Biomedical Catalyst Accelerator Provider Pool Expression of Interest

Applicant Briefing

Date: **6 February 2026**

The webinar will start at 11:00

- 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

Yvette Willis

Competition Manager, Healthy Living and Agriculture

Hannah Thomas

Innovation Lead, Health Technologies

UKRI Innovate UK

Agenda

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

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Key Dates

Timeline	Date
Competition Opens	**2 February 2026**
Submission Deadline	**4 March 2026** at **11am**
Applicants informed	**7 April 2026** by **5pm**

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Competition Summary & Scope

Innovate UK

Summary

Innovate UK, part of UK Research and Innovation, is seeking expressions of interest to establish an approved provider pool to support delivery of the Biomedical Catalyst Accelerator Programme.

You may be invited to apply for wider health and life sciences accelerator programmes if successful.

The aim of this competition is to identify experienced providers with a proven track record of designing and delivering end-to-end accelerator programmes for innovative UK registered, micro, small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).

The programmes need to be aligned to Biomedical Catalyst or wider health and life sciences accelerator themes.

Your application must demonstrate evidence of delivery of previous high quality, structured accelerator programmes and outcomes.

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Summary

Early-stage accelerator strand
Applicants must demonstrate experience of delivering programmes supporting early-stage innovative human health SMEs; including ideation, business model development, customer discovery and early commercial validation.

Late-stage accelerator strand
Applicants must demonstrate experience of delivering programmes supporting late-stage innovative human health SMEs; including scale-up, investment readiness, regulatory strategy, market access or commercial growth.

You may apply for one or both strands of the competition, but each application must:

- be tailored to the type of accelerator outlined above
- demonstrate relevant experience aligned to the strand you apply for

Summary

In applying to this competition, you are entering into a competitive process.

This competition is for the selection of a provider pool, so we may not be able to approve all the providers who apply.

We would expect successful providers to be available to apply into closed competitions over the next 3 years to deliver themed accelerators.

Being in the approved supplier pool does not guarantee you will be eligible for and invited to apply into a closed competition or deliver an accelerator.

Scope

To be in scope for this competition, providers must:

- have delivered end-to-end, structured, high-quality accelerator programmes to innovative SMEs.
- be able to provide tailored support to the needs of SMEs working across a wide range of biomedical and healthcare R&D themes.
- support 10-15 participants per programme with total costs of up to £500,000.
- be available to apply into a closed competition over the next 3 years.

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Scope

Your application must describe:

- the accelerator you will deliver (aligned to the strand you are applying for).
- your approach to the programme design and delivery (format, intensity, duration).
- how you will ensure high-quality delivery (governance, quality assurance, continuous improvement).
- how you will monitor, evaluate and report delivery outputs and outcomes to Innovate UK.
- how your support will be tailored to the specific R&D focuses of the SME's when each theme is announced.
- how delivery can be mobilised efficiently when called upon and how you will work collaboratively with Innovate UK and other delivery partners, where required.

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Providers who will not be eligible

We are not approving providers:

- who do not have a proven track record of delivering structured accelerator programmes for innovative SMES end-to-end (design, set up, recruitment, selection, delivery and evaluation).
- who do not have evidence of measurable impact from their previous accelerator programmes.
- whose support is not tailored to biomedical and healthcare R&D-focused SMEs.
- whose delivery would result in double funding from Innovate UK or UKRI or if they are already funded by Innovate UK or UKRI for the provision of similar business support or innovation delivery activities.
- whose projects would be are classed as State aid under the Windsor Framework or a subsidy under the Subsidy Control Act 2022.
- with undertakings which gain a selective economic or commercial advantage from the funding.

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Eligibility criteria

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Eligibility Criteria – Your Application

Your application must:

- be from a single organisation: consortia are not permitted
- be able to deliver a Biomedical Catalyst Accelerator Programme if selected by Innovate UK
- operate at arm's length from Innovate UK and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) in the delivery of accelerators and innovation programmes
- demonstrate a proven track record of designing and delivering an end to end, structured accelerator programme for innovative micro, small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs)
- provide evidence of previous end to end programme delivery, including scale, duration and measurable outcomes
- have the capacity and capability to deliver support services when called upon over the lifetime of the approved provider pool
- carry out delivery activities primarily in the UK
- intend to support UK registered innovative SMEs

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Eligibility Criteria – Lead Organisation

To lead a project:

- Your organisation must be a UK registered business of any size, an academic institution, a not for profit, charity, research and technology organisation (RTO) or a public sector organisation.
- You must not act in any way to gain selective commercial or economic advantage from the outputs of this project.

