



OTT

A global consultancy
and platform for change

Calling on Student-led Think Tanks: Join the Building for the Future Initiative

Prepared by OTT Consulting – 2025

About OTT

OTT is a global consultancy and platform for change. We support and strengthen the work of research organisations, foundations, governments, non-governmental organisations and international agencies in support of better-informed decision making.

Through our [consultancy work](#), we develop tailored solutions to specific challenges. With services spanning research, strategy, evaluation, learning facilitation and organisational transformation, we partner with organisations to drive evidence informed change.

Through [On Think Tanks](#) we build, nurture and support a global community of people working in, with and funding think tanks. We create a space to connect, learn and exchange.

About the Building for the Future Initiative

The Building for the Future Initiative aims to strengthen student-led think tanks and enrich and broaden the perspectives that inform public policy recommendations.

The initiative follows annual cycles offering the beneficiaries a grant to:

- Invest in their organisational capabilities,¹
- Join the [School for Thinktankers](#), and
- Participate in the [OTT Conference](#).

In addition, participating think tanks benefit from:

- Ongoing mentoring and advice from the On Think Tanks team,
- Access to the global OTT community of think tanks and evidence informed policy experts,
- Access to capacity building resources and opportunities, and
- A platform and channels to share their work globally.

With funding from the Open Society Foundations, OTT currently offers support to student-led think tanks across Europe.

Participating think tanks include:

- The Security Distillery
- The Wilberforce Society
- York Student Think Tank

¹ The current programme involved think tanks organising multi-regional events to help them develop new partnerships, position themselves in new policy spaces, strengthen their brand, incorporate new evidence and knowledge, etc.

- Warwick Think Tank
- Epis Think Tank
- Generation for Rights over the World (GROW)
- Student Think Tank for Europe-Asia Relations (STEAR)

Indicative timeline

Workstream	Dates
Inception	January
School for Thinktankers and working session	February
Innovations	April - October
OTT Conference and working session	May- June
Reporting and lessons learned	September - December

The opportunity

OTT Consulting is widening the reach of the [Building for the Future](#) initiative by opening it to more think tanks and think tanks in other regions.

Student-led think tanks are organisations established and operated by students, often within a university, that engage in research, analysis, and advocacy on various public policy or social issues.

These think tanks aim to emulate and innovate on the structures and functions of established think tanks while providing students with opportunities to develop research, policy analysis, and leadership skills.

Participants gain hands-on experience producing policy briefs, organising events, and engaging in advocacy efforts. These think tanks also create opportunities for networking with academics, policymakers, and experts, expanding students' career prospects and connections.

By amplifying student voices on important social and policy issues, they encourage civic engagement and contribute to shaping informed public discourse, allowing young leaders to make a meaningful impact on their communities and beyond.

How to participate?

Each cycle starts in January. To join the next cycle, you will need to:

- Secure the necessary funding (e.g. from your university or an independent funder). OTT can help you prepare a proposal.
- Contact school@onthinktanks.org before July (or as soon as possible) to discuss your participation.
- Engage in discussions with OTT to determine your needs and strengths. We may offer some additional introductory support in advance of the think tank joining the initiative.

How much does it cost?

Directly paid to OTT:

- **Technical Assistance Fee:** USD 5,000 for each think tank team member attending the School and Conference (exclusive of VAT if applicable). For 2 participants the fee is USD 7,500.
- Fees for the **School for Thinktankers:** USD 1,900 per participant (exclusive of VAT if applicable).
- Fees for the **OTT Conference:** USD 100 per participant (exclusive of VAT if applicable).

Depending on the funder's preferences, additional costs will be paid directly to the think tank or via OTT (plus an admin cost and VAT if applicable).

For instance, if supported by their university, the think tank would receive the following support directly from it:

- Funding to support the delivery of innovations to develop the organisation's capabilities (approx USD 3,500).
- Travel costs to attend the School for Thinktankers in Barcelona for 8 days.
- Travel costs to attend the OTT Conference for 5 days. Location and dates to be confirmed.