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# Final Evaluation of the UKRI Strategic Priorities Fund (SPF)

## Summary Report

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**This summary report presents high-level key findings. Readers should refer to the main report and technical annex for further analysis and information.**

**Acknowledgements:** The study team would like to thank the UKRI evaluation team and evaluation advisory group for their contributions to the study, as well as the hundreds of other individuals that have provided inputs throughout the evaluation via surveys, interviews and workshops.



## The Strategic Priorities Fund (SPF)

SPF was an **£831m UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)** Fund that aimed to strengthen the UK's research capacity as a world leader in Research and Innovation (R&I) and address gaps in the research funding system.

The 2015 Nurse Review singled out issues with the UK research system's sub-optimal (i) ability to respond quickly and materially to emerging challenges or opportunities, (ii) support for multi- and inter-disciplinary R&I (MIDRI), and (iii) awareness and coordination of strategic research efforts across councils and government. SPF committed to fund R&I that addressed each of these aspects, and defined its **high-level objectives** accordingly:

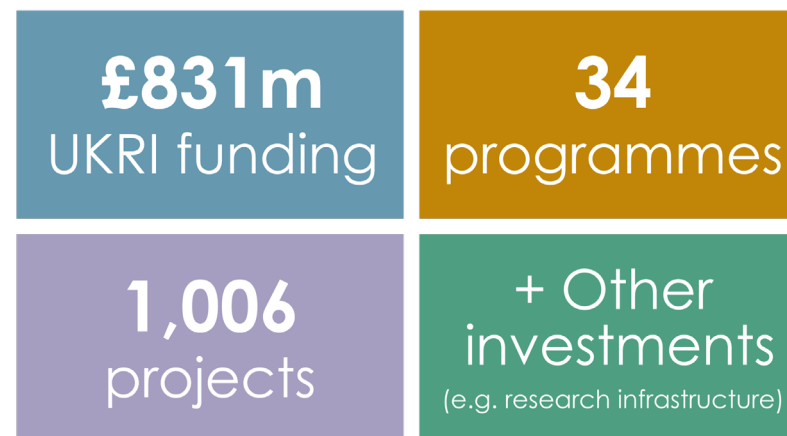
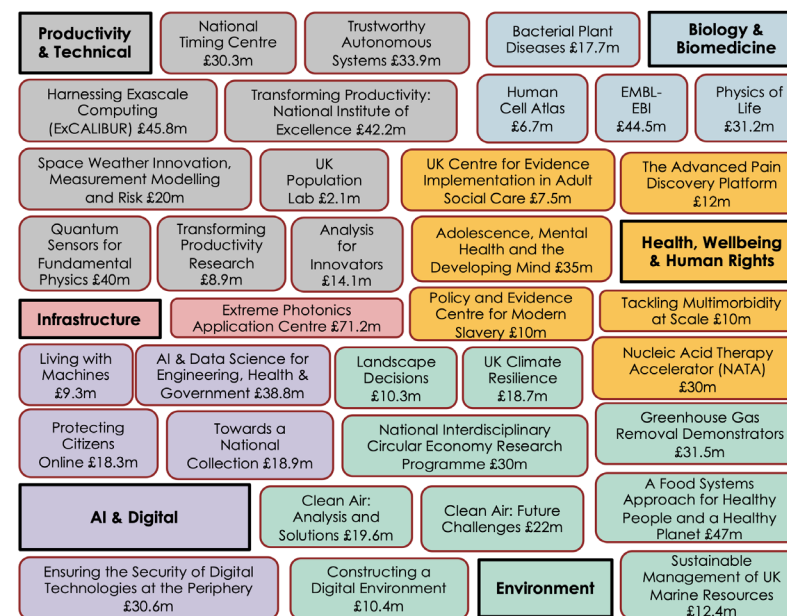
- **System Agility:** To respond to strategic priorities or opportunities
- **MIDRI:** To drive an increase in high-quality MIDRI
- **Government priorities:** To ensure UKRI's investments link up effectively with cross-departmental R&I priorities and opportunities

SPF has supported **34 programmes**, encompassing a diverse range of R&I activities at various stages of maturity, and from across thematic areas. These have gone on to support **1,006 individual projects** (plus other investments, such as infrastructure). Thirteen programmes were still ongoing when fieldwork for the final evaluation took place (March to July 2025).

**SPF was designed as a mechanism to allocate funding to a portfolio of programmes that each aligned with one or more of the Fund's objectives**, with a centralised process for funding allocation (to programmes) and a decentralised process for programme design and implementation.

Councils, Public Sector Research Establishments (PSRE) and other partners had a high degree of autonomy in running the programmes, while ongoing Fund-level involvement was light-touch, consisting mainly of oversight from the SPF Oversight Board, Working Group and central team, who monitored spend and progress with implementation, alongside evidence of emerging results.