More information on the different types of organisation can be found in our Funding rules.

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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. An example of acceptable reason for the use of an overseas subcontractor in this competition would be an internationalisation module of the accelerator programme, and you were directly connecting the cohort to a particular geography.

All subcontractor costs must be justified and appropriate to the total project costs.

Eligibility Criteria – Number of applications

Number of applications

A business of any size, academic institution, research and technology organisation (RTO), charity, not for profit or public sector organisation can only lead on one application per strand but may apply for **both** strands with tailored applications.

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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 not 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 • and is materially different from the application submitted before • and fits with the scope of this competition

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Innovation Funding Service (IFS)

How to apply

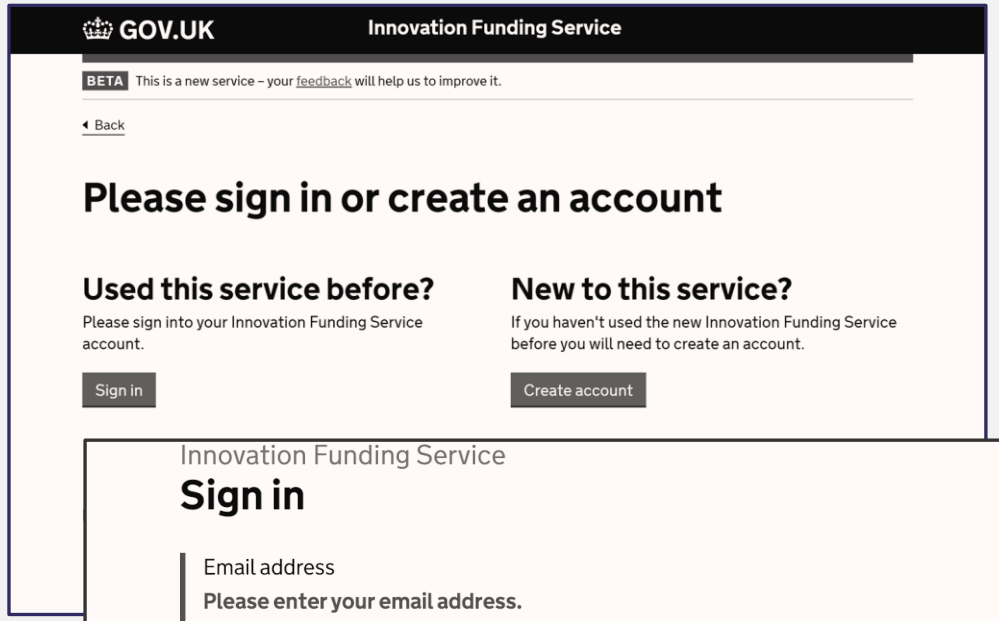
The lead applicant must create an account:

