



# UK Research and Innovation Equality Impact Assessment Form



## Overview of activity

Name of activity being assessed: strategic Longer and Larger (sLoLa)

Council/department/project team: Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council

## Aims and objectives of the activity

The aim of the sLoLa scheme is for large team-based projects to advance fundamental bioscience research based in bioscience discovery research across the UKRI-BBSRC remit.

It does this by supporting and delivering:

- bioscience discovery research including potential for major breakthroughs in our fundamental understanding of living systems
- strategic research
- collaborative research and development
- policy relevant research
- international research partnerships
- next generation research leaders
- a fully integrated team science approach
- enhancing the capability and capacity of UK biosciences

## Key features

Research grant applications can be submitted once a year for the assessment by the Strategic LoLa Committee (SLC), on any topic within UKRI-BBSRC's portfolio.

The funding opportunity consists of Stage one (Outline submissions) and an invitation-only full stage including potential interviews.

Outline applications don't undergo single-peer review but are assessed by a single multidisciplinary panel: the SLC, there is no external peer review. The SLC recommends applications to invite to submit a full stage application to BBSRC.

Full-stage applications are peer-reviewed and assessed by selected outline stage SLC members and further subject matter experts, including representatives from BBSRC's Responsive Mode research committees and BBSRC's Pool of Experts. Following assessment, the committee will rank applications and provide recommendations to BBSRC for applications to invite for potential interview process.

Team members of the most highly-rated applications by the SLC are invited to potential interview. The SLC will make a final funding recommendation to BBSRC.

We reserve the right to modify the assessment process as needed.

A funding opportunity requires consideration of equality as part of the application process, and assessment related processes such as external review, committee building and hosting committee meetings.



## Who is affected by your policy/funding activity/event?

Applicants to the scheme, external peer reviewers, Committee members and Chairs, the UKRI-BBSRC secretariat and employees supporting delivery of the funding opportunity, external national and international organisations with co-interest submitted to the opportunity.

## What data and consultation have you used?

Consultation with SLC attendees to understand potential barriers and take action, where possible, to enable attendance and participation.

Maintenance of two-way channels of communication between UKRI-BBSRC and stakeholders via project officer roles, applicants and panel member webinars and post-award workshops.

Learning from good practice in objective decision making and interview processes from across UKRI, supported by external independent advice.

Higher Education Statistic Agency, Staff Statistics Bulletin 2022/23 [accessed 28/11/2024].

Analysing your impact:

## Protected characteristics

### Age

*Positive impact or opportunity to benefit. Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown:*

*Negative impact. Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown:*

*Please explain the impact or why there is no impact including details of any evidence/data used.*

If an applicant's age became known to the panel or reviewers, there is the potential for unconscious bias, but at no point during the assessment process is this disclosed to reviewers or panel members.

*Detail actions taken/ that will be taken to increase positive or reduce negative impact (or why action is not possible). Detail how you plan to measure the relevant outcomes and outputs of your activity.*

No actions.

### Disability

*Positive impact or opportunity to benefit. Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown:*

*Negative impact. Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown:*

*Please explain the impact or why there is no impact including details of any evidence/data used.*

General issues regarding UKRI's grant application systems and provisions for flexibility are addressed through policies designed to apply across our organisation.



Committee members and potential interviewees with physical disabilities may find it difficult to access a physical meeting venue and / or participate in the meeting if the assessment venue cannot cater for their needs.

If an applicant's disability became known to the panel or reviewers, there is the potential for unconscious bias but at no point during the assessment process is this disclosed to reviewers or committee members, with the exception of prior consented disclosure in the application by the applicant.

*Detail actions taken/ that will be taken to increase positive or reduce negative impact (or why action is not possible). Detail how you plan to measure the relevant outcomes and outputs of your activity.*

Applicants with a disability (inclusive of physical or neurological) can cost for additional support required that is directly related to the grant.

Reviewers and committee members are advised applications may include these costs for reasonable adjustments and are advised they should be accepted without comment. UKRI will ensure their eligibility.

Disability and accessibility support for applicants and grant holders is offered during the application and assessment periods and, the ability to provide information in their applications about disability or long-term health conditions that they may wish to be considered by reviewers or committee members.

UKRI-BBSRC will use a virtual meeting format during outline, full stage and potential interview panel meetings and Discussion boards or other online platform following UKRI's Virtual-first policy.

Consider a return to accessible face-to-face meetings based on business needs, following UKRI's Virtual-first policy.

Respond to individual support needs on a case-by-case basis.

Ensure that electronic information is accessible.

Gather information from meeting participants about any additional requirement they may need to fully participate.

Ensure that plenty of breaks are built into the committee meeting agenda.

Allow for potential use of screen readers for participants of committee meetings who are visually impaired.

