

GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

BiolmagingUK Business Interaction Vouchers (BIVs)

2021



Biotechnology and
Biological Sciences
Research Council



CONTENTS

Introduction	4
Background - BioimagingUK.....	4
Scope of the competition.....	4
Aims of this call	5
Aims of BIV2 Awards.....	5
Aims of BIV PoC Awards.....	5
Eligibility.....	5
Use of Funds.....	6
Application Process	7
How to Apply.....	7
The Application Form.....	7
Structure	7
Field Guidance	8
Process for BIV review	10
What happens if you are successful?	10
Project Summary Reports	11
Costs and payment	11
Other Information	12
Data Protection Regulations	12
Intellectual Property.....	12
Contact Details	12

Introduction

Background - BioimagingUK

Imaging is now the dominant form of analysis of molecules, cells, and tissues across the Life Sciences. Imaging of biological samples, or bioimaging, underpins bioscience research from plant and animal phenomics to drug delivery. Bioimaging operates at all scales from high-voltage cryo-electron microscopes as used in structural biology, to enormously powerful super-resolution microscopes, through to whole plant or animal imaging.

Biological imaging is increasingly recognised as sufficiently complex, intensive, and important for the achievement of national goals that it warrants coordination and funding efforts similar to other trans-national research infrastructures such as CERN (the European Organization for Nuclear Research) and Instruct ERIC (European Research Infrastructure Consortium). This need for co-ordination of efforts both at national and international levels has arisen from the proliferation of methods and technologies in BioImaging, increasing levels of specialisation, and the need to develop know-how, share experience, and encourage knowledge transfer. The UK has driven greater coordination of our research efforts through BioImagingUK, an open network of UK scientists that develop, use, or administer imaging solutions for life sciences research. BioImagingUK was initiated in 2014 following a cross-agency funding award and was renewed in 2019 in partnership with the Royal Microscopical Society (RMS). One of the main goals of BioImagingUK is to enable new interactions between Academics and Industry to facilitate new innovations and developments in the field of Bioimaging.

Scope of the competition

Bioimaging is an area of strategic importance for the BBSRC and crosses all bioscience domains. The previous bioimaging Business Interaction Vouchers (BIVs) in 2019 demonstrated the potential for these investments to pump-prime new Industry partnerships that result in novel scientific discoveries, application development, publications, funding and training opportunities. To further support Academic-Industry engagement in bioimaging the BBSRC have now awarded **two** additional voucher schemes:

1) **BIV2*** to pump-prime small confidence-building **new or early-stage** collaborations (up to £15,000 per award, indicative budget of £150,000).

2) **BIV Proof of Concept (PoC)** to further **existing** partnerships, or new partnerships working on a product/process/etc., requiring pilot data or further evidence prior to full commercial demonstration (up to £30,000 per award, indicative budget of £240,000).

These are BBSRC-funded initiatives aimed at connecting and further supporting Industry and Academic partnerships. The application and approval processes are designed to be simple and straightforward, with both opportunities running concurrently.

***Please note: BIV2 applicants must provide evidence of a matched Industry contribution to be eligible for BIV funding (see [How to Apply](#)). This is not a requirement for the BIV PoC award, although industrial contributions are still encouraged.**

Overview of this call

This call is comprised of two BIV opportunities with differing aims: BIV2 and BIV PoC.

BIVs are intended to develop and expand on working relationships relevant to bioimaging between an Academic partner and an industrial based partner that are likely to lead to outcomes of:

- a longer-term relationship between Academic and Industry partner
- improved interactions between Academic and Industry partner
- new funding ventures between Academic and Industry partner
- new research technology transfer projects
- development of bioimaging instruments or image analysis approaches of benefit to both academic and industrial teams

Examples include (but are not limited to) projects that: generate new experimental data; develop or adapt imaging instrumentation or software for a new application; work towards solving technical problems with Industry for the broader benefit of the bioimaging community.

Pre-submission enquiries to the Network Officer are encouraged as once submitted, applications for one BIV scheme are not transferable to the other. Please email georgina@rms.org.uk with any such enquiries.

