Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award:

Build

We hope these Frequently Asked Questions will be helpful to potential applicants for the Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award: Build (strand 2).

If you have a query which is not covered below, or if any of the answers provided are unclear or if you need more information, please contact Innovate UK Customer Support Services. You can reach them by email at support@iuk.ukri.org or by calling the competition helpline on 0300 321 4357. Our phone lines are open from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays). We also have an automated virtual assistant on hand to answer frequently asked questions about Innovate UK, this service is available 24 hours a day, every day.

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Background

One of the greatest assets we have in the UK is the incredible diverse talent available. However, this diversity is not currently reflected in the UK innovation sector. For the UK
to thrive as an innovation nation, we must unlock the power of innovation talent and skills in every part of the UK and throughout society.

The Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award is a two strand pilot competition with the aim to empower today’s untapped innovators and businesses to increase investment in diverse talent across the UK. This competition will aim to level the playing field and unlock potential for innovation by supporting and funding innovators from groups that are currently underrepresented and/or overlooked in innovation.

The focus of the Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award is to attract innovators with different backgrounds and experiences. We will be looking for a diverse group of innovators that with our help, can turn their great ideas into successful businesses. The competition will be open to a range of innovators, those who are just beginning their career, through to those expanding their business.

This competition is split into two strands:

- **Begin** – a grant amount of £5,000 plus a living allowance
- **Build** – a grant amount of £50,000 (this strand)

Innovate UK wants to support untapped talent from anywhere in the UK. We are looking to find people with exciting, breakthrough innovative businesses or ideas driving positive economic, environmental, and societal change.

We particularly encourage women and young people to apply to the Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award, building on the success of the Women in Innovation and Young Innovator programmes. In addition, we want to attract and support underrepresented innovators from a variety of backgrounds or experiences. This also includes intersectionality, recognising the way multiple characteristics interconnect and can worsen inequities.

For the purpose of this competition, Innovate UK considers the following groups of people as underrepresented in the innovation ecosystem:

- disabled, including and not limited to mental health conditions, learning disabilities, neurodiversity and physical disabilities
- ethnic minority groups
- LGBTQIA+
- non-binary and all marginalised genders

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This is a pilot competition and who Innovate UK considers as underrepresented is based on Innovate UK and ecosystem evidence. The underrepresented groups will be regularly reviewed, and where necessary updated.

Note: you can identify with one or more of the underrepresented groups to be eligible; if you are aged 31-59 and you identify with another of the listed underrepresented groups of people, you are eligible for the Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award.

Eligibility

Q. Who can apply to the Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award Build competition?

A. This strand of the competition is open to founders, co-founders, or senior decision makers within a UK registered micro, small or medium (SME) business which has been active for at least 12 months by the competition closing date. This award is focused on an individual rather than a business. Every Build award holder will receive a grant of £50,000. Your project must start on 1 December 2023 and last for 12 months. Your business must be based in the UK, and you must do all your project work in the UK.

Applicants must identify as sharing a characteristic that is currently considered by Innovate UK as underrepresented in the innovation ecosystem.

You can only apply for one strand. It is your responsibility to ensure you submit your application to the correct strand for your project. You will not be able to transfer your application and it will not be sent for assessment if it is out of scope. If you submit more than one eligible application, only the first submission will be sent for assessment.
Q. What does Innovate UK mean by ‘underrepresented in Innovation’?

What is the definition of ‘underrepresented in innovation’ for this competition?

A. Innovate UK wants to support untapped talent from anywhere in the UK. We are looking to find people with exciting, breakthrough innovative businesses or ideas driving positive economic, environmental, and societal change.

We particularly encourage women and young people to apply to the Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award, building on the success of the Women in Innovation and Young Innovator programmes. In addition, we want to attract and support underrepresented innovators from a variety of backgrounds or experiences. This also includes intersectionality, recognising the way multiple characteristics interconnect and can worsen inequities.

