This document contains the guidance and scoring used by the Assessors when reviewing your application. Assessors will review your answers for each scored question and mark each of them between 1 and 20 (1 being the lowest and 20 being the highest).

Any questions that are not scored will not be reviewed by the Assessor.

Question 1: Applicant location (not scored)

You must state the name and full registered address of your organisation and any subcontractors working on your project.

We are collecting this information to understand the geographical location of all applicants.

Question 2: Animal testing (not scored)

Will your project involve any trials with animals or animal testing?

You must select one option:

- Yes
- No

We will only support innovation projects conducted to the highest standards of animal welfare.

Further information for proposals involving animal testing is available at the UKRI Good Research Hub and NC3R's animal welfare guidance.

Question 3. Permits and licences (not scored)

Will you have the correct permits and licences in place to carry out your project?

We are unable to fund projects who do not have the correct permits or licences in place by your project start date.
You must select one option:
• Yes

• No
• In process of being applied for
• Not applicable

Question 4: Project proposal

What is the business need, technological challenge or market opportunity behind your innovation? What approach will you take and where will the focus of the innovation be?

Describe or explain:

- the main motivation for the project
- the business need, technological challenge or market opportunity and how your project will respond to this
- how this project fits with your current product, service lines or offerings
- the wider economic, social, environmental, cultural or political challenges which are influential in creating the opportunity
- the nearest current state of the art, including those near market or in development, and its limitations, how you will improve on this and your freedom to operate
- the nature of the outputs you expect from the project and how these will help you to target the need, challenge or opportunity identified
- the current level of readiness, how it is likely to change over the life of the project and how it is likely to lead to project success
- how the project will make you more competitive and lead to commercial success
- the impact national and global factors have had on businesses or sectors that are a focus of your project

You must submit one appendix. It can include diagrams and charts to help support your answer. It must be a PDF, up to two A4 pages long and no larger than 10MB in size. The font must be legible at 100% zoom.

Question 4. Assessor guidance and scoring

Scores 17-20

There is a compelling business motivation for the project and the approach addresses the need, challenge or opportunity identified.
The project is significantly innovative either commercially or technically and will make a substantial contribution to the field.
There is a clear understanding of the nearest state-of-the-art available and solid evidence is presented to substantiate the level of innovation and freedom to operate.
Evidence is presented to show how the innovation and project outputs will differentiate from those of competitors.
There is a clear description of the current and proposed change in readiness over the life cycle of the loan utilising technology, manufacturing or commercial readiness scales, or appropriate equivalent.
Any wider factors influencing this opportunity are identified.
The applicant has clearly demonstrated how the project will build on and continue previous relevant innovation activity.

Scores 13-16

There is a good motivation for the project.
There is a good awareness of the nearest state-of-the-art and wider factors influencing the opportunity.
The project addresses the need or challenge and the main innovations and risks are highlighted.
Evidence shows that the proposed development is innovative and that the applicant has the freedom to operate.
It is demonstrated how the project outputs will differentiate from those of competitors.
There is an outline of the current and proposed change in readiness over the life cycle of the loan utilising technology, manufacturing or commercial readiness scales, or appropriate equivalent.
The applicant has shown how the project will build on and continue previous relevant innovation activity.

Scores 9-12

The project motivation is good but a lack of understanding of the nearest state-of- the-art or wider factors influencing this opportunity.
The project may address the need or challenge identified and the innovations are highlighted.
The level of innovation or freedom to operate is not strongly backed up with evidence.
The main risks are not fully identified.
Innovation focus is plausible and shows a link to improvements in competitiveness or productivity.
There is limited consideration of their current and proposed change in readiness over the life cycle of the loan utilising technology, manufacturing or commercial readiness scales, or appropriate equivalent.
The applicant has outlined previous innovation activity but not clearly shown how the project relates to it.

Scores 5-8

Project motivation is poorly defined or not relevant to the applicant or team. References to the current state-of-the-art are not offered or are not relevant.
The approach is poorly defined with an unconvincing link to the need or challenge identified.
Improvement in competitiveness or productivity is not very convincing.
The changes in readiness over the life cycle of the loan utilising technology, manufacturing or commercial readiness scales, or appropriate equivalent are poorly addressed.

There is limited information about the applicant's previous innovation activity and how the project relates to it.

