



Biotechnology and  
Biological Sciences  
Research Council

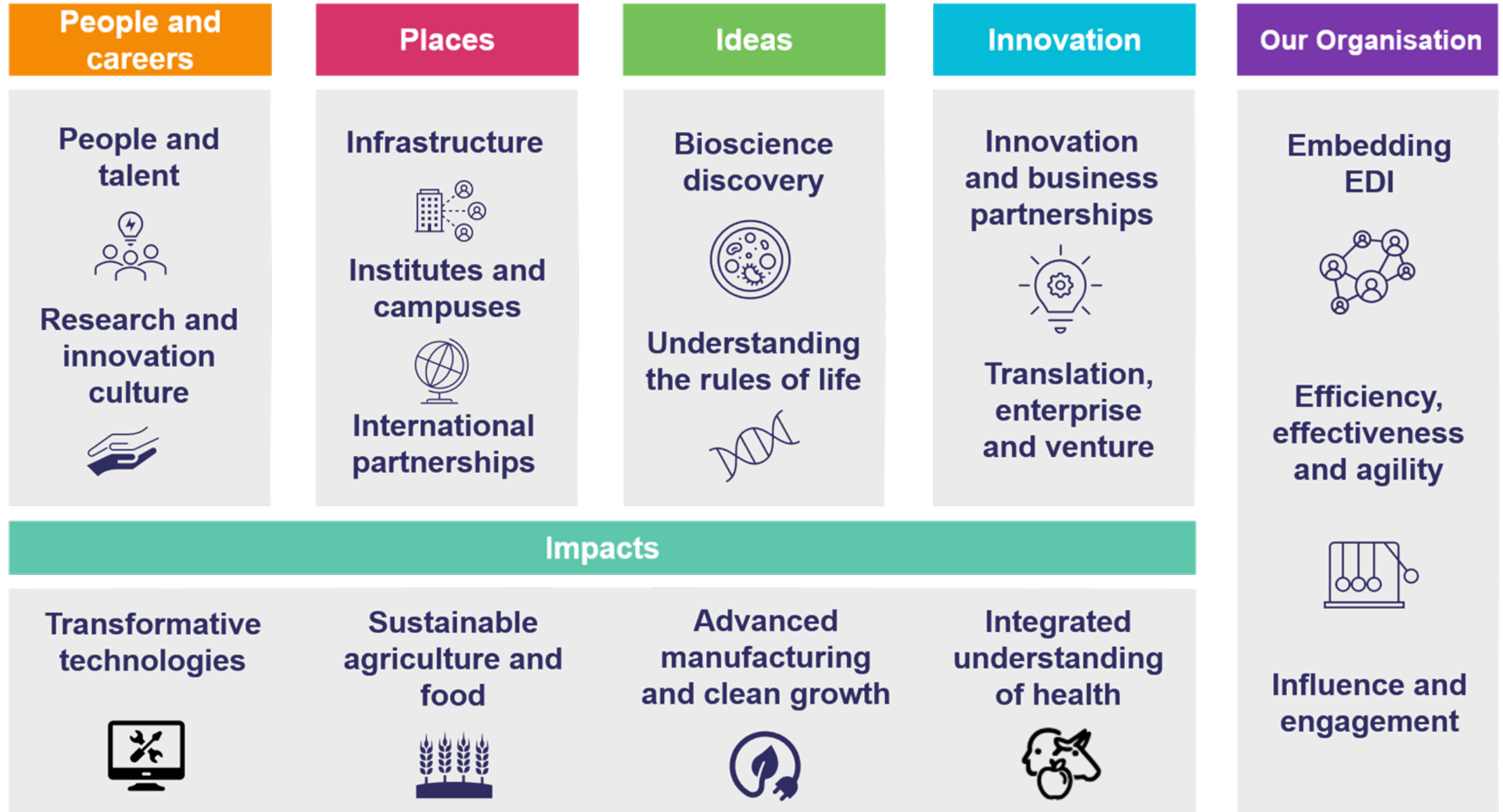
# **Biolmaging UK Community Meeting 2025**

