

ACET Canada-Estonia Wind Energy and Worldviews

Position title: Postdoctoral Researcher or Equivalent

Location: British Columbia with preference for Vancouver or Victoria (with funded travel to Estonia)

Salary: \$70,000 /year

Term: 1 year (with potential for extension)

Application Deadline: Sept 13, 2026

About ACET

Accelerating Community Energy Transformation (ACET) is a multi-partner international initiative accelerating the global push for resilient and equitable clean energy solutions through local, community-based collaborations.

Established at the University of Victoria in 2023, ACET works alongside the Institute for Integrated Energy Systems (IESVic), whom has over three decades of knowledge and innovation developed by with industry, nonprofit, government and community partners.

With support from the Canada First Research Excellence Fund, ACET is a partnership between Royal Roads University, University of British Columbia, Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières and Yukon University, led by the University of Victoria.

About the Estonian Islands Energy Agency

Established in 2023, the Estonian Islands Energy Agency (EISEA) is a socially oriented non-profit operating on six islands in western Estonia: Saaremaa, Hiiumaa, Muhu, Vormsi, Ruhnu and Kihnu. EISEA helps local authorities, communities and businesses to implement projects aimed at more sustainable energy use and production, and which help reduce carbon emissions.

The founding members of EISEA are the rural municipalities of the islands of Saaremaa, Hiiumaa, Muhu, Kihnu and Vormsi, the entrepreneurs' associations of Saaremaa and Hiiumaa, the Saare Development Centre and the Tallinn University of Technology. EISEA's activities are funded by the European Union's LIFE programme, by EISEA's founders and through the provision of various services.

About the Research Project

Major Energy Projects in Island Communities: worldviews, engagement, and community benefit of offshore wind

This research position will examine how large-scale renewable energy projects—particularly offshore wind—are reshaping social, economic, and political dynamics in island communities in Canada and Estonia. Focusing on the Estonian islands of Hiiumaa, Saaremaa, and Kihnu, it explores how worldviews, attitudes, and perceptions of fairness shape community responses to the potential of major offshore wind development projects.

Rather than viewing resistance simply as opposition, this project approaches it as a complex response rooted in worldviews — reflecting people's values, attitudes toward trust, participation, and whether they see direct benefit from the energy transition.

To ensure the research captures social and systemic dynamics, candidates will also incorporate technical analysis of energy system flows and local benefits. This includes examining where electricity is produced versus consumed, how local financial or resilience benefits are distributed, and how these factors intersect with perceptions of fairness and support for projects. By combining social insights with energy systems understanding, the project will contribute to identifying potential opportunities and challenges for pathways to offshore wind development, that are both technically viable and socially accepted. Co-developed with the EISEA and local communities, the research would:

- Analyze the relationships between perceived and actual community benefits, including energy, economic, cultural, and environmental outcomes; and
- Identify participatory strategies that align renewable energy development with local worldviews and community resilience.
- Possibly contribute to comparative analysis between Estonian and Canadian Island Communities

By grounding the analysis in lived experience and co-design, based on regional energy attributes, the project would generate practical insights for inclusive energy transitions in Canada and Estonia. It may also offer lessons for other island and coastal regions navigating similar social and political dynamics.

Key Responsibilities

- Scope a detailed research project (including work plan, budget, site visits, methodology, and interdisciplinarity contributions) based on the themes outlined

above in collaboration with ACET, EISEA, and community partners including academic institutions in Estonia.

- Build a foundational understanding of Estonian Island energy and electricity context including offshore wind development, policy instruments, and energy markets, including analysis of how local financial and resilience benefits are distributed.
- Design and secure behavioural research ethics approval.
- Conduct independent research as well as carry out collaborative research across other streams of the project.
- Collaborate and co-lead on communications and knowledge mobilization (presentations, briefs, academic papers).
- Represent the project at conferences and community events.
- Ensure meaningful community involvement in research design and decision-making.
- Collaborate with ACET's Research Manager and Engagement teams to align project delivery with broader initiative goals.
- Uphold ACET's commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and safe workplaces.
- Travel as required to Estonia for fieldwork, partner engagement, or other project activities.
- Other duties as required.

Qualifications

- Doctoral degree (PhD) or equivalent in public policy, planning, geography, political science, environmental studies, regional/urban studies, environmental or ecological economics, or a closely related field. "All But Defence" candidates would be considered. The UBC Postdoc eligibility criteria includes that the candidate is within five years of receiving their PhD. However, if a prospective candidate is outside the five-year envelope, the Hiring Committee may consider them for a Research Associate position.
- Qualitative research skills required, and quantitative research skills is an asset.
- Understanding of energy and electricity systems, offshore wind energy, and associated quantitative processes is an asset.
- Knowledge of and experience in community-engaged research approaches.
- Applied knowledge of worldview dynamics in community energy transitions or in regard to energy infrastructure.
- Proven ability to work collaboratively with a team-mindset.
- Proven ability to collaborate across disciplines and with community partners.
- Proven ability to apply effective project management in the context of research projects.
- Publication and knowledge mobilization record (academic and non-academic).

- Ability to work effectively within intercultural and international teams where English is a second language.
- Commitment to advancing Truth and Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.
- Commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion in research and workplace practices.
- Language skills in Estonian are an asset but not a requirement.

Working Conditions, Salary & Benefits

- \$70,000 /year base salary This is a one-year full-time, with potential extension.
- Applicants must be legally permitted to work in Canada and willing to be located in Vancouver or Victoria.
- Must be available to travel to Estonia for short periods of time (up to 1 month).
- Opportunities for professional development, networking, and collaboration.

Academic/Professional Supervision

This position will be under a combined supervision with faculty from UBC and UVic.

Application Instructions

Please submit the following materials as a single PDF to contactacet@uvic.ca with the subject line “Canada-Estonia Wind Energy and Worldviews Application”:

- Cover letter outlining relevant experience and interest, as well as a clear statement on your eligibility for working in Canada.
- Curriculum vitae.
- One writing sample (e.g. a research article or report).
- Applications will be accepted until 12 midnight on September 13, 2026

Equity Statement

ACET is committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion. We encourage applications from Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, members of visible minorities, women, and members of LGBTQIA2+ communities.