BBSRC Sparking Impact Award

Collaborative R&D Awards

Open Call

1. Background

The University has secured a £100k Sparking Impact Award (SIA) from BBSRC. This will fund activities that support the movement of people, the pull of technology and changing the culture surrounding KE; the emphasis being on delivering impact in ways that work. It will provide flexible funding that can be deployed rapidly to seize opportunities as they arise, and support the delivery of the University’s Impact, Innovation and Knowledge Exchange (IIKE) strategy.

1.1. At Sheffield, the SIA will build on the success of schemes trialed under the EPSRC’s Knowledge Transfer Account and will fund the following activities:

- Proof of Concept projects, to enable researchers to develop ideas, by a significant margin, to the point at which they can attract interest from external collaborators and leverage further investment.
- A Collaborative R&D scheme which provides funding for short term commercially focused projects with external partners.
- Industrial Research Sabbaticals to support the two-way flow of staff between the University and external partners.

1.2. The purpose of the Collaborative R&D Award scheme is to provide match funding to support short term commercially focused projects with external partners in order to share risk, demonstrate applicability of research and develop new relationships. Often there is a need to quickly demonstrate the utility of the University’s BBSRC research outputs and know-how to a partner. Many commercially focused projects, particularly in the early phase of a relationship are short in duration, e.g. 5 to 50 man days. Traditionally this type of project has been difficult for the University to resource.

1.3. All Collaborative R&D Awards must have an external partner. External partners could include national and international businesses, public and third sector organisations, or community bodies. However this fund will not support academic-academic collaboration.

1.4. Projects could include a range of activities (or mix of different activities), for example:

- Developing ways to enable potential users to understand the benefits of the ideas/technology
- Buying-in relevant expertise, e.g. relating to market intelligence, understanding the regulatory landscape, establishing early stage freedom to operate
- Short-term movement of academic staff into external organisations to work on a collaborative project
- Application of research into policy-making.
1.5. We are looking to seed new relationships and partnerships with external organisations, although a new partnership is not a requirement for accessing funding. This support is particularly aimed at getting new/early relationships started where:

- The external partner has not worked with UoS before,
- The academic PI is new to working with external partners, or
- The project will create a step-change in the relationship with an existing partner.

1.6. Collaborative R&D Awards can be used to support existing PhD students, staff employed by the University or to recruit new members of staff if necessary to meet the skill requirements of the project, providing this can be achieved in an appropriate timescale for the implementation of the project.

1.7. Projects can be carried out on a full-time or part-time basis, depending on the nature of the work. The PI may be based at the University of Sheffield or seconded to the external partner's premises or a mixture of both.

1.8. Projects may involve one or more researchers. Researchers are expected to get the benefit of working with the external partner on an industry led problem.

1.9. **The maximum SIA contribution to a project will be £20k.** The award can be used as leverage for, or form part of, a longer term project, in which case the external partner would be expected to fund any work beyond the initial funding period. **All projects must start within 2 months of the project approval date.**

1.10. **External partners are required to contribute to the fEC project costs and will be asked to sign a collaboration agreement with the University.** 50% is the desired contribution, although smaller contributions, which may be in-kind, will be considered and may be accepted if the project scores highly against the other assessment criteria. Contributions of less than 50% may be reflected by changes to the terms of the agreement.

1.11. The majority of projects will be undertaken at the end of a researcher's current project. However, they may also be taken part way through a project where there is a clear case for this. In such cases, it is critical to ensure that there will be no impact on the delivery of the researcher’s existing project, and that any impact is appropriately managed between all involved parties.

For special cases involving the full time secondment of staff to the external partner site, the SIA may be able to provide alternative funding for the project through the Industrial Research Sabbatical scheme (see [http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ris/rpe/bbsrc](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ris/rpe/bbsrc) for further information).

