BBSRC BUSINESS INTERACTION STRATEGY – August 2011

BBSRC is the UK's leading funding agency for academic research and training in the non-clinical life sciences. We support a broad research base in microbial, plant and animal sciences, ranging from studies at the molecular to whole organism and population level. Our remit also embraces engineering and technological approaches necessary to develop new procedures to investigate and analyse biological systems. The research and training we support underpins innovation in significant UK business sectors including agriculture, bioprocessing, chemicals, food, healthcare, pharmaceuticals, industrial biotechnology and bioenergy and is central to addressing Government priorities for growth and the long-term health of the UK economy and society. We have a duty to enable the optimal, successful and responsible application of the outcomes of the excellent research we support with public funding to deliver the widest possible benefits for society. It is therefore important that we, and those we fund, engage with a broad range of stakeholders, including business.

Between 2008 and 2011 we increased our commitment to research collaborations with business to £50M of which £34M was aligned with the Technology Strategy Board (TSB). This has led to business being involved in a wide range of underpinning bioscience research and training projects that will contribute to their future competitiveness and growth. Our Strategic Plan 2010-2015 and Delivery Plan for 2011-2015 commit to wide ranging plans to further increase the positive impact of the research and training we support for the benefit of society.

This Business Interaction Strategy outlines our intensions to increase impact through engaging with business. The Strategy is overseen by our Bioscience for Industry Strategy Panel. Advice on public views and aspirations around the nature of our interaction with business and the outcomes of research is sought from our Bioscience for Society Strategy Panel.

The Strategy has three streams of activity:

1. **Strengthening and developing BBSRC's links with bioscience-using business:** Ensuring that their needs influence our research and training priorities
2. **Creating opportunities for engagement between BBSRC-funded researchers and business**: Enabling a greater understanding within our scientific community and UK bioscience-using business of the needs and capabilities of each other
3. **Enabling BBSRC's scientific community to be responsive to the needs of business through our funding mechanisms and policies**: Funding and encouraging world-class collaborative research, training and knowledge exchange between UK business and our scientific community

Our three Strategic Priorities; Food Security, Bioenergy and Industrial Biotechnology, and Basic Bioscience Underpinning Health address significant UK and global grand challenges. These priorities will provide a focus for the delivery of this Strategy and our activities will centre on those business sectors key to delivering impact from our strategic priorities and those which underpin technology developments which will advance biosciences research.

1. Strengthening and developing BBSRC's links with bioscience-using business

We engage with business through a variety of mechanisms to ensure their views can be fed into our strategy, planning and decision-making processes alongside other views (e.g. research community, public etc.). This enables the research and training we support to provide new avenues for innovation and promotes knowledge exchange and research translation.

We will build on our interactions, increasing the breadth and depth of our partnership with business and our understanding of emerging business challenges. We will seek to ensure

relevant business has an awareness of the potential of biosciences research and is aware how it can engage in it.

We will develop Sector Engagement Plans for each of our Strategic Priorities to identify those sectors that are important to delivering impact. These will be used to guide our interactions, communications and activities with business enabling us to maintain and develop key relationships whilst focusing our resources.

2. **Creating opportunities for engagement between BBSRC-funded researchers and business**

The UK research base provides a rich source of innovation for UK business. We use a variety of approaches to enable BBSRC-funded researchers and bioscience-using business to build links. We aim to increase researchers' awareness of the challenges facing business and business awareness of the research and capability available within UK academia. By encouraging engagement between business and academia we also support the development of long-term relationships which can lead to further projects funded by other bodies, including business, providing a much greater impact than that which can be achieved through our funding alone.

We will drive culture change that will encourage and recognise collaboration between academia and business, whilst recognising the obligation for us and the researchers we fund to also consider wider societal issues. This will increase awareness of how research may impact on business and also speed the translation of research to products and services for the benefit society. We will also develop innovative new approaches to disseminate research outcomes to business and work more closely with existing networks, in particular the relevant TSB-funded Knowledge Transfer Networks to help form connections.

3. **Enabling BBSRC's scientific community to be responsive to the needs of business through our funding mechanisms and policies**

The promising new opportunities for innovation created by the research we fund are often too commercially risky and distant from the market place for business to invest in alone. We have a strong track record in supporting academia to work in collaboration with business to progress research to a stage where companies are able to take the lead in development.

We have a range of research, training and knowledge exchange mechanisms that support collaboration. We will review our current mechanisms for supporting collaborative research and people exchange to ensure they meet the needs of the research base and business, encouraging collaboration and leading to greater benefits for society. We will also work with the TSB to ensure our funding priorities are aligned, allowing funding to continue into the later stages of development.

We recognise that the research challenges which face business are multidisciplinary. In order to allow researchers to effectively address these challenges we will work in partnership with other funders to enable our activities to extend beyond the remit of BBSRC. We will also ensure that BBSRC policy encourages collaboration with business and where appropriate will respond to barriers.

Relevant BBSRC policies

Impact Policy

Knowledge exchange and commercialisation policy

IP Policy