

Westcott BIC Grant Application Grant Competition

Guidance for Applicants

1. Introduction

The Westcott BIC Research Grants are available to any existing early-stage UK based small to medium-sized enterprise (SME) that have been trading for less than 3 years. Consideration will be also given to applications from an individual(s) who at the time of the application may not have yet registered a UK limited company, with a caveat that payment will be only made once the company is registered. The aim of the fund is to provide flexible revenue grants designed to assist SMEs to help prove concepts with early stage development work, develop new business models and to help develop prototypes – all of these are aimed to support the creation of new products and services that are introduced to the market.

You are strongly advised to discuss your application with the Westcott Business Incubation Centre (Westcott BIC) team prior to submission and access further support and guidance around eligibility, suitability and procurement. The Westcott BIC team is on hand to provide support and guidance throughout the process, but will not be able to write your application for you. You can download the full application form on the Westcott BIC website (www.wbic.org.uk) or contact the Westcott BIC team on support@wbic.org.uk.

The grant is being provided through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) programme and the last date the grants will be awarded will be Spring 2021 subject to continuing funding being available. Westcott BIC Grants will be allocated via a competitive process across the duration of the programme, unless funding has been fully committed prior to that date.

Please note that this is a competitive grant process and that submitting an application does not guarantee a grant award.

The competition will be an open rolling competition, and applications can be submitted at any time. The open call will end on the **12th March 2021** subject to available funding, and the final grants will be awarded by the 29th March, with grant claims expected on the **30th June 2021** at the latest. Please, refer to section 6 for more information on the decision process and timings.

2. What's available?

Revenue grants of a minimum of £1,000 and maximum of £5,000 are available.

Applications may be viewed more favourably if they offer the following outcomes:

- Introduction of new to the market products
- Introduction of new to the firm products
- Employment increase in the applicant enterprise
- Co-operation with research institutions

Applicants should only offer these outcomes where they are possible and realistic. The outcomes must be achieved, reported and evidenced by the **30th June 2021**.

Grant projects will be paid in arrears, so applicants must be comfortable that they can cash flow their expenditure pending reimbursement. We will accept no more than one claim per grant award unless there are exceptional circumstances by which a formal request must be made in writing for more than one claim submission. The standard duration of Westcott BIC Grant spend is 8 weeks from the grant offer letter issue (or final claim date as specified in your application form – whichever is the earlier date). All extension requests must be made in writing and approved by the Westcott BIC Manager. We anticipate that most activities will be complete within three months of the grant award and all activity, expenditure must be achieved, reported and evidenced by 30th June 2021.

If you believe your project will last longer than three months, then please contact the Westcott BIC team prior to submitting your application.

All Westcott BIC grants are awarded on the basis of De Minimis State Aid and are subject to your De Minimis limit not being exceeded. If a company has already received €200,000 of State Aid within a three-year fiscal period it is ineligible to receive further financial support within that three-year period.

3. Eligibility

Please see below for details of eligible and non- eligible expenditure:

Eligible projects

Examples of what the grant **can** support:

Revenue projects

Specialist consultancy, projects and/or support related to:

Investment in product and service development

- Implementing findings of the planning process, such as in areas of new product/service development, manufacturing and design



- Accessing expert services for Intellectual Property registration, including patents, designs and trademarks (not the registration fees themselves)
- Implementing the results of industrial research, including the creation of pre- production prototypes

Technological and applied research

- Research and development, including specialised consultancy
- Collaborating with universities and colleges, and sourcing facilities, equipment and expertise to solve technical problems and develop further innovation
- Researching the development of new products or technologies, or significant improvements to existing ones

Developing pilot lines

- Implementing findings of the planning process, such as in areas of new product development, manufacturing and design
- Investigating the technological and commercial viability of transforming innovative ideas into new products, processes and technologies

Early product validation actions

- Assisting with the exploitation costs of new products or processes, including marketing, publicity and attendance at trade fairs

