



ECONOMIC RECOVERY INNOVATION GRANT (ERIG) FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ's)

Please note this is not an exhaustive list.

These FAQs should be read in conjunction with the [ERIG Guidance Notes](#). The information and evidence required, outlined in the Guidance Notes, is necessary to demonstrate the business meets the eligibility criteria, and ensure public funds are managed properly.

Please take time to read the Guidance Notes and FAQs carefully before applying.

OVERVIEW

Invest Northern Ireland (Invest NI) has launched a new grant scheme known as the Economic Recovery Innovation Grant (ERIG). ERIG will support local businesses to develop their innovation projects and encourage businesses to progress along the [Innovation Framework](#).

This support is part funded by the Department for Economy Economic Recovery Action Plan.

How does ERIG work?

ERIG is funding worth up to £5,000 (taxable) and allows small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to receive financial assistance to support the enhancement of their innovation activities.

The aim of ERIG is to improve the innovation capability of your business and to progress your business along the [Innovation Framework](#). The funding will help with an innovation project, such as developing new or improving existing innovative products, processes or services or business models.

Business **must** be recognised as a [Silver Level Innovator](#) by Innovate NI (or equivalent) for the project idea which the ERIG will be used to progress or implement.

Economic Recovery Innovation Grants are not transferrable and must be used for the project detailed in the approved application form.

What is a definition of innovation?

[Innovate NI](#) defines innovation as "A novel idea that creates value - For a business, this is an idea that will lead to the development of a new or improved product, service, business model, or process, that creates value in the business, produces new profits or business growth."

How much support will my business receive?

The value of grant will be dependent on the needs identified by the business in your application but a maximum grant of up to £5,000 (taxable) is available. The grant is revenue rather than capital and successful applicants will receive payment directly into the business bank account provided in their application.

Please be aware that the full cost of your project may be considerably greater than the support offered, and you should consider this carefully during your planning process.



What can I use ERIG for?

ERIG can help you address specific business costs associated with your planned innovation activities such as:

- Developing new or improved products, processes and services.
- Testing and validating your idea.
- Accessing information and expertise.
- Exploring new technologies.
- Developing and evaluating new business models.
- Market research.

How do I use my ERIG?

In order to apply for your ERIG your business will have identified an innovation project. To qualify for this funding your business and the innovation project must have been assessed by [Innovate NI](#) and recognised as a [Silver Level Innovator](#). Upon receipt of a Silver Level Innovator recognition (or equivalent) related to the innovation project you will be offered the opportunity to apply for this funding.

Your business is responsible for ensuring the funding received from this scheme is used for the purposes outlined in your application and in the accepted contractual Letter of Offer.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Who is eligible to apply for ERIG?

Applications are open to Northern Ireland based small and medium sized enterprises and social enterprises. This includes sole traders, partnerships, limited companies and those businesses at pre-trading stage with an innovative project who meet all the eligibility criteria.

Please refer to the [Guidance Notes](#) and [Eligibility Checker](#) to confirm if you are eligible to apply.

How do I prove that my business is based in Northern Ireland?

Your business must be based in Northern Ireland. We will validate this through the proof of address from documentation submitted as part of the application process.

Can I apply if my business is not based in NI but operates into NI?

No, this funding is only available to businesses that can provide proof of address that they are based in Northern Ireland.

What do you mean by an SME?

To confirm your business size, please refer to the European Commission's definition of an [SME](#).

What do you mean by 'Is my business trading'?

This refers to whether [HMRC](#) considers your company or organisation to be 'active' for Corporation Tax and Self-Employment Tax purposes when it is, for example, carrying on a business activity, trading or receiving income. If your company is 'active', then it is considered to be trading.



What do you mean by is my business pre-trading?

This refers to whether [HMRC](#) considers that your company or organisation has not yet become active or started trading or that it has not yet engaged in any business activity (business activity means carrying on a trade or profession or buying and selling goods or services with a view to making a profit or surplus).

Why do businesses have to be registered with HMRC?

As proof that they are operating or intending to operate as a legitimate business, all pre-trading and trading businesses must demonstrate that they are or will potentially become liable to pay relevant taxes to HMRC.

We ask you to provide your [HMRC Unique Taxpayer Reference \(UTR\)](#) which confirms that you are either registered as self-employed or a Limited Company.

