



Innovate
UK

Advanced Connectivity Technologies: New Innovators

Applicant Briefing

Date: 9 July 2026

The webinar will start at 11am

- 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 our YouTube channel](#)



Welcome and Introductions

Laura Smith

Knowledge Transfer Manager, Digital Economy & Place

Abbie Wood

Competition Manager, Digital & Technologies

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Innovation Lead, D&T - Secure & Resilient Growth



Agenda

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



Key Dates

Timeline	Date
Competition Opens	w/c 13 July 2026
Submission Deadline	5 August 2026 at 11am
Applicants informed	2 September 2026 by 5pm
Project start and end dates	Start by 1 November 2026 End by 30 April 2027



Competition Summary & Scope



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Summary

Innovate UK, part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), will invest up to £500,000 from the ACT R&D Programme in UK registered small and micro businesses.

This competition is funded by Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) and delivered via Innovate UK, UKRI. The competition is part of the Advanced Connectivity Technologies (ACT) R&D Programme, announced in the Digital and Technologies Sector Plan under the UK's Industrial Strategy.

The aim of this competition is to provide a package of targeted support to enable ambitious UK registered **micro and small businesses** to develop affordable, adoptable and investable innovations in Advanced Connectivity Technologies (ACT).

Your innovation must lead to new products, processes or services that are significantly ahead of others currently available, or propose an innovative use of existing products, processes or services. It can also involve a new or innovative business model.

Scope

You must be able to demonstrate measurable improvements against existing technical solutions as well as a credible integration route and pathway for commercialisation and adoption of your solution.

Your project must align with one of the following ACT Grand Challenges:

Challenge 1: Secure and Resilient Networks

- This challenge focuses on development of solutions that will position the UK as a leader in secure communications, underpinning critical national infrastructure and economic sectors.
- Solutions will protect networks against interception and cyber threats, ensuring data confidentiality within legal frameworks. This includes the integration of terrestrial and non-terrestrial networks to expand coverage and provide resilience.
- The key outcome is to create networks that are trustworthy, reliable, and able to withstand disruption, while preparing for emerging risks.

Challenge 2: Sustainable Networks

- This challenge will drive innovation in technologies that reduce the environmental impact of telecoms while ensuring that finite spectrum is used as effectively as possible.
- The key outcome is to create sustainable, energy efficient networks that contribute to the UK's clean power commitments.

Eligibility criteria



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Eligibility Criteria – Your Project

Your project must:

- have total project costs and a grant funding request of between **£25,000** and **£50,000**
- have total project costs that equal your grant funding request
- last between **3** and **6** months
- carry out all of its project work in the UK
- intend to exploit the results from or in the UK
- start by **1 November 2026**
- end by **30 April 2027**
- **not received any previous IUK funding**

Eligibility Criteria – Lead Organisation

Lead organisation:

To lead a project your organisation must:

- be a UK registered micro or small business

If your business has been funded directly by Innovate UK previously, you are not eligible to apply for this competition.

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 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

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
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). If you have previously submitted an application that reached our assessment stage, you can re-apply once more with the same proposal.	A brand-new application, project or idea that you have not previously submitted into an Innovate UK competition. or A previously submitted or ineligible application which: • 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.

The screenshot shows the 'Create your account' page for UK registered businesses. It includes a 'Back' link, a heading 'Your organisation', an information icon stating 'Your organisation must be UK based to receive funding from Innovate UK', a 'Business' section, and a 'Find your organisation on Companies House' section with a search bar containing 'nomensa' and a 'Search' button. Below the search bar, it shows 'Companies House search results' for 'NOMENSALTD' with details: '04214477 - Incorporated on 10 May 2001' and '13 Queen Square, Bristol, BS1 4NT'.

The screenshot shows the 'Please sign in or create an account' page. It includes a 'Back' link, a heading 'Please sign in or create an account', and two columns: 'Used this service before?' with a 'Sign in' button, and 'New to this service?' with a 'Create account' button. Below this, there is a 'Sign in' section with fields for 'Email address' and 'Password', each with a 'Show' button. At the bottom, there is a link 'Need help signing in or creating an account?' and a section 'My email and/or password isn't working' with a link 'Forgotten your password?'.

Application Questions

Detailed guidance available on IFS



Application Form		Word Count	Appendix
Question 1	Applicant location (not scored)	100 words	No
Question 2	Minimal Financial Assistance declaration (not scored)	5 words	Template - mandatory
Question 3	Animal testing (not scored)	Multiple choice	No
Question 4	Permits and licences (not scored)	Multiple choice	No
Question 5	Export licence (not scored)	Multiple choice	No
Question 6	International Collaboration (not scored)	400 words	No
Question 7	Trusted Research and Innovation (not scored)	400 words	No
Question 8	Where did you hear about this competition (not scored)	Multiple choice	No
Question 9	Your innovation area (not scored)	Multiple choice	No
Question 10	Funding plans (not scored but will be used to assess financial viability)	400 words	No
Question 11	The idea	600 words	No
Question 12	Impact and added value	600 words	No
Question 13	Business resources and capabilities	600 words	No
Question 14	Work packages and costs	600 words	No

UK Strategic Export Controls - overview

[UK strategic export controls - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-strategic-export-controls)

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).

