



10.2. Research related costs (travel, surveys...)

11.2. Yes. If yes,
11.2.1. How were they collected?
From what sources?

12.2. The executive leadership – top managers

10.3. Communication

11.2.2. How big are they in relation to the total operational budget (running costs)?

12.3. Programme managers – senior managers

10.4. Admin and finance support

12.4. We have a specialized Fundraising and Project Manager

10.5. Other overhead



SCHOOL for
THINKTANKERS

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW 2024

On Think Tanks

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1. WELCOME

Dear participant,

We are happy to welcome you to the 2024 School for Thinktankers. In this document you will find useful information that will help you prepare for the course. Please take the time to read it, make notes and plan ahead to make the most of the programme.

- If you have any questions, please contact:

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We look forward to getting to know you. Get ready for a week of rich discussions and reflections with experienced thinktankers, trainers and colleagues from around the world!

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The School for Thinktankers team



2. INTRODUCTION

The School for Thinktankers is designed to prepare aspiring and current think tank leaders to strengthen or prepare for leadership roles. A think tank leader cannot rely solely on being a great researcher; they also must be managers, networkers, and communicators. Unfortunately, many researchers and thinktankers do not get the opportunity to build these skills during their careers, and by the time they are ready to take on leadership roles it is (almost) too late. The School for Thinktankers seeks to remedy this problem by creating a space to learn about the many dimensions of working in, and leading, a policy research institution. The School also welcomes those who engage with think tanks or would like to learn more about the sector such as funders, academics, journalists and development practitioners.

Taught by senior thinktankers and expert practitioners, the programme has a practical approach. It is designed to:

- Inspire, prepare and strengthen think tank leaders.
- Build a community of think tank leaders to support and learn from each other.
- Encourage participants to reflect on their own organisation and how to support its development.

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Our approach to the development and delivery of the School for Thinktankers:

- Relies on evidence and practice – we draw on learning theories and the knowledge gained from past on-site schools, online courses we've conducted, research projects we've led, and insights shared from practitioners in OTT's wider community.
- Encourages participants to reflect critically on their experience and the lessons shared in the programme.
- Assists participants in addressing ongoing professional challenges.
- Enables participants to experiment with new approaches in their workplace.
- Promotes engagement between participants, trainers, and course facilitators to form a sense of community, as learning and improvement are a social process in which conversation and feedback are vital.
- Provides participants with guidance and supervision from a range of experienced thinktankers and experts.

3. STRUCTURE AND DELIVERY

This section outlines the different components that make up the School for Thinktankers.

WEBSITE

All course materials and links are available on the website www.ott.school in the [School for Thinktankers 2024 course page](#) (password: **SFTT2024OTT**).

DELIVERY

The programme is delivered in person (in Brussels) with online sessions before and after the week in Brussels. The online meetings will be held on Zoom. While in Brussels, the school will be conducted at Bruegel, our partner institution in the city.

1. **Bruegel**
Rue de la Charite 33
1210 Saint-Josse-ten-Noode
Brussels

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We will also visit the following institutions:

2. **The Centre for Africa–Europe Relations (also known as ECDPM)**
Avenue des Arts 44
1000 Brussels
3. **Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS)**
Place du Congrès 1,
1000 Brussels

COMMUNICATION

We will use Slack for day-to-day communication and engagement (you will receive an email with your login details). All participants are part of the Slack channel, as well as past participants of the School for Thinktankers, so please take advantage of the platform and use it to connect with your new network.

For any emergencies you can also contact Stephanie via WhatsApp.

PREPARING FOR THE SCHOOL

We encourage participants to:

- Take the time to read the Background Notes and other materials provided, and explore the [OTT website](#) to reflect on how the concepts we will discuss relate to your own work.
- Note down any questions or thoughts which might be useful for discussions at the school and/or for your personal learning journals.
- Actively use Slack for questions, comments or resources you would like to share with others.
- Review the profiles of your peers and trainers and start connecting with them (on Slack and social media).
- Attend each session, as the richness of the experience stems from engagement with fellow participants and trainers.

