



Department for
Science, Innovation
& Technology

5G Innovation Regions

Competition Application Guidance

July 2023



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Overview

Summary

The Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) is leading the Government's approach to driving innovation and unlocking opportunities for economic growth through making use of world-class digital infrastructure.

Advanced wireless technologies will be key to driving the Government's ambitions to harness digital transformation to build a more inclusive, competitive and innovative digital economy. Over the next decade, we will see the development and maturation of innovative technologies from Artificial Intelligence, to self-driving vehicles, to digital twins; all of which will demand advanced wireless connectivity.

DSIT is inviting applications into a £40 million fund for local authorities across the UK to establish themselves as '5G Innovation Regions' (5GIRs) as part of our wider programme to drive 5G adoption, with a focus on key sectors where there is local capability and opportunities. Funding will enable places throughout the UK to unlock opportunities across the digital economy which utilise advanced wireless connectivity.

5G Innovation Regions will receive funding to lead on delivering the Government's vision for communities across the UK to take full advantage of the transformative effect that advanced wireless connectivity and digital technologies can provide.

Tailoring interventions to their specific local needs and existing strengths, 5G Innovation Regions will promote the development and scaled adoption of 5G and other advanced wireless technologies, in businesses and in the delivery of public services, to generate value and growth at the local level.

This programme supports the government's vision set out in our [Digital Strategy](#) for a competitive and innovative digital economy, and delivers on our [Science and Technology Framework](#) and our commitment to grow the economy.

The programme supports the implementation of our [UK Wireless Infrastructure Strategy](#), which sets out a clear vision for how advanced wireless infrastructure can become an integral part of the fabric of the UK's economy and society by 2030, and how we want people, business and public services across the UK to realise the full benefits of 5G and other forms of advanced wireless connectivity.

This document sets out key elements of the funding for 5G Innovation Regions and the information applicants need in order to apply.

Dates & Deadlines

The competition process will follow these steps:

- Applications will be assessed against this Competition Application Guidance.
- Applications will be ranked for shortlisting.
- Applicants may be called upon to provide additional information as part of the shortlisting process.
- The highest scoring shortlisted applications will be selected as preferred applicants.
- Applicants will be notified of the funding decision.
- All applications will receive assessor feedback upon request.

The indicative timeline is below:

Milestone	Date/Deadline
Competition Opens	31 July 2023
Launch/Briefing Event	01 August 2023
Deadline for clarification questions	03 September 2023
Deadline for receipt of applications (competition closes)	23:59, 10 September 2023
Assessment of applications	Mid-September 2023
Successful Applicants Notified	Mid-Late October 2023
Project mobilisation	November 2023
Grant Funding Period (Subject to successful applicants satisfactory completion of any pre grant requirements and commercial agreements)	November 2023 - 31 March 2025

Who Can Apply

This competition is open to applications from UK local authorities. Applicants should also meet the other eligibility criteria set out in Section 4. We encourage applications from local authorities working together. This could include combined authority areas (Mayoral or County), or City and Growth Deal areas. Where local authorities work together, one local authority must act as the lead organisation for the purposes of the application.

How to Apply

What to Complete

The Applicant must complete the Application Form (plus any allowed appendices). See the Application and Assessment section below for further details.

Application Submission

Application submission is via the [Find A Grant portal](#), details of which are on the competition's gov.uk page. You will receive an email acknowledgement of your submission.

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).

Application Format

The Applicant must only use the Application Form and templates provided. The Application Form contains specific guidance on information to be provided.

Funding

Funding Source & Amount

DSIT is investing up to £40 million of capital funding to establish 5G Innovation Regions. DSIT expects to make available grant funding of up to a maximum of £3.8 million to each successful project.

DSIT will not be mandating any level of match funding from local authorities, but it is expected that proposals may include other sources of funding (both other public funding and potential private funding), and this would be reflected in proposals in the potential of greater aspirations for delivery.

All DSIT grant funded activities must be completed by 31 March 2025. Non-grant funded activities can continue beyond this date.

Subsidy Control

DSIT seeks that 5G Innovation Regions will be funded through a “no subsidy” route to local authorities, i.e as an intra-governmental funding transfer, from DSIT to the local authority, under the UK Subsidy Control Act 2022. This means that successful applicants will be responsible for their own compliance with the Act, and ensuring that the Act is complied with in any local authority spend or onward granting related to funded projects..

