20ALERT: Mid-range equipment funding

Opportunity status:	Open
Funders:	**Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC)**
Funding type:	Grant
Total fund:	£10,000,000
Minimum award:	£200,000
Publication date:	28 September 2020
Opening date:	28 September 2020
Closing date:	26 November 2020 16:00 UK time

Last updated: 24 October 2020

Start application

> ⓘ **In recognition of the current constraints faced by HEIs, we have amended the guidance relating to institutional contributions. This is discussed in section 15 of the call guidance and 'how we assess your application' section of the call text.**

For 2020 ALERT we encourage:

- applications for widely used, mid-range equipment that underpins capability across scientific areas in the UKRI-BBSRC remit
- applications that pioneer the use of emerging advanced research technology or utilise equipment in novel applications are particularly encouraged.

Applications will typically be from groups of researchers in one or more eligible institution(s) for instrumentation to be deployed collaboratively on a multi-project and multi-use basis.

The minimum value is £2 million (inc. VAT) at 100% full economic costing over 12 months. The call budget is approximately £10 million.

Who can apply

The 2020 ALERT call is open to institutions and researchers normally eligible to apply to UKRI-BBSRC, as described in section three of the **UKRI-BBSRC grants guide (PDF, 374KB)**.

As an individual you can only lead on one submitted application. As principle investigator on one proposal you can still be member of a consortium on a different application as long as you do not take a leading role as principal investigator. However, as such applications will be in direct competition this is not recommended unless the applications are in very different areas.

Multiple applications involving the same (or very similar) consortia members (for example, two applications involving the same group of investigators but different lead principal investigators) will be rejected.

An institution may submit more than one application, but we strongly encourage institutions to discuss and prioritise their submissions given the limited budget available.

The latest possible start date for an award will be 1 August 2021.

What we're looking for

Scope

Advanced research equipment and the development of capability in this area is a key component in maintaining the competitiveness of the UK research base. UKRI-BBSRC recognises that new technologies, tools and approaches, often spanning several disciplines, are revolutionising biology, providing unprecedented opportunities to advance understanding of the complex, dynamic processes that govern life and to apply that knowledge for the benefit of society and the economy.

To support this approach, the 2020 ALERT call, like previous calls of this nature, encourages you to apply for:

- equipment that is widely used and underpins capability across all scientific areas within UKRI-BBSRC remit. Relevance to the priority areas in **UKRI-BBSRC's Delivery Plan (PDF, 2.2MB)** is particularly encouraged
- applications that pioneer the use of emerging advanced research technology or utilise equipment in new ways of working
- applications that promote collaboration and equipment access between users within industry, public sector and other institutes.

Funding

The indicative capital budget for the 2020 ALERT is approximately £10 million.

Applications may seek the following only:

- the cost of capital equipment **over £200,000 including VAT,** requested under the 'Directly Incurred Equipment' heading only**. No other cost types are eligible under this call**. Any applications submitted with costs in any other heading will be rejected without consultation
- **only one piece of capital equipment**, although this can include equipment that requires assembly or involves several components (not necessarily physically linked) provided they constitute a single technology platform. **If you plan to request several components that could constitute a platform, it is important that you approach UKRI-BBSRC for permission before submission,** providing a short 1-2 page document outlining how your proposal delivers value for money and enables novel research that would not otherwise be possible. Please refer to the FAQs document for an example
- costs such as initial installation or service maintenance contracts if they are one-off costs and part of the manufacturer's offer. These costs should be included in the equipment quotation. Service maintenance contracts may extend a maximum of 24 months past the end date of the award (i.e. 36 months in total) but the contract cost must be paid within the lifetime of the grant (i.e. 12 months). Should the expected length of the contract exceed 36 months, then the cost included in the application should be reduced on a pro-rata basis so as to fit within the conditions as stated. UKRI-BBSRC expects that institutions will make longer term arrangements to ensure appropriate ongoing support over the lifetime of the equipment. **Separately negotiated service contracts are not eligible for this call**.

Applications looking to request over £750,000 need to contact UKRI-BBSRC before submitting an application. We reserve the right to reject any applications requesting costs over £750,000 that have not been discussed with us in advance of submission.

If you expect that a significant portion of the equipment user base will be undertaking research in areas outside UKRI-BBSRC remit, you must seek an appropriate level of additional upfront contributions and support from external sources and provide information on this external support in the application. **Read more about the UKRI-BBSRC remit**.

