CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Special Advisor for the Renewable Energy & Sustainability Report 2023

About REN21

REN21 is the only global community of renewable energy actors from science, governments, NGOs, and industry. We provide up-to-date and peer-reviewed facts, figures, and analysis of global developments in technology, policies, and markets to decision-makers. Our goal: encourage and enable them to shift to renewable energy – now. For more information, visit www.ren21.net.

Scope and Background of the Assignment

The transition towards an efficient, renewables-based energy system is widely recognised as a main solution to tackle the triple planetary crisis (climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution). Still, the shift is not happening quick enough. The world is far from being on track to reach the 1.5°C targets or achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Reinforcing and ensuring continuous societal support for the deployment of renewable energy and the necessary infrastructure is therefore more urgent than ever.

While a massive uptake of renewables brings clear benefits, as any technology or infrastructure, it may trigger pressures on both the environment and human wellbeing. Addressing these pressures is crucial to ensure that the transition fulfils its objectives of a more inclusive, fair, and clean economy and society. It is even more crucial that the sustainability argument is increasingly being used to push back against renewable energy deployment, undermining the efforts to phase out fossil fuels and reach any climate target or Sustainable Development Goal.

The *Renewable Energy & Sustainability Report* aims at building a shared understanding, amongst a diversity of actors, of the existing analysis and thinking about the environmental and social sustainability of renewable energy. Building on REN21's approach, the project will bring together diverse voices that take part in the current debate, with the objective to find common grounds of understanding. It will identify challenges, debunk myths, investigate case studies, and shed light on workable solutions. Rather than creating new standards or assessment tools, the project will provide insights into good practices in policy, regulations, and responses from industry and civil society.

Such objectives call for a comprehensive approach. Based on a literature review of the current thinking on sustainability, the sections of the report will reflect the strand of policy studies arguing for interlinked perspectives of resources management. The report will be therefore structured around the following approach:

Section 1 will address the **Water, Energy and Food** nexus, focusing on the links between water, energy, and food systems, which has increasingly gained scholarly and institutional attention in the recent years. The nexus can be approached from a technical perspective aiming to quantify and assess resources availability, but also from an institutional and practitioner perspective dealing with policies that shape the use of these resources. This section will observe the contribution of renewable energy technologies to address the water, energy, and food nexus.

Indicative length: 36 pages

Indicative sub-sections: Land use change • Water use and water access • Monoculture • Deforestation • Landscape • End-uses

Section 2 will observe the environmental consequences of the uptake of renewable energy systems from the perspective of "**One Health**", which links the health of the planet with that of humans. This perspective aims to break research and policy silos, addressing the determinants of health, be they environmental or socioeconomic, such as the impact of air pollution, temperatures increase, or the consequences of extreme weather events. The chapter will therefore observe the benefits and pressures that renewable energy technologies have on health determinants.

Indicative length: 36 pages

Indicative sub-sections: Biodiversity on land • Biodiversity in water • Pollution (air, soils, water, noise) • Health impacts • Climate change • Natural disasters

Section 3 will study **material** related issues, from the extraction of non-renewable materials such as metals and rare earths, all along their lifecycle towards their disposal. It will also address industrial ecology possibilities and circularity (refurbishing, recycling, technological alternatives). This section will also observe the economic system driving the end uses of the materials, and the possible changes of our current lifestyles that can alleviate pressures on resources.

Indicative length: 36 pages

Indicative sub-sections: Materials availability • Materials extraction (mining, deep sea mining) • Materials during devices lifecycle • Waste • End uses • Circularity

Section 4 will look at social and economic topics under the lens of **energy justice**. This framing is inspired by the line of research in social sciences looking at social aspects of sociotechnical transitions, the distribution of costs and benefits of such transitions, the inclusiveness of the decision-making processes, the recognition of the needs, skills, and legitimacy of all actors.

Indicative length: 36 pages

Indicative sub-sections:

Distributional Justice (Distribution of costs & benefits): Business models • Access to finance / financial risk • Financial sustainability over time (e.g., subsidies) • Jobs / Working conditions • Affordability of RE/consumer's protection • Energy access / Energy poverty

Recognition justice (fair representation/full political rights): Gender equality • Indigenous people rights • Population displacement / resettlement / compensation

Procedural justice - Community engagement: Planning & approval process • Citizens' participation • Social support

Transparency (building trust): Supply chain transparency and traceability

Each section will propose a **"status"** subsection, where current pressures and benefits are identified and described, and a **"perspectives"** subsection, featuring case studies, best practices (technology, governance, policies) and collaboration examples. Data will be collected from a literature review, from crowd-sourced data collection through the REN21's community, from expert interviews, as well as from four workshops that will be organised gathering industry, governments, finance, academic and NGO players.

