Design Foundations Round 1: Frequently Asked Questions

Important Dates

Competition opens	Mon 16th January 2017
Registration close	Wed 15th February 2017 - **Midday**
Application deadline	Wed 22nd February 2017 - **Midday**
Applicants informed	Thu 30th March 2017
Contracts issued	Fri 28th April 2017
Feedback to applicants provided	Fri 28th April 2017
Project start date	Approx. 1st June 2017 Subject to financial viability/eligibility checks and returning necessary documentation in good time
Project end date	All projects to be completed, costs incurred and paid by 31st March 2018 at the latest.

Q: Will there be further Design Foundations funding in 2017, and will they have the same scope and application process?
A: We expect to run a further two rounds of funding in 2017, opening for applications in May and August. The precise scope, themes and process may change. Supported projects at each stage will be shorter in duration, since all money must be spent by 31st April 2018.

Project Scope

Q: What do you mean by "early-stage design"?
*A: Referencing the 'double-diamond' process, developed by the Design Council, we consider stages 1-3 (Discover, Define, Develop) to be early-stage design. You can read more about the double-diamond process on the Design Council website. Crucially, early-stage design happens **before** you've settled on a specific product or service idea to develop.*

Q: Is this competition only for product design?
A: No, projects can explore ideas relating to products (both physical and digital), services or business models.

Q: What industry sectors are within scope?
A: We will accept applications for projects in any industry sector, but with a particular focus on Innovate UK's four priority areas: Health and Life Sciences, Materials and Manufacturing, Infrastructure Systems and Emerging and Enabling Technologies. Projects in these areas will align with follow-on funding opportunities in our core competitions. The Innovate UK 2016-17 delivery plan gives more information on the priority areas.

Q: Does the project have to involve new technology?
*A: No, the innovation can be in the form of a new application or combination of existing technologies. Bear in mind, however, that technical innovation **is** likely to be a consideration in other Innovate UK competitions via which you may wish to apply for follow-on funding.*

Q: Can we make changes to a project after we've won funding?
A: Change requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis, through a managed process. We recognise that circumstances and plans may change in response to discoveries and new learning.

Q: We already have an idea for an innovative product/service - can we win a grant to help design it?
A: No. This competition is for early-stage design projects that include design-led research and idea generation. The on-going design development of an existing or partly developed idea is beyond scope.

Q: We've already started work on a project, can we apply for funding to continue it?
A: Your project may be within scope, but you will need to (a) demonstrate that the project is still 'early-stage' design and (b) justify why public funding is necessary to make the project a success. You cannot use a Design Foundations grant to pay costs already incurred.

Q: Can we win funding to train our employees in design?
A: Not if this is the only activity. Capability building is an important aspect of the Design Foundations competition, but this should be achieved as part of a 'live' project aimed at generating ideas for new products or services with commercial application.

Q: Can we submit an application for a very risky project?
A: Yes, and assessors will look for evidence that you have identified and considered the main risks and that you can mitigate them as far as possible. We understand that innovation is risky and we want to enable innovation that could lead to significant growth but that is too risky for a business to undertake by itself. We do not want to fund projects with little or no risk as there is little justification for the use of public money.

Q: Does Innovate UK offer a pre-screening process where the scope of the proposed project can be checked to see if it fits within the scope of the call?
A: If you are unclear on whether your project fits the scope, please get in touch with the Innovate UK Business Support Group so we can best assist you. Telephone: 0300 321 4357 or email:
support@innovateuk.gov.uk

Applications

Q: Who can apply?
*A: Individual, UK registered **businesses** of any size.*

Q: Can we make a joint application?
A: No, this competition round is for individual business applicants only.

Q: We're a design business - can we apply to fund a project of our own?
A: Yes, but we expect to fund only a small number of these projects because our focus is on boosting design uptake and capability within businesses where it is currently under-used. You will need to demonstrate that the project represents a new approach for you, and that it will actively build capability within the business.

Q: How can Research Technology Organisations (RTOs)/Academia/Catapults get involved?
A: Only registered businesses are eligible to apply, win grants or provide sub-contracted services within this competition. If you are operating as a registered business (e.g. a spin-out) you can apply or be sub-contracted as normal.

Q: Can charities or other non-businesses organisations apply?
A: Only registered businesses are eligible to apply, win grants or provide sub-contracted services within this competition. If your organisation operates as a registered business, you can apply or be sub-contracted.

