



Innovate
UK

Growth Catalyst Early Stage: New Innovators

Applicant Briefing

For more information on the competition process, please [view our YouTube channel](#).



Welcome and Introductions

Dawn Manser

Competition Manager, Places, products and services

Jessica Cook

Programme Manager, New Innovators

Dave Wilkes

Director, Innovation Ecosystem



Agenda

- Introduction to Innovate UK & UKRI
- Key Dates
- Competition Summary & Scope
- Eligibility Criteria
- Innovation Funding Service (IFS)
- Funding Rules
- Assessment
- Use of AI
- Additional Support



Introduction to Innovate UK and UKRI

Dave Wilkes

Director Innovation Ecosystem

Innovate UK



UK Research and Innovation

We work with the government to invest over £8 billion a year in research and innovation by partnering with academia and industry to make the impossible, possible. Through the UK's nine leading academic and industrial funding councils, we create **knowledge with impact.**



**UK Research
and Innovation**

Innovate UK

- We are the UK's innovation agency
- We support business-led innovation in all sectors, technologies and UK regions
- A key delivery body of the Government's Innovation Strategy

Our Mission

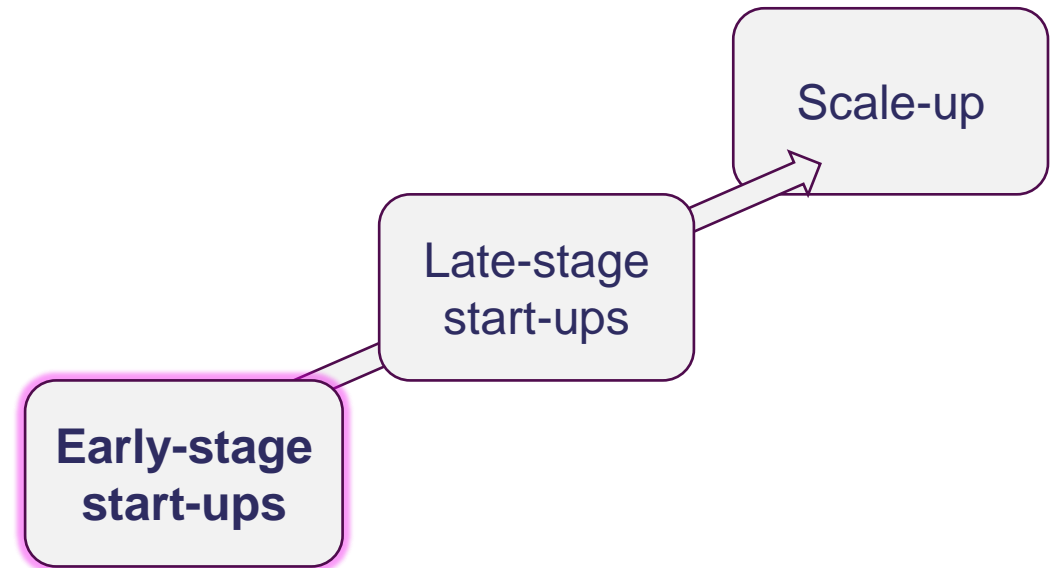
To help UK businesses grow through the development and commercialisation of new products, processes, and services, supported by an outstanding innovation ecosystem that is agile, inclusive, and easy to navigate.



Innovate UK Growth Catalyst



Integrated package of innovation support, tailored to the stage of your business growth



Key Dates

Timeline	Date
Competition Opens	7 July 2025
Submission Deadline	6 August 2025 at 11am
Applicants informed	2 September 2025 by 5pm
Project start and end dates	Start by 1 November 2025 End by 30 April 2026

Competition Summary & Scope



Innovate
UK



New Innovators is only for micro & small companies that have not previously received Innovate UK funding.

