TRACER
TRANSITION IN COAL INTENSIVE REGIONS

Stakeholder workshop Case Study Wales

30 June 2021, Online Meeting

- Agenda and Briefing Note -

University of Strathclyde Glasgow

EPRC European Policies Research Centre

This Project (Contract No. 836819) is funded by the
Horizon 2020 Framework Programme of the European Union

Meeting Agenda

30 June 2021 (Wednesday)			
9.45*	10.00	Virtual walk-in	All
10.00	10.10	Welcome to the TRACER Wales stakeholder meeting	Rona Michie, EPRC Jennifer Pride, Welsh Government
10.10	10.30	**Introduction to TRACER** – the consortium, the milestones, good practices and preliminary outcomes (followed by a short Q&A)	Rainer Janssen, WIP Renewable Energies (TRACER Lead partner)
10.30	10.50	**TRACER in Wales** – perceptions of the energy transition in Wales: presentation of the draft regional report	Liliana Fonseca, EPRC
10.50	11.00	**Q&A and sister project intervention** – introduction to ENTRANCES	EPRC Adrian Healy, Cardiff University
11.00	11.05	*Mini break*	
11.05	11.35	**Group discussion** of the reported outcomes, incl. priority themes and visions for the energy transition in Wales	All
11.35	11.50	**Feedback session** – reporting key messages of the group discussion	Wilbert den Hoed, EPRC
11.50	12.00	**Summary and conclusions**, next steps	Rona Michie, EPRC Baudewijn Morgan, Welsh Government
* All displayed times are in **BST**			

Practical information

TRACER Stakeholder webinar Case Study Wales

The meeting is organised by the University of Strathclyde, one of the partners of the Horizon 2020 project TRACER that supports nine coal-intensive regions around Europe to (re-)design their Research and Innovation strategies in order to facilitate their transition towards a sustainable energy system.

This co-creative workshop aims to continue the dialogue that has started in 2020 with interviews with key stakeholders in the Welsh energy transition. The workshop will present the findings of this round of interviews and provides room to discuss the contextual changes since mid-late 2020, such as the publication of both the Regional Investment in Wales Framework and the strategies developed during the Regional and Local Area Energy Planning processes. The Innovation Advisory Council for Wales has also very recently published recommendations on the future of innovation policy in Wales. We are hopefully emerging from COVID, and the post-Brexit landscape is becoming clearer. Relating specifically to energy transition in Wales, have the priorities changed/become clearer/more urgent?

During the online meeting, you will: **1)** hear about the findings of the stakeholder interviews; **2)** see a presentation about the TRACER project and its results from the 8 other (former) coal-intensive regions; and **3)** get the opportunity to work on the prioritisation of R&I-related findings and engage in interactive discussions with other experts.

Stakeholder perceptions of the energy transition in Wales

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In nine target regions across Europe, the Horizon 2020 TRACER project aims to help develop shared visions for energy transition and identify related priorities for future R&I strategies. In Wales, 30 stakeholders from a variety of sectors were consulted by the University of Strathclyde on their views on future priorities. This note summarises the emerging findings.

A tale of two transitions

The stakeholder feedback contains a strong narrative of **two transitions**, both with profound territorial dimensions. First the transition out of coal - Wales is still dealing with structural spatial inequalities related to the past. The second is the transition to renewable energy sources. These differ in terms of technologies, R&I needs, policy context and territorial incidence.

Policy related to the transition out of coal has been successful in terms of landscape and re-greening. However, opportunities were missed to link former mining communities with the transition to renewable energies, and to promote **community ownership and local involvement**.

Wales is a net exporter of energy and has an energy mix that is **well placed to make the shift** to a zero-carbon economy. There is strong consensus on Wales' many strengths, including research expertise, the industrial bases, internal and external linkages, and collaborative networks. However, the transition to sustainable energy in Wales faces significant infrastructural and technological barriers, as well as organisational, social and cultural challenges.

The feedback placed a strong emphasis on a **place-based approach** as well as the importance of **consulting the community regarding its own transition needs**. Some territories are better placed than others to take part in and benefit from green energy developments. The decarbonisation agenda will only relieve socio-economic inequalities if poorer households and disadvantaged areas are recognised and prioritised. Issues with digital access, health, accommodation and energy affordability are especially problematic in former mining areas.

The visions for energy transition highlight the need for political leadership and **collective effort in the just transition**. Recognising the mistakes of the past is necessary to seize present and future opportunities.

Three of the key emerging themes are energy R&I, skills and the need for community engagement:

Wales is well-regarded for energy-related R&D activity, with many innovative organisations and connectors, plus promising renewable energy clusters.

There is a need to maintain relationships (current EU-funded project partnerships) and build relationships (funders, investors). Renewables projects located in former mining areas may have upscaling potential. Some gaps were identified, such as:

- Mapping of energy needs and R&D in Wales
- Identification of specific growth sectors
- R&D on greening the steel sector
- Targeted pilot projects around hydrogen and battery storage
- Research into socio-economic and behavioural elements of energy transition
- Involvement of R&I in other sectors (e.g. transport, AI)

Energy R&I

Skills

Skills development should be a priority – there is a need for large-scale initiatives and better skills matching by connecting providers of skills and training with businesses and policymakers. Innovative planning and incentives for training are needed. Local, renewable energy hubs could e.g. provide training in hydrogen, wind and tidal energy and home installation to support supply chains.

Energy transition has the potential to promote employment, with decarbonisation and energy efficiency investment creating a local need for work. Opportunities for deprived communities are not necessarily provided by remote work or high-tech sector jobs.

Reskilling could be offered through Further Education colleges, schools and research opportunities in universities.

It is important to tackle the intergenerational divide and support the interests of young people.

Community engagement helps local embeddedness and could include:

- Distributed energy networks to promote community economic development
- Energy mutuals, i.e. a publicly/community-owned energy company based on an energy source
- A community sector model of investing in renewables projects which can be replicated and on a larger scale
- Public sector support for community energy projects by using buying power locally
- Maximising community benefits through heat or energy as a service, hybrid solutions, local energy trading markets, shared energy schemes
- Demonstrator projects (hydrogen buses, home installations) to boost public interest.

Community co-production