

Request for research proposals

The political economy of clean energy transitions

Background

United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER) and the Joint Institute for Strategic Energy Analysis (JISEA) at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) are collaborating to assemble an edited volume focused on the political economy of clean energy. Sustainable energy transitions involve the shift of resources between competing industrial sectors and political constituencies. Stakeholders in this process have varying degrees of political and economic power, and understanding how political economic factors influence clean energy transitions is crucial to effective policy formulation and facilitating transitions to sustainable energy systems. This initiative seeks to contribute to enhanced understanding of these factors.

Offer

UNU-WIDER and JISEA/NREL invite proposals from qualified researchers for papers exploring the political economy of clean energy. The aim is that these papers will culminate as chapters in a book volume.

The specific objectives of this request for research proposals are:

- 1 To obtain from the research community ideas of timely case studies that illuminate concrete political economy factors influencing clean energy transitions.
- 2 To advance the understanding of how political economy factors can both inhibit and accelerate clean energy transitions.
- 3 To compare and contrast how political economy factors influence clean energy transitions across a wide range of national settings (developed economies, emerging economies, and least-developed countries).

Some examples of topics of potential interest include (but are not limited to):

- Clean energy transitions: This research would focus on the political economy of clean energy transitions, tensions within energy economies, and how these processes play out in international, national, and subnational politics.
- The political economy of utilities and new entrants: This research would focus on tensions between utility incumbents and new entrants, particularly in developing countries.
- Climate change mitigation and poverty alleviation – tensions and opportunities: This research would explore the relationships between the policy goals of climate change mitigation and poverty alleviation.
- The political economy of energy innovation and the role of Research, Development, Demonstration & Deployment (RDD&D): This research would explore the factors and competing voices in approaches to energy innovation and RDD&D portfolios.

- Nuclear energy investment: This research would explore the political economy issues surrounding investment commitments to nuclear energy.
- Tensions between national and EU-wide energy market designs: This research would explore the political economy implications of national and EU-wide energy market design processes underway in Europe.
- The political economy of wind integration in China: This research would focus on the political economic challenges to integrating wind energy into the Chinese grid.
- Competing clean energy support mechanisms in South Africa: This research would focus on the political forces driving competing visions for clean energy support in South Africa.
- Energy market reforms: This research would focus on the historical challenges of energy market restructuring, and whether and how clean energy technologies and advocate blocs influence the process.
- Coal, wind, and PV in India: This research would focus on the Indian energy transition, and challenges associated with both conventional and renewable energy sources.
- Supply versus load advocates in capacity market reform: This research will focus on competing positions of supply and load advocates in recent US capacity market reforms.
- Energy, water, and land use: This research would explore the complexities at the intersection of energy, water, and land use in relation to energy access, economic development, and clean energy transitions.

Proposals from individuals (or groups of individuals) as well as non-profit organizations are welcome. Applications from suitably qualified women and developing country nationals are particularly encouraged.

Individual researchers will be issued UNU Consultant Contracts (CTC), while non-profit organizations will be issued Institutional Contractual Agreements (ICA). A total research honorarium in the range of USD 6,000-10,000 will be paid upon delivery of a longer working paper version and a shorter chapter version, depending on the qualifications of the lead researcher and assessment of the proposal.¹ Both of these deliverables must be deemed acceptable by the editors before payment will be made. The longer version will be considered for publication in the [WIDER Working Papers series](#). The maximum length of the chapter version will depend upon the publisher and other factors but is likely to be 7,000 words or fewer.

The honorarium will be expected to cover all costs associated with the conduct of all research proposed under the proposal except as designated below. It is not required to submit a budget.

UNU-WIDER and JISEA/NREL will formally pursue publication options after the selection of accepted proposals. The editorial team will draw from accepted proposals in order to develop a book proposal to submit to a publishing house. The editorial team may make requests on successful applicants in the elaboration of the book proposal.

All successful research applicants will also be expected to attend a 1 - 1.5 day workshop (date and venue TBD) where work in progress will be presented to other contracted researchers and to selected international experts. Costs of attending this workshop will be borne by UNU-WIDER in accordance with United Nations University travel guidelines.

While payment of the honorarium will be made upon delivery of the two paper versions discussed above, the final version of the book volume will not be complete at that point. After payment has been made, researchers will be asked to:

- 1 Respond to reasonable requests by the publisher and editors with respect to finalization of the book volume.
- 2 Participate in at least one knowledge-sharing event around book launch.

¹ In case of co-authorships the honorarium will be divided among the contributors.

Dates (EET–Eastern European Time)

7 January 2015	Announcement posted.
15 February 2015	Final opportunity for questions on the request for research proposals.
28 February 2015	Proposals due.
22 March 2015	Target date for informing on funding decisions.
19 April 2015	Target date for completion of necessary administrative procedures.
30 April 2015	Target date for submission of book proposal to a publisher.
July 2015	Target window for work-in-progress workshop.
30 November 2015	Target date for submission of final papers.

Knowledge-sharing events will be planned subsequently.

Evaluation process and criteria

A technical panel drawn together by UNU-WIDER and JISEA/NREL will score proposals along three criteria: technical merit (40 points), technical capabilities of the research team (30 points), and policy relevance (30 points). Based on this assessment, a pool of acceptable proposals will be determined. From this pool, accepted proposals will be drawn by a decision panel, which may include a potential publisher of the volume. The decision panel will consider additional criteria such as overall coherence of the book volume, diversity of topics addressed, and geographic diversity.

Other considerations

An individual researcher may only appear on a maximum of one proposal.

Only the final decision on whether to fund the proposal or not will be communicated to applying researchers.

For successful proposals:

- 1 Researchers or their institutions (non-profit) will sign a Consultant Contract or an Institutional Contractual Agreement with UNU-WIDER that follows the UNU conditions of service for [Consultant Contracts \(CTC\)](#), or [Institutional Contractual Agreements \(ICA\)](#).
- 2 Researchers/institutions will transfer copyright of research produced under the contract to UNU-WIDER. An important purpose of this copyright transfer is to allow UNU-WIDER to effectively negotiate with book publishers in order to seek the most desirable possible publication outlet. If no (further) publication is to be expected by UNU-WIDER, the copyright can also be returned to the author(s).

Proposal properties and logistics

- 1 The technical proposal should be no more than three pages of A4 paper in length, excluding cover page and references. Please use 12 point font and standard margins. Please complete a separate page (cover page) with complete contact information of researcher/s.
- 2 Submission of proposals is done electronically by using a form on the [RFRP announcement page](#). Details (such as address, gender, nationality, date of birth) of all researchers involved will need to be entered to the form and the cover page, the proposal, and short CVs (five pages or less) of researcher/s uploaded. Please familiarize yourself with the form in advance.
- 3 Please do not provide a budget.
- 4 Any questions on the proposal process should be sent to [researchproposal\[at\]wider.unu.edu](mailto:researchproposal[at]wider.unu.edu) by 15 February 2015. All queries and responses will be published on the [RFRP announcement page](#).