



**INNOVATION FOR A  
BRIGHTER FUTURE**

# Funding News Weekly Bulletin 5<sup>th</sup> September



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## Funding News Bulletin – 5<sup>th</sup> September 2025

### Innovation for a Brighter Future

This week's bulletin highlights funding opportunities for startups, SMEs, researchers, and community organisations across Essex and the UK:

- Young Entrepreneur Fund – £5,000 grants + 6-week business support. Deadline: 9 October 2025.
- Start Up Energy Transition Award 2026 – €10,000 prizes for clean energy startups. Deadline: 31 October 2025.
- HEDGE-IoT Open Call – Up to €60,000 for IoT energy innovation. Deadline: 24 October 2025.
- St Andrews Prize for the Environment – \$95,000 for global environmental projects. Deadline: 15 September 2025.
- Ofgem Energy Redress Scheme – £20,000–£2 million for charities/community energy groups. Deadline: 9 September 2025.
- Beyond the Bin Fund – Up to £45,000 for paper cup recycling projects. Deadline: 31 October 2025.
- Jam Jar Investments – £500K–£5M VC for consumer startups. Deadline: Rolling.
- Aurora Tech Award 2025 – \$15K–\$50K for women-led IT startups. Deadline: 12 November 2025.
- Future is Fungi Award – €250K–€350K investment or grant. Startup Award Deadline: 1 October 2025.
- Science Entrepreneur Award. Deadline: 20 January 2026
- XR Labs Fund – Up to £25K (80% FEC) for XR university prototypes. Deadline: 11 September 2025.
- Virgin Media O2 STEM Apprenticeship Fund – Covers full training costs. Deadline: Rolling.
- Europe's Rail Joint Undertaking – Horizon Europe Call – €148.2 million for rail innovation projects. Info Session: 10 October 2025, Brokerage Event: 13 October 2025, Call Launch: TBC.
- HMGCC Sensor Technologies Challenge – Up to £250,000 for electromagnetic sensor development. Deadline: 18 September 2025.
- Innovation Exchange Challenges – Discretionary funding for UK businesses solving sector-specific challenges. Deadline: 12 September 2025.
- ATI Programme Strategic Batch – September 2025 – Up to £18 million for aerospace R&D and infrastructure. Deadline: 17 September 2025 (11:00 BST).
- Full ADOPT Grant – Round 3 – £50K–£100K for on-farm trials and demonstrations. Deadline: 15 October 2025.
- Farming Innovation Programme – Small R&D Partnerships (Round 4) – £1M–£3M for collaborative agri-tech R&D. Deadline: 5 November 2025.
- Farming Innovation Programme – Feasibility Studies (Round 4) – £200K–£500K for early-stage agri-tech project. Deadline: 3 December 2025.
- ADOPT Facilitator Support Grant – £2,500 for project development support. Deadline: 15 October 2025.
- Innovate UK Travel Support Scheme – Up to £750 for UK SMEs attending Horizon Europe events. Deadlines: 19 September & 17 October 2025.
- CREST Awards for Schools – £350 + free awards for STEM engagement in underrepresented groups. Deadline: 14 October 2025.

## Discover Funding for Your Essex Business or Project – New Portal Now Live!

We're excited to launch the Ambitious Essex Funding Finder – your new go-to tool for discovering funding opportunities across Essex.

Explore the portal: <https://funding.idoxopen4business.co.uk/essexcc>

- Aimed at micro & small businesses, the portal helps you: Find grants, loans, and awards tailored to your needs

- Filter by sector, size, location, and funding type

- Save and download opportunities

- Set up alerts so you never miss a deadline and received notifications of opportunities.

Join our free webinar to learn how to get the most from the platform:

Tuesday 16 September, 10:00–11:00

Thursday 18 September, 14:00–15:00

Hosted by Ambitious Essex Growth Agency/ECC and Idox Software, the session includes a live demo, search tips, and Q&A.

Let's unlock funding for Essex together!

for more information please contact [gareth.heard@essex.gov.uk](mailto:gareth.heard@essex.gov.uk) (future funding & Innovation Lead)

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## Innovate UK Funding Application Overhaul

A major overhaul of its funding application process to make it simpler, faster, and more inclusive. Recognising that many businesses—especially first-time applicants—find the process complex and time-consuming, Innovate UK has introduced four key improvements. These include a redesigned application form that focuses on clarity and relevance, a commitment to a 90-day turnaround from competition close to Grant Offer Letter, a broader and more diverse pool of assessors, and tailored project monitoring based on individual needs. These changes aim to remove unnecessary barriers and ensure that more businesses across the UK can access innovation support with confidence.

