

# Engineering Biology Breakthrough Awards

## Guidance notes

### Application deadline

02 September 2021, 4pm

### Summary

Engineering biology has the potential to offer solutions to a range of global societal challenges. This opportunity will create a pipeline for the **development of high-risk, high-reward ideas and will exploit engineering biology approaches to generate impact across a range of sectors**. We strongly encourage applicants from disciplines and communities seeking to drive cutting-edge fundamental engineering biology ideas and opportunities that can pull-through into impacts in key sectors (e.g. clinical, environmental).

This opportunity aims to:

1. seed the development of novel and high-risk ideas in engineering biology that will enhance the current potential impact of engineering biology in the UK
2. engage with new research communities and develop early exemplars of opportunities in engineering biology, beyond its current application

The call has an indicative total budget of up to £1.5M, subject to the quality of the applications received. The budget represents a UKRI commitment to Engineering Biology and while delivered by UKRI-BBSRC, represents the strategic interests of UKRI-EP SRC, UKRI-NERC, UKRI-MRC and Innovate UK. Applications must be up to **12 months** duration and are not expected to exceed **£125K (£100K 80% FEC)**.

This call will be funded by a streamlined process. There are a reduced number of documents to prepare and a fast-track review process, which allows UKRI to provide opportunities that address imminent pressures facing the community and investments, while facilitating the generation of new and novel ideas.

Please note: we anticipate that the Engineering Biology Breakthrough Awards may receive a high level of interest. Prospective applicants are invited to consider carefully whether their application is within the remit and scope of the call, and should clearly articulate how the proposed project addresses the scope of the call. If in doubt, applicants are strongly advised to contact the office to discuss their proposed project.

### Eligibility

Standard eligibility criteria apply to this call and applicants from eligible UK-based organisations are invited, in accordance with standard UKRI practice. [See more details on eligibility](#). Institutions and researchers normally eligible for UKRI funding include:

- HEIs
- Strategically funded institutes
- Eligible Independent Research Organisations (IROs)

Applications from organisations and/or individuals that are not eligible will be rejected without reference to panel review.

New collaborations and partnerships are encouraged, including across disciplines and sectors. The involvement of private sector partners is welcome; however, businesses cannot be funded through this opportunity. The nature of the collaboration and the role of the industrial partner should be made clear in the case of support.

Partnerships with international research groups, where they add value to the project through access to key facilities or in-kind contributions, are encouraged. Funding will only be provided to UK eligible organisations but international researchers can be named as Project Partners as per the standard UKRI-BBSRC Grants Guide.

Principal Investigators and Co-Investigators must be at lecturer level (or equivalent) or above and meet the standard UKRI eligibility criteria.

Applications are encouraged from investigators that may not consider themselves to have a track record in engineering biology, this includes both early-career researchers who have yet to establish a track record as well as individuals from other disciplines that are looking to explore the potential impact of engineering biology across disciplines. It is anticipated that these investigators will provide evidence as to how their current expertise will bring a new dimension to engineering biology and where appropriate, how these individuals will work with others to ensure the appropriate expertise is sought to ensure the success of the application.

Development of exemplars in engineering biology beyond current known applications are welcomed and, in addition to supporting individuals lacking track records in engineering biology, we also encourage people who are established in the field to explore new breakthrough ideas and also new collaborations, bringing in other disciplines to explore novel aspects and catalyse innovative ideas.

Early career researchers are welcome to apply. Please see the associated Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), to understand the implications this may have on any new investigator or equivalent status for future applications.

For this opportunity specifically, an individual may apply only once as a Principal Investigator and may appear as a Co-Investigator on up to two further applications. In addition, there is a limit of two Co-Investigators per application and it must be clear from the application what contribution these Co-Investigators will make to the success of the application.

For any queries about eligibility, please contact [eligibility@bbsrc.ukri.org](mailto:eligibility@bbsrc.ukri.org) before submitting your application.

## How to apply

Please note that that this section has been updated on 14 July.