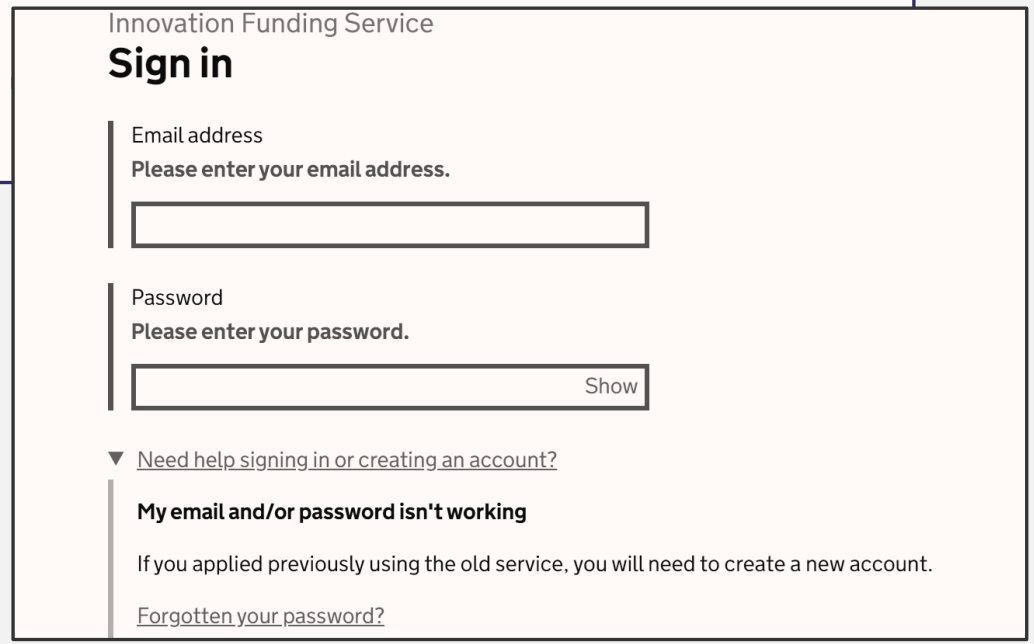
UK registered businesses

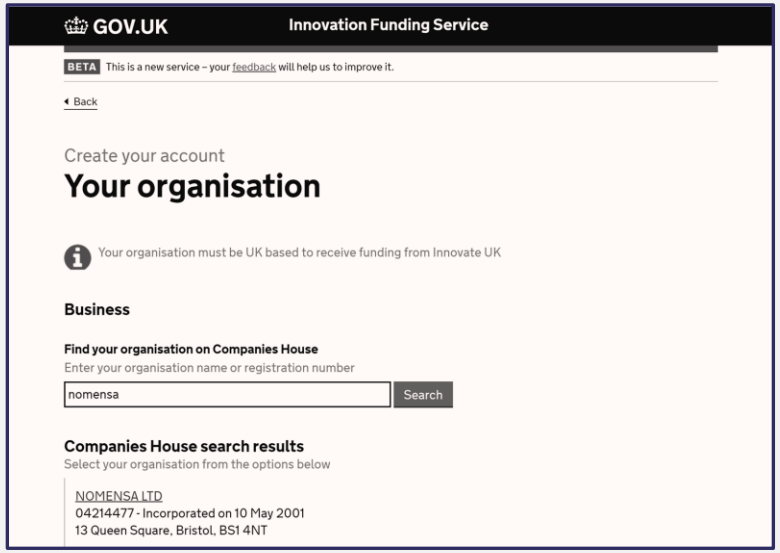
Use Companies House lookup using your company number. This facilitates our checks later if you are successful.

Research organisations, academics and universities

To avoid being listed as a business and to ensure you receive the correct funding, enter your information manually on IFS







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Application Questions

Application Form		Word Count	Appendix
Question 1	Applicant location (not scored)	400 words	No
Question 2	Animal testing (not scored)	Multiple choice	No
Question 3	Permits and licences (not scored)	Multiple choice	No
Question 4	International Collaboration (not scored)	400 words	No
Question 5	Export licence (not scored)	Multiple choice	
Question 6	Trusted Research and Innovation (not scored)	400 words	No
Question 7	Programme management and implementation	400 words	Yes – optional, 4 pages
Question 8	Project team and subcontractors	400 words	Yes – optional, 4 pages
Question 9	Recruitment and application assessment process	400 words	Yes – optional, 2 pages
Question 10	Risks	400 words	Yes – optional, 2 pages
Question 11	Costs and value for money	400 words	No
Question 12	Evaluation of the accelerator	400 words	Yes – optional, 2 pages

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Detailed guidance available on IFS

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.

Q4 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 international project co-leads, project partners, visiting researchers, or other collaborators are based in. You must also include details of any subcontractors or service providers.

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

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UK Strategic Export Controls - overview

UK strategic export controls - GOV.UK

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).

