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PLANNING AND ENGAGEMENT ARENAS FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY LANDSCAPES

PEARLS series - 2018/1



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PEARLS aims to strengthen people's commitment to safe, clean and efficient energy as actors in spatial planning and social innovation in renewable energy landscapes (REL), bringing the vision and experience of Mediterranean countries to the rest of Europe.

This project will take a step towards changing the way REL are addressed, providing key support for the pan-European energy challenge.

Cover: Card by Oriol Jonloch. Courtesy of the artist.



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Table of contents

The challenges	5
Aims and objectives	6
Project's ambitions	7
Expected impacts	8
The consortium	9
Project Management	10
Project's organisation	12
An exchange program	13
Web Site	14
Contact	15

Planning and Engagement Arenas for Renewable Energy Landscapes - PEARLS is a project funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Staff Exchange under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions.

PEARLS intends to be a key actor in the spatial planning and social innovation arena for Renewable Energy Landscapes - REL, playing an active role in reinforcing the population's commitment to secure, clean and efficient energy. REL are regarded as spaces where renewable energies change the population's relationship with energy and their landscape perception. Despite all efforts, resistance to REL lingers in Europe, while the reasons for strong social acceptance in Mediterranean and South American countries are still unknown. Thus PEARLS will focus on Southern European countries and Israel due to their wealth of renewable energy resources and citizens' deep engagement with REL.

WHAT

PEARLS main goal is to develop applied knowledge by addressing crucial questions on how to increase public engagement for a sustainable renewable energy system through planning processes. Its results will help to improve political initiatives and strategic interventions oriented to the population, enhancing the opportunities of places where energy resources are relevant but local communities suffer the weaknesses of social, economic and infrastructure networks.

HOW

Using secondments, staff exchange and collaborative research, the project will investigate the national legal bases; will develop methodologies on social innovation; and will explore tools from the multidisciplinary approach of Social Sciences in different European regions. The project budget will support the exchange of research and innovation staff between the academia and the non-academic sector, sharing the resources among all the participants.

PEARLS takes a radically new approach from the point of the scientific knowledge on how to best implement REL across Europe and extend southern landscapes towards other Mediterranean countries through participant's network. It is expected that PEARLS will generate an important change in the way REL are theorised, detected and addressed, thus providing a crucial support for the Pan-European Energy Challenge by establishing international, intersectoral and multidisciplinary collaboration as the nexus of a five-country holistic pool of universities and research centres in close cooperation with non-academic sectors.

WHO

All Partnership members, from five universities and nine non-academic beneficiaries (companies, private consultancies, cooperatives and business associations) detain expertise and experience in working with renewable energy, energy policy, REL, spatial planning and social innovation. Through secondments, staff exchange and collaborative research, the project will investigate how to enforce renewable energy best practice to contribute to help address in an innovative way the Energy Challenge. Deliverables will be provided by working reports, websites, toolkits, training and methodology materials, seminars, and scientific papers, academic journals and books.

Renewable Energy Landscapes are recognised as spaces where the use of renewable power sources transforms people's relationships with energy and their perception of the landscape. Whilst the social benefits of REL are widely acknowledged across Europe, in Southern European countries and Israel there is still insufficient knowledge to garner strong social support.

The introduction of new technologies in natural or man-made landscapes often produces social tensions and conflicts, thus hindering the energy production from renewable sources. The issues to be tackled consist of the technological, planning, design and social acceptance aspects, which must be addressed in a coherent way. Scientific knowledge and practical action are challenged, requiring both disciplinary research in the various sectors involved and ability to interact with the social actors in view of the elaboration of a synthesis appropriate for specific places and local communities.



credit: J.J. Gonzáles López

The challenges

The PEARLS project is focused on the wealth of renewable energy sources in Southern European countries and on attaining the deeper involvement of citizens with REL. This project transforms the extent and depth of scientific knowledge on how to best implement REL across Europe and extend these landscapes to other Mediterranean territories that form part of the participant countries' networks.