Ensure that colours chosen, and other visual stimuli do not trigger migraines or affect those with colour blindness; different colours may assist with this if participants do not bring their own laptops to committee meetings.

## Gender reassignment (Trans identity)

*Positive impact or opportunity to benefit. Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown:*

*Negative impact. Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown:*

*Please explain the impact or why there is no impact including details of any evidence/data used.*



As per UKRI's policies we take care to adopt gender neutral language and protect applications personal details.

If an applicant's gender reassignment became known to the committee or reviewers, there is the potential for unconscious bias, but at no point during the assessment process is this disclosed to reviewers or committee members.

*Detail actions taken/ that will be taken to increase positive or reduce negative impact (or why action is not possible). Detail how you plan to measure the relevant outcomes and outputs of your activity.*

We will ensure to use gender neutral language in all call materials and engagement with the community.

## Marriage or civil partnership

*Positive impact or opportunity to benefit. Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown:*

*Negative impact. Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown:*

*Please explain the impact or why there is no impact including details of any evidence/data used.*

Applicants are not required to declare their marital or civil partnership status.

Reviewers and committee members are provided the opportunity to declare conflicts of interest, but never directly asked to provide their marital or civil partnership status.

If an applicant, reviewer or committee member's marital or civil partnership status became known to UKRI-BBSRC, there is no point during the assessment process where this is disclosed.

UKRI's policies protect applicant and committee members' personal data, and UKRI's Conflict of Interest policy safeguards against undue influence.

*Detail actions taken/ that will be taken to increase positive or reduce negative impact (or why action is not possible). Detail how you plan to measure the relevant outcomes and outputs of your activity.*

No actions.

## Pregnancy and maternity

*Positive impact or opportunity to benefit. Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown:*

*Negative impact. Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown:*

*Please explain the impact or why there is no impact including details of any evidence/data used.*

Committee members and interview candidates who are pregnant or on maternity leave may be discouraged from participating in committee meetings.

If an applicant's pregnancy or maternity leave status became known to the committee or reviewers, there is the potential for unconscious bias, but at no point during the assessment process is this disclosed to reviewers or committee members.

Career breaks in applicant track records due to parental leave may result in the potential for unconscious bias.

*Detail actions taken/ that will be taken to increase positive or reduce negative impact (or why action is not possible). Detail how you plan to measure the relevant outcomes and outputs of your activity.*

If individuals receive a funding decision during their maternity leave period and are on leave for the start date of the grant, they can, as per UKRI's Grant Terms and Conditions RGC 6.1 extend the grant period by up to 12 months without additional funding subject to our prior written approval.

UKRI-BBSRC will use a virtual meeting format and Discussion boards or other online platforms following UKRI's Virtual first policy.

UKRI-BBSRC consults with all participants to understand and cater for their requirements for participation.

Applicants are provided an outline of the key dates during the assessment period which will require their participation as soon as possible after the close date of the opportunity.

Committee members are provided an outline of the key dates during the assessment period which will require their participation upon invitation to participate so they can make an informed decision on their involvement.

Resume for Research and Innovation (R4RI) has an optional additions section, where applicants may provide context, such as details for career breaks.

Guidance to be provided to the committee to ensure appropriate assessment of applicant track record without bias against career breaks due to parental leave/caring responsibilities and others.

UKRI-BBSRC extends Pool of Experts membership period if Maternity leave is taken during their appointment.

## Race

*Positive impact or opportunity to benefit. Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown:*

*Negative impact. Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown:*

*Please explain the impact or why there is no impact including details of any evidence/data used.*

If an applicant's race or ethnicity became known to the committee or reviewers, there is the potential for unconscious bias, but at no point during the assessment process is this disclosed to reviewers or committee members.

Individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds are underrepresented as academic staff (HESA, 2022/23).

It is important that selection of committee members and peer reviewers is from a diverse community which represents the community and UK as a whole.



*Detail actions taken/ that will be taken to increase positive or reduce negative impact (or why action is not possible). Detail how you plan to measure the relevant outcomes and outputs of your activity.*

UKRI-BBSRC will monitor the diversity of committee members and applicants to ensure representation of the community and a diversity of opinion.

## Religion or belief

*Positive impact or opportunity to benefit. Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown:*

*Negative impact. Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown:*

*Please explain the impact or why there is no impact including details of any evidence/data used.*

Assessment timelines may fall over religious holidays resulting in applicants and/or committee members being unable to or requiring flexibility to participate.

*Detail actions taken/ that will be taken to increase positive or reduce negative impact (or why action is not possible). Detail how you plan to measure the relevant outcomes and outputs of your activity.*

UKRI-BBSRC ensures that religious observances are considered as much as possible when timetabling major activities.

Applicants are provided an outline of the key dates during the assessment period which will require their participation as soon as possible after the close date of the opportunity. Committee members are provided an outline of the key dates during the assessment period which will require their participation upon invitation to participate so they can make an informed decision on their involvement.