**As such, and by design, the selection of the portfolio of programmes was the main mechanism that the Fund had at its disposal to provide the strategic steer to meet its high-level objectives. The programmes represent the main outputs at Fund level (as established in the Theory of Change).**



The project number (1,006) includes 670 research grants, 8 fellowships and 1 training grant awarded by Research Councils, plus 188 Innovate UK projects, and 139 Met Office grants. The terms projects, grants and awards are used interchangeably in this report.



## This Evaluation

UKRI commissioned Technopolis (with Science-Metrix, Ipsos MORI and CECAN) to undertake a **Fund-level evaluation of SPF**. The aims were to:

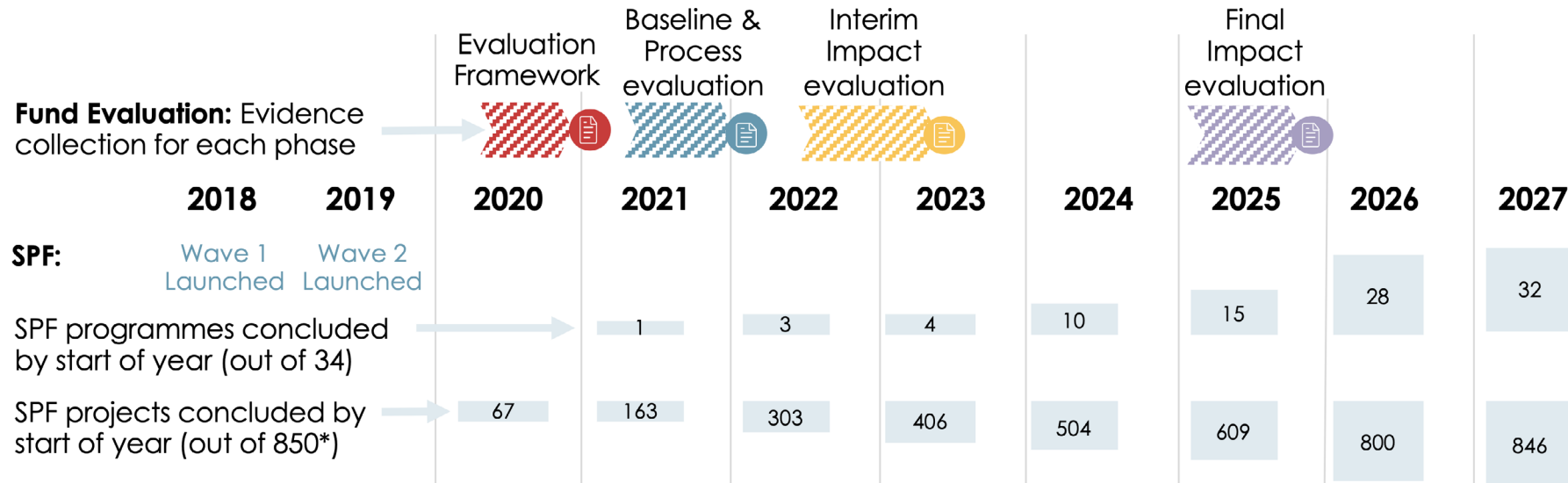
- demonstrate what the Fund has delivered for taxpayers
- help build the evidence base on 'what works' in supporting high quality MIDRI and ensuring R&I responds to opportunities and priorities
- inform ongoing improvements to the Fund or to similar initiatives

The study took place in phases from 2020 to 2025, with this document summarising the findings and conclusions from the final evaluation.

