

Technology Strategy Board

Driving Innovation

# Innovation Vouchers

up to  
**£5k**  
funding  
for SMEs

Simple  
online  
application

**Helping your business to access the knowledge it needs to innovate**

# What are Innovation Vouchers?

The Technology Strategy Board's national Innovation Voucher scheme is designed to help businesses gain the knowledge they need to innovate and grow.

An Innovation Voucher can help your business to work with an external expert for the first time by paying towards the cost of their services.

We are providing Innovation Vouchers for start-up, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises to work with 'knowledge suppliers' such as:

- universities and further education colleges
- research and technology organisations
- technical consultancies
- Catapult centres
- design advisers
- intellectual property advisers.

Initially, Innovation Vouchers will be available to businesses that are working on – or aiming to work on – ideas in the following three priority areas:

- agrifood – voucher value up to **£5k**
- built environment – voucher value up to **£5k**
- space – voucher value up to **£8k** (in association with the International Space Innovation Centre).

## What will we fund?

The Innovation Voucher can enable your business to access knowledge for all types of innovation – for example:

- ideas for new or improved products, processes and services
- using design to improve your ideas
- managing your intellectual property.

However, you need to be clear that accessing this knowledge will help your business address a real challenge, not just a small improvement or change to what you currently do.

Innovation Vouchers help you to obtain expert advice from a knowledge supplier you haven't worked with before, not to fund general business needs such as training or equipment.

# Is this for you - are you eligible to apply?

An Innovation Voucher will enable you to work with an external expert for the first time so you can move forward with a particular idea or innovation. It can also be used to help you think through an idea that might lead you to apply for other types of support offered by the Technology Strategy Board.

## To qualify:

- you need to be a start-up, micro or small and medium-sized business located in the UK\*
- it should be the first time that you have worked with your selected knowledge supplier
- the idea that you want help with should be a challenge for your business that requires specialist help
- your idea must be applicable to the agrifood, built environment or space areas
- you should not have received an Innovation Voucher from the Technology Strategy Board before.

\* Unsure if your business is an SME? Start-ups and small and medium-sized businesses from all sectors across the UK can qualify.

We use the European definition of SME, see: [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/facts-figures-analysis/sme-definition/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/facts-figures-analysis/sme-definition/index_en.htm)

## Applying is simple!

- apply via the Technology Strategy Board website at: [www.innovateuk.org/Competitions](http://www.innovateuk.org/Competitions)
- provide details of your business and answer some simple questions about why you want an Innovation Voucher and what you plan to do
- apply any time for agrifood and built environment
- applications for Innovation Vouchers in the space area can be made up until 24 October
- Vouchers will be allocated by means of a draw from eligible applications. In the first round, starting in September 2012, around 400 vouchers will be issued. In later rounds around 100 will be issued every three months
- to find out more information join the Innovation Vouchers group on **\_connect** at: <https://connect.innovateuk.org/web/guest/home>

# Apply @ [www.innovateuk.org/Competitions](http://www.innovateuk.org/Competitions)

**The online Guidance for Applicants will help you to decide if your project is eligible when the scheme opens on 24 September.**

**Competitions helpline: 0300 321 4357**

**Email: [competitions@innovateuk.org](mailto:competitions@innovateuk.org)**

## Important notes

Innovation Vouchers operate under de minimis State Aid regulations. There is an upper limit of €200k (approximately £165k) for all de minimis aid provided to any one business over a three-year fiscal period. See the Guidance for Applicants for more information.

The supplier chosen must be a registered business.

An Innovation Voucher is issued to an individual business and is non-transferable.

## Other voucher schemes

Before applying, you may want to decide whether this scheme is the best fit for your business needs. There are other innovation voucher schemes available and the Technology Strategy Board has brought together a list of those currently available in the UK. Before making an application you should find out which scheme best meets your needs by going to the Innovation Vouchers portal via the Technology Strategy Board website when the scheme opens on 24 September.

*The Technology Strategy Board is the UK's innovation agency. Its goal is to accelerate economic growth by stimulating and supporting business-led innovation.*

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