

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

THE FOLLOW-ON FUNDING SCHEME (FOF) APPLICANT GUIDANCE

This fund supports projects that have the potential for translational/commercial impact

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Follow-On Funding (FOF) scheme supports the development of outputs from existing or previous research at the University of Birmingham. The aim of the scheme is to ensure the translation and/or commercialisation of the University's research outcomes in the **engineering and physical sciences**.
- 1.2 The scheme will operate from 1 June 2017 until 31 March 2020. Applications will be invited quarterly, while details of the application deadlines are provided on the [Internal Funding intranet page](#) and through email.
- 1.3 These notes provide some general guidance. Further information can be found on the [Internal Funding intranet page](#) or by directly contacting the following research facilitation staff:

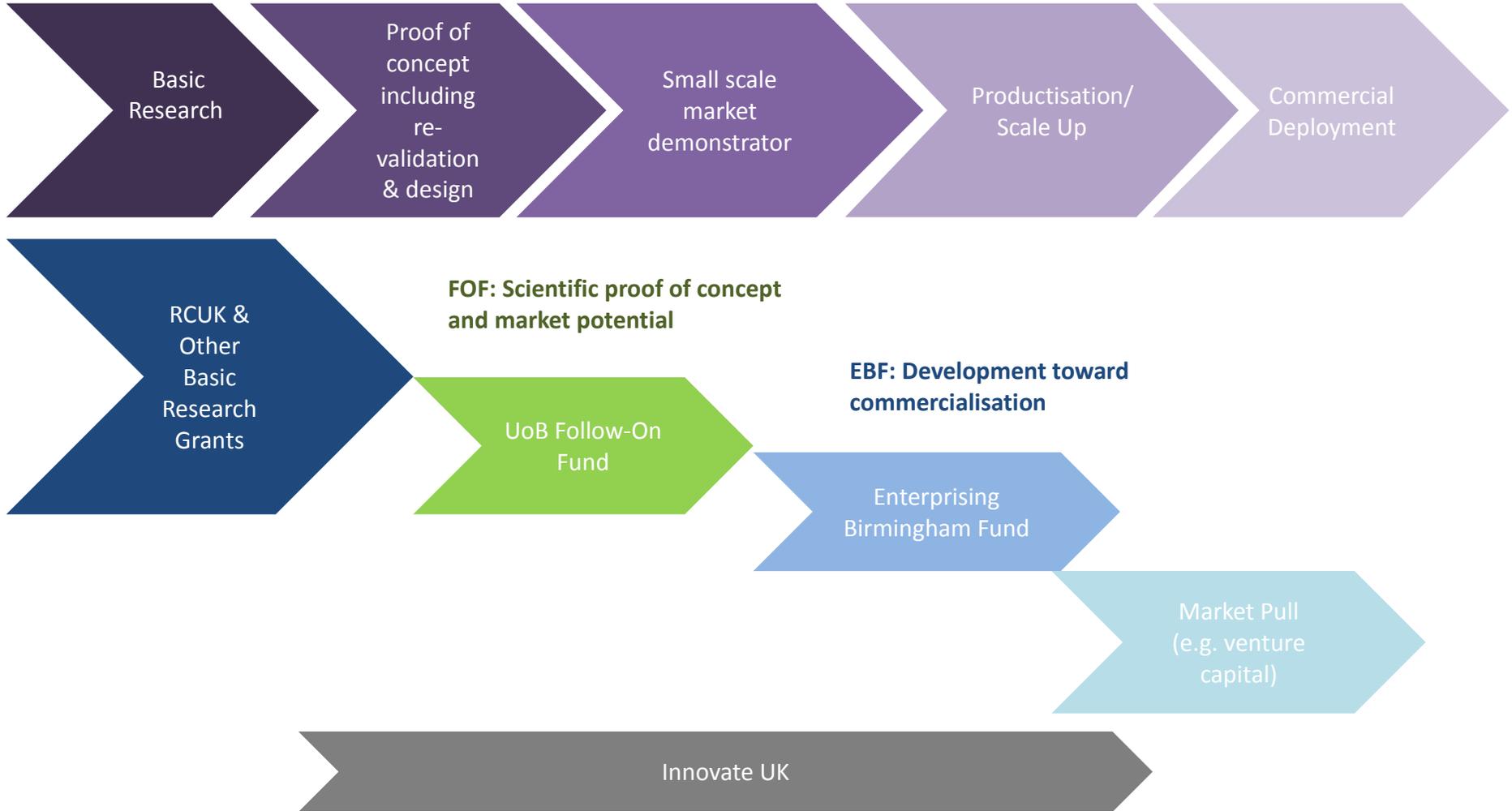
- **Anthony Khan** in Research & Innovation Services (x Ext: 47093, a.khan.7@bham.ac.uk)