Local authorities receiving funding as part of this programme of work are responsible for all spend incurred which may have subsidy implications depending on their onward relationships with parties receiving funding. This approach may require (for example where a local authority proposes to utilise funding by issuing grants, or in some circumstances via procurements) the use of the Research, Development and Innovation Streamlined Route by the local authority¹, or another route compliant with the UK Subsidy Control Act 2022 where applicable. The approach proposed by local authorities should be made clear within applications for funding, in their response to Question B3.

DSIT will expect funded authorities to inform DSIT of:

- any subsidy awards or schemes recorded via the Department of Business and Trade (DBT) Subsidy Database in relation to funded projects
- any changes to their approach to subsidy control as it relates to funded projects during the project duration; and
- any of any legal challenges made in relation to subsidy control related to funded projects.

Applicants should obtain their own independent subsidy control legal advice on how they will comply with the Subsidy Control Act 2022, and will be asked to commit to sharing that advice with DSIT and its professional advisers within ten working days of confirmation of a grant award, should their bid be successful.

If an applicant receives a subsidy in breach of the subsidy control arrangements that applicant may be required to repay any subsidy received to the value of the gross grant equivalent of the subsidy, plus interest.

Further information on Subsidy Control

The Subsidy Control team at the Department of Business and Trade (DBT) has lead responsibility within the UK for coordination and development of policy on subsidy control. DBT has published guidance which can be found on the government website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/subsidy-control-regime>

1

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1128060/research-development-innovation-streamlined-route-guidance.pdf

Grant funding agreements

For local authorities in England and Wales, funding will be paid by DSIT via a non-ring fenced capital grant under Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003; for local authorities in Scotland and Northern Ireland, funding will be paid by DSIT via a capital grant under Section 8 of the Industrial Development Act 1982.

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.

DSIT will assess value for money throughout the application process, through applicants' responses to Question B3. We reserve the right to undertake a detailed financial appraisal of proposed spend to assess whether the proposal will deliver value for money, in particular through scrutiny of the bidder's Cash Flow Profile submission.

Grants awarded under the Local Government Act will be paid to the successful local authority via a grant determination, and may be used only for the purposes that a capital receipt may be used for in accordance with regulations made under section 11 of the Local Government Act.

Successful applicants will also be expected to sign with DSIT a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which is non-legally binding, but sets out expectations for grant expenditure, i.e. the plans, activities and outcomes the applicant sets out in their application. The MoU will annex the applicant's bid for reference. Other conditions are as set out in the relevant legislation².

For grants awarded under the Industrial Development Act, applicants will be expected to sign a Grant Funding Agreement with DSIT. While those terms will be legally binding (as set out in the relevant legislation³), we will aim to ensure those applicants do not incur a higher burden than those funded under the Local Government Act, in line with the New Burdens Doctrine⁴.

Section 1: Policy & Programme Context

1.1 Policy Context

The Prime Minister has set out [five priorities](#) for this government, including to build a better, more secure, more prosperous future for the UK, by growing the economy, and creating better-paid jobs and opportunity right across the UK. DSIT's mission is to deliver stronger growth, better jobs and bold discoveries, including through innovation and investment in advanced technologies; these priorities can only be delivered with world-class digital infrastructure.

² <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/26/contents>

³ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1982/52/contents>

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/new-burdens-doctrine-guidance-for-government-departments/new-burdens-doctrine-guidance-for-government-departments#background>

The UK's telecoms networks provide the infrastructure that underpins our economy, from the way we do business and access public services, to enjoying entertainment and staying in touch. By building world-class, secure digital infrastructure, we can realise the vision we set out in our [Digital Strategy](#) for a competitive and innovative digital economy, and deliver on our [Science and Technology Framework](#) priorities by boosting investment in infrastructure, research and development.

Improving digital connectivity is one of the government's [Levelling Up priorities](#). We want places and communities across the UK to share in the benefits of good connectivity, enriching lives and driving local growth. The Government has already invested in places across the UK, including through levelling up funding and City and Growth deals, and our Investment Zones and programme of devolution in England will give local areas more flexibility to deliver their local priorities.

Advanced wireless technologies will be key to driving the government's ambitions to harness digital transformation to build a more inclusive, competitive and innovative digital economy. 5G in particular has the potential to unlock significant economic and social benefits for all of the UK. As a foundational technology for other technologies, including augmented and virtual reality, AI and machine learning, 5G will be key in helping sectors across the economy maintain their international competitiveness.

Future telecommunications is one of the five critical technologies identified in the Science and Technology Framework. The advancement and development of 5G networks and technologies will be a crucial element of strengthening and achieving strategic advantage in this prioritised area of science and technology application.