The award will cover between £25k to £50K for between 3 and 6 months work to help you:

- develop both your idea and your business
- create a new revenue stream
- evidence and enable your market, funding and commercialisation plans
- show what's feasible, helping you decide whether to pursue your idea further
- catalyse further innovation on your path to commercial success
- respond to changing market conditions

70% of the grant will be paid up front to cover cash flow and help you make a quick start on developing your innovation and business. A further 20% may be paid in arrears if the advance payment has been evidenced after Quarter 1. 10% is retained until all final deliverables have been approved.

In your application you need to demonstrate to us that you:

- have a great idea (The Idea, question 10)
- need public funding (Impact and Added Value, question 11)
- have the capability to deliver the project (Business Resources and Capabilities, question 12)
- will deliver the project (Workplan and Costs, question 13)

We also ask an important unscored question around your funding plans for the company that can support the success of the project (question 9).

Your idea must focus on how new technology can enable affordable, adoptable and investable innovation in one of the 5 critical technologies.

Competition scope: 5 critical technologies

Artificial intelligence

We will support projects that:

- Develop novel AI tools, technologies or services across the AI stack
- Delivering clear, game-changing interventions that will contribute towards the development of trusted and responsible Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) solutions

Semiconductors

We will support projects that are:

- supporting developments in semiconductor design, materials and manufacture within the UK
- identifying or delivering a clear, game-changing intervention and address an identified industrial requirement or improvement
- realistically and significantly meeting and providing a long-term commitment to supporting the UK semiconductor industry

Competition scope: 5 critical technologies

Advanced connectivity technologies

- We will support projects that accelerate the development of advanced connectivity technologies. Projects must focus on one or more of the following key technology domains as they apply specifically to the telecoms sector:
 - Compound Semiconductors & Photonic Integrated Circuits – design and fabrication for advanced connectivity applications
 - Advanced Radio Frequency (RF) & Optical Wireless – wireless technologies across the electromagnetic spectrum, from RF to visible light
 - AI, Network Management & Design – AI-driven approaches to optimise, automate, and secure network infrastructure
 - Secure, Resilient & Quantum-Safe Communications – innovations to protect critical infrastructure and ensure future-proof security

Competition scope: 5 critical technologies

Quantum technologies

- Industrial products, processes or services to advance scalable solutions such as chip scale quantum, photonic and optoelectronic systems for applied quantum technologies
- Technologies (such as qubit processor, networking, switching or control systems) for scaling quantum computers
- Commercial hybrid quantum – classical software applications and services

Engineering Biology

Synthetic Biology is the design, engineering and re-engineering of biologically based parts, devices and systems. Engineering Biology encompasses the wider capabilities and ecosystem that supports the exploitation of synthetic biology for economic and public benefit. We will support projects that:

- Develop new engineering biology tools, technologies or services
- Use innovation in engineering biology to develop new products or processes, including more sustainable manufacturing processes

Eligibility criteria



Innovate
UK



Eligibility Criteria – Your Project

Your project must:

- have total project costs and grant funding request of between £25,000 and £50,000
- have total project costs that equal your grant funding request
- start by 1 November 2025
- end by 30 April 2026
- last between three and six months
- carry out its project work in the UK
- intend to exploit the project outcomes from the UK for domestic or global benefit

Eligibility Criteria – Lead Organisation

Lead organisation:

To lead a project your organisation must:

- be a UK registered micro or small business.

More information on the different types of organisation can be found in our [Funding rules](#).

Eligibility Criteria – Subcontractors

Subcontractors

Subcontractors **are** allowed in this competition.

Subcontractors can be from anywhere in the UK and you must select them through your usual procurement process. You can use subcontractors from overseas but must make the case in your application as to why you cannot use suppliers from the UK.

You must provide a detailed rationale, evidence of the potential UK contractors you approached and the reasons why they were unable to work with you.

We expect all subcontractor costs to be justified and appropriate to the total eligible project costs. We will not accept a cheaper cost as a sufficient reason to use an overseas subcontractor.

.

