

FABLS Network Operational Procedures for Access to Funds 2008

Acronyms

‘**FABLS**’ stands for Fluorescence and Biological Life Sciences.

‘**EMC**’ stands for Executive Management Committee of FABLS.

‘**RMC**’ stands for Resource Management Committee of FABLS.

‘**CI**’ stands for Chief Investigator

‘**PI**’ stands for Partner Investigator

Definitions

‘**Member**’ is a person with interest the area of fluorescence who has applied for a membership with the Network with the intention to use its resources and infrastructure for developing new Projects.

‘**Project**’ is a research project registered with the Network.

‘**Project Team**’ means all people involved in the Project whose names are on the Project’s registration form either as Chief or Partner Investigators.

‘**Chief Investigator**’ means the Researcher who is the principal applicant on the Project’s registration application.

‘**Partner Investigator**’ means a researcher who collaborates on a proposal submitted by a Chief Investigator

‘**The Network**’ means the ARC/NHMRC Research Network “Fluorescence Applications in Biotechnology and Life Sciences”.

‘**The Partner’s component**’ means the funding pledged to FABLS by Partner Institutions, which is listed in the FABLS application, or may have been pledged separately in the context of new Memberships of FABLS.

A **Project** can have only one **CI** but may have several **PIs**.

A **Member** can have only one current **Project** as **CI** but may participate as a **PI** on several projects.

Introduction

FABLS funding can be accessed by the Members of FABLS only within the context of a project. A project has to be registered with the Network to be eligible for funding. Once it is registered the Chief Investigator may receive financial support for their project, provide the requested budget components are eligible under FABLS rules and subject to other conditions as specified in this document. A small number of Special Initiatives, that may not have the character of a project may be funded as well, provided they are in agreement with the aims of the FABLS Network. These have the same status as projects.

This document describes the procedures for project registration, and for accessing the funding.

Part 1: Project Registration

1.1. Project Registration form

1.1.1. Project registration under the FABLS Network Funding Scheme requires the completion of a Project Registration form that is forwarded to the Network Administrator at fabls@ics.mq.edu.au

1.1.2. Application form is found on the FABLS website. Special Initiatives should use the same form. It is recognized that the Special Initiatives may not meet all the criteria listed on the form.

1.1.3. A proposing CI may apply for project registration by sending a completed application form to fabls@ics.mq.edu.au

1.2. Rules for project registration

1.2.1. Each Member may only have one registered project valid at any time as a Chief Investigator, but can be a Partner Investigator on additional applications.

1.2.2 Applications with single CI and multiple PIs will be funded at a level designated for a single CI.

1.2.3. The Project may have any number of participants who may or may not be Network Members. FABLS actively encourages that project participants become FABLS Members

1.2.7. Members who have received FABLS funding in the past should note that new applications will be considered only after the report from the previously completed FABLS projects has been accepted by the FABLS RMC and EMC.

1.3. Registration process

- 1.3.1. Each Project registration form is read by all Members of the RMC in a timely fashion.
- 1.3.2. If the project adequately satisfies the criteria for Network Projects, then the project is approved.
- 1.3.3. Projects regarded as failing to meet the criteria by the majority of RMC Members will be discussed further with a view to possible project modifications. The proposed modifications will be communicated to the applicant with encouragement to resubmit an amended Project.
- 1.3.4. The RMC will attempt to discuss the project modifications within the shortest timescale that is practicable.
- 1.3.5. The projects that have been modified to the satisfaction of the RMC will be approved without further consideration.

1.4. Registration Approval and notification letter

- 1.4.1. Chief Investigators will be informed of their successful registration by e-mail.
- 1.4.2. Projects will be issued with an identification number, which is also accessible through the Network Forum.

Part 2: Mechanisms for funds allocation

2.2.1. Items eligible for funding and funding limits

Applicants are reminded that FABLS funding is principally designed to support networking type activities as prescribed by the ARC Networks Contract and by the FABLS proposal to the ARC. Both are accessible on the FABLS Website

Requests for funding may be made for the following types of support:

2.2.1. Funding for working parties, progress meetings.

This funding supports projects but not directly. It may include travel support for bringing over external consultants (but not their fees if any). Funding for this component comes from the ARC allocation for that component defined in the FABLS proposal.

