



Tiefe Geothermie:
Akzeptanz und Kommunikation
einer innovativen Technologie

Gefördert durch:



aufgrund eines Beschlusses
des Deutschen Bundestages

The Role and Potential of Communication by Analysing the Social Acceptance of the German Deep Geothermal Energy Market

Master Thesis

University of Plymouth, Plymouth Business School

Abstract:

Geothermal technologies have the capacity of representing a significant contribution to the energy policy objectives of the German government, caused by their competitive advantage of the base load performance. However, one major problem of this energy form is the social acceptance of the national as well as local population.

This master thesis deals with the analysis of the social acceptance of the German geothermal market. Based on the analysis results the general role and potential of communication is investigated in more detail. Basic topics of this thesis are the discussion of the available literature, the creation of a stakeholder analysis as well as the evaluation, analysis, and conclusion of both primary and secondary research. The literature review shows that the term social acceptance is well defined in comparative studies. However, with focus on the German geothermal energy market it is an almost unexplored research field. In this study, the term “social acceptance” is measured by the seven indicators interest in the deep geothermal energy, attitude towards the deep geothermal energy, the knowledge about the technology, the perception of the societal and individual benefits, risk perception, communication, and general aspects. The stakeholder analysis defines the stakeholder group project developers and operators as well as the interest group citizens’ initiatives as test groups for the primary research. The analysis results show that scepticism and problems of the acceptance are phenomena of the last years. As starting point for the increased critical attitude, the occurrence of microseismic activities caused by the geothermal project in Landau is detected. Especially, the potential risks and fears of the local residents, but also a low knowledge level of the technology are influencing the situation in geothermics. At the same time, the importance of the extensions of “green technologies” is highly accepted. Furthermore, the population recognises the societal and individual benefits of the renewable energy such as geothermics. In this ambivalent situation, the further success of the geothermal technologies is highly dependent on the development of the social acceptance of the (local) population. Communication and PR activities are identified as the most important actions for an acceptance increase of the geothermal technologies. In general, the communication

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strategies of every (new) geothermal project must be related to the methodologies and theories of the communication field “risk communication”

Keywords:

Social acceptance, Geothermal energy, potential of communication, risk perception, stakeholder

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