Aims of BIV2 Awards

BIV2 awards aim to **develop new or enhance existing early-stage existing collaborative R&D partnerships with Industry**. They are intended to support risk in research and innovation at the very earliest stages. A matched contribution in cash or in-kind from the Industry partner enables them to “buy out” an Academic partner’s time.

Aims of BIV PoC Awards

Proof of Concept funding is aimed at **existing partnerships** that have progressed through the early stages of R&D with an idea, product or process etc, and which now need to demonstrate the validity and/or commercial potential of a principle or concept by generating pilot data and/or other forms of evidence prior to full commercial demonstration. These activities typically require more funding, and due to commercial potential, they are usually linked to pre-existing partnerships as agreements will often need to be in place (e.g. for any IP arising, etc).

The purpose of BIV PoC awards is to advance the commercial readiness of R&D through existing collaborative partnerships; and to provide later stage proof of concept funding to academic and business collaborators across the UK bioimaging community. The latter is required now that wider growth, development and critical mass has been achieved across the UK bioimaging community (academic and industrial), leading to the need for later stage innovation support to catalyse further growth and economic prosperity.

Eligibility

Funds are awarded to the Academic partner who **must be eligible to receive BBRSC funding**. Eligibility guidelines can be found at the latest [BBRSC Grants Guide](#)

Applicants must also be members of BioImagingUK. Membership is free - [JOIN HERE](https://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?A0=UK-EUROBIOIMAGING-PROJECT):
<https://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?A0=UK-EUROBIOIMAGING-PROJECT>

The Industry partner should be registered in the UK or have a UK R&D or manufacturing site. Where a suitable company cannot be found in the UK, an overseas company may be used. However, such collaborations should be judged on a case-by-case basis, and clear justification must be provided. BBSRC Business Interaction Vouchers are considered as *de minimis* aid and industrial partners need to ensure they are not in breach of *de minimis* aid rules by accepting the Interaction Voucher. Further information can be obtained at www.gov.uk/state-aid.

Use of Funds

- The value of each awarded voucher must be **no more than** £15,000 (BIV2) or £30,000 (BIV PoC) (100% fEC, including VAT). For BIV2, the Industry partner must, as a minimum, match the awarded voucher amount in cash or in kind.
- Vouchers are awarded to the Academic partner to tackle a problem relevant to the industrial partner.
- The work must be clearly defined from the outset and must be completed within 6 months.
- The project should focus attention on UK based Industry partners
- Each BIV project must be directly relevant to the UK bioimaging community. The majority of each project must fall within [BBSRC remit](#). However, it is accepted that projects of this nature may have a significant element of technology development which may fall outside of BBSRC remit. Please contact the Network Officer with any queries relating to the scope of the call.
- The work must be relevant to the aims of the call.

BIV funds **cannot** be used for the following:

- Patent filing or similar costs associated directly to registering intellectual property rights
- Equipment purchases above a **total combined value** of £2000. Pieces of equipment below this threshold are acceptable if adequately justified.
- Consortium building is not eligible as the sole purpose of a BIV; meetings and consortium building can form part of a BIV but should not be the sole purpose.
- Indirect or estate costs at the academic organisation
- Undergraduate activities, core PhD training, masters degrees
- Funding for generic staff posts not directly related to BIV-funded projects
- Other costs not allowed in the UKRI-BBSRC/UKRI Standard Research Grant T&Cs

Application Process

How to Apply

Application is through a simple pro-forma available from <https://www.rms.org.uk/network-collaborate/bioimaginguk-network.html>. Applications can be submitted by either partner but must be collaborative. Awards for successful proposals will be made to the Academic partner.

A letter of support signed by the Industry partner must be provided as part of the application. For BIV2, this must also include details of their matched contribution. Applications submitted without a letter of support will be rejected.

Deadline for applications is 4pm BST on Thursday, 30th September 2021

Applications should be sent electronically to Georgina Fletcher (georgina@rms.org.uk) and Maddy Parsons (maddy.parsons@kcl.ac.uk) and will be acknowledged upon receipt.

