



National Space Innovation Programme (NSIP) Grant Call FAQs

Document last updated: 18 August 2020

The information below complements the UK Space Agency's NSIP call for grant proposals launched on 22 July 2020.

Please note:

- The deadline for questions regarding this call for grant proposals was 12 noon BST on 10 August 2020 and therefore the clarification period has closed.
- An [amended budget template](#) (Annex E) has published on the NSIP funding call web site that clarifies the pre-populated match funding rates shown on the “Drop down options” tab: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/call-for-applications-national-space-innovation-programme-nsip>

Q1: Can I submit more than one proposal in response to this call?

A1: Yes, an organisation can submit more than one proposal as the lead (Prime) organisation, and also partner on more than one proposal. As per the instruction in ‘Annex B - Application Guidance’, each application must be submitted separately.

Q2: I want to include more detail than a section in the application form allows, is this permitted? Can I also submit additional documents submitted with the application form?

A2: No, only the information contained within the application form and within page limits specified for each section will be evaluated when selecting proposals. This is to ensure all proposals are scored fairly and equally, and also helps assessors to more easily compare proposals.

Q3: Will any of those projects submitted under the Space Growth Partnership Expression of Interest exercise undertaken in 2019 receive priority when proposals are assessed?

A3: No. The Expression of Interest activity undertaken in 2019 helped inform the NSIP themes. The selection of NSIP projects will be based only on the outcomes of the review of proposals submitted in this funding call.

Q4: Can organisations based outside of the UK apply for funding?*

A4: No - organisations based outside of the UK are able to participate as part of a project team, however the lead organisation for that project proposal must be UK-based.

***Response amended on 6th August 2020, and note response to Question 24.**

Q5: The funding detailed for this is a total of 10M£, from which a number of projects will be funded to a max value of 2m£ within the thematic areas described for FY20/21. Is the expectation that the funding allocated for the projects must be completely spent by March 21? In essence this would mean that from the start of project (notional Oct 20) the work must be completed within 6 months?

A5: Yes, each project will need to complete their Discovery Phase project by 31 March 2021. As part of this funding call, we are asking applicants to outline milestones and financial profile for their Implementation Phase for the subsequent two financial years.

Q6: If a phased approach is considered, does a separate application need to be made to get funding beyond March 21? Since this has not yet been secured, what guarantee is there that continued funding will be available?

A6: Yes, a separate application will be required under the mini-competition to down-select Discovery Phase projects to take forward into their Implementation Phase from April 2021, therefore there is no guarantee of project co-funding after 31 March 2021.

Q7: If a maximum grant of 2M£ is allocated, for a project, what costs need to be invoiced by the end of FY20/21? Can some labour costs be carried beyond March 21?

A7: All work that has been completed this financial year will need to be invoiced and paid by 31 March 2021 and this includes labour costs. We will not be able to carry FY 20/21 costs into the next financial year.

Q8: Can you please tell me if projects for the recently opened call on July 22nd have to be finished by March 2021 - i.e. 5 months in total length from signing in October?

A8: Yes, as per the guidance in the NSIP 'Call for Proposals' document, the FY 20/21 milestones are to be completed by 31 March 2021.

Q9: I note that you talk about the 'Discovery Phase' and Implementation Phase'. Can you tell me the details of the funding profile for the 2yr Implementation Phase? What is the value of funding available for this next stage? If we are expected to provide an outline of the milestones and costs for this phase, then it is important to know what the broad financial boundaries are for this phase. Also is the expectation that another call will be released for the Implementation Phase, and are only those successful projects from the Discovery phase able to apply? Or will the next phase be open to all people?

A9: We have not defined a funding profile for the Implementation Phase, each proposal will need to outline their proposed milestones, deliverables and costs for subsequent FYs to March 2023.

Project teams that have successfully completed their FY 20/21 milestones will be invited to participate in a mini-competition in 2021 for the down-selection of projects to be taken forward into the Implementation Phase. More information about this will be provided to those project teams in 2021.

Q10: There is mention of that "a live Q&A log will be maintained and hosted on the UK Space Agency web page alongside the call documentation". Can you direct me to where this is located?

A10: The Q&A log is the 'NSIP Grant Call FAQs' document [this document] that can be downloaded from the Funding Call page: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/call-for-applications-national-space-innovation-programme-nsip>

This document will be updated on a regular basis whilst the period for submission of clarification questions remains open.

Q11: Is it allowed to use an Ireland bank account for the funding or do I have to have a bank account in Britain?