Who is Innovate NI?

[Innovate NI](#) is a Department for the Economy initiative which aims to support Northern Ireland businesses to innovate successfully using a four step [Innovation Framework](#).

The initiative was designed to encourage businesses thinking about innovating to take the first step, and support those that are already innovating to do more by successfully embedding innovation into their operations.

Innovate NI provides businesses with the opportunity to broaden and strengthen their innovation capacity, capability and activity by inspiring innovation, providing a four step pathway to successful innovation and a four tiered [Innovation Recognition Programme](#), with each recognition linked to a step on the Framework.

Why is the Innovation Assessment through Innovate NI included as part of the ERIG application process?

The [Innovation Assessment](#) helps identify which steps of the [Innovation Framework](#) a business has completed. The aim of this funding is to help businesses innovate and progress to the next step of the Innovation Framework.

What information is required when completing the Innovation Assessment with Innovate NI?

It is important to complete the innovation assessment form using one innovative idea only. This idea must align with the definition that innovation is a novel idea that creates value.

Please explain in detail the following points to allow a robust assessment to be carried out:

- How your idea will/does **add value** to your business.
- How your idea **clearly differs** from what others are offering.
- How you will/did **evaluate and test** your idea.
- If introducing new digital technology, how this change/improvement to your service/business model add value to your business.

How does my business become a Silver Level Innovator?

As part of the overall ERIG process, businesses who have completed the [Eligibility Checker](#) will be directed to submit an [Innovation Assessment](#) to Innovate NI.

This Innovation Assessment will be reviewed by Innovate NI and depending on the level of innovation activity undertaken, you may be recognised as a [Silver Level Innovator](#).



Is it my business that is awarded the innovation recognition or is it my innovative idea? [Innovation Recognition](#) is issued to the business. It reflects the innovation level of the business as a whole, not just one single idea.

Innovate NI recognises businesses for their innovation activities – depending on the steps of the Innovation Framework completed by the business, Innovate NI may issue the business with an Innovation Recognition.

There are four recognition levels, and businesses are encouraged to continue to develop their innovation and may receive further recognition for their efforts.

Can a business that has received a Bronze Level Innovator recognition apply for ERIG?

No, only businesses that have obtained [Silver Level Innovator recognition](#) can apply for ERIG.

Businesses that have been recognised as Bronze Level Innovators in the past, can complete the [Innovation Assessment](#) again to see if their innovative idea has progressed along the Innovation Framework and is now a Silver Level Innovator.

Can I apply for ERIG if my business has not been awarded or is in the process of applying for Innovation Recognition from Innovate NI?

No, only businesses that have been recognised as a Silver Level Innovator from Innovate NI are eligible to apply for ERIG. Businesses can apply for innovation recognition by completing the [Innovation Assessment](#).

The only exception to this criteria is if, when considering the information provided in the Innovation Assessment, Invest NI deems that the business has identified a project that will lead to a new or improved process, product, service or business model which has the potential to deliver **business improvement**.

This business improvement must relate to the actual development of a new or improved product, service, process or business model which enhances the established core business.

In this case, providing that business specific projects have progressed through the equivalent steps of the Innovation Framework (i.e. the business must have selected an innovative project and must be currently developing it), Invest NI may consider the applicant as **equivalent** to a Silver Level Innovator and provide access to the ERIG application.

Does your innovation project have to link to your Silver Level Innovator recognition?

Yes, this funding is available to progress or develop projects which were outlined in your [Innovation Assessment](#), which was reviewed by Innovate NI and deemed to qualify for Silver Level Innovator recognition (or equivalent).

Silver Level Innovator status recognises that the business has a clear idea which has been well thought out and is now ready to start, or is in the process of testing, validating and developing the idea. Innovative projects which are specific to the business **only**, must have progressed through the equivalent steps of the Innovation Framework to be deemed **equivalent** to Silver Level Innovator status.



Can I apply if I already have a Silver Level Certificate?

Yes, businesses which meet all the Invest NI [Eligibility Criteria](#) and have obtained Silver Level Innovator recognition **since 1 April 2021** (or equivalent) are eligible to apply. These businesses will be required to provide evidence of their Silver Level Innovator certificate or written proof of the outcome of your Innovation Assessment. Once approved, they will receive access to the online application on Invest NI's MyINI Customer Portal.

