

UK Research and Innovation Equality Impact Assessment Form

About your activity

Title of your activity

BBSRC Connecting Culture Fund

Council or business area

Skills and Careers Unit, BBSRC

Aims and objectives

1. The Connecting Culture Fund provides a mechanism to support cross-institute working which is in addition to the activities identified by individual institutes in their Research Culture Statements and funded via the Institute Development Grant or other routes.
2. The objectives of the Connecting Culture Fund are to:
 - support BBSRC-sponsored institutes to foster cross-institutional activities and practice-sharing to further their research culture ambitions
 - support knowledge exchange between institutes and other research organisations (e.g. universities) on 'what works' in research culture within biosciences

This is an open call where project ideas are collaboratively created by members of the Institute Research Culture Forum, which brings together culture leads at the BBSRC strategically funded institutes. Projects will be led by the institutes and submitted to The Funding Service to be assessed by a pool of assessors, to ensure the projects meet the aims of the Connecting Culture Fund, any costs are adequately justified and the team are capable of delivering on their project with sufficient support from their host organisations.

Who is affected?

People or groups affected by the Connecting Culture Fund include:

- Members of the BBSRC Institutes Research Culture Forum

- Institute staff leading, co-leading or participating on individual projects
- Any project partners or collaborators who engage with this funding opportunity
- UKRI-BBSRC employees working on the programme, including strategic and operational leads, project officers and members of the BBSRC Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) team
- Institute staff and students who engage in the activities funded by this opportunity (for example, by participating in training, networking events or other activities)
- Individuals involved in the assessment of project proposals

What data and consultation have you used?

The following information and groups have been reviewed and consulted:

- BBSRC Institute Research Culture Statements and other information relating to research culture that was included in the 2022/23 Institute Assessment Exercise
- BBSRC Institute Research Culture Forum
- BBSRC Policy team
- BBSRC EDI Expert Advisory Group
- BBSRC EDI Action Plan 2022-25
- BBSRC Executive Leadership Team

Impact on specific groups

Are there general impacts on multiple groups?

Building on learning from the pilot round of Connecting Culture Fund in 2024, the impact of the programme on minority groups has been reduced. Groups most affected in the previous round were part time staff.

The sections below describe features of the programme that are now in place to reduce or mitigate any negative impact.

The call is run over multiple rounds; this will prevent ‘lock-out’ for any individuals, groups or institutes that cannot lead or participate in projects at a particular time.

The call is open to anyone based at a BBSRC institute and can be led or co-led by any individual at any career stage or role type. All ideas will be discussed by the group, with input via the Forum meetings as well as in advance in writing (via a discussion board) and after discussion.

The Institute Research Culture Forum, which includes representatives from all BBSRC sponsored institutes as well as BBSRC staff, will have a key role in developing and triaging ideas, prioritising proposals, disseminating outputs and maximising the impact of projects. The forum is being consulted at programme development stage and features of the calls (such as timings) will be accommodated where systems and funding requirements allow. The forum membership is based on institute representation, rather than relying on individuals, therefore the impact of individuals’ abilities to participate is minimised. Slides and other materials are shared via the Institute Culture SharePoint site, which can be accessed by all Institute Research Culture Forum members.

Time has been built in to allow for cross-institute consultation and project development, prior to projects being reviewed by the forum, submitted to BBSRC and assessed.

Project ideas will be generated by individuals or groups at institutes and presented to the Institute Research Culture Forum for discussion, amendment and prioritisation. Each Forum meeting includes representatives from all eight institutes as well as BBSRC office, therefore the minimum attendance at each meeting is 9 people, therefore the risk of bias during discussions will be minimised.

The funds awarded through this programme will be used to support activities involving individuals from across the BBSRC sponsored institutes. This may include the exploration of solutions to challenges affecting people who identify as being part of a minoritised or under-represented group, through communication and consultation with people with relevant lived experiences. Where relevant, project leads should communicate the potential benefits of participating in activities, using positive examples from projects awarded through previous rounds of the CCF.

BBSRC staff will respond to individual requests for reasonable adjustments to the application or assessment process.

The application and assessment process will be entirely virtual.