For the purpose of this competition, Innovate UK considers the following groups of people as underrepresented in the innovation ecosystem:

- disabled, including and not limited to mental health conditions, learning disabilities, neurodiversity and physical disabilities
- ethnic minority groups, including white minority groups
- LGBTQIA+
- non-binary and all marginalised genders
- people with primary caring responsibilities
- people from low socioeconomic backgrounds
- people from non-traditional educational routes into innovation
- women
- younger (aged 18 to 30) and older (aged 60+) people

This is a pilot competition and who Innovate UK considers as underrepresented is based on Innovate UK and ecosystem evidence. The underrepresented groups will be regularly reviewed, and where necessary updated.

Innovate UK is unable to advise on your eligibility regarding the above list; you must self-identify.

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Note: you can identify with one or more of the underrepresented groups to be eligible; if you are aged 31-59 and you identify with another of the listed underrepresented groups of people, you are eligible for the Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award.

**Q. Will you use the data I share in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) survey to check that I have a characteristic that Innovate UK considers as underrepresented? Will my EDI survey be used in the funding decision process?**

A. No. The EDI survey will not form any part of the competition or decision making process. Your answers will be treated in the strictest confidence and will only be used to monitor the diversity of applicants.

Innovate UK will use the personal data you give us to:

- identify any under-represented groups, investigate the reasons for this and take appropriate and effective steps to improve representation
- publish aggregated and anonymised data as part of our commitment to transparency and supporting access and inclusion

We'll store your data securely and handle it in line with UK data protection legislation and good practice, including restricting access to identifiable information. You can let us know at any time that your preferences have changed with respect to how we handle and store your data. If you would like to know more, including how to exercise your data protection rights, please see our [privacy notice](#).

**Q If I’m not eligible for this competition, what other opportunities are there for me?**

A. There is support available to those that are ineligible who want to develop their innovative idea. To view other opportunities, visit the [Innovation Hub](#) and the [Innovation Funding Service](#). You can also contact [Innovate UK](#), [Innovate UK KTN](#) or [Innovate UK EDGE](#) directly, who can then advise on available support.

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Q. I'm aware that Innovate UK has been running the Women in Innovation Programme since 2016, is the Build strand of the Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award replacing the Women in innovation programme?

A. We are building on the legacy and success of the Women in Innovation and Young Innovators programmes. These programmes have laid the foundations for our work on equality, diversity, and inclusion and they have enabled us to build communities of changemakers, driving real impact in solving some of our biggest challenges.

The Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award will open the door to a wider range of underrepresented innovators with great ideas. This initiative is going to be bigger, more flexible and accessible, giving our communities of innovators more options to better suit their needs. We are widening the door to invite even more ambitious entrepreneurs with great ideas to engage with us at key stages on their business journey.

This new award will increase our commitment and will provide opportunities for many more women innovators with brilliant ideas to succeed.

Q. My friend or co-founder and I are developing this business idea together, does that make me ineligible for this award?

A. No. The Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award: Build competition is open to sole applicants only. The awards are for individuals, but this does not prevent you from working on the project with others. You will need to decide who is going to be the sole applicant and take part in the programme if successful. If it is unclear who the sole applicant is within your submission, you may be made ineligible, and your application will not be sent for assessment.

More than one innovator working within the same organisation can apply, however if you are both successful in the same competition you will need to decide who will take the award as we will not support both applications from the same business. It is important that you consider the additional added value of what this will mean if your co-founder has already been successful in a competition.

Note: You will not be able to change the lead applicant at any point once you have submitted your application and the competition has closed. If you are successful, you
will not be able to change the recipient of the award and it may result in your funding being revoked if you are unable to complete the 12 month programme.

Q. Is there a minimum time commitment expected of the lead applicant?

A. There is no minimum time commitment in the competition specification. However, applicants must demonstrate that they can fulfil the aims of the competition. This is a major award, and we would expect applicants to devote sufficient time to deliver the activities set out in their applications.

As part of the support package, you will be provided a Monitoring Service Provider who you must meet with on a quarterly basis (once every 3 months) and an Innovation and Growth Specialist.

Part of the Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award will involve you committing to attending Cohort Development Sessions; there will be 2 sessions through the duration of your project. You will also need to commit at least 5 days to role modelling within the 12 months of the award as stipulated in the competition brief.