However, if your business has received an innovation recognition from Innovate NI **prior to 1 April 2021**, it must re-submit an [Innovation Assessment](#) before beginning the ERIG application process to ensure your innovation recognition level is accurate.

If the business is still categorised as a Silver Level Innovator (or equivalent), applicants will be required to provide clear rationale for any delays to the progression of the project, and this will be subject to review by Invest NI to determine eligibility.

Can I apply for ERIG if my business has been recognised as a Gold or Platinum Level Innovator?

No, only businesses that are Silver Level Innovators (or equivalent) can apply for support. ERIG is aimed at helping early-stage innovation in businesses with a good idea to progress along the Innovation Framework.

Businesses who have been recognised Gold or Platinum Level Innovators are not eligible to apply.

Why can I not apply for ERIG if I have received financial assistance from Invest NI within the last 3 years or have a current Letter of Offer?

ERIG funding is targeted at businesses that have not received Invest NI support within the last 3 years and would not normally have access to other forms of Invest NI support.

Invest NI clients who received financial assistance in the last 3 years should contact their Client Executive to discuss other available support. All Invest NI customers are appointed with a client facing contact who knows your business needs and would be best placed to advise your business on the types of Invest NI support and funding available to your business.

What type of business is deemed to be an Invest NI customer?

The definition of an Invest NI customer can be found on our [website](#).

I have received financial assistance from Invest NI within the last 3 years or current Letter of Offer, does this mean I am NOT eligible to apply for this funding?

Yes, if you have been supported by, or are likely to be supported by other Invest NI funding this would indicate you are an active Invest NI customer and can access financial support through other Invest NI programmes and are not eligible for ERIG funding.

The only exception to this is if your business has received Innovation Vouchers.

Does a grant from one of the NI Executive COVID Emergency Schemes mean I cannot apply?

No, receipt of assistance via one of the NI Executive COVID Emergency Schemes does not affect your eligibility for ERIG support. NI Executive COVID Emergency Schemes include:

- COVID-19 Restrictions Business Support Scheme (CRBSS) Part A
- COVID-19 Restrictions Business Support Scheme (CRBSS) Part B



- COVID-19 Limited Company Director's Support scheme
- COVID-19 Newly Self Employed Support Scheme
- NI Micro-business Hardship Fund

Please note- the following supports are not deemed to be NI Executive COVID Emergency Schemes:

- Business and Financial Planning Grant
- Digital Selling Capability Grant
- Energy Efficiency Capital Grant
- Micro Business E-Commerce Grant
- Productive Investment Capital Grant
- Process and Organisational Improvement Grant
- Supply Chain Resilience and Development Framework

How do you quantify the 3-year timeframe for businesses in receipt of financial assistance from Invest NI?

The timescale refers to the 3 years prior to your ERIG application form being received by Invest NI.

Can my business apply to ERIG if I do not have a current Letter of Offer and have received financial assistance from Invest NI over 3 years?

Yes, so long as the internal checks carried out by Invest NI validate the information provided on your application form and your business meets all the other eligibility criteria for the funding.

Why are businesses in receipt of Innovation Vouchers eligible to apply for ERIG?

It is considered that ERIG funding will complement Innovation Vouchers funding allowing business to further progress their innovation project.

Businesses who have received Innovation Vouchers have accessed specialist knowledge and expertise through identified Knowledge Providers. The funding is paid directly to the Knowledge Provider whilst ERIG payments are paid direct to the business. This will help your business, to cover specific additional costs identified in the application form to progress/accelerate the business along its innovation journey.

Why are businesses in receipt of NI Executive COVID Emergency Scheme funding eligible to apply to ERIG?

NI Executive COVID Emergency Schemes provided funding support to help businesses deal with the challenges of the pandemic. Due to the extenuating circumstances under which this funding was provided it would not be appropriate to include this as an exclusion to applying. Examples of NI Executive COVID Emergency Schemes include:

- COVID-19 Restrictions Business Support Scheme (CRBSS) Part A
- COVID-19 Restrictions Business Support Scheme (CRBSS) Part B
- COVID-19 Limited Company Director's Support scheme
- COVID-19 Newly Self Employed Support Scheme
- NI Micro-business Hardship Fund



Will my business be eligible if my innovation project has received or requested support from other public funding such as government or European Union funding?

