



# UK Research and Innovation Equality Impact Assessment Form

## About your activity

### Title of your activity

BBSRC Follow-on-Fund: 2026 round one

### Council or business area

Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC)

## Aims and objectives

The aim of the Follow-on-Fund (FoF) is to help researchers maximise the commercial, economic and societal benefits of their research. The BBSRC FoF is designed to enable researchers with a sound understanding of the market opportunity of their intellectual assets, to execute a defined programme of work that has clear objectives.

Projects considered through this programme must:

- Draw upon current or previous BBSRC supported research, or other type of BBSRC research investment, or both
- Enable research outputs to be further developed into practical application to deliver benefit and impact
- Seek to provide demonstrable benefit within the UK. Project outcomes may also provide benefits within international markets, provided that the primary aim is to provide significant benefits to the UK.

Key Features:

- There are two application rounds per year for this opportunity: FoF1 and FoF2
- Applications to FoF must be within BBSRC remit
- The FoF Committee meets twice per year



- Committee members are drawn from a college of experts from academia, industry and policy makers
- Committee members use their own knowledge and experience to evaluate the proposal against a set of assessment criteria
- The Committee ranks the proposal in that round to inform funding recommendations
- The Committee recommendations are considered internally by BBSRC and a final decision is taken on the list of awards to be supported

## **Who is affected?**

Applicants to the scheme, research offices, submitting organisations, Committee members and Chairs, UKRI-BBSRC secretariat and employees supporting the delivery of the funding opportunity, external national and international organisations with co-interest or offering co-funding/project partner funding for applications submitted to the opportunity.

## **What data and consultation have you used?**

We have consulted the following:

- Consultation of previous EIAs developed within BBSRC for comparable peer review activities
- Learning from best practice in objective decision making across BBSRC peer review activities, including previous FoF call and other initiative calls
- Consultation with BBSRC's EDI and peer review policy experts on barriers to inclusion, participation and potential bias in the decision-making process
- Consultation with BBSRC's Appointments Panel secretariat to ensure diversity of Committee membership
- Maintenance of two-way channels of communication between UKRI-BBSRC and external stakeholders
- External data e.g. Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data

## **Impact on specific groups**

### **Are there general impacts on multiple groups?**

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 Follow-on-Fund 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 Conflicts 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 Committee 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.

Committee members must avoid any bias in their final reports due to: gender, disability, age, racial or ethnic origin, sexual orientation and religious belief. Committee members 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 the Follow-on-Fund 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
- 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 via a dedicated inbox
- Applicants can contact peer review support to provide sensitive information, for example unavailability due to parental leave.



For Committee members:

- 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 Chair informally throughout the Committee meeting period
- UKRI-BBSRC provides regular training and guidance on new or revised ways of working

## Impact on protected characteristics

Complete the table for all characteristics. You only need to add details if there is a positive or negative impact.

Protected characteristic	Impact (positive, negative, none or unknown)	Details of impact	Actions to reduce negative or increase positive impact
Age	None		
Disability	Negative	<p>Committee members 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.</p> <p>If an applicant's disability became known to the Committee, there is the potential for unconscious bias but at no point during the assessment process is this disclosed to Committee members, with the exception of prior consented disclosure</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>Applicants with a disability (inclusive of physical or neurological) can cost for additional support required that is directly related to the grant.</p> <p>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</p>



		in the application by the applicant.	<p>-term health conditions that they may wish to be considered by Committee members.</p> <p>UKRI -BBSRC will:</p> <p>Use a hybrid meeting format with virtual Discussion boards for this opportunity.</p> <p>Respond to individual support needs on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>Ensure that electronic information is accessible.</p> <p>Gather information from meeting participants about any additional requirements they may need to fully participate.</p> <p>Ensure that plenty of breaks are built into the Committee meeting agenda.</p> <p>Allow for potential use of screen readers for participants of Committee meetings who are visually impaired.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Ensure that the venue is fully accessible to all Committee members.</p>
Gender reassignment	Negative	If an applicant's gender reassignment became known to the Committee members, there is the potential for unconscious bias, but at no point during the assessment process is this disclosed to Committee members.	BBSRC will ensure to use gender neutral language in all call materials and engagement with the community.
Marriage or civil partnership	None		



