



## CONNECTED Training Grant 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 provides funding for Training Grants 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, and preference will be given to those who are Early Career Researchers and to those who are 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.

Places are limited and will be awarded following a competitive review process.

### Funding eligibility

#### Applicants:

All Network Members are eligible, but preference will be given to those who are Early Career Researchers (ECRs), or are 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-development/development-finance-standards/daclist.htm>





All applications must be supported by your organisation: please provide a letter of support from your group leader alongside your application.

Network Members who have research employment contracts:

To be eligible, you must have a current contract of research employment which extends at least until the finish date of the proposed training. This should be confirmed in the letter of support from your group leader

Network Members who are students:

The organisation that funds the CONNECTED network makes the following stipulations: Network Members who are part-time students are eligible for all costs associated with the training if they also have an employment research contract with their organisation which extends at least until the end of the training, as above. This should be confirmed in the letter of support from your group leader.

Network Members who are full time students, from DAC-list country institutions only, can apply for costs limited to travel (and associated costs including travel visas, vaccinations etc), subsistence and accommodation, to attend training that is relevant to the scientific goals of the CONNECTED network. Note: full-time students will need to pay the costs of the training itself.

***Due to administrative processes, we strongly advise you to apply for funding for training opportunities that are at least four months away at the time you submit your application.***

**Activities supported:**

The Training Grant 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, and subsistence costs are eligible together with course fees (except for full-time students, see above), and consumables for training purposes. We are unable to make payments in respect of travel insurance policies.

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:**

The Training Grant 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. The funds distributed as part of this award should be used exclusively for costs relating to attendance at this course. These can include costs such as (but not limited to) return flights to your home, visas, and vaccinations required for travel. Please detail and itemise these on the application form. Any additional costs claimed will not be paid.

**Reporting and evaluation**

At the outset and upon completion of the training, awardees will be required to complete a short evaluation form. Awardees will also be required to complete a follow up questionnaire 6 – 12 months later. The Network Team may also request that the awardee's Research Group leader complete a related questionnaire for assessing change resulting from the training course.

**Passport**

Please ensure you have a current passport. Some countries require that you have 6 months remaining on your passport at the time of travel. Please check individual country requirements. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure their passport fulfils the requirements of the country being visited, or country being travelled through en route to their final destination.

**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.

**Application process**

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.





Your 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.

Application form:

1. Applicant details – please complete all sections
2. Details of the training event/lab visit
3. Benefit of the training to the applicant - please detail how this training opportunity will contribute to your professional development in the CONNECTED research field (maximum 400 words). Main points to include:
  - a. Your current area of research and your work responsibilities
  - b. The potential of this training to development your career in the field of plant vector-borne disease
  - c. Your opportunities to use and share the learning you will receive with colleagues
4. Previous CONNECTED funding – please let us know if you have received funding from CONNECTED to date and what for/how much.
5. Costs of Training – please itemise the total costs you are applying for up to a value of £3000
6. Visa and vaccinations – please complete all sections
7. Required additional documents – 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. Please also include a letter of support from your research group leader confirming (a) your contract of employment at your institution, (b) that you are recommended to undertake this training (c) you are able take time off from your work duties to attend the training
8. Confirmation section - Please complete
9. Signature - Please complete

Completed application forms, CVs, and letters of support must all be submitted to the Network Team email account ([connectedvirusnetwork@gmail.com](mailto:connectedvirusnetwork@gmail.com)) by 4pm 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). The CONNECTED Directors 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, and an authorised signatory at their organisation must both sign, and return to the Network Team to confirm that the applicant will use the funds in the manner set out in their application.

### **Payment of Awards**

Travel, visa and immunisation: The Network Team can book flights if requested. Full details of airlines, flight times and numbers will need to be provided by the awardee. It is the responsibility of the awardee to ensure that these are accurate. The awardee will be responsible for booking any additional travel needs plus any visa, and immunisation 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 research group to arrange suitable accommodation (lab learning visits, work shadowing visits, external training courses) or with the CONNECTED Network team (CONNECTED training courses). It is anticipated that the Network Team will be able to pay for accommodation directly out of the Training Grant award to avoid awardees having to pay themselves and claim afterwards. The cost of the accommodation must not exceed £140 per night.

Subsistence: Subsistence expenses will be reimbursed. This includes food (if not provided by the organiser of the event), local travel and incidental costs up to the value of £45 per day. Only expenses that adhere to CONNECTED Travel, Subsistence Costs and Accommodation





Booking Guidelines can be claimed. Itemised receipts will be needed to process the expenses claims. We will ask you to confirm you understand that only allowable expenses will be reimbursed. Claims with non-allowable expenses and without itemised receipts will be rejected. Awardees should claim these costs back from the Network Team by completing an expense form (to be provided by the Network Team). Please note that all expenses will need to be claimed in arrears.

### **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.

