

1st COST Action TU1401 Training School 2016 Renewable energy and landscape quality

The training school investigated relationships between renewable energy production and landscape quality, and the role of public participation for the acceptance of renewable energy systems. Participants explored how experts and the general public communicate and perceive renewable energy facilities in the landscape and familiarized themselves with visual impact assessments, landscape character assessments and techniques, thus improving:

- Environmental and landscape literacy, awareness and methodological competences
- International overview and critical perspectives on a diverse set of visual impact assessment methods
- Transferable skills to work in interdisciplinary and trans-boundary contexts
- Mediation, consensus-building and networking skills

Quick facts

- **Venue:** Dublin, Ireland
- **Date:** from 22nd to 26th May 2015
- **Host:** Dublin Institute of Technology, School of Transport Engineering, Environment and Planning
- **Number of participants:** 20
- **Number of trainers:** 5
- **Countries represented:** BE, CH, CZ, DE, EL, ES, UK, IS, PL, PT, SL, RS
- **Contents:** visual impact assessment, landscape character assessment, communities and planning, communication and perception of renewable energy in landscape



Workshop 1 Effect of wind farm design on acceptance

Michael Roth, Nürtingen-Geislingen University

Number and layout of wind farms have been found to affect social and individual acceptance, but there is a lack of perspectives from landscape and engineering experts.

A set of photo simulations was shown to participants to rate. Rating of photos by experts revealed that distance and angle of view had an effect on acceptance, while parity of wind turbines did not.

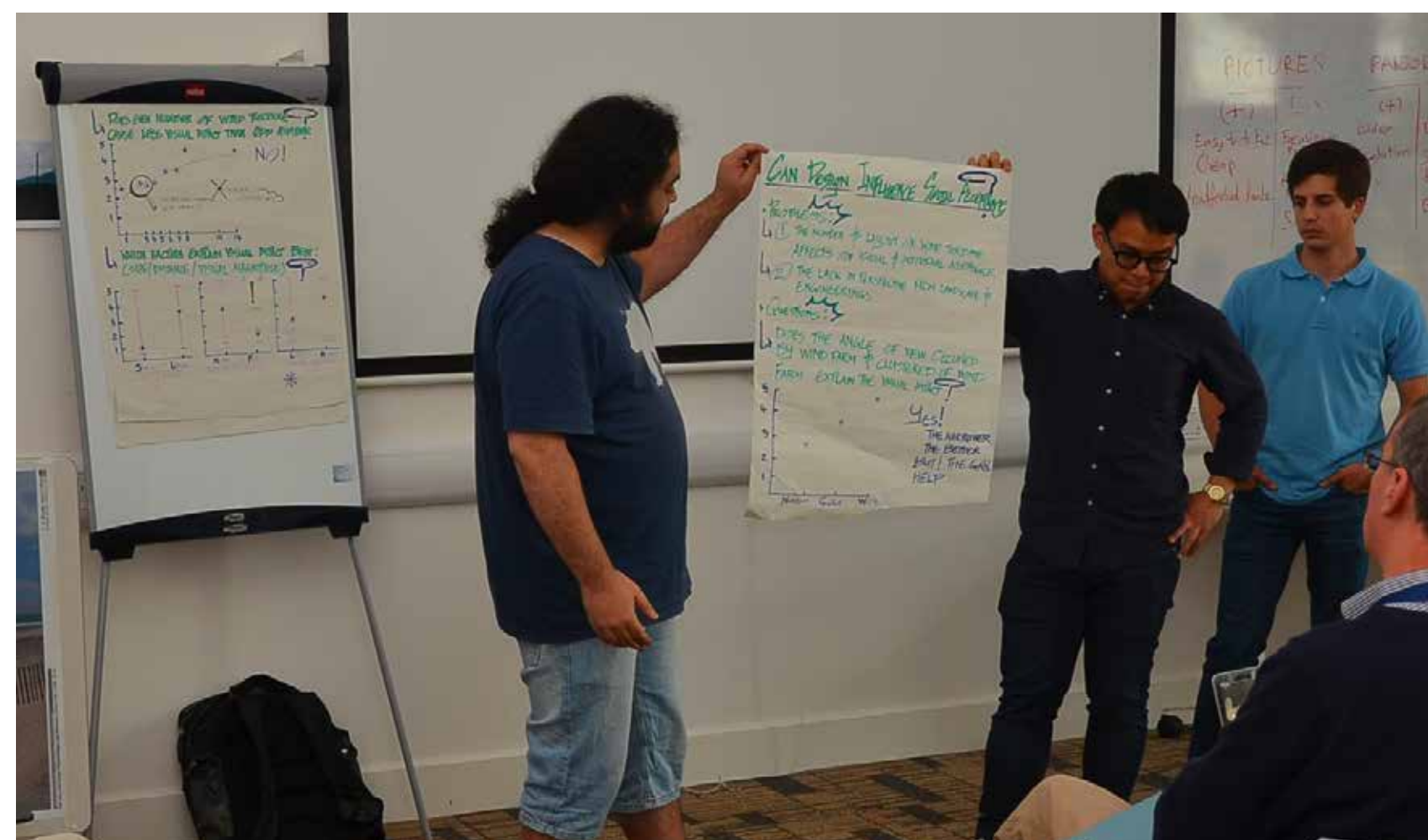


Figure 1: Group presenting workshop findings (photo: Michael Roth)

Workshop 2 Best focal length to represent a landscape view

James F. Palmer, Scenic Quality Associates

Standard practice of visual assessments employs the use of single frame photographs. Fundamental questions, such as most appropriate focal length to use have not been adequately researched.

Participants evaluated how well the photos taken at different focal lengths represent the actual landscape in terms of its context. Focal length slightly over 50mm was preferred.



