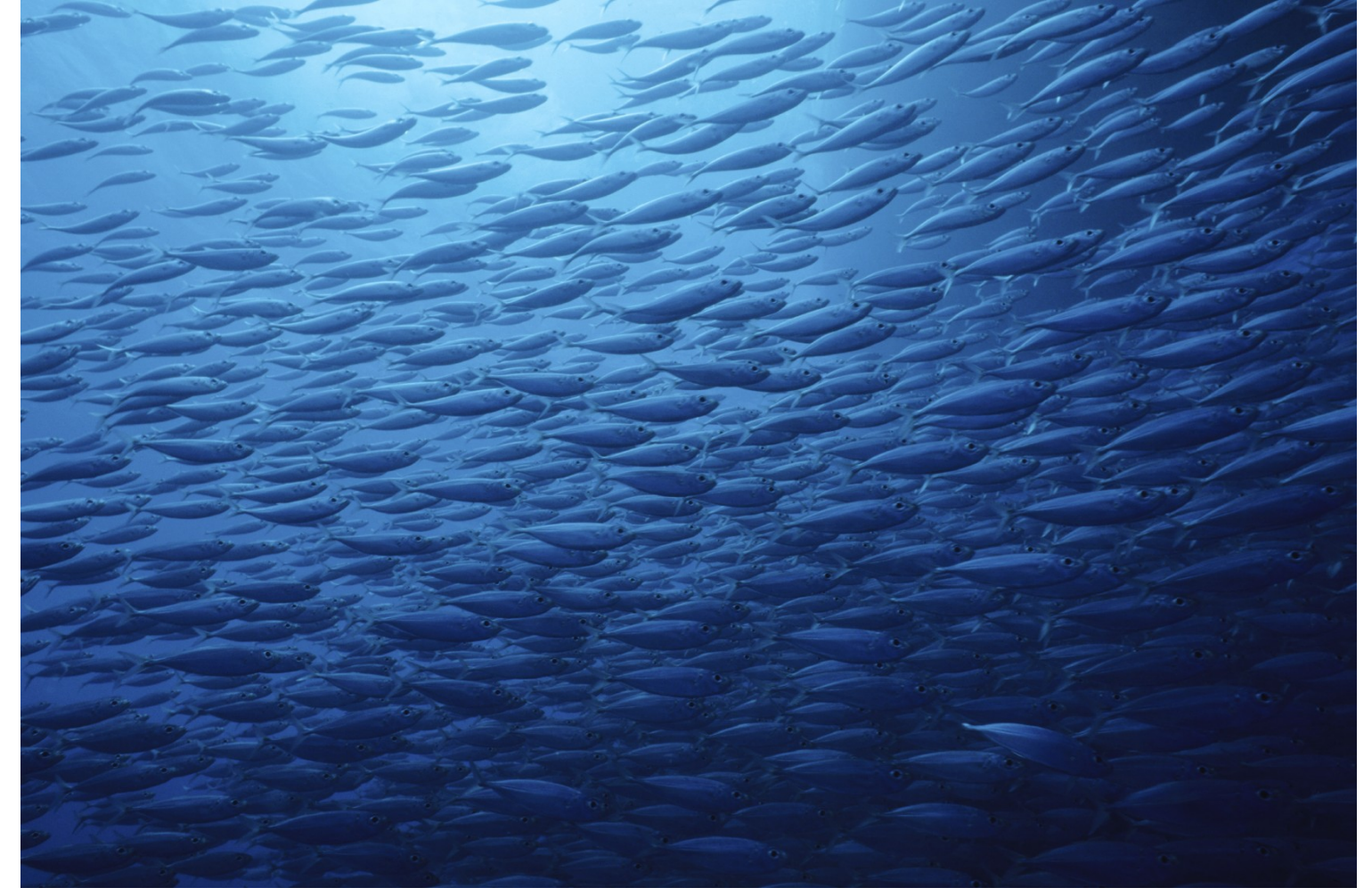
