



Local Acceptability of the Green Transition

Playbook





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ISBN 978-952-7599-09-9 (print)
ISBN 978-952-7599-09-9 (PDF)
Graphic design/Layout Katja Harvala
Akordi Oy Publications
December 2024

TAH FOUNDATION

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We're all in

The green transition is materializing in a growing number of industrial and infrastructure projects scattered in specific locations. While the projects aim at emission-free energy and production, the downside is the change in land use and the potentially negative environmental and social impacts. Balancing the pros and cons of green transition projects is not an easy task. As a result, the social acceptability of new projects is becoming one of the most critical prerequisites for the success of a sustainable transition.

The local acceptability of these industrial projects is currently being tested. In many cases, green transition projects generate contradictions and conflicts at the local level. Parties to these conflicts include project developers, local politicians and officials, and various community groups and environmental NGOs.

Conflict is a catalyst for action. At its best, conflict can be the impetus that brings parties together to find new solutions and a better way forward. At their worst, conflicts escalate and become destructive for all involved. This is why anticipating and resolving conflict is paramount in the green transition. On a global scale, the stakes are high: the viability of life forms and species. It is clear that everyone will lose if the green transition fails. Conflicts in the green transition cannot be avoided, so we had better learn to resolve them together.



Jonna Kangasoja
Co-Founder CEO
Akordi

PART I
**Why
Playbook?**



The green transition will not be accepted at any cost

The green transition as a whole, and especially the development of renewable energy, has strong societal and political support in Finland. Although the general acceptance of the green transition is high in Finland, local acceptance does not necessarily follow. Finland is regionally divided into very different realities of the green transition – the local conditions vary a lot.



The transition to a green economy involves so-called “green on green” conflict situations, where projects favorable to climate change mitigation, such as those related to renewable energy, raise local concerns and opposition due to their impacts on water bodies and biodiversity. These projects require space and infrastructure, and it is impossible to fully avoid environmental impacts.

Accelerating the green transition through national and EU-level measures, such as fast-tracking permitting or providing economic incentives, can increase the challenges of local acceptance. Criticism may intensify and become an issue if the transition is perceived as “overbearing” and seen to be progressing at the expense of environmental quality, citizen participation or thorough impact assessments. The balance between these is critical to acceptance: while the goals of the transition may be accepted, they will not be accepted at any cost.

Conflicts generate costs

Tension and conflict result in both direct and indirect costs to project developers and stakeholders. The most obvious consequences are project delays or cancellations. Conflicted projects may need to be redesigned or rescheduled. For example, a project canceled due to a local government decision can result in significant write-offs, especially if the project was well underway. In addition, managing escalated conflicts incurs unforeseen costs such as lost sleep, CEO time, damages, administrative and legal clarification, and unexpected communication needs.

The indirect effects of conflict include damage to a company's reputation, which can affect customer and investor confidence and potentially increase financing costs. In addition, conflicts can create broader social tensions, such as divisions within the local community or between interest groups. They can also lead to political setbacks or "disciplinary measures," such as increased regulation. From a regional economic perspective, conflicted, delayed and canceled projects can result in economic losses for the region, such as employment opportunities and additional investment that do not materialize.