Pregnancy and maternity	Negative	<p>Committee members who are pregnant or on maternity leave may be discouraged from participating in Committee meetings.</p> <p>If an applicant's pregnancy or maternity leave status became known to the Committee, there is the potential for unconscious bias, but at no point during the assessment process is this disclosed to Committee members. Career breaks in applicant track records due to parental leave may result in the potential for unconscious bias</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>UKRI-BBSRC consults with all participants to understand and cater for their requirements for participation.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Resume for Research and Innovation (R4RI) has an optional additions section, where applicants may provide context, such as details for career breaks.</p> <p>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.</p>
Race	Negative	<p>If an applicant's race or ethnicity became known to the Committee members, there is the potential for unconscious bias, but at no point during the assessment process is this disclosed to Committee members.</p> <p>Individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds are underrepresented as academic staff (HESA,</p>	<p>UKRI-BBSRC will monitor the diversity of Committee members and applicants to ensure representation of the community and a diversity of opinion</p>



		2022/23). It is important that selection of Committee members is from a diverse community which represents the community and UK as a whole.	
Religion or belief	Negative	Assessment timelines may fall over religious holidays resulting in applicants and/or Committee members being unable to or requiring flexibility to participate.	<p>UKRI-BBSRC ensures that religious observances are considered as much as possible when timetabling major activities.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>When applicable, UKRI-BBSRC ensures that the venue caters for all dietary requirements. A quiet room for people needing quiet space or space for prayer will be made available.</p>
Sex	Negative	The awards are open to all eligible researchers. 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.	<p>UKRI-BBSRC will monitor the diversity of Committee members to ensure representation of the community and a diversity of opinion.</p> <p>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</p>



		During Committee selection, including ad hoc Committee members, in preparation for a meeting, gender is considered to ensure equal representation as far as practicable.	are used for discussing applications.  UKRI-BBSRC will ensure that the call text highlights the importance of a diverse team.
Sexual orientation	None		

## Impact on additional characteristics

Complete the table for all characteristics. You only need to add details if there is a positive or negative impact.

Additional characteristics	Impact (positive, negative, none or unknown)	Details of impact	Actions to reduce negative or increase positive impact
Geographical location and place	Negative	Committee members may be prevented from participating due to the travel requirement associated for in person meetings.  During Committee selection, including ad hoc Committee members, in preparation for a meeting, geographical spread across the UK is considered as far as practicable to ensure representation.	UKRI-BBSRC will:  Use a hybrid meeting format and virtual Discussion Boards following UKRI's Virtual-first policy
Socio-economic status	None		
Education background	Negative	Project lead applicants must have a contract of employment at lecturer level or equivalent.  Committee members are drawn from a wide range of	The Resume for Research and Innovation (R4RI) enables applicants to describe their track record, and additionally to



		backgrounds (academia, industry, early career researchers, and those with a non-traditional background). However, some of these areas may be underrepresented.	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 or guardian responsibilities	Negative	Committee members may find it difficult to participate if they have caring responsibilities	UKRI-BBSRC ensures that school holidays are considered where possible when timetabling discussion boards 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
Carer responsibilities	Negative	Committee members may find it difficult to participate if they have caring responsibilities	UKRI-BBSRC ensures that school holidays are considered where possible when timetabling discussion boards 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)	N/A		
Other characteristics	N/A		

## Final decision

### Make a decision on whether to proceed with the activity

State which one of the following outcomes applies and give a reason for your decision.

1. No negative or positive impact identified therefore, activity will proceed
2. Adapt or change the activity in a way which will eliminate negative impact or promote equality
3. Stop the activity because the evidence shows bias or negative impact towards one or more groups.
4. Barriers and impact identified, there appear to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the activity. Proceed with caution with this activity knowing the impact



## Review and sign off

### How will you monitor and review the impact of your activity?

UKRI-BBSRC will review this equality impact assessment as the programme progresses to identify any further actions or interventions that are required to improve the diversity and inclusion of the scheme.

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

### What is the EIA review date?

31/01/2027

### Contact

Elly Tyacke: [elly.tyacke@bbsrc.ukri.org](mailto:elly.tyacke@bbsrc.ukri.org)

### Will the EIA be published?

YES - EIAs should be published alongside relevant funding activities for example funding opportunities and events

### Who has this been signed off by?

Include the name, date and job title

## Submitting the form

You need to [submit the form to the central repository](#)

EIAs for the International Science Partnership Funds should be emailed to: [ISPF@ukri.org](mailto:ISPF@ukri.org)



## Change log

Include changes as you've reviewed the EIA. For example, based on input received from x at the announcement of opportunity stage, x was added

Name	Date	Version	Change
Elly Tyacke	25/02/2026	1	EIA created for BBSRC 2026 Follow-on-Funds, rounds 1 and 2
		2	
		3	

## Action plan

Add the actions you intend to take (or have taken) to address the negative impact you have identified. Actions should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound).

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