

What do researchers want from COP26?



UK Research and Innovation

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For more than fifty years, researchers and innovators have been working in all corners of the globe, to find solutions for mitigating against, and adapting to, climate change. Their breakthroughs have been significant in shaping policy. We spoke to some of the researchers whose work we fund and asked them to name one thing they wanted to come out of COP. This is what they told us.



Luke Jerram's Gaia hangs over the action hub at COP26 in Glasgow. Photo Adam Harvey/UK Government

sequestering carbon. This would allow a buffer to protect the ocean from the wider threat of climate change.”

Dr Pam Wiener, Roslin Institute: “My hope for COP26 is that there will be a focus on conservation and promotion of genetic diversity across biological systems, including livestock.”

Rodney Harrison, Professor of Heritage Studies, University College London: “Like most people, the key thing I hope to come out of COP26 is a firm agreement and an international programme which will limit global heating to 1.5 degrees. Through the exhibition and associated events though, we aim to highlight the values of participatory arts, humanities and social science-based research in developing creative solutions to the climate crisis and adapting to climate change to contribute to the same.”

Wayne Binitie, PhD student, Royal College of Art: “Our Polar Zero exhibition is part of a global conversation at COP26. We hope to promote a deeper awareness of our relationship to the glacial past, present and future.

“The question of polar history is so vast and so complex so occasionally the magnitude of the subject doesn’t allow the proximity or a sense of intimacy with the subject itself. The greatest challenge has been how do you communicate the complexity of the subject to a general audience.

Using arts, science, and engineering we have attempted to invite people to mediate a conversation which is both operating at the collective and individual level.”

Dilanthi Amaratunga, Professor of Disaster Risk Management, University of Huddersfield: “The ongoing Covid-19 outbreak is an unprecedented event in modern human history and is global, but its prevention and preparedness are local. We argue that mechanisms and strategies for disaster resilience can enhance preparedness for early and better recovery that prevents the emergence of new risks to epidemics such as Covid-19. One thing I hope that comes out of COP: new research and governance and a new model for disaster risk management to be encouraged. It has long been accepted that even in individual events, multiple pieces of cycle unfold simultaneously.”

Dr Tahrat Shahid, Food Systems and Gender Advisor, Global Challenges Research Fund: “It’s really important to talk about what’s appropriate for different communities