Figure 2: Evaluating best focal length (photo: Michael Roth)

Workshop 3 Role expectations in stakeholder discussions

Ken Boyle, Dublin Institute of Technology

In stakeholder discussions multiple interests and individual subjectivities face each other. What is the role of experts in these processes?

A focus group of various experts most often mentioned their role was knowledge-broker and a mediator, but without a real consensus. Experts were split halfway on how they are perceived by other stakeholders (positive or negative).



Figure 3: Discussion with local community (photo: Michael Roth)

Workshop 4 Effective use of Visual-Acoustic Simulations

Ulrike Wissen Hayek, PLUS, ETH Zurich

How can visual-acoustic simulations be used to explore energy landscapes beyond simple valuation?

Participants placed activities in a simulated landscape. After adding windmills, the exercise was repeated. Most affected were passive activities (yoga, meditation), least affected were active activities (e.g. football, cycling, picnic, cross-fit).



Figure 4: Placing activities in a landscape (photo: Michael Roth)

Workshop 5 Single image representation of landscape

Pat Brereton, Dublin City University

According to the European landscape convention, landscape is the consequence of each person's perception. Is then a single image representation of landscape a valid method?

Employing participant-generated photography, three different distinct views of the same landscape was found, suggesting single photo representation may be problematic.



Figure 5: Choosing most representative photos (photo: Marija Lalosevic)

A common exercise Q-sort: participants' attitudes towards renewables

Vincent Vanderheyden, University of Liege

Coming from various backgrounds it is questionable whose attitudes are similar and in what way. Using Q-sort participants were grouped based on similarity of ranking ten statements about wind energy.

Three groups, all exhibiting pro-wind attitudes were found. However, differences on the importance and role of wind energy in scientific communities show diversity and should not be neglected.

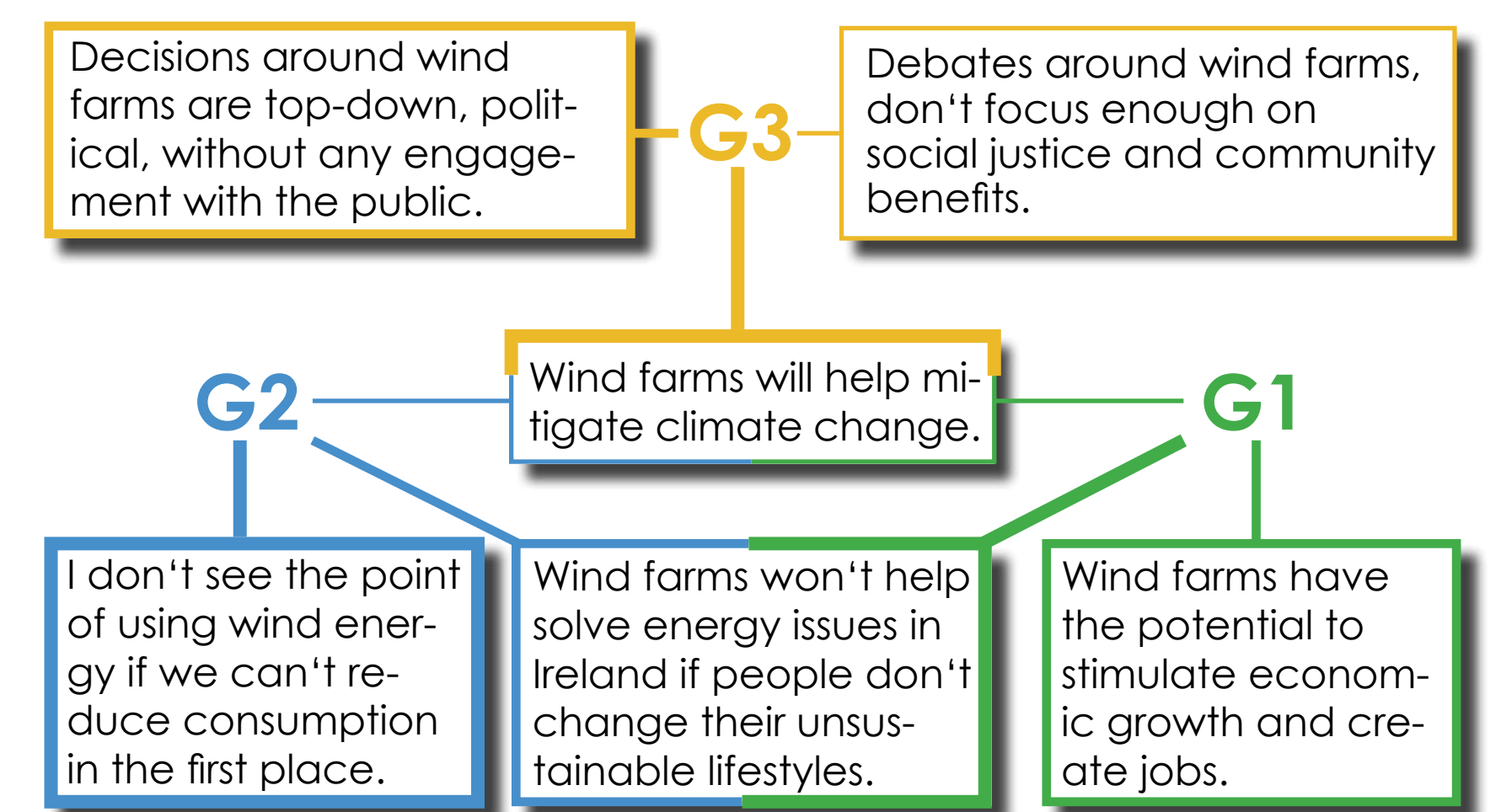


Figure 6: Statements by groups. Line weight means level of agreement.

Contact

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