BBSRC RESPONSIVE MODE APPLICATIONS: GUIDANCE TIPS
This document provides some hints and tips based on BBSRC guidance and additional insight from current BBSRC Committee Members to help develop competitive BBSRC applications.

Important Sections
Whilst the Case for Support is a key document, peer reviewers and Committee members will review, consider and comment on all sections. To maximise your chance of success and to create a good impression, please do follow BBSRC advice and best practice for all sections including the Je-S sections. Competition is fierce, success rates are ≤25%, and therefore all sections need to be polished and fit for purpose.
Advice about what to include in key sections and where to get further advice is listed below. Note in addition to your peer reviewers, Research Services and / or IIB can help to review some sections.

Je-S Sections:
The **Objectives**, **Technical Summary** and **Summary** sections are **VERY** important – they are often the sections first read by reviewers and assessors and create the first impression of your proposal. They are also used by BBSRC staff to identify peer reviewers and Committee members. Committee members select which proposals they wish to introduce based on the technical summary – having the best match of expertise (reviewers and committee members) is key to successful peer review. Note: Summary sections (lay, technical and impact summaries) will be published on publicly available sites should the project be funded. Please ensure confidential information is not included in these Summary.

Sections	Limits	Why it is important, What it should cover
Objectives Additional advice from Research Development Manager (RDM)	4000 characters including spaces	BBSRC Staff will use this section to identify peer reviewers The objectives of the proposed project should be listed in order of priority and should be those that the applicant would wish the Council to use as the basis for evaluation of work upon completion of any grant awarded. and Objectives can be presented in a number of ways – however ensuring that each main aim stands alone and is not dependent on each other is key.
Summary Additional advice from RDM	4000 characters including spaces	BBSRC Staff will use this section to identify peer reviewers and Committee members often read this section first to get the overview of the application. If this section is not well written you run the risk that your application may not be sent to appropriate reviewers and introducers may struggle to understand why it is important. Should provide a plain English summary of the proposed work, explaining: • The context of the research • Its aims and objectives • Its potential applications and benefits Should be written in a style that is accessible to a variety of readers, including the general public. BBSRC may use this summary for general publicity purposes and as a basis for answering enquiries from the media and others about the purpose of the research.

Technical Summary Additional advice from RDM	2000 characters including spaces	Committee Members will use this section to choose whether they wish to introduce your application. Make it interesting. Should be a brief technical summary of the work proposed including the research objectives, plans for methodology, and experimental design.
Academic Beneficiaries Additional advice from RDM	4000 characters including spaces	Should summarise how your proposed research will contribute to knowledge, both within the UK and globally by addressing the following: How the research will benefit other researchers in the field Identify whether there are any academic beneficiaries in other disciplines and, if so, how they will benefit and what will be done to ensure that they benefit.
Impact Summary Additional advice from RDM or IIB	4000 characters including spaces	Should complement, but not duplicate, the Pathways to Impact section. It should answer the two questions: 1. **Who** beyond academia might benefit from this research? 2. **How** might they benefit from this research? It should not include specific activities that will be undertaken as this will be covered in the Pathways to Impact attachment. The answers to these questions should include information about your publics and/or stakeholders and should clearly articulate impact goals (not dissemination or knowledge exchange goals, which are part of the Pathways to Impact section).

Attachments (Mandatory)

All attachments must use **Arial font size 11, 2 cm margins and single line-spacing**. The only exceptions are figures including legends**.**

Sections	Limits	Why it is important, What it should cover
Case for Support Seek advice from your Peer Reviewers, DoR, Academic Lead and RDM	**8 sides of A4** in Total	This includes Programme and Methodology and the Track record sections. Should be a self-contained description of the proposed project with relevant background and should not depend on additional information. Start with a paragraph that sets out the importance, novelty and timeliness of the application, alignment to BBSRC strategic priorities before the detailed background and methodology. Keep it accessible, it should be understandable beyond your research group. Think about BBSRC **Assessment Criteria (Annex 1)** when preparing your Case for Support. **Advice from current BBSRC Committee Members:** • The Case for support should be written in language that can be understood by a non-expert scientist. Introducers may be