Supporting advanced manufacturing capabilities

- Accessing equipment or services that support a technology 'step-change' for the business

First production

- Services to provide additional production capacity to exploit innovation

Ineligible projects

Examples of what the grant cannot support:

- VAT payments (other than project costs for non-VAT registered businesses);
- Paying off debts or refinancing;
- Purchase of land or buildings or financial investments;
- Repairs to equipment or buildings;
- Salaries of employees or interns;
- Preventative and remedial maintenance of assets or equipment;
- Training, including in the use of assets and equipment;
- Purchasing of vehicles
- The revenue grant cannot support the purchase of assets or equipment in excess of £4,999 (any mobile asset of more than £1,000 value must be recorded on an asset register);



- Any statutory or legislative obligations, duties or requirements;
- Hire purchases and/or asset finance arrangements;
- Routine expenditure relating to new employees (e.g. office furniture, ICT and training);
- Expenditure relating to business as usual;
- “Like-for-like” replacement of obsolete equipment with little or no added value.

Ineligible sectors

A number of sectors are ineligible for grant support under De Minimis. These are:

- Fishery and aquaculture sectors
- Primary production, processing and marketing of agricultural products
- Road Freight
- Services of general economic interest
- Export related activities and activities favouring domestic over imported goods

A number of additional sectors are ineligible for grant support under ERDF. These are:

- Coal, steel and shipbuilding sectors
- The synthetic fibres sector
- Generalised (school age) education
- Banking and insurance companies
- Retail businesses (ineligible for capital expenditure only)
- Social Care Services & Social Welfare (hospitals, housing associations, sports facilities)
- Child-minding facilities

4. Procurement

Please read this section carefully.

A condition of ERDF is that you are required to demonstrate that you are procuring products or services for your research activity in line with EU Procurement regulations as follows:

- For individual purchases/procurement activities of up to £10,000 (total value excluding VAT) of which your grant money will be used to pay for in part or completely, you must provide at least 1 written quotation per individual item to be purchased. You are not obliged to accept the lowest quotation received, but a written explanation of the rationale behind any such decision will be required which demonstrates the supplier’s experience and/or value for money. For smaller or generic goods/services, it is acceptable to use print-outs from websites. Please complete the Procurements table in Section E: Planned Expenditure in the application form with the details of any quotations obtained.
- For individual purchases/procurement activities of up to £24,999 (total value excluding VAT) of which your grant money will be used to pay for in part or



completely, as above applies however you must provide 3 written quotations per individual item to be purchased.

5. **Evidence of expenditure**

The evidence that you need to provide for all procurement is:

- copies of all quotations/screenshots or copies of the advertised procurement opportunities you have published on the portal(s) (such as Contract Finder), together with details of the assessment criteria used for each purchase and how you selected the winning bidder based on these criteria (e.g. scoresheet).

If you cannot demonstrate that you will assess the quotations or tenders received in accordance with EU Procurement regulations as outlined above, we will not be able to consider your grant application.

We do not anticipate that any individual procurement under a Westcott BIC activity will exceed £24,999. If you think that one might, you MUST contact the Westcott BIC team prior to submitting your application.

For all expenditure which uses your grant monies in part of wholly, you will need to meet the ERDF audit trail requirements including evidence of defrayal (monies leaving your bank account). For example:

- Invoices/receipts,
- Evidence of defrayal of expenditure.

6. **Decision-making process**

As soon as your application is received the Westcott BIC team will send an e-mail to confirm that the documentation has been received.

There will be an initial triage on all applications to ascertain applications that fall into and out of scope as per this guidance document. We will also check to see if all areas of the application have been correctly completed and signed where required.

Applications that are ineligible for the grant will be notified as to the reason why.

Applications that are eligible for the grant will be scored against the grant criteria by at least two assessors.

