

Applicant Webinar – Questions

A webinar for applicants was held on 11 November 2024, a recording of which can be viewed [here](#). Passcode: a8p#%l6?

If your question has not been answered here, or if you have any additional queries, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us at ISPF-BBSRC@bbsrc.ukri.org and we would be happy to help.

General

Q: Is the funding for the UK and the Singapore team separate, i.e., 3.45M in SG and 2M in UK?

A: Yes, funding for the UK and Singapore teams is separate. The Full Economic Cost (FEC) of the UK component can be up to 2.5 million, of which BBSRC will fund at 80% FEC (up to £2 million). For the Singapore component, projects can cost up to SGD 3.45 million, including 30% overhead expenses. Each team must provide a separate budget and justification of resources – the UK team under the main “[Resources and cost justification](#)” section of the application; and the Singapore team under the “[Additional documentation for Singapore applicants](#)”. A template for Singapore applicants can be found under “[Additional info](#)” on our website.

Q: Is this opportunity limited to academia for the research consortium concept?

A: Only researchers based at academic institutions may receive money through this funding mechanism, and so the call’s requirement of involving “three different research organisations” is limited to academia. However, industrial project partners are welcome to participate as collaborators – they would not receive funding from either BBSRC or NRF, but are able to participate with cash or in-kind contributions. You can find further information about project partners on our website under the “project partners” section of the “How to apply” heading.

Q: Can organisations that are non-industrial, but also not universities be eligible for funding?

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A: In the UK, eligible organisations can include higher education providers, research institutes, etc. please check the [eligibility of your organisation](#) on our website and [get in touch with the BBSRC team](#) if you have any queries. In Singapore, eligible organisations generally refer to local publicly funded institutions. For any specific queries, please [contact NRF](#).

Q: What is a “specialty chemical” and what counts as “high value”?

A: In this funding opportunity, specialty chemicals are defined as low-volume, high-value chemicals differentiated by performance and functionality specifications. We do not have set boundaries for what constitutes low-volume or high-value, and so we welcome applicants to apply with their selected chemical/process in mind and to provide the reasons why this falls in scope of this definition. Our panel of experts will assess the applications with this justification in mind.

Q: What is the expectation for the proportion of research vs partnership or engagement activities?

A: Proposals should primarily be research projects and have a substantive research component. However, we do encourage applicants to incorporate plans that will enable people and knowledge exchange (such as data and methodologies) and support the development of staff including early career researchers and new skills. There is not a set expectation, but in their proposals, applicants should justify how any activity adds value towards their stated objectives, and this will be assessed by the panel.

Q: For knowledge exchange parts of the proposal, can we cost in the exchange of PhD students alongside PDRAs on the project?

A: PhD Students cannot be wholly funded under this initiative; however, if the work they are already doing as part of their PhDs is associated to the project, they could be incorporated as part of the early career researchers taking part in exchanges. However, the aims of the grant and proposed work packages cannot be reliant on PhD student input.

Q: How many proposals will this call likely fund?

A: We aim to fund 1 successful proposal from this funding opportunity.

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Q: When will outcomes of this call be released?

A: We aim to complete the assessment process within six months of the closing of the funding opportunity. The panel for this funding opportunity is expected to be convened in early March 2025. Funding outcomes are anticipated to be released April to May 2025.

Eligibility (UK)

Q: Does the UK PI need to be from BBSRC?

A: Standard BBSRC eligibility applies in this case. The PIs need to be from the eligible research organisation and would need to be employed by the host research organisation for the duration of the project. They would need to be at least equivalent to lecturer level or above and must be resident in the UK. Full details are on the [UKRI website](#) under the guidance for applicants. If you have any specific queries, please do email ISPF-BBSRC@bbsrc.ukri.org

Eligibility (Singapore)

Q: Do the Singapore team members need to be from three discreet institutions (i.e. locations), and do those associated with the NCEB count as one institution?

A: The Singapore team does need to include researchers from 3 discrete institutions. If all PIs are part of the NCEB, they will still be considered as different research organisations if they are based at 3 different universities.

Q: Do all the members of Singapore team need to be from NCEB, or only the lead?

A: Only the Singapore project lead needs to be from the NCEB. We welcome other PIs from the Singapore research ecosystem to join in this joint call with the UK. You can find out more about [NRF's eligibility requirements here](#).

Q: How can UK researchers find out who is involved in the National Centre for Engineering Biology (NCEB)?

A: Researchers should [contact Dr Wun Kwok Soon](#), the programme director of the NCEB, to find out more about the centre and who is involved.