

FNS-Cloud Work Based Learning Competitive Grant Scheme (WBLCG)

1. Introduction

It is well accepted that professionals learn most effectively when their subject or focus:

- a) Is of real and, often, immediate perceived value to their work
- b) Highly resonant for individuals in terms of their experience
- c) Does not require extensive adaptation to be applicable to their needs.

Individuals learn in different ways, with some preferring active engagement or 'hands on' experience whilst others prefer to develop through a combination of theoretical underpinning and practical skills. Both these approaches require opportunities for professionals to learn directly from one another in supportive (safe) and mutually beneficial environments.

The innovation and inter-connectivity required across FNS-Cloud Work Packages, especially between diet and health researchers and ICT specialists, necessitates sharing of practice, as developed and applied, allowing emergent protocols to be disseminated quickly and effectively within and beyond the project.

Work-based learning visits allow beneficiaries to spend time together to learn and develop their interests, whilst enhancing coherence of the project.

2. FNS-Cloud WBL Competitive Grant Scheme

Within FNS-Cloud, there is an allocation for 32 work-based learning visits /activities by beneficiaries. These visits can cover any action that enhances professional practice, research progress or skills, provided the outcomes also contribute directly to the objectives of the project.

Examples include development of new research skills (e.g. wet- or dry-science), and specialised application of protocols or technical aspects of the research as well as activities that enhance dissemination of research and/or the research leadership, particularly amongst female ICT specialists.

The duration of the visits can be between a few days and up to four months. The calls for applications will be made on an annual basis and will be managed by WP7.

The funds will be granted on a competitive basis with the criteria being:

- 1.** Clarity of purpose
- 2.** Contribution to the deliverable(s) of FNS-Cloud
- 3.** Contribution to the professional development and career enhancement of the applicant.

A short application form will be available (see below) with accompanying notes and online help.



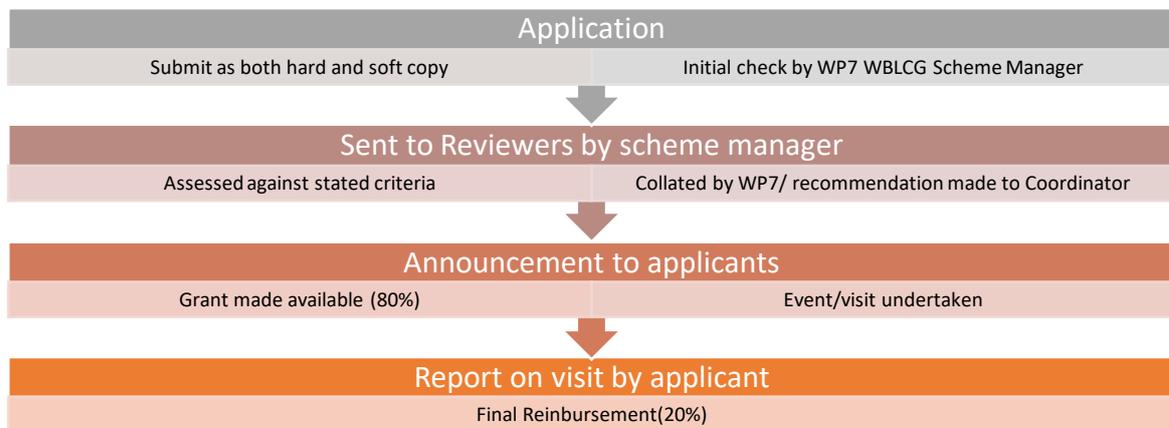
The application form will request information on the operational and technical aspects of the work to be undertaken, but it will also ask the applicant to provide a rationale for the development they are seeking in terms of their career and research, and how this will contribute to their organisation and the wider objectives of FNS-Cloud. This real-world ‘impact’ can be unfamiliar amongst less senior researchers and, hence, online resources will be provided (e.g. bibliography, exemplars and webinar) to support this.

The theme of evidencing strategic impact of professional development will be continued through a written report at the end of the visit and, again, a template and explanatory notes will be made available. However, final costs for these visits will be withheld until the report is completed satisfactorily.

It is expected that the report will contain conventional descriptions of research activities and technical developments, but it will also require a more strategic view of the visit, particularly the impact of learning achieved and contribution to the applicant, their peers, and the project. Finally, the recipients of these grants will be expected to contribute to the FNS-Cloud Community of Practice (FNS-Cloud CoP) and, specifically, the FNS-Cloud Consortium meetings and annual CoP conference.

All transferable intellectual property rights of the contributions made by the applicant will be assigned to UWTSD and will accomplish the EU requirements on open access and open data.