PEARLS 'goal is to contribute to the generation of a radical change in the way REL are theorized, detected and addressed and thus provide crucial support for the pan-European energy challenge. PEARLS will focus on Southern Europe and Israel due to their wealth of renewable energy resources and citizens' deep engagement with REL.

To develop research and innovation skills between early stage and experienced researchers, combining social and technological aspects for the sustainable implementation of REL in Southern European countries and Israel.

To share and integrate multidisciplinary knowledge through international and multisectoral synergies to develop frameworks, processes and operational tools to enhance the spatial planning and social innovation arena for REL and boost relevant policy agendas.

To investigate and ***compare*** data, approaches and processes in order to: (a) determine potential commonalities relevant to the subject under investigation (b) exchange this knowledge within the consortium via secondments and (c) transfer this knowledge to a wider audience.

To produce outputs within the framework of international and intersectoral activities based on the PEARLS project, such as scientific, management and training activities, and dissemination and communication of the results.

The PEARLS research and innovation project is relevant because globalisation is a dominant policy discourse in the transition to a low carbon economy. The Energy Challenge needs to reinforce public engagement in support of renewable energy. This is often presented as a face-off process, with scant attention paid to the way that cultural approaches towards energy behaviour and public participation contribute to the sustainable implementation of renewable energies.

The overarching objective of this Project is to develop an international and intersectoral network of organisations working in a **joint research programme to contribute to the Pan-European Energy Challenge** through the implementation of renewable energy best practices. Participants exchange skills and knowledge that lay the groundwork for key advances in spatial planning and social innovation while strengthening collaborative research among different countries and sectors.

PEARLS Project focuses on how principles opposing climate change and global warming can be applied to European strategies on public engagement to renewable energy. Despite scientific approach on the promotion of renewable energies and public acceptance based on Not in My Back Yard and Landscape Quality, PEARLS project will develop research capacity in the field of spatial planning and social innovation in Southern European countries. These countries are critical examples of natural resources availability underpinning renewable energies but where less attention to public participation into spatial planning processes is paid. To reinforce knowledge and expertise, new approaches such as Please In My Back Yard, Place Attachment and Territorial Heritage will be developed.

PEARLS interrogates and develops planning and public engagement to deploy renewable energy through questions related to: (a) regional differences in renewable energy resource exploitation; (b) people that can be involved in energy policy initiative support; and (c) whether REL should be developed as areas of interest for renewable energy in order to better understand for the interaction with the landscape.

Low Carbon Economy Transition is one of the main challenges that society is facing nowadays. Thus, enhancing the sensitivity on this process, and promoting the advantages that it has for people as individuals and for society as a whole is becoming urgent. This sensitivity must come as result of a better understanding of the new Energy Paradigm. This means that a great involvement of the educational sector is required. On the other hand, it is very important to ensure equal and inclusive participation of local actors in the managing process.

Generation of stronger awareness that change in the energy model cannot occur without a change in the population's behaviour toward energy.

Reproduction of public participation schemes to support renewable energy projects developed in countries in Southern Europe and in Israel and to export these experiences to an international audience as good practice.

Generation of evidence-based training materials on social innovation and public engagement tools for use in renewable energy development and other research contexts.

Development of a network of researchers, technical staff and policy makers across different sectors and national contexts with in-depth expertise in spatial planning and energy policy.

Stimulation of new trans-methodological approaches to support investigation into social and technological issues by different research and innovation staff.

To favour the involvement of the public at large in the Energy Challenge debate (from those who are unfamiliar with it to those who are most in favour of/against renewable energies).

To spark sensitivity to a Low Carbon Economy and the advantages that it has for new life patterns on the individual level and for society.

To generate new channels of communication between society, researchers and companies by way of everyday formats, such as social networks and Internet video channels.