Eligibility Criteria – Number of applications

Number of applications

A business can only lead on one application

An eligible UK business can submit one application only. We will only award grant funding to one project per business.

Previously submitted applications

This competition does allow you to submit a previously submitted application.

Previously submitted application	Not a Previously submitted application
<p>A previously submitted application is an application Innovate UK judges as <u>not</u> materially different from one you have submitted before (but it can be updated based on the assessors' feedback).</p> <p>If you have previously submitted an application that reached our assessment stage, you can re-apply once more with the same proposal.</p>	<p>A brand-new application, project or idea that you have not previously submitted into an Innovate UK competition.</p> <p>or</p> <p>A previously submitted or ineligible application which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• has been updated based on assessor feedback• <u>and</u> is materially different from the application submitted before• <u>and</u> fits with the scope of this competition

Previous Innovate UK funding

We will **not** award you New Innovator funding if you have:

- been previously funded by Innovate UK (unless you received funding through Innovate UK Young Innovators)
- failed to comply with previous Innovate UK Young Innovators grant terms and conditions



Innovation Funding Service (IFS)

How to apply

The lead applicant must create an account:

UK registered businesses

Use Companies House lookup using your company number. This facilitates our checks later if you are successful.

Research organisations, academics and universities

To avoid being listed as a business and to ensure you receive the correct funding, enter your information manually on IFS



GOV.UK Innovation Funding Service

BETA This is a new service – your [feedback](#) will help us to improve it.

[Back](#)

Create your account

Your organisation

i Your organisation must be UK based to receive funding from Innovate UK

Business

Find your organisation on Companies House
Enter your organisation name or registration number

Companies House search results
Select your organisation from the options below

NOMENSA LTD
04214477 - Incorporated on 10 May 2001
13 Queen Square, Bristol, BS1 4NT

GOV.UK Innovation Funding Service

BETA This is a new service – your [feedback](#) will help us to improve it.

[Back](#)

Please sign in or create an account

Used this service before?
Please sign into your Innovation Funding Service account.

New to this service?
If you haven't used the new Innovation Funding Service before you will need to create an account.

Innovation Funding Service Sign in

Email address
Please enter your email address.

Password
Please enter your password.

▼ [Need help signing in or creating an account?](#)

My email and/or password isn't working

If you applied previously using the old service, you will need to create a new account.

[Forgotten your password?](#)

Application Questions

Application Form		Word Count	Appendix
Question 1	Applicant location (not scored)		No
Question 2	Minimal Financial Assistance declaration (not scored)		Yes – mandatory template
Question 3	Animal testing (not scored)	Multiple choice	No
Question 4	Permits and licences (not scored)	Multiple choice	No
Question 5	International Collaboration (not scored)	100 words	No
Question 6	Trusted Research and Innovation (not scored)	400 words	No
Question 7	Where did you hear about this competition? (not scored)	Multiple choice	No
Question 8	Challenge Themes (not scored)	Multiple choice	No
Question 9	Funding plans (not scored, but will be used to assess financial viability)	400	No
Question 10	The idea	600	No
Question 11	Impact and added value	600	No
Question 12	Business resources and capabilities	600	No
Question 13	Work packages and costs	600	No

National Security and Investment Act - overview

Subject to certain criteria, UK applicants are legally required to tell the government about acquisitions of certain entities in 17 sensitive areas of the economy (called 'notifiable acquisitions').

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-security-and-investment-act-guidance-on-notifiable-acquisitions/national-security-and-investment-act-guidance-on-notifiable-acquisitions>

These 17 areas are:

- Advanced Materials
- Advanced Robotics
- Artificial Intelligence
- Civil Nuclear
- Communications
- Computing Hardware
- Critical Suppliers to Government
- Cryptographic Authentication
- Data Infrastructure
- Defence
- Energy
- Military and Dual-Use
- Quantum Technologies
- Satellite and Space Technologies
- Suppliers to the Emergency Services
- Synthetic Biology
- Transport

If there is significant uncertainty about whether an acquisition is notifiable, you may contact the government on **investment.screening@cabinetoffice.gov.uk** to seek a view or get legal advice from your own sources.

