



Ministry
of Justice

Invitation to Application

MoJ Lawtech Grant

16 July 2026



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Introduction

This document sets out the objectives and core principles for funding for a further phase of government support aimed at accelerating innovation within the legal services sector, including through the growth of lawtech, in the UK.

This new funding seeks to build on and continue the progress made to date by the LawtechUK programme. The programme was established in 2019 by Tech Nation using a £2m grant from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) to support lawtech and the digital transformation of the UK legal sector. It then moved into a second phase in 2022, led by CodeBase and Legal Geek, with a total investment of £5.5m.

We are now seeking a provider to take forward work under a third phase of funding. This document sets out our invitation to tender and provides all relevant information required for developing your bid. This includes the background to and purpose of the grant, timings and financial basis.

We look forward to receiving your bid.



Overview

The MoJ intends to provide up to £3.62m in grant funding over 2.5 years to a single applicant or consortium of applicants. The successful bidder will be selected through a competitive process, with final decisions made by an expert evaluation panel appointed by the MoJ.

There is no expectation that bidders will continue or replicate existing programme activities. We welcome fresh thinking and innovative approaches to delivering the objectives set out below. While bidders may wish to consider how existing assets, networks and momentum could be leveraged where appropriate, proposals should be driven by what applicants believe will deliver the greatest impact over the next phase of the programme.



Background

What is lawtech?

‘Lawtech’ describes technologies which aim to support, supplement or replace traditional methods for the delivery of legal services. Examples include firms moving from paper to digital contracts or using technology to create court bundles automatically, or artificial intelligence (AI) tools which help consumers to understand and take action on legal issues online. Lawtech is already transforming the legal sector and holds the potential to revolutionise the delivery of legal services, providing new ways of meeting legal needs and boosting economic growth. There is a growing global market for lawtech and an opportunity for the UK to be a world leader in this area.

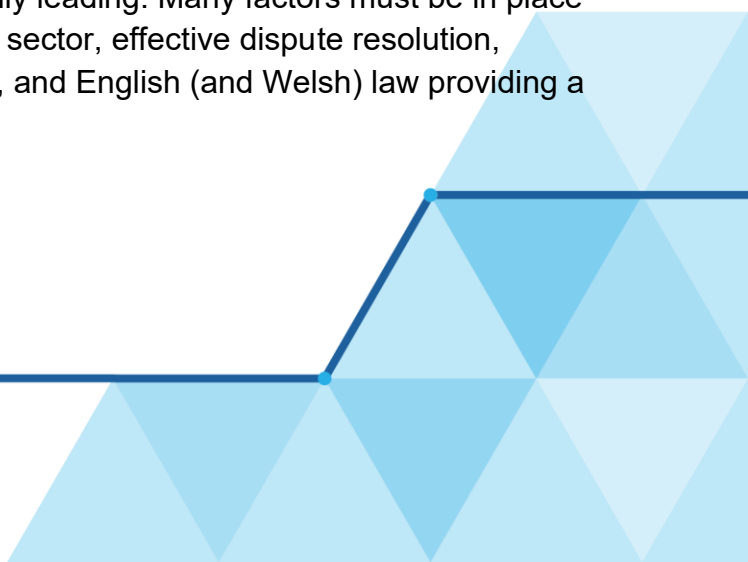
A strong, innovative legal sector is central to the success of the government’s Growth Mission and its ambition to improve access to justice. The Industrial Strategy (published in June 2025) makes clear that innovation is key for the UK to remain a global leader in legal services, and lawtech plays a central role in this ambition.

The UK’s lawtech sector is uniquely positioned to drive growth, bolster our global competitiveness and support the wider legal sector to innovate.

Opportunities

Lawtech has the potential to fundamentally transform the provision of legal services in the UK, through greater efficiency, enabling new ways of delivering legal services and being more responsive to users’ needs. The objectives for this phase of funding recognise this and place a new emphasis on how lawtech can help address unmet legal need. Key questions we are interested in include: How can lawtech help the legal services sector to deliver for individuals and consumers? How can it increase access to advice and the ability to engage with the justice system? How can we connect individuals with innovative services that help them solve their legal issues?

