

Minutes and actions

Solar Radiation Management: Public Dialogue Oversight Group Meeting 03

Wednesday 21 May 2025, 13:00-14:00 BST, by zoom videoconference.

Members:

Jack Stilgoe (Chair): University College London
 Alexander Hall: McMaster University
 Duncan McLaren: University of California, Los Angeles
 Joanna Haigh: Imperial College London
 Nick Pidgeon: Cardiff University
 Chuks Okereke: University of Bristol
 Savio Moniz, Kate Scott: Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ)
 Tracey Dale: Economic and Social Research Council UKRI (ESRC)
 Jim Fleming: Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council UKRI (EPSRC)

Other attendees:

Lizzie Garratt, Simon Howe: Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)
 Steve Robinson, Anna Beckett, Trupti Patel: Sciencewise
 Henrietta Hopkins, Richa Jumar, Hally Ingram: Hopkins Van Mil (HVM)
 Anna MacGillivray, Hilary Livesey: URSUS Consulting Ltd

Apologies:

Jim Haywood: University of Exeter
 Doug Parr: Greenpeace
 Hugh Hunt: University of Cambridge
 Emma Bessent: Arts and Humanities Research Council UKRI (AHRC)
 Kate Furber: Hopkins Van Mil (HVM)

Previous Oversight Group Actions: All actions closed.

Oversight Group 03 Meeting Actions:

No.	Action	Responsible	Timing
3.1	NERC team to initiate discussion with research projects to formalise public dialogue feedback process.	NERC	December 2025
3.2	OG to feedback to HVM with regards to specific elements of the dialogue. e.g., location, recruitment specification.	OG/ HVM	June 2025
3.3	OG to be invited to planning workshop and to continue to engage with HVM over dialogue process planning.	HVM	June 2025
3.4	Topic Review to be sent to OG for further comments.	NERC	May 2025
3.5	HVM to consider contacting Professor Sander van der Linden regarding approach to myth-busting.	HVM	August 2025

3.6	Doodle Poll to be sent to OG members to find the most appropriate date for OG 04, 05 & 06 meetings in July, September, and November 2025.	NERC	June 2025
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Minutes:

1. *Welcome and Introduction – Chair*

All were welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly those attending their first OG. Representatives from Hopkins Van Mil (HVM) were introduced as the contractor team undertaking the SRM Public Dialogue. The team from URSUS Consulting were also introduced, as evaluators to the SRM Public Dialogue.

2. *Review of agenda and actions – Chair*

2.1 All actions from meetings 01 and 02 were recorded as complete. All papers should be taken as read, with OG members encouraged to raise questions through relevant presentations throughout the meeting.

2.2 NERC updated the OG members about the public dialogue tender process which led to HVM to be appointed. It was recognised that the timetable represented a short slip compared to the original timeline, so public dialogue activities will now commence after the start of the SRM research projects. It was considered to have only a small impact due to projects being active for under one month, and they are already engaging with the public dialogue activities.

It was confirmed that the original design of the investment meant that research projects would begin simultaneously to the public dialogue. The OG recognised that public dialogue would not have the opportunity to have informed the design of the research projects, however there is an expectation for projects is to engage in the public dialogue process, and for outcomes and learnings to feed into appropriate updates to research based on insights provided through the public dialogue.

Action 3.1: NERC team to initiate discussion with research projects to formalise public dialogue feedback process.

2.3 The OG sought further clarification on the relationship with Advanced Research and Invention Agency (ARIA) *Exploring Climate Cooling* programme, including opportunities for interaction. NERC confirmed that the two research programmes are distinct, although the two funding agencies have worked together to ensure there was no duplication of funding, although noting some project leads and researchers overlap. ARIA will be a stakeholder for the public dialogue and liaising with HVM on engagement. The OG Chair confirmed that he is a member of the ARIA advisory group advising on governance. The group has encouraged ARIA to fund public engagement work. It is advised that once funded, that group should engage with the OG.

