

The Company of Biologists' Scientific Meeting and Sustainable Conferencing Grants

Applicant Handbook

This Handbook will help you to understand the terms and conditions of our Scientific Meeting and Sustainable Conferencing Grants, and to complete your application using our [online system](#). Please read the information below thoroughly before submitting your application.

What are Scientific Meeting Grants?

Scientific Meeting Grants are available to help finance a range of charitable activities including (but not limited to) meetings, workshops, and conferences in the fields relevant to our journals.

Grants can be used to cover expenses such as a plenary or keynote speaker, to assist with travel for early career scientists, or to reduce (or waive) registration fees.

Grants are typically awarded on a sliding scale – for example meetings with fewer than 100 people may receive up to £2,000, whereas a meeting with 400 people may receive £4,000. Grants in excess of £6,000 are only awarded in very exceptional circumstances.

We encourage organisers to include a virtual element in their event, making them more accessible to a larger and more diverse audience and promoting inclusivity, accessibility, and sustainability.

We will not fund:

- Attendance at scientific meetings, conferences, or training courses
- Expenditure on capital equipment and capital building proposal
- Undergraduate expeditions and courses
- Social/political networking
- Conference dinners/social events/refreshment breaks
- Tuition fees
- Payments for the employment of staff
- Abstract books
- Publishing expenses (e.g. page charges)
- Intra-institutional events (e.g. departmental seminars, etc.)
- Core costs (i.e. overheads)
- Field excursion costs for summer post-grad schools/courses

What are Sustainable Conferencing Grants?

Sustainable Conferencing Grants are available to support innovative ideas that enable biologists to collaborate proactively whilst minimising their impact on the environment - for example by:

- Reducing travel requirements
- Increasing accessibility and inclusivity
- Improving interaction opportunities for geographically diverse participants
- Enhancing the 'human' experience of virtual meetings

Organisers of conferences, workshops, seminars, training, and networking events can apply for grants in the following categories:

- **Measures to reduce the carbon footprint of travel (up to £1,000)**

- for example, removing the necessity to fly by asking speakers to present virtually, or maximising the number of non-local speakers travelling by train or other relatively low-carbon transport
- **Additional cost of technology (up to £2,500)**
 - for example, rental of a virtual platform or equipment to host a virtual element, technology and associated support/services
 - we are particularly keen to fund innovative technologies or innovative uses of existing technologies
- **Innovative feature (up to £2,500)**
 - for example, the development of an app to enhance the experience of virtual attendees
- **Other (up to £1,000)**
 - measures to improve sustainability that are not covered by any of the other categories
 - innovative measures are particularly encouraged

Applicants will be asked to summarise how they would use the funding to make their meeting more sustainable, including any planned innovations that may help others to run more sustainable meetings.

Whilst Sustainable Conferencing Grants are open to organisers of seminars, funding will generally be limited to one grant per series. An exception may be made for a new, exciting, and more innovative proposal within the same series.

We will not fund:

- **Plastic-free badges, recycled posters/banners, composting of discarded materials** as these should be standard arrangements for a conference aiming to be sustainable.
- **Conference bags or gifts (mugs, pens etc)** as we discourage conference organisers from providing free gifts, even if sustainably sourced.
- **Apps unless they contribute to sustainable conferencing practices** beyond simply avoiding printing a conference booklet. We do however encourage applications for innovative apps that facilitate remote interactions.
- **Registration fee waivers**
- **Electric screens for displaying posters or conference information** at in-person meetings.
- **Costs associated with catering** (e.g. sustainably sourced food or re-usable cutlery). We encourage sustainable catering, but do not fund it through this funding scheme.
- **Equipment purchases.**
- **Offsetting carbon expenditure** from flights. Our aim is to encourage and explore changes in behaviour so, while offsetting may be helpful in cases where flying is unavoidable, this is not something we fund through this scheme.
- **Subsidised travel to encourage non-stop flights** as we cannot monitor validity.
- **Duplicated requests** (i.e. where same funding requested under Scientific Meeting Grants and Sustainable Conferencing Grants).
- **Sponsorship** (i.e. where we are offered something in exchange for funding).
- **Childcare costs** as there are currently insufficient funds within the budget for childcare to be considered for funding.

