

Supporting and hindering factors that influence social acceptance and commitment to wind energy project

A collection of shared thoughts from three Horizon Europe projects- WENDY, JustWind4All and WIMBY



The acronym NIMBY refers to the English phrase "Not in my backyard" and it is defined in The Oxford English Dictionary as: "an attitude attributed to people who object to the siting of something they consider harmful or dangerous in their own neighbourhood, while implicitly not objecting to similar developments *elsewhere*"¹.

Not only do wind farm projects not escape this definition, but they are also projects where public opinion is in favour of sustainable power generation, yet local communities are often opposed to such developments. This is due to the fear of potential negative impacts they may have on the local community and rights-holders. Such concerns are generally referred to as health concerns, potential negative landscape and environmental risks, land value and impact on tourism and economic activity in general.

WIMBY, WENDY and JustWind4All are all European projects that aim to change the social perception of onshore and offshore wind energy projects by investigating the drivers and barriers to social acceptance, so that wind energy gains significantly more public attention and support from the broad society. They also aim to accelerate the development of onshore and offshore wind energy through fair and effective governance. By creating synergies between the 3 projects, the hope is to increase the impact and the outreach of the high-quality tools and knowledge under development.

¹ <https://languages.oup.com/>

WIMBY

WIMBY (Wind In My BackYard) emerges as an European-funded initiative dedicated to fostering the adoption and acceptance of wind power within the European Union. Positioned at the intersection of technological innovation, societal engagement, and environmental impact assessment, WIMBY aims to change the narrative surrounding wind energy deployment.

WIMBY's goal is to develop innovative tools facilitating citizen and stakeholder interaction, knowledge sharing, and collaborative evaluation of impacts, conflicts, synergies, and social innovation potential related to wind power. The project aligns with the broader EU decarbonisation strategy, seeking to increase the use of wind power as a sustainable and cost-effective renewable energy source.

The primary goal of WIMBY is to address and mitigate the NIMBY effect, a phenomenon where local communities resist new developments that they fear might negatively impact their surroundings. The NIMBY effect represents a significant barrier to the widespread deployment of wind power, despite its potential to combat climate change. WIMBY seeks to bridge this gap by providing practical information for stakeholders and citizens, fostering participatory decision-making processes, developing strategies that consider trade-offs and synergies, finally supporting a just transition involving the whole society in shaping our common future energy landscape.

WIMBY employs innovative models to assess the impacts and potential conflicts emerging from new wind power development. The project also develops guidelines to increase public engagement, transforming complex data into comprehensible information. These results are shared through open-access repositories and social media, promoting transparency and accessibility.



Central to the project approach is the development of a Web-GIS interactive platform. This platform enhances the accessibility and usability of information, facilitating knowledge exchange among stakeholders. It enables the early engagement of local communities and multidisciplinary experts in the planning of new wind farm deployments, bringing different perspectives and impact mitigation options into discussion.

To conduct transparent and transdisciplinary research, WIMBY has assembled a diverse team of experts, including renewable energy scientists, behavioral economists, ecologists, planners, engineers, lawyers, physicists, and more. The project's collaborative approach ensures a holistic understanding of the challenges and opportunities associated with wind energy. This multilevel study unfolds through four pilot cases, where concerns and impacts from social, health, and environmental perspectives are identified and assessed. Through its multifaceted approach, WIMBY endeavors to dismantle barriers, foster informed decision-making, and contribute to the broader mission of a sustainable future.



WENDY

The WENDY project aims at unravelling the factors triggering social acceptance of wind farms through an in-depth analysis at three dimensions: social sciences and humanities, environmental sciences, and technological engineering. The main objective of WENDY is to trigger a societal perception change towards onshore and offshore wind energy and boost the understanding of wind farms decision making processes while enhancing energy citizenship.

