



£20M FUNDING FOR INNOVATIONS ADDRESSING SOCIETAL NEEDS

The UK Government has released £20 million of grant funding under the Innovation Funding Scheme (Innovate UK) for projects that address societal or industrial needs emerging as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The aim is to help boost the UK’s “resilience to the long-term impact of the coronavirus outbreak and similar situations in the future”.

Funding of up to £50,000 will be available to technology and research-focused businesses proposing solutions in areas such as: community support services; couriers and delivery; entertainment; financial services; food manufacturing and processes; hospitality; remote working; retail; sport and recreation and; transport.

Projects could include new ways of working and living, for instance:

- New technology allowing retailers to better respond to sudden spikes in consumer demand and improve deliveries across the UK
- New services for families to connect with and remotely monitor their elderly or vulnerable relatives, giving people peace of mind that their loved ones are receiving the services they require (food deliveries, doctor’s appointments and bill payment etc.)
- Educational tools which seamlessly integrate the classroom with the kitchen table, allowing teachers to remotely set dynamic tasks, support vulnerable children and ensure no child is left behind.



ELIGIBILITY

The Government funding will be made as a “de minimis grant”. This means that any applicant who applies will need to declare any and all de minimis awards, from any source of public funding, during the current and previous two fiscal years. In order to be eligible for the funding, your project must:

- Have total eligible costs of between £25,000 and £50,000
- Be able to start by 1 June 2020 (at the latest)
- Be no longer than 6 months in duration

In order to lead a project, your organisation or business must:

- Be a UK registered business of any size
- Carry out its project work in the UK
- Intend to deliver the proposed outcomes for UK domestic or global benefit

Subcontractors are allowed to be a part of the funding, with the UK Government expecting subcontractor costs to be justified and appropriate to the total eligible project costs.

Sole traders are not eligible for this funding.

FUNDING

Each organisation can apply for up to £50,000 (within the de minimis limits). An organisation or business can claim 100 percent of their projects costs, up to the maximum of £50,000. This funding will be paid in advance of the project start date.



BUSINESS PROPOSAL

The government has provided the following advice on what an application must demonstrate in order to apply for the funding:

- A clearly innovative and ambitious idea, which would realistically and significantly meet a societal need that has emerged, or increased, due to the COVID-19 pandemic - or the need of an industry that has been severely impacted and/or permanently disrupted
- The capacity and capability to deliver the project successfully and on time during the working restrictions of COVID-19
- The ability to start your project no later than June 2020
- Value for money

PROJECTS THAT WILL NOT BE FUNDED

The Government has advised that they will not fund proposals that:

- Cannot be undertaken within the working restrictions of COVID-19
- Do not evidence the potential for significant and positive economic and/or societal impact, or value for money
- Are re-submissions of previous Innovate UK applications
- Are focused on aquaculture and fisheries, road freight transport or the production of agricultural products (due to de minimis restrictions)
- Would directly duplicate other UK Government activities already underway addressing the current COVID-19 healthcare situation (e.g. increasing the supply of ventilators and vaccines)
- Do not address how potentially negative outcomes (e.g. on the environment) would be considered

APPLICATIONS

Funding applications opened on 1 April and close at 12pm on 15 April 2020. Applicants will be notified of the outcome on 27 April 2020.



To find out more about anything covered in the article, or to discuss the potential impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the commercial sector, please contact will foulkes or another member of Thrings' Commercial team.



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