The Application Form

This section explains the structure of the application forms and offers guidance on the information to include in each section.

The purpose of the application form is to obtain enough information on the project to enable assessors to understand how well it aligns with the call objectives, and to score various categories. No appendices are required.

There are 7 sections in the form that will be used for the assessment. Each section is weighted at 10 points, giving a total possible score of 70 points. Each section has a threshold value assigned to it. Any application that falls below the threshold value for any question will be rejected.

Thresholds are as follows:

- Relevance to aims of the call (7/10)
- Proposed work (7/10)
- Project deliverables (6/10)
- Value to Industrial partner (6/10)
- Benefit to research and industrial partnership (7/10)
- Value for money (8/10)
- Potential for building longer-term relationships (7/10)

Structure

It is important that you address and respond to each section clearly. To help you, the guidance below provides an explanation of what is required for each field. The guidance notes are not intended to be exhaustive; you should develop your own responses based on your own skills, knowledge and experience.

You may refer to other sections of the form in your answers if this helps avoid repetition.

Maximum word limits apply to certain form fields. These are specified in the field guidance section below. It is important that you complete each field and present a fully completed form. Incomplete forms will be rejected.

The typeface should be Arial or Calibri, font size 11 and colour black. Please check your completed application form in PRINT VIEW: any text that can't be seen in this view or when the form is printed will not be read.

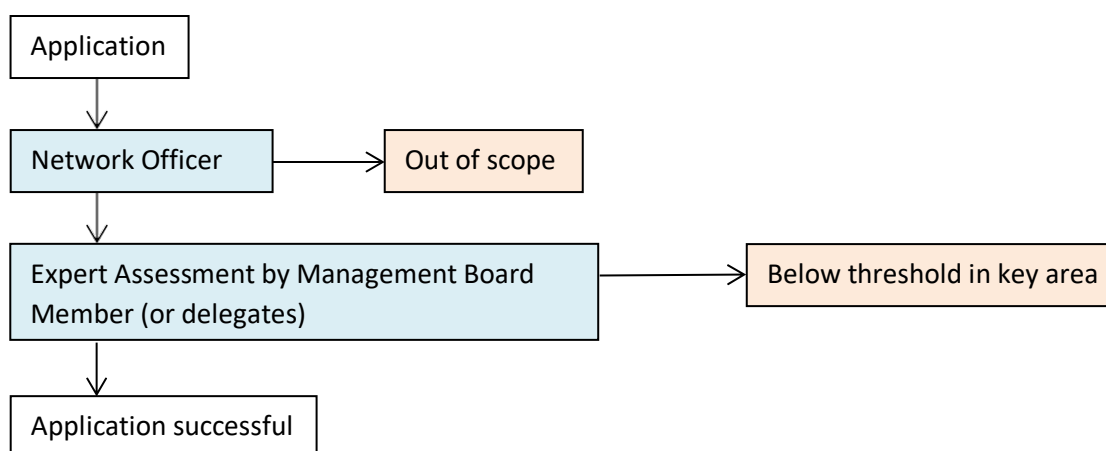
Field Guidance

BIV Application Form		
Required Fields	Guidance	Maximum word limits/ Further clarification
Application details		
Proposal Title	Please give a title for your application.	Word limit - 25
Applicant contact details	Enter the full name, address, postcode, e-mail address and telephone number of the Primary Contact between the Network and the proposal. This will be the grant holder in the event of a successful bid.	No word limit. Applicants need to be eligible for BBSRC funding
Please confirm that you are a member of BioImagingUK and eligible for BBSRC funding	See Eligibility	Y/N
Industrial and Academic Partner details	Enter the full name, address, postcode, e-mail address and telephone number of the partners	No word limit.
Are you aware of any conflicts of interest that should be considered with regard to this proposal, e.g. Consultancy/shareholder for associated Industry partner, associations with BioimagingUK Management Board members	Yes/No	If 'Yes' give details. This section enables us to manage potential conflicts of interest during the review process.
Proposal details		
Project abstract	Please give the main aim of your project and summarise the proposed methodology and likely outcomes.	Word limit - 250 This summary may be made publicly available
Expected timeline	Please provide a brief timescale and justification for this.	Word limit - 100
Sections 1-7		
The proposal will be scored in these sections. Failure to reach the threshold in any one of the 7 sections will result in the failure of the application		Score must match or exceed the threshold in each section
Section 1: Relevance to aims of this call		

