

# **GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS**

## **The Anaerobic Digestion Network – a BBSRC NIBB**

### **Secondment Grants**



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## Introduction

### Anaerobic Digestion Network - a BBSRC NIBB

The Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) has committed £18M to fund 13 collaborative Networks in Industrial Biotechnology and Bioenergy (BBSRC NIBB). The BBSRC NIBB will foster collaborations between academia, industry, policy makers and NGOs in order to find new approaches to tackle research challenges, translate research and deliver key benefits in Industrial Biotechnology and Bioenergy (IBBE). Each Network has a particular focus area, mainly within the UK, but with interest to build international links. Details of all of the Networks can be found on the BBSRC website (<http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/bbsrcnibb>).

These multidisciplinary networks will drive new ideas to harness the potential of biological resources for producing and processing materials, biopharmaceuticals, chemicals and energy. The Networks can provide Proof of Concept funding, Business Interaction Vouchers and events and are open to new members.

The BBSRC NIBB, along with the IB Catalyst, form the central part of the BBSRC's strategy to support the development of IBBE as a key component of the UK bioeconomy. The Networks will help to provide sustainable processes for producing bio-based alternatives to products which currently rely on petrochemicals.

The Anaerobic Digestion Network (AD Network) addresses scientific and technical challenges in the development of anaerobic biotechnology, drawing on the expertise of leading academics underpinned by new tools and concepts. As well as enhancing the performance of anaerobic digestion as a second generation bioenergy process, these can create new areas of application in the creation of value-added bio-based products, widening the process scope to a biorefinery. Bio-molecular tools open up the possibility of improved diagnostics and advanced on-line process control, topics of immediate interest to industry. For more information, see the website (<http://www.anaerobicdigestionnet.com>).

The AD Network is led by an Executive Board comprising Professor Charles Banks, University of Southampton (Primary Investigator) and Professor Orkun Soyer, University of Warwick (Co-Investigator).

## Secondment Grants

### What is a Secondment?

Secondments are available to help fund UK-based Network members to facilitate the transfer and exchange of research and knowledge. This could be for training purposes or for the accumulation of new skills. They are not to be used for conference attendance. They may be used to fund a visit to another laboratory for training purposes but may not be used for training *within* an organisation.

Funds are available for two schemes.

- **Secondment Grants – UK only** are aimed at UK-based AD Network members who wish to spend time with a UK- based partner organisation or for the accumulation of new skills or training.
- **Secondment Grants – UK to overseas** are aimed at UK-based AD Network members who wish to spend time with an overseas partner organisation for the accumulation of new skills or training.

Available Bursaries		
	Total available (annual limit*)	Max. value per award (incl. VAT) at 100% FEC
Secondment Grants – UK only	10 (2)	£2000
Secondment Grants – UK to overseas	10 (2)	£3000

\*Secondments will be allocated over the 5 year lifetime of the Network. Therefore, for example, 2 *Secondment Grants – UK only* may be allocated each year for 5 years, i.e. a total of 10. The exact dates and quantities of available bursaries are subject to change and details will be posted on the Network website, [www.anaerobicdigestionnet.com](http://www.anaerobicdigestionnet.com).

All secondments must be requested and approved in advance of the planned activities taking place. We ask that you roughly estimate the anticipated spend, but will only reimburse expenditure claims supported with full receipts. Each secondment has a maximum spending limit (above). We accept no responsibility for spending that exceeds that limit.

Members might also like to investigate the BBSRC FLIP programme which supports longer exchanges than those offered by the AD Network. There are 20 available each year, exchanges last up to 24 months and cost up to £150,000 at 80% FEC. Details can be found at: <http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/business/people-information/flexible-interchange-programme.aspx>.

### Aims and Objectives in relation to the Secondments

These secondments are intended to further the aims and objectives of the AD Network by:

- encouraging and fostering collaboration between members for knowledge exchange
- enabling members to attend relevant training events that they would otherwise be unlikely to access

## Questions and Answers

*I want to learn a skill at another University. Can I use a secondment?*

Yes. Explain why this skill is unavailable at your own institution and why it will help develop UK AD research. This could be because you want to develop a new area of research and need specialist training. You will need to arrange your own formal agreement\* with the host.

