

Preface

Two decades after the take-off of the renewable energy (RE) systems and continuous increases in the electricity bills, customers start to seek answers. Answers related to the efficiency/effectiveness of RE systems, answers related to local benefits in relation to huge profits of some private RE developers, and answers related to tax being spent supporting the ballooning institutional architecture (Energy Regulators, Transport System Operators, Public Utilities, International RE Agencies).

From the point of view of the editors—two scientists who have followed the RE Market almost since its birth—the above issues have not been discussed sufficiently (if not at all) and answers have not been given. Indeed, the focus of academic and institutional studies has been on the race for RE, the technological advances, and the barriers and constraints which slow that race down. In the meantime climate pressures and “environmental problems related to energy” constitute the perfect “camouflage” for developers to become even richer, for customers to pay for unknown or “hidden” services, and for energy institutions to be created whose role remains dubious.

To approach some of those emerging questions, we have thought of suggesting this book, a book where examples of “rushing”/“not-well-planned” *Renewable Energy Governance* have been analyzed. As already mentioned, RE has been around for more than two decades now, which allows maturity and experience to lead to more secure conclusions.

This book is made from case-study interrogations of highly educated people that live (or work in) countries from around the world. Therefore, there is a collection of case studies from USA, Brazil, New Zealand, Australia, Kenya, China, Japan, and European countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Spain, and UK). To keep things simple, this book is mainly emphasizing RE Governance for electricity purposes and not transport. Therefore, cases on biofuels are only referred at a limited extent in this book.

The choice of authors was not “accidental”. The energy sector covers a range of aspects related to RE such as trade, production, employment, pricing, taxes, environmental regulation, etc. Selected academics were asked not only to cover the different disciplines surrounding RE, but also to be as illustrative as possible and to be critical, keeping an objective view over RE expansion. In short, this book offers an honest, fresh, and thorough look at RE Governance facts and/or mistakes.

The idea was that each chapter should be edited from a pair of academics, one being experienced (a Professor, an Associate Professor or equivalent) and the other a young Researcher (a Ph.D. candidate, a postdoc, a Lecturer, a research fellow or equivalent) or an Executive from the Market. This was done to add depth and freshness to the views under examination and move away from “ritual” explanations and deeply engrained path-dependent thinking. We have deliberately asked Market Executives to participate, as this would balance the academic perspective of this book. We judged this inclusion as necessary because we consider that the voice of the Market should definitely go hand in hand with the voice of academics on crucial issues that touch everyday life, such as energy.

This book is designed to provide lecture material as well as numerous case studies to be further considered in seminars and discussions related to energy governance. More particularly, the book is targeted at those who want to actively learn about renewable energy and the governance aspects that shape and define the sector. The book does not provide a recipe but a palimpsest of emerging RE ideas and examples from across the world which raise questions, create challenges, and require solutions. It is designed to provide background information and case studies to help with the development of lectures for specialist undergraduate modules or postgraduate Higher Education courses. It is also for postgraduate or research students who are from other sectoral backgrounds, such as engineering or finance, but who want to more broadly access the aspects which shape the RE sector. Finally, it is for professionals who have experience of energy utilities or the RE domain and are well founded in traditional expositions and descriptions of the sector, but who are not entirely convinced by contemporary rhetoric and want to probe deeper to see what lies beneath the smooth veneer of the RE sector.

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Renewable Energy Governance

Complexities and Challenges

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