



Industrial Biotechnology Innovation Catalyst (IBIC) Impact Acceleration Account

HANDBOOK 2026

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About IBIC

The Industrial Biotechnology Innovation Catalyst (IBIC) is a £5 million EPSRC place-based initiative that brings together north-west England's industrial biotechnology community to accelerate knowledge exchange, skills development, and innovation. It galvanises links between the region's science, research, innovation, and teaching sectors to create real-world impact.

The IBIC is led by The University of Manchester's Institute of Biotechnology and co-created with the Universities of Liverpool, Salford, and Manchester Metropolitan, and civic and business partners including the Innovation District Manchester project.

This Impact Acceleration Account initiative helps us to maximise our economic and social impact by ensuring we deliver research and expertise effectively and efficiently to external partners. It funds a range of support mechanisms, from initial engagement and collaboration, through to commercialisation and user adoption.

What is industrial biotechnology?

Industrial biotechnology uses biological elements (eg enzymes, molecules, microorganisms, etc) to create bio-based industrial products and processes such as biofuels, chemicals or pharmaceuticals. Using industrial biotechnology as a source of renewable raw materials can help us to transition away from using fossil fuel-based raw materials, with the potential to reduce waste, energy and pollution.

Our funding mechanisms

IBIC activity is currently delivered via a number of funding schemes:

- [Relationship Development scheme](#)
- [Proof of Concept scheme](#)
- [Secondment Exchange scheme](#)
- [Cluster / Network Building scheme](#)
- [Commercial Development scheme](#)

These support different activities, dependent on the nature of the collaboration and the stage of technology, research or knowledge development. Further details are given on the following pages.

Relationship development scheme (up to £10,000)

- Seed funding to build relationships
- Enhancing knowledge and skills via exchange

We want to encourage long-term, beneficial collaboration between businesses and academics by establishing contact and aligning everyone's strategies at an early stage. That's why our relationship development scheme aims to foster new relationships between industry and academic researchers to create collaboration and knowledge exchange opportunities. We also look to support market discovery by providing research evidence or creating licencing opportunities, as well as building relationships with end users of new technologies.

Applications for this award will be assessed on:

- Both partners' willingness to collaborate
- Market need
- Novelty of the technology or solution
- Scope for impact and its significance to industry/society
- Strength of the follow-on activity plan and its sustainability

Typical duration: up to 6 months

Maximum award: £10,000

Contribution from external partner: a direct financial contribution is welcome, but not expected

Apply here: [IBIC relationship development scheme application form](#)

Closing dates: 12/03/2026, 11/06/2026, 10/09/2026, 10/12/2026

Proof-of-concept scheme (up to £30,000)

- Demonstrate research or knowledge exchange
- Prototype development
- Policy scoping

We want to support the early stages of transforming research outputs into commercial opportunities. Therefore, the proof-of-concept scheme is available to support early evaluation prototypes or 'demonstrators', initial trials in a particular field, or 'scoping exercises'.

Applications for this award will typically include:

- A project partner with a committed cash contribution
- Outcomes that will lead to a spin-out company, new IP, licensing agreements, follow-on translational funding, or advancing the collaboration (e.g. through a Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP), or an industry-funded PhD studentship)

Applications for this award will be assessed on:

- The collaborative partnership
- Novelty of the technology or solution and market need
- Quality of the proposed workplan
- Scope for impact and its significance to industry/society
- Strength of the follow-on activity plan and its sustainability

Typical Duration: up to 12 months

Maximum Award: £30,000

Contribution from External Partner: A direct financial contribution is usually required

Apply here: [IBIC proof-of-concept application form](#)

Closing date: 12/03/2026, 11/06/2026, 10/09/2026, 10/12/2026

Secondment exchange scheme (up to £60,000)

- Flexible funded student/staff exchanges (two-way)
- Knowledge exchange
- Accelerate translation

One of the best ways to increase knowledge exchange is to encourage secondments between universities and organisations.

We can provide flexible support for secondments between our university partners and your business or organisation. The secondments will focus on developing specific commercial industrial biotechnology research outputs while also extending the culture and skills for business engagement at our university partners.

Applications for this award will be assessed on:

- The novelty of the underpinning science, engineering, or policy development
- The scope and significance for impact
- The commitment of the host organisation
- The scope for developing long-term partnership
- The strength of the investment plan following a successful secondment

Typical Duration: Up to 12 months

Maximum Award: £60,000

Contribution from External Partner: A direct financial contribution is usually required

Apply here: [IBIC secondment exchange application form](#)

Closing date: 12/03/2026, 11/06/2026, 10/09/2026, 10/12/2026

Cluster / network building scheme (up to £5,000)

- Funding for a variety of networking activities
- Skills training
- Thematic knowledge exchange
- Policy development

We want to foster a culture and environment across the NW industrial biotech community that encourages, enables, and empowers ambitious knowledge exchange and innovation activities. We can provide funds to connect university research, services and training to local businesses, FE colleges and residents to embed impact, skills, capabilities, and capacity amongst the IBIC community and facilitate R&D-intensive start-ups and spinouts/ins to incorporate, develop and commercialise their IP.

