

Algae-UK PoC Call with IBioIC: industrial biotechnology applications of algae in food and novel food ingredients

Call now open: 4th December 2020 **CLOSING DATE: 26th February 2021, 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 industrial biotechnology applications of algae in food and novel food ingredients. The challenges of delivering more sustainable sources of food and novel food ingredients from algae are wide and varied, but Algae-UK and IBioIC will focus on supporting projects that facilitate:

- The production of sustainable and naturally sourced “ingredients” and products
- The delivery of better tasting, smelling and coloured food ingredient products
- The potential to improve yields, scale of production and reduce production costs
- The delivery of “hero” products: products that showcase the benefits of incorporating more algae in our diet and food manufacture. Please note: “hero” products eligible for Algae-UK funding cannot be a primary food product, rather a minor ingredient such as those that impact colour and taste/smell.

Projects also need to fit with the BBSRC definition of industrial biotechnology (IB): “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”.

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 2021.

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 primary 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. 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 russell.clarke@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.