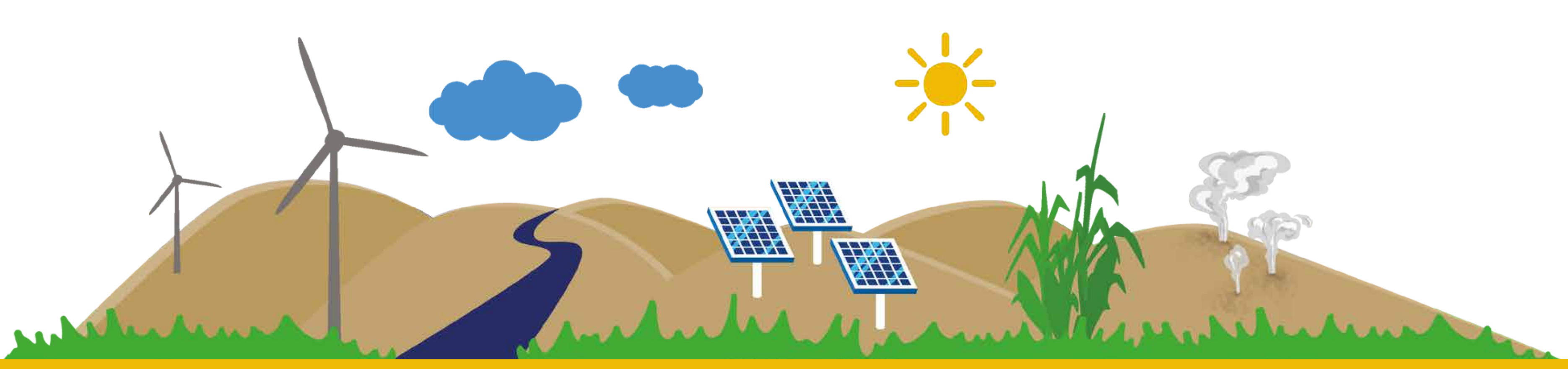




COST Action TU 1401 RELY

Renewable Energy and Landscape Quality



General description

About the Action

In response to climate change, limited fossil fuels and rising energy demand and prices, renewable energy (RE) is heavily promoted throughout Europe. While objectives to boost RE and trans-European energy networks are ambitious, it is increasingly understood that **public acceptance becomes a constraining factor** and **general support for green energy does not always translate into local support for specific projects**. **Perceived landscape change and loss of landscape quality have featured heavily in opposition campaigns** in many European countries, even though RE can facilitate sustainable development, especially in disadvantaged regions rich in wind, water, biomass, geothermal or solar energy.

Aims

- **Better understanding** of how European landscape protection/management and renewable energy deployment can be reconciled to contribute to the sustainable transformation of energy systems
- **Consolidating and extending knowledge** in landscape quality, renewable energy, and public participation from a pan-European perspective
- **Provision of best practice examples** for decision-making and production of guidelines and toolboxes for public participation in the planning of renewable energy systems
- **Revealing the potential of sustainable landscape development**, with innovative land uses producing synergies for landscape quality and renewable energy
- **Optimization of trade-offs** between renewable energy production and landscape protection by promoting an effective policy without jeopardizing the values and quality of European landscape
- **Advancing participative approaches** in planning to assist a smoother transition to energy systems based on renewable energy

Working groups

WG1 Renewable energy production systems and impacts on landscape quality

- Review of specific RE production systems and their impacts on landscape character and landscape quality in Europe from past, present and future perspectives
- Systematic review of the nexus between RE production systems and Europe's landscapes as multifunctional spaces, cultural heritage and basis for individual and social identification
- Pan-European documentation and synopsis of landscape quality and character assessment methods

WG2 Landscape sensitivity and potentials in terms of renewable energy production

- Risk and potential analysis for landscape functions and qualities affected by RE
- Analysis of specific landscape functions' and qualities' vulnerability to specific RE systems
- Typology of best practices of sustainable, landscape compatible RE production
- Guidance for assessing the potential of areas for RE systems and their effects on landscape quality/character
- Catalogue of relevant criteria, indicators and GIS proxy data for assessing landscape suitability of RE production systems

