**University of Cambridge BBSRC Impact Acceleration Account**

**Pump-Priming Funding Call 2024 Guidance**

**Call opens: 13 November 2023**

**Call closes: 16February 2024 at 16:00**

**Awards: up to £40,000 per application**

**Duration: up to 9 months, starting 15 April 2024 onwards**

**All projects and expenditure must be completed by 31 January 2025**

**Background**

The University of Cambridge was awarded an Impact Acceleration Account (IAA) by the BBSRC to strengthen engagement with users and accelerate the translation of research outputs into impacts. This includes facilitating the impact agenda by forging new collaborations with industry, policy makers and third sector organisations or strengthening existing external non-academic collaborations.

Funding is available for pump-priming projects to support knowledge exchange and early-stage impact projects to progress research outputs and outcomes to the point at which further translational funding can be sought.

This document sets out the guidance for the BBSRC IAA pump-priming call. It should be read in conjunction with the University’s [Summary of Impact Acceleration Account Terms and Conditions](https://www.research-strategy.admin.cam.ac.uk/impact/funding-impact/summary-impact-acceleration-account-iaa-terms-and-conditions). If you have any questions regarding this BBSRC IAA call, please contact Dr Carmen Fernandez-Posada and Lauren Maggs, Research Strategy Office, [iaa@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:iaa@admin.cam.ac.uk).

**Who can apply?**

Funding is open to researchers employed by the collegiate University with project proposals within the [BBSRC remit](https://www.ukri.org/councils/bbsrc/remit-programmes-and-priorities/). Please note that previous/current BBSRC funding is **NOT** a requirement.

Applications from early career researchers (ECRs) with principal investigators as co-applicants are encouraged\*. Previous IAA awardees/applicants are welcome to apply. All applicants must have department affiliation and all applications will require Head of Department signature. The lead applicant must be employed by the University through the duration of the entire project.

\*There is no standard definition of ECR. However, an ECR is generally considered as someone who is within eight years of the award of the PhD.

**What activities can be funded?**

Funding is available to fund approximately two pump-priming projects of up to £40,000 each. Interdisciplinary applications are also welcome. If your project falls across council remits (e.g. BBSRC and EPSRC) we strongly encourage you to contact us ([iaa@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:iaa@admin.cam.ac.uk)) before submission so we can discuss if your application should be considered for co-funding. Pump-priming projects should enable impact to be achieved in an effective and timely manner. Funds can be used for a wide range of activities, including but not limited to:

* Activities which aim to impact on policy, business and third sector practice (e.g. engaging with stakeholders to influence their resources/procedures, encouraging adoption of your methods/guidance etc.)
* Validation of technology/process/prototype/models in a relevant environment (e.g. crop field testing, testing models/diagnostics in real world settings or conditions etc.)
* Scale up a process to demonstrate viability at industrial scale
* Repurposing existing technology for new applications beyond the laboratory
* Engaging with non-academic partners and end users through workshops/demonstrations to enable impact (e.g. prototype/process/tool refinement etc.)
* Pursuit of commercialisation, for example, by:
* Developing ways to enable potential users to understand the benefits of novel ideas or technologies, e.g. initial product design, developing virtual demonstrations, prototypes etc.
* Providing access to expertise to enable exploitation and commercialisation, e.g. undertaking market intelligence, understanding the regulatory landscape, or establishing early-stage freedom to operate etc.
* Undertaking market validation

Examples of previously funded IAA projects:

* [Piloting the feasibility of community-based livestock abortions reporting for improved surveillance of Rift valley fever disease in Isingiro District, Uganda.](#Conlan)
* Governance of Stem Cell-Based Embryo Models (G-SCBEM)
* Conduct of comprehensive market research to assess and report on the commercial potential for high value tyrosine-derived molecules.
* Discussions to help inform the first National Food Strategy in 75 years.

Project holders must ensure that their research is compliant with the [University’s Policy on the Ethics of Research Involving Human Participants and Personal Data](https://www.research-integrity.admin.cam.ac.uk/sites/www.research-integrity.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/uoc_ethics_policy_july2020_0.pdf) and that any ethical issues are identified and brought to the attention of the relevant approval or regulatory body. Where ethical approval is required this must have been granted before the work begins. See the [University’s Research Ethics pages](https://www.research-integrity.admin.cam.ac.uk/research-ethics) for further details.

**Eligible costs**

The costs awarded for each project may vary depending on the work proposed but should not exceed **£40,000 (direct costs only)**.The assessment panel may decide to part-fund any application at their discretion.

IAAs may be used to fund directly incurred costs such as:

* Directly incurred staff costs
* Pooled labour, where applicable
* Travel/subsistence, in line with University policy [Travel policy | Finance Division](https://www.finance.admin.cam.ac.uk/policy-and-procedures/financial-procedures/chapter-5b-expenses-benefits/travel-university-4)
* Materials and consumables
* Equipment/facilities access
* Equipment purchases (capped at £10,000 and must be justified against the duration of the project)
* Procurement of an external consultant e.g. for market research or business planning, to include VAT as applicable
* Other engagement, knowledge exchange, workshops, training and culture change activities

IAA funding is **not** available to support:

* Continuation of research, either solely within the University or with external partners
* Any costs relating to intellectual property protection including but not limited to registering, maintaining, or supporting patents or intellectual property rights.

Applications should be costed using the online tool [X5](https://www.research-operations.admin.cam.ac.uk/costing-and-pricing-research-proposal/x5), under the Funding Scheme select the X5 template ‘UKRI (Research and Innovation); IAA – internal calls’, with items fully justified in the application. Please allow sufficient time for costing and liaise with your departmental finance team to obtain an X5 costing for your proposal. **Please note IAA proposals should not be submitted in X5 and should remain in draft form only**. This is because IAA funds have already been awarded to the University and submission for approval would result in double-counting of funds. Submitting your proposal into the Research Operations Office workstream could additionally delay the review of your application by the panel. The draft report downloaded from X5 should be submitted with your application and will be scrutinised by the panel as part of the assessment process.  Any changes to an approved project budget will need to be cleared with the Impact and KE team.