DSIT published the [UK Wireless Infrastructure Strategy](#) in April 2023, which sets out the strategic framework for the development, deployment and adoption of 5G and future networks. It articulates a clear vision for how advanced wireless infrastructure can become an integral part of the fabric of the UK's economy and society by 2030, and how we want people, business and public services across the UK to realise the full benefits of 5G and other advanced wireless connectivity. As part of this Strategy, DSIT announced £40 million of new funding to establish 5G Innovation Regions across the UK to encourage 5G adoption.

5G Innovation Regions will receive funding to lead on delivering the Government's vision for communities across the UK to take full advantage of the transformative effect that advanced wireless connectivity and digital technologies can provide.

5G Innovation Regions will:

- Drive economic growth in places by supporting places in adopting wireless connectivity for services based around local opportunities for growth.
- Accelerate commercial investment in 5G and other advanced wireless technologies by aggregating and demonstrating demand.
- Foster the emergent 5G ecosystem by enabling "learning by doing".

5G Innovation Regions are part of DSIT's work leading the Government's approach to driving telecoms innovation, ensuring more secure and resilient networks and a more diverse and competitive supply chain. (Further detail is given in Programme Context).

1.2 Programme Context

The adoption of 'smart' 5G connectivity and services in places will provide huge economic benefits, with substantial productivity gains. Many of the economic and societal benefits of advanced wireless connectivity will be realised at the local level.

Local and regional authorities can play a crucial role in facilitating the deployment of 5G and leading adoption and innovation in public services, as well as creating the right conditions for new investment and growing local businesses.

Through the Wireless Infrastructure Strategy we are investing £40 million to establish 5G Innovation Regions across the UK. Funding will enable communities and businesses throughout the UK to unlock opportunities across the digital economy utilising advanced wireless connectivity.

Tailoring their approach to local needs and existing strengths, 5G Innovation Regions will promote the use of services enabled by the development and scaled adoption of 5G and other advanced wireless technologies in businesses and in the delivery of public services, to generate value and growth at the local level.

5G Innovation Regions should target key sectors with high potential for local economic growth and productivity gains. These will vary by area, but should include: public services (including "smart communities" applications); rural industries (including agri-tech and food production); transport and logistics; advanced manufacturing; and creative industries.

5G Innovation Regions are not designed to increase wireless coverage, but rather to bring together, at scale, multiple use cases within a 5G Innovation Region. The outcome of this is to demonstrate the benefits of accelerated 5G adoption.

Supported by the Wireless Infrastructure Strategy, 5G Innovation Regions will build on the learnings of the [5G Testbeds and Trials \(5GTT\) Programme](#) to drive innovative applications powered by 5G and other advanced wireless connectivity from proof of concept to widespread adoption. It is our ambition that projects will demonstrate the scalability, replicability, and sustainability of 5G use cases across key sectors of the economy, creating 5G Innovation Regions across the UK.

Section 2: Competition Outline

2.1 Competition Context

5G Innovation Regions will receive funding to lead on delivering the government's vision for communities across the UK to take full advantage of the transformative effect that advanced wireless connectivity and digital technologies can provide.

5G Innovation Regions are encouraged to adopt a diverse range of advanced wireless networks and technologies (e.g. heterogeneous environments integrating 5G with other networks such as 4G/LTE, Wi-Fi, satellite, Low-Power Wide Area Networks, IoT networks, fixed-wireless access and other existing technologies such as Extended Reality, Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning algorithms or digital twins) tailored to their specific needs.

DSIT aims to establish a diverse portfolio of up to 10 5G Innovation Regions across the UK with different geographic, sectoral and technological challenges and solutions.

DSIT will ensure broad inclusion of private and public service sectors with high potential for local economic growth and productivity gains, building on existing capabilities in each area and potential. These will vary by area, but should include: public services (including "smart communities" applications); rural industries (including agri-tech and food production); transport and logistics; advanced manufacturing; and creative industries.

Led by a UK local authority, each 5G Innovation Region will develop a framework to stimulate the adoption by public and private sector organisations of digital technologies and services that rely on 5G and other forms of advanced connectivity.

Each 5G Innovation Region will:

- Develop a digital ecosystem that builds on local areas of sector expertise and capability;
- Unlock opportunities to use developing technologies in the innovative delivery of both public and commercial services to individuals and businesses through wider scale adoption; and
- Amplify local and national activities by working with other 5G Innovation Regions and with other national initiatives to support local digital growth and broader prosperity, e.g. Investment Zones, Devolution Deals, City and Growth Deals, Project Gigabit, the Open Networks R&D fund etc.