To foster the involvement of young researchers in the dissemination of research results as a complementary way of extending the outreach of their scientific production.

To ensure equal and inclusive participation in events promoted by participant organisations in collaboration with local institutions and authorities in their own countries.

The Consortium consists of 13 academic and non-academic entities from Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece and Israel, and 3 more entities from Spain, United Kingdom and Italy that support the Consortium as an Advisory Board. All participating organisations have been selected for their diverse, complementary experience and expertise in planning and public engagement in renewable energy in Southern European countries and Israel. All are highly internationalised organisations in the Mediterranean Basin and have a proven ability to 'go the extra mile'.

The consortium is underpinned by international, intersectoral and multidisciplinary collaboration as the nexus of a five-country holistic pool of universities and research centres in close cooperation with non-academic sectors. In particular, the partnership is composed of five universities and eight non-academic beneficiaries (companies, private consultancies, cooperatives and business associations). They all possess expertise and experience in working with renewable energy, energy policy, REL, spatial planning and social innovation through the internationalisation of applied research and training for capacity development.



Project Management is structured on four levels. The first level is the **Project Coordinator** based in the University of Seville. The second level is based on the **Steering Committee**. Thirdly, PEARLS beneficiaries and participants constitutes the **Partnership Board**. Finally, the fourth level is the **Advisory Board**.

The project's general structure was outlined at a preparatory Workshop held by the University of Seville in January 2017. This activity was attended by lead partners from all the EU countries involved and representatives from non-academic beneficiaries who are part of the Steering Committee and the Advisory Board. Since the workshop, all management activities have been approached in an open and cooperative atmosphere with the aim of accommodating the highest number of beneficiaries' opinions and points-of-view possible. All partners also have commitments in PEARLS project management directly or through their national representatives.

Management structure

- The overall Project Coordinator is based in Seville and acts as the liaison between the Consortium and the Funding Authority and acts as the Chair of the work
- The Steering Committee is a body comprising all Work Package leaders and co-leaders (ICSUL, UNITN, CLANER, AUTH and USE) and is entitled as the consortium's ultimate decision-making body
- The Partnership Board includes one representative of each beneficiary of the Project
- The Advisory Board is an external body which supports and advises the Steering Committee and the Coordinator