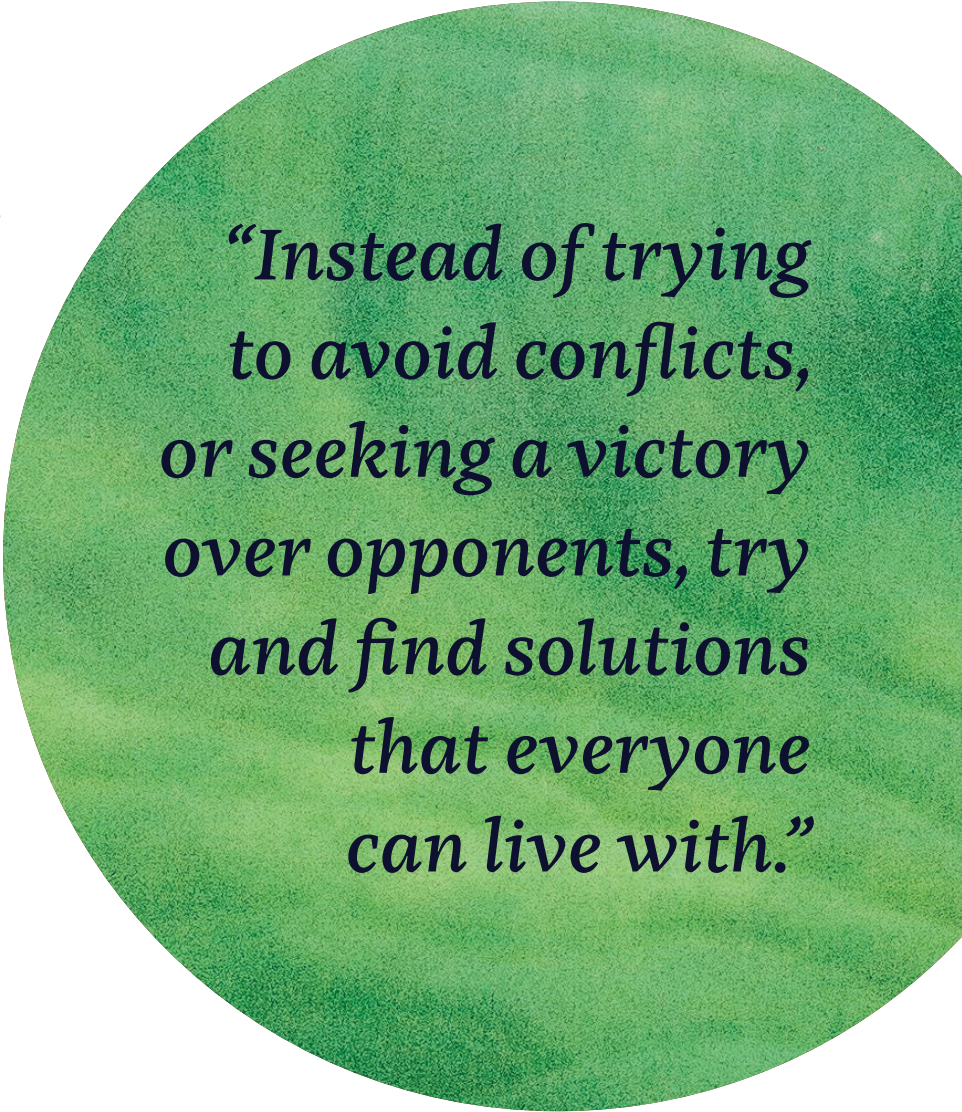


In conflict situations, it's common to either try to avoid the conflict or to seek victory over your opponents. Akordi's view of conflict is that conflict is a necessary symptom of change. Conflicts make visible the values that are considered worth fighting for.

This playbook is the result of Akordi's experience that even the most difficult conflicts related to land use and natural resources can be solved together. It is not easy. It takes time and effort. We have seen parties to disputes pause, agree on ground rules, take on new, more constructive roles, define better outcomes, and pursue them together.

In the Playbook, we have selected a few case examples from real situations where Akordi has acted as an independent mediator. Our work is based on the theory and practice of conflict resolution and multi-party negotiation. The same principles and methods are in many ways broadly applicable to the everyday challenges of the green transition.

In this first version of Akordi's Playbook, we focus on the early stages of project development and offer proven tools for thinking and acting. These tools can help build better interaction, collaboration and trust, which are essential for project acceptance. However, when conflicts do arise, they can be addressed constructively and resolved with the help of an independent mediator.



“Instead of trying to avoid conflicts, or seeking a victory over opponents, try and find solutions that everyone can live with.”

PART II
Aims



Go slow to go fast – shorten the project lead time by investing in early-stage interaction

Green transition project developers aim to develop their projects in an efficient and feasible manner. From a project-centric perspective, corporate social responsibility, local acceptance, or the so-called social license to operate involves efforts to convince the host community of the company's good intentions while minimizing doubts and resistance to the project. The project developer's goal is to gain approval for a proposed project or activity. Too often, project planning begins with a "Decide-Announce-Defend" (DAD) approach, where the location and technical implementation of the project are first planned, then presented to the public and, finally, defended against criticism.

Consent-based approaches begin with the perspective of the host community – the realities and needs of the local population. Consent-based siting allows communities to voluntarily "opt in" rather than having their role reduced to opposing the project at public meetings. This approach offers new opportunities for company-community collaboration that promotes respect and fairness while enabling tailored, site-specific solutions to controversial infrastructure siting. The community should have the power and opportunity to consider

the company's proposals from its own perspective, to say yes or no to the offer, and the decision should be based on a full understanding of the potential impacts and risks of the project.



Collaboration is born of necessity

Interdependence means that no actor can unilaterally make decisions and directly implement desired actions without the cooperation and resources of others.

Local land use decisions are political decisions. Anything that affects local political decision-makers also affects the feasibility of projects. Especially in small communities, the question of who supports or opposes a project is highly relevant to local politicians. Without the acceptance of the local community, it is difficult for political leaders to support a project.

A situation where parties need something from each other and have something to offer is ideal for building collaboration. What does the project offer the local community? How does the project address the needs and future plans of the community?

A developer needs financing from investors, leases from landowners, predictable conditions and rules from society, zoning decisions from the municipality, permits from environmental authorities, and acceptance from the local community.”

The role of the local government is critically important

Local governments exist to promote the development of the city or municipality, and the well-being of all its residents. The ability of local governments to act reliably and impartially in the face of competing interests is critical to the social acceptance of complex projects and contentious land use decisions. The political leadership of the local government can act as a convener, bringing all parties to the table.

