

# Just Energy Auctions

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## **Motivation**

Renewable energy auctions are seen as a panacea for bringing cheap renewable energy to countries in the Global South. Various structural aspects of such auctions cut against principles of community engagement and indigenous rights, undermining the just energy transition.

## **Problem Statement**

My work explores the tensions among renewable energy development, climate change, principles of community engagement, and indigenous rights. This project offers new ways to design energy auctions consistent with the (contestable) ideals of sustainable development and legal principles of indigenous rights. The project focuses on Mexico's renewable energy transition, given that the country has embarked on an historic renewable energy transition in order to combat climate change and that energy auctions serve as the basis for the project development. Mexico is also home to a large indigenous population whose rights are implicated by the energy development underway.

## **Methodology**

In this project I rely on legal analysis of the relevant international doctrines concerning indigenous rights. I apply this legal framework to evaluate empirical data from Mexico's first two energy auctions, focusing specifically on Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula. In addition to utilizing empirical data from auctions, I rely on interviews with energy officials from Mexico's Secretary of Energy.

## **Results**

My research preliminarily suggests that current design of energy auctions in Mexico structurally precludes opportunities for participation in energy development by community members. Moreover, the auction process cuts against the doctrine of free, prior, and informed consent because it does not allow for indigenous communities to participate in planning or initiating energy projects consistent with principles of self determination.

## **Conclusions**

The paper suggests pathways for changing energy auctions consistent with principles of community participation and with the international doctrine of free, prior, and informed consent. In particular, the paper suggests economic carve outs for community energy projects as well as community-based energy planning prior to energy auctions.