Please consult the detailed guidance below on how to apply for full details of the attachments required. You must apply using the [Joint Electronic Submission system \(Je-S\)](#) **before 16:00 on 02 September 2021**. Please note that the only be able to submit you application via Je-S from 12 July 2021 onwards.

When applying select:

- council: BBSRC
- document type: standard proposal
- scheme: Rapid Response
- call/type/mode: RAPID RESPONSE

Please ensure that the Title of Project is prefixed '21ENGBIO', failure to do so may result in your applicant not being accepted.

See the [Je-S handbook](#) for advice on completing applications to BBSRC.

Please read the full [BBSRC guidance on research grants \(PDF, 375KB\)](#) before applying.

Your host organisation's administration is required to complete the submission process. Applicants should allow sufficient time for your organisation's submission process between submitting your proposal to them and the closing date.

**UKRI partners must receive your full proposal application by 16:00 on 02 September 2021.** Late applications will not be accepted.

As well as the Je-S application form, the following documents must be submitted.

You should attach your documents as PDFs to avoid errors. They should be completed in single-spaced Arial 11 font or similar-sized sans serif typeface.

- Case for Support – Up to four A4 sides
- Justification of Resources – Up to one A4 side
- Capability to Deliver – Up to one A4 side
- Proposal cover letter
- Diagrammatic Workplan - Up to one A4 side

While not mandatory, applicants may also submit the following 'Other Documents'.

- Host Institution letter of support
- Project partner letter(s) of support

Each document must be provided in PDF format, using the following naming convention:

"21EngBio: <Document Name> – <PI Name>"

For example - "**21EngBio: Case for Support – Joe Bloggs**"

Applications that do not contain PDF attachments will not be accepted.

We advise applicants to read the [UKRI-BBSRC Grants Guide](#) and the [UKRI grant terms and conditions](#) before completing their application and to consult all call guidance and FAQs for detailed guidance specific for this call.

## General information

- Standard guidelines for research grant applications apply, as described in the [UKRI-BBSRC grants guide](#).
- Standard font (size: 11 point - we recommend the use of Arial, Helvetica or Verdana typeface) and margin sizes (not less than 2 cm) must be used for all forms (excluding text on diagrams and the use of mathematical symbols). A minimum of single line spacing and standard character spacing must be used. **Applications that do not adhere to these guidelines may be withdrawn from consideration.**
- We require that all documents submitted via Je-S are converted to PDF prior to submission. Applications that do not contain PDF attachments will not be accepted.
- The UKRI-BBSRC's New Investigator, Industrial Partnership Award and LINK uplift schemes do not apply to this call for proposals. First time Principal Investigators (PIs) should note that, if successful, being the PI on this grant may impact on your eligibility for such New Investigator or equivalent schemes across UKRI. Further information can be found in the FAQ document.
- PhD students should not be included on applications to this Breakthrough Ideas 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. If required, expert advice from sub-group of the panel will be sought regarding fit to scope, noting that this will not be an assessment of the quality of the proposal.**

**The Engineering Biology Breakthrough Ideas call has an indicative budget as detailed in the call information. We encourage research organisations to consider the scope and eligibility of potential applications to the call, and prioritise appropriately, prior to submission. We do not seek to implement an institutional cap for proposals but will take such measures if required to moderate demand to a manageable level.**

**Additionally, subject to the demand and volume of applications received across the three themes, the office reserves the right to conduct portfolio management to ensure a balance of projects are funded through this opportunity.**

## Application procedure

### Required documents

We are committed to improving the way we support the very best people, ideas and projects through strengthening best practice, identifying innovative approaches and being responsive to new opportunities and changes in the landscape. We want to ensure UKRI makes the best possible investment decisions and free-up those we invest in to focus on their work of creating new knowledge and delivering social, cultural, and economic benefits.

Therefore, this call will be funded by a streamlined application process to focus on the high-risk and novel breakthrough ideas. There are a reduced number of documents to prepare

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and a fast-track peer review process will operate to enable researchers to respond rapidly to emerging economic and societal challenges and opportunities.

