



# VIEWS: A Team Activity to Facilitate Wise Decisions with Stakeholders

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**Abstract:** Emotions can play a key role in public acceptance or rejection of sustainable innovations and policies. However, emotions are often dismissed as irrational and difficult to predict. In our research, we propose that emotional responses to innovations are useful sources of information because emotions have a systematic basis in people's *core values* (i.e., the desirable goals that people find important in life, and that motivate behaviour). People tend to experience negative emotions towards innovations with characteristics that threaten their values, whereas they experience positive emotions towards innovations with characteristics that support their values. They can also feel mixed emotions towards innovations with characteristics that both support and threaten their values. To encourage decision-makers to consider the values and emotions of the public in project development, we have designed a novel role-playing card game/activity called VIEWS (standing for "considering Values, Innovations and Emotions to facilitate Wise Decisions with Stakeholders"). VIEWS aims to provide a fun and engaging way to help decision-makers understand the perspectives of different stakeholders in society, so they can develop more socially-acceptable innovations.

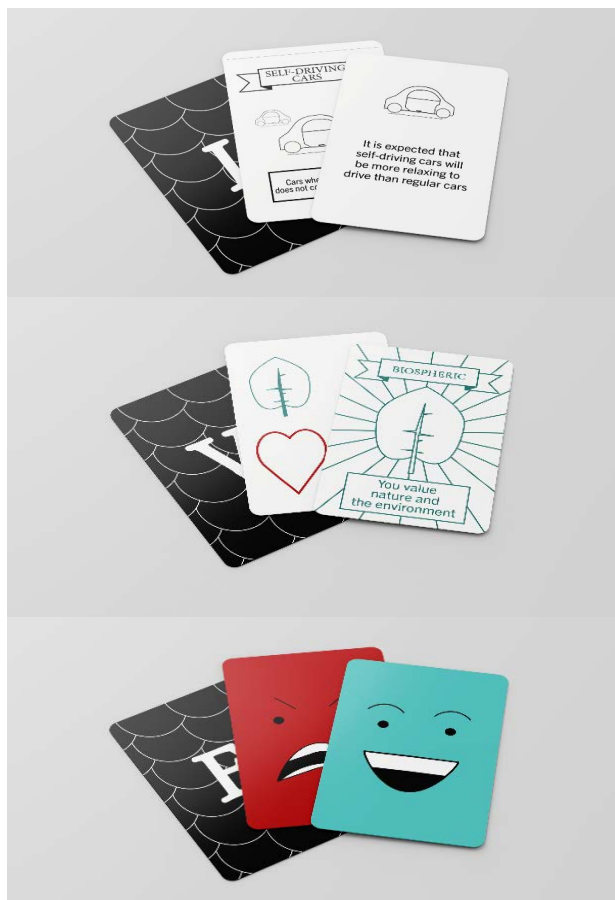
## Why is innovative research needed?

Important innovative solutions (e.g., renewables and smart technologies) will grind to a halt without public support. People often react emotionally to innovations and may oppose them despite their potential societal benefits. Policy-makers and practitioners tend to see emotions as irrational and unpredictable, and emotions are therefore typically ignored in decision-making. However, dismissing emotions may actually strengthen public opposition. Our research project is a collaboration between researchers in environmental psychology at the University of Groningen, philosophers at Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands, and various business partners (for more information, see our website [here](#)). Based on philosophical and psychological approaches to values and emotions, we argue that emotions towards innovations can be *predicted*, and can contribute to developing socially responsible innovations (Perlaviciute et al., 2018). In our empirical research, we have found that emotional responses to an

innovation can be triggered by what the specific characteristics of the innovation imply for people's core values (e.g., the value placed on their personal resources, their personal comfort, the wellbeing of other people or the environment). People may feel negatively about and oppose innovations that threaten their important values, whereas they may feel positively about and support innovations that support their important values. We have tested these ideas in experiments with various innovations provided by our business partners; for example, products made from wastewater materials (e.g., Judge et al., 2021).

## What is innovative about this research?

In addition to traditional academic outputs, we wanted to provide a tangible tool that could facilitate participatory and user-centred decision-making. Therefore, we have been developing a role-playing activity called "VIEWS" ([www.viewsthegame.com](http://www.viewsthegame.com)), which aims to help decision-makers better understand



**Figure 1.** Images showing examples of the cards included in the VIEWS activity.

how the public might perceive and respond to their innovation or project, so that they can intervene to make changes to improve the innovation early-on in the development process. VIEWS also aims to provide an interactive activity that will facilitate social interaction, deliberation, and reflection among decision-makers and stakeholders. The setting for the VIEWS activity is a public assembly, in which citizens are debating whether or not to implement a proposed innovation. Using a customized deck of cards that portray values, emotions, innovations and stakeholders (see Figure 1), players first take on the perspective of someone with a particular set of values (e.g., protecting nature). They then are shown various characteristics of a proposed innovation, and are asked consider how they would feel about this innovation from their new value perspective. They express their emotions to the other players, who then try to guess their underlying values. After the players have guessed all the other players' values, they work together using the “Wise discussion” cards

to brainstorm ways to improve the innovation, so that it better fits with everyone’s values.

In general, it is hoped that VIEWS can help shift the focus from the specific characteristics of the innovation, to the more abstract values that people find important, which can help identify possible solutions to value conflicts. It is also hoped VIEWS can allow for more egalitarian, inclusive and engaging discussions, via reinforcing shared values and providing roles for all participants. VIEWS is suitable for anyone who is involved with designing and implementing sustainable innovations, including new technologies or products, as well as new projects that implement existing technologies. Secondary audiences can include business clients, interest groups/NGOs and members of the public. VIEWS will likely be most useful at the idea-generation stage of a project or innovation (for highlighting potential issues to be considered), but the activity also can be played iteratively throughout the process of innovation development and project implementation. We are currently piloting VIEWS with different audiences; for example, we have conducted an online session of VIEWS with project managers at the Royal Haskoning DHV (an engineering consultancy in the Netherlands).

## How does this innovation help address the Priority Questions?

VIEWS aims to provide a fun and engaging way to help decision-makers understand the ways in which different people may interpret and respond to the same innovation. Therefore, it can help decision-makers to understand **what drives public acceptance of different renewable energy sources and related infrastructures** (i.e., “Renewables”, question 30). It also provides an example of **how the Social Sciences and Humanities can contribute to building new methods that support a more participatory, user-centred or democratic design approach for the development of smart technologies** (i.e., “Smart consumption”, question 35).

## Key references

- Judge, M. et al. (2021). From toilet to table: value-tailored messages influence emotional responses to wastewater products. *Biotechnology for Biofuels*, 14(1), 1-12.
- Perlaviciute, G. et al. (2018). Emotional responses to energy projects: Insights for responsible decision making in a sustainable energy transition. *Sustainability*, 10(7), 2526.