RIPEN Innovation Hub – Feasibility Award (FA)
Guidance for Applicants Year 2024/2025

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1. Purpose

The RIPEN Hub Feasibility Award (FA) supports the application of university research to the real word, benefiting society at large and helping to boost the economy. This award is aimed at bridging the gap in late-stage innovation. We are inviting applications for projects to promote the benefits of BBSRC (Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council) research and/or PhD training to a full range of end users across industry, the public sector, the third sector such as:

• Commercialisation of research outputs, e.g., funding small proof of concept studies.

• Training of academics in knowledge exchange and commercialisation, e.g., hold internal business plan competitions or workshops.

• Assessment for commercial potential of research outputs, e.g., carry out market surveys for innovative technologies.

• Engagement of academics with relevant users of their research, e.g., hold showcase events to introduce businesses to applied research in academic groups or support short secondments to/from business.

The RIPEN Hub will look to fund projects that align with the 2024/25 priority areas listed below.

For this year we have 2 cross cutting themes and 5 research areas
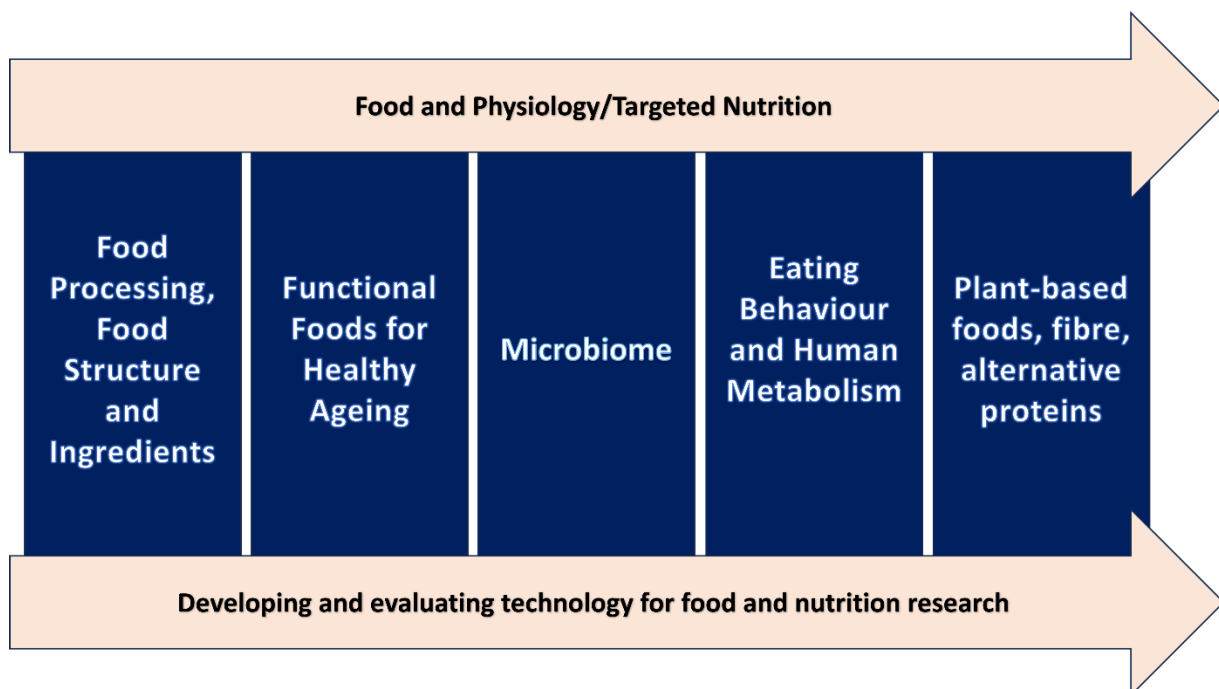
2. Funding

The RIPEN Hub will receive £250,000 per annum from the BBSRC - Diet and Health Open Innovation Research Club to fund research across three streams. The three streams are: a) Progression Award, each with a maximum value of £50,000, b) Feasibility Award, each with a maximum value of £100,000 from RIPEN hub with match funding contributions from industrial partners (in cash or in kind) and c) Mobility Award, each with maximum value of £100,000. We want to support as much work as possible so please be mindful of the amount you request and the justification.

The range of activities specific to Feasibility award include, but not limited to:

- Early-stage commercialisation/market assessments/proof of concept/prototypes.
- Workshops, seminars, or symposia.
- Engagement events with industry and other user communities.
- Networking and collaborations.
- Employment of specialist staff (e.g., case study writing, software development).
- Other dissemination activities, including appropriate publications.
- Training.

