

## **Social Responsibility and Sustainability at Regional Studies Association conferences**

The Regional Studies Association is committed to improving its sustainability performance and decreasing its environmental impact. Every measure helps to make a difference and we are grateful for your support.

The RSA's conference programme is peripatetic, which means that we travel to new venues each year, and unfortunately, because not all venues are equal in terms of being able to meet our standards of sustainability, we have to work within the parameters of what is possible in the venue that offers to host us.

### **Reduction of printed materials, less plastic and waste**

The RSA has been reducing the amount of printed paper used at conferences for a number of years and we ran our first paper free conference in 2019 (Australasia Conference in February 2019). At the 2020 Annual Conference (#RSA20) in Ljubljana, Slovenia, we will continue our reduction of printed paper in the form of conference programmes or flyers and we will encourage participants to use the RSA's conference App to access the programme, abstracts, details for other participants and exhibitors. During conferences, we aim to reduce single-use plastic. Where possible we are using paper badges and reusable conference bags made from recycled plastic bottles. After the conference, we ask you to leave your badge and lanyard in one of our 'Badge Return' boxes, so that we can recycle and reuse these for forthcoming events. Where possible, we recycle all paper waste from conferences. You can help us doing this by placing unwanted paper or waste in the correct bins at the venue and bring a reusable water bottle and/or coffee cup to use during the conference.

### **Lowering our carbon footprint and environmentally friendly transport in Ljubljana**

Travelling to a conference creates by far the biggest environmental impact and we appreciate all the efforts participants make to reduce this carbon footprint. We help delegates who wish to reduce their airmiles by providing details of train and coach companies. In addition, we offer a limited number of remote participation slots for participants who do not wish to, or cannot travel to the conference. If this is of interest to you, please email Katharina Bürger at [katharina.buerger@regionalstudies.org](mailto:katharina.buerger@regionalstudies.org). From our end, the RSA team reduces the materials we send by courier and we send only the essential staff members to the conference to reduce our own carbon footprint. Additionally, we schedule a number of Association meetings during the conference to ensure that we are as carbon efficient as possible in bringing together editors, Board and committee members for a number of different meetings. Within Ljubljana, the conference hotels are in close proximity to bus stops and bike hubs. The conference venue can be reached by bus from the city centre, but is also in walking distance from the main suggested conference hotels. Major international conferences such as the RSA Annual Conference 2020 are an important part of academic life. They allow researchers at all career stages to learn about the latest developments in their field, to receive feedback on their research and to build valuable professional networks.

While flights contribute to the conferences' carbon footprint, we understand that attending such events is important for researcher careers. We thus encourage delegates to make the most of their travel by maximising the opportunity to network, to arrange meetings with other participants and to co-time related research meetings at the conference. Please do talk to us if you need room space for these meetings and we will assist if the venue size and set up allows us to.

At the 2020 Annual Conference, we will live-stream some of the plenary sessions on @regstud Twitter to allow colleagues not at the #RSA20 to be part of our engagement here.

We are developing alternative conference models and will trial our first Carbon Choice Student and Early Career Conference in March 2020. For future Carbon Choice Conferences that have a strong remote participation, we welcome offers to host local or regional hubs to reduce travel carbon impacts. Please contact us at [events@regionalstudies.org](mailto:events@regionalstudies.org), if you would like to get involved.

## **Social Responsibility**

### **Differential Attendance Charges**

The RSA's Board has committed funds to the #RSA20 conference allowing us to offer a lower than normal conference fee. Additionally, we offer differential pricing by career stage and geography of employment. The latter is based on GDP per capita on a price parity basis meaning that participants from lower income countries pay lower attendance charges.

### **Conference Bursaries (conference fee waivers)**

To support students and early career researchers and researchers from low income countries, we offer a limited number of conference bursaries (conference fee waivers). More details and application guidelines can be found on the [conference website](#).

### **Training Sessions**

To support the career development of students and early career [researchers, we run special career sessions](#). The RSA funds the early and mid-career female networking workshop. Furthermore, there will be an Early Career Plenary Speaker competition to present their paper in one of the plenary sessions during the conference.

### **Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy**

Our conferences aim to be inclusive and we actively adhere to our Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy. Please visit the [conference website](#) to view the policy.

### **Please share your ideas**

We are working to make our events and day-to-day work more sustainable and would be grateful for your comments and ideas on how we can improve further.

Please share your thoughts and feedback with us at [events@regionalstudies.org](mailto:events@regionalstudies.org) to take these conversations forward and to make further changes for forthcoming conferences.