

National Environmental Isotope Facility User Survey 2023

63 Responses

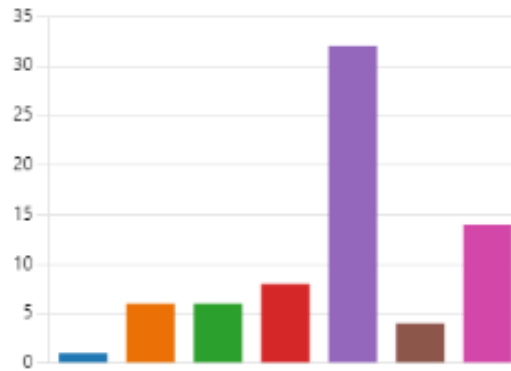
11:01 Average time to complete

Closed Status

1. Which area of the NEIF have you used during the last calendar year?

[More Details](#)

Argon isotopes (Ar-SUERC)	1
Cosmogenic nuclides (CN-SUERC)	6
Geochronology and tracers (Ge...	6
Biology stable isotopes (SI-Ecol-...	8
Environmental & geological sta...	32
Compound specific (Org-Bristol)	4
Radiocarbon (14C-Oxford, 14C-...	14



2. How frequently do you apply to the NEIF?

[More Details](#)

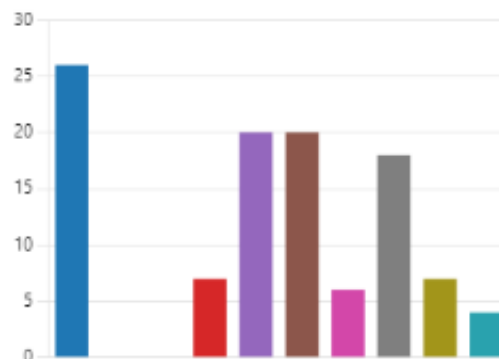
More than once per year	5
Once per year	16
Every other year	17
Occasionally	16
This is the first time	9



3. Which main areas of science are you actively involved in?

[More Details](#)

Earth sciences/ observation	26
Forensic science	0
Atmospheric sciences	0
Geochronology	7
Fresh water and marine sciences	20
Climate change	20
Life sciences	6
Archaeology	18
Polar sciences	7
Modern Environmental Tracing	4



4. How did you first hear about NEIF?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

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Responses

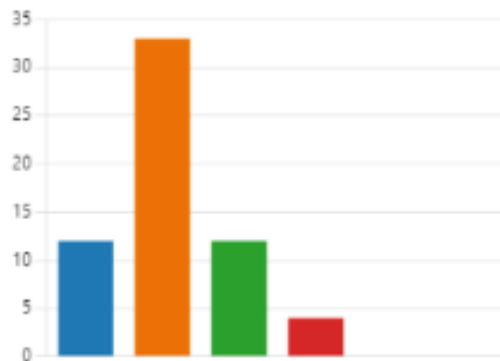
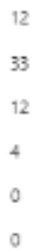
Latest Responses
 "Academic supervisor"
 "Via NERC"
 "on the grapevine"



5. How did you find the application process?
 With 6 being very simple and 1 complicated

[More Details](#)

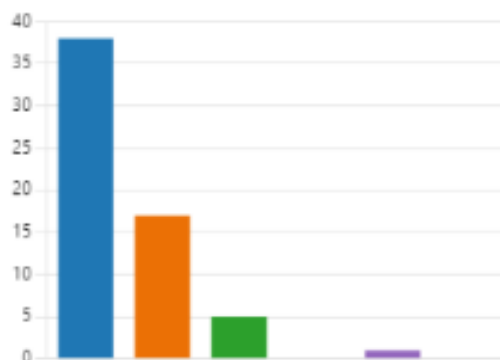
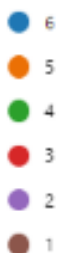
[Insights](#)



6. How would you rate the response time by facility staff to your initial enquiry?
 With 6 being prompt and 1 being very slow

[More Details](#)

