

SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE OF A GREEN DEAL IN UKRAINE AND SWITZERLAND: A CROSS-COUNTRY ANALYSIS

Nadiya Kostyuchenko, University of St.Gallen, Sumy State University, +41 79 3255024,
nadiya.kostyuchenko@unisg.ch

Katharina Reidl, University of St.Gallen, +41 76 4765821, katharina.reidl@unisg.ch
Rolf Wüstenhagen, University of St.Gallen, +41 71 2242587, rolf.wuestenhagen@unisg.ch

Overview

Green Deals - policy packages aimed at streamlining climate mitigation investments - have recently been established in several countries to reach the 1.5°C global warming target (EC 2022). They are usually adopted on a national or supranational level, such as in the case of the European Green Deal, and as such follow a top-down approach of policymaking. At the same time, given the crucial role of social acceptance (Ellis & Ferraro 2016) in successful energy and climate policy implementation, a stream of literature has pointed out the important role of citizen co-investment and community participation (Knauf & Wüstenhagen 2023; Le Maître et al. 2023). This paper focuses on two countries that are currently considering the introduction of a Green Deal, namely Switzerland and Ukraine, and investigates citizen preferences for design options to enhance community participation. The results show varying degrees of preferences for local participation: Ukrainian respondents are particularly sensitive to local communities being involved in Green Deal-related decision-making, whereas this is less of an issue for Swiss respondents as long as there is transparency and they have veto rights on specific projects. While respondents from both countries prefer a Green Deal to involve a diversified portfolio of renewable energy, energy efficiency in buildings and clean transport, they exhibit interesting differences with regard to their preferred funding sources and who should be eligible for Green Deal financing.

Methods

The analysis is based on a nationwide online survey of 2000 respondents in Ukraine and Switzerland, half of them in each of the two countries. Data collection occurred from December 2022 to January 2023. Respondents were recruited from large nationwide consumer panels. The study uses a choice-based conjoint (CBC) design with Hierarchical Bayes analysis. In a series of choice tasks, respondents were asked to choose among a range of scenarios for Green Deal policy packages. The scenarios differed in investment target sectors, entities eligible for receiving funds for Green Deal projects, source of funds, and level of local participation. Apart from the choice experiment, the survey also collected descriptive data about respondents' beliefs about the climate crisis, energy security issues, environmental conservation, and trust in institutions, as well as sociodemographic details.

Results

The choice experiment revealed that respondents in both Switzerland and Ukraine favour a diversified approach to Green Deal investments. A portfolio where one third of the funds each was invested in renewable energy, energy efficient buildings and clean transport was preferred over Green Deal packages that consisted of only one of those options. In both countries, a Green Deal that was targeting 100% renewables was the second-preferred option. When it comes to the source of funds, the most preferred option among Ukrainian respondents was for EU funding, which was only the second-preferred option in Switzerland. Swiss respondents, in turn, were particularly positive about using a national CO₂ tax to fund Green Deal investments. In both samples, investors from China were the least preferred source of funds. As for entities who should be eligible for Green Deal funding, Ukrainian respondents viewed international companies as particularly positive, whereas the most preferred option for Swiss respondents was for domestic companies to benefit, followed by private households. Interestingly, respondents in both countries were less supportive of making Green Deal funding available to local municipalities. Finally, when it comes to local participation, respondents in both countries agreed that there should be transparency through annual reporting to the public, combined with veto rights for specific projects. Ukrainian respondents turned out to be much more sensitive to the level "no involvement of the local population" than Swiss respondents, possibly reflecting that this is taken for granted in Switzerland with its direct democracy.

		Average Zero Centered Utilities		Std. Deviation	
		Ukraine	Switzerland	Ukraine	Switzerland
Investment Target	100% in renewables	0.54	7.82	26.05	29.01
	100% in clean transport	-15.03	-21.91	34.42	34.15
	100% in energy efficient buildings	-18.28	-11.87	28.96	29.17
	33.3% in renewables, 33.3% in energy efficient buildings, 33.3% in clean transport	32.77	25.96	52.22	45.59

Source of Funds	The European Union	53.00	28.33	43.12	38.62
	Investors from China	-48.99	-93.50	56.01	62.14
	National CO ₂ tax	0.38	44.33	46.50	52.79
	Crowdfunding	-4.39	20.84	33.89	38.78
Eligibility for Funds	Private households	-3.92	9.87	26.61	26.36
	Local governments (municipalities)	-5.77	2.38	24.68	21.61
	Domestic business	-2.80	11.31	24.90	17.78
	International companies	12.49	-23.56	33.13	25.50
Level of local Participation	No involvement of the local population	-33.49	1.82	43.99	32.40
	Annual reporting available to the public + veto right	24.88	7.97	28.95	22.69
	Citizens invest in their own households	3.95	-0.33	31.55	25.48
	Citizens contribute financially & non-financially to community projects	4.66	-9.46	27.84	29.12

Table 1 CBC results. Average Zero Centered Utilities and Std. Deviation

When it comes to additional descriptive results of the survey, 61.8% of Ukrainian respondents believe that achieving the climate targets depends on the national government as compared to 51% for Swiss respondents. The Ukrainian respondents assign more importance to the role of local municipalities as policy actors than state governments (63.4% UA, 50.1% CH). The importance of individual involvement was underlined by 69.2% of Swiss and 90.2% of Ukrainian respondents. The respondents in both countries think that companies should play an important role in implementing the Green Deal: 58.3% (53.4%) of Swiss (Ukrainian) respondents believe that the role of companies has to be greater than the role of the government or local municipalities.

Energy security is classified as a highly relevant issue by respondents from both countries (98.6% UA, 94.4% CH). The preferred measures chosen to ensure energy security were “production by local utilities”, (34.1% UA, 44% CH); “houses should produce their own energy” (30.6% UA, 24.7% CH), and “importing 50% of energy from the EU and producing 50% of energy locally” (27% UA, 19.2% CH).

Conclusions

Based on a large sample (N=2000), the survey investigates the social acceptance of a Green Deal for two EU-neighbour countries who have not introduced the policy yet, namely Switzerland and Ukraine. In line with research on social acceptance of other energy and climate policies, we find that community participation can play an important role when introducing a Green Deal. Positive preferences for local participation are particularly pronounced among the Ukrainian respondents in the sample, offering important insights for policymakers who are currently designing efforts for a green recovery of Ukraine after the war. Designing a balanced portfolio of Green Deal investments across renewable energy, energy efficient buildings and clean transport is another factor to increase social acceptance. Furthermore, transparent reporting and veto rights for the local population are appreciated by respondents in both countries. In terms of funding, there is greater openness to European Union financing of Green Deal investments in Ukraine, whereas Swiss respondents would prefer them to be financed through a national CO₂ tax. What is encouraging to see is that both energy security and climate change are equally important to respondents in both countries, showing the potential of a long-term social acceptance of both a green recovery in Ukraine as well as credible climate policy measures in Switzerland.

References

- EC (European Commission, 2022). A European Green Deal – striving to be the first climate-neutral continent.
- Ellis, G., & Ferraro, G. (2016). The social acceptance of wind energy. *European Commission-JRC Science for Policy Report*.
- Knauf, J., & Wüstenhagen, R. (2023). Crowdsourcing social acceptance: Why, when and how project developers offer citizens to co-invest in wind power. *Energy Policy*, 173, 113340.
- Le Maitre, J., Ryan, G., Power, B., & O'Connor, E. (2023). Empowering onshore wind energy: A national choice experiment on financial benefits and citizen participation. *Energy Policy*, 173, 113362.