



Innovate
UK

Business
Connect

14th July 2026

Funding 101- Good application guide

Sustainable Chemicals Innovation Network – Learning and Insights Series

Catherine Julia Mort, Knowledge Transfer Manager –Industrial Biotechnology

Welcome and House keeping

- Cameras – Option to turn on or off. Please bear this in mind if you don't want to appear in the recording!
- **PLEASE mute your microphone during the main session**
- I will be sharing several QR codes, please keep your phones near by!
- Q and A at the end – you will be able to unmute and ask your question or please type in the chat box.

Outline of Webinar:

Aim

To familiarise those with less experience with Innovate UK funding with the application requirements and encourage applications from organisations new to Innovate UK

Content

1. Introduction to Innovate UK funding and IS8
2. Tips for funding applications
3. Relevant activities from our networks
4. Q&A

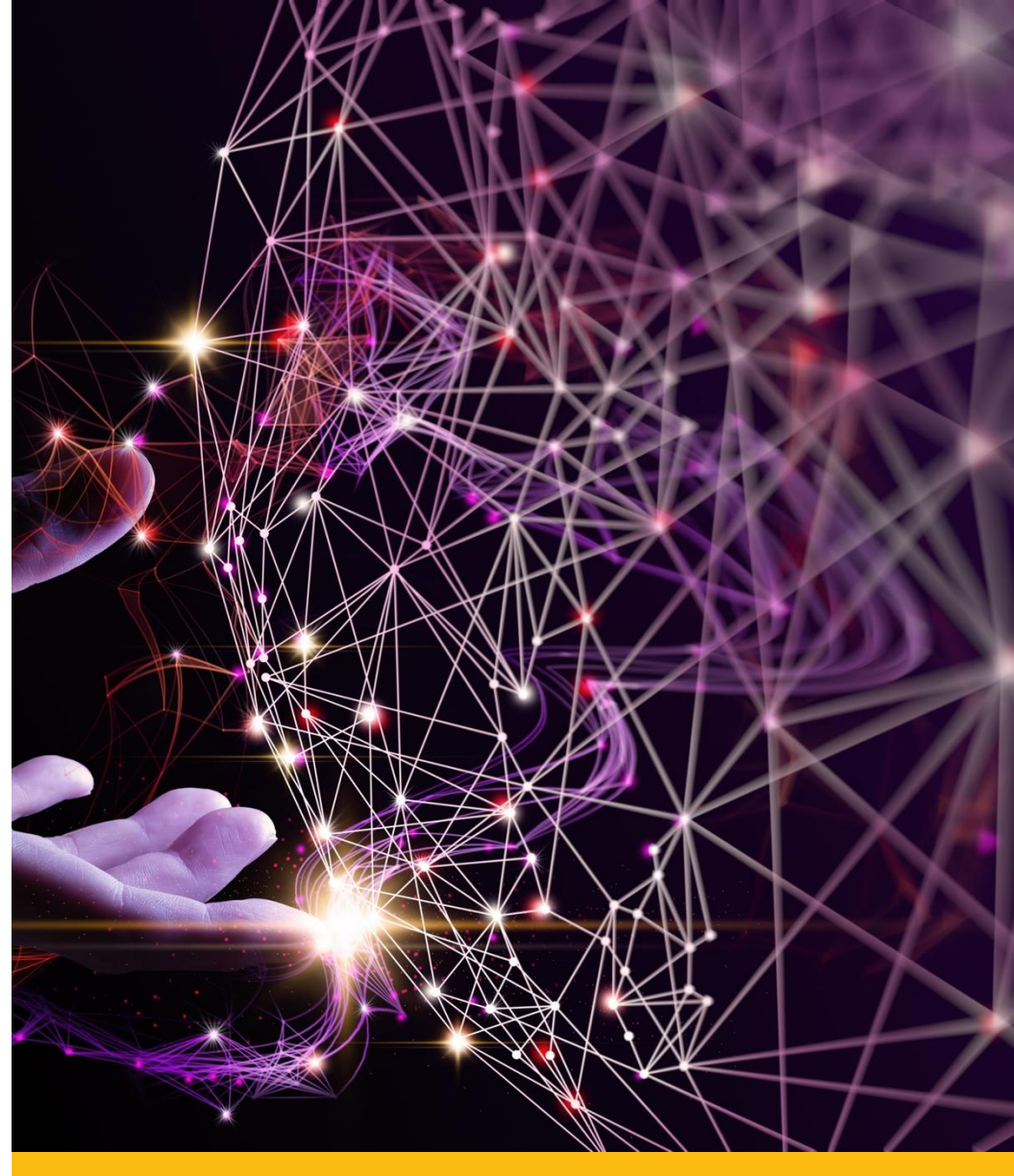
Disclaimer!

- *This is intended as general guidance for your application not a guarantee of success!*
- Each competition has a section on ‘**how to apply**’ with links to **IUK Guidance for applicants' webpages**: contains **General Guidance**, **Guidance for Specific Funds**, **Costs we Fund** and **Project Impact Guidance**.
- ***Follow that to the letter!***

About us

We are the home of the UK's innovation networks, connecting businesses, researchers, investors and partners to accelerate innovation.

