

Women In Innovation Awards 2025/26 Assessors Guidance

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 10 (1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest).

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, and the work location for your project if different to the registered addresses.

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

Question 2. Minimal Financial Assistance declaration (not scored)

You must download the declaration template. You must complete this, declaring any funding received under Minimal Financial Assistance (previously referred to as Special Drawing Rights) or de minimis awards (from any source of public funding) in the applicable period.

You must complete all the fields on your form before uploading.

You must write 'declaration attached' in the question text box.

You must upload the completed declaration as an appendix. It must be a PDF no larger than 10MB. It must be legible at 100% zoom.

You must keep all documentation relating to Minimal Financial Assistance (previously referred to as Special Drawing Rights) and other de minimis awards for a period of six years. You must be prepared to release it to any public funding body which requests it.

Question 3. 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 4. 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 which 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 5. 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 subcontractors, service providers, visiting researchers or other collaborators are based in.

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

Question 6. Export licence (not scored)

You must indicate whether an export control license is required for this project under the [academic export control guidance](#).

You must select one option:

- Yes
- No

Question 7. Trusted Research and Innovation (not scored)

You must explain if your proposed project work relates to UKRI's Trusted Research and Innovation (TR&I) 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

If your proposed work does not relate to UKRI's TR&I Principles, your answer must confirm this.

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.

Question 8. Suitability checker (not scored)

Have you completed the [suitability checker](#)?

You must select one option:

- Yes

- No

If No, ensure you complete it before starting an application.

Question 9. Industrial strategy priority sector (not scored)

Which Industrial Strategy priority sector, is the idea being applied to?

You must select one option:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Digital and technologies
- Life Sciences

Question 10. Business founder or co-founder (not scored)

Are you a woman founder or co-founder of your business?

You must select one option:

- Yes
- No

If you select No to this question you will be made ineligible.

Question 11. Role model commitment (not scored)

Can you commit to a minimum of four hours of role modelling activity over the duration of the award?

- Yes
- No

If you select No to this question you will be made ineligible.

Question 12. The problem

What is the problem that your idea looks to address?

Discuss the potential scale of the problem. How widespread is the issue? What are the consequences if it remains unaddressed? Highlight any research or evidence that supports your response.

Question 12: Assessor Guidance and scoring

Score 1 - 2: Unclear

- problem is unclear, vague, or not described
- no discussion of scale or consequences
- no evidence or research cited
- response lacks relevance or coherence

Score 3 - 4: Basic

- problem is mentioned but lacks depth or specificity
- limited discussion of scale or consequences
- limited or anecdotal evidence provided
- limited connection between problem and proposed idea

Score 5 - 6: Adequate

- problem is described
- some discussion of scale and consequences
- some credible evidence or reference is included
- shows some understanding of the issue's significance

Score 7 - 8: Well developed

- problem is clearly described and contextually relevant
- scale and consequences are clearly outlined
- multiple sources of credible evidence support the response
- clear alignment between problem and proposed solution

Score 9 - 10: Exceptional

- problem is described in detail with strategic relevance
- strong compelling outline of scale and consequences
- broad, credible evidence and research is cited
- demonstrates deep understanding and urgency of the issue

Question 13. The benefit (not scored)

Who benefits most from addressing this problem?

You must select one option:

- those who use the product or service, such as through lower costs or better outcomes
- wider society or individuals who don't use the product or service, such as by improving productivity or reducing access inequalities
- the environment, such as reducing emissions or waste
- government or public services, such as through cost savings or improved efficiency
- your industry or sector, such as through innovation leadership or competitive advantage
- do not know
- prefer not to say

Question 14. Benefit detail

Outline the benefits for who you have selected in question 13, The benefit. In your explanation, include specific metrics or indicators that you intend to use to measure these benefits.

Do not consider market sizing or customer characteristics. These will be covered in more detail in later sections of the application.

Question 14: Assessor Guidance and scoring

Score 1 - 2: Unclear

- benefits are unclear, vague, or missing
- no metrics or indicators provided
- poor connection between benefit and measurement

Score 3 - 4: Basic

- benefits are mentioned but limited detail or specificity
- metrics are general or implied, for example, better outcomes
- limited connection between benefit and measurement

Score 5 - 6: Adequate

- benefits are described and relevant in some detail
- some metrics or indicators are provided
- some explanation of how benefit will be measured, though lacking depth

Score 7 - 8: Well developed

- benefits are clearly described and contextually relevant
- multiple specific metrics or indicators included
- clear explanation of how benefit will be measured

Score 9 - 10: Exceptional

- benefits are detailed, strategic, and aligned with broader goals
- metrics are specific, quantifiable, and linked directly to the benefit
- includes baseline data, targets, or benchmarks
- demonstrates a robust plan for monitoring and evaluation

Question 15. Nature of the idea (not scored)

Which of the following, if any, best represents the nature of the idea?

You must select one:

- new product, service or business model
- improved product, service or business model
- do not know

Question 16. The idea

Provide a detailed description of your idea. This must refer to the problem you identified in question 12, The problem, and how this idea intends to address it.