PARTNERS

Companies, Institutions & Universities behind PEARLS

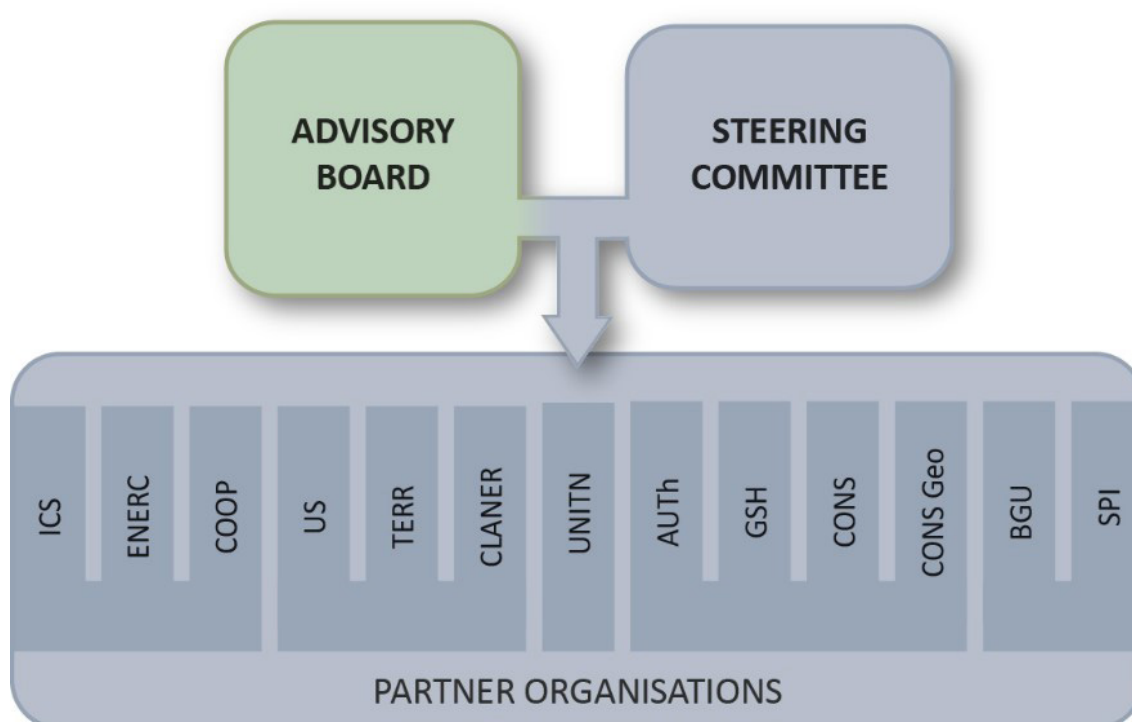


ADVISORY BOARD



The multilevel structure is underpinned by the PEARLS Coordinator's support team. The coordinator is supported by the European Social Research Laboratory, EUSOCLAB. Together with the Administrative Manager and the Technical Staff from EUSOCLAB, they take responsibility for all travel arrangements, for processing day-to-day finances and organising networking activities, and are in charge of setting up and maintaining the web site. They work together with the Research International Office at the University of Seville. The University research administrator oversees compliance with the Grant Agreement and the rules governing the MSCA RISE call. The administrator also oversees compliance with the arrangements adopted in the Consortium Agreement, especially concerning issues regarding the allocation of funds, the corresponding calendar and expenditure items. The Research International Office maintains fluid contact with the Coordinator and the National Contact Point. In turn, the Coordinator maintains fluid communication with the European Research Agency Project Officer in Brussels.

The Coordinator is also supported by the Steering Committee, SC, the second level in the project structure. This Committee is made up of a representative from both the academic and non-academic areas of each of the participating countries. Steering Committee members also act as leaders of the project's work packages. Their main task is to support the Coordinator in day-to-day decision-making and act as a link to their respective countries' beneficiaries. SC members hold periodic meetings at the beginning of each year for an interim update on achievements and any possible execution dysfunctionalities. They also maintain fluid contact through virtual meetings on different platforms. The team's commitment and good working relationship enable continuous information-sharing and also, above all, support and also ensure agreement on any decisions that are made.



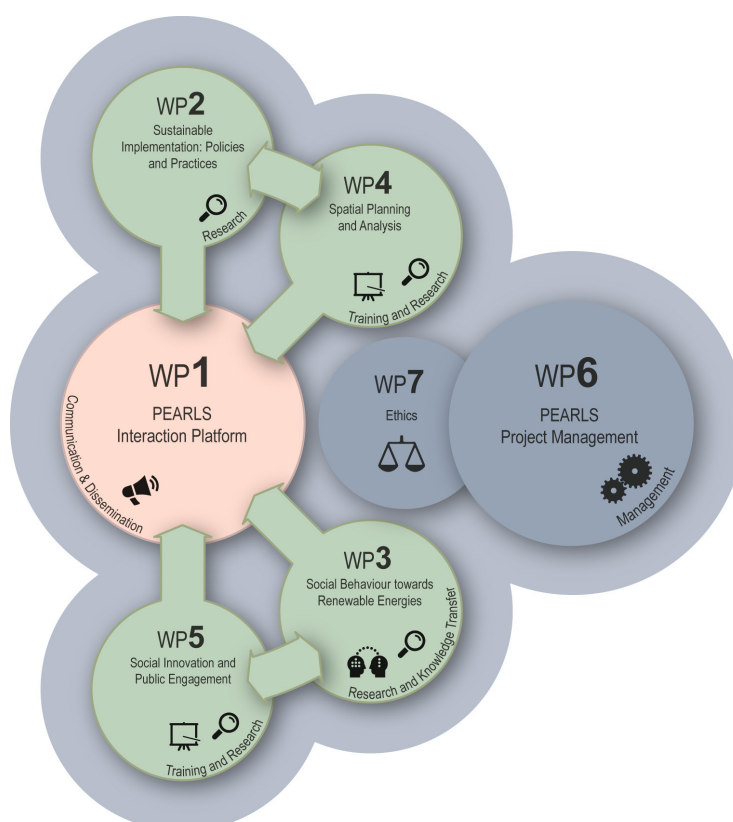
The work and collaboration in the project is organised around seven Work Packages.

