BIOCATNET IB-SCA Guidelines

1. **General Information**

   1.1   Industrial Biotechnology Seeding Catalyst Awards (hereafter, IB-SCA) are available to BIOCATNET members.   The objectives of the IB-SCA are to accelerate the transition from discovery research to translational development projects by supporting preliminary work or feasibility studies to establish the viability of an approach. Projects should not address new research but rather must target outcomes at TRL 3/4 or higher, with a clear route to progress to TRL 5/6.

   1.2   IB Seeding Catalyst Awards may be used to support a range of activities to address challenges using biological processes, or processes in which biological and chemical approaches are used in combination. The scientific scope of the funding will include production of:
   - Fine and speciality chemicals and natural products (e.g. fragrances and flavours; pharmaceutical intermediates)
   - Commodity, platform and intermediate chemicals, and materials (e.g. coatings, plastics, and textiles)
   - Liquid and gaseous biofuels
   - Peptides and proteins (e.g. enzymes, antibiotics, recombinant biologics)
   - Novel or improved upstream or downstream processes to reduce costs or improve efficiency

   1.3   An IB-SCA project should not exceed 3 months and a maximum value of £25,000 (inclusive of VAT), matched funding is not required but is strongly encouraged, and review scores will reflect projects demonstrating significant industrial contributions. Industrial contributions can be either in cash or kind.

   1.4   In order to maximise the value of the award and the outcomes of the collaborative measures, IB-SCA are intended to support only direct costs and directly allocated investigator costs incurred by the eligible partner during the project. Estates and Indirect costs will not be eligible for BIOCATNET support, and should be supported by the awarded institution or the industrial partner. However, all direct costs including Travel and Subsistence will be funded at 100% fEC.

   1.5   IB-SCA cannot be used to support generic staff posts not directly related to the project, for example to support general "Impact Officer" positions, however they can be used to buy staff time on projects.

   1.6   Activities proposed for funding through the IB Seeding Catalyst Award must also align with one or more of the following objectives of the ISCF strategy:
   - Increased UK business investment in R&D and improved R&D capability and capacity
   - Increased multi- and inter- disciplinary research around the challenge areas
   - Increased business-academic engagement on innovation activities relating to the challenge areas

- Increased collaboration between younger, smaller companies and larger, more established companies up the value chain
- Increased overseas investment in R&D in the UK

1.7   These challenges may be addressed by a wide range of activities such as, for example: Funding for proof of concept projects
- Developing ways to enable potential users to understand the benefits of novel ideas or technologies, e.g. initial product design, developing virtual demonstrations, mock-up and models, etc.
- Providing access to expertise to enable exploitation and commercialisation, such as undertaking market intelligence, understanding the regulatory landscape, or establishing early stage freedom to operate
- Undertaking initial desk based market research, and early stage user intelligence activities

1.8   IB Catalyst Seeding Catalyst Awards cannot be used to support:
- Generic translation activities or infrastructure
- Patent filing or similar costs associated directly to registering intellectual property rights
- Non-specific public engagement activities and science communication, however specific activities designed to have specific impact upon a specific public may be acceptable
- New research

2.   Funding eligibility

2.1   All applicants, whether eligible to receive funding or not, must be registered Members of BIOCATNET. Membership of BIOCATNET is by approval of the Network Management Board, subject to registration of an individual or organization on the BIOCATNET member database after completion of a valid Membership Application Form.

2.2   Projects must be led by a principle applicant who is a current Member of BIOCATNET and eligible for BBSRC funding. Funding will be provided only to organisations and individuals belonging to such organisations who are eligible to receive BBSRC funding (see BBSRC Grants guide for further details).

2.3   Projects must include at least one **Industrial partner**, named in the application form, in addition to the principle applicant. Industrial partners are not eligible to receive BBSRC BIOCATNET funding.

2.4   **Principle applicants who receive BIOCATNET funding to support the staff costs of a post-doctoral research assistant (PDRA) will not be eligible to receive support under the BBSRC New Investigator scheme.** See Section 3.13 of the BBSRC Grants guide for further details.

2.5   BBSRC NIBB IB-SCA may be considered *de minimis* aid. Applicants will provide affirmation on the application form that they understand the relevant regulations, and

that they will not be in breach of *de minimis* aid rules by accepting the award. For further information see https://www.gov.uk/state-aid.

3. Funding calls

3.1 A single call for IB-SCA proposals will be issued on the 11th of September 2017 and will close at 17.00 on the 29th of September. The applications will be reviewed between the 2nd and 6th of October with successful applicants notified on the 6th of October.

3.2 The call will be publicized at BIOCATNET Events, and advertised via biocatnet.com and the usual BIOCATNET dissemination routes.

4. Application and Evaluation process and identification of conflicts of interest

4.1 The funding call will be published via the BIOCATNET website (biocatnet.com). Applicants should request an application form along with all guidance documents from the Network Manager, via email (biocatnet@manchester.ac.uk). Applicants will receive a unique identification number, which should be quoted in all correspondence.

4.2 Completed application forms will be submitted in pdf format to Network Managers. The Network Managers will acknowledge receipt of completed application forms within 3 working days of receipt, and will hold all applications in confidence.

4.3 The applications will be initially reviewed by the Network Managers, who will categorise the applications for review purpose; reject with feedback any ineligible or incomplete application forms; identify conflicts of interest.

4.4 The applications will then be reviewed by at least three BIOCATNET Management Board members. The academic and industrial lead of the subtheme in question and the Network Director/Co-Director. Additional members of the management board may be brought in to assist in the review of applications that are outside the primary expertise of the Network Director/Co-Director and subtheme leaders.

4.5 Scoring Criteria

4.5.1 Applicants must complete all sections of the application form. Failure to comply will result in the application being rejected by the Network Managers, feedback explaining the reason for rejection will be provided to the applicants.