When tensions run high, there is also considerable pressure on political decision-making. Residents may demand that political leaders take a “yes” or “no” position on the proposed development at a very early stage. Conflicts can become politicized, creating divisions among decision-makers. Highly politicized disputes weaken the chances for moderate voices and evidence-based deliberation in the decision-making process.

As companies move forward with their own projects, they should consider how best to support local decision-making capacity and sound judgment. Too narrow a preparation process involving individual decision-makers can raise suspicions that management is “in the pocket” of the company. This undermines the legitimacy of both the company’s and the local government’s decisions in the eyes

of local residents. Criticism of a single project can easily turn into a broad challenge to the entire decision-making process of the city or municipality.

Small municipalities in particular need additional resources to manage green transition projects. Managing internal and external interactions, the increasing workload of zoning, strategic assessments, and knowledge production requires resources that should ideally be secured as early as possible, preferably before individual projects take concrete shape. It is beneficial for the developer, the community, and other stakeholders to engage in early joint discussions about, for example, the future of the local community, the impacts of different alternatives, and the acceptable way forward. This will also help policy makers make decisions based on shared information and understanding.

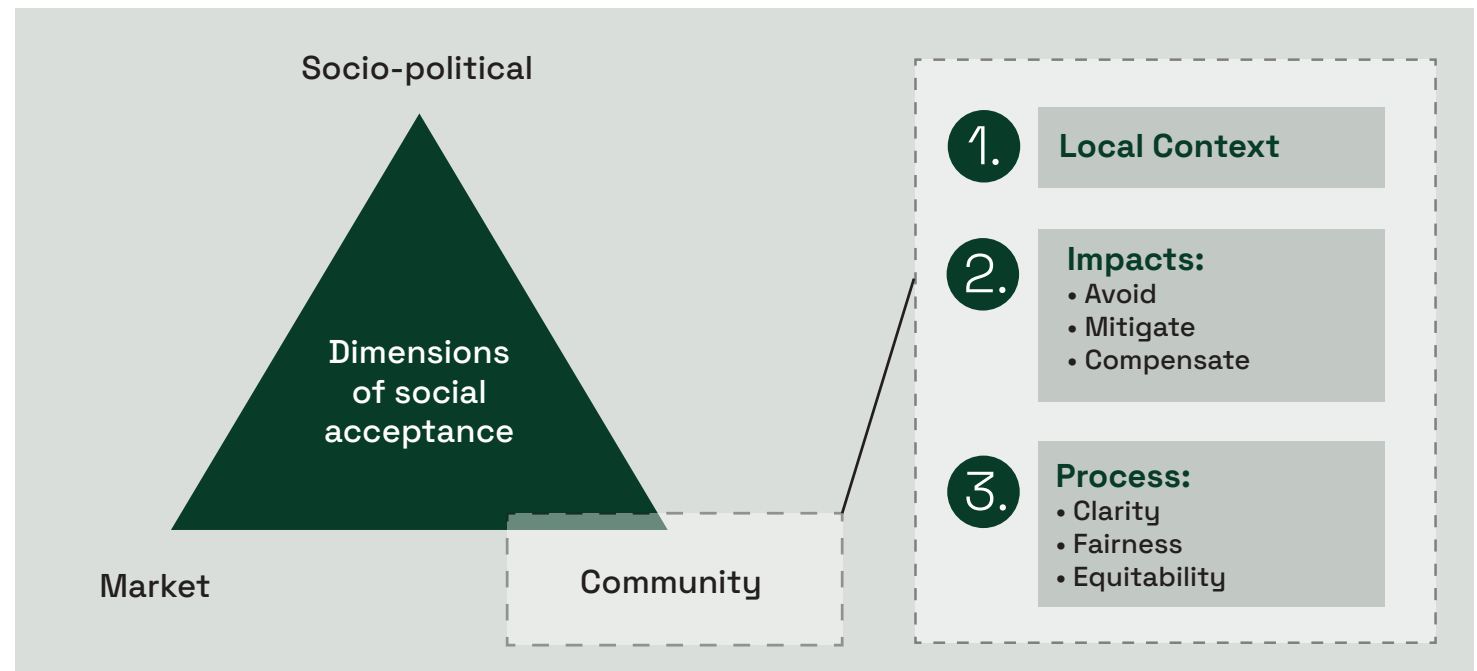
PART III
Imple-
mentation



What can be done to achieve local buy-in?

Research shows that local acceptance depends on: 1) understanding the specifics of the context and adapting accordingly, 2) how effectively harmful impacts are avoided, mitigated, or compensated for, and 3) how clear, fair, and equitable the procedures are.

The following pages provide practical tips for improving these three factors of local acceptance.



