



Department for  
Science, Innovation  
& Technology

# Evaluation of the Regulators' Pioneer Fund (Round 3) - Technical Report

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## Glossary of key terms and acronyms

**Table 1: Glossary of key terms and acronyms**

<b>Acronym/Term</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
AI	Artificial Intelligence.
Baseline interviews	Start of project interviews with project leads for RPF3 awarded projects.
Care Quality Commission (CQC)	The Care Quality Commission is the independent regulator of health and adult social care in England. Its primary role is to ensure the quality and safety of care provided in various settings, including hospitals, care homes, and independent providers.
Compliance	Regulatory compliance is the process of adhering to laws, regulations, standards, and other rules set by governments and regulatory bodies.
Contribution Analysis (CA)	Contribution analysis is an approach used to assess whether and how an intervention contributed to observed outcomes. It examines the causal links between activities and results, considering other influencing factors, to build a credible explanation of the intervention’s role in achieving change. As part of this process, evaluators often develop contribution statements—clear summaries that describe the intervention’s specific role in producing the observed outcomes.
Delivery to intention	Whether projects were able to deliver their activities as they originally intended in their proposal.
Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)	BEIS (Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy) was a UK government department responsible for business, energy, science, innovation, and climate change until it was split up in February 2023, being replaced by the Department for Business and Trade (DBT), the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), and the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT).
Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT)	A UK government department established in February 2023. Its main goals are to drive economic growth through science and technology, use AI and digital technology to improve government services, and empower citizens.

Endline interviews	End of project interviews with project leads for RPF3 awarded projects.
Environment Agency (EA)	The Environment Agency is a non-departmental public body established in 1996 in the UK, responsible for protecting and enhancing the environment. Its key roles include enforcing environmental regulations, managing waste, preventing water pollution, and overseeing river management initiatives.
Health and Safety Executive (HSE)	The Health and Safety Executive is a British public body responsible for the encouragement, regulation, and enforcement of workplace health, safety, and welfare.
Impact categories	The broad types of RPF impacts captured by the Theory of Change.
Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)	The Information Commissioner's Office is a UK government regulator responsible for upholding information rights and data privacy.
Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA)	The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency is an executive agency of the UK government. Its primary role is to regulate medicines, medical devices, and blood components to ensure they are safe, effective, and of high quality.
National Institute for Biological Standards and Control (NISBC)	The National Institute for Biological Standards and Control is a government agency in the UK that plays a crucial role in ensuring the quality of biological medicines and diagnostics.
Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR)	The Office for Nuclear Regulation is the independent nuclear regulator in the UK. Its mission is to protect society by securing safe nuclear operations and it regulates nuclear safety, security and conventional health and safety at the nuclear sites in Great Britain.
Proof of Concept (PoC)	Evidence, typically from an experiment or pilot project, which demonstrates that a design concept, business proposal etc. is feasible.
Regulatory authorities	Regulators and Local Authorities
Research and Development (R&D)	Work directed towards the innovation, introduction and improvement of products and processes.

The Regulatory Innovation Office (RIO)	The Regulatory Innovation Office (RIO) <sup>1</sup> , part of the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT)
Sandboxing	Building and testing innovation concepts and solutions in a controlled, simulated scenario without risk to operations.
Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs)	Business with between 1-250 employees.
Theory of Change (ToC)	A Theory of Change is a framework that outlines how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context. It describes the positive change sought, the activities required to achieve that change, and the outcomes that are anticipated as a result of those activities. Essentially, it serves as a roadmap for understanding the connections between actions and their intended impacts.

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<sup>1</sup> [Game-changing tech to reach the public faster as dedicated new unit launched to curb red tape - GOV.UK](#)

## Summary

This report contains the technical appendices that accompany the main evaluation report for the third round of the Regulators' Pioneer Fund (RPF3). RPF3 provides seed funding and support for UK regulators and local authorities to trial innovative regulatory approaches that reduce barriers to innovation and help businesses bring new products and services to market faster.

The appendices outline the evaluation methodology and tools used, including:

- Monthly monitoring forms completed by projects
- Qualitative topic guides for different stages and participant groups
- The Contribution Analysis approach used to assess the programme's impact

This document accompanies the 'Evaluation of the Regulators Pioneer Fund (Round 3) - Final Report', available on the DSIT website.

## Overview of funded projects

Nine short-term (8-months) and 15 long-term projects (12-18 months) received funding in the third round of the Regulators' Pioneer Fund (RPF3). Below are the project descriptions, as shared by the respective projects at the start of RPF3

**Table 2: RPF3 Project descriptions**

Project length	Project	Description
Short-term projects (8 months)	Care Quality Commission - Capturing innovation to accelerate improvement in health and social care	CQC explored and piloted ways of developing the right regulatory environment for innovation to flourish. Over eight months, CQC worked with a group of innovators and partners within the health and care system. CQC aimed to capture examples of high-quality innovation and share this learning and explore and articulate the role of an enabling and supportive regulator in an innovative health and care system. CQC also aimed to pilot a suite of innovation-supporting activities and products to accelerate innovation and improvement based on research evidence about the ways CQC can impact improvement in health and social care.
	Environment Agency - Using digital twin technology to enable low carbon industrial clusters	<p>The Environment Agency (EA) used world-leading digital twin modelling to help industry shape industrial clusters based on real-world environmental constraints –enabling rapid deployment to support energy security and sustainable economic growth. This is the first time that cutting edge digital twin technology has been used with environmental data to explore environmental limits and optimise decarbonisation technology in industrial clusters. The concept of 'digital twins' allows the creation of a digital representation of real-world places and systems.</p> <p>EA used digital twin technology to simulate the operation of multiple low carbon technologies in an industrial cluster. Using the outcomes from this project, EA explored opportunities for industry to work innovatively to mitigate environmental impacts and avoid costly delays in deployment. This</p>

		<p>provides an entirely new capability to “see the future” and shape it –leading to faster deployment timescales and lower environmental risk. EA worked with local and national Environment Agency specialists, Microsoft and their digital partners, industry representatives and other UK environmental regulators to achieve this. It was investigated how digital twin technology can be used as a positive tool to understand and plan to mitigate environmental limits as part of the overall ambition to facilitate the development of the first UK low carbon industrial cluster.</p>
	<p>Greater London Authority - Developing a market-based approach to enable significant SuDS investment through collaborative streetworks</p>	<p>The Greater London Authority (GLA) developed a strategic and innovative market-based approach to facilitate the delivery of critical sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) at scale through the Infrastructure Coordination Service (ICS) collaborative streetworks programme. This project sought to exploit the opportunity identified by leveraging the learning from UK environmental markets to address identified blockers to investment and enable scaled collaborative delivery. The project also identified any wider opportunities for application of market-based approaches to improve investment in critical flood resilience measures in London.</p>
	<p>Health and Safety Executive - Enabling Innovation in Industrial SafetyTECH</p>	<p>HSE employed a regulatory sandbox approach that enabled experimentation with technological innovations. The sandbox benefits both regulator and industry, providing clarity to innovators on regulatory expectations and confidence to industry to invest in and adopt Industrial Safetytech (IS).</p> <p>The project outcomes supported the safe deployment of emerging technology, providing confidence to large business and SMEs around IS adoption. This initiative has generated and harnessed new thinking, methods and technological approaches to improve regulatory delivery and performance, thus enabling innovative new products and services to come to market for the benefit of all.</p>

	<p>Information Commissioner's Office - Enabling innovation – piloting a multi-agency advice service for digital innovators</p>	<p>The DRCF aims to help make the UK the most innovation-friendly jurisdiction in the world by making it easier for firms that operate across digital regulatory boundaries to do business. To advance this ambition, the DRCF undertook exploratory research and piloted a multi-agency advice service for digital innovators needing joined up advice from multiple regulators.</p> <p>The service was designed around the views, needs and working practices of innovators across the digital economy. Success was measured by the accessibility of the pilot service and the impact of the advice on the businesses who use it.</p>
	<p>Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Authority - Developing approaches to make AI algorithms more interpretable using AI as a medical device as an exemplar</p>	<p>Explainability is about understanding how an algorithm arrived at a decision: for example, what factors did the algorithm consider and what weight did it assign to them? Interpretability, on the other hand, refers to the degree to which a human user can understand how a decision made by an algorithm applies to their own context. For clinician end users, a basic degree of explainability would be required for understanding the internal logic of the algorithm so that they have confidence in either accepting the algorithm's decision or overruling it.</p> <p>The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Authority (MHRA) aimed to produce a workable methodology to support regulation and clinicians for both transparent and complex models. This improved the possibility of introducing complex AI safely into the clinical pathway.</p>
	<p>National Institute for Biological Standards and Control - Developing guidelines to accelerate innovation for microbiome therapeutics and diagnostics</p>	<p>In order to encourage innovators to invest in the UK health care, the National Institute for Biological Standards and Control (NIBSC) aimed to develop appropriate internal and external guidelines that will facilitate the regulatory process, bringing confidence to the microbiome field and ensuring the safety of our patients. To achieve this, the NIBSC collaborated with the different MHRA departments, as well as with its extended national and international network of scientists, clinicians,</p>

		<p>companies and regulators, to ensure that it could capture the views and requirements of the field. NIBSC further utilised this knowledge to deliver public communication pieces aiming to inform and educate scientists, clinicians and patients on this emerging field.</p>
	<p>Office for Nuclear Regulation - Pilot of a regulatory sandbox on artificial intelligence in the nuclear sector</p>	<p>Working with the Environment Agency, ONR delivered a pilot regulatory sandbox process to support adoption of innovative technologies and approaches in the nuclear sector. Regulatory sandboxing is when regulators and industry work together in a non-regulatory environment to explore how innovative proposals can progress to deployment. Artificial intelligence (AI) was chosen as the pilot topic and the project focused on two potential applications in the nuclear sector. The pilot sandbox enabled innovators in AI to access regulatory advice in a safe space to derisk future deployment, while maintaining independence from regulatory decision making.</p> <p>This was the first application of a regulatory sandbox by nuclear regulators in the UK, and the learning was shared with key stakeholders and industry.</p>
	<p>Wakefield Council - Navigating SMEs through the complexities of 'Precautionary Allergen Labelling Risk Analysis' through the use of innovative technologies</p>	<p>Wakefield Council aimed to provide businesses, particularly SMEs with a free, interactive tool to assist them in the learning, understanding and application of precautionary allergen labelling (PAL) risk analysis. There were currently no existing support resources comparable to the one being produced.</p> <p>The tool was a 'first of its kind', interactive interface, which allowed users to select from a series of diverse retail and hospitality business formats from a traditional coffee shop, through to a more complex restaurant providing a range of dishes that include 'free-from' allergen offerings. Once the user selected an operational model with similarities aligned to their existing operating model / workplace, they were able to navigate the outlet's</p>

		<p>operational layout and characteristics and complete a series of hypothetical risk-based scenarios that aided decision making in completing their PAL risk analysis. The scenarios were designed to challenge the thinking of Food Business Operators (FBO) and their employees, to help them distinguish the difference between controlled and uncontrolled cross-contamination of allergens through good food hygiene and safety practices.</p> <p>The tool was designed to be licensed to allow national regulators the permissions to host or signpost the tool through web integration, to promote a standardised approach and provide a national resource to aid businesses with effective PAL analysis and in turn detract from general or blanket statements, i.e., 'may contain' being used without appropriate and proportionate risk analysis, which can often devalue the use of PAL, and exclude and mislead consumers with food allergies.</p>
<p>Long-term projects (12-18 months)</p>	<p>Argyll and Bute Council - West Coast of Scotland Trial for Integration of Manned and Unmanned Air Space</p>	<p>Argyll and Bute Council collaborated with Skyports and Air Navigation Solutions Limited (ANSL), who provide Air Traffic Services under Licence to London-Gatwick Airport and Edinburgh Airport, to examine and establish a volume of airspace over the west coast of Scotland for a six-month period. During this time, the local authority and two companies investigated the feasibility of the creation of a blanket area of low-density airspace over rural areas that would enable the safe integration of unmanned aircraft systems with general aviation/scheduled manned aircraft. This required close working with the Civil Aviation Authority to look at groundbreaking new regulations.</p> <p>This project was a foundational step towards unlocking Uncrewed Aerial Vehicle (UAV) airspace in the UK without disenfranchising crewed aviation and provide a network across the West Coast of Scotland, including inter island, to allow UAV trials for multi logistic delivery purposes.</p>

	<p>Care Quality Commission - Assessing Integrated Care System performance in understanding and responding to the health and care needs and experiences of people most likely to experience poorer care and inequalities</p>	<p>The Care Quality Commission (CQC) worked collaboratively with research, system and voluntary sector partners to provide a rigorous, scalable approach to assessing, reporting on and driving improvement in people's experiences of integrated care; how ICBs are performing in relation to their People and Communities strategies; and how ICBs are performing in acting on people's needs and experiences to reduce inequalities in health and care provision. It supported Integrated Care Boards to develop a rigorous consistent model for tracking and demonstrating their progress in these areas.</p>
	<p>Care Quality Commission - Driving innovation and accelerating improvement in medicines sustainability</p>	<p>CQC wanted to address environmental sustainability challenges associated with medicines across the health and care landscape. The project focused on understanding how better sustainability can be fostered within both individual providers and local systems settings. The CQC used the new evidence base created by this project to evolve how medicines are regulated sustainably and crucially, how to drive innovation in this area. The project also looked at the use of digital tools to support medicines sustainability and sought to identify gaps in this market as well as anticipated future needs. This information could be used by both businesses and providers to develop innovative digital solutions to help address this issue.</p>
	<p>Civil Aviation Authority - Hydrogen Challenge</p>	<p>The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) aimed to establish a CAA-led Regulatory Challenge on Hydrogen as aviation fuel. This Challenge facilitated collaboration among the CAA, the aviation industry and academia to enhance the understanding of hydrogen-related risks to aviation safety, identify gaps in CAA policies, and propose recommendations to develop new net-zero policies.</p> <p>This project supported the UK transitioning to a net zero economy, by supporting aviation industry and setting the scene in reducing any regulatory burdens on the introduction of hydrogen in aviation at a commercial scale. This project also aimed to contribute to making the UK a world leader in the</p>

		use of hydrogen in aviation, influence the development of future global standards, and create opportunities for investment.
	Coventry City Council - Drone Ready Cities (DRC) Roadmap to a regulatory framework for commercial drones in urban environments	Coventry City Council in partnership with the Midlands Aerospace Alliance aimed to tackle non-aviation regulatory barriers to urban drone use to enable public and private organisations to deliver faster, safer, cheaper and with less impact on the environment. This was done through a series of workshops with local authority regulators other regulators and stakeholders from transport, aviation and local potential beneficiaries. Each were given the opportunity to benchmark from experience in other relevant projects in the UK and other countries.
	Environment Agency - Using data to improve efficiency and effectiveness of regulation of the water sector and stimulate innovation	<p>The three water regulators – the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI), the Environment Agency (EA) and Ofwat – wanted to explore how they could improve regulation and stimulate innovation to tackle the challenges facing the water sector (public and private) using the data they hold. By sharing data and making more data open, the regulators aimed to give businesses and the public the opportunity to exploit the data which will create opportunities for innovation in: how the regulators and policy makers act on the data, how the public acts on it (for instance on data on flooding, pollution and drought) and by utilising data from the public about the local environment.</p> <p>This project enabled the regulators to collaboratively explore whether more of the data they each collect and hold could be shared between them to provide a more joined-up, efficient and effective service to water companies, businesses, local authorities and landowners they regulate, support and advise. It could also contribute to an improved foundation of data to support the development of policy in the area of drinking water supply, since the UK is no longer driven by European Directives and Regulations.</p>

		EA also explored whether some or all of that data could be made publicly available increasing transparency and allowing innovators to bring new products and services to market.
	Financial Reporting Council - Company and Organisational Data Explorer (CODEx)	<p>The UK is a world leader in collecting company and organisational data. However, access and usability could be optimised. To optimise access and usability, the Financial Reporting Council (FRC) proposed: The Company and Organisational Data Explorer (CODEx), a regulatory toolkit for structured data, creating a common set of analysis capabilities that allow data to be connected and reused and a public platform for structured data, creating a common interface, location and toolkit to simplify access, analysis of, and consumption of, public data. The project connected with initiatives across UK regulators and aimed to create a common set of components that could be reused across the Government.</p> <p>CODEx was designed to keep the UK at the forefront of regulatory experimentation for digital reporting, maximise the digital opportunity for the UK, provide greater transparency to the public and support regulators in using data to deliver better services at a lower cost to the public.</p>
	Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency - Using High-fidelity Synthetic Data as synthetic control arms and to boost sample sizes in clinical trials	The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) focused on the use of computer-generated data to help boost small clinical trials, and to see if this can improve the value of these trials. Following this, the project created an entirely artificial control group for a clinical trial. In the future, these approaches could be combined with, or even replace, real patient information. Success in this project could help to change the way clinical trials are performed in common and rare diseases, lowering their cost and improving how new treatments are tested before they are applied in the NHS.
	Milton Keynes City Council - Regulating Unmanned	As part of the Smart City work, Milton Keynes City Council worked with Cranfield University's Drone

	<p>Aerial Vehicles within Smart City Environments</p>	<p>Innovation Hub and Satellite Applications Catapult Westcott DronePort to prove, trial, test and demonstrate new drone-based services that operate alongside their robotics delivery services and self-driving passenger shuttles. The 18-month, project built on their reputation as an ‘urban laboratory’ and used new technologies to create enhanced and differentiated services, benefitting the city and everyone in it and help create more high-tech, high-skill jobs for our people in a new and growing sector. By integrating the ground-and air-based services, the project saw opportunities to reduce traffic congestion, and the resultant carbon emissions, creating a healthier environment for all in line with our Net Zero ambitions.</p> <p>The project itself was designed to demonstrate the new technologies, show that they are safe, secure and reliable and aid the development of UK-wide regulation in this area.</p>
	<p>Plymouth County Council - Maritime Regulatory Innovation Framework (MRIF) - Developing regulatory frameworks to support maritime innovation</p>	<p>Plymouth County Council developed an evidence base and a framework for testing autonomous and prototype vessels for R&amp;D. This will allow UK innovators and businesses to take a leadership role in testing new and emerging technologies. The new framework was co-designed by the MCA, local authorities, academia, business and other stakeholders and will be developed to be shared across the country.</p> <p>The framework will provide dedicated professional and academic resource to scope, quantify and map the overlapping legislative and operating elements, while working in partnership with key stakeholders as well as national and international regulators and relevant authorities, to identify and address the industry’s needs to drive R&amp;D in a safe, timely and cost-effective manner. By creating workable and safe regulations, this will allow the UK to take a leading role as an international centre for zero emissions and autonomous vessel innovation and manufacturing hub.</p>

	<p>Powys County Council - Intelligence Support for Private Sector Housing teams</p>	<p>Improving contact with Local Authorities for property agents and landlords during a time of increasing legislation is crucial for better business regulation. Powys County Council brought together Housing authorities to improve the way they work together, ensuring that enforcement is targeted where most needed, and guidance is consistent for cross-boundary businesses.</p> <p>Regional coordination for Housing enforcement teams across England achieved better communication and sharing of intelligence. This ensured that threats could be prioritised and resources used most effectively in the future. For businesses in the property sector this could achieve fewer visits and avoid duplication from having to provide identical information to a number of different authorities and departments. Businesses will be supported through advice and reassured that the problem traders will be targeted for enforcement.</p>
	<p>Scottish Environment Protection Agency - Outcome based regulation</p>	<p>The Scottish Environment Agency (SEPA) explored and tested an outcome-based regulation (OBR) approach, with a focus on supporting the achievement of net zero. It brought together regulators, other public sector organisations, operators and businesses to explore what OBR might mean for existing practices, processes and what it means for regulators in their approach to setting and assessing compliance.</p> <p>Trialling OBR in Scotland's largest industrial cluster provided the opportunity to test in a complex regulatory landscape, encompass emerging and innovative technologies with a focus on hydrogen and the bioeconomy. This also provided a robust test case for further exploration with small and medium enterprises and other sectors. In doing so, the project generated a deeper understanding of the holistic regulatory environment in industrial clusters including economic, environmental, and national/regional policies, strategies, and incentives. This, in turn, will improve understanding of investment drivers and constraints, make dialogue</p>

		<p>with business and industry more productive and support innovation.</p> <p>SEPA explored how new approaches to regulation could contribute to a collaborative ecosystem which achieves strategic and economic outcomes significant at a Scotland and UK level.</p>
	<p>Solicitors Regulation Authority - Making Alternative Dispute Resolution work better for individuals and businesses</p>	<p>The Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) saw an opportunity to carry out further research with partner organisations, experts and others interested in better understanding the use of DR as a mechanism for resolving disputes. SRA believed that there was an opportunity to look at creating technological pathways that help individuals and businesses resolve disputes or reach agreement on an issue that might otherwise be contentious. The Civil Justice Council (CJC) and other government departments were keen to explore the new, interesting and cost effective ways of using technology that might help remove barriers to the uptake of DR, improve the user experience, reduce bureaucracy and costs. Ultimately the outcome of the project should provide consumers and businesses with accessible and affordable alternatives to court proceedings.</p>
	<p>Tameside Council - Greater Manchester Business Compliance Service</p>	<p>This project brought together the Greater Manchester (GM) local authorities to provide local businesses with compliance advice and support, freeing up their time to focus on innovative new products, processes and services. Greater Manchester's new Business Compliance Service provides a one stop shop for business compliance advice and support, staffed with dedicated Business Compliance Officers, available Monday to Friday.</p> <p>They proactively contacted businesses to ensure that they knew what they needed to do to comply with regulations covering environmental health, trading standards and licensing. The aim was that the additional signposting advice and support will free up business' time and allow them to focus on creating innovative new products and services,</p>

		<p>creating growth, additional jobs and create a more prosperous local economy to assist in levelling up the country. The service will be flexible to demand and changing requirements for businesses, for example providing focused and dedicated support in the event of changing legislation or as new opportunities arise for Greater Manchester businesses through the levelling up agenda or as a result of the UK's exit from the EU.</p> <p>As a lasting legacy, staff within the Business Compliance Service also created a suite of self-help compliance products and tools, as suggested by businesses and for businesses hosted on their new GM Business Compliance website, to ensure a longevity to the service beyond the conclusion of this project.</p>
	<p>West Midlands Combined Authority - Transport Regulatory Sandbox - Dynamic traffic management and digitisation of street spaces and traffic orders</p>	<p>The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) partnered with other local authorities to deliver a Rules of the Road project (under the Future Transport Zone UK Pathfinder and with DfT funding). This was a universally adopted Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) management process, supported by a platform/software engine, which enables the creation of a real time Rules of the Road digitised map.</p> <p>Building on the project, WMCA intended to explore a wider acceleration of standardisation and digitisation of highway assets. This was intended to provide real time, dynamic street, and kerbside management. This specifically focused on: kerb space and highway asset digitisation to allow for booking and loading of freight deliveries, booked parking bays, more flexible operational envelopes for automated vehicle solutions, providing last mile delivery solutions, and the simplification of TRO application and implementation processes, building on DfT's existing ambitions for TRO reforms.</p>

## Evaluation Approach

In 2022, the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) was commissioned by the then Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to carry out a three-year evaluation of the RPF3 fund. The evaluation was then managed by the Regulatory Innovation Office (RIO) within the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT), following government departmental changes. The evaluation assessed the programme's success in helping regulators and local authorities ('regulatory authorities') adopt new and experimental regulatory approaches that support businesses to innovate. The evaluation was guided by three research questions:

- What impact has the £12m programme had to date? What impact has the RPF programme had, including RPF1 and 2, and the long-term outcomes of RPF3 against the then-current government priorities, such as place based innovation, reducing the cost of living and achieving net zero?
- What can we learn about the process of delivering the fund and innovative projects?
- What can government and wider stakeholders learn from this fund?

### Aims and Objectives

- Assessing whether RPF3 has delivered against its intended goals – exploring the range of outcomes and impacts achieved, for whom and why. As well as assessing the impacts of RPF3 projects, the evaluation also focused on the longer-term impacts achieved by projects funded in previous rounds.
- Eliciting and understanding the lessons learned from delivering innovative projects – building on lessons from the previous RPF evaluations to better understand what works well and the challenges in managing and delivering the programme and its projects. The evaluation focused on lessons learned at three levels:
  - Programme entry: exploring the ways in which the RPF application process supports or is challenging for applicants.
  - Programme support: exploring how RPF is delivered by the RIO Capability & Impact team.
  - Programme delivery and outcomes: mapping and understanding project delivery and outcomes at both baseline and at project completion.
- Disseminating key lessons across government and beyond – for example, lessons around what worked in supporting and accelerating innovation and learning from projects that have not delivered as intended.
- Effectively monitor the projects to manage risks and maximise outcomes – risks and mitigation plans formed part of the monthly monitoring information shared by RPF3 projects, which were used to systematically record anticipated and new risks, as well as track their resolutions.

## Qualitative data collection

The qualitative data collection addressed both the process, outcome and impact evaluation questions and involved 99 data collection encounters in total, with a majority of these involving interviews with staff leading on the RPF3 projects ('project leads') and programme staff. Project staff were interviewed both at the start of their project ('baseline') and towards the end of their project ('endline'). In addition, interviews were also conducted with staff from regulatory authorities that were not taking part in the RPF3, either because they did not apply or were not selected.

The data collection encounters are presented in Table 3 below, grouped according to whether they focused on experiences of programme entry, support, delivery and outcomes or the experience of previous RPF rounds. A full methodological summary for each data collection encounter is provided in the next section of the report.