This funding pot will fund a variety of networking activities including:

- workshops to pump prime new activity between academia and industry
- sandpits to encourage knowledge sharing and adoption of new technologies/approaches
- project & skills training to fill gaps in the IB R&D skills and talent pipeline and encourage adoption and diffusion of new technologies and approaches, particularly for early-stage companies, FE college and university students and early career researchers
- scoping exercises
- showcases – academia to industry or industry to academia
- demonstration
- thematic specific knowledge exchange & public engagement to support building IBIC's community and ecosystem
- policy influencing activities

Applications for this award will be assessed on:

- The need for the proposed activity and applicability to NW industrial biotech sector
- The strength of the knowledge exchange / innovation action
- Scope for impact and its significance to industry/society
- Potential of the follow-on activity plan

Typical duration: flexible, depending on the activity

Anticipated award range: £500-£5,000

Contribution from external partner: a direct financial contribution is welcome, but not expected. In-kind contributions are also welcomed.

Apply here: [IBIC cluster network building scheme application form](#)

Closing date: Open call, apply at any time

Commercial development scheme (up to £50,000)

- Initial market and competitive landscaping
- Technology evaluation to drive start-ups, spin-outs and licensing opportunities

Generating tangible environmental, societal and commercial impact from our research is at the heart of the Industrial Biotechnology Innovation Catalyst (IBIC) mission. Typical routes to such impact are through creating a start-up or spin out company, or through licencing Intellectual Property to an external party to subsequently exploit. To identify if such opportunities exist, the researcher/s must first identify what problem their technology will solve and also understand their potential market.

The IBIC Commercial Development Fund helps bridge this gap between academic research and commercialisation opportunities, with follow on funding potentially being made available for projects that demonstrate significant potential/strategic value is likely.

Applications for this award will typically include:

- A project lead academic working with their local tech transfer office
- Outcomes that will lead to a spin-out company, licensing agreements or a spin-in

Applications for this award will be assessed on:

- Feasibility of the invention/technology
- Quality of the proposed workplan
- Scope for impact and its significance to industry/society
- Strength of the follow-on exploitation plan