Q. Given the NI protocol, will Northern Ireland applications be eligible?

A. Yes. We welcome and encourage applications from Northern Ireland as well as all nations and regions of the UK. Grant funding in this competition is awarded as Minimal Financial assistance (MFA) and De minimis where applicable. This allows public bodies to award up to £315,000 to an enterprise in a 3 year rolling financial period. If you are unsure about your obligations under the Subsidy Control Act 2022, you should take independent legal advice. We cannot advise on individual eligibility or your legal obligations.

Q. What is the (time) commitment required for the grant?

A. Your project must:

- start on 1 December 2023
• end on 30 November 2024
• last 12 months
• have a total grant funding request of £50,000

We expect you to:

• provide at least 5 days over the duration of the award to be a role model to inspire others
• attend two Cohort Development Sessions

Q. Am I eligible to apply if I have received an Innovate UK grant?

A. Yes. Although you cannot have received other Innovate UK funding for the same project prior to applying, you are eligible to apply for the Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award Build competition with a different project; we do not allow duplication of cost or grant.

You are not eligible to apply if you have previously received a Women in Innovation, Young Innovators Next Steps (Follow on Fund) award.

Q. I am a previous Women in Innovation awardee. Can I apply for additional funding through the Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award competition for further development of the same project?

A. No. The Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award Build competition currently does not offer a scheme for previous Women in Innovation awardees to apply for continuation funds for the same project. The award is for an individual, rather than a business and we intend to support new projects within this competition. If your previous Women in Innovation project requires additional funding, we encourage you to seek alternative sources of funding. To view other opportunities, visit the Innovation Hub and the Innovation Funding Service.

Q. I am a previous Young Innovator awardee. Can I apply for additional funding through the Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award Build competition for further development of the same project?

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A. Yes. If you are a recipient of the Young Innovator Awards you are eligible to apply as long as you have not also had a Young Innovator Next Steps (Follow on Fund) award. Innovate UK will not duplicate grant costs so your project/innovation/technology must have moved on significantly from the Young Innovator submission.

Q. Can I apply if I have previously received De minimis or Minimal Financial Assistance (MFA) funding?
A. Yes. As long as you have not exceeded the £315,000 allowance you are allowed under De minimis or MFA rules within the current 3 year period. You must declare any previous funding received under De minimis and MFA through the declaration form provided at application stage.

Q. How can I check if previous grants I have received fall under De minimis or Minimal Financial Assistance rules?
A. You must check with the Public Authority that awarded your previous grants to confirm whether the grant awarded to you was classed as De minimis or MFA.

If you have received previous funding from Innovate UK, this information will be provided in your Grant Offer Letter.

Q. Am I able to apply for other Innovate UK grants if I am awarded the Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award funding?
A. We advise you to check the eligibility criteria of each competition to ensure you are eligible. It is important to note that you cannot receive funding for the same project twice.

Q. We are writing a Smart Grant application for our innovation. Are we able to also submit an application for the same innovation via this competition?
A. You can submit an application to both competitions, however you cannot receive other Innovate UK funding for the same project. If you are successful for more than one grant with the same project, you will be required to select which award you would like to proceed with. We advise you to check the eligibility criteria and application process of each competition to ensure you are eligible and that your application is suitable.

Q. I am already a recipient of an Innovate UK grant, can I still apply?

A. As long as you are not a Women in Innovation or Young Innovators Next Steps (Follow on Fund) holder, you can apply with a new project. Before applying, it is important to consider if you would be able to deliver the project and commit for the full 12 month duration whilst working on any other project you are currently receiving Innovate UK funding for. We would also encourage you to make sure you clearly state the added value of this award in your Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award Build application.

Note: You cannot receive Innovate UK funding for the same project you were initially successful with so you would need to apply with a new project. You will also need to check that you are not exceeding your MFA amount.

Q. How do you prove the business has existed for a year?

A. You will need to provide financial accounts including a business bank account in the name of your business with transactions for a period greater than a year from the competition closing date.

Your company does not need to have been registered on Companies House for a period of a year or more. If your company and business accounts have been dormant in the last year, then your company was not actively trading for the last year, and so would not be eligible.

Q. Why do you require companies to be active for more than a year?

A. We are not looking to fund business as usual or a brand-new start-up company, as this award is designed for an up-and-running company that is looking to make a step-change and would use the award to scale up and grow their innovative company or
looking to carry out an innovative project which would make the company a market leader.

