

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Will proposals addressing the focus receive an uplift/ preference in the assessment?

No, the purpose of the focus is to increase the number of applications that address SEM issues being submitted to the call. All applications will be assessed on an equal basis and against the same criteria.

2. My proposal involves partners from multiple institutions. Should I submit a single application or joint applications from multiple institutions?

Either approach is acceptable.

3. Why is there a limit on the number of letters of support that can be provided?

The BBR Fund Panel has frequently commented that it is the content of the letters provided, rather than the sheer number, which demonstrates the value of a proposed resource to the UK bioscience research community. We have taken the decision to limit the number of letters of support that can be provided due to the large numbers of letters we have received in previous years, which poses considerable challenges to the peer review process. Applicants should submit a representative selection of letters that demonstrate the breadth of the research their resource will enable and comment on the value of the work proposed to the research community.

4. How should I demonstrate 'community need/demand' for my resource?

Applicants should provide appropriate indicators of the need/demand for their proposed resource by the research community. This should include letters of support representative of the utility of the resource to research community it will serve. Other indicators of potential utility might include usage statistics for existing resources, feedback from user surveys, and evidence of user engagement/ consultation in the development of the project objectives. Further guidance on letters of support is available under 'How to apply'.

5. What is the membership of the assessment panel?

The assessment panel is drawn from BBSRC's core committees and pool of experts. Additional expertise may also be drawn from the wider bioscience community. The panel will comprise a balance of developers and users of resources. Details of previous assessment panels are available on the respective call webpages. The 2014 panel will be published once the assessment is concluded.

6. I previously submitted a grant application that was unsuccessful. Can I submit the proposal to the BBR Fund?

Any proposal related to a previously unsuccessful grant application must comply with BBSRC's resubmission policy (see BBSRC Grants Guide). This includes unsuccessful outline proposals. Applicants are advised to contact the programme staff prior to submitting an application if they are concerned that their project may be considered a resubmission. Applications that are deemed to constitute uninvited resubmissions will be rejected from the call.

7. When is the outcome of the call likely to be known?

We are unable to give a precise date by which outcomes will be announced. It is anticipated that we will be able to notify applicants by the end of October 2014

8. I wish to develop a resource with both biological and bioinformatics components, is this allowed?

Yes.

9. My proposal has relevance to other Research Council's scientific remit. Will it be suitable for the BBR Fund?

Applications must address the needs of the BBSRC research community and BBSRC's strategic priorities. Resources that do not address BBSRC remit or which will be of primary utility to researchers working outside of BBSRC remit will be rejected prior to assessment. Applicants needing further guidance on the suitability of a proposal for the BBR Fund are strongly advised to contact the programme staff prior to submission (see contact details).

10. What is the scale of resources that can be requested?

Projects may request no more than £2M and can have a maximum duration of five years.

11. Does the BBR Fund support genome sequencing projects?

Genome sequencing projects are not supported by the fund. Sequencing may be performed where this is needed in order to establish a particular resource; for example, the sequencing of gene libraries

12. Does BBSRC provide other funding for bioinformatics projects?

The BBR Fund is one of a number of recurring BBSRC funding streams that support bioinformatics and other computational approaches to the biosciences. Its focus is the support of community resources.

Potential applicants are advised of the following alternative schemes that may be suitable for projects that do not adequately address the objectives of the BBR Fund:

- **Responsive mode grants** (see related links) are awarded in response to unsolicited research applications in any area relevant to BBSRC's mission. Research projects funded under responsive mode, including technology development projects, are awarded no more than £2M FEC and can last up to 5 years. There are three annual responsive mode calls and applications are assessed by the appropriate BBSRC Research Committee (see related links). Please note the current the NSF/BIO - BBSRC lead agency pilot operating through responsive mode in the 'data driven biology' and 'systems approaches to the biosciences' strategic priority areas.
- **The Tools and Resources Development Fund Call 2** (see related links) has an annual call that is designed to support small or short-duration 'pump-priming' projects that develop novel software tools, technologies and computational methods for research challenges within our remit. Projects can be of up to 18 months duration and may request up to £150K FEC.

- **Strategic Longer and Larger** (sLoLa) grants (see related links). These are integrated research projects with high strategic relevance that require long timescales, extensive resources and/or multidisciplinary approaches. The sLoLa scheme has an annual call for grants requesting over £2M FEC project value and lasting up to five years.

Other opportunities may arise through our managed mode initiatives and will be advertised under 'special opportunities' on the BBSRC website.