



UK Research  
and Innovation

# UKRI Communications and Engagement 2021/22





UKRI's vision is for an outstanding research and innovation system in the UK that gives everyone the opportunity to contribute and to benefit, enriching lives locally, nationally and internationally.

To achieve this, our mission is to convene, catalyse and invest in close collaboration with others to build a thriving, inclusive research and innovation system that connects discovery to prosperity and public good.

At the heart of our mission lies a new word, a new ambition and a new approach – inclusivity. We cannot bring about the changes we want to see alone; the success of UKRI's mission relies on outstanding communications and engagement from every part of our organisation to every part of the research and innovation system and beyond.

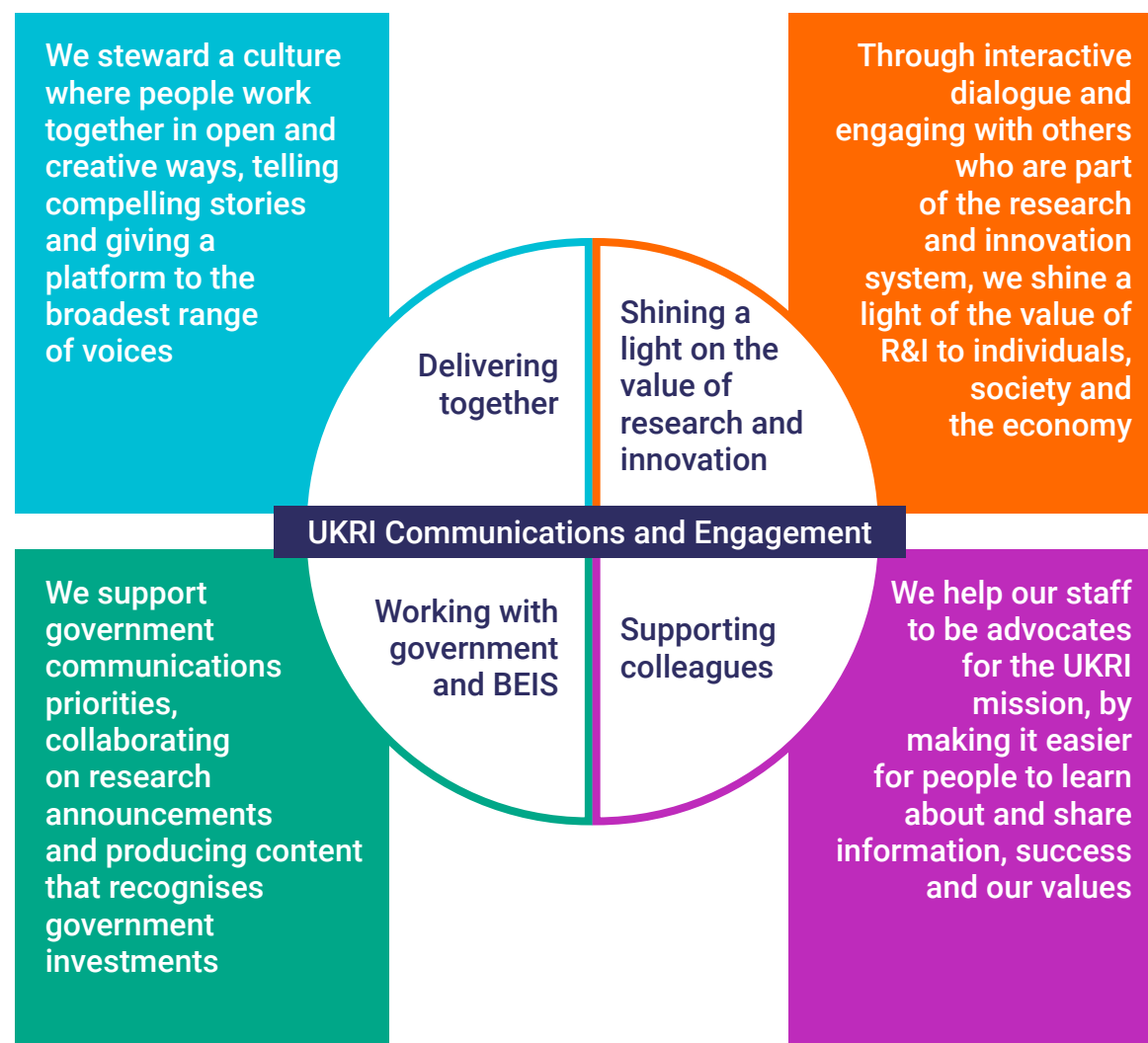


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# Communicating with and for people



## Our ambition is to reposition research and innovation to a new place in our culture – **by everyone, for everyone.**

We want to move away from delivering information 'to' people and towards providing an interactive dialogue and engagement with everyone who is part of our research and innovation system. That includes our staff, stakeholders and collaborators, sponsors in government and, ultimately, those who fund us – the UK population.

We will steward a culture where people work together in open and creative ways, engaging with the broadest range of voices. We aim to communicate our achievements clearly, effectively and creatively. Making connections between our research and its inclusive economic and social benefits will contribute to creating an R&I system that is collaborative and empowering and viewed as an integral part of society. Alongside this, we will provide the highest quality communications and engagement advice and support for UKRI, those we fund and colleagues in government.

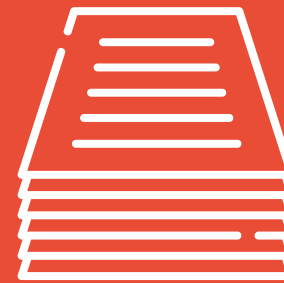
This Communications and Engagement framework sets out the first phase of this new way of working. It is an overarching strategic approach, complemented and supported by specific plans developed for different areas of work, for example Internal Communications ([see our Internal Communications Strategic Framework 2021-22 here](#)), Reforming our Business, Public Engagement and Council communication plans.

# Our progress so far...



Completed the first phases of 3 major programmes – **the brand, single website and staff portal**

**Created and implemented a unified brand** spanning all 9 Councils, 5 international offices and (soon) our extensive network of centres and institutes



Developed and approved 9 Council communications plans

**Introduced 5 new systems** and tools for more efficient cross-team working and engagement:



**Web Help Desk**  
For publishing requests



**Asana**  
Forward planning tool



**DeLib**  
Stakeholder engagement tool



**GovDelivery**  
Email newsletter platform



**Yammer**  
Employee engagement platform

**5**



**Grew UKRI's Twitter channel** – the number of followers has more than doubled since July 2019 and stands at over 60k followers (Apr 21)

**Developed a UKRI Public Engagement vision**



**400**

**Sent over 400 daily news briefs**, showcasing media coverage from all Councils. Created a weekly forward look of announcements across UKRI and established an out of hours press service



**Introduced a UKRI internal email alert** for key updates and Covid-19 related information with 2,738 subscribers

**2,000**

**Introduced a virtual all-staff Wednesday webinar** every fortnight, with an average of 2,000 attendees and almost 300 questions answered per session via the Source



**Supported 81 virtual events in 2020** – from Black Lives Matter seminars and the ESOF conference to UKRI's first Parliamentary event

“

UKRI is about integration, gathering information from the R&D sector and using this to better support stakeholders.

To do this well, we need deep engagement and listening with stakeholders, to understand their needs and to communicate these well. ”

UKRI Corporate Plan 2020-21

# Communications for engagement

## Stakeholder engagement

Communications should significantly improve the impact of stakeholder engagement activity – making it easier and more likely that people will want to engage, and helping them (and us) get more from the engagement. It is not one size fits all – we need to tailor our communications to ensure we are engaging with people in a way and through a channel that is relevant to them. We need to be clear as to what we would like from them and we need to ensure we listen to the information we receive. This will be particularly important as we reach out to new audiences who are not familiar with our organisation or the work that we do.

Councils have excellent engagement with their communities and an in-depth understanding of stakeholders and issues in their sectors and disciplines. These interactions are important because Councils depend on stakeholder input for much of their work – and UKRI as a whole benefits from these good relationships. Linked to this, engagement across Councils and the corporate hub can help us understand challenges, concerns, sensitivities and pressure points.

### The UKRI Communications and Engagement team adds value by:

- Creating a holistic view, joining-up conversations, identifying gaps or duplication, helping to mitigate stakeholder fatigue, and making use of our collective voice when it is right to do so.
- Convening new forums and building new relationships where there are gaps in our networks or activities, for instance with currently underserved communities.
- Supporting and empowering existing relationships across UKRI by developing and sharing up-to-date information and insight.
- Leading on topics that do not have a Council home, and acting as a source of professional expertise and tools to advise and support Councils when needed.

Depth of engagement	Public	R&I Communities and HEI leadership	Policy	Internal	Engagement Co-create, exchange ideas, understand perspectives and values, influence and be influenced
	PPI, citizen science	Council membership, advisory panels, 1-2-1 meetings	1-2-1 meetings	1-2-1 meetings	
	Placements, Public dialogue	Peer review colleges, Strategic relationships	GO-Science CSA network	Staff networks	
	Festivals	Town hall events, RE engagement forums	Attendance at meetings etc	Webinars and events	
	STEM ambassadors Specialist press	Sector press, own channels	Participation in events	Yammer, Council, all staff webinars	
	Mainstream news	Social media, mainstream news	Social media, mainstream news	All staff webinar, the Source	
Reach of engagement					Communication Demonstrate value, excite, inspire, open accountability

## Public Engagement

People are at the heart of research and innovation so it is important we engage with the wider public, with whom and for whom the system functions.

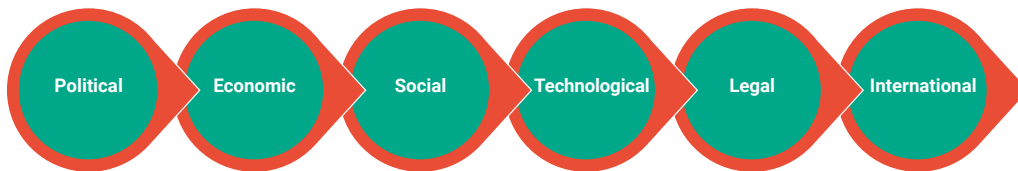
We are starting the development of a new UKRI public engagement approach and will be working across UKRI, our communities and beyond to shape our ambitions, approach and programmes. The UKRI Public Engagement team aims to add value by:

- Working across the organisation to develop a more strategic and unified approach, by convening Councils, piloting new approaches and analysing the evidence.
- Convening the research and innovation sector and championing this new vision of research embedded in society.
- Designing and delivering practical interventions that aim to make the system more inclusive, from our national network of STEM ambassadors to grant programmes that support universities, charities and local communities to connect and work together on shared research goals.

