

**Project information sheet
of
Deutschen Bundesstiftung Umwelt**



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Title of proposal	FAIR ENERGY TRANSITION FOR ALL PROJECT- FETA
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Keywords

Duration	Project start	Project end	Project phase(s)
24 months	15.05.2020	15.05.2022	1

Final Report

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Network of European Foundations	Fax	-
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Cooperation partner(s)

Foundations Partners-	Mercator Stiftung, IKEA Foundation, Cariplo Foundation, King Baudouin Foundation, Open Society Foundation
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Project Partners-	IFOK, Climate Outreach, EPC and 9 policy experts and national facilitators in 9 European countries
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A) Objectives and occasion of the project

Energy transition requires policy measures that impact housing, energy, transport and other aspects of our everyday lives. Socially and economically disadvantaged groups are most affected by distributional impacts of climate policies – such as rising fuel taxes or closing coal mines. This puts efforts to tackle the global threat of climate warming at risk.

Listen to the vulnerable people is what we have done: In different European countries, we have listened to the concerns and ideas of economically and socially disadvantaged people unheard in the current debate. The idea was to start from people's experiences and to adapt concrete solutions to and with them, while taking insights from existing studies on the subject into account.

We wanted to know:

- How to ensure that the costs and benefits of the energy transition are shared fairly across society
- How Europe and countries can avoid that policies hit the pockets of poorer households the hardest
- How to best combine action for energy transition and social justice

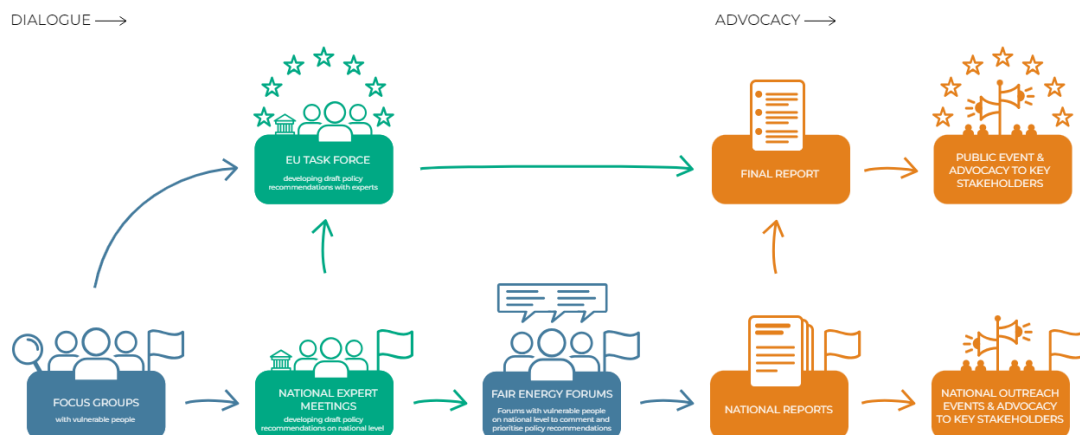
Our two main goals during the process were to:

- Better understand the views, fears, and emotions of vulnerable people on the energy transition and on its current and potential impact on their living conditions.
- Provide input to national and European policy makers, researchers, and stakeholders in the development of fair energy transition policies.

Also see <https://fair-energy-transition.eu/> for a detailed description of the project and the final deliverables.

B) Presentation of the process steps and the applied methods

The *Fair Energy Transition for All* project is based on listening to vulnerable groups, gathering their views and presenting them to experts and policy-makers, using a unique approach to reach out to and integrate the unheard citizens into policy-development:



1. Focus Groups

- 93 focus groups were organized in nine EU member states involving 917 citizens all over Europe. The member states are: Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Spain.
- The focus groups were made up of people from economically vulnerable or socially disadvantaged groups with a diversity of profiles (people living on basic social welfare, elderly people, less educated households, people with a migrant background or people especially affected by structural changes due to climate policies (e.g. in the coal mining sector)). To recruit the participants, we have worked with local organisations and businesses which serve these communities, such as community welfare associations, educational institutions, or support groups, language schools, and family centres as well as charities serving the needs of senior citizens, friendship centres, local housing associations and day centres.
- These marginalised groups have contributed their experiences, challenges faced in their everyday lives and to understand what they need from the energy transition, and paint a picture of the problems and to propose possible solutions in each specific country.

