

## REGIONAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION

### POLICY EXPOSITION (EXPO)

Handbook 2024

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## I. The Exposition (Expo) in brief

In 2017, the Association has launched a new policy research initiative worth £15,000 to successful teams aiming to connect the work of its members and wider communities to societal questions and policy needs.

It was proposed to call this new initiative an “Expo” taking the word’s meaning of a “comprehensive description and explanation of an idea or theory” for example, “a systematic exposition of the idea of biodiversity”.

The Association seeks a leading and impactful role for its community, to inform and influence policy and practice in creative and ambitious ways. The aim is to support Expos addressing issues that are important, current and having impacts for society. They will investigate how the communities of regional studies, regional science, urban studies and related fields can respond to new societal challenges and opportunities.

The Expos will deliver a policy focussed, clear and evidenced book for launch particularly within the relevant practice-based communities and to the academic community through the Association’s membership benefits and wider book sales.

The RSA provides funding of **£15,000** (or its equivalent in dollars or euros; for your information c. \$19,000; c. €16,800). This includes the cost of a book publication and launch for which £2,000 of the grant will be retained by the RSA. To support RSA Policy Expositions on topics related to the priority areas set out in the RSA Development Plan from time to time an open call will be made inviting the academic community to suggest suitable themes. Commissioning will be on the basis of two Expos per year to allow each to be carefully supported and managed and maximum value to be extracted from the outcomes.

Each Expo theme is advertised through a call for expressions of interest and will be awarded to teams setting out clear policy-related questions. Expos will run for up to 18 months and need to include a number of deliverables including calls for evidence and focus groups and would have tightly prescribed outcomes in the form of an article for the journal *Regional Studies*, *Regional Science* and a report in the form of a policy-oriented book for publication in a new *Regional Studies Policy Impact book series*. This book would normally be expected to be launched by the Association at an appropriate time and venue and will be given in print form to all RSA members (excepting those paying the Chinese Division rate) and in electronic form to all subscribers to the RSA journals pack. This gives each book a very substantial potential readership footprint. Additional copies will be purchased by the Association for distribution to the policy community directly.

The full Terms and Conditions governing the grant will be provided to successful applicants as part of the formal grant offer and will be based on the general terms and conditions set out below.

### **Prioritized research themes**

The Policy Expo programme responds to the aims of the Association. The Regional Studies Association’s Development Plan highlights the Association’s aims in the next planning period as:

- leading the regional research, policy and practice communities
- developing our members and support our community
- delivering high quality regional research
- influencing policy debate and practice
- innovating in publishing
- acknowledging excellence in our field

In line with many other funders, the RSA Board operates a number of schemes and in some of these it allows applicants to apply freely without thematic restriction and in others it requires them to contribute to the research priorities of the Association. In the case of application for a Policy Expo award, applicants will

respond to the appropriate call for expressions of interest. These will relate to the following priority areas set out in the Association's Development Plan and from time to time there will be free calls.

**1. Sustainable Cities and Regions**

- *urban and regional sustainability, risk management, low carbon and climate mitigation strategies, food, energy, water and environment and environmental resilience*

**2. Spatial Theory and Methods**

- *urban and regional theories, methodology, value change (including big and open data), visualization, spatial economic analysis*

**3. Territory, Politics & Governance**

- *territorial politics, governance, institutions, regionalism and regionalisation, city region building and metropolitan politics, devolution and localism*

**4. Regional and Urban Economies**

- *innovation, evolution, economic resilience, clusters, creativity, competitiveness, labour markets, work and welfare, migration, firms, sectors, global production networks and value chains.*

**5. Spatial Planning**

- *cities and city regions, strategic spatial planning, housing, transport, infrastructure and the built environment, place making approaches*

**6. Regional and Urban Policy**

- *cohesion, leadership, governance, public management, policy formulation and evaluation, place based approaches, smart cities and regions, urbanization and regional development*

**7. Sub-national identities & well being**

- *citizenship, culture, identity, lived differences, social capital, ageing, demography, community and wellbeing*

For the 2024 Call for Applications, applications should address one of the following themes:

**Populations and health**

Demographic change presents significant challenges and opportunities for regional policy, including population decline/growth, the impact of an ageing population, the effects of mass migration and so on. We are interested in proposals that take a quantitative or qualitative (or a mix of both) to help policy-makers understand how to analyse and design policy to address changing demographics in their places.