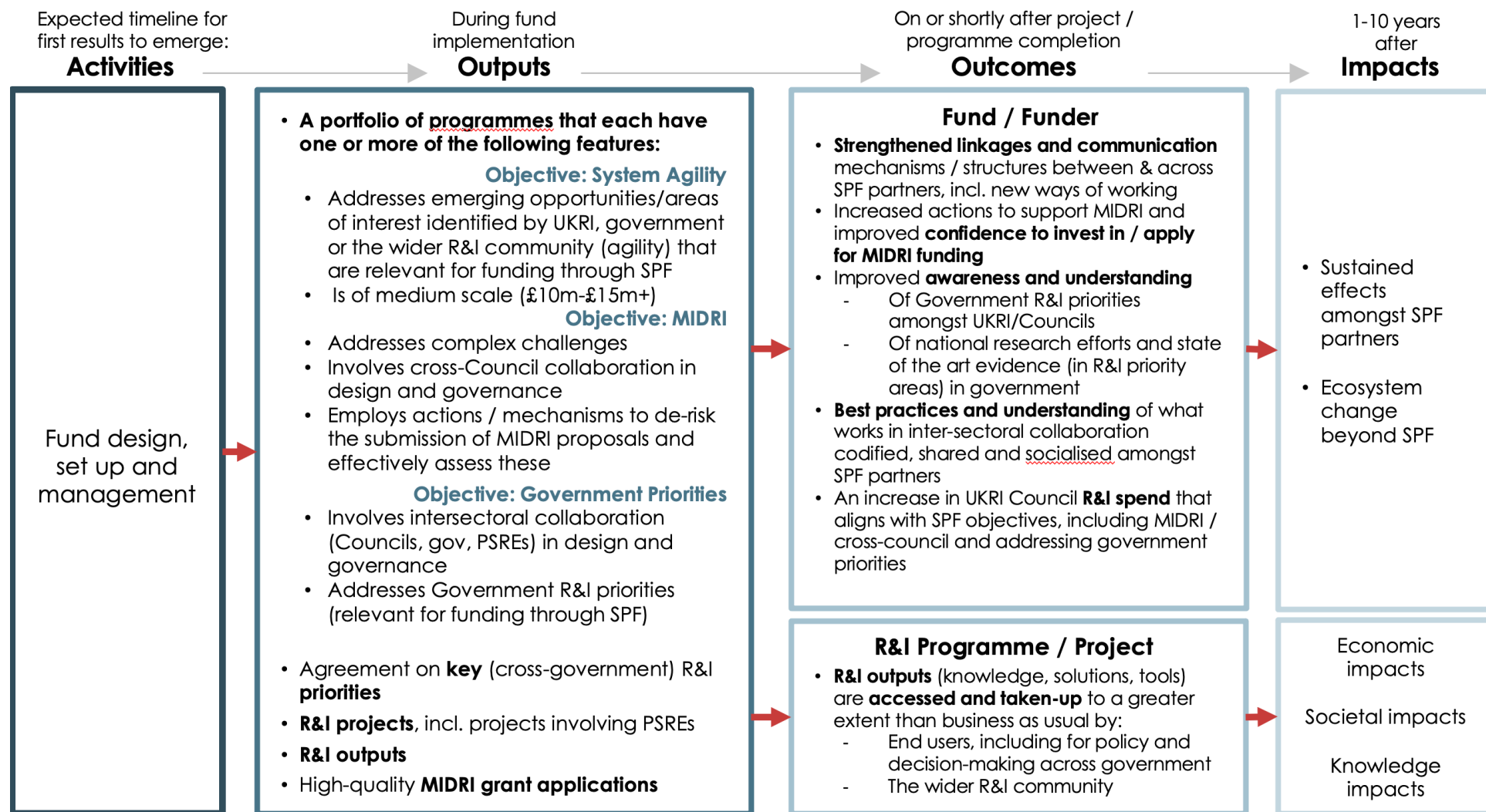
The evaluation focused on assessing changes that — to some extent — could be attributed to the Fund, using qualitative and quantitative evidence. It also drew comparisons with benchmarks, including 'business as usual' (e.g. other existing funding mechanisms) or what could have been achieved via other means, to assess additionality.

The evaluation used a **mixed-methods approach** grounded in a Theory of Change (see next page). Given the nature of the Fund, this placed a strong emphasis on SPF as a mechanism to drive high-level objectives. As a result the study focused on providing evaluative judgments to assess changes in process, knowledge, behaviour and collaboration.

Over 280 stakeholders were consulted during the final evaluation phase via interviews and surveys, including SPF programme leads, co-leads, partners, participants and Advisory Board Members, plus representatives from government departments and agencies. **Across all phases of the evaluation there were over 750 contributions from stakeholders via interviews, workshops and surveys.**



The final evaluation presents an early assessment of outcomes, given that some programmes are still ongoing (the last will close in 2029/30) and some outcomes may take 2-3 years to materialise after programme end.





## Main Findings

### SPF as an effective mechanism to ensure that the UK R&I system is able to respond to strategic priorities and opportunities (system agility)

SPF has achieved this objective to some extent via three mechanisms:

- **Scale:** SPF provided funding for medium scale programmes (£10m+), helping to address a gap in the funding system relating to medium scale, complex initiatives.
- **Timing:** SPF provided funding in between Spending Review allocations, at a time when R&I budgets (both of Councils and government departments) were reported to have been 'tight' and with existing funding mostly already committed, leaving limited room for new initiatives (at scale) to address emerging opportunities and priorities.
- **Neutral funding:** A key feature of this additional funding was that it represented 'neutral resources', i.e. it was not tied to a specific Council or government department's budget. This was a transitional enabler during UKRI's formation and was reported to have encouraged greater openness and flexibility, as well as facilitating the system to address problems/ challenges that crossed disciplinary boundaries. Councils reported being less proprietorial when developing and implementing SPF programmes, compared with business as usual at the time, and more focused on supporting the best opportunities, rather than securing a share of the budget for their own purposes.