- 1.4 **All applications must be submitted via the online application form available here:**
<https://bham.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/epsrc-follow-on-fund-fof-application-form-2>

2.0 How does the Follow-on fund work?

- 2.1 The Follow-on Funding scheme provides support for proof of translational or commercial concept activity. The aim of the scheme is to de-risk new products, processes or therapies so that their further commercial or clinical development will be suitable for support from, for example, the Enterprising Birmingham Fund (EBF) or external funders e.g. MRC DPFS/DCS, Biomedical Catalyst, Innovate UK, venture capital.
- 2.2 Rather than replicating other funding sources, the FOF is intended to support projects at a unique point in the development pathway that leads to the commercial or clinical application of research outputs. In considering the suitability of their project, potential applicants must keep in mind that the fund is designed to support *scientific proof of concept work* and that on completion of a full FOF project applicants will be expected to be in a position to apply for EBF/external funding. The diagrams below illustrate the FOF's position in the funding pathways for engineering, physical, and biomedical sciences.

Engineering & Physical Sciences Funding Pathway



2.3 Funding is not intended to support:

- Estates and indirect costs
- Single items of equipment costing greater than £10,000
- Entire translational projects
- Staff between posts/funding (i.e. 'bridging')
- PhDs
- Continuation of research grants
- Costs relating to the protection of intellectual property

3.0 Is our project eligible?

3.1 Engineering & Physical Sciences

3.1.1 For applicants from the **engineering and physical sciences**, funding for FOF projects comes from the EPSRC. As such, all projects must build on an EPSRC investment (including research, equipment and training related to a previously funded project linked to the project being proposed).

3.1.2 Projects in the engineering and physical sciences are normally expected to cost up to a maximum of £100k and last for up to a maximum of 12 months, subject to available funding. Shorter, more speculative projects are welcome and exceptions to these upper limits may also be considered if dictated by the needs of the project.

4.0 How do we apply?

4.1 The Follow-On Fund aims to provide substantive funding to develop the outputs of basic research to a position where EBF or external funding is appropriate. It is recognised however, that some prospective projects may be more speculative, with a consequent high risk of failure. To accommodate such projects, the application and project delivery processes fall into two streams.

4.2 Applicants based in EPS can benefit from support to develop their applications that is available from the EPS Research Support Office.

- ❖ **Paul Reay**, P.Reay@bham.ac.uk (ext. 42216)

4.3 Applicants based in LES can benefit from support to develop their applications that is available from the LES Research Support Office.

- ❖ **Jen Jennings**, j.l.jennings@bham.ac.uk (ext. 45890)

4.4 Applicants based in MDS can benefit from support to develop their applications that is available from the MDS Research Support Office.

- ❖ **Georgina Drury**, g.e.drury@bham.ac.uk (ext. 58010)

4.5 All applicants can contact **Alta Innovations** to discuss matters relating to IP and business planning.

- Bids from EPS should be discussed with Alan Tibbatts (x48620)
- Bids from MDS and LES should be discussed with Jonathan Watkins (x58535)

4.6 For applications **under £25K**, applicants should complete relevant sections of the application form and submit the completed version by the deadline. The project will be delivered by the academic team, who will be responsible for completing one or more project reports. If such a project is successful, the team may re-apply to the FOF for more substantial funding to continue their work.

4.7 For applications **over £25K**, applicants will be expected to work with a small Project Steering Group (PSG) to ensure that the project is suitable for FOF support, that the project plan is feasible and appropriate and if funded, that the project remains on track to deliver its outputs. Applicants must therefore complete the following steps:

- Applicants complete as much of the application form as possible.
- It is a mandatory requirement to discuss all applications of £25k and above with Alta Innovations.
 - Bids from EPS should be discussed with Alan Tibbatts (x48620)
 - Bids from MDS and LES should be discussed with Jonathan Watkins (x58535)

- The Project Steering Group (PSG), comprising the applicants, their research support representative and a relevant member of the technology transfer team holds an initial meeting to discuss the proposal in detail.
- Applicants fully complete the application for submission to the panel in time for the published deadline.

Please note that having a Project Steering Group (PSG) in place is a mandatory requirement for all projects at £25k and above.

4.8 All applications must be submitted via the online application form available here:

<https://bham.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/epsrc-follow-on-fund-fof-application-form-2>

4.9 Recommendations for EPSRC IAA funding will be made by the Management Group chaired by Professor Jon Rowe. Recommendations will be approved by the Strategic Block Grants Panel which consists of Professor Tim Softley, Professor Lee Chapman, Professor David Hannah and Professor Paul Moss, which has an accountability and governance role.