2.2.2. Funding for laboratory exchanges

Examples may include supporting a PhD student to stay in an overseas lab for a period of research, or a sabbatical spent at a commercial organisation. It comes from the ARC allocation for that component.

2.2.3. Funding for infrastructure access

This must be applied for within a context of a Network Project, also for a transient industrial partnership. Applications are encouraged for use of infrastructure that is not managed by project participants. This funding comes from the ARC allocation for that component.

The total request for these three items shall not exceed \$ 10,000

2.2.4. Project consumables and equipment funding

The ARC expects that project funding will primarily come from other sources. However FABLS will be able to provide very limited amount of project funding to selected projects. The relevant request shall not exceed \$ 5000, unless there is a special justification.

Project funding includes personnel, maintenance, travel, consumables and other. Funding for this component comes from the Partner Institutions and from Macquarie contribution. All items that would be supported within a Discovery program qualify.

FABLS has no role in defining the use of funding from Partner Institutions.

2.2.5. The Resource Management Committee monitors that the funding awarded to individual requests is appropriately allocated between these categories.

2.2.6. Funding Requests for Special Initiatives should not depart considerably from these categories.

2.3. Justification of Funding

2.3.1. The CI needs to provide justification for funding with their request.

2.3.2. Funding justification needs to contain enough details for judgment of the project needs, how the proposed expenditure will support the project, and assess compliance with FABLS funding constraints.

2.4. Rules for the Award of Funding by the Resource Management Committee applicable to funding rounds

Funding to be distributed consists of the ARC allocation that is a fraction of a total FABLS funding and cash support from Macquarie University and selected Partner Institutions. Separate constraints apply to each of these sources.

- 2.4.1. The ARC funds may not be used in support of direct project work, but they may be used to
 - support project working groups, meetings, bringing over experts,
 - fund personnel placements in partner laboratories,
 - support access to infrastructure for project work,
- 2.4.2. The funds from Partner Institutions may only be used to support the projects of CIs is from that institution. These funds are not transferred between institutions.
- 2.4.3. There are no additional constraints concerning the allocation of the Macquarie University component.
- 2.4.4. Funding from future sources will be distributed in agreement with the conditions specific to these sources.

2.5. Principles for the distribution of the Partner's component

- 2.5.1. The Partner's component is awarded automatically and immediately upon project registration.
- 2.5.2. The CI is informed in parallel to the relevant entity in their institution such as their Research Office.
- 2.5.3. The Members from a single institution who registered a project should negotiate with other FABLS Members from the same institution how the institutional pledge should be divided. These Members may or may not have FABLS-registered projects. This information should be provided to the FABLS administrator.
- 2.5.4. FABLS issues a letter to the relevant entity in that Partner institution advising of the endorsement of projects and requesting funding release as per Members proposition.

2.6. Principles for the distribution of ARC component

- 2.6.1. The Resource Management Committee will advise the applicant CI on eligibility of their budget items. If the application does not comply with the guidelines the CI will be invited to submit a revised application in the same funding round
- 2.6.2. The total (eligible) requests are then calculated and compared to available funding.
- 2.6.3. If the total requests are less than the funding available, then the (eligible) requests are met in full.
- 2.6.4. If the total requests are greater than the funding available but less than 150% of the latter then the funding is divided equally among the requests or requests met in full, whatever is the lesser amount.
- 2.6.5. If **the total** requests are more than 150% of available then the RMC will need to make merit-based decisions. These will be documented and communicated to the recipients.

2.7. Principles for the distribution of the Macquarie component

- 2.7.1. The Macquarie component is awarded based on the combination of merit and need.

2.8. Timing of Registrations and Funding Requests

- 2.8.1. Project registrations may be submitted at any time.
- 2.8.2. Funding requests for project support, working party support and laboratory exchanges may be lodged at any time.
- 2.8.3. The awards for project support, working party support and laboratory exchanges are made, in principle, twice per year with two closing dates for funding requests as separately communicated to Members. A decision may be made to hold only one funding round.

