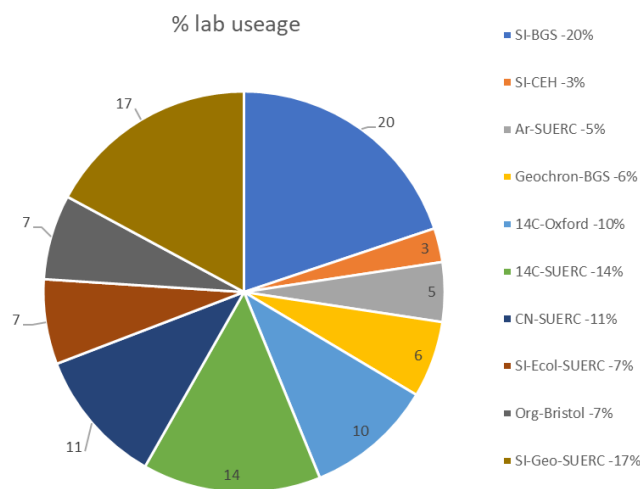


## The National Environmental Isotope Facility user survey for 2021

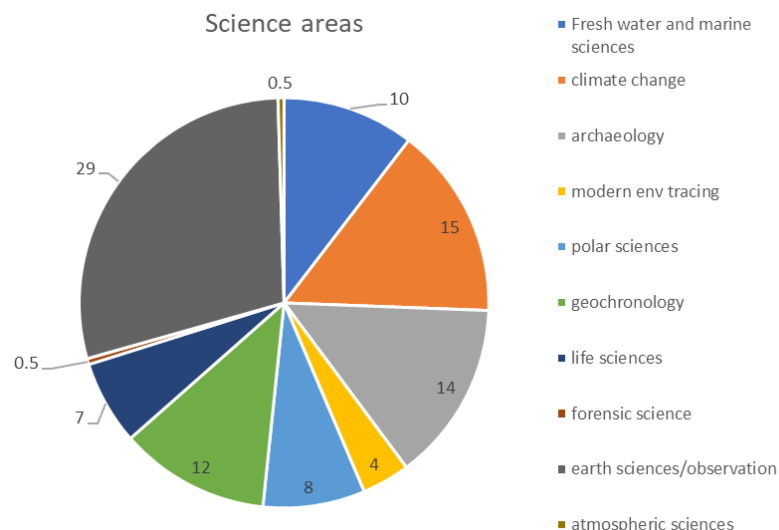
Thanks to all of those who took part in the 2021 NEIF user survey. The feedback we have received has been invaluable, it supports the continued operation of the facility and helps us to make improvements both in our administration of the facility and with supporting community needs. A short summary of the results is presented below.

### The Respondents

- There were 121 responses to the combined NEIF user survey in 2021
- As each user could record the use of multiple facilities, a breakdown of facility use as a % of all users shows: 20% of users used the BGS stable isotope lab and 17% used the SI Geo lab at SUERC lab, with other labs having slightly lower numbers of total users.



- In 2021 there were 23 new users of NEIF and 119 total who responded to the survey, 65 users stated that they apply at least once every two years and 2 who apply more than once a year.
- The majority of users were referred to NEIF by word of mouth, emails from colleagues and due to long term re-use. 6 users found NEIF through the website, 2 through direct talks and 2 as part of larger grant applications.
- Again, as a % of the total the major areas of scientific interest for users are earth sciences (29%) and climate change (15%).

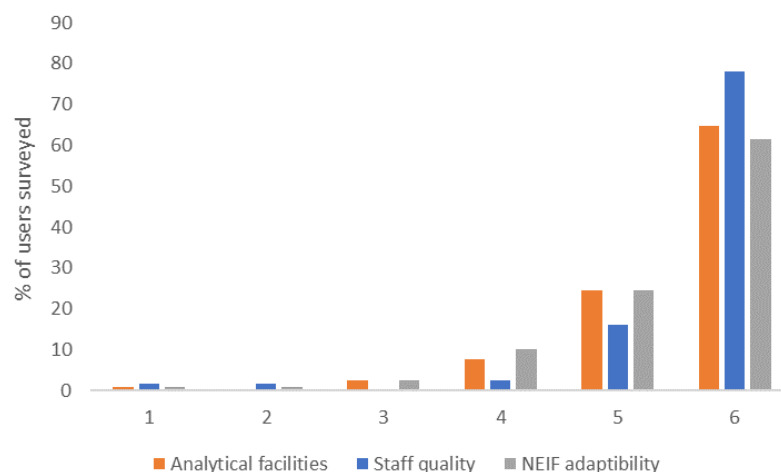


## The Application Process

- The majority of the users found that applying to the NEIF facilities was a simple or very simple process (score 5 or 6 (67%)), with only 15% ranking the process a score of 1-3.
- 88% of the respondents thought the staff response time feedback ranked 5-6 out of 6, and only 9% of the users though the response times were slow to very slow (scores of 1-3).
- Within 2021, of the 119 survey respondents, 85 said their project was funded first time, 24 on re submission and only 10 unfunded, a highly successful application rate.
- 77% of users found the feedback they received from the steering committee detailed (scoring 5-6 out of 6) with only 8% considering it to be less useful (scores 1-3).
- Where applicants had a rejection or had to resubmit a proposal 85% felt they received good support from facility staff before resubmission and 56% felt that the comments from the steering committee were useful in the resubmission (scores 5-6).
- Q10 asked how this application processes could be improved this led to a number of free form comments, many 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, 89% of respondents thought the NEIF facilities were world leading or excellent, scoring 5-6 out of 6.
- 94% of respondents considered the staff service to be excellent (scoring 5-6).
- 85% of respondents considered NEIF and our ability to tailor to specific project and adapt to these requirements essential to their work (scoring 5-6 out of 6).



- When asked how the NEIF facilities could be improved many comments suggested no changes and an excellent set of facilities. Amongst the other comments were improvements to sample turnaround time, more support for staffing to reduce bottle necks, clearer project progress communication, concerns over the management of some facilities. *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 83% 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 more reading lists to be made available to students prior to training in lab and additional funding for student training. Most also acknowledged that with COVID in lab training has been difficult. *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: clumped isotopes, increased accuracy on  $^{26}\text{Al}$ , multiple S isotopes, position specific isotopes, more focus on multi-isotope systems, v small  $^{15}\text{N}$ ,  $^{17}\text{O}$  on  $\text{SO}_4$  and  $\text{N}_2\text{O}$  and replace resin extraction for  $\text{NO}_3$ .