For a complete list of eligible/ineligible costs and other costing considerations, please refer to the [IAA Terms and Conditions](https://www.research-strategy.admin.cam.ac.uk/impact/funding-impact/summary-impact-acceleration-account-iaa-terms-and-conditions).

**Working with external partners**

Where a project involves a Third Party, applicants should consider what types of agreements may be required (for example collaboration agreements, non-disclosure agreements, material/data transfer agreements and/or other types of contract) when applying for any Impact Acceleration Award. More details of what you should consider and template agreements can be found on the [IAA website](https://www.research-strategy.admin.cam.ac.uk/impact-acceleration-accounts) or contact [iaa@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:iaa@admin.cam.ac.uk) for further support and advice.

Award applicants will receive support from the Research Operations Office on contract negotiations and if relevant, Cambridge Enterprise to ensure appropriate protection of IP.

**Application process**

Applicants for IAA pump-priming funding are required to present a case for support that includes clear impact objectives and outputs for the proposed work, as well as identifying further routes for development and potential leverage of further funding. Potential applicants are **strongly encouraged** to contact Dr Carmen Fernandez-Posada and Lauren Maggs iaa@admin.cam.ac.uk, before submitting their application for tailored support and advice. Applicants must ensure they are aware of any internal departmental deadlines for approval by Head of Department before submission.

Application is via the online [IAA Application System.](https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=RQSlSfq9eUut41R7TzmG6RO90bOjjQpMj0lLqsyC-d9UMFFJWFVDN1NGMEFFRDFSMVA4UlNJVkw3TiQlQCN0PWcu) Please provide:

* Outline details of the project in the [IAA Application System](https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=RQSlSfq9eUut41R7TzmG6RO90bOjjQpMj0lLqsyC-d9UMFFJWFVDN1NGMEFFRDFSMVA4UlNJVkw3TiQlQCN0PWcu).
* A completed [BBSRC IAA application form](https://www.research-strategy.admin.cam.ac.uk/file/01-bbsrciaaform2024docx-0), including HoD signature.
* A copy of the **draft project costing from X5.**
* A **letter of support** from external partner (if applicable)
* Any additional documents, such as a Gantt chart showing the intended project timeline, as appropriate.

**Please note the submission system only accepts PDF documents.**

**Advice for this call**

Through the IAA, the University wants to invest in projects which can make an impact on our lives and the world we live in. Applications should:

* Focus on knowledge exchange and impact, not on research.
* Be written specifically for IAA purposes (applications which read like re-drafted research grant proposals are less likely to be successful than projects which clearly comprise development and impact activities directed towards knowledge exchange and impact).
* Explain background research in terms which can be understood by a panel that has no specialist knowledge in your technical field.
* Be realistic about what will be achieved in the project.
* Detail how the project will be monitored to ensure it remains focused on the impact objectives.

**Assessment process**

A cross-disciplinary panel with membership drawn from the University, Cambridge Enterprise and industry/policy/impact experts (as appropriate) will review applications in September 2023. The assessment criteria are:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Guidance** |
| **Clarity of impact objectives** | Clarity of the impact (not research) objectives and proposed impact activities, including how impact will be measured/evidenced. |
| **Clarity of plan** | Clarity and coherence of the plan to achieve impact objectives, including, management, timeframe and milestones. |
| **Articulation of need** | Clarity of description of the research base on which the project builds, the need being addressed and/or justification of why impact objectives have been identified. |
| **Value for money** | The extent to which the proposal makes the best use of resources. |
| **Project partner involvement**  **(call-specific)** | The suitability, level of engagement, and degree of support offered by the partner organisation(s), where applicable. |
| **Sustainability**  **(call-specific)** | The extent to which the project outlines plans for potential next stages (including further sources of funding) and/or explains how the project fits within a larger programme of work. |

**Timeline**

The funding should support short-term projects of up to 9 months. The funding dates for this call are:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Call opens** | **Call closes** | **Project start** | **Expenditure completed** | **Final report** |
| 13 November 2023 | 16 February 2024 at 16:00 | starting no earlier than 15 April 2024 | By 31 January 2025. | Within 1 month of project completion |

Proposed projects should not start any earlier than 15 April 2024to allow sufficient time for fund allocation and activation. Project start dates are subject to appropriate agreements with any external partners being in place. No-cost extensions will be available for projects that can make a strong case that additional time is needed to realise impact. All requests for extensions must be made through the IAA team.

**Monitoring and reporting**

**Expenditure** **should be posted** **on a monthly basis against the grant**. Project holders and their departmental grants/finance officers must ensure that all expenditure is posted against projects within 2 weeks of the end of the project. Further financial reporting will be requested at project close.

**As a condition of the grant, you must meet with a member of the Impact and Knowledge Exchange Team during the first 3 months of your project to discuss progress and after project completion to discuss outcomes**. For commercial impact projects, a Cambridge Enterprise case manager will join these meetings. The purpose of these meetings is to monitor progression of funded impact projects and identify the potential for leveraging funding through collaboration, follow on funding schemes or opportunity for commercialisation.

All award holders will be required to complete an **online survey** at the end of their funded period. We will also request images of the projects to use in reporting outcomes of the BBSRC IAA to the BBSRC and for highlighting successful impact projects. Given the timescales over which impacts occur, we also welcome key updates via email on funded projects beyond the final report. This enables us to signpost you to any relevant support as well as to strengthen our future applications for institutional IAA funding.