Open Networks Ecosystem Competition

Application Form

1. How to Submit

You must submit your documents via the [Find a Grant site](https://www.find-government-grants.service.gov.uk/grants/open-networks-ecosystem-competition-1).

You will receive an email acknowledgement of your submission.

Please submit your application and all required documents by **11:59pm on 23rd May 2023**.

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).

The (Consortium) Lead Partner must submit the following **mandatory documents**:

1. Your **Application Form**, with all questions answered, within the word count, plus any allowed appendices. You must also complete the Supplementary Information section, including:
	1. **A Finance Summary** table, and
	2. the **Confirmation of Grant Agreement Terms** table.
2. **Project Commercial Form** (for each partner, including the Project Lead) covering all proposed costs. These should cover the full grant term. These documents are used to understand how you have estimated your costs - see Section 2.6.4 for information on eligible costs.
3. **Two Years of Latest Accounts** (in .pdf format) for the Project Lead and each Consortium Partner.
4. **A Project Plan** as per the requirement in Question C1.
5. **A Risk Register**, as per the requirement in Question C3
6. **Intellectual Property Plan**, as per the requirement in Question B3
7. A table outlining the **Finance and Commercial roles** for all organisations looking to receive funding, as per the requirement in Question C4.
8. A **Work Package Cost Breakdown** and **Spend Profile by Month**, as per the requirements in Question D1.

2. Summary Information

**Application Information (not scored)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Consortium Name** |  |
| **Consortium Lead Organisation** |  |
| **Consortium Lead Contact Name** |  |
| **Consortium Lead Contact Email** |  |
| **The main technology theme(s) being addressed in this application** (outlined in Section 2.3 of the competition guidance) |  |
| **Name(s) of additional organisation(s) forming part of this application** |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **DSIT may publish consortium partner list (organisation names only)** | ☐ |

3. 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** |
| A. Project description and objectives | 35% |
| B. Outcomes, sustainability | 25% |
| C. Project delivery | 25% |
| D. Financial | 15% |
| E. Additional Funding Activities | Not scored (optional) |

In evaluating your responses we value brevity and the maximum word limit is fixed, 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. **Content beyond the word limits will not be provided to assessors.**

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.

**Firstly, please describe how you heard about the challenge? e.g through targeted DSIT engagement / UKTIN / Gov.uk website/ Other (please specify). *Please note that this question is not scored.***

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**Public Description (400 word limit) (not assessed)**

* To comply with government practice on openness and transparency of public funded activities, DSIT 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.

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# Section A. Project description, objectives and outcomes (35%)

A good 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 three questions.

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| **A1: Describe the project’s strategic aims, highlighting which Open RAN challenges you plan to address? Including references to relevant competition objectives - 15% - 1000 words (Triage Question)*** State, in simple terms, what you will deliver in your project.
* Describe the main motivation for the project and the challenges the project will address. Your description must address the relevant technology theme(s) priorities in Section 2.3.
* How will your solution impact the global and UK markets for Open RAN? How will it be differentiated from competing products or solutions?
 |
| Response: |
|
| **A2: Describe, in technical terms, the system architecture and major technological components and innovations of the project including diagram(s), this includes contributions to relevant telecoms standards. - 15% - 1250 words (Triage Question)*** If relevant, also explain how the proposed project is likely to advance telecoms standards (with references to Section 2.5.1). If not, explain why. Outline how the project will address technical standards and/or support development of standards which facilitate open and interoperable technologies in line with DSIT objectives?
	+ Outline how your project will contribute to the UK’s telecoms standards objectives. If relevant, outline how research activities and outputs can contribute to influencing international technical standards setting and/or the development of standards facilitating open and interoperable technologies.
	+ Identify which standards-setting organisations (e.g. SDOs) you will seek to engage with, and which working groups are you likely to target, and why they are most appropriate.
	+ Describe how you might continue to assess relevant standards activity and possible contribution of the project or participants to standards, throughout the lifetime of the project.
 |
| Response:  |
|
| **A3: Describe your approach to the project’s telecoms and cyber security? - 5% - 600 words:*** Describe how you will ensure your implemented solutions are safe and secure conforming to best practice.
* Identify who in your consortium is responsible for different aspects of telecoms and cyber security?
* What technical functionality is built into your system to appropriately manage and monitor telecoms and cyber security?

Topics for consideration when describing your project’s approach to telecoms and cyber security:* Adopting and working toward secure by default and secure by design in all delivered products and end-to-end systems.
* Actively running security testing with reliable metrics that show the quality of the security testing, reliability of their projects when under test, and the security of the transmissions seen on various interfaces.
* Performing regular audits of equipment, processes and policies testing.
* Limiting the use of vendors whose goods or services could be considered as presenting a high security risk.
* Increasing the security of virtualised and distributed network functions.
* Ensuring network operation, management and monitoring is secure, in particular between equipment of different vendors.
* Ensuring software integrity checking, update and patch management is in place.
* Supporting cooperation and information sharing between UK and global organisations around secure network design, attacks, vulnerabilities and security mitigations for Open RAN solutions.
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| Response: |

# Section B. Outcome sustainability, benefits and route to market (25%)

A good response to this section will provide a clear explanation of the project’s outcomes and outputs. It should address the following three questions.

