



Innovate
UK

TechLocal: Connecting Local Talent to Local Tech Jobs

Applicant Briefing

Date: 10 February 2026

The webinar will start at 11:30

- Welcome, we are currently waiting for more people to join
- This briefing will be recorded. A copy of the slides and the recording link will be made available on IFS
- Please enter any questions that you may have into the Q&A Box
- For more information on the competition process, please [view YouTube channel](#)



Welcome and Introductions

Ellie Foden

Competition Manager, Digital and
Technologies

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Innovation Lead, Digital and Technologies



Agenda

- Key Dates
- Competition Summary and Scope
- Eligibility Criteria
- Innovation Funding Service (IFS)
- Funding Rules
- Assessment
- Use of AI
- Additional Support
- Q&A



Key Dates

Timeline	Date
Competition Opens	4 February 2026
Submission Deadline	18 March 2026 at 11am
Applicants informed	27 April 2026 by 5pm
Project start and end dates	Start by 01 July 2026 End by 31 March 2027

Competition Summary & Scope



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What is TechLocal?

Funding programme to develop impactful local initiatives that enable tech talent to secure entry level tech jobs by bridging the gap between training and employment

How will it work?



- Local initiative for the home nations and regions
- Focused on six frontier technologies
 - Cyber Security
 - AI
 - Quantum
 - Semiconductors
 - Engineering Biology
 - Advanced Connectivity Technologies (ACT)
- Collaborative projects
- Impact on jobs

What are we looking for?

Your project can focus on:

Networks

Creating networks of employers to access talent and provide opportunities as part of recruitment.

Recruitment

Develop innovative ways to de-risk tech talent recruitment for SMEs.

Employment

Create innovative employment pathways for Growth and Skills Levy-trained individuals.

Develop innovative recruitment practices to support women into the tech force.

Develop innovative initiatives to bridge the gap between newly trained talent and employment readiness.



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In addition...

We welcome projects that:



Include plans for sustainability and scalability



Target occupations on the [Critical Shortage List](#)



