

Canada-Germany Workshop: Sustainable Energy Transitions, Individuals, and Communities

Call for Participation

The Balsillie School of International Affairs is hosting a half-day workshop between Waterloo Region and German-based academic researchers. Focusing upon the ways in which individuals and communities advance a sustainable energy transition, the purpose is to share perspectives, with an aim towards transatlantic learning through comparative studies and exploring the potential for future collaborative work. This call for participation invites interested members to submit expressions of interest.

Will this be in-person and/or virtual?

It will be a hybrid workshop. At each location (Waterloo; Freiburg; Karlsruhe), local participants will gather 'in person'. In Waterloo, that location will be the [Balsillie School of International Affairs](#). In Germany, it is anticipated that there will be locations at each of the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology and the University of Freiburg, and perhaps others. The various locations will then be connected virtually in real-time.

When will this be held?

The workshop will be held on **Wednesday, 16 April 2025**. On that day, it will run from 08:30 to 11:45 in Canada (Eastern Time) and 14:30 to 17:45 in Germany (Central European Time). In Canada, there will be an additional working lunch (with lunch provided) from 11:45 to 13:30 at the Balsillie School of International Affairs.

Who is eligible to participate?

In Canada, students, staff, and faculty affiliated with either the University of Waterloo or Wilfrid Laurier University are invited to apply to participate. In Germany, students, staff, and faculty associated with a university, research institute, or similar kind of organization in the Freiburg-Karlsruhe area are invited to apply to participate.

Who might be interested in this workshop?

It is anticipated that this workshop would be of interest to those involved in one or more of the following areas of activity:

- Those conducting academic research on a sustainable energy transition, and in particular the roles of individuals and communities therein.
- Those Canadians who have particular interests in Germany; those Germans who have particular interests in Canada.
- Those who do 'comparative work' in socio-technical transitions, and who are interested in the ways in which different kinds of comparative work can be catalyzed between international groups of potential collaborators.

So, this isn't a conventional 'research paper' gathering, is it?

No, not exactly. Yes, the presentations will be led by academically-oriented researchers who will be talking about their past, present, and future research work in sustainable energy transitions, but – to be clear – they will

not be presenting ‘full papers’, welcoming detailed critiques, etc. Instead, ‘glimpses’ into researchers’ and research groups’ activities will be offered, with the goal – in addition to mutual learning, generally and broadly – of finding interesting connections across Canadian and German workshop participants. This, we hope, will be done by means of:

- identifying commonalities, synergies, complementarities, etc. across Canadian and German activities and plans;
- understanding different research cultures, strategies, and processes;
- networking and brainstorming; and
- building appetites for follow-up conversations.

In short, it can be reasonably thought of as a ‘transatlantic sustainable energy meet-up’, with the intention of building academic research connections that stimulate continued Canada-Germany conversations and potential collaborations.

What form can participation take?

One can apply to participate as either a ‘presenter’ or as a ‘delegate’.

- As a ‘presenter’, you are expressing an interest to speak for approximately 10 minutes answering one or more of three key questions, each of which is with respect to one or more academic-oriented research areas within ‘sustainable energy transitions, individuals, and communities’ (see more about this in the Appendix, below):
 - o what is the ‘landscape’ (social, political, technological, etc.) around this issue in your particular geographic area?
 - o what work are you undertaking?
 - o what plans do you have for future work?

Presenters will attend all parts of the workshop.

- As a ‘delegate’, you are confirming that you have academic-oriented research interests in one or more of the core areas associated with the workshop, and further that you have an interest in learning, sharing, and networking about these various topics. Delegates will attend all parts of the workshop.

How can I apply to participate?

Before Friday, 14 March 2025, you can apply to participate – as either a ‘presenter’ or a ‘delegate’ – at this website:

https://uwaterloo.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9NPN89aPxXkA8fQ

All applicants will receive information about the status of their application by Tuesday, 25 March 2025. (In case it is useful to know in advance, please note that those applying to participate are asked for a brief statement of interest as part of their application: for presenters, 250-400 words; for delegates, 100-250 words.)

What are some of the key dates?

By Friday, 14 March 2025 – The last date to submit an ‘expression of interest’ to participate as either a ‘presenter’ or a ‘delegate’.

By Tuesday, 25 March 2025 – Those who have submitted an ‘expression of interest’ will receive a response.

After Friday, 14 March 2025 and up to just before the workshop – As space allows, registration for ‘delegates’ may continue. Please visit the registration link for up-to-date information.

By early April (date to be confirmed) – All participants – both ‘presenters’ and ‘delegates’ – must submit a ‘one-pager’, which gives basic biographical information about them, and also their current and planned activities around sustainable energy transitions, for sharing with all workshop participants as a workshop ‘pre-read’. Note that presenters will be invited to share their presentation (slides, outline, whatever form they wish) with the workshop organizers after the workshop – to be circulated, with a brief workshop report, to all workshop participants – but this is not mandatory.

Wednesday, 16 April 2025 – Workshop.

Who is leading this?

This initiative is being led by Prof. Sarah Burch, Prof. Juan Moreno-Cruz, and Prof. Ian Rowlands – all Balsillie School of International Affairs; and Faculty of Environment, University of Waterloo. The initiative is being supported by the Balsillie School of International Affairs.

Is there anything else to share at this point?

The workshop will be conducted in English. The workshop will adopt the [Chatham House Rule](#) (though please recognize that a full list of participants, including their contact details, will be distributed to all participants). There is no registration fee associated with the workshop.

Who can I contact for more information?

You can contact Prof. Ian Rowlands at irowlands@uwaterloo.ca.

Appendix – Areas of focus for this workshop

Summary: The project connects ‘communities of research’ between the Waterloo Region area (in southwestern Ontario, Canada) and the Freiburg-Karlsruhe area (in the western part of Baden-Württemberg, Germany) on the issue of ‘sustainable energy transitions, individuals and communities’. Given similarities and connections between these two locations, there is great potential for mutual learning by virtue of conversations, comparisons, and collaborations.

Themes:

- *Energy attitudes*: What are peoples’ opinions regarding future energy systems? What are they positive towards – and negative about – regarding energy technologies, information and communications technologies, infrastructures, etc. (in their homes, at their workplaces, in their communities)? Who do people trust? Who do people mistrust?
- *Energy communities*: Do people see themselves as ‘energy citizens’ (however defined)? What should peoples’ relationships with energy be? What is an ‘energy community’, and what purpose does it serve?

- *Energy equity*: How do we ensure we 'leave no one behind'? What is 'distributional justice' when systems are transforming (when incumbents' benefits must be phased out; when new entrants must be supported; etc.)? What is 'procedural justice' (how, for instance, are rights of the individual balanced with needs of the collective)? How does 'recognition justice' (what are the root causes of inequity and inequality?) factor into transitions?
- *Energy literacy*: To what extent do people understand their energy use? What should people know about energy systems? How best are different kinds of people reached with the right information? How should 'energy education' proceed, and who should be doing it? From what sources do individuals obtain information?
- *Energy policies*: What are peoples' levels of support and opposition towards different energy governance arrangements (including co-operatives, real-time pricing, localization/internationalization, distributed system operators)?
- *Energy tariffs*: How do people respond to different energy pricing systems? What are they willing to pay, for different approaches (e.g., demand response technologies)?
- *Energy technology*: What are the potential impacts of different energy technologies? How are associated discussions framed and conducted? How do science and policy interact in energy issues?
- *Other energy issues*: We are open to receiving other expressions of interest that, while not fitting into any of the above, nevertheless relate closely to 'sustainable energy transitions, individuals and communities'