

SPE Policy Pitch 2024

Outline

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

Context

The UK has a legal target to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions¹ by 2050 but it will need to implement new policy initiatives across different sectors of the economy if it is to achieve this. 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 ballooned above 10 per cent and remains in excess of 6 per cent as 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). Moreover, the productivity of the UK economy has been stagnating. While fears of a deep recession have subsided, growth is forecast to remain minimal and to lag behind that of other major economies for the next few years. The current UK government has responded by diluting climate policy and jeopardising its legally binding 2050 net zero target. The Committee on Climate Change in October 2023 highlighted that there is a "substantial policy gap to the UK's 2030 goal" of a 68 per cent emissions reduction and that recent changes in policy direction have created "widespread uncertainty for consumers and supply chains". There will be a general election by January 2025, and the run up to this provides an opportunity for the government and opposition parties to set out how they will address these gaps.

Guidance for the Policy Pitches

Policy pitches should:

- Be additional (e.g not something which the UK government already does) and implementable by the UK government.
- Contribute to both reducing carbon emissions and tackling the cost-of-living and low-productivity crises. 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

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.

- Originality and inventiveness (this can include identifying a policy from another country which can be adapted for the UK).
- Detail of the research and effective use of evidence.
- 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://www.theccc.org.uk/2023/10/12/ccc-assessment-of-recent-announcements-and-developments-on-net-zero/>