

# HIGH VALUE CHEMICALS FROM PLANTS NETWORK

## OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR BUSINESS INTERACTION VOUCHERS SCHEME

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Document control:  
Version 8 created 22/11/2016  
Owner WJL  
Review date October 2017

## Context

BBSRC NIBB Business Interaction Vouchers (BIV) support collaboration between academic partners and industrial partners by resourcing small, confidence-building measures intended to lead to:

- solving a technical problem for an industrial partner
- developing a longer-term relationship
- securing joint follow-on funding
- aiding technology transfer
- next steps towards commercialisation of a high value product

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

Each individual project lasts a maximum of 6 months and each BIV is worth a maximum of £10,000<sup>1</sup> (inclusive of VAT).

## BIV eligibility

### Applicants:

The academic and industry applicant must both be registered HVCfP members.

The **lead (academic) applicant** must be employed at an Institution which is eligible to receive BBSRC funding, must be located in the UK for the duration of the project and must hold a position which makes them eligible to be named as Principle Investigator on a BBSRC grant (see <http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/web/FILES/Guidelines/grants-guide.pdf>). Post-Doctoral Research Associates who are involved in developing a BIV application and who are to be engaged in the research can be named as a 'Researcher Co-Investigator' on the application. Applicants should be aware that receiving a BIV award as a Principle Investigator where the funding includes PDRA staff support costs may make the individual ineligible for New Investigator status in BBSRC Responsive Mode.

The **industrial applicant** should have an R&D or manufacturing site in the UK. This is to ensure there is benefit to the UK research base and the UK economy from the BIV award. In exceptional circumstances, where there is not a UK company to exploit the research a BIV may be awarded to support a collaboration with an industrial partner who has an overseas an R&D or manufacturing site. 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.

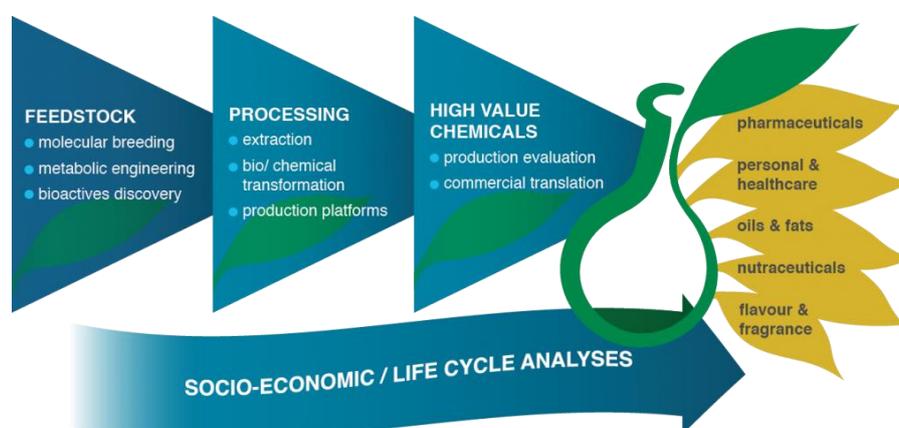
### Project:

The Project can be any defined piece of work *by* an academic partner *for* an industrial partner which is relevant to HVCfP and BBSRC IB scope (see below). It is expected that the academic partner offers expertise that the industrial partner does not usually have access to. New collaborations will be prioritised; however, BIV may be used to fund existing collaborations.

<sup>1</sup>In the period 1<sup>st</sup> January 2014 – 28<sup>th</sup> October 2015 BIV were worth a maximum of £5,000. For those applicants who were successful in applying for a BIV in this period, there is the option to submit a follow-on application for a maximum of £5,000 to continue the same project once the original project has been completed and the project completion report submitted. Applicants should submit their application on the standard BIV application form, and provide justification for why the follow-on funds are required and how they will be used. Any follow-on award will be subject to standard terms and conditions as outlined in this document and in post-award communications, and must be supported by an industry contribution which at least matches the value of the voucher requested.

**Applications must include activities which are relevant to the scope of the HVCfP Network (Figure 1) and meet BBSRC's industrial biotechnology (IB) scope for PoC/BIV Projects – “IB is defined as the use of biological resources for producing and processing materials, chemicals and energy. The resources include plants, algae, marine life, fungi and micro-organisms. The feedstocks include renewable materials such as crop residue, animal wastes, food and municipal wastes and perennial biomass. BBSRC has included the production of anti-microbial compounds and biopharmaceuticals in IBBE too. Projects that are focused on producing or testing human food or animal feed fall outside of the IB remit and are not eligible for BBSRC NIBB funding”.**

**In designing your BIV Project, please be aware that simply the utilisation of a biological feedstock is not sufficient to fit BBSRC IB scope for PoC/BIV Projects. Please make it clear in your application how your Project incorporates or feeds into a biological process/conversion or, how the Project outputs could be expected to do this in the future.** If you are unsure about how to describe this within your application, please seek advice at least 3 days in advance of the closing date by emailing [wendy.lawley@york.ac.uk](mailto:wendy.lawley@york.ac.uk).



