



Department for
Digital, Culture,
Media & Sport

Future Radio Access Network: Diversifying the 5G Supply Chain - Application Guidance

Contents

Overview

1. Programme and policy context

2. Competition outline

[2.1 Diversification Open RAN Competition ambition](#)

[2.2 Scope](#)

[2.3 Funding](#)

3. Eligibility criteria

[3.1 Eligible applicants](#)

[3.2 Proposing consortium](#)

[3.3 Roles](#)

4. Further General Guidelines

[4.1 Benefits monitoring](#)

[4.2 Collaboration](#)

[4.3 Dissemination](#)

[4.4 Consortia Forming Support](#)

5. Competition process

[5.1 Dates and deadlines](#)

[5.2 Project Development Review](#)

6. How to Apply

[6.1 What to Complete](#)

[6.2 How to Submit Your Application](#)

[6.3 Application Format](#)

7. Application and Assessment

[7.1 Application Structure](#)

[7.2 Supplementary Information](#)

[7.3 Assessment](#)

[7.4 Scoring](#)

[7.5 Quality Threshold](#)

8 Additional Documents and Information

[8.1 Notices](#)

Overview

Background

The [Diversification Strategy](#) identified R&D as a barrier to entry for new suppliers. The Government is investing in the UK's R&D ecosystem and capability in order to underpin the long term success of the reforms and initiatives set out in the Diversification Strategy. This competition will support the UK's infrastructure innovation ecosystem to play a leading role transforming the UK telecoms market, and encourage more private sector innovation to help unlock opportunities for UK businesses to play a role in the emerging global supply chain based on open standards.

This competition is part of a wide ranging government response to the challenge of diversifying the UK's supply market for radio equipment set out in the Diversification Strategy. The Diversification Strategy calls for the establishment of a UK wide R&D ecosystem spanning the development of physical hardware, to software/virtualised solutions, and testing with live networks, to accelerate and pull forward the development of interoperable technologies. There is already an ecosystem taking shape through private sector funding. This competition is intended to help harness that momentum and promote collaboration and convene the strengths of the UK's R&D sectors to pull in the same direction and towards the goals of the diverse supply chain the UK needs to ensure its national security and resilience. Ultimately, the projects funded through this competition should help develop products that resolve the top challenges posed by new, interoperable technologies, and develop initial UK capability in the Open RAN ecosystem.

The Government is already making investments to bolster this ecosystem in the form of the SmartRAN Open Network Interoperability Centre (SONIC) and the UK Telecoms Lab (UKTL). The competition will complement those initiatives by focusing more on providing support to companies developing technology rather than testbed infrastructure. Consortia are encouraged to make use of existing testbeds and other infrastructure, such as SONIC, other 5GTT funded facilities, and private sector labs and testbed infrastructure.

Objectives

- Accelerate the development of high-performance 5G Open RAN solutions that meet UK dense urban requirements by 2025.
- Attract new 5G RAN suppliers to conduct R&D in the UK, and foster professional collaborations between potential new entrants into the UK's public network.
- Contribute to the delivery of the 5G Supply Chain Diversification Strategy's objectives of disaggregated supply chains, open interfaces by default, and security being a priority in network deployment.

Competition Timeline and Events

There will be opportunities to learn more about the competition and discuss with potential collaboration partners at a series of direct engagement events:

Briefing Events	Date
Competition Briefing Event	13th July 2021 (event recording)
Matchmaking Event	27th July 2021 (event recording)

For this competition the application window is open for 8 weeks and the timeline is:

Milestones	Date
Competition launch	2nd July 2021
Applications deadline	27th August 2021
Shortlisted applicants notified	Mid September 2021
Interviews with shortlisted applicants	Late September 2021
Successful applicants notified	Mid October 2021
Project pre-grant set up and DCMS due diligence. Subject to completion, DCMS and the lead partner then sign a grant funding agreement.	November 2021 - January 2022

Who can apply?

This competition is open to applications from consortia with two or more members with funding available for activity taking place in the UK.

How to apply

Please read the Competition Guidance below, complete the Application Form and the Finance Forms provided alongside this guidance and return to 5g-diversification-strategy@dcms.gov.uk.

Funding

There is up to **£30 million of funding** available from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport in this competition. Grants ranging from £250,000 to £5 million will be made available to individual projects.

Delivery Period

Subject to completion of pre-grant set up and DCMS due diligence, projects will be expected to sign a Grant Funding Agreement in late 2021/early 2022. They should plan to complete delivery within eighteen months of the project start date. Projects will have the opportunity to update their proposals as part of the required Project Development Review around the halfway point of the project.

Competition Guidance

1. Programme and policy context

The 5G Supply Chain Diversification Strategy (2020) set out that deployment methods based on openness and interoperability - such as Open RAN - have a key role to play in enabling diversification.

Although Open RAN is an emerging technology, the Government recognises its potential to positively impact competition and innovation in the telecoms supply market, and in the emergence of other open

network solutions. In particular, the Government believes the UK is well placed to drive the development and deployment of Open RAN and other open technologies, noting the innovative approach of the UK telecoms market in recent years.

At the same time, the Government recognises the scale of the work required to ensure its successful implementation in the UK. The Telecoms Diversification Taskforce recommended that the Government invest in product development and engineering in priority areas so that open interface technologies are at least as performant, efficient and secure as today's traditional deployment methods. This competition will be an early mover in this space, aiming to start the process of key product development to ensure that Open RAN meets the needs of the UK's networks.

We view this competition as the very beginning of our wider programme of investment in Diversification R&D - aiming to address the key technological challenges to developing Open RAN in the UK, and catalysing the role the UK ecosystem can play to encourage innovation in interoperability.

Defining Open RAN

When referring to Open RAN in this document, we mean this in its broader sense of disaggregated networks and open architectures, not just the OpenRAN standards coming out of standard setting bodies. It is worth noting that we are also looking to support other forms of interoperability in the RAN, with a view to enabling multi-vendor architectures by default. Bidders should not feel discouraged from applying if their solution does not meet a specific definition of Open RAN.

2. Competition outline

2.1 Diversification Open RAN Competition ambition

Our overarching objective in the R&D and Open RAN policy space is to foster the industry trend towards openness in order to make market entry (and interchangeability) of new suppliers easier now and in the long-term. Open RAN is an enabler of interoperability, and our analysis has shown that the market is moving in this direction. However there are two key risks: that the progress is too slow to make a significant impact in the market, or that Open RAN development could itself create a new form of vendor lock-in.