Our vision for the future is of a tech-enabled legal services sector, which meets user and business needs and continues to be internationally leading. Many factors must be in place to achieve this vision including a thriving lawtech sector, effective dispute resolution, appropriate use of justice data and transparency, and English (and Welsh) law providing a strong foundation for emerging technologies.



This vision will be dependent on collaboration across many parties, including government, universities, regulators, law firms, in-house lawyers, legal communities, incubators and accelerators. The provider will work collaboratively with as many of these stakeholders as possible to source the best ideas when developing their approach to achieving the objectives.

The Grant

We expect the Grant Funding Agreement to be signed and commence in October 2026 and come to an end in March 2029. Please note that funding for the grant period will be paid monthly in arrears over the financial years ending 2027, 2028 and 2029. Grants cannot be paid out for any work undertaken prior to countersignature of the Grant Funding Agreement if the application is short listed. A detailed timeline is at page 10 below.



Purpose of the Grant

The grant objectives are to:

- Foster the growth of the UK lawtech sector, with a focus on solutions that benefit consumers and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), as well as supporting the development of AI-driven legal technologies in line with the UK AI Action Plan.
- Drive greater adoption of lawtech among SME legal service providers, by supporting skills development and digital capability in the sector.
- Accelerate regional lawtech growth, targeting regions identified as priorities in the Industrial Strategy—especially city regions and high-growth clusters with the greatest potential.
- Support the development and adoption of technology which will increase access to legal services and aim to reduce unmet legal need.
- Enable the law of England and Wales and the UK's jurisdictions to become the foundation for emerging technologies, by supporting and promoting the UK Jurisdiction Taskforce's work.

The objectives of the funding have been designed to support wider MoJ objectives, including increasing access to legal services and reducing unmet legal need, as well as supporting the development and uptake of lawtech and helping grow the legal sector's economic value.

The objectives have been deliberately designed to be complementary and mutually reinforcing, rather than hierarchical. We recognise that the relative importance of different objectives may vary across activities and evolve over the lifetime of the programme, particularly given the pace of technological change. By avoiding a formal ranking, we encourage bidders to take a holistic approach and develop innovative proposals that balance growth, adoption, regional development and access to justice in a way that maximises overall impact against the programme's aims.



Additional Context

The legal technology landscape has evolved significantly since the launch of LawtechUK in 2019. The rapid development and adoption of AI, particularly large language models and generative AI, has accelerated innovation across the sector and attracted substantial investment from major technology companies. As a result, the lawtech ecosystem is increasingly shaped by organisations with access to significant capital, technical expertise and computing resources.

In this context, the Government is particularly interested in how this programme can help ensure that the benefits of technological change are shared more widely. This includes supporting SME legal service providers, consumers and innovators to harness the opportunities presented by AI, while helping to improve access to legal services and reduce unmet legal need. We are keen to explore how targeted interventions can support areas of innovation that may not otherwise attract sufficient commercial investment, including niche markets, specialist legal domains and solutions designed to address access to justice challenges. Bidders should consider how the programme can remain responsive to emerging opportunities and challenges, including supporting innovation beyond the most commercially attractive use cases.

Collaboration and partnership will be critical to maximising the impact of the funding. To date, LawtechUK has played an important convening role, bringing together legal professionals, technology companies, investors, regulators, academics and policymakers. We encourage bidders to consider how they can build on this strength, using the programme to foster collaboration, share expertise and coordinate activity across the legal and technology ecosystem. Proposals should focus on where government funded intervention can add the greatest value and have the most significant impact, complementing rather than duplicating activity that the market is already well placed to deliver.