Scores 1-4

There is little or no business drive to the project.
References to the current state-of- the-art are not offered or are not relevant.
The approach is not well defined or is inconsistent with the need or challenge identified.
There is no identification of how this will improve competitiveness. Changes in readiness have not been considered.
The project does not relate to previous innovation activity.

Question 5. Market opportunity

What does the market you are targeting look like and how are you going to grow your business as a result of the project?

Describe or explain:

- the markets (domestic, international or both) you will be targeting in the project and their size, structure and dynamics
- the target markets' main supply or value chains and business models, and any barriers to entry that exist
- your current position in the markets and supply or value chains outlined, and whether you will be extending or establishing your market position
- your target customers or end users, and the value to them, for example, why they would use or buy your product
- your route to market

- how you are going to profit from the innovation, including increased revenues or cost reduction

Question 5. Assessor guidance and scoring

Scores 17-20

The target market size, drivers and dynamics are fully quantified and evidenced. Where the market is new or unexplored, possible routes are identified based on precedents.
Target customers are identified along with the value proposition to them.
The routes to market and how profit, productivity and growth will increase are clearly identified and evidenced.
Relevant secondary markets are substantiated and described in brief.
The wider positive impacts of the project are understood and any possible negative impacts are fully mitigated where appropriate.

Scores 13-16

There is a good awareness of the target market's drivers and dynamics.
The market size is quantified with some evidence.
For a new market, a good attempt is made at describing the possible routes to market and estimating the market size.
Target customers are identified along with the value proposition to them.
The routes to market and how profit, productivity and growth will increase is outlined with some evidence.
Relevant secondary markets are described showing good awareness.
There is good awareness of how the project may impact others.
Any possible negative impacts are partially mitigated where appropriate.

Scores 9-12

The general market size and dynamics are understood but the addressable market is poorly quantified.
Target customer types are described but the value proposition to them is less clear. There is some information about how profit, productivity or growth increases may be achieved at some point.
Secondary markets are mentioned but little information is offered.
There is basic awareness of how the project could impact some others.

Little mitigation is offered where there may be negative impacts.

Scores 5-8

Some information about the general market is offered but the extent of the addressable market for the project is not described.
There is some information about the target customer types but there is little about the value proposition or how profit, productivity or growth will be affected.
Secondary markets are barely mentioned.
The applicant provides some information about possible impacts but significant gaps remain.

Scores 1-4

The market is poorly defined or is irrelevant to the motivations of the project.
The applicant provides little or no information about the target customers.
There is no information about how the project might impact others.

Question 6. Project delivery

Who is in the project team, what are their roles and how will you manage the project effectively?

Describe or explain:

- the roles, skills and experience of all members of the project team that are relevant to the approach you will be taking, including any roles you will need to recruit for
- the resources, equipment and facilities needed for the project and how you will access them
- the details of any vital external parties, including subcontractors, who you will need to work with to successfully carry out the project
- the resources available to take the project to market after the development period, including commercial resources
- the main work packages of the project, indicating the total cost of each one
- your approach to project management, identifying any major tools and mechanisms you will use to get a successful and innovative project outcome
- the management reporting lines

- your project plan in enough detail to identify any links or dependencies between work packages or milestones

You must submit two appendices to support your response to this question.

You must submit an appendix containing a short summary of the main people working on the project to support your answer. It must be a PDF up to four A4 pages long and no larger than 10MB in size. The font must be legible at 100% zoom.

You must submit a project plan or Gantt chart as an appendix to support your answer. It must be a PDF, up to two A4 pages long and no larger than 10MB in size. The font must be legible at 100% zoom.

Question 6. Assessor guidance and scoring

Scores 17-20

The applicant is well placed to carry out the project and exploit the results.
There is a clear plan to obtain all the resources, equipment and facilities they will need.
The project work packages are outlined with the research category and total cost provided for each one.
The applicant has clearly and realistically stated how the project relates to each stage of the innovation loan and how it will be managed.
The approach to project management is described.
The plan is designed to meet the objectives of the project in a realistic and efficient way.
Any links or dependencies between work packages or milestones are identified.

Scores 13-16

The applicant’s project team makes sense given the approach described in Q3.
The applicant indicates how access will be obtained to all the resources, equipment and facilities they will need.
The project work packages are outlined with the research category and total cost provided for each one.
The applicant has stated how the project relates to each stage of the innovation loan and how it will be managed.
The approach to project management is stated.
The plan seems appropriate to the project objectives. Any links or dependencies between work packages or milestones are identified.