No, if your innovation project has been supported from other public support such as government or European Union funding then you are not eligible to apply for this funding. Your business has a responsibility to ensure that the same project is not double funded through public funding.

If your business has applied for other public funding for the innovation project, please indicate the current status of that application.

What do the De Minimis Aid / Subsidy Control rules mean for the payment that I will receive?

This grant will be paid either on the basis that it complies with all the terms and conditions of Commission Regulation ((EU) No 1407/2013 of 18 December 2013 (De Minimis aid Regulation), or that it complies with the subsidy control chapter of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement and any other international subsidy commitments.

Further information can be found at: <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/introduction-state-aid>. Applicants will be required to provide details of all government funding they have received in the last three financial years and sign a declaration to that effect.

What do you mean by De Minimis State Aid?

De minimis aid describes small amounts of public funding to UK goods business that has a negligible impact on trade and competition. A single company can receive up to €200,000 de minimis aid over three consecutive fiscal years. Further information on de minimis aid at can be found at:

<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/de-minimis-aid>

Applicants will be required to provide details of all de minimis aid they have received in the last three financial years and sign a declaration to that effect.

What do you mean by Minimal Financial Assistance under the subsidy control chapter?

Minimal Financial Assistance describes small amounts of subsidies to UK service businesses that have minimal effect on competition and trade under the subsidy control regime that will replace EU state aid rules. A single business can receive up to £315,000 aid over three consecutive fiscal years.

Applicants will be required to provide details of Minimal Financial Assistance they have received in the last three financial years and sign a declaration to that effect.

How do I know if this grant will exceed the ceilings?

The maximum amount of de minimis aid a company can receive in the current and previous two fiscal years is €200,000. Please review the EC's de Minimis Regulation

https://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/legislation/de_minimis_regulation_en.pdf

If receipt of this grant results in a breach of the €200,000 ceiling you will have exceeded the de minimis threshold.

The maximum amount of Minimal Financial Assistance a company can receive in the current and previous two fiscal years is £315,000. If receipt of this grant results in a breach of the £315,000 ceiling you will have exceeded the threshold.



If my business is pre-trading, do I have to complete the state aid de minimis declaration?

No, as your business is pre-trading you will have received no state aid.

TIMESCALES

How long will the application process be opened?

ERIG has been extended for applications. Projects will be appraised on a first-come first served basis. Invest NI reserves the right to close the grant to applications:

- When the available budget is fully allocated, or
- On 31 March 2022 at 5pm, whichever comes first.

Invest NI recommends that you apply as early as possible, as the assessment and application process may take **several weeks** to complete.

Businesses must complete all **3 steps of the application process** by 5pm on Thursday 31 March 2022.

Therefore, we advise businesses complete the Eligibility Checker (Step 1) and submit their Innovation Assessment (Step 2) **by Wednesday 23 March 2022 at 5pm** to allow sufficient time to complete the ERIG application (Step 3), if eligible.

We recommend you submit your application as soon as possible as online applications cannot be submitted after the scheme has closed.

Printed copies of the online application will **not** be accepted.

APPLYING FOR ERIG

How do I apply?

Firstly, use the [eligibility checker](#) and answer each question. If you are eligible to apply for ERIG, you will be directed to [Innovate NI](#) to complete your Innovation Assessment.

Businesses issued with a [Silver Level Innovator recognition](#) from Innovate NI (or equivalent) will be notified that they may be eligible for ERIG support and given access to Invest NI's MyINI Customer Portal to complete the application.

What should I do if I think my business is eligible but it failed validation on the online eligibility checker?

The eligibility checker is based on the criteria of the scheme. If your business has failed validation on the eligibility checker, then your business is not eligible to apply.

Why do we have to use the Eligibility Checker as part of the application process?

The [Eligibility Checker](#) has been based on the eligibility criteria and by responding to each question it will assess if your business is eligible to apply for this funding.

How do I apply to Innovate NI for my Innovation Recognition Level?

You can submit an [Innovation Assessment](#) outlining your innovation activities to Innovate NI. They will assess your information and if appropriate, they will issue you with the appropriate outcome.

How long does it take Innovate NI to assess and issue Innovation Recognition Levels to businesses?



