

BBSRC-NSF/SBE Application Guidance

This is a guidance document created to assist applicants to the UKRI NSF-SBE scheme in the completion of their application to BBSRC. It is specific to the scheme and should be used in conjunction with the opportunity specific guidance found on the funding finder and information that can be found on the following web pages:

The UKRI central scheme web page can be found here [UKRI-SBE lead agency opportunity – UKRI](#)

The SBE scheme web page can be found here [SBE-UKRI Lead Agency Opportunity \(SBE-UKRI\) | NSF - U.S. National Science Foundation](#)

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Full Application Stage

Please note, this scheme requires submission of an expression of interest before proposals are invited to full stage submission.

The guidance here is only applicable if a full application is invited following an expression of interest. Applications submitted to BBSRC Lead agency that have not been invited to submit a full application will be rejected.

Full applications (both the UK and US components) will undergo a single peer review process lead by either BBSRC or NSF/SBE, depending on where the application is submitted.

Applications will be reviewed in competition with other unsolicited applications or with applications received in response to a specific opportunity by the lead funding agency. That is, applications submitted to the lead agency management plan agreement will not undergo a special review process.

Applications will be peer reviewed in accordance with the lead agency's criteria. While not identical, NSF/SBE and BBSRC ask reviewers to evaluate the proposed project on both its scientific and/or intellectual merit.

Read the [How we make decisions – UKRI](#) for more information on UKRI assessment processes and refer to the specific opportunity for more details.

Full submission process to BBSRC – UK-led applications only

All BBSRC Lead Agency applications will be assessed through 'BBSRC standard research grant: applicant-led mode' opportunities. Please check the UKRI funding finder site [Opportunities – UKRI](#) for the most up to date opportunity information.

Each application will be assessed by one of the [research committees \(A-D\)](#) in the manner detailed on the opportunity and, in competition with all other applications submitted to the same opportunity.

Full applications must be submitted within one year following an invitation from the expression of interest.

You are reminded that the UK component of projects submitted to this lead agency agreement through the BBSRC responsive mode must not exceed £1M, and that the BBSRC awards 80% of full economic costs. Additional guidance can be found on the UKRI-SBE lead agency funding finder opportunity at [UKRI-SBE lead agency opportunity – UKRI](#).

We allow for a +/- 10% change in budget between the expression of interest and full stage application submission. If there is a larger change in budget, please contact NSF/SBE (sbe-ukri@nsf.gov) and BBSRC (bbsrc.iru@bbsrc.ukri.org) to explore whether this is possible.

Applications should include all the documentation expected for a standard research grant: applicant-led mode application, as well as an additional document relating to the NSF/SBE budget. Please use the template found on the UKRI-SBE lead agency funding finder opportunity page here [UKRI-SBE lead agency opportunity – UKRI](#).

Studentships or student resource may not be requested, or included, on BBSRC research grant applications so please ensure the UK side does not include doctoral students.

Supplementary guidance for completion of application sections

Supplementary guidance for completing TFS sections specific for NSF-SBE applications is provided below, however this is not comprehensive nor exhaustive. You must ensure you also read the guidance and respond to the questions for the opportunity as directed on The Funding Service (TFS).

- See the TFS guidance for advice on completing applications to BBSRC [How applicants use the UKRI Funding Service – UKRI](#)
- Please check the relevant sections of the [Guidance for applicants – BBSRC – UKRI](#) before applying.
- Please also refer to How to Apply section of the relevant opportunity webpage

1. Title:

Title should be prefaced with “SBE-UKRI”

2. Summary:

This should cover the whole application (both UK and US components).

3. Core team

Please only provide details of the UK applicants in this section.

4. BBSRC scheme

Please state the corresponding number for the SBE-NSF scheme as indicated in the question. Please upload the following documentation as a PDF:

- US budget form - the budget should use the [US budget form template](#).

Costs must be fully justified and costed in USD.

5. BBSRC remit classification

Select the most suitable research committee for your application (A-D).