Support SME growth



Include employer engagement

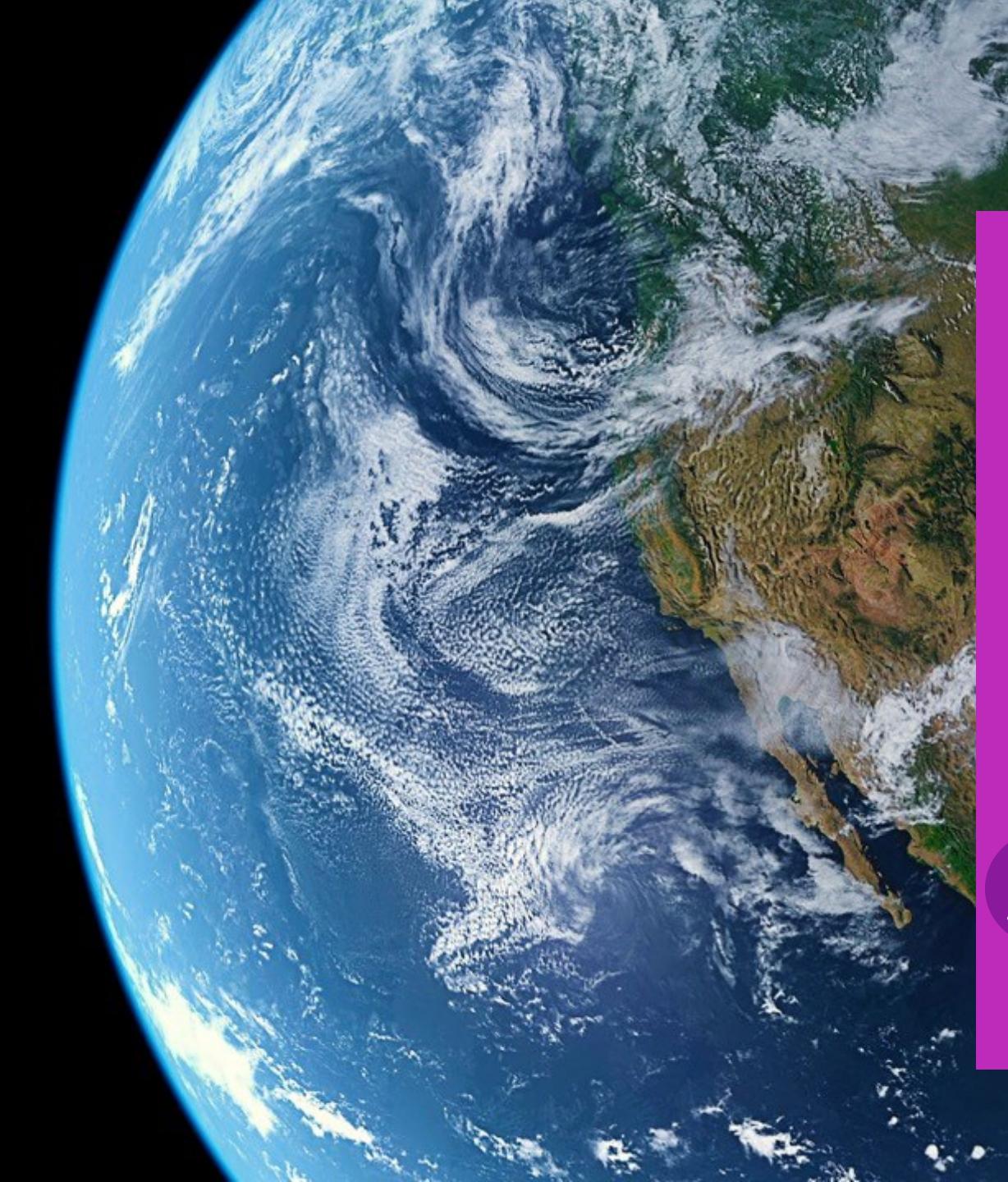


Support women into tech

Out of Scope

We are not funding projects that are:

- Not in scope for this competition
- Do not have a clear impact in one of the twelve specified areas
- Do not have an impact or application on at least one of the six frontier technologies
- Replicates the aims or activities of other TechFirst initiatives
- Replicate other local projects such as those delivered by the Local Innovation Partnerships
- Are limited to research papers or feasibility studies

A satellite image of Earth, showing clouds and landmasses, occupies the left two-thirds of the slide. A vertical pink bar is positioned on the right side.

Who can apply?

Collaborations only

To lead or collaborate you must be:

- UK registered business any size
- Research and Technology Organisation (RTO)
- Academic institution
- Charity
- Not for profit
- Public sector organisation

Local authorities can collaborate but not lead.



Eligibility criteria



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Eligibility Criteria – Your Project

Your project must:

- have a grant funding request of between £100,000 and £225,000
- last between 6 and 9 months
- not start before the 1 July 2026
- end by the 31 March 2027

Any funded organisation needs to carry out their project work in the UK and must intend to exploit the project results from or in the UK

Eligibility Criteria – Lead Organisation

Lead organisation:

To lead a collaborative project your organisation must be a UK registered business of any size, a Research and Technology Organisation (RTO), academic institution, charity, not for profit or public sector organisation.

Local Authorities cannot lead.

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

Eligibility Criteria – Collaboration

For this competition your project must be collaborative.

In all collaborative projects there must be:

- at least two grant claiming partners
- evidence of an effective collaboration

(This means one partner must not account for more than 70% of the eligible costs and you must include rationale for the collaboration and describe the structure in the application.)

Eligibility Criteria – Project Team

Project team

To collaborate with the lead, your organisation must be one of the following UK registered:

- business of any size
- academic institution
- charity
- not for profit
- public sector organisation
- research and technology organisation (RTO)

Eligibility Criteria – Partners/Subcontractors

Non-funded partners

Your project can include partners that do not receive any of this competition's funding, for example, non-UK businesses. Their costs will count towards the total project costs.