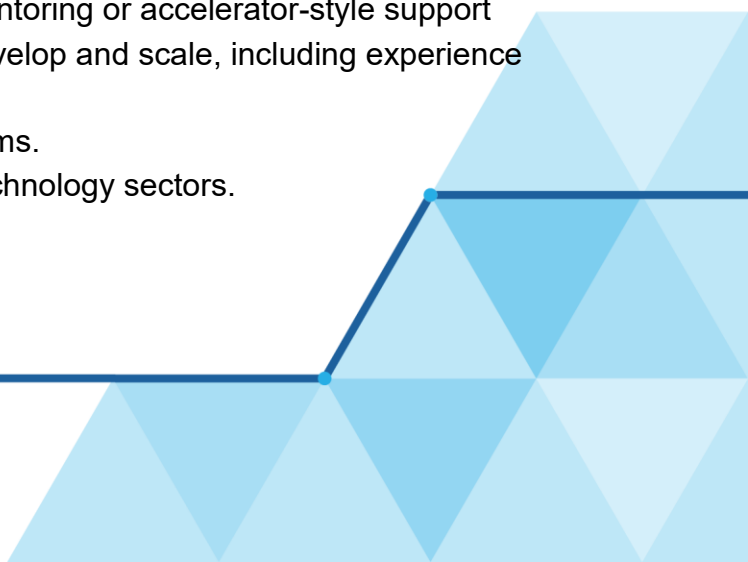
Bidder Specification

Bidders must present a clear and credible vision for delivering the programme objectives, including a strong understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing the UK legal sector and the role technology can play in addressing them.

Bidders should also demonstrate a strong track record of programme delivery and the ability to manage delivery effectively from inception to completion. Essential capabilities include:

- Strong financial and organisational management capabilities, including grant administration and financial forecasting.
- Experience convening and coordinating diverse stakeholder groups and providing credible leadership for a not-for-profit initiative.
- Experience working with external experts and specialist partners.
- A strong commitment to innovation in legal services and the ability to drive positive change across the sector.
- An understanding of wider government priorities relating to economic growth, legal services and access to justice.
- Access to established networks across the UK legal and technology sectors relevant to programme delivery.
- Knowledge and expertise within the UK lawtech sector. This does not need to form part of the bidder's existing in-house capability, but bidders should demonstrate how they will access the necessary expertise.

The following would additionally be beneficial:

- Experience delivering government-funded grant programmes with demonstrable impact.
 - Strong marketing and communications capability, either in-house or through delivery partners as the programme will likely include promotion of the UK lawtech sector.
 - Access to an existing delivery team with the necessary skills and expertise to minimise mobilisation risk.
 - Experience delivering high-profile national or international programmes, as well as supporting start-ups or scale-ups through mentoring or accelerator-style support
 - Understanding of how technology sectors develop and scale, including experience running accelerator or sandbox programmes.
 - Knowledge of international lawtech ecosystems.
 - Experience in fintech or other comparable technology sectors.
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Timeline

Publish Invitation to Apply	16 July 2026
Deadline for clarification questions from applicants	9 August 2026
Deadline for submission of applications	26 August 2026
Evaluation of applications	27 August 2026 to 18 September 2026
Award notification	14 October 2026
Funding start date	1 November 2026
Funding end date	31 March 2029

The proposed timetable is only a guideline. The Ministry of Justice reserves the right to make any changes it deems necessary to the proposed timetable.



Planned Delivery Outcomes

We expect bidders to indicate examples of the types of projects they intend to deliver to meet the objectives and the process by which they will undertake them.

Programme and project benefits will need to be defined as part of the delivery plan process for each financial year of the grant. These benefits will need to be in line with the objectives of the grant. MoJ expects that each delivery plan will take into account emerging issues facing the UK lawtech sector at the point that the delivery plan is in development. Each delivery plan will include clear and defined outputs relating to the programme against which progress will be tracked and monitored by the MoJ using KPIs and other performance management tools.