- **Focus sections (sidebars and boxes)**
  - Policy Landscape
  - Business models
  - Rights of Nature
  - Energy sufficiency and conservation
  - Precautionary principle & reversibility
  - Adaptation to climate change (resilience of RE infrastructures)
  - Energy infrastructures as common goods

The research and writing process of this report will be collaborative and build on REN21's successful multi-stakeholder approach to tracking renewable energy developments. The work will build on the knowledge, data, experience, and work done-to-date within REN21's community of experts as well as by environmental NGOs, academia, intergovernmental structures, and industry players already working on these topics, and sometimes already collaborating. Activities will include identifying relevant players and projects to support the author's research, participating in the meetings of the advisory committee, and providing advice for the final framing of the report, as well as participating in the four thematic workshops gathering diverse players around a specific topic of each section. As with all REN21 products, the report will be open to extensive peer review.

Objective

REN21 is looking for a consultant(s) to act as a Special Advisor and support the REN21 Secretariat in guaranteeing the quality of the *Renewable Energy & Sustainability Report* and balancing its content.

Description of Required Tasks

1. *Serve as Special Advisor for the Renewable Energy & Sustainability Report*

The contractor will support the REN21 Secretariat and Chapter Authors through the following activities:

- **Critical review of the *Renewable Energy & Sustainability Report* chapters:**
  - Critical reviews will be required of the following stages in the chapter authorship – Outline, Draft 1, peer review draft, and final designed version.
  - Comments will be delivered to the Chapter Author and REN21 Secretariat.
- **Review and balancing of the sections**
  - Prior to authoring, discuss with the author(s) the overall direction of the chapters/sections and which aspects may be critical to highlight
  - Critically review **sections** and discuss with the REN21 Secretariat on balance, orientation, and possible issues
  - Critically review **figures and tables if relevant** and suggest improvements to help illustrate the status of knowledge, the **comparison** with fossil fuels and nuclear where relevant, and the proposed perspectives and good practices.
- Suggest **individual expert reviewers** for the sections, preferably prior to the formal review. For this, the contractor will suggest identified experts to review (parts) of the section and incorporate their suggestions after cross-verifying them
- **Participate in the expert review** to review all pieces of the *Renewable Energy & Sustainability Report*, including the peer-review period
- As **follow-up to expert reviews**, the contractor will review the comments and consult with the Chapter Author and REN21 Secretariat on how to address critical comments, topics or how to close remaining data gaps
- **Support the REN21 Secretariat in defining the content of cross-cutting pieces of the** *Renewable Energy & Sustainability Report* by potentially reviewing summaries of sections prepared by the section authors to be used for the Executive Summary as well as the press release

For these tasks, the contractor will work in close collaboration with the REN21 Secretariat and Chapter Authors and maintain a regular exchange regarding content, status, and how she/he can contribute.

2. Follow-up and Outreach Activities

- Where possible, the contractor should collaborate in *Renewable Energy & Sustainability Report* dissemination and communication activities at the country and/or regional level. Ideally, this should include:
  - **Presentation of the report on the contractor's website**, and if existing, on blogs, and social media along with a link to www.ren21.net/sustainability (exact link to be confirmed)
  - **Organisation of and/or participation in the *Renewable Energy & Sustainability Report* outreach events** – Regional events to promote the *Renewable Energy & Sustainability Report* and his/her role in its production along with linking the *Renewable Energy & Sustainability Report* to the national and regional debate. This can be done through standalone workshops, media launch events, side events at conferences, etc.

Proposal Requirements

The submission should include:

- The contractor's specific interest in the project
- A detailed résumé of prospective co-author, highlighting related work experience

- An overview of written reports covering similar scope and focus
- A writing sample that illustrates the contractor's knowledge regarding the sustainability of renewable energy technologies.
- The contractor's daily rate

Proposals should be addressed to secretariat@ren21.net.

The **deadline date** for receipt of proposals is **20 of August 2022, 23:00 (CEST).**

Tentative Timeline

Below is a provisional timeline for report production:

By when	What
September 2022	First meeting with the advisory committee and the authors Final framing of the report
September 2022 – January 2023	Data collection Expert interviews 4 thematic workshops Writing of the report
February 2023	Peer Review
April – May 2023	Report Finalisation
June 2023	Launch of Final Report