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Q6 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

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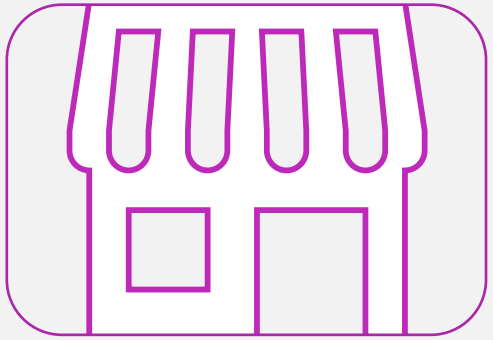
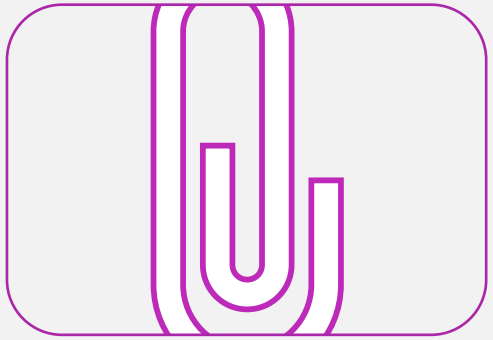
Your Project Cost Categories

View our Application Finances Instructional Video

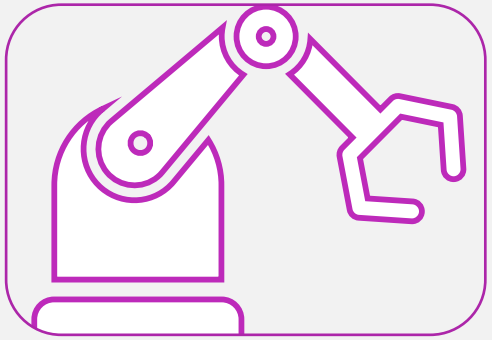
Labour



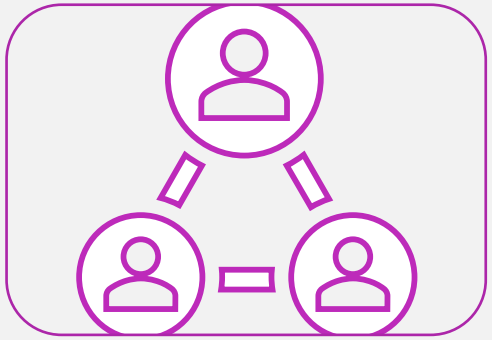
Overheads



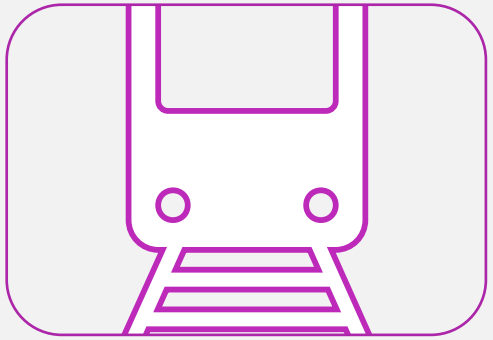
Materials



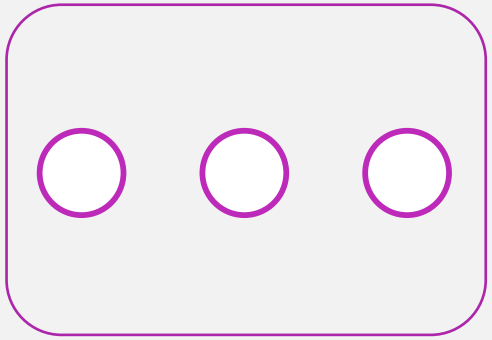
