



# ACCESS

# Scoping Report

Innovative Economic Solutions and  
Alternatives

Contribution to scoping future UKRI Social  
Science Interdisciplinary Research

ACCESS Scoping Team

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University  
of Exeter



UNIVERSITY OF  
SURREY

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# SUMMARY REPORT

## Introduction

A key objective of the ACCESS programme is to ‘contribute to scoping future transformative social science and interdisciplinary research within the area of climate and environment that draws on diverse stakeholder perspectives to ensure strategic research outcomes that make a difference’.

As part of this objective ACCESS is providing input into the Economic and Social Research Council’s (ESRC) environmental priorities. The first scoping activities were carried out by the ACCESS Scoping Team for the ESRC in the spring and summer of 2022. (See [ACCESS Contributions to Scoping Future UKRI Social Science and Interdisciplinary Research. Phase I and Phase II Combined Report - December 2022 - University of Surrey](#)).

‘Innovative Economic Solutions and Alternatives’ was identified by the ESRC in 2022 as a potential theme for future funding. This document reports the findings of a second set of scoping activities conducted by ACCESS that explored the ‘Innovative Economic Solutions and Alternatives’ theme further.

The aim of this exercise has been to scope current perspectives and understandings from a range of stakeholders on the theme with a view to helping inform and shape a potential future funding opportunity. ACCESS prepared an outline description of the research theme (outlined in Annex A), which was consulted upon.

The scoping process involved three sets of activities. Details of these can be found in the Appendix B:

1. Desktop Research. To provide context we undertook a rapid survey of relevant literature.
2. On-line Survey. To capture perceptions of the topic among the ACCESS partnership and wider ACCESS network and from the ESRC associated networks. The survey went live on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023, 47 complete responses were analysed. Most participants (71%) were academics and the most frequent professional affiliation was ‘Policy’ (16%).
3. On-line Discussions. To provide a greater depth of perspectives we held two on-line Discussions. Participants (n=6) in the first discussion group were invited as they worked in the area of environmental economics. Participants for the second (n=5) represented a wider field, including researchers and research users. During both discussions participants were asked to reflect on: the objectives of the proposed theme; what was missing; how it was framed; whether there were any gaps; and what specific research questions or requirements they would like to see included in a potential funding opportunity.

The findings of each of these activities are combined here to explore:

1. Initial responses to the outline description of the theme

2. Perspectives on what is missing from the text
3. Suggestions for specific themes and research questions
4. Any wider recommendations and suggestions

The findings and recommendations presented in this report reflect the perspectives of the people who participated in the discussions and the survey. It should be noted that they may not necessarily reflect those of the wider research community.

## Responses to the outline theme

The Survey results highlighted that respondents thought that the topic itself was valuable (80% agreed). Moreover, 74% of respondents agreed that the topic would generate innovative and impactful research. However, they appeared less convinced that it would support strong co-production approaches (64% agreed), produce new methods (51%) or new theories (44%).

Participants often called for the need for co-creation and co-production in developing effective solutions, the importance of interdisciplinarity, and for generating practical solutions to challenging problems. Reflecting different perspectives within academic economics and related disciplines (see Appendix C) the survey results captured a range of different perspectives ranging from calls for pragmatic, implemental solutions to calls for more radical transformative perspectives.

Those suggesting a more 'practical' approach were more likely to call for greater evidence needs to: 1) explore and test pragmatic feasible and politically achievable solutions; 2) to work within existing economic frameworks to ensure acceptance from policymakers, businesses, and other economists; and 3) to provide practical suggestions that align with mainstream economic thinking that have direct impact on shaping policies and guiding real-world decision-making.

Those advocating for a more 'radical' approach were more likely to call for more research into: 1) the transformative changes that are necessary to address the root causes of sustainable transitions effectively; 2) more radical actions to stay within planetary boundaries and avoid crossing critical ecological thresholds; 3) sustainability efforts that address systemic inequalities and consider the well-being of marginalized communities; 4) alternative economic models that can open up new avenues for sustainability; and 5) longer term perspectives that challenge the growth-oriented nature of the current economic paradigm.

These responses advocating for perspectives that fall between the more radical and pragmatic approaches emphasised the need for practical, policy and business engaged approaches whilst also recognising the necessity of systemic transformation. These perspectives reflect the political economy of a rapid and just transformation.

The online discussions broadly aligned with the findings of the survey. Different perspectives were captured in the discussions including more practical and radical perspectives as well as those falling in between.

Key themes identified from Discussion 1 were:

- The problem with GDP Growth. The need to invite radical and transformational proposals that do more than ‘tinker’ around the edges of mainstream economics
- The need for a Whole Systems Approach
- The need to encourage co-creation with end users / stakeholders and to demonstrate clear routes to impact
- The importance/challenge of scaling up existing or possible new solutions
- The need to consider what is meant by innovation – within or beyond what is acceptable within the current political systems
- The importance of framing any future funding opportunity in this area – reflecting practical as well as more radical approaches to innovation and new solutions

Key themes identified in the second discussion included:

- The suggestion that the framing of the outline theme may be too broad and that there could be value in identifying specific topics and sectors with most added value
- The importance of adding the word ‘just’: ‘a socially just transition to net zero’
- The need to clarify how radical the theme should be?
- The need to provide ‘actionable evidence’ for quick solutions to urgent problems
- The importance of interdisciplinarity and co-production
- The centrality of politics and government and the extent to which it is necessary to rethink current political systems

## What is Missing?

When asked what was missing from the outline theme (as set out in Annex A), survey respondents highlighted the following:

- The need to explore innovative solutions in the following areas: (green) finance models; concepts and meaning of work; the role of power and regulation; a need to ensure social groups at different scales (communities, local business) are included.
- The need to explore radical, rapid economic transformations including critical engagement with the concept and terminology of economic growth, concepts of de-growth / post-growth. In addition, the need to explore change at the scale and speed needed, and the examination of truly progressive/radical, non-mainstream ideas and alternatives.
- Consideration of broader social, cultural, structural and governance issues, systems approaches, a wider perspective that looks beyond climate change and carbon to examine biodiversity and

other sustainability issues; individual, organisational as well as societal behaviours as drivers of change, exploring wider social/cultural factors as well as politics, power and policy.

- A more explicit recognition of the importance of interdisciplinary insights, interdisciplinary working and co-production.

Key outcomes identified by the participants focused on the following areas:

- Practical implementation and impact
- Radical transformation
- Practical transformation (i.e. combining radical perspectives with practical application)
- Systems thinking, interdisciplinarity and co-production
- Specific outcomes such as externalities, finance, work, pricing and subsidies, environmental metrics, successful and socially acceptable interventions, power imbalances, place and space, just transitions and organisational management

## Subthemes and Research Questions

Specific research questions were identified by participants in the survey which reflected the topics and themes highlighted above. A full list of these questions can be found in the Full Report (Appendix C). The below is a representative sample.

### ***Practical (Economic) Innovation***

- What are the economic opportunities and risks of not mitigating and adapting to climate change?
- What is the role of finance as a driver for social and environmental change?
- What transformation in formal and informal institutions and the wider business environment is required to reshape valuations and incentives that fast track societies towards sustainable production and consumption and sustainable economies?
- How to best support transitions to regenerative farming across a range of farm business types?

### ***Radical Transformation***

- How can we decouple the growth narrative from wellbeing policies?
- How can we mainstream community-led management of natural resources/commons through innovative economic and financial mechanisms?

### ***Beyond Economics... Broader Questions... Systems Thinking***

- How do institutions, incentives and structures need to change to fully integrate holistic environmental/ecological/sustainable considerations?

- How can complexity theory and related approaches be applied to environmental economics and policy?
- How do we bring environmental and social science within economic decision making?
- How to achieve a truly sustainable system through the ‘just transition’?
- How do you get buy-in for the change necessary in a democracy? Who is responsible for implementing alternatives at what level (local, national, supra-national)?
- What are the political and power-related blockages and barriers?

