

NBIC Proof of Concept (PoC) 5 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

For ease we have separated the FAQs into sections, 'General', 'Timing', 'Eligibility and Project Partners', 'Intellectual Property' and 'Finance'.

General

- 1. What documents will I need to provide to support my application?**

You will be required to provide all of the following:

 - A detailed financial breakdown of your costs including staffing and materials.
 - Letters of support from all collaborating institutions (on institutional headed paper).
 - A letter from your home institution confirming support and agreeing the budget associated with the project (on institutional headed paper).
- 2. I'm unable to provide a supporting document on institutional headed paper; are you able to accept an email instead?**

We can accept emails as long as the full name and job title of the author are clearly stated in the footer of their email.
- 3. How will the assessment of the projects work, and will confidentiality agreements be put in place?**

There will be an independent panel that assesses the project. The final decision will be ratified by NBIC's Non- Executive Board. Confidentiality agreements will be required for all assessors and panel members.
- 4. Can we submit multiple bids, for instance with different companies or are we limited to one bid?**

You can submit multiple applications. We do reserve the right to take a portfolio view if we cannot afford to fund all the fundable applications. Our goal is to fund excellent projects independent of location from member institutions. Please note however that applicants can apply for multiple projects but cannot hold more than 1 NBIC PoC Award as a Project Lead plus 3 as Collaborator at any one time.

Timing

- 5. What is the application deadline for POC5?**

You are required to submit your online application with all the required supporting documentation by no later than 12 April 2024.
- 6. When will I receive feedback on my application?**

You should expect to receive feedback towards the end of June 2024.
- 7. Is it possible for a project to exceed the average project duration of 12 months?**

We will consider projects exceeding 12 months if required, however this would be exceptional. Please [contact us](#) to discuss further.



Eligibility and Project Partners

- 8. Where can I find a list of research institutions that are part of the NBIC consortium?**
This is available on the NBIC website [here](#).
- 9. Must the industrial partner in the application be UK-based?**
The industrial partner should have a UK presence, i.e., having a sales, R&D or manufacturing office set up in the UK.
- 10. Would it be acceptable to have 1 UK partner and 1 non-UK (EU) partner?**
Yes, but the non-UK partner would not be able to claim funds even if they are SME or Micro-enterprise.
- 11. How can I check whether the University of xxx has been “acceded to NBIC”? If it has not, how can we make this happen?**
This is available on the NBIC website [here](#).
- 12. Can a Post-doctoral Research be the Project Lead?**
Yes, researchers within partner academic institutes as well as companies are eligible to apply as Project Leads.

Intellectual Property

- 13. About ownership of intellectual property and rights to exploitation.**
For successful projects, a Project Agreement will be put in place, NBIC will provide a template agreement. This Project Agreement includes negotiable clauses on IP rights based on several scenarios, including ownership, use, protection and exploitation of IP. It would be expected that Background IP would be the sole and exclusive property of the party to whom it belonged prior to the start of the project. Unless otherwise agreed, all intellectual property shall belong to the party that generated them. Our IP guidelines are available on our website [here](#).
- 14. Is there any guideline from the funding body on how to deal with intellectual property rights?**
Applicants should contact their organizations’ research contracts/Technology Transfer Office to negotiate IPR in line with our guidelines. It is expected that all parties engaged in the project make every reasonable effort to ensure that the intellectual assets obtained during the course of the project, whether protected by intellectual property rights or not, are used to the benefit of society and the UK economy.

Finance

- 15. Who leads the project and how are the funds transferred?**
Regarding the leadership of the project; we expect that the PoC be jointly written and submitted by the Project Lead. The funding will be invoiced to the University of Southampton in a schedule that will also be included in the Project Agreement.
- 16. Since NBIC is giving funding only to research institutes, does it mean SME & Micro gets their share through the research institute?**
The University of Southampton (NBIC) as budget holder would fund the SME/Micro directly against auditable costs.
- 17. For Micro Businesses and SMEs, the POC form says they “can receive up to 50% of directly incurred project costs (capable of audit)”. What does this include?**



As part of our governance, we can only part support (up to 50%) costs in SME/ Micro businesses that can be directly audited and traced to activity on the NBIC funded projects. This evidence could include documented timesheets (with explanation of hourly rates), invoices from third parties. NBIC will only fund up to a limit (£75K). Then any costs claimed by a Company may reduce the amount payable to the academic partner. The contribution to the project in time and resources can also be indicated on the form (even if not claimed) to demonstrate the commitment of the industrial partner to the project.

18. An industrial partner can contribute in kind to the proposal but cannot make a cash contribution. Please could you tell me if this is OK?

Contribution of in-kind or cash are both welcome. The level of this contribution is weighted in the assessments. Successful projects have had on average at least 30% of the total project value contributed by the industrial partner either in kind or in cash.

19. Is there a requirement for how large the industrial contribution needs to be?

Projects are expected to propose additional sources of funding or support in-kind that will enhance the quality of the bid and the outcomes anticipated. The level of funding from collaborators will be used as a key criterion by indicating the extent of engagement with external stakeholders or industrial partners and their level of commitment (in-kind or finance). See also answer to Q22.

20. Does the maximum funding level of £75k include the company contribution?

No, it refers to NBIC funding. Please refer to the guidance for examples of funding level.

21. Can the funding be used to support a PDRA or supplement a student?

This POC is for translational research, so PDRA support, etc. has to be utilised for this purpose but can be deployed to an appropriate researcher e.g., PDRA, PhD.

22. Do you have any further guidance on funding and or restrictions on the £75K available?

The project will be expected to develop a concept, idea or technology from any application sector which can be in a laboratory, model or real world setting to give confidence for further work. The PoC programme is not aimed at basic research, but is expected to build on existing research, findings or technology and show how the collaboration will move the research towards practical exploitation in a specified application. In Technology Readiness Level (TRL) terms then these projects are likely to be at levels 2-6. A useful guide to TRL levels can be found [here](#).

23. Are we allowed to allocate some of the funding for public engagement? More specifically, involving an artist to work part-time and a gallery (as a partner) to run art workshops and an exhibition?

On the assumption you are proposing a project that fits the other PoC criteria explained in the guidance and application in terms of its prime objective, then this outreach and communication are fine to include. The application will be assessed on its merits against others.

