

GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

The Environmental Biotechnology Network
– a BBSRC/EPSRC NIBB

Travel Bursary Grants



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Introduction

Background

The Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC), in association with the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), have secured funding for a second phase of Networks in Industrial Biotechnology and Bioenergy (NIBB Phase II). Commencing in early 2019, these cover all aspects of Industrial Biotechnology.

Six Networks share £11M of funding to advance TRL levels for the benefit of wider society. The second phase of the BBSRC NIBB will continue to build capacity and capability in the UK, supporting research and translation in biologically based manufacturing. Their aim is to continue to foster collaboration between academic researchers and business at all levels, in order to find new approaches through excellent research to tackle research challenges and help deliver key benefits in IBBE. Details of all of the Networks can be found on the BBSRC website (<https://bbsrc.ukri.org/research/programmes-networks/research-networks/nibb/>)

- Algae-UK: Exploiting the algal treasure trove
- BNet: Biomass Biorefinery Network
- CCNet: Carbon Recycling - Converting waste derived GHG into chemicals, fuels and animal feed
- E3B: Elements of Bioremediation, Biomanufacturing & Bioenergy – Metals in Biology
- ENet: Environmental Biotechnology Network
- HVB: High Value Biorenewables Network

The Networks will run from 2019 to 2024, will provide flexible funding for projects and are open to new members throughout their lifetime.

About ENet

Microbial systems provide a range of environmental protection and bioremediation services, forming the basis for some of the world's largest industries across the Water-Wastes-Soil nexus. Development of such systems to date has been largely empirical and incremental, but the pace is changing in response to the need to match expanding global demand with finite resources. There are also new challenges to address, ranging from the emergence of new micro-pollutants to the requirement for efficient closed-loop systems that combine treatment with resource recovery.

The current revolution in biological and analytical sciences is creating tools that give unprecedented insights into these systems from genetic to community level, and into factors that can potentially be used to control and harness them. At the same time, new approaches allow enhanced measurement and modelling of engineering phenomena such as mixing and mass transfer, while advances in materials science and separation technologies offer the potential for selectively retaining microbial biomass and/or removing final and intermediate metabolic products. These developments thus offer a chance to optimise existing treatment processes and to create more sustainable 'future-proof' technologies in new areas of application. Successful exploitation of these opportunities depends, however, on bringing together an enhanced knowledge of the underlying science with the ability to apply this in large-scale engineered systems, which must meet both societal expectations and increasingly stringent economic and environmental requirements.

The aim of ENet is thus to develop and strengthen links between advanced molecular and applied microbiology, engineering and systems optimisation to maximise the societal impacts and benefits. Its overall goal is to take fundamental discovery science towards practical application in key areas of the human/environment interface.

Principal Investigator

- Professor Sonia Heaven, University of Southampton, Faculty of Engineering and the Environment

Co-Investigators

- Professor Frederic Coulon, Cranfield University, School of Water, Energy and Environment
- Professor Tom Curtis, Newcastle University, School of Engineering
- Dr Tony Gutierrez, Heriot-Watt University, School of Engineering and Physical Science
- Dr Jhuma Sadhukhan, University of Surrey, Centre for Environmental Strategy

Travel Bursary Grants

What is a Travel Bursary?

Travel bursaries are available to help fund UK-based Network members attend and travel to and from national and international events/meetings. Funds available are for:

- **Travel bursaries for early career researchers – UK only** are available for [qualifying EBNet members](#) to attend UK events relevant to the EBNet remit. Predominantly, though not exclusively, these might be ‘pre-authorised’ bursaries for attendance at EBNet events such as the annual Early Career Researchers’ Conference. However, applicants can [apply to us](#) with details of a specific request.
- **Travel bursaries for early career researchers – UK to overseas** are for [qualifying EBNet members](#) to present their work at high profile international meetings *which have a primary focus on some aspect of Environmental Biotechnology*, or where this is one of the main themes of the conference. This is not intended for people who merely wish to attend or present a poster*. In order to qualify, you should be able to demonstrate that you have had an oral presentation accepted at that particular conference. The presentation should seek to promote work conducted via a UK-based institution to a larger audience.

At the discretion of the Executive Group, these bursaries may be allocated by Call to specific conferences or topics and advertised to the membership. All conference events should offer opportunities for early career researchers to network and to have their work peer reviewed and discussed by experts in the field from around the world. In the review of your application, a major consideration will be how big an impact your work will make at the conference, and how great is the potential for networking within a peer group expert in the wider aspects of environmental biotechnology.

