

A4I, Round 10 Stage 1 Q&A

These are the questions answered via message so not viewable on the recording.

Q. Does the product or service need to be commercialised and available for sale?

A. In terms of product/service, they have to be on the market and with a customer, it cannot be a bench proto type etc.

However this does not need to be a commercial arrangement, so if you are trialling it with a customer without charge, that will still class as on the market.

Q. Does the business need to be based only in the UK? Or is it sufficient if the business carries out the work on their problem in the UK?

A. All work must be carried out in the UK by a UK registered business entity. The entity will be treated as part of the parent company if majority owned, when it comes to the share of match funding needed, or eligibility for the fully funded strand.

Q. Do you need to have revenues or can a pre-revenue business can apply?

A. Pre Revenue Buisnesses can apply, however do remember this is for existing products and services only, where work has already been undertaken to try and resolve the issue.

Q. Will failed Stage 2 projects from previous rounds need to apply to R10 from Stage 1 or they can go straight to Stage 2?

A. Resubmissions need to apply at stage 1 again - you will need to do a new video. The application may be seen by more partners than in a previus stage. If you were out of scope in the previous round you cannot resubmit as you will be out of scope again (unless something has changed).

Q. Can you provide us with an example or 2 of previous application problems proposed that were eligible and in-scope?

A. We cannot share previous applications as they are confidential to the applicant and will involve IP. However you can see example ideas that were completed in the case studies section - <https://www.a4i.info/case-studies/>

Q. What's the criteria that defines S/M/L companies for Strand 2 application?

A. This is determined by the number of employees, the annual turn over and money on the books. Please see guidance here - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fcdo-small-to-medium-sized-enterprise-sme-action-plan/small-to-medium-sized-enterprise-sme-action-plan#what-is-an-sme>

Q. Can the applicants have support to fill the application from who they think can support them to solve the problem.

A. Not at Stage 1 as at this point you do not know who can help you as it's a currently unsolved problem. At Stage 2 though, the partner(s) will wish to work with you on the application.

Q. If you were to enhance a product that you already had on the market, so that it could fit into a new market, would this still be in scope? For example, if your product was manual and you needed to make it automated to fit into a new market?

A. Yes generally this is a good use of A4i - provided it is clear how the enhanced product is related to the existing one - it has to be truly related and not a new product which is unrecognisable from the existing one! But enhancement to improve the spec for example which would potentially increase competitiveness in new markets is fine for A4i scope. Tell us what is common and what is being enhanced and what is the problem to be solved in that enhancement.

Q. Re MFA in strand 2 is the amount the value of the partner project cost and not including the grant to the company?

A. In Strand 2 the partners costs go against the companies MFA limit. The companies costs do not, as the company is match funding so it is not considered state aid.

Q. Would a business entity which qualifies as an SME but is part of a parent company which doesn't qualify still be eligible for funding?

A. If the SME is majority owned by the parent company, then the parent company size will be included with the applicant to determine their size. So a UK SME might be considered a large business if the parent company employees or revenue take all organisations over the thresholds.

Q. Are we required to speak to the A4i partners prior to the application or will they be selected for us?

A. No, you don't contact or select partner organisations prior to brokerage, which follows after the close of stage one application. You may have an idea who will likely be able to help but you may not know all who could help, so let the brokerage provide the invites to talk from partners.

Q. When is it defined if what I need is a mini project?

A. This is what you find out in the brokerage meetings. Mini projects last less than 3 months, have total costs under £50K (and are fully funded), so if partners think the work can be done within those bounds, it can be a Mini project.