Capable

CLIMATE POLICY ACCEPTABILITY ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK

CAPABLE'S USER MANUAL

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Climate Policy Acceptability and Effectiveness

Authors: Albert Ferrari, Loïc Berger, Johannes Emmerling, Silvia Pianta, Mary Sanford, Kai Lessmann, Keith E. Smith, Žan Mlakar, Ilke Aydogan, Ivan Savin, Jeroen van den Bergh, Uyanga Turmunkh, Ilaria Dibattista, Alessia Casamassima and Simone Borghesi

Table of Contents

Introduction

The road to net-zero is hindered by fragmented policymaking, uneven public support, and limited tools to assess the broader social and political implications of climate action. Achieving climate neutrality in the European Union and globally requires ambitious and effective climate targets, as well as the ability to implement widely accepted policies. Many existing policy assessments focus narrowly on effectiveness, overlooking critical dimensions like feasibility and public perception.

In this context, the Horizon Europe project CAPABLE, funded by the European Union, aims to provide recommendations for designing socially and economically acceptable climate policy measures for 2030 and beyond. CAPABLE draws on economics, sociology, political science and psychology to capture climate policy's multidimensional outcomes and implications and develop policy recommendations that are both politically feasible and economically and socially effective. The project brings together a unique group of experienced researchers from various disciplines, including economics, political science, social psychology, and environmental sciences.

Throughout its duration, CAPABLE has relied on cutting-edge methodologies to identify policy-relevant insights and disseminate them to policymakers and policy experts. The handbook of the CAPABLE project is intended to serve as a comprehensive user guide for the project's outputs and findings. This CAPABLE manual aims to guide users through the various deliverables and research outputs, demonstrating how the project can contribute to more informed and effective climate policymaking. It is addressed to policymakers contributing directly to assessing and designing climate policies at the European level, but can also be valuable to other climate policy experts, stakeholders and policymakers at the EU, national and local levels willing to understand, assess and design climate policies. The handbook aims to extract the main implications, recommendations, and conclusions from the public and upcoming deliverables, inviting users to delve deeper into CAPABLE products for a detailed understanding.

The project is considered excellent and at the frontier of research for several reasons. It employs cutting-edge economic decision-making tools and a multidisciplinary methodological approach to evaluate climate policies from a multidimensional perspective. CAPABLE generates new empirical evidence, in particular through large-scale surveys, and integrates assessments of the perspectives of relevant stakeholders and policymakers. In addition, it allows users to dig deeper into the findings by providing various types of material, including online policy tools, policy briefs and podcasts.

This short manual is structured around four thematic sections that collectively form a comprehensive analysis of European climate policies. The first section focuses on methods for policy evaluation and explores how heterogeneity influences effectiveness and acceptability. The second section addresses the assessment and effectiveness of climate policies, with particular attention to the EU Green Deal and the Fit for 55 package. The third section investigates public acceptance and social feasibility, presenting both theoretical frameworks and empirical

findings on the determinants of support for climate measures. The final section centres on communication and perception, examining how scientific knowledge, uncertainty, and climate policies are conveyed and understood by the public and policymakers. Overall, CAPABLE's approach to integrating diverse methodologies and engaging with stakeholders makes it highly relevant to current policy challenges and positions it at the forefront of climate policy research.

Methods for Policy Evaluation and Socio-Economic

D1.1 - Summary report on policy evaluation and the role of social and economic heterogeneity for policy effectiveness and acceptability CAPABLE project

This deliverable develops several innovative methodological frameworks for assessing and comparing the outcomes of different climate policies, such as ex-ante vs ex-post analysis and heterogeneity of socio-economic characteristics of individuals. It also reviews outcomes of the IPCC's most recent scenario on welfare, highlighting that despite the complexity of policy impacts, including costs, distributional impacts and co-benefits, lower temperatures are associated with higher welfare. Lastly, it proposes an analytical framework for evaluating climate policies to inform policymakers, considering (i) various policy instruments like carbon pricing, subsidies, standards or bans, (ii) multiple market failures and externalities, and (iii) the social cost of distributional effects of policies.