The award is designed to help business innovators achieve their vision for their business and become a leader in their field.

If you do not have a business, or your business has been running for less than a year, you may be eligible for the Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award: Begin competition.

Q. Can I apply if my business has been registered for more than a year, but I am not yet trading?

A. You will need to provide financial accounts including a business bank account in the name of your business with transactions for a period greater than a year.

HMRC considers that your company or organisation has not yet become active or started trading if it has not yet engaged in any business activity (business activity means carrying on a trade or profession or buying and selling goods or services with a view to making a profit or surplus). If you are not engaging in business activity, you would not be eligible to apply.

Pre-revenue companies are eligible as long as you have been buying goods or services as part of your business for more than a year.

If your business has been running for less than a year, you may be eligible for the Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award: Begin competition.

Q. What does it mean to be a senior decision maker?

A. To lead a project you must be a founder, co-founder or senior decision maker within a UK registered micro or SME business. A senior decision maker would be an appropriate director, CEO, FD, COO, or someone formally nominated by the board of directors to sign on their behalf.

Q. Can I apply if I operate a charity?

A. Yes, but only if your charity has a registered business arm or business side, and this has been operating for a year or more. This would need to be registered as a company.
on Companies House. If your charity does not have a business operation, then you would not be eligible to apply.

Q. Are sole traders eligible to apply?
A. Yes, if all the other eligibility criteria are met, you have been active for a year, and you have a business account.

Q. Do you have to be a UK citizen to apply?
A. No, but you must be resident in the UK, carry out all project work in the UK, and intend to exploit the results of your work from or in the UK.

Q. On the application, we are asked to supply “Applicant location”. Are there any locations that are automatically not eligible?
A. Your organisation must be a UK registered micro, small or medium-sized enterprise. Organisations located outside the UK will not meet the eligibility criteria.

We will take a portfolio approach in our funding decision to ensure we have representation of businesses working across the UK; as a result, we reserve the right to revoke your award if your business location changes ahead of your start date.

Application

Q. I have not applied to Innovate UK before, is there any resource or support available for people that have not applied before?
A. Innovate UK has online guidance for applicants.

It is essential that all applicants watch the recording of the applicant briefing. In addition to this we are arranging a series of drop-in sessions.

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Innovate UK KTN has a wide network, deep sector expertise, and can connect you to people and organisations to help accelerate your ideas and project. Innovate UK KTN have guidance for completing and submitting a grant application.

Innovate UK EDGE focus on growing innovative businesses and ensuring that projects contribute to their growth and may also be able to offer advice.

If you have any specific questions to support your application, please contact Customer Support Services.

Q. Is there a deadline for applications?
A. The Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award: Build competition will close on 6 September 2023 at 11:00am precisely. Extensions to this deadline cannot and will not be granted under any circumstances, even in the situation where, let’s say you have technical issues 10mins before the application deadline.

Q. Where can I apply?
A. On the Innovate UK Innovation Funding Service. The deadline for the Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award: Build competition is 6 September 2023 at 11:00am.

Q. Will the production quality of the submitted video be judged in any way? E.g. storytelling, editing, etc?
A. No. The assessors will be scoring your videos (for Question 10) based on the content of your answer to all elements of the question, it is not scored on editing, background music, or story telling abilities.

You must use YouTube to record your video and then provide a link in your application (and the access password if required). It must be no longer than 3 minutes; if your video is over 3 minutes long, only the first 3 minutes will be used to assess your application.

If the assessors cannot view your video or it is hosted on a platform other than YouTube, the assessors will be unable to assess this question and your application will be ineligible. The video must remain available until 1 January 2024.

Requests for extensions due to problems uploading a video will not be accepted.

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If you cannot upload your video to YouTube, you must contact support@iuk.ukri.org at least 10 days before the competition closes for advice.

Your application will be ineligible if you submit your application without a video.

If you need additional support, we do provide reasonable adjustments for people who have a disability or a long-term condition and face barriers applying to us. Read more on how we are making our application process more accessible and inclusive for everyone.

You must contact us as early as possible in the application process. We recommend contacting us at least 15 working days before the competition closing date to ensure we can provide you with the most suitable support possible.

