

Flexible Mobility Award (FMA) - Guidelines

UPDATED GUIDELINES for projects submitted after 22-02-2024

Please check your eligibility to receive funding using our quick [online test](#) before completing an application form.

1. What are BBSRC Flexible Mobility Awards?

Flexible Mobility Awards (FMAs) are to encourage and support mobility between academia and industry within the remit of the [Biofortification Hub](#). The Biofortification Hub is one of [six Hubs](#) funded by BBSRC as part of the Open Innovation Research Club ([OIRC](#)) on diet and health.

The awards aim to promote the movement of researchers and technicians between different research settings. Beneficiaries of FMAs can be either Early Career Researcher (ECR) from academia wishing to explore work in a company or a private organisation; or staff from industry (including technicians, specialists, engineers, researchers etc.) wanting to further their career progression through work experience in a public research organisation.

2. How much funding is available?

The Biofortification Hub has been awarded £400K of FMA funding at 100% fEC (full Economic Cost) and is expecting to make **individual awards up to £20K** (at 100% fEC) over the lifetime of the Hub. Awards include a set contribution of £3K towards the expenses of the host organisation. FMA awards exceeding £20K may be considered on a case-by-case basis but require prior approval from the Biofortification Hub before applying.

Projects are awarded at 100% fEC by BBSRC.

3. Who is eligible to apply for FMA funding?

Funding is available to staff and researchers from any public or private UK organisation with an activity in the area of biofortification. Priority will be given to Early Career Researchers (ECRs) from academia and technicians, specialists, engineers, researchers from industry.

FMAs will prioritise UK-based organisations (academic or industry) but will also consider placements at overseas partners of a UK-based company.

4. How long is each placement?

FMAs will support placements for a duration of **up to 3 months** in either industry or academia. Part-time placements will be considered on a case-by-case basis providing the maximum funds requested do not exceed £20K.

5. When are the funding calls?

Applications can be submitted anytime (open call) and will be reviewed every 2 months (Jan / Mar / May / Jul / Sep / Nov) by the Biofortification Hub.

6. What is the application process?

The applicant should complete an application form available on the [Biofortification Hub](#) website or by request to the Hub Manager (biofortification.hub@nbi.ac.uk). It is recommended, but not mandatory, that all applicants (including industry partners) join the Biofortification Hub. It is free and only takes two minutes to [apply for Hub membership](#) online.



Briefly, the application form asks for the following details:

- Applicant details (including a CV)
- Host details
- Project placement details (including baseline situation, project activities and intended outcomes)
- Financial details (including details of the industry contribution, if applicable)

The completed application form, letter of support (if relevant) should be e-mailed to the Hub Manager: biofortification.hub@nbi.ac.uk.

A '[Companies House](#)' search for the industrial partner(s) will be conducted when it is the host organisation.

All applications will be acknowledged within 3 working days. The Hub Manager will check the application meets the criteria and has the required information, however if this cannot be easily remedied (within 3 working days) then the application will be returned and will have to be resubmitted.

7. What is the review process?

The Biofortification Hub and [Executive Group \(EG\)](#) will evaluate applications. The Hub aims for a 2-week turnaround of applications. The chair of the [Strategic Advisory Board \(SAB\)](#) will review the award recommendations prior to submission for approval by BBSRC.

Criteria for assessment will include:

- Eligibility
- Status of candidates
- Project in scope
- Quality of project
- Potential outcomes (benefit to ECR, long-term collaboration, facilitating movement to higher education etc.)

8. How and when will the award be paid?

The successful academic and industrial partner will **join the Biofortification Hub** ([apply for Hub Membership](#)). They will agree a start date and need to have a signed Collaboration Agreement and, when applicable, a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) in place prior to the project commencing. The Hub Manager will require evidence that these are in place before releasing funds.

A formal "Funding Offer Letter" and "Award Agreement" (summarising the "Terms and Conditions") will be issued to the successful applicant.

The Quadram Institute Bioscience (QIB) will transfer funds to the applicant and applicant/host organisations based on the award details. Generally, expenses and salary buyouts of the applicant will be processed once received by QIB. Travel and subsistence expenses will be paid to the applicant upon presentation of receipts to QIB. Funds (£3K) will be transferred to the host organisation upon completion of the placement.

9. What reporting will be required?

A short [Project Completion Form](#) (authorised by the industrial partner for use in the public domain) must be submitted within one month of the project ending and should be sent to the Hub Manager (biofortification.hub@nbi.ac.uk).

Briefly, the Project Completion Form includes:

- Summary of the outcomes
- Testimonial(s) from the host organisation and awardee
- Image (with legend) related to the placement
- Future plans

The Hub Executive Group (EG) and [Core Membership Group \(CMG\)](#) will approve all reports. In the case of conflict of interest, the CMG Chair or nominee will review such reports.

The report will be used to create a [case study](#) available in the public domain (e.g. Biofortification Hub, BBSRC and British Nutrition Foundation websites and publications). In some cases, the awardee may be approached by the Hub for a short online interview regarding the placement.

The awardee should acknowledge the support of the BBSRC award **BB/X010864/1** on papers and other forms of media communications including press releases, conferences and media appearances.

10. What data protection and data sharing policies are in place?

Please read the Biofortification Hub [privacy notice](#) before completing an application form.

Contact the Hub Manager (biofortification.hub@nbi.ac.uk) if you have any questions.

Copies of proposals will be made available to the Biofortification Hub Executive Group (EG) and chair of the Strategic Advisory Board (SAB) in confidence. Administrative staff of the Norwich Bioscience Institutes (NBI Norwich) will use the information provided in the application for processing the proposal, the award of any consequential funding, and the payment, maintenance and review of the FMAs.

To meet BBSRC obligations for public accountability and dissemination of information, details of grants (including successful FMAs) may also be made available on the Research Councils' websites and other publicly available databases, and in reports, documents and mailing lists. BBSRC will use this information for research-related activities, including but not limited to, transfer of funds, statistical analysis in relation to evaluation of BBSRC OIRC Hubs, study of trends and policy and strategy studies.

Information about grants may also be made available to the [British Nutrition Foundation](#) which coordinates on behalf of BBSRC, the activity of the six OIRC innovation Hubs, including the Biofortification Hub.

11. Who do I contact if I have any questions?

If you have any questions regarding the application process, please contact the Hub Manager: biofortification.hub@nbi.ac.uk.