To further improve accessibility, Innovate UK has launched a suite of tools and resources to guide applicants through the process. These include practical articles, behind-the-scenes videos, simplified question sets, and expert support. The goal is to empower applicants to submit strong, well-argued proposals without needing external consultants. Over the next 6 to 12 months, Innovate UK hopes to see increased participation from underrepresented regions and groups, better feedback from users, and a more agile, responsive funding system. This initiative reflects a broader commitment to building a fairer and more effective innovation ecosystem in the UK

## Young UK Entrepreneurs Offered Financial Support to Start or Grow Businesses

Young entrepreneurs in the UK can apply for financial support to help start or expand their businesses. The Young Entrepreneur Fund is run by Simply Business in partnership with Hatch Enterprise and provides both funding and tailored business assistance.

Grants of £5,000 are available through the initiative. In addition to financial support, successful applicants will take part in six weeks of business development support delivered by Hatch Enterprise. This aims to help young entrepreneurs address the challenges of launching or growing a venture.

The programme is open to individuals aged between 18 and 30 who are resident in the UK. Applicants must either have a business idea they wish to pursue or already be running a business that is trading.

Funding is intended to be flexible and can be used to support a wide range of business costs, depending on the needs of the applicant. The programme is designed to strengthen the long-term viability of businesses led by young people and improve their capacity to operate and grow.

**The deadline for applications is 9 October 2025 (23:59).**

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## Global Start Up Energy Transition Award Opens for 2026

The Start Up Energy Transition Award is an international competition for start-ups and young companies worldwide that are working on ideas affecting global energy transition and climate change.

There are five categories of the award, all with the aim of clean energy promotion. The categories are:

- Clean Energy and Storage
- Mobility and Transportation
- Industry
- Buildings and Construction
- Quality Energy Access and SDG-7

The winner of each category will receive a prize of up to €10,000. There is also a €5,000 prize for non-winning SGD-7 Finalists.

National and international companies that contribute to the success of the energy transition with their products can apply. Applicants can only apply to one category and must meet the following eligibility criteria:

The start-up must have been founded within the last 10 years and be registered or in the process of becoming registered.

The applicant must be able to present a proof of concept and a client, or an industrial/corporate/institutional partner or a functioning prototype (TRL 4 or higher).

**The deadline to apply for the 2026 Award is 31 October 2025.**

## Funding for UK SMEs and Startups in IoT Energy Innovation

SMEs and startups working in energy innovation can apply for financial support through the HEDGE-IoT Open Call, funded under Horizon Europe. The project aims to advance the energy sector by promoting Internet of Things (IoT) solutions that are data-driven and capable of being tested in real-world pilot environments.

Applicants can receive up to €60,000, covering a maximum of 70% of eligible costs. The funding is intended to help organisations create IoT-enabled services that build on HEDGE-IoT's existing technologies and contribute to the wider transformation of Europe's energy systems.

The initiative is open to SMEs and startups established in the UK, any EU Member State or a Horizon Europe associated country. Projects supported through this Call are expected to demonstrate the application of IoT technologies within energy environments, with a focus on improving efficiency, performance and system integration.

**The deadline for applications is 24 October 2025 (17:00 CET).**

## St Andrews Prize for the Environment Opens for Entries

The University of St Andrews has launched its annual global Prize for the Environment.

The St Andrews Prize for the Environment is a significant global initiative that identifies and champions innovative and inspiring responses to environmental challenges, including the climate crisis.

Now in its 27th year, the Prize was established by the University to reward and promote the most significant global contributions to environmental conservation and sustainable development.

Individuals, multi-disciplinary teams, organisations, and community groups may apply.

For a project to be eligible, it must:

Be solving a major environmental problem, Be contributing to the long-term global pursuit of sustainable development, conservation and or biodiversity, Be innovative, Be fully established, Be able to provide data and evidence to demonstrate the success of the solution.

Have the potential to expand to another location or for its key elements to be applied in another context. Have a need for funding to develop the project further and a clearly defined plan for how the prize money will facilitate this, Have the ability to inspire others in the field

Meet high ethical standards in respect of intellectual property and in how it interacts with people and with the environment.

Be able to host a University of St Andrews student for a two-week internship visit.

Be inclusive.

From 2025, the winner and two runners-up will receive a prize package comprising prize money to enable them to take their project to the next stage and a two-week internship visit from a University of St Andrews student, funded by the University.