The 5G Supply Chain Diversification Strategy, and the recent Telecoms Diversification Taskforce Report identified high costs of R&D as a critical barrier to entry for new suppliers, evidencing the need for intervention earlier in the product development cycle. Our findings and industry engagement have led us to assess the ways of administering funding to industry to facilitate R&D.

DCMS plans to invest in multiple projects targeting all aspects of Open RAN technology which will be led by the private sector. This will involve a range of private sector organisations (for example, vendors, system integrators, software providers, and small innovative enterprises) and may involve public sector organisations. The project will provide the opportunity to use developing technologies in innovative products and services to businesses, to improve the readiness and availability of Open RAN products and services. It will also open the potential for economic development by stimulating the development of a diverse future RAN ecosystem involving multiple vendors.

This competition will fit into a wider programme of R&D work, and will complement emerging policy priorities and roadmap including our current investments, such as the UK Telecoms Lab (UKTL), SmartRAN Open Network Interoperability Centre (SONIC Labs), and the NEC NeutrORAN trial.

2.2 Scope

2.2.1 Competition objectives

Projects applying to this competition are expected to address one or more of the priority objectives for development set out below. Achieving these objectives will catalyse the development of Open RAN solutions relevant to the UK market, with a view to accelerating the diversification of the UK's 5G supply chain by making interoperable technologies a viable alternative to traditional deployments. Projects are not expected to target all objectives and may prioritise some over others.

- 1. Accelerate the development of 5G Open RAN solutions that meet UK dense urban requirements by 2025.**
- 2. Attract new 5G RAN suppliers to conduct R&D in the UK and foster professional collaborations between potential new entrants into the UK's public network.**
- 3. Contribute to the delivery of the 5G Supply Chain Diversification Strategy's objectives of disaggregated supply chains, open interfaces by default, and security being a priority in network deployment.**

Ultimately, these projects should help develop products that resolve the top challenges posed by new, interoperable technologies that support open standards, high security standards and develop initial UK capability in the Open RAN ecosystem to accelerate deployment of Open RAN solutions into UK networks.

2.2.2 Functional Priorities

Through discussion with operators and suppliers, and taking on board the advice of the Taskforce, we have worked to define Open RAN functions which will be critical in delivering a minimum viable product. By addressing these barriers we are able to accelerate and enable the 5G ecosystem to meet the Government's diversification objectives. These barriers are grouped into buckets based on functionality in order to be technology agnostic, solution-led and welcome a broad array of submissions. These functionalities are often areas where proprietary solutions have a technical advantage, or the barrier does not exist for them due to the nature of proprietary architecture. Prioritisation was also based on existing market activity. Where there is evidence from our engagement with industry that the barriers would be resolved absent intervention, they have been deprioritised to ensure effective ROI on competition funds.

We believe that these priority functions are those that are essential for delivering a competitive Open RAN product for the mid-2020s procurement cycle, on commercial, technical and resilience grounds. Underpinning these functional buckets are two core principles of secure-by-default and building capability in the UK that we encourage applicants to demonstrate.

The key priorities identified are:

- **Power Efficiency** - Power consumption represents a large share of Opex for operators, and Open RAN cannot currently match proprietary solutions for efficiency. This also represents a strategic opportunity for the UK to establish global leadership in an area of priority across 5G.
- **Spectrum Management** - This encompasses an array of key capabilities needed for Open RAN to be viable in the UK's market conditions, including handling new mmWave frequencies and aggregating service across fragmented spectrum bands.

- **Software Platforms** - Interchangeability of softwarised solutions is integral to Open RAN architecture. As such, having a common API (Application Programming Interface), operating system, or something analogous to an 'app store' from which MNOs could deploy software solutions and applications onto COTS (Commercial Off The Shelf) hardware will be critical.
- **Systems Integration** - Maintaining seamless interoperability and integration between components from different suppliers in a single architecture will become both more complex and more important with the coming of Open RAN. Developing this capability is particularly relevant from a national security perspective given the lack of onshore skills in this area.

While these are highlighted as priorities, the competition will welcome applications across the breadth and depth of the RAN, for example: **RAN Intelligent Controller (RIC) and other management applications, site connection handovers, electromechanical performance, neutral host, and MORAN** (active infrastructure sharing) use cases. The competition will use a portfolio approach, ensuring we have a variety of successful bids.

2.2.3 Security Requirements

Proposed solutions should adhere as closely as possible to the principles and requirements set out in the Vendor Security Annex of the NCSC (National Cyber Security Centre) Telecoms Security Requirements.

Bidders should consider potential threats and increased attack surfaces that could be exposed through the unguarded adoption of open and generic technologies in telecoms networks. These risks should be manageable and advantages realised, if adequate mitigations are put in place. Nascent standards and specifications, virtualisation, new open interfaces, use of generic hardware and Free and open-source software (FOSS) and increased automation pose both security threats and opportunities. Bidders should describe a thorough security evaluation of their products in relation to these component technologies where relevant.

Security innovation will be a highly valued factor of the winning bids. Bidders should make a convincing case for how their security practices excel throughout development, deployment and operation. Bidders should define the security standards and processes that they have incorporated into their product management processes. A full Software Development Life Cycle (SDLC) policy and process description is required, along with the publication of a security declaration setting out your organisations approach to product security. Particular attention will be paid to innovative security solutions for Machine Learning/AI, automation, zero touch provisioning and other network management & orchestration (MANO) capabilities. Defence in depth should be displayed: detailed descriptions for the implementations of secure boot, zero-trust, least privilege, optimal patching, sophisticated monitoring & event handling technologies would be welcomed.

During the rigorous assessment process, alongside the priorities identified, we will consider the security of projects. We will look for evidence that entrants have a clear understanding of security of the OpenRAN architecture, and consider this. Secure by design principles and good practice are required for all projects, DCMS reserves the right to fail projects if their security approach is not deemed sufficient by assessors.

Where relevant to the project aims, the evaluation team would be interested to receive short summaries of participating staff who contribute to standards and/or industry initiatives like 3GPP, ETSI or the ORAN Alliance or have participated in early commercial rollouts and/or TIP initiatives for the early deployment of Open RAN technologies.

We consider the Open RAN security challenge to be one of the key issues that needs to be addressed and believe that the UK is well situated to provide innovative solutions that will provide confidence in the security of the technology. There is a huge opportunity for innovation in this space and we see this as an opportunity that we expect all projects to engage with.

We have worked closely with NCSC to provide some topics for your consideration that take guidance from the upcoming Telecoms Security Bill which outlines a higher standard of security for telecoms networks.