**Table 3: Data collection groups**

<b>Focus</b>	<b>Participant group</b>	<b>Purpose and topic coverage</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Number of data collections</b>
Programme entry	Non-applicants	<p><b>Explore decisions not to apply</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding of the programme and its purpose</li> <li>• Factors preventing application, or that would enable it</li> <li>• Potential improvements to funding eligibility or process</li> </ul>	30-minute interviews	1
	Unselected applicants	<p><b>How to improve the Fund and application process</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding of programme, its purpose and motivations to apply</li> <li>• Experience, views on, and improvements to the programme</li> <li>• Views on eligibility criteria, likelihood of future applications</li> <li>• Barriers to unselected applications, and support needed</li> <li>• Whether and how innovation ideas have proceeded without RPF funding and outcomes of this</li> </ul>	45-minute interviews	5

Programme support	Programme staff Strategic staff; Operational leads	<b>Delivery lessons from RPF 1 &amp; 2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflections on the programme, its contribution to collaboration and cooperation in achieving innovations, and the range of impacts, and what helps achieve them</li> <li>• Reflections on the application and award process for RPF3</li> <li>• RPF3 delivery lessons and best way to disseminate learnings</li> </ul>	Paired interviews or mini groups	3
	Observations of the Regulators' Innovation Network	<b>Shared learning and collaboration</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How learning generated through funded projects is shared with other regulators</li> <li>• How other regulators are influenced to apply lessons to their own work</li> <li>• Nature of collaboration stemming from learning opportunities</li> </ul>	Observations	2
Programme delivery and outcomes	Project strategic and operational leads	<b>Project information, anticipated and actual outcomes</b>  <b>Baseline interviews</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project information, relationship to the Fund and policies</li> </ul>	Single or paired interviews	24 Baseline 24 Endline 12 Case studies

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project context, application motivations and experience</li> <li>• Innovation's, and the Fund's role in promoting collaboration</li> <li>• Anticipated outcomes, their importance, and for who</li> <li>• How the programme has helped and will help achieve aims (linked to ToC)</li> </ul> <p><b>End-of-project interviews</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery experiences, partnerships/ collaborations</li> <li>• Range of outcomes/unanticipated outcomes</li> <li>• Fund's role in innovating and bringing to market</li> </ul> <p><b>Case study interviews</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revisiting delivery experiences</li> <li>• Understanding how project outcomes will lead to longer-term impacts</li> <li>• Factors helping or hindering outcomes and impacts</li> </ul>		
		All RPF3 projects completed monthly monitoring progress reports to provide an early understanding of outcomes, achievements, learning, as	Monitoring data	Number of reports (monthly): 8 for 8-month   12 for

		well as risk and mitigation measures.		12-month   18 for 18-month
		All RPF3 projects completed end of project reports highlighting their key activities, outcomes and lessons learned.	End of project reports	24
Previous RPF stages	RPF1 and RPF2 projects and businesses	<p><b>Understand longer-term, sustainable impacts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project information and anticipated and actual impacts</li> <li>• Outcomes since funding ended – nature of outcomes, on who, in what regulatory/ authority contexts</li> <li>• What helps achieve sustainable/ significant impacts</li> </ul>	20 x 45-minute interviews	10 projects, 5 businesses

## Evaluation timeline

A detailed breakdown of research activities and timings is outlined in Figure 1 below.

**Figure 1: Timeline of evaluation activities**



## Impact evaluation

### RPF3 Theory of Change

The research team built on the initial Theory of Change (ToC) developed by the RPF and other stakeholders. The ToC was informed by documented learning from previous RPF rounds and

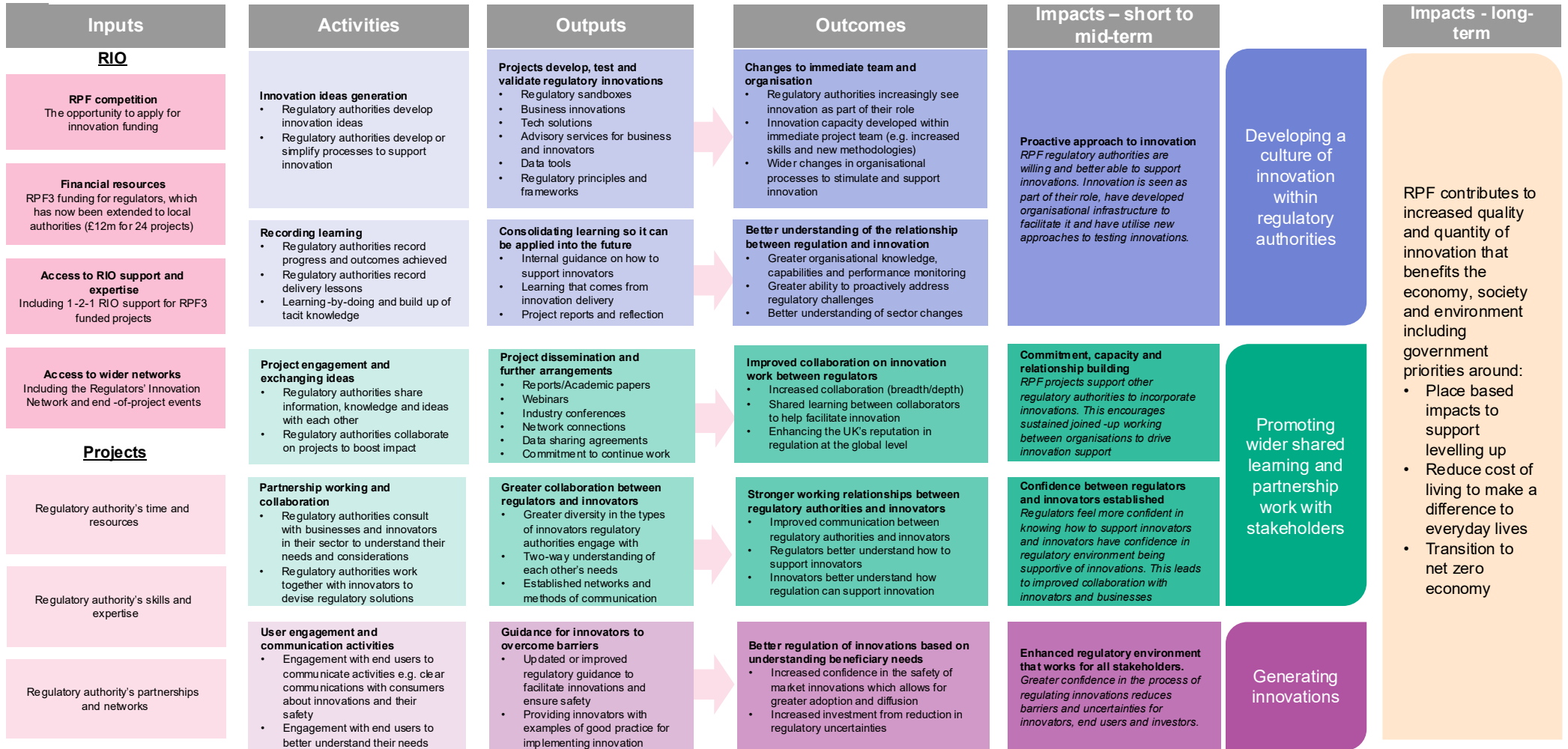
scoping activities with Fund staff undertaken by the research team to refine it further. The ToC outlines how the RPF is expected to work across all rounds, covering the range of funded projects and how they are envisaged to lead to the expected results of the RPF (see Figure 2).

RPF's ToC sets out expected impacts, to emerge after three rounds of funding. It groups the key short-and-medium-term programme impacts into three categories which were developed through the initial scoping work with programme staff and explains the different ways in which the RPF aims to contribute to changes.

- Generating innovation - bringing in new, innovative products, services and processes to benefit consumers and businesses.
- Developing a culture of innovation within regulators and LAs involved in the programme.
- Promoting wider shared learning and partnership work among stakeholders.

Across these categories, key RPF outcomes and impacts focus on developing the commitment and capacity of organisations to support innovation. They focus on achieving joined up working across a range of stakeholders to support better understanding of innovation needs and share good practice, as well as to develop consumer and business confidence in the regulatory frameworks governing innovations.

**Figure 2: Theory of Change**



## **Contribution analysis approach**

A Contribution Analysis (CA) approach was used to systematically understand the extent to which the programme has contributed to outcomes. CA does this by rigorously testing the understanding of how the programme works (presented in the ToC), through an iterative process of evidence collection and analysis<sup>2</sup>. CA also allows for the examination of alternative explanations to outcomes and dependencies (including external barriers and enablers) to build a robust narrative for whether the outcomes were achieved and how the programme contributed to them.

The information given in the ToC are then presented in written form as 'contribution claims' for each outcome area. These claims are testable conjectures that describe an outcome, what the programme inputs are that are relevant for that outcome and the series of steps or 'mechanisms of change' that are needed to get there. These claims then get revised and iterated on over time as evidence is collected and the understanding of the programme improves.

## **Roadmap of the contribution analysis**

Figure 3 outlines the stepped approach of conducting CA over the three-year evaluation period. It illustrates the iterative process of data collection and theory revision, leading to a final assessment and synthesis of findings.

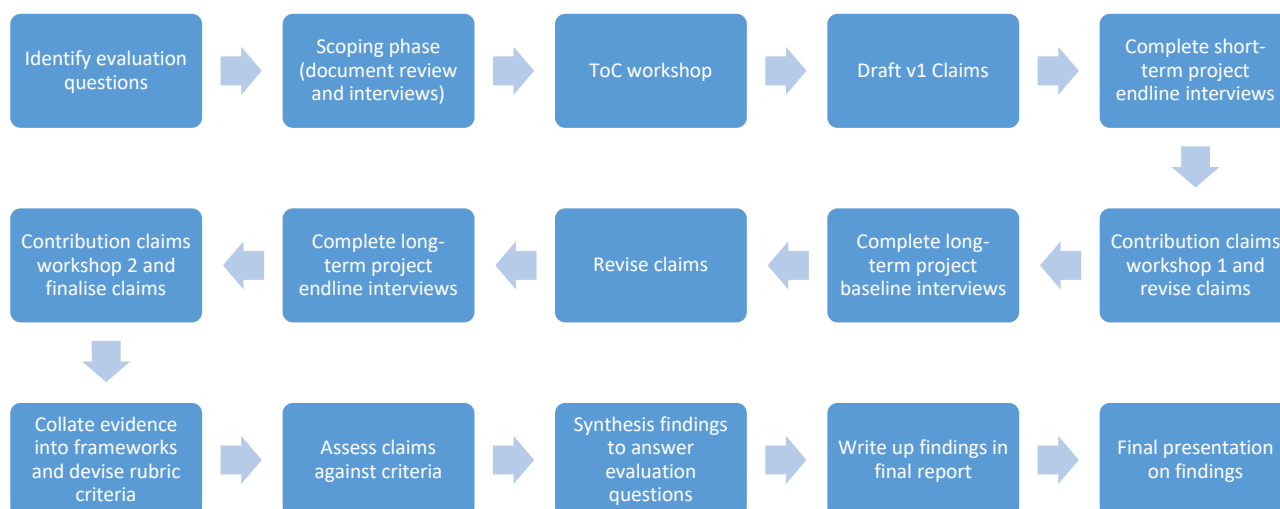
During the scoping phase, interviews were conducted with programme staff and documentary evidence of the previous RPF round was reviewed. A ToC workshop was then held to examine the programme's causal links in more detail. This led to the updating of the ToC to better reflect RPF3's objectives, and a series of contribution statements were created to align with the identified outcome areas.

The contribution claims were then further updated after the short-term project endline interviews, and these revisions were discussed at a second workshop with programme staff. Following the endline interviews for long-term projects, a final revision and workshop session was conducted to assess the claims against the new evidence.

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<sup>2</sup> Befani, B. & Mayne, J., 2014. Process Tracing and Contribution Analysis: A Combined Approach to Generative Causal Inference for Impact Evaluation. *IDS Bulletin*, 45(6), pp. 17-36.

**Figure 3: Roadmap of the contribution analysis**



## Evolution of the contribution claims

The initial contribution statements for the programme at the start of the evaluation were:

1. *RPF instils a culture that encourages and stimulates innovation from regulators.* The funding provides regulators with the capacity to identify opportunities for innovation in their operations. Tools and processes are developed to provide solutions to these opportunities and create a commitment to innovation following their improved capabilities to address the topic.
2. *RPF leads to an increase in the knowledge base of the role of innovation in regulation.* Monitoring progress and data collection activities throughout the project are translated into showcased outputs that demonstrate learning that has resulted from the programme. These outputs are consumed by other regulators who draw upon the knowledge and are influenced to apply lessons to their own work.
3. *RPF encourages regulators authorities to work together to drive innovation.* The process of RPF application and delivery encourages recipients to work collaboratively to a degree they would not have otherwise without the programme. The RPF will support this collaboration by providing the opportunity for regulators to interact and learn from one another through networks such as the Regulators' Innovation Network (RIN).
4. *Recipients of the RPF programme have a better understanding of what innovators in their respective area or sector need to develop products or services.* Advisory services for businesses are developed through the RPF following engagement with RPF networks and project research which help support innovators in their short-medium term activities. This fosters two-way learning that instils greater confidence between industry and regulators to understand what is needed to achieve innovation objectives.
5. *RPF leads to the development of innovative processes, products and services through the delivery of RPF projects.* Projects will improve regulatory guidance that facilitates

innovation from their consultations and testing, ensuring improved products and services are brought to UK markets.

**Following the short-term project endline interviews and subsequent claims workshop, the claims were revised to provide greater detail and explanation:**

1. *RPF creates a stronger culture of innovation within regulatory authorities or parts of it.* Regulatory authorities or specific teams within them have a proactive approach to tackling regulatory issues and greater organisational capacity to do so. The RPF provides resource to identify gaps in regulatory guidance and develop innovative solutions in an experimental way, where typical funding models do not allow for this type of risk. Projects demonstrate new ways of working and upskill staff to innovate, which leads to leadership and teams within the regulatory authority feeling more confident and committed to applying new methods of solving regulatory matters. As a result, organisational infrastructure and processes are established or strengthened to support and sustain these new commitments.
2. *RPF leads to a better understanding of the relationship between innovation and regulation, including how new technologies and systems impact in their sector and how to address their regulatory needs.* RPF projects allow for new ways of working on regulatory issues and for the authority to research solutions to underexplored areas in their field. Organisational knowledge is generated from the 'learning-by-doing' process during project activities, hiring new staff and engaging with other regulatory authorities throughout the project lifecycle as they share information about their experiences in these areas. These learnings are recorded by the regulatory authority so they can be applied into the future.
3. *The RPF encourages regulatory authorities to work together to drive regulatory and commercial innovation, including those abroad.* These activities demonstrate the UK's role as a thought-leader on certain topics at the global level. RPF provides the opportunity and forum for regulatory authorities to work together to provide solutions to common problems. Projects bring together people and organisations over the project lifecycle to share information, knowledge and ideas. These engagements can lead to further collaboration, including combining resources to work together on a solution and aligning practices across multiple organisations. Engagement with regulatory authorities from abroad allows UK regulators to influence and provide leadership on global regulatory policy by showcasing newly developed regulatory solutions and sharing their expertise around these.
4. *The RPF enables closer working relationships between regulators and innovators.* Each has greater confidence in the other's ability to work on developing safe innovations and trust that they will be supported in doing so, creating a more efficient regulatory process. The projects funded by the programme create an environment where both parties work together towards a common objective, increasing their exposure to each other and creating a more balanced and collaborative dynamic. This way of working allows innovators and regulatory authorities to have more extensive and openness in their communication, enabling greater two-way understanding of each other's needs and remit. This allows for consideration of requests earlier on in the innovation development process and for regulatory authorities to provide more timely and targeted support to innovators.

5. *The RPF programme creates an improved regulatory environment for innovation stakeholders, helping facilitate more innovation and economic activity, increase adoption and diffusion, and ensuring safety in UK markets.* RPF projects create a stronger culture of innovation within regulatory authorities and increasing collaboration between other regulatory authorities and innovators. By ensuring greater coordination throughout the innovation process between regulatory authorities and innovators, new products, services and processes that RPF projects focus on are likely to face fewer barriers before going to market. This reduction in uncertainty helps two-fold by increasing investor confidence in financing and commercialising innovations and helping increase end user confidence in adopting them knowing that they are safe. A more coordinated regulatory environment also reduces the costs for businesses to meet the requirements to operate, giving them more resources for enterprise activities.

**Another revision of these claims took place after the long-term project baseline interviews to sharpen the narrative. This included splitting claim 3 into two separate claims around cooperation (3a) and influence (3b):**

1. *RPF creates a stronger culture of innovation within regulatory authorities.* Regulatory authorities have a proactive approach to tackling regulatory issues and have greater organisational capabilities to do so. The RPF provides resource and justification to pursue innovative solutions to regulatory gaps. The funding's tolerance for risk makes it unique and enables experimental methods and new ways of working to create regulatory solutions. The learnings and results from these projects give leadership and teams more confidence and commitment to continue applying new methods to solving regulatory matters. Regulatory authorities see innovation as part of their role, with new organisation infrastructure and processes becoming established or expanded to account for these new commitments.
2. *RPF leads to a better understanding of the relationship between innovation and regulation. Regulatory authorities increase their organisational knowledge on how to evaluate the impact of innovations through the development of new technologies, information management and regulatory systems.* RPF allows regulatory authorities to explore new ways of working on regulatory issues and/or research solutions to underexplored areas in their field. Organisational knowledge is generated from the 'learning-by-doing' process during project activities, onboarding new expertise via new staff or organisation partnerships and knowledge-engaging with other regulatory stakeholders. These learnings are recorded and disseminated within the regulatory authority so they can be continued into the future.
3. *A - Regulatory authorities have greater capacity to tackle regulatory issues and drive innovation by having established processes of working together.* The RPF provides a forum and network for regulatory authorities to interact, discuss their challenges and see where they can align goals. Opportunities arise for regulatory authorities to work together on common problems by pooling resources and ensuring work is not duplicated. RPF projects bring together people and organisations where they share information and ideas to address regulatory solutions. This process and its outputs form working relationships between organisations and their leaders. Following the end of the project, the regulatory

authorities explore the opportunities to continue working together on shared regulatory matters.

*B - RPF recipients produce innovative regulatory solutions that influence other regulatory authorities to align to their practices.* These solutions exhibit the UK as a progressive and forward-thinking regulatory environment. RPF project dissemination work from completed projects showcases new regulatory methods and solutions. These new methods and solutions inspire other UK regulatory authorities to try new approaches to regulation and demonstrate the UK's role as a thought leader on these topics at the global level. Additionally, international regulatory authorities have a desire to work with the UK authorities to improve their regulatory work and want to align their practices with the UK.

4. *Greater collaboration between regulatory authorities and innovators creates a more efficient regulatory process.* Closer working generates greater confidence in each other's ability to develop safe innovations and trust their needs will be supported. The RPF program fosters collaboration regulatory authorities and innovators, working towards shared goals with an outcomes-focused approach. Innovators gain more frequent and in-depth access to regulatory authorities, leading to increased exposure and a more balanced, collaborative relationship. This improved dynamic promotes open communication, helping both sides better understand each other's needs and responsibilities, and providing innovators with more timely and targeted support.
5. *RPF creates an improved regulatory environment that fosters innovation.* Innovators feel like regulatory authorities support the development of their ideas and UK markets offer a greater number of safe products and services. RPF beneficiaries have a stronger culture of innovation and greater collaboration between themselves and innovators. As regulatory authorities focus on outcomes for their sector, compliance frameworks have a degree of flexibility that means they are relevant and effective over time, whilst greater access to regulatory authorities means regulation is clear for innovators. Together, this creates more timely responses to queries and fewer barriers to developing and commercialising innovations.

## Evidence assessments

The evidence assessments were formed against a set of rubrics against three criteria, with specific questions accompanying each rubric to support the assessment. The questions and the three respective criteria were:

- Plausibility – does the claim provide a clear, coherent and logical explanation of the causal narrative?
- Completeness – does the claim:
  - Give sufficient detail to explain the causal pathway?
  - Provide the entire explanation of how the outcomes are generated?
  - Reflect all the available observed evidence?
- Strength of evidence – does the claim:
  - Provide a thorough and convincing explanation of the connection between the intervention and the outcome? (confirmatory or contradictory)
  - Provide numerous sources of evidence for the explanation? (triangulation)
  - Consider the ability of sources to speak to the reality of what is happening / whether there has been adequate coverage of a particular population?(representation – i.e., did we speak to the right people)

The evidence from all sources was assessed using the five-point scales shown in the tables below. The main advantages of using rubrics to score the three criteria are that they provide a rigorous, transparent, and systematic method for evaluating the claims.

- Rigour was achieved through a systematic examination of both the credibility (plausibility) and robustness (completeness and strength of evidence) of the evidence in relation to each claim. The aim was to assess the 'probative value', that is, to determine how strongly the evidence supports or challenges the explanation provided by the contribution claim, and to what extent it enhances or weakens the overall argument.
- Transparency was ensured by maintaining a clear trail that linked the empirical evidence to assessment scores, allowing external audiences to scrutinise and verify the evaluation process.
- Consistency was achieved by applying a systematic process to the assessment of evidence, ensuring that each claim is evaluated using the same standards.

**Table 4: Evidence assessment tables**

**Plausibility**

<b>Very weak</b>	<b>Weak</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Strong</b>	<b>Very strong</b>
<p><b>Unclear, illogical, or contradictory</b> explanation connecting intervention to outcome.</p>	<p><b>Explanation indicates a possible connection</b> between intervention and outcome.</p>	<p><b>Explanation is clear, logical, and temporally consistent</b>, and suggests a likely association between intervention and outcome.</p>	<p><b>Convincing explanation</b> of how evidence connects intervention and outcome. <b>Conclusions drawn tend to follow the data.</b></p>	<p><b>Highly convincing account, clearly and logically signposting key steps</b> and specific data connecting intervention to outcome. <b>Conclusions drawn unambiguously follow the data.</b></p>

**Completeness**

<b>Very weak</b>	<b>Weak</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Strong</b>	<b>Very strong</b>
<p>The claim is <b>poorly detailed</b> and fails to cover the relevant causal pathways.</p> <p><b>Multiple alternative explanations</b> or risks are identified, severely</p>	<p>The claim <b>lacks detail</b> and covers few of the relevant causal pathways.</p> <p><b>Several alternative explanations</b> or risks are identified,</p>	<p>The claim is <b>adequately detailed</b> and covers some of the relevant causal pathways.</p> <p><b>Some alternative explanations</b> or risks are identified, but they</p>	<p>The <b>claim is well-detailed</b> and covers most of the relevant causal pathways.</p> <p><b>Few alternative explanations</b> or risks are identified, none of</p>	<p>The <b>claim is thoroughly detailed</b> and captures the full relevant set of causal pathways.</p> <p>There are <b>no alternative explanations</b> or risks identified that threaten</p>

<p>threatening the completeness of the claim.</p> <p>The <b>claim does not reflect the narrative</b> derived from available evidence, demonstrating a minimal understanding of the causal relationships.</p>	<p>significantly threatening the completeness of the claim.</p> <p>The claim reflects a <b>limited narrative</b> derived from available evidence, demonstrating a weak understanding of the causal relationships.</p>	<p>only moderately threaten the completeness of the claim.</p> <p>The <b>claim reflects a portion of the narrative</b> derived from available evidence, demonstrating a basic understanding of the causal relationships.</p>	<p>which significantly threaten the completeness of the claim.</p> <p>The <b>claim reflects the majority of the narrative</b> derived from available evidence, demonstrating a strong understanding of the causal relationships.</p>	<p>the completeness of the claim.</p> <p>The <b>claim reflects the full narrative</b> derived from all available evidence, demonstrating a deep and thorough understanding of the causal relationships.</p>
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### Strength of evidence

Very weak	Weak	Moderate	Strong	Very strong
<p><b>Strong contradiction:</b> Evidence clearly and consistently indicates that the contribution claim is incorrect. Multiple reliable sources and data points refute the claim, demonstrating that the expected outcomes are not</p>	<p><b>Contradiction:</b> Evidence generally suggests that the contribution claim is unlikely to be correct. There are several sources and data points that contradict the claim, though some minor aspects may still align</p>	<p><b>Mixed/inconclusive:</b> Evidence is inconclusive or inconsistent regarding the contribution claim. There is a balance of sources and data points both supporting and contradicting the claim, making it difficult to draw a definitive conclusion.</p>	<p><b>Confirmatory:</b> Evidence generally supports the contribution claim. Most sources and data points align with the expected outcomes, though there may be some minor inconsistencies or contradictory evidence.</p>	<p><b>Strong confirmatory:</b> Evidence overwhelmingly supports the contribution claim. Multiple reliable sources and data points consistently demonstrate that the expected outcomes are directly attributable to the intervention, with no</p>

<p>attributable to the intervention.</p> <p><b>No evidence corroborates the connection between intervention and outcome.</b> Other evidence contradicts the proposed connection.</p> <p>The perspectives and/or experiences of priority groups are not included as sources of evidence.</p>	<p>with the expected outcomes.</p> <p><b>A single source of evidence</b> supports the claim (i.e., the connection between intervention and outcome).</p> <p>The perspectives and/or experiences of some priority groups have been included, but those groups have not been involved or consulted.</p>	<p><b>Multiple lines of evidence</b> (i.e., source types) corroborate the connection between intervention and outcome.</p> <p>The perspectives and/or experiences of priority groups have been elicited indirectly through <b>data collection by the researchers or evaluators</b> and from their observations.</p>	<p><b>Multiple lines of high-quality evidence</b> corroborate the connection between intervention and outcome.</p> <p><b>Priority groups generate their own evidence with their own perspectives and experiences.</b> These are aggregated and homogenised by researchers and/or evaluators, so therefore may lack nuance.</p>	<p>significant contradictory evidence.</p> <p><b>Multiple lines of evidence across different sources</b> corroborate the connection between intervention and outcome.</p> <p><b>Multiple sources of evidence generated directly by priority groups through their own data collection and analysis processes.</b> Perspectives may be unique to different groups and thus reflect a variety of viewpoints.</p>
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## Process evaluation

The process evaluation was conducted alongside the impact evaluation, described in the sections above. The process evaluation assessed how the programme and the projects it funded were being implemented. It provided a detailed understanding of the management and delivery on the ground, checked if the implementation was as intended, and identified the key barriers and enablers for successful outcomes<sup>3</sup>. In doing so, it:

- Monitored what worked well and not so well when managing and delivering the fund.
- Identified key challenges regulatory authorities encounter when delivering innovative projects.
- Provided lessons for future funding rounds by identifying factors that contribute to the success of the RPF and the projects it funds.