Q6 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 details of any subcontractors or service providers.

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

Q7 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

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.

Project Impact questions

- Each organisation in your application 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:

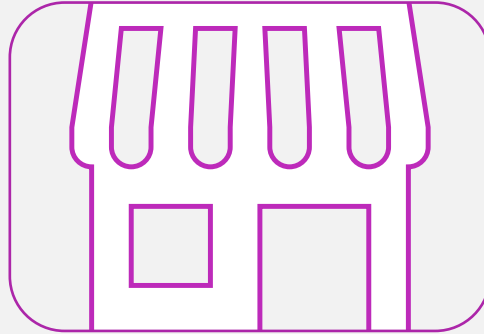
- [Watch Our Impact Management Framework video](#)
- [How is the Project Impact data collected? video](#)

Your Project Cost Categories

View our [Application Finances Instructional Video](#)



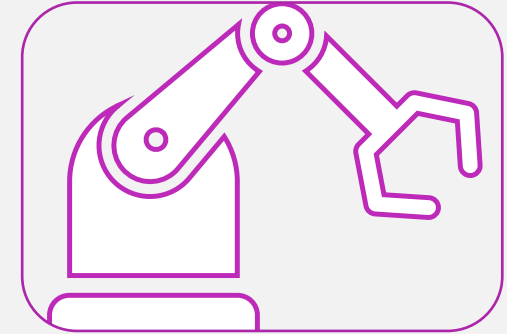
Labour



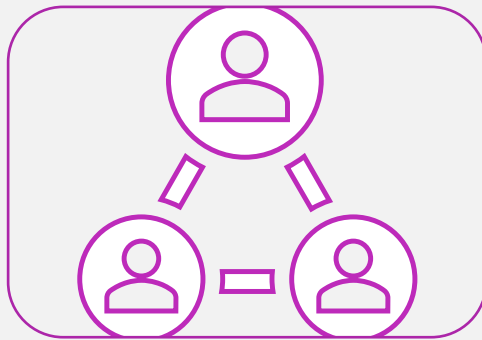
Overheads



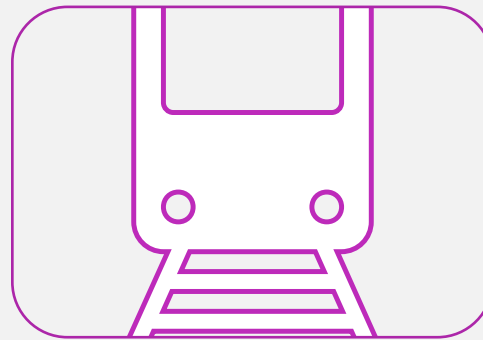
Materials



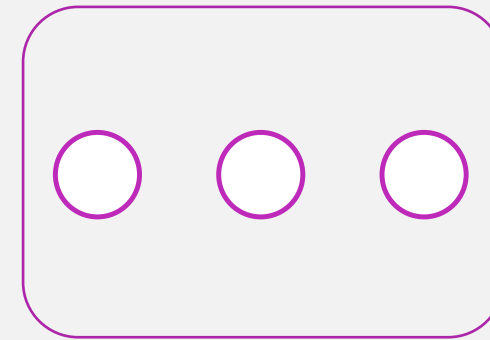
Capital Usage



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

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

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

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 \(opens in a new window\)](#).

%

☐ No

- This is where you place your funding level percentage figure
- MFA projects can be 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



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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
- To note:** some applicants may need to adjust their costs and funding sought figure as they may have reached their MFA limit
- IFS will not correct you if your Funding level is less than 100% or if your costs and grant request don't match

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](#)

