

Citizen science for food standards challenges

Opportunity status:	Open
Funders:	Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) , Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) , UK Research and Innovation
Co-funders:	Food Standards Agency (FSA)
Funding type:	Grant
Total fund:	£200,000
Maximum award:	£32,000
Publication date:	12 March 2021
Opening date:	18 March 2021
Closing date:	4 May 2021 16:00 UK time

Last updated: 16 April 2021

! UKRI and the Food Standards Agency (FSA) would like to invite prospective applicants to a webinar to be held on 20 April, 10:00 to 11:00. See the 'Additional info' section below for more details and how to register.

Apply for funding for a pilot project investigating the Food Standards Agency's (FSA's) areas of research interest themes. Your project must use citizen science research methods.

To lead a proposal, you must be based at a UK research organisation. You can be from any discipline across the BBSRC and ESRC remits.

Your proposal must be in collaboration with members of the public. You can also include partners from outside academia.

Your project must be between six and nine months long.

The full economic cost can be up to £40,000. We will fund 80% of this, except directly incurred costs of not-for-profit partners, which we will fund at 100%.

We're delivering this funding in partnership with the FSA.

Who can apply

Principal and co-investigators must be employed by:

- a higher education institute (HEI)
- a research council institute (RCI)
- approved independent research organisation (IRO)
- public sector research establishment (PSRE).

[Check if you are eligible for research and innovation funding.](#)

Applicants must meet the standard BBSRC eligibility criteria, as set out in the [BBSRC grants guide \(PDF, 354KB\)](#).

Projects should be a collaboration between researchers, a specific group of citizens and, where appropriate, relevant partners from outside academia. This can include partnerships with organisations from private, public and non-profit sectors, as well as community representatives and groups.

Citizens and partners should be involved in co-creating the projects and developing the application for funding where possible.

What we're looking for

Together, the FSA and UKRI are interested in funding pilot research projects that tackle food standards challenges through citizen science methods.

For the purposes of this opportunity, to guide the expectations of how citizen science methods are applied, applicants should consult:

- ECSA's [ten principles of citizen science \(PDF, 193KB\)](#)
- [ECSA characteristics of citizen science](#)
- the recent FSA publication [citizen science and food: a review](#).

Through the funded projects, we aim to facilitate the spread of citizen science methods in the academic community and expand the range of people from outside of academia involved in research. The projects should also better equip the community to take advantage of future funding opportunities through new connections and skills in citizen science methods.

The citizen science elements of the project should be integral to the overall research design and have a clear benefit for the members of the public involved. We encourage applications that involve citizens in the research design process where possible.

Food Standards Agency areas of interest

Applications should be related to one or more of the FSAs [areas of research interest themes](#).

The themes are arranged under four high level research priorities.

Priority one: food hypersensitivity and allergy

How can the FSA protect the UK consumer from the health risks posed by food hypersensitivity (including allergies and intolerance)?

Priority two: assuring food safety and standards

1. How can the impact of chemical contaminants (including nanomaterials and microplastics) in food be assessed and minimised?
2. How can the FSA better understand and reduce the impact of foodborne pathogens?
3. How can the FSA improve the evidence base concerning antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and food?
4. What is the role of food safety and standards in nutrition and health?

Priority three: innovation in food regulation

1. What role does consumer and food business operator behaviour and perception play in ensuring food safety and standards?
2. How can data and digital innovations be used to create a safer food system?
3. How can the FSA remain at the cutting-edge when developing and implementing food regulations?

Priority four: the future of food systems

1. How can the FSA remain responsive to emerging challenges and opportunities in the UK food system, including unprecedented challenges such as those associated with COVID19?
2. What is the impact of novel and non-traditional foods, additives and processes on the UK consumer?
3. What is the impact of crime in the UK food supply chain, including food fraud, and how can it be better detected and monitored?

Requirements for all projects

All projects must:

- contribute to addressing at least one theme of the FSA [areas of research interest](#)
- sit within [the remit of BBSRC](#) and/or [the remit of ESRC](#).