To succeed, we need to make it easy and attractive to interact with us; communicating and engaging in ways that provide reliable, timely and accurate information to colleagues, stakeholders and partners. We will support this approach through early involvement in projects and programmes to provide strategic advice and direction on delivery and measuring success. We will focus on areas where we can make the greatest impact and leverage support through collaborations and partnership working.

## Operating context

We are living in a period of extreme flux. The coronavirus pandemic, the UK's exit from the EU, climate change and extreme weather, fragmentation of media channels, and increasing inequalities in society are just some of the changes impacting our lives, our organisation and our work. Our communications and engagement activities need to recognise and respond to what is happening in the world – and take account of how the information we share will be received and perceived. You can find a full analysis of our operating context in [Annex A](#).



## Our strategic approach

We aim to communicate and engage in ways that invite and encourage interaction from a diverse range of people.

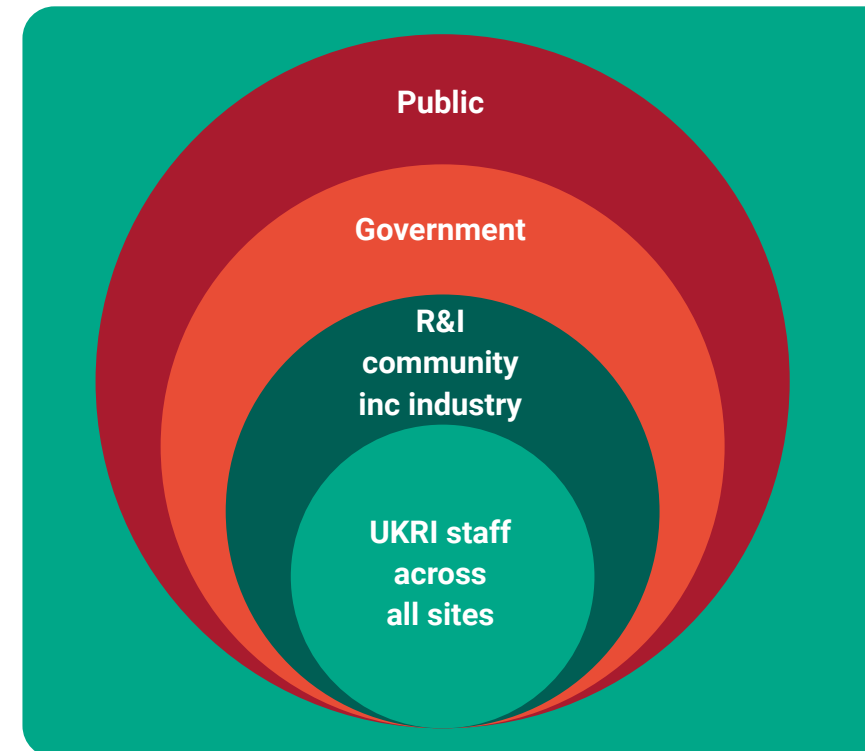
- **Story-led:** Our Councils, programme support teams and individuals are doing remarkable work. We tell these stories using the channels that work best for our audiences – with an aim to reach beyond our traditional audiences.
- **Rooted in Councils:** Driven by their knowledge and expertise, we work with each Council to create and deliver an effective communications plan based on their priorities.
- **Working smart:** We find synergies across Councils and topics and amplify these to have a greater impact. We ensure our priority topics stem from Councils' and wider UKRI strategic priorities, and at the same time map to government objectives. Using our priority topics, we create over-arching narratives to ensure a clear and consistent voice in our communications.
- **Adding value:** Providing strategic communication and engagement support at the early stages of projects and programmes is crucial and means we can counsel against ineffective approaches and add value by advising on how best to reach intended audiences cost-effectively.

## Our audiences

Our communications and engagement activity is informed both by the needs of the research and innovation system and the people who benefit from its work. We rely on individuals, organisations and partners to help us realise our vision. Different audiences look for different information, and our communication and engagement activities must reflect this diversity.

Through our insight and intelligence-gathering work, we are building an increasingly detailed understanding of the people who approach us and those with whom we seek to connect. This enables us to direct communications accurately and effectively, and to develop and refine our communication channels to better suit their needs and preferences. Over time, this understanding will ensure we reach a more diverse audience.

For more detail on our audiences, see [Annex B](#).







## Our channels

We have access to many communication and engagement channels, each with the ability to reach different users looking for different kinds of information.

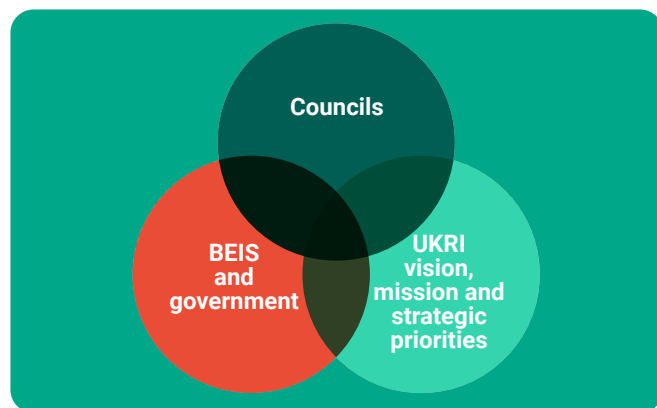
For each campaign and activity, we tailor our content to ensure it is relevant and interesting and will support high quality engagement with our audiences. We strive to select the most appropriate channels, be these our own UKRI and Council channels or news, social or paid for channels. Where we share objectives and target audiences, we work closely with partners and government to cross-promote and amplify messages.

We make use of both traditional and innovative channels to engage our audiences where *they* choose to consume and engage with content. We have invested in improving the user's experience of platforms we own, from the single UKRI website and *The Source* intranet for staff to rolling out a new engagement hub (DeLib).

We are improving our use of social media channels like YouTube with search engine optimisation and launching new channels to address gaps, most recently our public facing Instagram channel. We are developing our knowledge of channels we do not own but can place content in and who they reach. [You can find a full list of our channels and their audiences here.](#)

Where we lack audience insight, we are working to better understand our audiences and how they use channels to extend the reach we can offer all parts of UKRI

# Balancing our resources



Our role is to provide communications and engagement support for Councils and for UKRI's vision and mission, cross-cutting themes and strategic priorities.

Our strategic approach to communications and engagement means the most important areas are delivered in the most efficient way. We map our priorities to government objectives, allowing recognition of government investments in our priority areas and in research and innovation more widely. This also allows us to collaborate effectively on research announcements and provide content that supports wider campaigns and projects.

By finding the right balance and tone, we help ensure UKRI can contribute to conversations appropriately and that these contributions are heard and valued.

## How we describe the relationship between UKRI, our Councils and centres and institutes

To ensure that we communicate with a consistent and strong voice, we have developed a brand system that covers our councils, centres, institutes, funded programmes, international offices and beyond. Our system enables us to clearly articulate – both visually through our branding and in writing – the relationship between the different parts of our organisation, and the partners we work with, in the stories that we tell. Our centre and institute logos feature the UKRI identifier, council shape and name, to show the link to our brand family. In writing, when we talk our councils' work, we mention the full council name first, followed by 'part of UK Research and Innovation'. When abbreviating a council name, there is no need to include UKRI in front e.g. UKRI MRC. Our full brand guidelines can be found at [ukri.org/brand](https://ukri.org/brand).

## How we support Councils

The UKRI Communications and Engagement team recognises that our Councils have their own stakeholders and objectives which bring specific communication and engagement needs. Through cross-council communications and engagement networks, an editorial board and our team of business partners, we work proactively to identify these specific requirements. We have introduced a cross-UKRI engagement forum to share intelligence and bring policy issues to the fore.

Our dedicated communications plan for each Council aims to meet their specific strategic needs and integrate with the UKRI communications strategy. See [Annex C](#) for more on how we support Councils.

## How we interact with BEIS and Government

It is important for both UKRI and BEIS to demonstrate the value and relevance of research and innovation, explaining why and how this investment of public funds can benefit individuals, communities and society, as well as businesses and the UK economy.

Working in partnership with the BEIS communications team to share plans and operational information at the earliest opportunity helps to maintain a 'no surprises' approach. We have agreed a set of principles for information-sharing across our teams as part of the UKRI-BEIS ways of working. We also provide a wide range of content for BEIS colleagues including a searchable case-study catalogue.

## How we support UKRI priorities and themes

Our stories bring to life how research and innovation support economic growth and productivity, the richness of our culture, efficient and effective public services and how we are tackling national and global challenges from climate change to levelling up. See page [14](#) for more on our priority areas.

# Evaluation

## Evaluating Communications and Engagement

As communications and engagement professionals, we hold ourselves accountable for our choices and for what we deliver. We are committed to continually reviewing and improving our performance through effective feedback, ensuring evaluation is at the heart of what we do.

We have adopted an approach which seeks *value* from evaluation activity. We promote a pragmatic and proportionate approach and encourage a wide range of evidence measures, including narrative feedback. Evaluation forms one part of our cycle of continuous improvement.



**Insight** helps us understand our audiences and how to reach them, making our work relevant and better targeted.

By focusing on **objectives**, we steer our evaluation towards outcomes rather than activities.

Our on-going **monitoring** ensures we collect the evidence needed for effective evaluation.

By **evaluating**, we transform data and commentaries into actionable intelligence.

Regular **reporting** helps ensure intelligence informs insight-gathering processes and exercises.

Using a range of tools and approaches, we are creating an Evaluation Framework to capture evidence measures, so that we can understand the effectiveness (or otherwise) of activities and develop a rounded picture of our operations. Our Evaluation Framework will be based on the Government Communication Service model.