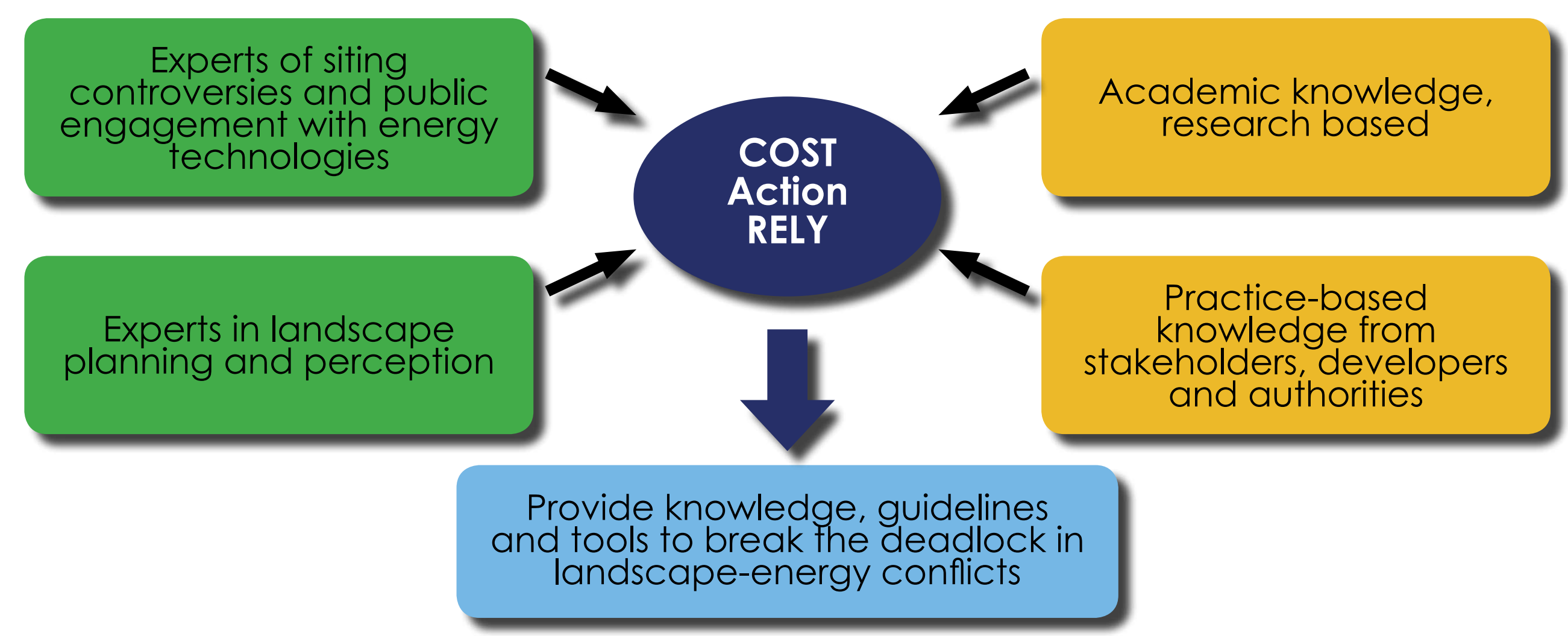
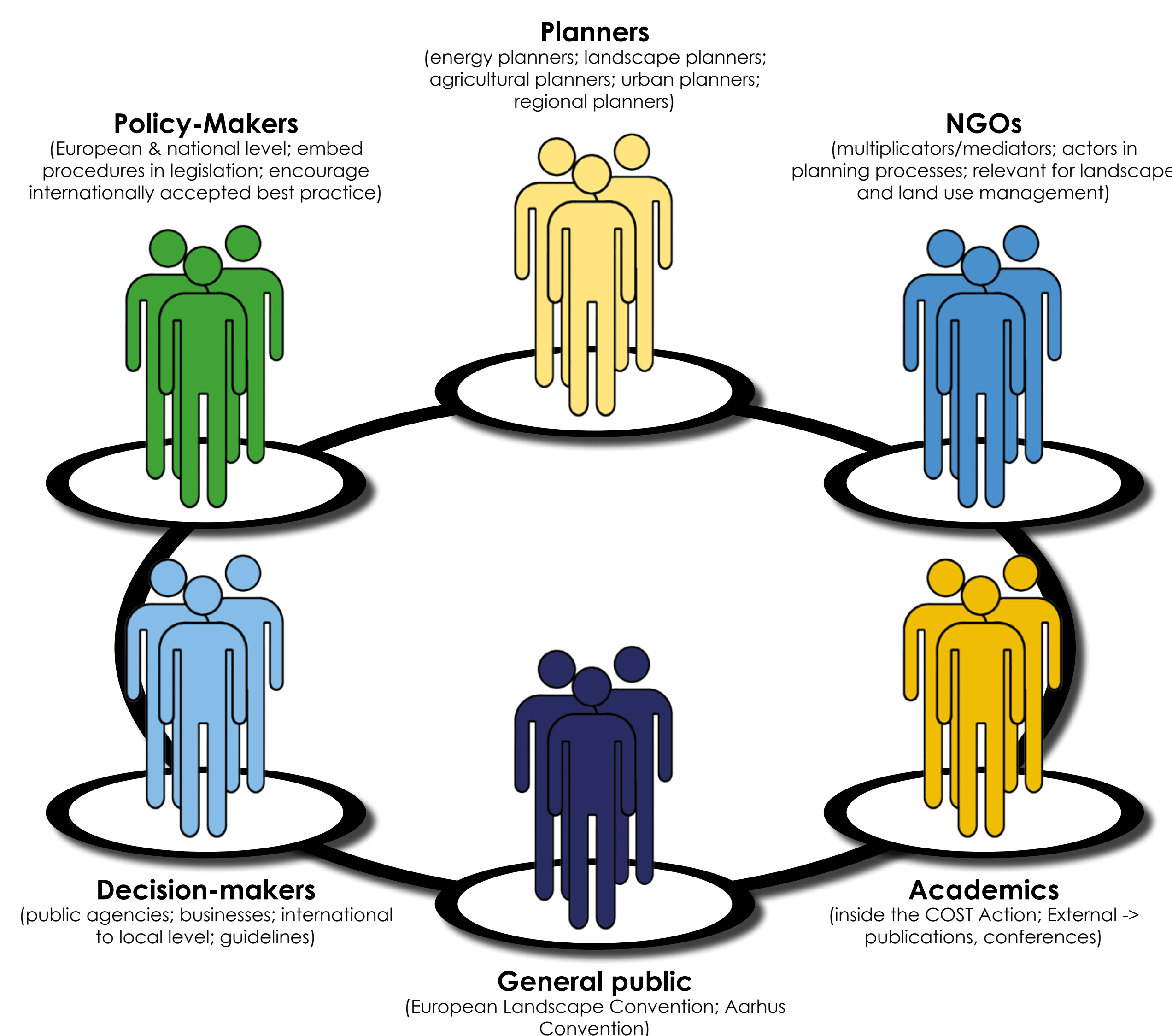
WG3 Socio-cultural aspects of sustainable renewable energy production

