

SPE Environmental Policy Pitch 2023

Outline

For this year's policy pitch competition, students are tasked with suggesting an environmental policy that could be implemented by the UK's central government to simultaneously reduce greenhouse gas emissions and tackle the cost-of-living crisis.

Context

The UK has a legal target to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions¹ by 2050 but [a progress report](#) from the UK government's official climate change advisors in summer 2022 highlighted that there are "important policy gaps" in the UK's strategy to actually achieve this. The government will therefore need to implement new policy initiatives across different sectors of the economy if the UK is to reach net zero emissions. In the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine the UK (like other countries) is facing what is often referred to as a cost-of-living crisis. During 2022 inflation went over 10% and the cost of energy soared, with wages lagging behind such price rises. This means there is an ongoing squeeze on living standards with individuals and families (particularly those on lower incomes) facing significantly reduced 'real' incomes (adjusted for inflation and after taxes and benefits).

The UK government has also faced challenges with its public finances, with a series of planned restrictions on public spending announced in [autumn 2022](#). The UK government provided significant subsidy support for the cost of energy for consumers and businesses during the autumn and winter of 2022, with further support ([on a reduced basis](#)) to be provided from April 2023 onwards.

Guidance for the policy pitches

Policy pitches should:

- Be implementable by the UK government in the future (e.g. not something which the UK government already does).
- Be potentially *politically* acceptable, and technologically and economically feasible.
- Contribute to both reducing carbon emissions and tackling the cost-of-living crisis. The focus can be more on one of these challenges but there has to be some consideration of both (e.g. a climate scheme which increases living costs for people on lower incomes or an economic support package which pushes up greenhouse gas emissions will not be appropriate).
- EITHER be based on an original policy idea OR a policy scheme which is in place in another country which could be adopted in the UK.

Criteria for Judging

- Originality and inventiveness (this can include successfully identifying a policy from another country which can be adapted for the UK).
- Detail of the research and effective use of evidence.

¹ Cutting greenhouse gas emissions to as close to zero as possible, with any remaining emissions re-absorbed from the atmosphere, by oceans and forests for instance.

- Feasibility of implementation (e.g. provide some reflection the costs of your policy and potential political challenges of implementing it).
- A compelling and convincing presentation.

Resources

<https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainers/cost-living-crisis>

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/>

<https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/2022-progress-report-to-parliament/>

<https://environment.inparliament.uk/publications>

<https://www.ukonward.com/reports/emergency-response-energy-crisis/>

<https://www.ippr.org/research/publications/spending-and-stability>

<https://greenallianceblog.org.uk/2022/12/02/too-many-people-are-suffering-in-cold-homes-when-the-solutions-are-clear/>

<https://policyexchange.org.uk/publication/turning-it-on-off/>

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/Global/CitizensAdvice/Energy/Insulation%20Nation.pdf>

<https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/publications/rising-energy-bills>

<https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/help-today-squeeze-tomorrow/>