Typical Duration: up to 9 months

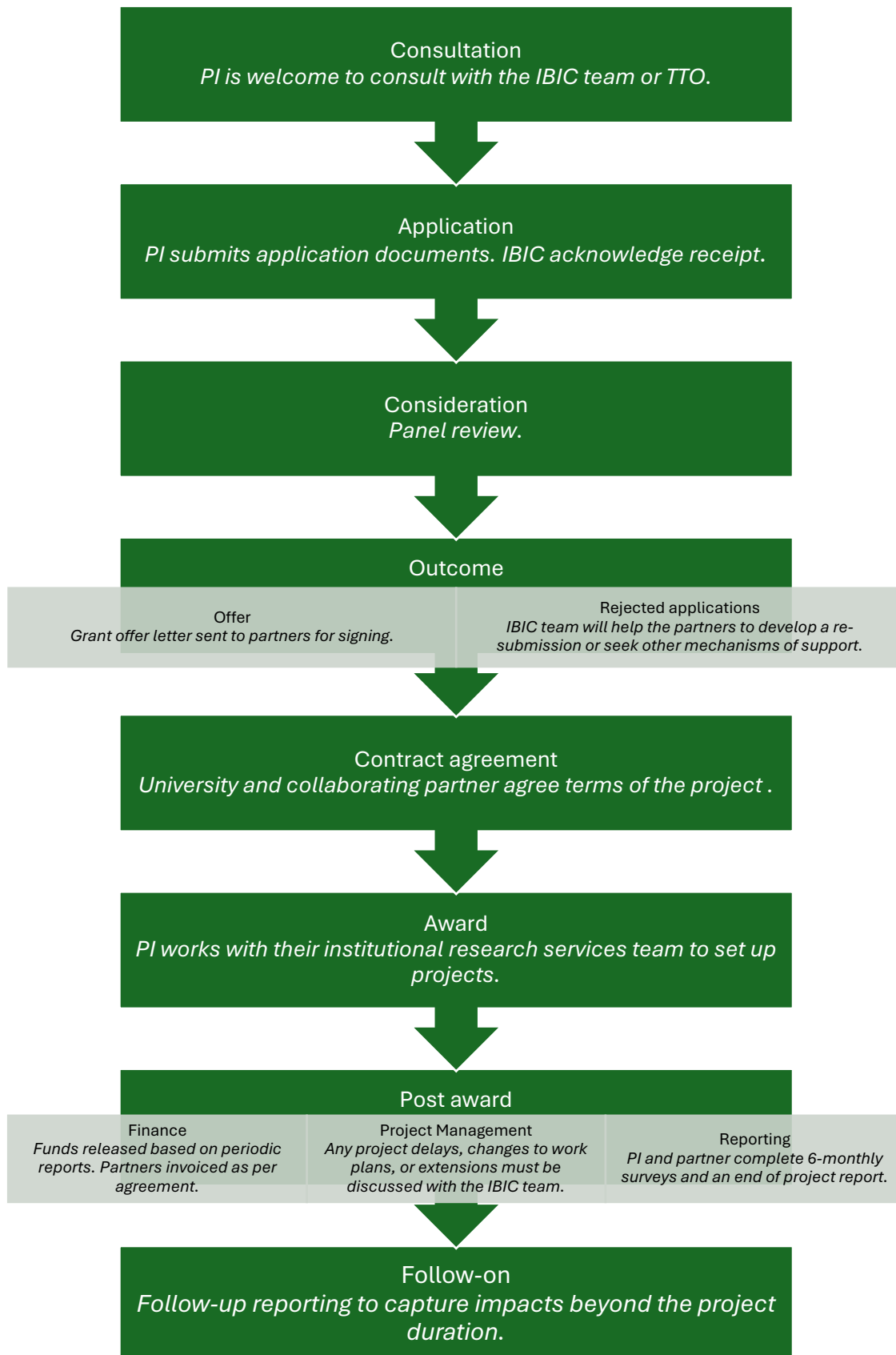
Maximum Award: £50,000

Contribution from External Partner: Not usually required

Apply here: [IBIC commercial development application form](#)

Closing date: 12/03/2026, 11/06/2026, 10/09/2026, 10/12/2026

The funding process



1. **Consultation:** The PI is welcome to consult with the IBIC team for guidance and support for project development, please allow at least four weeks prior to submitting the application to do so. The IBIC team can review and feedback on draft applications with the PI and external partner. Those applying for Commercial Development funds must also consult their local Tech Transfer Office (TTO).
2. **Application:** The PI requests a costing from their research services team (all projects costed at full economic costs) and the application undergoes relevant institutional approvals. The PI submits application documents to IBIC (see [Application checklist](#)).
The IBIC team will acknowledge receipt of applications, request any missing documents or information and notify of the expected outcome date.
3. **Proposal consideration:** The IBIC Funding Review Panel will meet within four weeks of the proposal deadline. Applications are anonymised before being sent to the panel for review.
4. **Offer:** Following approval of a proposal by the IBIC Grant Review Panel, the PI is sent a grant offer letter and requested to return a signed offer acceptance within 10 working days.
5. **Contract agreement:** The Proof of Concept and Secondment application forms contain an example set of standard terms and conditions, setting out expectations for the project agreement. Any envisaged concerns or additional requirements relating to these can be indicated in the application form and are discussed during panel review. Finance codes, release of funds and invoices are not generated, and projects do not start, until an agreement is confirmed by the PI as being fully in place with the industry partner. For Relationship Builder and Commercial Development projects we strongly advise that an NDA is in place prior to any discussions.
6. **Award:** When an agreement has been fully executed the project can start. The HE partner should work with their internal research support teams to set the award up. Applicants from external HE institutions can invoice The University of Manchester. UoM applicants will have the PURE record checked by the Research Services team and the project will be set to “awarded” and assigned an R code on Oracle Financials.
7. **Post-award, project finance:** The PI’s research finance team will submit periodic financial reports to the IBIC team. The IBIC team will confirm eligibility of expenditure, compare it with planned expenditure and ensure spend trajectory is in line with the expenditure deadline. Funds will be released based on expenditure once the IBIC team have reviewed the reports and transactions. The research finance team will invoice the HE partner organisation as per the set schedule in the agreement.
8. **Post-award, management:** Project delays and changes to the work plan or planned expenditure must be discussed with the IBIC team and agreed with the

partner organisation. Extension requests must be sent via email to the IBIC team.

9. **Post-award, project reporting:** The PI and collaborating partner organisation are required to complete a survey to report on the progress of the project at six-month intervals, as well as a final report at project end, detailing achievements, outputs, outcomes and impacts. The IBIC team will send a link to the survey to each partner at the appropriate stage of the project.
10. **Follow-on:** Requests for follow-up reports will be sent to the PI and collaborating partner(s), beyond the end of the award, to understand the ongoing impact generated from the project that may not have been realised at the time of reporting, in line with EPSRC reporting requirements.