A related topic of interest under this theme is the impact of health inequalities on regional economies. While life expectancy in most regions continues to improve (although at a slowing rate in some places), declining healthy life expectancy for some populations presents significant social and economic challenges, and in many regions the gaps in health between different socio-economic groups is widening. A project that explores the social determinants of poor health, how to calculate their economic impact and provides guidance on how policy might address them would be of great interest for policy-makers.

**Climate and sustainability**

Climate change and its impacts is the greatest current challenge facing policy-makers worldwide. The UN has warned it is “now or never” to act to ensure global warming is limited to 1.5 degrees. Meanwhile we face the rapid growth of 50 degree places, extreme weather events, droughts and wildfires.

Expo proposals that address some of these issues are strongly encouraged. Some possible areas of focus include comparisons of regional approaches to climate change or designing policies and strategies towards achieving Net Zero; the biodiversity crisis and its impact for regional policy; governance and policy relating to natural resources; Net Zero and economic growth – mutually compatible?

### **Inclusive strategies for regional development**

It is increasingly recognised that the dominant policy paradigms in regional economic development over the past five decades have failed to resolve (and in some cases may have even accelerated) disparities within and between regions. This underpins recent discourse on people and places ‘left behind’, and the political, social and economic impacts of failing to address these disparities.

Some of the issues that have been highlighted by policy-makers at all levels of governance as being of interest include – how can investments in new innovation infrastructure be more inclusive in terms of ensuring maximum benefits for local businesses in the foundational economy and for local communities in terms of jobs and skills pathways; what has been the impact of the growth of gig and platform working in addressing or exacerbating inequalities?; how can entrepreneurship help to drive regional development?; to what extent did the Covid pandemic change business models and work patterns and what does this mean for regional policy?; the role of rural economies in regional development; the role of creative industries in driving inclusive strategies for growth.

### **Regional planning for resilience**

We strongly encourage proposals that focus on topics of interest to city and regional planners, and highlight the importance of good planning for regional social and economic resilience. Policy-makers are particularly interested in learning about innovative approaches to planning from around the world.

Areas of particular interest include; strategies to address housing crises, particularly in terms of affordable housing and provision of social housing; how to plan the age-friendly city; the governance and financialisation of infrastructure; planning for reconstruction following natural disasters or conflict.

### **Tools, frameworks and capacities for regional policy**

Policy-makers are very interested in evidence-based, ‘what works’ toolkits and guidance that can be applied across a range of policy themes. Some specific ideas that have been suggested are – the use of digital and data in designing policy; the sustainable development goals as a framework for regional development policy; policy mobilities – how can policies in other places be translated and applied effectively; tools for policy ‘proofing’ - ensuring strategies and policies don’t discriminate/ actively benefit people and places with particular characteristics (e.g. gender, age, health, ability, economic status, rural etc.)

### **Geopolitics and regional impact**

Recent geopolitical manoeuvres to exercise greater political control over territorial space has returned to centre stage recently with important regional implications. Geopolitics, its focuses on political power, and link to geographic space, mean policymakers are increasingly interested in the regional implications for people and places.





- establish a chair who would lead the Expo and act as a point of contact with the RSA (chair will be also listed as the Principal Investigator (PI) in the award letter)
- be global in scope and outlook, seeking to engage new communities as well as joining up existing connections. Where appropriate the Expos should adopt a multi and interdisciplinary approach as this will be welcomed
- compile an evidence base of a range of sources including academic, policy, web and grey
- review, synthesise and contribute to the literature on their topic. The outputs of each Expo should make a recognisable intellectual contribution to the field
- include a call for evidence among the RSA membership and wider community. The RSA office team would assist with publicising this to the membership and beyond
- run focus groups or special workshop/ webinar sessions (normally two) at RSA conferences, other agreed international and national events, and also hold online focus groups and engage communities through innovative uses of social media
- consult with up to 20 of the RSA's key stakeholders, such as DG Regio, other European Commission DGs, European Committee of the Regions, National Governments, UN Habitat, think tanks, practitioner bodies, other learned societies etc.
- undertake data analysis as needed, generate new data as identified in the research plan
- use case studies to illustrate key points, and also engage in comparative analysis
- The publication language is English
- Assist the RSA and Publisher team with the policy launch of the book and engage in social media, blog and other promotional activities to promote the book and article.