5G Innovation Regions will work closely with DSIT in support of their digital connectivity ambitions, and with other regions to share learnings and experiences for the benefit of their local area and all areas of the UK.

2.2 Competition Objectives

2.2.1 Strategic programme objectives

1. Drive economic growth across the UK by supporting places to adopt advanced wireless technologies for services based around local opportunities for growth:
 - Delivering direct economic benefits to places (e.g. productivity gains, cost savings and/or welfare improvements) through projects and use cases across public services and industry, and through the adoption of advanced wireless connectivity services, building on local opportunities and strengths.
2. Accelerate commercial investment in 5G and other advanced wireless technologies by aggregating and demonstrating demand:
 - Aggregating and demonstrating demand through projects and use cases for advanced wireless technologies, across public services and industry, helping to build the business case for commercial investment, over and beyond the lifecycle of the programme.
3. Foster the 5G ecosystem enabling “learning by doing”:
 - The 5G ecosystem includes the private, academic and public sectors. It is conducive to development. This attracts new investment and generates economic development in the UK. It is a highly innovative environment where 5G technology can be tested and developed. Contributions can be organised in a way which ensures the creation of a higher collective value through knowledge sharing and dissemination.
 - Running outreach and engagement activities with stakeholders in key local sectors, as well as suppliers and service providers, on the adoption of advanced wireless connectivity services through use cases and projects, facilitating scale-up and replication elsewhere in the UK, as well as increasing capability in the UK workforce

2.2.2 Possible enabling activities

It is expected that each 5G Innovation Region will tailor their scope, activities and expenditure based on local requirements to support the strategic programme objectives. Generally, we would expect to see each 5G Innovation Region run a number of ‘enabling activities’, which in turn will help build the business case to attract commercial investment during and beyond the grant funding period, and to provide evidence to demonstrate the case for an ongoing 5G adoption initiative in the region.

To that end, we would expect 5G Innovation Regions to leverage DSIT funding to run sector specific activities based around identifying and delivering regional projects with strategic value, aimed at validating the widespread adoption of 5G use cases and services in key economic sectors. The deployment of network infrastructure should be limited to that which fulfils the requirements for the adoption of use cases and services, rather than funding network infrastructure focused on improving (or extending existing) wireless coverage.

Based on DSIT's evaluation of previous funded programmes, we would expect successful 5G Innovation Regions to carry out the following enabling activities:

Developing the regional ecosystem:

- Work with partners to put in place strategies, structures and arrangements to support collaboration and to drive adoption
- Ensuring there is a focal point of contact for local stakeholders wanting to understand the opportunities and benefits of 5G adoption. (These structures may form part of existing or planned local structures for economic or digital development.)
- Running activities for local businesses to work with advanced wireless networks and network services; matchmaking and collaboration spaces; educational and upskilling opportunities for local businesses; other marketing and communications activities etc.
- A key activity for the 5G Innovation Region will be supporting collaboration and driving dissemination of learnings and good practice; initially within its own area but more broadly for the benefit of the 5G ecosystem across the UK, e.g. with other 5G Innovation Regions, projects, testbeds and initiatives.

Identifying strategic sectoral projects and use cases:

- Working with local partners to identify strategic sectoral projects and use cases, based on specific regional characteristics, i.e. based on areas of local industry or public service delivery with existing capabilities and with high potential such as health/social care, manufacturing, transport/logistics, agritech, creative industries etc. Projects should have a regional perspective and should aim to involve a regional end user.
- Promoting the generation of privately funded projects within the community, for example, by hosting meetups, workshops and helping to link demand with the relevant sector.

Mobilising and delivering strategic projects and use cases:

- Once projects and use cases have been identified, they can move into their delivery phase. Delivery approaches could include making use of existing arrangements, private sector funded activities, competitive sourcing, grant funded support etc. (DSIT recognises that, given timings, these activities may only be deliverable in 2024/25).

Developing a sustainability plan:

- Building on all other activities, working with local partners on commercial sustainability options beyond the period of DSIT funding, e.g. making the case for ongoing funding from within the local authority; industry or public sector partners agreeing to fund/scale-up projects or to act as anchor tenants; attracting inward

investment; monetising any products or solutions developed during the life of the project; opening up assets as test-beds for further development or R&D, or for shared use etc.

