

Key Learning Points Identified by individual groups participating in Regional Meeting workshops

- Dynamic process
- Need more clarity re National Importance v Impact
- Need to identify evidence of National Importance
- Need to explain context: Regional – National – International
- Academic, Economic and Societal needs – should also include Environmental needs
- Need to balance between breadth and focus
- Key issue is importance to the nation not of the nation
- Reviewers should comment on the applicants case for importance, not identify this themselves
- Smaller, verifiable statements carry more weight than grand but unverifiable assertions
- Better to focus on one aspect well rather than present weak arguments to tick all boxes
- Need to be explicit on National Importance context – and evidence based
- How does work such as providing clean drinking water in 3rd world display importance?
- Most of this information would already be in our applications and now we will just be stating it explicitly
- Beware over-claiming and avoid inventing UK benefit
- Only needs to be a relatively short section
- Focus on defensible outputs is not compatible with open research
- Beware of unintended consequences – and cynical game playing
- Risk of picking winners based on historical data
- Need quantitative evidence of Importance
- Evidence for national importance different for modelling or theory
- National Importance may not align to academic priorities
- Cannot predict major breakthroughs
- Applicants and Referees need a shared understanding of importance
- Applicants can set their own definition of importance
- Expert reviewers important in getting objective overview of the context for importance
- Be clear and focussed in making this case
- Explicitly identify distinctiveness and added-value
- Danger that UK importance could be contrived
- Need to set out anticipated timescale for potential developments
- Diversity of importance and how it can be demonstrated
- Need to make the case in the way Life Sciences do
- Open to interpretation – needs clearer guidance
- Stretching limits of improbability
- There is a gap in current knowledge
- For evidence, is reference to Government Reports needed?
- Guidance on length of Case for Support section is needed
- Provide supporting evidence wherever possible
- How does the scope of National Importance map onto how EPSRC will assess National Importance?
- In some areas it is easier to identify National Importance
- Most societal challenges are international – is that a problem for National Importance?
- External support is very important when completing proposals e.g. research officers