2. National Expert meetings and EU Task Force

- National expert meetings in the same nine EU member states and EU task force on EU level, involving 150 experts on national and European levels.
- In each country, the focus group results have been discussed in workshops with national experts. Participants included academics, members of think tanks, civil society and consumer organisations.
- The aim of the national expert meetings was to develop workable policy recommendations based on the results of the national discussions with vulnerable people.
- The input from the focus groups and the national expert groups' policy recommendations have been discussed by the EU Task Force at the EU level. This group is the European counterpart to the National Expert Meetings and has worked on EU-level policy recommendations.

3. Fair Energy Forums

- The policy recommendations that were previously produced by national and EU experts were reviewed and commented by a national Fair Energy Forum in each country.
- The forums were mainly held with participants of the original focus groups, together with policy experts supporting the citizens.

4. Advocacy at national and EU levels

- The results of the dialogue with citizens and experts been published in a national report from each country.
- To find their way into national policies, the policy recommendations have been presented to policy-makers and the interested public in national outreach events.
- A similar exercise has been carried out with EU policy-makers and stakeholders.
- We have also participated to the EC/ILO Just Transition Pavilion at the COP27.

C) Results and discussion

The deliverables (available on the FETA website)

- **Synthesis notes with the results of the focus groups**, per country
- **Briefing paper** ‘Fair Energy Transition for All: what vulnerable people have to say’ with a global analysis of all the focus groups;
- EPC/KBF/ifok joint **webinar** about the focus group results on March 17th 2022 and press release on the same day
- **National final report per country**, with recommendations at country level
- **EU report** with recommendations at EU level
- **A final report** which presents the key learnings from the FETA project on how to design a fair energy transition considering the needs of vulnerable people.
- **A final EU event** co-organized with EPC/ifok/KBF to present the recommendations to policy-makers
- **A video** about the project and the methodology
- **Testimonies** from participants
- **Project Website**
- **A method guide**
- **An evaluation report**

The Fair Energy Transition for All (FETA) project is based on two years of listening deeply to the concerns and hopes of Europe’s most vulnerable citizens on the transition to green energy. It offers a blueprint for change across the continent that can ensure wide public support and spread the benefits of renewal to those living in or close to poverty.

The approval of those least able to absorb the transitional costs of giving up fossil fuels matters profoundly. Without it, we face failure. Enacting such a programme would be difficult at the best of times; in the aftermath of a pandemic, amid a war with Europe’s biggest gas supplier that is fuelling a cost-of-living crisis, these are not the best of times. Yet making urgent energy savings, reducing waste and switching to a clean system with efficiency and renewable energy production at its core cannot be further delayed.

The FETA project has shown that there is an understanding of the need to break with coal, oil and gas, and a willingness to play a part, even among the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in society. This is contingent, however, on the transition being seen to be fair. Vulnerable citizens are generally confused about how best to have an impact and where to find trustworthy information. Deeply mistrustful of politicians, they are sceptical about leaders’ desire and ability to meet climate goals, let alone to do it in a way that is equitable for all.

To avoid pushback, Europe’s wealthy must not be seen to escape the need to change behaviour. As vital as it is in itself, the energy transition also offers European society many opportunities – if managed well. Eradicating energy poverty, reducing inequalities, providing jobs, improving EU competitiveness, strengthening our democratic institutions, and improving the resilience and economic security of the Union: with planning, coordination and monitoring, this can be the moment to begin a new, sustainable, resilient and equitable chapter.

There is public acceptance of the need for sacrifices. However, to maintain and build this support, fairness and equity must be shown to be as much the ambition of the transition as its other aims.

FETA proposes an array of measures and tools for government at every level:

- Fairness and well-being must be placed visibly at the heart of national and European policy. It should be reinforced by national subsidies as well as EU fiscal rules, financial support and con-

vergence criteria. Special and well-coordinated efforts should be made to protect those facing energy poverty and to curb conspicuous energy consumption by a privileged few. For policies to actually meet the needs of different vulnerable groups, they should be involved in the decision-making process, e.g. through citizens' assemblies on local, national or European level.