## Wider Requirements

Some participants, in particular participants of Discussion Group 1 suggested that ESRC reflect on the peer review process to ensure it includes a diversity of disciplinary perspectives, including those representing ‘traditional’ economic perspectives, ‘radical’ economists and those interested in economies who sit outside of disciplinary economics.

## Summary and Recommendations

Across the literature, the survey, and the discussions a few key themes emerged that may need to be considered for a potential funding opportunity.

- Radical versus more practical solutions. There is debate in the literature and within the research field between those calling for research exploring more radical solutions and those calling for more pragmatic solutions. If the funding opportunity is to appeal to both, it should do so clearly. This may have implications for the review process as supporters of the different perspectives may not always understand or value each other’s different approaches.
- The funding opportunity may want to highlight and give greater emphasis to the value of inter and trans-disciplinary, collaborative co-production approaches.
- Specific topics noted by participants include: (green) finance, the meaning of work, pricing and subsidies, environmental metrics, socially acceptable interventions, power imbalances, place and space, just transitions and organisational management.

### ***Further considerations for the ESRC***

The different perspectives that emerged in responses to the online survey and each Discussion Group, suggest it is worth the ESRC considering whether this funding theme might be split into two separate opportunities, one focusing on rapid actionable economic solutions and one focusing on radical alternative models and perspectives. For some respondents the theme is already too broad and would benefit from a tighter more targeted focus on specific topics. For others it is too narrowly economic and needs to significantly widen its scope.

A two funding opportunity option might include for example:

*Theme 1 - Innovative Economic Solutions*

- Targeted primarily at disciplinary economists
- Looked at a range of very specific economy-sustainability topics/issues
- Focused on innovation within existing economic frameworks
- A strong emphasis on actionable evidence and practical implementation

*Theme 2 - Alternative Economic Systems/Models*

- Targeted more widely at heterodox economists and social scientists
- Explored a variety of 'radical' alternative economic models/approaches for sustainability
- Employed broader systems/nexus perspectives
- Emphasised system transformations for sustainability and social justice

Alternatively, a combined funding opportunity might look to do one of two things:

- I. Find Common Ground. This approach frames a funding opportunity around finding the common ground in addressing sustainability challenges. It requires a careful balance between ambitious vision and practical implementation. It involves considering the broader context, understanding the complexities involved, and recognizing the potential for incremental progress while remaining open to more transformative actions when necessary.
- II. Accept a Two-Pronged Approach. This framing recognises the differences of some elements of 'radical' and 'pragmatic' perspectives. The funding opportunity is broadly defined and there is no requirement to find common ground. Instead, there is a recognition that in the context of net-zero, biodiversity and other sustainability challenges we need a broad spectrum of economic solutions, some more radical than others and some more practical than others.

## *Appendix A – ESRC Emerging Research Theme*

Note that the below text was prepared by ACCESS for the ESRC. The text was developed based on three themes originally outlined by ESRC. These can be found in the first ACCESS scoping report.

### **Innovative Economic Solutions and Alternatives**

Population and economic growth are unprecedented with enhanced pressures on our environment and resources. We need new innovative economic solutions to deliver the required rapid transformations and sustainable wellbeing for all. This requires understanding our economic systems through new approaches to inform decisions that ensure we can mitigate and adapt to climate change and avoid climate and biodiversity decline.

We need to understand, if, when and how economic interventions can be leveraged to promote rapid change in everyday behaviours and practices to tackle climate change, net zero and biodiversity challenges while supporting the health and wellbeing of all. A greater understanding of the power dynamics of decision making, lobbying and driving or resisting innovative economic solutions can provide valuable insights to help drive forward sustainable development. We also need to explore more sustainable alternative economic systems and ways of working embedded in principles of fairness, equality, empowerment and quality of life. The research programme will aim to understand:

- the economic opportunities and risks of not mitigating and adapting to climate change
- the opportunities, barriers and risks to sustainable investment and fostering inclusive prosperity, by understanding financial solutions
- equitable, fair and sustainable local and national economic systems and business models
- labour markets and future of work, including skills for low-carbon solutions
- the business models and supply chains required for low carbon solutions at local, regional and national scales
- the potential for radical economic instruments to promote rapid environmental change
- power dynamics of decision making that drive forward or resist innovative economic solutions.

## Appendix B – Innovative Economic Solutions Survey

Qa Which of the following best captures your professional affiliation?

- academic (1)
- policy (2)
- business (3)
- civil society (4)
- research council (5)
- general public (6)
- other, please specify (7) \_\_\_\_\_

Qb Which of these disciplines are you most likely to identify with?

- Social Sciences (1)
- Arts and Humanities (2)
- Engineering and Physical Sciences (3)
- Health and Medical Sciences (4)
- Natural and environmental sciences (5)
- Biological sciences (6)
- Other, please specify (7) \_\_\_\_\_

Qc Please find below a description of the potential research theme as well as a description of the cross-cutting theme.

### **Research Theme – Innovative Economic Solutions and Alternatives**

Population and economic growth are unprecedented with enhanced pressures on our environment and resources. We need new innovative economic solutions to deliver the required rapid transformations and sustainable wellbeing for all. This requires understanding our economic systems through new approaches to inform decisions that ensure we can mitigate and adapt to climate change and avoid climate and biodiversity decline.

We need to understand, if, when and how economic interventions can be leveraged to promote rapid change in everyday behaviours and practices to tackle climate change, net zero and biodiversity challenges while supporting the health and wellbeing of all. A greater understanding of the power dynamics of decision making, lobbying and driving or resisting innovative economic solutions can provide valuable insights to help drive forward sustainable development. We also need

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- the economic opportunities and risks of not mitigating and adapting to climate change
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- equitable, fair and sustainable local and national economic systems and business models
- labour markets and future of work, including skills for low-carbon solutions
- the business models and supply chains required for low carbon solutions at local, regional and national scales
- the potential for radical economic instruments to promote rapid environmental change
- power dynamics of decision making that drive forward or resist innovative economic solutions

Q1 How valuable do you think a call on this 'innovative economic solutions' topic would be for environmental social scientists and practitioners in the UK?

- Not very valuable (1)
- Somewhat valuable (2)
- Quite valuable (3)
- Very valuable (4)
- Extremely valuable (5)

Q2 How likely do you think it is that a call like this would generate research that rates highly on the following criteria:

	Very low (1)	Low (2)	Average (3)	High (4)	Very high (5)
interdisciplinarity (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
equality, diversity and inclusion (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
co-producing solutions (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
generation research impact (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
developing new methods (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
generating new theories (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
driving innovative, effective sustainable solutions (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q3 What, if anything, do you feel is missing from this 'innovative economic solutions and alternatives' theme as outlined above?

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Q4 From your perspective, what are the key outcomes that research examining/exploring innovative economic solutions and alternatives should be hoping to achieve?

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Q5 From your perspective, what are the priority research questions and topics that should be considered within a potential call on innovative economic solutions and alternatives?

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Q6 If you have any further comments on the document, please write them here.

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# Introduction and Aims

A key objective of the ACCESS programme is to ‘contribute to scoping future transformative social science and interdisciplinary research within the area of climate and environment that draws on diverse stakeholder perspectives to ensure strategic research outcomes that make a difference’.

As part of this objective ACCESS is providing input into the Economic and Social Research Council’s (ESRC) environmental priorities. The first scoping activities were carried out by the ACCESS Scoping Team for the ESRC in the spring and summer of 2022.

This document reports the results of a second set of scoping activities that focused on the research theme ‘Innovative Economic Solutions and Alternatives’; a potential theme identified by the ESRC in 2022 (Appendix A).

The aim of this exercise has been to scope current perspectives and understandings from a range of stakeholders on the theme with a view to helping inform and shape a potential future funding opportunity.

The scoping process involved three sets of activities:

- I. A limited Desktop Review. To provide context we undertook a rapid survey of relevant literature.
- II. On-line Survey. To provide a breath of perspectives we carried out an on-line survey.
- III. Two on-line discussions. To further explore different perspectives on the proposed theme.