2.2.3 Expected characteristics of an applying local authority

- DSIT would expect that a successful application for a 5G Innovation Region would show evidence of:
- Established, or looking to establish, digital adoption and growth plans, with experience of delivering a programme of new digital applications and services that make use of advanced wireless networks, in public sectors, services and industry vertical sectors
- Ability to demonstrate areas of unmet digital potential, e.g. recognised industrial or public service sectors with low demand but high potential for adoption; strong digital employment clusters, but low share of digital GVA over time; NUTS 2 areas with high average % growth in digital sectors; clusters of high growth digital firms but low VC investment.
- Experience of identifying gaps in local digital ecosystems, and development of interventions to address those gaps, such as: digital adoption in traditional economic strength areas; local networks and accelerator programmes; or dedicated programmes to commercialise digital ideas in local education institutions.
- Experience of scaling projects based on existing small-scale proven activities, and creating longer-term project viability; attracting inward investment; and applying digital solutions and services that make use of wireless and advanced network technologies across multiple sectors, using a range of advanced technology solutions
- Appropriate expertise and capacity in place across the local/regional authority, e.g. in planning, economic development, “smart” city/region development etc., with experience in fostering relationships with industry and other stakeholders.
- Ability to access the spectrum and network capabilities required to deliver the project, or have a clear plan to acquire or build them in a timely manner. This may be, for example, in the form of an agreement (or plan for an agreement) with an existing network provider, through private networks, or through enabling the deployment of new network infrastructure, in addition to any required connections to existing or third party infrastructure. Where required, spectrum may be commercially licensed, by using an [Ofcom Innovation and Trial Licence](#) or by making use of Ofcom’s [licensing approach](#) to provide localised access to spectrum bands that can support mobile technology.
- Consideration of the value of promoting open standards, encouraging interoperability between vendors and operators.
- Secure by design: implementing and developing security best practice and standards consistent with UK security policies.

Section 3: Further General Guidelines

3.1 Benefits Monitoring

DSIT is constructing a set of benefit metrics that we expect applicants to report against. Projects will be provided during mobilisation with a template and structure for reporting, and will be allocated a DSIT benefits realisation lead who will provide support.

The project should allocate resources to capture the benefits and lessons learnt within the project lifecycle. A requirement of the funding award is that the local authority must prepare a progress report at three monthly intervals, to be submitted to DSIT. The report will include the benefits realisation return and lessons learnt.

In addition, we would expect lead authorities and other project partners to participate in evaluation activities, e.g. surveys and interviews of funding recipients, which will be conducted by DSIT or a third party acting on its behalf to assess the outcomes of the DSIT programme and its constituent projects. Evaluation activities are expected to be undertaken both during and after the lifetime of the project.

3.2 Collaboration and dissemination

Collaboration is the inter-working with other 5G Innovation Regions, relevant government projects, participation through other channels and the wider ecosystem, on topics of shared interest. The aim is that by combining the efforts and knowledge base, and producing tangible and useful outputs that can be shared and demonstrated, the collaboration activities will help to encourage the adoption of advanced communication technologies within the UK. DSIT and UKTIN will assist in supporting this collaboration.

Projects are encouraged to look for opportunities to collaborate with other ecosystem participants, on topics of shared interest. Projects should consider plans for delivery of collaboration activities, including scope, timeline, representation, funding, reporting and the expected outputs of the collaboration activities.

Working with DSIT and ecosystem partners, projects will be encouraged to plan, support and deliver communications activities to ensure the benefits of their work and learnings are demonstrated and shared as widely as possible with the ecosystem. Such activities could lead to the production of tangible outputs such as published reports, events and workshops.

Collaboration and dissemination work will be supported by the [UK Telecoms Innovation Network \(UKTIN\)](#). UKTIN is delivering a place based and vertical industry approach to accelerate the deployment, adoption and the realisation of benefits from advanced connectivity networks. They are taking a regional approach, to liaise closely with 5G Innovation Regions, convening a monthly conference call to understand what comms activities are underway and how those can be supported and amplified through UKTIN channels. They are

building on the earlier place-based adoption work previously undertaken by UK5G through the 5G Testbeds and Trials programme. Key to that is identifying, creating and disseminating the important learnings from the regions on behalf of DSIT. Project support in contributing insights, reports and learnings to the UKTIN team will be essential to delivering on this critical national dissemination activity.

3.3 Applying local authorities

DSIT encourages applications from multiple local authorities, which would be in contiguous environments, adhering to existing or proposed local governance structures and regional boundaries. This could include combined authority areas (Mayoral or County), or City and Growth Deal areas. (Proposals could include separate locations within the overall regional area.)

