

PHYCONET, a BBSRC NIBB

BBSRC NIBB Business Interaction Vouchers: Terms and Conditions

Please read this document before completing the application form.

Introduction

BBSRC NIBB Interaction Vouchers are available to fund projects between academic partners and industrial partners within the PHYCONET network, in order to encourage and support collaboration between academia and industry. The collaboration can be any defined piece of work **by** the academic partner **for** the industrial partner. A total of £200,000 is available.

The vouchers are available for the duration of the network. Each voucher provides funding up to the value of £10,000 (including VAT), to fund a project of no longer than 6 months in duration. The industrial partner is expected to contribute at least the same amount as the voucher value, either in cash or in-kind. The Business Interaction Voucher is paid to the academic for them to carry out work for the industrial partner; any work done by the industry partner as part of the project should be covered by their in-kind or cash contribution.

Please note that the vouchers cannot be used to purchase equipment.

The vouchers are intended to help resource small, confidence-building measures between an academic partner and an industrial partner that are likely to lead to outcomes of:

- a longer-term relationship
- improved interaction
- new research technology transfer projects

Examples of projects include (but are not limited to) generating new experimental data, data analysis, technical consultancy or literature review.

The nature of the work to be carried out must be within the scope of the PHYCONET network (specifically, producing high-value products from microalgae, including cyanobacteria, industrially cultivated in an intensive and controlled manner using photobioreactor or fermentor technologies) which are grouped into five research streams:

1. Build on current expertise and progress in algal genomics, synthetic biology and systems biology to develop key species as platform strains for the IB sector.
2. Exploit the knowledge-base in bioinformatics, data mining, 'omics, metabolic modeling and biological chemistry to identify new algal genes and metabolic pathways that could be

exploited commercially, either through transfer to platform strains or industrial cultivation of the natural species.

3. Develop a robust, cost-effective and scalable photobioreactor technology for the IB sector.
4. Advance cultivation (whether by phototrophic, mixotrophic or heterotrophic growth) and downstream processing technologies.
5. Assess opportunities and barriers to commercialisation.

Eligibility

Academic partner

Business Interaction Vouchers are available to PHYCONET members who are UK-based academics (and who will remain in the UK for the duration of the project). Applicants must ensure that they meet the eligibility criteria set out in section 3 of the BBSRC Research Grants guide (<http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/funding/apply/grants-guide.aspx>). The vouchers may not be used to fund PhD students.

Industrial partner

Business Interaction Voucher awards should focus attention on UK-based partners where there is benefit to the UK research base and the UK economy. In exceptional circumstances, where there is not a UK company to exploit the research, a Business Interaction Voucher may be awarded to fund a collaboration with an overseas partner company. The application should provide a clear justification for working with an overseas partner company and outline how the project will lead to building international collaborations, how the project will be taken forward leading to inward investment and the benefit back to the UK.

The industrial partner must also be a PHYCONET member, and must not be in breach of the *de minimis* aid rules (further information can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/state-aid>).

Application process

Applications will be invited on a quarterly basis, to be received before 5pm on the 15th of the months of March, June, September and December; where the 15th of the month falls on a weekend, applications should be received before 9am the following Monday. Deadlines for calls will be announced through the mailing list, on the PHYCONET website and on Twitter.

Applications should be made by completing the application form provided. Applications may be submitted by either the academic or industrial partner, but should be collaborative and only submitted once for each project. Please note that the voucher will be awarded (in arrears) to the academic partner, who must be a PHYCONET member.

The proposed start date should take into account the time required for evaluation and approval of the application by the panel and BBSRC (approximately 4 weeks) and should not be more than four months later than the deadline of the appropriate call.

The completed form should be returned to networkmanager@phyconet.org.uk.

Evaluation

New collaborations will be given priority, but continued collaborations will also be considered.

Priority will be given to proposals that aid technology transfer, work towards solving a technical problem for the industrial partner, or adapt an existing technology for a new application.

An evaluation panel comprised of members of the PHYCONET Executive Group and Management Board will assess applications on a rolling basis. It is expected that the applicant will be notified of the panel's decision within one month of submission.

The criteria used to evaluate applications will include:

- relevance to the aims and objectives of PHYCONET
- quality of work proposed
- value of the clearly defined project deliverable(s) to the SME/industrial partner
- interdisciplinary bridge-building
- benefit to the research and industrial partnership
- value for money
- contribution of the industrial partner to the project
- potential for building longer-term relationship
- future funding potential

All applications will be treated as confidential. Any potential conflicts of interest will be declared to the Network Manager, who will direct applications to non-conflicted members of the evaluation panel for appraisal. Applications will be scored using the criteria listed above. The PHYCONET Management Board Chair, Mike Goosey, will sign off on applications recommended by the evaluation panel to receive funding and the Director, Saul Purton (or Co-Director, Michele Stanley, if the Director is conflicted), is responsible for awarding the Business Interaction Voucher.

Administration of projects

A project start date (which must be within three months of the date on the UCL Letter Agreement issued to the awardee) must be agreed between PHYCONET and academic and industrial partners. A signed agreement must be arranged before the project can start; this will include details of ownership of resulting intellectual property through the appropriate technology transfer offices and legal departments, as well as confirmation by the industrial partner that there would be no breach of the

de minimis aid rules. It is recommended that the appropriate finance office representative of the institute of the academic partner signs this agreement.

Projects must be completed within six months of the agreed start date.

On completion of the project, the academic partner will submit the following documentation:

- a short report of the work undertaken, countersigned by the industrial partner
- a “project completion” form completed by both partners; this will include a public summary of the work (which may be used by PHYCONET) and details of possible further development of the relationship
- a statement detailing expenditure (receipts are not required but must be kept in case of an audit at a later date)

The required documentation must be submitted to the Network Manager within one month of the end of the project. Once this has been received, the Network Manager will provide a purchase order number and the academic partner will invoice PHYCONET.

Data protection

Applications will be distributed to the evaluation panel, and the information provided used for the purposes of awarding the voucher and for reviewing voucher funds. Details of the award, including the name of the host university and academic member, the name of the industrial partner and a brief description of the project receiving funding may be published on the PHYCONET website.

Information submitted in project proposals will be used by the BBSRC for research-related activities, including but not limited to, transfer of PoC funds, statistical analysis in relation to evaluation of the BBSRC NIBB, study of trends and policy and strategy studies. To meet the Research Councils’ obligations for public accountability and the dissemination of information, details of grants (including successful PoC awards and Business Interaction Vouchers) may also be made available on the Research Councils’ web sites and other publicly available databases, and in reports, documents and mailing lists.

The academic partner and industrial partner agree to presentation of the project results at a subsequent PHYCONET meeting.