Please note that end users are not limited to industry and may include policy organisations and third sector organisations.

Ineligible activities include:

- Patent filing or similar costs associated directly to registering intellectual property rights.
- Activities for which the primary or sole purpose is public engagement. However, we recognise the value that public engagement can bring to projects and therefore engagement activities alongside other impact activities could be supported, providing they are linked to the research area and have a clearly defined purpose and audience.
- New research.
- Undergraduate activities, core PhD training, master's degrees.

We expect the projects to have a timeline of 12 months with a clear deliverable at 12 months. The earliest activities can start 1st October 2024.

The RIPEN funding model follows the UKRI/BBSRC Impact Acceleration Account Framework and therefore we will aim to fund projects at 100% of eligible directly incurred costs and directly allocate costs for facilities and charge out costs (e.g., equipment time or CBS costs). Indirect costs or estate costs at the research organisation cannot be funded. More details can be found here: https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/UKRI-050721-FundingOpp-UKRI-IAA-Permitted-Activities-Costs-1.pdf . Please contact us if you have any questions at least 15 days before the submission of your application.

3. **How to Apply**

Applications should have a Principal Applicant and we can accept Post Doctoral Researchers as Principal Applicants if a named supervisor, who holds an academic position (i.e., lecturer upwards) is also named on the application.

Applicants should be members of the RIPEN Hub and to submit the following documents:

• A Feasibility Award cover sheet.

• A written case for support of up to two pages to include:

a) A description of the current/previously funded relevant research/training conducted by the group in recent years.
b) A description of the activities to be funded, described as in Point 1 above (Purpose) and further elucidated as in Point 2 above (Funding) including clear objectives and milestones.
c) An overview of the potential identified impact and route to uptake.
d) A statement of the expected deliverables.
e) A consideration of opportunities for follow-on funding and securing support from external partners.

• A justification of resources document (max 1 page).

• CV of named researchers

• For applications that involve Enterprise teams, please provide a Letter of Support. Other Letters of Support from partners/stakeholders are not mandatory but if available are encouraged to be included. Letters of Support from end users should clearly indicate the potential value of the research outputs to their organisation and impacts that could be achieved as well as outlining any support that they will be contributing to the project. Letters from Enterprise should identify the market position for the potential technology. Letter of Support from academic partners are not mandatory.

Applications should be submitted to Dr Katerina Petropoulou at ripenhub@imperial.ac.uk

4. Deadlines

The deadline for this call is Monday 17th June 2024.

5. Review of Applications

All eligible applications submitted will be considered for funding by the Hub's Scientific Board. The Board will rank the proposals after considering the likelihood that the proposed activities would amplify bioscience engagement with industry or business. Successful proposals will be those assessed as having the highest likelihood of supporting the purpose of the scheme, rather than to any specific pre-selected challenge areas.

A formal letter confirming the outcomes will be sent to Principal Applicants. Feedback will be limited to a statement of success or otherwise unless the group decides that additional feedback is necessary or useful.

6. Accessing Funds

Information on how to access funds will be provided to successful applicants with their award letter.

7. Reporting

Projects will be reviewed as part of an active monitoring and stage-gating process at 6 months, and it is expected to provide a final report at the end.

Applicants that are successful in receiving an award will be required to provide the following information at each review:

• What the funds have been used for.

• How the funds have increased the impact of the initial BBSRC investment.

• Outputs and outcomes obtained (including publications, conference presentations, products developed, patents filed, events held, collaborations established, additional funding/investment generated, media mentions).

• Envisaged future applications of the outputs and outcomes obtained, including the potential for further research and development.

8. Terms and conditions

UKRI (UK Research and Innovation) Standard Terms and Conditions apply. In addition, funds must be spent in accordance with Points 1 & 2 of this document and reporting requirements met as described in Point 7.

RIPEN Hub, as part of Imperial College London, is a proud signatory to the San-Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), which means that in hiring, promotion, and research funding decisions we will evaluate applicants on the quality of their work, not the impact factor of the journal where it is published. More information is available at https://www.imperial.ac.uk/research-and-innovation/about-imperial-research/researchevaluation/.

9. Privacy notice

The applicant descriptive details will not be shared with the internal selection panels.

The RIPEN Hub team will monitor the demographic data of applicants for reporting to UKRI if needed. The responses to the questions will be collated across all applicants. Your personal information will not be shared, nor any identifiable data. For all questions, a 'not disclosed' option is available, should this response be the preferred option.

Lay summaries of successful projects might be used on a public-facing webpage and should be written accordingly.