Do not consider market sizing, project management or risks. These will be covered in more detail in later sections of the application.

Question 16: Assessor Guidance and scoring

Score 1 - 2: Unclear

- idea is unclear or poorly described and is not innovative
- no reference to the identified problem
- no explanation of how the idea addresses the problem

Score 3 - 4: Basic

- idea limited in detail or clarity and has little innovation
- limited or vague reference to the identified problem
- limited explanation of how the idea addresses the problem

Score 5 - 6: Adequate

- idea is described with some clarity and relevance but has some innovation
- some reference to the identified problem
- some explanation of how the idea addresses the problem

Score 7 - 8: Well developed

- idea is clearly described, relevant and is innovative
- clear connection to the identified problem
- clear explanation of how the idea addresses the problem

Score 9 - 10: Exceptional

- idea is compelling, well described and highly innovative
- direct and detailed reference to the identified problem
- thorough, logical explanation of how the idea addresses the problem

Question 17. Design

How will you ensure that your idea is designed with care and attention to its use, and is developed inclusively? Discuss user needs, experience, what they value and what testing you will carry out.

You could also consider any unintended negative impacts and how they can be avoided.

Question 17: Assessor Guidance and scoring

Score 1 - 2: Unclear

- no clear consideration of user needs or experience
- no mention of inclusive design and testing

Score 3 - 4: Basic

- limited awareness of user needs or experience
- limited or generic mention of inclusive design and testing
- unintended impacts briefly acknowledged but not addressed
- some consideration of unintended negative impacts and how to address them

Score 5 - 6: Adequate

- user needs and experience are described with some relevance
- some evidence of inclusive design and testing
- some consideration of unintended negative impacts and how to address them, to ensuring diverse user needs are embedded in testing
- unintended impacts identified with mitigation strategies

Score 7 - 8: Well developed

- clear understanding of user needs, values, and experience
- clear understanding of the practicalities of implementing inclusive design for the idea
- clear route to ensuring diverse user needs are embedded in testing
- unintended impacts identified with mitigation strategies

Score 9 - 10: Exceptional

- deep understanding of diverse user needs, values and experience
- strong commitment to inclusivity throughout with clear evidence of the practicalities of implementing inclusive design
- strong commitment to ensuring diverse user needs are embedded in testing
- proactive identification and mitigation of unintended negative impacts

Question 18. Customers (not scored)

Which of the following is your main customer?

- individuals or consumers
- businesses
- charities or non-governmental organisations (NGOs)
- government or public sector
- do not know

Question 19. Customer detail

What are the key characteristics or needs of your main customer?

Do not consider market sizing, this will be covered in more detail in a later section of the application.

Question 19: Assessor Guidance and scoring

Score 1 - 2: Unclear

- no evidence of understanding characteristics or needs of main customer

Score 3 - 4: Basic

- limited evidence of understanding characteristics or needs of main customer
- characteristics or needs are generic

Score 5 - 6: Adequate

- some evidence of understanding characteristics or needs of main customer
- some connection to how these needs inform the idea

Score 7 - 8: Well developed

- clear evidence of understanding characteristics or needs of main customer
- evidence of research or engagement with customer groups
- clear connection to how these needs inform the idea

Score 9 - 10: Exceptional

- strong evidence of understanding characteristics or needs of main customer
- evidence drawn from extensive customer engagement and broader research
- strong connection to how these needs inform the idea

Question 20. Market size

Estimate the realistic market opportunity for your idea.

Provide an evidence based assessment through:

1. The Total Addressable Market (TAM): This is the total market demand for a product or service. It's the maximum revenue opportunity available if 100% market share was achieved.
2. The Serviceable Obtainable Market (SOM): The portion of the addressable market that can realistically be captured by your idea. It factors in constraints like competition, geography, pricing, and how easily you can go to market.

Question 20: Assessor Guidance and scoring

Score 1 - 2: Unclear

- no clear market opportunity described
- TAM and SOM are missing or speculative
- no evidence or rationale provided

Score 3 - 4: Basic

- limited description of market opportunity
- TAM and SOM are estimated with weak justification
- evidence is weak

Score 5 - 6: Adequate

- market opportunity is described with some relevance
- TAM and SOM are estimated with some justification
- some supporting data or sources referenced

Score 7 - 8: Well developed

- clear and realistic market opportunity outlined
- TAM and SOM are clearly defined and supported by credible data
- evidence based approach with consideration of market constraints

Score 9 - 10: Exceptional

- market opportunity is thoroughly researched and compelling
- TAM and SOM are calculated and justified with strong robust data
- demonstrates deep understanding of market dynamics, competition, and route to market feasibility

Question 21. Milestones

What are the key milestones that will you be aiming to achieve through this award?

You must focus on what the support (financial and non-financial) from this award will enable you to do.

You must ensure these milestones fit within your anticipated timeline for project delivery.

You do not need to provide a detailed project plan at this stage.

