



Department
for Environment,
Food & Rural Affairs



UK Research
and Innovation

What Works Centre for a Climate Resilient UK

Applicant Webinar

Thursday 8 October 2026, 10:00-11:30

Centre partners:



Department of
Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs

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Housekeeping

- **Recording:** This session will be recorded and published on the Funding Finder.
- **Chat:** If you would like to introduce yourself, please do so in the chat now.
- **Questions:** please submit via Live Q&A (can like & up-vote) and FAQ document will be published on Funding Finder.
- If you have any questions following the webinar, email the team directly environment@esrc.ukri.org



Agenda

1. Scene-setting: the policy landscape

Lee Davies and Caroline Booth, Defra

2. The funding opportunity: a high-level overview and how to apply

Susie Stevenson and Andrew Telford, ESRC

3. Introduction to the What Works Network (WWN)

Molly Scott, Cabinet Office

4. B2Match Partnership Platform

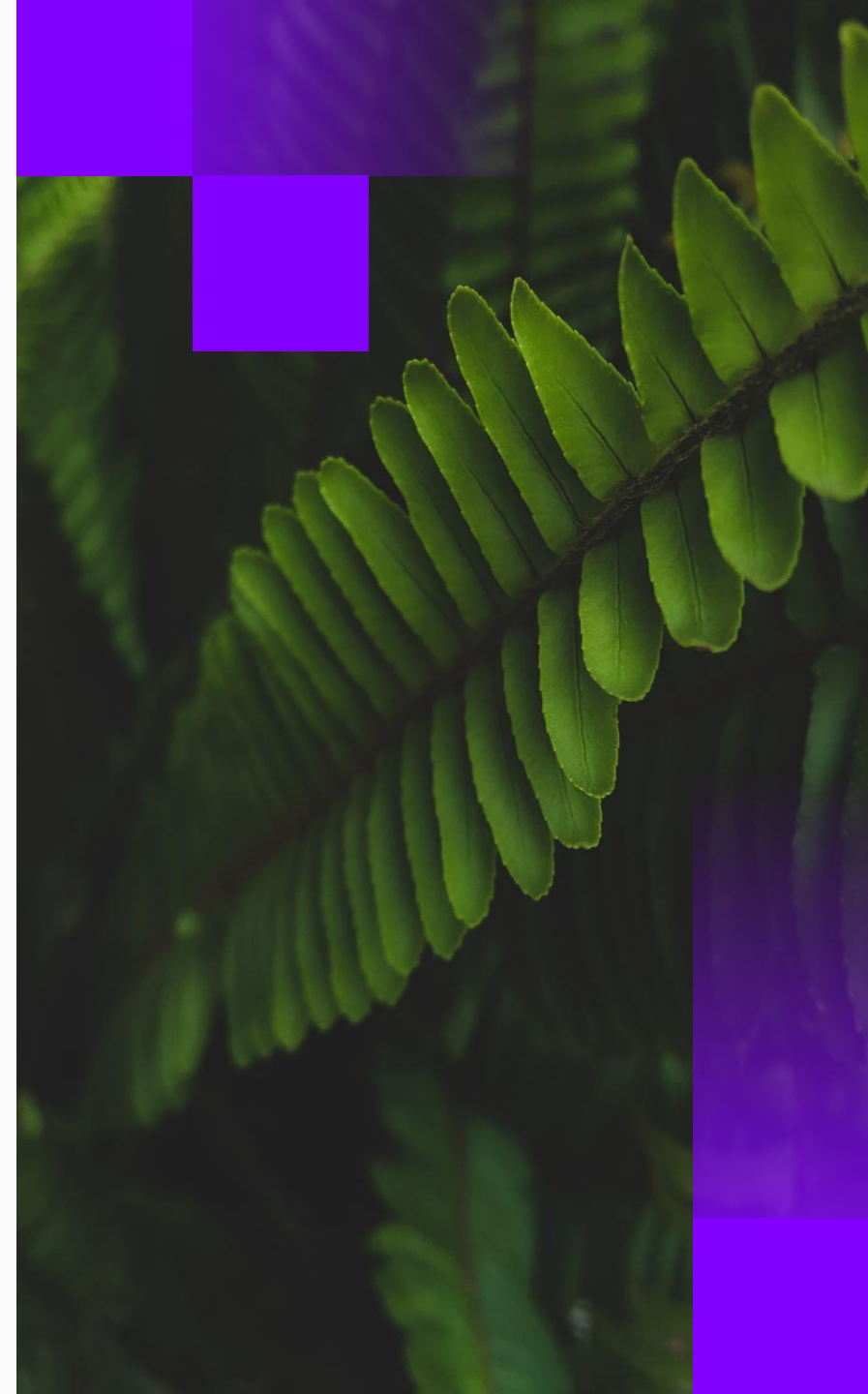
Georgia Aristide-Oke, Innovate UK Business Connect