This at-scale and 'neutral' funding enabled the design of programmes that address complex challenges, involve multiple stakeholders and take different approaches.

There is qualitative evidence that SPF funding allowed councils to address opportunities that might otherwise have been missed, both because of a lack of funding (at scale) in the system, and also because the Fund (through its objectives and selection criteria, plus its stated intention to support larger programmes) provided additional impetus to look across Councils and work more closely with government departments. This in turn encouraged and enabled programme ideas that addressed emerging opportunities and more complex problems, and did so through a multi-stakeholder approach.

Overall, the timing of SPF and scale of funding plus the autonomy given to programmes, all meant that there was also potential for greater agility at programme level (although this was not an explicit expectation of the Fund). The case studies prepared for the evaluation all include discussion of how programmes have evolved and adapted to changing needs and opportunities over their lifetime. Concretely, programmes were able to adapt to barriers and opportunities posed by COVID-19, as well as to changing user needs and priorities, and learning from early implementation.



## SPF as an effective mechanism to increase (high-quality) MIDRI

The evidence collected in this evaluation shows that **SPF helped to drive an increase in high-quality MIDRI at all stages**, from applications to research teams and publications, through to synthesis and dissemination of outputs.

**Main mechanism.** SPF has enabled a focus on supporting and enabling MIDRI across much of its programme portfolio via a 'light-touch' approach; making funding available for:

- programmes intended to support MIDRI, with councils retaining autonomy as to how best to execute this objective
- programmes that address cross-departmental government priorities and embed participation of different stakeholders across the programme cycle
- programmes that are led in collaboration by more than one Council

**Effect on processes.** This 'light touch' approach seems to have been effective in supporting high-level objectives:

- Most programmes (90% of those running calls) encouraged MIDRI applications through call text and criteria, with nearly half making MIDRI a requirement
- The majority of programme leads (68% of programmes with calls) reported success in attracting a sufficient number of high quality MIDRI proposals as a result, and nearly half of all SPF applications included two or more Fields of Research
- Nearly all programmes (90%) also put in place processes specifically designed for the assessment of high quality MIDRI applications.

### Examples of SPF programmes engaging with different communities

**Adolescence, mental health & the developing mind:** The Research and Stakeholder Advisory Board (RSAB) included government, academics, practitioners and third sector stakeholders. A Young Person's Advisory Group also fed into the RSAB.

**Clean Air:** Charitable/social enterprise organisations were more involved than was initially anticipated, in part due to the outreach activities of the programme Champion. There was also successful engagement between the programme and the health community, particularly with primary care and General Practitioners.

**Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre (MSPEC):** A key objective was to build and sustain an inclusive 'network of networks' of producers and users of modern slavery research. The Advisory Board comprised representatives from academia, civil society, NGOs, the Home Office, international organisations, and independent members. The Centre also involved people with lived experiences of modern slavery in call processes, in projects and in discussions with policymakers.

**Productivity Institute:** The Productivity Institute established 8 Regional Productivity Forums, which brought together over 130 people from different sectors (including small and large businesses and policy makers) to ensure that the institute heard from different perspectives and understood the productivity challenges and opportunities of different sectors, roles and regions.

**Tackling multimorbidity at scale:** Patient and public involvement experts were involved as proposal reviewers and panel members.

**UK Centre for Evidence Implementation in Adult Social Care:** Organisations in the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector, as well as people with lived experience of social care, were all involved in the call scoping and review process.



Councils reported via interviews that **encouraging MIDRI proposals is not new or unique to SPF**. However, the majority of funding elsewhere was single-Council. Even cross-Council initiatives can be limited by a lack of neutral funding (within SPF, neutral funding — i.e. not tied to a specific Council or government department budget — was found to reduce concerns about the balance of funding going to different communities). The feedback from programme leads does suggest that SPF has expanded efforts to encourage MIDRI, and stimulated councils to make this a stronger request (or requirement) within calls.