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 will not accept a cheaper cost as a sufficient reason to use an overseas subcontractor.

All subcontractor costs must be justified and appropriate to the total project costs.

Eligibility Criteria – Number of applications

Number of applications

A business, research and technology organisation (RTO), academic institutions, charity, not for profit or public sector organisation can only lead on one application but can be included as a collaborator in a further two applications.

If an organisation is not leading any application, it can collaborate in two applications.

Local authorities cannot lead an application but can collaborate in any number of applications.

If these limits are exceeded, applications will be made ineligible. Where an organisation appears on more applications than permitted, only the first eligible applications submitted will be considered.

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



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



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This screenshot shows the 'Create your account' page for UK registered businesses. The page is titled 'Your organisation'. It includes a note that the organisation must be UK based to receive funding from Innovate UK. A 'Business' section with a 'Find your organisation on Companies House' search bar is present. The search bar contains the text 'nomensa' and has a 'Search' button. Below the search bar is a 'Companies House search results' section, which displays the result 'NOMENSA LTD' with the details '04214477 - Incorporated on 10 May 2001' and '13 Queen Square, Bristol, BS1 4NT'.

This screenshot shows the 'Please sign in or create an account' page for the Innovation Funding Service. The page is titled 'Innovation Funding Service' and includes a 'Sign in' and 'Create account' button. It also features sections for 'Used this service before?' and 'New to this service?'. The 'Used this service before?' section contains a note to sign in and a 'Sign in' button. The 'New to this service?' section contains a note about creating an account and a 'Create account' button. Below these sections is a 'Sign in' form with fields for 'Email address' and 'Password', and a 'Show' link for the password field. At the bottom, there is a link for 'Need help signing in or creating an account?' and a section for users whose 'My email and/or password isn't working'.

Application Questions

Application Form		Word Count	Appendix
Question 1	Applicant location (not scored)		No
Question 2	Animal testing (not scored)	Multiple choice	No
Question 3	Permits and licences (not scored)	Multiple choice	No
Question 4	International Collaboration (not scored)	400 words	No
Question 5	Export Licence (not scored)	Multiple choice	No
Question 6	Trusted Research and Innovation (not scored)	400 words	No
Question 7	Delivery location (not scored)	400 words	No
Question 8	Frontier technologies (not scored)	400 words	No
Question 9	Need or challenge	400 words	No
Question 10	Approach	400 words	Yes – optional, 2 pages
Question 11	Team and resources	400 words	Yes – optional, 2 pages
Question 12	Added value and impact	400 words	No
Question 13	Outcomes and plan for continuation	400 words	No
Question 14	Project management	400 words	Yes – mandatory, 2 pages
Question 15	Risks	400 words	Yes – mandatory, 2 pages
Question 16	Costs and value for money	400 words	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.

UK Strategic Export Controls - overview

[UK strategic export controls - GOV.UK](#)

The UK government has put together this guidance for those who export or transfer goods, software or technology (including data, information and technical assistance) which might be subject to strategic export controls.

It explains what control lists are, as well as who they apply to and when, so that exporters can make sure they comply with the law.

Applicants should assess how these controls may impact the project and confirm if they will need a licence (see question 5).

Q4 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.

Q5 Trusted Research and Innovation (not scored)

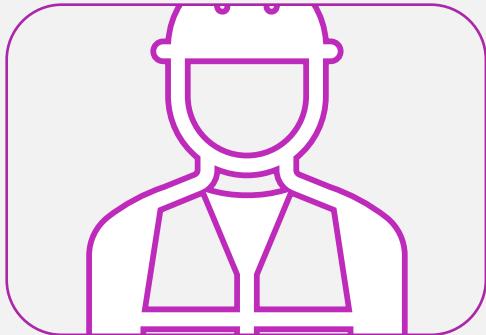
You must explain if your proposed project work relates to UKRI's Trusted Research and Innovation Principles, including:

- 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

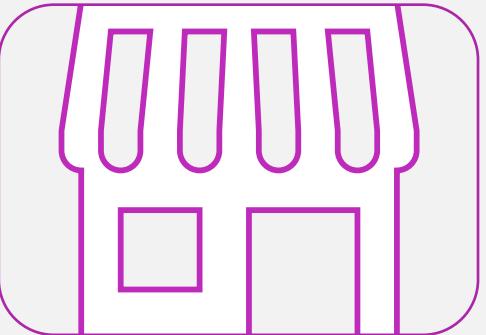
We may ask you to provide additional TR&I information at a later date, in line with UKRI TR&I Principles and funding terms and conditions

Your Project Cost Categories

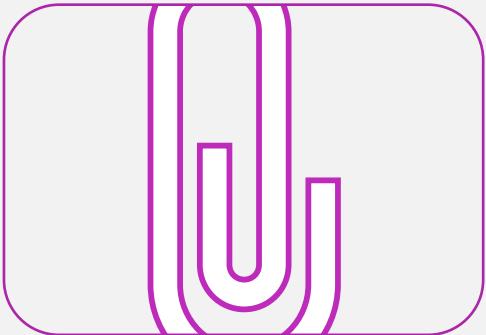
View our [Application Finances Instructional Video](#)



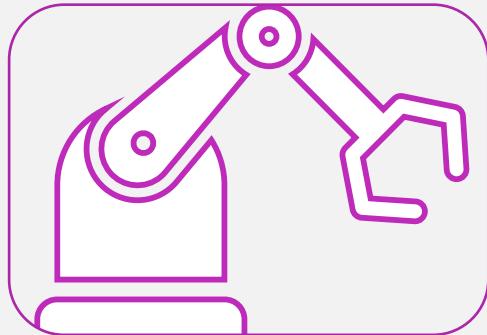
Labour



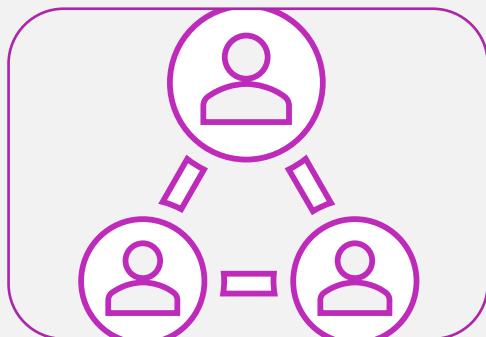
Overheads



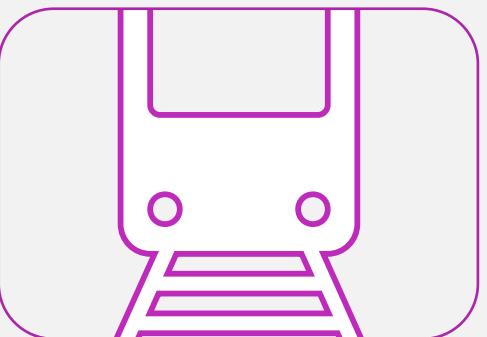
Materials



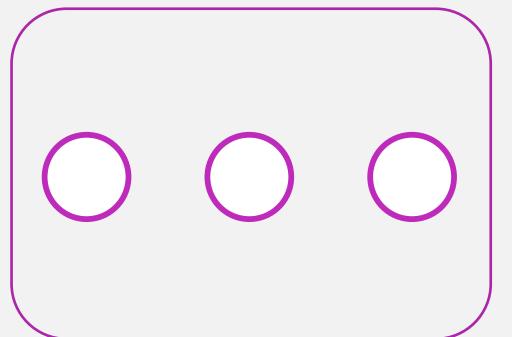
Capital Usage



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

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



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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 funding level percentage according to the competition's funding rules.

You can declare Other Public Sector Funding here if you have previously received public money for **exactly** the same activities

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.

If collaborative, the lead must ensure that all partners have marked their finances as complete.

Research organisation participation must be no greater than **50%** of the total project costs.