All projects are expected to:

- have a clear justification and aims for using citizen science methods

- involve a defined group, or groups, of people in the UK that are involved in co-developing the project from the beginning, expanding engagement outside academia with FSA [areas of research interest](#) themes
- adhere to best practice in citizen science, as outlined in the [ten principles of citizen science \(PDF, 193KB\)](#) and the [ECSA characteristics of citizen science](#) where possible
- demonstrate a commitment to the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion in both the project design and delivery team.

We are particularly interested in projects that:

- involve people from groups and communities who are under-represented in decision making linked to FSA areas of research interest themes
- involve partnerships with non-academic organisations that can enhance the outcomes of the project
- demonstrate potential to share the learning, outcomes and successes of their approach widely among the academic community.

You should design your project based on the latest available information about the coronavirus outbreak and the associated social distancing regulations. You should be clear about the levels of uncertainty involved in your approach and about how you will adapt as the situation evolves.

UKRI and FSA will provide support and guidance throughout the lifetime of each project, and successful projects will be invited to take part in cohort activity to enhance the outcomes of the scheme.

Before the projects start, a workshop will be held for successful applicants, providing an opportunity to present their proposal and build networks with other funded projects and the wider FSA and UKRI teams.

Each project will be supported by a lead contact within the FSA. This relationship will be maintained by regular meetings and updates. The appropriate frequency and content of these meetings will be decided between the successful applicant and the FSA lead contact. Following project completion, successful candidates will be required to present the outcomes of the project to key stakeholders during a network event arranged by the FSA and UKRI. Each project will also be expected to produce a final report, using a template provided by FSA and UKRI, that will be published on the FSA website.

Each project must also report on the project outcomes using Researchfish. [Find out more about reporting your research outcomes.](#)

The project is funded at 80% fEC and is generally expected to cover:

- principal and co-investigator time
- research assistant or technician time
- external consultants' and/or partners' time
- expenses for citizen participants, where relevant
- travel and subsistence
- equipment and consumables

For non-profit organisations (for example, charities, community groups), directly incurred, project-related costs can be claimed by the applicant at 100% full economic cost. This might include:

- salary costs for time spent on the project (excluding national insurance contributions)
- travel and subsistence
- venue hire
- any other costs that are deemed eligible under the directly incurred costs heading in the [BBSRC grants guide \(PDF, 354KB\)](#).

If you are unsure whether a project partner qualifies for non-profit status please contact citizenscienceforfood@bbsrc.ukri.org).

Where partners are claiming costs, research organisations should ensure that the budget is transferred to the partner in a way that does not produce unnecessary burden for the partner and is agreed by both parties in advance.

Detailed guidance on the resources that can be requested can be found within the [BBSRC grants guide \(PDF, 354KB\)](#).

How to apply

You must apply using the [Joint Electronic Submission system \(Je-S\)](#) before 16:00 on the day of the deadline.

When applying, select:

- the 'Documents' section in Je-S then 'New Document'
- council: BBSRC
- document type: Standard Proposal
- scheme: Standard
- call/type/mode: UKRI/FSA Joint Call in Citizen Science for Food.

When submitting your application, you must complete the Je-S pro forma together with the mandatory attachments outlined below. The projects' full economic cost (100% fEC) can be up to £40,000. Any proposals that exceed this will be automatically rejected.

Je-S pro forma

The Je-S pro forma consists of a series of sections. The following guidance should be used to guide the completion of mandatory sections of the Je-S form. If a mandatory section does not apply to your application, please enter 'not applicable'.

- project details: the maximum project cost is £40,000 (100% fEC). Projects must last between six and nine months
- principal investigator and co-investigators: principal investigators and co-investigators must be of at least lecturer level (or equivalent) and above and

must meet the standard BBSRC eligibility criteria, as set out in in the [BBSRC grants guide \(PDF, 354KB\)](#)

- objectives (4,000 characters): please use this section to describe the aims and objectives of your project and how they relate to the opportunity's criteria. This information should then be referred to and built upon in the case for support
- summary (4,000 characters): use this section to summarise your project's approach, the FSA area of research interest theme you plan to address, and the main work packages that make up the project
- technical summary (2,000 characters): use this section to describe in more detail how the relevant FSA areas of research interest theme you plan to tackle has been identified and defined, how you will identify, attract and involve citizens in your project, and the benefits you anticipate from citizen involvement
- academic beneficiaries (4,000 characters): use this section to explain how your collaboration will facilitate the spread of citizen science methods into new academic disciplines and communities
- project partners: partnerships with organisations from outside academia that have the potential to enhance the outcomes of your project are encouraged. Use this section to briefly detail any project partners and their contributions. Further information on why these partners are appropriate, and the nature of your partnership or partnerships can be provided within the case for support
- other support
- research council facilities.