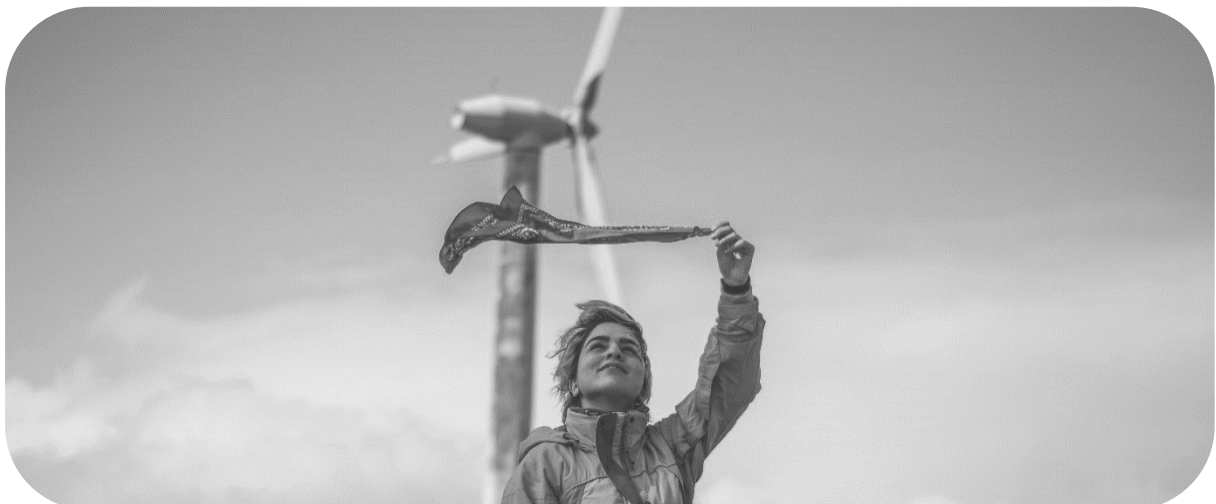
The WENDY project has 10 wind farm use cases from 4 different countries: Italy, Spain, Norway, and Greece, through which the solutions and tools developed will be validated. These cases have been selected considering several characteristics such as geography, maturity, type of wind energy and coexistence with other activities.

Although all WENDY tasks are directly or indirectly related to the study of social acceptance factors for wind energy, the project includes specific activities dedicated to the study of this topic, such as the investigation to establish the basis of the current barriers, challenges and needs for increasing the acceptance of wind energy both at the European level and at the level of use cases, among many others.

The WENDY project will also develop several functional applications and materials (guidelines, handbooks, knowledge hubs, an exchange platform and finally the WENDY toolbox) to facilitate the exchange of knowledge between decision makers and key stakeholders, involving citizens, local authorities, business owners and relevant actors of the wind energy value chain.

The WENDY toolbox is a spatial Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis toolbox that will integrate participatory approaches and will be able to identify the optimal turbines' sitting with the minimum environmental impact and highest social acceptance likelihood.

In this way, WENDY will help to increase social acceptability of wind energy at local communities by changing the NIMBY attitude to a more sustainable and encouraging principle called PIMBY, or "Please, in my backyard".



JustWind4All

JustWind4All's overall aim is to support the acceleration of on- and offshore wind energy through just and effective governance. They are undertaking a comprehensive analysis of how different actors are coordinating their actions around wind energy development in regions across Europe, and how this translates (or not) into effective and just processes and outcomes.

While prevalent concepts like NIMBY (Not In My Backyard) and social acceptance have traditionally dominated discourse in wind energy research, they often oversimplify the multifaceted roles that the public assumes in the development of wind energy projects.

JustWind4All contextualises its research more broadly, considering instead both relational and systemic perspectives on participatory practices for allowing to capture a whole variety of different forms of participation and their relations with one another. By emphasizing energy citizenship, the project challenges the passive stance associated with social acceptance, where individuals are constrained to either accept or reject offerings without creative agency to support, resist, amend, subvert, or co-develop, to just name a few ways of how the public engages. In addition, transitions are influenced by many different actors in many different ways – thus JW4A research focuses on diverse actor's roles, practices and interests – including citizens, but also developers, local and national governments and others. It studies their participatory practices and governance arrangements and processes.



JustWind4All explores participation in several research endeavors. The database of participatory practices and social innovations, in the context of onshore and offshore wind energy developments identifies a set of good participatory practices, while also highlighting examples of social innovation initiatives. The emergence and development of participatory practices in different environments is explored through regional case studies of wind energy governance, resulting in sets of recommendations for fostering energy citizenship. Lastly, through co-production activities with wind energy actors In Wind Labs, JustWind4All can explore first-hand how different actors participate and collaborate in a variety of wind energy contexts!





Join the Wind Revolution: Follow, Engage, and Act!

As WIMBY, JustWind4All, and WENDY are collectively working on a transformative journey towards sustainable wind energy adoption, we invite you to become an integral part of this movement. Stay connected with us on social media platforms, where we share the latest updates, insights, and impactful stories. Subscribe to our newsletters for in-depth information, behind-the-scenes glimpses, and exclusive content.

By following our projects, you actively contribute to the discourse around wind energy acceptance, enabling a future powered by clean, renewable sources. Together, we can break down barriers and foster understanding.

Keep an eye out for upcoming activities— workshops, events, surveys —where your participation can make the difference.



WENDY Project EU



WENDYprojectEU



wendy-project.eu



Wimby – Wind In My Backyard



WIMBY_project



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JustWind4All



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