



## **2016 Institute Assessment Exercise**

### **Overview of the 2016 Institute Assessment Exercise Process**

**April 2017**

## Introduction

BBSRC makes strategic investments in eight research institutes which are central to delivering its vision and strategic priorities. The institutes have a vital role in supporting BBSRC's mission to further scientific knowledge, and to promote economic growth and job creation in key sectors of the UK economy including agriculture, bioenergy, biotechnology, food and pharmaceuticals. In addition, the institutes maintain unique research facilities of national importance.

The eight strategically-funded institutes are:

- Babraham Institute
- Earlham Institute
- Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences
- Institute of Food Research / Quadram Institute
- John Innes Centre
- Roslin Institute
- Rothamsted Research
- The Pirbright Institute

BBSRC is committed to the rigorous assessment of all its major investments. As the strategically-funded institutes account for a significant proportion of BBSRC's total research investment, it is essential to ensure that the institutes continue to deliver excellent, strategically-relevant research, and that BBSRC's investments are managed appropriately and provide value for money. To achieve this, BBSRC conducts an Institute Assessment Exercise (IAE) every five years. The IAE informs future funding decisions and enables BBSRC to comply with government policy.

In 2016, BBSRC conducted an IAE for seven of the eight strategically-funded institutes. The IAE made recommendations to BBSRC Council regarding which institute programmes were of highest priority for support, with the final decisions dependent on the overall levels of funding available.

The Institute of Food Research (IFR) did not participate in the 2016 IAE because of on-going development of the new Quadram Institute, which will integrate research teams from IFR, the University of East Anglia and the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital. The Quadram Institute will participate in the IAE process during 2017 and the outcome will determine which awards are funded from April 2018.

## Assessment Procedures

The institutes' submissions for the 2016 IAE consisted of three major components:

- **Director's Statement** (one per institute): sets the Institute in context and provides a clear high-level vision for the Institute as a whole.
- **Institute Strategic Programme Grant (ISPG) proposal(s)** (one or more per institute): describes a proposed five-year strategic programme of research with direct objectives.
- **Core Capability Grant (CCG) proposal** (one per institute): describes the core capability of the Institute that is essential to support BBSRC's investment in the ISPGs. It also describes any associated national capability that is essential for UK national strategic purposes and is intended to benefit the scientific community in general.

ISPG proposals were subject to peer review. This included an external reviewer assessment, a Principal Investigator response, and review by the Institute Assessment Panel (IAP). The IAP considered the extent to which proposals met the criteria listed in **Annex A**.

CCG proposals were also reviewed by the IAP, but were not subject to an external reviewer assessment. To assist with the assessment of CCG proposals, the IAP was provided with advice from an internal BBSRC office review group comprising of finance, facilities management and estates development expertise. The IAP considered the extent to which the proposals met the criteria listed in **Annex B**.

Unlike previous IAEs, there were no visits to the institutes as part of the assessment process. Institutes were invited to present their proposals to the IAP at the respective panel meetings. This meant that each Institute was treated in exactly the same way.

The IAP balanced all the assessment criteria in making their overall assessments. For ISPGs, the relative scientific quality of proposals within the institutes' respective fields was an important criterion.

## Institute Assessment Panel

IAP members were chosen for their expertise in the areas of science covered by the institutes as well as their experience in leading large programmes. The IAP included international experts and representation from industry / users. All appointments were approved by BBSRC Appointments Board as part of enabling the IAP to act on and with the delegated authority of Council.

Details of the IAP membership are provided in **Annex C**.

The 2016 IAE included greater competition between institutes than previous IAEs and it was anticipated that the IAP would make recommendations to fund some ISPGs or elements of

CCGs in preference to others. To enable a competitive assessment process, two distinct types of IAP were convened:

- **individual Institute Assessment Panels (iIAP)**
  - one iIAP for each institute
  - one iIAP for the cross-institutional wheat ISPG proposal
- **final Institute Assessment Panel (fIAP)**
  - one fIAP covering all institutes

The IAP itself was comprised of two categories of Panel members. A **core membership** was recruited for all the IAP meetings and formed the fIAP. The core membership was augmented by **subject matter experts** who attended one or more iIAP meetings, but did not attend the fIAP meeting.

