

2020 TRDF: Transformative Research Technologies for the Detection and Diagnosis of Plant and Animal Diseases

Frequently Asked Questions

These frequently asked questions are provided as guidance to applicants on common queries. Applicants should contact us if further clarification is required or if they have queries which are not covered here, in the call text or in the call guidance notes.

Scope

1. What is the purpose of TRDF?

TRDF aims to pump prime the next generation of cutting-edge enabling research technologies with a potential for transformative impact in life sciences research (both biological and biomedical).

Projects are expected to be small and of short duration. The emphasis is on support for exploratory pilot studies, particularly for proof-of-concept with little to no preliminary data where there is 'high-risk/high reward'. The outcome of the proposal does not necessarily need to be a fully-fledged tool.

The 2020 TRDF call has an exclusive focus on transformative research technologies for the detection and diagnosis of plant and animal diseases, in particular, infectious agents with zoonotic potential.

2. I wish to adapt a technology that is currently used in another discipline outside of bioscience. Is this appropriate for the call?

Yes, this is appropriate providing that the technology adaptation requires that radical, novel modifications are made.

3. I wish to adapt a technology that is already being used in bioscience for use in a different biological system. Is this appropriate for the call?

Unlikely. A very strong case would have to be made that radical, novel modifications are required. An application to Responsive Mode could be more appropriate in this instance.

4. Will TRDF support pilot studies on generic technology advancements?

Technology development proposals for this call should be driven by the need to tackle discovery research challenges in the detection and diagnosis of plant and animal diseases. We encourage applications working at and across disciplinary interfaces.

5. I wish to generate some preliminary data for a subsequent application to UKRI-BBSRC in the area of technology development. Is this appropriate for the call?

Yes, in principle, providing that the application is relevant to the detection and diagnosis of plant and animal diseases. One aspect of the call is to support early stage investigation of new research technologies. This may involve a small research element, for example to establish proof-of-principle, but the primary focus of projects is expected to be technology development rather than data generation.

6. Can I use technologies developed in other academic labs?

Yes, if there is a development component to the project. We would expect the technology developer to be a collaborator on the application.

7. What do you mean by ‘early stage project’? I have an application for which I have already generated considerable pilot data. Will this application be suitable for the call?

Unlikely. The call is intended to support early concept, exploratory investigations with little to no preliminary data. Applications which already contain considerable amounts of preliminary data could be more appropriate for Responsive Mode.

Applications developed out of a previous project must clearly outline what is novel within the proposal, and why the proposal should be considered relevant to the call’s focus on novel technologies that could deliver a potential step change in research capabilities. Fit to scope is part of the assessment criteria that the panel will use in its assessment, and incremental adaptations or improvements to existing technologies are specifically excluded from the call.

UKRI-BBSRC reserves the right to reject applications, without reference to peer review, which are deemed to fall outside the remit and scope (including the financial scope) of this call.

8. I have previously received funding for a successful TRDF project and would like to follow it up. Is an application to TRDF appropriate for this?

Unlikely. The call is intended to fund small and short duration pump-priming activities with little or no preliminary data, and therefore is unlikely to be appropriate for the direct continuation of previous grants. Applicants may wish to consider other funding opportunities like Responsive Mode instead.

9. My proposed research isn’t entirely within UKRI-BBSRC’s remit, what should I do?

The 2020 TRDF call has an **exclusive focus on transformative research technologies for the detection and diagnosis of plant and animal diseases, and in particular infectious agents with zoonotic potential.**

Proposals with a focus outside of this scope, and/or outside of UKRI-BBSRC remit will be rejected prior to assessment. If you are unsure about whether your planned research would be appropriate for this call, please send an outline (no more than 2 sides of A4) of what you plan to do to development.fund@bbsrc.ac.uk and UKRI-BBSRC staff will be happy to advise you.

10. My proposed technology may be used in a biomedical research context, is this allowed?

Although we recognise that some technologies may have a broader application in human disease detection and diagnosis in the future, the primary focus of proposals to this call **must** be on the detection and diagnosis of plant and animal diseases.

Proposals with a focus outside of this scope, and/or outside of UKRI-BBSRC remit will be rejected prior to assessment. If you are unsure about whether your planned research would be appropriate for this call, please send an outline (no more than 2 sides of A4) of what you plan to do to development.fund@bbsrc.ac.uk and UKRI-BBSRC staff will be happy to advise you.

11. I would like to develop technology which is ready to be translated as an application to industry. Is this allowed?

No, the focus for this call is on technologies for the discovery research community.

Detection and Diagnosis of Plant and Animal Disease

12. My proposal focuses on diseases relating to animal welfare. Is this in scope?

Diseases relative to animal welfare are in scope, however studies focussing **solely** on animal welfare aspects, and not addressing the detection and diagnosis of disease, are not in scope.

13. What is regarded as a pest?

For this call, we consider pests to be viruses, fungi, weeds and insects.