- Communication about energy transition and related policies must be clear and frank. Policies must be communicated in a way that builds trust and understanding, and acknowledges agency and fairness. Advice and training must be easily available to let the most vulnerable share in new opportunities.
- Many models must be developed to shift transport in town and country toward low-emissions options, including electric public transport and cycling, with special attention paid to those in rural hardship. To make public transport more affordable, reliable and accessible for everyone, investments need to be made in fair ticket prices, public transport infrastructure and the collection of mobility. Steps should also be taken to break habits of personal car ownership, even of electric cars.
- In housing, long-term financial support should target those least able to afford insulation and new heating systems. Rules should encourage owners, including landlords, to invest. Citizens should be consulted on how to save energy as this is one of the easiest and most efficient ways to save costs. Residents, including tenants and the most vulnerable, should be helped to take part in collective energy generation.

Discussion

All the targets have been successfully reached and the project has generated a lot of interest at country and EU level. In the academic arena, we have been invited to contribute to several lectures, and end of year thesis on the topic.

We encountered two difficulties:

- The focus groups started during the pandemic. We tested an online version but decided to pursue with physical meetings. This is why the project was postponed by 6 months during the course of 2020.
- It was difficult to remobilize the participants for the Fair Energy Forums probably because time span between the focus groups and the FEFs was too long (6 months); many intermediaries had lost contact with the participants, even if they had shown interest in contributing until the final phase.

The evaluation carried out by ODS concludes that:

Reaching the desired target groups The project successfully reached a diversity of vulnerable/economically disadvantaged people that were not previously engaged in political or consultative processes across all countries involved. A total of 916 people attended 97 FGDs across nine countries in Phase I and a further 169 attended the FEFs. According to survey results, 82% of those who attended the FGDs in Phase I had not previously been engaged in such a process. Most were unfamiliar with the energy transition, and partners reflect that the concept was not clear to the majority of the participants. Each country used a diversity of methods to reach those groups. Partners reflect that they were largely dependent on intermediaries including social welfare departments, representative groups, municipalities and organisations providing language classes.

Partners reflected on the flexibility and support from the core FETA team as being key to the success of the outreach phase. The methods of outreach differed from country to country, some used social media, connected with NGOs and social interest groups and/or worked with municipalities. A key enabler in Denmark, the Netherlands and Spain was the use of vouchers, gift cards and cash as an incentive for participants, this also helps

the process to be less extractive. The outreach phase, according to partners, took more time than expected. Relationship building is a key aspect of outreach. As many partners did not have previous connections with representative groups this prolonged the phase especially considering the relationships needed to be built at a distance due to limitations to face to face contact.

It is clear that the project reached a diversity of relevant policy experts in Phase II through the expert group meetings. The majority of experts in many countries had a background in government ministries, academia, and consulting. In other cases, participants also included trade unionists and CSO representatives. Partners and experts alike reflected on the added value of having a combination of just transition experts in addition to experts in mobility, infrastructure and buildings to speak on the topic from different perspectives. Evidence also reflects that the project was also able to reach beyond the key actors involved in the project activities to other relevant policy audiences - evidence shows significant interest to engage with the project at the country and EU level.

Raising the knowledge of key stakeholders and target groups According to survey results, 57% of policy experts involved in Phase II of the project report that they have increased knowledge on the interests of vulnerable/disadvantaged people as a result of the information shared from FGDs. Experts reflected that they now have a better understanding of the reality of the struggles faced by participants. Further, many noted that they also learned from other experts during the discussions through the multi-sectoral dialogues facilitated. In terms of knowledge building of the participants of the FGDs 74% report that they have learned something new about energy use. The participants reflected that this new knowledge was gained through 'listening to the opinions of others' and they were able to get a 'broader perspective on the topic'. The energy diaries contributed to this knowledge creation, according to the survey, 29% of participants found them 'very useful'. Across those consulted, there is general agreement that the knowledge produced by the project is not 'radically new' but often referred to as 'legitimised' and 'applied' knowledge. The knowledge produced by the project reflects that marginalised people can make a valuable and rich contribution despite not being 'experts'.

