



# Citizens in Transition

## Short Summary

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The Future of Energy: Leading the change  
Topic 3 - Energy Transition Technologies:  
Consumer expectations and citizens' attitudes  
Call for Proposals 2017 of the TUCK Foundation



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## Executive summary

**Societies and citizens are key for change:** the energy transition reflects an ideal of society. Neither capitalistic projects alone, nor local potential resources are sufficient to enable a major shift in the energy mix.

They are essential actors of this transition process, willing to be more involved in the planning of energy transition projects and gathering in citizen initiatives. But in return the introduction of new energy technologies is deeply impacting citizens in their private life sphere (use of personal data, neighborhood and landscape transformation, change of energy consumption behavior). In this context, **acceptance has become critical to succeed in most energy transition projects.**

Based on a comparative French/German study on citizen acceptance and energy transition project development strategies, this study 1) structures the societal issues related to energy transition projects and their influencing factors, 2) provides a best practices document for coordinators of energy transition projects so that they can recognize citizens' societal issues in a project at an early stage and deal with them in an appropriate way and 3) conceptualizes two innovative solutions which aim at maximizing the citizens' acceptance.

Comparing the German *Energiewende* with the French *Transition Energétique* enable to understand the influences of different contextual factors, to gather a rich database of faced issues and best practices, and to get inspired mutually. However, it is also a delicate exercise in terms of complexity and comparability.

Municipal organizations, industry and energy market structures, research funding, history and heritages, landscapes, population density, natural resources, the role played by communities, the value of symbols, the relationship to money or technology are just some of the main aspects differentiating France and Germany. They deeply influence and connect with the dynamics and choices of the energy transition.

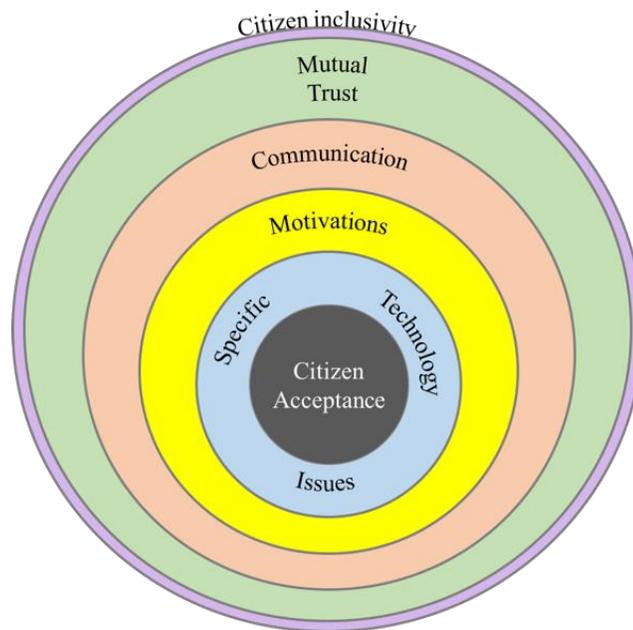
For instance, the comparison of smart meter deployment approaches in France and Germany reflect two radically energy transition strategies, based on "Grand Projet" in France, and social market economy in Germany. Decision-making stakeholders in the energy sector are also more numerous and diverse in

Germany than in France, with direct consequence on the plurality of technologies and the diversity of the energy mix.

Despite all these differences of contexts, surveys show that acceptance of both French and German Citizens reach a similar high level around 90%, both want to be more involved in the dialogue and funding models of the energy transition. In particular, citizen cooperatives represent the future of energy transition for four out of five citizens in both countries.

A major achievement of this study is a novel typology of citizen societal issues related to the energy transition, co-created between the project partners and French and German energy sector professionals during a binational workshop and a dozen of interviews.

It provides guidelines for energy transition actors in order to avoid possible friction points and maximize the chance of citizen acceptance before, during and after implementing new energy transition technologies.



24 societal issues related to citizen acceptance of energy transition could be collected, analyzed and classified into five main consistent categories: **Citizen inclusivity** was identified as the societal base of citizen acceptance. **Mutual**

**trust as the necessary social capital to start any energy transition project.**

An adapted **Communication** makes the difference in an Energy transition project, while **benefit and Motivation sources** enable to fairly balance drawbacks and risks and then trigger citizen acceptance. Finally, **Technology specific issues and risks** should be openly assessed, answered and supervised.

These five issue categories may be visualized as an onion layer: each layer represents issues to overcome on the way to the full citizen acceptance. For each issue, some best practices from project experiences in France and Germany are provided.

Finally, two solutions were conceptualized to answer these issues:

- **A Citizen Information and Participation 2.0 platform**, aiming at transforming the relationships between citizens, their representatives, and project's owners as well as catalyzing bottom-up initiatives
- **An Experimental lab involving citizens** as beta users of the future energy transition technologies.

This report may also be used in the field of research for a more holistic or deeper investigation of citizen acceptance and energy transitions in Europe.