Project team

1. Are cross-institutional bids welcome?

Yes. Applicants are asked to note though, that both outline and full stage submissions 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 proposals applicants should 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 and number of research organisations should be appropriate for the delivery of the project – there are no limits on the number of staff. Clear roles for all applicants must be identified within the proposal.

3. What do you envisage the contribution of an early-career researcher can 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. There are no restrictions on career stage and standard BBSRC eligibility criteria apply (Section 3 of the BBSRC Grants Guide).

We 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. This does not preclude involvement of early career researchers within the co-investigator team.

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

Yes, provided they meet BBSRC’s eligibility requirements. We recommend notifying BSBRC of such changes before submission. Major revisions to the scope of the project between outline and full stage are not permitted, unless in response to feedback.

Eligibility

5. Are international partners allowed?

No. 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?

Yes, if they meet the criteria (including the requirement for residency) as described in Section 3
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 proposals, 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/).

8. What is the definition of early career in the context of sLoLa?

BBSRC does not apply a strict definition of ECR in the context of the sLoLa call and there are no eligibility criteria applied in relation to ECR involvement, other than BBSRC’s standard eligibility criteria.

9. Can we include researcher co-investigators to these proposals?

Yes, this is permitted. Researcher co-investigators do not need to be included in the call registration stage. Information on research co-investigators is available in BBSRC’s grants guide, section 3.11.

10. If a PI from 2018-19 round is successful can they be a CoI on a 2019-20 round proposal?

Restrictions on eligibility apply to investigators only being eligible as PI on a single sLoLa. Investigators may be co-investigators on other sLoLa projects provided they are able to make the necessary time commitment.

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11. Does the PI or the institution submit the registration?

While either the PI or Institution can submit a registration, we expect that the PI should engage with their university office and any sift or prioritisation process that is in place at their Research Organisation at all stages of the application process.

BBSRC will notify the designated university contacts of every registration submitted at the same time as confirming to the Principal Investigator. This will enable universities to have a clear picture of registrations from their Research Organisation.

12. 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 14 May 2019, as described in the call for proposals https://bbsrc.ukri.org/funding/filter/2019-slola/.

The questions asked in the Keysurvey can be found here:

- https://bbsrc.ukri.org/documents/siola-keysurvey-docx/
13. Will small changes be allowable post-registration? For example, addition of co-investigators when additional expertise is deemed necessary during the development of the proposal?

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

14. Is it worth applicants contacting BBSRC before registration to talk through their proposal?

Please email the call inbox bbsrc.lolagrants@bbsrc.ukri.org with your questions in the first instance. Where necessary, we would be happy to arrange to speak with applicants.

15. Can outline proposals from the 2018/19 sLoLa call that were not selected for a full proposal be redeveloped for 2019/20 call?

This will be a highly competitive call again and substantive changes would be expected to the work programme for this to be considered. Further justification may be requested by BBSRC for proposals that are very similar to 2018-19 outlines. Please email the sLoLa team if you have questions about a specific proposal.

Scope

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

We expect proposals 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. Proposals developed from prior large investments should be able to demonstrate that they will deliver an appropriately transformational step change in meeting the aims of the sLoLa scheme.

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

A range of actions to ensure impact is realised should be considered for all proposals, appropriate to the nature of the proposed work. We recognise there are many forms of impact and that these are delivered through a range of measures.

18. Is there an anticipated duration for a project?

Projects may be up to 5 years in duration.

Resources and budget

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

Equipment may be sought as part of a sLoLa proposal, where the items of equipment requested are necessary for the successful delivery of the proposed research. Items of multiple-use
20. Do you expect institutional commitment / financial contribution on sLoLa?

Our normal fEC rules apply to the sLoLa scheme. 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 confirming and relevant institutional support.

21. Is there an upper limit for individual proposals?

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 proposals.

22. 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 proposals.

23. 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 proposal, if this involves sub-contracting aspects of the work to non-eligible institutions, for example due to the lack of appropriate expertise in eligible institutions, this is acceptable. See section 2 of the BBSRC Grants guide for further information about sub-contracting.

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

No financial information is required at the registration stage.

25. What steps will be taken to ensure that the RM committees have the expertise to assess fundamental (frontier) bioscience?

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 proposals received.

26. Timing between registration and outline is rather short, how quickly will feedback be given?
Feedback on proposals 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 proposals that we receive. However, we will aim to get back to all applicants within seven working days of registration.

27. What is the expected composition of the Strategic LoLa Committee (SLC)? Are members selected from responsive mode panels?

The SLC in 2018 was composed of two members of BBSRC Council who acted as Chairs, the Chairs of our Responsive Mode Research Committees, and experts that included members of our pool of experts. We anticipate that the 2019 SLC will have a similar composition tailored to the submissions received to the 2019-20 call.

28. Are all assessment criteria weighted equally?

Proposals will need to meet all the assessment criteria to a high level be competitive.