Q5 International Collaboration (not scored)

Does your proposed work involve any international collaboration or engagement?

You must provide details of any expected international collaboration or engagement. You must include a list of the names and the countries any international project co-leads, project partners, visiting researchers, or other collaborators are based in. You must also include details of any subcontractors or service providers.

If your proposed work does not involve international collaboration or engagement, your answer must confirm this.

Q6 Trusted Research and Innovation (not scored)

You must explain if your proposed project work relates to UKRI's Trusted Research and Innovation Principles, including:

- a list of any dual-use (both military and non-military) applications to your research
- a list of the areas where your project is relevant to one or more of the 17 areas of the UK National Security and Investment (NSI) Act)
- whether an export control license is required for this project under the academic export control guidance and the status of any applications
- a list of any items or substances on the UK Strategic Export Control List

We may ask you to provide additional TR&I information at a later date, in line with UKRI TR&I Principles and funding terms and conditions

Project Impact questions

- You will complete the Project Impact questions within the 'Supporting information' section
- The Project Impact questions ask for data about your business and innovation and its contribution to the UK economy, society, and the environment
- Visit the [Project Impact guidance](#) page for more information, the types of questions you will be asked and how to get further support
- By providing this data, you are enabling us to better understand the impact of our support. It will help us identify success stories and provide evidence to government and the public of the value of supporting innovative businesses



For more information:

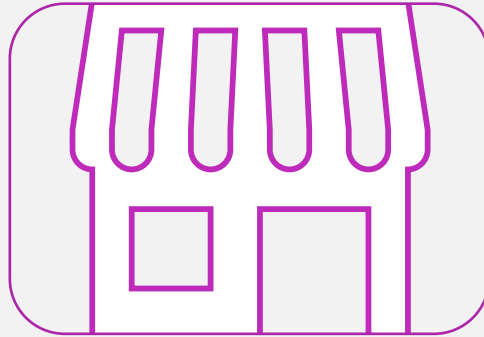
- [Watch Our Impact Management Framework video](#)
- [How is the Project Impact data collected? video](#)

Your Project Cost Categories

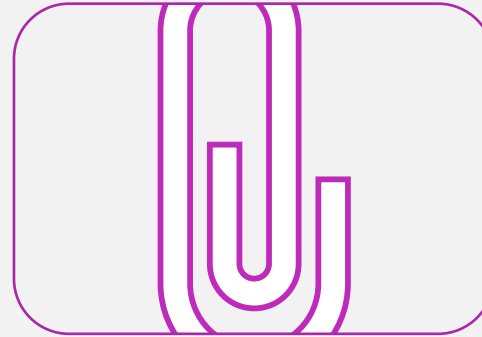
View our [Application Finances Instructional Video](#)