Source: Peltonen, L., Donner-Amnell, J., Nokelainen, S. (2024) Tuulivoiman hyväksyttävyyden nykytila ja näkömät Suomessa, p. 25

1. Local context

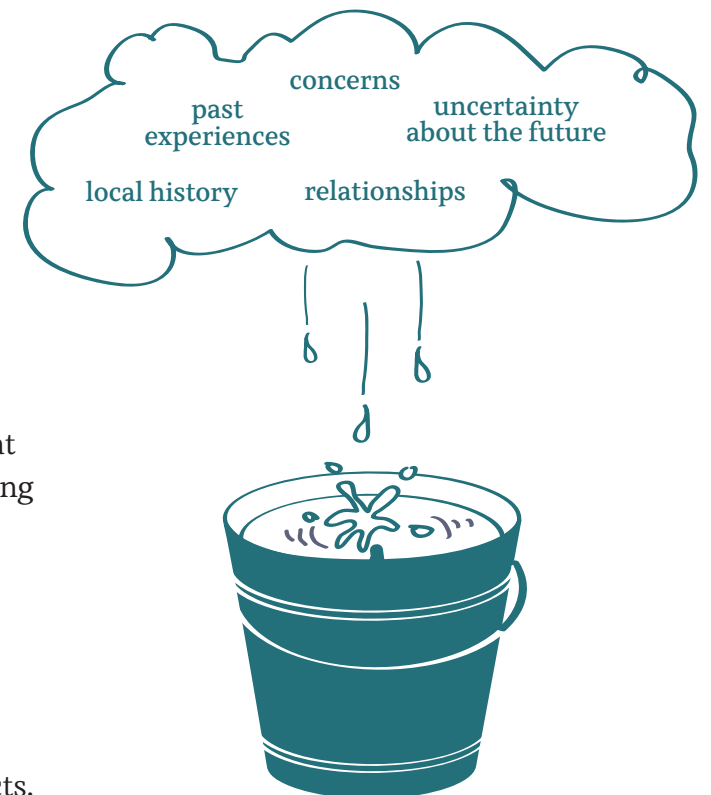
Go out and get to know your locality and meet the stakeholders in person

The local community's experience with a new project can be described as a "bucket of misery". The bucket is already filled with past experiences, the burden of past relationships between parties, and concern and uncertainty about the future. According to Marc Wesselink, a Dutch partner of Akordi, the positive side of the bucket is that it often contains the ingredients for solutions. For this reason, it makes sense to spend some time with the bucket.

Projects are always implemented in a specific location, which is important in many ways to the people and other species living near it. By meeting members of the local community and representatives of various stakeholders, it is possible to learn about the experiences, knowledge, needs, fears and expectations of the

parties involved. Comprehensive knowledge of the operating environment reduces the risk that the project will be caught in a cycle of appeals due to unexpected issues. At the same time, early engagement opens the necessary direct communication channels and lays the foundation for building trust.

You can start by understanding the context through media analysis and interviews with key stakeholders. Do this to identify issues that various parties have raised in the past regarding the use of the project area. This information may reveal previous projects and regulatory processes that have already "filled the bucket" of this community. Understanding this social situation and its dynamics is as important as the techno-economic calculations and the scientific assessment of environmental impacts.



Project developer checklist

- Get to know the local community and build collaborative relationships
- Identify key stakeholders
- Introduce yourself and the potential project idea to everyone in the project's impact area.
- Seek to better understand the challenges, concerns, and hopes of those who may be affected by the project.
- Actively listen to what people have to say
- Discuss ground rules for project development and interaction

Checklist inspired by ELSA.



2. Impacts **Assess and manage impacts with local stakeholders**

All projects have impacts, some of them unwanted. It is important not to try to hide them.

When managing impacts, it is useful to apply the concept of a "mitigation hierarchy". First, the harmful impacts of the project should be avoided altogether, for example through good project siting. If impacts cannot be avoided, they can be mitigated through technical and design solutions. Impacts that cannot be mitigated can be compensated for where possible. Once these measures are taken, residual impacts can be tolerated, and the change introduced may require a period of adjustment.

Compensation is therefore the last resort for dealing with impacts that cannot be mitigated. Excessive eagerness to compensate for the project's adverse impacts may raise suspicions that there is a reluctance to discuss the impacts and that those concerned about them are being "bribed into silence".

Information on impacts alone does not automatically increase the acceptance of a project. Even a detailed EIA report may not necessarily build confidence in the project and the developer if the impact assessment is not developed through interaction with all those affected by the project.

Impact assessment is not only a mandatory legal "bottleneck" for the project, but also an opportunity to learn and better understand

the impacts of the project together with the local community. The impact assessment process influences how controversial the project is perceived locally – if successful, it serves as an effective conflict management tool. However, if the assessment process and management of its results, including communication and interaction, fails, it can damage the community's trust in the project.

It is important to focus on impacts that are considered most significant and relevant locally. The neighbors of the project area and the parties negatively affected by the project will perceive the impacts based on their own perspectives, values, and needs. For them, a "green transition project" may be more about the threatened opportunities for hunting, fishing, or berry picking, or disturbing the peace of their summer cottage. Large projects can also affect the identity of the entire community and therefore require internal community discussion and reflection. The impact of the project is a much broader issue for the local community than the assessment reports produced by the EIA process.