The benefits and outcomes to be derived from the funding will ultimately depend on the delivery plans to be developed by the grant recipient, which will describe how they will use the funding to meet the grant objectives. The benefits of achieving the grant objectives will be for the legal sector, its clients and wider society and not directly for MoJ. Each delivery plan will include clear and defined outputs and longer-term outcomes relating to a work programme against which progress will be tracked and monitored by the MoJ. A key expectation of a new provider will be to identify and work with initiatives already taking place within the sector that have elements of cross over with the grant objectives and to target support for the sector in areas where the programme can make most impact.



Eligibility

This competition is open to applications from UK based registered entities. Applicants may take the form of sole legal entities or may wish to combine to form consortia, joint ventures (JVs), unincorporated associations or partnerships. This may, for example, apply to entities who feel that alone they do not have the capacity or capability to address the size and scale of the objectives. Applicants are responsible for determining the most appropriate approach to delivering their proposal.

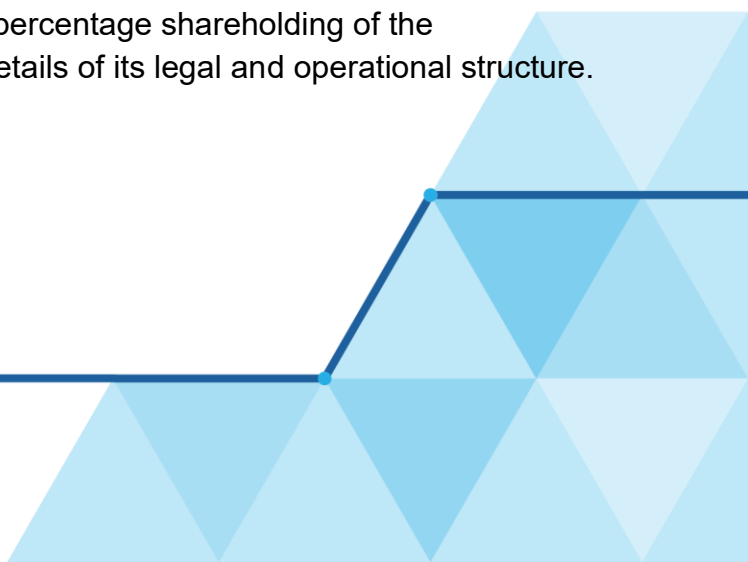
Specific eligibility criteria for the competition are below:

- Applicant(s) must be registered corporate entities and have a significant UK presence.
- Public sector organisations are not eligible to receive this funding.
- Individual people are not eligible applicants.

All awards will be made subject to successful due diligence checks. Such checks will include, but not be limited to, a review of financial statements to ensure financial viability, a review of proposed governance structures, adverse media checks and legal entity checks. MoJ reserves the right to take account of other factors that have a bearing on a bidder's suitability.

The following additional guidance applies to applicants who put forward a joint approach: A Lead Partner that shall submit an application on behalf of all Parties to the JV/consortium must be identified; The Lead Partner shall be responsible for all communication with the MoJ during the competition process. The Lead Partner will be the prime recipient of grant funding and who will be responsible for managing the consortium's activities and for allocation of grant funding to other consortium members.

As part of their application, the applicant must submit a structure diagram identifying the roles and relationships between the Partners including all relevant companies, their respective parent or ultimate holding companies. The structure should make clear who will be responsible for delivery of the grant and ensure that, as a minimum, the legal obligations and liabilities of the applicant are borne by an entity or entities which satisfy the financial and economic requirements set out in this document. Where the group is proposing to create a separate legal entity, such as a special purpose vehicle (SPV), they should provide details of the actual or proposed percentage shareholding of the constituent members within the new entity and details of its legal and operational structure.



The applicant must submit written confirmation from each Partner that they authorise the Lead Partner organisation to act on their behalf in relation to this grant application.

If awarded a grant, unless otherwise stated in your application, each of the Partners shall be jointly and severally responsible for the due performance of any grant agreement with the MoJ.

Applicants must advise the MoJ if there is any change to their legal status and/or composition during or after the appointment process, and the MoJ reserves the right to disqualify applicants where significant or material changes occur. The applicant must submit only one application for grant funding. Individual organisations are not permitted to apply as part of more than one consortia.