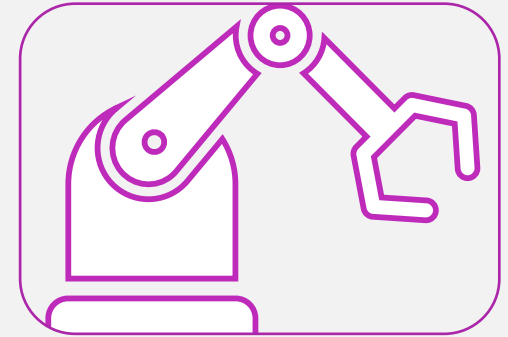
Labour



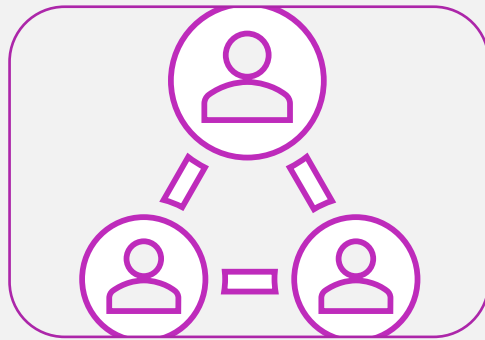
Overheads



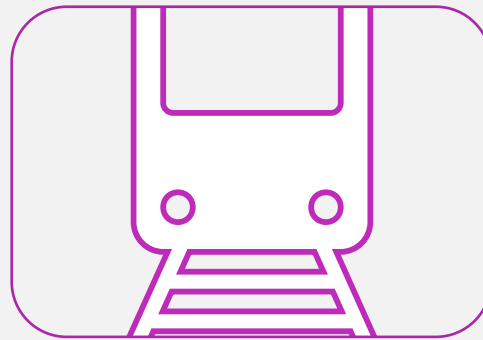
Materials



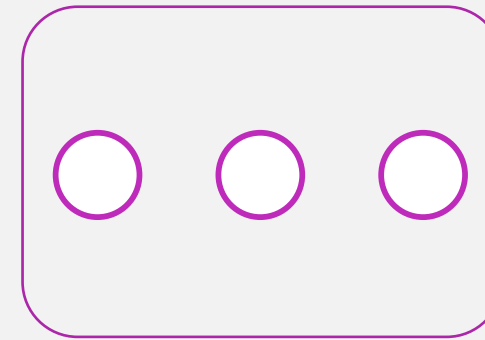
Capital Usage



Subcontractors



Travel &
Subsistence



Other

Your project finances


Finances

Your organisation is required to submit its project finances. Your organisation's project costs can be seen in the 'Finances overview'.

Your project finances

 Incomplete

[Finances overview](#)

 Incomplete

Your project costs

Add your project costs by category – refer to previous slide for link to instructional video

Your project location

Enter postcode for where most of the project work will take place.


Your organisation

Add details of your organisation including size, turnover and number of employees

Your funding

Include your 100% funding level percentage according to the competition's funding rules.

Finances


 Only members from your organisation will be able to see a breakdown of your finances.

Please complete your project finances.


[Your project costs](#)

 Incomplete


[Your project location](#)

 Incomplete

[Your organisation](#)

 Incomplete

[Your funding](#)

 Incomplete

Checking your finances are complete

Finances summary

These organisations have not marked their finances as complete:

- Ludlow
- EGGS



This application cannot be submitted until all items in the finances section have been marked as complete by all partners.

		Total costs (£)	Funding level (%)	Funding sought (£)	Contribution to project (£)	Other public sector funding (£)
Empire Ltd Lead organisation	✓	200,903	30.00	57,803	140,632	2,468
Ludlow Partner	⚠	200,903	30.00	57,803	140,632	2,468
EGGS Partner	⚠	990	100.00	990	0	0
Total	⚠	£402,796		116,596	281,264	4,936

Check your finances have been correctly entered, with the correct costs, funding level % and funding sought figures, as per the eligibility criteria of the competition.

IFS DOES NOT VALIDATE TOTAL PROJECT COSTS


Terms and Conditions

Before you can submit your application, you must agree to the draft terms and conditions for this competition. Please ensure you share the T&Cs with your legal team at the earliest possible opportunity.


Terms and conditions

You must agree to these before you submit your application.

[Award terms and conditions](#)

 Incomplete

[Review and submit](#)

 [Print your application](#)



