

Participatory Value Evaluation: involving a large and representative group of citizens in the energy transition

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Drie reasons to involve citizens

Substantive reason

- Participation can lead to better decisions. Citizens can contribute knowledge that is new to experts and policymakers.
- Through participation, policymakers learn about citizens' priorities.

Normative reason

- Democracy means involving citizens in government decisions when they are (significantly) affected by them.

Instrumental reason

- Good participation can lead to support, acceptance, legitimacy and stronger trust in the government.



Citizen participation in the Netherlands



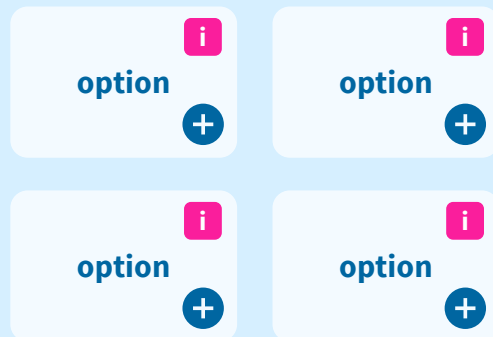
**PVE might facilitate
participation of
other group**



In a PVE, citizens take a seat in the chair of the decision maker for 15 minutes

Step 1

They see the most important policy options



Step 2

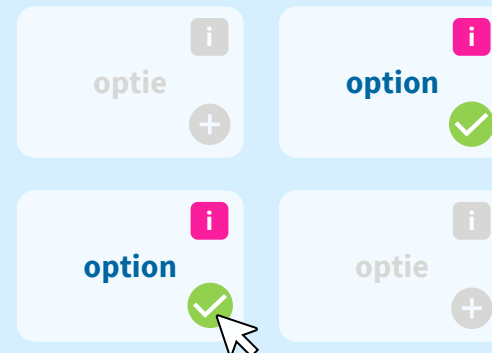
But there are constraints such as a limited public budget or other policy goals



Step 3

Participants are asked what they would advise

They experience the dilemma of a policy maker



Step 4

Participants are asked to provide a motivation for their choices

Please provide arguments



More than 100 applications in real projects in the Netherlands



What options should the government focus on?

Use the sliders to bet more or less on the options. Click on the i-button for more information.

Sort ▼

Compromise ⇄

i  **Biomass from the Netherlands**

 20 %  20 % €

Don't focus on

Focus as much as possible

i  **Biomass from abroad**

 30 %  0 % € €

Don't focus on

Focus as much as possible

i  **Continue to use natural gas and store greenhouse gases underground**

 15 %  0 % € € € € €

Don't focus on

Focus as much as possible

i  **More wind turbines in the North Sea and storing energy in hydrogen**

 15 %  15 % € €

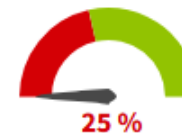
Don't focus on

Focus as much as possible

Restrictions



Energy supply



i Not enough clean energy for everyone in the Netherlands



How much energy is generated in the Netherlands



i We are very dependent on energy from abroad

Costs to society



Feedback



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What options should the government focus on?

Average recommendation

Insights

Focus most on:

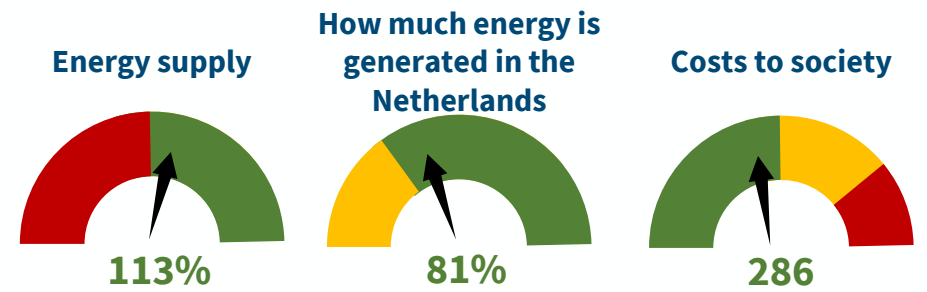
- Sustainable heating options
- More wind turbines in the North Sea and energy storage in hydrogen.

Focus least on:

- Continuing to use natural gas and CO₂ storage
- Biomass from abroad

Noteworthy:

- Overall recommendation easily meets the 100% energy supply target
- Most participants recommend generating 70%–90% of the energy supply in the Netherlands from sustainable sources.



The average Dutch citizen believes it is important that the Netherlands is not too dependent on other countries for its energy supply.

“Being as independent as possible is important, as we have hopefully learned after COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine. So, work together where necessary, but minimize dependence.”

“Since the coronavirus pandemic, I have become increasingly convinced that we need to become more self-sufficient.”

Strong correlation between perception of climate change and policy preference

	The climate is not changing (1%)	The climate is changing, but that is not due to human activity (7%)	The climate is changing, with human activity playing a minor role (28%)	The climate is changing, mainly due to human activity (63%)
Energy option				
Biomass from the Netherlands	44%	45%	56%	60%
Biomass from abroad	32%	34%	35%	36%
Continue to use natural gas and store greenhouse gases underground	68%	62%	48%	34%
More wind turbines in the North Sea and storing energy in hydrogen	51%	59%	67%	77%
Building large nuclear power plants	68%	54%	49%	40%
Building small nuclear power plants	55%	56%	51%	42%
Reusing heat from industry to heat homes	60%	68%	72%	78%
Using heat from the ground to heat homes	55%	68%	66%	72%
More wind turbines and solar parks on land	52%	47%	56%	67%
Buy renewable energy stored in hydrogen from abroad	43%	54%	45%	49%

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Insights

Participants who believe that the climate is not changing (due to human activity). Positive about

- Continuing to use natural gas
- Nuclear energy

Explanation: people expect nuclear energy to cause little disturbance.