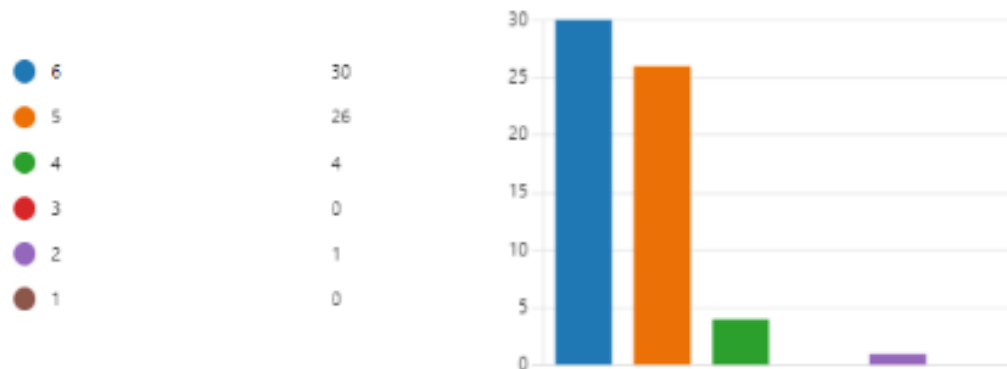
[Insights](#)



7. Were you satisfied with the level of feedback following the review of your proposal?
With 6 being detailed and helpful and 1 being poor.

[More Details](#)

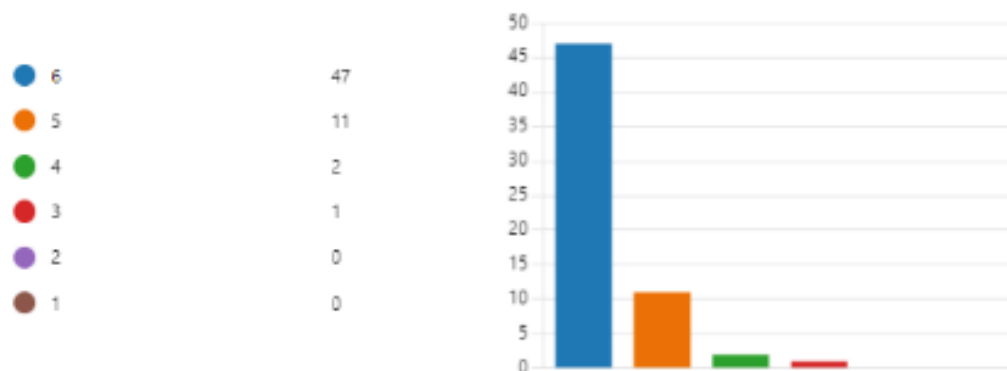
[Insights](#)



8. Do you feel you had adequate support and feedback from facility staff prior to the submission of your proposal?
With 6 being detailed and helpful and 1 being poor

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)



9. Was your proposal funded? If yes please skip forward to Q15
If no, please continue through questions Q9-Q14

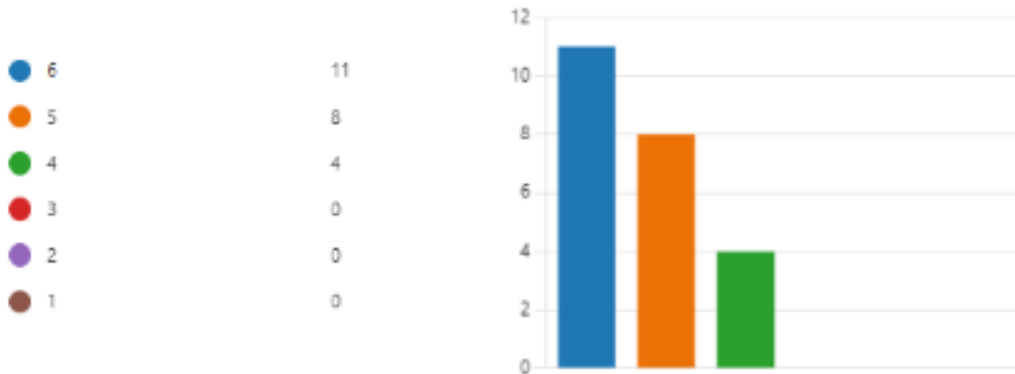
[More Details](#)



10. How would you rate the response time for comments, following the submission of your proposal to NEIF?

With 6 being prompt and 1 being very slow

[More Details](#)



11. Please add your suggestions of how we could improve the application process

5 Responses

ID ↑	Name	Responses
1	anonymous	It was very smooth, I can't think of many ways to improve.
2	anonymous	It all feels seamless and easy.
3	anonymous	All good
4	anonymous	It was good that I was contacted to indicate there was a delay in the time to decision process. An idea of an anticipated timeline from the outset would have been nice (appreciating that it's not a hard and fast cutoff)
5	anonymous	Dan Condon has been outstandingly friendly and helpful through the whole process.