Terms and Conditions

Before you can submit your application, **all** organisations in an application 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](#)

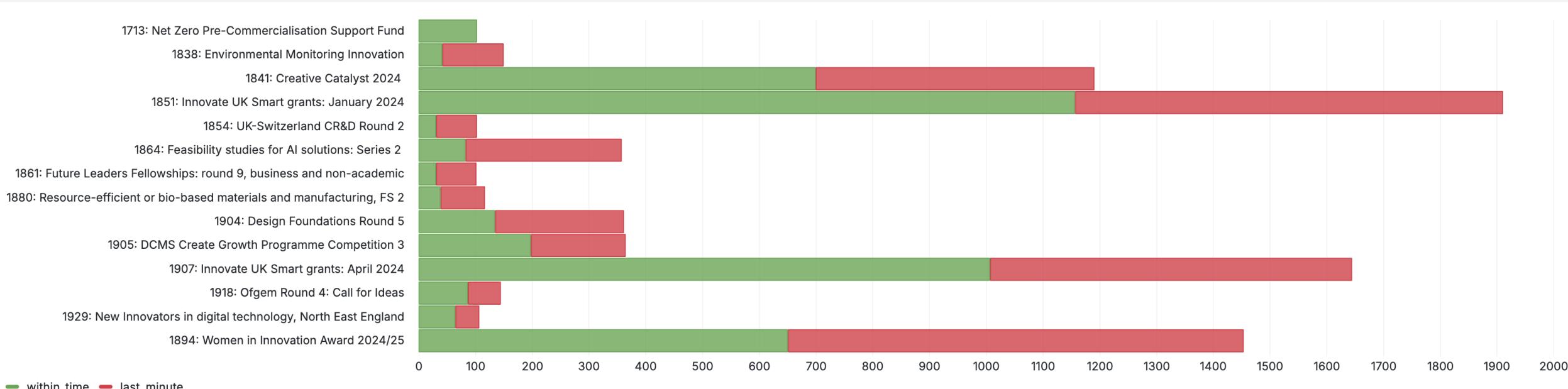


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Submitting your application

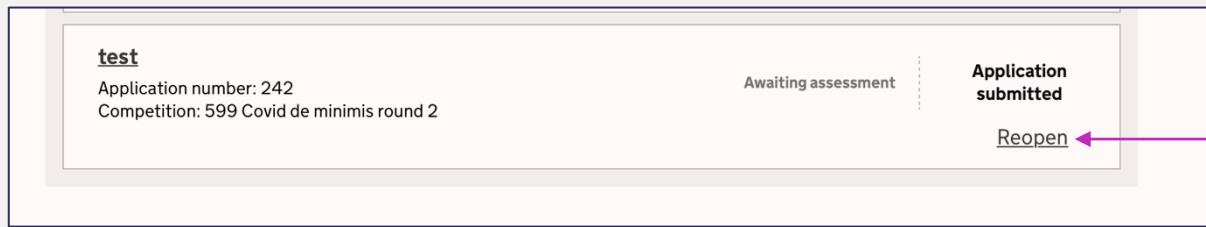
Customer Support can help resolve any issues you might have when submitting **but only if they are contacted before the deadline**.

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



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Editing a submitted application