As a strategic delivery partner to Innovate UK, part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), we combine data, insight and sector expertise to connect people and opportunities, helping ideas move from concept to scale.



Sustainable Chemicals Innovation Network

Purpose:

Launched in 2025, the network brings together industry, researchers and innovators to discover new opportunities for collaboration across the supply chains by:

being a key strategic linker across government, national and regional activities

understanding challenges and opportunities for the sector.

being a focal point to disseminate funding opportunities

Focus:

Defossilisation of chemicals -2025-ongoing

Sustainable Chemicals Incubator Plus (SCIP) - 2025- Ongoing

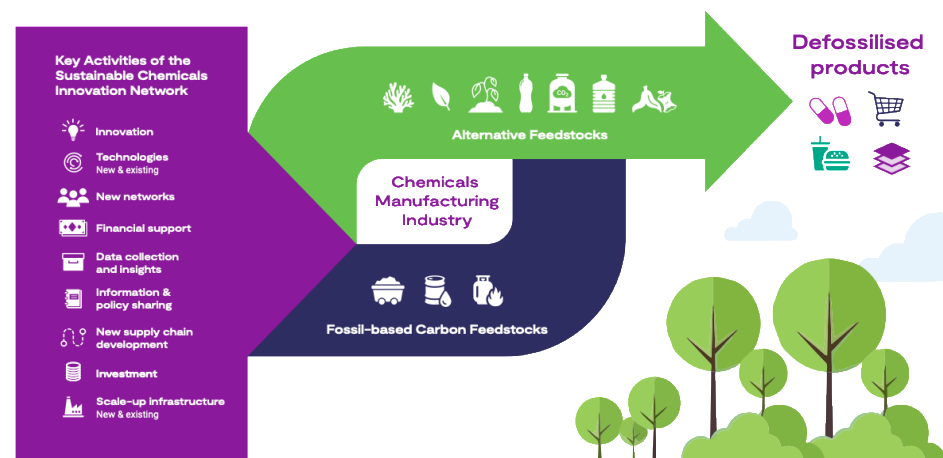
Sustainable Chemical Supply Chains & the Industrial Strategy – 2026- Ongoing

The Sustainable Chemicals Innovation Network



Goal

The UK chemical industry is working to transition to a net-zero future by reducing its reliance on virgin-fossil carbon as a feedstock, creating new resilient value chains for defossilised chemical products. This is set out in the Sustainable Carbon Ambition which underpins the focus of the Sustainable Chemicals Innovation Network.

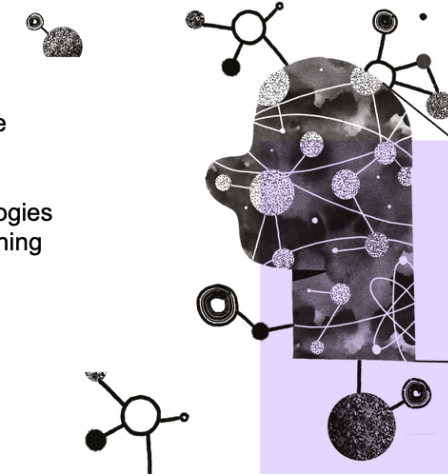


Innovate UK Prospectus



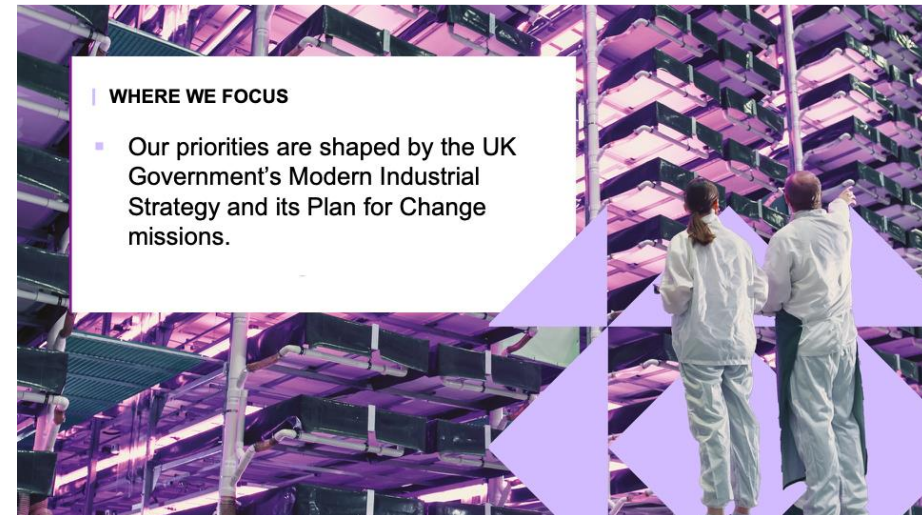
THE OPPORTUNITY

- UK's discovery research base, spanning the public and the private sectors, is world leading.
- We will help breakthrough technologies become scalable businesses – turning innovation into commercial and economic growth.



WHERE WE FOCUS

- Our priorities are shaped by the UK Government's Modern Industrial Strategy and its Plan for Change missions.