Project Costs

The grant funding provided will be as follows:

Financial year	Value
2026/27	£620,000
2027/28	£1,500,000
2028/29	£1,500,000

This represents the maximum funding available. Please refer to the accompanying draft grant funding agreement for further information about eligible expenditure.



Value Added Tax

The grant offer will be made on the basis that the costs presented to the MoJ take account of all VAT liabilities. If it is later found that the project costs increase because an error has been made about whether VAT can be recovered, the MoJ will not increase the applicant's grant to cover this. If the applicant is, after all, able to recover VAT, which it had included in the costs put forward to the MoJ, the applicant will be liable to repay all or some of the amount it recovers, to the MoJ.

The MoJ may seek to recover some or all of the grant, if the applicant is performing unsatisfactorily or if the project ceases activity. The MoJ may not require all or part of the grant to be repaid where the reasons for unsatisfactory performance or early cessation of work are beyond the control of the applicant and reasonably unforeseen by them.



Monitoring and Evaluation

The grant recipient will be required to closely monitor the delivery and success of the funded activities throughout the funding period to ensure that the aims and objectives of the funding are achieved. The grant recipient shall provide MoJ with all reasonable assistance and co-operation in relation to any ad-hoc information, explanations and documents as the MoJ may require. There will also be formal reporting requirements, which will include the following.

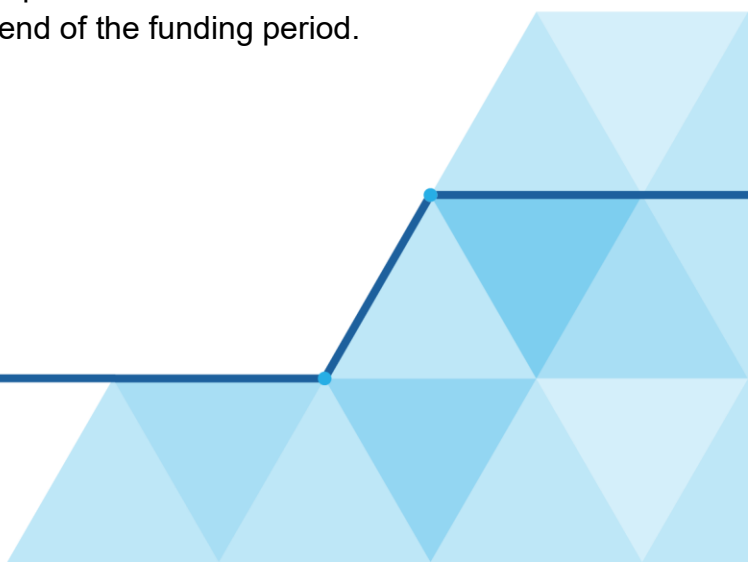
There will be a monthly meeting between the MoJ and the grant recipient to discuss a monthly reporting pack and delivery. This will include the progress made towards delivering the agreed outputs and longer-term outcomes set out in the relevant delivery plan. The grant recipient will provide the MoJ with a regular financial report in a form agreed by both.

The Grant Funding Agreement will include details of the grant recipient's aims, objectives, eligible expenditure terms, milestones, monitoring and reporting mechanisms, target KPIs and programme descriptions. MoJ will monitor the grant, the benefits and outcomes derived from the funding through a tried-and-tested series of mechanisms, including:

- Regular direct meetings as required;
- Monthly reporting mechanism on progress against the delivery plan;
- Quarterly management meeting;
- Quarterly financial report;
- End of year report;

As the grant objectives include the promotion of the lawtech sector in the UK, it is anticipated that the grant activities will include spend on promotional and marketing activities. MoJ will take particular steps to ensure that this spending is appropriate and proportionate. The grant recipient will be required to seek permission from MoJ prior to any proposed expenditure on advertising, communications, consultancy or marketing either in connection with, or using the grant.