- Investigation of socio-cultural aspects of sustainable RE production
- Ways of integrating specific aspects of RE in participatory toolkits
- Inventory of best practice examples for participatory RE projects
- Selection of case study regions
- Generating scenarios as a basis for the toolbox by using advanced GIS-based 3D-visualization in empirical studies on cross-cultural comparison of reactions to the scenarios
- Toolbox for landscape-aware public participation in all stages of planning for RE systems

WG4 Synthesis of findings and dissemination

- Synthesis of findings and dissemination of results
- Establishing communication and dissemination structures
- Maintenance of the Action website which serves as an internal and external information platform
- Multilingual glossary for scientific collaboration and trans-border public participation and exchange of knowledge in all WGs
- Producing photo database for internal and external use
- Assistance for the other three WGs with service for exchange and communication

Target groups



Milestones and timetable

Duration: October 2014 - October 2018

Activity	Year			
	1	2	3	4
Kick-off phase				
Working Group 1: Systematic review, meta-analysis				
Working Group 2: Strategic case studies				
Working Group 3: Multidimensional scenarios				
Working Group 4: Synthesis, dissemination				
Milestones				
Meeting, incl. kick off meeting	X	X	X	X
Annual progress report		X	X	X
Action conferences		X	X	X
Training Schools with special focus on ECI			X	X
Publication of a comprehensive Action book				X
Final Action report				X

Objectives

- **Advance a transdisciplinary and multi-paradigm science base** to aid in the management of landscapes, in the light of climate change and renewable energy deployment
- **Examine, critique and (re)define landscape quality objectives** in the context of the abovementioned challenges, based on validated empirical research
- **Increase the awareness of the two-way interaction** between renewable energy systems and landscape quality
- **Explore and extend procedures for participation** of the public and other parties in the planning of renewable energy systems

Knowledge transfer

- **Transnational:** Exchange of national perspectives on the topic of RE and landscape quality and approaches to planning and public participation
- **Interdisciplinary:** Representatives from landscape sciences and planning, RE technologies and economics, public participation and governance contribute disciplinary/sectoral perspectives to develop a holistic view and approach to the reconciliation of European landscape protection/management and RE deployment
- **From science to practice and vice versa:** Application of different theory- and practice-focused views and approaches to the development of RE production systems and high quality landscapes
- **From professionals to the public and vice versa:** Exchange of the project findings with the wider audience and feeding their views, values, attitudes and needs back into the final project results

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About COST

COST is the longest-running European framework supporting transnational cooperation among researchers, engineers and scholars across Europe. It is a unique means to jointly develop own ideas and new initiatives across all fields in science and technology, including social science and humanities, through pan-European networking of nationally funded research activities. Based on a European intergovernmental framework for cooperation in science and technology, COST has been contributing - since its creation in 1971 - to closing the gap between science, policy makers and society throughout Europe and beyond.

