

SELECT COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**Scientific infrastructure****Call for Evidence**

1. The House of Lords Science and Technology Committee, under the Chairmanship of Lord Krebs, is conducting an inquiry into scientific infrastructure. This refers to large and medium-sized equipment and the e-infrastructure to support scientific research. Such infrastructure requires substantial financial investment and often capital expenditure. It is therefore important that a long-term strategic plan is in place for initial investment, use, operational costs and upgrades.
2. This inquiry will collect evidence on the large and medium-sized scientific infrastructure currently available in the UK. It will consider future needs and whether an effective long-term strategic plan is in place to meet these needs. It will consider funding and governance arrangements. Finally, it will consider how effective international partnerships and partnerships with industry can be achieved.
3. The scope of this inquiry does not extend to investment in scientific infrastructure which could be funded from individual grants or within the budgets of individual universities or institutes.
4. The Committee invites submissions on the following points, with practical examples where possible. Please only answer the questions of relevance to you.

Current availability and status of scientific infrastructure

- What scientific infrastructure is currently available in the UK, do UK researchers have sufficient access to cutting edge scientific infrastructure and how does this situation compare to that of other countries?
- Is sufficient provision made for operational costs and upgrades to enable best use to be made of the UK's existing scientific infrastructure? Is it used to full capacity; and, if not, what steps could be taken to address this?
- What substantial increases in scale would allow new areas or domains of science to be explored (analogous to Large Hadron Collider and Higgs boson)?

Long-term needs, setting priorities and funding

- What role should the Government play in ensuring that there is an effective long-term strategy for meeting future scientific infrastructure needs?
- What are the long-term needs for scientific infrastructure and how are decisions on priorities for funding usually made?
- Is it more important to invest in large, national infrastructure or medium infrastructure?
- Since the last Comprehensive Spending Review, a series of additional announcements have been made on investment in scientific infrastructure. How were the decisions on investment reached and what have been the impacts of this approach to funding scientific infrastructure?
- What impact has removing capital spend from the ring-fenced budget had on investment in scientific infrastructure and should the ring-fenced science budget be redefined to include an element of capital spend?
- If the current funding level is maintained or reduced, what would be the longer term impacts on scientific infrastructure in the UK?

Governance structures

- Does the UK have effective governance structures covering investment in scientific infrastructure, how do they compare to those of other countries, and are there alternatives which would better enable long-term planning and decision-making?
- Are effective and fair arrangements in place for access and charging for public and private scientific infrastructure?
- Are effective structures in place for funding of medium-sized scientific infrastructure and enabling sharing among Higher Education Institutes and Research Institutes?
- Are regional research alliances proving effective in enabling access to funding for medium-sized infrastructure? Should more be done to support or incentivise approaches to collaborative funding and sharing of medium-sized infrastructure?

Partnerships

- To what extent do funding structures in the UK help or hinder involvement in EU and international projects, and should the level of UK involvement be improved?
- To what extent are EU and international programmes effective in promoting collaborative investment in scientific infrastructure projects?

- What impact does publicly funded scientific infrastructure have in terms of supporting innovation and stimulating the UK's economy?
- How accessible is publicly funded scientific infrastructure in the UK to industry and small and medium sized enterprises? Is there room for improvement?
- Are Government policies successful in encouraging industry to co-invest in scientific infrastructure?

Written submissions should be provided to the Committee as a Microsoft Word document and sent by e-mail to hlscience@parliament.uk. Please do not submit PDFs (if you do not have access to Microsoft Word you may submit in another editable electronic form). If you do not have access to a computer you may submit a paper copy to the Clerk of the Science and Technology Committee, Committee Office, House of Lords, London SW1A 0PW, fax 020 7219 4931. The deadline for written evidence is Friday 21 June 2013 (although submissions may be made before this date and indeed are encouraged).

Short, concise submissions, of no more than six pages, are preferred. A longer submission should include a one-page summary. Paragraphs should be numbered. Submissions should be dated, with a note of the author's name, and of whether the author is acting on an individual or corporate basis. All submissions will be acknowledged promptly.

Personal contact details supplied to the Committee will be removed from submissions before publication but will be retained by the Committee staff for specific purposes relating to the Committee's work, such as seeking additional information.

Submissions become the property of the Committee which will decide whether to accept them as evidence. Evidence may be published by the Committee at any stage. It will normally appear on the Committee's website and will be deposited in the Parliamentary Archives. Once you have received acknowledgement that your submission has been accepted as evidence, you may publicise or publish it yourself, but in doing so you must indicate that it was prepared for the Committee. If you publish your evidence separately, you should be aware that you will be legally responsible for its content.

You should be careful not to comment on individual cases currently before a court of law, or matters in respect of which court proceedings are imminent. If you anticipate

such issues arising, you should discuss with the Clerk of the Committee how this might affect your submission.

Certain individuals and organisations may be invited to appear in person before the Committee to give oral evidence. Oral evidence is usually given in public at Westminster and broadcast in audio and online. Persons invited to give oral evidence will be notified separately of the procedure to be followed and the topics likely to be discussed.

Substantive communications to the Committee about the inquiry should be addressed through the Clerk or the Chairman of the Committee, whether or not they are intended to constitute formal evidence to the Committee.

This is a public call for evidence. Please bring it to the attention of other groups and individuals who may not have received a copy direct.

You may follow the progress of the inquiry at www.parliament.uk/hlscience.