

De-commodifying energy: alternative and innovative energy governance

An empirical study

Department: Copernicus Institute of Sustainable Development

Research group: Energy and resources

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Project Description

This research project aims to gather and analyse empirical data to explore the potential pathways and factors for de-commodifying energy. For the last centuries, energy has been seen as a commodity; therefore, different market designs and modes of governance have been developed for such a commodity. However, climate change and often occurring energy crises highlight the shortages of such market designs for energy as a commodity. Along with these crises, developments of renewable energy technologies suggest the potential for other alternative and innovative energy governance. In this context, there are examples such as energy communities, which approach energy (systems) as a common pool resource, which are focused on collective action for generating and distributing energy for local participants. Although such practices show such modes of governance could potentially work, they are still focused on local-level practices without challenging energy as a commodity conceptually (and not focusing on all energy system levels). This research aims to conduct a series of interviews with various national and international experts in the energy, sustainability and governance fields to explore the de-commodification of energy. Therefore, the research involves developing the interview questions, conducting the interviews, collecting and analysing data and providing insights and recommendations. For all these steps, close supervision and guidance will be provided. This project could bring insights for policy-makers (and academics) to decide on alternative energy governance modes focusing on de-commodifying energy.

Job Requirements

A highly motivated student with fluency in English and experience in (or willingness to learn) empirical data collection (e.g. conducting interviews, surveys and workshops) is a must. Experience performing research on related topics (e.g., energy policy, governance, economics and behaviour studies) is a plus. Knowledge and experience with NVIVO (or similar programs and software) and statistical software and applications (e.g., R. and Python) are highly appreciated.