



Department for  
Business, Energy  
& Industrial Strategy

# Biomass Feedstocks Innovation Programme: Phase 1 – First Q&A

An SBRI Competition: 4887/02/2021

Clarifications  
Questions and answers  
Networking List



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# Updates

*BEIS has provided anonymised replies to any questions asked regarding this competition which, in our judgement, are of material significance to all bidders.*

**All bidders should take these replies into consideration when preparing their own bids for Phase 1 and BEIS will evaluate bids on the assumption that they have done so.**

All updated material and this document can be found on the [Gov.uk programme page](#) and [Contracts Finder](#).

Please note the Networking List at the end of this document, with details of those seeking potential project partners.

## Clarifications to the Guidance Notes

### Knowledge Sharing Requirements.

Page 29 of the competition guidance notes, which were released 3 March 2021, contained the following paragraph:

*“Knowledge sharing: effective dissemination and knowledge sharing are key requirements in this competition – and applicants will be assessed on the scope and scale of their proposed knowledge sharing activities (see assessment criteria).”*

Clarification as of 19 March 2021: While effective dissemination and knowledge sharing are key requirements of the competition, they will not form part of the assessment criteria being used to judge bids for entry into Phase 1. Therefore, prospective bidders are not required (for Phase 1 bids) to provide details of their plans in this respect. As Phase 1 proceeds, we will expect successful projects to engage with dissemination and knowledge sharing, particularly as commercialisation plans are being developed.

The reference on page 29 of the competition guidance notes, has been removed in the updated Guidance Notes, as of 19 March 2021.

### Project Delivery, Risk Register, and Project Team

For both Lots, both the Project Delivery (including the risk register and Finance Form) and the Project Team assessment criteria apply specifically to Phase 1 only.

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Additionally, as stated in both descriptions of the criteria in the Application Forms (Lot 1 and Lot 2), responses to Assessment Criterion 2 (Social Value) relate only to the immediate impacts of bidders' planned activities for Phase 1 (not beyond).

The Guidance Notes have been updated to provide additional clarity on this point, both in the specific criteria and as an introduction to the assessment criteria for each Lot.

## GDPR Declaration 5

BEIS has uploaded a working copy of the GDPR Declaration 5 to the [Gov.uk programme page](#) and [Contracts Finder](#) – this has replaced the previous document that was uploaded 3 March 2021. For ease of use, all bidders should use the new form, downloadable from 19 March 2021.

## Questions and answers

### Programme Scope questions

#### **Question 1: Is forestry harvest machinery, chemical and thermal technologies in scope?**

Yes, forestry harvest machinery, chemical, and thermal technologies are in scope, so long as they meet the competition criteria and the technology readiness level (TRL) requirements as set out in the guidance notes. Projects should also contribute to the overall objectives of the programme.

#### **Question 2: Does the programme include semi-wild crops?**

We would consider this in scope. The proposed innovation project must contribute to the overall programme objectives, one of which is to produce innovations that address some of the barriers to feedstock production, helping to scale up the supply of sustainable domestic biomass in the coming years to levels commensurate with those required to meet our net zero commitment.

#### **Question 3: Is Hemp within scope of the programme?**

We would consider this in scope. The proposed innovation project must contribute to the overall programme objectives, one of which is to produce innovations that address some of the barriers to feedstock production, helping to scale up the supply of sustainable domestic biomass in the coming years to levels commensurate with those required to meet our net zero commitment.

#### **Question 4: Are waste feedstocks in scope?**

The feedstocks that are in scope of this programme are:

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Second generation energy crops (i.e. non-food, lignocellulosic crops) and conventional (long-rotation) and short rotation forestry are in scope.

Traditional food and fodder crops (such as maize) and waste feedstocks (such as animal manures) are out of scope.

Marine-based feedstocks, including algae, are within scope and assessment of these will be based on the same general principles outlined in this Competition Scope section.