Even if critical decisions about the project's progress are far in the future, simply living with uncertainty can cause significant concern. A clear path for identifying impacts and managing them effectively helps the local community cope with the uncertainty that the project brings.

Joint fact-finding – building common understanding

Disagreements over the knowledge base for decision making provide fuel for the continuation of disputes, especially when strong interests are involved in the decision-making process. It is common for conflicting parties to seek support for their perspectives from researchers or other experts. This support is particularly sought in situations where there is an attempt to influence a judicial decision or a political resolution of a contentious issue.

Unlike many other interfaces between research and practice, collaborative fact-finding is not driven by science and research. Instead, it is structured around the need to solve a pressing problem.

In joint fact-finding, the parties review and jointly interpret various sources of information. In addition, the parties may decide to gather new information, such as gathering a broader range of perspectives or consulting different experts. This type of sustained collaboration results in a jointly constructed and shared knowledge base that combines local knowledge with research data. Policymakers can easily use this knowledge base to support their decision-making.

Key features of joint fact-finding:

- The parties to the dispute contribute their knowledge to a common pool, building a knowledge base together.
- The parties jointly select and invite suitable experts, and define the questions for external experts to answer
- Both factual information and values are included in the discussion, with an effort to identify them clearly.
- Information is processed not only through written sources, but also through face-to-face dialog with experts, decision-makers and other stakeholders.
- Special attention is given to “translating” expert and research findings into an easily understandable format.
- The process seeks a common understanding. At the same time, it maps areas of consensus, disagreement and uncertainty within the research/scientific knowledge.
- The process is facilitated by a professional mediator.

Checklist for project developers

- Plan a series of events to explore concerns over impacts already before the EIA program is developed
- Gather all questions and concerns and check with those who have raised them that their issues have been correctly understood
- Draft the first version of the EIA program to reflect the identified information needs
- Gather feedback on the draft EIA program
- Ask people to identify any missing issues that need to be addressed and how they would prefer these issues to be addressed
- Publish the EIA program and hold an open discussion on it
- Refine the assessment needs based on insights from the discussion session
- Use an independent facilitator who is trusted by all parties, or encourage the local community to form a group to oversee and support the assessment process. The group can channel community questions into the assessment, review the results, and communicate them to the community
- If necessary, bring in completely independent experts in addition to selected consultants to address and clarify complex issues

[Checklist inspired by ELSA.](#)



3. Processes

Tailor interaction to situation and needs

The pressure and pace of the green transition is creating competition for the best project sites. Landowners and communities may also be competing for the best agreements and investments. The urgency and competition can easily lead to a situation, where the views and needs of some stakeholders, or groups that hold particular rights, are overlooked, or addressed too late in the process.

Project zoning and EIA processes include several legally required participation procedures, such as hearings, public meetings, and steering group work. However, these may not be sufficient to address the concerns of all groups and achieve local acceptance. If there is no time nor space allocated for exploring the complex issues and diverse perspectives involved, people can either grant their support regardless, or, what is more likely, turn against the project and oppose it. Do more than the required minimum, and do it early.

Timing is of the essence: inquiring about local perspectives often starts when people are officially consulted for the zoning process. At this stage many of the key issues in the plan already appear fixed. If this is the first possibility to voice concerns regarding the project, it's simply too late. If people don't find other meaningful avenues for making themselves heard, challenging the plan in court may seem like the only effective way to have a say.



Participation and interaction require different procedures depending on the situation

SPECTRUM OF PROCESSES FOR COLLABORATION AND CONSENSUS-BUILDING IN PUBLIC DECISIONS

EXPLORE/INFORM	CONSULT	ADVISE	DECIDE	IMPLEMENT
Outcomes	Outcomes	Outcomes	Outcomes	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved understanding of process, subject, etc. Lists of concerns Information needs identified Explore differing perspectives Build relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggestions for approaches Priorities identified Comments on draft policies Discussion of options Call for action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consensus or majority recommendations, on options, proposals or actions, often directed to public entities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consensus-based agreements among agencies and constituent groups on policies or rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-party agreements to implement collaborative and strategic plans
Sample Processes	Sample Processes	Sample Processes	Sample Processes	Sample Processes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus Groups Conferences Open houses Dialogues Roundtable Discussions Forums Summits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public meetings and workshops Charettes Electronic Town Halls Community Visioning Scoping meetings Public Hearings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advisory Committees Task Forces Citizen Advisory Boards Work Groups Policy Dialogues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborative decision-making processes Regulatory Negotiation Negotiated settlement of lawsuits, permits, cleanup plans, etc. Strategic Planning Committees Consensus meetings Mediated negotiations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborative Planning processes Partnerships for Action Implementation Committees