Main insights:

- Policies should be evaluated based on their comprehensive welfare implications, including costs and benefits, and their distributional impacts.
- Policymakers should consider and differentiate findings from both ex-ante and ex-post studies to inform future policymaking.
- The use of welfare metrics that allow for the ranking of alternative strategies and explicitly state normative preferences about the importance of different dimensions for human well-being should be encouraged.

Read the report and a related paper:

- https://capableclimate.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/D1.1_Summary-report-on-policy-evaluation_with-Appendices.pdf
- Gsottbauer, E., & van den Bergh, J. C. J. M. (2025). Pricing instruments in environmental and climate policy when polluters are boundedly rational. npj Climate Action, 4, 96. https://doi.org/10.1038/s44168-025-00284-9

D1.2 - Report on insights on pro-environmental behaviour, with insights from several case studies

The report employs methodologies such as nationwide representative surveys in Spain, Italy, and the Czech Republic, topic modelling, and computational text analysis. These methods are innovative in their integration of diverse data sources and analytical techniques to assess the public acceptability of climate policies, the relationship between COVID-19 and climate change, and the comparison of expert answers with those generated by AI tools like ChatGPT. Beyond this report, several papers related to this work examine how climate experts perceive issues such as green growth, degrowth, and carbon pricing.

Main insights:

- Public acceptability of the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) can be increased by aligning revenue allocation with citizen preferences.
- The use of AI tools like ChatGPT could complement traditional policy analysis methods, combined with human oversight due to potential biases and the "black box" nature of AI processes.
- Climate policy in times of COVID-19 suggests a need to focus on a sustainable recovery, energy and transport efficiency, investments in low-carbon technologies, and education. Regulation and pricing strategies can enforce individual climate action

Read some related papers here while we publish the final deliverable:

- Mestre Garcia, C., Savin, I., & van den Bergh, J. (2024). The nexus of COVID-19 and climate change: A systematic literature review. Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie und Statistik, 244(3), 237–266. https://doi.org/10.1515/jbnst-2023-0048
- Salekpay, F., van den Bergh, J., & Savin, I. (2024). Comparing advice on climate policy between academic experts and ChatGPT. Ecological Economics, 226, 108352. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolecon.2024.108352
- King, L. C., Savin, I., & Drews, S. (2023). Shades of green growth scepticism among climate policy researchers. *Nature Sustainability, 6*(11). https://doi.org/10.1038/s41893-023-01198-2
- Savin, I., Drews, S., & van den Bergh, J. (2024). Carbon pricing – perceived strengths, weaknesses and knowledge gaps according to a global expert survey. *Environmental Research Letters, 19*(2), 024014. https://doi.org/10.1088/1748-9326/ad1c1c

D2.4 - New methodology to compare and develop policy packages in a socially acceptable manner

Conjoint experiments are widely used in political and economic sciences to examine multidimensional preferences and trade-offs, yet little is known about how preference estimates vary across response methodologies. This study systematically compares three commonly employed methods -- discrete choice, binary ratings, and profile vote -- using a conjoint experiment on carbon taxation policies. Results show that while all methods yield similar estimated relative preference changes, discrete choice response methods fail to capture the preference level, produce less consistent results, and are less efficient than binary ratings or profile voting. We identify alternative methods that offer comparatively more reliable and versatile analytical approaches for capturing preferences within discrete choice experimental settings.

Main insights:

- Policy design should incorporate public preferences for specific features, such as costs, timelines, and benefits, to enhance public acceptability.
- Policy designs should be informed by systematic comparisons of response methods to maximise efficiency and consistency in capturing public preferences.
- Conjoint experiments could be used to better understand public support for carbon mitigation policies, particularly fossil fuel taxes. When possible, binary ratings or profile vote methods should be preferred over discrete choice for more reliable and versatile analyses.

Assessment and effectiveness of climate policies

D3.1 - Report and interactive database on assessments of policies, globally and in the context of the EU Green Deal and the Fit for 55 package

The report employs a broad range of innovative methodologies to assess the impacts of climate policies. First, it utilises a large-scale AI systematic mapping approach to review existing carbon pricing assessments. It created an interactive database out of over 84,000 climate policy evaluations.

The report also introduces a machine learning-supported evidence and gap map for climate policy evaluations worldwide. Second, it conducts detailed econometric analyses of the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) using official microdata on allowance transactions from the EU ETS registry, applying network analysis to shed light on the role of financial actors in the European carbon market. It also uses the registry data to analyse the trend of emissions and employment across sectors over the last two decades and at the regional level.