Work Packages 1 and 6 are designed to develop PEARLS communication and dissemination strategies together with project management activities. These are being achieved by the PEARLS multifunctional website and the Intranet to support internal daily activities.

Work Packages 2 and 4 compare related policies and practices in depth. Their purpose is to gain a better understanding of legal frameworks (energy policy, land use planning and landscape practice regulations) and daily practice in REL implementation. The main focus of WP4 is critical knowledge transfer and skills enhancement relevant to spatial analysis and planning (GIS and multi-criteria analysis), landscape analysis and spatial database management.

Work Packages 3 and 5 are focused on the individual and social dimensions of renewable energy development and REL implementation. Energy behaviour analyses to increase people's awareness of energy efficiency and renewable energies help overcome existing barriers to change in energy consumption. The social dimension in renewable energy development explores how resources from social research can be used to enhance the involvement of communities, to tap into local knowledge to create innovative solutions and defuse the potential causes of conflict around the cultural values that REL face.

Work Package 7 guarantees compliance with the project's ethical commitments.



The project works via secondments, staff exchange and collaborative inquiry. PEARLS is executed on the basis of 39 secondments that are undertaken during the project's four years' duration, i.e., a total of 90 months. These secondments correspond to three staff profiles.

The **Experienced Researcher - ER** profile requires being in possession of a doctoral degree or having at least four years of research experience. A total of 17 secondments have been allocated to ER.

The **Early Stage Researchers - ESR** must be in the first four years of their research careers and not have a doctoral degree. A total of 16 secondments apply in this case.

The **Technical Staff - TS** profile is aimed at administrative, managerial or technical staff supporting research and innovation activities as part of the action, with 6 secondments carried out.