When applicable, UKRI-BBSRC ensures that the venue caters for all dietary requirements.

## Sexual orientation

*Positive impact or opportunity to benefit. Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown:*

*Negative impact. Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown:*

*Please explain the impact or why there is no impact including details of any evidence/data used.*

If an applicant's sexual orientation became known to the committee or reviewers, there is the potential for unconscious bias, but at no point during the assessment process is this disclosed to reviewers or committee members.

*Detail actions taken/ that will be taken to increase positive or reduce negative impact (or why action is not possible). Detail how you plan to measure the relevant outcomes and outputs of your activity.*

No actions.

## Sex

*Positive impact or opportunity to benefit. Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown:*

*Negative impact. Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown:*

*Please explain the impact or why there is no impact including details of any evidence/data used.*

The awards are open to all eligible researchers, even if they haven't held an award of this size before. However, given the greater proportion of males at the mid and advanced career stages (HESA, 2022/23) this could result in an increased proportion of applications from male project leads to the scheme.

The sLoLa scheme is predominantly a large team-science endeavour and a more even gender balance is seen in the whole of the core team.

Whilst Pool of Experts membership from which committee members are drawn is open to a wide range of backgrounds (academia, industry, early career researchers, and those with a nontraditional background) there is an uneven gender split in the Pool of Experts.

During committee building in preparation for a meeting, gender is considered to ensure equal representation as far as practicable.

If an applicant's sex became known to the committee or reviewers, there is the potential for unconscious bias, but at no point during the assessment process is this disclosed to reviewers or committee members.

*Detail actions taken/ that will be taken to increase positive or reduce negative impact (or why action is not possible). Detail how you plan to measure the relevant outcomes and outputs of your activity.*

UKRI-BBSRC will monitor the diversity of committee members to ensure representation of the community and a diversity of opinion.

To avoid potential unconscious bias, first names and titles of applicants will not be used during virtual meeting discussions; but instead, application and extranet numbers are used for discussing applications.

UKRI-BBSRC will ensure that the call text highlights the importance of a diverse team.

## Additional characteristics

### Geographical location and place (consider UK and international offices)

*Positive impact or opportunity to benefit. Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown:*

*Negative impact. Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown:*

*Please explain the impact or why there is no impact including details of any evidence/data used.*

Pool of Experts members may be prevented from participating due to the travel requirement associated for in person meetings

During committee building in preparation for a meeting, geographical spread across the UK is considered as far as practicable to ensure representation.

*Detail actions taken/ that will be taken to increase positive or reduce negative impact (or why action is not possible).*



UKRI-BBSRC will use a virtual meeting format and Discussion boards or other online platforms following UKRI's Virtual-first policy.

### Socio-economic status

None identified

### Education background

*Positive impact or opportunity to benefit. Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown:*

*Negative impact. Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown:*

*Please explain the impact or why there is no impact including details of any evidence/data used.*

Project lead applicants must have a contract of employment at lecturer level or equivalent.

The Pool of Experts membership from which committee members are drawn is open to a wide range of backgrounds (academia, industry, early career researchers, and those with a non-traditional background). However, some of these areas may be underrepresented.

*Detail actions taken/ that will be taken to increase positive or reduce negative impact (or why action is not possible).*

The Resume for Research and Innovation (R4RI) enables applicants to describe their track record, and additionally to describe any factors that provide context, such as career breaks.

Steps have been taken to minimise the potential impact of unconscious bias in the assessment process see below for more information in general or overarching impacts section.

### Parent/guardian responsibilities

*Positive impact or opportunity to benefit. Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown:*

*Negative impact. Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown:*

*Please explain the impact or why there is no impact including details of any evidence/data used.*

Committee members and interview candidates may find it difficult to participate if they have caring responsibilities.

*Detail actions taken/ that will be taken to increase positive or reduce negative impact (or why action is not possible).*

UKRI-BBSRC ensures that school holidays are considered where possible when timetabling assessment process and virtual meetings.

Expectations and dates for all aspects of the process are set out as far in advance as possible, allowing for preparation for participants to cover any caring responsibilities.

Where possible, UKRI-BBSRC aims to schedule meetings in standard working hours.

UKRI-BBSRC will pay the cost of additional caring responsibilities incurred while on UKRI-BBSRC business.

## Political opinion (Northern Ireland only)

None identified

## Other characteristics

None identified

## Are there general or overarching impacts on multiple groups? What actions will you take to increase positive impact, or reduce/mitigate negative impact?