**Question 5: Please can you provide a definition of "scientific data synthesis"?**

We would describe this category in the following way:

“Projects developing a tool or platform that would integrate scientific data, and facilitate its interpretation and application, in such a way as to enable practical improvements to the production of biomass, or stimulate its production through a credible mechanism, within the defined project level boundaries. The tool or platform must also meet the TRL requirements set out in the guidance.”

If potential applicants are considering submitting a proposal that falls into this category and are uncertain as to whether it will meet the criteria, they can submit a short description of the concept and we will provide feedback as to whether it is within scope.

An example can be found in Section 2.7.3.2 (Diagnostic and predictive tools for bioenergy crop yield) of the [Scoping Study: Background Report](#) would be one such example (the Scoping Study can be found alongside this document on the [Gov.uk programme page](#) and [Contracts Finder](#)).

Any application would have to demonstrate how the tool was underlain by robust scientific evidence and how its use could help meet the competition goals (i.e. scale up), as part of responding to the full suite of assessment criteria we have set out.

**Question 6: Can you tell us any more about funding for projects excluded from this first phase e.g. around education and farming advisory services?**

The BEIS BioEnergy Innovation team has no plans for funding in this area as our Net Zero Innovation Portfolio targets technological innovations. However, we are aware that a range of interventions are likely to be necessary to scale up feedstock supply and these issues are under consideration as part of the Biomass Strategy, which the UK government intends to publish in 2022.

**Question 7: Will there be future innovation funding for activities beyond the farm gate/forest road?**

Further programmes in our BioEnergy theme, as part of the £1bn Net Zero Innovation Portfolio, will look at innovation opportunities through the supply chain (i.e. feedstocks, conversion, fuel output).

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For instance, BEIS has commissioned a research project on the use of advanced gasification technologies to produce methane, hydrogen and transportation fuels from biomass and waste feedstocks. The outputs of this research, expected in Spring 2021, will help to inform our future programmes focussed on biomass conversion technologies.

**Question 8: Are you anticipating that the multi-site demonstrator will cover second generation energy crops and forestry or do you anticipate it being limited to one or the other?**

We would expect the demonstrator to cover either second generation energy crops or forestry.

**Question 9: Should bidders take note of the rankings assigned to innovations in the Scoping Study material provided alongside the tender documents?**

The materials from the [scoping study](#) are presented for background information only. Bids will be judged purely on their merits and against the specified assessment criteria.

**Question 10: Does the competition cover things like short rotation forestry, increasing biomass yield, machinery, and storage?**

Yes, within the specified “farm gate/forest road” boundary described in the Competition Guidance Notes.

**Question 11: Are methodological or scientific studies within scope?**

The Competition is only open to entries which develop an innovation which can be recognised as a technology and placed on the technology readiness level scale, as outlined in the Guidance Notes (see page 3 and Annex 2). Purely methodological or scientific studies are not within scope.

However, we would consider an application that took (or developed) robust methodologies, which then resulted in an innovative technological product of some description. This would be within scope under the category of “scientific data synthesis” on Page 3. A fuller description of this is provided in this document under Question 5.

## Eligibility criteria

**Question 12: Can anyone outside the UK apply?**

As per our competition’s eligibility criteria: the project co-ordinator must be a UK registered company, academic, research, third sector or community organisation.



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## Deliverables

**Question 13: The competition information states that monitoring officer could be from an external organisation. Can BEIS provide any information on why this is, and what kind of external organisation(s) might be involved?**

BEIS uses externally resourced technical support on programmes due to flexible resourcing requirements. We cannot provide detail on who would be involved at this stage.

## Assessment Criteria

**Question 14: Unless otherwise stated (such as for Lot 1, Criterion 2) – should bidders' responses cover their entire proposed project across both Phases 1 and 2?**

Yes. The purpose of the assessment criteria is to enable BEIS to judge the strength of your project idea and its ability to meet the aims of the programme. Over the course of Phase 1, the funding provided to successful bidders will enable these fundamental issues to be addressed more thoroughly.