A11: As noted in Section 5 of the NSIP 'Call for Proposals' document, all grant recipients must have a UK bank account and all grant payments will be made in UK sterling. Please also note that the project must be led by a UK organisation (Section 4 in the NSIP 'Call for Proposals').

Q12: Does my company have to manufacture the system by the end of FY 2021? or does the project requires only the design of the system?

A12: We have not defined this. Your project proposal will need to describe the planned deliverables for FY 20/21.

Q13: In terms of overhead/indirect costs, are these included in the labour costs when we submit a proposal or are they separated out as a different heading?

A13: The overheads are stated separately from the pay costs in the budget template. Section 12 (Finance Policy) in the NSIP 'Call for Proposals' document explains how these are to be costed.

Q14: Can an academic institution be the lead (prime) for this call?

A14: Yes, a UK academic institution may be the lead organisation in the NSIP funding call.

Q15: Are proposals in the EO stream limited to technical innovation for new products?

A15: The NSIP funding opportunity is not limited to technical innovation for new products. Applications are invited for innovative products, services or technologies in either of the two core themes. Sections 3 and 4 in the NSIP 'Call for Proposals' document provide more information on each theme and also on what is in and out of scope.

Q16: Can you please confirm that the upper budget limit for FY 20/21 is £2 million?

A16: As noted in Section 6 (Funding) in the NSIP 'Call for Proposals' document, we expect grant amounts per project to be between £200,000 and £2,000,000 for the FY 20/21. The UK Space Agency reserves the right to also consider proposals that may be above £2,000,000.

Q17: We are considering submitting bids into the National Space Technology Programme (NSTP) and also into NSIP. If we do bid for NSTP funding and were successful, would that block us from the NSIP funding?

A17: Being in receipt of an NSTP grant does not prevent you from submitting a proposal into the NSIP funding call. As the NSIP 'Call for Proposals' Document notes in Section 12 (Finance Policy), UKSA would not fund activities for which you are already receiving funding. Therefore, any activity/work package being undertaken in your NSTP project would not receive funding under an NSIP grant, and vice versa.

Q18: Please can you define “UK Organisation”, would this be any type of organisation e.g. industry lead / academic lead etc. Can you also confirm whether the UK Organisation can be an affiliate or subsidiary of a company outside of the UK?

A18: Yes, the UK organisation leading your project may be from industry, academia or research organisations. The UK organisation may be an affiliate or subsidiary of a company outside the UK if the affiliate or subsidiary is registered at Companies House and can demonstrate its status as a UK organisation.

Q19: Will the implementation phase also be judged? How long do we anticipate the implementation phase to last for?

A19: Yes, the reviewers will take into account the information provided in Section 9 of the Application Form. We anticipate that the Implementation Phase will conclude by March 2023.

Q20: Can our estimations of the implementation phase change after the discovery phase and we get more details on the mini-funding round?

A20: Yes, your estimates for the Implementation Phase may be amended during the mini-competition.

Q21: Can we submit a Fundamental Research proposal?

A21: No, this funding call is not accepting fundamental research proposals, please see the table in Section 4 of the NSIP ‘Call for Proposals’ document.

Q22: This call does not appear to include international elements which were discussed in the briefings prior to the release. Will there be a separate mechanism for NSIP International?

A22: Yes, there will be a separate mechanism for NSIP international and details will be published in due course.

Q23: Does prior work (PD/R&D) funded by the applicant, which is specifically relevant to the project outcome, qualify as a matching contribution?

A23: No, prior work is not eligible as a match funding.

Q24: Answer 4 of the FAQs states that overseas organisations are eligible to receive funding in this call. Is there any requirement for this funding to be spent on activities performed in the UK? Please can you confirm how the match funding is to be managed for such organisations, especially if not EU based. Is it expected that the UK lead would provide the match funding required in order to meet the state aid criteria?

A24: Overseas organisations may participate in the NISP project but are not eligible to receive NSIP funding – the response to Q4 has been amended.

Q25: We are seeking clarification in regards to the definition of SME as on page 16 of the Call for Proposals document you state SME & ME in the 1st table and then refer to SME in the second table. Does this acronym mean Small Medium Business or Small Micro Business? If it is Small Micro Business I am assuming that ME column in the first table would apply to any business that falls in to the Medium sized Company Category in the second table. Can you confirm.