## UKRI Pride campaign 2020: Promoting equality, diversity and inclusion is at the heart of UKRI's vision.

In June 2020, UKRI demonstrated its ambition to achieve a more diverse and inclusive research and innovation community with its Pride campaign. The campaign demonstrated UKRI's ambition to foster an inclusive, equal and fair research and innovation culture.

UKRI sought opinions on the challenges faced by the LGBTQ+ community in the research and innovation sector and used the insights gained to inform campaign messages. Positive role models from across UKRI were showcased through storytelling in the form of videos and a podcast, offering the perspectives of LGBTQ+ staff members. By promoting this content on social media and on internal communications channels, UKRI openly supported the LGBTQ+ research and innovation community, highlighting and exploring some of their successes and challenges. The campaign was also recognised by the Government Communications Service who asked to feature it in a blog.

The UKRI LGBTQ+ network also ran an event in November focussed on equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in research and innovation. The event featured senior leaders from across UKRI, insights from industry and government organisations and the personal reflections of colleagues across the sector.

The videos and podcast were warmly received, with tweets such as 'well done UKRI' and 'Simply wonderful'.

Since the campaign, a UKRI-wide EDI network has started to form, using Yammer as an internal platform for EDI knowledge and expertise. Although Pride takes place in June, UKRI didn't want this to be just an annual event, so efforts are underway to continue the discussion internally and externally.

# Case study

“ Well done UKRI. Simply wonderful. ”

# Communications priorities 2021/22

**UKRI and its Councils are changing research and innovation to be for everyone and by everyone**

## People and Culture

Celebrate and welcome diversity in UKRI and help open up the R&I system to more people and ideas



**BUILD BACK BETTER**

## COP 26 and Net Zero

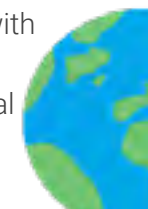
Harness the excitement of COP26 to inspire positive climate action and inform UK climate policy



**BUILD BACK GREENER**

## Global Research and Innovation

Foster an inclusive environment by making it easier for researchers, innovators and businesses to find out how to work in or with the UK, helping the UK become an international partner of choice for R&I



**BUILD BACK FAIRER**

## Impact

Shine a light on the many people involved in research and innovation who collectively help build a stronger, more inclusive, more sustainable and more resilient UK knowledge economy



**BUILD BACK STRONGER**

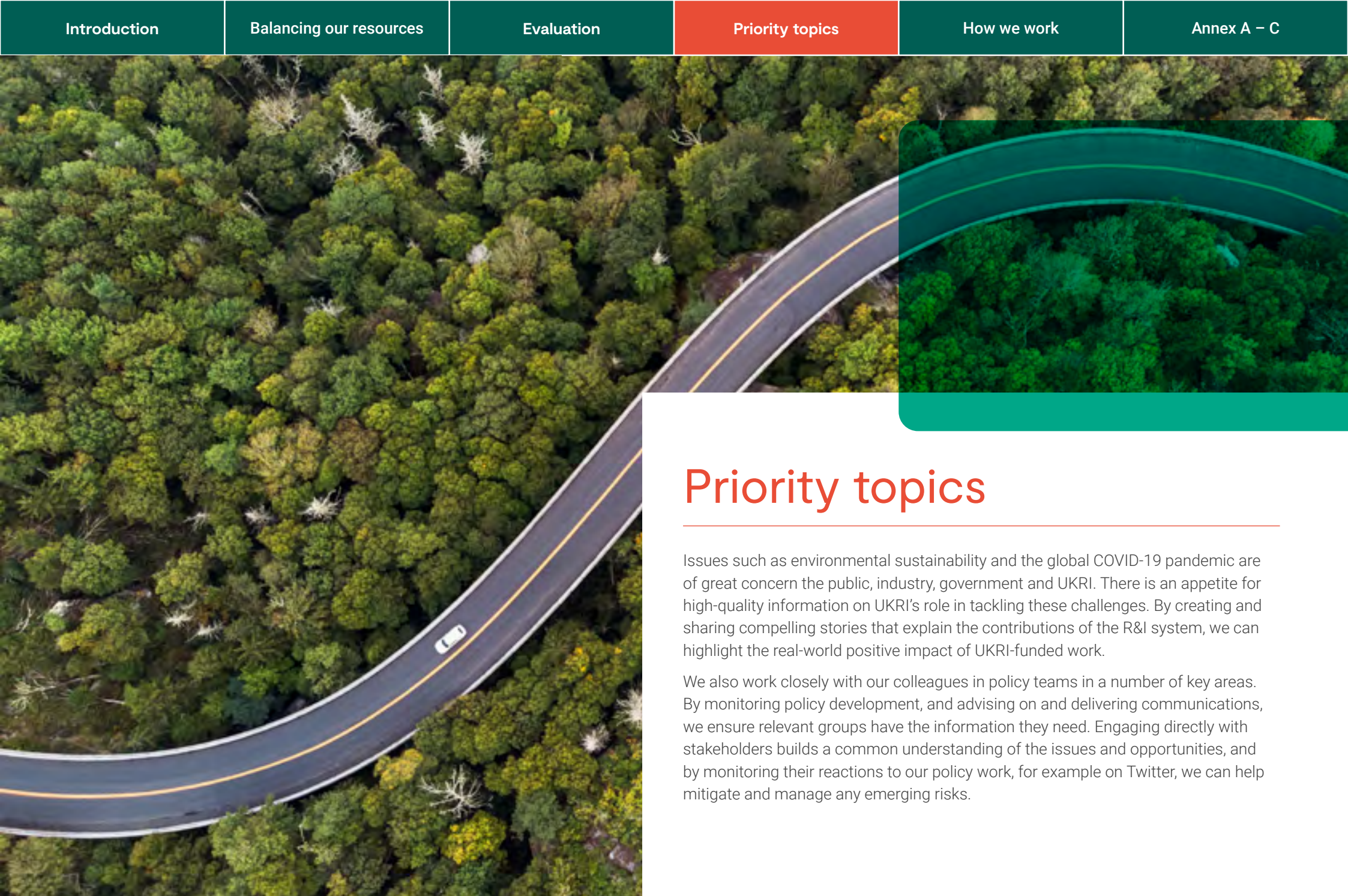
## Covid-19 Recovery

Share stories of the UK's continuing recovery from Covid that help us meet our inclusive ambitions by focusing on people, society, health and the economy



**BEATING COVID & BACKING THE NHS**





## Priority topics

Issues such as environmental sustainability and the global COVID-19 pandemic are of great concern the public, industry, government and UKRI. There is an appetite for high-quality information on UKRI's role in tackling these challenges. By creating and sharing compelling stories that explain the contributions of the R&I system, we can highlight the real-world positive impact of UKRI-funded work.

We also work closely with our colleagues in policy teams in a number of key areas. By monitoring policy development, and advising on and delivering communications, we ensure relevant groups have the information they need. Engaging directly with stakeholders builds a common understanding of the issues and opportunities, and by monitoring their reactions to our policy work, for example on Twitter, we can help mitigate and manage any emerging risks.

## Net Zero and COP26

As an organisation, UKRI cares about sustainability and the environment. For more than 50 years, UKRI and Councils have invested in cutting-edge research and innovation to understand, tackle and mitigate the effects of climate change and embed evidence in decision-making and climate policy. Our research and innovation output will play a critical role in delivering on the UK commitment to reach 'net-zero' carbon emissions as a nation by 2050. By understanding our own impact on the environment and acting upon it, we will ensure research and innovation plays its part in addressing these challenges.

Our communications and engagement work on this priority topic covers Net Zero, COP26 and the [UKRI Environmental Sustainability Strategy](#), and links to the government objective to *Build Back Greener*. It is relevant to Government policymakers, researchers and research enablers, innovators, businesses and public audiences. We will amplify the work of Councils and deliver this in partnership with UKRI institutes, universities, research organisations, businesses, National Academies, BEIS, DEFRA and others.

### UKRI aims

- To help ensure the UK reaches its target of net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and as an organisation contribute to this overall goal by achieving net zero across all our operations and supply chains by 2040.
- To invest in research and innovation that will enable sustainability and clean growth through clean power and clean air, sustainable farming, resilient environments and by eliminating pollution.
- To invest in research and innovation that creates circular, resource efficient economies across whole supply chains and sectors, advances our understanding of the economic importance of biodiversity and drives an expansion in green finance and low carbon services.

### Communication and engagement objectives

To increase public confidence in and support for the UK's net zero carbon emissions target:

- We will share UKRI's commitment to protecting and enhancing the environment across all our investments and operations by highlighting the actions we are taking as a funder and employer.
- We will position UKRI as an essential part of the climate change solution by featuring and promoting UKRI work that has a positive influence on tackling climate change and its impact.
- We will complement the Government's ambitions for *Together for our Planet*, the UK's Year of Climate Action, enabling access to the UK's strong track record in funding research and innovation tackling climate change, and how this bodes well for the future.
- We will create a sense of celebration and positive action in the run up to COP26 by encouraging the R&I community to share stories about the positive impacts of the people and ideas who have ensured we understand and can address and solve climate change challenges.

To increase the number and improve the quality of funding applications relating to sustainability and clean growth:

- We will ensure relevant funding opportunities reach researchers and businesses working in sustainability and clean growth and related fields.
- We will encourage researchers and businesses considering applications by sharing information on UKRI-funded work and researchers and the contribution this is making to cleaner environments and sustainable growth.

To encourage UKRI staff and stakeholder support for and commitment to UKRI's environmental sustainability strategy:

- We will share the positive actions we are taking as a funder and employer, and across our operations, alongside our track record in funding research and innovation that tackles climate change, showing how this equips us for the future.
- We will position UKRI as an essential part of the climate change solution by featuring UKRI work that has a positive influence on tackling climate change and its impact.
- We will celebrate the positive impacts of the people and ideas who have ensured we understand and can address and solve climate change challenges.



## COP26

Research, innovation and partnership underpin the UK's commitment to achieving a net zero economy by 2050, and people across the research and innovation system have new ideas to help us all tackle climate change and live more sustainably.

The UK has a strong track record of investment in the research and innovation required to deliver clean growth, net zero and environmental sustainability, and currently holds a unique position of leadership – Presidency of this year's UN Conference of the Parties (COP) in partnership with Italy – to strengthen global commitment to climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience through international collaboration. In the run up to this, we will use our role as a steward of the research and innovation system to bring our communities together.