The key findings of these activities are presented below.

# Part A – Desktop Review

The recent academic literature on the extremely broad topic of ‘innovative economic solutions and alternatives’ in the context of sustainability is very large and covers a long and diverse list of relevant topics and approaches. This list includes those areas of research which look to address environmental challenges while promoting economic growth and social well-being and include, for example, a focus on: the circular economy; green finance; carbon pricing; renewable energy incentives; eco-entrepreneurship and innovation; resource efficiency and eco-design; sustainable supply chain management; sustainable tourism; agro-ecology and sustainable agriculture; sharing economy and collaborative consumption; and urban planning and smart cities.

This list also includes research that both examines and advocates for a growing range of ‘alternative economic models and systems’ developed both within, and to a degree, outside disciplinary economics. These models aim to fundamentally transform the way we organize and operate our economies to promote environmental stewardship, social equity, and long-term well-being. Some notable examples include, degrowth; post-growth economy; steady-state economy; commons-based economy; doughnut economics; localism and community-based economies; gift economy; social and solidarity economy; and the regenerative economy.

Given the size and scope of this literature, a traditional review of all its component topics and approaches has not been feasible in the time and resources available. Instead, for the purposes for this scoping exercise, it is useful to highlight one of the key characteristics of that literature and briefly outline in a little more detail the distinction noted above between ‘innovation’ within existing economic frames and ‘alternative’ economic models.

## Pragmatic Solutions and Radical Alternatives

While the boundary is not always clearly defined, and some economists would resist such categorisations, there is, nevertheless, a discernible dividing line within the economic literature between research which examines and emphasises pragmatic, implemental solutions within traditional economic frameworks and research which explores and advocates for more radical and transformative economic approaches to address a broad range of environmental and social challenges.

The arguments on both sides can be broadly summarized as follows:

### **1. Pragmatic Emphasis / Approach:**

- **Feasibility:** Advocates of a pragmatic approach argue that incremental changes within traditional economic frameworks are more feasible and politically achievable. Radical transformations may face resistance from established institutions, making it challenging to implement large-scale changes.

- **Mainstream Acceptance:** Working within existing economic frameworks may lead to more acceptance from policymakers, businesses, and other economists. This approach may also gain more traction in policy circles and be more easily integrated into current economic systems.
- **Policy Relevance:** By providing practical suggestions that align with mainstream economic thinking, economists can have a direct impact on shaping policies and guiding real-world decision-making.

### *Illustrative References*

- Stern, N., & Valero, A. (2021). Innovation, growth and the transition to net-zero emissions. *Research Policy*, 50(9), 104293.
- Desalegn, G., & Tangl, A. (2022). Enhancing green finance for inclusive green growth: A systematic approach. *Sustainability*, 14(12), 7416.
- Nyangchak, N. (2022). Emerging green industry toward net-zero economy: A systematic review. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 134622.
- Robins, N., Dikau, S., & Volz, U. (2021). Net-zero central banking: A new phase in greening the financial system.

## **2. Radical Transformative Emphasis / Approach:**

- **Systemic Issues:** Critics of the pragmatic approach argue that many sustainability challenges are rooted in the fundamental structure of the current economic system. Therefore, transformative changes are necessary to address the root causes effectively.
- **Planetary Boundaries:** The urgency of environmental issues, such as climate change and biodiversity loss, calls for more radical actions to stay within planetary boundaries and avoid crossing critical ecological thresholds.
- **Inequality and Social Justice:** Transformative approaches often emphasize the interconnectedness of social and environmental issues. They argue that sustainability efforts must address systemic inequalities and consider the well-being of marginalized communities.
- **Innovation and Paradigm Shift:** Advocates of radical transformative approaches argue that the current economic system may hinder innovation and transformative thinking. Embracing alternative economic models can open up new avenues for sustainability.
- **Long-Term Viability:** Some argue that incremental changes within traditional frameworks may not be enough to achieve sustainable outcomes in the long run, as they may not challenge the growth-oriented nature of the current economic paradigm.

### *Illustrative References*

- Jackson, T. (2016). *Prosperity without growth: Foundations for the economy of tomorrow*. Taylor & Francis.
- Fioramonti, L., Coscieme, L., Costanza, R., Kubiszewski, I., Trebeck, K., Wallis, S., ... & De Vogli, R. (2022). Wellbeing economy: An effective paradigm to mainstream post-growth policies?. *Ecological Economics*, 192, 107261.
- Raworth, K. (2017). *Doughnut economics: seven ways to think like a 21st-century economist*. Chelsea Green Publishing.

In recent years, the discussion on this topic has become more pronounced. For while there are areas of overlap and agreement, for example, on the need for more interdisciplinary and holistic approaches, there is no emerging consensus within the discipline of economics, and different economists hold diverse and sometimes irreconcilable viewpoints on the best approach to pursue sustainability and related social justice goals.

# Part B – The Survey

An online survey was designed and developed by the ACCESS Scoping Team using the Qualtrics platform. The survey – which can be found in [Appendix B](#) – was largely based on the one developed for the previous ‘place-based’ scoping exercise.

In order to capture a broad range of perspectives the survey was distributed among as wide a relevant audience as possible. Engagement channels included (but were not be limited to):

- The ACCESS partnership (e.g. the Universities of Exeter, Surrey, Bath, Sussex and Leeds; and the NESRN, which includes: Natural England, Natural Resources Wales, NatureScot, Natural England, Environment Agency and Forest Research)
- The wider ACCESS network (e.g. the Universities of Belfast, Cardiff and Manchester, the Tyndall Centre, National Trust, local and national governments, and various UK government departments)
- Other relevant University of Exeter and University of Surrey networks and individuals
- The ESRC and associated networks (e.g. the RIDE Forum)

The survey went live on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023 and closed on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> June. A total of 45 responses were recorded in Qualtrics during this period. An additional 2 textual responses were received via email after the closure of the survey.

## SURVEY FINDINGS

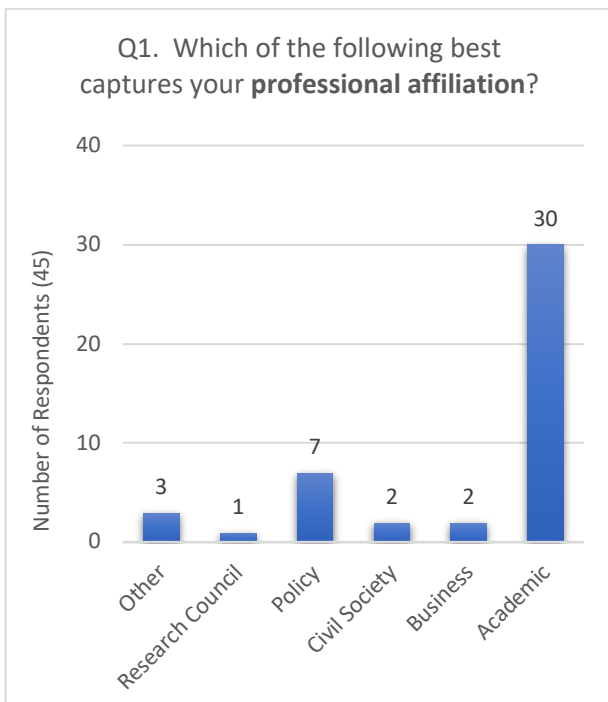


Fig. 1.