The winner will receive prize money of \$95,000 (US dollars) and the runners-up will receive \$20,000 (US dollars).

**The deadline for entries is 15 September 2025**



## Ofgem Energy Redress Scheme Opens for Application from Across Britain

Charities and community energy groups across England, Scotland and Wales can now apply for a grant through one of six funding streams, with a total of £40 million available.

Priority is given to projects that support people in vulnerable situations struggling with their energy bills, the development of innovative energy related products or services and projects that empower people to reduce their carbon emissions. In addition, this funding round also encourages applications for projects targeting Private Rented Sector (PRS) properties.

The funding streams available are:

The Main Fund with £25 million offers grants between £50,000 and £2 million for projects that support households in vulnerable situations.

The Impact Fund with £2 million offers grants between £20,000 and £499,000 for projects monitoring the impact to households, of energy advice and other interventions.

The Small Project Fund with £1 million offers grants between £20,000 and £49,999 for projects that support households in vulnerable situations.

The Innovation Fund with £6 million offers grants between £20,000 and £1 million for projects that develop innovative products or services to benefit households.

The Carbon Emissions Reduction Fund with £4 million offers grants between £20,000 and £1 million for projects that reduce UK carbon emissions and empower households to help reduce their carbon footprint.

The Just Transition Fund with £2 million offers grants between £20,000 and £250,000 for projects that develop community renewable energy which will benefit energy consumers in vulnerable situations.

Applications are accepted from registered charities, Community Interest Companies (CICs), Community Benefit Societies and Cooperative Societies in England, Scotland and Wales that are registered with the Energy Redress Scheme and have passed the due diligence process.

Charities can apply for funding through all six funding streams.

Community energy groups can apply for funding through three funding streams: the Carbon Emissions Reduction Fund, Innovation Fund, or Just Transition Fund.

Only one application can be made per round across all the funds.

Commenting on the new round, Senior project manager for the Energy Redress Scheme at Energy Saving Trust, Graham Ayling said:

“We’re pleased to announce this new round of funding to support the voluntary sector in delivering their crucial work, helping households in vulnerable situations to stay warm during the colder months ahead.

The funding will also support projects actively engaging local communities and households with reducing their carbon emissions as the UK transitions to net zero. We encourage charities and community energy groups to apply.”

**The deadline for applications is 9 September 2025 (17:00).**

## Grants for UK Projects Improving Paper Cup Recycling

The Beyond the Bin Fund is offering financial support for projects that aim to increase the recycling or reuse of on-the-go paper cups in the UK.

Grants of up to £45,000 are available. Funding can be used to cover staff costs, project materials and equipment, communications, venue or travel expenses, data and evaluation, professional fees and reasonable project-related overheads.

Eligible applicants include UK based businesses and brands such as coffee chains, retailers and venues, as well as local authorities, universities, research institutions, startups and social enterprises. Collaborative projects will also be considered, provided one organisation acts as the lead applicant.

The funding is intended to encourage new approaches to addressing challenges in paper cup recycling and recovery. Potential activities include awareness campaigns designed to increase recycling rates, improvements to collection and recycling infrastructure, and research that develops practical solutions for the recyclability of paper cups.

By supporting projects across different sectors, the fund aims to help reduce the environmental impact of single-use paper cups by creating and testing scalable solutions for their reuse or recycling.

**Applications open on 1 September 2025 and must be submitted by the deadline of 31 October 2025.**

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## Jam Jar Investments

European early-stage consumer venture capital firm founded by the team behind Innocent Drinks. The firm backs ambitious consumer brands across the UK and Europe, offering investment and strategic support to help them scale. Jam Jar typically invests between £500,000 and £5 million at the seed or Series A stage, with a focus on companies capable of achieving a £250 million+ exit. The fund targets businesses with strong early metrics, compelling products that consumers love, and complementary founding teams. Sectors of interest include food and drink, healthtech, fintech, marketplaces, and beauty, with a preference for B2C models. Jam Jar is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and operates from its London office at Phoenix Brewery. Applications are open to professional clients and eligible counterparties only. Interested companies can submit pitches directly via the Jam Jar website, including a pitch deck and company details.

**Application deadline: Rolling (open for submissions at any time).**

## Global Programme Offers Support for Fungi-based Environmental Innovations

A global programme is offering funding and support to startups and researchers developing fungi-based innovations aimed at addressing environmental challenges. The Future is Fungi Award targets projects that contribute to climate change mitigation, biodiversity protection, sustainable agriculture or alternatives to petrochemical products.