### Communications and engagement objectives

We have developed a communications plan for COP26 which has been approved by the COP26 Programme Board.

- To create a sense of celebration and positive action in the run up to COP26 by encouraging the R&I community to share stories about their work to understand, address and solve climate change challenges.
- To inform future policy and position UKRI as an essential part of the climate change solution by identifying and creating opportunities for senior UKRI staff and our research and innovation community advocates to participate in climate change debate and discussion.
- To position UKRI as a positive actor in this space by demonstrating that research and innovation are vital to addressing the challenges of climate change through exhibits at the UK Pavilion and fringe events.
- To inspire and engage individuals by promoting positive climate action through a programme of engagement with public and young people.

Planned activities as part of this plan include: producing dynamic visual content to reach audiences online, working with partners to engage public audiences in Glasgow and liaising with the government's COP26 press unit to secure media coverage.

### Delivering together

To achieve our organisational ambitions around net zero we will look across all parts of UKRI to challenge and change the way we operate and invest.

As the UK's leading public funder of environmental science, NERC champions the importance of generating environmental solutions across disciplines to support the government's ambition for clean growth but all our Councils play key roles in helping us to achieve our net zero ambition.

**A selection of this work is shown on [page 17](#).**



### Working with NERC

- As the UK's leading public funder of environmental science, NERC plays a vital role in enabling understanding and predicting rapid changes in the environment, ensuring the right solutions are developed in the journey towards net zero.
- NERC is pivotal in translating world-leading science into knowledge, expertise and skills to meet the climate agenda and stimulate economic and societal wellbeing.
- NERC enables a vibrant, varied programme of public engagement on environmental science and climate challenges. This engagement not only informs, influences and inspires UK and global communities, but also listens to and learns from their unique perspectives.

### Working with AHRC

- AHRC research responds to society's most pressing questions and has taken the lead in developing the cross-disciplinary field of environmental humanities.
- The arts and humanities provide crucial knowledge and skills that enable society to reflect on the lessons of the past and address the most pressing societal challenges of our times including the move towards net zero.
- AHRC facilitates collaboration between new research partners, which is essential in maintaining the world-leading status of UK arts and humanities research and mobilising it to respond to research agendas, such as the climate challenge, that transcend cultures and geographical boundaries.

### Working with Innovate UK

- Reaching net zero closely aligns with Innovate UK's focus on helping businesses to seize opportunities arising from the global low-carbon economy.
- By promoting Innovate UK's programmes and funding calls that tackle climate change – most notably the Sustainable Innovation Fund, Global Expert Missions, and the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund (ISCF) – we will position UKRI as a key contributor to achieving sustainable growth and a clean environment.
- Several ISCF Challenges relate to clean environment and sustainable growth and their content will be showcased to deliver positive messages of how we are driving clean growth.

### Working with BBSRC

- BBSRC's vision to deliver a healthy, prosperous and sustainable future strongly aligns with COP26.
- This is supported by its focus to promote an understanding of the power of biology to deliver 'greener' energy, materials and other everyday products.

These BBSRC key messages align with, and can be delivered through, our COP26 activities:

- UK bioscience has a central role in creating a greener, circular (bio)economy, helping to meet the UK target of net zero emissions by 2050, through accelerating innovation and delivering sustainable solutions.
- The UK's world-leading bioscience is driving innovation by working in partnership, both nationally and internationally, with industry, policymakers and society to foster collaboration, putting the UK at the forefront of access to new products and therapies.
- Through openness and engagement, we will ensure bioscience can deliver the promise of the bioeconomy for social and economic benefit.



“The people, knowledge, ideas, infrastructure and networks that make up our research and innovation system are the fuel for UK prosperity.

They support economic growth and productivity, the richness of our culture, efficient and effective public services, as well as fostering private investment and tackling national and global challenges from climate change to levelling up. ”

UKRI Corporate Plan 2020-21

## Impact

UKRI has a critical role to play in supporting the flow of people and ideas through the research and innovation system, putting new knowledge to use and catalysing economic impacts and other societal benefits, both through our funding and through the connections we help forge. We need researchers and innovators, businesses and collaborators to continue to attract and foster private sector research and development, driving growth and enhancing economic impact.

### Communication and engagement objectives

To recognise the investment and role of researchers, innovators and partners in generating impact by creating and sharing stories of their contributions to our knowledge-based economy, at the same time attracting a wider diversity of individuals into R&I by showing how the talent and skills in the R&I workforce add value to the UK economy and society. We will:

- Highlight the real-world impact of UKRI-funded research and innovation, making it relatable to a variety of audiences so that a greater diversity of people and organisations can engage with the R&I system.
- Support the UKRI community to tell the story of innovation and impact, empowering and enabling them to take opportunities to engage with diverse audiences.
- Increase the visibility and findability of research and innovation stories by curating and packaging impact-led materials for use across multiple channels, and sharing these with colleagues to use in their own work.
- Increase our catalogue of case studies demonstrating the contribution of R&I to building a strong, sustainable and resilient UK knowledge economy, focusing on the issues that are of the greatest concern to the public, and share these with colleagues in partner organisations.



## Overcoming the challenges of Covid

UKRI communities are playing a vital role in the UK's response to and recovery from the pandemic.

Acting with speed and agility, more than £400 million was invested in more than 1,700 COVID-19 research and innovation projects between the beginning of the pandemic and August 2020 – and these figures have continued to grow. By working collaboratively, researchers, innovators, businesses, government and other funders have a greater opportunity to better understand the disease, find treatments, develop vaccines, and manage the economic and social consequences of the pandemic.

UKRI's position as a steward of the system calls on us to be open about the work we have supported and delivered across our communities. By shining a light on the impact of our investment, we can demonstrate the value of the talented people we employ, fund and collaborate with, and help to inspire high quality applications, foster national and international collaboration, catalyse new activity and help research and innovation shape government policy.



## Communication and engagement objectives

To inspire high quality applications for COVID-19 related projects and increase speed and efficiency in the application process. We will:

- Make new and existing funding opportunities as easy as possible to find and access.
- Explain clearly the end-to-end application process for applicants.
- Share UKRI's strategic priorities for COVID-19 research, stimulating ideas for new research and innovation proposals.

To reassure individuals and build public confidence around the potential for research and innovation to help overcome the pandemic. We will:

- Create and publish compelling stories about successful research and innovation, its outcomes and impact, and promote these to public audiences.
- Enhance our database of case studies with COVID-19 related research stories and ensure our partners and funders are able to access and use these in their own work.
- Produce and share quarterly reports for parliamentary audiences, highlighting progress and achievements in overcoming the pandemic.

To maintain and increase staff awareness of, and pride in, UKRI's contribution to the pandemic we will:

- Convene a COVID-19 communications campaign team which draws on expertise from across the communications and engagement directorate, including communication business partners, international and internal communications teams, web and content teams and external affairs.
- Encourage and equip our colleagues to share information about our COVID-19 research with stakeholders, partners and others, ensuring that our ambitions, activities and achievements are communicated effectively.



## People and Culture

People and Culture encompasses a raft of workstreams from promoting diversity in research to open access, from research integrity to transparency on diversity data. The driving force behind this work is our ambition to steward a system that is 'by everyone, for everyone'.

Communications and engagement will support each workstream to engage with those affected by issues of equality, diversity and inclusion. Work on this will expand as the People and Culture strategy is developed.

### Communication and engagement objectives

To equip everyone in UKRI to recognise and live the values needed to realise our inclusivity ambition, we will:

- Work to address the serious underrepresentation of the BAME community in the research and innovation system in the UK. This priority goal is part of the diversity agenda. We will work with HR on staff engagement; support data teams to communicate our diversity data transparently and clearly; and promote role models in our community.
- Develop tools and resources to support UKRI to reach beyond the people and audiences who already know us well.
- Through 101 Jobs, celebrate the diversity of roles in the R&I system and support Councils in promoting and celebrating their talent schemes.
- Support the Reforming our Business programme to make fundamental changes and significant improvements to the way we work, helping us become an inclusive organisation that welcomes diversity.

## The UK's place in global R&I

The UK is a global partner in research and innovation. Our collaborations around the globe strengthen research, and enable the exchange of ideas, know-how and best practice. Association to Horizon Europe allows our researchers and innovators to collaborate with colleagues across Europe. However, our communities now face considerable change in the international funding landscape.

### Communication and engagement objectives

To help the UK remain an attractive destination for talent and investment. We will:

- Support bi-lateral and multi-lateral partnerships: celebrating excellence in our global work.
- Work across Councils to describe the benefits of the UK for investors, helping to boost inward investment.
- Promote Horizon Europe to domestic researchers and innovators to ensure maximum uptake and ensure value for money for UK tax-payers.
- Highlight international collaborations to all partners and the impact they have on people in the UK and around the world. Help our partners share and celebrate their international collaborations.
- Help international researchers see what it looks like to work in R&I in the UK, and how they can work with the UK from their own base.







# Case study

## Reforming our Business

Informed by our approach to People and Culture, the Reforming our Business (RoB) programme aims to make UKRI's operations simpler and better to the benefit of our staff and our stakeholders with the aim of embedding continuous improvement in all that we do.

The RoB communications and engagement team, along with internal communications, plays a significant role in engaging and communicating internally to drive support and buy-in for programmes and facilitate the adoption of new systems, processes and organisation changes into business as usual activity. The team also oversees engagement and communications externally with our research and innovation communities to encourage the co-creation of solutions for positive system-wide change.

Current projects supported by the communications and engagement team include: Diversity of Outputs and Resume 4 Researchers, 101 Jobs and Future Workspaces.

Reforming our Business projects delivered by the communications and engagement team are:

- **The single UKRI website**
- **The staff portal project – The Source**
- **Evolving the UKRI brand**

### Single UKRI website

This major three-year endeavour seeks to create a highly effective single UKRI website to showcase content from each of the nine councils. Following extensive development and user testing, and working to meet Government Digital Service accessibility standards, we successfully delivered the first phase of the new UKRI website in Autumn 2020. The final phase – transitioning nine existing council sites to the new website – is now underway and on track to complete by the end of 2021. This three-year project was agreed by the UKRI Executive Committee and has formal approval from the BEIS/Government Digital Standards Joint Assurance Group. The website project will improve and modernise our offer to our communities, providing a website that enables UKRI and Councils to have a strong and coherent voice.