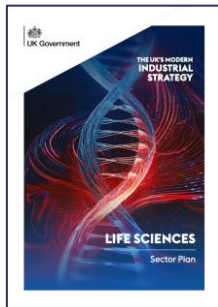
Create, Grow & Scale

The UK's Modern Industrial Strategy

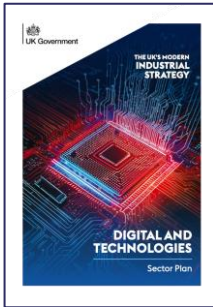
Policy Paper



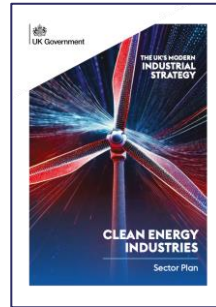
Industrial Strategy Sector Plans (IS8)



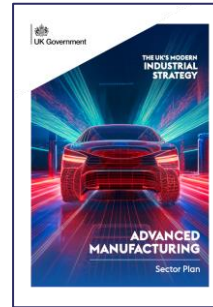
Life
Sciences



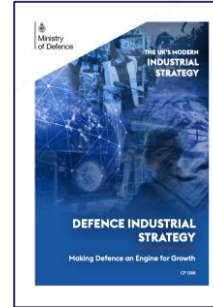
Digital
Technologies



Clean Energy
Industries



Advanced
Manufacturing



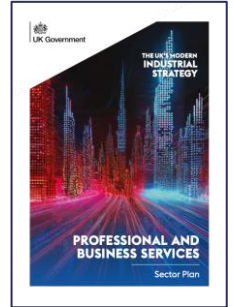
Defence



Creative
Industries

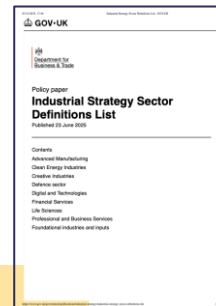


Financial
Services



Professional
& Business
Services

Technical Annex & Industrial Strategy Sector Definition List



Industrial Strategy and Sustainable Chemicals

Life Sciences

- Pharma & Biopharma
- Medical technology

Clean Energy

- Hydrogen production
- Fuel cells
- Carbon capture storage and utilisation

Advanced Manufacturing

- Battery manufacture
- Advanced materials including; coatings, adhesives, lubricants, catalysts, polymers, resins

Defence

- Advanced materials and protective systems
- Chemicals for detection and decontamination
- Explosives and propellants



Examples of current Innovate UK Funding

1

Accelerated Knowledge Transfer Partnerships 6

Opens: 26th May 2026
Closes: 15th July 2026

2

Innovation Loans: Expression of Interest

Opens: 6th June 2026
Closes: No submission deadline

3

Zero Emission Vessels and Infrastructure 2 Competition(s)

Open: 26th March 2026
Closes: 16th Sept 2026

4

Clean Maritime Demonstration Competition(s) 7

Open: 11th March 2026
Closes: 15th July 2026

5

UK-Switzerland CR&D 3

Opens: 1st July 2026
Closes: 3rd Sept 2026

6

Drive35: Scale-up fund

Open: Wed 17th June
Closes: No submission deadline

For more information,
use this QR code:



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Funding Application Guide

- Innovate UK Business Connect's Investment team have produced a useful guide on how to apply for funding.
- <https://iuk-business-connect.org.uk/investment/good-application-guide/>



How does it work? - Innovation grants

Innovation grants are released through competitions **published on Innovate UK website:**

➤ <https://apply-for-innovation-funding.service.gov.uk/competition/search>

Support and updates available at Innovate UK Business Connect:

➤ <https://iuk-business-connect.org.uk>

Competitions regularly opening (and closing) - Each competition has specific eligibility and scope criteria

- **Applications are for specific innovation projects**
- Application consists of answering ~10-15 questions about your proposed project – usually part funded
- **Match funding** – the businesses will usually need to cover some of the costs (typically 30-50% depending on size of company)

Keep an eye out for competitions!

Why apply?

1. Finance to support R&D
2. Derisk new technologies
3. Platform for collaboration
4. Proven business benefit
5. Develop an innovative culture

Help you get or stay ahead!



What do you need to do?

1. Be prepared

- What's your project?
- Who do you need to work with?
- Have you got support of potential customers?
- Have you got your supply chain engaged?

