

2024-2029 Communications Strategy

Purpose:

To deliver relevant and timely communications activities that highlight our interdisciplinary whole systems energy research, inform our key audiences and advance the understanding of the transition to a net zero energy system.

UKERC's Communications Strategy is aligned with our Engagement Strategy, making sure our key messages engage contacts in policy, industry, academia, civil society and the wider public.

The Communications function is based at Imperial College London. Its role is to coordinate messaging, media relations and digital channels across the UKERC consortium. It is underpinned by a commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion, ensuring that engagement is representative, accessible, and responsive to the needs and voices of underrepresented groups across the energy system.

1. Strategic Objectives

- **Mission alignment:** Elevate UKERC's profile as the UK's pre-eminent centre for interdisciplinary whole systems energy research, and champion research on delivering a secure, sustainable and just energy transition.
- **Targeted outcomes:** Support government, industry and civil society with evidence-based analysis on the challenges of decarbonisation, energy security, affordability and flexibility. We do this via our research themes on infrastructure delivery, system flexibility, energy justice, geopolitics, our public engagement observatory, and our research missions and responsive research work.
- **Maintain a strong brand identity,** ensuring that all activities consolidate this. This is achieved through brand templates and guidelines, circulated through a strong internal communications function, and supporting our researchers' speaking engagements, media interviews and other communication activities.

2. Key Audiences

- **Government:** UK Government, Scottish Government, Welsh Government, Northern Ireland Executive, and their representatives, , plus civil servants (e.g. DESNZ BEIS) and local authorities
- **Regulatory, Intermediary and Advisory bodies.**
- **Industry & Business:** Energy firms, industry and business associations (e.g. Energy UK, Energy Networks Association) supply chain actors, investors.

- **Civil society & NGOs:** Environmental NGOs, consumer groups, community energy networks.
- **Academic & Research community:** Consortium partners across UK universities, ECRs and UKRI stakeholders.

3. Core Values

- **Independence:** UKERC offers independent, whole systems research evidence to inform policy and practice. We are a trusted voice, valued across political, industry and civil society sectors
- **Interdisciplinarity:** Our members, based at thirteen UK universities, represent multiple disciplines, including engineering, economics, social science, psychology, geography and environmental sciences and many more
- **Whole Systems Perspective:** UKERC's research covers all parts of the energy system, including energy sourcing, supply, distribution and use, and across energy technology, economics, behaviours and governance
- **Relevance:** We deliver timely, responsive research, data and public engagement evidence that informs and shapes net zero and energy transitions.

4. Channels & Approaches

- **Publications:** Policy briefings, working papers, Research Reports, and flagship outputs (including UKERC's Annual Review of Energy Policy).
- **Events & Webinars:** Interactive sessions for stakeholders through digital webinars, and conferences, workshops and roundtables for academia and energy stakeholders.
- **Media:** Proactive and responsive press engagement, research insights and commentary blogs on topical themes, active presence across multiple digital platforms.
- **Digital platforms:** Maintain and grow our weekly newsletter (2,000+ subscribers), website and social media presence (19,000+ followers) to inform research and stakeholder communities, achieve research impact and continue to grow our audiences.
- **Internal engagement:** Internal communications, webinars and meetings to foster cross-institution understanding and collaboration, and the diversity and inclusiveness of our community
- **Accessibility standards:** For UKERC communications to meet all accessibility standards.
- **External engagement:** UKERC is a cornerstone of the UK energy research community. We disseminate and network sector news and developments, including events, career and funding opportunities, primarily through our website and weekly newsletter

5. Reporting and Continuous Improvement

- All of UKERC's work will be distilled through **the Key Performance Indicators** identified by UKRI.

- UKERC will **regularly report** these KPIs to funders on an annual basis
- **Regular reviews** of reporting and feedback to optimise messaging and channels.
- **Flexible planning** aligned with emerging research and policy developments, consultation opportunities and the Responsive Research Theme and New Partners Capability and Development Fund.
- **Learning loops:** survey outcomes, stakeholder suggestions (e.g., Advisory Board) and analytics inform strategy updates, including biannual website reviews.

6. Rapid Response

- Established rapid response protocol to respond to urgent policy developments, including emerging calls for evidence from UK and devolved governments.
- Named spokespersons and a clear internal sign-off process ensure timely and respected communications.