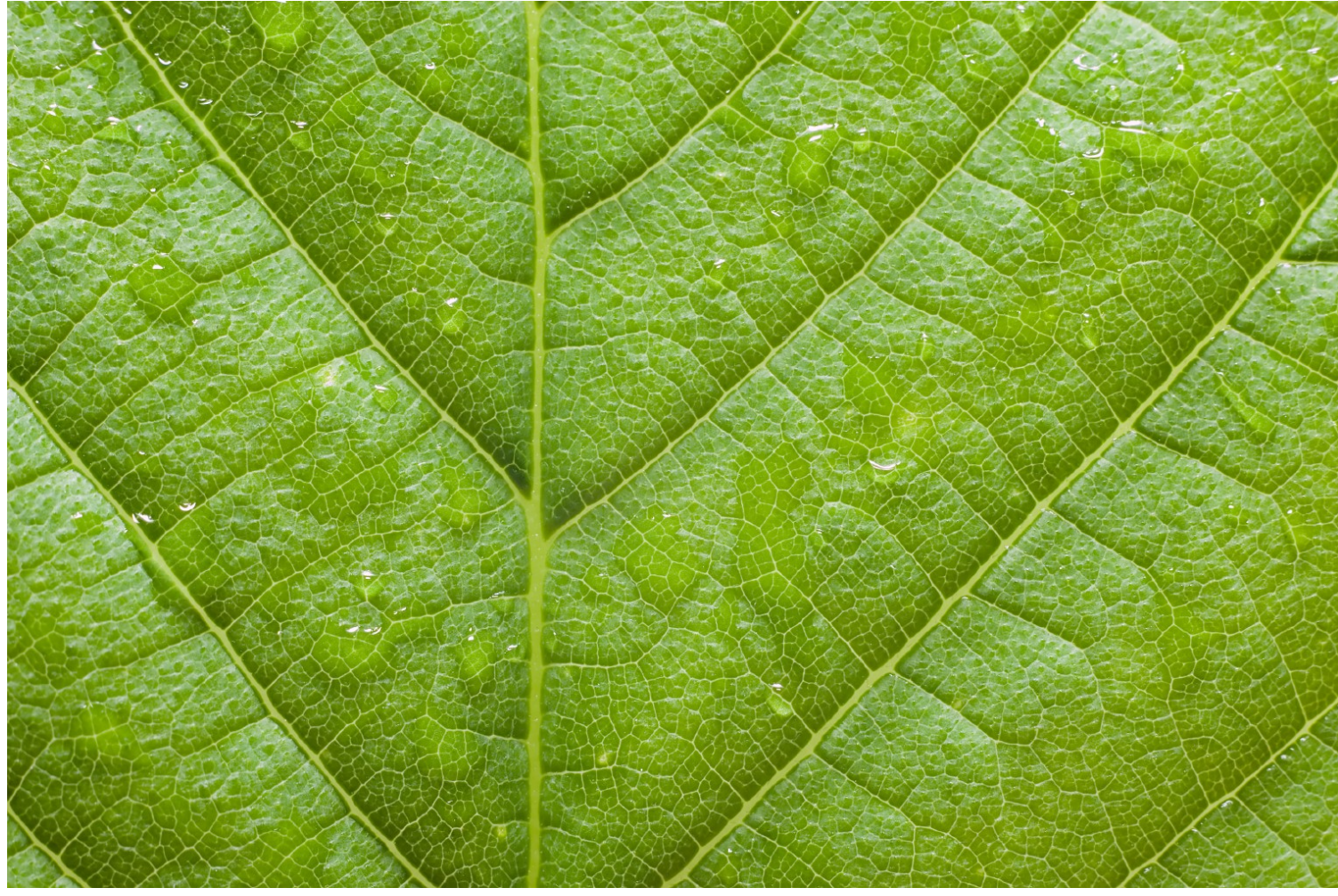