ABOUT YOURSELF/PARTICIPANT'S PRESENTATION

We have a session for participants to get to know each other and the work that each of you do. As you will see on the website, all attendees have remarkably interesting profiles, are based across the world, and focus on different issues. To get to know each other better, please prepare a **3-minute presentation**. Do stay within the 3-mins to give other participants an opportunity to also share. Your presentation will be followed by a quick Q&A with the other participants. It can cover the following sections:

- **About me** – your role, country, and the field you work in.
- **Why we (your organisation) exist** – Your organisation's mission or what it aims to do. You can also use a short, success story/moment to highlight your work. If you're not affiliated with an institution, you can share about a new project or research idea that you're working on (or would like to).
- **A challenge we want support with OR a collaborative opportunity we want to partner on** – use this last point strategically as a call to action where other participants have a clear idea of how they can connect with you or support you.

If you'd like to use a PowerPoint presentation, **please upload it onto this [Google Drive folder](#) by 30 January 2024**. Bruegel has an advanced system that requires us to upload all the presentations well ahead of time. Please refrain from adding videos or hyperlinks in the presentation (you may add links, but participants will need to view these on their own time). You are also welcome to speak freely without using a PowerPoint presentation. You can bring a small poster that can be placed in the learning room, flyers or other printed material that you'd like to share with the group.

See on the next page an example of a participant's speech – with a little bit of assistance by ChatGPT (a good conversation starter about AI and think tanks!). You don't have to follow the exact format. You can do what feels natural to you but try to incorporate the 3 areas highlighted.

EXAMPLE OF A PARTICIPANT'S SPEECH

Section 1: About me

Hi everyone, my name is [Your Name], and I'm a director of the Community Climate Innovations think tank. I've been working in the field of environmental sustainability ever since I saw how repeated natural disasters worsened the poverty situation in my country without any real policy solutions.

Section 2: Why we exist

The Community Climate Innovations think tank exists because we envision a future where a better planet isn't a choice that's up for debate—it's an important, shared responsibility. So, we use evidence to spotlight the issues faced by climate vulnerable populations and devise community-informed solutions. Last year, we designed community forums where residents, from fishermen to educators, all came together to discuss solutions. This was a special moment for me, and for the first time, we were able to put together a policy solution that incorporated traditional knowledge and modern infrastructure.

Section 3: A challenge we want support with

However, no journey is without its challenges. One challenge we face is how to get the media to pick up our research and the issues faced by the communities we work with. What has your experience been like? What advice can you share?

LEARNING JOURNALS

We have developed a learning journal (available on the website) as a guiding tool to help you plan and reflect on your learning experience. We will use the questions in the journal throughout the programme to help you reflect, but we also encourage you to complete it on your own.

CERTIFICATE

At the end of the training, participants who have attended the course will receive a certificate of participation.

SHARE A LITTLE PIECE OF HOME

The School is a place to foster a community that learns, shares ideas and has fun together! If you'd like to bring something small from your country to share with the other participants, this would be a lovely and welcome gesture. This is completely optional and only if you would like to and are able to. For example, you can bring some goodies to munch on, key chains, fridge magnets or anything that you'd like to share with the others. It's a really great way to connect with everyone – and plus points if it has a story behind it!

4. PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

INTRODUCTORY MEETING

Our introductory meeting will be held on Monday, 15 January 2023, online. A calendar invitation and a link to the online meeting will be sent to you by Stephanie. All participants are expected to attend the session. The agenda for the introductory meeting is given below.

TIME	MONDAY 15 JAN ONLINE
13:00-13:30 GMT	Welcome and programme overview in Brussels – led by Stephanie Nicolle
13:30-14:10 GMT	Learning objectives – led by Stephanie Nicolle and Estefania Teran
14:10-14:30 GMT	Tips and logistics – led by Stephanie Nicolle and Estefania Teran

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PROGRAMME SCHEDULE IN BRUSSELS

A draft of the programme is shared on the next page. While the times of the first and last date won't change, OTT may make select changes to some sessions. This could happen if a speaker is unable to attend due to an emergency, if another session may be more useful for participants or if we need to update a venue (e.g. dinner venue). **We recommend referring to the Programme Schedule document** that has been separately uploaded onto the website for the latest information. And when you receive access to Slack, we will share all updates on the channel.