### Eligibility requirements

- A. All applicants for the RSA Policy Expo Grant need to be current paid up RSA members at the time of application and must remain in membership through the period of the research up to and including the point of acceptance of the final report and grant deliverables. (in any category except Corporate)
- B. Members should note that they are not permitted to hold more than one consecutive RSA research award at a time. For clarity, a member holding a Research Network award or an RSA Individual Research Grant (Early Career, MeRSA or FeRSA Award) may not apply for the Policy Expo until their existing reward has expired and all reporting requirements have been satisfactorily delivered and accepted by the Association.
- C. The RSA will allow applications from researchers on temporary contracts with a recognised HEI provided that evidence is supplied showing that the contract covers as a minimum the period of research and reporting period as defined in the application
- D. The award will be administered through the HEI which will normally be an institution with degree awarding powers or a national research institute.
- E. Half the sum of the award will be paid on signature of the contract and the remaining half will be paid on receipt and formal acceptance of the book and journal article (acceptance of both documents does not imply that they will be published but does release the second half of funding)
- F. Only one RSA Policy Expo award is possible per person.

### Non-Eligibility

You may not apply for this award if:

- A. You are a post-doctoral researcher supported by a senior investigator's funding
- B. You are a corporate member of the RSA. For clarity, corporate members may not apply for this award either as organisations and nor may individuals as representatives of corporate members

### C. You do not hold a current RSA membership

RSA Members should note that they are not permitted to hold more than one consecutive RSA research award at a time. For clarity, members holding a Research Network Grant, Policy Expo or Travel grant may not apply for the MeRSA until their existing award has expired and all reporting requirements have been satisfactorily delivered and accepted by the Association. Members are only permitted to have only one of the RSA Individual Research Grants (Early Career, MeRSA, FeRSA). For example, if you have held an Early Career grant you are ineligible for the MeRSA and FeRSA grants. For clarity, after successful submission of all deliveries for the Early Career, MeRSA or FeRSA award, a member may apply for the Policy Expo, Research Network, Travel Grant or Conference Bursaries. This is in the interest of enabling access to the Association's limited resources to as many members as possible and thus to support a multiplicity of scholars and their different approaches and topics of interest and is consistent with the Association's pluralist approach to regional studies.

### III. Reporting

The following reports and publications are required to comply with the grant scheme:

1. an article for submission to the journal *Regional Studies, Regional Science*. This journal is gold open access and the article processing charge will be covered from the £2,000 retained from the award by the RSA to promote and launch the report of the Expo. All submissions are subject to the normal refereeing process
2. a minimum 25,000 and maximum 30,000-word policy-oriented book including an executive summary for submission to the *Regional Studies Policy Impact Book Series*
3. an end of award report including a financial report within three months of finishing the project. The end of award report will include both a narrative and financial section. The financial report is expected to be completed by the HEI.
4. a short policy reflections report, 6 months after award end date

Additional relevant updates, in forms of brief reports, news items, pictures, pieces for the RSA Blog, RSA website, Facebook or Twitter and the members' e-zine – *Regions* are strongly encouraged and may be requested.

Information provided in any submitted report may be used in part (extract) or entirety to promote the Expo within the Association's publications but in all cases this will be in consultation with the Expo research and policy team.

Reports should be submitted using the appropriate form which can be downloaded from the Association's website at: <https://www.regionalstudies.org/funding/policy-expo-grant-scheme/>

### IV. Financial guidelines

Expo award holders may use the funding in conjunction with other funding provided that the results provided are discrete to the Regional Studies Association.

The RSA provides funding of **£15,000** (or its equivalent in dollars or euros; for your information c. \$19,000; c. €16,800). This includes the cost of a book publication and launch for which £2,000 of the grant will be retained by the RSA.