		allocated projects that are not in their immediate subject area and you are more likely to get your project put forward for funding if it is easily comprehensible. • The aims and why they are important /advance the field should be understandable from reading page 1 of the case for support. • Avoid making the rest of the text too dense or filled with specialist abbreviations – the aims / hypotheses /methodologies / deliverables should all be clear backed up with supporting preliminary data. • Proof read, and proof read again.
Track Record	**1-2 sides of A4** within the 8 page limit (Note 1 page is more usual)	Should set out why the team (PI, CoIs, Researcher CoI) is fully equipped to deliver the research programme. It should draw on their skills, expertise, previous awards (give BBSRC or other Research Council reference numbers), publications, prizes etc. **relevant to the research programme** and demonstrate which part so the research programme they will be responsible for. There should also be reference to the research environment setting out specific infrastructure, facilities, equipment etc. that are **relevant to and will benefit** the programme –e.g. ARC, Bioimaging Unit (including specific microscopes); Sequencing and Bioinformatics Hub; Mass Spec; Greenhouses and plant growth rooms; cell culture suites; access to world class labs; interdisciplinary environment; links to additional expertise beyond the core team etc. .
Experimental Programme & Methodology	**6-7 sides of A4** within the 8 page limit	**Background:** Introduce the topic of research and explain its academic and wider context and demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of past and current work in the subject area both in the UK and abroad. Pilot data should be included to provide evidence of feasibility. Where CoIs and collaborators provide key skills / techniques make this explicit in a project management section and / or track records. **Programme and methodology:** Identify the overall aims of the project and the individual measurable objectives against which you would wish the outcome of the work to be assessed. This should: • Refer to (but not copy and paste) the objectives set out in the proposal form; • Detail the methodology to be used in pursuit of the research and justify this choice; • Explain why the proposed project is of sufficient timeliness and novelty to warrant consideration for funding • Describe the programme of work, indicating the research to be undertaken and the milestones that can be used to measure its progress. The detail should be sufficient to indicate the programme of work for each member of the research team and explain how the project will be managed.

		References: should appear in a list at the end of the Case for Support and be linked to relevant text by, for example, sequential numbering and superscript reference numbers embedded in the body of the document. The citation of preprints is acceptable.
Workplan Additional advice from RDM	**1 side of A4**	The Diagrammatic Workplan is a document used to visualise the project by representing timelines and milestones. This should be a standalone document and it cannot be used to extend the case for support. Project-specific timelines and milestones should be clearly and accurately shown. Use of a Gantt chart focusing on the visual diagram with minimal text is recommended. Ideally this will show exactly what each of the staff are planned to do in each month. This really helps with justification of staff resources. Including impact objectives on here helps to show that there are clear deliverables.
Data Management Plan Additional advice from RDM	**1 side of A4**	Should be project specific and very explicit. Needs to be much more than keeping the data on a secure server within your institution and making available on request. Raw data needs to be deposited in appropriate databases. The headings below should be used /considered to ensure that all aspects are covered. An unsatisfactory DMP can create the impression that the application has been rushed and not fully considered. • Data Area and Data Types • Standards and Meta data • Relationships to other data available in public repositories • Secondary use • Methods for data sharing • Proprietary data • Timeframes • Format of the final dataset Detailed guidance in **Annex 3.** The Data Management Plan is scored by the Committee as Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory
JoR Additional advice from Finance Manager / RDM	**2 sides of A4**	Needs to be more than a list of what has been requested. The JoR must fully explain the rationale for what has been requested and why they are needed to deliver the research programme. Where possible link to relevant workpackages / objectives. Make sure staff time including PI and CoI time is fully justified. Committees expect extensive justification of anything over about 3.75hrs per week (except for a NI). Applicants requesting 2 PDRAs, or a PDRA and a tech, should provide a breakdown of the responsibilities and roles of each. Consumables need to be properly broken down and not rounded up! If anything is to be outsourced, include details of the quote and a letter of support.

		If resources are not fully justified they can be cut by the Committee
CVs	**2 sides of A4 (each)**	CVs are required for all **named applicants and named research staff only**. The CV should include details of: • Employment history (give dates and details of position held including the nature of your current employment) • Qualifications (state subject, class of degree with university dates) • Patents • Most recent publications, within the last 5 years, in refereed journals or preprint servers relevant to the project. Lists of publications should be included within the CV and not submitted as a separate document.
Covering Letter Additional advice from RDM	No limit but keep succinct	**Choice of Committee**: Recently a number of applications have been moved to different Committees (Usually from Committees that receive the higher number of applications to those that receive fewer). Where this could be a possibility the cover letter could be used to clearly set out why the Committee was selected. **Declaration of Interests statement**: usually it is sufficient to say that the document https://www.ukri.org/files/legacy/documents/declarationofinterests-applicants-pdf/ has been read by all applicants and there is nothing to declare. **Reviewers:** If there are reviewers that you wish not to be used due to conflicts of interest, perceived bias etc. this should be declared. **Resubmission**: If there is any possibility that BBSRC may consider this a resubmission – clearly state **how** it is different from a previous application. **Reinforce key messages**: Use the covering letter to sell your application – uses data in new publications, alignment to BBSRC strategic priorities –additional contributions from University, Industry partners etc.