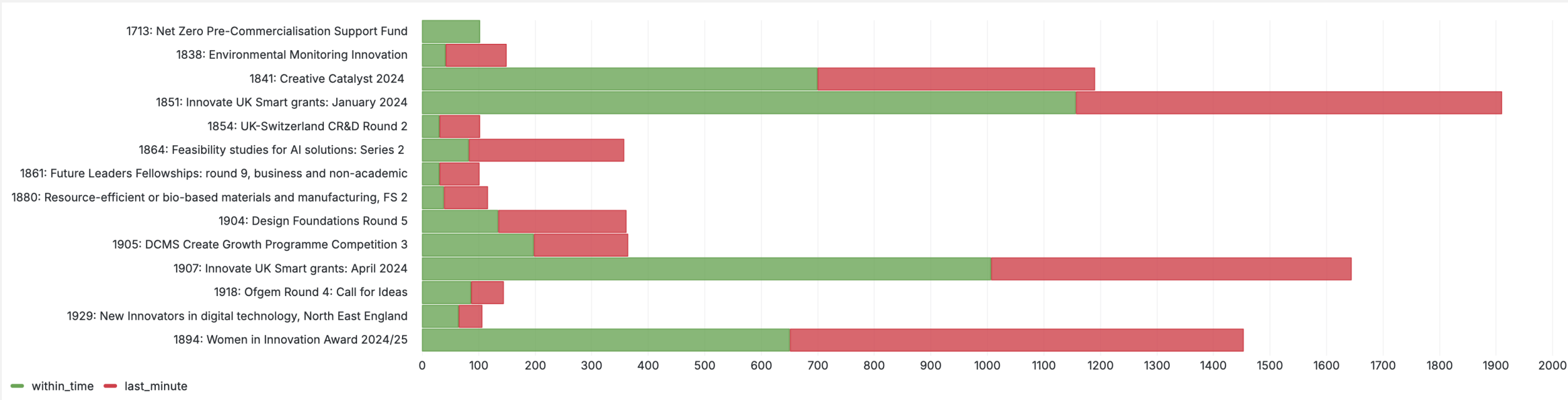
I agree to the [full terms and conditions](#) set out by the funding authority. I understand I need to agree to the final contract if my application is successful.

[Agree and continue](#)

Submitting your application

Customer Support can help resolve any issues you might have when submitting **but only if they are contacted before the deadline.**

Once the deadline has passed, your application cannot be submitted.



Editing a submitted application

test
Application number: 242
Competition: 599 Covid de minimis round 2

Awaiting assessment

Application submitted
[Reopen](#)


Reopen by clicking here

Terms and conditions
You must agree to these before you submit your application.

[Award terms and conditions](#)

✓ Complete

Review and submit

 [Print your application](#)

Remember to press
‘Submit application’

Terms and conditions

[Award terms and conditions](#)

✓ Complete +

Submit application

Need help with this service?

[Contact us](#)

Pros & Cons of using AI to support you

With the advances in AI technology, it is only natural to use technology to support you in applying to our competitions. Whilst we don't recommend or advise against it, we would like to make you aware of the following which could potentially impact your project.

Pros

- Removes barriers for people with disabilities and non-English speakers
- Allows you to rephrase your content to meet the word count in a question
- Ensures all aspects of a question are answered
- Can aid a better understanding of:
 - intended/wider market
 - best practice in project management
 - complementary technologies and advances in the industry
 - expected project impacts

Cons

- It is not always accurate in its assumptions and can get things wrong
- AI learns from the information you give it as well as what it has already learnt
- May provide a generic response meaning your application could use similar phrasing to others
- AI can be detected as non-human as it lacks expression and insight because it relies on logic to summarise information based on the question asked

Whilst AI offers many benefits, it is important you are aware that **you are potentially sharing your idea with the world**, so be careful what you share as you have no control over how it is shared on once you do.

Funding Rules



Innovate
UK



Other Innovate UK projects

If you have an outstanding final claim or Independent Accountant Report (IAR) on a live Innovate UK project, you will not be eligible to apply to this competition, as a lead or a partner organisation.

We will not award you any further funding if you:

- applied to a previous competition as the lead or sole company and were awarded funding by Innovate UK, but did not make a substantial effort to exploit that award
- applied to a previous competition as the lead or sole company and failed to comply with grant terms and conditions.

Article 10 of the Windsor Framework

The EU and the UK formally adopted the [Windsor Framework](#) on 24 March 2023.

The Windsor Framework replaces the Northern Ireland Protocol, providing a new legal and UK constitutional framework.