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

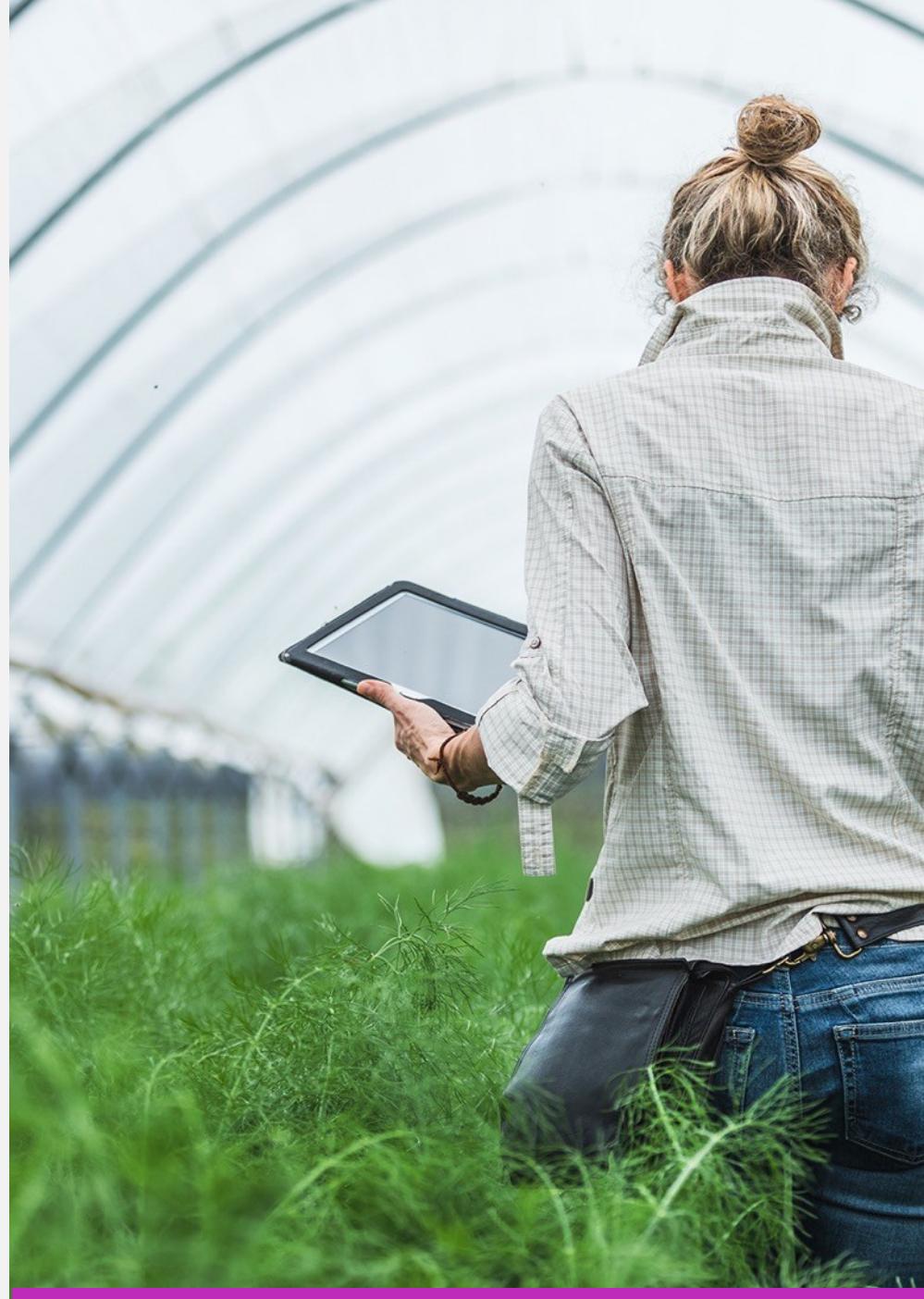
Cons

- 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

Funding Rules



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You are unable to claim funding if

- you are an **overseas organisation** - your company number begins with **FC**
- your organisation is **setup as a branch** - your company number begins with **BR**
- you are a **collaboration with no formal structure of ownership or control** - your company number begins with **ML**
- you are a **Crown Dependency**:
 - if your company is based in **Jersey** - your company number begins with **JE**
 - if your company is based in **Guernsey**
 - if your company is based in the **Isle of Man**

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.

Compliance with the UK Subsidy Control Regime

On 4 January 2023, the [Subsidy Control Act 2022](#) came into effect.

This provides a framework for public authorities to design and award subsidies in a compliant way, whilst minimising any negative effects of subsidies both within the UK and Internationally.