*Exceptions may be made to this rule by the Executive Group at a future date for specified international conferences only.

Available Bursaries	Total available (annual limit*)	Max. value per award (incl. VAT)*
Travel Bursaries for early career researchers – UK only	250 (50)	£100
Travel Bursaries for early career researchers – UK to overseas	10 (2)	£1,500

* Limits may be altered over the course of the network at the Executive Group’s discretion. If so, these will be widely advertised.

All bursaries must be requested and approved in advance of the planned activities taking place. Each bursary has a maximum spending limit (above). We accept no responsibility for spending that exceeds that limit, either deliberately or accidentally.

We anticipate competition for these larger bursaries and will only support those who make a sound case for funding. Please give as much information as you can on [the application](#) to enable us to assess your particular circumstances without the need for further clarification.

Aims and objectives of the Bursaries

These Bursaries are intended to further the aims and objectives of EBNet by:

- encouraging and fostering collaboration and networking opportunities
- enabling members to attend relevant events that they would otherwise be unlikely to access
- promoting research conducted via a UK-based institution to a wider audience
- promoting the support of the EB Network, BBSRC and EPSRC at international events

Where we have supported attendance at a conference, we expect that our contribution is acknowledged in some way.

Eligibility

Only UK-based academic members of EBNet may apply for bursaries. Membership is free and available at: <http://ebnet.ac.uk/>.

Applicants must be academic members who qualify as an Early Career Researcher. Typically (though not exclusively), this would be an academic/postgraduate/post doctorate in a permanent position in a UK institution. This need not be full-time. To be considered under the scheme, applicants at the time of submission:

- must have no more than three years' full-time employment (or the full-time equivalent taking account of career breaks, part-time employment, etc.) at lecturer or equivalent level
- should not exceed 10 years in active postgraduate research studies and postdoctoral research employment

To be eligible – the PhD student or PDRA must be based at an eligible UK institution. This includes universities and other research institutions capable of receiving BBSRC/EPSRC funds. If you have questions regarding your eligibility, please [contact us](#).

Application Process – UK Only Bursaries

If you wish to attend a specific UK event, contact us by [email](#) with details of your request, including the event name, web-link, date, location, an estimate of expenses and why you wish to go. Reasonable travel and accommodation expenses can be covered up to the £100 limit. We may ask for further information. Your request will be considered by 2 Executive Group/Network Manager members and a response should be made by email shortly thereafter.

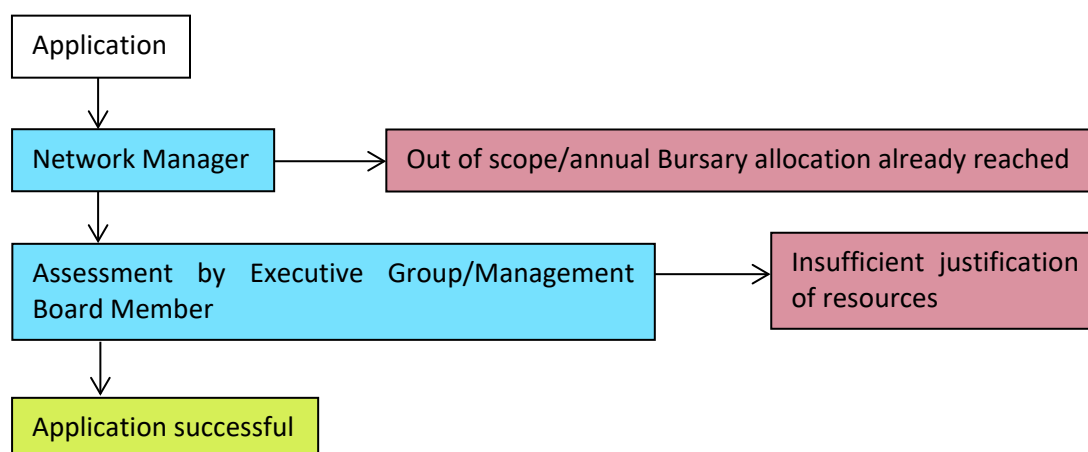
Application Process – UK to Overseas

How to apply

Application is through a simple application form available at EBNet.ac.uk or by emailing EBNet@EBNet.ac.uk. The form is filled in using the [guidance](#) below and emailed back to us with the relevant [supporting documentation](#).