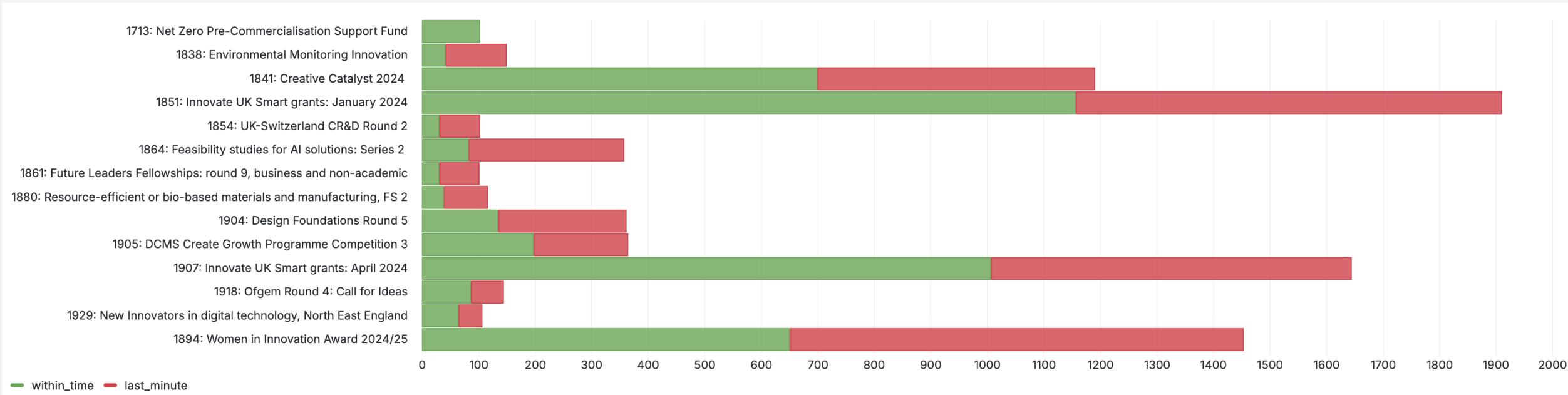


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Submitting your application

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.



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

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

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

- been previously funded by Innovate UK as a business; this does not apply to funding received in an academic capacity, prior to company formation
- failed to comply with grant terms and conditions

Innovate UK may withhold a grant payment at any time if you have any outstanding sums due to us in relation to other projects.

Compliance with the UK Subsidy Control Regime

On 4th 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.

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](#).

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



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**
- 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



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Reasonable adjustments

We welcome and encourage applications from people of all backgrounds and are committed to making our application process accessible to everyone. This includes making [reasonable adjustments](#), for people who have a disability or a long-term condition and face barriers applying to us.

You can contact us at any time to ask for guidance. We recommend you contact us at least 15 working days before this competition's closing date to allow us to put the most suitable support in place. The support we can provide may be limited if you contact us close to the competition deadline.

You can contact Innovate UK by [email](#) or call 0300 321 4357. Our phone lines are open from 9am to 12pm and 2pm to 5pm UK time, Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays).

Reasonable adjustments – what we need from you

To apply for a reasonable adjustment we will need to collect some information from you, below is the list of what we need:

- Name
- Organisation
- Email address
- Phone number
- Competition you are applying to
- Application number if you've started an application
- Consent to pass info to Innovate UK Business Connect

This information must be given to Innovate UK Customer Support Services, Business Connect are unable to provide support without a referral from CSS

Further information on the process can be found here <https://iuk-business-connect.org.uk/how-we-help/reasonable-adjustments-service/>

Reasonable adjustments – what we can do

Below is a list of possible adjustments we can make, this list is not exhaustive and not every adjustment will be appropriate for you, adjustments will be made on a case-by-case basis:

- Proofreading
- Clarifying language
- Resources
- Introduction to experts
- Time management
- Note-taking

Reasonable adjustments – what we can not do

The reasonable adjustments offered are designed to remove barriers to applying, they are not designed to make decisions for you or give you advice on an application. With that in mind, the support we offer does not include the below:

- Providing deadline extensions
- Choosing which competition to apply to
- Developing an idea
- Advising whether your idea is in scope for a competition
- Offering financial advice
- Helping with research

Useful Information

- UKRI's [General Guidance](#)
- Innovate UK Business Connect's [Good Application Guide](#)
- [Who we fund](#)
- [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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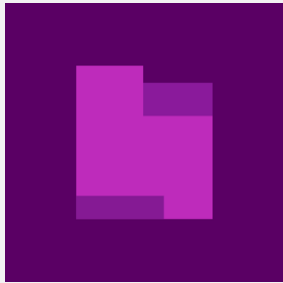


Contact

Customer Support Services

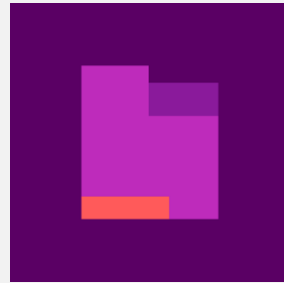
0300 321 4357 (Monday - Friday 9am-12pm and 2pm-5pm)

support@iuk.ukri.org



Innovate UK

ukri.org/councils/innovate-uk



**Innovate UK
Business
Connect**

[iuk-business-
connect.org.uk](https://iuk-business-connect.org.uk)



**Innovate UK Business
Growth**

www.iukbg.ukri.org



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Thank You



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@weareinnovateuk