

Innovate UK Analysis for Innovators Round 12, Stage 1 briefing 13 November 2023, Q and A

Q: Does the scope of the programme cover just the "analysis" of the problem, or can it include solutions to the problem - based on the analysis?

A: The programme's goal is to provide you with the solution to solve the problem. Your business will then implement that solution.

Q: For the stage 2 funding that is for SMEs only (100% funding), are specialist individual consultants (who operate within their own companies) considered as sub-contractors? It may be that this is the only way to cost-effectively engage such skills...

A: If the specialist individual is a member of staff of the applicants and paid through payroll (PAYE or hourly as defined in the guidance to applicants) then they are allowable. There is NO way to sub contract in mini projects.

Q: How would you define "early stage"? Can you provide a TRL level?

A: The product, service or process must be on the market, that means being used by someone outside of your own organisation. They don't however need to be a paying customer and could be a partner testing it for you or trialling it, with a view to purchase when the problem is solved.

Q: If we are planning on product launch early next year, would we be better off applying to a subsequent round?

A: If you have it being trialled or tested with someone now/imminently then it should be OK. But if it's purely in house until then, yes please delay applying as it will be out of scope.

Q: Are issues relating to scaling manufacturing within scope?

A: If there is an issue in your product or the manufacturing process that you can't solve, which is stopping you from scaling up, then yes.

Q: Do IUK/KTN claim ownership of any IP arising from the project?

A: Entering IP stays with those parties. The outcome is owned by the company. The only exception to this is that if a partner develops a new measurement technique, it reserves the right to retain use of that method for use with other business as part of the national capability.

Detailed IP agreements are mandatory before projects start so it is all covered in detail.

Q: If you want to retake the video, does this overwrite the previous recording?

A: Yes

Q: How are the experts and partners selected?

A: The 9 partners are pre decided and they select their most relevant people to work on the projects.

Q: Does the process you are discussing need to be carried out in the UK, or if it ok if the R&D and business is based in UK only?

A: All project work must be carried out in the UK, by partners and companies.

Q: Can a university be involved and at what stage?

A: Applications are ONLY open to UK registered businesses. The only way for a University to be engaged is as a sub contract in a large project, or by being part of a partner organisation as detailed earlier.

Q: Can the company change the lead applicant and assign that role to another colleague at any stage due to unforeseen circumstances

A: Not easily no. We ask for one person as a point of contact due to the complexity of brokerage. In these cases the assigned person passes the invites over to colleagues and assists.

Q: Can you share other bits of video on the platform, e.g. a video of the process to illustrate?

A: No you cannot, the best way to do that is have the clip playing on a screen and record that on the chosen device.

Q: Is 100% of the analysis partner costs covered by IUK for both the mini project and larger project? In previous rounds I recall the business had to pay some of the analysis partner costs.

A: The system has been changed in recent years, now ALL partner costs are paid through the system using the companies MFA allowance limit, but the company themselves pay NO monies to the partner.

Q: So in the larger projects is the match funding to the whole project cost and not just the costs incurred to the business?

A: In Stage 2 large projects, the company needs to match fund THEIR costs only. MFA covers the partners costs.

Q: When do we need to find a partner?

A: The partner is identified for you, from the pool of 9 partner organisations. You meet every partner that thinks they can help you and hopefully agree in Stage 1 that you can write a proposal with one (or more) of them in Stage 2

Q How do you ensure confidentiality of company information in applications?

A: The Innovate UK platform (IFS) terms of use, outlines the level of confidentiality involved with applications, at Stage 1 you are not disclosing trade secrets, but mainly explaining your challenge.

If you get to brokerage, you can request an NDA be signed for meetings. And before projects start you sign an agreement with the partner(s) involved to agree IP rights. In 8 Rounds of finished projects, over 250 companies have completed circa 400 projects and no issues have ever occurred with confidentiality.

Q: Can a University department submit a proposal?

A: No, only a business can apply. Several projects have been from companies spun out from University teams, but it HAS to be a company applying.

Q: Can you help with finding out if a company has already spent all available de minimis aid allowance?

A: Unfortunately not, there is no central database to check. Please speak to you accountant, legal team, or records keeper as you should have a record of state aid received (MFA, de minimis etc).

Q: Will the proposals be reviewed by scientists?

A: The experts will be the best people the partner can identify to work with you, these may be scientists, engineers, mathematicians etc.

Q: Are there any case studies from funded projects from previous rounds?

A: Yes they are here - https://iuk.ktn-uk.org/knowledge-centre/casestudy/?_sft_areas=analysis-for-innovators

Q: Did I understand this right. The project (if successful) must take place between sept and Dec 2024? Or must it start between these dates?

A: Start must between 1st Set - 1st Dec 2024, with a maximum 6 month duration.