The process evaluation aimed to achieve these aims by answering the primary and secondary research questions listed in the table below. Table 5 indicates which data sources will be used to answer these research questions.

**Table 5: Process evaluation research questions and data sources**

Primary research questions	Secondary research questions	Data sources
How is the programme being managed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What were programme staff experiences of designing and setting up RPF3? What lessons were learnt?</li> <li>• What was the rationale behind the selection of funded projects? How well do funded projects align with RPF aims?</li> <li>• How were applicants and projects supported by programme staff and resources over the course of the third round?</li> <li>• What support has been offered by Programme staff to overcome barriers and to enable outcomes?</li> <li>• How have lessons learned from RPF1 and RPF2 been taken on board in the design, set up and delivery of RPF3?</li> <li>• What lessons have been learnt in what works well and less well in supporting programme</li> </ul>	Interviews with programme strategic and operational staff

<sup>3</sup> Oakley, A. et al., 2006. Process evaluation in randomised controlled trials of complex interventions. *BMJ*, 332(7538), pp. 413-416.

	<p>applicants and projects to achieve successful outcomes?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How have lessons about delivering these types of innovative projects been shared?</li> </ul>	
How is the programme being delivered?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What were regulator authorities' experiences of the application process? What could have been improved?</li> <li>• How has RPF3 funding been used? How has this deviated from the original plan and what has driven any changes?</li> <li>• What other resources were used to support project delivery and to achieve outcomes, why and were these sufficient?</li> <li>• What worked well and less well in delivering projects successfully?</li> <li>• What were the barriers and enablers to successful project delivery? How did barriers and enablers vary between different regulatory authorities, innovations and sectors?</li> <li>• How have lessons learnt been shared? Among which audiences and through which forums have lessons been shared?</li> <li>• How have projects found the support offered by RPF Team? How could this be improved?</li> </ul>	<p>Interviews with project strategic and operational staff</p> <p>Monthly monitoring information</p> <p>Project reports reviews</p>

## Strengths and limitations

This theory-based evaluation approach follows HM Treasury's Magenta Book<sup>4</sup> guidance for evaluations of complex programmes, employing contribution analysis in lieu of a counterfactual and ensuring a clear trail from evidence to conclusions.

Following on from this, a key strength of the study's approach was its use of a developed Theory of Change to test contribution statements that were central to how the programme worked, while still allowing flexibility in the qualitative encounters to capture insights outside of this framework. The approach also provided a comprehensive view of programme issues and achievements by gathering perspectives from diverse stakeholders, which ranged from programme and project staff to an independent expert on technology and regulation.

<sup>4</sup> [The Magenta Book - GOV.UK](#)

However, certain perspectives were underrepresented, which limited the extent that the evaluation could comment on two key issues. There were limitations in understanding why some regulatory authorities had never applied for RPF funding because it was challenging to recruit these authorities.

Similarly, the evidence on long-term impact needs to be read with caution for three reasons:

- It was too early to observe the longer-term impacts of RPF3 projects during the evaluation.
- Although the evaluation focused on previous RPF1 and RPF2 projects, engagement was lower than anticipated for legacy projects due to staff turnover and changes in role.
- The evaluation was able to include only a limited range of perspectives from wider stakeholders—such as external experts in innovation and regulation, innovators, and those who may benefit from regulatory change. This reflects the evaluation’s scope, which prioritised engagement with programme staff and funded projects, as well as the limited availability and willingness of wider stakeholders to participate. As a result, the evaluation is restricted in what it can report from these stakeholders’ viewpoints, and the findings may lean more toward the programme’s internal perspective. However, some wider stakeholder perspectives were captured through the deep-dive case studies with 12 RPF3 projects, which are published alongside this report.

Finally, much of the data was gathered from project leads and programme staff, so it is important to acknowledge the risk of self-reporting bias. To minimise this risk and strengthen the robustness of the findings, several mitigation strategies were built into the evaluation design. These focused on the independence of the evaluation, encouraging participants to reflect openly on their experiences, ensuring interviews were conducted in an unbiased and methodologically sound way, and assessing the evidence rigorously (outlined below).

- **Independence of the evaluation.** The study was conducted by an independent evaluator to help ensure that the insights generated were impartial.
- **Encouraging open reflection.** The study created conditions for open reflection by keeping interviews anonymous and reassuring project leads that the evaluation focused on the programme overall rather than individual project performance. This helped reduce any sense of scrutiny and encouraged more balanced and honest reflections.
- **Unbiased, high quality interviewing.** Interview guides were designed to avoid leading questions and experienced interviews used indirect, neutral prompts to support open and unbiased responses.
- **Rigorous evidence assessment.** A theory-based contribution approach was used to test the plausibility, completeness, and strength of the evidence through a structured, analytical framework. Self-reported project insights were cross-checked against monthly monitoring forms (which form part of the due diligence process around grant administration and are themselves reconciled with financial and operational documentation such as invoices and progress records).

# Methodological summary

## Quarterly monitoring reports

Each regulatory authority completed monthly progress reports for the RIO guided by the ToC and contribution statements (Appendix A). A secure folder was set up so that the RIO could share the monthly reports to NatCen securely. The evaluation team then produced quarterly monitoring reports synthesising three months' worth of progress reports, based on a subset of measurement indicators. The quarterly reports were produced in Microsoft PowerPoint and showed a high-level summary of project progress, widespread challenges, risks and barriers, and any key learning that emerged across the projects.

The evaluation also drew on the insights from the end of project reports that each RPF3 project was asked to complete after the projects ended. These reports provided further insights on key project outcomes, delivery experiences, learning and outcomes.

## Programme staff

There were three data collection encounters with programme staff. For all of these, the participants were recruited directly through the RIO.

Two paired interviews were completed with programme staff managing the RPF3 projects. One was conducted at the beginning of the short-term projects and the other at the beginning of the long-term projects. The interviews lasted an hour and half and involved discussing the staff members' role and responsibilities, as well as how they have supported the projects at different stages. They were also asked about the progress of projects and any emerging outcomes they had noticed.

A focus group was held with programme staff managing both short-term and long-term projects once all projects were completed. They discussed their delivery experiences, the support needed and provided to projects, the outcomes achieved by projects, and how the RPF contributed to these outcomes, including any alternative explanations.

## RPF3 Project leads

Twenty-four single or paired baseline interviews were conducted with all RPF3 strategic and operational project leads at the set-up stage of their projects. RIO provided NatCen with the contact details of each regulatory authority. NatCen sent out emails with a privacy notice and scheduled interviews based on the project leads' availability. The interviews lasted for approximately 70 minutes and focused on the participants reasons for applying to RPF, their experiences of the application process, the context behind their project's innovation, and any outcomes they anticipate coming from the project.

An additional twenty-four endline interviews were conducted when projects were completed, using the same recruitment approach and including both single and paired interviews. The 80-

minute interviews focused on participants' experiences of delivering different stages of the projects, the expected and unexpected outcomes achieved, and how the impact of these outcomes could be sustained in the future.

## Unselected and non-applicants

Four interviews were completed with unselected applicants and one interview with a non-applicant. As with all other qualitative data encounters, RIO provided regulatory authority contact details for NatCen to arrange the interviews. The 45-minute-long interviews focused on the reasons for applying for RPF, their experiences of the application process, their views on the application outcome and any improvements that could be made to the process of applying for the RPF fund.

## RPF1 and RPF2 projects

Five interviews were completed with RPF1 project leads and six interviews were completed with RPF2 project leads. The projects were selected purposively based on RIO's assessment of whether projects had achieved sustainable outcomes, and whether they have been involved in RPF1 and RPF2. The RPF team provided contact details to NatCen, who then made contact and scheduled the interviews accordingly. The 60-minute interviews focused on participants' relationships to the past project, any immediate and sustained project outcomes they had observed, and the factors that contributed to these outcomes.

In addition to project leads, 5 interviews were completed with businesses and innovators that benefited from RPF1 and RPF2 projects. The project leads made initial contact with businesses, forwarding them the research teams' contact details to opt-in to the research. The 30-minute interviews focused particularly on understanding the programme and project contributions to anticipated and actual innovation outcomes, as well as the factors that determine the extent to which innovation aims were achieved. The interviews also explored experiences of working with regulators and local authorities.

## Case studies

From the 24 RPF3 projects, twelve case studies were selected to illustrate the range and diversity of projects across the programme. They were selected with the following criteria:

- Regulator or local authority diversity: projects across a range of regulators and local authorities.
- Diversity in project focus: projects that vary in terms of the innovations they offer (e.g. services, products or processes) and the recipients they target. In making this selection, we also considered the wider government policy areas that the innovations speak to. For example, where possible we included projects that were focused on drones or autonomous vehicles, engineering biology, space, AI and digital health care.
- Delivery learning: projects that vary in their delivery experiences, with some experiencing more challenges and successes than others.

Twelve interviews were conducted with project leads, split with 4 short-term project leads and 8 long-term project leads. NatCen sent out emails alongside a privacy notice, and then scheduled the interviews based on project leads' availability. Lasting 80 minutes, the interviews revisited the projects' vision and delivery experiences and then explored in more detail the previous and current project outcomes and how they contribute to overall project goals.

In addition to these interviews, 15 interviews were conducted with beneficiaries and innovators who were involved in the projects. The project leads initially contacted the businesses and shared the research teams' contact details. The interviews lasted half an hour and explored their relationship with the RPF3 project and whether and how the projects made a difference to their organisation.

## Regulators' Innovation Network (RIN) observations

The NatCen research team attended two of the RIN meetings facilitated by the RPF team. The Network is a forum for regulators, both those involved and not involved in the RPF, to share best regulatory practices and support a culture of collaboration and experimentation, enabling businesses to bring innovations to the market. The observations helped to provide an understanding of the discussions at the RIN and how the meetings support collaboration between regulators, including the sharing of knowledge and experiences.

## Analysis and reporting

All interviews were transcribed verbatim, and data summarised using NatCen's qualitative Framework approach using NVivo 12. This approach facilitated data management and analysis by case and theme within an overall matrix. In this study the cases were participants who had taken part in the different stages of qualitative data collection and the themes were based on the aims and objectives of the research. This approach to data management allowed for a robust and systematic analysis grounded in the views and experiences of the interviewed participants. When analysing the data, special attention was paid to the ToC and contribution statements.

Table 6 below lists the outputs from the evaluation, alongside the length and format, the purpose and contents.

**Table 6: Evaluation reports**

Report	Length/format	Purpose and contents
Interim report Jan 2024	c. 150-pages (written)	<p>The report primarily focuses on evaluating the 8-month projects, drawing out the extent to which contribution claims can be evidenced.</p> <p>Additionally, it covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issues around RPF3 application and entry</li> <li>• Extent to which there is evidence of RPF1 longer-term outcomes and impacts</li> </ul>
4 x case studies Jan 2024	Slide deck, c. 40-50 slides	The slide deck presents insights from each short-term case study in detail, uncovering the unique pathways taken by the selected RPF projects. Again, these will be tied back to the ToC.
Final evaluation report August 2025	c. 100-pages (written)	This is the main evaluation output, bringing together the insights from all of the primary research and monitoring information, to produce a holistic picture of the RPF. It presents all the available evidence for and against each contribution claim, detailing the mechanisms of change, and the barriers and enablers faced by regulatory authorities, businesses and other stakeholders. It also explores the extent to which there is evidence of RPF2 longer-term outcomes and impacts.
8 x case studies August 2025	Slide deck, c. 60-70 slides	The slide deck will present insights from each long-term case study in detail, uncovering the unique pathways taken by the selected RPF projects. Again, these will be tied back to the ToC
Technical report August 2025	c. 150 pages (written)	The technical report details the methodology used, with research instruments included as appendices.

## Appendix A: Monthly monitoring form template

<b>Project details</b>	
Project title:	
Organisation:	
Project lead:	
Reporting period (Date from: to:)	
Date of the report:	

<b>Project RAG</b>	
Please select Green, Amber or Red from the drop-down and provide a brief reason for your rating alongside:	
Green	

<b>Progress summary</b>
Provide a brief description of the main achievements and issues for the reporting period along with any changes to the milestones/deliverables. Please add any general comments that may support/add to later sections in the form. (Recommended approx 200 words)

## Work packages and deliverables

Use the table below to describe the work packages and deliverables **progressed in this reporting period**.

### Work Package 1

#### Brief description:

Deliverables	Start /End Date	Progress	Next Steps
1			
2			
3			
4			

### Work Package 2

#### Brief description:

Deliverables	Start /End Date	Progress	Next Steps
1			
2			
3			
4			

### Work Package 3

#### Brief description:

Deliverables	Start /End Date	Progress	Next Steps
1			
2			
3			
4			

## Early outcomes and achievements

Please describe any early outcomes or achievements that you have encountered in your project. These are separate from the deliverables.  
For example partnership development, dissemination of best practice information, etc.

Please describe whether and how businesses and consumers are making use of the innovations.  
For example, describing which businesses and/or consumers are making use of the innovations and which aspect of the innovation they are making use of, etc.

## Learnings gained

Please describe any new learning gained from undertaking the project, particularly in relation to facilitating new, innovative approaches or doing new, experimental things in your organisation.




What are the main challenges you are facing?  
For example, detail any specific challenges to engaging businesses and/consumers.

What has worked well so far and what hasn't?

**Project timeline**

Please use this tab to provide a timeline for your project. We recommend using a Gantt Chart format.  
Please update the project timeline for each monitoring return as required, considering any changes to **key milestones or deliverables**.

**Project Name:**

Completed	
In progress	
Overdue	

					January				February					
					Week Commencing									
Task	Responsibility	Start date	End date	Status	02-Jan	09-Jan	16-Jan	23-Jan	30-Jan	06-Feb	13-Feb	20-Feb	etc..	etc

**Risks and mitigation plans**

Use the table below to highlight the main project risks and mitigations. These can be in relation to the Fund, sector, organisational related factors, etc.

Work package name	Risk	Likelihood (L/M/H)	Impact (L/M/H)	Mitigation	Update

Do you require any additional support from the Better Regulation Executive to help manage these risks?

**Contracting and on-boarding partner organisations**

Describe your progress on contracting and on-boarding partner organisations.

**Personnel changes**

Provide an update on any changes to your team structure or personnel.

<b>Engagement</b>			
<b>Between projects and their organisation</b>			
Provide details of any activities that involve sharing of innovation learning between the project and their wider organisation (i.e. the regulator or LA they belong to)			
<b>Outside of the organisation</b>			
Provide details of engagement activities with other regulators and local authorities (UK and abroad)			
<b>With innovators and beneficiaries</b>			
Provide details of any engagement activities with innovators, businesses and consumers (e.g. sharing learning)			
<b>Publicity</b>			
Provide details of any planned publicity.			

## Appendix B: Topic guides

### RPF programme staff interview (short-term projects)

**Research aims and questions:** As part of the process evaluation, to better understand the implementation of the Fund through exploring how the Fund is being managed and delivered on the ground. These interviews were conducted with programme staff at the stage when short-term projects were starting.

#### Overview of topics to be covered in interviews:

- Participants' role and responsibilities
- How projects have progressed at set-up and delivery stages
- Supporting projects at these stages
- Emerging project outcomes
  - The RPF's role in contributing to these impacts
  - Alternative explanations for the outcomes

#### How to use this topic guide:

- The guide is intended for use with operational Fund staff
- This document is a guide to the principal themes and issues to be covered in interviews

- Fully formed questions are avoided to allow researchers to be responsive and flexible in their questioning
- We will prioritise what participants tell us spontaneously – prompts are not exhaustive and will be drawn on if needed and selectively
- Probes such as 'why', 'how' etc. are not included in the guide. These are asked by researchers as and when appropriate

#### Introduction

- Thank you for agreeing to take part. Introduction to researcher.
- Introduction to NatGen - independent research organisation commissioned to evaluate RPF3
- The interview will last up to 80 minutes and will explore:
  - Your thoughts on how projects have progressed and the support they need
  - Your thoughts on the impacts of the RPF3 to date
  - The findings will inform the evaluation design and will feed into the interim report. The interim report will be published externally
- Participation is voluntary - there are no right or wrong answers, you can choose not to discuss any issue

- What you say is confidential and your participation is anonymous to anyone outside of the NatCen research team
  - We will not tell anyone else, what you have personally said, nor will we include any names or personal details in the report
  - However, it is possible that your colleagues at the RIO may recognise quotes or examples that you give
- We will be recording the session, so we have an accurate record of what is said
  - Recording software is encrypted and files stored securely on NatCen's computer system in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018
  - Only the research team will have access to the recordings
  - Data will be deleted at the end of the project
- Questions?
- Ask for permission to start recording

### **Contextual information (5 mins)**

Section aim: to understand participants' role in supporting projects and any involvement in previous RPF rounds

- Participant role and responsibilities over time

- Their interactions with RPF3 projects
- Any changes to role and responsibilities over time
- Their involvement in previous RPF rounds
  - Whether involved
  - Nature of involved
  - How their role compares to current involvement

### **Project set-up (15 mins)**

Section aim: to understand how RPF3 projects have progressed at the set-up stage, factors affecting progress and the support they needed and accessed

- Reflections on how projects have progressed at the set-up stage, including issues faced and things that have helped or hindered setup and for which types of projects
  - Fund
    - Support offered by the Fund (to be discussed later on in this section)
    - Timeframes (e.g. time between being awarded and starting project)
    - Governance (e.g. flexibility in adjusting delivery milestones and project goals)
    - How ring-fenced funding provided
  - Regulators and LAs

- Organisational buy-in and priorities since being awarded funding
  - Setting up projects (e.g. appointing the right staff, establishing governance and delivery processes)
  - Timeframes (e.g. onboarding consultants and sub-contractors, whether projects now feel they can innovate in 8 months)
  - Working with stakeholders (e.g. getting experts onboard)
  - Technological readiness (e.g. having the tools to innovate)
  - Delivery teams (e.g. staff availability and absences and size of delivery teams)
- Wider factors
  - Sector response to project (e.g. buy-in from sector)
- Reflections on how project set-up experiences compare to previous RPF rounds (researcher – only if participants’ have knowledge or experience of previous rounds)
  - Whether overall project progress matches with previous rounds
  - Comparing factors that help and hinder RPF3 project set-up with previous rounds – including reasons for any differences
- Overview of the set-up support needed by projects and offered by RIO
  - Types of support needed
  - Type of support offered by RIO and rationale
    - Regular (e.g. monthly meetings with RIO project leads, knowledge sharing workshops) and ad-hoc support (e.g. dealing with queries in dedicated RPF3 project mailbox)
    - Whether support varies between projects
    - How different types of RIO support work together
    - How support delivered and rationale for this – e.g. 1-2-1, workshops and through forums such as the Regulators’ Innovation Network (RIN)
- Other sources of support accessed by projects at set-up (e.g. via their organisation or sector)
  - Nature of the support accessed and rationale
  - Effectiveness of support in helping projects set-up
  - How this external support sits with the support provided by the RIO
- Reflections on RIO support offered at set-up– including what works well and less well
  - Take-up of different types of support

- How helpful is support in helping project set-up
  - How support fits with the support needs of projects – including any gaps
  - Support that works well/less well and for whom
- How RPF3 support compares to support provided in previous rounds
  - Learning from previous rounds that have fed into RIO support offer
- Emerging learning on supporting the set-up of future short term projects and the upcoming 12-18 month projects (researcher- important to cover)
  - Support needs and gaps
  - Types of support that is more or less effective for different projects
  - Important features of support (e.g. Programme staff accessibility, frequency of delivery, flexibility in governance procedures etc.

- Reflections on how projects have progressed at the delivery stage, including issues faced and things that have helped or hindered delivery (and whether these differed from set-up) and for which types of projects
  - Fund
    - Support offered by the Fund (to be discussed later on in this section)
    - Timeframes (e.g. time between being awarded and starting project)
    - Governance (e.g. flexibility in adjusting delivery milestones and project goals)
    - How ring-fenced funding provided
  - Regulators and LAs
    - Organisational buy-in and priorities since being awarded funding
    - Setting up projects (e.g. appointing the right staff, establishing governance and delivery processes)
    - Timeframes (e.g. onboarding consultants and sub-contractors, whether projects now feel they can innovate in 8 months)
    - Working with stakeholders (e.g. getting experts onboard)
    - Technological readiness (e.g. having the tools to innovate)

### **Project delivery (20 mins)**

Section aim: to understand how RPF3 projects have progressed at the delivery stage, factors affecting progress and the support they needed and accessed

- Delivery teams (e.g. staff availability and absences and size of delivery teams)
  - Wider factors
    - Sector response to project (e.g. buy-in from sector)
- Reflections on how project delivery experiences compare to previous RPF rounds (researcher – only if participants' have knowledge or experience of previous rounds)
  - Whether overall project progress matches with previous rounds
  - Comparing factors that help and hinder RPF3 project delivery with previous rounds – including reasons for any differences
- Overview of the delivery support needed by projects and offered by RIO
  - Types of support needed
  - Type of support offered by RIO and rationale
    - Regular (e.g. monthly meetings with RIO project leads, knowledge sharing workshops) and ad-hoc support (e.g. dealing with queries in dedicated RPF3 project mailbox)
    - Whether support varies between projects
    - How different types of RIO support work together
  - How support delivered and rationale for this – e.g. 1-2-1, workshops and through forums such as the Regulators' Innovation Network (RIN)
- Other sources of support accessed by projects at delivery stage – if different from set-up (e.g. via their organisation or sector)
  - Nature of the support accessed and rationale
  - Effectiveness of support in helping projects delivery
  - How this external support sits with the support provided by the RIO
- Reflections on RIO support offer at delivery– including what works well and less well
  - Take-up of different types of support
  - How helpful is support in helping project delivery
    - How support fits with the support needs of projects – including any gaps
    - Support that works well/less well and for whom
  - How RPF3 support compares to support provided in previous rounds
    - Learning from previous rounds that have fed into RIO support offer

- Emerging learning on supporting the delivery of future short term projects and the upcoming 12-18 month projects (researcher- important to cover)
  - Support needs and gaps
  - Types of support that is more or less effective for different projects
  - Important features of support (e.g. Programme staff accessibility, frequency of delivery, flexibility in governance procedures etc.)

### **Supporting projects – overall thoughts (10 mins)**

Section aim: to capture any overall thoughts on supporting projects

- Overall views on support needs of projects and the effectiveness of the support offered by RIO
  - What has worked well/less well
  - Key gaps in support and any additional support outside of RIO needed
- Thoughts on what helps and hinders the RIO to support projects effectively – at Fund, sector and project levels

### **Outcomes (25 mins)**

Section aim: reflection on project outcomes to date, how the Fund has contributed to these and exploring alternative outcomes

- Broad types of project outcomes and impacts to date – and at what level (sector, regulator/LA, business and/or consumer level) and any commonalities/variation between projects
  - Sector and regulator/LA level
    - A culture of promoting innovation instilled in organisation
    - Better understanding of the role regulation can play in innovation
    - Regulators working together to drive innovation
    - Better understanding of innovators needs for their sector to develop products/services
  - Businesses/consumers
    - Development of innovative processes, products and services
    - Reduced time/cost of introducing innovation to UK markets
    - Better regulatory frameworks – increasing confidence in regulatory systems and maintained or improved protection for consumers

- Barriers and enablers to outcomes and impacts at different levels – e.g. Fund, regulator/LA, business and consumer (researcher – touch on lightly if these are similar to set-up and delivery barriers and enablers)
  - Variation in these across different types of projects
- Whether and how Fund has contributed so far to outcomes and impacts
  - RIO support (researcher – touch on lightly if already covered at length earlier)
  - Funding – e.g. providing credibility and capacity to prioritise innovation
  - Opportunity to learn from and work with other regulators/LAs
  - Opportunity to work with innovators and sectors experts
- Other factors outside of the fund that can explain outcomes and impacts (researcher- probe)
  - Wider economic and regulatory factors
  - Organisational factors
  - Business factors
  - Consumer factors
- The support needed by projects and offered – including gaps and learning
- Main outcomes/impacts of Fund to date
- Key implementation lessons for the Fund to take forward for future short term projects and the upcoming 12-18 month projects, later this year
- Check if anything else to add, thank, close and end recording – questions and next step

### **Concluding thoughts (5 mins)**

- Summary of the progress made by projects and what has affected this

## RPF programme staff interview (long-term projects)

**Research aims and questions:** As part of the process evaluation, to better understand the implementation of the Fund through exploring how the Fund is being managed and delivered on the ground. These interviews were conducted with programme staff at the stage when long-term projects were starting.

