Great British Chemicals (GBC) FlexFund
Reviewer Assessment Form

Please tick to confirm that you have read and understood the **Reviewer Guidance**

Please complete all sections below. The final scores must be an integer (1–10). Provide concise but critical and evidence-based comments to justify each score.

Application Details

Application Reference: _____

Project Title: _____

Lead Institution: _____

Principal Investigator (PI): _____

PI ORCID: _____

Non-Academic Partner(s): _____

Reviewer Name: _____

Reviewer ORCID (if applicable): _____

Date: _____

1. Quality (Scientific excellence)

Strengths	Concerns
Key Assessment Considerations: • The novelty/originality, relationship to the context, timeliness and relevance to identified stakeholders • The ambition and adventure of the specific project objectives • The suitability of the proposed methodology and the appropriateness of the approach to achieving impact • Meets national needs by establishing/maintaining a unique world leading activity	

2. Impact Potential (Reach and Significance)

Strengths	Concerns

Key Assessment Considerations: • Clarity of transformative aspects, tangible outputs and outcomes • Scalability and real-world applicability (chosen TRL/SRL) • Commercial, policy, environmental or societal significance • Pathway to subsequent innovation/capacity stages • Potential for follow-on funding	

3. Strength of Co-creation and Stakeholder Demand[i]

Strengths	Concerns
Key Assessment Considerations: • Appropriateness of the track record of the applicant(s) • Balance of skills of the project team, including collaborators • Depth of partner engagement • Evidence of stakeholder demand • Appropriateness of cash/in-kind contribution • Potential for sustained collaboration	

4. Alignment with GBC Mission (People, Planet, Prosperity)

Strengths	Concerns
Key Assessment Considerations: • Enhancement and complementarity to GBC activities and other UKRI investments in this area • Clear alignment with GBC vision - contributes to future UK economic success and development of emerging industry(s) • Contribution to defossilisation pathways and environmental sustainability • Relevance to a fair, inclusive and commercially viable transition	

5. Value for Money and Deliverability

Strengths	Concerns

Key Assessment Considerations: • Appropriate and fully justified resource allocation (80% FEC), including resources requested for activities to either increase impact, for public engagement or to support responsible innovation • Effective and feasible workplan and timeline • Clear risk mitigation strategy • Appropriate team capability • Quality of the research environment, including, for example, access to equipment and training

6. RRI and EDI Integration

Strengths	Concerns
Key Assessment Considerations: • Responsible Research & Innovation embedded • Clear EDI integration and alignment with UKRI's commitment. • Engagement and reflective practice • Clear data management plan	

7. Summary and Score

Summary	Score out of 10
Guidance: Please summarise the strengths and concerns you have identified and any highlights for consideration by the panel to justify the score you award (out of 10). Please refer to the Scoring range definitions in the **Reviewer Guidance.**	

Reviewer Guidance

Before you start a new review you will be asked to read and confirm that you understand this guidance and the requirements for the call. https://greatbritishchemicals.ac.uk/funding/

1) Read the application

We will send you a link to

- read the full application online

- see the questions and assessment criteria for each application section
- open and download any attachments uploaded by the applicant

As a reviewer, you should treat all information you receive as part of the review process as confidential unless we indicate otherwise.

2) Write and submit your review on time

To provide your review you should

- write your review using the electronic reviewer form we send you
- structure your review using the assessment areas as subheadings
- score the application from 1 (not suitable) to 10 (exceptional) using the **Scoring range definitions**
- preview and check your review before submitting it, ensuring that the scores align with the comments to avoid any doubts by the funding assessment panel.
- When your review is finished, submit it to GB Chemicals via the online form.

It is vital that the reviews are received by the deadline, since the review process runs to very tight schedules. If we do not receive reviews on time, then proposals may have to be deferred to the next round.

Our guidance should help you write a good review and decide the score. Please contact us as contact@greatbritishchemicals.ac.uk if something is unclear.
You may use an alternative writing tool such as Word to write your review and then copy it into the text boxes.

3) How we use your review

Your review is checked by the management team to ensure your review is usable (see guidance for **Making sure your review is usable**). It is then shared with the Funding Assessment Panel, who use the scores and comments to rank and prioritise all the submissions that are eligible for funding. The final decision is then made by the Steering Committee and reported to the Advisory Board. Feedback is sent to the applicants with the outcome.

If the proposal is so far outside your area of knowledge that you do not feel able to give a medium expertise or part review, or you identify a conflict of interest, then please decline the review as soon as possible.

The information below is based on UKRI, EPSRC and NERC guidance. Please read this to ensure that our reviewer processes are aligned with those of our funders.

Please DO

- **Contact us as soon as possible if you are unable to review.**

This is important so that we have time to assign another referee if possible, adding a reason for the decline (e.g. conflict of interest/lack of expertise/too busy/other).