Third, it develops another meta-analysis and a realist synthesis on the effectiveness of carbon pricing across different jurisdictions. The findings emphasise the growing availability of ex-post climate policy evidence, as well as the fragmentation and uneven distribution of that evidence across geographies, sectors, and policy types.

Main insights:

- Carbon pricing has been shown to be an effective tool across the world, with disparities across regions and systems. However, its credibility is at stake today to cut emissions further while avoiding the risk of speculation and public resistance in the context of higher prices.
- Further research is needed, ex-post evaluations of understudied carbon pricing schemes and studies focusing on underexplored policy outcomes such as equity impacts, co-benefits for health and biodiversity, and behavioural change.

Read some related papers here while we publish the final deliverable:

- Callaghan, M., Banisch, L., Doebbeling-Hildebrandt, N., Edmondson, D., Flachsland, C., Lamb, W. F., Levi, S., Müller-Hansen, F., Posada, E., Vasudevan, S., & Minx, J. C. (2025). Machine learning map of climate policy literature reveals disparities between scientific

attention, policy density, and emissions. npj Climate Action, 4, 7. https://doi.org/10.1038/s44168-024-00196-0

- Döbbeling-Hildebrandt, N., Miersch, K., Khanna, T. M., Bachelet, M., Bruns, S., Callaghan, M., Edenhofer, O., Flachsland, C., Forster, P., Kalkuhl, M., Koch, N., Lamb, W., Ohlendorf, N., Steckel, J. C., Minx, J. C. (2024). Systematic review and meta-analysis of ex-post evaluations on the effectiveness of carbon pricing. Nature Communications, 15, 4147. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-024-48512-w
- Döbbeling-Hildebrandt, N., Danilenko, D., Lamb, W. F., & Minx, J. C. (2025). Under what conditions and why is carbon pricing effective? A realist synthesis of ex-post evidence. Environmental Research Letters, 20(10), 103005. https://doi.org/10.1088/1748-9326/ae03d8
- Mohammadzadeh Valencia, F., Mohren, C., Ramakrishnan, A., Merchert, M., Minx, J. C., & Steckel, J. C. (2024). Public support for carbon pricing policies and revenue recycling options: A systematic review and meta-analysis of the survey literature. npj Climate Action, 3, 74. https://doi.org/10.1038/s44168-024-00153-x

FOCUS ON THE DATABASE ON POLICY ASSESSMENT

The climate policy literature map identifies and classifies the policy and scientific work on climate policy instruments via machine-learning techniques. It provides an understanding of the instruments and sectors that have been explored and research gaps that remain to be further explored. To check out the results, visit the online dashboard:

https://climateliterature.org/#/project/policymap

D3.2 - Report on environmental impacts and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the environment and policies

The report applies a diverse set of empirical and modelling methods to assess the diverse impacts of recent crises (i.e., the COVID-19 pandemic and the energy crisis triggered by the invasion of Ukraine by Russia) on climate policy. These include comparative analyses of transport fuel consumption data and household-level electricity usage.

To evaluate behavioural responses, the research estimates price elasticities and adjustment lags in energy demand under the recent energy crisis. To understand public support for climate policies, it conducts a quantitative analysis of Eurobarometer data to identify the drivers of political acceptability under stress conditions like energy price spikes. At the macroeconomic level, the project employs agent-based modelling to simulate the effects of energy price shocks on GDP, inflation, and firm survival under various policy scenarios. In parallel, the report estimates the external costs of environmental degradation using environmental-economic accounting methods and incorporates natural capital valuation to assess the ecosystem-related components of the social cost of carbon.

Main insights:

- Temporary restrictions do not lead to lasting behavioural change. Policies should invest in infrastructure and incentives that make low-carbon choices the default choice.
- Communication strategies should link decarbonisation to security, health, and economic opportunity, not just environmental goals, to increase public support.
- EU climate policy should combine carbon pricing with social safety nets such as targeted transfers.

