TAKING DIALOGUE SERIOUSLY

The social impact of large fusion facilities Porto Torres experience

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The project

To promote a participatory process inherent the construction of an experimental fusion power plant in Porto Torres using EASW (European Awareness Scenario Workshop)



What is an EASW?

EASW promotes the citizens' participation to collective decision concerning technology. The EASW represents one of the main project of the European Commission Directorate General (DGXIH-D) and is directed towards increasing conscious participation in the choices associated with the impact of science and technology on society. Further information on www.cordis.eu

Research Steps

First step of research intended to study the town using a certain number of statistical items

Second step was the presentation to the laic public of fusion technology using public hearing methodology

- •Why we speak on fusion
- How it works
- •What is the state of the research
- How it is done
- Safety aspects
- •Environmental aspects
- Social and economic aspects



Third step has been the workshop

Fourth step has been the discussion on ITER

The workshop

EASW is a structured discussion of around 30-50 people all residents in the town, belonging to four different social categories:

 Residents: includes representatives of local special-interest associations or local resident organised movements;



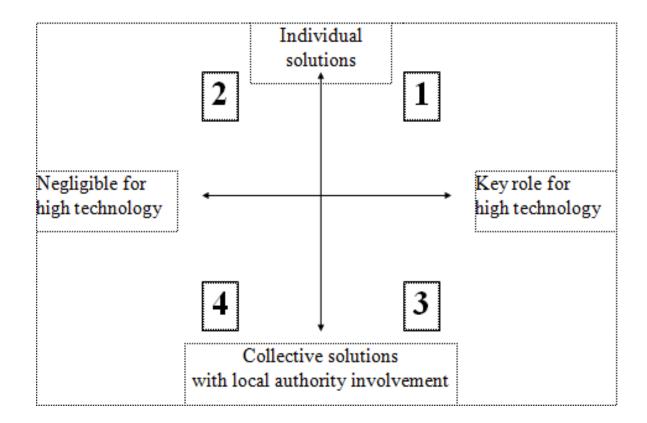
- Technological experts: made up of experts in technology representatives of firms within the jurisdiction of the municipality, researchers and consultants on the themes under discussion;
- Policy-makers: made up of politicians, public officials, local administrators, civil servants etc.;
- Private sectors representatives and trade unions: made up of businessmen and trade unions representing the local or regional business community in those sectors closely linked to the themes discussed at the EASW.

The purpose

Group discussion had to be designed with reference to two main co-ordinates

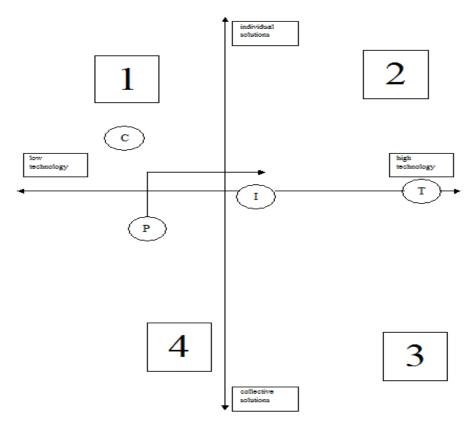
- 1) The level of technologies involved in the scenario and
- 2) The kind of **participation** to action by local population.

The two co-ordinates can be reported as in the following scheme.



Results

All four groups propose to reinforce the strategic position of Porto Torres and to valorise environment and the archaeological sites present on the territory in order to favour tourism, especially in coincidence with the creation of the National natural park on the Asinara island. In other terms, participants do not want to leave doors closed to different kinds of development but propose scenarios that include a plurality of solutions: if one fails the others might prove efficient and the territory won't suffer as it has been in the past from the failure of one and only solution.



P = Politicians C = Citizens I = Businessmen and trade unions T = Technicians

Second EASW: the direct experience

- Deepening of information and raising of citizens' awareness, concerning energetic issues and the use of fusion
- Raising of citizens' awareness concerning socio-economic effects on the territory tied to the realisation of a Research Centre on nuclear fusion. Analysis and spread of JET experiences in Culham
- "Direct experience" of a delegation of citizens of Porto Torres through visit/lab at JET in Culham
- Creation and spread of a simulated scenario about the realisation of a Research Centre on fusion in Porto Torres considering the possible effects on local economy
- Socio-economic data processing on the achievement of the thermonuclear fusion energy considering citizens' participation using the Strategic Scenario Workshop

Conclusion I - Theoretical Lesson

The success of Porto Torres experiment include a certain number of topics useful for social and economic assessment of a project. In fact nuclear fusion, because its intrinsic complexity, include all possible social impact and all possible risk perception. Taking into account this experience we can list the following statements.

ENVIROMENT

Every project, every production or research activity we intend to realize, should be able to integrate with local territory and should have an environmental impact.

INFORMATION

Communication, regarding scientific and technologic innovation diffusion must be: full, complete and continuous.

ECONOMY

Research and entrepreneurial activities should fit and support local development.

POLICY

Bureaucratic practices should not be an obstacle to the introduction and the transfer of scientific and technological enterprise. Coordination of local and national policies is a fundamental question.

SOCIETY

Rising of awareness and choosing power in people. Fitting and sharing of development plans between social and political powers.

Conclusion II Practical lesson

Presence of an efficient staff

The presence of an effective staff and its competence can determine the success of an participatory activity.

Significant representativeness of participants

It is important that participants well represent their category. The number of people belonging to different economic, political and social areas should be well balanced.

Informal atmosphere and behaviour in the workshop

To stimulate debate and experience exchange it is necessary to create a favourable atmosphere and an informal attitude among participants.

Fruitful discussion among participants

EASW methodology help different actors to become aware of different possible future scenarios. It facilitate then the development of practical ideas to realise a specific project in a local context.

Preliminary information to participants on relevant topic/s

This means to give a preliminary introduction to the methodology which would be useful to start with an homogeneous level of information among participants.

Creativity

High level of creativity due to the use of tools that stimulate the visualisation of outcomes and increase participant motivation

Presence of a "external experts" to stimulate debate

The role of these persons should be that of stimulating debate and give additional information on the central theme by provoking new points of view and contrasting opinions with respect to the general opinion

Adaptation to local conditions

The methodology should be contextualised and the participants should be invited to discuss on something which involve them directly.

Concrete follow-up

Follow-up activities are to be considered a strength of the methodology, because they express participants evaluation and then because they ensure that ideas are put in practice in local contexts.

Post Porto Torres activities I

2001 Public participation and fusion. Methodologies for increasing public awareness". After Porto Torres a certain number of studies has been conducted by myself and my institute. Of course we faced different arguments, because, after the choice of Cadarache, French colleagues thought that a fusion power plant, considering the French situation, could be accepted by local population. We don't agree, but it is not important. In any case our focus moved on fusion communication.





Post Porto Torres activities II

2003 Awareness of fusion in schools across Europe

2006 Study of communication following the agreement on the European site for ITER and its impact in terms of public opinion

2008 An assessment of the EFDA SERF (Socio-Economic Research on Fusion) And Proposed future Directions

2011 Evaluation of impacts of different communication activities carried out on fusion energy