

Planning for Impact:

A one-day learning-by-doing workshop for early career researchers

Context

The energy sector is being transformed. New solutions are being created as various organisations seek to address society's demand for energy in ways that reduce its environmental footprint. The ones that are successful are those that are also reliable, affordable & engaging. This creates opportunities for researchers - working with those organisations and individuals who are seeking to deliver innovative, low carbon energy solutions.

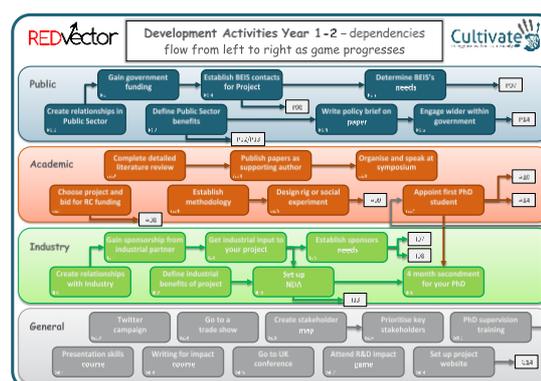
Delivering low carbon energy is not just about technology, it's about policy, economics, society and the business models that bring all of these together. Responses to these opportunities and the evidence that supports them are all available from you as university researchers - and delivering this knowledge is an excellent route to creating impact from your work.

The Game



This one-day workshop is designed to give you experience of identifying, prioritising and managing relationships with those needing your research outputs. The main activity in the workshop is a business game designed with input from the EPSRC and other academic colleagues to ensure realism. It will give you experience of making effective decisions around stakeholder engagement, delivering effective communication of your work and, of course, designing and delivering high quality research projects...whilst having fun!

On the day you will work in a small team with colleagues who have different levels of research experience. The simulated research environment will take you through 5 years of an energy-related research career, starting from the point at which you are awarded your PhD. You will be given resources (time and funding) which you will have to spend wisely to build influence and academic excellence with the aim of maximising your research impact through engagement with other academics, industry and government. Various elements of chance will influence how your careers progress, based on what you do with the opportunities these 'chances' create for you.



Learning Outcomes

If delivering impact from your research is new to you, this workshop will help you to gain a basic understanding of the concepts and help you to make your research more effective. If you are a more experienced practitioner, this workshop will allow you to test impact delivery concepts in a safe environment. Whatever your level of experience this workshop is designed to provide you with greater confidence in your current practices and new ways of thinking about planning for impact. The rich learning experience will allow you to explore the following aspects of delivering impact from your research:

- The importance of taking an 'impact-based' approach to project development
- Creating effective research 'outcomes' not just project 'outputs'
- Working out who to engage with to achieve outcomes
- Defining benefits for stakeholders that meet their needs
- Developing key relationships to deliver the greatest impact
- Clarifying objectives and prioritising actions

In addition to these the business game environment is a safe and fun place to develop and enhance personal skills such as:

- Team work
- Negotiating skills
- Presentation skills
- Strategic thinking
- Stakeholder management

Agenda

Morning (9:30-12:30)

Introduction: University
Talk: Planning for impact
Talk: Energy system challenges
Explanation: Game rules
Game: Setup and Year 1

Lunch (12:30-1:30)

...and development of research proposals

Afternoon (1:30-4:30)

Game: Years 2-5
Analysis: Interactive feedback

Your Facilitators

Andy Boston is director of Red Vector Ltd, an independent energy consultancy specialising in modelling energy systems and delivering interactive learning. Before that he headed up the Analysis Team at Energy Research Partnership - a forum for government, industry, academia and the third sector to tackle the big issues arising from the decarbonisation of the energy sector.

Prior to his role at ERP he was Technical Head of Energy Systems at E.ON's Technology Centre, overseeing the low carbon, energy modelling and optimisation fields. He read Physics at Oxford and is a Chartered Engineer.

Andy pioneered the use of business games within E.ON, designing and delivering 20-30 events, some for external clients. These had a range of purposes, some were for testing strategies or exploring new market rules, others were run as team building exercises, or for training new staff.



Dr Mike Colechin is director of Cultivate Innovation Ltd, ...working with the organisations and individuals who are delivering innovative, low carbon energy solutions.

Prior to setting up Cultivate, Mike worked as Partnership Manager for the Energy Technologies Institute (ETI), an organisation that brings together engineering projects to accelerate innovation and help the UK meet its long-term energy objectives. He still delivers this role on a part-time basis, ensuring that the ETI creates value for its funders (both public and private) and the wider community of industry, public sector and academic players involved in energy in the UK. This is about informing policy, supporting companies developing the solutions, and building investor and industry confidence in new approaches to energy.

Mike is a Chartered Mechanical Engineer with over 20 years' experience in the energy sector. Prior to joining the ETI, he spent 15 years with E.ON, first as a Combustion Engineer and subsequently as a member of E.ON's R&D Management Team.