Capital Usage



Subcontractors



Travel & Subsistence



Other

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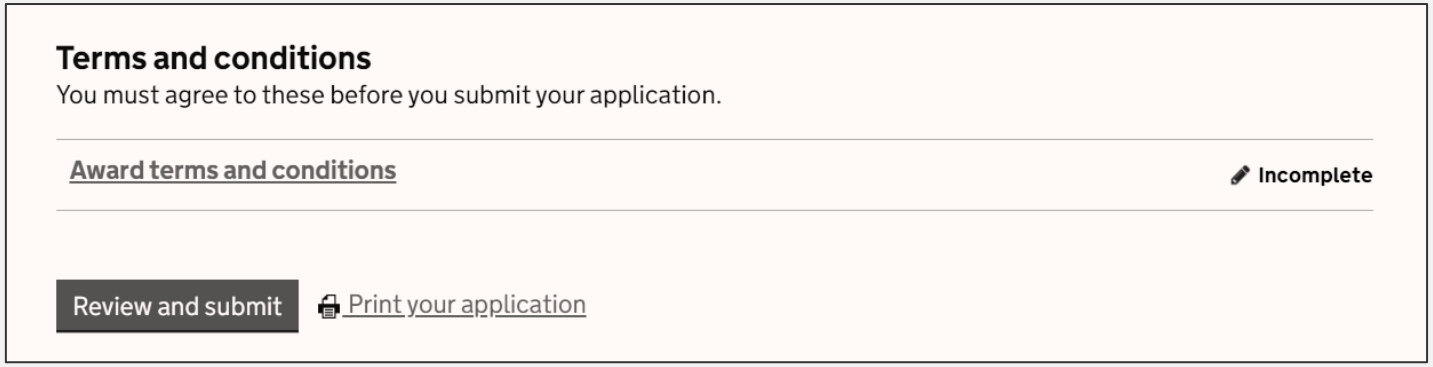
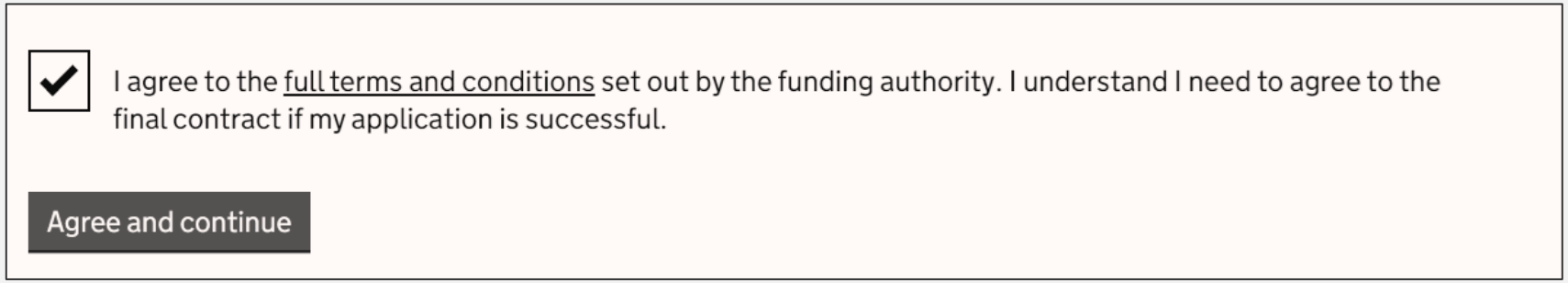
Terms and Conditions

Before you can submit your application, **all** organisations in an application 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.





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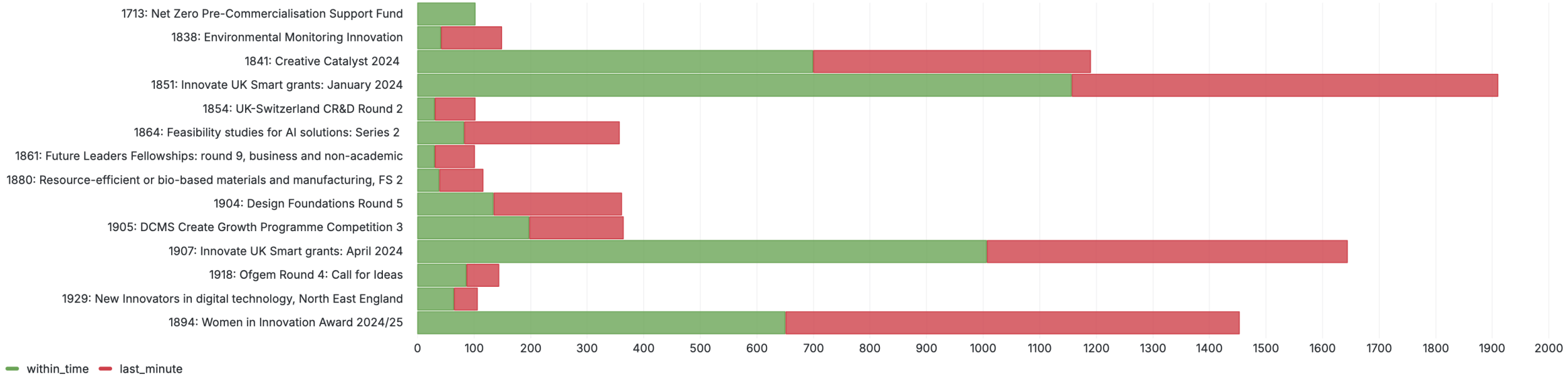
Submitting your application

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.



