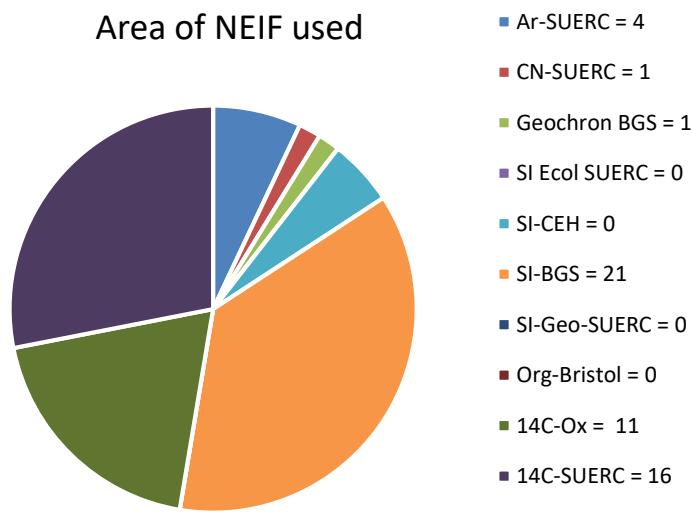


## The National Environmental Isotope Facility user survey for 2020

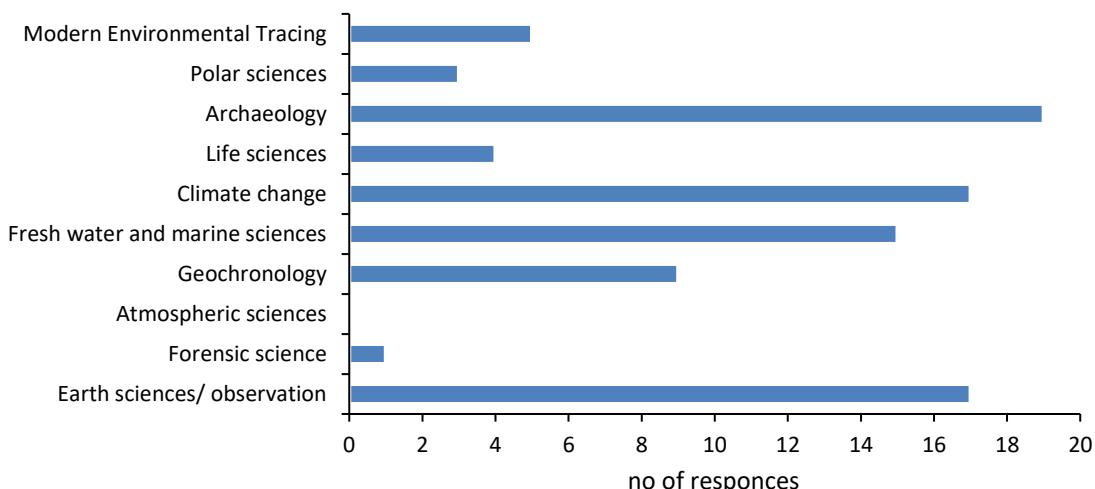
Thanks to all of those who took part in the 2020 NEIF user survey. The feedback we have received has been invaluable, both for the continued operation of the facility and to help establish where additional services maybe required by the wider isotope research community. A short summary of the results is presented below.

### The Respondents

- There were 44 responses to the combined NEIF user survey in 2020



- The majority of the respondents had used NEIF for either stable isotope or radio carbon applications, with 18% of those surveyed having used more than one of the facility nodes.
- The majority of the respondents are regular users with 77% using the facility at least once every 2 years.
- The same number of respondents (77%) expected to continue using the facility at this regular rate, suggesting an excellent retention of previous users.
- We also see that word of mouth or direct referral by collaborators is the most common way for our users to hear about the facility. Only 6 of the 44 users surveyed found NEIF through the website/ direct application or external talks.
- The main science areas of those surveyed are: Climate change (18%), Archaeology (21%) and Earth Sciences/ observation (18%).



