Innovate UK C&D / R&D Competition:

Semiconductors & Components for Smart Electronic Platforms

Frequently Asked Questions

(v1.0 rel. 2 March 2026)

Question: Does "reusability" refer to environmental sustainability?

Answer: No. In the context of this competition, "reusability" means that the component is designed to be sold to and adopted by multiple customers. While sustainable practices (like recycling rare-earth metals) are positive, they do not fulfil the core reusability requirement of the competition. Components designed purely as an internal service for a single company are out of scope.

Question: Are final-product PCBs out of scope? What about sub-assemblies, modules, or printed electronics?

Answer: The development of complete final-product PCBs or for example full AI-enabled IoT product is out of scope. However, sub-assemblies or modules (such as a positioning/GNSS timing module) that will be integrated onto a larger PCB within a smart electronic platform are in scope.

Printed electronics that replace in-package / PCB substrates are potentially in scope if they directly deliver a component-level function within the target industrial and tactical edge environments. Applicants proposing this are strongly advised to email Innovate UK's customer support service with their specific use case for confirmation.

Question: Can the grant be used for integrated circuit (IC) fabrication and advanced packaging costs?

Answer: Yes, IC fabrication (including international fabrication) and packaging technologies (e.g., heterogeneous integration) are eligible, provided they are explicitly used to deliver your target component.

However, fabrication must sit within the UK-anchored aspect of the supply chain (as per the competition's goal) and complies with subcontracting funding limits. You cannot use the majority (e.g., > 60%) of your funding simply for fabrication. Funding will also not be provided to develop a manufacturing capability.

Question: Are software development or AI research and innovation in scope?

Answer: No. Innovate UK will not fund the research and innovation of the AI model or the software for an end application. Software development is permitted only if it is strictly focused on the essential firmware or driver software required to enable the use of the proposed hardware component within its target smart electronic platform.

Question: Are communications related components in scope?

Answer: No. We are not funding projects that propose a platform-level communications (wireless or wireline) component or module. Components may include integrated communications, however, the primary purpose must not be to act as a communications module.

Question: How do we prove market demand? Will Innovate UK help find buyers?

Answer: Innovate UK does not get directly involved in finding buyers for your proposed technology. Applicants must clearly articulate their market understanding and exploitation routes (e.g., market awareness, outcomes and route to market) in the application. You may find it useful to reach out to https://iuk-business-connect.org.uk/people/ covering your sector.

Question: How can I demonstrate market 'buy-in' without a letter intent by a potential third-party customer/integrator?

Answer: The purpose of a letter of intent (LOI) is to support your written response in terms of demonstrating potential early market 'buy-in' and proactive customer engagement. Such LOI can be provided as an optional appendix under 'Question 11: Outcomes and route to market' to support your written response.

If you are unable to obtain a LOI by the submission deadline, your written response must articulate any early engagements (with their respective progress and assumptions) you may have had with potential customers in support of market 'buy-in'.

Question: Is there a definition of 'integration readiness levels'?

Answer: This competition is not using a predefined 'integration readiness level' type of scale. Instead, it defines specific criteria that projects must satisfy by their completion to demonstrate that the proposed component has been made ready for integration within smart electronic platforms - these criteria are functional readiness, interface readiness, and consumable format.

Applicants must define their starting point ('baseline') and clearly articulate what the specific "next steps" of increasing the integration readiness will be to make the proposed component ready to be adopted by a third-party by the end of the project.