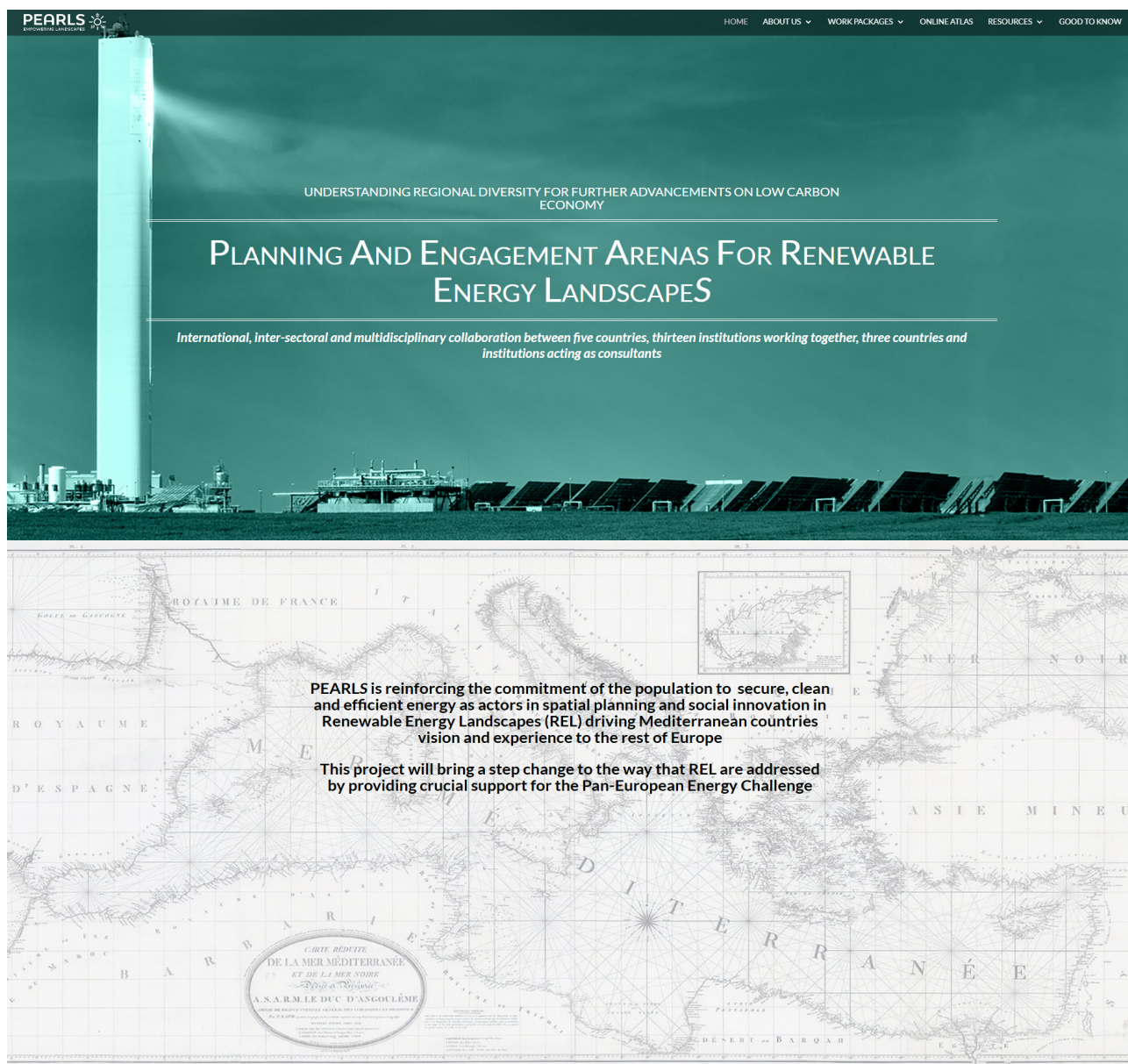
The first secondment began on September 24th, 2018 and the last is envisaged for month 49, July 2021.

PEARLS Secondments

Partner	Country	Total Number of Secondments	Total Researcher Month
USE	Spain	8	13
CLANER	Spain	4	14
Territoria	Spain	1	4
ICSUL	Portugal	4	9
ENERCOUTIM	Portugal	1	2
COOPERNICO	Portugal	2	2
UNITN	Italy	4	9
AUTH	Greece	7	16
GSH	Greece	4	16
CONS	Greece	1	1
CONS GEO	Greece	1	1
UH	Israel	1	2
SP INTERFACE	Israel	1	1
TOTAL		36	90

A Web site has been activated, as a key communication tool among participants and as a shop-window of the project progress and results. It intends to be an information and communication tool supporting the dissemination of results and the stimulus for an interaction with stakeholders and the general public.

The “Resources” section of the Web site includes an information repository. The repository system is based on the Word Press file system. The information contains: Project deliverables; Pearls Project member publications; bibliography; documents and web links. The aim of this repository is to bring project results together in a single place while also hosting them for dissemination and communication. The Project deliverables sub-section provides links to each of the deliverables in their corresponding WPs. Publications include scientific papers, Open Access, Proceedings and other materials produced by PEARLS Project members. The last sub-section contains a broad spectrum of working documents based on specific books, working documents in different languages and weblinks displaying PEARLS Project’s regional diversity.



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