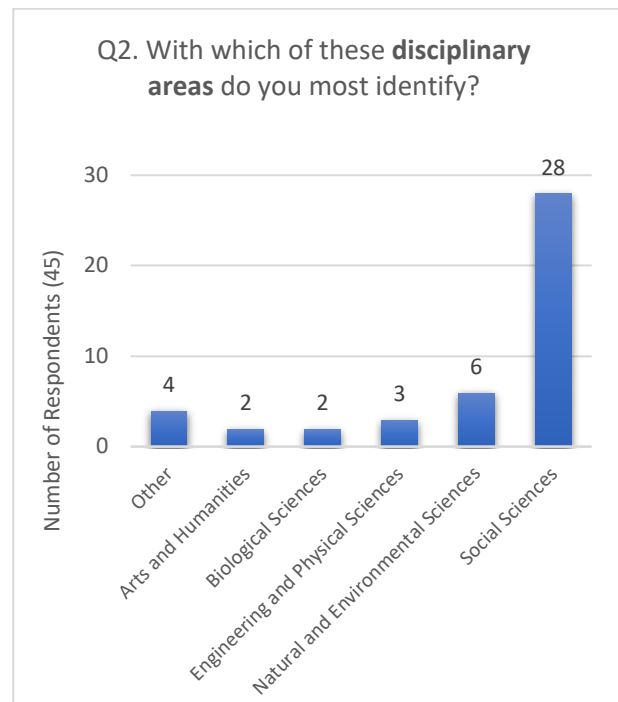


Fig. 2

Of the 45 respondents who completed the online survey most (n32 or 71%) were academics. The next most frequent professional affiliation was ‘Policy’ with 7 (16%) responses (Fig. 1). Not surprisingly, given the focus of ACCESS, most of the survey respondents (n28 or 62%) identified as social scientists, with the next most frequent identification being ‘Natural and Environmental Sciences’ with 6 (13%) (Fig. 2). It was not determined – although in retrospect it may have been useful to do so – how many of the survey respondents most identified with the discipline of economics.

## 1. General Perceptions

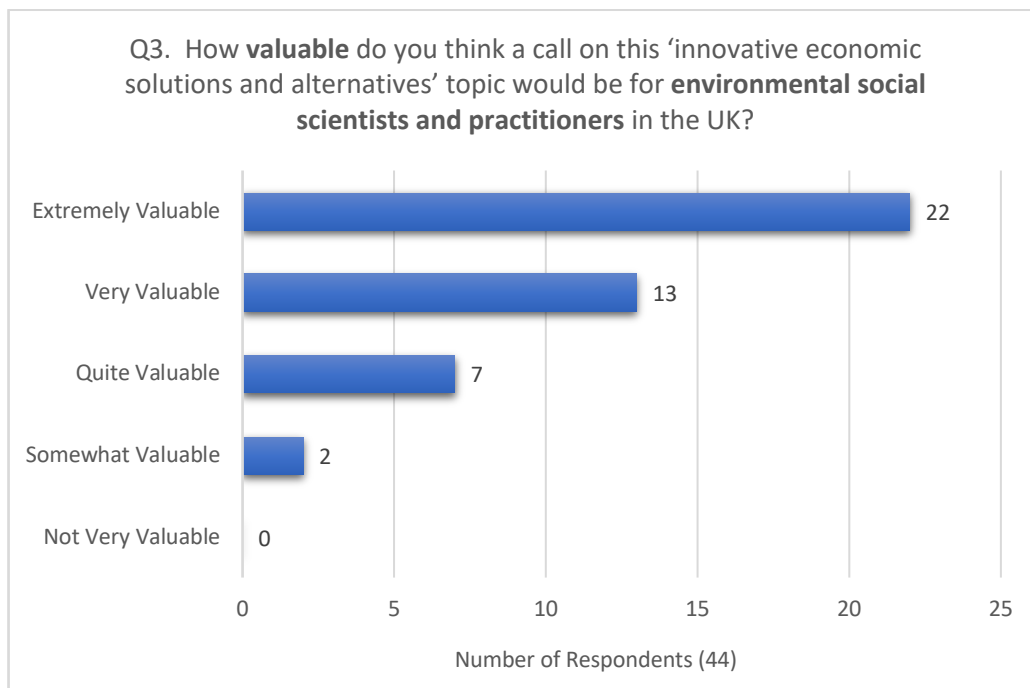


Fig. 3

There was, in the main, a very positive response to the above question (Fig. 3). Of the 44 respondents, 80% (n = 35) thought a funding opportunity focusing on the proposed ‘innovative economic solutions and alternatives’ topic would be ‘very valuable’ or ‘extremely valuable’ for UK environmental social scientists and practitioners

Respondents, however, seemed a little less convinced that the outline theme, as currently described, would generate research that rated highly with respect to ‘interdisciplinarity’ and/or ‘co-producing solutions’. Although with 64% (n = 28) still thinking that it ‘highly likely’ or ‘very highly likely’ would rate highly for ‘interdisciplinarity’ (Fig. 4), and 58% (n = 25) for ‘co-producing solutions’ (Fig. 5) they were by no means a negative responses.

There was a similar lack of certainty among respondents as to the extent the outline theme, as currently described, would generate research that rated highly with respect to ‘developing new methods’ or ‘generating new theories’. Just over half (51%; n = 22) thought it ‘highly likely’ or ‘very

highly likely' that it would rate highly for 'new methods' (Fig. 6), while a little under half (44%; n = 19) thought it would do so for 'new theories' (Fig. 7).

