25BBR Bioinformatics and Biological Resources Fund Frequently Asked Questions

Eligibility, BBSRC Remit, The Funding Service (TFS)

1. **Am I eligible to apply?**

   Standard BBSRC eligibility rules apply to 25BBR. Applicants (Project leads, co-leads or Research co-leads) must hold academic appointments at eligible HEIs or research institutes; industry/companies are not eligible to be applicants but can be involved in proposals as [project partners](). BBSRC does not fund the industrial collaborating partner. Further information can be found here: [Check if you're eligible for funding – BBSRC – UKRI]()

2. **I am a Research Technical Professional / Research Software Engineer. Am I eligible to apply?**

   Building on the Technician Commitment UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Action Plan and the UKRI people and teams action plan, we particularly encourage applications from research technical professionals and research software engineers as either project leads or project co-leads. A research technical professional can be listed as a project lead or project co-lead, provided that their level of responsibilities and duties is appropriate to a person with substantial research experience. If you are unsure if you are eligible, contact bbr.fund@bbsrc.ukri.org

3. **Is my organisation eligible to apply, i.e. is this an open funding opportunity?**

   25BBR is open to research spanning across BBSRC remit. Before applying for funding, check the [Eligibility of your organisation](). UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) has introduced new role types for funding opportunities being run on the new UKRI Funding Service. For full details, visit [Eligibility as an individual]().

4. **Is my proposal within the remit of BBSRC?**

   An overview of BBSRC remit, programmes and priorities can be found here: [Remit, programmes and priorities – BBSRC – UKRI]()

   BBSRC will give priority to fundamental science which:

   - addresses important underpinning questions in biology or normal human physiology*, which can advance knowledge and innovation across many sectors, or
   - seeks to develop new tools, technologies and approaches that have broad application across bioscience research, for example data rich and systems biology, or
   - informs / is informed by research into animal or plant health.

   *BBSRC does not fund research where the primary aim is to understand human disease-specific processes, and/or develop associated interventions

   In areas relevant to human health:

MRC will give priority to fundamental science which

- addresses important health questions, or
- is likely to inform research on health or disease, or
- forms part of a multidisciplinary effort / centre of excellence with close links to health research.

[MRC and BBSRC's joint statement on interfaces](#) may be useful for further context.

For advice regarding fit to BBSRC remit / BBR scope specific to your proposal, please contact bbr.fund@bbsrc.ukri.org with a 1-2 page summary of your intended proposal and we will be happy to advise. Please note we aim to respond to queries within 5 working days.

5. **Will this opportunity open again in the future and when?**

BBR has been run on an annual basis, and while we cannot confirm future funding opportunities at this stage please keep an eye on the Funding Finder or get in touch with any project ideas for a future BBR submission you might want to discuss (bbr.fund@bbsrc.ukri.org).

6. **Where are embedded images allowed and in what sections?**

Embedded images are allowed in responses to the following core questions as appropriate.

- Vision
- Approach. A project Gantt chart identifying appropriate deliverables, responsibilities, and time points for each objective, is recommended.
- Management strategy

Please see the relevant TFS form sections for extensive guidance on how to use images in your application (please note that image legends count towards your word limit).

7. **Where are attachments allowed and what sections?**

Attachments are permitted within the following sections:

- Letters of Support (maximum 10) demonstrating community demand (**mandatory** for 25BBR) in the *Community demand* section.
- Project partners Letters of Support (if applicable) in the *project partners* section. These do not count towards the maximum 10 limit for the community demand section.

Please see the relevant TFS form sections for extensive guidance on how to use attachments in your application. Additional attachments beyond what is listed above are not permissible, all the relevant information should be provided in the provided text boxes instead.

8. **What are the word limits for each section?**

Word limits for each section are visible under 'How to Apply' on the [Funding Finder](#).

October 2025

9. What is the 'Resubmission Policy'?

The funding opportunity follows the standard UKRI resubmission policy. Any proposal related to a previously unsuccessful grant application must comply with BBSRC's resubmission policy (see [BBSRC policy on resubmissions and revised submissions](#)). Applicants are strongly advised to contact the office prior to submitting an application if they are concerned that their project may be considered a resubmission. Applications that are deemed to constitute uninvited resubmissions will be rejected prior to assessment.