Public acceptability

- **The challenge:** Policies for a transition to sustainable resource use will likely involve a substantial degree of change in behaviour and practices and will therefore depend to a large extent on the consent and cooperation of actors at various levels.
- **The public's process of accepting or rejecting policies:** Individuals tend to test new information against a framework of their own existing knowledge, values and beliefs (Ford, Williams, Bishop and Hickey, 2009). Individuals then accept, reject or adapt to the new information; potentially altering their personal 'worldview' in the process. This process also occurs collectively within discourses, potentially leading to public acceptance and paradigm change. This paradigm change has the potential to make the public more receptive to subsequent policies.
- **The aim** of this work has been the ex-ante assessment of the public acceptability of the DYNAMIX policy packages, to identify potential acceptability issues and to propose adjustments to the policy mixes to overcome these and enhance the policies' effectiveness.

Method

In this study we take a revealed preferences-type approach to evaluating public acceptability. Our method has two core components which feed into an assessment of public acceptability.

- First, we conducted an analysis of online search frequencies using culturally-appropriate terminology to highlight the Member State populations where keywords may have particularly high salience. We use data from the online search frequency analysis tool Google Trends to compare the relative popularity of key internet search terms in the EU by geographical location and date.
- Second, we conducted an in-depth analysis of the visible public discourse using media articles and supplementary sources in the online public domain (based on Statham and Tumber, 2013), identifying key discourses and their influence and draw out particular areas of concern. Based on our findings, we suggested modifications and enhancements to the content, design and/or sequencing implementation of the DYNAMIX policy mix, all aimed at improving public acceptability and mitigate low assessments of public acceptability.

Assessment criteria

In the assessment of overall public acceptability of DYNAMIX policies, the following descriptive criteria were used:

- *Unnoticed:* The policy measure would likely be proposed and implemented without significant public attention or concern.
- *Uncontentious:* While aspects of the policy measure may stimulate some degree of concern among minority public groups, it is unlikely that any formal coalition of disparate stakeholders would form to oppose it.
- *Contentious:* Proposal of the policy measure may likely cause considerable public concern on the issues raised, leading to the formation of coalitions of disparate stakeholders to oppose it. Implementation of the policy measure in its current form will likely require the investment of political capital from the governing body.
- *Highly contentious:* Proposal of the policy measure may very likely cause considerable public concern on the issues raised, leading to the formation of coalitions of disparate stakeholders to oppose it. Implementation of the policy measure in its current form will likely require the investment of considerable political capital from the governing body and favourable political and economic conditions.
- *Unimplementable:* Proposal of the policy measure may very likely cause considerable and negative concern on the issues leading to the formation of coalitions of disparate stakeholders to oppose it. It is unlikely that the policy measure could be implemented in its current form.

Recommendations

Based on this analysis, we make the following recommendations to those formulating policy:

- Give prominence to public acceptability issues and be prepared to make adjustments to the policy to maintain it.
- Involve and engage with target groups through consultation and participation in the policy design process to explore mutually agreeable solutions.
- Consider making concessions to target groups, to ease the introduction of the suggested policies, and make a policy more acceptable overall. In particular, be prepared to support transitions in sectors most affected.
- Recycle any revenues generated from implementing policies where possible.
- Be aware of the worldviews and paradigms of all those inputting into the policy formulation, including your own and those supporting you. In doing so, it is likely that the mechanisms and pathways for paradigm change which would otherwise be implicit in the policy will become explicit.
- Where necessary, be prepared to invest considerable political capital. Often the most challenging and needed paradigm changes will provide a return on the investment with 'interest'.
- Seek to frame the change in the context of a wider transition over the longer term. To demonstrate that such changes are possible, highlight where equivalent paradigm shifts have occurred in the past. Choose words, concepts, discourses and rhetoric carefully as their meaning may differ subtly between different groups and stakeholders in society.
- Be aware of false paradigm shifts and intended consequences (e.g. substitution, leakage and rebound effects which counteract the desired objective).

Summary Results

DYNAMIX blueprint policies	Concern categories (+/-)							Acceptability assessment
	Effectiveness	Motive	Cost	Fairness	Uncertainty	Cultural	Freedom	
Green fiscal reform: internalization of environmental costs	-	-	-					highly contentious
Green fiscal reform: materials tax				-				highly contentious
Circular economy tax trio on extraction, landfill & incineration of virgin materials					-	-		highly contentious
Reduced VAT for environmentally advantageous products & services	-		-	-	-			uncontentious
VAT on meat products	-	-	-	-				highly contentious
EU-wide feebate schemes for select products categories		-	-	-				uncontentious (likely positive)
Shift from consumption to leisure	-		-				-	highly contentious
Restrictions on advertising & marketing	-		-	-		-	-	contentious
Local currencies for labour-based services	-		-					uncontentious
Information campaign on food waste & changing diets	+/-							unnoticed
Redistribution programmes to reduce food waste	+/-			+				uncontentious
Stimulation of sharing systems	-		+	+				uncontentious
Product standards	-			-			-	highly contentious
Extended producer responsibility	-							highly contentious

References

Evidence for all of the results and recommendations can be found in the DYNAMIX deliverable D5.4.2 (Assessment of Public acceptability of DYNAMIX policy mixes) - <http://dynamix-project.eu/assessment-public-acceptability-dynamix-policy-mixes>

1. Ford, R. M., Williams, K. J., Bishop, I. D. & Hickey, J. E. 2009. Effects of information on the social acceptability of alternatives to clearfelling in Australian wet eucalypt forests. Environmental management, 44, 1149-1162.
2. Statham, P. & Tumber, H. 2013. Relating news analysis and public opinion: Applying a communications method as a 'tool' to aid interpretation of survey results. Journalism, 14, 737-753.