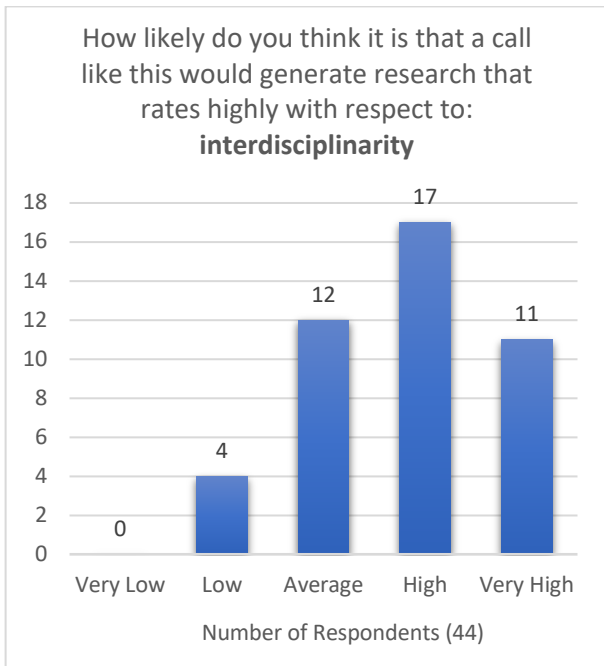


Fig. 4

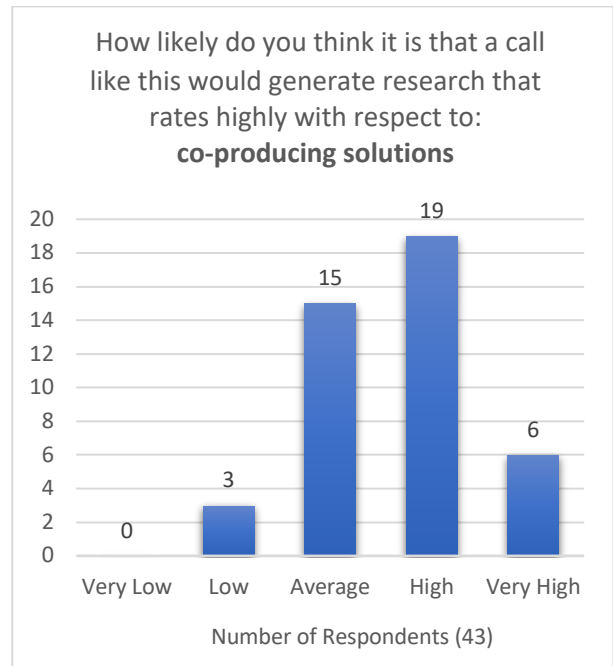


Fig. 5

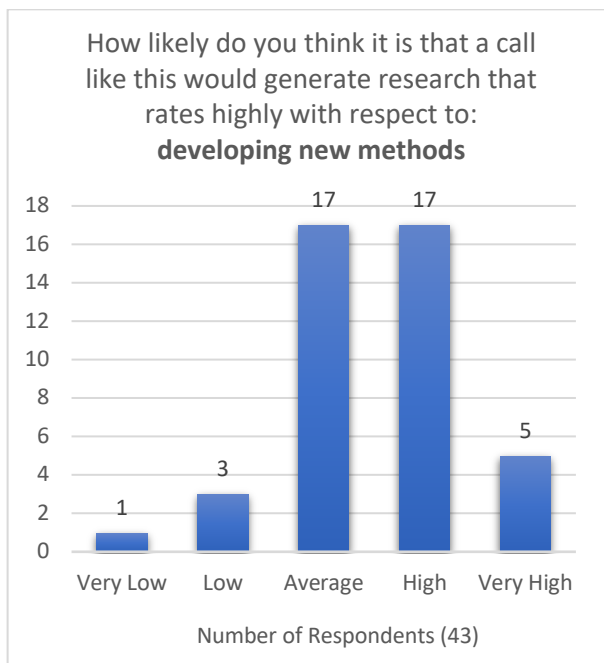


Fig. 6

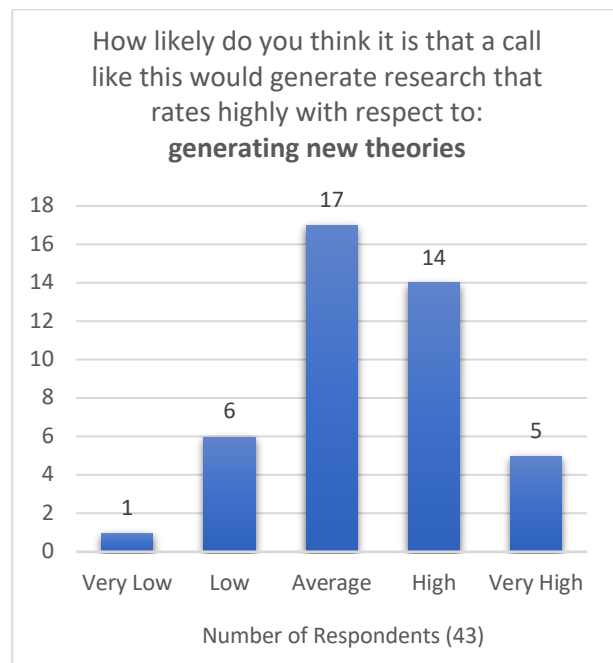


Fig. 7

When it came to generating innovative and impactful research, however, there was, again, a much more positive response. 74% (n = 32) of survey respondents, for example, thought it 'highly likely' or 'very highly likely' that such a call would generate research that rated highly with respect to 'driving

innovative, effective, sustainable solutions’ (Fig. 8). While a similar percentage of respondents (77%; n = 33), were also convinced that it was ‘highly likely’ or ‘very highly likely’ that such a call would generate research that rated highly with respect to ‘generating research impact’ (Fig. 9).

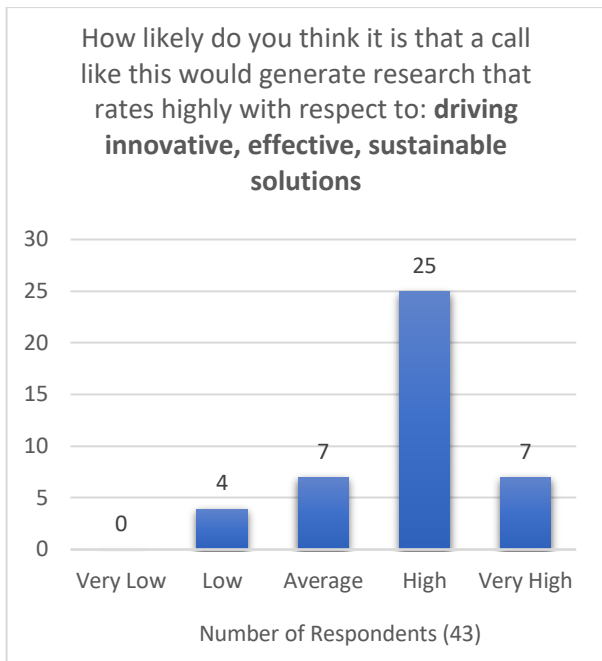


Fig. 8

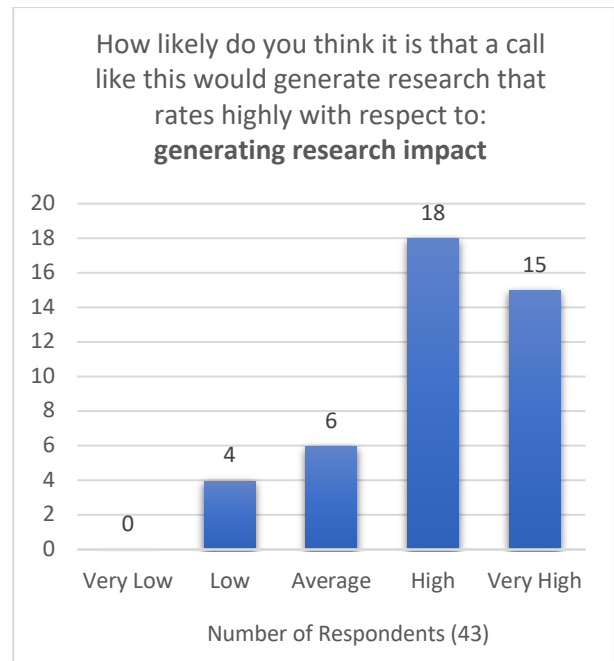


Fig. 9

## 2. What’s Missing?

In an open-ended question, respondents were asked ‘What, if anything, do you feel is missing from this innovative economic solutions and alternatives theme...?’

This question elicited a diverse range of responses and suggestions as to what is missing from the proposed ‘innovative economics’ theme. These have been broadly grouped under four categories.

### 1. Innovation... but within an existing economics frame

- A focus on the role of both public and private (green) finance; the need to understand the role of the State and other traditional actors in a new vision for financing and what changes will be needed to enable this.
- A broader engagement with the concepts of work, occupations, and economic activity. A recognition of the fast technological developments in terms of digitalisation, AI, etc. and the impacts they will have on the notion of work and our economy.
- An examination of the power of regulation and its critical role in delivering economic-based innovation.

- The need to attend to specificity and scale in terms of a focus on specific sectors, locations and perspectives; and requirement to ensure that community, place-based and small business solutions are included.
- Miscellaneous other issues including: the need for a greater focus on the economics of adaption; a better understanding of where innovation is already happening despite or around the margins of formal mechanisms and arrangements; and an examination of the potential for adverse impacts from innovative economic solutions.

## **II. Radical and Rapid Economic Transformation**

- A critical engagement with the concept and terminology of economic growth.
- Relatedly, an exploration of the possibilities and implications of de-growth / post-growth.
- A sense of the appropriate scale and speed of change needed.
- An invitation to engage with truly progressive/radical, non-mainstream ideas and alternatives.

## **III. Broader Perspectives**

- As it is currently articulated the potential funding theme does not take account of broader social, cultural, structural and governance issues.
- A joined-up, systems approach that examines where and how innovative economic solutions can be combined with other instruments and approaches.
- A wider perspective that looks beyond climate change and carbon to examine biodiversity and other sustainability issues.
- The importance of understanding individual, organisational and societal behaviours as drivers of change. An examination of innovative behaviour change interventions.
- Moving beyond behavioural explanations to incorporate wider social/cultural factors. Understanding cultural responses to current economic paradigms and cultural inertia to change. A recognition of the role of emotions, values and morals in processes of economic and systems change.
- A consideration of politics, power and policy. An examination of how incumbent power resists positive/transformational agendas. A greater understanding of policy pathways. The potential funding opportunity text is too narrowly economic with little scope for interdisciplinary insights on governance, change, and transition.

