Request for Proposals for Social Science Research into the Structural, Political, and Institutional Dynamics of Climate Change Politics

The [Climate Social Science Network](), a global network of scholars headquartered at Brown University, announces its interest in fostering research and other activities to enhance our understanding of the cultural, institutional, and political dimensions of climate change politics. This fourth call for proposed research seeks to close gaps in our understanding of key sectors and types of actions obstructing action on climate change. See our previous grants at https://cssn.org/current-grants/ The period of the work will be from 1 June 2023 to 31 May 2025.

Proposals for the following types of projects are solicited:

1. Research to determine the historical activities of institutions that oppose action on climate change. This includes historical and archival research, as well as time series analyses of organizational data. This includes the role of the oil and gas sector, the petrochemical sector, agricultural and forestry industries (including livestock, ethanol, farming), transportation (rail, automobile shipping and air transport), coal, steel, utility, and real estate sectors.
2. Empirical analysis of the role of public relations firms in creating and maintaining organized political opposition to climate change action. Research on the impact of PR campaigns on the political process is desired, including empirical analysis of the impact of advertising campaigns on elite discourse, media coverage, and public opinion.
3. Analysis of the roles and relationships between organizational actors in climate change politics engaged in obstructing climate action, including management, finance, and other consultancies, think tanks, law firms, advocacy organizations, foundations, corporations, public relations and lobbying firms, and trade associations.
4. Examination of the role of finance actors such as banks, investment firms or insurance companies in fostering efforts to obstruct climate action, including greenwashing, establishing misleading ESG goals and climate action plans, and failure to hold institutions accountable for their actions.
5. The role of nation states and state owned enterprises in obstructing climate action.
6. Efforts by corporations, foundations, or trade associations to influence primary, secondary, and university teaching and research to support the viewpoints of fossil fuel related interests.
7. The use and impact of sponsored content in major media outlets by opponents of climate action.

This letter solicits proposals from scholars in sociology, political science, public policy, geography, communications, or other interdisciplinary social science areas. More competitive proposals will focus on East and South Asia and Oceania; Latin America and Africa, the Near and Middle East, and the former Soviet Republics. Proposals focused on the United States and Canada focused on the agricultural and forestry, transportation, and the real estate sectors will be prioritized for funding. This RFP does not solicit research into individual or psychological perspectives on climate change, discourse analysis, or public opinion polling.

Successful proposals will have scientifically sound research plans that are explicitly rooted in relevant social science theory and literature. Proposals will be evaluated using criteria of intellectual merit and their potential contribution to informing pragmatic and timely actions to address climate change.

Funding for *seed grants and PhD dissertation support* with a maximum amount of $20,000 is available. All recipients of seed grants are expected to apply for further funding from other sources, and the grant application must specify how this funding will be utilized to apply for further funding from other funding sources. A small number (1-2) of *research grants* of up to $50,000 for major research efforts is available. Applicants for seed grants should submit a maximum three-page research proposal (plus appendices), and applicants for research grants should submit a maximum five-page research proposal containing the following items:

- Title
- Participating researchers, affiliations, nations, and email addresses.
- Abstract describing the overall project, time frame and budgetary requirements. This should be no longer than 250 words.
- A 150 word abstract that could be used publicly if the grant is awarded.
- Research Objectives, including specific aspect of the RFP (#1-7 listed above) that the proposal addresses. Research grant proposals should include specific hypotheses that will be tested in the research.
- Intellectual Merit of the Proposed Research – including how this research expands the peer reviewed literature in the specified scholarly area. Research grant proposals should include a detailed literature review; seed grants should include a detailed list flagging the most relevant pieces.
- Broader Political Importance and value of the research to addressing climate change.
- Proposed Budget and Schedule, including intermediate outputs and planned peer reviewed publications.
- For seed grants, identification of future funding sources.

Indirect costs are prohibited; the approved indirect cost rate for this (RFP) is 0%.

Research projects involving human subjects (defined here: https://www.brown.edu/research/irb-review) will usually require approval at your home institution and through Brown University's institutional review board. This is all feasible, and is getting more streamlined, but may require a couple months, which should be built into the project schedule.

This call for proposals is open to all members of the Climate Social Science Network. If you are not a member, contact us at https://cssn.org/contact/.

The application must be received by April 1, 2023. Apply online: https://forms.gle/5LHkRHJaJCr7tKQy8

Grant awardees will be required to report on their project's outcomes at CSSN's annual conferences in June, and in a brief final report.

Direct questions to: Timmons Roberts, Executive Director, CSSN timmons@brown.edu