Effective stakeholder engagement for energy scenario communication

7th International Conference on Renewable Energy Sources and Energy Efficiency (RESEE2023)

Date/Time: Thursday 12 October 2023 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Location: 16:20 -18:00

Background

The session was organized by the Long-Term Energy Scenarios (LTES) Network, which focuses on improving scenario development processes and their use in decision-making. A key aim of the session was to explore how long-term energy scenarios can mobilise investments for energy transitions through clear communication and data visualization.

Key Points

- Comprehensive energy plans that outline the size and type of investments needed create a predictable environment for investors, providing a clear view of the scale and scope of opportunities in the energy sector.

- Energy planning and national economic planning institutions should collaborate closely to develop investment-ready energy plans, ensuring credibility and attracting potential investors.

- Energy plans should highlight socio-economic benefits, such as job creation, the relationship between energy supply and demand, and the impact of innovative technologies. This approach ensures greater stakeholder buy-in and attracts investment.

- Effective stakeholder engagement and clear communication are essential for the success of long-term energy scenarios. Tools like the 2050 Calculator and MinFin play a crucial role in bridging the gap between technical planning and financial strategy.

- Engaging financing institutions early in the planning process is critical to securing the necessary funding for energy transitions. Public-private partnerships and access to concessional finance are key enablers of energy transitions.

- Participatory processes, including public consultations and stakeholder workshops, enhance the legitimacy and acceptance of energy policies, ensuring that plans are realistic, locally relevant, and supported by the communities they serve.

Participants

Dr. Stella Hadjiyiannakou *Ministry of Energy, Cyprus*
Juan Jose Garcia *IRENA*
Dr. Vivien Foster *Climate Compatible Growth/Imperial College London*
Dr. Onesmus Mwabonje *2050 International Calculator Program*
Dr. Constantinos Taliotis *The Cyprus Institute*
Abigail Cutajar *Ministry of Environment, Energy and Enterprise, Malta*

Presentations

Presentation by Dr. Stella Hadjiyiannakou

Dr. Stella Hadjiyiannakou (Ministry of Energy, Cyprus) opened the session by welcoming participants and emphasizing the importance of long-term energy scenarios (LTES) in guiding national energy transitions. She highlighted Cyprus's commitment to renewable energy and energy efficiency, as well as the role of the LTES Network in fostering international collaboration. Dr. Hadjiyiannakou underscored the need for effective communication strategies to engage stakeholders and secure financing for energy transition projects.

Presentation by Juan Jose Garcia

Juan Jose Garcia (IRENA) highlighted the ongoing work of IRENA's Long-Term Energy Scenarios (LTES) Network in developing a toolbox to enhance participatory methods in energy scenario formulation. He emphasised that fostering inclusive and just energy transitions requires engaging a broad range of stakeholders, including policymakers, financiers, and the public.

Juan Jose noted that preliminary findings indicate participatory processes improve the legitimacy and acceptance of energy scenarios, leading to more effective implementation. The toolbox being developed includes guidelines for scenario development, stakeholder engagement, and data visualization, ensuring that technical information is accessible to non-experts.

Presentation by Dr. Vivien Foster

Dr. Vivien Foster (Climate Compatible Growth/Imperial College London) introduced the MinFin tool, designed to bridge the gap between national energy planning and clean energy transition financing. She explained that the tool visualizes the financial implications of energy scenarios, facilitating dialogue between energy planners and ministries of finance.

Dr. Foster outlined the tool's three pillars:

1. Financing needs: Derived from energy planning models like OSeMOSYS.
2. Financing sources: Based on historical data on energy project financing.
3. Funding availability: Including government budgets, internal cash generation, and potential cost savings from cleaner energy transitions.

A case study from Kenya demonstrated how MinFin can simulate alternative futures by evaluating concessional finance access and increased funding flows. The tool's high-level

dashboard provides a clear visualization of investment needs, financing costs, and available funding, enabling policymakers to understand the financial dimensions of energy transitions.

Presentation by Dr. Onesmus Mwabonje

Dr. Onesmus Mwabonje (2050 International Calculator Program) presented the 2050 Calculator, a transparent energy model supporting governments, stakeholders, and the public in exploring decarbonization pathways. Originally developed for the UK, the tool has been adopted in over 30 countries, including Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa.

Dr. Mwabonje outlined four key principles underlying the tool: openness, collaboration, simplicity, and transferability. He described its three tailored versions:

1. Web version: Providing policymakers with quick insights into energy scenarios.
2. Excel version: Offering experts detailed modeling capabilities.
3. Gaming version: Designed to engage students and raise awareness of sustainable energy pathways.

Drawing from the Kenyan experience, Dr. Mwabonje emphasized the importance of capacity building and stakeholder engagement in adapting the calculator to national contexts, ensuring its long-term sustainability.

Presentation by Dr. Constantinos Taliotis

Dr Taliotis iscussed Cyprus's participatory approach to developing long-term energy scenarios, particularly for the National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP). He explained that the process involves multiple stakeholders, including technical committees, ministries, and the public, ensuring transparency and broad support.

Dr. Taliotis highlighted the use of three key modeling tools that integrate technological detail with macroeconomic analysis to project the energy mix, greenhouse gas emissions, and investment requirements. He noted that short policy briefs are prepared to communicate key policy impacts to non-technical stakeholders, focusing on indicators such as renewable energy share, energy efficiency targets, and electricity costs.
The NECP process includes extensive public consultations through workshops and feedback sessions with industry representatives, NGOs, and academia. Dr. Taliotis underscored the importance of aligning energy investments with the NECP to avoid project implementation delays and ensure coherence across sectors.

Q&A and Discussion Summary

Abigail Cutajar from Malta's Ministry of Environment, Energy and Enterprise described their process, led by the energy ministry, of constant consultations with diverse stakeholders. She emphasized the critical importance of understanding what people want, but noted the challenge of aligning priorities across ministries, each with its own targets.

Dr. Constantinos Taliotis from the Cyprus Institute explained their structure of technical committees coordinated by a secretariat under the Ministry of Finance and Department of Environment. He highlighted the much larger scale of private investment needed compared to public funding, most of which comes from EU programs. To communicate scenario impacts to policymakers, his team prepares concise 2-3 page policy briefs focusing on key indicators, using simple graphs to rapidly convey the main points.

The importance of building local capacity for scenario modeling was emphasized by Dr. Onesmus Mwabonje from the 2050 Calculator program. He stressed that countries need to understand their own trajectory rather than relying on external consultants. However, he noted that data sharing between siloed ministries remains a challenge.

Cutajar agreed, suggesting that automated reporting systems could help ministries track emissions data in a more timely way. She also stressed the need for frequent, iterative engagement with stakeholders like enterprises to understand their financing needs.

The discussion underscored the critical role of participatory stakeholder processes and clear communication to build consensus for ambitious climate and energy plans. However, data sharing between government entities was a common challenge cited by the panelists in developing robust scenarios.