A25: In the tables in Annex A of the NSIP 'Call for Proposals' document use, the acronym SME does refer to small and medium-sized enterprises, the standard definition as used in the GBER rules. However, table 1 does also include ME for medium-sized enterprises – the acronyms are not as clear as they should be.

Therefore, an organisation that falls within the Medium sized company category in the second table would refer to the level of support available from the ME column within the first table. A Small or Micro company would refer to the level of support available from the SME column within the first table.

Q26: Can you clarify the match funding requirements of all consortium partners please. Specifically academic partners, is the matched funding the 20% in-kind contribution from receiving 80% FEC?

A26: The match-funding requirements for project partners are set out in Section 7 and Annex A of the NSIP 'Call for Proposals' document. Academic partners will be funded at 80% of Full Economic Cost with their 20% matching contribution.

Q27: Can you clarify whether a research organisation would qualify as an academic partner under the GBER funding criteria?

A27: A research organisation may qualify as an academic partner under the GBER funding criteria if it is undertaking non-economic activity and is non-profit distributing. Those research organisations which are engaged in economic activity as part of the project will be treated as business enterprises for the purposes of funding.

Q28: As a large enterprise under GBER and Industrial Research with Collaboration / Dissemination, then this allows us to claim 65% funding. In a scenario where we were to team with an academic partner who are funded at 80% FEC, please confirm that the funding is treated per organisation i.e. 65% funding of the Large Enterprise workshare, and 80% of the academic partner workshare?

A28: Yes, the GBER funding is treated as per organisation in the project. As set out in Annex A of the NSIP 'Call for Proposals' document, the Large Enterprise would be able to seek up to 65% and Academia up to 80% at FEC where the research organisation bears at least 10% of the costs and has the right to publish its own research.

Q29: With the Expression of Interest, I see we have to indicate a budget. How firm does this budget have to stay when we submit the final proposal? As we are still working through the project and understanding its costs.

A29: The information in the Expression of Interest (EOI) is to assist UK Space Agency with its planning of the proposal review phase. All information in the EOI is an approximation of your application and no organisation will be held to any of the submitted facts or values.

Q30: Can the costs associated with new equipment be considered eligible costs within the programme? Is there a limit on how much can be spent on equipment / hardware within the project?

A30: The funds from the NSIP grant funding are on a cost recovery basis only and for direct project costs. Therefore equipment costs can be considered as eligible costs to the extent and for the period used for the project. If the equipment is not used for their full life for the project, only the depreciation costs corresponding to the life of the project, as calculated on the basis of good accounting practice, are considered as eligible.

There is no defined limit for equipment or hardware costs, but all costs set out in each proposal will be taken into account when the value for money offered by each project is considered.

Q31: Can the cost of satellite bandwidth from non-UK satellite operators be considered an eligible cost?

A31: As noted in the response to Q29, these costs must be a direct project cost and on a cost recovery basis only.

Q32: Can a company perform an implementation project in this call if it proposes a project within time and cost limits?

A32: The focus of this Funding Call is on Discovery Phase projects, a proposal for an Implementation Phase project may be considered by UKSA.

Q33: As our company would be new, there would be no financial track record that could be audited. Would this be acceptable or does there need to be a minimum trading history?

A33: There is no specified minimum trading history. For all proposals selected for grant funding, due diligence would be undertaken on the organisations and in the event that UK Space Agency required any further information, this would be requested from the bidders.

Q34: When does any matched funding need to be in place, for example does it need to be in place by the proposal deadline? Is it acceptable if matched funding is also tied to project milestones?

A34: Your match-funding will need to be available for the project milestones as set out in your proposal – Section 8d) of the Application Form (Annex D) and in your Budget template (Annex E).

Q35: Does all work need to be completed within 6 months (i.e. by the end of March 2021)?

A36: Yes, as per the guidance in the NSIP 'Call for Proposals' document, the FY 20/21 milestones are to be completed by 31 March 2021.

Q36: Are there further calls for proposals planned?

A36: Yes, subject to confirmation of NSIP budget.

Q37: The project we are proposing has potential for an international collaboration element. Should we include these elements in the NSIP proposal?

A37: Yes, please do include the international collaboration element within your project proposal.

Q38: Would current projects that are already running be considered for funding or are you looking for new projects to fund?

A38: Current projects would be considered for funding if the funding was for a new activity. UKSA will not fund activities that are already in receipt of funding. The proposal would need to be make clear that it is a new activity and also if the project (as a whole) is in receipt of funding from other grant streams.