Topics for consideration

- Adopt and work toward secure by default in all delivered 5G products.
- Actively run security testing with reliable metrics that show the quality of the security testing, reliability of their projects when under test in particular to DDOS attacks and the security of the transmissions seen on various interfaces.
- Perform regular audits of equipment, processes and policies testing to agreed guidelines set by a regulator, operator or national body.
- Limit the use of high risk Managed Service Providers (MSPs) and equipment suppliers' 3rd line support.
- Increase the security of virtualised network functions.
- Ensure 5G network operation, management and monitoring is secure.
- Ensure software integrity checking, update and patch management is in place.
- Implement cooperation and information sharing between operators to discuss secure network design, attacks, vulnerabilities and security mitigations.

The Vendor Security Annex can be made available to bidders on request. Please contact Clark.A@ncsc.gov.uk for further information.

2.2.4 Project Success Criteria:

To provide extra information on our success criteria, we have produced the following statements to provide an overview of what we are expecting successful projects will achieve, in general terms.

- All successful projects should remain market relevant by the end of the funding period, and may be of commercial interest to Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) on completion. We will measure the MNO interest in projects, and relationships built with successful bidders.
- All projects should disseminate the learning gained from their projects meaningfully. This, at the least, will include the reports of the learning being published to the UK5G website for use across the ecosystem. Specific information released will vary between the successful projects, and DCMS will continue to engage with successful projects to ensure the right information is released. The number of downloads / views of these reports will indicate the success of this. Additionally, having the project referenced in future publications and commercial decisions will be a key indicator of success.
- Successful bids will progress from early Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs), to higher TRL levels. Projects that begin in TRL levels 3-5 should progress to 6-8. This will be measurable as the final milestones of the project are reached.
 - TRL 3 – Experimental proof of concept
 - TRL 4 – Technology validated in lab
 - TRL 5 – Technology validated in relevant environment (industrially relevant environment in the case of key enabling technologies)
 - TRL 6 – Technology demonstrated in relevant environment (industrially relevant environment in the case of key enabling technologies)

- TRL 7 – System prototype demonstration in operational environment
- TRL 8 – System complete and qualified
- Successful projects will result in products/solutions which are truly interchangeable when tested against 3rd parties. This means that projects will be more than just 'Open RAN in name', but actively deploy solutions that mitigate the resilience risks posed. Successful projects can have solutions tested in SONIC Labs to ensure they are truly interoperable.

2.2.5 Sustainability

DCMS will, as a condition of making funding available, require the successful applicant to set out the principles of how they will create sustainable project outputs in their application, and to have an approved plan in place prior to project end.

DCMS is looking to fund projects that begin at TRL levels 3-7 however we will consider lower levels if a strong case can be made.

We welcome proposals that have an international outlook, building upon existing UK strengths and partnering with non-UK organisations to develop globally-viable business models.

All activities funded under the competition must be carried out in the UK.

2.3 Funding

There is up to **£30 million of funding** available from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) in this competition.

DCMS will make available grant funding ranging from £250,000 to £5 million to individual projects taking place over up to an eighteen month period from project start. Funds must be used for experimental development, as described in the "FRANC - General Guidance for Grant Applicants" document provided. Grant recipients will be required to confirm that the costs they wish to claim for are capitalised and/or treated as capital expenditure in line with UK GAAP.

We will consider a larger scale project with a larger grant funding requirement and extended delivery period, but you must contact us through customer support services to discuss this at least 10 days before the registration deadline.

DCMS may make additional grant funding available to projects at a later date subject to satisfactory delivery.

2.3.1 Subsidy Control

For experimental development involving collaboration under UK Subsidy Control, the maximum grant allowed towards your eligible project costs under subsidy control rules if you are an organisation receiving direct grant funding from DCMS is:

- up to 60% if you are a small business
- up to 50% if you are a medium-sized business
- up to 40% if you are a large business

The definition of SME used by DCMS is set out in the Companies Act 2006, amended by The Companies, Partnerships and Groups (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2015¹. Under the Companies Act 2006 paragraphs 465 to 467 the SME can be summarised as: Up to 249 employees and annual turnover no greater than £36 million and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding £18 million. A large business in this context means any enterprise which is not an SME.

Successful bidders will be required to provide a breakdown of their expenses with accompanying legal sign off to confirm their compliance with Subsidy Control principles. We withhold the right to disqualify projects if it is not provided in a timely manner.

Applicants should refer to the general guidance for the full detail on the subsidy control requirements, including the funding rates.

2.3.2 Grant Funding Agreement

Successful projects should be prepared to enter into a Grant Funding Agreement (GFA) within 4 weeks of notification of our intention to grant funding.

Projects must declare they have understood and accepted the terms of the grant agreement when submitting their application. The terms and conditions set out in the GFA are non-negotiable. The GFA is provided on the competition's webpage. We recommend that you review this with your legal advisors and raise any queries you may have before submitting your application.

2.3.3 Eligible cost and funding allocations

Eligible costs are those that you incur in carrying out your project for which grant funding may be claimed - including the costs of your labour, overheads, materials, subcontracts and T&S among others. These eligible costs are intended to cover all activities directly associated with carrying out your project. Please see the "FRANC- Eligible Project Costs Guidance" document provided on the competition's webpage for full details and explanation. Sample evidence of these costs being incurred will be required as part of the grant claims process.

The applicant(s) selected at the end of this competition will need to follow the process and criteria that will be set out in a DCMS grant funding agreement to access funding for individual activities (the draft Grant Funding Agreement is available on the competition webpage).

The following criteria apply to the distribution of funds amongst a consortium:

- Total subcontracting cost is limited to 30% of the total project costs - a clear case must be made as to why subcontractors are not key project partners and why it is not possible for the work to be conducted by a project partner.
- No single partner can receive more than 70% of the total eligible project costs
- At least 70% of total eligible project costs should be incurred by private sector business organisations
- For all research organisations and public sector organisations the total level of project participation is set at a maximum of 30% of total eligible project costs. If your consortium contains more than one research or public sector organisation, this maximum will be distributed between them

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/46/section/465>

Within your consortium, there must be a lead partner who will be the accountable body and recipient of any DCMS grant awarded. They will also be responsible for managing the consortium and for any distribution of DCMS funds to consortium partners, as set out in the consortium's collaboration agreement. Please note that Grant Funding is paid quarterly and in arrears.

The applicant(s) selected at the end of this competition will need to follow the process and criteria that will be set out in a DCMS grant funding agreement to access funding for individual activities.

