



NERC Impact Awards 2018

Introduction

1. We are pleased to announce the 2018 NERC Impact Awards. The awards recognise and reward NERC-funded activity that has led to substantial impacts on the economy and/or society. 'NERC-funded activity' means anything that was funded by NERC, including for example research, innovation, training and public engagement.
2. There are three categories: economic impact, societal impact and early career impact. For each category, the entry judged to have had the greatest impact will receive a NERC Impact Award and £10,000 to further the impact of their NERC-funded activity. The runner-up for each category will receive £5,000. An Overall Impact Award of an additional £30,000 will be awarded to the entry judged to have had the greatest impact overall.
3. Awards will be presented at a ceremony showcasing the winners and runners up, their work and the impact of the science that NERC funds. The ceremony will be held in London in late 2018.
4. Detailed guidelines about the awards and application process are given below. Applications must be submitted by **midday on Monday 21st May**.

What is impact?

5. NERC uses the same definition of impact as used in the Research Excellence Framework (REF): "An effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia."
6. Impact may include cost savings, for example reduction or prevention of negative effects, or benefits resulting from a decision not to undertake a particular course of action.
7. Impact may have been realised in the UK or another country or both.

Award categories

8. Entries will be considered within one of the categories listed below. Applicants should choose the category most relevant to the impact being submitted. NERC reserves the right to place entries in alternative categories if deemed appropriate based on the category definitions.
9. Applicants are invited to contact the NERC Evidence team if they wish to discuss which category would be most appropriate (contact details below).

Economic Impact Award

10. This category recognises NERC-funded activity that has led to demonstrable economic benefit (that is, financially measurable benefit) as a result of NERC investment, for example:

- The growth of one or more existing companies e.g. generated a new product or service, significantly improved an existing product or service, led to more effective or efficient production processes or services, increased market share of the company, created new jobs or exports;
- Financial benefits to governments, public authorities, non-government organisations or third sector organisations. That is, research that saved financial resources (efficiency) or generated other financial benefits (e.g.increased revenues, more effective service outcomes); and
- Commercialisation achievements e.g. a licence deal, new spin-out company, raising private investment or other commercial outcome.

Note: this is not intended to be a restrictive or exhaustive list.

Societal Impact Award

11. This category recognises NERC-funded activity that has delivered demonstrable social, cultural, public policy or service, health, environmental or quality of life benefits – where financial outcomes are not the primary benefit or a meaningful measure of the benefit. Examples include:

- More effective public policy, regulation or decision-making, whose benefits are not mainly financial;
- Improved public health, wellbeing or quality of life, or benefits to society in other tangible ways including cultural outcomes;
- Improved environmental health and/or sustainability; and
- Improved societal understanding of complex environmental issues.

Note: this is not intended to be a restrictive or exhaustive list.

Early Career Impact Award

12. This award recognises NERC-funded activity by early-career researchers that has led to demonstrable economic and/or societal impact.

Overall Impact Award

13. This award recognises the entry with the greatest overall impact as judged against the assessment criteria below.

Eligibility

14. Entries must meet the following criteria:

- The lead applicant is currently employed within an [eligible research organisation](#);
- The NERC-funded activity made a material contribution to the impact; and
- NERC-funded applicants/team members must have met all conditions of their funding to date.

15. 'NERC-funded activity' means anything that was funded by NERC, including for example research, innovation, training and public engagement.
16. There is no time constraint on when the NERC funding was received, or when the impact was realised (although see paragraph 21 regarding continued case studies).

Economic and Societal Impact Awards

17. Entries can be from individuals or teams from one or more institutions.
18. As well as researchers, NERC is keen to recognise and celebrate the contribution of people in research translation and research user organisations who played a key role in delivering the impact from the research. Applicants are encouraged to include any key players from these organisations in their teams, although note that team members will only be eligible for a share of the award funding if employed by an [eligible research organisation](#).