Assessment criteria

The IBIC team can provide support and guidance for your application. **We strongly advise you [contact us](#) before beginning the application process at least four weeks before the deadline.**

Your application will be assessed on the below criteria, as appropriate to the funding scheme:

1. **Potential for impact:** A good proposal clearly articulates and quantifies the potential for commercial, social and academic impact, and considers specific outputs and routes to impact. It should clearly demonstrate how the expected outcomes are innovative, and why the planned project activities are essential to achieving impact. **All projects must have an impact on the north-west's industrial biotech sector.**
2. **Quality of the work plan:** A good work plan lists clear and well-defined tasks that are achievable within the timeframe, with risks identified. It should evidence engagement with the collaborating partner (if the project has one) and consider the resources required. There should be clearly defined outputs at each stage, and key decision points highlighted. The work plan should demonstrate that you have considered the work required to achieve the expected impact and that the team have the appropriate skills to carry out the project.
3. **Demonstrable potential for follow-on activity:** The follow-on plans should identify the opportunities and mechanisms for follow-on work, with clear potential benefits to the academic team and to the host academic institution. For collaborative projects, your application should show that you expect to continue the collaboration beyond the duration of the project. For Commercial Development projects there should be a clear route to exploitation eg via a spin out or licensing opportunity.

4. **Value for money:** All costs should be appropriate and justified. Where indicated in the scheme, the partner organisation is expected to contribute financially to the project with a direct contribution. Direct contributions are not normally expected for Relationship Development funding and may not be appropriate for certain organisations (such as charities). In-kind contributions (such as staff time and equipment) are also expected and should be well-defined. Partner contributions are not expected for Commercial Development projects.
5. **Nature of secondment:** For Secondment projects only, the nature of the secondment is evaluated. Ideally, for outward secondments, the secondee should be based at the collaborating partner organisation. A good application will show clear consideration of the support the secondee requires from the partner, and commitment from the partner to provide this.
6. **Feasibility of the invention/technology:** For Commercial Development projects only, the applicant must demonstrate that there is a credible commercial opportunity, show how the innovation or technology is a solution to a problem/unmet need in the market and that it is at an appropriate level of technology readiness.

Each IBIC funding mechanism has its own application form. Download the appropriate form for your project:

[Relationship development scheme](#)

[Proof-of-concept scheme](#)

[Secondment exchange scheme](#)

[Cluster / network building scheme](#)

[Commercial development scheme](#)

Guidance on the application form

Applications are anonymised for ED&I purposes prior to the panel assessment. Please include the name of the academic project partners on the first page only. Use the terms PI, Co-I or PDRA in the remaining fields. Do not include hyperlinks, DOI or references by which you may be identified.

Word limits are strictly applied, if they are exceeded the application may be rejected.

The forms for relationship development, proof-of-concept, secondment exchange, cluster/network building and commercial development schemes each differ slightly, but the following guidelines apply to them all except where stated.

Section : Academic partner(s): The PI and any Co-I's on the project must be named. Add more spaces if required.

Section : External partner organisation (only if indicated): Provide details of the Lead partner organisation and any collaborating organisations. Include organisation name, address and a contact email for all collaborating organisations. For Cluster/network building scheme please indicate stakeholder organisations and sectors who will participate in the proposed.

Section : Strategy: This section varies in content, depending on funding scheme and will include some of the following:

- **Project title:** This information must be suitable for the public domain. Use clear, concise language that can be understood by a non-specialist.
- **Lay summary:** Describe the project aims and its significance in a lay manner. This information must be suitable for the public domain.
- **Technical summary** (where indicated): Provide a summary of the invention or technology and describe the problem the technology/innovation is solving.
- **Strategic aim of this collaboration:** Define the strategic aim/scope of the project and the significance to the host university, external partner or participating organisations.

Section: Potential for impact: Be specific about the demonstrable impacts that will result from your partnership, project or activity. These should be quantifiable and extend beyond academic impact and you should work collaboratively with your project team(s) to identify and quantify them. Impact may include commercial benefit to the partner organisation, demonstration of IP or market opportunity, job creation, policy change and societal or environmental benefits. Please refer to [Appendix 1](#) which contains a guide to outputs, outcomes and impacts. Consider the impacts both during and beyond the timeframe of the project.

***Secondment applications:** You are asked to outline how secondment will support the aim of your project. Be specific about why a secondment is more appropriate than other forms of interaction, such as consultancy.

Section : Delivery

- **Project work plan:** This should be divided into stages and detailed enough to show that you have understood the work and resources required at each stage and planned accordingly. The effort required is the time in months to complete each task. Tasks may run concurrently, but the total effort should equal the project length. With the project objective in mind, state what each task will achieve and how it will be carried out. List tangible and quantifiable outputs at each stage (see [Appendix 1](#) for examples of outputs) and note any key decision points which will enable you to manage the direction of the project. Accompany the work plan with a **project Gantt chart**. This is less detailed, but you should clearly indicate how the tasks will be completed over the duration of the project.

- **Summary of project outputs and outcomes:** List the outputs arising from the work plan and outline the associated anticipated outcomes and impacts. *These should be realistic and measurable*, and you should consider how you will capture evidence. For examples of project outputs, outcomes and related impacts, refer to [Appendix 1](#). Add additional rows as necessary.

