



Bennett Institute
for Innovation and
Policy Acceleration



Bennett Institute for Innovation & Policy Acceleration

Launch Event & Symposium

**Tackling the Climate Crisis
through Innovation & Policy**

Thursday 27 February 2025

Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, London, UK





Welcome to the Bennett Institute for Innovation & Policy Acceleration's Launch Event & Symposium

We are delighted to welcome you to this inaugural symposium to formally mark the launch of the new Bennett Institute at the University of Sussex.

We are facing some of the greatest global challenges ever experienced by humankind. Climate change, biodiversity loss, disease and population growth (to name a few) are having a detrimental effect on the earth's ecosystem and nature-based services for human well-being.

For climate change, there is a consensus regarding the problem and remedial targets, such as maintaining global warming below two degrees. However, governments in the UK and elsewhere have not developed adequate policies; neither have they encouraged the development of technologies and solutions capable of meeting targets in time to prevent irreversible and potentially catastrophic damage.

Our mission, in the Bennett Institute, is to accelerate the development and implementation of urgently needed policies and practices to tackle society's greatest challenges. Today's symposium agenda will tackle pressing questions, such as what policy changes will make innovation happen and can we still control AI - and if so, for good? Renowned experts from academia, business, government and international organisations will be sharing their insights to make the event a highly valuable platform for debate and connection.

We hope today's symposium will inspire you. In the challenges we face, one thing is now certain: we desperately need "fast forward thinking for people and planet".



Professor Benjamin Sovacool
Director



Professor Matthew Agarwala
Bennett Chair
Sustainable Finance



Professor Felix Creutzig
Bennett Chair
Innovation & Policy
Acceleration



Programme

09:00 – 10:00 Registration & refreshments

10:00 – 10:45 **Welcome and opening remarks**

Sasha Roseneil, Professor, Vice Chancellor, University of Sussex

Peter Bennett, Founder, Peter Bennett Foundation

Sir Jim Skea (via recorded video), Professor, Chair, IPCC

Benjamin Sovacool, Professor, Director, Bennett Institute for Innovation & Policy Acceleration, University of Sussex

10:45 – 10:55 **Opening ceremony**

10:55 – 11:40 **Opening keynote**

Gillian Tett, Provost of King's College, Cambridge; Columnist and Member of the Editorial Board, Financial Times

11:40 – 12:15 Refreshments & networking

12:15 – 13:15 **Panel discussion – New frontiers in research & innovation**

Sasha Roseneil (Chair), Professor, Vice-Chancellor, University of Sussex

Ben Goldacre, Professor, Director, Bennett Institute for Applied Data Science, University of Oxford

Michael Kenny, Professor, Inaugural Director, Bennett Institute for Public Policy, University of Cambridge

Rob Miller, Professor, Director of Whittle Laboratory, University of Cambridge

Benjamin Sovacool, Professor, Director, Bennett Institute for Innovation & Policy Acceleration, University of Sussex

13:15 – 14:15 Lunch & networking

14:15 – 15:15 **Panel discussion – How do we control AI for good?**

Felix Creutzig (Chair), Professor, Bennett Chair, Bennett Institute for Innovation & Policy Acceleration, University of Sussex

Gong Ke, Professor, Chairman, Academic Committee, Nankai University; Immediate past President, World Federation of Engineering Organizations

Emmie Hine, Research Associate, Yale Digital Ethics Center

Sander van der Linden, Professor of Social Psychology in Society, University of Cambridge

Somya Joshi, Head of Division-Global Agendas, Climate and Systems Stockholm Environment Institute; Associate Professor, Governance and Sustainability, Stockholm University

15:15 – 15:45 Refreshments & networking



15:45 – 16:45 Panel discussion – Greening finance & reducing poverty

Matthew Agarwala (Chair), Professor, Bennett Chair, Bennett Institute for Innovation & Policy Acceleration, University of Sussex

