

## SUPPORTING LETTERS

Many different types of organisation might support a Follow-on Fund application, and so provide a supporting letter. For example, a project with the potential to improve crop yield may be supported by a potential manufacturer of new technology, an end user of that technology (maybe a seed company, or a subcontractor to them), a regulatory body, organisations with an interest in crop quality (farmers, conservation groups etc.), and/or trade associations for any or all of these.

Supporting letters can act as an indicator of a proposal's quality and the wider 'team' that has been assembled. A good supporting letter may include the following:

1. An indication that the supporting organisation has a good understanding of the academic's work. It will be helpful to mention any previous collaborations, although there will be good applications where collaboration has not previously taken place.
2. A clear explanation of why the supporting organisation believes the project is important, and the potential benefits they see resulting. It will, for example, be helpful to see an outline of the advantages of any products/services that may result, and their scale of demand, compared to existing products/services. (Note: BBSRC appreciates that confidentiality issues may prevent firms disclosing too much detail about internal operations or future plans.)
3. A clear statement of how the supporting organisation plans to assist in conducting the project. This may involve a contribution of resources to assist with the project's technical work plan, but it could equally involve specific advice on the likely requirements of end users of any new product or service.
4. If appropriate, a more general discussion of how the supporting organisation may be able to assist in developing the project. Some organisations maybe potential licensees, while others may help by advising on commercial partners, or provide evidence of end-user demand for any new products / services. For legal reasons, supporting organisations may be unwilling to make anything that could be construed as a binding commitment but it is reasonable to expect a non-binding indication of potential future support.
5. At the time of the application BBSRC would **NOT** expect supporting organisations having any broadly defined rights (for example a pre-agreed exclusive license) to project results, as this might raise questions about of the appropriateness of BBSRC funding for a project. However, it may be that the research institution decides at a later date that an exclusive license is the most appropriate way to commercialise the project results.