Q. Do I have to include any personal information in my application or video question?

A. No. There is no expectation to declare any personal information in your response. We encourage applicants to share as much or as little about your background / journey / experiences as you feel comfortable with. We understand that it can be uncomfortable to share personal details; applicants are not required to include special category or sensitive information in their application.

Q. What if I don’t want to be publicly linked to the Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award competition and its target groups?

A. We want to ensure that there are no barriers to any eligible applicant applying for this competition. It is important to note that you will never be asked to publicly disclose your association to the groups currently considered by Innovate UK as underrepresented in the innovation ecosystem at any stage of the competition process or award programme. If successful, you will have the opportunity to opt out of being featured in competition marketing.

Q. I am disabled. Is there any support for my application?

A. We welcome and encourage applications from people of all backgrounds and are committed to making our application process accessible to everyone. This includes
providing support, in the form of reasonable adjustments, for people who have a
disability or a long-term condition and face barriers applying to us. Read more on how
we are making our application process more accessible and inclusive for everyone.

You must contact us as early as possible in the application process. We recommend
contacting us at least 15 working days before the competition closing date to ensure we
can provide you with the most suitable support possible.

You can contact us by emailing support@iuk.ukri.org or calling 0300 321 4357. Our
phone lines are open from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays).

Q. What would you recommend focusing on in my application? What
do unsuccessful applicants typically miss or get wrong?

A. To fit the competition, your project must address a problem, be innovative, meet the
eligibility criteria, and have a realistic plan. Unsuccessful applicants typically leave the
application to the very last minute, don’t fill the forms in correctly, have lots of missing
information, forget to include their video link or forget to make the video link accessible,
don’t provide sufficient evidence or detail in the application, or don’t follow the
instructions.

We encourage you to submit your application well ahead of the deadline and to
proofread it several times before doing so. You might also consider having a colleague,
trusted friend, family member, or advisor take a look at it before submitting to ensure
that it is as complete, clear, and comprehensive as it can be.

Innovate UK KTN has a wide network, deep sector expertise, and can connect you to
people and organisations to help accelerate your ideas and project. Innovate UK KTN
have guidance for completing and submitting a grant application and Innovate UK
has online guidance for applicants.

Q. Can I apply with a business idea which I previously submitted to
last year’s Women in Innovation competition or any other funding
opportunity?

A. You can use a previously submitted application if you meet the eligibility criteria for
this competition and you did not receive a Women in Innovation Award previously, or
other Innovate UK funding for the same idea. Before doing so, please read through the additional details under the previous applications section of the application form.

If you received feedback on your previously submitted application, we do encourage you to take it into account before submitting the same idea for this competition. However, please note that it is most likely that different assessors would review your new application and therefore there is no guarantee your application will score higher even if all feedback is addressed.

Please note at Innovate UK you are only allowed to apply twice with the same application.

**Q. Is there a Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award helpline?**

**A.** If you need more information, you can contact Innovate UK directly for all competition enquiries via email at support@iuk.ukri.org or call the competition helpline on 0300 321 4357. Phone lines are open from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays).

**Q. Can I edit my application once submitted?**

**A.** Yes. You can reopen your application once submitted, up until the competition deadline. Please note that you must resubmit the application before the competition deadline.

**Assessment and Selection process:**

**Q. Who are we looking to fund?**

**A.** This pilot programme aims to level the playing field and unlock potential for innovation by supporting and funding innovators from communities that are currently underrepresented in innovation.
We want to support innovators who are at a critical stage with their business, where an award will enable them to take an important step forward. The funding should help them make a real difference to innovation in the UK, including in and beyond their sector or innovation area. All awardees should clearly explain how they will benefit from the full package of funding and support on offer and describe how this will add value to them and their business.

We are looking for innovators from diverse communities, who have the potential to be leaders and role models to inspire other innovators.

Q. How do you select the Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award holders from the many applications you receive?

A. We follow a very detailed and thorough process working with a team of experienced independent assessors. Every aspect of each application is carefully reviewed and evaluated against a common list of criteria and multiple assessors review the same application to ensure that the outcome is as consistent and fair as it can be.

We want to fund a variety of projects across geographical areas. We call this a portfolio approach. The portfolio approach is undertaken by Innovate UK after the independent scoring by assessors.