Section : Follow On: Outline what steps will be taken after the duration of the IBIC impact acceleration funding that will ensure full realisation of the intended impacts. You should give careful consideration to the routes and mechanisms to achieve further impact and the potential barriers to market or realisation.

For Relationship Development and Cluster/Network Building proposals, these are intended as early-stage collaboration/knowledge exchange and are expected to lead to further collaboration such as Proof of Concept Grants or a Knowledge Transfer Partnership. Further collaboration is encouraged, and you should consider how this will be funded.

If not detailed elsewhere in your applications, you should note the intellectual property considerations that may arise during and after the project, and how these will be managed. Be specific about the ownership.

Section : Finance

- **Project budget:** Your application form will be accompanied by a full economic costing (FEC) report, eg from your research support team, which you should use to complete this section. The PI, Co-I's and researchers (if known) must be named on the costing.
- **Project costs:** Include all staff costs, estates, indirect costs, technician costs, travel and subsistence, and consumables. Costs listed in your application must be reflected in your work plan. The table below sets out the eligible and ineligible costs for each funding scheme. IBIC will fund eligible costs at 100% FEC up to the limit of each funding scheme.
- **External partner contribution:** Except in exceptional circumstances, a direct financial contribution from the partner organisation is expected for proof-of-concept and secondment exchange grants. In all grants the partner is expected to make an in-kind contribution to the project, such as equipment and facilities, or staff time.

Eligible costs	Rel Dev	PoC	Sec	Clus/Net	Comm Dev
Directly incurred					
PRDA costs	any	any	any	not eligible	any
Travel / subsistence	£5k max	£5k max	£5k max	any	£5k max
Equipment / consumables with justification)	£2k max	£10k max	£10k max	No equipment	£5k max (non-research)
PDRA training and development (with justification)	not eligible	£2k max	£2k max	not eligible	£2k max
Other costs ¹ with justification, subject to approval from IBIC team	any	any	any	any	any
Directly allocated					
Investigator time	20% max	20% max	20% max	20% max	40% max
Technician time	30% max	30% max	30% max	not eligible	Up to 10% but not expected
Ineligible costs					
Estates					
IS Technician					
Indirect costs					

¹ Other costs should be appropriate to the scheme, eg for all schemes this might include impact related costs, for cluster/network building projects these might include venue hire, reasonable catering costs, or for commercial development projects this may include consultancy costs.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

IBIC aims to have an inclusive environment by identifying and removing barriers in our practices. As part of UKRI's equality, diversity and inclusion initiative, completing the monitoring form linked on each application form will help us to achieve this, and also help us to meet our obligations under the Equality Act 2010. While it is voluntary to disclose this information, doing so will enable us to better understand the composition

of our connections and examine our practices fully. The ED&I survey is anonymous and can be accessed on the following link: [IBIC equality data gathering form](#)

Data we want to capture includes Gender, Age range, Ethnicity, Disability Status and Sexual orientation. Your answers will be treated in the strictest confidence, and all data disclosed will comply with the Data Protection Act 1998. All data is handled in accordance with The University of Manchester Policy and more details can be seen here: <https://www.manchester.ac.uk/discover/privacy-information/data-protection/>

Application checklist

- Ensure that you have contacted the IBIC team for support at least four weeks prior to submission.
- Ensure that your local TTO has been contacted for Commercial Development applications.
- All projects should be costed (FEC) and validated by your local research support team, prior to completion of the IBIC application, and a copy must be attached to the submitted application.
- We strongly encourage you to complete the IBIC equality data gathering form.

Your application must contain:

- Signed application form.
- Signed letter of support from the partner organisation (where indicated).
- Evidence of discussions with your local TTO (where indicated).
- Evidence of institutional approval (snapshot of approval on PURE is eligible).

Send your completed application documents via email to: IBIC@manchester.ac.uk

Post-award reporting and evidence capture

As detailed above, the progress and achievements of the project will be captured in six-monthly reports during the project, and a final report at project end. Follow-up reports will be requested beyond the award period to record impacts generated from the project that may not have been realised at the time of initial reporting, as per EPSRC reporting requirements.

Further information

[Appendix 1](#) is a guide to project outputs, outcomes and impact as key performance indicators for IBIC projects. [Appendix 2](#) contains frequently asked questions.

Appendix 1: outputs, outcomes, and impact

IBIC IAA awards are intended to foster innovative routes to impact beyond academia. In the application form you are asked to consider the outputs, outcomes your project will deliver, and the impacts that will result. During and after your IBIC project, you will be asked to report on these. In this section we explain the differences between outputs, outcomes and impacts, with examples, and appropriate sources of evidence.

Outputs: What you produce

Outputs are the direct products of the activities you undertake during the project. They are usually tangible and quantifiable. Outputs typically occur during the timeframe of the project. Evidence for outputs is largely quantitative and should be realistic.