You may be required to provide further clarification or information in support of your application, and a Westcott BIC grant assessment meeting can be requested by the assessors.

You will receive written confirmation of the decision within six weeks from the Grant submission date. If you are requested to perform changes or to provide further clarifications on your application, then the 6 weeks will count from the date of the last grant application submission or when the clarifications are provided.



Any expenditure incurred before receipt of the formal Grant Offer Letter is deemed to be ineligible expenditure for grant assistance.

The details of your Westcott BIC Grant award will be outlined in the Grant Offer Letter to successful applicants and will include any grant conditions. You may not be awarded the full grant you have requested in your application and/or you may need to satisfy certain conditions to unlock all the grant funding you have been provisionally allocated.

All unsuccessful Grant applicants are welcome to submit a revised or new application subject to available funding. A maximum of two grant applications will be evaluated from the same company or individual applying for a given technology.

If your application is incomplete at the time of submission or you are requested to provide further information, a maximum of two more submissions will be allowed to include the feedback provided. If after a third and final submission your application does not address the changes requested or the feedback provided, and/or it requires further amendments, it will be automatically withdrawn, and further submissions will not be accepted.

You may only receive one Westcott BIC Grant.

The Westcott BIC Grants have limited availability and applications will be assessed on the following criteria:

Gateway criteria (yes/no questions, which must all be answered yes):

- Eligible to receive ERDF grant as an SME?
- Suitable for Westcott BIC (alignment with technology areas):
 - UAV
 - Rocket Propulsion
 - 5G communications
- Compliant with De Minimis requirements?
- Compliant with procurement rules?

If your grant application is eligible and passes the initial triage, the panel will review your application based on the following criteria:

Criteria	Description	Scoring	
		Level of innovation	How innovative is the proposed idea
		Medium	5
		Low	1
Relevance to technology areas	Link to one of three technology areas	High	10
		Medium	5
		Low	1
Additionality / Impact on the applicant	What's the potential impact of the grant on the applicant (i.e. start up growth or acceleration of growth of business)	High	10
		Medium	5
		Low	1
Commercialisation	Likelihood of the technology/service being commercialised (even if too late to count against and ERDF output)	High	10
		Medium	5
		Low	1
Contribution to ERDF outputs	Potential achievement of outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of new to the firm products • Introduction of new to the market products • Co-operation with research institutions • Employment increase in the applicant enterprise 	All 4	10
		Three	8
		Two	6
		One	3
		None	0

These scores will be weighted as follows to achieve a score out of 100:

Criteria	Weighting
Level of Innovation	2.5x
Relevance of technology areas	2x
Additionality/Impact on the applicant	2x
Commercialisation	2.5x
Contribution to ERDF outputs	1x

7. **Nature of grant offer**

Westcott BIC Grants cannot contribute to projects that are already underway. Any grant offer will be invalid if work commences prior to the date of the Westcott BIC Grant Offer Letter.

Retrospective grant applications are not permitted.

An offer of a Westcott BIC grant is time limited and will expire 30 days after the date the Grant Offer Letter is issued. Although the Westcott BIC team will endeavour to follow up Grant Offer Letter which have not been returned by applicants, it is your responsibility to ensure that the Grant Offer Letter is signed and the original returned to the Westcott BIC team within the deadline.

8. **Making your grant claim**

Any Westcott BIC Grant that is approved is only for the purpose stated in the Grant Offer Letter.

If the circumstances on which a grant application was based change, you must contact the Westcott BIC team to discuss before committing to making any payments. This may include, but is not limited to, a change of expected completion date, change of supplier, change to the expenditure value(s), expected project outcomes, or cancellation of the activity. If you are in any doubt, please contact the Westcott BIC team to discuss.

All extensions to grant claims will need to be agreed by the Westcott BIC team and it must not be assumed that funds will be available if the deadline is missed.