- **Reply on time.**

It is vital that the reviews are received by the deadline, since the review process runs to very tight schedules. If we do not receive reviews on time then proposals may have to be deferred to the next round.

- **Use the scores provided and give clear recommendations.**

It is essential that you provide a score using the guidance provided. We also need you to fully justify your decisions and indicate any doubts/ borderline cases in the comments sections.

- **Take the time to provide detailed and constructive comments**.

At the review stage, we ask you to justify your score with full comments on the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal. This is particularly important if you give a high score.

These comments are crucial because:

  - they validate the score given;
  - they are passed over to the applicants as feedback;
  - they are used by moderating panels alongside external reviewers' assessments.

- **Be honest with your assessments.**
- **Referee the proposal not the proposer.**
- **Provide reviews regardless of any administrative errors that you notice in the application forms.**
- **Ensure that you are fully up to date with your institution's training on equality, diversity and inclusion and overcoming unconscious bias.**

Please DON'T

• **Be personal or aggressive.** Remember that comments are fed back to applicants. If you think a comment could be misinterpreted or cause offence, please do not include it. For this reason, you should also avoid comments that could identify you to the applicant.

• **Be too brief or too verbose.**

- **Rewrite the proposal in your review.**
- **Be ambiguous.**
- **Invent your own notations or scores.**
- **Give the proposal to someone else to review.**

Making sure your review is usable

UKRI use the following criteria to decide whether a review is usable. The reviewer must make sure their review:

- provides the necessary information to help UKRI staff and panel members to make an informed judgement, ensuring all the assessment criteria are addressed unless they are outside the reviewer's area of expertise
- is only based on information included in the application
- is not speculative, inflammatory or an attempt to damage the applicant
- does not use **Conflicts of** interest

UKRI defines a conflict of interest as a situation in which an individual's ability to exercise judgement or act in one role is, or could be seen to be, impaired or otherwise influenced by their involvement in another role or relationship. Even a perception of competing interests, impaired judgement or undue influence may be damaging to our reputation. Generally, conflicts might occur if individuals have, for example:

- a direct or indirect financial interest
- non-financial or personal interests
- competing loyalties between an organisation and another person or entity to which they owe a primary duty

The existence of an actual, perceived, or potential conflict of interest does not necessarily imply wrongdoing on anyone's part. However, any private, personal, or commercial interests which give rise to such a conflict of interest must be recognised, disclosed appropriately and either prevented or properly managed.

If your involvement in assessing an application might be perceived as a conflict of interest, you should either:

- decline the invitation to review it
- notify us email contact@greatbritishchemicals.ac.uk

For practical guidance**, read our policy on conflicts.**

- Journal-based metrics (such as journal impact factors or any hierarchy of journals), conference rankings or metrics such as the H-index or i10-index as a surrogate measure of a research article's quality. This follows the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment principles
- has no conflict of interest with the application
- has not revealed their identity
- has not used a generative artificial intelligence (AI) tool, including to correct language, spelling, grammar and formatting to maintain confidentiality

If any of those criteria are not met, the review will be unusable. Once a review has been submitted, it cannot be amended or returned.

Most common reasons for a review being rejected

Reviews are frequently categorised as unusable due to one or more of the following reasons:

- the reviewer has identified themselves through the review.
- the reviewer has commented on UKRI policy and process.
- a conflict of interest has become apparent after the submission of the review.
- not enough information has been provided to support the score.
- at any point of the assessment process, the reviewer confirms that they have used a generative artificial intelligence (AI) tool to develop their review

How to write a good review

Where possible, reviews must be based on evidence, which you should clearly show in your comments. Make sure to:

- familiarise yourself with any specified assessment factors or scoring matrix
- provide comments and recommendations that are consistent with, justify, and explain your scores
- ensure your comments are comprehensive but concise
- clearly identify strengths and weaknesses of the application in a constructive manner
- raise any concerns in the form of questions for the applicant
- avoid jargon, panellists may not be specialists in your field

- consider other aspects of the proposed research or innovation, like its methodology, experimental design and data management plan, as well as its potential impact (and the pathways to achieving it) including any ethical and social issues (for example, the appropriate use of animals or human tissue)

Scoring range definitions

10 **Exceptional:** the application is outstanding. It very strongly meets all of the assessment criteria and meets them to an exceptional level. It is difficult to articulate how the application could be improved.

9 **Outstanding:** the application is outstanding. It very strongly meets all of the assessment criteria and meets them to an outstanding level.

8 **Excellent:** the application is very high quality. It strongly meets all of the assessment criteria and meets them to an excellent level. There are very minor weaknesses.

7 **Very good:** the application demonstrates considerable quality. It meets most of the assessment criteria to a high level. There are some minor weaknesses/limitations.

6 **Good:** the application is of good quality. It meets most of the assessment criteria well, but not across all aspects of the proposed activities. There is a few clear weaknesses/limitations.