Q: Can businesses be newly formed for the purpose of a project?
A: Yes, the business can be newly formed. It would need to be a UK registered business to receive grant.

Q: Do we have to work with a sub-contractor?
A: No, if you have appropriate resources and capability within your own business, you do not need to work with a sub-contractor. Bear in mind, however, that we are seeking to support projects which build capability within the applicant business. If your business already has a design resource, what capability can you build?

Q: Can we work with a sub-contractor based outside of the UK?
A: No, for this competition all sub-contractors must be UK registered businesses.

Q: Can we work with multiple sub-contractors?
A: Yes. Each sub-contractor must have a distinct and clearly defined role in the project. You may not engage more than one sub-contractor to complete the same task.

Q: Can I make more than one application?
A: No. A business can only make one application in this competition round.

Q: Can I appear as a named sub-contractor on multiple applications?
A: Yes, but applications may be turned-down at the portfolio selection stage if we feel that the sub-contractor is overcommitted and unlikely to be able to deliver the project/s on time and to a high standard. Ultimately, your professional reputation is at risk if you overcommit.

Q: If our application is not successful, can we reapply in subsequent rounds?
A: Yes you can.

Q: Can I apply if I've already had funding from Innovate UK for this technology?
A: Yes as long as the new application is focused on addressing the challenges that remain with innovation. Highlighting the previous funding and how the proposed new project will build upon the previous work will show the assessors the journey you are on with regards to the technology

Q: Is it essential to upload PDF documents alongside my application?
A: No, this is optional but it will help us to recognise the quality and capability of your design resource (whether internal or sub-contracted) and strengthen your application.

Help & Support

Q: How can I find a designer with the appropriate skills and experience to work on my project?
A: You could talk to one of the design industry bodies or associations, including the Design Council, BIDA, DBA or Service Design Network. The Knowledge Transfer Network can also help connect you.

Q: Where can I get help with my application?
A: You can talk to the Knowledge Transfer Network on 03333 403250, enquiries@ktn-uk.org, or contact the Innovate UK Business Support Group on 0300 321 4357, support@innovateuk.gov.uk

Q: Where can I find recordings of the briefing event?
A: A recording of the London briefing event will be made available via the Innovate UK competition page.

Assessment

Q: Who are the assessors?
A: Innovate UK select external assessors from industry and academia based on their experience and expertise. For this competition, all assessors will have significant knowledge of design practice in business.

Finances

Q: Is £100,000 the maximum grant I can win?
*A: No. The maximum **project cost** is £100,000, and the value of the grant available will be 50-60% of this total, depending on the size of the applicant business.*

Q: What is the sub-contracting limit?
A: A maximum of 70% of your total project costs can be used to sub-contract other businesses, for example to provide professional design services.

Q: What are eligible project costs
*A: Costs you can claim against, or contribute, include: Labour costs, Overheads, Materials, Capital equipment usage, Sub-contracts, Travel & subsistence, IP filing costs up to £7,500 (SME only). Claims can only be made for costs **incurred <u>and</u> paid** between the project start and end dates.*

Q: As the applicant business, can we make a contribution in kind to cover our share of the project costs?
A: Your contribution must be in the form of eligible project costs (see above).

Q: Can we use other sources of funding to make up all or part of our contribution to the project costs?
A: You cannot use other public money to fund your contribution, but you could use private funding/investment.

Q: Do Design Foundations grants count towards de minimis state aid funding total?
A: No, grants awarded through this competition are excluded from the de minimis total.

Q: What financial checks do we need to pass?
A: Assessors will review whether the total cost of the project and that of the individual work packages appear reasonable compared to your stated project content and objectives. If successful, applicant viability and project cost eligibility checks will be carried out by Innovate UK to ensure that you represent a legitimate enterprise and are requesting the correct amount of grant.

Q: When is the grant money delivered?
*A: All grants are claimable **quarterly in arrears.** Claims are only paid once quarterly reporting and necessary audits are complete.*

Follow-on Funding

Q: Is follow-on funding available to develop the ideas we generate during our design project?
A: You could apply for follow-on funding through other Innovate UK funding competitions including our sector-specific competitions or open calls.

Q: Will I have a greater chance of winning further funding from Innovate UK if I win a Design Foundations grant?
A: Your application will not be favoured just because you have received a Design Foundations grant. However, we do believe that businesses conducting excellent, early-stage design are more likely to have strong ideas and be better equipped to describe their benefits – which would aid your application.