The new user-centric website is easy to navigate, well designed and highlights the full breadth of UKRI and council investments, opportunities and stories. The navigation, structure and design of the new site have been developed collaboratively with colleagues and partners to meet business and user needs, ensuring a consistently high level of accessibility and findability across UKRI and Councils' content. It delivers economies of scale in having a single, highly-skilled web team to maintain standards and publish content for all Councils.

UK Research  
and Innovation

# The Source

## Case study

“It’s really nice to hear about previous experience and people’s lives outside of work, particularly in the current climate where we can’t be in the office.

I’m really pleased with The Source and find it so easy to navigate. I’ve managed to find everything that I need so far.

Staff portal ‘The Source’ initial feedback

”

### The staff portal project – The Source

The staff portal project aimed to deliver a new all-staff intranet for UKRI that would support an inclusive workplace, enable us to celebrate our successes more widely and make key information for staff accessible in one click. Launched in November 2020, we have seen wide uptake for The Source and good internal feedback, with around 50% of the staff base actively using the site by the end of 2020, and 83,300 page views in just the first week of go live.

In the first part of 2021, we will complete the transition of content from council intranets to The Source. During this time we will be working with Council transition leads and key stakeholders to ensure that business critical information continues to be made available. We are also on track to introduce a new feature that will enable colleagues to personalise content to meet their individual needs and interests. This project ensures that we have a modern and secure platform that is flexible and fit for purpose.

### Evolving the UKRI brand

This project follows on from the success of our unified UKRI brand, which was launched across all nine Councils in 2019. We delivered a clear and consistent brand identity to give UKRI and the Councils a strong voice within the R&I landscape. We have since created brand resources and assets – including brand photography, motion branding, and further guidelines – to support Councils and teams in applying the brand across their communications activities.

We are now in Phase 3 of the project, extending the roll out to Council centres, units and institutes. This involves engagement with communications and leadership teams to support them with the initial changeover and rollout of the new visual identity and associated assets. On completion of this phase by the end of 2021, we will have delivered the roll out and implementation of the unified brand across the wider UKRI family of more than 400 organisations, including our international offices.



# UKRI Communications and Engagement team – how we work and how to work with us

We deliver relevant, engaging and timely content based on a story-telling approach that aims to make it easy and attractive to interact with us.

We co-ordinate objectives, messages and content in areas of interest and concern, and for organisational priorities. Using a variety of communication channels, from traditional media through to interactive technology, we share information and engage diverse audiences and stakeholder groups in relevant ways. While maintaining a suite of channels, we also develop and access new ways to connect with harder-to-reach audiences.

We use data and insight to better understand our audiences: their interests and influences; behaviours and attitudes; understanding of subject matter; and how they like to share information. This allows us to tailor communications to specific audiences, securing their attention and engagement.

We work closely with colleagues to understand their objectives, enabling us to recommend efficient and effective communications or engagement activities. Our long-term connections with stakeholders help us amplify Council and UKRI content.

We manage UKRI's brand and visual identity, providing guidance, expert support and access to materials so that everyone can easily and accurately represent UKRI.

## Our teams

The Communications and Public Engagement directorate is made up of a number of teams. As a diverse group of communications and engagement professionals, we have a wealth of expertise and experience, and can flex resource where needed.

**The Content team** tells UKRI's research and innovation stories in a compelling way. They create engaging content to deliver our messages, placing it on the most appropriate channels for our audiences: from a live event for MPs or factsheet for BEIS to public-facing Instagram activity. They draw on audience insight to inform decision-making, leading to improvements such as enhanced digital newsletters and refreshed social media channels. They have recently developed a new searchable case study catalogue and asset library.

**The External Communications team** delivers a responsive function that is guided by the priorities of research and innovation in the UK, UKRI and our Councils. As UKRI's press office, the team handles all media enquiries and is responsible for proactive media planning of major UKRI and Council announcements. They play a key role in the management of issues, responding quickly and appropriately both to advise colleagues and to implement responses that provide information that sheds light and not heat on the issue. They work with a number of partners to develop a pipeline of briefings with our funded researchers, ensuring they provide appropriate comments on stories in the news and the coordination of our announcements with government.

**The Web team** is creating, enhancing and maintaining a single website and funding finder for UKRI that provides an efficient, informative and inspiring user journey, reflecting the ambition and scale of UKRI. The site launched in October 2020 and during 2021/22 the team will complete the final phase of the project and transition the nine Council websites to the new site. They support the present Council sites and will transition these using content design and user research, working closely with their Council transition champions resulting in a safe and modern platform that works for all parts of the organisation in the future. They also content design funding opportunities and have introduced a new Helpdesk system to improve efficiency.

**The Internal Communications team** work alongside key stakeholders, including Councils, HR, Finance, DDaT, CEO office and estates, to inform and engage colleagues with regular internal communication activity alongside bespoke campaigns and projects. Our upgraded and modernised communications systems and platforms, which includes the launch of the new staff portal, The Source, means that in 2021 they can be creative with our content, providing more ways to tell stories and share success.

**The External Affairs team** equip and enable UKRI to listen, understand and respond to the views of its research and innovation communities, including parliament, to help support a thriving and inclusive system. They work with Councils and UKRI corporate hub to develop and manage key stakeholders' relationships and shape future policy and strategy. They work closely with Councils' engagement teams and provide co-ordination, ensuring we have a holistic view of engagement across the organisation, spotting opportunities and reducing duplication. They are developing and refining engagement tools and mechanisms to deliver UKRI's vision, improving support and co-ordination of engagement across UKRI and councils, and gathering and effectively sharing insight to shape UKRI's strategy and policy development.

**The Events team** shape an engaging programme of events providing UKRI with a platform to interact with key audiences and showcase UK science, policy and communications. The team work collaboratively with colleagues across the whole of UKRI to develop creative, innovative events, helping them to reach and target audiences in the UK and around the world. The team is working with DDaT to address the need for a strategically consistent centralised approach to virtual event delivery - acting as a gateway for demand and providing event facilitation and additional resources that will support both virtual events and the change to a hybrid event model.

**The International Communications team** promotes UKRI's global portfolio, supporting the UK's international objectives to be a leader in research and innovation and partner of choice for collaboration. With aid budgets tightening and Europe-focussed business and research communities requiring support, this year is critical for honest engagement with our communities, sharing information and showcasing talent.

**The Business Partner team** work closely with Councils to ensure their communication and engagement needs are identified and captured in dedicated communication plans. They build long-term relationships with colleagues in Councils, the corporate hub and the wider communications team to manage successful delivery against these plans, aligning and joining up with cross-UKRI priorities where appropriate to tell both the individual and whole UKRI story. This year they will refresh council communications plans, support corporate hub communications and provide regular evaluation against the objectives in those plans.

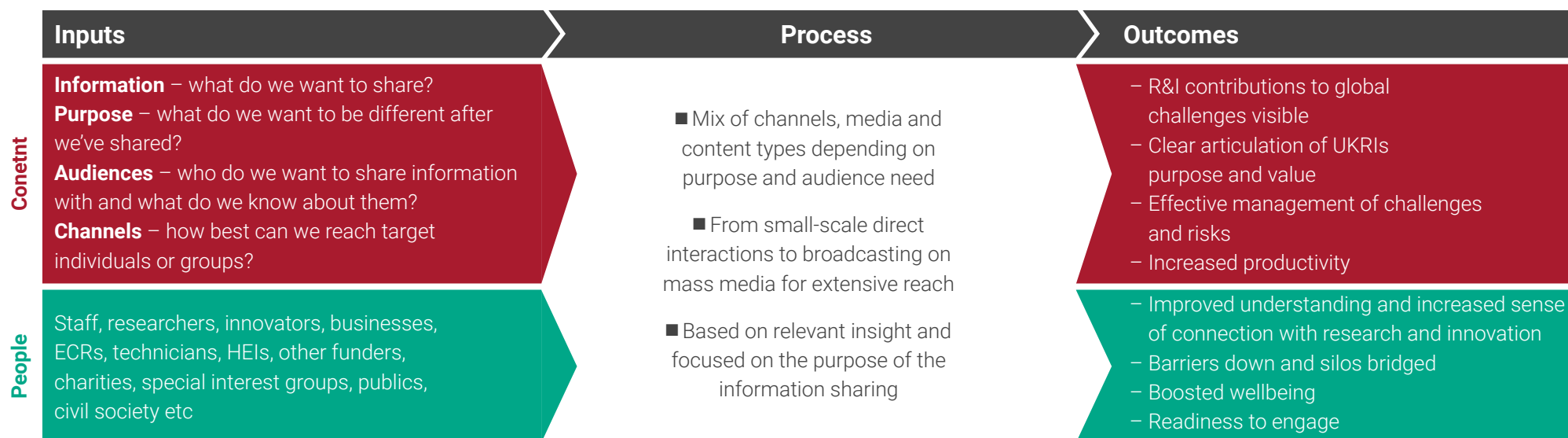
**The Public Engagement team** work across UKRI to develop a strategic approach to the embedding of research and innovation in society. Alongside strategy, the team designs, delivers and manages programmes in three broad areas: public dialogue and public opinion, ensuring UKRI engages with the broadest range of voices; by supporting universities and researchers to involve the wider public in their work; and by funding a wide range of programmes for young people and underrepresented audiences, delivered through museums, festivals, work placements and volunteering opportunities.

**The Strategic Priorities team** provide dedicated communications expertise and resource for UKRI's strategic priorities. They have expert knowledge of themes and topics, and strong relationships with the policy and strategy teams leading them. They support each theme's objectives by collaborating with communication colleagues to create insight-driven, targeted campaigns that produce measurable results. In 2021/22 they are sharing our current and historic research in climate change and the COVID-19 response, communicating EDI and People and Culture policy changes, and promoting the ISCF wave three competitions to encourage high quality first-time applicants.