Innovate UK operates a minimum quality threshold, where anyone scoring below a set amount will not be considered for funding.

The assessors will not have access to your Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) survey information at any time. Your EDI survey will not be used in the decision making process. The EDI survey data will be used to measure the outcomes of the competition, not to determine application success on an individual level.

You can find more information about the standard assessment process in this outline video about how Innovate UK assessors assess.

Q. How many applications in total will be funded for this competition?

A. Innovate UK, part of UK Research and Innovation, is investing up to £6.2 million this year across the two strands of the Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award: Begin and Build. We aim to support 225 awards across the two strands.

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Innovate UK reserves the right to adjust the funding allocations between the two competition strands.

Q. Will there be an interview stage?
A. No. We will only have an external independent assessment stage.

Q. Many grants take in consideration applicants’ locations, are there any quotas when it comes to where we’re based in the UK?
A. No. There are no quotas. We are looking to fund a portfolio of business ideas. We will select a portfolio of award winners who are located throughout the UK.

Q. When will I know if I have been successful with my application?
A. You will be informed by Innovate UK of the outcome of your application on 6 October 2023. You will be able to access your feedback on the same date via the IFS system.

Award

Q. Can you tell me more about the support package that is offered alongside the grant?
A. The non-monetary package of support will be delivered by:

- Innovate UK KTN
- Innovate UK EDGE
- PR Agency

The expert advice available includes, but is not limited to:

- funding and finance options and how to access these, including introductions to investors and training on pitching
- media and communications, such as branding

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• intellectual property
• developing new business models
• evaluating market opportunities
• finding new partners
• growth and scale up
• developing international collaborations and accessing global markets
• business planning strategy

Access to relevant world-leading facilities and equipment will also be provided where this is appropriate. As part of your award, you will receive press and media support to become a leading role model in innovation.

Q. When are the Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award: Build projects expected to start?

A. Projects are required to start on 1 December 2023 and end on 30 November 2024 (12 month duration). You must confirm on your application form that you can start your project on 1 December 2023, or your application will be made ineligible.

Peer support and collaboration is a key element of the award, as is the expert advice from Innovate UK EDGE and Innovate UK KTN therefore the Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award has a set start and end point that all award holders must adhere to, and this should be reflected within your application.

Q. What is a role model? What does it mean to be a role model?

A. A role model is a person perceived by others as setting an example of best practice which, if replicated, can enable the achievement of goals. A role model is frequently associated with undertaking activities, including but not limited to, mentoring, coaching, presentations, advice, and guidance. In this case, a role model will help encourage and inspire others to enter a career in innovation and promote diversity and inclusion in innovation.

Q. Why am I being asked to take part in role modelling activities as part of the award?

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A. Greater representation from different backgrounds and experiences in business innovation has proven to have a positive economic and societal impact in the UK. However, to diversify businesses, we need to inspire and inform young people of the opportunities available to them through access to relatable role models, and hands-on experience.

Therefore, we are asking you to act as a relatable role model to inspire the next generation of innovators so that:

- talented entrepreneurs know about the opportunities
- businesses like yours have access to diverse talent in the future
- we co-create a more inclusive and representative innovation ecosystem that benefits everyone

This is building on the previous role modelling expectations from the Women in Innovation and Young Innovator competitions where our award holders inspired the next generation through support from Founders4Schools.

Q. What activities should I be thinking about to fulfil this role modelling commitment, and what support will be available?

A. Award holders will be asked to dedicate at least five days during the duration of their award to being a visible and relatable role model to inspire others into innovation.

Some examples of the activities you may complete are:

- passing on your knowledge, skills, and/or personal lived experiences through talks, panels, workshops, and media engagements
- supporting students, through careers talks, careers events and mentoring
- providing workplace experience to young people
- mentoring other innovators and entrepreneurs

Q. Will I be paid extra for role model days/activities?

A. No. The role model activities should be volunteered by the award holder.

Q. Am I able to use this grant to hire consultants or subcontractors?

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A. Subcontractors are allowed in this competition and must be selected through your normal procurement process. Subcontractors can be from anywhere in the UK.

