



Analysis of Interactive Session at ERP Plenary, April 2015 – Summary

Overview:

At the April plenary participants were asked a few questions about energy innovation and the role of ERP in that process. Responses were collected via a mobile phone voting system that allowed all to participate. A graphical summary of the responses is provided in Appendix A and the key points are described below.

Results - Project Areas:

Energy Storage came out as the area that members felt most needed a breakthrough and also an area they were willing to commit to work in. In the following discussion a member raised the difficulties of turning it into commercial opportunity and this is what needed exploring. ERP's [Managing Flexibility of the Electricity System](#) project has also highlighted there is a need for market pull for the services storage offers. However [Energy Storage](#) has been studied before by ERP in 2011 so clarity is needed on where members feel fresh input is required.

Heat was seen as the area least needing a breakthrough but most needing ERP attention, although only 2 members offered this as an area in which they would participate. The implication is that progress here is blocked more by policy or implementation than by technology. Some of this could be addressed by the HMT/DECC project proposal which is in preparation.

The first two questions have **energy demand** scoring highly as an area needing a breakthrough and one in which could be suitable for ERP. Question A2 also showed a future project area in the category of "social" as scoring highly, so it could be that a project is developed around **behaviour and demand reduction**. Four members offered active involvement if a project were initiated in the demand area.

Systems was in equal first place (Question A4) for members offering project support, and was seen as the most important area for future projects (Question A2). Some effort is needed to identify what aspect is in the minds of members, although it is possible that the [Energy Systems Catapult](#) is the best home for work in this area, as identified by the [Smart Energy](#) project.

In the discussion, the gap between technological breakthroughs and what can be delivered was noted: regulatory issues are important, and ERP is not necessarily about identifying new technologies but is about looking into applications. Energy perspectives on smart materials and the digital world were also mentioned.

Action: Members who suggested topics they would like to see developed or those they would participate in (especially Storage, Heat, Regulation and Demand) should make this known / discuss with the Analysis Team.

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ERP's Role:

The discussion brought to light that Members see ERP as a **tool for education** (“Learning about a topic” in Question B2 scored 10 out of 24), through its impartial analysis (Question B1). **Influencing** also scored highly (9 out of 24) as a use for ERP output, and 4 out of 22 for being ERP's most important role. However education was not seen originally as one of ERP's core functions, and on closer inspection the high influencing score was weighted towards influencing others than within the members own organisation (6-3). The 2010 MoU says that ERP's Objectives are to “take a visionary lead on research and innovation, seeking to influence the development and deployment of new technologies and enabling timely, focussed RDD&D investments to be made” which will be achieved by “(i) influencing members in their respective individual roles and capacities, and (ii) communicating views more widely.”

Given this a missing aspect was around **ERP's impact**. In fact “Impact” was viewed as one of the biggest weaknesses, particularly after a report has been published. 9 out of 24 Members suggested that **follow-up activities** were the best way for ERP to become more effective (Question B3). **Presenting at conferences** was seen as an important way to have more impact by 6 other members.

The **lack of profile** was the other big weakness, the implication being that ERP needed to get “out and about” more often.

In discussion it was noted that the value of ERP is in **public-private partnerships** as very few groups covered that spectrum and the real complexities across the system. Figuring out directions for future innovations would be essential.

Action Points:

Some of the weaknesses highlighted in the areas of ERP impact, follow-up and profile have already been recognised and action is underway in the following areas:

- The development of an **ERP communications strategy** with the objective of “creating impact” at its core. The strategy (available soon) outlines tools, methods and a consideration of opportunities for ERP to have greater impact both broadly and on a per project basis. The Comms Strategy also clarifies the roles of all parties within ERP and recommends a review (with report) of ERP's role and impact. Key stakeholder groups are being identified and output is now being crafted for the specific audience in mind.
- The **new ERP website** has provided stronger branding and ease of use, with a focus on communicating ERP's role, accessibility for the user and an easy search function for project work. A new Members' Area is also currently being populated with access to meeting papers and the aforementioned ERP Comms Strategy.
- Alongside this, ERP's presence on **social media** has also increased. We would like to request that all Members/Member Orgs follow us on twitter at [@erpuk_info](#) and on [LinkedIn](#).
- As a result of the redesign of the website, consistent ERP branding is also being rolled out for all ERP documents.