An additional caveat to this response is around the risk register – for both Lots, the Project Delivery assessment criteria applies specifically to Phase 1 only. This includes the risk register and Finance Form, as stated in the Clarifications to 'Project Delivery, Risk Register, and Project Team' section in this document.

**Question 15: Should responses to Criterion 2 of the Lot 1 and Lot 2 Application Forms (Social Value) relate only to the immediate impacts of bidders' planned activities for Phase 1 of the competition (not beyond)?**

This is correct - this criterion is specific to Phase 1 activities.

**Question 16: Is it correct that a bidder's risk register should identify only risks to the successful delivery of their Phase 1 project plan? So it should exclude, for example, risks to the overall delivery of the innovation (that might be investigated during Phase 1)?**

Yes, this is correct. During Phase 1, successful bidders will be able to develop a risk register for the development of their innovation and this will be assessed as part of the entry into Phase 2.

## Contract Size and Restrictions on Funding

**Question 17: The Guidance Notes advise that project costs should reflect actual costs at a 'fair market value' and profit for the project team members must not be included. For labour costs, is there any guidance available on how BEIS will judge whether**

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**quoted costs represent ‘fair market value’? Would bidders be expected/encouraged to provide evidence?**

Bidders are encouraged to provide as much detail on their costings as possible, especially around labour costs, which are not necessarily fixed within the market.

**Question 18: Bidders’ quoted costs must exclude profit. Is there any requirement for sub-contractors to exclude profit? I.e. are bidders required to persuade sub-contractors to work at cost price? (And if so, how should this be evidenced?)**

Costs submitted in applications should exclude profit for the bidder - BEIS will contract solely with the project co-ordinator. It is expected that the bidder will negotiate a fair market price with sub-contractors, and that an element of this is likely to include some profit.

**Question 19: The Guidance Notes advise that BEIS will not make payments in advance of need. Does this mean costs will only be reimbursed quarterly or monthly in arrears (creating a need for bidders to have the funds available to cover costs until reimbursement), or would BEIS consider paying costs immediately at the point at which they are incurred?**

As stated in the Guidance Notes: for this Competition (Phase 1) BEIS wishes to make quarterly payments to suppliers, made on evidence of eligible costs incurred in that quarter. This means that costs would be paid quarterly. However, BEIS understands the difficulties that small businesses may face when financing this type of project. BEIS will explore cash flow issues with bidders as part of developing the financial profile during the Contract Award process. BEIS will offer flexibility in terms of profiles and payments, within the confines of the requirements for use of public money within which it operates.

**Question 20: Would fees to acquire licences for the use of third parties’ proprietary datasets be considered eligible costs?**

Yes, if this cost is specific to the project, fully supported by an audit record justification of the claim.

**Question 21: Can you provide an estimate of the number of Phase 2 innovations you anticipate funding?**

BEIS has not finalised the sum that will be allocated to Phase 2 Demonstration projects. BEIS expects to make this decision in 2021. It is envisioned that Phase 2 individual project values will not exceed £4m, except in the case of a multi-site demonstrator for which a budget of £5m will be available. Note that only one multi-site demonstrator will be funded within Phase 2 (as stated in the Guidance Notes).

We cannot provide a definitive number for Phase 2 innovations at this stage but envision up to 12 projects as a reasonable estimate.

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## Notification and Publication of Results

**Question 22: Is it possible for substantial elements of the Phase 1 output to be withheld from publication due to commercial confidentiality?**

As stated in the Guidance Notes, some organisations may not want their activities to be publicised and organisations will be given a chance to opt out of any involvement in media related activity, should they see this as being necessary.

BEIS recognises the need to maintain confidentiality of commercially sensitive information. BEIS will consult applicants regarding the nature of information to be published, to protect commercially sensitive information.

At the end of Phase 1, if the applicant wishes for BEIS to publish an amended version of their report with commercially sensitive information removed, this will need to be provided by midday 28 February 2022.