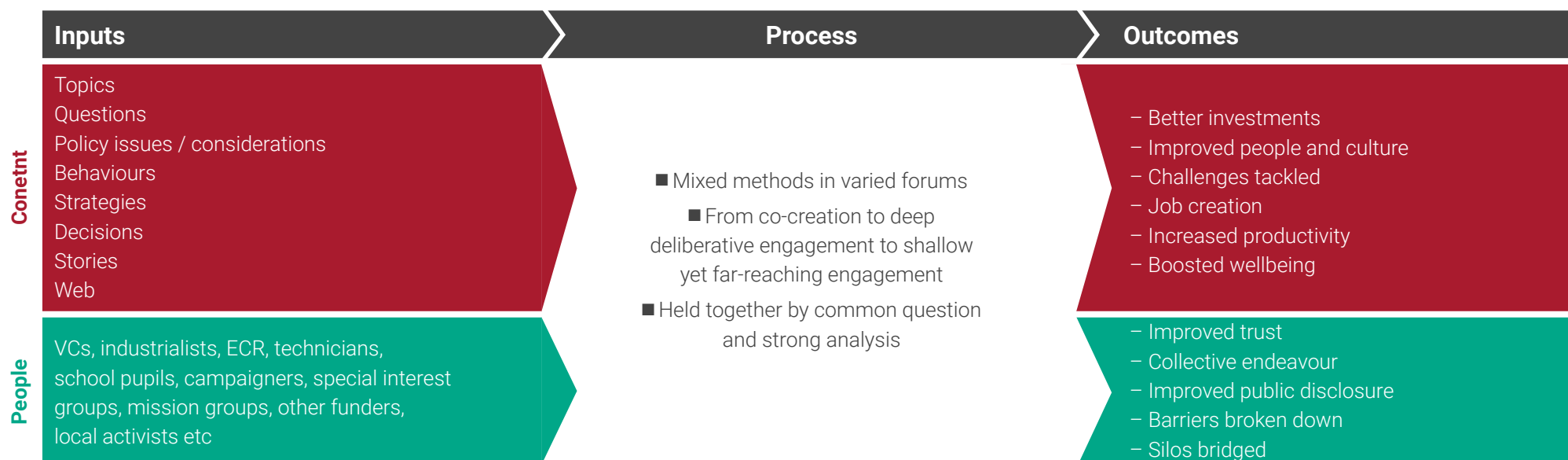
**The Reforming our Business team** work with Council and corporate hub colleagues to create interest and a sense of ownership in the changes necessary to deliver UKRI's vision and mission. They support RoB projects and help build a culture of continuous improvement. Throughout their work, primacy is given to direct engagement, supported by clear, bite size and timely information helping people to successfully adopt changes.

**Professional standards:** our Planning and Operations teams ensure we are well managed and able to provide assurance to senior management, and our Evaluation team works to drive up standards and ensure we are performing at our best.

## Our communication framework:

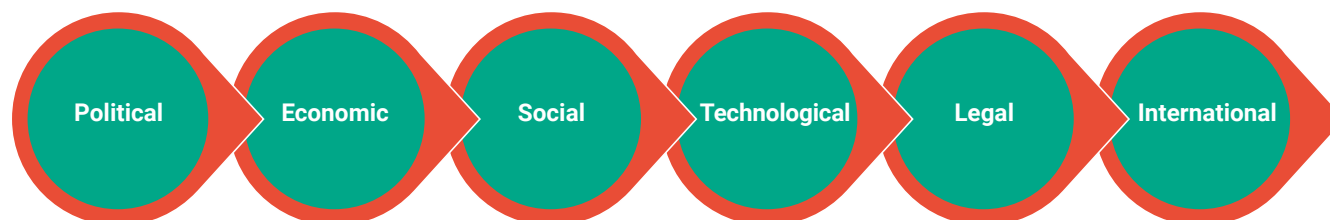


## Our engagement framework:





# Annex A: Analysis of our operating context



## Political

The Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and wider government have an interest in how UKRI delivers value for the taxpayer, grows the economy and improves people's lives.

We share with government colleagues a commitment to evidence-based policy making and would like to see this embedded into a virtuous circle where the need for research and innovation both informs and responds to wider government considerations.

There is a recognised tension between investment in fundamental research and stability for the research and development system, and the need to respond to pressing, short term concerns. These tensions must be balanced to maintain a long-term strategic focus.

## Economic

There are threats and opportunities across the funding landscape for both UKRI and all our stakeholders and partners. The human cost of the pandemic is likely to grow for some time and includes impacts on jobs and livelihoods, as well as physical and mental health.

Pressure on public spending will become more intense and the environment more competitive.

The impact on the jobs market could affect UKRI training and postgraduate programmes; apprenticeships may become a mechanism for addressing areas of skills shortages, bringing new young talent into research and innovation.

## Social

The provision of accurate, timely information, along with transparency of process, including decision making, is now commonly expected from public sector organisations. There needs to be a clear line of sight from funding research to its impact and societal benefits.

The COVID-19 pandemic has raised the profile of the role of research and innovation, with increased public appetite for scientific information [Source: IpsosMORI tracker]. There is now an opportunity to retain and build on this, informing people on research topics and, crucially, the outcomes.

The pandemic has also placed a spotlight on the research process; revealing that disagreement, challenge and a need for interpretation of data are part and parcel of good research. This may need further explanation to retain confidence in the system.

The pace with which COVID-19 vaccines have been developed and rolled out may have created misperceptions about how fast science can deliver – these expectations may need to be managed in the future.

## Technological

The pandemic has had an impact on how research is carried out and disseminated, with changes to open access, open data, infrastructure and skills. The research and innovation community may expect us to consider and respond to the opportunities this has presented.

The democratisation and pace of communications grows with the increasing number of ways people access information (14 different channels were cited as sources of information about UKRI [Source: RepTrak survey], for example). However, the likelihood of – and risks from – misinformation are also widely accepted to have increased. An analysis of 69 studies in this area suggests the highest prevalence of health misinformation is found on microblogging platforms, such as Twitter, and media sharing platforms, such as YouTube [Source: Journal of Medical Internet Research].

The skills shortages in some areas of research and innovation must be addressed, and attracting more, new talent into the research and development sector will be crucial.

## Legal

Governance in a fast decision-making environment requires agility and flexibility, with continuous improvement built into the process to ensure stable ways of changing.

Constitutional change creates challenges; leaving the EU is impacting freedom of movement and the availability of international partners and collaborators. The direction of government legislation following EU Exit will be an important driver of change. Keeping the R&I community abreast of developments and how these impact policy or funding will be a priority.

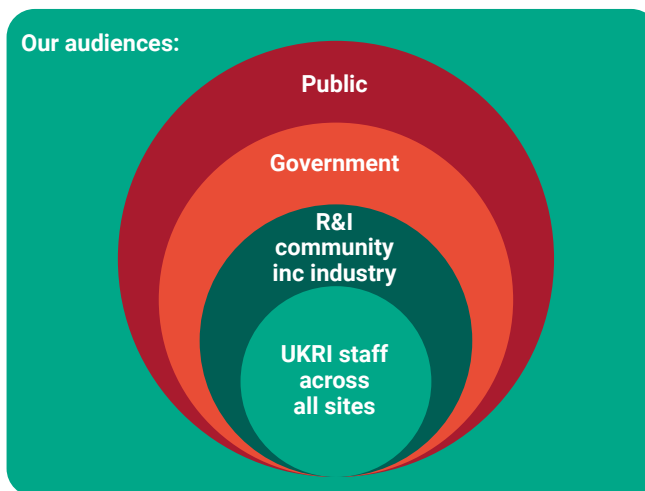
## International

The need for new relationships with Europe and global collaboration further afield has never been more pressing, but the impact of the pandemic places uncertainty on funding and partners.

To position our Councils as a research partner of choice internationally, we must have the agility to respond to opportunity quickly. Our communications channels and engagement networks can play a key role.

It is important Councils continue to have the mandate to work internationally to ensure research rigour and to maintain an international outlook.

# Annex B: Our audiences



## Our staff

Our most valuable asset – our staff are responsive and adaptable to the needs of the organisation. We know that staff want to be listened to and feel valued, and to feel empowered with the latest information and news, wherever they work, be it remotely or in our offices and labs around the UK and internationally. This means we not only need to ensure everyone is well informed but also involved and inspired, particularly as we emerge from the pandemic and help the UK recover.

## The R&I community

This includes a range of stakeholder organisations across the UK, from universities and their umbrella organisations to industry and trade associations, that have an interest in seeing UKRI and the wider R&I

system succeed. Regular stakeholder conversations have shown us that these organisations want us to develop a clearer value proposition and present more opportunities for collaboration and partnership.

When UKRI was established, it was seen as too opaque by many leaders in universities and research organisations, who wanted more transparency in our decision-making. Different sections of the R&I community, including researchers and postgraduate students from ethnic minorities have also challenged us. This demands of us better listening skills and the commitment to respond in an appropriate and timely fashion.

## Business

From multinationals to start-ups, businesses across the UK can benefit from UKRI's funding and services but need to know how to access them. Innovate UK's 2020 customer survey showed that, while it was regarded as the first port of call for innovation support for those businesses it engaged with regularly, awareness levels remain static. Innovate UK's proposed Prepare to Innovate business engagement plan aims to drive awareness among relevant companies across the UK.

## Government

As a public body, we update our sponsor department, BEIS, regularly and ensure other government departments are aware of our work and opportunities for collaboration. A 2020 study conducted by Echo



Research found only 38% of MPs surveyed were aware of UKRI. Raising awareness among BEIS, government departments and MPs of our work and its benefits for their constituents and the UK is a priority area.

## Public

UKRI seeks to create a research and innovation system that is open to all. We want to involve members of the public in decisions and listen to their concerns and ideas. According to a 2020 study we commissioned from Ipsos MORI on the effects of the pandemic, the UK public has a positive disposition towards science and scientists, and this carries through to the role of scientists in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. However, this positivity is not spread evenly across different demographic groups, highlighting important challenges.

Three linked surveys conducted by the Reputation Institute in 2020 showed that UKRI's reputation among public audiences follows the public sector as a whole, with an improvement mid-year followed by a return to pre-pandemic levels by the end of the year. Although reputation is still strong, a request for more openness and transparency remains a continuing theme.



# Annex C: Council Communication Plans

The Councils are central to the success and effectiveness of UKRI, and for the delivery of UKRI-wide initiatives and priorities (see Priority topics section).

