

Introduction

This provides applicants with some guidance on completing an innovation voucher application. This document is not an application form and to apply you must submit an online application during one of the open calls. Further information, date of the next call for applications and access to the online application form at www.investni.com/innovation

* If you require an application in an alternative format (including Braille audio disc, large print or in minority languages to meet the needs of those whose first language is not English) then please contact us on 0800 181 4422 and ask to speak with the Invest NI Equality Team.

Before you start the application process please familiarise yourself also with the Frequently Asked Questions document [Innovation Vouchers FAQ's \(PDF\)](#)

Step 1: Guidance

Any personal data you provide to Invest NI will be handled in line with the Data Protection legislation.

We will store this information securely and retain it only as long as is necessary under public sector requirements.

We will share your personal data with Knowledge Providers for the specific purposes of this programme.

We may also share your personal data with our sponsor department, the Department for the Economy, for governance purposes and also with other public bodies, such as local Councils, for economic development purposes. As the Innovation Voucher is sourced from public funds Invest NI will, in the interest of openness and transparency, proactively publish limited information on the scheme including:

- Name of applicant
- Application title
- Amount of assistance

Invest NI will not publish any other personal or commercial information you provide as part of this application process.

For full details on how we use your personal data, including your rights, please visit:

<https://www.investni.com/privacy>

Step 2: Applicant details

Business name

Type of business

Choose from dropdown menu in online form.

Sector

Choose appropriate sector from dropdown menu in online form.

Companies in the transport and agricultural sectors do not qualify for an Innovation Voucher in line with State Aid Guidelines.

Company registration number (if registered with Companies House)

Postcode lookup

Enter postcode to obtain full address

Name

E-mail address

Telephone number

Job title

Is your business a social enterprise?

Yes/No

Number of full-time employees

Please state the number of full-time employees in your business. You can apply if:

- You are a small enterprise with fewer than 50 employees and either an annual turnover and/or an annual balance sheet not exceeding €10m.
- You are a medium-sized enterprise with fewer than 250 employees and either an annual turnover not exceeding €50m or an annual balance sheet not exceeding €43m. You should also have not received assistance through Invest NI's Grant for R&D programme in the last five years.

Annual sales

Please enter the value of your annual sales in £ Sterling. If you are pre-trading, this figure may be zero.

Step 3: Project Details

Business overview

Please provide a brief outline of your business including the following: industry sector, customer base, how long the business has been established, and the main products and markets. If your business is pre-trading, it is important to provide information on your expertise, experience and knowledge in this business area.

Application title

Please enter a descriptive name for your application title. This will be used to help you identify your application on our system. Your Innovation Voucher application title, alongside details of your participation, will be published. Therefore we recommend you choose a title that will not disclose commercially sensitive information about your project.

Step 4: The Innovation Project

The information in this section will be considered by the assessment panel to determine if an Innovation Voucher should be awarded. It is important that this section demonstrates the need for, and benefits of, engagement with a Knowledge Provider to develop an innovative solution to the particular business issue.

In instances in which an existing solution is readily available from the private sector, it is unlikely that an Innovation Voucher will be awarded. If insufficient or unclear information is provided, Invest NI may not be able to fully appraise the project, and this may result in your application being rejected.

Issue to be addressed and activity required

What is the business issue you would like to address in your proposed innovation project and what specific activity would you like the Knowledge Provider to undertake on your behalf to help solve the business issue?

Innovation

Considering your target market, please explain how you think your proposed product or service is novel/different/innovative/unique.

Assessment of market need

Please detail the market research and/or market analysis you have carried out to assess the demand and/or potential market for your project? Please also explain any initial development work you have undertaken eg development of design concepts, initial prototype etc.

Skills requested

In order to address your business issue, what skills and expertise do you require from the Knowledge Provider?

Deliverables

What are the outputs you expect the Knowledge Provider to have delivered once your project is completed? Please be specific eg design concepts, initial prototype, report on scientific research.

Business benefits

How will your business and the Northern Ireland economy benefit from this project. What are the expected results at the end of the project, and how will these impact on your business?

Previous Innovation Voucher business benefits

If you have previously received an Innovation Voucher, what were the outcomes and benefits to your business as a result of the project?

Step 5: Interaction with a Knowledge Provider

Identified Knowledge Provider

Have you identified a Knowledge Provider from:

[Invest Northern Ireland's list of approved Knowledge Providers](#)

Yes/No

If yes, please state the following:

Name

Institution/Organisation

Faculty/Department

Previously used Knowledge Provider

Has your business previously used the services of this Knowledge Provider for a knowledge transfer project?

Yes/No

Previous R&D

Has the business previously undertaken any research and development activity?

Yes/No

Previous innovation activity

Has your business previously undertaken any innovation activity?

Yes/No

“Innovation is the process that transforms ideas into commercial value. It requires the execution of an idea which addresses a specific challenge and achieves significant value creation for both the company and or customer. Innovation can happen across all functions within a business or organisation, such as new technology, new or improved products and processes, customer service or experience, design, branding, sales/distribution/marketing channels, business or revenue models and leadership, but most importantly, innovation must always create value.”

