Algae-UK, a BBSRC NIBB

Proof of Concept Funding: Terms and Conditions

Please read this document before completing the application form.

Introduction

Algae-UK has Proof of Concept (PoC) funding available to finance projects targeted to specific objectives within the network. 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.

Applicants may apply for up to £50K (100% fEC), equating to £40k at 80% fEC.

Applications need not include an industrial partner, but are encouraged, particularly if additional funding (cash or in-kind) is available. **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

Up to **20 %** of the project value may be subcontracted to industry to buy a service or to an SME to facilitate involvement.

Projects should be completed within **12 months** of the start of the project.

Successful applications will likely be those demonstrating the potential to secure further funding or which show potential for commercial translation. Please note that PoC funding cannot be used to purchase equipment or fund PhD students.

Eligibility

PoC funds are available to <u>Algae-UK members who are UK-based academics</u> who 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). PoC funds are subject to *de minimis* aid rules, therefore non-academics receiving sub-contracted PoC funds need to ensure that they do not breach these rules by accepting funds (see https://www.gov.uk/state-aid for further details).

Application process

Applications should be made by completing the PoC funding application form provided on the Algae-UK website. The completed form should be returned as a pdf document to the Network Manager at info@algae-uk.org.uk, who will confirm that the required information is present and in a format suitable for review. Applicants submitting non-compliant forms will be requested either to send additional information or to amend and resubmit the form.

Evaluation process

Selection of reviewers and conflict of interest

Each application will be assessed by at least three members of the Algae-UK Management Board (MB) who will be selected according to their expertise in relation to the application. In case of insufficient expertise within the MB, appropriate expertise will be sought from other Algae-UK members, who, in reviewing the application, agree to treat the application as confidential.

Any member of the MB who has a conflict of interest must recuse him/herself from the review process and an alternative assessor selected.

Examples of a conflict of interest may include:

- employed by the same institution as the applicant(s)
- Actively involved in research collaborations with the applicant(s)
- Working closely with the applicant(s), e.g. 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 p.a. from the applicant's organisation
- Personal/family relationship with the applicant(s)

Evaluation criteria

For each of the evaluation criteria, proposals should score 60% of total marks allocated to be eligible to receive funding.

Criterion	% contribution to total score
Scientific excellence of proposed project	30
Scientific record of applicant	20
Relevance to Algae-UK objectives	10
Industrial relevance and likelihood of commercial translation	20
Economic, environmental and social impact	10
Value for money	10

Reviewers will have approximately four weeks to evaluate proposals, and the process of evaluation will be the same regardless of the amount of funds requested. The Network Manager will collate scores received from the reviewers for each application and create a ranked list for review and approval by the Director and Co-Directors of Algae-UK. If the Director or Co-Directors are conflicted, the non-conflicted Executive Group member will review and approve the ranked list along with the MB Chair (if both the Director and Co-Director are conflicted, one or both MB Co-Chairs will review and approve the ranked list along with the MB Chair). The MB Chair will sign off on the ranked list.

Applicants will be notified of the outcome with feedback as soon as possible after applications approved by the MB have been **approved by BBSRC**. A formal offer letter will be sent to successful applicants detailing the Terms and Conditions of the award.

Administration and reporting

Prior to the start of the project, the (lead) applicant will be required to sign an agreement, in which the applicant agrees to the Terms and Conditions of the PoC award. In cases of collaboration between two or more institutions, appropriate signed agreements (including details of ownership of resulting intellectual property through the appropriate technology transfer offices and legal departments) must be in place before the start of the project; the Network Manager will require confirmation of this.

A report is to be submitted 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.

Payment of awards

BBSRC will transfer project funds at 80% fEC to University College London (UCL) no more three months from the date of project completion, subject to all procedures being followed and the required documents having been put in place and approved. The institution receiving the award must

contribute the remaining 20% fEC. The final invoice will only be paid when the project is complete and the final project report has been received by the Network Manager.

Please do not vire project costs between budget headings without prior approval.

Data protection

Applications will be treated as confidential and used only for the purposes of reviewing to determine whether funding will be approved and for monitoring Algae-UK funds.

Applications will be distributed to the assessors, and the information provided used for the purposes of awarding the PoC funds. Details of the award, including the name of the host university and academic member, the name of the industrial/ academic partner (if any) and a brief description of the project receiving funding may be published by the BBSRC and Algae-UK. The PoC application form is clearly marked as to which information is likely to be published.

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 PoC 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 PoC awards and Business Interaction Vouchers) 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.

Algae-UK also request that project results are presented at a future Algae-UK meeting.

Contact details

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