For any Je-S related queries, please refer to the Je-S Handbook, or contact the Je-S helpdesk:

Email: jeshelp@je-s.ukri.org

Phone: +44 (0) 1793 444164

Mandatory attachments

Applicants must provide all documentation listed below. All submissions must adhere to the stipulated page limits, and use standard font (size: 11 point – we recommend the use of Arial, Helvetica or Verdana typeface) and margin sizes (not less than 2cm) for all forms and CVs (excluding text on diagrams and the use of mathematical symbols).

A minimum of single line spacing and standard character spacing must be used. Applications that do not adhere to these guidelines may be rejected. We recommend that where a document contains any non-standard fonts (scientific notation, diagrams, and so on), the document is converted to PDF prior to attaching it to the proposal.

As part of UKRI's commitment to the principles of [DORA](#), publication references within the application should be provided as Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs) wherever possible.

Provide:

- case for support (up to five sides of A4) in which you:

- describe the proposed programme of work, including a Gantt chart or project plan, if appropriate
- detail the delivery team and how they will work together with project partners to achieve the proposed plan
- explain how the proposed work addresses the opportunity aims (see What we're looking for)
- justification of resources (up to two sides of A4) in which you:
 - provide a full justification of resources requested, including those for all members of the core team, which should include an itemised budget breakdown
 - include a narrative CV for principal investigators, co-investigators and researcher co-investigators (using the template provided) (up to two pages of A4)
 - outline the track record of principal investigators, co-investigators and researcher co-investigators and their suitability for the proposed project.
- letters of support (one side of A4 per letter) in which you:
 - provide letters of support from project partners detailing their role in the project, their reasons for participating and the benefits they will bring to the project
- data management plan (one side of A4) (upload as other attachment) in which you:
 - provide a statement on the planned approach to data management. Your data management plan should be guided by UKRI's [common principles on data policy](#) and [guidance on best practice in the management of research data \(PDF, 467KB\)](#)
- ethical practice plan (one side of A4) (upload as other attachment) in which you:
 - provide a statement on your commitment to ethical practice. Your ethical practice plan should highlight and explain the ethical dimensions of citizen science that you have considered, and how these considerations have affected the design of your project. In particular, you should pay attention to:
 - consent and communication with participants
 - data ownership, data sharing, confidentiality and participant privacy
 - the positionality and power structures between the research team, the project partners and participants
 - equality, diversity and inclusion, and avoiding discrimination.

Further guidance on the ethics of conducting citizen science can be found on the [Citizen Science Association's Ethics Working Group webpage](#).

Confidentiality and disclosure

UKRI takes all reasonable steps to ensure that the contents of applications for the UKRI/FSA joint opportunity in citizen science for food are treated as confidential. Applicants must ensure that the title and summary of the proposed project are worded in such a way as to protect confidential or sensitive areas, as project

summaries and personal data from the first page of successful applications will normally be transferred to publicly available databases.

The following details will be transferred for all funded projects:

- title and project summary
- institution
- name or names of applicants
- name of any project partners
- the value of the award
- start and end dates and duration of the award.

BBSRC must be notified in writing at the application stage if you do not wish personal data or information that could affect intellectual property rights to be transferred to the databases. Applicants must abide by UKRI's [expectations on research integrity](#).

Data protection

Grants submitted through Je-S are done so under the Je-S terms and conditions.

How we will assess your application

Applications will be reviewed by an external assessment panel only.