Each Council has its own communications and engagement needs specific to its work. Alongside this, we have worked with Council leadership teams to establish their priority requirements. A summary of each is provided here (the full documents are available on The Source) and current plans will be reviewed.





## Arts and Humanities Research Council

AHRC funds research across the humanities and the creative and performing arts. This research provides economic, social and cultural benefits to the UK, and contributes to the culture and welfare of societies around the globe. It enables cultural participation, addresses contemporary social challenges, and helps to rebuild a stronger economy and a more cohesive society.

### Communications and engagement objectives

To showcase the value and contribution of AHRC's funded research to the recovery and growth of the cultural and creative economy. We will:

- Share AHRC research-impact stories with relevant audiences in government and the creative sector to help AHRC make the case for funding research that grows the creative industries and drives collaboration between researchers and the creative industries.

To highlight how collaboration between AHRC's funded research and cultural institutions supports the heritage economy and makes culture accessible to diverse audiences. We will:

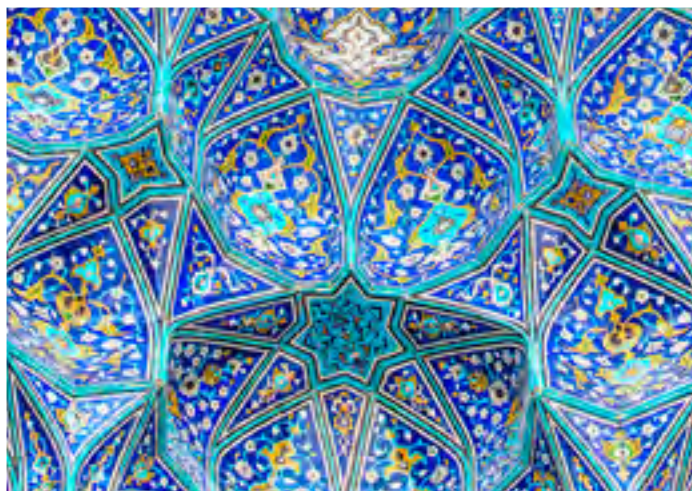
- Support AHRC's drive for collaboration between arts and humanities researchers and the cultural and heritage sectors by improving awareness of the value of research to cultural-sector leaders and decision makers, including those in the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport and the museums sector.

To demonstrate the essential role of AHRC's funded research in tackling major contemporary challenges. We will:

- Establish the contribution of arts and humanities research in healing divisions and uniting communities by sharing AHRC research-impact stories on issues such as modern slavery, mental health, artificial intelligence, climate change, equality and diversity, and COVID-19. Much of this will be delivered as part of UKRI wide campaigns, ensuring arts and humanities are part of the UKRI story.

To position AHRC as a funder that supports its communities throughout the research journey and at every career stage, creating the best possible context for arts and humanities research to thrive now and in the future. We will:

- Help AHRC establish a strong pipeline of world-leading arts and humanities researchers applying for funding by showcasing its long-term commitment to supporting them.







## Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council

Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council

BBSRC pushes back the frontiers of biology to deliver a healthy, prosperous and sustainable future; rooted in an understanding that the power of biology impacts on our lives, from the provision of safe and nutritious food, new pharmaceuticals and better health, to 'greener' energy, materials and other everyday products.

### Communications and engagement objectives

To demonstrate the value and potential for bioscience to address major societal challenges, including helping to meet the challenge of Covid and the UK Government's target of net-zero by 2050.

- We will highlight the role of UK bioscience in growing a sustainable, balanced economy for the future and in meeting the social and environmental challenges of the coming decades by using BBSRC impact case studies in our COP26 communications campaign and positioning BBSRC as a trusted voice through its active research projects in response to the pandemic.
- We will ensure bioscientists are aware of BBSRC's long-term, strategic vision and the funding available to tackle the biggest challenges facing industry and society, for example the Bacterial Plant Pathogens SPF programme, the SPF Food Systems Programme and the SPF Greenhouse Gas Removal Demonstrators in conjunction with NERC.

To showcase the frontiers of bioscience, and BBSRC's role in championing discovery-led research, to demonstrate the importance and impact of the long-term investment in fundamental biosciences research.

- We will promote advances in bioscience which push the boundaries of knowledge and deliver important discoveries with a range of potential applications such as the Strategic Longer and Larger grants: Frontier bioscience 2020/21.

To demonstrate the role of the biosciences in the development of new tools, technologies and approaches, highlighting how these help to push the boundaries of bioscience discovery and stimulate innovation.

- We will support BBSRC's ambition to drive bioscience innovation by ensuring key outputs and publications reach target audiences in industry, policy and wider society.
- We will support BBSRC's drive to inspire the next generation of citizens and scientists and ensure society and the economy has access to the right skills for the future, by featuring bioscience-related roles in our 101 Voices project.

To continue to position the UK as a global partner of choice in the biosciences, highlighting how collaboration is essential to the success of UK bioscience in order to develop new knowledge, ideas and talent.

- We will champion bioscience innovation by building on our strong foundations with industry, policymakers and society whilst fostering collaboration between research users and the international science community, linked to wider 'build back better' objectives.







Economic  
and Social  
Research Council

## Economic and Social Research Council

ESRC is the UK's largest funder of research on the social and economic questions facing us today. This research shapes public policy and contributes to making the economy more competitive, as well as helping to improve quality of life and giving people a better understanding of 21st century society.

### Communications and engagement objectives

To demonstrate ESRC's role in meeting today's major opportunities and challenges and informing advances in science and technology, drawing on our understanding of society and how it helps identify both the need for improved public policy and services and the possibilities these bring. We will:

- Focus our communications efforts on sharing research outcomes that improve understanding of populations, thus helping to build more secure, resilient and connected communities.

To demonstrate the ability of social science research to address major societal challenges and have a positive influence on the development and delivery of effective public policy and services. We will:

- Show how social science can unlock the full potential of research and technological advances, for example through the work of the UK Centre for Evidence Implementation in Adult Social Care.
- Provide examples of how social science can generate innovations across all sectors, for example through the Celebrating Impact Prize.

- Develop and oversee delivery of stories, case studies and content that illustrates the role social science research has in informing trade negotiations and relations activity.

To demonstrate how ESRC is enabling a more competitive, better regulated, better financed, more highly-skilled economy. We will show how ESRC investments:

- Improve productivity and transform working lives, for example through the Productivity Research Programme
- Help society respond, recover and reset throughout the pandemic through highlighting outcomes from Covid19 funded research.







Engineering and  
Physical Sciences  
Research Council

## Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council

EPSRC invests in world-leading research and postgraduate training across the engineering and physical sciences. This research builds the knowledge and skills

base needed to address scientific and technological challenges and provides a platform for future UK prosperity by contributing to a healthy, connected, resilient, productive nation.

### Communications and engagement objectives

To showcase EPSRC investments that are building a highly-skilled UK workforce, tackling global challenges and underpinning the science research base, enabling EPSRC's profile to be synonymous with fundamental, discovery science. We will:

- Identify and share stories and case studies that show how long-term EPSRC investments in fundamental science provide the foundations for research outputs and impact across UKRI and build long-term capability for our world-class UK research base.
- Establish the connection between EPSRC investments in people, training and skills and the UK's need for a numerate, highly-skilled workforce to drive the innovation landscape.
- Make colleagues across UKRI and further afield aware of EPSRC's links and partnerships with businesses and the value that flows from these.

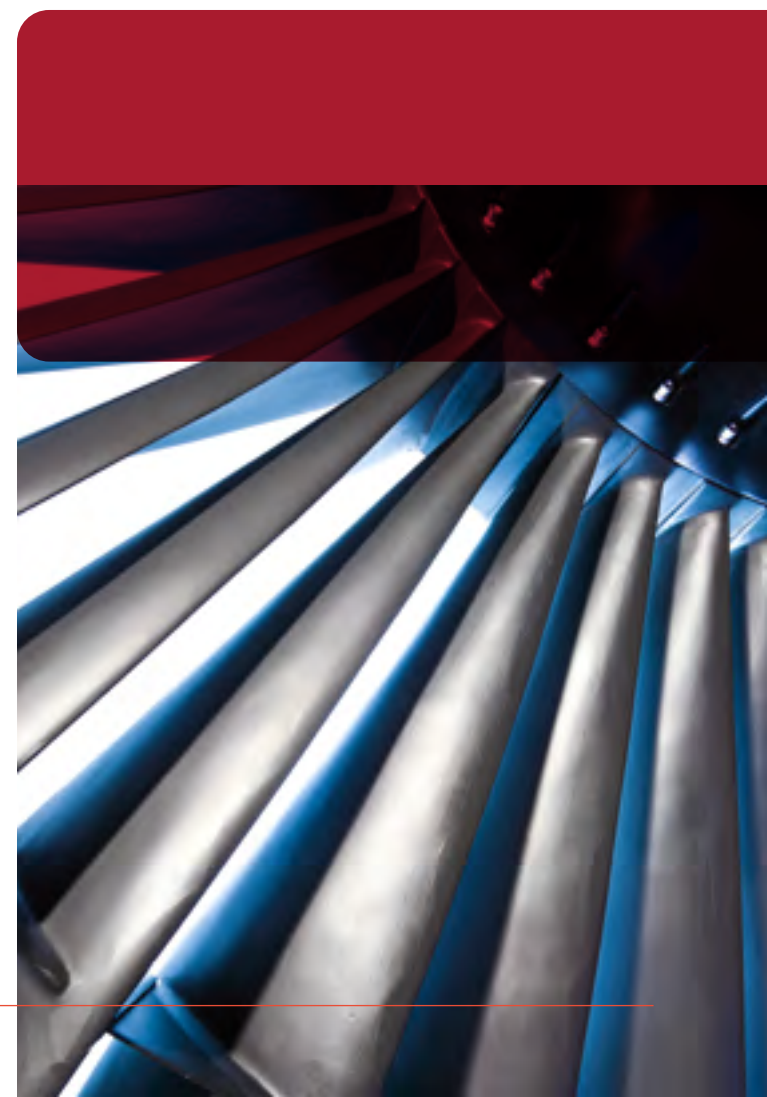
To ensure that funding opportunities, policy changes and new schemes have a communications approach in place, with key milestones having appropriate platforms to demonstrate the UK's position as a world-leader in engineering and physical sciences. We will:

- Work with communications colleagues in EPSRC institutes such as Rosalind Franklin, Alan Turing and Henry Royce to:
- Agree approaches for collaborative activities that promote EPSRC investments and amplify stories to EPSRC communities, focusing on people as well as projects.
- Scope institute-led events for senior EPSRC representation, identifying profile raising opportunities and ensuring that EPSRC is visible in communications activities.
- Gather evidence and materials, including case studies, that can be distributed to EPSRC colleagues and used for new content.