Exclusions

Applications in the following areas will not be accepted, and UKRI-BBSRC withholds the right to reject these applications without consultation:

- applications that request any other costs apart from capital funding. The 2020 ALERT call supports capital funding **only**
- equipment requested valued below the £200,000 (VAT included) threshold
- proposal that exceeds 12 months in duration
- applications for single-user or single-project instruments
- requests for funding for equipment that is scheduled for market release **after** the call close date
- principal beneficiaries are outside of the UK
- principal beneficiaries are outside of bioscience
- establishment of generic computing platforms (for example high performance computing clusters) when the intended use largely extends beyond research areas that are within the UKRI-BBSRC remit

- requests for contributions to very large facilities or to the purchase of equipment that constitute normal elements of a well-founded laboratory (centrifuges, fridges, incubators, etc.) or for buildings and other types of infrastructures
- while the use of new or emerging technologies is encouraged, proposals for the development of new technology are outside of the scope of 20ALERT and will be rejected
- proposals to develop software packages
- proposals that do not provide quotes for the requested equipment
- applications of the same nature that at the same time have also been submitted to other award schemes (including research council grant schemes)
- Unsolicited resubmissions of proposals that have previously been considered by UKRI-BBSRC or any other funder.

How to apply

You should refer to the call guidance for full details. Applications must be submitted using the **Joint Electronic Submission system (Je-S)** by 16:00 on 26 November 2020.

Please consider the time required by your research office to process the application as late submissions will not be accepted.

Applicants should select:

- council: UKRI-BBSRC
- document type: Standard Proposal
- scheme: Standard
- call/type/mode: 20ALERT Mid-range equipment funding.

You should discuss your application with your relevant procurement and finance officers **prior to submission**, particularly bearing in mind the EU tender and procurement rules.

The maximum duration of grants is 12 months and grants must start by 1 August 2021 at the very latest.

If you expect the expenditure to be challenging within the given time constraints regarding grant duration/start date (for example, because the equipment may require an export license or involves lengthy customisation or construction times) you must contact UKRI-BBSRC before submitting an application.

In order to ensure compliance with basic requirements of the call, you should refer to the 20ALERT checklist and all associated call guidance before submitting your application. **Once the application has been submitted, no further modifications can be made.**

How we will assess your application

Applications will be assessed by a multidisciplinary panel of experts covering scientific, managerial, technical and user aspects of equipment provision and management. **External reviews will not be sought.**

Contributions from the host institution(s) and/or other external sources are welcome but not mandatory. **Institutional commitments directed towards staff posts to fulfil aspects such as running and maintenance of the equipment, as well as training of users, are encouraged,** as UKRI-BBSRC is unable to support them through this call.

The following assessment criteria (not listed in order of priority) will also apply:

1. **Impact** of the investment, including the research enabled, the benefit to or involvement of a wider user community, and/or the anticipated extent of usage.
2. **Scientific quality** and **strategic relevance** of the proposed research to be conducted using the equipment.
3. Arrangements for the **management and support** of the equipment and in particular the arrangements to secure the expertise in its operation and to provide access to the equipment and expertise in its use.
4. Arrangements for **managing access to the equipment** and the prioritisation of its use. Award holders will be expected to put arrangements in place for providing advice and support to others wishing to assess the potential of the technology for their own research
5. **Provision for staff development, training and sustainability for staff employed** to operate and manage the equipment
6. The **contribution the investment will make to the physical research infrastructure** in the applicant institution(s) and in the UK (for example, how the equipment will complement related infrastructure and equipment) and the broader environment in which the equipment will be placed (for example, lab space, running costs, technical support, scientific expertise, data management).
7. The **track record** of the applicants evidencing a demonstrable history of, and the capacity to deliver excellent research. This may be demonstrated through a strong track record of research council funding or other suitable measures. The inclusion of experience directly relevant to this call, for example a track record in managing facilities, is strongly encouraged. Reference to the institutional environment in which the equipment will be used should also be made.
8. **Value for money**, including the credibility of the financial and management proposals.
9. Consideration will also be given to any **ethical and societal issues** that may be raised by the proposal.

Research technical professionals

As the first funder to sign the **Technician Commitment**, UKRI recognises the value of technical expertise to the UK research workforce and is committed to ensuring 'visibility, recognition, career development and sustainability for technicians working in higher education and research, across all disciplines.'

Therefore, provision for professional development of technical and support staff will be part of the assessment by the panel and will inform the final score. Applicants should detail how staff roles will support the use of the equipment and how they will be supported in their careers. Please refer to the UK Research and Innovation statement of expectations for technology/skills specialists and UKRI-BBSRC's website **https://UKRI-BBSRC.ukri.org/skills/developing-careers/research-technicianstechnology-skills-specialists/**.

Contact details

For call-specific queries please email **bbsrcalert@bbsrc.ukri.org**.

For Je-S system queries please email **jeshelp@je-s.ukri.org**.

Please provide as much information as possible in your email to ensure a rapid response.

Additional info

Supporting documents

- **20ALERT: Call guidance**
- **20ALERT: Pre-submission checklist (PDF, 24KB)**
- **20ALERT: Frequently asked questions**
- **20ALERT: Justification of resources (Word, 25KB)**
- **20ALERT: Equality impact assessment (PDF, 190KB)**
- **BBSRC Funding guide (PDF, 374KB)**

Timeline

○ **28 September 2020**
Opening date

○ **26 November 2020 16:00**
Closing date

○ **March-April 2021**
Panel review

Related content

Je-S Handbook

Je-S login