## Knowledge Sharing Requirements

**Question 23: The Guidance Notes (released 3 March 2021) advise that “effective dissemination and knowledge sharing are key requirements in this Competition – and applicants will be assessed on the scope and scale of their proposed knowledge sharing activities (see assessment criteria)”. Knowledge dissemination is mentioned briefly in the Lot 1 Application Form, under Eligibility Criterion 3. Is any guidance available on what knowledge sharing requirements bidders are required to sign up to and how this will be assessed?**

Bidders can ignore this sentence for the purposes of entry into Phase 1. Entry into Phase 1 will be judged off the five assessment criteria and bids will not be assessed against dissemination and knowledge sharing. However, these remain an important part of the programme as a whole (Phase 1 and Phase 2) and should be a key consideration of successful applicants when developing commercialisation plans during Phase 1.

As detailed in the Clarifications section of this document, ‘Knowledge Sharing Requirements’, the Guidance Notes have been updated to reflect this advice.

**Question 24: Can you confirm whether, if successful in Phase 1, multi-site demonstrator project co-ordinators will get details of all the successful bids to Phase 1 Lot 1 and what information project co-ordinators will be able to access. i.e. contact details, types of innovations they are developing.**

BEIS will be able to provide (where not commercially sensitive) details of the other projects being funded. BEIS will not be able to mandate that other successful bidders provide their contact details, but it will be strongly encouraged.

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Additionally, as stated in the Guidance Notes, during December 2021 Phase 1 programme participants will be expected to attend a dissemination event with other Phase 1 participants to discuss project findings.

## Application Form and Declarations

**Question 25: If a sub-contractor would only be used in Phase 2 projects and not Phase 1, should they be included in this bid process? Specifically, would such sub-contractors be required to complete the Standard Selection Questionnaire within the Declaration Form?**

Sub-contractors relevant for Phase 2 should not be included in the Phase 1 bid process.

As stated in the guidance notes: for Phase 2, it is envisioned that the outputs from Phase 1 will be assessed alongside other information that BEIS may request from applicants (with reasonable notice), and alongside any information provided by applicants about changes to their project team (this would include changes to any sub-contractors).

**Question 26: The Declaration Form (Declaration 4) states that “The procurement document will provide instructions on the selection questions you need to respond to and how to submit those responses.”. Are bidders required to complete all sections of the Declaration Form, or are some not applicable to this competition?**

All Declaration Forms provided should be filled in and returned with the application forms.

Please note the caveat for section 8.4 of Declaration 4: “Can you supply the information in questions a. to d. above for any sub-contractors who you are relying upon to perform this contract?” (as per Question 27). This is not required.

**Question 27: The Declaration Form (Declaration 4) section 8.4 asks bidders and their sub-contractors to provide certificates from previous customers. Is this section required for this competition?**

BEIS will contract solely with the project co-ordinator. The project co-ordinator must ensure that sub-contractors are able to deliver successfully on projects (as per the Eligibility Criteria number 10 in Lot 1 and Lot 2 Application Forms). The question “Can you supply the information in questions a. to d. above for any sub-contractors who you are relying upon to perform this contract?” is not required.

**Question 28: In the GDPR Form (Declaration 5), we are unable to get the drop-down boxes to work and so cannot see the options. Please could you confirm whether this is a problem with the form, or likely a problem at our end e.g. our version of Excel?**

BEIS has uploaded a working copy of the GDPR Declaration 5 to the [Gov.uk programme page](#) and [Contracts Finder](#) – this has replaced the previous document that was uploaded 3 March

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2021. For ease of use, all bidders should use the new form, downloadable from 19 March 2021.

**Question 29: As this competition is for contract rather than grant funding, should the fields in the Finance Form relating to grant funding be left blank?**

This is correct.

**Question 30: Should the Finance Form only be filled for the costs of Phase 1?**

This is correct.

**Question 31: In the Application Form, under the Organisation Details section, there is a question asking “How is the business currently funded?”. No option is provided for “revenue funding” where a business supports itself on income from clients. How would you like this to be indicated?**

Bidders should tick the “No Funding” box if this is the case.

