement are of most interest internationally for consideration in phase 1.

5. At present, many countries tend to have small and disjointed approaches to engaging the public on and around energy/climate change. Frequently, different policies have their own public engagement approaches/programmes, lacking a systemic and strategic approach that connects them. There are also big differences across countries in terms of public engagement and participation at a local level, such as in informing decision making around energy infrastructure and in actively supporting community ownership.
6. Dr Christina Demski (Cardiff University) has produced a [review of existing evidence](#) around public engagement on energy and climate change. This review highlights a number of benefits from public engagement including helping to facilitate action (although

communication on its own is rarely sufficient), building trust and the development of better and fairer policies and infrastructure.

7. Many countries have also committed to the [Action for Climate Empowerment](#), which will result in the development of systematic education, training and public awareness programmes around climate change.
8. This annex is strongly aligned with the vision and purpose of the Users TCP. The energy sector is undergoing an unprecedented period of change – the proposal to set up a world leading collaboration of public engagement and participation focuses on a fundamental part of delivering climate and energy transitions. In particular, it will focus on how to best involve the public in decision making and action relating to energy demand, the adoption of new energy technologies (including home retrofit) and the development of energy infrastructure. This would be the only ongoing collaboration that exists on this issue internationally that brings together a range of countries with leading experts to build expertise and knowledge in this vital area.
9. In short, effective public engagement is absolutely critical if certain climate and energy goals are to be achieved but many countries are lacking substantive, systematic and effective approaches for doing this. Therefore, a better understanding of how to effectively engage with citizens is crucial to climate and sustainability goals.

Objectives

10. The overarching vision is to create a world leading centre on energy and climate change transitions, public engagement, communication and participation, with an aim to enable international collaboration and learning, and connect policy makers and subject matter experts.

11. Three provisional objectives are proposed:

Objective 1: Collaborating to develop best practice principles for public engagement, communication and participation.

Objective 2: Identifying and sharing knowledge/information about which approaches are consistently effective in which circumstances across countries.

Objective 3: Identifying common issues/challenges and bringing in world leading experts to address and resolve these.

Pathways to impact

12. It is proposed that there will be a two-tier structure to the annex:
 - **A central policy maker group.** This group will be directly involved or linked to public engagement approaches and initiatives within national governments that are participating in the annex. This group will directly steer, fund and use the insights being generated from the centre. Initially this group would meet quarterly (as well as informal exchanges).

- **A wider interest group.** This group will include subject matter experts – including academics, consultants and practitioners (including those who have run campaigns, marketing experts, public participation specialists). The wider interest group will interact with and share insights with the central policy maker group.
13. The centre will work to drive best practice public engagement internationally. Initially public engagement will be treated as a broad concept in its entirety – however key areas of public engagement will be defined and form the focus of phase 1. This impact will occur through
- The central policy maker group using the shared insights of their work and the evidence projects commissioned, and
 - Key outputs being published and available to use by countries and organisations globally. Overall, the centre will work to drive best practice public engagement internationally.

Activities of the centre

14. It is envisaged that phase 1 of the annex will run for 2 years. It is proposed that, after these 2 years, the annex only proceeds if there is a sufficient amount of interest from Users TCP countries (e.g. 8 or more countries signed up).
15. It is suggested that two substantive pieces of work will be carried out during phase 1:
1. A comprehensive review of international energy and climate public engagement approaches. This should cover a wide array of countries and include:
 - Cross-cutting initiatives (e.g. around climate change or energy transitions generally).
 - Local level and community driven initiatives (e.g. around driving and promoting community ownership).
 - Case studies of specific sectors (such as retrofit, heating, electric vehicles, low carbon energy and food). This would be significantly more comprehensive than the initial scoping review the UK has funded.
 2. Development of clear evidence-based recommendations, practical advice and recommendations for countries on how they should engage the public, both around climate change/energy transitions generally, around some sectors specifically and in relation to local infrastructure. This is important because there is
 - A limit to how much countries can learn from one another
 - A need to collectively build an understanding of what good practice public engagement approaches should/could involve (and how countries should go about establishing these).
16. It is envisaged that members of the wider interest group will provide summaries and hold presentations of the latest evidence. The annex will provide a platform to ensure interchange between key experts and policy makers and ensure that the latest and most important evidence is disseminated.
17. The centre will also provide a clear outline of international evidence needs in this space to help shape the direction of academic research.

Management

18. We anticipate a joining fee of £20,000 (\$25,000) for countries participating in phase 1. The funds would be managed centrally by The Users TCP accounting structures. £10,000 of the funds would be used to pay for a world leading expert in the area to act as chair and coordinator. This expert would be expected to oversee all outputs, establish meetings and coordinate the wider interest group (and associated presentations/evidence insights). The remainder of the funds would be used to fund the aforementioned activities of the group.
19. The core policy maker group would be responsible for setting out the priorities for the centre and would develop more detailed requirements and guidelines regarding the approach of the annex.

Outputs (for whom, target groups)

20. The anticipated outputs would be:
 - A visual, compelling and comprehensive slide-deck detailing a wide array of international public engagement approaches and associated success outcomes.
 - A report, building on the above international approaches, developing new practical guidelines and steps, and setting out clear recommendations for how countries should go about developing public engagement approaches.
 - Presentation(s) or short report(s) summarising the latest evidence on public engagement and its value.
21. Informal challenge and advice sessions for policy makers with experts

Time Schedule and milestones

22. A provisional timetable for the initial few months of the centre is as follows:

November 2021 – First Central Policy Group Meeting to confirm requirements for the coordinator, key questions / insights needed.

December 2021 – Appointment of expert coordinator

Jan 2022 – Second Central Policy Group Meeting (Quarterly thereafter)

March 2022

- Appointment of expert contractor(s) to deliver the outputs
- First workshop with the wider interest group

Funding and Commitments

23. All participating countries would need to contribute £20,000 (\$25,000) to participate in Phase 1 and dedicate a small amount of time to the central policy group to help guide the annex. The annex will largely be delivered via cost-share.