



**INNOVATION
ZERO WORLD
CONGRESS**

2024 Speaker Action Report

A PATHWAY TO NET ZERO POLICY



Introduction

Innovation Zero 2024 brought [650+ speakers](#) together in London to discuss the challenges and opportunities that will lead us towards a low carbon 2050 economy. We understand that our attendees come to the event to gather insights from and network with speakers, as well as to utilise their presence in our audience to ask questions of our speakers.

Understanding that events like Innovation Zero thrive on the wisdom of our speakers and given how many of you attend to hear from their expertise, we decided to flip the coin and gain the perspective from our speakers. The task was simple; 4 questions with specific asks and requests from our diverse audience of policymakers, investors, startups and corporates.

This report distils the insights and recommendations garnered from participants who addressed four pivotal questions crucial to advancing sustainability and achieving net zero.

1. **What's your top request from the newly elected government** for advancing sustainability and our path to Net Zero by 2050?
2. How can **investors and funders strategically support** and prioritise projects that have the potential for widespread systemic impact?
3. What are the key elements necessary for **turning innovative ideas into scalable and sustainable solutions** in the context of the net-zero transition?
4. If you could make a **specific request or call to action** to the audience attending Innovation Zero, what would it be? What action or engagement do you believe could have a meaningful impact beyond the event?

Government Action and Policy Priorities

Participants at Innovation Zero articulated a clear call to action for the newly elected government: to prioritise sustainability and net-zero commitments in policymaking. Emphasising the need for robust regulatory frameworks and ambitious targets, stakeholders underscored the importance of clear, long-term policies that provide certainty and foster innovation. The top request includes incentivising **renewable energy adoption**, strengthening **building efficiency standards**, and supporting **green infrastructure** investments.



Holistic and Systemic Approach:

Prioritising support and funding for UK sustainable innovation and technology is crucial to fostering a holistic approach towards achieving Net Zero goals.

Integrating Net Zero considerations into all investments and policies will ensure that sustainability is at the forefront of economic and industrial strategies.

Setting a clear vision for the future of the UK's industry and aligning the workforce with sustainability objectives are essential steps in creating a systemic approach to Net Zero.

Richard Thompson, Environment Agency: "To take a full systems approach in designing a pathway to net zero. It's no good achieving a target for Net Zero if it comes at the expense of other areas of the environment."

Policy and Regulatory Clarity:

Enhancing clarity on existing and future policies is vital for businesses and stakeholders to plan effectively for sustainability transitions.

Advocating for **long-term policy certainty and operational expenditure (OPEX) subsidies** will provide stability and encourage investment in sustainable practices.

Addressing the decommissioning of gas networks in a fair and credible manner is necessary to facilitate the shift towards cleaner energy sources.

- *Penny Fowler, ShareAction: "In this critical decade for climate action... it is essential that the next UK Government takes **bold and urgent steps to align the financial sector with its net zero target...** Key levers to achieve this include reform of the definition of fiduciary duties..."*
- *William de Laszlo, GB Row Challenge Ltd: "My top request would be for the newly elected government to **take sustainability and the path to Net Zero seriously, rather than using it as a political tool...** I'm a great believer in incentives and alignment - regulation for businesses and providing tax breaks..."*

Financial and Investment Frameworks:

Deploying public capital strategically to attract private investment for social and environmental projects will amplify the impact of sustainable initiatives.

Enabling funding access for multi-year projects, particularly in emerging technologies like hydrogen, is essential for advancing sustainable innovation.

- *Sarah Gordon, Grantham Research Institute, London School of Economics: "Greater ambition on mobilising private investment for public policy priorities, with a commitment to collaboration and co-design with the private sector to this end."*
- *Luciana Ciubotariu, Thames Freeport: "Increased Funding for R&D: While the UK invests significantly in R&D, there is room for greater emphasis on clean energy and sustainability-related research."*
- *Heather Buchanan, Bankers for Net Zero: "A general yet crucial ask for a new Government is to prioritise the green agenda... It is crucial to underscore the sustainable finance agenda as a **pro-growth, pro-business, and pro-investment** initiative..."*
- *Freya Burton, LanzaTech: "Support for green infrastructure including public transport, job creation and investment in renewables and climate tech."*

Community Engagement and Public Support:

Promoting grassroots engagement is pivotal in building widespread public understanding and support for sustainability and climate action.

Engaging communities in the dialogue about Net Zero will foster a sense of collective responsibility and ownership in achieving environmental goals.

Risk and Capital Support:

Providing risk-taking capital to support blended finance models will encourage innovative approaches to sustainability projects.

Ensuring robust infrastructure support and funding for regulators, industry, and academia is critical for scaling up sustainable solutions effectively.

- *Tom Venner, Canary Wharf Group: "Firstly, it should be highlighted that in this space businesses shouldn't wait for government to deliver all the*

requirements and policies for net zero... CWG would ask for the government to consider how they can support material reuse in construction..."

- *Nick Wells, UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology: "Our path to net zero by 2050 should continue to **combine the potential of technology and nature-based solutions** to remove and safeguard emissions of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere."*
- *Hilary Leever, EngineeringUK: "**Develop a cohesive, long-term STEM workforce plan** that will meet the needs for Net Zero..."*



Conclusion

Innovation Zero has once again underscored the critical importance of collaboration and forward-thinking in the journey towards a low-carbon economy by 2050. The insights gathered from over 650 speakers have provided a comprehensive roadmap that highlights **the necessity of robust government policies, strategic investment frameworks, and community engagement.**

The recent King's Speech in July aligns closely with the themes discussed at Innovation Zero, emphasising key areas such as GB Energy, planning reform,

energy independence, sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) production, skills development, and water pollution. These initiatives are pivotal in advancing the UK's sustainability agenda and will be closely monitored as they develop in the coming months.

The resounding message from our participants is clear: **achieving net-zero emissions requires an integrated, systemic approach** that aligns policy, finance, technology, and societal efforts. Government action, as outlined in the King's Speech, is paramount in setting the stage with clear, long-term regulatory frameworks and ambitious targets that drive innovation and stability. Streamlining approval processes for wind power and transmission lines, enhancing energy independence, and unlocking investment in energy infrastructure are essential steps forward.

Financial institutions and investors play a crucial role in prioritising projects with the potential for widespread impact, ensuring that sustainability is woven into the fabric of economic and industrial strategies. Supporting the production of SAF through new bills and enhancing skills through initiatives like Skills England will further bolster the transition to a sustainable future.

Moreover, the transformation to a sustainable future is not solely the responsibility of policymakers and investors. It demands active participation and commitment from all sectors of society, including businesses, academia, and the public. Grassroots engagement and public support are essential in building a collective sense of responsibility and driving the behavioural changes needed to meet our environmental goals.

In conclusion, the path to net-zero by 2050 is both a formidable challenge and an unprecedented opportunity. By leveraging the collective wisdom and action of our diverse stakeholders, **Innovation Zero has set a clear agenda for the future**. We call on all participants to continue their efforts beyond this event, transforming insights into action and fostering the collaborative spirit necessary to achieve a sustainable, low-carbon economy for generations to come. With the initiatives from the King's Speech supporting our objectives, we are optimistic about the progress and impact we can achieve together.