Whilst we may set a deadline date in a call for a specific conference, applications are accepted at any time and should receive a response within 4 weeks from that point. Applications should be emailed to EBNet@EBNet.ac.uk as a Word or PDF email attachment and will be acknowledged by email upon receipt with a reference number (TBYYYYXX). Should an acknowledgement not be received in good time, please contact the Network Managers directly to ensure your application is processed.

Process for Bursary review



Submissions will first be sifted by the Network Managers to ensure they are consistent with the aims and objectives of the Network. Should sufficient funds remain available, they will then be passed to a member of the Executive Group or Management Board for assessment and approval. Applicants who have participated in EBNet activities (e.g. attended an event, acted as a member of the ECR Scientific Committee) will be viewed favourably.

Applications may then be funded (up to the annual limit), rejected or further clarification sought from the applicant to assist the decision. Decisions are entirely at the discretion of the Executive Group for final approval. We aim to assess proposals and reply within 4 weeks.

Application form guidance

This section explains the structure of the application forms and offers guidance on the information to include in each section. The purpose of the application form is to obtain enough information to enable us to understand how well your submission aligns with the Network objectives.

It is important that you address and respond to each section clearly. To help you, the guidance below provides an explanation of what is required for each field.

Please include proof that you have been accepted for an oral presentation by the organisers with your application.

Bursary Application Form		
Required Fields	Guidance	Maximum word limits/ further clarification
Application details		
Purpose of Travel Bursary	Please state the purpose of your application.	Word limit - 25
Details of Event	Specify the name, date and location of the event/conference.	Please include a link to the website, if appropriate
Please explain why the travel costs cannot be met from existing funds (PhD funds or project funds)	You will need to make a case for funding based on your circumstances explaining why other sources of funding are unavailable to you.	No word limit

Applicant's details		
Applicant's Name	Enter your full name as primary contact.	No word limit
Institution	Please give the name and address of the institution where you are employed	No word limit
Phone Number	Please give a contact number where we can reach you	No word limit
Email	Please give your email address. An academic (not personal) email address is preferred.	No word limit
Applicant's Career to date	Please give a brief overview of your career, with positions held, institution and dates. Also provide details of any prior activities with the Network. Are you a recipient of EBNet-funded research? Have you presented at the EBNet ECR conference? Which of our events have you participated in?	Word limit – 200 This assists us to verify your ECR status and EB credentials and can be a simple table or list. You may attach a CV to the application if you wish.
Please confirm that you are a member of EBNet and eligible for funding	See Eligibility	Yes/No – delete as applicable
Bursary Details		
Please provide a brief description of the background to the bursary request and purpose of the funded travel. Please also state how the bursary fits within EBNet research themes remit.	Applicants should use this opportunity to make a case for funding as we anticipate competition for the awards. See the website for details on the EBNet research themes. If you are a PhD student, see further information below .	Word limit - 400
Please list the key outcomes that will arise from this funding	Applicants should explain how this award furthers the objectives of EBNet. This section could cover international networking, dissemination of research, information exchange, etc.	Word limit- 300
Financial Details		
Please provide an estimate of the breakdown of funding costs below. For currency conversions, use https://www1.oanda.com/currency/converter/ . Standard university travel claim rules apply.		
Conference registration	Please state the name, date, location and amount (£) if you wish to claim for conference registration fees	In pounds sterling (incl. tax, if applicable)
Accommodation	Please estimate the sum for your accommodation. Only reasonable costs for the destination will be reimbursed e.g. up to 3* accommodation. AirBnB is not allowed.	In pounds sterling (incl. tax, if applicable)
Travel	Please estimate the costs of all air/rail/taxi/bus travel. Only reasonable costs will be reimbursed. The cheapest form of available transport should always be used. Where a valid public transport option exists, a claim for	In pounds sterling (incl. tax, if applicable)

	taxis (or other more expensive options) will not be accepted as valid.	
Subsistence/Other (please specify)	Please estimate your subsistence costs – if required. Only reasonable costs will be reimbursed. No claims will be accepted for alcohol purchase. Visa costs can be reimbursed if total award amount is not exceeded.	In pounds sterling (incl. tax, if applicable)
Total (£) contribution requested from EBNet	This should not exceed the bursary amount, usually £2,000 for overseas and less for UK.	In pounds sterling (incl. tax, if applicable)
Signature		
Applicant agrees to the following: I confirm that I wish to apply for an EBNet <i>Early Career Researcher Bursary – UK to overseas</i> , that I am an EBNet member and that the information contained in the application is accurate to the best of my knowledge. I agree to provide a half page summary report and photograph(s) upon completion of the bursary.		Please sign, date and print your name. A scanned signature is acceptable.