If an overseas subcontractor is selected, you must make the case in your application as to why you could not use suppliers from the UK, including a detailed rationale, evidence of UK companies that have been approached and reasons why they were unable to do so. A cheaper cost is not deemed as a sufficient reason to use an overseas subcontractor.

We expect all subcontractor costs to be justified and appropriate to the total eligible project costs.

Q. What can the funding be used for?

A. The funding will be provided under Minimal Financial Assistance (MFA) rules or De minimis rules where applicable. You cannot use the award to match fund for other competitions as it is considered to be public funding and cannot be used to secure other forms of Subsidy or State aid. The award should help to strengthen your position to secure additional investment.

For additional information on de minimis funding you can visit:

https://www.ukri.org/councils/innovate-uk/guidance-for-applicants/general-guidance/funding-rules/#contents-list

We are not funding projects that:

- do not meet the competition eligibility or scope
- do not intend to use the full package of support on offer
- have a negative impact on the environment or society
- have a detrimental effect on equality, diversity, and inclusion
- do not involve any research and development or innovation, for example, the creation of information-only websites
- involve exports or imports
- involve primary production in fishery and aquaculture
- involve primary production in agriculture
- include activities relating to the purchase of road freight transport
- are not allowed under De minimis regulation restrictions
- are not allowed under Minimal Financial Assistance
• are dependent on export performance – for example giving an award to a baker on the condition that they export a certain quantity of bread to another country
• are dependent on domestic inputs usage – for example if we give an award to a baker on the condition that they use 50% UK flour in their product.

Under current restrictions, this funding opportunity will not fund any procurement, commercial, business development or supply chain activity with any Russian or Belarusian entity as lead, partner, or subcontractor. This includes any goods or services originating from a Russian or Belarusian source.

**Q. Is the £50,000 award 100% funded?**

A. Yes. We do not require match-funding because the funding is provided as Minimal Financial Assistance or De Minimis rules where applicable.

**Q. How will I receive the money?**

A. In total, every Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award Build holder will get £50,000. This will be divided over three claim periods:

- 70% (£35,000) in December 2023
- 20% (£10,000) at the mid-point, June 2024
- 10% (£5,000) in September 2024

The individual will receive the money into a business bank account. Therefore, you can only apply if you are a senior member of your organisation, for example, if you are the CEO or someone in a senior decision-making position.

Claims will need to be agreed with your Monitoring Service Provider and Innovation and Growth Specialist, who we will allocate to you.

You will need to provide evidence to your Monitoring Service Provider to show how your grant was spent over each claim period before your next claim can be submitted.

**Q. Are there any bank accounts Innovate UK will not accept?**
A. The bank account must be in the name of the business, from a UK high street bank, have a cheque and credit clearing facility and be regulated by the PRA. Online accounts are eligible as long as they meet these criteria.

Fintech accounts are not eligible; common examples include Tide, Revolut, Prepay Solutions.

Note: Starling and Metro have a quick account set up process.

Q. How can I learn more about and join the Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award community?

A. You can visit the Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award page. You can also:

- Sign up to our newsletter to keep up to date with upcoming funding opportunities, events, and news
- Catch up on the Briefing Event recording or slides
- Follow us on LinkedIn, Twitter or Instagram

Additional resources and support

Q. I am putting an application together for the Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award: Build competition, are there any other resources or support available?

A. Yes. The formal applicant briefing event can be found on the website; it is essential that all applicants watch the recording. The event outlines the scope and eligibility of the competition, offers advice on how to apply, as well as the chance for applicants to hear from inspiring innovators.

In addition to this we are arranging a series of drop-in sessions including specific workshops for grant writing and video support, and dedicated Q&A drop-in sessions.

The Q&A drop-in sessions for the Begin and Build strands are aimed at:

- supplementing the official Innovate UK guidance
- answering any questions, you might have regarding the application process

Innovate UK has online guidance for applicants.

bit.ly/unlocking-potential-award
Innovate UK KTN has a wide network, deep sector expertise, and can connect you to people and organisations to help accelerate your ideas and project. Innovate UK KTN have guidance for completing and submitting a grant application.

Innovate UK EDGE focus on growing innovative businesses and ensuring that projects contribute to their growth and may also be able to offer advice.

If you have any specific questions to support your application, please contact Customer Support Services.