2.9. Overall principles

- 2.9.1. The RMC tries to optimise their award allocation so to maximize the support of all projects, within the existing flexibility.
- 2.9.2. The RMC prepares a report explaining their decision, and this report is made available to Members.

Part 3: Approval of Funding

3.1. Processing of Requests

- 3.1.1. After the submission deadline, the funding requests will be distributed by the FABLS Administrator between Members of the RMC.
- 3.1.2. Each application must be assessed by at least three RMC Members.
- 3.1.3. No less than one paragraph and up to one page of comments is required from each assessor.
- 3.1.4. Each assessment will include a recommendation to the RMC on awarding funding and its amount, if successful.
- 3.1.5. The RMC will formulate a detailed final report justifying their funding decisions in each individual case.

3.2. Letter of Offer

- 3.2.1. A letter of offer will be sent to successful applicants within 1 week of making the decision. Funding Agreement will be forwarded with the letter.
- 3.2.2. Successful applicants must accept the letter of offer within 28 days of the letter of offer being sent to them by signing the Funding Agreement and returning it to the FABLS administration.
- 3.2.3. A notification letter will be sent to all other applicants within 1 week of making the decision.

Part 4: Funding Administration

4.1. Releasing of funds

- 4.1.1. Funds are released after the Funding agreement has been signed by both parties (The Network Convenor and the Chief Investigator).
- 4.1.2. The funds are transferred to the account in the Chief Investigator institution opened for the purpose and nominated in the Funding agreement.

4.2. Appeals process

- 4.2.1. Unsuccessful applicants who decide to appeal should do this within 28 days of the notification letter being issued.
- 4.2.2. Only appeals made on procedural grounds will be considered.
- 4.2.3. Email communication with respect to appeals will not be entered into.
- 4.2.4. Appeals are dealt with at the first EMC meeting from the date of appeal.

4.3. Varying the Funding Approval

- 4.3.1. Requests to vary the Funding Approval must be forwarded in writing to the Network.
- 4.3.2. The RMC must assess such applications within a shortest possible timescale.
- 4.3.3. A letter of notification is sent to the Chief Investigator of the project.
- 4.3.4. When the reason for varying the funding approval is the change of the Chief Investigator, both the new and former Chief Investigators are informed in writing.
- 4.3.5. The Funding Approval may be varied where:
 - the organisation's involvement with the research program ends or substantially changes;
 - the research program changes so that it is no longer consistent with the description in the Funding Approval;
 - the person named in the funding approval as the Chief Investigator ceases to lead the research program;
 - any of the collaborating partner institutions involved in the research program end or substantially change their involvement with the program
- 4.3.6. Unclaimed awards: The funding offer expires in 6 months if the Award is unclaimed within that period.

4.4. Reports

- 4.4.1. Submitting the project report is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator who lodged the Project Registration.
- 4.4.2. The report is required if funding has been awarded, regardless if funding originated from the Partner Institution or FABLS.
- 4.4.3. The report length should reflect the amount of funding received within the approximate ratio of 1 page per \$ 5000 awarded.
- 4.4.4. A project report is due within six months after the expiry of a project registration. Projects funded in the last FABLS funding round (24 September 2007) need to be reported within a 12 months period.
- 4.4.5. If the report is not received within six months, a reminder is sent to the Chief Investigator.
- 4.4.6. A second (and final) reminder is sent after one month of the first reminder and this time to all members of the team.

- 4.4.7. After one month from sending the final reminder and if the report is not produced, the RMC may decide that the project has not been carried out and may take the appropriate steps to recover funds.

4.5. Recovery and Carryovers

- 4.5.1. Recovery of funds is decided by the Resource Management Committee and final approval of the decision is made by the FABLS EMC.
- 4.5.2. A request in writing is sent to the Chief Investigator. The Chief Investigator can either appeal or arrange a way of returning the funds.
- 4.5.3. In cases when funds have not been spent within the approved time period, Chief Investigators can apply for carryover of funds .
- 4.5.4. Carryovers are approved by the Resource Management Committee after receiving an application to carryover funds with detailed explanation of what prevented the funds to be spent as planned and how these would be spent and within what timeframe (up to 12 more months).

