

BBSRC Mid-Range Equipment Funding ALERT 2022

Opportunity guidance

Application deadline

15 December 2022, 16:00 GMT

Summary

1. The ALERT 2022 opportunity will fund mid-range equipment at a value between £200,000 and £1.5 million (inc. VAT) to enhance the capability of the UK research base in areas of science in BBSRC's remit.
2. BBSRC recognises that new technologies, tools and approaches, often spanning several disciplines, are revolutionising biology. They are providing unprecedented opportunities to:
 - Advance understanding of the complex, dynamic processes that govern life
 - Apply that knowledge for the benefit of society and the economy
3. To support this approach, this funding opportunity, like previous opportunities of this nature, encourages you to apply for:
 - Equipment that is widely used and underpins capability across all scientific areas within BBSRC remit (relevance to the priority areas in [BBSRC's delivery plan](#) is particularly encouraged)
 - The use of emerging advanced research technology or utilisation of equipment in new ways of working, specifically “lab-to-field” equipment which enables the translation (or applied use) of laboratory scale experiments to real-world settings or environments
 - Equipment that promotes collaboration and increased access to users within industry, public sector, and other institutes, for example equipment-sharing and access to equipment

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

Checklist

4. Applicants should read all the opportunity guidance and the separate ALERT 2022 pre-submission checklist carefully and ensure their submissions are compliant with the requirements of the opportunity. Failure to comply with the guidance will result in the application being rejected without review.

Scope

5. The majority of the user base for the equipment must be undertaking research in areas within BBSRC remit and this should be clearly evidenced in the Case for Support.
6. If the expected user base of the equipment significantly spans areas outside BBSRC remit, you are required to demonstrate that upfront financial support has been secured in a proportionate way. In such cases, you must contact BBSRC prior to submission.
7. The application must be for equipment and must **NOT** be a technology development or software development project.
8. The application must not request more than one piece of equipment **UNLESS** the applications constitute a single pipeline or platform (as defined below).
 - a pipeline: an end-to-end experimental process made up of several components that may require assembly
 - a platform: a single piece of experimental equipment that may be constituted from multiple parts
9. The application must not exceed 12 months in duration and the grant must start by **1 August 2023** at the latest. No slippage will be allowed to this date, and grant extensions will not be allowed under any circumstances.
10. The application must present clear evidence that the equipment would have appropriate and commensurate professional/technical support in the host institution and plans for the need for training and support of users.
11. The application must present a case for multi-user and multi-project use of the equipment.

Finance

12. Only costs under the 'Directly Incurred Equipment' heading are permitted. The application must not request costs for staff or other ineligible costs.
13. The value of requested equipment must be **between £200,000 and £1.5 million (inc. VAT)**. This value refers to the equipment costs **prior to the application of any discounts, institutional or partner contributions**, and does not include other eligible one-off costs such as initial service/maintenance contracts.



14. The funding requested on the Je-S application form (under the 'Directly Incurred Equipment' heading) should be the costs being sought from BBSRC, net of any discounts and contributions from elsewhere (value in Column F of the Justification of Resources template).
15. Costs should be requested at 100% full economic cost.
16. The values in the Justification of Resources must match the quotes provided.
17. The application should include at least three recent quotes (i.e., dated in the last six months at the time of the opportunity closing date) for the equipment, or reasons not to include three quotes are clearly stated in the Cover Letter. All quotes must be provided in GBP. When quotes are not provided in GBP the conversion rate used at the time of submission must be clearly stated in the Justification of Resources.
18. Details of funding offered, in-kind support, and any other collaborative activities to be conducted in support of the research, are provided where applicable.

Documentation

19. The application must be submitted as a single Je-S form. This applies even if it involves two or more collaborating organisations. Joint applications are not permitted. A list of all required documents is provided below.

Technician Commitment and research technical professionals as Investigators

20. Building on the [Technician Commitment UKRI Action Plan](#), BBSRC especially encourages applications from [research technical professionals](#) (RTPs) as either principal investigators or co-investigators.
21. All principal investigators and co-investigators must meet the eligibility criteria. [Check if you are eligible for funding](#)



General information

23. The indicative capital budget for the ALERT 2022 is approximately £20 million.
24. The ALERT 2022 opportunity will fund mid-range equipment at a value between £200,000 and £1.5 million (inc. VAT) to enhance the capability of the UK research base in areas of science in BBSRC's remit. For further detail please also refer to the opportunity text and other associated opportunity documents.