4.10 Applications will be reviewed by the panel according to the following criteria:

- Quality of the proposed project and suitability for Follow-On Funding
- Value for money/proportionality (i.e what are the benefits of the project and is what is proposed justifiable against cost)
- Clarity and ambition of the project objectives
- Clarity of the funding pathway that the award fits into
- Potential to resolve translational/commercial proof of concept, and de-risk for further funding
- The decisions of the panel will be final

5.0 How do we complete the application form?

5.1 All applications must be completed using the online form: <https://bham.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/epsrc-follow-on-fund-fof-application-form-2>

5.2 The problem and its market potential (max. 3500 characters)

This section should outline the problem, your solution and the market potential for it.

5.3 Your solution in the market (max. 2500 characters)

This section should help the panel understand its significance and effectiveness as a solution to the problem that it has been designed to address and how it is better than its competition. You should include evidence from market analysis activity. You should also detail the short falls your solution has and what steps you propose to take within and beyond the project to address them.

5.4 Data/Research evidencing technical significance and effectiveness of your proposed solution

This section should help the Panel to gain a further technical understanding of your solution with data being included alongside graphs/charts or illustrations etc.

5.5 Your commercial or translational partners (max. 2000 characters)

This section should give the Panel a clear sense of who your commercial or translational partners are, their stake in the project and why they won't pay for what you are proposing to do at this stage.

5.6 The need for funding now and the likely return on investment (max. 2000 characters)

This section should help the Panel understand why your project should be funded now and what the likelihood of a return of investment is and when this might happen. The FOF is intended to enable projects to prove translational/commercial concepts in order to de-risk them for either consideration by the Enterprising Birmingham Fund or for further external funding. You should give details of how this will be achieved within the scope and timeframe of this project if it is funded. Repeat applications to the Follow-On Fund will be considered.

5.7 The project (max. 4000 characters)

This section should provide details of what you propose to do in the delivery of your project.

5.8 Project Plan

This will typically involve defining: the technical concept and target challenge/opportunity or the therapeutic concept and disease target; where appropriate, the initial clinical study; the pre-commercialisation or pre-clinical data required; the exploitability of the IP situation; the viability of the market size and route to market; and the plans for commercialisation and/or introduction into clinical practice. Include details of how key scientific questions are to be answered and milestones met:

- How will the funding be used, internally and externally (in words)?
- Using SMART objectives, outline all activities, timeframes, deliverables and, where appropriate, how these can be tranced (in the table)
 - Make note of who is involved in delivering the project and what their relevant experience and skills are. Are there any gaps in expertise that will need to be procured during the project and how will learning be retained within the research group? What equipment/facilities and/or other School/College resources are required? Are these available?
- What are the main risks to project delivery?

5.9 Previous investment (max. 1500 characters)

All projects must demonstrate that they build upon previous EPSRC investment. Please use this section to explain what previous EPSRC investments you have had and how they link to the proposed project.

5.10 Project costs

Please provide a breakdown of project costs

5.11 For applications above £25k only: please state the Internal Experts Project Steering Group

Please state the internal experts that will be part of your Project Steering Group (PSG).

5.12 For applications above £25k only: please state the External Experts that will be part of your Project Steering Group (PSG).

For projects requesting over £25K, each project steering group will, where possible, include an external expert. You should therefore suggest up to three external experts who you believe have the experience and skills to benefit your project. Please note that you will not be penalised if you suggest none or one, compared to two or three individuals. This question is to encourage you to start thinking, ahead of potential funding, who would be a good addition to your PSG. Ideally, your project plan should include detail of how this external expertise will be retained in the core academic team.

6.0 What reporting will we have to do?

Awardees will be expected to report impact annually and on a cumulative basis via a survey that we will be circulated.

7.0 Improving the quality of your application

7.1 To improve the quality of your application, please ensure that:

- a) Your project is eligible for EPSRC funding and that you have shown a clear link to previous EPSRC investment
- b) You have clearly identified a viable market and have given the Panel a sense of its size and the potential for impact within it
- c) Where you are working with business, that the business need is clear
- d) You have discussed your application with your Research Support Office:
 - Paul Reay, P.Reay@bham.ac.uk (ext. 42216) - EPS
 - Jen Jennings, j.l.jennings@bham.ac.uk (ext. 45890) – LES
 - Georgina Drury, g.e.drury@bham.ac.uk (ext. 58010) - MDS