2. **Eligibility Criteria**

2.1. Applications for SIA Collaborative R&D Awards must meet the following eligibility criteria:

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<th>Eligibility Criteria</th>
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| Link to BBSRC funded research | - All projects will be exclusively focused on accelerating the delivery of impact from BBSRC funded research.  
- There must be a clear link to the outputs of BBSRC funded research; these outputs can originate from current or previous BBSRC funding.  
- Outputs from the full range of BBSRC-supported research activities are eligible for support (e.g. research originating from studentships funded under the White Rose Consortium’s DTP scheme). |
| Research and Development | - Projects must be research or development not consultancy.  
- Projects must add to or apply existing research. |
This support is particularly aimed at getting new/early relationships started where:
- The external partner has not worked with UoS before
- The academic PI is new to working with external partners or creating a step-change in the relationship with an existing partner.

Projects with external partners outside the UK are eligible, however all partners should have a significant presence in the UK, e.g. manufacturing and/or R&D base, and the activity should be able to deliver benefit to the UK.

Applicants are suitable to lead the project

The PI must:
- Be an academic member of staff employed by the University of Sheffield.
- Have the skills, experience and enthusiasm to lead the project.
- Have the necessary time and/or researcher in post to deliver the project.

Proposal fit

- The project must match the spirit of the call.
- There must be a clear need for this flexible resource – e.g. a project of short duration that would be difficult to resource by other means.

Potential impact

- The project should have the potential to deliver economic, environmental and/or societal benefit to UK organisations or citizens outside academia.

### 3. Assessment Criteria

3.1. Applications will be judged and prioritised against the following assessment criteria:

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| Partnership                  | • Does this collaboration fit within the broad objectives of the University’s IIKE strategy? ([http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.229137!/file/IIKE_Strategy_Statement_October_2012.pdf](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.229137!/file/IIKE_Strategy_Statement_October_2012.pdf))  
  • Is this partner new to the University?  
  • If with an existing partner, does the project make a step change to this relationship?  
  • Is this academic new to external collaboration? |
| Commitment of external partner| • Is there a letter of support showing clear commitment to the project, including a shared understanding of its potential benefits and planned programme of work/deliverables?  
  • Has the partner made a financial or in kind contribution to the project cost? |
| Project plan                  | • Is there a clear project plan with SMART objectives? (SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic & Time-bound)  
  • Are there clear objectives and deliverables?  
  • How will the project be managed? |
| Potential impact              | • Is there a clear understanding of the potential impact that could result from this project?  
  • Are there realistic and appropriate plans in place to deliver and maximise this?  
  • Is there potential for the project to deliver significant benefits, reach a large number of beneficiaries, or both?  
  • Is the impact identified both realistic and likely to be delivered by the activities described? |
| Resources                     | • Are the resources applied for appropriate and justified?  
  • Is there potential to deliver strong impact with these resources? |
### Added value/leverage
- Does this represent good value for money?
- What financial contribution will be made by the external partner?
- Will there be any additional in-kind contribution from the external partner?
- Will this collaboration allow any other funding or in-kind support to be leveraged?

### Follow-on plans
- Is there a realistic plan for the uptake and/or further development of the project outputs (if successful) either with or by the external partner?
- Is there a plan for this collaboration/relationship to continue - in any form - after the duration of the project?

## 4. Eligible Costs
The anticipated resources required to deliver the project and justification for these should be provided. This funding will cover all **direct costs** (directly incurred and directly allocated) associated with the project.

Eligible costs include:
- Researcher time (e.g. PDRA, PhD student).
- The cost of technical or administrative staff that are essential to the project.
- Project-related consumables and equipment access.
- Subcontracted consultancy or other development services.
- Market assessment.
- Other costs, such as travel and subsistence.

### 4.2. The SIA will not fund:
- Patent filing or costs relating to IP rights
- Public Engagement activity
- New research projects

## 5. Application Process
5.1. This is an open call. Applications that meet the eligibility criteria in section 2 will be assessed against the criteria in section 3 by a panel comprising of University of Sheffield Academics and an external advisor. Those accepted by the panel will be awarded on a first come - first served basis until all available funding has been allocated.