Projects should complete all DCMS funded activities within an eighteen month delivery period, unless an extension is agreed with the DCMS. Non-DCMS funded activities could continue beyond this date.

DCMS funding available under the funding agreement will need to be:

- Complemented with additional financial and non-financial contributions by the private sector partner(s) and/or other project participants (including public sector participants) as agreed with the 5GTT Programme during the development of the project; and
- Compliant with Subsidy Control rules.

Please read the "FRANC - General Guidance for Grant Applicants" document provided for more information on the different categories of funding and the rules around our subsidy control framework.

Proposals for collaboration activities should be included in applications and should make up 2-4% of the DCMS grant, with grant claims for this activity subject to match funding requirements specified by subsidy control rules. Such activities should lead to the production of tangible outputs such as published reports, events and workshops.

3. Eligibility criteria

Consortia must demonstrate clearly in their application how they meet **all** the eligibility criteria set out in this section.

3.1 Eligible applicants

This competition is open to applications from consortia from across the UK. Organisations which do not have a UK presence may participate in the delivery of projects but will not be eligible to receive DCMS funding. However, we welcome proposals that have an international outlook, building upon existing UK strengths and partnering with non-UK organisations to develop globally-viable business models.

All awards will be made subject to successful due diligence checks.

High risk vendors (HRVs) are not permitted to participate in consortia as a consortium partner or supplier. See [NCSC Advice](#) for more information on HRVs. Public funds must not be used to pay for any HRV products or services through the competition. We understand that in the case of Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) for example, with pre-existing HRV equipment in their networks, these networks may reasonably be used to build testbeds. However, funding must not be used to buy additional equipment or services from HRVs.

3.2 Proposing consortium

In order to attract the broadest range of proposals, we are open to receiving proposals from consortia that can be led by any type of organisation from the public, private, third or academic sectors, providing that the consortium meets the following criteria:

- There must be a lead organisation that demonstrates that it can act as the accountable body, has the capability, and is able to manage the delivery of the project across the consortium with clear project governance and leadership.
- To be considered a consortium, at least two organisations must be requesting grant funding from DCMS.
- The consortium shows evidence of private sector partnership, including strong industry representation
- The consortium should demonstrate that it can meet the funding requirements as outlined in the “Subsidy Control” section above.
- The consortium demonstrates committed support from individuals with decision-making and budgetary responsibility from each member organisation.
- While we do not require SME involvement in consortia, we do strongly encourage bidders to consider their involvement and will take this into account when considering our portfolio.

3.2.1 Spectrum

The consortium must have access to the spectrum and network capabilities required to deliver the project, or has a clear plan to acquire or build them in a timely manner. This may be in the form of an agreement with an existing network provider, or through the deployment of new network infrastructure, in addition to any required connections to existing or third-party infrastructure. Spectrum may be commercially licenced, by using an [Ofcom Innovation and Trial Licence](#) or by making use of Ofcom's [new licensing approach](#) to provide localised access to spectrum bands that can support mobile technology.

3.3 Roles

You should specify the following roles in your proposal, as applicable:

Organisation Role	Notes
Project Lead	For all projects we expect that this will be a business organisation. The proposal should make it clear why the project lead is the most appropriate organisation to lead the project.
Key Project Partner	These will include all organisations which will receive grant funding from DCMS and any other public sector source. In addition, any other organisation which the consortium regards as critical to the delivery of the project but which is not receiving grant funding from DCMS or any other public sector source.
Project Partner	These are any other organisations not receiving grant funding from DCMS or any other public sector source and which will undertake important activities during project delivery. These organisations may be involved in the project governance as appropriate.

Organisation Role	Notes
Project Participants	<p>These are any other organisations not receiving grant funding from DCMS or any other public sector source.</p> <p>These organisations may be identified at the proposal stage, or could be added to the project at a later date.</p>

4 Further General Guidelines

4.1 Benefits monitoring

We expect bidding projects to focus particularly on the measurable benefits that could arise from their work, rather than just running demonstrations. In bids we expect to see quantitative estimates of these benefits, how they will be measured and evidenced throughout and after the projects. The reporting framework for benefits realisation can be made available upon request.

Once started, projects will be required to agree benefits metrics with DCMS, focusing on the positive outcomes of the project, and monitor and report these to the Department. Moreover, we will require the project to report on Technology Readiness Level increases, investment in each consortium partner and a range of other information to be agreed with projects once selected. A further key area for reporting will be lessons learnt and the knowledge dissemination activities undertaken by the project. Project reporting will be quarterly and will form part of the deliverables that the project is expected to achieve in order to access grant funding. It is important to note that the Department expects the project to appoint someone that is responsible for the benefits monitoring and reporting and allocate specific time to undertake this work.

In addition, project partners will be expected to participate in occasional Programme evaluation activities, e.g. surveys and interviews of grant recipients, which will be conducted by DCMS or a third party acting on its behalf to assess the outcomes of the 5GTT Programme and its constituent projects. Evaluation activities are expected to be undertaken both during and after the lifetime of the project. An example list of monitoring indicators and the template that will need to be reported on quarterly is provided for sight in supporting documents.

4.2 Collaboration

Projects are expected to be carried out collaboratively within their consortium initially and where there is opportunity for mutually beneficial inter-working with other projects, participation through ecosystem partners channels and the wider ecosystem, on topics of shared interest we expect projects to take advantage (see funding requirements in section 2.3.3).

Projects are required to take part in activities such as:

- Production of lessons learnt materials for publication such as reports, case studies etc.
- Collaborate specifically with the wider ecosystem through involvement in attendance at collaboration, knowledge sharing workshops and trade events
- Sharing of media and publicity products for use in DCMS media channels

The aim is that by combining the efforts and knowledge base, producing tangible and useful outputs that can be shared and demonstrated, the collaboration activities will help to foster the ecosystem. DCMS will monitor collaboration between projects, facilitate partnerships and support these efforts where relevant.

Potential areas for collaboration activity include key cross-cutting strategic issues outlined in section 2.2 (scope).

All selected projects must also sign up to the FRANC Participation Agreement with DCMS as part of the application process. This outlines how members of the ecosystem should collaborate, share knowledge and join-up through the five Programme Participation Principles.

4.3 Dissemination

Communicating the findings and stories from projects will be a key responsibility of consortia that receive DCMS funding. The dissemination of shared learning throughout the ecosystem is an integral part of the Programme and will be considered throughout the application process.