The programme comprises two strands. The Startup Award is open to early-stage and scaling companies at pre-seed to Series A stage that have an incorporated business and demonstrate positive environmental impact. The winner will receive an investment of €250,000-€350,000 from a syndicate of private investors, coordinated through an external platform with a 3.5% fee deducted. The investment includes a 10% discount on the valuation in the next equity round. Additional support includes access to an expert network and visibility through podcasts, interviews and presentation opportunities.

The Science Entrepreneurs Award is open to individual scientists or teams with at least one scientist, who have reached Technology Readiness Level 3 or above. Eligible applicants should not yet have incorporated a company, or must have founded one no more than eight months prior. The winner will receive a financial grant, with potential access to investment, and participate in a three-month online Venture Programme providing training on building a startup and commercialising research. Participants also gain recognition through the Fungal Hall of Fame and access to networks to support market-ready solutions.

**Applications for the Startup Award are open between 10 September 2025 and 1 October 2025. Applications for the Science Entrepreneur Award are open between 15 December 2025 and 20 January 2026.**

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## Global Aurora Tech Award to Support Women Entrepreneurs in IT Fund

Applications are open for the 2025 Aurora Tech Award, which provides financial prizes to women-led startups in the information technology sector. The award aims to recognise and support women entrepreneurs by offering cash prizes to help advance their businesses. Three prizes are available in this round. The first prize is \$50,000, the second is \$20,000 and the third is \$15,000. The award is open to startups founded or co-founded and led by a woman from any country. Eligible businesses must be less than five years old and have a functional prototype of their product. The funding can be used to support business development and growth activities, enabling recipients to progress their product or service in the market. The scheme is open to companies working in any area of information technology, provided they meet the eligibility requirements.

**The deadline for applications is 12 November 2025.**



## The XR Labs Fund

Targeted funding opportunity for UK university researchers and technicians to develop extended reality (XR) prototypes, with a particular emphasis on virtual production and convergent media. Grants of up to £25,000 full economic cost (FEC) are available, with 80% (£20,000) funded by XR Network+. The fund aims to broaden access to university-based XR infrastructure and foster collaboration between academic institutions and industry partners. Projects must make demonstrable use of XR facilities at the applicant's home institution or through collaboration with another UK university. Eligible activities include academic-led R&D with industry partners, rigorous user testing, inter-university collaboration, and training for technical teams. All projects must align with one or more of the XR Network+ themes, which include immersive storytelling, virtual production workflows, and convergent media innovation.

**The fund is particularly welcoming to first-time applicants, with guidance and support available to help navigate the application process. This includes a detailed application form, budget template, and work plan, all of which must be submitted via the XR Labs Fund portal by 12:00pm on 11 September 2025. Funding decisions will be announced in the week commencing 3 November 2025, with projects starting from 16 February 2026 and concluding by 17 August 2026.**

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## Virgin Media O2 Offers £1 Million to Support STEM Apprenticeships

Virgin Media O2 has announced the launch of a £1 million Apprenticeship Talent Fund to help smaller organisations recruit and train apprentices in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) roles.

The funding will be provided through transfers of Virgin Media O2's unspent apprenticeship levy funds. It will cover the full cost of approved apprenticeship training for eligible roles, enabling organisations to access financial support they would not otherwise receive.

The initiative is aimed at addressing cost pressures, complexity of training and limited access to levy funds, which have been identified as barriers to apprenticeship recruitment. It also seeks to increase participation from underrepresented groups, particularly women and people from global majority backgrounds, in STEM careers.

The fund is open to UK-based small businesses, charities, social enterprises and local authorities that do not pay the apprenticeship levy. Organisations can apply when hiring a woman or a person from a global majority background for a STEM apprenticeship. The support is intended for new recruits rather than existing staff.

Funding can be used to create new apprenticeship roles for young people or career changers, contributing to the development of a skilled and diverse workforce in STEM sectors.

**Applications can be made at any time.**

## Europe's Rail Joint Undertaking – Horizon Europe Call for Proposals 2025

Europe's Rail Joint Undertaking (ERJU) is launching its second major call for proposals under Horizon Europe, offering €148.2 million in funding across seven targeted rail innovation topics. These include network and mobility management, automated train operations, intelligent asset management, sustainable rail systems, digital freight services, regional rail revitalisation, and studies on Rail Industry 5.0. Full details are available in the Horizon Europe Work Programme (pages 153–253).

