

ENERGY FUTURES - EMERGING PATHWAYS IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD?

International conference by the Leibniz Research Alliance on Energy Transitions

May 6th - 8th 2020

WZB Berlin Social Science Center

Application requirements

Please submit your 250-word abstracts to the session organizer(s) by December 15th, 2019. All abstracts must include a title, your name, institutional affiliation, and contact information.

Session title

The role, significance and potential of local governments in governing climate and clean energy futures.

Session chair(s)

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Abstract

The public and academic debate on governing climate change and clean energy transformations has focussed largely on the role of national governments. Despite the fact that local governments have the potential to play a significant role, they have received little attention. Indeed, municipalities are key actors in governing climate change and paving the way for clean energy futures. Urban areas account for a majority of the global population, most anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions and significantly more than half of the world's energy consumption. In addition, cities are normally more densely populated and polluted, which leads to a greater sense of urgency for a clean energy transformation process. Moreover, the impacts of climate change are putting increasing pressure on urban areas, through a higher incidence of flooding, heat waves, water scarcity, and so on.

Responding to these challenges places new and often complex demands on local decision makers. Regardless of national politics and international agreements or declarations of intent, concrete measures often have to be implemented at the municipal level. This includes both climate protection initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions at the place where they originated (for instance through a transformation towards clean energy), and measures to adapt to the impacts of climate change in the most vulnerable areas of their city.

This session invites theoretical and empirical contributions from all disciplines and countries that examine the local governance of climate change and clean energy futures. The contributions should focus on one or more of the following questions or address further related topics:

- What drives and hinders local action on climate change and clean energy futures?
- What measures are municipal governments adopting in the areas of climate change and energy futures? What might this tell us about local and multi-level governance arrangements?

- What is the role, significance and potential of local politicians and policymakers in governing climate and clean energy futures? What is the role, significance and potential of civil society organisations, local activists or movements such as Fridays for Future on local climate action?
- Do key moments - such as extreme weather events, new or updated regulations or legislation, international agreements, etc. - influence or shape local action on climate change and clean energy futures? How might this happen?
- How can we continue to pursue long-term transformative processes such as the work towards climate change and clean energy futures in times of changing or uncertain political support?