## **IV. Interdisciplinarity and Co-production**

- Related to the above, the need for a more explicit recognition of the complexity of the problem and the necessity for the establishment of interdisciplinary teams and ways of working.
- A sufficiently strong/explicit emphasis on co-production and collaborative approaches/methods.
- A statement that highlights the connection between active co-production and the development of targeted, more impactful solutions.

### 3. Key Outcomes

To help identify specific key outcomes from a potential funding opportunity on this topic respondents were asked: 'From your perspective, what are the key outcomes that research examining / exploring innovative economic solutions and alternatives should be hoping to achieve?'

This question elicited a similarly broad range of ideas. These suggestions for key outcomes have been broadly grouped under five categories. These categories are not mutually exclusive.

#### ***I. Practical Implementation / Impact***

A significant proportion of survey responses emphasised the need to focus primarily on the practical implementation of ideas and on the subsequent 'real world material impact' of research. These responses argued that knowledge or new innovations are only as useful as far as they are implementable, measurable, and have specific policy or practical outcomes. They also stressed the importance of rapid knowledge mobilisation and the need to accelerate the uptake and diffusion of innovative economic solutions.

*'We should not be proposing whole new systems... but seeing how innovative economic solutions can be realistically implemented as soon as possible'* (Survey Respondent)

#### ***II. Radical / Systemic Transformation***

In contrast to the above, an equally significant proportion of survey responses emphasised that key outcomes should be related to broader efforts to facilitate a rapid, and in some instances, radical transformation of the current socio-economic system. For some this meant a better understanding of how current financial/economic structures inhibit the transformation process, or more opportunities to 'explore alternative economic models' for sustainable growth. For others, rather more radically, it meant the development of policies that promote the '*complete restructuring of the [current] economic system*' or an understanding of how to '*disrupt the core economic dynamics driving over-production and consumption*' and '*scale-up non-capitalist economic forms*'.

#### ***III. Practical Transformation***

Located between those which emphasised practical implementation and measurable impact, and those which argued for radical change to the current economic system, were a set of responses that occupied a distinct middle ground. These responses referenced key outcomes that both emphasised the need for practical, policy and business engaged approaches whilst also recognising the necessity of systemic transformation. Responses, for example that would like to see outcomes that: '*challenge the status quo of the dominating neoliberal, capitalist system by providing solutions that are viable and attractive to the business community*'; or that develop '*mechanisms and approaches that take us beyond the conventional but are practical, demonstrated and co-created*'. Outcomes, which in the broadest sense, also attend to what might be described as the political-economy of a rapid and just transformation.

#### **IV. Systems Thinking / Co-production**

Thinking more systemically and working more co-productively were identified by a number of respondents as not just means to specific knowledge production ends but as important outcomes in and of themselves. A few respondents, for example, stressed the importance of a broader systems perspective, whether that involved looking beyond the disciplinary boundaries of traditional economics to engage with ‘political and demographic questions’, or recognising the ‘interactions between different actors and wider dynamics’, or adopting a ‘nexus’ approach. Other respondents focussed on the importance of co-productive methods, highlighting the value of ‘breaking down silos’, engaging across sectors and disciplines, and working collaboratively on co-designed solutions.

#### **V. Specific Outcomes**

In addition to the above, there were also a range of other, more specific outcomes, which respondents suggested the potential funding opportunity should be looking to achieve. These included but were not limited to:

- Better accounting of externalities, including information on the environmental impact within supply chains.
- Increased understanding of the role of finance as a driver for social and environmental improvement.
- A greater understanding of the concepts of quality of life/meaningfulness of work.
- Progress on both pricing and subsidies as legitimate policy tools.
- A variety of environmental metrics, economic metrics, and distributional metrics
- An evaluation of successful interventions. Research that shows social acceptability of interventions.
- Research that exposes power imbalances and the impact these have on attempts to address key challenges, including the climate and nature crises.
- A better sense of what works with regard to place and space for different communities and how to ensure inclusivity and just transition to an effective green/sustainable economy.
- Encouraging change at the level of organisations and management practices especially in large corporations.

## **4. Priority Research Questions/Topics**

Participants were given the opportunity to suggest specific research questions or topics they would like to see addressed in a potential funding opportunity: ‘From your perspective, what are the priority research questions and topics that should be considered within a potential call on innovative economic solutions and alternatives?’

Reflecting the points made in previous responses to the ‘missing’ and ‘outputs’ questions, this question again produced a large range of responses. These suggestions for potential research questions/topics

have been broadly grouped under three headings. These 'groupings' are similar to, but do not perfectly align with, the groupings of responses to previous questions.

## ***I. Practical (Economic) Innovation***

Suggestions for research questions/topics included, but were not limited to:

### *Risk/Impact*

- TOPIC: Understanding the economic risk to UK prosperity and security posed by climate change, particularly risks to key systems such as finance, commerce, industry, energy, agriculture and habitation.
- QUESTION: What are the economic opportunities and risks of not mitigating and adapting to climate change?
- QUESTION: What are the most practical and helpful ways of measuring environmental impact beyond net zero, to include CE and nature positive outcomes, that can improve financial risk assessment?
- QUESTION: How to best deal with the impacts we are locked in for, and avoid maladaptation making them worse in the future.
- QUESTION: How can the processes of innovation be designed to avoid unintended consequences?

### *Finance*

- TOPIC: The role of finance, how to blend public and private support effectively, designing incentives and penalties for performance/adherence and non-performance/adherence, effective communication across relevant disciplines.
- QUESTION: What is the role of finance as a driver for social and environmental change?
- QUESTION: What can be done to leverage more private finance into this arena?
- QUESTION: What alternative financing approaches, such as natural capital and just transition, can be developed to finance an equitable sustainable economy?

### *Business/Organisational Change*

- TOPIC: The process of organisational and strategic change and how this can shape the design and implementation of innovative economic solutions.
- QUESTION: What transformation in formal and informal institutions and the wider business environment is required to reshape valuations and incentives that fast track societies towards sustainable production and consumption and sustainable economies?

### *Land Use / Land Economy*

- TOPIC[S]: valuing nature, nature based solutions, access to nature, tree planting (establishment and management), regenerative farming.
- QUESTION: How to best support transitions to regenerative farming across a range of farm business types?
- QUESTION: How do we foster greater access to nature in urban settings, across income groups

### *Other*

- TOPIC: Labour markets, job prospects and growing sectors and skills supply issues.
- TOPIC: Future scanning for opportunities/changes (e.g. implications of crypto-currency, mechanisms for investing in ecological services)
- TOPIC: Health economics – the potential costs to health care systems for treating the consequences of climate change, biodiversity loss etc.
- QUESTION: What prevents implementation of economic innovation in the current economic system?
- QUESTION: What are the solutions optimising for? What should they be optimising for? Are there trade-offs?
- QUESTION: How to create the enabling conditions for new technology scale up

### **Radical Transformation**

Suggestions for research questions/topics included, but were not limited to:

- TOPIC: Valuing collective social and environmental impact rather than economic growth.
- TOPIC: Alternatives to market based production / current macro-economic orthodoxy: e.g. understanding the dynamics of commons and state based production and their capacity to rapidly reduce environmental impact
- TOPIC: Ways to support and scale prefigurative efforts at living in post-growth/post capitalist ways.
- TOPIC: Higher taxation on the wealthy and reparation-focused taxation on fossil fuel companies (not just windfall taxes)
- TOPIC: Investment in social infrastructure, in this respect meaning investment in people rather than places, especially with a female perspective.
- TOPIC: Ways to strengthen and support efforts to disrupt harmful capitalist practices (advertising/over-production/consumerism)
- TOPIC: Case studies and analysis of historic economic and financial alternatives to economic system norms that have not got off the ground to any large extent (e.g., LETS, (green) social enterprises, Gross National Happiness)
- QUESTION: How can we decouple the growth narrative from wellbeing policies?
- QUESTION: How can we mainstream community-led management of natural resources/commons through innovative economic and financial mechanisms?