The iIAP and fIAP had distinct but complementary roles. The iIAP conducted a detailed assessment of each institute's ISPG and CCG proposals, scoring the proposals against the assessment criteria. The fIAP then used the assessments from the iIAP meetings to develop a final priority assessment of all the ISPG proposals.

### Institute Assessment Panel meetings

The iIAP and fIAP meetings took place at the Grosvenor Hotel in London in late September. The meeting dates are shown below:

Date	Morning	Afternoon
Tuesday 20 September	Earlham Institute*	Roslin Institute*
Wednesday 21 September	Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences*	John Innes Centre*
Thursday 22 September	Rothamsted Research*	Wheat (cross-institutional) *
Monday 26 September	Babraham Institute*	The Pirbright Institute*
Tuesday 27 September	Final Institute Assessment Panel	

\* individual Institute Assessment Panel meetings

Institute staff were in attendance for part of the iIAP meetings, but did not attend the fIAP meeting.

Each iAP meeting followed exactly the same format and overall timings – the example below is from a morning meeting:

Session times	Purpose & details	Duration
08.45 - 09.25	<u>Panel opening session:</u> Institute Staff are welcome to use the separate venue room hired for them	<u>40 mins</u>
09.25 - 09.35	Institute Staff session set-up (during Panel tea/coffee break)	10 mins
09.35 - 11.20	<u>Institute Staff session:</u> Welcome and introductions Institute presentation Interview	<u>1 hr 45 mins</u> 5 mins 40 mins max up to 1 hr
11.20 - 11.30	Institute Staff session dismantle (during Panel comfort break)	10 mins
11.30 - 12.50	<u>Panel closing session:</u> Institute staff are kindly requested to remain at the venue, using the separate room, in case there are any final questions from the Panel	<u>1 hr 20 mins</u>
12.50 - 13.00	Chair's thanks to Institute staff	10 mins

### Output from the fIAP meeting

The fIAP did not produce a traditional rank order list for the ISPG proposals. Instead the fIAP placed the ISPG proposals into a set of funding priority categories. In part, this approach was adopted to recognise the challenges in competitively assessing ISPG proposals that may vary considerably in their nature and / or rationale and that collectively have broad coverage of the BBSRC remit. In doing this the fIAP focused above all on two criteria, Scientific Quality and Strategic Relevance, with a higher weighting being placed on Scientific Quality reflecting BBSRC's mission to invest in the best science wherever it may be delivered.

In making their priority categorisation of ISPGs, the fIAP considered the following: the proposal, the reviewers' comments, the Institute's response to the reviewers' comments, the Director's Statement, the Institute presentation and interview, and the iAP's assessment of the proposal. The members of the fIAP had all been members of the iAPs, thus providing consistency throughout the panel process.

The fIAP also reviewed and agreed the final assessment of each of the CCG proposals.

The fIAP's priority categorisation of ISPGs and assessment of CCGs formed the basis of their recommendations to Council. It should be noted that the fIAP was unaware of any issues of funding constraints, i.e. their recommendations were based purely on their consideration of each ISPG and CCG against the relevant criteria.

The fIAP also provided written feedback on the ISPG and CCG proposals for the institutes.

## **BBSRC Council IAE sub-Group**

A BBSRC Council sub-Group was established to advise the Executive on the delivery of the IAE with a particular focus on preparing for the December Council meeting where the funding decisions would be made. Membership of the sub-Group is at **Annex D**.

BBSRC Executive, in consultation with the Council IAE sub-Group, used the output of the fIAP to develop a series of funding options to be considered by Council. The direct output of the fIAP was also provided to Council alongside the funding options.

## **BBSRC Council meeting**

BBSRC Council met on 7 December to consider the recommendations arising from the IAE and decide which programmes should be funded.

Council's decisions were shared with the Institutes on 9 January 2017.

## **INSTITUTE STRATEGIC PROGRAMME GRANT ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

The criteria for assessment of the ISPG proposals are:

- The scientific quality of the proposal in relation to internationally excellent standards for strategic research in the field
- The extent to which the proposal addresses global challenges in the biosciences, as set out in BBSRC's current Strategic Plan and relevant BBSRC Strategic Research Frameworks
- Whether the resources (people, equipment, etc.) are appropriate and deployed as effectively as possible
- The appropriateness of the proposed scientific leadership and track record of key investigators
- The appropriateness of the proposed actions and objectives to achieve impact
- For programmes which build on previous ISPG research, the quality and impact / potential impact of the outputs from the previous programme(s)
- The approach to data management
- The overall value for money.