Developed by Suzanne G. Orenstein, Susan Sherry, and Lucy Moore

Rules of thumb for siting industrial projects

- Base the process on broad participation: Invite all stakeholders affected by the project and involve them in risk mapping.
- Listen and respond: Address stakeholder needs and concerns.
- Build trust among stakeholders: Avoid making empty promises and acknowledge past mistakes - there is always room for improvement
- Hold as many planning alternatives as possible for as long as possible. A lack of options can easily lead to mistrust. Be open to considering alternative site proposals from others.
- Choose the best implementation option: The decision should be based on a comprehensive and transparent evaluation of alternative sites and engineering solutions.
- Consider other land use pressures: Ensure that no single area is overburdened with excessive risks or facilities.
- Ensure that future operations adhere to strict safety regulations and establish a transparent monitoring and oversight system for the project.
- Discuss potential negative impacts of the project with transparency.
- Offer compensatory benefits to the host area or community affected by the project.
- Make conditional agreements: Agree with stakeholders on conditions under which facility operations would be suspended.
- Ensure that the project schedule is feasible and allows for thorough planning and participation.

Adapted from: Kunreuther, H, Susskind, L, & Aarts, T.D. (1991) The Facility Siting Credo: Guidelines for an effective facility siting process. Environmental Impact Assessment Review.

When to use external help?

In particularly challenging and complex projects, or when there is a lack of trust between the parties, an external facilitator or mediator can help – especially if involved early in the process.

If both the developer and local government are perceived as unreliable by other parties, an independent mediator who is trusted by all sides can help structure constructive interactions between parties.

The facilitator/mediator can help the parties to jointly identify problems to be solved, explore possible solutions, and build a common path to achieve them. Based on the analysis of the situation (assessment), the mediator can propose process steps, bring the parties to the table, and ensure that the dialogue and collaboration is meaningful and justified from everyone's perspective.

During a collaborative problem-solving process, an independent facilitator/mediator can help the parties work more effectively and identify issues that need consideration. It is still up to the parties to engage in problem solving. The earlier the professional neutral is brought in, the greater the chance that he or she will be effective in helping the parties move forward.



PART IV
Principles
and Skills



Principles



Take into account people's core concerns

Humans are naturally endowed with the ability and desire to contribute to larger collective endeavors. A sense of meaning comes from participation and from the recognition and appreciation of our contributions. Being seen, heard, and acknowledged is a basic human need.

To be ignored or to experience being treated as less valuable than others is toxic to a person. The negative emotions that result from a lack of recognition lead to a counter reaction that can take the form of protest, passivity, or active resistance.

Respect people's agency and choices

One of our most important basic needs is autonomy, or the right to self-determination. From an early age, we all want to have a say in matters that affect us, our loved ones, and our future. We want to be asked for our consent and to have our consent confirmed before decisions are made that affect us.

We are also very aware of our status – we want to be treated according to our social position and as representatives of our peer group. We are quick to recognize when we are not treated as full, capable actors with the ability to make our own decisions and judgments.





Recognize reciprocity

Reciprocity is an inherent rule in collaborative efforts. When others address your needs, you are likely to reciprocate to help them achieve their goals. Conversely, the experience of injustice strengthens the urge to respond negatively and to hinder the efforts of those whose actions are unsatisfactory. This is a form of active agency.



Ensure clarity of progress and communication

Finns value clarity. We want to know immediately who is involved, what the other party wants, and what will happen next. By focusing on communication, interaction and relationship building in the early stages of a project, it is possible to anticipate and address issues that may arise during project development.



Build trust

Respecting others and their experiences, and addressing each other's needs builds trust. Trust allows you to admit mistakes, make course corrections, and show vulnerability and imperfection. When things go wrong, there's an opportunity to learn and gain confidence from others that tomorrow will be better. Collaboration means wanting to move forward together. We've seen that these new experiences create social capital that doesn't diminish but grows with use.

[Learn more: To Navigate Conflict Prioritize Dignity by Merrick Hoben.](#)

Practice these skills:

- **Be interested in the perspectives, experiences, and needs of others.** Behind every request is a need that has been shaped by personal experience. The best way to understand is to ask a sincere question and then listen.
- **Learn to trust.** When you show others that you trust them and are genuinely interested in their needs, they are likely to trust you in return. Sometimes starting a new kind of collaboration requires courage and trust on one side, so that others can follow suit.
- **Prepare.** Set the stage for success before the meeting, workshop, or discussion takes place. As soon as you know you'll need others' support for your work, start learning about their situation and perspectives – that means picking up the phone. Also, consider your own goals and alternatives. What do you need from others? And what happens if you don't get the support you need from them?
- **Think about what questions are important to everyone.** From the perspective of the project developer, questions such as "How can the project be implemented?" may not necessarily motivate local stakeholders. By carefully considering which questions are common to all, and inviting others to reflect on issues from their own perspectives, you can foster better discussions and engage motivated individuals.
- **Recognize your own reaction.** Emotions affect us all. When talking about things that are important to us, and when difficult issues are on the table, everyone occasionally feels the urge to defend, attack, or react in other ways. Learn to recognize what happens inside of you when a difficult situation arises, and think about how to respond most effectively in those moments. Sometimes it's helpful to take a break – whether it's a short walk or just a quick mental break before the next turn to speak.
- **Acknowledge past mistakes.** Sometimes there is a lot of history between the parties, and past situations may weigh heavily on their minds. In these cases, openly acknowledging past mistakes is the only way to move forward. The actions of individual project developers and the lessons learned can affect the entire industry.
- **Dare to disagree.** As collaboration gains momentum, it can feel important to keep critical voices hidden so that the positive momentum of doing things isn't disrupted. But for solutions to be truly sustainable and acceptable, it is essential to voice concerns and point out when a proposal is not feasible. Raising critical perspectives also builds trust by addressing issues openly and honestly, as the Finnish expression goes, "putting the cat on the table."
- **Appreciate the contributions of others.** Solving problems together is hard work. Think about how you can recognize and value the expertise and knowledge of others and show appreciation for their efforts.