### Overview of topics to be covered in interviews:

- Participants' role and responsibilities
- How projects have progressed at set-up and delivery stages
- Supporting projects at these stages

### How to use this topic guide:

- The guide is intended for use with operational Fund staff
- This document is a guide to the principal themes and issues to be covered in interviews
- Fully formed questions are avoided to allow researchers to be responsive and flexible in their questioning
- We will prioritise what participants tell us spontaneously – prompts are not exhaustive and will be drawn on if needed and selectively
- Probes such as 'why', 'how' etc. are not included in the guide. These are asked by researchers as and when appropriate

## Introduction

- Thank you for agreeing to take part. Introduction to researcher.
- Introduction to NatCen - independent research organisation commissioned to evaluate RPF3
- The interview will last up to 70 minutes and will explore your thoughts on how projects have progressed and the support they need.
- The findings will inform the evaluation design and will feed into the final. The final report will be published externally
- Participation is voluntary - there are no right or wrong answers, you can choose not to discuss any issue
- What you say is confidential and your participation is anonymous to anyone outside of the NatCen research team
  - We will not tell anyone else, what you have personally said, nor will we include any names or personal details in the report
  - However, it is possible that your colleagues at the RIO may recognise quotes or examples that you give
- We will be recording the session, so we have an accurate record of what is said
  - Recording software is encrypted and files stored securely on NatCen's computer system in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018

- Only the research team will have access to the recordings
- Data will be deleted at the end of the project
- Questions?
- Ask for permission to start recording

### Contextual information (5 mins)

Section aim: to understand participants' role in supporting projects and any involvement in previous RPF rounds

- Participant role and responsibilities over time (**researcher – if interviewed previously, keep brief and ask whether their role or interactions with projects has changed**)
  - Their interactions with RPF3 projects
  - Any changes to role and responsibilities over time
- Their involvement in previous RPF rounds (researcher – do not ask if interviewed previously)
  - Whether involved
  - Nature of involved
  - How their role compares to current involvement

### Project set-up (25 mins)

Section aim: to understand how RPF3 projects have progressed at the set-up stage, factors affecting progress and the support they needed and accessed

- Reflections on how projects have progressed at the set-up stage, including issues faced and things that have helped or hindered setup and for which types of projects
  - Fund
    - Support offered by the Fund (to be discussed later on in this section)
    - Timeframes (e.g. time between being awarded and starting project)
    - Governance (e.g. flexibility in adjusting delivery milestones and project goals)
    - How ring-fenced funding provided (e.g. flexibility with spending profiles or providing funding prior to start of project for start-up activities such as recruitment etc.)
  - Regulators and LAs
    - Organisational buy-in and priorities since being awarded funding
    - Setting up projects (e.g. appointing the right staff, establishing governance and delivery processes)

- Timeframes (e.g. onboarding consultants and sub-contractors, whether projects now feel they can innovate in 12- 18 months)
  - Working with stakeholders (e.g. getting experts onboard)
  - Technological readiness (e.g. having the tools to innovate)
  - Delivery teams (e.g. staff availability and absences and size of delivery teams)
- Wider factors
  - Sector response to project (e.g. buy-in from sector)
- Reflections on how project set-up experiences compare with the RPF3 8-month projects
  - Whether progress matches the 8-month projects at a comparable stage
  - How enablers and barriers compare with 8-month projects
- Reflections on how project set-up experiences compare to previous RPF rounds (**researcher – only if participants’ have knowledge or experience of previous rounds**)
  - Whether overall project progress matches with previous rounds
  - How enablers and barriers compare with previous rounds – including reasons for any differences
- Overview of the set-up support needed by projects and offered by RIO (**researcher – return to issues raised earlier in discussion of barriers and enablers**)
  - Types of support needed e.g.
    - Support with monitoring
    - Negotiating project spending profiles
    - Connecting with other projects
    - Helping manage emerging risks and barriers at set-up
  - Type of support offered by RIO and rationale
    - Regular (e.g. monthly meetings with RIO project leads, knowledge sharing workshops) and ad-hoc support (e.g. dealing with queries in dedicated RPF3 project mailbox)
    - How support delivered and rationale for this – e.g. 1-2-1, workshops and through forums such as the Regulators’ Innovation Network (RIN)
- Other sources of support accessed by projects at set-up (e.g. via their organisation or sector)
  - Nature of the support accessed and rationale
  - Effectiveness of support in helping projects set-up
  - How this external support sits with the support provided by the RIO

- Reflections on how support needs and delivery compare to:
  - 8-month projects – including any learning taken forward from the 8-month projects (researcher – important to cover)
  - Previous RPF rounds- including learning from previous rounds that have fed into RIO support offer
- Wider reflections on RIO support offered at set-up– including what works well and less well
  - Take-up of different types of support
  - How helpful is support in helping project set-up
    - How support fits with the support needs of projects – including any gaps
    - Support that works well/less well and for whom
- Emerging learning on supporting the set-up of future projects, particularly long-term ones (researcher-important to cover)
  - Support needs and gaps
  - Types of support that is more or less effective for different projects
  - Important features of support (e.g. Programme staff accessibility, frequency of delivery, flexibility in governance procedures etc.)

## **Project delivery (20 mins)**

Section aim: to understand how RPF3 projects have progressed at the delivery stage, factors affecting progress and the support they needed and accessed

- Reflections on how projects have progressed at the delivery stage, including issues faced and things that have helped or hindered delivery (and whether these differed from set-up) and for which types of projects
  - Fund
    - Support offered by the Fund (to be discussed later on in this section)
    - Timeframes (e.g. time between being awarded and starting project)
    - Governance (e.g. flexibility in adjusting delivery milestones and project goals)
    - How ring-fenced funding provided
  - Regulators and LAs
    - Organisational buy-in and priorities since being awarded funding
    - Setting up projects (e.g. appointing the right staff, establishing governance and delivery processes)

- Timeframes (e.g. onboarding consultants and sub-contractors)
  - Working with stakeholders (e.g. getting experts onboard)
  - Technological readiness (e.g. having the tools to innovate)
  - Delivery teams (e.g. staff availability and absences and size of delivery teams)
- Wider factors
  - Sector response to project (e.g. buy-in from sector)
- Reflections on how project delivery compares to the 8-month projects (**researcher – important to cover**)
  - Whether progress matches the 8-month projects at a comparable stage
  - How enablers and barriers compare with 8-month projects
- Reflections on how project delivery experiences compare to previous RPF rounds (**researcher – only if participants' have knowledge or experience of previous rounds**)
  - Whether overall project progress matches with previous rounds
  - How enablers and barriers compare with previous rounds – including reasons for any differences
- Overview of the delivery support needed by projects and offered by RIO (researcher – return to issues raised earlier in discussion of barriers and enablers)
  - Types of support needed
  - Type of support offered by RIO and rationale
    - Regular (e.g. monthly meetings with RIO project leads, knowledge sharing workshops) and ad-hoc support (e.g. dealing with queries in dedicated RPF3 project mailbox and calls)
    - Whether support varies between projects
    - How different types of RIO support work together
  - How support delivered and rationale for this – e.g. 1-2-1, workshops and through forums such as the Regulators' Innovation Network (RIN)
- Other sources of support accessed by projects at delivery stage – if different from set-up (e.g. via their organisation or sector)
  - Nature of the support accessed and rationale
  - Effectiveness of support in helping projects delivery
  - How this external support sits with the support provided by the RIO

- Reflections on how support needs and delivery compare to:
  - 8-month projects – including any learning taken forward from the 8-month projects (researcher – important to cover)
  - Support provided in previous RPF rounds – including any learning from previous rounds that have fed into RIO support offer
- Reflections on RIO support offer at delivery– including what works well and less well
  - Take-up of different types of support
  - How helpful is support in helping project delivery
    - How support fits with the support needs of projects – including any gaps
    - Support that works well/less well and for whom
- Emerging learning on supporting the delivery of future long-term projects (researcher- important to cover)
  - Support needs and gaps
  - Types of support that is more or less effective for different projects
  - Important features of support (e.g. Programme staff accessibility, frequency of delivery, flexibility in governance procedures etc.)

### **Supporting projects – overall thoughts (10 mins)**

Section aim: to capture any overall thoughts on supporting projects

- Overall views on support needs of projects and the effectiveness of the support offered by RIO
  - Any variations between 8-month and 12-18-month projects
  - What has worked well/less well
  - Key gaps in support and any additional support outside of RIO needed
- Thoughts on what helps and hinders the RIO to support projects effectively – at Fund, sector and project levels

### **Concluding thoughts (5 mins)**

- Summary of the progress made by projects and what has affected this
- The support needed by projects and offered – including gaps and learning and whether differs from 8-month project support
- Key implementation lessons for the Fund to take forward for future long-term projects

- **Check if anything else to add, thank, close and end recording** – questions and next step

## RPF programme staff focus group (endline)

**Research aims and questions:** As part of the process evaluation, to better understand the implementation of the Fund through exploring how the Fund is being managed and delivered on the ground. These interviews were conducted with programme staff at the stage when both short- and long-term projects were near completion.

### **Overview of topics to be covered in interviews:**

- Understanding the types of RPF3 projects
- How projects have progressed at set-up and delivery stages
- Supporting projects at these stages
- Understanding project outcomes

### **How to use this topic guide:**

- The guide is intended for use with operational Fund staff
- This document is a guide to the principal themes and issues to be covered in interviews
- Fully formed questions are avoided to allow researchers to be responsive and flexible in their questioning
- We will prioritise what participants tell us spontaneously – prompts are not exhaustive and will be drawn on if needed and selectively

- Probes such as ‘why’, ‘how’ etc. are not included in the guide. These are asked by researchers as and when appropriate

## Introduction

- Thank you for agreeing to take part. Introduction to researcher.
- Introduction to NatCen - independent research organisation commissioned to evaluate RPF3
- The discussion will last up to 90 minutes and will explore your thoughts on how projects have progressed and the support they need.
- The findings will inform the evaluation design and will feed into the final report. The final report will be published externally
- Participation is voluntary – you can choose not to discuss any issue
  - There are no right or wrong answers
  - Likely to be differing views and we don't expect people to share views, but respect differences
  - Can speak one at a time
- What you say is confidential and your participation is anonymous to anyone outside of the NatCen research team

- We will not tell anyone else, what you have personally said, nor will we include any names or personal details in the report
- However, it is possible that your RPF colleagues may recognise quotes or examples that you give

- We will be recording the session, so we have an accurate record of what is said
  - Recording software is encrypted and files stored securely on NatCen's computer system in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018
  - Only the research team will have access to the recordings
  - Data will be deleted at the end of the project
- Questions?
- Ask for permission to start recording

## Context and understanding project types (20 mins)

Section aim: to understand participants' role in supporting projects and to understand the broad types of RPF3 projects

- Participant role and responsibilities over time (researcher – if interviewed previously, keep brief, and ask whether their role or interactions with projects has changed)
  - Exposure with short- and long-term projects

- Their interactions with RPF3 projects
- Any changes to role and responsibilities over time
- Explore how they would describe the broad types of RPF3 projects (**researcher – say that this will be useful when we come to look at the difference that the RPF has made. Explain that we have an idea of the emerging categories, but would be good to get their top-of-mind thinking on this first**)
  - Explore how they would describe the broad types of RPF3 projects
    - Type of innovation
    - Type of regulatory authority
    - Differences between short- and long-term projects
  - Projects easy / difficult to categorise and reasons why
- Researcher – share our project categorisation, which outlines and describes the broad project categories, and provides examples of where we think different RPF3 projects fit in these categories. Ask them to reflect on:
  - General thoughts on the categorisation
    - How it compares to theirs – exploring similarities and differences
    - Is it a useful way of looking at the projects
  - Comprehensiveness of the categories

- Whether makes sense of the different types of projects
- Projects that are easy/difficult to fit into this
- Any differences between short- and long-term projects
- Suggested improvements – (researcher – note any differences in views to inform future category development)
  - Overall categories
  - Description or nuancing of the individual categories

### **Project delivery (20 mins)**

Section aim: to understand RPF3 project delivery and the factors affecting progress

- Reflection on how projects have progressed on their original intentions to deliver
  - The types of delivery outputs that are more/less likely to be delivered to intention
  - Types of projects that have done well / less well in delivering to intention (e.g. types of innovation, delivery complexity)
    - Long and short-term projects

- According to the categories discussed in section 1
  - Delivery complexity
- Reasons why some longer-term projects needed extensions
- Issues faced and things that have helped or hindered delivery (see box below) – any variations between different types of projects (including the category of projects discussed in section 1, as well as long- and short-term projects)
  - Fund
    - Support offered by the Fund (to be discussed later in this section)
    - Timeframes (e.g. time between being awarded and starting project)
    - Governance (e.g. flexibility in adjusting delivery milestones and project goals)
    - How ring-fenced funding provided
  - Regulators and LAs
    - Organisational buy-in and priorities since being awarded funding
    - Timeframes
    - Working with stakeholders (e.g. regulators involved in project)

- Technological readiness (e.g. having the tools to innovate)
- Project related factors
  - Nature of innovation
  - Project coordination and leadership
  - Delivery teams (e.g. staff availability and absences and size of delivery teams)
  - Contractor working practices and relationships
- Wider factors
  - Wider government policy directions and changes to this (changes in innovation focus and direction)

Sector response to project (e.g. buy-in from sector)

### **Supporting projects – overall thoughts (20 mins)**

Section aim: to capture any overall thoughts on supporting projects

- Overall views on support needs of projects (researcher – return to issues raised earlier in discussion of barriers and enablers)
  - Variations in support needs – between different categories of projects discussed in section 1, as well as short- and long-term projects

- Overview of the support offered by the RPF team and its effectiveness - including variations in support between different categories of projects discussed in section 1, as well as short- and long-term projects
  - Type of support offered by RPF STAFF and rationale
    - Whether affected by changes in innovation department (e.g. transition from BEIS to RIO etc...)
    - Regular (e.g. monthly meetings with RPF project leads, knowledge sharing workshops) and ad-hoc support (e.g. dealing with queries in dedicated RPF3 project mailbox and calls)
    - Support to connect projects together / promote shared learning (e.g. forums such as the RIN)
    - How different types of RPF support worked together
  - Take-up of different types of support
  - How helpful is support in helping project delivery
    - How support fits with the support needs of projects – including any gaps
    - Support that works well/less well and for whom
- Other sources of support accessed by projects at delivery stage – if different from set-up (e.g. via their organisation or sector)
  - Nature of the support accessed and rationale
  - Effectiveness of support in helping projects delivery
  - How this external support sits with the support provided by the RPF
- Learning on supporting project delivery for future rounds of the RPF (**researcher- important to cover**)
  - Support needs and gaps
  - Types of support that are more or less effective for different projects
  - Important features of support (e.g. promoting shared learning between projects, RPF staff accessibility, frequency of delivery, flexibility in governance procedures etc.)

### **Outcomes (20 mins)**

Section aim: reflection on project outcomes to date, how the Fund has contributed to these and exploring alternative outcomes

**Researcher, explain that we will explore outcomes in detail with projects but want to draw on participant's experience**

**of working across projects to understand the typical types of outcomes achieved.**

- Broad types of project outcomes and impacts– any variations between different types of projects and evidence for this
  - Sector and regulator/LA level
    - A culture of promoting innovation instilled in organisation
    - Better understanding of the role regulation can play in innovation
    - Regulators working together to drive innovation
    - Better understanding of innovators needs for their sector to develop products/services
  - Businesses/consumers
    - Development of innovative processes, products, and services
    - Reduced time/cost of introducing innovation to UK markets
    - Better regulatory frameworks – increasing confidence in regulatory systems and maintained or improved protection for consumers
    - Barriers and enablers to outcomes and impacts at different levels – e.g. Fund,

regulator/LA, business and consumer  
**(researcher – touch on lightly if these if already discussed in section 2,)**

- Variation in these across different types of projects
- Whether and how Fund has contributed to outcomes and impacts
  - RPF support **(researcher – touch on lightly if already covered at length earlier)**
  - Funding – e.g. providing credibility and capacity to prioritise innovation
  - Opportunity to learn from and work with other regulators/LAs
  - Opportunity to work with innovators and sectors experts
- Other factors outside of the fund that can explain outcomes and impacts (researcher- probe
  - Wider economic and regulatory factors
  - Organisational factors
  - Business factors
  - Consumer factors

**Concluding thoughts (5 mins)**

- Summary of the progress made by projects and what has affected this
- The support needed by projects and offered – including gaps and learning and whether differs from 8-month project support
- Key implementation lessons for the Fund to take forward for future

**Check if anything else to add, thank, close and end recording** – questions and next steps

## Baseline project staff interviews (short term projects)

**Research aims and questions:** To better understand the project context, the nature of the project and innovation, anticipated outcomes and impacts, as well as the factors affecting how these will be achieved. This includes the role played by the RPF in stimulating the innovation.

### Overview of topics to be covered in interviews:

- Participants' role and responsibilities
- Motivations for applying and application experiences
- Understanding project context and the nature of the innovation
- Exploring anticipated outcomes and impacts - and the factors likely to influence these

### How to use this topic guide:

- This document is a guide to the principal themes and issues to be covered in interviews
- Fully formed questions are avoided to allow researchers to be responsive and flexible in their questioning
- Probes such as 'why', 'how' etc. are not included in the guide. These are asked by researchers as and when appropriate

## Introduction

- Introduction to researcher. Thank you for agreeing to take part
- Introduction to NatCen – independent research organisation, commissioned by the Better Regulation Executive (BRE) to carry out this study
- Explanation of research:
  - We're interviewing regulators and local authorities who were awarded RPF3 funding at two time points - the start of their projects and when they have completed these.
  - Interview will explore your motivations for applying, views of the application process, as well your thoughts on the project and what it aims to achieve.
  - The findings will feed into the interim and final report and help inform thinking on the RPF design
- There are no right or wrong answers. We may ask what may seem obvious questions, but this is to draw on your expertise to learn more about the project and to ensure we understand issues from your perspective.
- What you say is confidential. We will not attribute views to specific projects but report the overall views of all the projects that participated. Further, we will not tell anyone else what you have personally said, nor will we include any names or personal details in the reports. However:
  - BRE will know we have spoken to your project, as we are interviewing all projects awarded RPF3 funding
  - You may be identifiable in published outputs, given that we are speaking to a small number of projects and the uniqueness of your innovation and role
- We will be recording the interview, so we have an accurate record of what is said. Only the research team will have access to the recordings - they will not be shared with BRE
- Recorder is encrypted and files stored securely on NatCen's computer system in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018
- Identifiable data, including all recordings, will be deleted at the end of the project
- The interview will last 60 minutes
- Questions?
- Ask for permission to start recording

## Contextual information (5 mins)

Section aim: to ease participants into the discussion and to understand more about the organisation and their role

- Participant role and responsibilities
  - Involvement in the original application

- Current role and responsibilities in relation to the project
- Brief overview of the regulator and their sector
  - How innovation focused regulator is
    - Explore their history of thinking about and supporting innovations
    - Examples of previous innovation activities
    - Sectoral and wider factors that contributed to the innovation focus (e.g. government priorities, groups such as the Regulatory Horizon Council's work)

### **Applying for the RPF (10 mins)**

Section aim: to explore understanding of the RPF, motivations to apply and experiences of the application process (researcher - cover lightly if time an issue. Particularly cover motivations for applying, importance of RPF and application experiences)

- General views on the RPF (researcher - keep brief)
  - Understanding of what RPF is trying to achieve (its goals)
  - General views on the role of the regulatory environment in encouraging innovations for their sector

- The importance of the RPF in stimulating innovation (researcher - important to cover)
- Motivations for applying for RPF3 - e.g.
  - The difference the innovation could have made to organisation, sector and wider (e.g. economy)
  - Helping organisation realise their aspirations to innovate
  - RPF3 providing resourcing opportunity
  - Opportunity to carry out work outside of their core regulatory mandate
  - Tackling shared issues through collaboration with others (e.g. other regulators and sector stakeholders)
  - Developing a proactive approach to regulation
  - How these compare to motivations for applying to previous rounds
- If they had considered or explored other ways to launch this innovation or other innovation activities in the past (researcher - important to cover)
  - Nature of other options approached (e.g. funding streams) and reasons why
  - How alternative ways of achieving goals compare to RPF in progressing innovations

- Importance of RPF in stimulating change (cover light if already discussed at length in section 2)
- Experience of application process - key enablers and barriers relating to the Fund, their organisation and wider factors
- Anything else they are currently doing in addition to the RPF to achieve their innovation aims (researcher - important to cover)
  - Nature of activities
  - Rationale for drawing on these other strategies
  - Whether and how they work with the RPF

### **About their project (15 mins)**

Section aim: understand their project and its innovation in more detail, including delivery (researcher - this is a priority section. Review project applications and summaries before interview and prompt accordingly)

- Description of innovation
  - Rationale/need for project in sector - including why they selected this specific project over other ideas
  - Nature of project
  - Focus of the innovation - and whether aims have changed/developed since application

- Delivery description
  - Key organisational staff involved in overseeing and co-ordinating
  - Key activities and their role in the innovation
  - Partners and stakeholders - including collaboration (e.g. with regulators and businesses)

### **Outcomes and impacts (25 mins)**

Section aim: exploring anticipated outcomes and impacts, and how these will be achieved - including enablers, barriers and safeguards (researcher - this is a priority section. Review project applications and summaries before interview and prompt accordingly)

### **Understanding and evidencing outcomes**

- Describe anticipated short- and medium terms goals (outcomes) and longer-term goals (impacts) - (researcher - draw on project applications to prompt for these)
  - Identify key anticipated goals
  - For whom, in what contexts
    - Regulator or LA (e.g. shift to innovation culture)
    - Between regulators and other stakeholders (e.g. collaboration)

- Sector
  - Businesses and consumers
  - Wider
- Distinguish between short-, mid- and long-term goals (establishing their timeframes for these)
- Any changes to these since the start of the project
- Explore project goals in relation to the RPF
  - Whether these goals would be possible without the project being funded by the RPF (researcher - important to cover)
    - The extent to which outcomes and impacts could be reached
    - Whether these could be reached within the same timeframes without the RPF
  - Thoughts on how project goals align with the RPF programme goals (researcher - refer back to their understanding of the RPF in section 2, as well as our emerging RPF3 ToC) -
    - Developing a culture of innovation in organisations
    - Partnership work to drive innovations
    - Innovative products, services and processes

- How it aligns with any of the three key priority areas (net zero, levelling-up and helping with the cost of living)
- Evidencing project goals
  - Identify key goals (including both outcomes and impacts) from the above discussion
  - What would constitute evidence that these have been reached -
    - Type of evidence - e.g. raising awareness and changes in attitudes, behaviours, services and products - in relation to whom
    - Addressing challenges to evidencing
  - Any additional monitoring of evidence beyond completing the monthly monitoring forms

### **Achieving project goals**

- Relationship between project activities and goals (researcher- exploring the mechanisms of change here)
  - Which are key activities
  - How the different activities will contribute to the short-, medium- and long-term goals
- Relationship between short- and medium-term goals (outcomes) and long-term goals (impacts)
  - Whether and how outcomes can lead to impacts

- Whether impact can be realised in the lifetime of the projects
- Factors that will help or hinder the achievement of these goals (both outcomes and impacts)
  - Fund level
  - Regulator - e.g.
    - Working with stakeholders and collaborators
    - Senior-level buy-in
  - Sector level
    - Nature of the sector(s) they regulate
    - Working with innovators
    - Business and/or consumer level engagement
  - Wider factors
    - Economic and legislative context
- Factors that will help address these challenges, relating to the project and wider (safeguards)
  - Type of factor - relating to the project (e.g. expertise), organisation (e.g. resources), Fund (e.g. access to resources and expertise) and wider (e.g. buy-in from businesses and sectors)
  - Support needed from Fund to help address challenges
  - Sector based support needed

### **Sustainability of outcomes and impacts beyond RPF3 project**

- View on how likely project achievements (outcomes and impacts) will remain after project has ended
  - Which achievements would be sustainable
  - Key threats to sustainability
  - Conditions under which achievements can be sustainable

### **Concluding thoughts (5 mins)**

Section aim: to bring together insights on outcomes and impacts (researcher - cover lightly)

- Key short-, medium- and long-term goals the project is trying to achieve
- Summarise main things that need to happen for the project to achieve its goals
- Key factors that will help or hinder the achievement of these goals
- Likelihood of the sustainability of outcomes and impacts

Check if anything else to add, thank, close and end recording

- Questions
- Next steps

## Baseline project staff interviews (long term projects)

**Research aims and questions:** To better understand the project context, the nature of the project and innovation, anticipated outcomes and impacts, as well as the factors affecting how these will be achieved. This includes the role played by the RPF in stimulating the innovation.