### **Beyond Economics... Broader Questions... Systems Thinking**

Suggestions for research questions/topics included, but were not limited to:

#### *Systems Thinking*

- TOPIC: Whole-system coherence. Understanding how actions to counter one environmental issue (e.g. carbon, pollution, biodiversity, flooding, etc) impact on other environmental issues.

- QUESTION: How do institutions, incentives and structures need to change to fully integrate holistic environmental/ecological/sustainable considerations?
- QUESTION: How can complexity theory and related approaches be applied to environmental economics and policy?

#### *Social factors*

- TOPIC: Social and cultural barriers to change.
- TOPIC: Understanding how social preferences can be changed and how preferences for lower impact consumption can replace high impact consumption.
- QUESTION: How do we bring environmental and social science within economic decision making?
- QUESTION: How to achieve a truly sustainable system through the 'just transition'?
- QUESTION: How can trade-offs between participation/evidence and rapidity be navigated in a socially just yet effective way, who makes the decisions and how?
- QUESTION: How do the public understand when and how economic interventions can be leveraged to promote rapid change in everyday behaviours and practices to tackle climate change, net zero and biodiversity challenges while supporting the health and wellbeing of all?
- QUESTION: How can qualitative data and analysis be understood to a similar degree of thinking as do economic and quantitative data?
- QUESTION: What are the dynamic processes that operate to deliver effective social and environmental change? How do these operate in terms of place and space to effect more optimal sustainable and inclusive solutions?

#### *Policy, Politics and Power*

- TOPIC: Understanding how to implement the innovative solutions within the policy and industry landscape to achieve change.
- TOPIC: Achieving longer-term perspectives in decision-making, moving away from 'short-termism'.
- TOPIC: Understanding climate decision-making and the true role of economics within that
- QUESTION: How do you get buy-in for the change necessary in a democracy? Who is responsible for implementing alternatives at what level (local, national, supra-national)?
- QUESTION: What are the political and power-related blockages and barriers?
- QUESTION: How can economic innovation navigate political and ideological divides?
- QUESTION: What is the political economy of the path of least resistance policy making?

## 5. Further Thoughts

At the end of the survey, participants were given the opportunity to add any further/final comments or thoughts.

Responses to this final survey question reiterated or continued to develop the common themes and key issues identified in the previous questions.

There were repeated and reiterated requests, for example, for the theme to be more radical and bolder in its ambitions and not just another invitation to make minor adjustments to ‘business as usual’ models. There was a concern among a number of respondents that the current framing of the outline theme, and the language used, was very much in line with ‘mainstream’ or ‘conventional economic thinking’, essentially about ‘making capitalism more sustainable’. This framing, one respondent suggested, would lead them to ‘moderate’ any potential bids they made. Another respondent suggested it would be useful to include reference to ‘exemplar alternative economic systems... (e.g. doughnut economics, ecological civilization, de-growth, diverse economies etc.)’.

A number of respondents took the opportunity in the final section of the survey to further stress the need to look not just beyond mainstream economics, but beyond the discipline of economics altogether, to the wider social sciences. These calls echoed a common and consistent thread throughout the survey on the need and value of interdisciplinary working. One respondent suggested that the potential funding theme ‘could ask explicitly for applications to involve multiple (social science) disciplines’. This emphasis on interdisciplinarity also reflected a recognition among many respondents of the complex interconnected and interacting nature of economies, ecologies, and societies, and the value of adopting broader systems perspectives and approaches. By extension, this also implies, as one respondent pointed out, that we need to fully integrate complexity thinking (and management) into existing policies and structures.

The need to integrate research, policy, and practice, and for a call that produces actionable, impactful outputs was another common theme that ran through survey responses and was re-stated in the final section. For one respondent, ‘producing solutions-orientated research can only work if practitioners and decision-makers are involved throughout the programme lifecycle, from design, through testing solutions, to implementation’. This fully ‘co-productive’ way of working however, requires, as another respondent remarked, that ‘the call is prepared and designed in such a way’ ... as to ‘enable the non-usual (but key) suspects to engage... and to co-design the research’. This demands, they continued, that time and resources are made available to facilitate engagement during the research process. It also means placing ‘more than the usual emphasis’ on dissemination/translation/support to use these co-produced findings and to develop relationships/learning past the ‘end’ of the project.

# Part C – The Discussion Groups

To delve a little deeper into some of the points and issues identified by the survey the ACCESS Scoping Team designed and ran two Discussion Groups.

Discussion Group 1: Targeted invitations were sent out in early June (2023) to 20 individuals with a view to recruiting 6-8 participants. The aim of recruitment was to ensure both a gender balance and a diversity of economic perspectives ranging from those working within, what might be termed, a traditional economics frame to those advocating for more radical alternatives. The ESRC were involved in the process of identifying potential DG1 participants.

Discussion Group 1 (DG1) was held online, using Teams, at the end of June (2023). DG1 contained 6 participants (excluding the ACCESS Scoping Team) and had both a gender and, on paper at least (see below), a ‘perspectives’ balance.

Discussion Group 2 (DG2): An open invitation to participate in the second Discussion Group was sent out to the ACCESS partnership and wider network in late June, with a view to recruiting 6-8 participants. This open invitation was followed-up by a number of targeted emails inviting relevant individuals from ACCESS’s policy and practice community, with the aim of ensuring that DG2 captured the views of knowledge ‘users’ as well as ‘producers’.

Discussion Group 2 was held online, using Teams, in mid-July. DG2 contained 5 participants (excluding the ACCESS Scoping Team and attending ESRC representatives). These 5 participants included 2 academics and 3 representatives from relevant policy and practice communities. Whilst the number of participants for DG2 was a little on the low side, the discussion was, nonetheless, lively and informative.

Both Discussion Groups 1 and 2 followed similar formats. In advance of each, participants were sent a document prepared by ACCESS for the ESRC introducing and outlining the innovative economic solutions and alternatives theme – see Appendix A. During the discussion participants were asked to reflect on the following four main questions:

- I. The objectives of the proposed theme. Are these the right objectives, is anything missing, should the framing be adjusted?
- II. What is current knowledge in the field, what are the gaps in knowledge?
- III. Are there any specific subthemes and research questions that should be included?
- IV. Are there any thoughts on wider requirements for the potential program?

In addition, further prompts and questions were included, based on some of the points and issues raised during the survey, and in the case of Discussion Group 2, during Discussion Group 1. Both Discussion Groups lasted approximately one hour and were recorded, with the participants consent, using the Teams record function. These recordings included an auto-generated transcript, from which discussion summaries were produced. The discussion summaries are presented below.

# Discussion Group 1

Following considerable efforts to ensure that Discussion Group 1 (DG1) contained a balanced range of perspectives from across the spectrum of economics and related disciplines, it was a surprising to witness a consensus emerging among participants on the need for 'systemic change' and more radical changes. In contrast to the survey which captured both the views of those that emphasised 'practical innovation' within existing economic frames and those that advocated for more 'radical transformation', DG1 appeared largely united in their repeated calls for rapid, radical, and wholesale systems transformation.

The group discussion picked up on many of the 'progressive' points made previously by survey respondents. The key points made in the discussion are outlined below.

## ***The Problem with GDP Growth***

Participants spoke of problems with perceiving economic growth as a way to solve problems rather than as a cause of the problems. Instead, they felt there was a need to explore de-growth approaches and focus on providing for human needs.

*"I think it would be a huge wasted opportunity if we put forward the sort of thing that involves just tinkering on the status quo"*

## ***The Need for a Whole Systems Approach***

There was a call for looking at the wider system and a focus on whole system transdisciplinary approaches. Participants discussed the need for looking beyond economic systems, to look at wider impacts for a broader range of social groups and to be sensitive to local contexts.

*"I would argue that what's needed is more of a transdisciplinary, whole systems approach to this"*

## ***The Importance/Challenge of Scaling-Up***

In talking about alternative economic solutions participants discussed the importance of ensuring solutions can be scaled up and how different systems and mechanisms can be replicated or translated to different political, institutional and cultural contexts.