Article 10 provides that European Union State aid rules will continue to apply to the UK in respect of measures which affect trade in goods or the electricity market between Northern Ireland and the EU.

Article 10 does not directly apply to subsidies for services and such subsidies will need to comply with the UK's subsidy control regime.

Financial viability and eligibility

Innovate UK is unable to award funding to organisations that are considered to be in financial difficulty. All applicant organisations are subjected to financial viability and eligibility checks to ensure they are suitable for public funding.

[General guidance on Subsidy control \(and State aid where relevant\).](#)

Minimal Financial Assistance (previously Special Drawing Rights) or De Minimis

Grant funding in this competition is awarded as minimal financial assistance (MFA). This allows public bodies to award up to £315,000 to an enterprise in a 3-year rolling financial period.

To establish your eligibility, we need to check that our support added to the amount you have previously received does not exceed the limit of £315,000 in the 'applicable period'.

The applicable period is made up of:

- (a) the elapsed part of the current financial year
- (b) the two financial years immediately preceding the current financial year

In your application, you will be asked to declare previous funding received by you.

This will form part of the financial checks ahead of Innovate UK making a formal grant offer.

EU Commission rules now only apply in limited circumstances. Find out more about the [De Minimis regulation](#).

Grant requested

Finances

[Close all](#)

Finances summary

The finances of all project partners are included in this summary.

	Total costs (£)	Funding level (%)	Funding sought (£)	Contribution to project (£)	Other public sector funding (£)
Organisation	£30,000	100.00	£30,000	0	0

- Your Total costs and Funding sought figures must be between £25,000 and £50,000 and must match.
- You must request 100% funding
- IFS will not correct you if your Funding level is less than 100% or your costs and grant request don't match

Grant requested

Untitled application

Your funding

Are you requesting funding?



Yes

Select a funding level

The maximum you can enter is 100%, based on this [competition's rules \(opens in a new window\)](#).

100

%



No

- This is where you place your funding level percentage figure
- MFA projects are funded at 100% of costs

Finances

Close all

Finances summary

The finances of all project partners are included in this summary.

	Total costs (£)	Funding level (%)	Funding sought (£)	Contribution to project (£)	Other public sector funding (£)
Organisation	£30,000	100.00	£30,000	0	0

Minimal Financial Assistance (MFA) Declaration Form

Declaration statement

I confirm that I **have not** received any funding in the applicable period as defined above. *(Please check the box if applicable and move to Recipient Acknowledgments.)*

☐

or

I confirm that I **have** received the following funding in the applicable period as defined above. *(Please check the box if applicable and complete the table below.)*

☐

DECLARATION:

I believe that the facts stated in this Declaration are true. I understand that legal proceedings for false and inaccurate declarations may be brought against anyone who makes, or causes to be made, a false statement in a document verified by a statement of truth without an honest belief in its truth.

Company	
Applicant Name	
Signature	
Date	

False declarations will result in withdrawal of the offer made by the Authority. If an award is made to you based on false information, the Authority has the right to recover funding in full.


A	B	C	D
Body who provided the funding <i>(Who awarded you the funding?)</i>	Funding Amount received in GBP	Funding Amount received in Euros <i>(only use this column to declare your conversion of the De minimis funding you previously received in euros)</i>	Date awarded


Assessment





Assessment


[YouTube Playlist](#)

- 

1 **How do our assessors assess?**
Innovate UK • 8.1K views • 2 years ago
2:33
- 

2 **How are successful applications selected for funding?**
Innovate UK • 17K views • 2 years ago
2:39
- 

3 **What steps are there before a project starts?**
Innovate UK • 7.7K views • 2 years ago
3:45
- 

4 **How are successful projects monitored?**
Innovate UK • 4.1K views • 2 years ago
2:20
- 

5 **How successful applicants receive their funding.**
Innovate UK • 4.6K views • 2 years ago
2:51



Assessment

An assessor will score Questions 10 to 13. We want to fund a variety of projects across different categories. We call this a portfolio approach.