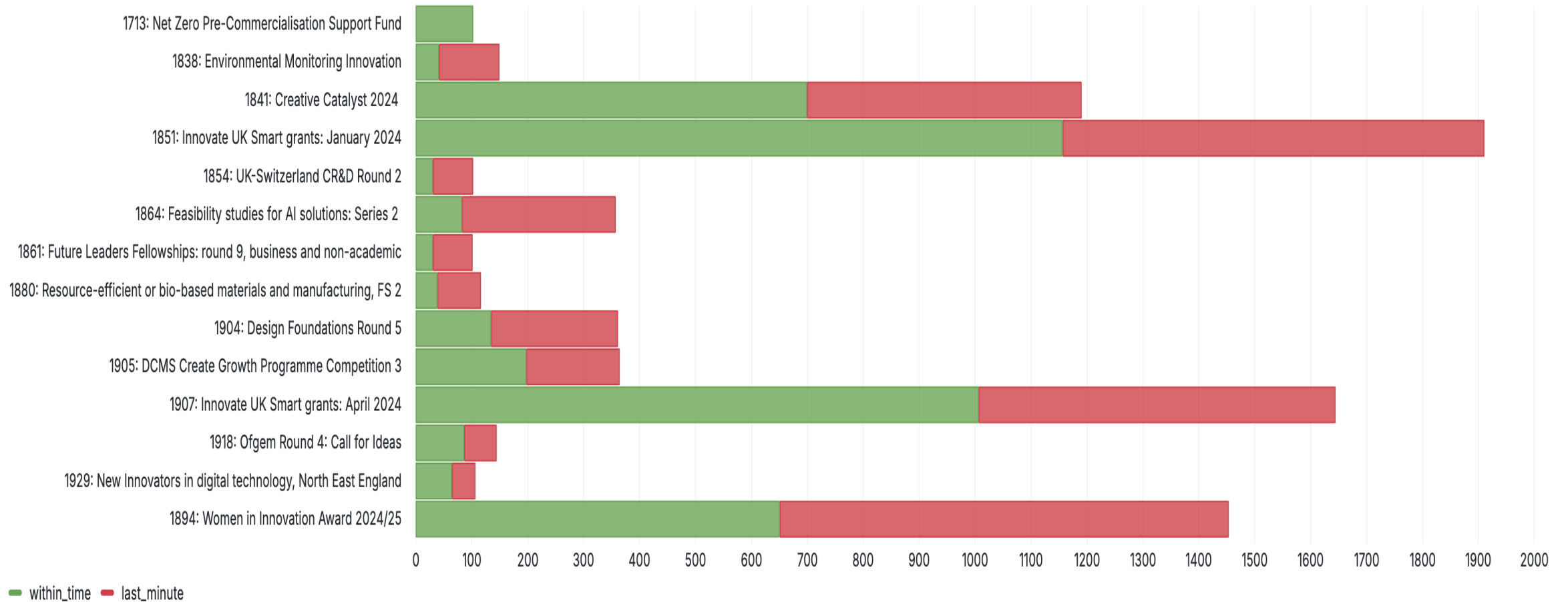
2. Get in touch

- Do you need partners to realise the project?
- We can help with finding partners and light touch application guidance

3. Apply

- Are you going to lead the application or work with someone?
- Watch the competition briefing
- Do not wait until the last minute

Prepare Early!



Innovation Funding Service (IFS)

- An online platform that allows businesses and other organizations to apply for funding to support their innovation projects.
- It's a key part of how Innovate UK manage innovation grants
- The service covers the entire application process, from initial application to grant award and project monitoring.

<https://apply-for-innovation-funding.service.gov.uk/competition/search>



 **Innovation Funding Service**

[Dashboard](#) [Profile](#) [Sign out](#)

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

[< Innovate UK](#)

Innovation competitions

Filter competitions

Keywords

Innovation area

Any

Update results

24 competitions

[Future Leaders Fellowships: Round 10, business and non-academic](#)

UK registered organisations can apply for a share of up to £110 million for ambitious research and innovation projects in any sector, and tailored support to develop careers for future leaders. This funding is from UKRI.

Eligibility
This competition is open to single applicants with supporting organisations.
To lead a project your organisation must be a UK registered:

- business of any size
- charitable organisation
- Catapult
- public body
- Agri-Tech Centre
- eligible research organisation

  [Business Connect](#)

General Example:

Application Form		Word Count	Appendix
Question 1	Applicant location (not scored)	400 words	No
Question 2	Minimal Financial Assistance declaration (not scored)	400 words	Yes - 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	Need or challenge	400 words	No
Question 9	Approach and innovation	400 words	Yes – optional, 2 pages
Question 10	Team and resources	400 words	Yes – optional, 2 pages
Question 11	Market awareness	400 words	No
Question 12	Outcomes and route to market	400 words	No
Question 13	Wider impacts	400 words	No
Question 14	Project management	400 words	Yes – mandatory, 2 pages
Question 15	Risks	400 words	Yes – mandatory, 2 pages
Question 16	Added value	400 words	No
Question 17	Costs and value for money	400 words	No

Each competition slightly different – depends on what type of projects Innovate UK are looking for

Detailed guidance available on IFS and how to apply

Key features of a good application

- **Alignment to the competition scope**
- **Quality of research and innovation**
- **A strong business case / a convincing value proposition**
- **A credible plan for Research and Development**
- **The right consortium (e.g. supply chain and route to market)**
- **A clear need for support**
- **Sufficient risk**



1. Alignment to scope

Read the briefing document carefully

- Be very clear and specific about how your project fits the scope
- Don't assume assessors are experts in your field
 - Use layman's terms
 - Avoid acronyms
 - Avoid over emphasizing

If you are not sure you can ask: support@iuk.ukri.org

*****Read the underlying/connected strategy*****



If assessors don't think the project is in scope, the rest of your work will be wasted!