### Overview of topics to be covered in interviews:

- Participants' role and responsibilities
- Motivations for applying and application experiences
- Understanding project context and the nature of the innovation
- Exploring anticipated outcomes and impacts - and the factors likely to influence these

### How to use this topic guide:

- This document is a guide to the principal themes and issues to be covered in interviews
- Fully formed questions are avoided to allow researchers to be responsive and flexible in their questioning
- Probes such as 'why', 'how' etc. are not included in the guide. These are asked by researchers as and when appropriate

## Introduction

- Introduction to researcher. Thank you for agreeing to take part
- Introduction to NatCen – independent research organisation, commissioned by the Technology and Innovation Regulation Directorate (RIO) in DSIT to carry out this study
- Explanation of research:
  - We're interviewing regulators and local authorities who were awarded RPF3 funding at two time points - the start of their projects and when they have completed these.
  - Interview will explore your motivations for applying, views of the application process, as well your thoughts on the project and what it aims to achieve.
  - The findings will feed into the interim and final report and help inform thinking on the RPF design
- There are no right or wrong answers. We may ask what may seem obvious questions, but this is to draw on your expertise to learn more about the project and to ensure we understand issues from your perspective.
- What you say is confidential. We will not attribute views to specific projects but report the overall views of all the projects that participated. Further, we will not tell anyone

else what you have personally said, nor will we include any names or personal details in the reports. However:

- RIO will know we have spoken to your project, as we are interviewing all projects awarded RPF3 funding
- You may be identifiable in published outputs, given that we are speaking to a small number of projects and the uniqueness of your innovation and role
- We will be recording the interview, so we have an accurate record of what is said. Only the research team will have access to the recordings - they will not be shared with RIO
- Recorder is encrypted and files stored securely on NatCen's computer system in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018
- Identifiable data, including all recordings, will be deleted at the end of the project
- The interview will last 60 minutes
- Questions?
- Ask for permission to start recording

### **Contextual information (5 mins)**

Section aim: to ease participants into the discussion and to understand more about the organisation and their role

- Participant role and responsibilities
  - Involvement in the original application
  - Current role and responsibilities in relation to the project
- Brief overview of the regulator and their sector
  - How innovation focused regulator is
    - Explore their history of thinking about and supporting innovations
    - Examples of previous innovation activities
    - Sectoral and wider factors that contributed to the innovation focus (e.g. government priorities, groups such as the Regulatory Horizon Council's work)

### **Applying for the RPF (10 mins)**

Section aim: to explore understanding of the RPF, motivations to apply and experiences of the application process (**researcher - cover lightly if time an issue**). Particularly cover motivations for applying, importance of RPF and application experiences but please be aware it has been some time since their application)

- General views on the RPF (**researcher - keep brief**)
  - Understanding of what RPF is trying to achieve (its goals)

- General views on the role of the regulatory environment in encouraging innovations for their sector
- The importance of the RPF in stimulating innovation (researcher - important to cover)
- Motivations for applying for RPF3 - e.g.
  - The difference the RPF project could have made to organisation, sector and wider (e.g. economy)
  - Helping organisation realise their aspirations to innovate - e.g. RPF funding seen to be unique opportunity
  - RPF3 providing resourcing opportunity **(researcher, prompt on why resources were needed)**
    - Bring in or bring together expertise and/or dedicated delivery staff
    - Opportunity to carry out work outside of their core regulatory mandate
    - A low risk way to develop and test innovation ideas
  - Tackling shared issues through collaboration with others (e.g. other regulators and sector stakeholders)
  - Developing a proactive approach to regulation
- How these compare to motivations for applying to previous rounds, if applicable
- Motivations for applying for 12–18-month project funding, rather than for 8-month funding
- If they had considered or explored other ways to launch this RPF project or other innovation activities in the past **(researcher - important to cover)**
  - Nature of other options approached (e.g. funding streams) and reasons why
  - How alternative ways of achieving goals compare to RPF in progressing innovations
    - Importance of RPF in stimulating change (cover light if already discussed at length in section 2)
- Experience of application process - key enablers and barriers relating to the Fund, their organisation and wider factors **(researcher, keep brief as already given coverage in previous phases)**
- Anything else they are currently doing in addition to the RPF to achieve their innovation aims (researcher - important to cover)
  - Nature of activities
  - Rationale for drawing on these other strategies
  - Whether and how they work with the RPF

## About their project (20 mins)

Section aim: understand their project and its innovation in more detail, including delivery (researcher - this is a priority section. Review project applications and summaries before interview and prompt accordingly)

- Description of innovation
  - Rationale/need for project in sector - including why they selected this specific project over other ideas
  - Nature of project
  - Focus of the innovation - and whether aims have changed/developed since application
- Delivery description
  - Key organisational staff involved in overseeing and co-ordinating
  - Key activities and their role in the innovation
  - Partners and stakeholders - including collaboration (e.g. with regulators and businesses)

## Outcomes and impacts (20 mins)

Section aim: exploring anticipated outcomes and impacts, and how these will be achieved - including enablers, barriers and safeguards (**researcher - this is a priority section. Review**

project applications and summaries before interview and prompt accordingly)

## Understanding and evidencing outcomes

- Describe anticipated short- and medium terms goals (outcomes) and longer-term goals (impacts) - (**researcher - draw on project applications to prompt for these**)
  - Identify key anticipated goals
  - For whom, in what contexts
    - Regulator or LA (e.g. shift to innovation culture)
    - Between regulators and other stakeholders (e.g. collaboration)
    - Sector
    - Businesses and consumers
    - Wider
  - Distinguish between short-, mid- and long-term goals (establishing their timeframes for these)
  - Any changes to these since application
- Explore project goals in relation to the RPF
  - Whether these goals would be possible without the project being funded by the RPF (**researcher - important to cover**)

- The extent to which outcomes and impacts could be reached
  - Whether these could be reached within the same timeframes without the RPF
- Thoughts on how project goals align with the RPF programme goals (researcher - refer back to their understanding of the RPF in section 2, as well as our emerging RPF3 ToC)
  - Developing a culture of innovation in organisations
  - Partnership work to drive innovations
  - Innovative products, services and processes
- How it aligns with any of the three key priority areas (net zero, levelling-up and helping with the cost of living)
- Evidencing project goals
  - Identify key goals (including both outcomes and impacts) from the above discussion
  - What would constitute evidence that these have been reached -
    - Type of evidence - e.g. raising awareness and changes in attitudes, behaviours, services and products - in relation to whom
    - Addressing challenges to evidencing

- Any additional monitoring of evidence beyond completing the monthly monitoring forms

### Achieving project goals

- Relationship between project activities and goals **(researcher- exploring the mechanisms of change here)**
  - Which are key activities
  - How the different activities will contribute to the short-, medium- and long-term goals
- Relationship between short- and medium-term goals (outcomes) and long-term goals (impacts)
  - Whether and how outcomes can lead to impacts
  - Whether impact can be realised in the lifetime of the projects
- Factors that will help or hinder the achievement of these goals (both outcomes and impacts)
  - Fund level
  - Regulator - e.g.
    - Working with stakeholders and collaborators
    - Senior-level buy-in
    - Project team - size, expertise and management

- Sector level
  - Nature of the sector(s) they regulate
  - Working with innovators
  - Business and/or consumer level engagement
- Wider factors
  - Economic and legislative context
- Factors that will help address these challenges, relating to the project and wider (safeguards)
  - Type of factor - relating to the project (e.g. expertise), organisation (e.g. resources), Fund (e.g. access to resources and expertise) and wider (e.g. buy-in from businesses and sectors)
  - Support needed from Fund to help address challenges
  - Sector based support needed

### **Sustainability of outcomes and impacts beyond RPF3 project**

- View on how likely project achievements (outcomes and impacts) will remain after project has ended
  - Which achievements would be sustainable
  - Key threats to sustainability

- Conditions under which achievements can be sustainable

### **Concluding thoughts (5 mins)**

Section aim: to bring together insights on outcomes and impacts **(researcher - cover lightly)**

- Key short-, medium- and long-term goals the project is trying to achieve
- Summarise main things that need to happen for the project to achieve its goals
- Key factors that will help or hinder the achievement of these goals
- Likelihood of the sustainability of outcomes and impacts

### **Check if anything else to add, thank, close and end recording**

- Questions
- Next steps

## Endline project staff interviews (short term projects)

**Research aims and questions:** To better understand the delivery of the project, achieved outcomes, and the factors affecting how these were achieved. This includes the role played by the RPF in stimulating the innovation.

### Overview of topics to be covered in interviews:

- Participants' involvement throughout the project
- Project delivery experiences
- Achieved, unachieved and unexpected outcomes
- Sustainability of the project

### How to use this topic guide:

- This document is a guide to the principal themes and issues to be covered in interviews
- Fully formed questions are avoided to allow researchers to be responsive and flexible in their questioning
- Probes such as 'why', 'how' etc. are not included in the guide. These are asked by researchers as and when appropriate

### Interview preparation (for researcher):

- Review the Theory of change
- Look at baseline interview data to gain an understanding of the projects

- Look at pen portraits of projects presented in the slide decks (project paragraphs are in the descriptions)
- Look at quarterly monitoring forms for any barriers / enablers to use for prompts
- Look at end of project reports (provided in draft form by project leads), although not essential

## Introduction

- Introduction to researcher. Thank you for agreeing to take part
- Introduction to NatCen – independent research organisation, commissioned by the Technology and Innovation Regulation Directorate (RIO) on the Regulators' Pioneer Fund at DSIT to carry out this study
- Explanation of research:
  - Remind them that we're interviewing regulators and local authorities who were awarded RPF3 funding at two time points - the start of their projects and when they have completed these.
  - Interview will explore your project delivery experiences and project achievements and what contributed to these. Stress that we will not be reporting on individual projects (unless they are selected for case studies early next year) and are interested in the learning across the RPF projects,

including what has worked well/less well and the RPFs role in helping to achieve project goals.

- However, please do let us know if you would like to us to feedback anything directly to the RIO outside of the report in an attributable way. Please also feel free to provide feedback directly to the RIO team outside of this interview.
- The findings will feed into the interim and final report and help inform thinking on the RPF design
- There are no right or wrong answers. We may ask what may seem obvious questions, but this is to draw on your expertise to learn more about the project and to ensure we understand issues from your perspective.
- As noted, unless you say so, we will not attribute views to specific projects but report the overall views of all the projects that participated. Further, we will not tell anyone else what you have personally said, nor will we include any names or personal details in the reports. However:
  - RIO will know we have spoken to your project, as we are interviewing all projects awarded RPF3 funding
  - You may be identifiable in published outputs, given that we are speaking to a small number of projects and the uniqueness of your innovation and role
- We will be recording the interview, so we have an accurate record of what is said. Only the research team

will have access to the recordings - they will not be shared with RIO

- Recorder is encrypted and files stored securely on NatCen's computer system in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018
- Identifiable data, including all recordings, will be deleted at the end of the project
- The interview will last 70 minutes
- Questions?
- Ask for permission to start recording

### **Contextual information (5 mins)**

Section aim: to ease participants into the discussion and to understand more about their involvement throughout the project.

#### **Participant role and responsibilities**

- If different participant at baseline: their role in the programme and when they joined
- If same participant at baseline: whether and how their role and involvement has changed

### **Project delivery and learning (20 mins)**

Section aim: understand the project delivery experiences, including whether delivery was intended and what factors enabled and hindered delivery. (**Researcher - this is a priority section.** Review baseline interview data and project monitoring reports before interview and prompt accordingly. Be prepared to outline the delivery that was provided at the baseline interview)

- Delivery description
  - Understanding what was delivered
  - Key activities and milestones (cover briefly, using prompts from baseline interviews)
- Explore whether project was delivered as intended (comparing delivery to intentions)
  - If delivered as intended, why
  - If not, describe deviations
  - Change in timetable or spending/resource inputs (including staff)
  - Any uncompleted work packages/milestones
  - Whether aims changed/developed since application
  - Reasons for deviations
- Delivery experiences – including factors that helped (safeguarded) or hindered project delivery (researcher - important to cover)
  - Fund level

- Timeframe
- Spending (e.g., within financial year)
- RIO support and how this could be improved
- The fund management processes
- Regulator level
  - Working with stakeholders and collaborators (including other regulators)
  - Senior-level buy in
  - Project team - expertise, recruitment
  - Exploration of additional resources to support project delivery; nature of these activities, and rationale for drawing on these
- Sector level
  - Nature of the sector/s they regulate
  - Working with innovators
- Wider factors
  - Economic and legislative context
- Key delivery learning and future improvements – at a:
  - Regulator/project level
  - RPF level
    - Project delivery requirements (e.g. timeframe)

- Support to help delivery (e.g. addressing support gaps or how support was delivered)

## Outcomes and Impacts (30 mins)

Section aim: exploring project achievements and how these were achieved - including barriers and enablers (Researcher - this is a priority section. Review baseline interview data and RPF Theory of Change, using these to prompt on anticipated goals and why these have or have not been achieved)

## Understanding achieved project goals

- Identify project goals achieved
  - For whom, In what contexts
    - Regulator or LA (e.g. shift to innovation culture, how has it developed their organisation / raised their profile, upskilled staff)
    - Between regulators and other stakeholders (e.g. collaboration)
    - Sector
    - Businesses and consumers
    - Wider
  - Distinguish between short- and medium-term project goals (establishing their timeframes for these)
- Thoughts on how achieved project goals align with the RPF programme goals (**Researcher - important to cover. If not mentioned spontaneously, use these prompts about the RPF programme**)
  - Developing a culture of innovation in organisations
  - Partnership work to drive innovations
  - Innovative products, services, and processes
  - Meeting the key government priorities, they thought they would, including: (**Researcher-review applications for other priority areas the project intended to address**):
    - Transition to net zero
    - Place-based innovation
    - Reducing cost of living
- Evidence that these were reached
  - Type of evidence - e.g., raising awareness and changes in attitudes, behaviours, services, and products - in relation to whom
  - Any challenges to evidencing
- Anticipated project goals not unachieved/underachieved (**Researcher – refer to baseline interview data**) and

### **reasons for this relating to the Fund, regulator, sector, and wider factors**

- Any unexpected project achievements (**Researcher - important to cover**)
  - For whom, in what contexts
  - Reasons for these
  - Consequences of these unintended achievements

### **Achieving project goals**

- Project activities contributing to achieved goals (**researcher- exploring the mechanisms of change here**)
  - Which are key activities
  - How the different activities will contribute to the short-, medium- and long-term goals
- Relationship between short- and medium-term project goals (outcomes)
  - Whether and how short- term goals led to medium-term goals
- Factors that helped or hindered the achievement of these goals (**important to cover – touch on lightly if already been discussed in section 2**)
  - Fund level

- Regulator - e.g.
  - Working with stakeholders and collaborators
  - Senior-level buy-in
  - Project team - size, expertise, and management
- Sector level
  - Nature of the sector(s) they regulate
  - Working with innovators
  - Business and/or consumer level engagement
- Wider factors
  - Economic and legislative context

### **Achieved project goals in relation to the RPF**

- Whether these would have been achieved without the project being funded by the RPF (**Researcher – vital to cover in detail**)
  - RPF's contribution to achieving goals
  - Any alternative explanations
- How achieved project goals relate to delivery against the key priority areas they said they would deliver in the application, including net zero, levelling up and helping with cost of living (**Researcher- review application form**)

- Whether achieved project goals raise the profile of the UK to invest

### **Key learning on achieving project goals and future improvements – at a:**

- Regulator/project level (e.g. types of goals that can be achieved)
- RPF level
  - Support to help achieve goals (e.g. addressing support gaps or how support was delivered)

### **Sustainability (10 mins)**

Section aim: To understand sustainability of project achievements beyond the RPF3 project

- View on sustainability of achieved project goals now that the project has ended – including what constitutes sustainability
  - Continued implementation of innovative activities
    - Mainstreaming project into everyday business as usual
    - Project has inspired other activities that build on the original innovation

- How the project impacts wider work in this field (e.g. if their project is part of wider on-going projects)
- Organisational change
  - Building innovation teams
  - Upskilling staff and how these skills be used going forward
  - Change in strategic goals including a greater innovation focus
  - Sustained relationships with other regulators (what does this look like, e.g. increased meetings / contact)
- Sector change
  - More funding within the sector to either upscale developed innovations or increase the amount of new innovations
  - Innovation is a priority for regulators across the sector
  - Improved relationships between regulators, innovators, stakeholders, and businesses to drive innovation
  - An increase in knowledge of the role of innovation in regulation
- Benefits for businesses and consumers

- Increased innovative market processes, products, and services
- Factors affecting sustainability of achieved project goals
  - Key enablers and threats to sustainability
  - Conditions under which achievements can be sustainable
  - Support needed to improve sustainability of project achievements, including other:
    - Government departments and funding streams
    - Government sponsored organisations
    - Non-government organisations and funding streams

- Likelihood of the sustainability of achieved project goals
- Next RPF round
  - Would they apply again?
  - Why / why not?
- Check if anything else to add, thank, close and end recording
- Questions

#### Next steps

### Concluding thoughts (5 mins)

Section aim: to bring together key delivery learning, insights on outcomes and impacts, and whether they would apply for the next round (researcher - cover lightly)

- Any key delivery learning
- Key short- and medium -term project goals that were achieved
- Key factors that helped or hinder the achievement of these goals

## Endline project interviews (long term projects)

**Research aims and questions:** To better understand project delivery, achieved outcomes, and the factors affecting how these were achieved. This includes the role played by the RPF in stimulating the innovation.

### Overview of topics to be covered in interviews:

- Participants' involvement throughout the project
- Project delivery experiences
- Achieved, unachieved and unexpected outcomes
- Sustainability of the project

### How to use this topic guide:

- This document is a guide to the principal themes and issues to be covered in interviews
- Fully formed questions are avoided to allow researchers to be responsive and flexible in their questioning
- Probes such as 'why', 'how' etc. are not included in the guide. These are asked by researchers as and when appropriate

### Interview preparation (for researcher):

- Review the Theory of change
- Look at baseline interview data to gain an understanding of the projects

- Look at pen portraits of projects presented in the slide decks (project paragraphs are in the descriptions)
- Look at quarterly monitoring forms for any barriers / enablers to use for prompts
- Look at end of project reports (provided in draft form by project leads), although not essential

## Introduction

- Introduction to researcher. Thank you for agreeing to take part
- Introduction to NatCen – independent research organisation, commissioned by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) on the Regulators' Pioneer Fund to carry out this study
- Explanation of research:
  - Remind them that we're interviewing regulators and local authorities who were awarded RPF3 funding at two time points - the start of their projects and when they have completed these.
  - Interview will explore your project delivery experiences and project achievements and what contributed to these. Stress that we will not be reporting on individual projects (unless they are selected for case studies later this year) and are interested in the learning across the RPF projects,

including what has worked well/less well and the RPFs role in helping to achieve project goals.

- However, please do let us know if you would like to us to feedback anything directly to the RPF TEAM outside of the report in an attributable way. Please also feel free to provide feedback directly to the RPF team outside of this interview.
- The findings will feed into the final report
- There are no right or wrong answers. We may ask what may seem obvious questions, but this is to draw on your expertise to learn more about the project and to ensure we understand issues from your perspective.
- As noted, unless you say so, we will not attribute views to specific projects but report the overall views of all the projects that participated. Further, we will not tell anyone else what you have personally said, nor will we include any names or personal details in the reports. However:
  - The RPF team will know we have spoken to your project, as we are interviewing all projects awarded RPF3 funding
  - You may be identifiable in published outputs, given that we are speaking to a small number of projects and the uniqueness of your innovation and role
- We will be recording the interview, so we have an accurate record of what is said. Only the research team will have access to the recordings - they will not be shared with the RPF team

- Recorder is encrypted and files stored securely on NatCen's computer system in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018
- Identifiable data, including all recordings, will be deleted at the end of the project
- The interview will last 70 minutes
- Questions?
- Ask for permission to start recording

### **Contextual information (5 mins)**

Section aim: to ease participants into the discussion and to understand more about their involvement throughout the project.

### **Participant role and responsibilities**

- **If different participant at baseline:** their role in the programme and when they joined
- **If same participant at baseline:** whether and how their role and involvement has changed

## Project delivery and learning (20 mins)

Section aim: understand the project delivery experiences, including whether delivery was intended and what factors enabled and hindered delivery. **(Researcher - this is a priority section.** Review baseline interview data and project monitoring reports before interview and prompt accordingly. Be prepared to outline the delivery that was provided at the baseline interview)

- Delivery description
  - Understanding what was delivered
  - Key activities and milestones (cover briefly, using prompts from baseline interviews)
- Explore whether project was delivered as intended (comparing delivery to intentions)
  - If delivered as intended, why
  - If not, describe deviations
    - Types of deliverables that were / were not delivered to intention
    - Project extensions to March
    - Change in timetable or spending/resource inputs (including staff)
    - Any uncompleted work packages/milestones

- Whether aims changed/developed since application
- Reasons for deviations

Delivery experiences – including factors that helped (safeguarded) or hindered project delivery **(researcher - important to cover)**

- Fund
  - Timeframe
  - Spending (e.g., within financial year)
  - RPF support and how this could be improved – including whether experienced any changes in this as the government’s innovation department changed
  - The fund management processes
- Regulators and LAs
  - Working with stakeholders (including other regulators involved in the project)
  - Senior-level buy in
  - Timeframes
  - Technological readiness (e.g. having the tools to innovate)
- Sector level
  - Nature of the sector/s they regulate

- Working with innovators
- Project related factors
  - Nature of innovation
  - Project coordination and leadership
  - Delivery teams (e.g. project team expertise, staff availability and absences and size of delivery teams)
  - Contractor working practices and relationships
- Wider factors
  - Wider government policy directions and changes to this (changes in innovation focus and direction)
  - Sector response to project (e.g. buy-in from sector)
- Key delivery learning and future improvements – at a:
  - Regulator/project level
  - RPF level
    - Project delivery requirements (e.g. timeframe)
    - Support to help delivery (e.g. addressing support gaps or how support was delivered)

## Outcomes and Impacts (30 mins)

Section aim: exploring project achievements and how these were achieved - including barriers and enablers (**Researcher - this is a priority section**). Review baseline interview data and RPF Theory of Change, using these to prompt on anticipated goals and why these have or have not been achieved)

## Understanding achieved project goals

- Identify project goals achieved
  - For whom, In what contexts
    - Regulator or LA (e.g. shift to innovation culture, how has it developed their organisation / raised their profile, upskilled staff)
    - Between regulators and other stakeholders (e.g. collaboration)
    - Sector
    - Businesses and consumers
    - Wider
  - Distinguish between short- and medium-term project goals (establishing their timeframes for these)

- Thoughts on how achieved project goals align with the RPF programme goals (**Researcher - important to cover. If not mentioned spontaneously, use these prompts about the RPF programme**)
  - Developing a culture of innovation in organisations
  - Partnership work to drive innovations
  - Innovative products, services, and processes
  - Meeting the key government priorities, they thought they would, including: (**Researcher-review applications for other priority areas the project intended to address**):
    - Transition to net zero
    - Place-based innovation
    - Reducing cost of living
- Evidence that these were reached (**Researcher – important to cover. We want to understand how we can know if each of the goals have been achieved**)
  - Type of evidence - e.g., raising awareness and changes in attitudes, behaviours, services, and products - in relation to whom
    - Evidence that indicates goal has been/ not been achieved (**researcher – this is the ‘smoking gun’ evidence that confirms something has happened**)
- Evidence that suggests the goals has been achieved/ not achieved because the necessary steps have happened or necessary conditions have been met (**researcher – this is the ‘hoop test’ that, if met, gives us confidence that we are on way to achieving/ not achieving outcome**)
  - Any challenges to evidencing
- Anticipated project goals not unachieved/underachieved (Researcher – refer to baseline interview data) and reasons for this relating to the Fund, regulator, sector, and wider factors
- Any unexpected project achievements (**Researcher - important to cover**)
  - For whom, in what contexts
  - Reasons for these
  - Consequences of these unintended achievements

### Achieving project goals

- Project activities contributing to achieved goals (**researcher- exploring the mechanisms of change here**)
  - Which are key activities

- How the different activities will contribute to the short-, medium- and long-term goals
- Relationship between short- and medium-term project goals (outcomes)
  - Whether and how short- term goals led to medium-term goals
- Factors that helped or hindered the achievement of these goals (**important to cover – touch on lightly if already been discussed in section 2**)
  - Fund level
  - Regulator - e.g.
    - Working with stakeholders and collaborators
    - Senior-level buy-in
    - Project team - size, expertise, and management
  - Sector level
    - Nature of the sector(s) they regulate
    - Working with innovators
    - Business and/or consumer level engagement
  - Wider factors (**researcher, particularly important to cover**)
    - Economic and legislative context

### **Achieved project goals in relation to the RPF**

- Whether these would have been achieved without the project being funded by the RPF (**Researcher – vital to cover in detail**)
  - RPF's contribution to achieving goals
  - Any alternative explanations
- How achieved project goals relate to delivery against the key priority areas they said they would deliver in the application, including net zero, levelling up and helping with cost of living (**Researcher- review application form**)
- Whether achieved project goals raise the profile of the UK to invest

### **Key learning on achieving project goals and future improvements – at a:**

- Regulator/project level (e.g. types of goals that can be achieved)
- RPF level
  - Support to help achieve goals (e.g. addressing support gaps or how support was delivered)

## Sustainability (10 mins)

Section aim: To understand sustainability of project achievements beyond the RPF3 project

- View on sustainability of achieved project goals now that the project has ended – including what constitutes sustainability
  - Continued implementation of innovative activities
    - Mainstreaming project into everyday business as usual
    - Project has inspired other activities that build on the original innovation
    - How the project impacts wider work in this field (e.g. if their project is part of wider on-going projects)
  - Organisational change
    - Building innovation teams
    - Upskilling staff and how these skills be used going forward
    - Change in strategic goals including a greater innovation focus
    - Sustained relationships with other regulators (what does this look like, e.g. increased meetings / contact)
  - Sector change
    - Other changes or planned changes in organisational approach and systems for supporting innovation
    - More funding within the sector to either upscale developed innovations or increase the amount of new innovations
    - Innovation is a priority for regulators across the sector
    - Improved relationships between regulators, innovators, stakeholders, and businesses to drive innovation
    - An increase in knowledge of the role of innovation in regulation
  - Benefits for businesses and consumers
    - Increased innovative market processes, products, and services
- Factors affecting sustainability of achieved project goals
  - Key enablers and threats to sustainability
  - Conditions under which achievements can be sustainable
  - Support needed to improve sustainability of project achievements, including other:
    - Government departments and funding streams

- Government sponsored organisations
- Non-government organisations and funding streams

### **Concluding thoughts (5 mins)**

Section aim: to bring together key delivery learning, insights on outcomes and impacts, and whether they would apply for the next round (researcher - cover lightly)

- Any key delivery learning
- Key short- and medium -term project goals that were achieved
- Key factors that helped or hinder the achievement of these goals
- Likelihood of the sustainability of achieved project goals
- Next RPF round
  - Would they apply again?
  - Why / why not?
- Check if anything else to add, thank, close and end recording
- Questions
- Next steps

### **Non-applicants**

**Research aims and questions:** To understand non-applicant's awareness of RPF, their reasons for not applying and RPF improvements to encourage applications. This will be done with a view to also understanding the role of RPF in stimulating innovations.