The climate is changing, mainly due to human activity. Positive about

- Wind energy
- Heat

6 Case studies

Conducted in 2022 - 2023

National

- National climate consultation (11.582 participants)
- National energy consultation (7.986 participants)

Regional

- Gelderland climate consultation (3.298 participants)
- Flevoland energy consultation (2.397 participants)

Local

- Eemnes energy consultation (464 participants)
- Heeze-Leende energy consultation (436 participants)



Which measures should Flevoland mainly take?

Use the sliders to assign more or less value to the measures

Sort ▼

Compare ↔



Build more solar parks



10%



1,800 football fields



No additional parks

As many additional parks as possible



Build more wind farms



45%



3,500 football fields



No additional parks

As many additional parks as possible



Ensure that companies use less energy



30%



0 football fields



Leave it as it is now

Save as much energy as possible



Investigate whether nuclear energy is possible in Flevoland



0%



0 football fields



Do not investigate

Very extensive research

Limits



Generating clean energy in Flevoland



44%



Flevoland generates less sustainable energy than it uses.

Available government money

Maximum 101%



0%



Use of space



0 football fields

Feedback

18 november 2025



PVE: five criteria for legitimate public participation

Five criteria for high legitimacy of public participation

- 1 Outcomes are representative for the population
- 2 Everyone can participate
- 3 Stakeholders support the participatory process
- 4 Critique on the design of the participatory process can be refuted
- 5 The outcomes are actionable. Policy makers can show how they improved their policies based on outcomes of PVE

How is this safeguarded in the (design of a) PVE?

- 1 Conduct the PVE with a representative group of citizens
- 2 Open the PVE for everyone
- 3 Involve stakeholders in the design of the PVE
- 4 “Methodology document” is made in which all design choices are underpinned
- 5 Ensure that the PVE mimics the key choice situation on which a policy maker needs to take a decision



Quantitative insights

1. In every case, 70 - 80 % of participants believes the government should undertake action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and supports sustainable energy policy
2. Options to build wind and solar farms on land on average rank the lowest in all regional and local PVEs, while they rank average in national PVEs

What are the underlying values and concerns?

Qualitative analysis of motivations provided by 500 - 1.000 participants per case study



National level

Values and concerns

‘Security of supply’ is the most important value for guiding decisions about the energy transitions

- *Independence*
- *Prevent sudden cost increases*
- *Take responsibility*
- *National pride*

Being as independent as possible is important, we have hopefully learned after Corona, the war in Ukraine and the espionage and other negative actions of China, among others. There is great unrest in many areas in the world. So work together where necessary but with as little dependence as possible.”

We can do a lot, just as the Netherlands, just prove that we can do this.”

‘Protecting the climate’ prioritized over ‘protecting the environment’

“The modern landscape is becoming one in which we have to accept wind turbines and solar panels.”

“Necessary to reach production. The landscape is changing, but we have to accept it. In the past, the landscape has sometimes changed significantly under the influence of certain developments. We also accepted. Think of industrialization.”



Local level

Values and concerns

Some subgroups still consider 'protecting the climate' to be the most important value, but the majority prioritizes other values, such as:

Heeze-Leende

Landscape aesthetics

"We live in a beautiful nature reserve and we should preserve it."

Health

"The impact on the residents of Sterksel is already extremely large and negative. Odor nuisance and enormous numbers of truck movements with associated (noise) nuisance. This cannot be allowed to get any bigger."

Eemnes

"Eemnes is a very beautiful rural village and I would like to keep it that way. Make sure it doesn't become too full because there are already so many homes being added."

Place identity

"On the Meentweg, the municipality is very critical of views of the open area. This is decisive for the entire municipality and must be preserved."



Regional level

Values and concerns

"I find windmills and solar parks to be unpleasant to see. I understand that this will have to be done in a sustainable society."

Choices and value trade-offs resemble those at the local level: prevent impact on landscape related values. Motivations suggest more openness to wind and solar because necessity is understood

Gelderland

Wind turbines > solar panels

Flevoland

Solar panels > wind turbines

They belong to us, the Dutch, not to commercial parties that want to make as much profit as possible and do not care about the users of their products

"It's already completely full. Now it seems as if almost only the polder is being filled up. And we as residents don't notice this. not actively approached to participate with a discount, etc."



Wat inzichten uit percepties inwoners overheidsbeleid

What are the conditions for the 'silent middle group' to accept ambitious sustainability policies?

1. Climate measures that directly affect citizens' personal lives are only acceptable if other measures have been applied to the maximum extent possible and the government pursues a strict policy against major polluting sectors.
2. Protect low incomes and prevent the gap between rich and poor from widening.
3. The polluter must pay.
4. The benefits of a measure must outweigh the costs and there must be no better alternative.
5. Ensure that energy companies are transparent about profits and that profits are not too large.

Important factors that explain differences in perceptions between groups:

1. How strongly do people perceive the problem? (concerns about climate)
2. Financial position
3. Level of education



Why do Dutch governments often use PVE to involve citizens?

Reasons mentioned by policy makers in 9 case studies

- 1 Good that you reach a representative group of citizens and also a new group of citizens.
- 2 Results of PVE are more actionable because citizens experience your dilemma before giving an advice.
- 3 PVE provides nuanced (quantitative) insights and insights about values underlying preferences.
- 4 Insights can be used to make policies more 'citizen oriented'.
- 5 The method is efficient. Low costs per participant.



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