

This project is being supported by:



The British Academy

COMMUNITY ENERGY OWNERSHIP AND GENERATION

As part of its wider work on energy and the environment in 2015, the British Academy wishes to commission case studies and analysis of different nations' approaches to local energy generation. Through this commission, the Academy hopes to understand how the UK might develop more examples of local generation and management. The commissioned research will form part of a broader policy project carried out by the British Academy in parallel with a series of public debates on energy and the environment.

Project summary

Understanding behaviour remains of interest in the sphere of energy policy, although this is often focused at opposite ends of the spectrum of analysis - from behavioural economics looking at individuals' motivations, to social practice theory looking at macro trends in behaviour, connected to culture and norms. A gap has been identified in evidence for policy that tries to analyse behaviour at the middle of this spectrum - groups, communities, localities. Central to this are issues of culture, and of perception and expectations of energy and other essential services.

The Academy wishes to analyse opportunities for and barriers to local, shared energy generation in the UK, incorporating comparative institutional analysis with other nations where cooperatives and shared ownership of local energy infrastructure are more common. Barriers to widespread take-up of shared energy generation in the UK may be cultural, and historic, and the purpose of this research is to understand the extent to which this is the case, and what this means for policymakers, industries, the voluntary sector and other stakeholders involved in local energy generation.

The main outcome of this project will be a report, to be published in 2016, including analysis of barriers to local and shared energy ownership and generation in the UK, case studies of other nations, and recommendations to encourage greater take-up of this in the UK. The report will also include evidence gathered from national surveys, feedback from engagement exercises at our public events, and input from key stakeholders.

The case studies

The Academy wishes to commission up to 15 case studies of examples of different nations that contain community generation within their energy mix, to a greater or lesser extent. There should also be case studies from the UK, both urban and rural. The case studies should identify layers of cultural conditions that impact upon the propensity for development of localised energy generation, ownership and management, including cooperatives. The choice of nations will be left to the researchers, however, the Academy wishes to see a mix of:

- Early and recent adopters of local energy generation, ownership and management
- Nations from within and outside the EU
- Examples of schemes at across a spectrum of the 'local'
- Nations with administrative systems at varying degrees of centralised and federal government/governance

- Nations with a varying reliance upon fossil fuels as part of their energy mix
- Examples of early adopters and new entrants
- Examples of schemes that were developed 'top down' and 'bottom up'

The case studies should seek to set out how the schemes were established, how they are run, and give an indication of scale and level of success.

The definition and scope of 'culture' should be developed by the researchers themselves, and we are interested in hearing from researchers as to how they would approach this question. This could be by looking at the institutional structure in the countries and regions studied, broad social and political attitudes, historic or discursive patterns and norms, or social practices in relation to energy and other commodities.

The case studies should form a good qualitative evidence base to allow the Academy's working group to address the following questions:

- Do different conditions tend to favour different models of local ownership?
- What are the most successful policy levers in encouraging this shift in local ownership and generation of energy?
- What are the particular successful levers / barriers within devolved/federal/local government to innovative policies to incentive local and shared energy generation and management across the case studies?
- How important is path-dependence and history to reforming the energy market towards more local generation?

The Commission

- To begin in July 2015 with an initial set of case studies delivered in October 2015 and further refinements by December 2015.
- The case studies will feed into a policy study which will report in the first half of 2016, depending on the feedback from public engagement exercises.
- The budget for the research is up to £22,000 inc vat.

To apply

We welcome tenders setting out the following information:

- How you would gather the case studies and your methodological and disciplinary approach to highlighting the cultural aspects of the context in which they are set.
- Details of the researchers that will be involved, including CVs showing relevant experience and previous work.
- Breakdown of costs including day rate for the researchers.
- Delivery timescale and points at which you would be able to report.

The deadline for application is **23:59 on Friday 3rd July**.

Applicants may be called for interview at the Academy in the week commencing 6th July 2015, and the successful researcher(s) will be asked to attend a meeting of the project working group towards the end of July (date tbc).

The research will be carried out according to the British Academy's standard contract which is attached.