## **BBSRC Update**

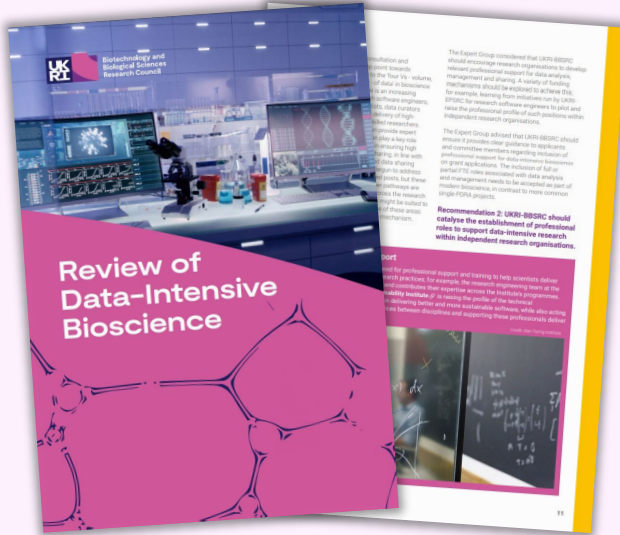
30 June 2025

**Philip Hubbard**  
Portfolio Manager  
BBSRC – Transformative Technologies

# BBSRC Research and Innovation Priorities – Delivery Plan 2022-25

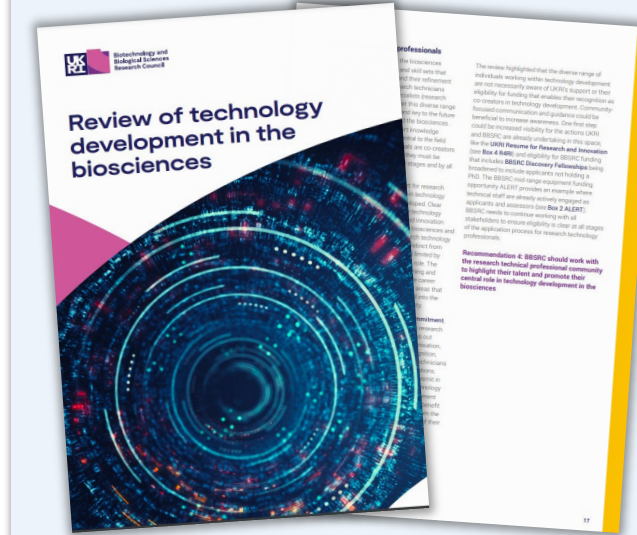


# BBSRC recognises the importance of RTPs



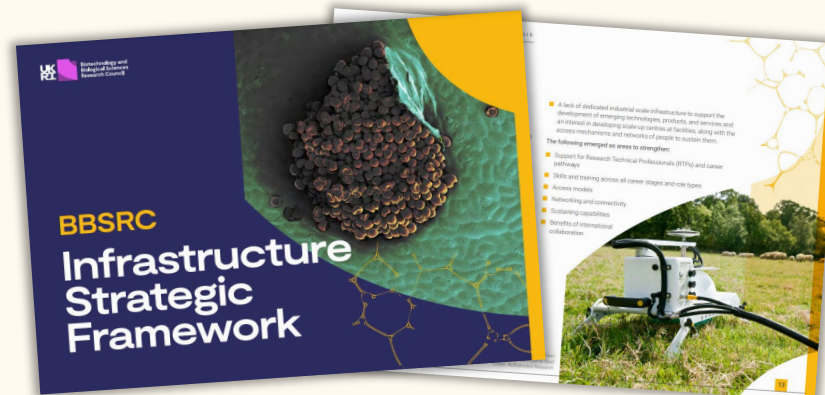
“BBSRC should catalyse the **establishment of professional roles** to support data-intensive research within independent research organisations”

Find it [here](#)



“BBSRC should work with the **research technical professional community** to highlight their talent and promote their central role in technology development in the biosciences”

Find it [here](#)



“We will ... advocate for the crucial role people play in sustaining infrastructure, championing the role of **Research Technical Professionals (RTPs)**”

Find it [here](#)

# BBSRC works with RTPs in a number of ways

Building on the [Technician Commitment UKRI Action Plan](#) and the [UKRI People and Teams Action Plan](#), we aim to champion the role of RTPs in research and innovation and the value they bring to our investments



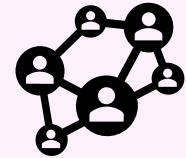
Providing **opportunities to influence** BBSRC's strategic planning, ensuring views represented in our decision-making



Embedding support for RTPs within our peer review processes to **promote recognition** of their skills and expertise



Raising **awareness of funding eligibility** such as ALERT, Transformative Research Technologies and Responsive Mode



**Collaborating with external partners** that support RTPs, such as the Institute for Technical Skills and Strategy.

# BBSRC funds Bioimaging in many ways

example investments include:

## TRT

3D-printed transmissive adaptive optics for microscopy<sup>1</sup>

Developing affordable 3D-printing approaches to create controllable optical elements that enable high resolution microscopy within thick samples and tissue.