Working with DCMS and ecosystem partners, projects will be expected to plan, support and deliver communications activities to ensure the benefits of the project are demonstrated and shared as widely as possible with the Open RAN ecosystem. Such activities should lead to the production of tangible outputs such as published reports, events and workshops.

4.4 Consortium Forming Support

In addition to running briefing and networking networks to support potential bidders, DCMS is working with UK5G to provide the following options to support consortia forming:

- Watch existing elevator pitches a number of organisations who are interested in forming / joining a consortium have already shared their Elevator Pitch videos. These are available on the UK5G Website for you to view on the competition page.
- Post to the Collaboration Exchange which is an easy path to increasing awareness of your business' interest in joining a project is to post in the "Find a partner to collaborate with" thread on UK5G. You also have the option to "Follow" the thread if you just want to keep an eye on the businesses who are expressing interest.
- Talk to UK5G for bespoke support who can also help with more specific issues on your application. They can be contacted on hello@uk5g.org.

5. Competition process

5.1 Dates and deadlines

For this competition, the application window is 8 weeks and the timeline is:

- Competition opens: 2nd July 2021
- Competition closes: 27th August 2021
- Shortlist applicants notified: Mid September 2021
- Shortlisted applicants interviewed: Late September 2021
- Successful applicants notified: Mid October 2021
- Project pre-grant set up and DCMS due diligence (subject to completion, DCMS and the lead

partner then sign a grant funding agreement): November 2021 - January 2022

The competition will take applications that cover up to an eighteen month delivery period. They will be expected to submit fully costed bids.

DCMS will use a portfolio approach that will ensure a broad range of projects. This is to make sure that all projects considered to be above a quality threshold meet the strategic criteria described in this competition guidance and avoid oversubscription of projects with a similar focus.

When all submitted applications are received they will undergo a triaging process in which they will be assessed based on questions A1 and A2 before a full assessment on the application will be conducted. Applicants scoring a mark below 4 will be deemed ineligible for funding.

The competition process will follow these steps:

- The project lead will submit applications with detailed financial plans that cover the full funding period to project end.
- Submitted applications will be reviewed to make sure that they are eligible for the competition.
- All applications will undergo the triage process outlined above.
- Only applications that meet the eligibility requirements of the competition will be assessed.
- Shortlisted applicants will be interviewed face-to-face by DCMS.
- The lead applicants will be notified of the funding decision for their project.
- DCMS may elect to identify reserve applicants, in case the preferred applicant(s) is/are unable to complete a funding agreement with DCMS on a timely basis.
- A grant funding agreement will be issued to successful applicants.
- All eligible and in scope applications will receive assessor feedback.

5.2 Project Development Review

The competition will be assessed based on proposals based on delivery of a single project for the duration of the project but with a Project Development Review around the halfway point of the project. At this Project Development Review, each project will submit updated proposals for the remaining delivery period.

The purpose of the Project Development review is to:

- Help ensure projects are delivering high quality outcomes by providing an opportunity for both the projects and DCMS to reconsider approaches and strategies and potentially make adjustments.
- Provide an opportunity to reassess the spend profile for the project.
- Help ensure projects are aligned across the portfolio and working in collaboration, where appropriate, to maximise value for money and achieve common aims.

At the Project Development Review, updated plans will be reviewed for approval by DCMS against the projects' stated aims and those of the competition. The projects may use this opportunity to refine their approach or adjust the project's direction. The purpose of this Project Development Review point is not to reduce the number of funded projects, but to ensure projects are continuing to deliver suitable and value for money outcomes based on the developing 5G and diversification landscape. Submissions may propose an increase, reduction or no change in the overall funding envelope.

Evaluation of the revised plans will be in line with the principles of initial proposal evaluations outlined in this document, having regard to project delivery up to the Project Development Review. The potential outcomes envisaged of the Project Development Review are:

- updated project with an increased scope and/or value up to 50% of the original proposal; or
- updated project with no change in scope and/or value; or
- updated project with a decreased scope and/or value.

DCMS expects that, barring exceptional circumstances, projects will not be stopped as a result of this review. The applicants should prepare their proposals in response to this competition guidance setting out their plan for the full delivery period.

6 How to apply

6.1 What to complete

The following documents need to be completed as part of your application:

1. [Application Form](#) (one per project, plus any allowed appendices) - see Application and Assessment section below for further details of the application
2. [Project Finance Form](#) (one per applicant covering all proposed costs) - this document is used to understand how you have estimated your project costs - see [Eligible Project Costs Guidance](#) for further guidance.

6.2 How to submit your application

You must submit your documents to the following email address: 5g-diversification-strategy@dcms.gov.uk

You will receive an email acknowledgement of your registration.

Applications for submission must be submitted by midday 27th August 2021

We strongly advise submitting well in advance of the deadline (i.e. days before) as there is always a risk that IT issues prevent you submitting promptly (e.g. issues sending large files).

6.3 Application format

You can only use the application form and templates provided. They contain specific guidance on information you must provide.

The application form and templates contain specific fields. It is important that you complete each field and submit a fully completed form. Incomplete forms may be considered ineligible and not sent for assessment. DCMS reserves the right to ask for additional clarifications and correction following the submission deadline.

The application form and templates must not be altered, converted or submitted as a different file type.

The submission must conform to the maximum length specifications stated in the “Competition questions” section below. Information in excess of this will be disregarded. Hyperlinks referencing further information may be included to inform more detailed understanding post-selection, but will be disregarded during the assessment of applications.

Additional information submitted at the request of DCMS must meet any timing, format and length requirements we may specify at the time.

7 Application and assessment

7.1 Application structure

The structure for applications is as follows:

Applicant information (not assessed)

- Project name
- Name of application lead organisation
- Contact details for application lead organisation
- Name(s) of additional organisation(s) forming part of this application
- Contact details for additional organisations
- Public description of the project
- Main technical or process categories of the project (refer to section 2.2, if other please specify)

Public Description (400 word limit) (not assessed)

- To comply with government practice on openness and transparency of public funded activities, DCMS has to publish information relating to funded projects. Please provide a short description of your proposal in a way that will be understandable to the general public. We will publish this information for all bids, including those not awarded funding, so do not include any commercially confidential information, e.g. intellectual property or patent details.
- We would also like to publish the partners involved in your proposal and the public description of the project, but this is not mandatory. Please confirm in the application form to indicate if you are happy for these to be published as well.

Evaluated Questions

Responses will be evaluated using the general weighting scheme set out in the following table. Supporting questions, detailed marking and associated reasoning are set out in subsequent sections.

