CONNECTED Training Voucher Application Guidance

Summary

CONNECTED aims to build a sustainable network of international scientists and researchers to address the challenges of vector-borne plant viruses in Africa. CONNECTED creates opportunities for individuals to engage with each other, build capacity and create research consortia to respond to funding opportunities in the research area of African vector-borne plant viruses.

A key objective of CONNECTED is to enable Network Members, particularly Early Career Researchers, to enhance their knowledge and skills for career progression. To contribute to this, CONNECTED is providing funding for Training Vouchers up to a total value of £3000. These are available via competitive application and aim to support Network Members to take advantage of training opportunities, which can include (but are not limited to) attendance at CONNECTED and other courses or workshops, laboratory learning visits and work shadowing.

Applications are open to all Network Members who are Early Career Researchers, but preference will be given to those based in DAC-list countries.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to identify a relevant training course or organisation they wish to visit. A list of UK group leaders is available to Network Members upon request as suggestions, but this is not exhaustive. Group leaders are under no obligation to agree to host a Network Member in their laboratory.

All awardees are required to provide a short report following the completion of their training, for inclusion in Network outcomes and publicity (template will be provided).

Funding eligibility

Applicants:
All Network members are eligible who are Early Career Researchers (ECRs), but preference will be given to those based in DAC-list countries. ECRs are defined as those who have received their highest degree (BSc, MS or PhD) within the past 7 years. For a list of DAC countries, please visit the following link: http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-

The funding body that the CONNECTED network receives funding from stipulates that students are not eligible to apply. Applications must be supported by your organisation please provide a letter of support from your group leader alongside your application.

Activities supported:
Training vouchers will support training and learning activities within the scope of the CONNECTED Network. Examples include attending courses or workshops providing knowledge and skills in plant virology and/or entomology, laboratory learning visits, work shadowing.

Immunisation, visa, travel, accommodation, insurance and subsistence costs are eligible together with course fees, and consumables for training purposes.

For lab-based or work shadowing visits, the group leader can agree to accommodate up to a maximum of 3 visiting Network Members. These can be simultaneous visits if this is convenient to both the Research Group leader and the Network Members.

Activities not supported:
Training Vouchers will not support activities outside CONNECTED's remit, attendance at conferences, or staff time.

Value of grant:
Awards will be for up to £3000 of total actual costs.

Application process
There will be 3 Training Voucher calls throughout the lifetime of the CONNECTED grant. Network Members will be made aware of upcoming calls, including deadlines and key dates, via the CONNECTED website (https://www.connectedvirus.net/) in monthly newsletters and news items. Guidance documentation and the application form are available on the CONNECTED website.

Please enclose your CV with the application form, this should include information on your publications, conferences, training courses undertaken and any previous awards.

Each completed application form must be accompanied by a letter of support from your group head. If you propose to conduct a learning visit to another group, you must also submit a letter of support from the group head of the host organisation confirming that they are happy to host you and can provide the learning opportunities sought.

Completed application forms, CVs, and letters of support must all be submitted to the Network Team email account (connectedvirusnetwork@gmail.com) by 4pm on the closing date. You will receive acknowledgement of your application.

Review process
Each application received will be checked by the Network Team to ensure it meets the application criteria and contains the required information. If there are any problems, further information will be requested from the applicant. All complete applications will be reviewed by the CONNECTED Network Executive (selected Management Board members may also take part should any member of the Network Executive have a conflict of interest with any applicants). The CONNECTED Management Board will receive a copy of the shortlisted applications, to enable final decisions for funding to be made.

Notification
All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application; please see the CONNECTED website for anticipated dates when results will be communicated to applicants.

Contractual Agreement
Successful applicants will be sent an award letter that they must sign and return to the Network Team to confirm that they will use the funds in the manner set out in their application. All Training Voucher activities must commence within 6 months of signing and returning the award letter.

Reporting
On completion of their training, recipients of awards will be required to provide a short report of the benefits to their career development (a template will be provided). The report should be sent to the Network Team email account (connectedvirusnetwork@gmail.com) within 2 months of finishing the Training Voucher activities. The awardee will be requested to complete a follow up questionnaire 6 – 12 months later. The Network Team will also request that the awardee's Research Group leader complete a related questionnaire for assessing change resulting from the Training Voucher activities.

Payment of Awards

Travel, visa and immunisation: the awardee will be responsible for booking their flight and travel needs plus any visa, immunisation and insurance needs. Awardees should claim these costs back from the Network Team by completing an expense form (to be provided by the Network Team) and submitting itemised receipts.

Accommodation: Depending on the nature of the visit, the awardee should work with either the host UK host to arrange suitable accommodation (lab learning visits or work shadowing visits) or with the CONNECTED Network team (training courses). It is anticipated that the Network Team will be able to pay for accommodation directly out of the Training Voucher award to avoid awardees having to pay themselves and claim afterwards.

Subsistence: Subsistence costs of £30 per day will be available for UK-based visits. These are to cover food, local travel and incidental costs. These will be paid directly to the awardee. Bank details will be requested once the award letter has been signed and returned. Receipts must be retained in case they are required for audit purposes.

Timescale on visas and travel

If awardees plan to use the Training Voucher to attend a specific event (for example a workshop), they must ensure that sufficient time is allowed for visa, travel and immunisation arrangements to be completed. Awardees are responsible for ensuring that the appropriate visa(s) and immunisations are in place to enable travel.

Publicity and Data Protection

Copies of applications will be made available to the CONNECTED Management Board and Network Executive Group who will use the information provided for reviewing the proposal and post-award administration. CONNECTED may choose to publish details of awards, awardees, and information of training provided.

All funding comes from the BBSRC, so to meet the UK Research Councils' obligations for public accountability and the dissemination of information, non-confidential details of awards may also be made available on the Research Councils' websites and other publicly available databases, and in reports, documents and mailing lists. The BBSRC will use this information for research related activities, including but not limited to, statistical analysis in relation to the evaluation of BBSRC funding, study of trends and policy and strategy studies.