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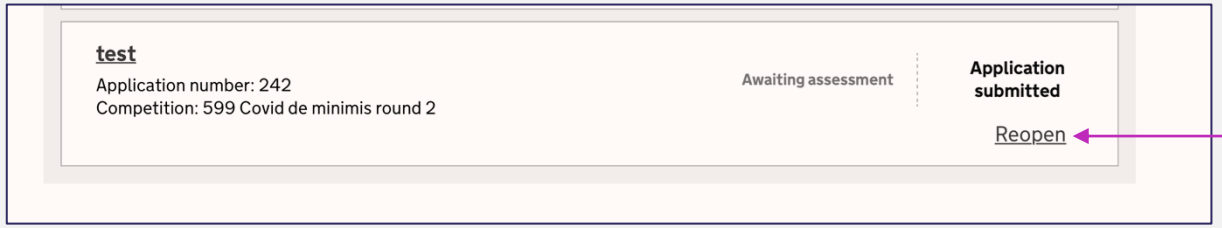
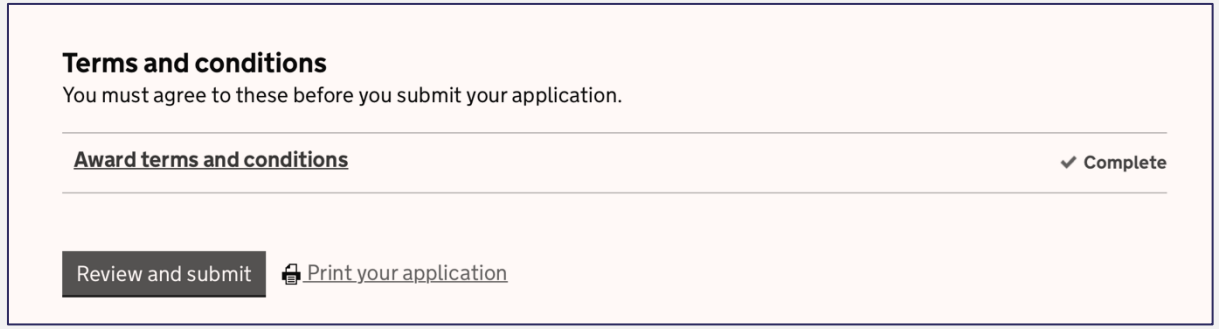
Editing a submitted application



Reopen by clicking here



Remember to press ‘Submit application’

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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