3. Summary and explanation of the Operational Procedure for WBLCG Scheme



a) Applicant sends an unsigned soft-copy sent directly to WBLCG scheme manager’s email address (and a scanned copy onto G:Drive)

It is important to use both approaches to ensure, as far as it is possible, that no application is missed: it is unusual that both email and upload fail. Signed copies may be sent by email provided the applicant and recipient are convinced of a (previous) reliable exchange of email. Obtaining a signed copy is important as a means of demonstrating supervisors/ line managers/ host organisations are informed about the activities of staff and students and grant permission without additional administrative burden.



- b) Scheme manager checks copy for names, sex and gender, contact email address, organisation and supervisor/ line manager, justification – maximum of 1000 words – costs (e.g. travel, accommodation and subsistence) and eligibility (i.e. FNS Cloud member organisation)**

This check is intended only to establish the application includes all relevant information. Typical errors include insufficient words, spurious travel costs arising from lack of knowledge/ information about local travel, unregistered applicant, and inappropriate or ill-considered subsistence. Inappropriate costs will be excluded without reference to the applicant and these changes explained in the award email. It is appropriate for some subsistence costs to be made in the award, but these costs are paid retrospectively, in line with EU guidelines for Reimbursement of Experts' Expenses, on production of a valid receipt. Missing costs, which are more common in visit/ exchange applications, where individuals do not consider every-day costs (e.g. laundry for three months), are also included without reference to the applicant based on UK Civil Service Rates and explained in the award email. Justifications with too few words will be returned to the applicant for amendment and must be resubmitted before the deadline for applications or within 24 hours, after the close of the call. Any supporting documentation was requested at this time (e.g. confirmation of additional funding from another source).

Awards will be made up to the value of €2000 EUR; thereafter any additional costs must be covered by the applicant's organisations from their FNS-Cloud budget, if available, or another source.

In extra-ordinary circumstances, where there is adequate funding remaining from that year's allocation, an additional €500-1000 EUR may be made available.

Otherwise, funding not used in one year will be rolled over the next.

- c) Scheme manager distributes applications to Review Panel consisting of at least two WP leaders, Scheme manager and others as required, determined by type and scope of application, to score completeness of information, reasons for attending, adding-value to the Project and contribution to deliverables on a scale of 1-5 (1 = poor, 5 = excellent) and collated the scores**

In collating the scores, the WBLCG scheme manager must consider the status of the individual (i.e. Masters or PhD student, early-career post-doctoral researcher, post-doctoral researcher/ lecturer or senior staff) since this affects all aspects of the application. Senior staff are familiar with application processes and what is needed for a successful outcome, and more likely to add-value and understand the strategic benefits of their participation for both the network and their organisation whilst PhD and Masters Students are more commonly engaged in specific activities, but less aware of what is required generally or how to express their needs appropriately. Outliers (i.e. scores different significantly between the Panel) will be reviewed by the WBLCG scheme manager, as necessary. Once the applications have been collated and successful applications identified, these will be recommended to the FNS-Cloud Coordinator. The applicants will be informed of the Review Panel's decision four weeks after the close of submissions. Unsuccessful applicants' will be provided with feedback to help them apply to subsequent funding rounds.



d) Financial settlement

This will be achieved by copying individual award emails to a nominated individual (e.g. finance officer, head of department, supervisor, etc.) and providing a summary itemising the type of award (full, fixed value, travel only) and the 80:20% awards.

Successful applicants will be awarded 80% of estimated costs (not including subsistence) in advance to ensure none are required to finance travel or accommodation from personal accounts or organisation's funding, which could impede participation. However, 20% and any additional funding, most commonly subsistence but also some accommodation and rarely unanticipated travel costs, will be awarded after completion of reporting and on presentation of receipts etc. for the full costs (details will follow to successful applicants).

e) Letters confirming awards will be provided by the WBLCG scheme manager in soft- and FTP-copy

f) The deadline for receipts, boarding cards and a completed expense form, and the FNS-Cloud report – from each recipient – is four weeks from the Monday following the final day of event or visit.

Receipts etc. will be sent to the coordinating centre's (WP7) nominated individual by secure mail or courier rather than ordinary post whilst the reports shall be emailed to the WBLCG scheme manager.

Receipts will be checked, and any outstanding financial awards made or recouped, as appropriate.

Reports will be checked initially for word count and whether the contents were appropriate. Reports identified as unfit for purpose will be returned for amendments. The aim of the report is to encourage those receiving a grant to reflect on their learning, to describe how participation benefited them and might be employed by their organisation, and how it fits with FNS-Cloud wider goals; almost without exception, recipients will find this part of the process most difficult regardless of location or seniority.