Valerie Hickey, Dr, Global Director for the Environment, World Bank

Robin Millington, Non-Executive Director and founding CEO, Planet Tracker

Elree Winnett-Seelig, Global Head of Environmental, Social and Governance, Citi Markets

Simon McDonald, The Lord McDonald of Salford GCMG KCVO, Member of the House of Lords, Former Permanent Under-Secretary, FCO & Head of HM Diplomatic Service

Paul Nightingale (Discussant), Professor, Science Policy Research Unit, University of Sussex

16:45 – 17:00 Closing remarks

Benjamin Sovacool, Professor, Director Bennett Institute for Innovation & Policy Acceleration, University of Sussex

Peter Bennett, Founder, Peter Bennett Foundation

17:00 – 18:00 Drinks reception



QEII Conference Centre

Ground Floor, Registration, Cloakroom, Helpdesk and Reception

4th Floor, Refreshments & Networking, Westminster Suite

4th Floor, Symposium Presentations, St James Suite



Welcome & opening

Sasha Roseneil

Professor, Vice-Chancellor, University of Sussex



Sasha Roseneil has been Vice-Chancellor and President of the University of Sussex since August 2022. Previously, she was UCL's first Pro-Provost for Equity and Inclusion and Executive Dean of the Faculty of Social and Historical Sciences. Before that, Professor Roseneil was Executive Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Essex, and held leadership positions at Birkbeck, University of London and the University of Leeds.

Peter Bennett

Founder, Peter Bennett Foundation



Peter Bennett is the founding benefactor of the Peter Bennett Foundation (2013). Graduating in 1978 he read Economics at Churchill College. Following a successful career in banking and hedge fund management, Peter now devotes his time to pursuing philanthropic endeavours to promote equality and reduce poverty through direct donations and institution support.

Sir Jim Skea

Professor, Chair, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)



Jim Skea was elected IPCC Chair for the Seventh Assessment cycle in July 2023. From 2009 to 2023, Jim Skea was Professor of Sustainable Energy at Imperial College London. He was Research Director of the UK Energy Research Centre 2004-12 and Director of the Policy Studies Institute 1998-2004. He has operated at the interface between research, policy-making and business throughout his career. He was a member of the UK Committee on Climate Change from its inception in 2008 until 2018 and was the Chair of Scotland's Just Transition Commission from 2018 to 2023. From 2015-17, he was President of the UK Energy Institute. He was awarded a CBE for services to sustainable energy in 2013 and an OBE for services to sustainable transport in 2004. In 2024, he was awarded a knighthood in the King's Birthday Honours list for services to global leadership in climate science.

Benjamin Sovacool

Professor, Director of the Bennett Institute for Innovation & Policy Acceleration, University of Sussex



Benjamin Sovacool is author of many academic peer-refereed articles, book chapters and reports on energy and climate change topics. He is one of the most globally highly cited researchers on controversies in energy and climate policy. He has submitted analysis and testimony to the UK's House of Commons and House of Lords, and the US House of Representatives, Senate and Supreme Court. He was also a Lead Author of the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report, published in 2022.



Keynote speaker

Gillian Tett

Provost King's College, Cambridge, Columnist and Member of Editorial Board
Financial Times



Gillian Tett is a columnist and member of the Editorial Board for the Financial Times. She writes a weekly column on Friday, covering a range of economic, financial, political and social issues. She also serves as Provost of King's College, Cambridge. Previously, she chaired the FT Editorial Board, ran Moral Money, the FT's sustainability newsletter which she co-founded, and wrote two columns a week. She has been named Columnist of the Year (2014), Journalist of the Year (2009) and Business Journalist of the Year (2008) in the British Press Awards and received three awards from America's Society of Business and Economic Writers Awards. She is a best-selling and award-winning author of four books and received the Royal Anthropological Institute Marsh Award and the American Anthropological Association President Medal for her work in social science. She has received honorary degrees from Carnegie Mellon, Miami and Baruch, Exeter, Lancaster, and Goldsmith's universities.