*I want to learn a new skill from Industry. Can I use a secondment?*

Yes. See above. We strongly encourage links between industry and academia.

*\*What do you mean by “formal agreement”?*

It may be the case that no such agreement is necessary (e.g. attendance at a simple training course). However, you may have in mind a personal placement at a workplace with associated Health and Safety issues. Most Universities and companies have procedures in place, as standard, to cover Visitors. It is your responsibility to ensure that appropriate measures are in place to cover insurance and legal liabilities, as necessary. This may entail registering through a pre-existing Visitor system or, in rare cases, arranging your own agreement. Arranging this is your personal responsibility.

If insurance and legal liabilities need to be covered by a separate agreement between the parties involved, this can be arranged through the support services of your own institution (whose experience of staff exchanges, secondments and placements should be extensive). We recommend that you contact them to arrange this well in advance. The AD Network accepts no responsibility for any legalities/insurance pertaining to the secondment activity.

*I need to spend some time with a partner organisation to develop a big, joint funding proposal. I won't be learning a skill. Can I apply?*

No, not through our secondment funding which is intended solely for knowledge transfer. Please apply through our “Workshop” funding scheme; specifically the “Funding Specific Workshop”. We can offer £50 per person towards food/accommodation and you can also access our £100 travel bursaries. You will need to specify the funding stream (e.g. IB Catalyst or Horizon 2020). We will only fund for this purpose if a bid is subsequently made as a result. We will seek proof to this effect before authorising payment. If you are the lead on the bid, this would be unlikely to be an issue.

*I want to combine a conference trip abroad with a skills workshop run by the event. Does this count as a secondment?*

This would be looked at very carefully to determine the nature of the skill transfer. If a request is made for a substantial contribution from the AD Network for a trip that has a minimal amount of skill transfer potential it may be declined. Only if there was a substantial and unique opportunity to gain new skills of value to UK AD research would this be considered. Certainly, no contribution to conference expenses would be made. We have a separate funding stream for Early Career Researchers to attend conferences.

*I already have separate funding to attend a conference abroad but wish to extend my stay by a few weeks to learn a skill whilst there. Can you “top up” to cover my extra accommodation and expenses?*

This may be possible depending on the circumstances. Please put full details of your separate funding arrangement on your application. We must ensure that costs are kept separate. We would need to confirm the details and timings of your interaction with the host institution prior to payment. You would need to arrange your own formal agreement with the host. A decision of this kind would be made on a case-by-case basis.

*There is a specialist training course run by a commercial concern that I would like to attend. Will you fund this?*

We would need to know the details of the training course to ensure that it is within our remit. Please give us a link to the website, if possible. Please make a case stating the relevance of the course to your future work in AD research.

*I have a particular AD skill and wish to train people elsewhere at another University/Company. Is this covered?*

Yes, but you should be clear about the benefit to UK-based AD research or industrial biotechnology – particularly if this were to take place abroad. We encourage the transfer of skills and knowledge so any reasonable request of this nature will be looked at favourably.

You might also want to look at the BBSRC. Strategic Training Awards for Research Skills (STARS) programme. It aims to support the development of strategically important and vulnerable research skills and capabilities in the biosciences. Awards are available to develop postgraduate-level training in areas of significant need for clearly defined academic and industrial sectors. See <http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/funding/studentships/stars/>

### **Eligibility**

Only UK-based academic members of the AD Network may apply for bursaries. Membership is free (see [www.anaerobicdigestionnet.com](http://www.anaerobicdigestionnet.com)). Please see the BBSRC eligibility guidelines at [www.bbsrc.ac.uk/web/FILES/Guidelines/grants-guide.pdf](http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/web/FILES/Guidelines/grants-guide.pdf) for more information.