What would be the effect of not receiving Invest NI assistance for this project?

Please select ONE of the options from the menu on the online form.

Upload supporting documents

You can upload further information to support your application but please limit this to photographs, sketches or diagrams. Please do not attach annual reports, business reports or business plans. To attach a file, click on the ‘Related Documents’ tab at the top of the application.

The size of your attachments cannot exceed 20MB per attachment.

Note: A description is required for each file uploaded.

Step 6: Declaration

Is your business based in Northern Ireland?

Your business must be, or will be, predominantly based in Northern Ireland. You will be required to provide evidence of this if requested.

Yes/No

Signatory of this Innovation Voucher application is entitled to work in Northern Ireland?

As signatory of this Innovation Voucher application must be entitled to work in Northern Ireland for at least eighteen months from the issue of an Innovation Voucher, without any additional approvals. You will be required to provide evidence of this if requested.

Yes No

Is your business solvent?

To apply for an Innovation Voucher, your business must be solvent and have no distress of execution levied against it.

Yes/No

Other Invest NI support

Has this project been supported or is it likely to be supported by any other Invest NI programmes?

Yes/No

If yes, please provide the name of the support programme(s) and year(s) of any support.

Other non-Invest NI support

Has this project been supported or is it likely to be supported by support, other than from Invest NI?

Yes/No

If yes, please provide the name of the support programme(s) and year(s) of any support.

Agree to disclosure

I have read, understand and agree to the Disclosure, Publicity and Confidentiality clauses and consent to use of the information provided for the purposes described.

1. Invest NI shall be entitled to publish details of the applicants such as name of applicant, application title and amounts and types of assistance offered, at such times and in such manner as Invest NI or the European Commission may decide.
2. The Client shall assist Invest NI with any publicity and/or surveys which Invest NI may deem appropriate in respect to the Project.
3. Invest NI shall be entitled to disclose details of the Client to other government agencies and departments, and bodies engaged in economic development within the EU (subject to the terms of the General Data Protection Regulations and Data Protection Act 2018 and any other applicable legal restrictions which prevent the disclosure of such information) where Invest NI considers that disclosure is in the Client's interest.
4. Invest NI may include any information which it receives in relation to the Client in a database of economic, financial and statistical information. Invest NI may publish or disseminate reports derived from such a database, provided such reports do not specifically identify the Client.

5. Invest NI shall be entitled to disclose information about the Client to Invest NI's professional advisers (including the Knowledge Providers) or to consultants working on Invest NI's behalf. Any such disclosure will only be made for the specific purpose for which these professional advisers or consultants are engaged, with both subject to obligations of confidence.

6. Subject to Clause 1, Invest NI shall treat all information received from the Client in receipt of an Innovation Voucher as confidential and shall not disclose such information to any third party other than those referred to at Clauses 3 and 5. Without the consent of the Client, such consent not to be unreasonably withheld or delayed, except as may be required by law (including without limitation Freedom of Information legislation) or for the purpose of preventing or detecting crime or for the purposes of any parliamentary or governmental enquiry into the activities of Invest NI.

Agree to the limits on innovation aid

I have read, understand and agree to the limits on innovation aid.

1. The assistance made available through the Innovation Voucher scheme is awarded under The Industrial Development (Northern Ireland) Order 1982 and is State aid (Innovation Aid for SMEs) under Article 28 of Commission Regulation (EU) No. 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 (the "General Block Exemption"), notification no. SA.40270 "Skills, Strategy and Innovation Solutions".

2. Your business must not have received more than €200,000 of Innovation Aid for SMEs in the last 3 fiscal years. Where an undertaking is part of a group of companies, the Innovation Aid limit applies to the combined group and not individual companies or undertakings within the group. Please note that it is your responsibility to check whether the support you have received was classed as Innovation Aid. If in doubt, please check with whoever provided the support to you.

Agree to Pay VAT

VAT of £1,000 is payable on a £5,000 Innovation Voucher. The Knowledge Provider will invoice the applicant on completion of the project for the VAT and any additional project costs in excess of the voucher value (as agreed at the outset of the project). Your business must:

- Agree to pay the VAT element applicable to the Innovation Voucher and any project costs in excess of the value of the Innovation Voucher value.
- Be in a position to fund the project to completion.

I confirm that the information contained in this form is true, accurate and not misleading as at the date of this form, and that Invest NI is entitled to rely on that information.

Any information provided in the application should be correct. Should any fraudulent information be provided, Invest NI may take further action.

Authorised signatory name

Signed on behalf of the business. Please type your full name.

To submit an application, you must be authorised to do so, in the case of a Limited company, by a Director or the Secretary and in the case of a Sole Trader or Partnership, by a Proprietor or Partner. By submitting the application, Invest NI will assume that you have been authorised to do so.

Job title

Please provide your full job title as part of the confirmation of your authorisation to submit the application on behalf of the business.

END OF DOCUMENT