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Other Action Points of note are:

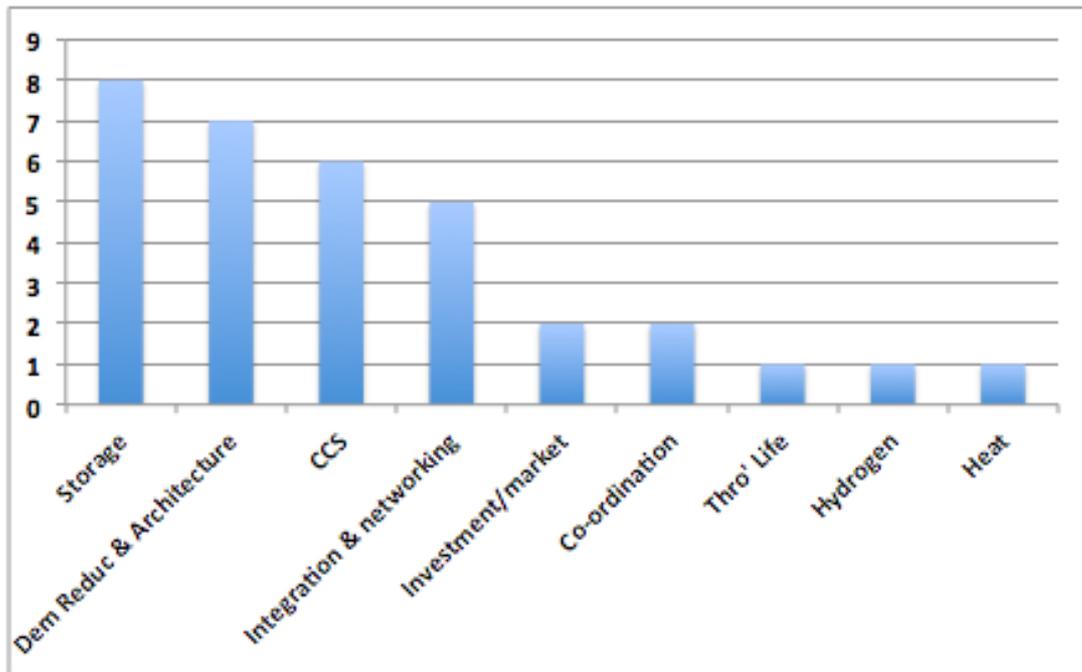
- **Report launch events:** Last year the work on minerals was launched jointly with UKERC. Further launch events with other organisations are being explored as a way to raise the profile of particular work areas.
- **Conferences and joint workshops:** In the last 6 months ERP has worked with UK Water Research and Innovation Partnership (UKWRIP) and The Infrastructure Transition Research Consortium (ITRC) to host a workshop on the energy-water nexus. A number of further workshops are also being considered, e.g. for the proposed Horizon Scanning work.
- Finally, a formal ERP leaflet collating our **'impact to date'** has been recommended and will be produced later this year.

Although work is underway to improve ERP's impact, the interactive session was a valuable reminder of the work that needs to be done, particularly in the area of post report follow-up, for example ensuring recommendations are considered and implemented.

We would like to thank Members for their input at this session.

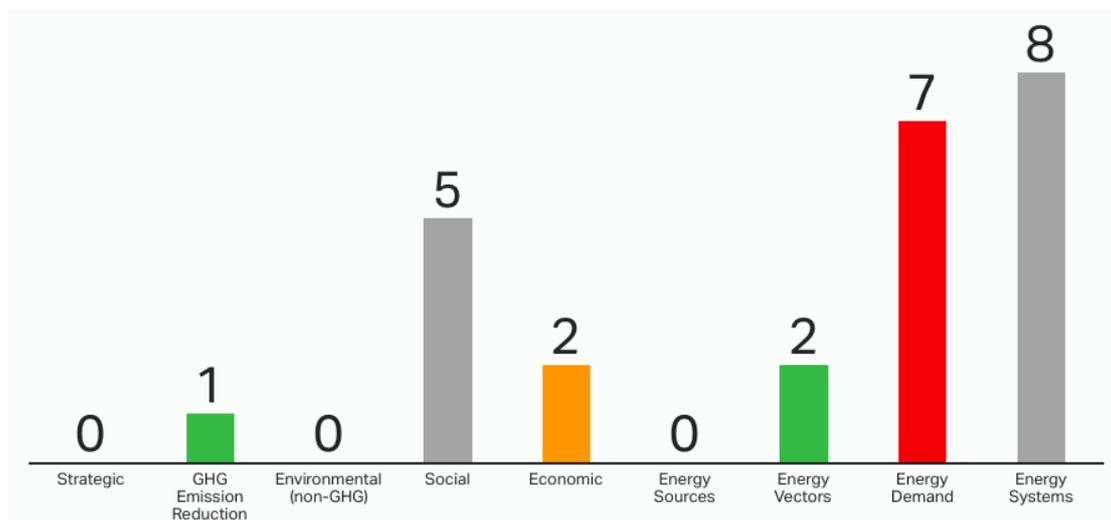
Appendix A – Responses Given:

A1: Where do we need a breakthrough?



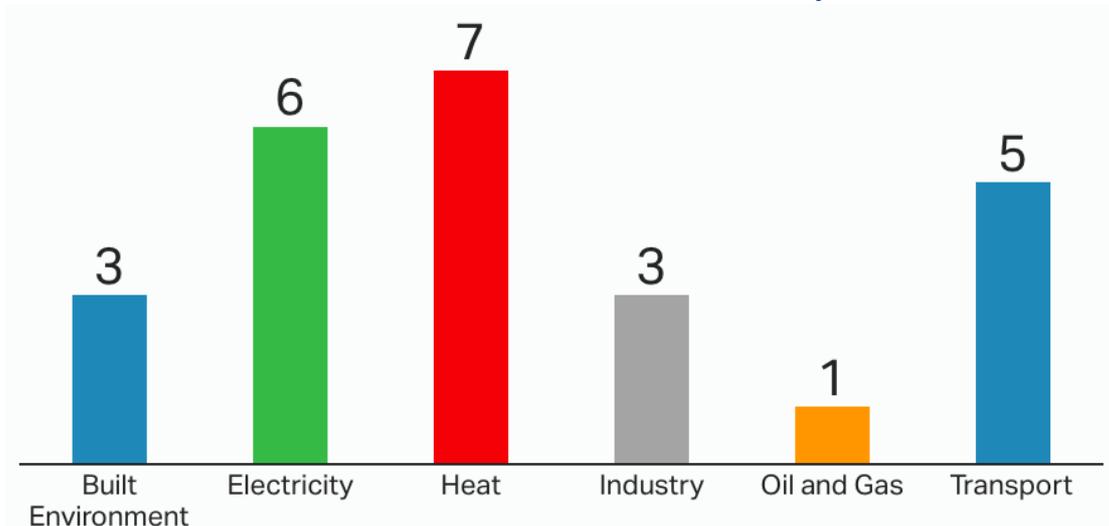
This was a question with free format answers. Some categories have been combined.

A2: Future Project Area?

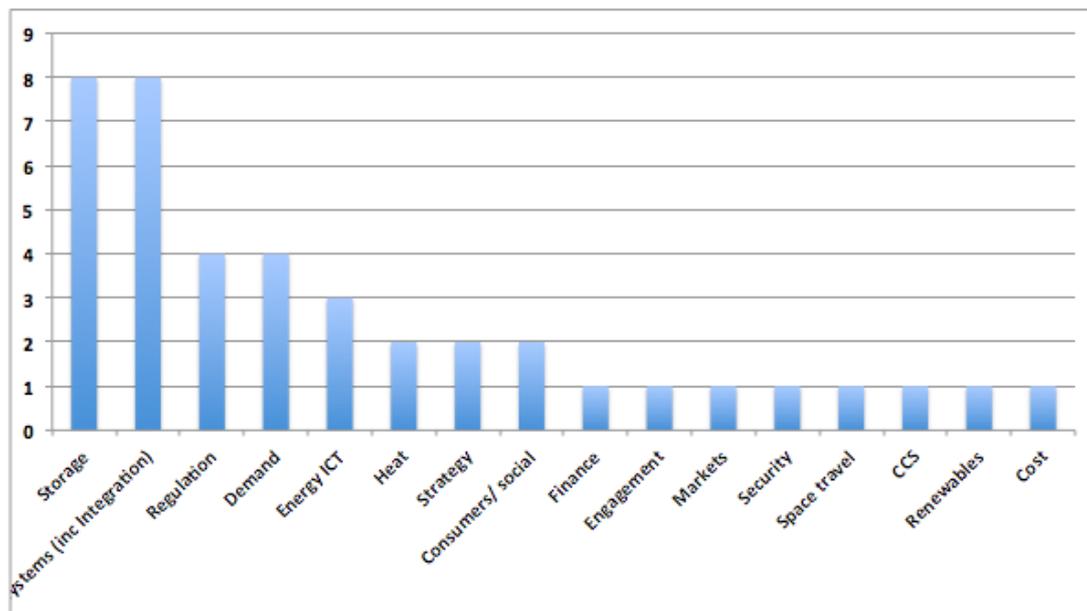




A3: Which sectors would most benefit from ERP's input?

