



Biotechnology and
Biological Sciences
Research Council

2026/27 strategic Longer and Larger (sLoLa)
grants: frontier bioscience

Webinar

30 April 2026, 12:00

Welcome: we will be starting shortly

<https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/2026-to-2027-strategic-longer-and-larger-slola-outlines/>

Welcome and Introductions

- Panellists

 - Research and Innovation Funding Delivery*

 - Sarah Purcell, Portfolio Manager
 - Helen Smith, Portfolio Manager
 - Inbal Ringel, Senior Portfolio Manager

 - Research Strategy and Programmes*

 - Dorothee Kommer, Portfolio Manager
 - Peter Burlinson, Head of Strategy – Rules of Life

- Single point of contact

 - bbsrc.lolagrants@bbsrc.ukri.org

- The recording of this webinar will be made available on Funding Finder page of the funding opportunity.

Technical Notes

- By default, attendees are muted and video is turned off.
- Submit any questions that arise as the webinar progresses via the Q&A function
- The chat function is disabled for this webinar.

Questions

- You can submit questions as the webinar progresses via the Q&A function
- Questions can also be submitted to bbsrc.lolagrants@bbsrc.ukri.org at any time.
- Detailed questions about a specific proposal which are unlikely to be relevant to other attendees should also be sent to the inbox.
- Questions about the UKRI Funding Service system should be emailed directly to support@funding-service.ukri.org

Purpose of the webinar

- Provide an overview of the 2026/27 sLoLa funding opportunity
- Highlight key expectations
- Ensure applications are appropriately targeted

BBSRC Forward Look: The Power of Bioscience

Our vision is to harness the power of bioscience to deliver a healthy, sustainable and resilient future

Our ambition is to deliver three high-level and interconnected impacts

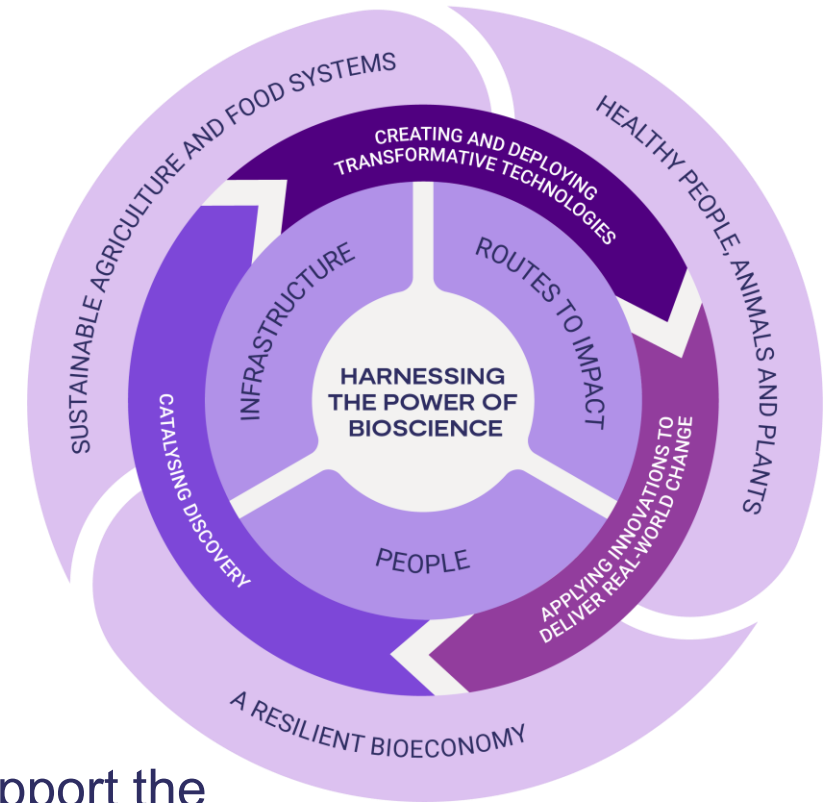
- Healthy people, animals and plants
- Sustainable agriculture and food systems
- A resilient bioeconomy

We will achieve our ambition through

- Catalysing discovery
- Creating and deploying transformative technologies
- Applying innovations to deliver real-world change

Our commitment

- To provide leadership and catalyse collaborative working to support the people, infrastructure and routes to impact that will deliver progress.



What is BBSRC looking for in a sLoLa application?