1. Indicate how you believe the proposal will result in a new association, or assist in development of a pre-existing relationship 2. Show how your proposal contributes to technology transfer by working towards solutions to technical problems or adapting existing technology for new applications 3. Specify if this a new collaboration	Threshold score (7/10) Word limit - 200
Section 2: Proposed work	
1. State how your methodology is appropriate and sufficient to the stated aims 2. Indicate how the work will be of wider value to the bioimaging community (ie: users of bioimaging methods as well as microscopy experts) 3. Explain how the work expands our current knowledge in a meaningful way	Threshold score (7/10) Word limit - 150
Section 3: Project deliverables	
1. State exactly what will be the outcome of this project in terms of technical content. 2. State exactly what change in understanding/process/testing regime etc. will result from this work	Threshold score (6/10) Word limit - 150
Section 4: Value to Industrial partner	
1. State what the outcome of the project will mean to the industrial partner in terms of savings, efficiencies, profitability, potential new markets or other benefits 2. Show how the project will benefit the Industrial partner in the future	Threshold score (6/10) Word limit – 150
Section 5: Benefit to research and industrial partnership	
Describe how the project is a genuine partnership in terms of the respective contributions of knowledge, skills, tools and/or materials etc. and what both parties will gain from the association	Threshold score (7/10) Word limit - 100
Section 6: Value for money	
Explain why the proposed work would be unlikely to happen without BBSRC BIV funding and what makes this method of doing the work cost effective. Justify the level of expenditure requested.	Threshold score (8/10) Word limit - 200
Section 7: Potential for building longer-term relationships	
Describe how the proposal is likely to build trust, deepen understanding or lead to further work in the future. If this is a new association explain how you might strengthen the association in the future	Threshold score (7/10) Word limit - 100
Financial Breakdown of BIV request	
Please provide a brief financial breakdown of your proposal in the table in pounds sterling (incl. VAT)	The rules on VAT for Universities can be complex with research activity and consumables classed separately – please seek specialist advice from your institution if unclear. Please note BIV funding can be used for salary, travel and purchase of consumables (a

	consumable is considered as something used up in the course of the project). Small items of equipment can be purchased to a maximum value of £2000 for each BIV and must be accompanied by specific justification where requested.
Financial Breakdown of Industry Contribution	
Please specify the value of any contribution to the project from other project participants, in pounds sterling (incl. VAT)	In cash/in kind

Process for BIV review



Submissions will initially be assessed by the Network Officer to ensure they are eligible and consistent with the aims and objectives of the call. If they are out of scope, they will be rejected. They will then be grouped according to their chosen focus area and passed to reviewers (up to 3), chosen by the Network Director for assessment.

Recommendations for funding will be passed to the Management Board and BBSRC for final approval. Applications with an average score at or above the threshold in the 7 categories will be ranked according to scores and the highest ranked applications funded in-line with the funds available.

We aim to assess proposals within 4 weeks. All applicants will be given feedback on their proposal.

Reviewers will be expected to adhere to the highest standards of scientific integrity as laid down by the BBSRC (Ref: <https://bbsrc.ukri.org/documents/safeguarding-good-scientific-practice/>). Briefly, in the event of a conflict of interest, this must be declared to the Network Management Board who will reassign the proposal to an alternative reviewer.

What happens if you are successful?

If successful, the Primary Contact will be informed via email. Following this you will be sent a Conditional Grant Offer Letter. This must be signed and returned to indicate acceptance of the award. The following are examples of documents that may be requested in the Conditional Offer Letter:

- Confirmation that a Collaboration Agreement* is in place between Academic and Industrial partners.
- A letter confirming your BACS details, for payment purposes.