The panel will assess all applications by the following criteria:

- quality of the research proposal:
 - the extent to which the project advances knowledge within the FSA areas of research interest themes, using citizen science methods that reach high international standards
 - the extent to which the proposal adheres to best practice in undertaking research involving citizens, including in regard to equality, diversity and inclusion, ethical practice and data management
- impact:
 - the potential of the project to embed citizen science methods and share learning amongst relevant academic communities
 - the potential to engage people who are underrepresented in decision making related to FSA areas of research interest themes
- delivery team:
 - appropriateness of the team's (researchers, partners and citizens) experience and expertise to deliver the proposed project
 - extent of involvement of citizens and non-academic partners in the design of the project
- planning:

- adequate justification of resources that are appropriate to deliver the project
- the feasibility to deliver on objectives within the timeframes of the project.

Feedback to applicants will be provided along with the communication of funding outcomes.

Please direct all enquiries to citizenscienceforfood@bbsrc.ukri.org.

Contact details

citizenscienceforfood@bbsrc.ukri.org

Additional info

Supporting documents

[DOI guidance \(PDF, 171KB\)](#)

[Narrative CV guidance \(PDF, 116KB\)](#)

[Narrative CV template \(Word, 29KB\)](#)

Food safety workshop

BBSRC, ESRC, FSA, and Food Standards Scotland are working collaboratively to coordinate activities and develop a joined-up approach to tackle the challenges of maintaining safe food in the UK.

As part of this approach, a food safety workshop was convened to develop strategic thinking. One of the key recommendations from the workshop was to invest in public engagement and citizen science. This aligns with UKRI's long-term commitment to citizen science and participatory research in its [vision for public engagement](#). The workshop also identified the need to build and strengthen collaborations across the food safety research and innovation community.

The FSA recently published [citizen science and food: a review](#) exploring how citizen science methods have been applied to FSA research priorities, and mapping citizen science projects against the 11 FSA areas of research interest themes. The review identified a growing community and recommended further investment in this area to build capacity and capability and spread the use of these methods among the food science community.

This funding opportunity is an opportunity to address the recommendations from both the workshop and the review.

Webinar for applicants

Following the opening of the UKRI-FSA Citizen Science for Food Standards Challenges funding opportunity to applicants, UKRI and the Food Standards Agency (FSA) would like to invite prospective applicants to a webinar.

The webinar will consist of a presentation followed by a Q&A session, to answer any queries applicants may have. The presentation will cover:

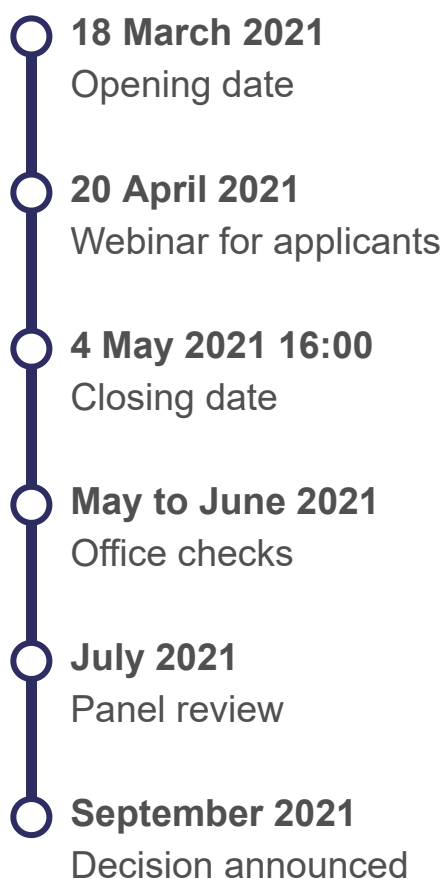
- the scope and aims of the call
- the FSA's areas of research interest and how these are defined
- specific call details and eligibility criteria
- details of the different types of collaborators that may be involved in an application
- the application and assessment process
- guidance on what we would expect in a successful application
- a Q&A session for any questions.

The webinar will be recorded and will be made available to prospective applicants who are unable to attend the live event.

The webinar will be held on 20 April, 10:00 to 11:00.

Attendees can register for the event via [EventBrite](#).

Timeline



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