6. Vision

Describe your application through a single integrated narrative, encompassing both the UK and US contributions.

7. Approach

Describe your application through a single integrated narrative, encompassing both the UK and US contributions.

8. Applicant and team capability to deliver

Please discuss both the UK and US teams and make sure to name the members of the US team and their respective research organisations.

9. Project partners

Complete this section for any project partners (both UK and US components). You must also name the US applicants to be funded by NSF/SBE if successful here. Include the total costs requested from NSF/SBE as project partner in-kind contributions.

10. Project Partners: statement of support

Complete this section for any project partner including the named US applicants.

11. Resources and Cost

Costs and justification for the UK component should be provided here. Costs must be submitted in £. The UK component of projects submitted to this lead agency agreement through the BBSRC responsive mode must not exceed £1M FEC, BBSRC awards 80% of full economic costs.

Costs being requested from NSF/SBE by US-based applicants should not be entered into the Funding Service. The resources and cost justification should however include a clear summary and justification of the US costs sought from NSF/SBE, making it clear that these will be funded by NSF/SBE if the project is successful.

12. Data Management and Sharing

This should cover the whole application (both UK and US components).

13. Facilities

Only complete this section if you are using a facility from the [facility information list \(DOCX, 35KB\)](#). Otherwise enter 'N/A'

14. Ethics and responsible research and innovation (RRI)

This should cover the whole application (both UK and US components).

15. Animal involvement and the '3Rs'

You must complete this section about how your proposed project will involve or impact animals. This should cover the whole application (both UK and US components).

16. Genetically modified organisms and biological risk

You must complete this section if your project will include genetically modified organisms or genetic technologies. This should cover the whole application (both UK and US components).

17. Human participation in health-related research

You must complete this section about whether your project will include human participation. This should cover the whole application (both UK and US components).

18. Trusted research and innovation (TR&I)

This should cover the whole application (both UK and US components). You must include the named US applicants.

Contact details

Please provide as much information as possible in your email to ensure a rapid response.

For queries regarding BBSRC eligibility, contact: eligibility@bbsrc.ukri.org

For queries regarding BBSRC remit, contact: remit@bbsrc.ukri.org

For queries regarding NSF/SBE eligibility, contact: sbe-ukri@nsf.gov

For queries regarding NSF/SBE remit, contact: sbe-ukri@nsf.gov

For queries regarding the scheme, contact: SBELeadAgency@ukri.org

For TFS system queries please email: support@funding-service.ukri.org

Frequently Asked Questions

Eligibility

Q. What are the eligibility criteria for UK partners?

UK applicants must be eligible for BBSRC standard research grant: applicant-led funding. Further information about eligibility criteria can be found [Find out if you can apply for funding – UKRI](#). Queries concerning eligibility of the UK partner should be sent to eligibility@bbsrc.ukri.org with SBELeadAgency@ukri.org cc'd.

BBSRC is unable to provide guidance on the eligibility of US partners.

Q. What are the eligibility criteria for US partners?

US applicants must be eligible for NSF/SBE funding. Queries should be sent to sbe-ukri@nsf.gov.

Q. Are applicants based in other countries eligible to apply?

No, only UK and US based applicants are eligible.

Funding

Q. Will BBSRC pay costs incurred by the US partners?

No, funding for activities undertaken by US partners will be met solely by the NSF/SBE. Likewise, NSF/SBE will not fund costs incurred by the UK partners; these will be met by BBSRC.

Q. At full stage, should costs for the US component of the project be included in the BBSRC responsive mode application?

A copy of the proposed, justified NSF/SBE budget request from the US members of the collaboration must be filled in using the NSF budget form template. This must be uploaded to the application in TFS as a PDF under the 'BBSRC scheme' section.

Costs being requested from NSF/SBE for US based investigators must not be entered in the TFS fields for UKRI FEC.

Costs for the UK component of the project must be requested from BBSRC by completing the relevant finance fields of the TFS application as normal.