The **only** documents required for application are:

Document	Max. page length (A4)	Guidance
Case for support	4 pages	<a href="#">See below.</a>
Capability to Deliver	1 page	<a href="#">See below</a> and the application download 'Capability to Deliver Guidance'.
Justification of Resources	1 page	All resources requested (directly incurred, directly allocated, staff costs, PI and Co-I time) must be fully justified. Please list values requested alongside the justification.  Items that would ordinarily be found in a department, for example non-specialist computers, should include justification both for why they are required for the project and why they cannot be provided from the research organisation's own resources (including funding from indirect costs from grants).
Diagrammatic Workplan	1 page	A diagrammatic workplan for the proposed project, typically in the form of a Gantt chart, outlining the key steps to be taken and milestones to be reached to realise the project outcomes.
Proposal Cover Letter	None	Applicant's Declaration of Interests must be included in the Proposal Cover Letter – please see the guidance provided at <a href="https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/UKRI-261120-Declaration-of-Interests-for-applicants-v2.pdf">https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/UKRI-261120-Declaration-of-Interests-for-applicants-v2.pdf</a>

### **Case for Support (maximum of 4 sides of A4)**

The Case for Support should be a self-contained description of the proposed work with relevant background, and should not depend on additional information. Applicants must not include URLs to web resources in order to extend their Case for Support. Panel members will base their assessment only on the written information contained within the form. UKRI-BBSRC reserves the right to withdraw proposals that contain links to additional information extending the Case for Support.

It should include the following:

- The project title at the top of the document.

- Descriptions of the work proposed in the application, including the proposed project, approaches and methods.
- Clear articulation of how the proposed project addresses the scope of the call.
- Descriptions as to how this will seed the development of novel and high-risk ideas in engineering biology
- Where appropriate, a description as to how engagement with new research communities will help develop exemplars of opportunities in engineering biology, beyond its current application
- A statement on responsible research and innovation in the context of the proposed idea

If your study involves the use of animals, please refer to section 4.13 – 4.39 of the grants guide for information on how this should be incorporated into your proposal.

The Case for Support should **not** include a track record as this information will be captured in the Capability to Deliver document (see below).

References should be included in the page limit and appear in a list at the end of the Case for Support and be linked to relevant text. We strongly encourage references to be given as DOIs to allow additional space for the scientific case. Within the list of references, URL links to relevant publications or online resources are permissible.

### ***Capability to Deliver (maximum of 1 side of A4)***

This should be a narrative explaining the applicants' relevant experience and expertise to demonstrate their eligibility and ability to successfully deliver the proposal. Where a lead applicant lacks a track record in engineering biology, this section should demonstrate how their expertise in an outside discipline offers value in the context of their proposal, and this section should demonstrate the applicants' skills and experience.

All teams should describe the contributions of each individual and the role they will play in delivering the breakthrough idea. Additionally, the current position of each PI and Co-I on the grant should be stated indicating how they meet eligibility criteria as outlined within the [UKRI-BBSRC Grants Guide](#).

Further detailed guidance is provided in the application download 'Capability to Deliver Guidance'.

### ***Other Information***

A cover letter is required for this call. Please include details if you have any conflicts of interest to declare as outlined in [UKRI Guidance on Declarations of Interest](#). Additionally, please include details regarding conflicts for members of the community who may be asked to sit on the review panel.

Although project partners are not required for this call, you should attach Letters of Support for each partner included in the application, where appropriate.

Equipment quotations and facility access forms should only be included where they are necessary as indicated in the [UKRI-BBSRC grants guide](#).

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**UKRI-BBSRC reserves the right to reject applications that do not include the required attachments or include attachments not specified in this guidance.**

## Post award

- UKRI-BBSRC will decide the final funding value of each grant.
- A sample of successful proposals may be audited.
- Grants will be awarded under specific Terms and Conditions.

## Contact

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

For call-specific queries, please contact: [engbio@bbsrc.ukri.org](mailto:engbio@bbsrc.ukri.org)