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Project Summary

EnergyPROSPECTS (PROactive Strategies and Policies for Energy Citizenship Transformation) will work with a critical understanding of energy citizenship that is grounded in state-of-the-art Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) insights. Funded under the EU Horizon 2020 programme for three years, EnergyPROSPECTS aims to develop a broad understanding of energy citizenship, as a policy concept, a socio-technical imaginary, a knowing-of-governance, i.e. a social construction of desirable/normal civic agency in future energy systems. The project will identify and examine a range of cross-cutting issues in energy citizenship, which will inform iterative typology development and criteria for case selection. Drawing on existing databases and a search for new cases, a selection of 500 initiatives and a mapping and typology refinement exercise to demonstrate the depth/breadth of the energy citizenship concept in theory and practice will be performed. Forty cases will be selected for in-depth analysis exploring development, evaluation, intermediaries, institutions, governance and ICT in energy systems. Using a multi-actor perspective, an empowerment toolkit for practitioners and citizens will be developed, co-creating viable strategies, and developing new business and social innovation models, and new forms of organisation to advance energy citizenship. A critical part of the research involves analysing the external and internal contextual conditions as they support or hinder energy citizenship in its various forms. Based on the analysis the project will match suitable models and forms of organisation with different countries, regions and contexts, and will conduct a citizen survey to appraise the validity of various scenarios and discuss and refine results in citizen workshops and policy forums. This will produce practical policy outputs which will be revised with policy actors in knowledge exchange workshops.

Summary of Objectives

EnergyPROSPECTS's primary objectives are to:

1. Develop an innovative conceptual framework for the understanding of energy citizenship
2. Identify diversity of types and empirical manifestations of energy citizenship
3. Identify constraining and enabling conditions to active energy citizenship
4. Identify and assess the more and less favourable outcomes and impacts of different forms of energy citizenship
5. Enhance engagement with citizens, practitioners and policy-makers and analyse and design more effective ways of engaging citizens and other stakeholders
6. Translate findings and insights into tools and interventions for citizens and practitioners, new business and service models.

The EnergyPROSPECTS consortium includes nine research partners (universities, research institutes, enterprises and NGOs) from Ireland, Belgium, Hungary, Netherlands, Bulgaria, France, Latvia, Germany and Spain.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document provides good practice guidelines for EnergyPROSPECTS consortium members concerning research design and implementation, ethical standards and key aspects of data collection, participant recruitment and community involvement. It details key steps and procedures in relation to carrying out EnergyPROSPECTS empirical research work to a high standard and in accordance with European and internal guidelines for ethical conduct in research practice. Drawing on well-established good practice guidelines and research manuals issued by the European Commission, the European Science Foundation and the OECD Global Science Forum, this document outlines in detail procedures and criteria to guide data collection aspects of the EnergyPROSPECTS project.

1. Introduction

Integrity, rigour and ethical conduct are central pillars of good research practice. The following guidelines are intended to offer assistance to all EnergyPROSPECTS team members during the project and promote a shared understanding of the importance of high standards in research and adherence to guidelines concerning ethical conduct in social research. They complement the rules for participation and dissemination outlined in the EnergyPROSPECTS consortium agreement (20/04/2021) as well as Deliverables D1.1 (Detailed Project Management Handbook), D1.2 (Data Management Plan) and D8.1 (H - Requirement No. 1 on '*Procedures & criteria that will identify/recruit participants; Consent procedure; Consent form template*'). Throughout this document references are made to three key international good practice guides for researchers.

1. The European Commission's comprehensive guidelines ***Ethics for Researchers: Facilitating Research Excellence in FP7*** (2013);
2. ***The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity***, issued in 2017 by the All European Academies (ALLEA); and
3. ***Best Practices for Ensuring Scientific Integrity and Preventing Misconduct***, a set of guidelines issued by the OECD's Global Science Forum (2007).