#### **Overview of topics to be covered in interviews:**

- Participants' role and responsibilities
- Awareness and understanding of RPF
- Reasons for not applying for RPF3
- RPF improvements to encourage applications

#### **How to use this topic guide:**

- This document is a guide to the principal themes and issues to be covered in interviews
- Fully formed questions are avoided to allow researchers to be responsive and flexible in their questioning
- Probes such as 'why', 'how' etc. are not included in the guide. These are asked by researchers as and when appropriate

## Introduction

- Introduction to researcher. Thank you for agreeing to take part
- Introduction to NatCen – independent research organisation, commissioned by the Better Regulation Executive (BRE) to carry out this study
- Explanation of research:
  - We're interviewing a small selection of regulators that have not applied for the third round of the Regulators' Pioneer Fund (RPF3)
  - Interviews will explore your views on the RPF, including previous experiences, reasons why your organisation did not apply for RPF3 and any improvements that can be made to the Fund
  - The findings will feed into the interim and final report and help inform thinking on the RPF design
- Participation is voluntary - there are no right or wrong answers, you can choose not to discuss any issue
- What you say is confidential and your participation is anonymous to anyone outside of the NatCen team
  - We will not tell anyone else what you have personally said, nor will we include any names or personal details in the reports
- We will be recording the interview, so we have an accurate record of what is said

- Recorder is encrypted and files stored securely on NatCen's computer system in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018
  - Recorder is encrypted and files stored securely on NatCen's computer system in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018
  - Only the research team will have access to the recordings
- Data will be deleted at the end of the project
- The interview will last 30 minutes
- Questions?
- Ask for permission to start recording

## Contextual information (5 mins)

Section aim: to ease participant into the discussion and to understand more about their organisation and role

- Brief overview of the regulator and their sector
- Participant role and responsibilities
  - Current role and responsibilities
  - Whether and how this relates to innovations

## RPF awareness and views (5 mins)

Section aim: to briefly explore awareness of the RPF and participants' thoughts on regulation and innovation

- General views on the RPF
  - Awareness and understanding of what RPF is trying to achieve
  - Thoughts on promoting a regulatory environment that encourages innovation for their sector
  - Other ways in which they think they will achieve the innovation / impact the RPF seeks (researcher - important to cover)
    - Whether they will look to carry on innovation work through other routes e.g. other funding streams or approaches
    - How alternative ways of achieving innovation goals compare to RPF in progressing innovations
    - Importance of RPF in stimulating change
- Previous experience of applying for the RPF
  - Whether they applied for previous rounds and motivations
  - Application outcomes and thoughts about this
  - How they heard about the fund previously
  - What motivated them to apply previously

- Experiences of
  - Applying for the Fund
  - If successful, delivering projects (keep brief)

## Reasons for not applying for RPF3 (10 mins)

Section aim: to understand reasons for not applying, which will inform the discussion on what can be done to encourage regulators to apply

- Whether they considered applying for RPF3
- Reasons why they did not apply (ask openly and then use the following prompts)
  - Fund
    - Views on the role of regulators in promoting innovation (cover lightly if discussed at length in section 2)
    - Importance of RPF in stimulating innovation (important to cover but cover lightly if discussed at length in section 2)
    - Eligibility criteria
    - Application process (e.g. platform used, the application form, timeframe for applications)
    - Views on Fund support available to help with application (e.g. anticipation of written

guidance and ongoing support available from Fund)

- Previous RPF application and delivery experiences (draw on insights from section 2 - including ways in which RPF helped/did not help innovation focus in their organisation)
- Regulator
  - Generating ideas for projects
  - Senior-level/organisational buy in to innovation work (e.g. lack of engagement with innovation or whether they already have other innovation funding/programmes in place)
  - Anticipated project delivery challenges
  - Internal resources and expertise (e.g. previous experience of writing funding applications, having the time to do so)
  - Working with stakeholders and collaborators
- Wider factors
  - Anticipated sector response to innovation work
  - Economic and legislative contexts

## **Improvements and concluding thoughts (10 mins)**

Section aim: to explore what can be done to encourage regulators to apply

- Key reasons for not applying for RPF3
- Whether they would consider applying for the RPF in future rounds
- Views on how applications to the RPF could be encouraged
  - Improvements to Fund entry (e.g. eligibility criteria, application process, support needed)
  - Improvements to Fund project delivery support

## **Check if anything else to add, thank, close and end recording**

- Questions
- Next steps.

## Unselected applicants

**Research aims and questions:** To better understand participants' reasons for applying, their experience of the application process and RPF improvements to improve experiences. This will be done with a view to also understanding the role of RPF in stimulating innovations.

### Overview of topics to be covered in interviews:

- Participants' role and responsibilities
- Awareness and understanding of RPF
- Motivations for applying
- Experiences of the application process and views on outcome
- RPF improvements to improve experience

### How to use this topic guide:

- This document is a guide to the principal themes and issues to be covered in interviews
- Fully formed questions are avoided to allow researchers to be responsive and flexible in their questioning
- Probes such as 'why', 'how' etc. are not included in the guide. These are asked by researchers as and when appropriate

## Introduction

- Introduction to researcher. Thank you for agreeing to take part
- Introduction to NatCen – independent research organisation, commissioned by the Better Regulation Executive (BRE) to carry out this study
- Explanation of research:
  - We're interviewing a small selection of regulators who applied for the third round of the Regulators' Pioneer Fund (RPF3) but were not awarded funding
  - Interview will explore your views on the RPF, why you chose to apply, your experiences of the application process and views on the outcomes, and any improvements that can be made to the Fund
  - The findings will feed into the interim and final report and help inform thinking on the RPF design
- Participation is voluntary - there are no right or wrong answers, you can choose not to discuss any issue
- What you say is confidential and your participation is anonymous to anyone outside of the NatCen team
  - We will not tell anyone else what you have personally said, nor will we include any names or personal details in the reports

- We will be recording the interview, so we have an accurate record of what is said
- Recorder is encrypted and files stored securely on NatCen's computer system in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018
  - Recorder is encrypted and files stored securely on NatCen's computer system in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018
  - Only the research team will have access to the recordings
- Data will be deleted at the end of the project
- The interview will last 45 minutes
- Questions?
- Ask for permission to start recording

### **Contextual information (5 mins)**

Section aim: to ease participant into the discussion and to understand more about their organisation and their role

- Brief overview of the regulator and their sector
- Participant role and responsibilities
  - Current role and responsibilities
  - Whether and how this relates to innovations

### **RPF awareness and views (5 mins)**

Section aim: to briefly explore awareness of the RPF and participants' thoughts on regulation and innovation

- General views on the RPF
  - Awareness and understanding of what RPF is trying to achieve
  - Thoughts on a promoting a regulatory environment that encourages innovation for their sector
  - The importance of the RPF in stimulating innovation (researcher - important to cover)
- Previous experience of applying for the RPF
  - Whether they applied for previous rounds and motivations
  - Application outcomes and thoughts about this
  - Previous experiences of project delivery, if relevant (cover lightly)

### **Motivation to apply for RPF3 (10 mins)**

Section aim: what innovation they wanted funded and the reasons behind this

- Brief description of project applied for
  - Nature of project

- Focus of the innovation
- Rationale/need for project in sector
- Motivations for applying for RPF3 - e.g.
  - The difference the innovation could have made to organisation, sector and wider (e.g. economy)
  - Helping organisation realise their aspirations to innovate
    - RPF3 providing resourcing opportunity
    - Opportunity to carry out work outside of their core regulatory mandate
  - Tackling shared issues through collaboration with others (e.g. other regulators and sector stakeholders)
  - Developing a proactive approach to regulation
  - How these compare to motivations for applying to previous rounds
- Alternative ways of achieving the goals of the project they sought RPF funding for
  - Whether they will look to carry on project through other routes e.g. other funding streams or approaches, extent to which they will do it anyway
  - How alternative ways of achieving goals compare to RPF in progressing innovations

- Importance of RPF in stimulating change (cover light if already discussed at length in section 2)

### **Application experiences (15 mins)**

Section aim: to explore views on what worked well and less well during the application process

- Briefly, what application process involved for regulator
  - Liaising with the Fund (e.g. to understand eligibility and what the application process involves)
  - Generating innovation ideas
  - Getting organisational buy-in
  - Identifying and working with other stakeholders (e.g. regulators and innovators)
  - Identifying experts (e.g. to help write the application)
- Experience of the process - key enablers and barriers
  - Fund
    - Eligibility criteria
    - Application process (e.g. platform used, the application form, timeframe for applications)
    - Views on Fund support available to help with application (e.g. anticipation of written

guidance and ongoing support available from Fund)

- Comparison to previous RPF application experiences (draw on insights from section 2)

- Regulator

- Generating ideas for projects
- Senior-level buy in to innovation work
- Internal resources and expertise (e.g. previous experience of writing funding applications, having the time to do so)
- Working with stakeholders and collaborators

- Wider factors

- The nature of the sector(s) they regulate
- Economic and legislative contexts

- Thoughts on the outcome - views on

- Decision
- Why they felt they did not get funding
- Feedback on decision from the Fund
  - Nature of feedback
  - Whether it was helpful (including which aspects)

## **Improvements and concluding thoughts (10 mins)**

Section aim: to explore what can be done to improve the application process

- Summarising what worked well and less well about the application process
- Whether they would consider applying for the RPF in future rounds (researcher - important to cover)
  - Anything they would do differently if they would apply
  - If not, what other routes they would go down and how do these compare to the RPF
- Improvements to the RPF to encourage successful applications
  - Eligibility criteria
  - Application process (e.g. platform used, the application form, timeframe for applications)
  - Fund support available to help with application
- Check if anything else to add, thank, close and end recording
- Questions

## RPF1 follow-up interviews: project staff

**Research aims and questions:** To understand immediate and longer-term, sustainable outcomes and impacts

### Overview of topics to be covered in interviews:

- Understanding project context and the nature of the innovation
- Immediate and sustained project outcomes and impacts
  - The RPF's role in contributing to these impacts
  - Alternative explanations for the outcomes

### How to use this topic guide:

- The guide is intended for use with RPF1 project leads
- This document is a guide to the principal themes and issues to be covered in interviews
- Fully formed questions are avoided to allow researchers to be responsive and flexible in their questioning
- We will prioritise what participants tell us spontaneously – prompts are not exhaustive and will be drawn on if needed and selectively
- Probes such as 'why', 'how' etc. are not included in the guide. These are asked by researchers as and when appropriate

## Introduction

- Thank you for agreeing to take part. Introduction to researcher
- Introduction to NatCen - independent research organisation commissioned to evaluate the RPF3 by the Technology and Innovative Regulation (RIO) Directorate, part of the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology – formerly BEIS
- Explanation of research
  - We're interviewing regulators and local authorities who were awarded RPF funding in previous rounds to better understand any project outcomes and impacts since the funding ended
  - The interview will last 45 minutes and will explore whether anticipated project outcomes were achieved and any sustained impacts beyond the RPF1 funding and the reasons for this
  - The findings will feed into the interim and final report to inform thinking on RPF design
- Participation is voluntary - there are no right or wrong answers, you can choose not to discuss any issue
- What you say is confidential. We will not attribute views to specific projects but report overall views of RPF1 and RPF2 projects that participated. Further, we will not tell anyone else what you said personally, nor include any names or personal details in reports. However, you may

be identifiable in published outputs, given we are speaking to a small number of projects and the uniqueness of your innovation.

- We will be recording the session, so we have an accurate record of what is said. Only the research team will have access to the recordings – they will not be shared with RIO
  - Recording software is encrypted and files stored securely on NatCen's computer system in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018
  - Only the research team will have access to the recordings
- Data will be deleted at the end of the project
- Questions?
- Ask for permission to start recording

### **Contextual information (10 mins)**

Section aim: to understand their project and its innovation in more detail

- Participant role and responsibilities for RPF1 project
- Brief description of RPF1 innovation (researcher, probe based on a review of previous project information)
  - Rationale/ need for project in sector - including why they selected this specific project over other ideas

- Nature of project
- Focus of the innovation

- Status of the project / innovation from end of project to present day
  - Intentions following funding end
  - How the situation has evolved, factors affecting this (explore role of pandemic)

### **Outcomes (30 mins)**

Section aim: reflection on immediate project outcomes and sustained impacts, as well how the Fund has contributed to these and exploring alternative outcomes

- Intended project outcomes and impacts at regulator/ LA, business and consumer levels
  - Short-medium term
  - Longer-term
    - Expected timeframes for longer-term outcomes to be achieved
  - Any change in intended outcomes as the project progressed and rationale for this
  - Whether and how intended outcomes contributed to wider government agendas, in what way

- Main achievements during the lifetime of the project
  - Nature of outcomes achieved
  - How they were achieved
  - At what level e.g. Fund, regulator/ LA, business, consumer
  - To what extent they were sustained
  
- Outcomes and impacts not achieved by the end of the project
  - Nature of outcomes not achieved
  - At what level e.g. Fund, regulator/ LA, business, consumer
  - Willingness/ ability to achieve them beyond the project
  - Status of these outcomes now
  
- Whether longer-term outcomes and impacts were achieved within the anticipated timeframes
  - Examples of these outcomes and impacts
    - Nature of outcomes and impacts
    - How achieved
    - Who experienced by

- Explore reasons why intended outcomes and impacts were achieved/ not achieved and sustained/ not sustained, what helped and hindered
  - Reasons these outcomes/ impacts were/ were not realised or sustained
  - If there were plans to achieve outcomes and impacts beyond the project, what happened
  - Whether and how RPF contributed to achieving and sustaining outcomes / impacts beyond the project

### **Possible outcomes**

#### Sector and regulator/ LA level

- A culture of promoting innovation instilled in organisation
- Better understanding of the role regulation can play in innovation
- Regulators working together to drive innovation
- Better understanding of innovators needs for their sector to develop products/services

#### Businesses/ consumers

- Development of innovative processes, products and services

- Reduced time/cost of introducing innovation to UK markets
- Better regulatory frameworks – increasing confidence in regulatory systems and maintained or improved protection for consumers
- RPF funding legitimised innovation activities (e.g. senior leadership buy-in, helping set-up innovation teams)
- RPF improved knowledge about supporting innovations – including role of innovators
- Created lasting partnerships between regulators and /or businesses
- Helped identify innovation opportunities
- Increased business and consumer confidence in regulatory framework
- Other factors outside of the fund that helped or hindered achieving and sustaining (or not) outcomes
- Funding / investment opportunities
- Wider economic and regulatory factors
- Organisational factors
- Business factors
- Consumer factors

### **Concluding thoughts (5 mins)**

- Key learning around achieving or sustaining outcomes and impacts
- Future plans relating to RPF innovation and the rationale for this

**Check if anything else to add, thank, close and end recording – questions and next steps.**

## RPF1 follow-up interviews: innovators, businesses & other beneficiaries

**Research aims and questions:** To understand immediate and longer-term, sustainable outcomes and impacts experienced by innovators, businesses and other potential beneficiaries of the RPF1 project, such as regulators

### Overview of topics to be covered in interviews:

- Understanding of potential beneficiaries' organisational context and relationship to project
- For innovators, their experience of being involved in the project
- Immediate and sustained project outcomes and impacts
- The RPF's role in contributing to these impacts
- Alternative explanations for the outcomes

### How to use this topic guide:

- The guide is intended for use with RPF1 innovators, businesses or other beneficiaries, such as regulators – we will conduct one interview per project, with projects referring an individual from just one of these groups
- This document is a guide to the principal themes and issues to be covered in interviews. There are separate sections for innovators and businesses/other recipients.
- Fully formed questions are avoided to allow researchers to be responsive and flexible in their questioning

- We will prioritise what participants tell us spontaneously – prompts are not exhaustive and will be drawn on if needed and selectively
- Probes such as 'why', 'how' etc. are not included in the guide. These are asked by researchers as and when appropriate

### Introduction

- Thank you for agreeing to take part. Introduction to researcher
- Introduction to NatGen - independent research organisation commissioned to evaluate the Regulators' Pioneer Fund (RPF) by the Technology and Innovative Regulation (RIO) Directorate, part of the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology. The RPF funded [the name of the RPF1 project] and is an initiative to help create a regulatory environment that supports innovation.
- Explanation of research
  - In addition to [name of the RPF1 project] staff, we also want to talk those that the project tried to make a difference to. This includes innovators who worked with the project, or businesses and other regulators
  - The interview will last 45 minutes and will explore your thoughts on whether the project has made any short-term and lasting difference

- The findings will feed into the interim and final report to inform thinking on RPF design
- Participation is voluntary - there are no right or wrong answers, you can choose not to discuss any issue
- What you say is confidential. We are talking to innovators, businesses and regulators associated with other projects too. We will not attribute views to specific projects or your organisation but report the overall views of those that have participated. Further, we will not tell anyone else what you said personally, nor include any names or personal details in reports. However, you may be identifiable in published outputs, given we are speaking to a small number of projects and the uniqueness of the innovation.
- We will be recording the session, so we have an accurate record of what is said. Only the research team will have access to the recordings – they will not be shared with RIO or the project
  - Recording software is encrypted and files stored securely on NatCen's computer system in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018
  - Only the research team will have access to the recordings
  - Data will be deleted at the end of the project
- Questions?
- Ask for permission to start recording

## Contextual information (10 mins)

Section aim: to understand participants role and relationship to the RPF1 project. We anticipate speaking to innovators, businesses or other regulators that the project has worked with

- Participant's organisation and their overall role (researcher keep brief and probe using information provided by project lead)
  - Nature and remit of organisation
  - Their role in the organisation, including links to innovation in general
- Their understanding of the of RPF1 innovation (researcher, keep brief and probe based on a review of previous project information)
  - Rationale/ need for project in sector - including what they hoped the project would achieve
  - Focus of the innovation
  - Overall thoughts on regulators involvement in innovation
- Participant relationship to the RPF1 project (researcher, we will have a clear sense of this from the project lead, but briefly clarify further)
  - Nature of relationship (innovator, business and other beneficiary, such as regulator)

- Nature of exposure to the project
- Whether relationship has continued with project/regulator and what has affected this

### **For innovators only (10 mins)**

Section aim: exploring innovators' experiences of working with regulators

- Nature of involvement with project
  - Their role and input into the innovation
  - Stages they were involved in
  - Who they worked with, including project team and wider regulators
- Experience of working with regulator in developing and delivering innovation
  - Regulator's understanding of innovation and innovators' needs
  - How supported they felt in developing innovation
  - Level of input and whether this was valued
  - What worked well/less well at different stages - e.g. at design, setting-up, test, delivery

### **Outcomes (25-30 mins)**

Section aim: reflection on any immediate and sustained differences the project made, how it contributed to these, alternative explanations and what would have happened in the absence of the innovation

- Whether the innovation made a difference during lifetime of the project
  - Example of the differences it made
    - Nature of differences – e.g. how helpful it was, what it enabled them to do or learning opportunities offered
    - At what level e.g. Sector, regulator, innovator, business, consumer
  - How compares to the differences the project was anticipated to make
    - Any anticipated differences not realised
    - Unintended effects of the project
  - To what extent they were sustained
- Whether innovation made any longer-term difference, after the project ended
  - Examples of the differences it made
    - Nature of differences – e.g. how helpful it was, what it enabled them to do or learning opportunities offered

- Timeframe for differences
  - At what level e.g. Sector, regulator, innovator, business, consumer
- How compares to the differences the project was anticipated to make
  - Any expected differences not realised
  - Unintended effects of the project
- Explore reasons the project made/did not make a difference and why these differences were sustained/not sustained, what helped and hindered
  - Reasons differences were/ were not realised or sustained
  - Whether and how the project contributed to making difference and sustaining these beyond its lifetime
  - Other factors outside of the project contributed to the difference made
    - Funding / investment opportunities
    - Wider economic and regulatory factors
    - Sector factors
    - Organisational factors
    - Business factors
    - Consumer factors
- Reflections on what would have happened if the innovation was not delivered
  - Whether the absence of the innovation would have impacted them and the sector(s) in any way – how, why/why not
  - If innovation was needed, whether it would have been delivered outside of the project in other ways and how
    - Who would have delivered it
    - How it would have been delivered (e.g. pace/timeliness of delivery, delivered fully or partially)
- Reflections on what has happened in the area with similar aims to the RPF1 innovation since the project ended
  - Nature of activities
  - Timeframes
  - How it relates to the RPF1 project (e.g. builds on it, replicates it etc.)

### **Possible outcomes**

Regulator– either the organisation delivering the project or those potentially benefitting from it

- A culture of promoting innovation instilled in organisation – e.g. change in attitudes or ways of working with innovators
- Better understanding of the role regulation can play in innovation
- Regulators working together to drive innovation
- Better understanding of innovators needs for their sector to develop products/services

#### Innovator level

- Innovators have a better understanding of the role regulation can play in innovation
- Innovators' confidence in working with
- regulators
- Better collaboration between innovators and regulators

#### Businesses/ consumers

- Development of innovative processes, products and services
- Reduced time/cost of introducing innovation to UK markets
- Better regulatory frameworks – increasing confidence in regulatory systems and maintained or improved protection for consumers

#### **Concluding thoughts (5 mins)**

- The need for the innovation
- Key differences the innovation made
- Key learning around helping the innovation make a difference or sustain it

Check if anything else to add, thank, close and end recording – questions and next steps

## RPF2 follow-up interviews: project staff

**Research aims and questions:** To understand immediate and longer-term, sustainable outcomes and impacts

### Overview of topics to be covered in interviews:

- Understanding project context and the nature of the innovation
- Immediate and sustained project outcomes and impacts
  - The RPF's role in contributing to these impacts
  - Alternative explanations for the outcomes

### How to use this topic guide:

- The guide is intended for use with RPF2 project leads
- This document is a guide to the principal themes and issues to be covered in interviews
- Fully formed questions are avoided to allow researchers to be responsive and flexible in their questioning
- We will prioritise what participants tell us spontaneously – prompts are not exhaustive and will be drawn on if needed and selectively
- Probes such as 'why', 'how' etc. are not included in the guide. These are asked by researchers as and when appropriate

## Introduction

- Thank you for agreeing to take part. Introduction to researcher
- Introduction to NatCen - independent research organisation commissioned to evaluate the RPF3 by the Technology and Innovative Regulation (RIO) Directorate, part of the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology – formerly BEIS
- Explanation of research
  - We're interviewing regulators and local authorities who were awarded RPF funding in previous rounds to better understand any project outcomes and impacts since the funding ended
  - The interview will last 45 minutes and will explore whether anticipated project outcomes were achieved and any sustained impacts beyond the RPF2 funding and the reasons for this
  - The findings will feed into the interim and final report to inform thinking on RPF design
- Participation is voluntary - there are no right or wrong answers, you can choose not to discuss any issue
- What you say is confidential. We will not attribute views to specific projects but report overall views of RPF2 projects that participated. Further, we will not tell anyone else what you said personally, nor include any names or personal details in reports. However, you may be identifiable in

published outputs, given we are speaking to a small number of projects and the uniqueness of your innovation.

