



**Economic  
and Social  
Research Council**



### **ESRC Policy Fellowships 2023: Opportunity Description**

**Fellowship Title:** Department for the Economy - Evaluating Innovation Policy Research Fellowship

**Host Department:** Department for the Economy, NICS <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/>

**Host Team:** Analytical Services Division.

**Summary:** Opportunity to work with the Department for the Economy to drive a step change in approach to the evaluation of the Department's 10x Innovation Policy, creating an evidence base to understand the true impact of innovative, inclusive and green growth and to aid future decision-making.

**Fellowship Theme:** Data and Evaluation. *Please see the full call text 'What We Are Looking For' for a detailed summary of the research themes targeted in this call.*

**Policy topic:** Evaluation of innovation policy to drive innovation led, sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

**Relevant academic disciplines:** Behavioural Economics, Data and Evaluation, Impact Evaluation, Statistical Research and Methodology for Impact Evaluation, Measurement of Innovation Policy.

**Relevant research career stage:** Early and/or Mid-Career Professionals.

### **Fellowship Structure**

#### **Inception Phase:**

Estimated Start Date: To be agreed with fellow/ESRC.

Duration: 3 months

FTE: 0.4

#### **Core placement phase:**

Duration: 12 months

FTE (range): 0.6-1 FTE

#### **Knowledge Exchange phase:**

Duration: 3 months.

FTE (range): 0.2-0.4 FTE

### **Work Arrangements**

**Location requirements:** Hybrid working available. Office attendance arrangements will be agreed with the successful applicant. Some presence at, The Department for the Economy, Adelaide House, Adelaide Street, Belfast, would be preferred.

**Necessary level of security clearance:** [Basic Personnel Security Standard checks \(BPSS\)](#), usually takes around 6 weeks. We would expect the successful applicant to start the security clearance application process, with support from the host team, as soon as their Fellowship has been confirmed by ESRC. Ideally the security clearance process would be completed before the inception phase begins. See [National security vetting: clearance levels - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

### **Fellowship Opportunity Description**

The Department for the Economy has a wide remit including responsibility for; wider economic policy (energy, tourism and telecoms), range of employment and skills programmes, oversight and funding of the further and higher education sectors and various aspects of employment law.

In May 2021 the Department published an ambitious Economic Vision “A 10X Economy”. This document sets out Northern Ireland’s plan for a decade of innovation, underpinned by three key pillars of achieving innovation led, inclusive and sustainable growth. The Department has developed a set of internationally comparable and underpinning metrics against each of these 3 pillars by which the achievement of the strategy can be measured. Programme and policy objectives are currently being developed to understand and measure the contribution of our department and partner organisations to meeting these policy objectives.

It is a key aim of the Department to understand, at an impact level, the true contribution and difference 10X policies, projects and interventions have made on the everyday lives of citizens in NI.

The fellow would aim to emulate the work of the “What Works Centres” in England and the ESRC funded Wales Centre for Public Policy, to begin to adopt an impact-based approach to evaluating the Department for the Economy’s 10X Strategy. The approach developed by the fellow would focus on the extent to which the intended outcomes of innovation led, inclusive and green growth have occurred and how this has improved the standard of living, wellbeing of society, and the environment. The Department would envisage a co-ordinated, consistent, and practical approach to scoping and designing an evaluation approach using new and innovative techniques to understanding the true impact of a wide range of policy-based interventions.

The fellow will have the opportunity to co-design clear research tasks in collaboration with officials in government based on policy needs and the fellow’s interests/skills during the inception phase of the fellowship.

### **Objectives**

- Undertake research to inform the development of a robust approach to evaluating the department’s impact and communicate and agree this approach with senior leaders and policy makers.
- Research a departmental evaluation framework to guide the creation and collection of data across all business areas to ensure quality, consistent outcomes-based evaluation approach.
- Research possibilities of a thematic approach to impact evaluation that combines the three priority growth pillars - innovative, green, and inclusive economic growth.
- Use expertise in evaluation methods to provide advice to policy teams on appropriate statistical methodologies required to measure the impact of innovation programmes or projects and determine if they can be applied to priority 10x projects.
- Support the development of evaluation capability across the department.

### **Anticipated benefits**

- Understanding the true impact of policy interventions and its impact on the economy, the environment and on society.
- Support Departmental decision making and provide trusted, impartial advice on performance measurement and program improvements.
- Inform future spending decisions enhancing value for money.
- The development of more efficient and effective departmental programmes and projects.

### **Anticipated benefits to the fellow:**

- Experience of developing and implementing evaluation approaches and techniques in a complex policy environment.
- Opportunity to inform decision making and the prioritisation of resources within the host department and wider public sector.
- Opportunity to build relationships with policy and analytical professionals within the host department and the wider NI public sector at a senior leadership level.

### **Person Specification**

Applications will be assessed against the following opportunity-specific requirements in addition to the generic eligibility and call criteria.

#### **Essential Criteria:**

- A proven academic track record in a relevant discipline (Behavioural Economics, Data and Evaluation, Impact Evaluation, Statistical Research and Methodology for Impact Evaluation, Measurement of Innovation Policy).
- Subject matter interest and expertise (Innovation Policy, Economic Development, Productivity, Green Growth, Social Inclusion).
- A passion for evidence-based policy making.
- Evaluation expertise in methods such as (but not limited to) Experimental Designs, Quasi-Experimental Designs and Theory Based Evaluation (including logic models and Theory of Change).
- Ability to turn expert knowledge into practical and helpful advice.

#### **Desirable Criteria:**

- Experience of evaluation design in a complex policy environment.
- Experience of assessing the quality of evaluations and decipher from them credible lessons on “what works” to shape future actions.
- Ability to work along side others and support their development and capability.