- Exceptional science at cutting-edge of field
- Addresses the bioscience discovery research scope of the call
- Employs a team science approach
- Requires a longer- and larger-scale research programme to achieve aims
- Strong strategic case for funding – potential to significantly enhance the capability and capacity of UK bioscience

Bioscience discovery research scope

- Potential to lead to major breakthroughs in our fundamental understanding of living systems
- Generates knowledge with broad and long-term significance to bioscience
 - May be no immediate route to identifiable applications
- Likely to require or develop cutting-edge approaches or methods
- Likely multidisciplinary

Team science

- An opportunity to bring together multiple researchers to address a complex challenge
- Your team should be the best team to deliver the proposed programme of work in a national context
 - Typically, involving multiple research organisations or departments
 - Bringing together researchers from range of backgrounds and different career pathways and stages
 - Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) should be considered
- Complementarity and ‘added value’ of each team member should be clear
 - Covering all experimental, analytical, managerial and leadership requirements

Team science leadership

- Project Leads are not required to have led a similar scale research programme previously
- Applicants can adopt distributed leadership and management models to share opportunities and responsibilities across the sLoLa team.
- The sLoLa team (project leads and project co-leads collectively) should demonstrate competency to lead a complex, multi-site project
- Consider opportunities for mentoring and professional development of researchers in their early career stage and technicians in relation to technical, leadership, management and interdisciplinary working.

Longer and larger scale

- The sLoLa mechanism is designed to support integrated programmes of research over a longer timeframe and at a larger scale than a standard grant
- Must demonstrate that the work requires a single larger scale award to be carried out
 - Clear synergy and interdependency between work-packages
 - Plan for integration of outcomes from individual work-packages
 - Project summary diagram in 'Approach' section
- Full justification for every element of research programme

Strategic case

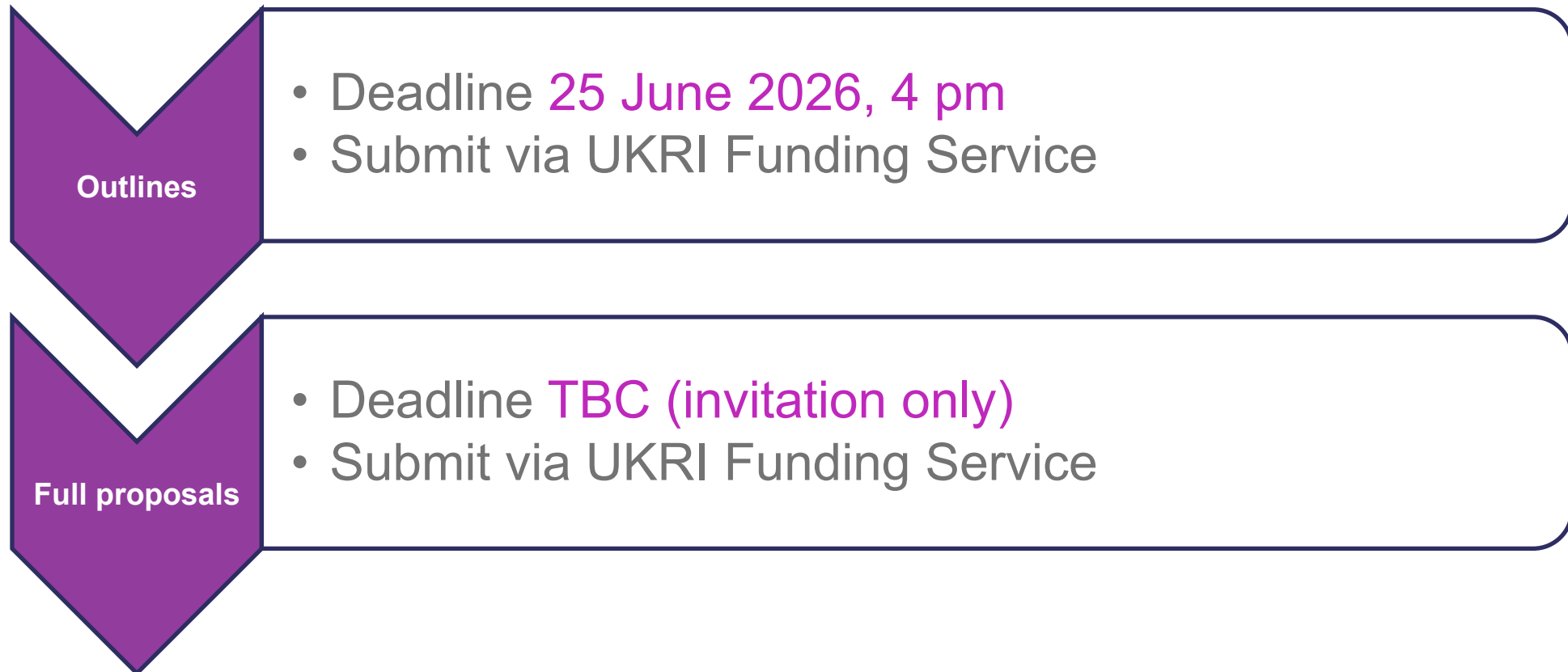
- Research programmes should be distinctive and outline how they will significantly enhance the capacity and capabilities of UK bioscience
 - For example: impact on knowledge, generation of resources, skills development
- Proposals that overlap with existing large-scale investments will be at competitive disadvantage
- Should identify and justify distinctiveness vs any other existing large-scale programmes within the research landscape
- Describes plans for ensuring long-term legacy and uptake of project outputs

