

# Policy Engagement Training Programme

2024

This training programme is delivered by the Institute for Methods Innovation, Fast Track Impact and Walcott Communications Limited on behalf of the Natural Environment Research Council and Economic and Social Research Council.



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# Policy Engagement Training Programme

## Introduction and background

The [Institute for Methods Innovation](#), [Fast Track Impact](#) and [Walcott Communications Limited](#) are working on behalf of the [Natural Environment Research Council](#) and [Economic and Social Research Council](#) to deliver a policy engagement training programme to support and equip UK researchers to translate their research into policy insights and real-world impacts. This training is offered at **no cost** to eligible participants.

This unique training programme, tailored for environmental, economic and social science researchers, unlocks full potential in policy engagement. It addresses the challenge of balancing academic commitments with professional development, offering a fresh, flexible approach.

The programme consists of a self-paced online training course and either live virtual training or in-person training sessions at different locations in the UK. The programme's blended learning model allows for a combination of in-person and virtual sessions, ensuring adaptability and convenience. Participants gain insights from policymakers and experts, enriching the learning experience.

The following policy engagement pathways are currently available:

- **Eight half-day live virtual sessions in March 2024** (two sessions per module), combined with identical activities and webinars as the first pathway, interspersed between sessions.
- **Four days of in-person training in March and April 2024** (one day per module), supplemented by self-paced learning resources, activities between events, and guest speaker webinars.

Full course attendance is encouraged, but there is flexibility to choose specific modules. All participants will have access to an online course to complete at their own pace.

The programme uses a flipped classroom approach, linking self-paced online materials with live training sessions. Participants can view the core training content online before meeting trainers either virtually or in person. This structure allows live sessions to focus on interactive learning and skills development, guided by expert trainers. The training programme features networking across different disciplines and guest speakers from various policy areas.

The programme focuses on helping researchers acquire practical skills for influencing policy and methods for evaluating policy impacts, adhering to responsible policy engagement principles. It integrates Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) principles to ensure an inclusive learning environment. Participants join an exclusive network of researchers, aiming for a sustainable impact in the policy realm. It serves as a pathway to transform research into meaningful policy changes.

## Why participate?

- **Learn from experts:** Experts lead the training, providing unparalleled insights and guidance in policy engagement. Their expertise ensures up-to-date and impactful training in policy-related skills and knowledge.
- **Flexible training programme:** The programme offers a flexible blended learning approach, allowing the choice between virtual and in-person sessions. This adaptability ensures engagement in training without disrupting personal and professional life.
- **Insights from policymakers:** The training features direct engagement with policymakers at various local and international levels. This offers firsthand understanding and practical knowledge from policy experts.
- **Become part of a community of practice:** Participation includes joining an exclusive alumni network which will provide ongoing support and collaboration opportunities. This community of practice allows for continued connection, experience sharing, and professional growth post-training.

## Join an alumni network

Building on the networking activities for each of the in-person and live online cohorts, all training participants will be invited to join a community of practice in which they can continue interacting with each other and the trainers.

The community of practice will include a series of interrelated activities:



- **Quarterly online networking and discussion groups** on policy-related topics and other types of impact with other researchers.



- **Bi-annual online surgery sessions** where researchers can bring impact questions and challenges to the consortium's experts and get feedback and help from other researchers in the network.



- Free **quarterly live online training events** to build skills that can support their policy impact. For example, previous sessions have included workshop facilitation skills, online and social media engagement strategies, presentation skills, networking skills, impact culture and leadership for impact.



- A **bi-weekly podcast** drawing on the latest research and including guests, to enable researchers to keep up to date with new developments in the emerging field of research impact.



- A **monthly newsletter** providing summaries and links to the latest peer-reviewed papers and other useful resources on policy and other types of impact.



- Ongoing access to **policy engagement expertise** via these mechanisms, as well as social media, to provide long-term mentoring and support for participants applying what they learned in the course.



- Online networking opportunities, including a designated social media group on **LinkedIn** and hashtags for the community of practice.



- An online forum is provided for participants to collaborate anytime. It's a **digital space** to work together on research projects with policy impact and share opportunities like grants, fellowships, and awards.

## Eligibility criteria

To apply, eligible participants don't need policy experience but should meet these criteria:

- Be environmental or social sciences researchers at postdoctoral level or higher (or equivalent), with academic research as a responsibility.
- Work at a [UK Higher Education Institution](#) (HEI) or a recognised [Independent Research Organisation](#) (IRO).
- Hold a full or part-time postdoctoral position (or equivalent), either fixed term or permanent, with academic research duties.
- Be currently employed in this position, which should extend beyond the course duration.

## Application process

Submit the [application form](#) by **noon on Monday, 19 February 2024** to apply for the training programme. Apply early to secure a spot. Applications that meet the published eligibility criteria and are correctly completed will be accepted in most instances.

## Application review

After submission, applications will be reviewed, and successful individuals will receive a confirmation by email. A first-come, first-served prioritisation will be applied during this first phase of the training programme. Applications are reviewed in the order they're received, based only on the application form.

## Timetable (Phase 1)

- Closing date for Phase 1: **Monday, 19 February 2024 at noon**
- Notification of outcomes for those who apply by the closing date: **Not later than Friday, 23 February 2024**
- Course information sent to participants who apply by the closing date: **Friday, 23 February 2024**
- A follow-up will occur after the course to evaluate its outcomes. Participants are expected to engage in these activities. For questions about the programme or application, contact [training@methodsinnovation.org](mailto:training@methodsinnovation.org).

## Travel and subsistence

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) will cover travel and subsistence expenses for in-person course participants, in line with the [UKRI travel, subsistence and expenses policy](#).

When planning travel, a 'travel hierarchy' should be followed to consider lower carbon-emitting options first (see UKRI policy for details). For example, domestic mainland UK flights are generally discouraged unless for operational or well-being reasons, and any requests for air travel will require written justification and UKRI approval prior to bookings being made.

## Future training opportunities

A second round of training sessions will be hosted in Autumn 2024. Applicants who are unable to attend Phase 1 will be given priority for the second phase. Details on further chances to join the training will be provided when ready.

## Equal opportunity and diversity

This training programme aims to actively promote equal opportunity<sup>1</sup> and positive relationships among diverse equality groups. We seek to ensure all applicants, training staff, and external stakeholders are treated fairly and equally, regardless of gender, marital status, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, race, ethnicity, religion, past criminal convictions, age, or disability.

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<sup>1</sup> The Equality Impact Assessment for the policy engagement training programme is available at: [methodsinnovation.org](https://methodsinnovation.org).