10. What is the minimum and maximum time length the award should be?

There is no minimum mandated award duration. Awards can have a duration of up to 5 years.

11. Does the opportunity allow for more than one application from one research organisation?

Yes, but organisations need to be prepared to support all submitted applications if they are funded.

12. Can a Project Lead make multiple applications for one opportunity?

Yes, but they need to be able to justify that they have the capacity to support more than one application and that their time commitment overall on UKRI funded grants does not exceed 100% of their time.

13. My proposal involves partners from multiple institutions. Should I submit a single application or joint applications from multiple institutions?

In contrast to Je-S, the new Funding Service currently does not have the functionality for joint applications, so all institutions must be captured in one single application.

The project lead is responsible for completing the application process on the UKRI Funding Service, but we expect all team members and project partners to contribute to the application. Only the lead research organisation can submit an application to UKRI.

14. Can I involve overseas institutions in my application?

Yes. BBSRC welcomes the involvement of international partners in the research that it funds – however, international partners cannot be listed as applicants (Project Leads, Co-Leads, etc.). International partners cannot receive funding through 25BBR as BBSRC is only able to provide funding to eligible research organisations.

Your international partners should be listed in the 'Project Partners' section. The nature of the collaboration and the role of the international partner should be made clear across the 'Vision' and 'Approach' sections.

Further information on eligibility for funding can be found here: [Check if you are eligible for research and innovation funding – UKRI](#)

15. Can I involve industrial partners in my application?

Yes. BBSRC welcomes the involvement of private sector partners in the research that it funds – however, industrial partners cannot be listed as applicants (Project Leads, Co-Leads, etc.). Industrial partners cannot receive funding through BBR, as BBSRC is only able to provide funding to eligible research organisations. Your industrial partners should be listed in the 'Project Partners' section. Industrial partners can be based in the UK or abroad, across the whole size spectrum. The nature of the collaboration and the role of the industrial partner should be made clear across the 'Vision' and 'Approach' sections.

Further information on eligibility for funding can be found here: [Check if you are eligible for research and innovation funding – UKRI](#)

16. Can I lead an application as an industrial partner?

No. Standard BBSRC eligibility rules are that applicants (Project leads, co-leads or Research co-leads) must hold academic appointments at eligible HEIs or research institutes; industry/companies are not eligible to be applicants but can be involved in proposals as project partners. BBSRC does not fund the industrial collaborating partner or any costs associated with the collaborator. Further information on eligibility can be found here: [Check if you are eligible for research and innovation funding – UKRI](#)

17. Will the presence of a project partner increase chances of success?

The panel will assess the overall quality of the application, with project partners considered as part of a holistic assessment. Therefore, project partners should only be included if their involvement is justified as part of the resource offering, not as an attempt to increase chances for funding.

18. Is it necessary to provide the names of the advisory board members in the application, or should we outline the process by which the board will be established?

If your proposed resource already has an established advisory board please provide the names of the members in the 'Management Strategy' section.

We do not expect complete advisory board membership to be in place for new resources at the time of submission. Instead please provide

- the names of people you are considering or have already reached out to where available
- an overview of the type of expertise you expect to appoint

Please note that advisory board membership is expected to be independent from the proposed project.

19. Do you mandate a specific solution in response to the sustainability options question?

No. All applications are expected to evidence consideration for alternative long-term sustainability options beyond BBSRC support, but we do not mandate a specific approach.

BBR Scope

20. I wish to develop a resource with both biological and bioinformatics components, is this allowed?

Yes.

21. Will my proposal be suitable for 25BBR?

The main focus of the proposed resource should be the support of bioscience research, but resources with broader applicability will be considered. Resources with a main focus outside of BBSRC remit will be rejected prior to assessment.

Further information on the MRC-BBSRC remit boundary can be found in our [Joint Statement on MRC-BBSRC Interfaces](#).

Applicants needing further guidance on the suitability of 25BBR proposal are strongly advised to contact the office prior to submission (bbr.fund@bbsrc.ukri.org).

