



Micro Internships | Client brief

DEFRA - ENCOURAGING SUSTAINABLE ACTION ACROSS THE UK

SUMMARY

Defra is the UK government department responsible for protecting the natural environment while supporting sustainable food systems and rural communities. One of the major challenges facing environmental policy is encouraging widespread participation in sustainable behaviours across individuals, businesses, and communities. Your brief asks you to explore how Defra could increase engagement in environmental action, using communication, incentives, community initiatives, or innovative tools to help people make more sustainable choices.

KEY WORDS

- Sustainability
- Environmental Policy
- Biodiversity
- Behaviour Change
- Community Engagement
- Food Systems
- Nature Recovery
- Climate Action
- Public Policy
- Environmental Innovation

INDUSTRY

- Public Sector
- Environmental Policy
- Sustainability
- Agriculture
- Rural Development

FOCUS

Public engagement helping to protect and restore nature, behaviour change and sustainability, community-led environmental action, and policy and innovation.

BRIEF

Hi everyone – I'm **Sam Patel** and I'm a Policy Advisor at **Defra**. I'm thrilled to share a challenge with you that we'd love your help in solving.

Our department is responsible for protecting the UK's natural environment, supporting food and farming, and helping rural communities thrive. Across the UK, we face a number of environmental challenges. These include protecting wildlife habitats, improving water quality in our rivers and lakes, supporting farmers to produce food sustainably, and reducing pollution and waste.

While government policy plays an important role, we know that lasting environmental improvement doesn't happen through policy alone. It also depends on the actions of people, businesses, and local communities. For example, individuals make choices every day about things like waste, food consumption, water use, and travel. Farmers and businesses make decisions about land use, production methods, and environmental impact. Communities often lead local projects that restore habitats, improve green spaces, or protect local wildlife.

However, one of the challenges we face is that many people want to support the environment but are not always sure how their actions can make a difference. In other cases, sustainable choices may feel confusing, inconvenient, or too expensive.

So here is the challenge we would like you to explore.

How might Defra encourage more people, businesses, and communities to take practical action to protect nature and support a more sustainable future?

As you think about this challenge, you might consider questions such as:

- How can governments communicate environmental issues in ways that feel clear, relevant, and motivating to everyday people?
- What kinds of incentives, education, or technology tools could help individuals or organisations make more sustainable choices?
- How could communities become more involved in protecting local environments, such as rivers, wildlife habitats, or green spaces?
- Are there examples from other countries or organisations that successfully encourage people to adopt more sustainable behaviours?
- What delivery timelines do you estimate, and when will the impact of your proposal be seen?

Your role is to act as policy and innovation consultants, helping us think creatively about how the government, communities, and organisations could work together to support environmental protection. We're looking for ideas that are practical, inclusive, and realistic, while still being ambitious about protecting nature for future generations.

We can't wait to see what you come up with. Best of luck, and don't forget – you can find out more about Defra at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs/about>