Read some related papers here while we publish the final deliverable:

- Patino-Artaza, H., King, L. C., & Savin, I. (2024). Did COVID-19 really change our lifestyles? Evidence from transport energy consumption in Europe. Energy Policy, 191, 114204. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.enpol.2024.114204
- Kremer, E., Reissl, S., Fierro, L. E., Emmerling, J., Lamperti, F., & Roventini, A. (2025). Energy price shocks in the European Union: Macroeconomic impacts, distributional effects and policy responses. *Energy Economics, 152,* 108979. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eneco.2025.108979

D3.3 - Report and high-level summary on the implementation of the Fit for 55 package

The EU Fit-for-55 package collects key policy measures in support of the European Union's Green Deal framework aiming to reduce EU emissions by 55% by 2030. This report presents research that evaluates three critical components of the Fit-for-55 package: the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS), the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), and the extension of carbon pricing to housing (ETS 2). The research emphasises the importance of policy credibility for the ETS price dynamics, and the impact of speculative action on the ETS and the permit price therein, employing innovative modelling techniques as well as empirical analyses. The CBAM analyses examine its impacts on trade, production, emissions, and GDP across regions in a large-scale, multi-regional macroeconomic model. Novel game-theoretic modelling sheds light on the formation of climate clubs and the stability of the club under retaliation. The ETS 2 analysis examines the potential for expanding carbon pricing to the building sector, comparing policy alternatives and measuring distributional impacts by integrating a new housing model into an optimal policy framework within a general equilibrium.

Main Policy Recommendations:

- Policy credibility is fundamental to climate policy success - maintaining consistent, long-term climate commitments is more important than specific policy design details, as market participants' behavioural responses to policy signals often determine outcomes more than the policies themselves.
- Climate policy often requires integrated, multi-instrument approaches. Balancing economic efficiency with political feasibility improves the distributional impact of the policy and its chances of successful implementation.
- International climate cooperation through climate clubs is viable but requires strategic design. Strong initial coalitions with stringent border adjustments can improve participation.

Read some related papers here while we publish the final deliverable:

- Sitarz, J., Pahle, M., Osorio, S., Luderer, G., & Pietzcker, R. (2024). EU carbon prices signal high policy credibility and farsighted actors. *Nature Energy, 9,* 691–702. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41560-024-01505-x
- Terranova, R., Cozzarini, C., Reissl, S., & Tavoni, M. (2025). Detecting speculation in the market for EU emission allowances. Energy Economics, 148, 108652. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eneco.2025.108652
- Blanz, A., & Gaitan, B. (2023). Reducing residential emissions: Carbon pricing vs. subsidising retrofits. arXiv. https://doi.org/10.48550/arxiv.2310.15687

Policy brief: Lessons from carbon pricing in Europe: Beyond effectiveness

The European Union Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) is the world's largest carbon market and a cornerstone of the EU's strategy to combat climate change. It is a primary tool for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in energy-intensive sectors and plays a central role in achieving the EU's climate targets. Building upon the findings of different deliverables, this Policy Brief highlights several critical policy insights of the EU ETS's performance, including its demonstrated ability to reduce emissions even at relatively low prices compared to social cost of carbon estimates.

Read the policy brief:

- https://capableclimate.eu/capable-policy-brief-ets-n1/

FOCUS ON THE LARGE-SCALE SURVEYS
The survey was conducted in the summer of 2024 by Dynata, involving 19,327 participants across 13 EU countries. The survey measured support for various climate policies, both implemented, proposed as part of the EU's Fit-for-55 package, or plausible. The sample was representative in terms of gender, age, and education, allowing for broadly generalisable findings.To check out the results, visit the online dashboard:

https://capableclimate.eu/online-tool/

This policy brief also highlights the main findings of this survey and provides guidance on navigating the online dashboard.

https://capableclimate.eu/pb3-dashboard/

Public Acceptance and Social Feasibility

D2.1 - Literature review and integrative framework of determinants of public acceptance and social feasibility of climate policies

This report reviews 519 empirical studies published between 1998 and 2024 on determinants of public acceptance of climate policies, drawing evidence from 59 nations. Publications increased from about 15 per year in the early 2000s to nearly 80 per year by 2023.

The review identifies three main groups of determinants. First, policy design and perceived impacts (≈45% of all instances), focusing on how people judge the fairness, cost, and effectiveness of policies. Second, individual characteristics (≈35%), including values, political orientation, and concern about climate change. Third, contextual factors (≈20%), such as trust in government and exposure to crises or extreme weather.