22. What are expectations regarding the user community?

While the intention for BBR projects is to benefit UK researchers, we recognise that internationally leading infrastructures, facilities and resources will also have significant portions of their user base outside of the UK. When scoping your project please consider that resources with a significant impact and demand from within the UK research base fit the scope of the funding opportunity better than projects that serve a broad international community in which the UK only has a relatively small domestic user base.

23. You mentioned placing data in existing repositories is out of scope, would this include data sharing?

Not quite. Your proposed repository sharing data with another repository would be permissible. What is not permissible is to apply for funding solely to deposit data created e.g. by your research project into an existing repository run by others.

24. Does 25BBR support genome sequencing projects?

Projects primarily focussed on performing genome sequencing are not supported by 25BBR. Sequencing may be performed where this is needed in order to establish a particular resource; for example, the sequencing of gene libraries.

25. Is the inclusion of AI as a technology mandatory?

No. While we do see an increase in the application of AI across data resources and welcome the inclusion, it is not mandatory to include AI in your proposed resource.

Funding

26. What funding is available, and do you have a rough estimate per award?

Key information regarding what funding is available can be found on the [Funding Finder](#)

Resources vary significantly in terms of scale and scope, so estimates per award are not informative as to a 'typical' resource. Applicants can apply for up to £2m. BBSRC will fund 80% fEC. The total budget of BBR is £7m.

Success rates can vary, but in previous years we have funded around 6-10 resources each time.

27. Can we include costs for travel / project meetings / networking activities / community outreach?

Yes.

28. Can we include cost for workshops and training?

Yes, where relevant (e.g. in the form of user training). However, training cannot be the sole focus or majority of activity of the application.

29. Can I apply for PhD Studentships?

No, BBSRC funding for PhD students or any other type of student may not be included. BBSRC has distinct mechanisms for funding student training.

30. Is it possible to apply for continuation funding of an existing resource previously funded under BBR?

Requests to support existing resources, which were funded previously through BBR or alternative funding sources, are permitted under this funding opportunity: Please see the funding finder listing for further information.

31. Can funds for equipment purchase be requested?

Yes, equipment purchases are permitted as part of this funding opportunity as long as they are directly relevant to the delivery of the proposed resource. There is no defined upper limit on what proportion of the requested cost falls into a particular category within the overall limit of £2m. Applicants are expected to fully justify the need for any resources that are requested (including equipment).

Further information regarding equipment costs can be found here: [Directly incurred costs – BBSRC – UKRI](#)

Assessment

32. Will I get an uplift as a New Investigator/with an industrial collaborator?

No, these uplifts do not apply in this funding opportunity. These schemes are used in Responsive Mode and can confer an uplift after the ranking of applications. First time Project Leads (PLs) should note that, if successful, being the PL on a grant which includes funding for Postdoctoral Research Assistant (PDRA) staff support costs will subsequently exclude them from being a New Investigator in Responsive Mode.

33. How can I demonstrate community need / demand for my resource?

Letters of support demonstrating community need are **mandatory**, at the time of submission, and proposals submitted without these letters will be rejected prior to assessment. Please see the 'community demand' section under how to apply for further details.

34. Why is there a limit on the number of letters of support demonstrating community demand?

The BBR Fund Panel has frequently commented that it is the content of the letters provided, rather than the sheer number, which demonstrates the value of a proposed resource to the UK bioscience research community. Applicants should submit a representative selection of letters (**no more than 10** as a single PDF) that demonstrate the breadth of the research their resource will enable and comment on the value of the work proposed to the research community.

Letters of support that fail to demonstrate community demand, in particular template letters indicating generic support without identifying a particular usage, are of negligible value for the assessment and should not be submitted. Carefully chosen letters containing relevant evidence of the requirement/ benefit to be gained are of greater value than large numbers of letters.

35. What is the membership of the assessment panel?

Overall assessment will be conducted by a panel of experts covering scientific, managerial, technical and user aspects of resource provision. The 25BBR panel will be published once the assessment is concluded.

36. How long is the assessment process and when will we receive the outcomes of our application?

We aim to hold the assessment panel in March and hope to be able to inform applicants of the outcome by end of May.

Contact

If your question has not been answered by the information given above, please contact BBSRC staff on bbr.fund@bbsrc.ukri.org and we will do our best to answer your question.

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