*"A focus on alternative models or solutions, without an examination of if and how they can be scaled-up is not very useful."*

## ***Innovation***

Participants discussed what is meant by innovation and the need to ensure it is not just seen as 'taking things to market' but as much more than that.

*“Whatever economic financial system we have, it needs to be a system that’s pro innovation because..”*

### **The funding opportunity and Review Process**

- There was a specific discussion around the need to frame the funding opportunity broadly – to address large environment and wellbeing challenges to avoid research that may only help support marginal changes.
- Participants suggested that the review process needs to be examined, in particular it was noted that more “conventional” reviewers may not be suitable to review more radical proposals and that whole systems approaches require specialist reviews.
- Other suggestions for the process were to focus less on written proposals and more on verbal interviews, to have 2-stage approaches or sandpits in order to support more innovative and collaborative proposals.

*“what kills these kinds of inter and transdisciplinary and more radical proposals is they send them out to conventional reviewers who don’t really get it”*

## **Discussion Group 2**

In contrast to Discussion Group 1 which tended to focus on the need for ‘radical transformation’, participants in Discussion Group 2 (DG2) focused more on current politics and policy making, and the importance of ‘actionable evidence’.

The group discussion picked up on many of the ‘practical’ points made previously by survey respondents. Key points made by participants in DG2 are highlighted below.

### **Framing and Focus**

Participants noted that the focus of the funding theme was very broad and suggested it might focus on areas that may be of most value, or on specific sectors (e.g., energy, water or food), or specific challenges (e.g., a just transition to net zero).

*“You’ve got a very big, broad remit... there’s obviously a huge range of things that you could get from this. So it’s worth thinking through carefully if that’s what you want”*

### **Defining ‘Radical’**

It was noted that it should be made clear what is meant by ‘radical’ and how radical is radical.

*“So I’m comfortable thinking of [that] as quite radical, but you know there will be lots of people that would argue that that isn’t”*

### **Actionable Evidence**

Participants discussed the need for actionable evidence and practical solutions, which may involve community led research.

*“... ways in which you could start to kind of test that and gradually build up more evidence on whether it would actually work or not”*

### ***Interdisciplinarity and Co-production***

Participant discussed the importance of ensuring the funding opportunity would appeal to different disciplinary audiences and the importance of collaboration and co-production to engage and empower different audiences. It was suggested the funding theme may appeal to not only to academic audiences but also consultancies and agencies.

*“... would just advocate thinking very broadly and sort of promiscuously about the kinds of disciplines that are call like this could appeal to”*

### ***Politics and Government***

It was suggested it would be important to consider the timing of the call to be mindful of the political climate at the time at which the funding opportunity may come out.

*“I think it's important to think about the political moment we're at”*

### ***The funding opportunity – Urgency***

Finally, it was suggested that it may be worthwhile considering a different approach to commissioning research funding to support research that provides quick actionable insights that are urgently needed.

*“...try and innovate and commission research that produces actionable insights really, really quickly and urgently.”*

## **Part D – Conclusions and Considerations**

### **Summary Narrative**

These recommendations reflect the perspectives of the people who participated in the discussions and the survey. It should be noted that this was a small sample of voluntary participants and the findings may not necessarily reflect the wider research community.

- The academic literature on ‘innovative economic solutions and alternatives’ for sustainability includes a long and diverse list of relevant topics and approaches. One of the key

characteristics of this large literature is a discernible distinction between research which examines and emphasises pragmatic, implemental solutions within traditional economic frameworks and research which explores and advocates for more radical and transformative economic approaches.

- The online survey garnered 47 responses. Most respondents classified themselves as social scientists. Across the 4 main survey questions there was a diversity of perspectives and opinions expressed, reflecting the diversity of approaches and specialisms within academic economics and related social science disciplines. Within these responses there was a discernible separation between those respondents who expressed a preference for pragmatic, implementable reforms and those who sought more radical transformations.
- These different perspectives were also evident in the two Discussion Groups, with Discussion Group 1 reaching a general consensus on the need for truly transformative change, while Discussion Group 2 tended to emphasise the practicalities and specifics of policy implementation.
- Within the survey and during Discussion Group 1 a distinct position was articulated that emphasised the need to move beyond a focus on GDP growth, to re-imagine what the economy is and does, and to embrace and enable wholesale, systemic change. To this end, the funding theme, as currently defined, is perceived not nearly radical enough. Couched in the language of 'traditional' economics, it will not elicit truly innovative or transformative solutions and applications.
- Essential to the project of systemic change, is a need to adopt more systems based thinking and approaches. This means not just thinking cross-sectorally, but employing approaches that recognise the complex, inter-connected and interacting nature of economies, ecologies and societies.
- The funding theme was also perceived to need a broader and more explicitly interdisciplinary perspective, looking beyond the boundaries of economics to incorporate wider social science perspectives and insights on individual behaviour, social systems, cultural norms, power, governance, and place.
- Discussion Group 2 members were more likely to focus on practical and implementable innovations and outcomes. These 'pragmatists' highlighted the importance of research that produced 'actionable evidence' and impactful, measurable outcomes. They sought to understand and facilitate policy pathways and engage constructively with policy and decision makers.
- Relatedly, Discussion Group 2 also tended to focus on the 'specific', and on reform/innovation largely within the context of existing economic mechanisms and frameworks. Specific suggestions for topics to focus on, for example, included: green finance; work; regulation; land-use; risk/impact; business/organisational change.
- A degree of common ground between different perspectives was found in collective calls to recognise the value and necessity of collaborative, co-produced solutions. The importance of interdisciplinary working. Engaging with relevant communities, policy-makers and practitioners

throughout the different stages of research, from development to impact, was seen as crucial to the success of any future funding opportunity, regardless of its framing.

## Implications for the potential funding opportunity and considerations for the ESRC

- The above collective emphasis on collaboration and co-production necessitates a different kind of funding opportunity, one that accommodates and facilitates the co-productive process from scoping of the funding theme through to implementation and evaluation of outputs/outcomes.
- Discussion Group 1 also suggested the need to review various other elements of funding opportunity process, suggesting that a traditional peer review process could be an impediment to innovation. They also suggested that it was crucial that the proposal review process included both 'radical' economists and those interested in economies who sit outside of disciplinary economics.
- More generally, the two distinct 'radical' and 'pragmatic' perspectives that emerged in responses to the online survey and were especially evident in the different tone and emphasis of each Discussion Group, suggest it is worth the ESRC considering whether in fact, this funding theme might be best split into two separate funding opportunities. For some respondents the theme is already too broad and would benefit from a tighter more targeted focus on specific topics. For others it is too narrowly economic and needs to significantly widen its scope.
- A two funding opportunity option might include:
  - Theme 1 - Innovative Economic Solutions*
    - Targeted primarily at disciplinary economists
    - Looked at a range of very specific economy-sustainability topics/issues
    - Focused on innovation within existing economic frameworks
    - A strong emphasis on actionable evidence and practical implementation
  - Theme 2 - Alternative Economic Systems/Models*
    - Targeted more widely at heterodox economists and social scientists
    - Explored a variety of 'radical' alternative economic models/approaches for sustainability
    - Employed broader systems/nexus perspectives
    - Emphasised system transformations for sustainability and social justice
- Alternatively, a combined funding opportunity might look to do one of two things:
  - I. Find Common Ground. This approach frames a funding opportunity around finding the common ground in addressing sustainability challenges. It requires a careful balance between ambitious vision and practical implementation. It involves considering the broader context, understanding the complexities involved, and recognizing the potential for incremental progress while remaining open to more transformative actions when necessary.

- II. Accept a Two-Pronged Approach. This farming recognises the differences, and in some cases irreconcilability, of some elements of 'radical' and 'pragmatic' perspectives. The funding opportunity is broadly defined and there is no requirement to find common ground. Instead there is a recognition that in the context of net-zero, biodiversity and other sustainability challenges we need a broad spectrum of economic solutions, some more radical than others and some more practical than others.