Question 21: Assessor Guidance and scoring

Score 1 - 2: Unclear

- milestones are unclear or irrelevant to the idea
- no link to the support provided by the award
- no consideration of feasibility

Score 3 - 4: Basic

- milestones provided are limited in relevance to the idea
- limited connection to the award's support
- limited consideration of feasibility

Score 5 - 6: Adequate

- milestones described have some relevance to the idea
- some link to financial or non-financial support from the award
- some consideration of feasibility

Score 7 - 8: Well developed

- milestones are clearly relevant to the idea
- clear connection to the financial and non-financial support of the award and how it enables progress
- milestones are feasible and show ambition

Score 9–10: Exceptional

- milestones have strong relevance to the idea
- strong alignment with both financial and non-financial support from the award
- milestones are feasible, ambitious and show strong alignment with the aims of this competition

Question 22. Delivery

What steps will you be taking to ensure successful delivery? Discuss your overall approach to deliver what you set out to achieve through the financial and non-financial support to time and cost.

Question 22: Assessor Guidance and scoring

Score 1 - 2: Unclear

- no clear approach for delivery
- no consideration of time or cost management

Score 3 - 4: Basic

- approach for delivery is limited
- limited consideration of time or cost management

Score 5 - 6: Adequate

- there is some clarity to the approach for delivery
- some consideration of time and cost constraints
- some connection between approach and milestone delivery

Score 7 - 8: Well developed

- clear approach for delivery
- clear consideration to managing time and cost
- clear connection between approach and milestone delivery

Score 9 - 10: Exceptional

- detailed proactive approach to ensure delivery
- strong alignment with time and cost management
- strong connection between approach and milestone delivery
- demonstrates robust planning, monitoring, and contingency strategy

Question 23. Risks

Recognising and acknowledging potential risks is a vital part of the planning process and will not negatively impact your application.

Consider these risk types and outline the three main risks which are applicable to your idea. Include the reasons why you have chosen them and how you will mitigate impact:

- technical risks; risks related to product development, functionality of performance
- commercial or financial risks; such as those related to market adoption, competition or profitability
- environmental or social risks; risks related to environmental impact, regulations, social acceptance
- regulatory risks; risks related to obtaining necessary regulatory approvals
- project management risks; risks related to timelines, team or resources

Question 23: Assessor Guidance and scoring

Score 1 - 2: Unclear

- risks are unclear or irrelevant
- no rationale for risk selection
- no mitigation strategies provided

Score 3 - 4: Basic

- risks are identified but with limited description
- limited explanation of why they were chosen
- mitigation strategies are generic or underdeveloped

Score 5 - 6: Adequate

- relevant risks are identified with some description
- some rationale for selection is provided
- mitigation strategies are outlined but may lack depth or specificity

Score 7 - 8: Well developed

- risks are clearly defined and relevant to the project
- clear rationale for selection
- mitigation strategies are clear, practical and tailored to each risk

Score 9 - 10: Exceptional

- risks are well described and show strong understanding of project challenges
- strong evidence based rationale for selection
- mitigation strategies are detailed, proactive, and demonstrate robust planning

Question 24. Video pitch

Why have you chosen to apply for this award and what is your vision for the future of your business?

When you enter Pitchtape to record your video, you will be asked to respond to these three question prompts:

- showcase your idea
- outline your business growth ambitions
- explain why this award is right for you

Ensure you address the question prompts in your video.

To be eligible, you must submit a Pitchtape video in response to this question.

Video requirements:

Maximum length: 3 minutes, if your video is longer than this only the first 3 minutes will be assessed.

Create and submit using Pitchtape via this application

Check the link works before submitting

Important:

For information about how to record and submit a video using Pitchtape visit - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XvEauVJoKv0>.

We will not be assessing the production quality of your video. Pitchtape will automatically create a link in response to the video question, if your link doesn't work or is hosted on a platform other than Pitchtape, your application will be made ineligible. Should you experience any technical issues while creating your video, email support@iuk.ukri.org at least 15 working days before the deadline. Your video will be stored securely and viewed only by Innovate UK staff and assessors. If confidentiality limits what you can share, you must note this in your written response.

Question 24: Assessor Guidance and scoring

Score 1 - 2: Unclear

- no showcasing of their idea
- no clear growth ambition described
- no explanation of why applicant and their business are well suited to the award

Score 3 - 4: Basic

- showcasing of idea provided limited additional value
- limited growth ambition described
- limited explanation of why applicant and their business are well suited to the award

Score 5 - 6: Adequate

- showcasing of idea provided some additional value

- some growth ambition described
- some explanation of why applicant and their business are well suited to the award

Score 7 - 8: Well developed

- showcasing of idea provided clear additional value
- clear and realistic growth ambition described
- clear explanation of why applicant and their business are well suited to the award

Score 9 - 10: Exceptional

- showcasing of idea provided strong additional value
- strong, compelling and realistic growth ambition described
- strong explanation of why applicant and their business are well suited to the award