Panel Discussion – New Frontiers in Research & Innovation

Ben Goldacre

Professor, Director, Bennett Institute for Applied Data Science, University of Oxford



Ben Goldacre is a doctor, academic, writer, and broadcaster. He trained in medicine at Oxford and UCL, in psychiatry at the Maudsley, and in epidemiology at LSHTM. His academic and policy work is in informatics, epidemiology and evidence-based medicine, where he works on various problems including variation in care, better uses of routinely collected electronic health data, evidence-based social policy, access to clinical trial data, efficient trial design, and retracted papers. He runs the Bennett Institute for Applied Data Science, a multidisciplinary team of academics, clinicians and software developers. Alongside this he also works in public engagement, writing and broadcasting. His books have sold over 600,000 copies; his TED talks have had over 4 million views; while being accessible to a general audience, these lectures and books are also used in university teaching around the world.

Michael Kenny

Professor, Inaugural Director, Bennett Institute for Public Policy, University of Cambridge



Michael Kenny is Professor of Public Policy and the inaugural director of the Bennett Institute of Public Policy at Cambridge University. His expertise lies in public policy, governance, territorial politics, British politics and political ideas. He is a Professorial Fellow at Fitzwilliam College, a visiting Fellow at the UCL Constitution Unit, a member of the advisory board of the Constitution Society, and a Fellow of the UK's Academy of the Social Sciences. He served on the Leverhulme Trust's Advisory Committee (2010-2018) and was co-director of the British Academy's "Governing England" programme (2015-2018). Michael has authored many books — his latest being "*Fractured Union: Politics, Sovereignty and the Fight to Save the UK*" (Hurst Publishers, 2024).

Rob Miller

Professor, Director of Whittle Laboratory, University of Cambridge



Robert Miller is the Director of the Whittle Laboratory and the Rolls-Royce University Technology Centre in Cambridge. He is a member of the UK Department for Transport's Science Advisory Council and he is known for his pioneering work on Rapid Technology Development. He is currently building the New Whittle Laboratory, and as part of it, he is setting up the Bennett Innovation Lab (BIL), a Disruptive Innovation Lab designed to embed fast feedback between cutting-edge science and its emerging application. He also set up and led the Aviation Impact Accelerator and he is a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering, his research has been awarded the American Society of Mechanical Engineers' highest award in the field, the Gas Turbine Award, four times.



Panel Discussion – How do we control AI for good?

Felix Creutzig (Chair)

Professor, Bennett Chair, Bennett Institute for Innovation & Policy Acceleration, University of Sussex



Felix Creutzig is head of the working group Land Use, Infrastructures and Transport at the Mercator Research Institute on Global Commons and Climate Change, and Chair of Sustainability Economics at Technische Universität Berlin. He was Coordinating Lead Author of the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report and a Lead Author of the Fifth Assessment Report. Felix Creutzig joined the Bennett Institute for Innovation and Acceleration from September 2024.

Gong Ke

Professor, Chairman, Academic Committee, Nankai University, Immediate Past President, World Federation of Engineering Organisations



Gong Ke is the executive director of the Chinese Institute for New Generation AI Development Strategy, supervised by China Academy of Engineering, chair of the advisory board of AI graduate education to the Chinese Ministry of Education, a member of the National committee of AI Ethics, chief scientist of Shanghai AI laboratory for AI education, advisor of Tsinghua Institute of International AI Governance. He has led research projects in wireless communications including the initiative on developing China's wireless transmission standard for digital television as well as research on experimental microsatellites, and recently on the development strategy of artificial intelligence. He has received the National Technological Invention Award and international honors. He is Honorary Doctor of University of Glasgow, UK and Honorary Fellow of International Science Council. He was a member of the standing committee of Chinese Association of Science and Technology (2006-2016) and a member of the Scientific Advisory Board of the UN Secretary General from 2014-2017. He also served as President of the World Federation of Engineering Organizations (WFEO) from 2019-2022.