2. Quality of research & innovation

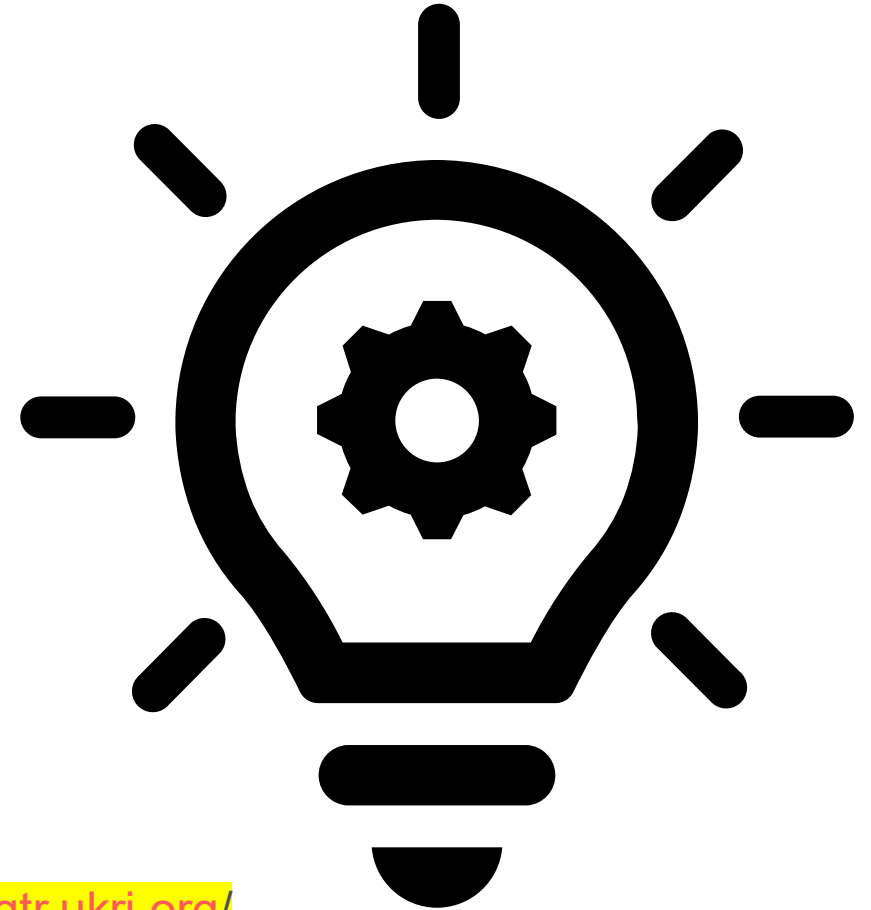
- All projects must involve significant innovation and pushing boundaries
- Show how your project is commercially/scientifically innovative and how your research will progress understanding / deliver breakthrough

Provide evidence to support this i.e. results of:

- Patent searches
- Competitor analyses
- Literature surveys
- **Freedom to operate** - Detail background IP, strategy for protecting any IP generated and distribution of IPR

Gateway to research - <https://gtr.ukri.org/>

See current and past research projects



3. Make a strong business case

What is the need/benefit that this project will address?

What is the current market like (size, dynamics etc.)?

How will the partners profit from success; when and how much?

- Quantify the Return on Investment
- How will you commercialise over few years after project?

Describe the route to market

- Have you got partners in the supply chain?

Articulate the wider impact – Social, environment



It is considered as an investment!

4. Have a credible plan for R&D

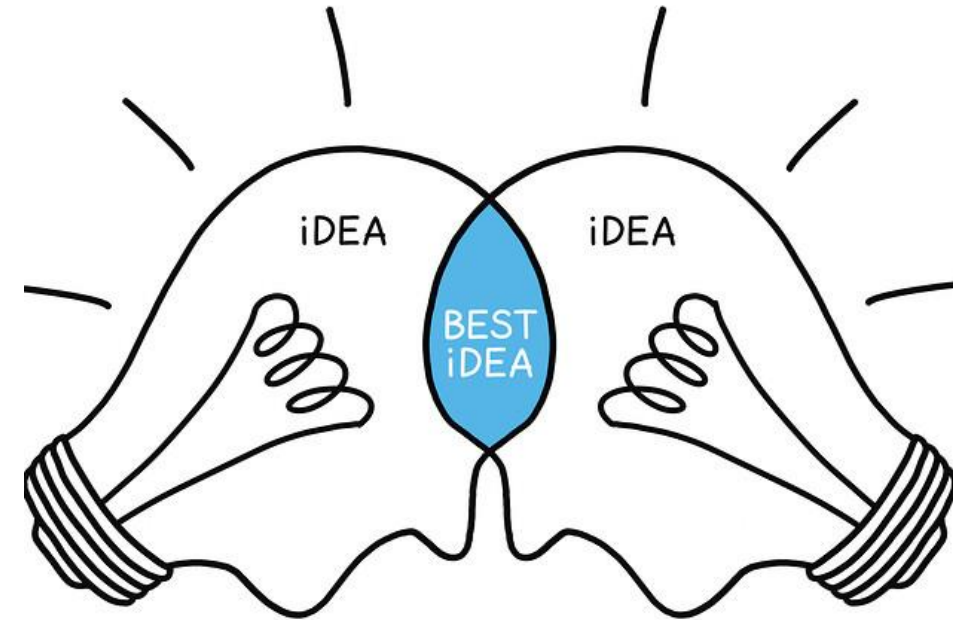
- **Outcome focussed research**
- Provide sufficient detail to be able to judge the quality & feasibility of the technical plan and the value for money
- **Work packages; partners involved; timeline; description of activity; milestones**
- Demonstrate the necessary skills & resources are available
- **Provide a clear/simple management structure and plan**
- How are you going to disseminate the results?