All guidelines in this document have been formulated to closely match the aims and objectives, structure and content of the EnergyPROSPECTS project. Following the adoption of this document in July 2021, **full ethical clearance will be sought for the EnergyPROSPECTS research** by the Research Ethics Committee at the EnergyPROSPECTS coordinating partner, the National University of Ireland, Galway. Ethical clearance will safeguard the health, welfare and rights of participants and researchers in research studies and afford security and protection to the handling and treatment of collected data, taking into account the scientific procedures and concerns of the relevant individuals and communities of individuals. All researchers and workshop facilitators involved in EnergyPROSPECTS will take full responsibility for using these guidelines and procedures in their delivery of the project.

2. Good research practice guidelines

The EnergyPROSPECTS consortium brings together experienced researchers from across Europe who are committed to integrity, quality and good practice in research. The **European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity**, issued in 2017 by ALLEA - All European Academies, provides four guiding principles of integrity in scientific and scholarly research:

- **Reliability** in ensuring the quality of research, reflected in the design, the methodology, the analysis and the use of resources.
- **Honesty** in developing, undertaking, reviewing, reporting and communicating research in a transparent, fair, full and unbiased way.
- **Respect** for colleagues, research participants, society, ecosystems, cultural heritage and the environment.
- **Accountability** for the research from idea to publication, for its management and organisation, for training, supervision and mentoring, and for its wider impacts.

All members of the EnergyPROSPECTS consortium agree to adhere to these principles of research integrity throughout the entire project.

2.1. Proper and responsible research procedures

All EnergyPROSPECTS research will be carried out in a careful and well considered manner. Great care will be taken throughout the lifespan of the project to reduce the risk of oversights and human

error arising from negligence, carelessness, or inattention to important details of the study by introducing internal quality assurance measures, such as peer review/evaluation, etc. Furthermore, regular online and face-to-face exchanges between team members are an integral part of the EnergyPROSPECTS research plan and will serve to further minimise the risk of errors. Quality management measures are described in more detail in D1.1 Project Management Handbook.

Cross-national comparative research involving teams of researchers from different cultural backgrounds can present particular challenges regarding the maintenance of high standards of integrity, responsibility and accountability (UNESCO 1994, Freed-Taylor 1994, Frank Vanclay, James T. Baines & C. Nicholas Taylor 2013). EnergyPROSPECTS team members commit to culturally sensitive research practices that adhere to the internationally recognised European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (ALLEA - All European Academies (2017)) in ways that suit national contexts.

The EnergyPROSPECTS consortium commits to sustainably managing resources and to minimising any harmful impact on the environment arising from the research. Efficient deployment of (financial and other) resources and minimisation of waste are central principles of the project. Efforts will be made at all stages of the project to minimise the ecological footprint of the research, for example through regular monitoring of the impact of EnergyPROSPECTS events on the environment and the implementation of guidelines for green events developed by EnergyPROSPECTS partner GreenDependent at the regular partner meetings and the necessary measures will be decided upon there. In case a serious breach is uncovered the relevant part of the Consortium Agreement will be addressed.

2.2. Good data practices: availability and access

Safe and secure data collection and processing of all data is a central tenet of the EnergyPROSPECTS project. The guidelines (Deliverables 1.1, 1.2 8.1) provide details on the procedures and criteria that will be used to identify/recruit research participants in the different Work Packages (notably in WP3, 4 and 5) specifically developed for case study research work. Detailed data protection procedures will be established prior to data collection. All original data collected during the EnergyPROSPECTS project will be securely stored for a minimum period of 5 years (D1.2 Data Management Plan will have more details). After the successful conclusion of the EnergyPROSPECTS project, research data will be made available open access on Zenodo to anyone interested in studying them or wishing to replicate the research or elaborate on its results.

EnergyPROSPECTS researchers will collect primary data only in WP3, WP4 and WP5. Secondary data will be collected throughout the project. Researchers in the project will be provided guidelines and will have to attend an internal training session in order to ensure that all researchers are aware of and familiar with procedures to follow (see Task 3.4 and Deliverable 3.4). Raw analogue data, including interview recordings, if adequate consent is provided by interview subjects, will be stored securely (e.g. in a locked cabinet) on the premises of the partner responsible for the respective WP and it will be shared only with project partners on password protected data repository in compliance of GDPR regulations should personal data be involved. All interview data will be transcribed by the national partners without delay, so only transcribed data – and no personal data – will be shared with other partners for evaluation and analysis.