Examples of outputs:

- *Publications and documents:*
 - No. of joint academic/industry publications
 - Provide DOIs or references
 - Manuals or guides written
 - Standard Operating procedures written
 - Consultancy/technical reports
 - Policy/influencing document written
- *Commercial:*
 - No. and value of licensing agreements
 - No. of market assessments completed
 - New trademarks registered
- *Partnership/user engagement activities:*
 - No. of contributions to conferences/trade shows
 - Provide evidence such as conference proceedings or URL
 - No. of outward secondments
 - No. of inward secondments
 - No. of collaborative academic/partner projects.
 - No. of CPD programmes developed or training delivered
 - In-kind contributions from partner organisation
 - Direct cash contributions from partner organisation
 - Number and duration of inward visits from partner organisation representative s, and outward visits by the academic to the partner organisation
 - Number of networking events organised
 - Public engagement activities (events, web and social media)
- *New technology/knowledge:*

- No. of patents filed
- Provide patent application no. as issued by the UK IPO (or the EPO, or USPTO, or WIPO)
- No. of new records of invention
- No. of prototypes/ tool kits/ test beds/ databases / beta software produced
- No. of diagnostic tools developed
- *Creative outputs:*
 - performances
 - exhibitions
 - compositions

Outcomes: What you achieve

Outcomes are the results of your activities. These can be planned or unintentional and may arise in the short-term or extend beyond the duration of the project. These should be realistic. Evidence for outcomes may be quantitative or qualitative, and you should work closely with the partner organisation to capture examples. Keep evidence such as records of meetings and communications that evidence knowledge transfer, funding and investment details, documentation of processes, analytics and archives from online activities, and feedback from events.

Examples of outcomes:

- *Economic/commercial*
 - Spinouts/social enterprises/Joint ventures established
 - You will be asked to provide company number(s) as recorded by Companies House, and URLs where appropriate
 - Income generated through commercialisation activities (e.g. consultancy or licensing)
 - Additional business or commercial R&D investment in the University over and above the original IAA project
 - Investment from companies or venture capitalists in commercialisation/spin out
 - Permanent employment created as a result of initial IAA placement, jobs created or safeguarded.
 - In particular, consider the career outcomes/future employment for secondees and others working directly on the project.
 - Scale-up of products or processes
- *User engagement and partnership*
 - Further collaborations with partner organisation beyond the initial IBIC grant
 - Projects continuing beyond initial engagement, further grant applications submitted

- Extent and reach of CPD
 - Record the numbers of attendees and any feedback, course completion rates
- *Knowledge and influence*
 - Engagement of non-academic audiences
 - May be evidenced by numbers of attendees at events, social media views/impressions, feedback received
 - Media interview, press release, press conference or other response to a media enquiry
 - Note times, dates and provide URLs where necessary
 - Citation in policy documents
 - Provide references and URLs as appropriate
 - Evidence given to a government review
 - Give details and URL as appropriate
 - Contribution to new or improved professional practice
 - New standard operating procedures, the adoption of new techniques and processes
 - Prizes received (academic or industrial/sector-related)
 - provide URLs /press-release where necessary

Impact: What you affect

Impacts are long term outcomes which affect the society and culture, health and quality of life, the economy or the environment. They include wealth creation and improvements in social or environmental conditions. You should include long term beneficial changes to the partner and host University, and reputational benefits. Please ensure that stated impacts are realistic.

Evidence of impact may include independent statements from partner organisations or policy makers, policy documents, sales records, financial and employment records, media archives, numbers of software downloads, evaluation reports and feedback. Evidence may be quantitative or qualitative.

Examples of impacts that may arise from the outputs and outcomes listed above:

- Number of jobs created or safeguarded as a result of IAA supported activities.
- Increased R&D expenditure by partner organisation
- Increased turnover, profits and exports of new products/processes by partner organisation
 - Collect quantitative information from partner organisation
- Cost savings/efficiency gains for partner organisations
 - Collect quantitative information from partner organisation
- New business models in partner organisations
 - Collect testimonials/documentation from partner organisation

- New products/processes
 - Provide URLs for products and quantify sales/implementation of processes where possible
- Policy changes
 - If possible, provide case studies, collect statements and reference policy documents
- Change of practice/behaviour
 - Specify the nature of the change and the benefits gained
- Environmental impacts: Waste reduction, energy efficiency gains, increase in sustainability, circularisation of life-cycle.
 - Collect quantitative information
- Social/societal impacts such as increase in engagement, participation and agency
 - Consider at the planning stage how these will be evidenced. Examples may include focus group reports, interviews, surveys and evaluation reports, attendance numbers at events and web analytics
- Cultural impacts such as enhancements to cultural heritage preservation and interpretation, the production of new cultural artefacts, media or creative practices
 - Provide evidence such as URLs, press release and media coverage

Appendix 2: FAQs

Application FAQs

Are Post-Doc Researchers eligible to apply as the role of Principle Investigator?