You will be held to the plan!

5. The right consortium

- **Matched funding** – partners show intent
- Horizontal or vertical consortia (or both) possible
- **Why these partners?** – what makes this a particularly strong consortium?
- Show how all the partners have an active role to play and how each benefits in some way (no “passengers”)
- **Is the supply chain complete?** If not, how will you fill
- If there are global markets in mind, explain how these will be accessed



The sum greater than it's parts!

6. A clear need for support

- What would the consequences of not getting the funding be?
- Explain why the project would not go ahead (or would be delayed or reduced in scope) without funding support:
 - Explain and justify why you are not funding the project yourselves
 - Explain how the project would be undertaken differently with funding support
- A realistic prospect of success, but sufficient uncertainty that there is still need for R&D



Why should taxpayer money support this?

7. Identify risks and mitigation strategies

- **Explain the risks and how these will be mitigated**

- Technical (incl. regulatory)
- Commercial
- Managerial
- Environmental

- **Use risk management tools e.g. risk register**

“funders recognise that projects of this type are inherently risky, but seek assurance that projects have adequate arrangements for managing this risk”



It should be risky, so you need to mitigate!

Assessment

<https://www.ukri.org/councils/innovate-uk/guidance-for-applicants/general-guidance/what-happens-after-you-have-submitted-your-application/>

1. **Applications are assessed for eligibility.** They will check business registered, collaboration requirements, finances, duration, if previously submitted
2. **Applications are assessed against the scope by Innovation Lead.** Their decision is final.
3. **Sent to independent assessors** – experts from across business and academia. They are allocated based on their skills and expertise relevant to your project.
4. **Assessors complete their assessment independently** and are bound by a non-disclosure agreement as part of their contract.
5. **Each assessor submits a score for each scored question.** They will also provide comments which form your application feedback.
6. **A ranked order of all applications based on the average assessor score of each application.** The highest-ranking applications (subject to meeting a minimum quality threshold and any [portfolio approach](#)) are recommended to Innovate UK for funding.

Feedback can be helpful for future!

General tips

- Answer the question fully
- Build a narrative
- Use evidence and quantify where possible
- Assume the assessor knows nothing about your technology and explain in full!

Need or challenge

6. What is the business need, technological challenge or market opportunity behind your innovation?

▼ [What should I include in this section?](#)

Explain:

- the main motivation for the project
- the business need, technological challenge or market opportunity
- whether you have identified any similar innovation and its current limitations, including those close to market or in development
- any work you have already done to respond to this need, for example if the project focuses on developing an existing capability or building a new one
- the wider economic, social, environmental, cultural or political challenges which are influential in creating the opportunity, such as incoming regulations

Your answer can be up to 400 words long.

Words remaining: 400

Relevant Network Activities at Innovate UK

Business Connect:



B2Match – Networking opportunity!



Call to action!

- Please make sure you add your profile to the **B2Match platform** so you can connect with other delegates.
- This platform will be open until March 31st 2027!

<https://b2match.com/e/navigating-sustainable-chemicals-innovation/sign-up?invitation=PA6yVqum1bo7Lf...>

Navigating the Sustainable Chemicals Innovation Ecosystem networking platform

Scan the QR code to find out more and sign up to the networking platform:

<https://bit.ly/Microgravity-Opportunity>



UK Sustainable Chemicals Innovation Ecosystem Directory

Showing national and regional organisations supporting innovation

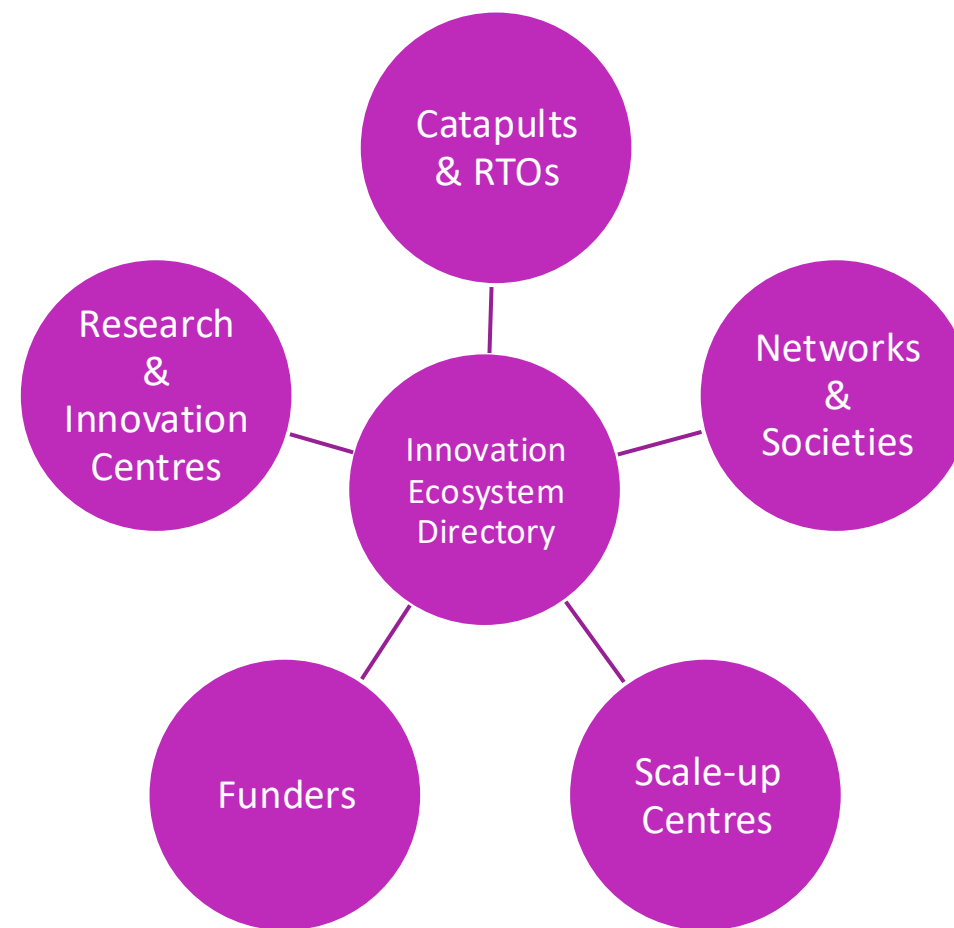
Launched in June!