Early Career Impact Award

19. Only individual entries will be accepted. Applicants must have received substantial NERC funding (e.g. PhD studentship, postdoctoral employment), and have no more than eight years of full-time postdoctoral research experience from the PhD certificate date to the closing date of the competition. Allowances will be made for breaks in research experience, e.g. parental leave, illness, non-research roles, periods of part-time working.
20. Applicants are invited to contact the Evidence team if they wish to discuss whether they are eligible for the early career award.

Continued case studies

21. Applicants may enter a case study topic that was entered into the previous NERC Impact Awards if they can demonstrate that significant further impact has been realised or has come to light since the previous submission in September 2014. Any developments since the previous entry must be clearly identified.
22. The Evidence team will assess whether developments since the original submission are clearly identified and significant in terms of reach and significance. Case studies that meet this eligibility criterion will continue into the assessment process as for other case studies, i.e. the entire content of the case study will be assessed against the assessment criteria.

How to enter

23. Entries should be submitted using the application form [template](#). Guidance on completing the template is included at Annex 1.
24. Entries should be emailed to the Evidence team at impact@nerc.ac.uk by **midday on Monday 21st May**. We will acknowledge receipt by email. Any entries received after this deadline will not be considered.

Assessment process

25. Entries will be assessed in three stages:
 - a. The NERC Evidence team will check the eligibility, appropriateness of the award category and validity of continued case studies (see paragraph 22).

- b. A shortlisting panel will shortlist two entries in each award category.
- c. A judging panel will interview shortlisted candidates in July and identify the winner for each category and winner of the overall award. Shortlisted candidates will be expected to make all reasonable efforts to attend the interviews.

26. The panels will comprise members of NERC's wider stakeholder communities, including the research community and research users, and NERC staff. In accordance with NERC's [policy](#) on conflicts of interest, panel members will be asked to declare any potential conflicts of interest, and to leave the room during discussion of any entry in which they have a conflict of interest.

Assessment criteria

Economic Impact Award and Societal Impact Award

27. Entries will be judged on the reach and significance of the realised impact. Reach means the range and extent of people or organisations who benefited from the impact, significance means the importance/magnitude of the benefits. The judging panels will form an overall view about the 'reach and significance' of each entry, rather than assessing reach and significance separately.

28. Panels will look for clear evidence of:

- The people or organisations who benefitted from the impact (e.g. business, government, third sector organisation, or wider society);
- A realised beneficial impact outcome, meaning impact that has already taken place (rather than potential impact or the effort that went into achieving the impact); and
- A distinct and material contribution from the NERC-funded activity to the impact outcome.

Early Career Impact Award

29. As above. However recognising that impact often takes a long time to materialise, it is accepted that the impact outcome for early career researchers may be emerging but not yet be fully realised.

Overall Impact Award

30. The individual or team that achieved the impact with greatest reach and significance.

Awards

31. In each category the winner will receive £10,000 and the runner-up £5,000. The Overall Impact Award winner will receive an additional £30,000. The awards will be announced at a ceremony showcasing the winners and runners up, their work and the impact of the science that NERC funds. The ceremony will be held in London in late 2018, and shortlisted applicants will be expected to make all reasonable efforts to attend.

32. The awards must be used to further enhance the impacts from the NERC-funded activity within 12 months of receipt of the award. Shortlisted applicants will be asked to explain briefly how award money would be used to achieve further impact from the NERC-funded activity. This information will not form part of the judging process.

33. Awards will be payable to organisations rather than individuals. Where a team receives an award it will be shared amongst the team members who are employed in [eligible research organisations](#) at the discretion of their institution(s). Award recipients will be required submit a

brief report to NERC 12 months after receiving the award explaining how the award money was used to further the impact.

34. The NERC Communications and Engagement team may contact applicants prior to the event for details regarding their research and relevant impact. This may include opportunities for videography and wider media opportunities.

Timetable

Deadline for entries: **midday on Monday 21st May**

Interviews of shortlisted applicants: London, 24th October

Communications team engagement with shortlisted applicants: August and September

Awards ceremony: London, early December 2018

Contact details

Please contact the NERC Evidence team if you have any queries relating to an entry.

Email: impact@nerc.ac.uk.