By means of natural language processing, we clustered studies into 15 main research themes; the most frequent were public opinion (9.9%), trust and political ideology (9.1%), and perceived policy effects (8.8%). Over time, research has shifted from general climate attitudes toward policy-specific design and communication issues.

Main insights:

- Public acceptance research has expanded rapidly and become more experimental.
- Most studies now focus on how policy features shape support.
- Context and trust matter increasingly for explaining differences across countries.

Read the policy brief:

- https://capableclimate.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/D2.1_Literature-Review-and-Integrative-Framework.pdf

D2.2 - Empirical report and publication on key determinants of policy acceptance and their interactions across Europe.

The report summarises the findings of the first wave of the survey, which is presented in the text box. The survey measured people's preferences towards 15 different climate change policies, including a mix of policies that have already been implemented as part of the EU's Fit-for-55 package and those that are not yet implemented, but relevant to the climate policymaking context within the EU and its member states.

This comprehensive survey integrates psychological predictors, including values, political attitudes, climate worry, social influence, personal behaviours, and socio-demographics, standardised at the country level. The results indicate a general trend for individuals to like or dislike climate policies as a whole. A wide range of psychological characteristics, including climate worry, trust in the EU parliament, and perceived climate policy support of other citizens, are the primary drivers of policy preferences. The patterns are largely similar across countries, indicating that the conclusions are broadly generalisable.

Main insights:

- Public Psychological characteristics like climate worry, social influence, and political attitudes are key in determining the support for specific climate policies
- Public communication strategies should be tailored to those specific psychological characteristics beyond demographics when trying to parse out the support for specific climate policies.

D2.3 - Summary report and scientific publication on aspects of policies that critically influence public acceptance

The report maps climate-policy preferences along two dimensions (the overall opinion level and its stability across policies). The analysis reveals four core insights that could maximise support, reduce backlash, and make ambitious climate action more feasible. First, perceived benefits, including a policy's effectiveness in reducing emissions and its impact on well-being, strongly drive support, while concerns about personal and economic costs strongly influence support.

Second, some instruments are well-supported across all respondents (e.g., an EU Rail Fund), while consumer-facing taxes or bans on popular products remain highly contentious. Third, priorities on how to ETS revenues vary: 'Supporters' prefer reinvestment in mitigation, while 'Middle' and 'Opposer' blocs prioritise household compensation and climate-adaptation spending. Lastly, even within 'Opposers' groups, there are comparatively high levels of climate concern and institutional trust.

Main insights:

- Europe does not face an immovable wall of climate scepticism; instead, it confronts a large swing constituency whose backing hinges on perceived fairness, visible benefits, and manageable costs.
- Designing packages that pair stringent measures with household relief, local co-benefits and clear communication of efficacy can shift the 'Conditional Middle', and with them the overall majority, towards sustained support.
- Policy designs need not just minimise costs but also promote effectiveness. Policymakers shouldn't necessarily shy away from more stringent climate measures due to concerns about cost impacts, as they run the same risks of alienating potential supporters by minimising effectiveness.

Read some related papers here while we publish the final deliverable:

- Smith, E. K., Mlakar, Ž., Levis, A., Sanford, M., Stapper, L., Bouman, T., … Pianta, S. Climate Policy Feasibility across Europe Relies on the Conditional Middle (2025). https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/pnvw8_v3

Communication and Perceptions

D4.1 - Report on comprehension and use of scientific knowledge and effectiveness of different communication approaches.

The report systematically reviews communication strategies, focusing on how scientists convey uncertainties to policymakers. It includes a literature review and qualitative interviews with scientists and policymakers to understand the dynamics of communicating uncertainty. The report also explores the use of calibrated language, with a case study on the IPCC's approach, to communicate certainty levels effectively. The report constitutes a comprehensive exploration of communication strategies about uncertainty, offering practical insights for policymakers, scientists, and communicators to bridge the gap between scientific knowledge and informed decision-making.

Main insights:

- Researchers should emphasise transparent communication of scientific uncertainties and unknowns to build trust and inform, by presenting an objective balance of findings, including all available evidence, rather than persuade. They should also aim to anticipate and address potential misunderstandings or misinformation proactively.
- It is important to build capacity among policymakers on the limits, uncertainties and unknowns of what science finds and does not and how to make decisions in this given context.
- Further research is needed to understand how different ways of presenting uncertainties affect policymakers' understanding and decision-making.