12. Do you intend to/ have you resubmitted your unsuccessful application?

[More Details](#)



13. If you have resubmitted within this calendar year was this resubmission successful?

[More Details](#)



14. Please comment on the helpfulness of the committee's comments on the resubmission of your proposal

7 Responses

ID ↑	Name	Responses
1	anonymous	Excellent.
2	anonymous	Very helpful overall
3	anonymous	OK
4	anonymous	(not yet announced)
5	anonymous	Very helpful
6	anonymous	Very informative, and second review also clearly took into consideration the responses and information we had provided.
7	anonymous	Helpful and positive constructive feedback on where the application can be improved, greatly appreciated

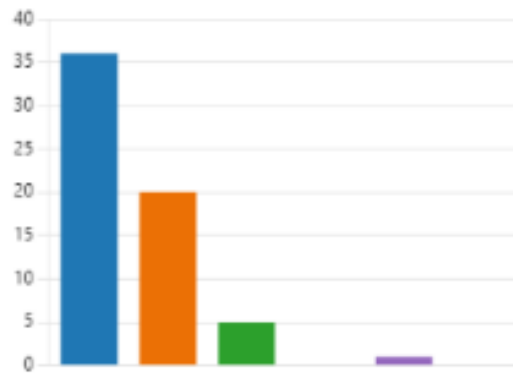
15. How would you rate the analytical facilities provided by the NEIF?
With 6 being world leading and 1 being below standard

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

- 6
- 5
- 4
- 3
- 2
- 1

36
20
5
0
1
0



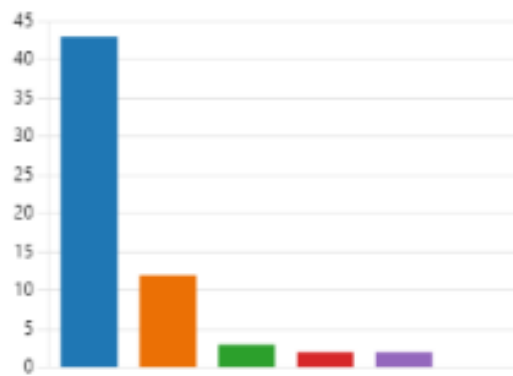
16. How would you consider the quality of service you have received from the NEIF staff?
With 6 being world leading and 1 being below standard