**CORE CAPABILITY GRANT ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

The criteria for assessment of the CCG proposals are:

- The extent to which capability will enable internationally excellent research in the field, as proposed in associated ISPGs addressing strategic need
- The extent to which the capability is required to maintain key research capability within the UK bioscience community and enable associated high-quality research
- The evidence of the need for, and community interest in, the capability
- The adequacy of the plans for engagement with the research and user communities, including the extent to which the capability will be accessible to these wider communities
- The evidence of appropriate skills and competencies to deliver the capability, along with associated quality leadership
- Transparent identification, development and maximisation of usage rates of capability articulating relevant splits for non-ISPG use
- Demonstration and benchmark evidence of efficient management of capability compliant with recognised metrics
- Demonstration that the capability is operating effectively and efficiently
- The evidence of the sustainable whole-life cost of the capability
- The evidence of compliance with all relevant national and international regulatory standards applicable and to what extent.



**INSTITUTE ASSESSMENT PANEL MEMBERSHIP****Individual Institute Assessment Panels (IIAP)****Babraham Institute**

<b>Panel Member</b>	<b>Institution Affiliation</b>
Maggie Dallman (Chair)	Imperial College London
Simon Hubbard (Deputy Chair)	University of Manchester
Simon Morley (Deputy Chair)	University of Sussex
Richard Aspinall	Anglia Ruskin University
Simon Baker	Bioline Ltd
Deborah Dunn-Walters	University of Surrey
Paul Haggarty	University of Aberdeen
Rosalind John	Cardiff University
Vivek Kapur	Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences
Jane Langdale	University of Oxford
Steve Long	University of Illinois
Fiona Marston	Absynth Biologics Limited
Tracy Palmer	University of Dundee
Kay Simmons	former U.S. Department of Agriculture
Will Spooner	Eagle Genomics
Jim Woodgett	Lunenfeld-Tanenbaum Research Institute

## Earlham Institute

Panel Member	Institution Affiliation
Simon Hubbard (Chair)	University of Manchester
Maggie Dallman (Deputy Chair)	Imperial College London
Simon Morley (Deputy Chair)	University of Sussex
Sarah Butcher	Imperial College London
Ian Henderson	University of Birmingham
Vivek Kapur	Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences
Jane Langdale	University of Oxford
Carolyn Lawrence-Dill	Iowa State University
Steve Long	University of Illinois
Tracy Palmer	University of Dundee
Kay Simmons	former U.S. Department of Agriculture
Will Spooner	Eagle Genomics
Alan Walker	University of Aberdeen
Eileen Wall	Scotland Rural College
Doreen Ware	Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory

## **Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences**

<b>Panel Member</b>	<b>Institution Affiliation</b>
Maggie Dallman (Chair)	Imperial College London
Simon Hubbard (Deputy Chair)	University of Manchester
Simon Morley (Deputy Chair)	University of Sussex
Murray Grant	University of Warwick
Vivek Kapur	Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences
Jane Langdale	University of Oxford
Carolyn Lawrence-Dill	Iowa State University
Steve Long	University of Illinois
Kim Matthews	AHDB Beef & Lamb, Agriculture & Horticulture Development Board
Tracy Palmer	University of Dundee
Kay Simmons	former U.S. Department of Agriculture
Mark Sorrells	Cornell University
Eileen Wall	Scotland Rural College
John Wallace	University of Aberdeen
Doreen Ware	Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory

## John Innes Centre

Panel Member	Institution Affiliation
Simon Hubbard (Chair)	University of Manchester
Maggie Dallman (Deputy Chair)	Imperial College London
Simon Morley (Deputy Chair)	University of Sussex
Susannah Bolton	Agriculture & Horticulture Development Board
Alan Dangour	London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine
Claire Grierson	University of Bristol
Vivek Kapur	Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences
Jane Langdale	University of Oxford
Carolyn Lawrence-Dill	Iowa State University
Gary Loake	University of Edinburgh
Steve Long	University of Illinois
Frank Ordon	Julius Kühn Institute
Tracy Palmer	University of Dundee
Kay Simmons	former U.S. Department of Agriculture
Mark Sorrells	Cornell University