Projects must be led by an academic, with researchers generally appointed (costed on) to the project. Further guidance is here: <https://www.ukri.org/councils/epsrc/guidance-for-applicants/check-if-you-are-eligible-for-funding/>

I am a newly appointed Fellow - what academic status is required to be investigator here?

Principal investigators must have academic status. Your Fellow-status may allow you to be PI, but please check with your local research services team. Further guidance is here: <https://www.ukri.org/councils/epsrc/guidance-for-applicants/check-if-you-are-eligible-for-funding/>

Can I include a named researcher in my proposal?

Yes, as long as the researcher's salary has been included in the project costing and they have the capacity to work on the IBIC project within the project timescales.

Can I work with a company that I have an interest in?

Please contact the IBIC team if there is any potential, real or perceived conflict of interest. We will consider all requests on an individual basis. Conflicts of interest must be detailed in the application.

Can IBIC IAA funded projects link back to previous IBIC applications?

Yes, for example, to demonstrate progression from Proof-of-Concept to Secondment, but they must also still fit with the remit of IBIC.

Can I apply for funding from IBIC to financially support exhibitions, public engagement or outreach events?

IBIC IAAs can be used for two-way public engagement that is relevant and informs research impact as a critical pathway to achieving economic and/or societal impact in the north west biotech sector. However, the IAA schemes are not suitable for other outreach-based activities as these schemes are intended to support knowledge exchange and impact generation with external partners, including businesses, public and third sector.

The organisation I want to work with is not based in the north-west, would the IAA project still be eligible?

Non-north-west based businesses may be eligible where there is demonstrable evidence of the intention for inward investment in the north-west during or beyond the lifetime of the project (e.g. establishing a north-west site, job creation). North-west based sites of international businesses may also be eligible, however, we do require you to work with the north-west site, and the north-west site must be appropriate (e.g. if the project is focused on Research and Development, the north-west site must be conducting related R&D and have staff to support the project). In multi-national organisations, although benefit can often be seen across the entire organisation, we do need to demonstrate benefit to the north-west site.

I have a project idea; will the IBIC team be able to find a suitable external organisation to collaborate on the project?

Please contact the IBIC team if you have a potential project idea. Whilst we do not have a 'list' of external organisations ready and waiting to collaborate, we may be able to support introductions where applicable. The Relationship Development scheme has been designed to support academics in identifying and nurturing their own relationships with external partners.

I am not sure which scheme is applicable for my proposed project.

The IBIC team are happy to support your application and will advise on the scheme they think is relevant for your project. Please email ibic@manchester.ac.uk with any queries and we will arrange a meeting to discuss your options.

For the secondment scheme, can the secondee be an existing academic?

Yes, as long as this is agreed with your department/division ahead of submitting your application. In most academic cases, the secondment is limited to 6 months.

Can the secondment scheme fund an inward secondment (an employee of the partner organisation seconded to a University partner)?

Yes, secondments can be inward and/or outward, providing the secondment supports the commercialisation and/or translational development and adoption of University research. Secondees will maintain the terms and conditions (including annual leave) of their own organisation. The external partner is expected to provide in-kind and direct financial contributions in both cases. For inward secondments, the external partner is expected to fund the secondee's salary. The IAA may be used to support reasonable University support costs, e.g. academic or PDRA time, equipment access and consumables (purchased through the University).

Finance FAQs

How should I include the direct financial contribution from the partner?

The partner direct contribution should be included in the costing for the overall budget, and costed in the same manner as the IBIC contribution.

Are IBIC projects funded at 80% FEC?

No, projects should be costed at 100% FEC and IBIC will cover 100% FEC of all DI costs, DA PI costs and DA tech costs, up to the funding scheme limit. IBIC will not cover any overhead categories (estates, indirects, IS tech etc).

Can overheads be covered by the partner contribution?

No, all overhead is via a Department or School sustainability contribution and must be approved by the appropriate Head of Department or School.

Can the partner contribution be limited to provision only? i.e., time/resources in-kind, not necessarily a cash contribution.

Yes, but this will weaken the case at review for Proof of Concept and Secondment IBIC grants, unless there is good justification. For example, if the partner is the NHS or a charitable organisation. A direct, cash contribution is welcomed but not expected for Relationship Development or Cluster/Network Building projects.

What is the minimum eligible FTE % for PI/Co-I?

We advise against costing PI FTE at less than 5% as it is likely to be flagged at the funding panel and we would generally want to see 10% upwards costed on the project but it does depend on the project. The PI/Co-I FTE % needs to be cohesive with the project plan, e.g. if the project plan includes a lot of travel for the PI, the FTE should be

in line with the time the PI is spending traveling on the project. If the project needs a lot of input from the PI but the FTE is low, this will be queried by the panel.

If during the project I need to purchase more consumables than originally costed, can I use other budget headings to cover this?