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

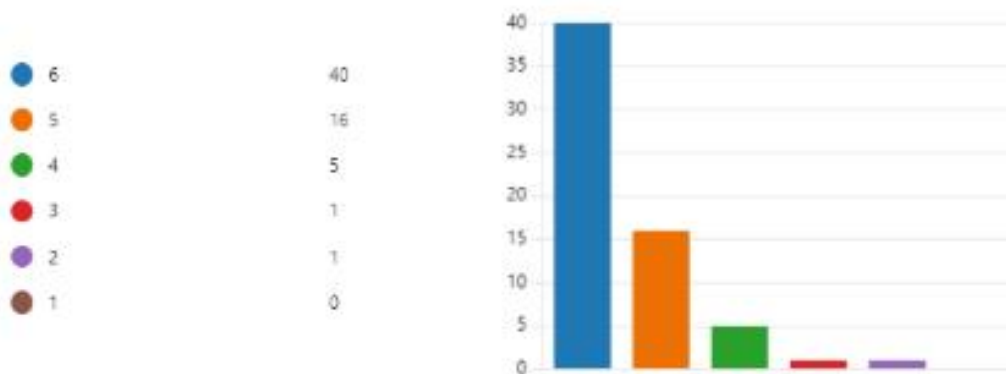
- 6
- 5
- 4
- 3
- 2
- 1

43
12
3
2
2
0



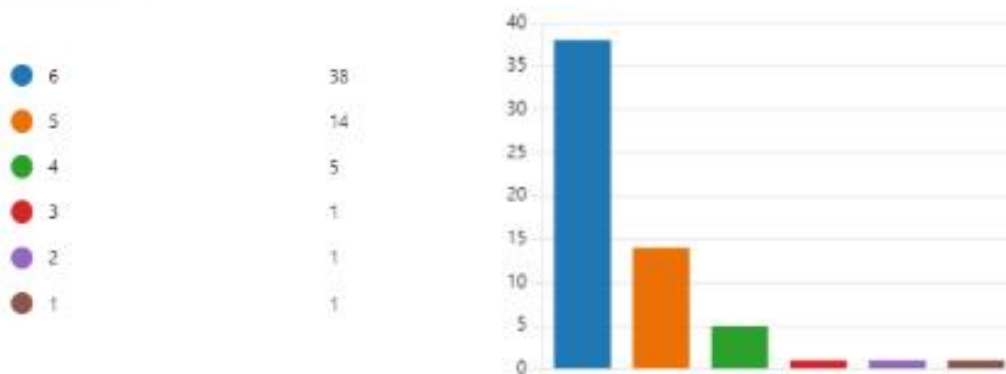
17. How important to you is science collaboration with the NEIF staff?
With 6 being world leading and 1 being below standard

[More Details](#)



18. How important do you consider the training that is provided by the NEIF, for yourself or your students?
With 6 being world leading and 1 being below standard

[More Details](#)



19. The service allocation of time depends upon accurate forecasting of likely demand. How frequently do you anticipate using the NEIF over the next five years?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

Frequency	Count
More than once per year	13
Once per year	24
Every other year	11
Occasionally	13
This is the only time	1



20. Which new analytical facilities or offerings would you like to see within the NEIF?

26 Responses

ID ↑	Name	Responses
1	anonymous	Lead-210 radiometric dating. Denitrifier method for nitrogen stable isotopes.
2	anonymous	It's a really big ask, but a facility to measure isotopes of many noble gases in seawater would be wonderful. It would be a large investment and have very significant running costs though.
3	anonymous	Carbonate clumped isotope analysis
4	anonymous	Pb-210 dating
5	anonymous	Small sample size capability for 14C
6	anonymous	210Pb / 137Cs dating - this is really something that is lacking for the community
7	anonymous	Currently OK for my needs
8	anonymous	GC coupled with both high-resolution MS and IRMS. Determination of d2H of solid (biological) samples.
9	anonymous	Compound specific radiocarbon
10	anonymous	compound specific radiocarbon dating
11	anonymous	U/Pb in fish material
12	anonymous	Happy with existing facilities
13	anonymous	Turnaround time for processing samples and delivering results is extremely poor. The University of Oxford failed to invest in staff to process samples and therefore processing radiocarbon dates has been extremely slow. This has resulted in delays to projects.
14	anonymous	LA-MC-ICP-MS for Sr isotope analysis
15	anonymous	n/a
16	anonymous	Minor S isotopes (33, 36); He isotopes
17	anonymous	None I can think of.
18	anonymous	Laser sulphur
19	anonymous	The NEIF provides the analyses I currently require
20	anonymous	Fluid inclusion analysis
21	anonymous	Introduction to the equipment such as the mass spectrometer would be beneficial prior to lab visit (e.g., through online tutorials and/or videos).
22	anonymous	ion probe and/or electron probe - for in situ geochemical analysis
23	anonymous	Multiple sulfur isotopes, more in situ stable isotope analysis (e.g. SIMS/keep LAICPMS)
24	anonymous	development of shorter-lived radio isotope dating methods for dating material in the 20,000-50,000 yr time frame.
25	anonymous	in situ cosmogenic 14C (I know it's been funded but I want to note that I am still using other labs to do this and look forward to it being built and part of the NEIF portfolio).
26	anonymous	Compound-specific radiocarbon Carbonate clumped-isotope thermometry