5. Q&A

Jen Gold, ESRC & Panel

6. Close and next steps

Jen Gold, ESRC





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Scene-setting: the policy landscape

**Lee Davies, Deputy Director Climate Adaptation and Rural
Communities, Defra**

Caroline Booth, Head of Climate Adaptation Evidence, Defra



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Policy Landscape and Background



Rising risk

The CCC warns impacts are worsening faster than expected and current adaptation is insufficient.



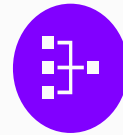
Statutory responsibility

Each Government is responsible for adaptation planning and reporting under the Climate Change Act 2008 or Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009.



The evidence gap

Climate risks are better understood, but there is less evidence on adaptation action, particularly on what works in the UK, its value for money, or who benefits.



A gap in the network

No existing What Works Centre covers climate or environment, despite being so cross cutting, and the scale of action needed.

Our vision and approach for the centre



Generate robust evidence



Implementation and scalability



Pilots and trials of real-world interventions



Place based and context specific adaptation



Interdisciplinary skills



Mobilisation of evidence



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The funding opportunity: a high-level overview

Susie Stevenson

Head of Environment, ESRC



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Key high-level details

- The What Works Centre for a Climate Resilient UK will transform how the UK adapts, and builds resilience to, the current and projected impacts of climate change
- The maximum funder contribution of your centre can be up to £21.1 million
- Funding is for a single award
- The grant must start by 1 August 2027 and run for 44 months
- Your application must set out how the centre will deliver against What Works Network membership requirements

Objectives

- Convene stakeholders and identify evidence needs
- Generate and synthesis trusted evidence
- Mobilise, test, accelerate and scale effective actions
- Advance adaptation evaluation practice
- Strengthen capacity and capability



Topics

1. Healthy natural environment and food systems
2. Thriving places
3. Services and infrastructure

Cross-cutting themes

- Collaborative working to translate evidence insights into improved delivery of actions
- Co-production and decision making, including underrepresented voices
- Adaptation at scale and at different scales
- Place-based adaptation
- Equity, vulnerability, and 'just resilience'
- Routes, costs and value for money for climate adaptation investment
- Systems of adaptation governance and accountability
- Co-benefits, barriers and interdependencies of climate adaptation interventions

Relevant investments



Policy fellow database of fellows



METIUS



THE AGILE INITIATIVE'S SPRINTS



Place-based approaches to sustainable living

Outcomes

- High quality, trusted adaptation evidence of relevance to the UK is actively sought and routinely used to inform decision making
- Effective adaptation interventions are generated, tested, scaled and adopted more efficiently
- Adaptation governance and investment decisions become more evidence led
- Adaptation action better addresses vulnerability and inequality associated with climate risks
- Organisations systematically evaluate adaptation interventions using high-quality trusted evidence and common evaluation standards
- A stronger culture of adaptation learning and sharing of best practice emerges across the UK



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The funding opportunity: how to apply

Andrew Telford

Senior Research Portfolio Manager, ESRC



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The application process: key dates

Stage	Timeline	
Closing date	15th December 2026 – 4:00pm UK time	Project Lead submits full application via the UKRI Funding Service
Applicants informed of interview	Mid-March 2027	Panel of experts will review your application. Candidates will be informed of their shortlisting outcome and, if successful, interview date.
Interviews	WC 12 April 2027	Virtual interviews held
Final decision	Mid-May 2027	Shortlisted applicants notified of their funding outcomes.
Project start	1 August 2027	Project must start by this date

Applicant eligibility

Project Lead

- Must be based at a UK research organisation eligible for UKRI funding, for the duration of the grant.
- Applicants can only hold a Project Lead role on **one** application

Project Co-Lead

- **At least one** Project Co-Lead **must** be from business, the third sector or government bodies based in the UK.
- Applications can also include Project Co-Leads based in non-UK research organisations.
- Project Co-Leads can be involved in **no more than two** applications.
- Defra and Devolved Government partners cannot be named as a Project Co-Lead or Project Partner on any application.