The 2026/27 sLoLa call

- Proposals should be >£2M FEC
 - The total budget is to be confirmed. We typically award up to four sLoLa awards per year, subject to the quality of applications received and the available budget
- Application and assessment process is designed to identify and prioritise the most robust proposals of the highest quality at each stage
 - Conduct peer review effectively and efficiently
 - Manage time and effort for applicants
 - Manage reviewer, committee member, and BBSRC office resources
- We are looking for world-leading research programmes

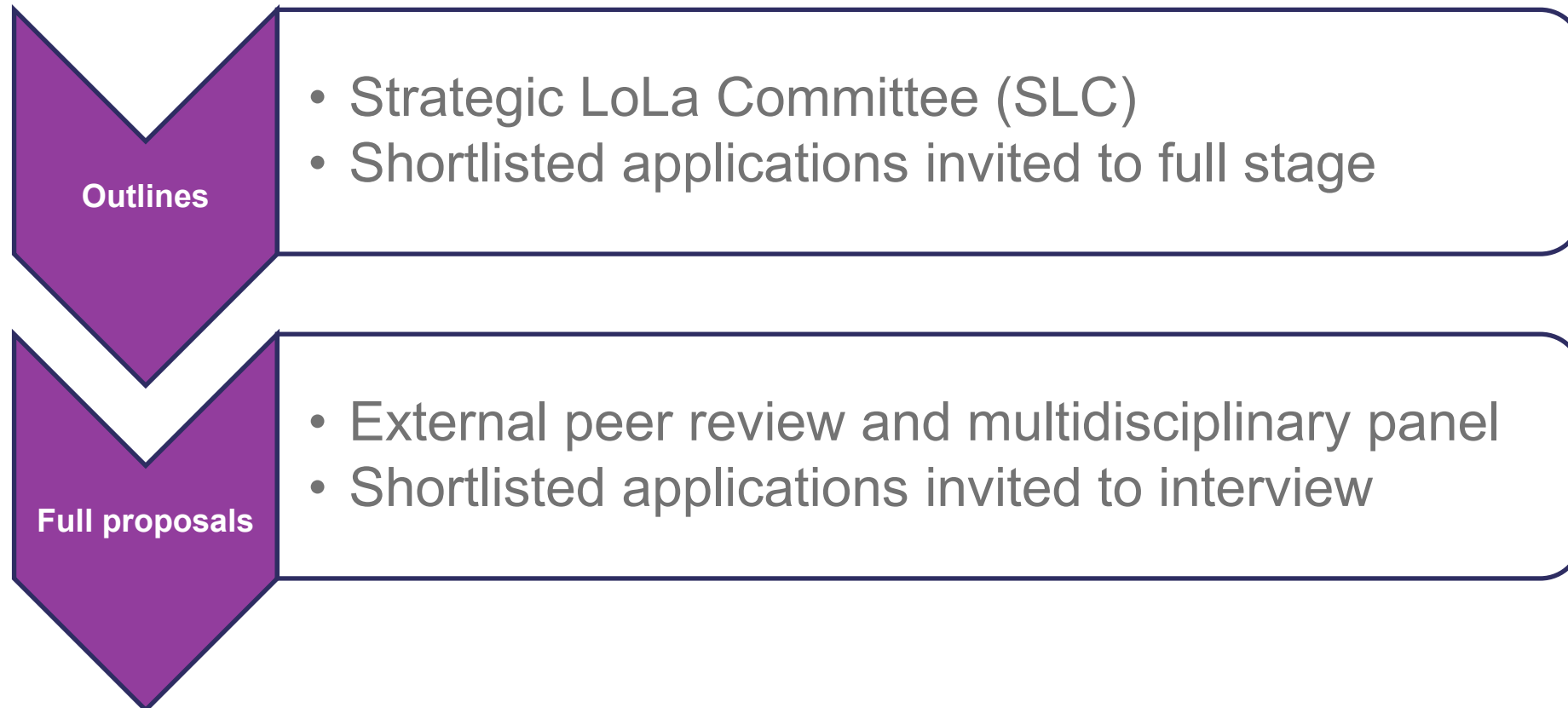
Application process

No mandatory call registration before an Outline submission
Full information is on the call webpage



Assessment process

Details of what happens at each stage are in the call guidance document



Outline stage

- Application sections:
 - Outline Vision
 - Outline Approach
 - Strategic case
 - Outline Applicant and team capability to deliver
- No letters of support, management plans or costs required at this stage
- Will be assessed solely by the Strategic LoLa Committee (no external peer review)
- Feedback will be provided to all applicants regardless of outcome

