

## **Algae-UK First PoC Call with IBioIC: Polymers and Pigments**

Call now open: 29<sup>th</sup> November 2019 **CLOSING DATE: 28<sup>th</sup> February 2020, 16:00**

Algae-UK and IBioIC have funds to support a number of small, proof of concept and “scouting” projects, between academic and industrial based partners with the view that they will deliver more significant future outcomes. Algae-UK expect to run at least four Proof of Concept calls, each with a specific algae related focus or theme.

### **Scope of call**

The aim of this call is to provide support for projects that help to address the technical challenges in delivering bio-polymers and natural pigments, dyes and inks from algae. These compounds have broad applications in areas ranging from novel food ingredients; components of cosmetics and personal care products; packaging and printing; textiles, fabrics and other materials; healthcare products – all sectors where there is an active drive towards more sustainable production.

While there are some specific challenges associated with each sector and the application of polymer and pigment materials, there are some cross-cutting themes:

- Sustainable and naturally sourced “ingredients” and products
- Ensuring the product delivers to its main marketed purpose, e.g. stable natural polymers used in textile manufacture, but can then be biodegraded or effectively be recycled/ reused at end of life
- Providing the key to disruptive sustainable technologies and solutions
- The added benefit of being applicable to more than one sector, with modification to formulation, stabilisation, etc.

### **Funds and scale of award**

Algae-UK are pleased to be working with IBioIC on this call and will fund projects up to £50k (100% FEC figure) with an expectation that 3–5 projects will be funded in this round. All applications will be reviewed and assessed by Algae-UK for their technical benefits. Any successful applications that also meet IBioIC’s additional criteria will go forward for commercial review and sign off. It is expected that 1-2 such projects will be supported through IBioIC funding.

It is anticipated that proposed projects will have a duration of no more than 12 months and will start in May 2020.

### **Criteria**

Algae-UK and IBioIC are therefore looking for applications that:

- Are relevant to the Industrial Biotechnology sector and fit the BBSRC definition of industrial biotechnology: “IB is a set of cross-disciplinary technologies that use biological resources for producing and processing materials and chemicals for non-food applications. The resources include plants, algae, marine life, fungi and micro-organisms. The feedstocks include renewable materials such as crop residue, animal wastes, food and municipal wastes and

perennial biomass". To be clear: while novel food ingredients are within scope, bulk food ingredients are not.

- Are clearly aligned to assist with the ongoing technical challenges associated with the cross cutting themes outlined above.
- Ideally involve an industrial collaborator. Such an involvement is not mandatory for Algae-UK PoC funding, but is a key consideration when reviewing grant applications. However, for an application to meet the IBioIC criteria for funding support, the project must have an industrial collaborator (see IBioIC Guidelines below).
- Have clear plans to engage/ collaborate further with other partners relevant to the value chain that the project will impact. This is an opportunity to bring in relevant expertise from sectors not normally associated with industrial biotechnology.

### **Algae-UK criteria for funding**

1. Applicants are members of the Algae-UK Network – this includes any industrial partners.
2. Proposal contains a clear and concise plan with well-defined objectives and deliverables.
3. Proposal contains a clear plan for following-up and progressing the work/ technology development beyond the initial scope of the PoC proposal.
4. Proposal includes a plan for establishing value and demonstrating impact from project deliverables.
5. Proposal is a proof of concept and good value for money.

### **Algae-UK Eligibility**

Funding is available for Algae-UK Network members who are eligible to receive BBSRC funding. The guidelines for this can be found by going to <http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/funding/apply/grants-guide.aspx>. Please note that there is a provision made for "buying in services" from commercial entities which is capped at 20% of the total project costs - these services will need to be justified in the application. We are particularly looking for projects where there is a relevant industry partner actively engaged in the project. Whether they are an integral part of the work programme or providing an advisory role so that the project remains commercially grounded, their role needs to be clearly defined within the PoC application. Greater value will be placed on projects that have more significant industry involvement – beyond the advisory role commitment – as they will be seen to have more industrial and stakeholder relevance.

### **Note on State Aid rules**

Please be aware that Algae-UK BBSRC NIBB funds will be counted as 'de minimis' State Aid and so those receiving funding will need to ensure they are not in breach of 'de minimis' State Aid rules through their participation. The following link might be helpful in this regard - <https://www.gov.uk/state-aid>.

### **Application**

Application is via the Algae-UK-IBioIC PoC application form, which can be downloaded from the Algae-UK website: <https://www.algae-uk.org.uk/funding/poc/>. Please take careful note of the instructions provided within the application form as well as the information provided in this call scope and the guidelines document. All applications need to be submitted electronically to the Network Manager at [info@algae-uk.org.uk](mailto:info@algae-uk.org.uk). The Management Board aims to assess and turnaround decisions on PoC

applications within four weeks of the call closing date. Please note that awards will be subject to certain contractual terms which will be set out in the award letters.

