

Research Associate in economics supporting the Cambridge Zero Policy Forum (part-time)

This is an exciting opportunity for an economist researcher looking to work across academic disciplines to improve climate policy and be involved in writing a report. The [Cambridge Zero Policy Forum](#) is hiring a second, part-time, temporary researcher to work on a report looking at whether supporting green investment for the UK is really a growth strategy. The report is led by economist [Dimitri Zenghelis](#) (lead author on the Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change, commissioned by the then Chancellor Gordon Brown) in collaboration with academics and policy specialists from other disciplines. The report is intended for policy makers involved in climate policy in the UK over the coming decade.

Scope of work

The Research Associate will work with the Cambridge Zero Policy Forum team on the development of the report under the direction of Dimitri Zenghelis.

The report will assess whether delaying the transition from a fossil fuel to a low carbon economy will cost the UK more in the long run, through lost economic opportunities and increased economic risks. The report will propose steering a shift to future proofed public and private investment, as well as propose using Risk-Opportunity Analysis (ROA) as a key tool for guiding strategic decisions. The report will use multidisciplinary input to assist greater policy engagement on the strategic urgency and the value of ROA. Existing evidence will be used to bring to life approaches to managing big structural change, noting that such transitions cannot accurately be evaluated by traditional Cost-Benefit Analysis.

This approach is in keeping with current central government guidance. Appendix 7 of the [Green Book](#), “Transformation, Systems and Dynamic Change”, states that “research and analysis which considers transformational possibilities needs to consider wider systemic effects and do so with an awareness of dynamic changes in the ways that parts of the system behave in relation to each other” e.g. uncertainty, risk, tipping points, and irreversible feedback effects relating to the structure of the economy. The report will consider that a key challenge with this approach is that the social disruption and investment spending is upfront and known, whereas the opportunities are less certain and extend into the future. The policy is therefore perceived as risky, on the basis of partial consideration of the risks.

The report will also identify the needs on the ground of institutions like HM Treasury, and help to foster common understanding on big strategic questions and challenges around net zero, to support a strategic clean growth plan. See below for relevant background reading.

Tasks

- Perform literature review and analysis involving different academic fields and other relevant sources.
- Support work on modelling for policy appraisal of the risks and opportunities of the net zero transition.
- Draft and assist with editing the final policy orientated report.
- Support report development workshops with materials, briefings, output notes and summaries.
- Compile and map key strategic players in delivering net zero in the UK, and identify which institutions need to adjust their capabilities (e.g. governance, skills, data and data collection methods).
- Utilise data and economic models.

- Present and explain environmental economic concepts to those working outside the field, if required.
- Clearly communicate and explain ideas to other members of the team and wider stakeholders.
- Draft report sections involving text, data and visuals delivered within schedule.
- Prepare notes and meeting materials.
- Perform other ad hoc tasks that may arise.

Person specification

- Expertise in economic theory and/or sustainable public and private finance (essential)
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills (essential)
- Good planning and project management skills (essential)
- Ability to manage own workload and prioritise competing tasks (essential)
- Strong stakeholder management skills (essential)
- The ability to incorporate multidisciplinary input (essential)

Assignment details

Up to 20 days between May 2024 – July 2024

Grade 7 RA (£18.81/hour)

As this is a temporary assignment with limited funding, it will be administered through the University of Cambridge's Temporary Employment Service. Cambridge Zero will advertise the assignment and interview candidates and the successful candidate will be asked to register with the Temporary Employment Service.

There is the possibility of further work through to December 2024 but this is wholly dependent upon funding, which has not been secured.

The appointee will need to be resident in the UK for duration of this assignment.

The University has a legal responsibility to ensure that all its employees have the legal right to live and work in the UK. Therefore, if you are made an offer of employment, this will be subject to the University verifying that you are eligible to work in the UK before you start work.

Please complete the [form](#) and email a CV and covering letter to info@zero.cam.ac.uk setting out how your skills and experience meet the requirements in the role profile. Applicants will be assessed as to how well their skills and experience meet the requirements.

The closing date for submissions is midnight on Sunday 5 May 2024. Please apply as soon as possible as interviews will be conducted on a rolling basis. Only applicants who meet the essential criteria will be interviewed.

Suggested readings for context:

An introductory article from Dimitri, which reviews Simon Sharpe's book Five Times Faster: The Economy Is a Flexible Ecosystem, Not A Rigid Machine. We Must Shape It. (forbes.com)

Ekins, P. and Zenghelis, D. 2022, "The costs and benefits of environmental sustainability' paper wins Outstanding Article Award". University College, London

Geels et al. 2021. 'Productivity opportunities and risks in a transformative, low-carbon and digital age'. The productivity Institute.

<https://www.productivity.ac.uk/publications/productivityopportunities-and-risks-inatransformative-low-carbon-and-digital-age>