## Roslin Institute

Panel Member	Institution Affiliation
Simon Hubbard (Chair)	University of Manchester
Maggie Dallman (Deputy Chair)	Imperial College London
Simon Morley (Deputy Chair)	University of Sussex
Andrew Jones	University of Liverpool
Nicholas Jonsson	University of Glasgow
Vivek Kapur	Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences
Julian Ketley	University of Leicester
Jane Langdale	University of Oxford
James Leigh	University of Nottingham
Steve Long	University of Illinois
Kim Matthews	AHDB Beef & Lamb, Agriculture & Horticulture Development Board
Grace Mulcahy	University College Dublin
Christine Nicol	University of Bristol
Tracy Palmer	University of Dundee
Kay Simmons	former U.S. Department of Agriculture

## Rothamsted Research

Panel Member	Institution Affiliation
Maggie Dallman (Chair)	Imperial College London
Simon Hubbard (Deputy Chair)	University of Manchester
Simon Morley (Deputy Chair)	University of Sussex
Liz Baggs	University of Aberdeen
Frank Ewert	University of Bonn
Murray Grant	University of Warwick
Claire Grierson	University of Bristol
Sue Hartley	University of York
Vivek Kapur	Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences
Jane Langdale	University of Oxford
Steve Long	University of Illinois
Frank Ordon	Julius Kühn Institute
Tracy Palmer	University of Dundee
Julie Scholes*	University of Sheffield
Kay Simmons	former U.S. Department of Agriculture
Mark Sorrells	Cornell University

\* Julie Scholes did not attend the Rothamsted Research iIAP meeting, but provided comments on the Institute's proposals prior to the meeting.

## The Pirbright Institute

Panel Member*	Institution Affiliation
Simon Morley (Chair)	University of Sussex
Simon Hubbard (Deputy Chair)	University of Manchester
Sarah Butcher	Imperial College London
Nicholas Jonsson	University of Glasgow
Vivek Kapur	Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences
Jane Langdale	University of Oxford
Steve Long	University of Illinois
Beatriz Martinez-Lopez	University of California, Davis
Kim Matthews	AHDB Beef & Lamb, Agriculture & Horticulture Development Board
Grace Mulcahy	University College Dublin
Christine Nicol**	University of Bristol
Tracy Palmer	University of Dundee
Eleanor Riley	London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine
Martin Sheldon	Swansea University
Kay Simmons	former U.S. Department of Agriculture
James Stewart	University of Liverpool

\* Maggie Dallman did not attend the Pirbright iIAP meeting.

\*\* Christine Nicol did not attend the Pirbright iIAP meeting, but provided comments on the Institute's proposals prior to the meeting.

## Cross-Institutional Wheat ISPG

Panel Member	Institution Affiliation
Simon Hubbard (Chair)	University of Manchester
Maggie Dallman (Deputy Chair)	Imperial College London
Simon Morley (Deputy Chair)	University of Sussex
Alan Dangour	London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine
Murray Grant	University of Warwick
Vivek Kapur	Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences
Jane Langdale	University of Oxford
Carolyn Lawrence-Dill	Iowa State University
Steve Long	University of Illinois
Frank Ordon	Julius Kühn Institute
Tracy Palmer	University of Dundee
Kay Simmons	former U.S. Department of Agriculture
Mark Sorrells	Cornell University
Doreen Ware	Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory



### Final Institute Assessment Panel (fIAP)

Panel Member	Institution Affiliation
Simon Hubbard (Chair)	University of Manchester
Maggie Dallman (Deputy Chair)	Imperial College London
Simon Morley (Deputy Chair)	University of Sussex
Vivek Kapur	Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences
Jane Langdale	University of Oxford
Tracy Palmer	University of Dundee
Kay Simmons	former U.S. Department of Agriculture

BBSRC Council Observer	Institution Affiliation
Belinda Clarke	Agri-Tech East

**MEMBERSHIP OF THE IAE COUNCIL SUB-GROUP**

<b>Panel Member</b>	<b>Institution Affiliation</b>
Neil Brewis	F-Star
Belinda Clarke	Agri-Tech East
Maggie Dallman	Imperial College London
Mike Goosey	Independent
David Gregory	Independent
Sarah Gurr	University of Exeter