Enabling meaningful collaboration between research and stakeholder communities

To enable the meaningful involvement of key stakeholders, critical for the centre's effective operation.

As an exception:

- More than 30% of total costs can be allocated to non-academic partners
- The combined time commitment of research staff from non-academic partners can also exceed one year FTE.
- This **must** be clearly justified in your application.

Target Audience:

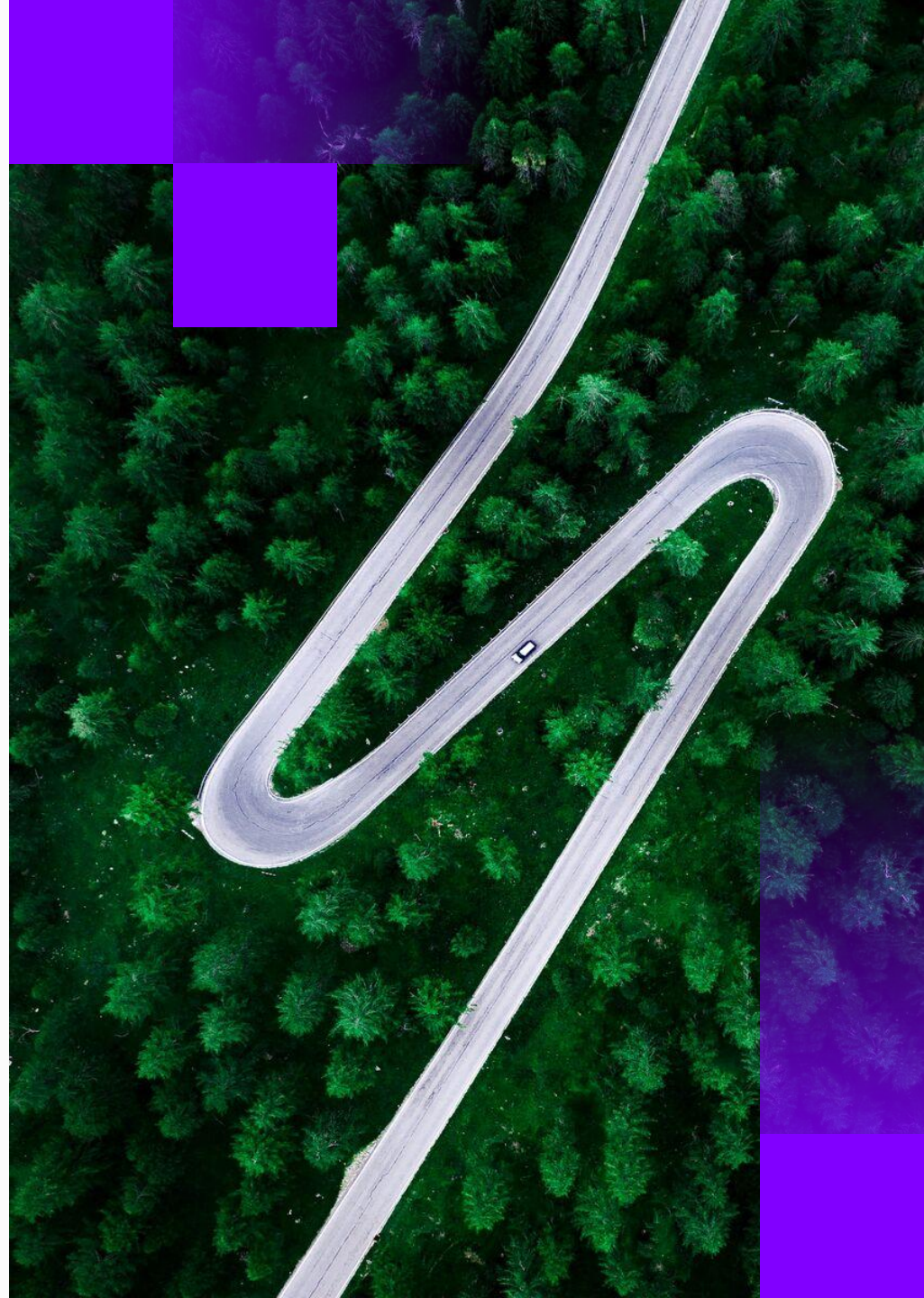
- UK Government and Devolved Governments (the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland, Scottish Government and Welsh Government)
- The centre will work collaboratively across government departments.
- Wider audiences include: local and combined authorities, non-departmental public bodies, environmental public bodies, regulators, scientific organisations, households, communities, land managers, businesses and third sector organisations.

