

# OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR BUSINESS INTERACTION VOUCHERS SCHEME

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## 1. Context

BBSRC NIBB Business Interaction Vouchers will encourage and support collaboration between academic partners and industrial partners within the CBMNet Network. The vouchers will help resource small, confidence-building measures between an academic partner and an industrial based partner that are likely to lead to outcomes of: - a longer-term relationship – improved interaction – new research technology transfer projects

BBSRC CBMNet Business Interaction Vouchers are available and provide up to £10,000 to be used to support collaboration between academic partners and industrial partners who are members of CBMNet and eligible for BBSRC funding. This initial collaborative project should be a stepping stone to establishing a longer term partnership between the academic and industrial partner and lead to knowledge exchange. The industrial partner's contribution will be at least the value of the voucher in cash or in-kind contribution. Projects will last for six months maximum. Funds will support a collaboration that can be any defined piece of work by an academic partner for an industrial partner. New collaborations will be prioritised; but existing collaborations are acceptable.

## 2. Funding eligibility

### 2.1 Applicants:

Funding is available for current CBMNet members who are eligible to receive BBSRC funding (<http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/web/FILES/Guidelines/grants---guide.pdf>). Vouchers are up to £10,000 (inclusive of VAT) maximum; the industrial partner's contribution will be at least the value of the voucher in cash or in-kind contribution. Business Interaction Vouchers are paid to the academic partner who is tackling a problem relevant to the industrial partner. Industrial members can apply for them but they are paid in arrears to the academic they are working with.

### 2.2 Activities funding will support:

Funds will support a collaboration that can be any defined piece of work *by* an academic partner *for* an industrial partner. New collaborations will be prioritised; however, vouchers may be used to fund existing collaborations. The scope will be that of the CBMNet Network 'Themes' (See CBMNet website for further details). Examples of projects include, but are not limited to, generating new experimental data, data analysis, technical consultancy or literature review. The work of each individual project will be constrained to 6 months maximum. Priority will be given to proposals that meet one or more of the following:

- Aid technology transfer
- Work towards solving a technical problem for an industrial partner
- Adapt an existing technology for a new application

## 3. Funding calls

The funding call will remain open for the lifetime of the Network and will be well advertised using the CBMNet's website, twitter and email, as well as other outlets to ensure wide coverage of the opportunity.

## 4. Application process

Applications can be submitted by either partner but only one form is required per project. The applicant should submit a pdf file of the online word application document (See CBMNet website for further details).

A summary of the complete process can be seen at the end of this document.

## 5. Submission of applications and further information

Applications are to be submitted by e-mail to [jen.evans@shef.ac.uk](mailto:jen.evans@shef.ac.uk); all applications will usually be acknowledged within three working days. All enquiries should also be directed to [jen.evans@shef.ac.uk](mailto:jen.evans@shef.ac.uk).

## 6. Evaluation process

The CBMNet Team, who are also the Executive Group for the network, (Professor Green, Dr Thomas and Dr Evans) will form a BIV Evaluation Panel. Applications will be usually within 2 weeks of being received. In the case of conflict of interest, the CBMNet Team will engage the MB Chair or nominee to evaluate the application.

Criteria for assessment will be:

Essential criteria	Criteria	% expected contribution to total score
Match to network remit*	Relevance of application to CBMNet scope	25
	Quality of work proposed	15
	Value of the clearly defined project deliverable(s) to the SME/industrial partner	10
	Benefit to the research and industrial partnership	10
	Value for money	10
	Contribution of the industrial partner to the project, which can be in kind	10
	Potential for building longer term relationship	20

\*Proposals outside the network remit will be rejected

For each criterion, proposals should score 60% of total marks allocated to be considered for funding. The MB will have a good degree of flexibility in the decisions made so that, at the MB's discretion, an application could for example, be part funded.

If the project application is successful, an award letter is sent to the lead academic. If the project application is unsuccessful, an email will be sent to inform all applicants.

## 7. Reporting

At the end of the award, a final report on results against objectives will be submitted to the Network Manager. This report will detail the major findings and how these will be exploited in seeking further funding and team building. Also, where possible, a case-study template will be started and will be updated throughout the Network's lifetime. Finally, six months after the end of the funding period, a report of how the work undertaken has led to other outcomes will be required.

Final reports will be signed off by the Principle Investigator.

## 8. Payment of awards

The academic and industrial partner will agree a start date and will need to have a signed agreement in place prior to the project commencing; the CBMNet Network Manager will check this is the case. The CBMNet will provide a simple contract for the awardee, assigning all rights to the awardee's University or the partnership, but requiring vouchers to be spent as detailed on the proposal. The academic awardee will invoice CBMNet Network in arrears. A project report form (including a public summary of the work, which may be used by the Network and BBSRC- See CBMNet Project Report Guidelines Document on CBMNet website) will be sent to the Network Manager within one month of the project ending and it will include an expenditure statement. Once this has been received the invoice will be paid. Receipts will not be required by the CBMNet but the academic partner will keep proper financial records should an audit be required.

## 9. 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 the Innovation voucher and will agree this when submitting an application. (Further information: [www.gov.uk/state-aid](http://www.gov.uk/state-aid)).

## 10. Data protection regulations

Copies of proposals will be made available to the CBMNet Evaluation Panel, who will use information provided in the application for processing the proposal, the award of any consequential voucher, and for the payment, maintenance and review of the voucher funds. Funding comes from BBSRC, so to meet the Research Councils' obligations for public accountability and the dissemination of information, details of awards may also be made available on the Research Councils' websites and other publicly available databases, and in reports, documents and mailing lists.

## 11. Summary of complete process

