

Research conducted by University of Southampton – Combined Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form for Anonymous Online Surveys for Adult Participants

Study Title: EBNet Members Survey

Researcher(s): Prof Sonia Heaven, Dr Sigrid Kusch-Brandt

University email: S.Heaven@soton.ac.uk, S.Kusch@soton.ac.uk

Ethics/ERGO no: 110675

Version and date: V1 15 Jan 2026

What is the research about?

We are inviting you to participate in a survey for members of the Environmental Biotechnology Network (EBNet, www.ebnet.ac.uk) regarding your experience as an EBNet member and your views on what are the key issues in environmental biotechnology now.

This study was approved by the Faculty Research Ethics Committee (FREC) at the University of Southampton (Ethics/ERGO Number: 110675).

What will happen to me if I take part?

The study involves completing an anonymous questionnaire, which should take approximately 5 to 10 minutes of your time. If you are happy to complete this survey, you will need to tick (check) the box on the survey form to show your consent. As this survey is anonymous, neither the research team nor anyone else will be able to know whether you have participated, or what answers you provided.

Why have I been asked to participate?

You have been asked to take part because you are on our mailing list as an EBNet member.

What information will be collected?

The questions in this survey ask for information on:

- What benefits if any do EBNet members feel they have obtained from participation in the Network?
- What do they see as priorities for environmental biotechnology?

The survey asks you to confirm whether you are an EBNet member, what best describes your current area of activity and interests, and approximately how many years you have worked in areas related to Environmental Biotechnology. The answers are anonymised and no personal data is recorded or retained.

Some of the survey questions contain textboxes where you will be asked to type in your own answers. Please note that in order for this to be anonymous, you should not include in your answers any information from which you, or other people, could be identified.

You do not have to answer all the questions if you do not wish to do so. However, those questions marked with an asterisk require some response before you can proceed.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

If you decide to take part in this study, you will not receive any direct benefits; however, your participation will contribute to a wider understanding of key issues in environmental biotechnology as a discipline, and will help to inform ideas for future networks and activities.

Are there any risks involved?

Taking part in this study is not expected to cause you any psychological discomfort and/or distress; however, should you feel uncomfortable you can leave the survey at any time, and contact the organisers: S.Heaven@soton.ac.uk, S.Kusch@soton.ac.uk

What will happen to the information collected?

All information collected for this study will be stored securely on a password protected computer and backed up on a secure server. The information collected will be analysed, and may be written up for dissemination on the EBNet website, in communications with funding bodies, and at conferences or in journal papers. The data will mainly be used in aggregated form, while some anonymous specific statements of individual respondents may also be included.

The University of Southampton conducts research to the highest standards of ethics and research integrity. In accordance with our Research Data Management Policy, data will be held for 10 years after the study has finished when it will be securely destroyed.

What happens if I change my mind?

You can withdraw from the survey at any point before final submission, by closing the survey window. Closing the window before final submission will create an incomplete dataset; the research team may fully delete such datasets, or may still consider them in certain cases. As all responses are fully anonymous, it will in no case be possible to link such a dataset to a specific respondent.

What happens if there is a problem?

If you are unhappy about any aspect of this study and would like to make a formal complaint, you can contact the Head of Research Ethics and Governance, University of Southampton, on the following contact details: Email: rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk, phone: + 44 2380 595058.

Please quote the Ethics/ERGO number above. Please note that by making a complaint you might no longer be anonymous.

More information on your rights as a study participant is available via this link:

<https://www.southampton.ac.uk/about/governance/participant-information.page>

Thank you for reading this information sheet and considering taking part in this research.

☐ Please tick (check) this box to indicate that you have read and understood information on this form, are aged 18 or over and agree to take part in this survey.