Emmie Hine

Research Associate, Yale Digital Ethics Centre



Emmie Hine is a Research Associate at the Yale Digital Ethics Centre and a PhD candidate in Law, Science, and Technology at the University of Bologna and KU Leuven. She researches the ethics and governance of emerging technologies, including AI; her work focuses primarily on the US, EU, and China. She shares her perspectives in her byline for her weekly tech-focused newsletter, the Ethical Reckoner. She holds degrees from Williams College and the University of Oxford, and previously worked as a software engineer.



Somya Joshi

Head of Division – Global Agendas, Climate & Systems, Stockholm Environment Institute;
Associate Professor, Governance and Sustainability, Stockholm University



Somya Joshi is Head of Division – Global Agendas, Climate and Systems at the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), focusing on bridging science and policy for sustainable development and challenging entrenched narratives of extractivism and colonialism, particularly in technology disruption. She is Docent / Assoc. Professor at Stockholm University in Sustainable Human Computer Interaction. She spent over 15 years in leadership roles in science, policy frontiers advocating for decarbonisation, global goals and using futures thinking to bring about systemic change. From a PhD in Manchester in local regeneration, to a postdoc at Cambridge on global development organisations and information flows. She is part of the leadership of a top global environment think tank and she is the Chair of the AI taskforce at SEI and is currently exploring how to balance the echoes of the past with the promises of the future in her research on AI and Sustainability.

Sander Van der Linden

Professor, Social Psychology in Society, University of Cambridge



Sander van der Linden, Ph.D., is Professor of Social Psychology in Society and Director of the Cambridge Social Decision-Making Lab in the Department of Psychology at the University of Cambridge. He has won numerous awards for his research on human judgment, communication, and decision-making, including the Rising Star Award from the Association for Psychological Science (APS). He co-developed the award-winning fake news game, Bad News and regularly advises governments, public health authorities, and social media companies on how to combat the spread of misinformation. He is ranked among the top 1% of highly cited social scientists worldwide and has published over 175 research papers. His research is regularly covered in outlets such as the New York Times, BBC, NPR, and Rolling Stone. Before joining Cambridge, he held academic positions at Princeton, Yale, and the LSE. He is the author of Foolproof: Why Misinformation Infects our Minds and How to Build Immunity which was named of Nature's Top Science Books and the recipient of the Best Book Prize from the American Psychological Association, the British Psychological Society, the Society for Personality and Social Psychology and the Harvard Shorenstein Centre.



Panel Discussion – Greening Finance & Reducing Poverty

Matthew Agarwala (Chair)

Professor, Bennett Chair, Bennett Institute for Innovation & Policy Acceleration, University of Sussex



Matthew Agarwala is the Bennett Chair in Sustainable Finance at the Bennett Institute for Innovation and Policy Acceleration, at the University of Sussex Business School. He is an economist interested in measuring and delivering sustainability, wellbeing, and productivity. Motivated by the belief that 21st century progress cannot be described by 20th century statistics, Matthew's work seeks to transform economic measurement to better reflect sustainability, inequality, and wellbeing. He enjoys working across sectors and disciplines, and his co-authors include ecologists, economists, conservation scientists and practitioners, social anthropologists, civil servants, members of UK Parliament, and Nobel Laureates in peace, medicine, physics, and chemistry. Matthew regularly consults for governments and scientific organisations on topics including natural capital, ecosystem services, green finance, wellbeing, and sustainability.

Valerie Hickey

Dr, Global Director for the Environment, World Bank



Valerie Hickey is the Global Director of the Environment Department at the World Bank. Valerie takes this role having worked as the manager for Advisory and Operations in the Climate Change Group, where she oversaw the implementation of the World Bank's commitments on climate change, climate mainstreaming and climate finance. Before that she was the Practice Manager for Environment in Latin America and the Caribbean where she managed a cross-sectoral team that supported countries and communities on issues related to climate change, sustainable forest management, integrated conservation and development, integrated coastal zone management, fisheries, pollution management and environmental health, environmental economics and environmental risk management. She holds a Ph.D. in Environmental Science and Policy from Duke University.