Aim:

To create an innovation ecosystem directory of organisations that are actively engaged in sustainable chemicals.

Purpose:

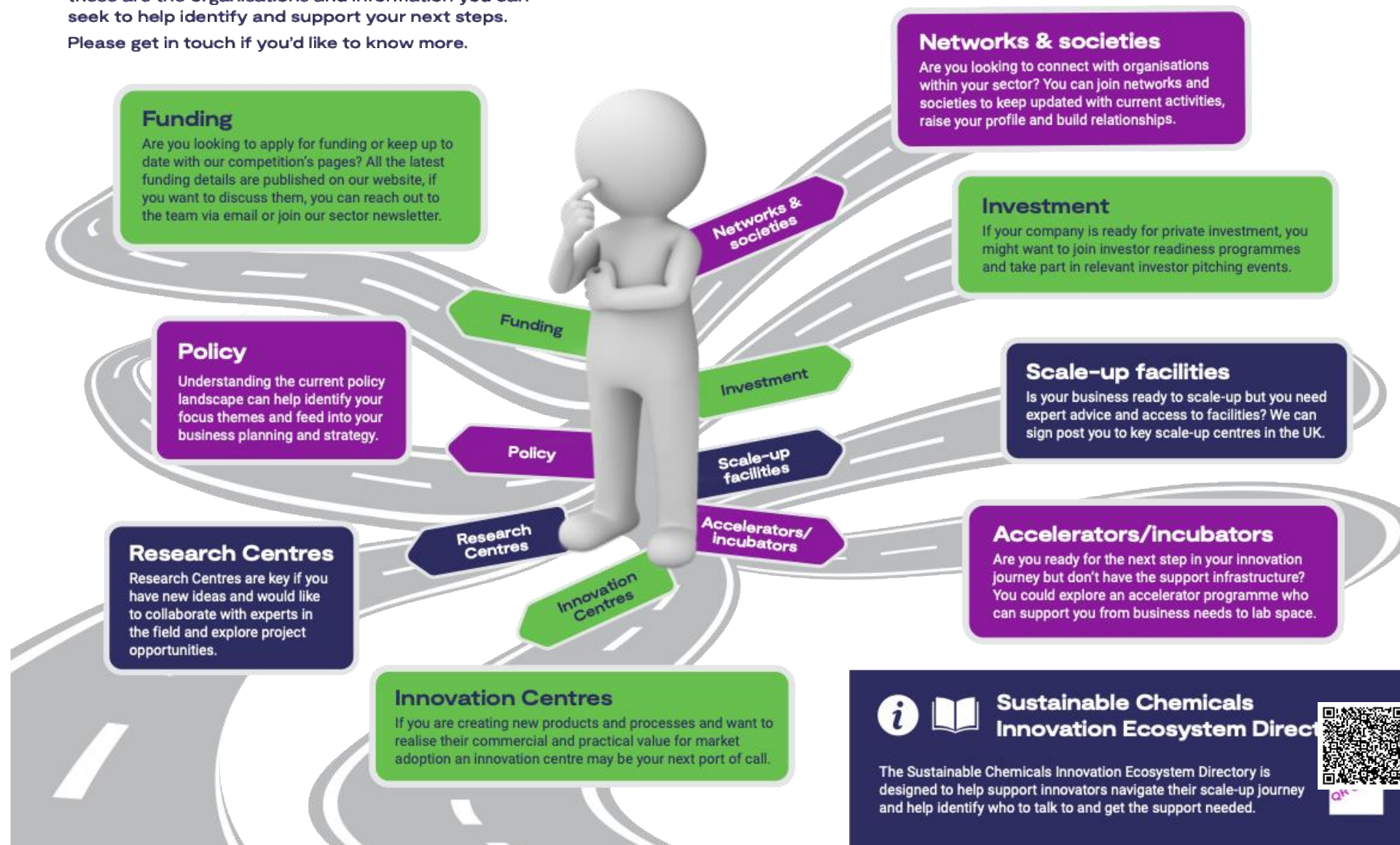
To support companies and innovators in understanding who is supporting innovation and scale-up within the chemicals sector.



