

## Algae-UK, a BBSRC NIBB

### BBSRC NIBB Business Interaction Vouchers: Guidelines

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**Please read this document before completing the application form.**

#### Introduction

BBSRC NIBB Interaction Vouchers are available to fund projects between academic partners and industrial partners within the Algae-UK network, in order to encourage and support collaboration between academia and industry. The collaboration can be any defined piece of work by the academic partner that helps and supports the industrial partner. To be absolutely clear: these funds are awarded to the academic partner, industry members are not eligible to apply directly themselves.

The vouchers are available for the duration of the network. Each voucher provides funding up to the value of £10,000 (£12,500 100% FEC) inclusive of VAT, to fund a project of no longer than 6 months in duration. The industrial partner is expected to contribute at least the same amount as the voucher value at 80% FEC, either in cash or in-kind. The Business Interaction Voucher is paid to the academic for them to carry out work for the industrial partner; any work done by the industry partner as part of the project should be covered by their in-kind or cash contribution.

**Please note that the vouchers cannot be used to purchase equipment.**

The vouchers are intended to help resource small, confidence-building measures between an academic partner and an industrial partner that are likely to lead to outcomes of:

- a longer-term relationship
- improved interaction
- new research technology transfer projects

Examples of projects include (but are not limited to) generating new experimental data, data analysis, technical consultancy or literature review.

The nature of the work to be carried out must be within the scope of the Algae-UK network – specifically: the industrial biotechnology applications of algae including cyanobacteria, microalgae and macroalgae. This has been further broken down into four key themes within the network:

1. Strain domestication and development of platform species.
2. Exploitation of algal metabolic diversity.
3. Biomass production and downstream processing.
4. Assess opportunities and barriers to commercialisation.

## Eligibility

### *Academic partner*

Business Interaction Vouchers are available to Algae-UK members who are UK-based academics (and who will remain in the UK for the duration of the project). Applicants must ensure that they meet the eligibility criteria set out in section 3 of the BBSRC Research Grants guide (<http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/funding/apply/grants-guide.aspx>). The vouchers may not be used to fund PhD students.

### *Industrial partner*

Business Interaction Voucher awards should focus attention on UK-based partners where there is benefit to the UK research base and the UK economy. In exceptional circumstances, where there is not a UK company to exploit the research, a Business Interaction Voucher may be awarded to fund a collaboration with an overseas partner company. The application should provide a clear justification for working with an overseas partner company and outline how the project will lead to building international collaborations, how the project will be taken forward leading to inward investment and the benefit back to the UK. **Please note:** successful applications involving an industry partner will be asked to provide the following details before a formal award letter can be processed:

- Company reference number
- Company head count
- Company turnover

The industrial partner must also be an Algae-UK member, and must not be in breach of the *de minimis* aid rules (further information can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/state-aid>).

## Application process

Applications should be made by completing the application form provided by the date and time indicated on the BIV funding section of the website [web address]. Applications must be submitted by the academic or industrial partner, but should be collaborative and only submitted once for each project. Please note that the voucher will be awarded (in arrears) to the academic partner, who must be an Algae-UK member.

The completed form should be returned to [info@algae-uk.org.uk](mailto:info@algae-uk.org.uk).

## Evaluation

New collaborations will be given priority, but continued collaborations will also be considered, and will also be prioritised where the collaborators are working to push the research up the Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs).

It is expected that proposals will aid technology transfer, work towards solving a technical problem for the industrial partner, or adapt an existing technology for a new application.

An evaluation panel comprised of members of the Algae-UK Executive Group and Management Board will assess applications. It is expected that the applicant will be notified of the panel's decision within one month of submission.

The criteria used to evaluate applications will include:

- relevance to the aims and objectives of Algae-UK
- quality of work proposed
- value of the clearly defined project deliverable(s) to the SME/industrial partner
- interdisciplinary bridge-building
- benefit to the research and industrial partnership
- value for money
- contribution of the industrial partner to the project
- potential for building longer-term relationship
- future funding potential

All applications will be treated as confidential. Any potential conflicts of interest will be declared to the Network Manager, who will direct applications to non-conflicted members of the evaluation panel for appraisal. Applications will be scored using the criteria listed above. The Algae-UK Management Board Chair will sign off on applications recommended by the evaluation panel to receive funding and the Director, Saul Purton (or one of the Co-Directors, if the Director is conflicted), is responsible for awarding the Business Interaction Voucher.

## Administration of projects

Prior to the start of the project, the applicant will be required to sign an agreement, in which the applicant agrees to the Terms and Conditions of the BIV award. An appropriate signed agreement must be arranged before the project can start; this will include details of ownership of resulting intellectual property through the appropriate technology transfer offices and legal departments, as well as confirmation by the industrial partner that there would be no breach of the *de minimis* aid rules. The Network Manager will require confirmation that this agreement is in place before funding will be released.

Projects must be completed within six months of the agreed start date.

A report is to be submitted to the Network Manager within one month of project completion. This should include a public summary of outcomes and possible future direction for the work (which may be published by the BBSRC NIBB) and a summary of financial expenditure. This should be countersigned by the industry partner.

Funds will be transferred (at 80% FEC) up to three months in arrears from the BBSRC to University College London, who will then transfer the funds to the institution of the applicant. The institution

receiving the award must contribute the remaining 20% FEC. The funds will only be processed when the BBSRC is satisfied that all procedures have been followed and the required documents have been approved.

## Data protection

Applications will be distributed to the evaluation panel, and the information provided will be used for the purposes of awarding the voucher and for reviewing voucher funds only. Details of the award, specifically: the name of the host university and academic member, the name of the industrial partner, the project title and the public summary of the project receiving funding may be published on the Algae-UK website.

In addition to the information marked as public, information such as funding amount/ cost breakdown submitted in project proposals will be used by the BBSRC for research-related activities, including but not limited to, transfer of BIV funds, statistical analysis in relation to evaluation of the BBSRC NIBB, study of trends and policy and strategy studies. To meet the Research Councils' obligations for public accountability and the dissemination of information, details of grants (including successful Proof of Concept awards and BIVs) may also be made available on the Research Councils' web sites and other publicly available databases, and in reports, documents and mailing lists, however, any confidential information such as costings will be anonymised and only presented in the form of statistical analysis.

The academic partner and industrial partner agree to presentation of the project results at a subsequent Algae-UK meeting.