Transfers of funds between fund headings are permitted only within and between Directly Incurred costs, excluding equipment. Directly Incurred funds must not be used to meet costs on any other Grant or activity. Funds can only be transferred and used to meet the cost of activity or activities that meet the agreed aims and objectives of the project. You should contact the IBIC team before moving between budget headings.

Can I use IBIC funds to cover travel and conference costs in advance for a conference scheduled after the project end date?

Directly Incurred funds must not be used to meet the costs of an activity that will fall outside the grant period. There may be some flexibility with projects with direct partner financial contributions from a project partner therefore, you should seek guidance from the IBIC team.

If I move to another research organisation, can I transfer this project there?

The project may be transferred to another eligible organisation, providing that it remains within the scope of IBIC and a suitable environment can be provided to enable the project to be successfully completed; this will be subject to prior written approval of the IBIC team. Written agreement to this is required from both the relinquishing and receiving organisations. If the Grant Holder moves to another Research Organisation, and the project remains at the original Research Organisation, the Research Organisation must nominate an alternative Grant Holder with the relevant expertise to undertake the project plan. Requests for this should be submitted for the approval of the IBIC team.

Can I use the IAA funds to cover student fees?

Costs associated to students must not be charged to the IAA budget however, students are able to undertake paid work as casual assistance, this should be evidenced with a clear audit trail and should not form part of the formal studentship training.

Are there any consumables costs that are ineligible on IAA projects?

In most cases laboratory consumables such as gloves and blue roll, as well as office consumables such as photocopying, printing, postage, general transport costs, stationery, computer consumables and telephone costs, and also utilities costs, are not expected to be accounted for at the project level and should be found from indirect costs. You may be able use the partner contribution to cover these costs if necessary, the IBIC team can advise.

Can the IAA funds cover the visa costs of the PDRA?

UKRI currently allow visa fees to be charged to the grant for all DI staff directly employed on the grant for 100% of their time. All visa costs, including Certificates of Sponsorship, incurred must be a direct result of the person being employed on the grant for 100% of their contracted time and is not extended to family members. All costs must be met within the original grant cash limit.

Can the IAA funding be used to pay for external specialist expertise, such as consultants?

Yes - A third-party organisation (such as a consultant or subcontractor), not employed on the grant, who is subcontracted by the lead research organisation to provide limited, specific contributions or deliver a specific piece of work that cannot be resourced internally by the project team, may be included but should not form the bulk of the IBIC budget.

For further guidance, refer to UKRI guidance on grant terms and conditions.

Post-Award FAQs

Do you fund project extensions?

The IBIC funding is limited; therefore, it is unlikely that we will be able to offer funded extensions.

Are non-funded project extensions eligible? If so, what is the process for extending my IBIC project?

Extensions are eligible depending on how long you want to extend the project (we are limited to IBIC spending deadlines). The extension must be agreed with the IBIC team, and justification will be needed. The extension should also be agreed with the partner organisation and the authorised institutional approver. If you are planning to extend your project, you must contact the IBIC team in the first instance to discuss.

Now that my project has been awarded, do I need to contact the contracts team to arrange an agreement between my university and/or the partner organisation?

All funded IBIC projects will need to have an agreement in place before they can commence, between the university and another HE organisation, or between an HE organisation and the external partner. The Proof of Concept and Secondment application forms contain *an example* of standard Terms and Conditions that can be used as a basis for an agreement for the IBIC funded projects. We would also recommend an NDA is in place before any discussions commence with the external partner. Any concerns or additional requirements to the standard Terms and Conditions agreement can be indicated in the application and will be discussed during panel review.

When should I start the recruitment process for the researcher on my IBIC project and can the IBIC team help?

Advertisement of research staff should be processed promptly once the project award letter has been signed and preferably after the agreement has been completed (although due to time constraints, there may be times when adverts are made live before the agreement has been signed).

What will happen if there are delays with recruiting a researcher?

Depending on the project, if a researcher cannot be recruited within the project timescales and IBIC expenditure deadlines, the project may be withdrawn. If you are having problems with recruitment, you should contact the IBIC team as soon as possible to notify us of any potential delays or issues.

Can I delay the start of my IAA project?

Delaying the project depends on project timescales and IBIC expenditure deadlines. All cases for delaying projects will be different so you will need to contact the IBIC team directly so that we can check whether your project is eligible and determine the latest we can extend the project start date.

The partner organisation will also need to agree to any changes in the start and end dates of the project. If delaying your project is approved, your research support and research finance teams will need to be notified.

Do I need to submit a final project report to IBIC?

Yes, the PI and the external partner organisation are required to submit a progress report and final report to the IBIC team, who will use the details of the project outputs, outcomes and impacts on the annual IBIC monitoring report.

Links to surveys will be sent to the PI and partner organisation contact at the appropriate stage of the project. Follow-up reports will also be requested beyond the duration of the project to understand impact generated from the project that may not have been realised at the time of reporting, in line with EPSRC reporting requirements.