Expected skills and expertise

- Understanding of climate risk and climate resilience
- Interdisciplinarity
- Co-production and engagement across sectors
- Understanding of the climate policy landscape across the UK
- Evidence standards and evaluation methods
- Communication and influencing
- Collaborative mindset, leadership and engagement
- Creating, cultivating and leading high-performing teams

What assessors are looking for

- A clear and compelling vision
- A coherent and well-structured approach to the programme of work
- An experienced applicant and team, with capability to realise the investment ambitions
- Generation, synthesis and mobilisation of evidence to inform and accelerate adaptation pilots, interventions and actions
- Meaningful, collaborative working with partners and stakeholders, supported by strong governance
- Embedding environmental sustainability within the Centre
- Justification of the resources requested



Programme budget and spend profile

- The total funder contribution can be up to **£21.1 million** (funding is for a single award).
- Funders will pay **80% of the Full Economic Cost** of the application, with any exceptions paid at 100%, up to £21.1 million total funder contribution.
- This investment will receive a non-standard funding profile with financial limits for each year. Your application is required to plan activities in accordance with this budget profile which sets out the total funder contribution.

Funding profile and financial limits

Financial Limits per financial year	
Financial year	Financial limit
2027/2028	£1.9 million
2028/2029	£4.65 million
2029/2030	£9.2 million
2030/2031	£5.35 million

- The What Works Centre will be funded by Defra and UKRI. UKRI funding is via the Emerging Government Priorities programme and the Climate Adaptation, Environment and Resilience programme
- Funding remains subject to final business case approval and future Spending Review settlements.
- If the successful application is not within these annual budget limits, they will be required to recalculate costs to ensure it is within the total budget and financial limits for each financial year.

What we will not fund

- Proposals which duplicate the work of other funders and partners' investments relating to climate resilience
- Proposals which employ only quantitative or only qualitative research methods
- Clinical trials
- Associated studentships
- Flexible fund pots (as defined in the ESRC Research Funding Guide)



Where to find help

- For help and advice on costings and writing your proposal please first contact your research office, with sufficient time.
- For questions related to this specific funding opportunity please contact environment@esrc.ukri.org
- Any queries regarding the system or the submission of applications through The Funding Service should be directed to the helpdesk.
 - Email: support@funding-service.ukri.org
 - Phone: 01793 547490



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Introduction to the What Works Network (WWN)

Molly Scott, Senior Evaluation Adviser, Evaluation Task Force (Cabinet Office)



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The What Works Approach in Government

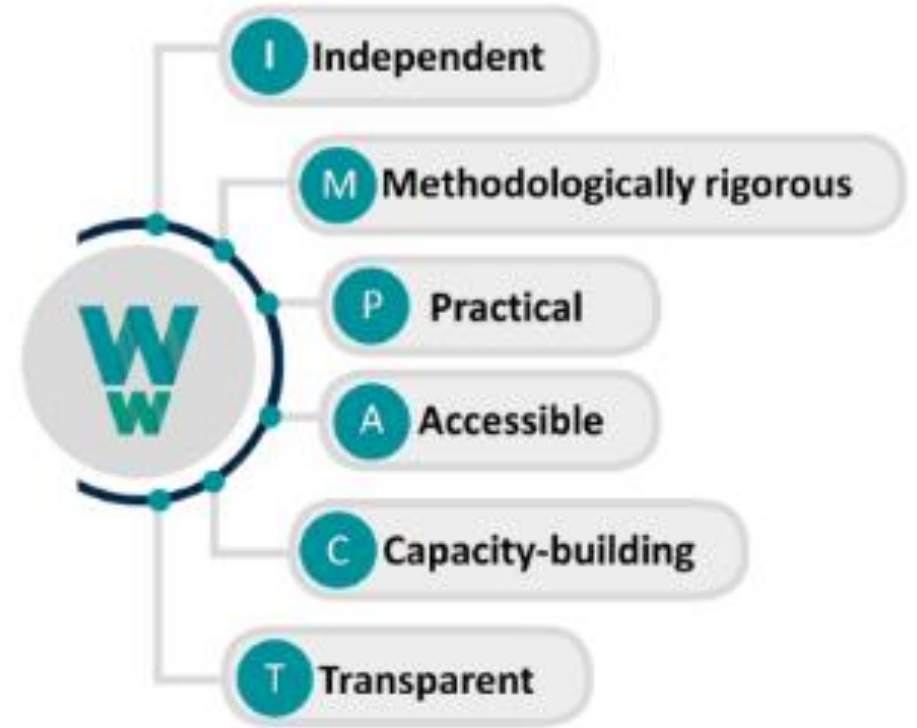
The What Works Network is a group of 12 independent What Works Centres, that aim to improve how Government uses evidence in decisions. Most are charities or social purpose companies.