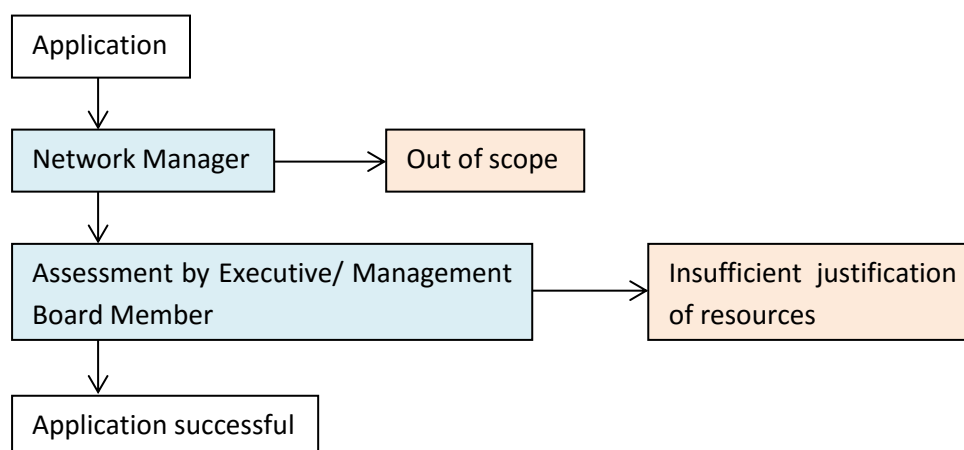
We welcome queries at [adnet@soton.ac.uk](mailto:adnet@soton.ac.uk).

## Application Process

### How to apply

Application is through a simple pro-forma available from [www.anaerobicdigestionnet.com](http://www.anaerobicdigestionnet.com) or by emailing [ADNet@soton.ac.uk](mailto:ADNet@soton.ac.uk). Applications are accepted at any time and should receive a response within 4-6 weeks from that point. Applications should be sent to [ADNet@soton.ac.uk](mailto:ADNet@soton.ac.uk) and will be acknowledged upon receipt. Should an acknowledgement not be received in good time, please contact the Network Managers directly to ensure your application is processed.

### Process for Secondment review – £2000-£3000



All submissions will be acknowledged by return email. Submissions will first be sifted by the Network Managers to ensure they are consistent with the aims and objectives of the Network. Broadly speaking this means that they relate to AD and have some relevance to UK Industrial Biotechnology. They will then be passed to a member of the Executive Board or Management Board for assessment and approval.

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 Board for final approval. We aim to assess proposals and reply within 4-6 weeks.

### Costs and payment

If successful, the applicant will be informed via email. This email will confirm the maximum amount of funds that can be claimed under the secondment for the purposes stated in your application.

Recipients of secondment grants are required to provide a 1 page summary report of their AD Network-funded activities upon completion of their bursary. This summary will be made publically available on our website and may be published more widely elsewhere.

All expenditure must be supported by valid original receipts, without which the full bursary will not be reimbursed. Please send original receipts along with your expenses claim form, BACS or bank

account details and a completed summary report form to request payment of the grant, in arrears. Please ensure that you have retained copies both for your own records and in case of loss of the original receipts. Payment may be withheld until a completed summary report is received.

Travel, accommodation and subsistence costs must be kept reasonable. No claims will be accepted for alcohol purchase. When claiming for air travel, please keep a valid boarding pass from the return trip, as proof of travel. Travel should be economy. If in doubt, contact the Network Managers for advice prior to any large purchase. Consumables and equipment hire costs are capped at £500 and should be essential to the secondment. No equipment purchase of any kind is permitted.

Should the conditions of payment of the grant present any difficulties that might hinder uptake of the award, please contact the Network Managers at [adnet@soton.ac.uk](mailto:adnet@soton.ac.uk) to discuss alternative payment arrangements.

## The Application Forms

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. Appendices are not required, but are accepted to provide extra information if considered helpful.

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. The guidance notes are not intended to be exhaustive; you should develop your own responses based on your own skills, knowledge and experience.

### Field Guidance

Secondment Grants Application Form		
Required Fields	Guidance	Maximum word limits/ Further clarification
Application details		
Purpose of Secondment	Please specify whether you are applying for a <i>Secondment grant – UK only</i> or a <i>Secondment Grant - overseas</i> .	Word limit - 10
Funding requested from BBSRC NIBB AD Network (£)	Please estimate the maximum sum requested from the AD Network. This should not exceed the maximum permitted sum set out in the “What is a Secondment?” section.	In pounds sterling (incl. VAT). Up to £2000 permitted for UK only secondments. Up to £3000 permitted for overseas secondments.
Applicant contact details		
Applicant’s Name	Enter your full name, address,	No word limit



