YESI Fellows Scheme

Powered by YESI, funded by ESAY & NERC

- Funding and Support for UoY staff and collaborators to undertake short projects developing knowledge exchange and research activities
- Applications from Early Career Researchers are particularly encouraged
- Different from traditional fellowships as awarded to teams, not individuals
- 10 interdisciplinary projects funded in 2022-2023
- Collaborative teams spanning 12 departments and all 3 faculties
- KE projects working with local, UK and International external partners:
    - With Many Roots, York Cycle Campaign, University of St Andrew's, Palestinian Wastewater Engineers Group (PWEG), Arava Institute for Environmental Studies (AIES), Ark Foundation, ActionAid Bangladesh, International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD), Mahidol University International College (MUIC), Binus University

https://www.york.ac.uk/yesi/yesi-fellows/

Discipline Hopping

UoY teams working across departments to explore new synergies or avenues of inquiry that enhance interdisciplinary working around environmental challenges.

(Funding: NERC & ESAY; £195k)

Wolfson Atmospheric Chemistry Laboratories

Health Sciences

Physics, Engineering and Technology

Institute for Safe Autonomy

Biology

Archaeology

Education

SEI-Y

Computer Science

Leverhulme Centre for Anthropocene Biodiversity

Chemistry

Environment & Geography

Theatre, Film,Television and Interactive Media

Knowledge Exchange

UoY teams working with external partners to share knowledge in the field of environmental sustainability aligned with YESI's themes of Environment & Health; Resilient Ecosystems and Food, Water & Waste.

(Funding: ESAY; £48k)

YESI Fellows Quick Quotes

The funding from the YESI Fellows allowed us to engage with the larger coastal community across the UK, providing useful and compelling links between academia, conservation minded groups, and land managers. We are in process of building upon these conversations to apply for further multi-/trans-disciplinary funding.

Dr. Kelly R. Redeker

The YESI Fellows scheme was a fantastic opportunity for me to be a PI and lead a project, a rare opportunity for postdocs. The funding has allowed us to host a workshop that will lead to new ideas and support future grant proposals.

Dr Lisa Miller

It has been a great opportunity to be involved in an interdisciplinary research project and work with new colleagues in different departments. My PhD also focused on creative interventions to enhance wellbeing, so it's been great to return to a research area that I'm passionate about.

Emily Shoesmith

YESI Fellows Case Study

Natural language processing of biodiversity policy documents

Project duration: 7 months
Funding: £14,609.02 ESAY, £26,168.26 NERC

Principal Investigator
Dimitar Kazakov (Computer Science)
Co-Investigator
Jamie Carr (Leverhulme Centre for Anthropocene Biodiversity/Environment & Geography)

Aims and Objectives
We aimed to use the YESI Fellows scheme to assess the extent to which countries of the world are (or are not) considering the inter-related challenges of biodiversity conservation and climate change in a holistic way. The topics of climate change and biodiversity overlap in a range of ways, and so countries can benefit greatly by ensuring that their respective strategies speak to each other coherently. Currently, however, it is unclear whether governments are even acknowledging the fact that these relationships exist, let alone seeking to purposefully align their actions and targets.

We have developed and applied a bespoke index that conveys the extent to which biodiversity strategies are integrating matters of climate change, and vice versa. Findings can then be used to compare across documents to gauge the degree of alignment between both, and to assess whether this has improved over time.

Traditionally, content analysis such as this would involve manually reading and coding the relevant text in each document. We bring novelty and efficacy by applying natural language processing (a form of machine learning) to the task.

Outcomes
As well as highlighting ways that countries could improve their environmental strategies, the outputs from this work will have future applications. For example, the annotated texts could be used to assess alignment between the environmental strategies of local administrative units in a single country. Moreover, given that countries produce new strategies roughly every five years, we hope that this project will mark the beginning of a longer-term effort to monitor and inform environmental planning processes into the future.

The scheme encouraged seeking contacts across faculties and ultimately marked the start of a new collaboration which would have remained unlikely without the funding, or the specific encouragement to seek partners from other disciplines.

Dimitar Kazakov