Membership criteria:

- Commitment to 6 'IMPACT' principles
- All centres are committed to increasing the supply of and demand for evidence in their policy areas through:
 - Generation of evidence on what works
 - Translation of evidence in an accessible way
 - Encouraging evidence uptake

Joining process:

- Develop EOI, with support from Evaluation Task Force
- Present to current WWC CEOs, who will vote.



Further guidance:

- [What Works Network membership requirements](#)
- [What Works Network strategy](#)
- [Key considerations around setting up a WWC](#)
- Contact etf@cabinetoffice.gov.uk – we can help.



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B2Match Partnership Platform

Georgia Aristide-Oke, Knowledge Transfer Manager – Net Zero
Innovate UK Business Connect



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Overview

The B2Match partnership platform aims to facilitate partnership development and consortium building for prospective applicants to the What Works Centre for a Climate Resilient UK competition.

This platform provides a dedicated space for you to:

- **Showcase Your Expertise:** Create a profile highlighting your skills, experience, and project interests in line with the competition's scope and objectives.
- **Discover Potential Partners:** Browse profiles of other registered participants seeking collaboration on proposals.
- **Identify Complementary Skills:** Find organizations and individuals with the specific knowledge and capabilities to enhance your consortium.
- **Facilitate Direct Connections:** Easily reach out to promising partners and initiate discussions about potential collaborations.
- **Increase Your Chances of Success:** By connecting with the right partners, you can build stronger, more competitive proposals for the competition.

What Work's Centre for a Climate Resilient UK
1 Oct – 15 Dec 2026

INFO

NETWORKING GUIDE

What Work's Centre for a Climate Resilient UK

1 October 2026 - 15 December 2026

Register now

Registration open until 15 Dec 2026

How it works

1. Register & Create Your Profile

- You will need to **Register** in order to join the partnership platform page and start finding potential collaborators.
- It's quick and easy to do. You will be invited to introduce yourself – outline what you are looking for in a partner, highlight what you can offer, select your area of interest aligned with the competition themes and specify your location.
- Your profile is your first impression on the platform – make it count! A strong profile boosts your visibility and helps you attract more of the right connections.



b2match Demo Day >
20–22 July 2026
Vienna, Austria

- ☒ Create an account
- ☐ Participation type
- ☐ Attendance type
- ☐ Complete your profile
- ☐ Plan your schedule

Create new Account
or [log in](#) with your existing b2match account

Your email address

Password

First name*

Last name*



b2match Demo Day >
20–22 July 2026
Vienna, Austria

- ☒ Create an account
- ☒ Participation type
- ☒ Attendance type
- ☒ Complete your profile
- ☐ Organisation details
- ☐ Plan your schedule

Complete your profile

Profile image



[Change profile image](#) [Delete](#)

Your profile picture should be a JPG, PNG, or GIF file, and it should not be larger than 800 kb.