Financial information

25. 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

26. The ALERT 2022 opportunity will **ONLY** allow costs to be requested under the 'Directly Incurred Equipment' heading.
27. Costs such as initial installation or service maintenance contracts **are eligible** if they are one-off costs and part of the manufacturer's offer. Service maintenance contract costs should be part of the manufacturer's offer and are expected to be included in the equipment quotation.
28. Refurbishment or installation costs **may be eligible** under the scheme providing these are an **absolute requirement** for the proper functioning of the equipment (e.g., a ventilation system or cold room). These costs must be itemised in the application and fully justified.

You must contact us prior to submission if you intend to apply for refurbishment or installation costs.

Ineligible costs

29. Costs to undertake research or the development of new technologies or software packages.
30. Other maintenance costs (with the exception of costs referred to above).
31. Support for running costs for usage of the equipment such as staff, consumables, and longer-term estate charges. They should be provided as host institution contribution(s) or sought on a project basis through research grant applications.
32. Staff costs – commitments to staff posts for the running and maintenance of the equipment beyond the lifetime of the grant, as well as for the training of users (where applicable), should be provided in the form of host institution contribution(s).
33. Depreciation costs.

34. Estate and indirect costs.
35. Requests for multiple items of equipment that could be **funded individually or in clusters** on research project grants.
36. Requests for funding for equipment that is scheduled for market release **AFTER** the opportunity close date.

Financial contributions from the institution and from external sources

37. Contributions from the host institution(s) and/or other external sources are welcome but are 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 BBSRC is unable to support them through this opportunity. Contributions from external sources can be in kind (such as commitments to staff posts for the running and maintenance of the equipment, or the training of users) and/or financial (such as partial financing of the equipment).
38. 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. Where contributions are coming from existing awards from other funder(s), a statement from the funder agreeing to the use of funds in this way must be provided. Applications that are dependent on the outcome of requests to other funders to secure the required funding will be rejected.

VAT Exemption

39. In cases where the equipment is likely to be zero rated, BBSRC does not advise on whether VAT should or should not be included in any quotes provided.
40. If the research organisation/department are confident that they meet HMRC criteria for exemption, then they can submit without VAT. In such cases, if the value is pushed just below the minimum ALERT threshold cost because VAT has been excluded then this will be accepted.

Application procedure

41. Applications may involve a single institution or two or more acting in collaboration. However, **applications involving two or more collaborating organisations must be submitted as one using a single Je-S form**. Awards will be made to the submitting research organisation, which will subsequently own the equipment. Applications that involve investigators from different institutions that are not submitted on a single form **will be rejected**.
42. **As an individual you can only lead on one submitted application**. As principal investigator (PI) 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 PI. 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 (e.g., two applications involving the same group of investigators but different lead PIs) will be rejected.

43. An institution may submit more than one application but multiple applications from an institution for similar equipment **are strongly discouraged**. Applicants are advised to consult within their institution to identify mid-range equipment that is of strategic interest across departments, as applications are expected to evidence the wider context of the institutional environment.

Required documents

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

Attachment	Max. A4 page length	Guidance
Application Cover Letter (mandatory)	None	Applicants Declaration of Interests will need to be added to the Application Cover Letter. If three quotes cannot be provided applicants should give clear reasons in the Application Cover Letter.
Case for support (mandatory)	8 pages	See guidance below
Justification of resources (mandatory)	2 pages	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) Failure to address all aspects in full may result in the application being rejected.
Data management plan (mandatory)	1 page	Applicants should explain how data from the new instrument 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.
Diagrammatic work plan (mandatory)	1 page	A diagrammatic chart outlining steps to be taken to realise the acquisition/ installation of the equipment, as well as any steps that need to be taken to train users and/ or staff.

<p>Applicant CVs (mandatory)</p>	<p>total of three pages</p>	<p>Required for all named applicant researchers and research technical professionals. BBSRC encourages applicants use the resume for researchers format.</p> <p>All applicant experience should be collated and uploaded as a single PDF.</p>
<p>Letters of support for institutional support and project partners (mandatory)</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>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> <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>
<p>Equipment quotations (see guidance)</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>Three quotations should be provided. If it is not possible to obtain three quotations, applicants must explain why in the Application Cover Letter and will need to upload blank documents to satisfy the Je-S validation requirement.</p>
<p>Additional letters of support (optional)</p>		<p>A maximum of 5 additional relevant 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>
<p>Business cases (blank document)</p>	<p>1 page</p>	<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

45. Applicants should read all the opportunity guidance and the separate ALERT 2022 pre-submission checklist carefully and ensure their submissions are compliant with the requirements of the opportunity. Failure to comply with the guidance will result in the application being rejected without review.