## Eligible Costs

- Project costs (cost of travel and accommodation nationally and internationally and subsistence)
- Networking costs
- Teaching or research buy-out – limited to £5,000
- Research assistance
- Consumables – purchase of datasets, photocopies, microfilms etc. and any minor items that will be used during the course of the project
- Costs of deposit of digital material in a suitably accessible repository may be considered
- Cost of reproduction rights will be considered
- Up to £2,500 of the Grant may be used towards attending an RSA Conference (travel, subsistence and conference fees at the applicable country band fee) to run a policy workshop that will include acknowledgment of the grant.
- Writing fee to have the book written in easily accessible and policy facing English (NB the reporting and publishing languages are English)

## Ineligible Costs

Applicants registered with special needs may consult the Association about possible exceptions. Ineligible costs are:

- Institutional overheads
- Work space
- Payment to the researchers in lieu of salary or for personal maintenance at home
- Equipment including but not limited to computing, printing, cameras, telephones of any type, recording equipment etc.
- Software – of any description
- Subventions for direct production costs (printing, binding, distribution, marketing etc.)
- Books
- Childcare
- Insurance (this should be provided and evidenced by the relevant HEI)
- Translation and/or interpretation
- Gifts
- RSA membership fee

## Claims

The Regional Studies Association is a learned society and a registered charity. The funding for the RSA Policy Expo programme has been generated by the Association and its members. Award holders and their institutions are expected to comply not only with the terms of the scheme but also with the spirit of the scheme. If you and/or your HEI are not certain if an expense is eligible or not, please consult the Association prior to financial commitment. Expenses deemed as ineligible will not be covered.

A detailed budget should be submitted as part of the application form. The budget is a part of the research contract and applicants should expect to spend the money in accordance with what was set out in their application. Spending outside these parameters may not be reimbursed. Any budget changes should be communicated to the RSA in advance and are subject to approval. Claims may only be submitted for items listed in the application unless prior permission from the Association is granted for virement of monies to new headings.



Some tips/suggestions:

- This Expo book is not a standard academic publication and must be policy-facing i.e, it needs to be accessible for non-technical policy-makers at all spatial scales. This means that writing should be not overly technical/complex, but clear for a non-academic professional audience. It also needs to bring out the key policy points (our 'policy takeaways'). In doing so, this means – where appropriate - making use of bullet points, infographics, highlighting points in the text, visuals such as diagrams, case examples, graphs or even photographs (so long as we have permissions to re-use/publish them). You don't have to use all of these display methods, but include some to emphasise your key points.
- Throughout the book try to use shorter sentences and shorter paragraphs, and as far as possible avoid jargon. (Ask yourselves 'will a regional policy maker understand this?')
- You should have an Executive Summary at the start of the Book and followed by a Key Recommendations Section.
- In drafting chapters, make good use of infographics, case boxes text/explainers/figures and highlighted text (where necessary) etc. Remember though, when using highlighted text, each chapter will have a different colour code.
- When writing chapters, use references sparingly, and they should not be cited within the text – rather as an endnote, preferably at the end of each chapter.
- If possible, and where appropriate try to highlight key policy recommendations in imaginative ways (e.g. in a box/infographic) or at the end of the chapter
- Sparingly use direct quotes – but where these are included, put them in a separate paragraph with the large publishers quotations around them
- Include a Glossary of key terms – this will allow you to include some technical terms in the text and aids users.
- Once you've drafted your monograph/or even just a chapter, try to obtain user feedback from policymakers/practitioners (at different levels; regional/national/supranational) to see if they follow your ideas.
- Seek out Forwards from policymakers/practitioners and Cover endorsements

## VI. Recognition / Intellectual property / Knowledge transfer / Copyright

The support of the Regional Studies Association should be acknowledged in the normal way when any results are presented (reports, publications, presentations).

The project must be solely funded by the Association, but applicants may use this funding as leverage for further funding for future projects. The grant must be used to fund a discrete project which could for example, be a pilot study. The RSA reserves the right to be a named partner in future projects.