Remit

Q. Is my application within remit for this scheme?

Projects must be within BBSRC and NSF/SBE remits. Further information about BBSRC remit can be found on the [Remit, programmes and priorities – BBSRC – UKRI](#). Queries concerning BBSRC remit should be sent to remit@bbsrc.ukri.org

BBSRC is unable to provide guidance on NSF/SBE remit, please contact sbe-ukri@nsf.gov

Q: Which BBSRC Research Committee should I apply to?

Applications should be submitted to the committee you feel would be best placed to assess your application (A-D). Following submission, BBSRC will check your choice in line with the remit of the committee and make a final decision as to which committee will assess your application.

Details of the research committees can be found at [Research Committees – UKRI](#)

Q. Will applications submitted to BBSRC be reviewed by the usual research Committees or will a separate panel be used?

When BBSRC is the lead agency, all applications submitted will be assessed by the four committees (A-D) in the usual manner and in competition with all other applications submitted to the opportunity. Applicants should indicate which research committee is likely to be best able to assess the work proposed in the BBSRC schemes section.

Other

Q: Where do I submit my Full Stage application?

All BBSRC Lead Agency applications will be assessed through 'BBSRC standard research grant: applicant-led mode' opportunity. All information and documentation

should be submitted to BBSRC through UKRI's TFS. Applications received via UKRI's TFS will be managed following BBSRC internal processes.

Q. What if I have difficulty meeting the stated deadlines, or submitting the full application within one year of receiving the EOI acceptance?

BBSRC applicant-led responsive opportunity now operates without deadlines.

If more time is needed for full application preparation above the provided one year, an additional EOI may be required.

Q. Do applications under the NSF/SBE lead agency scheme receive any uplift during the assessment process or would the applications qualify for other applicant-led mode schemes, e.g. New Investigator, IPA, LINK?

No, applications will be assessed in competition with all other applications and will receive no additional uplift. Schemes such as New Investigator, IPA and LINK are not applicable to applications submitted to the NSF/SBE lead agency scheme. Please do not submit the full application to the BBSRC New investigator award: applicant-led mode opportunities.

Q. Will BBSRC share information I submit to the call with NSF/SBE?

Yes. As outlined in the call text and lead agency management plan, for the purposes of managing the administration of the lead agency scheme full stage applications will be shared between BBSRC and NSF/SBE staff.

Q. What happens if my application is recommended for funding?

If successful, applicants will need to submit a copy of their application to the non-lead agency before funding can be awarded. No further peer review will be undertaken.

Q. If funded, will the UK and US components need to have identical start dates?

No, NSF/SBE and BBSRC do not require identical start dates for the UK and US components. However, we would expect the UK and US component to have aligned timeframes to enable a true partnership to take place.

Q. My question is not answered above or in the information available of the BBSRC and NSF/SBE website. What should I do?

Please contact SBELeadAgency@ukri.org

For NSF/SBE queries please contact sbe-ukri@nsf.gov.

Additional information

Data Protection

UKRI BBSRC carries out the processing of personal data in accordance with the UK Data Protection Act 1998/General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) www.ico.org.uk.

The information you provide for the UKRI-SBE Lead Agency will only be used by BBSRC and its partner, NSF/SBE for the purpose of managing the call.

The personal data you have provided will be Name, Research Organisation, Job Title, and Email address. Information gathered will be used by BBSRC to manage applications and provide feedback.

The personal data provided will be retained on our systems for as long as is required to carry out processing for the purposes outlined above.

By providing your information you are consenting to its use as detailed above. You can access a copy of the UKRI Data Protection Policy here: [Data protection policy – UKRI](#).

Change log

v1.0 21/01/2025

Document created.

v1.1 13/10/2025

Amended to accessible format, updated contact list and details of inclusion of international project partners on applications

v1.2 01/07/2026

Text updated to align with applicant-led responsive removal of deadlines, and introduction of structured ethics, TR&I and animal use question sets.

v1.3 01/07/2026

Formatting updated for accessibility.