2.4 Further information was shared regarding the Royal Society report on SRM. There is concern that the scope of which focusses on the science, not including engagement, social and ethical considerations. OG members confirmed that they had contacted the Royal Society leads

appealing for further consideration for ethics to be included in the report. The OG also recognised the further opportunity for the NERC/Sciencewise public dialogue work to have a broader audience. The timescale for Royal Society SRM report is likely to be publishing in autumn 2025 prior to the public dialogue findings. It was recognised, however, the benefits of making connections early. The OG reflected that the 2008 Royal Society report on geoengineering did include social/ethics work.

3. *Public Dialogue: process overview – HVM*

HVM presented an overview of the SRM public dialogue. This included detail of a design workshop taking place in July 2025, with participation from the funded research projects, the OG and ARIA. The workshop will aid the design of the dialogue. The main work for HVM over the next three months in the design phase will be creation of dialogue stimulus materials and details process plans for dialogue delivery.

HVM described the dialogue recruitment process, explaining that the group of 56 participants broadly reflect the demographics of the UK (incorporating reflecting attitude and the cultural context, religious, age, housing status, political leanings). The OG discussed the workshop locations, which will take place in September and October 2025. Workshops will be a mixture of on-line and in-person. The OG fed back initial comments to HVM. Conversation focussed on reiterating that the purposed of the dialogue is for the science community learning from what the public understand, cautioning that focus should not be science versus other process. The OG also raised the issue of recording and representing moral hazard within planning, recognising the inherent issue that with funding underway, at some point the science area may be deemed to be required to stop, but it will be beyond the threshold of work and research undertaken.

Further OG discussion focussed on the dialogue being aware of and having plans for the rise in climate change scepticism, the polarised politics of net zero as well as the extent of conspiracy theory attachment. The OG reflected that previous public dialogues have benefited from having participation from influential stakeholders, such as the Royal Society. In the case for SRM also, recognising the risk of describing SRM approached as technologies ready for use, noting that currently these approaches are largely theoretical.

Action 3.2: OG to feedback to HVM with regards to specific elements of the dialogue. E.g., location, recruitment specification.

Action 3.3: OG to be invited to planning workshop in June 2025 and to continue to engage with HVM over dialogue process planning.

4. *Public Dialogue: Topic Review – HVM*

HVM lead discussion of the topic review, highlighting the requirement to provide a clear glossary of terminology, and that participants hear from specialists who can present the full range of perspectives on SRM and associated risk management. This includes the clear explanation of current SRM legal and policy context as well as governance requirements and barriers/enablers (including social, cultural, political, ethical dimensions) to raise key questions for participants to reflect upon. In addition, the dialogue to include myth busting FAQ emphasising the known,

creating a space for reflection which does not support misinformation. This will build on but not duplicate what has gone before.

The OG reflected the motivational reasoning from stakeholders in the SRM space, who are not objective. This cautions the relationship with misinformation and glossary of terms relying upon partial and motivated positions. Reflecting on approaches to myth-busting, the OG advised not repeating the myth as this aids in reinforcement. The OG advised, therefore, avoiding mention of chemtrails unless participants bring this up. The OG noted that Professor Sander van der Linden at Cambridge University would be a good contact for framing myth-busting.

Action 3.4: Topic Review to be sent to OG for further comments.

Action 3.5: HVM to consider contacting Professor Sander van der Linden regarding approach to myth-busting.

5. *Public Dialogue Evaluation - NERC*

NERC confirmed that following a tender process, URSUS consulting Ltd. have been appointed as the public dialogue contractors and were able to attend the OG at short notice after being appointed.

The OG underlined that the evaluation should be constructive through partnership. In addition, it should evaluate the wider impact of the dialogue. For example, noting which of the research projects will change direction based on outcomes and involvement with the dialogue. URSUS confirmed the intention of the scope of the evaluation and welcomed a wash-up meeting with the research projects at the end of the dialogue process to ascertain what has been taken on board and how they will incorporate dialogue findings. This suggestion was supported by the OG.

6. *Next steps and future meetings - Chair & NERC*

Action 3.6: Doodle Poll to be sent to OG members to find the most appropriate date for OG 04, 05 & 06 meetings in July, September and November 2025.

7. *Meeting close*