Changing the opinions of key stakeholders In terms of the contribution to the opinions or attitudes of experts on the impact of energy transition policies on the lives of vulnerable groups, 16% surveyed said their attitude had changed, 18% were 'neutral', 43% stated it hadn't and 21% stated 'not yet'. These results reflect a limited result in terms of the achievement of this objective for experts. In terms of understanding why, it can be explained by the fact that some experts were already aware of the living conditions and struggles faced by vulnerable groups, due to the area of their work (focusing on energy poverty reduction or impact of energy transition policies on vulnerable groups) or because of personal engagement with the cause.

While it is too early to see evidence that the project contributed to a change in opinion in the broader political arena, there are examples of engagement with policy makers at the national and European level. For instance, the national policy partner in the Netherlands engaged with four representatives of ministries. With regards to the media, there is little evidence of the project contributing to a change in opinions and attitudes about fair energy transition policies and the perceived impact on the living conditions of vulnerable people. There are examples of interest from the media in some of the countries.

D) Public relations and presentation

Advocacy in Bulgaria, Germany, Poland

Bulgaria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article: There is a need for a definition of energy poverty and a mechanism to help households participate in building renovation programmes. 	EnEffect	January 2022
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article: With the January's energy bills, we are constantly reminded that energy poverty is a serious problem 	EnEffect	January 2022
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article: Energy poor citizens are seeking solutions for the high energy prices through renovation 	EnEffect	May 2022
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article: Energy poor citizens are seeking solutions for the high energy prices through renovation 	EnEffect	May 2022
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article: Energy poor citizens are seeking solutions for the high energy prices through renovation 	EnEffect interview for https://3e-news.net/	September 2022 September 2022 September 2022
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article: The energy poor are looking for solutions to high energy prices by renovating buildings 	Based on interview with EnEffect	February 2022 April 2022 May 2022
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article: What is energy poverty and when will this term have a definition in our country? 	Based on interview with EnEffect	May 2022 May 2022
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article: When will we finally know which households are energy poor? 	EnEffect	May 2022
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article: The definition of energy poverty is about to get a green ... 	EcoEnergy	September 2022
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly newsletter of EcoEnergy 	Facebook EnEffect	February 2022
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bratislava, Slovakia workshop 	Facebook EnEffect	May 2022
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens discuss the fair energy transition 	Facebook EnEffect	May 2022
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solutions to Tackle Energy Poverty 	Facebook EnEffect	September 2022
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens discuss the fair energy transition 	Facebook EnEffect	February 2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens discuss the fair energy transition 	Facebook EnEffect	May 2022	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EUSEW2022 	Facebook EnEffect	September 2022	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy poverty definition needed now 	Facebook EnEffect	September 2022	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens discuss the fair energy transition 	LinkedIn EnEffect	February 2022	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to reduce the heating bills? 	LinkedIn EnEffect	May 2022	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to reduce the heating bills? 	LinkedIn EnEffect	September 2022	
Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog-Article on Lessons Learned with target group 	ifok	August 2022
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coffee Lecture: How to engage vulnerable target groups? (click for recording in German) 	Mercator, ifok	11/10/2022
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach Event 	Adelphi, Mercator, DBU, ifok	29/11/22
Poland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article: Energy transition an opportunity or a threat for Europe? (page 66) 	Polish Chamber of Ecology (PIE)	November 2021
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article: The human face of a just transition - conclusions from the focus groups 	SAPE – Polska SAPE - Polska	October 2021 October 2021
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twitter SAPE: blog article promotion 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog Article: The human face of a fair transition - results of focus groups 	FEWE	October 2021

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facebook FEWE - results of focus groups 	FEWE	October 2021
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog Article: Fair Energy Transition for All - People from "vulnerable groups" met at Fair Energy Forums 	FEWE	October 2022
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facebook FEWE - blog article promotion 	FEWE	October 2022
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twitter FEWE- blog article promotion • Blog Article: invitation to the project's final event • Blog Article- SAPE: invitation to the project's final event 	FEWE FEWE SAPE – Polska	October 2022 October 2022 October 2022

E) Conclusion

- The project was innovative in terms of methodology and target group
- It has delivered interesting insights and generated a lot of interest
- We are now exploring next steps with interested partners