### **Data protection regulations**

Please be aware that copies of proposals will be made available to the PoC Assessment Committee (members of the Management Board and external “co-opted” reviewers where appropriate – for example the appropriate assessors for IBiolC), who will use information provided in the application for processing the proposal through assessment, the award of any consequential grant, and for the payment, maintenance and review of the funds. Funding comes from BBSRC and SFC, so to meet the Research Councils’ obligations for public accountability and the dissemination of information, non-confidential details of awards may also be made available on the Research Councils’ websites and other publicly available databases, and in reports, documents and mailing lists. Be assured however, that all parties involved in PoC assessment and monitoring have to sign a confidentiality undertaking and any conflicted parties (i.e. members of the Assessment Committee) will not have access to confidential information regarding the proposals they are conflicted over.

### **Conflict of interest guidance**

In the PoC application form we provide you with an opportunity to highlight any conflicts of interest you may be aware of that the Management Board members may have with regards to your proposal.

Examples of a conflict of interest include:

- Employed by the same institution as the applicant(s)
- Actively involved in research collaborations with the applicants(s)
- Working closely with the applicant(s), for example as a co-author or PhD Supervisor, or has worked closely in the last 4 years
- Holding a current position on the governing body of, or an honorary position within, the institution(s) of the applicant(s)
- In receipt of personal remuneration in excess of £5,000 per annum from the applicant’s organisation
- Personal/family relationship with the applicant(s)

### **Note on Costings**

You will see that the project costings section on the application form is different from the usual BBSRC JeS format. Please use internally generated costings to complete this section. Please also note that equipment costs are not eligible under PoC funding.

### **Note on release of funds**

Successful applicants will be informed via email and an electronic award letter will be sent to the PI and it is their responsibility to inform and circulate it to the institution’s awards/ research office.

### **Algae-UK monitoring, reporting and finances**

Algae-UK awardees are required to submit a final report to the Network Manager within two months of completion of the project. This should include a public summary of outcomes and possible future direction for the work that may be published by the BBSRC NIBB and a summary of financial expenditure. Where appropriate, a case-study portfolio will be drawn-up and updated throughout the Network’s lifetime.

Financial expenditure will be required in all reports but the Network will not require receipts to be submitted. However, these must be kept as they may be required for possible future audits. The Awardee's host institution will follow their standard procedures for financial accounts. Any underspend will be returned to the Network and will be allocated to future PoC funding rounds.

All reports will be checked by the Network Manager and approved by the Management Board.

## IBioIC Guidelines

### Additional IBioIC Criteria for funding

1. Proposal must be with a Scottish academic institution.
2. Proposals must include an Industry Partner that must make at least a 50% contribution to the project, either in kind or in cash, which will be monitored by IBioIC.
3. If the application is successful, the Industry Partner must become a Member of IBioIC. Please contact [heather.michie@ibioic.com](mailto:heather.michie@ibioic.com) for details on the benefits of membership and associated costs.
4. Once projects have been awarded, the following documents must be returned before the project can initiate:
  - a. Signed award letter
  - b. Signed collaboration agreement (a template will be provided)
  - c. Full financial plan (academic and industry partner – a template will be provided for this)
  - d. Detailed project plan (a template will be provided)

### Note on State Aid rules

Aid granted by the Scottish Funding Council funded Innovation Centres constitutes State Aid and is provided under SFC's Innovation Centre Programme 2014-2020 General Block Exemption Regulations Scheme, Reference Number SA. 43342. Further details can be found at:

<http://www.sfc.ac.uk/innovation/innovation-centres/innovation-centres-state-aid.aspx>

Aid granted by IBioIC will be made under Article 25.

### Data protection regulations

IBioIC funding is provided by the Scottish Funding Council. Reports, including state aid reporting, will be provided to the funders under the Government's obligations for public accountability and the dissemination of information. Non-confidential details of awards may also be made available on IBioIC's website, social media channels, reports and documents.

All assessors with the ability to view project submissions adhere to Confidentiality Agreements and any conflicted parties will not have access to confidential information regarding the proposals they are conflicted over.

### Note on release of funds

Successful applicants will be informed via email and an electronic award letter will be sent to the PI and it is their responsibility to inform and circulate it to the institution's awards/ research office.

Funding for successful projects will be released quarterly and in arrears upon receipt of an invoice from the HEI. Details of in-kind/cash contributions to the project from industry partners will also be monitored on a quarterly basis.

### IBioIC monitoring and reporting

IBioIC will monitor projects on a quarterly basis and will request a quarterly report on the technical aspects of the project and details of milestones met. A final report will also be expected with further details of the outcomes and impacts of the project.