To claim the grant, you must provide the Westcott BIC team with a signed Claim Form (which we will provide with your Grant Offer Letter), along with evidence of defrayal of the costs. This would include a copy of any supplier invoice(s) and proof of payment, namely a redacted business bank statement showing the relevant payment(s). If a credit card has been used, the minimum payment paid, must be at least the value of the item being claimed and we need to see evidence of this via bank statement etc. Payment of supplier invoices cannot be made by cash or contra arrangements. All bank statements and payment evidence will need to be signed, dated and labelled with the statement:

‘All documents are true copies of originals’

If you cannot provide this evidence, we will not be able to process your grant claim.

Funding cannot be awarded as retrospective payment for goods or services procured before a formal offer of grant has been received and accepted.

All grant payments are based on the net cost of goods and services procured. If your business is not VAT registered, the full cost will be used to calculate the final grant payment.

9. **Impact deliverables**

In Section: Costs and Deliverables of the grant application form, you will need to provide details of any Impact Deliverables (i.e. new co-operations with research institutions, new products to market or new products to the firm, employment increase) to be achieved.

Once you have claimed your grant, the Westcott BIC team will provide you with the 'Impact Declaration Form' which you must use to confirm the details of the impacts achieved. A member of the Westcott BIC team will follow up with you if you have indicated that you will be able to achieve an impact deliverable from the support of the grant.

- **Co-operation with research institutions**

A new co-operation with a research institution undertaken, as a result of your support from Westcott BIC.

The co-operation:

- must have been created as a result of the activity supported by the grant
- cannot have been in place before the grant was awarded
- focuses on collaborations which are about transferring good ideas, research results and skills between the knowledge base and business to enable innovative new products and services to be developed and includes:
 - Research collaborations and free dissemination of research
 - Joint and long-term development of new business or services
 - Formation of joint ventures and spin-out companies
- is intended to be long-term and sustained, and is distinct from enterprise support
- benefit must be conditional on some form of formal co-operation

Please note that you will be asked to provide a copy of the letter or other form of agreement (e.g. a memorandum of understanding (MOU) or a contract), which explains what each party's role is in the collaboration, including shared objective and aims, along with evidence of outcomes during the operation.

You will also need to provide basic evidence about the research entity: i.e. name, address, including post code, evidence of primary research activity, i.e. charter. A research entity is an organisation whose primary activity is research and development (R&D).



- **New to market products**

A new to the market product that you develop, as a result of your support from Westcott BIC team.

Support must be for an enterprise to introduce one of the following:

- Product - when it is either at pre-launch or launched to the market
- Process - when it has been introduced into the business
- Service - when it has been introduced to the market

The indicator measures if an enterprise receives support to develop a 'new to the market' product in any of its markets. It includes process innovation, as long as the process contributes to the development of the product.

A product is new to the market if there is no other product available on a market that offers the same functionality, or the design or technology that the new product uses is fundamentally different from the design or technology of already existing products. Products can be tangible or intangible (incl. services and processes).

Supported operations that aimed to introduce new to the markets products but did not succeed are still counted.

If a product is new both to the market and to the firm, you should also be counted as supported to introduce new to the market products as well as supported to introduce new to the firm products.

Please note that you will be asked to provide a self-declaration to confirm the product/process or service is new. This should confirm the date the new product was launched and should provide further documentation to confirm details of product, which could include marketing information or literature. If product has not progressed to market, the enterprise should provide information on the status of the product.

- **New to firm products**

A new to the firm product that you develop, as a result of your support from the Westcott BIC.

The indicator measures if an enterprise is supported to develop a “new to the firm” product, including:

- Product - when it is either at pre-launch or launched to the market
- Process - when it has been introduced into the business
- Service - when it has been introduced to the market

It includes process innovation, as long as the process contributes to the development of the product. Projects without the aim of actually developing a product are excluded. If you introduce several products or receive support for several operations, you are still counted as one enterprise.



