



Call for Applications - RSA Policy Expo 2019

Sustainable Energy

Addressing the global energy challenge requires paying attention to the regional implications of an energy transition worldwide. This challenge entails three parallel processes: the imperative for emissions reduction, the move towards the securitization of resources, and global concerns with facilitating sustainable energy access for all.

First, there is an imperative to reduce carbon emissions following the commitments acquired in the 2015 Paris Agreement for Climate Action. The publication of the IPCC 1.5 Degrees report in October 2018 highlighted the concern with the voluntary commitments made by national governments because these commitments will not be sufficient to maintain global temperature increases under safe levels. Calls for increased ambition have reached sub-national levels of governance, indicating the need for understanding and coordinating responses at the local and regional levels. Coalitions of regions such as the R20 Regions of Climate Action have demonstrated their capacity to advance sustainable energy alternatives and establish long-term alliances with the private sector.

Second, sustainable energy efforts emerge hand in hand with an ongoing tension about the securitization of energy resources different World regions. The entrenchment of fossil fuels in contemporary societies and the patent difficulties to bring about a just transition moving away from coal, oil, and gas relates to geopolitical processes that depend on regionally-based means of energy resource control and shape the development of regions. Energy security narratives are changing rapidly. On the one hand, arguments about the diversification of the energy mix and the need to align regional development objectives with energy efficiency concern have now become mainstream and embedded in national energy policies. On the other hand, concerns with securitization of energy resources have been a powerful driver of innovation that explains the dramatic increase in the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix. Securitization concerns relate to broader changes in industrial, regional and innovation policies, as well as changes in energy consumption habits and the development of alternative, decentralized modes of energy provision.

Third, the global energy challenge has a critical dimension related to the lack of energy access. Approximately 1 billion people in the World lack access to electricity and over 3 billion depend on lower quality fuels that have a direct impact on their lives and health. This dimension is central, for example, to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, particularly the Sustainable Development Goal 7 of providing sustainable energy for all. The possibilities for different sectors of the population to access sustainable energy- and the policies that could make that possible- depend on numerous regional factors. Detailed, comparative research on the regional aspects of sustainable energy access is scarce, particularly in those areas where the gaps in energy access are more profound.

This theme seeks to rethink the regional aspects of sustainable energy transitions, whether this is regarding the decarbonization of society and the economy, the securitization of energy resources, or energy access. Proposals that consider this as a multi-dimensional challenge in which the three themes are interrelated are particularly encouraged.

For example, the following list provides some examples of the contribution that could emerge from the proposal:

- Assessing the regional development implications of sustainable energy transitions and how different models of energy development work in different locations.
- Developing a multi-dimensional analysis of sustainable energy transitions that engage a continuum of factors including the political economy of energy, territorial policies, and practices of everyday life.
- Understanding the governance arrangements that enable and foster sustainable energy transitions.
- Analyzing how urban energy transitions are already unfolding in different regions, examining, for example, the relationship between economic restructuring, technology development, and social change.
- Explaining the relationship between global energy policies and the deployment of development policy at the regional level.
- Drawing a sustainable energy agenda for the social sciences – where does social science fit in, what is the value of social sciences research in sustainable energy transitions?

We encourage proposals that emphasize the regional aspects of sustainable energy and remain international in scope (for example, including more than one country or explain how research in one country responds to global energy concerns).

We seek proposals that, while ambitious in advancing the field, target policy-relevant questions and envisage avenues to influence policy and practice. The RSA will award £15,000 for the completion of the research and outputs. The research should produce an article for our gold open access journal, *Regional Studies*, *Regional Science* and a short 'policy facing' book of no more than 30,000 words published by Routledge. The book will have a large distribution, as it will be sent in print copy to all RSA members and in e-book format to all those who subscribe to any of the journals of the RSA. Applicants are advised to read the application support document carefully and to comply with rules of the scheme such as the inclusion of a named early career researcher in the team.

Application queries

The Policy Expo initiative is worth up to £15,000 (c.\$19,000; c. €16,800) to successful teams aiming to connect their work and wider communities to societal questions and policy needs. The RSA seeks to support 3 Policy Expos:

- 1. Infrastructure in local and regional development**
- 2. Austerity urbanism and inclusive growth**
- 3. Sustainable energy**

Research related queries should be addressed in the first instance to the RSA Chief Executive, Sally Hardy on sally.hardy@regionalstudies.org and policyexpo@regionalstudies.org

Administrative queries should be addressed to policyexpo@regionalstudies.org or by telephoning +44 (0)1273 698 017.

Please send your applications to policyexpo@regionalstudies.org

The submission deadline for detailed applications is **12th June 2019**.

To download the application form and handbook, please go to <http://www.regionalstudies.org/funding/page/policy-expo-grant-scheme>