14. I am not sure if my proposal is relevant to the Detection and Diagnosis of Plant and Animal Disease, where can I find out more information?

Specific advice on proposal fit can be provided via an email to development.fund@bbsrc.ac.uk.

Funding

15. What is the maximum duration of an award that can be made under this initiative?

In line with the scope of the initiative, proposals for research projects should be for short pump-priming activities of between 6 and 18 months duration.

16. Is £150K (80% FEC) the maximum amount that can be requested?

In line with FEC, this figure is not an absolute upper limit. It is a guide to inform applicants of the appropriate level of funding that can be requested. UKRI-BBSRC considers that applications requesting in excess of this amount are unlikely to meet the aims of the call (i.e. to support pump-priming research projects). **If your application is in excess of £150K (£187K FEC), you must contact us prior to the submission.** Should an application which significantly exceeds the £150K guide be submitted to the call, UKRI-BBSRC reserves the right to withdraw it prior to peer review and recommend that it be submitted to a more appropriate funding stream (e.g. Responsive Mode).

17. Does the £150K figure refer to the FEC value of a proposal or the requested Research Council contribution to this cost?

The £150K figure refers to the requested Research Council contribution, at the 80% contribution level.

18. Can funds for equipment purchase be requested?

Applicants can request equipment if necessary to the proposed research; there is no defined upper limit on what proportion of the requested cost falls into a particular category within the overall limit of £150K. However, applications which use the bulk of their resources purchasing and commissioning equipment are invariably classed as 'development of generic platform technologies' which are outside the scope of the call. Applicants are expected to fully justify the need for any resources that are requested (including equipment). Equipment will be funded at 50% FEC, unless a case for instrument development can be made which would permit funding at 100% FEC.

19. Can we include costs for travel, project meetings and networking activities?

Yes.

20. Can I apply for PhD Studentships?

No, UKRI-BBSRC funding for PhD students or any other type of student may not be included. UKRI-BBSRC has separate mechanisms for funding student training.

21. Does time allocated as part of the national supercomputer resource ARCHER count towards the £150K limit?

Yes. Costs for access to High Performance Computing resources, including ARCHER, should be incorporated into the total funding requested, which should not exceed the £150K limit. A technical assessment form will be required for access to ARCHER: please contact the office for details on how to incorporate requests for ARCHER time within your proposal.

Attachments and assessment

22. What is the membership of the assessment panel?

The streamlined assessment will use a multi-disciplinary panel with appropriate expertise. The 2020 panel membership will be published once the assessment is concluded.

23. Will I get an uplift as a New Investigator/with an industrial collaborator?

No, these uplifts do not apply in this call. These schemes are used in Responsive Mode and can confer an uplift after the ranking of applications. First time Principal Investigators (PIs) should note that, if successful, being the PI on a grant which includes funding for Postdoctoral Research Assistant (PDRA) staff support costs will subsequently exclude them from being a New Investigator in Responsive Mode.

24. What should be included in the 'Capability to Deliver' document?

The Capability to Deliver document replaces the elements which would usually appear in the track record and CVs of a standard proposal. Applicants should highlight why they are the best person to deliver the research and what the value of carrying out the research at their Research Organisation or with any project partners (if included) is. The Capability to Deliver document is for the whole research team, not just the Principle Investigator. Further information can be found in the call guidance, and in the application download 'Capability to Deliver Guidance' on the TRDF webpage.

General

25. Can a series of scientifically linked proposals be submitted together?

This is not advised. All applications are assessed separately, and each proposal must be able to stand alone and not rely on the successful funding of other related applications.

26. Can joint grant applications for a single project be submitted via Je-S?

No. A single, shared Je-S application should be submitted even if the application involves researchers from multiple Research Organisations.

27. I previously submitted a grant application that was unsuccessful. Can I submit the proposal to the TRDF call?

Any proposal related to a previously unsuccessful grant application must comply with UKRI-BBSRC's resubmission policy (see [UKRI-BBSRC Grants Guide](#)). Applicants are advised to contact the office prior to submitting an application if they are concerned that their project may be considered a resubmission. Applications that are deemed to constitute uninvited resubmissions will be rejected from the call.

28. Can I involve industrial partners in my application?

Yes. UKRI-BBSRC welcomes the involvement of private sector partners in the research that it funds. Your industrial partners should be listed in the 'Project Partners' section. The nature of the collaboration and the role of the industrial partner should be made clear in the case of support. Please note that UKRI-BBSRC is only able to provide funding to eligible research organisations (see [UKRI-BBSRC Grants Guide](#) for further information).

29. When is the outcome of the call likely to be known?

We are unable to give a precise date by which outcomes will be announced. It is anticipated that we will be able to notify applicants by early February 2021.

Contact

If your question has not been answered by the information given above, please contact UKRI-BBSRC staff on development.fund@bbsrc.ac.uk.

UKRI-BBSRC Research, Strategy and Programmes

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