Simon McDonald

The Lord McDonald of Salford GCMG KCVO, Member of the House of Lords, Former Permanent Under-Secretary, FCO & Head HM Diplomatic Service



Simon McDonald was born and educated in Salford, and read History at Pembroke College, Cambridge, where he is now an Honorary Fellow. He joined the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in 1982 and, early in his career, served in Jeddah, Riyadh, Bonn and Washington, D.C. He was British Ambassador to Israel (2003-2006) and to Germany (2010-15). In September 2015 Simon became Permanent Under-Secretary at the FCO and Head of the Diplomatic Service. After leaving the FCO in Autumn 2020, he was appointed a life peer, taking his seat in the House of Lords as a crossbencher in February 2021. Simon is a Knight Grand Cross of the Order of St Michael and St George (GCMG) and Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order (KCVO). His first book - *Leadership: Lessons from a Life in Diplomacy* - was published in 2022 and his second - *Beyond Britannia: Reshaping UK Foreign Policy* - in 2023. The University of Salford awarded him an Honorary doctorate in 2024. Simon became the 39th Master of Christ's College on 1 September 2022.

Robin Millington

Non-Executive Director and founding CEO, Planet Tracker



Robin Millington, named Global Sustainable Business Leader of the Year 2023 by Environmental Finance, works with a NED & Advisory portfolio having recently retired as Founding CEO of Planet Tracker, a ground-breaking non-profit sustainable finance think tank working to embed the value of nature into global capital markets. Having dedicated nearly three decades to environmental causes including climate, biodiversity/nature and wetlands/water, Robin is an experienced senior director with an extensive track record including as a Director with the European Climate Foundation, Founding Director of Wetlands International and Managing Director of the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) in Brussels. Previously she spent many years in the private sector both in consulting and in multinational work. She has an MBA from INSEAD and her BA from Stanford University. She is currently a Non-Executive Director with Dunya Analytics and Vice-Chair of the ESG Advisory Committee for SHEIN. Previously she served on the Supervisory Board of the Capitals Coalition, as Board Vice-Chair of the Gold Standard Foundation and serves on various advisory committees.



Elree Winnett-Seelig

Global Head of Environmental, Social and Governance, Citi Markets



Elree Winnett Seelig is a Managing Director and Global Head of ESG for Citi's Markets business. Elree, who has worked at Citi for eleven years, was previously Head of Strategy for Commodities at Citi. Prior to joining Citi, Elree was Head of Energy Client Management for Commodities at BNP Paribas and worked in Natural Resources Investment Banking at Lehman Brothers and Utility Project Finance at NationsBank (now Bank of America). She also spent 11 years working in conservation and community development in southern Africa and consulting for venture capital firms investing in renewable energy. Elree regularly speaks to the largest asset managers, asset owners, corporates, industry bodies, and regulators on ESG, climate and biodiversity risk integration, and energy transition, including voluntary carbon markets and liquidity / assets re-pricing. She is a Fellow of the Linnean Society and in 2022 she was also a Turner Fellow at the Cambridge Conservation Initiative.

Paul Nightingale (Discussant)

Professor, Deputy Director of the Science Policy Research Unit, University of Sussex



Paul Nightingale is Deputy Director of the Science Policy Research Unit (SPRU), at the University of Sussex, where he is a Professor of Strategy with a focus on innovation. He previously worked in industrial R&D and now his main areas of work relate to finance and financial innovation, and its impact on the economy. This involves work on the funding of small firms, especially innovative small firms. He has an interest in firms at the bottom of the performance distribution and the problems they face accessing finance, and potential issues they pose for public policy. He also works on project delivery, trying to understand what drives success in major transformational projects and major R&D projects. This work explores the inherent uncertainty in complex projects and how it can best be managed.



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