PART V
Case
Examples





Case Inkoo – Planning a steel plant on a brownfield site

Akordi carried out a situation assessment by request from the municipality of Inkoo in the summer of 2024 regarding the disagreements related to the development of the Joddböle area.

Problem: A coal-fired power plant used to operate in Joddböle, Inkoo. The area is used for sand and gravel extraction and port activities. In 2022, a floating LNG terminal was anchored in the port. From the perspective of landowners and national policy makers, it would be difficult to find a better location for the Norwegian company Blastr Green Steel's steel plant. However, the planning of the steel plant has caused disagreements and concerns within the community.

The situation assessment structured and clarified the concerns:

In the summer of 2024, Akordi interviewed 26 stakeholders in Inkoo. Based on the interviews, seven main themes emerged from the concerns: environmental impacts, language and cultural change, factors influencing Inkoo's vitality, the municipality's decision-making capacity, the participation opportunities and information needs of Inkoo residents, the reliability of the project developer, and the role of the state.

Akordi's recommendations: The situation assessment highlighted that the acceptance of current and potential future industrial activities in Joddböle requires the production of transparent impact and monitoring data in cooperation with the local people. There is a perceived lack of information, especially regarding the potential

impacts of the steel mill on Inkoo: the EIA process and the Zoning Plan Impact Assessment will provide information on environmental impacts, but neither of these comprehensively address the economic, social and cultural impacts on the Inkoo community.

Another recommendation focused on joint monitoring of noise and air quality. The noise and dust impacts of the existing operations at Joddböle have long been a source of criticism. Based on the interviews, a proposal was made for an operational model in which the companies in Joddböle, together with key stakeholders and neighbors, would consider how to credibly monitor the perceived negative impacts and what measures could be taken to potentially reduce these impacts.

Third, it was noted that the credibility of impact assessment data in the eyes of citizens can be improved by developing a commonly agreed approach to addressing and validating the emerging assessment information. If necessary, mutually agreed independent experts could be asked to assess the accuracy of the results or the sufficiency of the studies, especially for certain key issues.

[Read more: Situation assessment helped voice concerns regarding planned steel plant in Inkoo](#)



Sodankylä Case – Collaborative monitoring of mining impacts on water

Problem: Assessments commissioned by project developers and prepared by consultants may be mistrusted, and communities may lack the resources to conduct their own studies. For example, interpreting the results of water monitoring in mining operations, their scale, and assessing practical impacts is often a challenge even for experts, let alone local residents.

Collaborative problem solving: In 2023, a monitoring group was formed in Sodankylä with representatives from mining companies and the local community. Together, the group identified information needs that went beyond the requirements of the legal permit conditions for water monitoring, planned methods for joint monitoring, and agreed on their implementation. In meetings organized and facilitated by Akordi, members of the monitoring group expressed their concerns about water impacts, explored each other's perspectives, and learned about the current state of the water system and its monitoring. As a result of this collaboration, a local model for joint monitoring of mining-related water impacts was developed and is now part of the Sodankylä Mining Program.

Conditions for success: Building a shared knowledge base differs from typical mining company stakeholder engagement and traditional methods of participation in several ways. For example, the group made up of various representatives of the local community collectively defines and implements the objectives related to impact monitoring. At meetings held in Sodankylä in 2023, members of the monitoring group expressed their concerns about water impacts, explored each other's perspectives, and learned about the current state of the water system and its monitoring. The working methods of the group also played an important role: time was spent together during meals and coffee breaks, and sufficient time was allocated to discuss and elaborate on the issues.

[Read more: Developing a collaborative water monitoring platform with the local communities and mining companies in Sodankylä](#)



Case: Wind power in reindeer husbandry areas - jointly developed best practices

Acceptance of a project does not come from the developer or the authorities, but from the local community. The level of acceptance changes over time and is determined by whether the relationship between the local community (including the municipality) and the project operator is functional and based on good neighborliness. Sometimes, the operating environment involves specific issues and boundary conditions that can only be identified by understanding the local realities.