Who can apply for a grant?

- The individual who completes the application must be in the organising group for the event.
- Applications from professional fundraisers and conference agencies are generally not considered.
- Grants cannot be awarded retrospectively, and funding decisions are made six to eight weeks after each application deadline.
- Although there is no restriction on nationality, we are unable to pay awards to recipients in jurisdictions, countries, or regions of the world subject to sanctions, embargoes or other political trade restrictions put in place by the United Nations, the EU, or the UK.
- Whilst the quality of science remains paramount, we prefer to support events where organisers have sought maximal feasible diversity in speakers in terms of geography, gender, and age. In addition, where attendance at events is selective, we would also expect such points to be influential. We invite applicants to make a statement on these issues in their funding application.

How to apply

- Organisers can apply for a Scientific Meeting or Sustainable Conferencing Grant using our [online application system](#).
- All sections of the application must be completed unless specifically stated.
- The application and all supporting documents must be submitted in English.
- Incomplete applications will **not** be accepted.
- Notes on individual sections:
 - **Name and address of the contracting party for the purposes of the Grant Agreement.** It is important that the individual/institution legally authorised to sign on behalf of the organiser group is declared.
 - **Details of professional organiser being used (if applicable).** Applications from professional fundraisers or conference agencies will not generally be considered. Any exceptional circumstances should be declared.
 - **Topics/programme outline** - not to exceed two pages.
 - **Speakers/proposed speakers** - not to exceed two pages.
 - **Outline budget for the event** - please select one of the two budget templates most appropriate for your event. We are unable to consider applications where budget information is incomplete or missing.
 - **Funding sought from other sources** - if you have applied or intend to apply to other funding bodies, then please provide details including the amount requested.

Application deadlines

Application deadlines are available at <https://www.biologists.com/grants/meeting-grants/>.

What is the application process?

- Following an initial evaluation by our Grants and Sustainable Conferencing Committees, a shortlist for funding is submitted to the Board of Directors for approval. Unsuccessful applicants will be informed at this time.
- Shortlisted applicants will generally be informed of the outcome of their funding request within six to eight weeks of the application deadline.
- Successful applicants will be required to sign our Grant Agreement and provide bank details to enable funds to be electronically transferred.

Terms & conditions

- If you wish to accept a Scientific Meeting Grant and/or a Sustainable Conferencing Grant, you will be required to sign a Grant Agreement. The terms of this Agreement are non-negotiable and if you are unable to accept the terms offered, we will consider your request for funding withdrawn.
- Funds will be paid direct into a bank account in the name of your institution or meeting. We are unable to make transfers into an individual's personal bank account.
- We require you to acknowledge receipt of grant funds.
- Awarded funds must be returned in full if for any reason the event is not held.
- Grant funds can only be used to support the event specified in the original application.
- As this funding is a grant and not sponsorship, we **do not require an invoice**.
- Acknowledgements:
 - We ask that you to acknowledge The Company of Biologists' contribution to your event on your website and in any printed material circulated about the event. This should include our company name 'The Company of Biologists', our [company logo](#) and our web address (biologists.com).
 - If you have received a Sustainable Conferencing Grant, you will also be required to publish a brief statement on the event website describing how you will use our funding to make your meeting more sustainable, including any planned innovations that will help others to run more sustainable meetings.

- Reports:
 - Successful applicants will be required to provide a short report within three months of the event taking place.
 - If you have been awarded a Sustainable Conferencing Grant, your report should include feedback about the tools used/support provided, describing what did and did not work, value for money and any ideas for future improvement. It should also include details of how the Grant was acknowledged and, where possible, feedback from delegates.
 - The Company of Biologists may use material from your report on our website, in social media, and in other promotional materials. If you have any concerns about the use of your material, please let us know in advance.
 - Your report will be retained for at least seven years and may be inspected by the Charity Commission.