

# Bioinformatics and biological resources fund

**Full call application deadline: 3 October 2012, 4pm**

## Summary

The Bioinformatics and Biological Resources (BBR) Fund aims to:

- Support the bioscience research community with the establishment, maintenance and enhancement of infrastructures
- Support high quality bioinformatics and biological resources that align with one or more of our three strategic research priorities as stated in our **Strategic plan: the age of bioscience** (see related links)
- To also supply long-term funding to provide a stable environment for resource development and provision.

The budget for the call is in the region of **£6M**, subject to the quality of applications received.

## Background

The BBR Fund was established to tackle a strategic need, identified by us, to provide **'proper support for resources such as databases, genetic resources and culture collections which require long term maintenance and curation'**.

The design of the BBR Fund was informed by scientific advice obtained from a community consultation, our Strategy Advisory Panels (see 'Exploiting New Ways of Working Strategy Advisory Panel' in related links) and a pilot call for proposals operated during 2006/07.

The BBSRC's Strategic Plan (see related links) has a key priority to **'provide the bioinformatics and biological resources required by the research community to stay internationally competitive'** and the Delivery Plan 2011-15 (see related links) states that we will **'drive bioinformatics underpinning research and innovation'** and **'position the UK as a leading nation in data intensive bioscience research'**.

The current call is the sixth round of BBR funding; grants awarded under previous calls can be viewed at their relevant webpages (see related links).

## Scope of call

Bioscience researchers have a continuing and growing need for access to state-of-the-art bioinformatics and biological resources:

- For **bioinformatic resources** (e.g. databases, software suites), there is a need to enable the management, analysis and sharing of large and/or complex datasets.
- For **biological resources**, access to materials that underpin cutting edge bioscience research is required e.g. culture and germplasm collections, mutant lines, DNA samples, clones, genetic libraries etc.

Yet issues remain around the provision of these infrastructures:

- Resources may already exist but are not readily available (e.g. funded by our project grants)

- Resources may have been established as a community resource for a fixed term and require more sustainable funding
- Researchers may need a resource that does not currently exist
- Existing resources may require development if they are to meet the needs of the UK bioscience community

Grants are available for **up to 5 years** to provide high quality, accessible, community resources that meet key UK needs.

Applications for biological resources may have a bioinformatics element included (e.g. to facilitate accessibility).

BBSRC wishes to support high quality resources that align to the Strategic Plan 2010-2015. The Strategic Plan research priorities are food security, bioenergy and industrial biotechnology, and basic bioscience underpinning health. The Strategic Plan priorities are articulated in more detail in the current set of BBSRC council-wide priorities (see related links).

The BBR Fund has a key role to play in implementing the BBSRC's Data Sharing Policy (see related links) and we anticipate continuing demand for community data sharing infrastructures, responding to the opportunity generated by next generation sequencing and other high-throughput technologies.

Resource provision has a strong international dimension and we view the BBR Fund as a contribution to the global infrastructure required to underpin modern bioscience research.

### Scientific objectives

Applicants can apply for funding for the following types of applications:

- Establishment and maintenance of a **new resource** that would be applicable to a broad BBSRC user community
- Maturation and subsequent maintenance of a project-based resource **into a community-based** one
- Development and subsequent maintenance of an existing community resource **to increase its relevance** to a broad BBSRC user group
- **Interfacing and integrating** resources to better meet user need

**It is essential to demonstrate strong demand from the UK bioscience community together with an appropriate access policy.**

Resources often thrive best when they are alongside and/or closely informed by research groups that actively use them. While the focus of this fund is on resource provision, an element of research can be included. However, this should be focused on technological development of the resource features so they continue to meet user need.

### Renewals

Renewals for awards previously supported under the BBR Fund are permitted under the current call. These applications should continue to maintain and develop the resource and will be assessed in competition with all other proposals submitted to the call.

### Exclusions

- Continued maintenance of resources that already have suitable provision (e.g. funded from BBSRC institute core support, other Research Councils, Government Departments, and/or European funding streams)
- Resources where the principal beneficiaries will **not** be the UK bioscience community
- Establishment or continued maintenance of resources where the principal users are outside the biosciences (i.e. medicine, chemistry)
- Applications that will only archive resources (the focus for the BBR fund is **active** usage by the bioscience community)
- Collections of preserved, non-recoverable specimens (e.g. herbaria, formalin-fixed material).

### European Life Sciences Infrastructure for Biological Information (ELIXIR)

In 2011, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding to be involved in the development of the construction phase of the ELIXIR. ELIXIR aims to establish and operate a sustainable infrastructure for biological information in Europe to support life science research and its translation to medicine and the environment, the bio-industries and society.