Part 5: Miscellaneous

5.1. Email correspondence

- 5.1.1. Email correspondence with the EMC and RMC is encouraged in the process for project registration and before submission of funding requests.
- 5.1.2. The RMC will not enter into communication concerning individual funding requests after they have been submitted and before the funding decisions have been made.
- 5.1.3. Justification of the funding decisions of the RMC is documented and available to Members upon request.

5.2. Format of documents

- 5.2.1 All documents should be written in English and need to comply with the submission requirements.
- 5.2.2 All pages should be A4 in black type, use a single column and 12-point font size on A4 paper, printed on one side only.

5.3. Reference Numbers:

5.3.1 The Members will be notified by email of the reference numbers for their project registrations and funding requests. These numbers will also be available through the Forum after individual login.

5.3.2 A project registration number is composed of: the year of registration, the surname of the Chief Investigator and a consecutive number of the application for that year

For example, Kate Krastev submitted a registration application in 2005 and that was the 9th application for the calendar year submitted. The project identification number issued was: 2005Krastev9

5.3.3 A funding request reference number is composed of the project registration number and the date the application was received at FABLS

For example, 2005Krastev9-12-03-2005.

5.4. Contact Points:

5.4.1 FABLS website address: <http://www.mq.edu.au/physics/fluoronet>

5.4.2. Enquiries about this Scheme may be addressed to:

FABLS Network
c/o Ewa Goldys, Network Convenor
Department of Physics
Macquarie University
North Ryde, NSW, 2109
Australia
Email: fabls@ics.mq.edu.au

5.4 Applicable law

The Network is required to comply with the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1988* and the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*. Information about the *Privacy Act* is available at <http://www.privacy.gov.au/act/index.html>

5.5. Incomplete or misleading information

It is a serious offence to provide false or misleading information to the Commonwealth. If an application is incomplete, inaccurate or contains information that is considered misleading, it may be excluded from any further consideration for funding).

If the Network believes that omissions or inclusion of misleading information are intentional, or if there is evidence of malpractice, the Network will refer the matter for investigation with a view to prosecution under Commonwealth criminal law. The Commonwealth Government is committed to protecting its revenue, expenditure and property from any attempt, by members of the public, contractors, sub-contractors, agents, intermediaries or its own employees, to gain financial or other benefits by deceit.

5.6. Insurance and Liabilities

Institutions are subject to the liability, indemnity and insurance provisions of the Funding Agreement. The draft Funding Agreement can be viewed on the FABLS website.

5.7. Confidential information

All Confidential Information owned by any of the team members should be treated as confidential and must not, without the prior written consent of the other Party, disclose or permit the same to be disclosed to any third person. Each Party's obligations under this clause will continue until such time as each part of the other Party's Confidential Information lawfully becomes part of the public domain.

Information contained in applications is regarded as confidential unless otherwise stated.

Notwithstanding the above, the Network may publicise and report offers or awards of funding, including information about the proposed research, the name and institution of any applicant, and any other institution or organisation involved in the project, the title and summary descriptions of the project and its intended outcomes, and the level and nature of financial assistance from the FABLS Network.

5.8. Intellectual property

- 5.8.1. FABLS makes no claims on any intellectual property developed in the course of projects carried out by Network Members and other parties and which directly or indirectly were receiving any form of support by FABLS.
- 5.8.2. Ownership of any Intellectual Property arising from these Projects shall be determined by agreement between the parties collaborating in the Project. FABLS Network does not engage in any part of this process.
- 5.8.3. Applicants must agree to comply with the National Principles of Intellectual Property Management for Publicly Funded Research (available at www.arc.gov.au) and act in accordance with any intellectual property policies of the applicant's institution.

“Intellectual Property” means all statutory and other proprietary rights in respect of know-how, confidential information, copyright, trade marks, designs, patents, circuit layouts and all other rights as defined by Article 2 of the Convention establishing the World Intellectual Property Organisation of July 1967;

5.9. Acknowledging FABLS support

The ARC expects that research funded by the FABLS Network will be appropriately acknowledged by including the number of award (**RN0460002**) in any publications arising from the Network Projects.