4.5.2 Any application that scores less than 60% for any of the sections will be rejected with feedback. Scoring is as follows.

4.5.3 **Alignment to ISCF scope and objectives (scored out of 10 points)** – Applicants will provide details of how this funding aligns with the objectives of the ISCF, with specific reference to how the award will accelerate the transition from discovery research to translational development projects. Generic translational activities

will not be supported, and therefore the proposal must demonstrate a clear route to exploitation of the technology being developed.

4.5.3.1 The benefits to UK R&D must be described, with a suitably detailed plan for how the applicants will leverage the award to achieve future investment through regional, national, or international partnerships. BIOCATNET recognises that academic research developed through network funding may be best exploited through international partnerships where appropriate.

4.5.3.2 The plan should include realistic estimates for follow-on funding and investment, but also demonstrate ambition and the requirement for IB Catalyst Seeding funds to achieve this.

4.5.4 **Project Summary (scored out of 20 points)** – Applicants should describe:

4.5.4.1 The relevant IB challenges that the project seeks to address and how the project will accomplish this.

4.5.4.2 What is innovative about the proposed project and where relevant outline any prior experimental/technical evidence and explain how the previous results bridge to the proposed study.

4.5.5 **Partner Details (scored out of 10 points)** – Applicants are to provide details on all partner organisations to the project. Explain the nature of the consortium and how this adds value to the application. Please provide details of any financial contribution in cash or in kind to the project provided by the Industrial partner(s). Additional weight will be awarded to proposals which directly leverage industrial or other funding contributions to support the work, beyond that provided by the BIOCATNET IB Catalyst Seeding Fund award. However, the award should not be used to replace previously planned or allocated R&D budget.

4.6 **Conflicts of Interest** – Applicants must declare any potential conflicts of interest with members of the Management Board; the list of current MB members is available either upon request to the Network Manager or via biocatnet.com. Members of the Management Board reviewing applications will similarly declare conflicts of interest to the Network Managers upon receipt of an IB-SCA application before reading the proposal.

Examples of a conflict of interest include:
- Employed by the same institution as the applicant(s)
- Actively involved in research collaborations with the applicants(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
- Personal/family relationship with the applicant(s)

4.6.1 Conflicts of interest will be documented by the Network Managers and resolved as follows:

4.6.1.1 The identified member of the management board will not be allowed to review the application in question, during any review of said application the identified MB member may be asked to step out of the room during any face to face review/not be included in any communication of the application form via any form of electronic distribution

4.6.1.2 As the KTN is not eligible to apply for IB-SCA funding BIOCATNET will employ impartial review by the Yvonne Armitage of the KTN who has indicated that she is willing to review specific applications where the conflict of interest cannot be resolved by implementing 4.6.1.1.

4.6.2 Members of the MB review panel will not be allowed to review their own applications, additionally members from the same institution as the applicant will not be allowed to review the application. In this case Yvonne Armitage will be asked to review the application along with any remaining neutral MB members.

4.7 Applicants will be informed on the outcome of their application in a timely manner.

4.8 Funds will be allocated upon signature of the project agreement (contract). This contract will consist of: i) description of work (the application form), and ii) signature by the awarded institution of the grant offer letter issued by The University of Manchester on behalf of BIOCATNET.

4.9 The grant must be completed and all spend incurred by the 28th of February. No extensions will be granted. The grant may lapse if it is not completed within this period.

4.10 The start of the grant may precede the start date indicated in the submitted application form and shown in the offer letter, but must not be earlier than the date of the offer letter itself. The grant must start no later than

4.11 The final ranked list of applications will be approved and signed off by the Director/Co-Director, the Chair of the Management Board and the Network Managers.

4.12 BIOCATNET has provisions for bringing in external consultants, should the need arise BIOCATNET may ask for external review of applications if there is not the necessary expertise within the pool of internal reviewers/management board members.

5. Monitoring, Reporting and Payment of awards

5.1 The Network Managers will act as monitoring officers for all IB-SCA projects and may request a meeting to review progress during the lifetime of the project.

5.2 All projects will be required to submit a report to the Network Managers no later than 2 weeks after completion of the project. These reports must include: a financial summary from the awarded institution to indicate the actual incurred costs to the project; a public summary of outcomes of the project; a plan for exploitation and dissemination of the knowledge, including further funding. Subject to satisfactory completion, the final reports will be agreed and signed off by the Network Managers and Director or Co-director. Project reporting must be received by the NETWORK Managers no later than 16th March 2018.

5.3 Payment of funds will be made in arrears and only upon completion of all reporting requirements imposed by BIOCATNET and the BBSRC.

6. Data protection regulations

6.1 Copies of proposals will be made available to the BIOCATNET management board, unless there is an identified conflict of interest (see 4.6). All information submitted in the application form will only be used for the purpose of reviewing said application.

6.2 BIOCATNET management board members will be required to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) before they are allowed to review BIV proposals.

6.3 Successful applicants are requested to provide a non-confidential abstract of their proposal which will be made publically available according to the BBSRC's Data Sharing Policy, including via the Website (biocatnet.com) and the BBSRC.

6.4 BIOCATNET and the BBSRC may make publically available, alongside the non-confidential abstract, the PI and Institution/Organisation, identity of Industrial partners, the amount of the award, and the length of the project. Any other information divulged in the application form will be treated strictly confidentially by BIOCATNET, unless publically disclosed by the applicant.

6.5 Unsuccessful applications will be treated with strictest confidence by BIOCATNET.

6.6 Projects will abide by the BBSRC's Data Sharing Policy.

6.7 To facilitate dissemination of network activities BIOCATNET may invite project partners to present their results at future network events.