Annex 1

BBSRC Assessment Criteria

Assessment covers:

- Scientific Excellence
- Strategic Relevance
- Industrial and stakeholder relevance
- Economic and social impact
- Timeliness and promise
- Value for Money
- Staff Training potential

Scientific Excellence needs to demonstrate that the applications is /includes:

- Top quality internationally competitive science
- Addressing an important problem
- Novel and exciting
- Clear and understandable aims and objectives
- Accompanying data that supports the proposal
- A feasible workplan with appropriate contingency plans
- Consideration of the wider impacts of the research

Annex 2

Pathways to Impact Many academics find that the impact sections of a UKRI grant application are very challenging to write. To make things easier it pays to consider the potential impact of your research and how that impact might be realised at the outset of preparing your application. This also gives you the opportunity to identify and connect with as many stakeholders or beneficiaries as possible prior to submitting the application. Naming specific stakeholders (businesses, agencies, departments, public bodies, third sector etc.) adds credibility to the planned impact activities. You will also be able to show how the potential impact has informed the direction of your research.

The Impact sections of the application will be scored by the reviewers as Excellent, Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory. An Excellent pathways to Impact will give it an advantage over similarly scored proposals without an Excellent rating, particularly if your application is near the funding cut off.

Here we have briefly summarised some of the most important things you need to think about to successfully complete your Impact Summary and Pathways to Impact. There are many more resources available please contact IIB if you need further information or guidance.

Impact Summary

This section describes your impact goals. These don't all have to be realised by the end of the research project but they should be specific, achievable and measureable. The Impact Summary should specifically address the two questions below:

1. Who might benefit from the proposed research?
   Information about the stakeholders and public groups who will be **interested in**, and could **benefit** from, your research.

2. How might they benefit from the proposed research?
   Describe **what will have changed** as a result of your research.

Identifying Stakeholders

Consider: Who outside of academia might be interested in the outcomes of your research? Who is likely to benefit most from your research? Do you have sufficient existing contacts with stakeholders and public groups? How would you identify and contact new stakeholders (e.g. colleagues with contacts, community groups who work with end users, knowledge exchange events etc.)? It takes significant time to develop new non-academic contacts so try to identify stakeholders and end-users early in the application process.

Prioritise stakeholders and end users who would be most engaged with your research, likely to benefit significantly and are relatively easy to contact. Contact as many of these stakeholders as possible to get feedback on your impact plans to show evidence of two-way engagement. Think about how you would contact and engage harder to reach but potentially influential stakeholders as they may have significant ability to help you achieve your impact goals.

Identifying Impact Goals:

Consider: What will have changed as a result of your research? Exactly how will the end users or stakeholders use the research? How will they benefit? How might the end-users (stakeholders of publics) describe how they have benefited?

Impact goals should describe the changes and benefits that will occur as a result of the research. These changes can deliver economic or social benefits at the regional, national or international scale. Public communication is not an impact goal in itself, but can form part of the impact pathway to achieve specific goals.

Pathways to Impact

There are many different ways to set out a Pathways to Impact statement but try to include as much structure as possible to guide the reviewers. For example, Pathways to Impact could be grouped by type of impact (e.g. Economic/Industrial, Policy, Practitioner, Societal) or by specific impact activities (e.g. stakeholder workshops, public engagement, industry visits) or by stakeholders (e.g. policy makers, industry, practitioners, public bodies). However you chose to set out your PtI statement, the Je-S guidance recommends the attachment should include the following information:

1. Activities that are project-specific (not generic)

Describe your impact goals clearly and identify specific activities to achieve each of these goals. Identify exactly who you will work with (businesses, agencies, departments, public bodies, third sector etc.) giving as much detail of you can and naming individuals in these organisations if at all possible. Describe exactly how

each of the planned activities will contribute to meeting the impact goals and how you will measure the success of each of these activities.