Problem: Reindeer husbandry areas are attractive for wind power development due to sparse population and good wind conditions. However, the same areas are already used for reindeer husbandry. Tensions have arisen between the two sectors, partly because reindeer husbandry practices are unfamiliar to wind power developers and the special status of reindeer husbandry is not recognized. There have been many shortcomings in interaction in the early stages of project planning, and one of the main points of contention has been creating a common understanding of the impact of wind energy projects on reindeer husbandry practices, grazing areas and future livelihood prospects.

Conditions for success: : The Wind Power and Reindeer Husbandry Collaboration Forum provided a previously missing space for

stakeholders to learn from each other, ask questions and get to know each other. On neutral ground, facilitated by an independent party, these meetings have allowed stakeholders to jointly explore the issues between wind power and reindeer husbandry in a guided manner and to jointly develop mutually acceptable practices.

Joint problem solving: A systematic dialogue between the wind power sector and reindeer husbandry has been established to address tensions between the sectors. The Reindeer Herders' Association and Finnish Renewables (Suomen Uusiutuivat; formerly the Finnish Wind Power Association) have successfully created a neutral cooperation forum for their members, mediated by the independent facilitator Akordi. Through extensive meetings, wind energy stakeholders and reindeer husbandry cooperatives have agreed on best practices for planning and operating wind projects in reindeer husbandry areas. These best practices guide wind energy developers in assessing the local impact of potential projects in cooperation with the reindeer herding cooperatives, while at the same time familiarizing themselves with local conditions.

[Read more: Pioneering Collaboration Between Reindeer Husbandry and Wind Power Industry](#)



Case: Jyväskylä forest program development

Problem: The City of Jyväskylä wanted to develop consistent and clear guidelines for the management of its forests, focusing on how to work in recreational, conservation and commercial forests while preserving the forests' key values. The long-term strategic plan, which would guide the management and use of the city's forests, needed broad support both within the city and among stakeholders.

Collaborative problem solving: The City of Jyväskylä became the first city in Finland to implement a forest program process led by a neutral party through broad stakeholder cooperation. The preparation and review of the program's content was carried out by a carefully selected collaborative group. The forest program process followed the principles of an interactive and consensus-based negotiation process and was divided into five phases: 1) defining the process, 2) building a shared knowledge base, 3) developing the program, 4) compiling the program, and 5) implementing and monitoring. Decision-makers approved the final outcome presented by the group at the June 12, 2018 meeting of the City Planning Commission. The guidelines of the forest program are valid until 2030.

Conditions for success: Recent research has identified several key factors for the success of the Forest Program, which has received broad support. These include the city's active role as an initiator and the clear political support and mandate given to the collaborative group to develop the program. The city's commitment to the process provided the necessary resources and framework to address difficult issues. In terms of the quality factors of the process, essential conditions for success included the role of the independent facilitator in designing the process and supporting the work of the collaborative group, as well as the creation of a shared knowledge base to support collective decision-making.

[Read more: What went right? - A Collaborative process to prepare a city forest management strategy](#)



Akordi has a strong foundation in research

Akordi is a Finnish social enterprise established in 2013. Akordi is a pioneer in the field of environmental cooperation, conflict resolution and public policy mediation in Finland. Akordi's team consists of ten people.

Akordi's work is based on the international tradition of environmental conflict resolution and the research work of the company's founders and experts (e.g. Susskind, McKernan & Thomas-Larmer 1999; Turunen 1995, Peltonen & Villanen 2004; Peltonen et al. 2006; Kangasoja et al. 2008; Peltonen & Kangasoja 2009; Peltonen et al. 2012; Kangasoja 2017; Luoma 2018; Kettunen 2019; Kotilainen 2024).



Akordi was founded by Lasse Peltonen and Jonna Kangasoja after several years of academic research work on land use planning conflicts, followed by a one year visit in the United States. During the academic year 2012–2013, Lasse and Jonna studied at the Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School, and at the MIT-Harvard Public Disputes Program. Their desk and homebase was at the **Consensus Building Institute**. CBI is a nonprofit organization that has worked at the forefront of collaboration and conflict resolution for more than 30 years. CBI was founded by **Professor Lawrence Susskind**.

Read more about our work and get to know the Akordi team:
<https://akordi.fi/project-database/?lang=en>

Akordi operates internationally



In 2014, the Consensus Building Institute convened the [**CBI Global Network**](#), a diverse community of leading practitioners spanning the Americas, Africa, Europe and Asia. Akordi's Lasse and Jonna have been members of the network since the beginning.

Akordi's closest European cooperation partner is [**Wesselink van Zijst**](#) in the Netherlands.

Akordi's long-standing international partnerships also include the [**National Policy Consensus Center \(NPCC\)**](#) in Portland, Oregon, USA. Since 2015, NPCC experts have regularly visited Finland to conduct training with Akordi.

Akordi is developing and delivering the [**Earning Local Support Academy**](#) training concept in Finland, in cooperation with its Irish partner John Aston (Astoneco).

AKORDI

www.akordi.fi

Read more – Publications available for download on Akordi's website.

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