- We will be recording the session, so we have an accurate record of what is said. Only the research team will have access to the recordings – they will not be shared with RIO
  - Recording software is encrypted and files stored securely on NatCen's computer system in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018
  - Only the research team will have access to the recordings
  - Data will be deleted at the end of the project
- Questions?
- Ask for permission to start recording

### **Contextual information (10 mins)**

Section aim: to understand their project and its innovation in more detail

- Participant role and responsibilities for RPF2 project
- Brief description of RPF2 innovation (researcher, probe based on a review of previous project information)
  - Rationale/ need for project in sector - including why they selected this specific project over other ideas

- Nature of project
- Focus of the innovation
- Status of the project / innovation from end of project to present day
  - Intentions following funding end
  - How the situation has evolved, factors affecting this (explore role of pandemic)

### **Outcomes (30 mins)**

Section aim: reflection on immediate project outcomes and sustained impacts, as well how the Fund has contributed to these and exploring alternative outcomes

- Intended project outcomes and impacts at regulator/ LA, business and consumer levels
  - Short-medium term
  - Longer-term
    - Expected timeframes for longer-term outcomes to be achieved
  - Any change in intended outcomes as the project progressed and rationale for this
  - Whether and how intended outcomes contributed to wider government agendas, in what way
- Main achievements during the lifetime of the project

- Nature of outcomes achieved
- How they were achieved
- At what level e.g. Fund, regulator/ LA, business, consumer
- To what extent they were sustained
- Outcomes and impacts not achieved by the end of the project
  - Nature of outcomes not achieved
  - At what level e.g. Fund, regulator/ LA, business, consumer
  - Willingness/ ability to achieve them beyond the project
  - Status of these outcomes now
- Whether longer-term outcomes and impacts were achieved within the anticipated timeframes
  - Examples of these outcomes and impacts
  - Nature of outcomes and impacts
  - How achieved
  - Who experienced by
- Explore reasons why intended outcomes and impacts were achieved/ not achieved and sustained/ not sustained, what helped and hindered
  - Reasons these outcomes/ impacts were/ were not realised or sustained
- If there were plans to achieve outcomes and impacts beyond the project, what happened
- Whether and how RPF contributed to achieving and sustaining outcomes / impacts beyond the project
  - RPF funding legitimised innovation activities (e.g. senior leadership buy-in, helping set-up innovation teams)
  - RPF improved knowledge about supporting innovations – including role of innovators
  - Created lasting partnerships between regulators and /or businesses
  - Helped identify innovation opportunities
  - Increased business and consumer confidence in regulatory framework
- Other factors outside of the fund that helped or hindered achieving and sustaining (or not) outcomes
  - Funding / investment opportunities
  - Wider economic and regulatory factors
  - Organisational factors
  - Business factors
  - Consumer factors

## Possible outcomes

### Sector and regulator/ LA level

- A culture of promoting innovation instilled in organisation
- Better understanding of the role regulation can play in innovation
- Regulators working together to drive innovation
- Better understanding of innovators needs for their sector to develop products/services

### Businesses/ consumers

- Development of innovative processes, products and services
- Reduced time/cost of introducing innovation to UK markets
- Better regulatory frameworks – increasing confidence in regulatory systems and maintained or improved protection for consumers

## Concluding thoughts (5 mins)

- Key learning around achieving or sustaining outcomes and impacts
- Future plans relating to RPF innovation and the rationale for this

**Check if anything else to add, thank, close and end recording** – questions and next steps

## RPF2 follow-up interviews: innovators, businesses & other beneficiaries

**Research aims and questions:** To understand immediate and longer-term, sustainable outcomes and impacts experienced by innovators, businesses and other potential beneficiaries of the RPF2 project, such as regulators

### Overview of topics to be covered in interviews:

- Understanding of potential beneficiaries' organisational context and relationship to project
- For innovators, their experience of being involved in the project
- Immediate and sustained project outcomes and impacts
  - The RPF's role in contributing to these impacts
  - Alternative explanations for the outcomes

### How to use this topic guide:

- The guide is intended for use with RPF2 innovators, businesses or other beneficiaries, such as regulators – we will conduct one interview per project, with projects referring an individual from just one of these groups
- This document is a guide to the principal themes and issues to be covered in interviews. There are separate sections for innovators and businesses/other recipients.
- Fully formed questions are avoided to allow researchers to be responsive and flexible in their questioning

- We will prioritise what participants tell us spontaneously – prompts are not exhaustive and will be drawn on if needed and selectively
- Probes such as 'why', 'how' etc. are not included in the guide. These are asked by researchers as and when appropriate

### Introduction

- Thank you for agreeing to take part. Introduction to researcher
- Introduction to NatGen - independent research organisation commissioned to evaluate the Regulators' Pioneer Fund (RPF) by the Technology and Innovative Regulation (RIO) Directorate, part of the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology. The RPF funded [the name of the RPF2 project] and is an initiative to help create a regulatory environment that supports innovation.
- Explanation of research
  - In addition to [name of the RPF2 project] staff, we also want to talk those that the project tried to make a difference to. This includes innovators who worked with the project, or businesses and other regulators
  - The interview will last 45 minutes and will explore your thoughts on whether the project has made any short-term and lasting difference

- The findings will feed into the interim and final report to inform thinking on RPF design
- Participation is voluntary - there are no right or wrong answers, you can choose not to discuss any issue
- What you say is confidential. We are talking to innovators, businesses and regulators associated with other projects too. We will not attribute views to specific projects or your organisation but report the overall views of those that have participated. Further, we will not tell anyone else what you said personally, nor include any names or personal details in reports. However, you may be identifiable in published outputs, given we are speaking to a small number of projects and the uniqueness of the innovation.
- We will be recording the session, so we have an accurate record of what is said. Only the research team will have access to the recordings – they will not be shared with RIO or the project
  - Recording software is encrypted and files stored securely on NatCen's computer system in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018
  - Only the research team will have access to the recordings
  - Data will be deleted at the end of the project
- Questions?
- Ask for permission to start recording

### **Contextual information (10 mins)**

Section aim: to understand participants role and relationship to the RPF2 project. We anticipate speaking to innovators, businesses or other regulators that the project has worked with

- Participant's organisation and their overall role (researcher keep brief and probe using information provided by project lead)
  - Nature and remit of organisation
  - Their role in the organisation, including links to innovation in general
- Their understanding of the of RPF2 innovation (researcher, keep brief and probe based on a review of previous project information)
  - Rationale/ need for project in sector - including what they hoped the project would achieve
  - Focus of the innovation
  - Overall thoughts on regulators involvement in innovation

- Participant relationship to the RPF2 project (researcher, we will have a clear sense of this from the project lead, but briefly clarify further)
  - Nature of relationship (innovator, business and other beneficiary, such as regulator)
  - Nature of exposure to the project
  - Whether relationship has continued with project/regulator and what has affected this

### **For innovators only (10 mins)**

Section aim: exploring innovators' experiences of working with regulators

- Nature of involvement with project
  - Their role and input into the innovation
  - Stages they were involved in
  - Who they worked with, including project team and wider regulators
- Experience of working with regulator in developing and delivering innovation
  - Regulator's understanding of innovation and innovators' needs
  - How supported they felt in developing innovation
  - Level of input and whether this was valued

- What worked well/less well at different stages - e.g. at design, setting-up, test, delivery

### **Outcomes (25-30 mins)**

Section aim: reflection on any immediate and sustained differences the project made, how it contributed to these, alternative explanations and what would have happened in the absence of the innovation

- How they feel about regulations in their sector since the project
  - Thoughts about the regulator
    - Specific teams within the regulator
    - How supportive they are of innovation
  - How easy are regulations to navigate
- Whether the innovation made a difference during lifetime of the project
  - Example of the differences it made
    - Nature of differences – e.g. how helpful it was, what it enabled them to do or learning opportunities offered
    - At what level e.g. Sector, regulator, innovator, business, consumer

- How compares to the differences the project was anticipated to make
  - Any anticipated differences not realised
  - Unintended effects of the project
- To what extent they were sustained
- Whether innovation made any longer-term difference, after the project ended
  - Examples of the differences it made
    - Nature of differences – e.g. how helpful it was, what it enabled them to do or learning opportunities offered
    - Timeframe for differences
    - At what level e.g. Sector, regulator, innovator, business, consumer
  - How compares to the differences the project was anticipated to make
    - Any expected differences not realised
    - Unintended effects of the project
- Explore reasons the project made/did not make a difference and why these differences were sustained/not sustained, what helped and hindered
  - Reasons differences were/ were not realised or sustained
- Whether and how the project contributed to making difference and sustaining these beyond its lifetime
- Other factors outside of the project contributed to the difference made
  - Funding / investment opportunities
  - Wider economic and regulatory factors
  - Sector factors
  - Organisational factors
  - Business factors
  - Consumer factors
- Reflections on what would have happened if the innovation was not delivered
  - Whether the absence of the innovation would have impacted them and the sector(s) in any way – how, why/why not
  - If innovation was needed, whether it would have been delivered outside of the project in other ways and how
    - Who would have delivered it
    - How it would have been delivered (e.g. pace/timeliness of delivery, delivered fully or partially)

- Reflections on what has happened in the area with similar aims to the RPF2 innovation since the project ended
  - Nature of activities
  - Timeframes
  - How it relates to the RPF2 project (e.g. builds on it, replicates it etc.)

### **Possible outcomes**

Regulator– either the organisation delivering the project or those potentially benefitting from it

- A culture of promoting innovation instilled in organisation – e.g. change in attitudes or ways of working with innovators
- Better understanding of the role regulation can play in innovation
- Regulators working together to drive innovation
- Better understanding of innovators needs for their sector to develop products/services

Innovator level

- Innovators have a better understanding of the role regulation can play in innovation
- Innovators' confidence in working with
- regulators

- Better collaboration between innovators and regulators

Businesses/ consumers

- Development of innovative processes, products and services
- Reduced time/cost of introducing innovation to UK markets
- Better regulatory frameworks – increasing confidence in regulatory systems and maintained or improved protection for consumers

### **Concluding thoughts (5 mins)**

- The need for the innovation
- Key differences the innovation made
- Key learning around helping the innovation make a difference or sustain it

**Check if anything else to add, thank, close and end recording** – questions and next steps

## Case study interviews: project staff (short term projects)

**Research aims and questions:** To showcase the different types of RPF innovation work, as well as understand what projects have achieved, how these achievements can lead to likely longer-term impacts and how these can be evidenced.

### Overview of topics to be covered in interviews:

- Revisiting project context
- Understanding project outcomes and how these can lead to longer-term impacts
  - How project outcomes can lead to anticipated longer-term impacts
  - Evidencing outcomes – understanding whether project is on track to achieve longer-term impacts
  - Factors helping or hindering outcomes and impacts

**Researcher** – we will use two tools to help cover what we have previously discussed quickly and/or to help deepen participants' reflections. Both drafted in advance of the interview:

- **A project overview slide** – outlining the project's vision, delivery activities and experience and overview of its goals based on the endline interview and end of project report
- **Progress pathway diagram** – outlining our understanding of how the project will achieve its goals

(i.e. how its activities contributed to the end of project outcomes and how these could lead to other outcomes and longer-term impacts)

### How to use this topic guide:

- The guide is intended for use with RPF3 project leads
- This document is a guide to the principal themes and issues to be covered in interviews
- Fully formed questions are avoided to allow researchers to be responsive and flexible in their questioning
- We will prioritise what participants tell us spontaneously – prompts are not exhaustive and will be drawn on if needed and selectively
- Probes such as 'why', 'how' etc. are not included in the guide. These are asked by researchers as and when appropriate

### Introduction

- Thank you for agreeing to take part. Introduction to researcher
- Introduction to NatGen - independent research organisation commissioned to evaluate the RPF3 by the Technology and Innovative Regulation (RIO) Directorate, part of the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology

- Explanation of research
  - We have selected four projects for deeper case study work to understand their innovation journeys in more detail. Projects have been selected to reflect a range of RPF projects and to optimise RPF learning.
  - The purpose of the case study is to showcase the different types of innovation funded by the RPF3. We also want to learn in more detail about what your project has achieved and is likely to achieve in the future.
  - As part of the case study, we also want to talk to project beneficiaries and stakeholders, such as businesses and innovators, that can provide reflections on the project's achievements. We will work with you to identify these and will discuss this at the end of the interview.
  - Interview will last 80 minutes and focus on what your project has achieved at different time points. We will briefly revisit what you told us about the project achievements at the endline interview, then move to discuss any achievements since and what you anticipate in the future. At the end, we will discuss who else you think we should talk to.
  - Across this discussion, we will be asking similar types of questions on how you see project achievements leading to the overall project goal and the evidence for this.
- The findings will feed into an interim case study report and into the final report.
- Reassurances
  - There are no right or wrong answers, and we appreciate some of the questions will ask you to speculate about the future achievements of the project
  - Although we will not name you personally in any outputs, we will identify your project in the published case study research outputs. This means you may be identifiable in these outputs.
- We will be recording the session, so we have an accurate record of what is said. Only the research team will have access to the recordings – they will not be shared with RIO.
  - Recording software is encrypted and files stored securely on NatCen's computer system in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018.
  - Only the research team will have access to the recordings.
  - Data will be deleted at the end of the project.
- Questions?
- Ask for permission to start recording.

## Contextual information (15 mins)

Section aim: a brief and targeted overview of their RPF3 project to ease participant into the discussion and to address any gaps in knowledge about project delivery and intended outcomes.

This section will also broadly map the how the project will lead to change ('project pathway'), which will be returned to in the next section.

To limit time spent on covering the same ground as the endline interviews, researchers will share on-screen a **project overview slide** - this will outline what we already know about the project's vision, delivery activities and experience and overview of its goals. The slide will also outline information gaps and provide the opportunity for tailored probes and prompts, in addition to the generic ones provided below

A second **progress pathway slide** will also be shared towards the end of this section, which outlines our understanding of how the project will achieve its goals (i.e. how its activities contributed to the end of project outcomes and how these could lead to other outcomes and the longer-term impacts/ overall project goal)

- Participant role and responsibilities
  - Any continued involvement with innovation in organisation
  - Involvement in their specific project innovation since RPF3 funding ended

**Researcher, share the project overview slide on screen to prompt thinking** – keep the discussion brief and focused on sense checking what we know and addressing gaps in knowledge

- Overview of the project's vision
  - Rationale/need for the project in sector
  - Nature of project and focus of innovation
  - Key intended project short-, medium- and long-term goals – as well as any changes to these
- Delivery overview
  - Key activities
  - Partners and stakeholders – including collaborations (e.g. with regulators and businesses) and sub-contractors
  - Delivery enablers and challenges experienced
- Reflecting on how the project will achieve its long-term goals (researcher – share onscreen a map of our understanding of the progress pathway for the project to achieve its goals. Discuss map's accuracy and use it as a

reference point for the remainder of the interview – we can add to and amend this pathway in section 2)

- How the activities contribute to the goals
- Identifying short-, medium- and long-term outcomes and timeframes for these
- Relationship between short-, medium-, and long-term goals

### **Outcomes (50 mins)**

Section aim: understanding achieved and anticipated outcomes to better understand how projects lead to change ('progress pathway') and what constitutes evidence of this change

### **Revisiting immediate achieved project goals discussed at endline**

Researcher - to prompt reflection, re-share the progress pathway slide on screen outlining our understanding of what was achieved at the end of the project– keep the discussion brief and focused on sense checking what we know and addressing gaps in knowledge

- Overview of the key achieved project goals discussed at endline interview
  - Key goals achieved/ not achieved – including for whom, in what contexts
    - Regulator or LA (e.g. shift to innovation culture, how has it developed their organisation / raised their profile, upskilled staff)
    - Between regulators and other stakeholders (e.g. collaboration)
    - Sector
    - Businesses and consumers
    - 
    - Wider
  - How goals align with RPF programme goals (**researcher – important to cover**)
    - Developing a culture of innovation in organisations
    - Partnership work to drive innovations
    - Innovative products, services and processes (for regulators and commercially)

- Evidencing goals were achieved (researcher – we want to understand how we can know if each of the goals have been achieved)
  - Evidence that indicates goal has been/ not been achieved (researcher – this is the ‘smoking gun’ evidence that confirms something has happened)
  - Evidence that suggests the goals has been achieved/ not achieved because the necessary steps have happened or necessary conditions have been met (researcher – this is the ‘hoop test’ that, if met, gives us confidence that we are on way to achieving/ not achieving outcome)
  - Any challenges to evidencing
- How progress against these goals align with the overall progress pathway discussed in section 1 (researcher – we are looking at how the immediate outcomes feed into other outcomes and eventually to impacts or the overall project goal)
  - Where goals sit in the progress pathway
  - Importance of goals on this progress pathway – e.g. are they instrumental in achieving other goals in the pathway
- Factors that helped or hindered the achievement of goals

Project activities contributing to goals (**researcher - important to cover**)

- Other factors affecting goal achievement
  - Role of the RPF – e.g.
    - Provided credibility to the project
    - Gateway to other funding sources
    - Connecting regulator with other organisations
  - Regulator - e.g.
    - Working with stakeholders and collaborators
    - Senior-level buy-in
    - Project team - size, expertise, and management
  - Sector level
    - Nature of the sector(s) they regulate
  - Working with innovators
    - Business and/or consumer level engagement
    - Wider factors
    - Economic and legislative context

## Goals achieved since the endline interview

Researcher – these are goals experienced since the endline interview, for which we will have limited information. Continue to share the progress pathway slide on screen

researcher, be sure to prompt for both, as important to know about commercial and regulatory impact)

- Overview of the key achieved project goals since endline interviews
  - Key goals achieved/ not achieved – including for whom, in what contexts
    - Regulator or LA (e.g. shift to innovation culture, how has it developed their organisation / raised their profile, upskilled staff)
    - Between regulators and other stakeholders (e.g. collaboration)
    - Sector
    - Businesses and consumers
    - Wider
  - How project goals align with RPF programme goals (**researcher – important to cover**)
    - Developing a culture of innovation in organisations
    - Partnership work to drive innovations
    - Innovative products, services and processes (for regulators and commercially –
- Evidencing goals were achieved (researcher – we want to understand how we can know if each of the goals have been achieved)
  - Evidence that indicates goal has been/ not been achieved (researcher – this is the ‘smoking gun’ evidence that confirms something has happened)
  - Evidence that suggests the goals has been achieved/ not achieved because the necessary steps have happened or necessary conditions have been met (researcher – this is the ‘hoop test’ that, if met, gives us confidence that we are on way to achieving/ not achieving outcome)
  - Any challenges to evidencing
- How progress against these goals align with the overall progress pathway discussed in section 1 (researcher – we are looking at how these outcomes feed into other outcomes and eventually to impacts or the overall project goal)
  - Where they sit in the progress pathway – including following on from the endline interview goals discussed earlier

- Importance of goals on this progress pathway
- Factors that helped or hindered the achievement of goals (**researcher – touch on lightly if similar to factors discussed earlier**)
  - Project outputs contributing to goals (researcher - important to cover)
  - Other factors affecting goal achievement
    - The RPF – e.g.
      - Provided credibility to the project
      - Gateway to other funding sources
      - Connecting regulator with other organisations
    - Regulator - e.g.
      - Working with stakeholders and collaborators
      - Senior-level buy-in
      - Project team - size, expertise, and management
    - Sector level
      - Nature of the sector(s) they regulate
    - Working with innovators

- Business and/or consumer level engagement
- Wider factors
- Economic and legislative context

## Looking ahead

Researcher – explain we are asking them to reflect on whether and how the longer-term goals of the project will be achieved. Continue to share the progress pathway slide onscreen

- Review goal pathway for the future
  - Review the outcomes that need to happen from this point forward to help them achieve the long-term impact of the innovation
  - How goals align with RPF programme goals (**researcher – important to cover**)
    - Developing a culture of innovation in organisations
    - Partnership work to drive innovations
    - Innovative products, services and processes (for regulators and commercially)

- Evidencing goals were achieved (researcher – we want to understand how we can know if each of the goals will be achieved)
  - Likely evidence that will indicate goal has been/ not been achieved (researcher – this is the ‘smoking gun’ evidence that confirms something has happened)
  - Likely evidence that will suggest the goals has been achieved/ not achieved because the necessary steps have happened or necessary conditions have been met (researcher – this is the ‘hoop test’ that, if met, gives us confidence that we are on way to achieving/ not achieving outcome)
  - Any challenges to evidencing
- Factors that are likely to help or hinder the achievement of goals (researcher – touch on lightly if similar to factors discussed earlier)
  - Project outputs contributing to goals (researcher - important to cover)
  - Other factors affecting goal achievement
    - The RPF – e.g.
      - Provided credibility to the project
      - Gateway to other funding sources – researcher important to know

whether long-term project outcomes are reliant on further funding (RPF or otherwise)

- Connecting regulator with other organisations
- Regulator - e.g.
  - Working with stakeholders and collaborators
  - Senior-level buy-in
  - Project team - size, expertise, and management
- Sector level
  - Nature of the sector(s) they regulate
- Working with innovators
  - Business and/or consumer level engagement
  - Wider factors
  - Economic and legislative context

### Concluding thoughts & next steps (10 mins)

- Future plans relating to RPF innovation and the rationale for this

- Thoughts on beneficiaries and/or stakeholders we need to speak to next
  - Identifying individuals and organisations
  - Arranging to send recruitment materials for project lead to pass on to these individuals
  - Arrange a timeframe to contact project lead if we haven't heard from beneficiaries

**Check if anything else to add, thank, close and end recording** – questions and next steps

## Case study interviews: Innovators, businesses & other beneficiaries (short term projects)

**Research aims and questions:** To showcase the different types of RPF innovation work and understand the project outcomes experienced by innovators, businesses, and other beneficiaries of the RPF3 project, such as regulators

### Overview of topics to be covered in interviews:

- Understanding of potential beneficiaries' organisational context and relationship to project
- For innovators, their experience of being involved in the project
- Immediate and sustained project outcomes and impacts
  - Evidence for these outcomes and impacts
  - The RPF's role in contributing to these impacts
  - Alternative explanations for the outcomes

### How to use this topic guide:

- The guide is intended for use with RPF3 innovators, businesses or other beneficiaries, such as regulators – we will conduct one interview per project, with projects referring an individual from just one of these groups
- This document is a guide to the principal themes and issues to be covered in interviews. There are separate sections for innovators and businesses/other recipients.

- Fully formed questions are avoided to allow researchers to be responsive and flexible in their questioning
- We will prioritise what participants tell us spontaneously – prompts are not exhaustive and will be drawn on if needed and selectively
- Probes such as ‘why’, ‘how’ etc. are not included in the guide. These are asked by researchers as and when appropriate

## Introduction

- Thank you for agreeing to take part. Introduction to researcher
- Introduction to NatCen - independent research organisation commissioned to evaluate the Regulators’ Pioneer Fund (RPF) by the Technology and Innovative Regulation (RIO) Directorate, part of the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology. The RPF funded [the name of the RPF3 project] and is an initiative to help create a regulatory environment that supports innovation.
- Explanation of research
  - In addition to [name of the RPF3 project] staff, we also want to talk those that the project tried to make a difference to. This includes innovators who worked with the project, businesses and other regulators.

- The interview will last 30 minutes and will explore your thoughts on whether the project has made any short-term and lasting difference and the evidence for this.
- The findings will feed into the interim and final report to inform thinking on RPF design.
- Reassurances
  - Participation is voluntary - there are no right or wrong answers, you can choose not to discuss any issue.
  - Although we will not name you personally in any outputs, we will identify your organisation in the published case study research outputs. This means you may be identifiable in these outputs.
- We will be recording the session, so we have an accurate record of what is said. Only the research team will have access to the recordings – they will not be shared with RIO or the project.
  - Recording software is encrypted and files stored securely on NatCen's computer system in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018.
  - Only the research team will have access to the recordings.
  - Data will be deleted at the end of the project.
- Questions?
- Ask for permission to start recording.

## Contextual information (5 mins)

Section aim: to understand participants role and relationship to the RPF3 project. We anticipate speaking to innovators, businesses or other regulators that the project has worked with or benefited from the project

- Participant's organisation and their overall role (researcher - keep brief and probe using information provided by project lead)
  - Nature and remit of organisation
  - Their role in the organisation, including links to innovation in general
- Their understanding of the of RPF3 innovation (researcher - keep brief and probe based on a review of previous project information)
  - Rationale/ need for project in sector - including what they hoped the project would achieve
  - Focus of the innovation
  - Overall thoughts on regulators involvement in innovation
- Participant relationship to the RPF3 project (researcher - we will have a clear sense of this from the project lead, but briefly clarify further)
  - Nature of relationship (innovator, business, and other beneficiary, such as regulator)

- Nature of exposure to the project
- Whether relationship has continued with project/regulator and what has affected this

## For innovators only (5 mins)

Section aim: exploring innovators' experiences of working with regulators

- Nature of involvement with project
  - Their role and input into the innovation
  - Stages they were involved in
  - Who they worked with, including project team and wider regulators
- Experience of working with regulator in developing and delivering innovation
  - Regulator's understanding of innovation and innovators' needs
  - How supported they felt in developing innovation
  - Level of input and whether this was valued
  - What worked well/less well at different stages - e.g. at design, setting-up, test, delivery

## Outcomes (15-20 mins)

Section aim: reflection on any immediate and sustained differences the project made, how it contributed to these, alternative explanations and what would have happened in the absence of the innovation

- Whether the innovation made a difference either during lifetime of the project or since it has ended (researcher – keep brief)
  - Example of the differences it made
    - Nature of differences – e.g. how helpful it was, what it enabled them to do or learning opportunities offered
    - Timeframe for differences
    - At what level e.g. Sector, regulator, innovator, business, consumer
- Evidencing of the difference the project has made (researcher – we want to understand how we can know if the project has made a difference)
  - Evidence that indicates the project has/has not made a difference (researcher – this is the ‘smoking gun’ evidence that confirms something has happened)
  - Evidence that suggests the project has/has not made a difference because the necessary steps have happened or necessary conditions have been met (researcher – this is the ‘hoop test’ that, if met, gives us confidence that we are on way to achieving/ not achieving outcome)
  - Any challenges to evidencing
- Explore reasons the project made/did not make a difference and why these differences were sustained/not sustained, what helped and hindered
  - Reasons differences were/ were not realised or sustained
  - Whether and how the project contributed to making difference and sustaining these beyond its lifetime
  - Other factors outside of the project contributed to the difference made
    - Funding / investment opportunities
    - Wider economic and regulatory factors
    - Sector factors
    - Organisational factors
    - Business factors
    - Consumer factors

- Reflections on what would have happened if the innovation was not delivered
  - Whether the absence of the innovation would have impacted them and the sector(s) in any way – how, why/why not
  - If innovation was needed, whether it would have been delivered outside of the project in other ways and how
    - Who would have delivered it
    - How it would have been delivered (e.g. pace/timeliness of delivery, delivered fully or partially)

- Innovators have a better understanding of the role regulation can play in innovation.
- Innovators' confidence in working with regulators
- Better collaboration between innovators and regulators
- Development of innovative processes, products and services
- Reduced time/cost of introducing innovation to UK markets.
- Better regulatory frameworks – increasing confidence in regulatory systems and maintained or improved protection for consumers.
- Regulators working together to drive innovation.