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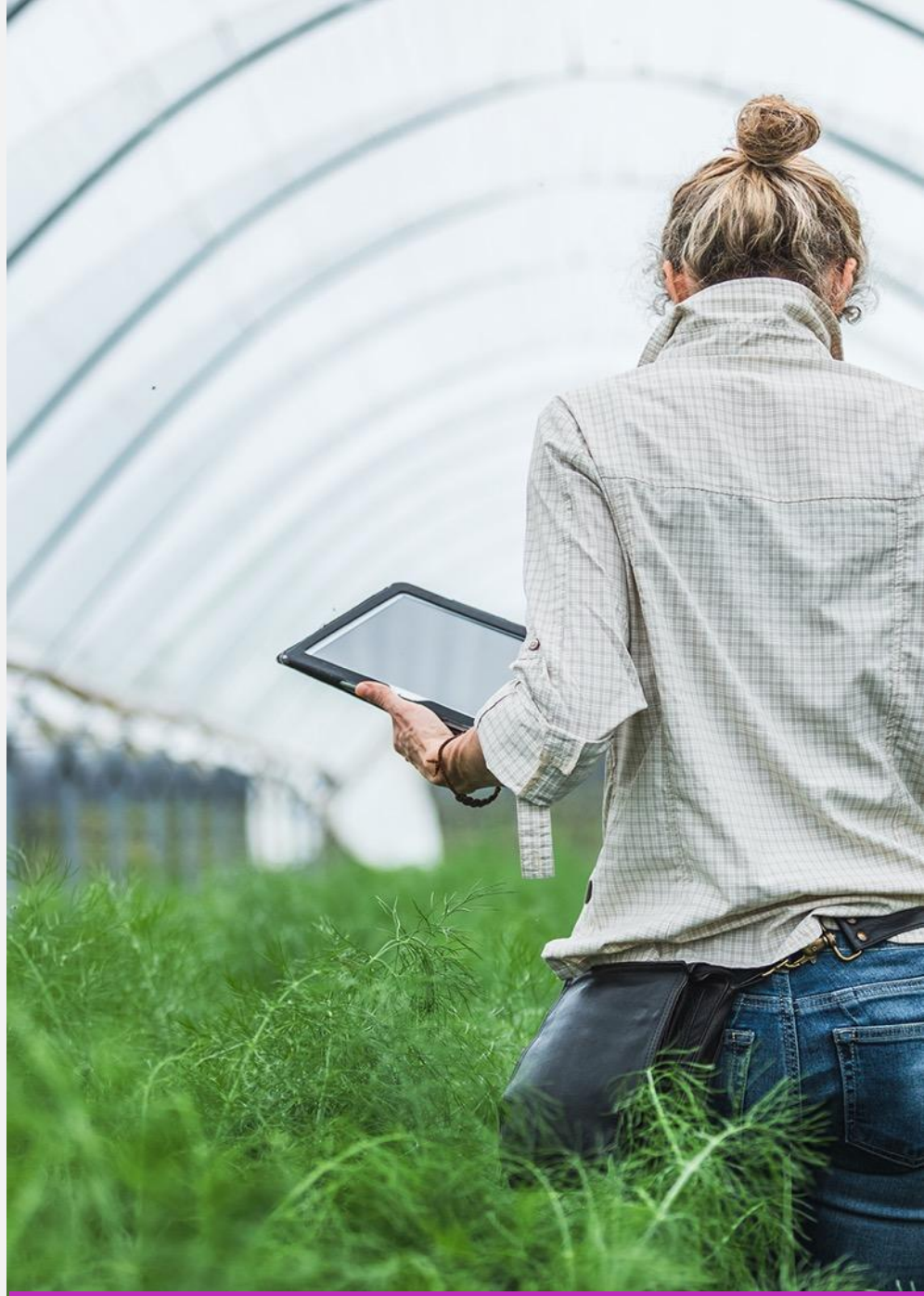
Funding Rules



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You are unable to receive future 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**

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Other Innovate UK projects

If you have an outstanding final claim or Independent Accountant Report (IAR) on a live Innovate UK project, you will not be eligible to apply to this competition, as a lead or a partner organisation.

We will not award you any further funding if you:

- applied to a previous competition as the lead or sole company and were awarded funding by Innovate UK, but did not make a substantial effort to exploit that award
- applied to a previous competition as the lead or sole company and failed to comply with grant terms and conditions.

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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.

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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).

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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.

Undertakings in difficulty
In the unusual circumstance of an award having to be made under the EU GBER regulation (State aid), the applicant must pass **'undertaking in difficulty' checks as defined by GBER (2014)**.

Guidance on Article 10 of the Windsor Framework.

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No Subsidy

This competition has been designed to provide funding that is not classed by Innovate UK as a subsidy.

Your eligibility to be given an award on a ‘No Subsidy’ basis will be determined by Innovate UK after you have submitted your application.

You should still seek independent legal advice on what this means for you, before applying.

Further information about the Subsidy Control Act 2022 requirements can be found within the **Subsidy Control Act 2022 (legislation.gov.uk)**

It is the responsibility of the lead organisation to make sure all collaborators in the project remain compliant with the ‘No Subsidy’ status they are awarded.

It is important to note that it is the activity that an organisation is engaged in as part of the project and not its intentions, that define whether any support provided could be considered a subsidy.

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Assessment

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Assessment

[YouTube Playlist]

1

How do our assessors assess?

Innovate UK • 8.1K views • 2 years ago

2

How are successful applications selected for funding?

Innovate UK • 17K views • 2 years ago

3

What steps are there before a project starts?

Innovate UK • 7.7K views • 2 years ago

4

How are successful projects monitored?

Innovate UK • 4.1K views • 2 years ago

5

How successful applicants receive their funding.