Q. I don’t have much experience with Innovate UK grants; how should I get started?

A. It can be difficult to know where to start when preparing to apply for any grant. Spend time thinking about the project you want to submit, research Innovate UK (the funder), and check that you are eligible for the competition being advertised.

Each competition has its own eligibility criteria and scope. These must be met by the organisations and proposals being made, to be considered for and to be successful in being awarded, the support on offer. Innovate UK runs many different competitions, and each will have different eligibility and scope requirements. Applicants must refer to the competition brief for specific guidance.

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If you have any specific questions to support your application, please contact Customer Support Services.

Q. Is there an Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award helpline?

bit.ly/unlocking-potential-award
A. If you need more information, you can contact Innovate UK directly for all competition enquiries. Email them at support@iuk.ukri.org or call the competition helpline on 0300 321 4357. Our phone lines are open from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays).

Other Questions

Q. Is the Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award likely to be highly competitive? Is it worth my time to apply? I don’t know if this is the right time for my project. Should I apply anyway?

A. Generally, our funding rounds are highly competitive, we envisage high volumes of applications and predict that approximately 10% of applications will be successful for this competition. Please wait until your project is as strong as possible so you can make the best case for funding. Remember that if you’re unsuccessful you can only reapply with the same project twice.

Q. How many funding opportunities are there within the Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award competition and how do they differ in funding amounts?

A. We have 2 strands of funding opportunities within the Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award competitions:

- Begin strand: £5k grant and £10K living allowance
- Build strand: £50k

Q. Will there be another Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award competition, if yes when will it be?

A. We have not planned another round yet. We recommend you keep an eye on the Innovation Funding Service and sign up to the Innovate UK Unlocking Potential newsletter.

bit.ly/unlocking-potential-award
Q. Can a business outside of the UK submit an application to Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award competition?

A. No. Your organisation must be a UK registered micro, small or medium-sized enterprise.

Q. Can a lead applicant on an Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award application be a co-applicant on another application for a different competition?

A. This competition is for sole applicants only, however there may be other competitions that allow co-applicants (please check the eligibility for each competition on IFS before applying). Before applying to this competition, it is important to consider if you would be able to deliver the project and commit for the full 12 month duration whilst working on any other project you are currently receiving Innovate UK (or UKRI or other external) funding for. We would also encourage you to make sure you clearly state the added value of this award in your Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award Build application. We advise you to check the eligibility criteria of each competition to ensure you are eligible. You will also need to check that you are not exceeding your Minimal Financial Assistance (MFA) or De minimis limit of £315,000 in the 'applicable period'.

Note: You cannot receive Innovate UK funding for the same project you were initially successful with so you would need to apply with a new project.

Q. Does the lead applicant for Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award competition need to be based in the UK?

A. Yes. Your business must be based in the UK, and you must complete all project work in the UK.

Q. How many funding opportunities are there within the Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award competition and how do they differ?

A. We have 2 strands of funding opportunities within the Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award competition, the key differences are outlined below:

bit.ly/unlocking-potential-award
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Begin</th>
<th>Build</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ if you are ready to turn your idea into a business then this is the right opportunity for you</td>
<td>✓ if you are a founder, co-founder or senior decision maker within a UK registered micro or SME business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ if you have an innovative business idea within an existing early-stage business you are also welcome</td>
<td>✓ if your business has been active for at least 12 months by the closing date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ you must not have received any Innovate UK funding</td>
<td>✓ you may have received Innovate UK funding (exceptions are in the competition brief)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ £5,000 grant plus £10,000 living allowance making a total of £15,000</td>
<td>✓ every award holder in this strand will get £50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ you must provide at least four days of role modelling activities to inspire others</td>
<td>✓ you must provide at least five days of role modelling activities to inspire others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q. Can I apply to both Innovate UK Unlocking Potential Award strands (Begin & Build)?

A. No, you can only apply to one strand. It is your responsibility to ensure you submit your application to the correct strand for your project. You will not be able to transfer your application and it will not be sent for assessment if it is out of scope. If you submit more than one eligible application, only the first submission will be sent for assessment.

Q. Do I need to have a business bank account to apply? (Build)

A. Yes. You need to have a business bank account as Innovate UK are unable to deposit this grant funding into a personal account.

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