At present, any UK based resource likely to be considered for involvement in ELIXIR, including becoming part of any potential node, would need to already receive national funding. If potential applicants consider their proposal to have relevance to ELIXIR, they are advised to discuss potential engagement with us (contact Dr Adrian Pugh, email: [adrian.pugh@bbsrc.ac.uk](mailto:adrian.pugh@bbsrc.ac.uk), tel: 01793 444283) and to describe this relevance in the outline application.

Further details on ELIXIR can be found at [www.elixir-europe.org/researchers](http://www.elixir-europe.org/researchers).

### Awarded grants

For research community resources arising from **previous calls** for the BBR Fund see related links above.

For grant information that includes further details of each resource see '**Search awarded grants**' in related links.

### Eligibility

This call for proposals is open to all institutions normally eligible for BBSRC managed-mode calls, which includes:

- HEIs
- Research Council Institutes
- Independent Research Organisations (IROs) approved by BBSRC.

For the categories of eligible organisations see our Grants Guide (Section 2) and for a list of IROs see the RCUK eligibility guidance.

Applicants must be eligible for BBSRC funding. Details of the eligibility criteria can be found in our Grants Guide (Section 3) - see related links.

### How to apply

**Outline application is closed**

- Applicants are required to complete an outline application form.
- Submit outline proposals via Joint electronic Submission (Je-S) System (see external links).
- When adding a new proposal, you should select Council 'BBSRC', document type 'Outline Proposal' and the 'BBRFOutlines' Scheme. On the Project Details page you should select the BBR Fund Call.
- Note that clicking 'submit document' on your proposal form in Je-S initially submits the application to your host organisation's administration, not to BBSRC. Allow sufficient time for your organisation's submission process and our outline call deadline. BBSRC must receive your application by 8 May 2012, 4pm.

#### Format of 'Case for support' for outline proposals

- The case for support should be submitted as a single document containing each of the sections described under the headings below. The page limits refer to each separate section and may not be combined
- The preferred typefaces are Arial, Helvetica or Verdana and a strict minimum font size of 11 must be used (excluding text on diagrams and the use of mathematical symbols). In addition, a minimum of single line spacing and standard character spacing must be used, with margins of no less than 2cm
- Applicants must not include URLs to web resources in order to extend their case for support. However, within the list of references, URL links to relevant publications or online resources are permissible

#### Case for support

Outline proposals should be provided on **up to 6 sides of A4** setting out the following:

- The bioinformatics and/or biological resource to be provided (**4 sides**):
  - Objectives for the application
  - Description of the resource
  - Strategic relevance to BBSRC (including current Council-wide strategic priorities)
  - Use of/demand for the resource and benefits to users (i.e. evidence for usage and/or support from potential users; high quality scientific projects that the resource will enable)
  - Uniqueness within the UK and internationally
  - Context (i.e. related or equivalent resources that exist including commercially available resources)
- Management of the resource (**2 sides**):
  - Management structure
  - Advisory structure
  - Approach to acquisitions
  - User access arrangements

- Training policy and activities (if appropriate)
- Long term 'options analysis' for the resource
- Raising community awareness of the resource existence
- Additional attachments
  - CV Principal Investigator: up to 2 pages
  - CV of all co-Investigators: up to 2 pages
  - Letters of Support

### Full application

The BBR Fund aims to support **community resources and not research project grants**. Thus, the information required in applications, the application process and the assessment criteria (see below) are distinctly different from those normally employed in responsive mode.

Applicants successful at the outline assessment stage will be invited to submit a full application.

For the submission of full applications, **an application form must be completed** and submitted through the Je-S system (see external links) by **3 October 2012, 4pm**.

Applicants must read the **BBR Je-S guidance** before preparing applications as this describes the information required in your application.

### Assessment process

**Outline applications** are not subject to full external peer review, but will be assessed by members of the BBR panel of experts. Feedback from the panel will be supplied to applicants; applicants who are successful at the outline stage should address the points raised in the Panel's feedback in their full application.

**Full applications** will be subject to refereeing and applicants will have the opportunity to respond to referees' comments. Overall assessment will be conducted by a panel of experts covering both the technical and user perspectives of resource provision and drawing on, where appropriate, our research committees core and pool membership.

The criteria used for the assessment of applications are:

- Scientific quality and quality of the resource provision
- Strategic relevance to BBSRC (including current Council-wide strategic priorities)
- UK scientific community need/demand and potential benefit
- Uniqueness and availability
- Management (including management arrangements, advisory structure, connectivity to users, user access arrangements)
- Cost effectiveness
- Prosperity and quality of life
- Timeliness and promise

Funding agencies and research charities invited to observe the BBR fund 2012 include:

- The US National Science Foundation
- The UK Medical Research Council

- The UK Natural Environment Research Council
  - The Wellcome Trust
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**Contact**

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