Researchers will be strongly advised to encrypt all sensitive data using public key encryption software, in particular Pretty Good Privacy (PGP) the publicly available public key encryption application. This key will be provided by the researcher to the project manager only.

Confidentiality of data or results should be respected by all EnergyPROSPECTS researchers. All data files, especially records connecting identities to the data they provided, will be password protected

where possible and saved to an external drive that will remain the property of the project. Personal details and consent forms will be retained for as long as the DMP specifies. A DMP (D1.2) will be developed prior to any data collection and will contain more information on these data concerns.

3. EnergyPROSPECTS ethical guidelines

EnergyPROSPECTS consortium members are fully aware of the ethical issues involved in their work with human participants and commit to taking the utmost care to follow the general ethical principles of the scientific code of conduct: avoidance of exploitation, just distribution of benefits and burden, beneficence, respect for persons, respect for human dignity, scientific validity, social value and the rights and interests of research participants. The ethical standards and guidelines of Horizon 2020 will be rigorously applied, regardless of the country in which the research is carried out.

3.1. Recognising and preventing scientific misconduct

EnergyPROSPECTS consortium members condemn all forms of scientific misconduct.

What is scientific misconduct?

According to the European Commission (2013), scientific misconduct includes (negligent or intended) fabrication of results, improper manipulation of research data and plagiarism. These forms of scientific malpractice can cause harm and undermine scientific progress. The European Commission condemns all forms of scientific misconduct.

According to the OECD Global Science Forum (2007), misconduct in research damages science, but its consequences also extend into the broader societal sphere. These include

- harm to individuals and to society arising from fraudulent research results,
- direct damage to science itself, by creating false leads for other scientists to follow,
- degradation of relations among scientists, between senior researchers and students, and between researchers and agency programme managers,
- damage to science through the undermining of the public's trust in science, and of the government's ability to foster and promote research in a competent and responsible manner.

A possible consequence of misconduct is a decline in the credibility of scientific analysis and advice on issues that have important implications for society (e.g. energy consumption, climate change) and that require evidence-based laws and regulations to address them.

The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (2017) lists the very similar serious misconducts (fabrication, falsification and plagiarism), but also lists other direct violations of the good research, such as:

- Manipulating authorship or denigrating the role of other researchers in publications.
- Re-publishing substantive parts of one's own earlier publications, including translations, without duly acknowledging or citing the original ('self-plagiarism').
- Citing selectively to enhance own findings or to please editors, reviewers or colleagues.
- Withholding research results.
- Allowing funders/sponsors to jeopardise independence in the research process or reporting of results so as to introduce or promulgate bias.
- Expanding unnecessarily the bibliography of a study.
- Accusing a researcher of misconduct or other violations in a malicious way.

- Misrepresenting research achievements.
- Exaggerating the importance and practical applicability of findings.
- Delaying or inappropriately hampering the work of other researchers.
- Misusing seniority to encourage violations of research integrity.
- Ignoring putative violations of research integrity by others or covering up inappropriate responses to misconduct or other violations by institutions.
- Establishing or supporting journals that undermine the quality control of research ('predatory journals').

The EnergyPROSPECTS Grant Agreement outlines a series of steps to prevent scientific misconduct. Article 34 of the agreement includes an obligation to comply with ethical principles and highest standards of research integrity, and applicable national, EU and international law. Moreover, research actions raising ethical issues must comply with the ethics requirements set out in Annex 1 of the Grant Agreement. Non-compliance with the obligations outlined in Article 34 may incur a grant reduction, a termination of the agreement or participation of the beneficiary who is in breach of the ethical principles or any of the measures outlined in Chapter 6 of the Grant Agreement.

Full ethical clearance will be sought for the EnergyPROSPECTS project by the Research Ethics Committee at the EnergyPROSPECTS coordinating partner, the National University of Ireland, Galway. Ethical requirements are further addressed by *Deliverable 8.2*, which confirms that a competent Institutional Data Protection Officer has been established in each partner organisation and that all data collection and processing will be carried out according to EU and national legislation.

