



Engineering and Physical Sciences
Research Council

Updated Action Plan following the recommendations of the Life Sciences Interface (LSI) Programme Impact Study published November 2005

Introduction

The aim of the 2005 study was to review the impact of the EPSRC LSI Programme since its inception in April 1999, and specifically to:

- Review the success of the Programme in meeting its original objectives.
- Assess the profile, standing and perceptions of the LSI Programme in the wider UK research community.

This update summarizes what we have done to date in addressing the recommendations from the impact study, and details relevant ongoing activities and future plans.

Recommendation: The LSI Programme should work to raise its profile in the wider community

Issues	Actions	Update
<p>Our stakeholder survey for the impact study showed that many people in the community are not aware they have LSI Programme funding, because we work entirely in partnership with other EPSRC Programmes and Research Councils. The LSI Programme involvement is usually not evident from grant announcement letters or EPSRC's Grants on the Web.</p>	<p>We will inform successful applicants of their LSI Programme funding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> From April 2007 we will send a letter introducing the Programme to all new recipients of LSI funding, including a copy of the full current LSI Programme funding portfolio. <p>All other current LSI grant-holders will also receive a copy of the portfolio.</p>	<p>A letter and CD of Programme information, including the full current funding portfolio, was sent to all current LSI grant-holders in June 2007. We plan to send out the same information to all new grant-holders every quarter, beginning in September 2007.</p>
<p>Many researchers and stakeholders in the wider community are not aware of the LSI Programme and its objectives.</p>	<p>We will refocus and publicise the LSI Programme's vision statement and objectives.</p> <p>The vision statement and objectives for the Programme have been revised in consultation with the LSI Strategic Advisory Team, and may be viewed at http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/ResearchFunding/Programmes/LifeSciencesInterface/default.htm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This information will also be made available to all LSI grant-holders. <p>We will publicise the LSI Programme's involvement in other funders' activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will continue to promote our activities in partnership with other funders in EPSRC's <i>Connect</i> magazine and on our website as appropriate. <p>We will carry out a series of cross-departmental LSI Programme visits to universities from Spring 2007</p> <p>We will scope a national conference of LSI research to take place in the academic year 2008-9.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This information was included in the CD sent to all grant-holders in June 2007. This series of visits has been delayed slightly; the first visits are now planned for October/November 2007.

Recommendation: The LSI Programme should highlight examples of successful LSI collaborations, and analyse how and why they succeeded

Issue	Action	Update
<p>Many respondents to the stakeholder survey in 2005 felt they had insufficient information on which to base a judgement on the impact to date of LSI Programme funding.</p>	<p>We have developed a set of case studies, which will be included in our publicity material and circulated to LSI grant-holders with the funding portfolio from April 2007.</p> <p>We always welcome 'good news' stories from LSI Programme funding for EPSRC's publications and for wider dissemination.</p>	<p>Five case studies were included in the CD sent to all grant-holders in June 2007.</p>

Recommendation: Publications arising from LSI Programme grants should be systematically collated for future quantitative analysis of publication and citation rates

Issue	Action	Update
<p>No effect on publication rates or journal choice could be attributed to the inception of the LSI Programme based on the 2005 analysis of publication data provided by LSI Programme grant-holders. However, it was regarded by many respondents to the stakeholder survey to be too early in the life of the Programme for a quantitative analysis of publication outputs.</p>	<p>From April 2007 we will ask current and new grant-holders for electronic/paper copies of all substantial publications to arise from LSI Programme funding.</p>	<p>This request was made to all current grant-holders in June 2007.</p>

Recommendation: The LSI Programme should place greater emphasis on building industry collaborations in future

Issue	Actions	Update
<p>There were very few industry respondents to the 2005 stakeholder survey. No clear views emerged from the survey on the level and success to date of industry interactions on LSI Programme funded research.</p>	<p>We will consult the LSI Programme Strategic Advisory Team in April 2007 to develop a forward strategy for knowledge transfer.</p> <p>We will survey LSI grant-holders in 2007 to obtain evidence of researchers' wider industrial support.</p> <p>In addition we will continue to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with Knowledge Transfer Networks (KTNs), including Chemistry Innovation http://innovation.globalwatchonline.com/epicentric_portal/site/Innovation/ Biosciences for Business http://ktn.globalwatchonline.com/epicentric_portal/site/bfb/ and Bioprocess UK http://www.bioprocessuk.org/. • Work with the Technology Programme in partnership with other EPSRC Programmes and the new Technology Strategy Board secretariat in Swindon: http://www.dti.gov.uk/innovation/technologystategy/tsb/. • Partner BBSRC and industry in the funding of the Bioprocessing Research Industry Club (BRIC): http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/science/initiatives/bric/Welcome.html The third call for proposals through BRIC will be issued later this year. • Work through the EPSRC Healthcare and Process Industries Sector Teams to identify where industry has priorities at the LSI, and build new strategic links with industry where appropriate. 	<p>The outputs from this SAT meeting are currently being considered for further development. The survey has been postponed until the outputs from the SAT consultation have been properly considered.</p>

Recommendation: Greater clarity is needed in the ways that the relevant funding agencies work together, and particularly where the LSI Programme fits in the funding landscape

Issue	Actions
<p>Many of those aware of the LSI Programme's existence are nevertheless unclear of our role, and how we work within EPSRC and together with other Research Councils.</p>	<p>We have published a list of frequently asked questions on the role of the LSI Programme and how we work on our website: http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/ResearchFunding/Programmes/LifeSciencesInterface/FrequentlyAskedQuestions.htm</p> <p>An important part of the LSI Programme's work is to provide advice on the best 'home' for LSI proposals. We will continue to provide advice on project outlines sent in to us at any time. For more information, please see our website: http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/ResearchFunding/Programmes/LifeSciencesInterface/OutlinesOfProposals.htm</p> <p>The process for co-funding of proposals by Research Councils in responsive mode has now been formalised in a new cross-Council funding agreement. The details can be seen on the RCUK website at http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/research/prcremits.htm.</p> <p>The LSI Programme will continue to facilitate this process between EPSRC and the life sciences.</p>