To bring EPSRC investments to life, promoting the importance of continued investment in fundamental science and highlighting the economic and societal impact of these investments on the global stage. We will:

- Increase awareness of EPSRC-funded research in fields such as mathematical sciences, information and communications technologies and the physical sciences that enables the UK to prepare and adapt for a secure, safe and sustainable future.

- Highlight how new ideas from engineering and physical sciences drive the technologies on which a net-zero economy will be based.
- Showcase EPSRC's work with multinational companies, demonstrating the value they bring by facilitating research collaborations that lead to improved technologies and new products.





Medical  
Research  
Council

## Medical Research Council

MRC is at the forefront of scientific discovery to improve human health. Its scientists and clinical professionals tackle the greatest health problems facing humanity in the 21st century, from the

rising tide of chronic diseases associated with ageing to developing new medicines to treat rare genetic disorders. It funds research to treat and prevent disease, advancing health worldwide.

### Communications and engagement objectives

To demonstrate how sustained long-term investment in knowledge-building and expertise-development achieves a wide range of societal, economic and patient benefits. We will:

- Showcase achievements across MRC's portfolio, for example how world-class medical research improves pandemic preparedness and health, ageing and wellbeing; and how the nurturing of emerging technologies will support the development of new advanced therapies and their underpinning enabling technologies.

To promote MRC research and training careers activity and champion competitive career paths, particularly among technologists, interdisciplinary scientists and under-represented groups. We will:

- Develop content for MRC engagement with charities, academia, industry and the NHS.

To raise awareness of MRC's role in fostering collaboration; its technologies, infrastructure and support services; and the impact of MRC-led and MRC-supported global initiatives. We will:

- Develop content that demonstrates MRC's role in facilitating increased connections between researchers to address key societal issues.
- Raise awareness of existing and new MRC technologies, infrastructure and support services.
- Showcase MRC's leadership in international partnerships that enhance the competitiveness of the UK and bring additional inward investment to the UK science base.

To demonstrate how MRC partners with industry and plays a leading and catalytic role in the evolution of the translational ecosystem. We will:

- Promote opportunities and content that raises the profile of MRC's work with industry.
- Promote opportunities and content that showcase how MRC translational activity fosters a positive change in UK research culture, catalyses innovative partnerships between the public and private sector and realises benefits for patients.

To raise awareness of the need for increased partnerships to address new research requirements, particularly across charities, universities, the NHS and industry. We will:

- Promote the benefits and impacts of partnership working.

To provide communications planning and content support for stakeholder engagement strategies and projects. We will:

- Work with MRC's engagement team to build a strong sense of community and belonging for those MRC funds and to inform strategy development.





## Natural Environment Research Council

NERC is the UK's leading public investor in environmental science. Its world-class research, skills and infrastructure solve major global issues such as the climate crisis and plastic pollution, and bring benefits to the UK, such as affordable clean energy, sustainable agriculture, clean air, and resilience. Working with its research centres, higher education institutions (HEIs), government, civil society and business, NERC shapes the direction of environmental research and innovation.

### Communications and engagement objectives

To increase awareness of NERC's evolving role as an organisation committed to sustainability and pursuing the highest standards of equality, diversity and inclusion – in turn attracting and inspiring talent across the UK research community. We will:

- Help raise NERC's profile and awareness of its contributions through a range of channels, increasing understanding among research and partner communities of NERC's evolving role, culture and behaviours.

To position NERC as the leading UK public investor in environmental science, working with researchers, institutions, government and industry to mitigate environmental impacts and drive a greener, more sustainable, economic recovery. We will:

- Seek to place content, in a variety of outlets from traditional media, opinion pieces and blogs, and to integrate NERC's key messages in partner communications and BEIS communications activities, leading to increased awareness among UKRI/NERC communities of NERC's mission, objectives and funding activities.

To demonstrate how NERC achieves real-world impact, providing new solutions to complex environmental challenges while supporting global environmental initiatives, such as those defined by COP26, the World Economic Forum and the shared ambition to achieve Net-Zero economies. We will:

- Place success stories in traditional news and social media channels and provide appropriate content to digital marketing campaigns, leading to increased positive media coverage, increased awareness of NERC's role in stakeholder communities, and increased engagement on digital channels.





Science and  
Technology  
Facilities Council

## Science and Technology Facilities Council

STFC is a world-leading multi-disciplinary science organisation. Its research seeks to understand the Universe from the largest astronomical scales to the tiniest constituents of matter, and creates impact on a very tangible, human scale.

### Communications and engagement objectives

To demonstrate to key stakeholders in Government and the public the benefits of STFC science, technology and innovation. We will:

- Show how STFC's expertise in leading research, and in building and supporting diverse innovation communities, provides a unique ecosystem to develop successful solutions.
- Provide channels where STFC researchers and facilities can demonstrate how their work impacts everyday life through new and improved products and better health outcomes.
- To position national laboratories and international facilities as centres of excellence. We will:
  - Communicate the contribution of highly-skilled employees and the researchers, reinforcing STFC's importance as a global science partner.
  - Promote collaborations and STFC's potential to be a partner of choice on a global scale, in turn enhancing the UK's reputation and influence.

To articulate opportunities, outcomes and benefits of collaborating with STFC to maximise the reach and impact of its commercial facilities, research and centres. We will:

- Use evidence-based examples to highlight successful collaborations across STFC's portfolio and partners.
- Highlight the benefits of investment and partnership to local economies across the UK.

To amplify opportunities from across UKRI to the community, advancing world leading research and training, and helping the UK to retain a strong pipeline of skills. We will:

- Help promote STFC's public engagement programmes which include a range of hands-on activities with schools and the general public, citizen-science projects and grant-funded public engagement programmes.
- Promote the work of STFC people externally.

To champion Equality, Diversity and Inclusion across all communications, strengthening STFC recruitment and retention. We will:

- Improve the effectiveness of STFC's integrated internal communications programme, ensuring all activities seek to reflect the diversity of the community that funds its work and demonstrate the breadth of its research and technology programmes.



Innovate  
UK

## Innovate UK

Innovate UK drives productivity and economic growth by supporting businesses to develop and realise the potential of new ideas, including those from the UK's world-class research base.

They connect businesses across all sectors to the partners, customers and investors that can help them turn these ideas into commercially successful products and services, and business growth.

### Communications and engagement objectives

To position the UK as global leader in innovation, and one of the very best places in the world for businesses to grow and deliver sustainable economic and societal benefit, by promoting the value and impact of investments to key national and international stakeholders, including the public.

- We will provide a voice for businesses to tell their success stories through video, traditional media, digital campaigns, events and targeted briefing, securing positive traditional and social media coverage and additional funding.

To support the delivery of outstanding business innovation in an ecosystem that is agile, inclusive, and easy to navigate to ensure UK businesses recognise and access the right investment and collaboration opportunities at the right time. We will

- use digital marketing to provide clear signposting, early notification, and simple roadmaps for funding, increasing the number and quality of eligible applications.

To increase awareness and understanding of the importance of UK innovation and Innovate UK's unique role, to incentivise innovation and inspire a wider, more diverse business audience to apply for funding, in turn increasing the overall quality of applications We will:

- deliver targeted digital campaigns, trade media and events, increasing applications from new businesses.

To promote investment opportunities in talent and skills, and the importance of the transfer of skills and knowledge between university research and business innovation.

- We will support partnership communications campaigns, with universities and UKRI councils, and digital marketing campaigns that focus on the people behind the innovation, increasing awareness of programmes that enable skills and knowledge transfer such as Catalysts and Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs).

To promote the work of business-led initiatives that drive forward emerging technologies and opportunities for technology transfer. We will:

- work in partnership with the Catapult Network and UKRI Councils to showcase success stories, digital campaigns and traditional media, increasing awareness of programmes such as Catapults.

To help position Innovate UK as a leader of equality, diversity and inclusion in business innovation. We will:

- support Innovate UK's continuing promotion of the Women and Innovation and Young Innovators campaigns to inspire the next generation, create authentic, relatable, diverse role models and challenge perceptions of innovators and entrepreneurs, leading to greater diversity in applications.





Research  
England

## Research England

RE creates and sustains the conditions for a healthy and dynamic research and knowledge exchange system in universities in England. This system works to complement similar systems across the Devolved Administrations, to ensure, as practicably as possible, system wide approaches are identified and implemented.

RE is driving the transformation in university capacity and capability that will deliver the Government's target of 2.4% of GDP investment in R&D by 2027.

### Communications and engagement objectives

To demonstrate that government investments in university research and knowledge exchange represent the best value for public money. We will:

- Provide evidence of accountability through examples of research excellence that support national policy and priorities.
- Promote the outcomes from REF2021 and the first iteration Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF) to provide examples of the impacts of investment in research and knowledge exchange.

To demonstrate the effectiveness of RE's funding and policy approaches in supporting excellence, building capacity and sustaining capability in the higher education (HE) sector, and the resultant impacts on the economy and society, national agendas and global challenges. We will:

- Develop case studies that highlight the funding and policy approaches of RE and align with and support UKRI's overarching themes, priorities and narrative.
- Raise awareness of the distinctive role of RE within UKRI, showcasing the contribution RE makes as part of the balanced funding mechanism and its role in supporting a vibrant and successful research and innovation system across the English HE sector.

To articulate opportunities for partnership working and its anticipated benefits to HE sector research, innovation and teaching. We will:

- Highlight joint funding and policy approaches that address shared priorities and showcase the impacts and outcomes.
- Promote competitive funding opportunities via the Funding Finder on UKRI's website and highlight joint funding opportunities with other bodies; and publicise the allocation of funding to successful projects.

## Find out more and get in touch

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To learn more about the work we do and how to contact us:

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[www.ukri.org](http://www.ukri.org)



**UK Research  
and Innovation**