We reserve the right to prioritise projects based on:

- technology and sector/theme
- project type and size
- grant requested
- location

You will then receive an email notification to offer grant funding or to inform you that your application has been unsuccessful on this occasion.

You will not receive any feedback on your application following assessment, whether successful or unsuccessful in receiving grant funding

Project setup

If you pass the technical assessment, you will have a further eight steps detailed in your notification to complete in Project Setup before being able to start your project.

These are:

- Project details
- Project team
- Documents
- You will be allocated a Monitoring Service Provider (MSP)
- Bank details
- Finance checks
- Spend profile
- Grant Offer Letter

Please share the T&Cs with your legal team at the earliest possible opportunity to avoid any delays.

You are expected to complete all the steps above within 60 calendar days of receiving your notification. Failure to do so may result in funding being withdrawn.

Work can only commence on your project once you have received your Go Live email.

Additional Support



Innovate
UK



Innovate UK Business Growth

www.iukbg.ukri.org

Our advisory service equips ambitious innovation-focused businesses to make the best strategic choices and harness the right resources to accelerate their growth and scale.

Over 30,000 innovators, including but not limited to Innovate UK grant winners, have benefitted from its tailored support.

It can help with achieving goals such as:

Improving innovation management, intellectual property protection and accessing innovation infrastructure nationally

Becoming investment ready and securing risk-tolerant funding & finance

Forging international R&D collaborations

Grant winners are contacted by an innovation and growth specialist and the majority of winners work with us.

Useful Information

- UKRI's [General Guidance](#)
- Innovate UK Business Connect's [Good Application Guide](#)
- [Who we fund](#)
- Collaboration Agreement Guidance: [Lambert Toolkit](#)
- [Innovate UK: Shaping the Future](#)

Funding opportunities

To find out more about the competitions currently available you can visit either the [**Innovation Funding Service \(IFS\)**](#) or the [**funding finder**](#) on the UKRI website. Through these links, you can review the competitions available and decide which ones may be right for you.

You can [**sign up to our newsletter**](#) to receive all the latest information on our competitions straight to your inbox or [**register for email alerts**](#) to get page updates from Innovate UK.

The government also offers [**other opportunities for businesses to get finance and support**](#).

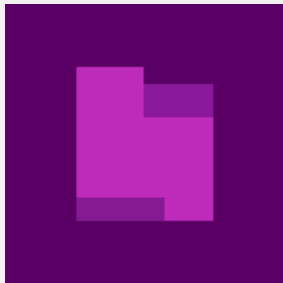
Innovate UK reserves the rights to host competitions on a needs basis and will adjust each competition criteria and scope accordingly. We may occasionally run closed competitions that are for invited applicants only. These are run based on the challenge requirement or need.

Contact

Customer Support Services

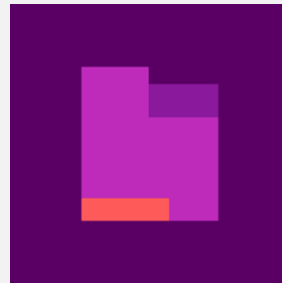
0300 321 4357 (Monday - Friday 9am-12pm and 2pm-5pm)

support@iuk.ukri.org



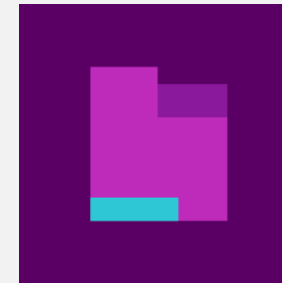
Innovate UK

ukri.org/councils/innovate-uk



**Innovate UK
Business
Connect**

iuk.ktn-uk.org



**Innovate UK Business
Growth**

www.iukbg.ukri.org



Innovate
UK



Innovate
UK

Thank You



@InnovateUK



Innovate UK



Innovate UK



@weareinnovateuk