Section	Weighting	Ideal response
A. Project description and objectives	25%	A clear description of the project, stating its aims, its objectives and expected outcomes. The description should describe which elements of Open RAN and other technologies will be adopted and why, detail the project's innovative elements and summarise the expected key impacts of the trials. The description should also outline the consortia and their roles, along with key members and who's doing what.
B. Outcomes, sustainability and route to market	30%	Provide a clear description of project outcomes and a reasoned and credible comparison of the benefits and costs of the project. Outlining how your successful trial will lead towards deployment of commercially-viable products and services sustained without further government grant funding.

Section	Weighting	Ideal response
C. Project delivery	25%	Evidence that the project plan and work package tasks have been thought through and that there is a robust approach to controlling the project in flight that is proportionate to the funding levels sought.
D. Financial	20%	A clear overview and explanation of the costs of the programme and confidence that financial management and control of the project will deliver good value for money.

In evaluating your responses we value brevity and the maximum word limit is a guide, but please give sufficient evidence to support your bid. Tables will not be included in this word limit but should be only used where necessary. Additional diagrams should not be provided unless requested.

Your response should provide sufficient evidence to support any assertions made and state any underlying principles or assumptions. You should not include commercial sales messages about products or services being proposed.

Section A - Project description, objectives and outcomes (25%)

Please provide a clear description of the project, stating its motivation, its objectives and expected outcomes. The description should describe which elements of 5G and other technologies have been adopted and why, detail the project's innovative elements and summarise the expected benefits of the project's outcomes, including on telecoms network supply chain diversification. The description should also outline the consortia and their roles, along with key members and who's doing what.

An ideal response to this section will provide a clear and compelling description conveying understanding of the nature, scale and value of the proposed project, and why the proposed consortium is well placed to deliver it. It should address the following four questions.

- **Question 1: Describe the project's strategic aims highlighting which Open RAN challenges you plan to address? Including reference to competition objectives - 10% - 750 words (Triage Question)**
 - Describe the main motivation for the project and the Open RAN challenges the project will address. Your description must identify genuine commercial drivers for success and the particular challenges that could be met using 5G capabilities, and highlight innovative aspects.
 - How will your solution impact the global and UK markets for Open RAN? How will it be differentiated from competing products or solutions?
 - State, in simple terms, what you will deliver in your project.
- **Question 2: Describe, in technical terms, the system architecture and major technological components and innovations of the project including a diagram(s). - 10% - 750 words (Triage Question)**
- **Question 3: Describe your approach to the project's telecoms and cyber security? - 5% - 400 words**
 - Describe how you will ensure your implemented solutions are safe and secure conforming to best practice

- What technical functionality is built into your system to appropriately manage and monitor telecoms and cyber security?

Section B - Outcome sustainability, benefits and route to market (30%)

Please provide a reasoned and credible picture of how the project's expected outcomes might lead towards deployment of financially viable products including wider benefits of these telecoms network supply chain diversification.

An ideal response to this section will provide a reasoned and credible business case for the development of the project's products. It should address the following three questions.

- **Question 1: Describe the project's measurable outcomes - 5% - 400 words**
 - Describe what will be the measurable impacts of your project by the end of the funding period and how you will evidence the impact of your project.
 - Describe your approach to the identification and dissemination of lessons learned and project outcomes and explain how it benefits the wider supply chain diversification ecosystem
- **Question 2: How will your project bring the product(s) or capability(s) closer to deployment and support the development of an Open RAN ecosystem? If helpful, you may wish to use Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs) to support this - 10% - 750 word limit**
 - Describe how the project will contribute to developing the UK's capabilities in the emerging 5G Open RAN environment.
 - Describe how your proposal will contribute to the development of an Open RAN 5G research, development and innovation ecosystem in the UK
 - Highlight the key outputs of your project you will deliver in the first year and in the following period and how these will deliver against the challenges and use cases you have identified
 - Describe how you intend to factor in the expected availability of the 5G services and devices featured in your proposals and how you intend to ensure the project will help develop the UK's diverse supply chain in telecoms.
- **Question 3: Building on your response to question 1, compare and contrast the project's benefits to its costs. Please specify the project's measurable monetisable and non-monetisable benefits or explain how you will determine these as part of your project - 10% - 750 word limit.**
 - How the project will deliver and measure benefits, such as:
 - Reducing the cost barrier for development and deployment of Open RAN technologies, products and services.
 - Accelerating Open RAN technology maturity.
 - Contribution to the development of Open RAN standards
 - Increased opportunities for collaboration
 - Collaborating with DCMS to identify technical and commercial barriers to 5G Open RAN deployment.
 - Developing and exploring new business models and applications, and potential benefits to businesses, including productivity improvements.
 - Supporting the development of the local economy, including the growth of local businesses, particularly SMEs.
 - You should clearly identify what will be delivered before the Project Development Review

- Note: You highly recommend that you begin to quantify some of these benefits as this will greatly support our benefits realisation efforts
- **Question 4: Describe your vision for the development and funding of the product(s) once the project is completed - 5% - 400 word limit**
 - Describe how the project outputs will deliver value beyond the funding period, including how it could be further developed, scaled or improved beyond the timeframe or outside of the scope of this project.
 - Briefly detail any follow-on projects or future improvement opportunities currently envisaged.
 - Describe how this project will affect your longer term roadmap for new products and services.

Section C - Project Delivery (25%)

Please provide a detailed plan for the delivery of the project. A good response will provide evidence that the project proposal is credible and that there is a robust approach to controlling the project that is proportionate to the funding levels sought.

It should address the following three questions

- **Question 1: Provide an 18 month plan and supporting description that outlines the following: - 12.5% - 1000 word limit**
 - Describe how the project will be delivered
 - Outline key activities, including purpose and objectives of these activities
 - Describe your mobilisation plan (from grant agreement to starting delivery)
 - Highlight key decision points
 - Identify milestones, including grant payment milestones
 - Gantt Chart (required) or other supporting materials should be provided as an annex
- **Question 2: How will the project be governed and decisions made? - 5% - 400 word limit**
 - Describe your proposed project management processes and governance structures.
 - Describe the roles and responsibilities, skills and experience of all partners that are relevant to the approach you will be taking. In particular, identify the participant(s) who will be responsible for the management and operation of the testbed, and why they have the right skills and capabilities to deliver this.
 - Describe how your consortium will deliver this project. How will the organisations achieve more working together than if they were working individually?
 - Explain why the project lead is best placed to undertake this role. Business led projects are preferred unless there is a strong justification otherwise.
 - Describe which legal entities will own any assets which are paid for by grant funding.
 - Describe the details of any vital external parties, including sub-contractors, who you will need to work with to successfully carry out the project.
- **Question 3: Describe the most significant risks to the successful delivery of the project and how they will be managed (7.5%) - 600 word limit**
 - Identify the main risks and uncertainties of the project and provide a risk analysis for the project content and approach, with a ranking of the risks and mitigations. Include any cost, timing, technical, commercial, managerial and environmental risks as well as other uncertainties (for example ethical issues, device/service availability issues) associated with the project.

