



Lignocellulosic Biorefinery Network

OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR Catalyst Seeding POC funding

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Context

BBSRC awarded LBNet £100K for Catalyst Seedling POC projects. **This call is for projects with budget requests of up to £25K that must be completed by February 28th 2018 (the completion deadline is non-negotiable). These funds are for direct cost only, at 100% FEC. Equipment purchase is not an eligible cost for these funds; equipment costs (such as instrument time or equipment access charges) are allowable costs. Estates and Indirect costs are not allowable costs.**

Applicants

Funding is available for current LBNet members eligible to receive BBSRC funding (<http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/web/FILES/Guidelines/grants-guide.pdf> - section 3 of this document); in certain cases funding will be made available to other LBNet members (e.g. SMEs or Industry) if their involvement is essential to the project, but it will only be a minor part (<20%) of the entire funded project. Questions on eligibility beyond this will be referred to the BBSRC (reference to De minimis state aid rules).

Principal applicants who receive LBNet funding to support the staff costs of a PDRA will not be eligible to receive support under the BBSRC New Investigator scheme. See Section 3.13 of the [BBSRC Grants guide](#) for further details.

Activities which funding will support

The areas of the call will be in technologies that underpin the establishment of sustainable biomass biorefineries. Topics for proposals include:

- The production of high value chemicals, bulk chemicals, or biofuels from either biomass processing or fermentation of biomass-derived sugars.
- Cost-effective production of fermentable sugars from biomass processing.

Funding will be available for lab or pilot scale proof of concept research that takes projects closer to demonstrating a clear route to commercialisation, as well as for desk-based studies that explore the IP and commercial landscape for promising concepts. A clear demonstration that the funds can be spent by February 28th is a prerequisite of the call.

Application process, submission of applications and further information

The project application template provided for this call (www.lb-net.net) should be submitted as a pdf file by email to: veronica.ongaro@york.ac.uk. In addition, a CV of the lead applicant must be submitted (no more than 2 sides of A4) and a letter of support from the applicant's University confirming acceptance of the 100% FEC rate and that the applicant is eligible to receive BBSRC funding. All information submitted will be held in strictest confidence.

Evaluation process

The Network Manager will check that applications meet the criteria and include the required information. If there are any problems the Network Manager will contact the applicant to request further information. However, if this cannot be easily remedied (within three working days) then the application will be returned.

The proposal assessment will be carried out by an extended Executive Board of five or six people drawn from the LBNet Management Board. This number should provide enough assessors to allow us to cover any conflicts of interest with at least three assessors in the Executive Board (EB) discussion. We will send the applications to all Management Board members, who will be given the opportunity to comment on applications, grade them as fundable or not fundable and rank the fundable ones by priority. The main assessment criteria will be quality of science, commercial potential and demonstration of ability to spend within the funding period. We will produce a rank list from assessors' scores, and the extended Executive Board will discuss these by teleconference and agree a final rank list and distribute funding accordingly. Funding recipients will be required to submit, by the end of February, a final report using the normal LBNet PoC report format (already approved by BBSRC), together with an invoice and expenditure statement, and will also be required to respond to a simple follow-up questionnaire at the end of 2018 to update us on on-going activity building from the LBNet funds.

Proposals will be introduced at meetings/teleconference, discussed by the Board and ranked by the following criteria:

Criteria	% contribution to total score	Threshold level required
Quality of science/contribution to knowledge	50	30
Industrial relevance/pathway to impact/commercial potential	30	18
Project management including spending time scale	20	12

For each criterion, proposals must score a minimum of 60% of total marks allocated to be considered for funding.

The MB will be able to award proof of concept funds up to £25K. Applicants will be notified of the outcome once the Network Manager has updated the BBRR NIBB Extranet with award details and BBSRC has agreed that funding may be awarded. Applicants who are unsuccessful will be informed promptly and the Network Manager will pass on specific feedback if the Management Board makes this available.

Payment of awards Monitoring, reporting and finances

Consortia of applicants will need to have a signed consortium agreement in place prior to funded projects commencing; the Network Manager will check that this is the case.

At the end of the award, a final report setting results against objectives will be submitted to the Network Manager and, where possible, a case-study template will be started and will be updated throughout the Network's lifetime.

Financial expenditure statement will be sent together with the invoice. However, LBNet will not require receipts to be submitted, although these must be kept, as they may be required for possible future audits. The grantee's host institution will follow their standard procedures for financial accounts. Any underspend will be returned to LBNet and will be allocated to future PoC funding rounds.

All reports will be checked by the Network Manager. The Executive Group will approve the report before payment.

Data protection regulations

Copies of proposals will be made available to the LBNet evaluators (members of the EG and MB, plus external reviewers where applicable), who will use information provided in the application for processing the proposal, the award of any consequent grant, and for the payment, maintenance and review of the funds.

BBSRC will use this information for research related activities including, but not limited to, transfer of PoC funds, statistical analysis in relation to evaluation of the BBSRC NIBB, study of trends and policy and strategy studies.

To meet the Research Councils' obligations for public accountability and the dissemination of information, non-confidential details of awards may also be made available on the Research Councils' websites and other publicly available databases, and in reports, documents and mailing lists.

Conflict of interest guidance

In cases of conflict of interest, there are specific alternatives to the stated guidance; these are referred to throughout the document.

Examples of a conflict of interest include:

- Employed by the same institution as the applicant(s)
- Actively involved in research collaborations with the applicants(s)
- Currently working closely with the applicant(s), for example as a co-author or PhD Supervisor, or has worked closely with them during the last 4 years
- Holding a current position on the governing body of, or an honorary position within, the institution(s) of the applicant(s)
- In receipt of personal remuneration in excess of £5,000 per annum from the applicant's organisation
- Personal/family relationship with the applicant(s)