To support applicants, ERJU will host an online information session on 10 October 2025, followed by an in-person brokerage event in Birmingham on 13 October 2025. The brokerage event will bring together ERJU representatives, existing project participants, and rail innovators from across Europe to facilitate consortium building and collaboration. Interested parties are encouraged to review the Work Programme, attend the info session, and register early for the brokerage event.

Key Dates:

- ◆ Online Info Session: 10 October 2025
- ◆ Brokerage Event (Birmingham): 13 October 2025
- ◆ Call Launch: TBC (expected early October 2025)

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## HMGCC Challenge Provides Support for Development of Sensor Technologies

UK organisations can apply for funding to develop advanced electromagnetic sensors under the HMGCC Co-Creation Challenge. The scheme will provide support over a 16-week period to help progress technologies from laboratory stage towards proof of concept.

Applicants may receive up to £250,000 per project. The focus is on lab-based sensors, including quantum sensors, operating across electromagnetic frequencies from 1MHz to 4GHz. The aim is to move technologies currently at Technology Readiness Levels 3 to 5 towards prototype stage and eventual field trials at levels 6 to 7.

The challenge covers a wide range of technology areas such as antennas, electronic engineering, materials science, photonics, radio frequency science, systems engineering and quantum technologies. Funding can be used to cover time, materials, overheads and other indirect costs linked to the project.

Applications are open to sole innovators, industry partners, academic institutions and research bodies of all sizes, provided they are based in the United Kingdom. Eligible organisations must be able to demonstrate how their work can progress sensor development to practical applications.

**The deadline for applications is 18 September 2025 (17:00).**

## The Innovation Exchange Challenges

Delivered by Innovate UK Business Connect, offer discretionary funding and tailored support to UK businesses through sector-specific innovation challenges. These challenges aim to accelerate cross-sector collaboration by connecting industry needs with pioneering solution providers. Participating businesses gain access to expert matchmaking, strategic advice, and opportunities for R&D partnerships. The programme is open to small, medium, and large UK companies with relevant experience aligned to specific challenge requirements. Applicants may be required to provide match funding. The initiative supports knowledge transfer, innovation strategy development, and commercial growth by enabling businesses to engage with experts, academics, and government bodies beyond their usual networks.

**Application deadline: 12 September 2025**

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## ATI Programme Strategic Batch – September 2025

The Aerospace Technology Institute (ATI), in collaboration with Innovate UK and the Department for Business and Trade, has launched the September 2025 Strategic Batch for expressions of interest. This opportunity supports UK-based businesses, academic institutions, and research technology organisations (RTOs) to deliver industrial research and capital infrastructure projects that strengthen the UK's civil aerospace sector. Projects must align with the ATI's Destination Zero strategy, which prioritises zero-carbon emission aircraft, ultra-efficient technologies, cross-cutting enabling technologies, and non-CO<sub>2</sub> solutions.

Up to £18 million in grant funding is available per organisation, with total project funding capped at 50% of eligible costs. Match funding requirements vary by organisation size, and collaborative projects are encouraged. This is the first of four potential stages, beginning with an Expression of Interest (EoI) phase. Successful applicants may be invited to submit full applications to Batch 47 later this year. The ATI Programme is part of a wider £975 million government-industry investment running through to 2030.

**Application deadline: 17 September 2025 (11:00 BST)**

## Full ADOPT Grant – Round 3

Defra's ADOPT programme is offering grants of £50,000–£100,000 to support on-farm trial and demonstration projects that accelerate the adoption of innovative practices in agriculture. Eligible applicants include farming, growing, or forestry businesses based in England. Projects should focus on practical implementation and knowledge exchange, and must be delivered in collaboration with other stakeholders such as researchers, advisors, or supply chain partners. This round complements the ADOPT Facilitator Support Grant and forms part of the Farming Innovation Programme.

**Application deadline: 15 October 2025**

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## Farming Innovation Programme – Small R&D Partnerships (Round 4)

The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra), in partnership with Innovate UK, will open Round 4 of the Small R&D Partnerships competition on 15 September 2025. This call offers up to £7.8 million to support collaborative R&D projects that develop new farming products, services, or systems and bring them closer to commercial use. Projects must be £1 million to £3 million in size and can last up to 30 months. Lead applicants must be UK-registered businesses working with at least one research organisation.

Projects must demonstrate clear benefits to farmers, growers, or foresters in England and address one or more of the programme's core themes: productivity, environmental sustainability, and resilience. There are no fixed topics, allowing applicants to propose solutions that reflect industry priorities. A consortia-building event will be held on 18 September 2025 to help applicants find partners. This competition is part of the wider UK Farming Innovation Programme, which has committed £200 million to agri-tech innovation through to 2030.

