



UK Plant & Crop Phenotyping Infrastructure

UKRI Infrastructure Fund Scoping Activity

“Integrating state-of-the-art national facilities in plant and crop phenotyping and connecting the UK community to address global food security.”

Opportunity guidance

Application deadline

31 October 2022, 16:00 GMT

Summary

The UK Plant & Crop Phenotyping Infrastructure (working title of “UKPCPI”) was submitted to the 2021 UKRI Infrastructure Fund as a preliminary activity for which BBSRC was awarded £2.4M to conduct a scoping activity ahead of preparations for a future, full scale national plant and crop phenotyping infrastructure.

This opportunity invites colleagues from across the UK plant and crop phenotyping community to submit a collaborative, community consortium application to deliver the UKPCPI scoping activity.

This document highlights further information to assist applicants in the preparation of the application.

Checklist

Applicants should read all the opportunity guidance specifically noting the UKPCPI pre-submission checklist carefully and ensure their submission is compliant with the requirements of the opportunity.

Scope of the UKPCPI infrastructure project scoping activity

- Assess the feasibility of a mechanism for national plant and crop phenotyping facility access (the trial scheme should be based on the successful European Plant Phenotyping Network (EPPN) Transnational Access model, or similar).
- Pilot proof-of-concept digital infrastructure to address current phenotyping data management and analysis limitations, thus enabling [FAIR data](#) access to collaborators.
- Coordinate the UK plant and crop phenotyping community and prepare for a UK [EMPHASIS](#) node as identified in the 'UK's research and innovation infrastructure: opportunities to grow our capability' report.
- Demonstrate an increase in novel, multidisciplinary approaches to phenotyping and associated advanced technology development by broadening the efforts of the UKRI funded Technology Touching Life project [PhenomUK](#).
- Increased community engagement with industry to exploit the potential to contribute to the bioeconomy, through the development, commercialisation, and industrial uptake of new knowledge, methods, and technology.

Documentation

- The application must be submitted as a single community consortium bid. This applies even if it involves two or more collaborating organisations, joint applications are not permitted. All co-investigators should be listed on a single "small grants proforma".
- A list of all required documents is provided in paragraph 8.

Technician Commitment and technicians

- Building on the [Technician Commitment UKRI Action Plan](#), BBSRC especially encourages inclusion of research technical professionals as either principal investigators or co-investigators.
- All delivery partners (co-investigators) must meet the eligibility criteria outlined in the [eligibility section of our website](#). Please contact the [BBSRC infrastructure](#) team directly to confirm eligibility **ahead of proposal submission**.

General information

1. The indicative budget for the UKPCPI project is £2.4 million.
2. The UKPCPI initiative will fund a collaborative, community consortium to deliver an infrastructure scoping activity ahead of preparations for a future, full scale national plant and crop phenotyping infrastructure. For further detail on the scoping activity or the application process please contact the [BBSRC infrastructure](#) team directly.

Financial information

3. Details of eligible and ineligible costs are provided below. All costs must be fully described and justified in the Justification of Resources (see Justification of Resources and the Cost summary table).

Eligible costs

4. Any expenditure that is **directly** related to the establishment of the UKPCPI can be claimed. This includes e.g., equipment/ hardware, software, directly incurred and/or directly allocated staff costs.

You must contact us prior to submission if you intend to apply for these costs.

Financial contributions from the institution and from external sources

5. Contributions from the host institution(s) and/or other external sources are welcome but are not mandatory. Contributions from external sources can be in kind and/or financial.
6. Any financial and/or in-kind contributions must be secured at the time of application. For each contribution a **letter of support from the contributing party should be attached to the application**, detailing the type of support to be provided.

Application procedure

7. The application must be submitted as a single community consortium bid. This applies even if it involves two or more collaborating organisations, joint applications are not permitted. Awards will be made to the submitting research organisation, which will be responsible for the legal and financial administration of the project.

Required documents

8. In addition to the completed Je-S pro-forma, the application should include the following attachments:

Attachment	Max. word/ page count	Guidance
Application Cover Letter (mandatory)	None	Applicants Declaration of Interests will need to be added to the Application Cover Letter.
Small Grants Proforma (mandatory)	See proforma	As this application is not submitted via Je-S applicants will need to complete the Small Grants Proforma manually
UKPCPI Proforma		
Case for support (mandatory)	5000	See guidance below
Justification of resources (mandatory)	1000	Applicants should also consider the information provided for completing this section on the Je-S System Help pages (see -Standard Proposals> Case for Support and Attachments).
Data management plan (mandatory)	500	Applicants should explain how data from the UKPCPI pilot will be captured, managed, and made available. The data management plan should complement the Case for Support, addressing the challenges involved in data capture and maintenance and detailing how the necessary resource and skills to support data management will be made available.
Table of milestones and deliverables	None	Applicants should detail project milestones and deliverables which progress from the pilot will be measured against.
Diagrammatic work plan (mandatory)	1 page	A diagrammatic chart outlining steps to be taken to realise the pilot UKPCPI aims and objectives. This should include milestones and deliverables
Applicant CVs (mandatory)	See R4RI guidance	Resume for Research and Innovation is mandatory. Required for all named applicants and named research and research technical professional staff only. All CVs should be collated and provided as a single PDF.
Letters of support for institutional support and project partners (mandatory)	None	A letter of support is required from the institution and each external project partner providing a contribution, this includes financial and/or in-kind. This must clearly state the contribution value, any conditions, and their expectations from the award. Conditions and expectations cannot be contrary to UKRI grants Terms and Conditions.