- Identify any internal and external dependencies, support or engagement that is required. Indicate what is agreed at the time of submission, and what is still to be agreed, for example any legal agreements or consents that need to be put in place to enable the works to be undertaken.

Section D - Financial (20%)

Please detail the project and explain the financial and value for money approach of the project.

A good response to this section will provide a clear overview and explanation of the costs of the programme and confidence in financial management and control of the project.

It should address the following three questions.

- **Question 1: Identify the major cost components and explain how these represent value for money - 10% - 600 word limit**
 - Provide a narrative description summarising what each project participant will be delivering and the costs associated.
 - Describe the contributions in kind from each project participant.
 - Provide a cost breakdown of forecast expenditure on the project. Identify costs for the testbed and funded trials separately. Explain how the costs have been calculated.
 - Describe what network and any other infrastructure will be used in the project (if any), and how it will be sourced.
 - Describe any subcontractor costs and why they are critical to the project and are not grant receiving consortium members.
 - Identify the amount of DCMS grant and other funding you will set aside for working with the Open RAN ecosystem. A minimum of 2-4% of grant funding is required.
 - Confirm that all grant funding claims do not extend beyond 31 March 2024.
 - Provide an appendix separately identifying the following:
 - The estimated project cost for each work package. Make clear the level of contribution from each project participant and the level of grant funding requested from DCMS.
 - The spend profile by month, linking it to milestones and deliverables as needed. This should be fully consistent with the dates you have specified in the project plan.
- **Question 2: Explain how you will ensure value for money through your sourcing approach and supply chain - 5% - 400 word limit**
 - Explain your sourcing approach
 - Confirm that the grant amount requested includes any irrecoverable VAT, all fees and charges, and appropriate allowance has been made for any price inflation during the project period.
- **Question 3: Explain to what extent this project would go ahead without public funding and the difference public funding would make. Why would you not be able to wholly fund the project from your own or other private-sector funding? 5% - 400 word limit**
 - Detail how the funding you require will allow you to undertake the project in terms of time to market and any other relevant factors, where you would otherwise be unable to.
 - Tell us whether the project could go ahead in any form without government funding, and if so, what difference would government funding make? Explain why this contribution would be beneficial to the project partners involved in the project, as well as the UK taxpayer (in terms of economic, social, environmental and other impacts)

- Describe any direct follow-on funding from project partners. This should include any post-project research and development, further trialling and capital spending commitments by the project partners.
- Describe any additional areas of added value not set out elsewhere in your proposal.

Note: As part of assessment of Section D, Assessors need to be confident the project is good value and can be delivered to the stated cost. They will consider:

- The response to these questions and the supporting financial information provided
- The suitability of the proposed costs - costs considered excessive will be a cause for serious concern
- The total amount of grant funding requested from DCMS
- Whether there is an appropriate level of contributions from public sector organisations who are project partners

7.2 Supplementary Information

Information provided here will be used to aid understanding of the (above) assessed responses.

Ref	Question/Request	Bidder Response
1	Please complete the finance summary table	Complete the table in the Application Form
2	Please confirm that your consortium has reviewed and understands the Subsidy Control regime under which you intend to receive grant funding, and that your application complies with said rules?	Please state: 'Yes' or 'No' and which regime you intend to use
3	I confirm that the project has obtained a legal opinion and this bid would constitute allowable subsidy under the regime you intend to use.	Please state: 'Yes' or 'No', If No, when would this be expected to occur?
4	Has the financial contribution of each partner to the project been signed-off at an appropriate level within their organisation?	[For each organisation please state: 'Yes' or 'No' If No, when would this be expected to occur?]
5	Can you confirm that your bid conforms to the DCMS High Risk Vendor (HRV) policy outlined in guidance.	Please state: 'Yes' or 'No'
6	Do you require radio spectrum to carry out your project? If yes, what spectrum do you require and have you yet secured it?	Please state: 'Yes' or 'No' If not, please explain why not, and how you intend to secure this spectrum prior to the project commencing
7	Please provide the addresses of the key locations in the project?	Location & address <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 5px;"> [Insert location name and address] </div>
8	Please confirm that the grant amount requested from DCMS includes any irrecoverable VAT, all	[Enter 'Confirmed']

Ref	Question/Request	Bidder Response
	fees and charges, and appropriate allowance has been made for any price inflation during the project period.	
9	Please confirm that if you are successful in this competition, the Project Lead will accept the terms and conditions in the draft grant funding agreement provided? We expect projects to sign within 6 weeks of notification of successful bid	[Enter 'Confirmed']
10	Confirm your project has reviewed and understand the 2-4% collaboration requirements outlined in the guidance.	[Enter 'Confirmed']
11	Please confirm whether partners have provided a letter of support or commitment to the project? Please submit a copy of this letter as a PDF.	[Enter 'Confirmed' and partner name]

7.3 Assessment

1 - Sift

Initial eligibility checks will be undertaken on all applications against the scope, funding and eligibility requirements in the application guidance. If an application passes the sift it will progress to evaluation. If an application does not pass the sift, we will notify the lead partner with an explanation as to why.

2 - Shortlisting

All applications passing the sift will be evaluated and moderated beginning with a triaging process in which they will be assessed based on one question before a full assessment on the application will be conducted in which they must reach a minimum threshold for evaluation to proceed. Successful applications will then be scored against the scoring scale and any pass/fail criteria and then ranked based on total score. A shortlist of the top ranked applications will be invited to interview.

3 - Outcome and feedback

The result of the shortlisting will be shared with all evaluated applications. Feedback will be provided to all applications that have been fully evaluated once the competition has closed. It is the responsibility of the lead to communicate the feedback with the rest of the consortium, if applicable. No additional feedback can be provided.

4 - Interview

Shortlisted applicants will be provided with a list of questions and requests for further information that must be supplied in advance of the interview. DCMS will tell the lead partner when their interview will be. Interviews are likely to be held in central London.

