

Biofilms Innovation Knowledge Centre (IKC)

'Frequently Asked Questions'

What is the purpose of an IKC?

- The IKC will bring together innovators in business and those who are working at the cutting edge of research. Together, they will work in partnership to advance underpinning bioscience; catalyse the commercial exploitation of new products and processes and deliver against a range of challenges and opportunities across multiple industry sectors.
- It will support multidisciplinary, collaborative research across industry sectors.
- The IKC programme aims to add value to emerging and existing UK industries, and sectors, through harnessing science and technologies across myriad sectors and industries.
- IKCs are academically-led and are a key component of the UK's innovation landscape.
- IKCs aim to create early stage critical mass by concurrently advancing research and accelerate the commercialisation of world class science and emerging technologies into new products, processes or services across an array of sectors and industries.

How will the UK Biofilms IKC be structured?

- The Biofilms IKC will consist of up to four academic partners (across the 4 institutions) in collaboration with industry.
- The Biofilms IKC will act as a nucleating point of science and technology for the UK Biofilms research community - bringing together well established, well respected researchers from multiple sectors.
- To encourage translation of any novel IKC findings, collaborations with industry must be included with the bids.
- 60% - 70% of the IKC portfolio must cover strategy for advancing biofilm research and skills training.
- 30% - 40% of the IKC portfolio must cover strategy for supporting and facilitating the commercialization of biofilm science and technology.
- Initial funding will be for five years.

Could funding be allocated to smaller IKCs taking on complimentary areas of research as an alternative to creating a single IKC?

- The single IKC must act as a nucleating point for the entire UK Biofilms research community and must deliver across all strategic themes for the UK: Prevention, Detection, Managing and Engineering over a five year period.
- In order to achieve its objectives the IKC will necessarily have a wide range of collaborations with industry, academia and other bodies that are important in the space (e.g. standards, metrology, regulation, Government departments, non-governmental organisations, research institutes, etc.).
- In keeping with the centre's own level of expertise, these interactions should draw on the very best capabilities available and help maintain the international competitiveness of UK business.

How much is industry expected to contribute to the IKC in terms of funding and in-kind contributions?

- Industrial support of cash or in-kind contributions must be discussed between applicants and industry before an IKC bid is submitted and should be based on the needs of the IKC that applicants are developing.
- A letter of support (and /or intent) from project partners (academic and industrial) should be submitted with the expression of interest (EOI).

How will we know who is putting a bid in to support?

- Signing up to and using the UK Biofilms Extranet Discussion Boards made available by the BBSRC will give you an idea of the community that are interested in the Biofilms IKC (this can be done by registering your interest through the biofilms inbox: biofilms@bbsrc.ac.uk).

What is the purpose of the UK Biofilms Extranet Discussion Boards?

- The Discussion Boards will be a secure discussion forum for potential applicants to discuss the Biofilms IKC call and any possible collaborations. In addition, the BBSRC will be able to answer questions posted onto the discussion board or offer clarity on a particular subject. We also have the ability to set up private, invite only discussion rooms which can be used for the purpose of forming your bids and sharing confidential information.

How will small emerging companies and spinouts benefit from an IKC, what strategies are in place to make sure they have the opportunity to participate in an IKC bid?

- Each IKC bid will require information on how they will be inclusive of small and emerging companies. The IKC is expected to pursue an energetic outreach activity and to continue to develop a breadth of interactions and collaborations that deliver tangible benefit to the businesses involved, this includes small and emerging companies.
- The IKC should provide academia *and* industry access to its assets, both physical (facilities and scientific equipment) and intellectual (techniques, know-how and expertise).

Considering the current political uncertainty, is the £12.5 million IKC budget secure over the life of the IKC?

- Both the BBSRC and Innovate UK are dedicated to providing the £12.5 million award for the life of the IKC which is currently five years. The funding will be released in two tranches: tranche 1 will comprise of £5.5 million, the remaining £7 million will be released in tranche 2 with the prerequisite that the IKC successfully passes a 24 month review.
- The STFC is also dedicated to providing an in-kind contribution of up to £1m over the full five years.

How advanced do Intellectual Property (IP) arrangements have to be at EOI?

- All academic and industrial members of the IKC will need to set up collaboration agreements. How IP is exploited and who owns it must be decided by the members of the IKC during the bidding process.

How will BBSRC training programmes such as the DTP¹, CTP², MTP³ and STARS⁴ run in conjunction with the IKC?

- Any training programmes integrated into the IKC must be discussed in the application. Applicants must demonstrate how a particular training programme is linked to the overall strategy of the IKC, for example: tackling a shortage of skills in a specific area. Applicants must also show how the IKC will develop students and researchers into future leaders of the biofilms research community and the subsequent benefits of this. The training programmes will focus on scientific research skills as a priority and will not cover entrepreneurial or business skills.

1. Doctoral Training Partnerships

<http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/skills/investing-doctoral-training/dtp/>

2. Collaborative Training Programme

<http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/funding/filter/collaborative-training-partnerships/>

3. Modular Training Partnerships

<http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/funding/filter/modular-training/>

4. Strategic Training Awards for Research Skills

<http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/funding/filter/stars/>