There should be a lead local authority to which DSIT will award funding. That local authority will then be responsible for overseeing the distribution of grant funding to any other local authorities within the region, and/or for the procurement of relevant goods or services from other organisations.

Because of the funding framework approach being taken, DSIT does not expect bids from consortia. However, it would expect to see evidence that the local authority has the necessary relationships in place (or plans to put them in place in a timely manner) with those public and private sector organisations required to deliver their objectives.

At this stage, DSIT does not expect local authorities to form commercial partnerships where doing so now may create complications for them to run open competitions as required locally to demonstrate value for money at a later stage or to meet public subsidy or procurement regulations.

3.4 Security Requirements

Applicants should be aware of requirements of the Telecommunications (Security) Act 2021 which introduced duties on providers of public electronic communications networks and services to identify and reduce the risk of security compromises, and prepare for the possibility of their occurrence.

The Act also places duties on providers to prevent, remedy or mitigate any adverse effects of security compromises. These overarching security duties are intended to provide an effective and enduring basis for protecting networks and services.

The use of a range of wireless networks and technologies in a place-based environment by a local authority, and within a 5G Innovation Region, can present a valuable opportunity to improve and expand services offered to communities. However, it is important for local authorities to recognise the need to consider the cyber security of any new assets deployed. Applicants are therefore encouraged to read and implement the [DSIT Secure Connected](#)

[Places Playbook](#) (alpha version) which provides advice to set a strong cyber security foundation. The Playbook is complementary to existing NCSC cyber security guidance such as the [Connected Places Cyber Security Principles](#), a further source of technical guidance which applicants are also encouraged to read and implement.

Applicants should note that any delivery activities involving DSIT funding should adhere to the [NCSC advice on the use of equipment from high risk vendors in UK telecoms networks](#).

Section 4: Eligibility Criteria

Applicants should demonstrate the following. Failure to meet any of these criteria immediately makes a bid ineligible:

1. The lead applicant must be a UK local authority⁵.
2. High risk vendors (HRVs) are not permitted to participate in projects: please refer to the [NCSC advice on the use of equipment from high risk vendors in UK telecoms networks](#). Public funds must not be used to pay for any HRV products or services through this competition. We understand that, in the case of Mobile Network Operators with existing HRV equipment in their networks, these networks may reasonably be used to provide network services. However, project funding must not be used to buy additional equipment or services from HRVs.
3. This competition will not fund any procurement, commercial, business development or supply chain activity with any Russian and Belarusian entity as a partner or subcontractor. This includes any goods or services originating from a Russian and Belarusian source.

Section 5: Application and Assessment

5.1 Application Structure

The structure for applications is as follows:

5.1.1 Applicant Information (not assessed)

- Applying local authority
- Lead contact name and email

⁵ Bodies that are defined as local authorities **for the purposes of section 31** are as defined in [section 33\(1\) of the Local Government Act 2003](#). The 32 local authorities of Scotland as defined by [Local Government etc.\(Scotland\) Act 1994](#) are eligible for funding in this competition. The [11 local councils of Northern Ireland](#) are eligible for funding in this competition

5.1.2 Other information (not assessed)

Public Description (200 word limit)

To comply with government practice on openness and transparency of public funded activities, DSIT has to publish information relating to funded projects. Applicants will need to provide a short description of their proposal in a way that will be understood by the general public. Do not include any commercially confidential information, e.g. intellectual property or patent details.

We would also like to publish the details of any relevant suppliers involved in proposals and the public description of the project, but this is not mandatory.

5.1.3 Competition Questions

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

The Application Form and templates contain specific fields. The Applicant must complete each field and submit a fully completed form. Incomplete forms may be considered ineligible and not sent for assessment.

DSIT reserves the right to request additional clarifications and corrections following the submission deadline.

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

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

In evaluating your responses we value brevity and the maximum word limit is fixed, but please give sufficient evidence to support your application. Tables will not be included in this word limit but should be only used where necessary. Additional diagrams and annexes should not be provided unless requested. Hyperlinks referencing further information may be included to inform more detailed understanding post-selection, but will be disregarded during the assessment of applications.

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.

Where you think that part of an answer to one question is already answered in your response to another question, then please cross reference your answers.

Section A. The vision (Business case) (50%)

A1: What will your project deliver at a regional level? (Triage question, 12.5%, 400 words)

- Describe your vision and rationale for the project.
- Set out a description and a map of the geographic area the project will cover. You may include relevant statistics such as size, population and the number/type of businesses covered.
- How does your proposal align with broader strategic and funding priorities and initiatives for your area?
- Describe the outcomes you plan to achieve with the project from a regional perspective and what you expect to measure, including wider societal benefits.
- Describe how the project, from a regional perspective, will meet the competition objectives set out in Section 2.2. above. You should also consider the policy and programme context set out in Section 1.