## ALERT

A Mass Spectrometer for Structural Biology and Top-down Protein Identification<sup>2</sup>

Installing advanced mass spectrometry to decode protein structure and function, enabling transformative bioscience research in health, agriculture, and life sciences across Midlands institutions

## BBR

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The Digital Research Infrastructure Programme is a £129 million UKRI initiative to develop a coherent state-of-the-art national digital research infrastructure (DRI). It will seamlessly connect researchers and innovators to the computers, data, tools, techniques and skills that underpin the most ambitious and creative research.



General enquiries: [tt@bbsrc.ukri.org](mailto:tt@bbsrc.ukri.org)

- 1: APP18674, **University of Strathclyde**
- 2: APP24327, **University of Birmingham**
- 3: BB/W019116/1, University of Surrey
- 4: UKRI DRI Business Case, University of Liverpool

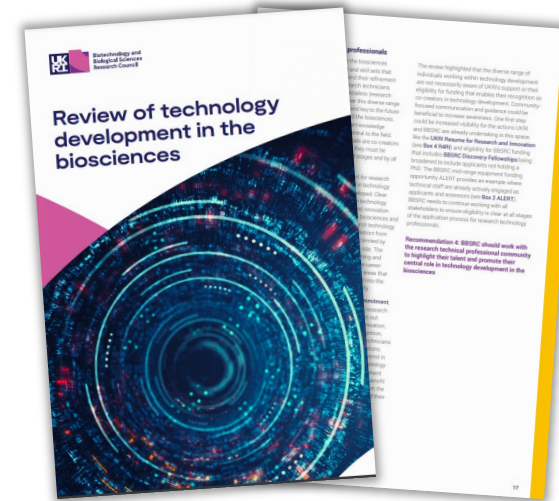
[Digital Research Infrastructure Programme – UKRI](#)

# Transformative Research Technologies (TRT)

Small funds for early-stage development of cutting-edge research technologies for the biosciences – for 24TRT, up to £225,000 FEC for projects lasting 6 to 18 months (£3m fund)

Launched following BBSRC's Review of Technology Development

- Open scope across BBSRC remit
- Increased award size
- RTP inclusion



**Recommendation 4:** BBSRC should work with the research technical professional community to highlight their talent and promote their central role in technology development in the biosciences

## RTP success in 23TRT



# ALERT: Mid-Range Equipment Call

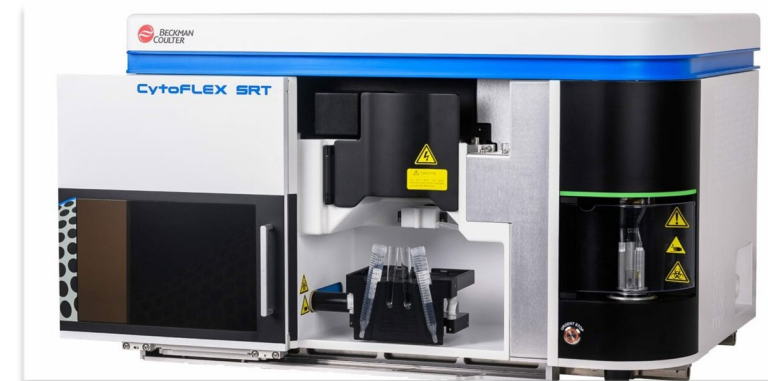
**24ALERT: Total fund: £20,000,000 Funding range: £200,000 - £1,500,000 (100% FEC) Project duration: 12 months**

Can support a range of equipment including:

- Widely used and underpinning capability
- Emerging advanced research technology or utilisation in new ways
- Promoting collaboration and increased access to users within industry, public sector and other institutes

Important to highlight:

- **Research Technical Professionals** can be both Project leads or co-leads
- ALERT funds both **single instruments** and **multi-component** systems (pipeline/platform)
- We aim to fund awards that replace so-called '**workhorse**' equipment and those that bring in a **new capability**.