		<p>All letters should be on headed paper, dated within six months of the date of submission of the application and have the signature of the named contact in the partnering organisation.</p> <p>All letters of support should be collated into a single PDF before uploading.</p>
Equipment quotations (optional)	None	<p>If possible three quotations should be provided per equipment request.</p>
Additional letters of support (optional)		<p>Letters from scientific and other collaborators may also be attached. For example, this would include expressions of interest from the wider user community.</p> <p>All letters of support should be collated into a single PDF before uploading.</p>
Business cases (blank document)	1 page	<p>Items over the OJEU threshold (£138,000 including VAT) will not need an additional business case. Applicants will need to upload a blank document to satisfy the Je-S validation requirement.</p>

Case for Support

Applicants should read all the opportunity guidance and the UKPCPI pre-submission checklist carefully and ensure their submissions are compliant with the requirements of the opportunity.

The aims and objectives of the pilot and how it will be delivered (including feasibility)

This should include a description of the UKPCPI pilot workplan with sufficient detail to allow the Panel to assess the likely outcomes and delivery of the project.

Consideration should be given to any ethical and societal issues relating to UKPCPI scoping activities and future development. Reference relevant UKRI (or other) strategies where appropriate, including but not limited to:

- [The UK's research and innovation infrastructure: opportunities to grow our capability](#)
- [BBSRC strategic delivery plan 2022 to 2025](#)
- [BBSRC Forward look for bioscience](#)
- [Review of Data-intensive Bioscience](#)
- [UK Plant Science Research Strategy](#)

Potential to deliver

Amongst the consortium you must show evidence of:

- the capacity to deliver and/coordinate excellent research, and where possible, experience directly relevant to this opportunity. For example, a track record in managing facilities or national networks is strongly encouraged
- a leadership role in international research programmes focused on plant and crop phenotyping infrastructure and large-scale community experiments
- experience of implementation of digital infrastructure (or information systems)
- in-depth knowledge and understanding of challenges facing modern plant and crop phenotyping and complementary network or infrastructure activities, both nationally and internationally

Institutional environment

Including the following aspects:

- Summary of applicant institutional support/commitment to plant and crop phenotyping, including details of future plans/upcoming investments
- Summary of applicant capabilities, including details of potential facilities and technical support that may be accessed as part of the scoping activity



- Plans for how UKPCPI will contribute to promoting environmental suitability with specific reference the priority areas and objectives set out in the [UKRI Environmental Sustainability Strategy](#).

Training provision (or plans for) including support for research technical professionals and early career researchers

The professional development of technical staff and early career researchers should be considered, including:

- Appropriate plans to ensure support and career development for staff involved in managing and supporting facilities/equipment
- How to increase early career researchers access to facilities and equipment, a broad spectrum of training (both academic and industry).

Applicants should detail how:

- Researcher technical professional roles will support the UKPCPI development and detail how these roles will be supported in their careers by a future full infrastructure.
- UKPCPI will support early career researchers looking to establish or transition to independence and in developing their own research ideas.
- To increase early career researcher engagement through UKPCPI development, specifically and collaborative opportunities.

Please refer to BBSRC's statement on [technicians and technology and skills specialists](#), and [UKRI Technician commitment action plan](#).

Benefit to a wider user community

Describe how the UKPCPI pilot will benefit a broader UK user community and how this will be delivered. How the project will link with other relevant industry/national/international activities.

Anticipated outputs and UKPCPI future planning

Describe the UKPCPI scoping activity outputs and how they will inform the planning and development of future UKPCPI activities, specifically for the planning of a full-scale national infrastructure for plant and crop phenotyping.

Key risks and dependencies

Describe the key risks and dependencies for the UKPCPI scoping activity.



Post award

9. BBSRC will decide the final funding value of the grant. This decision is final.
10. Following the application assessment, applicants must seek value for money in their choice of equipment, through competitive tender where appropriate. Applicants whose external support takes the form of a supplier's discount are reminded that there may be a procurement risk in seeking discounts from a specific supplier prior to a full tendering process. Where applicable, they are advised to discuss the management of any such risk with their institution procurement staff before submitting the bid.
11. There can be **no purchase of equipment prior to a grant being formally announced and the offer letter being received**, even if this is at the applicant's own financial risk. This will result in withdrawal of the grant. Expenditure may be incurred prior to the start of the grant and be subsequently charged to the grant if it does not precede the date of the offer letter.
12. Managing VAT exceptions on equipment is the responsibility of the Research Organisation(s).
13. Applicants and institutions are reminded that it is their responsibility to comply with all relevant national and EU legislation, and the institution's own financial policy and procedures regarding the procurement of equipment. Accepted procurement best practice in the higher education sector must be observed. For all equipment and services where the contract value is greater than £25,000, professionally qualified procurement staff must be consulted before the procurement process begins and applicants are advised to consult with their local purchasing office.
14. Once awarded the UKPCPI project may be audited.

Useful links

See our full [terms and conditions](#) on the UKRI website.

See our [grants guide](#) for further information.

Contact information

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

For opportunity-specific queries please email: infrastructure@bbsrc.ukri.org