Draft programme schedule in Brussels

DATE	SUNDAY 28 JAN	MONDAY 29 JAN	TUESDAY 30 JAN	WEDNESDAY 31 JAN	THURSDAY 1 FEB	FRIDAY 2 FEB	SATURDAY 3 FEB	
LOCATION	BRUEGEL	BRUEGEL	BRUEGEL	BRUEGEL	BRUEGEL	BRUEGEL	BRUEGEL	
FOCUS	Introduction	Policy-relevant research	Communications	Fundraising & funding	Governance & management	Combined topics	Wrap-up & lessons learned	
9:00 AM – 9:30 AM	Free	Tailoring policy agendas for multi-context engagement. Olumide Abimbola, Africa Policy Research Institute	Mobilising messages. Katja Knežević, Bruegel	Visit to the European Parliament (walking from Bruegel at 8.45 am)	Steering success: Governance models & leadership advice. Sonja Stojanovic Gajic	Participants' presentations	Integrative workshop: running a think tank (guidelines from the Build a think tank guide). OTT Team	
9:30 AM – 10:00 AM								
10:00 AM – 10:30 AM	Welcome & getting to know each other		Coffee break					
10:30 AM – 11:00 AM								
11:00 AM – 11:30 AM		Coffee break	Walk to Bruegel	Coffee break				
11:30 AM – 12:00 PM	What is a think tank? History, roles & models in differing contexts. Enrique Mendizabal, OTT	Organising & delivering policy relevant research. Enrique Mendizabal, OTT	Communication strategies. Stuart Coles, Chatham House	Engaging with funders. Alma Kurtovic, Bruegel	Steering success contd. Sonja Stojanovic Gajic	Participants' presentations		Reflection & lessons learned
12:00 PM – 12:30 PM								Closing ceremony ('gift giving' & growing as part of OTT's community)
12:30 PM – 1:00 PM								
1:00 PM – 2:30 PM	Lunch (walk to city centre at 2:00 pm)	Lunch + informal chat with Olumide	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch + informal chat with Sonja on the changing roles of think tanks: from watchdog, to think tank, to watchdog	Lunch	Lunch	
2:30 PM – 3:00 PM	Walking city tour of Brussels. Starting point: Grand Place	Walk to CEPS	Branding workshop. Soapbox	Reflection on learning journals & group activity. OTT team	Walk to ECDPM	The policy ecosystem: challenges and advice for think tanks. Camille Nessel, Assistant to MEP Bernd Lange		
3:00 PM – 3:30 PM		Welcome to CEPS			Coffee break		Coffee break	Welcome to ECDPM
3:30 PM – 4:00 PM			Coffee break					
4:00 PM – 4:30 PM				Coffee break	Coffee break	Coffee break	Coffee break	Free
4:30 PM – 5:00 PM	Free	Session led by CEPS	Branding workshop contd. Soapbox	Candid conversation with a funder. Goran Buldioski, Open Society Foundations	Skills & competencies for think tank work. Andrew Sheriff and Kathleen Van Hove, ECDPM	The future of think tanks. Brussels Binder (tentative)		
5:00 PM – 5:30 PM								
EVENING			Group dinner at 6.30 pm (venue tbd)	Free	Informal chat & drinks at Bruegel (tbd)	Free	Free	

ONLINE SESSIONS AFTER BRUSSELS

We will conduct two online meetings after the programme in Brussels. A calendar invitation and a link to the online meetings will be sent to you by Stephanie. The details of the meetings are given below.

TIME	THURSDAY 14 FEB ONLINE	DATE TO BE CONFIRMED ONLINE
13:00-14:30 GMT	What I did on Monday morning: Lessons, reflections & future actions – led by Stephanie Nicolle (This session may only last for 1 hour)	Evidence use – led by Emily Hayter, Senior Associate of Evidence Use at OTT (This session is also open to OTT's alumni network)

RECOMMENDED DRESS CODE

During the weekend (Sunday and Saturday): casual and warm clothes for the Brussels city tour. A good jacket that can keep you warm goes a long way (as do a pair of trainers or sneakers!).

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During the week: Business casual.

MEALS

The programme includes coffee breaks to keep us refreshed and energised!

We will have a simple lunch at Bruegel during the week. Dinner is not included in the school costs except for the group dinner on Monday, 29 January 2024. For more detailed information on how to prepare for your stay in Brussels, please read our **Brussels City Guide**.

KEY CONTACTS

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