Scores 9-12

The applicant has most, but not all, of the required skills and experience required. The project work packages are outlined but there are some details missing.
The applicant has provided limited information on how the project relates to each stage of the innovation loan and how it will be managed.
The plan seems reasonable but not tailored to the objectives of the project.

Scores 5-8

There are significant gaps in the project team with little or no information about how these will be filled.
The plan has serious deficiencies or major missing aspects.
The plan has little chance of meeting the objectives of the project.
The applicant has not stated how the project relates to each stage of the innovation loan and how it will be managed.

Scores 1-4

The applicant will not be capable of either carrying out the project or exploiting the results.
The plan is totally unrealistic or fails to meet the objectives of the project.
There is no information on how the project relates to each stage of the innovation loan and how it will be managed.

Question 7. Project risks

What are the main risks for this project? Describe or explain:

- the main risks and uncertainties of the project, including the technical, commercial, managerial and environmental risks
- any project inputs that are critical to completion, such as resources, expertise, data sets
- any output likely to be subject to regulatory requirements, certification, ethical issues and so on, and how you will manage this
- what methods of future proofing you have considered against risks arising from possible national and global factors
- any project inputs that are critical to completion, such as resources, expertise, data sets

You must submit a risk register as an appendix to support your answer. It must be a PDF, up to two A4 pages long and no larger than 10MB in size. The font must be legible at 100% zoom.

Question 7. Assessor guidance and scoring

Scores 17-20

The key risks and uncertainties of the project are considered and mitigated.
Critical inputs to the project are identified.
Relevant constraints or conditions on the project outputs, for example, regulatory requirements, certification or ethical issues are identified.
The risk analysis is appropriate and professional.

Scores 13-16

The key risks and uncertainties of the project are considered with appropriate mitigations.
Relevant constraints or conditions on the project outputs are identified.

Scores 9-12

Most major risks have been identified but there are some gaps or the mitigation and management is insufficient to properly control the risks.

Scores 5-8

The risk analysis is poor or misses major areas of risk.

The mitigation and management is poor.

Scores 1-4

The risk analysis is superficial with minimal mitigation or management suggested

Question 8. Project costs and value for money

How much will the project cost and how does it represent value for money for your business and the taxpayer?

Describe or explain:

- the total eligible project costs and the loan you are requesting in relation to the goals of the project and your business
- how this project represents value for money for you and the taxpayer
- how it compares to what you would spend your money on otherwise
- any subcontractor costs and why they are critical to the project
- why you need this public sector support
- what advantages this public sector funding would offer your project, for example, appeal to investors, reduced risk or a faster route to market
- if any, what other support you have been offered or have received for this project
- what other routes of investment you have already approached and why a loan would be a better fit for your business

Question 8. Assessor guidance and scoring

Scores 17-20
The project costs are entirely appropriate and represent excellent value for money compared to alternative approaches outlined, including doing nothing.
The use of subcontractors is justified and reasonable for the proposed project.
The applicant has a clear idea of how they will finance the full costs of the project at each stage.
There is a compelling case for the positive difference funding will make.
Alternative sources of support are described with an explanation of why they are discounted or used in conjunction with the innovation loan.
There is strong evidence provided that suitable alternative sources of commercial funding have been sought with partial or no success.

Scores 13-16
The project costs are appropriate and should be sufficient to successfully complete the project.
The use of subcontractors seems reasonable.
The applicant has outlined how they will finance the full costs of the project at each stage.
The project represents good value for money compared to alternative outlined approaches, including doing nothing.

The arguments for public funding are good and justified.
There is limited evidence provided that suitable alternative sources of commercial funding have been sought.

Scores 9-12
The project costs seem ok but the justifications are not clear.
The applicant has described poorly how they will finance the full costs of the project at each stage.
Little information is offered about alternative approaches and the value for money this project offers.
The public funding arguments are acceptable but the difference made by the loan will be modest.
There is little evidence that alternative commercial sources of finance have been considered.

Scores 5-8
The project costs seem too high or too low given the proposed project.
Inappropriate use is being made of subcontractors.
The applicant has not considered how they will finance the full costs of the project at each stage.
The funding arguments are poor or not sufficiently justified.
There is no evidence that alternative commercial sources of finance have been considered.

Scores 1-4
The costs are not appropriate or justified or do not cover the full extent of the project. The balance between applicant and subcontractors is not justified.
There is no justification for public funding and no reason why the applicant should not fund the work.