



CHANGING THE GAME

Description



What is unique about Changing the Game?

Changing the Game is the first game to give a unified treatment of the future energy system. It allows students of *all* backgrounds to learn about and get hands-on experience with energy planning and policy making. It facilitates a number of relevant discussions and thereby empowers the participants with deeper knowledge and understanding of the complexities involved.

Dealing with energy systems usually involves dealing with a lot of numbers, which tends to scare most people away. In order to make energy planning accessible for everyone, we sought to visualize things as much as possible. Therefore *Changing the Game* uses LEGO® bricks to translate words and numbers into a visual representation.

A lot of work has been put into making the game playable by everyone irrespective of prior knowledge. Just reading the 13-page background material should give everyone with a high school education level sufficient knowledge to be able to play the game.

A diverse range of learning outcomes are achieved. Feedback from students who played the game shows that they have not only learned about technical issues, but also gained an understanding of the intricacies of negotiation and the dilemmas politicians face when trying to reach compromises that satisfy everyone.



Why Changing the Game?

The idea of creating a game came out of Energy Crossroads' efforts to host an interactive workshop on developing strategies for a clean, prosperous and secure energy future for Europe. The workshop was run during the *Our Opportunity* summit held in Copenhagen on March 10-12, 2009¹.

Agreeing on an energy future for Europe is greatly helped by having a discussion framework. The purpose of the framework is two-fold. Firstly, it ensures that everyone knows what they are talking about. Secondly, it ensures that only feasible solutions can be constructed or agreed upon. Part of the motivation of creating *Changing the Game* was to clear out misconceptions about energy systems that are currently influencing and blurring the debate. We believe that an informed and open debate and general awareness are key to creating the momentum for change.

How does Changing the Game work?

We believe in learning by doing. In *Changing the Game*, participants start out by creating a dream scenario. Following this they are given the challenge of turning their dream into reality while facing the technical constraints of the real world. Finally the participants are asked to address social and political aspects of changing the energy system.

¹ www.our-opportunity.com

Changing the game is played in four groups of six participants. The game is split into two parts: A technical/economical part and a social/political part. In the first part energy scenarios are modeled by building towers of LEGO® bricks. Bricks of different colors correspond to various energy resources and types of power plants. After constructing their dream towers the group is given dictator status to make it reality by applying changes to the current energy system. However, they cannot violate the technical constraints implemented in the game. Within this framework, they choose between a wide array of changes specified by so-called policy cards. These cards describe changes that could be made, how much it will cost and how it affects the LEGO® towers.

In the second part players lose their dictator status. After choosing the policy cards they find most important, they go on to discuss how the changes described could be implemented by different policy measures. Here they should also deal with what regulation is politically feasible in a democracy.

The outcome of the entire process is a feasible scenario with a price tag and an energy action plan giving policy recommendations of how to turn it into reality.

Going through the entire process the participants gain several important insights into how energy systems work and what implications arise from changing them.

Changing the Game helps provide an understanding of the magnitude of the systems we are dealing with. It illuminates where major changes could be made by our policy makers.