**Figure 1: HVCfP scope diagram**

## Calls for BIV applications

Applications for BIV can be submitted at any time until January 2018. Review panel meetings take place quarterly. The closing date for receipt of applications for review at the next panel meeting are advertised on the Network website and in the member's email newsletter. Any applications received after the published closing date for the next review meeting will be held for review at the next meeting.

## Application process

### Completing the application form:

Applications can be submitted by either the academic or industrial partner. The applicant should download the current version of the BIV application form from the HVCfP website at <https://hvcfp.net/business-interaction-vouchers/> and complete it according to the detailed guidance notes given on page 1 of the form.

### Finances:

**The maximum financial support that can be requested is £10,000<sup>1</sup> (inclusive of VAT).** The industrial partner must make a contribution to the academic partner which is worth at least the value of the voucher awarded, either in cash or as an in-kind contribution. Any award will be paid in arrears to the academic partner.

BIV may be used to support short term postgraduate research student positions (for example summer placements), provided that the BIV project forms a discrete piece of work and has a separate employment contract from any stipend. The 6 hours a week that PhD students have for additional paid work can also be utilised for BIV projects, again this should be a separate discrete project from their PhD and requires a separate employment contract. BIV cannot be used to subsidise student grants.

### Submission:

Applications should be submitted by e-mail to [wendy.lawley@york.ac.uk](mailto:wendy.lawley@york.ac.uk); all applications will be acknowledged within three working days. Wendy is the main point of contact for all BIV enquiries.

On receipt of an application, the Network Manager will check to ensure all sections have been completed in a satisfactory manner. In the event that an incomplete application is received, the lead applicant will be offered the opportunity to provide any missing information within three working days. If the required information is not received within this time period, the application may be formally rejected without being considered by the Review Panel. Applicants will have the opportunity to resubmit an application which has been rejected without review for consideration by the Review Panel at a later date if the application is subsequently completed in an appropriate manner. **By far the biggest reason for rejection of an application without consideration by the Review Panel is that the Project is deemed to fall outside of HVCfP/BBSRC IB scope.** BBSRC are asked to check the public summary of any application where there are concerns about scope and their decision is final. **If you are unsure about how to address this part of your application, please contact Wendy in advance of the deadline for advice.**

### Evaluation process

The Network Manager circulates details of applicants together with the public summary to the reviewers, who are required to declare any conflicts of interest<sup>2</sup> before they are given sight of the full application. The full application will then be circulated to non-conflicted reviewers for evaluation.

A Review Panel will usually comprise a minimum of two representatives from the Executive Group (EG) and one representative from the Management Board (MB). In cases where insufficient members of the EG are available to review an application due to conflict of interest, the MB Chair will join the panel or, if they are also conflicted (or if more than one replacement is required), will suggest a suitable MB nominee to evaluate the application. Each BIV application will be reviewed by a minimum of three representatives from the EG/MB. Any application recommended for approval by the BIV Review Panel will be subject to formal approval by BBSRC before the award can be made.

Assessment criteria are:

- Relevance of the application to BBSRC's definition of IB and HVCfP scope
- Quality of the work proposed
- Value of the proposed work to the Industrial Partner
- Value of the cash or in kind contribution by the industrial partner
- Overall value for money of the project
- The potential for building a longer term relationship between the partners

<sup>2</sup>Examples of a conflict of interest involving a member of a Review Panel include: Employed by the same institution as the applicant(s); Actively involved in research collaborations with the applicant(s); Working closely with the applicant(s), for example as a co-author or PhD Supervisor, or has worked closely in the last 4 years; Holding a current position on the governing body of or an honorary position within the institution(s) of the applicant(s); In receipt of personal remuneration in excess of £5,000 per annum from the applicant's organisation or Personal/family relationship with the applicant(s).

## Payment of awards

The Network will send an award letter to the Institution of the academic partner which summarises the terms and conditions governing the transfer of funds and confirms the project start date. The academic and industrial partners are required to confirm that they have a signed consortium agreement in place before the agreed project start date. The Network does not take responsibility for negotiations between partners regarding the development of a consortium agreement.

Once the signed award letter has been received by the Network Manager, the lead applicant will be provided with a project completion template and expenditure statement template. These documents should be completed and returned to the Network Manager within one month of the project end date. The awardee should invoice the HVCfP Network at the same time they submit their project completion form and expenditure statement. The project completion report will be reviewed by the Network Executive Group to ensure that agreed deliverables have been met before the invoice is approved for payment. Receipts will not be required by the HVCfP Network but the academic partner will keep proper financial records should an audit be required.

## State aid rules

BBSRC NIBB Innovation Vouchers will be counted as *De minimis* aid. Industrial partners need to ensure they are not in breach of *De minimis* aid rules by accepting a business interaction voucher and will agree this when submitting an application. (Further information: [www.gov.uk/state-aid](http://www.gov.uk/state-aid)).

## Data protection and usage

Copies of proposals will be made available to the HVCfP BIV Review Panel, who will use information provided to make a decision on suitability for the award of a BIV. If an application is funded, the HVCfP Network will upload details of the award to the HVCfP secure area of the BBSRC Extranet and will publish the names of Project partners, Project title and Project public summary on the BIV page of the Network website.

BBSRC will use this information 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.