Application forms are available on the SIA website: [http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ris/rpe/bbsrc](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ris/rpe/bbsrc)

5.2. Before submitting an application a draft **collaboration agreement** must be sent to the external partner. If the external partner agrees with the collaboration agreement then they should include the following statement in their letter of support:

> “I have received, read and agree with the terms of the standard agreement for the Collaborative Research & Development projects with the University of Sheffield”

Alternatively, if the partner wishes for any amendments to be made to the standard agreement, this can be discussed with the academic and the faculty BDM. Details of any amendments to the agreement and the justification agreed by all parties for such amendments should be included in the letter of support.

All successful applications will have the appropriate contract drawn up prior to account set up.

5.3. Applications should provide the following information:
• Applicants must cost projects using the URMS system (please see eligible costs section above) When costing your project please enter Lucy Martinez as an Investigator at 0%. Select University of Sheffield as the Sponsor, BBSRC as External Collaborator and SIA Collaborative R&D as the scheme.

• A clear description of any University background IP required for the project.

• A plan for the next stages for the collaboration (assuming the project is successful) and the anticipated future funding sources.

• **A signed letter of support from the external partner.** The letter of support must detail any “in kind” contributions that the external partner intends to provide and indicate whether the external partner agrees with the draft collaboration agreement they have been sent.

5.4. All applicants (PIs) must discuss their project with a Business Development Manager (BDM) prior to submission (see list of contacts at the end of Section 6). The BDM will be able to offer advice and guidance relating to eligibility and completion of the application form.

5.5. To submit an application, please email a signed electronic copy of the completed application form to iaa@sheffield.ac.uk or post to Lucy Martinez, 3rd Floor, New Spring House, S10 2GW.

5.6. Where projects meet the eligibility criteria, the BDM will then work with you and the partner to develop and deliver the project. This could involve:

• Developing the project plan.

• Checking the costing of the project in URMs.

• Preparing and costing a proposal for the client (if this is required).

• Putting in place an appropriate agreement with the partner.

• Liaising with the Research Partnerships and Engagement team who are administering the SIA funding.

6. **Funding and Conditions**

6.1. By accepting the award, the applicants agree to engage with the Research Partnerships and Engagement (RPE) team to monitor project progress both during the life of the project and post project to allow the reporting of outcomes and capture of (potential) impact. This will include making non-confidential aspects available to assist with the development of case studies.

As impact often occurs after the project lifetime, the RPE team may also contact you 6 months and 12 months after the project has finished to find out how the project has progressed and of any outcomes that have been realised.

6.2. **An appropriate collaboration agreement must be in place between collaborating partners before the project commences.** The BDM and RPE team will assist with advising, facilitating and negotiating this agreement.

6.3. For projects which require deploying a Research Council funded researcher during the lifetime of their current RC grant, the consequence of any delays to the delivery of the grant should be managed before the project starts. Any extension must be discussed and agreed with the RC before the Collaborative R&D project takes place.

It is the responsibility of the Primary Investigator to liaise with the RC regarding any extension arrangements.

6.4. Secondment of PhD students to an SIA Collaborative R&D project will be managed in line with internal rules and external expectations, which will be dependent on the funding body, to ensure that collaborative R&D does not have a negative effect on the progress of the doctoral training.
6.5. Please contact your Departmental Administrator in the first instance if you have any questions regarding the allocation of relevant costs to the account set up for this project.

6.6. The RPE team reserves the right to withdraw funds where there is evidence that a project is failing to adhere to the agreed application. Similarly, funds may be recovered where these have not been spent in accordance with the application, unless a change has been agreed in writing.

6.7. Applicants agree to comply with the University’s financial regulations - http://www.shef.ac.uk/finance/regulations.

Contacts

Business Development Managers:

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<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>General enquiries</td>
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<td>0114 22 24017</td>
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Note: For all enquiries from applicants who are not attached to one of the faculties listed above, or are proposing cross-faculty projects, please contact Lucy Martinez for advice.