Phone: Will Thomas, 01793 411698

Personal information will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1988), more information is available on the [Information Notice](#) page of the NERC website. Information will be kept in accordance with the NERC Retention Schedule (available on request).

ANNEX 1: APPLICATION FORM GUIDANCE

Applications must be submitted by **midday on Monday 21st May**, using the [application form](#). Any applications received after this deadline will not be considered.

The document is formatted to facilitate future use of the impact evidence using content analysis software (text mining). Please type in the spaces provided, and do not change the font, margins or document layout.

Please save the document in the format **Impact awards 2018 – Surname, Initial**.

Application details

This section contains information needed for administration, and will not be presented to the panels.

Contact details: for team entries, this should be the primary contact for the judging process, media and all communications.

Impact case study

This is the material that will be judged by the panels. This section should not exceed four pages in total.

The material contained in this section may also be used by NERC for other activities not related to the Impact Awards, for example in impact case studies or in the annual NERC Impact Report. Please mark any material not suitable for the public domain with START CONFIDENTIAL and END CONFIDENTIAL. Panel members will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement.

Summary of the impact - a plain English summary of the impact, maximum 100 words. Summarise who benefitted, what the benefits were, and the contribution of the NERC-funded activity.

Underpinning activity – briefly summarise

- The key insights/findings/breakthroughs that led to the impact; and
- The role of the NERC funding.

Details of the impact – describe the impacts that have already been realised, with supporting evidence. This should include:

- Key points of wider context to illustrate the significance of the impact e.g. size of the market/industry, cost/extent of the problem, government statements;
- How the NERC-funded activity made a distinct and material contribution to the impact outcome;
- The magnitude and significance of the impacts. Evidence may be quantitative (e.g. financial information), or qualitative (e.g. feedback/testimonials from impact beneficiaries);
- The people or organisations who benefitted from the impact (eg. business, government, third sector organisation, or wider society); and
- Approximate dates when the impacts occurred.

Where the NERC-funded activity was part of a wider set of work that contributed to the impact (e.g. funding from other sources, or collaboration with other institutions), specify the particular contribution of the NERC-funded activity and acknowledge other key contributions.

For continued case studies, show clearly which impacts have materialised or come to light since the original case study that was submitted in September 2014.

NERC funding received – briefly summarise the funding received from NERC relevant to this work, as far back as possible. e.g. grant/contract reference, amount and PI name.

Use of NERC infrastructure and resources - brief information about the use of any NERC research infrastructure or resources (eg. ships, aircraft, polar bases, capital equipment, services and facilities, and data centres). This information helps us to make the case for future capital investments in research infrastructure.

Sources to corroborate the impact - list up to five external sources that could provide additional corroboration of specific claims made in the case study. Where not already publicly available, this should be sources that could be made available if requested by a Panel. Sources could include for example:

- Reports, reviews, web links or other documented sources of information in the public domain;
- Confidential reports or documents;
- Factual statements already provided by key users/beneficiaries, that corroborate specific claims made in the case study; and
- Individual users/beneficiaries who could be contacted to corroborate claims.

Declaration

Submission of the application form to the NERC Impact Awards 2018 is your declaration that:

- a) The application has been completed in full and is correct at the time of submission;
- b) You will accept NERC's decision on award category, and the panel decisions on shortlisting and award recipients;
- c) The evidence in the impact case study section may be used by NERC for other purposes not related to the Impact Awards, for example to develop evidence and reports on the value of public investment (by NERC and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)) in environmental science. (Any material not suitable for the public domain should be clearly marked via START CONFIDENTIAL and END CONFIDENTIAL, and will be removed from material entering the public domain);
- d) Should you be shortlisted for an award:
 - i. You will work with NERC to develop publicity material for use during the award ceremony, related public engagement event and subsequently;
 - ii. NERC has the right to use images from your application, and images, video and quotes from the event in literature or promotional activities;
 - iii. To the best of your ability, you will keep NERC informed of any changes in contact details and of any press releases that are issued related to the impact; and
 - iv. You will make all reasonable efforts to attend a) an interview in July, b) the award ceremony in late 2018, and c) related NERC events to promote impact in the 2 months before and 6 months after the award ceremony.