*The Collaboration Agreement should be created between the project participants and it should incorporate the operation and exploitation of the outcomes of the project. BioImagingUK does not need to see a copy, but you are required to state that you have in place a document specifying the relative contributions to, and IP ownership issues regarding, the bid. BioImagingUK accepts that any Intellectual Property arising from the bid is owned by the applicants.

It can take some time to reach agreement on this document within the consortium participants, especially considering the involvement of applicants' legal and finance departments. You are therefore strongly advised to allow sufficient time. An example of collaboration agreement can be found on the Lambert Agreement website at: <http://www.ipo.gov.uk/lambert>.

If successful, before the project begins, a start date must be agreed with the Network Officer. Projects must be completed within 6 months of this start date.

Project Summary Reports

A maximum of 3 weeks after the project has finished, the Academic partner must submit a short report (maximum 1 page) on the work carried out (summarising the aims, achievements and any future plans) which must be countersigned by the Industry partner. At the same time, the partners must also submit a brief 'project completion' form whose content will act as a publishable summary for use by the BBSRC, posting on the BioImagingUK website and other promotional activities. Reports will be passed to the Management Board for consideration and sign-off.

Costs and payment

BIV2s can be requested up to £15,000 (incl. VAT). BIV PoC can be requested up to £30,000 (incl. VAT). BIV costs should be requested at 100% FEC. ***Payment will be made in arrears and only upon receipt of associated financial documentation detailing all costs ensued by Academic applicant relating to the BIV work. This information should be submitted to the Network Officer by Monday, 28th February 2022 (or at the end of the project, whichever is sooner). Only one request for fund re-imburement will be accepted by any single BIV awardee.*** Once this information is received the Royal Microscopical Society (RMS) will then transfer this sum to the institution awarded the BIV.

Invoices for costs incurred **must** be provided to RMS no later than **Monday, 28th February 2022**.

Other Information

Data Protection Regulations

The PI of the BIV grant has the responsibility for keeping data relating to the grant secure and safe. Copies of the applications will be made available to the BBSRC, who will use this information for research related activities, including but not limited to, transfer of funds, statistical analysis in relation to evaluation of the programme, study of trends and policy and strategy studies. Copies will also be made available to reviewers and the Management Board for the purpose of assessment and evaluation such as; processing the proposal, the award of any consequential grant, and for the payment, maintenance and review of the grant. They will be expected to adhere to the highest standards of scientific integrity as laid down by the [BBSRC guidelines Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice](#).

To meet the Research Councils' obligations for public accountability and the dissemination of information, details of funded awards may also be made available on the Research Councils' websites and other publicly available databases, and in reports, documents and mailing lists. We expect applicants to conform to the [BBSRC guidelines for data sharing](#): and [BBSRC guidelines Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice](#)

Intellectual Property

The Network is seeking to create an environment where knowledge is shared rapidly for the benefit of the whole community and used effectively to secure new sources of funding. However, it is important for each member to consider the expectations of their own organisation before disclosing proprietary information. Before engaging in consortium-building activities, you should create an inventory of the intellectual property you may need to disclose and seek advice of the relevant support services team in your own organisation on how best to proceed. Effective collaborations will usually start with an agreement which documents what each partner will contribute and how the outputs will be shared.

Useful advice is available from the:

- [UK Intellectual Property office](#) and <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20140603094601/http://www.ipo.gov.uk/whyuse/research.htm>
- [European IPR helpdesk](#)
- [BBSRC's Knowledge Exchange Commercialisation Policy](#)

Most organisations will have their own consortium agreements but if this is not the case, template agreements such as the [DESCA model consortium agreement](#) and the [Lambert toolkit templates](#) can be adapted to suit a range of collaborative interactions. BioImagingUK can provide some general advice in this area, but your essential first point of contact for all intellectual property and knowledge management decisions should be the support services available within your own organisation.

Contact Details

For any queries, please contact the BioImagingUK Network Officer, Georgina Fletcher (georgina@rms.org.uk) or BioImagingUK Network Director, Prof Maddy Parsons (maddy.parsons@kcl.ac.uk).