Innovate UK offers funding in line with the UK's obligations and commitments to Subsidy Control. To ensure that Innovate UK remains compliant with the UK's international Subsidy Control duties in respect of:

- the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement;
- the subsidy control act 2022
- Article 10 of the Windsor Framework (successful applicants which are affected by the Windsor Framework will be funded in line with [EU State aid regulations](#))
- Article 138 of the Withdrawal Agreement (some Union law applicable after 31 December 2020 in relation to the UK's participation in Union programmes and activities)
- the Subsidies and Countervailing measures within the WTO (ASCM)
- any other Free Trade Agreements active at the time of award

All awards will be conditional on compliance at all times with the UK's international obligations on Subsidy Control - this will be reflected in the terms and conditions of any award.

Subsidy Control (and State aid where relevant)

The Subsidy Control Act 2022 definition of a 'subsidy' means financial assistance which:

1. is given by a public authority. This can be at any level: central, devolved, regional or local government or a public body.
2. makes a contribution (this could be a financial or an in-kind contribution) to an enterprise, conferring an economic advantage that is not available on market terms.
3. affects international trade.

For awards made from 4 January 2023, the majority are subject to Subsidy Control Act 2022. EU State aid rules now only apply in certain limited circumstances.

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 \(and State aid where relevant\).](#)

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.

Undertakings in difficulty

In the unusual circumstance of an award having to be made under the EU GBER regulation (State aid), the applicant must pass 'undertaking in difficulty' checks as defined by GBER (2014).

Guidance on [Article 10 of the Windsor Framework](#).

Research, Development and Innovation Streamlined Subsidy Scheme

- Designed by Government to award subsidies to enterprises if they met defined criteria contained within the Scheme
- 3 categories available please check the competition you are applying for applicable categories
 - Feasibility Studies
 - Industrial Research and Experimental Development
 - Small and Medium Sized Enterprise (SME) Research, Development and Innovation Support
- When submitting an application as part of our due diligence you will be asked to declare any previous awards made in the 'applicable period' to ensure limits are not breached.
 - 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

Category 2: Industrial Research

For Industrial Research projects, you could get funding for your eligible project costs of:

- up to 70% if you are a micro or small organisation
- up to 60% if you are a medium-sized organisation
- up to 50% if you are a large organisation

Eligible costs please refer to the competition to which you are applying.

For a detailed definition of these research categories see [guidance document section 14.3.](#)



Assessment



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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



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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.

How you get paid

- Grants are claimed and paid out following authorisation, **quarterly in arrears**
- Organisations being funded at less than 100% will need to provide evidence that they will have funding available to meet their share of costs
- You can only claim for costs incurred between your project's start and end date
- Grant can only be paid into an approved UK bank account

Bank account – Guidance

Accepted business bank accounts – subject to change

- Advance Payment Solutions (Part of Cashplus Ltd)
- Allica Bank
- Allied Irish Banks
- Bank of Ireland (UK)
- Bank of Scotland
- Bank of America
- Barclays
- BNP Paribas
- C Hoare & Co
- CAF Bank
- Citi Bank UK
- Clear Bank
- Commerz Bank
- Coutts
- Danske Bank
- Deutsche Bank
- DNB Bank ASA
- Guaranty Trust Bank (UK) Limited
- Handelsbanken Plc
- HSBC
- J.P. Morgan UK
- Lloyds
- Metro Bank
- Mettle
- Mizuho Bank Ltd
- MUFG Bank Ltd
- Monzo
- NatWest
- Nordea
- Revolut
- Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS)
- Santander
- Skandinaviska Enskilda Banken Ab (Publ) [SEB]
- Starling
- The Bank of East Asia
- The Co-operative Bank
- Tide Bank
- Triodos Bank
- TSB Bank
- Ulster Bank
- Unity Trust Bank
- Virgin Money
- Wells Fargo Bank N.A.