A product is new to the firm if you did not produce a product with the same functionality or the production technology is fundamentally different from the technology of already produced products. Products can be tangible or intangible (including services).

Supported projects that aimed to introduce new to the firm products but did not succeed are still counted.

If a product is new both to the market and to the firm, you should be counted in both indicators.

Please note that you will be asked to provide a self-declaration to confirm the product/process or service is new. Evidence might include the date a new or improved process became operational or the date the new product or service was launched from market information or marketing literature. If product has not progressed to market, the enterprise should provide information on the status of the product.

- **Employment Increase**

A new full time equivalent (FTE) job that you create as a result of your support from the Westcott BIC.

The job(s):

- must have been created as a result of the activity supported by the grant
- must be paid employment
- cannot have been in place before the grant was awarded
- should have an intended life expectancy of at least 12 months and be for at least 36 hours per week
- must result in a net increase on jobs existing in the company when the grant was awarded

Please note that you will be asked to provide evidence of employment and in some cases the auditors might request a copy of the contract of employment demonstrating these criteria. You will also need to provide basic information about the gender, age, disability status and ethnicity of the job holder on the 'Impact Declaration Form'. This information will be treated in strict confidence.

10. Further Information

Applications must be made on the official 'Westcott BIC Grant Application Form'.

In line with EU State Aid regulations, you must sign a *De Minimis* State Aid Declaration (included within the application form) covering the last 3 years. This will need to include all previous aid received from all sources. If in doubt, please talk to



an appropriate member of your organisation to check the *De Minimis* State Aid your company has received to date before submitting your application form. This may take the form of other grants or innovation and business support received in the past.

Westcott BIC reserves the right to visit you to ensure the grant has been used for the purpose it was intended as stated in the application form and to inspect records to show costs have been incurred by you.

Your grant activity may also be subject to audit by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, ERDF and the European Court of Auditors.

1. **NOTES TO ASSIST WITH COMPLETING THE GRANT APPLICATION FORM**

Applications can be completed either electronically and submitted via email to support@wbic.org.uk or a signed hard copy can be posted or delivered with supporting documentation to the Westcott BIC team at:

Westcott Business Incubation Centre, Westcott Venture Park, Westcott, Nr Aylesbury,

HP18 0XB

No extensions to the deadline for responses will usually be granted with very limited exception to situations where an applicant finds themselves seeking to request an extension due to reasonable extenuating circumstances, those circumstances being beyond the applicants control and unforeseen to them.

Key Information: Please provide basic information about you and your company.

Executive / Public Summary: Please provide a brief overview of the contents of your Westcott BIC Grant Application which highlights key points in your application. Please note this summary could be published in the public domain and used for marketing purposes.

Section A: Your Business

Tell us about your business and your innovative new product or service, the history and your aims and aspirations for the future.

Please explain the innovation, what it does, how it works, how it is innovative and what work has been done to date. Include comparisons to existing competing solutions and the advantages your innovation offers.

Section B: Use of Grant

Please provide us with an overview of how you intend to use the grant for research and/or innovation and how it will help towards developing a commercial product or service.

Don't be too brief. Be really clear with what you intend to use the grant funding for i.e. "to purchase research consultancy" would be deemed insufficient detail for the grant panel to

seriously consider. A much better response would be to include details of how the consultancy will contribute to develop the innovation, why you need it, how it will be used in the business and how it may complement other activities that you are already conducting.

Section C: Costs and Deliverables

Please provide the total estimated cost of the project to which the grant will contribute (excluding VAT). Please ensure that you follow the European Union procurement requirements set out in Section 4 of the above Guidance Notes. State the value of the grant you are applying for.

Please supply the date on which the project is due for completion, this should be no later than 30th May 2021.

Section D: Impact Deliverables

Please tell us about any co-operations with research institutions that you intend to create / undertake as a result of this project. Collaborations with private companies cannot be included. **If you are awarded a grant, we will ask you to provide confirmation that these co-operations have been created.**

Please tell us about any new products / services that you intend to introduce to the market as a result of this project. If you are awarded a grant, we will ask you to provide confirmation that these products / services have been created.