The Innovator's Journey

As an innovator embarking on your scale-up journey, these are the organisations and information you can seek to help identify and support your next steps.

Please get in touch if you'd like to know more.



Sustainable Chemicals Innovation Ecosystem Directory

The Sustainable Chemicals Innovation Ecosystem Directory is designed to help support innovators navigate their scale-up journey and help identify who to talk to and get the support needed.



Sustainable Chemicals Innovation Ecosystem Directory

Our directory is designed to support businesses across different sectors looking to understand the sustainable chemicals innovation ecosystem and connect with key organisations. This network of experts can support all TRL (Technology Readiness Level) stages from TRL 3 businesses looking to develop a proof of concept to those further along the scale seeking private investment or commercialisation support.

Search for organisations specialising in scale-up, policy and strategy, funding or investment. You can also find networks, societies, incubators, accelerators and innovation centres to support you on your innovation journey. Fill out the form within the Additional Information section of an organisation to request an introduction through Innovate UK Business Connect.

Organisation Type 

Business Region 

Organisation/Initiative 	Organisation Type 	Business Region 	Full Details
Biobased and Biodegradable Industries Association (BBIA)	Trade Association	East of England	More Info
BioIndustry Association (BIA)	Trade Association	Nationwide	More Info
			More Info

Engineering Biology Innovation Network

Vision: Build a globally leading UK Engineering Biology sector that delivers economic impact for the UK.

Purpose: Remove barriers that prevent innovators from transforming EngBio ideas into products and services

Mission: Connect innovators with the right opportunities, partners and expertise that accelerate ideas into high growth opportunities across all EngBio application sectors.



Focus Areas

- Agriculture and food
- Materials and chemicals
- Health
- Environmental solution
- Energy and low carbon fuels
- Tools

Activities

- Connecting Innovators
- Consortia Building
- Company visits and Insights gathering
- Knowledge and expertise sharing
- signposting opportunities
- Informing UKRI, DSIT, DBT& other gov. departments about community needs

Engineering Biology funding

Open call

3rd UK-Switzerland bilateral call for joint innovation projects

Closing date: 3 September

Innovate UK and Innosuisse will invest up to £3 million and at least CHF 3 million in collaborative innovation projects. Aims to strengthen UK-Swiss collaboration in emerging technologies, including engineering biology, and develop new applications across sectors.

Potential future UKRI Engineering Biology funding

August — UKRI translation: BBSRC proof of concept awards

Translate bioscience research into bio-based solutions by demonstrating feasibility and progressing milestone-driven programmes towards commercial outputs, licensable IP and real-world impact.

September — collaborative research and development

Support for high-growth engineering biology businesses to work with supply chains and end-users, moving technologies towards commercialisation.

September — foundational technology awards

Advance critical engineering biology tools, including AI-ready data, design and predictive engineering tools, automation, novel chassis and standards infrastructure.

September — scale-up infrastructure access fund

Grant funding for businesses to access scale-up infrastructure and skills, supporting pilot commercial testing, trialling and validation of lab-proven technologies.

October — engineering biology Investor Partnerships

Align grant funding with Innovate UK investor partners to help high-growth businesses complete late-stage development, scale and enter markets.

Innovation Exchange (iX)

Connecting Industry Challenges with Innovation

3

Challenges Delivered

50

Applications Received

6

Solutions Progressed

Potential challenge opportunities valued from £270k to £400m+ annually

Challenges Delivered



Stellantis

Bio-oil

RobinsonBrothers
Excellence in Chemistry

Catalyst Recycling



M&I MATERIALS

Sustainable Feedstocks

Industry Feedback "An extremely well-prepared and professionally executed challenge" **Dr Ursula Peters** Expert Carbon Removal, Stellantis

WE ARE NOW LOOKING FOR NEW CHALLENGE HOLDERS!

✓ Technical bottlenecks? ✓ Sustainability challenges? ✓ Manufacturing and process challenges?

From challenge to solution through open innovation.



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Resources



Innovate UK

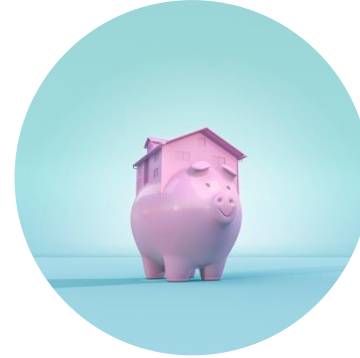
- <https://iuk-business-connect.org.uk/>



Business Connect Newsletters

Relevant examples:
Materials & Manufacturing
Chemistry & Industrial
Biotechnology
Clean Energy &
Infrastructure
Complex Systems
Circular Economy

**Subscribe at the bottom
of the webpages**



Opportunities

- <https://iuk-business-connect.org.uk/opportunities/>
- **Filter by sector, eligible organisations, funding types etc.**



Contact

Catherine Julia Mort

Catherine.mort@iukbc.org.uk

Thank you

Any Questions?

iuk-business-connect.org.uk

Visit the website for
more information