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| **B1: Describe the project’s measurable outcomes. Please specify the project‘s measurable monetisable and non-monetisable benefits or explain how you will determine these as part of your project - 12.5% - 1000 word limit*** How the project will deliver and measure benefits, and which they will be contributing to. These might include:
	+ Reducing the cost barrier for development and deployment of Open RAN technologies, products and services.
	+ Accelerating Open RAN technology maturity. You may wish to refer to technology readiness levels (TRLs)
	+ 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.
	+ Contribution to the development of Open RAN skills and capabilities within the UK.
* Describe how you will identify and prove the impacts and lessons learned of your project.
* Describe what the measurable impacts of your project will be by the end of the funding period
 |
| Response: |
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| **B2: Describe how the project will contribute to developing the UK’s capabilities in the Open RAN environment - 7.5% - 750 word limit*** Highlight the key outputs of your project and how these will deliver against the challenges and/or use cases you have identified related to the UK market.
* Describe how you intend to factor in the expected availability of the network components and services featured in your proposals.
 |
| Response: |
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| **B3: Describe your vision for the development and funding of outputs beyond the completion of your project - 5% - 500 words*** Describe how the project outputs will deliver value beyond the grant funding period, including commercialisation plans or scale up beyond the scope of the project funding.
* Describe your approach to the dissemination of lessons learned and project outcomes (through collaboration with UKTIN and other channels).
* Provide an Intellectual Property Plan (as an annex) explaining what ambitions your project has to patent and retain IP resulting from your work, with reference to Section 2.5.2. This must be no longer than two pages.
* Describe how this project will affect your longer term roadmap for new products and/or services. Briefly outline any follow-on projects or future improvement opportunities currently envisaged.
 |
| Response: |
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# Section C. Project Delivery (25%)

A good response will provide evidence that the project proposal is credible and that there is a robust approach to progressing and controlling the project, which is suitable and proportionate for the scope and the funding levels sought.

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| **C1: Provide a project plan - 10% - 750 word limit*** Describe how the project will be delivered.
* Identify key milestones and deliverables, including grant payment milestones.
* Outline key work packages and associated activities.
* Demonstrate that the project has the available resources to deliver the activities in the time available.
* Describe your mobilisation plan, from being notified of success to grant funding agreement. The key requirements for this stage of work are described in Section 2.6.3.
* Provide a clear, easily readable, high level gantt chart (as an annex), including an outline of the critical path for the project ‘end to end’ - from project set up to project closure by March 2025.
 |
| Response: |
| **C2: How will the project be managed and decisions made? 5% - 500 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.
* 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.
* Describe the details of any vital external parties, including sub-contractors, who you will need to work with to successfully carry out the project.
 |
| Response: |
| **C3: Describe the most significant risks to the successful delivery of the project and how they will be managed - 5% - 500 word limit*** Identify the key internal and external dependencies, support or engagement that is required. For example: product development; supply of goods / services; investment or legal agreements or consents that need to be put in place to enable the works to be undertaken.Indicate what is agreed at the time of submission, and what is still to be agreed.
* Provide a risk register (as an annex) which identifies and describes the main risks and uncertainties of the project with risks and mitigations scored by likelihood and impact.
 |
| Response: |
| **C4: Provide details of the Project Lead’s financial management of the project and their approach to providing regular, up-to-date expenditure forecasts to DSIT - 5% - 500 word limit*** Demonstrate how the Project Lead will fulfil its responsibility to ensure that evidence of eligible expenditure, for example all invoices and timesheets for participants, are made available to DSIT on request.
* Describe how the Project Lead will provide accurate forecasts for the whole consortium and ensure timely finance input from partners, including providing an pdated cash flow profile forecast template with each grant claim and/or change request once the project is in life.
* Outline any delegations and organisational policies that will ensure appropriate spend control and manage risks associated with fraud, risk and error.
* Set out how you will mitigate any risks to delayed expenditure within a financial year and between financial years (running 1st April to 31st March).
* Provide a finance and commercial roles table (as an annex). This should be completed **for the Project Lead and all consortium members that will receive funding** from DSIT.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Requires recruitment (yes/no)? | Position title | Proposed finance responsibilities on this project | Proposed commercial responsibilities on the project | Relevant experience | Relevant qualifications | % of their working time committed to this project |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

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| Response: |

# Section D. Financial (15%)

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.

