



RedKnight[®]
Grants & Funding Specialists

HOW TO WRITE AN INNOVATE UK APPLICATION

A STEP BY STEP GUIDE



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INTRODUCTION

In the UK, there is over £10 billion allocated for research and innovation funding each year. The UK's innovation agency, Innovate UK, runs regular competitions to decide which projects should receive funding. However, these competitions are complex and extremely competitive, with applications taking on average 4-6 weeks to complete.

Drawing on our extensive experience, we have created a short guide to help you understand what an assessor is looking for. This is based on Innovate UK's Smart Grant template. Much of the information is transferable to other Innovate UK competitions, but you should check the application before you start to ensure you answer the right questions. You should answer all questions to the best of your ability and cover each of the aspects included in the Guidance for Applicants.

Please be aware that Innovate UK Smart Grant competitions are extremely competitive and our guide does not guarantee success. However, it will help you to put forward a high-quality application, increasing your chances of securing funding.





ABOUT REDKNIGHT

RedKnight Consultancy is an award-winning grant funding firm based in Cardiff, South Wales. We work with tech-based start-ups and SMEs and help them secure grant funding to develop their innovative products, processes, and services.

Since launching in 2015, we have secured over £9.9 million of grant funding. However, our track record predates our launch; our team of specialists has over 50 years' combined experience working with over 150 organisations and accessing more than £50m of grant funding.

Our success rate typically falls between 42% and 50%, with the most up-to-date statistics available on our [website](#). We are extremely proud of this achievement at a time when some competitions have a success rate of less than 10%! If you have any other questions about RedKnight, you may find an answer on our [FAQs page](#).



THE APPLICATION

- 1 Need or Challenge**
What is the business need, technological challenge, or market opportunity behind your innovation?
- 2 Approach and Innovation**
What approach will you take and where will the focus of the innovation be? You can submit an appendix to support your answer.
- 3 Team and Resources**
Who is in the project team and what are their roles? You can submit an appendix to describe the skills and experience of the project team.
- 4 Market Awareness**
What does the market you are targeting look like?
- 5 Outcomes and Routes to Market**
How are you going to grow your business and increase your productivity into the long term as a result of the project?
- 6 Wider Impacts**
What impact might this project have outside the project team?
- 7 Project Management**
How will you manage the project effectively? You must submit a project plan or Gantt chart as an appendix to support your answer.
- 8 Risks**
What are the main risks for this project? You must submit a risk register as an appendix to support your answer.
- 9 Added Value**
What impact would an injection of public funding have on the businesses involved?
- 10 Costs and Value for Money**
How much will the project cost and how does it represent value for money for the team and the taxpayer?



Scope

Ensuring your project is in scope is a critical first step. Failing to meet this requirement will mean your project is ineligible and it may not even be assessed. Be sure to read the scope of the competition carefully and describe how your project addresses the specific areas of interest. You should also detail if the project is a single entity or if it is a business-led consortium (meaning there are two or more partners working in collaboration).



1. Need or Challenge

Start your response by providing a compelling business motivation for the project with quantifiable statistics (referenced). You will need to provide a clear understanding of the nearest state-of-the-art available. If applicable, describe how the project builds on previous relevant work that you have done (e.g., a feasibility study or a previous iteration of the product). It is important to conclude the response by detailing wider challenges influencing the business opportunity.



2. Approach and Innovation

The approach must address the need, challenge and/or opportunity identified in Q1 (Need or Challenge), including a summary of the main innovation and risks (more detail about the innovation in terms of graphics or diagrams can be included in the appendix). You should evidence how the innovation and project outputs will differentiate your solution from the competition, demonstrating significant commercial and/or technical innovation. Do not forget to evidence your freedom to operate, for example, through existing owned IP or via patent searches.





3. Team and Resources

Reference key expertise and past achievements to justify why your business (or consortium) is best placed to carry out the project and exploit its results. You should identify key personnel involved in the project, stating their academic background, work experience, and key areas of expertise. State the resources you possess to deliver the project or outline a clear plan to obtain all the resources, equipment, and facilities required. If working in collaboration, be sure to reference previous work you have done together to demonstrate the consortium will work well. Do not forget to use the appendix to detail all staff involved in the project and images of any resources, equipment, or facilities that you will use.



4. Market Awareness

Quantify the target market size and describe key drivers and dynamics (reference this where possible). Where the market is new or unexplored, you should identify possible routes to market based on the precedents. Remember to describe relevant secondary markets to demonstrate that your technology has wider applications.



5. Outcomes and Routes to Market

You will need to describe your target customers along with the value proposition to them (quantify value propositions). Detail routes to market, explaining how the project outputs will be exploited and/or disseminated, and how your business (or consortium) will generate profit, productivity, and growth. Provide realistic sales targets, financial forecasts, and ROI estimates.





6. Wider impacts

Describe the positive impact on others outside the team (such as supply chain partners, customers, broader industry) and consider the wider social, economic and/or environmental impacts. You should also include expected regional impacts with compelling evidence to justify your claims. Do not forget to mention any possible negative impacts and provide robust mitigation measures where appropriate.



7. Project Management

Outline the project work packages, detailing objectives, deliverables, research category, lead partner, and total cost provided for each one. You will also need to detail the approach to project management, for example holding monthly steering group meetings. The management plan should be designed to meet the project objectives in a realistic and efficient way. Any links or dependencies between work packages or milestones also need to be identified. Do not forget to include a Gantt chart and PERT diagram in the appendix.



8. Risks

The key risks and mitigation measures of the project should be detailed in the written response, with a risk register provided in the appendix. Remember to reference critical inputs to the project and detail any constraints or conditions on the project outputs e.g., regulatory requirements.





9. Added Value

Applicants need to put forward a compelling case for the positive difference funding will make to their project. You should detail any alternative sources of support that have been explored and explain why they are discounted or used in conjunction with the grant funding. The response should explicitly state how the project will significantly increase the industrial partners' R&D spend during and after the project, for example, development of future iterations of the technology or tackling other market verticals.



10. Costs and Value for Money

The assessors only see the headline figures for each cost category (per partner if a consortium-based project), so you need to detail what each cost category is covering. For example, detail the number of working days the labour budget covers. Costs should be in accordance with industry norms and represent excellent value-for-money compared to alternative approaches outlined (including doing nothing). You must clearly explain how each partner will finance their contribution, as should the balance of costs. If you plan to use subcontractors, their involvement and costs must be justified and reasonable for the proposed project.



CONCLUSION

Thank you for reading RedKnight's Innovate UK application guide. We hope you found it useful and wish you the best of luck in your attempts to secure funding. Please contact us via our [website](#) or through our social media accounts if you have any further questions.

Don't have the time to do all the work yourself? RedKnight can help. We offer a comprehensive bid writing service, which you can learn more about [here](#). Alternatively, if you have already done the hard work but feel your application could benefit from a second opinion, you may be interested in our peer review service. You can find out more about how this works on [our website](#).

WHAT OUR CLIENTS ARE SAYING



“We’re delighted to be receiving this grant from Innovate UK in order to develop and enhance our proprietary technologies. The Smart Grant means we can build on our achievements and test new innovative software and applications that not only gives patients control of their medical data, but has the potential for significant societal impact in how healthcare services are delivered for decades to come. The support we received from RedKnight was excellent. Their professional approach and knowledge of the process was crucial in helping us secure the funding.”

MR RICHARD FREEMAN - CEO -
MEDI2DATA





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