Additional Support



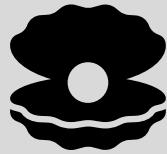
Innovate UK Business Growth

...understands that innovation-focused businesses face obstacles to growth beyond those facing typical entrepreneurial companies. Common stumbling blocks include:



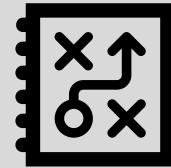
Inherent risks

Managing technical risks
e.g. new science, longer time to revenue, investor caution, regulatory approval, negotiating with partners and defending intellectual property



Inaccessible resources

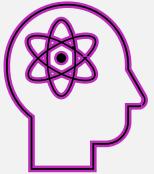
Knowing where to find and how to access the right innovation resources and opportunities in a fragmented and confusing landscape



Incomplete skillsets

Having the right combination of business and product development expertise to achieve important milestones

Innovate UK Business Growth's high-quality advisory support helps innovation-focused businesses in all UK locations and sectors to overcome these challenges and seize opportunities.



It offers clients a comprehensive spectrum of innovation and commercial expertise from a dedicated specialist located nearby



It offers a single access point to the most significant regional, national and international innovation resources



The 1:1 support is flexible, tailored in focus and timescale to the individual needs of innovative businesses



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Cyber Action Toolkit

The NSCS has created a free [Cyber Action Toolkit](#) that gives clear bite-sized actions to protect small businesses, their money and reputation from cyber crime

Search “NCSC cyber toolkit” or click here: <https://cybertoolkit.service.ncsc.gov.uk/>



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Cyber Action Toolkit. At the top, there is a header with a shield icon, the text "Cyber Action Toolkit", a "Sign in" button, and a "Get free toolkit" button. The main visual is a large, bold text "Start protecting your business with our free cyber toolkit" with a yellow underline. Below this, a subtext explains the toolkit's purpose: "The Cyber Action Toolkit gives you clear, bite-sized actions to protect your business's money and reputation from cyber criminals." At the bottom, there is a "Provided by" section with the National Cyber Security Centre logo and the UK Government logo.

Cyber Action Toolkit

Sign in

Get free toolkit

Start protecting your business with our free cyber toolkit

The Cyber Action Toolkit gives you clear, bite-sized actions to protect your business's money and reputation from cyber criminals.

Provided by

National Cyber Security Centre

UK Government

Contact Us

Whether you need help to set a strategic direction or with progressing your innovation, financing your growth or unlocking the potential of international partnerships.

visit our website:
www.iukbg.ukri.org

or call us on:
0300 123 3066

Contact Business Growth

The preferred way to get in touch with us is via email using the form below – we aim to reply within 2 working days. However, we will also be available by telephone during working hours (9am-5pm) and an answerphone will be available at all other times or when our lines are engaged (we will return your call as soon as possible). Please note that you cannot access our colleagues at Innovate UK through these channels.

If you're not from the UK, please [contact your local EEN branch](#).

You can also refer to [our FAQs page](#) to find answers to frequently asked questions about our services.

Telephone | 0300 123 3066

Name

Email

Telephone

Company name

Registered company name or intended trading name

Note: The service is offered to all Innovate UK competition winners but any suitable ambitious innovation-focused businesses with under 250 employees can be supported

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.

Q&A



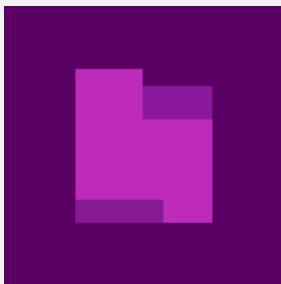
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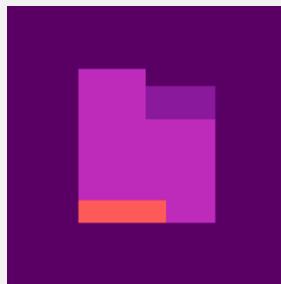
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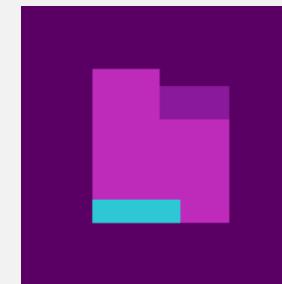
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