

Kent County Council

Energy Security Select Committee

What is 'Energy Security'?

There is no one, universally agreed upon definition of energy security. However, there are a number of overlapping definitions that can serve as a focal point for investigations. The International Energy Agency (IEA) defines energy security as:

The uninterrupted availability of energy sources at an affordable price.¹

Whilst the House of Commons' Energy and Climate change Committee provides a more detailed definition:

A secure energy system is one that is able to meet the needs of people and organisations for energy services such as heating, lighting, powering appliances and transportation, in a reliable and affordable way both now and in the future.²

In addition, the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) defines energy security as:

...ensuring that we have access to the energy services we need (physical security) at prices that avoid excessive volatility (price security).³

¹ International Energy Agency [online], available at:
<http://www.iea.org/topics/energysecurity/subtopics/whatisenergysecurity/>

² HoC Energy and Climate Change Committee (2011), UK Energy Supply: Security or Independence? London.

³ DECC (2012), Energy Security Strategy, London.

Energy security sits at the centre of a number of overlapping concerns (see Figure 1):

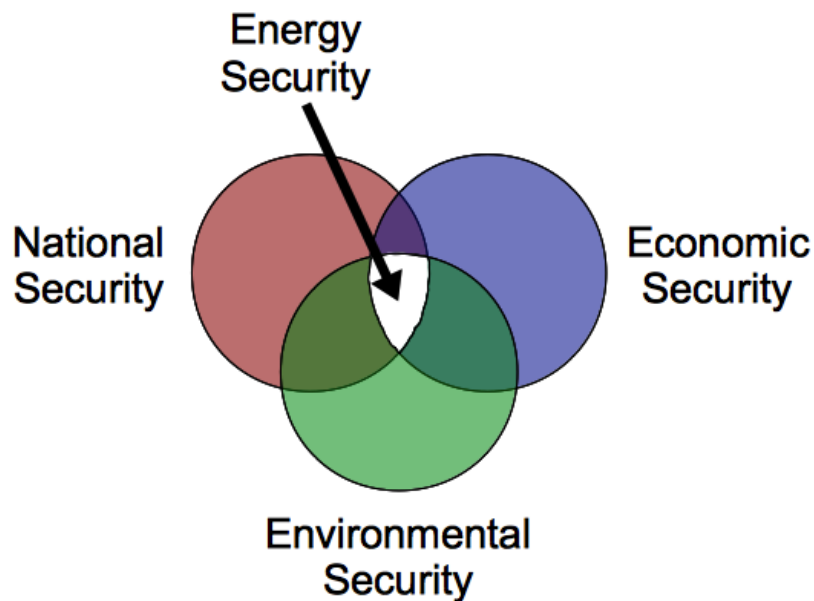


Figure 1 - Energy Security and Overlapping Concerns⁴

The institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) has noted that most definitions of energy security entail three main components for guaranteeing said security:

- Ensuring security of supply of fossil fuels
- Finding alternative sources of energy
- Reducing demand for energy⁵

⁴ SIMEC, Energy Security Initiative [online] available at: <http://www.simecuskmouthpower.com/energy-security-initiative/>

⁵ IPPR (2007), Energy Security in the UK, London.