5 - Post-interview

The evaluation scores of shortlisted applications will be updated following the interview, also taking into account any information provided, where requested by DCMS. Shortlisted applications will be ranked in descending order, based on total score. The highest ranked applications will be selected as preferred applicants. This will be done in accordance with the above and taking into account a portfolio approach to ensure that there is an appropriate balance of projects which support the 5GTT Programme, competition and policy objectives as set out in the guidance.

The lead partners will be notified of the selection decision, at this point projects should be prepared to enter into a Grant Funding Agreement (GFA) within 6 weeks of notification of our intention to grant funding.

Following the assessment, we will carry out a period of due diligence to validate and revise where appropriate the project scope, delivery plan and funding arrangements prior to the award of a grant. This will include both financial and reputational checks.

7.4 Scoring

Individual responses to each question will be scored in line with the following scheme. The assessors will score your answers to these questions. Each question will be given a score 0-10:

- 0-1 – Serious concerns: for example, does not meet requirements, and/or raises serious concerns.
- 2-3 – Some concerns: for example, meets some requirements but with gaps and/or some concerns.
- 4-5 – Adequate confidence: for example, meets most/all requirements, but lacks sufficient detail in some areas.
- 6-7 – Good confidence: for example, meets most/all requirements and provides a response that demonstrates a good understanding of the requirements.
- 8-9 – Very good confidence: for example, meets all requirements and provides a detailed response that also exceeds expectations in some areas and/or demonstrates a strong understanding of the requirements.
- 10 - Outstandingly good confidence: for example, meets all requirements and exceptional detail that exceeds expectations in many areas and demonstrates excellent understanding of the requirements.

Scores for each question will be weighted by the amount indicated against each question. Your application's total score will be the sum of the weighted scores.

7.5 Quality threshold

Following evaluation of the applications and moderation of scores, any application with an unweighted score of one or below (serious concerns) against any individual competition question, including where an error has been made by the applicant, will not be considered further for shortlisting (Step One).

All remaining applications with an average evaluation score against all competition questions (i.e. the weighted score across all competition questions) of 4 and above will be considered for shortlisting (Step 2).

DCMS also reserves the right to consider applications for shortlisting that do not meet the threshold above in the following cases:

- If an application fails to meet the threshold in Step 2 by a narrow margin as a result of the range of scoring by individual assessors being of significant variance from the average score for one or more competition questions for that application ("an outlier"). The application may be considered for shortlisting following a review of the outlier assessor's comments and approach if the outlier score may reasonably be eliminated and the average assessment score that is recalculated falls within the threshold above.

- If there is a very low volume of applications meeting Step 2 in respect of grant funding available, DCMS may lower the threshold that applies to Step 2 for the consideration of shortlisting. This will be on the grounds that DCMS will not want grant funding to be unallocated if there is a realistic prospect of consortia being able to improve their assessment score to a satisfactory level.
- If there is a significantly higher volume of applications meeting the thresholds in respect of grant funding available, DCMS may raise the threshold that applies to Step 2 for the consideration of shortlisting. This will be on the grounds that DCMS will not want consortia with lower assessment scores to invest time and effort in preparing for the interview stage if there is a very limited prospect of them being successful.

8 Additional Documents and Information

The following documents need to be completed as part of your application:

- Application form (one per project, plus any allowed appendices)
- Project Finance Form (one per applicant)

The following additional documents are provided to support you in your application:

- ["Future RAN Competition - General Guidance for Grant Applicants"](#) - which contains general information relating to this competition and the processes DCMS will use to deliver it, including: funding rules guidance, information on the different categories of funding and the rules around our subsidy control framework
- ["Future RAN Competition - Eligible Project Costs Guidance"](#) - which contains detailed information on which project costs are eligible for funding
- ["Future RAN Competition - Draft Grant Funding Agreement"](#) - which demonstrates the process and criteria to access funding for individual activities
- ["Future RAN Competition - Potential Monitoring Indicators"](#) - which will help inform the benefits realisation approach and includes a reporting template
- ["Future RAN Competition Participation Agreement"](#) (one per applicant) - which is provided for information and will need to be completed upon award

8.1 Notices

This document is issued in text format to organisations wishing to make an application to the Future RAN Competition. Should you require access to this document in another format (e.g. Braille, large font or audio) please contact us at 5g-diversification-strategy@dcms.gov.uk.

All applicants are solely responsible for all their costs and expenses incurred in connection with this selection process at all stages. Under no circumstances will DCMS be liable for any costs or expenses borne by or on behalf of the applicant or any party associated with this selection process.

We reserve the right to cancel the competition at any point. We will accept no liability for any losses caused by any cancellation of this competition nor any decision not to award grant funding as a result of the competition.

At any time prior to the deadline for receipt of proposals, we reserve the right to amend, add to or withdraw all or any part of the competition material at any time during the competition. Any such

amendments, additions, or removals will be notified identified in the documentation on the competition webpage.

Answers must be in English. Bidders should note that where any supplementary documents are not published in English, certified translations into English must be provided with the proposal (if applicable).

Proposals should remain valid for a period of 120 days from the competition closing date. A proposal valid for a shorter period may be rejected.

Applicants must not inform anyone outside of their proposed consortium, even approximately, what their total proposal costs are, or will be. Furthermore, bidders must not try to obtain any information about anyone else's proposal or potential proposal.

We reserve the right to discuss, for the purpose of clarification, any aspect of a proposal with the relevant bidder prior to the award of grant funding.

We reserve the right to undertake a detailed financial and technical appraisal of each bidder and their proposal and for this process to continue up to the award of any grant funding. Any such appraisal will be conducted in line with government policy at the time of assessment. Further appraisal may continue if required through the duration of the grant funding period.

No representation, warranty or undertaking, express or implied, is or will be given by DCMS or any of its agents or advisers with respect to the information contained in the competition material, including with respect to its accuracy, adequacy or completeness.

Information provided in response to this document, including personal information, may be published or disclosed in accordance with access to information regimes, primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR².

If you would want the information that you provide to be treated confidentially, please be aware that, in accordance with the FOIA, public sector organisations are required to comply with a statutory code of practice which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence. In view of this, it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you wish that information to be treated confidentially. If we receive a request for disclosure of that information, we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances.

DCMS will process your personal data in accordance with the DPA and the GDPR and, in the majority of circumstances, this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport www.gov.uk/dcms

² Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation) OJ L 119/1, 4.5.2016, as retained in UK law by virtue of section 3 of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 and as amended by Schedule 1 to the Data Protection, Privacy and Electronic Communications (Amendments etc) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (SI 2019/419)."