

Call for Abstracts

Regional Studies Association Winter Conference 2022 (#RSAWinter)

Regions in Transition: Balancing Economic, Social and Environmental Sustainability in the Face of Uncertainty

10th-11th November 2022, Holiday Inn Bloomsbury, London, UK

Regions are always transitioning, however the usual technological, social, environmental and economic changes have been jolted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Throw in growing geopolitical instability, climate change and migration pressures, and we find ourselves in an increasingly volatile and uncertain global context. Shifting towards a more sustainable and resilient model of regional and urban development becomes even more urgent but ever more challenging.

These pressures are triggering policy innovation in cities and regions, from universal income experimentation, foundational economies, digital citizen participation, adaptive spatial planning or deployment of nature-based or circular economy solutions. However, these innovations seldom become mainstream and the 'business as usual' approach dominates. Too often, responses remain based on outdated policy recipes and ideas that failed. As with any societal, economic and technological change, sustainability transitions also tend to benefit cities and regions best equipped to capitalise on it. Other places are highly vulnerable to the negative impacts and are likely to lag further behind. In this light, regions and cities across the globe are in a desperate need of new policy ideas and experimentation in terms of new economic models, ways to empower citizens and promote a fairer distribution of the fruits of economic growth. This requires tools and indicators for regional and urban policies, and modes of regional planning and governance to overcome the limitations that the administrative, spatial or sectoral boundaries pose.

The Regional Studies Association Winter Conference 2022 offers a timely opportunity to discuss and debate these important issues, to rethink the key theories, concepts and methods, and to explore futures for regions and cities. The organisers seek papers and special sessions that critically evaluate any aspect of regions in transition, particularly those that:

- Break new ground by identifying new fields of enquiry
- Propose new concepts and methods
- Examine the consequences of and challenges to sustainability transitions (especially on the linkages between the three pillars of sustainability – economic, social and environmental)
- Propose new policy solutions for local and regional policy and planning practitioners
- Collaborative, comparative or interdisciplinary papers are especially welcome
- Session proposals experimenting with new formats for the debate and engagement of the audience are encouraged

Broad theme and key agendas include, but are not limited to:

- Regional opportunities and challenges for sustainability transitions
- Regional innovation and the pursuit of better regional futures
- Industry 4.0 and changing geographies of knowledge and economic flows
- Role of universities and research institutions for new regional economies
- Regional impacts and responses to COVID-19
- Geographies of migration and socio-economic integration
- Rethinking EU Cohesion Policy, territorial dimensions of EU policies
- Knowledge transfer and practices in regional policy
- Regional planning, populism, demographic and economic shifts
- Transitions in regional and local development policy
- Innovations in citizen empowerment and promotion of spatial justice at local and regional scale
- Governance rescaling, socio-economic and environmental challenges
- Circular economy and spatial development
- Climate change impacts and policies for regions and cities
- Geographies of trade and foreign direct investment

Submission Details: Please submit your abstract (up to 250 words and text only) through the RSA conference portal at <https://members.regionalstudies.org/lounge/Meetings/Meeting?ID=389>.

Abstracts will be considered and reviewed by the Conference Programme Committee against the criteria of originality, interest, subject balance and geographical spread.

For special sessions submission additional criteria for assessment of proposals include gender balance between the speakers and innovation online and offline means to engage the audience in a debate with the speakers.

Abstract submission deadline is 10th August 2020.

Academic Organiser: Marcin Dąbrowski, Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands

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More information at

Currently in the UK there are no government COVID restrictions and at this time we are intending to run this conference face to face with a hybrid element, we reserve the right to pivot to online if the UK government advice is updated.