### **Possible outcomes**

Regulator level– either the organisation delivering the project or those potentially benefitting from it

- A culture of promoting innovation instilled in organisation – e.g., change in attitudes or ways of working with innovators.
- Better understanding of the role regulation can play in innovation.
- Better understanding of innovators needs for their sector to develop products/services.

### **Concluding thoughts (5 mins)**

- The need for the innovation
- Key differences the innovation made and evidence for this
- Key learning around helping the innovation make a difference or sustain it

Check if anything else to add, thank, close and end recording

– questions and next steps.

## Case study interviews: project staff (long term projects)

**Research aims and questions:** To showcase the different types of RPF innovation work, as well as understand what projects have achieved, how these achievements can lead to likely longer-term impacts and how these can be evidenced.

### Overview of topics to be covered in interviews:

- Revisiting project context
- Understanding project outcomes and how these can lead to longer-term impacts
  - How project outcomes can lead to anticipated longer-term impacts
  - Evidencing outcomes – understanding whether project is on track to achieve longer-term impacts
  - Factors helping or hindering outcomes and impacts

Researcher – we will use two tools to help cover what we have previously discussed quickly and/or to help deepen participants' reflections. Both drafted in advance of the interview:

- **A project overview slide** – outlining the project's vision, delivery activities and experience and overview of its goals based on the endline interview and end of project report
- **Progress pathway diagram** – outlining our understanding of how the project will achieve its goals (i.e. how its activities contribute to the end of project

outcomes and how these could lead to other outcomes and longer-term impacts)

### How to use this topic guide:

- The guide is intended for use with RPF3 project leads
- This document is a guide to the principal themes and issues to be covered in interviews
- Fully formed questions are avoided to allow researchers to be responsive and flexible in their questioning
- We will prioritise what participants tell us spontaneously – prompts are not exhaustive and will be drawn on if needed and selectively
- Probes such as 'why', 'how' etc. are not included in the guide. These are asked by researchers as and when appropriate

### Introduction

- Thank you for agreeing to take part. Introduction to researcher
- Introduction to NatCen - independent research organisation commissioned to evaluate the RPF3 by the Regulatory Innovation Office (RIO), part of the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology
- Explanation of research

- We have selected four projects for deeper case study work to understand their innovation journeys in more detail. Projects have been selected to reflect a range of RPF projects and to optimise RPF learning.
- The purpose of the case study is to showcase the different types of innovation funded by the RPF3. We also want to learn in more detail about what your project has achieved and is likely to achieve in the future.
- As part of the case study, we also want to talk to project beneficiaries and stakeholders, such as businesses and innovators, that can provide reflections on the project's achievements. We will work with you to identify these and will discuss this at the end of the interview.
- Interview will last 80 minutes and focus on what your project has achieved at different time points. We will briefly revisit what you told us about the project achievements at the endline interview, then move to discuss any achievements since and what you anticipate in the future. At the end, we will discuss who else you think we should talk to.
- Across this discussion, we will be asking similar types of questions on how you see project achievements leading to the overall project goal and the evidence for this.
- The findings will feed into an interim case study report and into the final report.
- Reassurances
  - There are no right or wrong answers, and we appreciate some of the questions will ask you to speculate about the future achievements of the project
  - Although we will not name you personally in any outputs, we will identify your project in the published case study research outputs. This means you may be identifiable in these outputs.
- We will be recording the session, so we have an accurate record of what is said. Only the research team will have access to the recordings – they will not be shared with RIO.
  - Recording software is encrypted and files stored securely on NatCen's computer system in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018.
  - Only the research team will have access to the recordings.
  - Data will be deleted at the end of the project.
- Questions?
- Ask for permission to start recording.

## Contextual information (15 mins)

Section aim: a brief and targeted overview of their RPF3 project to ease participant into the discussion and to address any gaps in knowledge about project delivery and intended outcomes.

This section will also broadly map the how the project will lead to change ('project pathway'), which will be returned to in the next section.

To limit time spent on covering the same ground as the endline interviews, researchers will share on-screen a project overview slide - this will outline what we already know about the project's vision, delivery activities and experience and overview of its goals. The slide will also outline information gaps and provide the opportunity for tailored probes and prompts, in addition to the generic ones provided below

A second progress pathway slide will also be shared towards the end of this section, which outlines our understanding of how the project will achieve its goals (i.e. how its activities contributed to the end of project outcomes and how these could lead to other outcomes and the longer-term impacts/ overall project goal)

- Participant role and responsibilities
  - Any continued involvement with innovation in organisation
  - Involvement in their specific project innovation since RPF3 funding ended

**Researcher, share the project overview slide on screen to prompt thinking** – keep the discussion brief and focused on sense checking what we know and addressing gaps in knowledge

- Overview of the project's vision
  - Rationale/need for the project in sector
  - Nature of project and focus of innovation
  - Key intended project short-, medium- and long-term goals – as well as any changes to these
- Delivery overview
  - Key activities
  - Partners and stakeholders – including collaborations (e.g. with regulators and businesses) and sub-contractors
  - Delivery enablers and challenges experienced
- Reflecting on how the project will achieve its long-term goals (researcher – share onscreen a map of our understanding of the progress pathway for the project to achieve its goals. Discuss map's accuracy and use it as a

reference point for the remainder of the interview – we can add to and amend this pathway in section 2)

- How the activities contribute to the goals
- Identifying short-, medium- and long-term outcomes and timeframes for these
- Relationship between short-, medium-, and long-term goals

### **Outcomes (50 mins)**

Section aim: understanding achieved and anticipated outcomes to better understand how projects lead to change ('progress pathway') and what constitutes evidence of this change

### **Revisiting immediate achieved project goals discussed at endline**

Researcher - to prompt reflection, re-share the progress pathway slide on screen outlining our understanding of what was achieved at the end of the project– keep the discussion brief and focused on sense checking what we know and addressing gaps in knowledge

- Overview of the key achieved project goals discussed at endline interview
  - Key goals achieved/ not achieved – including for whom, in what contexts

- Regulator or LA (e.g. shift to innovation culture, how has it developed their organisation / raised their profile, upskilled staff)
- Between regulators and other stakeholders (e.g. collaboration)
- Sector
- Businesses and consumers
- Wider
- How goals align with RPF programme goals (**researcher – important to cover**)
  - Developing a culture of innovation in organisations
  - Partnership work to drive innovations
  - Innovative products, services and processes (for regulators and commercially)
- Evidencing goals were achieved (researcher – we want to understand how we can know if each of the goals have been achieved)
  - Evidence that indicates goal has been/ not been achieved (researcher – this is the 'smoking gun' evidence that confirms something has happened)
  - Evidence that suggests the goals has been achieved/ not achieved because the necessary steps have happened or necessary conditions

have been met (researcher – this is the ‘hoop test’ that, if met, gives us confidence that we are on way to achieving/ not achieving outcome)

- Any challenges to evidencing
- How progress against these goals align with the overall progress pathway discussed in section 1 (researcher – we are looking at how the immediate outcomes feed into other outcomes and eventually to impacts or the overall project goal)
  - Where goals sit in the progress pathway
  - Importance of goals on this progress pathway – e.g. are they instrumental in achieving other goals in the pathway
- Factors that helped or hindered the achievement of goals
  - Project activities contributing to goals (**researcher - important to cover**)
  - Other factors affecting goal achievement
    - Role of the RPF – e.g.
      - Provided credibility to the project
      - Gateway to other funding sources
      - Connecting regulator with other organisations
    - Regulator - e.g.

- Working with stakeholders and collaborators
- Senior-level buy-in
- Project team - size, expertise, and management
- Sector level
  - Nature of the sector(s) they regulate
- Working with innovators
  - Business and/or consumer level engagement
  - Wider factors
  - Economic and legislative context

### Goals achieved since the endline interview

Researcher – these are goals experienced since the endline interview, for which we will have limited information. Continue to share the progress pathway slide on screen

- Overview of the key achieved project goals since endline interviews
  - Key goals achieved/ not achieved – including for whom, in what contexts
    - Regulator or LA (e.g. shift to innovation culture, how has it developed their

- organisation / raised their profile, upskilled staff)
  - Between regulators and other stakeholders (e.g. collaboration)
  - Sector
  - Businesses and consumers
  - Wider
- How project goals align with RPF programme goals (**researcher – important to cover**)
  - Developing a culture of innovation in organisations
  - Partnership work to drive innovations
  - Innovative products, services and processes (for regulators and commercially – researcher, be sure to prompt for both, as important to know about commercial and regulatory impact)
- Evidencing goals were achieved (researcher – we want to understand how we can know if each of the goals have been achieved)
  - Evidence that indicates goal has been/ not been achieved (researcher – this is the ‘smoking gun’ evidence that confirms something has happened)
  - Evidence that suggests the goals has been achieved/ not achieved because the necessary
    - steps have happened or necessary conditions have been met (researcher – this is the ‘hoop test’ that, if met, gives us confidence that we are on way to achieving/ not achieving outcome)
    - Any challenges to evidencing
- How progress against these goals align with the overall progress pathway discussed in section 1 (researcher – we are looking at how these outcomes feed into other outcomes and eventually to impacts or the overall project goal)
  - Where they sit in the progress pathway – including following on from the endline interview goals discussed earlier
  - Importance of goals on this progress pathway
- Factors that helped or hindered the achievement of goals (**researcher – touch on lightly if similar to factors discussed earlier**)
  - Project outputs contributing to goals (researcher - important to cover)
  - Other factors affecting goal achievement
    - The RPF – e.g.
      - Provided credibility to the project
      - Gateway to other funding sources

- Connecting regulator with other organisations
  - Regulator - e.g.
    - Working with stakeholders and collaborators
    - Senior-level buy-in
    - Project team - size, expertise, and management
  - Sector level
    - Nature of the sector(s) they regulate
  - Working with innovators
    - Business and/or consumer level engagement
    - Wider factors
    - Economic and legislative context
- Review the outcomes that need to happen from this point forward to help them achieve the long-term impact of the innovation
  - How goals align with RPF programme goals **(researcher – important to cover)**
    - Developing a culture of innovation in organisations
    - Partnership work to drive innovations
    - Innovative products, services and processes (for regulators and commercially)
- Evidencing goals were achieved (researcher – we want to understand how we can know if each of the goals will be achieved)
    - Likely evidence that will indicate goal has been/ not been achieved (researcher – this is the ‘smoking gun’ evidence that confirms something has happened)
    - Likely evidence that will suggest the goals has been achieved/ not achieved because the necessary steps have happened or necessary conditions have been met (researcher – this is the ‘hoop test’ that, if met, gives us confidence that we are on way to achieving/ not achieving outcome)
    - Any challenges to evidencing

## Looking ahead

Researcher – explain we are asking them to reflect on whether and how the longer-term goals of the project will be achieved. Continue to share the progress pathway slide onscreen

- Review goal pathway for the future

- Factors that are likely to help or hinder the achievement of goals (researcher – touch on lightly if similar to factors discussed earlier)
  - Project outputs contributing to goals (**researcher - important to cover**)
  - Other factors affecting goal achievement
    - The RPF – e.g.
      - Provided credibility to the project
      - Gateway to other funding sources – researcher important to know whether long-term project outcomes are reliant on further funding (RPF or otherwise)
      - Connecting regulator with other organisations
    - Regulator - e.g.
      - Working with stakeholders and collaborators
      - Senior-level buy-in
      - Project team - size, expertise, and management
    - Sector level
      - Nature of the sector(s) they regulate
    - Working with innovators

- Business and/or consumer level engagement
- Wider factors
- Economic and legislative context

### Concluding thoughts & next steps (10 mins)

- Future plans relating to RPF innovation and the rationale for this
- Thoughts on beneficiaries and/or stakeholders we need to speak to next
  - Identifying individuals and organisations
  - Arranging to send recruitment materials for project lead to pass on to these individuals
  - Arrange a timeframe to contact project lead if we haven't heard from beneficiaries

Check if anything else to add, thank, close and end recording – questions and next steps

## Case study interviews: innovators, businesses & other beneficiaries (long term projects)

**Research aims and questions:** To showcase the different types of RPF innovation work and understand the project outcomes experienced by innovators, businesses, and other beneficiaries of the RPF3 project, such as regulators

### Overview of topics to be covered in interviews:

- Understanding of potential beneficiaries' organisational context and relationship to project
- For innovators, their experience of being involved in the project
- Immediate and sustained project outcomes and impacts
  - Evidence for these outcomes and impacts
  - The RPF's role in contributing to these impacts
  - Alternative explanations for the outcomes

### How to use this topic guide:

- The guide is intended for use with RPF3 innovators, businesses or other beneficiaries, such as regulators – we will conduct one interview per project, with projects referring an individual from just one of these groups

- This document is a guide to the principal themes and issues to be covered in interviews. There are separate sections for innovators and businesses/other recipients.
- Fully formed questions are avoided to allow researchers to be responsive and flexible in their questioning
- We will prioritise what participants tell us spontaneously – prompts are not exhaustive and will be drawn on if needed and selectively
- Probes such as 'why', 'how' etc. are not included in the guide. These are asked by researchers as and when appropriate

### Introduction

- Thank you for agreeing to take part. Introduction to researcher
- Introduction to NatCen - independent research organisation commissioned to evaluate the Regulators' Pioneer Fund (RPF) by the Regulatory Innovation Office (RIO), part of the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology. The RPF funded [the name of the RPF3 project] and is an initiative to help create a regulatory environment that supports innovation.
- Explanation of research
  - In addition to [name of the RPF3 project] staff, we also want to talk those that the project tried to make a difference to. This includes innovators who

worked with the project, businesses and other regulators.

- The interview will last 30 minutes and will explore your thoughts on whether the project has made any short-term and lasting difference and the evidence for this.
- The findings will feed into the interim and final report to inform thinking on RPF design.
- Reassurances
  - Participation is voluntary - there are no right or wrong answers, you can choose not to discuss any issue.
  - Although we will not name you personally in any outputs, we will identify your organisation in the published case study research outputs. This means you may be identifiable in these outputs.
- We will be recording the session, so we have an accurate record of what is said. Only the research team will have access to the recordings – they will not be shared with RIO or the project.
  - Recording software is encrypted and files stored securely on NatCen's computer system in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018.
  - Only the research team will have access to the recordings.
  - Data will be deleted at the end of the project.

- Questions?
- Ask for permission to start recording.

### **Contextual information (5 mins)**

Section aim: to understand participants role and relationship to the RPF3 project. We anticipate speaking to innovators, businesses or other regulators that the project has worked with or benefited from the project

- Participant's organisation and their overall role (researcher - keep brief and probe using information provided by project lead)
  - Nature and remit of organisation
  - Their role in the organisation, including links to innovation in general
- Their understanding of the of RPF3 innovation (researcher - keep brief and probe based on a review of previous project information)
  - Rationale/ need for project in sector - including what they hoped the project would achieve
  - Focus of the innovation
  - Overall thoughts on regulators involvement in innovation

- Participant relationship to the RPF3 project (researcher - we will have a clear sense of this from the project lead, but briefly clarify further)
  - Nature of relationship (innovator, business, and other beneficiary, such as regulator)
  - Nature of exposure to the project
  - Whether relationship has continued with project/regulator and what has affected this

### **For innovators only (5 mins)**

Section aim: exploring innovators' experiences of working with regulators

- Nature of involvement with project
  - Their role and input into the innovation
  - Stages they were involved in
  - Who they worked with, including project team and wider regulators
- Experience of working with regulator in developing and delivering innovation
  - Regulator's understanding of innovation and innovators' needs
  - How supported they felt in developing innovation
  - Level of input and whether this was valued

- What worked well/less well at different stages - e.g. at design, setting-up, test, delivery

### **Outcomes (15-20 mins)**

Section aim: reflection on any immediate and sustained differences the project made, how it contributed to these, alternative explanations and what would have happened in the absence of the innovation

- Whether the innovation made a difference either during lifetime of the project or since it has ended (researcher – keep brief)
  - Example of the differences it made
    - Nature of differences – e.g. how helpful it was, what it enabled them to do or learning opportunities offered
    - Timeframe for differences
    - At what level e.g. Sector, regulator, innovator, business, consumer
- Evidencing of the difference the project has made (researcher – we want to understand how we can know if the project has made a difference)
  - Evidence that indicates the project has/has not made a difference (researcher – this is the

'smoking gun' evidence that confirms something has happened)

- Evidence that suggests the project has/has not made a difference because the necessary steps have happened or necessary conditions have been met (researcher – this is the 'hoop test' that, if met, gives us confidence that we are on way to achieving/ not achieving outcome)
- Any challenges to evidencing
- Explore reasons the project made/did not make a difference and why these differences were sustained/not sustained, what helped and hindered
  - Reasons differences were/ were not realised or sustained
  - Whether and how the project contributed to making difference and sustaining these beyond its lifetime
  - Other factors outside of the project contributed to the difference made
    - Funding / investment opportunities
    - Wider economic and regulatory factors
    - Sector factors
    - Organisational factors
    - Business factors
    - Consumer factors

- Reflections on what would have happened if the innovation was not delivered
  - Whether the absence of the innovation would have impacted them and the sector(s) in any way – how, why/why not
  - If innovation was needed, whether it would have been delivered outside of the project in other ways and how
    - Who would have delivered it
    - How it would have been delivered (e.g. pace/timeliness of delivery, delivered fully or partially)

### **Possible outcomes**

Regulator level– either the organisation delivering the project or those potentially benefitting from it

- A culture of promoting innovation instilled in organisation – e.g., change in attitudes or ways of working with innovators.
- Better understanding of the role regulation can play in innovation.
- Regulators working together to drive innovation.

- Better understanding of innovators needs for their sector to develop products/services.

**Check if anything else to add, thank, close and end recording** – questions and next steps

#### Innovator level

- Innovators have a better understanding of the role regulation can play in innovation.
- Innovators' confidence in working with
- regulators
- Better collaboration between innovators and regulators

#### Businesses/ consumers

- Development of innovative processes, products and services
- Reduced time/cost of introducing innovation to UK markets.
- Better regulatory frameworks – increasing confidence in regulatory systems and maintained or improved protection for consumers

#### **Concluding thoughts (5 mins)**

- The need for the innovation
- Key differences the innovation made and evidence for this
- Key learning around helping the innovation make a difference or sustain it

## Annex C: Assessment of the claim's rubrics

The rubrics cover three criteria for assessing evidence against the claims: (i) plausibility; (ii) completeness; and (iii) strength of evidence. Assessment of each criterion drew on considerations adapted from Aston and Apgar<sup>5</sup> for this study (outlined below). In addition to their emphasis on plausibility, representativeness, and triangulation, the evaluation team developed all three completeness considerations and examined the degree of confirmation or contradiction. A five-point scale was used to assess each criterion based on these considerations. This scale allowed for a detailed assessment of each criterion in a way that supported an unambiguous and consistent interpretation.

- **Plausibility** – whether it is logical and feasible that each step along the claim are related and the 'cause' would influence the 'effect' as intended
- **Completeness** – had three considerations: (i) explanatory detail of the claim; (ii) extent of alternative explanations of outcomes; and (iii) extent to which the claims draws upon the evidence collected by the evaluation.
- **Strength of evidence** - the three considerations for strength of evidence were: (i) extent to which the evidence confirms or contradicts the claim; (ii) extent to which different sources of evidence corroborate with each other (triangulation); and (iii) extent to which the different potential sources of evidence and stakeholders were drawn upon (representativeness).

The rubrics were developed iteratively, firstly by defining extreme cases – a very weak and strong case – and an intermediate point (moderate). The language and concepts were informed by relevant literature and team's experience in assessing evidence. From there, the 'weak' and 'strong' cases were calibrated by positioning them between moderate and the extremes ('very strong and 'very weak'). Finally, the rubrics were refined and finalised through an internal evaluation team workshop to ensure clarity and consistent interpretation across the team.

### Plausibility

#### To what extent does the claim:

- Provide a clear, coherent and logical explanation of the causal narrative
- Does it make sense?
- Are we sure that the programme activities causing these effects?

#### Table 7: Assessing plausibility

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<sup>5</sup> Aston, T. & Apgar, M. (2023) Quality of Evidence Rubrics for Single Cases. London: Evaluation Capacity Development Forum. Available at: <https://evaluation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Quality-of-Evidence-Rubrics-2.0-Final.pdf> (Accessed: 15 October 2025).

Very weak	Weak	Moderate	Strong	Very strong
Unclear, illogical, or contradictory explanation connecting intervention to outcome.	Explanation indicates a possible connection between intervention and outcome.	Explanation is clear, logical, and temporally consistent, and suggests a likely association between intervention and outcome.	Convincing explanation of how evidence connects intervention and outcome. Conclusions drawn tend to follow the data.	Highly convincing account, clearly and logically signposting key steps and specific data connecting intervention to outcome. Conclusions drawn unambiguously follow the data.

## Completeness

### To what extent does the claim:

- Give sufficient detail to explain the causal pathway
- Are there any missing details that would help explain this causal pathway?
- Provide the entire explanation of how the outcomes are generated
- Are there any other explanations for the outcomes that are outside of what is described in the claim?
- Reflect all the available observed evidence
- Are there any evidence/insights you are aware of that are not reflected in the claims?

**Table 8: Assessing completeness**

Very weak	Weak	Moderate	Strong	Very strong
The claim is poorly detailed and fails to cover the relevant causal pathways.	The claim lacks detail and covers few of the relevant causal pathways.	The claim is adequately detailed and covers some of the relevant causal pathways.	The claim is well-detailed and covers most of the relevant causal pathways.	The claim is thoroughly detailed and captures the full relevant set of causal pathways.
Multiple alternative explanations or	Several alternative explanations or	Some alternative	Few alternative explanations or risks are	There are no alternative

<p>risks are identified, severely threatening the completeness of the claim.</p> <p>The claim does not reflect the narrative derived from available evidence, demonstrating a minimal understanding of the causal relationships.</p>	<p>risks are identified, significantly threatening the completeness of the claim.</p> <p>The claim reflects a limited narrative derived from available evidence, demonstrating a weak understanding of the causal relationships.</p>	<p>explanations or risks are identified, but they only moderately threaten the completeness of the claim.</p> <p>The claim reflects a portion of the narrative derived from available evidence, demonstrating a basic understanding of the causal relationships.</p>	<p>identified, none of which significantly threaten the completeness of the claim.</p> <p>The claim reflects the majority of the narrative derived from available evidence, demonstrating a strong understanding of the causal relationships.</p>	<p>explanations or risks identified that threaten the completeness of the claim.</p> <p>The claim reflects the full narrative derived from all available evidence, demonstrating a deep and thorough understanding of the causal relationships.</p>
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## Strength of evidence

### To what extend does the claim:

- Provide a thorough and convincing explanation of the connection between the intervention and the outcome (confirmatory or contradictory)
- To what extent does the evidence confirm or contradict the claim?
- What types of evidence can we observe (e.g. smoking gun evidence)?
- Provide numerous sources of evidence for the explanation (triangulation)
- How many different sources of evidence are there?
- How frequently are they drawn upon?
- Ability of sources to speak to the reality of what is happening / whether there has been adequate coverage of a particular population (representation – i.e., did we speak to the right people)
- Who are the priority groups of the people we would want to speak to for this evaluation?
- Were the people we spoke to able to give us the full picture?
- Was there anyone key who we were not able to speak with?

**Table 9: Assessing completeness**

Very weak	Weak	Moderate	Strong	Very strong
<p>Strong contradiction: Evidence clearly and consistently indicates that the contribution claim is incorrect. Multiple reliable sources and data points refute the claim, demonstrating that the expected outcomes are not attributable to the intervention.</p> <p>No evidence corroborates the connection between intervention and outcome. Other evidence contradicts the proposed connection.</p> <p>The perspectives and/or experiences of priority groups are not included as sources of evidence.</p>	<p>Contradiction: Evidence generally suggests that the contribution claim is unlikely to be correct. There are several sources and data points that contradict the claim, though some minor aspects may still align with the expected outcomes.</p> <p>A single source of evidence supports the claim (i.e., the connection between intervention and outcome).</p> <p>The perspectives and/or experiences of some priority groups have been included, but those groups have not been involved or consulted.</p>	<p>Mixed/inconclusive: Evidence is inconclusive or inconsistent regarding the contribution claim. There is a balance of sources and data points both supporting and contradicting the claim, making it difficult to draw a definitive conclusion.</p> <p>Multiple lines of evidence (i.e., source types) corroborate the connection between intervention and outcome.</p> <p>The perspectives and/or experiences of priority groups have been elicited indirectly through data collection by the researchers or evaluators and from their observations.</p>	<p>Confirmatory: Evidence generally supports the contribution claim. Most sources and data points align with the expected outcomes, though there may be some minor inconsistencies or contradictory evidence.</p> <p>Multiple lines of high-quality evidence corroborate the connection between intervention and outcome.</p> <p>Priority groups generate their own evidence with their own perspectives and experiences. These are aggregated and homogenised by researchers and/or evaluators, so therefore may lack nuance.</p>	<p>Strong confirmatory: Evidence overwhelmingly supports the contribution claim. Multiple reliable sources and data points consistently demonstrate that the expected outcomes are directly attributable to the intervention, with no significant contradictory evidence.</p> <p>Multiple lines of evidence across different sources corroborate the connection between intervention and outcome.</p> <p>Multiple sources of evidence generated directly by priority groups through their own data collection and analysis processes. Perspectives may be unique to different</p>

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				groups and thus reflect a variety of viewpoints.
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