UKRI is committed to embedding equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in all we do, so that we can maximise the impact of our research and innovation to involve and benefit all parts of society. Everything we fund must embrace a diversity of thought, people and ideas. Applicants are signposted to our EDI policies and provisions, to include guidance for those who have taken career breaks or need 'reasonable adjustments' to support them in the application process. The Resume for Research and Innovation (R4RI) has an optional additions section, where applicants may provide context, such as details for career breaks, alternative career paths, information about a disability or long-term health condition.

The UKRI-BBSRC sLoLa scheme adopts the standard UKRI Terms and Conditions of Research Grants, and these are designed to support equality, diversity and inclusion in all that we do. UKRI collates EDI data on grant applicants and publishes this annually. UKRI's Conflict of Interest policy sets out our expectations, alongside our commitment to the Nolan Principles and our Code of Conduct. Operationally we have particularly focussed on considering applicant and college members time commitments ensuring that, where possible, the preparation of applications, closing dates, assessment periods and all committee meetings take into consideration school holidays.

Materials for applicants and assessors are provided online, and in accessible formats where required. Virtual settings for committee training and for committee meetings and locations and venues for post-award engagements are designed to be physically and neurologically accessible, with agendas considerate of EDI, and all engagements incorporate reasonable adjustments as required to support applicants, assessors and award holders. In line with UKRI's reasonable adjustments guidance, where an application includes costs for reasonable adjustment, UKRI will ensure they are eligible, and these should be accepted without comment.

Reviewers must avoid any bias in their final reports due to gender, disability, age, racial or ethnic origin, sexual orientation and religious belief. Reviewers' comments must not break this policy or be defamatory or otherwise actionable.

The new UKRI Funding Service contains an expanded set of questions asked of applicants, which includes some or all, of the protected characteristics above. Data processing will be in line with data protection practice and use will be subject to the new UKRI Funding Service Data Protection Impact Assessment.

UKRI-BBSRC is dedicated to ensuring that the processes for sLoLa scheme are open and inclusive. Those engaged in the processes endeavour to conduct each stage in a fair manner and without prejudice or bias. In line with this we adopt the following principles:

## For applicants

The call is advertised widely to reach the largest possible audience. As this funding scheme is widely known the BBSRC's community, no pre-announcement was published. The call text and guidance clearly state the eligibility and assessment criteria and ask questions in a clear and descriptive way. The UKRI-BBSRC website conforms to accessibility requirements for websites, including the ability to adjust the text size or use a text reader on the page. UKRI-BBSRC supports applicants as much as possible, both before and after submission, to assist them in the application and assessment process. Applicants can contact the funding opportunity lead to discuss individual needs and support in the application process. Applicants can contact peer review support to provide sensitive information, for example unavailability due to parental leave.

## For assessors - reviewers

Reviewers are drawn from as wide a pool as possible. The guidance provided clearly states the expectations of reviewers. UKRI-BBSRC provides support to reviewers as much as possible, to assist them in the assessment process.

## For assessors - Committees

Everyone involved in the decision-making process has had training in Unconscious Bias to raise awareness of conditions that may impact on their decision-making. UKRI-BBSRC is committed to enabling participation for people with alternative work patterns, including reduced working hours. Committee members are asked to inform UKRI-BBSRC if they have any additional needs to enable attendance or participation. UKRI-BBSRC consults with Committee members on a regular basis regarding business improvements including a questionnaire sent after each meeting for feedback. UKRI-BBSRC consults with the Committee chairs informally throughout the committee meeting period. UKRI-BBSRC provides regular training and guidance on new or revised ways of working.

## Evaluation

### Final Decision

No negative or positive impact identified; therefore, activity will proceed.

### Review and sign off

What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the impact of your activity?  
UKRI-BBSRC will review this equality impact assessment annually to identify any further actions or interventions that are required to improve the diversity and inclusion of the sLoLa funding opportunity.

UKRI-BBSRC monitors, analyses and publishes data to better understand the diversity of our applicant and assessor community.

UKRI-BBSRC is proactive in increasing the diversity of our reviewers and Committee members. Committee membership for each meeting is published on the website after the funding decisions have been made and all outcomes communicated to applicants.

Further information on <https://bbsrc.ukri.org/about/equality-diversity/>

Next review date: March 2027



Will this EIA be published? Yes

Point of Contact: Dorothee Kommer

Sign off by (name and date) – Dorothee Kommer 0503/202

Before publishing or archiving your EIA, please remove any sensitive or confidential information such as personal identifiable data.

Once your EIA is completed or updated: Upload it to the UKRI central repository via [the EIA submission form](#)

EIAs for ODA and non-ODA ISPF programmes should be emailed to: [ISPF@ukri.org](mailto:ISPF@ukri.org)



Change and action log

Name	Date	Version	Change

Use the table below to define the actions you intend to take (or have taken) to address the indications of negative impact you have identified or to promote equality. Actions should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound).

Action	Deadline	Owner	How will it be monitored?	What is/will be the impact/outcome?