Q39: We read that the grant would need to be match funded. If awarded with a grant and match funding was only received after the end of the financial year would the grant funding then be lost or can it be drawn after the end of the financial year in this instance?

A39: The grant funding is only available to 31st March 2021 and the work associated with the grant funding must be completed by 31st March 2021. The match funding must be in place before signing of the grant funding agreement and could not come after UKSA funding.

Q40: Can the match funding come from the organisation receiving the funding or would it need to come from another corporate, prime or partner?

A40: Yes, the match funding should come from the organisation receiving funding.

Q41: If we plan to run the same project but one which concentrates on climate change and the other on communications should these be submitted as separate proposals or can they count as one proposal but with two streams?

A41: Yes, these should be submitted as separate proposals.

Q42: For partnered projects what level of commitment would you want to see from the partners?

A42: We have not stipulated a level of commitment and would expect the lead applicant and partner to determine, taking note of the required match-funding rates.

Q43: Does the lead applicant company need to have been registered as a UK company for a certain period prior to application for NSIP?

A43: The lead applicant must be a UK registered company at the time the application is submitted.

Q44: Is the support level in relation to the companies size (e.g. SME, ME, LE) evaluated by the size of the UK entity (e.g. a subsidiary) or against the overall company including any parent organisation (outside of UK/EU)?

A44: The level of support is evaluated against the UK entity.

Q45: Does any resulting demonstration of the research have to be held within the UK or could the demonstration be conducted in a relevant region outside of the UK?

A45: It is expected that the demonstration of the research would be held within the UK. If there is any element of this that could not be held within the UK, your proposal must explain why a UK demonstration would not be possible.

Q46: Is there definition on how much of the grant funding can be spent with organisations (sub-contractors) outside of the lead organisation (prime)?

A46: We have not specified this.

Q47: Is it sufficient to demonstrate the cost of work done by sub-contractors through the provision of paid invoices against an agreed statement of work or will they be required to show evidence of time sheets and hourly rates?

A47: UKSA will pay grant funding based on actual project costs incurred. Staff and pay costs are set out in Section 12 of the NSIP 'Call for Proposals' document.

Q48: Will sub-contractors be subject to an audit by UKSA?

A48: As noted in 8.2 of the Grant Funding Agreement (Annex G), UKSA as the Authority may conduct audits of all of the activities under the NSIP funding agreement and this may include accessing information concerning sub-contractors involved in the NSIP project.

Q49: What criteria will UKSA use to determine value-for-money with sub-contractors and what is the process to determine that acceptability? For example, is there a range of daily rates that UKSA consider acceptable?

A49: We do not have published daily rates. All costs set out in each proposal will be taken into account when the value for money offered by each project is considered.

Q50: What is the impact if costs are deemed to be outside what is considered by UKSA to be value-for-money?

A50: Projects that are short-listed for grant funding will undergo due diligence and it is at that stage that any value for money queries would be discussed with the lead organisation.

Q51: Do we need to have a Memorandum of Understanding or Consortium Agreement with all Partners before submitting the application on 2nd September?

A51: No. information on each project organisation is required in the Application Form (Annex D), including the UK-based lead organisation in Section 3a)

Q52: Do we need to hire everyone that we wish to include in the project before the application or provide you with conditional agreements with key employees in the UK or this can be done after submission of the documentation?

A52: No, this is not required before application.

Q53: What is the procedure to select sub-contractors? Shall it be done before submission or afterwards? What rules apply if we want to engage a Company that is providing manufacturing capabilities, which is located in another country?

A53: The selection of sub-contractors is for the project lead organisation to decide. Please note that the NSIP funding is for UK-based organisations and all proposals to demonstrate the benefit to the UK in their submission. If any project is proposing to undertake activities outside the UK, then your proposal would need to set out what this is and why it cannot be undertaken within the UK.

Q54: Is NSIP 100% funded via de minimis or it is necessary for applicants to contribute 20% of the total project cost?

A54: Under de minimis State aid, all applicants must provide a minimum of 20% of the total project cost from their own resources or funding. Please note that in this NSIP funding call it is expected that GBER will be applicable due to the minimum grant value of £200,000.

Q55: Are applicants able to receive feedback/approval of rates ahead of submission in a way that does not jeopardise a submission?

A55: We are unable to provide feedback or approval of overhead rates (nor on any other aspect of a project) ahead of submission of proposals. Projects that are short-listed for grant funding will undergo due diligence and it is at that stage that any queries UKSA has on the project, including overheads, would be discussed with the lead organisation.