

Dame Ottoline Leyser DBE FRS  
Chief Executive Officer  
UK Research and Innovation

By email to [communications@ukri.org](mailto:communications@ukri.org)

**29 June 2020**

Dear Dame Ottoline,

Many congratulations on beginning your new position as Chief Executive. I am writing to offer you our support in maintaining climate change as a powerful unifying theme for UK research and innovation.

The Committee on Climate Change (CCC) are the UK's statutory advisors on climate change. We are independent of government – a technical organisation created by the Climate Change Act to advise Ministers and Parliament on reducing UK greenhouse gas emissions and preparing for the impacts of climate change. Last year, our advice led the UK Government to set a new goal of Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

I am grateful to UKRI for the funding it provides for new research across the climate field – and for bringing together the Research Councils and other innovative partnerships. These steps have made climate change an area of genuine UK research strength.

I welcome particularly the support UKRI has given through the Strategic Priorities Fund (SPF). The SPF programme on climate resilience emerged from a call made by the CCC to all Research Council CEOs in 2017 to significantly increase support for climate adaptation research. The £19 million made available through UKRI is a significant input for climate change adaptation research. It has been critical in addressing the historical funding deficit in preparing for the impacts of climate change. Evidence gaps remain, including on the effectiveness of different technologies to support adaptation – and ensuring that long-term monitoring continues to be properly supported.

Further research and innovation will also be critical for delivering the UK's Net Zero target. These challenges range from the fundamental, such as new ways to reduce emissions from cattle or technologies to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, through to the integration challenges of operating fully low-carbon electricity systems. Our 2019 Net Zero advice outlined the research and innovation needs for the transition in each sector.

I wish you every success in your new role. I would be pleased to meet to speak further about how we might showcase UK research as a key part of the UK's climate leadership – particularly as the UK prepares for the presidency of the next global climate summit in Glasgow in November 2021.

My Private Secretary, James Lees, is able to help arrange a meeting on [private.secretary@theccc.org.uk](mailto:private.secretary@theccc.org.uk).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C Stark'.

**Chris Stark**  
Chief Executive