Deadline: 25 June 2026, 4 pm

Full stage

- More detailed 'Approach' section plus other sections such as:
 - Management strategy
 - Resources
 - Animal use, Ethics, Letters of Support, etc.
- Changes to team from outline allowed (following BBSRC approval).
- Two assessment stages:
 - Full proposal assessed by external peer review and multidisciplinary panel.
 - Potential interviews by SLC for those teams whose projects are recommended by the multidisciplinary panel
- Full stage launch will be supported by a webinar

Assessment criteria

Outline and full stage criteria

- Outline Vision
- Outline Approach
- Strategic case
- Outline Applicant and team capability to deliver

Examples of additional full stage criteria

- Management strategy
- Ethics and responsible research and innovation (RRI)
- Resources and cost justification

Summary

- Read the guidance text on the funding finder page.
- Address all aspects of the assessment criteria and the call scope.
- Ensure you communicate your proposal clearly, for both subject specialists and a more general scientific audience.
- Consider team composition carefully. Collaborative teams need to be able to demonstrate full synergy and capability to work together effectively.
- If in doubt, please contact us for advice: bbsrc.lolagrants@bbsrc.ukri.org

Common questions set 1

Q. Can researchers outside the UK be included in the core team?

A. No. To be eligible as project lead or project co-lead, applicants must meet BBSRC's eligibility criteria and be based at an eligible UK organisation. The "Project co-lead (International)" role is not available for the sLoLa scheme.

For further details about eligibility see: [Organisation eligibility – UKRI and Applicants and co-applicants – BBSRC – UKRI](#)

Q. Can researchers outside the UK be included as project partners?

A. Yes, international researchers can be included as a project partner. Please note that no costs can be claimed on behalf of project partners.

Additionally, international subcontractors are allowed. Please refer to [BBSRC guidance for applicants](#) for further details.

Common questions set 2

Q. As sLoLa projects are focussed on fundamental science, would applications involving stakeholders be at a disadvantage as they might be seen as applied?

A. No, so long as the project clearly outlines how their work will improve our fundamental understanding of living systems.

Q. Can time for an administrative project manager (non-academic) be included on the application?

A. Yes, we encourage the inclusion of grant managers to support the delivery of projects of this size. The time required would vary by the project and team involved, and their inclusion should be justified and subject to peer review.

Common questions set 3

Q. Can applications come from one research organisation? If so, does it have to be multi-departmental?

A. Applications can be submitted by a team from a single research organisation. There is no requirement for the project to be multi-departmental, but sLoLa applications by nature multidisciplinary, so it would be unusual for an application to meet the requirements for an sLoLa if it was from a single department.

Q. Is it possible to include funds for PhD students and postdocs on sLoLa projects.

A. Funds associated with PhD students are not eligible on sLoLa grants. Postdocs can be costed on sLoLa applications as a “Research and innovation associate”, or “Researcher co-lead”.

Common questions set 4

Q. How many applications would you expect to be invited through to the full stage?

A. A maximum of 15 will be invited to submit a full application.

Q. What is the typical length of an sLoLa project

A. The maximum award is 5 years. Most sLoLa projects are 4 or 5 years.

Q. Is geographical spread of participating organisations assessed?

A. No. The team should be the right team to deliver the proposed project.

Common questions set 5

Q. Is there a requirement for institutional matched funding beyond 20%?

A. There is no requirement for matched funding from the institutions hosting the project lead, project co-leads or other staff employed on the application, beyond the standard 20% FEC.

Q. Can equipment be costed on the project?

A. Yes, Equipment below £25,000 (including VAT) will be funded at 80% of the FEC. Equipment over £25,000 (including VAT) will be funded at 80% of the FEC but will require additional justification. You should obtain and retain quotes for equipment over £138,000 (including VAT).

Further information [Directly incurred costs](#)

Common questions set 6

Q. Where can I find the Full Stage application questions?

A. The application questions of the Full Stage for this funding opportunity will be published ahead of the opening of the Full Stage (5 November 2026). We expect the Full stage application questions to be similar to previous years. You can view 2025/26 Full Stage applicant questions on the [Funding Finder](#).

Q. Will there be demand management for this funding opportunity?

A. Demand management is not currently being applied to this funding opportunity. However, should the level of interest exceed what can be managed within the assessment process, UKRI reserves the right to introduce limits on the number of applications that can be submitted. Further details will be clearly communicated where this is the case. UKRI encourages organisations to support applicants in preparing well-planned, high-quality applications that are competitive for funding relative to the funding opportunity.





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Thank you

Please use the Q&A function to ask
any questions

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