

Policy Impact Unit – Update

September 2024.

The news in *(policy)* brief...



The Interdisciplinary Circular Economy Centre for Mineral-Based Construction Materials ([ICEC-MCM](#)) joined [NICER](#) partners this month for their final showcase event in Westminster.

Policymakers, international stakeholders, industry partners and other attendees heard directly from [DEFRA](#)'s Chief Scientific Adviser about how the programme has blazed a trail in helping Government work more closely with academia, as well as panel discussions and talks on a range of topics - including influencing policy. It is great to see the work of [Prof Julia Stegemann](#) and our other ICEC-MCM colleagues recognised in this way - a huge congratulations to you all!

The showcase also saw the launch of a new [Policy Brief - on Soil, Construction and the Circular Economy](#) supported by PIU (*excerpt below*).

We also drew on our previous ICEC-MCM Policy Brief this month, on [Landfill Tax, CDW and the Circular Economy](#) to make a representation to [HMT](#)'s spending review process – and were interviewed by Parliament's [POST](#) to inform a new piece on [Planning for Net Zero](#).

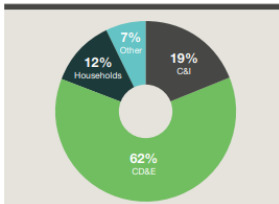


Figure 1: Waste generation split by source including Households, Construction, Demolition & Excavation (CD&E), Commercial & Industrial (C&I) and Other, UK, 2018*

Towards better soil management and recovery

Soil needs to be considered a valuable and non-renewable resource, not waste. A recent report published by researchers at the ICEC-MCM, Lancaster University and the Environment Agency, has called for a new Soil Reuse and Storage System (SRSS) in England to remedy many of the challenges facing the construction sector in relation to soil waste.

Comparable systems already exist in New York, Flanders (Belgium) and the Netherlands, which demonstrate that the UK could capitalise on the economic, social and environmental benefits of implementing a domestic system. The proposed system would ensure that healthy and clean soils are stored in 'soil hotels' for further reuse, whilst contaminated soils are treated in 'soil hospitals' to enhance their quality. For example, soil hospitals can play a key role in removing hazardous pollutants, including excess of alkaline

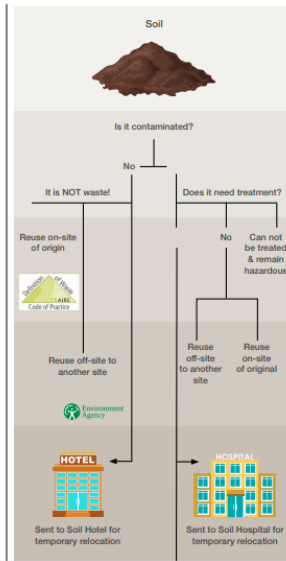
Barriers to soil reuse

Several factors are currently contributing to the improper management of soil within C&D activities and projects, including:

Classification criteria – soils are currently classified under frameworks that are primarily designed to assess wastes with more homogenous properties, such as the Waste Framework Directive and the Waste Acceptance Criteria. Given the complexity and variability of soil, these frameworks may misdescribe and misclassify soil wastes.

Perceived time and cost of proper soil management can disincentivise soil reuse, treatment, and recovery as landfilling is often viewed as the cheaper and more hassle-free option.

Poor planning has been described as a critical obstacle when it comes to soil reuse. It can lead to more soils being excavated from construction sites than necessary resulting in a surplus of soil without certainty of use, which then becomes waste. Although waste storage exemptions do currently exist, they are considered restrictive on the storage amount and the timeframe over which they can be applied, which can inadvertently lead to landfilling as the more attractive option instead. Some construction site locations may have the capacity for on-site storage of soils but



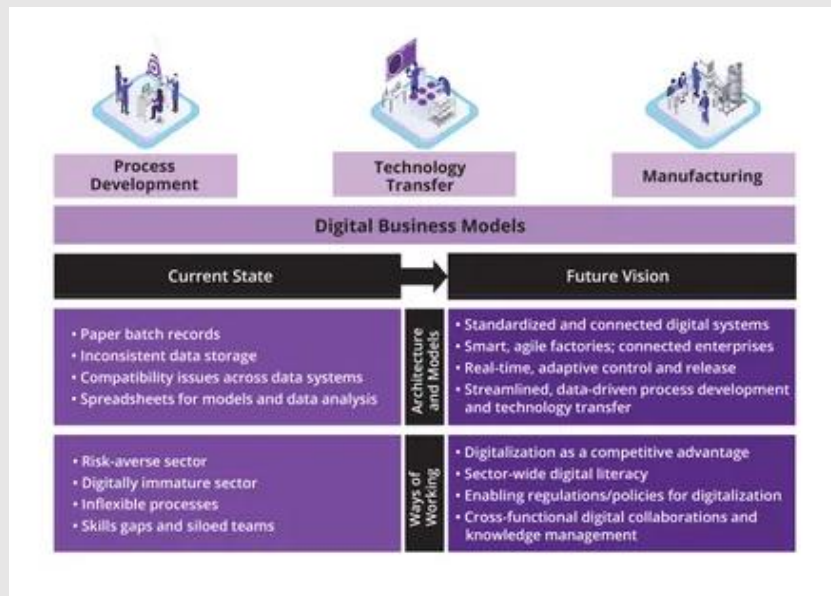
New Project: Modelling for Decision Making



The PIU are working in partnership with [Dr Erica Thompson](#) and the Academy for the Mathematical Sciences, to develop a **new policy brief or written report setting out some of the key considerations for UK policymakers when engaging with models** – including how models can be improved and how modellers can be better engaged in the policy process.