**These additional and enhanced efforts have not come without challenges.** Leads identified a number of issues and difficulties faced in implementing processes to effectively and efficiently assess MIDRI, which can be summarised into three areas:

- ▶ **Finding reviewers:** Finding sufficient MIDRI assessment specialists or reviewers with MIDRI experience. Linked to this is an issue of potential reviewers declining to contribute because they are not experts in all relevant fields (suggesting a need for explicit clarifications when approaching individuals, such as that presented above).
- ▶ **Assessing MIDRI-ness:** Identification of appropriate and genuine indicators of MIDRI (e.g. defining where one discipline ends / starts and therefore whether/the extent of MIDRI in a proposal) or achieving consensus on what a strong MIDRI proposal looks like. Also, assessing at the proposal stage if true interdisciplinary partnerships have been established – or whether bids are just framed as interdisciplinary without establishing genuine partnerships.
- ▶ **Efficiency of process:** Larger panels (covering multiple disciplines) ensure fully informed decisions but can be less efficient at ranking and recommendations.

### Adolescence, Mental Health and the Developing Mind (AMHDM) | Wave 2 | Lead: Medical Research Council (MRC)

The programme has supported a MIDRI approach through the design of its calls, which were informed by all three Councils and the Research and Stakeholder Advisory Board to ensure these were developed with different disciplines in mind and so that they would be applicable and appropriate to a wider group. The calls clearly stated that all three Councils were involved, which was key for encouraging bidders who would not otherwise engage in MRC calls.

The documentation for the call included multiple references to MIDRI. The programme team also delivered a webinar in which they promoted a MIDRI approach, supplied a frequently asked questions document that included a response on the level of interdisciplinarity expected, and supported the development of MIDRI research teams. The programme was clear that successful proposals would demonstrate the value of a MIDRI approach and avoid tokenism.

Interviewees noted that the requirement for a MIDRI approach was more explicit for this programme than previous calls they had been involved in, though they have historically supported MIDRI teams and projects.

Given the nature of mental health research (i.e. the nature vs nurture debate), the research community was open and responsive to using a MIDRI approach.

Source: Technopolis (2025). AMHDM case study



**Effect on outputs.** The processes to attract and assess high quality MIDRI proposals contributed to:

➤ **High quality MIDRI applications.** Of the 19 leads of SPF Programmes that had received MIDRI proposals to calls (and responded to our questionnaire), more than half (58%) reported attracting more MIDRI proposals than is usual, while two-thirds (68%) reported attracting a sufficient number that were of high quality. In general, those involved in managing SPF programmes were positive about the response to efforts to encourage MIDRI teams / projects.

➤ **MIDRI-ness among SPF projects.** Analysis of the proportion of applications to SPF programmes that included two or more Fields of Research suggests that nearly half could be classified as MIDRI (46%, or 1,320 of 2,892). This is slightly higher than seen across UKRI, outside of SPF, during the same period (44%).

➤ **A high degree of multidisciplinary and intersectoral collaboration in SPF publications.** We found that papers from SPF projects have a degree of multidisciplinary (diversity of authors' disciplinary background) that is above the world average (1.35 vs 1), and above rates for UKRI and UK papers (1.10 and 1.09 respectively). These differences are statistically significant (95% confidence interval), and results are consistent with evidence at the baseline and interim stage.

Evidence also shows that SPF attracted researchers with varying degrees of experience of producing multidisciplinary papers, with 33% of them having produced one or more papers with a low degree of multidisciplinary in the 5 years prior to SPF involvement, 24% with a medium degree of multidisciplinary and 44% with a high degree of multidisciplinary. This shows SPF has attracted researchers that are active (to varying degrees) in multidisciplinary work.

There is also evidence that SPF publications achieve higher citation impact in comparison with benchmarks (SPF papers achieve a field-weighted citation score of 1.65 versus 1.34 for UK papers more generally). Also, the multi-disciplinary nature of SPF programmes and outputs seems to have contributed to higher uptake among policy makers (discussed below).

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**Measuring multidisciplinary:** The Multidisciplinary Index (MI) is used to measure the diversity of the co-participants' disciplinary background, which aims to capture the collaborative aspect in cross-disciplinary research. Specifically, it captures the average multidisciplinary of publications linked to a given group or entity. Multidisciplinary at project level was normalised using paper-level multidisciplinary in the relevant subfields (considering the subfields of the projects' papers) using the world level as a reference (i.e. the whole of Scopus provides the value of 1).

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Table 1 Multi and interdisciplinary research indicators of SPF papers and comparators, published 2006 to 2024

Papers	Publications	Publications	MI	MI
	2006-17	2018-24	2006-17	2018-24
UK papers	1,805,823	1,403,415	1.09	1.09
UKRI papers	242,636	267,703	1.11	1.10
<b>SPF papers</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4,277</b>	<b>n/c</b>	<b>1.35</b>

**System level effects (impacts).** There are early indications that SPF's MIDRI focus could have longer term and wider (ecosystem) effects based on evidence from programme leads who report using their learnings from SPF in other programmes/ activities. The relatively small scale of SPF vis-à-vis the UKRI portfolio (1-2% of grants awarded between 2018 and 2024) may limit a system level effect.