Occupation

Pitch

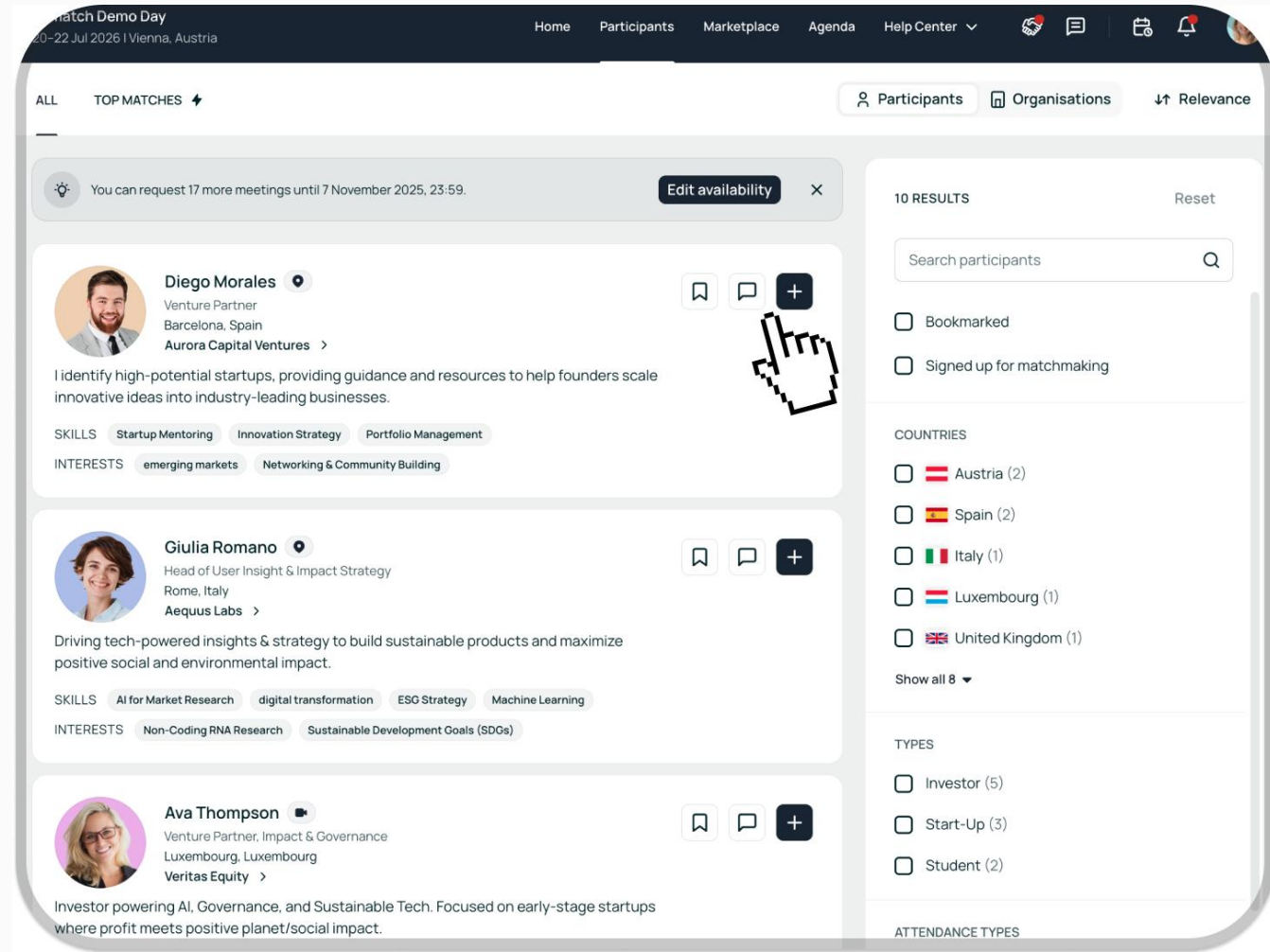
Introduce yourself to other participants with a short summary.