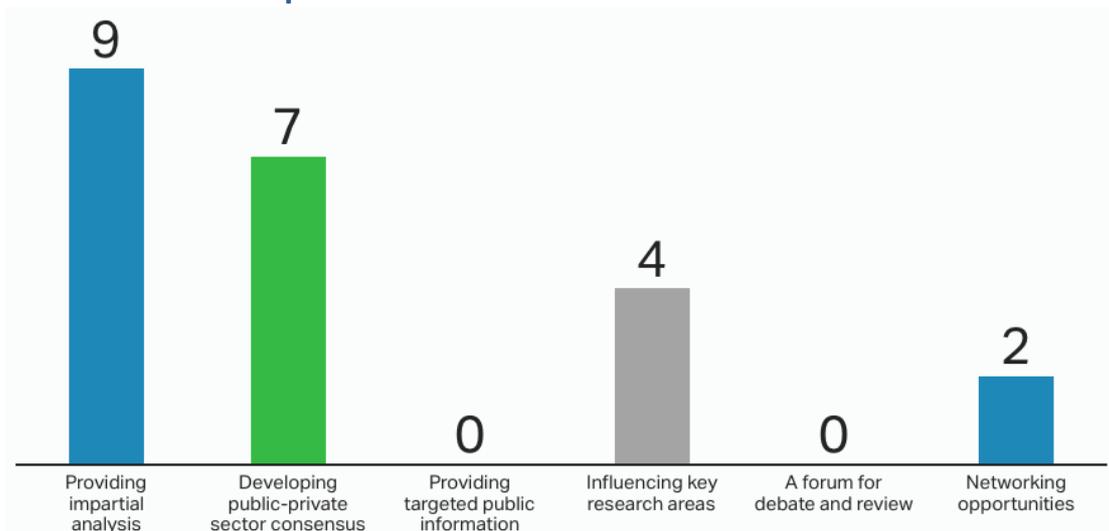


A4: Project I would actively participate in

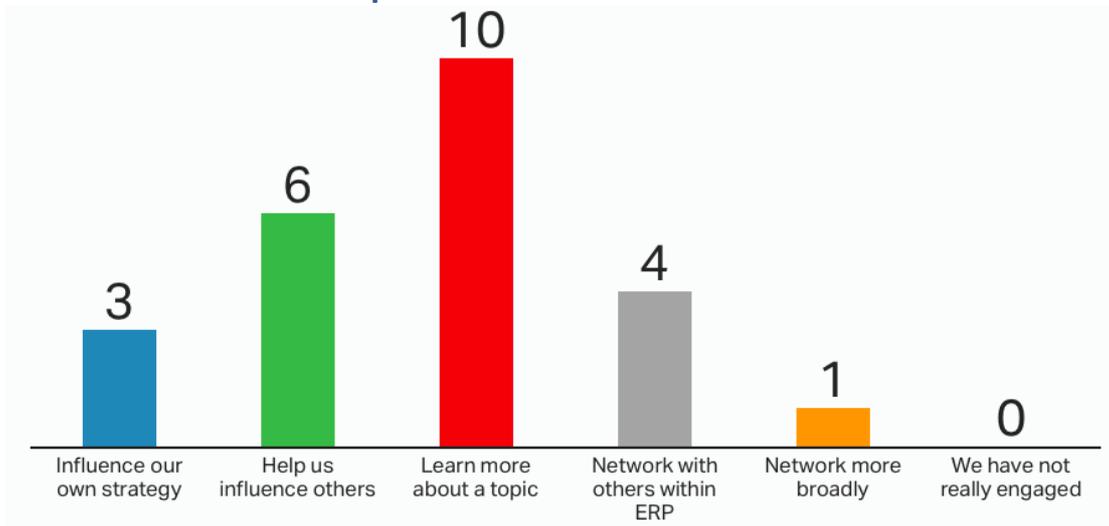




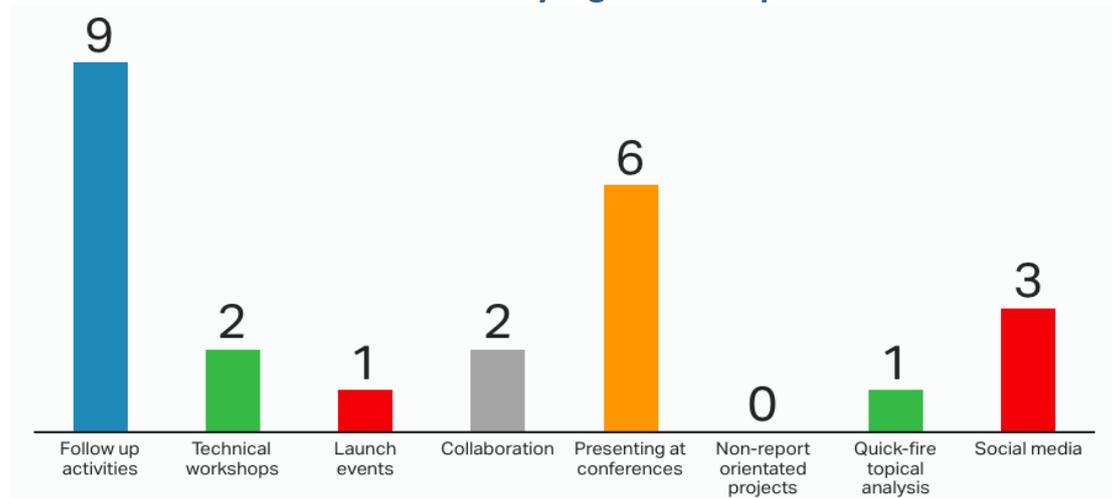
B1: ERP's most important role



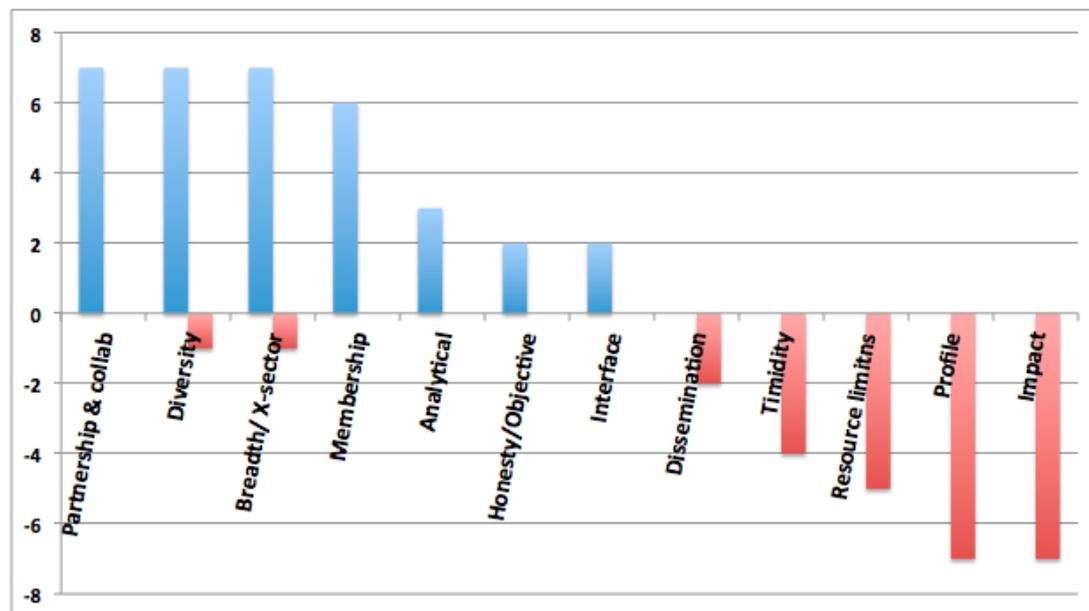
B2: I have used ERP output to...



B3: ERP could be more effective by a greater emphasis on ...



B4&5: Strengths and Weaknesses



The chart shows strengths (blue) and weaknesses (red). For clarity it omits those that got just one vote which were depth, long term, team, authoritative (strengths) and size, pace, flexibility and complexity (weaknesses).