



The WBSBF Recognition Award

BSBF 2024, 1st October 2024, Trieste

<https://www.bsf2024.org/women-in-big-science>

Terms of Reference for Evaluators of Applications

Background

The plan for the Women in Big Science Recognition Award was conceived in 2020 by the WBSBF Team to promote the participation and careers of women in big science projects and to celebrate as part of the Big Science Business Forum (BSBF) the efforts made by organisations, projects, and teams to create bias-free cultures and practices, where women can thrive on equal terms to men.

Key organisations operating in the big science ecosystem have been consulted during 2021 and 2022 on the design of the Award, and to identify the status quo and significant gaps in activities for gender equality and diversity in big science. The timing of this initiative coincides with the fresh drive by the European Commission to use Horizon Europe as a lever in achieving structural change for gender equality in research and innovation, requiring (with some exceptions) that organisations benefiting from the funding must have a Gender Equality Plan.

The Women in Big Science Award targets organisations, projects, and teams by assessing their achievement on three levels listed below:

- Level 1 recognises efforts and progress in transforming internal Organisational Culture
- Level 2 recognises efforts and progress involving joint actions as part of Collaborative Partnerships,
- Level 3 recognises efforts and progress in relationship with society and in Societal Impact.

All applications for the award, as a minimum requirement, need to describe what the organisation has been doing and/or is planning to do at Level 1. Should applicants wish to be assessed also at Level 2, they would need to describe actions that are taken jointly as part of a project or contractual partnerships. Lastly, if applicants want to be assessed on all three levels, they would need to provide evidence of their actions at all levels.

Whilst some organisations in the big science ecosystem have been on the journey to improve the position of women for some time, especially at Level 1, for many such a journey has just begun. The Award has been promoted as an integral part of all BSBF events, starting with BSBF2022. This means that it will be possible not only to monitor and learn

from their efforts but also from those of others on attracting more women to pursue a career or grow in big science.

What we want to achieve

We want to recognise, encourage, and promote all efforts and inspire new ones. Therefore, when evaluating applications, it is important to recognise the organisational diversity of the big science projects.

The context, governance, and mission in which applicants operate may constrain or facilitate the scope, and the types of actions they can adopt and implement (e.g., industry is different from research facilities). It is also important to acknowledge that some of the applicants may have just begun their journey to achieve gender equality while others may have been active for some time and have accumulated considerable experience in this area.

Scope and focus of the evaluation.

The aim of the evaluation is to assess the applications for the award submitted to BSBF2024 and identify:

- organisations that have already made significant progress and achieved demonstrable results.
- organisations that have put in place a comprehensive framework of measures that will produce concrete improvements.

Applicants have been provided with five questions to help them provide information in the following manner:

1. Is strategy clear? Does it deliver on specific policy objectives?
2. Is there a set of well-defined measures to achieve the prioritised objectives?
3. Is there a process to regularly monitor and report on progress?
4. Have the adopted measures delivered concrete improvements; if too early to specify: what improvements are expected?
5. Are significant actions/improvements planned for the next two years?

The evaluation will consider the evidence provided for each of these questions and assign a score reflecting a level of agreement on a scale of 0 – 5, with 0 = 'don't agree' and 5 = 'fully agree'. Therefore, the maximum score for each Level = 25/25. The threshold score for each Level is 15/25

The score of **5/25** could be interpreted as that, at this stage of effort, there is lack of a clear strategy, limited scope and impact of measures, insufficient evidence or expectation of achievement, no plans to make further progress in the future. By contrast, the score of **25/25** could be interpreted as evidence of very strong strategic approach with well-defined policy objectives, a variety of appropriate concrete measures to make specific structural improvements across several organisational functions, and strong evidence of performance/ambition to achieve measurable improvements.

Networks Applications

To recognise the distinction between formally constituted organisations and the often semi-formal networks, the 2024 edition of the WBSBF Recognition Award introduces a new award category specifically on networks.

A network can participate in the Network Recognition Award if it satisfies the following criteria:

- The composition of the Network is clear (i.e., who are the members, how members are selected, what is the role of members)
- Organization of the Network (i.e., is there a governing/management structure with clear responsibilities and monitoring of activities to assess effectiveness and impact)
- The scope and ambition of the Network's mission (i.e., is it to serve the interests of the members, e.g., career decision support, or act as an agent of change for gender equality and gender balance)

The following levels of impact can be considered.

LN1. Actions to improve individual professional growth.

LN2. Actions to promote diversity and inclusion in the organizations directly involved in the network.

LN3. Actions to foster cooperation among different entities and influence decision-makers, promote and foster big science projects in society.

Scope and focus of the Evaluation for Networks

The applicants have been provided with five questions to help them organise information for the application:

- 1) Why is the network needed? What is the network's mission/goal?
- 2) What services/activities does the network offer to its members?
- 3) What are the network's achievements/impact?
- 4) What are the network's future plans?
- 5) What is the added value of the Network?

The Levels should be assessed based on the following actions associated with the different Levels:

(L1) Training, mentoring, nominating, championing of network members, sharing job and career advancement opportunities. Providing mentoring support, promoting women in leadership roles.

(L2) Collecting/sharing statistics, disseminating evidence of diversity benefits, celebrating achievements of women in big science.

(L3) Outreach activities, e.g., to schools, public meetings, public visits to facilities, side-events and promotions at conferences, social media, sharing organisational best practices, disseminating evidence of diversity benefits, celebrating achievements of women in big science.

Promoting impact

When evaluating applications, the evaluation panel may wish to include advice, where appropriate, on how a given organisation could improve its approach to help maximise impact in its sector of the big science ecosystem.

Time frame and output

The deadline for submission of the electronic versions of the applications is 13th September 2024

The Evaluation Panel will receive copies of the applications on

The Evaluation Panel's decision will be announced on the 1st of October at BSBF2024 during the Women in Big Science Roundtable session.

Method

- The membership of the Evaluation Panel reflects the diversity of the big science ecosystem. It also includes members of the WBSBF team
- Applications for the Award are submitted using a poster format or video
- Applicants must submit an electronic version of a poster by 13th September.
- Members of the Evaluation Panel will receive copies of the applications together with an Excel template to record their scores.
- Two videoconference meetings are planned between 16th and 30th September to coordinate the scores and arrive at a consensus decision.
- The WBSBF team will receive the Panel's recommendations on how to improve the Award process in future BSBF events.

Information sources

The only material to be used in the evaluation is the electronic version of the Application poster.

The WBSBF team will be available throughout to answer any logistics questions and clarify the approach.