## SPF as an effective mechanism to address government R&I priorities

SPF has helped to address government R&I priorities, through additional spend, government department involvement in programmes and projects, and the dissemination, uptake and use of outputs developed under SPF programmes.

### Additional spend

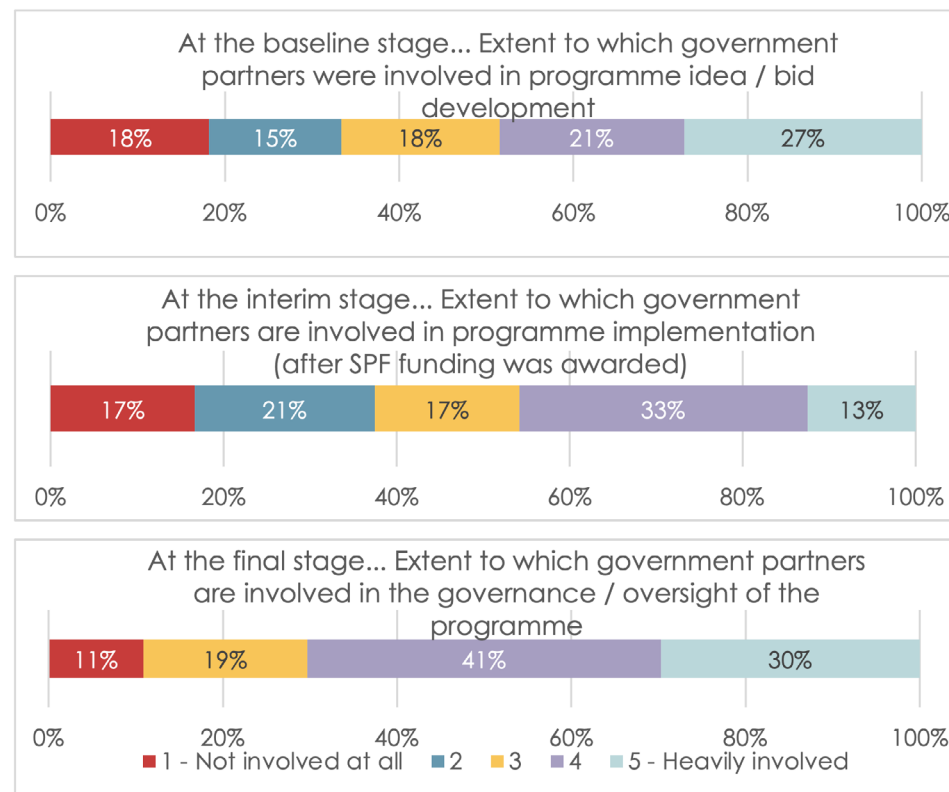
Based on comparisons of historical UKRI investment and SPF, we conclude that SPF increased UKRI spend in several priority areas, including research on productivity, modern slavery, bacterial plant diseases, and mental health (in comparison with the level of funding before and alongside SPF). There is likely to be a degree of SPF additionality in this increased level of spend. However, it is difficult to ascertain the extent to which these funds would not have been available to these areas in the absence of SPF, as it is not possible to measure the counterfactual scenario.

### Encouragement to involve government departments in designing programmes to address their priorities.

SPF encouraged programmes to involve government departments and agencies in their design, scoping and ongoing implementation. Evidence from across the different phases of evaluation demonstrates that this has been the case, with 80% - 90% of programmes reporting government involvement in preparatory stages, programme implementation and ongoing programme governance and oversight (at baseline, interim and final evaluation stages respectively).

Also, our assessment reveals that the process of priority identification was improved in Wave 2 programme selection, where SPF offered an opportunity to use the Areas of Research Interest (ARIs) to identify areas of cross-departmental priorities. This also contributed to further discussions on how to improve them.

Figure 1 Extent to which government partners were involved in SPF programme ideas/bid development and in subsequent programme implementation



Source: Technopolis, based on responses from 33 leads of SPF programmes (baseline evaluation, 2021), 24 leads (interim evaluation, 2022), and 27 leads (final evaluation, 2025). Given the slightly different portfolio of programmes that have responded at these points in time, one should not draw strong conclusions in comparing the specific proportions reporting each answer option at the different stages



## Dissemination of knowledge

Almost all programmes put in place appropriate and targeted mechanisms to distribute findings to relevant government departments, and all of the government representatives consulted for the final evaluation had seen outputs emerging from SPF that were of very high quality and addressed originally identified needs.