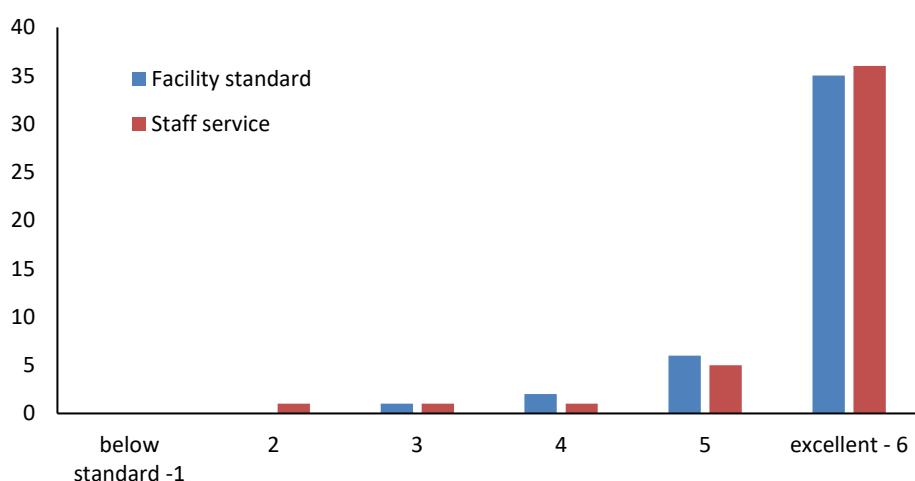
## The Application Process

- The majority of the users found that applying to the NEIF facilities was a simple or very simple process (70%).
- The majority of users found that facility staff responded promptly to their initial enquiry for support.
- Whilst 27 of the respondents thought the steering committee feedback ranked 5-6 out of 6, 17 of the users thought the feedback was less detailed (scores of 2-4).
- Within 2020, of the 44 projects submitted by the survey respondents, 26 were funded first time, 13 on re submission and only 5 unfunded, a highly successful application rate.
- Where originally unfunded, 72% of users found the feedback they received from the steering committee detailed (scoring 5-6 out of 6). However, less than half of these (38%) suggested that the feedback was useful in helping them re-submit their application.
- Q10 asked how this application processes could be improved this led to 26 free form comments, 9 of these suggested the process worked well. The others varied in their comments often suggesting faster feedback turnaround, longer applications, more detailed thoughtful reviewer comments, improvements to the web portal. *The free form comments have been sent in full to the NEIF operation group.*

## The Facility and Training

- When asked, 93% of respondents thought the NEIF facilities were world excellent, scoring 5-6 out of 6.
- The same proportion of respondents considered the staff service to be excellent (93% scoring 5-6 out of 6).

NEIF Facilities and staff service



- 88% of respondents considered NEIF and our ability to tailor to specific project requirements essential to their work (scoring 5-6 out of 6).
- When asked how the NEIF facilities could be improved 7 of the 17 free form comments suggested no changes and an excellent set of facilities. Amongst the other comments were improvements to sample turn around time, changes to the application process, clearer

collaboration/ publication expectations and more funding for student time at the facility for training are the key areas for improvement. *The free form comments have been sent in full to the NEIF operation group.*

- When asked how they rated training for themselves and their students 72% suggested this was excellent (scoring either 5-6 out of 6).
- When asked to comment on this the major changes that were suggested were for additional funding for student training and for more online interactive training courses. *The free form comments have been sent in full to the NEIF operation group.*

The final comments addressed future changes that users would like to see in the NEIF facilities. A full list of suggestions has been submitted to the NEIF operation group but a few of the suggestions include: Nd isotope measurements from small samples, DOC isotope measurement, N<sub>2</sub>O and denitrifier sample analysis, compound specific C and H isotopes and Hg isotope measurements.