21. Please offer any final comments about your experience with the NEIF

29 Responses

ID ↑	Name	Responses
1	anonymous	NEIF funding has been essential to my research and developing my career. I look forward to further collaboration.
2	anonymous	My experience is mostly through the stable isotope lab at BGS. Melanie Leng and Carol Arrowsmith are brilliant, and provide an outstanding service and collaboration - they produce high quality data in large quantities in a timely and professional way, and they engage very constructive on the interpretation and scientific collaboration side also.
3	anonymous	The waiting time for 14C dates is over five months. Is there a way to shorten it?
4	anonymous	Apologies if the following repeats comments made last year! Until my most recent application, I was fully satisfied with the review process but on the last occasion one of the reviewers made major criticisms which were no doubt the cause of the 'resubmit' decision. These criticisms were either partially or completely (demonstrably) invalid and in strong contrast to the supportive comments of the other reviewer. It cost me quite a lot of time to attend to the criticisms, but I did not in the end change much in the resubmitted application. As it was then approved I feel that that my view about the critical comments was vindicated. While I understand that everyone can have a bad day (particularly if dealing with a thick sheaf of applications!) and am very happy that the proposal was ultimately supported, I think it might be useful to have recourse to a third reviewer in cases where the two originals come to such contrasting conclusions - this would avoid the time and effort of both reviewers and applicant in a second round of application.
5	anonymous	The radiocarbon facility and applications are unique and essential.
6	anonymous	I love the NEIF staff I have worked with, they are super supportive and knowledgeable and willing to assist my projects.
7	anonymous	I think NEIF should developing world-leading 14C capabilities - which now means the ability to measure small samples.
8	anonymous	World class facilities makes confidence in data really high which is essential for the science areas I'm involved.
9	anonymous	The NEIF remains vital to UK 'competitiveness' in global science and allows us to contribute and collaborate on the highest impact work. Many researchers have the NEIF to thank for their careers.
10	anonymous	I have had an excellent experience with NEIF from pre-submission through to sample analysis. The application process allowed us to provide sufficient detail, but without being overly long! Our samples were analysed very quickly and the NEIF team at Bristol have been great and responded promptly to all my (many) emails - thanks Helen, Ian and Iain!
11	anonymous	Great service and great support. Thank you and long may it continue :-)
12	anonymous	My experience working with NEIF: Environmental & geological stable isotopes (SI-BG) have been fantastic. I still do not have the opportunity to write a proposal for it, I am working in technical services and research, collecting/preparing samples/analyze the results for stable isotopes produced by the team of Melanie. If is an possibility to join the email list to be aware about funds and the applications to perform analysis in NEIF facilities will be very nice, thank you. Dharma
13	anonymous	It was a pleasure working with the staff; they were an enormous help!
14	anonymous	My main comment is that when projects have been funded by AHRC or NERC, it is really time-consuming for everyone involved (applicant, facility staff, reviewers and committees) to then have to apply again for the radiocarbon dates. I think this should be revised, or a light touch application route be developed as it redirects energies from the main project to a time-consuming but essential side quest.

15	anonymous	The analytical facilities and support from staff are absolutely key to my PhD research.
16	anonymous	Happy with the service and staff assistance.
17	anonymous	An excellent experience. Great data.
18	anonymous	Have not applied in last year, so answer Q9 not appropriate
19	anonymous	Very slow return of data and organisation of student training and analytical visits.
20	anonymous	My experience with the NEIF was generally excellent, largely due to the helpful nature of all staff members I interacted with. Technical issues with machinery have lead to some delays in my project but I completely understand that that is outwith the control of the staff.
21	anonymous	NA
22	anonymous	Dr Rona McGill was extremely helpful and supportive. She went above and beyond what she needed to do, in terms of the application, study design and general support. Really can't thank her enough!
23	anonymous	great, just wish NERC and STFC would talk to each other so that facility usage was not so compartmentalized. NERC has a SIMS facility in Edinburgh that I don't have access to as a planetary scientist, because I want to analyze meteorites.
24	anonymous	I've always had a brilliant experience with NEIF, as have my students - SUERC is a great facility with friendly, collegiate and collaborative staff who in particular are always very patient and helpful with students. Keep up the good work!
25	anonymous	What makes NEIF exceptionally good is the supportive and nurturing aspect of the staff in their help with applications to the facility. This is especially the case with students, where NEIF staff have frequently helped them develop a proposal that is feasible with the sample material available. This both strengthens the proposal, reduces the risk of failure, and educates the students in how to construct well thought out and achievable proposals.
26	anonymous	Staff are excellent to work with when they are in contact. I currently have three batches of samples with NEIF, and I have no idea what stage of preparation they are at. When they respond it is helpful, but the length of time following submission to reply or run samples is an issue. I have samples for a PhD project that will likely not be in time for their project now, but I don't know as I don't hear back.
27	anonymous	Generally NEIF are excellent. Staff are helpful and engaged and a pleasure to work with. The one area which stops me rating the facilities as world-class is the turn-around times, and communication of those times (and delays). This seems to be a resourcing issue rather than one of an issue with staff or the facility per se. Demand just seems to outstrip capacity.
28	anonymous	A fantastic, world-leading facility. Staff are always incredibly helpful, including being critical of the proposals, which ensures that we make the most of the samples and that the science is robust. Having the ability to have some analyses funded through this channel has transformed my research. Thank you and keep up the good work.
29	anonymous	Fantastic and important work and with unusually clear and careful responses to any queries