

Tools and resources development fund: call 1

Support for development of novel tools, methods and technologies in the biosciences

Application deadline: 4 September 2013, 4pm

Summary

Our Tools and Resources Development Fund (TRDF) aims **to pump prime the next generation of tools, technologies and resources that will be required by bioscience researchers in scientific areas within our remit**. It is anticipated that successful grants will not exceed £150k ([ref 1](#)) and a fast-track, light touch peer review process will operate to enable researchers to respond rapidly to emerging challenges and opportunities.

The 2013 call has two phases:

- Call 1: proposing to fund novel technology development
- [Call 2](#) : funding bioinformatics and computational approaches

This page refers to call 1 only. Calls 1 and 2 will each have an indicative budget in the region of £2M, subject to the quality of the applications received.

For any enquiries please see below for [full contact details](#).

Scope

This call intends to:

- Support small or short-duration, pump-priming (pilot) projects that enable excellent bioscience
- Encourage applications that develop novel tools, technologies and methods spanning the breadth of BBSRC research and underpin in the long-run all of our strategic priorities and the wider biosciences
- Involve interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches. It is important that applications demonstrate appropriate collaborative connections, and biological demonstration/knowledge derivation

It is anticipated that grants of up to £150k ([ref 1](#)) will be made. Applications for projects should be between 6 and 18 months duration. Industry collaboration is welcome, if appropriate to the application.

A number of different types of proposal are eligible for consideration.

- Early concept, exploratory investigations of new tools, technologies and resources. The key feature of a successful 'early concept, exploratory' research project application is a technology or methods oriented approach that is enabling and adventurous, and encapsulates the concept of 'high-risk/high reward'. Funded projects are expected to test the 'high-risk, high reward' concept and, where successful, demonstrate proof-of-principle'
- Rapid access to, and novel deployment of, the very latest cutting edge technology. It is anticipated that these proposals would include collaboration with the technology provider
- Radical, novel modifications to existing tools, technologies and resources to facilitate new biological understanding and an expansion in use

Applications should be novel and adventurous and be aimed at developing new tools. This fund intends to support genuine early concept development, particularly where little pilot data exists. To facilitate the panel assessment, we request that applicants clearly state within the case for support which of the types of enabling proposal listed above they consider their application addresses.

Exclusions

The following areas are excluded from the first call:

- Applications which are not technology or methods focused
- Applications where the tools, technologies or methods will not be applied to a biological challenge within our remit
- Applications using existing tools and technologies available to comparable areas of biological sciences
- Generic 'platform' technology development in the physical sciences
- Incremental further developments in technologies where previous proof-of-concept has been demonstrated. Applications in this area should either be 'early-concept exploratory investigations' or 'radical, novel modifications'.
- Technologies primarily focused on computation, bioinformatics or algorithm development, including data sharing. Development of these technologies will be within the scope of the second call
- Applications not within the specified proposal areas or not meeting the specified expectations on project scale (including cost and duration). Such applications should be submitted to the responsive mode or another appropriate funding scheme.

As noted above, applicants interested in submitting projects related to the development of bioinformatics, computational biology or algorithms, including data sharing should submit applications to the **second call** to be issued later in 2013. Applications outside the remit of this call will be rejected at an early stage. Therefore we advise applicants to contact us to discuss potential project concepts (see contacts below).

Eligibility

- **Open to all institutions normally eligible for BBSRC managed-mode calls**, which includes BBSRC approved HEIs, Research Council Institutes and Independent Research Organisations (IROs).
- Categories of eligible organisations can be found in section 2 of our grants guide (see related links).
- A list of IROs can be found in the RCUK eligibility guidance (see external links).
- Applicants must be eligible for BBSRC funding. Details of the eligibility criteria can be found in section 3 of our grants guide.

How to apply

Apply via the Je-S website (see external links) by 4 September 2013, 4pm.

Applicants should select the following from the Je-S menus:

1. Select Council: **BBSRC**
2. Select Document Type: **Standard Proposal**
3. Select Scheme: **Standard**
4. Select Call/Type/Mode: **Tools and Resources Development Fund 1 (TRDF1)**

Applicants are advised to read the FAQs and application guidance in the downloads section above.

When submitting applicants will be asked to provide reviewer suggestions. However, this call does not operate with peer-review and is assessed through a single stage, fast-track panel assessment process. To satisfy Je-S validation requirements we advise applicants to input 'dummy' reviewer suggestions in this area of the form. 'Dummy' reviewer suggestions will not be utilised in any way.

Fast-track, light touch assessment

We reserve the right to reject applications, without reference to peer review, which are deemed to fall outside the remit and scope (including financial scope) of this call. We strongly advise applicants to contact the research councils if they are unsure whether their application would be suitable for the call.

Applications that fit the remit of the call will then be assessed through a single stage, fast-track panel assessment process so that the high-risk exploratory ideas and novel technologies can be rapidly tested and/or challenged. The streamlined nature of the assessment will use a broadly-based, multi-disciplinary panel with appropriate expertise.

Important notes:

- Applications will be assessed **only** by the expert panel
- Written reports from additional referees will **not** be obtained
- The panel will evaluate the applications against the **criteria for assessment** (see below) and provide the funders with a recommended rank-ordered list of proposals based on the details contained within the **case for support**
- **Applicants should ensure** that sufficient details of their expertise and track record, proposed project, approaches and methods are provided within the case for support to enable the application to be assessed by scientists with relevant but not necessarily specialist expertise
- Feedback will be provided to all unsuccessful applicants within three months of being notified of the panel's decision

Peer review

The Expert Panel will be composed of representatives from our core committee and pool membership, plus any additional members with expertise that covers scientific areas as required by the nature of the submissions.

Criteria for assessment

The assessment of proposals will reflect the scope of the fund and will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Scientific excellence
- Timeliness and promise
- Strategic relevance
- Economic and social impact
- Industrial and stakeholder relevance
- Value for money
- Staff training potential

In addition, assessors will be asked to take into account the scope as set out above, including the potential utility, novelty, and adventurousness of the proposed tool/technology development.

Complementary funding mechanisms

The TRDF complements responsive mode, which has four committee areas:

- Committee A: Animal systems, health and well being
- Committee B: Plants, microbes, food and sustainability
- Committee C: Genes, development and STEM approaches to biology
- Committee D: Molecules, cells and industrial biotechnology

The TRDF is a small grants scheme and is not suitable for applications where the cost to us is greater than £150k. Applicants are strongly advised to resource projects appropriately to achieve the proposed objectives, and to justify these costs. For projects where the resource required exceeds £150k, or the duration of the project exceeds 18 months, responsive mode may be a more suitable scheme. Applicants are advised to contact the appropriate committee secretariat for guidance. See 'Research Committees' in related links above.

Awarded grants

Grants arising from previous TRDF calls can be viewed on our previous call pages and our advanced grants search page (see related links).

Reference

1. This figure refers to the BBSRC contribution to the project, i.e. 80% of the full economic cost.

Contact

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Peer review and administration enquiries
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