## Uptake

Engagement in design, alignment with priorities, and dissemination of results have contributed to high uptake of knowledge outputs. This is an expected outcome of SPF and evidenced via assessment by programme leads, citation impact analysis, interviews with government departments and concrete examples of uptake.

Citations of SPF publications in policy-related literature (PRL) is higher than other UKRI grants [1.71 vs 1.20, where 1 is the overall UK average]. These differences are statistically significant (95% confidence interval). This level of engagement, alignment and dissemination has also translated into policy effects (see below, Policy, Economic, and Societal impacts).

Table 2 Total number of publications (2006-2024) and share cited in PRL

Publications	Publications 2006-17	Publications 2018-24	Share of papers cited in PRL 2006-17	Share of papers cited in PRL 2018-24
UK papers	1,805,823	1,403,415	1.00	1.00
UKRI papers	242,636	267,703	1.14	1.20
<b>SPF papers</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>4,277</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>1.71</b>

Source: Computed by Science-Metrix using Scopus, Overton and Gateway to Research (GtR) data (2025). Results are normalised against the average of UK papers.

## Examples of contributions to government policy and practice



**City Packs:** City packs produced by the programme have now become part of the local authority climate service. Packs were developed using UK Climate Projections data to provide high-level, non-technical local summaries of the future climate of UK cities and regions.



**Nucleic Acid Therapy Accelerator programme:** Programme findings and direct contributions were incorporated in the England Rare Diseases Action Plan (2025), which sets out how the DHSC and delivery partners will implement the UK Rare Diseases Framework in England.



**Transforming UK Food Systems for Healthy People and a Healthy Environment:** Principles and concepts of the programme were used to build the second part of the National Food Strategy for England (2025).



**Trustworthy Autonomous Systems (TAS):** Information from the TAS Hub was used to inform the development of the Transport AI Action Plan (2025) which sets out the approach DfT is taking to working with AI. The document is aimed at encouraging the transport sector to engage with the department in adopting opportunities for AI to improve the effectiveness, efficiency and inclusion of transport delivery systems.



**UK Climate Resilience:** Informing the Climate Change Risk Assessments Evidence. A Chief Scientific Advisor (CSA) reported that the programme has helped to build the evidence for Climate Change Risk Assessments (CCRA), with several outputs already used to directly inform the CCRA Evidence Report (2022). Seminars raising awareness of outputs and bringing together the research and end users have been well attended and improved understanding.

**Priority setting and SPF legacy:** In preparation for Wave 2, the Government Office for Science (GO-Science) led work to create greater co-ordination between departments (via CSAs) in their dialogue with UKRI over the identification of priorities and the development of SPF bids. Specifically, they employed a multi-step process to identify and consolidate cross-departmental priorities, supporting the development of programme proposals.

The SPF prioritisation process also provided a first test of the new government ARIs. The Nurse Review challenged government departments to take a more strategic approach to their R&D programmes and relationships with academia, which resulted in the Cabinet Office and GO-Science asking departments to begin publishing their ARIs from 2018, encompassing both near- and longer-term needs (the latter typically involving closer links with academia and cross-departmental collaboration).

SPF Wave 2 was considered the first real test of these ARIs and GO-Science reported that this had revealed that they were generally not yet mature enough to be used as the basis for determining cross-departmental priorities. As a consequence, GO-Science (in coordination with the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, EPSRC) established two ARI fellows to promote academic-policy engagement around the ARIs, including to streamline and make sustainable the process of producing and updating these documents.

**System level effects (impacts).** There is also qualitative evidence of increased understanding between councils and government departments on how to engage and collaborate beyond SPF, as well as some early examples of new joint initiatives to address government R&I priorities (an expected outcome of SPF).

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### Priority-setting process (Wave 2)

CSAs individually came up with lists of priorities and discussed these in their weekly meetings to arrive at one consolidated list. CSAs then discussed this list of priorities at a meeting with UKRI, alongside a developing list of (~80) potential Council bids. The CSAs looked for commonalities and alignment – identifying around 50 proposals.

A second meeting then considered a revised list of 23 proposals, with 8 identified as top priorities. GO-Science had further meetings with 11 government departments, all of whom were also engaging directly with the relevant councils in relation to SPF.

A final list of priority proposals (for CSAs) was established and shared with UKRI for the SPF assessment process. This included 13 top priorities (each with a department lead) and 5 second tier priorities. Some related closely to proposals originally identified, while others had evolved or represented amalgams of original ideas.

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## Wider impacts

**Societal impacts.** Most of the government representatives interviewed indicated that the outputs emerging from SPF programmes have been relevant to the policy work they are doing, and in many instances closely aligned with policy priorities highlighted in sector plans, government reviews and action frameworks.

This is further corroborated by citation analysis of SPF publications in policy related literature and qualitative evidence.