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| **D1: Identify the major cost components and explain how these represent value for money - 7.5% - 500 words (work package cost breakdown and spend profile by month required as annexes)*** Provide a narrative description summarising what each project participant will be delivering based on the project plan in your answer to question C1 and the costs associated. Include a description of the contributions in kind from each project participant.
* Provide a cost breakdown of forecast expenditure on the project. 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 which legal entities will own any assets which are paid for by grant funding.
* Describe any subcontractor costs and why they are critical to the project and are not grant receiving consortium members.
* Provide an annex identifying the following:
	+ The estimated project cost for each work package. Make clear the level of contribution from each project participant for each work package and the level of grant funding requested from DSIT.
	+ 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.
 |
| Response: |
| **D2: Explain how you will ensure value for money through your sourcing approach and supply chain - 5% - 500 words** * 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.
 |
| Response: |
| **D3: Explain whether this project could go ahead without public funding and if so the difference public funding would make. Why are you not able to wholly fund the project from your own or other private-sector funding? 2.5% - 400 words*** 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 consortia members 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.
 |
| Response: |

**Section E: Additional Activities [optional, not scored]**

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| **E1: Assuming that your project is successful, please outline at a high level any enhancements to your project that you would consider should additional funding and/or time be made available. This should include estimated costs for additional activities. - 750 words**This could include:* An expansion of project scope.
* An extension to the project looking to make progress on higher TRLs from the ‘basic’ bid, e.g. adding a testbed and trial phase.
* Completing additional work aimed at particular themes such as security, international and standards.

As part of feedback for successful applicants, DSIT will give an indication of whether it considers the inputs to this section of the application to be appropriate. In the instance that it does - options for extension will be agreed after the GFA is signed. This option may be exercised at the authority’s discretion following further development of the proposal/s through the grant change control process. Applicants should be cognisant of maximum subsidy rates in the [Research, Development and Innovation Streamlined Subsidy Route guidance](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1128060/research-development-innovation-streamlined-route-guidance.pdf) (which cover both core and additional activities)[[1]](#footnote-1). |
| Response: |

Supplementary Information

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

**1 Finance Summary**

Please complete the following finance summary.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1. Organisation name (as officially listed e.g. on Companies House) | 2. Organisation registered postcode | 3. Entity registration number (e.g. Companies House) | 4. Enterprise category | 5. Postcode where majority of work will be done | 6. Costs to be funded by each organisation(£) | 7. Funding sought from DSIT(£) | 8. Other funding from public sector bodies(£) | 9. Total(£) |
| Lead org. |   |  |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |
| Partner 1 |   |  |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |
| Partner 2 |   |  |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |
| Partner 3 |   |  |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |
| [non-partner contributions 1] |   |  |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |
| [non-partner contributions 2] |   |  |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |
| [non-partner contributions 3] |   |  |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |
| [non-partner contributions 4] |   |  |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |
| **Total (£)** |  |  |  |  |

Where organisations not requesting DSIT grant funding are contributing to the consortium, please enter their contributions in the *non-partner contributions* rows and populate.

**Confirmation of Grant Agreement Terms**

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

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Ref** | **Question/Request** | **Applicant Response** |
| 1 | Please complete the finance summary table for your proposed delivery plans | 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. To note: Successful applicants will be required to provide a breakdown of their expenses with accompanying legal sign off to confirm their compliance with Subsidy Control principles as part of the Grant Funding Agreement process | Please state: ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ and which regime you intend to use |
| 3 | Has the project obtained a legal opinion regarding Subsidy Control, that this application would constitute allowable subsidy? | Please state: ‘Yes’ or ‘No’. If ‘No’, state when this would 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 application conforms to the HMG High Risk Vendor (HRV) policy outlined in guidance? | Please state: ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ |
| 6 | Please confirm that the grant amount requested from DSIT includes any irrecoverable VAT, all fees and charges, and appropriate allowance has been made for any price inflation during the grant claim period. | [Enter ‘Confirmed’] |
| 7 | Please confirm that the Project Lead has accepted the terms and conditions in the draft grant funding agreement provided.We expect the Project Lead to sign the agreement after notification of a successful application and to ensure satisfactory completion of DSIT pre-grant consortium set-up requirements and information for DSIT due diligence. DSIT reserves the right to rescind offers of funding, for example if this is delayed. The terms and conditions set out in the GFA are non-negotiable and are available on the gov.uk competition website. We recommend that you review this with your legal advisors and raise any queries you may have with DSIT before submitting your application. | [Enter ‘Confirmed’] |
| 8 | Please confirm that the Project Lead has reviewed and accepted the Collaboration Agreement template. If your consortium is planning to deviate from this template, please let us know the nature of any changes you would propose in your application. | [Enter ‘Confirmed’] |
| 9 | 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 |
| 10 | Please confirm whether partners have provided a letter of support or commitment to the project?Please submit a copy of letters as a PDF.  | [Enter ‘Confirmed’ and partner name] |
| 11 | Please identify your pre-grant mobilisationteam including the Senior Responsible Owner(SRO) and Project Manager. | Please state who will be resourced for these roles |
| 12 | Please provide the name and email address for the lead contacts from each of your consortium partners. | [Enter the names and email addresses for each organisation’s lead contact] |

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1. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\_data/file/1128060/research-development-innovation-streamlined-route-guidance.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-1)