Additional information for PhD students

UK PhD students typically have funding for travel included within their PhD stipend.

If this is not the case, the PhD student should clearly explain *why* on their application. This might be, for example, that their particular source of funding simply does not include such provision. Please give sufficient detail to justify your application to EBNet. Explain why travel cannot take place without support.

If funding for travel is included within the PhD stipend, please explain carefully why this travel cannot take place without further support. For example, if applying to speak at a particularly expensive conference, we would want to see justification for that choice over a smaller, more affordable one. If the included stipend funding has already been spent, justify why additional funds are needed to travel again. For example, is EBNet-funded work being promoted?

All applications from PhD students **MUST** be accompanied by a letter of support from their supervisor (who should be BBSRC/EPSRC eligible). The letter of support should also explain the student's funding circumstances.

Checklist

Have you included...

- **Application.**
- **Letter of invitation.** For this bursary, we ask that the applicant attach a copy of the conference invitation letter as proof that an oral presentation of the paper is being given.
- **Letter of Support.** PhD students will need an accompanying Letter of Support from their PhD Supervisor. Supervisors should ensure that this explains the student's funding situation. This helps to avoid delays while we seek clarification

Successful Awards

If successful, the applicant will be informed via email and provided with a reference number (TBYYYYxx) which should be used on all further correspondence. This email will confirm the maximum amount of funds that can be claimed under the overseas travel bursary for the purposes stated in the application. Any further stipulations specific to the offer will also be outlined. An expenses form and bank details form will be attached.

Recipients will also be required to submit a publically publishable short report on their activities along with their expenses claim. This summary will be made publically available on our website and may be published more widely elsewhere. Please include as a separate attachment high-resolution, copyright-free images or photographs, if possible. Photographs contained within the report are not generally suitable for us to utilise for publicity purposes. We may also, from time to time, request another output (e.g., a short video), but this will be made clear in the offer. If you promote your placement through social media or other publicity routes, EBNet would be grateful for acknowledgement of our support. We are @EBNetUK on Twitter.

Funds will be paid in arrears, if supported by original receipts and the summary report. It is the responsibility of the applicant to post the original receipts/travel tickets to us, along with the expenses claim form and the bank details form. We cannot process your expenses claim without this information. Please ensure that you have retained copies both for your own records and in case of loss of the original receipts. Note that in case of air travel, a valid boarding pass for the return journey is required as proof of travel.

Applicants must ensure that they hold the appropriate visa which has been applied for in good time. EBNet will not be held responsible for any costs incurred should a visa not arrive on time, rendering the applicant unable to attend.

Important Note: Expense claims MUST be received within 3 months from the start of the activity. If we have not received a claim within that time frame, we will assume that the bursary is no longer required; however, if there are extenuating circumstances which delay your submission, please contact us so we can provide a written variation by email. We operate under the Finance system of the University of Southampton and adhere to their rules on late claims. Irrespective of this proviso, no claim for repayment is possible after the end date of the Network - which is 1st March 2025.

Should the conditions of payment of the grant present any difficulties that might hinder uptake of the award, please contact the Network Managers to discuss alternative payment arrangements. Note that the travel bursary is non-transferable.

Data Protection Regulations

The PI of the BBSRC NIBB grant has the responsibility for keeping data relating to the grant secure and safe. Copies of the applications will be made available to the BBSRC, who will use this information for research related activities, including but not limited to, transfer of funds, statistical analysis in relation to evaluation of the BBSRC NIBB, study of trends and policy and strategy studies. Copies will also be made available to members of the Executive Group and Management Board for the purpose of assessment and evaluation such as processing the proposal, the award of any consequential grant and for the payment, maintenance and review of the grant.

We are expecting applicants to conform to the BBSRC guidelines for data sharing: <https://bbsrc.ukri.org/about/policies-standards/data-sharing-policy/> and good scientific practice: <https://bbsrc.ukri.org/about/policies-standards/good-scientific-practice/>.

To meet the Research Councils' obligations for public accountability and the dissemination of information, details of funded awards may also be made available on the Research Councils' websites and other publically available databases, and in reports, documents and mailing lists.

Contact Details

For any queries, please email the Network Managers, Angela Bywater/Dr Louise Byfield at EBNet@EBNet.ac.uk or telephone 02380 591281.