Innovate UK • 4.6K views • 2 years ago

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Additional Support

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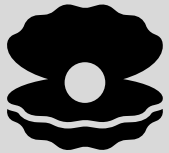
Innovate UK Business Growth

…understands that innovation-focused businesses face obstacles to growth beyond those facing typical entrepreneurial companies. Common stumbling blocks include:

Inherent risks

Managing technical risks e.g. new science, longer time to revenue, investor caution, regulatory approval, negotiating with partners and defending intellectual property



Inaccessible resources

Knowing where to find and how to access the right innovation resources and opportunities in a fragmented and confusing landscape

Incomplete skillsets

Having the right combination of business and product development expertise to achieve important milestones

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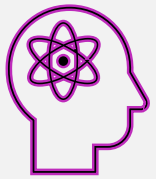
Innovate UK Business Growth's high-quality advisory support helps innovation-focused businesses in all UK locations and sectors to overcome these challenges and seize opportunities.



It offers clients a comprehensive spectrum of innovation and commercial expertise from a dedicated specialist located nearby

It offers a single access point to the most significant regional, national and international innovation resources

The 1:1 support is flexible, tailored in focus and timescale to the individual needs of innovative businesses

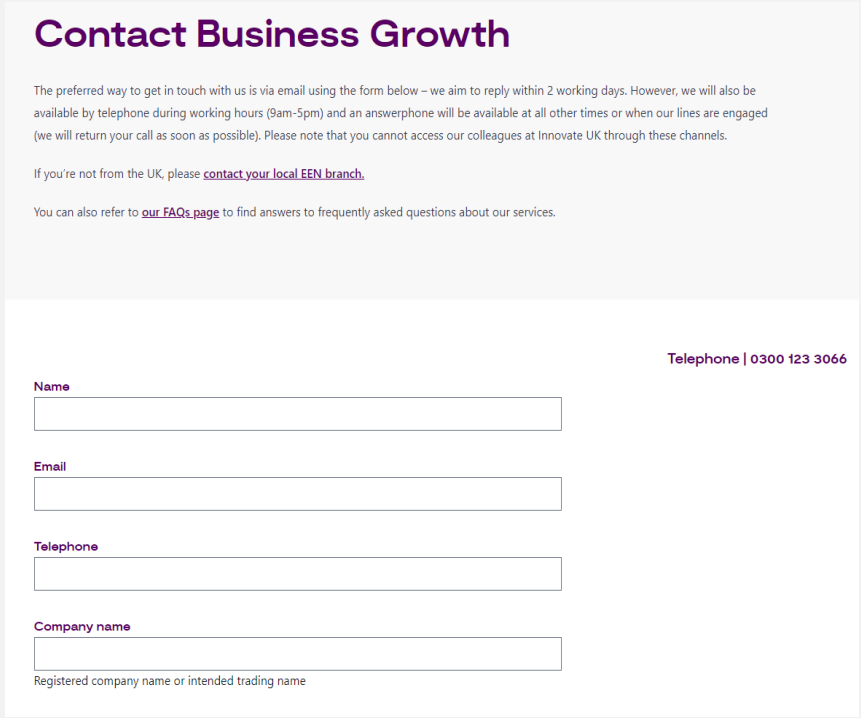
UKRI Innovate UK

Contact Us

Whether you need help to set a strategic direction or with progressing your innovation, financing your growth or unlocking the potential of international partnerships.

visit our website:
www.iukbg.ukri.org

or call us on:
0300 123 3066



Note: The service is offered to all Innovate UK competition winners but any suitable ambitious innovation-focused businesses with under 250 employees can be supported

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Cyber Action Toolkit

The NSCS has created a free Cyber Action Toolkit that gives clear bite-sized actions to protect small businesses, their money and reputation from cyber crime' The NSCS has created a free Cyber Action Toolkit that gives clear bite-sized actions to protect small businesses, their money and reputation from cyber crime

Search "NCSC cyber toolkit" or click here: https://cybertoolkit.service.ncsc.gov.uk/

Innovate UK

Useful Information

- UKRI's General Guidance
- Innovate UK Business Connect's Good Application Guide
- Who we fund
- Collaboration Agreement Guidance: Lambert Toolkit
- 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.

UKRI Innovate UK

Q&A

Innovate UK

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

Innovate UK Business Growth
www.iukbg.ukri.org

UKRI Innovate UK

Innovate UK

Thank You

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