Read the report and a related paper:

- https://capableclimate.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/D4.1_Report-on-Comprehension-and-Use_2023.12.20.pdf
- van den Bergh, J. C., & Botzen, W. W. (2024). Assessing criticisms of carbon pricing. International Review of Environmental and Resource Economics, 18(3), 315–384. https://doi.org/10.1561/101.00000172

D4.2 - Report on perceptions of climate policies of different policymakers

The report presents an overview of how climate issues are perceived by policymakers and politicians: first, the `policlim` model and dataset, and second, the survey of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). For the first project, we developed a model to determine whether a given sentence in a political manifesto contains content related to climate change. The model was trained, validated, and then applied to the full set of 1,792 manifestos in our sample, covering elections in 45 countries from 1990 to 2022. The MEP survey was fielded from April to October 2025. The purpose of the survey is to investigate how MEPs and their staff form opinions on a set of specific policies (climate and non-climate) and their perception of public opinion on the same policies.

The `policlim` dataset provides the prevalence of climate change topics in each manifesto. The model can be used to predict climate change salience across 26 languages.

Through the MEP survey, we investigate 1) how political actors' opinion differs from the opinion of their constituents; 2) the accuracy of MEPs and their staff on perceptions of public opinion; and 3) whether providing them with public opinion data has an impact on their legislative attitudes.

Read some related papers here while we publish the final deliverable:

- Sanford M, Pianta S, Schmid N, Musto G. `policlim`: A Dataset of Climate Change Discourse in the Political Manifestos of Forty-Five Countries from 1990 to 2022. *British Journal of Political Science*. 2025;55:e131. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123425100719
- `policlim` model: https://huggingface.co/marysanford/policlim ; `policlim` code and dataset: https://github.com/marysanford/policlim

D1.3 - Report on the treatment and communication of uncertainty for evaluation and design of climate policies.

The deliverable reviews literature and methodologies on how climate change economics models and deals with climate-related ambiguity and deep uncertainty. It provides an overview of the key sources of deep uncertainties in climate change economics and the appropriateness of various decision-making tools used to (1) guide climate policymaking under deep uncertainty and (2) describe and predict how society may respond to ambiguity related to climate change. The report advocates for alternative robust decision-making frameworks that embody the precautionary principle, such as Robust Decision-Making and the tolerable windows approach.

Main insights:

- Integrate calibrated risk and ambiguity attitudes into economic models for more accurate predictions.
- Implement robust decision-making frameworks that prioritise robustness over optimality and that give greater weight to worst-case scenarios.
- Use adaptive management strategies to adjust policies as new information becomes available.

Read some related papers here while we publish the final deliverable:

- Aydogan, I., Berger, L., Bosetti, V., & Liu, N. (2023). Three layers of uncertainty. Journal of the European Economic Association, 21(5), 2209–2236. https://doi.org/10.1093/jeea/jvad008
- Berger, L. (2023). A randomness device to create the conditions of uncertainty. Applied Economics Letters, 31(18), 1881–1884. https://doi.org/10.1080/13504851.2023.2208820
- Aydogan, I., Berger, L., Bosetti, V., & Liu, N. (2023). Unraveling ambiguity aversion. The Review of Economics and Statistics, 1–32. https://doi.org/10.1162/rest_a_01358
- Aydogan, I., Berger, L., & Théroude, V. (2024). Pay all subjects or pay only some? An experiment on decision-making under risk and ambiguity. Journal of Economic Psychology, 104, 102757. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joep.2024.102757

D2.5- Report on public perceptions of actors and policymaking

The report relies on representative samples of 19,327 participants from 13 EU countries in the summer of 2024, complemented by two pilot survey datasets collected from 700 Dutch citizens in October/November 2023 and 500 EU citizens in April 2024. The innovative aspect of these studies lies in their focus on pluralistic ignorance and public participation.

The report examines how individuals perceive other citizens' climate attitudes and the degree of citizens' involvement in climate policymaking, and how these perceptions influence their own policy acceptance. People tend to underestimate the degree to which other citizens care about environmental protection, but this does not seem to significantly spill over into their policy support. Instead, policy support seems to be driven by the extent to which they expect different societal actors to take climate action and by the degree to which they feel involved in climate policymaking within their country.