A2: What will your project deliver at a sectoral level? (12.5%, 400 words)

- Identify the industry/public service sectors that your project will focus on and describe the current state of development of these sectors in your area, together with any relevant statistics. Explain your rationale for focusing on these sectors.
- For each sector, set out the opportunities that your 5G Innovation Region will bring, including a description of the sectoral capabilities in your area and the local (and, where relevant, national) development opportunities.
- Describe the key activities you will expect to undertake in relation to each sector during the grant funding period. (This should include publicly funded activities as well activities which you will expect to be privately funded.)
- Describe the outcomes you plan to achieve with the project from a sectoral perspective, and what you expect to measure.
- How the project, from a sectoral perspective, will meet the competition objectives set out in Section 2.2. above.

DSIT encourages applications to focus activities around two-three key sectors that play on local strengths and opportunities. DSIT is likely to give more weighting to proposals that include activities in the following sectors: public services, including “smart communities” applications; rural industries, including agri-tech and food production; transport and logistics; advanced manufacturing; and creative industries. Regions are not limited to funding activities in these sectors but, where applicants focus on other sectors, they should outline how these will contribute to increased local growth and innovation.

A3: How will you ensure that the environment created by your proposal will support the development of an ecosystem for 5G (and other advanced wireless technologies) within the UK (12.5%, 400 words)

- Identify what advantages and expertise you and your area will bring to successful delivery of the 5G Innovation Region.
- Describe what activities you will undertake from a local/regional authority perspective (including any other bodies with regional interests) to facilitate and promote collaboration and synergies supporting the development of the 5G ecosystem.
- Describe your approach for the identification and dissemination of lessons learned and project outcomes.
- Describe the key features of your delivery and commercial approaches that will be suitable to be replicated by other areas as the UK's 5G ecosystem develops.

A4: What local strengths and commitment will support delivery of the 5G Innovation Region (12.5%, 400 words)

- Describe how there is strong, clear and committed leadership within your local/regional authority to drive this project and, as appropriate, any related local or regional organisations and/or innovation ecosystems that could contribute to its success and impact. Letters of support may be annexed to support your application.
- Describe existing or planned engagement with local individuals, local or wider businesses and other stakeholders that are relevant to any of your answers to this application.
- If applicable, please provide details of timings, scale and outputs of existing testbed, trial, pilot or similar projects that are relevant to this project, including details of scope, timings, scale and parties involved in delivery.

Section B. Delivery of the vision (Programme details) (50%)

B1: Provide a detailed project plan (Triage Question, 12.5%, 400 words)

- Describe how the project will be delivered.
- Outline key activities, including purpose and objectives of these activities - this can include initial activities, quick wins and possible scale-ups as the project progresses.
- Include information on 'what' is expected to be provided during the project, including any relevant facilities and services, including network services.
- Describe your mobilisation plan (from project selection to starting delivery). Please provide actual dates (assume 1 November 2023 for mobilisation commencement).
- Highlight key milestones, decision points and dependencies.

A Gantt chart or other supporting materials should be annexed to your application.

B2: How will the project be governed, decisions made and risks managed (12.5%, 400 words)

- Describe your proposed project management processes and governance structures, including the roles and responsibilities, skills and experience of key individuals that are relevant to the approach you will be taking.
- Identify the main risks and uncertainties of the project and provide a risk analysis for the project content and approach. A risk register can be annexed (maximum 4 pages) to your application.
- Identify any internal and external dependencies, support or engagement that is required including vital external parties needed to ensure delivery. 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.
- Confirm and describe how you will ensure that [NCSS guidance](#) and [DSIT policy will be applied so that](#) project activities will contribute, as applicable, to the development of a safe, secure and resilient UK telecoms network and services.
- Describe the spectrum and network capabilities, and any other relevant telecoms infrastructure, that you expect will be available for use in the project, and your approach to accessing it. For any required assets or capabilities not currently available, please clearly set out your plan for acquiring or building them in a timely manner.

B3: Provide an outline proposal for the sources and uses of funds for the project and explain how the uses represent value for money (12.5%, 400 words).