Part 1 – Equipment sustainability and institutional environment

Case for support for proposed equipment

Briefly describe the rationale for the selection of equipment and the research benefits that will be gained from it.

Potential to deliver

Evidence of the capacity to deliver excellent research and where possible experience directly relevant to this opportunity, for example a track record in managing facilities. Where applicants do not have prior experience, they should be able to clearly demonstrate their potential relevant to these points.

Institutional environment

Including the following aspects:

- Summary of existing facilities in the institution(s), including details of related/complementary equipment (existing or where confirmation of purchase is provided) and technical support.
- Summary of existing facilities elsewhere, including reasons why they cannot be utilised and identification of similar instruments overseas or in industry with which collaborations might be made.
- Supporting environment, including housing, laboratory space, and technical support to be made available in support of the equipment.
- Clear and specific plans for maintenance and long-term support of the equipment.

Support for research technical professionals

Arrangements for professional development of technical staff, including appropriate plans to ensure support and career development for staff involved in managing and supporting the equipment. Applicants should detail how staff roles will support the equipment and detail how these staff members will be supported in their careers.

Please refer to the [UKRI statement on technicians and technology and skills specialists](#) and [Technician Commitment UKRI Action Plan](#).

Contributions from host institutions, external project partner(s) or funders

Provide details of funding offered, in-kind support, and any other collaborative activities to be conducted in support of the research, where applicable. Host institution contributions can include contribution towards the equipment, services costs, and staff time to run and maintain the equipment.

Part 2 – Proposed research and wider benefits

Detailed plan of research

This should include a description of the projects that will be supported by the equipment, with sufficient experimental detail to allow the Panel to assess the quality of the science, including preliminary results where possible. Consideration should be given to any ethical and societal issues relating to research using the equipment. State any relevance to the [BBSRC Delivery Plan](#) and [BBSRC strategic priorities](#).

Contribution to the physical research infrastructure

Including:

- How the equipment will improve or complement the existing facilities in the department(s) or institution(s).
- How the equipment will contribute to the research infrastructure of the Institution and beyond (short and long term).
- Whether the equipment will be used for multidisciplinary purposes.
- How the equipment can contribute to training activities.
- If computing equipment is requested alongside instrumentation, why there is a need for enhanced data analysis/management with the associated purchase of the data-generating platform.

Environmental sustainability

Please outline how your proposal will contribute to UKRI's ambitions to support the UK's transition to net zero (priority areas and objectives set out in the [UKRI Environmental Sustainability Strategy](#)). This can include aspects such as energy efficiency of the equipment, reduced consumable usage, provision of more environmentally friendly housing or use of green energy. This may also include measures such as strategies to mitigate the emissions of high-impact equipment through management of the energy consumption or reducing the impact in other areas such as through remote access or use of consumables. Where the manufacture of the equipment has a high environmental impact you should consider sharing between departments and organisations and ensure that the machine is used at its full practical capacity. You can also use this section to outline how the equipment will tie into the broader environmental strategy of your research organisation. Please note that environmental sustainability will be one of the assessment criteria and applicants must show that they have provided due



consideration to a move towards lower impact solutions and that the choice of equipment and the proposed management plans will aim to minimize the environmental impact of the equipment.

Benefit to a wider user community

Describe how the equipment will benefit a broader UK user community and how this will be delivered, including how any access by external collaborators (including industry), will be managed.



Post award

46. BBSRC will decide the final funding value of each grant. This decision is final.
47. Following the decision, successful 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.
48. 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, provided that it does not precede the date of the offer letter.
49. Managing VAT exceptions on equipment is the responsibility of the Research Organisation.
50. 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.
51. A sample of successful applications may be audited.

Useful links

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

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

[Je-S Login](#) | [Je-S Helpdesk](#)

Contact information

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

- For opportunity-specific queries please email: bbsrcalert@bbsrc.ac.uk
- For Je-S system queries please email: jeshelp@je-s.ukri.org