**Application deadline: 5 November 2025 (11:00 BST)**

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## Farming Innovation Programme – Feasibility Studies (Round 4)

Launching on 13 October 2025, Round 4 of the Feasibility Studies competition will provide up to £4.8 million for early-stage projects that test new ideas in real-world farming conditions. Projects should be £200,000 to £500,000 in size and last up to 24 months. Lead applicants must be UK-registered businesses, and collaboration with research organisations is strongly encouraged.

This round supports innovation in crop and livestock production, resource efficiency, and climate resilience, with a focus on generating evidence to inform future R&D investment. A consortia-building event will be held on 14 October 2025 to support partnership development. The competition is delivered by Innovate UK and Defra as part of the Farming Innovation Programme, which aims to transform UK agriculture through industry-led innovation.

**Application deadline: 3 December 2025 (11:00 BST)**

## Support for Agricultural Businesses in England Developing ADOPT Applications

Defra, in collaboration with Innovate UK, is providing support through the Farming Innovation Programme for farmers, growers and foresters in England preparing Full ADOPT Grant submissions. The scheme is intended to improve application quality and encourage wider participation in innovation-related funding.

The support is aimed at individuals interested in on-farm trials or experiments that test new or emerging solutions in agriculture, horticulture or agri-forestry. Funding will be used to engage an external Project Facilitator to assist in developing Full ADOPT Grant applications.

Projects must address a clear challenge or opportunity on-farm or immediately post-farmgate. They should aim to enhance productivity, sustainability or resilience, including support for net zero farming practices. Proposals must also show how findings will be relevant to others in the sector and tested under real-world conditions.

Up to £100,000 has been allocated for the scheme. Grants of £2,500 will be made available to successful applicants.

Eligible applicants must be active farming, growing or forestry businesses based in England and able to demonstrate that they are established, including sole traders. Only single applicants may apply.

**Applications for Round 4 are open between 4 September 2025 and 15 October 2025 (11:00).**

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## Innovate UK is offering Travel Support of up to £750

Help UK-based R&D-performing SMEs attend Horizon Europe consortia-building events across Europe. The scheme enables innovators to form new collaborative partnerships and expand their networks internationally, accelerating UK involvement in European research programmes. Eligible applicants must be for-profit SMEs based in the UK and meet the EU definition of an R&D-performing SME. Successful applicants will receive proactive support from Innovate UK and must adhere to its travel expense policy.

**Upcoming supported events include the Manufacturing Partnership Days in Schaerbeek, Belgium (20–22 October 2025, Deadline: 19 September 2025) and Raw Materials Week in Brussels (17–21 November 2025, Deadline: 17 October 2025).**



## UK Schools Can Apply for Funding to Run CREST Awards from 9 September

Grants are available twice a year for UK schools in challenging circumstances to run CREST Awards with students (aged 3 to 19 years) who are underrepresented in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM).

CREST Awards aim to inspire children and young people to think and behave like scientists and engineers. It is the British Science Association's (BSA) flagship education programme for student-led project work in STEM. Once students complete CREST projects, they are recognised with a CREST Award certificate from the BSA.

A grant of £350 is available for schools to run CREST awards which can be spent on materials, equipment, a field trip, teacher CPD, etc. In addition, awardees will also receive up to £350 CREST Awards for free.

The funding is only available for 'school' settings. This includes schools; colleges; Ofsted-registered early years settings; nurseries; and preschools.

Applicants need to meet at least one of the following three criteria:

At least 30% of pupils are eligible for free school meals or equivalent.

At least 30% of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Is based in a remote and rural location.

Priority will be given to schools whose planned engagement clearly demonstrates a commitment to the following:

Involving and supporting children and young people eligible for pupil premium, from ethnic minority backgrounds, with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or from any other groups of young people more likely to be underrepresented in STEM.

Supporting girls and non-binary young people to develop their STEM skills, understanding and passions.

Engaging children and young people with lower prior attainment or in mixed attainment science groupings, and those who would not normally choose to participate in STEM activities.

Activities that are cross-curricular and/or involve collaboration between science and other subject areas, particularly if it is outside STEM (e.g. history, art, music).

Engagement that involves whole classes or whole year groups.

Engagement outside of traditional science contexts like STEM clubs and lessons.

**Applications will be accepted from 9 September to 14 October 2025 (17:00).**