	postcode, e-mail address and telephone number of the Primary Contact between the AD Network and the proposal. This will be the grant holder in the event of a successful bid.	
Institution	Please give the name of Institution where you are employed	No word limit
Address	Please give the 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	No word limit
Applicants Career to date	Please give a brief overview of your career, with positions held, institution and dates. Include relevant details of any AD activity. You may attach a CV to the application if you wish.	No word limit
Please confirm that you are a member of the AD Network and eligible for funding (Y/N)	See <a href="#">Eligibility</a>	Y/N
<b>Destination details</b>		
Name of contact	Enter the name of your primary contact at the secondment destination.	No word limit. We may contact them to confirm your secondment prior to payment.
Institution	Please give the name of the secondment destination	No word limit
Address	Please give the address of the secondment destination	No word limit
Phone Number	Please give a contact number for the secondment destination	No word limit
Email	Please give the email address for the secondment destination	No word limit
<b>Secondment Details</b>		
Please provide a brief description of the background to the secondment request. State the anticipated start date and duration. Explain the purpose of the funded travel/activity or collaboration to be carried out. Explain why this activity would not take place without AD Network support. Please also state how the secondment aligns within the AD Network aims and objectives.	Applicants should use this opportunity to make a case for funding as we anticipate competition for the awards.	Word limit - 400
Please list the key outcomes that will	Applicants should explain how	Word limit- 300

arise from this funding	this award furthers the objectives of the AD Network – in particular the intention to leverage further funding opportunities in the sector or the transfer of valuable skills to strengthen and consolidate future capability to respond to challenges within the area of AD.	
<b>Financial Details</b>		
Project costs. Please provide an estimate of the break-down of funding costs below.		
Accommodation	Describe and estimate the sum for your accommodation over the period. Include any travel accommodation as well as destination expenses. Only reasonable costs for the destination will be reimbursed and the cheapest available option should always be taken.	In pounds sterling (Incl. VAT)
Travel	Please describe and estimate the costs of all air/rail/taxi/bus travel. Only reasonable costs will be reimbursed. Air travel should be economy class.	In pounds sterling (Incl. VAT) Please note that in case of air travel a valid boarding pass for the return journey is required as proof of travel.
Other (please specify)	Please describe and estimate your subsistence costs – if required. Only reasonable costs will be reimbursed. Also detail any consumable or equipment hire costs that are essential to the secondment. These should not exceed £500. The primary purpose of the secondment is knowledge transfer/networking/training - not to subsidise research.	In pounds sterling (Incl. VAT) No alcohol purchases are permitted.
Total (£) contribution requested from AD Network	This should not exceed the maximum permitted sum set out in the “What is a Secondment?” section.	In pounds sterling (Incl. VAT)
<b>Signature</b>		
Applicant I confirm that I wish to apply for an ADNet <i>Secondment Grant</i> and that the information contained in the application is accurate to the best of my knowledge. I understand that the AD	Please sign, date and print your name	The AD Network will not be held liable for any costs incurred as a result of this secondment other than the agreed sum

<p>Network accepts no responsibility for any legalities/insurance pertaining to the secondment activity. I will provide a summary report upon completion.</p>		<p>of either £2000 or £3000 (max.). All insurance and legal liabilities specific to the secondment should be covered by a separate agreement between the parties involved, if necessary. By signing this application you indicate that you accept personal responsibility for obtaining such insurance/agreement, as necessary.</p>
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## Other Information

### 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 Board 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. They will be expected to adhere to the highest standards of scientific integrity as laid down by the BBSRC (Ref: [http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/web/FILES/Policies/good\\_scientific\\_practice.pdf](http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/web/FILES/Policies/good_scientific_practice.pdf)).

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.

We are expecting applicants to conform to the BBSRC guidelines for data sharing: <http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/publications/policy/data-sharing-policy.aspx> and good scientific practice: [http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/web/FILES/Policies/good\\_scientific\\_practice.pdf](http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/web/FILES/Policies/good_scientific_practice.pdf).

### Contact Details

For any queries, please contact the Network Managers:

Angela Bywater/Dr Louise Byfield at [ADNet@soton.ac.uk](mailto:ADNet@soton.ac.uk)

Tel: 023 8059 1281

Post: AD Network, Building 26, Room 2011, University of Southampton, Highfield Campus, University Road, Southampton, SO17 1BJ.