Please tell us about any new products / services that you intend to introduce to your firm as a result of this project. If you are awarded a grant, we will ask you to provide confirmation that these products / services have been introduced.

Please tell us about any jobs that you intend to create as a result of this project. If you are awarded a grant, we will ask you to provide confirmation that these jobs have been created. We will also ask you to provide some basic equality and diversity data about the post holders once the jobs have been created. This data will be treated as strictly confidential and submitted anonymously to the government for the project for monitoring purposes. The definition of a job is a role that is at least 36 hours per week for a minimum of 12 months. FTE jobs can be accepted (i.e. part-time jobs that add up to at least 36 hours per week can be counted). Jobs are employed roles only and do not include freelancers, subcontractors or volunteers.

Section E: Planned Expenditure

A condition of the ERDF grant is that you are required to demonstrate that you have procured the product or service for which the grant is being sought in line with EU Procurement regulations, as follows:

- For individual purchases/procurement activities of up to £10,000 (total value excluding VAT) of which your grant money will be used to pay for in part or completely, you must provide at least 1 written quotation per individual item to be purchased. You are not obliged to accept the lowest quotation received, but a written explanation of the rationale behind any such decision will be required which demonstrates the supplier's experience and/or value for money. For smaller or generic goods/services, it is acceptable to use print-outs from websites. Please complete the Procurements table in Section E: Planned Expenditure in the application form with the details of any quotations obtained.
- A quotation needs to be included
- For individual purchases/procurement activities of up to £24,999 (total value excluding VAT) of which your grant money will be used to pay for in part or completely, as above applies however you must provide 3 written quotations per individual item to be purchased.

The evidence that you need to provide for all procurement is:

- copies of all of the quotations/screenshots or copies of the advertised procurement opportunities you have published on the portal(s) (such as Contract Finder), together with details of the assessment criteria used for each purchase and how you selected the winning bidder based on these criteria (e.g. scoresheet).

If you cannot demonstrate that you have procured the product or service for which the grant is being sought in line with EU Procurement regulations as outlined above, we will not be able to consider your grant application.

Section F: Declarations

SME Declaration - this is needed to assess your eligibility to receive a Westcott BIC Grant under ERDF rules. This includes employee numbers, annual turnover and balance sheet figures.

Please complete the *De Minimis* declaration to ensure that you are compliant with State Aid rules and can legally receive the Westcott BIC Grant.

Please read the Privacy Notice which outlines how your data is collected, process and used for the purposes of managing the Westcott BIC programme under ERDF rules.

Please then review the Westcott BIC Declaration and sign in wet ink – electronic signatures cannot be accepted.

You are requested to complete the Equal Opportunities and Equality of Access Monitoring form at the end of the application. Completion of this section is voluntary.

2. SUBMISSION

When you have signed the application form this must be submitted either as an electronic copy or a hardcopy posted to the Westcott BIC team together with any supporting documents (supplier quotations/evidence of tendering etc).

You will be expected to:

- Provide all evidence required to process and verify the grant application;
- Provide all evidence as set out on the Impact Declaration Form, which will ask details of jobs created and outcomes as a result of the funding;
- Co-operate, if requested, with the Westcott BIC to promote and publicise success stories in the form of press releases, case studies, Freedom of Information Act requests or other communications unless there are clear reasons not to (for example, confidentiality around commercial issues, intellectual property or patents etc.);



- Participate in any evaluation activities by the Westcott BIC, the funding body and the external evaluator.

3. CONTACT US

If you have any queries, please contact the Westcott BIC team on 01869717018 or email support@wbic.org.uk

Our postal address is:

Westcott Business Incubation Centre, Westcott Venture Park, Westcott, Nr Aylesbury, HP 18 0XB