



CASI

Public Engagement in Sustainable Innovations (SI): Visions, Tensions and Dilemmas

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Why Public Engagement in SI?

Sustainability is a collaborative process requiring collaborative approaches

- It is a normative and political undertaking that involves balancing or trading-off different societal goals for the future
- Each sustainability choice entails different innovation trajectories



A key challenge for sustainability/innovation policy is that ambivalence and tensions tend to arise which can be illuminated and reconciled through careful analysis



Lessons from CASI: Reconciling citizens' and experts' perspectives

Putting normative issues into perspective can constructively inform policy options

- Integrating different values is about determining cross-cutting priority directions for research and innovation
- The opportunity is there to explore the motivations, values and preferences that lie behind particular visions for the future
- Knowledge co-creation can enhance the mutual consideration of future outcomes, impacts, and trajectories



The CASI approach – the importance of iterative analysis

- CASI sustainable engagement cycle: from ‘problem framing’ to ‘problem transformation’
- Integrative model promoting the transparent balancing of inputs and facilitation of different knowledge claims
- Systemic analysis of outcomes and underpinning normative justifications
- Feedback loops/mechanism of ‘outcome verification’



Takeaway points from the comparison of citizens' and experts' sustainability perceptions

Citizens' perspectives

- Imperatives for a wider/holistic societal transformation
- Cross-sectoral issues
- Systemic opportunities for society-driven action

Experts' perspectives

- Goal oriented formulations closer to dominant sustainability approaches
- Emphasis on technology, resource management, and economic efficiency



How to explain differences?

- An explanation may lie in expert competences, the knowledge and skills of citizens, a relationship between ‘hard’ vs. ‘soft’ values or an assessment of personal vs. professional contexts...
- Individuals and groups in society think and act upon the basis of their own normative assumptions and knowledge
- Expert knowledge provides a glimpse into what may be achieved under ideal circumstances
- Public knowledge tends to be more contextual and rooted in social dynamics, hinting at what may work and how it could be implemented in specific circumstances



Outlooks for policy

- Effective public engagement needs to be endorsed and streamlined across the H2020 programme
- Explicitly acknowledging and analysing normative preferences or objectives helps identify co-benefits of proposed topics and priorities
- Collective deliberation can nurture cross-sectoral conditions for sustainability across society as a whole
- Reconciling values and perspectives can offer insights for systemic action spanning different fields, domains, and activities

Thank you!

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