5 **Adequate:** the application is good. It meets the assessment criteria to an acceptable level, but not across all aspects of the proposed activities. There are multiple weaknesses/limitations.

4 **Weak:** the application is not sufficiently competitive. It meets the assessment criteria to an adequate level. There are, however, significant weaknesses/limitations.

3 **Poor:** the application is not sufficiently competitive. It meets some of the assessment criteria to an adequate level. There are, however, major weaknesses/limitations.

2 **Unsatisfactory:** the application is flawed or of unsuitable quality for funding. It does not meet one or more of the assessment criteria.

1 **Not Suitable:** the application is it does not meet any of the assessment criteria.

Safeguarding Peer Review

Great British Chemicals and our funders (EPSRC and NERC) are committed to ensuring that those who participate in the peer review process recognise the factors that introduce bias into decision

making. To do this, it is important to raise awareness of, and take steps to remove the opportunities for unconscious bias in all aspects of our decision-making processes.

All those involved in peer review must help us safeguard our decision making by taking the following steps:

• All proposals must be reviewed on equal terms and assessed using the published criteria.

• Question and challenge cultural stereotypes and bias in any funding assessment panel meetings and be prepared to be challenged.

• Be aware that working with a high cognitive load, with time pressures and the need to make quick decisions, creates conditions for bias which could have an impact on what we fund.

UKRI recognises that excellence in research and innovation requires diversity and equality. We seek to ensure that equality principles are applied to all funding activities, and that no one should be excluded from, or hindered in, a career in research and innovation because of their:

- sex
- ethnic background
- age
- disability
- sexual orientation
- religion or belief
- pregnancy or maternity
- marriage or civil partnership

Despite striving to be objective, people often hold implicit or unconscious assumptions that influence their judgement. Examples range from expectations or assumptions about physical or social characteristics associated with gender, ethnicity, and age to those associated with certain jobs, academic institutions and fields of study. The difficulty with **unconscious bias** is of course that individuals are unaware that bias is influencing their decisions. However, there are some general points of good practice that reviewers and panel members should adopt to minimise the effects of unconscious bias:

- ensure that evaluation criteria are understood and applied consistently;
- ensure sufficient time is allowed for the evaluation of each proposal. Reducing time pressures increases the likelihood that all proposals will receive a fair assessment.
- evaluate the entire application;
- be able to defend every decision for scoring a proposal against the evaluation criteria.

Conflicts of interest

UKRI defines a conflict of interest as a situation in which an individual's ability to exercise judgement or act in one role is, or could be seen to be, impaired or otherwise influenced by their

involvement in another role or relationship. Even a perception of competing interests, impaired judgement or undue influence may be damaging to our reputation. Generally, conflicts might occur if individuals have, for example:

- a direct or indirect financial interest
- non-financial or personal interests
- competing loyalties between an organisation and another person or entity to which they owe a primary duty

The existence of an actual, perceived, or potential conflict of interest does not necessarily imply wrongdoing on anyone's part. However, any private, personal, or commercial interests which give rise to such a conflict of interest must be recognised, disclosed appropriately and either prevented or properly managed.

If your involvement in assessing an application might be perceived as a conflict of interest, you should either:

- decline the invitation to review it
- notify us email contact@greatbritishchemicals.ac.uk

For practical guidance**, read our policy on conflicts.**

Journal-based metrics

We are committed to support the recommendations and principles set out by the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA; https://sfdora.org/read/). You should not use journal-based metrics, such as journal impact factors, as a surrogate measure of the quality of individual research articles, to assess an investigator's contributions, or to make funding decisions.

For the purpose of research assessment, please consider the value and impact of all research outputs (including datasets, software, inventions, patents, preprints, other commercial activities, etc.) in addition to research publications. You should consider a broad range of impact measures including qualitative indicators of research impact, such as influence on policy and practice.

The content of a paper is more important than publication metrics, or the identity of the journal, in which it was published, especially for early-stage investigators. Therefore, you should not use journal impact factor (or any hierarchy of journals), conference rankings and metrics such as the H-index or i10-index when assessing UKRI grants.

We encourage you to challenge research assessment practices that rely inappropriately on journal impact factors or conference rankings and promote and teach best practice that focuses on the value and influence of specific research outputs. If you are unsure about DORA, please speak to the panel convener or the panel chair.

Using generative artificial intelligence (AI) in peer review

Reviewers and panellists are not permitted to use generative AI tools to develop their assessment, including to correct language, spelling, grammar and formatting. Using these tools can potentially compromise the confidentiality of the ideas that applicants have entrusted to UKRI to safeguard.

For more detail see UKRI's **policy on the use of generative AI**.

[i] Project partners can be large or small organisations, and do not need to be UK based; we specifically wish to enhance the attractiveness of UK research with global research-intensive organisations. Collaborations with both single organisations and consortia are also equally valid, providing the collaboration(s) add value to the proposed research. Project partners are still expected to contribute to the project, either with cash or in-kind contributions.