IP rests with the research team but they are expected not to unreasonably withhold permissions from the Association using the results to promote the work that has been funded and to raise the profile of the Association and to make members and others in the regional studies communities of policy and practice aware of the work.

All articles published in Regional Studies, Regional Science are licenced under the Creative Commons Licence CCBY and the Book would normally be covered by copyright but the option to use one of the Creative Commons licences exists.

Copies of any publications should be given to the Association. Receipt of the award should be acknowledged in all publications.

Where possible and appropriate the Association expects that datasets arising from the research will be deposited in a public repository and that the whereabouts of the dataset will be made known.

In addition to the formal end of award report, the RSA may require short contributions that may be published in any one or more of our membership publications - *Regions* and/or on the RSA website, blog, Twitter, LinkedIn or Facebook or through other channels, as appropriate and agreed with the grant holder.

The Association wishes to have the opportunity to support all its researchers and therefore if any events or promotions are to be organised as a part of the research, the RSA should be alerted so that they may assist with marketing.

### **Knowledge Exchange**

The RSA recognises and encourages knowledge exchange and actively supports partnership and other schemes that enable this. Recipients of the RSA Policy Expo award are encouraged to ensure that the outcomes of this research investment are used to the benefit of the community and should inform the Association where research materials including any data sets arising from the funding, are deposited.

### **GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation)**

It is the HEI's responsibility to ensure that the research complies with all correct GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation), the Data Protection Act and PECR (Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations).

### **Copyright**

It is the PI's and HEI's responsibility to ensure that the research and any publications are in line with the publisher guidelines – such as:

- An author must confirm that they have seen, read and understood the publisher guidelines on [copyright and author rights](https://authorservices.taylorandfrancis.com/copyright-and-you/) - <https://authorservices.taylorandfrancis.com/copyright-and-you/>
- Authors must follow the guide on how use third-party material in their work - <https://authorservices.taylorandfrancis.com/using-third-party-material-in-your-article/>

### **Royalties**

Please note that copyright in the book rests with the author(s) but that any royalty income remains with the RSA.

## **VII. Ethics, misconduct and liabilities**

Grants will normally only be awarded to higher education institutions (HEI) or recognized research institutions as grant holders will be subject to the research rules and ethics of their employing institutions. Applicants must be based within an eligible HEI. The grant will be administered through the HEI which will normally be an institution with degree awarding powers or a national research institute. The grant holders will be subject to the research rules and ethics of their employing institutions.

The RSA accepts no responsibility for the views or opinions expressed by the grant holder. It is the responsibility of the HEI to ensure that the research is organised and undertaken within a framework of best practice that recognises the various factors, including rigour, respect and responsibility, that may influence or impact on a research project. Grant holders will be required to comply with their HEI's ethics code and this will be referenced in the document signed off by the HEI.

It is the responsibility of the HEI to ensure that all necessary permissions are obtained before the application is sent to the Association and that the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the research are clear. The grant holder and the HEI are responsible for any matters arising out of the process of a grant holder's research, the institution holding the grant or from the results of the research.

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It is the responsibility of the HEI to ensure that all necessary permissions are obtained before the application is sent to the Association and that the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the project are clear.

The award holder and the HEI are responsible for any matters arising out of the process of an applicant's research, the institution holding the award or from the results of the research.

The award holder and the HEI are responsible for any human resources related issue or health and safety issue (the HEI health and safety regulations will apply). The Regional Studies Association accepts no responsibility for issues directly or indirectly resulting from the funded research, the applicant or other organisations and individuals involved.

## VIII. Application queries

Research related queries should be addressed in the first instance to the RSA Chief Executive, Alan Kinder on [alan.kinder@regionalstudies.org](mailto:alan.kinder@regionalstudies.org) and [policyexpo@regionalstudies.org](mailto:policyexpo@regionalstudies.org)

Administrative queries should be addressed to [policyexpo@regionalstudies.org](mailto:policyexpo@regionalstudies.org) or by telephoning + 00 44 (0)1273 698 017

Please send applications to [policyexpo@regionalstudies.org](mailto:policyexpo@regionalstudies.org).

### **Regional Studies Association (RSA)**

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