

Request for proposals: Socio-economic consultant or consultancy to undertake mapping and analysis of science engagement in the UK/England

The British Science Association (BSA) would like to create an index or set of indicators for science engagement and inequity across the UK (or England, depending on available data). We are looking for a freelance research professional or small agency to create this index.

The Request for Proposals (RfP) closes at 09:00 on Monday 15 November 2021.

About this project

The BSA would like to create an index or set of indicators for science engagement and inequity across the UK. We would like to start creating a map of science engagement activity, and to highlight gaps, inequities, and areas for development. The chosen candidate for this research will support us by identifying and compiling data sources that allow science engagement to be mapped at a local level in England, and ideally across the UK nations and regions.

Recent examples of this type of work include:

- [Associations between community cultural engagement and life satisfaction, mental distress and mental health functioning using data from the UK Household Longitudinal Study](#) (UCL)
- [A Civic Strength Index for London](#) (Young Foundation)
- [New dataset gives full picture of outreach across England](#) (Office for Students)

Our scoping research has shown that much of the quantitative literature on science engagement has been based on surveys of participants, i.e. self-rated questionnaires from various research cohorts. For this work, the BSA are looking to identify data that would allow widespread measurement across geographies, particularly of the economic and geographic context that the individuals live in.

The BSA takes a broad view of science and STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) – we include a wide range of fields such as computing science/technology, chemicals, food, textiles, craft, design, engineering, graphics and applied technologies including those relating to construction, transport, the built environment, biomedical, microbiological and food technology. Our definition of science engagement recognises that people and communities across the UK have many opportunities to interact with science and scientists in different formal and informal settings and locations.

We are interested in engagement across all age groups and contexts, including but not limited to: science/STEM education; museums and discovery centres; science festivals; university-led engagement; local science business; citizen science; STEM industry and the STEM workforce.

The outputs of this project are aimed at science engagement funders, delivery organisations, and policymakers who could take steps within their work to enable more equitable science engagement. For example, by targeting their resources or activities towards areas or demographic groups who have been historically overlooked by science engagement.

What we need

We are looking to create an index of science engagement in the UK (ideally all nations and regions, but this is dependent on the available and consistent data). This is likely to be a composition of a number of datasets with appropriate weightings.

We want the data included in the index or indicators to be:

- Mappable at a local level (e.g. Lower layer Super Output Areas/LSOAs, or Local Authorities)
- Repeatable over space and time
- Consistent over space and time
- Contemporaneous and relevant
- Showing variation, range, or deviation between areas (e.g. not all areas are roughly equal)

We envisage data that the index or indicators might include data such as:

- The Education, Skills, and Training (EST) domain of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation
- Labour market statistics (NOMIS – proportion of adults by highest level of qualification, or Annual Population Survey)
- Business register (jobs in STEM industries, VAT-based business units)
- Locations of health assets (NHS trusts, research hospitals)
- Locations of higher education institutions, and area demographics.

We would like to be able to input data on science engagement such as: locations for government-funded STEM enrichment activities, locations of outreach activities, and locations of science centres and festivals.

We are looking for a data analysis/quantitative research agency or consultant(s) with:

- A track record of gathering public data sets to inform research and producing analysis reports;
- A solid knowledge of the landscape of social and economic data in the UK (awareness of science and science engagement is beneficial but not essential);
- Confidence in advising which data sets would work best for our needs;
- Access to data sets that would work best for our needs (including any paid or subscription services);
- Ability to meaningfully analyse, compile, and visualise data (including access to geospatial mapping software or tools);
- Experience of building knowledge quickly.

We need an agency or analyst/researcher who can thoroughly scan the available data and suggest how it can build a UK picture of science engagement. We will provide guidance on specific themes to focus on but would also like the chosen candidate to cast the net wide with their data collection and analysis.

We would appreciate any additional suggestions for other research to include and will work with the chosen candidate to finalise the scope of the work. We will provide guidance and a suggested research template for the chosen consultant(s) or organisation.

Outputs

The chosen candidate will produce a “beta version” of a UK map, index, or set of indicators for science engagement, including likely “hotspots and coldspots”. They should also provide clear methodology behind the index, and reference all data included in it. We intend to publish all outputs including underlying data.

We suggest that the work is split into two stages:

- Output A: list of indicators, methodology for an index, and data tables
- Output B: visualisation of the index/indicators and short report showing key trends

We will accept proposals for creating both outputs, or output A only.

This work will be done remotely and the chosen consultant(s) or organisation should be available for video call briefings and updates throughout the work.

Your proposal

Please include the following information in your response:

- A biography(s) or CV;
- A short summary of your approach (up to 800 words);
- Your track record (a summary of your relevant experience);
- Names of one or more previous clients & a brief description of your work for them;
- Budget breakdown (including whether you will charge VAT) and your ability to deliver this project during autumn 2021 – winter 2022. We recommend providing a day rate and the number of days you think this research will take.
- An up-to-date Diversity and Inclusion Policy (for organisations only).

Timeline

- 25 October 2021 Request for proposals issued
- 15 November 2021 Deadline for submissions (by 09.00)
- w/c 15 November 2021 Submissions reviewed and invites to interview issued
- 22-23 November Interviews
- 29 November 2021 Contract offered

Date	Milestone
25 October 2021	Request for proposals issued
15 November 2021	Deadline for submissions (by 09.00)
w/c 15 November 2021	Submissions reviewed and invites to interview issued
22-23 November	Interviews conducted
29 November 2021	Contract offered

How to apply

Please submit your proposal by 09.00 on Monday 15 November 2021 to Clio Heslop, Partnerships and Impact Manager clio.heslop@britishscienceassociation.org

Any enquiries in relation to this RfP can contact Clio Heslop via email to organise a call or meeting – note that responses given may be shared with other bidders. If you require this information in a different format for accessibility reasons, please contact Clio Heslop.

About the BSA

The British Science Association (BSA) is a charity with a vision of a future where science is more relevant, representative, and connected to society.

The BSA has three core pillars of work: education, engagement and influencing (convening stakeholders from across different sectors). We have established major campaigns and initiatives across the UK, including [British Science Week](#) and the [British Science Festival](#). We provide support to the science engagement sector, through managing programmes and networks such as the [UK Science Festivals Network](#) and the [Inclusive Science Engagement Network](#). And we have a growing portfolio of [Community Engagement](#) projects, such as our [Community Leaders](#) and [Community Buddies](#) programmes (the latter being particularly relevant for this proposal), and the [Ideas Fund](#), a new grants programme, supported by Wellcome, that connects communities with research professionals.

We champion youth voice and the importance of young people having agency to ask questions and lead their own investigations – we have run the [CREST](#) scheme for over three decades, and our [Future Forums](#) programme empowers young people to share their views with researchers and policy makers and discuss innovative solutions to the challenges facing their communities, society and the world around them.

We undertake research and policy work – as a partner on the Government's Sciencewise programme and as the Secretariat for the [APPG for Diversity and Inclusion in STEM](#). And we seek to influence and collaborate with leaders from across business, politics, science & research, civil society and the media through our [For Thought](#) programme.

We have a team of 33 staff, currently working from home but usually head quartered in London with some staff based elsewhere in the UK. We are funded by a mix of grants, sponsorship and donations; our annual turnover is c. £4m.