



CONNECTED Application Guidance: ***V4 Early Career Researcher Development Programme***

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. This will enable capacity building within the field of plant vector-borne diseases in Africa. To contribute to this, CONNECTED is running a prestigious interdisciplinary development programme for Early Career Researchers (ECRs), called the V4 ECR Development Programme. Full details and course content are on our website.

Applications are open to all Network Members who are Early Career Researchers. Preference will be given to those who are based in DAC list countries, however a minority of places are reserved for UK-based applicants.

Places are limited and will be awarded following a competitive review process. Awards will be made in a gender-balanced manner.

All awardees will be required to complete a series of short evaluation forms to enable the CONNECTED Network Team to assess and monitor change resulting from the training.





Applicant eligibility for funding

All Network members who are Early Career Researchers (ECRs) are eligible. ECRs are defined as those who have received their highest degree (BSc, MS or PhD) within the past 7 years. To be eligible, you must have a current contract of research employment which extends at least until the finish date of the proposed training.

Preference will be given to applicants who are based in DAC list countries, and a minority of places are reserved for UK-based applicants.

The development programme will comprise up to 30 participants from the fields of plant virology and entomology, most of whom will be from DAC list countries, primarily Sub-Saharan Africa. Approximately 20-30% will be from the UK. Awards will aim to achieve equal distribution between genders.

For a list of eligible DAC countries, please visit the following link:

http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/DAC_List_ODA_Recipients2018to2020_flows_En.pdf

Applications must be supported by your organisation: please provide a letter of support from your group leader alongside your application. See below for further information

Activities supported:

This award will support attendance at the University of Bristol, UK for the CONNECTED 'V4 ECR Development Programme'.

Immunisation, visa, return travel, and insurance costs are eligible. CONNECTED will cover the costs of all tuition, accommodation and subsistence. All accommodation and some meals will be arranged by the CONNECTED Network Team. Details will be provided in due course.

Activities not supported:

The funds distributed as part of this award should be used exclusively for costs relating to attendance at this course. Any additional costs claimed will not be paid.

Application process

Network Members will be made aware of 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. You must be a Network Member to be eligible to apply for this training opportunity.

Please fully complete all sections of the application form, adhering to word limits where appropriate.





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

Each completed application form must also be accompanied by a letter of support from your group leader. This letter should include the following:

1. Confirmation of your contract of research employment at your institution
2. Confirmation that you are recommended to attend this programme.

Completed application forms, CVs, and letters of support must all be submitted to the Network Team email account (connectedvirusnetwork@gmail.com) by midnight on the closing date.

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).

Applications will be reviewed against the following criteria:

- Applicant eligibility and appropriate supporting documentation
- Current research activity within the CONNECTED remit of vector-borne plant disease (question 2)
- Career development potential: scale of impact the programme will have on the applicant (question 3)
- Opportunity to utilise the learning: the extent to which the applicant will be able to put their learning into action in their own research (question 4)
- Sharing the new knowledge and skills gained to build research capacity (question 5).

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.

Timescales for visas and travel

Awardees 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. If successful applicants are unable to secure visas or





other requirements necessary to enable them to attend the course, they will lose their place and CONNECTED will not be responsible for any further costs.

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.

Evaluation

At the outset and upon completion of the development programme, awardees will be required to complete a short evaluation form. Awardees 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 course.

Payment of Awards

Travel, visa and immunisations: the awardee will be responsible for booking their flights and travel needs plus any visa, immunisations 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 and meals: Accommodation will be arranged and paid for by CONNECTED, along with several meals throughout the programme. Participants will be able to claim additional local travel and subsistence costs from CONNECTED in arrears.

All travel and subsistence costs claimed must be in accordance with the [CONNECTED T&S Conditions](#).

Publicity and Data Protection

Copies of applications will be made available to the CONNECTED Management Board, Network Executive Group, and BBSRC, who will use the information provided for reviewing proposals, making awards, 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.