2. Activities to engage with relevant end users/stakeholders (identified in the Impact Summary)

Clearly demonstrate that the stakeholders you have identified in your Impact Summary want or need your research. This can be via e.g. personal communication, previous research collaborations or public interest in the research area (numbers at research events, policy changes or (social) media interest). Ensure that the planned impact activities will address these needs and are accessible to the relevant end users or stakeholders. If appropriate, consider establishing an Advisory Panel of named non-academic stakeholders who can help you to develop the impact of your research as the work progresses. Describe exactly what activities the Advisory Panel will undertake, provide Terms of Reference if possible and plan regular meetings.

3. An understanding of the needs of end users and consider ways for the proposed research to meet these needs

Showing engagement with your stakeholders and end users is fundamental to writing a successful Pathways to Impact. Reviewers are increasing looking for evidence way two-way engagement with stakeholders/end-users of research rather than just communication of findings. To show that your impact goals are directly relevant to the needs of your end-users describe how stakeholder engagement has informed, or will inform, the direction of your research. Involve your target audience when designing communication and engagement activities to ensure they are as relevant and accessible as possible. Seek and document feedback from your audience to demonstrate the success of these activities

4. A plan to manage the activities (timing, responsible personnel, skills, budget, deliverables and feasibility)

Impact activities should be planned and managed to ensure your outcomes reach the desired audience at the right time. If possible reference your impact activities back to your research plan. Identify clear indicators which will enable you to evaluate the success of your planned activities. Ideally name a team, individual researcher or stakeholder/partner who will be responsible for implementing and managing each activity. Activities in your Pathways to Impact should be costed and justified (including the costs of monitoring and evaluation). Providing costs for your proposed impact activities increases the likely hood that they will actually take place. The general guidance is that costs for impact related activities should be 5 – 10% of the total value of the application.

5. Evidence of any existing engagement (track record).

Include evidence of your impact track record, particularly focusing on activities that are relevant to the current application. Include any track record for the Co-I(s) or other named researchers, especially if these are more developed or relevant than your own. If no one on the team has a track record with impact, consider collaborating with someone who does.

What to avoid:

- Generic non-specific pathways to impact.
- Duplication for previous applications
- Duplication of information from the Impact Summary to the Pathways to Impact
- A focus on communication rather than goals (i.e. changes and benefits)
- Academic benefits e.g. workshops that will mainly be attended by academics; training and career development opportunities for ECRs. Academic Impacts should be outlined in the Academic Beneficiaries and appropriate Case for Support sections in Je-S.
- Generic public engagement activities that are not specific to the project or have no clear and measurable impact goals e.g. school visits, websites, app, and social media. If you want to include these then be specific about what you want to achieve (e.g. exactly which social media platforms) why these are appropriate to achieving the impact goal and how you would measure success.
- Leaving out good ideas because they might be hard to achieve. Pathways to Impact are very often quite conservative, so if you have a good idea that might catch the reviewer‘s attention try to include it. As long as you genuinely plan to give it a go and can show a credible and feasible route to achieving the goal it doesn’t matter if you don’t quite get there.

Feedback and review

As well as academic peer review, seek additional feedback on your Impact sections from IIB or Research Development.

Further resources:
https://www.ukri.org/innovation/excellence-with-impact/pathways-to-impact/
https://bbsrc.ukri.org/funding/apply/application-guidance/pathways-impact/

Annex 3
Data Management Plan
Further guidance at: https://bbsrc.ukri.org/funding/apply/application-guidance/data-management/

BBSRC recognises that plans for sharing data will vary according to the type of data collected. Data sharing should be driven by scientific benefit and should also be cost effective. Data should be shared using established standards and existing resources where this is possible.

Applicants may wish to include details of:

- **Data areas and data types** – the volume, type and content of data that will be generated, e.g. experimental measurements, models, records and images
- **Standards and metadata** – the standards and methodologies that will be adopted for data collection and management and why these have been selected
- **Relationship to other data available in public repositories**
- **Secondary use** – further intended and/or foreseeable research uses for the completed dataset(s)
- **Methods for data sharing** – planned mechanisms for making these data available, e.g. through deposition in existing public databases or on request, including access mechanisms where appropriate
- **Proprietary data** – any restrictions on data sharing due to the need to protect proprietary or patentable data
- **Timeframes** – timescales for public release of data
- **Format of the final dataset.**