Main insights:

- Policymakers who wish to increase the social feasibility of their policies should involve citizens in climate policymaking more commonly.
- Policies should target societal actors in ways that align with how people perceive their willingness to engage in climate action..

Read the report:

- https://capableclimate.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/D2.5-Report-on-public-perceptions-of-actors-and-policymaking.pdf

D4.3 - Report on local governance and citizen engagement for climate policies

The report employs several methodologies to explore local governance and citizen engagement in climate policies. It relies on semi-structured interviews with local policymakers and trade union representatives to identify key dynamics and obstacles in implementing local and regional policies in the framework of the European Green Deal. Surveys were also used to assess how the European Climate Pact Ambassadors envisage their contribution to climate policies and how citizens perceive barriers to their engagement. In addition, computational text analysis is employed to analyse responses to the EU public consultations.

Main insights:

- To tackle the fragmented and bureaucratic relationships between citizens, cities, regional, national, and EU institutions on climate action, more structured opportunities for dialogue should be established.
- The implementation of the Just Transition Mechanism at the local level necessitates engaging with regional authorities during the definition of the Just Transition Plans and monitoring the implementation of such funding to provide long-term impacts.
- Enhancing the regulatory autonomy and financial resources for cities could enable more effective climate action at the local level.

POLICY BRIEF: TRULY JUST? BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION AND UNEVEN IMPACTS OF THE JUST TRANSITION MECHANISM

This policy brief draws on evidence from the report D4.3 to examine how regional dynamics, stakeholder perspectives, and public attitudes shape the implementation of green initiatives. It highlights the real-world challenges and opportunities of making the ecological transition truly just building upon findings from case studies of Emilia-Romagna (Italy) and a citizens' survey in the Netherlands and Slovenia. Read the policy brief

https://capableclimate.eu/pb2-barriers

Conclusions

Among growing geopolitical tensions and concerns over acceptability, loss of industrial activity, and competitiveness, CAPABLE research illustrates the path forward through its rigorous scientific research. This user manual is an invitation to dig deeper into CAPABLE work.

The research that it presents offers some hope that ambitious climate policies can be a way forward to reduce emissions, rebuild European industry and remain socially feasible under certain conditions. It invites policymakers and experts to consider new methods for assessing the effectiveness, acceptability, and perceptions of climate policies. It also puts online tools, syntheses, and scientific evidence at their disposal to build a new case for improved environmental policymaking.

TUNE IN TO OUR CAPABLE RADIO

To summarise and reflect on the findings of the project, policy impacts and partners' contributions, six podcasts have been recorded:

- Ep. 1: summary of the project with Silvia Pianta and Johannes Emmerling
- Ep. 2: the 10 commandments of climate policy by Jeroen Van Den Bergh
- Ep. 3: citizens' preferences on climate policies by Keith Smith
- Ep. 4: the role of national unions in the Just Transition by Giulia Laganà
- Ep. 5: the interaction between research and policies by Gaby Umbach
- Ep. 6: double interview and concluding remarks by Alessia Casamassima and Ilaria Dibattista (TBD)

LISTEN TO THEM:
https://soundcloud.com/fsregulation-energy-and-climate/sets/capable-podcast

The CAPABLE project

Policies to transform the European economy to meet the global climate targets of the Paris Agreement need to be cost-effective, fair, and politically and socially feasible. There is, therefore, a fundamental challenge for policy design which requires robust scientific methods to assess policy portfolios and the "sequencing" of policies. The project CAPABLE (ClimAte Policy AcceptaBiLity Economic framework) addresses these challenges by improving economic analysis in four ways:

- Develop frameworks for decision-making under deep uncertainty, taking into account behavioural factors and heterogeneous social actors;
- Account for the social acceptability and political feasibility of policies and their sequencing;
- Explicitly take into account the preferences, knowledge, and capabilities of policymakers as actors in the process.
- Utilise the existing evidence base, summarise it clearly and efficiently, and make it accessible and usable to policymakers;

This handbook collects and synthesises the findings of the CAPABLE project: https://capableclimate.eu/

Disclaimer

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