Country*

How it works

2. Explore the Participant Directory

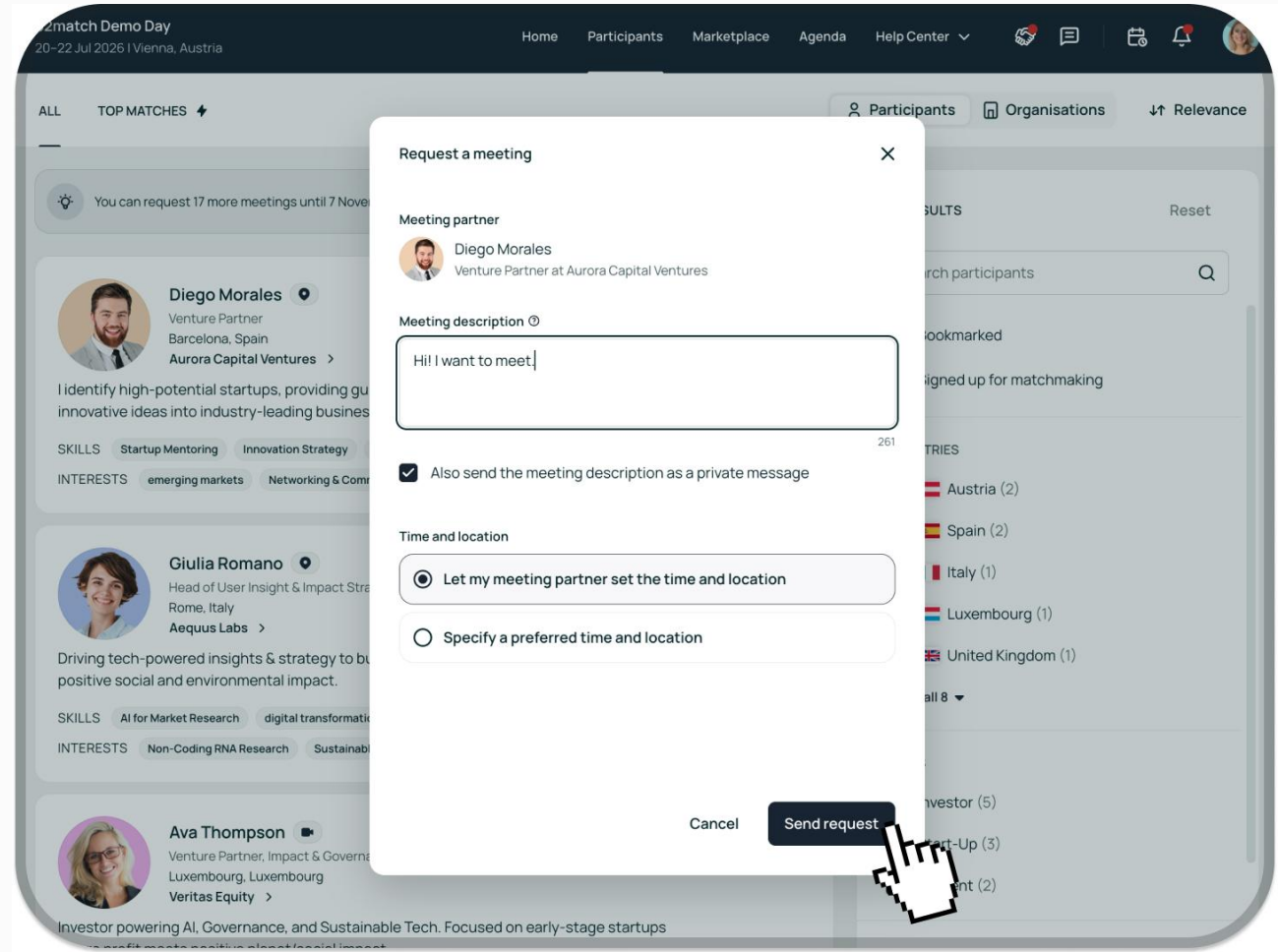
- The platform's matchmaking tool helps you find the most promising contacts.
- Browse the participant list, use filters, or check your AI Profile recommendations to discover partners that match your interests.
- Engaging with suggested profiles can lead to valuable connections and unexpected opportunities.



How it works

3. Connect & Meet

- Start connecting with potential partners right away through a chat message, or by directly requesting a 1-on-1 meeting.
- When requesting a meeting, include a short description of what you'd like to discuss to enhance the acceptance rate of your request.
- Make the most of the structured one-on-one sessions by sending and accepting meeting requests that fit your goals. Being proactive helps turn these brief, focused meetings into valuable, long-term collaborations.



