sLoLa call 2018: FAQ
Version 1.0 31 May 2018

Project team

1. Are cross-institutional bids welcome?

Yes. Applicants are asked to note though, that the submission must be made on single JeS form with one Research Organisation identified as the lead. This Research Organisation will be responsible for the management of the award.

For all applications, and particularly cross-institutional bids, we encourage applicants to consider the management approach, and how this will support the effective working of the team and successful delivery of the outcomes.

2. What team size might be acceptable?

The team size should be appropriate for the delivery of the project – there are no limits on the number of staff. When considering the composition of the team, we encourage applicants to consider the management approach, and how this will support the effective working of the team and successful delivery of the outcomes.

3. What do you envisage the contribution of an early-career PI need to be? Could their presence be detrimental to the proposal?

The contribution of people on the project should be determined by the need for their expertise, skills, and knowledge. Standard BBSRC eligibility criteria apply (Section 3 of the BBSRC Grants Guide) and we also expect Principal and Co-Investigators to demonstrate that they have the capability to successfully manage and deliver a programme of work of the proposed scale and complexity.

There are no restrictions on career stage, but we advise applicants to consider the key indicators for Principal and Co-Investigators:

- A track record of making internationally important research contributions relevant to the proposed project. This may be evidenced through a variety of different measures of peer recognition and success which may include, but are not limited to: publications, key note conference presentations, development and implementation of novel technologies, and patents

- A recent track record (within the last 10 years, excluding career breaks) of significant financial support from major funding bodies. This excludes research equipment grants, studentships and grants that have not been competitively awarded

- A track record demonstrating the capability of the Principal Investigator to effectively lead and manage teams. This should be evidenced through their role in specific projects or programmes, and professional development undertaken in leadership/project management.

We encourage the inclusion of Early Career Researcher (ECR) co-investigators providing evidence of significant accomplishments commensurate with their career stage is provided and they contribute distinctive expertise to the proposal. In such cases, the Principal Investigator must provide a commitment to the mentoring and career development of the ECR, and demonstrate previous successful experience of this.

4. Can additional Co-Investigators be added after the outline stage?

Yes, if the inclusion is justified. Major revisions to the scope of the project between outline and full stage are not encouraged, unless in response to feedback.

Eligibility

5. Are international partners allowed?

No, not as investigators. Standard BBSRC eligibility criteria apply, as described in Section 3 of the BBSRC Grants Guide.

For information about project partners and collaborators, refer to the BBSRC Grants Guide.

6. If investigators are partly based abroad, but have positions at UK HEIs, are they eligible?

Providing they meet the criteria (including the requirement for residency) as described in Section 3 of the BBSRC Grants Guide.

7. Can PhD studentships be included as part of a proposal?

No. Studentships and/or student resource may not be requested, or included, on BBSRC research grant applications, including sLoLas. BBSRC studentships are only available through application to the various BBSRC training award schemes. Further information is available on the BBSRC website (bbsrc.ukri.org/skills/).

Call registration

8. Could you please clarify the information that will be required for the registration?

Potential applicants (Principal Investigators) **must** register their interest in the call by 22 June 2018, as described in the call for proposals https://bbsrc.ukri.org/funding/filter/lola/.

9. Will small changes e.g. to Co-Investigators be allowable post-registration? e.g. when additional expertise is deemed necessary in the development of the proposal?

Yes. At the registration stage, only information about the anticipated team is required.

Scope

10. Would applications that build on previous large investments (which are no longer active) be permitted or disadvantaged, due to similarity with previously funded work?

We expect applications to make a distinctive major contribution to the BBSRC portfolio in the context of current and/or previous investments, where relevant. Providing it is appropriately recognised and justified, work that builds on previously funded programmes will not be disadvantaged, but should be able to demonstrate that it will deliver an appropriately transformational step change in meeting the aims of the sLoLa scheme.

11. Are bids expected to contain a significant outreach element to confer impact?

Appropriate measures to ensure impact is realised should be considered on a case-wise basis, dependent on the nature of the proposed work. We recognise there are many forms of impact, and that these are delivered through a range of measures. In relation to the frontiers bioscience scope of the call it is recognised that the value of outreach work may be variable, within a broader consideration of impact plans.

12. Is there an anticipated duration for a project?

Projects may be up to 5 years in duration.

Resources and budget

13. Can one request large equipment (above OJEU limit) on sLoLa?

Equipment may be sought as part of a sLoLa application, where the items of equipment requested are necessary for the successful delivery of the proposed research. Items of multiple-use equipment (i.e. where the equipment is necessary for the pursuit of the proposed research, but will not be fully occupied on it) may also be sought. The application must set out the other proposed uses and explain the overall benefit to BBSRC science of the equipment investment being sought.

Applicants should refer to the guidance on equipment in Section 5 of the BBSRC Grants Guide for detailed information.

14. Do you expect institutional commitment / financial contribution on sLoLa?

There is no requirement for a financial contribution from the institution. At the full stage, a letter of support from the Head of Department is required.

15. What is the expected budget for the call?

The indicative budget for this call is up to **£16 million**, subject to the quality of applications received.

16. Is there an upper limit for individual applications?

Proposals must be over £2 million (100% FEC project value) and can be up to five years in duration. We anticipate awarding 3-5 sLoLa grants in the 2018/19 call and the indicative total budget is £16M. No limit is specified for the value of individual applications.

17. Will the budget allocated to the individual committees for the Jan 2019 selection round be influenced by the possibility to have sLoLas in that round?

The indicative budget for the sLoLa call is in addition to the budget allocation for standard responsive mode applications.

18. Are international subcontracts allowable?

BBSRC considers eligible institutions to be best placed to determine how their work is undertaken. In the case of a grant application, if this involves sub-contracting aspects of the work to non-eligible institutions due, for example, to the lack of appropriate expertise in eligible institutions, this is

acceptable. See section 2 of the BBSRC Grants guide for detailed information about sub-contracting.

19. What financial information is required at the registration stage?

No financial information is required at the registration stage.

Assessment

20. What steps will be taken to ensure that the RM committees have the expertise to assess fundamental (frontier) bioscience, given that recent LOLAs and the RM scheme often seem focused on highlights, with a bias towards application?

Each Research Committee has a core membership that is complemented by additional members drawn from the Pool of Experts. This ensures the appropriate expertise is available to assess the applications received.

21. Timing between registration and outline is rather short, how quickly will feedback be given?

Feedback on applications will be given as soon as possible after you have registered. Therefore, the sooner you can register, the quicker we can get feedback to you. Our ability to respond will be dependent on the quantity of applications that we receive. However, we will aim to get back to all applicants within five working days of registration.

Miscellaneous

22. Will the call be repeated?

We have committed to running the call again in 2019. The scope for 2019 may remain focused on frontier bioscience, but this will be subject to review, which will incorporate learning from the progress of this year's call.