- Please complete the 'TEMPLATE 5GIR Cash Flow Profile.xlsx', providing estimates of you anticipate to use the grant funding over the life of the project.
- Provide a narrative description summarising what you will be delivering and the costs associated. This may include any anticipated non-DSIT sources of funding, and applicants should note any uncertainties about the availability and timing of funding.
- Provide a high-level cost breakdown of forecast expenditure on the project (aligned with the project plan provided in response to B1), including identification of common and sector specific costs. This should also set out where DSIT funding will be used. Explain how the costs have been calculated.
- Describe how any network and any other infrastructure will be used in the project (if any), and how it will be sourced.
- Describe which costs you expect to be incurred by external parties and which costs to be incurred by the involved local authorities.
- Explain how you will ensure value for money for the duration of the project through your sourcing approach and supply chain.
- Provide an outline of your approach to ensuring that you will meet the UK Subsidy Control regime.

B4: What is your approach to ensuring that the project will be sustainable after the period of DSIT funding? (12.5%, 400 words)

- Describe your approach to developing, implementing and seeking any funding required for any potential longer term plans. This could include what evidence the project may produce during 2024 to support your approach.
- Set out how aspects of the project may be developed further using non-DSIT funding (from any other public or private sources).
- Describe the ongoing operation of project structures and any assets or infrastructure developed by any party as part of the project.
- Describe the sustainability and scalability of products and services developed in the 5G Innovation Region.

5.2 Supplementary Information

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

Ref	Question/Request	Bidder Response
1	Please confirm that your proposed approach conforms to the DSIT High Risk Vendor (HRV) policy outlined in guidance?	[Enter 'Confirmed']
2	Please provide the addresses of the key locations in which funded activities will take place.	Location & address <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 10px auto;"> [Insert location name and address] </div> [Repeat for multiple locations]
3	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 funding period.	[Enter 'Confirmed']
4	Please identify (including which organisation they are based in) (i) the Senior Responsible Owner (SRO), (ii)	

	Project Director, (iii) Sector Leads, and (iv) Benefits Realisation Lead for the project	
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5.3 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 applicant with an explanation as to why.

2 - Triage

All applications passing the sift will be evaluated and moderated beginning with a triaging process in which they will be assessed based on questions A1 and B1 before a full assessment on the application will be completed. Applicants must meet the minimum threshold for evaluation to proceed.

3 - Application Assessment

The assessment panel will review, score and moderate all applications that passed the triage stage.

4 - Decision

DSIT will decide which projects to recommend for award of funding. DSIT will take a portfolio approach, based on the moderated assessment, in determining which projects to fund, ensuring that we have a variety of successful applications within the funding envelope.

5 - Outcome of the competition

The outcome of the competition will then be shared with all applicants.

6. Feedback for applicants

Feedback will be provided - upon request - to all applications that have been fully evaluated.

5.4 Scoring

1-7 Scoring Range:

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 between 1 and 7:

- **1** - Serious concerns: for example, does not meet requirements, and/or raises serious concerns.
- **2** - Some concerns: for example, meets some requirements but with gaps and/or some concerns

- **3** - Moderate confidence: for example, meets most/all requirements, but lacks sufficient detail in some areas.
- **4** - Adequate confidence: for example, meets most/all requirements and provides a response that demonstrates a good understanding of the requirements.
- **5** - Good confidence: for example, meets most/all requirements and provides a response that demonstrates a good understanding of the requirements.
- **6** - 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.
- **7** - 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.

5.5 Quality Threshold

All applications passing the sift will be evaluated and moderated beginning with a triaging process in which they will be assessed based on questions A1 and B1, before the full assessment on the application. Applicants scoring an average score below 4 will be deemed ineligible for funding and not evaluated further. Successful applications will then be scored for each question against the scoring scale and then ranked based on total score.

Following evaluation of the applications and moderation of scores, any application with an unweighted average score of 1 (serious concerns) against any individual competition question, including where an error has been made by the applicant, will not be considered for funding.

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.

DSIT 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 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.
- DSIT reserves the right to adjust the threshold in line with the volume of applications received.

Section 6: Additional Documents & Information

6.1 Notices

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

We reserve the right to undertake a detailed financial and technical appraisal of each applicant 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 DSIT or any of its agents or advisers with respect to the information contained in the competition material, including with respect to its accuracy 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 want the information that you provide to be treated confidentially, please be aware that, in accordance with FOIA, public sector organisations are required to comply with a statutory code of practice which deals, among 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.

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

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 DSIT 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 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. Applicants 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.

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

This publication is available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/5g-innovation-regions>

If you need a version of this document in a more accessible format, please email alt.formats@beis.gov.uk. Please tell us what format you need. It will help us if you say what assistive technology you use.