Sign up to the platform now

- Register today to create your profile and start finding potential collaborators for your proposal.
- The platform also contains a **networking tutorial video** along with an **FAQ's guide** to support you in navigating the system.
- For any queries about the networking platform, please get in touch:

georgia.aristide-oke@iukbc.org.uk

jordan.meadows@iukbc.org.uk



Scan the QR code



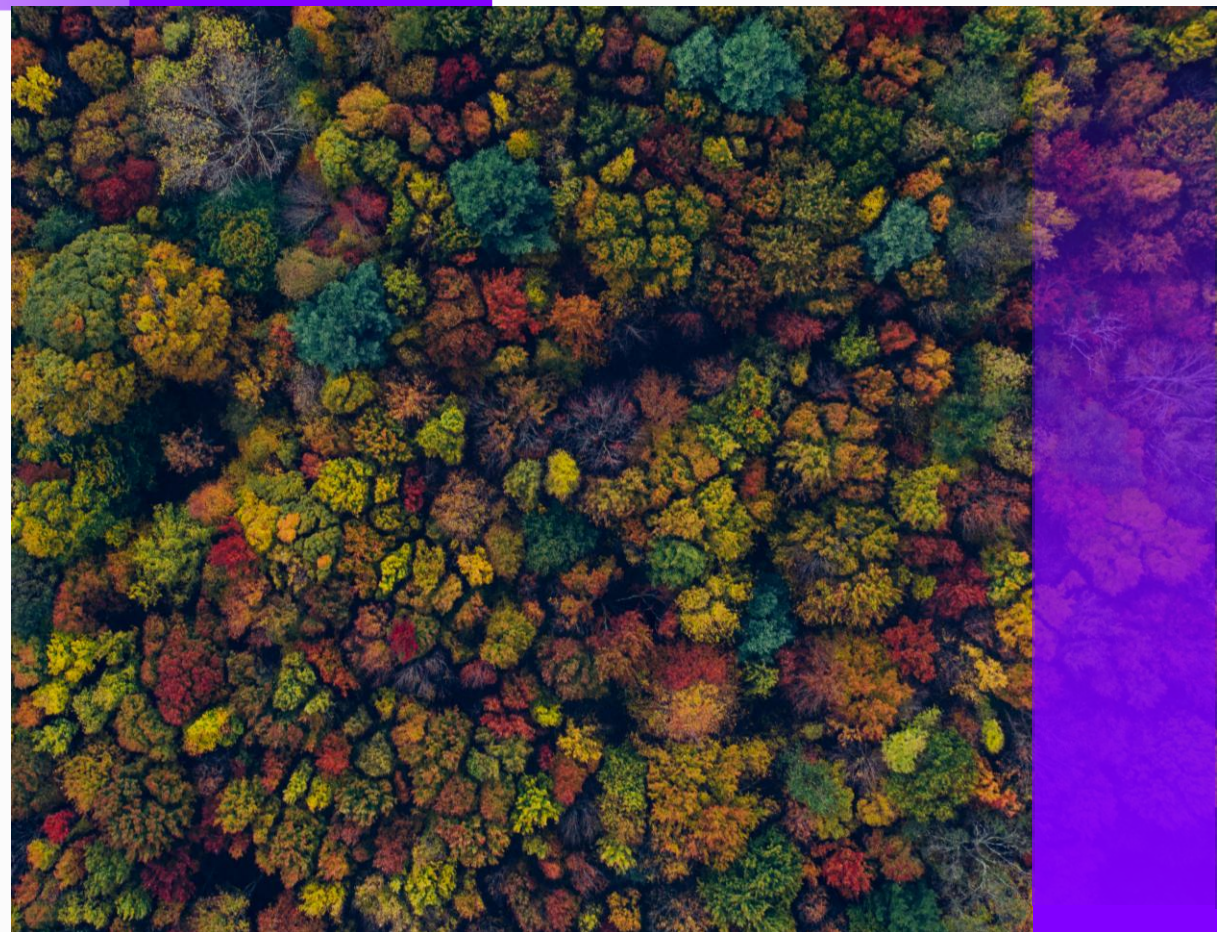
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Q&A

Facilitated by Jen Gold, Director
of Research, ESRC



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Next Steps

- Recording and FAQ document: will be published on the Funding Finder.
- Contact details, of all those who were happy for their details to be shared, will be made available on the Funding Finder.
- Application deadline: 15 December 2026 4:00pm UK time.
- Contact mailbox:
environment@esrc.ukri.org

Thank you!