The [Innovation Assessment](#) takes approximately 30 minutes to complete, however please allow several weeks for Innovate NI to assess and issue an [Innovation RecognitionLevel](#) to your business.

Invest NI recommends that businesses complete the Eligibility Checker (Step 1) and submit their Innovation Assessment (Step 2) by Wednesday 23 March 2022 at 5pm to allow sufficient time to complete the ERIG application (Step 3), if eligible.

How do I apply for ERIG through Invest NI?

Businesses issued with a [Silver Level Innovation recognition](#) from Innovate NI (or equivalent) will be notified that they may be eligible for ERIG support. Your business will be given access to the online application on Invest NI's MyINI Customer Portal.

Do I need to register and create an account to complete an application with Invest NI?

Yes, you will be directed to the MyINI Customer Portal. If you do not have a portal account, you will need to register using an email address and a password. You will then be able to complete the online application. If you already have an account, you will be able to use the same login details.

How long will it take to complete the online application?

The online application process takes approximately one hour to complete.

Can I save my application and return to it at a later stage?

Yes, you can save a draft of your application and complete later but saved applications must still be submitted before the scheme closes.

How do I submit my application?

You need to click on the 'Submit' button when you have completed your application.

I am unable to complete the online application form. Can I submit my application in a different format?

Unfortunately, we are only able to accept online applications. However, if you have a specific issue that means you are unable to complete the application form, please [contact us](#).

What details will I need to upload to the online application form?

The details you need to apply are outlined in the How to Apply section of the [Guidance Notes](#).

Why do I have to provide 5 different types of documents electronically?

As part of the on-line application process businesses must provide documentary evidence which will be used to help Invest NI validate your business. The onus is on the applicant to provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate that it meets the criteria:

Proof of your identity: You will be asked to provide evidence of your identity through a form of photographic ID, such as a scanned or photograph copy of a valid passport or a current (full or provisional) driving licence photo card.

Proof of the existence of a legitimate business: You will be asked to provide a clear and legible scanned, photograph or screenshot copy of your **Unique Taxpayer Reference (UTR), as well as your name and address**. Please also provide either of the following if applicable to your business: Your HMRC VAT Registration Number, or your Company Registration Number. For limited companies the UTR number should be in the name of the legal business entity.



Proof that your business is based in Northern Ireland: You will be asked to provide a document in the form of a scanned or photography copy which confirms that your business entity address is based in Northern Ireland such as a utility bill, bank statement, rates bill etc.

Proof of a valid sterling business bank account based in Northern Ireland: You will be asked to provide a bank statement for an account used by the business for trading and business expenses dated within the last 3 months. This must be the same account to which the ERIG grant payment will be made. For limited companies the bank statement should be in the name of the legal business entity. The statement must clearly show your business address; account name, number and sort code; date of issue of the statement; and business transaction information.

Proof of your Silver Level Accreditation Certificate: You will be asked to provide a copy of your Silver Level Innovator certificate awarded from Innovate NI (issued on or after 01 April 2021) or written proof of the outcome of your Innovation Assessment.

I don't have all the evidence requested to demonstrate that I meet the criteria. Can I still apply?

You must be able to provide all the evidence requested in order to apply. The onus is on the applicant to provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate that they meet all the criteria.

Please refer to the [Guidance Notes](#) for full details of what information you will need to provide and complete the online [Eligibility Checker](#) as part of the pre-application process.

I made an error on my application form. What should I do?

If your form is still saved as 'Draft', and has not been submitted, then you can go back to the relevant section and update with the correct information at any time up until the closing date.

Unfortunately, you cannot change your application after the closing date. Given the volume of applications and enquiries we expect to receive on the closing date we cannot guarantee to action this type of request at such a late stage. It is advisable to apply early if possible.

How do I upload the required documents such as proof of ID and bank statement?

To attach documents to your application, please click the 'Attach Documents' button at the relevant section. You will need to provide a description of the document to identify the document provided. Please note the maximum size of each attachment is 3MB. If you are using a camera or mobile phone, you may need to change the camera setting to reduce it to a lower resolution in order to meet the file size requirements.

What is a Unique Taxpayer Reference number (UTR) and where do I find it?