If you work in this space or have a policy partner who you think may be interested in feeding in, please let us know – or [share this link with them by October 4th](#).

PIU's September highlights also included...



- Supported **publication of a new [report](#)** in *bioprocess international* on “Re-imaging the Future of Biopharma Digitalisation” following the event we delivered earlier this year with the FTHM Hub and Accenture. The findings are particularly relevant for the development of critical infrastructure in healthcare and are informing our conversations with policymakers.
- Convened a **meeting with the [World Health Organisation](#)** (WHO) on post-market and market surveillance of medical devices alongside [Prof Derek Hill](#)
- **Met with the [Foreign Office](#)** to discuss findings from a new [UCL Gender and Tech](#) study, which could shape future approaches to tackling gender-based violence.
- **Submitted a response to the Call for Evidence** for the Fourth Health and Climate Adaptation Report led by UKHSA and NHS England, commissioned by DEFRA.
- Met twice with the **Home Office** to discuss tech-abuse alongside [Dr Leonie Tanczer](#), and produced an advice note to inform the next stage of their policy development. Provided an update on this and other policy developments to Leonie’s FLF Advisory Board (which includes policy partners.)
- Participated in the ‘*Not your porn*’ campaign regroup to discuss next steps for **policy change to stop image-based abuse**. Subsequently,

a new petition has been launched calling on the Government to introduce a comprehensive Image-Based-Abuse-Law. [To sign, or for more information about the campaign please click here.](#)

- Supported [Nishma Patel](#) in responding to an NHS and NICE Consultation on increasing the Budget Impact Test – with a view to diversifying the advanced therapies which can reach the NHS.
- **Delivered a talk on the importance of academic-policy engagement at the VaxHub Joint Symposium** (pictured below) which took place in Oxford. The event brought together the expansive VaxHub global network and showcased the full breadth of its ambitions, including the [VaxHub policy work](#) which PIU supports.



Opportunities

- [Prime Minister's Council for Science and Technology](#) has 8 vacancies open, two days per month for three years. Deadline 7th October.
- [IPPO](#) events – (i) **How Policy Can Increase Access to Early Years Support for Ethnic Minority Families.** (3rd October 14:00, [register here](#)) and (ii) **How do innovation districts succeed while sharing their benefits with local people?** (23rd October 11:00, [register here](#).)
- [UCL Public Policy](#) Researchers in Residence Scheme offers a unique chance to deliver policy impact from your work. [Find out more here](#) – applications open until 24th October.

- [House of Lords Inquiry - Scaling up - AI and creative tech](#) – Open until 16th October
- [Overton's Policy Impact Micro Grant](#) is now open for 2024 – up to £5000 is available per project and professional services staff and early career researchers are encouraged – deadline 6th December.
- [POST Fellowship Opportunity](#) for eligible students who are undertaking or have recently completed their PhD. Apply by 20th October.

This month at STEaPP we.....



- Presented a Theory of Change for UK Science Diplomacy to the **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's Science and Innovation Network** at the UK ambassador's residence in Rome, Italy. [\[GS\]](#)
- Presented to **UN and NGOs stakeholders** at the International [Conference](#) on Sustainable Development 2024 about our upcoming paper "Assessing the Influence of Research Quality on Policy Citations: Quantitative analysis finds non-academic factors more likely to influence how papers get cited in SDG policy". [\[BM\]](#)
- Reported [MPA student project](#) findings and recommendations to external partner organisations, including **The British Standards Institution, The International Science Council, UK Government Office for Science, FCDO, Royal Academy of Engineering and the National Engineering Policy Centre**. [\[JCM\]](#) [\[MC\]](#) [\[GM\]](#) [\[CLW\]](#) [\[AC\]](#) [\[JM\]](#) [\[EC\]](#) [\[JMC\]](#)
- Met with new **UK Minister of Public Service Reform** to discuss potential options for the new government. [\[GM\]](#)
- Provided technical contribution to **UK Water Industry Research (UKWIR) Report 'The Greenhouse Gas Emissions of Nature-Based**

[Solutions for Wastewater Treatment](#)' for use by stakeholders including water supply and sewerage companies of England and Wales, Scottish Water, Northern Ireland Water and Irish Water and public bodies working across water supply and environmental management. [\[CLW\]](#)

- Spoke at an **IIGCC** (Institutional Investors Group on Climate Change) roundtable webinar on [Navigating climate scenarios for investment](#). [\[ET\]](#)
- Contributed to the session on “Investing in clinical research in Africa to develop local solutions against the global challenge of Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) presented by Francine Ntoumi for PANDORA-ID-Net at the [EDCTP's side event](#) during the **UN GA79 Science Summit**. [\[SE\]](#)
- Developed the first ever **Bioethics Summer Program for Pakistan** and successfully delivered at the Shifa Medical College, Islamabad, Pakistan). [\[RM\]](#)
- Joined the [International Strategic Advisory Board](#) for the **Romanian National Research and Development Institute** for Industrial Ecology. [\[JC\]](#)
- Secured contract from **Government Skills and Campus Unit** for 2024-2025 implementation of impact evaluation of line management training across UK Civil Service. [\[IS\]](#)
- Engaged with the **Government Office for Science** team regarding the upcoming Technology Roadmap peer reviews. [\[PP\]](#) [\[PC\]](#)
- Contributed to the **UK Health and Security Agency** and **NHS England** call for evidence on the [fourth health and climate report](#). [\[PP\]](#)

Know a colleague who may be interested in receiving these updates? [Let us know!](#)

Thank you.