

# Place-based climate action network (P-CAN): delivering energy and climate policy at the city level in the UK

## The vision

The Place-based Climate Action Network (P-CAN) is about translating climate policy into action “on the ground” in our communities. Through P-CAN, we will stimulate a vital flow, operationalising the Paris Agreement, UK targets and individual city ambitions to deliver place-based impact, resulting in healthier, more prosperous and resilient cities while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Innovations in governance and finance will ensure the flow also spreads laterally, informing learning, creating connections and building momentum. The aim is to establish a network for climate action embedded in localities that is agile, effective and sustainable and, working in partnership with local authorities, to build broader capacity to effect transformative change. Our vision is for P-CAN to produce a replicable model that delivers climate policies on a global-to-local scale, facilitating and inspiring places across the UK.

## The project

The Place-based Climate Action Network is an ESRC-supported Network that brings together the research community and decision-makers in the public, private and third sectors. It consists of **five innovative platforms** to facilitate two-way, multi-level engagement between researchers and stakeholders. These platforms are three city-based “climate commissions” and two theme-based platforms.

The five-year project is led by an experienced team of researchers with strong track records of engaging with public, private and third-sector decision-makers. P-CAN builds on the policy connections, networking capacity and research strengths of its host institutions: the ESRC Centre for Climate Change Economics and Policy (hosted by the London School of Economics and Political Science and the University of Leeds), the Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Innovation, and the Centre for the Study of Risk and Inequality at Queen’s University Belfast.

## Motivation

The key to implementing climate action lies increasingly at the local level, with the participation of local actors, businesses and citizens. This is recognised and championed by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the UK Committee on Climate Change. The aim of P-CAN is to strengthen links between national and international climate policies and their local delivery. Clear policy signals by the UK Government remain essential, but the important decisions about low-carbon business opportunities, renewable energy investment, urban transport, energy management, buildings efficiency and the management of climate risks are decentralised, giving opportunities and scope for climate action.

## Network components

The Place-based Climate Action Network is about engagement, impact, and the co-creation and sharing of knowledge. The Network has the following components:

1. **Place-based energy and climate commissions:** We will develop three city-level climate commissions, in Belfast, Edinburgh and Leeds. The concept is already being piloted in Leeds as an innovative structure for sustained two-way, multi-level engagement between national and local policies and practices. We will work on the replication of these commissions in other cities and local context to further broaden our reach.
2. **Thematic platforms:** There will be two theme-based platforms, on **business** and **finance**. These virtual networks will focus on two stakeholder groups that are particularly important for place-based climate action. They will be co-created with representatives from the business and finance communities.
3. **The P-CAN Flexible Fund:** We will open the Network to the wider community of climate change researchers and research users by commissioning 20-30 small grants totalling £400,000 over five years. The grants will be awarded competitively, with a focus on engagement activities, user-oriented analysis, innovative approaches and support for early-career researchers.
4. **Communication and user-oriented research synthesis:** An active outreach strategy will connect place-based activities and inform wider climate action by co-producing, synthesising and communicating decision-relevant analysis. This programme of user-oriented outreach will leverage the work of P-CAN's host institutions and other ESRC investments.

## Impact

P-CAN will be successful if it can inform the climate change decisions of stakeholders across the five platforms. We will focus on activities that support key UK policy objectives and their local implementation, such as the city strategies of Belfast, Edinburgh and Leeds, the UK Government's Industrial Strategy, Clean Growth Strategy, and 25-year Environment Plan, the statutory carbon budgets, the third UK Climate Change Risk Assessment, the recommendations of the UK Green Finance Task Force and the recommendations of the Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD), as well as the climate strategies of Scotland and Northern Ireland. P-CAN will respond flexibly to evolving demands. This will ensure that the platforms we create become self-sustaining and can be replicated elsewhere.