This is the 10-digit Unique Taxpayer Reference number (UTR) issued by HMRC to individual taxpayers (self-employed) who need to complete a Self-Assessment tax return. It appears on your HMRC SA302 or tax calculation document, or your SA250 document and other documents from HMRC, for example, notices to file a tax return or payment reminders.

My business is a limited company, and my Unique Taxpayer Reference number is more than 10 digits.

For limited companies, the UTR is the first 10 digits of the 17-character Corporation Tax Payment Reference. Please only enter the first 10 digits when completing the application form.

What happens if the supporting documentation provided does not match the business name on the application i.e. different name due to marriage or divorce?



The supporting documentation provided must match the business name on the application form. Invest NI will use this information to validate the business. The business must provide additional supporting documentation in the form of a marriage certificate or divorce documentation to substantiate the information on the application form.

STRUCTURE OF SUPPORT

How much support is available?

The value of grant will be dependent on the needs identified by the business in your online application but a maximum grant of up to £5,000 (taxable) is available. The grant is revenue rather than capital and successful applicants will be paid the grant directly to the business bank account provided in their application form.

You should be aware that the full cost of your project may be considerably greater than the support offered, and you should consider this carefully during your planning process.

When will I know how much I am being awarded?

If successful, you will receive an email confirming approval of your application and a Letter of Offer, which will be issued to the email address provided on your application form. Your application status can be checked on the portal at any time.

When can I expect to receive the grant payment?

Each application will be verified and the submitted evidence checked in your application. This process can vary depending on the level and quality of evidence provided by each applicant. If you are successful, you will receive an email and an Invest NI funding letter of offer.

When can I start my project?

Please do not start the project, sign contracts with suppliers, incur costs or pay deposits until you receive written confirmation of funding from Invest NI.

Why do I have to provide estimated budget costs?

You must provide the overall estimated budget or costs for your innovation project even if this exceeds the limit of the funding provided. A breakdown of the overall budget or costs should be provided by cost category detailing the type of activities, which will be funded for this project. These should be rounded to the nearest £500 increment.

Do you have definitions for the different cost categories in the Project Costs section?

Listed below are some examples of the type of activities that **may be used** against each cost category (please note the list is not exhaustive):

- **Skills development:** Costs associated with training and/or courses that staff may need to attend associated with the development and implementation of new process, service or product.
- **Marketing:** Costs associated with pre-commercialisation tasks and preparing for market launch such as preparing sales and marketing plans, developing marketing collateral, establishing channels to market etc.
- **Consultancy:** Costs associated with defining the market opportunity for the new product, process or service. These may include financial or technical feasibility studies or completing a scientific literature review.
- **Equipment:** Costs for equipment used during the actual project development stage, i.e. small IT equipment or equipment required to develop and/or implement new or



- improved product, service, process or business model.
- **Trials and testing:** Costs associated with trialling and testing during the development stage of the new product, service, process or business model.

My business has received funding through Innovation Vouchers, can my project costs include consultancy for my innovation project?

If your business has received Innovation Voucher support for a project other than the one you are applying to ERIG to support, consultancy costs may be considered.

If the project for which you are applying for ERIG support has received Innovation Vouchers, you will need to clearly articulate why additional consultancy is required for the project.

Can I receive my payment by cheque?

Payments can only be made via bank account details where a BACS payment can be accepted.

My business trading account is a Euro account, can I still apply?

No, you must have a UK sterling business account to apply for the Economic Recovery Innovation Grant.

I don't have a bank statement dated within the last 3 months.

If you do not have a bank statement dated within the last 3 months, then you should contact your bank to obtain a PDF copy of your statement. If you cannot provide a bank statement within the last 3 months, Invest NI will be unable to verify your business and your application will be rejected.

APPLICATION SUBMITTED

What happens after I submit my application form?

After submitting, your ERIG Application Invest NI will endeavour to process your application as quickly as possible. Invest NI can only progress applications that have all the required documentation attached, otherwise your application may be rejected or put on hold until the correct documentation is obtained.

All uploaded documentation will be validated along with your application form and businesses will be informed of the outcome as quickly as possible.

The status of your application can be viewed through the Customer Portal.

How do I check on my application progress?

Applicants will be able to check the status of their application by logging into their Customer Portal account, going to 'Applications' and clicking on the 'Submitted' tab. This will show the progress of your application.

How will I know if my application is successful?

