



Bioscience research covers some of the most exciting, challenging and sometimes contentious areas of modern science – from the levels of gene function in plants, animals and microbes, to the biology of the human brain, to the impact of living populations and systems on our landscape.

Bioscience research contributes to many everyday aspects of the world around us including:

- New diagnostics, drugs and treatments in human and veterinary medicine
- Crop and livestock breeding, and pest and disease control in farming and horticulture
- New production processes for foods, healthcare products and industrial materials

Bioscience research also informs how we perceive the natural world, for example, through our understanding of evolution, processes such as cognition, animal behaviour and welfare, and the relationship between diet and health.

The Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) is the UK's principal public funder of basic and strategic research across the biosciences. Part of our mission is to promote public awareness and discussion about issues surrounding how bioscience research is conducted and the applications of research outcomes.

# Public Engagement

[ Our aim is to present the objectives of research as well as the results and potential applications; this includes promoting awareness about the role of bioscience in everyday life and how research is conducted. ]

• BBSRC's activities and BBSRC-funded research are frequently reported in the press and broadcast media. In addition to publishing media releases we provide briefings for journalists on emerging issues, often in partnership with the Science Media Centre. We also publish a free quarterly magazine "BBSRC Business" that is distributed to a wide range of interested organisations and individuals and accessible on our website.

The BBSRC website [www.bbsrc.ac.uk](http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk) provides updates on all BBSRC activities, including details of funding plans and projects, contact with industry and international collaborations.



We place considerable emphasis on direct contact between researchers and members of the public. BBSRC regularly contributes to national science festivals, and to local and regional science fairs and community events. We also provide funding, resources, advice and training to enable BBSRC - sponsored researchers to engage effectively with the public. All BBSRC grantholders are required to undertake and report activities to promote public engagement in science.



To raise awareness of the advances in contemporary bioscience and the issues raised, we promote direct links between scientists, the public and other stakeholders by:

- enabling PhD students to work with schools through Researchers in Residence and support for the BA CREST scheme for practical science in schools
- presenting travelling exhibitions highlighting current research areas
- hosting dissemination meetings to report on research outcomes of large funding initiatives and discuss their implications
- participating in and hosting parliamentary meetings to discuss research areas with parliamentarians and government officials
- producing publications to provide information on emerging and established scientific areas

We are committed to supporting the science curriculum and many of our schools activities and resources are coordinated through RCUK.



BA CREST Science Fair – young scientists present their projects competitively

[ Our aim is to promote effective two-way exchange of ideas with the wider public to enhance mutual understanding. We believe that stakeholder input improves our decision-making and priority-setting. We work with external agencies to make our dialogue activities as accessible as possible to our broad stakeholder community, and we regularly include public discussion meetings as part of our consultation processes. We are committed to the principle that these events must consider a wide range of perspectives and interests. ]



• We host and participate in a range of meetings with the general public, consumer groups, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and parliamentarians at a variety of locations, ranging from agricultural events, science centres and local/national science events to the Houses of Parliament. We also work with a range of partners to engage the public in discussion and debate on topics such as nanotechnology (with the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council and DEMOS) and future sources of energy (under RCUK).



BBSRC commissioned a study to encourage stakeholder dialogue through public discussion and on-line consultation to identify issues associated with new bioremediation techniques

**Our Bioscience for Society Strategic Panel** provides a high-level overview of opportunities and appropriate activities for engaging with different stakeholders. The Panel's membership includes ethicists, social scientists, educationalists, and representatives of special interest groups and NGOs.

The Panel will help ensure that BBSRC delivers on its social responsibilities by:

- advising BBSRC about public attitudes to bioscience issues
- guiding BBSRC's public engagement and dialogue programmes
- advising on integrating public attitudes into BBSRC policy and planning



Focus groups enable us to collect the views of potential end-users of our research as well as special interest groups, NGOs and wider public

BBSRC produces and sponsors discussion documents aimed at identifying science-based issues and stimulating constructive debate



BBSRC examines public perception surrounding areas of our research, for example, on diet and health issues

[ We publish statements that make clear our position on bioscience issues that may raise public concern, e.g. the misuse of bioscience research, stem cell biology and transgenic plants. ]

- We require all BBSRC grantees to report any potential ethical or social issues associated with their research. Where appropriate, these reports are referred to our Bioscience for Society Panel.

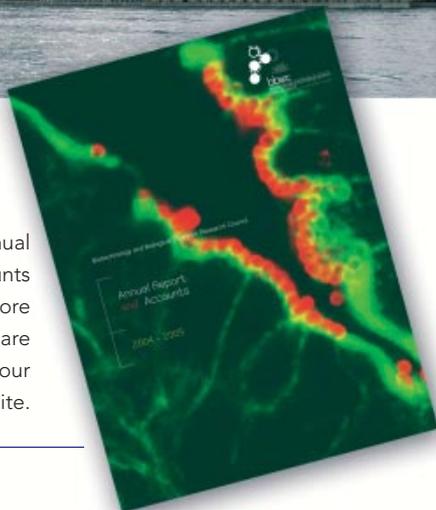
To ensure greater transparency and fairness, including due regard for diversity, appointments to BBSRC Strategy Panels and Research Committees are overseen by a Council Appointments Board. Details of BBSRC Council and Committee membership are available on our website and in BBSRC publications. Information of Council members' interests are also accessible.



BBSRC holds an annual open meeting and other events where stakeholders, including the general public, can question our current policies and strategies.



The BBSRC Annual Report and Accounts are laid before Parliament and are accessible via our website.



The BBSRC website provides details of BBSRC policy and funding. This includes access to our Operating Plans and Reports, notes of Council and Strategy Board meetings and reports on the outcomes of major reviews and consultations. The website also links to those of the BBSRC-sponsored institutes.

# presenting science through the media



Television interviews



Radio interviews



Media briefing information

# presenting science to parliament



Parliamentary discussion meetings at the House of Commons enable scientists and parliamentarians to exchange views on topical issues



# engaging all sectors of the community



Working together with our research centres we can support science in primary and secondary schools and engage directly with young people



The Royal Society Summer Science Exhibition enables researchers to present their science to a wide range of visitors



The National Council for Women (NCW) take part in BBSRC discussion meetings and events

# taking science to people



Farm Animal Genomics discussion meeting at the 2005 Royal Show



BBSRC-supported exhibits at the 2005 Eisteddfod in Bangor



DNA in the Garden – A display produced jointly by BBSRC and the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew

Public Engagement

The Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) is



one of eight Research Councils sponsored through the Government's Office of Science and Technology. BBSRC annually invests c£300M into the UK biosciences community, supporting 5,000

scientists and training 2,000 postgraduate research students.

Our mission is to fund internationally competitive research, to provide training in the biosciences, to encourage opportunities for knowledge transfer and innovation and to promote public engagement and dialogue about bioscience issues.



Biodiversity: What on earth is it?  
A travelling exhibition produced jointly by BBSRC & the Natural Environment Research Council



Mini beasts and the environment, National Science Week 2004  
RCUK National Science Week Awards scheme sponsors public science events across the country



BBSRC runs media and communication training courses for sponsored students and researchers



Researchers in Residence celebrated its 10th Anniversary in 2005 with a showcase reception at the Houses of Parliament