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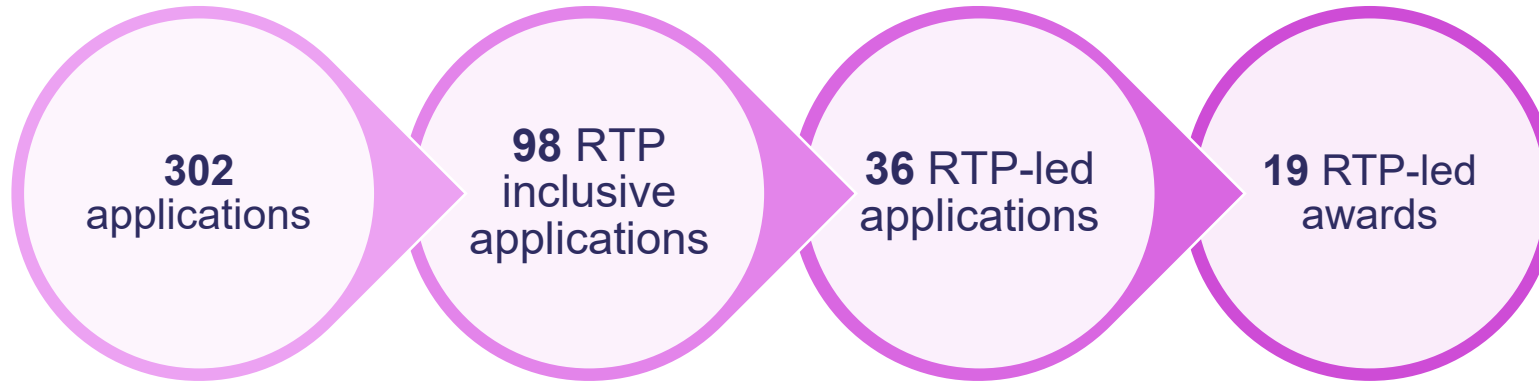
Contact [bbsrcalert@bbsrc.ukri.org](mailto:bbsrcalert@bbsrc.ukri.org)

Microscopy equipment is the most common award type in ALERT.

Mass spectrometry, sequencing, flow cytometry, X-ray techniques, NMR, agri-tech all feature regularly.

# RTPs success in ALERT

Across the 2021, 2022 rounds 2023:



- Since 2021, **over half RTP-led** ALERT applications have been **successful**
- **The top ranked** proposals from 2021 and 2022 were **RTP-led**

Close engagement with RTPs **strengthens** ALERT applications!

Watch our three-part video series on RTPs in the ALERT programme



# Bioinformatics and Biological Resources Fund (BBR)

**24BBR: Total fund: £7,000,000 Funding range: Up to £2,000,000 (80% FEC) Project duration: Up to 5 years**

- Open scope to implement, improve or consolidate bioinformatics or biological resources in support of UK bioscience

Contact [bbr.fund@bbsrc.ukri.org](mailto:bbr.fund@bbsrc.ukri.org)

Establishment of a **new and innovative resource** that will be beneficial to a broader BBSRC user base

Further development or **essential maintenance of an existing community resource**, with well-established access mechanisms, to increase its relevance, quality and utility

**Maturation and subsequent maintenance** of a project-based resource into a community-based one

**Association, or integration of distinct resources** that will create an upgraded resource with a greater value than the sum of the parts



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# BBSRC's Infrastructure Portfolio

- BBSRC contributes towards a wide range of bioscience infrastructures operating at local, regional, national, and international scales.
  - Project-level support
  - Multi-user equipment and resources
  - Large-scale national infrastructure (e.g. UKRI Infrastructure Fund)
  - International co-operation and partnership

## Places

### Infrastructure



### Institutes and campuses



### International partnerships

# 7 key principles to guide future investment

## BBSRC Infrastructure Strategic Framework

### Balanced portfolio

- Physical and digital infrastructure
- Disciplinary coverage
- Equipment, resources, services, access, people
- Regional national and international capabilities

### People, culture and talent

- Advocacy and best practice
- Technical skills and training
- Champion career pathways
- Recognition and support for Research Technical Professionals

### Connected infrastructure ecosystem

- Share data equipment and expertise
- Enable physical and virtual access
- National and international collaboration
- Cross-sector, cross-disciplinary communities

### Environmental considerations

- Embed shared standards and environmentally responsible approaches
- Align investments with UKRI Environmental Sustainability Strategy

### Forward planning

- Horizon scanning
- Responsive to user needs
- Alignment across strategic priorities, funding opportunities and existing investments

### Engagement

- Stakeholder engagement
- Collaboration and partnerships
- Community driven infrastructure ideas

### Sustainability

- Support for infrastructure at different lifecycle stages
- Encourage infrastructures to evolve to meet changing community needs and maximise usage



# UKRI Infrastructure Fund

Enables a strategic and long-term approach to planning infrastructure investments:

- clear approach to managing UKRI's infrastructure portfolio.
- develop a pipeline of ideas and infrastructure requirements for the longer term, across UKRI communities
- prioritise significant infrastructure investments to enable step-changes in infrastructure capability and capacity.

Not an open funding opportunity – proposals are codeveloped between councils and external stakeholders.

Find out [who is on the infrastructure fund advisory committee](#)

Contact [infrastructure@ukri.org](mailto:infrastructure@ukri.org)





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# Thank you



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