**Science, Trust and Policymaking: A British Academy-funded project**

**Information sheet and topic guide for participants**

**Background**

Questions about the role of science in decision-making have come into sharp focus over the covid-19 pandemic. Perceptions about science and decision-making vary widely amongst the public, and amongst scientific and policy communities themselves. People’s beliefs and values shape how they understand problems and their potential solutions; including framing what evidence is relevant and appropriate. What then can be done to create conditions which support greater trust in science in decision-making? Unpacking these factors helps us to understand how evidence is framed as both relevant and authoritative:

1. *Which factors influence why particular policy issues are seen (by the media and by publics) as requiring scientific evidence to underpin decisions?, and*
2. *What types of scientific claims have most traction and ability to elicit trust?*

In this project, we will explore these aspects of science-informed decision-making. For further information please contact the PI, Kathryn Oliver [Kathryn.oliver@lshtm.ac.uk](mailto:Kathryn.oliver@lshtm.ac.uk)

If you have any concerns about this study or its conduct please contact Patricia Henley, Head of Research Governance at LSHTM [rgio@lshtm.ac.uk](mailto:rgio@lshtm.ac.uk).

We have contacted you to ask if you will participate in an interview to help us understand these issues in more detail. We have identified you as a key actor in one of our case study areas (clean air zones, genetically modified crops, and monkeypox). For each case study, we are interested in talking to researchers, funders, journalists, members of the public, policymakers, and other key figures who were involved in how the policy developed, how it was implemented, and in how it was discussed and perceived in the media and in public discourse.

**Topic Guide**

Questions we would like to discuss with you are:

1. How you became aware of, or involved in the policy area or debate
2. The nature of your role and involvement
3. What you consider to be the critical events in this policy area and why
4. The publications, reports, and discussions which you think were most influential
5. Key pieces of scientific evidence which were, or were not discussed as part of these debates
6. The factors which led to some pieces of evidence, or authorities being influential and trusted as part of the debate

If you agree, we will record meetings and interviews which will be held in person or over Teams. We will not share this recording beyond the team, which will be used for our own records. You may consent to audio and/or video recordings, or neither. We may transcribe this meeting and use these data for analysis leading to academic publications. We will also take field notes, and use other materials (such as worksheets and flip-charts, stored as photos) to collect data from our work. We expect interviews to take between 60-90 minutes.

These data will be used in the production of reports for the British Academy, and in academic outputs. We will store these data for up to 10 years on a password protected survey at LSHTM and use for future research activities.

No identifying information will be shared in these reports or outputs without prior consent, which we will seek from you directly if needed. If you are happy for your identity to be shared, please tick the appropriate box below.

\_ I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

\_\_ I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason.

\_\_ I agree to share my identity in connection with statements made in the data and for identifiable quotes.

\_\_ I agree to take part in the above study.

Name of Participant Date Signature

Person taking consent Date Signature