3.2. Responses to suspected misconduct

Suspected deviation from the principles of research integrity will be subject to an independent investigation that follows best practice guidelines provided by the OECD's Global Science Forum in *Investigating Research Misconduct Allegations in International Collaborative Research Projects: A Practical Guide* (2009). According to the OECD Global Science Forum (2009), investigations into possible non-compliance and misconduct must be conducted with appropriate transparency and in accordance with the highest standards of:

Integrity

- Investigations into research misconduct allegations must be fair, comprehensive and conducted expeditiously but without compromising accuracy, objectivity, and thoroughness.
- Those parties involved in the procedure must ensure that any interests they have which might constitute a conflict of interest are disclosed and managed.
- Detailed and confidential records will be maintained on all aspects of the procedure.

Fairness

- Investigation of research misconduct allegations should be conducted in a manner that is fair to all parties and in accordance with relevant laws.
- Persons accused of research misconduct must be given full details of the allegation(s) in writing and allowed a fair process for responding to allegations, asking questions, presenting evidence, calling witnesses, and providing responses to information presented.
- Allow witnesses to be accompanied by or seek advice and assistance from anyone of their choosing.

Confidentiality

1. The procedure should be conducted as confidentially as possible, in order to protect those involved in the investigation. Such confidentiality should be maintained provided this does not compromise the investigation of the allegation, health and safety, or the safety of participants in research.

2. Where possible any disclosure to third parties should be made on a confidential basis. If the organisation and/or its staff have legal obligations to inform third parties of research misconduct allegations, those obligations must be fulfilled at the appropriate time through the correct mechanisms.

No Detriment

- Anyone accused of research misconduct is presumed innocent.
- No person should suffer any unnecessary penalty when accused of research misconduct before the allegation is proven.
- No person should suffer any penalty for making an allegation of research misconduct *in good faith*, but action should be taken against persons found to have made allegations in bad faith.
- Any action(s) taken should be subject to appeal.

Balance

- Occasionally the investigators may need to strike a balance between disclosure of identities and confidentiality. Such decisions should be made keeping in mind that the primary goal of this procedure is to determine the truth of the allegation.
- Consideration should be given to reasonably and appropriately restore reputations.
- Proportionate action should be taken against persons found to have committed research misconduct.

EnergyPROSPECTS consortium members agree to fully cooperate in any such investigation.

3.3. Other ethical considerations

One of the main justifications of scientific research is the benefit for society it seeks to create. The EnergyPROSPECTS consortium is committed to minimise risks and maximise benefits for immediate participants as well as for society at large. This includes the widespread dissemination of research findings for free, also through social media and newspapers. It also means that as part of the research methodology developed, e.g. in WP3, the project team will receive guidance as to how to feedback research results to EnergyPROSPECTS research participants, for example to in-depth case study participants in WP3. Further, 'gold' open access journal publications will be the norm and not the exception in this project. Finally, EnergyPROSPECTS researchers are committed to creating lasting links with the individuals and communities they will engage with. Ideally, spin-off initiatives will emerge.

4. Criteria and procedures for data collection

4.1. Selection and recruitment of citizen consultation participants

All EnergyPROSPECTS researchers are qualified and experienced in working with people in various settings (e.g. interviews, observations, workshops) and will provide a safe and easily accessible environment for data collection.

A **template for a consent form** will be issued to all EnergyPROSPECTS partners participating in data collection and/or workshop organisation, to facilitate a more formal agreement process between EnergyPROSPECTS partners and target citizens and communities. However, EnergyPROSPECTS partners are encouraged to adapt the template to suit national and regional cultural, social and political conditions.

Participation in the various research activities, e.g. case studies, workshops or consultations will be entirely voluntary and participants can discontinue their involvement with the project at any stage,

without having to provide reasons. A detailed strategy has been devised to reduce risks to participants, following international ethical guidelines for social research (e.g. European Commission, 2010; ISA, 2001; UNESCO, 1994). Measures that will be taken include anonymisation of data to protect participants' privacy, informed consent and responsible sampling during recruitment.

4.2. Communication with research partners

Regular communication with research participants will be a central feature of the EnergyPROSPECTS data collection, analysis and dissemination processes. All EnergyPROSPECTS team members are committed to open and honest communication with other team members, non-academic partners as well as the public, including all research participants.

5. Bibliography

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