As shown above, research outputs and insights emerging from SPF programmes are already helping to inform government policy decisions and practice.

Those concrete examples show how SPF programmes and projects' findings are being used to inform policy action plans, or practical guideline documents, in a variety of areas, from future health to biodiversity and climate challenges. They showcase the role played by research knowledge in informing policy decisions.

**Further societal impact.** No additional empirical evidence of wider impact was found at this stage (via surveys, interviews or case studies), beyond the uptake of SPF insights in policy and practice. Similarly, while programme level evaluations highlighted programme ambitions to support societal, health and environmental impacts, no impact assessment (so far) was able to provide empirical evidence on social outcomes achieved and to attribute them to a specific SPF programme. From a Theory of Change perspective, impacts are only expected to emerge after programme completion.

**Economic impact.** Multiple programme evaluation reports mentioned that it is still premature to fully assess the economic impact of the programmes. However, some stated that they expect programme activity to result in increased productivity and efficiency savings for companies, and the economy as a whole.

Some more specific examples of economic benefits were highlighted at the individual participant or business level (including improved commercial opportunities and a small number spin-outs start-up companies).

### Value for Money assessment – examples from individual programme evaluations

**Analysis for Innovators (A4I) | Wave 1 | Lead: Innovate UK (IUK) (£14 million).** As part of the evaluation, companies were asked about the financial benefits they had seen one year after project completion. Over a third (35%) of participants stated that they had already seen a financial benefit as a result of their A4I project, totalling £105.3 million. The report hasn't scaled up the benefits to the full population of applicants.

**EMBL-EBI | Wave 1 | Biotechnology & Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) (£45m).** Contingent valuation was used to measure the value users place on a freely provided service by asking what they would be willing to pay in a hypothetical market situation. For EMBL-EBI managed data resources that was an estimated £1.25 billion per annum.

**Ensuring the Security of Digital Technologies at the Periphery (SDTaP) | Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) (£31 million).** It is estimated that the SDTaP programme has a potential to deliver a high Return-on-Investment. Based on stakeholder survey results, the programme may generate between £0.7 to 4.4 billion of potential economic gains to the UK.

**Towards a National Collection (TaNC) | Wave 2 | Lead: Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) (£18.9 million).** Based on a willingness to pay approach and analysis of questionnaires completed by over 8,000 individuals it is estimated that Total Economic Value for the service is around £425 million per annum, once results are extrapolated to the full UK adult population.



## Learnings



### Future initiatives

The experiences of SPF and evidence collected in the evaluation provide some lessons for future interventions to consider.

With regard to **supporting and enabling MIDRI**, future interventions could benefit from:

- Standardising processes to further facilitate cross-council collaboration
- Investing time and resources in setting up (new) MIDRI partnerships
- Allowing sufficient time for effective integration of knowledge across disciplines

With regard to **addressing government R&I** priorities, future interventions could benefit from:

- Building upon the process of priority identification used for second wave of SPF bids
- Strengthening co-development processes between government and councils via dedicating more time to programme scoping
- Planning for and dedicate resources throughout the programme to maintain engagement
- Ensuring strong (and targeted) engagement with government in later phases of projects and programmes, including consideration of the appropriate nature of outputs and dissemination activities to engage with these potential end users



### Evaluation

**Multistage evaluations.** The development of the SPF evaluation over time, alongside the implementation of the Fund has allowed it to (1) Collect timely evidence on key indicators (including baselines), (2) Incorporate learnings from early stages of the evaluation (in relation to findings and the methodological approach), and (3) Provide early evidence to inform investment decisions.

There is **a trade-off in multi-stage evaluations**: as more time passes it is possible to capture more (and more robust) evidence on outputs and outcomes, but it also becomes increasingly difficult to capture comprehensive primary data as people change positions or move onto different activities and priorities as programmes close. Also, as time passes and policy priority changes, the original focus and evaluation questions may become dated. We suggest:

- Implementing a dynamic approach to capturing primary data as the end of a Fund and its programmes approaches (rather than at a single point, at the final evaluation stage)
- Focusing later stages of evaluation on mobilising secondary data sources, and limiting primary data collection
- Resourcing (Fund) evaluation studies such that the majority of efforts are dedicated to earlier stages (early findings and interim evaluation)

**Mobilising programme level evaluations.** At the outset, the Fund level evaluation was designed to mobilise evidence from programme level evaluations. However, and despite efforts from the Fund evaluation team and UKRI, the individual evaluations did not cover Fund level questions in a systematic way. Going forward UKRI may consider:

- Making it a requirement of funding that evaluations capture key Fund level questions.
- Delaying final Fund evaluations until at least half of the programme portfolio has conducted their own final evaluations