The grant recipient will be required to fund an independent evaluation of the success of the grant funding against the objectives towards the end of the funding period.



Applicants will need to demonstrate that they have credible plans for developing an initial delivery plan. Applications should describe how bidders would set up to ensure that there is a robust approach to governing the project and managing risks. Use of examples would be helpful. Applications should provide a clear description of how initial activities will commence and should detail the process for setting up the project.

MoJ will own all IPR that is generated using the grant funding.



TUPE

The attention of applicants is drawn to the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 ("TUPE"). There is currently a team in place at the incumbent of the existing grant funding. Please note that MoJ would be neither the transferor nor transferee of the staff in the circumstances of any grant agreement awarded as a result of this grant competition. MoJ does not believe TUPE applies to this grant if the incumbent provider is not the successful applicant. It is your responsibility to consider whether TUPE applies in the specific circumstances of your application, including if you are proposing to submit an innovative bid, and to apply accordingly.



Evaluation Criteria

Section	Weighting (%)	Description
A. Project vision	10	This section is for applicants to demonstrate suitable ambition and credibility in terms of how the funding will achieve the grant objectives. Applications should set out a clear and compelling vision of how the funding will help develop a culture of innovation within the legal services sector; increase understanding of the benefits of lawtech in legal service providers of all sizes; support the development of technology which will increase access to legal services and aim to reduce unmet legal need; and help grow the legal sector's economic contribution.
B. Delivery and Governance	30	This section is for applicants to demonstrate that they have credible plans for delivery and the ability to meet all the grant objectives. Applications should evidence that the project plan has been thought through and that they have a robust approach to governing the project and managing risks. Applications should provide a clear description of how initial activities will commence and should detail the process for setting up the project.
C. Activities and Impact	20	This section is for applicants to provide examples of the types of activities they would expect to deliver to achieve the funding's objectives. Applications should provide a clear description of the potential projects, stating their expected outcomes and outputs. The description should summarise the expected benefits and plans for measuring and monitoring them. Actual delivery will be subject to delivery plans agreed with the Ministry of Justice as described in the Invitation to Application.
D. Capability and experience	30	This section is for applicants to demonstrate that the organisation has sufficient technical skills and experience. Where applicable, applications should provide a clear overview of the consortium partner organisations and their roles.

E. Finance and Value for Money	10	This section is for applicants to give an initial view of how they would plan to allocate the funding and demonstrate confidence that financial management and control of the consortium will deliver good value for money. This will be subject to revision in the development of the first delivery plan for the programme.
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Scoring

Score	Quality	Description
0	No Evidence	No evidence provided that the application meets the requirement. No confidence that the applicant can meet the requirement.
1	Minimal response	Limited evidence to support that the application meets the requirement, and a low level of confidence that the applicant can meet the requirement.
2	Acceptable response	Acceptable evidence provided to support that the application meets most of the requirement and a medium level of confidence that the applicant can meet the requirement.
3	Good response	Good evidence to support that the application meets all material aspects of the requirement and a high level of confidence that the applicant can meet the requirement.
4	Excellent response	Comprehensive evidence provided to support that the application fully meets all aspects of the requirement, and a very high level of confidence that the applicant can meet the requirement.



Assessment Process

Initial eligibility checks will be undertaken on all applications against the scope, funding, and eligibility requirements. If an application passes the sift, it will progress to evaluation and will be scored against the evaluation criteria and then ranked based on total score.

Applications shall be evaluated by a panel appointed by MoJ. Each panel member shall undertake an independent evaluation. Once complete, a moderation meeting shall be held where the panel shall reach a consensus on the results.

In the event that two or more applicants receive the same score, priority will be given to sections D, B and A, in that order.



Subsidy Control

Before awarding the grant, MoJ will need to ensure that the grant is compatible with all subsidy control requirements which are in force. This will include the requirements in the new Subsidy Control Act 2022 if it is in force at the time. If MoJ is not able to satisfy itself that the grant is compatible with its legal obligations, it will not award the grant.





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