**Question 32: In the Application Form, under the Organisation Details section, there is a question asking “please list briefly any public sector support you are receiving or have received in the past 10 years, or which is currently being sought”. If a bidder has received support for a large number of projects, should they list all?**

Bidders should detail their highest value public sector supported projects, then group the rest, e.g. by route – specific grant type, scheme. We would need to understand total (approximate) figures and ideally the number of examples.

The purpose of this question is to get an understanding of the support bidders have received from the public sector, so it needs to provide enough depth to present an accurate picture.

**Question 33: How should the Scoping Study report (provided for background alongside the tender documents) be cited in applications?**

This competition has no set style guide for citations in bids.

The materials from the Scoping Study are presented for background information only. For reference, the Scoping Study materials can be found on the [Gov.uk programme page](#) and [Contracts Finder](#), alongside this document and the Guidance Notes.

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## Terms and Conditions

**Question 34: The Guidance and the Terms and Conditions require a successful bidder to identify patentable IP and to file for patents at the bidder's own cost "where it is reasonable to do so". Would we be free to determine that the IP protection afforded by a patent is not worth the cost and effort of the process, and therefore not to pursue a patent? Or would this place us in breach of the Terms and Conditions?**

Determining 'where it is reasonable' is a BEIS decision, but BEIS will take into account a supplier's recommendation and arguments for and against.

**Question 35: Clause 43, regarding information confidential to the contractor, refers to the need for a separate confidentiality agreement. Would this confidentiality agreement define the project outputs that are considered commercially confidential? At what stage would this confidentiality agreement be agreed?**

A confidentiality agreement can be created should there be elements of a project that cannot be published. This would be developed and defined as required during the project. Development of the confidentiality agreement can be included by the Applicant as a deliverable during Phase 1 of the programme.

It is anticipated that the publishable report, submitted by the successful applicants at the end of Phase 1 will take into account all commercially confidential restrictions. Applicants wishing to provide BEIS with such an amended report (where commercially sensitive information is removed) will need to provide this by midday 28 February 2022 (as stated in the Guidance Notes).

**Question 36: Is it correct that while clause 27(4) of the Terms and Conditions grants BEIS a licence to use relevant Background IP, this does not grant BEIS the ability to publish such Background IP? (We are aware that clause 27(3) grants BEIS the right to publish Arising IP.)**

This is correct.

BEIS recognises the need to maintain confidentiality of commercially sensitive information. BEIS will consult applicants regarding the nature of information to be published, to protect commercially sensitive information.

As per the Guidance Notes, if a project wishes for BEIS to publish an amended version of their Phase 1 report with commercially sensitive information removed, this will need to be provided to BEIS by midday 28 February 2022.

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# Networking List

*Details of those seeking potential project partners*

Company	Contact Name	Contact Details
University of Nottingham	Dr Alison Mohr	<a href="mailto:alison.mohr@nottingham.ac.uk">alison.mohr@nottingham.ac.uk</a>
NIAB	Dr Michael Gifford	<a href="mailto:Michael.Gifford@niab.com">Michael.Gifford@niab.com</a>
UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology	Dr Jeanette Whitaker	<a href="mailto:jhart@ceh.ac.uk">jhart@ceh.ac.uk</a>
Centre for Environment and Sustainability, University of Surrey	Dr Zoe M Harris	<a href="mailto:z.harris@surrey.ac.uk">z.harris@surrey.ac.uk</a>
GemServ	James Higgins	<a href="mailto:james.higgins@gemserv.com">james.higgins@gemserv.com</a>
Woodsure	Helen Bentley-Fox	<a href="mailto:helen@woodsurre.co.uk">helen@woodsurre.co.uk</a>
Energy Systems Catapult	Khumbu Mlotshwa	<a href="mailto:Khumbu.Mlotshwa@es.catapult.org.uk">Khumbu.Mlotshwa@es.catapult.org.uk</a>
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