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	Unknown		No known impact that is not already mitigated as described above
Disability	Negative	Unintentional bias if a project lead or participant is disabled. Varying impact depending on disability type, such as neurological, visual, auditory, or other physical disability including long term health conditions	Forum meetings will be scheduled at least six weeks in advance and where possible, information will be provided in advance to enable input from anyone who cannot join the discussion Where possible, information will be provided in multiple formats, for

			example call document and presentation Meetings will be held online to enable comments via discussion board or chat function. Plenty of breaks will be built into meetings. BBSRC will respond to any requests for reasonable adjustments to the application or assessment process on a case-by-case basis.
Gender reassignment	Negative	Unintentional bias if a project lead or participant has a Trans identity.	To reduce the impact of the CCF programme on this group, any transition or trans inclusive diversity policies will be publicly promoted and visible as part of call documentation. Gender neutral language will be used throughout the process Forum members and assessment panel members will be asked to display their preferred pronouns if they are comfortable to, minimising the risk of misgendering Confidentiality will be maintained at all times between any participants (forum or assessment panel members, or applicants) and BBSRC staff, should individuals wish to disclose any information regarding their gender expression or identity.
Marriage or civil partnership	Unknown		No known impact that is not already mitigated as described above.
Pregnancy and maternity	Negative	Applicants may be on parental leave whilst the opportunity is open, affecting their awareness of the opportunity and ability to participate. Individuals who are pregnant may have additional	To mitigate this, the programme will be run as an open call over the two-year period. Meetings will be held online and any accessibility requests will be taken into account, as described above.

		accessibility requests or need extra breaks during assessment meetings.	
Race	Negative	Under-representation of individuals from minority ethnic groups.	Programme schedule will be agreed with the Institute Research Culture Forum in advance and Forum members will be encouraged to consult widely within their individual institutes to identify project ideas All project ideas will be discussed with the Forum before prioritising and triaging. Applicants will be encouraged to collaborate with specialist groups to ensure that lived experiences are considered when planning activities. The assessment panel, although small, will aim to include individuals from a variety of ethnic groups.
Religion or belief	Negative	Participants being unable to participate in activities due to religious observances, for example if they coincide with religious holidays.	Ensure that religious observances are considered as much as possible when timetabling major activities.
Sex	Negative	Over-representation of females on the Institute Research Culture Forum (females/ women are overrepresented within the research support staff community, 60% of Connecting Culture Fund conference attendees were individuals identifying as a woman). Caring responsibilities also fall disproportionately on women / females.	ensure that school holidays are considered where possible when timetabling major activities associated with the programme, such as meetings and deadlines 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, BBSRC aims to schedule meetings in standard working hours BBSRC will pay the cost of additional caring responsibilities for individuals working on BBSRC business outside

			their normal working hours, for example for participation on an assessment panel. The assessment panel will include both males and females.
Sexual orientation	Unknown		No known impact that is not already mitigated as described above. There are no UKRI data with which to assess this characteristic currently. Inclusive language will be used during meetings and within the application/call text.

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	Unknown		No known impact since all meetings will be held online. Any impacts based on geographical location associated with individual projects funded through the CCF scheme will be considered within their own Equality Impact Assessments.
Socio-economic status	No known impact.		
Education background		Applicants and assessors may have varying education backgrounds.	To mitigate this, BBSRC will avoid using unnecessary jargon and academic language within the application process. Application assessment will be based on experience, skills and knowledge,



			with no requirements for specific qualifications.
Parent or guardian responsibilities		People with parental or caring responsibilities may have less time to prepare a proposal and/or participate in associated activities.	Caring responsibilities fall disproportionately on women and therefore this is likely to interact with gender. Mitigation as described for sex / gender above.
Carer responsibilities		See above	See above
Political opinion (Northern Ireland only)	No known impact.		
Other characteristics			

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.

2. Adapt or change the activity in a way which will eliminate negative impact or promote equality

The barriers and potential impacts have been considered and changes will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Review and sign off

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

For example, by planning regular reviews of the EIA, consulting with affected groups

This EIA will be regularly reviewed and shared with the Forum.

What is the EIA review date?

31st September (in line with the first proposed 'deadline' for this open call).

Contact

Emily Finnegan BBSRC emily.finnegan@bbsrc.ukri.org

Will the EIA be published?

Yes

Who has this been signed off by?

Clare Bhunnoo, BBSRC, Senior Portfolio Manager – EDI and Research Culture

09 June 2026

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

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
		1	

		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?