Invest NI will process applications as quickly as possible and once an application has been checked, applicants will be informed via email on the outcome of their funding.

Once an application is approved, the status of your application will be changed to 'Verified' which can be viewed through your Customer Portal account.

**If successful, how do I accept my Letter of Offer?**

Invest NI grant support for successful applications will be issued by email to customers in a contract known as a Letter of Offer. The Letter of Offer will be sent to the email address provided in the application form. All Letters of Offer must be signed and accepted within the required timeframe otherwise the Offer will become invalid.

In line with Invest NI's digital transformation strategy, Letters of Offer are issued and accepted digitally as standard, using a digital signatures platform.

The digital signatures platform used by Invest NI is [Signable](#). Please read the [step-by-step guidance](#) on how to accept your Letter of Offer through Signable.

Can I apply on my Smartphone or tablet, and can I read or sign the Letter of Offer through Signables?

Yes, you can accept your Letter of Offer through [Signable](#) using your smart phone or tablet.

Who within my business is authorised to sign the Letter of Offer?

Applications must be authorised, 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

Am I required to submit a claim if my application is successful?

No, Invest NI will not be requiring you to make a separate claim to receive this funding support. Your signed and accepted Letter of Offer will automatically trigger payments to the bank account provided in your application.

Will I be required to provide further information to Invest NI after I have received my payment?

Yes, Invest NI will be carrying out monitoring activities for any funding awarded to businesses. Invest NI will require participating businesses to submit information as and when requested, reporting on progress against the innovation project and achievement of any key milestones as set out in the application.

Can I apply again if I am unsuccessful?

Applicants who are unsuccessful will be informed by email. If you have been unsuccessful the status of your application will be marked as 'Rejected' on your Customer Portal account.

You will also be notified of this rejection by email to the email address provided in your application. If appropriate, you may wish to apply again in the future within the specified timeframe of the scheme, considering the relevant reason(s) why your application was rejected.

Some examples of rejection reasons are listed below (please note this is not exhaustive):

- Missing requested documentation.
- Incorrect or illegible documentation provided.
- Business has not met all the eligibility criteria.
- Business has received support for their innovation project through other government funding.
- Business is not in receipt of Silver Level Innovator recognition status or equivalent.



- The ERIG scheme has closed, or the budget is fully allocated as we approve on a first come, first served basis.

Can I appeal a decision to reject my business for this funding?

Invest NI will determine at its sole discretion:

- Whether sufficient information has been provided to validate an application.
- Whether an application has been successful.
- The amount and terms of funding awarded.

If you have any enquiries about your application, please [contact us](#) and a member of the ERIG team will get back to you.

OTHER FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

I have more than one innovation project, can I apply for this funding more than once?

No, grant will be restricted to one payment per business for one active innovation project based on your Silver Level Innovation recognition or equivalent.

I am not an Invest NI client; can I still apply?

Yes, the grant is open to non-Invest NI clients that meet the eligibility criteria. ERIG support has been structured to support businesses that have not engaged with Invest NI but wish to improve the innovation capability of the business and progress the business along the [Innovation Framework](#).

I have a disability and I am having difficulty completing the online application process. What can I do?

If you have a disability which affects your ability to complete the online application process, please [contact us](#) so we can discuss your particular needs and support you to provide the information required to submit an application.

Please do not hesitate to contact our [Business Support Team](#) on 0800 181 4422

If I am successful, do I have to declare this grant to HMRC?

Yes, this grant is taxable, and any payment must be declared to HMRC as appropriate as part of the tax return for the business.

My business is pre-trading, but I have not registered with HMRC, how can I provide the relevant documentation to you?

All business must be registered with HMRC and provide the relevant documentation to demonstrate that the business is a legitimate business.

Is grant awarded on a first come first served basis?

Yes, ERIG has now been extended for applications. Projects will be appraised on a first-come firstserved basis. Invest NI reserves the right to close the grant to applications:

- When the available budget is fully allocated, or
- On 31 March 2022 at 5pm, whichever comes first.

Invest NI recommends that you apply as early as possible, as the assessment and application process may take **several weeks** to complete.



Businesses must complete all **3 steps of the application process** by 31 March 2022

What information will you hold about my business?

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 Economic Recovery Innovation Grant 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 www.investni.com/privacy